



LAKE SOUNDINGS

The Newsletter of Gilmore Lake Association
Spring 2014

www.gilmorelakeassociation.com

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AIS/Eurasian Milfoil
John Ney
Fund raising
Fran McCloskey
Membership/Newsletter
Barb Robinson

President's Message

The incredibly cold and snowy winter is finally over. Folks have emerged to work on the yard and spruce up the cabin, but not to launch the boat. As I write this, the lake level is up about five feet, the landing is flooded, and the culvert is impassable. This first flood event of the year was not unexpected, given the winter snow pack. However it is being augmented by frequent heavy rains – the “good old days” of drought are gone. Despite much research by Bill Huelsman and his committee, there does not seem to be a viable way to control what the Triple T wants to send us (see article inside).

The long winter was not only physically brutal but emotionally as well. We lost two people who contributed greatly to the development of our Association: Jim Holmes and Lois Casey. Who will take their place?

On the bright side, the Minong Flowage is refilled. Also, EWM is still under control and (surprise!) large fingerling walleyes have been stocked into Gilmore Lake (see articles). The scour hole at the boat landing has been refilled, thanks to a donation by Mike Standaert of large glacial rocks and placement by Mike, Daryl Iverson, Russ Robinson, Burt King and me. It will remain in place only if boats do not power load (which is illegal) with their mega-motors at high throttle and their props directed at the lake bottom. Please load you boat correctly and see that others do the same. At a minimum, tilt your motor to protect the integrity of the lake bed.

Our water level will recede, and we can all enjoy another summer on the water. Be safe and continue to treasure the resource that is Gilmore Lake.

Please note that this year's Annual Meeting and Picnic will be June 28 at the Minong Town Hall, starting at 10:00am. The Annual Boat Parade will be on July 5 starting at 1pm.

Disclaimer: The materials, information and references provided in this newsletter are provided “as is”. While every effort is made to ensure their accuracy, no warranty, expressed or implied, is given with respect to them.

EWM Update

John Ney, Chairman, Milfoil Committee

The high, dark water has postponed the Spring survey of the present distribution of Eurasian watermilfoil. Hopefully, it has remained where it was last Fall. Or was not – the original 200 foot bed near the western shore was gone, apparently having succumbed to herbicide treatment. Two small beds totaling 0.2 acres remained in lower Big Gilmore. But EWM was last seen flourishing in Little Gilmore, interspersed with native vegetation along the eastern and northern sides, especially near the culvert.

Unless larger beds are discovered, the plan is to again treat these small infestations with granular 2,4D applied by our very own licensed pesticide applicator Russ Robinson. The epic “Weed Wars” continues. But it is no time to be smug. The trajectory of EWM in other waters demonstrates that it is capable of rapid expansion under the right conditions. Because our flood waters transport a lot of vegetation and EWM can start a new colony from a single fragment, new beds may be discovered. The combination of DNR grants and our own EWM funds from your contributions would permit us to pay for control treatment of up to five acres of EWM per year for the next five years. Let us hope that will not be necessary.

Last year, the Town of Minong and its Lakes Committee obtained a DNR grant to conduct Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) boat inspections at public landings on 9 lakes in the township including Gilmore. The program has been refunded for 2014 with the addition of the county park landing on the Minong Flowage. It will again include up to 400 hours of inspection at the Gilmore Lake landing. Cost of the total program is \$48,000, with \$12,000 as the local share in the form of cash contributions and volunteer labor. As in 2013, the GLA Board of Directors approved a donation of \$1,000 to help meet the local share of costs.

WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY COMMITTEE

By Bill Huelsman

Recently one of our lake members inquired about the cause of the fluctuations in our lake levels. As you will recall, during 2012 and 2013 Gilmore Lake Association conducted a study of our fluctuating lake levels. Our lake is categorized as a “low level lake” because its normal elevation is only about 2 feet above the stream where the lake discharges into

the Totagatic River. This condition results in the dramatic effect on Gilmore Lake’s water level. The normal flow of water is from Gilmore Lake into the Totagatic River. However, during periods of high flow in the river, the river actually turns and flows into the lake resulting in the water fluctuations. Upstream from the Gilmore Lake discharge, the Totagatic River is associated with a very, very large wetland area(thousands of acres).

During wet periods the water in this wetland area rises to above the normal elevation of Gilmore Lake and therefore creates a flow of water into the lake that can last for several days and, under some conditions, longer. The water in the lake rises until the level rises to the water level in the river and the associated wetland. Once the water starts to drop in the wetland, the water level in Gilmore Lake also starts to drop.

In recent years, there was a period of 7 or 8 years where the water level in the lake was relatively constant. Why we had this consistency in the lake level is because we were in an extended drought period. In the last few years we have returned to a more normal rainfall and, therefore, the lake has returned to its long standing history of significant water level changes. Our research shows that although there is very limited specific data, the institutional memory of the people interviewed confirms that the fluctuations of water levels on the lake since the return to normal rainfall is consistent with water fluctuations over the last 70 years.

The lake association invested considerable time and a small amount of funding to interview consultants, meet with Wisconsin DNR and develop significant historic data. Unfortunately no solution could be found for the water level problem within the regulatory environment of the Wisconsin DNR.

The lake association will continue to search for ways to improve the situation and has instituted certain record keeping activities that will more accurately define the problem. As an example, a stream gauge has been installed to measure the levels of the lake so that the variations can be documented.

I hope that someday we will find an acceptable solution to this difficult problem.

STOCKING WALLEYE IN GILMORE LAKE

By John Ney, Ancient Fisheries Biologist

Gilmore Lake historically provided a good fishery for walleye. Those fish probably originated from a combination of natural reproduction and stocking. As with many other area lakes (e.g., Nelson Lake, Chippewa Flowage), the walleye fishery is now greatly diminished. While multiple factors may be involved, the single most convincing reason is the explosion of the largemouth bass population. Research has documented that largemouth bass are voracious predators of baby walleye.

In an attempt to re-establish fishable populations, the WDNR, as well as lake associations, have started stocking 6-9 inch walleye in the Fall at a size and time where they are not vulnerable to bass. These are fish hatched in the Spring (as are all walleye) that were fed much better and longer than their brethren that get stocked at 2" in early summer. These Extended Growth (EG) walleye are expensive to rear; lake associations pay up to \$2 apiece for them. However, survival and growth of these EG walleye is good, providing the opportunity to again catch walleye.

The GLA did in fact stock ~1,000 EG fish in 2001 and they contributed to the walleye catch (at least mine) for several years. Should we do it again? Last December I talked with our DNR fish biologist in Spooner about EG walleye. Surprise: the DNR had a surplus of EG fish in 2012 and so stocked ~ 2,000 in Gilmore Lake as an experiment. They did an electrofishing survey in Fall 2013, but did not find many of these fish, now 12-13". On the basis of that one-time sampling, they do not plan to continue stocking EG walleye in Gilmore Lake.

At the same time, Gov. Walker and the DNR have started the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative (you can google it). One objective of this \$10 million plan is to increase production of EG walleye at state hatcheries from 60,000 to 500,000 by 2016. Another objective is to spend \$500,000 per year to buy EG walleye from private hatcheries, where facilities will be improved via \$2 million in competitive grants.

Competition will be intense among lake associations to get their share of these "free" fish. In the past, associations could buy EGs from private hatcheries, but it seems now the DNR might corner the market.

Will this come down to "haves" versus "have nots" for lakes regarding EG walleye?

I plan to find out (although the biologist at Spooner moved on and has not yet been replaced) whether:

1) Gilmore will get more DNR fish; and 2) our association will still be able to buy them from private hatcheries. If the answer to 1) is no and 2) is yes, the GLA will attempt to buy ~1,000 EG for stocking in 2014 and every other year thereafter, if results (survival, growth, harvest) from the 2012 DNR stocking are positive.

We need your help to get that information. If you catch one or more walleye of any size in Gilmore Lake this year, please contact me at 715-466-4198 or jney@vt.edu. Perhaps we can convince the DNR that they were wrong.

MEMBERSHIP/COMMUNICATIONS

By Barb Robinson

Last year, 2013, was a difficult year because most people don't *think* about their lake properties unless they *use* their lake properties. The high water early in the season, obviously kept down the lake hoppers but it also prevented people from putting their various toys into the water. Having said that, we finished at our target of 100 paid members (actually 103)!

This year to date we have 33 paid members. Right after the fall newsletter came out we had several people send in their membership fees along with a total of \$225 for the walleye-stocking fund. There is more information on the walleye stocking program in this newsletter and on our website.

The response to the Up North Updates is very positive. I try to be timely in my information. If you have not received an Update this year (there have been two), email me at: ribaldness@gmail.com. I may not have your correct email address. If you do not wish to receive further Updates, please let me know as well. If you have a question about the lake, check out the website. I think as more people come up to open their cabins they are going to realize that some of their stuff has floated away. Russ is going to post lost and found again. A side note is to put your name on your beach stuff, including pier sections, boats, and floats – everything that you store at lake side. We are back to normal lake levels which means fluctuating water levels. The lake level you see when you leave on Sunday night may change drastically later in the week.

If you are not a member but would like to join, there is a membership form on the back of this newsletter.

FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

By Fran McCloskey

The Fundraising Committee has been making plans to host a Gilmore Lake Rummage Sale Day this summer on Saturday July 19. The format will be different from our past GLA rummage sales. This year GLA members will host individual sales at their homes. We ask that you share a portion of your profits with GLA (10% is requested, and you are welcome to give more, if you wish). GLA will provide signage and put up fliers in town to generate interest. More information will be available at the Annual Meeting on June 28. If you have any questions on the GLA Rummage Sale Day, contact Tom Bergemann at bergemannt@gmail.com.

We are continuing our efforts to sell advertising in this newsletter, which benefits our association and the merchants that place ads with us. If you know of a business that we should contact for placing an advertisement, please let Fran McCloskey know (fran@fa-LLC.com or 612-581-7121.). This effort provides income of \$400.00 per year. Please support our advertisers with your business.

The fundraising committee is grateful for all of your donations that you include with the renewal of your GLA membership. We are moving ahead with a walleye stocking program, and any donations toward that effort are appreciated.

Anyone interested in joining our committee or helping with selling ads or promoting the rummage sale please let Fran McCloskey know.

Have a great summer!

ANNUAL NORTHWEST LAKES CONFERENCE

This year it will be held on June 20 at Drummond High School from 8am to 3pm. A continental breakfast will be available at 8am and a lunch will be available at 11:45am. There will be three sessions with various topics covered in each session. Our own Dr. Ney will do a presentation in the afternoon session on "Loving a Lake to Death". You can register online at www.wisconsinlakes.org. The cost of registration is \$35 and includes the breakfast and lunch. If you would like more information, contact: John Haack at: john.haack@ces.uwex.edu.

IN MEMORIAM

The past winter saw the loss of two of the Gilmore Lake Association's founding members, Jim Holmes and Lois Casey. Jim Holmes carried on a family tradition as the Holmes' family cabin has been in the family for over 100 years. Jim served as president of our lake association for many years and after leaving that position continued to prepare the brats for the annual picnic. He is also remembered by his Korean War bronze star and awards for his work with the Boy Scouts and the Shriners.

Lois Casey was also an active member of the lake association. While her husband was at the front during the annual meeting in his position as treasurer, Lois was always bustling around in the kitchen helping to prepare and clean up. Lois planted a large garden at their lake home and enjoyed the steady stream of deer, bears, and birds to be seen from their deck. She could be seen bicycling the roads around the lake and canoeing on the lake or just sitting on their point at the north end of the lake watching sunsets.

IMPORTANT MED INFO!!!

If you are on prescription medications would anyone know what they are if you couldn't communicate to the attending medical help? Having them on a list at home is great but that won't help if you are in a situation where you are in an emergency situation. The medical personnel need to know what you are taking in case they have to administer emergency medications. These medications might be counter indicated to what you are taking. The solution is easy – ***carry the list in your wallet***. The list should have the name, dosage, and frequency of the medication. You should also carry a list for your partner. The other things in this category are a list of allergies to certain drugs and to things like bees.

Editor's note: The following two pages are provided by the Minong Town Lakes Committee. If you would like more information about this committee, go to their website at: www.minonglakes.org.

MINONG TOWN LAKES FAIR - JULY 26

By Laurie Johnson

The 3rd hosting of the highly successful Minong Town Lakes Fair will be on Sat., July 26, 2014, from 9:00 -3:00 at the Town Hall grounds. The theme for this year will be plant life in and around the lakes. There will be a series of presentations in the new pavilion about plant diversity, shoreline health, wild rice, and fire protection. These will lead up to the keynote speaker, Susan Knight (U. of W.), talking about "The Good Plants".

The Fair will have ongoing educational kid's activities, a FREE lunch, interesting exhibiter's displays, and local vendors' booths. You'll be able to see a live owl up close, learn how to become a loon ranger, and more! There will also be a 50-50 raffle with great prizes awarded at the end of the pavilion presentations.

Feedback from the previous Fairs indicates that anyone in the area on July 26 would experience a day of fun, education, and value by planning to attend!

This Educational Fair is made possible by major financial support from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Realtors Association of Northwestern Wisconsin, along with contributions from local businesses. We rely entirely on volunteer help and encourage you to contact Barb Robinson at: ribaldness@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out.

Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC)

By Russ Robinson, Chair

It is hard to believe that this committee has been in existence for nearly seven years. We began with the idea that a group of volunteers could help guide the town of Minong on matters related to the area lakes. Our interest was primarily on educating residents on the importance of our lakes, aesthetically, economically and as a legacy to future generations. We also believed it was important to actively protect the value and quality of these resources, not just for lake property owners, but for all of the Minong residents.

Looking back on these seven years, I realize a lot has been accomplished and yet a lot remains to be done. We have held a number of educational seminars for area residents,. This year we will sponsor our third free educational fair on July 26th. Previously we had hired an environmental company to survey five of our "at risk" lakes and to recommend actions to preserve their quality and protect them from exposure to Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Beginning last year we began boat inspections at Minong area launch ramps to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS such as Eurasian Watermilfoil, zebra mussels and Asian Carp. All of these efforts have been primarily paid for by grants, fund raising, contributions and donations.

It is obvious that these actions benefit lake property owners. What is maybe less obvious, is how valuable the MTLC efforts have been to all town residents. Property taxes contribute the majority of income to the Town of Minong, the Northwood school system, and strongly support the police, fire and emergency medical services we all enjoy. The quality of our road system and their maintenance is directly related to the amount of property tax collected.

The Town of Minong is unique in Washburn County in that we depend heavily on the residential properties surrounding our large number of lakes to provide tax support for our public services with very few commercial/business's entities to share our tax burden. A few years ago the assessor's office calculated that approximately 80% of the Town's property tax was generated by lake properties. Many of these properties are owned by seasonal residents who are paying taxes but using little of the Town-provided services, and whose children are not enrolled in the Northwood school system, a real benefit to all town residents.

The value of the lake properties and the tax income they generate will only be maintained as long as the value and quality of the lakes are maintained. If we ignore the problems our lakes face with increased development

MTLC continued from page 5

and utilization, and their water quality declines, the value of lake properties and the tax income they provide to our town, our schools, our county, and our state will also decline. Should our lake property tax base decrease, the end result is a tax increase for non-lake residents and services may suffer from lack of adequate funding. That is an outcome that none of us as, Town of Minong residents, permanent and seasonal, would like to see happen and is the primary reason that the MTLC was formed.

I'd like to direct my final comments to rumors and misinformation that has been spread about our organization. Some very misinformed residents have stated that the Town of Minong had provided us with \$24,000 in funds in 2013, and furthermore the Town is building a pavilion that MTLC has requested. Both of these rumors are total fabrications and misleading. The \$24,000 was a short term loan made to MTLC to cover operational costs of the boat inspection program until reimbursed from the Wisconsin DNR grant money was received. This loan was repaid in full in September 2013, as promised. During the last few years, the MTLC has been awarded more than \$100,000 in grant money to support our projects. Most of that money has been used to pay local residents for boat inspecting efforts, providing materials and services for educational events, and improving access to some of our lakes with new docks. I know of no other volunteer organization that has been so successful at bringing additional income to the Town without relying on taxation of its residents.

The pavilion project was proposed by the Town Chairman at the 2013 annual meeting, and town residents in attendance approved it. The pavilion is available for use by all town residents. The MTLC organization had nothing to do with the proposal to build the pavilion or approval of its construction. I personally think the pavilion is a worthwhile investment for all town residents, but that is my opinion and not that of the MTLC.

Finally I would like to ask for your support of the Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC). We are always looking for additional members and volunteers whether they live on a lake or not, or are fulltime or seasonal residents. Monetary contributions are cheerfully accepted and recognized. What is not needed are rumors and misinformation which hurt an organization that is doing so much to help all the residents and property owners of the Town of Minong. To learn more about the MTLC go to: www.minonglakes.org .

THE DAM PROBLEM . . . IS FIXED!

by Jeanne Brown

(Information from MFA on 03/03/2014)

In November the contractor was testing the mud gate, a routine part of the repairs on the Minong Flowage dam, and the gate stuck in the open position allowing water to flow downstream at a rapid rate. Fortunately, after just a day, the gate was closed once again. Until the problem was fixed, the refilling of the Minong Flowage was halted.

Repairs are completed and the mud gate was successfully tested the morning of February 25th. At a meeting including representatives from the WDNR, Minong Flowage Association (MFA), Washburn County Highway Department, Washburn County Board, Wascott Town Board, Staab Construction, Ayers Associates, and the St. Croix Tribal Council, all in attendance agreed the refill should proceed immediately under the conditions specified by the WDNR. Those conditions include the requirement to maintain a specified water level downstream from the dam, and the posting of signs on the Flowage and public notices warning everyone the refill is underway and that ice conditions on the Flowage could deteriorate as a result of the rising water levels.

It is expected that the refill will initially proceed slowly, given the current flow into the Flowage and the downstream water level requirements specified by the WDNR. Water level increases will likely be in the range of several inches a week until the spring thaw. Given the amount of snow we have, once the spring thaw and ice-out event proceeds, the rate of refill will increase significantly. Depending upon the refill rate we experience and the amount of spring runoff that remains, the dam operator may temporarily stop the refill in order to accommodate the remaining runoff. This is consistent with normal years on the Flowage where in late winter the water level may be lowered several inches in anticipation of the spring runoff. We cannot project when the Flowage will be back to normal water levels, as it is entirely dependent upon the type of weather we experience over the next several months, but our expectations are that it will be refilled by ice out or a matter of days after that event.

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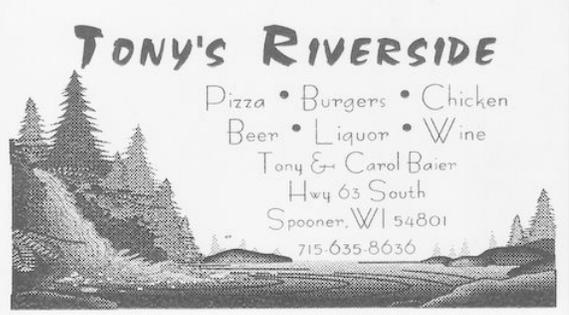
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GILMORE LAKE ASSOCIATION

The Gilmore Lake Association is committed to protecting our lake and your investments through the efforts to control and to treat EWM in our lake. These efforts are both costly and time consuming. By joining the Association, your dues help support this work. Fill out the form below and mail it along with your check or money order for \$25 to:

**Gilmore Lake Association
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Minong WI 54859**

PLEASE SIGN ME UP FOR 2014 MEMBERSHIP IN THE GILMORE LAKE ASSOCIATION!

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