

To preserve and protect Long Lake, its watershed and ecosystems



Long Lake

Preservation Association

Issue 59 • Summer 2016



—Photo courtesy of Joe Thrasher

President's Message

The Rites of Spring are upon us. Cabins are being opened, docks and lifts installed, boats are in the water. The world seems new, all over again.

Some things on Long Lake are new. The dam has been repaired, which will make it much easier for the Washburn County Highway Department to regulate lake levels. A short but important highway improvement at the south end, designed to significantly reduce runoff and erosion, is now complete.

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SUMMER
2016

Cakes at the Lake

& ADDITIONAL EVENTS

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

The Beautiful Bogs of Hunt Hill

WITH HUNT HILL STAFF

What lives in the bogs of Hunt Hill? Learn about this unique ecosystem that is home to beautiful orchids and carnivorous plants.

After the presentation, go explore one of our bogs with Hunt Hill Staff.

SATURDAY, JULY 16

Sandhill Cranes

WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CRANE
FOUNDATION

Cranes are an intriguing group of birds, and science can trace their family to prehistoric times. Come learn about these ancient, amazing creatures.

A special focus will be on cranes native to Wisconsin: the Sandhill Crane and the endangered Whooping Crane.

FRIDAY, JULY 29

Healthy Lakes Workshop

6-7 P.M.

SATURDAY, JULY 30

Ice Cream Social and Silent Auction

REEL'EM INN, 1-3 P.M.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

Beavers

WITH JOHN OLSON, WDNR ECOLOGIST

Learn about nature's engineer, the beaver, with retired DNR Furbearer Ecologist John Olson. Whether you love 'em or hate 'em, you'll walk away from this presentation with new knowledge about these aquatic mammals.

SEPTEMBER 10

Wild Rice: It's History, Harvest, and Wildlife

WITH JOHN HAACK, UW-EXTENSION

This tall plant that grows in water provided nutritious food for humans in the Upper Midwest for the past 2,500 years or more.

UW-Extension's John Haack will discuss the growth, harvesting, and processing of wild rice as well as the cultural and historical importance of this fascinating plant known to the Ojibwa as manoomin (the good berry).

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President's Message continued

And, while not visible, LLPA is implementing a new and technologically assisted method of tracking and communicating with members. If we are advised of a change of address, that change will happen within days if not hours. All membership checks will be deposited at the latest within one week of receipt, usually sooner. Expect more, but not excessive, email communications from the Board. And remember, we share membership lists and email addresses with no one. Only a few Board members can access the list, and fewer still make changes. We maintain enough redundancy to assure efficiency, but not more.

For those of you who have requested that newsletters be delivered in electronic form only, please be patient. We are updating membership management first; mailing lists, not the same thing, and electronic distribution of literature, come later.

Meanwhile, the usual LLPA summer activities will continue. There will be Clean Boats Clean Waters inspectors at landings. At present inspectors are Boy Scouts, whose Troops receive a contribution from LLPA, but we could definitely use volunteer help as well. We endeavor to inspect the entire shoreline of the lake for aquatic invasive species monthly, and could use help there, too. Training is available. If anyone with a journalistic bent would like to work on newsletters and the calendar they will be welcomed with open arms. If interested, please contact me or, better yet, Katie Connolly at Hunt Hill, 715.635.6543, program@hunthill.org.

Cakes at the Lake programs will continue at Hunt Hill, and we think you will find them of great interest. The Ice Cream Social and silent auction will again be held at Reel 'em Inn on July 30—mark the date. Free ice cream is worth taking a little time off the water.

Beyond that, enjoy the summer. We hope to see you on the lake.

—Joe Thrasher

Healthy Lakes

WORKSHOP,
JULY 29TH

On July 29 LLPA, WI DNR and Washburn County Land and Water Conservation Department will co-sponsor a Healthy Lakes Workshop at Hunt Hill from 6 to 7 PM. The presentation will be by well-known UW Extension Regional Natural Resources Educator John Haack, and will concern simple things you can do for water quality, fish and wildlife on your lake—fish habitat, shoreline plantings, rain gardens and more. Funding options for projects on your property will also be discussed, and coffee and refreshments provided. Those of you who have heard John in the past know a most entertaining and informative presentation can be expected.

One source of funding for improvement projects is the DNR Healthy Lakes grant program. Under this program grants are available for up to \$1,000 for each of five identified best practices. These practices include fishsticks, planting of 350 square feet of native species, creating of water diversion structures, rock infiltration drainage to handle runoff and creating rain gardens. To take advantage of the grant program the landowner must agree to maintain the improvement for ten years, and must have a government or lake association sponsor. LLPA, as a recognized lake association, will serve as sponsor of well designed proposals. Grant applications for 2017 projects are due February 1, 2017, so planning should occur this year. For more information on the program visit www.healthylakeswi.com.

Highway MD

STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Many were surprised to find Highway MD closed to traffic in early April, with traffic resuming for the fishing opener. The purpose was to facilitate construction of a stormwater improvement project near the base of Grandview hill, an area prone to washouts and stormwater runoff into the lake. The combination of steep terrain and minimal ditching on the west side of the highway had long contributed to runoff problems, with untreated stormwater, shoulder gravel and sand and salt from roadway maintenance running directly into the lake. That is what the quarter mile project was designed to alleviate.

What is visible is a concrete retaining wall and a collection of large rocks. What is not visible is a complex subterranean filtration system into which surface water is funneled. Runoff points are sharply reduced, and it is anticipated that total suspended solids (TSS) reaching the lake will be reduced by 80 percent.

What has been done thus far is the first of two possible phases of the project. Reduced runoff should reduce erosion problems, but if some persist a second phase of shoreline stabilization may be required. The first phase was supported in part by a grant from the Department of Natural Resources.



— Photo courtesy of Randy Poznansky



Membership Dues: \$25 (Jan. 1, 2016 to Dec. 31, 2016)

Name(s) _____

Home Address _____

City, State, & Zip _____

Lake Address _____

E-mail Address _____

E-mail Address _____

Would Like Newsletter ONLY Electronically _____

Enclosed are my membership dues and gift in support of the Long Lake Preservation Association programs.

- Membership Dues (per household): \$25
- General Operations Fund _____
- Lake Preservation & Land Conservation _____
- Watershed Environmental Monitoring Fund _____
- Memorials & Bequests _____
- Walleye Project Fund _____
- First Responders Fund _____
- Fireworks Donation _____
- Youth Outdoor Education Fund _____
- Additional Calendars # _____ \$10

Enclosed _____

Mail to: LLPA Membership
 PO Box 336 • Birchwood, WI 54817
 Long Lake Preservation Association • Summer 2016

Blue-Green Algae: LAKES HIDDEN POISON

Jay's new dog, Spot, loved being in the water just as much as the couple's other dog, Patches, did. Patches was an energetic 4-year-old spaniel reaching her prime. Jay figured she would've been the perfect dog for last fall's grouse-hunting season. They tried to keep both dogs out of the water during the summer algae bloom, but Patches died last summer from suspected poisoning from blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, as they are known to the scientific community.

Patches died suddenly last August after splashing along the shore of the lake for about 2 hours. She'd been playing with 5-year-old grandson Alex. Not long after the boy took a break from throwing sticks and tennis balls, Patches was not only dead but also as rigid as a bronze statue (story is fictional in names only).

Many dogs in the Midwest have died from suspected blue-green algae poisoning since various agencies started tracking this problem. It's now suspected that this toxic algae is also linked to human illness. Sickness and perhaps even human deaths from blue-green algae are possible. Lake conditions that increase the chances of both occur across the Midwest each summer wherever lake waters grow a pea-green soup, which indicates possible toxins. The reality is: Algal blooms are happening more frequently and are affecting ever more lakes across our northern region.

Warming temperatures plus more intense rains coupled with increased phosphorous loading (pollutants) alters lakes in ways that give blue-green algae a boost. Global warming offers blue-green algae rising temperatures and more opportunities to thrive. A research challenge is that blue-green algae are sometimes, but not always, toxic. Biologists acknowledge they have a ways to go before they fully understand cyanobacteria toxins. A tremendous

amount of knowledge about the exact toxicity of algae is just unfolding. Scientists are analyzing the layers of mud that have been deposited on lake bottoms over time. They do know cyanobacteria are thriving in lakes because of existing high phosphorus levels.

In our northern lakes, blue-green algae thrive best under warm, dry, calm conditions with access to plenty of their favorite foods: phosphorus and nitrogen. Those nutrients exist in lakes naturally, but the human factor has been the major problem. Nutrient levels in our lakes have spiked. Many decades of farming and lakeshore development have allowed leaves, soil and fertilizers to wash into our watersheds. Blue-green algal blooms are especially common in southern lakes where overdevelopment dominates the landscape. A few blue-green algal blooms were blamed for livestock deaths as early as the late 1800s.

Algae have an amazing track record: They were the earliest forms of life on the planet and have outlived trilobites, pteranodons and woolly mammoths. They've adapted to living in just about any condition, from hot springs to crusts on the walls of old buildings. They're not an endangered species.

While global warming likely exacerbates blue-green algae problems, farming, shoreland development, uncontrolled runoff from lawns without buffers, and inadequate riparian sewer systems have been the primary drivers in recent years. This is where we must put our focus. The problem is that this issue is heavily tied up in state politics.

Lake associations work very hard to keep their respective lakes as pollutant-free as possible. They work overtime to educate their respective members so people are alert to toxic dangers and aware of at-the-cabin good stewardship practices, including phosphorus reduction.

This is why your lake association is so important: Good water quality is the best defense against blue-green algae. Become an active LLPA member and a steward of Long Lake. Only you can prevent this threat to our lakes.

—Photos by Marsha Stelzer



Summer time.... and the living is easy.



Loon Nest

Our club, the Rice Lake High School Conservation Club, has been working on many different projects the last few years. We are always looking for new and unique projects in order to keep our club's activities diverse and robust. Our new club president, Hunter Denison, approached the club with an idea of constructing artificial Loon nests. The club thought it was a good idea, upon which Hunter researched construction and costs to make one loon nest. Our club's budget is not large, but we figured that we could make and pay for one artificial nest without breaking our bank. About the same time, Business Professionals of America organization through WITC notified us about a possible donation. I informed their club advisor Scott Elza of our intentions on making a loon nest. Their organization donated \$500 to our conservation club at just the right time. We went shopping for materials to build three nests with the assumption that we should not have any issue giving the nests away to area lake districts.

We had three after school build days which lasted anywhere from 1 to 3 hours long for each day. The nests were assembled and launched by the following Rice Lake High School students and club members: Dylan Doporcyk, Sam Krah, Anakah Denison, Elaine Breed, Hunter Denison, Chris Brogenrief, Luke Flemming, Sawyer Denison, and Adam Nielsen, and Channing Parkman. We launched our first nest on Clearwater Bay on the west side of Rice Lake. The same day, we launched a nest on Long Lake just rowing distance north of Dave's Outboard. Because of busy schedules, we didn't launch the 3rd nest until two weeks later on Lake Montanis.

We would like to thank Barb Sabatke for helping us launch the Long Lake nest and giving us a great education on some of the small but crucial tricks of the trade. (For example...preventing eagles from harassing the nest, keeping geese from occupying the nest before the loons, and making sure the anchor tether doesn't make noise and/or tear during constant wave action). One of our club members confirmed that there were two loons closely investigating the Rice Lake nest less than a week after its launch. Also, thanks Barb for letting us know that the Long Lake nest has occupants! We did not really know what to expect or how successful they would be but so far, 2 out of 3 is a great start for us! If anyone is interested in adopting a nest for next year on other lakes, please let me know next February. I anticipate our club will be interested in doing this again next year!

Please feel free to check us out on our Facebook page! (RLHS Conservation Club).

— *Chris Munden (RLHS Conservation Club Advisor)*



The ANP (artificial nesting platform) was a successful nesting site for a pair of loons this spring, with the addition of two new loon chicks that hatched June 6.



Camp Tomahawk

The flag has been raised as a symbol of readiness, Tomahawk's cabin doors have at last opened. From June 18th - August 20th Scouts from all over our great country will be making the trek to Tomahawk to experience all the great outdoors has to offer. They might take a hike back in time to a historically accurate logging camp, or ride the trails on ATV or horseback, and you might just see a few of them out on Long Lake using our new Blob. The Giant Water Blob is brand new to Tomahawk's aquatics program where the limits of both physics and fun will be tested as Scouts launch one another through the air. We've also started a News Team here at camp. News Team is the latest program here at Tomahawk where Scouts learn the value of qualitative investigative journalism. If you want to check the latest in Tomahawk News you can tune in on your home radio with frequency AM 1610. Anyone who wants to experience for themselves what Tomahawk has to offer, can come visit during our open tour on Sunday July 31st at 2pm. Come and see for yourself why your neighborhood is a destination for over 9000 guests this summer. If you want to learn more about Tomahawk, feel free to check out our website at www.camptomahawk.org, like our facebook page, or simply call us at 715-354-3497.



— Photos courtesy of Brian Halloran

12 STRATEGIES FOR A *Trouble-Free* SEPTIC SYSTEM

When it works, there's nothing to think about. But when something goes wrong, your septic system will be in your every waking thought: no washing dishes, no flushing, no showers. Then, overshadowing all these irritating inconveniences, is the repair bill.

Like all other maintenance items, it's much less expensive to maintain a system than to repair or replace it later. Follow these steps and you shouldn't be plagued by septic system nightmares.

- Put only human waste and moderate amounts of toilet paper down the toilet. Nothing else.
- Limit water usage, as it's the single biggest reason for septic malfunctions. Soil around the septic system absorbs the used water; if the ground is saturated, things will get ugly as the water has nowhere to go. Solutions: spread out loads of laundry over a week, don't allow showers to be taken one after another, install water-saving showerheads and faucet aerators and repair leaking toilets.
- Stay away from septic additives. They won't extend the life of your system, nor will they help you avoid periodic pumping of sludge from your tank.
- Don't use bleach-based cleansers and anti-bacterial products that can destroy the good bacteria needed for your system.
- Use liquid laundry detergents, as powdered detergents may have fillers that contribute to the early demise of your system.
- Don't use a garbage disposal or dispose of vegetables, meat, fat, oil, coffee grounds or similar types of food products in the septic system.
- Reroute the water softener recharge outside of the septic or recharge the water softener as infrequently as possible.
- Don't mess with the mound or drain field. The septic system is buried just below the surface. No activities, no tree planting, no parking on the mound or drainfield. Mowing is fine.
- Direct rainwater away from the mound or drainfield. Downspouts and drainage from roofs and paved areas should flow away from the septic area.
- Ensure your system has inspection ports, preferably ones with a mow-over design. If it doesn't, then have them put in by a licensed installer. Quick checks can catch a problem – such as ponding, sludge levels, pipe integrity – before it turns into a malfunction. Though licensed inspectors usually conduct these checks, rules vary by state: contact your county health department or extension office.
- Have the system pumped regularly – this may be the most important thing you do. In general, pumping every two or three years, will extend the life of your system (depending on the system size and usage).
- Have regularly scheduled inspections. Contact your county health department or extension office for a list of licensed professionals in your area.



Preservation Association

P.O. Box 336

Birchwood, WI 54817

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— Photo courtesy of Joe Thrasher