

To preserve and protect Long Lake, its watershed and ecosystems



Long Lake

Preservation Association

Issue 65 • Fall 2019



— Photo by Joe Thrasher

President's Message

While another summer boating season has come to an end, I hope the ice holds off long enough for us to enjoy a long fall fishing season!

LLPA's primary mission is to preserve and protect Long Lake, it's watershed and ecosystems. In addition, the LLPA works to educate and inform the property owners and those that enjoy Long Lake. To aid in meeting this goal, LLPA has expanded our mailing list beyond members to include all property owners on Long Lake, Mud Lake, Slim Lake, and Slim Lake Flowage! This list consists of approximately 930 residents. We hope you find the information in our newsletter useful!

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President's Message continued

In addition to the spring and fall newsletters, LLPA reaches out to our members through a process called "Constant Contact." Constant Contact is a program that allows the LLPA to send group emails to all members that have provided us with their email addresses. We strive to send out at least one email per month, a page or less in length. Recent subjects covered include swimmers itch, walleye stocking, annual meeting and ice cream social reminders, fall draw-down vote, protecting Long Lake from waste, HGTV on Long Lake, and a decontamination station update. If you have not been receiving Constant Contact emails, please first check your spam inbox as group emails sometimes go directly to spam. If not in your spam inbox, please send us your email address with your LLPA membership form! We share your contact information with no one.

Approximately 85% of the 440 LLPA members have supplied an email address for further communication. If you are unsure if LLPA has your current email address, you can send it to me at rlkrautkramer@gmail.com. If you are not a current member but want to become one, membership forms are available on our website. The web address is www.longlakellpa.org.

In closing, the LLPA board would like to thank all of the helpers and volunteers involved with the Clean Boats, Clean Waters initiative. These individuals put in countless hours on weekends and holidays throughout the summer at the public boat landings to help inform and assist boaters. With the new decontamination stations in place, we know volunteers answered many questions. The LLPA appreciates volunteer efforts to keep invasive species out of Long Lake.

Randy Krautkramer
President – Long Lake Preservation Association.

Helpful Tips for Fall Clean Up / Yard Waste Disposal

What is the best way to dispose of leaves in the fall? Wherever leaves fall, they decompose and restock the soil with nutrients and organic matter. As lake residents, this can be problematic because the nutrients will feed unwanted algae growth next summer. When algae dies it decomposes at the bottom of the lake and uses up oxygen that fish and native plants need. Leaves can nourish our soil, but residents should avoid putting leaves into or near the lake.

Where can I take my leaves? The Long Lake Recycle Site is ½ mile East of the Long Lake dam on Cty Hwy D. They are open on Saturdays from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm.

The Sarona location is the Lake Area Landfill on Cty Hwy D between Sarona and Shell Lake. They are open from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday and one Saturday per month. Plastic bags are not allowed for leaves and only brush less than 6" in diameter and grass are accepted.

Resources: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Wisconsin DNR



YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM AND YOU

Out of sight should not be out of mind!

by Joe Thrasher

Is your lake home or cabin served by a private septic system? For most of our readers it almost certainly is, in most cases by a conventional system consisting of one or more tanks and a drain field. If it is a second home or summer place this may be your only experience with a private system, since even small towns are now almost universally served by municipal waste systems. While we take municipal systems for granted, private systems, like other features of your property, require some regular care and maintenance.

Pump it out! You have seen the “honey wagons” roll by from time to time. Property owners should use area septic services for a septic pump-out at least once every three years. Why? Well, in Washburn County it’s the law, that’s one reason. Washburn County Ordinance Section 74-67 requires that all septic tanks be inspected by a qualified person every three years, and pumped unless inspection shows less than one third of the tank is occupied by sludge or scum.

The underlying reason for this ordinance has to do with how septic systems work. As waste water flows into the tank heavier materials sink and are decomposed by bacteria, forming sludge and gasses. Fats and grease rise and form a layer of scum. Liquid remaining after decomposition flows into the drain field, which is composed of perforated pipe set in gravel. Liquid drains from the pipe and through surrounding gravel and soil where bacteria are filtered out and clean water returns to groundwater. The tank is designed such that the floating scum is trapped and does not enter the drain field.

Over time the bottom sludge and floating scum thicken, reducing the amount of room for water. The bacterial decomposition process takes time. Less room for water means faster pass through, which leaves less time for proper decomposition. This will eventually lead to clogging of the drain field and failure of the entire system to function as designed unless the sludge and scum are periodically removed.

System failure has numerous possible ramifications, none good. Sewage can literally rise to the surface of the ground. Drinking water is at risk, since any home with a private septic system also has a private well nearby. Harmful effects extend beyond the property line; polluted groundwater knows no boundaries. Eventually

inadequately treated nutrients reach the lake, providing fertilizer for algae blooms and other excessive plant growth. For an excellent graphic summary of the effects of system failure, see <https://www.epa.gov/septic/septic-systems-and-surface-water> (be sure to click on “Table”).

Periodic pumping helps avoid system failure, extending the life of the system. Think of it as an ounce of prevention.

Your septic system is not a garbage can.

Non-degradable materials should not be flushed into the system. That includes food waste and even most paper products other than toilet paper. The use of in-sink garbage disposals is discouraged, as chopped up food waste tends to remain suspended in the water which flows into the drain field, where it can clog the perforations. A Wisconsin DNR publication, *Care and Maintenance of Residential Septic Systems* (B3583), recommends that if you must have a garbage disposal the septic tank be twice the otherwise recommended size. The economics of that choice are fairly obvious.

Hazardous household chemicals, unused medications, pesticides and the like should be kept out of the system. Many of these will pass through unaffected by the bacterial process, reaching and contaminating groundwater. In addition some, such as antibiotic medications, will destroy bacteria which are essential to the proper functioning of the system. In short, limit what goes down the toilet to that for which it was intended. Everything else should go in the garbage or recycling bin.

Your system is not indestructible. The drain field is a delicate system lying between the tank and one or more vent pipes sticking up through the ground. Do not park on or even drive over that area. Over time the weight of vehicles can cause soil compaction which hampers system effectiveness. Also, be careful what you plant over the drain field. Typical lawn is fine, but trees and deep rooted shrubs must be avoided or roots will eventually damage the system.

No septic system will function forever, but as presently designed and constructed they can have an extended useful life. Taking care of your system will allow it to serve you, your family and friends far longer!

POSSIBILITIES FOR HIGHWAY M

By Randy Champeau

“So what’s happening with Highway M?” This was a question posed at the 2018 Long Lake Preservation Association (LLPA) annual meeting. Actually it is a question that has circulated within the Long Lake community for at least the last 25 years! As in the past, no clear answer was available for the question so the LLPA requested that board member, Randy Champeau, look into the status of Highway M.

Some background may be appropriate here as to why the long term questions about Highway M have been so common and justified. Most people reading this article know that Hwy M runs parallel to Long Lake on its Western side between Hwy D on the South and Hwy B on the North. Highway M is an old state highway that became a county road; the roadbed along the Lake section is more than 70 years old. The roadbed is deteriorating and not adequate to support existing or future traffic; certain sections of the road are contributing sediments and pollutants directly into Long Lake due to erosion and runoff. Increasing pedestrian and bike traffic are extremely hazardous due to lack of appropriate right of way, crosswalks, and heavy vehicular traffic. Increasing development around the Lake is making existing problems significantly worse.



To get to the question of what is happening with Hwy M a meeting was held with the former Washburn County Highway Commissioner, Frank Scalzo. Mr. Scalzo indicated that Hwy M was a challenge and that each time a plan was developed in the past a Hwy Commissioner would leave before it could be implemented. Even “The Wall” below Grandview was an incomplete effort started by a previous commissioner. Indeed, “The Wall” falls far short of addressing the problems that run the entire length of Hwy M and most importantly some of the other significant trouble spots where Hwy M runs too close to Long Lake. In fact, “The Wall” likely exacerbates some existing problems related to Hwy M.

Mr. Scalzo indicated there were no immediate plans for Hwy M but agreed that all of the problems identified



regarding Hwy M should be remediated and a rebuilding of the road should be pursued. Randy Champeau made a specific request to Mr. Scalzo that the rebuild include: best appropriate erosion control; pedestrian safety; and installation of a hiking/ biking trail. He was entirely supportive of this request but indicated that it would be important to

gain community support and ultimately Washburn County Board support. Funding would be a challenge and he would be retiring within the year.

Since that 2018 meeting with Mr. Scalzo many more meetings were held around the community. In general, there is significant support for addressing the concerns of Hwy M and in particular building a pedestrian/biking trail as “a valuable community development effort”. Because Mr. Scalzo was retiring a Cross-Sector Citizen Committee was established to support a continued effort toward the development of Hwy M. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission has agreed to assist in the development of the Hwy M project and has created a website at <http://www.nwrpc.com/documentcenter/> where you can access the membership of the Hwy M Project Committee and review its draft minutes. The draft Vision of the Committee follows:

Develop and implement an engineering plan for remediating Highway M concerns from the Highway M/D intersection at the South end of the Lake then North to Audubon Road. This would include rebuilding or updating the road with “Best Practices” to alleviate environmental concerns; improve public safety by constructing a pedestrian biking trail with appropriate crosswalks, guardrails, signage, etc., adjacent to the entire length of the Highway M section identified above.

So what’s happening with Hwy M now? Meetings have been held with relevant support agencies, local legislators, and various state and national funding sources have been explored. No specific results have been determined so far. Mr. Scalzo retired midsummer 2019. Randy Champeau, Chair of the Citizen Advisory Committee, met with the new Washburn County Highway Commissioner, Mr. Brian Danielsen, and although only on the job two months,

Mr. Danielsen was quite aware of the Hwy M challenges. In general, he was supportive of remediating the problem but again concerned about the funding and structural challenges of building a pedestrian/biking trail. He said he would like to meet with the Citizen Advisory Committee in the near future to discuss the challenges.

What can you do if you would like to see “Hwy M” become a “Community Asset” rather than a “Community Liability”? One of the Citizen Advisory Committee board members believes the Long Lake community needs to be more active in speaking out about the Hwy M problems and the need for remediation. Also, given the significant tax-base contribution of Long Lake residents it seems well

within reason that the request for a pedestrian/biking trail is justified as a priority from a community development and ultimately a citizen safety perspective. To simply continue patching up Hwy M with all of its obvious problems seem unreasonable.

To voice your concern contact the Chairman of the Washburn County Board of Supervisors, Mr. Thomas Mackie at 715-468-4627; or email him via the Washburn County Clerk at lolson@co.washburn.wi.us; or email Mr. Mackie at tmackie@co.washburn.wi.us; or send letters to Washburn County Board of Supervisors, Attn: Thomas Mackie, P.O. Box 337, Shell Lake, WI 54871.

LLPA MEMBERSHIP OPPOSES FALL DRAWDOWN

The fall drawdown of the lake level was a topic of discussion at the LLPA annual meeting on June 1, 2019 with pre-notification of the discussion being sent out to over 400 Long Lake riparians.

Vice President Randy Poznansky, gave a presentation of the benefits and drawbacks of deliberately lowering the lake level each fall. Fall drawdowns are typically conducted to reduce the possibility of shoreline ice damage, along with providing additional water storage capacity for the spring ice / snow melt.

The water level post drawdown is approximately 7.2” below the mid-season target boating water level. While drawdown provides for a lower water level, it is viewed that Mother Nature has the predominant impact on the possibility of shore line damage based upon the thickness of the ice, density of the ice, wind direction, amount of wind, air temperature, amount of sun and amount of rain; all impacting how the ice melts and where it ends up on the lake.

In relation to reservoir capacity, the LLPA Board was advised by County officials that the dam rebuild of 2015 allows for approximately 1.5” of water to be discharged from the lake within a 24 hour period. Based upon historic lake level data, this is seemingly sufficient to take care of any spring melt-off without causing concern for flooding.

Reasons to **eliminate** the drawdown are many (see www.longlakellpa.org), but are primarily ecological as amphibians and invertebrates that hibernate in the lake bottom may be frozen to death if drawdown follows hibernation. Early fall drawdown can greatly inconvenience property owners who have not yet removed boats and/or lifts.

Scientific studies indicate that some previously stated reasons for drawdown and perceived benefits are outweighed by the detrimental effects of a drawdown. Lengthy reports by most recent 2003 and 2004 UW Stevens Point *State of the Long Lake Watershed* recommended consideration of discontinuing the drawdown, yet it has continued to date. For greater detail see Randy Poznansky’s article in the LLPA “Fall 2018 Newsletter” posted on the LLPA web site at <http://longlakellpa.org/>

Please note, there was not a fall drawdown on Long Lake in the fall 2015 / winter 2016 while the dam was being rebuilt and new updated controls installed. During this time period the water levels were kept consistent with typical boating levels.

Following the presentation at the LLPA annual meeting the topic was opened to general discussion and commentary. Discussion was followed by a show of hands vote where the membership favored **discontinuing** the fall drawdown by a vote of 63-6, or by 91%. Though this message was clear from the membership, the vote is not binding as the LLPA does not control the dam. The dam is under the jurisdiction of the Washburn County Highway Department.

The membership’s 2019 vote was shared with the then Washburn County Highway Commissioner who favored the idea of **eliminating** the drawdown. The Highway Commissioner requested that the LLPA meet with the Town of Long Lake, Town of Birchwood, and Town of Madge boards and survey the majority of the residents.

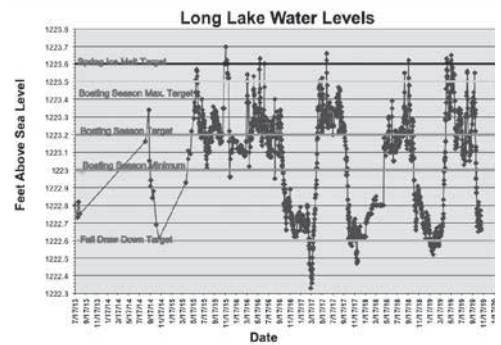
In August 2019 the LLPA made a presentation to the Town Board of Birchwood who unanimously voted in favor

of eliminating the drawdown. In September of 2019 the LLPA made the same presentation to the Town Board of Madge who elected to defer the decision until a board member requests that it be an agenda item on future town board meetings.

In mid September the LLPA requested to be on the agenda for the October 8th Long Lake Town Board meeting and two weeks later we received the following reply, in part, from Mick Givens, the Town Chairman of Long Lake: *“Your message states that Birchwood has approved and Madge has not yet taken any action. I have confirmed with Mike Baker, Madge Town Chairman, that Madge chose to take no action. Since Long Lake took no action on this topic only a year ago and since even a positive action would not meet the County requirements for all three Towns to favor change, I do not intend to place this item on the October agenda.”*

So where does this leave the LLPA initiative and overwhelming membership vote to eliminate the drawdown? Good question. The subject will be brought up at our next board meeting for discussion on next possible steps.

For additional details and updates please check our website. Please see the “News” section on our home page and also the “Lake Info and Maps” section.



Japanese Knotweed: Hopefully not on your property!

By Lisa Burns

Summer is fading and water enthusiasts are slowing their trips to the lakes and rivers. Unfortunately, invasive species don't always slow their trek when the weather becomes cooler. One particular species, Japanese Knotweed, is one to be on the watch for during the next couple of weeks along shorelines, ditches and lawns.

Japanese Knotweed, native in eastern Asia, was once a common ornamental sought for its “green screen” and lilac-like flowers. Now it presents a tremendous threat to Wisconsin's waterways and is listed as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species.

Japanese Knotweed is recognizable by its hollow bamboo-like stem. This time of the year, Japanese Knotweed is fairly easy to identify. Besides the bamboo-like stem, the leaves are alternate, egg shaped, dark green and 4-8” long. Numerous small white flowers will be branching off of the stem until late September. Winter is also a good time of the year to identify Japanese Knotweed, as the stems are rust-colored.

Being a very frost susceptible species, it causes this plant to die back leaving only reddish hollow bamboo like canes above the ground throughout the winter. Unfortunately, the cold winter weather does not kill the plant. With the arrival of spring, Japanese Knotweed begins to grow back from its enormous root system and takes full advantage of the new growing season. During peak growing season, it can grow 2-4 inches per day, reaching a maximum height of 10-20 feet in one growing season.

Its root system can grow 9 feet below ground and expand 60 feet wide. This leads to a decline in native plant growth,

displacing wildlife habitat and food. Homeowners can experience problems, as the invasive root system and strong growth can push up through and damage concrete foundations, buildings, roadsides and retaining walls.

Control of Japanese Knotweed is very difficult once established. It is important to do something immediately if a small population is forming on your property. Even small patches of it rarely take less than a year to eradicate, even with multiple attempts. There are numerous control methods to implement on established sites, including manual/mechanical and herbicide application. Herbicide use over Wisconsin always requires a permit from your regional WDNR Aquatic Plant Manager. Combining both methods allows more options and flexibility.

If you would like more information or would like to report existing infestations of Japanese Knotweed, please contact Lisa Burns at 715-468-4654 or email pictures to lburns@co.washburn.wi.us for confirmation.



Is Long Lake Getting **GREENER** ?

by Joe Thrasher

That question has been posed several times this past summer, particularly with respect to the upper basin (everything North of The Narrows). That is a pretty subjective question, but fortunately there are some statistics which help answer it.

Most years since 1991 LLPA has participated in the Citizens Lake Monitoring Network, which involves volunteers doing various water tests several times each summer. These tests involve sampling for phosphorus and chlorophyll, recording temperature and dissolved oxygen from top to bottom in various locations, and checking water clarity. The latter is done by lowering a round black and white object known as a Secchi disk and recording the maximum depth at which it can be seen. Typically, the greener appearing the water, the less depth it takes to make the disk disappear.

Results of this testing are uploaded to an internet database known as the Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS). To access the Secchi readings for Long Lake, enter "wi clmn" in your browser and click "Citizen Lake Monitoring Reports" (or enter <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn/reportsanddata/>) and then in succession click "Washburn County," then either "Long Lake-Deep Hole/Site A" (upper basin) or "Long Lake-Site E" (lower basin) and finally "Secchi Graph." There you will find both a table and a graph showing the average of readings from July and August, when the water tends to be the greenest.

What is obvious from the data is that there can be significant variation from year to year, and there is

consistently greater water clarity in the lower basin. There are no glaring obvious trend lines in either basin. If we include 2019 July-August averages (not yet online) of 6.0 feet upper and 9.5 feet lower basins, then the upper basin for 2019 is almost exactly at its ten year average. The lower basin was about one half foot below its ten year average, but that is somewhat skewed by the fact that the 2018 reading of 14.25 feet was the best visibility recorded since the program started in 1991.

Why, then, were a number of people questioning whether upper basin water was greener this year? It may be that it came on more rapidly, making it more noticeable ("It didn't look like this last weekend"). Statistically it has changed little in the past ten years.

And why is visibility consistently less in the upper basin? Testing done several years ago showed higher levels of naturally occurring phosphorus in the groundwater which surrounds and feeds the upper basin. Phosphorus is a nutrient on which algae thrives, and its presence is the likely explanation. While not much can be done about this, it is all the more reason to follow best shoreland practices to curb runoff of nutrients.

Water clarity is not the only factor in determining lake health. Clarity is the most visible factor, the one which most immediately impacts our enjoyment of the lake. We can all play a part in preserving clarity by controlling nutrient runoff into the lake.

Cakes at the Lake Recap

by Sage Dunham

Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary had another successful Cakes at the Lake season this summer. The new Richard Grand Recreation Hall was opened in June, just in time for Cakes at the Lake! The new building features many technology upgrades, including a built-in speaker system, projector and screen. The building also includes space for up to 200 people, restrooms and air conditioning, which makes the programs much more comfortable for our guests!

Each of the four Cakes at the Lake events in 2019 had over 150 people in attendance, with our July Cakes at the Lake reaching 190 people! Guest speakers included Chris Cold of the WI DNR who spoke to us about amphibians, Jim Schiebert of Beaver Creek Reserve who taught about butterflies, Stan Tekeila who enlightened us about the uncommon facts about common birds, and John Haack who shared information about wild rice.

Feeding and entertaining the masses takes a lot of help! If you attended the events, you probably noticed that the kitchen was alive with the singing and chatter of our summer staff and all of the volunteers who helped flip pancakes, cook sausage, refill drinks, chop fruit, wipe down tables, and wash dishes. Volunteers from the LLPA helped keep the parking lots safe and organized by directing cars. We are thankful to all of the volunteers that helped to make these events successful!

Hunt Hill is already preparing for the 2020 Cakes at the Lake season! The dates for next year are as follows: June 13, June 27, July 11, August 8, and August 22. Topics and presenters will be announced on our website in www.HuntHill.org in January of 2020!



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2019 Hunt Hill Updates

* Hunt Hill hosted over 1,800 students for field trips in the spring and fall of 2019. Students came from near and far. Participating schools included: Shell Lake, Haugen, Birchwood, Rice Lake, Eau Claire, and St. Croix Falls.

* In June, Hunt Hill reached our Million Dollar Match goal! Thanks to over 750 individuals, businesses and organizations, Dave and Carolyn Cleveland matched our funds and Hunt Hill now has a \$2 million endowment. Up to four percent of the endowment earnings can be used to support the camp.

* Thanks to a donation by Marcia Grand, Hunt Hill completed the remodel of the garage, and in June officially opened the Richard Grand Recreation Hall. The building includes a warming kitchen, multimedia equipment, HVAC, and can be divided into 3 classrooms. In addition, the updated space can be used year round!



* Thanks to Washburn County Land and Water and the WI DNR, Hunt Hill was able to install 2 rain gardens, a waterway, and a new path through the camp!

* Hunt Hill held a party for Maintenance Man, Larry Piskie, as a thank you for his 20 years of service. Larry is the longest-employed employee of the Friends of Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary, which incorporated in 1989.



* As co-beneficiaries of the Taste of Washburn County Gala, Hunt Hill was able to install phase one of our trail signage. Phase two will be completed in the spring of 2020 and will include trailhead signs and 'you are here' signs along the trails.