To preserve and protect Long Lake, its watershed and ecosystems

Long Lake Preservation Association

Issue 60 • Winter 2017

—Photo by Eugene Romsos

President's Message

Welcome to winter! Dwell not on the sub-zero readings of the thermometer, but the brilliance of the February sun, the blazing of the stars at night and the singing of the forming ice. It will pass soon enough.

Because we occasionally encounter some confusion on this issue, I would like to talk to you about what the LLPA is-and what it isn't. It is a private, non-profit corporation formed under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes. "Private" does not mean it is owned by someone; it is "owned" only by its members. Rather, it means it is non-governmental. It is what is known as a qualified lake association, but that merely means its By-laws meet

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Cakes at the Lake

& Additional Events

Summer 2017

Saturday, May 20

Prairie Fling
with Hunt Hill Staff

The festival features horse-drawn wagon rides, local food, vendors, community groups, kids activities, live music, petting zoo, nature programs and a special ribbon cutting ceremony. Event runs from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 3

LLPA Annual Meeting
Camp Tomahawk Main Lodge
Annual Election

Speakers TBD

Saturday, June 10

Cakes at the Lake
Loons with Barb Sabatke, Long Lake Loon Ranger

Saturday, June 24

Cakes at the Lake
Songs & Stories of the Water with Ben Weaver

Saturday, July 15

Cakes at the Lake
Snake, Rattle & Roll with Emily Roberts, Snake Discovery

Saturday, August 12

Cakes at the Lake
Bats with Brian Herringa, US Forest Service

Saturday, September 9

Cakes at the Lake
Astronomy with Mike Brown, Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society

President's Message continued

DNR standards for applying for certain grants. And it is tax exempt under section 501 C (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The point is, LLPA is in no way, shape or form a governmental agency. There are lake associations, and there are lake districts. Lake districts are governmental, and have the power of taxation. The district which includes the City of Rice Lake is a good local example. We are not that. We are merely an incorporated (necessary for tax exemption) group of lake or near lake owners, now exceeding 400 households, who agree with the mission "to preserve and protect Long Lake, its watershed and ecosystems."

How does LLPA pursue that mission? Not by law enforcement-it has absolutely no enforcement power, a fact which I feel is not always clearly understood. We cannot enforce zoning laws, DNR regulations, lighting ordinances or any other rule or regulation. The LLPA board does not mind receiving inquiries or complaints, and we will certainly refer people to the proper authority, but we can take no official action. Or, as was well put by past president and current county board member David Haessig, we are the LLPA, not the LLPD. And please understand this- we DO NOT REGULATE LAKE LEVELS. A committee of the LLPA board has formulated some suggestions on that subject, which are continually evolving, but decisions on lake levels are made entirely by Washburn County, owner of the dam.

What we can do is educate, trying to convince people that land use regulations exist for a purpose, and, going beyond regulation, that good lakeshore management practices do matter. Not mowing to the lakeshore DOES make a difference. Having a well functioning septic system DOES make a difference. For instance, a 2011 survey of all aquatic plant life in Long Lake found several areas of filamentous algae-the gooey, slimy, stringy green stuff. Nearly all of it was in front of buildings where good lakeshore practices were not being followed.

So if you feel a neighbor is doing something harmful to the lake, can you contact us? Of course. But a better approach might be to talk to your neighbor. No one wants to harm the lake, but many, especially newcomers, do not have the background knowledge to know the difference between good and not so good practices. If educational materials may be helpful, any board member will get them for you. Just ask.

And for now, until we can get in, not just on, the water, stay warm!

—Joe Thrasher
President, LLPA

Silent Auction 2016 Business and Donation

Reel 'Em Inn
Village Dell and Wine
Dave's Outboard
Eastside Campground
Northwoods Country Store
Kitchen Kleen Potatoes
Rockford House
The Hive
Butternut Hills Golf Course
Dahl's Home Store
The Roost
Lincolnwood Resort
Long Lake Bait and Tackle
DHH Designs
Sunset Resort
Joe Thrasher
Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary
Perlick Distillery

Zebra Mussels

On October 20, 2016, a property owner on Big McKenzie Lake, which straddles the Burnett-Washburn County line, found two zebra mussels on a dock leg. When notified, DNR personnel responded, finding one more on a nearby water intake. A week later, after inspecting several hundred docks and lifts, six more specimens were found on a boatlift some distance away. All were determined to be at most one year old.

Zebra mussels are an invasive species, likely brought in larval form from inland fresh water Eurasian ports in the ballast water of seagoing cargo ships in the late 1980's. Named for their striped shell, they can be as large as 50 mm (1.9 inches) but are typically smaller, about finger nail size. They tend to cluster, attaching themselves to solid objects such as docks, boat hulls and motors, rocks and the shells of native mussels. They have sharp edges and when washing ashore by the thousands pose a risk of cuts to waders. They clog municipal water intakes. Perhaps worst of all, they feed voraciously on the microscopic plants and animals which form the base of the aquatic food chain, depriving native species of that food source. They filter feed so efficiently-up to a liter of water per day per individual-that water may actually clear after the invasion, but that apparent benefit may be short lived as increased water clarity can result in excessive plant growth.

Zebra mussels are prolific. A single female can lay up to 40,000 eggs per reproductive cycle, or one million per spawning season. While only two to five percent survive, that still supports a rapid population growth. The larvae which hatch are microscopic in size, so cannot be visually detected. They can be transported from lake to lake attached to boats or trailers (they can live out of water for several days in cool conditions), which makes careful inspection when leaving a lake essential. But because the larvae cannot be seen, draining all lake water when leaving a landing is critical.

LLPA will muster all resources it can to continue Clean Boats Clean Waters inspections at Long Lake landings, but complete coverage is impossible, and ultimately it is up to you to stop the spread of invasive species. Inspect carefully for attached plants and animals whenever entering or leaving a landing, and never, never transport water from one water body to another. The health of the lake depends on it.

—Joe Thrasher

Long Lake
Preservation Association
Membership Form

Membership Dues: $25 (Jan. 1, 2017 to Dec. 31, 2017)

Name(s) _____

Home Address _____

City, State, & Zip _____

Lake Address _____

E-mail Address _____

E-mail Address _____

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 # _____ $10.00 each

Enclosed _____

Mail to: LLPA Membership
PO Box 336 • Birchwood, WI 54817

2015 FISHERY SURVEY

— Photo by Joe Thrasher

The results of an extensive survey of the Long Lake fishery by Wisconsin DNR in 2015 are now available. According to Craig Roberts, DNR Fisheries Biologist for Burnett and Washburn Counties, the survey started with netting of northerns in Mud Lake, progressing to Long Lake as the ice receded. That was followed by electrofishing (shocking) the entire shoreline for walleye, with subsequent shocking for bass and panfish. Data was also collected from a bass tournament, and a creel survey was conducted throughout the open water and ice fishing seasons.

With respect to walleyes, the survey revealed the adult population having increased since a 2009 survey, standing at 2.6 fish per acre. Typical sizes were larger, and the population of near legal fish has also increased. Walleye growth in Long Lake is faster than the regional average, but natural reproduction tends to be low, with sporadic good years.

In the fall of 2014 approximately 34,000 walleye fingerlings were planted in Long Lake, and electrofishing showed the one-year-old population to be well increased, indicating the plant was successful. While in the past plantings of 2 to 4 inch fish had poor survival rates, this planting was of fish not less than 6 inches, with a much better outcome. Another planting of about 34,000 walleye fingerlings took place in October. These fish have a clipped fin, so they can be distinguished from naturally spawned fish in future surveys.

Of other species, the size of northern pike has increased. The growth of bass, largemouth and smallmouth has increased since removal of size limits in 2006. The reason is that, as more fish are taken by anglers, more space is available to sustain growth of the rest of the population. Crappie growth is above regional average, and a very good population of 2 year old fish indicates good fishing days to come.

While the survey results as a whole are quite good, the creel survey did show that fishing pressure is higher on Long Lake than in the rest of Washburn County. For now at least the 18 inch limit on walleye will remain in place, and no changes in the regulations on pike, bass and panfish are anticipated.

While the near term outlook for walleyes seems good, in the longer term that may not be the case throughout Wisconsin. In an article recently published in the scientific journal Global Change Biology researchers predicted that, based on various models of anticipated climate warming, bass will overtake walleye populations throughout much of the state. By late in the 21st century as few as 3.3 to 4 per cent of Wisconsin lakes may be conducive to natural walleye success, with most present day walleye lakes giving way to bass populations which favor warmer water. The article did note that it was based on a near worst case scenario of climate warming because "management plans that are robust to high-end warming will likely be robust to less extreme futures," or, as the lead author was quoted in the Pioneer Press as saying, "a lot of people argue for using worst-case scenarios because if you plan for that and things are less severe, then you're better off."

— Joe Thrasher

TOWN OF LONG LAKE
Delays Action on Deteriorating Bays

Holy Island Bays - Circa 1920's

Holy Island Bays - August 2014

Over a 13 month period beginning in 2015 and continuing into 2016 numerous meetings and presentations were made to Town of Long Lake officials sharing detailed evidence regarding the deterioration of the two bays on either side of Holy Island.

Following multiple site visits with Town, County, WDNR and Contech Engineering representatives, local citizens appealed to the Town of Long Lake to take corrective action to stop and potentially partially reverse the effects of reduced water flow on either side of Holy Island resulting from the installation of two undersized culverts. These culverts were installed decades ago as a replacement for the two separate bridges that existed, the first being from the mainland to Purgatory Island and the second from Purgatory Island to Holy Island.

Backed by a resolution from the Long Lake Preservation Association Board which recognized this as an issue for the lake, the LLPA passed a motion fully endorsing the concept of replacing the undersized, inadequate culverts with two bottomless archway structures. This proposal detailed the methodology and costs to increase the water flow to approximate what was there before the bridges were removed.

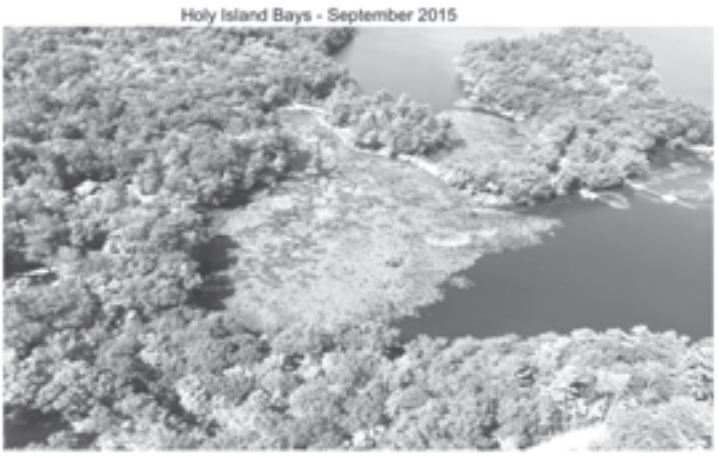
The larger structure between the two Islands would increase the "end opening" of the existing culvert from 28.2 sq. ft. to 124.8 sq. ft. (343% increase), be wide enough (16′ 10″) and tall enough (5′ clearance from the surface water to the center underside of the bridge) to allow fishing boats to pass. This would encourage boat traffic in that area assisting in keeping the weeds down and water flow up.

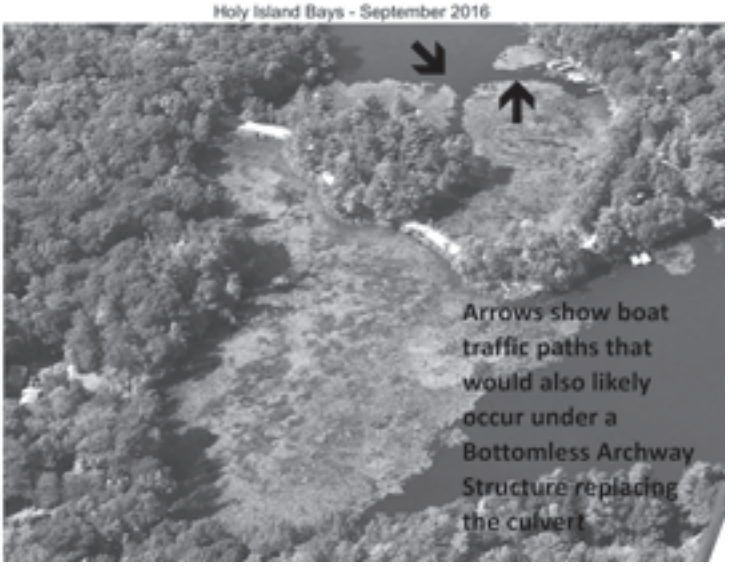
The other smaller culvert between the mainland and Purgatory Island would also be replaced with a bottomless culvert increasing the existing "end opening" from 15.9 sq. ft. to 27.4 sq. ft., a 72% increase.

Even a decades old memoir from a Holy Island elder recognized this as an issue for the lake. Quote: "Gradually the earthen approaches were extended and culverts were put in place (which seem to get smaller every now and then). Since the 1960's the sharply reduced circulation of the water has been followed by the encroaching vegetation and I wonder, hopefully, if a group of environmentalists will rise up in time to reverse the process".

The total cost of the project was estimated to be about $80,000 with the County assuming 50% of the cost through available grant monies for bottomless archway structures. It was felt that some portion of the remaining $40,000 cost to the Town could be reduced by other state grant money designated for these types of environmentally corrective projects.

After two meetings with the Town Planning Commission the proposal was cleared to go to the Town Board for review. Initially the project cost was determined as the reason to not take any action but when the Town board was solicited for a decision to proceed with the project it reached out to the Washburn County Highway Department to evaluate the condition of the culverts, which were ultimately determined to have many years of life in them in spite of being installed





— Photos by Randy Poznansky

about 50 years ago. At the June 2016 Town Board meeting the Town then indicated that the narrowness of Holy Island Road was an issue that needed to be addressed before any work was done on the culverts.

No time line was given for further review of the culvert replacement proposal but it is probable that without boat traffic the bays will continue to fill in with vegetation. While replacement of the larger culvert with a bridge would require road work in the immediate vicinity, many residents feel that any other widening of Holy Island Road presents a separate issue.

— Randy Poznansky

POINT INTERCEPT SURVEY

If late last summer you thought you saw two men in a large john boat, one pulling lake plants with a rake and another entering data into a computer, relax, you really did. They were Matt Berg of Endangered Resource Services of St. Croix Falls, and an assistant, performing what is known as a point intercept survey on behalf of LLPA. This involves sampling for and identifying aquatic plants at 2,140 locations, chosen by DNR and based on a formula taking into account lake size, shape and depth, islands and water clarity.

A point intercept survey does more than just identify plants. It is the base for calculating several measures of lake health, such as Simpson's Diversity Index (SDI) and the Floristic Quality Index (FQI). The SDI is the probability that any two plants chosen at random will represent different species. The higher the probability the greater the plant diversity in the lake, which is desirable. The FQI is designed to measure the impact of human development on the lake. Some species of plants are more sensitive to developmental disruption than others, and have been classified into ten levels of sensitivity ("Coefficient of Conservatism" in scientific jargon). The average of these levels present in the lake is used to calculate the index number. The more prevalent the sensitive species the better.

A single point intercept survey is a snapshot in time, indicating lake health at the time it was performed. It was first done on Long Lake in 2011. At that time both the SDI and FQI were above the average for our region. That notwithstanding, it was reported that filamentous algae, an indicator of excessive nutrients in the lake, was found at 18% of the sampling points which had vegetation, mostly in front of residences which had not implemented good shoreline practices (not mowing to the water's edge, planting buffer strips, using rain gardens, etc.).

A repeat survey does more; it is performed to detect any changes in lake health. While we do not yet have a final report of the 2016 survey, we are confidant that no new invasives (we have had Curly-leaf pondweed for some years) were found. More details will be in the next newsletter.

— Joe Thrasher

Long Lake
Preservation Association
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— Photo by Joe Thrasher