

SENTINEL Summer 2005

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Merilee Meyers

The loons are back, baby robins are screaming for food and the spring peepers are calling themselves hoarse. Foliage is lush, mosquitoes and ticks are hungry and flowers are starting to bloom. But . . . to exercise a bit of poetic license, "Spring has sprung, the grass is riz, I wonder where the sunshine is!"

It has been a long and chilly spring, with flashes of warmth and buckets of water. The flowers may be a bit reluctant, not so for the grass. We laid some sod in October last year which is growing quite nicely, thank you very much. Ditto the dandelions and poison ivy.

As most of you know several of us have been active in monitoring our lake for nutrients and clarity. Last year we had some interesting experiences in our pontoon boat and its electric trolling motor and gale force winds. We are again monitoring this year but our mode of transportation has improved. As Chuck continues to work in Southern California, we decided to buy a "real" motor for our pontoon.

Well, we set out to buy a motor and, lo and behold! We brought home our new motor attached to a new pontoon boat. My father is surely rolling in his grave!

Welcome back to all our summer residents. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fourth of July parade. This year we will finally be able to 'round the point, thanks to our new motor!

The annual meeting this year will be August 14, 1:00 pm at the home of Jay and Jane Johnson. Please attend this meeting as this is the time for everyone to express their thoughts, ideas and concerns regarding our lake. This year, in addition to the wonderful conviviality of the day, we will explore the "whys" and "how to" of shoreline restoration.

TID-BITS by SANDY

I'm back--did you miss me?!

Early ice out on our lake--April 13th--and the loons were there soon after.

Frank Nelson from Hilltop Road passed away in April. Our condolences to his wife, Helen and their family. Frank and Helen were faithful members of the Association and he will be missed. Lynne Holt returned from Chicago where she helped to place her mother in an assisted living facility. It took her weeks to empty out the home her mother lived in for 37 years. That should be a lesson for us all! The Bradford/Custodi home on Marcella Drive sold to Petersons from Grand Forks. Becky Chakov spent two weeks visiting her son in Florida and celebrating her 80th birthday. Izzy celebrated #85 last December. Both are remarkable! Fred and Pat Pick have been seen planting, planting, planting those Christmas trees. I understand they'll be for sale this year, so you won't have to go far to get a beautiful tress. George and Diane Winter spent a month traveling around New Zealand last winter. They had a great time and if you have 8-10 hours to spare, Diane has a 'few' pictures to show you. Graceful George fell and twisted his knee and when he returned it was necessary to have some major repair work. He was in a full leg cast for weeks and is now in Physical Therapy. George says it pays to marry a woman 15 years younger so she can push the wheelchair! Ken and Lis Awsumb are back volunteering at the hospital after their month in Florida. You'll probably see them out swimming before long. Another set of 80+ remarkable couples. Denny and Dorothy Kaatz are full time Long Lakers now that they have both retired. Any tid-bits for next newsletter...call Sandy Johnson @ 586-2969.

CARPE NOTCEM--SEIZE THE NIGHT!

Light pollution is defined as: "Glare, light trespass and "up" lighting contributing to sky glow by unshielded, misplaced, excessive or unnecessary outdoor lighting."*

Over the years, as development has occurred on Long Lake and the surrounding area, light pollution has become a significant problem and concern to lake residents. One once was able to stand on the dock and be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the cosmos. Now, light pollution from the city of Bemidji is trespassing on our night sky. The western sky has a dull red glow every night all year long. Horizon stars and planets disappear long before their natural setting.

Light pollution on our lake has also increased with the use of Mercury vapor and such equivalent lighting. Most of us want to look across the lake to a darkened silhouette of conifers and deciduous trees and undiminished sunrise or sunset. What we tend to forget is that there are people living across the lake who desire the same outlook.

A good general rule of thumb to follow is: if your yard light is reflected in the water in front of your place, then people across the lake can see the light and are affected by it.

By eliminating light pollution, we can conserve energy, reduce glare, maintain our desirable community character, safeguard our wildlife in their natural environment and restore our view of the starry night sky* Van Gogh had it right.

Nocturnal creatures at the Minnesota Zoo are kept in darkened cages so as to be active during the hours visitors enjoy the zoo. Nocturnal animals deprived of their night will migrate to more hospitable habitats. Bats eat mosquitoes. Bats are active at night. In the grand scheme of life, is a brightly illuminated yard all that important? Please consider our wildlife and your neighbors. If you have a light reflecting off the water during leaf-out conditions, please consider moving it back or removing it altogether. All your neighbors will thank you.*Excerpted from the Dark Sky Society website

SHORELAND BMP'S

Best management practices (BMP's) are actions you can take to reduce your impact on the environment. This issue and future issues of the Long Lake Newsletter will describe various BMP's you can adopt on your shoreland property to help protect and preserve water quality. In many cases, the best management for shorelands may be retaining the natural characteristics of your property. These ideas are taken from the Minnesota Extension Service Shoreland Best Management Practices newsletter.

Establish Filter Strips

Filter strips are vegetated areas of land adjacent to shorelines that help minimize runoff to a lake or stream. The most effective filter strips include a variety of low plants, shrubs, and trees, preferably native or existing vegetation. In Minnesota, filter strips of 50-100 feet are recommended for most effective water quality protection. Re-establishing vegetative strips along the shore on property that has been developed is recommended because a filter strip of even a few feet will help minimize runoff and provide some water quality protection.

Plant New or Retain Existing Shoreland Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs are an excellent inexpensive and attractive way to control runoff and erosion. Roots hold soil and help stabilize slopes by trapping and using precipitation that would otherwise run off. They increase soil porosity, allowing water to infiltrate rather than run off. Vegetation helps protect water quality by filtering out nutrients and pesticides that could otherwise reach the lake and cause algae blooms or excessive plant growth. Retaining natural vegetation (existing trees and shrubs) is "best," because it is adapted to the local climate and usually has strong, well-established root systems that provide better erosion control water cleaning capacity, and stability for plants. Existing trees and shrubs also offer more typical habitat for wildlife and are more resistant to pests and disease.

DUES-R-DUE in AUGUST

August is the time to renew your membership or become a new member of the Long Lake Association. Your \$15.00 will carry your membership from August 2005 to July 2006. The easiest way to pay your dues is to attend the annual meeting on August 14th. Otherwise, send your check to: Arlene Lee, 10338

Long Lake Dr NE, Bemidji, MN 56601. Curious as to how your \$15.00 benefits you?! You'll hear all about it at the annual meeting!

ANY INTEREST IN WALLEYE STOCKING?

My wife Patty, my son Hayden and I are new members of the Long Lake Association and new property owners on Long Lake.

Long Lake has a natural walleye population, but the numbers in the last DNR survey (1993) were very average. Since there is no public access, the DNR does not stock the lake.

The purpose of my letter is to see if there is interest in a walleye-stocking program for Long Lake sponsored by the Lake Association.

If we could raise enough funds, the "ideal" program would look like this:

1. Stock 1-1 1/2 pounds of walleye fingerlings for every littoral acre (acreage of the lake that is 15 feet or less). Since Long Lake has 180 littoral acres, that would mean 180-270 pounds (a pound of fingerlings will have 15-25 fingerlings per pound depending on the size of the fingerlings).
2. Stock the lake on alternate years.
3. Stock the lake in the fall (Oct/Nov) or even through the ice in winter (stocking through the ice limits fingerling mortality).

The two private suppliers I spoke to charge about \$20/pound for walleye fingerlings. That would mean one stocking would cost between \$3,600 -\$5,400. Using the stocking rate of only 1 pound per littoral acre (\$3,600), if even 25 people are interested, that would mean each party would have to kick in \$144 for each stocking.

An alternative approach would be to see how much money people would be willing to contribute and stock whatever we can afford.

What are your thoughts? Feel free to contact me at GPHSkroch@comcast.net or at 763-420-9327. Thank you.

EAGLE VS OTTER

Over the past 20 years or so, we have observed a great many activities of the various critters that we share our property and the lake and sky with, but nothing to compare with the action in the spring of 2002.

The lake ice was breaking up and there was a large piece of ice about half way from our dock to the island. In the water there was something thrashing around. With the help of binoculars, we were able to see an otter working on a large fish which he was trying to get up onto the ice. Although the otter is not bothered by either the cold water or the ice and slush, the ice kept breaking away each time he would get to the edge with the fish;. However, after about 15 minutes of struggling, he got the fish up on the ice and set it down.

Surprise! A large bald eagle, who must have been observing the episode unfold, swooped down and grabbed the fish, leaving a very confused looking otter wondering what happened.

Ater a while, the otter went back into the water and seemed to be looking for more fish or maybe his prize, but with no luck. Also, a second eagle was seen to follow the thief away, perhaps to share the loot, but we will never know.

EXCEPTS FROM MN WATER SAFETY LAWS

Anyone operating or riding on a personal watercraft must wear a US Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device (PFD or life jacket).

Personal watercraft must travel at slow--no wake speed (5 mph or less) within 150 feet of non-motorized boats, shore (unless launching or landing skiers directly to or from open water), docks, swim rafts, swimmers, or any moored or anchored boat.

Operation of personal watercraft is allowed only from 9:30 am to 1 hour before sunset.

If you tow a person on water skis, or any other device, there must be an additional person on board the personal watercraft to act as an observer. (The observer does not have to be facing backward.) The skier/kneeboarder, etc., must also be wearing a PFD or there must be one on board the personal watercraft for the skier. Factory-installed or factory-specified wide-field rearview mirrors are allowed instead of an observer when pulling a skier or other device (tube, kneeboard, etc.). The mirrors must be specified by the personal watercraft manufacturer. After-market mirrors, stick-on mirrors, motorcycle mirrors etc., do not qualify for the observer exception.

If the machine is equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch, it must be attached to the person, lifejacket or clothing of the operator when underway.

You may not operate a personal watercraft if any part of the spring-loaded throttle system has been removed or tampered with so it interferes with the return-to-idle system.

You may not travel through emergent or floating vegetation at greater than slow--no wake speed.

You may not chase or harass wildlife.

You may not operate a personal watercraft in a manner that unreasonably or unnecessarily endangers life, limb or property.

You may not weave through congested watercraft traffic, or jump the wake of another watercraft within 150 feet of the other watercraft. This includes other personal watercraft.

A personal watercraft rules decal issued by the DNR needs to be on the craft in full view of the operator.

You may not operate a personal watercraft while facing backwards.

Personal Watercraft Operator Age Restrictions Regardless of Horsepower

Operator Age

Less than 13 years of age: Cannot operate, even with adult on board.

13 years of age: Must either have:

someone at least 21 on board, or

a watercraft operator's permit and be in visual supervision by someone at least 21.

14-17 years of age: Must either have:

a watercraft operator's permit, or

someone at least 21 on board.