



Deer Tales

Deer Lake Improvement Association Newsletter

Fall 2006

Upcoming Event:



Saturday, December 2 - Christmas Party!
(see page 7 for details & reservation form)

President's Message



Just as seasons evolve, time has brought change to the leadership of the D.L.I.A. Board of Directors. We will all miss our outgoing officers, Bob Rawlings and Bucky

Jandric, as well as departing director, Sharry Ehlers. Their contributions to the lake have been significant and many. We wish them well and thank them for a job well done.

Please welcome Mark Thayer and Tom McBride to the board. Mark's many years of service have been invaluable and Tom's enthusiasm and creativity will be a great asset to the organization.

This summer the Highway 8 Draft E.I.S. was released and confirms that the D.O.T. will reroute the highway. A comprehensive multi-year program to control weed growth was implemented. The Deer Lake boat landing was completely rebuilt. And the Deer Lake Conservancy, in partnership with the D.L.I.A. continues to set the standard for protection and enhancement of water quality.

As we do our best to serve the interests of the residents of Deer Lake, I would like to thank the D.L.I. A. Board for their service and support.

Have a safe and pleasant winter.

John Wright
President, Deer Lake Improvement Association

Conservancy Corner

What's does it mean to live on Deer Lake?

As the leaves turn their various shades of red and yellow, and eventually fall to a point where there is serious work to be done, I sometimes think about what it means to live on Deer Lake. After the usual thoughts, like it's great, or the kids like it, or it seems to be a lot more work than it used to be, I start thinking about what it really means to live on Deer Lake.

The DNR tells us that water samples collected over the years indicate the main basin of Deer Lake may be returning to a mesotrophic state from a eutrophic state. To us non-biologists, this is a good thing. In fact, should this happen, Deer Lake would be the first lake in Wisconsin to accomplish this rather astounding feat. And, should this happen, it would be through the hard work and dedication of many people who have gone before us.

To me, the biologic classification of our lake is interesting, but it isn't the real bottom-line. The real bottom line is how the quality of our water positively or negatively impacts our enjoyment of the lake, our property values and our perception of the lake as homeowners.

Living on Deer Lake comes with a responsibility. Maybe more so than living on a lake that hasn't come as far or done as much as Deer Lake. This responsibility requires each of us as homeowners to do all we can to protect our lake for generations to come. We need to take responsibility for updating our failing septic systems, planting buffer zones, using zero phosphate fertilizers and respecting the shore-land zoning ordinance. We also need to become supporting members of the Conservancy.

By taking our responsibility seriously, and perhaps doing a little more, those coming after us will have reason to say...job well done!

Rob Ilstrup
President, Deer Lake Conservancy

Early Days at Deer Lake

- by Elmer L. Anderson

In the summer of 1934, my wife Eleanor's sister, Edith, was on the staff at Camp Lawton on Deer Lake. One day when she was canoeing with a group of the children, as noticed a "For Sale" sign along the shore west of Camp Lawton. She knew that her folks, Gustav and Elizabeth Johnson, were looking for a lake place and so she called and told them about the "For Sale" sign. The property was know as the James' Place, after a man from Chicago who had bought it, built a home, and built a barn with a weather vane on top of it with his name on it. After it was all done and ready to move into, his wife decided she didn't want to leave Chicago, so it was put up for sale during the bottom of the Depression. As I recall, the price was \$5,600 for about 1,600 feet of lake frontage and 20 or more acres of field. Edith and Eleanor's folks came up to see it right away and bought it the day they first saw it. It was just what they had wanted.

That was the beginning of the Johnson/Anderson occupation on Deer Lake. The folks built three cottages, rented out two of them, and the family shared the third. Eleanor and I were married in 1932, but Edith and her brother, Arvid, were not yet married at that time. In fact, Arvid was a teenager.

Grandpa Johnson loved to fish and I used to go out with him every year on opening day. We

would cast for bass with good luck, but Grandpa particularly liked to drift slowly and fish for crappies. I would frequently manage the boat as he fished and enjoyed himself. We would have many talks. It was the same year that I moved from representing a company in Muskegon, Michigan, to going to work for H.B. Fuller Company and we often discussed my role at Fuller. When the opportunity came in 1941 to purchase equity in the company, Grandpa and Grandma Johnson were very helpful in making it possible.

During a storm, the weather vane on the barn was dislocated and taken down. Later on in years, in fact it was 1988, when we had a dispersal of the herd that we had built up, there was some machinery sold and some antique dealer got a hold of that weather vane and we lost track of it. A year or so later, our son, Tony, came to our house with the weather vane. An antique dealer in Stillwater had obtained it and Tony bought it from them and returned it to us where it now resides in our cottage at Deer Lake which we still own.

From 1934-2001 are a lot of years and there is a lot of history of the families and their fun with water sports, and tree planting, and environmental projects, as well as building a registered dairy herd. Deer Lake still is the focal point of the family once a year to get together and relive the joys that all have had over these many years. Deer Lake is a special place and will long live in our memories.

Deer Lake Boat Landing Improvements Made

The Deer Lake Association teamed up with the Department of Natural Resources and the Town of St. Croix Falls to repair the public boat landing on the northwest corner of the lake. Repairs were needed because of a large drop off at the end of the boat ramp caused by users "power loading" boats onto trailers. The landing ramp was excavated to a greater depth and extended to prevent the hole caused by power loading. A grant to the Town of St. Croix Falls from the Department of Natural Resources supported the project. The Deer Lake Improvement Association contributed the project match. Thanks to John Wright who coordinated this project for the lake association and to the DNR crew who supervised installation.

Aquatic Invasive Species Watch

Corey Carpentier, a student at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse, was a frequent presence at Deer Lake's public boat landing this past summer. Corey inspected boats and trailers entering and leaving the lake, educated lake users about invasive species and monitored aquatic plants in the lake. Steve Schieffer, from Harmony Environmental, supervised Corey's work and led the aquatic plant survey work described below. The Department of Natural Resources and the Deer Lake Improvement Association funded the work in a grant project sponsored by the Town of St. Croix Falls.

The threat from aquatic invasive species comes from their ability to overtake native aquatic plants and form dense mats of vegetation. Once established, aquatic invasive plants can be extremely difficult to eradicate.

Some highlights of Corey's summer work:

- Days present at the boat landing...Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from Memorial Day weekend until August 25 (plus Wednesdays in August.)
- Number of days at boat landing...36 (275 hours).
- Average boat encounters...10 on Fridays, 15 on Saturdays, 16 on Sundays, with most in the morning.
- Number of vehicles/trailers inspected total...750, 75% fishing.
- Number of trailers observed entering water with plant material on trailer...0.
- Number of information packets handed out...160.
- Percentage with prior knowledge about Clean Boats Program...50.
- Percentage that were completely unaware and were newly educated...20.
- Number of individuals refusing information...4.

Aquatic plant surveys

Corey surveyed the bay around the boat landing for aquatic invasive species on a weekly basis. Since the invasive plant, curly leaf pondweed, was already known to be present at the boat landing, he was really looking for other invasive species such as Eurasian Water Milfoil. To look for these species, he sampled about 25 random points within the bay, extending out 100 meters. In addition, he sampled the landing near the "Lagoon" twice. No aquatic invasive species besides curly leaf pondweed were observed.

Corey also surveyed areas with habitat conducive to curly leaf pondweed growth and found four more areas where curly leaf is fairly well established. These areas were mapped using GPS coordinates and GIS software and added to the curly leaf areas already mapped.

This past May, approximately seven acres of curly leaf pondweed stands were chemically treated. Corey assisted in the post-treatment monitoring of these stands. Approximately one week after application, 95% of the curly leaf sampled at random points was dying back. A survey in spring 2007 will test the effectiveness of this treatment following a growing season.

Lastly, Corey assisted Steve in the full lake aquatic macrophyte (plant) survey as a follow-up to a 2003 survey. Approximately 300 points were sampled in the survey. The 2006 survey found more species (30) than the previous survey (19). The good news is that no invasive species (besides curly leaf pondweed) were observed. Deer Lake has a very diverse plant community within a very narrow zone around the lake supporting plants. Filamentous algae were very abundant and found at depths of up to 21 feet. Aquatic plants were found at depths of up to 19 feet, indicating good water clarity and light penetration in Deer Lake.

(see samples of Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil on page 6.)

(This article appeared in the August/September 2006 issue of "Cabin Life" magazine and is reprinted with permission. "Cabin Life" subscriptions are available at www.cabinlife.com or by calling (888) 287-3129.)

What's Going Into Your Lake?

by Steve McComas

If You Like Clean, Clear Water, Keep an Eye on Your Watershed

"How's the water?" asks the guy on the dock to the swimmer in the lake.

"Wet."

"Very funny."

It's an age-old smart-aleck remark. But wait a minute, have you actually thought about how water gets into a lake?

The story begins, of course, with rain and snow falling directly on the lake's surface. But there's more to it. There's a whole geographic area contributing water to a lake, and it's called a watershed. Watersheds also are referred to as catchment areas or drainage basins.

"So what?" asks our smart-aleck friend on the dock.

So ... watersheds are critical to the health of lakes -- because what's in your watershed ends up in your lake. We're not just talking about water, but whatever is carried in that water, which may include harmful things like massive amounts of sediment, and fertilizers -- which contain phosphorous. Phosphorous stimulates algae growth, and let's face it, nobody like too much algae.

What about sediment? Pollutants bind to sediments and thereby catch a ride on sediments that are carried into your lake. Excessive sediments bring in excessive nutrients, producing -- you guessed it -- excessive algae.

All this algae contributes to oxygen depletion when the algae die. Oxygen depletion is not good for plant or animal habitats and can even produce fish kills.

How Big Is Your Watershed?

At many lakes, you can stand on your dock and view the surrounding ridgeline. That is more than likely your watershed boundary. If you can see the ridgeline, it represents a relatively small drainage area -- probably a few square miles. Precipitation that falls on the hillside slopes will run into your lake, whereas precipitation that falls on the other side of the ridgeline flows to another body of water and to a different watershed.

But looks can be deceiving. If there is a stream running through a gap in that ridgeline, that stream is delivering water to your lake from another watershed. Your watershed may be a lot bigger than it first appeared.

Why the geology and geography lessons? Knowing the size of your watershed and knowing a little about your local geology and geography influences how to maintain your lake if it's healthy, or how to fix your lake if it's ailing.

What Your Lake Looks Like

So watersheds matter because they deliver things that influence the water in a lake - which may in turn influence ducks, fish, plants, algae and sometimes our fun.

The effect can be just a matter of appearances. For example, does your lake have a coffee-color stain? The reddish-brown color is a product of decomposed peaty vegetation (that's why the color is also referred to as a "bog stain"). The flow out of the wetland delivers stained water to your lake. The color is from organic acids which are harmless and are not pollutants. The water could even be drinkable, although it would not have the best flavor. One possible downside of bog-stained water is that it can dye a white cotton T-shirt a rusty orange color.

Undesirables Riding Piggyback

Watersheds can deliver substances far worse than coffee-colored water -- like sediment. In fact, the world's number one pollutant to water bodies is sediment. That's because surface runoff in the watershed erodes and delivers millions of tons of sediments to lakes and streams every year. Some sediment in runoff is natural, but excessive sediment loads will start filling in stream channels or bays in your lake. In stream channels the sediment buildup can devastate aquatic insect habitat and fish spawning areas. In lakes, sediment buildup serves as a nutrient source for algae, smothers fish spawning sites, creates mucky bottoms, and can make some areas unusable by filling them in.

Another significant concern about sediment carried into your lake is that various substances catch piggyback rides on the sediment.

This can be the primary way phosphorus is delivered to your lake. Phosphorus in moderation is okay, but excessive phosphorus will spur nuisance algae blooms.

In watersheds, the primary phosphorus source is soil. All soils contain phosphorus, but some have more than others. For example, loamy cropland soils typically have higher phosphorus content than sandy forested soils.

In addition, when fertilizer is added to any soil type -- including your lawn -- it will enrich the soil with phosphorus. The problem is, by fertilizing your lawn you're indirectly fertilizing your lake, and this pollution can lead to algae blooms.

Fertilizing the Lake

To a farmer or gardener, there's nothing better than the sight, smell and feel of good black dirt.

To a lakehome owner, there's nothing better than the sight of clear, clean water. If your cabin is on a clear water lake -- that is you can see down 10 or 20 feet into the water -- the water is that clear because it is not very productive. That means it doesn't produce a lot of open water plants or, in this case, algae.

If your watershed has the kind of fertile topsoil that makes farmers and gardeners happy, it's vital to control excessive sediment erosion. Why? Because fertile soils contain a lot of nutrients that will basically fertilize your lake, and make you and your neighboring cabin owners unhappy.

You can think of a clear water lake as being like a desert when it comes to plant production (versus a corn field or even a forest). One way to describe production is to look at the annual yield of plant material per acre, per year:

- **2 tons** -- What a clear water lake might yield (in this case, we're talking about algae). That's about the same amount of plant material produced by a desert ecosystem.
- **6-7 tons** -- What a formerly clear water lake might yield during a severe algae bloom condition -- meaning you'll be looking at a pea-green-soup condition.
- **20 tons** -- What a grassland in fertile soils might yield.

So the challenge is to keep your lake like a desert, and to stop it from resembling a grassland.

Runaway Runoff

Runoff has increased dramatically in the United States over the past 200 years. And with more runoff comes more sediments and nutrients begin delivered to our lakes.

Why the increase? There are a few reasons:

1. At one time, many glacial lakes were landlocked and had small watersheds. This meant clear, clean water. But in the 1800s, lakes started coming

under development pressure, primarily for agricultural purposes. Ditches were dug to drain land for crops or grazing. The watershed area was artificially increased, increasing nutrient loads.

2. We have drained many wetlands -- installing outlets so water has flowed out of these previously landlocked water bodies. Rather than infiltrating down into the ground water table, the wetland outflow is now a surface water flow.
3. As more roads, rooftops and other impervious surfaces have been built, less rain is able to soak into the ground.

The bottom line is that with more surface runoff today, extra amounts of sediments and nutrients are being delivered to our lakes, clogging them up, encouraging algae blooms and killing off fish.

Because your lake responds to what your watershed delivers, it pays to keep an eye on what is happening in your watershed. Your children will thank you.

What You Can Do

Is there anything you can do about your watershed to improve your lake's health? Yes! Here are five areas to consider:

- **Shoreline buffer.** The land that abuts your lake represents the final watershed filter. Maintaining natural vegetation along the shore serves as a natural biological, chemical and physical buffer. It even attracts wildlife -- while repelling nuisance geese.
- **Shoreline bump.** If you live in a land of icy winters, consider leaving the shoreline bump caused by ice push. This bump will keep watershed runoff from running into the lake. Any pollutants in the runoff will soak into the ground instead.
- **Unpaved areas.** Are you thinking about paving your driveway? Instead, explore other options that minimize impervious surfaces and allow rainwater to penetrate the ground.
- **A more natural yard.** Consider leaving the fertilizer back in the city at your primary residence. Plus, if you don't fertilize the lawn at your vacation home, you don't have to mow as much.
- **Join up.** Lastly, maybe it's time to join your local lake association. You can voice your concerns about runoff issues and probably meet some like-minded neighbors.

Steve McComas, aka the "Lake Detective," is co-owner of Blue Water Science Consulting Company and author of "Lake and Pond Management Guidebook."

Fireworks

The annual fireworks display is one of the highlights of the summer. Unfortunately donations for the 2006 show are still running about \$900 short of the \$6,000 budget. All social events, including fireworks, must be self-funding. If additional donations to make up the shortfall are not received by December, we will be forced to scale back next summer's display.

Many people have already donated far more than the suggested donation of \$25. To those that have given, Thank You. To those of you yet to make a contribution, please consider making a donation to help preserve this great Deer Lake tradition.

Thank you,
John Wright



Deer Lake Web Site:

www.deerlakewi.com

Check It Out!!



Sweater, n: garment worn by child when it's mother is feeling chilly

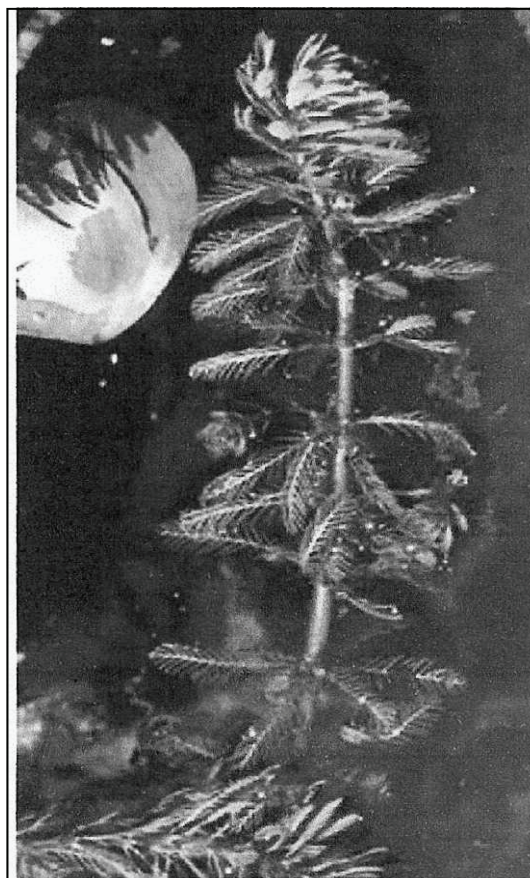


above: Curly Leaf Pondweed
right: Eurasian Water Milfoil

Update on the Bauerly Brothers' Redi-Mix Plant

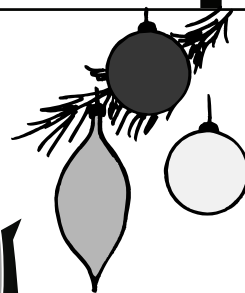
Glenn Stoddard writes, "There is not much news on the challenge to the Bauerly Bros. Redi-Mix Plant on Highway 35 (Watershed #5, Deer Lake). The full "record" was finally and formally filed with the court by the town's attorney, Bruce Anderson, on August 21st. Mr. Anderson has also dropped his initial affirmative defenses to our case, in light of my responsive letter to the court. Thus, the case is ready to be scheduled by the judge for briefing, but it has not yet been scheduled and we don't have a date for a scheduling conference yet."

Mark Thayer



Join us as we celebrate at the annual

Deer Lake Christmas Party



Indianhead Supper Club
Balsam Lake, WI

Saturday, December 2nd

Social: 6:00 p.m.

Dinner: 7:30 p.m.



DLIA Holiday Party Reservations

- **Steak Medallions**
Sirloin tips in mushroom sauce, w/ Baked potato

Qty _____ at \$20.00 = _____

- **Seafood Pasta**
Shrimp w/Fettuccini in white sauce (no potato)

Qty _____ at \$20.00 = _____

- **Chicken Marsala**
Chicken breast in Marsala sauce, w/Baked potato.

Qty _____ at \$20.00 = _____

All dinners will come with rolls, butter and a salad.

TOTAL DUE (price includes tax & tip) to: **"Deer Lake Improvement Assoc."** Total = _____

NAME (S):

DINNER CHOICE (S):

Send this form with check/money order by Monday, November 25, 2006 to:
Denise Sinclear Todd, 1873 Peer Ave., St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

If there are any piano players or singers that would like to volunteer and lead our group, or for any questions regarding the party, please call Denise at 483-1442, or Kris McCormack at 483-3157.

DLIA Board 2006-2007

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