



MINONG TOWN LAKES COMMITTEE

Summer 2014 "A newsletter for everyone who loves and enjoys the lakes of the Minong area" Issue # 2

MTLC Website

<http://minonglakes.org>

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Welcome

By Deb Loza - Editor

Welcome to the second issue of our MTLC newsletter. We're excited to bring you articles that will help you be more in touch with our surrounding lakes. Much has happened since last year, so read on and enjoy.

Minong Town Lakes Fair July 26

by Laurie Johnson



The 3rd hosting of the highly successful Minong Town Lakes Fair will be on Sat., July 26, 2014, from 9:00 -3:00 at the Town Hall grounds. The theme for this year will be plant life in and around the lakes. There will be a series of presentations in the new pavilion about plant diversity, shoreline health, wild rice, and fire protection. These will lead up to the keynote speaker, Susan Knight (U. of W.), talking about "The Good Plants".

The Fair will have ongoing educational kids' activities, a FREE lunch, interesting exhibiter's displays, and local vendors' booths. You'll be able to see a live owl up close, learn how to become a loon ranger, and more! There will also be a 50-50 raffle with great prizes awarded at the end of the pavilion presentations.

Feedback from the previous Fairs indicates that anyone in the area on July 26 would experience a day of fun, education, and value by planning to attend!

This Educational Fair is made possible by major financial support from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Realtors Association of Northwestern Wisconsin, along with contributions from local businesses. We rely entirely on volunteer help and encourage you to contact Barb Robinson , at ribaldness@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out.

Town of Minong First in State to Seize Lean Government Opportunity: Clean Boats Clean Waters Clean Grants

By - Pamela Toshner, DNR Lake Biologist



Thanks to the feedback of motivated waterfront property owners in northwest Wisconsin like you, preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Wisconsin recently got easier. Since

the Clean Boats Clean Waters initiative was launched back in 2003, diligent volunteers and paid staff have inspected hundreds of thousands of boats and educated over one million people about healthy boater hygiene. Fortunately, the legislature segregated funds that enable DNR to provide AIS grants to support watercraft inspection efforts. Unfortunately, volunteer burn-out is high, and some groups may not even apply for the funds because of the perception that the grant application process and competition are too challenging. The DNR response to public feedback that there must be an easier way to fund watercraft inspection projects was to Lean-Government it.

Lean government applies objective methods to both identify and then implement the most efficient, value added way to provide government services. DNR was the first agency in the state to take on Lean Government projects, and Clean Boats Clean Waters Clean Grants is one of DNR's first projects. We hit home runs...out of the ball park on our project goals by reducing both of the following approximately 90%: volunteer/applicant and staff time administering grants and the amount of time an applicant waits to get the funding. Furthermore, about 90% of projects are funded within 14 days, and 100% of customers are satisfied!

The Town of Minong exhibited great leadership and partnership with local citizens and lake groups by being the first town in the State to seize this funding opportunity in 2013 and will continue it into 2014. This means the majority of lakes with public landings will be protected from the movement of aquatic invasive species, which is pivotal given the invasion and establishment of Eurasian water milfoil into Nancy Lake, Minong Flowage, Gilmore Lake, and, most recently Horseshoe Lake.

Thanks to the Minong Town Lakes Committee and town board for contributing to the project's success and leading other lake-rich towns by example. Your continued feedback will help us grow Wisconsin's Clean Boats Clean Waters program into a comprehensive, community-based effort that surveys say is the best way to get out the word about preventing AIS spread...while making government leaner. For more information on the Clean Boats Clean Waters Clean Grants, please visit our website or contact Lake Biologist Pamela Toshner (715-635-4073) or Environmental Grants Specialist Jane Malischke (715-635-4062).

CBCW 2014

by John Ney



The 2013 town-wide Clean Boats Clean Waters program was a great success. It met its twin objectives of boat inspections and education about aquatic invasive species (AIS), including our local scourge, Eurasian water milfoil. A total of 2,493 boats were examined for AIS by 22 paid inspectors from the fishing opener through Labor Day. Amy Wandel, our project coordinator, did a tremendous job keeping the program on track and entering information into the DNR CBCW data base.

The Town of Minong and the MTLC applied for and received a CBCW grant for 2014 as well. It will pay for 200-400 hrs of weekend boat inspections on 9 area lakes, including the county park boat landing on newly refilled Minong Flowage. The DNR will provide \$36,000 in cash. The MTLC's share will be \$12,000 in cash and volunteer labor, the standard 75%-25% split for these grants. Amy has again agreed to be project coordinator.

The Town of Minong Board of Supervisors has been very supportive of the CBCW program. Supervisors voted unanimously to provide the MTLC a short-term loan up to \$27,000, funds which the DNR is committed to pay, but only on a reimbursable basis, after expenditures have been made. Therefore, this support is essential. The Board made the MTLC a similar loan in 2013, which was reimbursed in full by the DNR in October.

Clean Boats Clean Waters is a boon to our lakes and their users. It is a win-win for everyone.



Fish stocking

By Larry Damman

First published in the Spring 2014 *The Waterfront*, from Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association.

In my years as a fish biologist, people constantly requested stocking records to find the good places to fish walleyes. What they really need is a list of walleye lakes that never get stocked. Walleye lakes maintained by stocking are the ones with habitat limitations resulting in marginal populations.

Given the right habitats for spawning, fry and fingerling development of a species will produce more fingerlings than the lake can support into adulthood. Nature has to mercilessly thin them down through predation and disease. This mortality is necessary to create a balance between the number of potential young recruits and the number of adults the lake can sustain. When we harvest a fish from a self-sustaining population, we are not decreasing the population so much as creating the opportunity for a fingerling to survive to adulthood. Stocking where fingerling habitat is essentially saturated increases the fingerling mortality rate instead of increasing the adult population.

There are 3 basic reasons for fish stocking:

1. To introduce new species into suitable habitat

2. To maintain a species where habitat conditions will support adult fish but not natural reproduction.
3. To supplement existing populations that exhibit low rates of natural reproduction.

For stocking to be effective you need an empty habitat niche to target.

When the white man came to Washburn County, most land locked lakes including ones as big as Shell Lake had no fish. With no stream connections, fish couldn't colonize them after the glaciers receded. Early settlers and logging camps caught fish from nearby creeks for **Type 1 stocking**. In those days suckers and bullheads were the most popular. They were oily fish suited to canning and smoking in the days before refrigeration. Over time, most every fish native to the great lakes region was introduced creating self-sustaining fish communities similar to those in the naturally colonized drainage lakes.

Type 2 stocking occurs to provide the anglers something extra or special to catch. The trick is to find an open niche and match it with an appropriate species. Some lakes have a lot of deep, cold water. Warm water fish like bass or walleye can't utilize this habitat but rainbow trout may thrive in it. Rainbows only reproduce in streams so recruitment will depend on stocking. Stocking walleye into a shallow, weedy bass lake doesn't work because there is no niche for the open water loving walleye.

Type 3 stocking to boost populations with low natural recruitment is widely practiced and most problematic. Physical habitat still controls the maximum number of fingerlings produced, not the number stocked. However factors such as weather or interactions with other species can further reduce potential. Unstable weather in the spring can wipe out the walleye hatch or a successful hatch in a year that coincides with the peak of the crappie population cycle will suffer higher than normal predation losses. Stocking fingerlings helps to assure that all available fingerling habitat is utilized even if you had some excessive mortality before that. The later in the year you stock the more of these mortality events you can avoid. The basic problem is that you are working on the margins. There may not be that much difference between a weak population maximized by stocking or the unstocked version.



The dam problem . . . is fixed!

By Jeanne Brown

(Information from MFA on 03/03/2014)

In November the contractor was testing the mud gate, a routine part of the repairs on the Minong Flowage dam, and the gate stuck in the open position allowing water to flow downstream at a rapid rate. Fortunately, after just a day, the gate was closed once again. Until the problem was fixed, the refilling of the Minong Flowage was halted.

Repairs were completed and the mud gate was successfully tested the morning of February 25th. At a meeting including representatives from the WDNR, Minong Flowage Association, Washburn County Highway Department, Washburn County Board, Wascott Town Board, Staab Construction, Ayers Associates, and the St. Croix Tribal Council, all in attendance agreed the refill should proceed immediately under the conditions speci-

fied by the WDNR. Those conditions include the requirement to maintain a specified water level downstream from the dam, and the posting of signs on the Flowage and public notices warning everyone the refill is underway and that ice conditions on the Flowage could deteriorate as a result of the rising water levels.

It is expected that the refill will initially proceed slowly, given the current flow into the Flowage and the downstream water level requirements specified by the WDNR. Water level increases will likely be in the range of several inches a week until the spring thaw. Given the amount of snow we have, once the spring thaw and ice-out event proceeds, the rate of refill will increase significantly. Depending upon the refill rate we experience and the amount of spring runoff that remains, the dam operator may temporarily stop the refill in order to accommodate the remaining runoff. This is consistent with normal years on the Flowage where in late winter the water level may be lowered several inches in anticipation of the spring runoff. We cannot project when the Flowage will be back to normal water levels, as it is entirely dependent upon the type of weather we experience over the next several months, but our expectations are that it will be refilled by ice out or a matter of days after that event.

Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC)

by Russ Robinson, Chair



It is hard to believe that this committee has been in existence for nearly seven years. We began with the idea that a group of volunteers could help guide the Town of Minong on matters related to the area lakes. Our interest was primarily on educating residents on the importance of our lakes, aesthetically, economically and as a legacy to future generations. We also believed it was important to actively protect the value and quality of these resources, not just for lake property owners, but for all of the Minong residents.

Looking back on these seven years, I realize a lot has been accomplished and yet a lot remains to be done. We have held a number of educational seminars for area residents. This year we will sponsor our third free educational fair on July 26th. Previously we had hired an environmental company to survey five of our “at risk” lakes and to recommend actions to preserve their quality and protect them from exposure to Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Beginning last year we began boat inspections at Minong area launch ramps to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS such as Eurasian water milfoil, zebra mussels and Asian carp. All of these efforts have been primarily paid for by grants, fund raising, contributions and donations.

It is obvious that these actions benefit lake property owners. What is maybe less obvious, is how valuable the MTLC efforts have been to all town residents. Property taxes contribute the majority of income to the Town of Minong, the Northwood school system, and strongly support the police, fire and emergency medical services we all enjoy. The quality of our road system and their maintenance is directly related to the amount of property tax collected.

The Town of Minong is unique in Washburn County in that we depend heavily on the residential properties surrounding our large number of lakes to provide tax support for our public services with very few commercial/business entities to share our tax burden. A few years ago the assessor's office calculated that approximately 80% of the Town's property tax was generated by lake properties. Many of these properties are owned by seasonal residents who are paying taxes but using little of the Town-provided services, and whose children are not enrolled in the Northwood school system, a real benefit to all town residents.

The value of the lake properties and the tax income they generate will only be maintained as long as the value and quality of the lakes are maintained. If we ignore the problems our lakes face with increased development and utilization, and their water quality declines, the value of lake properties and the tax income they provide to our town, our schools, our county, and our state will also decline. Should our lake property tax base decrease, the end result is a tax increase for non-lake residents and services may suffer from lack of adequate funding. That is an outcome that none of us, as permanent or seasonal residents, would like to see happen and is the primary reason that the MTLC was formed.

I'd like to direct my final comments to rumors and misinformation that has been spread about our organization. Some very misinformed residents have stated that the Town of Minong had provided us with \$24,000 in funds in 2013, and furthermore the Town is building a pavilion that MTLC has requested. Both of these rumors are total fabrications and misleading. The \$24,000 was a short term loan made to MTLC to cover operational costs of the boat inspection program until reimbursement from the Wisconsin DNR grant money was received. This loan was repaid in full in September 2013, as promised. During the last few years, the MTLC has been awarded more than \$100,000 in grant money to support our projects. Most of that money has been used to pay local residents for boat inspecting efforts, providing materials and services for educational events, and improving access to some of our lakes with new docks. I know of no other volunteer organization that has been so successful at bringing additional income to the Town without relying on taxation of its residents.

The pavilion project was proposed by the Town Chairman at the 2013 annual meeting, and town residents in attendance approved it. The pavilion will be available for use by all town residents. The MTLC organization had nothing to do with the proposal to build the pavilion or approval of its construction. I, personally, think the pavilion is a worthwhile investment for all town residents.

Finally I would like to ask for your support of the Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC). We are always looking for additional members and volunteers whether they live on a lake property or not, or are fulltime or seasonal residents. Monetary contributions are cheerfully accepted and recognized. What is not needed are rumors and misinformation which hurt an organization that is doing so much to help all the residents and property owners of the Town of Minong. To learn more about the MTLC go to: www.minonglakes.org.

State of the Lake -Big Bass



Life on and around the lake seems to vary little from season to season and year to year. One can only hope that is true for our healthy little lake.

The meandering survey that was conducted several years ago told us of the health of our lake as well as its fragility. This past summer brought a bit of a change. The launch ramp was monitored by CBCW monitors. This monitoring showed increased boat activity on our lake. (Maybe due to the drawdown of the Minong Flowage)

The survey suggests being proactive in preventing invasive species. We have a great new sign at the landing. We hope lake users heed the warnings on this sign. Volunteers can be trained to recognize the invasive species and early detection increases the chances of an infestation being successfully and economically controlled. These volunteers could come from an organization of land owners around and near the lake.

Anyone interested in reading more of the survey that was done or interested in forming an organization of land owners around and near the lake may contact: sdahlby@aol.com

Shoreline Restoration Assistance Offered

by Lisa Burns



Are you looking to find ways to improve your shoreline or fix erosion or runoff problems that are occurring? The Washburn County Land and Water Conservation Department has assistance to do just that.

The program is based on a cost sharing program, where the department pays up to 70% of the costs. Landowners pay 30%, however, individual labor can be applied to off-set costs. For major erosion or stabilization practices, shoreline protection monies are available at 50/50% cost share rate.

The department assists riparian landowners plan and design a natural landscape of vigorous trees, shrubs and wildflowers that can sustain any soil type. Only native species may be planted. They provide deeper roots and lead to better soil infiltration and fewer erosion problems.

To become eligible, program requirements must be met and the landowner must sign a cost share application and agreement prior to any installation. (Property must also be located in Washburn County).

As pressure to develop our shorelines increases, it is our responsibility to take an active role in protecting our water resources. Protection includes maintaining a healthy shoreline to sustain and protect wildlife, aquatic plants and animals, and to reduce pollutants and invasive species from entering lakes and rivers. A simple practice, such as not mowing down to the water's edge, will greatly increase a lakes health and provide many benefits to wildlife.

To get more information on the Land and Water Conservation Department's shoreline restoration program, please call 715-468-4654 or send an email to landwtr@co.washburn.wi.us.

The Kimball Lakes Chain

By Don & Marge Olson



The Kimball Lake chain is between County I to the east, Big Sand Lake Rd. to the north, Log Cabin Rd. to the west and St. Croix Trail to the south. It is made up of three lakes: Lower, Middle and Upper Kimball which are all connected by channels. The only public landing is off St. Croix Trail on Lower Kimball Lake. Upper Kimball is the only "No Wake" lake of the chain. All of the lakes have Northern Pike, Bass, Pan fish and Perch.

Information on the lakes is as follows:

	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Max. Depth</u>	<u>Public Access</u>
Lower Kimball	121	42	Yes
Middle Kimball	102	77	No
Upper Kimball	38	11	No

The name Kimball came from Josiah Bond, one of the early settlers and founders of Minong. It was named after Josiah's in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Byron Kimball. Josiah was with the firm of Peyton, Kimball and Barber, a sawmill enterprise on Connor's Point, Superior, WI. Nancy Lake was named after his wife, Nancy Kimball Bond.

In 1905, the census map shows that the area we now know as Minong was called Nancy. In 1910 the area name changed to Minong and is now known as the Town of Minong. Minong is an Indian name for "Pleasant Valley".

In the early 1900's, the land surrounding the outskirts of the lakes was logged off for homestead properties. There was a school named The Kimball School located on Kimball Lake Rd. which is now called Log Cabin Road. A Mr. Jesse, who had a farm on Totogatic Lake which is now the park on the Minong Flowage, used to drive his buggy around the road on the north side of Upper Kimball and pick up children to take them to the school. Marge's aunt and uncles were some of the children who lived on the north side of Big Sand Lake Rd. back in 1905 to 1910. My family was the Henry Prechts who had come from Germany to Chicago to Minong. My grandmother was Marie Rahmel, who had left her farm family in Rishnau, Stettin, Germany, which is now Poland at the age of 19 to join her brother in Chicago, where she met Heinrich Julius Precht from Hamburg, Germany. The story goes that, he a carpenter from a more aristocratic family, loved her so much he fulfilled her dream of owning land and becoming a farmer.

There were a lot of families in the vicinity in those days trying to make a go of the homesteaded land. However, the sandy soil, along with the short growing season and severe winters led many

of the farmers to desert the land. Unfortunately, my family too moved back to Chicago when my grandmother needed a goiter operation and then died on the operating table. But my father, Henry Precht was given the homestead deed to the property and did come up on numerous occasions. Other families like the Blakes and Punkies also departed the scene.

I am told that this area was very much like what my grandmother had come from in Stettin, Germany which is about 50 miles NW of Berlin. They too had flat land with a few hills, pine trees, lakes and sandy soil. That is probably why the soil was good for potatoes which is what Germans are famous for.

Very few of the early settlers lived on the lake but would make a trail down to them. There were various Indian settlements along the lakes at this time as well. Indians were known to start fires to help produce blueberries. This area was burned between 1910 and 1920.

It was also reported by a Mr. Tentcher that the lakes dried up in 1931-32. Both the Lower and Upper Kimball Lakes were like haystacks and Middle was still a lake in the middle because it is 80' deep. He noted that you could drive a car around the edges of Middle Kimball. Those were the days of the dustbowl and right after the Depression. In the years following, the lakes filled in again, possibly because of the CCC building the dam on the Flowage and an excess amount of rain which started the springs up again on Upper Kimball. He also writes that when he came to Minong in 1930, this lake chain was pristine with very few homes on it and the fishing was fantastic. He later moved to the east side of Middle Kimball.

A relative of the Tubbs family stated that her grandfather and great uncle came to the area around 1915 looking for property and described the Kimball Lakes as walled by huge, majestic stands of white pine, giant Norway, birch, oak and jack pines. The lake water was blue as the heavens and clear as crystal, the loons yodeled, and the whippoorwills sang at dusk. It was the last unspoiled pristine place in the world with the water being the best for everything, including drinking. The Tubbs family bought property on the west side of Middle Kimball.

The Tolene family had a farm about a mile to the west of Middle Kimball where they had come in about 1925. They harvested ice on the lake, hauled it home with a sleigh and team of horses and stored it in an old shed filled with sawdust which kept the ice cold. The ice, along with milk and eggs, was sold to people on Kimball. They were farmers, but Bob Tolene also worked on the cranberry bogs, which were located near Lower Kimball, in both spring and fall.

In the early days, transportation to the lakes was by horse and buggy from the railroad station in Minong, which had trains coming to and from the Chicago and Minneapolis areas. There were guides taking people to the lakes to show them what was available. In the 1930's, the lots were sectioned off on the east side of Upper Kimball. Many people came from Illinois to buy and build cottages. In the 1950's, improved highway access to the area led to the development of small recreational resorts.. Most of the resorts have disappeared, replaced by seasonal,

private properties. Deer hunting and blueberry picking are still popular in this area, along with turkey hunting and fishing.

The Pokegama "Dam"

Where's the common sense?

By Jack Loza



In 1968 Washburn County workers installed a culvert under County road I at the north end of Lake Pokegama. According to an eye witness account, an employee of the DNR said that the culvert was too large in diameter and had to be placed deeper under the highway

than planned. This would result in allowing too much water to flow from the lake and a lowering of the lake and surrounding wetlands. The resolution to this problem was to connect a grader blade to the bottom of the culvert which, in effect, raised the culvert depth and allowed the lake to maintain normal level.

This ingenious solution has worked perfectly for 46 years and shows no sign of deteriorating. The County workers used scrap metal and clear thinking to resolve a problem at minimal cost.

Fast forward to today. Even though the Department of Natural Resources had full knowledge of the culvert and grader blade installation 46 years ago they now have determined that it is an illegal dam and must be permitted and rebuilt or *pulled out!*

A new dam would cost \$70,000 or more, and it would do nothing more than the current grader blade. Is this a wise use of our tax money?

Pulling out the grader blade would lower the lake level. It would partially drain the adjacent wetlands to the south and east. It would affect nesting habitat. And it would put additional pressure on the old Fisher dam which is a short distance downstream. The Fischer dam is privately owned and it would become the controlling point for elevation levels of Pokegama. Does this mean that a private individual has the right to control the level of a 450 acre lake? Further, is the Fisher dam strong enough to withstand additional pressure?

Oddly enough, no one has claimed that the current grader blade dam is dangerous or hazardous. It's just that it was never permitted. Isn't 46 years of flawless use enough to warrant issuing a permit? **Where's the common sense?** There is one person who feels that the lake level should be lowered. The rest of the lake owners and the Town of Minong want it left as is.

Precedents exist for approving the continued use of so called illegal dams. The county and the DNR need to join together to implement a solution without spending more tax dollars.

Annual Northwest Lakes Conference

June 20 at the Drummond High School, 8am – 3pm. Cost \$35 Register online at: www.wisconsinlakes.org. For more information contact: John Haack at: john.haack@ces.uwex.edu.

Minong Town Lakes Committee
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Lake Association Websites

MTLC: <http://minonglakes.org>
Pokegama: <http://tinyurl.com/2rj4nv>
Horseshoe: <http://www.horseshoelake.org/home.asp>
Gilmore: <http://www.gilmorelakeassociation.com/>
Minong Flowage: <http://www.minongflowage.org>
Nancy: <http://www.lakenancyminong.com>

Other Coming Events

Father's Fest

Minong Businesses, the Minong Area Chamber of Commerce and WRSL-FM Radio are sponsoring a new annual event "Father's Fest", June 13th & 14th, the Fri & Sat before Fathers Day. Lots of Family Fun, Games, Contests, Golf Tournament, Minnow Races, Fishing Lessons, Fishing Tournament, 5K Run/Walk, Vendors and much more. "Two Days To Show Your DAD How Much You Care!" Check it all out at: www.fathersfest.com

North American Loon Symposium is being held in Ashland WI, Oct. 25-26 2014 at Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute. More information at: www.northland.edu/loonsymposium.htm

Want to volunteer? Please contact a committee member. "Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them." –Harriet Naylor

Disclaimer: The materials, information and references provided in this newsletter are provided "as is". While every effort is made to ensure their accuracy, no warranty, expressed or implied, is given with respect to them.

GOT E-MAIL? Our costs can be greatly reduced if we bypass snail mail and email you the newsletter directly. To receive the Newsletter via email only, please contact Russ Robinson at r.rubarb@gmail.com

Also, the Minong Town Lakes Committee is especially grateful for any contributions given to help offset the costs of printing and mailing this newsletter. Donated funds would also provide support for future educational and community based projects. If you would like to contribute, please enclose a check, payable to the Minong Town Lakes Committee, PO Box 215, Minong, WI 54859.

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CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____

ZIPCODE: _____