

Big Birch Lake Association NEWSLETTER



No . 145

January, 2022

President's Letter

Happy New Year from the BBLA Board of Directors. We hope the new year began well for each of you, and that you are looking ahead to another season of life at Big Birch Lake in 2022.

Ben Ellering resigned his position on the BBLA Board in December. As a result, Vice President Kevin Costello will serve as interim president until the next organizational meeting in September, when the board elects its officers.

Board member Matt Everding was appointed interim vice president by the board.

Craig Tweedale will take over the Director position of Area J leaving an At-Large position to be filled by the board until elections at the next annual meeting in August.

In this issue, be sure to read Grant Niehaus's article on the results of the walleye and bluegill survey conducted online this past year.

Another piece of Big Birch Lake history was submitted by Julia Zaborski. Learn more

about how the North Shore was developed by folks from Kansas in the early 1900's.

Finally, thank you for your support through 2021, and remember to renew your membership for 2022. Membership materials were mailed last December in order to give members a chance to make a year-end donation to take advantage of tax exemptions.

If you misplaced the paper renewal form, you can always go online at bigbirchlakeassociation.org and renew your membership. Dues remain at \$50 and all other donations in any amount are welcome.

If you would like to volunteer in any capacity for the BBLA, please talk to your area representative (find them listed on page 7) who will put you in touch with a leader of any committee in which you have an interest.

Until spring, stay warm, enjoy winter and plan for warm weather activities at Big Birch Lake.

Calendar

BBLA Board Meeting

3/19/22

4/16/22

Social events foster community building

By Jeanne Niehaus

Two events held on Big Birch Lake this past summer promote community on Big Birch Lake. **Both events are not affiliated with BBLA**, but the BBLA does work to keep the lake safe by adding extra inspectors' hours at the accesses during these events.

BBL Area Charities through fundraising efforts hosted another incredible fireworks event over the Fourth of July weekend. Many BBLA and community neighbors contributed to the fundraising. Funds raised in 2021 included \$13,500 that was distributed between the Melrose, Freeport and Grey Eagle fire departments. In addition, extra patrols were paid for by Big Birch Lake Charities to make sure the event was a safe environment for all that evening. Watch for future fundraising efforts regarding next year's event.

The Bob Show, also known as the Big Birch

Lake Get Together was held in August. It originally started as a way to meet people from around the lake. It has grown to be a fun event for all ages and continues to be a way to meet new and old neighbors on the lake and from local communities.

A hat was passed during the event and a \$500 donation was made to the BBLA to cover the expense of extra inspectors at the access points to check watercraft entering and exiting the lake. Mark your calendars for next year's event to be held on August 13, 2022.

As we enjoy Big Birch Lake, please ask visiting family and friends to be compliant and courteous with inspector request. We all have a common goal of keeping the lake clean and safe.

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Renew membership for 2022

The 2021 BBLA membership and sponsorship forms were mailed in December to allow people to donate to the BBLA before the end of the year and incur an additional 2021 tax deduction. The membership form is also available on the contact page of the association website: www.bigbirchlakeassociation.org

If you no longer want a paper copy of the newsletter and prefer to read it on the BBLA website, please contact the association via email or contact your area director.

The individual membership is \$50.

BBLA sponsors are important to the association, and we encourage our members to show their appreciation by supporting sponsor businesses in 2022.

The member list on page 4 is the final list of those who were members in 2021.

Follow the life of Big Birch Lake on its Facebook page. If you don't have a Facebook account, you can still follow the page by typing [bigbirchlakeassociation/](https://www.facebook.com/bigbirchlakeassociation/) Facebook into your browser.

If you are away from the lake during the cold months, Facebook is a good way to stay connected to the lake.

Obituaries of lake residents

Betty (Broman) Richie age 89, was born August 4, 1931, in Minneapolis, MN and passed away peacefully on July 28, 2021.

Betty worked at Northwestern Bell and took a hiatus from working outside the home to raise her family, eventually going back to work at the Prudential Insurance Company.

Betty enjoyed volunteering and spent many years working at estate sales for the Ebenezer Society Hands and Hearts.

She also enjoyed the many years spent volunteering in the gift shop at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

Preceded in death by husband, Lovell Richie, brothers Robert Broman and Gene Broman. Betty was survived by children Barbara (Robert) Roy, Paul Richie (Angela Mae), and Karen (William) Lloyd. Grandchildren Samantha Richie, Kye Richie, Andrew Roy, Katherine (Joe) Turner, Jackson Lloyd, Alex Lloyd, Jacob Lloyd, brother Raleigh Broman and many dear friends.

"When the coffee is hot and the talk is good, and the feeling is easy and the laughter is light, and the memories are many but

BBLA Financial Report

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

1005 · Checking-CMCU	1,883.54	1,570.56
1010 · Share Account-CMCU	35.90	35.90
1015 · My Goal Savings	801.80	801.83
1020 · Money Markey-CMCU	35,563.77	9,171.82
1050 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #1	110,927.40	110,153.69
1055 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #2	10,611.87	10,547.04

Total Checking/Savings

159,824.28 132,280.84

Other Current Assets

1080 · Initiative Foundation Fund	49,901.85	44,251.44
1499 · Undeposited Funds	350.00	500.00

Total Other Current Assets

50,251.85 44,751.44

Total Current Assets

210,076.13 177,032.28

Fixed Assets

1200 · Building & Land

35,300.00 35,300.00

Total Fixed Assets

35,300.00 35,300.00

TOTAL ASSETS

245,376.13 212,332.28

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Long Term Liabilities

2550 · Reserve

2551 · Aquatic-Invasive Species 100,000.00 100,000.00

2552 · Future Buffer Strips 14,495.72 14,495.72

Total 2550 · Reserve

114,495.72 114,495.72

Total Long Term Liabilities

114,495.72 114,495.72

Total Liabilities

114,495.72 114,495.72

Equity

3990 · Unrestricted Net Assets

120,443.92 87,215.67

Net Income

10,436.49 10,620.89

Total Equity

130,880.41 97,836.56

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

245,376.13 212,332.28

the time is too short, you know you are with a friend."—Unknown

Memorials preferred to the Big Birch Lake Association, the Minnesota Human Society, Shriner's Hospital or a charity of your choice.

Kenneth "Andy" Holthaus

Kenneth "Andy" Holthaus, age 46, passed away unexpectedly December 12, 2021 at the family cabin in Grey Eagle.

A memorial service will be held in the spring of 2022.

Kenneth Andrew Holthaus was born January 11, 1975, in Edina, to Denneth and Joan (Silvia) Holthaus. Andy worked at Comcast for 21 years. He resided in New Prague but enjoyed s

pending his free time with his family at the cabin on Big Birch Lake in Grey Eagle. Andy's love for the outdoors included fishing, hunting, golfing, waterskiing and boating.

Survivors include his wife, Jennifer Holthaus of New Prague, children Ellisa (Christof) Barrier of Bloomington, Chase Holthaus of New Prague, and Alix Holthaus of New Prague; father, Kenneth Holthaus of Edina; brother Perry Holthaus of Hamburg and nephew, Tyler Holthaus of Hamburg.

Andy was preceded in death by his mother, Joan Holthaus.

After a warm, long fall, the lake transitioned to winter

Large numbers of trumpeter swans gave bird watchers new insight to migratory bird behavior

We read the lands and waters to find ourselves in the change of season. We get our bearings for winter watching natural features change color and texture.

After a long, warm, two and a half months of beautiful fall weather, the first major indication of impending winter arrived on Veteran's Day when a cold rain turned to wet snow.

So began the change of seasons from fall to winter at Big Birch Lake. The north winds brought large flocks of skittish mallards and more trumpeter swans than ever seem in past years.

Floating bogs bounced from shore to shore at the whim of November gales.

Looking back, we worried through the summer drought about the lack of rain that dropped the water level to lows not seen in several years. We worried about floating our boats out of lifts and away from moorings.

If the drought wasn't enough, the furious wind storm of August 28th blew that issue out of the water. Powerful western winds uprooted hundreds of trees, overturned boats, lifts and docks with abandon causing thousands of dollars of property damage.

After late summer and fall rain replenished the lake, we felt some normalcy in an otherwise abnormal year.

The normalcy of a foot of snow and cold temperatures in late December had a way of calming our frustrations and allowed perspective about the past year.

The vast array of migratory birds that rest on Big Birch Lake, offering sight and sound to our year's end signaled that all was well with creation.

In fact it was an exceptional year for the migration of trumpeter swans on the lake. From mid-November to mid-December they arrived daily sometime in large numbers and other times in small family flocks.

The large numbers of swans in 2021 was remarkable. One day we counted over 200. (See the photos of swans posted on the BBLA Facebook page.)

Around 3:30 in the afternoon, swans would begin to arrive for the night. From the northwest, their flight pattern

would circle over the North Shore, and then they would land in the northwest corner of the upper bay. This phenomenon occurred even after most of the lake was ice covered.



A determined number of swans, kept open an area of water that decreased in size daily as the ice closed in. Official ice over was December 7, but swans maintained open water for an additional week.

As the open water decreased in size, incoming swans preferred landing in water, but some had to settle landing on the ice. When the open water finally



froze one very cold night, the swans were gone the next morning.

Before ice-over, the swans would swim close to the shore and plunged their long necks to the bottom to reach vegetation. The young swans and mallards would quickly gobble up any remnants of plants that floated to the surface.



Kutter's Column

One day while observing a family of swans close to shore, I realized that young swans could not turn bottoms up like the adults. One young swan tried to imitate the parents but would just resurface immediately.

Trumpeter swans communicate with one another constantly until they sleep, which seemed to be in the morning when the rest of the world is getting ready for the day.

They talk to one another all of the time, and when a new family arrives, it seems



the entire flock greets them.

When in the family unit, any interlopers from another family are quickly dispatched by one of the adults. However, the number of mallards that occupy the swan's space does not seem to bother them at all.

This window on nature allowed for many enjoyable hours of bird watching. A good pair of binoculars and camera with a telephoto lens give the viewer a chance to see swans up close without disturbing their routines.

Observing migratory birds is just one more reason why heaven seems closer in a house beside the water.

Photos by Robert Kutter

MEMBERSHIP AS OF OCTOBER 4TH 2021

Althaus, Kurt & Lori	Gagne, Bob & Christine	Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy	Ritter, Greg & Barb
Anderson, Jay & Derry	Gallagher, Pat & Caryn	Lind, James & Maryellen	Rivisto, John & Deb
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa	Gangl, Dale	Lind, Kevin	Roe, John & Janet
Anderson, Todd & Debbie	Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou	Linz, Curtis & Mary	Roehrl, Joe & Margaret
Anderson, Warren	Gerding, Dewayne & Alvina	Lloyd, Karen	Rothstein, Gary & Ruth
Andrews, Mike & Jackie	Gerner, Robert & Charlene	Loehr, Jim & Renee	Roy, Barbara
Arulfo, Michelle	Good, Tiernan	Logan, Guy & Suzanne	Rudolph, Jerry & Deb
Atkinson, Dan & Jan	Gordon, Brian J	Louden, Sarah	Russell, Jim & Mindy
Atwood, Duane	Grossman, Jim & Jan	Mack, Murray & Sue	Rutherford, Peter & Lourel
Auger, John & Karen	Grutsch, John & Jan	Malm, Scott	Rutherford, Tyler & Amy
Austing, April	Hammerstrom, Malia	Martland, Richard & Marge Anderson	Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki
Austing, Dick & Jane	Hatton, Rene & LuAnn	Matchinsky, James & Roselyn	Sand, Daniel & Mary
Beckermann, Fran & Linda	Heisick, Rosemary	Mattson, Amy	Savage, William & Sharon
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie	Helget, Ron & Becky	Mauseth, Adrea	Schanhaar, Tom & Deb
Benolken, Sue	Henderson, John & Mary	McConnell, David & Ann	Schiemann, Charles & Ellie
Berg, Dwaine & Louise	Hendrickson, David & Colette	Mehr, Mike & Lori	Schiffler, Dean & Carla
Berg, Ken & Bev	Hennemann, Kitty	Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann	Schmid, Judith
Beste, Thomas & Julie	Hess, Herb & Mary Kay	Meyer, Barry	Schmid, Ted & Julie
Beuning, James & Judine	Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam	Meyer, Glenn & Dianne	Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Blommel Family	Hinnenkamp, Hollis & Mary Jo	Meyer, Juel	Schmit, Nicholas
Blommel, Leroy & Marilynn	Hoffman, Dan & Janell	Meyer, Ken & Sherry	Schnettler, Edmund
Blommel, Michael	Holthaus, Ken	Meyer, Roy	Schnettler, John & Jan
Boecker, Elmer & Juliana	Hotzler, Mark & Jane	Meyer, Virg & Joyce	Schnettler, Mike & Deb
Bohlig, Silverius	Howe, Michael & Jeanne	Middendorf, Fred & Amber	Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Bomstad, Gary	Hughes, Bob & Sally	Miley, Rod & Nancy	Schwartz, Richard
Braegelman, Pat & Sandy	Hughes, Tim & Kristine	Mische, Hans & Julie	Schwartz, Stephen & Joan
Brattensborg, Ruth	Humbert, Rick & Lois	Moening, Lee & Judy	Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Brixius, Bernie & Lisa	Huseby, Robert	Mohr, Richard & Marilyn	Seitzer, Jim & Belinda
Broman, Raleigh & Ruth	Ingold, Kirk & Mandi	Mohs, Dean & Sandy	Sexton Family Cabin
Brennuer, Paul & Lauri	Ingold, Linnea	Molitor, Chick & Karen	Shafer, Tom & Bonnie
Bruyere, James Jr	Iverson, Ron & Jennifer	Molitor, Jon	Sieben, Kevin & Beth Thieschafer
Bullock, Lou & Debbie	Jacobsen, James & Marjorie	Moser, Helen	Sieben, Russell & Mary
Bushman, Wayne	Jansen, Jeff & Teri	Mueller, Jerry	Silbernagel, John & Marie
Bussmann, Scott & Andrea	Jepperson, Craig & Mary	Nathe, Mark & Ann	Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Butte, Rick	Jeske, Nancy	Nathe, Mike & Laura	Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Campbell, Mel & Sherry	Johnson, Adrian & Kay	Neibling, Tim & Sue	Sorenson, Larry & Loanne
Carlson, Allen & Shirley	Johnson, Craig & Debra	Neville, Steve	Spanier, Eric & Jana
Carpenter, Todd & Laura	Johnson, Dale & Janet	Niehaus, Anthony & Carol	Spears (Moening), Heather
Carstens, James & Brenda	Kadri, Abdu & Janice	Niehaus, Bob & Deb	Stalboerger Family, Lorraine
Casper, Paul & Deb	Kalgren, Rick & Ann	Niehaus, Grant	Starfield, Glenn & Katy
Caspers, John & Allyson	Kappes, Mike & Jannie	Niehaus, Jeanne	Steinbring, John & Sandy
Cavello, Amy	Kaufman, Robert & Josephine	Niehaus, John & Mary	Stomberg, Chuck & Nancy
Cebuhar, Charles & Mary	Kelly, Brandon & Becky	Nohner, Kevin & Mary	Strack, Robert & Laurie
Chaput, Larry & Bradley Johnson	Kemper, Jeff & Linda	Nohner-Black, John	Tanner, Lucy
Chirhart, James & Juanita	Kennedy, Dennis & Holly	Orth, David & Linda	Tembrock, Henry & Marion
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb	Kerfeld, Art & Rosie	Osendorf, Phil & Gail	Thelen, Steve & Amy
Claussen, Kim	Kerfeld, Cheryl	Osendorf, Rosemary	Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Collins, Joyce	Kerfeld, Donald & Diane	Ostendorf, Lenore	Thompson, Rod & Sally
Collins, Margaret	Kerfeld, Glenn	Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa	Timmermann, John
Comfort, Jeff & Julie	Kirchner, Gerald & Jonelle	Ostrem, Justin & Amy	Tomsche, David & Molly
Costello, Kevin & Ann	Klaphake, Deb	Pakola, Howard & Barbara	Tomsche, Dr. Ed & Theresa
Coulson, Brad & Jane	Klaphake, Florian & Doreen	Patch, Bruce & Johanna	Trierweiler, Corey & Julie
Damrow, Paul & June	Klapperich, John & Suzy	Pavlivek, John & Kathryn	Trulson, Kent & Loretta
Davis, Scott & Marjo	Klasen, Kyle & Stacy	Pelo, Rod & Phyllis	Tschida, Stewart & Amy
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth	Klasen, Vern & Marlene	Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia	Tschida, Wayne & JoAnn
Dinndorf, Don	Klocker, Barb	Phillips, Rev Roger & Rosemary	Tweedale, Craig & Mary Lou
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill	Kloos, Mike & Becky	Piersak, Jeff & Kim	Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Dougherty, Tim	Kluempke, David	Piersak, Thomas	Van Beck, Chad
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam	Kluempke, Jim & Cathy	Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence	VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
Duevel, Jerome & Kim	Koch, Bob & Connie	Plombon, Roger & Gloria	Vener, Mike & Kim
Elfering Family, Evelyn	Kotsmith, Randall & Karen	Poganski, Rock & Marcia	Viere, Kevin & Ann
Elieff, Daniel & Julie	Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon	Powers, Robert & Kathleen	Vowles, Willm & Dawn
Ellering, Ben & Jenn	Krig, Gary & Peggy	Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine	Waldorf, Bernadine
Engel, Greg & Susan	Kuehne, Midge	Pudlick, Gerald & Sheila	Waldvogel, Dennis
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl	Kuehne, Robert	Pundsack, Craig & Lisa	Walker, Tom
Enright, John & Kay	Kunkel, Phil & Rose	Rahn, Dave & Lisa	Walters, George & Sue
Erickson, Russell	Kutter, Robert & Nancy	Rasmussen, Steve & Sandy	Wander, Dave & Joan
Ersland, Mary Kay	Kutter, Ryan & Jenny	Rediske, Marilyn	Ward, Rick & Missy
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer	Kutter, Wayne & Sherry	Reed, Beverly	Warnert, Ron & Lee Meyer
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah	Kyllo, John & Carole	Refsland, Curt & Mary	Weinman, Roger & Constance
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer	Lafayette Resort	Richardson, David & Anna	Weitzel, John & Mary
First, Pete & Nicole	Langer, Denise	Richie, Betty	Weitzel, Michael & Jean
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn	Larson, Brandon & Debi	Richie, Paul	Welle, Larry & Rose
Fox, Thomas & Laurie	Larson, Gayle & Karen Lemons	Rieger, Joel & Pamela	Wiebolt, Bernard
Freeman, Dave & Sue	Larson, Max & Brenda	Rieland, Chuck & Lucy	Wolters, Ronald & Kathy Hinnenkamp
Frerichs Frank, Jane	Lemieux, BJ & Rachel	Rieland, Mike & Mary	Wright, Thomas & Sara Roberts
Freudenrich, Jeremy & Holly	Lieder, William & Renee	Rieland, Shirley	Zaborski, Tom & Julia
			Zachman, Jeff & Linda
			Zackoski, Michael & Kimberly
			Zaczkowski, Marie
			Zenzen, Art & Marilyn
			Zimmer, Chris & Sarah
			Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris

Kansas connections to Big Birch Lake

(Editor's Note) The following article was written by Julia Norman Zaborski, a summer resident of the North Shore of BBL. The story was originally intended for the 2007 book, History of Big Birch Lake.

Mr. John Norman, a local banker in Troy, Kansas quizzed Mr. Finley, a real estate salesman also from Troy, about some property Finley owned in Minnesota with the prospect of good fishing. Norman and his wife, son and 16 year-old daughter, Vera, arrived in Minnesota by train in the summer of 1905 to check out a promised bounty. They disembarked from the train at the station in Ward Springs and stayed at the Mossman's home on Little Birch Lake.

The fishing on Big Birch Lake proved to be excellent, the lake being filled with many varieties of fish including walleye, bass, rock bass, and huge sunfish. Frogs were found everywhere in the water and on the shore. Turtles lived in the swampy area of reeds and cattails where the north shore curves towards the west. They were often found laying their eggs in the sandy beach and lawn. Crayfish, grasshoppers, butterflies, bunnies and fireflies were in great abundance all during the summer months.

The beach on the north shore was wider than it is today with approximately 15 feet more of gently sloping shoreline. Later, the Norman family stayed there in a rental cottage in the Finley/Kohls Addition on the north shore next to the cemetery and by the Young farm.

Eventually a fire destroyed the rental cottage and John's launch (a boat with the motor in the center of the boat with leather seats around the edges) which he had stored there. John Norman bought the empty lot and built his own cottage there. Vera, now married to Paul Brown of Troy, also bought and built, on property next to her parents. (Today a Norman great-great-grandson lives in the cottage by the cemetery, my nephew; today a Norman great granddaughter lives in the other one next door, that would be me!)

To the west of the Norman cottage and directly behind the cemetery, on a small hill overlooking the lake, Mr. Litchfield built what was referred to as "Litchfield Lodge." The lodge had a boathouse by the water where Mr. Litchfield kept his yacht, moving it into the lake on railroad tracks. Mrs. Litchfield was rarely seen outdoors all summer. Mr. Litchfield was a very successful businessman who dealt in farm implements in Iowa. While he was away from the lake

attending to business it was told that he had a single, long-stemmed rose delivered every day to his wife. (Today, my brother-in-law lives there.)

The original cottages were similar in style and construction, being more or less, one big room with partitions for bedrooms. The partitions went 2/3 of the way up to the ceiling and electricity lighted a single bulb hung from the center of the ceiling in each room. The cottages each had a stone fireplace, stone pillars for foundation and roof support, and a screened porch with heavy wooden shutters that were held up with a wooden stake to get a view. During storms, it was necessary to close and latch the shutters, a sometimes soggy undertaking. All water for drinking and cooking was from the outdoor hand-pumped well. No bathroom indoors, only an outhouse. All garbage was biodegradable and buried deep enough from skunks. Even tin cans were buried. The kitchen was in the back away from the lake, and consisted of mostly shelves for dishes and staple storage and included an ice box and coal-oil stove. The ice man delivered his ice several times a week and some of his paths became future roads.

Besides my ancestors, Normans and Browns; Finleys, Stronges, Larzelers, Hagis, all from Troy, Kansas, and Judge Jackson family from Atchison, Kansas spent their summers on the north shore of Big Birch Lake too along with the company of the Youngs, Kutters, Hammarstens, Harts, and Tanners of Minnesota. (Today another Norman great-granddaughter, my older sister, lives where what was known as "Grandmother Tanner's.") Many cottages built in the 1920's still remain, modified somewhat however. Today, five cottages on the north shore are occupied by descendants of the original families. The Judge from Atchison, Kansas has a grandson who has returned from Iowa to retire on the river in Melrose. Today sixth generation children from many states continue to make the trek to the north shore of Big Birch Lake with their parents who are still lured by the bounty of this fascinating lake.



Two social events occur on BBL each summer, the Fourth of July Fireworks, sponsored by BBL Area Charities and the Bob Show, which usually happens the second Saturday of August. The fireworks photo is from Mary Phearson.



Big Birch Lake Ice-over Dates

2021	December 7
2020	December 15
2019	December 2
2018	November 20
2017	December 7
2016	December 10
2015	December 19
2014	November 21
2013	November 27
2012	December 10
2011	December 6
2010	November 27
2009	December 10
2008	December 7
2007	December 1
2006	December 1
2005	November 30
2004	December 14
2003	November 29

SPONSORSHIP AS OF APRIL 1ST 2021

PLATINUM

Central Minnesota Credit Union - GE	Grey Eagle
Kutter Agency Inc.	Grey Eagle
Engelmeyer Land Services LLC	Melrose
Warrior Boats Inc.	Melrose

GOLD

Freeport State Bank	Freeport
Rahns Oil & Propane	Melrose
Outdoor News Inc.	Plymouth

SILVER

Freeport Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Freeport
Bitz Plumbing & Heating Services Inc.	Grey Eagle
Central MN Realty-Brandon Kelly	Grey Eagle
Double R Saloon Inc	Grey Eagle
Grey Eagle Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Grey Eagle
Dymoke Law Office P.A.	Melrose
Kemper Excavating	Melrose
Kraemer Lumber Co Inc	Melrose
Meadowlark Country Club	Melrose
Melrose 1 Stop-Sinclair	Melrose
Melrose Plumbing & Heating Services Inc	Melrose
Munson Feed Co Inc.	Melrose
New Munich Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Melrose
Edina Realty-Jeff Piersak	St. Cloud
Arnzen Construction Inc	St Rosa
RJ's Country Store LLC	St Rosa
St. Rosa Lumber Inc.	St Rosa

BRONZE

All Stars Sports Bar & Grill	Freeport
Hennen Floor Covering Inc	Freeport
Hennen Lumber Co Inc.	Freeport
Neville Hardware	Grey Eagle
Benchmark Real Estate-Judy Frieler	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	Grey Eagle
Plumbing on the Side	Grey Eagle
Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	Grey Eagle
Dan Schmidt Printing Inc	Melrose
Joe Hellermann Repair	Melrose
Melrose Bakery	Melrose
Norwex - Karen Molitor (320) 249-8000	Melrose
Centre Powersports & Marine	Sauk Centre
K&R Tax Service LLC DBA H&R Block	Sauk Centre

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS bigbirchlakeassociation.org

Big Birch Lake Association Board of Directors

Director	Representing	Lake Phone	Home Phone
Kevin Costello, Pres.	Area C Director		320-249-0472
Matt Everding	Area F Director		320-492-5902
Craig Tweedale, Treas.	Area J Director		608-317-6647
Jay Anderson	Area I Director		763-482-1926
Mark Erdmann	Area G Director		612-386-9254
Blake Johnson	Area D Director		612-910-3871
Deb Johnson	Director At Large		320-285-5833
Adrian Johnson	Area A Director		952-939-0939
Grant Niehaus	Director At Large		320-583-4939
Jeanne Niehaus	Director At Large		651-757-7475
Gary Rothstein	Area H Director		320-290-7818
Mike Sadlowsky	Director At Large		
Russ Sieben	Area B Director		320-256-3936
Larry Welle	Area E Director		320 894 6695

Big Birch Lake Association e-mail address: bbla@meltel.net

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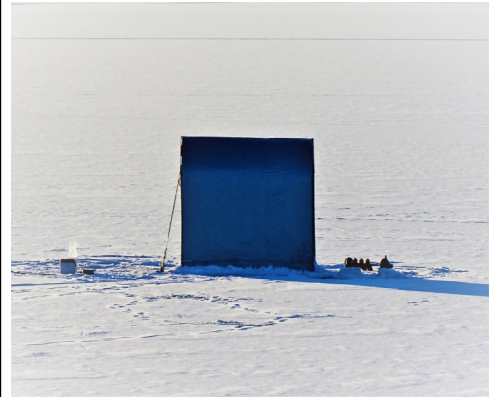
Kevin Costello, President

Robert Kutter, Editor

E-mail: bbla@meltel.net

Web Site: www.birchlakeassociation.org

Mission Statement: The purpose of the Big Birch Lake Association shall be to improve and protect water quality, to advance the propagation and habitat of fish and to protect the welfare of all wildlife in Big Birch Lake and adjacent areas.



Ice fishing was underway on the lake just before the Christmas holiday when ice was thick enough for portable houses. Photo by Robert Kutter

Walleye, bluegill survey results may impact future bag limits on BBL

By Grant Niehaus

The BBLA Fishing and Wildlife Committee thanks those who participated in the walleye and bluegill (sunfish) bag limit survey. We had 121 people complete the survey and the results indicate that 93 percent are in favor of reducing the walleye bag Limit from 6 fish to 4 fish and 82 percent are in favor of reducing the bluegill (sunfish) bag limit from 20 fish to 10 fish. We will pass this information along to the DNR. In the next year the DNR will hold a public forum prior to making this change.

From the gill net survey that was done this past Summer by the DNR, there appears to be an increase in walleye numbers which are a direct result of fingerling stocking between the DNR and the BBLA.

The BBLA Fishing and Wildlife Committee in conjunction with the DNR will be stocking walleye fingerlings during the Fall of 2022. The DNR will stock 642lbs of walleye fingerlings and the goal of the BBLA is to stock up

to 642lbs of walleye fingerlings to achieve the optimal stocking rate of 1284lbs of Walleye fingerlings for the lake.

However, the amount of walleye fingerlings stocked by the BBLA will be directly tied to the amount of funds available. We are asking for donations again to help cover the costs of walleye fingerling stocking in 2022. Donations can either be mailed to the BBLA earmarked "walleye stocking" or can be made through the payment/donate link on the BBLA website under Fishing/Wildlife donations. We will also be sending out mailers to folks around the lake as well as local businesses asking for donations. If you know people who are not members of the BBLA but fish for walleyes on BBL, please encourage them to donate as well.

Finally, the Fishing and Wildlife Committee will be placing new bedding in the various wood duck houses that were installed around the lake last year. This event will happen sometime in February. If time permits, we are also looking to build some mallard nesting tubes to install at various locations around the lake. If anyone is in-

terested in helping with either of these activities, please reach out to Grant Niehaus for more information.

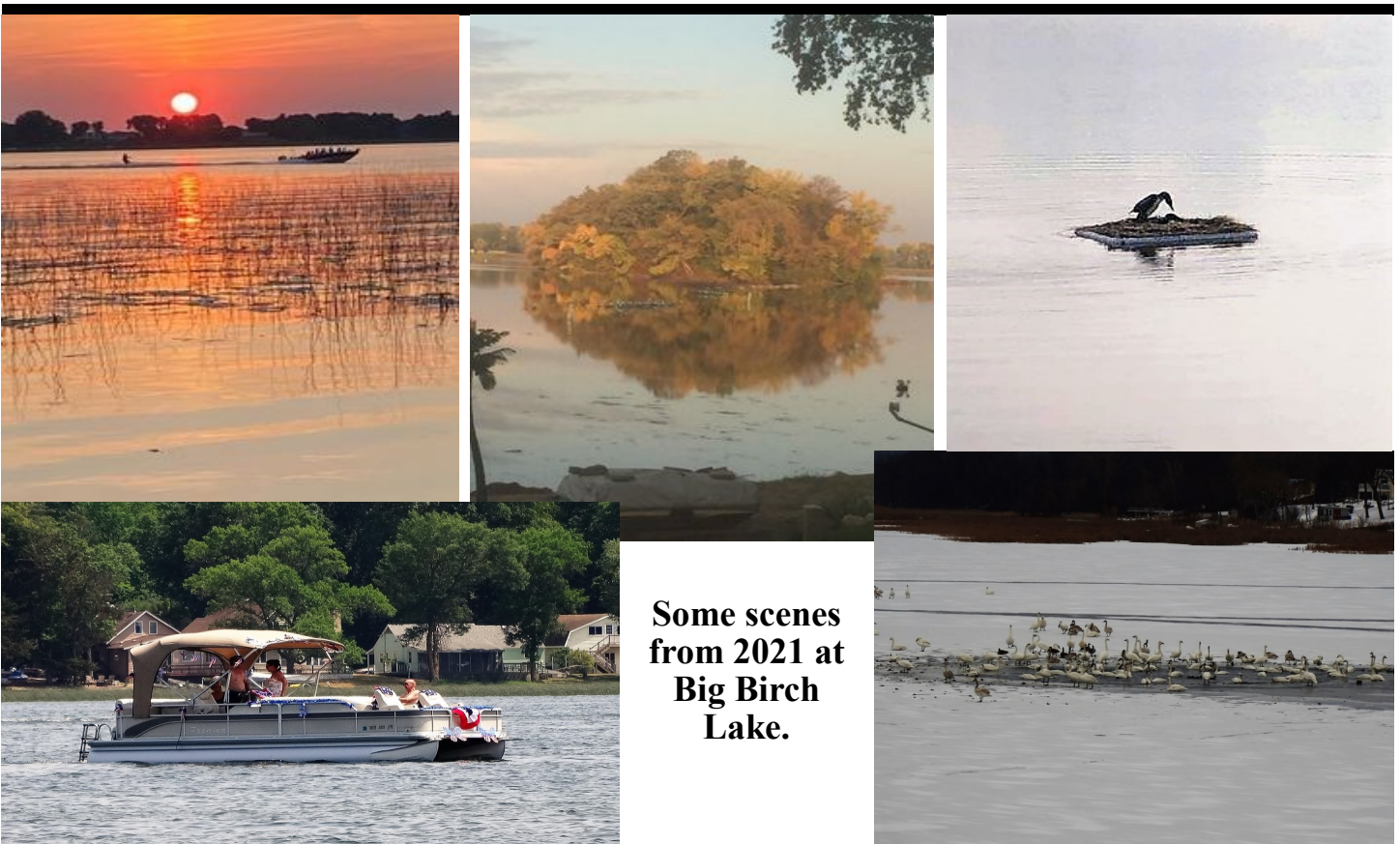
Again this year, an effort will be made to cleanup the lake after the ice-fishing season. Watch for detail through email and on the BBLA Facebook page.



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**Some scenes
from 2021 at
Big Birch
Lake.**