



# Big Birch Lake Association NEWSLETTER



No . 149

January, 2023

## BBLA/DNR stock 1300 lbs. walleye in BBL in Oct.

By Grant Niehaus

The Fishing and Wildlife Committee stocked 650 lbs. of walleye fingerlings at various public accesses around BBL this past October of 2022.

This 650lbs was matched by the DNR who also stocked 650lbs of walleye fingerlings in September of 2022. A combined 1300lbs of walleye fingerlings were stocked into BBL which amounts to 30,000 walleye ranging from 4-8 inches in length.

The committee extends a big "Thank You!" to all of those who donated to make this event a success and

ensure a strong walleye population for years to come. The individuals, organizations, and businesses who contributed to this stocking can be found on page 7.

Please remind your friends and family who fish BBL to release walleyes less than 14 inches so that these small walleyes have a chance to grow and become nice eating and trophy size fish. If you didn't get a chance to donate to the stocking event this year but would like to make a donation for future stocking events in the coming years, you are still able to do so. Either donate online on the BBLA website ([bigbirchlakeassociation.org](http://bigbirchlakeassociation.org)) under the payment/donate link and add your amount to the Fishing/Wildlife Donations category; or mail a check made out to the Big Birch Lake Association with "Walleye Stocking" in the memo.



Walleye stocking Oct. 22, 2022. Photo by Grant Niehaus.

### Calendar

BBLA Board Meeting

3/18/23

4/15/23

## BBLA thanks teams who checked for AIS in 2022

By Deb Johnson

The Aquatic Invasive Species Committee thanks all the plant access teams that checked our BBL accesses for invasive plants this past summer.

The five access areas were examined during 28 team visits from June through early October with no invasive plants (AIS) found. That's great news!

The team visits involve much rake-throwing (at least 10 times per visit) and much plant-sorting. Imagine picking through the mass of aquatic vegetation that the double-sided rakes pulled to the surface in Big Birch Lake this past August. It's a labor-intensive, messy job but an important one.

Many of these 22 team members have volunteered for this program for five years. They all deserve our appreciation and thanks.

### Weed Removal Stations

By Grant Niehaus

The DNR approved BBLA permits to build and install weed removal stations at all 3 of the DNR Public Boat Accesses (state forest, Hunter's Bay, and north bay).

These stations will allow for easy aquatic weed removal from one's boat/trailers prior to launching and when leaving BBL. The thought is that by providing people with the tools to easily clean their boat and trailer, more people will use these tools. This in turn will hopefully reduce the spread of AIS into BBL and other lakes. Keep an eye out in the April Newsletter on further details of these stations.

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# President's Letter

## Happy New Year from the BBLA Board of Directors.

Millwood Township, Stearns County, is in talks with the Big Birch Lake Association to review the St. Rosa access issues. The BBLA board is approaching this concern with the viewpoint of how changes to this access would affect the entire lake.

The concerns regard the condition of the boat launch, closing of access during the week to motorized watercraft when inspectors are not available and access availability in general.

The BBLA board is working with the township in reviewing how the access can be user friendly while keeping the invasive species issue in the forefront. (The St. Rosa Access was the point of entry for zebra mussels currently in Big Birch Lake.)

The board thanks director Grant Niehaus and his committee for the work they did to raise funds to stock walleye in BBL last fall.

You can now go online to make your donation for BBLA membership. Go to [bigbirchlakeassociation.org](http://bigbirchlakeassociation.org) to complete membership form. Minimum dues are \$50 but you may give above that amount.

You should have received a membership form in the mail as well. You can fill that out and send your membership check to BBLA, PO Box 342, Grey Eagle, MN 56336.

If you are interested in volunteering for the organization there are five committee opportunities for which you may want to participate. You can sign up with your membership or talk to your area director about how you may become involved.

The BBLA Board of Directors thanks Grant Niehaus and his committee for the work they did to raise funds for the walleye stocking. The stocking of walleye fingerlings was completed last October. (See story on page 1.)

## Annual ice and road ditch cleanup

By Grant Niehaus

The BBLA will have its annual ice cleanup day sometime later this winter. We drive around the ice on ATVs/snowmobiles and pick up any trash/debris left on the ice and public accesses from the ice fishing season.

## BBLA Financial Report

	Nov 30, 22	Nov 30, 21
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Checking/Savings</b>		
1005 · Checking-CMCU	1,803.97	1,125.67
1010 · Share Account-CMCU	35.90	35.90
1015 · My Goal Savings	400.62	400.59
1020 · Money Markey-CMCU	26,588.87	21,568.91
1050 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #1	111,663.59	110,877.28
1055 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #2	10,656.69	10,607.08
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	151,149.64	144,615.43
<b>Other Current Assets</b>		
1080 · Initiative Foundation Fund	42,745.25	50,970.36
1499 · Undeposited Funds	331.61	100.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	43,076.86	51,070.36
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	194,226.50	195,685.79
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
1200 · Building & Land	35,300.00	35,300.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	35,300.00	35,300.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>229,526.50</b>	<b>230,985.79</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>		
2550 · Reserve		
2551 · Aquatic-Invasive Species	100,000.00	100,000.00
2552 · Future Buffer Strips	14,495.72	14,495.72
<b>Total 2550 · Reserve</b>	114,495.72	114,495.72
<b>Total Long Term Liabilities</b>	114,495.72	114,495.72
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	114,495.72	114,495.72
<b>Equity</b>		
3990 · Unrestricted Net Assets	133,848.96	120,443.92
Net Income	-18,818.18	-3,953.85
<b>Total Equity</b>	115,030.78	116,490.07
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>229,526.50</b>	<b>230,985.79</b>

This event usually happens sometime in March or early April but is highly dependent on the weather.

We will communicate via our Facebook page when this event is scheduled, so keep an eye out on Facebook come March/April.

The Annual Road Ditch Clean Up will tentatively take place again on Earth Day

this year (April 22nd 2023). This is a big undertaking and we are always looking for volunteers to help out with this. If you would like to engage in this event, please reach out to your local Area Director and they can fill you in on the information as it gets closer to April. We will also post updates on our Facebook page on details of this event as well.

# Water, forests, hills create peaceful patch of planet

## Be grateful for those who preserved the forests

The crisp September morning shimmered with dewdrop beauty as hardwood trees began changing color. The last time in those woods I was a teenager, and the opportunity to spend three hours in a 93 acre forest adjacent to Big Birch Lake was a thrill.

Reacquainting myself with the forest affirmed my attachment to the land. Hillsides of elm, red oak, white oak, burr oak, American linden, (basswood) ironwood, sugar maple and paper birch helped me understand and appreciate why early white people came to the area to harvest the forest.

Riding a 4x4 over trails took me up close and personal with a forest in which we cousins had once ridden bikes, skied and sledged down hills in winter, skinny dipped in Fish Creek, (Adley Creek) competed to see who could most often cross the creek in one bound and wandered to the source of spring water that flowed from a hillside from which we drank.

Without the forest around BBL, the lake would lose its luster. It would appear like a prairie lake with a thin necklace of greenery.

We can be thankful to those who preserved the wooded lands and especially those who knew that keeping some of that forest for generations to enjoy in the form of the Big Birch Lake State Forest Campground was a decision made with foresight.

Tom Callahan, a Civil War Veteran, was the first white person to settle in the Big Birch Lake area in 1867. Others arrived with the promise of inexpensive or free land which they cleared for farming.

Entrepreneurs who saw the forest as a source of income and wealth soon followed. In conjunction with railroad barons, they purchased the land in the area and built a Northern Pacific spur line that stretched from Little Falls on the east to Morris on the west.

This 100 mile stretch of railroad was funded for the purpose of extracting the lumber from this area and shipping it to prairie for building homes and businesses.

Finished in 1872, the railroad went on to serve the freight and passenger needs of the area until the last freight train passed through the area in 1972. The last passenger train was in 1954.

There were several sawmills begun in the forests and with the arrival of the railroad the sawmills drew closer to the shipping source. One of the lumber shipping sites named Cogel Siding was located about half way between Grey Eagle and Burtrum.

At least two woodworking businesses were established in Grey Eagle to accommodate the growing demand for doors, windows, frames, flooring, ceiling, stairwork, store fronts, interior finishes or special order woodwork, but by 1912 those businesses fell to competition from larger manufacturers.

As the lumber industry was fading away, people began building cabins on area lakes. First they came and camped in tents and later built small summer cabins, a few of which are still standing.

When the Northern Pacific Railroad began offering passenger service to the area, people arrived at Grey Eagle and Ward Springs to spend summers at the area lakes.

By the 1930's most of the forested area had been converted to cropland, leaving a patchwork of widely scattered forty-to-80-acre farms with wood lots which were used for fuel wood, timber, and summer livestock shelters.

BBLA member Larry Zimmerman remembered walking through the woods from the farm where he lived on the east side of Big Birch Lake to a rural school in the 1940s. He recalled seeing large stumps from trees felled in an earlier time and realized that indeed lumbering was an important part of economy for the first white people.

The school Zimmerman walked to was located just up what is now called Ascot Road. Locally is was known as the Finnlander School, but was officially Todd County District #152.

The school, which my dad attended through the 8th grade, at one time had the largest graduating class in all of the Todd County rural school districts.



## Kutter's Column

Any evidence of a structure on the location of the school is long gone but one can see the flat land on which the building once stood.

I vaguely remember going inside the school as a child after it had fallen into disrepair. It certainly was an idyllic location for a school in the woods with Adley Creek nearby.

The school was called the Finnlander School because of the number of Finnish families in the area along the east shore of Big Birch Lake. They came to the area from Upper Michigan in the early 1900s, where they had worked in mines. They wanted land in the woods near water so they could hunt and fish.

There was trail along the east side of BBL that was close to the water in the early 1900s. There are locations where remnants of the road are still visible.

Grey Eagle merchants wanted a way for the Finnish community to get to town and those further south reaching as far as St. Rosa, so they lobbied to have a road built between the two communities. Todd County #47 and Stearns County #35 is that road, although it has had several alterations since it was first built.

We can all be thankful our ancestors left the forest mostly intact around Big Birch Lake. We can also be thankful for the glaciers that left a basin filled with water that humans labeled a lake. We are attracted to water and especially water surround with a forest.

Growing up here, I took for granted the splendors of the area, the water, the forests, the hills, the land. It wasn't until I moved away and came back that I realized what a beautiful, peaceful patch of the planet is now my home again. Now I understand heaven seems closer in a house beside the water.



## MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 2022

Althaus, Kurt & Lori	Fox, Thomas & Laurie	Lafayette Resort	Rutherford, Peter & Laurel
Anderson, Chadyienne	Frerichs Frank, Jane	Lambrecht, Craig	Rutherford, Tyler & Amy
Anderson, Jean	Froehling, Joseph	Langer, Denise	Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa	Fuchs, Lori	Larson, Brendan & Debi	Sand, Daniel & Mary
Anderson, Todd & Debbie	Gagne, Bob & Christine	Larson, Gayle & Karen Lemons	Savage, William & Sharon
Arulfo, Michelle	Gallagher, Pat & Caryn	Larson, Maxwell & Brenda	Schanhaar, Tom & Deb
Auger, John & Karen	Gangl, Dale	Lemieux, BJ & Rachel	Schiemann, Charles & Ellie
Austing, April	Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou	Lieder, William & Renee	Schiffler, Dean & Carla
Austing, Dick & Jane	Gerding, Dewayne & Alvina	Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy	Schlough, Thomas & Joyce
Becker, Isaac & Nancy St. Pierre	Gerner, Robert & Charlene	Linz, Curtis & Mary	Schmid, Judith
Becker, Virginia	Gordon, Brian & Kristen	Loehr, Jim & Renee	Schmid, Ted & Julie
Beckermann, Fran & Linda	Grossman, Jim & Jan	Logan, Guy & Suzanne	Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie	Grutsch, John & Jan	Mack, Murray & Sue	Schnettler, John & Jan
Benning, Ken & Mary Pat	Hammerstrom, Malia	Matchinsky, James & Roselyn	Schrivier, John & Lezlie
Benolken, Sue	Hatton, Rene & LuAnn	McConnell, David & Ann	Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Berg, Ken & Bev	Heinen, Nancy	Mehr, Mike & Lori	Schwartz, Dick & Ellen
Berg, Aaron & Becky	Helget, Ron & Becky	Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann	Schwartz, Stephen & Joan
Berg, Dwaine & Louise	Hendrickson, David & Colette	Messerich, Steve & Char	Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Bergmann, Ken & Marilyn	Hennemann, Kitty	Meyer, Barry	Sealock, Donald & Jennie
Beuning, James & Judine	Hess, Herb & Mary Kay	Meyer, Glenn & Dianne	Seep, Terry & Kimberly
Blommel, Mike	Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam	Meyer, Ken & Sherry	Seitzer, Jim & Belinda
Blommel, Leroy & Marilyn:Member	Hinnenkamp, Hollis & Mary Jo	Meyer, Juel	Shafer, Tom & Bonnie
Blommel Family	Hoffman, Dan & Janell	Meyer, Roy	Sieben, Kevin & Beth
Boecker, Elmer & Juliana	Holthaus, Ken	Meyer, Virg & Joyce	Sieben, Russell & Mary
Bomstad, Gary & Susan	Howe, Michael & Jeanne	Miley, Rod & Nancy	Sieloff, Justin
Borgerding, Clarence	Hughes, Bob & Sally	Mische, Hans & Julie	Silbernagel, John & Marie
Braegelmann, Pat & Sandy	Hughes, Dan & Liz	Moening, Lee & Judy	Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Brattensborg, Ruth	Hughes, Parry & Kathy	Mohr, Marilyn	Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Brixius, Bernie & Lisa	Humbert, Rick & Lois	Mohs, Dean & Sandy	Spanier, Eric & Jana
Broman, Mark & Marcia	Humbert, Ryan & Stacy	Molitor, Chick & Karen	Spears (Moening), Heather
Brunner, Paul & Lauri	Huseby, Robert & Christina	Molitor, Jon	Spence, Jim & Christine
Bruyere, James Jr	Ingold, Linnea	Moser, Scott & Helen	Stalboerger Family, Lorraine
Bullock, Lou & Debbie	Iverson, Ron & Jennifer	Moser, Jean	Starfield, Glenn & Katy
Bushman, Wayne	Jacobsen, James & Marjorie	Nathe, Mark & Ann	Steinbring, Brad & Denise
Butte, Rick	Jansen, Jeff & Teri	Nathe, Mike & Laura	Steinbring, John & Sandy
Campbell, Mel & Sherry	Jarsko, Judy	Neibling, Tim & Sue	Stomberg, Chuck & Nancy
Carlson, Shirley	Jepperson, Craig & Mary	Neville, Steve	Strack, Robert & Laurie
Carpenter, Todd & Laura	Jeske, Nancy	Niehaus, John & Mary	Tanner, Lucy
Carstens, James & Brenda	Jim Lind Family	Niehaus, Bob & Deb	Tembrock, Henry & Marion
Casper, Paul & Deb	Johnson, Adrian & Kay	Niehaus, Grant	Thelen, Steve & Amy
Caspers, John & Allyson	Johnson, Leonard & Amy	Niehaus, Anthony & Carol	Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Cavello, Butch & Amy	Johnson, Craig & Debra	Nohner, Kevin & Mary	Thompson, Rod & Sally
Cebuhar, Charles & Mary	Johnson, Don & Julie	Orth, David & Linda	Timmermann, John & Molly
Chaput, Larry & Bradley Johnson	Kadri, Abdu & Janice	Osendorf, Phil & Gail	Tomsche, David & Molly
Chirhart, James & Juanita	Kalgren, Rick & Ann	Osendorf, Rosemary	Tomsche, Dr. Ed & Theresa
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb	Kappes, Mike & Jannie	Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa	Tschida, Stewart & Amy
Claussen, Kim	Kelly, Brandon & Becky	Ostendorf, Lenore	Tschida, Wayne & JoAnn
Collins, Jim & Crystal	Kemper, Jeff & Linda	Ostrem, Justin & Amy	Tweedale, Craig & Mary Lou
Collins, Joyce	Kennedy, Dennis & Holly	Pakola, Howard & Barb	Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Comfort, Jeff & Julie	Kerfeld, Art & Rosie	Patch, Bruce	Van Beck, Chad & Brenda
Costello, Kevin & Ann	Kerfeld, Cheryl	Pavlivek, John & Kathryn	VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
Coulson, Brad & Jane	Kerfeld, Donald & Diane	Pelo, Rod & Phyllis	Vener, Mike & Kim
Czap, Neil & Catherine	Kerfeld, Glenn	Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia	Vener, John & Corinne
Damrow, Paul & June	Klaphake, Deb	Phillips, Rev Roger & Rosemary	Waldorf, Bernadine
Davis, Scott & Marjo	Klaphake, Florian & Doreen	Piersak, Jeff & Kim	Waldvogel, Dennis
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth	Klapperich, John & Suzy	Piersak, Thomas	Walker, Tom
Dinndorf, Don	Klasen, Kyle & Stacy	Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence	Wander, Dave & Joan
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill	Klasen, Vern & Marlene	Plombon, Roger & Gloria	Ward, Rick & Missy
Dougherty, Tim	Klocker, Barbara	Poganski, Rock & Marcia	Warnert, Ron & Lee Meyer
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam	Kloos, Mike & Becky	Powers, Robert & Kathleen	Weinman, Roger & Constance
Duevel, Jerome	Kluempke, David	Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine	Weitzel, John & Mary
Duncomb, Bruce & Vicki	Kluempke, Jim & Cathy	Pundsack, Craig & Lisa	Weitzel, Michele
Elfering Family, Evelyn	Koch, Bob & Connie	Rahn, Dave & Lisa	Welle, Larry & Rose
Elieff, Daniel & Julie	Kohorst, Don & Loni, Bob & Joan	Rasmussen, Steve	Wiebolt, Bernard
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl	Konsor, Stephen & Karen	Refsland, Curt & Mary	Wolters, Ronald & Kathy Hinnenkamp
Erdmann, Mark & Summer	Kotsmith, Randy & Karen	Rieger, Joel & Pamela	Zaborski, Tom & Julia
Erickson, Russell	Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon	Rieland, Shirley	Zachman, Jeff & Linda
Ersland, Mary Kay	Krig, Gary	Rieland, Chuck & Lucy	Zackoski, Michael & Kimberly
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer	Kuehne, Robert	Rieland, Matt & Shari	Zaczowski, Marie
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah	Kuehne, Ron & Midge	Rieland, Mike & Mary	Zenzen, Art & Marilyn
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer	Kunkel, Phil & Rose	Ritter, Greg & Barb	Zimmer, Chris & Sarah
Family of Lovell & Bertty Richie	Kutter, Robert & Nancy	Roe, John & Janet	Zimmerman, Larry & Marion
First, Pete	Kutter, Wayne & Sherry	Rothstein, Gary & Ruth	Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn	Kyllo, Carole	Rudolph, Jerry & Deb	
		Russell, Jim & Mindy	

## Big Birch Lake Association Board of Directors

Director	Representing	Phone
Kevin Costello, Pres.	Area C Director	480-250-3698
Matt Everding, V. Pres.	Area F Director	320-492-5902
Craig Tweedale, Treas.	Area J Director	608-317-6647
Jay Anderson, Sec.	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
Brandon Kelly	Area E Director	320-491-6107
Hans Mische	Director At Large	320-250-9002
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	612-366-5494
Steve Thelen	Area B Director	320-309-9881

Big Birch Lake Association e-mail address: [bbla@meltel.net](mailto:bbla@meltel.net)

The Big Birch Lake Newsletter is an official publication of the Big Birch Lake Association, Inc.  
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Web Site: [www.birchlakeassociation.org](http://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.**

## Thank water quality volunteers

### By Grant Niehaus

I would like to extend a big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped take and analyze water samples this past year at the various streams that flow into BBL for ortho phosphorous. These volunteers include Rick Butte, Sherry Kutter, Mike Sadlowsky, and Chuck Schiemann.

Using the ortho phosphorus data from the last 23 years, we plan on revisiting our current buffer plan along Fish Creek to see if we can make any changes as well as look at implementing new buffers at other sites around BBL.

Limiting the amount of phosphorus entering the lake will help reduce the abundance of algae and weed growth that we have been seeing the last few years.

This is also a good reminder to use phosphorus free fertilizer (if you choose to fertilize your lawn) around the lake as well as dispose of any yard and beach waste in areas that won't run back into the lake.

## Obituary of lake resident

**Cathy A. Groth**, age 76 of Grey Eagle (Big Birch Lake) and Cape Coral, Florida, passed away suddenly from complications of dementia on Sunday, December 18, 2022 at the CentraCare Hospital in Melrose, Minnesota.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Cathy Ann Ripley was born April 21, 1946 in Worthington, Minnesota to Russell and Eunice (Carlson) Ripley. She graduated from Luverne High School in 1964, the year the Cardinals boys basketball team won the state championship. Cathy graduated from the University of Minnesota with two degrees. She was united in marriage to Larry Groth, raised 3 children, and later divorced. In 2012, she married Greg Gervais in Maui, Hawaii. After a successful working life, Cathy retired in 2018 and spent her summers in Grey Eagle and her winters in Florida.

Cathy wasn't happy unless she was rearranging or redecorating her house. Instead of buying a picture that matched the color of her walls, she would buy the picture and have Greg repaint the room to match the picture! Cathy loved spending time with

Greg and some of their favorite times together were spent traveling the world, especially their trips to Europe.

Survivors include her husband, Greg Gervais of Grey Eagle and Cape Coral, Florida; sons, Jason Groth of Plymouth, Christopher (Angie) Groth of Plymouth, and James (Michelle) Groth of Mound; three grandchildren, Maria Groth of Duluth, Grace Groth of Duluth, and Ella Groth of Plymouth; mother, Eunice Ripley of Luverne; siblings, Robyn (Dennis) Nowka of Luverne, Vicky Atwood of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Sally Ripley of St. Paul, Russell "Scott" Ripley of Dassel, Kim Ripley of Golden Valley, and Lisa (Tom) Lahr of Butte, Montana. Cathy was preceded in death by her father, Russell Ripley; brother, Randy Ripley; and sister, Paulette Ripley.

## Big Birch Lake Ice-over Dates

2022	December 4
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 MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> 2022



### PLATINUM

Opatz Metals & Roloffs	Holdingford
Spirit Liquor	Melrose
Warrior Boats Inc	Melrose



### GOLD

Central Minnesota Credit Union - GE	Grey Eagle
Central MN Realty-Brandon Kelly	Grey Eagle
Rahns Oil & Propane	Melrose



### SILVER

Freeport Trucking	Freeport
Grey Eagle Electric Inc	Grey Eagle
Double R Saloon Inc	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	Grey Eagle
Lake Country Storage LLC	Melrose
Proliant Dairy Inc	Melrose
Kemper Excavating	Melrose
Melrose Electric Inc	Melrose
Meadowlark Country Club	Melrose
Melrose Plumbing & Heating Services Inc	Melrose
North Risk Partners	Melrose
Kraemer Lumber Co Inc	Melrose
Freeport State Bank	Melrose
Hoffman Tree Service	Sauk Centre
Main Street Title & Closings LLC	Sauk Centre



### BRONZE

All Stars Sports Bar & Grill	Freeport
Hennen Floor Covering Inc	Freeport
Hennen Lumber Co Inc	Freeport
Neville Hardware	Grey Eagle
Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	Grey Eagle
Econ-O-Wash Laundromats	Melrose
Engelmeyer Land Services LLC	Melrose
Bussmann Properties LLC	Melrose
Bueckers, Ervin	Melrose
Mayers Inc	Melrose
CAP Enterprises of Melrose Inc	Melrose
Grey Eagle Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Melrose
Spanier/Nathe Cabinets LLC	Melrose
Munson Feed Co Inc	Melrose
Minnesota National Bank	Sauk Centre
Tim Kampsen Agency	Sauk Centre
Centre Powersports & Marine	Sauk Centre

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS [bigbirlakeassociation.org](http://bigbirlakeassociation.org)

## 2022 BBLA Walleye Stocking Donors as of Dec 1st 2022

Althaus, Kurt & Lori  
 Arnzen Construction Inc  
 Auger, John & Karen  
 Backwoods Outdoors LLC  
 Baywatch Villas Association  
 Beckermann, Fran & Linda  
 Becky's Salon  
 Berg, Dwaine & Louise  
 Berg, Ken & Bev  
 Beuning, James & Judine  
 Braegelmann, Pat & Sandy  
 Brunner, Paul & Lauri  
 Bruyere, James Jr  
 Bullock, Lou & Debbie  
 Campbell, Mel & Sherry  
 Carstens, James & Brenda  
 Casper, Paul & Deb  
 Cavello, Butch & Amy  
 Coborn's Incorporated  
 Costello, Kevin & Ann  
 Coulson, Brad & Jane  
 Damrow, Paul & June  
 Dinndorf, Don  
 Dobesh, Jeff & Jill  
 Dougherty, Tim  
 Duevel, Jerome  
 Duncomb, Bruce & Vicki  
 Eagle Fabricating & Water Walker Dock Systems  
 Enneking, Gene & Cheryl  
 Erdmann, Mark & Summer  
 Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer  
 Famo Feeds Inc  
 Femrite, Scott  
 Fox, Thomas & Laurie  
 Freeport State Bank  
 Freudenrich, Jeremy & Holly  
 Gagne, Bob & Christine  
 Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou  
 Gordon, Brian & Kristen  
 Grey Eagle/Burtrum Lions Club  
 Grutsch, John & Jan  
 Hinman, John & Kathy  
 Hoffman, Dan & Janell  
 Hughes, Bob & Sally  
 Humbert, Rick & Lois  
 Ingold, Kirk & Mandi  
 Ingold, Linnea  
 Iverson, Ron & Jennifer  
 Jepperson, Craig & Mary  
 Jim Lind Family  
 Johnson, Adrian & Kay  
 Kalgren, Rick & Ann  
 Kelly, Brandon & Becky  
 Klasen, Vern & Marlene  
 Koch, Bob & Connie  
 Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon  
 Kraemer Lumber Co Inc  
 Krig, Gary & Margaret  
 Larson, Brendan & Debi  
 Lind, Kevin  
 Linz, Curtis & Mary  
 Loehr, Jim & Renee  
 Mack, Murray & Sue  
 Martland, Richard & Marge Anderson  
 Mehr, Mike & Lori  
 Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann  
 Melrose Lions Club  
 Meyer, Barry  
 Meyer, Glenn & Dianne  
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 Niehaus, Anthony & Carol

Niehaus, Bob & Deb  
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 Nohner-Black, John  
 Orth, David & Linda  
 Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa  
 Patch, Bruce  
 Phillips, Rev Roger & Rosemary  
 Plombon, Roger & Gloria  
 Poganski, Rock & Marcia  
 Pundsack, Craig & Lisa  
 Rahns Oil & Propane  
 Rasmussen, Steve  
 Refsland, Curt & Mary  
 Reis, Cole & Kyla  
 Richie Family  
 Rieland, Chuck & Lucy  
 Rieland, Shirley  
 Rothstein, Gary & Ruth  
 Roving Hillbillies Snowmobile Club  
 Russell, Jim & Mindy  
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 Rutherford, Tyler & Amy  
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 Schanhaar, Tom & Deb  
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 Schiffler, Dean & Carla  
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 Schwartz, Stephen & Joan  
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 Sieben, Russell & Mary  
 Sieloff, Justin  
 Silbernagel, John & Marie  
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 Spanier, Eric & Jana  
 St Rosa Jaycees  
 St Rosa Lions Club  
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 Steinbring, John & Sandy  
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Walleye fingerlings released into BBL in Oct.  
 Photo by Grant Niehaus

## Trumpeter swans now common migrants in fall on BBL

By Robert Kutter

Growing up at BBL, I never saw a swan on the water. Now swans are a common sight in the fall migration.

They were once eliminated from Minnesota and across much of the United States in the 1880s due to overharvest for food and feather value as a fur trade item to make powder puffs.

The largest concentrations of breeding swans occur in north-central Minnesota and west of the Twin Cities.

For more than 20 years, reintroductions occurred in various areas throughout the state. By 2010, the state's winter population estimate was about 6000 birds. Today, Minnesota has the largest population of trumpeter swans in the upper Midwest.

The trumpeter swan is the largest native waterfowl species in North America. Risks include loss of wetland habitat, being shot illegally, and poisoning from lead shotgun pellets and fishing weights according to a 2016 report in the Outdoor News.

"The species is now flourishing in Minnesota thanks to a decades-long restoration efforts by the DNR and others," according to Tori J. McCormick, a contributing writer to the Outdoor News.

By now I probably have over a hundred photos of trumpeters. I first saw them land on the lake in the fall of 2007. I grabbed my camera, went behind the house and tried to carefully get close to the shore without scaring them off. They are skittish and quickly swim away with the first sign of movement.

Fifteen years later, they are common on the water and on surrounding farm fields in the fall. In some fall seasons the numbers are greater than others. Sometimes they stay for days, and other times they are gone by morning.

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Trumpeters are not to be confused with the somewhat smaller tundra swans even though they look alike. Tundra swans, like the trumpeter swans, mate for life, but do not sound alike. Tundra swans were once known as the whistling swans.

Trumpeter swans arrive on BBL in later October or early November. Depending upon the weather, they will hang out with their offspring for a week or more feeding close to shore. Using their long necks they turn bottoms up and eat aquatic plants from the lake bottom.

Impatiently waiting for what the swans bring up, mallards are nearby to gobble up anything available.

Bird watching is fun in any season, and watching the largest north American waterfowl each fall is now something we can look forward to each fall.

The photos of swans to the right are some of my favorites over the years.

