



Big Birch Lake Association NEWSLETTER

No 156

October, 2024

Calendar

Board elects Tweedale BBLA President

President's Letter

At the September BBLA Board of Director's meeting I was elected as the new president of the Big Birch Lake Association. If there is one thing I have learned in my life it is the only thing that remains constant is change.

Our past president, Kevin Costello, after years as president, was ready to take on a different role. Costello was elected as treasurer and Matt Everding was re-elected as vice president.

We are grateful for Kevin decision to stay on the board as his years of experience and talents are needed.

For those of you who do not know me, I have been serving as the BBLA treasurer since 2017. I am the Area J Director, volunteer on the AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Committee and enjoy putting out the loon nests every year with the assistance of family and friends.

I have been coming to Big Birch Lake since 1972 when I was invited by Mary Lou Tie-mann to her parent's cottage. Like many of you, I fell in love with the lake and the area.

My wife (Mary Lou) and I eventually built our place on the lake and retired here in 2017.

My goal moving forward is to follow and honor our association's mission statement put forth by our predecessors. I will always remember their words and remind others as we move forward with future initiatives.

Last but not least, I and the BBLA Board of Directors will like to thank the numerous volunteers that work so hard in helping to preserve our lake and its surroundings. We would also like to thank all of our members for their support of the BBLA. Without you we could not accomplish so much and keep the lake "healthy" as stated by the recent study from Steve McComas, the Lake Detective.

Craig Tweedale, President

Johnson thanks teams who check accesses for invasive plants

By Deb Johnson

Deb Johnson, chair of the AIS Committee, thanks all the plant access teams that checked the BBL accesses for invasive plants this past summer.

The five boat access areas were examined during 29 team visits from June through late September with no invasive plants (AIS) found. They have a couple more checks to go, but that's great news!

The team visits involve a lot of 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 seven years. They all deserve our appreciation and thanks.

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BBLA Board of Directors

Names	Areas	Phone
Craig Tweedale, Pres.	Area J Director	608-317-6647
Kevin Costello Treas.	Area C Director	480-250-3698
Matt Everding, V. Pres.	Area F Director	320-492-5902
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
Brandon Kelly	Area E Director	320-491-6107
Bill Lieder	Director At Large	320-733-2777
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 A&B Director	320-309-9881

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

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Craig Tweedale, President
 Robert Kutter, Secretary and Newsletter 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.

Obituaries of lake residents

James "Jim" Matchinsky, age 85, passed away peacefully on July 27, 2024.

Born on May 11, 1939, in Melrose, Minnesota, Jim was a cherished husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Rose, his children, Michael (Jill), Ann (Kevin Costello), Wendy (Mark Ell), Karl, Gary (Susan), twelve grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, brother Alan (Karen), and sister-in-law Margaret (Bob). He was preceded in death by parents Frank (Bud) and Helen Matchinsky, brothers Robert and Richard, and sister-in-law Jace.

Jim was an avid entrepreneur and adventurous in all his professional endeavors. After graduating from Melrose High School, he proudly served in the U.S. Army where he was stationed in Germany studying and practicing in the medical field. He was honorably discharged in 1961 and married his high school sweetheart the following year. Careers as a pharmaceutical sales

rep and a restaurant owner covered five states before his move back home to his beloved Melrose. Jim joined Melrose State Bank working in insurance and real estate until his entrepreneurial spirit took over and he and Rose bought the Hardware Hank store and a small hobby farm in Grey Eagle. He was active as a member of the Jaycees, the Chamber of Commerce, St. Mary's choir, and much more. In 1981 Jim packed up the family and moved to Tempe, Arizona to start his final career in wholesale printing as an owner/operator of Business Cards Tomorrow. This evolved into three locations in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, all of which are still in operation today.

Beyond his professional life, Jim loved hunting, fishing, music, and en-

tertaining. He passionately enjoyed all activities surrounding Birch Lake and the mountains of Arizona. There was nothing more important than his family as he looked forward to summers and holidays spent with his grandkids, extended family, and friends. Jim was a devout Catholic, deeply committed to his faith. He was a generous supporter of the Church, charities, and helping those in need. His kindness and philanthropy touched many lives and left a lasting impact on those around him. Jim will be remembered for his remarkable life, filled with love, laughter, and faith. He leaves behind a rich legacy and his spirit will continue to inspire those who knew and loved him. **Obituaries continue on page 4**

BBLA Financial Report

		Aug 31, 24
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1006	· Checking -Stearns Bank	2,606.60
1060	· Certificate of Deposit	129,780.96
1005	· Checking-CMCU	2,012.45
1010	· Share Account-CMCU	35.90
1015	· My Goal Savings	0.00
1020	· Money Markey-CMCU	55,896.98
Total Checking/Savings		190,332.89
Other Current Assets		
1080	· Initiative Foundation Fund	53,465.55
1499	· Undeposited Funds	100.00
Total Other Current Assets		53,565.55
Total Current Assets		243,898.44
Fixed Assets		
1200	· Building & Land	35,300.00
Total Fixed Assets		35,300.00
TOTAL ASSETS		279,198.44
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Long Term Liabilities		
2550	· Reserve	
2551	· Aquatic-Invasive Species	100,000.00
2552	· Future Buffer Strips	14,495.72
Total 2550 · Reserve		114,495.72

What is the future of Big Birch Lake?

How do we care for this body of water going forward?

Those lazy, hazy days of summer took over September this year. Warm temperatures and almost no rain added a month of summer.

Is that unusual? I would say yes. Those of us who have known this lake more days than we care to admit are not likely to recall such an extension of summer.

So what are we to conclude? Will it be like this going forward? Was this a one season anomaly? As the climate changes are we trending toward a fourth month of summer? I will leave that answer to the scientists. Do read the other stories in this issue from Steve McComas on the condition of the lake.

Sometimes these changes make us nostalgic for the way it was. Just a few years ago, I would tie a rope to the dock on a beautiful late August day with a north breeze, lower myself onto an air mattress, and float out observing the cloud formations overhead.

With the changes in the water, the ever present filamentous algae, I don't go in the water. I want the lake to be the lake I remember from childhood and from just seven years ago.

With my two feet beneath my chair, and looking at the lake from my second story perch, that is not today's reality.

The photo on this page was loaned to me by Julia and Tom Zaborski. It is the photo side of a postcard one could send to family and friends. To the best of my detective work, I believe the photo is from the 1930s.

Not many will recognize the scene, but it was the landscape I first observed as a child. The gravel road from Grey Eagle heads south to BBL and makes a sharp right turn. Straight ahead was the cartway to the water, now called the North Shore access owned by Grey Eagle Township. Cartways were developed to

harvest ice from the lake for summer refrigeration.

On the right is the Kutter farm, and at the lakeside on the right was Taylor's Dew Drop Inn, where I now live.

I do not know who owned the cottage on the left at the time, but when I was born, it was owned by Dr. Robert Hart and his wife Angie. He was a dentist in Long Prairie.

The gravel road to the left led to the other cabins on the North Shore. At the time there was no shortcut to the Rock Tavern from Grey Eagle. One would have to follow the gravel roads around the lake.

I spent more hours than my parents knew swimming and playing in the water at Hart's during the 1950s and 60s.



Originally, the cartway was considered the local public swimming beach until another beach owned by the township was created down the shore to the east.

We can look back at pictures from the past and recall how life was different. We herded dairy cows from the night pasture on the right across the road where they followed a lane to the day pasture.

Nearly everyone who wanted to get on the water launched their boats at the North Shore access. It was and is shallow with lots of sand to get stuck in. But remember back then boats were mostly



Kutter's Column

small fishing boats and a few small runabouts. My brothers and I used the farm tractors to pull vehicles out when they got stuck in the sand and could not get up the hill.

Back to today's reality, the Grey Eagle Township has declared the access for non-motorized boats only.

Paved roads and fast moving traffic is the current norm on the roads. Pontoon boats are the most common means of water transportation.

Mostly, there are many more people living around the lake than there was 80 years ago. So it is expected that the lake has changed significantly over time. Will the water quality improve? Will the filamentous algae go away? Will their be less vegetation to get tangled in? I don't believe anyone knows at this point. We have to wait to understand what the science of lakes reveals. Until then we can all do our part to keep chemicals, trash, lawn clippings, and unused bait out of the water.

We can't live in nostalgia, but can recall and record how BBL was different in decades past. What have we learned about this body of water that will teach us how to care for it in the future?

The beautiful sunrises and sunsets in early October are once again reminders that heaven seems closer in a house beside the water.

Charles “Chuck” Cebuhar died peacefully in Memory and Hospice Care at the VA in St. Cloud, MN. He was from Edina and formerly from Cedar Rapids, IA.

He was born to Mary and Vincent Cebuhar in Rathbun, Iowa after they immigrated from Italy and Croatia.

After high school, Chuck served in the US Army in Okinawa, Japan in WWII. He received a Purple Heart, the Bronze Start and numerous other awards.

Upon returning from Okinawa, he entered and graduated from the University of Iowa Law School. Chuck began his career with the IRS. He then went into banking; eventually owning with his partners, United State Bank in Cedar Rapids. After retirement he became CEO of the bankrupt Morris Plan. With his perseverance, he transitioned it into First Security Savings and Loan in Cedar Rapids, taking over the leadership of that bank as well. Chuck was very community minded, and served on the board of many organizations.

Chuck was a friend to many, and mentor to family, friends and associates. He was happiest when help others, whether it be planting flowers and trees or working on a special project. He also enjoyed playing Bridge.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his nine siblings and Marlene Cebuhar, the mother of his children.

He is survived by his living wife and soulmate, Mary, and his children. Tony (Joni) and Mary (Tom Peremsky). He is also served by his bonus children, Tim Lieder, Jon Lieder (Sharla), Bill Lieder (Renee) and Kristin Latuff (Brent). As well as nine bonus grandchildren and eleven bonus great grandchildren. A family Celebration of Life was held at Big Birch Lake.

Thomas Lee Renard

Thomas Lee Renard, age 88, died peacefully on September 28 in Excelsior, MN. He was buried at St. Josephs Catholic Cemetery in Grey Eagle.

He was born in Green Bay, WI on April 16, 1936. Graduated from West High School in Green Bay, WI and the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

He was commissioned Captain in the US Army. He worked for Johnson & Johnson, President of Foley Belsaw and finished his career at Piper Jaffray.

He spent his boyhood playing football, basketball, track and tennis. He was an Eagle Scout and continued being a scout leader and community volunteer in adulthood.

He enjoyed fishing, bird hunting, and spending time at Big Birch Lake and his North Dakota farm.

He married his high school sweetheart and raised four children in Minnetonka. He was a totally devoted husband and found no greater joy than being with his family. He loved God and country, and he will be missed forever and loved every day/

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Jeanine Renard, sons Mark (Alicia) Renard, Thomas (Paige) Renard, daughter Jennifer (Hunter) Westbrook, daughter-in-law Deborah Renard, 11 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren, brother Jeff, nieces nephews and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents Winford and Lucille Renard, eldest son, Michael Renard and brother John Renard.
Editor’s Note: Jeanine Renard served several years on the BBLA Board of Directors.



Steve McComas spoke at the BBLA Annual Meeting in August. He prepared a report on the health of Big Birch Lake. The complete document will be available on the BBLA website at bigbirchlakeassociation.org Photo by Robert Kutter.

Big Birch Shoreland Conditions

By Steve McComas

The shoreland encompasses the shallow nearshore area, the shoreline and the upland area going away from the lake-front. Basically it is the area that lake residents own.

The shoreland area can support a variety of wildlife and helps filter nutrients before they enter the lake when a shoreline buffer of native vegetation is in place. Many of the parcels around Big Birch Lake have excellent native shoreland conditions. However, on the survey around the lake perimeter on July 12, 2024, it was observed some parcels

Adrian Johnson retires from BBLA Board

Adrian Johnson said he watched the board of directors grow and change over the years he served. He appreciates the hard work many put into the love of the lake by keeping it clean, healthy and safe. “There are a lot of talented people involved young and old. Keep it up!”

Transforming a donated building in Grey Eagle into a beautiful office and meeting venue for all of the community use was a highlight of his experience on the board.

Johnson came to the area when he married Arnold Berscheid’s daughter, Kay, from the north end of Little Birch Lake. Berscheid developed some lake lots from his farm, and in 1973 we bought the last two remaining lots. Then in 1980, we traded Chuch Hinnekamp as a down payment on his house on Little Birch.

In 1988, as we wanted more of a cabin and not a house, we took a boat ride around Big Birch and saw Rich Hinnekamp nailing a for sale sign on a large Birch tree. We fell in love with the white cabin with a wrap-around porch.

After our boat ride, I drove over and we made a deal.

“In 1999 we tore down the cabin and built our year-around Norson designed home. We love it.”

Over the years we loved the many resorts and stopping at the Rock Tavern with its many owners.

could improve the natural conditions of their shoreland area by maintaining at least a 15-foot deep buffer over at least 50% of their shoreline.

McComas reported the following about the water quality.

- Lake stratified to about 18 to 24 feet. Warm lake water resides on top of colder lake water.
- Dissolved oxygen to support fish is found down to 18 feet (6 meters) in July.
- Phosphorus concentration was measured at 16 ppb in July, 2024 which is low, which is good news.
- Overall, the lake water quality is above average.

State of the Lake Summary



Bill Lieder was elected to the BBLA Board of Directors on August 24 at the annual meeting. He is an at-large director and lives on the east shore of the upper bay. Photo by Robert Kutter

Lake holds good variety of aquatic plants

By Steve McComas

Big Birch Lake has a good variety of aquatic and shoreland plants. Examples of several common submerged aquatic plants. In 2004, the MnDNR conducted a plant survey on Big Birch Lake. A total of 22 aquatic and shoreland plants were observed and there are likely more species present if the whole lake was surveyed. Plants are essential for maintaining good water quality and offer terrific wildlife and fish habitat.

Based on available data no obvious pollution sources have been observed in Big Birch Lake but further testing is recommended especially for streams where there may be a question of the quality of incoming water.

Using water quality data, Big Birch Lake is an unimpaired lake based on ecoregion values and is in a protection mode rather than a restoration mode.

Ongoing lake water quality monitoring for nutrients and clarity should be continued. If water quality declines for three years in a row, a more detailed study to find the sources of excessive nutrients would be appropriate.

Zebra mussels will likely produce lake changes and lake monitoring for the three main water quality indicators (clarity, phosphorus, and chlorophyll) will aid in determining the magnitude of lake change.

By Steve McComas

Shoreland Conditions: Much of the lake shoreland is in excellent natural condition. A meander survey around the perimeter of the lake in 2024 found some parcels could improve natural shoreline buffer conditions with a 15 to 25 foot deep growth of native vegetation along at least 50% of their shoreline.

Water Quality: Water quality as measured by clarity (using a Secchi disc), nutrients (phosphorus), and algae (measured with chlorophyll) are within ranges of unimpacted lakes in the Northern Lakes and Forest ecoregion. The water quality in Big Birch Lake is very good.

Algae and Zooplankton: Typical algae and zooplankton species are found in Big Birch Lake. Although blue-green algae are present (cyanobacteria sometimes develop toxic strains) however their density is low and they are not harmful to pets or swimmers.

Aquatic Plants: A good diversity and at least 22 aquatic and shoreline plants have been identified. This diversity supports excellent water quality and fish habitat. Curlyleaf pondweed, a non-native plant, is present and is managed on as-needed basis. Eurasian watermilfoil, a non-native species, was not observed in 2024.

Zebra Mussels: The first observation was in 2018. They are past the point of eradication. Their growth will be abundant for a couple of years and then they will likely become food limited and their numbers will decrease.

Fish: Several gamefish species such as walleyes, northern pike, and yellow perch are present in Big Birch Lake at or above regional densities. The 2021 fish surveys found 16 fish species indicating a good diversity as well as good predator-prey interactions.

Lake Protection Projects: Big Birch Lake has good water quality conditions. Expensive restoration projects are not needed at this time. Rather, maintenance projects such as curlyleaf pondweed control, and protection projects such as installing and maintaining shoreland buffer strips are recommended. Lake residents can also help protect lake water quality by implementing good house-keeping projects that include low fertilizer use and enhancing native vegetation in shoreland areas. Ongoing monitoring should also continue.

Editor's Note: McComas presented the above information at the BBLA Annual Meeting this past August.



Filamentous algae was abundant in 2024. This condition is not expected to be a long term problem. Weather conditions in 2024 combined with zebra mussel impacts likely produced the abundant growth in 2024.

MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 2024

Althaus, Kurt & Lori	Froehling, Ronald & Lisa	Loehr, Jim & Renee	Schiemann, Chuck & Ellie
Anderson, Chadyienne	Fuchs, Brian & Lori	Logan, Guy & Suzanne	Schiffler, Dean & Carla
Anderson, Jean	Gagne, Bob & Christine	Mack, Murray & Sue	Schlangen, Brad & Angie
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa	Gangl, Dale	Malm, Scott	Schlough, Thomas & Joyce
Anderson, Todd & Debbie	Gasow, Ralph & Lori	Marshall, Karin	Schmid, Judith
Arulfo, Michelle	Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou	Martland, Richard & Marge Anderson	Schmid, Ted & Julie
Atkinson, Dan & Jan	Gerding, Dewayne & Alvina	Matchinsky, James & Roselyn	Schmidt, Jane
Atwood, Duane & Jody	Gerner, Robert & Charlene	McConnell, David & Ann	Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Auger, John & Karen	Gordon, Brian & Kristen	McQueen, Kathy	Schmit, Nick & Karen
Austing, April	Goulet, Evan & Emily	Mehr, Mike & Lori	Schmit, Nick & Karen
Austing, Dick & Jane	Grutsch, John & Jan	Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann	Schnettler, John & Jan
Baywatch Villas Association	Hammerstrom, Malia	Meyer, Barry & Denise Langer	Schriver, John & Lezlie
Becker, Isaac & Nancy St. Pierre	Hatton, Rene & LuAnn	Meyer, Glenn & Dianne	Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Beckermann, Fran & Linda	Helget, Ron & Becky	Meyer, Juel	Schwartz, Dick & Ellen
Beehler, Robyn & Roxanne Olsen	Hendrickson, David & Colette	Meyer, Ken & Sherry	Schwartz, Steve & Joann
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie	Hennemann, Kitty	Meyer, Virg & Joyce	Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Benning, Ken & Mary Pat	Hinman, John & Kathy	Miley, Rod & Nancy	Seitzer, Jim & Belinda
Benolken, Sue	Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam	Mische, Hans & Julie	Sexton Family Cabin
Berg, Dwaine & Louise	Hoeschen, Larry & Elaine	Moening, Lee & Judy	Shafer, Tom & Bonnie
Berg, Ken & Bev	Hoffman, Dan & Janell	Mohr, Marilyn	Sieben, Kevin & Beth
Bergmann, Ken & Marilyn	Hotzler, Mark & Jane	Mohs, Dean & Sandy	Sieben, Russell & Mary
Bergquist, Randy & Missy	Howe, Michael	Molitor, Chick & Karen	Silbernagel, John & Marie
Bertram, Steve & Pam	Hughes, Bob & Sally	Molitor, Jon	Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Beuning, James & Judine	Hughes, Dan & Liz	Moser, Helen	Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Blommel Family	Hughes, John & Susan	Moser, Helen	Spanier, Eric & Jana
Blommel, Leroy & Marilyn:Member	Hughes, Parry & Kathy	Moser, Jean	Spears (Moening), Heather
Bondhus, Adam	Hughes, Tim & Kristine	Mueller, Jerry	Spence, Jim & Christine
Borgerding, Clarence	Humbert, Rick & Lois	Nathe, Julie	Stalboerger Family, Lorraine
Braegelmann, Pat & Sandy	Huseby, Robert & Christina	Nathe, Mark & Ann	Starfield, Glenn & Katy
Brattensborg, Ruth	Ingold, Kirk & Mandi	Nathe, Mike & Laura	Steinbring, John & Sandy
Brixius, Bernard	Ingold, Linnea	Neville, Steve	Stomberg, Chuck & Nancy
Broman, Brad & Charlene	Iverson, Ron & Jennifer	Niehaus, Anthony & Carol	Strack, Bob & Laurie
Broman, Mark & Marcia	Jacobs, Dave & Diane	Niehaus, Bob & Deb	Studniski, Adam & Jolene
Brunner, Paul & Lauri	Jacobsen, James & Laura Carpenter	Niehaus, Grant	Tanner, Lucy
Bruyere, James Jr	Jansen, Jeff & Teri	Niehaus, Jeanne	Tembrock, Henry
Bruyere, Scott	Jarsko, Judy	Niehaus, John & Mary	Thelen, Steve & Amy
Bullock, Lou & Debbie	Jepperson, Craig & Mary	Olson, David & Cathy	Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Bushman, Wayne	Johnson, Adrian & Kay	Orth, David & Linda	Thompson, Rod & Sally
Bussmann, Scott & Andrea	Johnson, Blake & Ruth	Osendorf, Phil & Gail	Timmermann, John
Butte, Rick	Johnson, Craig & Debra	Ostendorf, Lenore	Tomsche, David & Molly
Campbell, Mel & Sherry	Johnson, Dan & Julie	Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa	Tomsche, Dr. Ed & Theresa
Carpenter, Todd & Laura	Kadri, Abdu & Janice	Ostrem, Justin & Amy	Trierweiler, Corey & Julie
Carstens, James	Kalgren, Rick & Ann	Pakola, Howard & Barb	Tschida, Wayne & JoAnn
Caspers, John & Allyson	Kappes, Mike & Jannie	Patch, Bruce	Tweeddale, Craig & Mary Lou
Cavello, Butch & Amy	Kemper, Jeff & Linda	Pavlivek, John & Kathryn	Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Cebuhar, Charles & Mary	Kerfeld, Cheryl	Pelo, Rod & Phyllis	Van Beck, Chad & Brenda
Chaput, Larry & Bradley Johnson	Kerfeld, Donald & Diane	Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia	VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb	Kerfeld, Glenn	Phillips, Rosemary	Vener, John & Corinne
Citrowske, Cheri	Klaphake, Deb	Piersak, Jeff & Kim	Vener, Mike & Kim
Collins, Jim & Crystal	Klaphake, Florian & Doreen	Piersak, Thomas	Viere, Kevin & Ann
Collins, Joyce	Klaphake, Steve & Pam	Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence	Voigt, Kenneth & Joan Zirbes-Voigt
Collins, Margaret	Klapperich, John & Suzy	Plombon, Roger & Gloria	Von Wahlde, Cody & Denea
Comfort, Jeff & Julie	Klasen, Kyle	Poganski, Rock & Marcia	Von Wahlde, Dan & Brenda
Costello, Kevin & Ann	Klasen, Vern & Marlene	Powers, Robert & Kathleen	Vowles, Willm & Dawn
Coulson, Brad & Jane	Klocker, Barbara	Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine	Waldvogel, Dennis
Damrow, Paul & June	Kloos, Mike & Becky	Pundsack, Craig & Lisa	Walker, Tom
Davis, Scott & Marjo	Kluempke, Cathy	Rahn, Dave & Lisa	Walters, George & Sue
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth	Kluempke, Cathy	Rasmussen, Steve	Wander, Dave & Joan
Dickhaus, Bob & Kris	Koch, Bob & Connie	Refsland, Curt & Mary	Ward, Rick & Missy
Dinndorf, Don & Vi	Konsor, Stephen & Karen	Richardson, David & Anna	Warnert, Ron & Lee Meyer
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill	Kotsmith, Randy & Karen	Rieger, Joel & Pamela	Weber, Tom
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam	Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon	Rieland, Chuck & Lucy	Wehlage, Mike & Julie
Duevel, Jerome & Kim	Krig, Gary & Peg	Rieland, Matt & Shari	Weitzel, John & Mary
Duncomb, Bruce & Vicki	Kuehne, Robert	Rieland, Mike & Mary	Weitzel, Michele
Elfering Family, Evelyn	Kuehne, Ron & Midge	Rieland, Shirley	Welle, Larry & Rose
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl	Kuhlmann, Mary	Ritter, Greg & Barb	Westbrock, Bruce & Linda
Erdmann, Mark & Summer	Kunkel, Phil & Rose	Roe, John & Janet:Member	Worms, Steven & Shirley
Erickson, Russell	Kutter, Lee & Gay	Roffes, Chuck	Zaborski, Tom & Julia
Erslund, Mary Kay	Kutter, Robert & Nancy:Member	Rothstein, Gary & Ruth	Zachman, Jeff & Linda
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer	Kutter, Wayne & Sherry	Rudolph, Jerry & Deb	Zackoski, Michael & Kimberly
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah	Lafayette Resort	Russell, Jim & Mindy	Zaczkowski, Marie
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer	Larson, Brendan & Debi	Rutherford, Peter & Laurel	Zehrer, Bill & Pam
First, Pete & Nicole	Larson, Maxwell & Brenda	Rutherford, Tyler & Amy	Zenzen, Art & Marilyn
Flanders, Josh & Stacy	Lemieux, BJ & Rachel	Sabrowsky, Gary	Zimmer, Chris & Sarah
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn	Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy	Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki	Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris
Fox, Thomas & Laurie	Lind, James & Maryellen	Sand, Daniel & Mary	
Freeman, Dave & Sue	Linn, Mike & Denise	Savage, William & Sharon	
Frerichs Frank, Jane	Linz, Curtis & Mary	Schanhaar, Tom & Deb	

SPONSORSHIP AS OF JULY 8TH 2024



PLATINUM

Opatz Metals & Roloffs	.....	Holdingsford
Leedstone	.....	Melrose
Warrior Boats Inc	.....	Melrose
Eagle Dock & Lift LLC	.....	Grey Eagle



GOLD

Atkinson Well Drilling LLC	.....	Freeport
Double R Saloon Inc	.....	Grey Eagle
The Rock Tavern LLC	.....	Grey Eagle
Lake Country Storage LLC	.....	Grey Eagle
Neville Hardware	.....	Grey Eagle
Central MN Realty-Brandon Kelly	.....	Grey Eagle
Hinman Lawn Service	.....	Grey Eagle
Kutter Agency Inc	.....	Grey Eagle
Kraemer Lumber Co Inc	.....	Melrose
Meadowlark Country Club	.....	Melrose
Melrose Plumbing & Heating Services Inc	.....	Melrose
North Risk Partners	.....	Melrose



SILVER

Magnifi Financial - GE	.....	Grey Eagle
Spiritz Liquor	.....	Melrose
Freeport State Bank	.....	Melrose
Rahns Oil & Propane	.....	Melrose
Bitz Plumbing & Heating Services LLC	.....	Sauk Centre



BRONZE

All Stars Sports Bar & Grill	.....	St Rosa
RJ's Country Store LLC	.....	Freeport
Hennen Floor Covering Inc	.....	Freeport
Hennen Lumber Co Inc	.....	Freeport
Freeport Trucking	.....	Freeport
Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	.....	Grey Eagle
Becky's Salon	.....	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	.....	Grey Eagle
Grey Eagle Electric Inc	.....	Grey Eagle
CAP Enterprises of Melrose Inc	.....	Melrose
Econ-O-Wash Laundromats	.....	Melrose
Engelmeyer Land Services LLC	Melrose
Dan Schmidt Printing Inc	Melrose

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McComas prepares report on status of fishery in BBL

By Steve McComas

This standard survey report summarizes data collected from 15 gill nets that were deployed the week of August 9, 2021. This report is an update from the standard survey report completed in 2018 (LakeFinder, Standard Survey 2018-08-06).

Catch comparisons can be made to previous standard surveys dating back to 1981. All nets are replicated from the previous survey during the same time of year so that valid comparisons can be made. Species targeted include Walleye, Northern Pike and Yellow Perch. Smallmouth Bass can also be effectively caught with gill nets on Big Birch but to a lesser extent.

Walleye is the primary management species, and management objectives are generally accomplished through stocking fry and fingerlings.

Evaluations of stocking success are completed by electrofishing (targeting young-of-year Walleyes in the fall of the year when spring-stocking of fry occurred) and by gill netting when adult fish are targeted 2-4 years after fry or

fingerlings were stocked.

The number and size of juvenile Walleye sampled by electrofishing can often predict the strength of that year class 2-4 years later. At this time, the 2018 year class appears to be fairly strong. These fish were about 13 inches long in 2021 and should be approaching 15 inches by the fall of 2022.

Since 2014, the number of Walleyes seen in surveys has trended upward so it's reasonable to expect fishing to improve. As anglers are aware however, the fish can be there but may not always be willing to bite.

A slight decrease in Northern Pike numbers may be evident. Lower density pike populations can be beneficial to other species in the community. DNR's management objective is for a low density population comprised of good numbers of fish over 26 inches. Generally, we see pike in our gill nets ranging from 15-30 inches in Big Birch, with higher numbers of smaller fish than large.

There is a history of targeted pike sampling which is completed right after spring ice-out using trap nets along the

shoreline. This type of targeted survey was completed in March and April of 2021. Noteworthy observations include a reduction in pike measuring over 30 inches from earlier targeted surveys. This was expected following the elimination of protective regulations in 2015.

Other results noted was the sample proportion of pike in the 22-26 inch range which corresponds to the statewide north-central zone pike regulation implemented in 2018. Over 32% of pike in the 2021 ice-out nets were within the 22-26 inch protected slot, the highest percentage observed since 1994. Yellow Perch, a primary prey species for pike and Walleye, have been quite variable in their abundance for the past 20 years in Big Birch. In 2010, we sampled above average numbers of perch, but in 2007 and 2018, we didn't sample a single one. Other years our catches were below average compared to other lakes similar to Big Birch.

The perch population appears less robust than we'd like to see and may be comprised of mostly smaller fish that are not vulnerable to our gill nets. Larger perch (4-7 inches) are not present in consistent numbers helpful in maintaining healthy Northern Pike and Walleye.