

Greetings Fellow Bootsters –

For those that don't know me, I am Fred Luckeroth. My wife, Chris and I have been residents on Boot Lake since 2001. Recently I was “elected” Chair Person of our Boot Lake Association. (Attached are the minutes from that meeting as well as the Board members meeting in August)

Our Association was organized in 1998 by a dedicated group of individuals that wanted to unite the property owners on the lake and provide a sense of community for all. Like all communities people come and go, as have all those founding members. So to provide continuity it is important that we reach out to all current and new property owners and encourage participation. As the founding members stated back then and it is still relevant today, we should remember that we are stewards of Boot Lake, we are “temporary” residents that are currently entrusted to protect our wonderful environment for all those that come after us.

So take a look at our latest annual meeting minutes. We are also going to try to produce a periodic newsletter to communicate any news, events or general information that may be useful for you to know. And let us know if you have any comments, questions or suggestions for our Association Board members.

Boot Lake Loons

We had a pair of adult Loons hatch two chicks in early summer on the north end of the lake. Only after a loon chick survives four or five weeks can you really start hoping that it will survive at all. We are glad to report that the chicks survived all the local perils – motorboats, birds of prey, large fish, snapping turtles, discarded fishing line. Hopefully they will survive the world's ecological perils – acid rain, mercury poisoning and the warming globe. After the first month they need another six or seven weeks to get big and strong enough to get airborne. It appears our loon chicks have beaten the local odds and will probably soon be able to lift off and head south.

Besides our family of four loons, we have occasionally had some singles visit our lake during the summer. One early August morning while fishing I saw a group of eleven loons cruising the lake, the most I have ever seen at one time. But how about this – researchers last year documented about 100 loons on Lower Whitefish Lake and 40 loons on Lower Hay Lake, both north of Brainerd. Apparently the loons congregate in late summer to fatten up on highly nutritious ciscoes, a type of whitefish that is a staple of these deep cold Minnesota lakes.

I try to impress on my grand kids how lucky they are to experience the sights and sounds of these grand birds. Loons now summer in less than a dozen states along the US northern border. And Minnesota's beloved loon population is stable at about 12,000 breeding adults — the largest in the U.S.

If you want to read about the latest efforts on loon conservation, here is a link to a recent article in the Mpls. Tribune.

<http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-on-the-cusp-of-a-new-era-of-loon-conservation/392254151/>

Burning Garbage

Do you still burn your garbage in a burn barrel? Torching garbage has serious consequences for the environment, and it is illegal — yet it's a Minnesota habit that's been hard to break.

If you still burn your garbage consider these facts:

Burning things such as plastics and rubber releases the potent carcinogen dioxin and other toxic compounds into the air, soil, and water. Almost all garbage in the modern waste stream releases toxins when burned, and these toxins can harm human health as well as local wildlife and habitat. Garbage burning also starts wildfires every year in Minnesota.

Burning garbage, whether in a fire pit or a burn barrel, has been against the law for decades in Minnesota. But it appears that many Minnesotans are still unaware, confused, or defiant when it comes to burning garbage. In a 2010 survey conducted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 33 percent of rural Minnesotans said they sometimes burn trash. Nationally, garbage burning is the largest source of human-caused dioxin emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

So now that you might understand the effects a little better, if you are still burning garbage out of "habit and convenience", please consider a garbage hauler, recycling, or packing it out if you are just up for the weekend.

To read an in depth article on garbage burning, check out this link:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/issues/2016/may-jun/illegal-burning.html>

Summer Storms

Although we had a couple severe summer storms in our Boot Lake area this summer, we can consider ourselves very lucky. That is because we really dodged a bullet from a big blow-down that hit less than 10 miles north of us ("as the crow flies") in Itasca State Park. Huge old growth red and white pines were snapped and twisted off. As we drove in the park from the East entrance off Highway 200 we were amazed at the number of trees down. But what was just as amazing, and somewhat puzzling, was why one tree would be twisted and snapped off and another right next to it was still standing tall.

The initial cleanup was just to clear roads, trails, parking areas, campgrounds, etc. But now the cleanup has been extended after Labor Day to areas 30 feet back off roads and trails. Beyond that most of the downed trees will be left as they are. So if you haven't had a chance yet to take a drive through the Park, do so and you will still see many sights of the power of Mother Nature !

To read a report of the storm go to this link from the Park Rapids Enterprise:

<http://www.parkrapidsenterprise.com/news/local/4080025-storm-rips-through-itasca-state-park>

DNR Fish Survey

In mid August of this year the DNR conducted a Lake survey on Boot Lake. Lake surveys consist of periodic monitoring and sampling of fish populations, water chemistry, and fish habitat. Lake survey data is used to track fish population trends, evaluate the effectiveness of management actions such as stocking, and establish realistic management goals for a given lake. Boot Lake has been surveyed about every five years with the first survey conducted in 1951.

The Gill net is the main piece of equipment used for sampling walleye, northern pike, yellow perch, cisco, whitefish, trout, and salmon. The standard gill net is 6 feet tall by 250 feet long, with 5 different mesh sizes. Gill nets are generally set in off shore areas in water deeper than 9 feet. Nets are fished for a period of 24 hours. Fish are captured by swimming into the net and becoming entangled. Fisheries workers record length and weight data from each fish, determine the sex, look for parasites or disease, and remove several of the fishes scales for determining the fishes age. Most of the fish taken in gill nets are killed, but only a small portion of the lakes fish population is sampled during an individual survey event.

The Trap net is the main piece of equipment used for sampling bluegill, crappie, and bullheads. The standard trap net is 4 feet tall by 6 feet wide with a 40 foot lead. Trap nets are generally set perpendicular to shore in water less than 8 feet in depth. Nets are fished for a period of 24 hours. Fish are captured by swimming into the lead and following it towards the trap. Most of the fish collected in trap nets are returned back to the water as soon as the necessary biological data is recorded.

The DNR publishes the survey data on the DNR internet site. In general, it takes about 18 months from the time the nets are lifted during a lake survey until the results of that survey are published on the DNR Web. The lake survey database contains information for about 4,000 different waters.

Doug Kingsley of the local Park Rapids DNR Fisheries office provided us at our request some preliminary data from this latest survey. Here are a few observations from this data.

In 2016, 33 walleyes were trapped averaging 2.2 lbs. The biggest was 26 inches. In comparison, in 2011, 47 walleyes were trapped averaging 1.7 lbs. The biggest was 24 inches. So weight and length of those recently sampled are slightly larger than five years ago. Now somebody just tell me how to catch them !!

In 2016, 60 northerns were trapped averaging 1.5 lbs. The biggest was 29 inches. Again, compared to 2011 when 88 northerns were trapped averaging 1.3 lbs. The biggest was 35 inches. So we still have too many small northerns in the lake.

In 2016, hundreds of sunfish/bluegills were trapped averaging less than a quarter pound with very few in the 6-7 inch range. In 2011, the sample was very similar. So we still have an over abundance of small sunfish in the lake.

One optimistic sample, if you can call it that, there were two crappies trapped; that is 2 more than in 2011 !!

Some miscellaneous information from the survey:

The temperature of the water was 74.5 degrees at the surface, and surprisingly stayed within one degree of this down to a depth of 18 ft. From this depth the temperature dropped off gradually to 46 degrees at 70 ft.

Also surprising was the oxygen level of the water (measured in parts per million) which was at its greatest level at 24 ft. It was within .5 of this level from the surface down to 26 ft, when it started dropping off. At 60 ft the oxygen level was zero.

And finally, the DNR counted approximately 75 homes/cabins on the lake, and about 90 docks.

To look at surveys from all the years 1951 through 2011 go to:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/showreport.html?downum=03003000>

Association Dues

A reminder, annual dues are \$10. If you haven't already paid you can make check payable to:
Boot Lake Association.

Send your dues to our Treasurer:

Craig Nieman

53199 Sunrise Lane

Park Rapids, MN 56470.

Boot Lake Ladies Coffee Group

The Ladies of Boot Lake gather for coffee on the first Wednesday of the month at 10am. All are welcome. If you would like to host for one of the gatherings and/or just join the group, send an email to Iris Shepard to be put on the emailing list: irisandkenshepard@gmail.com

You will be put on the email address list and notified each month of the location.