

News from Boot Lake

It was a quiet summer on Boot Lake.

Our open water season began on April 6 when the last of the winter ice disappeared. Almost immediately the loons were back from their winter home in the Gulf of Mexico to the chilly 40 degree water on Boot Lake. A few weeks later we had 8-10 swans visiting for a few days and feeding on aquatic vegetation along the shallow shoreline. We are unsure whether they were local area swans making the rounds or migrating swans passing through. But their sight and sounds were a welcome sign of warmer weather to come.

In May we had two pair of loons on the lake. Loons are territorial birds, and a mated pair will defend an area of water from other loons, thus we had a pair at each end of the lake. The pair on the south end of the lake were never observed nesting and no chicks were seen. The pair at the north end of the lake nested by the end of May on the northwest side of the lake on a piece of bog and were on their nest for about two weeks. But then suddenly they abandoned the nest for reasons unknown. But a week or so later they renested on the northeast side. About 4 weeks later two chicks hatched and were immediately out swimming and hitching rides on their parents back. Unfortunately only one of the chicks survived the summer.

It was a pleasant summer for weather on Boot Lake. We had mostly high temps in the 70's and 80's, with only 3 days getting to 90 degrees or above, and only 8 days where the high temperature did not reach 70 degrees. It was neither an overly wet nor a dry summer, but just enough rain to keep the vegetation nice and green. Our measurements recorded just over 3 inches of rain in June, a little drier in July with about 2 inches of rain, and then about 3 ½ inches in August. This compares favorably with the average precipitation for this area of 3 inches per month. We also avoided most of the severe storms in Minnesota this summer with the worst occurring late night on June 13. A very localized wind storm just after midnight took some trees down around the lake. Our dock was flipped sideways but other than that we did not hear of any property damage to homes or cabins.

How were the bugs this summer at your place? The ticks were out in force early on with the warmer weather in May. We heard of a couple of cases of tick borne illnesses in the local area. Personally we avoided any problems – “knock on wood” – and attribute this to the use of a clothing insect repellent with permethrin. This is an active ingredient that kills the insects when they get on the clothing, with no harmful side effects on humans when used properly.

We found the mosquitoes, horseflies, deer flies and black flies were not good as usual, but then again, not too bad this summer. This could be due to just the right amount of moisture and mild temperatures. Except for a stretch of several weeks in July when you could not go for a walk on the township and county roads without being chased down by the flies, all in all they were relatively tolerable this summer.

The weather was favorable also for wild berry picking. Enough rain came early for the raspberry and blueberry to develop good blossoms and then enough warm weather for the fruits to develop well. We found the raspberries to be somewhat sparse but when we found them there were good size berries.

The lake warmed up for a “refreshing” swim by the 4th of July but the cooler than average temps in August kept the water from getting above 74 degrees, slightly below an average year. We did several sechii disc readings during the summer to measure the clarity of the water. The best reading was 19 feet. This is the first time in the 20 years of measurement data we have that the clarity was less than 20 feet. Hopefully this is not a trend for the future.

Not all was peaceful and quiet this summer as several burglaries were reported here on the lake and the Two Inlets area in mid June. It is a reminder to get to know your neighbors and check on each others properties when they are away and always be on the watch for suspicious activity.

And finally, how did you do fishing? I have said many times that I have never had a bad day of “fishing” – the “catching” is not always so good – but the “fishing” is always great !!

See you on the Lake.

Fred Luckeroth, Chairperson, Boot Lake Association

Shoreland Landscaping

One of the primary qualities of Boot Lake is its crystal clear water. The water clarity has been measured at or near 20+ feet for many years. Being spring fed with no inlets and relatively undeveloped shoreland has probably been the primary reason for this sustainability. But as more lots are developed and built on, this could lead to more runoff into the lake. So here is some good information to consider when landscaping that could help keep our water system healthy.

In a recent article in the Park Rapid Enterprise, Julie Kingsley, Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) manager pointed out the benefits of shoreland landscaping that includes a buffer zone of natural, native plants along the lakeshore. "People like their manicured, green golf course all the way down to the lake. That's not good for the wildlife, not good for the water," Kingsley said. "You need a buffer." This alternative differs from the typical approach to home landscaping. It's called "lakescaping." Creation of a buffer zone is the essence of the lakescaping concept. It is an opportunity to balance our needs and priorities with the needs and priorities of those with whom we share life at the edge of the water. "Restore Your Shore" is a Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) tool for shoreland owners and professionals to use in implementing shoreland restoration and protection projects. It includes online native plant encyclopedia, with photos, to help lakeshore owners select suitable plants for their area. The list includes nearly 400 native plants. Native plant species have longer root systems than grass, which prevent soil erosion.

This information can be found on the DNR website at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys

Lakescaping and shoreland restoration can return many desirable features to your shoreline including providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, filtering out pollutants and runoff that degrade water quality and preventing shoreline erosion by absorbing wave action.

Invasive Species

The topic of Invasive Species continues to be a hot button topic with mixed opinions and controversy surrounding causes, effects and prevention. A July 30 article in the Star Tribune saw Hubbard County as a rare bright spot in Minnesota, with all of its lakes free of the Big Four invasive species in the state: zebra mussels, spiny waterfleas, starry stonewort (thick algae) and Eurasian watermilfoil. But that bright spot dimmed slightly when just recently DNR invasive species specialists confirmed Eurasian watermilfoil in Bad Axe Lake around the resort access to the lake. An estimated 1.4 acres of Bad Axe Lake are infested with Eurasian watermilfoil but they report it did not appear to be widespread into other areas of the lake. Hubbard County and the Bad Axe Lake Association will partner to fund a treatment response in an attempt to eradicate the milfoil. Total cost for the initial

treatment is estimated at \$6,500. The county board and lake association agreed to split the expense 50-50.

While Hubbard County may be a bright spot, Becker County has over a dozen lakes with invasive species including zebra mussels, all in the western end of the county near Detroit Lakes.

At our annual meeting in August we discussed the need for watercraft inspections at the public access on Boot Lake. We do not have the traffic of some of the larger more popular fishing lakes and do not have a heavy traffic load of fishing and pleasure boats at the public landing during the week. However, with two resorts on the lake, we do see up to a couple dozen boats on Saturdays which is the turnover date for resorters. And since these boats come from many different locations within and from outside the state, we think it might be proactive to have inspectors present on Saturdays.

We contacted Karl Koenig who is the Becker County Water Quality/AIS Coordinator. He stated that a Minnesota 2014 tax bill provides counties with funding to create and manage AIS prevention programs. He agreed that the resorts on Boot Lake present a risk for AIS infestation. Although he said he struggles to hire inspectors every season, especially in the more remote parts of the county, he will budget funds to recruit and hire an inspector for the Boot Lake public access. He added that at Bad Medicine Lake he had good luck recruiting inspectors from lake residents and association members. The DNR provides training sessions for inspectors each year in Detroit Lakes, usually in mid-April. Inspectors typically work from fishing opener to Labor day and are paid \$14 per hour. So if anyone reading this knows of any young adults, retirees or other individuals looking to work weekends for extra income they may reach Karl via email – kikoeni@co.becker.mn.us – or by calling (218) 849-6438.

To find much more information about Invasive Species in Minnesota you can visit the DNR website at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic/index.html>

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.