

News from Boot Lake

Normally I would give you a recap of our past winter – the snow, the cold, etc. etc. But how quickly events can change our lives, our demeanor, our outlook.

We are “hunkered down” up here in the northwoods like everyone else hoping these actions slow the spread of the Coronavirus and eventually eliminate it and we can get back to normal. So we wait and hope. But as one retired neighbor observed somewhat fatuously, this “stay at home” order is much less disruptive for Boot Lake residents because for many of us we probably moved up here to “social distance” ourselves in the woods away from the urban hustle and bustle. Maybe true, but not to say it hasn't put a halt to our social gatherings, volunteer activities, church activities, health club visits, dining out, etc. The reality hit my wife on a Sunday morning as she “attended” our church services via streaming on Facebook. All of a sudden she was in tears when she said she realized just how isolated we were. And later in the day my daughter called in tears when she heard the news that the national “stay at home” guidelines were extended until April 30.

And it has been hard to watch our families from afar try to cope with the disruption of their daily routines of jobs, school, church, sports, etc. Yes, our lives have definitely been turned upside down. We probably all have read, watched and listened to suggestions and methods to cope with our current “new normal”. There is plenty of literature and media available to help. For me I have tried to keep it simple, or “short and sweet” as they say.

First – *Take it one day at a time* – keep a daily routine, e.g. morning coffee reading a book in front of the fireplace; stretching and exercise while listening to the latest news; breakfast while doing my crossword puzzle; planning one project each day, taking an afternoon walk, and so on.

And Second – *Keep reminding yourself of the positives in your life* – your still healthy (knock on wood), you have shelter, you have food, you are able to keep in touch with family, to name a few.

So when will we see our seasonal residents back on the Lake. Some Rural counties have asked MN cabin owners to stay away, citing limited health resources, vulnerable elderly populations and generally small hospitals and scarce medical resources. They aren't prepared for a wave of infected urbanites and are worried of coronavirus spreading. At the same time local businesses depend on the annual migration of cabin-dwellers for their business. It's a “Catch-22”.

So if you are considering coming to the cabin here are some strict guidelines to follow.

– If you have “self-isolated” in your current location for a 14 day period without any symptoms and can drive up without more outside contact, then coming to your cabin and getting out of an urban area might make sense.

– But if you have been out and about and are coming to the cabin then you should agree to a 14-day self-quarantine when you arrive. You could still get outside, walk around your property, work on “opening up” the cabin and doing spring chores. After the 14 day quarantine it would be okay to get to our local grocery stores, drug store and take-out restaurant.

Every family's going to have to make that decision on their own.

Take care, stay safe and hopefully we'll see you on the Lake this summer.

Fred Luckerth
Chairperson
Boot Lake Association



Teaching homeowners septic ‘secrets’ to protect water

In previous newsletters we have talked about what we can do to help protect the great water quality on beautiful Boot Lake. Much of the information we passed on had to do with Shoreland Management. In this newsletter we will provide information on the water that goes into our septic systems.

Most people who live in a home with a septic system probably know they should get it pumped once in a while.

But they may not realize that what they put in their septic system can prevent it from working properly — and could even wind up in their drinking water, or in the aquifer from which the underground springs come that feed fresh water directly to our Lake.

The technology behind a septic system is fairly basic: Pipes carry wastewater away from the house and into a tank that collects solids. The water then goes to a drain field, where it’s absorbed into the soil and is recycled back into the groundwater.



But for many homeowners, out of sight means out of mind. As long as the water disappears when they flush the toilet or turn off the faucet, they probably don't think a whole lot about their septic system. Items that go down the sewer such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products can kill the natural bacteria in a septic system that help break down organic matter. Even though septic systems are effective at treating sewage, there are trace amounts of contaminants that leave every wastewater treatment system, no matter how large or small. So homeowners are urged not to dump unused medications down the drain, cutting back on antibacterial soaps and cleaners, and choosing natural products when possible. A general rule would be if you could eat it, it's probably OK for your septic system. — items like vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice -- things like that.

Most septic systems comply with state regulations. But in 2018, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimated that about 15 percent of systems failed to meet the state's requirements for protecting groundwater. And of course the stakes are especially high near a lake. When septic systems fail, they can be a major source of phosphorus, which fuels algae blooms that can leave a lake looking like pea soup in the summer.

If you want more information regarding septic systems check out this link to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency:

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/healthy-septic-systems>

And if you are even more ambitious and looking for something to do for several hours while “self-isolating”, check out this free Webinar being offered by the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates in conjunction with the U of M and the Minnesota Department of Health.

Septic Secrets Friday, April 17, 2020 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (Central Time)

Check out this link to register:

<https://www.anymeeting.com/AccountManager/RegEv.aspx?PIID=EE51DA83834830>



What is “Nextdoor”

Nextdoor is a social media App that is a great way for people to connect, share and even help one another. Nextdoor is the neighborhood hub for trusted connections and the exchange of helpful information, goods, and services. Bringing neighbors together can cultivate a kinder world where everyone has a neighborhood they can rely on.

Use Nextdoor to:

- *Spread the word about a lost dog*
- *Recommend and discover favorite local businesses*
- *Find a new home for an outgrown bicycle*
- *Receive important safety information from local agencies*
- *Meet neighbors over a cup of coffee or organize a walking group*

Nextdoor requires people to use their real name and verified address, so members can trust that their Nextdoor neighborhood is made up of real people at real addresses. This creates the trust and accountability that cultivates kindness online and into the real world. Nextdoor has a dedicated Trust and Safety team to ensure that:

- Private neighborhood conversations are not indexed in search engines.
- Your Nextdoor neighborhood is protected by password and encrypted by HTTPS.
- It does not share your name, address, or email address with advertisers.

The Boot Lake Association Board of Directors endorses the use of Nextdoor as another way to communicate within our community. We considered at one time setting up a Facebook page but feel Nextdoor is better because it is based on geography, it requires an ID and password, users can see messages and alerts on the website, but also can sign up to receive email and push notifications, and Nextdoor is securely encrypted using the HTTPS Internet protocol.

Thanks to Teri and Scott Erhardt for taking the lead in implementing this communication tool.



Check out this link to join: <https://nextdoor.com/invite/rblgglbjbdblpgwzmkm/>

Boot Lake Has Been a "Neighborhood" of Sorts for Hundreds of Years.

The Native American Chippewa (Ojibwe) have been in this area for hundreds of years. For 10 years after the establishment of Becker County, which was established in 1858, there were no white settlers. The Chippewa (Ojibwe) Indians occupied nearly all of the county. In 1867, a treaty was signed establishing the White Earth Reservation, a large tract of land just to the west of Boot Lake, to be home for the Chippewa Indians.

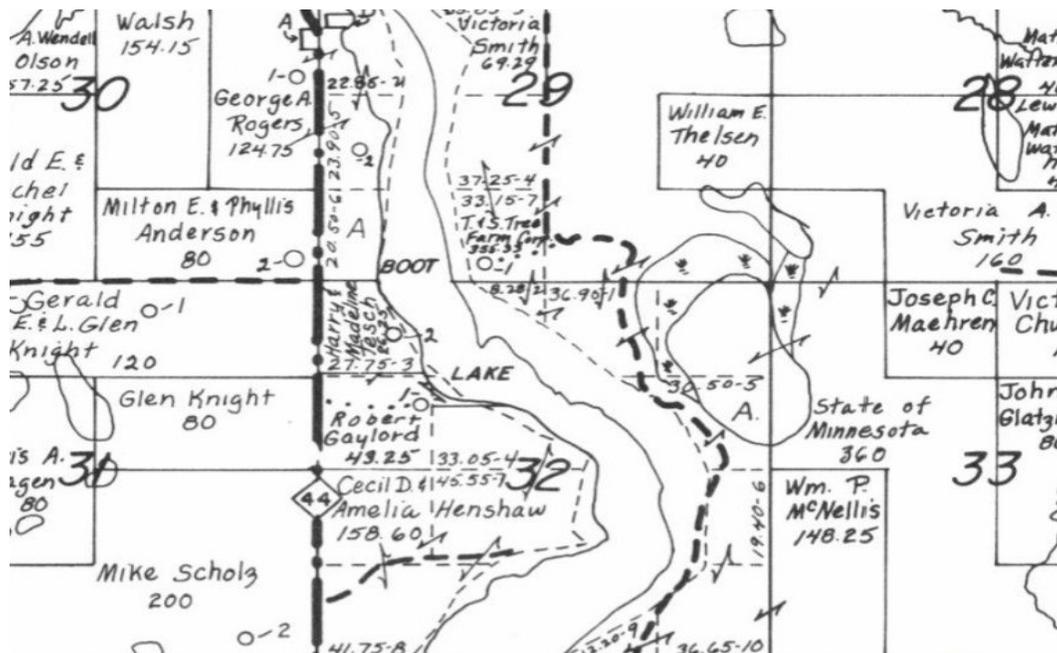
Way before that, around 1680, Father Louis Hennepin crossed through this area while returning from his exploration of the head waters of the Mississippi, as part of the company of Explorer La Salle on his exploration of the Mississippi. So to him belongs the honor of being the first white man to enter our Boot Lake area.

Fast forward to the late 1800's when during the summer of 1896 two families settled in the woods at the south angle of Boot Lake and began the erection of homes. Herman Lashowski and Louis Strouve worked hard and skillfully, but gave up the struggle and with their families moved away in the following fall or winter. A Mr. John August Diekmann bought the property of these families on Section 32 (which is now the Grouse About Trail area), and later established a very pleasant home there. Bachelor that Mr. Diekmann was, he had no notion of abandoning his "Cottage by Boot Lake."

Boot Lake is geographically divided with the southern fourth of the lake part of Two Inlets Township, and the northern three-fourths part of Savannah Township. Until 1901 Boot Lake was entirely in Two Inlets Township. It was in that year that a group of settlers prepared a petition which requested that Township 142, Range 36 be detached and set up in business for itself. It was because of some beautifully grassy prairie land that the suggestion for a name for the township was "Savanna". Why it was then spelled "Savannah" like the city in Georgia is not clear.

In just a few years the area witnessed a change from a desolated wilderness to a fairly populous township, even having a post office. Mrs. C. E. Smith was the first postmistress and she opened the Savannah Post Office to the public at her home on the west shore of Boot Lake in September, 1902.

On March 22nd, 1902, School District No. 91 was organized, comprising the whole township, and a few months later school began in a frame schoolhouse with Town Clerk Henry Kalthoff as teacher (This school building is now used as the Savannah Township Hall). Thereafter Three more schoolhouses were built. And there were enough kids in the Boot Lake neighborhood that a one room school was built on the north side of the Lake just adjacent to Lakeside Cemetery – District 97.



So beginning around 1900 and for the next several decades we have families homesteading or purchasing tracts of land around Boot Lake. Some of the familiar names were Pfeifer's, Theisens, Thelens, Knights, Scholz, and Eischens. For these families life improved in the mid 1940's when the Rural Electric Administration (REA) brought electricity to Boot Lake.

A few resorts and a campground were opened on Boot Lake over the years.

Pine-O-Rama Campground, located midway on the east side of the lake was operated by the Theisen Family from 1964-1984.

Fun-ta-Boot Resort was on the southwest side of the lake. It initially began as a small fishing resort with just six units. It was purchased in 1985 by the Williams Family and expanded as a family resort with more than a dozen units. The resort was sold in 2019 and the name was changed to Evergreen Bay Resort.

HalfMoon Trail Resort, which is located midway on the west side of the lake, was started in the 1950's by the Tesch family with just six cabins. It was then owned by the Hicks family, the Hunt family (from 1983 to 1996), the Ahrendt family (1st and 2nd generations) to the present time, and has expanded to 19 units. The Name has always been Half Moon Trail Resort. The story passed down from the original owner Harry Tesch was that there originally was a trail down to the lake that the Indians used to get water from the lake and they called it the Half Moon Trail.

Development of lake lots has accelerated rapidly over the past 20 years. From approximately 30 structures on the lake in 1998 to almost 80 structures in 2020. So 120 years later what do you think Mr. Diekmann with his "cottage by Boot Lake" would think of the "Neighborhood" now.

Now with accelerated technology and social media we enter a new age of bringing Boot Lake Neighbors together.

Again, "Welcome to the Neighborhood"

(excerpts taken from the book "*A Pioneer History of Becker County Minnesota*" by Alvin Wilcox

The Battle Over 'Wake Surfing' Has Made Its Way to the Minnesota Legislature

In the Fall Newsletter we introduced you to wake surfing. We were encouraged by the fact that Wake-surfer groups themselves were calling for self-policing. But as the sport of "wake surfing" has caught on in Minnesota, it has led to local battles over whether the activity should be restricted — or even banned in places — because of damage it can cause to shorelines, property and fish habitat.

Now, debates that began at lake associations and city halls have spilled over into the Legislature, where resort owners, environmentalists, boat dealers and lake-front residents are split over how to regulate a growing sport and its signature powerful wakes

An environmental committee in the Senate approved a bill on Wednesday aimed at keeping wake surfing — in which boats create waves big enough for people to surf without the need of a tow rope — 200 feet from shore, docks, swimmers and other boats. Supporters say the measure, sponsored by Sen. Bill Weber, R-Luverne, is backed by industry research and boat dealers, and would address problems while keeping lakes open to surfers.

But a contingent of homeowners and environmental advocates have pushed for tougher regulations — or at least more research on wake boats. They view a 200-foot buffer as an ineffective solution that wouldn't prevent disruption and damage.

Boats used for wake surfing move relatively slowly, typically between 10 and 12 miles per hour, The boats are designed to make large enough wakes that a person doesn't need a tow rope to ride them, unlike water skiing or wakeboarding. Complaints about the large powerful wakes they kick up have chased kayakers and canoers out of the water, sent waves over pontoons and damaged docks. The waves can erode shoreline, putting infrastructure

at risk and damaging aquatic plants like cattails. There are also concerns about the effect of wakes below the water's surface. Wake-creation systems from the powerful boats can scour the bottom of lakes, disturb fish habitat, uproot plants and disturb sediment that can release phosphorous and nutrients that cause algae blooms. And water tanks on the boats may also spread invasive species.

Minnesota law now generally prohibits boating that harasses others or causes property damage, but there are no state regulations specific to wake surfing. So now the Legislature is debating whether a 200 foot restriction is enough, or should a larger, say 300 ft barrier, be imposed. The Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee have approved a bill to set the 200 ft barrier and the measure will now head to the Senate floor for consideration. The Senate version of the bill sets a minimum restriction for wake surfing boats where one doesn't exist today, but the issue can be revisited in light of new science and it doesn't stop local governments from setting tougher ordinances. Bodies of water that are uniquely sensitive to boat wakes can petition DNR for tighter restrictions.

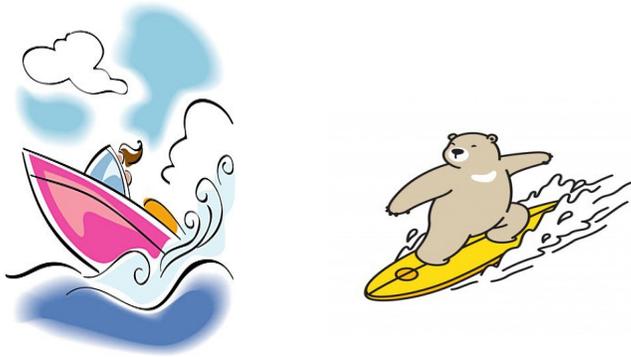
If you want to learn more about the issues and solutions of this emerging issue, check out the on-line presentation below.

Enhanced Wake Watercraft Impacts on Lakes

Friday, April 24, 2020

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (Central Time)

<https://www.anymeeting.com/AccountManager/RegEv.aspx?PIID=EE52DA80894739>



Aquatic Invasive Species News

The 2020 Legislative Session convened on February 11. Important environmental issues got a quick start with bills moving on:

- Increased fines for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Violations,
- A boat operators certificate with accompanying training in public safety and AIS prevention

Action to Increase AIS Fines

Violating AIS Laws is serious:

- The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species research Center in 2019 published a study showing a 25% reduction in walleye growth due to AIS,
- The costs of managing current infestations of AIS run into the millions every year in Minnesota – For example – Lake Koronis spends about \$200,000 on starry stonewort control,

- MN Seagrant reports that zebra mussels alone cost the US economy \$1 billion annually.

Minnesota's AIS penalties were set back in 2012, when Minnesotans were just learning about the damage AIS can cause to our waterways and infrastructure. This was a new area of game and fish law, and people needed time to become educated about how to comply. Since then both the State and citizens have spent millions of dollars on AIS campaigns, the media has published multiple news stories about the spread, the costs, and Clean, Drain Dry. The costs of AIS management are rising across the state. So is it time that our AIS laws more accurately reflect the public costs associated with violating laws intended to protect our natural resources?

Currently, the fine for illegally taking a muskie is \$1000. This bill would increase the fine for transporting invasive animals like zebra mussels to that level.

Support for a Watercraft Operator's Certificate

The days of the 16 foot fishing boat with a 25 hp outboard are long gone. There is new technology in fishing boats and pontoon boats. Today a fishing boat can go 70 mph and people water ski behind pontoon boats. Boating recreating is exciting and has far more options. But these new, faster and more powerful boats also carry different demands on the operators to protect public safety, lake ecology, and the enjoyment of all users. The size, power and number of boats in Minnesota is going up. Minnesotans own more boats per capita than any state except FL. This is good news for a state that benefits so much from outdoor recreation. But some problems are emerging that require the increased education and ethics a boat operator's permit program would provide.

In addition, Enhanced Wake Watercraft, EWW are a rapidly growing and exciting new sector of the boating industry. But EWW can, if used improperly, cause shoreline erosion, destruction of aquatic plants, conflicts with other users, and the disturbance of lake bottoms. EWW are also at very high risk of transporting AIS due to the ballast tanks they carry, according to research by MAISRC.

So the threat of aquatic invasive species puts additional responsibility on boaters. Education is the first line of defense in AIS prevention suggesting the need for increased training, particularly for more complex watercraft. Using the educational platform a boat operator's permit would provide can build a productive lake ethic based on the rights and enjoyment of all users, reducing conflict and increasing enjoyment of our lakes and rivers. The promotion of hunting ethics through gun safety training has been a resounding success and the same model can be used in boating. This concept has been endorsed by angling groups, resort and marina owners, lake associations and even the boating industry.



Calendar of Events

NOTE: CONSIDERING THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE BELOW EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

- Spring Road Pickup and Potluck – Thursday May 14, 2020
 - Annual 4th of July Boat Parade – Saturday, July 4, 2020
 - Annual Meeting and Potluck – Sunday, August 9, 2020
-

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.

**You're not stuck at
home, you're safe at
home.**

**One word can
change your
attitude, and one
cough can change
your life.**