

Buffalo, Rice & Rock Lakes Association News

FALL/WINTER 2014

BRRLA President Comments

It is with great excitement that we have resurrected our association's newsletter. At our last lake association meeting in August we discussed the options of either ending the lake association after 22 years or continuing. After a brief discussion, it was decided to continue. One of the big factors in needing to continue working as an association is the challenge we face in slowing the spread of the various Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). We strive to protect our lakes for numerous reasons, such as ensuring our future generations will enjoy days "at the lakes" as we have. We also need to protect our financial investments. Records indicate that as lakes become infested with AIS it can have an adverse effect on property values.

To meet these challenges it will take a good deal of effort from many of us. As long as we have been an association we have not had high participation levels like other lake associations. We have looked at other successful lake associations and feel we need to change the way we do things. Resurrecting the newsletter is one item, but we need to streamline the process. It is currently too costly and cumbersome to communicate via mass mailings; therefore, we will provide them via the website. The website will enable us to provide links to other sites so we don't replicate information. Our goal is have an email address for each property owner so we can send more frequent communications and provide updates that may come our way. Information will be provided within the newsletter as to how you can provide us with your email.

Currently our lake association board of directors is made up of four officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and five additional directors. A proposal would be to keep the four officer positions, but to replace the directors with beach captains. There would potentially be six beach captains for Buffalo Lake, one or two for Rice Lake, and three or four for Rock Lake. The function of the beach captains would be to maintain a current mailing and email list for their designated area or beach, to provide a single point of contact for communication to the board of directors, and to be responsible for disseminating information on AIS to their respective areas. These changes would require a by-law change so please entertain these thoughts and we will continue these discussions in the spring.

Last item, next year the offices of the President, Vice President and Treasurer will be up for re-election. Please consider serving in one of these positions. New officers could bring fresh ideas to the association.

Hope you all have a good winter. See you in the spring/summer.
Roger Levos

**What you
need to
know**

The BRRLA website is back up and running! The website can be found at <http://minnesotawaters.org/buffaloricerocklakes/>

The website includes various resources, contact information for Board members, meeting minutes, bits of local history, and more.

The website is a work in progress so please let us know what additional information you would like to see! Pass along any ideas or suggestions to us by emailing buffaloricerocklakes@gmail.com

TID BITS

Buffalo Lake Access

At the last Lake Association meeting, there was a request to see if we could get a few trees removed at the Buffalo Lake Access. This would allow backing down the access without removing your front fender on a tree! The DNR has been contacted about the removal of three trees, and they have marked five trees for removal. They indicated that they would remove them when they had a back hoe in the area.

Buffalo Lake Dam

There are gates on the Buffalo Lake Dam. Their purpose is to prevent carp from migrating upstream. Roger Lundberg from the Buffalo-Red River Watershed Board indicated that carp not very far downstream from the dam. Someone has been going down and flipping the guards up in the air, thus allowing access over the dam in higher waters. **PLEASE LEAVE THE GUARDS DOWN!!**



What's
New?

We would like to provide our newsletters to you electronically!

Electronic newsletters save us
money and are more convenient
for you!

If you are willing to get the
newsletters electronically please
submit your name and email
address to us at
buffaloricerocklakes@gmail.com

“Bold Action Now...Next Steps in Fighting AIS”

Becker County, in conjunction with Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) and the city of Detroit Lakes hosted a one-day seminar on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)... the next steps. The meeting was held on September 30th from 10 am to 3 pm at the Holiday Inn in Detroit Lakes. Support was pledged by both local and state government officials. Updates on enforcement and physical resources were also provided by the Becker County Sheriff's department. The DNR also provided updates on inspections at lake accesses. The principal speaker at the seminar was Jim Foust from Utah based Hydro Engineering.

Hydro Engineering produces both fixed and portable decontamination machines. Hydro Engineering has been providing these machines with success to Lake Mead in Arizona. Becker County recently purchased a “Hydroblaster” from Hydro Engineering. This is a portable machine that can be moved to a specific site to provide boat or other watercraft decontamination. Jim explained the principles behind proper watercraft decontamination. Temperature seemed to be the key characteristic. Zebra mussels cannot survive excessive heat. 140 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 seconds will accomplish the task. The unit will provide 160 degree F. water at 3000 psi to both kill and remove the mussels. It takes about 30 minutes to properly decontaminate a boat.

In the last Minnesota legislative session \$10 million dollars was appropriated to the counties of Minnesota to combat the spread of AIS. A lot of the foot work or lobbying was done by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Association. What is a little surprising is the money was appropriated without a master plan or budget. Becker County was appropriated \$143,000. At a recent COLA meeting the decision was reached to buy the above mentioned “Hydroblaster” (approx. \$20K) along with additional trained inspectors. Expenses for the above mentioned meeting were also a part of the funding. Further work needs to be done to develop a usable budget for both current and future dollars.

Andy Wieland, Buffalo Lake Director and BRRLA COLA rep will represent our organization at the COLA meetings to develop the budget and provide direction to slow the spread of AIS to our lake chain. In the absence of a “silver bullet” to eliminate the spread of AIS we need to keep trying different items.

Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Redetermination of Costs for Ditches 10 & 19

In the fall of 2013 we as property owners on Buffalo, Rice and Rock Lakes received a notice for redetermination of costs for Ditch 10 (the ditch that flows from Little Round Lake into Buffalo Lake) and Ditch 19 (the ditch that connects Tamarack to Rock to Rice then to Buffalo Lake and includes the dam at the end of Buffalo Lake). The ditches were developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The last update to the property assessments were done in the 1920's. The costs that are spread out to the benefiting land owners through the assessment are primarily for ditch maintenance which primarily involves the removal of debris and beaver dams. These are necessary costs to keep consistent water levels amongst the affected lakes. A lot has changed in the lake chain since the 1920's. The benefits or assessments basically ended at the ditch input into Buffalo Lake. With the significant development on Buffalo Lake and the dependence on adequate water levels on the lake the redetermination seems to be the right and fair thing to do. The annual costs really don't change but we will all now share in the costs. The cost impact for an average lot should be around \$10/year. The assessments were made on land values only, building values were not included.

BRRLA Meeting Minutes

Please visit our website at <http://minnesotawaters.org/buffaloricerocklakes/> to read the most recent BRRLA meeting minutes.

COLA Update

Our Association is a member of the Becker County Coalition of Lakes Associations (COLA). As a COLA member, we have input into the issues they address. These include items that impact water quality testing, public education on Aquatic Invasive Species like flowering rush and zebra mussels, planning and zoning issues, and public policy. Here are some of the topics discussed at recent COLA meetings:

- Becker County has received \$145,000 in funding from the Minnesota Legislature to implement local action to prevent further spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). A portion of these funds have been used to purchase one AIS decontamination unit which can be used on boats, docks and lifts being transported between lakes. It has not been determined where this unit will be located.
- A new program to train lake access inspectors is being implemented by Becker County. Inspectors will monitor boat launch sites on selected high traffic lakes and will have the authority to deny launch of a vessel. The training for inspectors will be offered in October and again in April. It is open to anyone who qualifies and is willing to work the launch sites. Contact Becker County for more information if you are interested in this program.
- COLA has contacted a number of dock/lift removal companies to ensure they have a plan to address potential AIS contamination of their equipment. Some use separate teams for lakes with zebra mussels and those without. Others complete work at non-contaminated lakes prior to moving to those identified as having zebra mussels. When having a company install or remove your dock and lift, be sure to inquire about their policy for addressing AIS.
- The Becker County Sheriff's Department is planning to take more responsibility for the placement and maintenance of lake buoys. In many cases this is currently being managed by the local lake associations. The Sheriff's Department has agreed to implement a formal plan prior to the spring of 2015 to address the need for and management of lake buoys.