
Fifty Lakes Property Owners Association News

Winter

2011

2010 Summary

The following is a list of projects, activities and events the association was involved with in 2010.

1. Fifty Lakes Days.
2. Milfoil surveys were conducted at the following public boat accesses: Eagle, Kego, Mitchell and East Fox. Two surveys were conducted at each access, one in June and the other in August.

All surveys were negative, no milfoil or other invasive species were found.

3. Monitored the activities of Crow Wing County and the City of Fifty Lakes.
4. Coordinated with and had meetings with other property and lake associations in the area.
5. Conducted our annual meeting on August 21, 2010.
6. Continued working on Lake Management Plans for our lakes. We will have a draft LMP of Eagle Lake done around the beginning of 2011.

Thank you to the many volunteers who have been part of this project.

7. Continued our education program.
8. Monitored the water quality of our lakes. Monthly tests were conducted from May to September. Please see water quality update article for more information on water quality test results.
9. We also collected water samples on Daggett Brook. This was a MPCA project and personnel from The Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District assisted.

Thank you to the volunteers who participated in these two water quality programs.

10. Mark Johnson applied for two DNR Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) grants January 2010 and received BOTH!!

The first grant was for large AIS signs that will be located at our public boat accesses. They will be installed at the access sites this year by the DNR. The other grant was for road signs that followed the old Burma Shave sign concept from the 1950-60's. Mark developed a contest (all the rules, instructions, etc.) to submit phrases that would be put on these road signs. He ran the contest on a local radio station, had schools from the area involved, etc. There were over 400 entries for the contest. The end result is we have one set of signs that have been installed on Crow Wing County Road #1 and West Fox Lake Road.

We hope to have more signs installed with other phrases from the contest.

Mark has spent countless hours coordinating with many organizations and has done an incredible job on this project.

11. There were five shoreline restoration projects that were completed on East and West Fox Lakes in 2010. The restoration projects were part of a grant that the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District received.

There will be grant money available in 2011 for shoreline restoration projects. Please contact me for more information.

2011 - What will be happening?

1. The association will again be involved in all the projects, activities and events that are mentioned in the 2010 summary.
2. Grants for shoreline restoration will again be available in 2011. If you are interested in restoring your shoreline please contact me for more information.
3. We are discussing a fund raising program that would include other associations in the area. This program would be organized similar to the United Way Program. There are many issues and details that need to be worked out before this can happen. We are looking at 2012 as a start date for this program.
4. We hope to have our own web site up and running in the next couple of months.

Help Wanted!

We need your help in the following areas:

1. Membership: Please return your 2011 renewal and dues as soon as possible. I am also asking that you share your newsletter with your neighbor and encourage them to join the association.
2. Please consider receiving your newsletter by email. This will save the association postage and printing costs.

3. Consider helping us out at the public boat accesses inspecting boat and trailers for invasive species. We would like to develop a program that checks boats and trailers and also talk to people who are using our lakes.
4. Consider volunteering to help the association in any of the projects, activities and events that we are involved in. Contact any board member or me.

Finally, don't hesitate to call or email any board member or me if you have questions, suggestions or concerns about anything that the association is involved in.

From Ken Neihart, FLPOA President.

Water Quality Update!

The following information is a summary of secchi disk readings of the lakes in the city. The secchi disk measures water clarity and is expressed in feet.

Butterfield:

The average reading from 1996-2007 was 12.3 feet.
The average for 2008 was 12.5 feet.
For 2009 the average was 16.8 feet.
For 2010 the average was 16.1 feet.

Eagle:

Main Bay:

The average reading from 1996-2007 was 9.7 feet.
2008 average was 9.2 feet.
2009 average was 11.0 feet.
2010 average was 11.3 feet.

West Bay:

2009 average was 12.1 feet.
2010 average was 11.8 feet.

East Bay:

2009 average was 9.3 feet.
2010 average was 10.7 feet.

East Fox:

The average reading from 1992-2007 was 16.4 feet.
2008 was 19.5 feet.
2009 was 16.3 feet.
2010 was 16.2 feet.

Kego:

The average reading from 1998-2007 was 8.9 feet.
2008 was 6.4 feet.
2009 was 6.9 feet.
2010 was 7.0 feet.

Mitchell:

The average reading from 1998-2007 was 8.7 feet.
2008 was 8.5 feet.
2009 was 8.5 feet.
2010 was 8.0 feet.

West Fox:

The average from 1986-2007 was 15.5 feet.
2008 was 18.4 feet.
2009 was 14.9 feet.
2010 was 15.8 feet.

How is the water quality on your lake? Better, worse or staying the same!

Compare the different readings of our lakes. Why are they differences from one lake to another?

Trying to explain why water quality differs from one year to the next or from one lake to another depends on many factors.

Some of these factors that affect water quality are:

1. Annual precipitation.
2. Runoff from streams, brooks, etc.
3. Groundwater.
4. Runoff from surrounding land.
5. Wave action from wind and boat traffic.
6. Boat traffic that stirs up the bottom sediments that release nutrients into the lake.
7. Physical characteristics of a lake, such as size, depth, shape, littoral zone, etc.
8. Many-many more factors, too many to list!

In the spring newsletter we will consider another way of looking at water quality. This is called the Carlson Trophic Status Index. This index combines the secchi disk reading with tests for phosphate and chlorophyll-a. It gives a more in-depth study of the water quality of a lake.

If you are interested in water quality and would like to be a member of the water quality team, please contact a FLPOA board member.

Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Program for Volunteers

Keri Hull from the DNR will give a training session at the next FLPOA board meeting on 4/23/11 at the Fifty Lakes Sportsman's Club. She will present a 15-20 minute general talk, and then give a 1-hour training session around a boat outside. She will give us information on how to help educate boaters on our lakes to recognize aquatic invasive species and where they could be found on their boats and trailers. We must have at least 6 people who would be interested in volunteering in order for her to come to the meeting.

Many of our surrounding lakes are infested with AIS. The good news is that many more are not, and so far the lakes in Fifty Lakes appear to be okay. We need to do whatever we can to insure they remain AIS free. If you are willing to attend this training session and possibly volunteer some time on the opening of fishing season weekend, July 4 or Labor Day weekend, please call Judy at 218-763-3077. From Judy Miller, FLPOA Board Member

The Crow Wing SWCD is excited for the 2011 Tree Sale!

Order early to ensure availability of preferred species. Please note the minimum order number and volume discounts. **Deadline for Ordering is March 1st, 2011.**

New Items to the Tree Sale!

- **Native Plants Kits:** Plant a beautiful, low maintenance, cost effective, lake friendly garden. Kits are for raingardens, shoreline buffers, and bank stabilization. Each kit includes six species (36 plants). See order form for specific species.
- **Compost Bins:** Never buy soil again! The SWCD has partnered with the Northland Arboretum, Master Gardeners, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to sell backyard compost bins at reduced costs. Coming soon Backyard Compost Workshops!!

- **Grants:** Cost-share grants available for shoreline restorations, windbreaks, and raingarden projects. Sign up for cost-share grants at the Open House.

To Place an order:

Visit:

<http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/swcd/Forestry.htm>

Step 1: Print Order Form

Step 2: Fill Out Order Form (Sales tax included in all prices)

Step 3: Remit order form and 50 % Check Payment to:

Crow Wing SWCD
322 Laurel St. Suite 13
Brainerd, MN 56401

We look forward to a great tree sale. If you have any questions, please contact us. Visit this website for plant and tree pictures and species information.

<http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/swcd/Forestry.htm>

Call 218-828-6197 or E-mail

melissa.barrick@co.crow-wing.mn.us

Infestation is a blow to the Brainerd Lakes area after prevention efforts. More stringent rules will go into effect.

By Doug Smith, Star Tribune

Zebra mussels have invaded Gull Lake, one of the Brainerd area's more popular lakes. "It's really unfortunate," said Dan Swanson, Department of Natural Resources invasive species specialist. "It's a premier lake, used by a lot of people for fishing, boating, swimming and other recreation."

The infestation is a blow to the Brainerd Lakes area and Gull Lake residents, who have tried to prevent the spread of zebra mussels. The impact to infested lakes varies, but the mussels filter vast amounts of water, which can affect water clarity, vegetation growth and thus possibly fisheries.

"What will happen is unpredictable," Swanson said. The discovery underscores the likelihood that zebra mussels will continue to spread throughout Minnesota's lakes and rivers, despite efforts to educate boaters to drain their bilges and live wells when leaving lakes. In the past two years, the tiny

mussels have been found in some of the state's bigger and more heavily used lakes, including Mille Lacs, Minnetonka, Prior and Le Homme Dieu, and in parts of the Mississippi, St. Croix and Zumbro rivers.

Swap the Rock for Native Stock!

By Beth Hippert Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

Considering rock rip rap for your shoreline? Before you bury the plants and land under rock and gravel you should know there are good alternatives. These cost less, are more resilient, and with minimal maintenance will provide the services that keep the lake clean and well stocked with desirable game fish.

Although rip rap will protect the bank from wave erosion, undercutting, and your property from shrinking it also creates new problems. The rock layer destroys the plants. When plants are gone, the processes that keep the lake healthy are lost. These are the processes that use up nutrients and break down pollutants such as phosphorus, nitrogen, and E. coli bacteria. Rocked areas lack these native plants. The chemicals flow into the waters feeding undesirable algae. The algae then feast on once scarce nutrients and can grow into the large slimy masses that spoil our waters.

To better understand why replacing plants with rock rip rap is bad for the lake, recall the living world you've noticed in a natural shoreline ecosystem. Think about what goes on below, above, and at ground level versus the biological activity on, for example, a stone monument. The stone structure supports lichen, sheds water, and provides a perch for local birds and animals but little else, whereas native plants make food, build soil, recycle nutrients, and provide habitat for a wide array of animals, insects, and birds.

While foraging for food, breathing, growing and dying, this diverse community of plants and animals transform and repackage nutrients before they reach the lake. This helps to prevent explosive algae growth and low oxygen levels that cannot support game fish or the species they consume. However, understanding why rock rip rap is not the best choice for the lake is just the first step in protection.

The next step is planting for protection. A shoreline stabilized with a healthy mix of plants, shrubs, and trees will help maintain a healthy balance, in the water and out, and protect the shoreline.

Above ground, consider the stems, trunks, and branches; they protect the soil from erosion and store water. Select a few native deciduous and coniferous trees, some shrubs, and lots of herbaceous plants to maximize that protection.

When selecting plants also think about their roots and how they will help protect from erosion. Below ground the plant roots scavenge food and water at every level. This occurs from the top, just below the surface, all the way to the ground water. Thick carrot shaped taproots, fibrous masses, and roots that range from fine to coarse create channels in the soil. These areas are alive with biological activities that purify the stormwater. Once the plants have been selected and planted it's time to add protection to the ground's surface.

In undisturbed settings there is a layer of dead plant material, known as duff. This is a layer of dead plant material that absorbs the impact from falling raindrops (keeping the water and gravel clear of silt and soil) and protects the soil from drying out. A two to three inch layer of locally obtained, finely shredded mulch spread around new plantings will do the same for your project.

There are also things that can be done to reduce erosion and don't cost a dime. Simply allow the plants and grass to grow. Stop mowing an area about 15' wide between the lake and the lawn and, if you rake the beach, stop. Often, native plants sprout from the seed bank below, saving time and money! Later in the season when identification is easier, the invasive species that germinated from this bank can be plucked and the spot filled with native species.

Granted, planting for protection is a not as easy as dumping rocks on the shore, but, once established it is self-maintaining. Plus there are added benefits; cleaner water, bigger fish, beautiful habitat, and envious neighbors!

If you have questions about how to get started contact the folks at your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), or University of Minnesota Extension agent. They can provide guidance and

resources for the do-it-your-selfer as well as where to find professional native landscapers that specialize in shoreline restoration and stabilization. Also, depending on your situation, they may know of grant opportunities that, if your project qualifies, will provide financial and technical assistance to plant your project.

Web Resources--

Crow Wing SWCD:

www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/swcd

DNR:

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/waters/shoreline_alterations_lakescaping.pdf

and

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/nativeplants/index.html>

2011 Board Members

Mark Johnson (Eagle/VP)	markwarrenjohnson@yahoo.com	612-866-6413
Judy Miller (Mitchell)	mj@emily.net	763-3707
Ken Neihart (W.Fox/Pres)	kjneihart@aol.com	763-3100
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Les Degner (Kego)	ldeg@emily.net	763-3624
Bob Stancer (W.Fox)	bestancer@gmail.com	763-1134

Member Families by Lake

E.Fox	18	W.Fox	50	Eagle	32
Kego	16	Mitchell	45	Butterfield	7
		Other	20		

Total Members **188**

(Only 27 paid through 2011!)

Please renew now!

Is YOUR Membership Current?

Your membership expires on December 31st of the **year** on your mailing label following your name. Dues are \$15 per year payable to “**FLPOA**”.

You are **okay**, **unless** the year on your mailing label is highlighted.

Your membership is important!

Thank you for your support!

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL (DUES \$15.00 to "FLPOA")

Fifty Lakes Property Owners Association, Inc.

PO Box 206, Fifty Lakes, MN 56448

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

COMMENTS _____

PHONE (Home _____ Lake _____) LAKE _____

I am interested in helping the FLPOA with the following project(s), activities, or events: _____

_____.

EMAIL _____

_____ **Check here if you are willing to receive the newsletter via email only.**

FIFTY LAKES PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
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FIFTY LAKES, MN 56448