

JESSIE LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



JESSIE JABBER

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GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT HAROLD GOETZMAN:

I am honored to be the first President of the Jessie Lake Watershed Association (JLWA). This is an exciting time as we embark on a new course of management for the watershed with our governmental partners. Since formation of the association this spring, we have made significant progress in becoming a viable organization working together toward a common goal - maintaining the health and sustainability of the Jessie Lake watershed. I am very pleased with the success of our first annual meeting (potluck) and the response we have had so far with 65 property owners joining the JLWA. I look forward to working with all of you to create the kind of association you desire. A welcome also to those who have not yet been able to attend any of our meetings or who have not yet joined - please do it today, as we need your support.

As you know we have projects underway to improve walleye spawning habitat, control the beaver, and establish water-chemistry baseline data on four lakes. These projects will continue for another year and the results will provide direction for future efforts. Clean water is the key to a strong fish population because walleye and other fish species need a healthy aquatic ecosystem to naturally reproduce.

By joining the JLWA I believe we have all accepted the responsibility of preserving the resource we enjoy by practicing good stewardship. Each person doing their small part is required to maintain the qualities of the lakes we value. I hope the formation of the watershed association will provide an increased awareness of our human impact on lake quality. Through the newsletter and our meetings we will have the opportunity to provide information that will help us better understand the environment. Education is the key to progress. As President, I will try to provide direction and help to interface our association with the governmental agencies. We as landowners need to be involved in future development, changes in taxation, and any changes in land or water use practices.

Good fishing, water quality, and diversity of watchable wildlife are the benefits that can be achieved by the cooperative efforts of good neighbors in the JLWA. Please feel free to call me or the other officers with you concerns or suggestions. Take care and have a good winter.

Best Regards,
Harold Goetzman

MEETINGS

Public meetings were held at the Bowstring Hall on May 23 and September 5. Forty people attended the May meeting and fifty people the September meeting, both of which were chaired by Harold Goetzman. Harold reported the Jessie Lake Watershed Association (JLWA) has 65 paid members out of 131 lakeshore property owners in the watershed. Jim Anderson developed a directory containing the addresses of all property owners and copies were available at the September meeting.

Jim Anderson developed a set of bylaws for the association. These bylaws, which were subsequently approved, state that the mission of the association is to represent the common interests of the members relative to maintaining and improving the quality of the total environment in the watershed. Any property owner on a lake, or permanent stream, in the watershed is eligible for active membership with all other interested individuals eligible for a non-voting associate membership; annual dues for both classes of membership are \$10. The annual meeting will be held on Labor Day weekend with the purpose of conducting the essential business of the association and electing officers and directors. Special meetings of the membership may be called anytime with notice of these meetings mailed to the membership not less than two weeks before the meeting. Since the bylaws require an eight-person board of directors, two additional individuals were needed to serve with the previously selected six individuals to complete the board. Ed Bick and John Lichtscheidl volunteered to serve with Ken Albin, Jim Anderson, Harold Goetzman, Neil Gustafson, Bill Nelson, and Lance Stradtmann on the board.

Eight names for this newsletter were suggested by members: Land and Water Tidings, Up North Lakeshore News, Observer, Beaver Tales, Eagle Eye, Loon Droppings, Eagle Droppings, and Jessie Jabber. The attendees overwhelmingly selected Jessie Jabber! Jim Anderson, who submitted this title was the winner of a baseball cap decorated with a mallard and Jessie Lake Watershed Association embroidered on it. This fabulous prize was made and donated by Nancy Hackler.

Harold Goetzman reported that as of September 1 the JLWA treasury has a balance of \$412.45. Income was \$610 from dues and donations with meeting and mailing expenses amounting to \$197.55. In addition, the JLWA has been awarded a Conservation Partners Grant for \$4,155. Harold and Neil Gustafson prepared the application, which requested the funds for improving walleye spawning habitats, chemical analysis of water samples, controlling beaver, and obtaining aerial photographs of Spring Creek between Spring and Jessie lakes. Total project cost was estimated to be \$14,045 with the Itasca County Soil and Water District (SWCD) contributing \$6,100 and the JLWA contributing \$3,790 worth of labor at \$5/hour. These funds are to be spent by December 1999.

The members voted to have the association file for nonprofit status but not for federal tax exempt status. Jim Anderson volunteered to prepare the application, which will cost \$70.

The following slate of officers was submitted by the nominating committee and approved by the attendees. President - Harold Goetzman, Vice-president - Jim Anderson, Treasurer - Neil Gustafson, Secretary - Bill Nelson, Two-year directors - Ken Albin and John Lichtscheidl, and One-year directors - Ed Bick and Lance Stradtmann.

A potluck was held after the September meeting. The Bowstring Store donated hot dogs and buns to complement the food brought by attendees. All those in attendance not only enjoyed an abundance of good food but also had the opportunity to meet and visit with their neighbors.

MEET YOUR OFFICERS

Harold Goetzman - President

My wife Diane and I live in Grand Rapids and have had a cabin on the west side of Jessie Lake for 23 years. My two sons, a stepson, and two stepdaughters have all graduated from college and are married. After receiving my Masters Degree in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of Minnesota I worked for 33 years in the minerals research field with the last 29 years at the Coleraine Minerals Research Laboratory (17 with U.S. Steel and 12 with the University of Minnesota). I recently retired and work part time consulting to allow for more time fishing, bow hunting, hiking, X-country skiing, curling, and traveling.

Jim Anderson - Vice president

In 1994, I retired after thirty years in law enforcement, the last twenty as an administrator. In 1995, my wife Rita and I bought our home on Jessie Lake. I wish I could say we retired to Jessie, but Rita continues to work as a flight attendant for that "local airline," and we still maintain a home in Deephaven. Although we have only lived on the lake for three years, we've camped on Clubhouse Lake annually for the last twenty years, and I have hunted and fished in this area since 1957.

My interest in the association is twofold. First, we all have a vested interest in improving and maintaining the overall quality of our lakes and surrounding environment. I want to do what I can to ensure my three grandsons have the opportunity in their lifetime to experience the outdoors as I have. Secondly, as individuals, we have very little impact effecting positive change or resisting action that could degrade our little piece of paradise. On the other hand, politicians and governmental agencies have a tendency to listen when an organized group of citizens express their concerns. Over the years, I have been involved in leadership roles with numerous professional, fraternal, and civic organizations, and professionally I have dealt with various federal, state, and local agencies. I believe my experience will be an asset in helping to build this association into a very viable and influential organization.

Neil Gustafson - Treasurer

My wife Jeanne and I retired on Lake Jessie in August 1994. Our eight grown children and their families give us a steady flow of visitors year-around. In my career I have been a planner, researcher, and teacher. I think that it is important to have a community organization that can deal democratically with the issues we share. My particular interests concern learning to live harmoniously with our natural environment in ways that do not diminish the quality of life for future generations. It will be a pleasure to serve as Treasurer of the JLWA.

Bill Nelson - Secretary

Upon our retirement in May of 1994 my wife Sarah and I moved to our home on Jessie Lake. After completing undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of Minnesota I spent 34 years

with the federal government conducting and administering fishery's research while Sarah taught school. We have great difficulty tearing ourselves away from the lake but we do try and escape to some exotic local for short periods each winter and annually visit our daughter and her husband who live near Boston and our son and his wife who live in Washington. We are very pleased at the high level of enthusiasm exhibited by so many people over the formation of the association. We are particularly interested in working to maintain, and ideally enhance, our beautiful environment. Additionally, we have found that a benefit of the association has been meeting so many of our delightful neighbors.

PROJECT STATUS

Beaver Control

As previously reported, a trapper hired by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) removed 42 beavers from Spring Creek and Jessie Lake during the fall of 1997. This trapper removed an additional 12 beavers during the spring of 1998. Neil Gustafson is in the process of hiring a trapper to continue these efforts during the fall of 1998 and spring of 1999. The DNR also removed the beaver dam on Spring Creek where it empties into Jessie Lake during the fall of 1997.

In late July employees of Itasca County blew out a beaver dam located just below Spring Lake on Spring Creek. Harold Goetzman has arranged with the DNR to remove additional dams on Spring Creek. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has a regulation against using explosives in national forests before October to protect bald eagles. Therefore, removal of the dams by blasting will occur in late fall.

Water Quality

Rian Reed, Limnologist with the SWCD demonstrated to Harold Goetzman, Jim Anderson, John Lichtscheidl, and Bill Nelson how to operate the water sampling equipment and filter the water samples. Samples were obtained monthly from April through October on Jessie Lake and during June, July, August, and October on Peterson, Spring, and Little Spring lakes. Water samples were also collected periodically from streams entering and leaving Jessie Lake. The water samples were sent to a laboratory in Duluth where they are being analyzed for total phosphorus, total nitrogen, nitrates, nitrites, ammonia and chlorophyll-a. Samples were also collected periodically to estimate alkalinity, conductivity, pH, turbidity, and identify the species of algae present. Each week Bill Nelson measured the water depth in all the streams to provide data for estimating flows. It is expected that all the analyses will be completed by next spring. Upon receipt of all the data Rian will summarize and interpret the results in a report to the JLWA. Our thanks to Carl Heide and Ron Mason who provided access to Spring and Little Spring lakes, respectively. Carl was also kind enough to allow the use of a boat.

Walleye Spawning

Spring and Pooles creeks were surveyed during April for evidence of walleye spawning by Jeremy Cable, USFS District Biologist, and Bill Nelson. Surveys consisted of crashing through the brush in the dark, shining spotlights in the water, and counting eyeballs (walleye eyes glow red when illuminated at night). Walleye were present in both creeks and subsequent sampling recovered walleye eggs in Spring Creek.

On July 9 Spring Creek was waded to determine the extent walleye migration was being blocked by beaver dams and deadfalls. Harold Goetzman, Ed Bick, Ken Dinkle, Neil Gustafson, and Bill Nelson from the JLWA were joined by Chantel Cook and Karl Koller, fishery biologists with the USFS and DNR, respectively. The biologists provided advice on what material should be removed and how to decrease bank erosion and increase water velocities. Although the creek was choked with woody debris it was at least encouraging to find human artifacts limited to the ubiquitous beer cans, without any tires, cars, refrigerators, or pampers present.

On August 20 Harold, Ed, and Bill were joined by Jim Anderson, John Lichtsheidl, Jerry Ostergren, Rian Reed and three technicians from the SWCD and the DNR to clean woody debris from Spring Creek between Jessie Lake and the bridge on CR 135. A large number of logs blocking the stream were moved to block off side channels, thereby increasing stream velocity to scour the bottom, or used to protect stream banks from eroding; in some cases logs were removed from the stream. On September 3 Harold, Ed, Jim and Bill were joined by Jeremy Cable and a DNR technician to clean the stream north from the CR 135 bridge to Little Spring Lake. By opening two beaver dams the flow increased greatly, albeit temporarily, and Spring Creek rose more than five inches at the bridge by the time the work was completed. However, one humongous log jam proved too much for this stalwart crew and will require blasting. Considering the number of dead trees along the stream bank, and potential for beaver activity, the creek should be surveyed in late winter to ensure it remains open for walleye movement next spring.

A historic event took place on October 22 when a crew of JLWA members joined the DNR and USFS personnel to place rock in Spring and Pooles creeks to provide walleye spawning habitat. About 20 cubic yards (three trucks) of 2-8 inch rock were put in the streams with the assistance of a contractor operating a rubber-tracked vehicle (ASV). Harold and Diane Goetzman, Jim Anderson, Neil Gustafson, John Lichtsheidl and Tim Onraet helped place the rock in a specially designed installation that theoretically will remain free from sedimentation. Construction of walleye spawning habitat is a relatively new science and improvements and expansion may be necessary in the future. However, this will provide us with a couple of specific areas to monitor next spring for walleye activity. Coupled with the stream cleaning, and placement of logs to increase water velocity and scour the stream bottom, this should give us a good start on restoring walleye spawning habitat.

DID YOU KNOW?

By Harold Goetzman and Bill Nelson

Many property owners have expressed concern about the persistent and heavy growth of algae that has turned Jessie Lake green this summer. Phosphorus and nitrogen are the major nutrients responsible for algae growth. Most people know that lawn fertilization and faulty septic systems are easily preventable sources of phosphorus and nitrogen which enter lakes and streams. But did you know that allowing the ashes from your evening campfire to enter the lake can also be a major source of phosphorus? The ashes concentrate the phosphorus that is in the wood so please dispose of the ashes on land and away from the lake!

Most people believe a rain that increases the lake level is diluting the concentration of nutrients in a

lake. Unfortunately, rainwater contains levels of phosphorus that are just as high, if not higher, than what is in the lake. In addition the rain is transporting nutrients from the soil to the lakes. Maintaining a buffer strip of vegetation along the shoreline provides a filter to reduce the concentration of nutrients entering the streams and lakes. Buffer strips also reduce shoreline erosion and the resulting nutrient carrying sediment from entering the water.

Another significant benefit of maintaining natural vegetation along shorelines is the habitat it provides for wildlife. Over one-half of the mammals and one-third of the birds present in the Chippewa National Forest use these shoreline habitats. In fact, it is estimated that the population of “Watchable Wildlife” is 100 times higher within 500 feet of the shoreline than it is elsewhere.

Walleye spawn early in the spring when the water temperature ranges from 42-52°F. Spawning occurs at night over rocky areas in streams or over coarse gravel shoal areas in lakes. Walleye do not build nests, but randomly deposit their adhesive eggs, which hatch in 12-18 days. A single large female may deposit more than 600,000 eggs, which explains why releasing large fish you catch is so beneficial.

The DNR Area Fisheries office in Grand Rapids consists of nine permanent staff, five professionals and four technicians; additional summer temporary help is also hired. This staff is responsible for managing the fisheries in 1,160 lakes and 200 streams (1,100 miles). In their spare time they run the walleye spawn taking operation at Cut-Foot-Sioux and related hatchery and rearing pond operations that provide the walleyes that are stocked in this area.

A SHOCKING EXPERIENCE

by Bill Nelson

Did you wonder what that noisy flood lit boat was doing on Jessie Lake October 1? It was the DNR using an electric shocker boat to survey the lake for young walleyes. That afternoon Karl Koller called and asked me if I would like to accompany him and Dick Thompson, Asst. Area Fisheries Manager, on the evening survey. Needless to say I jumped at the chance.

The shocking equipment consists of an 18-ft Jon-boat with poles jutting out the front from which wires dangle into the water. The generator aboard provides plenty of noise along with the electricity that is run to the wires. These wires act as positive electrodes with the boat serving as the negative electrode. The 150 volts and 5 amps entering the water attracts fish from about 10 feet away to the positive electrodes where they are temporarily stunned. If desired, the fish can be dip netted and examined before being released.

We trolled slowly along five different stretches of shoreline for 20 minutes. These same stretches of shoreline have been surveyed for the last three years to estimate if any natural walleye reproduction had occurred that year and to check on the survival of stocked walleye fry.

On this evening we counted more than 200 walleye ten to twelve inches long from the 1996 stocking. This is the most walleye of that size that Karl or Dick has ever seen during one of these surveys. We also saw a couple of walleyes produced this year. This documents the first successful natural reproduction of walleye in Jessie Lake in many years. Perhaps removing the beaver dam blocking Spring Creek did make a difference. However, we saw very few “keeper” size walleyes, which was

expected since we were usually sampling very shallow water. Unfortunately, we also saw literally hundreds of thousands of young perch, potential food to keep those walleyes from biting. A fair number of northern pike over a large size range were also seen. Other species observed were burbot, suckers, tullibee, sunfish, crappie, rock bass, largemouth bass, and various minnows. All in all it was a fascinating and frosty (34 when I got home) night. Walleye fishing in about one more year should be excellent!

ICE COVER

by Bill Nelson

At the Annual Meeting Tim Onraet mentioned that when he and his wife Rita purchased Ayers Resort and Campground they found records of when the ice had gone out of Jessie Lake dating back to 1940. In checking around I learned from Florence Bellamy that Charlie DeGroote was the person who started the record keeping and that she had records of freeze-up dating to 1977. The following graph summarizes this information.

Although the time of ice out has extended over nearly a six-week period during the last 59 years, about half the time the ice has gone out during the last week in April. Last spring the ice went out very early, only three days later than the record of April 9, which occurred in 1945. Conversely, in 1996 the ice went out on May 9, with only 1950 and 1966 being later. Considering how miserable the winter and spring of 1995/96 were I am glad I was not here in 1950 when the ice did not go out until May 19.

The time of freeze-up has not extended over as long a period as ice out. Nearly 70% of the time freeze-up has occurred from November 16-26. If you have any additional information for Jessie Lake, or Peterson, Little Spring, and Spring lakes let me know and I will include it in the next issue.

REMINDERS

Jim Anderson has additional copies of the directory and they will be available at the next meeting.

Nancy Hackler has monogrammed jackets and sweatshirts as well as beautiful caps for sale. If you would like to place an order call Nancy at 612-420-2208.

Don't forget to send any observations, stories, comments, or interesting information to Bill Nelson for inclusion in the spring newsletter.

Please remember to return the attached form with your 1999 dues. A sincere thanks to all of you who have already paid your dues.