

LAKE ALEXANDER PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

Happy Spring LAPOA Members May 2018

Here it is May 20th, and the ice is gone, having finally disappeared according to my records on Saturday, May 5 (April 3 last year, what a difference a year makes eh?!). I know water temp was cold for fishing opener, but at least folks were able to get out and fish! It was quite an uneventful Winter without any major ice heaving or damage, at least not that I heard about...as I'm sure you are all aware, April was cold, so ice out was delayed but Spring has arguably arrived, so please get out and enjoy it. Water levels tend to be somewhat high, somewhat similar to last year at ice out. One floating bog appeared just as I was writing this letter, but it has been moved by Action Dock and tucked back in behind Green's Island. Let's hope that's it. I am hopeful many of you have seen the major bog issue on North Long Lake, if not, do an internet search and check it out, makes our bog issue somewhat relative in comparison?!

Snowfall was somewhat average, but it came late; overall, I would argue it was a pretty decent ice fishing and snowmobiling season, especially compared to the most recent Winters, so I think most who were up and recreated this Winter were at least somewhat satisfied. I didn't hear of many frozen septic systems, so that too is a blessing (sorry if you had issues, none were brought to my attention). With that Winter update, I would like to welcome all of you, our Summer residents, back to Lake Alexander and the Lincoln Lakes area; here's

hoping your Winter season went well and wishing you another dandy Summer around the Scandia Valley area. I want to remind all of you of this Summer's LAPOA gathering; **the annual meeting is set to occur in combination with the Lake Alexander Lake Improvement District meeting, on Saturday, July 14, 2018 at the Scandia Valley Town Hall.** Please mark that date on your calendars and look for further information in this newsletter. Finally, our website address continues to be found at minnesotawaters.org, where you should click on the link on the left to Lakes and River Groups, and then click on page 10 to find the Lake Alexander Property Owners Association.

I would like to close out this President's Spring letter by saying that I look forward to meeting up with many of you around the Lincoln Lakes this Summer and to seeing you at our annual meeting. Finally, as I always do, I'll remind you to please share you thoughts with myself or any LAPOA board member regarding our member-driven association, and again, thanks for your continued support of the LAPOA!!

Here's to a great Spring and Summer around the lake,

Dr. Bill Faber, President

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Mission Statement: To act as stewards of Lake Alexander in regards to water quality, fish management, and shore line conservation.

Lake Alex 2018 Fishing Opener: Not One for the Record Books

Despite threats of late ice out on many northern Minnesota Lakes, those of us on Lake Alexander were fortunate to have warm weather arrive just in time to drive the ice off the lake a week before the 2018 Fishing Opener. By the time the opener arrived, lake temperatures hovered in the upper 40's, with only a rare 50 degree reading in some northern bays and shorelines. As one of the newer residents of Lake Alexander, I haven't had enough time to pattern all of the lake from a fishing perspective, but one thing that did seem reliable over the past couple years was the presence of large numbers of Crappies/Bluegill in Thoroughfare Bay right at ice out. Not this year...at ice out, nary a Crappie could be caught in the bay, at least not as in years past. Something was different this year. Yes, the water was cold, but in years past, the Crappies were always there chasing schools of Minnows even when water temps were around 40 degrees. Crappies were being caught in the bay at late ice, but once the ice went out, they all seemed to have lockjaw. Using my fishing electronics, it was quite evident that the bay was full of fish. Our family, including my brother, who has a place on Fish Trap, prides itself on our piscatorial prowess. We always convince ourselves that with enough time and tackle options, we can crack the code and make Mother Nature succumb to our determination. Wrong again...slip bobber rigs, light jigs with soft plastics/maribou, bare hooks with Minnows/waxies, micro spinnerbaits, etc. etc. Nothing seemed to work, yet the depth finder was lit up with fish marks nearly over the entire bay less than 15 ft deep. We tried early morning, mid-day and the reliable evening bite, and came away empty-handed every time. I'm still scratching my head over this one. And of course, the fishing opener is really about Walleyes (and Northers for some) rather than Crappies. As is expected during a cold water opener, Walleyes will typically be shallower than their Summer haunts, ranging from depths of 12-20 feet deep. It was nice to know we could now target

some Walleyes since the panfish weren't cooperating. With \$53.00 worth of Silver Shiners, we headed out opener morning with a fresh optimistic attitude believing that success was just around the corner. Besides, I had promised everyone fish tacos for dinner. We were able to identify some of our favorite dropoff areas adjacent to bays where Walleyes typically spawn, and even found some standing green weeds that had somehow survived the long Winter. The depth finder showed huge clouds of baitfish in 16-20 foot depths, with nice curved arcs shadowing the cloud (this is what a Walley looks like on a depthfinder). We were on the money spot for sure. Using a combination of Lindy rigs and light jigs we worked the weed edges near the baitfish cloud for several hours. Nothing. Struggling to retain a modicum of optimism, we decided to opt for the sunset trolling bite along the reliable Ogema Point and Gold Coast shorelines. Heading out at 7 pm, we trolled Firetiger Scatter Raps (my go-to Rapala on Alex) for two and a half hours in the presence of at least 25 other boats. Again, no fish and surprisingly we didn't even see fish caught by other boats. Now I'm sure there's someone out there who figured out the pattern during the opener, but it wasn't us. As an excuse for failure, I'm going to theorize that the massive population of baitfish in the lake has something to do with the challenges we faced. Typically baitfish populations are highest in the late Summer when the lake is teaming with natural food sources for the fish. I was amazed at the size and number of baitfish schools we marked on our electronics, especially this early in the Spring. All the baitfish schools were stalked with Walleyes/large gamefish marks in close proximity. The cold water temps of this opener also keeps fish in a less active pattern, making them a bit lethargic with small strike zones. So as they say, "that's my story and I'm sticking to it". I'm confident there's a magic temperature coming in the next week or so that will ignite the Walleye season for 2018, but for us, it sure wasn't opening weekend.

Gene Champeau
LAPOA Board Member

2018 Fishing Regulations

The DNR announced a new 10 fish limit for Northern Pike in many areas of central Minnesota. This does not include Lake Alexander where the limit remains that all fish 24-36 inches must be immediately released, three in possession with one over 36 inches allowed. The other limits are:

- Walleyes: 6 in possession with 1 over 20 inches
- Bass, Smallmouth and Largemouth: 6 combined
- Crappies: 10
- Sunfish: 20
- Muskie: one over 54 inches

Possession is defined as either in your live well, cooler or freezer.

Anglers are encouraged to practice release of larger Sunfish and Crappies to eliminate the problem of stunted fish due to over-harvesting. Not only are large panfish removed from the lake but they are removed from the gene pool leaving only smaller fish to reproduce. Do your lake a favor and throw the big ones back!

Doug Cook
LAPOA Board Member

Event Name: Lake Alexander Open House

Date: Saturday, August 18, 2018

Time: 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Location: 7163 Bear Road, Cushing, MN 56433

Overview:

Conservancy staff will present current forest and water protection strategies developed and developing in the North Central Mississippi Headwaters Region, including work around the Lake Alexander preserve and forested lands.

10:00 am Registration

11:00 am Presentation in the shop area below the office

12:00 pm Picnic lunch (provided)

1:00 pm Hike to forest management areas

2:00 pm Homeward Bound!

The 1,734 acre Lake Alexander Preserve, located just West of Crow Wing County and the Brainerd Lakes Area, is part of a 180,000 acre mosaic of red and white pines, wetlands, and hardwood forests, and is one of the Conservancy's great success stories in Minnesota.

What to Wear/Bring: Comfortable shoes, hat, camera and binoculars. Watch the weather and dress appropriately. This event will happen rain or shine.

RSVP: Please RSVP to the Conservancy's Todd Holman via email: tholman@tnc.org or by phoning and leaving a message at: (612) 867-3140

Restoring And Maintaining A Healthy Shoreline

Doug Cook
Third in a series

My main job at the LAPOA is to report on the status and activities of the Lake Alexander Fishery. Directly affecting the fishery and also one of the main missions of the LAPOA is shoreline conservation. As shoreline owners, we directly affect the fishery and lake health. Good shoreline practices can make the difference between a healthy lake and a distressed one. Establishing a 10 foot buffer zone between the shore and the lawn and populated with native plants acts as a runoff filter and attracts song birds, ducks and loons. Reducing the amount of manicured shoreline from 100 to 25 feet reduces your maintenance time yet still provides plenty of swim beach. Many yard chemicals including pesticides from bug control and herbicides for weed control clearly state on the label they are not to be used near water as they are extremely toxic to fish. If you spray Roudup to control vegetation on your beach or rip rap you can be sure that it will end up in the lake. We can justify behaviors by saying "its just a small amount", but multiply it by 400 property owners and you can see how it adds up. Our goal is to conserve the natural shoreline that we have, and to support and encourage lakeshore owners to stop the practice of maintaining a fertilized lawn right down to the beach. Fertilizers with nitrates and phosphorus promote algae growth and negatively affect the lake. It is time that we establish a new standard of lakeshore beauty, our lake depends on it.

I am pleased to report that we have our first lakeshore owners enrolled in the shoreline restoration assistance program stated by the LAPOA. These folks had an established buffer zone filled with native plants that was

destroyed by high water and erosion in the Fall. They do not wish to put in rip rap, and our grant program does not support rip rap installation. There is nothing illegal about installing rip rap, its just expensive and takes away any ability to walk on the beach. If you ever try walking on rip rap, make sure your insurance policy is up to date. Working with Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation yielded the potential of using bio logs instead of rip rap. Sometimes called Ecologs or Coir logs, these logs are made of natural fibers. Logs are stacked on top of each other along the beach front and staked into the ground. Native plants can then be added to the logs. Once established, the native vegetation anchors the beach front and prevents erosion while adding attractive lakeshore plantings. A buffer zone can then be established behind the bio-logs. Grants up to \$500 are available from the LAPOA pending submittal and approval of an application. These grants cover bio-logs, buffer bed preparation, purchase of natural plants, removal of structures, and rain gardens.

You will find the complete project proposal along with an application form on the association website at:
<https://minnesotawaters.org/lakealexanderpropertyowners>
or just search for "lake alexander property owners".

Or you can contact me for an application or more information at: douglascook@yahoo.com
507-276-5214 (cell)

Get more information about erosion control using bio logs at:
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys/sl/shoreline.html>

For more information about restoring your shoreline visit:
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys/index.html>

Spring 2018 Fisheries Report - Lake Surveys

I am sure many of you have noticed the nets in the lake this Spring. The DNR put out the nets right after ice out as one part of the effort to survey the health of our fishery. The survey netting is a labor intensive effort that last occurred in 2014. Last Fall, I reported on the electrofishing survey, an important part of the lake survey that records numbers of young Walleyes too small to be netted. Netting, along with electrofishing, comprise the primary methods to evaluate local fish populations. There are different types of nets used depending on the species targeted. Gill nets are used to sample Walleyes, Northerns, Muskies, Perch, and Cisco (Tullibee). The standard gill net is 6 feet tall by 250 feet long with 5 different mesh sizes. Trap nets are used to sample Sunfish, Crappies and Bullheads. The standard trap net is 4 feet tall, 6 feet wide and 40 feet long. Each day DNR officers and trained volunteers count and empty the nets, keeping careful records of the numbers and species netted. The catch is reported separately by net type. Each lake has goals specific to that lake as part of a long term management plan. The Lake Alexander fish management focus is primarily on Walleyes with secondary management for Northern Pike, Muskellunge, Largemouth Bass, and Smallmouth Bass. Once the netting is finished, there is much work to do with the data in order to interpret it. All of the data is entered into a

lake survey database containing all of the past years data, checked for errors, and analyzed. Data files are then sent to St. Paul for uploading into the statewide database and put into proper formats for display on the DNR website. It takes 18 months from the time of netting until the reports are able to be published on the internet or printed. We will have our local results much sooner, hopefully by the time of our annual meeting in July. These results will give us the best picture of the health of our fishery in four years and as compared to previous surveys. The regional fisheries office in Little Falls is responsible to carry out this critical part of understanding our fishery. Without their good work, we would only be guessing at how the lake fish populations are doing. Fact-based science is the only objective tool we have to evaluate fish populations in the lake. For more information, visit the DNR website: www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind

Doug Cook
LAPOA Board Member

Morrison County AIS Grant Funding

Morrison County will receive a projected \$127,617 from the State of Minnesota for educational programs to help control aquatic invasive species (AIS).

A total of \$33,000 was approved by the county for local lake associations to help combat AIS. Lincoln Lakes LID's (Lake Shamineau, Alexander, Fish Trap and Crookneck) aka Quad Lakes Group, applied for and received a grant of \$18,292 from Morrison County for the prevention of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

In addition, a number of other programs will benefit from the funding from the State of Minnesota.

Veliger testing started last year, Veligers are the larva of the Zebra Mussels. Volunteers from your lake board collect water samples for testing, this is done in June and July, prime time for the Veligers, as well as the spread of Veligers. Morrison County then has the samples tested and results are passed on to the LID's. Last year no Veliger's were found in Crookneck, Shamineau or Alexander. But, as you know Fish Trap is infested with Zebra Mussels.

Water Festival, a program in cooperation with Morrison County Soil and Water District, directed towards 6th graders and their role in conservation stewardship of water and other natural resources. To be held at Camp Ripley, Sept. 18-19th.

Funding for regional media programs, as well as a AIS informational flyer with your county tax statements.

Whereas funds for these grants come from the State of Minnesota, just how does the state determine who gets what? It's based on two factors, the number of boat landings in the county and the number of trailer parking spaces. Morrison County has a total of 29 watercraft launches, and 269 trailer parking spaces.

The lake associations of Pine Lake, Cedar Lake, Platte Lake, Green Prairie Fish Lake as well as Sullivan, have also applied for grants.

To sum it up, Quad Lakes Group requested and received \$18,292, for our projects which include AIS vegetation surveys in the Spring/Summer (Curly Leaf Pondweed & Eurasian Milfoil). AIS educational brochures for placement at the lands, as well as local business. Updating and maintenance of the signage at the landings.

Chuck Schiemo
Board Member

Ice Out, Water Level and Bogs

After a long Winter that lasted into Spring, the ice finally was gone off the lake on Saturday May 5th, 2018. For a while it didn't look like it would be gone prior to the fishing opener, but we made it by just under a week. The weather has definitely improved in the last several weeks, so hopefully we can all get out on the lake and enjoy it.

The lake level was at 2.90' near the outlet on 4-20-18. This was just slightly higher than last Fall, when it was 2.80' on 9-6-17 and last Spring when it was 2.70' on 5-29-17.

We have seen one sizeable bog so far this Spring that will need to be relocated. This is being taken care of by our LID board.

Matt Skjonsby
LAPOA Board Member

Lake Alexander Property Owners Association Membership

Reasons to become a Member of the LAPOA

- Mailings of all the Lake Association Newsletters to keep you informed on "what's happening" on the lake.
- A collective voice that cares about our water quality.
- Contact and a voice with the Morrison County Planning and Zoning Board.
- Opportunity to vote on issues affecting the lakes' health.
- An active advocate to the Lake Improvement District (LID) to enhance the quality of Lake Alex for it's property owners.
- Regular testing of farm runoff and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) that threaten our lake.
- The LAPOA improves the value of your property by having a unified voice and acts with it's members best interest in a democratic fashion.
- If you are not a member, please consider joining. If you are, we look forward to your continued support.

Membership dues are \$15.00/year or \$1.25/month. What a great value!

Dave Schleichert
LAPOA Board Member