



RCCC Lake Association Newsletter

No. 41

Spring 2015

HIGHWAY 6 CLEAN-UP

Saturday, May 2
9:00 AM

The Association takes responsibility for cleaning up the right of way on two miles of Highway 6 each spring. Cleanup will begin at 10 AM at the Clinker Lake Landing. Coffee and donuts will be served. Bags and safety vests are provided.

We had a good turnout last Spring.
More would be very welcome.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION WILL BE
APPRECIATED.**



2015 ANNUAL MEETING & PICNIC

Saturday JULY 18 11:00AM

The meeting will be at the home of Greg and Lissa Walter

21563 Rabbit Lake Drive

The meeting and program will be followed with a lunch. Hamburgers/brats and drinks will be provided. Please bring a dish to share. This is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors around the lakes. There will be DOOR PRIZES

Special thanks to Dave Schaefer,
Dick Jueb and Bridge Tavern
for donating door prizes
at our events.



21236 Archibald Rd
Deerwood, MN 56444

*~Our thanks to Deerwood Bank for
printing this newsletter~*

RCCCLA Board Meeting Minutes

10:00 a.m.
March 28, 2015

Gordy Lusian, president, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Present were Terry & Don Dean, Jay & Ejie Hanson, Rick West, Bob Sandin, John Wojciak, Jon Wittnebel, Tim Wilharm, and Rad Royer.

Agenda:

1. **Correction to minutes** from Aug. 23, 2014 meeting: Amend Vice President to Lissa Walter
2. **Treasurer's report:** Bills paid: LARA yearly membership-\$50.00; website fee for 6 months through June 2015: \$270.00.
Balances: CD \$8605.89, savings \$1205.04, checking \$1980.97 (102 paid memberships @ \$1635 so far this year)
Submitted by Terry Dean, Treasurer
3. **Annual Meeting:** Annual meeting and picnic will be at the Walter's residence on July 18th. Discussion on buying grill to use at annual meeting and share with members. Motion tabled with Bob Sandlin checking on renting one for Annual meeting.
4. **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS):** Jon, Rad and Gordy will serve as coordinators for AIS. Crow Wing County has classified Rabbit Lake as "Very High" in its "Risk Classification by Landing" evaluation.
Gordy motioned, with Ejie's second to purchase and become part of Zebra Mussel Veliger Testing. Passed.
Bob motioned with Tom's second for Gordy to send a letter of support to AIS to Congress for support of AIS funding. Passed
5. **Water access usage counters** are available from Crow Wing County at reduced and shared price for use at public access. Rad motioned with Jon's second to table. Passed
6. **Tent caterpillar spraying:** Jon reported recent data shows the caterpillar cycle is going down and with last year's deforestation lessened there is no need to follow up this year with continued spraying.
7. **Past Lake Water Quality Data:** Rad gathered past data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota DNR Fisheries, and Crow Wing County on research completed encompassing the lakes. Email him for the links.
Rick motioned with Jon's second to test water quality this summer on the two Rabbit Lakes for up to 4 sites at a cost of \$210 per sample. Passed
8. **Secchi Disc** readings will be done this year by Jon Wittnebel and reported to the MPCA.
9. **Lake Map with Owners:** Ejie & Jay will check with County Recorder to help develop a map of owners.
10. **Web Page:** Rad will look at alternatives to our present web page site.
11. **Lake Level:** Tom will continue to record weekly lake levels from the County Road 31 bridge water level gauge and report them to the DNR
12. **Loon Count:** will be done again by Pete Backlin and his wife for the DNR. Our lake's two radio collared loons are now in Florida and can be tracked on the USGS web site.
13. **Winter Social:** had 62 people in attendance.
14. **Newsletter:** will be coming out this spring. Rick motioned and Gordy seconded members can advertise free and nonmembers pay \$25. Passed

Next board meeting: set for May 16th at 9:00 am at the Cuyuna City Hall.

Meeting adjourned: at 12:05 pm

**RABBIT, CLINKER, CARLSON, CUYUNA LAKE ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2014-2015**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Gordy Lusian, President

Much was accomplished at our recent RCCC Lake Association meeting on March 28. You will find the meeting's minutes elsewhere in this newsletter, but I would like to provide further information, here, concerning one of the topics addressed at the board meeting.

In 2014, the Minnesota Legislature established a local funding stream for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention aid. This funding has been used to set-up many AIS programs where none existed. At its meeting on Feb. 10, 2015, the Crow Wing County Board approved a plan for the prevention of AIS proposed by the County's Land Services (CLS) Department. The plan includes: boat landing inspections, watercraft decontamination, targeted treatment of Eurasian water milfoil, and testing for zebra mussel viligers, which are microscopic zebra mussel offspring.

In addition, the CLS created a "Risk Classification by Landing" list for all lakes in Crow Wing County that designates all public landings as having low, moderate, high or very high usage. The ranking was then used to provide an allocation of inspection hours for each public landing. Lakes that received a "very high" risk will be provided with a county trained inspector for 400 hours at no cost to the lake's homeowners or associations. Rabbit Lake was ranked "very high" and will therefore receive the equivalent of approximately \$6,000 in inspection hours.

In addition, a proposal to establish a committee to deal with all things AIS related was approved. Initial members include Rad Royer, Jon Wittnebel, Stan Nagorski and myself. See you on the lake this summer.

It is not too late to be a member. Please complete the attached form

Membership is valid from January 1 – December 31

RCCC Lake Association
P. O. Box 212
Crosby, MN 56441

Membership Application 2015

_____ New Member

_____ Renewal of Membership

Name(s) _____

Lake Property Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mailing address (if different from address above) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone _____

Email address _____

Membership fee \$15.00

RCCCLA WEB SITE

Please check the RCCCLA web site at www.rabbitlake.org.



If you have any questions/concerns or would like to submit an article for the RCCC Lake Association Newsletter, please contact:

Ejje Hanson at: 952.334.5849 ~
218.527.0014 ~ 952. 831.7615

We take ads and service announcements from members at no cost. The deadline for the Spring Newsletter is September 1, 2015.

ART LESSONS

Come join the watercolor art lessons taught at Donna Maves' studio at 21423 Cottontail Drive on Clinker Lake. Lessons are on Mondays and Tuesdays. For more information, call 218-546-6489.



Oars-N-Mine Bait & Tackle

22640 Highway 6 North
Crosby, MN 56441
218 546-6912

Oars-N-Mine Bait and Tackle has volunteered to remove and install our safety buoys.

Please thank them for helping us with this project, by using their products and services.

Besides bait and tackle, they sell licenses, boat lifts and docks. They also fill propane tanks and provide boat storage.



Welcome to the Finest Premium Wood Products!

At Aitkin Hardwoods, we cater to contractors, building professionals, do-it-your-selves and beginners alike. Our knowledgeable staff and comprehensive showroom combined with your unique vision will provide the custom tailored look to fit your home and budget.

Experience the incredible selection of custom wood products and stop in our showroom just four miles west of Aitkin on Highway 210 between Aitkin and Deerwood, Minnesota.

Hours

M – F: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat. by Appointment
888-927-6515

**TENT FOREST CATERPILLAR
(ARMY WORMS) UPDATE**
Submitted by Jon Wittenebel

This year we will not spray for the worms. We have had contact with Jana Albers, MN Forester at Grand Rapids MN. She indicates the presence of the worms is down in our area. This downward trend is based on the forestry groups aerial images from the summer and fall of 2014. Her advice is that spraying will not be necessary this year and that "we are on the downward cycle". We wish to thank all previous participants.



FISH SURVEY

Submitted by Rad Royer

The DNR will be conducting a fish survey on our lakes this year. The last survey was conducted six years ago. In addition, walleyes are stocked in the lake every other year and this year stocking will take place. Our current northern protected slot of 24-36 inches is to continue and be re-evaluated in 2021. Check out the fish data for our lake on the state DNR website.

<http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/3472>



Holmwig Excavating, LLC

For all of your excavation service needs, contact Holmwig Excavating, LLC in Crosby, MN. Our services range from basements and driveways to site prep. We are licensed, bonded, and insured for your protection. Contact Holmwig Excavating, LLC today at 218-546-6103 for more information. You may also contact us at 218-820-2447 (Cell) for more information.



Traditions Mini Golf Center

**Batting Cage • Mini Golf • Water Wars
Frost Frozen Yogurt Shoppe**

*Rabbit Lake Association Members
bring this ad in*

**Buy a Round of Golf and
get another 1/2 off!**

Children under 12 must be
accompanied by an adult

Not valid with any other offer • Expires
8/31/15

Stop in for some fun!



**218-546-8346
P.O. BOX 70
CROSBY, MN 56441**

Oddities Lurking in Our Waters

By Jesse Williams

Jesse's Guide Service 218.831.0267

The definition of a strange catch may vary widely for Minnesota anglers. For many, they would define it as catching a fish that they may have never caught before. It could also mean catching something that they did not intend to catch, such as catching a walleye while fishing for panfish with the grandkids or hooking into a musky while pitching bass jigs in heavy cover. For some it may even mean catching something other than a fish (we've all heard a loon/osprey/otter story at some point.) But how about catching a fish that should not exist in the body of water you are fishing?

I had a discussion with a good friend of mine a number of years ago regarding the fishing in Rabbit Lake. While asking for details on how their opener had been he mentioned that along with a number of northern pike and walleyes that they had landed a smallmouth bass. I cornered him on it and essentially called him a liar, as I had never seen nor heard of a smallmouth coming from the lake. Less than a week later while casting crankbaits during an evening walleye outing I hooked into a very solid fish. As it turns out it was not just the first smallmouth I had ever seen in Rabbit Lake, it was a very large specimen as well, stretching out to 21.5", a trophy smallmouth in anyone's book. About 10 minutes and 20 casts later I again hooked into a feisty fish, and this time there was no guessing as to what it was. With another 19" smallmouth caught and released two things were clear; 1) I needed to call my buddy and apologize, and 2) something had changed in the lake. Where did these fish come from, and why had we not noticed them before?

In the years since then I have boated a good number of smallmouth in Rabbit Lake, and although I'm sure that part of my success has to do with me learning their patterns (location, feeding periods, presentations, etc.) I am also certain that there are more fish in the lake each year. The structure and available forage truly are in favor of the smallmouth as it has classic smallmouth structure, primarily rock, where crayfish and the abundant shiners and young perch seek cover; a buffet right next to the livingroom. That said, the smallmouth population is still in its infancy, and should continue to get stronger with time. With the range of sizes being caught there obviously is some successful recruitment of this species going on in the lake. So we know where the young fish are coming from, but where did the sexually-mature adult fish such as the first two I encountered come from?

There are a few theories on this. One quite popular theory, and to be honest probably the most accurate, is that "bucket biologists" dumped a few in the lake over the years. If you have never heard the term "bucket biologists," I am referring to anglers who catch a fish from one body of water and transport that live fish to another body of water and release it, with the intention of either starting a new population there, to wreak havoc on present fish populations or simply to try to make a story for the next angler that snags into this fish. This is entirely illegal and is often, though typically unintentional, the cause of transporting AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) to new waters. We'll touch base on that later.

The second most-popular theory is that there is an underground waterway or aquifer that connects the nearby Mississippi River to Rabbit Lake, and that fish are migrating into the lake from the river. In my opinion this theory doesn't hold water (no pun intended.) The red flag here for me is the channel catfish population that has exploded in this stretch of the river over the last 5 years. If there is an underwater channel connecting the two bodies of water and fish are using it to travel from the river to the lake then why have we not seen any catfish in Rabbit Lake? Of all the species on the very expansive list that live in this part of the Mississippi channel catfish are the most likely to use such a dim-lit path, and with the numbers of cats in the river at all-time high levels one would surely think that for every smallmouth that made the trek 3 or 4 catfish would do the same. Maybe it was the old "fertilized eggs on a duck's leg trick" that brought those smallmouth over to Rabbit. We will probably never know the real story, but it is fun to think about! Whatever the reason, it appears that smallmouth bass are now an established species in the lakes, and if one were to pick a not-so-common fish to add to a lake smallmouth are quite a choice. I don't think any Midwest angler will argue the fact that pound-for-pound smallies are the hardest fighting fish in freshwater, never giving up even when they are in the boat. For a young angler catching just one of these "bronze-backs" big or small trumps even the best panfish outings and will have them begging for more!

Oddities Lurking in Our Waters (continued)

This “new” fishery will only survive if anglers use caution and restraint when it comes to catching these incredible fish. With the population as it is now it could be seriously damaged if people chose to target them and keep them. It is completely legal to keep a smallmouth during the open season, however a picture goes a long ways and the release of these fish will help boost or at minimum maintain angler opportunities.

Something else that is lurking in nearby waters and is trying to find its way into Rabbit Lake is a startling list of Aquatic Invasive Species. Having grown up on Upper Mission Lake just 6 miles west I know too well the impacts these non-native plants and animals can have on a lake. Both Upper and Lower Mission had incredible cabbage weeds when I was a youngster and those weedbeds were very desirable to all fish species, particularly the lake’s abundant crappies. Roughly 10 years or so ago it was discovered that the lakes were invested with Curly-leaf pondweed. This particular invasive grows in immensely dense patches in shallower water, and germinates earlier in the season than most native weeds, in turn choking out the native weeds before they get a chance to grow. From my experience with fishing around it Curly-leaf does not hold fish well. It also dies off early in the summer, uprooting itself and drifting up on windblown shorelines, making quite a smelly mess for homeowners and leaving the formerly productive weed areas nearly void of any cover, as nothing other than curly-leaf had grown there.

As if the lake wasn’t struggling enough it took another blow just a few years later when Eurasian water milfoil was found in small, isolated areas of the lakes, particularly around the accesses and high-traffic areas. Eurasian water milfoil is a very adaptable and capable invasive plant that can grow to depths in excess of 15 feet. The introduction of milfoil picked up where the curly-leaf left off, growing in the deeper waters that the curly-leaf cannot reach. The dense growth of milfoil clogs up motors and access points. Unlike the curly-leaf fish LOVE the milfoil, however due to its dense growth and rope-like design it is very difficult to fish effectively. If you have any questions about the impact Eurasian water milfoil has on a lake just talk to anyone that owns a lake home on Minnetonka or Bay Lake. These AIS even have an impact out of the water; they can have a negative effect on property values. Combatting AIS comes with a hefty price tag as well, and so far no entirely effective solution has been found for removing the problem, only offering expensive temporary relief.

How does a lake become infested, and more importantly how do we stop the spread of AIS so that lakes such as Rabbit don’t fall victim to this epidemic? Boater knowledge is important, and compliance with DNR regulations against the transport of AIS is imperative. Inspect and clean your boat and trailer every time you pull into a boat ramp and every time you pull out of one, regardless of whether or not that body of water is known to house AIS. It’s not just weeds you need to watch out for either, Zebra mussels, Rusty crayfish, Mystery snails and Spiny water flea are also serious invasives and have a major impact on the ecological balance of a lake. Zebra mussels for instance can be nearly microscopic and invisible to the naked eye in their larval stage which can easily go undetected on a boat trailer, boat hull or even in a live well. AIS can also go unnoticed in a body of water for quite some time, so treat every lake/river as if it is infected. Pull your boat plug, check your trailer, and drain any part of the boat capable of holding lake water; it’s not just a safe decision, it’s the law!

For a list of known infected lakes as well as informational material regarding AIS and preventing their spread visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website – www.dnr.state.mn.us.

TRACK RABBIT LAKE LOON MIGRATION

Loons from Minnesota and Wisconsin have had satellite tracking devices surgically implanted to follow their migration patterns. Last summer tracking devices were implanted in loons from Rabbit Lake and Clearwater Lake along with other Minnesota and Wisconsin lakes. To view the website, go to www.usgsloon.gov then click on Common Loon Migration Study. You will be able to track each loon individually with date and location. Also, watch a very interesting video on this site, "Unraveling Mysteries of the Common Loon" to learn more about this study.

The loons on Rabbit Lake were captured at night using recorded baby loon distress calls to lure them close enough to the boat and then netted. They were then taken back to the public access to a specially equipped van and the tracking devices implanted. Other loons are banded with geolocator tags which can determine location and how deep a loon dives. Information from these tags must be uploaded so the loon must be recaptured or found dead to retrieve the information. If you see a loon with tags on its legs, report this sighting to the DNR. Kevin Woizeschke, Nongame Wildlife Specialist from the Brainerd DNR office is involved in this study and can be reached at. 218 203 4371.

Submitted by Rick West

DECODING DIFFERENT LOON CALLS

By Jim Gilbert
Special to the Star Tribune

Calls of the common loon are captivating and memory stirring. What would our northern and central Minnesota lakes be without this mournful cry and laughter of the wilderness? To appreciate loon calls you simply have to hear them in their natural setting. And as we listen, the variations of yodel, tremolo, wail, and other calls can tell us much about loon behavior.

The yodel call, "oo-AH-ho" is used for territory advertisement and defense. It is given only by the male. The far-carrying wail-call, "ahaa-ooo-oooo-ooo-ahhh", is frequently used and helps the pair keep in contact with each other. This call is often heard at night and is considered the mournful cry of the wilderness.

The tremolo-call, a wild laugh, is probably the loon's all purpose call and can signal alarm, worry or greeting. Usually the tremolo is coupled with a behavior response such as a dive, a run on the water surface or a takeoff, and it's the only call loons can give while in flight. The presence of people often evokes the tremolo, especially when boaters approach too closely. But we must remember, the tremolo isn't reserved just for intruding humans. Millions of years before people appeared, the tremolo-call echoed across ancient lakes. Loon pairs frequently use a tremolo duet when something threatens their young. This splendid tremolo duet is also used in spring to reinforce pair bonds and to advertise territorial rights.



RCCCLA

Newsletter

(Rabbit, Clinker, Cuyuna, Carlson Lake Association)

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