Lake Metonga Association Newsletter

April 2004

Lake Metonga Invasive Species Signboard

Ice Out – April 20, 2004 The huge snow banks have disappeared. The Northwoods has had its share this year. This probably makes up for the lack of snow in 2003, which resulted in many frozen septic systems. The snow cover provides an excellent insulating blanket. No frozen septics this year. The brown colors are starting to turn green. Spring, what a welcome sight after a long, long winter.

Loon Nesting Platforms The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources ("WDNR") granted approval to place two artificial nesting platforms in Lake Metonga in anticipation of increasing loon productivity. The populated clear shorelines on Lake Metonga lack the natural vegetation desirable for loon nesting. It is our hope that the platforms will encourage loon pairs to start a family. This beautiful bird is best known for its early morning and evening calls. Its OO-AH-HO resonates across the water in an almost mesmerizing fashion. It is a sight to behold to see a loon with her young riding on her back. "Loon Alert" signs are posted to help keep the lake safe for loons: - "Please stay 200 feet from loons on the water and the shoreline and platform nesting areas." Wildlife harassment is illegal and you may report violations to the WDNR office or call their toll free number (1-800-TIP-WDNR).

A special thanks to Dave Patzlaff for building our two loon nesting platforms. Super Job,

Dave! How could any loon resist nesting on these platforms?

Walleye Stocking for 2004 During the first two weeks of June the WDNR will stock 107,850 fingerling walleyes in Lake Metonga. The WDNR's plan is to stock 50 fingerlings per acre. For Lake Metonga, this calculates to: 50 walleyes per acre x 2,157 acres = 107,850 fingerlings. The size of the fingerlings ranges from 1-1/2 to 2 inches. The WDNR has hatchery facilities in Woodruff, Wisconsin, where the "fry" are reared to this fingerling size as they feed on normal plankton levels in the rearing ponds. The WDNR hatchery lacks facilities and staff and would need an additional food source to accommodate growing larger fingerlings.

Fyke Netting and Shocking 2004 The WDNR regularly conducts netting and electro-fishing surveys on Lake Metonga. From these surveys, the WDNR can determine what fish species are present, estimate the size of fish populations and assess the health of the fishery. Fyke netting will be conducted soon after ice-out. Four to five days after the fyke netting is complete, the electro-fishing survey (shocking) will be conducted. The Lake Association will publish the results when there are made available.

A Creel Survey This will be conducted by the WDNR beginning at the opening of fishing season, May 1, 2004, and continue throughout the summer and fall ending on October 31, 2004. The WDNR creel surveyor will perform the following:

1. Count the number of anglers on the Lake at various times throughout the day.
2. Interview anglers in their boats or at the boat landings to obtain a count of the fish harvested, the type, size, and time the fish were caught.
3. The surveyor will spend 40 hours during any of the seven days of the week.
4. During fyke netting a certain number of walleyes will be marked with a fin clip. The number of fish found with fin clips during the creel survey provides an estimate of fish harvested by anglers during the course of the season.

From the data collected projections can be made about hours spent fishing, number of each species harvested, average length of harvested fish, total number of fish in the population harvested, and the catch and harvest rates.

This information in combination with previous data allows the Fisheries Biologist to design the management plan best suited for the fishery in Lake Metonga.

Please cooperate with the Creel Surveyor. His interview may briefly interrupt your fishing schedule, but the data collected will ultimately benefit each angler.

Weevil Damage To Eurasian Water Milfoil

EnviroScience biologists conducted two follow-up surveys since 8,000 weevils were planted in two milfoil beds on July 26, 2002

in Strawberry Bluff Bay. The first survey was performed on August 28, 2002 and the second survey on August 26, 2003. In each case 20 to 30 Eurasian Water Milfoil ("EWM") stems were collected along 30 meter transect lines in each site for assessment of plant health and presence or absence of weevils.

Stem analysis results revealed significant increases in weevil densities since 2002, indicating that the population of weevils had successfully over-wintered and returned to the Lake in high numbers. Although EWM dominated the plant community, an emergence of new native plants (Large Leaf Pondweed and Eel Grass) were observed. This continued increase in the number of native plants is an extremely positive sign, indicating that the native plant community is re-establishing as the EWM becomes more damaged by weevil activity.

A detailed report will be presented at the annual meeting in July.

Zebra Mussel Study Continues Again in 2004, Les Schramm will assist Mike Preul, Fishery Biologist for the Mole Lake Sokaogon Chippewa Community, with the zebra mussel survey. Additional grant funds have been awarded to the Chippewa Community to allow Mike to continue this study through 2006. This extended period will allow additional collection of data which will aid in evaluating whether increases in zebra mussel densities have a direct affect on the fishery and/or the overall ecosystem of Lake Metonga.

Our Lake Association is extremely appreciative of Mike's interest, effort, his technical ability in conducting this study and evaluating the data collected. Thank you, Mike, from all Lake Metonga property owners and those in our community who use this water resource.

New Signboards New sign boards have been built and placed at the city beach and county park boat launches. The new signs warn lake users that "Lake Metonga is infested with – Eurasian Water Milfoil, Zebra Mussels, and Rusty Crayfish." Each exotic is identified by a colored picture and a brief corresponding description. Procedures are listed that boat and recreational owners should take to prevent the spread of these exotics. The signs were constructed with grant funds from "BoatUS Foundation", Annapolis, Maryland. Stop and inspect our new signboards.

A special thanks to everyone who helped with this project – Roger Cronce picked up the signs from "Scenic Signs, Inc. in Wausau; Jim Greely, Warren Hagen and Gary Mueller for gathering materials and constructing the framework and roof. Jim, Warren, Gary and Les assisted in placing them at the boat launches. Thanks for all your time and effort – Great Job, Guys!

Boat Washing Station Clean boats prevent invasive species from entering lake waters. Everyone needs to inspect their boats, recreational equipment and travel trailers before entering and when leaving Lake

Metonga and should physically remove any milfoil or zebra mussels that may have attached to the equipment to prevent it from being spread to other bodies of water. However, juvenile zebra mussels feel like sand or grit on the surface of boat hulls, motors and other submerged parts and a visual inspection may not detect their presence.

Therefore, the Lake Association is providing the City of Crandon and Forest County with pressure (1,600 PSI) boat washing equipment at the City Beach and Count Park. This is another tool available to lake users for cleaning off any small milfoil fragments and juvenile zebra mussels to reduce the risk of transporting these exotics to other bodies of water.

The use of these washing facilities is voluntary. It should not be considered as a substitute for the physical steps boat owners should take to clean their equipment. These steps include:

- Inspect and remove aquatic plants and animals from your boat, motor and trailer;
- Drain water from your motor, livewell and bilge;
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash;
- If unable to high pressure spray wash – dry equipment at least 5 days before entering another body of water.

Phosphorus/Algae Growth The contributing factor for algae growth in Wisconsin Lakes is the nutrient phosphorus. There is an adage which states that, "One pound of phosphorus can produce from 300 to 500 pounds of algae". J. R. Vallentyne, in his Book "The Algae Bowl – Lakes and Man", states that a 500 pound batch of wet algae requires:

1 Pound of Phosphorus

7 Pounds of Nitrogen

40 Pounds of Carbon.

Since there is usually more than adequate levels of nitrogen and carbon in lakes, for every pound of phosphorus added, another 500 pound batch of wet algae can be produced.

What are the sources of phosphorus?

1. Surface Water Runoff
2. Failing Septic Systems
3. Soil Erosion which carries nutrients into the lake
4. Lawn Fertilizer
5. Raking burned leaves or lawn clippings into the water.

Lake protection begins at each individual home. We all need to be good environmental stewards.

Watch For These Coming Events

Watch for the June Newsletter mailing which will include:

1. 2004 Membership Application

2. Annual Meeting July 3, 2004
   9:00 a.m. to ~~11:00~~ 10:30 a.m.
   in the Crandon School Auditorium

3. Boat Parade

4. Raffles

Have a great summer season!

Les Schramm