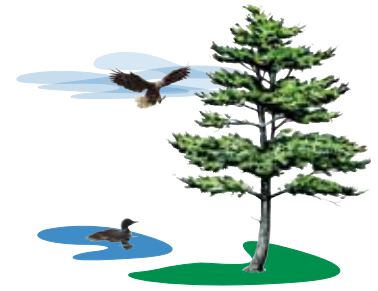


# LAKE METONGA NEWS

Volume 2022: No. 2



## Welcoming Two New Members to the Lake Community



*Photos courtesy Lynn Smith*



There are five eagle nests located around Lake Metonga. Unfortunately, our eagle cam on the Truymen Tree just south of Peterson Bay has been on the fritz this year, so most were unable to watch any activity on the nest. As it turns out, eagles did visit occasionally, but did not nest and produce any offspring.

Kitty-corner across the lake, the eagle's nest by Lynn and Mike Smith and neighbors Jan and Mark Bellucci had two successful fledgling eaglets (top photo). The proud parents look on (bottom).

## Association Update

*Mark Truymen*

It feels like Fall is hastening towards Winter. Most leaves have already fallen and the docks and lifts have been stored for another season.

Lake Metonga Association (LMA) has had a busy summer with the treatment of 14 acres of eurasian milfoil in Strawberry Bay. We also had another very successful year of removing bullheads, which was conducted by our hard-working Fisheries Committee and the many property owners, relatives and friends of the lake that brought in over two million bullhead minnows.

The milfoil treatment was done in June with the help of volunteers who tested the area daily for a week. In September, our lake consultant, Onterra LLC, did a post treatment sampling, the results of which you'll read about later in the newsletter.

After a three year hiatus, the Weeds'N'Walleyes Banquet was on again. The event was held October 1st in the Conference Center at the Mole Lake Casino. More on that in this newsletter as well.

There will be a "changing of the guard" for next year's banquet as Chris & Gary Mueller are retiring from this role that they've overseen for many successful years. If you're interested in helping with our most important fundraiser in the future, please reach out to us on our website or to any board member.

*Continued page 2...*

# Lake Metonga News

## Truyman continued...

The Association Outreach Committee will be meeting in early November with the main issue on the agenda of membership. As you know, our membership year is the calendar year, so you'll be receiving notice in mid-January 2023 to renew your membership. When you receive that notice, please complete and return ASAP as it makes it much easier for our volunteers.

Until next spring: good luck with ice fishing, stay safe on the snowmobiles, or cozy by the fire...or warm in the sun for all you snowbirds.



*(Above) About two hundred association members and friends of the lake attended this year's Weeds'N'Walleyes Banquet to help raise tens of thousands of dollars for the association's lake preservation and enhancement efforts.*

*(Right) At the end of the night, Chris and Gary Mueller take home one prize basket to replace the undisclosed number of gift baskets and prizes they've been "hoarding" in their house for the past three years.*

## Weeds'N'Walleyes Banquet a Big Success; Muellers Reclaim Their Basement!

Gary Mueller

After a three year hiatus since 2019, we found out first hand how much things have changed, and faced new challenges to make this year's banquet a success.

Previous WnW events were held in the Bingo Hall with over three hundred guests. We found out in late spring that the Bingo Hall was reduced in size and our event was being relocated to the Conference Center. Early LMA fund raisers were held in the Conference Center to about one hundred fifty guests. With invitations carried over from the two previous years' canceled events, we sent out new invitations and hoped for the best. Invitation responses came in very slow as a pair of local weddings took precedent for many in the community.

With Mrs Mueller having amassed a trove of baskets and prizes for three hundred plus guests we had to maximize the available space in the new location. By relocating the food serving area to the gathering area outside the hall we were able to handle about two hundred guests.

The two hundred guests really stepped up and made this one of our most successful events on a per capita basis. Our Tribal hosts had some real challenges with logistics and serving, but their enthusiasm and "can do" attitude went a long way to making this event a real success.

We want to thank all the sponsors, volunteers and guests who place the association so high on their priority list — for helping this event become a huge success and making the lake association's efforts possible.



## Strawberry Bay Milfoil Treatment 2022

Eddie Heath, Onterra LLC in cooperation with LMA Invasives Committee

For our 2022 milfoil post-treatment follow-up, a sub-sample point-intercept grid was placed over the Strawberry Bay treatment site at a spacing of 25 meters apart resulting in 75 sample locations (see graphic at right).

Following the standard point-intercept methodology, a rake sampler is deployed at each sampling points and all the aquatic plant species encountered are recorded, along with information about their relative abundance.

During our mid-September post treatment sub-sample point-intercept survey, we found EWM at only one location out of 75 (1.3%), whereas we had EWM on the rake at 53 (70.7%) locations during the June pretreatment survey. This indicates a high level of EWM impact during the year of treatment.

Our annual lake-wide EWM mapping survey during September of 2021 (pretreatment), and September 2022 (post treatment), support these findings as shown in the maps below.



(Above Left) The 2021 late-fall mapping of the lake showed serious milfoil infestation in Strawberry Bay — scattered plant areas (gray), dominant groups (yellow) and highly dominant (orange). With DNR approval, the area was treated in the spring of this year.



(Above Right) As follow-up, the treatment zone is mapped for sampling in mid-September. Milfoil was detected at only one of the 75 target points.

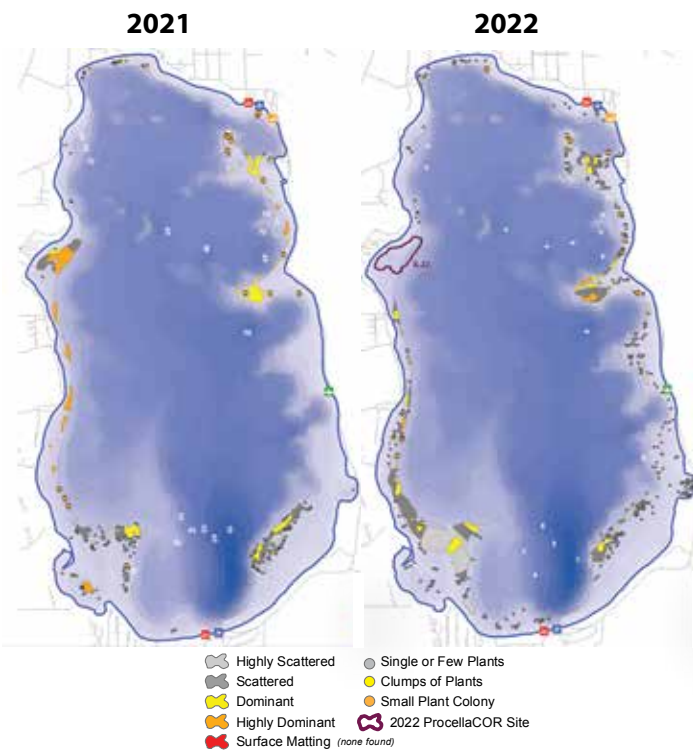
As the maps indicate, during the 2021 pretreatment EWM mapping survey, a highly dominant EWM colony was mapped in Strawberry Bay. During the 2022 post treatment mapping survey, no EWM was detected in this area.

While it is certainly possible that some small-statured plants may have escaped our detection, we are confident that we did not miss anything large or overly important as it relates to the overall management picture of the Metonga system.

While the year of treatment results are extremely promising, a full understanding of treatment success will be understood after looking at this site in 2023, the year after treatment. This will allow us to tease out whether only seasonal EWM reductions occurred, or if longer-term control was achieved.

\* \* \*

Grant Reed, Chair of the Lake Metonga Invasive Committee stressed that long term results are what we need to see in order to call this treatment a success. We'll be watching this area closely to see how long it takes for the EWM to get back to the pre-treatment level (or if it ever does) — so we can make better treatment decisions going forward. This is in large part why our committee and the association board find the investment in these annual map studies to be money well spent, allowing us to see trends and identify “hot spots” early on before they become an even larger scale and much more expensive problem to try and tackle.



# Lake Metonga News

## Year 2 Bullhead Reduction Program: An Even Bigger Success This Year In Large Part Due to the Amazing Effort By Two Young Volunteers

Julie Van Lannen

This year, we saw many highlights of the bullhead reduction program. Another 7,768 adult bullheads were electroshocked out of the lake this past spring by the Mole Lake Fisheries group. We also tripled the number of individuals who completed the volunteer agreement form to collect the minnows. And, we more than doubled the amount of bullhead minnows collected from last year.

This year an estimated 2,221,669 minnows and eggs were collected along with 73 adults. We even had a TV station (Channel 12 WJFW) come to the lake and report on the project. See adjacent article next page.

However, the greatest highlight was the collection effort of bullhead minnows from two young volunteers, Midori and Ezra Santiago. The staff at the collection site were like “kids in a candy store” anxiously waiting to see how many bags these two were going to hand in each Saturday. In total, Midori and Ezra collected over 20 gallon bags of minnows! That’s not a typo. You read that right! Not pints – not quarts – they collected over twenty **GALLON** bags.

Midori and Ezra, along with the help of their grandfather who drove the boat, would go around the lake and collect the minnows. They both are on their respective school’s swimming team, so getting in the water to collect the minnows never deterred them. They had fun. They graciously answered these questions:

### **Why did you decide to collect bullhead minnows?**

We decided to collect bullhead minnows to do our part to help the lake. Our family enjoys ice fishing, and catching the bullheads helps keep the number of perch and walleye healthy.

### **What is your favorite part about collecting?**

Our favorite part of collecting is spending time together as a family and the challenge of getting as many minnows as possible.

### **What is your secret in catching so many?**

We spend a lot of hours on the water when hunting for bullheads. The water conditions have to be just right to be able to spot them well. Being a good swimmer also really helps because sometimes you have to dive down fairly deep to get them.



Midori Santiago holds two 1-gallon bags of bullhead minnows averaging tens of thousands of minnows per bag.

### **What part of the lake did you find easiest in catching them? What’s your “Hotspot”?**

The west side of the lake seems to have more minnows, but really we have been able to find some in the shallows of all areas of the lake, even off our own dock.

### **What part of the lake was more difficult to catch them?**

Any spot that has more weeds is a little bit more difficult to catch them. The minnows have better camouflage and the weeds get in the way of the nets.

### **Who will take the bragging rights on being the better fisher person? Midori or Ezra?**

Midori is the better fisher person. She is persistent and loves to swim.

**What advice would you give others who are thinking about collecting them but have not tried yet.**

Just give it a try. We started to help the lake and for something to do when we are out on the boat, but now we actually look forward to going out and catching them. Also, wear gloves when handling the fish, even the minnows have sharp little barbs.

*The efforts of these two school aged kids give us promise on the future of Lake Metonga. Hopefully, next summer we will see more individuals attempting to beat their record! Thank You Midori and Ezra! And thanks to everyone who participated in this summer's project!*

**The Fisheries & Habitat Committee wishes to give special thanks and recognition to our sponsors for their ongoing generosity:**

- Palubicki's Eats and Treats
- Schaefer's
- Tamarack Outfitters
- Yeti's

**Mole Lake Fisheries Bullhead Harvesting on Metonga Aires on Local NBC Network**

On June 13, Channel 12 Rhinelander aired a special report on the joint efforts by Mole Lake Fisheries and the Lake Metonga Association to improve the walleye and perch fishery by getting the overabundance of bullheads in the lake under control.

Before a filmed electroshocking demonstration on the lake, Gary Mueller narrated on shore how and why bullhead harvesting came about, and why the association is putting so much emphasis on their new bullhead minnow harvesting program.

Mole Lake Fisheries has electroshock harvested adult bullheads since 2008. Each harvesting season begins when the ice is out until the bulrush beds get too thick to patrol. In the ten to twelve seasons that Mole Lake Fisheries has harvested, they've netted well over 60,000 adult bullheads which are donated to area raptor centers for food. The process is very time consuming and extremely labor intensive. As Mike Preul, head of Mole Lake Fisheries commented, "People who volunteer don't come back a second time."

Watching the Mole Lake Fisheries staff at work, it's easy to see why. And it's also easy to see why Lake Metonga Association's new program to harvest the minnows by the millions is so much easier. And, with the ice cream and other rewards from area businesses, it's a real treat for volunteers to come back for more.



*(Above) Mole Lake Fisheries staff member Norb Nunway harvests adult bullheads aboard one of Mole Lake Fisheries electroshocking watercraft. As the boat coasts slowly through the emerging bulrushes, electrodes dangling in the water momentarily paralyze the fish, allowing just a second or two to selectively net only bullheads, as many as possible, before they come to and scurry away — and before the net gets too heavy to hoist on board and deposit into the live well. Driving the boat is Mole Lake Fisheries staff member, Clint Soulier (not pictured).*



*(Left) Michael Lodholz, Reporter from WJFW Rhinelander interviews Gary Mueller for the Channel 12 special report on bullhead harvesting efforts on Lake Metonga.*

# Lake Metonga News

## Loon Report

Kim Reed

Presently, the adult loons from Metonga are well on their way in their annual migration down to the Gulf of Mexico, with the fledglings following as the temperatures drop. We'll see the adult loons again in spring, just as the ice recedes. But, we won't see the fledged chicks again for 2-3 years, as they will remain in warmer waters. When the fledged chicks do return, they will look for a home nearby within 10-20 miles of Lake Metonga.

The loons of Metonga had an exciting yet challenging summer. Within a day of ice-out, loons were heard. The loon nest in Farmers Bay was placed on May 7th, and once it hit the water, the loons started to enter into Farmers Bay. The pair checked out the nest, and then continued to "hang out" in the bay until they officially started nesting on May 20th.

The loon pair in Peterson Bay started to nest around the same time. For four weeks, the adult loons incubated their eggs, with the first pair hatching in Peterson Bay on June 14th. This loon pair quickly left their nest and continued to stay along the east shore of the lake for several weeks.

The loon pair in Farmers Bay only hatched one chick, but this chick was able to feed with double resources and grew quickly. With fewer forage fish in Farmers Bay, this pair and chick left the bay area several weeks sooner than past years, and was seen as far south as the Veterans Memorial Park, well into the center of the lake, and north to the southern portion of Strawberry Bay. It appears that we were lucky to have a loon pair nest naturally in the area of Strawberry Point and hatch two chicks. However, we were not able to confirm this as this family was not seen together after the 4th of July weekend.

This year, the loon pair in Farmers Bay had to defend their nest and area with several floater loons and was more protective. In late May, a loner loon attempted to enter, and after several chest bumps from the nesting pair, the loner decided to leave. A couple weeks later, a mallard family got a little too close to the nest, and caused a bit of a stir with the loons defending their area and the ducks moved to another area in the lagoon. A short time later, the pair did a great job at defending the nest with an eagle fishing near the point. And again, in late June, four floater loons attempted to take over the territory. After a display of dominance, these floaters left the bay about ten minutes later, without harming the nesting pair or chick.



*Adult and baby loon in Farmers Bay, Summer 2022*

With the loons working so hard to hatch and raise the chicks to fledging in such a short time on Metonga, please try to help them have a successful summer by following these tips:

- Be alert for the loons and chicks on all areas of the lake, especially in the vicinities of the nesting areas and waters. Remember that the loon chicks cannot dive underwater to escape boats and jet skis until they are 8-10 weeks old. Slow down and give them distance. If you are kayaking or approaching on the water, remain at a safe distance. The loons will defend their chicks as best as they are able. Remember, it is a federal offense to instigate or harass the loons. This includes approaching them or their territory intentionally or without altering your course.
- Get the lead out! Lead poisoning in birds is on the rise, and not just loons. For example, lead that finds its way to the bottom of the lake look like food, and are easily ingested. Please switch to non-lead sinkers, fishing tackle and ammunition. REGI has treated several loons from nearby lakes this summer, and this is a painful and costly rehabilitation. *Read about their Pickerel Lake rescue at: <http://www.raptoreducationgroup.org/blog/2022/10/7/immature-loon-admitted>*
- Throw away fishing line and tackle at the boat ramps or at home. Loons as well as other birds have been hooked with lures & hooks and entangled in line. With a lake our size, capturing loons to offer aid is not easy.

Please help be part of the solution, not the problem! Together, lets make sure the loons on Metonga continue to nest here and fledge chicks successfully.

Please report any unusual loon activity to the Reed's at [kmsreed@gmail.com](mailto:kmsreed@gmail.com) or 920-639-4332

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## Another Clean Boat Clean Water Season Comes to an End — With A Big “If” for Next Year

Julie Janquart

With the end of summer, another successful Clean Boat Clean Water (CBCW) season comes to an end. Lake Metonga Association applies every year to the DNR for a grant to have this program and receives a 75/25 grant from the DNR for the CBCW program. For example, if the DNR gives a \$6,000 grant, then the lake association is required to put \$2,000 towards the program.

One of the requirements to receive the grant is to have 200 inspected hours at the North Shore Landing and 200 inspected hours at the South Shore Landing. Even though the South Landing did not completely open until the middle of June this summer due to the campground renovations, we were able to complete the mandated 200 hours. Our three inspectors did a great job and put in a total of 579 hours at the landings.

The Clean Boats Clean Water program attempts to reduce/eliminate the spread of invasives to our beautiful lakes and rivers throughout the state. Our inspectors are tasked to inspect for any type of plant life, zebra mussels, etc. on boats, trailers, motors, live wells and bilge tanks and make sure they are removed before entering the lake and after leaving the lake. The inspectors educate the boaters about draining all water from boats and equipment, drain live wells and containers holding any catch, and about appropriate disposal of live bait.

Another mandate to receive the DNR grant is to acquire data. There is a set of questions that the inspectors ask and record on a watercraft inspection report.

This year, the inspectors inspected 720 boats and talked with 1,380 individuals. Some of you may have been annoyed at being asked these same questions every time you put your boat in or took it out. Please remember that the questions are mandated to receive the grant money and are important to protect our lakes!

The Lake Metonga Association needs to continue this program in the future but, we need someone to step up and serve as the coordinator for this important program. Without an active CBCW program, future DNR assistance with our milfoil treatment efforts will also be jeopardized.

The coordinator pay is \$15.00 per hour with the work beginning in April and concluding in early October.

In preparation for next year, a timeline of tasks has been created, and complete training and start-up assistance will be available. A list of some of the coordinator responsibilities include: hiring of inspectors, preparing inspectors' folders/paperwork, creating inspectors' schedule, submit time sheets twice a month to the Crandon City Clerk, enter data into the computer, and applying for the 2024 grant.

If you are interested, please contact any of the following:

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Mark Truymen [mrtruymen@gmail.com](mailto:mrtruymen@gmail.com)

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## Area High School Students Environmental Day on Metonga

With cool temperatures, blustery winds, and the lake level to low to launch from the South Beach dock, area students attending Environmental Day conducted their studies at various learning stations set up in Veterans Memorial Park. Subjects included: How to cast a line fishing instructions, Identifying land and water invasives, EWM and Zebra mussel examination, Minnow education, Clean Boats/Clean Waters, Lake Metonga Bullhead Project, Forest County geology timeline, and Wisconsin lakes trivia.



## Lake Association Contacts:

### 4th of July Boat Parade & Picnic

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### Apparel

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### Weeds'N'Walleyes Banquet

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## Lake Metonga Association

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*Photos courtesy Lynn Smith*