

Muskellunge Lake Association, Inc.

Newsletter
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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE – Mike Newmeister, michael.newmeister@gmail.com 414-326-6130

DECISION TIME

In our second year of dealing with our Eurasian Water Mil-foil (EWM) infestation, our prospects for controlling this weed have been greatly diminished. As you recall, we hired hand pulling of EMW in August of 2017. Those efforts were primarily directed to the center bar where we have the greatest concentration of EWM. Unfortunately, this area is also too often the first place fisherman target for all species of fish in the lake. This only exacerbates our problem in that motoring on top of the weeds and getting it tangle in lures can only lead to the it's dispersal to other areas. On the up side, this bar is buffered by relatively deep water on all sides. To date, there is little evidence that the plant will promulgate in much more than 6 foot of water.

With this in mind, an extensive volunteer hand pulling was conducted twice this summer. Although early indications showed promise, by summers end the infestation was worse than ever. Further, it appears that the EWM was pushed out many of the native plants.

This brings us to a decision point. The board of directors is now considering the drastic step of a chemical intervention. The decision to do so is not taken lightly. The fact will remain that there will always be EWM in our lake. The extent of the infestation along the shorelines is uncertain and will be for many years. To date however, these areas are both small in number and small in concentration. It is the board's belief that either hand-pulling or diver assisted suction harvesting (DASH) can still be effective in these areas. However, this will be more than a voluntary effort so we can anticipate an annual expense to accomplish this task.

At present, the board in, consultation with Joe Pallardy our consultant with Emmons & Olivier, is of the opinion that the concentration at the center bar poses a significant risk to the entire lake. This area will serve as dispersal point in every compass direction so long as it remains in the present abundance.

Candidly however, our discussions with the DNR about a chemical intervention has met with a very cool response. Even though we have funds to do so from our Rapid Response Grant, a permit from the DNR is still required. Furthermore, the decision to go ahead with this plan could preclude us from getting any additional financial assistance form the DNR.

In order to maximize other resources going forward, the board will soon apply to the DNR for a Lake Management Planning Grant. Such a plan will be required if a chemical intervention is attempted. It may also put us in line for some financial assistance from the DNR. This grant however not only will focus on EWM, but also deal with other lake issues. These included among many objectives 1) a better understanding our water shed dynamics as it pertains to our high concentration of phosphorous. 2) a



better understanding of our water chemistry and oxygen depletion showing up on testing. 3) a shoreline condition assessment to identify areas in need of restoration and 4) a review and analysis of our fishery.

Our grant application must be filed by December 8, 2018. A preliminary plan is now being reviewed by the DNR. We hope to make the application available to our members before filing with the DNR.

The decision to apply for a chemical intervention permit will need to be made by early spring. We encourage all input to aid in the decision process. No action will be taken until the nature, extent and financial commitment is provided to our entire membership. Stay tuned.

RAPID RESPONSE GRANT – Mike Newmeister

As many of you are aware, in 2017 the Muskellunge Lake Association was awarded this grant from the DNR to deal with the discovery of Eurasian Water Mil-foil (EWM) in our lake in the fall of 2016. The grant was for a total up to \$19,997. By terms of the grant, the association is allowed to offset out of pocket expenses by volunteering labor and equipment to achieve grant goals.

As explained earlier, much of the early volunteer effort has been invested to determining the extent of our infestation. Thereafter, in 2017, we contracted with Aquatic Plant Management of Minocqua to perform a hand-pulling intervention in the most infested parts of the lake. In 2017, our lake fund expended a total of \$8,490.75 for this activity and for our consultant, Emmons and Olivier. Because of the extensive volunteer effort of many of your neighbors, nearly all of those funds have been reimbursed to us by the DNR.

Our efforts in 2018 included the vigilant assessment of the presence of EWM throughout the lake. Of pressing concern however, is the abundance of the plant at the center bar. This is far and away the largest area of infestation. In light of our experience in 2017, we thought a volunteer effort by our lake residents could significantly challenge this infestation in a manner similar to the efforts of Aquatic Plant Management. Therefore, on July 1 and again on July 29, a large volunteer effort was undertaken at the center bar. We logged 84 volunteer hours plus the use of many boats. These hours will offset our 2018 out of pocket expense which was only for our consultant this year.

2019 will be the last year of this grant. We have on hand approximately \$3000 for an intervention effort. How that money is spent rest largely on the application and award of the Lake Management Grant referred to above.

CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS GRANT – Mike Newmeister

As you are aware, for many years the Muskellunge Lake Association has applied for and receive a CBCW grant from the DNR. The purpose of this grant is to have trained persons conduct inspections of boats, provide AIS information, and collect and report certain data. Although we could defray our out of pocket expense with volunteer hours, the past several years we have contracted with the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh to provide 200 hours of landing coverage. The contract expense was \$3434. We will be reimbursed \$2575.50 this fall.

In light of the fact that our lake is now infested, I do believe it will be the board consensus that the funds dedicated to this effort will be better utilized in EWM interventions. This will be a board agenda item in January. Your input on the elimination of this activity is welcomed.



YOUR DUES, OUR LAKE IMPROVEMENT FUND

Over the years, our association has been blessed with the overwhelming financial support of the lake community. Your dues, although modest, allows us to defray the expense of our aeration system which has entered its 4th decade. Those expenses include the utilities to run the pump, maintenance of the pump, and the replenishment of parts for the fencing we install each year.

Because we are not a lake district, we rely solely upon the generosity of all of you to fund our lake improvement. At present, the association has resources just in excess of \$14,000. This has been static for many years and the cushion has been viewed by the board as our 'rainy day fund'. Now that we see the storm clouds gathering, we may very well tap, if not exhaust those funds in the forthcoming future.

For this reason, you will note on our request to join or renew your membership, a separate line for contributions to the Lake Improvement Fund. Please consider protecting your investment by providing an additional gift to the lake you cherish.

WELCOME COMMITTEE – Lillis Raboin, wlraboin@aol.com 920-374-9784

Here's a shout out to our new lake neighbors.

- Tim and Amy Elve now own property at 2041 Musky Road, next to our aerator shed. They also have a home in Waunakee, WI.
- Jim Robersen and Charlyne Heckler now own property at 6441 Timbering Haven Lane. They also have a home in Ferryville, WI.
- Edward and Linda Ference now own property at 6416 Evergreen Lane. They also have a home in Gurnee, IL.

Welcome to the lake. Please watch our calendar of events so we all can get to know you.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – Bonnie Duffy larnbonn@gmail.com 715-477-0792

Looks like we are headed for an early and long winter. Hope everyone stays warm. Only one card sent out lately.

- Sympathy card sent to Dennis and Joanne Rydzewski on the passing of Joanne's mother a few weeks ago.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE – Bonnie Duffy larnbonn@gmail.com 715-477-0792

The social committee is pleased to announce the return of the winter social to be held on Saturday, January 26, 2019. The venue is the VFW Club in Eagle River. Festivities will commence with a cocktail hour at 5:00PM. Dinner will follow at 6:00 PM. The cost will be \$20 per person. The committee will provide additional information soon.

As in the past, there will be raffle and door prizes. The committee is seeking themed gift baskets and hand-crafted items for these purposes. Also, if you are aware any local business that may wish to contribute something, please let Bonnie know so a contact can be made on behalf of the lake association.

WEBMASTER – Jeff Rappold, musky.board@gmail.com 920-585-9133

WEB. Well another year and the usage on our web site www.muskellungelake.org is still going strong. We have regular visits to the site throughout the year. As we have said in the past, the web site will always be our best repository of documents, meeting minutes and general informational materials as they pertain to our lake. On our HOME PAGE we will try to keep the upcoming events calendar current as well as noteworthy items. As we talk about starting a new Lake Management Plan, you can find the reports from previous 3 extensive studies done on Muskellunge Lake. For those of you that haven't been around for a long time, it might be a good read on a rainy day.



E-Mail. I hope by now you have realized we have migrated to using email as our primary means of contacting our members. In a much timelier manner we can share information, make requests for help, and keep people up to date on what's going on. Some say that email is a bit old school, yet it is still the communication tool that is most flexible. You can save it, move it, forward it, attach things to it, copy and paste it, link it, send to multiple people and yes even print it. You can read it at home, work or on your phone.

News. A point about our newsletters, or the lack of them. We are finding that the news you want to know about isn't timely any longer if we wait for the next mailing. In these busy times putting together a newsletter is challenging. New things are going on around and about the lake that you want to know about. The efforts with Eurasian Milfoil management, Boat Landing monitoring, soliciting volunteers or making announcements of events or work days can all be done more efficiently via email. Just as important, the reply function helps us understand any concerns you may have or want to share. Please share your email address with us and keep it up to date if you make changes. If you don't have an email address, ask a family member to be your lake news ears and let you know what is going on. We are not trying to cut back on lakeside news, we are just trying to be more effective.

Facebook. This has been a challenge for us to keep our Facebook page current. With all the changes going on in the Facebook world, how it works organizations has become quite different. The good news is someone has volunteered to step up and restart an all new Muskellunge Lake Facebook page that will be easier to maintain and communicate. Watch for this in 2019.

Personal Information. We will never purposely share your email addresses or contact info with anyone outside of the MLA board. We will try to blind copy your email so the addresses are hidden. Your contact info and that of your lakeside neighbors is on the web site and in the password protected area. If you have forgotten your password for access to this area let me know. Please let me know of changes to any of your contact info so we can keep our database current. Mailing addresses, cell phone numbers, email contacts and even names change on occasion. Keep us up to date and current if you would. Contact me Jeff Rappold at musky.board@gmail.com.

BOAT LANDING – John Kurhajec john.kurhajec.b1h7@statefarm.com 715-479-1703

Not much to report. This past summer, we had 220 + hours of Clean Boats Clean Waters coverage at the landing by University of Wisconsin students. This may be the last year in light of the uncertainty of the lake financial commitment to deal with the Eurasian Mil-foil.

In the past, we had volunteers monitor the landing. We may return to that model. If interested, one must attend an accredited CBCW seminar. As of yet, none are scheduled for 2019.

AERATOR – Bob Hodkiewicz hud4@frontier.com 715-479-7194

After having the aerator pump checked over, nothing was wrong and is ready to be used this Winter.

If conditions are appropriate, we are planning to put the fencing in and start the aerator on Jan. 5, 2019 at 9:00 AM. Your help is welcomed.

A.M. providing there is at least 8 in. of ice. It's about a two-hour job, and we could use some volunteers. If you could help, a phone call or E-mail before Jan. 5th, at 9:00AM. would be appreciated.

WATER QUALITY – Jeff Rappold, musky.board@gmail.com 920-585-9133

The Science. In case you didn't know, volunteers on our lake have been reporting water quality data to the WDNR since 1973. This data is reported as a part of the Citizens Lake Monitoring Network. (CLMN). Five to six times a year we check water clarity, temperature profile, and now dissolved oxygen.



We then prepare samples for lab tests of Phosphorous (the nutrient) and Chlorophyll (algae). This data recorded over time helps keep track of overall water quality. You can look up the data for our lake by searching the DNR site for Muskellunge Lake or going to this link <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/waterquality/Station.aspx?id=643137> .

What we know. Well we have known for a long time that our lake is Eutrophic (aging). Reversing this aging process is difficult but we can certainly help by not adding to the problems. Never use lawn and garden fertilizers on lakeside properties. We have a natural influx of Phosphorous in our ground water that we can't control but adding to it in any way accelerates the aging of the lake making it less desirable for all of us. Keep your septic system checked and in good order. Minimize stirring up bottom sediments with your boat prop wash. Keep your shoreline natural with plenty of native plants, brush and trees to filter run off. Your efforts will help.

The lake is changing. It seems like our lake changes a lot sometimes. Why is that? A couple years ago the lake was exceptionally clear well into the early summer. If you recall that year had a very late ice out and a cold spring. The usual remix of nutrients that occurs at spring turnover was delayed as was the algae. By late summer we had a weed crop like we had not seen in years. Lots of sun and clear water will do that. Opposite to that effect, these last two summers many noticed that the water was quite turbid and brown most of the summer. Weed growth was way down from normal. Many thought the weeds had finally retreated and hoped it would always be like that. You also remember we had an unusual amount of rain in the early summer. This caused huge dirty runoffs, high water and a new influx of nutrients. Winds kept the water turbid most of the summer. With reduced light, it prevented the weeds from growing out in the deeper waters like normal.

Going forward. Tracking the chemistry of the lake over time can give us some early indications of trouble. This year we began tracking, on a regular basis, the dissolved oxygen content at various depths. We have discovered that late in the summer the depths below 10-12 feet are often oxygen depleted. We also discovered low oxygen in the deeper waters in the winter even near the aerator. You will now see us out even in the winter at 6 different spots keeping an eye on the oxygen levels. We will try over time to see if there are any connections between the low oxygen conditions on the bottom and the phosphorous nutrients in the lake. We will also gauge the effectiveness of our aerator that also impacts the fishery in the lake. We're not sure where this will lead us but without data we will get nowhere.

EWM MANAGEMENT – Jeff Rappold, musky.board@gmail.com 920-585-9133

What we know. You have read earlier of our specific efforts to control and harvest the invasive plant Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). While our efforts of prevention at the landing helped delay the invasion, we are now faced with dealing with it. Why should you care? Unchecked in some lakes, EWM can grow into huge matted masses that makes recreational use of the water nearly impossible. The EWM grows early and fast and can crowd out and shade the native plants until they die off. To be clear, we don't know if that will happen here long term. It is known that even with manual harvesting or herbicide treatments we will never eliminate EWM in Muskellunge lake completely. A large amount and diversity of plants is a good thing. It is more difficult for EWM to find a place to get started with lots of native plants. EWM spreads easily as this plant can fragment and break apart all on its own. These fragments then move around and take root in new areas. Boaters and fishermen can also break off and spread the fragments of this plant. It is no coincidence that the EWM found in our lake so far is in areas popular with fishing and boating.

Identification. EWM is sometimes difficult to identify. In our lake, most often it has been found in areas that are 3-5 feet deep and on relatively hard bottom with silt some on top. It tends to grow in clumps and grow to the surface where it canopies on the surface. A detailed survey late this summer found nine locations with several or more EWM plants. The large infestation on the center bar grew and has gotten thicker this summer even with the two volunteer harvest sessions.



What can you do. You need to be a bit careful if you are going to manually remove EWM yourself. The root ball needs to be removed or it just grows back. Just cutting it without removing the stems from the water just sends all kinds of fragments around so now your neighbors will have to deal with it as well. Chopping it up with your boat prop will just spread a plume of fragments to take root elsewhere. Fishermen can help as well. If you think you have some EWM that has been retrieved on your lure, throw the weeds in a small bucket that you can keep in your boat and deposit them on shore later. The habit of just shaking it off or throwing it back in the lake just sends a piece off to take root somewhere else. Boaters can help as well. Running your boat too much in shallow waters destroys good plants and it also is now a great bare spot for new EWM to take root. As most gardeners know, stir up the dirt if you want a real crop of weeds to grow.

Our plan. Mark the spot. You likely noticed a significant number of marker buoys around the lake. We are using these markers to identify locations and to track the growth in some areas. Help us by avoiding the marked areas to minimize the chance of spreading fragments. Occasionally they may drift off their spot, but we try to remark them to the GPS coordinates regularly. We are maintaining a detailed GPS record of locations and size. We can all still enjoy the lake as we always have if we are mindful of a few of these EWM precautions. If you would like to help even more, volunteer to be trained in identification and location marking. Your boating cruises or fishing outings on the lake can be a benefit to us all. Volunteer to help with our harvest efforts. Keep a close eye on the shoreline areas near your place and harvest the EWM yourself.

SPECIAL EVENTS

4th of July Boat Parade. It will be hard to forget that last year's July 4th parade that was literally blown off the water. 30 minutes before the planned start a storm rolled through and forced us to cancel. It was too bad, as we quickly went around to tell of the cancellation, we noticed a lot of people had put significant effort into their decorations. Once the storm hit..., well like most we didn't have much left to show off. That was the first weather issue in seven years. This year will be better I'm sure. So, we intend to again hold our annual Muskellunge Lake boat parade. Plan to come out and join in the fun! Watch your email for announcements of the details and time for this year's parade. The prior year's winner was the swashbuckling Kurhajec family with their pirate ship. Congratulations, as they will be sporting the winner's flag for another season. We received a nice thankyou note from the Vilas Co. Food Pantry. The July 4th collection brought them 61 pounds of food and \$130 of much needed cash. Thanks to all who helped.

Annual Meeting. Watch for email announcements regarding the annual meeting to be held in July. We hope to have another good program of interest for you as well as a short business meeting.

CALENDAR

January 5	Aerator install
January 26	Winter Social
TBD	Winter Board Meeting
TBD	Annual Meeting

