



INVIGORATING FALL!

September 2020



“Stay close to the serenity of the lake to meet your own peace of mind.”
~ Munia Khan ~

REFLECTING ON THE PAST YEAR

by Greg Holt – MWLA President

As 2020 moves from summer to autumn, this is a good time to reflect on the past year. COVID-19 has been devastating for some, causing worry and hardship for others, and at the least, altered the way we all have been able to interact with one other.

Despite the disruptions from normal life for some and the upheavals for others, the Northwoods and waters have been here for us - allowing us to take a breath of fresh air, look beyond ourselves and see the beauty that the world provides. For this we can be thankful. And we can also be thankful for each other. Many have contributed their time and talents to help protect, maintain and enhance our waters. Some have done water clarity testing with Secchi discs, and others have spent time pulling and helping control purple loosestrife. Many have monitored for aquatic invasive species and reported their findings to Emily at the Discovery Center. Clean Boats/Clean Water workers have been at some of the more popular boat landings reminding boaters of ways to protect our waters. And safety-centered efforts are helping all of us to remember to respect others on the waters so we all can enjoy boating and recreating in a multitude of ways.

Many have given financially to local organizations and the MWLA to help fund the work that helps to protect our precious environment. For the MWLA these contributions are vitally important. They allow us to help fund a variety of endeavors to control invasive species and to be an active, contributing member of the Town Aquatic Invasive Species Program. The monies help fund our outreach activities and to educate the public regarding maintaining healthy waters, shorelines, and fisheries. The Association thanks all who have been generous with their donations and continuing their memberships.

The indoor season is quickly approaching but the outdoors will continue to beckon us with the quiet beauty and peace of winter. For now, the splendor of the fall colors are already transforming our woods. Enjoy it all. Enjoy one another as you are able, and remember as you spend more time indoors, be safe.

MWLA NEWSLETTER GOING ALL DIGITAL

The MWLA membership was notified by an email alert on August 20 that: The Times They Are A-Changin'! COVID-19 has changed all our lives in ways we have not yet fully grasped. The Manitowish Waters Lakes Association is also changing. As of this fall, we will be going completely digital with our newsletter that is provided in the spring, summer, and fall. If you know of a member who is unable to access the internet, please tell them to contact the MWLA at 715-543-8401 and we will mail them a hard copy of the newsletter. Better yet, print out a copy of your digital newsletter and share it.

2021 MWLA ANNUAL MEETING

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we did not hold an in-person Annual Meeting. We are hoping, and will be planning, to have one next summer if possible. Please mark the date of Saturday, July 31st as our tentative date for the MWLA Annual Meeting and Breakfast to begin at 9:00 a.m. at the North Lakeland Discovery Center. More information to come in our Spring 2021 Newsletter.

MANITOWISH WATERS CRAN-A-RAMA CANCELED

The Manitowish Waters Chamber of Commerce has announced: *As we continue to make efforts to keep our visitors, volunteers and community members safe while dealing with factors beyond our control such as shortage of volunteer and vendor participation which impacts the overall quality of our event, Cran-A-Rama has been canceled. Thank you for understanding during these difficult times and thank you to each and every one of you for supporting our community and businesses through these difficult times!*

TAISP NEWS

(Town Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership)

by Emily Heald, NLDC Water Program Coordinator
715-543-2085, watr@discoverycenter.net

To the Dedicated Volunteers of the Manitowish Waters Chain of Lakes: THANK YOU for helping us to make the summer so successful, despite the unusual circumstances in 2020.

Below are some highlights and reminders for you as the leaves are changing and we are coming into the fall (dare I say, winter?) season:



Highlights/Updates:

Discovery Center monitored the entire chain and associated rivers twice this summer—once in the early summer primarily for curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) and once later in the summer primarily for purple loosestrife (PL).

CLP was found on Stone, Fawn, and Island Lakes, as well as the Island-Spider and Rest-Stone channels, and Rice Creek. We hand pulled at all locations except Rice Creek.

We found a small, floating fragment on the south western end of Alder Lake. We scoured the area but did not find any rooted plants. **Please take extra**

care to be on the lookout for CLP on Alder.



PL is found throughout the Chain. PL flowers were clipped at each site, and full plants were removed at some sites as well. This year volunteers were vital in helping to monitor for PL.

Since I could not complete in-person AIS trainings, I created an online training: <https://youtu.be/ZnLoLDqbiNw>

Despite fewer overall hours spent on the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program, my summer assistant spoke with more boaters than ever! In 100 hours (150 in 2019) we spoke to 387 boats (386 in 2019) and **924 people** (681 in 2019)!

Reminders:

If you are holding on to any AIS volunteer forms, please turn them in to me. Continue to log your monitoring hours. Remember, once you know what to keep your eyes open for, ANY time on the water counts as monitoring! Time cruising on the pontoon, fishing, canoeing, swimming, etc. If you need additional volunteer forms, please let me know.

Continue to spread the word to your neighbors and friends on the Chain: Our management planning grants are still ongoing and continue to require volunteer hours for local matching funds. Invasive species will **always** be an issue, we must always keep our eyes open and report potential problems.



Kudos to Jarod Scheff and Emily Heald for all the AIS work they accomplished this summer!

THE FALL DRAW DOWN - THE WHEN AND THE WHY

by Greg Holt

The water level in the Chain above the dam will likely decrease from its current level and reach 8'0" sometime shortly before October 1st.

Then beginning on October 1st, the level will be drawn down from 8'0" to reach the final winter level on or before October 31st.

The operation of the Rest Lake Dam is guided by the Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.), a document that was signed in April of 2016 by the Chippewa - Flambeau Improvement Company (Xcel Energy) and the State of Wisconsin. This agreement does not replace the work order that was signed in the 1930's but adds more detail to it. It is a step in the process that attempts to provide some compromises relative to upstream (above the dam) and downstream (below the dam) interests. It also attempts to keep in mind ecological needs and navigational needs both above and below the dam.

To understand the timing of the fall draw down, it is helpful to understand the way the dam is operated in summer. The summer level of the Chain above the dam is actually a range rather than a single specified level. That summer range is 8'0" to 8'6". The Chain has been 8'3" or greater much of the summer. It is also helpful to remember that September is considered part of the summer relative to the M.O.U.

In later September, Xcel energy decreases the level of the water above the dam to be at or near 8'0" by October 1st, which also increases the flow of water below the dam. Per dam records, this occurred between Sept. 28th and Sept. 30th in 2016; between September 27th and September 30th in 2017; and on Sept 28th, 2018 the level of the water above the dam was 8'2".

Beginning October 1st, the water level is drawn down to reach the winter level by October 31st, the date specified in the M.O.U. This operation of the dam in September and October allows the owners of the dam to accomplish a difficult task, to drop 3'6" of water over 4000+ acres of lakes and channels by October 31st.

Hopefully, this information will be helpful for those who need to keep in mind when they can expect to see some drop of water level above the dam and an increase in water below the dam and plan accordingly.

WATER SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

by Greg Holt

Although COVID-19 has changed the way we have experienced the summer of 2020, we hope all our full and part-year residents and visitors have had multiple opportunities to 'Enjoy Our Waters Safely'. The Town is fortunate this year to

have the benefit of three Water Patrol Officers monitoring our waters, responding to issues, helping out when necessary, educating folks while out on the water regarding unsafe or illegal boating practices and issuing warnings and citations when appropriate.

Along with the efforts of the Water Patrol Officers, the Water Safety Committee continues to address many of the concerns that folks raised during public meetings last winter and the Committee continues to work on educating folks regarding slow no wake regulations, state laws regarding operation of boats, and ways to improve water safety. Equipment for the Patrol Officers is being enhanced, new signage has been posted at landings, a map of the Chain will be coming out that will more clearly indicate slow-no-wake areas, and new informational brochures on water safety will be available at the Chamber and in kiosks.

The Water Safety Committee and the Manitowish Waters Lakes Association receives many comments from community members and visitors regarding the buoys out on the water. It has been noted that some of the buoys are in need of repair. Some folks feel the buoys are too numerous, others comment that there are too few, and others indicate they think the buoys are being ignored or are in the wrong places. The Water Safety Committee will be doing a “buoy survey”, boating all the lakes of the Chain and noting the condition and checking for the correct positions of the buoys.

The Committee and the Association also have received reports that some of the buoys appear to move from one spot on the water to another. Buoys are placed to ensure safety. They mark unseen hazards and promote safety by reducing the likelihood of injury to others or damage to shorelines and property. Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 30.68 states that “no unauthorized person shall move, remove, molest, tamper with, destroy or attempt to destroy...any navigation aids or regulatory markers, signs or other devices established and maintained to aid boaters”. Fines for tampering or moving buoys can be very significant.

Boat safely—heed the buoys, respect your fellow boaters and everyone recreating on our waters.

MANITOWISH WATERS BOAT PATROL: FALL REPORT

by Dan Perry, Boat Patrol Officer



As we move into the fall, we get a chance to look back on the summer of 2020. The members of the Manitowish Waters Boat Patrol Team are also looking back on the season and evaluating how the season went.

Throughout the summer the Boat Patrol put in over 460 patrol hours during which they made over 4180 contacts, gave 379 verbal warnings, wrote 66 written warnings, and issued 11 citations. So, what types of violations were citations issued for? The most common violations included slow-no-wake violations (3), and unreasonable and imprudent speed (3). The other violations included operating a PWC within 100 feet of another watercraft greater than slow-no-wake speed (2), failure to carry required number of PFD's on board (1), operate PWC without a valid safety certificate (1), and allow riding on decks or gunwales (1).

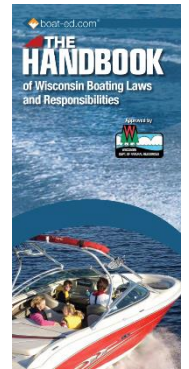
Boat Patrol Officers also responded to numerous complaints from the public, as well as calls for assistance from the Vilas County Sheriff Department. A boat accident with injury was responded to and investigated, and vessel assistance was given to several boaters needing help or a tow.

Throughout the summer, Officers noticed a few trends in behavior and boating practices that were at times concerning. The Boat Patrol's first priority is to keep people as safe as possible on the water, and some of the warnings and citations that were issued reflect what we saw as potential safety concerns. Some of these include passengers riding on the decks and gunwales of a boat while underway. Even at a slow-no wake speed, this is an unsafe and illegal practice that has the potential to lead to an unfortunate accident of someone falling from a boat and being seriously injured or killed. Another common safety violation we observed was watercraft, particularly PWC's, operating above slow-no-wake within 100 feet of another boat. This behavior also has significant potential to result in an accident, as happened once this summer unfortunately.

The majority of the boats contacted by the Boat Patrol were polite, conscientious operators that knew and followed the rules. Many of the rule violations we observed were corrected by informing newer, inexperienced boat operators of the safe operating rules, and simply given a verbal or written warning. Through these contacts, our Officers have gotten to know many of the residents and frequent visitors of the Chain and have built positive relationships with them. Because of this, many of these residents have been much more comfortable reporting boating issues and violations to our Officers

and have confidence that their complaint will be addressed. This type of community involvement is refreshing to see in a year full of tension and mistrust throughout our nation.

The objective of the Boat Patrol is not to inhibit anyone's enjoyment of the water, but rather to keep everyone as safe as possible. As we look back on the year, we will look for ways to continue to improve our service, and to make those improvements in the off season. One of the ways that we look for input in this, is through the upcoming survey that will be going out to members of the community. I urge everyone who receives a survey to fill it out and return it, so that we can get some feedback as to what the community feels went well and what needs to be improved upon. We value your input and look forward to hearing from you.



Please take the time this fall to enjoy our Northwoods and all it has to offer. Stay safe, healthy, and let's hope for an easy winter for once!

Please share this information with your neighbors, friends, and guests. Everyone is encouraged to read the Handbook of Wisconsin Boating Laws and Responsibilities to familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations. It is available at the MW Chamber of Commerce office located in the Community Center or by clicking this link <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/LE/LE0301.pdf>

DEAD PIKE LAKE RESIDENTS HIT ROADBLOCK

by Gale Wolf

It took the inimitable Yogi Berra to remind us that "it ain't over, 'til it's over."

After almost four years of preparatory work between the DNR, the MW Township and the consulting firm AES, the Dead Pike Lake's restorative project was scheduled for completion this fall. Suddenly, while referencing the current pandemic, the challenging economic climate and budgetary reductions, the Department has reported that it is unable to commit further funds for the project's completion.

Undeterred, the Township and lake residents are searching for other funding sources, while also appealing this decision to the Natural Resources Board, the citizen group which officially directed the Department to "*fix the Lake's problem*" during its meeting in December 2016.

The MWLA, whose mission includes concern for every lake within the Township, maintains its active interest and support of this Dead Pike Lake effort. Further information can be obtained from Board member Gale Wolf at wolfdn@centurytel.net or by calling 715/543-2439.

ATV / UTV ISSUE TOWN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

by Bob Kovar

There will be an informational meeting on October 13 at 6:00 p.m. at the MW Town Hall for the Town Board to receive input from "both sides" of the ATV/UTV issue. The TB approved an advisory referendum question that will be on the November 3 ballot for MW resident voters to weigh in on. The wording is "Should the Manitowish Waters Town Board adopt an ordinance designating all town roads in the Town of Manitowish Waters as ATV/UTV Routes?". They did not stop there, however. The Town is working together with a citizens' group to send out a survey to all NON-resident property owners to make sure input is provided from them as well.

Ensuring that all residents in our town have a voice is the basic tenet of living in a democracy - I am proud that Manitowish Waters recognizes that. In addition, our Town Chair just let me know that he is most likely going to provide a ZOOM (virtual) meeting option for the informational meeting on ATV's on October 13 as someone just donated the money for a ZOOM license recognizing the importance of keeping our democracy working during this pandemic.

I can't stress strongly enough the importance of providing a virtual platform for people to attend the meeting. As we know, Wisconsin is currently very hot with the Covid-19 virus and many of us are understandably unwilling to ignore the very strong public health guidelines limiting public gatherings, especially indoors. This is important because we do not want the Town Board to misconstrue a lack of in-person attendance on either side of this issue as a lack of interest!

MWLA quotes on the issue:

Quote from MWLA Summer Newsletter: *The mission of the MWLA is to “maintain, protect, and enhance the quality of the Manitowish Chain of Lakes and other Township waters”, therefore, we feel that it is imperative that the Town supervisors take into consideration the negative impact that ATV 's and ATV trails could have on the fragile environment of the Northwoods.*

Quote from MWLA letter written to the Town Board on 8-8-20: *The MWLA is also active in controlling and attempting to decrease purple loosestrife in our area. Our Association provides volunteers who help the Discovery Center in their efforts to control this invasive. The Discovery Center staff provides many man hours and devotes financial resources to combat purple loosestrife, which is found in both Manitowish Waters and the southern Iron County areas. ATV and UTV travel between Mercer and Manitowish Waters potentially could increase the populations of this invasive for either or both communities.*

There are likely to be strong emotions connected with this issue, both from those who support and from those who oppose ATVs and UTVs in the Township of Manitowish Waters. The MWLA Board of Directors strongly urges that there should be no further action taken by the Town to open town roads to ATVs and UTVs without a public referendum on this issue.

PORTABLE FISH HATCHERY

Our board discussed the feasibility of partnering with Walleyes for Tomorrow to build a portable fish hatchery to be placed on the Chain. The DNR gave WFT permission to put the hatchery on lakes that don't have the level of natural walleye reproduction as seen in the past. It was suggested that it would be used on Alder Lake for a couple of years (until we start to see natural reproduction) and then transport it to other lakes on the Chain that are experiencing low walleye reproduction. Since the MWLA has received many generous donations for fish stocking, the board thought this would be an important project to sponsor with the help of other organizations. The board voted unanimously to contribute \$2500 to the fish hatchery project from funds donated this year to fish stocking.

GLOBAL WARMING COULD MEAN FEWER FISH FOR SPORT FISHING

by Elizabeth Weise – USA TODAY



Global warming is putting lake fish in hot water, with worrisome possibilities for many species, as well as the nation's fishermen and the \$115 billion sport fishing industry that employs as many as 820,000 people. A study published in the journal [Nature Climate Science](#) Monday found at least a 100 fish die-offs in Wisconsin between 2004 and 2014 were strongly linked with warmer summer temperatures fueled by climate change. Already, some species, such as walleyes and cisco, are experiencing declines because of warming water temperatures.

Wisconsin is a bellwether state because it's the third most popular destination for anglers to travel to, according to the sport fishing association, after Florida and Michigan. Sport fishing is a \$2.3 billion industry in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin findings are based on a particularly rich dataset that's been collected by the state over many years. It was analyzed by a group of biologists, ecologists, and fisheries scientists. They found that warmer temperatures could mean trouble for species common in these lakes, such as bluegill, walleye, largemouth bass, and northern pike. Click here to access entire article

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/07/09/global-warming-killing-fish-hurting-sportfishing-industry/1675771001/northern-pike>.

VILAS COUNTY LAKES AND RIVERS ASSOCIATION (VCLRA)

VCLRA is launching its “Greet your neighbor” program for lake associations. We need your help! Improper shoreline development is the major threat to lake health and water quality in Northern Wisconsin. The 19,000 Vilas County lakeshore properties turn over on average every 5 years; many of the damaging shoreline developments happen soon after a change in ownership. Lake associations have a pivotal role to play! One-on-one, neighbor-to-neighbor connections are the most effective way to have a positive influence on a new lake property owner, and lake associations are best positioned to make these personal connections.

We have developed all the tools you need as a lake association to identify and engage new owners. We have already distributed 7,500 copies of “business cards” in an effort to connect with new owners and encourage them to protect their property and their lake. These cards are shared with new owners through realtors, lake associations, title companies, chambers of commerce, libraries, County Land and Water office, County Zoning, and landscapers.

Please visit vclra.org/greet/ to learn about the “Greet your neighbor” and access all the materials needed to get started, including welcome letters, conversation starters, online resources, tools to identify new lake property owners and talking points. Email us at new-owner@vclra.org if you have questions or need assistance with the program.

SHORELAND LIGHTING

We should all strive to be considerate of how our lighting affects our neighbors next door, and also our neighbors across the water. Education is the best solution to this issue. Most complaints are about security lights that are left on from dusk to dawn, or even 24/7 all year round. A more effective approach would be to use a motion detector. Solving shoreland lighting problems involves working with your neighbors and talking individually with them about the lighting problem, keeping in mind their concerns about safety and security.

The following link is provided to access the informational pamphlet from the UW-Extension titled [Sensible Shoreland Lighting](#) that offers tips for shoreland lighting and why sensible lighting matters. <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/GWQ031.pdf>

PROTECT WHAT MATTERS

by Laura A. Hayes - DNR



With the fallen leaves, dormant dry plants, and lower humidities of fall comes an increased risk of wildfire. Taking a little time this fall to make you home or cabin more “Firewise” could save it from wildfire this fall AND next spring when wildfire potential is at its greatest.

What can you do? There are many simple things you can do around your home that could help it survive a wildfire and fall is a good time to do them before the snow flies:

- Rake yard and garden debris; compost the debris or bring to your town’s brush site.
- Remove dead trees and brush.
- Prune evergreen tree branches up and away from the ground.
- Move woodpiles at least 30 feet from all buildings.
- Remove wood mulch around building foundations; consider filling in the area with decorative rocks
- Clean out/remove leaves and needles:
 - from rain gutters
 - under decks
 - on roof
 - in and around window wells
 - in nooks and crannies

To learn more, visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestfire/planning>

DID YOU KNOW?

- Planting trees on your shoreline is one way of restoring natural shorelines. Restoring your shoreline with a variety of natural plantings is one of the best ways for lakes to stay healthy. To learn more about tree planting and to obtain an application for the WDNR annual seedling sale, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TreePlanting/>
- Rest Lake Ice On and Ice Off Data provided by Bill Dietz and the Chippewa/Flambeau Improvement Company:

Ice on: ¾ of Rest 11-16-14, Ice complete 11-21-14

Ice out: 5-8-14
 Ice on: 11-30-15
 Ice off: 12-14-15
 back on: 12-23-15
 Ice off: 4-17-16
 Ice on: 12-11-16
 Ice off: 4-10-17
 Ice on: no data
 Ice off: 5-7-18
 Ice on: 11-18-18
 Ice off: 4-27-19
 Ice on: no data
 Ice off: 4-27-20



Rest Lake Dam -1920

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 Check out our website at [www.mwlakes.com](http://www.mwlakes.com) to access board meeting minutes, lakes-related articles, information on aquatic invasive species, past e-newsletters, and many other interesting topics.

 [Like Us On Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ManitowishWatersLakesAssociation) or go to <https://www.facebook.com/ManitowishWatersLakesAssociation>

**The MWLA Board of Directors appreciates your continued support.**

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