

Note from the President

After one month of rain and another of heat and humidity, it was very nice to have a beautiful and enjoyable but short summer in August and September. It was also a busy summer for our Association as we responded to unusually high water levels and continued to discuss issues such as curly-leaf pondweed treatment, water quality, train noise and others.

After approximately 14 inches of rain in a two week period in July and August, our lake level reached a height not seen by property owners in many, many years (if ever). Upon confirming that there were no beaver dams preventing water flow west of our dam, the only immediate action available to our Association was to post notices at the access, at local businesses and in a mailing advising boaters to abide by state laws, keeping a sufficient distance from the shore to minimize wakes. Our water flow committee also met and discussed additional possible actions as noted below in an article by Brian Sams.

Total Phosphorous readings in August were the highest in several years and chlorophyll-a readings were the highest of any reading in the last five years, all concurrent with the August/September algae bloom we've observed. In response to these readings the board voted to both apply for a grant which would pay for 75% of the cost for a septic inspection for any lake property owner and to support Morrison County's proposed ordinance change, requiring septic inspections county-wide for all lake owners (and other properties on environmentally sensitive areas) where an adequate record of conformances does not exist. We also discussed the idea of paying a private company to evaluate our lake and make recommendations about lake practices designed to address our rising levels of phosphorous and chlorophyll-a. Please visit RMB website (www.rebel.info) and click on "Lakes Program" to view 2011 lake data.

Good news and bad on our aquatic vegetation – curly-leaf pondweed seems to be at the lowest level since we started our treatment but wild celery (a native plant) is at a very high level for the second consecutive year. The Association will again apply for a DNR grant for lake-wide curly-leaf pondweed treatment. Since the LID is at the end of the three year contract with Professional Lake Management (PLM), it will solicit bids for 2012 treatment from all companies qualified to treat curly-leaf pondweed, including PLM. Based on information from the DNR that wild celery levels are cyclical, we can only hope that we've reached the end of the cycle and will see lower levels next year. We've ask the DNR to address the problem of wild celery at the DNR access but as of yet haven't received a final response.

Thank you to the Lincoln Lakes Business Association for making a contribution of \$500 towards our endowment goal of \$5,000 from local groups and private donations to be matched by \$5,000 from our Association and \$10,000 from the Initiative Foundation. Thanks to Scott Schnuckle for spearheading this effort and please see his article included in this newsletter for additional information.

Also thanks to Brian Sams for his work on water level issues, Mike Flanagan for his work on this newsletter, Paul Baker for his work on train noise and, as always, to Jim Fogelberg and Jim Blumn for taking the time to record lake data. Finally, thanks to all of the board members and committee members for taking time to address our important lake issues this year. Please visit us at our website (www.fishtraplake.pbwiki.com) for other information and updates, including county meetings scheduled for late October and November on septic system inspections and train noise reduction opportunities.

See you next summer,

Chuck Salter

Fish Trap Lake Property Owner's Association Annual Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2011 Scandia Valley Town Hall

Board Members present: Chuck Salter, pres., Scott Schnuckle, vice pres., Marilyn Sutton, sec., George Heroux, treas., Peg Hartung, Brian Sams, Ron Mash, Paul Baker, Mike Flanagan, David Thibert. **Absent:** Joan Russell, Tom Kajer, and Peggy Swalm.

Secretary Report: Brian motioned to accept the minutes of the April 16, 2011 meeting and seconded by Paul. Motion passed.

Financial Report: Approved as read by George. Suggestions from the membership were to show this report with a comparison to the previous year and to also put the report on the website.

Tim Crocker, DNR: reported that as of today the high water of Lake Alexandria and Fish Trap was down 1 ½ inches reading 1276.74. A member reported that he had 16 inches of water in his basement this spring. Other members mentioned their concerns about shoreline erosion, contamination of wells, and faulty septic systems due to water saturation. Lake Alex, Platt and Sullivan are all high as well as the Mississippi and Long Prairie Rivers due to 18 inches of rain fall this year so far. There are four requirements to remove beaver dams. 1. Call the DNR 2. Get permission from the land owner. 3. Get an agreement to remove the dams and 4. Remove all the materials and debris used to make the dam. Chuck talked about the Clemson Leveler briefly about how it works and how much it would cost to purchase. Members were told they can get additional information on the DNR website. Paul Baker moved that the association act to remove the beaver dams or install the Clemson Leveler only when water levels exceed 1276.8. Scott seconded and all approved with two disapprovals. Members unanimously approved a motion to form a sub committee to explore other options. The Water Flow committee was established consisting of Brian Sams, Scott Schnuckle, Peg Hartung, Tom Vouk, Jim Licari, Ron Mash (and/or his wife), George Heroux, Mike Flanagan and Paul Baker.

Glen Erickson, County Assessor: Reported that there were 5 sales on Fish Trap in the past year. Assessments are now based on a 10% land value decrease and a 15% building value decrease on Lake Alex, Shamineau and Fish Trap. He said that he had a few phone calls with complaints about lake property owner's taxes.

Jim Fogelberg: has been doing lake clarity tests on Fish Trap for the last 5 years and his Secchi Disk readings were sent to the MN Pollution Control Agency. The deepest level he could see was 23 feet in spring and now it is 16 feet but probably due to the high water level. The TSI (Trophic Statistical Index) readings compare Fish Trap at 42, Crookneck at 49 and Shamineau at 42. The State Pollution Control normal guideline for our region is between 40 and 50.

Greg Vaneckhout, MN Pollution Control: said that Fish Trap Lake water quality samples are better than normal due to the high water tables. The Phosphorus, Chlorophyll, and Secci Disk calculations are all combined and then averaged. In drier years there is more algae and poorer water quality. Scott Schnuckle asked if they considered Fish Trap an impaired lake and Greg said they will decide when they take a four year average of these findings.

Septics: One member stated that he believed that septic and drain fields are being affected due to high water saturation which can cause health concerns as well as too many nutrients going into the lake. Decomposing curly leaf can also increase nutrient levels. Brochures from the University of Minnesota are available to the members in the back of the room to take home. Fish Trap Lake Association promotes voluntary septic maintenance. Greg Vaneckhout noted that owners should pump their septic approximately once every two years.

Patrick Selter, Professional Lake Mgmt.: Fish Trap Lake was approved for a \$21,500 grant to treat 65 acres. He will work with our LID (Lake Improvement District) to treat curly leaf. Between 260-270 land property owners received notices this spring for permission to treat their lake shore. There was an 85% response to the mailing. He reported that Wild Celery is a cyclical plant and tough to treat. It is abundant in dry weather and less so in rainy. Property owners can buy a weed shear (razor type blades) and cut a 50x50 area and remove this plant without a permit. Mechanical harvesting is not recommended with this plant because it chops it up and spreads it around too much. Wild celery usually comes in late July. Ducks love it! He stated that our lake would be more likely to get Milfoil from boats than from the Lake Alex inlet.

continued on page 3

Initiative Foundation: Chuck reported that we could apply for an endowment \$10,000 matching grant. We could get \$1,000 every year to spend on loon nests, float buffer zones etc. He asked members to send recommendations to the association's e mail address. We will explore all the options.

Jerry Benusa, property owner: reported that Fish Trap Lake Drive and Trail has been invaded this spring by Forest Tent Caterpillars. They devour the leaves off the trees and then drop to the ground. He distributed a handout from the U of M. This infestation could stay for 2-3 years and eventually will kill the trees. About 20 years ago he had gone door-to-door seeking monies to help defray the cost of aerial spraying in early April. The cost then was about \$750.00. He is asking if there is some help from the association to get this cost covered for spraying next spring. Jerry was asked to get bids on this and present to the board in September for consideration.

Election of Officers: Chuck, Marilyn, Brian and David have all agreed to serve another 3 years on the Board unless someone wants to run for these positions. There being no volunteers a motion was made, seconded by Nancy Resch and so moved.

Fireworks: check the website for rules

July 4th Boat Parade: will form and leave from the campground at noon.

Fishing Contest: Peg Hartung agreed to host the annual fishing contest at the BP station.

Train Whistles: One member expressed concern about train noise. Brian Sams explained that four years ago we had considered petitioning the county for a quiet zone but discovered that it was extremely unlikely that such a request would be granted.

Barking dogs & flood lights: members told to talk to the owners or file a complaint with the sheriff's office.

Door prizes were awarded and a motion to adjourn was made by Scott and seconded by Mike at 12:05 PM.
Marilyn Sutton, secretary

Executive Meeting following the annual meeting

All previous members were present. Motion and seconded to have Chuck Salter as president, Scott Schnuckle as vice president and Marilyn Sutton as secretary.

Mike Flanagan agreed to continue publishing the newsletter.

The Fall Meeting will be: SEPTEMBER 10TH AT 9:00 am

SCANDIA VALLEY TOWN HALL

Followed by the LID (Lake Improvement District) meeting

Curly Leaf Treatment Update

An email that received from Dan Swanson of the DNR in response to an email asking about the post treatment study.

Charles: My intern and I did a post treatment point intercept aquatic plant survey on July 27 and 28, 2011. The final lake vegetation report will be completed this winter. We did not see anything out of the ordinary during our survey. We found one site with coon tail at 19 feet but the majority of rooted submerged plants were at 15 feet or less. This is typical of what was found in the 2005 survey (19 feet max. depth of plants) and the 2009 survey (16 max. depth of plants). The 2005-2009 vegetation aquatic vegetation survey is available on the MN DNR Lake Finder site. Thank you.

We only found curly-leaf pondweed at a small number of sites this summer. This is also fairly typical although I have seen curly-leaf growing in deep water on some of our lakes. Your lake did not appear to have this late growth.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010

Presented at the Annual Meeting June 2011
Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association Inc
6/18/10 to 6/17/11

Total Bank Balance 6/18/10	\$9,856.19
Checking Account:	
Balance 6/18/1	\$3,856.19
Income:	
Dues Paid	4,250.00
Interest Earned	11.25
Newsletter Ads	<u>300.00</u>
Total Income	\$4,561.25
Expenses:	
Administration	100.00
Annual Meeting 2010	457.00
Brochures at Public Access	125.00
Fishing Contest Manager	75.00
Fishing Contest Winners	145.00
Liability Insurance	227.00
MN Waters Assn. Dues	200.00
LABA Dues	100.00
Septic Tank Information	112.09
Newsletters Printing & Postage (Fall & Spring)	1,500.17
P.O. Box Rent	56.00
Postage	88.00
Water Monitoring-Postage	200.00
Secretary Expenses 2010	500.00
Treasurer Expenses 2010	<u>300.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$4,185.26

Current Financial Update (June 17, 2011)

Checking Balance 6/17/1	1	\$4,232.18
CD Balance 6/18/10		\$6,000.00
Interest Earned		<u>86.11</u>
CD Balance 6/17/1	1	\$6,086.11
Total Bank Balance as of 6/17/11		\$10,318.29
Total 2011 members as of 6/17/11		60

TRAINS

There is growing concern from Fish Trap Lake property owners over the frequency and level of train horn noise as a result of the horn warnings at the Old Hwy #10 and County Road #200 crossing. The reasons we hear more noise is that in 2006, the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) enacted new Locomotive Train Horn Warning Guidelines which call for a minimum 15-20 seconds of audible warning at each Highway Rail Grade Crossing. This new guideline has been implemented slowly over the course of the past few years. Add to that, we simple endure more trains every year.

Research has found that we have two ways to eliminate the noise:

- 1) Request for a study and implementation of a "quiet zone".
- 2) Close the crossing.
- 3) It appears that closing the crossing our most viable option. Several members of the Board are in discussions with County Commissioner Tom Wenzel, County Engineer Steve Backowski, and Lynn Liebfried from BNSF working toward this end. We will update you all as to progress.

FTLPOA BOARD MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 10, 2011

Scandia Valley Town Hall at 9:00 AM

Board Members present: Chuck Salter, pres. Scott Schnuckle, vice pres, Marilyn Sutton, sec. George Heroux, treas., Joan Russell, Paul Baker, Brian Sams, David Thibert, Mike Flanagan, newsletter, Ron Mash, Peggy Swalm and Peg Hartung. Absent: Tom Kajer.

Lid Members present: Ron Nypan, Wayne Hoffman, Lee Goderstad and Larry Haber

Guests present: Jerry Benusa, FTLA, Ron Wieber, Lake Alexander Association and Mark Anderson, Morrison County Planning and Zoning.

Secretary's report of 6/18/11: Motion to accept by Joan and seconded by Ron.

Treasurer report: George reported that the membership is 181 with more coming in. Scott made a motion to mail a dues statement out in early spring instead of enclosing it in the spring newsletter. Motion seconded by Mike.

Old Business: Septic Systems. Mark Anderson reported that both Todd and Stearns Counties have ordinances in place to inventory, inspect and report septic systems that are not in compliance. Morrison County currently does septic inspections for property ownership transfers, land use permits and property improvement permits. A volunteer inspection program has recently been performed on Crookneck Lake and it was found that 10% or eight systems were failing (non-compliant). County wide they found 43 non-compliant systems however that number included rural farm land etc, not just sensitive areas such as lakes and streams. Chuck made a motion to support Morrison County Planning and Zoning Commission in passing an ordinance under MN Rule 6120.3400 subj. part 3, section D in regards to septic compliance. Mike seconded the motion. Scott made a motion to pursue a grant from the Clean Water Legacy to fund inspections which would pay for 75% of the inspection and the property owner would pay 25%. Seconded by George. Motion passed. Mike will publish this information in the FTLA Newsletter. Mark also informed the board that soon Planning and Zoning will be on the Beacon Internet site whereby anyone would be able to scan all properties, get a history of the property, all permits that were issued and compliance inspections.

High Water Levels: Brian read a letter he mailed out to 4 to 5 property owners bordering 300 feet along the outlet seeking permission to cross and remove cattails from the outlet stream bed as approved and recommended by the newly approved water flow committee. The DNR has recognized cattails as an invasive species and as a possible contributing factor in blocking the flow of water from Fish Trap Lake. Paul made a motion to accept the bid of \$500 from PLM to treat up to 700 feet of cattails in the outlet. Seconded by George. Motion passed. A motion was made by Chuck to authorize Brian to purchase a Flow Meter not to exceed the cost of \$500 to monitor the water flow at the dam and also to approve the retroactively mailed notices to lake owners informing them of high water level concerns. Seconded by Brian. Motions passed. Brian agreed to measure water flow in order to establish yearly data enabling the association to more easily determine when water flow is blocked by downstream obstruction such as dams.

Army Tenet Worms: Jerry Benusa a summer resident reported that the army tent worms this spring were the worst infestation he has seen and moved along east and south Fish Trap Lake Road. Trees have been defoliated for the past two years Jerry is concerned that some may not recover. He personally visited over 30 affected property owners and secured their signatures to consent to aerial spraying next spring. He received a bid of \$1200. It was suggested to Jerry that this amount be equally divided among the property owners wishing to have their property sprayed for the spring 2012 infestation of army tent worms.

Initiative Foundation Endowment: A contribution of \$500 has been donated by the Lincoln Lakes Area Business Association towards this endowment to raise \$5000 to apply for this grant. Peggy Swalm made a motion to utilize \$5000 from the FTLA funds to match individual contributions toward an endowment of the Initiative Foundation to be used for lake improvements. Seconded by David. Motion passed.

Water Quality: A discussion was held regarding the source of green water caused by increase chlorophyll and decrease phosphorous this late summer from a report by the RMB Environmental Lab. Could be that their testing is in error? Chuck will follow up and it will be discussed at our spring board meeting. Scott motioned to continue approvals to seek grants for treating curly leaf. Seconded by Brian. Motion passed.

continued on page 6

Train Whistles: Paul contacted the BNS again regarding a "quiet zone" at the Lincoln railroad crossing. He was told that this crossing was "banked", which meant that if a new crossing was needed somewhere else that this "banked" crossing would then be closed. Paul and Ron volunteered to go to the City Planning department meeting held in October to again request a "quiet zone". Motion was made by Paul to pursue closing the Lincoln crossing and seconded by Scott. Motion passed.

New Business: Amendment to By Laws. After a discussion it was decided not to amend the association by laws to vote by e mail deciding that it is more efficient to have open discussions among board members and the membership at large on decisions affecting the FTLA but to table the discussion until our next meeting in the Spring so that all board members and any other interested association members can participate in the discussion.

Website: Mike motion to approve the cost of \$500 to obtain a FishTrapLakeAssoc.com domain name. Seconded by Brian. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: Saturday, March 17, 2012 Scandia Valley Town Hall at 9:00 AM

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2011 (year to date)

Presented at the Fall Meeting September 2011

Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association Inc.

Board Financial Report

6/17/11 to 9/9/11

Total Bank Balance 6/17/11	\$10,318.29
Checking Account:	
Balance 6/17/11	\$4,232.18
Income:	
Dues Paid	2,925.00
Interest Earned	<u>2.63</u>
Total Income	\$2,927.63
Other Revenue:	
DNR Grant	<u>21,500.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$24,427.63
Expenses:	
High Water Mailing	200.42
Annual Meeting 201	427.00
Postage	132.00
Check Blanks	71.91
Curly Leaf Spraying	<u>21,500.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$22,331.33
Checking Balance 9/9/11	\$6,328.48
CD Balance 6/17/11	\$6,086.11
Interest Earned	<u>0.00</u>
CD Balance 9/9/11	\$6,086.11
Total Bank Balance as of 9/9/11	\$12,414.59
Total members as of 9/9/11	181

Water Levels

During the summer of 2010, many of us noticed that the water level of Fish Trap Lake was rising. Docks and lift had to be adjusted, and some of us lost a few feet of beach, but it wasn't unbearable. However as we progressed into fall, the levels did not drop as they typically do. It was a moderately wet fall, but it was unusual for water levels to stay so high, as it usually declines through the fall and winter and is replenished in the spring by snowmelt and rain. Many cabin owners around the lake began to call members of the board expressing their concerns about the water level, especially flooding and damage that could occur during ice formation on the lake.

When the board began to talk to local residents about the situation it was discovered that there were two beaver dams on private property that were holding back a significant amount of water. General consensus was that we should blow the beaver dams and restore the water flow to creek, but there was difficulty in getting the board together for a vote at that time. During the course of discussion with DNR, I learned that as long as I had permission from the DNR and the property owner, I could have the dams blown without waiting three weeks for the board to meet and vote. I contacted a trapper, who removed three large beavers (one at 75 lbs!) from the area and then the dams were blown. Results were immediate for the first couple of inches, but the water could only flow out as fast as the creek and control structure allows, and while we saw some relief, water levels remained high. During the course of the winter, three smaller dams were removed by hand and some more trapping was done. Regardless of these actions, water levels were still high in the spring of 2011.

Rainfall in the spring and summer of 2011 was heavy, and groundwater, lake and river levels remained high throughout the region. All of these factors, including starting at a high level from 2010, seem to have contributed to the high lake level this summer. During the course of the summer, I removed three small (almost insignificant) dams and kept a closer eye on the creek. It was mentioned to me by several owners that they felt that the creek was more grown up with weeds and cattails that they had ever seen, so I did two surveys of the creek, one in a canoe and one "on foot" which ended up meaning swimming. I felt that there were enough cattails to cause a slowing of the outflow, and brought this opinion to the board. The board decided to form a committee and we met in August to discuss the outflow. At this meeting, one of the committee members explained that in the past years he and some others had kept the creek open by removing cattails manually, but that over time health conditions ended this activity. If you check with the DNR, you will find that permits were pulled yearly for this purpose until 2008.

The committee decided that debating whether high or low lake levels were better was not our objective. Instead, we determined that the creek should be kept open and flowing to the best of our ability regardless of water level in order for the control structure to be effective as a lake level control and that the flow of water at the control structure should be monitored. We decided that spraying with a safe and approved chemical would be the safest and most economical way to remove the cattails and that the use of a flow meter at the control structure would allow us to collect the information needed to monitor the outflow in the future. This recommendation was brought to the board and was approved. Before any treatment could be conducted, permission had to be granted by landowners on affected areas of the creek, and that has been obtained as of this writing. I have been in contact with Audrey Kuchinski at the DNR and Patrick Selter of PLM, and if all goes as planned some treatment can still be done this fall.

So far, the late summer and fall of 2011 has been fairly dry. Water levels are dropping and we should be at or below the level we were at last year at this time. If you notice or hear about a beaver dam on the creek or a condition that is obstructing the outflow, please notify someone on the board.

Brian and Heather Sams
Campfire Bay Resort on Fish Trap Lake

ST PAUL MN 551

FISH TRAP LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 85
Cushing, MN 56443



Charles Salter & Kate Bretscher
4721 Wedgewood Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55345

55345+3720



For those of you who have misplaced your application for membership for 2011, we have attached a copy. Please fill this out and mail it to the address below with \$25. Thank you.

2011 Membership Form

Name _____

Permanent Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Lake Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

The FTLPOA is a 501c3 non-profit organization and dues are tax deductible.

Make check payable to: Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association

**Send check and form to: George Heroux, treasurer
1893 320th St.
Cushing, MN 56443**

Initiative Foundation Creates Opportunity to Invest in our Lake

If you haven't heard of the Initiative Foundation of Little Falls, it exists for one purpose, to improve the quality of life in central Minnesota. It is a foundation founded with money from the The McKnight Foundation in partnership with local people. So how does that create an opportunity for Fish Trap Lake?

Currently, our lake association has roughly \$6,000 sitting in a CD earning almost nothing. The Foundation offers a donation match program to establish an endowment that will benefit the lake by not only doubling any monies we invest, but then providing an annual dividend of 5% (many multiples higher than current earnings). The small catch is that there is a minimum size requirement of \$10,000 from the organization wishing to establish the endowment that will then be matched dollar for dollar by the Foundation. That means the minimum endowment is \$20,000 with an annual dividend of at least \$1,000 to be used to fund lake improvement projects, e.g., weed control, loon nests, buffer zones.

The Fish Trap Lake Association Board has approved using \$5,000 dollars from our current reserve to match individual donations and area business donations with the goal of raising a minimum of \$5,000, which will in turn be matched again by the Initiative Foundation. Let's look at the math of our opportunity:

Individual/business donations	\$ 5,000
FTLA match	<u>5,000</u>
Subtotal	\$10,000
Foundation match	<u>\$10,000</u>
Endowment	\$20,000
Annual dividend	\$ 1,000
1 st Year Return on Investment (ROI)	
\$15,000/\$5,000	300%*
Future year ROIs (\$1,000/\$5,000)	20%*

* Does not consider the fact that donations are 100% tax deductible because we are a 501 (c)(3) organization.

If you have a virtually risk-free investment that achieves better than 20%, please let us know. If not, would you please consider investing in our lake. If 250 lake property owners contributed \$20 each, we would have our \$5,000. Any business donations, which we hope will be generous, would then help build the endowment beyond our minimum goal.

PLEASE act now to invest in our lake! Your donations, no matter how large or small, will make a difference. Please send a check today to:

George Heroux
1893 320th St.
Cushing, MN 56443

Make your check out to FTLPOA and note on your check that it is for the Initiative Foundation. Thank you for your contribution.