



FISH TRAP LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSN.

"To preserve our wildlife and water quality and

promote safe recreation for the Fish Trap Lake Community"

Winter Newsletter

February 2008

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2007 FISHING CONTEST WINNERS

SUNFISH:

- 1st: Jerry Benusa 14.75 oz.
- 2nd: Margaret Wielinski 11.75 oz.
- 3rd: Margaret Wielinski 11.5 oz.

BASS:

- 1st: Jim Bluhm 3 lb. 10.5 oz.
- 2nd: Dave Holmquist 3 lb. 4.5 oz.
- 3rd: Michael Puetz 2 lb. 13 oz.

NORTHERN:

- 1st: Kathy Puetz 2 lb. 12.5 oz.
- 2nd: Michael Puetz 2 lb. 9.125 oz.
- 3rd: Kathy Puetz 2 lb. 8 oz.

CRAPPIE:

- 1st: Joseph Wielinski 1 lb. 8 oz.
- 2nd: Jerry Benusa 1 lb. 1.33 oz.
- 3rd: Jerry Benusa 1 lb. 1.33 oz.

WALLEYE:

- 1st: Linda Johnson 3 lb. 13 oz.
- 2nd: Mike Flanagan 3 lb. 10 oz.
- 3rd: Joseph Wielinski 3 lb. 8 oz.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone is having a wonderful winter. It's hard to believe that we are only about three months away from cabin season.

The board has been working on several projects this winter that will pave the way for many exciting developments for our lake association. We anticipate forming our Lake Improvement District (LID) and starting treatment of curly-leaf pondweed on a significant scale. We've been working with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to upgrade the lake's ranking. In addition, to keep everyone abreast of all developments, we've completed and will soon launch our own lake association website:

fishtrapolake.pbwiki.com

For those of you who are new to the lake, a LID is a small governmental body with limited authority. The LID proposed by our committee would have responsibility only for the management of aquatic vegetation and no other lake issues. It would include Fish Trap Lake and all shoreline properties on the lake. The LID would be responsible for selecting the best method to eradicate curly-leaf pondweed and to hire a company to accomplish that result. The costs of the treatment would be shared by all shoreline property owners on Fish Trap and paid as a special assessment. Last year, approximately 150 lakeshore owners sent letters of support in favor of a Fish Trap Lake Improvement District.

We have submitted our Lake Vegetation Management Plan (LVMP) and are awaiting

Continued on next page...

Note from the President/Continued from cover

approval from the DNR. Upon approval, the Morrison County Board will hear the matter and schedule a public hearing sometime in the spring or early summer when all property owners have returned from various winter locations. Upon approval by the County Board and the appointment of the first LID board members, the LID will schedule the first meeting which, by law, must be in either July or August.

At our annual meeting, the association voted to pursue treatment of curly-leaf pondweed prior to the establishment of a LID. We've applied for two grants in order to pay or defray the costs of treatment. The Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership grant is for an amount up to \$5,000. The grant from the DNR is for a maximum amount of \$20,000. As with any grant, it's possible that we may get the full amount but it's also possible that we may get nothing. We hope to have a decision on both grants by early March.

Our March 8th board meeting will be an important one. Based on the information available, we will have to make three key decisions.

- * The number of acres that we will (apply to) treat in 2008
- * The treatment agency that we will contract with to apply the chemical treatment
- * A criteria to select the areas to treat and, applying that criteria, the areas of the lake that we will treat in 2008.

It's possible that at the time of our March 8 meeting we may not know if we have been approved for one or both grants. It's also possible that the DNR may significantly limit the number of acres we can treat. In either case, the board will have to establish a procedure to make decisions during the time between our board meeting and our annual meeting on June 21.

In addition to working on the grant and curly-leaf pondweed treatment, we have been working with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to correct the unfairly low ranking for Fish Trap Lake. On October 17th, the Morrison County Record reported that the MPCA had reduced the rating of our lake from FS (fully supporting recreational activity) to NS (not supporting recreational activity). Through efforts by Morrison County Planning and Zoning and our Fish Trap Lake association, the MPCA corrected itself and revised the level of total phosphorus level downward but continued to show that the lake was non-supporting of recreational activities. After further discussion, the MPCA recently revised our rating from NS to insufficient data. Although this is certainly an improvement, Fish Trap Lake is still not treated the same as neighboring lakes which, despite a complete absence of any data, are listed as FS. We are continuing to work with the MPCA to insure that all local lakes are treated the same and to correct other errors. (For example, their ratings for Overall Trophic Status and Carlson Trophic Status for Total Phosphorus in Fish Trap Lake are wrong.)

Given all of the activity occurring over the next few months, we have developed a website to provide members with updates. To follow the developments as they happen, please visit us at fishtraplake.pbwiki.com. Since the website is a work in progress, we are open to ideas. We are also interested in receiving your comments about any of the above issues (or others) at our new email address fishtraplake@yahoo.com

I'm looking forward to seeing you this spring.

Chuck Salter

Annual Meeting Minutes – June 16, 2007, Castaway on Lake Alex

Present: Chuck Salter, George Heroux, Tom Kajer, Bill Bates, Joan Russell, Peg Hartung, Lee Walberg, David Hoeller, and Lisa Kajer Absent: Brian Pantzke, Mike Wood, Brian Sams, Katie Harms.

Vice President, Chuck called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. He welcomed everyone and then introduced guests asking them to give a brief update on information of interest to our members. Guests present included: Sheriff Wetzel, Tim Houle, Commissioner Tom Wenzel, Representative Al Doty, Senator Paul Koering, Glenn Erickson, and Jim Lilienthal,

Sheriff Wetzel clarified the life jacket ordinance for children that states any child who is 10 years old or under must be wearing a life jacket if the boat is under power. This will be enforced this year since the public has been given a two-year grace period on this ordinance.

Representative Doty said that a lot of money is going into a 10-year plan for clean water. He also explained his concern about “endocrine descriptors (disruptors)” such as pharmaceuticals and household cleaners that are ending up in water causing “girly fish” (male fish that take on female characteristics) including the production of eggs.

Commissioner, Tom Wenzel, stated that work would start on County Road #203 next year with resurfacing being done in 2008. He said that new, blue, 911 signs will be installed in the entire county by October 2007. The Shoreline ordinances were passed so now work is being done on land use ordinances. He said Camp Ripley is thinking about putting a non-motorized trail around the camp.

Senator Paul Koering thanked the Tom Wenzel for his hard work as commissioner and said that Sheriff Wetzel is one of the best sheriffs in the state.

Tim Houle thanked both the Representative and Senator for their hard work on behalf of Morrison County. He said thoughtful consideration had been given as to placement of the 911 signs. If people feel the placement for their sign is not correct then they should call his office so he can confirm the placement. He said a few new ordinances may be of interest to our members. Controlled access use now states that up to four lots can share one access. There can be one dock for 120 feet on the lake and one boat slip/owner. All ordinances can be viewed at the county web site: www.co.morrison.mn.us There was some discussion about wetlands and what constitutes a wetland. Individuals should contact Tim Crocker at the DNR office and/or the Morrison County Soil and Water Division, about wetland questions and concerns. Tim was asked about septic system requirements and he stated that at the time of sale or when a person requests a permit the county has the authority to inspect a system and to determine if it needs to be updated. There are no state laws that allow a county to be more aggressive about septic systems. Chuck Salter stated that Chuck Forss has sent him a list of septic systems on our lake that are in compliance with the law that went into affect in 1990. Many systems on our lake are non-conforming since that law change. Everyone was encouraged to get his or her system checked. Tim was asked if septic system pumping contractors record with the county when they pump a system, like they are required to do in Scott County. Tim said he didn't think so, but would look into what they do in Scott County.

Glenn Erickson, county assessor, handed out the 06 sales records and stated that there have been fewer sales not only on Fish Trap Lake but sales are down in Scandia Valley, as a whole.

Jim Lilienthal, DNR Conservation Officer, spoke about the stocking that has been done on Fish Trap and encouraged people to visit the website that lists the annual stocking information, lake surveys and contains their newsletter. The site is: www.dnr.state.mn.us/arcas/fisheries/littlefalls He said that they are stocking Fish Trap every year now with both fry and fingerlings. They will be doing OTC marking in the future so they can determine if the fish caught during netting are a part of the stocking they have done or are naturally produced in the lake. He has seen some environmental changes in Fish Trap with the warming of the water. He said the water is clearer now with more vegetation in deeper water. He encouraged people to contact Marilyn Emerson about developing fish friendly shorelines. He told us to proceed with careful consideration about how we treat the curly-leaf pondweed in our lake.

There was much discussion about shoreline use and tree removal. Various ordinances apply so people need to check the ordinances before they do anything.

Patrick Selter, of Professional Lake Management, gave a power point presentation on treating curlyleaf pondweed. He estimated that it would cost our association about \$30,331/year (2007 prices) for five years to manage our curlyleaf pondweed. There would be a 5 – 7% increase in price each year since the chemicals continue to increase in price. Our association could set up a multiple year agreement to set the yearly increase. He also suggested that we get a current survey done of the lake since the data he was working with is from 2005.

Scott Schnuckle moved and Lorraine Jehert seconded that we treat as many acres as allowed by the DNR. Motion carried. Chuck Salter explained that a draft vegetative management plan has been completed and has been sent to Ed Phieler, at the DNR office, for review. Our association could apply for a \$5000 grant from the Healthy Lakes Partnership Program once the vegetative plan is accepted. He also stated that the petition to form a Lake Improvement District (LID) is on file with the signed letters at the county. Tim Houle reminded us that there are time constraints written in the law that need to be followed to form an LID. He doesn't feel that we have enough time this year to form the LID. With this information a second motion was made by Donna Walberg to replace the one voted on earlier. The motion was seconded by Ray Bernardy. It stated: If insufficient grant funds are available the association will seek individual lakeowner donations to pay the bill to treat the acres allowed by the DNR. Motion carried.

The 2006 annual meeting minutes were corrected to read: Sheriff Wetzel stated that they would be ticketing if children 10 years and under were not wearing a life jacket. Tom Kajer moved acceptance with the correction, Joan Russell seconded. Motion carried.

Chuck accepted the financial report as presented in writing.

People were encouraged to sign the Quiet Zone petition if they were in agreement with it and it would be passed on to the county administrator.

Tom Kajer reported that our association has contracted with a laboratory in Detroit Lakes to test our water for Phosphorus and Chlorophyll A. Jim Fogelberg, who is doing the secci disc data collection will collect the water samples one time per month for five months and send it to the lab. It will cost around \$200 for this lab service.

Chuck opened nominations for the executive board. The following terms were up: Katie Harms, Brian Pantzke, Bill Bates, Mike Wood and Lisa Kajer. Katie Harms and Bill Bates were interested

in running again. The following people volunteered along with Katie and Bill: Scott Schnuckle, Marilyn Hoegemeyer, and Peggy Swalm. Peg Hartung moved, Dave Hoeller, seconded that the five be appointed to the board. Motion carried.

Boat parade will be July 4th beginning at the campground at noon. Posters will be placed at various sites to inform people.

Jim Loschieder and Peg Hartung won the t-shirts.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Executive Board Meeting that followed the annual meeting.

Present: Lee Walberg, Bill Bates, Peg Hartung, Joan Russell, Tom Kajer, Chuck Salter, Marilyn Hoegemeyer, Peg Swalm, Scott Schnuckle, and Lisa Kajer

Marilyn moved, seconded by Dave that Chuck be nominated as President. He accepted. Motion carried.

Marilyn moved, seconded by Lee that Dave be nominated as Vice President. Dave accepted. Motion carried.

Joan moved, seconded by Peg that Marilyn be nominated as secretary. She accepted. Motion carried.

Scott moved, seconded by Bill that George be nominated for treasurer: George had agreed earlier to that nomination. Motion carried.

Fall board meeting was set for Saturday, Sept. 29th at 9:00 AM at the Hitchin Rail.

19 people signed the Quiet Zone petition. Chuck Salter took it to give to Tim Houle at a later date.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Kajer

2007 Board of Directors
Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association

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Katie Harms kharms@integraonline.com 320-632-8222

Peg Hartung kphart@upstel.net

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★ Scott Schnuckle schnucks@comcast.net

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Lee Walberg lee.walberg@smosgood.com 320-230-2763

Walberg

**Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association
Fall Board Meeting, September 29, 2007, at the Hitchin' Rail**

Board members present: Chuck Salter, Peg Hartung, George Heroux, David Hoeller, Tom Kajer, Joan Russell, Brian Sams, Scott Schnuckle, Peggy Swalm, Marilyn Hoegemeyer

Board members absent: Bill Bates, Katie Harms, Lee Walberg

Others present: Tom Wenzel and Duane Johnson, Morrison County commissioners; Tim Houle, Morrison County Administrator; Chuck Forss, Morrison County, Zoning and Planning; and Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association members: Jerry and Jan Benusa, Jim and Marilyn Sutton and Pat and Gwen Wampach

President Chuck Salter called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed the Morrison County officials, board members and the association members present.

The secretary's minutes from the April 14, 2007, Spring Board meeting were accepted and approved.

Treasurer George Heroux reported that there are 216 association members, as of Sept. 26, 2007. (There were 207 last fall). He sent reminder notices in August to property owners who had not paid membership dues before or at the annual meeting in June and got 35 new members as a result. He reported a total bank balance, as of Sept. 28, 2007, of \$13,843.81. The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Septic Systems

Chuck Salter opened a discussion about septic system compliance and system failures by noting that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has Fish Trap Lake listed in the lowest category of water quality, based on a 1997 survey that showed a phosphorus level of 40 parts/million. But Chuck said those results might not be accurate and the MPCA is rechecking their data. A more recent study by Bemidji State (done in 2003), for example, ranked Fish Trap Lake as 8th in water clarity of 250 lakes studied.

Discussion then focused on what is being done about getting all septic systems in compliance on Fish Trap Lake. It was suggested by several of the association members present that just encouraging compliance is not adequate. Tim Houle said that Morrison County cannot go onto a property to do an inspection without the owner's permission. But if an owner applies for a building permit or wants to sell the property and there's been no septic system inspection in the past three years, then the system must be inspected. (That's more restrictive than state law, which has a five-year-inspection window). And, he said, records show that 90 percent of the systems are now in compliance.

There may be other reasons for a high phosphorus level: for example, runoff, nutrient loads from inlets, wetlands or Lake Alexander, climate changes (little snow and rain resulting in a low lake level), whether people manage the ash from their lakeshore fire pits, whether they fertilize and mow right to the edge of the lake. It was noted that it is now illegal to use lawn fertilizer with phosphorus and there are efforts to promote planting lakeshore buffer zones to help reduce runoff into the lake.

Several association members present said that some other lake associations have forced all owners on the lake to have their septic systems inspected. County officials said lake associations need a strategy for how to get that done. The county needs a partner: the lake association and a Lake Improvement District (LID) to force compliance. Inspections cost about \$300, but if many property owners participated that amount could be reduced by half, according to the county. Upgrading a septic system generally costs from \$8,000 to \$10,000, but it was noted that there is a loan program available.

The county does catch up with septic system compliance when a property is sold and if a system needs to be upgraded, the property owner has 10 months to get it done. If, however, a system is non-compliant but not failing, the owner may get a variance. If you believe someone is illegally pumping sewage into the lake, call a conservation officer, county officials said.

lake, call a conservation officer, county officials said.

Chuck Forss suggested that a Shoreline Assessment, best done in July, would provide a detailed look at the lake, providing an image of the shoreline, riprap, buffer zones and it would show areas of the lake affected by sewage or other runoff.

Water sampling, on-going educational efforts and other potential strategies to deal with septic system problems were discussed. Then Peggy Swalm moved and Scott Schmuckle seconded this motion:

That the Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association pursue a Clean Water Legacy Grant to educate property owners about contributors to poor water quality and fund a voluntary septic assessment of all properties. Motion carried.

Then Joan Russell moved and David Hoeller seconded this motion:

That each Fish Trap Lake Property Owner be encouraged to bring a well water sample to the June 2008 Association meeting for a free water analysis, including testing for nitrates. Motion carried.

Chuck Forss will pursue two other strategies:

1/Get an assessment of impacts on Fish Trap Lake from feedlots, other agriculture inputs at inlets; wetlands impact and nutrient loads from Lake Alexander and pursue the possibility of monitoring sites.

2/Conduct a Shoreline Assessment of Fish Trap Lake in July 2008.

Water Level

There was discussion about how low the lake is, the lowest ever, some reported. Others noted that Lake Alexander is low, too, as are many other area lakes, and that Fish Trap Lake water levels have fluctuated over the years, depending on rain and snow amounts. Scott Schmuckle suggested that more buoys are needed when the water level is low. Scott said he would investigate the price and maybe individuals or the association could buy additional buoys, if the sheriff's department would continue to put them out and take them in in the fall. There'll be more discussion on this topic at the next board meeting.

Quiet Zone

Chuck Salter reported that about 25 people signed the petition at the association meeting in June requesting a quiet zone at the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe railroad crossing at Aster Road (near The Stop) in Lincoln. And one person said he/she liked the train whistles. The Morrison County Board did not approve the request for the quiet zone because of a lack of support from petitioners, cost concerns and safety concerns.

Lake Improvement District (LID)

Chuck Salter noted that he is awaiting a reassessment of the MPCA's data on Fish Trap Lake before he completes the LID application. Between 2001 and 2005 the MPCA said the lake was fully supporting recreational activity, but now says it is non-supporting of recreational activity. Getting the MPCA reassessment done is important for other reasons as well because it hurts resale values and resort business. Tom Kajer noted that the bar charts in the MPCA data are not accurate, based on their own information.

Once the LID application is complete, the county commissioners must hold a public hearing, probably in early June, and then vote on the LID application. The next step is a meeting of Fish Trap Lake Property Owners in July or August where they will vote on establishing a Lake Improvement District so all lake owners can share in the cost of controlling non-native aquatic plants in Fish Trap Lake. If approved, treatment of curly leaf pondweed could begin under LID jurisdiction in 2009.

In the meantime, a section near the public landing was treated in 2007 and 60 acres infected by curly leaf pondweed can be treated in 2008. Grants are available. Treatment costs from \$300 to \$500 per acre.

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300
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number and location of acres to be treated and which company to hire. David Hoeller will look into which company to hire.

Tom Kajer moved and Brian Sams seconded this motion:

That a Healthy Lakes Grant for \$5,000 be pursued for treatment of curly leaf pondweed in 2008. Motion carried.

Peg Hartung moved and Tom Kajer seconded this motion:

That a DNR grant for \$20,000 be pursued for treatment of curly leaf pondweed. Motion carried.

Website

Brian Sams said he would work to get the Fish Trap Lake Property Owners Association's website up and running in October.

Winter newsletter

It will be sent to all property owners with minutes of the June association meeting and the fall board meeting, pertinent dates to remember and an update from Chuck Salter about where we stand with the LID.

Spring Board Meeting

To be held on March 8 at 9:30 a.m. at Scandia Valley Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Marilyn Hoegemeyer,
Secretary

Dates to remember

March 8, 2008: 9:30 a.m., Spring Board Meeting at Scandia Valley Town Hall

June 21, 2008: Annual Meeting

July 4, 2008: Annual July 4th Boat Parade