



The Chain Letter

PREZ SEZ by Dick Mace

Volume 16 Issue 1

Winter 2016

Special points of interest:

2016 Dues are Due
 Annual Meeting
 Saturday June 4th
 9:00 am
 Pike Lake Firehall
 Guest Speaker
 John Bates

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“HAPPY NEWYEAR 2016” I hope all of you are doing well this New Year, especially in these warmer temperatures, as compared to the Polar Vortex of last year. I am sure that some are not so happy with the warmer temps, such as the snowmobilers, ice fisherpersons and other winter sports enthusiasts as well as the resort owners. However, I understand things have improved with respect to the ice conditions so “enjoy” while you safely can. I must also say that I was honored to be elected as your new Lake Association President, although for me personally, it was not a good time from my vantage point, as I lost my best friend and your President, Arnie Clement. Arnie was a long time and dear friend of my family and his passing on my birthday (July13, 2015) was, and continues to be, very troubling for me. He and I were also professional associates for many years as land use administrators in the neighboring counties of Racine and Waukesha. We had much in common. It was Arnie, and his wife Kay, who introduced and lured us to this Chain of Lakes. Before our house was completed, we would stay at their house on long weekends and fishing trips, which is how my wife Nell and I came to fall in love with this Chain, along with the help of George Gunderson and his aunt in Fifield, who also were instrumental in finding our home on Pike Lake. While I will miss my friend, I will always have fond memories of him for bringing us to this place and it is now an honor to have replaced him as President, although he would have been a great long term President of this Association had the Lord allowed him to stay with us a while longer. I hope I can do as well as he would have done.

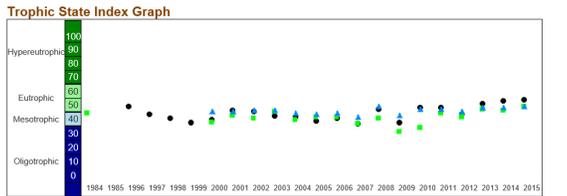
The outlook for our Chain is promising and bright. With the exception of a few small isolated patches of Purple Loosetrife on Round and Pike Lakes, invasive species are presently not a problem for our Lakes, but we must continue to monitor the system for any new signs of unwanted invasive species. We have good weed growth and good water quality and little, if any, contamination. Our fish populations are good, although a few more and larger walleyes would be desirable. Our bass population is doing very well and almost too well, as they apparently are the enemy of small walleye fry. Our newest project, which is in the planning stage, is to build “Fish Sticks” in areas along our shores where they would enhance fish habitat. We are looking for a Project Manager to take responsibility for that effort and help us to find sources of trees and qualifying shorelines where they could be built. We also expect to apply for state funding for that project, if we can get all of our “ducks in a row” with the help of a manager. With the assistance of my son from Portland Oregon. who manages a number of websites, I am hoping to get our Association website up and running again in the coming months.

Lastly, our membership growth this past year was outstanding, rising from 127 members in 2014 to 184 as of our October 19, 2015 Board meeting. I hope this rejuvenated interest in our lakes and what we are trying to do as an Association, continues into 2016 and beyond. Please consider spending \$25 for your membership renewal or a new membership, if you have not previously joined , as this is a bargain for the value we get in a high quality lake environment and to help us all to continue and improve its quality. By the way, the \$25 fee is the same amount as it was when we formed this Association 19 years ago. A REAL BARGAIN. Thank you for all your support and I look forward to your participation in the Association, and remember our Annual Meeting will be June 4, 2016 at 9:00am at the Firehouse.

Dick Mace, President

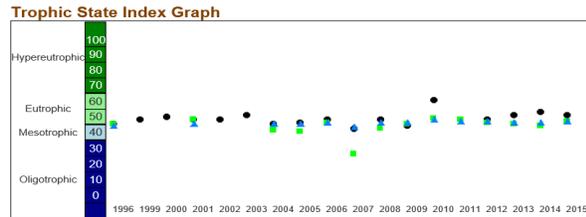
Lake Testing Report

Your team of lake testers were in full swing last summer on the chain. As in past years, we completed four tests throughout the summer, starting right after “ice out”. The results of the tests are all available on the DNR Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) pages at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn/>
I'll not replicate the detailed data here, but have included summary results from the site below.

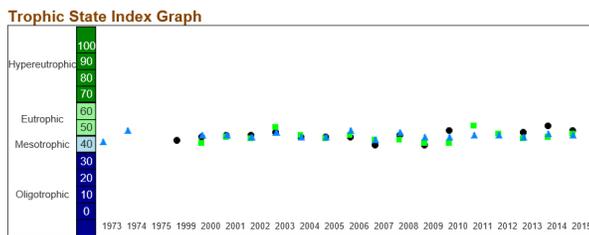


Monitoring Station: Amik Lake - Deep Hole, Vilas County
Past Summer (July-August) Trophic State Index (TSI) averages.

● = Secchi ■ = Chlorophyll ▲ = Total Phosphorus

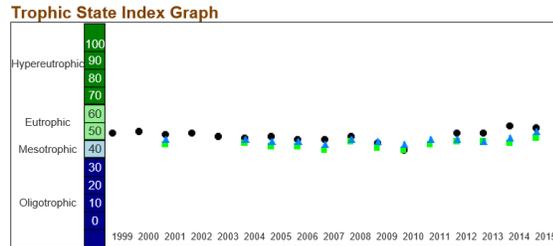


Monitoring Station: Pike Lake - Deep Hole, Price County
Past Summer (July-August) Trophic State Index (TSI) averages.



Monitoring Station: Round Lake - Deep Hole, Price County
Past Summer (July-August) Trophic State Index (TSI) averages.

● = Secchi ■ = Chlorophyll ▲ = Total Phosphorus



Monitoring Station: Turner Lake - Deep Hole, Price County
Past Summer (July-August) Trophic State Index (TSI) averages.

You will see that, over the years there has been a very slight shift with respect to visibility (Secchi), Chlorophyll and Phosphorus, but overall our lakes are fairly stable and solidly in the Eutrophic range. The higher these measures move on the scale the more aquatic plant and algae growth will be supported, resulting in a reduction in clarity. The truth of the matter is that there has been little change for the years for which we have data. I BELIEVE this to be consistent with our most recent professional lake testing indicating that our nutrient levels are primarily naturally occurring.

Rick Sironi, Water Quality Committee Co-Chair

Our Lake Association is in need of your help!

As often happens, it tends to be the same few, from the many, that do a majority of the work. Your Lake Association is calling on you to help us in continuing in our endeavors.

We are in need of a Clean Boats/Clean Waters Committee Chair: This person would be in charge of organizing volunteers to do periodic boat inspections at our boat landings.

We are in need of a Social Committee Chair: This person would be in charge of putting together an annual social. Please consider helping in one of these areas.

PLCLA Fisheries Report, February 2016

NEW PANFISH BAG LIMIT FOR 2016 Effective April 1st, 2016, the pan fish bag limit for the Pike Lake Chain (PLC) will be changing. The new bag limit will still be 25 a day, but you will only be able to keep a maximum of 10 of any one pan fish, i.e. perch, crappie, bluegill, etc, per day. However, the possession limit will still be ‘measured’ the old way, i.e., you can still have 50 of any one pan fish (because there are still lakes on which you can keep 25 of any one pan fish). The PLC is one of about 12 lakes under this year’s new bag limit rules.

WALLEYE BAG LIMIT The walleye bag limit for the 2016 season will continue to be the same as last year. You can keep 3 fish a day, but only 1 can be over 14”. That is the daily total for ALL 4 lakes combined. Possession limit is still double the daily bag limit.

The DNR will do electro-shocking in September, to evaluate the walleye growth and population as a control body of water. It will be used as a comparison to other lakes that have both natural reproduction (as the PLC has) and stocking.

MUSKY STOCKING Last Fall 400 + musky fingerlings were released in the PLC. Stocking will continue every 2 years at a ratio of 1 fish for every 4 acres per lake. Last year’s numbers released were: 182 - Round Lake, 201 - Pike Lake, 37 - Turner Lake

Russ Schroeder, Fisheries Committee Co-Chair

AIS Report January 2016

The good news: There is no problem with purple loosestrife at this time. The -20 temperature has taken care of the problem, at least for the next few months.

The reality: THEY'LL BE BACK!

You will recall that purple loosestrife is our one significant aquatic invasive species on the chain. This year it was found in the same areas where it was previously experienced, but not as bad as in 2014. The main three areas being:

The marsh on private property behind the old Pine Forest Lodge.

The bay-like swamp on the northeast corner of Round Lake.

The large stumpy bay north of the logging dam (new location from 2014).

This past summer we picked up and deployed 12 beetle laden plants acquired from McNaughton. We also physically dug-up and removed several plants where there were just a few plants and we could access them.

We will again ask for beetles and deploy them this coming summer in the worst areas. This is a long-term approach to controlling the spread, as the desire is to establish a self-sustaining native beetle population that will keep the loosestrife in check. It is unreasonable to expect that it will ever be completely eradicated.

As for the other species of invasives that have been identified as a risk for our lakes (low probability), we continue to take samples of the aquatic plants and have NOT found any evidence they have been introduced to our chain. We again encourage anyone that is interested in doing their own spot checking to contact us to discuss how to collect the weeds and what to look for.

Sandy and Rick Sironi AIS Committee Chairs

What's a Fish Ladder and Why Should I Care

As the name implies, a fish ladder helps fish climb up over an obstacle but instead of rungs the ladders steps are a series of pools. Fish are able to swim up short pitches from pool to pool and thus climb over a barrier they otherwise could not jump. The higher the obstacle the more pools and horizontal distance needed.

Fish ladders are commonly used out west to allow salmon to bypass dams on their way upstream to spawn. Salmon are strong jumpers to start with so the drops between pools can be fairly high. Poorer jumpers such as most of our inland freshwater fishes need lower elevations between pools. Fish ladders have been used in Wisconsin, including one fairly nearby at Snaptail Rapids on the East Fork of the Chippewa River north of Winter.

The Round Lake Dam, on our Pike Lake Chain of Lakes, is a barrier to upstream movement of fish. The sheet piling structure, which was placed in front of the dam (I believe back in the 1970's but don't quote me on that) is only a few feet high but it effectively blocks fish from getting over it into the chain. It was put there to set a level for the chain below which the water could not drop in order that folks had deep enough water for piers and such. The volunteers who worked all summer to restore the old logging dam years ago saw numerous fish try to come up, including sturgeon, but none made it. For sure we lose fish from the chain by going over the dam, especially in the spring. So there has been a net loss of fish from the chain for nearly half a century.

A fish ladder at the Round Lake Dam would allow many species of fish including sturgeon, walleyes muskies, and even forage species such as white suckers and redhorse to get back up into the chain from the South Fork of the Flambeau River as they once did. Fish ladders would also allow invasive species to come up as well. This is a big concern at some dams, but I don't know of any invasive species in the South Fork or really anywhere below the chain that we would need to worry about.

Our DNR fisheries biologist, Jeff Scheirer, is interested in investigating the potential for a fish ladder at the Round Lake Dam, as is the US Forest Service fisheries biologist Sue Reinecke. The dam is located on Forest Service land and they were significant partners in the project to restore the old dam structure. That was a big project and took a lot of planning, cooperation and volunteer service not to mention dollars. A fish ladder would be a pretty big project too, but I think it could benefit the fishery in the chain. If it could be engineered to go up the widest (north) sluice on the dam it could be fairly simple. If it had to bypass the dam entirely then not so easy. There are lots of "ifs" but it could be a project for the PLCLA to consider. Food for thought.

Steve AveLallemant

Walleye Stocking in the Pike Lake Chain?

Walleye stocking is a highly visible and popular fishery management action. But it is also quite costly. So how do we know when and where it should be done?

Walleyes are quite specific about the spawning habitat they need to have successful natural reproduction. Many waters simply do not have the correct habitat and stocking is necessary to have any walleyes in the lake at all. This is not the case for the Pike Lake Chain. It is historically walleye water and has all the habitat needed for them to do well.

Even where spawning habitat is good, natural reproduction for walleyes is usually quite variable from year to year. A "strong" year for reproduction is often followed by one or two "weak" years. This happens because walleyes lay huge numbers of eggs, but they are left to fend for themselves. Weather and water levels in the spring are the main drivers as to whether these large numbers of eggs will hatch and get a good start. After that, predation by other fishes, including other walleyes, as well as food availability are the main factors that determine whether they will survive to adulthood. If conditions are right, a "strong" year results and many young walleye are produced. Across the north, spring conditions have been highly variable for at least a decade and this has tended to disfavor walleyes. The waters that have held up best have been the darker stained "drainage" lakes (those with fairly large rivers flowing in and out). The Pike Lake Chain is this type of water. I asked DNR fisheries biologist Jeff Scheirer for the most recent fall survey information on natural reproduction of walleyes in the chain (2013-2015) and encouragingly they are plenty adequate to sustain the walleye population. Round Lake as usual had the best reproduction followed by Pike and Turner. Amik has virtually no natural reproduction of walleyes. But fish have fins and considerable movement occurs allowing walleyes to be present throughout the system. These are the latest numbers in a long history of survey information showing the chain to be a solid walleye producer. My own angling success and that of others bears this out as well.

During my working years I often heard that even if natural reproduction was decent wouldn't stocking some more walleyes be even better? Stocking is almost never additive. There is also a large body of research to suggest that stocking on top of natural reproduction, even if successful in part, may compromise the genetics of the "native" fish. But that's another story.

In the end, fish stocking is only justified where Ma Nature has failed to provide for an extended period of years. Not the case for our chain.

The Pike Lake Chain also has a Fishery Management Plan developed by DNR fisheries biologists with the input of our lake residents and others who fish the lakes. It provides direction for management of the entire fishery, not just walleyes but other species in the chain. There may well be actions to be taken in the future to optimize the fishery but stocking walleyes is likely not one of them.

Steve AveLallemant, Feb 29, 2016

Water Skiing and Towable Survey Results

Keep Hours 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Per the Ordinance of the Town of Fifield 81 votes or 67%

Expand Hours 9:00 am to 6:30 pm 27 votes or 22%

Sunrise to Sunset 13 votes or 11%

We have had several surveys done over the years and results trend towards keeping the hours as is. From the result of this latest survey, the Lake Association will not be requesting the Town of Fifield to pursue any changes. If, as in individual, you wish to pursue this any further, please take it up with the Town of Fifield.

Annual Meeting Guest Speaker John Bates

John Bates is our Guest Speaker at our June 4th Annual Meeting. John is the author of several books on the Northwoods of Wisconsin. He has worked as a state forest naturalist for the WDNR and owns Trails North, a naturalist guide service. He also conducts outdoor classes for Nicolet College, the University of Wisconsin Extension, and the North Lakeland Discovery Center. You might recognize his name from the articles he has written, "A Northwoods Almanac" for the *Lakeland Times* in Minocqua, Wisconsin.

Emergency Medical Responders Needed

If you are interested in becoming an EMR please contact Fire Chief Terry Mantor.

Elections for New Officers/Board Members

We will be voting for Treasurer, Secretary, and four (4) board members at our Annual Meeting this spring. To date, Pam Ahles said that she is willing to run again for Treasurer unless there is someone else who would be interested, Jean Nelson said that she is willing to run again for Secretary unless there is someone else who would be interested, we have not yet verified with all four of the board members who are up for reelection, so we might be looking for people to run for the Board. Please contact any of the officers if you are interested in running for any of these positions.

Fish Sticks Coordinator Needed

At a special meeting of the Association it was found that we had members who were interested in allowing Fish Sticks placed off their shoreline. Due to logistical difficulties we found in potentially getting trees to sites, it was clear it would take more investigation and need a coordinator. If you are interested in being that Coordinator, please contact any Officer of our Association.

Fish Sticks vs Tree Drops

Check out these WDNR WebPages to find out more about Fish Sticks and Tree Drops. While both improve fish habitat they are very different.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/fishsticks.html>

http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Waterways/checklists/checklist_treedrop.pdf

Coming soon to our **FACEBOOK** page, pictures of the steps in doing a tree drop. Check us out, **Pike Lake Chain Lakes Association, Inc.**

PIKE LAKE CHAIN LAKES ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 106 Park Falls, WI 54552

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Dues are \$25.00 per membership per year. Dues cover the period 1/1/2016 to 12/31/2016.

Record membership as: _____ Individual/Family, _____ Business, _____ Trust

Please note: 1 membership constitutes 1 vote, with a Family, Business, or Trust membership, **anyone** in your Family, Business, or Trust is eligible to cast that one vote.

of Memberships _____ @\$25.00 = Amount enclosed \$ _____ Check # _____

NAME(S) : (Please Print) _____

Email Address (Optional)

Email addresses are used only as a means to forward information from within our chain of lakes, such as meeting dates, lost and found items, and Pike Lake Chain area events, etc, addresses are not made public.

Lake Residence Address

Lake Residence Phone #

Place of Residence (If different from Lake address):

Cell or Residence Phone:

Please indicate your areas of interest:

_____ Boat Landing Monitoring _____ Lake Aquatic Monitoring

_____ Other please specify _____

Make all checks payable to: Pike Lake Chain Lakes Association, Inc.

*******Please include a copy of this form and MAIL TO*******

Pam Ahles PLCLA

N15058 RICE CREEK CT, PARK FALLS, WI 54552

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

A **BIG** thank you to those members who faithfully renew their membership each year, and a heartfelt welcome to all the new members. Let's see if we can keep the membership up. If you know of a neighbor that is not a member, please have a friendly conversation about the benefits of membership. It would be a great help to the Association if you were to send in your annual dues prior to our June 4th meeting.

ANNUAL PIKE LAKE FIREFIGHTER'S INC FUN DAY SEPTEMBER 4th!

Volunteers are always needed — please contact Doug Noetzel with any questions. Raffle prizes needed — please contact Susan Zimmer or Jack Wierzba. Patti Schroeder is asking for donations of like-new stuffed animals for the Fun Day kids games, please contact her regarding your donation. Thank you for your support!

Pike Lake Chain Lakes
Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 106
Park Falls, WI 54552

**2016 dues
are due now**

*Here to preserve and protect for
future generations*



PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE PLCLA BY-LAWS

The PLCLA Board of Directors is proposing a change to our current By-Laws. This change will be voted on at our Annual Meeting June 4th.

Now reads:

Article VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 5 – BOARD MEETINGS: The new Board shall meet within 60 days of the annual meeting and at least one other time prior to the next annual meeting. Regular meetings shall be held at places, dates, and times established by the Board. Special meetings may be held on the call of the President or any three Directors after at least 24 hours notice by telephone, mail, or personal contact. Four Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The meetings shall be open to the members. Decisions shall be made by majority vote of Directors present, with the President voting only to break ties. Between meetings, the President may solicit decision from the Board through written communications.

Proposed Change:

Article VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 5 – BOARD MEETINGS: The new Board shall meet within 60 days of the annual meeting and at least one other time prior to the next annual meeting. Regular meetings shall be held at places, dates, and times established by the Board. Special meetings may be held on the call of the President or any three Directors after at least 24 hours notice by telephone, mail, or personal contact. A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The meetings shall be open to the members. Decisions shall be made by majority vote of Directors present and, Committee Chairpersons and Officers who are members, with the President voting only to break ties. Between meetings, the President may solicit decision from the Board and, Committee Chairpersons and Officers who are members, through written communications.

PLCLA ANNUAL MEETING Saturday June 4th 9:00 am at the
Pike Lake Firehall. ALL ARE WELCOME!

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