

NLA Spring Newsletter

May 2019



It's been quite the winter with lots of cold temperatures and snow!

Snow conditions were great this winter for the Birkie, snowmobiling, biking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, and ice fishing — sports we all love. However, now it's time to enjoy our summer months filled with sunshine and warm temperatures. Hope everyone is looking forward to getting out on the lake to enjoy all the water activities. See you on the lake!

Nelson Lake — a fun place to live and play!

NLA Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 8, 2019

9:00 AM — Noon

Hayward Vet's Center

AGENDA



- 9:00 am Coffee & Donuts
- 9:30 am Nelson Lake Park Project and Lenroot Town Report
- 10:00 am Fish Habitat & Stocking Projects
- 11:00 am Annual Meeting Business
- Approval of June 9, 2018 Minutes
 - Financial & Membership Report
 - Nominations and Elections
 - Annual Membership Dues
 - Any Other Business
- 12:00 pm Adjourn to June 13, 2020

2019 Important Dates:

Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 8, 2019

9:00-Noon

At Hayward Vet's Center

Annual Picnic

Saturday, August 10, 2019

4:00-7:00 pm

At Nelson Lake Landing Resort

2020 Important Date:

Winter Rama 2020

Saturday, January 4, 2020

Noon-4:00 pm

At Nelson Lake Landing Resort





From the President *Rick Lindner*



Soon the summer season will begin. We will be holding our Annual Meeting at the Vets Center on Saturday, June 8th, 2019. Plan to attend the meeting to see presentations of information that will be of interest to all members of our association.



This year we will be staffing the boat landings with most of the same inspectors that you saw last year, and a few new ones. Please extend them your full cooperation as you launch boats. Their work is key to prevention of invasive species in our lake. If you use your boat in other lakes please ensure all water from those lakes is drained from your boat and from the engine water pump before launching in our lake. This is important for the prevention of Spiny Water Fleas from entering our lake.

Last year we had a few incidents of littering on the lake, especially at the beach areas often used during the summer. Littering on Public or Private property is a **“misdemeanor punishable by up to 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine up to \$1,000, with the possibility of eight to 40 hours litter cleanup”**. If you see someone littering on the lake capture the registration number of the boat (photo is best) and a photo of the litter and the person, if possible. Report the incident to our DNR Warden Aaron Koshatka, 715-699-4820, or the DNR Hotline 1(800)847-9367. Send photos or boat registration number to Aaron.koshatka@wisconsin.gov

After some discussion the NLA Board of Directors has decided to discontinue the July garage sale event. Recent sales have provided very little profit after disposing of the unsold items. It also required a lot of time and labor by a few dedicated volunteers.

The Board also discussed our Annual Membership Dues. Expenses associated with Nelson Lake Park project and our continued Fish Stocking and Habitat programs have reduced funds available to fight Invasive Species, should an infestation occur. Our research has determined that other lake associations in the area have membership dues of \$30-\$35. Many of our members already contribute that much or more by donating to the Walleye or Invasive Species funds. Our membership dues have been at \$20 since the original formation of the association in 1983. Therefore, at the annual meeting we will take a vote on increasing our Annual Membership Dues in 2020.

I hope we all have a great summer with good weather and good times on the lake with friends and family. Please join us for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 8th and the Annual Picnic on Saturday, August 10th.

Sincerely,
Rick Lindner



From the Treasurer *Cara Goldman*



Financials as of March 31, 2019

General Fund	\$24,767.72
Fish & Wildlife	\$ 5,883.11
Lake Project	\$ 402.55
Invasive Species	\$10,817.51
Park Project	\$ 378.00
TOTAL	\$42,248.89

Membership: Nelson Lake Association currently has 236 members



A warm welcome to new members that have joined our association this year!
Thank you to all NLA members for supporting our association
in our effort to improve Nelson Lake
and for participation in association events.

ELECTIONS — by Rick Lindner

This year the offices of Vice President and Secretary are up for election. Harold Burton and Steve Bilitz are current candidates for re-election to those positions. There are two Director at Large positions up for election. Gordy Christians and Tom LeMay are the current candidates. We can have more than one candidate for any of the positions. If you would like to be a member of the board please let any of the current board members know and we will add you to the list of candidates for election at the *Annual Meeting*.

NLA Board Members



Rick Lindner
President



Harold Burton
Vice President



Cara Goldman
Treasurer



Steve Bilitz
Secretary



Gordy Christians



Tom LeMay



John Welter



Angie Wuethrich-Dorenski



Kelly Plote



Art Saxum



Casey Stangl



Mark Schaezner

Rick Lindner	President	715-634-4290
Harold Burton	Vice President	715-634-2909
Steve Bilitz	Secretary	715-634-2553
Cara Goldman	Treasurer	715-634-3750
Gordy Christians	Director at Large	715-634-3156
Tom LeMay	Director at Large	715-634-2594
John Welter	Director at Large	715-634-4175
Angie Wuethrich-Dorinski	Director at Large	715-699-1484
Kelly Plote	Director at Large	715-864-0015
Art Saxum	Director at Large	715-634-5073
Casey Stangl	Director at Large	715-699-1213
Mark Schaezner	Director at Large	612-860-9064

NLA Raffle

2019 RAFFLE PRIZE will be a KAYAK along with a paddle and vest

We will have only one raffle prize this year (last year we had 2 prizes). Last years Kayak was so well received that we decided to offer one again this year. Total number of tickets to be sold will be 200, so you will have a good chance to win.

Tickets will be available for purchase at resorts on Nelson Lake starting in June, as well as at the NLA Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 8, 2019. Tickets will sell for \$10 each OR 3 for \$25.

Raffle drawing will be held Saturday, August 10, 2019 during the Nelson Lake Association picnic (4:00-7:00 pm) at Nelson Lake Landing Resort.



Tickets are \$10 each
OR 3 for \$25
a total of 200 tickets to
be sold.

Sun Dolphin Journey Sit-on-Top Angler Kayak with Paddle

- Maximum weight capacity of 250 lbs
- Overall dimensions 120' x 29"W x 16"D
- Sit-on-Top style
- 2 flush mount and 1 swivel fishing rod holders
- Storage & shock cord deck rigging
- Retractable carrying handles
- Paddle holder
- Adjustable foot braces
- Backrest with protective thigh pads

Onyx Kayak Fishing Vest

- Adult universal
- Color: Tan



Status of Nelson Lake Fishery in 2019

By Max Wolter, DNR Fisheries Biologist

Nelson Lake Fishery in 2019

Where do we stand?

Greetings Nelson Lake! I was asked to give an update on all things fish in Nelson. What have we seen recently? What plans do we have going forward? I'm happy to try to answer those two important questions below. I am always available at if you want to send questions to me directly.

max.wolter@wisconsin.gov

How, when, and why does DNR survey Nelson Lake?

In our area, spring DNR fisheries surveys are set up on a rotating basis, with larger lakes being surveyed more often. We're on the Chippewa Flowage every year, Lac Courte Oreilles every other year, and the next biggest lakes (Round, Grindstone, Nelson) every third year. Nelson was last surveyed in the spring of 2017, meaning our next spring survey will be 2020.

Spring surveys typically involve looking at all species. We use fyke nets set shortly after ice-out to look at walleye, pike, perch, and crappie. Then we return and electrofish when the water is between 60-70F to look at bass, bluegill, and non-game species. For all species we are looking at size and their relative abundance.

We also do one-night fall electrofishing surveys on many lakes in the area on an annual basis. Nelson is one of those lakes. We have shocked in the fall each year since 2013 (when the Walleye Initiative began) and many years before that too. These surveys specifically tell us about whether natural born walleye are present, and how stocked walleye from previous years are doing.

What have we seen in the most recent DNR surveys?

The 2014 spring survey showed a slight uptick in adult walleye. I was hopeful that the 2017 survey would show a continuation of that trend, but it did not. Adult walleye numbers were back down.

This is the result of almost non-existent natural reproduction, and only limited stocking success (more on that later). However, walleye size was fairly impressive, with almost half of the adults being over 20 inches. That's not typically a sign of a healthy walleye fishery, but those are still impressive fish.

Other aspects of the fishery showed slight improvements between the 2014 and 2017 surveys. Both bass and bluegill size showed improvement. Pike, crappie, and perch were not targeted in the 2017 survey due to logistical constraints, but we plan to collect more data on those species in 2020.

Are fish sticks working?

This is an important question that I wish I could answer more directly. We know fish sticks (and tree drops, which serve the same function) have a wide range of benefits to fish communities.

When looking at a complex lake like Nelson it's tough to make definitive conclusions (though we have tried) that something has improved solely because of the many trees that have been added over the years. There are simply too many factors changing at once. But, we have seen improvements over time in the species that we expected to benefit most from fish sticks (bass and bluegill), so my impression is that these have been positive. We have also gotten a lot of nice feedback from anglers that enjoy fishing near these structures, and they have value in that regard as well. .

What's the deal with all the small panfish?

In almost all cases, fish populations have a very predictable relationship between their abundance and their size. When a species is very abundant, the average size is small. When the population is not abundant, the average size is big. Nowhere has this been truer than Nelson. When walleye were very abundant decades ago, their size was very small. Because there were so many predators at that point in time, bluegill abundance was kept in check. Under

(continued on next page)

Status of Nelson Lake Fishery in 2019

By Max Wolter, DNR Fisheries Biologist

What's the deal with all the small panfish?

(continued)

those conditions, Nelson Lake was growing some of the biggest bluegill in the state.

Today, we have almost the exact opposite situation. Adult walleye are not abundant, but they are pretty big. With the lack of an abundant predator, panfish abundance is very high, and size is moderate to poor, depending on the species of panfish. It really is that simple. Nothing else has fundamentally changed with panfish genetics, overall forage base, overharvest, or anything like that. One reason we have been willing to invest so much time and resource into trying to bring back walleye is that we know how important they are to making big panfish. But as discussed above and below, we have had only limited success on that front.

One of the most frequent questions I get related to Nelson Lake panfish is: "Why don't you raise the limit and let anglers help reduce the abundance?". It's not an illogical thought. However, we would need to train anglers to do something they fundamentally have no interest in—keeping 2-4 inch panfish. The reason walleye are such an effective predator and can control panfish abundance is that they get them when they are very small. Anglers simply won't do that, no matter what the limit is. I am not aware of any instances where increased angler harvest actually led to better size of panfish. Yet there are countless examples of the opposite. That's not saying panfish regulations on Nelson Lake will never be reconsidered, but it's not as easy as raising the bag limit and getting bigger crappie.

What are the future plans for walleye?

Nelson Lake has been stocked with extended growth walleye for over a decade now, including both fish stocked by the lake association and by the DNR. We have tried different stocking rates, frequencies, and locations. In 2017 we tried stocking minnows just before the walleye arrived. We've stocked in

wet years and dry years, hot years and cool years. We've tried getting anglers to reduce the abundance of potential predators (largemouth bass). We tried supplementing the forage base by stocking adult suckers.

Throughout all of this we have evaluated each walleye year class, both as juveniles and adults. At best, we have had moderate success with our stocking efforts. Returns on some stocked years have been poor. Why? What is the limiting factor?

On paper, Nelson sets up as a lake where stocking should be working. It has relatively dark water once again, which has been a key factor in other local lakes where stocking has worked well (Chetac, Teal, Barber, as examples). So we're not ready to throw in the towel just yet. We will continue to work with NLA to develop strategies that might improve our stocking success. The every-other-year rotation seems to be slightly better than the every-year stocking, based on our stocking data. So I expect we'll stick with that, meaning we'll stock again in the fall of 2019. We did not get the hoped-for bump in survival from doing the minnow stocking and alternate stocking locations in 2017. We still have a few cards to play, and we'll certainly play them.

Fish management is, in many ways, an exercise in constant adaptation. We appreciate all the excellent cooperative work NLA has engaged in with us over the years, from fish sticks to stocking. We look forward to continuing that work.



TOWN OF LENROOT UPDATE – SPRING 2019

by Gordy Christians

Planning for summer 2019 work projects in the Town of Lenroot is well underway. The Nelson Lake Park development project will hopefully be complete by fall. The park sign has been developed and will be approved at the town board meeting in March for, installation in May. After putting building of the shelter out for bids twice with no interest, the board is looking for a builder. Black topping of the boat landing area and/or gravel parking areas will be determined when the budget balance is known. Bidding for blacktop will be done with town road projects in April or May.

A suggestion was made at a recent board meeting to replace the portable toilet at Gerlach Landing parking lot with a more permanent structure. To facilitate this, a 50% grant request was written to DNR and approved. A cement toilet exactly like the one at the Nelson Lake Park has been ordered and should be installed in May after road bans are lifted.

For those traveling on Jolly Fisherman Road this summer, DNR has ordered that one of the new culverts near Highway 27 be lowered some 30 inches to facilitate fish passage. This will require the road to be closed during this work which may take one to three days depending on difficulties encountered. Timing will depend on weather, water levels, and contractor availability but must be done by Labor Day. Signs will be posted when work is imminent.

Roads planned for resurfacing with blacktop this summer include Reiske's, Wagoner Circle, Bill's, Birch Point, and Gerlach. Some adjustment in these plans may be needed after bids are received and the cost of blacktop is known. This work should not require road closures but may cause some short term traffic delays.

Highway 63 north of Hayward is scheduled for reconstruction this spring and early summer. Alternate routes will be posted for highway traffic. However, this may generate increased traffic on town roads (Nelson Lake Road and Mosquito Brook Road in particular) and may require some increased regulation for safety.



Thank
you

for keeping
our lake
roads
looking
beautiful!

Summer
time ☀️



Enjoy your
summer on
the lake!

Fishing Regulations

NELSON LAKE

General Fishing Regulations

Species	Season	Daily Bag Limit	Length Limit
Walleye	General gamefish*	3	18" minimum
Northern Pike	General gamefish*	1	32" minimum
Largemouth Bass	General gamefish*	5, both species combined	None
Smallmouth Bass	Catch and release only from first weekend in May to third weekend in		None
Panfish (Crappie, Bluegill, Yellow Perch, Sunfish)	Open Year Round	10 combined	None

*General gamefish season runs from the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March

**3-line motor trolling is allowed
(3 hooks, baits, or lures per person)**



20th Annual WINTER RAMA



Winter Rama was held on January 5 at Nelson Lake Landing. There was a great turn out of NLA members, friends and family! Many thanks to John and Linda for hosting the event and to Scott Flynn for being the master of ceremony for the game challenges. Weather was perfect for the new **"I Beat The Big Island"** challenge this year. This being the first year for this event, we were thrilled with the participation and hope to hold this event again during our 2020 Winter Rama. So mark your calendars!



Linda and John Welter



Scott Flynn

"I Beat The Big Island" participants!



**A special *Thank You* to
Paula and Steve Bilitz
for coordinating the Big Island event.
It was a huge success. Great job!**

WINTER RAMA

Bob Goodrich

**Winner of
golf putting
contest**



CHILI & DESSERT WINNERS!

WINTER RAMA 2019



There were so many wonderful pots of chili this year. Everyone enjoyed the wide variety of chili recipes.



★ **BERNIE BELL** was the 1st place winner in the chili contest. Congrats Bernie!



BARB BESKE'S chili was awarded 2nd place in the chili contest. Congrats Barb!



BEST DESSERT
TERRI BARES won the best dessert contest. Congrats Terri!



BIG ISLAND CHALLENGE RETURNS TO WINTER-RAMA!

Eighteen NLA members and their guests took on the first Beat the Big Island challenge at the 2019 Winter-Rama. On skis, snowshoes and on foot, they circled Nelson Lake's Big Island, enjoying warm weather, cowbell ringers and a pop-up beverage stand along the way. Members of the North Country ATV Club provided assistance and encouragement to race participants. At the end of the trek, each finisher received a commemorative race button and one free refreshment of their choice at Nelson Lake Landing.

Based on the enthusiastic reception to this new event, the NLA Board has decided to bring it back in 2020. Put it on your calendar now – **Saturday, January 4, 2020**. The race starts from Nelson Lake Landing Resort at 9:30 am.

Event Details:

- Hike, bike, snowshoe or ski around the Big Island. You choose. This is an un-timed fun race. Bring your family (not recommended for children under 5).
- Race starts and ends at Nelson Lake Landing. Begins promptly at 9:30 am. Depending on your mode of trekking, it should take 2 – 2 ½ hours to complete the tour around the island and return to the Landing.
- **Registration form** for this January 4, 2020 event will be included in the Fall NLA Newsletter. Cost is \$5.00 per participant.
- The race will be held regardless of weather or number of participants.

Hope to see many of you turn out for this fun event in 2020!



THANKS FOR SUPPORTING OUR ASSOCIATION!



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JAR & LORI WELTER

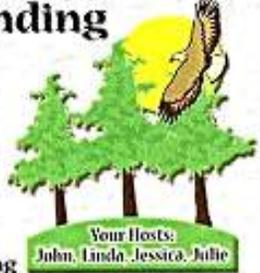
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