

Fall



NLA NEWSLETTER

2019

Summer sure went by quickly! We hope everyone enjoyed the many summer days filled with sunshine, family, friends, and lots of water activities on the lake. Fall weather is quickly arriving and will provide us with some amazing fall colors. Now, moving on to cooler weather very soon.

Upcoming Events

Winter Rama	Saturday, January 4, 2020	Noon — 4:00 P.M.
Annual Meeting	Saturday, June 13, 2020	9:00 A.M. — Noon
Annual Picnic	Saturday, August 8, 2020	4:00 P.M. — 7:00 P.M.



From the President

Rick Lindner



This newsletter contains some very important information about future plans for Nelson Lake. Please see the articles about a possible drawdown during the winter of 2020-21. There are multiple reasons why a drawdown would be good. In addition to restoration of walleye spawning beds it will also provide an opportunity to inspect the Dam, repair the boat ramp at the Nelson Lake Park, and lower the culvert on Jolly Fisherman Road. Read the articles in this newsletter for more details.

Stocking plans include adding 27,000 Extended Growth (6-8 inch) Walleye in October 2019. DNR Fisheries is also planning on doing a Fyke Net Survey in the spring of 2020 and Electro-Fishing survey again next fall. This year the DNR did a study on prey fish in Nelson Lake and found an abundant supply. Therefore, they are not recommending minnows be stocked with walleye this year. But the plan is to spread out the walleye by using 5 or 6 locations on the lake to take advantage of the existing prey fish population thereby increasing the survival rate.

We had a great annual meeting in June with about 50 people attending. The highlight was an excellent presentation by Max Wolter, DNR Fisheries Biologist, on all the initiatives that have been undertaken in the past on Nelson Lake and future actions to consider. The annual picnic in August was attended by 94 people. See the articles and pictures from both events later in this newsletter.

I want to thank all the volunteers who help make our association a success. The shoreline monitors who look for invasive weeds twice each summer at one or more of the 31 shoreline sectors on the lake; the team that helps change the 16 buoys each spring and fall; the board members that meet the first Monday every-other month and help with the many tasks that our association supports in the community; the boat inspectors who handed out informational cards about littering and are instrumental in keeping our lake free from invasive weeds; our welcome lady (Diane Stangl); and the many volunteers that help behind the scenes with the annual meeting, the annual picnic, and other support activities, including a special thanks to Ruth for publishing this excellent newsletter.

Help Wanted!

The Nelson Lake Association is looking for 1 or 2 people to share the boat inspection duties next summer at the public boat landings. The pay is \$12 per hour. The work is on weekends and holidays (May-September) and will be spread out so all are able to be with family and friends when needed. A schedule will be established in April to accommodate each person's availability. Training will be provided. At the end of the year a 1099 form will be provided for anyone earning \$600 or more during the season. **If you are interested in helping protect our lake from invasive species contact Rick Lindner at ricklindner@yahoo.com or by phone at 715-634-4290 (home) or 715-410-0411 (cell).**



From the Treasurer Cara Goldman



Financials as of September 30, 2019

General Fund	\$27,602.00
Fish & Wildlife	\$ 6,938.11
Lake Project	\$ 422.55
Invasive Species	\$ 6,354.51
Nelson Lake Park	\$ <u>733.00</u>
TOTAL	\$42,050.17

NELSON LAKE PARK: The Nelson Lake Association promised to donate a total of \$20,000.00 to the Town of Lenroot to be used towards the renovation costs of the Nelson Lake Park. The contribution was to be made in two phases. The first contribution of \$10,000.00 was sent to the Town of Lenroot in June 2018. The second and final donation will be sent to the Town of Lenroot upon completion of the park renovation, which is anticipated to be by the end of 2019.

MEMBERSHIP as of 9-30-19 is at 231



NLA Board Members



Rick Lindner
President



Harold Burton
Vice President



Cara Goldman
Treasurer



Steve Bilitz
Secretary

- 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



Tom LeMay



John Welter



Angie Wuethrich-Dorenski

- 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



Art Saxum



Casey Stangl



Mark Schaezner

- 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



Did you know....

NLA has their own “Welcome Lady”

Meet Diane Stangl!



For the last six years Diane has had the pleasure of being called the “Nelson Lake Welcome Lady”...personally greeting and welcoming new home owners to Nelson Lake.

This entails obtaining the addresses of new property owners, then visiting and welcoming them to the beautiful Nelson Lake area. Diane acquires the addresses through friends, neighbors, real estate transactions that appear in our local newspaper, and several real estate offices that provide annual residential sales information on Nelson Lake.

After compiling the list of addresses and routing her trip, she drives to each new location in hopes of finding them at home, enjoying their time at the lake. Diane presents each resident with a welcome folder that includes: Welcome letter from Rick Lindner, our NLA president, a membership form inviting them to join the Nelson Lake Association, a history of Nelson Lake detailing its beginning in the early 1900's, a current lake map highlighting the resorts and campgrounds, a recent NLA newsletter, information on invasive species and how to protect our valuable waters and improve habitat for lakeshore property.

Of course, face to face with new residents gives Diane an opportunity to personally welcome them and answer any questions. If she does not find the new owners at home she leaves the folder on their door. Most of her visits occur during the spring and fall. The annual number of contacts range from 20 to 25 new residents. This number has increased in the last few years.

If anyone knows of new home owners or anyone interested in joining the Nelson Lake Association, please contact Diane at 715-699-1213.

WE ♥ OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Thank You Diane



Discussing the Drawdown Option

Max Wolter – WDNR Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County

Earlier this summer I had the pleasure of addressing many NLA members at the summer meeting. I used that time to summarize the various strategies that DNR and NLA have partnered on to try and improve different aspects of the fishery. Those can be briefly summarized as stocking, regulations, and habitat projects (fish sticks). We've seen some success with those efforts. For example, bass are bigger now than a few years ago, likely benefiting from a combination of new regulations and more suitable habitat. But we have not been able to change some of the overriding negative trends in the fishery, namely, the non-existent natural reproduction of walleye.

So what do you do when you've run through all the tools in your toolbox? You start to look at using bigger tools. That's the essence of the conversation surrounding the use of a planned and strategic drawdown to try to benefit the Nelson Lake fishery. But before I go any further, there are several points of nuance that I want to make sure nobody misses in this article:

1. The DNR is not saying there will be a drawdown. This is just the start of a conversation about whether to conduct one sometime in the future.
2. The type of drawdown being discussed would occur during winter and would be designed to minimize impacts on recreation and access.
3. There is no scenario where a drawdown would be conducted in winter of 2019-20.
4. Whether there might be a drawdown or not in the future will be decided by many players, not just by DNR.
5. If a drawdown is conducted, there is no guarantee of success.

Those points are all super important. There is a tendency in some circles to assume that the DNR hands down these kinds of decisions and then everyone else has to live with it. Far from the case! The dam on Nelson Lake is operated by Sawyer County, meaning the county will

have final say in any plans. The public can and should be very involved in developing and discussing those plans, and no plan for an elective drawdown like this should go forward without adequate public support.

So this is really just the start of a conversation about drawdowns as a tool. And it can be a powerful tool. We have examples of drawdowns being used throughout the Midwest, including locally, to improve fisheries. Many of the issues on Nelson Lake (such as small panfish size and poor walleye reproduction) mirror the situation on the Chippewa Flowage from about 10 years ago. There a winter drawdown scheme was developed specifically to benefit fish and manage aquatic plants. And, generally speaking, it worked well on both accounts. Walleye reproduction and abundance are back up, and invasive plants were set back in years after drawdowns.

But there are negative side effects that need to be a part of the conversation as well. Drawdowns have the potential to negatively impact wildlife species such as turtles, frogs, and furbearers (beaver, muskrat). Winter drawdowns are done with the expectation that spring snowmelt will quickly refill the reservoir. But if the snow doesn't show up (an increasing risk under a changing climate) refill in the spring could be delayed which may impact access to the lake. These things need to be weighed against the list of hoped-for benefits as this conversation moves forward.

I appreciate the receptiveness that NLA members showed to having this discussion back at the summer meeting. I hope that open-mindedness will continue as we move forward with these discussions and weigh the various pros and cons. We still have a few cards to play in the next year, including another round of walleye stocking in fall of 2019. But if we continue to see poor success with those stocked fish, expect to hear more about the drawdown conversation from your NLA leadership in 2020.

More on the Drawdown by Rick Lindner



I hope you have read the article from Max Wolter about the Drawdown Option. At the Annual Meeting Max did a great job of discussing all the options that we have tried to restore the Walleye population and improve reproduction. I will add a few details here to the points he made in the article.

Max mentioned the stocking initiatives. In 2003 we began stocking Extended Growth (6-8 inch) Walleye instead of walleye fry. In 2005 the DNR initiated a major effort to stock Extended Growth Walleye in area lakes. With the 27,000 being stocked this October, almost 183,000 Extended Growth Walleye will have been stocked in Nelson Lake. To increase the food supply for the stocked walleye and natural reproduction we also stocked 2,000 adult White Suckers with the hope that their offspring would provide a food source that would help increase the walleye survival rate. In 2017 we also stocked 900,000 minnows along with the 27,500 walleye to help the walleye survive the transition from the hatchery to the lake. To increase habitat for juvenile fish, our 8 years of Fish Sticks projects placed about 1200 trees in the water along the shoreline of county forest lands. Although these actions may have had some effect on the walleye population we continue to see low survival rates and low walleye reproduction in our lake that was once called a walleye factory.

The one thing that we have not tried is a strategic drawdown. As Max mentioned this was done on the Chippewa Flowage with excellent results. My theory is that a drawdown restores the spawning beds by reducing weed overgrowth. This seems to make sense. When you look at the lake shoreline you find weed growth typically in the water from knee depth to 5 feet deep, the same areas where walleye spawn. The weed residue from the previous summer covers the gravel needed for good spawning. In the water less than 2 feet deep the weeds freeze out as our ice depth reaches 30 inches. If we do a drawdown of about 4 feet most of the weed growth may freeze and dry out, then be washed out of the spawning beds when water levels are restored. A drawdown was discussed for Nelson Lake about 10 years ago but the unknown effects on wildlife and uncertain benefits resulted in a lot of resistance. The studies conducted on the Chippewa Flowage have shown that there is little, if any, effect on wildlife. Therefore the wildlife experts are no longer opposed to a drawdown.

At the Annual Meeting, after Max completed his presentation and left the meeting, I asked for a show of hands by anyone that thought we should pursue discussions with the DNR on a potential drawdown. The support was virtually unanimous. I don't recall seeing anyone without a hand up. Strategic planning is necessary. It will need to be done in a year that walleye are not being stocked in the lake to obtain support from the DNR offices. A drawdown would happen in the late fall, just before ice over, and water level will be restored in the spring by the snow melt so it should be normal by fishing opener. Township and County organizations will also need to support the action, and public support will be critical to making the decision.

TOWN OF LENROOT UPDATE – FALL 2019

The Nelson Lake Park is nearly complete, only the installation of the new blacktop still needs to be done at this writing. All elements of the park development project must be complete by next summer to be counted against the grant. There are a number of possible development elements beyond those included in the grant such as electricity in the shelter, picnic tables for the shelter, playground equipment, a handicapped fishing pier, and others that may be suggested in the future. The Town will consider these as they are suggested and funding is found.



The boat ramp at the Nelson Lake Park has been repaired. This ramp was damaged by the practice of power loading/unloading blasting the base under the concrete slabs away. If the lake level is lowered in the fall of 2020 as has been suggested, the town will undertake further repairs.

A new concrete toilet has been installed at Gerlach Boat Landing parking lot. This replaces the plastic toilet which has been removed and will be offered for sale by the township. 50% of the cost of this toilet was covered by a DNR grant, the rest was from the township accommodation account.

See the information on the NLA or Town of Lenroot websites for information about the Jolly Fisherman Road culvert relocation.



FISHING HAS NO BOUNDARIES

In May, Nelson Lake Association participated in The *Fishing Has No Boundaries* event on the Chippewa flowage. The Nelson Lake pontoon boat doors have been widened to allow wheel chairs to be rolled right onto the boat. On Friday we hosted three persons with disabilities (fishermen) and two of their assistants for a great



day of fishing. We caught bass (had to release those), Northern Pike, and pan fish. It was a very successful day fishing. The joy on the face of those fishermen when they were pulling in fish is priceless.

The plan was to fish on Saturday, however, the weather did not cooperate. The thunderstorms kept the boats on the dock and

there was no fishing. *The Fishing Has No Boundaries* adapted to the situation and started the music and fish fry early so that the participants did not go home disappointed. Many of the Nelson Lake board members volunteered for the event including: Casey and Diane Stangl, Harold and Bonnie Burton, Mark Schaezner, and Rick Lindner.

In June, *Fishing Has No Boundaries* hosted a fishing/cruise event on Nelson Lake. Once again, the Nelson Lake Pontoon boat was at the dock to take passengers out for cruise. It was a joy to see the beauty of Nelson Lake through the eyes of the seniors that we hosted. We were able to see the Eagles nest on the east shore of the lake and cruise past Tanning Point. We had to cut the cruise short as thunderstorms moved in. As we apologized to the guests for the truncated cruise, one of the passengers stated – “that is OK, even a short ride on Nelson Lake is better than watching Judge Judy.”

Fishing Has No Boundaries was started in Hayward in 1986. Today it is a national organization with chapters in states across the nation.

TOGETHER
WE CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE 

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

For
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Us!



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A Cut Above The Rest

Buoy Changeover



We wish to thank the volunteers that helped with the buoy change. Each fall the large summer buoys have to be removed from the lake and a small (cone shaped) winter buoy is attached to the anchor to mark the location. Winter buoys will slide below the ice as it moves during the spring thaw. In the spring the opposite is done so the large warning buoys are in place during the summer season. This fall the team that changed the buoys was (left to right) **Tom LeMay, Joe Stonionis, Rick Lindner, and Jeff Hanson.**

Thanks for helping!



2019 Annual Meeting

The NLA Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, June 8, 2019 at the Veterans Center from 9:00-Noon. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting. Presentations were given on the following topics: [Nelson Lake Park Project](#) by Gordy Christians; [Fish Habitat & Stocking Projects](#) by Max Wolter, DNR Biologist; and [Financials and Membership](#) by Cara Goldman.

A discussion was held on cost of our annual membership dues. Since 1983 our annual membership dues has remained at \$20 per year. Expenses for the association have kept increasing since then. After a discussion a motion was made to increase our membership dues to \$30 per year. A vote of the members was taken and the motion was approved.

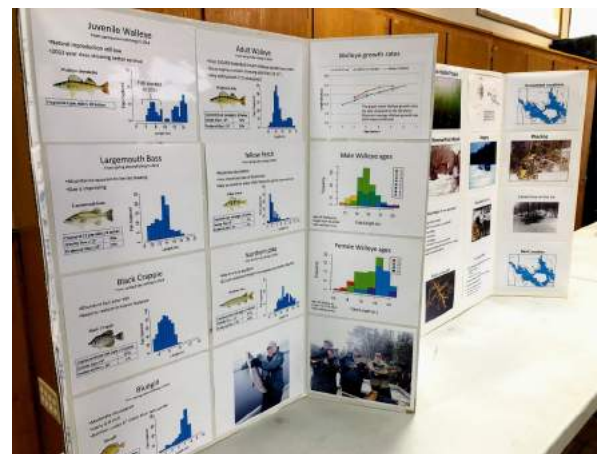
Nominations and Elections to the Board of Directors was held. The following positions were up for re-election:

- Harold Burton, Vice President
- Steve Bilitz, Secretary
- Gordy Christians, Director at Large
- Tom LeMay, Director at Large

All four were re-elected.



DOOR PRIZE WINNERS





**2018/2019 NLA
SCHOLARSHIP WINNER IS
LISA SNYDER**

Each year the Nelson Lake Association awards a \$500 scholarship to a graduating Hayward High School student who will be attending an accredited college or vocational school enrolled in preferably Natural Resources or environmental studies.

The scholarship is awarded at the beginning of the second semester of school after a grade report is sent to the Nelson Lake Association showing a successful first semester GPA 2.0 or higher and proof of second semester enrollment.

Lisa is a Hayward High School graduate from Stone Lake, WI. She will be attending UW Eau Claire this fall and is planning to major in biology in the hopes of pursuing a career as a veterinarian or a marine biologist.

Congrats!
Lisa

NLA HAPPENINGS!



New NLA koozies were ordered this year with our website printed on them. The koozies will be distributed at NLA events throughout the year and will also be included in the gift package we provide to welcome our new Nelson Lake residents.

NLA members help keep our roads around the lake clean!



The Nelson Lake Association schedules boat monitors during the summer months to monitor our boat landings to assure boats being launched into our lake are free of invasive species.



NLA members put the buoys in the lake each spring and change them each fall to help keep our boaters safe.

Big Island Challenge Returns To Winter Rama 2020



Based on the enthusiastic response to this new event, the NLA Board has decided to bring it back in 2020.

Put it on your calendar now - Saturday, January 4.

The event starts from Nelson Lake Landing Resort at 9:30 a.m.

EVENT DETAILS:

- Hike, bike, snowshoe or ski around the Big Island. You choose.
- This is an untimed fun event. Bring your family!
(not recommended for children under 5)
- Event starts and ends at Nelson Lake Landing Resort. Begins promptly at 9:30 am. Depending on your mode of trekking, it should take two to two-and-a-half hours to complete the tour around the island and return to The Landing.
- Each finisher will receive a commemorative button and a free beverage of their choice at The Landing.
- **TO REGISTER**, send the attached **registration form and \$5.00** per participant to event coordinator, Paula Bilitz, by **WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18, 2019.**

MAIL TO:

Paula Bilitz
12549N Tanning Point Road
Hayward, WI 54843



Registration form is on next page of this newsletter.

The event will be held regardless of weather or number of participants.

See you at the Island!

Registration Form



YES, I ACCEPT THE BIG ISLAND CHALLENGE!

Registration: Please Submit by Mail

PARTICIPANT NAME(s) _____

AGE (if under 18) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (for event notifications) _____

TECHNIQUE (you may change your choice on the day of the event depending on conditions)

Ski Snowshoe Hike Bike

Make check for \$5.00 (per participant) payable to Nelson Lake Association and mail to:

PAULA BILITZ
12549N Tanning Point Road
Hayward, WI 54843

Please submit registration no later than Wednesday, December 18, 2019.

By registering, I or my parent/guardian (if under 18) agree to hold harmless and indemnify Nelson Lake Association from all claims, present or future, for any loss or injury resulting from participation in this event.

2019 NLA PICNIC

Raffle Winner!



Mary & Greg Pieterick had the winning raffle ticket! They were so excited to win the kayak, as they were just thinking about buying one. Mary & Greg have a cabin on Nelson Lake (Tanning Point.)
CONGATS!



A huge **THANK YOU** to
Lynn's Custom Meats & Catering
for preparing the chicken!



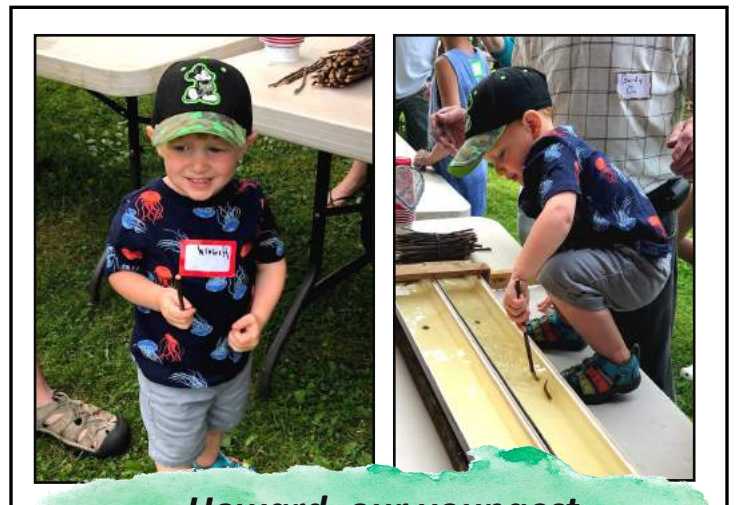
Delicious!



Minnow Race Winners

Kiel Bell and Gavin Erickson were winners in the Minnow Race.

Rick Lindner presented each with a new fishing rod and reel.



Howard, our youngest Minnow Race participant!

2019 NLA PICNIC



Perfect day for a picnic — thank you everyone for attending!



94 people attended the picnic

