

Spring 2015



Inside this issue:

<i>President's Message</i>	1
<i>Water Quality Survey</i>	1
<i>2014 DNR Written and Published AIS Treatment Factsheet</i>	2-4
<i>DNR Press Release about our Successes</i>	4
<i>Volunteers Needed</i>	5
<i>Kids Fishing Day Event</i>	5
<i>2015 AIS Treatment and Expected Plant Growth</i>	5
<i>Joining our Board</i>	5
<i>Lake Districts vs Associations</i>	6-7
<i>Geese Management</i>	7
<i>Citizens Climate Lobby</i>	7
<i>Water Quality Goals</i>	7
<i>2015 Meeting Dates</i>	8
<i>2015 Membership Form</i>	8

President's Message – Bill Miller

2015 marks our twentieth year of existence: a milestone that many organizations never achieve. The BCABLA has a singular mission of protecting and enhancing the water quality of our lakes. The members of this organization have spent tens of thousands of hours over the last twenty years tirelessly working to support this mission. Like any organization, we have grown, contracted and grown again over the years. We have excelled at times and struggled at others. However, through both good times and bad, our members have maintained a quiet resolve to push forward through the many obstacles thrown in our path. We have done so with grace and dignity and I could not be more pleased to be a small part of this organization. We spend so much time on planning what we are going to do in the next week, month or year, we sometimes forget to enjoy the moment. We sometimes forget to celebrate the

small things and enjoy what we have. I think that while we have a lot of work to do this year, we need to step back and reflect and celebrate what we have achieved. While the rest of this Spring 2015 Newsletter will provide information about our planned activities for 2015 and beyond, I want to dedicate my message this Spring to all of the members of our organization and community who have worked to improve the water quality of our lakes over the last twenty years.

To that end, I want to specifically thank the founding members of the BCABLA: Bill Duffack, Joe Kehoe, Donna Kehoe, Sandy Raby and Tom Raby. While there were many members over the years playing very critical and active roles in the organization, these individuals appear to be the glue that kept this organization going through some very lean times. Of this group, I would like to thank Sandy Raby in particular for her nineteen

years of leadership in this organization. Without her, I do not think this organization would be celebrating its twentieth year in 2015. I know for certain, that without her we would not be making the incredible strides we are today to improve water quality. I have had people tell me that it was only through her tenacity and sheer force of will that the organization has become what it is today. It was through her efforts and grant writing ability that we were able to raise the money necessary to figure out the cause of our issues on the lake, and develop a plan to implement.

Sandy retired from the Board last year, and I think it only appropriate that as we mark our twenty year anniversary that we consider it equally a celebration of Sandy Raby and all those who have worked toward improving the water quality of our Lake. Please join me in celebrating their involvement in our organization.

Big Chetac Lakeshore Property Owner Water Quality Survey

All Big Chetac Lakeshore property owners were mailed the survey on March 10th. The DNR asked us to update our Lake Management Plan. The survey is a part of this process. The DNR approved survey included the following five sections:

1. Residency and property type – A little information about you.
2. Water Quality Issues – How have the water quality issues impacted you?
3. Past and Current Water Quality Initiatives – How
4. Future Water Quality Initiatives – How should the Lake Association Proceed?
5. Funding – How should approved activities be funded?

has the Lake Association done so far?

A survey company in MN is administering the survey and collecting the results. A reminder to complete it was sent out on April 10th. We hope to have results back by May 1st. Results will be reported online and at our regular meetings when available.

OFFICIAL DNR REPORT ON Lake Chetac, Sawyer County
2014 Curly Leaf Pondweed
Herbicide Treatment & Fish Survey Results



This fact sheet provides an overview of the 2014 herbicide treatment conducted by the Big Chetac and Birch Lake Association to control the aquatic invasive species, curly leaf pondweed. Full reports and fact sheets are available on Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Chetac and Big Chetac and Birch Lake Association's (BCABLA) websites. Please contact the individuals listed below if you have questions.

Alex Smith, DNR Lakes Biologist 715-635-4124 or Alex.Smith@Wisconsin.gov

Max Wolter, DNR Fish Biologist 715-634-9658 Ext. 3509 or Max.Wolter@Wisconsin.gov

Bill Miller, President BCABLA 715-254-9559 or bcabla@hotmail.com

Project Purpose and Background:

- Big Chetac and Birch Lake Association developed a comprehensive lake management plan for Big Chetac with an overarching goal of improving lake health. One of the management objectives identified in the plan is to control the aquatic invasive species curly leaf pondweed through herbicide treatments. The goal is to reduce the weed's abundance in order to increase native plant diversity and abundance, thus improving habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. A study conducted by the lake association consultant has also shown that curly leaf pondweed biomass is a significant source of phosphorus (15 percent) to the lake system. The elevated phosphorus levels are contributing to the toxic blue-green algae blooms that occur annually on Lake Chetac. By reducing the source of phosphorus to the lake, it is anticipated toxic blue-green algae blooms will decrease, resulting in healthier lake conditions for recreational use.
- The lake association received a DNR aquatic invasive species control grant in 2013 to control curly leaf pondweed as outlined in the association's DNR approved lake management plan. As a part of the lake association's grant project, herbicide treatments were conducted in 2013 and 2014, with another treatment planned for 2015.
- The lake association applied for, and was granted, an aquatic plant management permit from DNR to control the non-native aquatic invasive plant curly leaf pondweed in 2013, 2014 and 2015. All permit and treatment notification requirements were met by Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association as outlined in Wisconsin law. The lake association hired a licensed applicator to conduct the herbicide treatments.
- A DNR lakes biologist reviewed the following reports to evaluate and prepare the 2014 herbicide treatment results summary below: (1) a pre- and post-treatment aquatic plant survey report developed by the lake association's consultant, Endangered Resource Services; (2) a curly leaf pondweed turion or reproductive structure monitoring report developed by the lake association's consultant; and (3) a herbicide residual monitoring report developed by DNR's consultant. Final reports are available at the websites listed above.

2014 Treatment Results Summary

The herbicide, Aquathol K, was applied by the lake association's applicator at a concentration of 1.0 parts per million (ppm) active ingredient to 90 acres of North Bay on May 20th, 2014. The **herbicide treatment was significantly effective in controlling the weed within the north bay** treatment area. Curly leaf pondweed was found at 205 points pre-treatment and 37 points post-treatment, resulting in an **82 percent reduction of the aquatic invasive species**.

- **Following herbicide treatment, the post treatment plant surveys of the north bay documented an increase in native plants:** three additional native species were present after treatment. Five native aquatic plants species were found prior to treatment in the north bay treatment area and eight native aquatic plants species (not including filamentous algae) were found after treatment.

OFFICIAL DNR REPORT ON Lake Chetac, Sawyer County 2014 Curly Leaf Pondweed Herbicide Treatment & Fish Survey Results



Fisheries Evaluation Results

The Lake Chetac fishery has been surveyed several times by DNR Fisheries staff both before and after the 2013 and 2014 herbicide treatments. These surveys were conducted to address questions received by the public. Below is a summary of the findings.

- **Panfish abundance (crappie and bluegill primarily) has been increasing** over the last decade or so. This appears to be completely unrelated to the herbicide treatment.
- Because panfish abundance has been increasing, **size of panfish has been decreasing**. This is a very common pattern that has been observed in many lakes throughout the area over the same time span.
- **There is no indication that fish of any species are avoiding the treatment area.** Catch rates in fishery surveys are as high or higher in the area treated with herbicide.
- There is **no indication that the herbicide treatment has hurt natural reproduction** of panfish. Young panfish have been found throughout the lake.
- There is **no indication** based on the fish condition and length/weight ratio **that the herbicide treatment has caused fish to be limited by food availability**.
- There is **no indication that the herbicide treatment has caused die-offs of fish**. However, die-offs from naturally occurring bacteria called “columnaris” are common in the spring.



Young-of-year panfish from a mini-fyke net set in the herbicide treatment area in Lake Chetac during August 2014.

Walleye recruitment continues to be poor but is similar to other area lakes. The DNR plans to continue stocking walleye.

2014 Treatment Results and Report Information

- The herbicide Aquathol K was applied to 90 acres of the north bay of Lake Chetac on May 20, 2014 to control the aquatic invasive plant curly leaf pondweed. The herbicide was applied at a concentration of 1.0 ppm by the lake association’s contractor, Midwest Aquacare with DNR onsite for supervision. The 2014 approved herbicide concentration was reduced by two-thirds following the results of the 2013 treatment.
- Aquathol K is a dipotassium salt formulation of endothall and is commonly used for curly leaf pondweed control on many lakes throughout Wisconsin. Aquathol K is approved by the EPA for aquatic plant control and the fact sheets are available online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/plants/factsheets/EndothallFactsheet.pdf> and <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/plants/factsheets/GeneralherbicideFAQ.pdf>.
- Two bays were used as control areas to assess curly leaf pondweed and native plants under non-treatment conditions: the bay adjacent to the DNR boat launch and the bay adjacent to Fred Thomas Resort. No herbicide was applied to these bays.
- On the day of treatment, the wind was reported as 4-9 mph from the SW and the water temperature was 57.4°F.
- As a part of DNR research efforts to better understand herbicide movement, herbicide concentration monitoring occurred at three sites within the treatment area and six additional sites outside the treatment area for seven days after treatment. A final report is available at the websites listed below.

OFFICIAL DNR REPORT ON Lake Chetac, Sawyer County 2014 Curly Leaf Pondweed Herbicide Treatment & Fish Survey Results



- As expected, low levels of herbicide were detected at the herbicide monitoring sites outside the treatment area. Herbicide dissipation within lakes is expected and has been demonstrated on many aquatic invasive species control projects throughout the state. Requiring treatments to occur in early spring before native plants are actively growing and during relatively calm weather conditions minimizes impacts to non-target plants.
- Aquatic plant monitoring (pre- and post-treatment) was conducted by scientists from the lake association's consulting firm, Endangered Resource Services using the point-intercept method per DNR guidance. The pre-treatment aquatic plant survey occurred on May 17-18, 2014 and the post-treatment aquatic plant survey occurred on June 14-15, 2014. The plant survey report is available at the websites listed below.
- Monitoring of curly leaf pondweed turions occurred on November 1-2, 2014 by the lake association consultants from Endangered Resource Services. Turions are curly leaf pondweed reproductive structures in the lake sediment. The turion report is available at the websites listed below.

Full reports and fact sheets are available on DNR's Lake Chetac and Big Chetac and Birch Lake Association's (BCABLA) websites.

As Published in local newspapers on March 26th—DNR Press Release:

DNR, northern lakes group make progress against aquatic invasive plant

By [Northwest Region](#) March 26, 2015

Contact(s): Alex Smith, DNR lakes biologist, 715-635-4124, Alex.Smith@wisconsin.gov; Bill Miller, president, Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association, 715-254-9559, bcabla@hotmail.com; Kevin Harter, DNR communications, 715-416-2230, Kevin.harter@wisconsin.gov

EDGEWATER, Wis. ♦ A three-year cooperative project funded by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is helping a Sawyer County lakes group make important progress in ongoing control of curly leaf pondweed in Lake Chetac.

After two years of treatments, surveys taken at the end of 2014 indicate an 82 percent reduction in the 90-acre area of the lake targeted for herbicide application. Alex Smith, DNR lakes biologist for the region, said the survey work also documented an increase in the growth of native plants in the Sawyer County lake. "This measurable progress highlights the importance of public-private partnerships in attacking the challenges posed by aquatic invasive species," Smith said.

The work was carried out by the Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association, which was awarded the \$164,000 grant in 2013. Bill Miller, president of Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association, said before the treatment began, surveys documented five native aquatic plant species in the affected area, while there were eight native species present following the treatment.

The treatments did not have any negative effect on the lake's fish population, which includes a variety of panfish as well as northern pike and walleye. Panfish abundance has continued to increase and there is no indication fish are avoiding the treated area.

Miller said an additional goal of the management effort is to reduce the potential for toxic blue green algae blooms. Curly pondweed is a significant source of phosphorus in the lake system and contributes to the blooms.

Next steps for the group will involve study of long-term options to control the curly leaf pondweed and other habitat improvement efforts. To learn more about the results, along with the full technical monitoring reports, visit DNR.wi.gov and search for "Lake Chetac."

Volunteers Needed in 2015

We need help this year for all the activities we take on. Below is a list of projects we are looking for help with.

1. **Invasive Species Monitoring:** Periodically go out in out in boats throughout the summer and check for Aquatic Invasive Species. This is easy, fun and educational. Due to the early ice out, plant growth is expected to be exceptional this year.
2. **Manually harvesting Curly Leaf Pondweed:** This can be done at your own property, or by participating in a group harvest event. The group harvest event this year will be done in the very North End of Big Chetac at Benson Creek. To ensure that the work we have been doing in the north end of the lake is sustained we need to go up the creek a bit and clear out the CLP and their Turions.
3. **Lake Management Plan Revision:** We need to form a committee to revise our lake management plan for Big Chetac. A great deal of this work can be done via electronic means, phone, email, skype.... We will be taking input from what we have learned over the last three years, the new survey, from local governmental agencies, the Wisconsin DNR and the general public to decide how we want to proceed moving forward with our water quality initiatives.
4. **BCABLA Leadership Development:** We need to actively engage our members to get more involved with the running of our organization. My tenure as President will be up in June. While I plan to remain actively engaged in the organization as required by our bylaws for the next couple of years, I will, more likely than not, be moving off the lake. I commute to Eau Claire for work, and that drive has finally gotten to me. If you want to be on our board, just let us know.
5. **20th Year Anniversary Celebration Planning:** We need a group to decide and plan how best to celebrate this milestone. Good Theme for this years' Bluegill Parade Float!
6. **Native Plant Restoration in the North End of Big Chetac:** We will need some volunteers to help us kick this off.

To volunteer your time, please either email us at BCABLA@hotmail.com or indicate your interest on the membership renewal form when you send it in.

Kid's Fishing Day Event– Volunteer Now Wednesday, June 10th, 3 to 7 pm

The Birchwood Lions Club has asked the Lake Association to Sponsor a Kid's Fishing Day Event! Walleyes for Tomorrow has donated twenty fishing rods, reels with line and a hook to give each of our participants.

We plan to have sign-ups at the Birchwood School for kids ranging in age from 8 to 14.

We will use the DNR landing off of Ol' Hayes road to launch from. We will have a bbq with hotdogs, chips, pop and water from 3 till 4 and then take the kids out on the lake for a few of hours of fishing.

We need volunteers to take a kid or two out on their boats and teach them how to catch

fish.

This is a really great idea. John and Lana Howard have agreed to organize the event. If you want to participate, please give them a call at 715-354-9827, or email them at JohnLana@skcable.com.

2015 Curly Leaf Treatment

The DNR issued our permit to treat the 90 acres at the North End of the Lake again this year. The treatment will occur sometime between mid April and the end of May when the temps and plant growth are right.

For more information, visit the DNR's new webpage highlighting our work at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/grants/project.aspx?project=79135077>.

Expected 2015 Plant Growth

Be aware with the early ice-off we are expecting a bumper crop of Curly Leaf Pondweed throughout the lake this year. The added days of light with colder water temps are expected to result in many of the dormant turions sprouting this year.

The number of Turions germinating in the last two years has been less than anticipated as a result of late Springs.

The good news is that the germination of these turions will enable us to eliminate those in the north end with this years treatment.

Joining our Board

We are seeking some energetic individuals who want to lead our organization as we plan out the next phase of our water quality improvement initiatives.

Our work of the last few years has really paid off and we need to keep it moving forward. The more people who actively engage, greatly reduces the work that any one person has to do.

Please seriously consider getting actively involved in your Lake Association. We want your help in making the next twenty years even more successful than the last.

Lake Districts - What are they, why are they formed and how do they differ from a Lake Association ?

There are two main types of lake organizations, lake associations and lake districts. Lake associations are voluntary groups. Lake districts are special purpose units of government. The same lake may have both a voluntary association and a public management district. The type of organization best for your lake is determined by many factors, including; the lake community's long range goals, the number of people living on and using the lake, the size and type of lake, the urgency of threats to the lake, and the complexity of lake management activities needed to improve the lake.

Lake Associations

Lake associations are voluntary groups, and include unincorporated associations, qualified lake associations (incorporated associations), and nonprofit corporations. Lake associations can form without any formal requirements, although many incorporate under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes to be eligible for state cost sharing grants.

Associations have no powers over lake community residents; membership and dues are voluntary. A voluntary association can have genuine advantages over a lake district because they may be able to act more quickly than governmental bodies on some issues. Some folks may be more willing to support a voluntary organization rather than forming a new unit of government, particularly one with taxing power. However, if your lake management goals are ambitious, the more stable funding of a lake district may be essential. On the other hand, voluntary lake associations are sometimes frustrated by low participation and monetary support.

The BCABLA is an incorporated under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes and has been granted by the IRS 501c3 status, making it tax exempt with contributions being tax deductible.

Lake Districts

Lake districts are special purpose units of government, and include; public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, special districts, and commissions formed by local governments. The purpose of a district is to maintain, protect, and improve the quality of a lake and its watershed for the mutual good of the members and the lake environment.

Lake districts are established by town, county or village boards, or city councils, and usually based on a formal petition of lake area owners. Lake district formation and operations must comply with Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The boundaries of a lake district usually include the property of all riparian owners and can include off-lake property that benefits from the lake or affects the lake's watershed. The district may include all or part of a lake or more than one lake. A city or village must give its approval to be included in a district.

Lake districts are governmental bodies with elected or appointed leaders and annual budgets funded from tax levies or special assessments. Districts also have some capabilities to regulate lake use, such as local boating ordinances and sewage management. Within a lake district, all property owners share in the cost of management activities undertaken by the district. Residents who live in the district and are eligible voters and all property owners have a vote in the affairs of the district. This is accomplished at an annual meeting which must be held between May 22 and September 8 each year.

In Summary

The primary advantage to a Lake District over a Lake Association is one of funding. All properties within the border of a given lake district contribute to the funding of the districts activities. A Lake District can also take on debt to fund their activities, which a lake association cannot. So for lakes, like ours, that have challenges requiring larger sums of monies, the formation of a lake district is usually seen as the way to go. The study prepared by SEH Consultants in 2010, recommended that we pursue the formation of a lake district. We chose not to do that at the time.

The amount each property owner would have to contribute annually is typically quite low. The boundaries of the district

Lake Districts - What are they, why are they formed and how do they differ from a Lake Association (continued) ?

can be limited to just lakeshore property owners, or expanded to include a wider area. There is no fixed rule of thumb on the amount of the annual contribution or the area of the district. Those are all things that are decided at the time of formation and approved by the property owners within the lake district.

In the property owner survey sent out to Big Chetac lakeshore property owners we asked for opinion in regard to how we should fund whatever activities we decide to pursue in the future. Once we see the responses from the survey we will have a better idea of whether to pursue this or not.

How Best to Keep Geese from Hanging out on your property

Are Geese and the more than a pound of poop each creates daily causing you grief? Ever wondered why they find your property so attractive, but appear to leave your neighbors property alone?

Geese are attracted to nice open space that is easily accessed from the lakeshore. They just love grass.

Don't worry, because there is an easy fix to this problem that will also help the health of the lake. If you do not have a 50 foot natural buffer zone between the lakeshore and your home, that is more than likely the reason you are having geese problems.

Best shore-land management practices suggest a nice natural plant buffer zone at the shore of the lake. It helps to prevent run off of debris and other pollutants from your property into the lake. It also will act as a great Geese deterrent. A true win/win. So consider going eau natural with your lakeshore this summer.

Local Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby Just Formed

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. They believe politicians don't create political will, they respond to it. They believe citizens who are well-trained, organized by Congressional district and with a good system of support can more than influence the political process.

With more than 300 chapters nationally in nearly every congressional district and growing rapidly, former NASA scientist James Hansen has said of CCL "If you want to join the fight to save the planet, to save creation for your grandchildren, there is no more effective step you could take than becoming an active member of this group"

Based on what climate scientists and economists alike tell us, CCL believe that Carbon Fee and Dividend is the best first step to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate. In

CCL Continued

order to generate the political will necessary for passage of our Carbon Fee and Dividend proposal we train and support volunteers to engage elected officials, the media and the public.

They engage in letter writing, meetings with our elected officials, getting published in local media, and providing educational opportunities for the public. More information at www.citizensclimatelobby.org or contact Dan Herscher at dher-scher@hotmail.com or 715-577-0721.

Dan has asked the Lake Association to lend its support to CCL's efforts. The potential long term impact of climate change on our lakes and water quality are something we should all be concerned with. We applaud Dan and the work of CCL and encourage you learn more about their efforts.

Water Quality Goals for Big Chetac

Big Chetac is a green lake. It will always be a green lake. The green in

Water Quality Goals Continued

the lake is algae. Some algae is good and some is bad. Big Chetac has both good and bad algae. Blue Green Algae is bad and the overall goal of all our water quality initiatives is to reduce the number of days each year the lake experiences toxic Blue Green Algae Blooms.

The algae in our lake is there because we have too much phosphorous in the lake. To reduce the quantity of algae in the lake, we need to reduce the level of phosphorous. By reducing the level of phosphorous we will reduce the number of days we experience the blooms.

It is that simple: the lake will remain green, will remain an incredible fishery, will remain a scenic and quiet place to live and enjoy for future generations to come. However, it will be a safer place to do all those things.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." (Edmund Burke)

Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association

BCABLA PO Box 33 Birchwood, WI 54817
Visit us at BCABLA.com

Contact Information:

Bill Miller, President 1-715-254-9559 or BCABLA@hotmail.com
Terry Olson, Vice President 920-650-1993 or olsonterry65@gmail.com
Mike Klink, Treasurer 715-271-2582 or mike_klink@hotmail.com
Bob Reynolds, Director 715-354-3822 or golferreynolds@gmail.com
Ron Adamski, Director 715-354-7013
Bill Duffack, Director 715-354-9850; 803-469-0189
Mark Robinson, Director 920-729-8181 or markl.robinson@gapac.com

You can also find and “like” us on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Big-Chetac-and-Birch-Lake-Association/290256524401583>

Protecting our lakes for generations to come! Please contact us with any questions or comments. We hope you have an excellent summer!

2015 BCABLA Meeting Dates—Mark your calendars!

In 2015 we will again be holding some meetings Saturday mornings and others on Wednesday evenings.

Saturday Meeting Dates: (9:00 am Birchwood Village Hall): April 11th, June 13th, August 8th

Wednesday Evening Dates (6:00 pm Birchwood Village Hall): May 13th & September 9th

Please remember that June is the Associations’ official annual meeting and that all meeting dates are subject to change. Look for updates at BCABLA.com our Facebook page and/or via email.

Detach and Return the Form Below

2015 Lake Association New Membership and Renewal Application
(if you already paid your 2015 Dues, no need to send this in again)

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR PAYMENT TO:

BIG CHETAC AND BIRCH LAKES ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 33

BIRCHWOOD WI 54817

Name(s): _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Your information will be used for contact purposes only. We will not be sharing this information with anyone outside of the Association. We very much need your email address so that we can more easily communicate with you on a regular basis.

Enclosed:

Membership Fee: Single Membership \$20, Family Membership \$35 \$ _____

Donations to help fund Grants(\$5, \$10, \$15, \$50, \$100 any amount helps) \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

All Donations are Tax Deductible and greatly appreciated!

I would like to volunteer this year by (check all that apply):

- Chairing a Committee
- Monitoring Invasive Species
- Pulling CLP
- Membership
- Fish Sticks
- Researching a Topic
- Joining the Board
- Other