

Briggs Lake Chain Association

The Lake Report

Remembering the Past – Improving the Future...promoting the care, improvement, and general welfare of the Briggs Lake Chain [Julia, Briggs, Rush and Big Elk] and adjoining and connecting waters...

January 2015

Volume XXII, Issue I

Mark your calendar...

- 01.08.15 Healthy Lakes— 6:30 PM
Palmer Town Hall
- 01.10.15 BLCA Board Mtg—8:30 AM
- 01.12.15 Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
- 01.20.15 Clear Lake Twp Board-7 PM

New Year Greeting from Healthy Lakes!

Year end reflections and summaries are commonplace in our media: big events, celebrity stories, storms, record setting weather, sports, elections, births, deaths, the economy. And we, as news consumers, soak it up. Not too much detail, but enough that we can identify with whatever is being highlighted. The Healthy Lakes Committee did pretty much the same thing: we looked back at 2014 and how we did on our goals, and then reset our goals for 2015.

Highlights and summaries of 2014 from Healthy Lakes

Lake Improvement District

We reset our goal to submit petitions to Sherburne County Commissioners to 3/30/2015 Results as of mid December 2014:

- Total signatures: 386 [44.6% or 386 out of 864: 461 signatures needed]
Briggs Lake 54% [174 out of 322] Julia Lake 45% [80 out of 176]
Big Elk Lake 21% [47 out of 221] Rush Lake 55% [79 out of 144]

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No Separate Green Sheet!!	

Aquatic Invasive Species [AIS]

- Curly leaf pondweed will be with us indefinitely. Sprayed 60 acres as allowed by DNR.
- **Discovered new infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil on Rush Lake. Sprayed 5.4 acres allowed by DNR. As of August 2014 EWM not found on other lakes. Future spread likely but uncertain where.**

Groundtruthing

- 28 groundtruthings completed in 2014
- 93% (88 of 95) completed of those who volunteered to be groundtruthed
- 68% (60) of groundtruthed properties have implemented improvements
- Top 3 improvements: 38% vegetation buffers, 27% berms, 22% redirected storm water

Restoration and Other Conservation Projects [DNR, Soil and Water and BLCA funded]

- 12 new shoreland projects over the 2013-2014 funding period [DNR funds]
- 6 BLCA Mini-grants: rain gutters, rain barrels, runoff diversion
- 10 shoreland restoration replantings/expansions [DNR funds]

Water Quality

- We are still on MPCA's "Impaired Waters List." Water quality data are still being analyzed, but overall our lakes haven't improved or worsened, except for discovery of Eurasian watermilfoil. Details in next Lake Report.

Education

- Conducted one conservation focused workshop
- Presented one program on Eurasian watermilfoil
- Presented several LID information sessions.

High Water Events

- Experienced 3 prolonged high water events; unfortunately one during the fishing opener

Cont'd on Pg 3



January 2015 President's Letter

Greetings Lake Residents,

I am deeply grateful to those who volunteer their time and resources to support the BLCA and help fix our lakes. The number is substantial but far from including most of our lake residents. Involvement varies with interests, free time and skill sets. From taking a shift at the Food Booth or Brat Sale fundraisers to running the website, from planting shoreline restorations to compiling databases and sending out mailings, from doing lake testing to representing lake interests in meetings, BLCA volunteers contribute valuable time and services. Some maintain and fix the dam, some write grants, many have helped with the Lake Improvement Petition process. The list is much longer and we lake property owners are very lucky to have this core group of volunteers so completely looking out for our collective interests and accomplishing so much. In fact, the BLCA was honored as Sherburne County's Conservation Partner for 2014. With great pride, I thank all of the BLCA volunteers! Anyone is welcome to join in helping out, just let us know you are interested through the BLCA website: ***briggslakechainassociation.com***.

This Lake Report issue is part of a mailing to solicit funds to control the aquatic invasive species (AIS) curlyleaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil. Page 3 of the mailing packet — The 2015 AIS Information Form, explains the costs involved with controlling these AIS. The limited number of generous donors who pay to control AIS cannot afford to continue funding all the expenses. A solution is a LID that splits the costs among all lake property owners thus keeping everyone's share affordable. Or, every property owner could donate \$100.

The upper three lakes cover 717 acres. They have around 100 acres of curlyleaf pondweed and 12 acres of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). Big Elk Lake covers 357 acres and has neither AIS but experts anticipate EWM to explode, even there, within 10 years. The DNR will only permit a maximum of 54 acres in Big Elk to be treated and in the upper three lakes, permits treatment of only 60 acres max. This makes it critical to keep treating the worst 60 acres of CLP and all the EWM. If treatment is skipped or skimped on and the weeds explode, the DNR would still max treatment at 60-acres. Shocking the entire lakes, as was done in the early 2000's, to bring things under control wouldn't be permitted.

With your generous donations we can manage the AIS problems, but how about water quality? The 2014 testing results are in, but need more refining to see if we have data showing improvement or not. My personal take is things have gotten worse:

- Once high water struck in June, I never again saw the lake bottom clearly along my dock.
- There were two prolonged periods of extensive blue/green algae blooms. They are dangerous to health, widespread and stink. In my 19 years on the lake, these were enormous firsts. Algae continued making the water green next to shore even as the lake froze. Neighbors got coated in green slime from minor blooms when they removed docks and swimming platforms at the end of the season. This meant the water was unusually rich in polluting nutrients.

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Palmer Township

The Palmer Township Board meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Township Hall. Let **Kathy Miller** know of agenda items by email at: **palmertwp@gmail.com** **by noon on Tuesday before the meeting** or call her at 743-2100. Our website is: **www.palmertownshipmn.org**

Clear Lake Township

The Clear Lake Township Board meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Township Hall. Let **the Township clerk** know of agenda items by Thursday morning before the meeting. To contact Clear Lake Township, please call 320-743-2472 or email the Township Clerk at: **clearlaketwp@hotmail.com** Our website is **www.clearlaketownship.org**

Please attend your respective Township meeting and voice your concerns about matters relating to our lakes.

President's Letter, Cont'd from page 2

- While I was helping remove another resident's dock, my boot broke through the thin, narrow skim of ice along shore releasing a noxious stench of raw septic. Yes, the owner confirmed, it had been a chronic problem in the area for several years! Some neighbor had a failed septic and was ignoring making the necessary repairs. This had made the lake unsanitary and unfit to swim in for quite a distance along the shoreline. Something to think on: 25% of our septic systems around the lakes are estimated to need some kind of attention. (Why isn't everyone willing to properly maintain the septic systems designed for their property? If we don't, won't we be heading for a community wide sewer system with all the very expensive associated assessments, usage fees and other costs?) This swimming season (even before my gross-out), I thought it prudent to stay out of the water, everywhere.

The above experiences generated these personal insights; Sufficient donations will solve controlling the AIS present in our lakes, but what can be done to encourage lakeshore property owners to be more responsible in their actions? Current laws and regulations make harmful, detrimental, and unsanitary practices legal. We can do many things to and on our properties that we shouldn't. Tests show, the water coming into our chain is better than when it leaves, proving lake residents contribute to poor water quality. What might persuade us to change our practices? What will we do to help improve our lakes, even on a very small scale? Can those who care do enough to offset the harm done by those who don't?

All lake property owners are receiving this mailing. My plea is for everyone to do something to improve our water quality. Just stopping a harmful practice, or repairing/replacing a bad septic system, or taking advantage of a grant (that even includes volunteer help!) to prevent runoff into the lake will make a difference. You may not be sure what you can do or even if the problems are just in my mind, but, there are lots of sources for information on the issues and solutions available online. Feel free to contact the BLCA for assistance. Join the BLCA and/or sign up for emailed lake updates (including high water events) and the Lake Report. Please be part of the solution.

Thanks for helping me want to swim in our lakes again.

Dan Merchant, BLCA *President*

Healthy Lakes 2015 Goal Summary *See complete 2015 HL goals on website briggslakechainassociation.com*

Lake Improvement District

- Present petition to Sherburne County Commissioners for creation of Briggs Chain LID by March 30, 2015
- Assist in developing the structure of the LID and beginning operation

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Organize and fund the control of AIS in 100% of approved affected lake areas

Conservation Projects

- Continue shoreland restoration and other conservation projects
- Complete plans for major stormwater runoff diversion projects

Groundtruthing

- Complete groundtruthing of all volunteered properties

Fish Stocking

- Complete one fish stocking in Big Elk Lake

Water Quality Monitoring

- Continue water quality monitoring on all four lakes

New Year's Request of Property Owners

Many sincere thanks to all property owners who have signed the LID petition. Other Lake Report issues have detailed the need for, and process of, creating a Lake Improvement District. Gradually we are approaching the 51% of total signatures needed to submit the petition to the commissioners, and we feel confident we will exceed that threshold.

Our Request for 2015:

- For the unsigned: Please sign and return your petition. If you need help, or need more information, contact Scott Ruitter at sruiter@grede.com or 743-3365 or Kenzie Phelps at kenziephelps@gmail.com or 743-2663 or check the website briggslakechainassociation.com for a printable petition.
- For those who have signed: Please talk with your neighbors, friends, and relatives who have not signed and tell them why you have signed and the benefits of the proposed LID.



The Lake Report

Briggs Lake Chain Association

See us on the Web at

<https://www.briggslakechainassociation.com>

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The Lake Report is published for the benefit of BLCA members and lake residents. Please submit articles and feedback by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next issue. Email or snail mail copy to the Editor.

This 'n That

Please send news about BLCA members to **Marilyn Humble** so that a card may be sent for such things as illness or a death in the family. Call her at 743-2741 or email her at:
imhumble@midco.net

**Do you want to learn how your property can
be more colorful, attract birds & butterflies
and help our lakes?**

The Healthy Lakes Committee of the BLCA

BLCA members have been trained in Best Management Practices (BMPs) for lake properties. Two BLCA volunteers would like to spend about one hour with you. You will be provided copies of the Flyover report of your property. We will discuss concepts, share technical resources, and share what we have implemented at our properties. You will be provided information on how to obtain funding for any improvements you decide to implement.

For this free onsite visit send me your name. If, your summer is totally booked we have done these visits with snow on the ground.

Call (320-743-5698) or email so we can schedule time with you.

Email, John Schnell at the BLCA website —
john.schnell@briggslakechainassociation.com

John Schnell, Ground Truth Team Leader

**A new law helps control the spread of
Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).**

**This law applies to lake residents if they use a
trailer (any trailer) to move lake toys and
equipment to or from the water.**

<http://trailers.mndnr.gov/>

Beginning in 2015 a new trailer decal requirement is scheduled to start. The new law requires anyone who transports watercraft or water-related equipment like docks and lifts with a trailer in Minnesota to complete an aquatic invasive species training course. After completing the course, you receive a decal that must be displayed on your trailer.

- Online training will be available here (<http://trailers.mndnr.gov/>) on January 5, 2015.
- Paper home-study training packets will also be available.
- Trailer decals are required on trailers starting July 1, 2015.

Call 651-351-2000 to request a paper copy or ask questions