

Volume XX, Issue VIII

## Mark your calendar...

- Sept 5 Healthy Lakes— 6:30 PM  
Palmer Town Hall
- Sept 14 BLCA Board Mtg—8:30 AM  
Palmer Town Hall  
General Mtg—10 am
- Sept 9 Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
- Sept 17 Clear Lake Twp Board—  
7 PM

## Inside this issue:

Lake Improvement District	1
President's Letter	2
Township Meetings	2
Flotilla and Events	3-4
Insert / Green Sheet	
LID—cont'd and thank you's	



For full details go to:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/palmerday/>

## Are You Satisfied With Your Lake Experience This Year?

Okay. June was alright except for cool temperatures.....but then high water had its way at the end of the month, **very** high water for two and a half weeks. High water continued into July through July 4<sup>th</sup>. No wake ordinances were in effect keeping boating activity at a crawl. How about the weeds? Many property owners had some pretty awful weed messes to deal with. Now towards the end of the summer we have a low water event, and many property owners can't even get their boats off their lifts. High water, low water. And many areas of the lakes are now unfit for swimming. Then there's the algae blooms and nasty colors. Like the smell?

Satisfied? Hardly.

Lets face it: our chain of lakes have some significant, chronic problems. These problems were not as severe 40 years ago but they are here now. The BLCA has identified the problems, and there are three major water issues facing the Briggs Lake chain of lakes:

- Water Quality [We have been on the MPCA's impaired water's list since 2008]
- Aquatic Invasive Species [We have had curly leaf pondweed for well over 10 years. No zebra mussels yet]
- Water Level Stabilization [No need to go further back than this year, although records show many years of high/low water events]

These issues didn't develop over night but took years to develop. And they are not going away. These are lake wide problems that will take lake wide participation and solutions to solve. These are chronic problems bigger than the BLCA's ability to respond. They are bigger than the roughly 45-50% of residents who pay BLCA dues and make weed donations. These problems demand full, lake wide participation.

### We look to the past, and to the future, for answers.

What have we learned and what do we know from the past?

Lake chain residents love their lakes, have fond memories of being at the lake, and continue to make memories for the next generations [check out the **This I Remember** series on the BLCA website]

Lake residents want to be good stewards of the lakes and leave a good legacy for future generations

The Briggs Lake Chain Association [BLCA] has made some progress over the years in addressing these issues. However, the BLCA as a membership organization, is not the best structure to deal with these "chronic" lake issues.

Fewer than 50% of residents are members, and only a small percentage of them contribute to "weed management" of curly leaf pondweed, an aquatic invasive species. Non-members don't pay membership dues, don't donate to weed management, don't go for **Best Management Practices**, yet benefit from all that the BLCA has done.

The BLCA relies on memberships, donations, and grants to address these issue areas. Membership dues, grants, and donations are not enough, and are not sustainable for the long term battle with chronic issues that took decades to develop.

### President's Letter

I have been BLCA President a very short time and I am awed by the selfless contributions volunteers make on behalf of our organization. There so many contributors and they make the BLCA fun and effective.

This past year, besides gaining an insight on how much we rely on volunteers and how effective they are, I have gotten an education on a very broad range of subjects and been exposed to some very interesting people and topics. I have been forced to deal with issues that are new to my experiences. In trying to resolve them, I have relied on the advice and experience of many others. Many were in our association, some friends or acquaintances, some in government agencies and lots of research. I have enjoyed these interactions. Being president has altered the way I prioritize my time. I hope I'm good at learning from my mistakes and I also hope that where I have had success I don't lose my touch. I am so, so, glad I'm not in this by myself.

Here are some of the challenges I foresee for the next year.

**Curlyleaf Pondweed:** This is the invasive weed we keep spraying to control. This spring the DNR changed the amount of acres we could spray, then cut that in half for Briggs just as we began to spray. For some reason our pre-spraying survey found more weeds than expected in Briggs. The DNR wouldn't let us spray all of them even though the acreage was under the allowable limit to spray without a variance. These untreated acres mean more potential weeds in Briggs next year. This fall when things slow down at the DNR, I hope to get the details of this action explained so it can be avoided in the future. Even with the reduced acreage we were allowed to control, the company that did the spraying managed to minimize the nuisance level of the remaining weeds. We were also very lucky that the winter ice and snow cover on the lakes reduced the weed proliferation especially in Julia and Rush.

**Weed Donations:** Member donations have been dropping. Donations from organizations are mixed and some previous donor organizations were unable to donate. The Clear Lake Lions generously increased their donation reducing the loss. We got a DNR grant to help pay for spraying (\$100/acre this year, \$150/acre last year). Even without being allowed to spray half of what we expected to spray we spent over \$4,000 more than the generous donations and grants. Weed spraying is reducing BLCA reserves but it has to be done to control the curlyleaf pondweed.

**Septic Grants:** Sherburne County estimates that 25% of the properties surrounding our lakes have failed septic systems. They are pretty confident about this number based on "sniffer boat" results and state statistics. Groundtruthing flyover data has confirmed some sites that need septic inspections. There is nothing to require a property owner to perform a septic inspection and, to date; no property where this was recommended has done so. It costs about \$400 for the inspection and lots more to fix a bad system. The BLCA doesn't have funds to help out. Stearns County piloted a septic grant process that requires inspections and has given over \$900,000 to property owners to fix failed systems. Sherburne County has not initiated this grant process. Your help may be required to move this issue forward in our county to protect our drinking water and make our lakes healthier.

**Lake Improvement District (LID):** Our goal is to have a LID proposal ready for the county commissioners by next fall. It was introduced at our August Workshop as a tool that could be used in controlling our water levels, weeds and water quality. It is not practical for the BLCA to tackle these issues without help. For example: Just controlling curlyleaf pondweed is reducing BLCA reserves and in long term is unsustainable without more financial help. The plan is to explain how a LID will help with this and other issues. The process will be explained and your questions will be answered. We will need your help to get the county commissioners to agree to this change.

The year ahead is going to be another busy one for the BLCA. I am so, so, glad I'm not in this by myself.

Thank all of you for your membership in the BLCA. We are an organization dependent on volunteers so please feel free to help.

We will gratefully put your skills or interests to use. We will try and make it fun.

Sincerely, Dan Merchant

### 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](mailto:palmertwp@gmail.com) by noon on Tuesday before the meeting or call her at 743-2100. Our website is: [www.palmertownshipmn.org](http://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 **Mary Mathison** 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](mailto:clearlaketwp@hotmail.com) Our website is [www.clearlaketownship.org](http://www.clearlaketownship.org)

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

### Flotilla on Briggs Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>

All four lakes were represented on the nine boats that collected on the Briggs Lake Reed Reef. The food, as usual, was very tasty and diverse and the group wandered from boat to boat enjoying it and socializing with different groups. A thoughtful someone even provided healthy fruit to accompany the other decadent treats!

The evening was clear, warm and with enough of a breeze to keep the event comfortable. Someone debuted a gas-powered device that tows people through the water.



The flotilla attendees gaped when the aquanaut dove into the water and an assistant started the motor and handed him the propulsion unit. The little unit pulled the aquanaut around the assembled boats at a good clip with a wake streaming behind. It was a nice diversion and fun to see.

Eventually the sun set, the moon rose (sparkling on the lake), the wind died and those that brought wraps put them on. Those that didn't bring wraps weren't in great discomfort but will add them to their flotilla gear list. As 10 PM approached, the party broke up. Flashlights can be added to the flotilla gear list as another good thing to pack but the bright moon helped and made the voyage in the dark pleasant.

The bigger the flotilla, the more fun and enriching the social opportunity! Hope you will join us! Dan Merchant

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### Palmer Day Food Booth Volunteers Still Needed

Dan Stang still has some holes to fill at the Palmer Day BLCA Food Booth. If you are going to be free for a few hours over the weekend please consider volunteering. You will be busy, have fun and help raise funds for the BLCA. It is a great way to serve and to get to know each other a little better while sharing in a positive experience. Thank you!!

#### Food Stand Volunteers Needed: Call Dan Stang 320-980-2649

Friday, September 6 (Set Up)	5-7 pm
Saturday, September 7 (Food Stand)	8-Noon
Saturday, September 7 (Food Stand)	Noon-4 pm
Saturday, September 7 (Food Stand)	4-8 pm
Saturday, September 7 (Food Stand)	8-Close
Sunday, September 8 (Cleanup)	9 am

September Flotilla: Big Elk / Saturday, September 21 / 6:30 p.m.



# The Lake Report



Briggs Lake Chain Association

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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.



Photos from Rush Lake and Cedar Point Neighborhood Watch events  
Submitted by Merchant & Munsterman



Certificates of Recognition Presented to Water Samplers by Walt Munsterman.

Chuck Heinemann sampled water from 2006-2011, George LaMotte and Tom Koontz sampled water from 2006-2012 and Paul Fors has sampled water from 2006 and is still going! Additionally, Fors has been taking secchi readings of the clarity of water in Lake Julia for over 25 years and was presented his certificate at the August General Meeting.

Thank you gentlemen for your service and dedication!