

2006 Minnesota Lake Association of the Year

Volume XVIII, Issue 8

October/November 2012

Mark your calendar...

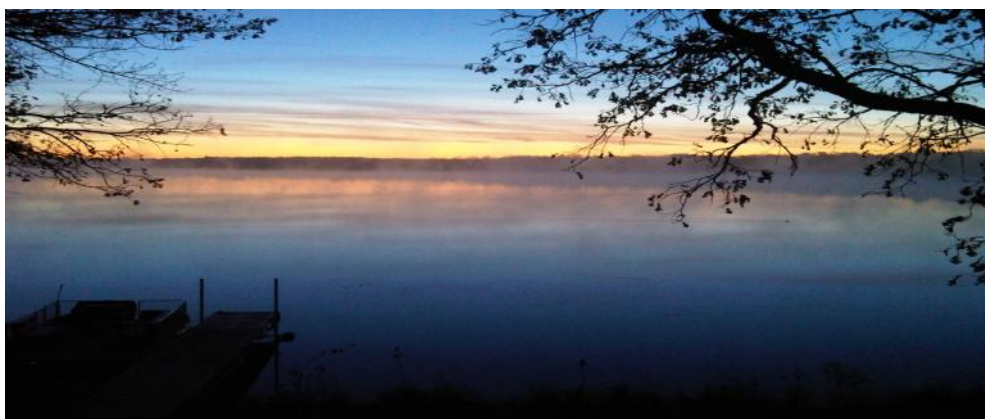
- Oct 4 Healthy Lakes— 6:30 PM
Palmer Town Hall
- Oct 13 BLCA Board Mtg—8:30 AM
Palmer Town Hall
- Oct 10* Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
*Mtg on WEDNESDAY Oct only
- Oct 16 Clear Lake Twp Board—
7 PM
- Nov 1 Healthy Lakes—6:30 PM
Palmer Town Hall
- Nov 10 BLCA Board Mtg—8:30 AM
Palmer Town Hall
- Nov 12 Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
- Nov 20 Clear Lake Twp Board—7 PM

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President's Letter

Fall is here. The humming birds and robins are getting ready to migrate and the orioles have been gone a couple of weeks. Leaves are changing and falling and the lake water is cooling. The sunsets seem extra vibrant. Frost is imminent and houseplants are heading indoors. Morning boat rides start off with jackets that get removed before the cruise ends. Soon the docks will be onshore and watercraft in storage. The buoys will disappear and the lakes will appear natural, uncluttered and alone; a beautiful time of the year.



A year ago I joined the BLCA Board to help with the flyover. Now I'm president with a lot more to learn. My deepest appreciation goes to past President's Barb Aaberg and Kenzie Phelps who are mentoring me in my new position. I really have a lot to learn but am thankful that I'm retired and don't have to arrange the responsibilities around a work schedule. I do have to readjust to actually being committed to a schedule and not just doing my thing; for example, I now check my email at least daily instead of once a week or so. With the cooling water, the algae will disappear and the water appears cleaner. I hope it serves as a reminder of what our goal is – improve lake water quality.

My wife, Sue, and I have been busy as part of the John Schnell's Briggs Lake Groundtruthing Team. (We help verify flyover groundwater intrusion data with property owners during on-site visits.) These groundtruthing visits have placed us on several very different properties. I appreciate, even more, how lucky we are to live beside these beautiful lakes. Each property is unique. They vary in size, landscaping, house style and, of course, view. I have not been to one that I wouldn't be happy to live at.

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President's Letter

Unfortunately, one of the high nutrient indicators that groundtruthers look for on the lakeshore is present on nearly all the properties "verified". Usually the presence of these fibrous algae indicates a serious nutrient runoff from the property along the shore. This year it looks like the nutrients are in the lake and not all coming from the land. Our lakes are already phosphorous and chlorophyll rich enough to place them on the DNR imperiled waters list, so any additional nutrients from ground water intrusion (old/new failed septic systems, improper fertilizer, road/house runoff, erosion, shoreline burning [campfires, leaves], raking and piling leaves near the shoreline, etc.) could provide a source of nutrients that tip our lake water quality from OK to yucky. Each property owner can contribute something to reducing runoff into our lakes.

Please support the BLCA and its volunteers in the groundtruthing effort. It's a valuable educational process in helping turn around our lakes with the cooperation and help of the people who live along them.

Be generous in your support of the weed spraying effort. The program is past the DNR subsidy and the BLCA is obligated to pay in full for the spraying to control our curly-leaf pondweed invader. By controlling this invasive species we don't have as much in our lakes, less spraying to pay for, better waters to use and less biomass to feed algae and wash up on shore when it dies off. This is an effective program that wasn't as effective as it could have been the last two years because of late DNR permitting and high water. I will do what I can to get the spraying done at a more effective time in 2013.

Our lakes are also shallow and during this year's extra-low water period the sediment at the bottom were frequently stirred by propellers and jet type water propulsion units. The dislodged sediment is very fine and remains in suspension for a long time during which it provides an additional source of nutrients for algae. It also makes the water less clear. Please remember to modify your watercraft use to minimize stirring up the lake bottom and educate others who may be unaware of this influence on our water quality.

The BLCA webmaster, Mike Flanery, conscientiously updates the BLCA website (briggslakechainassociation.com) to include articles and links to sites that educate lakeshore dwellers on issues impacting our lakes. Don't overlook this valuable educational resource as it can reach those who don't live here year-around or just use their properties occasionally.

We need your help to improve the quality of our lakes.

Dan Merchant, BLCA President

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 **Mary Mathison** know of agenda items by Thursday morning before the meeting.

To contact Clear Lake Township, please call the Clear Lake Township Hall Tuesday–Friday at 320-743-2472 between 11 AM and 4 PM or email the Township Clerk at marymathison@hotmail.com. Our website is www.clearlaketownship.org.

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

A Groundtruthing Experience

When the idea of the Flyover Study was first brought up almost 2 years ago, my first reaction was 'this is a great idea!' I felt ready to take it to the next level of getting these lakes cleaned up. Then my next reaction was 'what issues are they going to find on my property?' Our family has been on this property since the mid 50's and we haven't always done the right thing over the years. Needless to say, I was concerned with the possibility of bad results. I was also determined that whether it was good or bad it needed to get fixed. So I signed up for the Groundtruthing right after the BLCA presentation this summer.

In September, members of the Groundtruthing team came out to our property. They took the time to explain what the process was before we started. They were professional, knowledgeable and did it in a non-threatening way. After that I was confident we could resolve any and all issues that we saw. I had some "hot spots" from the study that we checked out. These issues were discussed and we talked about all the possibilities and came to a mutual agreement that they were not a contributing issue on my property. But, like so many properties on the lake, there are issues here: not enough set back from the lake, too much run off, and not enough of a good vegetation buffer zone. They gave me several options to help with run off.



Next spring we will be looking at putting in more plantings and also a small berm to control the runoff. They let me know that they are here to help me with correcting these issues, whether it is with available Grant money or with volunteers. I want to say "thank you" to the Groundtruthing team for the painless way they helped me see the longtime issues we have with our property. We now realize the need to right these wrongs and have some ideas to get things started. The solution won't happen overnight, but I feel we are moving in a positive direction. I encourage all the Lake Chain home owners to allow the Groundtruthing team to help them with any property problems they may have. Let them help you make the difference that these lakes so desperately need.

Steve Demeules, Concerned lake resident
and BLCA member

BLCA Events Calendar

Autumn is here and it is time once again for the **HIGHWAY 25 CLEANUP ADVENTURE!!** Come one and all!

When: Saturday October 13th at 11:00 AM

Where: We will gather at the Rush Lake landing

Bring your friends and your sturdy shoes and gloves.

We will provide the safety vests and garbage bags. The stretch of road is three miles long and with many workers we can finish very quickly. Hope to see you then!

Contact Laura at 743-5698 with questions

A FLYOVER UPDATE

On August 24th and 25th, fifteen BLCA volunteers participated in a two-day Groundtruthing Class facilitated by Al Cibuzar of A.W. Research Laboratory (AWRL). Al is the scientist who conducted the flyover. Both days the group met in the Palmer Township Hall for a classroom educational period and then moved outside and looked at properties belonging to members of the group. Two properties on each of the four lakes were groundtruthed. The entire group examined the AWRL data and recommendations prior to the site visits.

While on-site, the property was examined, the owner questioned about usage, septic location, well location, site history (old septic areas, outhouses, garbage dumps, etc.) and other things that might help validate AWRL findings. The lakeshore was examined for Cladophora and Spirogyra, fibrous algae. The presence of these algae indicates a high nutrient source in the lake water in the area it is detected. Usually this would mean a high level of nutrients was seeping from the property along the shoreline and into the lake. Its presence would confirm any high nutrient spots detected in the flyover. The property owner could then be informed the data was validated and start to fix the problem.

On some properties there were issues that remained unsolved after the on-site visit. Both John Schnell and I had 'septic' areas (hot in winter/high nutrient) in our yards that had ever been used for septic systems, dumps, outhouses, and/or other uses that would store nutrients underground. What to do?

We examined aerial photos from 1938 to see what had been on our lots and what the land looked like. John suspected his lot was filled over an area containing peat (high in organic matter and thus nutrients) and had this confirmed by recollections of long-time Palmer residents. The former owner of my property knew of nothing in the area of my hot spot dating from the 1950's and the 1938 photos didn't help. John then contacted Bill Bronder, Resource Conservationist of Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). Bill and Franny Gerde, District Aide, came to our properties and did test borings. Bill used a hand auger to drill holes nearly 6 feet deep. Periodically he would remove the dirt, examine its texture, moisture content, measure the depth from which it was removed and sometimes note the color of the removed soil, to determine what was in it to answer our questions.

Bill confirmed John had peat-like organic matter underlying the hot spots indicated in his property. John's problem was solved. Mine was not as conclusive. There was just sand. From 29" and deeper it was fine and moist. The area was high above the water table. Could it be a spring area? I will feel better when I get the soil tested to see if there are nutrients in the moisture. There are more gray areas in groundtruthing than I expected but there are also more resources than I knew of. It's a very educational process.

Since we are now in the Groundtruthing portion of the process Kenzie Phelps has been designated the Project Manager. The groundtruthers have been grouped by lake and each lake has a Team Leader:

Briggs Lake: John Schnell — Team Leader
George & Barb Kydd
Jane Curtis
Sue & Dan Merchant

Big Elk Lake Wayne Smith — Team Leader
Barb & Darrell Tucker

Rush Lake Walt Munsterman — Team Leader
Bud Summers

Lake Julia Mike Flanery — Team Leader
Karen Jones
Kenzie Phelps

These teams of volunteers have been working at groundtruthing all of the BLCA Board Member properties and all the properties of all those who signed up for groundtruthing at the Flyover Meeting in July before the lakes freeze over. They have already done nearly half of these and are working hard to finish all 46.

Another groundtruth training session with Cibuzar is being considered for this winter. There are costs involved and we may be able to apply for some grants to help, but more volunteers wanting the training is the key. We now know what groundtruthing involves so we can give new volunteers a good idea of what they are committing to. Additionally, someone interested in taking the training might consider arranging accompanying a team during an on-site visit for first hand experience before making the commitment (one year of groundtruthing).

GROUNDTRUTHING IN ACTION



Al Cibazar of A.W. Research Laboratory (in lake) conducting groundtruthing class on Big Elk Lake



Cladophora algae attached to rocks along the lakeshore. This indicates a high nutrient load in the water.



Groundtruth Class at Palmer Township



Groundtruth Class verifying a Lake Julia property



SWCD Bill Bronder, Resource Conservationist and Franny Gerde, District Aide do a boring as John Schnell and Dan Merchant look on.

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.

BLCA Membership Update

It is never too late to become a member of the BLCA!! If you have a friend or neighbor who wishes to join the BLCA, direct them to our website at: www.BriggsLakeChainAssociation.com to download a Membership Form or have them contact a board member. We have been granted 501.C3 status and your \$30.00 donation is now TAX DEDUCTIBLE!!!

To have *The Lake Report* sent via email, we need their e-mail address included on the membership form. (Please print clearly!!)

Send the BLCA Membership form and a check payable to: BLCA in the amount of \$30.00 to the BLCA Treasurer: Karen Jones at 11271 42nd Street; Clear Lake, MN 55319.

Please remember that the BLCA relies on your financial support to improve the quality of our lakes for ourselves and for the benefit of future generations. (We no longer have grant support for curly leaf pondweed spraying and need to cover our own expenses here on out.)

If you can't download the form, please contact any BLCA Board member to join! (Our contact information is in the Palmer Directory and on the website.)

Again, thank you for your assistance to improve our lakes' water quality and our lake community by being a lake association member!

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Hart

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

The Healthy Lakes Committee has been meeting EVERY Thursday evening due to all the activity related to the Flyover Study and Groundtruthing. If you have questions or time to share, we would love to have you join us at 6:30 PM at Palmer Town Hall on Thursday evenings.

If you have been considering putting in a shoreline vegetative buffer, we have \$18,000 available in the current grant...if we don't use it, we lose it. Please contact Ken Gossett with any shoreline project inquiries. You can reach him at: kengossett@aol.com or 320-743-6896

For information on septic system operation and maintenance, check out this site: <http://septic.umn.edu> They have information related to bathroom, kitchen, laundry and basement/utility rooms such as this gem (that I had never heard of and am guilty of:) 'NEVER let wash water from latex paint on brushes or rollers go down the drain and into the septic system.' This site has a treasure trove of information to help us make wise use of our precious water resources.

As you travel from lake to lake ...REMEMBER TO: CLEAN DRAIN & DRY!! Help stop the spread of invasive species!

