

2006 Minnesota Lake Association of the Year

Volume XVII, Issue 2

March/April 2011

Mark your calendar...

- March 3 Healthy Lakes— 6:30 PM
Palmer Town Hall
- March 5 1st Annual Palmer Winter
Golf Extravaganza—
11 AM registration, Briggs
Lake Landing
- March 12 BLCA Board Meeting—
8:30 AM Palmer Town
Hall
- March 14 Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
- March 15 Clear Lake Twp Board—
7 PM
- April 7 Healthy Lakes— 6:30 PM
Palmer Town Hall
- April 9 BLCA Board Meeting—
8:30 AM Palmer Town
Hall
- April 11 Palmer Twp Board—7 PM
- April 19 Clear Lake Twp Board—
7 PM
- April 23 Lakeshore Restoration
Workshop— 8:30 AM
Palmer Town Hall
- May 13–15 Linder's Fundraising
Weekend

Inside this issue:

President's Letter	2
Winter Events	2
BMP	3
Happenings Around the Lake	3
F.Y.I.	4
This 'n That	4
Township Reports	4
Green Sheet	Insert
This We Remember	Insert
Linder's Fundraising Invitation	Insert

Lakeshore Restoration: Kenzie and MaryAnn Phelps—Lake Julia

About 20 years ago MaryAnn and I were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. We weren't looking to live on "the lake," but happened to learn that Virg and Bob wanted to sell their lake property on Julia. We made an offer, bought the property, plus an old, oil-leaking Simplicity riding mower, and proudly took possession in the spring. New to being lake-property owners, we looked around and came to the conclusion that mowing the lawn right down to the shoreline was indeed okay, and provided that nice manicured lawn look. We noticed that many places around the lake had rip rap for a shoreline, so we got a permit and did that too.

Our home was a scant 4 miles from Lake Julia, and having two places so close together was rather ridiculous...so we sold our home and built on Lake Julia. During the building process we filled in all of the low spots in the lawn by the shore (without a permit), seeded and sodded a new lawn, fertilized, and proceeded to mow and trim to the water's edge. I sometimes thought, as the grass and weed trimmings floated off in the water, that I was doing something not quite right. I hoped nobody was watching.

After joining the BLCA and getting involved, I started learning about my role as a good steward of the lake, and that what I was doing was contributing to poor water quality. I noticed there were other property owners who had already figured this out. I learned more about BMPs (Best Management Practices) and decided to stop doing what I was doing. But what *should* I be doing instead? I attended a workshop put on by the BLCA and Mark Baseletti (Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District) and learned about lakeshore restoration, rain gardens, and other conservation projects property owners like me could do.

MaryAnn and I decided to install a restoration buffer zone on our lakeshore in July 2005. With the leadership of Mark Baseletti and the help of others who had done or were going to do a restoration, we planted hundreds of native plants along a 10–20 foot wide zone along the lake, planted some new trees, and even tried some aquatic plants. The native plants grew nicely, and now we have a nice buffer between the lawn and lakeshore. The native flowers bloom all spring, summer, and fall; butterflies and birds are plentiful; some of the aquatics have outlived the muskrats; and the roots of the native plants have nicely anchored the shoreline and filter any harmful runoff. I still enjoy a nice lawn, but it no longer reaches down to water's edge.

Healthy Lakes: Lakeshore Restoration Workshop

Saturday, April 23, from 8:30 AM to noon, Palmer Town Hall

Want to know what you can do on your property? The BLCA will hold a workshop for people interested in doing restoration projects. The BLCA again has funding from the DNR to help defray the costs. And again, those who have done some form of conservation projects are ready to assist those just getting started. Not only can you become a better steward of the lakes, doing a project is a great social event! Check out the BLCA website for the agenda and other details, and keep reading Mike Punton's BMP articles in the *Lake Report*.

President's Letter: The Power of the BLCA

Depending on your perspective, the above title might excite, anger, or intrigue you. In the short time I have been involved with the BLCA, I have found there is some confusion about the role the BLCA plays in our local community. I want to clear up some of the confusion about what it is we do and what we are about.

Let's start with what *we are not*. We are not a governing body; we have no rights or authority over any person or property (unlike some homeowner associations). We do not make laws, nor do we have any power to enforce current laws.

What we are is a group of volunteers that has formed a non-profit organization to improve the quality of our lakes and the lives of the residents on and near the Briggs Lake Chain. We do this in many ways.

The lake association:

- creates, prints, distributes, and pays for the **Palmer Directory**—our local phone book.
- creates, prints, distributes, and pays for **The Lake Report**—our local news source.
- creates, prints, distributes, and pays for the **Welcome Walker Booklet**—the source of information for new residents.
- maintains the **BLCA website** to provide residents lake-related news and information.
- reaches out to residents through our **Sunshine Mailings**.
- promotes and helps organize **Neighborhood Watch** parties.
- organizes the spring and fall **clean-up on Highway 25** in our area.
- organizes social activities for area residents, including **sleigh rides, crafts, picnics, boat flotilla on the lake, 4th of July events, and more**.
- provides funding for the band at **Palmer Day**.
- puts on free **education programs** for residents during the summer months.
- pays for advertising of the community-wide **garage sale**.
- organizes **fund raising** events.
- promotes the **improvement of our lakes and connection waters** through:
 - **testing and sampling** of the lakes to monitor water quality;
 - coordinating and paying of **weed control**;
 - educating, coordinating volunteers, and funding for **lakeshore restoration projects**;
 - securing **grants** for lake-related projects;
 - attending local-, county-, and state-held meetings to stay **informed about legislation** related to the lakes; and
 - organizing **stocking of fish** on Elk Lake.

After looking at all the above activities, I hope you will join the Briggs Lake Chain Association. Your once-a-year donation of \$30 (that's only \$2.50 a month!) will make a difference. Typically only 50–55% of the 600 plus residents choose to become a member of the BLCA, but the goal for this year is to increase membership to 60 percent.

The power of the BLCA—**let's change the word power to impact**—the impact of the BLCA is reflected in the number of residents that benefit from our annual activities. Have you enjoyed some of the benefits or activities? I hope so.

Barb Aaberg, BLCA President

BLCA Winter Event

On February 12th at the Palmer Town Hall, the BLCA sponsored a Valentine card making party. Kids from 9 months to 92 years old came, and everyone had a great time. Laura Schnell and her daughter Liz set up stations filled with supplies, and the eager participants flocked to gather their decorations to make that special Valentine. Pink lemonade and cookies were served. Go to the Briggs Lake Chain Association website to look at all the happy faces!!!

We hope to see all of you next year!

Best Management Practices:

by Mike Punton

Phosphorus...too much is not a good thing.

As the temperatures soared to unusually high levels in mid-February, and the grass started to peek through the openings in the snow, I couldn't help but to think—could this be another early spring? Could raking, fertilizing, garden preparation, and spring clean-up in late March/early April be a reality? Poof! Two days later that fairy tale evaporated like a glass of water in the Mojave Desert, i.e., 10 more inches of snow covered my Kentucky bluegrass. The John Deere will just have to be patient.

Whether it be March or April, garden preparation, spring yard clean-up, and turning the grass green will come sometime soon. For many, determining which fertilizer to utilize is an annual event. Although phosphorus has been banned from most lawn fertilizers in Minnesota, it's still a popular garden fertilizer. Perhaps too popular. Fertilizers high in phosphorus have become a standard recommendation for newly planted items (it's usually labeled as "root stimulator"). It's also sold as a bloom booster.

Adding phosphorus at planting time may not be such a smart practice for several reasons:

More isn't necessarily better—Researchers have discovered that excess phosphorus doesn't increase root growth. Too much phosphorus may even slow the growth of roots.

The same is true when phosphorus is used to increase bloom. Plants need some phosphorus to produce flowers, but too much can suppress flowering rather than stimulate it.

Pollution and other problems:

How much is too much? In most cases it's difficult to tell without a soil test. Here in Minnesota, most gardens naturally have plenty of phosphorus in the soil.

If you add phosphorus to a garden that already has enough, the excess can run off into the lakes and streams polluting them (that's why phosphorus was banned from most lawn fertilizers).

There are other options for fertilizing your garden. Plants need nitrogen, potassium, and lesser known elements such as manganese and magnesium, although they aren't typically sold in the concentrations that phosphorus is. Phosphorus competes with those other nutrients. If there's too much phosphorus in the soil, iron, manganese, and other nutrients will have trouble making their way into the roots. That can cause plants to develop deficiencies that could harm or kill them.

Phosphorus is a valuable resource, but one that's been overused for years. Instead of blindly applying it when you plant this spring, have your soil tested. If tests indicate your soil could use some phosphorus, add compost rather than fertilizer.

Think Spring ☺

Happenings Around the Lakes

**BLCA Weekend of Fundraising at
Linder's Garden Center and Flower Marts**

Friday through Monday, May 13 to 16.



Shop at Linder's Garden Center and any of the 50+ Flower Marts to support BLCA. With each of your purchases during this weekend, BLCA receives 15% of your pre-tax totals. All you have to do is fill out the **Fundraising Invitation** (see insert) and bring it with you when you shop at Linder's. You may make additional copies of the invitation to give to friends and family to use at any Linder's Flower Mart.

The nearest Linder's Flower Mart to the Briggs Lake Chain is located in the Becker Furniture World parking lot.

The Lake Report



Briggs Lake Chain Association
See us on the Web at
<https://www.briggslakechainassociation.com>

Penny Houtz, Editor
11408 54th Street
Clear Lake, MN 55319
Phone: 320-743-4812
Email: phoutz@frontiernet.net

Carol Kufner, Green Sheet Editor
Phone: 320-743-3753

Mike Punton, BMP contributor

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. E-mail or snail mail copy to the Editor.

This 'n That

Thanks to all who support the BLCA through dues, donations, and volunteering!

As you enjoy your time out on the lakes this winter, please remember to clean up the ice of any debris you may have dropped, as well as anything you see left behind by others.

Volunteers are needed for the McDonald's Meats Brat & Pork Chop Sale and the Palmer Days Food Booth, the BLCA's largest fundraisers. We are always looking for people to help us with both. So if interested at all, call Karen Jones at 320-743-4727.

Please send news about BLCA members to Marilyn Humble, Sunshine Chairperson, so that a card may be sent for such things as illness or a death in the family. Contact her at 743-2741 or imhumble@mywdo.com

The 2010–2011 Palmer Directories are available at the Palmer House and Briggs Lake General Store. If your name(s) or other information is incorrect, PLEASE let us know, and we'll make the change in our database. For corrections, contact Steve Demeules at <https://briggslakechainassociation.com> or call him at home at 320-743-4749.

The BLCA Board meets on the second Saturday of the month at the Palmer Town Hall beginning at 8:30 AM. If you'd like to serve on a BLCA Committee or help with BLCA programs or projects, we'd love to have your help—simply email us at blca@briggslakechainassociation.com or let any of the board members know of your interest and preference.

F.Y.I.

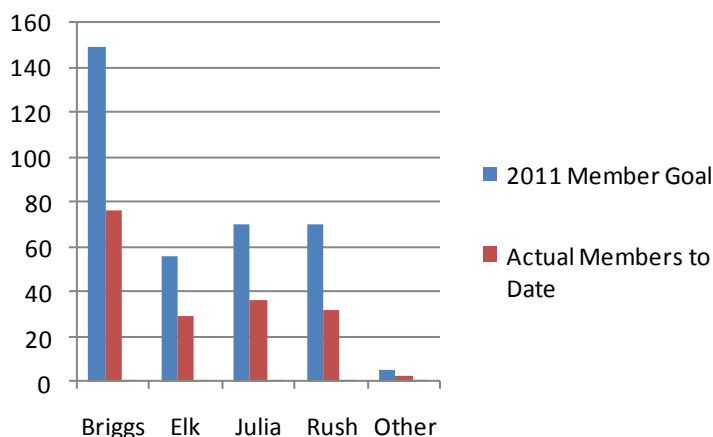
BLCA Membership

Join the BLCA and receive our newsletter and a membership card to display at your residence. Only BLCA paid members will receive the Lake Report and Green Sheet after the March/April edition—don't miss out! Your membership dues are \$30.00. If you need a copy of the form, please go to the BLCA website or contact a board member.

To have *The Lake Report* sent to your computer, please include your email address on your membership form.

If you need to mail dues or donations, please send it to the BLCA Treasurer, Karen Jones, 11271 42nd Street, Clear Lake, MN 55319.

Membership as of February 2011



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@mywdo.com by noon on Tuesday before the meeting or call her at 743-2100.

Clear Lake Township

The Clear Lake Township Board meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Township Hall. Agenda items should be sent to **Mary Mathison** at 743-2485 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 Township Clerk Mary Mathison at: marymathison@hotmail.com Our website is now: www.clearlaketownship.org