

The Nebagamon Lake Association Newsletter

Spring 2023



President's Message

Well, it's nice to finally have summer return after a record setting snowfall last winter. The leaves are out, the water warming, and folks are busy getting boats and other equipment ready. We are looking forward to a fun-packed and safe summer.

Your NLA has also been busy preparing for the summer season. Over the last winter, we were approved for all federal and state grants applied for, totaling over \$200,000. These grants included boat lift monitoring, Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) control and Healthy Lakes projects. We also partnered with the Village to gain funds for the boat ramp repair (lengthening and strengthening) and boat ramp water runoff contaminant control. The ramp is owned by the Village who will fund any grant co-pays. Our role has been to help with the ramp project designs and grants, as requested by Jim Jonasen, Village President. A team was formed along with Jim to include Howard Levo and Alan Yoshimoto providing engineering and Jason Willett writing very successful grant applications. Thanks to this team for a job well done! These projects are expected to be installed this coming fall.

There are many exciting plans to improve our lake scheduled this summer. They are detailed in other articles, but I will mention a few of the key ones here. The AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) team, under the leadership of Dave Sprowls, is focusing on CLP, which is prevalent in Lake Minnesuing and has started to enter Minnesuing Creek, which flows into our lake. CLP is very invasive, choking off other plants and is difficult and expensive to (try to) control. We will try to hit it hard while still in the creek together with the DNR and the Douglas County AIS group. To this end, the Village has contributed \$5,000 and the NLA \$2,000 for the 25%

co-pay of the grant awarded. Gwen Theien has agreed to join this team as they deal with prevention of other AIS and monitor boats carrying AIS at the boat ramp. The Healthy Lakes team, under the leadership of Jason Willett, is focusing on identifying more projects to control runoff water by diversion and/or capture with drain pits and gardens. Free engineering evaluations are available and if your property is approved, you pay only 0-10% of the installation costs. If you are interested in reducing lake contamination and/or helping to protect your shore from erosion, please contact Jason or Diane Bick who recently joined this team.

The Fisheries team, under the direction of Ken Lundberg, is busy working with the DNR to evaluate the numerous fish surveys conducted over the past year. They will be used to develop a Fisheries management plan and fishing regulations for our lake. This team identified several new Shoreline Habitat locations to be installed next winter. This habitat not only attracts shoreline fish, birds, and mammals, but also helps protect shoreline erosion of our properties. Contact Ken for more information on this great opportunity. I should also note that our lake was rated as one of the five top walleye lakes in NW Wisconsin and rated as a top small mouth bass fishery in a recent Duluth News Tribune article. This is a testament to the success of our Fishery team! This team also welcomed two new members this year: Bob Blake and Jeff Laabs.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to write about our NLA organization development. Jack Sellwood, Dave Conley, Mark Laskowski, George Lehman and Ed Noltner will all be leaving our Board. We very much appreciate the effort and many hours they have donated for the benefit of the NLA and our lake. This

will leave us with 8 board members, and we will be looking for replacements over time as needs develop. As I noted in last fall's newsletter, we want to diversify these Board additions with women and younger members. Equally important, we want all Board members to either be an officer or responsible for one of the project areas approved by the Board. To help realize these objectives, we would appreciate all potential candidates be suggested to the Board President by April 1 each year. These candidates would then be vetted by the Board and, if positive, be recommended to the membership to vote at our Annual Meeting. Finally, I want to thank so many of the residents for their great support and encourage everyone to volunteer for one of the teams to "LEAVE OUR LAKE BETTER THAN WE FOUND IT". We have many challenges but there is no doubt that together we can overcome them.

-Phil Takkunen

pavilion. Enjoy the good company of friends and neighbors starting at 6pm on August 12th, 2023. The admission fee includes a delicious dinner and is expected to cost around 10 dollars, subject to change due to volatile food prices. Drinks are available at the cash bar. As has become customary, ice cream sundaes will be served to you, our guest, free of charge. Hope to see you there!



4th of July Boat Parade – but it is on July 2nd!

Join your neighbors for the annual July 4th Boat Parade again this year. Due to the village fireworks taking place on Sunday, July 2 this year, the boat parade will also be on July 2. The parade starts at 8 p.m. The parade will be led by an NLA board member's boat, so hop in line to the south of Honeymoon Point when you arrive. All types of boats are welcome to take part. We will again be taking pictures of the festivities and determining which boats have the best combination of decoration, spirit, and creativity. The top two winners will receive a Dilly Bar for every person on board. Pictures will be shared on the NLA Facebook page as well as in the fall newsletter, as space allows. Don't forget to stop by the leading pontoon at the end of the parade (near Camp Nebagamom) to get a Dairy Queen gift certificate! Please thank Shawn and Judy Thayer, owners of the Dairy Queen, for their generosity in providing product and coupons for this event!

As a note to our members, we are one of the sponsors of the Nebagamom Community Association Golf Outing to help fund the 4th of July activities.

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Reminder—Important Dates in 2023

- June 24 Annual meeting, 9:00 a.m., Auditorium
- July 2 Boat Parade, 8 p.m.
- August 12 Summer Social, 6 p.m.

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See you at the annual membership meeting on June 24 (9:00 at the Auditorium). We will gather at 9 and get the meeting no later than 9:30. Come meet your neighbors, hear about our initiatives, and let us know what's on your mind. Scott Toschner of the DNR will be there to discuss the results of the fishing survey conducted recently.

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Summer Social – August 12th

Please join us for the annual Nebagamom Lake Association summer social at Botten's Green Acres



3 for 3! ...Wins for Our Lake!

The Village-owned free public boat launch (at 2nd Ave W and Waterfront Drive) is getting improvements this fall! Village staff applied for and received a \$50,000 grant from the state DNR to repair the boat ramp after the concrete planks had been buckled up by ice shove the first winter after installation.

And this fall and winter, the partnership of the Village and our Lake Association has been successful at getting funding to improve or eliminate the pollution from the nearly 10 acre (1/2 paved) area from which runoff finds its way into the Lake at the boat launch area.

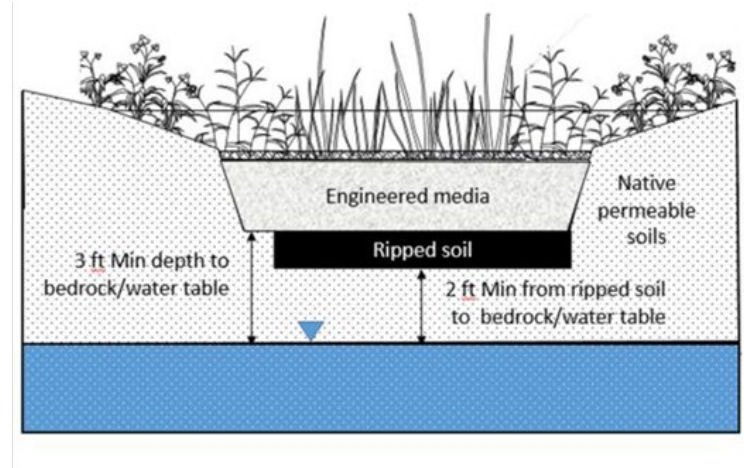
The existing sediment control structure will be enlarged and enhanced, and possibly relocated:



The location of likely bio-treatment (& underdrain) system is shown in the following photo:



The preliminary bio-treatment cell design:



While we - and our Lake and land - got buried in so much snow, your NLA volunteers with Village staff and the strong support of Village Board President (and NLA member) Jim Jonasen; together were also buried in our success at securing funding for 2 water quality projects from three sources:

- 1) The US Army Corp of Engineers, under its Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, has agreed to review the design for and fund **75% of the costs** of a sustainable runoff mitigation and demonstration project for the village's boat launch including the source areas of the runoff that drains through the launch and potentially also including improvements to the near shoreline and shoreline restoration too;
- 2) The Wisconsin DNR awarded a "Surface Water Restoration" grant of **\$40,300** to the Village to cover the non-federal share of the same boat launch work. We expect this will be a best in class system we can all be proud of and show off to all our northern neighbors with boat launches; and

- 3) The Wisconsin DNR also awarded the NLA another, our 7th Healthy Lakes grant, for **\$12,900** to fund private efforts to manage Lake Nebagamon water quality through installation of the 5 practices: i) Near shoreline habitat and protection (also known as Fish Sticks), ii) Rock Infiltration pits and trenches for runoff, iii) runoff diversion, iv) rain gardens and v) native plantings.

In addition to this funding, the NLA also secured another grant from the DNR, a \$4,000 “Clean Boat, Clean Waters” award to partially fund our boat inspectors at the Village’s boat launch – those inspections help keep Milfoil, Curly Leaf Pond Weed and Zebra Mussels from invading our Lake.

In regard to the exciting Boat Launch project’s initiation and funding, many thanks are due, especially to our Village/NLA team, which included: Phil Takkunen who formed the team and coordinated meetings; Alan Yoshimoto and Howard Levo (who both have engineering degrees) contributing on the preliminary design. Jim Jonasen was the village rep who coordinated selecting and working with AMI, an engineering consulting firm, to characterize the problem and make a preliminary design. Jim also, of course, coordinated with the Village Board. Oh yeah, and me, I helped with financial aspects including working with the Army Corps of Engineers to secure their financing and writing the competitive DNR grant application.

Douglas County wrote 3 letters of support: from the County Board itself, the Land Conservation Committee, and from staff conservationist Ashley VandeVoort. Ashley was also able to commit to develop and support educational signage for the site.

We also had letters of support from others, including GLIFWC (the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, which includes the Red Cliff Band) and the Brule River Sportsmen’s Club.

And of course the whole Village Board itself deserves our thanks for their support, securing needed preliminary funding and committing throughout this long process even while the funding was uncertain. Well done all!

That said, of course we are never done working to keep our lake healthy. To fight the algae, we need to install more Healthy Lakes and Minnesuing Creek practices. **An**

engineering review of what you could do on your land is free and requires no commitment of any sort. After that, if you want to go ahead, we can likely help with funding so you may pay little or nothing out of pocket! We hope to add more installations to our current grant #7 (which does allow us an amendment to increase the total from the DNR up to \$25k). And of course, if we have demand for funding, we will also look at possibly applying for an 8th grant this fall!

More information is available on the NLA website at:

<https://nebagamonlakeassociation.com/healthy-lakes-initiative/>

Or, chat about it with any of our volunteer team, including: Diane Bick (at 952.250.9559), Greg Neve (at 715.374.2423), Alan Yoshimoto (at 715.817.0439) or me (651.303.1850). You could also chat with your neighbors that have implemented HL&R practices (you can see them listed on our web site).

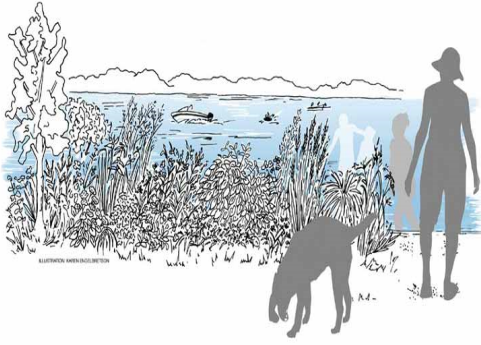
If you’re ready to help preserve our water quality (and property values) for fishing, swimming, boating recreation and viewing (Ok, maybe that shows my age, lol), **please call or text Alan at: 715.817.0439 today.**

-Jason Willett

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Take A Seven Mile Tour Around Nebagamon’s Shoreline Today!

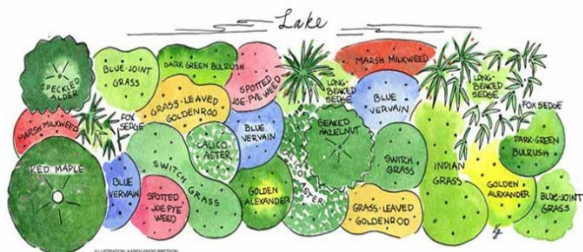
At the turn of the last century, Superior family groups took a train from Superior to the Village of Lake Nebagamon to spend the day enjoying the village and our lake. Swimmers and picnickers hung out in town, and many would board a sightseeing boat that made the trip around the seven miles of our shoreline. At that time, visitors admired our wild and scenic shoreline, surrounded by tall pines. Eventually, the trees were cut down and supplied wood to the growing urban populations in the Midwest. Then, the shoreline spent a period growing back our trees, shrubs and repopulating the woods with wildlife. Eventually, the shores of Lake Nebagamon once again were ornamental, populated this time with families, docks, boats, boathouses, and cabins as well as pine trees and sandy beaches. The Healthy Lakes Project of the Nebagamon Lake Association offers a rooted solution to enhance the natural beauty of the shoreline.



Change the shoreline planting on your property based on your interests – from bird/butterfly habitat to a low-growing garden showcasing your lake or river view. The six different options feature native plants which form deep roots, as well as improving wildlife habitat and decreasing water runoff.

Native plantings include grasses and wildflowers with shrubs and trees. With the help of state and NLA funding, individual homeowners plant and maintain a garden. Each of the six planting methods include a range of native plant life, including a tree, shrubs, grasses, sedges, ferns and ornamental plants. The plantings must total 350 contiguous square feet, be at least 10 feet wide in any direction, adjacent to the shore. It's also possible to augment an existing area of vegetation if it is at least partially within 35 feet of the shoreline. For example, one planting design places a firepit with seating behind the planting, to provide a measure of privacy and a lake view.

The Shoreline Edge plan restores vegetation at the water's edge, based on your average annual shoreline. The Bird/Butterfly option attracts birds and butterflies. The Bare Soil selection stabilizes areas of bare dirt. The low-growing strategy maintains a view of the water and is ideal for an access corridor. The Woodland Scheme can re-vegetate a shady area. The Deer Resistant plan utilizes many plants that deer and other browsing critters avoid. All of these plans can be arranged to also allow a swimming beach area.



Today, most of the tours of the lakeshore are by pontoon, canoe, or kayak. And many a resident makes the tour of the lakeshore, checking on changes that have made since the previous year. Think about augmenting your lakeshore with native plants and roots. But keep making the seven-mile tour and watch for new shoreline friendly plantings.

We have lots of pre-formatted collections of plants and designs and I would love to walk your shore and see what kind of rooting projects might work for you. I love to talk about native plantings and gardens, and now can help initiate the Healthy Lakes process for financing too, if you wish. So, please contact me at (952) 250-9559.

-Diane Bick

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Healthy Lakes Grants Save Property Owners Time and Money

Several years ago, our family learned about an opportunity to reduce surface runoff into Lake Nebagamon via a Healthy Lakes grant. Around this same time, we were growing increasingly frustrated by a constant battle to control erosion on our gravel driveway at our Maranatha Rd property. On several occasions, the damage was so bad that we needed to rent expensive excavation equipment to repair the deep eroded ruts and haul the gravel back up the hill where it belonged. On many more occasions, we did the repair the hard way: with a shovel, rake and lots of time and muscle.

The Nebagamon Lake Association team members involved in the Healthy Lakes initiative were able to help us solve our problem. The team of volunteers surveyed our property for opportunities to control surface run-off and reduce contaminant entry into our beautiful lake. They quickly identified an erosion control plan that also solved my erosion control frustrations.

We put some sweat equity into building run-off diversion channels constructed of 2x6 treated lumber. The channels were finished off with a metal grate custom-made by Ernie's Welding in Poplar. The design allows for surface run-off to enter the channel, which is diverted to an infiltration pit.



With the way the grant is structured, in addition to the labor we were able to do ourselves, the project cost us zero dollars out of pocket. More importantly, surface run-off no longer heads straight for the lake. As a further bonus, since completing our project, we haven't had to hire expensive machinery or spend hours of manual labor repairing our drive.



Consider what a Healthy Lakes site evaluation could do for your property. It's a great way to protect our beautiful lake.

-Adam and Sharla Riutta

2023 AIS Boat Launch Monitoring

This year's monitoring for Invasive Species started with the fishing opener on May 6th. We monitor 11 hours on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and 6 hours a day on Monday-Thursday. This comes to a total of 57 hours a week beginning with Memorial weekend.

Up until Memorial weekend we only monitor on Saturdays and Sundays for 11 hours each day.

Monitoring ends on Labor Day—this year it's September 4th.

Our main monitor again this year is Jeff Giansanti who started his 10th year. He covers the 11-hour shifts on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We have two new monitors this year, Jackson Rabold and Cavin Thompson, both from Northwestern H.S. They will split the 6 hour shifts Monday-Thursday.

So far in the first two weekends in May, we have averaged 13 boats a day coming into Lake Nebagamon. Very few fish were caught on the opener as self-reported to our boat launch monitor. Ice went out on the lake on the Thursday before the opener and the water temperature was only 45°. Just 3 small walleyes (not keepers) and one Northern Pike were reported to our monitor, Jeff.

-Dave Sprowls

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Purple Loosestrife – Beetles Available

Dara Filmore of the DNR has been a major advocate for prevention of invasive species in Lake Nebagamon. One thing she has become known for is raising beetles at her nearby property to release on Purple Loosestrife plants in the area, including on Lake Nebagamon. Do you know of a problematic area of purple loosestrife? Get in touch with Dave Sprowls, 715-815-0518, and he can connect you with Dara. There is no easier way to control Purple Loosestrife that we are aware of.



Membership Report

For the 2023 fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, we have 219 paid members (up 10 from the prior year), with many paying in advance. Paid memberships over the last 4 years are a good indicator of total membership, and that sits at 264. (up 4 from prior year). As hard as we try, we have about 50 (different) people each year that we aren't able to catch up with. With this newsletter we will be kicking off our collection of fiscal 2024 dues, which we try to get as complete as possible during the summer months.

After we process initial renewals generated from this newsletter, we do everything we can to provide reminders later in the summer. We try to make renewal as convenient as possible, whether including copies of the forms with the newsletter or providing an online payment PayPal portal at www.nebagamonlakeassociation.com. We have about 75% of lake shore owners as members, as well as numerous other members who have an interest in the lake. Each year we compare our membership records with the county tax records. We use this information to send information about our organization to new homeowners and those that have not been members in the past. When possible, we hope to make this an in-person welcome.

-Erik Takkunen

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2023 Lake Nebagamon Water Quality

The average secchi disk reading (a simple test to determine water clarity) for 2022 was 7.3 feet. This means that after 7.3 feet, you can no longer see the secchi disc. Here are the readings for the last five years for comparison.

2018 - 4.75

2019 - 6.71

2020 - 6.79

2021 - 8.2

2022 - 7.3

If you recall, 2018 was a season of record rainfall and high water, while 2021 was a season of little rainfall and low water. 2022 was again dry with lower water levels. We are looking for somebody interested in taking water samples going forward who can transition from Mark and Ken this summer. There are 11 samples each year during the open water season only.

-Mark Laskowski & Ken Lundberg

Fisheries Update

Last year was a busy one for the committee. The DNR conducted an intense study of the walleye population in the lake. The summer started with DNR placing hoop nets to capture walleyes and fin clip. Other captured fish were measured and recorded as part of the study. Later in the summer walleyes were captured by electrofishing. Fin clipped and non-fin clipped captures were counted and used to estimate the walleye population. In the fall the lake was again electroshocked to determine natural reproduction by juvenile fish captured. An angler creel survey started with the opening day of fishing season and was conducted through the ice fishing season. These studies will be used to develop a lake management plan as well as possible fishing regulations changes.

Our fisheries committee worked to change the size limits for walleye from the current three fish over 18 inches to three fish 15-20 inches with up to one of the fish over 24 inches. Preliminary data collected by the DNR led their walleye committee not to recommend changes at this time. Their concern was protecting adult walleyes of spawning size. Nebagamon appears to have a rapid growth rate up to about 16 inches and females are non-spawning below 15 inches. Nebagamon has one of the highest natural reproduction rates found in the North District Complex Lakes. Natural reproduction is important to help maintain our walleye numbers. The lake is stocked alternate years with extended growth walleyes to supplement natural reproduction. We expect to have another stocking this fall, and will provide more info when this is confirmed. Once the DNR studies are complete the walleye committee will be meeting with Nate Thomas, Fisheries Biologist for our area, to discuss possible future management plans for the lake. Two areas to be discussed are pan fish limits and an alternate slot type limit for walleyes that would protect enough adult spawning females to ensure natural reproduction is maintained.

The Shoreline Habitat Program has been renamed from "Fish Sticks" to reflect that the shoreline trees not only provide habitat for juvenile fish, but also habitat for shoreline birds, ducks and mammals as well as providing some protection from shoreline erosion. It has again been funded through the Healthy Lakes grant. Currently 11 sites are scheduled to have trees installed this winter providing there are safe ice conditions. The Fisheries Committee will be working to add 2 or 3 more

sites to the grant. If anyone is interested in adding fish shoreline habitat contact Ken Lundberg, 715-817-0449.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Bob Blake and Jeff Laabs to the committee, joining myself, Denny Raas, and Mark Laskowski.

-Ken Lundberg

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Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

THE NEBAGAMON LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC
BUDGET 7-1-2023 TO 6-30-2024

INCOME:	
DUES	7,000
SOCIAL	600
DONATIONS	4,500
HEALTHY LAKES PROJECT	20,000
BOAT MONITORING	6,500
INTEREST	10
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TOTAL	38,610
DISBURSEMENTS:	
PROJECTS:	
BOAT MONITORING	10,500
HEALTHY LAKES PROJECT	22,000
BOAT PARADE	150
FIREWORKS	400
L N SWIMMING CLASS	300
HAZARD MARKERS	500
SOCIAL	600
KIDS IN NEBAGAMON - CHRISTMAS	100
NEW PROJECT	2,000
WEB SITE	300
NEWS LETTERS, POSTAGE. MTGS. OFFICE EXP.	700
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TOTAL	37,550

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Curly Leaf Pondweed Invasive Species Update



You may recall from past newsletters that our neighbor lake to the west, Lake Minnesuing, the lake that feeds Lake Nebagamon, has been fighting a nasty invasive

species called Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP). At last year’s annual membership meeting, Alex Selle from the Wisconsin DNR was a special guest who told us about their planning relating to CLP. We recently got an update on their plans, which is dynamic in nature and may overlap with press time of this newsletter.

In May, Alex Selle, Zach Stewart, and Dara Filmore of the DNR teamed up to get out on Minnesuing Creek to conduct higher-resolution mapping of the CLP discovered there last year. While there, they pulled about 50% of identified CLP. Following that mapping, the DNR worked with five volunteers from the NLA on June 1 to do additional hand pulling of CLP in the creek. They felt the day was quite successful, and they pulled most of the CLP they could identify. The next step is a June 14 group meeting. A 2023 sampling of the bay where Minnesuing Creek empties into LN to check for CLP is expected this year. Note, last year no CLP was found.

We will likely have future hand-pulling sessions in Minnesuing Creek, perhaps this year, but more likely next Spring when it is known to bloom. We could really use your help!

-Dave Sprowls

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The Eagle Has Landed



Eagle! What's the first thing that pops into your mind? National bird, large, bald, loves fish? Most people would agree it's an awesome looking bird. Now, pretend you are on a boat. It doesn't matter if it's a pontoon, kayak, speed boat or canoe. What is one of your favorite destinations on the lake? My guess is Honeymoon Point ranks right up there. And why there? Most likely to get a glimpse of our resident eagles, sitting on a branch, attending to their young, or soaring majestically in the sky.

We've heard the stories. Observing a dive to retrieve a fish left on a dock, struggling to get a large fish airborne and then swimming to shore with it, or teaching its young to fly and to look for prey. And then, about 3 years ago, much of their nest tragically falls to the ground. Luckily, they have done some repairs in the last few years and continued to nurture their chicks in what is left of that amazing nest. It is said that a typical eagle's nest can be 5-6 feet in diameter and weigh a tremendous amount. By adding sticks to the nest each year, the additional weight most likely caused the collapse of their nest.

Long ago, our resident eagles picked out a strong and tall white pine on Honeymoon Point to construct their nest and to raise their young. But why that tree? Most likely because it provides a great view of the water on both sides of the point, a great lookout for fish, and above the canopy providing easy flight. Their nest, called an aerie, has been used year after year, which is typical behavior for all eagles. They will do some repairs each spring, including the part of the nest where the eggs are laid (bole), adding some materials such as down feathers, grasses, and mosses. Watch for these activities this summer as you cruise around the point. We are very lucky to have them reside on our lake. We

don't have to travel to Alaska or some other far-off place. All we have to do is hop in our boat of choice and experience the amazement of this wonderful bird.

Unfortunately, this spring a dead adult eagle was found on Honeymoon Point. Hopefully this doesn't alter the other eagles' activities there.

Chief Seattle once said, "We are part of the earth, and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle: these are our brothers. All things are connected like the blood which unites one's family."

-Dan Takkunen

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Loon News

Did you hear about loons falling from the sky in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota? "Loon fallout" is the name of this phenomenon that was due to the spring ice and rain in the area. The loons developed ice on their bodies that weighed them down and caused them to fall to the ground.

On the ground, loons cannot walk. Their legs, placed to the back of the body, are meant for swimming, not walking. If they don't land on water, they are in dire trouble. Even if they land on a small pond, they are still in trouble, as they need $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile of open water to take off.



Loon that has landed in a cattle pen. Photo property of Spectrum News.

Let's hope this phenomenon has not caused any trouble for our resident loons on Lake Nebagamon. The Raptor Education Group, Inc. (715-623-4015) is always available for any loon concerns.

-Dan Takkunen



When the people we love die, they leave us with treasured memories.

My father left 75 acres in Northern Wisconsin shaped by his influence: a summer camp infused with his values, rustic log cabins he preserved for posterity, and hundreds of trees he planted as saplings that now soar skyward.

My father, Bernard “Nardie” Stein, who died in late 2022 at age 91, co-directed Camp Nebagamom for Boys for three decades with my mother, Sally Lorber Stein. Dad’s front-facing role fit his genuine connection with children and young adults; quick yet kind-hearted wit; flair for song-leading; instant recall of people’s names, zip codes, and family trees; and many other competencies.

When I walk through camp, even in my imagination, I sense Dad’s presence. I have a hunch the same may be true for my family and generations of camp alumni.

The huge wooden rolltop desk still used in camp’s main office always reminds me of him. My parents realized early on that their 18-hour workdays mostly involved dealing with the unexpected. Nardie’s solution: his summer days began at 6:20 a.m. at that desk focused on routine yet important tasks. He met with maintenance staff, then joined Mom at the breakfast leadership team meeting. Nardie’s early detail wrangling freed up most of the day for creative problem-solving and the challenges and zany fun of co-leading a camp community comprised of 350+ people.

Dad approached the world as if it were full of friends he just hadn’t met yet, a feeling that permeates camp. In front of Nebagamom’s main office hangs a sign, “This Shall Be a Place of Welcome for All,” translated into 33 languages so far, one panel per language. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement in the 1970s, Nardie designed the sign’s earliest panels. A panel is added each time a new language is spoken at camp. This is Nebagamom’s cultural DNA: a community dedicated to

warmly welcoming newcomers who make camp better year after year.

Walk among camp’s beautiful tall trees and you’ll sense Dad’s vision of the importance of shade and erosion control on this sandy lakeside property. In 1958, 1969, 1970, and 1972, Dad led teams of staff and friends who planted hundreds of trees throughout and adjacent to camp — long rows and solo saplings of red pine, Norway spruce, and birch. Mom said she always knew when he was stressed during their years running camp, because that’s when Nardie liked to trim trees, “to raise the canopy — to help them thrive, symbolic of what he hoped to do for campers and staff.”

Nardie’s aesthetics and respect for history can be seen in the three authentic homesteaders’ log cabins he bought at auctions in the early 1960s. The largest of these was moved intact, skidded over the frozen lake. Dad turned it into a museum of lumberjacking filled with pictures and artifacts from 1898 to 1907 when Nebagamom’s site was a lumber mill run by the Weyerhaeuser family. He bought two other log cabins for \$20 and \$25, respectively, that were disassembled, moved, and reassembled at camp. One is a hub for older campers and their counselors, and kids learn wilderness tripping skills in the other.

After my parents retired in 1990, they built a lakeside home near camp. He loved spending time in his garage workshop decorated with his fine photography, the door open to the view of Lake Nebagamom. His specialties: repairing broken pottery and creating walking sticks, ceramic tile mosaics, cork collages, fishing lure plaques, and wooden cell phone holders.

There’s a sense of timelessness by that spring-fed lake where my maternal grandparents, Muggs and Janet Lorber, founded Camp Nebagamom in 1929. The land was previously a summer resort, a lumber mill, and home to a long lineage of the Anishinaabe people.

Dad was delighted and comforted when, in his final year, Camp Nebagamom became a nonprofit, assuring it will welcome young people for generations to come.

Jessica Stein Diamond is a freelance writer and editor, and the executive director of the Camp Nebagamom Scholarship Fund. This article is shared with permission and was originally published by Camping Magazine.

The following article and pictures are used with permission from Shoreline Living magazine, who will be featuring this article in an upcoming issue. It is the second Lake Nebagamon property to be featured in the magazine.

Using "Everyman's Right" to Protect a Natural Legacy

L A K E N E B A G A M O N

As an engineer, John Salmela's career propelled him in almost centrifugal fashion from the Midwest to far-flung postings in Maryland, Tennessee, California, and Puerto Rico. But no matter where his family ventured, their immovable center was the vacation home on Lake Nebagamon.

"We lived in 10 places, but nothing felt like home the way this does," Salmela said. And while his wife is gone now,

he still preserves the natural beauty that they shared here.

Especially along his property's shoreline. A photo taken there today could pass for the wooden-rowboat days of the 1940s or 50s. A tall, dense stand of cattails conceals the shore. Abundant lily pads and sunken logs – the kind that scream "cast here for bass" – enrich the shallows. There's a dock with a boat, but it barely intrudes on the landscape.

"I always felt that if I had a place on the lake, then I didn't want it to look like a place in the city," he said. "It should fit into what's there."

For Salmela, that means a modest yard where he "mows whatever comes up." No fertilizer or grass seed for him. Same goes with his laissez faire approach to cattails. He leaves them alone and the Salmela patch has doubled in size during his time here.





“The fish sticks start to attract fish and wildlife almost instantly” – SCOTT TOSHNER,

FISHERIES BIOLOGIST, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

As for the downed trees along the shore, that’s another story. Here, he’s relied on a bit of conservation stagecraft known as the fish sticks project.

The fish sticks are downed trees placed in the lake at strategic locations to provide habitat for fish and wildlife. They’re part of a program known as the Healthy Lakes initiative. Homeowners in Wisconsin can apply for a state grant of up to \$1,000 which covers about 75 percent of the fish sticks’ installation costs. Landowners and lake associations often pitch in for the other 25 percent.

It’s a proven program, but nothing radical. The fish sticks simply duplicate the fallen trees that were common in lakes before neatnik humans came along.

These days, most lakefront property in the Midwest resembles a suburban landscape. By that standard, a dead tree left in the water looks out of place – something to pluck out like a dandelion in a flawless lawn. A tidy homeowner may not realize how much food and shelter a downed tree provides for fish and wildlife.

Yet Scott Toshner knows. He compares the life-giving power of Midwest fish sticks to coral reefs in the Caribbean.

“The fish sticks start to attract fish and wildlife almost instantly,” said Toshner, a fisheries biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. “I notice that when I’m snorkeling. The first summer you see a green glaze of algae on branches as the tree’s cambium (inner bark)

dissolves. That attracts invertebrates (such as mayflies and spiders) and small fish that go into the trees for protection from predators. Then the bigger fish wait outside for them to make a mistake.”

In winter, contractors and volunteers join forces to emplace the fish sticks. They cut trees from the nearby woods and haul them with trucks and skid steers to pre-planned locations along the shore. The trees are 18” or smaller and either live or recently dead, which ensures that they’ll sink to the bottom. The trunks are laid in groups of three to five, in a cross-hatch pattern to mimic the random way that trees fall in nature. Then, as the winter sun gradually gains strength, the dark trunks absorb enough warmth to make them sink through the ice. To make sure the downed trees stay



put, workers secure them with steel cables to a live tree or fence post on shore.

Salmela doesn't fish, but he no less enjoys whatever the fish sticks attract. "I took a great picture of a great blue heron standing on a fish stick and waiting for his lunch to come by," he said. "It's on my computer screensaver."

Apart from Salmela's minimalist dock and cat-tailed shore, two other signs embody his long legacy here. One would be the Finnish flag he flies beneath the stars and stripes on his flagpole.

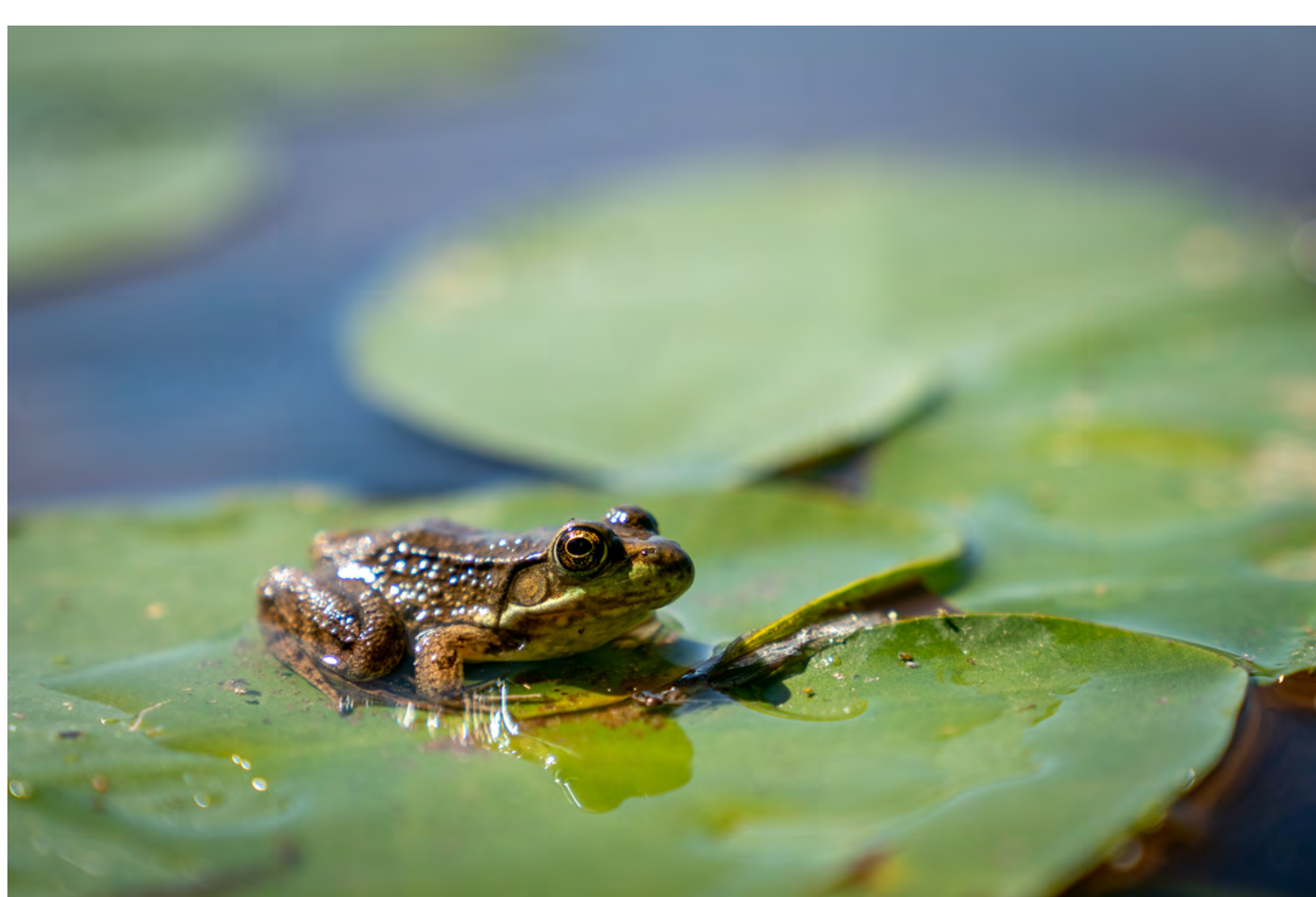


The second would be the small structure that looks like a tiny cottage, but to a Finn could well be a shrine: the family sauna. Salmela still uses the sauna several times a week when he's at Lake Nebagamon in summer.

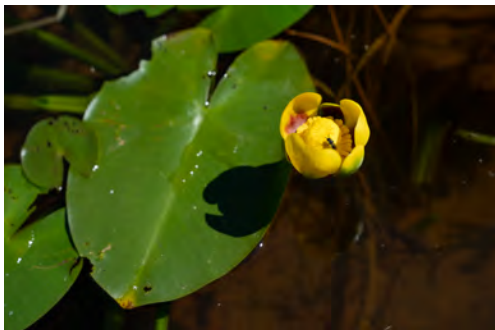
I look at the lake as a fragile object, he said. If you think about something as a fragile place that needs care, then you'll start to treat it differently"



"I'm of Finnish descent – both of my parents and grandparents were born in Finland," he said. "Growing up, we had eight Finnish families on this stretch of shore."



"I always felt that if I had a place on the lake, then I didn't want it to look like a place in the city," says John Salmela



The Salmela's came from a country that's still 75 percent forested; where wilderness preservation began in the 1840s; where the Finnish legal concept of "everyman's right" grants open access to nearly all lands and waterways.

Now, on Lake Nebagamon, Salmela exercises his right to protect what's wild and beautiful around him. "I look at the lake as a fragile object," he said. "If you think about something as a fragile place that needs care, then you'll start to treat it differently."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fish sticks projects aren't only for fish - they also attract many birds, waterfowl, turtles, and other creatures
- If you want to see fish by the shore, leave or add woody habitats such as limbs or treetops.
- Invite your neighbors to come see the abundance of wild creatures that use your natural shoreline.

Lake Nebagamon Ice In & Ice Out Dates

Year	Ice-Out Date	Ice-Free Days	Ice-In Date
1943	No Data	-	11/13
1944	5/1	214	12/1
1945	3/31	233	11/19
1946	3/31	237	11/23
1947	5/2	205	11/27
1948	4/12	240	12/8
1949	4/18	251	11/25
1950	5/14	194	11/24
1951	4/18	215	11/19
1952	4/21	221	11/28
1953	4/22	207	11/15
1954	4/20	224	11/30
1955	4/16	217	11/19
1956	4/28	215	11/29
1957	4/24	215	11/25
1958	4/14	227	11/27
1959	4/19	209	11/14
1960	4/20	225	12/1
1961	4/22	221	11/28
1962	4/25	228	12/8
1963	4/14	231	12/1
1964	4/22	212	11/20
1965	4/30	216	12/2
1966	4/22	223	12/1
1967	4/14	221	11/21
1968	4/11	239	12/6
1969	4/20	228	12/4
1970	4/24	217	11/27
1971	4/20	226	12/2
1972	5/1	182	11/30
1973	4/14	231	12/1
1974	4/26	218	11/30
1975	5/1	207	11/24
1976	4/14	215	11/15
1977	4/13	226	11/25
1978	4/19	215	11/20
1979	4/27	221	12/4
1980	4/22	215	11/23
1981	4/13	242	12/11
1982	4/24	214	11/26
1983	4/30	216	12/2

Year	Ice-Out Date	Ice-Free Days	Ice-In Date
1984	4/20	243	12/19
1985	4/18	218	11/22
1986	4/12	219	11/17
1987	4/7	240	12/3
1988	4/19	226	12/1
1989	4/26	212	11/24
1990	4/21	224	12/1
1991	4/12	213	11/7
1992	4/26	218	11/30
1993	4/24	217	11/27
1994	4/18	232	12/6
1995	4/18	209	11/13
1996	5/5	198	11/19
1997	4/24	210	11/20
1998	4/7	258	12/21
1999	4/13	248	12/17
2000	4/26	224	12/6
2001	4/25	239	12/20
2002	4/18	222	11/26
2003	4/24	223	12/3
2004	4/18	240	12/14
2005	4/11	229	11/26
2006	4/11	234	12/1
2007	4/19	226	12/1
2008	3/29	241	11/25
2009	4/16	234	12/6
2010	3/31	248	12/4
2011	4/13	233	12/2
2012	3/21	261	12/7
2013	5/12	197	11/26
2014	5/6	198	11/21
2015	4/12	257	12/26
2016	4/14	239	12/10
2017	4/4	247	12/8
2018	5/5	198	11/20
2019	4/25	221	12/2
2020	4/20	225	12/1
2021	4/4	247	12/7
2022	5/4	211	12/1
2023	5/4		
Averages			
Last 5	4/23	221	11/30
Last 10	4/21	226	12/3
Last 20	4/16	231	12/3
Overall	4/19	224	11/29

Credits:

Jack Arthur, Gail DeBrunye, Willard Kiefer, Andy Mack, Mark Laskowski, and Joe Snyder.

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