

HORSEHEAD LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT  
NO 1



September 15, 2015

Chairperson:

Dennis Batchelet  
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Secretary:

Mike Esler  
7753 Crow Rd.  
Lake Tomahawk, WI  
54539  
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Treasurer:

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Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539  
(312) 310-9357

Town Board:

Matt Michalsen  
7116 North Bluebird Rd.  
Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539  
(715) 614-4152

County Board:

Thomas Rudolph  
1740 Larsen Drive  
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(715) 362-6222



[www.horseheadlake-wi.org](http://www.horseheadlake-wi.org)

**August 38<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Meeting Notes**

- Tim Desmond re-elected to Treasurer position.
- Voted to look into a new lake survey grant.
- Voted to continue weed cutting during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> week in July.
- 2015-'16 total budget \$26,085. We had a carry-over of \$23,450.60 from 2014-'15. Our tax levy is \$3,219.40 to meet our anticipated expenses.
- Mill rate for 2015-'16 set at \$0.1477, or \$14.77/\$100,000 property value.

**Fish Kill**

The worst winter in forty years (2012-'13) continues to leave our lake recovering from

a sizeable fish kill, which is not unprecedented,

Fishermen have been catching 12-14" Northerns and have seen a few Perch, but that's about it. One documented 18 1/2" Northern was caught.

The good news is that tons of various minnow species have been seen all over the lake AND on August 18<sup>th</sup>, the DNR planted 14,352 Largemouth bass in the lake. (See the results of the 8/27/14 DNR electroshocking fish survey on our website).

Many theories abound to explain the fish decline. The district has contacted John Kubisiak, DNR fish biologist, to explore the possible causes.

There are three main probable causes: 1) in 2012-'13, 30" of ice took up so much water, leaving much less oxygen in the water, 2) continuous snow on the lake prevented sunlight from penetrating to allow plant life to furnish oxygen, 3) our relatively shallow lake. Deeper lakes allow fish to drop down further, as colder water holds more oxygen. Most probably the fish died from lack of

oxygen, along with lots of weeds.

One fish breeder explained that if the oxygen level dropped to about 2 ppm (parts per million of oxygen) many fish died at that time.

It seems our lake experienced a perfect storm of negative conditions.

### **Notice of Winter Open Water**

Notice is hereby given that no stakes or rope will mark open water during the winter season. Lake owners are obligated to make their guests aware of this to release them from liability. Large-print signs at the Kildeer landing warn of open water danger.

### **Managing Eurasian Water Milfoil**

Divers using GPS co-ordinates went out and found only four Eurasian Water Milfoil plants - all near the Kildeer dock, and carefully hand-pulled them. Next summer, they will again be contracted to pull the

weeds from the lake floor.

Our recent study recommends a repeat of the lake study every 3-4 years. We are looking into the possibility of a new grant to help defray the cost of a new lake study. It's not in the budget, so it won't be until at least the fall of 2016 or 2017.

### **Lake Water Testing**

Lake data for 2015 reveals that our lake continues in the Eutrophic category but remaining largely unchanged from our historic record averages. Water clarity was excellent in early spring, but this summer it has taken on a brownish tint and clarity has declined. Algae has returned as fall proceeds, leaving the lake water tinted green.

Mike and Kim Esler have volunteered to continue our lake testing for official DNR reporting in 2016. This will be their 5th year in this important role.

### **Aerator Maintenance**

Prior to the onset of ice, the aerator will be inspected and serviced by Mike Esler and Hans Delius to help ensure its continued service throughout the winter. They assure us that parts are readily available at reasonable prices. Because they can

perform this service, at no cost, the district no longer finds it necessary to set aside money for replacement. Mike and Hans plan to replace two diffusers this fall and two more in each of the next three years.

### **Clean Boats/Clean Waters**

Hallie Moline, will continue to be our lake volunteer, but reports that Oneida Co. currently sends out its own inspectors to add more complete coverage of our dock area. As most of you know, we've experienced many fewer fishermen in the past two years.



### **Weed Cutting**

Due to the unusual absence of surface weeds, our weed cutting was cancelled, again this year, resulting in a savings of \$17,500. True to his word, Cliff Schmidt allowed the district to cancel at no cost. We have signed a new contract for 2016, including a clause that if cutting is cancelled within thirty days of our scheduled work, the

District will be obligated to pay 10% of the contract.

Cancelling the weed cutting is resulting in another low tax rate, but Tim Desmond, our Treasurer, cautions that it could be a short-lived respite. If we resume cutting, our tax level will increase in the future. Ninety-two hours of weed cutting has been scheduled for July 14-24, 2016, as was agreed at the annual meeting.

## Check Your Boats and Trailers

Be sure your boat/trailer have NO plant material attached when you launch your boat in Horsehead Lake or take it out. Your boat and trailer should be washed thoroughly with soap and water before re-launching in our lake if it has been in another body of water. Leaving it out of the water for a full week will substitute for washing with soap.



## From the Chair

By Dennis Batchelet

Everything your commissioners do during the year culminates with the annual meeting. Twenty-four residents, this year, came out to conduct our business and set a path for the coming year. Not that we aim for a speedy meeting, but we completed all our business by 10:15.

On a more serious note, Oneida Co. Supervisor, Tom Rudolph, finished our meeting with a summary of how Oneida County and local officials have had their authority to regulate shore land usurped by Madison legislators. It occurred in the 2015-'17 Budget bill. Instead of raising the standards for minimum shoreland and lots, it lowered them to 100' and took away local authority to protect the quality of water. Rudolph emphasized that water quality in the north woods is our lifeblood and is the foundation for tourism, a major Wisconsin industry. Angered by these recent statutory changes, Plum Lake officials are spearheading a movement

to reverse these changes before they go into effect this fall. A. John Richter, the Plum Lake Association president, is building a coalition of districts, associations, individuals, and lobbyists to introduce a bill in the fall legislative session that would undo these measures that appear to favor business developers. Time is of essence since it must be done before the DNR notifies local officials of the changes. A special escrow account (501c3) has been started at BMO Harris Bank (\$7,500) by Plum Lake Association to help defray legal expenses.

If this issue resonates with you and you would like to send our Assembly representative and Senator an email, letter, or call their office - it would help resolve this contentious issue. Conscious of a possible threat to property values, Richter emphasizes that if nothing is changed, innumerable land plats will likely have to be changed. Once that occurs, they can never be reversed. You can get more information by contacting John Richter at [AJR5@aol.com](mailto:AJR5@aol.com) or [plumlakeshoreland@gmail.com](mailto:plumlakeshoreland@gmail.com). Following is a list of

contacts, should you be interested in expressing your views: Senator Tom Tiffany, [sen.tiffany@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.tiffany@legis.wisconsin.gov) Phone: (608) 266-2509. Assemblyman Rob Swearingen, [rep.swearingen@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:rep.swearingen@legis.wisconsin.gov) Phone: (608) 266-7141

Our district will not be making a donation, but we felt you should be kept apprised of the developing situation.

### **Law Enforcement on the Lake**

Suspect abuse of fishing limits? Contact Warden Tim Ebert or report to 1-800-TIP-WDNR.

Got an issue involving disorderly conduct or excessive noise? Contact the Oneida Co. Sheriffs Dept.

### **Did You Know?**

1) The most-recent (2014) district property valuation is \$21,791,597. Previously, it was \$19,508,400.

- 2) The Northwoods Children's Museum in Eagle River is excellent for kids - \$7/person.
- 3) Wisconsin & Michigan were originally part of the same territory.
- 4) The 5<sup>th</sup> documented mountain lion passed through northern WI (Iron County) since 2008, this summer. Trail cameras recorded the animal, which was last seen in Michigan, recently.
- 5) Earthworms are not native to North America.

### **Our 2015-'16 Volunteers**

#### Secchi testing/water

sampling: Mike & Kim Esler

#### Audit Committee:

Hans Delius & Bev Fagan

#### Clean Boats/Clean Waters:

Terry & Hallie Moline

#### Nominating Committee:

Linda Delius

Sincerely,  
Dennis Batchelet  
Tim Desmond  
Mike Esler  
Matt Michalsen - Lake  
Tomahawk Supervisor  
Tom Rudolph - Oneida Co.  
Supervisor