

HORSEHEAD LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT NO 1



March 15, 2005

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Dear District Members :

Eagles can only dream of next summer when they can once again fish the entire span of Horsehead Lake. For now they have to content themselves with scraps left by ice fishermen or perch beside the open water created by the aerator. The crafty deer that "outfoxed" the hunters continue to browse Horsehead Lake neighborhoods in search of corn and pine baughs. Small Game Season is a mere inconvenience to growing numbers of squirrels. This is obvious as they chase each other over snow drifts trying to remember where their last acorn was buried.

Fishing enthusiasts have adapted to cold temps judging by the popularity

of ice fishing this winter on our lake.

Snowmobile tracks zig-zag across the lake and fortunately stay far away from the open water made by the aerator. Open water this year was staked out by Hans Delius, & the Batchelets.

Here is an update on what's been happening.



Lake Activity

Daryl Dvorak proudly displays the 30" Northern Pike he hauled up through the ice on a nice day in early February. He was not alone on the lake, as several sheds, and cars with their complement of fishers were seen on the lake. While the vast majority of fishers respect the lake, a few beer bottles had to be pryed from the ice, abandoned without regard for keeping our lake clean.



Lake Level

When our last newsletter went out in September, several boards had been removed and the lake was gradually settling into the 15" drop voted on at our annual meeting. That was before a big rain came down. Because too much water was pouring over the dam, flooding properties on Horsehead Creek, two boards had to be replaced. By the time the rain subsided, our small amphibians like frogs and turtles had burrowed in for winter. Further lowering the dam would have put them at risk. Therefore, your commissioners voted unanimously to leave the boards where they were with the lake drawn

down 9". Feedback received was positive and, in fact, the lake was lowered exactly the same amount during the winter of 2003-'04. While your commissioners' aim was to carry out our vote, they felt wise discretion was needed in this case to protect the lake and wildlife.

Water Quality Improving

At present, we are waiting for our final 2004 DNR lake report, however, our own records show the lakes' average Trophic State Index is improving as is the phosphate level. Phosphate levels help to indicate relative fertility of the lake. Higher levels indicate greater production of weeds & algae.

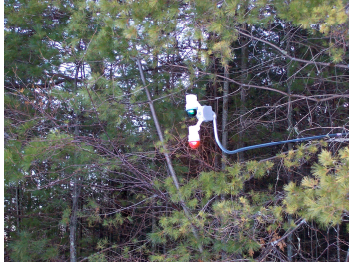


Aeration System

In February, Mike Vogelsfang, a DNR fish biologist, sampled the oxygen levels on our lake. He reports, "the lake looks great" although he noted a heavy snow cover in March might still hurt the fish. He tested the rocky point passage, & a spot near the aerator. Oxygen levels average about 3 PPL (parts per million) at 1-2 feet, which he says is "really good" for this time of the year. He reports the aerator is pumping well and oxygen is spreading below the ice throughout the lake. He says, "anytime you have bubbling air, you're saving fish". On neighboring McNaughton Lake, which is similar to Horsehead but with no aerator, the oxygen level is zero and it smells like a "sulfur pit".

In the fall, power outages, due to critter damage, occurred so Hans Delius encased the wires in tougher conduit. To monitor the aerator, Hans ingeniously installed a red/green light device on the west shore. Get out your binoculars to check

out the lights before spring. They're small so look closely.



Governor Declares June Invasive Species Month

Throughout the state numerous private groups and government agencies are teaming up to tackle the newest threat to our clear water in Wisconsin. Check out the Invasive Species Association at www.ipaw.org for more information. The featured D.N.R. speaker at our annual meeting, Sandra Wickman, will explain the problem and what we can do to protect Horsehead Lake. The "Clean Boats, Clean Water" boat inspection program aims to keep our lake free of Eurasian Milfoil, Curly

Pondweed [which we have], Zebra Mussels, and others. Unused bait can contain invasive species. Always dispose of unwanted bait in the garbage - **NOT** in the lake.

Meetings & Conventions

Dennis Batchelet attended a one-day Wisc. Association of Lakes seminar/workshop in Waukesha on Feb. 19th, entitled, "Lake Protection: It Starts and Ends at Home". It emphasized "We All Live and Work on the Watershed". The next WAL convention will be in Green Bay April 28-30, 2005.

The next commissioner's meeting will be at 5:30 PM on April 5th, 2005 at the Sloan Community Center in Lake Tomahawk.

Mark your calendar now for the next annual Horsehead Lake P&R District meeting in the Lake Tomahawk Sloan Center, Saturday, August 20th, 2005 at 9am.

Burn Barrels

What happens *around* the lake, affects the lake itself. In addition to fire prevention, DNR regulations aim to keep our northwoods air clean by limiting refuse burning to covered containers and ONLY the following may be burned:

- 1) non-recyclable paper
- 2) clean, unpainted, unstained wood.

Pressure-treated wood and plastics, when burned, produce toxic smoke affecting the surrounding habitat and settles on the lake.

Small recreational campfires do not require a permit.

Did you know?

1 pound of phosphorus in lawn fertilizer can produce up to 500 pounds of aquatic plant or algae growth once it washes into the lake?

WAL Newsletters

Call (608) 662-0923 or (800) 542-5253; email: wal@wisconsinlakes.org

Let's be safe out there.

Sincerely, Dennis Batchelet,
Beverly Fagan, Linda
Houghton-Bowen.