

Driftwood

The newsletter of the
Turtle Flambeau Flowage
and Trude Lake
Property Owners'
Association, Inc.

Spring / Summer 2016

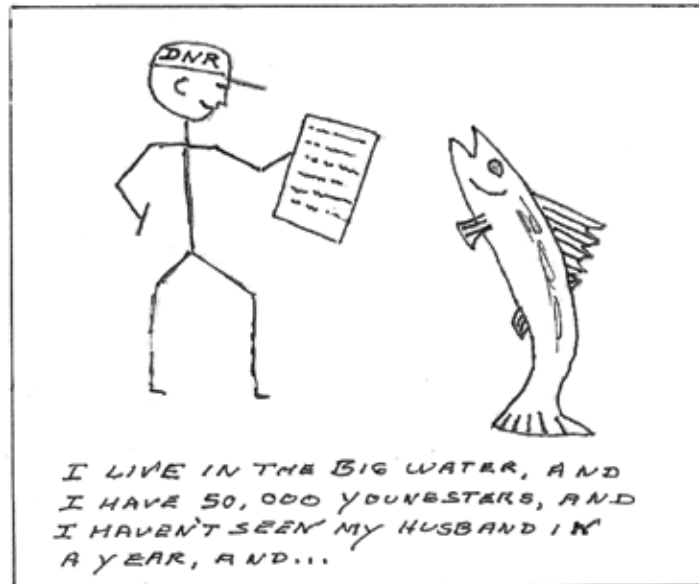
2016-17 Turtle-Flambeau Flowage Fishery Survey

By Zach Lawson

Fish population surveys

Beginning soon after the 2016 ice out, the Wisconsin DNR will be starting a comprehensive fish survey on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake to assess the entire fish community. This survey is comprised of multiple components taking place over the course of the entire open-water season.

First, a walleye population estimate will be conducted, which is a two-part process consisting of a marking period and a recapture period. The survey will begin with fyke netting to mark walleyes and other gamefish species. Fyke nets are large trap-style nets that are set along the shoreline. All fyke nets are checked daily. Gamefish captured will be checked for sexual maturity, measured, given a fin-clip (about half of a fin which will re-grow in about a year), and released. Once sufficient numbers of walleyes are marked,



crews will shift to the recapture component of the population estimate. The recapture event is completed using multiple nights of electrofishing along the shoreline within a day or two of the completion

of marking. Electrofishing works by putting an electrical field in the water to temporarily stun any fish within about 4 feet of the boat. Individuals sampled during the recapture event are measured, checked for sexual maturity, checked for a fin-clip, and released. The actual population estimate is calculated as follows. Fish marked in the nets provide a known number of marked walleyes swimming in the lake. From the electrofishing run, the ratio of marked to unmarked fish will be determined, and that ratio is used to

estimate the population. For example, assume that 1,000 walleye are captured in the nets and given a left-ventral fin clip. Then assume that 500 walleyes are captured during electrofishing--200 of which have the fin clip. Then, apply the ratio—500/200 to the total population of marked fish. The estimated population = 1000 X 500/200 = 2,500 walleyes (although the number will be vastly larger for the TFF/Trude than in this example).

As the water continues to warm, the same fyke nets used for walleye marking

will be reset to target adult muskellunge in quality musky spawning habitat. Nets will be checked daily, and individuals captured will be checked for sexual maturity, measured, aged (by taking a fin-ray to be analyzed later in the lab), marked, and released. This sampling will be important for assessing the overall abundance of the musky population and the effectiveness of the stocking program.

The third component of the survey will assess the bass and panfish populations. This will be conducted at night during late-spring using electrofishing (over the course of a week) in near-shore areas located around the entire Flowage.

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President's Letter

By Terry Daulton



During this April's snowstorm my husband Jeff and I were stranded at our "garage" apartment on Norway Point where we live when poor ice and good sense prevent travel to our island cabin. Instead of curling up with a good book, I found myself spring cleaning. I was tackling my filing cabinet when I ran across the archived TFFTL newsletters. I

wedged them out and Volume 2, issue 2 (1997) slid from the file. On the front page then president, Paul Gottwald, summarized the organization's founding year. Familiar names appeared...Maryann Brown, Jim Leever, and my husband, Jeff Wilson. Jim Leever wrote that at the first annual meeting (17 in attendance) our treasury held a whopping \$634. Articles covered purple loosestrife, fisheries, osprey, and a member survey asking for views on personal watercraft use.

I will not be running for election for president this coming spring, and seeing the newsletters made me reflective- and gave me a perfect excuse to halt my cleaning ordeal. So, I heated up some cocoa and leafed through the newsletter stash. Like snapshots in an old photo album, the articles told a story.

I found more familiar names...Roger Belongia, Rick Shukes, Tom Mowbray, Val Leever, Eileen Gottwald, and Arlen Wanta to name a few. I found the first article on water quality monitoring, fall 1998. Walleye Watch appeared in 1999. That fall the Great Addition headlined, announcing DNR acquisition of Big Island.

In spring of 2000, Paul Gottwald announced his move from president to ex-officio board member stating "I've enjoyed the job. We are now organized and ready to move on to new projects." Paul had shepherded the development of mission, by-laws, and the nuts and bolts it takes to start a new organization. As a retired DNR administrator, his skills in organization and coordination were no doubt invaluable, as was his understanding of the role that citizen stewardship could play as northern lakes faced increasing development and use.

Arlen Wanta was elected as the second association president in 2000, the year I joined the board and newsletter team. I

remember Arlen as a jovial man with a clear sense of what he wanted to accomplish. His first President's Letter began with the sentence "Fishing is a great way to relax and enjoy nature." Fish featured in every article he wrote, and he devoted much of his leadership to our fishery. In 2002 the first 32 fish cribs were placed. He also worked with Jim Leever to do the first intensive survey of our membership.

Arlen was a master at getting folks involved in conservation whether it was lifting heavy logs on a cold winter day or inspiring us to go fishing. In 2004, water levels crept into the newsletter for the first time, a preview of what would come during the drought. In August of 2006 Arlen passed away. In the following newsletter, Jim Leever remembered him with these words: "Arlen would look out at the flowage and see humps and stumps, weed beds, rock bars...there was hardly ever a conversation about fishing that didn't include some 'Arlen' stories."

Maryann Brown took up the reins of president with energy. If I could characterize her tenure, it would be as an ambassador for the flowage and the association. She was used to public service, not the least of which was her role on the DNR citizen advisory board for the scenic waters master plan to other committees and public meetings. Her newsletter articles praised the beauty and character of the flowage, reminding us all why we live, work and play here. She founded the Cabin Fever Party, made sure our meetings included time to socialize, and kept the board on task with our increasing workload. Along with fish cribs, loosestrife eradication and water quality work, water-level issues were heating up. She worked on fireworks regulations and involved our group in Mike Hittle's flowage history book project. In 2008 she finished out her term but stayed engaged, continuing in her role as our chief inspirational officer!

Reading through these newsletters left me feeling humble, and I pondered how personality seemed to set the stage for the leadership contributions of each president. We tend to focus on what we most enjoy.

I was first elected president in 2008 and brought a background in science, education and natural resources policy. If I look at my time as president, I feel most proud of the capacity we have built in those areas.

In 2008 we acquired a \$10,000 lake management grant and leveraged funds for a US Geological Survey baseline water quality study. Results suggested we expand monitoring protocols to help prepare for changes in climate and land use, with an eye to protecting long-term water quality. Part of the work was a survey of our membership on issues of concern and their hopes for the organization's direction. Based on USGS results, we expanded our water quality work to include four TFF basins, Trude Lake, Murrays Landing and the inlet at the Turtle River.



During a meeting with Xcel Energy about the water quality study, we started discussing the power company's upcoming invasive species plan which was required by the federal government. That conversation sparked collaboration between Xcel Energy and the Iron County LWCD, with Xcel providing \$7000 annually for work on invasive species.

Not everything with Xcel was easy. Our water-level issues were hitting rock bottom, literally. However, with the water-level committee and its captain, Jim Bohmann, we forged increasingly frank and regular conversations with Xcel and our DNR partners. This effort continues.

Perhaps in part due to the 2010 tornado with its generous contribution of downed trees along shores and the aging backs of our members, in 2012 we assessed our fish crib project. We had placed over 400 cribs in the flowage, but current science suggested that other management tools might be more effective. We decided to establish a fish management committee to evaluate the science and work more closely with the DNR on projects.

This effort was part of a larger re-structuring of committees aimed at energizing volunteers. It was nearly twenty years since inception, and we felt the need to tweak the bylaws and replace some original committees. Our new committees include membership, water quality, education and communications, water level, fish management, and invasive species. Just to highlight one, our new education and communications committee re-vamped the website with hopes to connect to younger audiences and streamline communications.

As if a real tornado were not enough, during my tenure, the board became increasingly engaged in natural resources

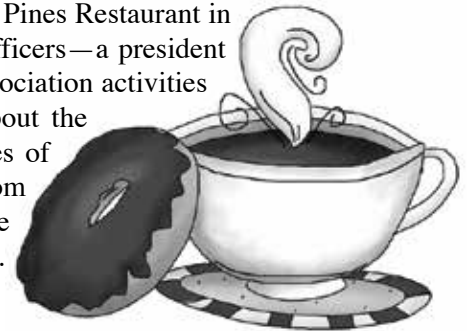
policy issues that could directly impact our members. These included motor trolling, a gravel pit proposal for Springstead, bass regulations, and most recently many changes in shoreland regulations passed or proposed by the state legislature. Another issue, a proposed ATV trail on the north side of the flowage, spurred us to conduct a recreation survey of members. Based on survey results, we opposed a suggested new trail on state land but took no position on the Popko Circle ATV route. We also participated in meetings with DNR and ATV interests seeking trail alternatives. Not surprisingly, we heard critiques from both sides of the controversy.

Jimmy Carter once said, "Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries." It goes without saying that all of this work is a credit to the board members, committee chairs, volunteers and dedicated members that we have in our association. Perhaps the best part of working with the association is making life-long friends and sharing experiences out on the water.

While I have decided that it is time to shift gears and not run for president, it has not been an easy choice. My husband has been threatening divorce if I don't take more time to enjoy the flowage and get away from the email. In the years I have been on the board, I have accumulated an impressive 838 separate TFF files in 67 folders on my computer. So, I hope to spend more time out on the water and less time tapping away on a keyboard. I will stay in touch with association activities and continue to do my part for our shared home, the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake. It is almost time for our association to celebrate its 20th birthday. It will be exciting to see the directions future presidents bring!

Annual Membership Meeting

The Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners' Association will hold its Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, June 18, at 10:00 a.m. This year we will meet in the Beer Garden at the Pines Restaurant in Mercer. The agenda includes, in addition to routine matters: elections for two officers—a president and a vice president—and two directors (voter IDs NOT required); a review of association activities for the year; remarks by John Richter of the Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative about the legislature and shoreland zoning; and an opportunity for members to raise issues of interest or concern about the flowage or the association. Coffee and confections from the Pines' kitchen will be available on your arrival, and the folks at the Pines will be ready to meet more substantial needs for food and drink at the end of our meeting. In the event of rain, the meeting will convene inside the restaurant.



Please join us for this most important event on our calendar.



Letter to the Editor

[Editors' Note: Though we invite letters from our readers, our mailbox is always empty. Recently, to our utter amazement, we received a letter in response to an article in our last edition; and we are pleased to be able offer this first-ever feedback from a member. Although we suspect the writer has used a pseudonym, we think his/her perspicacious remarks warrant publication.]

“Dear Mr. S. A. Tire,

After a careful reading of the most recent issue of the Driftwood newsletter, I believe that association member feedback would be somewhat appreciated. I have become very accustomed to the informative and entertaining articles regarding the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. This Fall/Winter issue was certainly no exception.

Of particular interest was your article regarding “licentiousness.” After a thorough search of Google, I was able to glean the meaning of this term, confirming my belief that this word had not likely been used outside of Madison and most certainly not north of Highway 10. Having overcome this vocabulary impediment, I was very disheartened to learn of the continued sexual frustration endured by our resident lake sturgeon. These creatures have long been a symbol of hope for many senior citizens—particularly the men. Still being able to reproduce at the age of 100 is nothing short of inspirational.

Hopefully the sturgeon will swim/march to the state capital as you suggest. Being unfamiliar with the state’s waterways, I can only assume that these sturgeon will have to use the state’s sewer system to reach our elected officials.

Thank you again for this informative article.

Very truly yours,

A. Mused

Plans in the Works – or How We Can Learn from our Pets

By Terry Daulton

What use are plans? In a way, we all make plans each year when we lay out New Year’s resolutions and most of us know what good those do...But still we keep trying. Perhaps planning is one of the things that sets humans apart from other species on the planet. (Although one might suspect our pets make plans... how to get a treat, how to take my owner for a walk, how to get into the bed at night).

But seriously, planning seems to be a necessary process for people and communities. It often brings out our aspirations for the future and if done well it can lay a course for solid improvement in economy, environment and quality of life.

This past year, Iron County began several planning processes which are undertaken every ten years. The county forestry department started work on the Iron County Outdoor Recreation Plan. The county zoning department began a comprehensive land-use plan update, which incorporates not only the outdoor recreation ideas but economy, health and services, arts, infrastructure etc. In this planning go-around a new approach was taken: an asset-based planning process. This process differs from one that starts by

identifying problems, in that it helps planners focus on existing strengths and positive actions we can take locally.

In the recreation planning process the forestry department did a survey of residents, landowners and visitors. North West Regional Planning, which facilitated the process, said that they had never received such a large response with so many constructive ideas. 558 people responded, 52% owned land in Iron County. Hiking, fishing, boating and snowshoeing were activities with the largest number of participants. Saxon Harbor and various other boat landings were cited as the most used county facilities. Fifty percent of respondents had visited the TFF in the past year. Seventy-four percent of respondents thought we had adequate snowmobile trails, 67% thought we had adequate ATV/UTV trails, and 54% thought we had adequate cross-country ski trails. The first choice for where we needed more trails was overwhelmingly bike trails. In the specific comments section there were some suggestions for the flowage, including opinions for and against the need for more ATV trails. From this survey, the county forestry department and a committee of citizens and elected officials developed a draft plan with specific projects. That draft and the survey results can be viewed

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Popko Circle ATV Issue: A Conflict in Values?

By Terry Daulton

What is it we value in the northwoods, and how do our local history and individual economic situations impact our values? The heated debates surrounding ATVs seem to me to be an interesting case study. It is hard to spend any time in the northwoods without becoming aware of the controversy evoked by decisions on ATV trails and routes. Pick up any newspaper and you are likely to read articles on this sticky issue filled with strongly held opinions and rancor on all sides. Mercer and the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area (TFSWA) have experienced this first hand.



Association member, Arnie Popp, readies his UTV for the season. Note the "Walleye Winch" for hauling in the big ones.

Iron County boasts Wisconsin's largest ATV system with more than 250 miles of trails and routes.

However, it should be noted that southern Iron County has fewer of those trail miles, at least in part due to the wetland and lake rich topography which makes trail development expensive and challenging. Many of you may have followed the ongoing discussions about a proposed trail on the north side of the flowage. In brief, there is interest in a trail from Mercer to the west end of Popko Circle. Such a trail would allow access to resort businesses and provide landowners access to the larger trail system. Hurdles have been finding private landowners willing to host a trail or a public land route that would not unduly impact wetlands and other water features. In addition, public land options are complicated by the potential need to change the TFSWA Master Plan should a trail be planned for state land. In all these discussions, it is important to keep in mind that ATV routes allow road access, while trails are specifically constructed for cross country travel. Many northern Wisconsin towns and counties are now considering opening all roads to ATVs, yet another potential controversy.

In 2013, the Town of Mercer granted a two-year temporary ATV route for Popko Circle. The idea was to evaluate the use of that route while the Dusty Loons ATV club pursued an alternate course for a trail from Mercer to Popko Circle that would cross fewer designated wetlands. At the time of the temporary route approval, the town expressed concerns about safety. The plan was that the route would be reconsidered by the town in the fall of 2016 after assessing landowner's opinions of the Popko route and further clarification of a trail option.

In the interim, an ad hoc committee of DNR staff, ATV club leaders, the Mercer Chamber of Commerce, and our association, met several times to consider options for a new trail. At the last meeting of the committee, a possible trail route was identified that would not cross large sections of wetland but would cross county land, some state land (thus requiring state approval and potential revision or amendment of the TFSWA Master Plan), and would also require permission from at least one private landowner. The DNR and county staff clarified that for a trail to receive funding and approval ATV proponents would need to identify the course of the trail on a map, provide documentation of any private landowner permissions, and have

a larger plan written out that would connect the trail to a larger trail system. Dead-end trails are low priority for approval and funding. The most likely connections to the larger trail system would mean a trail from Popko to Swamp Creek along FF or perhaps a trail west of Lake of the Falls that would connect to Russell Brothers road. In the mean time, the temporary ATV route on Popko Circle provided access to businesses.

This past February (18th) the ATV club asked the Mercer Town Board to consider permanently opening Popko Circle as a route. A group of 28 landowners who opposed to the route sent letters and a representative spoke at the meeting to express opposition. One opposing landowner traveled from Iowa to attend the meeting. An ATV club representative and some residents spoke in favor. A third argument was made that many seasonal and even permanent residents were not here in February. Eventually the Town Board decided to postpone a decision until May 15 when more residents and landowners would be available to express views. However, two weeks later, an additional issue arose. The Mercer Chamber of Commerce needed to print the ATV maps prior to May. In response to the Chamber's needs, the board met again on March 3 to consider the permanent route designation.

At this meeting, which was attended by a larger number of ATV enthusiasts, I spoke for the association. I again mentioned the results of the recreational survey we conducted as well as expressing concern about the short

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Conifers Native to the TFF Scenic Waters Area

By Chad McGrath

When TFF locals are asked to name a conifer, they generally say the word “pine”. Some less common responses would be spruce, balsam, hemlock, cedar and tamarack. These responses pretty well sum up the different species of conifers we find natively in and around the TFF. There are actually three different species of native pines (*Pinus*) growing in the TFF Scenic Waters Area: White, Red and Jack. (*strobus*, *resinosa*, and *banksiana*) White pine are generally thought to be the most aesthetically pleasing of the three, with mature trees having an irregular crown, their frond-like branches reaching skyward. Whites also achieve the greatest size, both in height and girth. Reds are often seen in plantations, their straight rows the anathema of wildness, but some lovely unplanted specimens can be found scattered throughout the northern forest. Jack pine are often felt to be the scruffy cousin of the pine world, short-needled and scraggly looking, not often of great size and with low eye appeal.



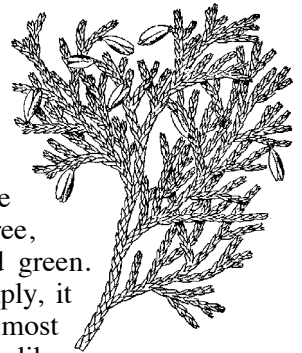
Classic Balsam Fir Spires

diameter giants of the U.P.’s Porcupine Mountains can’t equal white pine in height. And the small needles and strikingly small cones lend this lacy-leafed Amazon a feminine quality.

Spruce (*Picea*) come in two flavors here in the TFF Scenic Waters Area: White and Black (*glauca* and *mariana*). The two spruces can be difficult to tell apart. Your best, easy clue is location. Black spruce are almost always found near water, often almost in water. They are also found in pure stands in bogs and wet areas. White spruce are perhaps a bit more majestic and often stand alone or with one or two similar sized other whites.

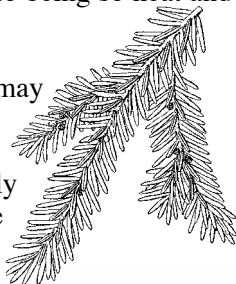


Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) has the oddest needles of our conifers. They are almost 2 dimensional, as if pressed with an iron (“appressed” in botanical jargon). The needles can look like sprays of foliage descending the tree, forming a solid wall of textured green. As “sprays of foliage” might imply, it seems a joyous tree but hangs out most often in foreboding, dreary places like dark sphagnum bogs. There are many varieties of cedar in the nursery trade, and it is perhaps the most commonly sold evergreen. We have all seen older homes made almost invisible by overgrown arborvitae. And we’ve seen cemeteries planted with nothing but pyramidal arborvitae: brown barked, green sheathed fingers reaching from below the soil up to the heavens, creating an unearthly landscape, perhaps mimicking the occupants’ aspirations to reach beyond their graves.

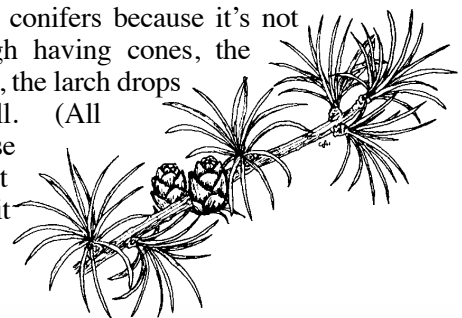


Balsam (*Abies balsamea*) fir is our only native fir and can be found growing almost anywhere in the TFF forest. You can often find one-foot tall specimens and taller, more mature balsam near one another. They are pretty shade tolerant, so will sprout and persist amid taller trees. Balsam are the trees of Christmas for many folks. Soft needles and wonderful fragrance make for a good “house guest” over the holidays. From a distance in the canopy, you can identify balsam fir by its singular spire-like tip. No conifer comes close to being so neat and pointed.

Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) may qualify as the Queen of the TFF Scenic Waters Area forest. There is something royal and gentle about hemlock. Locally some are truly monarchs, rivaling white pine in girth, although even the 4 foot



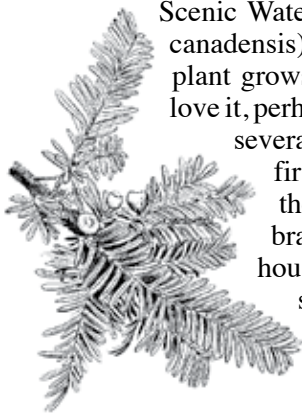
Larch, also known as tamarack (*Larix laricina*) is unique among these conifers because it’s not evergreen. Although having cones, the hallmark of a conifer, the larch drops its needles every fall. (All conifers actually lose their needles; but they just don’t do it every year and all at one time.)



Most people can recognize larch in October, when before dropping, the needles turn a rich golden color. Reflected in lakes around the north, it is an iconic image. Like black spruce and cedar, larch can grow in large stands where just the correct amount of water nurtures their birth and growth.

There are four other potential native coniferous residents of the TFF Scenic Waters Area. "Potential" because I have no reports of them here and I have not personally seen them. The least likely is the Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). It's toward the northern end of its range in Wisconsin and is not abundant anywhere in the northern forest. But they could be here. These bushy, prickly trees are plentiful in southern Wisconsin, visible off the side of the road in old, formerly tilled fields and unkempt areas. Two other juniper may also be somewhere inside the TFF Scenic Waters Area. Horizontal juniper (*Juniper horizontalis*) grows in a low, sprawling manner, never getting much above a few inches tall. It needs sunlight and likes rocky, craggy places, a tough combination to find around here. Common juniper (*Juniper communis*) gets taller, 4 to 5 feet, and also tolerates more shade, but it too prefers a dry, rocky soil.

Finally, the last conifer potentially in the TFF Scenic Waters Area is Canadian yew (*Taxus canadensis*). There's little doubt that this plant grows here. The problem is that deer love it, perhaps above all other food. I planted several native yew at my home when I first moved here 18 years ago. Only the one hidden under the lower branches of a balsam fir near my house is still alive, and it's actually smaller than when I planted it. One more note, yew do not have cones as we know them. They bear a pea-sized red berry-



like fruit called an aril. Its bright red color against the dark green needles is striking. There are lots of yew varieties used in the home landscape; most are crosses with a Japanese type. And most homeowners prune the dickens out of their plants and then never see an aril, which need older wood for development. Too bad. That's sort of like what we do governmentally in managing our forest. Most trees are cut long before they are biologically mature. Big, old trees are rare in the Scenic Area, as they are in most of the northern forest.

Here are three references if you are interested in reading more about trees and flora in general

Trees and Shrubs of Minnesota, by Welby R Smith, U of Minn. Press, 2008.

http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=JUVI
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

New Ranger for TFF

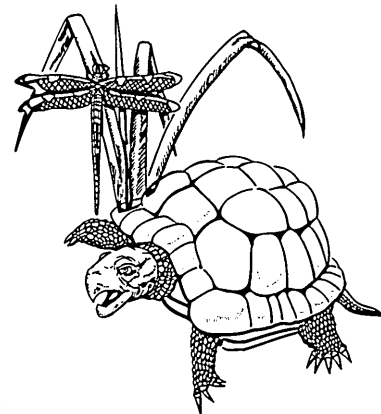


New Ranger for TFF with Thanksgiving Dinner

Hello, my name is Tyler Krekelberg, and I am currently in my final semester of College at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point studying Wildlife Ecology and Environmental Law Enforcement.

I am originally from Cokato, Minnesota, a small town in West-Central Minnesota. I grew up having a very strong passion for the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking are all things that I have grown up doing and still have the same passion for today. I also love baseball, football, and hockey and grew up staying plenty busy playing these sports.

That said, the main passion in my life would be my faith, and my faith is what makes me who I am today. I have a strong desire to serve God and people; and for me, working in the outdoors and working with people, is a place where I know I belong. Seeing people getting involved and learning more about the outdoors brings a lot of joy in my life. I always love meeting new people, so feel free to stop by and say hi.



The Legislature and the Lakes

By Mike Hittle

Act 55, Wisconsin's biennial budget for 2015-2017, contained language—inserted late in the budgeting process and without public input—that significantly limited the ability of counties to set standards for shoreland zoning deemed appropriate to local conditions. That action was followed during the 2015-2016 legislative session by the introduction of several bills that variously addressed issues relating to the state's lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Taken together, Act 55 and the newly introduced pieces of legislation seem to have been directed at three goals: to establish statewide uniformity of regulations; to narrow the purview of DNR regulation; and to extend the property rights of Wisconsin citizens.

Viewed from another perspective, however, these actions of the legislature disrupted established working relationships among citizens and governments at the local level and threatened to alter the character of many bodies of water. For example, counties may not establish shoreland zoning requirements that are more restrictive than state minimums, and lake classification for the purpose of zoning is no longer allowed. That means, in effect, that the minimum shoreland frontage lot size is 100 feet, not 200 or 300 as some northern counties previously required on certain lakes.

It comes as no surprise, then, that these initiatives prompted a strong reaction not only from affected governmental authorities, but also from individuals and groups with strong interests in the economic value, environmental health, and aesthetics of Wisconsin's waters. Existing conservation groups, such as Wisconsin Lakes, the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, to name but a few, stepped forward to express their concerns; and a new group, the Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative, Inc., sprang up in response to the measures introduced in Act 55. The latter group obtained a legal analysis of new legislation and then lobbied for legislative changes that would mitigate the adverse impacts of Act 55 on matters such as lake water quality and shoreland property values. The TFF&TLPOA has joined with over 60 lake associations to support the Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative and has supported its lobbying efforts.

When the legislative session ended in mid-March, the

situation stood as follows. Repeal of those parts of Act 55 that referred to zoning proved politically impossible. The only avenue open to opponents of the act was to seek legal means to delay or mitigate its effects. To that end, Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative, through its legal counsel, came up with a work-around designed to enable counties to zone shoreland lots through the exercise of their general county-wide zoning authority for political subdivisions. This same legal initiative also identified means by which counties could put a moratorium on development, pending the working out of new zoning codes. The legislature countered these attempts to limit Act 55 by passing Assembly Bill 582. This bill required political subdivisions to notify everyone in their jurisdiction of any potential actions (e.g., zoning ordinances) that might affect "the allowable use of a landowner's property," and it prohibited counties from enacting moratoriums on development. The bill went on to place procedural impediments to "down zoning," which was defined as efforts to reduce the density of development or to limit the uses of land. The bill also prohibited local regulation of any efforts to modify or replace structures located in a setback area if those structures had variances granted before July of 2015. Finally, the bill requires a court "to resolve an ambiguity in the meaning of a word or phrase in a zoning ordinance or shoreland zoning ordinance in favor of the free use of private property." In short, the legislature continued to facilitate more dense development of lakeshores and to restrict the ability of counties to tailor zoning for their regions.



Among other the bills introduced in the legislature in 2015, the ones that had the greatest potential to affect waterways were AB 600/SB 459. In its initial draft, AB600 permitted shoreland owners to remove (dredge) up to 30 cubic yard of lake bottom from inland lakes (and 100 yards from Great Lakes) every year without an individual permit. It declared that "any area of a navigable water that was filled before January 1, 1975, and has remained so ever since, is owned by the riparian owner in whose riparian zone [defined in the law as everything from the ordinary high water mark to the line of navigation] the filled area is located." The bill also permitted operation of ATVs and UTVs in the shallows without a permit if they were engaged in an activity that did not itself require a permit. Finally, it allowed for the sharing of docks, and appeared to place no limit on their length.

According to the Government Accountability Board, some



nine groups—all conservation-oriented—registered in opposition to parts of this bill, and an even greater number of groups—largely business-related—supported the bill, which contained a number of provisions not directly pertinent to shoreland issues. After a stop in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, chaired by Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay), a much-changed bill emerged for Senate consideration. Sections relating to the removal of material from lake bottoms, the operation of ATVs and UTVs, and shared docks were all removed from the bill. Another section of the bill would have allowed, under certain circumstances, the transfer of riparian ownership of filled lakebeds to private owners. Such a transfer seemed to challenge Wisconsin’s Public Trust Doctrine, which holds that the lands under lakes and streams belong to the general public, not the adjacent landowner. This provision also disappeared in the final version of the bill. Nevertheless, the final version of the bill (SB 459) contained passages that weakened protections of wetlands, expanded the legal definition of boathouses and strengthened their protections, and enabled seawall replacement even in “areas of special natural resource interest.” The bill, in its Senate version, passed both houses of the legislature.

One other legislative initiative that came before the legislature, although not touching on shoreland matters specifically, does have implications for riparian property owners. Assembly Bill 583 (SB 446) states that local governments cannot “prohibit, regulate the duration or frequency of, or unreasonably restrict the rental of a residential dwelling for seven consecutive days or longer.” At the extreme, this legislation could mean that every inhabitable property on a lake could be rented out for one week or longer. This legislation did not pass the legislature.

In spite of the outcome of the 2015-16 legislative session, Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative plans to continue its efforts “to correct the harmful Act 55 budget amendment” in the next legislative term. It has also identified AB 583 as a threat to lake property owners and will continue to oppose its passage.

Our association has invited the chair of the Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative, John Richter from Plum Lake, to speak at our annual meeting on June 18, 10 a.m. at the Pines. If you are interested in learning more about this group and their work, please join us.

Popko Circle ATV *Continued from page 5*

notice of the topic on the agenda in light of the decision two weeks earlier to postpone the decision until May. I opined that many residents and seasonal landowners from both sides of the issue could be out of town and might not have learned about the change in timing. I also reviewed for the town board the process that was underway with the ad hoc committee, explaining that the DNR was waiting to hear from the ATV club before any further options for a new trail would be developed.

I also spoke about the divisive nature of this issue in our community. I have heard from folks on many sides of this issue and have come to believe that much of this debate is based on fears about the future and on an underlying deep commitment to the quality of life in our area. On the one hand, I have heard from homeowners who moved here seeking quiet, tranquility and a retreat from the more developed parts of the northwoods. They see an ATV route and trail as a threat to their enjoyment of the area and their homes. On the other hand, business owners have told me they are struggling to make ends meet and see the ATV business as a way to offset declines in snow cover/snowmobilers and demographics on aging populations. ATV riders say that they are happy to share the trails and roads with other users, and don’t understand why non-motorized recreationalists are less willing to share space.

After lengthy debate the Town Board decided to permanently open Popko Circle. It is my understanding that Town Board member, John Sendra, has since been working to move the ATV Trail process ahead.

Seeing the anger, bitterness and disillusionment of people involved in this process has made me think about how we fail to work together as a community to resolve issues which touch on closely held values like economic security, privacy, democratic process and fairness, majority versus minority rights. This is not the last decision that will be made on ATV trails or routes, or other recreational uses in our shared commons. If anything can be learned I think it is that we need to include a wider group of citizens in the decision process from the outset. If trails are to be proposed in a neighborhood, we need to start talking about it early with as many neighbors and interest groups involved as possible. We need to be respectful, broad minded and visionary about the future and carefully consider how choices we make impact the short and long term economics and lifestyle in our community. We should not base decisions on any one interest group or on options that are determined behind closed doors. While working for our own interests, we also need to try to understand the views of others.

Our association will likely be active in this discussion as proposals related to state land in the TFSWA are developed. We will be attentive to possible impacts on water quality, threats from invasive species, and harm to aesthetics; in a manner consistent with our mission, “to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of the lake and its surroundings for the collective interests of the members and the general public”, will be our focus. At present some of this debate is geographically limited and perhaps beyond the purview of the association. I would, however, urge association members and others who are directly impacted by these kinds of issues to step up and participate in local decision

Website Makeover

By Leann Malison

A new look with more information are what you'll find at the recently improved association website at tfftl.org. Features include the latest news and reports, such as annual water-level analysis, DNR fish studies, and dates for upcoming meetings. The homepage includes the most recently posted material that is of significance to our members.

There is expanded information about membership: who is eligible, and how to become a new or renewing member. With membership renewal upon us, a new feature enables you to pay for membership via Paypal, and to download a PDF renewal form (renewal forms will still be mailed to members). We encourage you to invite a neighbor to join the association. All the information you need to recruit is now

available through the new website.

We've also provided more detailed information on the many ways to volunteer. It's an opportunity to learn more about the important jobs that need to be done to maintain our beautiful waters and surrounding land. If you're interested in fish management, helping find invasive species, monitoring water quality, or serving in a leadership role, these activities are all described, along with ways to contact us.

Of course, the website continues to provide you with information such as the Association Bylaws, past issues of Driftwood, and links of interest. But there's much new content. Take a look, browse around and see what the new website has to offer at tfftl.org.

Fishery Survey *Cont'd. from page 1*

This survey will be important for assessing the condition of the bass population prior to the new regulation change. Although panfish will be sampled during this electrofishing survey, we will also set fyke nets in panfish spawning habitats to assess abundances of bluegill and pumpkinseed populations. As with previously mentioned surveys, all individuals sampled will be measured and released.

Sturgeon netting will be conducted during summer months. We will use short-term gill net sets to capture lake sturgeon in lake basins and river channel areas. These nets are marked with flagged-buoys and are checked every hour. All individuals captured are measured, tagged for identification during subsequent sampling events, and immediately released. These surveys are critical for understanding the efficacy of our lake sturgeon population rehabilitation project.

Finally, we will conduct electrofishing surveys to assess walleye and musky natural reproduction during the fall. This survey will be targeting young-of-the-year (or baby fish spawned in spring of 2016) in near-shore areas. All fish sampled are measured and released.

Creel Survey

In addition to the fish survey, an angler creel survey will be conducted throughout the gamefish season. A creel survey is a sampling tool used to measure the fishing activities of sport anglers and to estimate the amount of fish harvested on a body of water. In general, creel surveys have a creel clerk on a lake working random shifts for forty hours each week throughout the fishing season. Over the course of a month, these random shifts cover a sample of all the possible daylight hours that may be fished.

To properly cover the area of Turtle-Flambeau and Trude Lake, we will have four creel clerks working the lakes. Two of the clerks will be counting and interviewing anglers from boats. The other two clerks will be interviewing anglers after their completed fishing trips at boat landings. Creel clerks will collect the following information: the species of fish targeted, catch and harvest, lengths of harvested fish, and hours of fishing effort. Typically, only anglers who have completed their fishing trips are interviewed as this provides the most accurate information and avoids disturbing anglers during their trip.

While the creel survey only takes a few moments to complete, we greatly appreciate angler cooperation. Information collected during these creel surveys is critical for understanding harvest and evaluating current fishing regulations. Combining data gathered during both the creel and fish population surveys provides managers with a complete picture of how these fisheries are functioning. Effort put forth by all involved will ultimately allow the DNR to better manage the fantastic fisheries of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake, and to ensure their sustainability for the future.

If you have any questions about any fisheries management activities for Turtle Flambeau and Trude, please contact:

Zach Lawson
5291 N State House Circle
Mercer, WI 54547
(715) 476-7847

If you have any questions about the creel survey, please contact:

Gene Hatzenbeler
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
810 W. Maple Street
Spooner, WI 54801
(715) 635-4164



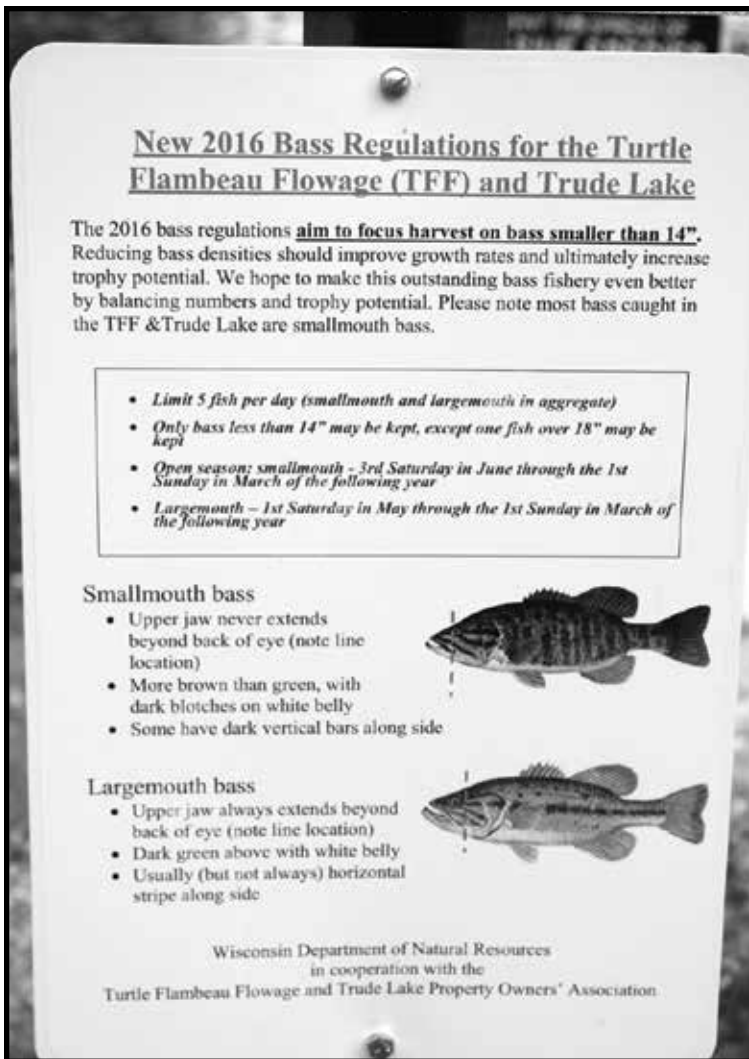
Water Quality Update

By Mike and Beth Myers

This year's ice out officially took place on April 16, and the first water-quality sampling was scheduled to take place within two weeks of that date. Happily, we have association volunteers who are ready to monitor all seven locations on the flowage throughout the course of the 2016 season.

Diane and Jeff O'Krongly are the new primary samplers for the Turtle River Inlet site. Kit Bogenschneider, the primary sampler in recent years, is the backup sampler for the site now. Thanks to Diane and Jeff for making sure we continue to collect data for the DNR for this location.

Enjoy your 2016 lake season!



Association works with DNR to design and distribute signs publicizing new bass regulations for the TFF and Trude Lake.

Plans in the Works *Cont'd from Page 4*

on the Iron County website at <http://www.ironcountyforest.org/>. A public hearing for the Outdoor Recreation Plan was held on April 12.

The larger comprehensive planning process is still ongoing. Again, a group of citizens and elected officials first compiled a list of nature-based, built, and human/cultural assets. They then began refining the list to identify "unique" and "significant" assets. In the unique category, the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Lake Superior came up as number one and two, respectively, of 22 unique assets. Significant assets were, in order: Lake Superior beach, inland lakes, Penokee vistas, waterfalls, abundant snowfall, Gile Flowage, hardwood forests, sustainable timber harvest, the TFF, followed by 31 additional assets. The planning team focused on nature-based assets as the core of their planning document. Much discussion followed about how to build the economy and infrastructure around outdoor recreation and natural resources and how to attract young people to our area. This planning process will include opportunities for public input and a public hearing. For more information you can visit <http://www.co.iron.wi.gov> and search in the comprehensive planning land/zoning department. You can also keep alert for public informational meetings and the hearing which will occur within the next few months.

What will make these plans and their lofty ideas generate on-the-ground results? Well, for one thing, accountability and follow up, something that is often lacking in New Year's resolutions. Perhaps it is important for Iron County residents to keep tabs on our elected officials and departments and periodically look to the plans and assess the county's progress in following them. Maybe we can take a lesson from our pets who are nothing if not persistent in pursuit of that extra treat or an afternoon stroll. If our pets can plan ahead and make progress, surely we can too!

TFF-TL POA

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Driftwood

The newsletter of the Turtle Flanbeau Flowage
and Trude Lake Property Owners' Association, Inc.

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— Mission Statement —

The purpose of the Association is to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of the lake and its surroundings for the collective interest of members and the general public.

Published Twice Annually

If you would like to contact the Association electronically, please visit our website
www.tfftl.org and search under "CONTACT US"

