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

Driftwood

Fall / Winter 2024

The Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation Focuses on Flowage EWM

By Cayla Cavey and Peter Levi

Editors' Note: Many association members may know that Iron County, the DNR and Northland College's Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation teamed up this summer to tackle our Eurasian water milfoil issue, taking a systematic approach to identify best methods for controlling the EWM spread. The following excerpt from an email with Cayla Cavey, Assistant Operations and Laboratory Manager, fills us in on progress.

Burke Center staff. Photo by Cayla Cavey

This summer, we started aquatic plant surveys the week of July 15th with funding from a DNR surface water grant. The Burke team, along with a team from the North Lakeland Discovery Center, conducted four surveys in the Voluntary Quiet Area. We replicated the original survey performed in 2018/2019 and added three new, detailed surveys in this area to better capture the nature of the plant community and Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) spread. The week of July 22, we shifted our survey focus to the Turtle River inflow to the flowage. There, we completed three additional detailed aquatic plant surveys to compare to the detailed surveys around the EWM invasion. In total, we performed seven successful aquatic plant surveys on the flowage this summer. We have done an initial review of the data. The species richness (e.g., number of unique plant species) was largely the same from the 2018/19 survey to 2024 (~44 species). However, the relative abundance of some species changed considerably. The general diversity of plants in the TFF is quite high, which is a great sign.

We did also share some social media posts about our work on the flowage at a few points this summer (such as via Instagram and Facebook).

In addition to our plant survey work, we received funding from the Natural Resources Foundation to measure water levels throughout the flowage in 2024. Four water data loggers were deployed for a total of 141 days, all the while measuring water level in the flowage every 30 minutes.

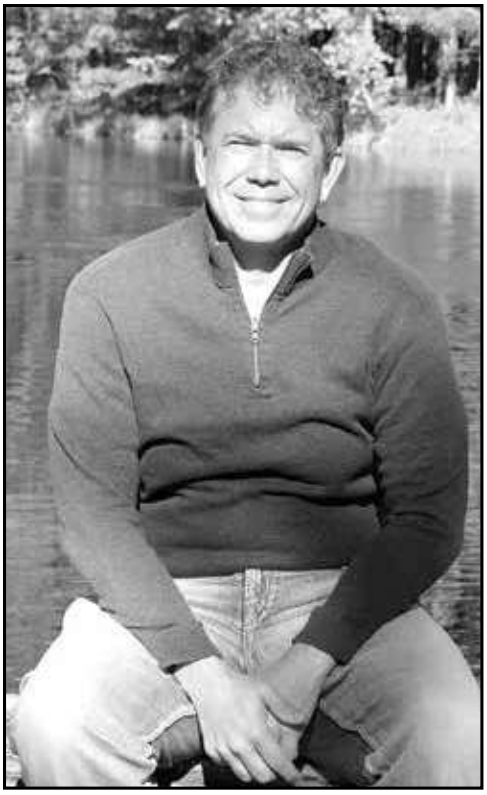
We are hoping that a clearer understanding of water level fluctuation across the flowage will better inform future EWM management decisions.

We are currently continuing to analyze both the plant survey and water level data so we can present it to the property owners' association.

Regarding potential future work on the flowage, we have an incredible team of faculty and staff working hard to attain more funding from the DNR and elsewhere to continue the survey and water level work next year.

President's Letter

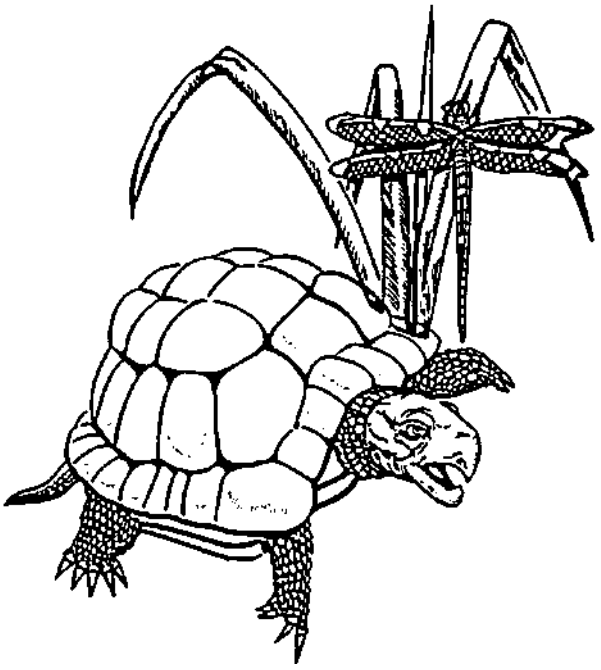
By Randy Schubert



As I write this we are approaching the end of another year – hard to believe how quickly time passes. As usual it has been a busy year for our association and its membership. Here are a few highlights. The association was able to update its by-laws for a stronger accreditation in order to position ourselves for applying for and securing financial grants to continue our ongoing fight against aquatic invasive species on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. We were also able to partner with Northland College in securing an important grant that will assist in further research and study of the Eurasian water milfoil which has been discovered on the flowage. We will continue to be proactive in our efforts to better understand this invasive and how to contain it from spreading. I would like to thank Randy Payne and his committee for all the work they have done on the Eurasian water milfoil, curly leaf pondweed and purple loosestrife. Our association, as a steward of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, will continue to make the invasives a top priority, devoting the resources, both financial and volunteer time where necessary.

We lost a great local partner this year when Zach Wilson took a new position. Zach has been such a wonderful friend to the association in sharing and contributing his time, knowledge and experience. On behalf of the association I would like to congratulate Zach on his new opportunity and also thank him for all he has done for the Turtle Flambeau Flowage Trude Lake Property Association (TFFTL-POA). We do however look forward to continued productive work with Iron County LWCD staff including department head, Heather Palmquist.

I would like to welcome several new board members and officers who were elected at our annual membership meeting in June. Karl Gustavson and Millard Johnson are our new board members and congratulations to Randy Payne who was voted in as our new vice president. I would also like to thank outgoing board members Jeff Malison and Jean Burns for all the years they have devoted to our organization – thank you. We also have a new chair of our Water Level Committee – Millard Johnson has agreed to take over the committee. I would like to thank Tom Mowbray and Jim Moore for all the work they have done over the years in keeping everyone updated on the water levels, historical trends and being such strong spokesmen for our association when working with Xcel – thank you!!



The association continues to remain strong in our membership and finances. Our members are committed in support of the organization's mission as stewards of this crown jewel. Thanks again to our leadership group, committee chairs, members and everyone who makes this organization a success. Have a wonderful winter and here's hoping that for those who spend the winter months in the area, we have plenty of snow!

Fisheries Update

By Jim Kohl, Chair, Fish Management Committee

On Sunday, November 3rd, I pulled my boat out for the season. This is something I've done for more than 50 years! The last 27 of those years were here at the Springstead Landing. In several of those years, this activity was done in haste, as 20 degree nights were starting to rim the shorelines with skim ice. This was not one of those years. Instead, I looked out on the bay with a sense of guilt. Am I pulling it too soon? Are the best fishing days still ahead? The water temps are in the mid 40 degrees, not 38 degrees. Oh well! I have a lot of winter preparation jobs to do in the yard and the garage. One day earlier, on November 2nd my brothers and I fished for three hours in the afternoon; catching over two dozen walleyes, two smallmouth bass, one big crappie, and a handful of rock bass. We were anchored in one spot in the river channel in 22 feet of water. It was a nice way to finish the season! We released the fish!

Photo by Jeff Kohl

After draining the bilge and livewell, winterizing the outboard, and charging the batteries, I rolled the boat into the garage, where it will sit until next May. As I stored the rods, reels, and tackle boxes; I reflected on the open water fishing season that just ended. There were good days and tough days. That's not unusual, but the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and its fisheries face new challenges. In this article, I'll share some of the things your association volunteers do on your behalf.

I'll start with fish populations, since I am the chairman of our Fish Management Committee. Our association has worked closely with the DNR for 20 years. One of the most visible joint ventures was the construction and placement of more than 400 fish cribs. The idea behind the cribs was to provide cover, shelter, and baitfish sanctuaries, replacing the hundreds of stumps that once covered large expanses of the flowage. These cribs have certainly attracted thousands of fish and provided fishing opportunities for all species during the past twenty years. The cribs are best known as seasonal hotspots for bluegills and crappies, but I have caught just about every species of gamefish over them, including big muskies!

Managing fish populations is a complex challenge for DNR fisheries biologists. Our Iron County biologist is Zach Lawson. Zach is responsible for fish management in both Ashland and Iron Counties, including inland lakes, trout streams, and Lake Superior tributaries. So, while the Turtle Flambeau Flowage is a high priority, he and his work crews have a significant workload. The walleye fishery is the #1 priority here on the flowage (also ranked #1 in our lake association survey). The DNR crews do annual surveys on the water for walleye recruitment (fall shocking), sturgeon monitoring, (summer netting), and periodic surveys for panfish and bass. The results of these surveys (data) are important in determining what actions are needed to reach population goals. The tool used to manage these populations is usually changes in the fishing regulations.

Our association Fish Management Committee currently consists of seven members. Those members are located in different areas of the flowage and have different educational backgrounds. So, in our meetings with the DNR, we discuss a wide range of fishing related topics: walleye stocking, "walleye wagon", musky stocking, shoreline erosion, invasive aquatic weeds, fishing regulations, wake boats impacts, forward looking sonar impacts, smallmouth bass versus walleye relationship, and adult panfish predation on walleye fry. In addition, our committee includes two area fishing guides and a fishing tackle retail store owner. We meet once or twice a year and, as chairman, I communicate with these members regarding information I receive from Zach Lawson.

Our association has been included in the discussions and decision making process in regulation changes for smallmouth bass, musky and walleye size limits, panfish bag limits, and more.

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Welcome Casey Baye - New Flowage Manager

By Chad McGrath

Shortly after beginning his new job as the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area Property Manager in early September, Casey Baye faced a daunting task. It was his responsibility to pull from the flowage the piers/docks at each of its four landings. The work required removing the upright metal posts that hold the floats, which hold the deck sections. After a season's worth of wear and tear, the poles get pounded down into the bottom muck and can require a mechanical jack to pull them up. Once the sections are freed, they need to be dragged up the ramp, onto dry land, and stacked or loaded onto a trailer. The process is complicated because some of the floats leak and are full of water, the Styrofoam inside soaked after a summer of leaking. A water filled float likely weighs over a thousand pounds. Sometimes as the electric winch slowly pulls the sections up the ramp, a section will get stuck on a high spot in the ramp. It then needs to be hand-jacked to free it, a potentially dangerous job. It took Casey and his crew of two nearly 12 hours to finish the four landings.

To his credit, even after such a rude introduction to his new job, Casey, who hails from Appleton, is still with us and enthusiastic. He holds a degree from UW Stevens Point in Natural Resources Conservation Planning and Soil Sciences, a degree path also followed by his father before him. His mother is a special education teacher.

Although Casey is new to the Property Manager position, he is not new to natural resource agency positions. He's been a summer park ranger at Peninsula State Park in Door County, summer recreation technician in the Lakewood/Laona Ranger District of the Chequamegon -Nicolet National Forest, and a summer backcountry ranger in Yellowstone National Park. This last position involved excursions into the Yellowstone wilderness either by horse or "self-propelled watercraft", usually kayak, to clear trails and check campsites. On longer trips they would overnight at one of the 40 rustic cabins located inside the park.

When asked what attracted him to this Property Manager position, his response is quick and upbeat. "I really like talking to people about natural resources. When I see someone or a family out there having fun enjoying nature it makes me feel great." When asked about challenges, he is also quick with his answer: "Manpower". The DNR allocates only his position and a half-time limited term employee position, which is used as a six-month full-time position in the summer. When asked about using volunteers, Casey responds positively, saying he, "Realizes volunteers can be helpful," and that "Two volunteers spent over 40 days/nights on the Flowage this last summer painting picnic tables."

Another challenge involves the dumpsters at the landings. There's been a move afoot nationally and here in Wisconsin to have hikers and campers "pack it in, pack it out." This includes your garbage. Casey says there've been problems with the dumpsters getting too much use, including from area residents, and overflowing. When this happens, people begin dumping things in the recycle bins. The resulting mess has led to penalties from the waste disposal company that total over a thousand dollars. The dumpster rental is expensive. If the pack it in, pack it out ethic could succeed here, dumpster rental fees could be used for other things, like "fixing the campgrounds and pumping the toilets, which have been neglected for several years."

Casey would also like to, "Fix the trail system. Right now, people hike the system and end up at dead ends or travel in unwanted circles because there's no signage, or incorrect signage."

During our talk, Casey told me that he views himself in the Property Manager position as a public servant. Asked why, he said it's likely an ethic learned from his mom and dad. And I'm sure an ethic that will serve him and those he serves well.

Association Annual Meeting
Mark Your Calendars!

June 21, 2025 – 10 AM to Noon

Mercer Community Center

New Mercer Ranger Station Open House

Photo by Terry Daulton

An open house was held on October 29th to introduce the public to the new ranger station. DNR representatives included: Jenna Malinowski, wildlife biologist; Jason Folstad, fisheries technician; Don Pelkowski, forestry technician; Katy Broquard, forester; Casey Baye, TFF property manager, and Ryan Peaslee, forestry team leader.

Staffing Changes at Iron County Land and Water

By Terry Daulton

If you have been active in Iron County conservation work on lakes or rivers, you likely worked with either our County Conservationist, Heather Palmquist, or with Conservation Specialist, Zach Wilson. Late in the summer, Zach Wilson announced that he would be moving on to a new position as Forest Ecologist with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Service based in Odanah.

Zach has been an active part of our Iron County conservation community since college, first when he worked for the North Lakeland Discovery Center and later in his role with Iron County. He also held a position with the Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Land. Most recently he has been heavily involved with work on invasive species control and outreach in Iron County and was a valuable partner with the TFFTL-POA in its work to control and prevent invasives. He supervised summer intern crews, organized volunteer days with our association and others, and led efforts to prevent the spread of curly leaf pondweed in the Turtle River system. Zach also worked in education and outreach, giving many public presentations, coordinating the Conservation on Tap at the Pines in Mercer in the summer, was a leader during the Wisconsin Conservation Camp and worked with Mercer and Hurley schools on the Woods and Waters Project for high school students. In 2023, his summer field crew was the first to identify Eurasian water milfoil in the flowage and he worked as part of the team that successfully applied for an AIS early response grant for the waterbody in 2024. Zach's enthusiasm and professional expertise will be missed.

Heather Palmquist, Department Head for the LWCD, informed *Driftwood* that the Conservation Specialist position is currently vacant and any questions or needs can be directed to her. Look for more updates on county staffing and work in our spring/summer issue.

Our association would like to express its thanks to Zach for his years of service and while he has moved on to a new role in conservation, we can still expect to see him out and about on the flowage. Hopefully he will be enjoying the flowage from a campsite, beach or fishing boat!

Moose On The Loose

By Chad McGrath

Photo by Amanda Griggs

As Amanda Griggs remembers it, she started her long slide toward moose addiction back in July of 2017. She was driving on highway 47 south of Mercer, when she noticed something odd along the roadside, in the brush, beyond the ditch. A "U" turn later she sat gazing at moose antlers 30 yards from her, as they and the attached moose crossed the road. She was struck by its size and fascinated by its being here in Northern Wisconsin: "I've been stalking moose ever since." Her stalk has taken her some wild places-literally and figuratively.

Last September Amanda went out for a hike looking for moose sign and checking trail cameras. "I'd been out for over four hours, and was getting tired, looking down a lot, stepping over deadfalls and through thick vegetation. Then I looked up and saw moose antlers through the brush, about 20 feet away. Then I saw a second antler pair near the first. They started sparring, I started taking video and when I heard the two moose vocalizing I got sort of scared but didn't want to leave because I needed to record it."

Amanda lives in Springstead. She'd been a teacher and school administrator for 20 years, but recently took a position in health care. And since her 2017 highway 47 encounter she's spent a lot of time not only tracking and recording moose but developing a database of sightings, photos, and her efforts to clarify the place of moose in the Springstead and Northern Wisconsin ecosystem. Her stated goal is to, "get them recognized as a resident species". Her hypothesis, as stated in the online crowdfunding site experiment.com is: "Wisconsin hosts a self-sustaining moose population, with recurring adults, breeding, and calf recruitment."

Why does Amanda want to "get them recognized"? She answers that question with another statement in her experiment.com funding request: "This project addresses a critical data gap in understanding the moose population in Wisconsin, which is currently unrecognized as a resident species. Without official recognition, moose lack state funding for monitoring and conservation."

"A picture is worth a thousand words"

This old saw is especially true in wildlife research. And the advent of trail cameras has been a boon to such research. Amanda's 25 cameras have taken hundreds of pictures of moose, but after eight plus years of service, 15 are currently out of order. That's one of the reasons she's gone to the crowdfunding site with an experiment and budget. She's currently (early November) seeking to fund $3,915 for cameras, memory cards, and batteries.

So, how many moose are out there?

Some experts have suggested that there are around 40 moose in Wisconsin at any one time and that these are tourists. A 2021 research article in The American Midland Naturalist, Proximity to Established Populations Explains Moose (Alces alces) Occurrence in Northern Wisconsin (Olson et al., 2021), concludes that moose seen in Wisconsin result from moose that stray into the state from Michigan and even Minnesota.

Amanda suggests that there are more. When asked how many moose live in the Springstead area, the area she has done the most research in, she comes up with, "six". She knows three of them so well she's named them and has taken their pictures! Extrapolating her estimate for the Springstead area to across the state, considering only suitable

Amanda Griggs and a shed moose antler.
Photo by Amanda Griggs

northern wetland habitats, gives a number of well over 100. But even if the number is only 40, some or most of them could be residents, not visitors.

Remember a few paragraphs back reading the quote from Amanda about being scared as the two moose 20 feet from her bellowed and clashed antlers, but that she couldn't move away because she had to keep documenting it? That day's four hour plus moose trek finished in the dark because, hours earlier, in her eagerness to get started and not expecting to be out so late, she'd not taken a flashlight. "Wanderlust knows no bounds", she said as we finished up our interview. And neither does this citizen scientist/former educator when it comes to moose: she knows no bounds.

Save The Turtle Flambeau Auto Tour

By Diane O'Krongly

Did you know there's an auto/bike interpretive tour on the north side of the flowage along Popko Circle that contains a plethora of information about the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Water Area? There are fifteen featured locations with #1 starting at the Little Turtle Flowage at Joe's Shack road. The tour ends at Lake of the Falls County Park on County FF. In all, the tour is 24 miles long and has 15 stops. The purpose of the tour is to showcase historical and/or natural history of each location and to illustrate the interactions between humans and our native flora and fauna. Through my involvement in the Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts (ICORE), a club that promotes activities such as bike riding, I have learned that many people who are familiar with this tour absolutely adore it. However, there is a chance that this awesome resource may be lost as the DNR writers of the new management plan are considering eliminating most of the stops. I will admit that the tour could use some updating. A few of the locations should be moved and a couple may be eliminated. For example, #11 should be moved north on Popko Circle to indicate that there is an osprey nest platform (installed by Xcel Energy) that is visible from the road. In addition, the current signage is poor. I met someone who noticed the current location markers and thought they were signage that indicated auto camping locations. Plus, locals and visitors are unaware of how to access information about the tour locations. .

You can download an amazing booklet describing the tour. This booklet will instruct you where to start the tour and provide great information about each stop. To obtain a booklet, go to: https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/lands/turtleflambeau/recreation/autotour.

The tour needs our help. Please consider contacting one or all of the following to voice your support for the continuation of this educational tour.

Casey Baye, Property Manager of the TFSWA- casey.baye@wisconsin.gov
The Mercer Chamber of Commerce- melissa@mercercc.com
TFF- Business Owners Association- turtleflambeauflowage.com
Iron County Forestry (several stops are on Iron County Forestry land) - tara@ironcountyforest.org
Roxanne Lutgen (Iron County Board of Supervisors District 13- roxanne.lutgen@ironcountywi.org

Please visit the TFF-TLPOA Facebook page and leave comments in support of saving the TFSWA Auto Tour.

Fisheries Update

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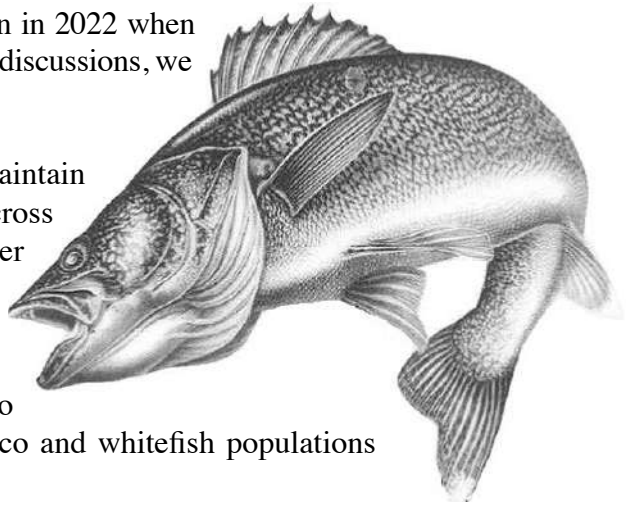


Our association was recognized as a stakeholder organization in 2022 when the DNR revised its Master Walleye Plan. During those statewide discussions, we learned that the declining walleye population challenge was not unique to the flowage.

Most of the lakes in Northern Wisconsin are struggling to maintain strong healthy walleye populations. In fact, the same is true across much of North America and parts of Canada. Many of the shallower lakes and flowages are shifting from cold water fisheries to warm water fisheries, including the TFF. Those conditions are more favorable to bass and panfish. When I started fishing here more than 50 years ago, several of the deeper TFF basins had cisco populations, indicating a healthy cold-water fishery. These cisco and whitefish populations have almost entirely disappeared.

Rising water temperatures and changing environmental conditions are primarily responsible for this shift. These changing characteristics combined with increased fishing pressure and improved electronic technologies will continue to stress the sustainability of our walleye population! Overharvest from spring spearing and hook and line angling means that despite optimal conditions and a strong history of excellent natural reproduction, there are simply fewer walleyes participating in the spawning process.

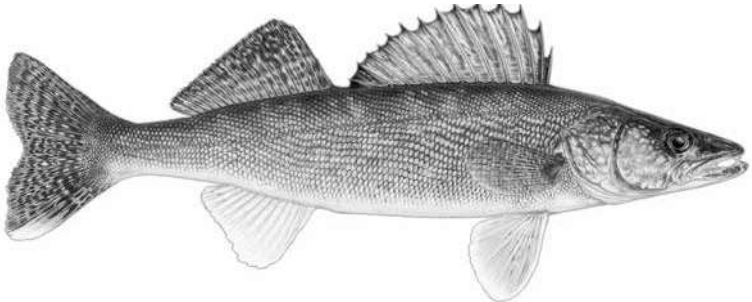
Despite the problems and challenges our walleye population faces, we still have the BEST natural reproduction in the state. On November 2nd, I experienced good walleye fishing with two different year classes. The DNR will not stock walleyes in the flowage because of the strong natural reproduction present. Additionally, in the recently completed fall walleye recruitment survey, the DNR found 83 young of the year (YOY) walleyes per mile of shoreline. Those results are not official but they are very encouraging, especially after concerns regarding low water and early ice out. There was also some excellent late October crappie fishing, with good catches of 13" to 14" fish!

Be aware that our association has volunteers that are monitoring water quality throughout the open water period. Association volunteers collect samples from seven different locations and mail them to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene four times during the open water season. Information collected includes water clarity, water temperature, and chemical testing for chlorophyll and phosphorus. This historical data is recorded and can be used to track any concerning changes in the future.

We have members that sit in on and participate in water level discussions with the DNR and Xcel Energy. We are recognized as a stakeholder in those meetings!

We also have a dedicated group of volunteers that are working to eradicate purple loosestrife and we are monitoring the flowage for curly leaf pondweed and the recently discovered Eurasian water milfoil. Association volunteers have been working to locate and remove purple loosestrife from our shorelines for over ten years.

Your membership in the TFFTL-POA helps to assure that the activities outlined in this article will continue in the future!



Citizen Lake Monitoring Network

By Troy Tipton and Becky Jirous

The Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN), the core of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, creates a bond between over 1,000 citizen volunteers statewide and the DNR. CLMN goals are to collect high quality data, to educate and empower volunteers and to share this data and knowledge. On the flowage, CLMN volunteers measure water clarity, chemistry, temperature and dissolved oxygen data, as well as monitor for the first appearance of aquatic invasive species. "Ice on" and "ice out" dates are also collected.

Paul Skawinski of the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point Extension Lakes Program provides statewide support and the Wisconsin DNR provides support to multiple northern counties, among them, Iron County. The 2024 water quality volunteers are: Jim Blum, Jim Kohl, Jack Peterson, Keewin Wilson, Bill and Sally Stewart, Diane O'Krongly, and Troy Tipton.

Here are some interesting tidbits on one of the tests conducted by CLMN volunteers–the Secchi disk. Water clarity or Secchi disk depth is probably the most common limnological measurement taken in lakes today. It is an integrative measurement of suspended solids (turbidity) in the water and provides an easy and economical assessment of lake health. High turbidity in a lake is generally considered bad because high levels of suspended particles block sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, hindering photosynthesis and reducing dissolved oxygen levels, which can negatively impact aquatic life like fish; therefore, a moderate level of turbidity is usually considered optimal for a healthy lake ecosystem.

The Secchi disk was invented by Father Pietro Angelo Secchi, who was asked to develop a water transparency instrument. The devised disk was first lowered into the Mediterranean Sea on April 20, 1865 and has seen many changes in terms of size and color in its history.

The Secchi disk CLMN volunteers use today to measure the water clarity of lakes across Wisconsin is an 8-inch black-and-white disk. Volunteers take Secchi disk readings at the same GPS coordinates throughout the open water season. The disk is lowered into the water from the shady side of a watercraft midday and the lowest depth at which they are able to see the disk is recorded. They also record the conditions at the time of the reading (sunny/cloudy/windy, etc.). The information is then entered into a DNR database that monitors and interprets the data over time as well as helping calibrate satellite imagery of the full body of water's turbidity.

The Secchi disk visibility world record of 262 feet was set in the Weddell Sea in Antarctica in 1986. The clearest lakes in Wisconsin only have maximum water clarities of 25 to 55 feet. These lakes include the aptly named Crystal Lake in Sheboygan County with a water clarity of 32.5 feet in March 2012, Maiden Lake in Oconto County with a water clarity of 47.5 feet in May 2009, and Black Oak Lake in Vilas County with a water clarity of 53.5 feet in June 2012. These lakes stand in stark contrast to some of the more turbid lakes we find in Wisconsin. Some of these lakes include Lake Wissota in Chippewa County with a water clarity of 0.25 feet in June 2012 and Lake Winnebago in Winnebago County with a water clarity of 0 to 0.25 feet in July 2012. Closer to home, Trude Lake Secchi results for 2024 were in the range of 11 to 12 feet while the flowage results ranged from 3.5 to 11 feet depending upon the location.

If you are interested in learning more about CLMN or helping with water sampling, please contact Todd Jirous at tbjirous@charter.net.

Source documents for this article came from several web pages off of https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/lakes/clmn

That Plant Was Used to Treat What? The Story of Lobelia Siphilitica (Great Blue Lobelia)

By Mary Nelson

Great blue lobelia (Lobelia siphilitica) is a stunning native Wisconsin plant! It grows two to four feet tall with a spread of two to three feet. Bright-blue, trumpet shaped flowers cover tall spikes, blooming from July through September. The flowers are rich in nectar and attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. Although numerous types of bees can pollinate great blue lobelia, the structure of the flowers make bumble bees, mainly due to their larger size, the most successful pollinators. The trumpet shaped flowers have five petals; the three lower petals are fused, and the upper two petals are usually curled back. A bumble lands on the lower petals, pressing them down, and then pushes the upper petals aside. The bee then dives headfirst into the flower to access the nectar and pollen. It is entertaining to watch bumble bees climb up the spike going from flower to flower until they reach the top and then fly off to another flower spike.

First year plant.
Photo by Mary Nelson

Here's what you need to know if you plan to include great blue lobelia in your landscape. It prefers medium to moist soil in partial shade but will tolerate full sun if it is mulched and watered periodically to ensure its roots stay cool. It can be short lived, but it will self-seed under the right conditions to form colonies, but it is not overly aggressive. Since the plants have fibrous roots, small seedlings that result from self-seeding can easily be dug and moved elsewhere. If you are interested in collecting seeds from the plant in the fall, wait until the flower spikes have started to turn brown. Cut off the spikes and place them in a paper bag. After a couple of days, empty the bag over a seed screen to separate the seed from the chaff. The seeds are very tiny and remind me of paprika.

Great blue lobelia has a very interesting history. As its scientific name suggests, it was once used in combination with other plants by Native Americans to make a tea to treat syphilis. Despite this traditional use, scientific research has shown that the plant does not have any proven efficacy against syphilis. Lobelia leaf teas were also used to treat other disorders, including colds, fevers, stomach ailments, croup, worms and nosebleeds. Poultices of crushed leaves were used to ease headache pain and promote healing of hard to heal sores. Some Native Americans believed that secretly adding ground roots to the food of an arguing couple would somehow put an end to the argument and avert divorce.

When you consider all the medicinal uses of great blue lobelia through the years, it is quite surprising to find out that it, as well as all other lobelias, contains a host of toxic alkaloids, including lobeline, lobelanine, and lobelanidine. Ingesting large amounts of lobelia can cause a range of symptoms ranging from vomiting and excessive sweating to coma and even death. Lobelia can also cause skin irritation or allergic reactions, such as redness, itching, or a rash. Considering this, it is also surprising to see how readily available lobelia products are for purchase. These products have been touted to protect against ailments such as asthma and other respiratory

disorders, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and drug abuse. However, there is no scientific evidence to support the efficacy of these products for these disorders. At one time, lobelia products containing lobelia lobeline, particularly Lobelia inflata (Indian tobacco), were sold in tablet form for smoking cessation. However, in 1993, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prohibited the sale of smoking products containing lobeline. Again, the main reason for this was that there is limited evidence of efficacy. Another contributing factor to this decision was the fact that lobeline has a narrow therapeutic index, meaning that the potentially beneficial dose is very close to the toxic dose.

Due to its toxicity and unpleasant taste, most mammals will avoid nibbling on this plant. The deer-resistant label, however, does not stop our Northwoods four-legged critters from taking the occasional bite.

Bumblebee gathering nectar and pollen.
Photo courtesy of nativesuburbia.com

What Are Our Association Funds Used For?

By Roger Nelson

The 2024 year to date finances show that the association has collected $4990 in dues and $4005 in additional donations for a total of $8995. This is compared to expenses of $6850.
A breakdown of those expenses follows:

Printing and Postage including Driftwood	$1316
Water Quality Testing	$780
Special Projects (funds Manitowish Discovery Center pulling Clover Leaf Pondweed upriver)	$2460
Administrative (website hosting and other miscellaneous expenses)	$1036
Purchase of 50 Road Signs to replace depleted inventory	$1258
Total	$6850

While our donations exceed our expenses, note that our dues do not cover our expenses ($4990 in dues compared to $6850 in expenses). It is because of the generosity of our members in making additional contributions to the general fund and special fund that we can meet our obligations. We want to thank all of our generous members and donors for their support - you make all of our volunteer work possible!

Keeping Our Association Vital: The Board of Directors and Our Volunteers

By Mary Nelson

The Turtle Flambeau Flowage-Trude Lake Property Owners Association (TFFTL-POA) was established on June 8, 1996, with a membership of 25 flowage residents. In 1997, the association was officially incorporated by the state and received its federal tax exemption status (501C4) in 1998. By fall 2012, the membership had increased to 185. Today, the membership stands at 198.

When the association was originally formed, there were no pressing issues or threats that required immediate attention. Paul Gottwald, the first president of the association, stated, "We wanted to be prepared…to build some camaraderie with stakeholders [property owners] around the flowage…to make sure that nothing bad happened."

Things have obviously changed since then. Today, the flowage faces numerous challenges that require attention, including invasive species, water quality, fluctuating water levels, fish management, shoreline erosion, and wake boats. The association accepts these challenges and works diligently to uphold its 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."

There is no doubt that we, as an association, can only accomplish these tasks if we maintain these two things: a strong board of directors and a solid volunteer base. Since the association has acquired 52 new members since May of this year, it's time to revisit both of these issues.

First, let's meet the board.

At the helm is our president, Randy Schubert. He has held this position since 2018. Randy is responsible for setting agendas and leading board meetings. In addition, he acts as emcee for our annual meetings and represents the association at official events.

Randy Payne serves as the board's vice president. He is also the invasive species coordinator for the TFFTL-POA, responsible for coordinating volunteer efforts, helping the TFFTL-POA and upstream associations with control, data logging and mapping, interfacing with Iron County/DNR, and attending various seminars and meetings. He is retired from a career in electrical engineering, physics and software. He will admit that he is not a biologist but is reinventing himself by learning about aquatic invasive species and the importance of controlling them! His hobbies include fishing, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and computer software.

Roger Nelson has been the treasurer and chairman of the Membership Committee for the association for a little over two years. As treasurer he is responsible for managing the association's finances, and as chair of the Membership Committee, he sends out the annual renewal notices and maintains the database of contact information for all enrolled members. Roger retired from a career in the financial services industry in 2007. He enjoys being on the board as it gives him the opportunity to interact with other board members and the membership in general. It also has given him a greater insight into the challenges that the flowage faces.

Todd Jirous, the association's secretary, is a Stevens Point native who spends as much time as possible on the flowage after purchasing a cabin 19 years ago. He retired in August and is looking forward to spending more "time on the water". Todd has been actively involved in water quality monitoring and invasive species identification and removal. He also served as the president of the Fort Flambeau Condominium Association for 10 years. Todd's professional career helped him hone his team-building, listening and coaching skills to lead successful teams supplying 50+ grocery stores and leading supply chain operations for a Wisconsin based health care organization with 13 hospitals and 40 physician practices.

Jim Kohl is one of five directors on the board. Jim and his wife Mary live on Shenebeck's Point on the flowage. They have been enjoying the flowage since 1972, primarily as fishermen, but as property owners since 1997. They share their home with two Labrador Retrievers, Jo Jo and Kay. Jim has been a board member for seven years and the chairman of the Fish Management Committee for the past four years. In that role, he works closely with Iron County fisheries biologist Zach Lawson and seven committee members, representing all areas of the flowage and possessing knowledge of different gamefish species. The committee, which also includes local fishing guides and a fishing tackle retailer, works closely with the association's aquatic invasive species committee, water level committee, and water quality committee to face the challenges of declining fish populations and the arrival of Eurasian water milfoil and curly leaf pondweed. Jim writes an article for each *Driftwood* newsletter addressing the fish populations on the flowage.

Jeff Wilson is a long-time flowage resident and association member. He worked for the Wisconsin DNR for most of his 30-year career. During that time, he held the wildlife technician position in Mercer, working on bear, deer, waterfowl, osprey, and non-game species projects to name a few. He assisted with many of the annual flowage wildlife surveys and spent his final career years working on research on common loons. That work spanned topics from mercury in loons, nest predators and chick production to satellite telemetry for both the DNR and US Geological Survey. He was on the original lake association board as the DNR liaison when Paul Gottwald founded the group. He was also on the first team that drafted a master plan for the flowage when it was acquired by the state. Jeff is a member of the Fish Management Committee and still spends much of the year at his remote cabin in the Horseshoe section of the flowage. He invites members to stop by for a visit!

Joanna Vodicka has been a proud member of the TFFTL-POA since 2021. In addition to serving on the board, Joanna has worked with the newsletter, our previous member survey, and other communications efforts for the association. Joanna and her family have a cabin on Lake Bastine. Their unique property, featuring an island and a bridge (often visited by kayakers during low water), is a hub for lake life in the summer and winter. Joanna's husband Mike is an avid musky fisherman, and their two kids, Allie (12) and Jack (9) love spending time exploring and relaxing. Joanna joined the board to learn more about the lake and scenic waters area while contributing her marketing expertise. If you're ever nearby, don't hesitate to paddle by or stop in to say hello!

Our two newest board members, Millard Johnson and Karl Gustavson, are highlighted in separate articles in this *Driftwood*.

Now, let's address volunteerism.

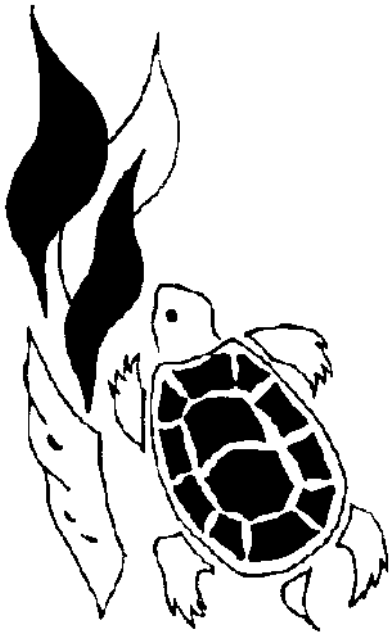
In pursuit of its goals, our association, as well as associations and organizations throughout the country, relies heavily on volunteers from its general membership. According to the US Census Bureau, an estimated 23.2 percent of Americans or 60.7 million people formally volunteered with organizations between September 2020 and 2021. In total, these volunteers served an estimated 4.1 billion hours with an economic value of $122.9 billion. If organizations had to pay people to perform the tasks accomplished by volunteers, they would probably cease to exist.

According to the US Census Bureau, the number one reason for people not volunteering is that they do not want to make ongoing commitments. Many of the things that the association needs to accomplish require volunteers that are willing to make an ongoing commitment, such as this publication, *Driftwood*. However, there are instances when additional people are needed for only a few hours every now and then. Again, take the example of *Driftwood*, where extra hands would be appreciated when it comes to affixing address labels and postage to outgoing copies.

If you would like to volunteer, either as an ongoing commitment or just occasionally, please indicate your willingness on the annual membership renewal form or contact us via email (tfftrude@gmail.com) or through the "Contact Us" form on the association's website (https://tfftl.org/).

Welcome New Members

By Roger Nelson, Treasurer



Over the past few years, the TFFTL-POA membership has averaged a little less than 160 members. It had been several years since we had made a proactive attempt to bring new members into the association. To address that, a data file of all the property owners around the flowage obtained from Iron County identified approximately 340 non-member property owners. A mailing was prepared and sent to those property owners inviting them to join. As a result, 52 new members joined the association since May. We had 22 former members who did not renew their membership, so we now have a total of 198 members.

A sincere thank you to the new members and a sincere thank you to all our long-standing members who have renewed their membership.

New Members in 2024

This year our association board launched a new member recruitment effort. We visited the Iron County land records and identified new property owners who might be interested in our work. A subsequent mailing brought in a really impressive response with 54 new members. Perhaps you will recognize a new neighbor or friend and welcome them to our organization.

George & Michelle Baker	Jim Behr	Robert & Susan Bialk
Terry & Deb Biddick	Rich & Deb Christensen	Don Craggs
Sarah Darnton	Tina Del Beccaro	Stuart & Stacey Denfeld
Nicholas England	Justin & Cody Fields	Todd & Mary Foltz
Michael & Margie Fugiel	David Gosse	Greg & Kelly Grey
Albert Grivetti	Gregg & Barb Gutschow	Brett & Sarah Hagland
Megan Headington	Donna & Bill Houdos	Rick & Stacey Jacobson
Jerry & Linda Janiczek	Craig Janssen	Marvin Kellerman
Mark & Wendy Kinderman	Mike & Betty Koch	Steve Kosik
Christopher Kozlowski	Henry & Patti Krauss	Joe & Bonnie Lepore
Adam Liebenthal	Tim & Lorena Luke	Yariy & Jayme Malanczij
Rob & Charlotte Mather	Terry & Diane Miller	Fred & Pat Netz
Jana Nyhagen	Diane Pavletich	Steve Piotrowski
Darren & Tiffany Pipp	William Riske	Susan Robinson
Stephen Shackelton	Rodney & Ronda Schmidt	Randy Schuett
Alex Sedo	Jim & Angela Seidl	Robert Singler
Robert & Nancy Vingers	John Wahleitner	Ryan Werth
Michael Whittaker	George & Lisa Wolf	Carol Zilinger & Carla Kloess

Meet New Board Member Karl Gustavson

By Karl Gustavson

Karl, Julia and Eric.
Photo by Karl Gustavson

In the early 1980s, my late father Terry Gustavson and a few friends from Williams Bay WI bought the cabins in the old Sleepy Lagoon Resort on the Turtle River at the north end of the flowage. (Ken Koutnik, an original purchaser and dear friend, is still a neighbor in the 1920s era log cabin along the river.) I remember my dad's pride and excitement when the State had the foresight to purchase the land surrounding the flowage and create the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area, keeping it wild and open to the public. I grew up fishing and hunting there, awed by the big woods and water. The stump fields repeatedly taught me to slow down and to respect the resource as it ate shear pins and occasionally provided a walleye. Today, my wife Angela and children Julia (age 14) and Eric (age 12) still own the cabin. We enjoy fishing, canoe trips, cross-country skiing, and the relative simplicity of being up north. I've been incredibly lucky to spend 40 years watching and learning the flowage. While a lot of things have gotten bigger and busier, and the old over-turned rowboats have been replaced by canopied shore-stations, most of the views and miles and miles of shoreline on the flowage are exactly the same – undeveloped wilderness.

Professionally, I am an environmental toxicologist and have worked in fisheries management, including fish tracking studies, habitat restoration, and remediation of contaminated waterways. I've always been curious about the interactions between habitats, fisheries, and human influences. In addition to being a board member, I am participating in the Association's fish management committee, and I look forward to learning more from our resource professionals and all the folks who spend so much time on the water. I greatly value the flowage's wild and undeveloped character, and recognize how increasingly rare such places are on Wisconsin's landscape. I hope that character can be maintained for our future generations.

Meet New Board Member Millard Johnson

By Millard Johnson

Millard and a lunker Musky.
Photo by Millard Johnson

My wife Mary and I have owned a log cabin on Trude Lake for 20 years. Spending time in the outdoors has been a focus of mine my entire life. I enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and canoeing. Over many years, I have also been involved in building four wilderness cabins in Northwest Ontario from trees harvested off the land.

As members of the TFFTL-POA, we all are blessed to be able to own cabins and homes on the flowage. It is a rare natural gem in the state of Wisconsin. I am interested in helping to continue the work of the association to keep the greater flowage and surrounding land in as natural and pristine condition as is possible so that native plants and animals can continue to thrive here and we can all enjoy experiencing the best that nature has to offer. As a part of that commitment, my wife and I were privileged to have the opportunity to purchase the land comprising the north shore of Nokomis Lake and the adjoining forested land (Nokomis Lake is just south of Trude Lake) so that it can remain undeveloped and to protect its unique marshes. This purchase, which also included Trude Lake shoreline, also stopped a large condo-ownership pier from possibly being built out into Trude Lake by a developer, thus preserving the natural state of the Nokomis Lake outflow bay and its marsh to continue to be available habitat for native fish reproduction.

I graduated from UW-Madison with degrees in accounting and finance and am the founder of Johnson Block and Company, a regional CPA and consulting firm. I am married with two grown children who all love the outdoors and spending time on Trude Lake also. I am currently on the association's water level committee and have been learning much from the experienced members who have had many years of excellent experience in this area.

— 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.

Driftwood is published twice yearly, Spring-Summer and Fall-Winter. Do you have an article you'd like considered for publication? Or, would you like to contact us electronically? We'd love to hear from you, please visit our website www.tfftl.org and search under "CONTACT US."