Turtle Flambeau Flowage - Trude Lake

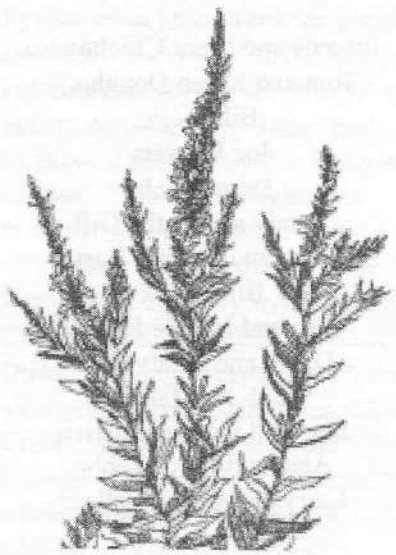
Property Owners' Association, Inc.

Fall/Winter Issue 2001/2002

Association Members Report on

Purple Loosestrife Survey

This year, loosestrife was found in two locations on the Flowage. The first was on a small island in the Grant's Creek area not far from where loosestrife was found last year. The second location was north of Sturgeon Bay Landing where a large number of plants were growing along the eastern shore. One of our loosestrife spotters noticed plants on the Manitowish River on both sides of the bridge on Highway 47 near the Ding-a-Ling Restaurant. Bruce Bacon at the Mercer DNR office was notified of each location and he had a crew that went to the sites and pulled the plants out by hand (see article on Page 3). One other report turned out to be smartweed, not loosestrife, which emphasizes the importance of having the DNR verify the sighting.



In recent years, it has been hard to drive anywhere in the Midwest without noticing concentrations of purple loosestrife. By comparison, the loosestrife situation here on the Flowage is not out of control and Bruce feels that the Turtle Flambeau Flowage looks good compared to most other lakes in the state. However, The increase in plants during the past year is disturbing and signals the need for close monitoring.

Next year we hope to find a few more volunteers. Please tell your friends and neighbors that the loosestrife survey is important for the health of the Flowage and is fun to do. No need to mention propeller dings and the aluminum we left on a few rocks!

Thank you to Arlen and Grace Wanta, Jim and Val Leever, Tom Mowbray, Paul and Eileen Gottwald, Roger and Donna Belongia, Harold Clark, Paul Gastmann, Schlueter, and Frank and Liz Kilgore.

Frank and Liz Kilgore
and Tom Mowbray
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Looking for a Logo

The Association is looking for suggestions for a logo. If you have ideas or talents in graphic design please contact the Association at our mailing address to the attention of the Logo Committee.

Views from the Shore

One unusual characteristic of life on the Flowage and Trude Lake is that geography makes it hard to get to know neighbors. Can you imagine living only a mile from a rural neighbor yet having to drive over an hour to meet or exchange views! Case in point, the distance between Springstead and Norway Point is about a mile but it would take those residents nearly an hour to drive over for a cup of coffee. While the geography of the Flowage is one of its most attractive features, it presents a communication challenge to people who live on and share its shores and waters.

In a way, getting to know our neighbors was the reason the Association Board put together the membership survey you received in the mail early this fall. The Board felt that we could better tailor our programs and directions if we knew more about the opinions of Flowage neighbors.

An ad hoc committee designed the survey with advice from Leever Research Services, a professional research firm that serves non-profit organizations. Leever Research also compiled the results and provided a survey report to the Association at no cost.

The survey was mailed to all 71 lake properties representing 122 Lake Association members. We received an outstanding response of 53 surveys, a 75% return rate. While the largest number responding was from Springstead and Lake Bastine, we did receive surveys from all major sections of the Flowage and Trude Lake.

Survey highlights identified by Leever Research are the following:

- Nearly one-quarter of Lake Association members are periodic visitors or vacationers, while the rest of members are split evenly between seasonal residents and full-time residents.
- The top three most important issues to Lake Association members are water quality, fish populations in the Flowage, and exotic species.
- Members feel the most appropriate ways for the Lake Association to address issues of concern are education through written materials, conducting surveys and research (e.g., water quality monitoring, exotic species, walleye watch) and field activities (e.g., fish cribs, purple loosestrife removal).
- On the Flowage, the top five recreational activities engaged in by members are fishing, nature observation, boating, ice fishing, and snowmobiling.

Seventy-seven (77) percent of members feel the Association has either met or exceeded their expectations. Twenty-three (23) percent of members did not know or had no opinion about how the Association was doing. Only two (2) percent of members felt the Association had fallen short of their expectations.

So, what does all this mean? Some positive notes are that the activities the Association conducts received fairly positive rankings and that members generally felt that the Association is doing a good job. It was also interesting to note that there was general agreement on the importance of a number of issues, such as water quality and fish populations. The survey also pointed out room for improvement. For example, the lower numbers of surveys returned by residents of Trude Lake, Norway Point, and Lake of the Falls, suggests that we could target our membership efforts to better serve and incorporate our "neighbors" on the north side of the Flowage.

Details of the survey will be presented at the spring meeting of the Association and copies of the report will be made available to all members. We are hoping to use the survey results to form future work plans and to evaluate our progress. The Board would like to express its thanks to Leever Research Services and to everyone who participated in the survey. Hopefully, the results of this survey will bring our neighborhood closer together and help us to further protect and enhance life on and around the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake.

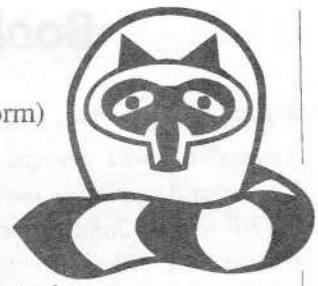
Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to the following people who became members in 2001:

Eugene and Mary Czechowicz
Tom and Karen Dougherty
Bill Ficek
Joe Flowers
Darrell Fohr
Randy and Cathy Gill
Ken and Audrey Hart
Bill Hosek
Dan and Margie Keuler
David and Cindy Lenz
Bob McMahon
Don and Denise O'Brien
Alan and Joyce Tebbe
Larry and Carol Wollner

Watch Out for Scats!

New Health Warnings on *Baylisascaris procyonis* (raccoon roundworm)



While few of us are curious enough to get up close and personal with a raccoon scat, warnings on potential health risks of contact with animal feces should be taken seriously. Fall yard clean ups or sweeping out that back corner of the wood shed may expose rural folks to a roundworm with a long name – *Baylisascaris procyonis*. Before you start on your fall projects, take a moment to read up on how to prevent exposure.

Baylisascaris (or raccoon roundworm) is a common large roundworm parasite of raccoons. This parasite can be accidentally ingested and cause a fatal disease in humans. Raccoons are the normal host for the roundworm and 40% to 70% of Wisconsin raccoons have the parasites. The adult worm does not harm the raccoon and simply lives in its intestinal tract. When a raccoon with an adult worm defecates, the ground and vegetation surrounding the raccoon feces becomes contaminated with parasite eggs. Other animals such as dogs, cats, cows, groundhogs or people can ingest the eggs accidentally during normal food seeking or investigative behaviors. The eggs can be transmitted to people from any fecal contaminated area including the cages or enclosures that held worm-carrying raccoons.

Larvae hatch inside humans or other animals when eggs are accidentally ingested. The larvae cause severe tissue damage and central nervous system disease, which leads to death, especially in children. The eggs are very hardy and can only be killed by intense heat or boiling lye. It is imperative that care be taken when contacting raccoon feces or intestinal tracts, and protective gloves and mask should be worn when burning material contacted by fecal piles.

So, when that raccoon family moves into your attic or barn, make sure you get out the rubber gloves and treat the situation with serious caution. If you have questions or want assistance in removal of raccoons, contact the WDNR for information.

Purple Loosestrife 2001

This summer, the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage Trude Lake Association continued to partner with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in its countywide purple loosestrife survey. With the help of volunteer surveyors, the WDNR is able to monitor many areas that have been affected by this invasive species. This article highlights results from the Flowage area.

Three sites on the Flowage were hand treated by wildlife LTE, Dan Kephart, and intern, Jessica Duda. Although only a few plants were pulled from islands near Grant Creek (on the east side of the Flowage), loosestrife had spread to another island in that area. In addition to the Grant Creek loosestrife, about 300 plants were pulled from the shoreline north of Sturgeon Bay Landing near Deadhorse Lodge. A few plants were also pulled on the west shore of Sturgeon Bay.

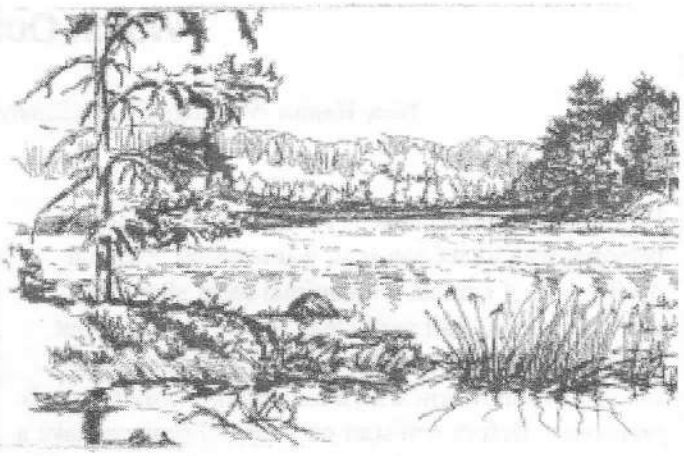
The largest loosestrife infestation found this year included about 600 plants, which stretched along the shoreline of the Manitowish River near the junction of highways 47 and 51. Due to the number of plants and the size of the affected area, the wildlife staff was not able to remove all of the loosestrife. The Manitowish River Bridge was cleared, but there are still a few hundred plants down river that have not yet been treated. Wildlife biologist, Bruce Bacon, is currently working on a permit that would allow the WDNR to treat this area next year with a herbicide that is safe to use over water.

The 2001 survey located many more purple loosestrife plants in our area than in previous years. Hopefully, this is not an indication of future problems. The Department of Natural Resources would like to thank everyone who has helped monitor purple loosestrife in Iron County and extends a special thanks to Association members. With your help, we will continue working to ensure that this noxious weed does not become a major problem in our area.

Dan Kephart, WDNR

Bookmarks

Editor's Note: This new periodic column in our newsletter will present reviews of books that may interest Association members. For residents of the TFF region, John Bates' new book "River Life" is a must-read. The following is an excerpt from a review appearing in "Wisconsin Rivers."



River Love Affair

by Scott Froehike

I'll bet at some point soon after author John Bates moved to his wife's ancestral home in Manitowish, Wisconsin, he realized he was falling in love with a nearby river. As it is with all great love affairs, John knew that he must get to know the object of his desire better. The product of his search for a deeper understanding of the Manitowish, a warm-water tributary to the Upper Chippewa River, is found in his latest book, *River Life; The Natural and Cultural History of a Northern River.*

The Manitowish is not a long river, running for not much more than forty miles before joining the Bear River and together becoming the Flambeau River. But what it sacrifices in length, it recovers in biological diversity and in the richness of its historical story. The author, Bates, essentially becomes our river guide and the book could be an excellent companion to a canoe trip down the Manitowish. His storytelling is, at the same time, so complete and enrapturing and his understanding of aquatic biology is so sophisticated that the book should be incorporated into environmental studies and high school curricula throughout the state. There is a tradition of nature writing in American literature that is the great gift possessed by authors in the "New World." We celebrate nature. Wisconsin's own contributions to this pantheon are the stuff of legends. John Bates would scoff at comparison, but there is something about the mixture of science and poetry in his work that conjures up Aldo Leopold. Though a less dense writer than John Muir, he is an equal advocate of wild places.

The book reads like a river, looping and slowing while he contemplates bulrushes, grebes and the mystery of springs. Bates does an admirable job of exploring some of the toughest policy related to river challenges of our time; the role dams play in our history and in the cycles of a living river. There are journal extracts from trappers and Jesuits and marvelous discussions of ancient trails and portages. We also learn which Ojibway bands placed their sturgeon weirs at particular rapids and where they dispersed to afterwards.

The period when Sioux and Ojibway fought their death battles over the northern woods and French Canadian trappers plied their hard trade is only five or six generations removed from us. Much has changed and yet, as Bates' book compellingly reminds us, the river rolls on.

Boat Landing News

In October, Roger Jasinski, Flowage Manager for the WDNR, shared a project update with the Association. Some improvements you can look for in the spring are the installation of information kiosks at three boat landings and the establishment of a walking trail at Fisherman's Landing.

The kiosks will be placed first at Springstead, Sturgeon Bay and Trude Lake landings. These kiosks will have maps, WDNR information and space for approved information such as our Association Courtesy Code. Kiosks are planned for the other landings as upgrades in parking and ramps are completed. Fisherman's Landing will have an added attraction - a 1.9-mile trail following the shore of the Flowage and looping back through the forested interior. Interpretive "tell the story of the Flowage" signs are planned for area visitors and residents.

Heading South:

"High-Tech Loons on the Air"

Why does the moon wax and wane each month? What magical essence lights the mating dance of a firefly? How does a bumblebee defeat the laws of aerodynamics? One by one human curiosity pursues the mysteries of nature, searching for the roots of phenomenon seemingly beyond our ken. For lovers of northern waters like the Turtle Flambeau, one such question pondered each fall and spring is the departure and arrival of common loons. Somehow in fall, they seem to slip away from us. One day we might see a slight shift in the plumage of adult birds, a lightening of the feathers along mandibles or a molted loon feather washed up on a beach. Chicks seem to leap to adult size, confusing the casual observer hoping to keep tabs on "their" loon family. These early signs should warn us that the loons are preparing for their epic journey south, growing new feathers, gaining weight and breaking down the tight family ties of the breeding season.

Sometime in September you notice that the adults are gone, leaving their youngsters afloat on the cold gray waves and then one by one the juveniles also disappear, leaving only questions behind. Where do they go? How do they know when to leave? Will they return again in the spring?

For years, researchers have studied bird migrations, primarily through recoveries of leg bands from birds that die during migration or on the wintering grounds. Somewhat like a needle in a haystack, this method has required capturing and marking large numbers of individual birds in the hopes of recovering a few bands. For example, in Wisconsin, WDNR researchers have banded over 800 loons with U.S. Fish and Wildlife bands and colored leg bands. These bands allow researchers to identify individual birds, aiding study of loon behavior and health on nesting lakes as well as tracking returns of juvenile and adult birds from year to year.

Technology has offered a new and promising option, tracking migrating loons using radio telemetry and satellites. This new research tool is currently being tested by the US Geological Survey and WDNR, under the joint leadership of Kevin Kenow and Mike Meyer. In the fall of 1998, Kevin first piloted this method with an adult common loon from Minnesota. He and his co-investigators tagged the loon with a PTT (platform transmitter terminal), which sent periodic signals to a computer using orbiting satellites. Kevin tracked this first loon as it migrated from north central Minnesota to southern Lake Michigan and eventually to the Gulf of Mexico.

In the summer of 2000, the team placed PTTs on two adult loons in Wisconsin, but the batteries expired before migration began. In September of that year the team placed a third PTT on a juvenile loon from Lost Lake in Northeast Wisconsin. They were able to track this bird as it migrated. On November 14th of that year the juvenile was on Lost Lake; on November 19th it sent a signal from Lake Michigan; and on November 27th it had flown to an inland lake near Gainesville, Florida. By the 28th it was on the Gulf of Mexico where it remained until its radio battery quit sending messages in late winter.

This year, the research team has successfully tagged two loons, one from Trude Lake and a second found on Wilson Lake. Shortly after tagging, the Wilson Lake bird's transmitter sent a signal from the Horseshoe area of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. On November 9, the Trude Lake bird was 228 kilometers off the North Carolina Coast and the Wilson Lake bird was still on the Flowage. On November 19th, the Wilson Lake Bird was located on southern Lake Michigan.

The study objectives to date have been to assess the feasibility of capturing and radio-marking juvenile common loons with the intent of conducting a large-scale study of movements and survival of juvenile loons. Hopefully, our two Flowage area birds will help to test this new science and also provide insights into migration routes, stopover use of lakes and reservoirs, and wintering habitat.

Some might ask if this research will take the mystery and romance away from our loons. For those who treasure the intangible values of the natural world, the clinical facts of science often seem too cut and dried to express the beauty and wonder of natural events. Yet, it could be argued that knowing more of the intimate life of a loon will not only help us to protect the bird and its species, but will add to our appreciation of its complexity and genius.

Turtle Flambeau Flowage - Trude Lake
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We want to hear from you!

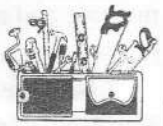
What are your concerns/ opinions? Have you had a rare or unusual sighting? Do you want to share a fish story, etc.?

The observations or personal experiences of our members make for interesting reading and add to the substance of the newsletter. If you would like to submit an article to the Association newsletter, send it to:

Newsletter Editor
TFF-TL Property Owners
Association., Inc.
P.O. Box 631
Mercer, WI 54547

Articles for the Spring/Summer 2002 newsletter should be received no later than April 1, 2002.

Volunteers needed. . . .



. . . .to Build Fish Cribs

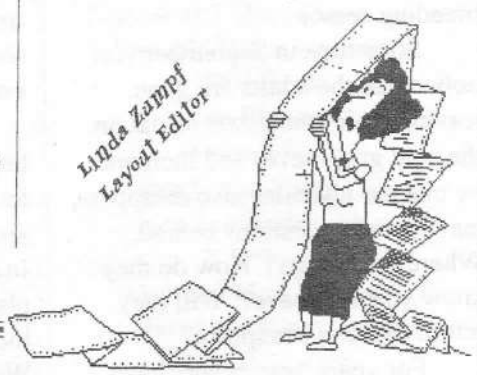
Do you like to fish? Have you ever complained about not getting out enough in the winter? Do you enjoy the camaraderie of working with great people? Are you able to hammer, saw, drill, haul or supervise?

If you answered yes to any of the above, this is the project for you! Jeff Roth, WDNR fisheries biologist, met with the Association at our fall meeting. He outlined a plan to construct and place a series of fish cribs this winter. We will be looking for volunteers for the project, which is tentatively scheduled for January or February. Exact dates will be dependent on ice conditions. If you are interested in this fun day on the Flowage, contact Arlen Wanta at (715) 583-4491.

And in closing . . .

. . . A note from the layout editor

I wish to sincerely thank all those who contributed articles to this issue of the newsletter, the editors and proofreaders. The articles were received prior to the set deadline (which I requested) and were well formatted and proofread. Unfortunately, I was unable to provide the time to produce the newsletter during the Thanksgiving/Christmas season this year and the Fall issue soon became the New Year issue. So, in closing, I say thank you to all for your patience and understainding! I wish you a very happy new year.



2002 Meeting Dates

Mark your calendars! Next year's meeting dates are April 27th, June 8th, and October 12th. All Association meetings are held at the Haines Civic Center, in Mercer. Reminder notices will be mailed to members in advance of each meeting.