Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake

PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring-Summer 2008

Aesthetics, Ecology & TFF Forest Management

By Chris Niehaus

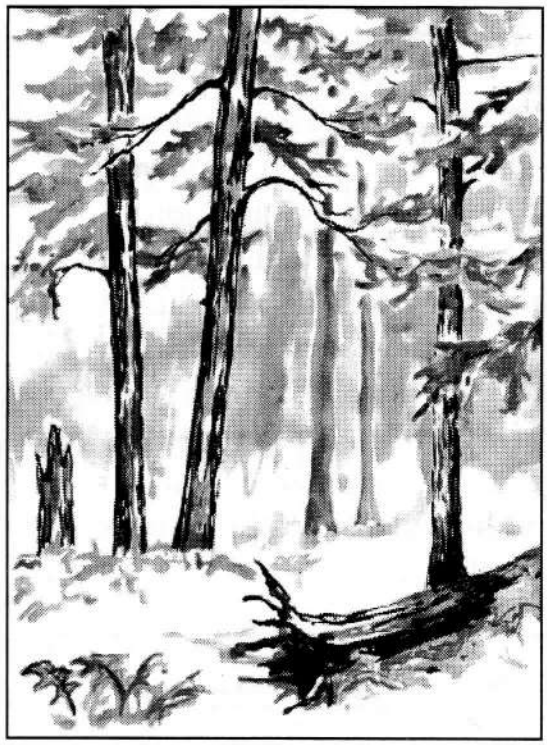
Unless you have taken the time to tromp inland from the shores of the flowage, you might be unaware that active forest management occurs on much of the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area (TFSWA).

The Master Plan, written when the state acquired the property, outlines specific areas where timber management can occur and the type of timber management that may take place.

Five different land classifications divide the property. The eastern portion of the property consists of a Wild Area and a large Natural Area. Scenic Areas exist along roadways and within view of the flowage. The bulk of the remaining land area is Habitat Preservation except for the area north of Trude Lake, which is a Ruffed Grouse Management Demonstration area. What do these classifications mean?

Natural Areas are for the most part off limits to harvesting. The Wild area allows selection harvests or harvests that will promote long lived trees (i.e. white pine and hardwoods). Within Scenic Areas only hazard trees at boat landings and campsites may be harvested within 300 feet of the shoreline. Portions of the viewshed more than 300 feet from shore may have selection harvests. Habitat Preservation allows normal harvesting of timber with the caveat that aspen must be left to grow to an old age of sixty and regeneration harvests are limited to no more than 40 acres. In the Ruffed Grouse Management area aspen takes priority and is harvested earlier (45 – 50 years old) to insure more vigorous aspen regeneration.

Aesthetics play a large role in how all sales are laid out and the time of year harvest may occur. In some cases, even the kind of equipment is restricted to minimize the impacts of harvesting. Currently, seven sold sales exist on the TFSWA for a total of 503 acres. These sales vary in types of timber (aspen, red pine, and hardwood) and in differing stages of completion. They are



spread around the property with two off Murray's Landing road, one on Big Island, one near Fisherman's Landing, one in the Springstead area, one north of Trude lake, and one near the dam. Close monitoring of all timber sales ensures com-

(Cont. on page 2)

Inside this Issue

(Cont. from page 1)

pliance. In the past we've been able to work with logging contractors to provide fish crib wood. On Big Island, the logging contractors cut a road for the future group campsites as part of a timber sale. In other areas, road maintenance was accomplished as part of a timber sale. In this way, logging helps to accomplish more than just sound forest management, it enhances wildlife and fisheries management, and recreation opportunities for all users of the flowage.

Thanks Thanks!

The association wants to give a special thanks to John Alberts for donation of concrete blocks to the fish crib building program. He had a enough old concrete blocks in his yard to take care of all the crib building needs for this year. This is a example of recycling at its best! Thanks John!

Website Now Available

The DNR website for the TFF is now up and running. For information on facilities and programs visit the web site!

http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/turtleflambeau

TFF Water Level & FERC License Amendment Update

By Tom Mowbray

TFF Water Level

First, some good news! Per an email from Xcel Energy, water elevation on the TFF was 1571.12' on April 18, 2008. This is up over 4' from the low of 1566.95' reached last fall. Xcel does not anticipate any trouble refilling the TFF to its target elevation of 1571.5' by fishing opener. This is a definite improvement over last year when we started out the year about 18" below full pool.

TFF Dam – FERC Licensing Process

In January 2008 the Association wrote to WI-DNR expressing our thoughts and concerns about the FERC licensing process and asked that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be revised in several areas. The same letter was sent to and is part of FERC's formal record concerning the TFF dam. Unfortunately, the suggestions we made were not included in a March 29, 2008, Water Quality Certificate (WQC) issued by WI-DNR as part of the FERC license amendment process.

In early April, Association representatives met with WI-DNR personnel to gain a better understanding of the process followed by the DNR in issuing the WQC, why the WQC did not include items that we suggested and we also reviewed the process necessary to appeal the WQC findings. After much discussion, including a brief review and consultation with a new Association member who is an attorney, it was decided that a formal appeal of the WQC was not the best way to go in this matter. Because of the way the WQC was written, it was not clear exactly what the nature of a successful appeal would be.

However, after meeting with WI-DNR, we do feel comfortable that they did consider and review our concerns, but issued a finding that did not include specific items we asked for. On April 17, 2008, a follow-up letter was sent to WI-DNR, which basically puts them on notice that the Association intends to stay actively involved in TFF water level management issues on an ongoing basis.

If anyone has any questions about TFF water management issues or the FERC license amendment process, please contact either

Tom Mowbray (715)583-4523) or
Jim Bohmann (715)583-9940).

--- President's Letter ---

By Maryann Brown

For the past three years I have had the pleasure to be the president of this association. The projects that our group has done are numerous, from fish cribs and loosestrife control to water quality monitoring. We have increased membership and have had to make thoughtful decisions on a number of serious issues.

Since the waters we represent are so unique, it's very important that our board takes each issue very seriously. As a result we have gained knowledge and experience. What are these issues? Probably the most important this past year was the drought, which created many problems last summer. The other issue this year was the re-licensing of the dam. These were challenges that our board had not faced in the past. Tom Mowbray has written a summary on the dam license in this issue if you would like details.

There is an issue of growing concern that I would like to share with you, illegal use of fireworks. The Wisconsin Fireworks Law forbids the use of fireworks that have any explosive mixture without a valid permit. In recent years, there has been growing abuse of this law on the flowage. For many residents, the fact that we have such a beautiful wild body of water makes this abuse even worse. While fireworks may be fun for users, for neighbors they destroy the tranquility of summer evenings. Fireworks can also disturb wildlife and present safety hazards. Please, tell your neighbors about the permit requirement. If you rent out your property, please advise renters that this practice is illegal and will not be tolerated this summer. The sheriff will be giving out fines. The DNR will also be giving out fines if the use of fireworks is on state owned property.

In June, we will have the annual election of our board. I will be stepping down as the president but will still be on the board. This board is a group of folks who work hard and are dedicated to the flowage. I have been fortunate to be a part of this group for 12 years and I look forward to our continued work together.

Phosphorus and Piers - An Update From the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL)

Two critical issues that WAL has been working on are lawn fertilizers and piers. Here is a brief update on their efforts.

Banning Phosphorus in Lawn Fertilizers

After considerable effort in the recent legislative session, WAL was able to persuade the Senate to pass an effective ban on phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. The Assembly Natural Resources Committee adopted a compromise bill, but it was never scheduled for a vote by the full Assembly. WAL will be working hard next session to get a ban on phosphorus in lawn fertilizers signed into law. Their new educational effort titled "Get the P Out" is focused on keeping our lakes clean and reducing phosphorous from these fertilizers.

Piers

The subject of piers has been controversial in recent years, and the legislature has considered bills regarding pier placement in navigable waters in the past two legislative sessions.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes has been actively working on pier bills for the best outcome achievable for our members' interests within the current political atmosphere.

(Cont. on page 5)

--- Flowage History Book Moving Forward ---

By Mike Hittle

The flowage history book project proceeds in what appears to be a gazillion different directions. It seems as if every conversation I have or every piece of material I read opens up a new line of investigation or yet another attribute of the "flowage experience" to think about. Still, some themes have emerged; and they will surely find their way into the book in some form or another.

One theme is that the sense of "timelessness" the flowage can evoke—say, for example, those still moments at dawn or sunset—is, in part, misleading. For change has been, and is, the order of the day for this fascinating area. Human intervention has a central role in this change, from harnessing the waters with the dam to wildlife management. Nature, too, has been at work, quietly and patiently in forest restoration and in modifying the fishery. People have also changed some patterns of activities—with mixed consequences. Goodbye two-horse motor! Hello depth-finder! All this change leads me to wonder: just how does one seek to conserve the ever-changeable?

A SECOND theme is how the history of the flowage maps against larger trends in our history. The construction of the dam coincides with a critical era in the state's efforts to regulate precious water resources to the benefit of economic growth, recreation, and aesthetics. Flowage resorts took hold and prospered as a growing automobile culture gave rise to a vigorous tourism industry, and suffered accordingly as that industry changed. The state's purchase of the flowage followed logically from the growth of a conservation ethic, articulated so well by men like Aldo Leopold. Mercer, Butternut and Park Falls may seem far "up north" to many Wisconsinites, but the resources of the area have never been far from the minds of those with the state's broader interests in mind.

Third, the experiences of those who have lived and visited here—especially in the early years—are real, sometimes gritty, and enduring. I have in mind here early resort owners who built cabins with their own hands and marked channels through the standing timber with red flags; or a fisherman who clambered across logjams on planks that had been stowed away in the boat for that very purpose; or those many settlers in the cutover from whom existence demanded a kind of multi-tasking that is rare today. Whether times were good or bad, many of those who came to know this area express a deep sense of respect for the land and water, a quiet pride in their hard-earned knowledge of how the natural world can and cannot be handled, and an appreciation for having been fortunate to be in on a good thing from early on.

I want to thank members of the association who have given me information and leads. I have yet to follow up on all the contacts you have provided, but please know that I am working away on the list as time and location permit. And I would appreciate additional leads. (In particular, I am compiling a list of guides. If you know of a favorite guide, and approximately when he worked, I would appreciate that information.)

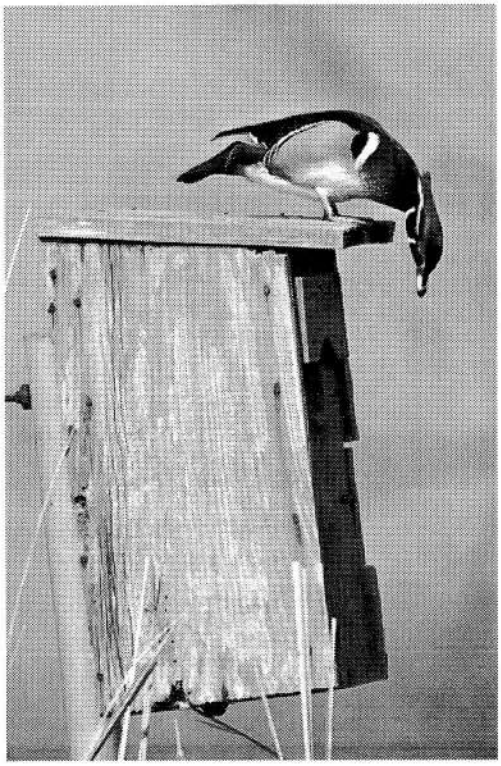
To share information and contacts please contact Mike Hittle at mmhittle@new.rr.com.

Wood Ducks in Your Yard - Volunteer Opportunity!

By Bruce Bacon –
DNR Wildlife Biologist

Back in the early 1980's the DNR ran an active wood duck house project on flowage. Over 200 wooden houses were put up, mostly mounted on used well pipe. House designs varied from refurbished mink boxes (from a mink farm) to the traditional deep wooden box with a 10"X10" inside floor dimension.

Response by breeding ducks was immediate, **but not by wood ducks**. Hooded mergansers readily accepted the nest boxes with only a few houses used by woodies. The houses were cleaned each winter and new wood shavings added. We looked at egg membrane and shell remains to see what kind of ducks nested. We also looked for nest material brought in by species other then ducks. As time progressed and management on the flowage evolved, the waterfowl nest box program was reduced greatly. The loss of the local wildlife management technician position ended the project. There are probably fewer than 75 nest boxes still up, tucked



away in less visible areas of the flowage.

I would like to suggest that it might be time to try a nest box project again. This time we should try an aesthetically pleasing box that is easier to maintain. We also want to focus on locations that will be best for wood ducks and work together to spread minimal effort among many folks. What I am proposing is that interested landowner/residents put 1 to 3 wood duck houses on their lots. The cost and annual maintenance effort for each person would be minimal. Wood ducks will readily nest near humans while mergansers are a bit shyer. If we placed houses fairly close to homes it will favor wood ducks and give people a chance to see ducks come and go.

I will provide plans for building and placing wood duck houses (we want to discourage squirrel use and mink and raccoon predation), annual maintenance and data collection. We might get school kids to help build houses. If someone knows of a source of used well pipe, or cheap 1" rough cut pine 10" and 12" wide, that would help. It should be not too hard and a lot of fun!

Annual records would tell us if we are having an impact on the duck population on the TFF. We are hoping to provide a demonstration at your summer meeting and perhaps even have some houses available for distribution.

If interested, contact Jeff Wilson at 715-776-0081.

Phosphorus & Piers

(Cont. from page 3)

The WAL Board approved two key policy goals on piers. First, we must ensure that pier placement does not damage habitat, obstruct navigation or interfere with the rights of other riparian owners or the public. Second, we must to maintain current law, which generally recognizes that the right to place piers should be proportional to shoreline frontage, rather than the density of shore land development.

This legislative session AB 297 was introduced, which was the same bill as last session's initial compromise bill. For in-depth information on this bill you can visit the WAL website by searching on Wisconsin Association of Lakes.

--- VHS Virus Alert! ---

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is a deadly fish virus that is threatening Wisconsin's fish. VHS was first diagnosed in the Great Lakes in 2005 and 2006. It's not a threat to people who handle infected fish or want to eat their catch, but it is a threat to the more than 25 fish species including walleye, perch, smallmouth bass and northern pike. Scientists are not sure how the virus arrived. It may have come in with migrating fish from the Atlantic Coast, or may have hitchhiked in ballast water from ships. To date, VHS has only been detected in fish from the Lake Winnebago system, Lake Michigan and Green Bay and the state is working hard to insure that it is not spread.

The following symptoms could apply to many different fish diseases; therefore, VHS must be confirmed by lab tests. Additionally, some infected fish may not show any signs and transporting these fish to new locations could spread the disease to new waters.

- Hemorrhaging (bleeding)
- Bulging eyes
- Unusual behavior
- Anemia
- Bloated abdomens
- Rapid onset of death

How VHS Spreads and Environmental Factors

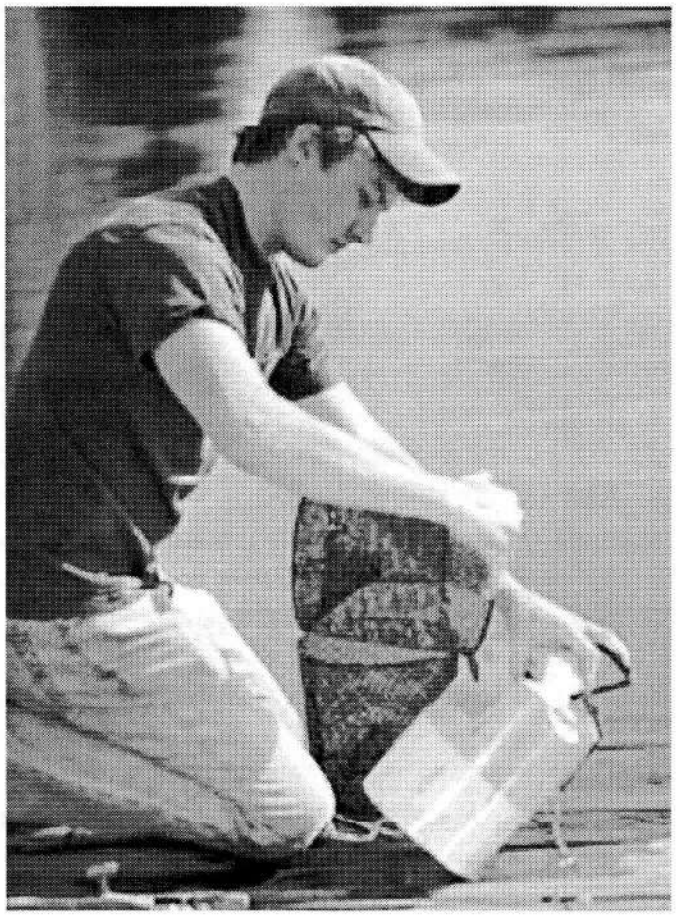
Infected fish shed the virus in their urine and reproductive fluids. The virus can survive in water for at least 14 days. Fish can be infected when the virus enters the gills, or when they eat an infected fish. Fish that survive the infection develop antibodies may start shedding virus again creating a cycle of fish kills.

The DNR is asking the public to take precautions similar to those used in stopping the spread of invasive species on all waters:

- Inspect your boat, trailer and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud.
- Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers.
- Do not move live fish from one water body to another.
- Dispose of leftover bait in the trash, not in the water or on land.
- Buy your minnows from Wisconsin bait dealers or catch your own and use it to fish the water you caught it from.
- Wash your boat and equipment with high pressure or hot water, or let it dry for five days

For detailed VHS rules please visit the DNR web site at http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/vhs/

Empty water from your bait bucket and livewell.



Drain water from your bait bucket and livewell to help prevent the spread of VHS.

Keeping the TFF Free From Eurasian Water-milfoil

Eurasian water-milfoil is an underwater aquatic plant native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa. It first arrived in Wisconsin in the 1960s. By the 1990s, it was found in more than half of Wisconsin counties. To date, the flowage has not been infested with this invasive plant. There is concern that with increasing use of the flowage, milfoil could be inadvertently introduced and from here spread to other Iron County lakes. Our association is looking to develop a more robust prevention program.

Eurasian milfoil is the only non-native milfoil species in Wisconsin. It is easiest to identify when it is blooming or has fruits on it. It has slender stems encircled by feathery leaves in groups. The stems branch and commonly grow to lengths up to 10 feet. It produces small, 4-parted flowers on a spike that stick out of the water two to four inches. The fruit is a hard, capsule with four seeds. Look for 12-21 pairs of leaflets per leaf to help distinguish Eurasian water-milfoil from Northern water-milfoil, the most similar native milfoil. The native plant typically has 7-11 pairs of leaflets.

Eurasian water-milfoil prefers disturbed lake beds and waters with high nitrogen and phosphorous runoff. It reproduces by seed, or from fragments of the plant that are broken and re-sprout. Milfoil is also spread by boats, motors, trailers, bilges, live wells, or bait buckets, and can stay alive for days if kept moist. This invader grows quickly in spring and forms a dense leaf canopy in the water that shades out native aquatic plants, changing fish and waterfowl habitat. It may also lead to poor water quality, algae blooms, and makes it hard to swim, boat, or fish.

Prevention & Control:

Preventing milfoil from reaching a lake or spreading is extremely important. Here's how you can help:

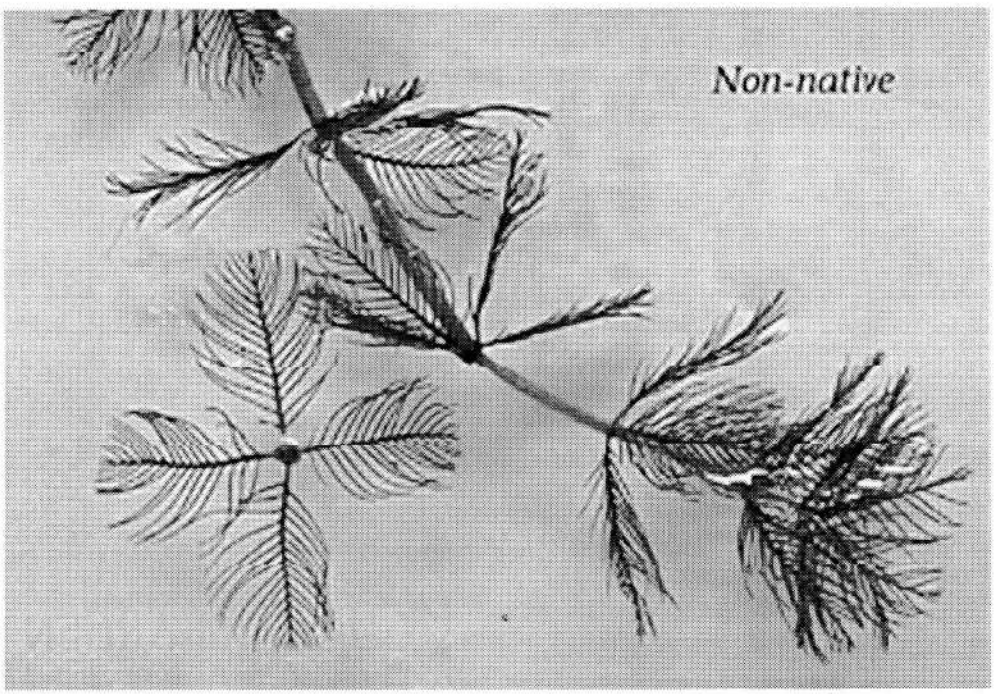
• Prevent nutrients from reaching the flowage. You can plant a rain garden in areas that run off into the lakes and streams.

• Inspect and remove all aquatic plants from your boat, motor, trailer, and fishing equipment when moving from one waterbody to another.

• Protect native plants along your shoreline.

• Learn which lakes in our region have milfoil. If you go to an infested lake make doubly sure you clean all equipment before returning to the flowage.

• Share this information with others who use our lakes and streams.



Eurasian Water-milfoil, ©DNR Photo

Invasive Species Committee
Summer Plans

By Diane O'Krongly

Last year, the association created a committee to address invasive species threats on the flowage. Here is our loosestrife plan for the summer.

••• Why should purple Loosestrife concern you? •••

Purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) is a wetland perennial from Europe and Asia that was introduced to North America. It is found in all 72 counties of Wisconsin. The plants growing in North America do not have to contend with the specialized insects and diseases that control it in its native habitat. This exotic plant threatens the health of wetlands on the flowage.

••• How You Can Help! •••

Survey

Each summer we organize a survey to check the flowage for purple loosestrife. Volunteers are again needed to check one of the 18 survey routes between July 15th and August 1st. Routes may be checked as early as July 1st but then need to be checked again later. The ideal situation is for routes to be checked more than once early in July and then again in late July. Any time members are on the flowage we would appreciate extra eyes looking for purple loosestrife.

Loosestrife Work Party July 31

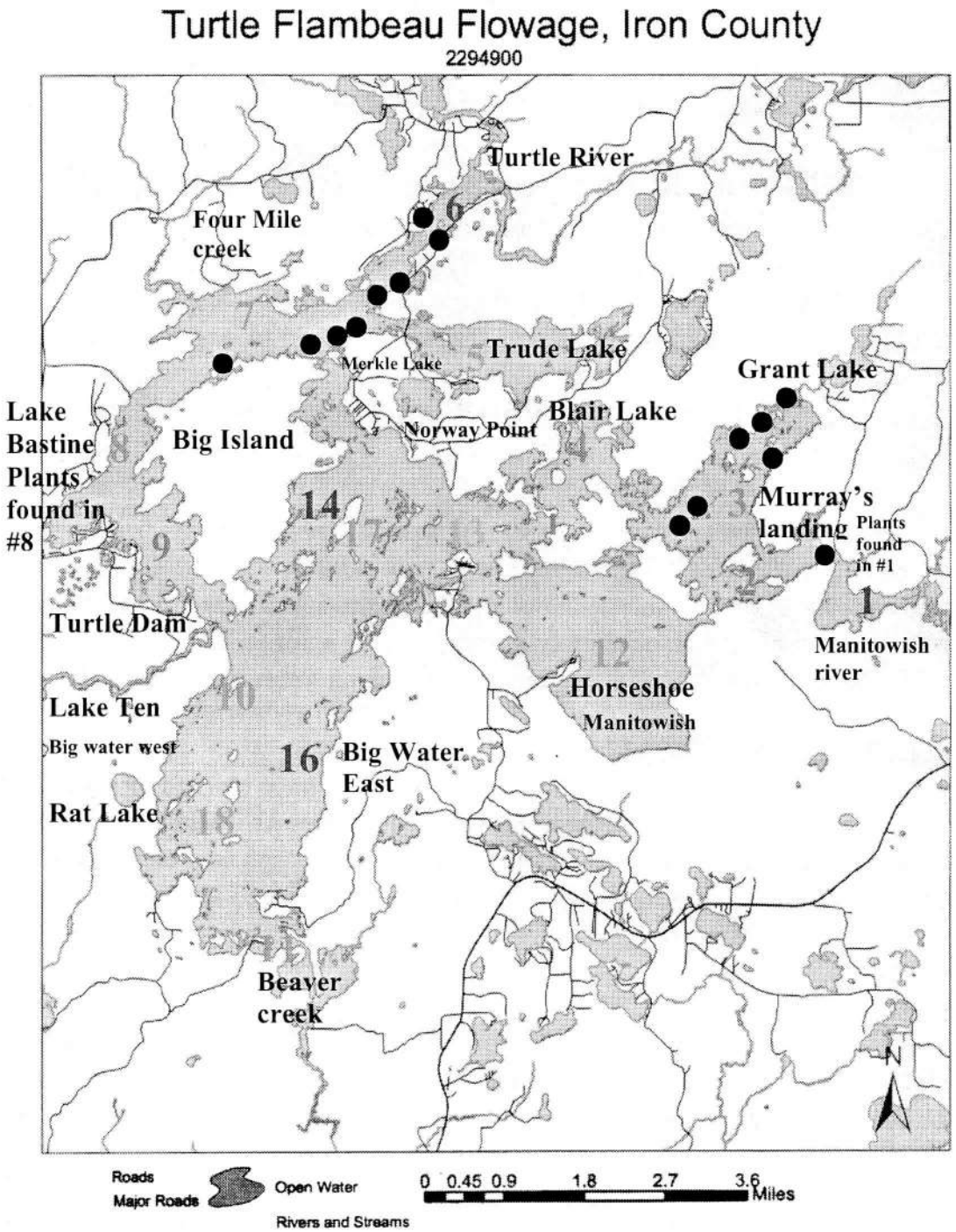
For the past several years, volunteers (along with the DNR) have worked to remove plants from the flowage. This year we are planning a special event on July 31. We will get dirty and dig out plants, have fun and learn about the fauna and flora of the flowage, and end with a cookout. We will also need volunteers to grill the food for the diggers. If you are interested in this event, please contact Diane O'Krongly.

Biocontrol

Biocontrol uses one organism to control another. Because North American insects don't eat loosestrife, European insects that feed exclusively on the plants were carefully tested and imported. Last year, John Bates and Mary Burns raised beetles for release on the Manitowish River. This year Diane will help the North Lakeland Discovery Center raise beetles.

If you are interested in volunteering,
contact Diane O'Krongly at 1-715-476-0287 or
dokrongly@centurytel.net.

(Looosestrife locations on back side of this page)



Loosestrife Locations

Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake

PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 631 - Mercer, WI 54547

Editor – Terry Daulton

Published Twice Annually

If you would like to contact the association by email, please note the new address!
TFTLkAssoc@hotmail.com

--- 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.

This newsletter was published by B-Town Enterprises, Printing & Publishing Division, Butternut H.S. - Butternut, WI - Under the supervision of Larry Meverden, Instructor. (715-769-3434)

Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake

PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 631 - Mercer, WI 54547