Driftwood

Spring/Summer 2009-2010

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

Partners Against Invasives

By Terry Daulton

As a child, I remember watching my mother work in the back yard, wielding a garden tool shaped somewhat like a screwdriver. She would bend down vigorously digging and pulling until her back was achy and her patience thin. Her goal – elimination of every last dandelion in our expansive lawn. I never quite understood her reasoning. To me, the dandelions were perfect for golden necklaces, and the fluffy seed heads were fairies that needed only a puff of breath to take flight. Looking back, I see that this was my first exposure to a non-native invasive species. I would like to say that my mother's eradication endeavor was an educational process designed to prepare me for the future. The truth was, Mom felt that the dandelions were an affront to her perfect suburban lawn.

Since the 1960's when my mom waged the dandelion wars, we have come a long way in preventing and controlling non-native invasive plants and animals. However, globalization has brought us more difficult challenges such as the Asian Carp, zebra mussel, and Eurasian water milfoil. Lists of restricted and banned species have grown, and related public educational programs have sprouted up almost as fast as the plants. Efforts to control purple loosestrife on the TFF and Trude Lake began in 1993. As many of you can attest, purple loosestrife eradication has been a persistent management effort ever since.

Last fall the association initiated a meeting to bring together Xcel Energy, WDNR, US Geological Survey, and Iron County LCD, to share ideas on ways we could cooperate on common interests in water quality and invasive species. This proved to be a timely session as Xcel Energy was just beginning work on an Invasive Species Management Plan, which is a requirement of their hydroelectric license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). After that initial meeting, we continued to work with Xcel as they drafted the plan and accepted comments.

The invasives plan is linked to Xcel's Big Falls Dam license, which will be in place until 2037, so the plan needs to be flexible enough to address future problems. From the outset, one challenge was the list of species that Xcel was required to address in the plan (gypsy moth, mute swan, zebra mussel, purple loosestrife, and Eurasian water milfoil). Invasive species are moving targets; in the time since the license was approved, some of the listed species have ceased to be a concern, while new species deserve our attention. We agreed to strengthen a section called "other invasive species" which could include a wider range of plants and animals.

We also decided that the best approach would be to designate funds to the Iron County LCD, under its invasive species program. Heather Palmquist (LCD) offered to coordinate the funds, and partners would seek funds to match Xcel's dollars. Matt Miller, lead staff at Xcel, sent out the first draft in January, took comments, and organized another partner meeting to hammer out final details of the plan. Dan Houston, DNR, had recently taken on the lead role for the state. The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Lac du Flambeau Tribe and US Fish and Wildlife Service were also invited to comment.

Here is a brief summary of the plan: Xcel will provide funding to Iron County on an annual basis starting at $7000 per year. The use of these funds will be determined by a stakeholder committee which will meet annually. The funding will be adjusted annually for inflation. For the first few years we expect that funds will be used to hire two seasonal employees to conduct Clean Boats Clean Waters at landings and assist with monitoring and surveys.

Under the "Other Invasive Species" section, we determined to use state regulation, NR 40, which identifies restricted and prohibited invasive species and rapid response protocols. Should a new species be found in the flowage, these protocols will give immediate access to funding from the state.

The specifics for each species Xcel is required to address are as follows:

continued on pg. 3

Editorial Page

Presidents Letter

Last summer a girl friend and I decided to go camping. Our destination, Fisher Lake in Langlade County. We headed off on a compass bearing and arrived at the lake just as the sun began its descent over nearby hills. Or was it the lake? In front of us was a dry expanse of wetland with a pine covered island in the middle. We gingerly picked our way to the island where we found a picnic table and fire ring, signs that someone regularly camped here. But why? The only answer we could come up with was that the lake usually had water in it!

Fisher Lake isn't the only lake that has dried up during the drought and this experience has made me feel a little bit lucky to live on a lake with a dam, where water levels have some legal basis, and where, within the constraints of nature, we have management options to discuss. As you will know from past newsletters, the TFF dam is managed by Xcel Energy under license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Within that license they are bound by a Water Quality Certificate from the DNR that sets out specific criteria for the management of the dam. I paraphrase the major criteria here:

- minimum outflow at the dam , 300 cubic feet per second (cfs)
- maximum summer drawdown, 4 feet
- maximum winter drawdown, 8 feet
- dam outflow can not be increased or decreased by more than 300 cfs per day
- the flowage must be near full pool (elevation 1571.5 ft) on or around April 10

The language of the MOU is more nuanced than the above summary, but suffice it to say that any deviation from the MOU must be made in consultation with the DNR. Many of you have followed the association's work over the past few years to encourage timely and conservative water management. Two board members, Jim Bohmann and Tom Mowbray, have done the lion's share of work (and if you see them give them a pat on the back!). We believe that the result of our work is a much stronger partnership with DNR, resulting in more timely and responsive management. We have doggedly tracked water levels and outflows, alerted DNR staff when levels begin to fall, and developed water-level guidelines we call the "Reasonableness Curve". This curve suggests water level targets which we believe meet the MOU framework, work to protect the ecology of the flowage, and extend the summer / fall recreation period.

Last fall, we met with Xcel and the DNR to propose our curve as a guideline for water-level management and a tool to address variations in a timely way. Our meeting held disappointments and some successes. Not unexpectedly, Xcel was not interested in adopting our water-level guidelines. They did however give us some feedback that allowed us to refine the Reasonableness Curve. We will continue to use our curve to track the water levels, and to inform our communications with the DNR. We were pleased that the DNR made clear their commitment to the MOU, including spring refill, maximum summer drawdown, and a return to minimum outflow levels at the dam. This is, of course, contingent on an easing of the current drought.

Xcel's lack of commitment to the model is a disappointment. By way of contrast, and perhaps more importantly, we continue to strengthen our relationship with DNR regulators who are ultimately responsible for decisions on outflow levels. In 2008, we pressed DNR staff to reduce the outflows below the 300 cfs minimum. The outflows have been 60-70 cfs below minimum since mid-September 2008. This spring we asked for a further reduction in outflow to correspond with dwindling tributary contributions and urged the DNR to insure adequate inflows to the Manitowish River which feeds the flowage. When making these requests, we endeavor to balance our needs with up- and downstream ecology and user concerns. Our request is currently being considered.

Since 2005, the total precipitation at Park Falls is 26 inches below normal. A casual drive past lakeshores in our region will show many lakes are from 2 to as much as 7 feet below normal. Most people recognize that there is not much anyone can do except hope for rain. As the

continued on pg. 3

President's Continued...

drought continues the board will keep this issue at the top of our work load. We have also gained a valuable lesson: in times of increasing climate instability, keeping a touch on the pulse of water levels is paramount to the health of our water bodies.

If you would like more information on our work with water levels, please visit the association's new website for a PowerPoint presentation on the reasonableness curve. You can also get drought information at: http://www.aos.wisc.edu/~sco/clim-watch

Invasives Continued...

-The DNR and Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection will continue to monitor gypsy moth.

- Mute swans have been eliminated from the region. Should any be found control measures will be taken.

- Zebra mussel samplers will be placed at the dam, and at six landings on the TFF and Trude Lake. These will be monitored to insure early detection of mussel velligers.

- Purple loosestrife control is currently being conducted by the association and DNR. Xcel will provide funds for beetle rearing and chemical spray for infestations. The plan acknowledges association concerns that personnel are stretched thin, stating "The TFFTLPOA has indicated that a lack of personnel is becoming an issue with meeting their volunteer monitoring efforts due to the sheer size of the flowage." In response, Xcel's funding for Iron County was made flexible to allow seasonal workers to assist the association.

- Eurasian water milfoil is found in nearby Long Lake and in a number of Vilas, Oneida and Price County lakes. Seasonal staff will conduct surveys and if milfoil is found the rapid response protocol would follow.

While this plan may not be approved for a number of months, Xcel Energy pledged to provide the $7,000 for this year. They then responded generously to an additional Iron County request that they cover costs for two staff this year ($10,000) as it is too late for most grant applications.

Work on this plan took many hours for Xcel, agency staff and the association board. In the end, I believe we all felt proud of the outcome. My Mom is still battling dandelions in her lawn...and I am sure that our association will still be battling invasive species 30 or 50 years from now. Luckily we have the benefit of partnerships and a wide range of tools to help insure that we don't just end up with stiff backs like my poor mom.

If you are interested in reading the full text of the Invasive Species Plan, please contact Terry Daulton for a copy. If you would like to get involved in our efforts to control and prevent purple loosestrife or other invasive species, please contact Diane O'Krongly, our invasive species chair, or visit our new website for more information on Clean Boats Clean Waters.

Welcome Aboard New Members!

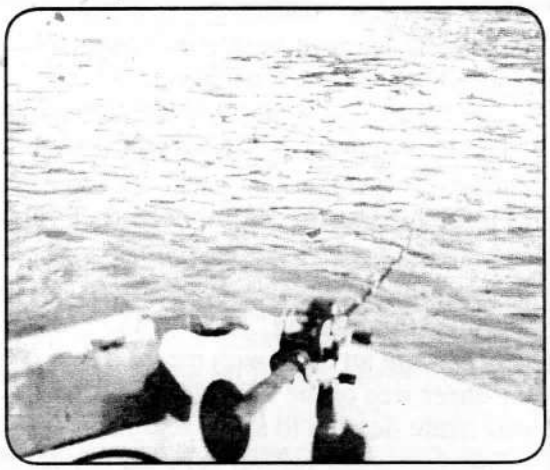
The association would like to extend a warm welcome to the 54 new members who responded to our recent appeal for new members. With your addition to our ranks, our total membership—property owners and friends--has now reached 209. The benefits to the association of this increased membership are many. We now speak for an even greater percentage of flowage residents—about two thirds of them—when we serve as advocates for our common interests or when we seek outside support for projects. In our publicity-driven age, numbers do count. Moreover we have substantially enhanced the pool of members on whom we can draw for ideas and assistance. But we hope that the primary benefits of membership will accrue to the new members themselves. We encourage you to come forward with your thoughts and concerns, to volunteer where time allows and when activities appeal to your interests or talents, and to share with others information and perspectives that the association makes available through its meetings and communications. Most of all, we hope that you will enjoy meeting and talking with others who share your affection for and commitment to this wonderful part of the northwoods. We look forward to seeing you Saturday, June 12, at the Annual Membership Meeting.

Format Change!

We have decided to introduce an editorial page in the newsletter. Our main goal is to provide a consistent location for the President's Letter and for policy or position statements of the association. In addition, we see this page as a place to publish letters to the editor. Please feel free to write to us at P.O. Box 631, Mercer, WI 54547 or e-mail us at newslettereditor@tfftl.org.

Association Opposes Motor Trolling

At the spring DNR hearing on fish and wildlife rules, held April 12, 2010, at the Mercer Community Center, the TFF-TL POA took a stand against a proposal that would allow motor trolling on most Iron County lakes—including the flowage. Nick Jongebloed, reading a statement on behalf of the association, focused on the ways in which the wilderness character of the flowage would be degraded by motor trolling. In addition, he raised concerns about possible adverse effects



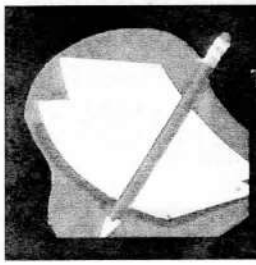
on the fishery and about possible user conflicts.

Attendees at the Mercer meeting defeated question number 25 by a vote of 11 yes, 29 no. Residents of Sawyer and Ashland counties also voted against question number 25; Price County residents supported it. The set of proposed rules changes would also authorize motor trolling in those counties, so their views on the question are of particular interest. The statewide vote on question 25 supported motor trolling. This issue will be resolved by the Natural Resources Board.

WAL Convention Update and Upcoming NW Lakes Conference

This past March, Board member Diane O'Krongly, along with Terry Daulton, attended the 32nd annual Lakes Convention of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes. The main theme of the conference was shoreland protection, with keynote presentations on the values of natural shorelines and understanding how social values shape our views of landscaping along shores. Terry attended a workshop on aquatic plant ID and Diane participated in a special session for educators titled, Educating for Stewardship. They also attended a number of sessions on fish habitat, new legislation, and native plant programs. The Iron County Land Conservation Department generously provided funds for the conference registration for a second attendee, based on the association funding one person to participate.

The LCD is offering a similar opportunity for Iron County lake association members interested in attending the Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Cable this summer. That session, scheduled for June 18 at Telemark, will feature presentations on drought and low water levels, limnology, shoreland restoration, and more. Our group often sends participants to this session. If you are interested in either the WAL conference or upcoming Northwest Lakes Conference you can find additional information at the Wisconsin Lakes website. Many of the WAL presentations are available on line. The Wisconsin Lakes website is www.wisconsinlakes.org.



Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners Association will be held SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. at the Haines Civic Center in Mercer. At the meeting, members will vote for a new member of the Board of Directors, receive a report from the treasurer, and hear updates on association activities. This meeting also provides an open forum for members to raise

Water Quality Study Field Work Completed

The Association's Sub-Above Mobile Scientific Laboratory (SAMSL) at work this winter taking simultane-

If you were one of the last intrepid (or foolhardy) anglers on the ice this spring, you might have thought there was a naive downstater risking life and limb heading towards the big water on March 15th . In reality it was the US Geological Survey collecting the last water samples for our water quality study. These samples are important to our understanding of under-ice conditions and complement data gathered from spring through fall. According to Dale Robertson, USGS, the results will not only be shared with the Association, but they will also be published in USGS annual reports. He has not completed the analysis at present, but will in the near future. At that point, we will have a better understanding of flowage water quality and a clearer grasp of questions that might yet need to be explored. Discussions can then take place on whether to proceed with future studies. We may, for example, consider an application for a major lake protection grant to better understand the sources of nutrients in the system, how they vary with changes in precipitation, and what should be done to try to prevent future degradation of the water.

For its part, the lake association has completed the survey of property owner opinion, a modest aquatic plant survey, and is currently compiling goals and objectives from various planning documents to complete its work on the project.

We hope to have this work finalized and our grant report prepared this summer. For more information on the grant project please visit our new flowage website.

Cribbage

This Year

Once again this fall and winter, the association's well-oiled crib-building operation cranked it up into high gear. On November 7, surely the finest day of autumn, 15 volunteers—including some non-member friends—turned up at fisherman's landing to pre-drill the massive pile of maple logs that had been delivered by Gary Kessler. Whether the pile totaled 2,000 full cords, as some older bodies were inclined to feel, or just 20 full cords as the logger asserted, the task seemed formidable. Undaunted, the volunteers fired up the generators and grabbed the drills (both provided by the DNR) and by three in the afternoon the job was complete: the holes drilled, the logs restacked, and the tarp cover in place. How does one account for such effort? Perhaps it was the prospect of getting onto the lake or into the woods late that sunny afternoon; perhaps it was the fuel provided by brats a la Arnie and pulled pork from Gateway Lodge; perhaps it was a bit of friendly competition between the two working groups which started at opposite ends of the pile and met in the middle. Only a golden spike was lacking to celebrate the moment.

Good weather, seasonably adjusted, of course, met all those who showed up for the mid-January crib assembly exercise. This stage of crib-building was truly a joint venture between the association and the DNR. On the 14th, 20 members and 7 DNR staff worked along side one another, while on the 15th the numbers were 21 and 8, respectively. (Data courtesy of Arnie Popp, who counts the number of dirty soup and chili bowls.) Three DNR snowmachines and utility sleds took the lead in ferrying logs and brush to the construction sites, while association members lashed the cribs together and weighted them—the rope and blocks also contributed by the DNR. By early afternoon on the 15th, 42 completed cribs were lashed in place along the shores of Baraboo and Sweeney Lakes, awaiting deployment by a DNR crew at ice out.

The Program

When the 42 cribs have settled on the bottom this spring, the association will have been responsible for the construction of 358 cribs under the current program. The DNR has dispersed these cribs about the flowage in locations that

continued on pg. 11

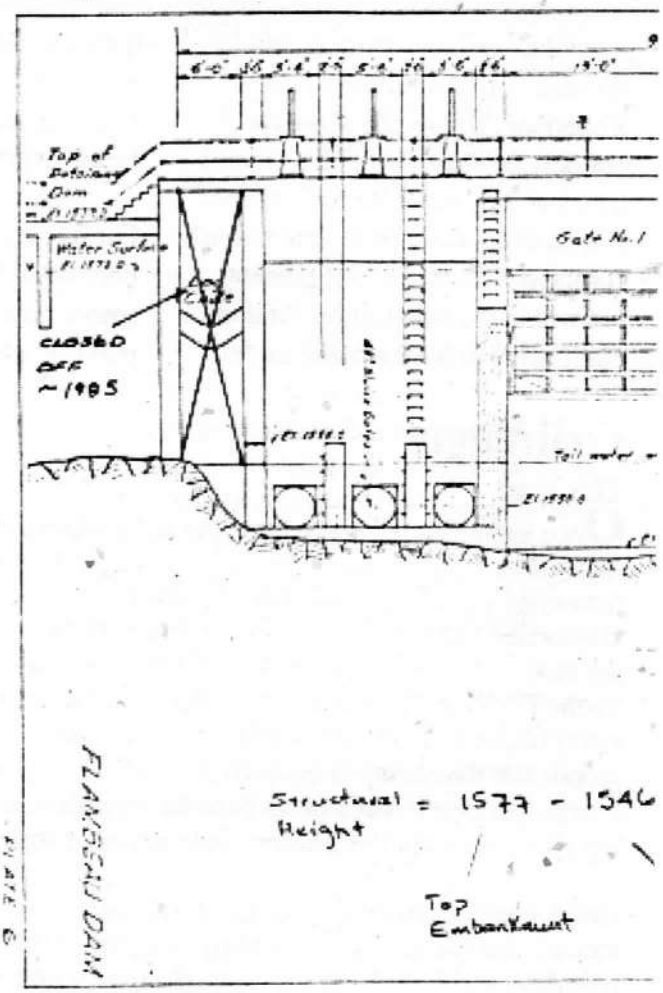
One Dam Date After Another

By Mike Hittle

Lots of people, usually those with little interest in the past, see history as one damn date after another. I've never subscribed to that view. For one thing, I have trouble keeping dates straight—including some that a married man really ought to have fully under control. For another, I find history's deeper meanings come from our interpretation of facts, not their mere recitation. That said, some facts are intrinsically interesting. Moreover, it sometimes happens that the ordering and the juxtaposition of events can raise useful questions that might otherwise not come to mind when facts are treated in isolation. I hope the following recitation about events leading up to the construction of the Flambeau dam will be a case in point.

Let us begin in early 1925, the year in which the dam was actually constructed. On the 24th of February, the Byllesby Engineering and Management Corporation, Chicago, Illinois, prepared for the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company (CFIC) a comprehensive set of cost estimates for the construction of the Flambeau dam. As of that date, the estimates record that $178,063.51 had been spent for the acquisition of property AND they go on to note that land or flowage rights must yet be secured from 23 additional parties at an estimated cost of $155,916. Total land acquisition costs, including surveying, taxes, legal fees, etc. were placed at $392,591.49

On March 28, 1925, the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company signed a contract with the L.E. Myers Company of Chicago, Illinois, "for the Construction of a Dam, Headworks and Dykes, to form or create the Flambeau Reservoir." This contract was based on specifications drawn up in 1924 by Read and Seastone, Consulting Engineers of Madison, Wisconsin, and modified on March 2, 1925, by the Byllesby Corporation. Among the more significant items in the estimate were 164,000 cubic yards of earth for the embankment, 7,269 cubic yards of concrete for the spillway dam, 1,120,000 pounds of steel sheeting, and 6,906 pounds of structural steel. Total construction costs, which included a $45,000 "profit" for the contractor, came to $564, 692.63. Counting in land acquisition costs, the building of the Flambeau dam was estimated to be a one million dollar project.

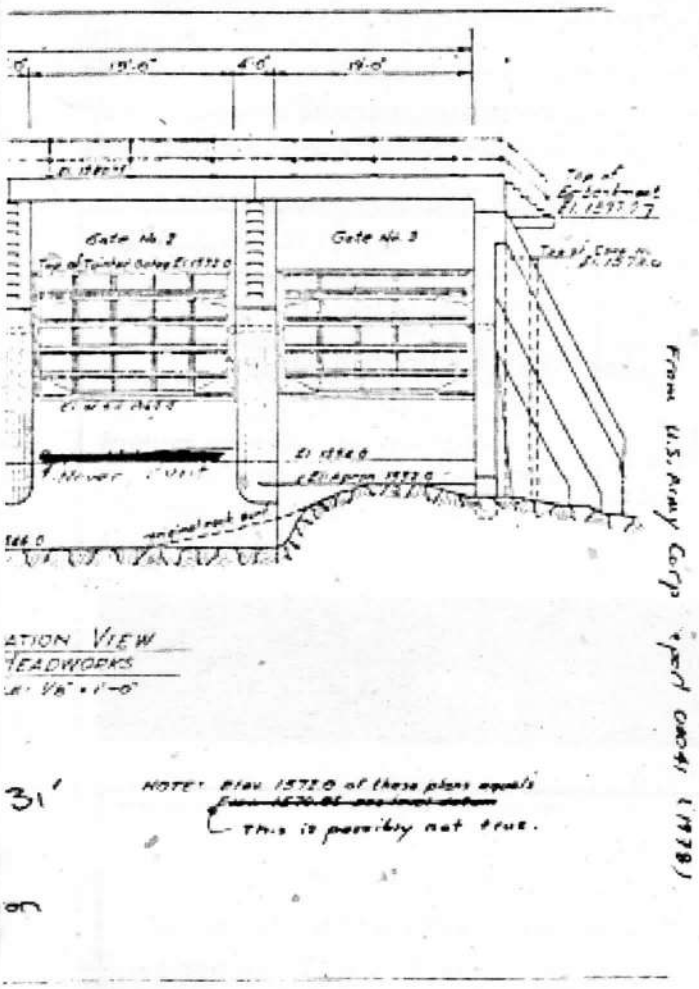


On March 31 the CFIC filed an application with the Railroad Commission (the predecessor of the state's Public Service Commission) seeking "approval of certain plans and specifications for the construction of a storage reservoir on the Flambeau River at or near the Junction of the Turtle and Manitowish Rivers...." Moving at unprecedented speed for a regulatory agency, the Commission on April 1 called for a hearing on the matter to take place at Madison on April 15. It then proceeded to place public notices in the Park Falls Herald and to contact as many affected property owners as was possible. The hearing took place as scheduled. The CFIC was represented at the hearing along with Northern States Power and

the Great Western Paper Company. Representatives of eight property-owners also participated—including those for the Jerome Fishing and Hunting Club and the Merkle Lake Hunting and Fishing Club—two properties whose acquisition would surely be quite costly to the reservoir owners.

Something seems amiss here. Why did the CFIC authorize engineering plans, seek estimates from a construction manager, and sign a construction contract in excess of half a million dollars prior to approval for the entire project from a state regulatory agency? Were those who proposed to build this storage dam lacking in business acumen? Or were there other issues at play that make this sequence of events less risky than they appear?

So I thought until I came across the following information. The CFIC, it turns out, had already filed an application with the Railroad Commission for the building of this reservoir on December 23, 1923. The company no doubt felt it was on solid ground in so doing. Through Chapter 640, of the Laws of 1911, the legislature had given the CFIC authority "to construct, acquire, maintain, and operate a system of water reservoirs on the headwaters of the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers and their tributaries...." The purpose was to provide a uniform flow of water in these rivers, thereby "improving navigation and other uses of said streams and diminishing injury to property both private and public." And while the Railroad Commission had regulatory authority over the CFIC, its role was to help the CFIC achieve its goals in a way that did no harm to public or private interests. In short, the RRC had an interest in making the project a reality. And yet, on January 20, 1925, the Commission denied the CFIC's application. In its decision, the commission expressed no reservations about the reservoir itself, but they took exception to an attempt by the CFIC to insulate the reservoir from certain state powers in a manner the Commission found contrary to law. (This is a story in itself!) The choice before the CFIC was simple: either abandon the project, or remove the material the Commission found objectionable and reapply. They chose the latter course and submitted a revised application on March 31. During the period between the rejection of its initial application and its decision to reapply, the CFIC seems to have entertained a high degree of confidence in the ultimate approval of the project by the Railroad Commission. Accordingly, they took the kinds of steps that were essential to undertaking and completing the project in 1925. That confidence proved to be well placed.



Given the Railroad Commission's regulatory objectives and its knowledge of the Flambeau reservoir project from the previous application, it should come as no surprise, then, that on 27 May, 1925, it approved "generally" the plans for the project, set the maximum elevation of water in the reservoir at 1572 feet, the minimum at 1539 feet, and had its bench mark, a bronze tablet, set in ledge rock on the site. Construction began in earnest, was largely completed in 1925, and the process of filling the flowage began March 16, 1926—the date on which the first readings of water elevation and discharge were posted.

Who's Who of Law Enforcement

The association frequently receives inquiries on how citizens can deal with law enforcement issues. Below is a short list of contact information for some of these issues.

Personal watercraft violations--operating before 11:00 AM or after 4:00 PM:

- Josh Kamrowski, Turtle Flambeau Flowage Ranger: Joshua.kamrowski@wisconsin.gov or (715) 476-7846
- Stuart C. Pfeiffer, Conservation Warden: (715) 476-2240
- Iron County Sheriff's Department: (715) 561-3800

Discovery of an aquatic invasive plant in the flowage:

- Heather Palmquist, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator ICLWCD: lakes@ironcountywi.org or (715) 561-2234
- Diane O'Krongly, TFFTLPOA Aquatic Invasive Species Committee Coordinator: invasivespecies@tfftl.org or (715) 476-0287

Fireworks nuisance:

- Iron County Sheriff's department: (715) 561-3800
- Josh Kamrowski, Turtle Flambeau Flowage Ranger: Joshua.kamrowski@wisconsin.gov or (715) 476-7846

Firewood violations:

- Josh Kamrowski, Turtle Flambeau Flowage Ranger: Joshua.kamrowski@wisconsin.gov or (715) 476-7846
- Stuart C. Pfeiffer, Conservation Warden: (715) 476-2240

Unauthorized/illegal cabin rentals:

- Opal Roberts, Mercer Town Clerk: (715) 476-9152

HELP WANTED:

The association is seeking a volunteer webmaster too do routine updating of our newly established website. If you are interested, please contact Terry Daulton (tdaulton@centurytel.com).

Legislative Update

Effective 2/1/2010: WI Act 31, which limits motorboats to slow-no-wake speed within 100 feet of ALL shorelines (including islands).

Effective 4/1/2010: WI Act 9, which eliminates the use of phosphorus in most lawn fertilizers.

Effective 7/1/2010: WI Act 63, which limits the amount of phosphorus in dishwasher detergent for home use.

Effective 10/1/2010: WI Act 55, which allows any Law Enforcement Officer to issue tickets for boat/trailer traveling with aquatic weeds attached.

Protection for Wisconsin's Shores & Shallows ~ Revised Shoreland Development Rules (NR 115)

By Mary Jo Gingras

In Wisconsin, we are fortunate that our lakes and rivers belong to the citizens of the state and that these valuable resources are at the heart of the way of life for many. We have the privilege to enjoy the ecological and recreational opportunities offered by these gems. Wisconsin's lakes and streams are protected through rules developed by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and adopted by the Natural Resources Board. In addition to our privilege to enjoy the resources, citizens, landowners, agency staff, and county governments have the responsibility to protect these resources for our children and grandchildren, so that future generations may enjoy the same opportunities and livelihoods.

As lakes continue to develop, it is important to study the impact of that development and to revise regulations to manage land use activities in a way that protects these resources. Development can increase water runoff and pollutants, cause a loss of plants that filter runoff, and reduce wildlife habitat. Research has shown that, as lakes here in northern Wisconsin are developed, characteristic songbird species have been replaced by common bird species such as grackles and cowbirds; green frog populations that live and breed at the water's edge have decreased; and largemouth bass and bluegill nesting habitat has declined.

SHORELAND BUFFER

The undisturbed, natural buffer along the shore is comprised of native trees, shrubs, and groundcover species. The buffer serves many important functions: allows water to soak into the ground; decreases fertilizer, pesticides, and other pollutants from entering the lake; reduces erosion as plant roots hold soil in place; and provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife species.

* The Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department provides assistance and funding to landowners for shoreland

The rules, referred to as NR 115, were first adopted forty years ago. They outline the minimum standards for shoreland development to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty along lakes and rivers. On November 13, 2009, Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board adopted a set of revisions to these rules. County governments have until 2012 to update their shoreland ordinances to be consistent with or exceed, the state's rules. Many counties across the state have already adopted ordinances that exceed the state's standards and provide additional protection for shoreland areas.

Under the revised rules, existing shoreland property owners can keep what they currently have unless they propose a major change on the property, such as remodeling or expanding an existing structure, erecting a new building, or installing additional "hard" surfaces (areas that prevent water infiltration into the soil). If these, or similar, activities are proposed, then property owners may have to utilize a conservation practice to offset the potential adverse impacts from their projects.

Shoreland Rule Updates:

Some of the standards remain the same:

Setback

- Homes must be set back 75 feet from the water.
- Minimum lot size requirements remain at 20,000 square feet and 10,000 square feet.

Changed standards:

Expansion

- The spending limitations have been eliminated on repair/remodel to existing non-conforming structures within 75 feet of the water.

continued on pg. 10

Shoreland Continued...

- Expansion of an existing home closer than 75 feet from the water's edge is now allowed in some cases: an owner can build a second story or add-on vertically if their existing house is at least 35 feet back from the water. However, the addition may not exceed 35 feet in height from the lowest elevation. Expansion of homes more than 75 feet back from the water is still allowed.
- Property owners expanding the physical footprint of a non-conforming structure (structure not meeting the current setback of 75 feet) will be required to offset, or mitigate, the environmental impacts of the expansion by choosing from a number of options. For example, replanting native vegetation in the shoreland buffer near the water's edge, or installing a rain garden to absorb storm runoff. Counties will set what the specific mitigation requirements are as they update their ordinances.

New standards:

Impervious Surface

- A new standard caps the total amount of hard or "impervious" surfaces such as roofs, pavement and decks allowed on shoreland property. The caps apply only to properties within 300 feet of lakes or rivers, and they do not affect existing property owners unless the owners try to make major changes that would cover up more land with hard surfaces.
- No limitations would exist for additions or new buildings where the lot's impervious surfaces do not exceed 15% of the total lot size. Where the sum total of impervious surfaces is between 15-30% of the lot size, property owners would be required to mitigate the environmental impact of their proposed project.

For more information on the revised rules, contact DNR staff: Gregg Breese, Shoreland Team Leader, at (608) 261-6430 or Gregory.breese@wisconsin.gov

Iron County is currently working on submitting a DNR Lake Grant to assist the Zoning and Land Conservation Departments in revising Iron County's Shoreland Ordinance. There will be a series of public forums and informational sessions during the fall of 2010.

For more information on shoreland protection in Iron County, contact: MaryJo Gingras, at the Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department at 715-561-2234.

TTFL-TL Plant Survey Completed

Last summer, as part of the association's Lake Grant, Heather Palmquist, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator for Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department, Terry Daulton, Sandy Wickman, DNR, Nick Jongebloed, and Diane O'Krongly conducted an aquatic plant survey on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. The group found 34 species of native plants. All types of plants where collected--emergent, submergent, and floating. The collected plants were pressed and then sent to Dr. Freckmann at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, for verification or identification. No aquatic invasive species were found.

Cribbage Continued... are, according to Jeff Roth, the recently retired fisheries biologist, perceived to be relatively sterile. The aim of the program is to provide habitat conducive to the survival and growth of fry of various species in the hope that more of these young can reach adult/spawning age. If successful, then, the crib program should, over time, increase the number of harvestable fish. Because cribs are viewed primarily as shelters, the association has not publicized their locations. Moreover, the association does not have GPS coordinates for the 358 cribs to give out, even if it were inclined to do so, because final decisions on the placement of cribs lie not with the association, but with the DNR. That said, those who wish to fish the cribs are free to do so, but they will have to locate the cribs on their own.

Melvin Yeakle puts some serious muscle into drilling a maple log.

The Future

Common sense suggests that restoring woody structure to a body of water that once had an overabundance of such structure should help the fish population. Unfortunately, no scientific study of the effectiveness of cribs has been undertaken on the flowage itself. The importance of the issue is such, however, that the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, at its recent convention, devoted several sessions to the techniques and results of introducing woody structures into lakes. The board of the TFF-TL POA is considering the formation of a fishery committee to explore management options. This committee would likely include both association members and resource professionals. The wide divergence of views on habitat management suggests the need for careful study before embarking on any course of action. The following reflections from Nick Jongebloed, a director of the TFF-TL POA, contain a number of steps he thinks might be taken to improve fish habitat on the flowage in addition to crib-building.

"Fish Sticks:" Food for Thought

"Let me say at the outset that I am a strong supporter of the crib-building program. My concern here centers on how we might further enhance the survival and growth rates of panfish in the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. Research has shown that panfish in lakes with significant woody habitat experience growth rates up to three times that of fish in more simple habitats, because of the increased population of invertebrates

"Presently, we have 358 cribs, with most of them placed in 12-14 feet of water. We realize that we cannot put the cribs any shallower, due to navigation problems at low water levels. But in the natural lakes that are part of the flowage, we can put cribs in deep water, 20-40 feet, as long as oxygen levels are adequate. When the lakes turn over in the fall, there is no stratification; and a thermocline no longer exists. Most of the fish move into the deep water basins. That is when our small panfish are at risk, because they have no cover for protection from the larger fish. Deep cribs would offer them shelter.

"Full tree drops provide an option or supplement to cribs. Installing full tree drops in deeper water could help to protect the smaller fish from the larger predators during the winter months. However, low water levels do not allow the use of tree drops along the shoreline because they will be exposed during low water, crushed or torn out by the ice, or become visual magnets for fishermen. Moreover, such drops are not now included in the flowage management plan. An alternative would be to install brush piles in 6-10 feet of water. They would not create a navigation problem and would not be affected by the ice. The brush piles would supply cover and invertebrate food for the small panfish, which would enhance survival and growth rates.

"Another idea that has been put forward for discussion would be for the DNR to authorize property owners to install small brush piles along shorelines out to 50 feet from shore. Also, they should be allowed to tie pine trees under their docks to give additional cover for the smaller fish.

"There has been some work done in Washburn County concerning tree drops and brush piles installed along the shoreline. These projects are known as "fish sticks," and show the importance of woody structures in lakes. For more information, visit www.bonylake.wi.org."

Driftwood

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

Published Twice Annually

If you would like to contact the association electronically, please visit our website www.tfftl.org and search under "Board Members-DNR Contacts"

--- 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 S.R.E. Design Printing & Publishing Division, Butternut H.S. - Butternut, WI - Under the supervision of Jordee Reimer, Instructor. (715-769-3434)

Driftwood

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

P.O. Box 631 - Mercer, WI 54547