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

Driftwood

Fall/Winter 2011-2012

Association Hosts Representative Bewley

By Mike Hittle

On Monday, August 22, the association welcomed a special guest, Representative Janet Bewley of the Wisconsin State Assembly. Ms. Bewley represents the 74th Assembly district, in which the flowage is located. On hand to greet her and to escort her on a boat ride around parts of the flowage were Terry Daulton, Diane O'Krongly, Jim Bohmann, Bill and Donna Ficek, Mike Hittle, Chris Niehaus, and Jeff Wilson.

In extending an invitation to Ms. Bewley, the board of directors pursued three aims; to give her a broad introduction to this valuable resource, from its scenic beauty to the many ways it is used by Wisconsinites and visitors alike; to inform her of the kinds of issues that the association feels are important to sustaining and enhancing the outstanding attributes of this scenic area; and to learn something of her thinking about natural resource issues. In effect, the day was designed primarily for both parties to get to know one another.

As the participants boarded the DNR pontoon boat (one donated by the association some years ago) for the morning voyage, the sky was overcast and the atmosphere a bit on the damp side. Fleeces and rain jackets were much in evidence. It hardly seemed the ideal day to show off the "Crown Jewel" of Wisconsin's natural resources; but then, as those who know the area can attest, the weather can easily be worse. And, of course, it can even improve.

Jim Bohmann describes water-level issues to Representative Bewley

Undaunted by the gloom, but also protected by the boat's canopy, Jeff Wilson powered up the engine and headed out onto the waters of the flowage. The first destination was Swimmer's Island, a site that sees a lot of use by those seeking relief from summer heat. Before the craft reached the island, however, Representative Bewley and association members had struck up an easy-going dialog, often prompted by questions that she posed. That give and take was to continue unabated throughout the day. After viewing the tornado damage to Swimmers' Island and talking about but not hitting any of the rocks adjacent to it, the party headed downlake. The narrow passageway above Hot Dog Island not only provided the party with even more dramatic evidence of the tornado's destructiveness, but it also afforded an opportunity to discuss with the representative issues concerning fish habitat. Shortly thereafter, the island lived up to its reputation as one of the most popular flowage camping sites. For just as the boat came to the end of the channel, it passed by an occupied campsite, with campfire burning and campers at the picnic tables enjoying either a late breakfast or an early lunch. All in all, it was a quintessential flowage moment.

The captain next piloted the boat sufficiently far into the Big Water to

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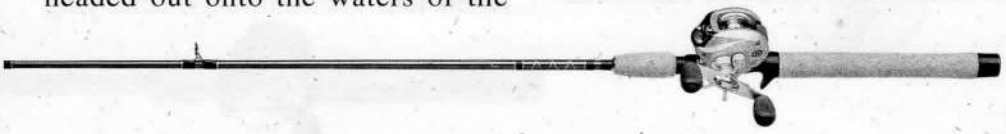


President's Letter

By Terry Daulton

I recently heard a news report describing a new TV reality series, one that centers on the lives of protesters at the "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrations. My first reaction was an eye roll over the desperation of reality TV, but as I thought about it, occurrit ed to me that maybe there was a more optimistic way to view this story. Maybe this news clip reflects a deeper social movement—an increase in the number of citizens actively participating in democracy and public policy around the world. If you look back over the past year, there seems to be a global groundswell of activism; from the Arab Spring in the Middle East and north Africa, to Tea Party and Wall Street rallies in the US, to Chinese protesters fighting for clean water, to our own Wisconsin protest movement. Regardless of ideology, more of us seem to be investing time and energy working for causes we hold dear.

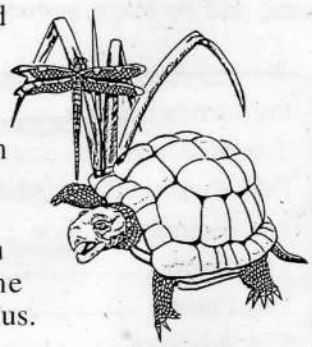
Though our association has not garnered any national headlines, we too have taken on some "activist" tasks this past year. No, we weren't out on a picket line, but we have taken a role in several local issues. If you followed the controversy around the conditional use permit for Pitlick and Wick's gravel pit in the Town of Springstead, you will know that our association wrote a letter in opposition to the permit based on our research and our view that the project could potentially have an adverse impact on the flowage and surrounding lakes.

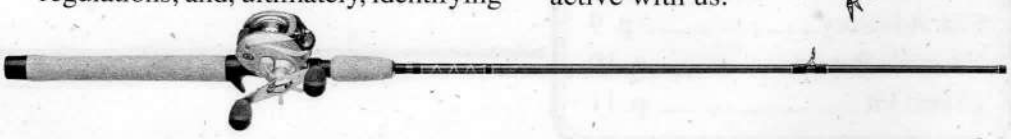
Our summer visit with State Representative Janet Bewley is another form of activism. We hope to continue to develop relationships with our elected officials so that when public policy impacts our waterbodies we will be well informed and have a strong rapport with decision makers.

When you picture an activist, images of crowds with signs shouting slogans come to mind. While protests get the headlines, most activism starts quietly. Effective activism takes time, good information, and often lengthy discussions and hard work. I am particularly proud of our association's activism this year regarding fisheries. We started by setting up a fish habitat and management committee with three board members and three association members. Led by Nick Jongebloed, they began by gathering information on ways to enhance fish habitat. They then invited Dave Nueswanger (DNR fish supervisor) to give us a presentation, with special emphases on walleye and bass interactions and on the impacts of habitat structures—like fish cribs, fish sticks, etc. We also invited our new Mercer area fish manager, Lawrence Eslinger, to talk about the TFF fishery at our annual meeting and at subsequent board meetings. The committee's ongoing agenda includes the following items: determining the future of our fish crib program; working to understand the complex relationships between species like walleyes, bass and panfish; understanding the effects of harvest regulations; and, ultimately, identifying concrete actions the association might responsibly take to improve the overall fishery.

At the same time we have initiated contacts with Dr. Mike Bozek, of The University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, and Sara Schmidt (a fish habitat consultant). At our invitation, they toured the tornado-damaged areas of the flowage with an eye toward determining whether a scientific study of fish utilization of downed timber might be feasible. We are hopeful that a study of tornado-introduced "fish sticks" might provide insights for future management efforts. Dr. Bozek is currently putting together a research proposal that would explore questions such as: how effective are shoreline tree drops considering our water level fluctuations and ice damage; where might such habitat best be placed; and whether, in fact, the flowage and Trude Lake need additional woody material in order to maintain a quality fishery.

In a way, most of our association work could be considered "activism," whether it is controlling invasive species, monitoring water quality, working with the DNR and Xcel Energy on water levels, or building fish cribs. I suppose it is unlikely that any television network will be launching a reality series, "Lives of the Flowage". (Although if they had been at a board meeting where we talk about smallmouth bass versus walleye they might change their minds! It's good drama and comedy!) Regardless of fame and fortune, we hope to continue our activism and to encourage more of you to become active with us.





What's up with the Mess?

By Chris Niehaus
Property Manager
Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area

It's been over a year since the tornado ripped through the flowage, leaving a path of twisted trees. By the weekend of July 4, 2010, we were back to a full assemblage of campsites; 60 first come, first served and 6 reserve only sites. We closed 8 sites permanently and moved them to other areas of the flowage. We kept the same number of family sites (17 with a picnic table) and the same number of rustic sites (40 without a picnic table). We still have the two first come, first served group sites and the one handicapped site.

I know many of you wonder about the downed trees on the islands. Those immediately adjacent to campsites slowly get cut as campers utilize the dead trees for firewood. Also, as we do maintenance on the campsites, the downed trees get cut into firewood chunks for use by campers.

As for the islands without campsites, they will stay as is. There are several reasons for this decision. The master plan specifically states that all islands and the shoreline strip 300 feet from the water's edge shall be left uncut, even in the event of a tornado. Yes, the plan specifically mentions tornados. Some say that we should ignore the master plan and just clean up the islands. That thinking opens a Pandora's box of other issues that may pose serious threats to the integrity of the flowage property. Citizens from around the state participated in the master planning process by providing comments. A citizen advisory board closely scrutinized the plan and offered many suggestions and comments. The plan, written over a couple of years, utilized the comments from the public. In short, we have a responsibility to honor this public input.

Karl Pilch, DNR, leads crew in campsite clean-up.

Moreover, salvage timber is not worth as much as standing timber because the fibers are twisted. The low volume of timber on the islands, combined with the poor price for that timber, does not equal the expense or risk for a logger to move half million dollars worth of equipment across unstable ice. Some folks ask why a group of volunteers cannot clean up the islands. The answer is simple: liability. The state requires anyone doing work on state lands to carry workman's compensation and $300,000 in liability insurance.

In time, Mother Nature will take care of it. Already, young aspen and white birch sprout from parent stumps. Given enough cycles of the seasons, the woody debris will provide soil medium and a nice seed bed for future generations of trees. In the meantime, it provides excellent cover for small mammals, birds, reptiles and even deer and bear.

TFFTL.org Online Information and Applications

Our website is now in full operation, with more information than ever. Business is picking up as well. As of late October, there had been 11,764 visits to our website, and not all of them by our Webmaster! When visiting the site you can check the calendar for upcoming events, read news relating to the flowage, look for pictures sent in by members, or see pictures of members participating in association activities.

If you have neighbors who are not members of the association, please encourage them to visit the site. They can get an up-to-date view of our activities AND they can print out a membership form. Or, if they are not on line, you can copy an application form and deliver it to them.

Finally, be sure your computer has a bookmark to TFFTL.org!

Attention! Cost Sharing Available to Replace Tornado Damaged Trees!

If you had substantial tree loss near the water's edge due to last year's tornado, you may be eligible for 70% cost share reimbursement from the Iron County Riparian Buffer Restoration Practice. Contact MaryJo Gingrass or Heather Palmquist at the LWCD office in Hurley for more information. (715)561-2234

Association Hosts Rep. Bewley

Continued from page 1

make it possible for our guest to view the dam and adjacent dikes, and to get a sense of the vastness of the Big Water. Time constraints then prompted a change of course toward Springstead Point, where lunch would soon be waiting. At this point, however, a balky outboard motor temporarily delayed matters. Despite copious analysis, advice, and assistance from numerous parties on board, the motor persisted in its ways, and so the cruise resumed at less than full speed ahead. Perhaps that somewhat slower pace aided in the sighting, near the Springstead Landing, of one of the loons equipped with a satellite transmitter. The loon cooperated nicely by surfacing frequently enough to allow all on board to have a good look at it and its antenna. Terry and Jeff filled the representative in on the research that these loons are contributing to.

As the pontoon boat traversed the last few hundred yards to Tom Mowbray's home, the sun began to poke its way through the clouds; and by the time the party clambered up onto the dock, brilliant midday sunshine had overtaken the entire sky. Tom, along with Sandy Bohmann and Nick and Jeanne Jongebloed, had laid out all the trimmings for a sumptuous fish fry; and Nick, who served as head chef, had a bag full of fillets ready for the fish cooker. Conversations with our guest continued through the lunch hour, though not with such an intensity as to preclude some serious eating. Needless to say, the bright sunshine gave an added boost to the experience. After the meal and some post-dessert conversation, the pontoon boat ferried Ms. Bewley and several others back to Fisherman's Landing. There, the representative said her goodbyes and headed off to her next obligation, a slice of leftover blackberry pie in hand.

Conversations between Representative Bewley and association members covered a wide range of topics: water levels; the economic value of the flowage; spearfishing harvests by Native Americans; fisheries management, etc. Association members who took part in this get together found Ms. Bewley to be interested in the flowage and the association, attentive to our various concerns, well-informed about and sensitive to environmental issues, and articulate in expressing her own views. The lines of communication that were opened up by her visit may well be of value to the association in the future, whether we seek advice from her or lobby for or against measures before the legislature. But even short of such future interactions, one sure outcome of this visit was the addition of a new friend of the flowage and of our association.

Janet Bewley reacting to transmitter-equipped loon

Bewley and O'Krongly: Fish-Fry Frivolity

Chef Jongebloed with a fine kettle of fish

Post-Picnic Conversation

Donna Ficek, Janet Bewley and Terry Daulton on board for return trip to Fisheman's Landing

Dike Construction Update

Dike reconstruction postponed: intrepid association volunteer awaits winter's icy blasts.

In our last newsletter we described Xcel Energy's plans to upgrade some areas of the Turtle Flambeau dike during the summer and early fall of 2012. But if you have been down at the south end, you may have wondered why your fishing was NOT disturbed by the sounds of bulldozers. We asked Excel's Matt Miller for an update. The following is a summary of the project and its updated timeline.

The Turtle Flambeau Reservoir dike project was initially scheduled in three phases: 1) raise the existing south dikes, where necessary, in 2011; 2) construct a new dike near Sportsman's Landing in 2012; and 3) construct a new dike on private property near Minnow Lake.

The work on the existing dikes requires filling wetlands at three of the dikes. Excel was unable to complete the wetland delineations before June due to a late spring. This put back the permitting process into summer. Both the WDNR and the US Army Corps of Engineers require permits. While both agencies completed the permits by August, it was too late in the season for Excel to get bids and complete the work before freezing weather. Xcel plans to finalize the designs of the new dikes over the winter. In 2012, they plan to raise the existing south dikes where necessary and possibly complete one or both of the new dikes. It is also possible that the two new dikes would both be completed in 2013.

Water Quality Volunteers Brave Wind, Cold and Mosquitos!

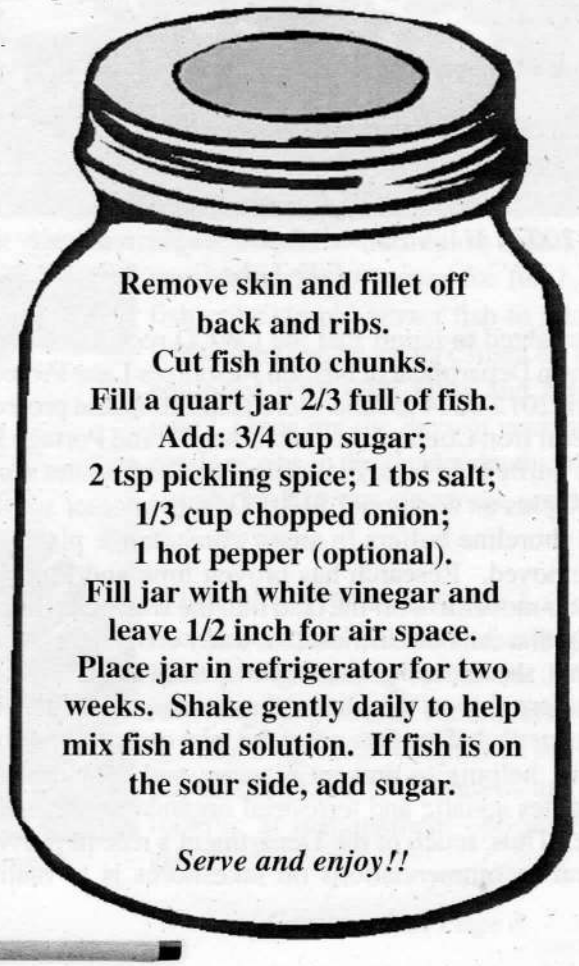
We want to take our hats off to this season's water quality volunteers! As you may know, the association has launched an expanded project to sample water quality on the flowage and Trude Lake, following up on recommendations from the US Geological Survey. Our new crop of volunteers had a challenging start this spring. Some were out in full ice fishing apparel to gather the early season water samples just after ice out. (Ask Mike Hittle and Chris Ederer about their adventure on Trude Lake in a spring gale!).

The volunteers for this season included: Jim Leever, Diane O'Krongl', Kit and Gary Bogenschneider, Todd and Becky Jirous, Heather Palmquist, Chris Ederer, Mike Hittle, Jim Blum, and Chris Niehaus. Our new volunteers finished the season with a renewed respect for the work Jim Leever has been doing for the last several years.

This expanded sampling was funded by the Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department and the WDNR. We are currently waiting for results from the season and hope to report on the data in the spring issue of Driftwood.

Popp on Pickling

Culinary correspondent and association director Arnie Popp recommends the following recipe for pickling suckers, northern pike, bass, and other fish.



Remove skin and fillet off back and ribs.
Cut fish into chunks.
Fill a quart jar 2/3 full of fish.
Add: 3/4 cup sugar;
2 tsp pickling spice; 1 tbs salt;
1/3 cup chopped onion;
1 hot pepper (optional).
Fill jar with white vinegar and leave 1/2 inch for air space.
Place jar in refrigerator for two weeks. Shake gently daily to help mix fish and solution. If fish is on the sour side, add sugar.

Serve and enjoy!!

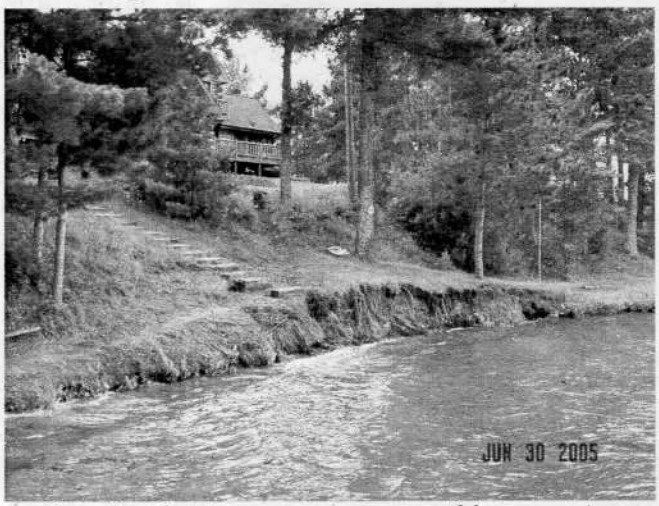
Shoreland Restoration Improvements on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Grand Portage Lake for 2012-2013

By: MaryJo Gingras, *County Conservationist*
Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department

The mission of the Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD), as it pertains to water resources, is to work with citizens to promote clean lakes, healthy habitat, native species and stable shorelines. Many of our programs target local youth through field research and monitoring activities, while other programs are aimed educating elected officials, local citizens, or lake groups. The Department provides technical and financial assistance to landowners for numerous types of conservation practices that protect and improve water quality. Many of our projects rely on grant funding, which we aggressively seek on an annual basis from both state and federal sources.

2007 - Mowed lawn; natural buffer removed on Pike Lake.

I am delighted to report that the LWCD recently secured a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Protection grant for 2012-2014 to fund shore restoration and protection on several Iron County lakes including Grand Portage Lake and the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. The Department secured $10,000 plus an additional $10,000 from another source to restore shoreline buffers in areas where native plants have been removed. Research has proven time and time again that water movement off the land into the water can transport nutrients that can be detrimental to water ecosystems. Shores with trees, shrubs, and groundcover species along the water's edge (referred to as the buffer) have many benefits. They filter nutrients before they enter the lake or stream; stabilize the bank, helping to prevent erosion; and provide habitat that enables aquatic and terrestrial organisms to breed and survive. Thus, much of the Department's role in providing technical recommendations on lakeshores is to maintain



Shoreline banks are more susceptible to erosion in areas where deep-rooted trees and shrubs have been removed.

shoreland buffers in order to protect water quality. The LWCD has worked on these types of projects in Iron County since 2000.

Our new grant will provide 100% cost-share funding for landowners on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Grand Portage lake. We hope to restore 600 feet of shoreline with the Birch Point Condominium association in 2012 and an additional 400 feet of shore at Carow Park on Grand Portage lake in 2013. Furthermore, the grant will employ a

2009 - Shoreline restored with native flowers, shrubs and trees and Pike Lake.

Conservation Specialist to work on assisting the county with revising and implementing our Shoreland Ordinance to further protect water resources. For more information on this grant or other programs, please contact MaryJo Gingras at the Iron Co. Land Conservation Department at (715) 561-2234.

Purple Loosestrife: Why is it Here?

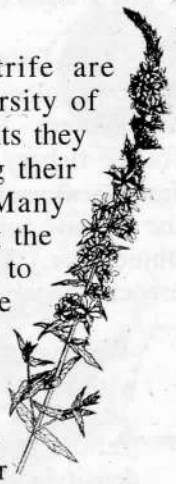
By Diane O'Krongly

Why are the non-native invasive species here? How did they get here? Sometimes they taste good, like garlic mustard. Sometimes the seeds stick on our clothing and luggage; think burrs. Sometimes they are beautiful, like Purple Loosestrife.

Last spring my high school science students pulled up over a thousand pounds of Garlic Mustard from a property on the Montreal River in Hurley. No one knows how it got there, but I do know that Europeans brought it from the old country because it tasted good. I have personally observed Iron County Lake property owners planting non-native plants on their shores. The plant species chosen were usually much showier than the native plants on the lake: Yellow Iris on Pardee Lake, and an entire garden of large showy flowers cascading down a steep shoreline on Spider lake. When I see such additions to the natural landscape, I wonder why people think it necessary to improve on nature's beauty.

I wonder if these lakeshore owners have ever slowed down to observe the variety of plants already present on their lakes. Do they ever stop to think what the addition of a new species might do to native plants and animals that are already struggling to find their native foods and space at the shoreline?

Volunteers who intensively search areas of the flowage for Purple Loosestrife are amazed by the diversity of native flowering plants they discover while doing their annual survey. Many volunteers say doing the surveys enables them to learn about the diversity of plants that already inhabit the shores of the flowage. Through the efforts of our volunteers, these native plants and the animals that rely on them have a better chance of continuing their existence on the flowage. Our volunteer efforts are working. This year's volunteer reports show that the worst infested areas have fewer plants than in previous years. Future surveys will no doubt find more new patches, and we will continue to treat them. You can find a map of Purple Loosestrife patches on the flowage and the results of our volunteer surveyors work on our website, TFFTL.org.



Fish Futures – Walleye Stocks and Habitat Investment

By Terry Daulton

I would like to make an analogy between the stock market and fish populations. To begin, consider that to untrained observers fish population dynamics and stock price dynamics may both seem pretty mysterious. Another similarity might be that fish numbers (populations) and stock numbers (prices) often respond to unforeseen events with surprising outcomes. Third, just as many of us try to predict the stock market (with varying levels of success), we also try our hands as arm-chair fish experts. In fact, even highly trained fisheries biologists often differ in their opinions on management approaches.

Over the past year, the association fish management and habitat committee has been gathering opinions and ideas from both fisheries biologists and area anglers. As many of you are aware, our association has been building and placing fish cribs for the past 12 years, with the goal of increasing woody structure as fish habitat. With changes in angling technology, there is much discussion about whether cribs are helpful or harmful to fish. Do they provide necessary cover for fish? Or do fish cribs simply attract fish to a location where they can be easily caught by anglers equipped with GPS units and high tech gear? Gone are the days of searching for elusive cribs in the murky depths; now we simply look at our electronic screens and cast our lines.

High Stock futures

While the TFF and Trude Lake have excellent natural habitat and as large lakes have enough area to spread out fish (thus reducing the potential for anglers on cribs to make a significant impact on the overall populations), the association has begun looking at management options beyond cribs.

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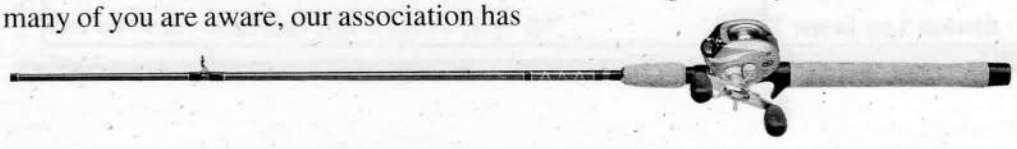


Fish Futures ... *continued from Page 7*

This fall, Lawrence Eslinger, (DNR fishery manager in Mercer), joined our board for an in-depth discussion of the TFF fishery. He began by highlighting the existing goals for the fishery which were developed in 2007 with input from local anglers. Many of you may remember attending the various public sessions which created these goals and objectives. You can find the entire fish plan on our association website but the goals were:

Walleye: A population of moderate to high density with a moderate proportion of quality – sized fish

Yellow Perch: A population of low to moderate density with a moderate proportion of preferred size fish

Black Crappie: A population of moderate density with moderate to high proportion of preferred sized fish and low to moderate proportion of memorable sized fish

Muskellunge: A population of low to moderate density with a moderate proportion of memorable sized fish

Smallmouth Bass: A population of moderate density with a moderate proportion of memorable sized fish

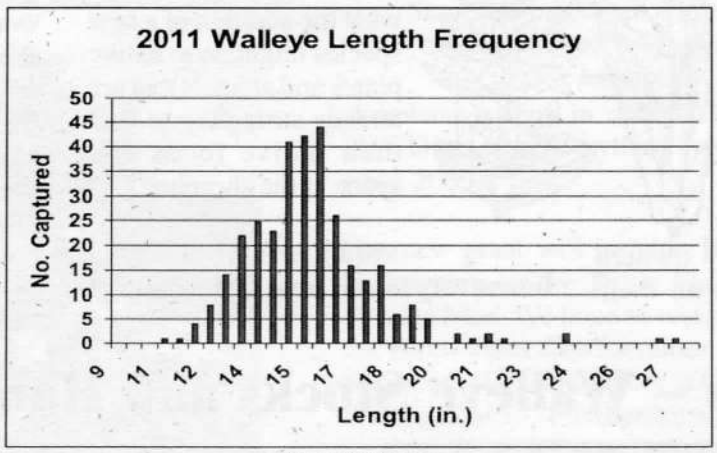
Bluegill: A population of low to moderate density with a moderate to high proportion of preferred size fish

A diverse native fish community that fluctuates in species composition but generally experiences no net loss of native fish species and provides adequate forage for sport fish populations.

Eslinger explained to us that these goals and their related objectives drive the work plan for fisheries management on the TFF and Trude Lake. He shared a number of charts and graphs on population levels. His basic point was that the flowage and Trude are predator- dominated systems. This means that we will probably never see high numbers of prey species such as perch, bluegill or crappie. With walleye, musky, small mouth bass, and northern pike in significant numbers, prey will be kept low. He said that if he saw a spike in prey species that would be a red flag that something is wrong with the predator populations. We had a lively discussion on the role of bass versus walleye, with Eslinger expressing confidence in the overall health of the walleye population.

We moved on to a discussion of various management options and settled on a plan to continue with a modest crib project this year in the Lake Bastine area. The TFF (Business) Association has expressed an interest in assisting with cribs, and we will be contacting them to recruit additional workers. In the meantime, we will continue to collect information on other options for habitat enhancement. For example, Eslinger expressed hope that UW Stevens Point will find funding to begin a study of woody habitat in the flowage. At the association's invitation, and in coordination with the DNR, Mike Bozek, a fishery biologist, visited the flowage this summer and fall, and is currently developing a proposal to study our woody habitat and to evaluate ways we can improve habitat . This study would begin by looking at the trees which the tornado dropped into near shore waters and assessing the use of these trees by various fish species. From there Bozek plans to identify the topography of lakebed best suited to tree-drop habitat and to assess the potential for beneficial management projects.

2011 Netting Results :



Net Returns

So what are the "fish futures" we can bank on here on the TFF and Trude Lake? You may know that recent fish mercury advisories for both waterbodies lower the number of fish people of all ages and genders should eat. Understanding that the association membership is keenly interested in maintaining great fishing opportunities, perhaps we should consider matters of quality of fish as well as quantity of fish. An enhanced effort to support policies that reduce pollutants such as mercury could be as important as fish cribs or bag limits. If we want dividends from our habitat work, we need to make sure that we have both quantity and quality in our fishery portfolio. Regardless, get out your long johns and keep your winter calendars clear; Lake Bastine fish cribs are still a sound investment for 2012!

For more information on mercury advisories see our article in this newsletter on the updated standards and recommendations.

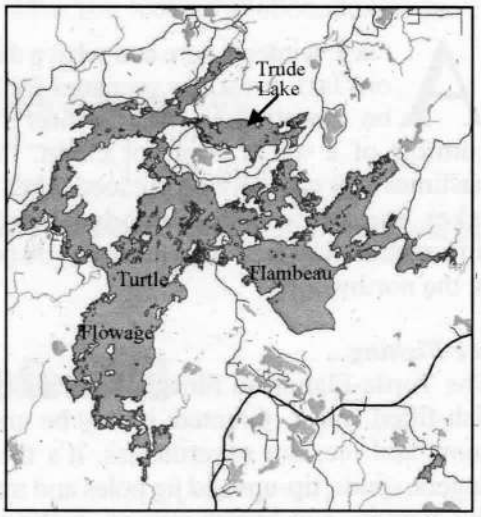
Fish Consumption Advice
Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake

What are the benefits of eating fish?

Fish are a nutritious family food. Modest amounts of fish can provide health benefits, although little additional benefit is actually gained by eating more than 1-2 servings per week. Some of the benefits of catching and eating fish include:

- Low cost and fun to catch your own fish
- Low in fat, yet high in protein
- Great source of vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids

While most fish have some level of mercury, some species in the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, Trude Lake, and other northern lakes tend to have higher concentrations. Therefore, consumption of these fish should be avoided or limited *(see table below for specific advice).*



Fish in Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake were last sampled in 2009.

Where does mercury come from?

Mercury occurs naturally in the environment but is released into the air through industrial activities. Airborne mercury deposits on land, streams, lakes, and wetlands. After converted to methylmercury it enters the foodchain and accumulates to higher levels in fish.

Tell me more about mercury in fish?

- Nearly all fish contain traces of mercury
- Larger, older predator fish contain higher levels of mercury compared to smaller, younger species
- Accumulates throughout a fish's tissue, therefore trimming, skinning, and cooking will not reduce mercury levels
- Mercury tends to be higher in waters that have low oxygen, higher acidity, and sulfates like wetlands and lakes typical of northern forested areas

What are the health risks?

The health risks vary depending on how much mercury you consume in a given time period. Your health risk may increase as you eat more fish that are high in mercury. These risks include:

- Memory loss
- Heart disease
- Loss of coordination affecting vision, hearing and speech
- Damage to developing brains of children, which can cause learning disabilities

Advice for eating fish from Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake	
Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:	**Women beyond childbearing years and men may eat:**
1 meal per week - Bluegill, sunfish, yellow perch, bullheads and inland trout; **and** **1 meal per month** - Black crappie, pike, bass, catfish, walleye under 24", and all other species;  **Do not eat** - Muskies and walleye over 24"	**Unrestricted** - Bluegill, sunfish, yellow perch, bullheads and inland trout;  **1 meal per week** - Black crappie, pike, bass, catfish, walleye under 24", and all other species; **and** **1 meal per month** - Muskies and walleye over 24"

Website: http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption/ - *Check back for updates*

Spring 2011

The Ranger's Report

At last, winter is here and what a dazzling wonderland old Jack Frost has prepared for us. Though it can be tempting to view winter's beauty from the comfort of a warm home or cabin, there are plenty of pastimes that can only be pursued when there is ice on the lakes and snow in the woods. I hope the following information will be of assistance as you pursue winter sports in the northwoods.

Ice Fishing...

The Turtle-Flambeau Flowage has almost 14,000 acres of fish-filled water. Granted, it may be under several feet of snow and ice, but nevertheless, it's there. So grab your augers, spuds, tip-ups and jig poles and make for the flowage this winter. But before you go, make sure you know the rules and regulations.

Daily bag limits for panfish (bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and yellow perch) allow individual fishermen to take 10 in total, with all crappies being a minimum of 10 inches in size. There is no minimum size limit for bluegill, pumpkinseed, or yellow perch. Panfish season is open year round.

Bass caught on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage must be at least 15 inches in length and only 2 fish may be kept. On Trude Lake, anglers may take bass 14 inches or greater in length and keep up to 5. The last day of the bass season is March 4.

There is no size restriction for flowage walleye; however, the daily bag limit is only 2 fish per angler. This differs from last year's flowage walleye harvest regulations, which permitted anglers to keep 3 walleyes without any size restrictions (except Trude Lake). Last year, anglers on Trude Lake were allowed to harvest 2 walleyes; whereas this year, anglers on Trude Lake may take 3 walleyes of any size. The last day of the walleye season is March 4.

Remember, only 3 lines, baits, hooks, or lures per person are permitted while fishing in Wisconsin; tip-ups are not separate from pole restrictions and count toward an individual's 3 lines. All lines must be attended. Failure to immediately respond to a line upon indication of a bite will be sufficient evidence that the line is unattended. Fishing holes are not to be "saved" by the use of construction cones or other markers. If no one is fishing the hole, then it is available to anyone. Fishing holes cut in the ice cannot measure more than 12 inches across.

Shanties & Other Shelters...

The doors of enclosed fishing shelters must be readily opened from the outside while occupied; they may be locked only while not occupied and not in use. The shelter owner's name and address (in English) must be legibly painted or otherwise affixed on the outside of the fishing shelter with block lettering a minimum of one inch square and in contrasting colors. Fishing shelters that are occupied or otherwise in use are exempt from this requirement.

*Consult the *"Guide to Wisconsin Hook and Line Fishing Regulations for 2011-2012"* for complete statewide fishing regulations and watch for special regulations posted at the landings.

Snowmobiling...

Snow machines are a common site in northern Wisconsin, and for many, an essential mode of transportation during the winter. Both snowmobiles and ATVs are allowed on the ice of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage; however, there are no snowmobile or ATV trails found within the Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area and so machines should not be operated on islands or other land areas, except for parking lots.

All motor-vehicles on the ice must be legally registered and operated in a safe manner. All snowmobile operators born after 12/31/1985, but at least 12, are required to have a snowmobile safety certificate and carry it on them in order to legally operate a snowmobile off private property.

IMPORTANT: When within 10 feet or less of a person not on a snowmobile, or in or on a vehicle, or when riding within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty, vehicles must be operated at speeds **of 10 mph or less.**
***It is unlawful for any person to operate a snowmobile in excess of 55 mph during the hours of darkness.**

Safety...

While the fish may be biting so might the frost. Frost-bite can happen to anyone anywhere when conditions are right, and so precautions should be taken to avoid skin exposure and loss of heat while recreating outdoors during the winter. Shivering is the body's mechanism to try and maintain heat.

Don't let things get out of hand and wait until it's too late. Remember, hypothermia sets in when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit; so bundle up and start enjoying winter rather than dreading it.

**NOTE: For a complete set of rules and regulations, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing trail maps and other information booklets, stop by the Mercer Ranger Station.*

Your Resources...

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is caretaker of your resources. Have you seen a violation, do you have a question, want to make improvement suggestions? Please let us know.

Violations: Wildlife, Recreational & Environmental.....1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)
Mercer Ranger Station.....715-476-2240
Turtle-Flambeau Flowage Property Manager.....715-476-7846

Contributing Writer Josh Kamrowski is the Natural Resource Officer for the Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area and can be reached via email at Joshua.Kamrowski@Wisconsin.gov.

Gravel Pit Application Defeated

By Jim Bohmann

An application for a conditional use permit by Pitlik & Wick (P&W) for the purpose of operating a gravel pit and crushing operation in the Town of Sherman has been denied by the Town Board. The proposed Springstead location of this nonmetallic mining operation was in very close proximity (about 2/3 of mile) to the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area (TFSWA). Our association's board unanimously urged the Town of Sherman to deny this application as the proposed gravel pit operation was not compatible with the serene environment of the TFSWA. An overwhelming number of local town residents were also strongly opposed to this environment threat.

In a letter to the Town of Sherman, our association highlighted the potential increase in local air and water pollution to the flowage, which is designated as an Outstanding Resource Water by the State of Wisconsin (only 103 lakes out of nearly 15,000 Wisconsin lakes have such a prestigious designation). Public filings with the WDNR indicate that even small P&W gravel pit operations have produced tons of air pollutants

(also known as fugitive dust) per year. Regrettably, such fugitive dust has the undesirable ability to transport by air dangerous chemical contaminants. Many of our area lakes have mercury fish advisories, including the flowage. Increasing the potential for additional (methyl) mercury in our lake ecosystems would impact fish and wildlife, as well as human health—and in the long run our local economy.

Further, we were troubled at the prospect of having water removed from the flowage for dust control—particularly given the complex challenges associated with the Xcel Energy / WDNR Memorandum of Understanding regarding flowage water levels and outflows. Should P&W have elected to remove water at Springstead Landing, there would have been additional traffic, crowding, and aesthetic impacts for visitors using that popular landing.

Finally, we were concerned about aesthetic impacts from this mining proposal. It is likely that campers, boaters, and local residents would be impacted by the noise pollution (from truck back-up beepers, truck engine brakes, crushing machinery etc.). Such situations would create an intrusion upon the serenity of the TFSWA and reduce both resident and visitor satisfaction.

The TFSWA extends well beyond the shoreline boundaries of the flowage to include thousands of acres of land. This entire area is managed with the objective of preserving its scenic qualities, as well as protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the wildlife populations with emphasis on endangered and threaten species found in the TFSWA. Our association believed very strongly that any proposed gravel pit operation, in such close proximity to the flowage, would not be compatible with the goal of the TFSWA Master Plan; accordingly, we opposed this gravel pit application.

TFF-TL POA
PO Box 631
Mercer, WI 54547

Driftwood

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

— Mission Statement —

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

Published Twice Annually

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