Driftwood

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

Spring / Summer 2013

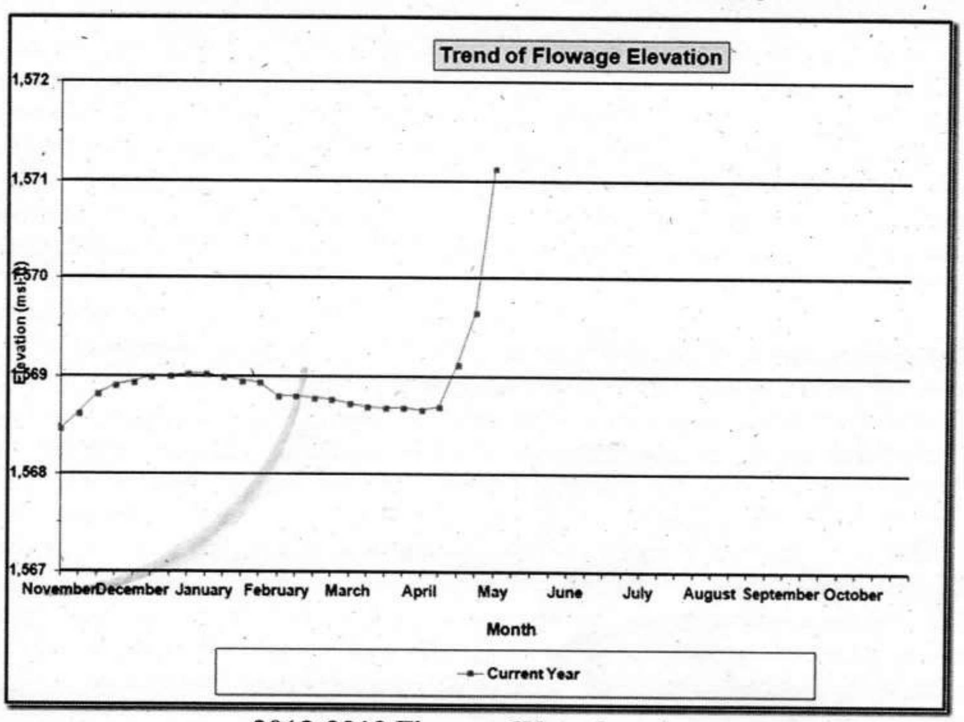
Water level Discussions: An Upward Trend

By Jim Bohmann

As you all will recall, our association has had many years of what I would characterize as marginally productive meetings, letters, telephone conversations, and emails with the WDNR and Xcel Energy concerning water level management on the TFF. Our assertion is that they have not followed a conservative approach to water level management and have consequently failed to comply with the full range of requirements in the MOU. I am happy to report that we may finally have created an environment to better address our water level problems.

This shift for the better started last summer when two association board members attended a small group listening session for community leaders with WDNR Secretary Stepp in Manitowish Waters. This meeting, held on August 23, 2012, provided us an opportunity to briefly describe our efforts, regrettably unsuccessful, to secure compliance with the MOU. Secretary Stepp, who had been unaware of the situation, committed to address our concerns by assigning John Gozdzialski, the Department's Regional Director Northern Region, to review the situation and to work toward a resolution.

After studying the background issues, Mr. Gozdzialski arranged a meeting between representatives of the association and Xcel's Director of Hydro Plants (a higher management level than our previous contacts). This meeting could be characterized as an extremely frank exchange of facts, interpretations, and recommendations. Aside from elevating blood pressure, this meeting had two important outcomes. First, Xcel reported that they would be deploying a new "predictive modeling process" that will be populated with significantly more current climate data. Second, to improve understanding and communications, Mr. Gozdzialski suggested that an association representative become a part of future water level consultations between the WDNR and Xcel. We agreed with this suggestion, and we look forward to making a positive contribution to the process of managing water levels.



2012-2013 Flowage Water Levels

While we are pleased that a more reliable modeling tool is being created, we have cautioned the WDNR that such

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Editorial Page

President's Letter

By Terry Daulton

It's April 19th and the computerized voice on my weather radio drones out a lengthy winter storm warning for the Lake Superior region. Small sleet ice balls tap on my office window, reminding me that it's not time to put away the shovels and Sorels. Hopefully, by the time you read this article, spring will have arrived in all its exuberant glory.

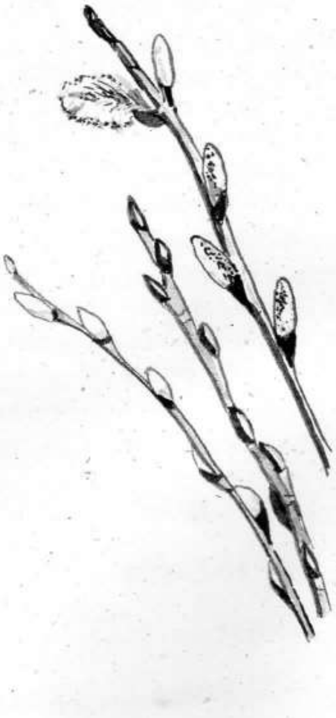
Spring is clearly overdue, and at our meeting this past week with the DNR and Xcel power company, officials said that they expect spring refill to be behind schedule this year. This is not necessarily due to lack of precipitation, but mostly is due to the expected extremely late ice out. The average ice out date for the flowage is April 20, just in time for Earth Day. This year we hope it will be out by the second week of May!

Our meeting with Xcel included a report by a well-respected environmental consulting firm, Ayres and Associates, hired by Xcel to examine water management issues for the TFF. Jim Bohman will cover some of these results in his article in this issue. In summary, the analysis focused on changes in precipitation and management since 1994, with interesting visuals showing the reduced annual precipitation and flowage outflow/inflow relationships. The presentation was followed by a frank discussion of options for conservative management this season. This meeting was part of a relationship building initiative led by the DNR, with the goal to improve understanding and management of the flowage. Earlier this winter we embarked on a series of meetings regarding the MOU and water level issues on the flowage, with particular focus on the pattern of summer drawdowns that have taken the flowage below the four-foot maximum permitted by the MOU. Unlike meetings in the past, we have added some new players to the stage, including John Gozdzialski, WDNR Northern Region Director, and Nancy Larson, DNR Natural Resource Manager based in Ashland. We also added upper- level managers from Xcel to our group.

The on-the-ground result of subsequent conversations and meetings is that the association will now have a seat at the table during "consultations" between Xcel and the DNR. These consultations are periodic meetings where outflows, forecasts, and management priorities are determined. There will also be a renewed focus on more frequent and transparent communications as well as on building trust and effective partnerships. Discussions have included a recognition that weather/climate patterns are changing and that management needs to adapt. According to Nancy Larson, changing climate and the need for related changes in management are issues that reach across the northern region and need to be addressed. This means that it's not just our problem; it's a larger concern for regulators.

Jim Bohmann's article in this issue highlights new information we have learned in the past few months about the legal interpretations of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and discusses the decision to invest some of our association funds to clarify the nuances of the document that regulates our waterbody. The board had several lengthy debates on the expenditure of funds, but I think that we all feel the returns have been significant.

The sleet has now turned to snow, and I suppose I should be happy for each moisture-containing flake. We know that nature does not hold consultation meetings or form leadership teams, so it is up to us to adapt and learn to work within the constraints of our habitat.



This summer will be an interesting one, as we become more engaged and responsible for the decision-making that determines whether loon nests flood, when boat docks are left high and dry, and whether we can be an effective part of a team that fine tunes water management to meet all the MOU principles.

Lions and Tigers and Bears! Oh My!

Have you ever heard the roar of a howler monkey? Well that is what flowage resident, Terry Daulton, first thought of when she heard a loud roar call while sitting in her tree stand during the gun deer season of 2012. She heard this call five times, at about 30-second intervals. According to her assessment, the calls were very loud and possibly quite close. It was, however, a still morning; and as we all know, sounds travel on the flowage. The time was 6:45 a.m. and she was hunting on the north shore of Horseshoe.

Turtle Flambeau cat, courtesy John Wahleitner

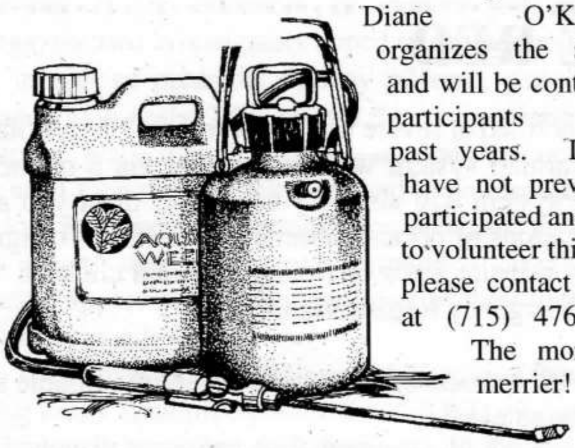
As a field biologist, Terry recognizes the vocalizations of fisher, snowshoe hare, raccoon, coyote, fox, and wolf. But this sound matched none of them. She thought… "it sounded like a roar"… and cats quickly came to mind. Later that day, Terry went online to listen to wildlife calls. When she heard the roar call of a cougar, she realized that it was nearly identical with the morning's arresting sounds.

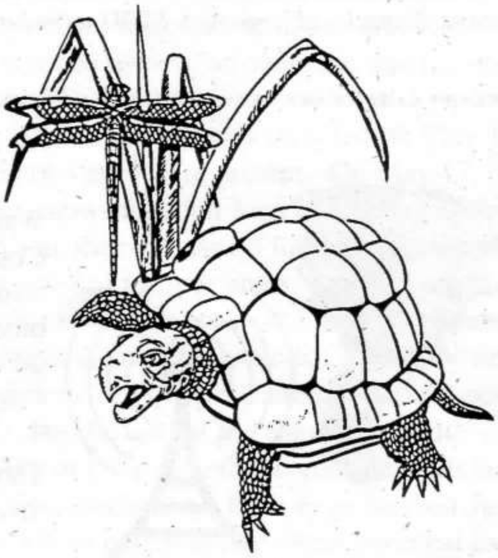
A few days later, a trail camera captured the image of a cougar (see photo) within 3 miles of Terry's hunting location. Other sightings were reported north of Mercer and in the Springstead area. As there was no snow, no tracks were found.

We are all used to bear sightings, and cougar reports in Wisconsin are becoming more frequent. Until breeding animals are found, these sightings are assumed to be those of transient animals. But who knows, where we have bears, and infrequent lions… what will be next? Tiger alert?

AIS ALERT !

As always, the association will be at war this summer with invasives—in particular, with purple loosestrife. We will need volunteers both to survey the flowage for infested sites and to help eradicate plants. Depending on weather, our campaign will take place sometime in July and August. Please check the association website - www.tfftl.org—for details. Diane O'Krongly organizes the survey and will be contacting participants from past years. If you have not previously participated and want to volunteer this year, please contact Diane at (715) 476-0287. The more the merrier!



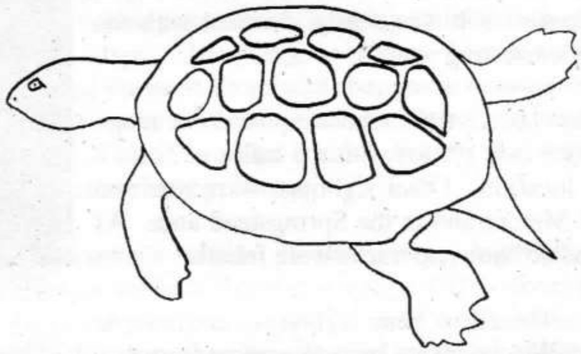


Water Level Discussion, *Cont'd. from Page 1*

an analytical tool must also incorporate the principle of conservative water management. Interestingly, during the first 16 years (1990-2006) after the signing of the MOU, the average summer drawdown was three feet compared to the maximum allowable summer drawdown of four feet. In 2007, when Xcel applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a dam license, the company stated that "summer and winter drawdown target depths are usually very conservative to allow for potentially dry conditions." In all of our negotiations with Xcel and the WDNR, we have pressed hard for a return to such a "conservative" approach to water levels. Accordingly, we were pleased that at the most recent meeting of the three parties, Xcel stated their intent to pursue a conservative regime of water management: namely, for the summer of 2013, they have set a drawdown target between 2.75 and 3.0 feet from full pool. The WDNR, for their part, clearly restated the requirement that Xcel be in compliance with the MOU. If all goes as projected, we should have a much more positive experience with water levels this summer, and hopefully into the future.

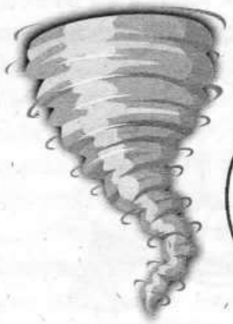
* * * *

Over the years of work on this issue, the board has repeatedly been stymied by the lack of clarity of the MOU. After considerable discussion we decided to obtain a better understanding of the provisions and requirements of that document as well as our rights as property owners and as Wisconsin citizens. Accordingly, the association retained the Madison law firm of Wheeler, Van Sickle & Anderson, S.C. This firm was selected for its expertise in Wisconsin water law and for its knowledge of and mutually respectful relationship with senior WDNR staff. Our discussions with legal counsel about numerous aspects of the MOU have led to two important conclusions. First, due to the potentially negative impacts of repeated MOU noncompliance, our association would clearly have "standing" in either federal or state courts. Secondly, legal counsel confirmed our understanding that the MOU's Major Principles establish broad policy goals, and that the Modifications section of the document provides guidelines whereby conflicts between Major Principles—such as between minimum water levels and minimum outflows—can be resolved. The relationship between these two portions of the MOU has been a point of contention between the association and the WDNR. Perhaps most importantly, our legal counsel, after an in-depth communication with the WDNR on our behalf, believes that the Department is devoted to implementing changes that will make flowage management more transparent, and that will likely result in a return to MOU compliance and to the prior culture of conservative water management.



We are grateful for the WDNR's high-level attention to this matter. We are hopeful that Xcel's new model and its commitment to a conservative approach to water management will bear fruit. And, we know that our association has acted professionally and responsibly to resolve our water issues. We have demonstrated that we are resilient and that we will not hesitate to take actions to resolve our water level problems. For now we will participate in water level consultations, and we will very carefully watch the decision-making process and its outcomes.

CODE RED



Want to be personally notified of severe weather warnings? Iron County's Code Red weather warning system will do just that via a phone call and/or an email. The system will also, if you wish, contact you about other "emergency situations or critical community alerts." To sign up, go to the Iron County website www.co.iron.wi.gov and click on "Iron County's Code Red Emergency Registration."

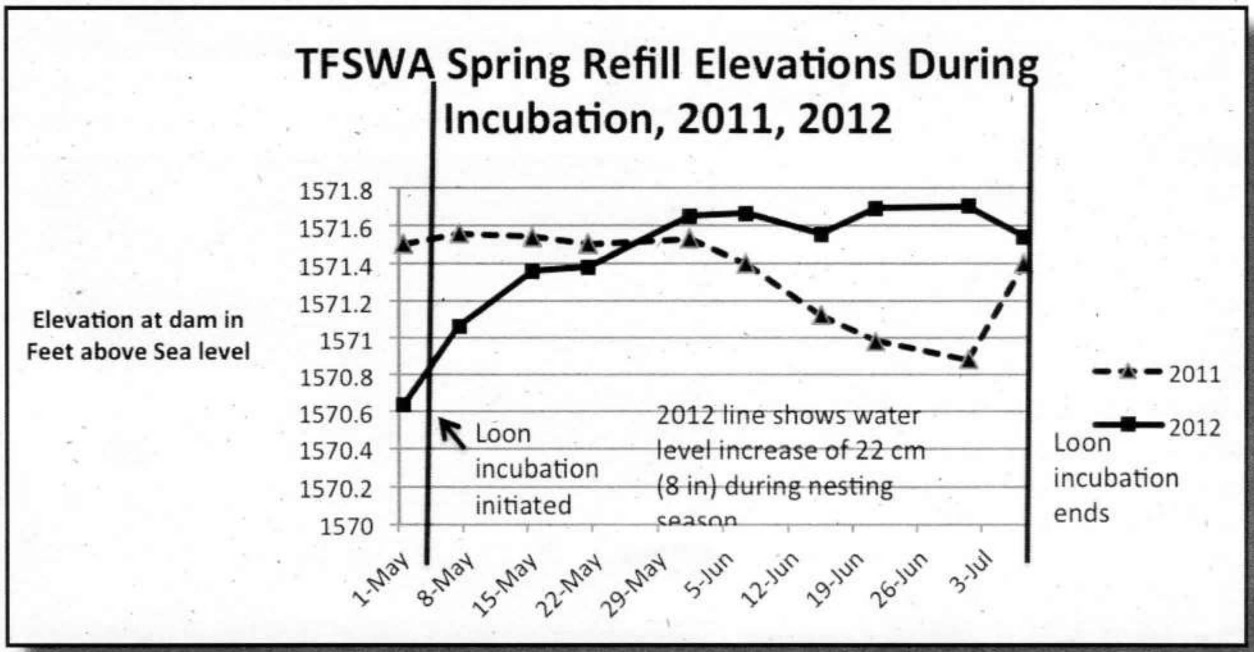
Those who remember the tornado of 2010 know just how valuable a few minutes' advance warning can be.

The Adventure of the Lost Loon Nests or CSI Loon

By Terry Daulton and Jeff Wilson

"Data! Data! Data!" he cried impatiently.
"I can't make bricks without clay." Sherlock Holmes

Forensics, cloak and dagger spying, and high-tech secret surveillance have nothing on two TFF loon researchers who spent the spring of 2012 detecting causes of loon nest failures. For more than 30 years, researchers of the common loon in northern Wisconsin have observed numerous types of nest failure. Several attempts to identify and quantify the causes of nest failure have provided some insights, but they have also raised questions. Last spring, Jeff Wilson and Northland College intern, Steve Theilking, set out to get to the bottom of loon nest mysteries. The flowage, with its approximately 32 pairs of loons, seemed a perfect place to launch their investigation.



By utilizing recent advances in remote camera technology, the two investigators hoped to capture, red-handed, images of predators as they pilfered, pawed and pillaged loon nests! They started their surveillance by putting in place digital, infrared, motion-detection cameras at 21 loon nests. They disguised some cameras as birch logs and others as vegetation bouquets; and they found a way to disguise cameras suspended directly above nests (apparently loons spend most of their time looking down or sideways).

Like any good investigators, Wilson and Theilking then spent long hours scrutinizing more than 26,000 images and meticulously recording their findings. In the end, they were able to document some real crime scenes, one "almost"crime scene, and some not-so-criminal causes for other nest failures.

Mammalian predators, as expected, did contribute to nest failures. Two of the predators were raccoons, and a third was a mink. At one nest the adult loon accidently rolled its egg into the water after one egg had been removed by an unknown predator the previous night. But the study failed to convict one suspect: an otter who was recorded on one nest bowl. The nest was first located on May 14 with one egg. A camera was installed on May 16, at which time two eggs were present. On May 17, the camera image shows an adult loon incubating at 8:01 a.m. At 8:13 a.m. the bird was off the nest, and the nest remained unoccupied for four hours. While the reason for the four-hour absence is not clear, it is fairly common for loons to leave the nest for extended periods of time early in incubation. An otter appeared at the nest bowl at 12:13 p.m., but did not eat the eggs. Seven minutes later (at 12:20 p.m.), the camera recorded an adult loon back on the nest incubating. Both eggs hatched June 13. While this does not mean that otters never eat loon

Loon and eggs as seen from overhead camera.

eggs, it does show in this instance the otter declined the opportunity.

The investigators also determined that water-level fluctuations may affect loon nest failures as much as, or more than, predation. Nest washouts in 2012 were due in part to an unusual spring refill. Spring refill is usually achieved by April 20 or within one week of ice-out, as called for in the Memorandum of Understanding. That was not the case in 2012. The four-foot fall drawdown and the lack of snowpack in the winter of 2011-12 reduced the amount of available water. Also, the 2012 flowage ice-out date (March 30) was the earliest on record. Finally, upstream impoundments also experienced early ice-out and reduced early outflows, making timely spring refill difficult. All these circumstances delayed refill until shortly before June 1. The first loon nest was initiated on May 8, and most loons built nests and began incubation before the flowage levels stabilized at refill. Because loon nests are built on land close to the water (within 8 inches), they are vulnerable to flooding. The water level of the flowage increased by 8.1 inches between May 8 and July 1, and, in the process, washed out a number of nests.

Wilson and Thielking came up with the following data for all the nests they studied: 31% hatched, 23% washed out, 15% were destroyed by predators, 5% had infertile eggs, 8% experienced research-induced failure, and 2% failed due to human recreation. In addition, 1 nest (2%) was lost when the loon inadvertently rolled its own egg out of the nest. Unknown causes accounted for 13% of the failures. As serious as these losses seem, previous studies have shown that loons are tenacious at re-nesting after nest failures, which contributes to their ability to maintain stable populations.

Unwelcome predator.

Loon defends nest against mink.

So did the loon gumshoes put the case of loon predators to rest? You might say that this investigation turned up new questions as well as a few answers. Detectives Wilson and Thielking will summarize their findings in an upcoming issue of "The Passenger Pigeon," the scientific journal of the

Irresolute otter inspects nest.

Stable water levels may be as important as other factors to loon nesting success based on our results. Managers of waterbodies with control structures should consider minimizing fluctuations during the loon nesting period. If water-level fluctuation is unavoidable, the use of artificial nesting platforms may be an effective option. "Elementary …my dear Watson!"

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. In brief, their data supports previous observations of raccoon and mink as predators of loon nests. The evidence with regard to otters is less conclusive. The improved technology and designs used in this study hold promise for further observations of nest predators with modest equipment and staffing requirements.

This research on the flowage was supported by a grant from the Sigurd T Olson Loon Research Award at Northland College, and the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

Dike 10 Project

By Chris Paulik, Property Manager
Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area

Some of you may have heard rumors of a new dike or at least dike work. It is not rumor. I would like to present the facts in so far as I know them for what is called the Dike 10 project.

Several years ago, Xcel Energy was mandated by FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) to identify areas around the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage that would be in jeopardy of a breach in the event of a 1000-year flood. To assess potential problem spots, Xcel conducted elevation surveys around the fowage. They found three situations where such a breach could occur and wash out the downstream community of Park Falls. First, they found low spots in the existing dike . Last year Xcel Energy hired a contractor to address those low spots. That work is complete.

The other two situations are not as simple to fix. One of them is located on private land near the Minnow lake area. To my understanding, this area will be addressed last, sometime in 2014. I am unfamiliar with how this is progressing since it is out of my realm of responsibility. I am, however, familiar with the third situation in need of fixing. This happens to be in the area of Sportsman's Landing. A low spot was identified here. To remedy this, the existing dike needs to be extended to the west approximately 2200 feet (just under a half mile). This extension will parallel Flambeau Dam Road on the north side and go across the road leading into Sportsman's Landing. The new dike will be approximately 4-6 feet tall and will encompass approximately 5.5 acres of land. This entire 5.5 acre area will have the trees cut to facilitate building the dike. At the point where the dike crosses it, the Sportsman's Landing Road will be tapered such that rigs going in with boat trailers do not get hung up on top of this large speed bump. When completed, the dike will be seeded with native forbs and grasses. Motor vehicles will not be allowed on the dike, but other non-motorized uses will still be allowed (hunting, walking, etc.).

What is the timeline? Well, Mother Nature has thrown a loop into scheduling given that she will not let go of winter. Xcel originally hoped to begin construction this June or July. That may still be possible, but for some of the permitting process we

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To Troll or Not to Troll

Once again, attendees at this spring's Conservation Congress hearings had an opportunity to express their opinions on motor trolling—specifically, whether it should be permitted on a statewide basis. And once again, the TFFTLPOA opposed any extension of motor trolling that would affect the flowage. Concerned that the association might not have a representative present at the meeting, Tom Mowbray put our case on record in a letter to Arnie Popp, the Iron County delegate to the Conservation Congress, with a copy to Warden John Windt, who was to chair the meeting.

Tom's letter laid out five reasons for our opposition to the proposed rule change. First, motor trolling will detract from the "wilderness experience" of the flowage—an objective that is embodied in the Master Plan for management of the TFF State Scenic Area. Second, motor trolling will increase user conflicts, such as those that might occur when a trolling boat and an anchored boat seek to fish the same shoreline or structure. Third, the fact that trolling involves continuously running motors will increase pollution, especially from older two-stroke engines. Fourth, there is strong local opposition to the proposed change. At the Spring Hearings two years ago, more than 70 per cent of Iron County voters turned down this same initiative. Finally, we would note that the flowage is one of Wisconsin's "Outstanding Resource Waters." That official designation entitles the flowage to the highest protection standards to combat pollution and to guard against degradation of water quality. Motor trolling strikes us as incompatible with that designation. In sum, the "Crown Jewel" of outdoor recreational areas in Wisconsin needs to be protected from activities that would in any way diminish the quality of the experience it affords or the ecological health of its waters and lands.

As it happened, Jeff Wilson was able to attend the hearing, and he read the association's letter. Of the sixteen people present at the hearing, four voted in favor of motor trolling and seven against. (Iron County had the second lowest number of participants statewide—with just two more than Menominee County). The motion was also roundly defeated in Oneida, Sawyer, and Vilas counties, all of which have prime musky fishing waters. At the state level, the motion failed by 384 votes out of 5166 votes cast. It remains to be seen how the WDNR and the Natural Resources Board will respond to these results.

Under Dock Fish Habitat?

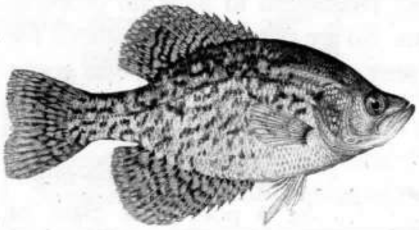
If you have heard that placing brush under your dock is a permissible way to enhance fish habitat, you have not heard the official version. Lawrence Eslinger (the DNR fisheries biologist at Mercer) has checked on the current regulations and reports that this activity is NOT allowed. He suggests, instead, protecting any wood that falls naturally into the flowage.

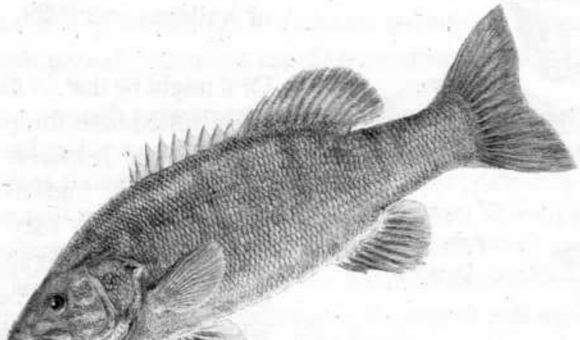
The Trude Bridge that Will [?] Arch the Flowage

The much-delayed construction of a bridge over the water link between the flowage and Trude Lake will be delayed again this year—though probably not postponed. Town Chairman Jim Kichak says that he "hopes to get it in this year," but that the relentless winter has set the timetable back by weeks. The chairman has spoken with Ayres Associates, who will likely be the contractor for the job; and Ayres has promised to put together a package, including costs, for presentation at the May 2 meeting of the town board. But additional progress depends on the pace of snowmelt. Once the ground is clear, a representative of the town, the contractor, a WDNR water regulations person, and Chris Paulik, the flowage property manager, will need to visit the site and review the process for securing a water-regulation permit. After that meeting, at least six weeks will needed before the permit is in hand. It is unlikely, therefore, that construction will begin before late July or sometime in August. Once the project is underway, Kichak estimates that traffic on the affected part of Popko Circle West might be closed for about 30 days.

It is critical that the project be brought to completion this year; otherwise, the town will loose precious state Road Aids money. Both Chris Paulik and her predecessor, Roger Jasinski, had sought such funding, but their applications had not been ruled on favorably. Even so, the application for this project remained active in the event that Road Aid funding, which is not available every year, were to be renewed. In October of 2012 Chris was notified that a Road Aids grant had been authorized for the project, and she promptly notified the town board.

If all parties are diligent, the bridge should be a reality this year; and Trude Lake residents, who have been patiently waiting for access to the flowage (or at least for a road surface that does not look like a relief map of the Himalayas), will be able to get in on the late-fall walleye bite. That, or fishing on early ice.





ANNUAL MEETING !!!

The annual membership meeting of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners' Association will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 22, 2013, at the **Community Center** (next to the Mercer Library) in Mercer. Here's your chance to:

Eat donuts! Hear from an expert what walleyes really like to eat! Drink coffee! Vote in fiercely contested elections! Receive a copy of a really and truly balanced budget! Ask if the Trude Lake bridge will ever be built! Speak out on your pet projects, hopes, and concerns! Tell everyone about all the 35 inch walleyes you have caught! Eat more donuts! And much more.

Walleyes vs Smallies, Round #3: or Food for Thought about Fish Food

The following is an "executive summary" of a study entitled "Dietary Habits and Competition between Walleye and Smallmouth Bass in the Turtle Flambeau Flowage," written by Lawrence Eslinger, WDNR Fisheries Biologist, in Mercer. This study was conducted by Lawrence Eslinger and Jim Zarzycki, with help from area volunteers. The full report, complete with tables, can be viewed on the association website, www. tfftl.org. The author wishes to send a big thanks to all the volunteers who helped out with this study. Given that the he was short a crew member—owing to a vacant technician's position—the study would have been impossible without volunteer support.

Illustration by Terry Daulton

Methods

113 smallmouth bass diets and 133 walleye diets were examined during the 2012 study. Two surveys were conducted each month between June and October to acquire—either by electrofishing at night or by angling away from shore in the day—fish for sampling. The stomach contents from each fish were placed in small airtight bags and later analyzed in the lab. These contents were categorized into four types of prey: fish, crayfish, other aquatic invertebrates, and terrestrial organisms. Fish species in the diets were identified when possible. Prey types were counted and measured (via weight and volume).

Results

1. <u>What walleyes and smallmouth bass are eating.</u>

For all five months, crayfish were the primary prey of smallmouth bass. Fish were second in terms of importance, followed by other aquatic invertebrates. For walleye, fish were their most important prey type, followed in order by other aquatic invertebrates and crayfish.

2. <u>Comparison of results of 2012 with a similar study done in 1989.</u>

Smallmouth bass ate similar diets in 2012 and 1989. Crayfish predominated in both studies—though smallmouth in 1989 ate a greater proportion of other aquatic invertebrates than they did in 2012. Walleye diets, in contrast, varied substantially between 2012 and 1989. While fish predominated in both studies, the volume of crayfish in walleye stomachs in 1989 was more than seven times greater than in 2012.

Discussion: As stated, in both years walleye preferred fish and smallmouth bass preferred crayfish. The big difference in those years was that walleye ate more crayfish in 1989 than in 2012. Absent data on the crayfish populations in 1989 and 2012, one can only speculate on the relatively different rates at which walleyes eat crayfish.
Here are some speculations.

- It is possible that crayfish abundance may have declined, but bass seem to have no problem finding them. So are crayfish not available for walleye to prey on, or is something else going on?

- That something else might be a poor year class of young-of-the-year yellow perch—the prey of choice of walleyes—in 1989.

- Or it might be that walleye have shifted their foraging behavior in response to greater bass numbers. That is, walleye may be spending less time foraging on rocky shoals/bars, where crayfish are most abundant, as the bass have

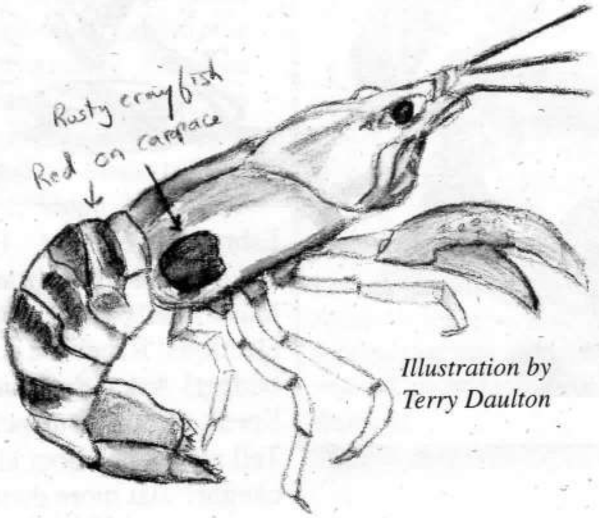
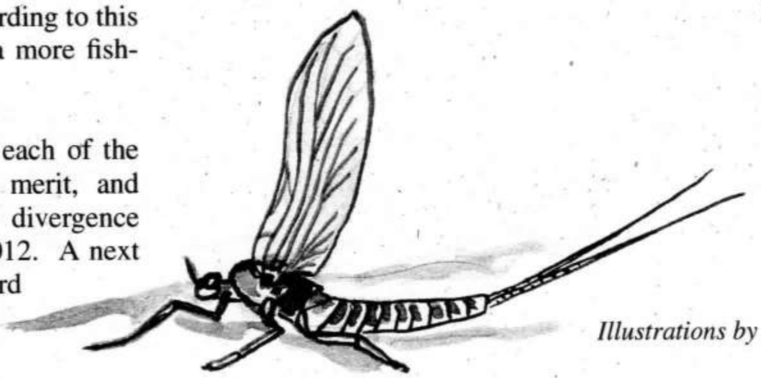


Illustration by Terry Daulton

come to dominate these locations. According to this theory, then, walleyes have shifted to a more fish-dominated diet.

- The author's personal opinion is that each of the above-mentioned theories has some merit, and taken together they may explain the divergence in walleye diets between 1989 and 2012. A next logical, and important, step toward understanding these data, would be to try to get a sense of the numbers of young-of-the-year perch and of crayfish in the flowage. A crayfish monitoring survey is the likely first step toward this goal.

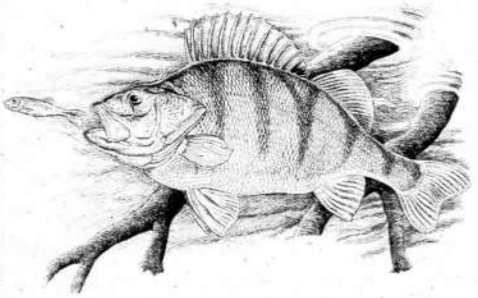


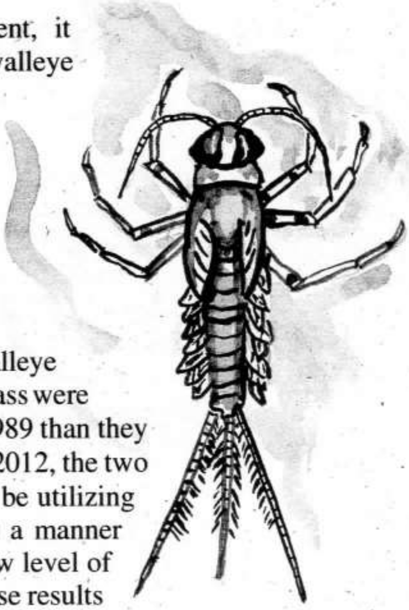
Illustrations by Terry Daulton

3. <u>*Is there direct predation of one of these species by the other and is there heavy competition for food resources?*</u>

Direct Predation.

The study found no identifiable young walleye in smallmouth bass stomach contents, whereas it did turn up one identifiable young walleye in a walleye stomach. No identifiable smallmouth bass were found in the stomachs of either smallmouth or walleye. Smallmouth bass in the flowage do occasionally eat a young walleye, but they are by no means eating large numbers of them. If any predator species is limiting walleye recruitment, it is very likely walleye themselves.





Competition.

The diets of walleye and smallmouth bass were more similar in 1989 than they were in 2012. In 2012, the two species appear to be utilizing prey resources in a manner that suggests a low level of competition. These results also suggest that preferred prey types for these two predator species are not limited in availability. In sum, the flowage seems to contain enough prey resources to satisfy the requirements of both species.

Lawrence Eslinger will make a presentation at the association's annual membership meeting in June. He will summarize this study, discuss the results of a different "bass-targeted" study, and indicate how those results compare with the objectives of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage Fishery Management Plan

Dike 10 Project, *Cont'd. from page 7*

need snow-free conditions to examine the site. It is also likely that we will have to have a public notice, with a subsequent comment period, regarding the dike construction, and that will require some time as well.

For sure, though, construction will begin at some point this summer and continue until completed sometime before winter. The road going into Sportsman's Landing will remain open up to the point where the dike needs to be built on the access road. It is thought that this will require approximately one week of closure if all goes well. As soon as I know when the closure will take place (hopefully with at least several days' notice), I will post the closure at all boat landings, in the local newspapers, on the radio, and on our website. I will also contact the Chamber, local vendors, particularly in Butternut and Park Falls, and the TFFTL and the business associations so that they can post details of the closure on their websites. I am advising folks who use Sportsman's landing to call my office first if they want to be sure of the status of the landing. That being said, please don't start calling until June because construction will not happen before then. For now, we are waiting on spring to arrive for real, not just on the calendar! Once that happens, things may start to move a bit faster. If you have any questions, please give me a call, and I will do my best to get you an answer.

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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.

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