



Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association

June 2018

The President's Pen

A different Big Portage Lake we all are returning to this year. The water is at levels that I can faintly remember, and some say it is above the high-water mark. Good in many respects and there are some negatives - like where did the loons nest this year now that some more of the island has disappeared? I hope they found some place because Big Portage Lake without loons, in my opinion, would be terrible.

The State of Wisconsin ATV rules allows the Township of Land-O-Lakes board to permit ATV travel on all town roads in the township of Land-O-Lakes. However, this does not include ALL of roads in Vilas county as you should be aware there are still some townships in Vilas county that has their township roads closed to ATV travel. I share this information so that all drivers using the local roads are aware of this change.

Another issue was settled in 2017 when the State of Wisconsin allowed the change of rental lake homes/cabins from 30-day rental periods to periods of any duration. The Health Department in Eagle River requires rentals to comply with state and local laws so that those entities receive the taxes due them. The health department is involved because it is necessary for inspections when the units are rented. For more information on property rental information it is suggested you check with your local authorities before you decide to rent to make sure you comply with the present laws. Also checking with the Eagle River health department to comply with the laws they have in place regarding their inspections

100-foot lakeshore lots are now allowed if a landowner wishes to subdivide their lakeshore property into 100 foot lots in order to sell them. Big Portage Lake formerly had the requirement of 200-foot lots. The Big Portage Lake Owners Riparian Association in 2017 was offered some acreage on the lake that was administered by the Northwoods Land Trust. Northwoods Land Trust is a 501c3 organization that monitors property that has been pledged to be kept in its natural state by donors who do not want to have their property developed. However, Northwoods Land Trust cannot own any of the land they monitor. Thus, they were looking for another 501c3 organization to own the property and came to the BPLORA Board with the possibility of ownership. As of late December 201, BPLORA now owns an 8+ acre tract of land on Big Portage Lake that has approximately 700 feet of shoreline.

Volunteerism is the heart and soul of every organization. Your lake is no exception. Yes, I know it takes a little time and family and kids are very important but the time you spend is of your choosing to fit into your schedule.

This year and into 2019 there are several fun projects that need to be completed regarding the Lake Management Plan which has many subsections, the ongoing boat landing monitoring, the bat program and several new additional programs. Get to know your lake, get to know your neighbors, become a member of the board (as with every year there are board positions open and new talent is desirable) and help keep Big Portage remain the lake it has been and will continue for centuries.

Please note – the date and location for the Annual Meeting has been changed...we are officially meeting on July 7th at the Land O' Lakes Fire Barn (attached to the fire house) at 8:30am for socializing and coffee. Meeting begins at 9am.

Have a great summer...I look forward to meeting more people on the lake and renewing old friendships

Your Prez,
John D. Alt

Event Calendar 2018

May 26th Board Meeting

Location - Dan Johns

8:30 a.m. – Social

9:00 a.m. – Meeting

***** July 7 Annual Meeting*****

Fire Barn

8:30 a.m. Social/Coffee/Donuts

9a.m. Meeting

Sept 1st – Board Meeting

Location – TBA

8:30 – Social

9:00 – Meeting

“He who stands for nothing will fall for anything.”

...Alexander Hamilton

BPL Clothing Store

By Bob Wannemaker

Welcome back to BPL. This season we will be offering the BPL clothing items on an individual basis, placing your orders on line with our supplier, FuzzyAntler. www.fuzzyantler.com phone -906-932-1262 Ironwood, MI

Identify yourself as a BPLROA member. Mark can embroider our BPL logo on the item of your choice. Payment will be made directly to Fuzzy Antler.

Our group orders have been getting smaller each year since many members now have BPL clothing. By placing your own orders directly, it will eliminate the delay in placing a group order. If you have any questions, please email or call me.

bob1.wannemaker@gmail.com

630-334-3663

See you on the water
Bob

BOARD MEMBERS – If you would like to serve on the board, please call John Alt 715-547-6804 or any board member. Everyone is welcome to volunteer. Board terms are 3 years - meetings are held just 3 times per year – Memorial Day, 4th of July & Labor Day weekends. No experience necessary. New people & new ideas are always appreciated and very important to the continuing stewardship of Big Portage Lake.

TREASURER'S REPORT

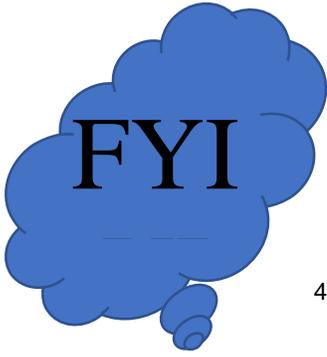
By Alice Muehlethaler

2018 annual membership dues in BPLROA \$35 per year for family membership and \$20 per year for Individuals.
Thanks to all of **YOU** for supporting the Riparian Association.

As of 12/08/2016		
Assets:		
Checking Accounts		\$ 5,007.78
Savings Account		15,522.71
CBCW Grant Account		1,842.62
LMP Grant		19,398.95
Fidelity Portfolio 11/18/11		
Charitable Trust	\$ 7,233.85	
Environmental Fund	\$ 1,802.64	
Working Capital	\$ 5,512.68	14,549.17
Liabilities:		
2018 CBCW Grant		\$ (1,287.75)
2018 LMP Grant		(12,165.78)
Total Assets		\$42,867.70

In 2003, the Board set up the **Environmental Contingency Fund**. Donations made to this fund are specifically earmarked for protecting our lake from invasive plants and other catastrophic problems.

Contributions are most welcome to prepare for future needs.



- 1) Though winter lasted into mid-April 2018, once the snow melted the fire danger in Vilas County increased significantly and remained very high for days. That meant no burning even with a permit, but the fire department still responded to a number of fires caused by people burning debris. One fire was started by a charcoal grill.
- 2) You can check the fire danger online at dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/restrictions.html The fire danger conditions are updated daily at 11 am.
- 3) The Big Portage Lake website is being revamped and will be designed to be mobile friendly and will include a News section for updates on the lake. More information will follow this summer.
- 4) Looks like that are reassessing properties in Vilas this year. Please be aware the Assessor might be wandering around your property – for more info please go to this website: <https://townoflandolakes.com/2018/05/23/reevaluation-notice>
- 5) New regulations regarding hunting permits – Governor Walker signed a bill allowing any age child to participate in the “mentored hunting” program at the discretion of their parents. The ‘mentored hunting’ also allows now for both the “mentor” and the “mentee” to carry a firearm or bow. For more information go to: <https://dnr.wi.gov> and search for “mentored hunting”.
- 6) Wildlife Health Matters dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/documents/whealthsummary.pdf provides multiple articles regarding the health and well-being of north woods wildlife. Interesting read for a rainy day!



DNR Creel Clerk Survey:

Last September we received the DNR 2016 survey of fishing pressure on BPL compiled from data obtained by the two DNR creel clerks assigned to our lake that year. This was the second part of the 2016 survey work, the first being the spring survey of to obtain size and population estimates. Some of the 2016 results compared to the previous survey in 2006 follow:

The walleye harvest was down sharply. Fishing effort directed at walleyes was also down. However, the population estimate of adult walleyes was essentially unchanged.

Perch harvest up sharply as was fishing effort directed toward perch. Fishing effort directed toward perch greater than toward walleye making perch the most sought-after fish on BPL. Perch harvest more than 3 times the walleye harvest.

Smallmouth bass catch was up sharply, but harvest was negligible. Catch similar to walleyes even though our estimated adult walleye population 10x the smallmouth population.

Northern pike harvest small, but up sharply from near zero.

BPL had less than half the fishing pressure (hours/acre) than the average for Vilas County and Ceded Territory lakes. BPL fishing hours declined 10% from 2006.

2017 Fall Young Walleye Survey:

The annual survey, conducted on October 3 by GLIFWC (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission) this year, counted 53 first-year walleyes per shore-line mile. DNR likes to see over 30/mile in at least 3 or 4 of every ten years as an indication of sufficient natural reproduction. BPL over 30/mile in 5 of last 10 years.

2018 Spearing:

224 walleye were speared this Spring. This is down from extremely high 431 taken last year and about 7%

of the 2016 estimated adult walleye population. Tribal agreement with DNR will result in a further reduction next and subsequent years until the next DNR population survey.

Habitat Improvement:

Nine trees dropped to date under our 5-year DNR permit which has two years left.

Last year one potential site was eliminated due to very shallow drop-off. Vilas County will now allow dropping live trees within a 35-foot wide viewing corridor per 100 ft. lot.

Other items: DNR continues to address declining walleye fishery on Lac View Desert: Little or no natural reproduction, declining population. Cause not apparent. Stocking by DNR and lake organization planned/ underway. Tribes have agreed not to spear. 18-inch minimum, 3 fish-limit in place. Also, Black Oak Lake to have their lake trout population improved by stocking.

**PROTECTING OUR LAKE
IS
EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY**

2017/2018 BPLROA Board Members

President:	John Alt	715-547-3364 or 612-239-8179
V.P.	Dan Johns	715-547-6488 or 309-657-8646
Sec./Treasurer	Alice Muehlethaler	715-547-3532 or 630-870-9677

Directors:

Jill Edwards	Phil Hallock
Dawn Eckstein	Bob Wannamaker
Dave Leifheit	Mark Schermeister
Dale Reilley	Peter Pinnow

Cut out and post by your house phone for easy reference

**2018 Boat Landing Monitoring -
Clean Boats/Clean Waters**

By Dale Reilley

Overview: For those of you reading the newsletter for the first time, let me provide a little background. Clean Boats Clean Water (CBCW) is an aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention subprogram through which staff, paid interns, and or lake volunteers conduct boat and trailer inspections and educates boaters on how to prevent the spread of AIS. For years, The Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association has participated in the CBCW program by conducting inspections at our boat landing. These inspections ensure that we are doing everything possible to prevent the spread of AIS.

I've been told that Lando skipped spring this year and went from serious winter weather conditions to summer in a couple of weeks. This mild weather will guarantee an early start to the boating season which means we need to be prepared at the boat landing.

The plan for 2018 involves paid interns and Big Portage Lake volunteers.

The interns are part of the Clean Boat Clean Water program aimed to minimize the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species by inspecting boats entering and leaving our lakes. UW-Oshkosh coordinates the staffing, scheduling etc. and provides interns to area lakes for a fee.

The Big Portage Lake ROA has taken advantage of available Grants, which substantially cover the cost of the program. Costs not included in the grant are offset by volunteer hours worked at the landing.

We will need to perform 108 volunteer hours this season to fully cover our costs.

Please be generous with your time and help us out at the boat landing. To become involved or to sign up for a training session contact me at 715-547-6305

Shoreline Monitoring

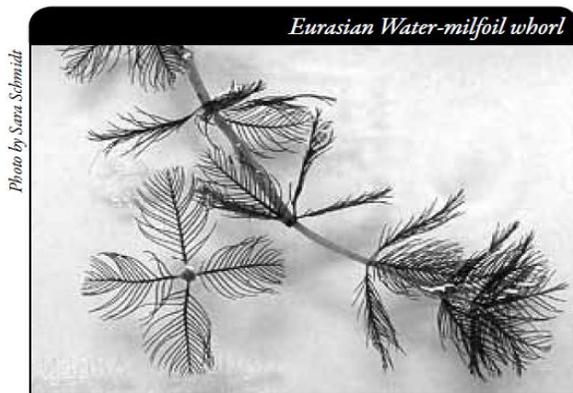
by Dan Johns

The growing season is upon us and it is time to focus on what is growing in and on the shore of our lake. We are monitoring our shoreline, looking for any aquatic invasive species (AIS) infestations. At this time, we are most concerned about Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP). If you observe any plants that you suspect may be EWM or CLP (pictured below), please contact Dan Johns at: 309-657-8646 or 715-547-6488.

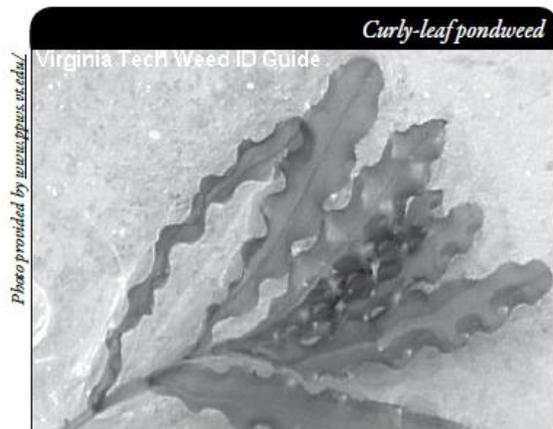
As in the past, periodic sweeps of the lake will be conducted by assigned monitors. This year, we are losing two of our assigned monitors, Forrest Muehlethaler and Dale Reilly. We thank them for their hard work and stewardship of the lake. We will miss their contributions to our efforts.

Two volunteers are needed to conduct sweeps of the two areas of the lake previously monitored by Forrest and Dale. The first area is located on the west side of the lake, encompassing a portion of the northwest shore of the south bay and the southwest shore of the north bay. The second area is located on the east side of the lake, running from Alt's Point in the north bay to the point at the entrance to the east bay. If you would be willing to help monitor either of these areas, please call Dan Johns at: 309-657-8646 or 715-547-6488.

BPLROA has obtained a grant to update the Lake Management Plan. One of the activities to be funded is a point intercept study. A consultant will sample and identify plants in the lake at more than 100 GPS established points. This survey will be coordinated by White Water Associates with assistance from BPLROA volunteers. The survey is tentatively scheduled to be conducted over a 3-4-day period in the latter part of July.



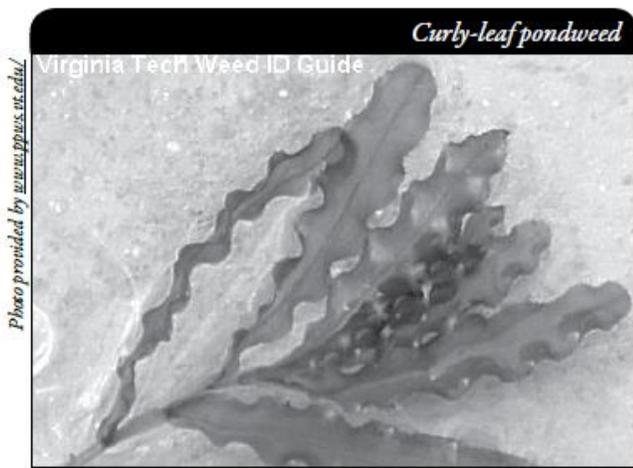
EWM whorl showing four leaves with leaflets. On each leaf, lower leaflet pairs are about the same length as upper leaflet pairs.



Curly-leaf pondweed leaves are often light green and fairly transparent.

All residents of Big Portage Lake are asked to help monitor the lake by reporting the following, if observed:

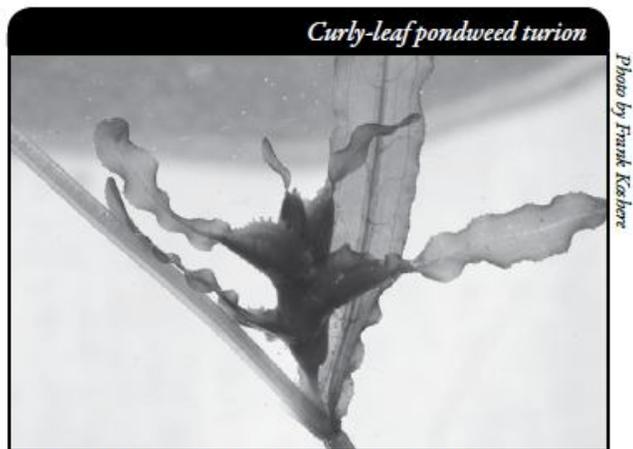
- Any plants that appear like these depictions;
- Any plants that are believed to be new to the lake; and
- Any plants that appear different, denser or more extensive than previously observed.



Curly-leaf pondweed leaves are often light green and fairly transparent.



Note the "lasagna-like" wavy leaves of curly-leaf pondweed.



Curly-leaf pondweed turion with leaves still attached. The leaves will eventually rot and fall off of the turion.



Potamogeton richardsonii (Clasping-leaf pondweed)

Each of the monitors is responsible for a section of the lake, essentially centered on their residences. **ADDITIONAL MONITORS ARE NEEDED.** If you would like to volunteer to assist in monitoring any section of the lake, please call Dan Johns at 309/657-8646.

Snorkeling and diving are excellent opportunities to observe plants. If you or your guests snorkel or dive, please take some time to check out the flora. Also, please continue to check any plants you might dredge up with your boat anchor or motor.

MAY WE CONTINUE TO NOT FIND THAT FOR WHICH WE SEARCH

Big Portage Lake Stewardship Program

by Susan Johns

In February 2018, The Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association (BPLROA) was awarded a Lake Management Planning Grant by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). This grant funds the Big Portage Lake Stewardship Program which is projected to continue through June 2020.

Previously, between August 2009 and February 2010, the BPLROA was awarded three grants by the WDNR to fund studies on Big Portage Lake. The results of these studies are found at www.bigportagelake.org/management_plan.php. The comprehensive lake management plan which was developed from these grant funded studies has enabled BPLROA to take a proactive approach to manage and monitor the quality of the lake and its watershed.

The current grant program is designed to enhance this long-term stewardship for Big Portage Lake by updating information about the lake and its watershed area. Lake stakeholders and volunteers will work collaboratively with White Water Associates (Amasa, Michigan) on a wide range of ecological studies of the lake and its surrounding properties. Data generated about water quality, fish, aquatic plants, animals, watershed habitat and aquatic invasive species will be used to update the lake's comprehensive management plan. Data generated from the lake study will be submitted to the WDNR to enhance their knowledge base of Wisconsin lakes.

This program provides many exciting opportunities for volunteers. Please review the following list and contact Grant Coordinator Susan Johns (309-657-8644 or 715-547-6488) if you are willing to help with any of these activities. There may be additional opportunities for volunteers, so please contact the Grant Coordinator even if what you would like to do it not on the list.

Volunteer Opportunities

Topic	Description of Volunteer Activities
Water quality	Collect water quality data. Equipment and training is available.
Water quality	A volunteer with a boat is needed for one 6-hour period to go around the lake with the consultant
Aquatic Animals, Rare Plants and Animal	BPL needs to gather data. We need to identify those on the lake who may be recording observations and compile that data. Telephone calls may need to be made
Aquatic Habitat	A volunteer may be needed to assist the consultant with data entry into a spread sheet. The program to be used is unknown at this time.
AIS Monitoring	The Shoreline Monitoring Committee needs at least 2 volunteers to assist with shoreline monitoring due the "retirement" of 2 current volunteers. Training and equipment will be provided.
Frog and Toad Study	Volunteers are receiving training and conducting a frog and toad study. This requires volunteers to be out in the evening at certain intervals during the summer listening and recording observations
Education	Volunteers may be needed to assist with the website, newsletter articles, and/or Facebook
Education	Participants will be needed for a floating workshop on BPL. The instruction will be provided by the consultant at the conclusion of the grant (2019). 4-6 boats and operators will be needed to provide the platform for the 2 ½ hour question and answer session. Approximately 30 volunteers are needed to attend.
Education	A user survey will be conducted this summer. Volunteers are needed to help both with encouraging participation but also with summarizing the responses.

For those who are working on one of the grant activities, it is extremely important to keep an accurate record of your volunteer hours. There is a substantial financial obligation for BPLROA under this grant that every volunteer hour recorded reduces. **Volunteer hours need to be recorded.** An interactive copy of the form we are using (Form 8700-349b: Donated Volunteer Labor Use as Grant) is found at the WDNR website: www.dnr.wi.gov. You may also obtain an electronic copy from Susan Johns (Susan.Johns@SJForensics.com).