

# Shoreline News

Newsletter of the Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association  
[www.bigportagelake.org](http://www.bigportagelake.org)

Spring 2021

## The President's Pen

by John Alt

COVID-19! That is the buzzword we have become acquainted with since March of 2020. It has affected every move we made in the past year. Hopefully in the near future, a new normal will be established so living at the lake this summer can be somewhat like it was before the pandemic hit.

However, I believe it will be at our own discretion as to whether we wear masks in areas of many people or not. I urge you all to carry a mask at all times so that if a mask is obviously required you will have one available for use.

In the meantime, enjoy Big Portage Lake as we have for many decades. Welcome back to Big Portage Lake and have a tremendous summer!

*Notes: As of March 28, 2021*

- *Wisconsin's mask mandate is still in effect.*
- *Case numbers are again rising in Wisconsin.*
- *The CDC recommends continuing to wear masks in public until herd immunity is achieved (hopefully) sometime in late 2021.*
- *News about variants in Wisconsin from DHS.*  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/032621.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/032621.htm)

## Big Portage Lake Adaptive Management Plan

by Susan Johns

Last year was the conclusion of a two-year lake study funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The [Final Report](#) is posted on the BPLROA web site. Thanks to Susan Johns for all her hard work and for all those individuals who volunteered their time for the project!

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The Annual Meeting will be held July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 at the Town Pavilion at 9 am.

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## Links to Additional Information

April 12 Conservation Congress Spring Meeting—**you can vote online!**

[dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing)

For Kids:

[www.eekwi.org/](http://www.eekwi.org/)

PDF about Bears

[dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/bearpractice.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/bearpractice.pdf)

CDC: Advice for after you are fully vaccinated:

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html)

Spring Frog Survey looking for Volunteers:

[dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/42086](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/42086)

[wiatri.net/inventory/frogtoadsurvey/](http://wiatri.net/inventory/frogtoadsurvey/)

FAA Recreational Drone Rules

[www.faa.gov/uas/recreational\\_fliers/](http://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational_fliers/)

Subscribe to DNR email news about—well, almost everything DNR related!

[public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new](http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new)

[BPLROA Membership Renewal Forms](#) are on the website if you need extra copies

## Boat Landing Monitoring for 2021

by Steve Saewert

The monitoring of the boat landing will proceed in 2021 with a few changes. BPLORA has again contracted with UW-Oshkosh for student monitors for 250 hours, up from the typical 200 hours. The extra hours are needed to account for the lack of volunteer monitors and the increase in boat traffic I wrote about in some detail in the Fall Shoreline News.

In that newsletter I noted a significant increase in boat traffic in 2020 and the need for more monitors to handle that traffic level. Your lake would appreciate some more monitors as I have only ten monitors actively participating. Ideas to increase monitor participation will be announced after the Spring Board Meeting.

I do not yet have a Boat Landing Monitor training session calendar, but I will email that out to all members as soon as it is available.

I have been talking about the Video/Audio camera for the boat landing for a few years now. In 2020, I secured all the approvals necessary (BPLROA, Town, State, DNR ). I also was successful in securing outside funding for the device such that BPLROA will be responsible for only 25% of the cost of the camera and only half of the annual operating costs.

The last hurdles to jump are related to the new cell tower in Town. The monitoring device requires a strong signal (both strength and direction) at the boat landing, and that the tower will handle Verizon cell phone traffic. As of this writing in mid-March, the tower is finished, and only AT&T has contracted to use the tower.

I hope that you will sign up to be a boat landing monitor for the public boat landing this summer. Please email me for more information: [spsaewert@gmail.com](mailto:spsaewert@gmail.com).

## Shoreland AIS Monitoring

by Dan Johns

Big Portage Lake (BPL) will continue to be monitored for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). As previously reported, BPL has a well-established program of AIS monitoring, which includes resident volunteers to conduct sweeps of the shoreline multiple times per year. Thank you to all the assigned monitors and residents for continuing to help implement our program. Our monitors include Tom Gratz, Bob Wannemaker, Dave Slezewski, Lee Nielsen, Dave Leifheit and Program Chair, Dan Johns. Last year these volunteer monitors spent more than 100 hours inspecting their assigned shoreline areas. They also spent many additional hours, as did many other lake residents, maintaining AIS awareness while on the shore or out on the lake.

Based on last year's program, there is both good and bad news. The good news is that we have not discovered any new invasive species in or on the lake shore. We also have not seen a significant expansion of existing invasives such as Reed Canary Grass. Of particular note, we have found neither Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) nor Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP), two of the most destructive invasives. The bad news? Plants like EWM and CLP can grow almost anywhere in our 639-acre lake. The bottom line? Although no new invasives have been detected, we cannot assume that they are not present, nor can we assume they will not insidiously root and grow at any time during Big Portage Lake's open water period.

The last few seasons, the lake has experienced particularly vigorous growth of vegetation in the 3 to 6 foot depth range in several areas, particularly along the north shore of the lake. These plants were all found to be native species common to the lake and are not problematic at this time. However, the enhanced growth of native species may indicate that conditions are becoming more favorable for the growth of any AIS that may be inadvertently introduced into

the lake. AIS may also be more difficult to detect under the camouflage of native species. We must therefore be ever more vigilant in our fight against AIS.

The success for our lake monitoring program depends on everyone. If you observe any suspect vegetation or have any questions concerning AIS, please contact Dan Johns (309 - 657-8646) or one of the other lake monitors. Please note the precise location of any suspect vegetation. In addition, if you can safely do so, harvest a segment of the suspect plant, place it in a plastic baggie and put it in the refrigerator. As soon as possible, you should deliver the sample to Dan Johns or one of the other monitors. If necessary, the sample will be submitted to a conservation professional for identification.

Big Portage Lake is clean, clear, and bio-diverse. Let's all do our part to keep it that way. I ask everyone to be knowledgeable, alert, ask questions and report observations. All of your neighbors thank you.

### From Dave Leifheit

The Fisheries Committee held no meeting since last fall.

BPLROA Connection Facebook page has 75 members. After you pay your dues, you can search for the BPLROA Connection on Facebook and request to join.

### Wildlife Sightings

We encourage you to monitor wildlife on the lake and participate in Wisconsin wildlife surveys.

We are blessed with abundant wildlife around Big Portage Lake and we encourage you to post your wildlife photos or videos to the BPLROA Connection Facebook page. We will attempt to keep an annual tally of wildlife sightings and share the totals in upcoming newsletters. If you

have trail cams around your lake home and/or you are an avid wildlife photographer and would prefer to just update us on interesting wildlife sightings rather than utilizing Facebook, please contact Dave Slezewski at 608-516-2721.

You can also participate in State of Wisconsin wildlife surveys and monitoring efforts. The Wisconsin DNR has a great Citizen Based Monitoring (CBM) program that allows the department to engage the public about wildlife while providing them with valuable data for wildlife. From insects to amphibians to birds to large mammals, CBM has it all. The website can be found at:

[dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/citizenMonitoring](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/citizenMonitoring)

### Turtles

Don't forget that turtle nesting season occurs every spring and summer around the lake in areas where creeks cross the roads. Locations include Portage Creek and Pickerel Creek (which crosses both East and West Big Portage Lake Roads). Watch for the signs and turtle nest cages placed on roadsides, and slow down.

If you are lucky, you may even witness the baby turtles hatching!

### Fireworks

by Dave Slezewski

A thrill, but at what cost to the lake, the wildlife, and your neighbors?

Fireworks present many adverse effects to our lake and the surrounding environment. In addition to the noise pollution amplified by the water, their composition pollutes our water and air with toxic chemicals such as mercury, lead, and nitric oxide among many others. Since some of these chemicals do not dissolve, these pollutants continue to build up in the lake ecosystem over time—that means within the water, fish, wildlife, and plants. Remnants

produce litter that ends up on the lake bed and on our shores.

Fireworks are an obvious fire hazard that could potentially cause a wild fire and/or damage property. Many dogs are terrified of fireworks which can lead to runaways and injury. Fireworks can be dangerous and disturbing to wildlife.

And note: fireworks that explode or leave the ground are illegal without a permit in Wisconsin.

As an alternative consider spending that money on your favorite charity (if you need a suggestion, BPLROA is a great idea!) and support local businesses or contribute to the cost of the town fireworks, and then watch the fabulous fireworks display in Land O'Lakes on July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Charitable Donations

If you are looking for a charity organization to donate to, consider BPLROA including matches through employers and AmazonSmile. (BPLROA is a 501(c)(3) organization.)

The association has ongoing and increasing expenses to preserve our beautiful lake. The expenses include aquatic invasive species (AIS) monitoring activities and potential remediation. These expenses cannot be met without your membership dues and extra donation support. An AIS infestation that requires remediation would deplete our current reserves rapidly.

So, what can you do to help? Your membership dues payment and extra donations are *always* appreciated! Also, your employer may match your donations. My employer matches my charitable giving dollar for dollar and makes a 2 for 1 match for any donations made on Giving Tuesday, the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Company policies vary, but it won't hurt to ask. Please consider BPLROA in your charitable giving. Family members and visitors are welcome to contribute as well.

## Amazon Smile

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android devices.

When you shop at AmazonSmile, you will have the same shopping experience as you do at Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Inform your family and all your friends about AmazonSmile and encourage them to consider BPLROA as their charity organization!

## Other Organizations

And don't forget about other local organizations that have been unable to hold fundraisers for the past year and are in need of support, including the Headwaters Food Pantry, Vilas County Humane Society, Northwoods Land Trust, Wisconsin Lakes, Wild Instincts Rehab, Northwoods Wildlife Center, the Raptor Education Group (REGI), and others.

## Winter Joy

*Glittering snowflakes  
in the sun's brilliant light.*

*Beauty in the harshness of the cold  
and in the stunning glory  
of the quiet of winter.*

*A time of rest before  
the rambunctiousness of nature  
bursts forth  
as the sun moves higher in the sky  
and the earth warms.*

## Proposal from Scott Topp

BPL property owner Scott Topp has proposed a collaboration of property owners to coordinate with the companies that use specialized barges to install and remove docks/piers and shore stations. By coordinating a number of installations/removals for the same date(s) and knowing the dates and times these barges will arrive, the boat landing can be monitored in order to help prevent the introduction of AIS into our lake by these barges.

*(Note: You may have already received an email about this proposal if you are on the association's "Blast List" which is used on rare occasions to inform members of timely lake information.)*

Scott's idea is to (1) have as many installations done at the same time as possible in order to (2) limit the number of times these companies launch into the lake, and (3) to know when they are coming so that the boats can be inspected for AIS before entering our water.

Some reasons for this proposal:

- Limit lake-hopping barge traffic to fewer incursions into BPL waters at known times/dates.
- Protect the health and life of the lake.
- Help installation companies reduce their costs, hopefully saving residents money.

If you are interested in participating, Scott requests your help by providing him with the following information:

- Your name and lake property address, a contact phone number and/or email address.
- Include the name of the company you use and their phone number (if you have it).
- Date by which you would like your dock and/or shore station installed (and in the fall, removed.)

You may contact Scott with this information or any questions by email at: [scottctopp@gmail.com](mailto:scottctopp@gmail.com) and/or by phone at: (224) 407-1956

A copy of Scott's email is available on at [www.bigportagelake.org](http://www.bigportagelake.org) in PDF.

**Note:** Last year, Black Oak Lake boat landing monitors stopped an installation barge from launching that was filled with milfoil.

We're Gonna Zoom, Zoom, Zoom, Zoom,  
Zoom

(Apologies to PBS...)

We all know that the coronavirus pandemic has caused immense suffering, loss, and distress for many of our fellow Americans.

For those able to stay home, new ways of "meeting" have become normal and enjoyable—a silver lining in the very dark cloud of the pandemic.

LOLA, Nicolet's Learning in Retirement program, The Nature Conservancy, Northwoods Wildlife Center, and the Aldo Leopold Foundation are just a few of the organizations that found a way to reach out via virtual meeting apps during these times.

So the question has arisen: In the future, would you (1) like to be able to attend the BPLROA Annual Meetings each summer via virtual meeting apps if held at a time other than the holiday weekend, and (2) would you be more likely to attend because you can participate without having to be at the lake and/or without giving up precious lake time on the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.

Comments and thoughts welcome.

[JillEdwards@bigportagelake.org](mailto:JillEdwards@bigportagelake.org)

<b>BPLROA Financial Report, March 2021</b>			
<b>Assets</b>			
Checking Account	\$ 7,082.92		
Savings Account	14,694.97		
CBCW Grant Account	\$ 590.82		
Lake Management Grant Account	6,695.60		
		\$ 29,064.31	
Fidelity Portfolio (3/15/2021)			
Charitable Trust	\$7,468.49		
Environmental Fund	1,861.11		
Working Capital	5,691.50		
		\$ 15,021.10	
			<b>\$ 44,085.41</b>
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>			
CBCW		\$ 3,000.00	
			<b>\$47,085.41</b>

Shoreline News is the newsletter of the Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association (BPLROA) and will be published twice a year in April and October as of 2020.

**Association Officers**

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- Jill Edwards
- Dan Johns
- Dave Leifheit
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**[Contact BLPROA](#)**

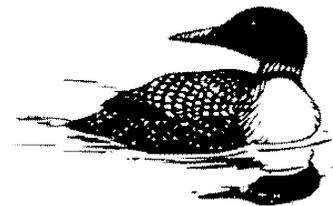
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Jill Edwards

**Fishery Committee:** Dave Leifheit

You may contact these individuals using information in the BPL Directory or via the Contact Us link on the BPL website at

[www.bigportagelake.org](http://www.bigportagelake.org)



*Common Loon drawing by Bob Hines for the US Fish and Wildlife Service*