

Cochran Lake Update

President's Report

by Mark Luoma

Our lake district annual meeting will be held at the Pike Lake Fire Hall on Saturday, May 26, at 8 a.m. The meeting's agenda is listed at the end of this newsletter.

The lake district directory can be found at:

http://www.cochranlake.org/web_documents/owners.pdf

Please check the directory to make sure that your address, phone number, and email addresses are correct. If any changes need to be made, please contact Don Schmitz at Dons@surgery.wisc.edu.

It is time to make a final decision on the fate of the boat landing stone barbeque fireplace. Loren Davis emailed me last September and offered to purchase it for \$500. He suggested that this money might be used to help fund future kids' fishing contests at the lake. I then sent a survey to lake owners via email or U.S. mail asking for opinions on what the board of directors should do with the fireplace.

I had a local stonemason examine the fireplace, and he estimated that it would cost between \$1,700 and \$1,900 to repair it.

The options presented in the survey were to 1) pay to have the fireplace repaired, 2) keep it and leave it in its current state, 3) sell the fireplace to Loren for \$500.

Twenty-one lake owners responded to the survey. Sixteen suggested that the district sell the fireplace. Four suggested that we keep it. One of these owners suggested that lake owners could attempt to make repairs to slow its further deterioration. One owner did not have an opinion.

I informed the board of directors at the December meeting that I would bring this to a vote at the 2012 annual meeting. This will give all owners an opportunity to

attend the meeting, participate in the discussion, and express their opinions before a vote is taken.

I emailed Loren to tell him that this matter will be finalized on May 26.

Summary of Last June's Fisheries Report

Cochran Lake was last shocked for one hour on June 1, 2011. Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and northern pike are considered gamefish and were collected for one full hour the night of the shocking. The other species were considered panfish and were collected for one tenth of an hour. They were reported as the estimated number of fish that would have been collected in one full hour. Although the black crappie is a panfish, they were collected for a full hour of shocking like the gamefish. The following fish were netted and recorded:

Gamefish (1 hour of shocking)

No. of Fish	Species	Average Sizes
12	Northern Pike	18.2 to 28.4 inches
65	Largemouth Bass	6.4 to 18.3 inches
1	Smallmouth Bass	10.1 inches
10	Black Crappie	3.0 to 13.2 inches

Panfish (.1 hour of shocking)

No. of Fish	Species	Average Sizes	Full Hr. Equivalent
117	Bluegill	1.5 to 8.2 inches	1,170/hr
4	Pumpkinseed	5.8 to 9.0 inches	40/hr
4	Yellow Perch	3.6 to 5.3 inches	40/hr

A couple of rock bass were also recorded as well as bluntnose minnows. Many of the bluegills had a lot of black spots. The smaller bluegills were abundant around most of the shoreline, but the larger ones seemed to be holding in deeper water. The DNR personnel reported that they saw and missed a tiger musky that they estimated to be about 22 inches long and observed no walleyes. They also saw and missed quite a few 14 to 18 inch largemouth bass that scooted out and around to the deeper water. The 14 to 17 inch bass were only in fair condition and not as fat as would be expected with all the 4-inch bluegills that are available. The northern pike were also pretty skinny.

Year-To-Year Shocking Comparisons

Largemouth Bass

1973 – 156	1989 – 283	1999 – 588	2001 – 289
2002 – 285	2003 – 264	2004 – 135	2005 – 151
2006 – 156	2007 – 137	2008 – 65	2009 – 83
2011 -- 65			

Northern Pike

1973 – 0	1989 – 0	1999 – 0	2001 – 0
2002 – 13	2003 – 10	2004 – 6	2005 – 9
2006 – 9	2007 – 3	2008 – 9	2009 – 8
2011 – 12			

Musky

One musky (29.7 inches) was recorded in 2002.

Walleye

One walleye (14 inches) was recorded in 2006.

Black Crappie (reported in one full hour equivalents)

1973 -- 0	1989 -- 0	1999 -- 1	2001 -- 0
2002 -- 0	2003 -- 9	2004 -- 10	2005 -- 10
2006 -- 10	2007 -- 5	2008 -- 1	2009 -- 20
2011 – 10			

Bluegill (reported in one full hour equivalents)

1973 -- 0	1989 -- 0	1999 -- 15	2001 -- 415
2002 -- 900	2003 -- 930	2004 -- 440	2005 -- 585
2006 – 1,340	2007 – 1,300	2008 -- 850	2009 – 1,020
2011 – 1,170			

Pumpkinseed (reported in one full hour equivalents)

1973 -- 0	1989 -- 0	1999 -- 3	2001 -- 25
2002 -- 40	2003 -- 60	2004 -- 25	2005 -- 10
2006 -- 20	2007 -- 50	2008 -- 30	2009 -- 30
2011 -- 40			

Yellow Perch (reported in one full hour equivalents)

1973 -- 35	1989 -- 21	1999 -- 1	2001 -- 50
2002 -- present	2003 -- 2	2004 -- 0	2005 -- 1
2006 -- 15	2007 -- 250	2008 -- 21	2009 -- 60
2011 -- 40			

White Sucker (reported in one full hour equivalents)

1973 -- 27	1989 -- 3	1999 -- 1	2001 -- 1
2002 -- 30	2003 -- 1	2004 -- present	2005 -- 2
2006 -- 0	2007 -- 0	2008 -- 0	2009 -- 1
2011 -- 0			

Green Sunfish

One green sunfish was recorded in 2005 and two in 2006.

BOAT LANDING

by Rick Schwai

In accordance with our membership's directive, the private boat landing gate will be locked from May 1 to November 1. The combination remains the same. For security reasons, it will not be printed in this newsletter. The combination will be available at the May 26th Annual Membership Meeting or from another resident.

LOONS: They're Ba-a-ack!

by Pat Schwai

As the ice turns from gray to black in spring, many of us eagerly anticipate the return of loons and their mournful wails floating across the water on a summer's night. This year the lake opened on March 19, but no loons were seen or heard. Given what transpired last year, some of us wondered if Cochran Lake would be home to loons this year. We were encouraged when the first loon arrived April 8, and the second followed two days later. (In 2011, the arrival dates were April 17 and 18 as the loons waited for the lake to open.) They are regularly seen swimming and diving together so we are hopeful they'll nest.

It has not been unusual for Cochran Lake to have a loon pair and an unpaired resident or non-resident intruder. When this is the case, loon aggression is highly likely to occur as it did last year. On June 5, 2011, I observed what would be the first of two territorial encounters. As one loon of the pair was pursued by an intruder, the spouse observed without coming to the aid of its partner. This is normal behavior. The encounter was brief and ended with the three of them swimming together before submerging. I would classify this as an encounter between two females as the aggression did not escalate.

During the next two weeks, the loons lived relatively peacefully while building an island nest. Then on June 19th, it was reported that another, more aggressive territorial chase ensued. Upon returning from a trip a few days later, I found the nest abandoned and only one loon on the lake. This loon appeared darker than either of our pair had been. On closer observation, I noted that the white feathers were stained a rusty color, indicative of time spent in water containing iron or tannins. Where had "our" loons gone?

Sadly, I was to learn months later that the remains of what appeared to be a loon had washed ashore. The disappearance of both of our loons is unusual because loons are "mated" to their territory and will usually take up with the survivor of a deadly encounter.

How will the loons fair on Cochran Lake this year? We do not know, but we do know that your timely sharing of observations with me, whether nesting activities, loon aggression, harassment by other wildlife or disturbance by humans, is important to the work of LoonWatch. As one of their many citizen monitors (Loon Rangers), I file an annual report on Cochran Lake. All

information aids in LoonWatch's ongoing effort to protect common loons and their aquatic habitats through education, monitoring, and research. You can make a difference!

2012 Kids Fishing Contest

by Sig Kaminski

Yes, we will have a 2012 kids' fishing contest this year, if approved at the May annual meeting. This will make year number 4.

Last year we had 19 kids enter the contest. I believe we would have had more, but the weather last summer was not the greatest on a number of the weekends. Also, the kids need a little help from the adults to make sure they get the forms filled out and sent in. Pictures of fish are welcome, but it's OK if you did not take one. Just have the kids write a short story. Forms will be at the meeting and on the web site, or just call Sig Kaminski at 762-1823.

I wish to thank all those who donate money or prizes to help make this contest successful. It takes around \$300 to pay for the prizes. I want to ensure that the prizes are of good quality so that the kids get things they can use for many years. So, for those who have given in the past, the kids LOVE YOU. And for those who have not shared in that LOVE and FEELING of doing good, please join in -- DONATE. I will do all I can to get the best prizes at the best prices.

We have a great lake for kids to catch fish. If you do not have the equipment or time to take the kids out, call me and I will find a way to get them on the water. I also know a number of people who live on the lake who would love to take a kid fishing.

WE WERE LUCKY!!

by Sig Kaminski

Many of you have heard that we had a fire at Cochran Lake a few weeks ago. The fire destroyed an outbuilding and spread as a grass fire to neighboring properties. Extinguishing the fire required combined fire departments from Pike Lake and the Town of Sherman, and more than 6,000 gallons of water pumped out of Cochran

Lake. As a volunteer fireman with the Pike Lake department, I thought it would be worthwhile to review the campfire/burning regulations and recommendations.

First of all, campfires do not require a permit. However, a campfire is defined as "a fire for cooking or warming purposes only". It appears that the fire at Cochran Lake was the result of a campfire. Although there are no regulations for a campfire, there are several recommendations to make them safe. They include:

- ➔ Use a metal burn ring to keep the fire contained within the ring
- ➔ Put a 3-foot buffer of stone or gravel around the outside of the burn ring to prevent the fire from jumping to grass or nearby brush. (This appears to have been the cause of the fire at Cochran Lake.)
- ➔ Do not leave the fire unattended.
- ➔ Have water and a shovel on hand.
- ➔ Pour water on the fire to completely extinguish it.
- ➔ Make sure the fire is cold before you leave.

Burning small amounts of clean, household paper products; wood brush; leaves; needles and grass **requires a burning permit**. The permit is free and issued on an annual basis. The permit can be obtained from Musky Jack's on Highway 70. Permits can also be obtained on line by visiting dnr.wi.gov or calling 1-888-WIS-BURN to have a permit mailed or e-mailed to you.

Once you have a permit, you **must call 1-888-947-2876 after 11 a.m. on the day you plan to burn**. You will hear a recording that will ask you in what county you want to burn. Based on the county's moisture conditions, weather conditions and day of the week, you will be told whether or not burning is allowed that day. In order to help you plan ahead, the following factors will determine if burning is allowed:

- ➔ The wind must be less than 8 mph.
- ➔ The predicted wind must be less than 12 mph.
- ➔ Due to being serviced by a volunteer fire department, burning is **not allowed on Sunday or holidays** unless there is snow on the ground.

Assuming burning is permitted, the Price County sheriff's department has requested that you call them at 715-339-3011. This is to prevent the reporting of false fire alarms.

I hope you keep these regulations and recommendations in mind when you plan your burning and campfires. If we all follow them, we won't need luck to keep us safe at Cochran Lake.

Water Quality Cochran Lake

by Sig Kaminski

Well, let's start out with the facts: the water is wet, clear, and has fish, weeds, logs, loons, ducks, frogs and turtles in it. These are all very good things, and it is a way of telling us that our lake is healthy.

Last year the high water temperature was right around 80 degrees. Secchi depth (how deep a black and white 6-inch circle can be seen in the depth of the water) was 15 feet, five out of the seven months that the depth was taken during the summer. The low depth was only 11 feet on the 3rd of August, which was caused by the pollen coming off the pine trees. The other month reading was 14 feet. Over all, the lake was clean and clear. Ice over occurred on November 18 (2011).

The 2011 lake monitoring tests came back on average with the last five years showing that our water quality continues to be healthy.

This year the ice went out on March 19. The latest water quality test was taken and sent in on April 3 (2012). The water temperature was 48 degrees and secchi depth was 15 feet. The current water level is about normal.

We still need to make sure that we keep the lake healthy. Do not add gas to your boat while the tank is in the boat. Take the tank out and on shore, and be vigilant about what you put on your yard. We don't want the wrong chemicals washing into the lake.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns about keeping our lake safe and healthy, please contact me at 762-1823 (land line) or 661-3816 (cell).

Adopt A Road by Ray Schave

Before everything greened up this spring, Cochran Lake District volunteers cleaned up approximately 8.5 miles of our local roads that we sponsor through the Adopt A Road program.

Thanks to the following members who participated in this year's spring clean up:

George & Letty Rasmussen
Ray & Diane Korinek
Sig & Mary Kaminski
Carl Schmelzer & Doty Ford
Rick & Pat Schwai
Ray & Judy Schave

We will be having a fall clean up. If anyone would like to participate, please contact Ray Schave. I have plastic bags and vests for those who would like them. If you see some litter along our roadways, please stop and pick it up so we can keep our roads clean and attractive.

Cochran Lake District
Annual Meeting Agenda
May 26, 2012
8 a.m.
Pike Lake Fire Hall

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report – Pat Krenz
April 14, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Treasurer's Report – Carl Schmelzer
Present 2012-13 Budget/Audit

Town Representative Report – Jim Hintz

Price County Land Conservationist Report -- Evan Lund

Committee Chair Reports

Adopt-A-Highway Program – Ray Schave

Water Quality – Sig Kaminski

Fisheries – Frank Sevcik

Lake Plants – Stan Kmiecik

Boat Landing – Brian Mandt

District Website – Don Schmitz

Additional Reports

Kids' Fishing Contest – Sig Kaminski

Wisconsin Association of Lakes -- Mary Rieder

Lake History – Donna Janes

Other

Old Business

Boat Landing Old Stone Barbeque

New Business

Election of Lake District Treasurer

2012 Kids' Fishing Contest

Adjournment