

Cochran Lake Update

April 2014



2013 Walleye Stocking

by
Mark Luoma

After the June 3, 2013, lake shocking took place, Department of Natural Resources fish biologist, Skip Sommerfeldt, indicated that it was time to look at stocking our lake with walleyes. It was becoming evident that the bass and northern pike were not adequately controlling our lake's bluegill population, which continues to increase resulting in stunted panfish. Skip recommended that we

submit an application on behalf of the lake district requesting permission to plant walleyes in our lake. I obtained the application form and together with Frank Sevcik completed the form and submitted it to the DNR.

A few weeks later, we were informed that the application had been approved. Initially, we planned to plant 300 fish but later decided to ask for permission to plant 700. The DNR informed us that they would like to see about 1,200 walleyes planted in Cochran Lake, which are approximately 10 per acre. Skip Sommerfeldt indicated that he planned to ask the state to provide an additional 500 walleyes. However, Cochran Lake was placed in the lowest priority level, Category 4, mostly because of the limited access to the public and because no walleyes had previously been stocked in the past.

On October 17 Frank Sevcik, Sig Kaminski, Ray and Judy Schave, and I met a representative from Klug's Fish Farm in Alexandria, MN at the boat landing. The cost of the fish was \$936 with another \$100 for transportation. We placed 700 healthy six- to eight-inch walleyes in numerous buckets and headed to various parts of the lake to release them. In the weeks before the lake froze, no one reported finding any dead walleyes so we are hopeful that the walleyes are taking well to our lake.

A fish biologist that I contacted said that it will probably take at least two years for these fish to reach the legal size of 15 inches. The state imposed possession limit will be five walleyes per day. However, the lake district board is recommending that no one keep a walleye under 18 inches (unless it is mortally hooked) for the next few years in order to allow these fish to spawn and become established in our lake.

At the December meeting, a lake owner expressed concern that we could plant walleyes only to have the Native Americans spear them in the years to come. There was a question as to whether they are allowed to spear on a lake as small as ours. I contacted the DNR to ask if spearing was a possibility on our lake. I learned that all lakes in Wisconsin are subject to spearing. However, I was told that if the state does not provide walleyes for stocking, the DNR will not report that walleyes exist in a lake. Also, this individual did not believe that any tribe member would be interested in carrying canoes



or small boats into our lake in order to spear. When I reported this at the February meeting, an owner asked that we discuss this topic at the annual meeting to determine whether we wish to request that the DNR not place our lake on the state stocking list to lessen the chances of spearing taking place on Cochran Lake in the future.



2014 Walleye Stocking

by
Mark Luoma

At the December 7, 2013, meeting, a recommendation was made to discuss a walleye stocking plan at the 2014 annual meeting. The recommendation was to ask the DNR to allow our lake district to pay for and plant 1,200 walleyes this fall and that we accept donations from property owners to help defray the costs and then budget the remaining amount from Lake District Funds.

After the meeting, I contacted DNR fish biologist, Skip Sommerfeldt, and asked him how many walleyes the DNR would allow us to plant. Skip told me that the maximum number of walleyes he would approve would be 1,100 every other year or 550 each year. My recommendation is that we plant 550 walleyes this fall and 550 in 2015. The cost will depend on the size of the walleyes that the fish farms are able to grow and provide for us. Since we will be planting fewer walleyes than last fall, it may make sense to pay for them entirely out of our budget. This will be discussed at the annual meeting.

Reminder:

Cochran Lake
District
Annual
Meeting is
scheduled for
8 a.m. on
Saturday,
May 24, 2014
at the Pike
Lake Fire
Hall.



2013 Cochran Lake Loons

by
Pat Schwai

The ice was starting to break up when I heard the first loon overhead on May 4. Three days later, three loons explored the lake in advance of ice out on May 8th. When three loons, or as I call them “a pair and a spare”, show up it is not always a good sign. If the “spare” doesn't move on and leave the pair to raise their chicks without interference, the nest or chicks are often lost. Many of us have witnessed these territorial displays much to our dismay.

For the first time, “our” loons showed an interest in the platform near the boat landing. More than a few people observed them on the platform engaging in what appeared to be nesting activities. But, alas, no chicks were seen. In fall, there was no evidence that nest building occurred. One of the paired loons was bearing a blue band. It will be interesting to see if that loon is back in 2014.

The literature indicates that loons quickly change places during incubation. An observer noted that the pair often left their nest unattended longer than one might expect. Was this due to hunger, inexperience or a sense that the eggs weren't viable? Were they nearby but submerged? It's difficult to know while maintaining a safe distance from the nest. However, once you see the pair welcome loon visitors to the lake, you know their nesting attempts are over for the year.

We remain hopeful that the loons will choose the platform this year and eliminate the risk of having their nest flooded or stranded on dry land as the water level changes.

Meanwhile, enjoy their presence and their sometimes eerie calls that remind us of how special Cochran Lake is.



Boat Landing Update

by
Mark Luoma

The gate at the boat landing was moved just beyond the Erickson driveway late this summer through the efforts of Frank Sevcik, Ray Schave, and Mark Luoma. It had been damaged by the town plow during the winter, and the Town of Fifield repaired it.

The boat landing pier needs to be water sealed this spring. Sig Kaminski will be asking for volunteers to help with this project when the weather permits it.

The boat landing fireplace has been removed. Loren Davis paid the lake district \$500 for it. He arrived in October, dismantled the fireplace, and took the rocks back to Minnesota. Loren will be sending the lake district a picture of the fireplace after he has completed reassembling it at his home.

The landing will need some minor repairs prior to anyone putting their boat or pontoon in this spring. The area on the right side of the ramp (in the water) has become rutted and a trailer could be damaged when using the landing. A permit will be completed and submitted to the DNR. Ski Kaminski will then purchase crushed rock and a crew will be assembled to shovel it into the affected area.

Lake Signage

by
Mark Luoma

After discussions at the summer and fall quarterly meetings, it was decided that we should not advertise that walleyes have been stocked in our lake since this could lead to non-owners focusing their fishing efforts on Cochran Lake. This would make it difficult to ensure the future success of our stocking



efforts. As a result, it was decided that no signs indicating size and possession limits for walleyes will be posted at either the carry-in or boat landings.

The fire department will provide No Parking signs that will be posted at the boat landing this spring. The landing is used by the fire department to access water in the case of a fire on property at the lake. Please do not leave your vehicle and trailer parked at the landing after launching your boat or pontoon.



Cochran Lake Water Report 2013

by
Sig Kaminski

Today is March 18, and the lake has about 26 to 36 inches of ice on it. Then to top it off we got 5" of snow and are looking to getting 5" more tonight.

I took the water temperature from May to November. The high was 78 on July 7, the low on November 27, and overall average for the 8 months was 55 degrees.

The secchi (depth readings) was around 10 to 13 feet deep for the first 3 months. That was because of the algae we had in the lake, plus the lack of wind to break up the algae. The next 5 months' readings were around 14 feet deep. Overall the lake was not as clear as in the past.

The good news is that the water level was up and stayed up for most of the year. It should also be up for this summer due to the amount of snow we have on the ground and all the rain we had in the fall of 2013.

The 2013 water test came back on average for the lake. The next water test will be two weeks after the ice goes out. When that will be is hard to tell at this time.

To look at the lake report you can go to – dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/lake on the internet. The waterbody # is **2264000**.

If you have any question, call me at 715-661-3816 or 715-762-1823.

Lake District Officers

The election for lake district president, a three-year position, will take place at the May annual meeting. Please consider running for this very important position. Judy Schave is finishing her second year as treasurer, and Sue Houkom is completing her first year as secretary.



National Forest Road Closings

by
Mark Luoma

The National Forest Service has completed a couple of logging projects in the Cochran Lake area. A few of the dirt roads in these areas have seen ATV usage in the past but will now be closed and bermed this spring. An official out of the Park Falls office asked me to report these closures to Cochran Lake lot owners.

1) Road 146A has been bermed just past the parking area for the carry-in landing.

2) Road 146D, the first road on the right (east) just north of Shady Knoll Rd., will be bermed just off of Springstead Rd.

3) Road 146C, the second road on the east side of Springstead Rd., will also be bermed right off of Springstead Rd.

4) Road 156 will be bermed just past 156D.

Kids Fishing Contest 2013

by
Sig Kaminski

The fishing contest started off slowly but finished off ok. We had 19 kids enter the contest this year, and a few youngsters caught some really nice fish.

I received \$213 when the bucket was passed around at the May annual meeting. I received an additional \$20 later on. I also used \$50 of the money from the fire pit sale to buy kids' books from Walmart. In addition, I also received around \$100 in donated gifts making the total cost for the 2013 contest at \$383.

I want to thank everyone who donated money and gifts to the contest. We will again vote on whether we want to conduct a 2014 contest during the annual meeting in May.

A few gifts still need to be picked up. Pictures of participants and their fish will be posted at the annual meeting.





Establishing a Contingency Fund by Mark Luoma

One of the topics that was discussed at the February quarterly meeting concerned looking into increasing the annual Lake District assessment so that a contingency fund could be established.

This fund could be used to pay for costs associated with addressing such issues as:

- Dealing with a blue-green algae outbreak
- Removing an invasive species from the lake
- Covering emergency expenses
- Paying for walleye stocking until the lake produces a self-sustaining population.

The current \$12 assessment per lot per year has been in effect for many years. It was suggested that this topic be placed on the agenda for the annual meeting so that lot owners could decide if they wish to approve the creation of a contingency fund, decide on a minimum dollar amount for the fund, and determine how much to increase the yearly assessment in order to meet the goal.

Adopt A Road by Ray Schave

When the snow finally melts and we have some resemblance of spring, I will make a request for Cochran Lake District volunteers to help clean up our 8.5 miles of local roads that we sponsor through the Adopt A Road program.

Thanks to the following members who participated in last year's fall clean-up.

George & Letty Rasmussen
Ray & Diane Korinek
Sig & Mary Kaminski

Rick & Pat Schwai
Ray & Judy Schave



If anyone would like to participate please contact Ray Schave. I have plastic bags and vests for those who would like them. In between times, to keep our roads clean and attractive, if you see some litter please stop and pick it up.

Cochran Lake District
Treasurer's Report
April 1, 2014
by Judy Schave

Checking Account Balance May 26, 2013	\$1,755.72	
Savings Account Balance May 26, 2013	\$4,499.69	
Petty Cash Balance May 26, 2013	\$1.20	
Total Bank Balance May 26, 2013		\$6,256.61
Expenditures thru April 1, 2014	\$(1,474.99)	
Proceeds thru April 1, 2014	\$801.40	
Checking Account Balance April 1, 2014	\$1,072.73	
Savings Account Balance April 1, 2014	\$4,509.09	
Petty Cash Balance April 1, 2014	\$1.20	
Total Bank Balance April 1, 2014		<u>\$5,583.02</u>

**Cochran Lake District
Annual Meeting Agenda**

May 24, 2014

8 a.m.

Pike Lake Fire Hall

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report – Sue Houkom
February 1, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Treasurer's Report – Judy Schave
Current Financial Report
Financial 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

Lake History – Donna Janes

Other

Old Business

New Business

Contingency Fund

2014-15 Budget

Fish Stocking Permit Application

Number of Walleyes

Payment Method

State Walleye Stocking

Do we wish to be placed on the state stocking list?

Election of Lake District President

2014 Kids' Fishing Contest

Adjournment

**Cochran Lake District Meeting
Pike Lake Fire Hall
February 1, 2014
9 a.m.**

Present: Mark Luoma, President; Judy Schave, Treasurer; Sue Houkom, Secretary
In addition, 9 people, representing a total of 8 property owners

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Luoma at 9 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Member Reports

Secretary's Report – Sue Houkom

Motion to approve, Carl Schmelzer; second, Judy Schave; motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Judy Schave

Motion to approve, Carl Schmelzer; second, Mary Kaminski; motion carried.

- A request was made to include a comparison of expenditures to budgeted amounts in the treasurer's report.
- The district expenditures are currently within budget.

Old Business

Follow up to question regarding Native American fish spearing regulations and lake sizes

- According to the DNR, there are no restrictions on the size of lake that may be speared.
- Since the state did not stock walleye in Cochran, the DNR is not required and will not report that walleyes exist in the lake.
- The tribes must notify the DNR as to the day and time when a lake will be speared.
- We may be placed on the state walleye stocking list again in 2014, but once again will most likely be a Category 4 site due to our limited public access. This means we may not get any fish from the state again this year. A suggestion was made for discussion at the annual meeting – Should we request that the DNR not plant state-provided walleyes in the future? This would mean that the DNR would then not have to report that our lake contains walleyes.

New Business

Spring Newsletter – The following were suggested as articles.

- Acceptance of donations from property owners to stock walleye
- Shocking survey
- Walleye planting

- Signage at the boat landings
- Forest road closings
- Water quality – Sig Kaminski
- Fishing Contest – Sig Kaminski
- Litter Pickup – Ray Schave
- Loons – Pat Schwai
- Parking restrictions at boat landing

Potential increase in District lot assessment – These reasons were cited for asking for the increase.

- Set up a contingency fund.
- If some remedy would be needed to address issues affecting the lake like the blue-green algae of last summer.
- To cover expenses in case of accident since the District does not carry insurance.
- The suggestion was made to set a monetary goal for the fund.
- Continue to stock walleyes until the lake produces a self-sustaining population.

Heating Issues – The Price County Human Services Department has programs in place to help residents who are having trouble heating their homes this winter. Anyone needing assistance should contact them at 715-339-2158.

Committee Reports

Fishery – Frank Sevcik (absent)

- State regulations apply for the daily catch (5 per day) and size of walleyes (15 inches) in Cochran Lake.
- We can ask owners to impose voluntary limits of taking fewer and bigger fish to help grow the population.
- Cost for larger walleye for planting will probably be about the same as we paid last year for smaller fish. The walleyes were smaller last fall because of the late ice out and colder conditions.
- The suggestion was made to check the stomach contents of any northern caught to see if they're eating walleyes.
- Ice fishing was great when it was warmer in December but recently not so good.

Water Quality – Sig Kaminski

Sig will get the kit during first part of March and will do the test two weeks after ice goes out

Kid's Fishing Contest – Sig Kaminski

19 kids participated, which is pretty consistent from previous years.

Adopt A Highway – Ray Schave

- Spring cleanup will occur when the snow disappears.
- Ray will announce the cleanup through the Google Group as usual.

Lake Plants – Stan Kmiecik (absent)/Rick Schwai

There was nothing new to report.

Boat Landing – Brian Mandt (absent)

- A yard of gravel is needed to fill a deep rut on right side of the launch area.
- Sig Kaminski volunteered to transport it, since a company may be reluctant to come out with such a small amount.
- It will need to be hand shoveled from trailer to hole.
- Mark Luoma will inquire about the need for a permit.
- The pier will be water-sealed this spring.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Houkom