

# Cochran Lake Newsletter

April 2015



## The Loons of 2014

by  
Pat Schwai, LoonWatch Volunteer

This was the summer of loon secrets. We scanned the islands from late May until mid-June looking for nesting activity, but saw nothing. Our hope for a chick was dwindling when on **June 22**, a guest of Rick and Doreen Dittberner let us know he'd spotted a nest on the most westerly island. Sure enough, tucked on the southwest side of the island was an occupied nest. The loons had done an amazing job of hiding the nest behind the emergent reeds and under a small shrub with overhanging branches. One had to be in just the right position

to get a glimpse of the nest.

We continued to watch the nest from a distance and were dismayed to find it empty 10 days later. Another lost nest, or so we thought. Then on July 4, a chick was spotted along the west shore of the lake. It was obvious from its size that the chick was more than a few days old. Again the parents had surprised us by keeping the chick's hatching a secret. This was one clever pair of loons.

Unlike other years when the male loons have been challenged by rogue loons, this year was relatively peaceful. Dan Scullin, however, reported an interesting encounter in which the parent had to protect the chick from an eagle. As the eagle closed in, the parent, likely using its wings, sent up a geyser of water that hid the chick while also fending off the eagle.

As summer wore on, the parenting duties fell to just one adult. While we were out kayaking one afternoon, we heard the adult with the chick calling while swimming toward the west side of the lake. There in the shadows was the other adult who still hadn't replied. The adults swam towards each other and then turned away. Was the other adult disinterested, injured or ill? We don't know the answer but from then on, only one parent was with the chick until their departure in early October.



Perhaps because this was an "only" chick, the youngster stayed in close proximity to the parent by swimming in circles around it, cuddling up to it and sometimes picking at its feathers. But as fall approached, not even those endearing behaviors could move the parent to share its fish. It was time for the young one to be self-sufficient and learn to fly. Mark Luoma witnessed the parent encouraging the

youngster to fly. Eventually the lessons were learned as neither loon was seen after October 4. The youngster will spend the next three years in the ocean before returning north to nest.

Thank you to those who shared their important and interesting observations. Also, thank you to the owners and their guests who enjoyed their water activities while helping the loons have a good outcome. What did they do?

- Observed low to no-wake speeds to prevent eggs from being washed off the nest.
- Fished away from the loons to prevent entanglement and swallowing of bait hooks. (Loons can be very curious.)
- Observed from a distance.



Throughout the summer, Mark Luoma faithfully photographed the growing chick and shared his photos through the Cochran Lake email. Rick Schwai used some of these pictures to create a time-line of the chick's development in poster form. We'll have one on display at the annual meeting if anyone is interested in ordering one.

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## Walleye Plantings

by  
Mark Luoma

A motion was approved at the 2014 Cochran Lake annual meeting to request that the DNR allow us to once again plant walleyes in our lake in an attempt to control the bluegill population. Our application was approved, and the DNR gave us permission to plant 550 fingerlings. The six- to nine-inch walleyes arrived in the afternoon on October 17. Ray Schave, Ray Korinek, Frank Sevcik, and Mark and John Luoma helped to relocate the walleyes in various places around the lake. As you may remember, the DNR also allowed us to plant 700 walleye fingerlings in the fall of 2013.

Biologists tell us that it will probably take two to three years for these fish to reach the legal size limit of 15 inches. At a previous lake district meeting, a recommendation was made to encourage fishermen to release all walleyes caught in our lake until they reach at least 18 inches in length, unless they are mortally hooked. We would appreciate it if this recommendation was practiced as it will allow these fish to become established and naturally reproduce in our lake.

I am including discussion on planting another 550 walleye fingerlings on the annual meeting agenda for the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Please contact Frank Sevcik, who has worked with the DNR on this project, if you catch any walleyes. This will help us to know if the walleyes are surviving and growing in our lake.

The DNR will be shocking our lake again this year to document and better understand our lake's fish population. Normally, this takes place in May, and the actual date is determined by weather conditions.

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## **Adopt A Road**

by  
Ray Schave

When all of the snow is melted and spring arrives, 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 spring and fall clean-ups.

George and Letty Rasmussen  
Sig and Mary Kaminski  
Rick and Pat Schwai  
Ray and Judy Schave

Ray and Diane Korinek  
Carl Schmelzer and Dottie Ford  
Donna Mandt

If anyone would like to participate this spring, 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.

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## **Proposed Fishing Tournament**

by  
Sig Kaminski

I'm proposing that we schedule a 3-hour fishing tournament for either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> of July. We will be discussing and voting on this at the May annual meeting.

We can have 19 boats enter without having to get a permit from the DNR. It would be a catch-and-release event for bass, northerns, and walleyes. Panfish could be kept. The time of the tournament would be from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Check in would be at Kaminski's house (Lot 1) from 6:15 a.m. to 6:45 a.m. Participants could drive to our house in their boat or car. Fish entries would need to be turned in by 10:30 a.m. at Kaminski's with lunch taking place from 11 a.m. to noon. Awards would be presented at 11:30 a.m. Brats, hamburgers, and hot dogs, along with soda, and chips would be supplied. Bring your own beer if that is your beverage of choice.

The cost would be \$5 for each child age 10 and under, and \$10 per adult. The deadline for registering would be June 21<sup>st</sup>. You could register by mailing me at N16496 Springstead Rd.; Park Falls, WI 54552; calling 715-762-1823; or emailing marynsig@gmail.com.

I would make a board for measuring the fish for each boat. Pictures must be taken of the fish (bass, northerns, and walleyes) on the board. Fish could then be released. Panfish could be either kept alive to register or measured on the board with a picture taken. After taking pictures, you may return them to the lake.

I welcome suggestions and input from the lake owners on this event. Email Sig at marynsig@gmail.com, or call 715-762-1823 or 715-661-3816 to talk to me about this event.

Let's have a great summer. I look forward to hearing from you. 100% of the entry fees will be put into the tournament.



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## Lake District Web Page

by  
Mark Luoma

Cochran Lake District maintains a website to keep our owners informed about what is happening on our beautiful lake. It can be viewed by going to **www.cochranlake.org**. Don Schmitz is our web master and can be contacted at Dons@surgery.wisc.edu.

The web page contains a number of items that may be of interest to our lake owners. One of them is an owners' directory that lists the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of lot owners. If you are new to our lake, please take the time to contact Don and provide him with this information. We encourage you to email Don whenever any of your contact information changes so that he can update our directory and keep it current.

Other features included in our web page are a brief history of our lake district, a listing of current district officers, a welcome message to new lake owners to provide them with pertinent information about Cochran Lake, agendas and minutes of meetings, past newsletters, information on past water quality tests, fish survey results, an algae committee report, a Cochran Lake map, information on burning restrictions and how to obtain a burning permit, a listing of our district's covenants and restrictions, and a photo gallery that includes pictures of our lake and its wildlife that have been taken by lake owners.

Another important communications tool that is available to lake owners is the Cochran Lake Discussion Group. Officers and lot owners are able to use this email group to keep everyone informed on upcoming events (such as the dates of quarterly meetings) and other special happenings. Please contact Don Schmitz and request that your email address be added to this group.



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## Lake Algae - Hope For the Better

by  
Rick Schwai

The last three years have seen a continuous blossoming of lake algae. In May 2014, a committee consisting of Cochran Lake residents was formed to study the causes of the algae and determine steps to prevent it in the future.

The committee contacted resources from the DNR in Rhinelander and Madison as well as the Trout Lake UW

Limnology station. It was determined that the lake algae was *Aphanothece Stagnina*, a type of blue green algae – known for growing in macroscopic colonies which have the potential to float en masse. Unfortunately, the water experts did not know what exactly caused this algae to form. They speculated that a combination of the drought in previous years followed by the subsequent rise of the lake to normal levels caused an excess of nutrients to be injected into the lake. This suspected increase of nutrients combined with the extremely warm temperatures of 2012 triggered the initial outbreak. In subsequent years of 2013 and 2014, they speculated that the extremely long winters prevented the normal growth of weeds in the lake and that the algae used the excess nutrients, normally used by the weeds, to spur its growth.

Their theory is supported by the continuous low phosphorus readings in the water samples taken in 2014. It does not appear that any particular building on the lake has caused the lake chemistry to change. Since there was limited development on the lake before 1994, the presence and outbreak of the blue green algae may have occurred previously without anyone knowing about it.

Aside from scooping it out or raking it out from beaches, no short-term solution exists to eliminate the algae. Currently only a “wait and see” short-term strategy seems to be viable. Long-term solutions should continue to focus on minimizing the impact of nutrients from lake residents. The algae poses the same perils as other types of blue green algae to dogs and swimmers. It should not be ingested, and it is recommended that you shower after swimming in it.

As I look out at the ice-covered lake this March, I am optimistic this year will see less algae. This year's snowfall has already melted on the lake ice thus allowing sun light to spur weed growth. Contrary to the last 2 years, the ice is expected to go out closer to normal ice-out dates. If this does occur and the algae growth theory is correct, the growing weeds should absorb the lake's nutrients before the algae can form.

A special mailer was sent to all residents in fall of 2014 with the findings of the committee. Also included was a set of steps that will support long-term quality of our lake water. They include:

- Pump Out Septic Tank Every 3 Years
- Eliminate Use of Fertilizers Near Lake
- Eliminate Use of Pesticides Near Lake
- Keep Shore Buffer Zone of 10 Feet
- Keep Soaps and Shampoos Out of Lake
- Keep Fireworks Out of Lake
- Use Phosphorous Free Detergents

Let's all keep these simple but effective steps in mind so we can all enjoy our lake now and in the future.

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## **2014 Water Monitoring**

by  
Sig Kaminski

It is March 8<sup>th</sup>, and the lake is still covered with snow and ice. It's been a cold winter up here. We started off the winter with a lot of snow in November and then went on to receive light snow falls for January and February; but what fell is still on the ground.

I was ice fishing last weekend. Fishing was slow; and it was windy and cold. I did catch a few and put them all back into the lake. The ice is nearly 28 inches deep with about 6 inches of snow on top of it. The water is very clear.

I should receive the kit for testing the water within the next week. The water sample will be taken two weeks after the ice goes out. In talking with Jim Kreitlow, water quality specialist with the DNR, regarding additional water testing, he wants to come out personally and take a surface sample as soon as any algae starts rising to the surface.

It is now March 17<sup>th</sup>: The snow is all melted except for the snow banks. The ice on the lake is still 16” thick.

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**Annual Meeting, Saturday, May 23, 2015  
Pike Lake Fire Hall, 8 a.m.**

**Your Lake District Officers**

by  
Mark Luoma

One of the items on this year’s annual meeting agenda will be the election of a president and a treasurer.

I have served as lake district president for the last four years. My term ended last May, but I volunteered to stay on for one more year. The person who is elected to this office will serve for the next two years. We are fortunate to have so many lake property owners who are always willing to volunteer for projects and to help out in many ways. That certainly helps to make the president’s job easier.

Judy Schave has served as the lake district treasurer for the last three years. The person elected to this position will serve for the next three years.

Please consider serving in one of these positions. We are very fortunate to have a lake management district. However, for this to continue, we must have a full slate of officers – President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Our lake management district provides us with opportunities to address lake and watershed management issues that help us to protect our property investments, recreational enjoyment, and quality of life experiences.

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**And Finally . . . .**

by  
Mark Luoma

At last year’s annual meeting, I volunteered to contact Terry Ides, who lives in Fifield, and ask him if he would be willing to talk to our lake owners about his experiences and early recollections of our lake.

When Terry was a teenager, he was a caretaker for the Olson brothers who owned the lodge that is currently owned by the Dorners. Terry has many interesting stories to tell of his years at the lake.

I invited Terry to attend the May 23 annual meeting. He is willing to talk with us; unfortunately, his son is getting married on that day so he asked if he could do this at a later meeting. The fall meeting is usually scheduled for the end of August or beginning of September, and this would work out for him. I'll email everyone through the Google group when the date for the fall meeting is set.

Also, I have been in contact with Loren Davis. Loren bought the old fireplace that was located next to the boat landing. He and his family spent many days camping at the lake when it was known as Lake Helen. Loren told me that he is going through old family albums and is scanning pictures that were taken when he was a youngster. He will burn them to a CD and send them to me. I hope that I will receive the photos in time to print them and have them on display at the annual meeting.

At last year's annual meeting, we discussed increasing the lake lot assessment from \$12 to \$25 to provide for adequate funds to cover any unexpected expenses the lake district may incur such as removing invasive species, dealing with a blue-green algae outbreak, paying for repairs to the landing and pier, or planned expenses such as walleye stocking. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to increase the assessment to \$25 per lot for the 2014 tax year with the stipulation that we would decide on the amount at each year's annual meeting. This item has been placed on the May 23 agenda. Owners of all the original 64 lots are paying this assessment. The Fifield town treasurer places this on each property owners' yearly tax statement.

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**Cochran Lake District  
Treasurer's Report**

April 1, 2015

by

Judy Schave

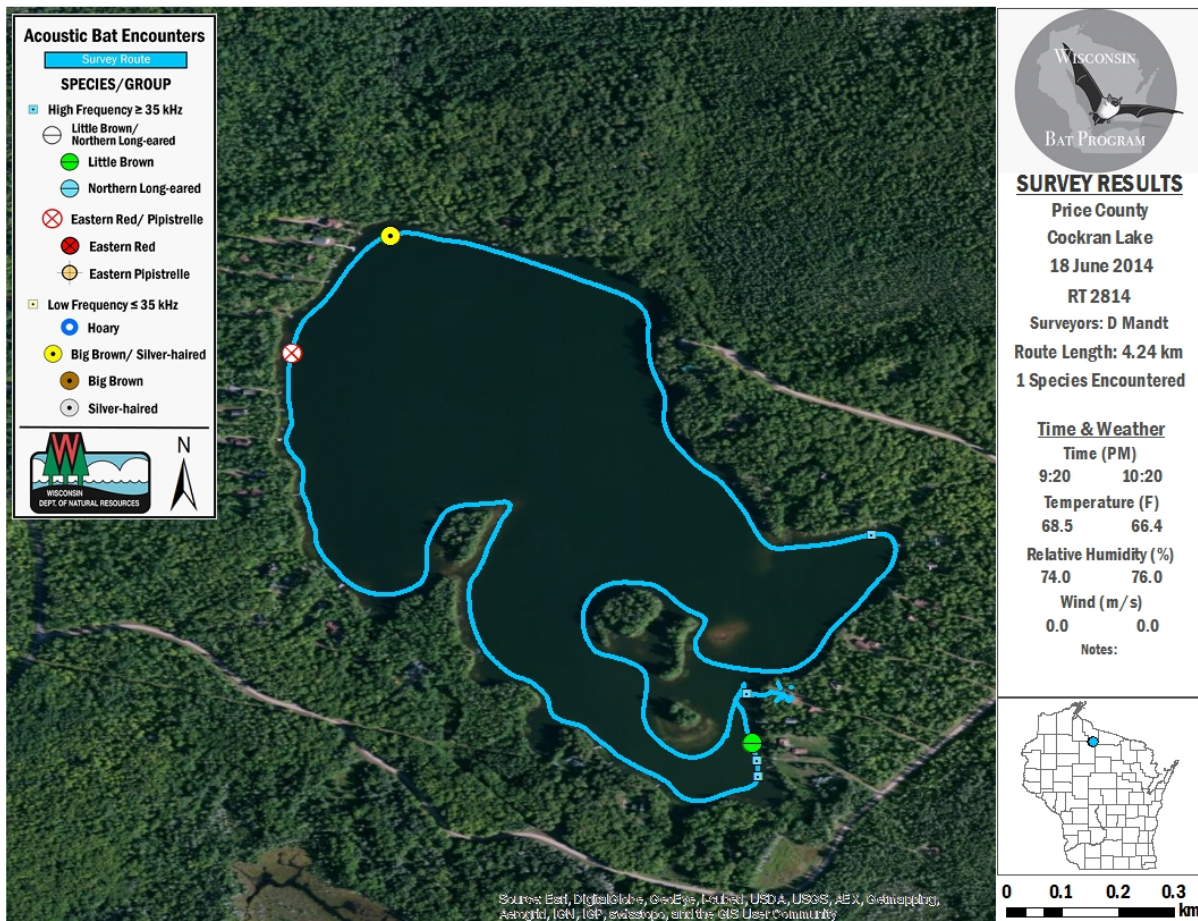
Checking Account Balance February 7, 2015	\$814.52
Savings Account Balance February 7, 2015	\$3,317.94
Petty Cash Balance February 7, 2015	\$1.20
Total Bank Balance February 7, 2015	<u>\$4,133.66</u>
Expenditures thru April 1, 2015	\$123.00
Proceeds thru April 1, 2015	\$1,502.04
Checking Account Balance April 1, 2015	\$2,191.52
Savings Account Balance April 1, 2015	\$3,319.98
Petty Cash Balance April 1, 2015	\$1.20
Total Bank Balance April 1, 2015	<u>\$5,512.70</u>

# Bat Monitoring

from  
Donna Mandt

The North Lakeland Discovery Center, as part of the WI DNR citizen-based acoustic bat monitoring project, uses volunteers to track the number and kinds of bats in the Northwoods. Last summer I took two readings around Cochran Lake. This entails using a handheld acoustic device with a GPS system that can detect and record the bats' echolocation sounds as we slowly go around the perimeter of the lake starting thirty minutes after sundown when the bats leave their day roosts to forage for insects.

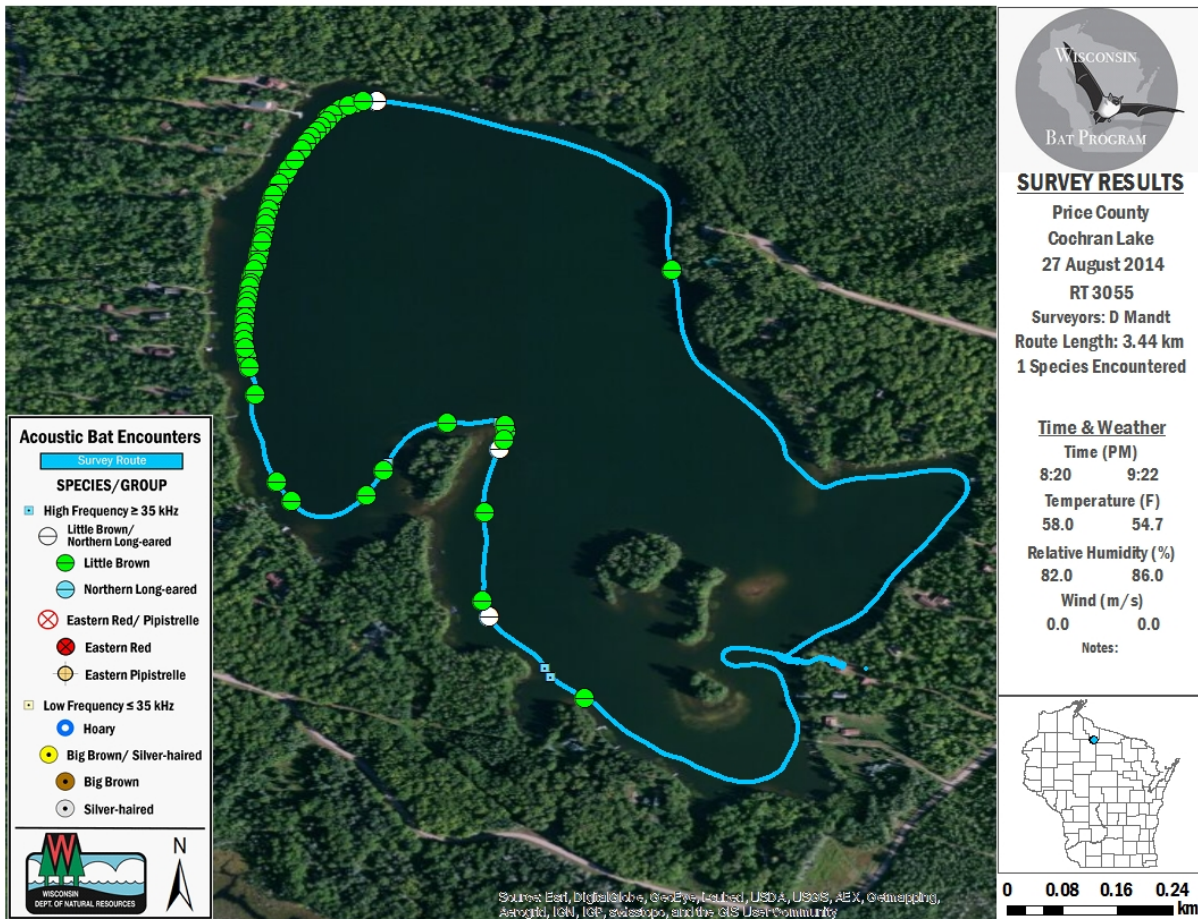
The first survey was done on June 18<sup>th</sup>. On this date, there weren't many bats: Big Brown/silver-haired (yellow dot) were found in the northwest corner of the lake, Eastern Red were found on the west side, and Little Browns with a few Silver-haired were located in the southeast part of the lake.



The next survey was done on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

As you can see, there was much more activity, Little Browns with a few spots of Little Brown/Northern Long-Eared bats were found on nearly all on the west/north west side of the lake!





As of June 1, 2011, cave bats (those hibernating in caves) were listed as a State Threatened species and are protected under the WI endangered species act. Bats not only eat mosquitoes, but other insects, helping to control insect-borne diseases. One NY Times article said that a colony of 150 big brown bats can protect crops from up to 33 million rootworms over a growing season. Bats also help in pollination.

The White-nose syndrome affects the cave hibernating bats by irritating them causing them to wake up when there is no food, so the bats burn up their store of energy and ultimately starve to death. Bats only have one baby, so when thousands are killed, their population doesn't get replaced very quickly.

If you have a bat problem or want more information, contact Licia Johnson at the Discovery Center: 715-543-2085.

## Cochran Lake District Meeting Minutes February 7, 2015 Pike Lake Fire Hall

**Present: Mark Luoma, President; Judy Schave, Treasurer; Sue Houkom, Secretary. In addition, 8**

people; in all representing a total of 10 lots.

**President Mark Luoma called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

### **Board Member Reports**

*Secretary's Report* – Sue Houkom

Motion to approve the December 6, 2014 minutes, Donna Mandt; second, Sig Kaminski; motion carried.

*Treasurer's Report* – Judy Schave

Total bank balance as of February 7, 2014 was \$4,133.66. Payments to the Postmaster and the Wisconsin Lakes Association will be made later this month, and revenues from the lot assessments will be deposited when received, which is usually around the middle of the month. Motion to approve, Frank Sevcik; second, Mary Kaminski; motion carried.

Each of the 64 lots on the lake is assessed the current \$25 fee even if two are combined.

### **Old Business -- None**

### **New Business**

*Fishing Contest Options For 2015:* Sig Kaminski will draw up plans for changes to the fishing contest and present them at the annual meeting in May.

*Suggestions for Newsletter Articles*

- Fish size limits, fish planted last year could be approaching legal size of 15"
- Fishing contest
- Algae
- Bats
- Lake history
- Loon Poster
- Request contact information for new owners

Articles are due to Mark Luoma by April 15.

*Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Conference* will be held from Thursday, April 23rd through Saturday, April 25th at Steven's Point. If anyone would like to represent the district, please contact Mark Luoma. Registration and one night's lodging would be covered by the lake district.

Some lake owners have not been receiving copies of the publication, *Lake Tides*. The suggestion was made to send a current directory with the Wisconsin Lakes dues. This should ensure that all owners, including those who are new, will receive the publication.

*Loon Poster:* Rick Schwai has created a 20"x14" poster with Mark Luoma's photos of the Cochran Lake loon chick covering the time from its earliest days on the lake until it flew away last fall. It will be available for purchase at the annual meeting in May for about \$15.

## Reports

*Algae Committee:* Rick Schwai -- Nothing to report.

*Fishery:* Frank Sevcik -- According to Skip Sommerfeldt of the DNR, Cochran Lake will be shocked this spring probably at end of May. It will be easier to recommend whether or not to stock more walleyes after the shocking has been done.

*Water Quality:* Sig Kaminski -- The normal surface test will be completed 2 weeks after ice out. Because of the presence of algae in the lake, Jim Kreitlow of the DNR suggests that we also utilize a deep-water test that yields 2 samples, including an additional phosphorus test and an algae test. Sig will call Jim in March to see when that test should be taken.

*Fishing Contest:* Sig Kaminski -- To be discussed at the annual meeting

*Adopt A Highway:* Ray Schave -- Will be scheduled when the snow is gone. Usually it is done in April. Watch for an email announcement.

*Boat Landing* Brian Mandt -- Plans are to water proof the dock at the boat landing this summer.

**Adjournment** -- *Motion to adjourn at 9:32, Donna Mandt; second, Sig Kaminski; motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Houkom, Secretary

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## Cochran Lake District Annual Meeting Agenda

May 23, 2014

8 a.m.

Pike Lake Fire Hall

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report – Sue Houkom  
February 7, 2015 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

Algae Committee – Rick Schwai

District Website – Don Schmitz

Additional Reports

2014 Kids' Fishing Contest – Sig Kaminski

Lake History – Donna Janes  
Loren Davis's Pictures

Other

Old Business

New Business

2015 Lot Assessment

2014-15 Budget

Fish Stocking Permit Application

Fishing Tournament

2015 Kids' Fishing Contest

Election of Lake District President

Election of Lake District Treasurer

Adjournment