

Windigo Lake Area Newsletter Fall/Winter 2015

(For property owners and friends of Windigo Lake, Lake 27, and Hub Lake)



Windigo, an Island Lake with Natural Shoreline

Desk of the President

Dick Steininger

As I reflect on 2015 and another year at Windigo, I continue to be thankful for times with family and friends and the beauty and nature of our lakes area. I am thankful for all of our engaged property owners who support the health of our lake and are open to learning about how we can best take care of our lakes. Each year seems to bring new learning about our lake environment and the wildlife there.

While at the annual meeting/picnic this past August, Dennis Arthur and Marylyn Konkler gave a report on the loon situation on Windigo. Dennis's report is included in an article in this newsletter.

As many of you know Windigo has been part of my life for a long time. In the past, we seemed to have about three loon nesting sites with one to three chicks per site. In the last few years I haven't seen any chicks that have survived except on Lake 27. I have been told that the eagles take some of the chicks which is possible.

After listening to Dennis, I think it was news to many of us that the most frequent cause of loon death is lake boating activity. The wave action from power boats and personal water craft (PWC) can flood the nest. Also, young loons can't dive and can't get away. Most of the heavy boating activity that I observe is on Friday nights, Saturday and early Sunday. I have also observed rules infractions such as skiing without a spotter and skiing and power boating too close to shore and other boats. Many times I recognize the faces of Windigo home owners in their ski boats or on a PWC as they go by me out on the lake or at my dock. If I can see a face, then the boater is too close.

I realize that Windigo is not the best lake for power boating activities due to all of the bays and islands, but rules are there for a reason and we do have a map at the boat landing showing the areas where power boating activities should be done. I receive about two or three emails per year plus verbal complaints about boating problems. I have had some members urge me to explore making Windigo a no-wake lake. I think it is important for us all to be able to enjoy our lake in our various ways, but full enjoyment for all is best done if we respect our lake rules and neighbors and work diligently to protect our wildlife.

In closing, please look around the lake and what do you see? Pontoon boats, kayaks and fishing boats, rubber rafts, and occasional high-speed boat use. This will give you an idea what most of your neighbors think Windigo is about. Thanks to everyone for listening and learning and for helping all enjoy our beautiful lakes and preserve our wildlife.

I wish you and your families a happy holiday season and New Year!

Regards,

Dick, December 2015



Hold the date for the Spring Dinner: Saturday April 30, 2016

Barb Pjevach

For the past couple of years, we have held the Spring Dinner on the weekend before the fishing opener so that we could more easily hold the dinner at a local restaurant. (Many restaurants are reluctant to reserve a room for our dinner on the weekend of opening fishing). Turn-out since we changed the date has increased every year. Last year we had over 45 attendees and reviews from attendees were good, so we staying with the same timing and venue this coming Spring. We are still working on the speaker and program, but please mark your calendar and consider joining us at the Ranch on the evening of April 30!



Loon Nesting and Health on our Lakes

Barb Pjevach with input from Marilyn Konkler and Dennis Arthur

We had a very informative discussion at our annual meeting discussing loons on Windigo area lakes and we agreed to write this article to provide the information we learned to all property owners.

We used to have 3-4 different nesting sites on Windigo. As the years have passed, the last two summers, there has been a nest on Lake 27 and there have only been a couple of nesting sites on Windigo; one this past summer on Portage Bay and one a few years ago on North Island. Regarding the nest on North Island a few years ago, one day the nest and nesting loon were gone with no evidence of what happened.



This past summer, we had two nests and 2 baby loons on our lakes. The baby loon from the nesting site on Portage Bay hung around on the west side of Windigo. The chick was born in late June. There was a lot of activity of lhigh-speed boats on the lake on Fourth of July Weekend and also the weekend of July 19. By mid-late July, the baby loon on Windigo was not seen. On Lake 27 the chick was born in early June. It survived the summer.

Historically there has been much discussion that perhaps eagles or snapping turtles are a threat to baby loons on our lakes, but the research actually shows more prevalent causes.

Northland College (A liberal arts college in Ashland with a focus on the environment and sustainability) has research on this topic. Dennis Arthur provided information to our members from their research. Here is some key information:

- In first few weeks, the loon can't dive. As a result, they have little means to escape from threats.
- Here are the causes of Loon mortality:
 - 50-80% of Loon chick mortality is due to watercraft.
 - 10% of mortality is intruding adult loons.
 - 5% mortality is due to infection and disease.
 - 5% mortality is due to snapping turtles and eagles
- Nesting failures come from canoes and kayaks that get too close. If the loon is looking at you, then you are too close. If they flap their wings, that is a challenge....don't come close.

Also note that with respect to intruding loons, the new loon to the lake will yodel. If the yodel is lower, then Loon passes by. If the responding Loon yodel is higher, then the Loon will challenge. As we have learned in past years, if a challenging Loon wins the challenge, they often will kill an existing baby of the defeated Loon.

Loons do like to nest back where they came from. But note that it takes a baby loon 3 years to mature to come back to its original lake. It is one thing to lose a baby and another to not have a nest. There are not very many territorial loons (nesting) on the lake even though we have floaters (passing by loons who are on the lake for a short time). So, until our lake can sustain more nests and baby loons, it is likely that we will not have as many loons on our lakes as we once had.

We hope this information is helpful and at our annual meeting, many of us were very surprised to learn that watercraft are the most prevalent cause of Loon death.

Please be kind to our loons and your neighbors and stay far away from nesting loons and loons with babies. If we are lucky enough to have another nest on Windigo this next summer, please look for them when boating and there are enough places to enjoy the lake with our boats without needing to use high speed near our loons.

Please keep in mind that even if you are in a kayak or canoe, if you are near a nest or a loon family, please also keep your distance and pay close attention to signs of distress in the actions of the parent loon.

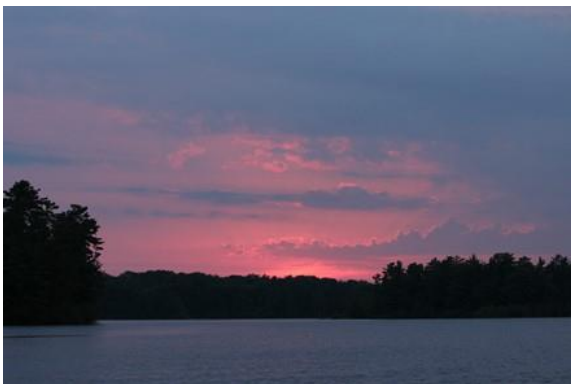


Thanks to Marilyn Konkler, Dennis Arthur, and Colleen Graham who track, monitor, and report loon activity on our lakes.

Shoreline Legislation Update

Barb Pjevach

As many of you are aware, there has been quite a bit of news and special interest group activity around the health of lakes as a result of a Wisconsin Bill being passed that prohibited counties have regulations which are stricter than state-level regulations with respect to shoreline development. As a result, for example, the Sawyer County regulations that had been put in place with respect to zoning, shoreland restrictions, and buildings, are no longer protecting the health of our lakes.



The Wisconsin Legislature closed its fall 2015 session in early November. No action was taken on proposed legislation dealing with groundwater management nor did they reverse the weakening of shoreland zoning law passed as part of the state budget (“the Act 55 changes”). If you would like to read more details, please visit “Wisconsin Lakes” website: <http://wisconsinlakes.org/>. Wisconsin Lakes, formerly known as the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, is the only statewide non-profit organization working to protect and enhance the quality of Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes. They are the citizen arm of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership.

Also, there is a group formed called the Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative (<http://wisconsinshoreland.org/>) which is working on lobbying for a bill to improve the protection of shoreland. They initially were lobbying for a repeal of Act 55, but now have worked with legislators to create a bill that will mitigate some of the damage of Act 55 without a complete repeal. If you would like to review the latest bill and are inclined to support it with your legislator, here is a link to the most recent copy of the bill:

https://wisconsinshorelanddotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/shorelandzoningdraft_p5.pdf .

If you would like to contact state representatives, Windigo area lakes are in Wisconsin District 87.

Our representatives are:

- Senator Jerry Petrowski (Senate District 29) 608-266-2502
- Representative James Edming (Assembly District 87) 608-266-7506 or 888-534-0087

Our neighboring district just north of Hayward has the following state representatives:

- Senator Janet Bewley (Senate District 25) 608-266-3510 or 800-469-6562
- Representative Beth Meyers (Assembly District 74) 608-266-7690 or 888-534-0074



If you want to contact legislators by email or mail, here is information for how to contact them:

E-mail. The e-mail addresses of members of the Wisconsin Legislature all have the same format.

- For members of the Assembly, the format is Rep.Jones@legis.wisconsin.gov.
- For members of the Senate, the format is Sen.Adams@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Mail. You can reach your legislator by mail at one of the following addresses:

- Representatives whose last names begin with a letter from A to L:
P.O. Box 8952, Madison, 53708-8952
- Representatives whose last names begin with a letter from M to Z:
P.O. Box 8953, Madison, 53708-8952
- All Senators:
P.O. Box 7882, Madison, 53707-7882

Membership Report

Dave and Donna Roeker

As we close out 2015, we have 78 members with representation from Windigo, Hub and Lake 27.

Dues Reminders for next year will be sent out in February. WLPOA serves property owners on Windigo Lake, Hub Lake, and Lake 27 by promoting communication and cooperation among lakeshore owners and by working with the DNR and local government to maintain lake quality and protect our lake from invasive aquatic weeds. WLPOA, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization so your membership donation is tax-deductible as provided by law. Thank you to everyone who supports our lake association. Your support is critical and it is very much appreciated.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) Updates

Barb Pjevach

Thanks to everyone for your continued interest and vigilance in looking for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)! As a reminder, there are 2 major AIS that are prevalent in other area lakes and which we are working to keep out of Windigo: Curly Leaf Pond Weed and Eurasian Water-Milfoil.

If you want to see details and pictures for monitoring AIS, please visit the AIS page on our website:

<http://www.windigolake.org/aquatic-invasive-species-prevention/>.

Another season of Boat Landing Monitoring is done. We were lucky to have our monitor Dennis work with us for the whole season. I am sure many of you met him at some point during the year. Monitoring started on May

1st and ended on September 7th. Over the 130 day period, Dennis was there for 57 of them. He put in 308 hours and checked on 217 boats. The principle purpose of the monitor is to educate the boating public because as we all know, it is impossible to monitor the landing 24 hours a day.

Special thanks to Colleen Graham who continues leading our efforts to stay on top of regional information and helping us with AIS prevention activities, our boat landing monitoring and grant communications!

Treasurer's Report

Gary Hartmann

I accepted the Treasurer's position at our August 1st Business Meeting to fill the vacancy created when Maryalice McHugh moved to Colorado.

WLPOA's income during 2015 is summarized below:

- We have received \$2,005 in dues from members and "Friends of Windigo"
- Donations to the Invasive Species Fund totaled \$630 and donations to the Fish Management Fund totaled \$225.
- Tickets to the Spring Dinner brought in \$1,068. Meal expenses and the speaker's honorarium were \$1,151 resulting in a loss of \$83.



WLPOA's annual operating expenses totaled \$ 1,157 for this year. This amount includes our membership mailings, printing and mailing of Newsletters, picnic expenses, our liability insurance, PO Box rental, annual corporate fees, and memberships in the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and the Sawyer County Lakes Forum.

DNR Grant to Monitor Windigo

Our Boat Landing Monitor is paid using a Wisconsin DNR Grant. These grants are 75% funded by the DNR with a 25% match provided by WLPOA. Our match can be satisfied with cash or by supplying "in-kind" donations (volunteer labor or boat use).

We spent \$ 3,090 this year on monitoring of the boat landing. We had received an advance of \$ 750 so our DNR Grant account currently has a negative balance of \$ 2,340. Our "in-kind" donations have been tallied up and it appears that we have met our matching goal. Thanks to everyone who reported their hours!

We have been approved for an additional grant for 2016 of \$3000 for our work monitoring our landing and other Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) activities. Our total estimated project cost is \$4000 including volunteer monitoring hours.

As of December 1, 2015, WLPOA has the following account balances:

Account Balances (12-01-2015)	Amount
General Fund (Checking)	\$5,384
Dedicated Fish Management Reserve (Savings Acct)	\$1,028
Dedicated Invasive Species Reserve (Savings Acct)	\$7,575
DNR Grant for 2015	(\$2,340)
Total on deposit	\$11,647

Fishing and Wildlife Committee

Dan Pjevach

I was unable to find a time to schedule our fall lunch with the DNR this year as our contact was expecting a baby at any time and could not commit to an appointment. However, he did state that the DNR would definitely be able to help us with the “fish tree drop” program the committee is considering for next year. The committee has determined that this program is a lot better than deploying fish cribs so we are taking the next step in determining if a Fish Tree Drop is a viable project for our lake. If you want to read more about the benefits of trees in the water, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/fishsticks.html>

At a minimum, we will be identifying trees on the state owned islands that could be included in our permit. We have the ability to include trees from private property owners as well. This could be an opportunity to try and influence nature by trying to direct that leaning tree on your property to the best final resting spot on your shoreline. Trees in overcrowded sections of your property would also be a good candidate for dropping. Avoid conifers/pines, they make the water more acidic around them and fish don't like them as much. In addition, this may sound somewhat counter-intuitive, but avoid trees that are already dead (sick is another matter, those can be good). Dead trees provide good wildlife habitat in their cavities and very often break apart when felled onto the ice anyway. No matter what you decide, we just want to make sure that property owners know that trees in the water are good for the lake and its inhabitants.



If you are interested in getting more information on our tree drop project, please e-mail or call me directly. My contact information is on the back page.

Another item of interest is that the DNR updated the fish eating guidance, ***Choose Wisely-2015: A Health Guide for Eating Fish in Wisconsin***. It is now available online through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website: (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/documents/consumption/ChooseWisely2015Web.pdf>). Windigo Walleye over 15” are still on the advisory but Northern Pike over 19” were added to the list this year. Make sure you consult this publication if you plan on eating fish caught in Windigo.

In an effort to better understand how Windigo is being used by the boating community, we started asking if the boat being launched was for a resident or non-resident and if the principle purpose of the launch was fishing or recreation. Although data was only collected for a portion of the season, it looks like about 80% of our launches are for fishing. We hope to collect data for the whole monitoring period in 2016 to see if this percentage applies to the whole season.

On a final note, the DNR shared the results of the Walleye Recruitment Survey they did on Windigo on September 29th. For this survey, the DNR used a boom shocker to survey about 2.9 miles of the eastern and northern shoreline. The results were definitely encouraging when compared to the last three years of surveys. Per Max Wolter, Fisheries Biologist at the DNR, “Windigo actually produced a really solid yearclass of walleye in 2015”. Compared to the surveys done on other area lakes, the number of Walleye less than one year old found in Windigo “was higher than other powerhouse producers like LCO, the Chippewa Flowage, and Round Lake”. Let’s hope these babies grow into some nice sized fish in the future.

Annual Picnic and Membership Meeting Recap

Barb Pjevach

We held our annual WLPOA meeting and picnic on Saturday August 1. Thanks to the Pydo Family for again hosting us at their property. Thanks to Sandy Bender and other volunteers for helping with all of the arrangements and food. Thanks to all members and guests who came and brought a dish to share!

Barb Pjevach read the minutes from the previous Annual Meeting and Gary Hartmann made the Treasurer's report and the Membership report.

The WLPOA officers were presented by Dan Pjevach and were approved by membership vote.

- President: Dick Steininger
- Vice President: Patrick Steininger
- Treasurer: Gary Hartmann
- Secretary & Communications: Barb Pjevach
- Committee Leaders are:
 - Membership Chairs: Dave and Donna Roeker
 - Safety/Environmental: Colleen Graham
 - Fish and Wildlife: Dan Pjevach
 - Social: Sandy Bender



Dick thanked people for helping with committees. John Adams asked what our lake turnover is and how we contact them. Gary indicated that he finds out some of the turnover when mailings are returned. It was noted that Bob Bauer died. Also, Todd Blumfield and Kate are up here every weekend. John will give his neighbors information to us. Dick guessed at 4-5 properties turn over each year.



Lake Environment: Colleen Graham reported that we applied for the Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) grant and received it again. This is the 4th year of monitoring at the Windigo landing. The committee members are in contact with Pat Brown who took Kristi Maki's job to get a survey on the calendar. There was a big change with the shoreline regulations at the state level that weakened the protection of quality shoreline that was previously legislated at the county level. Wisconsin counties can no longer be more restrictive than the state level. There has been a rush for building permits that would not have been approved before.

Loon Report: Marilyn Konkler gave the loon report and Dennis Arthur reported on research about loons and causes of loon mortality. See the separate article in this [newsletter which contains the information from their reports.](#)

Fish and Wildlife: Dan Pjevach reported that Windigo is one of the test lakes that was approved for the new DNR program to test new Panfish regulations. The new limit will be 15 panfish, no more than 5 of any species. The DNR is in a state of flux. The governor has thrown a lot out there and there were retirements. Dan also noted that there is not a lot of push for lake surveys. They are trying to do what they can with limited resources. With respect to the walleye population in Windigo, at first, the DNR thought that the large-mouth bass were eating walleye fry. According to Cindy Lawson's report from her attendance at the NW lakes conference, she learned that bass are not likely the cause of decreasing numbers of walleye; It may be due to the warming up of the lakes. We did get a spearing report. It was the 7th year. This last year, they only harvested 66 walleye. The

committee is next working on which trees to drop for the “fish sticks” program. John Adams asked if it mattered what kind of tree. Dan said that some people don’t want to drop trees because fisherman will hang there. But if we drop enough, the fallen trees will be in so many places that there will not just be those few hot spots. There are grants available for dropping trees so we could apply for those. They do want the dropped trees to be staked. Dan also reported that Colleen Graham had asked Dennis our Boat Monitor to track lake use at the boat landing. Recreation is increasing as the summer goes on.

Social: Dick thanked Sandy Bender for her efforts for this meeting and the Spring Dinner.

New Business: It was noted that some residents are not heeding the no-wake zone signs in Portage Bay. Theoretically because the Bay is under 46 acres, if it were a standalone lake, it would be entirely no-wake. It is also only about 300 feet in the long narrow section and is very shallow in the wider section so slower speeds are wise for the entirety of the bay. We also discussed that the DNR regulations for ANY lake are that boats need to have no wake 100 feet from shore and for personal watercraft the no-wake law specifies that they need to be 200 feet from shore before a wake is allowed. PWC also need to slow to no-wake when within 100 feet of another boat. Here is a link to the DNR site: <http://dnr.wi.gov/news/weekly/article/?id=1417> . Please be kind to your neighbors and the health of our lakes by boating at no-wake speeds in Portage Bay.

New Neighbors?

We need your help! We try to keep abreast of property ownership changes, but the best way to keep aware of new neighbors on our lakes is for current members to tell us! If you have a new neighbor, can you please pass on the newsletter and website information or even just drop any one of the officers or note or email us at info@windigolake.org. Thanks for your help in helping us welcome and reach out to our new neighbors!

Passings

We lost three long-time Windigo Lakes friends/residents this year:

- Wally Partlow (12/12/2015) ([CLICK](#) to go to Obituary)
- Don Morris (4/22/2015)([CLICK](#) to go to Obituary
- Jim Lantz (3/12/2015) [CLICK](#) to go to the Obituary.

In 2014, we also lost Robert Bauer and did not previously acknowledge his passing. [CLICK](#) to go to the Obituary.

Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Website and Communications Reminders

Barb Pjevach

As a reminder, please check out www.windigolake.org periodically for updates. We have our old newsletters on the site as well as instructions, pictures and information about looking for invasive species, fish surveys, and other topics about our lakes area.

If you want to keep in touch, we would appreciate emails from as many lake owners as possible so if you have not already given us your email please consider supplying it, even if you also want a paper newsletter in March and November.

Subscribe to Blog via Email
Enter your email address to subscribe to the WindigoLake.com posts and news and receive notifications of new posts by email.

In addition, you can subscribe to any new posts that we make to our website...which we do about 6 times a year. On our home page, just scroll down and you will see the area to subscribe on the right hand side of the web page.

Windigo Lake Property Owners Association

P.O. Box 13071, Hayward, WI 54843

Email: info@windigolake.org

Website: www.windigolake.org (or www.windigolake.com)

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