

Windigo Lake Area Newsletter Summer 2014

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



Windigo, an Island Lake with Natural Shoreline

President's Note

Colleen Graham

It's a beautiful day on Windigo Lake and even though I can't see a single boat on the water, I know that boating season is in full swing. I stopped by the landing on Highline Road May 23 and saw five trailers in the parking lot. Our new landing monitor, Tony Price, had his hands full.

You are probably aware that some lakes in the area are "quiet lakes" with a maximum 10 mph speed limit and no jet skis or waterskiing permitted. Other lakes have worked with local government entities to enact regulations restricting, e.g., the hours that certain boating activities can take place. An informal survey of the Windigo shoreline might lead one to believe that kayaking is the primary form of boating on our lake; but, come July, "fast" traffic, and the potential conflicts it brings, will surely be in play. Rather than pursuing new restrictions, the WLPOA board prefers that Windigo remain open to the full range of recreational boating activity. It's up to boaters to know and follow the regulations; it's up to everyone to report violations promptly so that bad behavior is discouraged. Towards that end, this e-newsletter is devoted to the topic of boating safety and courtesy. [We'd love to hear any feedback you might have on this topic.](#)

Our boat landing will be staffed by two monitors as part of the "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" program this summer: Luke Wilson is returning for another summer and Tony Price is a new hire. The two will be splitting shifts Friday through Sunday with additional hours staffed over holiday periods. We will conduct a survey for invasives in early August, but at this point, Windigo is still considered to be AIS-free, and Luke & Tony will help keep it that way. Stop by the landing and welcome them if you have a chance.

I hope to see you all at the annual business meeting and potluck picnic on August 2.

Regards,
Colleen, June 2014



Come to the Annual Picnic and Business Meeting, Saturday August 2, 2013!

Barb Pjevach

We will be holding our Annual Picnic and Business Meeting at Pydo's garage again this summer. The business meeting will be held at 4pm with the picnic to follow at approximately 5pm. Bratwurst, water and lemonade will be provided. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to pass along with your choice of beverage. Join us to catch up with your neighbors and fellow supporters of Lakes Windigo, Hub, and Lake 27. Pydo's garage is on Thunderpoint Road just past the isthmus between Windigo and Lake 27. If you would like to RSVP, please email us at info@windigolake.org, but all are welcome, even last minute attendees, so even if you do not send an RSVP, just come!

Nominations for WLPOA positions are OPEN! Please consider joining us.

Barb Pjevach

As many of you know, every year we solicit nominations for Board positions from our members and then vote on these nominations at the Annual Meeting in August. Please consider throwing in your name or asking us any questions you may have if you are potentially willing to help out on the Board or a committee. If each of us helps out, then we can rotate positions and make it enjoyable and not too much work for any of us. We only hold 2 or 3 Board meetings per year and handle the minimal WLPOA work via email. If you are interested in serving or have questions, please contact any WLPOA Board member. Note that currently a couple of us share roles and we will happily split our roles back out if someone is interested in one of the individual roles noted on our website. Our contact information is at the end of this newsletter. Also, we have added a listing of the Board positions and the responsibilities for each on our website. Check out the page at: www.windigolake.org/about-windigo-lake/wlpoa-volunteer-and-board-opportunities/

Boating Safety: Be Careful. Be Courteous.

Windigo is generally a quiet lake with law-abiding boaters. Every so often, however, bad decisions lead to conflict. By far, the biggest complaint we hear about boaters is that boats and jet-skis (PWCs) pass too close (and too fast) to other boats, docks, the shoreline, and loons. Not only is this discourteous, but it might be illegal. But how close is too close? Find the answer to this and all your boating questions in the on-line copy of Wisconsin's Boating Laws and Responsibilities. It covers watercraft licensing and required equipment, as well as lawful operation on the water. Page 15 addresses improper speed and distance generally; pages 22 & 23 cover distance and speed issues specifically related to water skiers and PWCs.



And, how fast is too fast? Windigo has several designated no wake zones with special speed requirements. However, the laws also call for "slow, no-wake speeds" within 100 feet of shoreline. That's right – if you are boating within 100 feet anywhere along the shore of the lake, you are in a no wake zone.

The law defines "slow, no wake speed" as a speed at which a vessel moves as slowly as possible while still maintaining steerage control.

Note that the requirement for PWCs is to maintain no wake speed 200 feet from shoreline.

Other than the obvious safety benefits, treating the shoreline as a no wake zone helps prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

While everyone is responsible for knowing and obeying the laws, why not go one step beyond and think about courtesy, as well. Your neighbors will thank you!

Reporting Boating Violations

DNR wardens don't regularly cruise Windigo Lake looking for boating violations. Let's face it – all our public entities are strapped for resources and they need to target the resources where the need is greatest. So, if you're watching someone water-ski without a spotter or see a pontoon boat chasing down a loon – unless you report the violation, you're not likely to see any action taken by the authorities.

And, since the authorities will probably not arrive till after the fact, you'll want to provide as much information in your report as possible. Good examples include the boat registration number, or, if the boat is just on the lake for the day, a license number from the vehicle at the boat landing. If you believe the boater lives on Windigo, observe the general area from where the boat comes and goes. Physical descriptions of the boat and motor (color, make, and horsepower) are also helpful. If it's a recurring issue, note the time of day and time of week (e.g., midweek, weekends) the problem usually occurs. Virtually everyone with a cell phone has access to a camera or video camera and those tools can greatly assist identification of the parties, or even record the actual violation.



Once the authorities are aware of the issue, they like to observe violations themselves so will either try to respond while the issue is occurring or will conduct a patrol in areas where complaints have been received to address those issues, either through education or enforcement. With enough information, they can locate the offender, possibly observe the behavior, and talk with them. This obviously works better when the complaint is fresh, meaning that the issue was reported as it occurred, rather than much later. If the complaint is not fresh, the issue will be addressed by patrols, as time permits.

At-A-Glance: How to report emergencies & violations

In an emergency, call 911 immediately (e.g., an overturned boat or some other direct and imminent threat to the safety of others on the water.

To report a non-emergency boating violation, call the Sawyer County Sheriff's office at 715-634-5213. From there, the complaint will be assigned either to Sheriff's Deputy Craig DePew or DNR Warden Rick Peters. If neither is available, it may be assigned to a road deputy.

Alternative ways to report non-emergency violations, including fish & game violations:

- DNR 24-hour hotline 1-800-847-9367 (1-800-TIP-WDNR)
- DNR email hotline LE.hotline@wisconsin.gov
- DNR text hotline 847411

Spring Dinner Recap

Barb Pjevach

The annual WLPOA Spring dinner was held at the Ranch on Saturday April 26, 2014. Approximately 30 people attended. Here are notes from the dinner discussion.

Colleen Graham, WLPOA President introduced the speaker, Dave Neuswanger. Dave is our regional fish management supervisor for the DNR. He worked in Missouri prior to coming to Wisconsin. Max Wolter has been the Fisheries Biologist assigned to our lake for the past year and a half. He reports to Dave and has worked closely with the WLPOA Fishing Committee. Prior to Max joining the DNR, Windigo had been scheduled for two different fish surveys in 2012. The DNR wanted to evaluate Walleye, Northern, Bass, Perch and Bluegill in Windigo using a fyke net survey in early spring and an electro-shocking survey in late spring. He noted that for the electro-shock survey, they actually stun the fish with electricity. This is safe for the fish if done correctly. Dave actually went into the field and assisted with the two surveys conducted on Windigo in 2012. He shared the results of these surveys with our group.

They were a little concerned with what they found. First, they found that the number and size of the Walleye population was down. They also found a large and healthy population of Large-Mouth Bass (LMB). They also noted a large but severely undersized population of Northern Pike. Finally they noted that the Perch population was extremely limited in that there were no larger Perch found in their surveys.



Since a lake is really a mostly self-contained eco-system, the results of the surveys for each fish species have to be analyzed together. The DNR's conclusion regarding the Windigo walleye population is that the decrease in size and amount is due to two factors, the loss of walleye fry as food to other species and a decrease in the favored food source of perch.

The decrease in Walleye fry could be attributable to the increase in Large-mouth Bass. Large-mouth Bass are eating machines. It was Dave's opinion that when combined with Windigo's clear water, these fish were eating a lot of the juvenile Walleye as well as other panfish. He thought that the change in the 2014 Fishing Regulations may help by opening up the LMB a month earlier than in the past, but he said that until LMB are actually fished for food, the problem would continue on Windigo. He noted that Small-mouth Bass were actually a different species than the large-mouth variety. They eat mostly crayfish and were not a threat to the walleye population. Walleye of all sizes were also a food for the Northern Pike in the lake.

The decrease in the perch population and subsequently the Walleye population could be explained by the large Northern Pike population in the lake. Northerns prefer eating fish that are shaped long and narrow like perch and walleye (as compared to the shape of a bluegill or crappie). The large number of Northerns in the lake could be responsible for both the decrease in number of Walleye available in the lake as the fish are eaten and for the decrease in the size of the Walleye as they consumed the Walleye's favorite food. The DNR supports this conclusion with the additional testing of 38 Northerns that they kept from the 2012 survey. These fish were dissected to determine their actual age and the results were categorized by size. What they found was the Northern Pike in Windigo are old but small. The results of the tests found the following:

A 6 year old Northern on Windigo averages 21". The average in northern Wisconsin is 25".

An 8 year old Northern on Windigo averages 22". The average in northern Wisconsin is 30".

A 10 year old Northern on Windigo averages 24". The average in northern Wisconsin is 33".

The DNR also analyzed what food the 38 Northerns had been consuming before they were caught. The principle

diet was found to be Perch. This could explain the fact that they only caught 3 perch per net when they did the 2012 survey. Walleye need Perch and Perch fry to grow. Thus, to fuel a healthy Walleye population, the lake needs more perch and fewer Northern and Large-mouth Bass. The DNR's opinion is that the Northern population needs to be culled.

Unfortunately, Dave did not recommend eating Northern from Windigo because the fish are old and they have had a long time to accumulate mercury. Also, they do not recommend eating Walleye longer than 19 inches for the same reason. He then explained how mercury builds up in the fish. Their verbal information at the DNR is that there may have been an old tannery on the shore of Windigo a century or more ago that resulted in the elevated levels of mercury found in our fish.

Dave then opened up the discussion for Questions.

Question: What is the situation with Crappies?

Answer: Dave asked what the group thought about the current status of Crappie fishing on the lake because fyke nets and electro fishing are not as effective for Crappie assessment in clear water lakes. However, even with the potential limitations of the surveys, the results have shown that the Crappies seem to be diminishing and they seem to have decreased in size. The samples they saw have gone from 16 inches to 12 inches. The question was asked if the Northern were eating them. Dave responded that normally Northern do not control Crappies. They have a strong preference for long slender prey like suckers or perch. He also noted that Large-mouth Bass in a smaller lake are capable of eating juvenile crappies.

Dave also noted that early catch and release no longer pertains to Large-mouth Bass...they can be fished with the fishing opener. Small-mouth Bass are different...they consume crayfish etc. They are still protected from harvest until late June. He also noted that for better Walleye and pan fishing, there needs to be increased Large-mouth Bass and Northern fishing. When he started at the DNR, there were no Fishery Management Plans for any of the lakes in his area. For the last 10 years, they have been working on getting them in place for lakes in our area. A Plan starts by determining what the stakeholders of a lake (both the public and private owners) want. The process is long but when completed, it allows the DNR to manage the fishery to that plan. The DNR began this process on the largest lakes in the area and is now moving to smaller lakes. Unfortunately, there are a number of lakes that will be started before Windigo.



Question: How is Mercury acquired by fish in the lake?

Answer: Through the food chain. It is available to take-in through microscopic plants. As the plants and organisms are eaten, the Mercury accumulates in the predator. Unfortunately, Mercury gets deposited right in the muscle of the fish. It cannot be washed off or cut out.

Question: What is the effect on groundwater and wells?

Answer: Dave is not sure but not likely much. It gets immediately picked up by organisms.

Question: Why has the DNR discussed that adding Muskies may benefit the Windigo fishery?

Answer: When they pulled slender northern pikes, they were surprised by the Windigo results. This is very unusual. The idea was borne then. Northern are growing slowly and not many people will eat them. Muskies are a primary predator of Northern Pike...they eat other long and narrow fish...they will eat other similar fish up to half their length. Nobody eats Muskie so the mercury accumulation will not be an issue. It is one of several tactics. It is a mesotrophic lake...not sterile unproductive lake...which makes it good for balance of activities.

Question: What is the relationship between Large-mouth Bass and Muskies?

Answer: Large-mouth Bass eat juvenile Muskies. In lakes that are dominated by Large-mouth Bass there is not an

increase in Muskies. Bass feed on Muskie fry. In the future if we do nothing he expects that we will see more Large-mouth Bass and the larger Walleyes will age. Between the Northern and the large-mouth Bass....they will dominate the fishery. The perch, crappies and bluegills will stay at the levels we are currently seeing.

Dave discussed different fishery management options for Windigo to address the Walleye situation:

- Harvest Large-mouth Bass as much as you can.
- Harvest Northern Pike
- DNR could remove the length limit on bass
- Stock Walleye
- Stock Muskie
- Eat large-mouth Bass. Dave says they are delicious. (There is a popular myth that Large-mouth Bass are not good to eat.)

Dave noted that there is more mercury in older bass. We should harvest the smaller Large-mouth Bass. Recently, they eliminated the 14" length limit on LMB in the Chippewa flowage...to help the Walleye populations.



Question: Would it be effective to add more fish cribs? Dave's response: They congregate fish but don't necessarily help increase number of fish. Fish cribs do not encourage fish spawning. Windigo has a one Walleye limit as a result of the declaration of the Lac Court O'reilles tribe....based on mathematical formula. There is a safe harvest level based on spearing intent. Their intent affects the sliding bag limit. Their declaration on Windigo is high. The DNR is hoping to offset the length limit. The bag limit will likely change after spearing....but will stand through May.

It was noted that the tribes can theoretically spear all season long but mostly do it in early spring.

Question: We used to have schools of little bullheads in the lake. Now we have not seen this for a number of years. The walleyes used to eat bullheads. Why are there are no bullheads now?

Dave's response: There is nothing more efficient at eating bullheads than large-mouth Bass. In Missouri they would have tons of bullheads. In a good clear lake bullheads are delicious. Large-mouth Bass are stocked as the primary predator to control the number some lakes. They eat bullheads to oblivion. They will eliminate them. Walleyes do not eat bullheads to oblivion.

Colleen closed the discussion by thanking Dave for his very information talk and Q&A session. A very enjoyable and informative evening was had by all and we hope that more friends and neighbors join us at the Annual picnic on August 2nd and our Spring Dinner next year!

Fishing Committee Update

Dan Pjevach

The committee meet on May 24th. After considerable discussion of all the facts and options out that that can affect the fish in Windigo, we determined that the Fisheries Management Plan could help us guide us on what projects would best benefit the lake. Although Windigo is a number of years away from the starting of a formal Management Plan, the committee decided to review a finalized plan to see how the process works and what we need to consider as we make our decisions. The committee also was going to follow up with the DNR about the coming statewide changes regarding the panfish bag limit and if such changes will help us lower the Crappie bag limit for the lake. Additional work will also be done on trying to determine how the annual spearing limits are set.

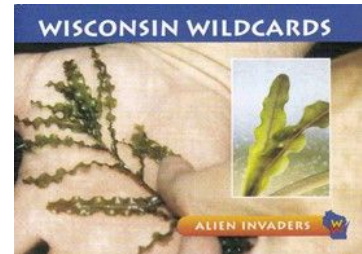
AIS Watch, Spring is the time to look for Curly Leaf Pond Weed, Look for Eurasian Milfoil from June through August.

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.

One challenge is that if Curly Leaf Pond Weed is present in a lake, it is viewable in Spring and then dies back by the end of June. Thus lake monitoring must be done during this time.

Curly-Leaf Pond Weed is an underwater plant that usually grows in lake water 3 to 10 feet deep. Its wavy leaves with fine-toothed edges make it appear “crispy”. It was accidentally introduced when common carp were stocked in North America. This invader grows well in cold temperatures, even under ice. It begins early in the spring, and shades out native plants, forming dense mats that make it tough to boat or swim. When curly-leaf pond weed dies back in mid-summer it releases nutrients, which can cause algae blooms and other problems. It is easily spread by boats and trailers.



Eurasian watermilfoil is visible throughout summer. Plants usually extend 3 to 10 feet, but can reach as much as 33 feet in length. The stems are reddish-brown to whitish-pink. It forms dense mats on the surface of water bodies, and new plants that may emerge from each node on a stem root on contact with mud. It regenerates mostly from rhizomes, fragmented stems, and axillary buds that develop throughout the year. Eurasian watermilfoil can be found in nearly 400 WI lakes.



More detailed pictures and instructions for how to look for AIS are on the AIS page on our website: <http://www.windigolake.org/aquatic-invasive-species-prevention/>.

Remember that we can apply the volunteer hours that any of us spend looking for AIS to grant money available to us from the Wisconsin DNR. Reporting is easy! Just email your name, the amount of time

you spent looking, when you did your monitoring, and whether or not you used a boat to info@windigolake.org.

Treasurer Report

Gary Hartmann

2014 Income as of June 1, 2014:

- Dues from memberships = \$ 1,975 (77 Members and 10 Friends of Windigo)
- Donations to AIS fund = \$ 635
- Donations to Fish Crib fund = \$ 260
- Spring Dinner at the Ranch yielded a profit of \$ 36.
(Payments from 32 preselected meals of \$ 728 minus food bill of \$ 692).

Total Funds available:

- Checking Account: \$ 5,587.
- DNR Advance: \$ 750.
- Fish Crib Fund: \$ 812.
- AIS Fund: \$ 6,930.

DNR Grant

Our grants are 75% funded by the Wisconsin 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 will need volunteer labor as a match for our 2014 Grant. Shoreline monitoring for invasive weeds can begin after ice-out and continue into the fall. Please continue to report your time and whether or not a boat was used; just send an email to info@Windigolake.com Thanks !

Membership Report

Gary Hartmann

‘Thank you’ to everyone who supports our lake association. Your support is critical and it is very much appreciated. If you haven’t received your 2014 Dues Reminder please request one from me; or a form can be downloaded from our web site.

Our membership form includes options for making voluntary donations to our Invasive Species Fund and our Fish Crib Fund. Members are also asked to select their preferred method of Newsletter delivery – either email or postal delivery. If you don’t select an option we will continue with your choice from last year. Contact me if you wish to change your delivery option.

As of June 1st , I have received 77 renewals which matches last year’s total. This is outstanding participation! In addition, there are 10 ‘Friends of Windigo’. Here is a breakdown of our membership by “neighborhood”:

Windigo Lake (94 owners; 72 have paid)

- Bluebird Drive: 4 of 4 paid
- Highline Road: 11 of 16 paid
- Ochu Road: 17 of 22 paid
- Peninsula Lane: 8 of 10 paid
- Portage Terrace: 2 of 3 paid
- Highway 27: 0 of 2 paid
- Tamarack Trail: 7 of 7 paid
- Tanager Trail: 2 of 4 paid
- Thunder Point Road: 11 of 11 paid
- Timber Lane: 9 of 11 paid
- Windigo Lane: 1 of 4 paid

Hub Lake (6 owners; 2 have paid)

Lake 27 (5 owners; 3 have paid)

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.

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.

If you want to keep in touch, we would appreciate emails from as many lake owners as possible.

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.

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.

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Windigo Lake Property Owners Association

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

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