

Windigo Lake Area Newsletter Winter 2019-20

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



Windigo, an Island Lake with Natural Shoreline

Desk of the President

Patrick Steininger

Greetings to all, I hope everyone had a nice fall in Hayward or wherever your travels have taken you this year. Please have a safe and happy winter season, and here is to a prosperous and healthy 2020. How can it be 2020? I only made it up to Hayward for a few days in September, but Jennifer and I enjoyed a few days in the Hayward area with her cousin from Minneapolis.

I can't be totally sure, but I don't see how the lake level could get any higher in 2020, but never say never.

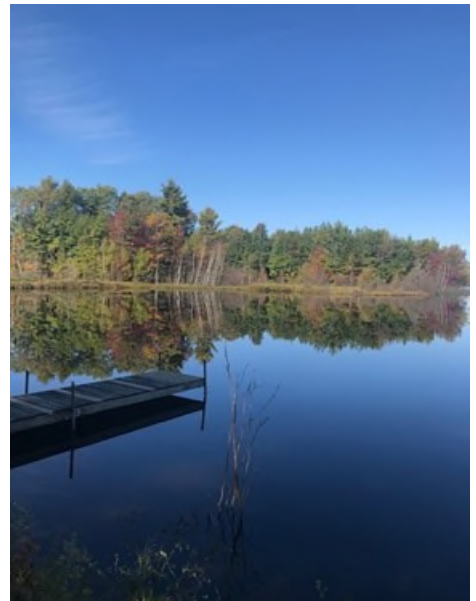
I hope to see a lot of you at the Spring Dinner this year!

Regards,

Patrick Steininger

C #708-899-3193

E-Mail Patrick.steininger@skodie.com



Please join us for the Spring Dinner: Saturday April 25, 2020

Barb Pjevach



Same Day New Location! We will again be holding our Spring Dinner on the weekend before the fishing opener so that we can 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). This year, we decided to try a new venue because Trailways is willing to give us their whole restaurant for our dinner. More specifics about our speaker and menu options, prices, and the RSVP form will be included with our Annual Membership letter in February and the March newsletter.

Please mark your calendar and join us at Trailways on the evening of April 25!

Annual Meeting and Picnic Report

Kris Soegaard & Barb Pjevach

Thanks to the Persells family for hosting our Annual Meeting and Picnic on Saturday August 3rd. We had a nice turnout with 40 property owners and friends in attendance. We also thank everyone who took time to attend, engage in the meeting and socialize with neighbors.

The full minutes for this meeting are available for download at this link: <http://www.windigolake.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Final-2019-Annual-Meeting-Minutes-1-10-2020.pdf>. If you only receive a print version of this newsletter, you can request a copy to be emailed to you by contacting us at info@windigolake.org.

We discussed the following topics at the meeting:

Secretary's report – Prior year minutes were discussed. There were no questions and the minutes were approved as distributed to the membership previously.

Treasurer's report – Gary Hartman reported the current status of the financials and details of fund balances. WLPOA finances continue to be very stable. Latest information is in the Treasurer Report in this newsletter

Nominations for Board members - We thank and welcome Paul Martin to serve our Board as Vice President and Steve Soegaard who is serving as a Director at Large. We thank Dick Steininger who is retiring to an Emeritus status on the Board. All other board members have agreed to continue to serve for another year.

Committee reports:

- Membership - Dave and Donna sent out letters to all property owners on our lakes with or without a dwelling – 116 this past year. We had 84 members as of the meeting, which is a high level of engagement for a lake association.
- Loon Watch – We had at least 2 new loons born and observed this summer. One chick was almost abandoned after kayakers approached one of the nests and the mother abandoned the nest. Unusual and luckily, the mother loon came back to that particular nest. Loons are VERY sensitive when nesting and people need to stay away for the health of the young loons. There was also a report of a territorial loon fight that resulted in the death of one of the young loons. This is tragic, but is normal when one male loon wins a “fight” with another male loon and takes his territory.
- Lake Environment – Patrick Steininger read Colleen Graham's report which discussed invasive species in the area. The boat landing monitoring continues to be supported by DNR grant and our lakes continue to be free of AIS. Zebra mussels have been reported in neighboring counties but not in Sawyer nor Bayfield counties. Traffic at the landing this summer was pretty average.
- Fish and Wildlife – There continues to be a lot of pressure from bass fisherman. This was the first summer with the new buoys and Portage Bay as a full no-wake zone. It was reported that it appears to be helping and that compliance with no-wake rules is much better than in previous years.
- Social – There was not much to report about the past year. There was a good turnout again at the Spring dinner.

New Business:

- Venue for 2020 Spring Dinner will be at Trailways. We will have the whole restaurant.
- **The 2020 Annual picnic will be moving to 8/8, the SECOND Saturday in August to move it away from the Lumberjack Championships weekend. The Persells have agreed to host again.**
- We need volunteers for Board roles (Treasurer, Lake Environment, Membership) so people who have been serving the association for a long time can rotate off. (Note that after this meeting, Kris Soegaard agreed to take the Treasurer role in addition to Secretary.)
- Increasing ATV/UTV use on roads but Highline still not an ATV/UTV route.



Old Business:

- Steve Soegaard began representing WLPOA on the Sawyer County Lakes Forum. It is a great forum to learn from other lake associations and exchange ideas. Thanks Steve!
- Dennis and DeAnn Persells have taken over volunteering for Secchi Disk water testing. Thanks Dennis and DeAnn and thanks to Mike and Roxanne Lantz for previously doing this testing for many years. The latest water clarity reading was 14 feet which is good, particularly for late in summer.

Open Discussion:

- Paul Martin thanked Dick Steininger for all of his efforts and service on the Board over many years.
- Nancy Christ brought up the issue of high water on Windigo and whether there is an outlet of some sort that could help. This introduced good discussion among the group. It was discussed that because Windigo is a seepage lake, based on our learning about groundwater at a recent spring dinner, we learned that even if water was drained, it would just come back from the groundwater. The previous high water level that people recall was back in 1983 and some people believe the current level is higher. It was also discussed that other lakes in the area (such as Pigeon Lake) have even more severe problems and have been well documented as trying to get any assistance in many different forms and governmental assistance is not available. It was discussed that if someone has time, it would be good to do research to find out history further back about Portage Bay potential connection to the Namekagon River.
- There was discussion about the size of boats and motors on the lake.
- There was discussion that Wisconsin may be changing the ATV rules. A change could affect the Bass Lake ordinance which does not allow ATVs on Highline east of Windigo.
- All attendees introduced themselves

Windigo Board and Activities - Volunteers Needed

Barb Pjevach

Thanks to Kris Soegaard, Steve Soegaard and Paul Martin for volunteering to serve on our Board this year. In addition, we would appreciate volunteers for a few other roles:

Clean Boats Clean Water (CBCW) Volunteer: Assist the Lake Environment Board Member with managing the boat landing monitor, entering data into the DNR SWIMS database, assisting the Treasurer in administrating the annual CBCW grant.

Fish and Wildlife Committee Chair: Connects with the DNR on behalf of the lakes, hold at least one committee meeting per year, provide short update articles for the newsletter.

Welcome volunteers: Reach out to new property owners with information about our lakes.

Social Chair: Coordinate the Annual Meeting/Picnic and Spring Dinner.

We try to make sure that we split up various WLPOA responsibilities and help one another to enable the time commitment with any of these positions to be minimal. Please consider joining us and helping with one of these roles!

Annual Membership Dues and Spring Dinner Information Coming

Barb Pjevach

As in prior years, Donna and Dave Roeker will be sending out letters in February regarding membership dues, fund donations (AIS, Fish and Wildlife), etc. This is a good time to also let us know your email address and contact information if you have any updates. The mailing will also include a registration form for the Spring Dinner on Saturday April 25.

Lake Environment

Barb Pjevach and Colleen Graham

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/>.

AIS Boat Landing Monitoring

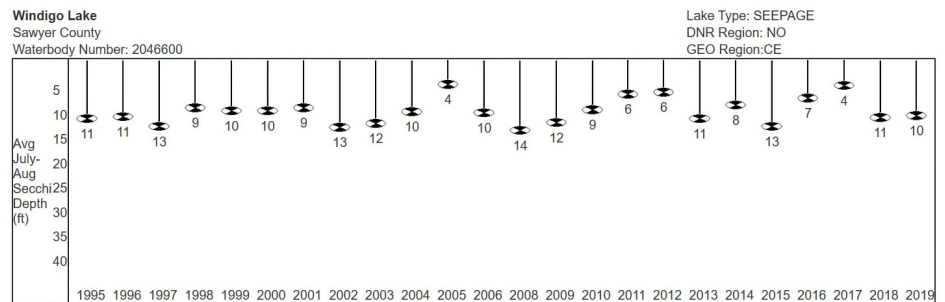
Utilizing our grant from the DNR for AIS prevention, the Association again contracted with Dennis Dollhopf who monitored the public boat landing generally on weekends and holidays from fishing opener to Labor Day. No incidents or sightings of AIS were reported. We submitted an application for a CBCW (Clean Boats Clean Waters) grant for 2020 and have been approved again for this grant. Anyone can help out as a volunteer landing monitor, even if it is for just a few hours. Your hours can be used to help maximize our use of grant funds and help in spreading the word about AIS. IF you are interested in volunteering, contact Colleen no later than April 15 so you can be included in the training session required by the DNR.

We believe that this monitoring is helping protect our lakes to stay AIS free as long as possible because our monitoring provides education to hundreds of people who are also boating on lakes which currently have AIS and could be transferred. Prevention is the least expensive way to keep our lakes AIS free.



Windigo Water Clarity

Thanks to the Persells who are now taking water clarity readings as of this past summer at the Windigo deep hole and sending them in to the DNR. Thanks again to Mike and Roxanne Lantz for doing this testing for many years. These readings are taken periodically during the summer months. Here is the historical chart of the average of these readings during July and August. Note that this year's clarity was similar to last year and was very good when considering the high water level and excess nutrients that could be coming into the lake from the wetlands. The levels are also much better than in 2017 when we saw the unusual green suspended algae in August of that year.



Past secchi averages in feet (July and August only).

Critter Reports and Loon Reminders

Various contributors

Here are latest critter updates from this past summer:

- We had 2-3 baby loons on our lakes this past summer. We believe that 2 survived. Young loons migrate later in the year than their parents. It is encouraging when we have baby loons survive because it is common for loons to return to their nesting location.
- We once again saw river otters on the lakes.
- Beavers were active along Thunderpoint Road.
- Bears were spotted again in our area.
- Snapping and Painted turtles were observed.
- Buffleheads and Merganzers were observed again in Spring.
- Blue and Green Herons were seen frequently on Windigo.
- Various types of ducks, geese and deer were also abundant on and around the lakes. Although the geese seemed to be a less prevalent this past summer.
- The old eagle nest on South Island was not actively used for nesting eagles but adult and juvenile eagles were seen and heard visiting our lakes.



LOON WATCH

As a reminder, our Lake 27, Windigo and Hub Lakes Loon Watch volunteer is Marilyn Konkler. Please contact her at mkonkler55@gmail.com with your loon sightings and observations throughout the summer. Thanks!

Is Your Home Protected Against Ground Water Damage?

Kris Soegaard

During the Annual Meeting of the Windigo Lake Property Owner's Association held in August, there was a lively discussion about the high water level of Windigo and neighboring lakes and the issues some homeowners are starting to experience related to high water. Not since 1983 has the water level been as high as it currently is, as noted by longer-term residents. And the current water level appears to be 6-8 inches higher than in 1983. Per several residents in attendance at the Annual Meeting, erosion is becoming a problem; they noted that if you have standing water on your lawn or the ground is squishy when you walk, you may already have a water-related problem. Windigo is a seepage lake and doesn't have a way to drain excess water. The level of the lake follows the water table.

All of this may raise the question for some homeowners as to whether their homeowner's insurance would cover water-related damage to your home due to the high water level. Shortly after the meeting, Kris Soegaard noticed an article in Kiplinger that addressed this question. Per this article, "Damage caused by wind, wind-driven rain, and water that comes in your home through the roof, windows or doors is usually covered by your homeowner's insurance policy. But your policy won't cover water that comes from the ground up even if you don't live in a designated flood zone." However, the article states that flood insurance would cover water that comes up through the ground.

No one can predict the weather, although meteorologists make a valiant effort. If you are concerned that water intrusion from the ground may be an issue for your property, you may want to discuss your concerns with the insurance company that provides your homeowner's insurance. They would be a good place to start with to understand your exposure should the ground water level become an issue for your property and what additional insurance options, including through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program, are available to you.

Fishing Committee Upates

Paul Martin

I sat down with Max Wolter, the DNR fish biologist, and discussed a few options that might help Windigo Lakes fishery in the future. Stocking the lake with either walleye fingerlings (very poor survival rate) or extended growth walleyes (very expensive) is something Max is strongly against at this point in time. Our lake is showing very good walleye reproduction for the last few years, and introducing more fish could severely offset the balance that we have right now.



This spring the DNR is setting Fyke nets at key points in the lake to help determine the adult population of all of the species that inhabit the lake. The data obtained from this survey will be analyzed and then compared to previous netting information. These findings should give us a better picture of Windigos' adult fishery.

Other options that were discussed included having some type of reward coupon for keeping Northern Pike. This would be designed to have people take home the Northern that they catch instead of putting them back. The Northerns in our lake are abundant and this program would help the other species by providing a larger food base with fewer Northerns. This is only a concept, and how to implement it and get the program approved by the DNR is another thing.

The bottom line is this, we have a fairly healthy lake as far as fish reproduction is concerned, but its smaller size (compared to other area lakes) makes its adult fish population vulnerable to increased fishing pressure.

We can only spread the word to visitors and lake neighbors to Catch, Photo and Release! CPR! Thanks to all who are helping to spread the word and help the health of our lakes and fisheries.

Treasurer's Report

Gary Hartmann

2019 Income & Expenses

WLPOA's income during 2019 is summarized below:

- Members and "Friends of Windigo" paid \$2,225 in dues.
- Donations to the Invasive Species Fund totaled \$ 1,365 and donations to the Fish Management Fund totaled \$ 1,200. We received some very generous donations to these funds this year and we are very grateful for this support.
- Tickets to the Spring Dinner brought in \$ 1,155 and our expenses were \$ 1,155 so this event broke even.

WLPOA's expenses were \$ 2,631.34 for 2019. Here is a breakdown by category:

Category	Amount	Notes
Communication	\$308.43	Newsletters, web site rent
Annual Membership Mailing	\$208.14	printing, envelopes, postage
Picnic Expenses	\$247.50	food, beverages, porta-potty
Fees & Insurance	\$626.00	Ins. Premium, WI fees, PO Box rental
Buoys	\$626.27	Purchase buoy
Grant Close-out	\$300.00	cover deficit
TOTAL	\$2,631.34	

DNR Grant Closeout

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. There is a \$ 3,000 cap on the amount that the DNR will spend each year. Our match can be satisfied with cash or by supplying “in-kind” volunteer labor.

We spent \$ 3,300 this year on monitoring of the boat landing. We received the usual advance of \$ 750. Our DNR reimbursement has been approved for \$ 2,250 as we reached the \$ 3,000 Grant limit. The remaining \$ 300 was covered from our general fund so we could close out the 2019 Grant with a zero balance.



We have been awarded a 2020 Grant and expect to receive the \$ 750 advance early next year.

Account Balances

Balances as of November 25, 2019 are:

WLPOA Account Balances	Amount
General Fund (Checking)	\$ 1,260.42
Non-dedicated Reserve	\$ 5,000.00
Dedicated Fish Management Reserve (Savings Acct)	\$ 5,071.75
Dedicated Invasive Species Reserve (Savings Acct)	\$ 11,943.06
DNR Grant for 2019 (closed out)	0
DNR Grant for 2020 (active)	0
Total on deposit	\$ 23,275.23

Transition

I have served as the WLPOA Treasurer for 12 years. This is an interesting position and I have enjoyed working with all the other Board Members over the years. But I’m ready to hand this job over to someone else. Our Secretary, Kris Soegaard, has agreed to take on this job as well as continue as Secretary. This transition has been approved by the Board and is effective Jan 1, 2020. Thank you to all who continue to support our lake association.

Membership Report

Dave and Donna Roeker

It has been another good year when we appreciate the support of so many of our property owners. While we would like to have everyone join our Lake Association, we appreciate that in general we have very high participation. Thanks to all of you! We have 85 paid members in 2019 and 17 additional “friends” (family members who also get our communications), staying pretty consistent with previous years. If you paid dues in the past, we appreciate your support. If you haven’t previously paid dues, when you receive the membership renewal letter in February, PLEASE consider doing so. The \$25.00 is a small price to pay to help preserve our gem of a lake. We are very lucky to have this lake. Our job as stewards is to maintain the beauty and preserve the wildlife and its habitat.

Our lake association has worked very hard this year to keep everyone informed. We have stayed involved with the town board on issues that affect our lake. We’d like to thank everyone that has attended the town meetings, sent letters or made phone calls to the board regarding important decisions. If you are interested in the town

government, you can always go online to <http://basslakewi.gov/>

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.

Historic Area Maps and Information

Following the Annual Meeting in August, John Adams graciously volunteered and conducted some research at a map library at the University of Minnesota to see what he could find about history of our lakes geologically to see if there were ever inlets or outlets to neighboring lakes. Here are a couple of the maps that the library had that we thought would be interesting to share. Note that while there are wetlands that have clearly existed between our lakes and the neighboring larger lakes (Grindstone and Lac Courte Oreilles), as far back as 1897 (when Windigo was called Bass Lake), our lakes were distinct and did not seem to have waterways connecting to the larger lakes. Thanks John!



Local Ordinance updates

This past year, we did not see a lot of activity for local ordinances that had a direct/significant impact on our Windigo Lakes Area. Several permanent residents attend most of the Bass Lake Township meetings. We greatly appreciate those who take time to attend.

As a reminder, if you are not a resident, but are interested in attending, anyone can attend. The Town of Bass Lake Board meetings are on the second Monday of every month at 6:30pm. Minutes and agendas are public and published on their website: <https://basslakewi.gov/>

If you do attend and have any information to share with other property owners, please email us at info@windigolake.org.

Sound travels...Did you know the trees have eyes and ears?

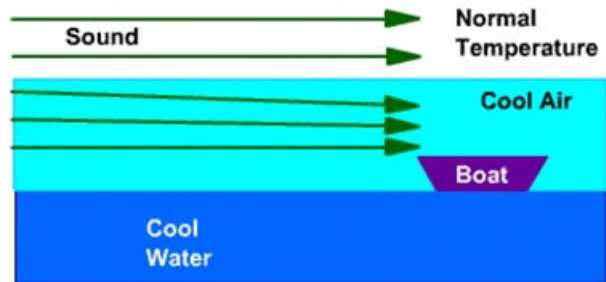
Barb Pjevach

We all love different aspects of our lakes, but one of the things friends and visitors always note is the beautiful treed shoreline of Windigo. It is easy to almost forget that homes and people are in those trees.

And as we all have experienced, sound really travels over the water! If you are sitting in a boat, a sound coming from the shore will seem louder than the same sound heard by a person on land. Sound seems to be amplified when it travels over water.

The reason is that the water cools the air above its surface, which then slows down the sound waves near the surface. This causes refraction or bending of the sound wave, such that more sound reaches the boat passenger and likewise back to shore from a boat.

Sound waves skimming the surface of the water can add to the amplification effect, if the water is calm. (Courtesy Ron Kurtus' school-for-champions.com)



Why do we bring up this information? Well, property owners have reported a few situations that made them uncomfortable. While we all enjoy our time at our lakes in various ways, please be aware when partying and spending time on boats and on your property that people who you may not see can very readily see and hear.

Passings

Barb Pjevach

2019 was a sad year when we lost several long-time Windigo Lake area friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Wes Miller passed away on July 15, 2019.. The Miller family (including Nancy Nelson, Wes' wife) have been long-time property owners on Windigo/Lake Twenty Seven. Here is the link to an article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune about his life and contributions to the University of Minnesota Medical school:

<http://www.startribune.com/dr-wesley-miller-retired-university-of-minnesota-doctor-educator-and-head-of-medicine-dies/526397172/> . Here is a link to his obituary: <http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/0000318595/>.

Mary Partlow passed away on August 19, 2019. Mary (aka Sissy) was preceded in death by her husband Wally a few years ago. The Partlow family has had property on the eastern side of Windigo for many years. Here is a link to Mary's obituary: <https://www.whitefuneralhomes.com/obituary/mary-partlow>

Nora Brink Hunter passed away on October 20, 2019. Nora and her brother David spent many summers on Windigo growing up and the Brink Family still has property on the lake. Here is a link to her obituary: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pasadenastarnews/obituary.aspx?n=nora-brink-hunter&pid=194549006>

Ken Shuey passed away on November 11, 2019 after a many year battle with cancer. He and Jeanne have been long-time full-time residents on Windigo and actively served Sawyer County and Bass Lake Township for many years. Here is a link to his obituary: https://www.apg-wi.com/sawyer_county_record/free/kenneth-shuey/article_83701b84-0a5d-11ea-a473-1f867e9b0bd7.html

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, please pass on the newsletter and website information to them. In addition, please contact any WLPOA officer or email us at info@windigolake.org. Thanks for helping us welcome and reach out to our new neighbors!

Historical Article about Portage Trail in the area.

The following article was put together in the past by Bob Rudiger, a former Windigo resident. We thought it may be of interest even though it is a repeat from year's past.

THE TALE OF A TRAIL

Compiled By Bob Rudiger
2003

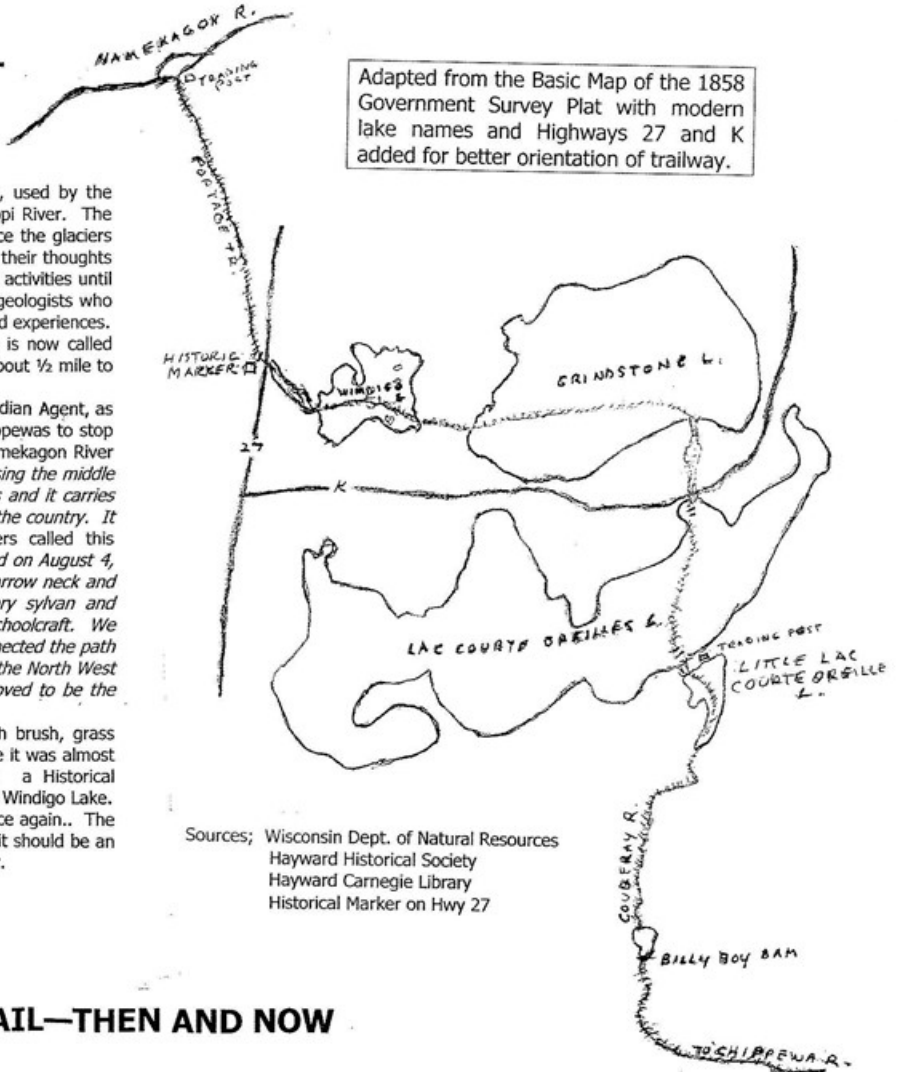
The Namekagon-Courte Orielles Portage was first, used by the Indians as a shortcut from Lake Superior to the Mississippi River. The Indians who followed it had inhabited these forests since the glaciers melted away. In those days they were unable to express their thoughts on paper and so there are no records of any portage trail activities until the coming of fur traders, surveyors, Indian Agents and geologists who in many cases kept journals covering their observations and experiences.

The portage carry from the Namekagon River to what is now called Windigo Lake was about 3 miles with one more carry of about 1/2 mile to Grindstone Lake.

In a journal kept in 1831 by Henry R. Schoolcraft, an Indian Agent, as he came to LacCourte Oreilles to try to convince the Chippewas to stop warring with the Sioux, he described his trip from the Namekagon River as follows: "From the landing on the river just after passing the middle pause (no doubt a rest stopping place) the path mounts and it carries along a considerable ridge, from which is a good view of the country. It is open as far the eye can see. (later white travelers called this ridge "look out hill") We continued to follow, the ridge and on August 4, we found it. (now called Windigo lake) to draw to a narrow neck and then to widen with six or seven islands, giving a very sylvan and beautiful appearance. "Lake of the Isles" according to Schoolcraft. We passed through it, Then crossed a short portage that connected the path with Lac du Gris (Grindstone Lake). This is the origin of the North West Fork of the Chippewa River. The outlet of this lake, proved to be the entrance into Ottawa Lake- (Lac Courte Orielles Lake).

Today, though the old Portage Trail is overgrown with brush, grass and overhung trees, it is still visible. Through lack of use it was almost forgotten until the Wisconsin Historical Society placed a Historical Marker on the bank of Highway 27 where the trail entered Windigo Lake.

The trail from the marker is now able to be traveled once again.. The DNR has recently developed the directions to follow and it should be an interesting trip for canoeist to take on a nice summery day.



PORTAGE TRAIL—THEN AND NOW

Windigo Lake Property Owners Association

P.O. Box 13071, Hayward, WI 54843

Email: info@windigolake.org

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

<u>Officers</u>		
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