

The Pipe Lakes Newsletter

News and ideas for the protection and rehabilitation of our lakes and land.

April 15, 2008

www.pipelakes.org

LUMBERING LED TO DEVELOPMENT OF PIPE LAKES

MERWIN MOEN



was possible to see Pipe Lake from the Danniger farm home which is more than a half mile away.

As the white pines came down, the oak, maple, ash and softwood trees reforested the land. Creating farm fields in these wooded lands was hard work. Many farm animals were pastured in the woods until the late 1950's.

Local historians tell us that the Chippewa—the Ojibwa or Anishinabe—were the Native Americans that inhabited the first small settlements in northern Wisconsin prior to white settlers arriving. The US Government signed treaties in 1837 and 1854 giving the Native Americans hunting, fishing and gathering of wild rice privileges on the lands, rivers and lakes in our area. Many of the descendents of these early settlers are still in the area.

The areas surrounding North Pipe Lake and Pipe Lake were a huge forest of white pines. Early white settlers were drawn to the area to work in the lumber mills or to start dairy

and crop farms. Hundreds of immigrants entered through Ellis Island, took the Pennsylvania Railroad to Milwaukee and then made their way to Cumberland. The railroad reached Cumberland about 1878. The railroad was given sections of land along the their tracks to encourage development. Some of you may show references to the railroad in your title abstract.

The **1882** picture above shows the **De Graw Mill** on the south shore of Pipe Lake (currently part of the Palas farm). There was also a large lumber camp on North Pipe Lake. The early lumber camps paid their hard working crews about \$20.00 a month.

The loggers used Pipe Lake to float the trees to the mills when the water was high. Pipe Lake has varied eight to ten feet in depth in cycles lasting up to 25 years since the late 1800s. It was dry enough in the 1930s to drive a Model T around the entire shore of Pipe Lake.

The Danniger Homestead on the east side of Pipe Lake was homesteaded in 1879. The family (many of whom still live here) heard many stories of the devastating fires that occurred in the 1880—1890s as a result of the brush and tree tops that accumulated from the logging. The loggers were so efficient that it

When large scale lake property development began in the 1960's, the farmers sold their unused lake frontage to city buyers. If they had only known....!

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THE BATTLEFIELD: NATIVE SPECIES AND BUFFER ZONES

PART 2

Ron Vantine

As discussed in the last Newsletter, the most important factor in improving the clarity of the Pipe Lakes is for us to reduce the amount of phosphorus that flows into our lakes. A key strategy for doing so is preserving and planting native species (plants, grasses, and bushes) instead of turf grass and establishing buffer zones along our shorelines.

Turf Grass Compared with Native Species

Frequently, we replace the native grasses and plants on portions of our properties with turf grass, that is, grass similar to the grass in our city lawns. Much of the phosphorous that enters our lakes is contained in the rainwater that flows across our properties into our lakes. One of the best methods for preventing that phosphorus from entering our lakes is to have it pass through native plants and grasses rather than turf grass.

This is because of the difference in the ability of turf grass and native species to absorb the runoff before it reaches the lake. Turf grass roots are only about 4 inches deep: whereas the roots of native species generally extend from 12 to 48 inches and often much deeper. Hence, the root systems of the native species are able to absorb vastly greater quantities of runoff, with the result that much less runoff, and its phosphorus, actually reaches our lakes.

In addition, turf grass has a very wimpy structure. So, in a heavy rain, the water easily causes the turf grass to bend over. It then literally creates a "chute" that accelerates the flow of water over the lawn. Native species, on the other hand, are much stiffer and stronger. Thus, they resist the water and slow up its movement, enabling their deep root structures to sponge up much of the runoff.

Shoreland Buffer Zones

A shoreland buffer zone is an area along the shoreline of a

lake lot that is left natural and contains only native grasses and shrubs rather than turf grass.

From our own experience, many of these native species have colorful flowers or interesting textures and shades of green that are very pleasing to the eye.

The "standard" recommendation in Wisconsin (which is a requirement in the case of new construction) is that the buffer zone should be 35 feet deep and extend along the entire shoreline, except for a 30 foot wide "view corridor". This view corridor is typically located where we put our docks, lawn chairs, etc at the shoreline.

Although 35 feet is the recommended depth for a buffer zone, I personally believe that a buffer zone of any meaningful depth will help reduce the phosphorus runoff into our lakes and is therefore better than no buffer zone at all. Plus, a buffer zone provides an interesting variety of native plants than enhance the natural appearance of the shoreline.

Our Personal Experience

Four years ago, Jeremy Williamson, Water Quality Specialist with the Polk County Land & Water Resources Department, and Rob Brusek, owner of the Dragonfly Nursery in Amery, on separate occasions, walked our shoreline with me. They were struck with the great variety of native species along our shoreline and made me appreciate the uniqueness of the biology along our lake that I had always taken for granted.

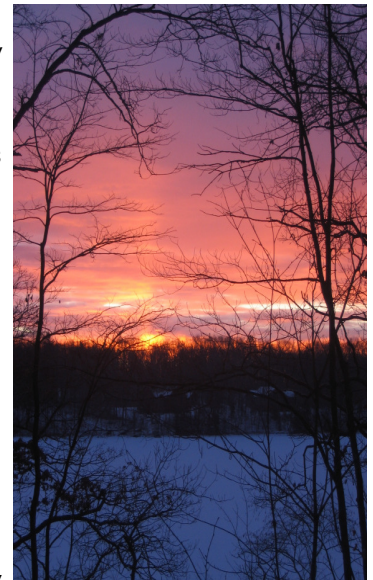
I remember three plants in particular: wild lilacs with a purple flower, Pennsylvania sedge grass, and Canadian Mayflower. Pennsylvania Sedge Grass grows to about 6-8 inches but bends over at about 5 inches high. It is light green in color and has a thin texture. Where it exists in a larger patch, it presents a lovely light green contrast to the rest of the forest area. Rob sells Pennsylvania

Sedge. He said it is a highly desirable plant and would cost us thousands of dollars to plant what exist there for free. Canadian Mayflower is dark green in color with a white flower in the spring. It grows very low to the ground and is a terrific groundcover. Again, it would be very costly to replace what nature has already placed along our shore.

Before these conversations with Jeremy and Rob, I had been weed whacking everything along my shoreline every weekend, largely out of a "city" habit. Ever since, however, I have just weed whacked the area near our dock, where we also have our lawn chairs and an old fire pit, and have left the remaining 85% of our shoreline grow naturally. The result is a much more attractive shoreline area: plus, over the course of a summer, I have saved myself many hours of weed whacking labor. The "no-care" feature of native species is another tangible benefit of this approach.

Conclusion

If we avoid planting, or limit the amount of, turf grass on our lake properties, and establish buffer zones along our shorelines, we will, collectively, significantly reduce the amount of phosphorous that flows into the Pipe Lakes through runoff. This will, in turn, make a major contribution to improving the water clarity of our two lakes.



Picture by Peggy Weber

Pipe and North Pipe Lakes Protection And Rehabilitation District

Board of Commissioners

Carol Vantine 612-750-8785	Chair
Joe Errigo 651-222-1698	Secretary
Tom O'Hern 651-674-5531	Treasurer
Larry Bresina 651-735-0019	Water Quality
Dick Hollar 715-822-5317	Special Projects
OPEN	County
Doug Rouzer 715-822-3288	Township

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR SHORELAND \$\$?

Our Water District has set aside some funds in 2008 to encourage residents to slow and reduce surface runoff by planting rain gardens, restoring their shore with native grasses and other innovative projects.

If you are interested in applying for these matching funds, please send a letter to us indicating your name, lake and home residence addresses, telephone number, how you want to use the funds. If possible, include a picture of the area you plan to restore.

Send the letter to Carol Vantine, via email at carolvantine@gmail.com or 45 University Avenue SE, #606, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

The deadline has been extended to July 31.

Can We Influence the Future of Our Lakes?

What do you think our lakes will be like 5-15 years from now? Will they be as inviting as today with maybe a few more buildings and piers? Or will we be fighting weed masses of Eurasian water milfoil or algae scum at the boat landing, in the passage between the lakes, and around the islands? Or, how about this – will both lakes be enhanced, Pipe Lake's clarity preserved and a shoreline looking more natural with many wildflowers along the shore, and North Pipe's water a bit clearer – and still no milfoil?

All of these possibilities are unknowns today. We could sit back and wait and see what happens. Or we could positively influence the future of the lakes through our efforts to protect them? The Water Quality Committee Core Group and the District Board have been exploring ways to make a difference. Their plan is to offer you a choice at the Annual Meeting – "to wait and see what happens", or be proactive and pursue a protection grant from the State of Wisconsin to positively affect the lakes. But to pursue a protection grant only makes sense if the lake community supports the goals, offers some volunteer time, and, yes, it will also cost us some money.

To pursue a protection grant and follow our 10-Year Strategic Plan, the District needs to put together a set of action steps for the next 5 years. With your help, the Lake District Board hopes to complete a 5-Year Lake Management Action Plan between now and mid summer. Then at the Annual Meeting you will have a choice between "wait and see" or "take positive action steps".

We need 5-10 people who will review our draft 5-Year Lake Management Action Plan and participate in a couple meetings to discuss the pros and cons. With this help, the final proposed plan will both make good environmental sense and be a reflection of what the lake community wants. Please contact Larry Bresina (651-735-0019) if you have an interest, or feel a sense of duty, to participate.

WE NEED YOUR HELP



We would like to include photographs of both lakes and our residents and guests using the lakes in our future newsletters and website updates. If you have some snapshots or digital pictures you are willing to share, please contact one of the Commissioners.



Picture by Peggy Weber

CAROL'S CORNER

The Legacy We All Enjoy

All of us are the lucky beneficiaries of the good stewards who came before us. The Native Americans, the loggers, the farmers and the early non-farming residents who enjoyed and used the lake and land resources for many decades left us a strong lake system with great diversity of native plants and animals.

In the last thirty years, the open shoreland areas have seen many new residential structures and all of us use more vehicles and play equipment on the water and the land. With acid rain and new pollutants possible from many products that offered to us for personal care, lawn care, pest control, etc, the watershed is has more challenges to clean up.

We have always had dialogue about how to share and protect Pipe and North Pipe Lakes— first informally, for a period



through the Sanitation District, then through the Lake Association, and for the last few years, through the our Pipe and North Pipe Lakes Protection and Rehabilitation District. As a result, our properties have increased in value and provided much enjoyment and relaxation to residents.

Now— it is our turn to be the stewards of these resources. Your ideas and opinions are important to help the Commission plan for the future. Talk to us, come to District meetings, suggest ideas, ask questions. Together we can continue the legacy of Pipe Lake and North Pipe Lake for future generations.

CONTEST

There is Still Time to Enter the Name the Newsletter Contest !

We are sponsoring a contest to find a name for our new, improved newsletter! The winner will be selected by a blue ribbon panel and announced no later than August 30. We have received several creative suggestions—but we want your ideas !!

The rules are simple:

- * You must be at least five years old and able to spell your own name.
- * Send your proposed name for the newsletter in an email or snail mail message to Carol Vantine before July 1, 2008 at carolvantine@gmail.com or Carol Vantine, 45 University Avenue SE, #606, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Accepted the (unaudited) financial report for 2007, showing income of \$26,797, expenses of \$18,641 and a balance forward to 2008 of \$8,156. The Commissioners requested that a written audit report be presented at the next regular meeting on May 16, 2008.

Extended the application deadline for the District's 2008 Shoreland Restoration Grant Program, from March 31 to July 31, 2008.

Directed the Water Quality Core Group to serve as a **Special Task Force to review pending applications for Shoreland Restoration Grants** and to report to the Commission on actions taken. Tom O'Hern agreed to serve on the Special Task Force.

Authorized extension of the current planning grant end date from June 30 to December 30, 2008.

Reviewed submission for the **Newsletter**

Naming Contest. No action was taken. Commission members reported they have received positive comments about the new format and content of the newsletter.

Accepted a report from Carol Vantine on the **redesign of the Pipe Lakes website**, including initial set up costs and projected ongoing annual expenses to maintain and update the website.

**UPCOMING
COMMISSION MEETINGS
EVERYONE WELCOME!**

May 16	3PM	2198 W. Pipe Lake CT
May 24	9AM	Special Meeting Christ Church
June 13	3PM	2198 W Pipe Lake CT
July 11	3PM	2198 W. Pipe lake CT
Aug 16	3PM	2198 W. Pipe Lake CT
Aug 30	9AM	Annual Meeting Christ Church
Oct 3	3PM	2198 W. Pipe Lake CT

BASS FISHING-DNR

Smallmouth bass are not abundant and anglers are encouraged to release smallmouth bass. Largemouth bass are overabundant. The DNR encourages harvesting largemouth bass in the 8-13 inch range.

The daily bag limit for bass is 3 in total. There is no minimum limit on bass, but all bass between 14 inches and 18 inches must be released immediately. Only one bass larger than 18 inches is allowed. More information is available at www.dnr.state.wi.

**RENTING BEDROOMS
- Polk County**

Anyone renting sleeping accommodations for money in Polk County must be licensed and inspected by the Polk County Health Dept. For more information on inspection contact Brian Hobbs, Environmental Sanitarian (715-485-8532). For more information on licensing contact Sara McCurdy at 715-485-9279.

**TRANSPORTING
INVASIVE SPECIES
- Polk County**

Polk County recently made it illegal to leave or enter a lake in the county with any aquatic plant or invasive animal species. Penalties will be assessed against violators. Be sure to check your vehicles and boats carefully. Tim Ritten is the Land and Resources contact (715-485-8699) at the County or check their website www.co.polk.wi.us

Everyone is encouraged to attend our May 24th meeting. It is a time to meet and greet folks you haven't seen through the winter and a time to catch up on what the watershed is doing to protect our lakes and animal habitat. We meet at Christ Church on Cty G at 9:00 AM.

AGENDA

- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- FINANCIAL REPORTS
- PICNIC AND BOAT PARADE DATES
- REQUEST FOR CANDIDATES FOR 2 OPEN COMMISSION SPOTS
- PRESENTATION ON ROLES A CONSERVANCY CAN PLAY IN LAKE MANAGEMENT
- PROGRESS UPDATE ON 2008 GOALS
- UPDATE ON 5 YEAR LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN
- ADJOURN

NEW LOOK FOR OUR WEBSITE!

www.pipelakes.org

- Check out our updated website—we have tried to make it easier to use and include more useful information.
- We have added key reports about our watershed from consultants and our monitoring efforts.
- We will publish minutes of all District meetings and financial reports as they are updated.
- Look for news and helpful links to other websites.
- Use the CONTACT US page to give us feedback or ask questions.



Picture by Peggy Weber