

Big Sugar Bush Notes

May 2017 Volume 27 Number 1

BIG SUGAR BUSH LAKE ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 27, 10:00 a.m.

Richwood Winery

By- law changes will be voted on May 27

Your Big Sugar Bush Lake Association Board is proposing two changes to the by-laws:

- 1.) We are proposing to change from two Big Sugar Bush Lake Association membership meetings per year to one annual membership meeting the second Saturday in June.
- 2.) We are proposing that the Big Sugar Bush Lake Association Board meet at least two times per year

Your Board is proposing the change to just one annual meeting and holding that meeting on a non-holiday weekend based on feedback we've received:

- Many members have relatives and other guests visiting on the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, sometimes making it difficult to get to the meetings;
- Our Spring and fall agendas are largely repetitive and the elected Board can address most issues that might come along.

Ice off on Big Sugar Bush April 7,

Big Sugar Bush neighbors watch closely for that special day that truly means spring is here. Ice off was earlier this year than some years, but not a record breaker. The weather had its ups and downs this spring. About, 70 lakes in southern Mn. lost their ice during the first week in March, some setting records. Many of those lakes refroze the following week surprising Pete Boulay, climatologist with the state climatology office, who had never heard of that ever happening.

Climatologists believe reporting ice out dates as data that is indispensable and helps better understand our lakes and climate. This department appreciates our reporting this information and encourages us to continue collecting and learning from shared information about our natural world. This data for Big Sugar Bush is being recorded by Ken Mattson and goes back to 1993. It is reported to the Mn. Pollution Control Agency.

ice.pca@state.mn.us Lake Ice Reporter webpage

“We all have a shared responsibility to protect our lakes, natural areas and wildlife habitat: to use only what we need, make smarter choices, and pass on to future generations the beauty, wildlife, water and natural resources we have today.” — Author Unknown

Aquatic Invaders Summit II

written and attended by **Chuck Becker**

The Aquatic Invaders Summit II was held in St. Cloud on October 5 and 6, 2016. This Summit was coordinated by MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates and was attended by 343 people from 65 Minnesota counties and several states. There were over 40 breakout sessions, as well as keynote speakers, regional discussion groups and a Trade Show with 25 exhibitors.

The number of sessions and the variety of session topics required a multitude of expert presenters. Presenters included people from MN DNR, MN Fisheries, Federal Fish & Wildlife, National Park Service, Minnesota Tourism, MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates, University of Minnesota, Flathead Basin Commission (Montana), several Minnesota COLA's, as well as many other organizations.

Following are some of my takeaways from the sessions I attended. (With four breakout sessions running concurrently, I could only attend 25% of the presentations.)

- Besides the fishing, recreational use and water quality impacts, invasive species can also have a significant impact on property values for lakeshore property owners.
- Aquatic invasive species is a particularly significant issue for the State of Minnesota where we have a \$13.6 billion tourist industry heavily dependent on clean lakes and rivers.
- Research into the prevention, containment, control and eradication of aquatic invasive species is ramping up now but helpful scientific information from states east of us who have experienced these challenges far earlier, are either non-existent or of little help.
- Recent research in Minnesota suggests that attributes like size, shape, depth,

clarity, water temperatures, etc. influence how a lake reacts to invasive species.

- Invasive species can dramatically change the fish species in a lake.

What are some of the things we can do to protect Big Sugar Bush?

- **Continue to educate ourselves, family, friends and other visitors to BSB about aquatic invasive species and how to prevent them. (Clean, Drain, Dry!)**
- **Make sure you talk to your guests who bring their own watercraft while visiting BSB, especially if they have had their watercraft in infected waters.**
- **Make sure any used docks or lifts you might purchase are cleaned and dried for the proper amount of time before installing them in BSB.**
- **As a Lake Association, we should consider joining MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR). The annual fee would be \$150.00.**
- **As individuals, we should also consider joining MLR. They appear to be one of the strongest organizations lobbying for lakeshore property owners, including for fair property taxes. Please find out more at <http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org/>**
- **As an Association, stay actively involved with the Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA).**

Here is a link to all of the Summit presentations: (A special thanks to Becker County COLA who paid my registration so no cost to our Association!)

Chuck

Becker <http://aisummit.mnlakesandrivers.org/summit-at-a-glance/#breakout>



Loon Nests Built and Launched

As a follow-up to last year's successful loon hatch, Larry Michelson, with help from Ken Mattson built two man-made loon nests and placed them on the lake –one in the vicinity of Jerry and Cheryl Amundson's and one in Bullard's bay. Please keep your distance as coming too close might disturb their nesting. Let's hope this may help nature take its course. Supplies for this project came from membership fees. One more nest will be added next year. This type of nest has been successful on other lakes.



Buoys

Buoys will again be placed in the large channel to slow boats and keep them from disturbing the lake bottom. High speed in shallow water stirs up phosphorus in the lake bottom and causes algae growth and decreased water clarity. Overall compliance with the no wake was good last year as most boaters respect the no wake zone. The buoys are permitted by Becker county sheriff department.

[Photos by F. Mattson unless indicated]

Larry Michelson and Ken Mattson



John Boots & Kaye Lommen



Steve Kohlhepp

Tree Planting on the Island

On the day after Arbor Day, Sat. Apr. 29, ten volunteers planted 100 white pine. They were planted on the island and peninsula. This project was funded by your membership fees. The DNR provided protective sleeves which will stop deer from eating the tops off which would retard the growth. With sunshine, rain, and time, we will have an even more beautiful area. The island was purchased by Big Sugar Bush property owners and donated to the DNR in 1993.



Bob Bachman, Chuck Becker, John Boots, Fran Mattson, Kaye Lommen, Larry Michelson, and Ken Mattson Not pictured is Steve Odegaard, Steve Kohlhepp, and Stephen Fulop

Two Surveys to be Conducted on Big Sugar Bush Lake This Summer

In talking to Nathan Olson, DNR fisheries manager, Steve Odegaard learned that an Index of Biological Integrity will be conducted on Big Sugar Bush Lake this summer. In addition to this survey, BSB is also scheduled for the periodic game fish survey which is conducted every five years.

The Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) surveys are conducted so that we can evaluate the “health” of a lake. Based on the lake’s physical characteristics, we have an idea of what fish species should be present. If we do not find those species when we conduct our sampling, then we know that there may be some problems with the habitat in the lake or issues with the lake’s watershed that is affecting the water quality of the lake. If a lake has an IBI score that is lower than what is expected, then it would be listed as impaired for aquatic life use. Usually follow-up surveys and additional field work are conducted before a lake receives this listing, just to make sure the listing is warranted. Similar to when a lake is listed as impaired for water quality purposes, a lake that is listed as impaired for aquatic life use is eligible for money from the Clean Water Fund of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment that was approved by Minnesota voters in 2008. Commonly a local unit of government, such as a County Soil and Water Conservation District, would apply for this money in order to conduct a project that would attempt to remedy the problems in the lake.

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Health Benefits Come From Time in the Forest

There is scientific evidence supporting the value of forest bathing. This is basically being in the presence of trees. It is proven that a forest visit has positive effects which lasted a month following each weekend in the woods. A Japanese study running from 2004 to 2012, shows that forest bathing tends to lower heart rate and blood pressure, reduce stress hormone production, boost the immune system and improve overall feelings of wellbeing.

Subjects showed significant increases in cell activity in the week after being out in nature. Cells in the immune system were measured before and after exposure to the woods. Just being in the presence of trees-no hiking, no counting steps, the point is to relax rather than accomplish anything.

Forest air doesn’t just feel fresher and better-inhaling phytoncides seems to actually improve immune system function. Phytoncides, is an oil emitted to protect trees from germs and insects.

Forest bathing is a break from your phone and computer, from all that noise of social media and email. Brief exposure to greenery can relieve stress levels. Experts have recommended doses of nature as part of treatment of attention disorders in children. The evidence suggests that we don’t seem to need a lot of exposure to gain from nature-but regular contact appears to improve our immune system function and our wellbeing. **Taken from article in Quartz submitted by Bob Bachman**

Winter Life at Sugar Bush



Ring in the New Year



Becker family photos by Kelly Mertes



The Pesky Porcupine

by Fran Mattson

Some of our Big Sugar Bush neighbors have had issues with the pesky porcupine. One decided to snack on Burke's front steps, as well as visiting the Frasee's and Mattson's yards. Siesta, Mattson's daughter's dog got in big trouble when it tangled with a young porcupine and got a mouthful of quills. Initially quills were extracted with a pliers, but when the dog stopped eating they realized there were more quills inside the mouth which required a holiday weekend trip to the vet which was painful to the wallet as well as the dog.

The porcupine's chewing on trees can actually kill the tree. They need to hone their continually growing teeth. They have an appetite for buds and bark of trees. The fisher is their main predator. In the past, they were a source of meat as well as using the quills for ornamental uses. Jewelry is still made locally.

Their unique defense system makes it obvious as to why they are left alone. They actually have a very soft undercoat. An adult weighs between 10-15 pounds and has 30,000 quills, the longest being on the back and tail. The quills are raised when the porcupine senses danger. Typically they would scurry away and climb a tree, but as a last resort may release 100 quills by slapping an invader with its tail. They are near-sighted and slow moving. They make their homes in hollow trees, never venturing far from their dens. Large amounts of scat on the

ground will indicate where they are living with stripped branches nearby.,

One winter when I was cross country skiing, I spotted two porcupine in different trees from each other on multiple days, always in the same locations until the day a blizzard was forecast and then they were nowhere to be seen. It was as though they could sense the change in weather.

Mating occurs for porcupines in Oct. or early Nov. at the age of 1 or 2 years, with offspring coming in Apr. or May. The female goes into heat for 8-12 hours which attracts the males. The males will follow her grunting and humming. Once the female chooses her partner, she will engage in a kind of a dance, standing on their hind feet, they will embrace placing paws on shoulders and rub noses whining and grunting, then falling to the ground where the female flattens her quills and moves her tail out of the way. Once they have mated they go their own ways.

A liquid repellent can be brushed on trees or wrapping metal around the bottom can give protection against the pesky porcupine. After all, we are in their territory. Don't be surprised if they come to visit your yard.

Facts in this article are taken from a Northwoods essay submitted by Sally Prichett

A FISH STORY FROM THE PAST

In May 1993, George Rousu, a lifelong resident of Big Sugar Bush Lake area was interviewed at a lake association meeting. At the time he shared memories that covered 60 years or more of this area.

He told of a fishing experience with his dad when he was about 13 years old. His dad rowed the boat with no rods and reels of today's world. He thought they had a chalk line. They were trolling past what today would be Rod Bergen's when he got a bite. He held on tightly to his line, but couldn't budge it. He handed the line to his dad and George took over the oars. His dad told him to head for shore as he wasn't able to bring it in from the boat either. George beached the boat and his dad clubbed the northern. They measured it with a folding ruler and it was 51 inches from the tip of the nose to tail. It was always good fishing, lots of fish when he was a boy. They threw back bass if they weren't at least 4 pounds.

According to George the area where the access is today was a separate lake which was called Gee or McGee and the Latvola boys opened up the small channel which opened up the lake. Rainy years brought water levels up. The Schmidt family owned much of the property around the lake. In 1965, they offered to sell it to George's dad. They had 710 acres and wanted \$10 an acre for it. George told his dad- "who would ever want to buy anything out here?" He didn't think any banker in his right mind would loan \$7,000 on something like that. One year later Hilding Hagen bought it.

Robert Burnside passed away Apr. 8, 2017

Burnside retired to Big Sugar Bush after working 23 years at the VA hospital. He was born in DL and went to school in Hawley. He joined the US Marine Corp and served in Viet Nam. He loved fishing and working at his taxidermy business. Taken from his obituary

Red Fire Number Signs

If you still have a red fire number sign posted by your driveway, please take it down. They are no longer an accurate number. The blue signs replaced those and are current address and fire location information,



Ron Jenson's dinner guests



Big Sugar Bush Lake Association Board Members

President: Chuck Becker 2015-2018

Vice President: Ken Mattson 2016-2019

Treasurer: Dean Bellefeuille 2014-2017

Secretary: Kent Anderson 2016-2019

Steve Odegaard 2015-2018

Jimmy Olson 2014-2017

Kaye Lohman 2016-2019

Larry Michelson 2015-2018

Mary Kohlhepp 2016-2019

Spring syruping time with Howard Lommen and Larry Michelson
photo by Kaye Lommen.

Webmaster: Ross Collins

Web content: Nancy Nornes Olson

Newsletter editor: Fran Mattson

Big Sugar Bush Website: bigsugarbush.net

Facebook page: Big Sugar Bush Lake Association

Submissions for the fall 2017 newsletter are due August 1. Email stories and photos to fnkmattson@gmail.com