



# PINE VIEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
BIG PINE LAKES ASSOCIATION

**August 2022**

P.O. Box 190 Finlayson, MN 55735

[www.BigPineLakes.org](http://www.BigPineLakes.org)

## BPLA Board of Directors

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(Years of service noted in parenthesis)

## BPLA Committee Leaders

Boat Parade:

North lake - Lisa Drake

South lake - Dan Frey

Fireworks: Dan Frey

Logo wear: Roger Olson

Membership: John Mueller

Merchant Directory: Roger Olson

Newsletter: John Mueller/Dan Frey

Picnic: Ron Redding/Dan Frey

Projects: Don Roepke/Ron Redding

Road Cleanup: Dwight Benoy

Volunteer Committee:

Ron Redding

Water Quality: Dwight Benoy

Fish Habitat: Don Roepke

## Chairman's Column

John Mueller

After starting the early season with significant rain activity and high-water challenges, we've enjoyed a pretty nice summer around the lakes. BPLA took the initiative to connect with both the Aitkin and Pine County Sheriffs in May when the lake levels rose 18"+ in 24 hours advising them on the lake level changes. With their endorsements, BPLA posted numerous signs around the lakes and posted on social media sites advising against boat wakes on the lakes. Thanks to everyone for respecting our efforts and supporting the "No Wake" requests.

BPLA has been active throughout the summer. We helped sponsor the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend festivities which included our annual boat parade on each lake (in the drizzle) and the fireworks on the evening of July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The fog bank that rolled in during the fireworks display will certainly help everyone remember 2022 as the year we could only "hear" the fireworks. It was especially memorable for anyone who needed to navigate home via boat after the fireworks.

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, BPLA hosted its annual membership picnic at the Narrows Picnic area. We had 65 people attend the picnic to enjoy the great food and mingle with their neighbors at the lake. A special shout out to **Dan Frey** and **Ron Redding** for coordinating everything and for bringing it all together on a beautiful July afternoon.

Another shout out is due to **Roger Olson** and **Don Roepke**. Over this past summer we have received reports from kayakers that there were beaver dams appearing in Strawberry Creek restricting water movement into Pine Lake. We were able to work with a local trapper to remove the beaver. Roger, Don and I spent a couple of hours after the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend removing the dams and opening up the channel again. Maintaining consistent water flowage in Strawberry Creek has been a priority for BPLA over the seasons to allow fish spawning in the creek in the spring.

Our Fall Membership meeting is right around the corner. It is scheduled for **Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>** at the Finlayson Community Center from 9:15 - 11:00. Doors will open with coffee and rolls at 8:30 am. If you have questions about the meeting, please reach out to one of your BPLA Board members.

*Chairman's column continued - page 3*



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## Volunteer Days – Project Days

Don Roepke

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time assisting with projects to benefit our lakes. We have completed two project days so far this year with two more planned before the end of the year.

To date we have completed: installation of the BPLA fishing dock and removal of debris in the BPLA Buffer Zone, removal of large planks and wooden bench from the narrows, cleared downed trees and the trail to overlook, trimming vegetation around BPLA identification signs and installation of replacement signs at School House Creek, Pine Lake Overlook, and Ash Creek.

Our remaining Project Days will be held on **August 20th and September 17th**, *Note: Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> is also a Roadside Cleanup Day*. As always, we will meet at the BPLA picnic area on the South lake at 9:00 am with snacks and refreshments provided.

Upcoming projects include: straightening and reinforcing clearance signs on the bridge at the Narrows, removal of loon platforms and repair of one, removal of BPLA fishing dock and checking the hiking trails for debris. If anyone has additional projects that you think would be beneficial to our members, please pass them on to me for consideration at [drgrouse@yahoo.com](mailto:drgrouse@yahoo.com)

## BPLA Picnic

Dan Frey and Ron Redding

This year's BPLA picnic was held on Sat. July 16<sup>th</sup>. We had 65 folks attend on a sunny, very humid, "Minnesota summer" day, where shade was a must. Thankfully the new canopies provided some relief to most everyone, allowing them to visit, catch up, and meet new lake neighbors. Thanks to everyone for bringing your fabulous side dishes and delicious desserts to share. The chicken, rolls and sides from Chris' Foods, were amazing as always. Thanks for coming out to socialize and we hope to see you all again soon.

A huge thank you once again to Ron and Sue Redding for all their help in making this such a success! Thanks also to John & Denise Mueller, Don & Shirley Roepke, and my wife Renee for helping organize and set up. Many thanks also to all of you that stayed and helped clean up after the picnic.

## Buffer Zones update

Maria Gobely

This summer has shown starts and stops in Buffer Zone activity. We had an early start to plans and designs but mother nature wasn't cooperating with the late spring and high water to get final site visits and planning done for funding approval.

In June we did a group willow cutting to cover the summer projects plus repair a lot of previous willow wattle that was damaged by ice heaves and flooding this spring. One of the planned projects was pushed to next summer because the owners are working on flood damage this year. Later in June the Pung project was done. The picture is their willow wattle getting ready to go in the water.



The Illi's will be a 2-phase project because the DNR is so far behind in permits. The largest planting, phase-one, was completed as scheduled August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Phase 2 will be the small area that requires a contractor to grade. We're currently awaiting approval on all the permits and scheduling alignment with the contractor prior to completing that work. I'll let people know on social media when we have the date for phase 2.

August and September have 5 site visits scheduled for 2023 projects. We're hoping to get planning and funding proposals done this fall in preparation for completion in 2023 to avoid similar 2-3 month delays we experienced in this years efforts.

The Murphy project is scheduled for Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup> start time 9:00 AM. 65051 Big Pine Rd. Bring work gloves, water shoes/boots for shoreline plants, and your helping hands.

Volunteers are greatly appreciated! It's truly amazing watching the fast growth of and the expanding footage of shoreline with buffer zones! Please reach out to Maria at [gobely@hotmail.com](mailto:gobely@hotmail.com) with any questions regarding buffer zones.

*Chairman's column, cont. from page 1*

The meeting will include updates from your BPLA board on key topics of information related to the association. We will also be offering a ZOOM call in for those who would like to join remotely. Details regarding the Zoom call will be distributed to association members via email the week prior to the meeting.

We also will conduct the annual election of our BPLA board. For 2022, we have 4 current board members (**Maria Gobely; Don Roepke; Dwight Benoy; and Jim Corbo**) who have completed either their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> two-year term and have expressed interest in continuing to represent their respective lakes. We also have 1 immediate opening to represent Big Pine Lake on the BPLA Board and are seeking interested individuals. During our upcoming fall meeting we will be voting on the current board members future involvement and introducing other applicants. If you are interested in submitting your name to be considered as a board.

Thanks for supporting the BLPA, see you around the lakes, *John*

## **Fisheries Update**

Don Roepke

The 2022 Minnesota DNR Survey of our Lake's is ongoing: The first part of the survey is completed. It was "The Near Shore Sampling portion". The DNR allowed me to observe and ask questions about this process. A 50-foot-long seining net was walked through the weeds with one end always held tight to the shore. All species collected are identified and recorded then released back to lake. Then to make sure all species are captured in the area, it is electro fished along shore. The crew repeated this 10 times on each lake at preselected areas. The full report will be online in the spring of 2023. But they did collect some interesting species, including Sculpins and Least Darters on one site along the rocky southeast shore of Pine Lake. These are both classified as "intolerant" species which means they are most sensitive to decreases in water quality and habitat alterations. This area has rocks and springs flowing into the lake. Fisheries said they do not see these species in other lakes in their district. They also netted a dock wheel while doing netting.

The Fish Net Survey is scheduled for the first weeks of August. You may have noticed net floats in the lakes during this time. This will show the population and size of the various fish in our lakes.

The Shoreline rating measurement will be done in late August or early September. This measurement is an indicator of the shoreline's ability to support the fishery with food while supplying improved water quality by plant filtration.

Walleye stocking is on schedule to stock 125 lbs. of fingerlings in Pine and 176 lbs. in Big Pine.

## **Fourth of July Fireworks - kinda**

Dan Frey

Well, that was the strangest night of fireworks in my 10+ years on the lake. With rain and drizzle most of the afternoon, many of you inquired whether the fireworks show would even happen. About 6pm, the skies started to clear. After a quick check with our vendor, we sent word out that "**We were: Go For Launch!**" I guess Mother Nature didn't see my post. The boats all gathered at dusk, there was excitement in the air... but there was also a huge fog bank that rolled in just before the fireworks began. From my location, we maybe saw the first 3 launches. With the fog and smoke from the fireworks, we saw nothing but a slight flash and a big BOOM! I also heard many stories about the exciting boat rides back home after the show. As my aunt used to say when things didn't go as planned, "we're making memories". Please remember to contribute to the "Fireworks Fund" when submitting your dues next year. The Big Pine Lakes Association is a 501(c)(3) and all donations are tax deductible.

Our sincere thanks again to **Don and Patt Makela** for allowing us to use their property for the launch site. We couldn't do this without their generosity. I also want to thank **Steve Karel & Rocky Bullis** for placing the warning buoys around the launch site, as well as the torches to light the channel for the return trips to the North lake. (definitely a big help this year) Also, my thanks to **Lou Beardsley, Dave Brandt,** and **Don Roepke** for coming out to help clean up the launch sight the next day. Much appreciated!

# PINE VIEWS

## 2022 Boat Parade Lisa Drake and Dan Frey

This year there were 14 very dedicated and creative groups that toughed it out in heavy drizzle and periods of steady rain, to creatively decorate their boats and participate in this year's annual BPLA boat parades. You never cease to amaze us and your lake neighbors with your creativity and spirit. This includes all those that went down to their docks to watch and cheer them all on! Thanks for another fun parade!

Below is a list of all entrants and pictures of this year's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners. If you would like a photo of your boat entry, please email me at: [dndfrey@gmail.com](mailto:dndfrey@gmail.com). Check out our BPLA website for additional photos.

### Big Pine (North) Lake

There were eight parade participants on Big Pine Lake. Many soggy thanks to the **Bjerke, Mikulak, Grover** and **Drake** families for helping make this year's parade another success! The 2022 Boat Parade North Lake participants were: *The Mueller Family, The Tohkern Family, The Gennrich Family, The Lee Family, The Leshar Family, The Nietz Family, Blake Auge, and The Reimann Family.*

1<sup>st</sup> place: the **Reimann Family** with:  
**Up North!**



2<sup>nd</sup> place: **Blake Auge** as:  
**Freedom Fisherman!**



3<sup>rd</sup> place: the **Nietz Family** with:  
**Gas Prices!**



### Pine (South) Lake

We had six parade participants on Pine Lake. Many soggy thanks to the **Opitz, Herrmann** and **Rod** families for helping make this year's parade another success! The 2022 Boat Parade South Lake participants were: *The Olson Family, The Benoy Family, The Dexter Family, The Orv Redding Family, The Onischuk Family and The Dotzler Family.*

1<sup>st</sup> place: the **Dotzler Family** with:  
**Ugly Ducks!**



2<sup>nd</sup> place: the **Onischuk Family** with:  
**Christmas in July!**



3<sup>rd</sup> place: the **Orv Redding Family** with:  
**'Merica!**



## Thank You for Boating Responsibly

Jim Corbo, Secretary

Back in June, the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) held public listening sessions regarding waves, wake boats, and wake surfing. Perhaps you have heard about this newer sport. I am a huge fan. In fact, I used to own a wake boat and intend to own one again in the near future. So, one can imagine the concern when small, newly formed activist groups are trying to restrict and regulate the use of wake boats on Minnesota lakes. What is even more concerning is that is happening on the local lake association level and many homeowners are unaware that their association is considering restricting the use of their lake. In the case of Lake Minnetonka, the LMCD has decided to evaluate restricting and regulating wake boats and wake surfing even despite proposed education-based legislation that currently sits pending in the Minnesota Legislature.

Personally, I do not agree with what the LMCD is attempting. This is not the job for a lake association; this is a job for state legislators and other local officials such as the DNR. If a lake association like the LMCD can go forward and set onerous restrictions on wake boats and wake surfing – something that has never been done before – this could set precedent for other lake associations to do the same. Let it be known that BPLA is not considering these restrictions. Nor should it.

As I follow the Lake Minnetonka happenings, which are still occurring as I write this, I have learned that the LMCD has taken matters into its own hands for various reasons (aside from its response to activists). One of those reasons I will cover here. When given an opportunity to comment, homeowners indicated a significant increase in the number of larger boats on the lake (not just wake boats). Larger boats produce larger waves. Wake surfing requires adding weight to one's boat to create a larger wave to surf on. These larger waves have the potential to negatively impact shorelines, as well as disturb wildlife and other people fishing or swimming or (my favorite) floatilla-ing. But most important to note, these same homeowners commented that they are more concerned with how these boats are being operated. As an example, wake boats maneuvering too close to shore or other boats, making too many repeated passes, playing loud music all the time. So, while I disagree with the actions of the LMCD, I do agree with this particular reason.

Back to good ol' Big Pine and Pine Lake! We are a fraction of the size of Lake Minnetonka so we do not see all the same issues that they do; however, it would be negligent of me not to acknowledge that we are seeing larger boats and pontoons on the lake. Again, I look forward to owning another wake boat and getting back into surfing. Try it with me sometime! Additionally, transient boating is less common here compared to Lake Minnetonka, but it does exist – whether it is guests, renters, or the occasional "tourist." There's no saying what sized boat they'll be pulling behind them. Yes, shore erosion is a legitimate concern up here and down there. BPLA is working hard to preserve our lakes by slowing and even reversing erosion by creating natural buffer zones. There have been many studies completed by various professional groups nation-wide that address the wave and its impact on the shore. Some of these studies are currently being presented to the LMCD. These studies show that any type of wave can potentially cause damage to a shoreline. They also show that the longer a boat-generated wave has to "spread out," the weaker it becomes and ultimately has the same effect on a shoreline as a naturally occurring, wind-blown wave. Which leads to my final point: operating boats responsibly (and legally) directly affects the quality of our lakes as well as other activities taking place on them. Overall, I can say that for the most part, I have seen nothing but responsible boating on our lakes this year (I am on Big Pine more than Pine for the record). **So thank you! It has been a great season!**

**As a reminder, our Fall Membership meeting is right around the corner. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 3rd at the Finlayson Community Center. Social time starts at 8:30 with donuts and coffee, the actual meeting starts at 9:15 am.**



## Local Business Spotlight



### **Northview Bank**

Crystal Kilichowski

Northview Bank has proudly served Minnesota and Wisconsin for over 100 years. Northview Bank offers competitive rates on mortgages, home equity loans, construction loans, vacation property loans and even land loans. We are locally owned, under the leadership of the Pogatchnik family, so decisions and service happen right here.

Northview Bank has been a leader in financing bare land for decades and has extensive knowledge with financing these products. We provide quick turnaround times, and the flexibility to get transactions closed with the products and services only a hometown bank can provide.

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### **Water Quality Update**

Dwight Benoy

If you weren't already aware, BPLA has a new website that includes lots of water quality information about our lakes. Just go to [www.bigpinelakes.org](http://www.bigpinelakes.org), then scroll to **Water Quality and Lake Information**. Click on View Water Quality Reports. There you will find lake information from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. You will also find BPLA Water Quality Readings which are the test results from the water sampling my wife Pat and I have been doing since 2013. These test results are shared with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the University of Minnesota. This information was used by the MPCA to develop Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) reports which are also linked to the BPLA website. Implementation of some of these strategies is being developed, including strategies for which BPLA may be able to participate. You'll hear more about this in the future, so stay tuned.

## Local Businesses

**Please patronize the businesses  
that support the BPLA!  
They are important to our success!**

A&M Pumps_____	320-676-3386
Aitkin County Sheriff_____	218-927-7435
American Septic_____	320-384-7300
Ausmus Floor & Furnishing_____	320-384-6101
Brett Paige Construction_____	320-630-6270
Chris' Food Center_____	320-245-2229
Complete Cabin Care _____	763-898-0474
Custom Portable Docks & Lifts__	320-384-6296
Double W Tree Service_____	320-279-1472
East Central Energy_____	800-254-7944
Finlayson Ag & Hardware_____	320-233-7372
Finlayson Storage_____	612-229-9205
Grace Construction _____	320-279-1552
Gruve _____	763-438-9365
Hayland Woods Native Nursery _	320-983-2584
LaRose Greenhouse & Nursery _	320-233-7455
Leach Electric_____	320-532-3277
Lindgren Land Surveying_____	651-303-9217
Man's Mowing_____	320-630-5336
Maple Run Orchard_____	320-279-1306
Matt's Sanitation_____	320-384-7137
Members Cooperative Credit Un.	320-245-5251
Moose Lake Implement & Sports	218-485-4486
MPJ Enterprises_____	320-245-5127
Northview Bank_____	320-233-7575
Old & New Staining & Painting __	218-341-7590
Paul's Portables _____	320-245-6802
Pine County Sheriff _____	320-629-8380
Pine Lake Mini Storage_____	320-279-3899
Purple Pumper_____	320-245-6812
Rapit Printing_____	651-633-4600
Remax Select, Inc._____	320-679-2594
Sandstone Ace Hardware_____	320-245-2235
Sandy's Salon_____	320-233-6192
Schoenrock Construction_____	320-233-6192
Town & Country Insurance_____	320-233-6684
United Country Real Estate_____	320-245-2502
The Vintage Pub _____	320-279-2622
Xtreme Custom Canvas _____	763-647-0316