



# PINE VIEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
BIG PINE LAKES ASSOCIATION

May 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

Welcome to Spring! After a delayed ice out, residents are finishing packing away their winter equipment, bringing out the summer supplies and water activity on the lakes is beginning. It shaping up to be another great season around the lakes.

Here are some highlights to look for in this Pine Views edition: 2 articles included from outside sources, an update regarding IBI Surveys on our lakes from Deb VerMeesch, Assistant Area Fisheries Director, MN DNR and an article submitted by Caleb Anderson, Pine County Soil & Water regarding Zoning restrictions related to lakeshore properties. Additionally, Maria Gobely has provided an update on our Buffer Zone activities in her update and is soliciting additional interested parties for future buffer zone projects.

In other news, BPLA was awarded \$500 in grant money again in 2022 from Pine County in our efforts to educate our membership on AIS avoidance. Part of this effort included the distribution of the brochure each BPLA member received with their annual membership confirmation and sticker this year. We'll have additional materials available for distribution and sharing at our upcoming May membership meeting.

Speaking of which, our BPLA Spring Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, May 28 at the Finlayson Community Center. The meeting will start at 9:15, with coffee and donuts being served at 8:30. We will also be establishing a ZOOM dial in number that interested members can use to participate in the meeting in lieu of attending the meeting in person. The ZOOM meeting detail information will be forwarded via email a couple of weeks prior to the meeting.

We continue to seek an additional Big Pine Lake property owner for our BPLA Board to join Maria Gobely, Jim Corbo and John Mueller in representing their lake. If you are interested in learning more about BPLA and serving your lake community, please contact one of our board members or join us at the meeting May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks for your support of BPLA and making the lakes a great place to be.

I look forward to seeing you at the lake! *John*



**As a reminder, our Memorial Day Membership meeting is right around the corner. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 28th at the Finlayson Community Center. Social time starts at 8:30 with donuts and coffee, the actual meeting starts at 9:15 am.**



## Buffer Zones

Maria Gobely

2022 Buffer Zone planning is moving along quicker than our spring thaw!

I'm working on scheduling spring site visits and projects. Please contact me asap if you're interested in a buffer zone in the near future so you can get on the spring site visit schedule. The site visit is the 1<sup>st</sup> step in the process. The consultant works with you on how you use the area and your aesthetic preferences to design the project that is most beneficial to you, your shoreline, and the lakes.

Our consultants will be presenting at the Spring Membership meeting. This would be a great opportunity to ask the true experts any questions you might have on buffer zones.

I'll post the schedule and updates of site visits, projects, and willow cutting on social media. Volunteers are greatly appreciated, and projects go much quicker with more helping hands. It's a great way to get outside and get to know your lake neighbors.

### Buffer Zone 2022 Calendar

Mid-May	-----	Spring Site visits
June 11 <sup>th</sup> at 1pm	---	Willow Cutting
June 25 <sup>th</sup> at 9am	---	Pung project (Pine Lake, 11037-117 <sup>th</sup> Street)
TBD	-----	Murphy project (Big Pine)
TBD	-----	Illi project (Big Pine)
TBD	-----	Budde project (Pine Lake)



### **BPLA Picnic**

Dan Frey/Ron Redding



This year's BPLA picnic is scheduled for **Noon, Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup>**. It will be at the BPLA picnic area on the south lake, near the boat landing. Bring your family, your favorite beverages, your chair, and maybe a dish or dessert to share. We'll provide chicken, buns, coleslaw, soda, and water. We're hoping for good weather and looking forward to seeing you there.

## Membership

John Mueller

Thank you to our members who have submitted their annual dues in 2022. As of this writing we have 185 families who have submitted their association fees. In addition to their annual membership fees, members have also helped by making contributions to our Water Quality Projects fund, 4th of July Fireworks fund (to be held Sunday, July 3) and the Food Shelf fund. Thanks to each of you for your contributions and commitments to date.

As part of the annual membership drive, renewing members can submit a guess as to when the Ice Out will be each spring. In 2022, we had 273 submissions with the renewals. (March = 25; April = 243; May = 5). We will be announcing the winners of the Ice Out contest at our upcoming May membership meeting. These families will receive a free 2022 BPLA membership for their efforts.

If you haven't sent your 2022 membership in yet, please do so soon so that you can continue to receive BPLA communications and informational updates. If you need a BPLA annual membership form, they are available on our new BPLA web site. [www.BigPineLakes.org](http://www.BigPineLakes.org)

## Fisheries Update

Don Roepke

During 2022, we will be seeing Minnesota DNR personnel more than in previous years. The Hinckley Area Fisheries Department will be stocking Walleye fingerlings in both lakes this fall. Both lakes are also scheduled for a Standard Lake Survey using, gill nets, trap nets and electro fishing. Starting this year, they plan to perform fish sampling near the shoreline using a method called the Index of Biotec Integrity (IBI) and a: Score The Shore (STS), evaluation. These results will be included as part of the Standard Lake Survey.

An article written by Deb Vermeersch, Assistant Area Fisheries Supervisor is included in this month's newsletter. Deb explains in more detail what will be happening and reasons for the new sampling processes. She also includes a link to a web site in the article, which guides lakeshore owners through scoring their own shoreline. I completed the survey and found it informative; it gave me insight into what makes up a healthy shoreline.

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## Light Pollution

Dwight Benoy

Wikipedia defines light pollution as the presence of unwanted, inappropriate, or excessive artificial [lighting](#). Light trespass occurs when unwanted light enters one's property.

Having a home in suburbia, I find it such a delight to escape the light pollution of the city and to see the heavenly display of stars more clearly while at the lake. However, there are many lakeshore owners who leave lights on overnight, I assume for security and safety concerns.

Besides disrupting star gazing, artificial light can have an adverse effect on organisms and ecosystems, including nocturnal wildlife and insects like fireflies. The rhythm of life is governed by patterns of light and dark, as we all know from our sleep routine and how it can be disrupted by light.

Please review your lighting set-up at the lake to see if you are contributing to light pollution or if you are a light trespasser. Be respectful of your neighbors and be considerate to fish and wildlife by turning off your lights when they aren't needed. Who knows, you might also benefit from reduced energy costs while making a small impact on climate change.

## BPLA Fireworks Celebration!

Dan Frey

Our annual fireworks display will take place on **Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 PM**. Thanks once again to the generosity of Don and Pat Makela, the fireworks will be launched from their property which is near the public boat landing on the south lake. Please stay behind the buoys which are placed in the water to keep boats at a safe distance from the launching site. Please also remember to maintain a safe distance between other boats and have proper lighting on your boats when navigating back to your home after the show.

I will be looking for volunteers on Monday July 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM to help clean up the launch sight. Please check the NextDoor site for reminders or time changes. It should only take about 30 minutes.



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## 2022 Project Days and Roadway Clean-up

Don Roepke

May is finally here and it's now time for our first BPLA Project Day. Hopefully the weather will cooperate for the projects planned. Project Days are on Saturdays starting at 9:00 AM we will meet at the BPLA Dock near the Public Landing located on the South Lake. Water and snacks provided.

Project Days are scheduled for:

- May 21 (and Roadway Clean-up)
- June 25
- August 20
- September 17 (and Roadway Clean-up)

Planned tasks for 2022: put in BPLA dock on South Lake, put in Loon Platforms at ice out, remove Loon Platforms after nesting is complete to refurbish Platforms, clearing debris from hiking trails on S. Lake, replace the School House Creek and Pine Lake Overlook signs, remove weeds from Buffer Zones at public landing and narrows, remove obstructions from Strawberry Creek, clear debris from dam on Big Pine.

Contact me with other ideas for other potential projects for BPLA Project Days.



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**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ZONING, AND SOLID WASTE**

1610 Hwy 23 N • Sandstone, MN • 55072

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## **Lakeshore Zoning Standards Apply in Rural Communities**

If it wasn't evident in the past, it is definitely evident today; Pine County lakes are a desirable place to be! We've all heard the stories about Minnesotans migrating to rural properties and lake communities through the pandemic and this has been abundantly observable across our region. With the rise of construction projects and new property owners, it seems worthwhile to step back and provide a brief primer on how lakeshore zoning and property development is regulated...

The state shoreland rules provide a statewide baseline suite of zoning regulations that apply within 1,000' of a lake, 300' of a river, and the 100-year floodplain. These rules serve to protect the economic and aesthetic value of the landscape as well as water quality and habitat. The Pine County Zoning Department administers these rules and handles all permitting associated with shoreland zoning through the Pine County Shoreland Management Ordinance.

Construction of a structure or structural expansion, installation of a pre-fab structure or shed, patios, driveways, parking areas, shoreline alterations and riprap, and other dirt work projects all require permits from the Pine County Zoning Department. There are also some projects that may not require a permit, but certain rules apply that the property owner must be aware of. These topics include clearing trees on steep slopes and along the lakeshore, construction of boat ramps, drainage and stormwater diversion projects, and construction of beach sand blankets.

Unfortunately, our office has seen a number of projects being constructed without permits. Sometimes these matters can be easily remedied via after-the-fact permits, which are disincentivized by a double permit fee. However, there are also instances of projects that do not meet zoning regulations and are not permissible. These sticky situations can get very stressful for all parties involved, especially when projects must be ordered to be reversed.

Pine County Zoning Department staff are committed to helping landowners comply with zoning requirements and troubleshooting options for property improvements that meet all the rules. We recommend you secure all applicable permits prior to writing checks if your project requires significant financial investment. While permits can be an annoying step in building out your dream property, they help keep the overall community in alignment for our shared goals of protecting our waterways. If you have a project on your mind for this summer, feel free to give us a call for all pertinent rules and permit information. By working together, we can preserve the economic and aesthetic value of our lakeshore communities to keep them of high quality for generations to come.

Submitted by:  
Caleb Anderson  
Land & Resources Manager  
Pine County Planning, Zoning, and Solid Waste Department

## Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) survey coming to a lake near you.

Submitted by Deb Vermeesch  
Assistant Area Fisheries Supervisor | MN DNR

Do you ever wonder why Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (MNDNR) fishery biologists are walking close to your shore in waders, with a backpack electrofisher or seine, during the summer months? One way to measure the health of a particular lake is to examine the species diversity of fish populations within the lake. Our gill and trap nets tell part of the story, but they miss the smaller species that live near shore. Fisheries biologists from the DNR and University of Minnesota developed a method called the Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) to combine our traditional surveys with nearshore fish sampling data. In order to do this, biologists sample the near shore area of the lake by seining and electrofishing. Depending on lake size we randomly select a representative number of survey sites around the shoreline of the lake. At each site we pull a 50-foot seine and sample 100 feet of shoreline with a backpack electrofishing unit to collect fish. We then put all fish captured into a holding tank. At each site we identify and count all species. Once completed all fish are released back into the lake.

This information helps us to assess the overall health of a lake based on measurements of these communities. Some species cannot survive without clean water and a healthy habitat while other species thrive in degraded conditions. We call these species intolerant or tolerant. Relative numbers of each type of species are considered "indicators" of the health of a lake. There is an indirect relationship between the fish communities and water quality and physical habitat characteristics. Over time the biological populations present in a lake are the result of cumulative effects of natural and human caused influences within the watershed area. These communities change in predictable ways in response to poor water quality or loss of shoreline habitat.

Once we collect and analyze all of the data, we can assign a score to a lake and determine if a lake is impaired based on nearshore fish communities. Once we determine a lake is impaired, we must identify the limiting factors and try to restore the lake through good land use practices and proper stewardship. This process is mandated by the Clean Water Act and carried out through partnerships between the DNR and other state and local agencies such as the Soil and Water Conservation Service. Lake sampling is done by watershed according to a rotating schedule set by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. These past few years our sampling has focused on the Rum River watershed; in the near future we will begin sampling in the Kettle River watershed.

The MPCA has developed similar IBIs to assess biological communities in streams and rivers in Minnesota. For more information on these IBIs, go to the MPCA website. [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us)

We also collect score the shore (STS) data while out on MN lakes. We can assess the overall shoreline habitat conditions of developed lots by a visual examination. We know that shoreline buffers with natural ground cover are effective in removing pollutants from runoff. Native vegetation acts like a sponge to hold runoff with associated contaminants. When human disturbance alters the natural shoreline conditions of the lake, water quality can be degraded. The thicker the vegetation is along the shoreline the more it will filter runoff. While surveying lakes we see a direct correlation between highly developed shorelines and decreased number of game fish in the lake.

Did you know you can perform a STS assessment on your own shoreline? Check out the following website to learn more about STS surveys and how to implement your own assessment in your backyard.

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/scoreyourshore/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/scoreyourshore/index.html)

### Got questions? The DNR Information Center can help you:

- Get in touch with a Conservation Officer
- Learn what to do about injured or nuisance wildlife
- Learn to manage your shoreline for water quality

And more! If you're not sure who in the DNR you need to contact, they can help. Call **888-646-6367** (888-MINNDNR) or email [info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us)

# Water Quality

By Dwight Benoy

We have all seen “blooms” of algae in our lakes at one time or another. Did you know some algae is good and other algae can be deadly? Dr. Adam Heathcote of the Science Museum of Minnesota has studied algae and has authored several publications on the topic. “Studies of the Lake of the Woods show how water can struggle with a legacy of pollution” was one such posting on March 19, 2018.

Of particular note is the discussion on Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. This type of algae can produce toxins that are poisonous to pets and people. You may have heard reports of dogs dying after swimming in this type of algae. When conditions are warm and sunny with lots of nutrients in the water, a “bloom” of algae can occur. This type of algae is a cyan color (blue-green) or looks like paint, which has been observed on occasion on our lakes. If you see a cyan colored algal bloom that looks like paint, assume it is toxic and keep people and pets out of the lake.

Phosphorus is the primary nutrient of concern for the development of algae blooms. Decaying weeds and leaves, along with man-made causes, are sources of phosphorus in the water. Over the years, phosphorus can settle into the sediments of the lake. While trapped in the sediments, it is not available in the water to fuel algae growth. However, this phosphorus can be released from the sediments back into the water.

If oxygen is available throughout the water, phosphorus will stay in the sediments. However, during the summer, the lake water stratifies with the lower level of stratification having little oxygen, which is why there are few fish in the deeper parts of the lake in the summer. Without oxygen, phosphorus migrates from the sediments into this lowest stratification level. It will remain harmless here unless the water in this lowest level gets mixed with the upper levels of water. This mixing can occur with late season storms with high winds that create large waves. Lakes that are less than 30 feet in depth, like our lakes, are more susceptible to this mixing.

So, what can we do about this? There isn’t much we can do to prevent storms or the phosphorus that develops naturally due to decaying vegetation. However, we can continue our efforts to encourage landowners around the lakes to minimize or eliminate the use of fertilizer, to plant buffer zones of native plants to soak up nutrients before they reach the water, to protect native aquatic plants that compete with algae by using the nutrients in the water and to maintain our septic systems. These are things we can control to minimize the amount of phosphorus going into our lakes, so we can minimize algal blooms and continue to enjoy the recreational quality of the water.

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## **2022 BPLA Calendar of Events**

**Membership Meeting** Saturday May 28, 2021 @ 9:15 AM in person or via Zoom, coffee & roll service starts 8:30 AM, at Finlayson Community Center.

**Boat Parade** Sunday July 3– Register at 4:30 PM, parade starts at 5:00 PM (*this is a date change*)

**Fireworks** Sunday July 3 - South Lake at 10:00 PM

**Fireworks Clean-up** Monday July 4 –meet at the Makela’s property at 9am. Check the NextDoor site for any changes

**Annual Picnic** Saturday July 16 @ noon, BPLA Picnic Area near landing at South Lake

**Project Day** Saturday August 20 @ 9:00 AM, meet at the South Lake Public Landing

**Membership Meeting** Saturday September 3, @ 9:15 AM, coffee & roll service starts @ 8:30 AM, Finlayson Community Center.

**Project Day & Roadway Clean-up** Saturday September 17 @ 9:00 AM, meet at South Lake Landing



## Geo-Caching... The World's Biggest Treasure Hunt

Jim Corbo, Secretary

First and foremost, a big welcome back to all our seasonal neighbors! I am always excited to see lake activity start picking up again as summer approaches. Speaking of activities, here's an idea for the family to consider this year... Geo-caching. For those that have no idea what I am talking about, Geo-caching is an outdoor activity where people use the global positioning system to essentially play hide and seek with small containers called "caches." These caches are placed at specific locations and marked by their GPS coordinates all over the world.

Geo-caching was first created in 2000 near Beavercreek, OR. A man by the name of Dave Ulmer hid the first cache and documented its location online. Now a cache can vary in size and contain a variety of items; however, at a minimum it must include a log and a writing utensil so that others may document their find. It is completely up to the creator what makes up the cache. Sometimes, the items may be tradable or traceable, some may be sentimental, or some may just be a container with a log. Mr. Ulmer partially buried a black plastic bucket and put items such as a slingshot, software, videos, and books in it. Usually, most of the items, also known as SWAG, are not worth much – just something for the finder to enjoy before returning the cache to its original location.

I was first introduced to the 'sport' back ten years ago when a fellow pilot had brought along his old handheld GPS and a list of coordinates that he found from a geo-caching website. We spent most of our overnight in Dayton, OH hiking around trying to find various caches. It was quite a challenge with that GPS, but I really enjoyed it. Plus, I got to see different parts of the city that I otherwise would never have known existed.

As access to the GPS system has evolved, one can now find an app that can be used with the GPS system on any smart phone. Geocaching.com is the most popular site that people use to join the community and download the app. There are other sites as well, which can be found by a simple Google search. Regardless of the app used, it is very easy to set up and start searching for caches. Further, these apps will provide hints to help locate each cache and other information regarding the cache (maybe it has been damaged or has gone missing). They will also spell out rules for being a member of the geo-caching community. Make sure to be familiar with them.

It may be hard to believe but there are actually many caches hidden in our BPLA community. Thanks to my brother, our family did a little geo-caching in the area last summer. I won't give away the exact location, but there is a cache located near the boat launch on the north lake. We also found a number of caches on the Willard Mungar trail that passes through Finlayson.

The geo-caching community is pretty big and there are many levels on which one can participate. While the majority of people enjoy finding caches, others get more involved in the community by hiding caches, or tracking caches as they move around the world. It's something fun to do with kids and a great way to get out and explore. So, if you and the family are looking for a different way to adventure around the lakes area, or anywhere else you might find yourself this summer, try it out. Join the largest treasure hunt in the world and you may be surprised at what you find.





## Boat Parade

Dan Frey

This year's annual boat parade is moving and will be held on **Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup>**. All parade participants will receive a prize pack and we encourage everyone to join in the fun. Prize money will be also awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners on both lakes. You can decorate with a patriotic theme or go with your imagination and creativity! Enthusiasm and creativity hold equal weight and judges will be stationed at docks around the lakes. We again ask that you please refrain from throwing water balloons or other items that may end up in the lake and harmful to wildlife. You must register before the parade to be eligible for the prizes.

Registration for the parade begins at 4:30 pm with the parade beginning **at 5:00 pm**. The North Lake registration is held at Drakes' dock again, which is on the last point on the NW bay going south to the narrows. The South Lake registration will again be held at my dock. It is the first dock in the NE corner of the South Lake, directly across from the boat landing by the Narrows.

Please join in on the fun and continue to help us grow this special event! If you are unable to join the parade, make sure you get down to the dock to watch and cheer on your lake neighbors as they parade by!

Please contact me [dnrfrey@gmail.com](mailto:dnrfrey@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



## 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
DB Cleaning_____	218-341-9935
East Central Energy_____	800-254-7944
Finlayson Ag & Hardware_____	320-233-7372
Finlayson Storage_____	612-229-9205
Grace Construction _____	320-279-1552
Hayland Woods Native Nursery___	320-983-2584
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
MJC Equipment_____	320-245-5127
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_____	320-233-6394
Purple Pumper_____	320-245-6812
Rapit Printing_____	651-633-4600
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

***Business Directories handouts are  
available at Membership meetings***