



PINE VIEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
BIG PINE LAKES ASSOCIATION

August 2023

P.O. Box 190 Finlayson, MN 55735

www.BigPineLakes.org

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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: Sue Bonine

Volunteer Committee: Don Roepke
/ Ron Redding

Water Quality: Dwight Benoy

Chairman's Column

John Mueller

What a great summer! The weather has been "Minnesota Nice" with limited storm activity and generally acceptable summer like temperatures. The lakes have seen significant activity with many boats on the water and people engaged in water activities.

Your BPLA organization has been active throughout the summer. We coordinated the May and June Roadside Cleanup and Project Days; the July 4 weekend festivities which included our annual boat parade on each lake and the fireworks on the evening of July 1st; and on July 15th BPLA hosted its annual membership picnic at the Narrows Picnic area. Check out the related articles in this Pine Views newsletter to learn more about each event.

Our Fall Membership meeting is right around the corner. It is scheduled for **Saturday, September 2nd** 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. The meeting will include updates from your BPLA board on key topics of information related to the association. If you have specific questions that you would like addressed during the meeting, please email them directly to me at johnmueller17@gmail.com.

We also will conduct the annual election of our BPLA board. For 2023, we have 2 current board members (**Roger Olson** and **Dan Frey**) who have completed either their 1st or 2nd two-year term and have expressed interest in continuing to represent their respective lakes. We also have 1 opening to represent Big Pine Lake on the BPLA Board as this is the final year for me (**John Mueller**). I am completing year 2 of my 3rd term and per BPLA by-laws must step down. 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 member candidate, please send a note to me prior to the meeting so your name can be included in the election process. Please plan on attending the meeting if you are interested in serving on the board.

Thank you for your support of BLPA, because of it we are able to continue in our efforts to "Preserve and Enhance the Quality of our Lakes!"

See you around the lakes, *John*



PINE VIEWS

Volunteer Days – Project Days

Don Roepke

We have completed 2 Project Days so far this year. The third Project Day will be completed before this newsletter is published. Thank you to all Volunteers who helped with Projects this year. Our remaining Project Day is scheduled for September 16th (this is also the day for Roadside Cleanup). We will meet at the BPLA Picnic Area on the South Lake at 9:00 AM, snacks and water are provided.

Projects completed so far this year include: Loon Nest platforms installed at ice out, BPLA Fishing Dock put into South Lake, picked up downed branches at South Pine Lake Public Landing caused by winter snows, installed Kaeder Creek sign, replaced Turtle Creek sign damaged in the winter, trimmed Pine Lake Overlook Trail, removed lake plants adjacent to the Fishing Dock to allow easier fishing, walked Strawberry Creek to remove fallen trees or debris restricting water flow.

Planned projects: pruning brushy shrubs in the Buffer Zone by Picnic Area, removing lake plants by fishing dock to open-up areas to fish, trimming weed and brush around various BPLA signage around the lakes, remove debris from the Dam on Big Pine Lake, remove branches from inactive beaver dam in Strawberry Creek to allow spawning fish to swim through, pull out Fishing Dock.

Volunteering to help on projects is a great way to meet fellow Lake People and help beautify our lakes and shoreline. Many hands help make quick work on the Saturday morning Projects. Please contact me with your ideas on any other projects for BPLA Volunteer Projects. drgrouse@yahoo.com

As a reminder, our Fall Membership meeting is right around the corner. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 2nd 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 update

Maria Gobely

Another successful planting was done at the Schussler's over the July 4th weekend. They are thrilled with the results and the lakes have gained ~100' of protected shoreline! They are testing a weed control blanket for us. It's much thicker than other materials we've used to wipe out the canary reed grass and anything else under it without using chemicals. Holes just large enough for the new plants are cut into the material and the new plants fill the hole.



We have found a source of willow, a couple miles west of Pine Lake. It's on a county road that we should notify before cutting. Always open to additional sources, especially near the lakes.

I'm always looking for pictures, information, and testimonials of previous projects. BPLA members have been doing this for over 40 years – that's quite a bit of history to fill in.

If you have interest or questions about buffer zones, helping, or projects on your place, please contact Maria Gobely at: gobely@hotmail.com I'm happy to get you on the list, answer questions, or send info your way.

Fisheries, Water Quality and Fireworks

Fisheries

Don Roepke

Matt Ward is the new Hinckley Area Fisheries Supervisor. Ward has extensive education and experience in fisheries management. He received a bachelor's degree from UW-Stevens Point and a master's degree from South Dakota State University in Fisheries. Over the past 20 years, Matt has worked for area fisheries offices in Duluth, Lake Superior, Walker, and Grand Rapids in various roles, most recently as the assistant area fisheries supervisor in Grand Rapids. Matt's first day at the office was August 2. Big Pine Lakes Association welcomes Matt to our area; we are happy to have the position filled. We are looking for good things from Fisheries to continue in the future under his guidance.

Water Quality

Dwight Benoy

For the past 10 years, your contributions to BPLA have been used to cover the cost of testing the quality of water in our lakes and major contributing streams. The results of these tests are posted on the BPLA website and are also shared with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Water samples are tested for phosphorus, nitrogen and chlorophyll. Secchi Disc tests are also conducted, which is a measure of water clarity. Samples are taken at four locations in the lakes and one sample each is taken from Strawberry Creek and Pine River.

The MPCA uses the Environmental Quality Information System (EQuIS) to store water quality data from more than 17,000 Minnesota sampling locations. EQuIS contains information from Minnesota streams and lakes dating back to 1926.

The MPCA used this data in conducting surface water assessments for the Kettle River and St. Croix River watersheds over the past couple years to determine whether water bodies meet state water quality standards.

In general, the data through 2022 shows a gradual improvement in water quality in our lakes. EQuIS data can be accessed at pca.state.mn.us/surface-water. BPLA plans to continue sampling and testing to monitor the water quality in our lakes and streams. Once testing is completed for 2023, it will be posted on the BPLA website and with the MPCA.

Fourth of July Fireworks

Dan Frey

Mother Nature must have felt bad about last year's boat parade rain, followed by the "fireworks fog" right at launch time and wanted to make up for it! Well, she really came through with perfect weather and couldn't have asked for a more perfect night for fireworks. Okay, fewer mosquitoes would have been nice but we can't have everything. Thanks to your generous donations and our fireworks vendor, we were all treated to a spectacular show. The applause, cheers and beeping boat horns from the sea of boats, indicated to me that you all agreed. 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.

A huge thank you to **Don and Patt Makela** for once again allowing us to use their property for the launch site. We wouldn't be able to do this without their generosity. Thanks also to **Steve Karel & his family** for placing the warning buoys around the launch site, as well as the tiki torches to light the channel for the return trips to the North Lake.

Cheers to the Sunday morning launch site clean-up volunteers of: **Lou Beardsley, Erin Brandt, Dave Brandt, and Don Roepke.** You are all the best!

Please consider helping clean up next year. Many hands make "quick work" so we can all get back to our families and the weekend.

PINE VIEWS

2023 Boat Parade

Lisa Drake and Dan Frey

Wow, what a turnout! The weather and enthusiasm were on our side this year and the creativity continues to amaze! We had the best turnout since I became involved 4+ years ago. Additionally, I heard that the turnout of spectators on docks and lake shores this year was also great. Once again, the judges had difficulty deciding with all of the creatively decorated boats. Thank you all for another wonderful parade!

Below is a list of all entrants and pictures of this year's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. Contact me if you would like a photo of your boat entry, at: dndrfrey@gmail.com, or check out our BPLA website (www.BigPineLakes.org) for additional photos.

Big Pine (North) Lake

There were 20 participants on Big Pine Lake. Many thanks to the **Bjerke, Mikulak, Grover** and **Drake** families for helping again with this year's parade. The 2023 North Lake entrants were: *The Collova-Sorenson, Lenertz, Washenberger's (x3), Lee, Jennrich's (x2), Ducharme, Tokheim, Gobley, Metzler, Mueller, B. Auge, Pitz, Grochowski families, and an unknown decorated fishing boat.*

1st place: the **Corbo Family** with:
Patriotic Pacman!



2nd place: the **Nietz Family** with:
Only you can prevent forest fires!



3rd place: the **Leshner Family** with:
Mosquito Squad!



Pine (South) Lake

We had 14 participants on Pine Lake. Many thanks to the **Opitz, Herrmann** and **Rod** families for helping with this year's parade. The 2023 South Lake entrants were: *The Benoy, Reller, Beardsley, McDonald, Rudich, Evans, Dotzler, Danielson, Anderson, Dexter, and Olsen families.*

1st place: the **Onischuk Family** with:
4th of July - KISS!



2nd place: the **Pung Family** with:
Hogwarts Express!



3rd place: the **Duffy Family** with:
Birthday Cake!



Six Generations of Family Fishing

Jim Corbo, Secretary

I have to say, it is awesome to see membership involvement in BPLA and the activities it sponsors. Thanks to all those who get involved. Recently, I received a letter from Lance Meier, who has a cabin on the north lake. His wife, Melanie, and various parts of his family have been on the lake for the past 114 years. They wanted to share their story of pulling fish out of the lakes as it spans over six generations of their family. Enjoy!



"This picture is of Alice Melin and of her father Zach Melin of Rush City. While this may look like an ordinary first fish picture, it is actually 114 years in the making. Alice is the 6th generation of two sides of her family to fish in the waters of the Pine Lakes. One set of Alice's Great-Great-Great-Grandparents (Gottfried and Rosalie Alleman) settled and began farming on the northwest corner of the south lake in 1908 and pulled many a fish out of the lake over the years. Richard (Dick) and Jenny Alleman still reside on the family farmstead and still occasionally throw a line in! Alice's Great-Great-Grandma was Anna (Alleman) Schuett and was an avid fisherwoman fishing off the dock at their home on the south lake along with her husband August. Alice's Great-Grandma is Audrey (Schuett) Meier who still runs to the lake quite often from their home south of Giese where she lives with her husband of 60 years, Jim.

This is where the double 6th generation fish comes in. Jim's grandparents and Alice's Great-Great-Great-Grandparents on that side were Carl and Catherine Meier who moved on to a farm on the west side of the south lake in 1930 and lived there with their children until later that decade.

Alice's Great-Great-Grandpa was John Meier who fished the lake as much as he could.

The Schuetts and Meiers became fast family friends culminating with the marriage of Jim and Audrey. Jim and Audrey have four sons. Alice's Grandpa is Tom Meier who settled in Rush City but spent many a day wetting a line in both lakes. Tom would drag his daughters out fishing all the time. His middle daughter, Katie, is Alice's mom who married Zach Melin from Rush City.

Alice caught her first fish off the dock at Lance and Melanie Meier's cabin on the west side of the north lake as the family was celebrating Jim and Audrey's 60th wedding anniversary Memorial Day weekend 2022 – thus becoming the 6th generation to experience the thrill of pulling in a 'lunker' from the lakes!"

Thank you, Lance, for sharing. We appreciate it. If anyone ever has a story to tell, please feel free to reach out to me or anyone on the BPLA Board and we can see about getting it placed here in Pine Views. Thank you all as well, for another excellent season. Jim

Roadside Clean-up

Sue Bonine

Thanks to all who joined us on Saturday, May 20th for BPLA Roadside Cleanup Day! It was a lovely spring day and a nice chance to meet our neighbors around the lakes and share in the work of keeping our area looking beautiful. We gathered at 9:00 a.m. at the south lake boat landing and after some brief introductions and instruction, individuals, and teams of two or three chose their familiar stretch of road to scour for any left behind trash accumulated over the winter months. Everyone was equipped with safety vests and trash bags, trail mix and bottled water if desired. We did find a few handfuls of agates, too! We hope to see you again this fall! Our next Roadside Cleanup is: **Saturday, September 16, 2023, 9:00 am**, at the South Lake Landing.



Local Business Spotlight

Members Cooperative Credit Union

Kristin LaBounty

Members Cooperative Credit Union (MCCU) is a full-service financial institution serving more than 55,000 members across 12 branches within our communities. We are proud to be the largest Credit Union based north of the Twin Cities, uniting communities since 1936 and serving member-owners with more locations than any other credit union in the region.

In 2016, MCCU broke ground on our current Sandstone branch location at 305 Lundorff Drive. We offer a full selection of consumer, business, and mortgage products, making it a one-stop shop for all your financial needs. We have convenient extended drive-up hours from 7:30-5:30 Monday thru Thursday and Fridays 7:30-6. Saturdays from 9-Noon. We also have a 24-hour drive-up ATM located on the south side of the building.

For added flexibility, try out the Video banking and receive in-person assistance without leaving the lake and the comfort of home. Our expert staff are available to serve you, right where you are!

It's never been a better time to be a member of MCCU. I invite you to come in and meet us for yourself! Our lobby is open Monday through Friday from 8:30-4:30. For more information, visit membersccu.org or call 218-625-8500.

BPLA Picnic

Dan Frey and Ron Redding

Our annual BPLA picnic was held on Sat. July 15th, with 68 folks socializing while enjoying the sunshine and fantastic food. Once again, the wonderful side dishes and desserts everyone brought to share, along with the broasted chicken, rolls, and side dishes from Chris' Foods, all disappeared quickly. It is a great time catching up with lake neighbors and meeting new folks from both lakes! Thank you to all who attended for making this another big success.

My thanks also to everyone who pitched in to help set up, organize, serve, and clean up, including Don & Shirley Roepke, Ron & Sue Redding, Roger & Mary Olson, John & Maria Gobely, and my wife Renee.

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
Anytime Fitness-Sandstone_____	320-245-3191
Aquatic Conservation_____	763-257-5852
Ausmus Floor & Furnishing_____	320-384-6101
Chris' Food Center_____	320-245-2229
Complete Cabin Care _____	763-898-0474
Custom Portable Docks & Lifts____	800-646-4089
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
Great Roots _____	218-429-1739
Gruve Dance Fitness_____	763-438-9365
Iron Horse Farms Tree Service_____	320-241-5741
Leach Electric_____	320-532-3277
Letourneau Landscaping_____	651-426-0410
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 Union____	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_____	320-384-6707
Pine County Sheriff_____	320-629-8380
Pine Lake Mini Storage_____	320-279-3899
Prairie Restoration _____	612-505-2206
Purple Pumper_____	320-245-6812
Rapit Printing_____	651-633-4600
RE/MAX Select, Inc._____	320-679-2594
Sandrocks Pub_____	320-245-7068
Sandstone Ace Hardware_____	320-245-2235
Sandy's Salon_____	320-233-6192
Schoenrock Construction_____	320-493-0588
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**