



PINE VIEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
BIG PINE LAKES ASSOCIATION

May 2023

P.O. Box 190 Finlayson, MN 55735

www.BigPineLakes.org

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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

Fish Habitat: Don Roepke

Website: John Mueller

Chairman's Column

John Mueller

What a start to the year! After setting record snowfalls this past winter, we were blessed with a quick peek at 70° and 80° weather before the bottom fell out again and more snow came our way. Spring continues to sneak up on us with the birds coming back and the trees starting to bloom. The lakes were clear of ice on April 29, it's time now to start thinking about cleaning up the yards and putting the docks in. Summer will eventually come; our days will get longer and the sun will shine brightly. Soon we'll all be enjoying the lakes with our families and friends. I'm looking forward to it!

A couple of highlights to look for in this edition of Pine Views Edition: Jim has gathered information pertinent to the current push by ECE to bring to the community broadband internet; Maria has some great information on the current and future state of buffer zone activity around the lakes and the various committee leads have updates on the key activities and projects planned for the year.

BPLA was awarded \$500 in grant money in 2023 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.

Our BPLA Spring Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, May 27th 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.

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

See you around the Lakes! *John*



As a reminder, our Memorial Day Membership meeting is right around the corner. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 27th at the Finlayson Community Center. Social time starts at 8:30 with donuts and coffee, the actual meeting starts at 9:15 am.



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Local Business Spotlight



Ausmus Floor and Furnishings

The Ausmus family has been laying flooring for over 65 years. Three generations have owned & operated the business over the years, and have sold furniture, flooring, and appliances since Les Ausmus opened the door. The store is on the corner of Hwy 61 and Main Street in Hinckley. We carry (and install) a full line of carpet, luxury vinyl plank flooring, and sheet vinyl. Our furniture is handcrafted at Best Craft Furniture in Kaukauna Wisconsin. Business hours are Monday through Friday 8am - 4:30pm and 8 to noon on Saturdays. Check us out on Facebook!

2023 Roadway Clean-Up

Sue Bonine

Borrowing a line from "[Keep Texas Beautiful](#)" by Jerry Jeff Walker, *Pine Lakes came out beautiful, why not keep her that way?*

Who is ready for Spring! Join us on **Saturday, May 20** for BPLA Roadside Cleanup and Project Day! It's a nice chance to meet your neighbors around the lake and help keep our area looking beautiful. We will meet at **9:00 a.m. at the south lake boat landing**. We'll provide safety vests, trash bags, water, snacks and have a few trash picker-upper tools available.

It's a very satisfying feeling to remove the blight along the roads (of course, we always find some agates, too!) and so fun to get the grandkids and grandparents alike involved! Make cleaning up litter fun. **Pass it on!**

P.S. If you're not already a member and want to join the BPLA Association, find out how at the BPLA website <https://www.bigpinelakes.org/join-our-membership>.

We're challenging our own family members to increase participation to 100% this year. Who's in?

BPLA Fireworks Celebration!

Dan Frey

The BPLA annual fireworks display will take place on **Saturday July 1st at 10:00 PM**. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of Don and Patt Makela, the fireworks will again be launched from their property 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 for navigating back to your home after the show. This is critical, as most of you discovered with last year's fog! Hopefully the fog stays away this year!

I will be looking for volunteers on Sunday July 2nd at 9:00 AM to help clean up the launch sight. Please check the NextDoor & Facebook sites for reminders or time changes. It should only take about 30 minutes. Your help is much appreciated.



2023 Project Days

Don Roepke

Project Days are on designated Saturdays, starting at 9:00 am. We meet at the BPLA dock near the Public Landing located on the South Lake. Water & snacks are provided.

Our 1st Project Day is on **Sat. May 20th @ 9:00 AM** and will soon be here. We look forward to seeing you there. The planned tasks for the first Project Day are as follows: Put the BPLA Fishing Dock in the South Lake; Pickup downed branches at Pine Lake public landing; Clear brush & debris from the Overlook hiking trail; Install sign on Kaeder Creek and replace the sign at Turtle Creek. Loon nesting platforms will be put out soon after ice out.

Project Days are scheduled for:

- May 20 (also Roadway Clean-up)
- June 24
- August 19
- September 16 (also Roadway Clean-up)

Please contact me with your ideas on any other projects for the BPLA Volunteer Project Days.

Buffer Zones

Maria Gobely

We currently have 2 new buffer zone projects and 2 that are adding plants in the works for 2023 in Aitkin County. Funding is available for both Pine and Aitkin Counties this summer. Because funds are "first-come first-serve" and the design-funding and approval-scheduling process takes time, please contact me ASAP to get on this year's calendar.

For those that would prefer to have a buffer done for them from soup to nuts, we have found a new resource with **Prairie Restorations**. They have been in the conservation business since 1977. Aaron would be happy to talk with you.

Aaron can be reached at: 763-631-9427 or by Email: asoltau@prairieresto.com

Cliff dwelling (aka: high elevation property) presents extra challenges to the owners and lakes in runoff, washout, erosion and land stabilization. Solutions are costly to the wallet and hard on your back because of the land structural work and heavy equipment needed.

I'm gathering information on vendors, additional funding sources, products like geocell and flexomat, and other ideas & resources to have options that are doable and hopefully affordable. Reach out if this is an area of interest to you.

I could really use your help with 2 items:

- 1) Easy access to willow to cut around the lakes. Most buffer projects use willow, so it would be great to have a source nearby.
- 2) Older buffer zone projects. BPLA has been involved in conservation efforts for over 40 years and it would be great to put together a history of it. Pictures would be fantastic.



If you have interest or questions about buffer zones, helping, or projects at 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.

BPLA Picnic

Dan Frey/Ron Redding



Here's a reminder that this year's BPLA picnic is scheduled for **Noon, Saturday, July 15th**. 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 all there.

Membership

John Mueller

Thank you to our members who have submitted their annual dues in 2023. 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 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 2023, we had 271 submissions with their renewals. (March = 8; April = 324; May = 43; July = 2). We will be announcing the winners of the Ice Out contest at our upcoming May membership meeting. These families will receive a free 2024 BPLA membership for their efforts.

If you haven't sent your 2023 membership in yet, please do so soon to continue to receive BPLA communications and informational updates. If you need a BPLA annual membership form, they are available on our web site. www.BigPineLakes.org

BPLA Mailing address is PO Box 190, Finlayson, MN 55735

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Water Quality

Dwight Benoy

Water testing results for 2022 show a continued gradual improvement of the water quality in the lakes. This has been a trend for the past nine years of testing. Phosphorus and nitrogen are the primary nutrients in the water that support algal growth, that green slime that sometimes develops on the lake surface during the summer. The quantities of these nutrients have declined as can be seen on the graphs on the BPLA website.

Also, Secchi Disc readings have been gradually increasing which means the clarity of the water is improving. To view the graphs of the test results, go to www.bigpinelakes.org and scroll to Water Quality and Lake Information. Click on Water Quality Reports, then BPLA Water Quality Readings. While test results can vary from month to month and year to year, the red dotted line on the graphs shows the trends. My wife Pat and I plan to sample the lake water again this summer at the six locations sampled over the past nine years.

It is likely the ongoing trend of improved water quality is due to the efforts of many of you through good septic system maintenance, minimizing or eliminating fertilization of your lawn and installation of shoreline buffer zones. Efforts like these by everyone around the lakes will help to keep the recreational quality of our lakes in good shape.

Fisheries Update

Don Roepke

The Minnesota DNR Hinckley Fisheries surveys for 2022 are completed. The Big Pine Lake survey is currently available online for review. The Pine Lake survey will be available online soon. Deb Vermeersch, Assistant Area Supervisor, MN DNR will be joining us at our upcoming Spring meeting to present their findings. If you're interested in looking at the information in closer detail, check out the links in the Water Quality & Lake Information page on the BPLA website (www.bigpinelakes.org)

The DNR Fisheries will not be stocking Walleyes this year. Their plan calls for stocking on even years only. The following are the stocking records currently available for past years stocking, including 2022. The numbers from 2021 represent the walleyes purchased and stocked directly by BPLA.



Big Pine

Year	Size	Number	Pounds	avg wt. (ounces)
2022	yearlings	3	3	16.0
	fingerlings	1,630		0.8
	fingerlings	1,320	110	1.3
2021	fingerlings	1,440	60	0.7
2020	fingerlings	2,992	176	0.9
2018	fingerlings	5,764	176	0.5
2016	yearlings	75	25	5.3

Pine Lake

Year	Size	Number	Pounds	avg wt. (ounces)
2022	fingerlings	1,680	140	1.3
2021	fingerlings	1,440	60	0.7
2020	fingerlings	2,125	125	0.9
2018	fingerlings	9,250	125	0.2
2016	fingerlings	9402	139.8	0.2



High Speed Fiber Internet: Call to Action

by Jim Corbo

East Central Energy has recently proposed some major expansions to its high speed fiber internet service. That is some great news for BPLA and our neighbors in the area considering the experiences many of us have shared with the current provider. Although no specific announcements have been made regarding dates or specific service areas, ECE has suggested that plans will be developed based on needs of individual communities. So, BPLA is asking for your help.

History (summarized from eastcentralenergy.com)

In 2019, ECE conducted a feasibility study for bringing broadband internet to residents in its 14-county service area. The results of that study suggested excessive risk to the company resulting from the amount of money required to invest in fiber and related equipment; therefore, a decision was made to discontinue that project.

The pandemic proved that high speed internet is needed more than ever in rural areas. Federal and state governments recognize this need and have made funding more accessible in the recent months. As a result, ECE has decided to revisit this project. In 2021, the ECE board of directors voted to re-develop a plan to bring fiber to its entire service area. It has since conducted another feasibility study, which concluded that this project is achievable given appropriate assistance, such as grants and other sources of financial support. Over the next several months, ECE will be further developing its plan.

How Can You Help?

As part of this plan, ECE is reaching out to determine the level of interest in high speed fiber throughout its communities. While no guarantees can be made, the more interest an individual community expresses in the need for this service, the better the chance that community has of being prioritized when the plan rolls out. Regardless, ECE's goal is to eventually provide service for all its members; not just those in higher populated areas.

Between our two lakes, we have approximately 315 households. That equals 315 voices that can send a message to ECE saying that we need high speed fiber in our neighborhood. In 2022, BPLA had 209 active members. Thank you for being members, by the way! We appreciate you. Now, we are asking you to be a voice and contact ECE to express your interest in this future service. Additionally, we are asking that you pass the word on to neighbors and friends in the area. There are approximately 106 non-members who do not receive these newsletters and other forms of communication from BPLA. Convince them to join, while you're at it! But, ask them to reach out to ECE as well so that we can improve our connectivity up here sooner than later. This new service will benefit individual homes as well as businesses in the greater Finlayson area. All you have to do is share your local address and contact information with ECE so that they know the interest exists. The website is listed below. As always, BPLA will provide updates as ECE develops and implements its plan.

Thank you for your time. See you around the lake this summer. www.ECEFIBER.com

2023 BPLA Calendar of Events

Project Day & Roadway Clean-up Saturday May 20 @ 9:00 AM, meet at South Lake Landing

Membership Meeting Saturday May 27, 2023 @ 9:15 AM, coffee & roll service starts 8:30 AM, at Finlayson Community Center.

Project Day Saturday June 24 @ 9:00 AM, meet at the South Lake Public Landing

Boat Parade Saturday July 1- Register at 4:30 PM, parade starts at 5:00 PM

Fireworks Saturday July 1 - South Lake at 10:00 PM

Fireworks Clean-up Sunday July 2 - meet at the Makela's property at 9am. Check the NextDoor and Facebook sites for any changes

Annual Picnic Saturday July 15 @ noon, BPLA Picnic Area near landing at South Lake

Project Day Saturday August 19 @ 9:00 AM, meet at the South Lake Public Landing

Membership Meeting Saturday September 2 @ 9:15 AM, coffee & roll service starts @ 8:30 AM, Finlayson Community Center.

Project Day & Roadway Clean-up Saturday September 16 @ 9:00 AM, meet at South Lake Landing



Boat Parade

Dan Frey

Mark your calendars and get out the designs you've been dreaming of during this long nasty winter! The annual boat parade will be held on **Saturday, July 1st**. 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 1st, 2nd, and 3rd 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 if you have any questions.



Big Pine Lakes Association
PO Box 190, Finlayson, MN 55735

Local Business Directory

**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
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_____	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
LaRose Greenhouse & Nursery _____	320-233-7455
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**