



## **Little Tamarack Flowage Baker Spring Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District**

P.O. Box 112, Conover, Wisconsin 54519  
littletamaracklakedistrict@gmail.com

### **Summer 2018 NEWSLETTER**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting and the Board Meeting verbatim are available in the Archives. Here are the important details:**

#### **Summary of the Annual Meeting (July 1, 2018):**

Al Williamson, Treasurer, reported that the current loan balance is \$19,741. He explained that this fiscal year's payment for the dam construction loan will be \$11,295, the same as last year, resulting in a loan balance of \$8,446. The plan is to make that final payment in 2020.

Rich Ruffalo, Dam Maintenance Committee Chair, reported that lake levels were monitored throughout the year, and due to unusually high levels a log was removed in late May. The Dam Committee is investigating the idea of a debris guard on the lake side of the underwater culvert, to avoid debris entering the culvert system.

Clancy Senechalle gave a report about the Water Quality Committee. Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department has offered to send a representative to the Flowage to lead a tour of the three bodies of water. The various forms of plant life will be identified, and invasive species look-alikes will be identified. After the tour, Committee members will be better able to monitor for invasive species going forward.

An election was held for the Commissioner seat being vacated by Rich Ruffalo. Mark Tuttle was nominated to fill the position by the Board, and elected unanimously.

During the "Public Comment" period Rick Pokorny mentioned the importance of property owners being good neighbors and keeping our lakes the peaceful, enjoyable place that we all enjoy. Bob Vogt mentioned concern about the possibility of sea plane landing at Baker Lake. Karl Jennrich explained that the Board had discussed this at earlier meetings and that Bob Senechalle had attempted to contact Mr. McKenzie. It was discussed that this issue could be on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting. Comments were also made about the "no wake" status of Baker Lake and the no wake rule in all lakes when a watercraft is within 100 feet of the shoreline.

In his closing comments, Chairman Karl Jennrich gave a report on current news and activities in Conover. Karl also recognized and praised the service to the Board provided by Rich Ruffalo. Karl summarized some of the invaluable contributions made to the preservation of the Flowage by Rich. Bob Senechalle added further comments of praise and appreciation to Rich. The Board presented Rich with a Plaque of recognition and some small gifts provided by Karl and Al Williamson. The meeting was concluded at 10:25 am.

**The Board of Directors** met immediately following the Annual Meeting. Executive positions for the coming year are as follows: Karl Jennrich - Chairman; Clancy Senechalle – Vice Chairman; Mark Tuttle – Secretary; Al Williamson – Treasurer. Bob Senechalle will continue as Recording Secretary.

Rich Ruffalo will continue as Chairman of the Dam Operations and Maintenance Committee; Clancy Senechalle and Sue Holloway will Co-Chair the Water Quality Committee.

To be included on the Agenda for the Board meeting on October 6 at 10:00 am: The float plane issue on Baker Lake; the “No Trespassing” sign on the site of the old culvert; and organization of records.

**Baker Lake** is experiencing a third year of murky water. Jim Kreitlow, algae expert now retired from the DNR, spent the morning of July 23<sup>rd</sup> on Baker Lake, taking water samples from the surface down to the bottom. He was joined by the Holloways and Mosbruckers, who were able to provide him with the history of the Flowage, the dam, and historical observations of the water quality on Baker Lake.



Jim returned the results the same evening, with a list of the types of algae found. Of significance is the blue-green algae which – when present in large concentrations – can produce toxins. **A rule of thumb: If you can't see your feet when wading in knee-deep water, you should minimize exposure by rinsing yourself and pets after swimming, and NOT allow pets to drink the water.** Blue-green algae can release toxins that can be fatal when drinking the water, and you never know when conditions are ripe for those toxins. A small percentage of people also get skin rash. If you swim, don't drink, and rinse off.

Water samples were also taken for the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point Water Lab, to test for chemicals and e-coli. Those results may take some weeks to return.

When all results are in, there will be discussion of causes and possible remedies. Other Wisconsin lakes have similar problems, and the DNR will be able to share their experience.

**Paddling Trip on the Flowage:** The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin has many interesting field trips for people who are interested in the out-of-doors and in protecting Wisconsin's natural beauty and ecology. The Little Tamarack Flowage has been included in their roster of field trips for the last two years, in partnership with the North Lakeland Discover Center. The trip has always has a waiting list, and group leaders Rod Sharka and Licia Johnson never tire of another paddle on the Flowage!



The 2018 trip had 15 paddlers, and they concentrated on the Spring Lake portion of the Flowage, since the Dragon Mouth Orchids are starting to bloom there. There were lots of orchids, and lots of orchid buds ready to bloom.

They paddled into Albino Bay (behind the first channel) which is a different aquatic habitat from the rest of the Flowage. It is a concentrated spring-fed pond, with water temperatures 15-20 degrees lower than the Flowage. There are few aquatic plants or fish. The most common aquatic plant is a bright green algae growing along the bottom, which can be seen when the sun shines. It looks like fiberglass insulation that has been stained bright green. In the late summer and autumn, there is also a pink-purple type of algae cluster that forms, looking like purple-pink fiberglass insulation. Weird!

**Loon News:** The loons arrived in the afternoon of ice-out – May 4<sup>th</sup>. On the main Flowage, the pair nested somewhere on the bogs near Flowage Landing or E Flowage Road. One chick hatched on June 19<sup>th</sup>, and is still going strong. There are no nesting loons on Spring Lake this year.



On Baker Lake, two chicks hatched June 30<sup>th</sup> – unusually late. The above photo was taken just hours before Mosbruckers reported the hatching. Unfortunately one of the chicks was taken (probably) by an eagle, but the other is still doing fine, and learning to dive.

**Aids to Navigation:** There are only four Aids to Navigation on the Flowage chain - the Lenses' Lighthouse, the two dam warning buoys, and the stake in the channel to Spring Lake, which marks a submerged stump. Unlike some waterways with a buoy marking every turn, boaters on the Flowage find their own way!

For the last couple of years, a duck has graced the top the stump stake. Finally someone has bought him a hat to keep him warm, and to show that this is Packer Country. Thanks to the person or persons who donated the CHEESEHEAD!



**LAKES & WETLANDS AND THE ECONOMY OF VILAS COUNTY – by Mariquita Sheehan, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department Conservation Specialist**

Quita Sheehan studied how the lakes and wetlands of Vilas County affect our economy. **This is an eye opener!** Individuals, lake associations, and lake districts know this is true, but sometimes it is difficult to persuade others how important it is.

Here is a summary: Vilas County has some 1,300 plus lakes with 1,743 miles of shoreline comprising 13 watersheds. Lakes and streams equal 102,276 acres or 15.6% of the surface area. Wetlands equal 121,258 acres or 18.5% of land area. **Thus, Vilas County is about 34% wet!**

Sources of economic value in Vilas County include **property values, tourism spending, and recreational use**. In 2011, Vilas County had the **3<sup>rd</sup> highest** per capita tourism spending in Wisconsin behind only Door and Sauk Counties. The 2010 census indicated that 61.5% of the homes in Vilas County are seasonal (highest in Wisconsin) and that owners of these homes spent an average of \$74.18 per day when occupied. This equals to \$1,146,674 dollars per day!

A review of assessed parcels indicates that **75% of Vilas County's property tax revenue comes from waterfront property (2016)**.

Conclusions of the study are that **water is the primary reason:** tourist visit here, families purchase second homes here, locals stay here, people retire here, and businesses locate here.

From the study it is quite clear that: **healthy lakes and rivers equal healthy economy**. We need to continually make sure our local, county, and state leaders heed this message.