Bone Lake Newsletter

Bone Lake — Once called Onondogacona which means lake of small pines

FALL 2020

KAREN ENGELBRETSON

Bottle gentian, *Gentiana andrewsii,* blooms in the fall with deep blue flowers that never actually open! The unusual blooms are pollinated exclusively by bumblebees strong enough to push their way into the flowers. When you find bottle gentian that's buzzing, be patient and you might see a bumblebee exit from between the petals. See page 8 for more late bloomers.

WHAT'S INSIDE...

Chairman's letter | 2
Alum survey data | 3
Water clarity update | 4
Boating safety | 6
Waterfront runoff | 8
Birds around Bone Lake | 9
Volunteers | 10

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ALUM TREATMENT...

Alum survey complete, treatment not favored

Thank you to everyone who responded to the BLMD fall survey to property owners. Here is a recap of the survey results and decisions made based on your input.

The survey was sent to 548 District property owners*; 226 surveys were completed and returned (130 were completed online, and 96 were returned by mail) for a response rate of just over 41 percent.

The survey results on alum treatment show:

- About 68 percent of respondents leaned toward not treating Bone Lake with alum.
- Seventy-three percent of respondents opposed or strongly opposed an alum treatment plan at the proposed special assessment amount.
- Most respondents indicated that the information provided helped support their decision-making process regarding alum treatments and that they could make an informed vote, should one be taken, on the alum treatment plan for Bone Lake.
- The question of whether or not to bring the alum treatment plan to a vote at the 2021 annual meeting showed 39 percent in favor of a vote and about 49 percent against taking a vote. Twelve percent were unsure about bringing alum forward for a vote.

Responses to other survey questions:

- The *Bone Lake Newsletter* is the primary source of information received. Folks also get information about the District through its eNews (emailed newsletter), annual meetings, and the Bone Lake website.
- Annual meeting. The majority favored continuing the use of a hybrid annual meeting like we held in August 2020, providing online and in-person attendance options.
- Wilkins was the preferred in-person meeting location over several other options.

Based on the survey input, the BLMD board decided to suspend any further review or proposed voting on the use of alum.

Through the alum committee's work, we have a very good understanding of the benefits and costs of alum treatments and property owner opinions. A big thank you to the alum committee for their work. Committee members included Bob Boyd, Cheryl Clemens, advisor, Phil Foster, committee chair, Kathy Killeen, Jerry Lutgen, John McCall, Cary Olson, Shelley Rose, Pat Schmidt, John Ukura, Jim Widen, and Wayne Wolsey,

Thank you to all who returned a survey! The feedback has been very helpful. ■

Please see page 3 for details on some of the survey responses. The complete survey report can be found on the Bone Lake website.

* Property owners who did not receive a survey should verify their mailing address with the Polk County Treasurer.

Dear Bone Lakers,

Despite this awful epidemic we all are experiencing, I hope you were able to enjoy Bone Lake this year along with our great summer and fall weather.

Due to Covid-19, the District held its first hybrid annual meeting offering the option to attend online via Zoom as well as in person at Wilkins. A big thank you to Karen Engelbretson for effectively incorporating attendance by Zoom this year.

We had record meeting attendance with nearly 200 attending—over 100 on Zoom and 81 signed in at Wilkins.

Based on the positive input received after the meeting and from our fall survey, we will plan to hold the 2021 annual meeting in a similar format.

In early September, a survey was mailed to all Bone Lake Management District property owners per the Polk County Treasurer's office to get your opinion on the proposed alum treatment, and the location and format of our annual meeting. Summary results of the survey are included in this newsletter and the full survey results, along with your comments, are posted on the Bone Lake website.

Based on the survey results, the BLMD board decided at our October commissioners meeting not to schedule an alum treatment vote at the 2021 annual meeting, and to suspend the alum committee.

A very special thank you to the alum committee which has done great work over the past two years investigating alum and other treatment options to improve Bone Lake's water clarity. This information will be stored away for possible future use if the lake water clarity should deteriorate.

The District will continue to market and implement water clarity improvement practices and to explore for new ones. Our water clarity has improved the past three years and hopefully that is a result of the many runoff control practices already installed.

We need more Bone Lakers to install runoff control practices on your property so we continue protecting and improving the lake's water clarity. Details and contact information is included in this newsletter.

Unfortunately, our summer ended on a sad note due to a water fatality in early September. David Saleh, 57, from Amery, dove off his pontoon into very shallow water near Bald Eagle Island.

Boating safety on Bone Lake is one of the District's top priorities. We will continue to use multiple channels and a variety of messaging to communicate the importance of water and boating safety on our lake.

Hopefully, this pandemic will get under control over the next several months. Until then and always, please stay safe and healthy. ■

—Phil Foster, Chair

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  - Bob Boyd
- Fisheries
  - Bob Boyd and Mike Belich
- Waterfront Runoff
  - Alex Chorewycz
- Watershed
  - — Chair position is open
- Wildlife and Natural Beauty
  - Cris Dueholm, Karen Engelbretson

Alum Committee
Phil Foster

Aquatic Plant Management
Bob Boyd, Cary Olson
- Clean Boats Clean Waters
  - Richard Mackie

Boating Safety & Buoys
Mike Musial

Communications
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Reduced Wake/High Water
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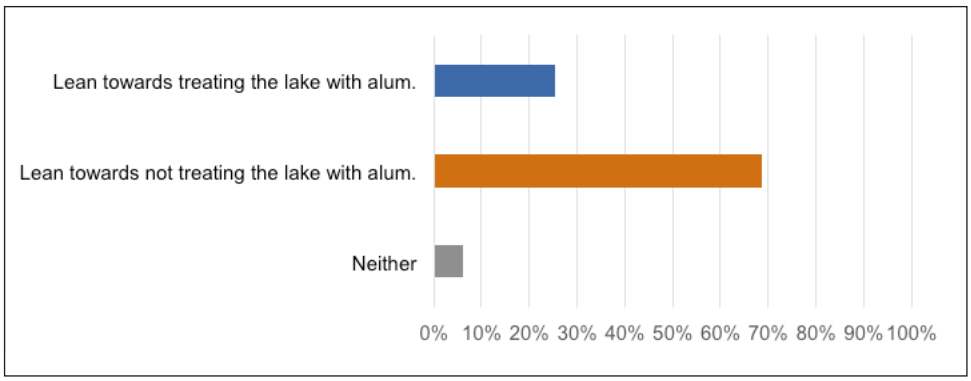
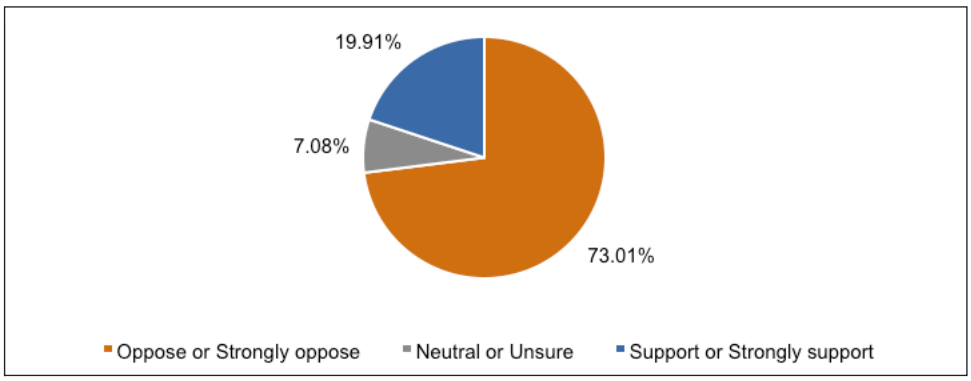
ALUM SURVEY RESULTS

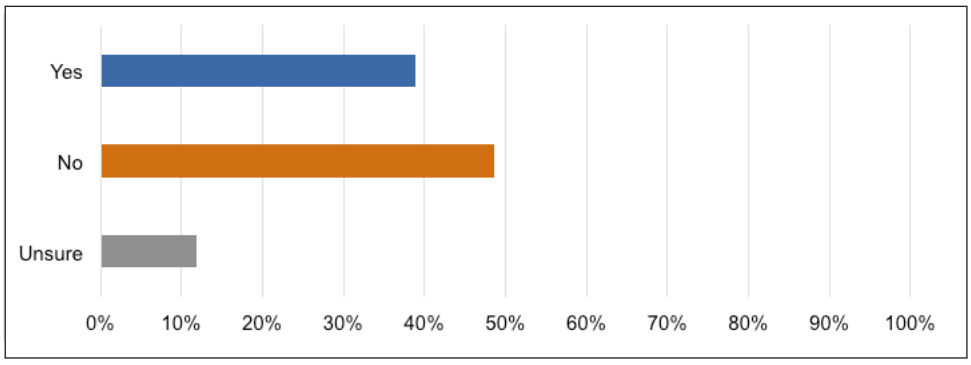
Two critical survey questions polled property owners' support of alum treatments. Just over 68 percent of respondents leaned toward not treating Bone Lake with alum.



The response corresponded with 73 percent of respondents opposed or strongly opposed to a ten-year alum treatment plan for Bone Lake at an estimated special assessment of $130 per $100,000 in property value per year for 10 years.



The question of whether or not to bring the alum treatment plan to a vote at the BLMD 2021 annual meeting was closer with 39 percent in favor of a vote and about 49 percent against taking a vote. Twelve percent were unsure about bringing alum forward for a vote.



The Alum Survey Report can be found at our website along with other alum committee documents.

Check your docks and lifts for invasive species when removing from the water

Property owners are encouraged to take the proper steps to clean all equipment to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Zebra mussels, in particular, are invasive organisms that have established in nearby Deer Lake. Zebra mussels cut feet, clog and overheat boat motors, and suffocate native clams, mussels and aquatic insects. Depending on conditions, they can survive out of water from several days to several weeks.

When removing equipment from the water, please follow these steps:

1. Inspect and remove all plants, mud, or other debris found on equipment that has been sitting in the water.

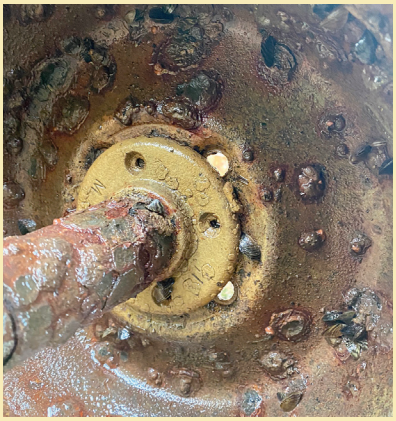
2. Drain all water if possible.

3. Spray all equipment (including live wells) with a pressure washer sprayer to reach invasive species that are hanging on tight or that you can't see.

4. Spray down your equipment and inside of live wells with a bleach/water solution: one tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water and let it air dry to help kill unseen hitchhikers.

5. Talk to your service provider and neighbors about taking these steps.

6. If you find something suspicious, take a picture, bag it, and contact Katelin Anderson, AIS Coordinator with Polk County at katelin.anderson@co.polk.wi.us.



Invasive zebra mussels are attached to this dock wheel. >

Bone Lake water clarity update

by John McCall

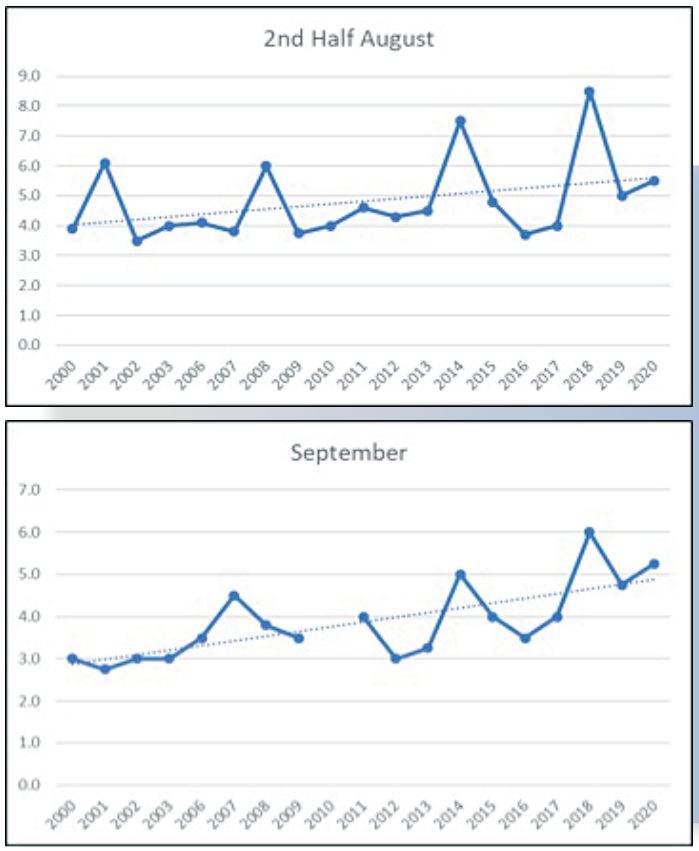
2020 was a good year for Bone Lake water clarity. Very clear waters early in the year and even into late August and early September resulted in a good overall mean, a substantial improvement over 2019, and nearly as good as 2018.

I've included the Trophic State Index from Wisconsin DNR which shows where the lake ranks based on the overall mean clarity measurements.

Bone Lake is essentially mesotrophic for most of the year, and for most of the yearly means, with occasional readings just inside the boundary for eutrophic. The graphs below show linear trend lines that indicate that the lake has improved since the year 2000. The trend in September secchi disk readings is especially notable.

My thanks to Bob Boyd for taking the readings until we recovered from the tornado. ■

Bone Lake Secchi Disk Readings, in Feet
Second Half August and September, Years 2000-2020



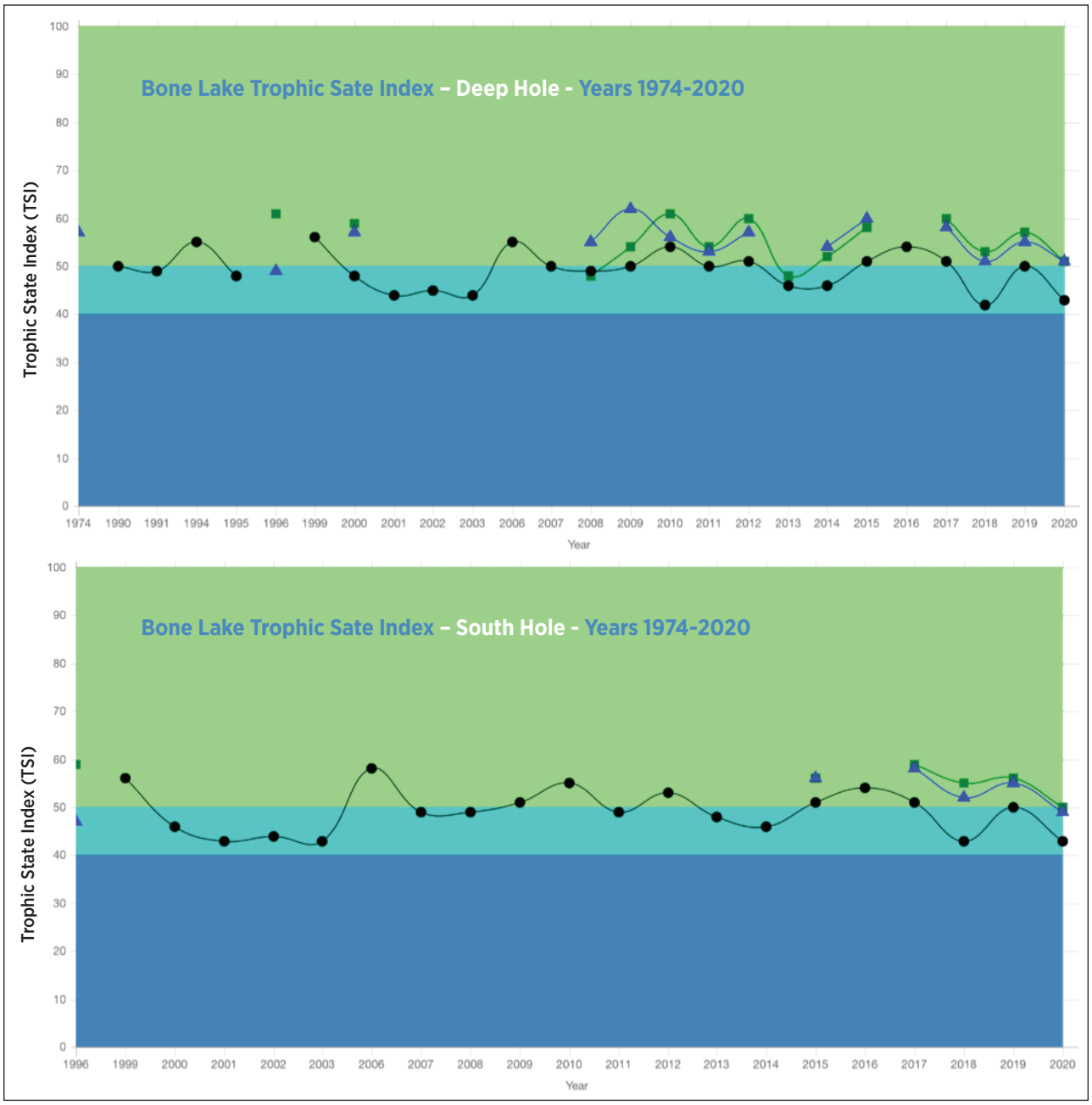
Trophic Sate Index

TSI	TSI Description
TSI < 30	Classical oligotrophy: clear water, many algal species, oxygen throughout the year in bottom water, cold water, oxygen-sensitive fish species in deep lakes. Excellent water quality.
TSI 30-40	Deeper lakes still oligotrophic, but bottom water of some shallower lakes will become oxygen-depleted during the summer.
TSI 40-50	Water moderately clear, but increasing chance of low dissolved oxygen in deep water during the summer.
TSI 50-60	Lakes becoming eutrophic: decreased clarity, fewer algal species, oxygen-depleted bottom waters during the summer, plant overgrowth evident, warm-water fisheries (pike, perch, bass, etc.) only.
TSI 60-70	Blue-green algae become dominant and algal scums are possible, extensive plant overgrowth problems possible.
TSI 70-80	Becoming very eutrophic. Heavy algal blooms possible throughout summer, dense plant beds, but extent limited by light penetration (blue-green algae block sunlight).
TSI > 80	Algal scums, summer fish kills, few plants, rough fish dominant. Very poor water quality.

Trophic state index (TSI) is determined using a mathematical formula (Wisconsin has its own version). The TSI is a score from 0 to 110, with lakes that are less fertile having a low TSI. We base the overall TSI on the Chlorophyll TSI when we have Chlorophyll data. If we don't have chemistry data, we use TSI Secchi. We do this rather than averaging, because the TSI is used to predict biomass. This makes chlorophyll the best indicator.

Bone Lake Secchi Disk Readings, Years 2000 - 2020

Year	June	1stH -July	2ndH -July	1stH -Aug	2ndH -Aug	Sept	Mean
2000	11.3	13.3	10.4	6.3	3.9	3.0	8.8
2001	11.2	11.0	11.5	10.8	6.1	2.8	8.6
2002	11.8	14.0	12.3	6.5	3.5	3.0	8.5
2003	12.0	13.5	14.0	8.0	4.0	3.0	10.0
2006				5.3	4.1	3.5	NM
2007	10.0	10.0	5.3		3.8	4.5	6.7
2008	10.0	9.5	6.8	6.0	6.0	3.8	6.9
2009	12.8	6.8	7.5	6.3	3.8	3.5	6.4
2010	12.0		5.5	4.5	4.0		NM
2011	8.5	8.5	8.0	6.0	4.6	4.0	7.5
2012	8.6	7.3	7.4	5.5	4.3	3.0	6.6
2013	12.5	12.0	9.5		4.5	3.3	9.1
2014	10.2	9.0	8.4	9.6	7.5	5.0	8.9
2015	11.3	9.5	5.5	5.5	4.8	4.0	7.1
2016	11.1	6.7	4.6	3.9	3.7	3.5	7.6
2017	10.5	7.2	6.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	7.7
2018	14.5	12.5	13.0	8.5	8.5	6.0	10.3
2019	9.3	8.0	5.8	5.5	5.0	4.8	6.8
2020	14.0	15.0	11.5	9.5	5.5	5.3	10.1
Average	11.2	10.2	8.5	6.6	4.8	3.9	8.0



Trophic State

Nutrients and productivity, sediment and accumulation, species shifts, species richness

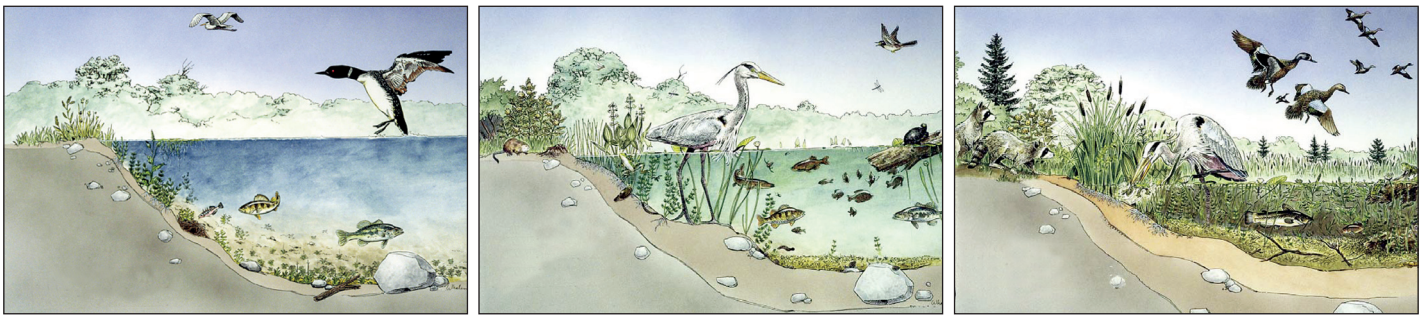


ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS WHALEN

Oligotrophic

- Clear water, low productivity
- Very desirable fishery of large game fish

Mesotrophic

- Increased production
- Accumulated organic matter
- Occasional algal bloom
- Good fishery

Eutrophic

- Very productive
- May experience oxygen depletion
- Rough fish common

2020 Sheriff's water patrols

The Polk County Sheriff's Department water patrols were on Bone Lake seven times this year and conducted 35 safety inspections, one boater assist, and issued many verbal warnings.

The following written citations and warnings were issued.

	Warnings	Citations
Boaters Safety Certificate	2, boat and PWC	4 boat
Slow no wake violation 100 ft. of swimmer		1 PWC
Slow no wake violation 100 ft. of another boat	3 PWC	
Slow no wake within 200 ft. of shoreline	1 PWC	
Riding on decks or gunwales	2 boat	
Registration	3, boat and PWC	
Fire extinguisher	1 jet ski	
Battery cover	1 boat	
PFD violation		1 boat
Lighting violation	1 boat	

Boating safety certificate

Wisconsin law requires those born on or after January 1, 1989 to pass a boater safety course and to carry a boater education card while operating watercraft on Wisconsin lakes. Four boaters were issued citations on Bone Lake this year for not having a boater education card while operating their watercraft. Two others were issued written warnings.

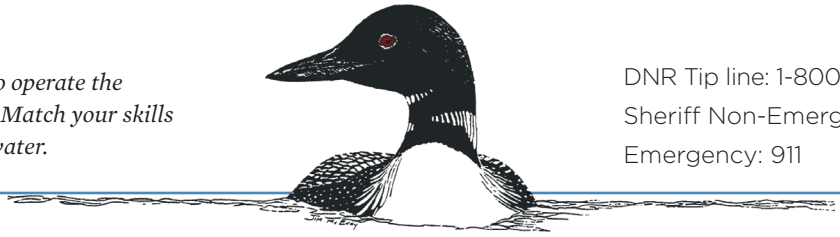
The Boating Safety course is offered online. Go to boated.com/wisconsin to access the course materials and take the test. Complete the course over the winter and be ready for safe and lawful boating in 2021.

Buoys keep us safe on the water

The buoys that mark hazards and navigation around the lake are important to safe boating. Buoys are sometimes out of place due to wind and storms, and, unfortunately, vandalism. Six buoys were destroyed by vandalism this year!

Buoys are paid for by District funds and maintained by volunteers. If you see a damaged buoy or notice one is missing or out of place, contact Mike Musial at (612) 207-5254 mobile, or email mbmusial@lakeland.ws.

Be sure you know how to operate the watercraft you're using. Match your skills with conditions on the water.



DNR Tip line: 1-800-847-9367 (voice or text)
Sheriff Non-Emergency: 715-485-8300 (24 hr)
Emergency: 911

Wisconsin's Lake Courtesy Code

Curbing Conflict

- More and more of us are enjoying the water in a wide variety of ways.
- Some seek peace and quiet, and a little bit of nature.
- Some let it all hang out and test their prowess and athletic skills.
- How do we share our small world with the creatures that need to live here?
- Can there be less stress and more pleasure?
- How will what I want to do affect others?
- Can I be respectful? Polite? Understanding?

Noise: Silence is golden.
Speed: Watch your wake.
Litter: Leave nothing but your ripples.
Space: Give wildlife and your lake neighbors some room.

RESPECT: The rights of others.

ENVIRONMENT: Enjoy wildlife from a distance.

SAFETY: Heed the boating regulations. Go slowly.

PEACE: Watch your noise and your wake.

ENJOY: Have fun, share the moments with your friends and family.

CONSIDER: The other people and creatures on the lake.

TRASH: Take your trash home.

RESPECT.

Consider how much nicer your day would be if everyone showed just a little more respect!

SAVE AND SHARE. CREDIT TO R. KORTH, UW EXTENSION/LAKES

New boating safety committee starting up

Boating on Bone Lake should be safe and enjoyable for everyone. With more people enjoying the lake using an increasing variety of watercraft, it is important that everyone knows boating safety regulations and respects each other's time on the water. A variety of messaging and distribution channels are needed to reach everyone with our objectives. Get involved, add your voice to boating safety issues.

A new Boating Safety Committee is starting up over the winter and will likely meet online via Zoom in the coming months. If you are interested in joining this committee, contact committee chair Mike Musial with your ideas, and to learn more.

Mike Musial (612) 207-5254 mobile mbmusial@lakeland.ws

New Polk County recreation patrol officer

The Polk County Sheriff's Department has hired a new Recreation Patrol Officer and purchased a new boat to accommodate this officer next year.

The new officer is Tyrel Hanson, who can be reached at tyrel.hanson@co.polk.wi.us.

Slow-no-wake safety rules for boats and PWCs

Slow-no-wake means moving as slowly as possible while still maintaining control of your boat's direction. Here are the Wisconsin slow-no-wake rules.

The 100 Foot Rule While operating a ***motorboat*** on any lake, slow-no-wake speed is required when operating within 100 ft. of the shoreline, and within 100 ft. of a raft, pier, a buoyed restricted area such as a dam, or marked swimming area.

The 200 Foot Rule While operating any ***personal watercraft*** (PWC), slow-no-wake speed is required within 200 ft. of the shoreline. Why? That's where most swimmers, anglers, docks, lifts and overhanging trees are. Not a place for fast operation, sudden turns or careless activities. It's also where most wildlife live.

Think you're good at guessing distances? Stand in one place and have a friend go to a spot you think is 100 feet away. Measure the distance. Try it with a spot you think is 200 feet away. Most people find that distance is hard to judge on land, but even harder to judge on the water. Boat operators will be held accountable for knowing these distances when operating boats or PWCs. ■

WHO CAN LEGALLY DRIVE A MOTORBOAT...

Operators 12-15 years of age must either have a DNR safety certificate or an adult on board while operating a motorboat.

A person 10 or 11 years old may operate a motorboat *only if* accompanied by a parent, a guardian, or a person at least 18 years old designated by the parent or guardian.

A person younger than 10 years old may not operate a motorboat.

WHO CAN LEGALLY DRIVE A PWC...

A person younger than 12 years old may not operate a PWC.

A person 12-15 years of age may operate a PWC only if he or she holds a valid boating safety certificate issued by WDNR. Parental supervision is not a substitute for a boating safety course certificate as with other motorboats.

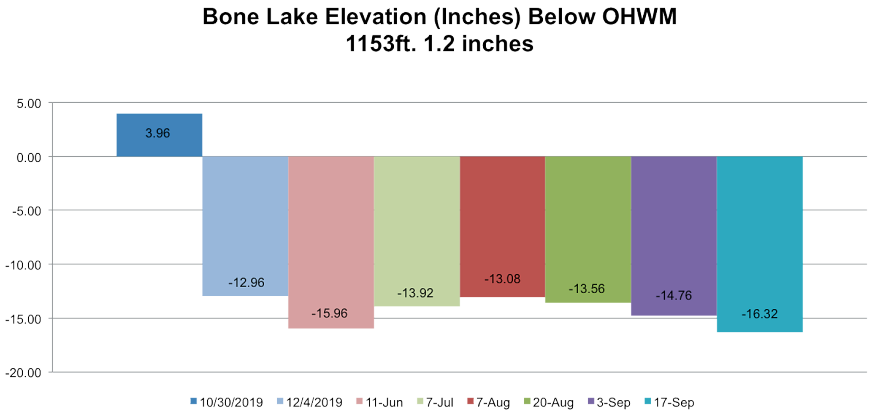
A person at least 16 years old may operate a PWC *only if* he or she holds a valid boating safety certificate issued by the DNR.

Source: dnr.wi.gov/topic/boat

Wisconsin law requires those born on or after January 1, 1989, to pass a boater safety course and to carry a boater education card.

Bone Lake water elevation

The graph shows Bone Lake's elevation from last October 2019 thru September 2020. The lake elevation didn't change dramatically from last year as we didn't have any heavy rainfalls and had no beaver dams. The lake elevation changed about 3 inches over the year and at it's highest the lake was still 13 inches below the historical high water mark. **—Cary Olson**



News from the waterfront runoff committee

by Alex Chorewycz

The lake protection grant that provides cost share dollars for owners to install waterfront runoff mitigation practices is ending in December 2020. Over the last three years there have been a number of waterfront runoff practices installed and we have used up almost all of the grant's remaining cost share funds.

In 2020 three projects were completed, the largest of which is the rain garden installed as part of Wilkins Bar and Resort re-grading and paving of their parking lot. The Wilkins project significantly impacts the health of our lake; runoff from the parking lot is now directed to a rain garden where it can slowly soak into the ground, keeping pollutants and nutrients from entering the lake.

Thank you to Wilkins for your stewardship in helping our lake. Thank you to all who have installed waterfront runoff mitigation practices on your properties to help improve Bone Lake's clarity and keep our lake healthy.

Septic incentive

The District provides a cost share incentive for property owners who wish to help our lake by replacing their non-compliant septic systems.

A non-compliant septic system can contribute phosphorus and other nutrients into groundwater that enters Bone Lake, fueling algae growth as well as impacting the lake's overall health.

Since 2018, eight property owners who replaced their non-compliant septic systems have received the District's cost share incentive.

Next year, incentives will be awarded again, along with free inspections.

To find out if your system is non-compliant, please contact Dick Mackie, the District's Septic Ranger to have a free, no obligation inspection. See the box below. ■

Do you smell something stinky?

A failing septic system can cause unpleasant odors, and even backed up sewage! Failing septic systems also can contribute phosphorus and other nutrients into groundwater that enters Bone Lake.

If you have a failing septic system and choose to replace it, you are eligible to receive a cost share of 50 percent, up to $2,500, from the Bone Lake Management District.

Polk County Zoning Department defines a failing septic system as one that causes or results in any of the following:

- Discharge of sewage into surface water or groundwater.
- Introduction of sewage into zones of saturation.
- Discharge of sewage through a drain tile or into zones of bedrock.
- Discharge of sewage to the surface of the ground.
- Failure to accept sewage discharges and back up of sewage into the structure served by the private sewage system.

Call Richard Mackie, Bone Lake Septic Ranger, at 715-857-5205 to arrange a free, no obligation review of your system.

Up to three incentives are available in 2021. Inspections are free.

Say hello to some late bloomers

These lovely natives are just getting started when other perennials begin to fade. They add unexpected form and color to the fall shoreline garden.

PRAIRIE MOON NURSERY

Bottle gentian, *Gentiana andrewsii,* also featured on page 1, blooms around Labor Day with spikes of deep blue to violet colored flowers.

KAREN ENGELBRETSON

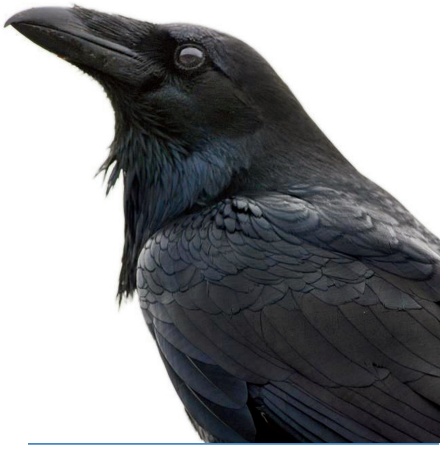
New England aster, *Aster novae-angliae*, and other asters bloom in pink, blue, purple, and magenta from August through frost. Asters are a critical fall nectar source for Monarchs.

PRAIRIE NURSERY

Stiff goldenrod, *Solidago rigida,* another Monarch favorite, thrives just about anywhere. Stems serve as perches for songbirds; seeds are an important late season bird food.

Magical mystical misfits

by Cris Dueholm



Common raven

What do ravens and crows have in common with bluejays and magpies? Well, they are all Corvids, members of the Corvidae family.

Raven and crows are both extremely intelligent, while some feel the raven is somewhat the smarter of the two! Ravens love to soar, crows don't. They both do stunt flying for fun. They both reside and breed here in the northern hemisphere. They enjoy playing games of catch a stick or small objects in midair. Both are omnivores, scavengers, as well as opportunist predators (they'll eat anything). They enjoy learning sounds from other birds that they will use to fool the listener. The crow loves to cache its food, then move it if anyone's watching. Both birds recognize humans and remember if you have been kind or unkind to them!

Ravens have a wingspan of 3-4 feet, and will weigh between 1-4 pounds. They will first breed around 4 years of age, sometimes using the same nest yearly. Males bring some of the sticks to the nest and the female will break them accordingly to make the nest, then line the cup of the nest with moss, grass, or animal fur. They will lay 3-7 eggs, incubate for about 25 days and the kids will stay in the nest about 28-50 days.

Crows have a wingspan of 2-3 feet, and will weigh around two pounds. They breed around the same age as the ravens. Crows like to build their nest in evergreens with all of the family helping, including last year's family members who will also help feed and teach the juveniles! Incubation takes around 18 days and the kids are in the nest for 20-40 days.

Raven on the left, and crow on the right. Can you see the differences?

You can tell the difference between ravens and crows not only by size but by the calls they make, the shape of the tail when they're flying, and the size of the beak! Crow and raven feathers are highly iridescent and will reflect blue, purple, and green shades in the sun. Ravens like to be by themselves or in pairs, where crows love to be in large flocks. A flock of crows is called a *murder* and a flock of ravens is called an *unkindness* or a *conspiracy*.

Crows and ravens are notorious in mythology, fables and native cultures. The crows sometimes are used as good luck charms by Native Americans, while some tribes use the crow image in their death and ritual customs. Crows are revered for their intelligence.

The Raven is viewed differently among the many Indigenous tribes but is an honored cultural hero. Raven is the transformer, trickster, temptress, the intelligent one. Ill-disciplined, shapeshifter, bringer of light and bearer of magic, Raven plays a part in Creation and is a symbol that signifies danger has passed and that good luck will follow.

I was able to witness a funeral for a dead Crow one time. There was a *murder* of well over a hundred crows that sat in the trees surrounding the deceased bird. Not a sound was made. Then slowly they began to fly off in small groups. Researchers think this is a way for them to communicate to one another about what had happened and to not follow in its footpaths.

These birds are truly magical and mystical—get to know them! ■

Editor's note: Search YouTube for a number of documentaries on the intelligence of ravens and crows.

Help support our birds. They need juicy bugs and caterpillars to feed their young, as well as small fruits and berries for energy. Plan to add some native flowering and fruiting shrubs to your property. Beauty for you, help for the birds.

Bone Lake volunteer awards

At the 2020 annual meeting we again recognized volunteers for their service to Bone Lake with the gift of a Bone Lake platter. This year the award recipients are as follows:

Pat Schmidt and Jerry Lutgen for their work on the alum committee.

David Klopp for serving on the wildlife and natural beauty committee and installing the purple martin houses at the north landing.

Ron Rosenthal for serving on the waterfront runoff committee and now mailing new owner information packets.

Andy Brown and Ron Ogren for serving on the Bone Lake board and representing Bone Lake and Georgetown Towns respectively.

Since 2013, the District board has recognized 56 individuals with 36 awards. Bone Lake is recognized by Wisc. DNR as one of the top Wisc. lakes volunteer groups.

We continue to have an outstanding group of volunteers—thank you for your dedication to Bone Lake!

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Phil Foster at philsuefoster@lakeland.ws or 715-553-0719. ■

Pat Schmidt

Jerry Lutgen

David Klopp

Ron Rosenthal

Andy Brown

Ron Ogren

Great gift idea... Wisconsin Lakes Trivia Game!
Test your knowledge about Wisconsin lakes and discover fun facts about lake history, fish, wildlife, sports and recreation while you play. Includes cards, score sheets, and die. Available at learningstore.extension.wisc.edu

Tourist Rooming Houses

Many properties around Bone Lake are now being rented for short-term and long-term stays. You must have a Polk County Land Use Permit and all proper licensing to rent your property. Polk County Board of Supervisors has created a Tourist Rooming House Ordinance that defines the rules for renting your property and for the activity of renters during their stay. Find the list of rules at bonelakewi.com.

Keep in touch

Subscribe to Bone Lake eNews! Get Bone Lake updates between newsletters throughout the year. Go to bonelakewi.com and click Join Our Mailing on the front page. Be sure to reply to the confirmation email to complete your subscription and click the link to add enews@bonelake.com to your address book. Signed up but not getting emails? Contact karen@kje.design.
Bone Lakers Facebook group page. Nearly 2,000 members are sharing photos, events, recommendations, and news about life around the lake. To join, go to facebook.com/groups/BoneLakers.

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