

DOCK SIDE

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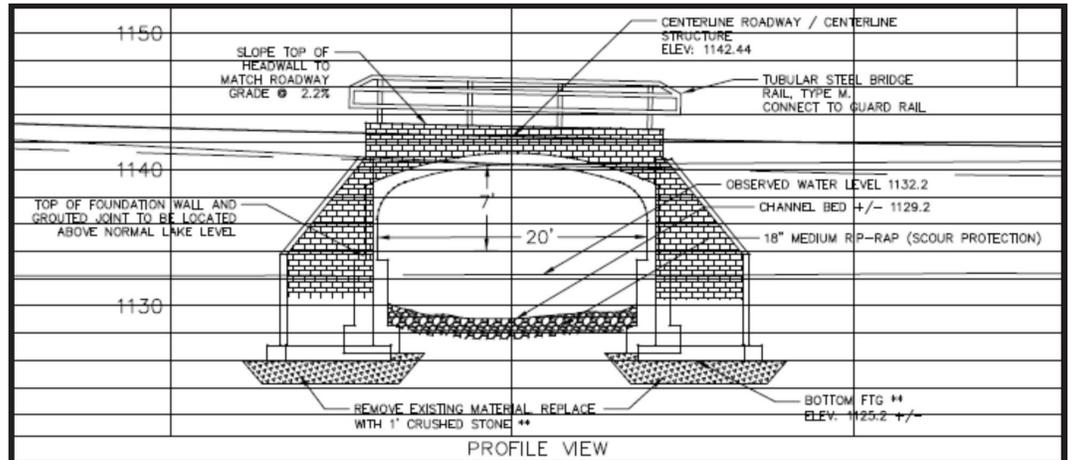
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The Millpond Bridge Construction Bids Higher Than Expected

On March 14th the BLPRD Bridge Project Committee meets to evaluate the contractor's bids to construct the Millpond Bridge. Bids were received on March 11th and initial reviews indicate that initial projections were low.

BLPRD Chairman Howard Seim explained the issue to the commissioners; "It appears the bridge bids have exceeding our budget goal that was approved at the last annual meeting (July, 2012). The bids we received on Monday (March 11th, 2013) are being evaluated and will be reviewed by the bridge committee Thursday (March 14th). If the bids exceed our budget we will need to re-assess the next step. The committee will bring the issue back to the electorate either at the next annual meeting or a special District meeting. In any event the April 15th start date is most likely not realistic. (As we stand now) engineering bridge design has been completed including the DNR recommended changes and the final package has been submitted to the DNR for final approval of bridge construction. When presented by the committee and approved by the electorate, a new bridge build timeline will be prepared."

Cost responsibilities for the Millpond Bridge are shared by several governmental groups. BLPRD is responsible for the culvert, the county highway department is responsible for the roadway over the bridge and the Village of Balsam Lake is responsible for the pedestrian walkway and area lighting.

When completed, both Balsam Lake and Millpond property owners and visitors will enjoy the new look and utility of this bridge. The bridge facade will take on a brick look through the use of embossed concrete forms. Those forms were donated by Larry Karlson of Karlson Forming Specialties, an Amery contractor. Mr. Karlson wanted the project to have that finished look. At the roadway level a pedestrian walkway will allow safe passage over the bridge and street lighting will be installed to illuminate the area. The village planned to utilize the same style of lighting fixture as was used on Main Street. At the waterline the bridge opening is wider, higher and deeper. The design would accommodate boats and pontoons that can meet the height and draft requirements of the space.

Commissioners Plan to Attend Wisconsin Lakes Convention

The BLPR Commissioners plan to attend the Wisconsin Lake Convention on April 9th through the 11th. Commissioners will meet with Scientists, state leaders and colleagues to discuss current challenges to the state's lakes and streams and solutions to the lake issues.

SO WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TOPICS OF INTEREST THIS YEAR?

- 1** The Scientists will discuss techniques for identifying and differentiating aquatic plants in lakes. This activity is important as aquatic plants native to the lake support the ecosystem and invasive aquatic plants challenge the ecosystems. Identifying invasive species early can make eradication less expensive and more successful.
- 2** Commissioners will be introduced to lake science and management including insights about the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of lakes. Building off this topic is do-it-yourself lake monitoring, (See Dockside article, "Environmental Scientists Wanted.")
- 3** A topic that is important to all shoreline property owners, Shoreland Property Management and Erosion Control. Building an effective buffer zone between the yard and the lake shore and protecting the lake from soil erosion is important in maintaining the health of Balsam Lake.



Rusty Crayfish found in Bone Lake

On August 31st Wisconsin DNR fishery specialists were electro shocking areas of Fox Creek near Jonzy's Market when they observed a significant number of Rusty Crayfish. During subsequent observations on September 1st and 2nd populations of Rusty Crayfish were observed at the location where the Fox River leaves Bone Lake.

The Rusty Crayfish is an invasive species that competes with native crayfish for food and space. They are more aggressive than native crayfish, are better able to avoid fish predation and can harm native fish populations by eating their eggs and young. In fact they eat twice as much as other crayfish. In a worst case scenario the Rusty Crayfish will strip a lake of its vegetation. Fish populations decrease as the lake's ecosystem is disrupted.

The Rusty Crayfish use water pathways to spread from lakes to streams. They could have also spread in the bait buckets of anglers or from the aquariums of hobbyists. Rusty Crayfish move to deeper water in the winter. They return to the warmer water along the shorelines as the ice melts and

retreats from the shoreline. They prefer rocks, logs and other debris for cover.

One female is all it takes to establish a new population. Mature rusty crayfish mate in late summer, early fall, or early spring. The male transfers sperm to the female. She stores the sperm until her eggs are ready to fertilize, typically in the spring (late April or May) as water



Meet "Rusty." The adult Rusty Crayfish measures 5" to 6" tail to the end of the claw. They are aggressive and have been known to pinch toes.

temperatures begin to increase. Stored sperm are released as eggs are expelled and external fertilization occurs. Rusty crayfish females lay from 80 to 575 eggs.

Eggs hatch in three to six weeks, depending on water temperature. Once hatched, young crayfish cling to the female's swimmerets for three to four molts (molting is when crayfish shed their old shell to allow growth).

Young crayfish may stay with the female for several weeks. She offers them protection during this vulnerable life stage. Eventually, the young leave the female. They undergo eight to ten molts before they mature, which may occur during the first year, but more likely in the following year. Rusty crayfish reach maturity at a total length of one and three-eighths inches (3.5 cm) and reach a maximum length of about four inches (10 cm), not including claws. In Wisconsin collections (Hobbs and Jass 1988), they averaged two and one-half inches (6.4 cm). There are no known populations of Rusty Crayfish in Balsam Lake. It is important for lake residences to know that this aquatic invasive species is nearby. **If you should see a Rusty Crayfish, if possible capture it and call Jeremy Williamson at (715) 485-8639 or email: jeremyw@co.polk.wi.us**

The best way to prevent the spread of invasive species is to be absolutely sure that your boats and trailers are clean – no vegetative fragments should be present. Live wells should be drained. In fact, it is illegal to transport aquatic plants on boats, trailers, and equipment in Wisconsin. Polk County also has an ordinance that makes it illegal to transport aquatic plants.

Environmental Scientists Wanted

amateur, young &/or old

Did you know that Balsam Lake relies on volunteers to be the eyes and ears in the lake world? Volunteer Environmental Scientists play an important role in assessing lake water quality and the watershed health by monitoring: water clarity, water chemistry (such as dissolved oxygen or phosphorus), aquatic invasive species, aquatic plant communities, and many kinds of wildlife— from aquatic insects to birds.

Volunteer lake monitoring is a great way to, learn more about our lake, observe and document long-term changes in lake health, and collect valuable data. This data is used to report on lake conditions and water quality trends, to prepare lake and watershed management plans, and to teach others about our lake's health and what we can do to take better care of Balsam Lake. Wisconsin has several monitoring programs that depend on citizen involvement.

Involve the children (grandchildren) in lake monitoring so that they can learn how the environment can affect Balsam Lake.



CITIZEN LAKE MONITORING NETWORK

Wisconsin's Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (formerly called "Self-Help Lake Monitoring") began in 1986. Today more than 1,100 citizen volunteers statewide are collecting water quality data for more than 850 Wisconsin lakes. The goals of citizen lake monitoring are to collect high quality data, educate and empower citizens, share and use this data and knowledge.

DNR and University of Wisconsin-Extension staff provides volunteers with the necessary equipment and training. Volunteers provide their time, energy, and a willingness to share information with their lake community and other lake users. Lake enthusiasts can receive training through the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network in four main areas.

Measure Water Clarity

This is where volunteer monitors typically get started. Consistent measurements of water clarity (using the Secchi disk method) provide easily gathered, reliable trends data on lake changes over time.

Water Chemistry

Collect Water Chemistry, Temperature, and Dissolved Oxygen Data. After a year of water clarity monitoring some volunteers begin water chemistry monitoring to gather more detailed data on nutrients and other aspects of a lake's physiology. Openings for water chemistry monitoring are limited and depend on the needs of the lake and interest of the volunteers.

Aquatic Plants

Aquatic plants are at the root of a healthy lake ecosystem. They play a vital role in stabilizing sediments, cycling nutrients, providing oxygen as well as food and shelter for all kinds of wildlife and other aquatic life. Understanding how the aquatic plant community is changing over time is a key first step before undertaking aquatic plant management activities.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Identify and map aquatic invasive species. Participants review monitoring protocols for specific aquatic invasive plants and animals such as Eurasian water milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, purple loosestrife, zebra mussels, rusty crayfish, etc.

Additionally, whole lake monitoring methods are discussed to assist participants in developing a proactive approach with early detection and rapid response efforts.

Lake Levels Are Expected to be Low

By Ray Sloss, BLPRD Commissioner



As of February 5 the Balsam Lake drainage basin is ten inches behind the average snow fall. However we have had 7 snow systems in the first 13 days of February. February is shaping up to be a snowier month than past Februaries.

Balsam Lake is classified as a drainage lake meaning that it is fed primarily by inflowing streams or rivers. Those streams and rivers swell during the spring snow melt runoff. A sudden change in the temperature from below freezing to well above freezing is good for runoff, bad for recharging the soils with moisture. A deficit of 10 inch of snow equates to 1 inch of rain on average. While March, April and May contribute more to the area in levels of precipitation, snow runoff is generally done in March. The warm temperatures insure that April and May's precipitation is absorbed into the soil.

Low lake levels affect navigation channels and may create lake hazards that didn't exist during normal lake levels. The channel between Boston Bay and Little Balsam is particularly challenging because it meanders and natural underwater hazards (rocks) exist just outside the channel. East Balsam begins as a shallow basin; deepest parts are approximately 13 feet. I have hit lake bottom at the northeast end

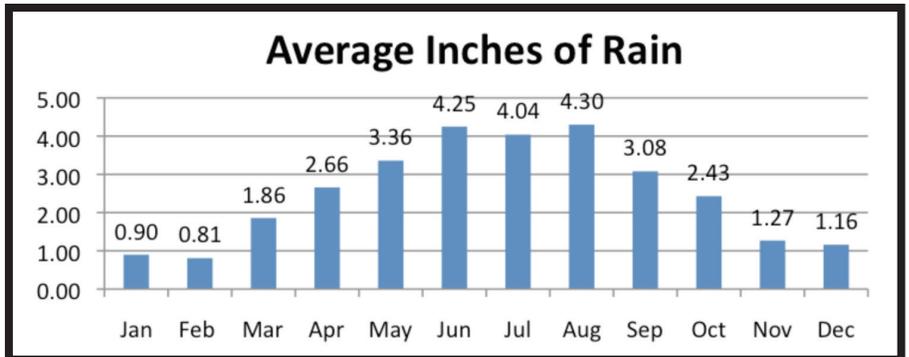
of East Balsam 100 feet out from shore. East Balsam also contains (appropriately named) Rock Island, which is surrounded by rocky shoals. This island is a favored

fishing location. It has been reported by East Balsam residents that the rocky shoals extending from this island cause boaters damage each year. Avoid this area while motoring; approach this area with caution when fishing or anchoring out as low lake levels extend the hazards.

Other expected affects of low lake level, "the art of getting your boat on and off the boat lift" and "surprise, the boat now fits under the dock instead of alongside the dock."

The affects of low precipitation levels extend widely. It was reported that two of the great lakes, Lake Huron

and Lake Michigan are at their lowest levels since record keeping began in 1918. The lakes are 29 inches below their long term averages. Lake Superior is also well below averages. However, the meteorologist Paul Huttner says that his senses "continue to point toward a wetter trend...and the hope for continued above average precipitation as we head toward spring 2013."



Donor "Gifts" Rice Creek Property to BLPRD Conservancy

Howard Seim, Chairman BLPRD.

A long time Lake Resident approached Howard Seim, Chairman of the BLPRD with an exciting question. Would the district have interest in a land that borders Rice Creek?

Rice Creek is one of two main inflows to Balsam Lake. It flows from Rice Lake and is joined by Otter Creek before flowing into the North and West most end of Little Balsam. Rice Creek is currently a "clean source of water." The donation of the land to BLPRD allows the district to maintain the shores of Rice Creek in a wild state.

We know from the Environmental Scientists that the deep root structure

of the natural vegetation on shorelines works to ensure that runoff is minimized and that the water resource is protected from naturally occurring and artificially introduced phosphorus. This helps to protect the creek from pollutants both natural and artificially introduced by human activity.

The seven acre Rice Creek Conservancy joins the Balsam Lake Sedimentation Acres, Stumps Bay Conservancy and the Bass Bay Conservancy as acreages important to the health

and beauty of our lake. These properties will be maintained in a wild state to protect them from development. They will continue to provide wild life habitat and wild life corridors. On behalf of the community on Balsam Lake, thank you for this exciting and important donation."

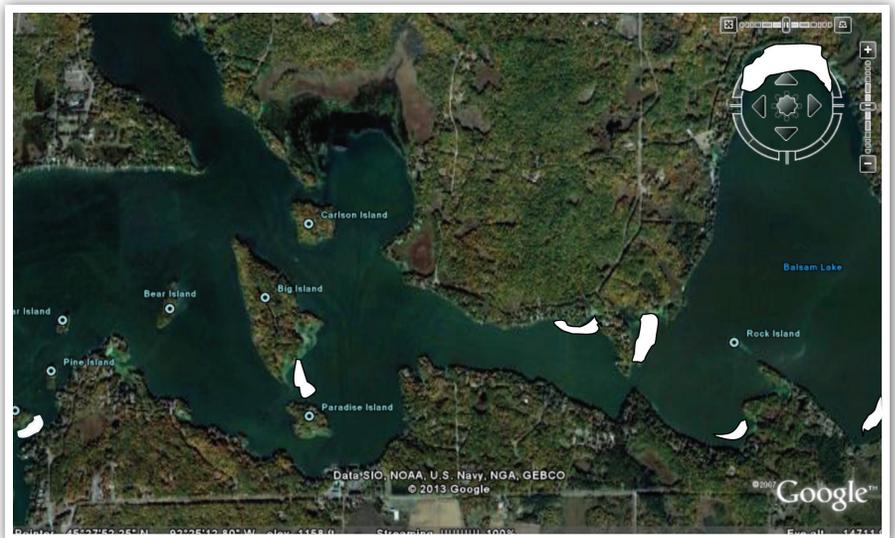


Curly Leaf Pondweed Treatment Planned for Balsam Lake

Loren Johnson, BLPRD.

BLPRD Commissioners have received and reviewed bids from contractors for herbicide application to areas with known Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP). The bid was awarded to the same vendor that performed the application last year, Lake Restoration, Inc. The treatment area totals 14.4 acres. Treatment will occur in early spring when water temperatures are between 45 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

CLP is an invasive species of aquatic plant that tends to crowd out the natural aquatic vegetation. In that respect it develops beds or a dense mat that also impedes waterway navigation. CLP reproduces from its turions which are spread by currents or by getting carried along on boats. (Most boaters of experienced the process of clearing weeds from their motors propeller by a short burst of power in reverse.) This aquatic plant prefers low temperatures and low light. For that reason it beats the native aquatic vegetation by



The white areas approximate the location of the CLP areas to be treated in the spring of 2013. From Left to right: First Island, Beds 19A&B; Big and Paradise Island, Bed 15; NW of Big Narrows, Bed 11; East Balsam.

beginning to germinate in late winter and comes out in early spring during which it grows rapidly. It then dies off in mid July.

Eradicating Balsam Lake of CLP is not practical. However controlling this perennial plant is desirable because of the damaging impact it has on the lake environment. District Commissioner

Loren Johnson is the Aquatic Plant Management lead on this project. Loren is directing attention toward five known CLP beds based on lake surveys that were completed last year. **If you observe CLP off your shoreline please contact Loren at landpjohnson@centurylink.net.**

DOCK SIDE

Balsam Lake Protection & Rehabilitation District
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Balsam Lake, WI 54810



2013 - 2014 Meeting Schedule

March 16th
April 20th
May 18th
June 15th
July 20th - Annual Meeting
August 17th
September 21st
October 19th
November - No Meeting
December 21st
January 18th, 2014
February 15th, 2014

Polk County Business Center
Lower Level Conference Room
Third Saturday of the Month
8:30 a.m.

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