

# Windigo Lake Area Newsletter

Windigo Lake Property Owners Association  
[www.windigoproductions.com/wlpoa/index.html](http://www.windigoproductions.com/wlpoa/index.html)

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Editor: Katy Cellucci

## Fall 2009

### Editor's Note

I'm not sure I can really say Fall as there have already been many signs of Winter on Windigo. It sure seems strange for October, but such is the way of the woods. I hope many of you got to enjoy the colors of Fall in the northwoods before the snow came down. It truly is breathtaking during this time of year. We have lots of news to cover and some lake news from residents. Thank you for submitting snapshots of your lives on Windigo.

### WLPOA OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Ray Cott-Meissel 715-558-1464
<b>Vice President</b>	Dick Steininger 715-634-4021 847-364-0073
<b>Treasurer</b>	Gary Hartmann 715-634-1709 763-258-4617
<b>Secretary</b>	Colleen Graham 715-634-3889 612-823-4945

### WLPOA COMMITTEES

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<b>Membership</b>	Gary Hartman
<b>Communication</b>	Katy Cellucci 847-672-9202
<b>Lake Environment &amp; Safety</b>	Paul Neiman 952-926-4254
<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife Habitat</b>	Dick Steininger

## Greetings and a Happy Autumn to All!

Well, another summer has come and gone. I hope everyone had ample opportunity to enjoy the pleasures and peacefulness of our beloved Windigo.

No significant environmental or political issues for us this year, so I'll pigeonhole that as "no news is good news". The only visible changes on Windigo - other than the water level slowly receding - is our new boat landing which has been dredged as best as possible and the new, highly effective *No Wake* buoy in Portage Bay.

In August, at the annual picnic and business meeting, a new WLPOA Board was elected! Well, sort of. Dick Steininger and I have traded places as President and Vice President and Colleen Graham and Gary Hartmann are continuing to serve as Secretary and Treasurer. I am honored to serve as president and will continue to work with the Board, the Committees, Bay Captains and Volunteers to further our mission of preservation and restoration for Windigo. I will also support the work on a local, regional and state level for preservation and restoration. There is a lot of good, solid environmental work going on in our legislature, which the WLPOA can support directly and through our active membership in coalitions like the *Sawyer County Lakes Forum* and the *Wisconsin Association of Lakes*. As individuals, we can influence legislation by letter, email and phone calls to our elected officials at both the state and federal levels. Even if you are not a Wisconsin resident, these activities are still effective because you are paying property taxes and your nonresident property taxes are a significant portion of our state's income.

Here's a short list of what's new in Madison:

### \* **Governor signs Slow no wake bill into law**

The Governor signed the slow no wake bill (SB 12) on July 10, 2009. The new law (2009 Wisconsin Act 31) establishes a statewide slow no wake zone for motorboats within 100 feet of a lake's shoreline. Slow-no-wake zones may be extended farther away from the shore or established less than 100 feet from the shoreline through passage of local boating ordinances. The bill was published on July 24, 2009 and will take effect seven months after the publication date.

This law will have a great impact on Windigo as we have Portage Bay and lots of small bays and peninsulas. This will reduce boat speeds on a large portion of the lake. Also the DNR loves Windigo, watches it closely and with all the budget cuts going on will be happy to accept the extra revenue from fines.

### \* **Aquatic invasive species policy**

Governor to sign Aquatic invasive species transport bill into law (AB 162 / SB 123)

This bill offers some technical changes to improve upon the "illegal to transport" language that was passed in the supplemental budget bill in May of 2008. All aquatic plants and animals would be required to be removed from boats or any other equipment before it is transported on public highways. Enforcement authority is also broadened under the bill.

SB 123 has passed both houses of the state legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature to become law.

This type of law has been in effect in Minnesota for several years and has been very effective in curtailing the spread of AIS. However it is not by any means a cure. Invasives are here to stay and it is only a matter of time before one comes to Windigo. When invasives come, it is important to act quickly to start the expensive eradication process. There are DNR grants available to defray the cost, but with a state budget deficit and a waiting list for the grants, it would take too long to start eradication. The WLPOA has started an Eradication Fund with a current goal of \$10,000 to give us a leg up when the inevitable happens. Please contribute generously.

**\*Ballast water bill (AB 360)**

On July 31st, a bill (AB 360) was introduced that will prohibit the discharge of ballast water and sediments that have settled out of ballast water in Wisconsin waters. All vessels that take on ballast from outside of Wisconsin waters will be required to get a permit from the DNR to discharge ballast water into Wisconsin waters. Permits must require treatment of ballast water and sediments to kill or remove aquatic invasive species and other organisms. The Assembly Natural Resources Committee held a public hearing on this bill September 2nd.

**\* Phosphorus in dish washing detergent (AB 281)**

On June 26, the full Assembly passed AB 281, which will reduce one of the most common causes of phosphorus pollution: dish washing detergent. Fifteen states have such laws in place already. The Senate Environment Committee has held a public hearing and will be holding an Executive Session on the bill October 6th.

**\* Proposed shore land management rules (NR 115)**

The state legislature has sent the proposed changes to Wisconsin's shore land zoning rule (NR 115, Clearinghouse Rule CR05-058), which contains statewide minimum standards for shore land development in unincorporated areas, back to the Department of Natural Resources for modification. Proposed NR 115 that was before the legislature is a consensus product developed over eight years, which has won approval of a key group of development and conservation interests (including the Wisconsin Association of Lakes) that have historically held very different views.

**\* Independent DNR Secretary bill (AB 138 / SB 113)**

This bill would restore authority to the DNR Natural Resource Board (NRB) to appoint the DNR Secretary. Currently, the Governor appoints the DNR Secretary.

The full state Assembly passed AB 138 by a huge bi-partisan vote. The Assembly version of the bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources. If this issue is important to you, please contact your state Senator (look up contact information ) and ask your Senator to encourage the Senate to bring the DNR Secretary Bill up for a vote soon and to please vote for it.

The Senate version of this bill (SB 113), has passed through the Senate committee and is available for scheduling before the full Senate. The Governor remains opposed to this legislation.

Watch a roundtable discussion on Who Should Appoint the DNR Secretary on Wisconsin Eye

Governor to sign bill banning mercury in certain products (AB 299 / SB 200)

Governor Jim Doyle will sign Senate Bill 200, the mercury products bill, at 2pm on October 6th. This proposal will regulate the sale of non-essential household products to

which mercury has been added during formulation and manufacture including fever thermometers, manometers (instruments for measuring pressure), thermostats, instruments and measuring devices, switches and relays, and household items. Every lake in Wisconsin is currently under a mercury advisory.

Details of the above can be found at the *Wisconsin Association of Lakes and the State Legislature websites*.

As always, if you have any concerns, questions or complaints, I can be reached at (715) 558-1464 and email: [swampcastle3@gmail.com](mailto:swampcastle3@gmail.com).

Have a great winter, and see you out on the ice!

Raymond Cott-Meissel

President, WLPOA

## **Information on Low Lake Level**

by Dick Steininger

As you may or may not know, most of the northern part of Wisconsin has been experiencing the same severe draught that we have been experiencing on Windigo.

Windigo's level has dropped about 36 inches in the last five years. Having been a visitor and a property owner on Windigo for the last seventy years, this is a cycle that has occurred about three times in my memory. I have read a couple of articles in the Lake Tides newsletter and Lake Connection newsletter. You may wonder if your taxes will increase now that you have more acreage due to the lake level dropping. The answer is no. The state owns all the lakefront from the ordinary high water level to the current water edge. They will allow you to clear a thirty foot wide area of none endangered grass and weeds. This may be done without state approval. You can remove by hand, a string weed trimmer or a push lawn mower. The material that has been removed should be picked up and disposed of in an upland location. If you use any fill such as sand, pea gravel, rocks and other fill you will need a permit from your local government. Riding any motor driven vehicle ATVS lawnmowers or golf carts is prohibited. One of the articles also states that the low water level has its benefits. Sediment is consolidated and allows new plants to colonize the lake bed and provide a habitat for rare plants and shorebirds. When water levels return to normal, the expansion of new plants becomes habitat for fish and wildlife while removing nutrients from the water, and will increase water clarity.

While boating in the south part of Portage bay you may have noticed that the water is quite shallow. If we all would boat in the center of the bay as we are headed out to the big lake, it would help prevent further lake damage from the props of the boats. It might also help restore this part of the bay with lily pads and flowers, which made it so beautiful years ago.

For more information about the low lake level, you might want to check out a couple of websites:

[www.uwp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/ecology](http://www.uwp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/ecology)

[www.wisconsinlakes.org/events/09may\\_lowlake.html](http://www.wisconsinlakes.org/events/09may_lowlake.html)

[www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html](http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html)

# **Lake Environment & Safety Committee Report**

## **WLPOA TAKES ACTION AGAINST INVASIVE SPECIES**

by Paul Neimann

The greatest threat to the lakes of Wisconsin, including Windigo, takes the form of invasive plants which can take over a lake rendering it ugly, unusable, and causing neighboring property values to plummet. In an effort to protect Windigo, the Association has taken a number of steps which will prevent or at least deter invasive species arriving in the lake. For example, it has circulated to its "Bay Captains" photographs of the invasive species so that they can be on the outlook for such plants and bring them to the attention of the DNR, Sawyer County and the Association's officers.

At the spring dinner, the guest speaker, Kristi Maki, a representative of the Sawyer County Land and Water Conservation Department, spoke in depth on the subject as well as providing photographs for purposes of identifying the offending plants. The Association also requested and obtained two invasive species surveys, one by the county and one by a local teacher of biology, to determine whether any dangerous plants had begun to grow in our waters. While any survey cannot be fool proof, the results were heartening in that neither survey disclosed the existence of an invasive specie. This finding is significant because it gives the property owners the opportunity to stay on top of this threat and to take early action where warranted. The Association has also requested the county to replace the damaged signs relating to plants at the boat landing.

The Association has also established an eradication fund which is to be utilized to retain professional assistance in the event an invasive specie is identified. Presently, this fund has a balance of approximately \$4,500 and the Association's goal is to reach \$10,000. It is in the interest of all property owners to contribute to the fund at the time of membership renewal.

### **Steps That All Property Owners Should Take.**

While the lake is free of invasive species, now is the time for all owners to take action by:

- \* Continuing to maintain our unique shoreline in its natural state since a natural shoreline with trees, grass and brush prevents runoff which provides nutrients for the invasive specie. The persons undertaking the two surveys commented favorably on the natural condition of our shoreline as a possible reason why harmful plants have not become ensconced in the lake. In that regard, Mike and Roxanne Lantz graciously monitor the clarity of our lake so that harmful conditions can be identified at an early stage.

\* The lake's Bay Captains continuing to monitor the lake for unwanted or unknown plants using the photographic and educational material provided to them.

\* Every property owner keeping an eye for the most worrisome invasive species which are:

curly leaf pond weed  
Eurasian water-milfoil  
purple loosestrife

Descriptions and photographs of the above plants as well as others can be seen on the Wisconsin DNR website, obtained from Sawyer County, from the Bay Captains as well as from any of the Association's officers.

\* Volunteering to be on the team which will eradicate the invasive plants both in the water and on the shore. Snorkeling skills would be helpful. Please notify an Association officer if you are interested in being part of such an effort.

## **WLPOA Annual Meeting and Picnic**

by Colleen Graham

About two dozen people attended the annual meeting on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. It was again held in Walt Pydo's garage and we wish to thank him for the use of his facility. The business meeting started at 4 PM. Meeting highlights:

- Election of Officers



- Ray Cott-Meissel (right) is our new president.
- Dick Steininger, (left) is the new Vice-President.
- Gary Hartmann will continue as Treasurer.
- Colleen Graham will continue as Secretary.

- A third buoy was purchased and installed on Portage Bay to remind boaters that the area is a “no wake” zone. Comments received have been very favorable.
- Bass Lake Township agreed to dredge the boat landing so it’s easier to get boats in and out of Windigo.
- Our web site (<http://www.windigoproductions.com/wlpoa/index.html>) will be updated quarterly by Herb Rush.
- Katy Cellucci will continue as editor of the newsletter. Articles and suggestions should be emailed directly to her at [k.cellucci@comcast.net](mailto:k.cellucci@comcast.net).
- A plan for monitoring Windigo for invasive species was discussed (see article in this newsletter under the Lake & Environment Committee report).

The pot-luck started at 5 PM and featured a variety of dishes. No one left hungry!



Pot luck dishes were set out at 5 PM



There was time for meeting and greeting our neighbors.



Bruce Konkler enjoyed the variety of dishes.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Gary Hartmann

As of October 10, 2009, our lake association has the following cash on hand:

- Operating Budget (Checking Account): \$ 122.00. Our budget supports printing and mailing of our newsletters, signs for our boat landing, and purchase of “no wake” buoys. We also maintain memberships in the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, the Sawyer County Lakes Forum, the Couderay Waters Regional Land Trust, and the DNR Adopt an Eagle Program.
- IE Fund:(Saving Account): \$ 4,353. This reserve was set up to deal with invasive species should the need arise. This year \$ 150 has been spent in support of monitoring Windigo for invasive species. Our goal is to build this fund up to \$ 10,000. We have reached 44% of our goal.

## **Membership Report**

Gary Hartmann, Membership Chairman

Six people recently paid their 2009 dues bringing the total number to 88 property owners! This is outstanding participation. Your support is critical to our association and it is very much appreciated.

A total of 17 people receive the Newsletter as Associate Members. Thirty-four members have elected to receive our Newsletter electronically. Please notify me if your email address changes so we don't lose contact.

WLPOA serves property owners on Windigo Lake, Hub Lake, and Lake 27 by promoting communication and cooperation among lakeshore owners, protecting the



health and quality of our lakes, and giving us a strong united voice in working with the DNR and local government.

WLPOA is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization so your membership donation is tax-deductible as provided by law.

## **Fish & Wildlife Habitat Report**

by Dick Steininger

I would like to schedule a meeting on the first weekend in May, opening day weekend, for our *Fish & Wildlife Habitat Committee*. I will try to keep the meeting to no more than two hours. If anyone is interested in joining this committee, please email me some times that you are available. I would like to have a dialog going all winter as to what we would like to get accomplished this year. I talked to Dave Ochu last week about the DNR doing some shocks on Windigo a couple of weeks ago. He said it was Dan Tyrolt who works for the tribe. Apparently, they have some treaty rights to check on Windigo. Dave will get the results of the shock and report to our committee. Once we get the report, I will email it to the members of our committee and we will start planning from there. I will ask Dan to join our committee meetings as he has done in the past.

Also, Ted Schwenker reported to our committee about the loon activity on Windigo. He said they found a dead one about two months ago. He hasn't found out what killed it other than it wasn't from an external object, like a boat. He also said that there no nests reported this year.

If anyone has any other Fish or Wildlife activity they would like to report on, please call me at (847) 364-0073 or email [r.steininger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:r.steininger@sbcglobal.net).

\*And we have just enough space left to share a memorable moment *On the Lake* from a long time visitor, first year owner. If you have any memorable moments *On the Lake* you would like to share, please email [k.cellucci@comcast.net](mailto:k.cellucci@comcast.net).

## **Deer Swimming**

by Patrick Steininger

This story probably happened about 20 years ago...Dad and I in the old aluminum fishing boat, with possibly Uncle Bob or Jeff, on a Memorial Day. Location was in just east of the deepest part of the lake and north of Crescent Island.

We were out fishing and we saw something large moving on top of the water, thinking it was some water fowl. As we got the boat closer, we saw it was the head of a deer swimming in the middle of the lake. The deer seemed totally lost, so Dad maneuvered the boat back and forth trying to guide the deer back towards the shore area. It took about 15 minutes, but it finally made it back to shore, and back to its tired feet. Then we start thinking how did he get out there? What if we did not come by? I guess Dad saved the deer from drowning. Probably talked about it for 1/2 hour after in amazement.

## Local Windigo News Sent in by its Residents

Leah Peterson sent in this bit of news and photo.



Our grandson Nile, caught his biggest fish ever on lake 27. He was proud of it and we put it on ice, and he brought it home for a father's day gift for his Dad. It was an 18 inch largemouth bass around 3 pounds.

**P** Please consider your environmental responsibility before printing this e-mail