



Big Wood Lake Association
Spring 2023

Wood Chips

President's Corner

By Mike Strub

After a full six months of winter, we're glad that spring is finally here! The winter of 2022-23 will go down as one of the strangest ever. I guess we should have gotten a clue when a Mustang gelding fell through the ice a week before Christmas. Look for more on that elsewhere in this edition of Wood Chips.

If you watch the Twin Cities news channels, you heard the reports that this was the 3rd (or maybe even 2nd) snowiest winter as measured at MSP. As a year-round resident I thought I'd share my view from North Shore Drive. It was a combination of excessive snow and not enough freezing temps that severely affected general use of the lake all winter. These poor ice conditions caused the cancellation of the annual American Legion Ice Fishing Contest in February, maybe the first time ever this annual event was called off. Getting out on the lake proved the biggest challenge with most hearty anglers heading out on foot most of the winter. Maybe the strangest sight (besides the horse rescue) was the lack of ice fishing shacks. There were hikers, some on snow shoes, some on cross country skis, then a few ATVs and snowmobiles ventured out and eventually a handful of pickup trucks and other vehicles were able to get out there, but what we call "the village" never happened. "The village" could be as many as a hundred (or more) shacks out by the two big islands. That did not happen this year. The general consensus is that due to low fishing pressure this winter, the summer fishing season should be really good. Those of us who like to use the fly-rod are looking forward to open water!



The latest BWLA Directory has been completed. Many thanks to Keith and Lynn Anderson for heading up this project, which happens every three years.

For the summer season, we have plans to hold all of our annual events this year, starting with the Spring Membership meeting at Luther Point May 20th. The clothing and flare sale happens June 24th at Thoreson Park, Flare night when we light up the lake is July 3rd and the Flotilla is on the 4th of July. We'll host a picnic in the park on July 22nd, and the fall membership meeting will be held at Wood Lake Camp and Retreat Center on August 26th.

Thank you for your support of the Big Wood Lake Association.
See you on the lake!

Did You Know?

By Cris Peterson



Four Cubs Farm will once again host the Dairy Breakfast on Saturday, June 17 from 7AM-Noon. The event receives generous support from local businesses and all proceeds benefit local community organizations like Grantsburg Dollars for Scholars and the Grantsburg Fair Association.

A delicious pancake breakfast with real maple syrup is available for \$9 for adults, \$6 for kids 6-12 and Free for kids 5 and under. The farm is located at 23250 S Williams Road. Come and see the cows!

New businesses have opened recently in downtown Grantsburg. It's wonderful to have a coffee shop back in town after Ascend closed in December. Check them both out!



The Grind Coffee Bar & Boutique opened in April where Ascend was located.



Across the street from the The Grind is another gift shop called North Goods.

Spring Cleaning For Safety

By DNR Conservation Warden Chris Spaight

Spring cleaning is an annual tradition as we open our windows and clear the winter dust from our homes, cabins and garages in preparation for warm weather fun. This seasonal sprucing also extends to our outdoor on-water activities.

It's time to check your water sports equipment. More specifically, it is time to check what I consider the most important item – the life jacket.

Critical Review Required

First consideration: Have you or anyone among your usual passengers gained or lost significant weight? Body size affects the snug easy-to-move fit you want to feel when wearing your jacket every time you are on or in the water.

After that consideration, take a hard look at them. Are they torn? Do they show signs of mold or mildew? Do they appear faded or look questionable in their reliability to save your life in an emergency?

If they are inflatable life jackets, test them to see if they can hold air for 16 to 24 hours. If it has a cartridge, check to see if it still shows a sign that it retains the power to inflate.

If you have any questions about their reliability, retire the jackets and get new ones for the new season. That's one peace-of-mind purchase you'll be glad you made.



Passengers And Sports

Purchase life jackets that fit your lifestyle. Do you anticipate having pets or children on board during the season? You'll need to add life jackets sized for children. Are grandchildren on the way? Remember to get the right size for each person on the boat. While not required by law, there are life jackets for pets, too.

Also, if your water enjoyment includes other water sports such as canoeing or kayaking, other life jackets are designed for those water activities. Sound confusing? The U.S. Coast Guard has a downloadable brochure to help you: uscgboating.org

Smart To Be Safe And It's The Law

Not only is staying safe part of the fun on the water, but it's also the law. Make it a habit to wear your jacket whenever you are on or in the water.

- All vessels (including canoes, kayaks and paddleboards) must have at least one USCG (U.S. Coast Guard)-approved wearable life jacket for each person on board.
- All vessels 16 feet or more in length must have one USCG-approved throwable personal flotation device onboard that is immediately accessible.
- Every person on board a personal watercraft must wear a USCG-approved life jacket.
- Sailboards and windsurfers are exempt from the life jacket requirement but are highly encouraged to wear one.
- Federal law requires children under 13 to wear a USCG-approved life jacket while underway in an open vessel on federally controlled waters.

Here's the harsh reality: If you're not wearing your life jacket when you enter the water, there's a good chance you will never get it on in time for it to save you -- or someone else.



Have fun, stay safe, and come back to shore with great stories to share.

Chris Spaight, Burnett County Conservation Warden, 715-463-2900,
Christopher.Spaight@wisconsin.gov

If you have information regarding natural resource violations, please call or text: VIOLATION HOTLINE: 1-800-TIP-WDNR or 1-800-847-9367. The hotline is in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Trained staff relay reported information to conservation wardens. Anyone who calls the Violation Hotline or provides information can remain anonymous.



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Association Email

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Area Contacts

Visit our website for county zoning, conservation, warden, and township contact information.

There is also a business directory for local service providers who are participating in our advertising program.

“Never Had a Catch Like This!”

It was 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, December 18, 2022. The night before, Grantsburg resident DJ Ryan had seen a post on Facebook about a horse running east on Assembly Road south of Grantsburg. He went out to check on the stray, but from the hoofprints he saw it appeared that the horse was headed home. Now on a frigid -5 degree morning, he learned that a horse had fallen through the ice on Wood Lake.

Many of you heard about this amazing rescue last winter. Reports even appeared on the national news. This is the back story.

DJ and friend Spencer Wicklund were the first to arrive at the scene. The horse was thrashing about in a hole in the ice 150 yards from shore just off Hanson's Point in about 20 feet of water. The early winter ice was only 4 inches thick, barely enough to support a man...and the horse weighed 1200 pounds. DJ and Spencer had ropes and straps but there was no way any rescue equipment could be brought out onto the ice because it was so thin.

Word spread quickly. Karl Anderson, owner of Anderson Auto Repair and Towing in Grantsburg who had experience retrieving sunken cars from the lake, was called out of church. He arrived with his tow truck and winch. The Grantsburg Fire Department arrived and departed because they couldn't let their people out on the ice. The DNR warden, Chris Spaight, arrived. A few sheriff deputies arrived along with several other Grantsburg residents including Katie and Rick Quimby.

DJ, Karl and Rick tried to get straps around the horse but it proved impossible. DJ made several trips home to gather more equipment. Jack and Susan Church, who live at the end of Hanson's Point Rd welcomed the freezing workers into their house, offered coffee to everyone and supplied them with a boat and a ski tube they hoped would help support the horse's head as they struggled to pull him out of the water.

It did not go well. Three hours went by. The horse shivered uncontrollably and began to lose consciousness. In the meantime, DJ had called a friend to be ready with his cattle trailer if they were able to pull the horse out. Suddenly, the horse made a huge, horizontal lunge that flopped him halfway onto the ice. DJ, Rick and Karl were able to get a strap around his body. With ropes and straps connected to Karl's towing winch, they skidded the down horse to the shore...and he stood up.

The cattle trailer arrived. The horse was brought to a heated barn nearby and he survived. DJ named him Jack, the main character from the movie Titanic. "We'll never let go, Jack" and they didn't.

The horse's real name is Wilson, and he is a Mustang originally from Montana and then Texas. Mustangs are the wild horses of the West that were originally brought to North America by the Spanish in the 16th and 17th centuries. They are tough survivors used to adapting to difficult conditions.

This was a difficult condition. DJ told a reporter who traveled from the Twin Cities to film the story that he'd been fishing on Wood Lake since he was 12 but had never had a catch like this.

With tremendous courage and a community of caring people, DJ and his team made Wood Lake proud.



Proposed Hog Facility in Trade Lake Township Postponed

By Cris Peterson

Many of you have seen the lawn signs and billboards around Grantsburg protesting the construction of a large hog farm in the area. The application process has been in the works for several years. Recently a piece from the online news outlet St Croix 360 reported that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources notified Cumberland LLC, the company making the application, that it again denied the permit request.

The problem centers around the documentation on how much land the company has arranged to spread the manure from the proposed facility. When you have livestock of any kind or any number, you have manure. It makes excellent fertilizer and replaces any chemical fertilizer that would be used at the same rate. But the manure needs to be applied at prescribed amounts and kept away from wetlands, waterways, lakes and rivers.

If one is not familiar with modern agriculture it's difficult to understand the process involved in a large farm permit. The United States Department of Agriculture defines a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation or CAFO as a farm that has more than 1000 animal units (1 unit=1000 pounds of animal) on the premises. The farm animals can be dairy cattle, chickens, pigs, turkeys, beef cattle and the like.

There are over 600 CAFOs in Wisconsin. They are very strictly regulated and are required to report every gallon of waste that is spread, where it is spread and the nutrient content of the manure. All CAFO farmers are required to take training each year on nutrient management.

If you'd like to learn more check out the St Croix 360 website at www.stcroix360.com/2023/03/proposed-hog-facility-denied-again-due-to-incomplete-information/



Big Wood Lake Association
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Find us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/BigWoodLakeWI

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Please check one: New Member _____ Renewal _____

New members, please fill in all information; existing members only include changes:

Home Address: _____

Lake Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail: _____

Would you like to volunteer for a committee or event, or like your name included for an officer or board member nomination? _____

Membership dues are \$30 per residence per year. Please mail to BWLA, PO Box 495, Grantsburg, WI 54840 or pay online at www.bigwoodlake.org by June 1.

Become a Friend of Big Wood Lake with an additional donation of at least \$50.00 per individual which is tax deductible. Learn more about the Friends program on our website.