



# BIG PINE LAKE

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ASSOCIATION  
CROSSLAKE, MINNESOTA



[www.bigpinelake-crosslake.com](http://www.bigpinelake-crosslake.com)

## 2019/2020 Winter Newsletter

Happy New Year!

As we embark on a new year, the Big Pine Lake Association's (BPLA) Board of Directors wishes all of our members a safe, healthful, and prosperous 2020!

**Newsletter Distribution:** In the interest of efficiency, we continue to distribute BPLA newsletters to association members via email, so please be sure to let us know if your email address changes.

**BPLA Membership:** - This year's BPLA memberships begin on May 1, 2020 with annual dues remaining at \$25.00 per year. Additional donations are welcomed and always appreciated!

**Board of Directors:** We are pleased to welcome two new members to our Board this year: Jackson Purfeerst and Tom Altier. Jackson was appointed as BPLA's Secretary and Tom will be serving as a Director. Thanks to all of our board members for their time and service!

Ken Ormsbee:	President	Scott Eichhorst:	Director - Lake Management
Bill Korchik:	Vice President	Gary Swanson:	Director
Ann Korchik:	Treasurer	Tom Altier:	Director
Jackson Purfeerst:	Secretary		



**Pine River Fish Passage Project (PRFPP):** As everyone should be aware, the PRFPP was fully-funded through a state-level grant program and a general contractor was competitively selected by the project's lead government agency, the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2019. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, a PRFPP Preconstruction Meeting was held to officially kick-off the construction phase of the project and on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, a formal groundbreaking ceremony was held at the existing rock dam site.

Attending the groundbreaking were representatives from SWCD; the MN State Senate; Crow Wing County (CWC); the City of Crosslake; MNDNR Public Waters, Fisheries, and Forestry Divisions; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); BPLA; and MN Native Landscapes (MNL), the project's general contractor. Elected Minnesota officials, including Senator Carrie Ruud, two CWC Commissioners, and current and former mayors of Crosslake were also in attendance.

Attached is a link to a short article and video related to the PRFPP groundbreaking ceremony: [PRFPP Groundbreaking Article/Video](#). Please note that paragraph three of the article states that the project will create "a lower lake-level for residents." Although this statement *could* be technically correct, it only applies to high inflow periods and not to low inflow periods. It is also important to note that the PRFPP top of dam elevation is identical to the rock dam's originally permitted top of dam elevation.

## **Pine River Fish Passage Project (PRFPP) continued:**

MNL's target start date is January 13<sup>th</sup>, although that date is highly contingent upon USACE being able to reduce Crosslake Dam outflows to 300 cubic feet per second (CFS) or less. As of today, outflows remain essentially where they've been for the last couple of months, at 500+ CFS. Assuming they are able to start on time, MNL's target completion date will be February 28<sup>th</sup>. Again, these are target dates that could change depending on a variety of circumstances and conditions. We will keep everyone updated as the project proceeds.

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Update:** As many know, Big Pine Lake is connected to the AIS-infested Whitefish Chain vis-à-vis the Pine River. It is also surrounded by numerous other AIS-infested lakes. Unfortunately, these two factors made the eventual infestation of our lake virtually inevitable.

**Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM):** In June of 2018, EWM was found in the upstream channel of the Pine River and at the inlet that leads into Big Pine Lake. BPLA immediately began working with the MNDNR at that time. In 2019, BPLA's Director of Lake Management, Scott Eichhorst, continued working with the MNDNR to perform shoreline inspections and to physically remove plants where possible. The good news is that no additional EWM was discovered in Big Pine Lake in 2019, so we ask that in 2020, you continue being diligent when exiting the upstream channel of the river by cleaning your prop appropriately. Also, if you see other boaters not doing so, please inform them of the presence of upstream EWM and the need for them to clean their prop before entering Big Pine Lake.



**Zebra Mussels:** In the fall of 2018, zebra mussels attached to dock structures were reported by three lake residents. Two of the most challenging aspects of zebra mussels are that they can spread quickly and that no effective method exists to control them. Since first discovered, the zebra mussels have spread and grown in size. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done at this time to slow their future growth.



Throughout 2020, BPLA will continue working with the MNDNR in an effort to slow the spread of AIS in Big Pine Lake.

## **Lake Management Update:**

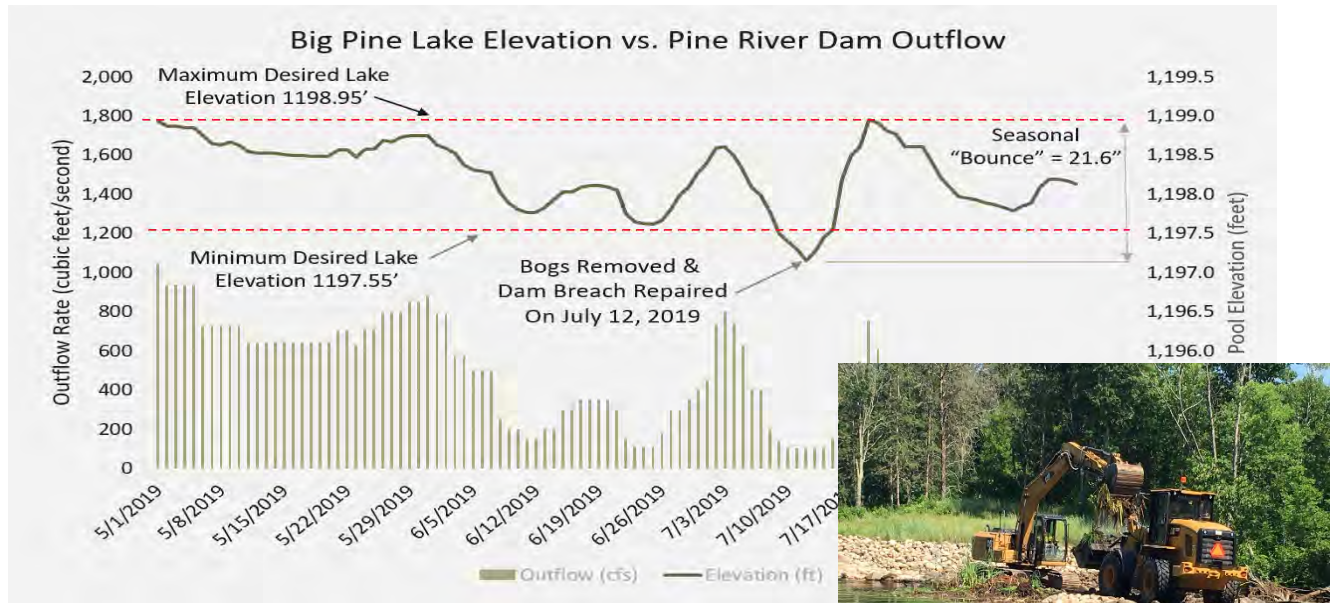
**Lake Level Monitoring and Related Issues:** As most of you probably remember, there was plenty of high water throughout the spring, then again at the end of July, and through much of September and October of 2019. The high water was directly attributable to rain events that caused Crosslake Dam outflow rates to be increased. In fact, water levels were so high on the Whitefish Chain in October that USACE had to delay drawing down water levels on the Whitefish Chain by a month.

**Large Floating Bog:** The below picture is of a bog that broke loose from the east river bay and then ended-up bouncing around Big Pine Lake for a couple of days. It eventually became lodged in the channel where the "no wake" sign is located and subsequently blew back into one of the river bays. At that time, we were not able to find a boat that hadn't already been winterized, so we're not sure of the bog's precise location at this time. As soon as ice is out this coming spring, we will embark on a bog-locating mission with hopes of locating and staking the bog wherever it came to rest. The MNDNR was contacted immediately after the bog was discovered and BPLA does have the authority, by way of a permit, to stake the bog in place. This large bog was undoubtedly uprooted as the result of high Crosslake Dam outflows having raised Big Pine Lake's water levels at the time.



## Lake Management Update continued:

**July Rock Dam Repair:** In July, high water, combined with a number of bogs lodged against the rock dam caused yet another breach. The breach was repaired in a matter of days, but the cost of the repair was \$11,610. The repair invoice was paid by Crow Wing County with funds from the Big Pine Lake Subordinate Service District (SSD) account.



**Water Clarity Monitoring:** BPLA continues to monitor water quality on a monthly basis, May through September, in collaboration with the Whitefish Area Property Owners Association (WAPOA). The monitoring data generated shows a general trend toward clearer lake water; thanks to your efforts in limiting phosphorus runoff into our lake. Zebra mussels are known to improve water clarity, but given their relatively recent discovery in Big Pine Lake, it is unlikely that they've effected water clarity at this point.

**2019 Social Activities and Events:** During the 2019 summer season, BPLA organized and coordinated three separate social events:

- Family Fishing Tournament
- Independence Day Boat Parade
- Annual Meeting

**2019 Family Fishing Tournament (July 5, 2019):** The weather for this year's BPLA Family Fishing Tournament was much better than was the case in 2018. Several BPLA members made voluntary cash donations, so we sincerely thank everyone who contributed to fund those great prizes!

We would also like to thank Gary and Ericka Swanson, along with their neighbors Sue and Jim Heurung and Craig Wokson for allowing us to use their properties again this year! The Swanson family bought the O'Brien's lake home in 2018 and graciously accepted our request to host the tournament. Gary also accepted the challenge of joining the BPLA board of directors. Thank you again!

Also, thanks to Jim and Fran Crotty, the photographer couple who documented the fishing tournament. We will post some of their excellent photographs to our website soon!



## 2019 Social Activities and Events continued:

Congratulations to the below 2019 BPLA Family Fishing Tournament winners!

### Minnnows – 10 and Under

- |                |                 |                         |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| • First Place  | Emmett Kittock  | Total Weight: 6.48 lbs. |
| • Second Place | Hunter Theissen | Total Weight: 1.32 lbs. |
| • Third Place  | Nyla Setzer     | Total Weight: .37 lbs.  |

### Juniors – 11 to 17

- |                |                 |                         |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| • First Place  | Wyatt Kittock   | Total Weight: 3.32 lbs. |
| • Second Place | Kaiden Reynolds | Total Weight: 2.27 lbs. |
| • Third Place  | Abby Theissen   | Total Weight: 2.20 lbs. |
| • Fourth Place | Kiya Reynolds   | Total Weight: 1.43 lbs. |

### Adults – 18 and Older

- |                |               |                         |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| • First Place  | Ross Theissen | Total Weight: 5.04 lbs. |
| • Second Place | Bob Theissen  | Total Weight: 5.70 lbs. |
| • Third Place  | Ron Schaap    | Total Weight: 4.10 lbs. |

2019 Family Fishing Tournament Volunteers: In 2015 and 2016 there were 12 people on the planning committee and six more volunteers who helped with set-up and clean-up. By 2019 we had only six people on the planning committee, with eight extra volunteers who helped during/after the event. In order to continue the Family Fishing Tournament in its current form, we will need additional volunteers to take on small, well-defined tasks so that adequate support can be provided without the burden being too great for any one person. Participating as a volunteer doesn't require a lot of time and is a great way to meet neighbors and make friends on the lake.

### 2019 Family Fishing Tournament Donations from Local Businesses:

Sincere thanks and appreciation go out to our local Crosslake business owners who donated cash and prizes to our fishing contest! We appreciate their generosity and we encourage everyone to frequent these businesses as much as possible!!

Donations were received from: Ace Hardware, Andy's Bar & Grill, Build-All Lumber Co., BTR Bait Shop, Cedar Chest, Dairy Queen, Grand Champion Meats, Denny's Lakeshore Aggregates, Judy's House of Gifts, Lakes Area Gallery & Frame Shoppe, Lake Country Crafts & Cones, Maucieri's Italian Bistro, McGarry's Barber Shop, North Aire Market, Passages of Time, Pine Peaks Restaurant, and the Riverside Inn. Again, thanks to our great local businesses for their generous donations!

### 2019 Independence Day Boat Parade (July 6, 2019):

Our third annual Big Pine Lake boat parade was our best yet! There were lots of decorated boats and great participation from those waving from the shore! There were a few tense moments for all, as boaters and onlookers alike attempted to evade the water cannons of the marauding pirates!

## 2020 Social Activities and Events Dates:

2020 BPLA Volunteer Forum: BPLA will be hosting a short one-hour volunteer forum in the basement of the Cedar Chest restaurant on **Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**, from **9:00-10:00 a.m.** That Saturday is on Memorial Day weekend since there will be lots of people up for the weekend. The various tasks that need staffing will be laid-out and described in writing so that volunteers can simply "shop" for tasks that need to be completed and then sign-up.

*Emmett and Wyatt with the largest fish caught!*



**2020 Social Activities and Events Dates continued:**

2020 BPLA Family Fishing Tournament: Assuming that we receive enough volunteer support to proceed with the 2020 FFT, we are planning to hold the fishing tournament on **Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**.

2020 BPLA Independence Day Boat Parade: BPLA's fourth annual Independence Day Boat Parade will also occur at 2:00 p.m. on the afternoon of **Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**, so mark your calendars and plan to participate in this fun event!

2020 Big Pine Lake Trail - Name Plaque Display Refurbishment: As some of you may have observed, many of the Big Pine Trail name plaques and the frame of the display are in need of refurbishment. At this point, we have no definitive plans for a refurbishment activity, but that will be one of the agenda items slated for the aforementioned 2020 Volunteer Forum.

2021 BPLA Roadside Cleanup: Based on our previous experience and input from BPLA members, the BPLA board has decided that Big Pine Lake roadside cleanup activities will take place every third year. As such, the next roadside cleanup will occur sometime in the spring of 2021.

**BPLA Website Hack and Restoration:** In October, BPLA's website was infected with malware by an overseas hacker. Bluehost, our website hosting provider, found the malware during a routine scan and quarantined the website, which means they took it down. BPLA contracted with SiteLock, a Bluehost strategic alliance partner, to remove the malware and construct a "Level 3" firewall to prevent future attacks. Previously, we've only had basic Bluehost scanning service that simply identified virus/malware problems instead of preventing and resolving attacks. The cost of SiteLock's Level 3 service is \$700 per year, which is a fairly substantial budget item for an association with \$25 per year dues. Because of their alliance partnership with Bluehost, SiteLock waived their initial \$600 malware removal and firewall engineering fee in exchange for our one-year contract. Our website was in quarantine for a few weeks, but it is up and running again and we don't expect a reoccurrence since it is now firewall protected.

**Sincere Condolences:** Lastly, we received the very sad news in October that lake resident and 2018 BPLA board member, Carolynn Duncan, had passed away. The BPLA board's condolences and prayers go out to Carolynn's husband of 53 years, Marty, and her children Derek Duncan and Darcy Helder and two granddaughters, Alison Helder and Kelsey Helder.

We hope the information in this newsletter is both interesting and useful to you. Please let us know if you have questions or suggestions regarding these and other Big Pine Lake related topics.

Thanks for your interest and participation and we wish you and your families a wonderful year in 2020!

**Your Big Pine Lake Association Board of Directors**

