



2020 Spring Newsletter

Spring Greetings!

As we struggle through the coronavirus pandemic and all of the challenges and difficulties that come with it, the Big Pine Lake Association's (BPLA) Board of Directors wishes our members and your families good health and, hopefully, a relaxing summer at the lake. Our last BPLA newsletter was sent in January 2020. If you need to refresh your memory on anything covered in that newsletter, just click on the following link: [2019-2020 BPLA Winter Newsletter](#)

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. We will continue to post each BPLA newsletter on our website for public consumption at www.bigpinelake-crosslake.com sometime after it is distributed to members via email.

BPLA Membership: The benefits of membership in BPLA are listed on our website at [BPLA Membership Benefits](#). This year's BPLA memberships begin on May 1, 2020 with annual dues remaining at the bargain price of only \$25.00 per year. That said, in the wake of our website being hacked and infected with malware last fall, BPLA contracted with SiteLock to construct a Level 3 Firewall and continuously scan our site for threats. The cost of this service is \$700 per year, which is a fairly substantial budget item for an association with \$25 per year dues. Hopefully, we will be able to maintain our \$25 annual dues amount, but we're a bit unsure of that right now. We will report on our bank account balance at the end of the summer and recommend where to go from there.

To become a member or renew your membership, simply mail your payment to: Big Pine Lake Association, PO Box 756, Crosslake, MN 56442. Please note that your annual membership payment may be combined with payment for participation in the 2020 BPLA Environmental Mosquito Management program offered below. *Additional donations are very much welcomed and greatly appreciated!*

Board of Directors: As always, thanks to our seven 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		

2020 Environmental Mosquito Management (EMM) Program: As discussed previously, the three-year long contract BPLA negotiated with Clarke Environmental in the spring of 2017 expired last August. Given this, BPLA went back out to the marketplace for new pricing and terms last month. We contacted five mosquito management firms and received pricing from four of them. The highest price we received for nine applications was \$899.91 and the lowest was \$522.00.

Clarke Environmental is the firm that once again provided the lowest price; they also offered the best contract terms and highest insurance coverages. Last year's cost for the season was \$515, so this year's price of \$522 represents less than a 1.5% increase. Given Clarke's highly competitive pricing and terms, BPLA plans to enter into a four-year agreement with them. The good news is that next year's price will be the same as this year's, followed by a 3% increase in the third year and no increase in the fourth year. In order to give you better a feel for just how competitive Clarke's pricing is, year four of their multi-year agreement is lower than the price the second lowest bidder quoted us for this year.



The EMM program is sponsored and administered by BPLA as a pass-through service on behalf of its members, so there are no additional costs to members beyond Clarke's actual service fee. **Non-BPLA members are also welcome to subscribe for an additional administrative fee of \$25.**

Highlights of the BPLA 2020 EMM program include:

- (9) Truck-based Ultra Low Volume (ULV) treatments if your property is large enough to accommodate the truck
- (9) Backpack-based Barrier Control treatments around the property
- Treatments control mosquitoes, no-see-ums/sandflies, and flying midges for up to seven days

2020 Environmental Mosquito Management (EMM) Program (contd.)

- Comprehensive insurance coverage for BPLA
- Program Consulting and Quality Control Staff
- Citizen Mosquito Hotline: (800) 942-2555
- Local, state, and federal regulatory compliance
- Digital customer database record keeping
- **In order to participate in the 2020 EMM program, the subscription fee, plus tax, must be paid to BPLA no later than May 15, 2020.**

Please send payment to: Big Pine Lake Association, PO Box 756, Crosslake, MN 56442

- BPLA Members: \$557.89 (\$522.00 + 6.875% tax)
- Non-Members: \$582.89 (\$522.00 + 6.875% tax + \$25.00)
- **NOTE: You may include \$25.00 for a new BPLA membership or a membership renewal with your EMM subscription for a total of \$582.89 (\$557.89 + \$25.00)**
- For questions or to report issues with your service, please contact Ken Ormsbee at (612) 963-1660 or ken.ormsbee.ii@gmail.com

As usual, 2020 applications will commence the week before Memorial Day weekend and continue through the end of August:

- May 21
- June 4, 18, 25
- July 2, 16, 30
- August 13, 27

Water Quality Monitoring: The first water quality sampling for 2020 begins on May 18th. BPLA has now been participating in the monthly water quality monitoring program, sponsored by the Whitefish Area Property Owners Association (WAPOA), for nine years. The information generated has shown a general trend toward clearer lake water; thanks to all for your efforts in limiting phosphorus runoff into our lake.

Pine River Fish Passage Project (PRFPP): Last January, when BPLA's 2019-2020 Winter Newsletter was released, the PRFPP ground-breaking event had just occurred and we were hoping that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was going to be able to curtail Crosslake Dam outflows enough that work could begin on the PRFPP. As a result of late fall rains and wet December snowfalls, outflows increased to nearly 800 cubic feet per second (cfs) rather than decreasing to under 300 cfs as required by the construction contract. In order to keep the project moving, the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) issued a modest change order to the PRFPP general contractor, Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL), who brought in additional equipment and materials that enabled them to deal with the heavier than anticipated flow rates.

SWCD and MNL both did an outstanding job in the face of many challenges! MNL began prepping the work site the last week in January and began working in the water the first week of February. MNL achieved substantial completion on April 2nd and they were completely demobilized the following week.

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, so I put together a short slide deck as a separate attachment to this newsletter that documents the project from the beginning of construction to completion. Thanks to SWCD, Scott Eichhorst, and Jackson Purfeerst for the great images!



Rock Riffle Maintenance Program: SWCD and Crow Wing County (CWC) are currently working with BPLA to develop a long-term maintenance program for the new dam structure. This maintenance program primarily focuses on two areas:

1. **Security and signage related to rock theft and/or movement:** Unlike the original rock dam, this one is an engineered structure with rocks having been carefully placed and distributed to conform with engineered drawings. Movement and/or removal of rip rap rocks will adversely impact the performance of the new structure. BPLA is currently working with SWCD and CWC to develop signage closest to the structure that is intended to educate visitors as to why they shouldn't disturb rocks. There will likely be signage that contains more stern warnings on a separate sign as you enter the parking area. We are also exploring the use of video surveillance equipment to monitor and record movement in the parking area and on the dam structure itself. The BPLA board is very much in favor of deploying wireless video equipment that can be powered by solar panels with battery storage and cellular video transmission. We will update you as this effort progresses.
2. **Bog management and removal:** Although the new structure should be much more tolerant and durable when bogs become lodged against it, we still need to be vigilant in trying to control them from getting into the river channel and ending up lodged against the dam. In addition to dissuading people from "messaging" with rocks, bog management and removal will be BPLA's primary role in implementing CWC's long-term maintenance plan. For bogs that cannot be safely removed from the structure, CWC will contract with Holmwig Excavation to have them removed since CWC has a standing multi-year ordering agreement in place with Holmwig.

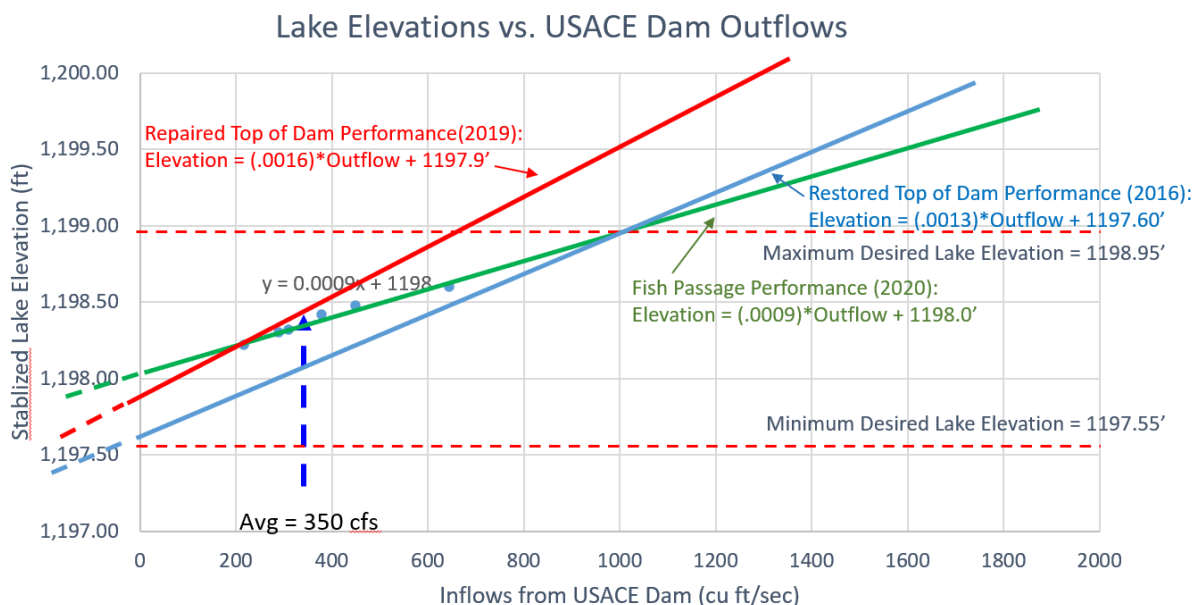
To assist in managing bogs, which involves capturing and staking floating bogs in place and pulling smaller bogs off the dam with boats, the BPLA board intends to organize and formalize a "Bog Management Team." We are seeking volunteers who are willing to offer small amounts of their time to help perform this task. Most of us have boats available during summer months, with many of us owning pontoon boats, which are generally more stable for staking bogs. Once we have volunteers, we will organize a mobile phone text group so that we can communicate quickly and efficiently. Please contact Ken Ormsbee at ken.ormsbee.ii@gmail.com if you're interested in volunteering. Many thanks for your help!

Rock Riffle Initial Performance Results:

Dennis Bengtson and his wife, Jane, returned to Minnesota a few weeks ago. Dennis immediately installed and calibrated his MNDNR lake level gauge so that he could correlate the current Crosslake Dam outflow rates and lake levels to similar historical outflow rates and lake levels.

Since April 7th, Dennis recorded stable lake elevations at six different outflow levels ranging from 217 cfs to 644 cfs. The computer analysis and graphical plotting of these six initial data points yields a linear relationship and performance equation that tells a great story when compared to similar analyses of the old rock dam's performance. Below are some of Dennis' initial findings, conclusions, and projections, along with a chart that compares the performance (lake levels) of two different configurations of the old rock dam to the modeled performance (calibrated with actual data since 4/7/20) of the new structure under varying inflow levels.

Below Chart: Linear Relationship of Inflows to Lake Elevations 2016 vs. 2019 vs. PRFPP



Rock Riffle Dam Initial Performance Results (contd.)

Below are some of Dennis' initial findings, conclusions, and projections related to rock dam versus rock riffle performance and expectations:

1. Increases in USACE dam outflows (inflow to Big Pine Lake) above 143 cfs will result in slightly lower lake elevations than before. In fact, we should now be able to receive up to 1,050 cfs before reaching our Desired Maximum Elevation (1198.95').
2. Conversely, decreases in USACE dam outflows below 143 cfs should result in a higher lake elevation than with the rock dam. This should especially be true at minimum outflow of 33 cfs where the elevation should never drop below our Desired Minimum Elevation (1197.55') as was always the case before. (Note: this remains to be verified by measurement when we experience minimum outflows of 33 cfs from the USACE dam.)
3. Except for the occasional extreme high-water events, our lake elevations should now stay between our Desired Minimum and Desired Maximum elevations. Docks and boat lifts should now be installed/positioned with more confidence that they will be usable all season long without further adjustment.
4. Even during extremely high outflow periods, our lake elevation should rise less than with any prior configuration of the rock dam. For example, the 1405 cfs outflow for 10 days in July, 2016 produced an elevation of 1199.42'. The new structure is projected to handle that outflow rate with a lake elevation two full inches lower, while exceeding our Desired Maximum by less than four inches.
5. Although fish passage performance during minimum 33 cfs outflow periods remains to be verified, we are very optimistic that it will perform as designed. This means that because of the size, shape, and elevation of the fish passage in Weir 6, our Desired Minimum lake elevation should be maintained, even during low inflow periods.

On behalf of all BPLA members, the BPLA board thanks Dennis for the enormous amount of work and analysis he put into developing the data that allowed SWCD's lead engineer to accurately design and model the desired performance characteristics of the new arched riffle structure. We'd also like to thank Dennis for his continued work in analyzing and validating the actual performance of the new dam and letting us know and understand how current performance compares to the past. Thanks again, Dennis!



Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS): No changes have occurred since the 2019-2020 BPLA Winter Newsletter was distributed last January, but AIS management will continue to be a high-priority issue for BPLA in 2020.

Social Events and Activities: Given that we are currently under Governor Walz's stay-at-home order with no real idea as to when the order will be loosened or lifted, this year's family fishing contest has been cancelled. We had also planned a Memorial Weekend Volunteer Forum related to the fishing contest, but that event has also been cancelled. If it does take place, which we aren't 100 percent certain of at this time, the Independence Day Boat Parade will happen on Saturday, July 4th at 2:00 p.m.

Given that 2020 is BPLA's 50th anniversary, we would like to change things up for this year's BPLA Annual Meeting by hosting some type of celebratory event – both for BPLA's 50th anniversary and for the successful completion of the PRFPP. We had planned to discuss this year's Annual Meeting at the volunteer forum, but that obviously won't be possible. As such, the BPLA board will discuss this further and offer a tentative plan for input and feedback. That plan will obviously be contingent upon what's happening with the coronavirus a few months from now. Stay tuned – more to come.

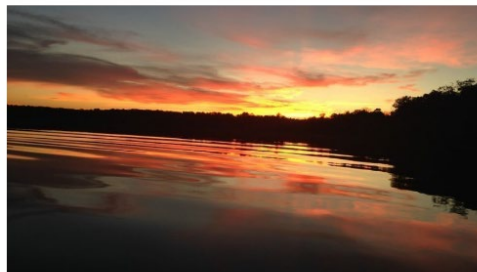
Treasurer's Report: The balance of BPLA's operating account as of April 23, 2020 was \$3,721.97. The balance of the Big Pine Lake Subordinate Service District (SSD) account for dam maintenance as of the same date was \$88,054.56. In April, with unanimous consent, the BPLA board authorized Crow Wing County to withdraw \$75,000.00 from the SSD account to fulfill BPLA's previous commitment to provide that amount in non-state matching funds under the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund grant that funded the cost of the PRFPP. Once withdrawn, the SSD balance will stand at \$13,054.56.

Big Pine Trail Reconstruction Postponement: As most of you are aware, the City of Crosslake notified property owners along Big Pine Trail that the City would be reconstructing the road this summer and that those who access their properties via Big Pine Trail would be assessed approximately half of the estimated cost of \$664,000. As a result of your participation in a petition that was managed by the BPLA board, along with arguments made at a special hearing of the Crosslake City Council, the project was delayed until such time that the road is deemed to be in need of reconstruction. The proposed replacement was the result of a few government officials making assumptions about the level of damage that Big Pine Trail would sustain from rock hauling activities related to the PRFPP project. While there are some visible potholes in the road, there is nowhere near enough damage to warrant a wholesale replacement of the road this summer. So, thanks for your participation in the petition effort!

BPLA Website Firewall and Scanning Service: As discussed in BPLA's last newsletter, our website was infected with malware by an overseas hacker last fall. Our website hosting provider discovered the malware during a routine scan and quarantined the website. BPLA then contracted with SiteLock to remove the malware and construct a "Level 3" firewall to prevent future attacks. The cost of SiteLock's service is \$700 per year, which is a fairly substantial budget item for an association with \$25 per year dues. BPLA receives weekly reports from SiteLock, and on average, our website receives 5,000 to 7,000 bot (automated software) visits per week and the firewall blocks around 2,000 threats per week. Annualized, that totals over 300,000 bot visits (many of which are hostile) and over 100,000 blocked threats per year.

Dock and Boat Lift Workers Petition: On April 8, 2020, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 20-33, extending Minnesota's stay-at-home order through May 3, 2020. The order also expanded the list of workers considered critical. Although the Critical Sector Worker list was expanded to include workers employed by florists, lawn care and golf course maintenance providers, landscapers, and garden centers, it did not include dock and lift service providers who install dock systems and boat lifts in lakes and rivers. Not only was this bad for dock workers and dock service companies, it was also bad for those not physically able to install docks and lifts. As president of BPLA, Ken Ormsbee published a petition on change.org, asking Governor Walz to expand the critical workers list to include dock workers. The petition garnered over 11,000 signatures and on April 13th, dock workers were added to the list. Senator Carrie Ruud was instrumental in making this happen, as were all of the petition's supporters. So thanks to all of you who took a moment to get online and sign the petition! Hopefully your docks/lifts are already installed or are at least scheduled to be installed in the near future.

Allow Dock and Boat Lift Installers to Provide Services During MN's Stay at Home Order



Ken Ormsbee - President, Big Pine Lake Association started this petition to Governor Tim Walz

Victory

This petition made change with 11,264 supporters!



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BPLA's board continues to welcome your ideas and suggestions for making our association more effective and valuable for all members. We welcome your involvement in ongoing projects, activities, and events that improve property values and our lake-living experience – now and for years to come. Please let us know if you might be willing to help.

Thanks in advance!

Your Big Pine Lake Association Board of Directors

