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2020-21 Winter Newsletter

New Year Greetings!

As we look back at what can only be described as an extraordinarily difficult and challenging year for most, the Big Pine Lake Association's (BPLA) Board of Directors wishes all of our members a safe and healthy 2021.

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 Memberships: This year's BPLA memberships begin on May 1, 2021, with annual dues remaining at only \$25.00 per year. Additional donations are welcomed and always appreciated!

Board of Directors: This year a decision was made by the BPLA board and unanimously approved by our members, to reduce the number of directors on BPLA's board to five. BPLA's board had traditionally consisted of five directors until 2013 when it was expanded to seven to accommodate two additional directors who wished to focus on the rock dam replacement initiative. BPLA members appreciate Gary Swanson and Tom Altier's service on BPLA's board and also thank our current board members for their time and service!

Ken Ormsbee:	President	Jackson Purfeerst:	Secretary
Bill Korchik:	Vice President	Scott Eichhorst:	Director, Lake Management
Ann Korchik:	Treasurer		

Pine River Fish Passage Project (PRFPP): As everyone should be aware, the PRFPP was officially completed in April 2020. The following link will take you to a nicely done and informative five-minute video produced by our project partner, the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD): [SWCD PRFPP Overview Video](#). BPLA is and always will be extremely grateful for SWCD's excellent work on the PRFPP!

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS): Due to MNDNR Covid-19 employee work restrictions, no field services were performed by the DNR related to AIS in 2020 on Big Pine Lake. We are assuming that the 2020 restrictions will be relaxed in 2021 and our intent is to resume working with the DNR to monitor milfoil and zebra mussel spreads in the Pine River basins and Big Pine Lake. Regarding zebra mussel spread, based on anecdotal information, it does appear that the zebra mussel population increased from 2019 to 2020, but most still remain fairly small in size.

Lake Management:

Floating Bogs: For anyone who isn't aware, the large bog that was bouncing around Big Pine Lake last fall came to rest in the Greer Creek inlet on the east side of the second downstream basin of the Pine River. The bog was staked this spring by BPLA board members and it remains in the same place in spite of the very high-water levels we experienced in late August. Hopefully, it will remain there with future high-water events. Over the summer, a few smaller bogs were dragged from the top weir of the new riffle structure by boat and relocated, but other than those we didn't experience any major bog problems this year. Thanks to those who removed the bogs.



Lake Management Update continued:

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). Thanks to Scott Eichhorst, BPLA's Director of Lake Management, for performing the monthly water clarity tests and managing the program.

PRFPP Initial Performance Results: Dennis Bengtson continues to monitor and record lake elevations on a daily basis. Dennis also analyzes this data and correlates it with outflow data from the Pine River Dam in Crosslake. Attached is a chart deck that Dennis prepared, with descriptions of each chart. The deck contains nine charts that utilize the above-mentioned data to graphically display the performance of the new structure in its first season of operation. The charts show an exceptionally good year for lake usability, largely the result of the excellent performance of the new arched riffle fish passage structure and moderate precipitation events. Please note the highlighted descriptions for Charts 2 and 4. Thank you for your outstanding work, Dennis!

2020/2021 Social Activities and Events: Due to Covid-19 restrictions during the 2020 summer season, the only BPLA social event held was our fourth annual Independence Day Boat Parade. Given still existing public health uncertainties, it is unclear what will be possible next summer with regard to social activities. As such, all events other than the boat parade are on hold at this point in time.

2021 BPLA Roadside Cleanup: Come this spring, it will have been three years since we've held a BPLA roadside cleanup event. Assuming that it is safe to do so, our plan is to hold another cleanup event this spring. More to come in the BPLA Spring Newsletter.

2021 BPLA Independence Day Boat Parade: BPLA's fifth annual Independence Day Boat Parade will occur at 2:00 p.m. on the afternoon of **Saturday, July 3, 2021**, so mark your calendars and plan to participate in this fun event!

2021 BPLA Family Fishing Contest: Each year that it's held, the BPLA Family Fishing Contest requires a significant amount of planning, coordination, and preparation. A fairly substantial amount of that work needs to be accomplished in the spring so that everything is ready to go by early July. We had planned to hold a Volunteer Forum last spring to garner more help for the fishing contest, but like the fishing contest itself, that meeting had to be cancelled. If we are to hold the fishing contest in 2021, we will need to host a Volunteer Forum the last weekend in May. Given where we're at with the pandemic today, it's impossible to know where things will be by May, but it doesn't seem particularly likely that life will be back to normal by spring. Only time will tell, so more to come in the BPLA Spring Newsletter.



BPLA Website Firewall and Scanning Service: As discussed previously, our website hosting provider discovered a malware infection on BPLA's website during a routine scan and the website was subsequently quarantined. BPLA 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 now receives nearly 10,000 bot (automated software) visits per week and the firewall blocks around 2,500 threats per week. Annualized, that totals over half a million bot visits (many of which are hostile) and over 125,000 blocked threats per year.

Big Pine Trail Land Lease and Resident Name Plaque Display Refurbishment: BPLA leases a small parcel of land from the MNDNR that the Big Pine Trail Resident Name Plaque Display resides on. The previous lease expired on June 30, 2020. As such, BPLA entered into a new ten-year lease, effective July 1, 2020. The cost of the new lease was \$500. Also, as some of you have probably observed, many of the Big Pine Trail name plaques and the frame of the display itself are in need of refurbishment. At this point, we don't have definitive plans for a refurbishment activity, but that is something we may be able to accomplish in 2021. More to come in the BPLA Spring Newsletter.

We hope the information contained 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 safe and healthy year in 2021!

Your Big Pine Lake Association Board of Directors