



## 2021 Spring Newsletter

Spring Greetings!

What a difference a year makes! We may not be completely done with this pandemic yet, but we're a heck of a lot better off than we were last May and many of us are actually beginning to feel like we're getting pieces of our lives back. To that end, the Big Pine Lake Association's (BPLA) Board of Directors wishes you a fun and happy summer filled with love, family, and friends! Our BPLA 2020-21 Winter Newsletter and 2020 Lake Elevation Season Summary Report were sent in January 2021. If you need to refresh your memory on anything that was covered in that newsletter or elevation report, just click on the following link: [2020-21 BPLA Winter Newsletter](#)

**Newsletter Distribution:** In the interest of efficiency, we continue to distribute BPLA newsletters and updates to association members via email, so please be sure to let us know if your email address changes. We post each BPLA newsletter on our website for public consumption at [Lake News & Events](#) a month or two 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 began on May 1, 2021**, with annual dues remaining at the low price of only \$25.00 per year. Your dues cover administrative expenses such as website security and hosting services, bank fees, the DNR lease payment for the Big Pine Trail name display, partner recognition gifts/plaques, BPLA Annual Meeting, event refreshments, etc. As a data point, we currently pay over \$700 per year just for website security software and web-hosting.

There are a number of new owners on the lake who have not yet become BPLA members. If you have a neighbor who isn't a member, please encourage them to join, as new memberships are our only means of increasing revenue without raising the annual membership fee.

To become a member or renew your membership, simply mail your payment to: Big Pine Lake Association, PO Box 756, Crosslake, MN 56442, along with your property address and contact information if you're a new member. **Additional donations are very much welcomed and greatly appreciated!**

**Board of Directors:** As always, thanks to our board members for their volunteer time and service!

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

**2021 Environmental Mosquito Management (EMM) Program:** As discussed previously, upon the expiration of our last EMM contract in 2019, BPLA went back out to the marketplace for new terms and pricing. We contacted five mosquito management firms and received pricing from four of them. The highest price we received for nine treatments was \$899.00; 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. Given Clarke's highly competitive pricing and favorable terms, BPLA entered into a four-year agreement with them. Last year's cost under the first year of our new contract was \$522. This year's price remains the same, next year's price will increase by 3%, and there will be no increase in year four. To give you a better feel for just how competitive Clarke's pricing is, year four of their multi-year agreement is lower in price than the second-lowest bidder's price for year one.

The EMM program is sponsored and administered by BPLA as a pass-through to its members, so there are no additional costs to members beyond Clarke's actual service fee.

**Highlights of the BPLA 2021 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
- Comprehensive insurance coverage for BPLA
- Program Consulting and Quality Control Staff
- Citizen Mosquito Hotline: (800) 942-2555



## 2021 Environmental Mosquito Management (EMM) Program (contd.)

- Local, state, and federal regulatory compliance
- Digital customer database record keeping
- **In order to participate in the 2021 EMM program, the subscription fee, plus tax, must be paid to BPLA no later than Friday, May 14, 2021.**

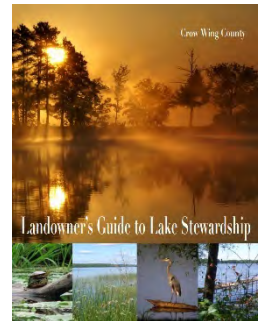
Please send payment to: Big Pine Lake Association, PO Box 756, Crosslake, MN 56442

- **2021 Subscription Cost: \$557.89 (\$522.00 + 6.875% tax)**
- **Given that May 1<sup>st</sup> was our annual membership renewal date, please include \$25.00 with your EMM subscription payment for your 2021 BPLA membership or membership renewal, for a total payment 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](mailto:ken.ormsbee.ii@gmail.com)

As usual, the nine 2021 treatments will commence the week before Memorial Day weekend and continue through the first week in September:

- May 20
- June 3, 17
- July 1, 15, 29
- August 12, 26
- September 9

**Water Quality Monitoring:** The first Big Pine Lake water quality sampling for 2021 begins on May 17<sup>th</sup>. BPLA has now been participating in the monthly water quality monitoring program, sponsored by the Whitefish Area Property Owners Association (WAPOA), for ten years. The information generated has shown a general trend toward clearer lake water. BPLA thanks everyone for your continued efforts to limit phosphorus runoff into our lake. For pertinent information on how to curb water pollution and protect the water quality of Big Pine Lake, please review Crow Wing County's useful and informative guide at the following link: [Landowner's Guide to Lake Stewardship](#)



**Arched Riffle Dam Maintenance:** As the owner of our new arched riffle dam, Crow Wing County (CWC) works closely with BPLA to manage maintenance issues related to the new arched riffle dam structure. There are two primary areas we focus on:

1. **Bog management and removal:** Although the new structure has already proven itself to be much more 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. If they do become lodged on the dam, we need to ensure that they're removed quickly. CWC and Holmviig Excavation have also proven themselves as being highly responsive and reliable partners, so we will continue working closely with them, just as we have this spring and in past years.
2. **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; there were occasional reports last year of people removing rocks from the dam.

BPLA and CWC did have discussions last spring regarding the installation of electronic surveillance equipment. Given the remote location of the dam, it was deemed that the initial cost of installing surveillance equipment, combined with the ongoing costs associated with maintenance and communication, were cost prohibitive – at least without knowing how much of a problem rock theft actually is. If you see someone removing rocks from the dam, please report it to me or any other BPLA board member. If you have a mobile device with you and are comfortable taking a photograph of the perpetrator/s and can do so safely, please feel free to do so. At this point, we are simply trying to gauge the extent of the problem. Based on physical inspections of the dam last fall, it wasn't obvious that large quantities of rock had been removed.





### Arched Riffle Dam High Water Performance:

Two design features of our new arched riffle dam were recently tested and validated by this spring's bog incident that resulted in most of the dam being covered and blocked by large bog sections. Those two features are: 1) the rock-armored banks on both sides of the riffles/weirs, and 2) the subsurface "maintenance road" located directly in front of Weir 6.

On Wednesday, April 14, large sections of cattail bogs broke loose, floated down the Pine River, and lodged against Weir 6 of our new dam. The bogs covered the entire water control surface, causing the water level of Big Pine Lake to rise sharply and exceed our Maximum Desired Lake Elevation (MDLE) by over 4".

CWC, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Pine River Dam's Operations Team were immediately apprised of the situation. This rapid response team worked in collaboration with each other and the arched riffle dam's maintenance contractor, Holmvgig Excavation, was quickly deployed by CWC to remove the bogs, resulting in the restoration of normal operation of the structure in less than two days.

Holmvgig's efforts were greatly facilitated by the use of the subsurface maintenance road that had been intentionally constructed in front of Weir Six to allow heavy equipment safe access to remove lodged bogs without altering or damaging the critical water control surface on Weir 6. In the past, large accumulations of floating bogs against the old rock dam could only be accessed and removed by operating heavy equipment on top of the loose-rock dam, altering the elevation of its water control surface.



Also, in the past, large bog accumulations against the old rock dam forced water around the ends of the dam, eroding the dirt banks. This oftentimes resulted in severe breaches and subsequent periods of very low lake elevations until the breaches could be repaired. The industrial geotextile fabric and rock-armoring of both the east and west banks that were incorporated into the design and construction of the new arched riffle structure have now proven themselves capable of mitigating damage to the banks, avoiding the need for costly repairs and interruptions to usable lake levels.



### **Arched Riffle Dam High Water Performance (continued):**

Since construction of the arched riffle structure was completed in April, 2020, a wide range of weather conditions and other natural occurrences have tested and validated all of the water control characteristics of the new dam's design and construction. Comparative analysis of performance data for the new structure with seven prior years of Rock Dam performance data has proven the new structure to be superior in all critical aspects: 1) reducing bounce and maintaining usable lake elevations by eliminating low water conditions, 2) handling high water events with less elevation rise, and 3) facilitating bog removal and withstanding abnormal high-water events without structural damage or costly repairs. All of these benefits to lake property owners are reflected in increased lake usage/enjoyment and the potential for improved property values. It is important to note that all of these benefits resulted from funding construction costs with Minnesota State grant dollars; no additional annual assessment funds were required by any Big Pine Lake property owner.

The expected benefit to Big Pine Lake as an improved fishery has yet to be determined, but a baseline fish population assessment was performed by the MN DNR prior to construction of the new structure for future comparison purposes.

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS):** No changes have occurred since the 2020-21 BPLA Winter Newsletter was distributed in January. BPLA will continue to work with the MN DNR's AIS Specialist assigned to Big Pine Lake to monitor and, where possible, slow the growth/spread of Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels. So that new property owners are aware, BPLA has investigated the MN DNR's AIS Control Grant Program and because we're connected to a river, we do not qualify for grant funding. The maximum funding amount per applicant is limited to \$5,000, so these grants are only capable of funding limited monitoring anyway. Hopefully, our DNR AIS Specialist will be able to resume inspecting our lake for Eurasian milfoil this spring.

**Social Events and Activities:** Although pandemic restrictions are beginning to loosen, this year's family fishing contest is once again being cancelled as a precaution. However, the Independence Day Boat Parade will take place on Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. with no restrictions.

2020 was BPLA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so prior to pandemic restrictions having kicked-in last spring, we had planned to host a celebratory anniversary picnic to coincide with BPLA's Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, that was not possible and we were instead forced to conduct BPLA's Annual Meeting virtually and postpone the picnic. We hope that will not be the case this year, but we will have to see where state-level restrictions are in August before deciding how to approach these events. More information will be provided as we move through the summer season.

**Treasurer's Report:** The balance of BPLA's operating account as of April 29, 2021, was \$7,459.15. The balance of the Big Pine Lake Subordinate Service District (SSD) account for dam maintenance as of January 25, 2021, was \$28,656.56. CWC was authorized by BPLA to pay Holmwig Excavation's invoice in the amount of \$6,980.00 for the recent removal of bogs from the new dam; that amount will be deducted from the SSD balance above. Holmwig was called back to remove bogs a second time in April and they will also be relocating the dried bogs currently residing in the dam parking area to a landfill; payment for both activities will also be deducted from the SSD balance above.

**Big Pine Trail Reconstruction Postponement:** So that new residents are aware, in January 2020, the City of Crosslake notified property owners that the City was planning to reconstruct Big Pine Trail during the summer of 2020 and that those residents who access their properties via Big Pine Trail/Big Pine Hollow/Big Pine Drive were to be assessed approximately half of the project's estimated cost of \$664,000. As a result of a petition that was managed by BPLA's board, along with arguments made at a special hearing of the Crosslake City Council in February 2020, the project was delayed until such point that the road is deemed to actually be in need of a wholesale reconstruction. We have not seen any additional information from the City in terms of timing for that reconstruction project, but the road still appears to be in fair shape, so hopefully, it can be put off for a few more years.

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.

Thanks in advance!

Your Big Pine Lake Association Board of Directors

