

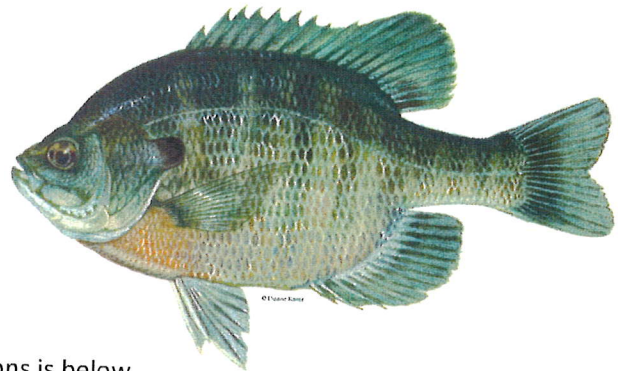


PINE LAKES PRESS

Winter 2020

Big Pine Lake Proposed for Reduced Bag Limit for Bluegill

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be proposing a reduced bag limit for bluegill and other sunfish in Big Pine Lake in 2021. Two options will be considered: 1) Reduced bag limit from 20 fish to 10 fish; 2) Reduced bag limit from 20 fish to five fish. All public accesses will be posted with a notice of this proposal and how the public can provide input by May 10, 2021. A formal public input meeting will be held in September 2021 with implementation in March 2022 if approved.



Additional information and answers to commonly asked questions is below.

For additional information, please contact Jim Wolters at the DNR Fisheries Office at 218-671-7954 or at Jim.Wolters@state.mn.us.

The Dam & Highway 8

From DNR Fisheries Specialist Howard Fullhart who spoke in 2019 about the proposed dam modification project for Little Pine, Big Pine and Rush Lakes is this update. "The bridge replacement and dam modification most likely won't happen at the same time...coordinating that when we don't have funding for the dam projects makes it difficult. With that said the Little Pine outlet is not going to take much modifying. Probably just some simple rock placement and we achieve what we need to."

Similar dam modification has been successfully done at Pelican and other areas. DNR will help find grants and keep the LID informed before any work begins.

County Engineer Chuck Grotte tells us: "The CSAH Bridge project was scheduled to be done this year (2020), however since the State Legislature has not passed a Bonding Bill the Bridge Bond funds are not yet available... Mn/ DOT is looking at another source for the bridge funding, but the work would not start until next year (2021).

...CSAH 8 will be detoured. The detour will be on CSAH 80 (Main Street, Perham), CSAH 51, CSAH 60 and CSAH 13.

The CSAH 8 Resurfacing Project is scheduled for next year (2021), however recent discussions with the City of Perham made us aware some underground utility work will need to be done...We don't typically rebuild a bridge and resurface a highway in the same year."

So, folks, it looks like we'll be taking the long way around Highway 8 at times until after Construction Season 2022.

Big Pine Lake • Little Pine Lake
Perham, MN



Not 'Wild' about Wild Rice?

Lakeshore owners in recent years are finding new 'weeds' growing near their docks. Wild rice, a native grass that grows in shallow lake and river areas has re-emerged in locations where some say it hasn't been seen in years. For some people that is cause for celebration, for others, a headache.

Here's a few things you may not know about wild rice, or ma-noomin, as it is known in the Ojibwe language. Wild rice is the state grain of Minnesota. Wild rice, the wild grass growing perhaps around your dock, along the shoreline, and down the river, is hand harvested each fall in Minnesota and Wisconsin, the only two states where it is abundant enough to sustain harvest. Wild rice also supports a multi-million dollar cultivated wild rice industry that emerged in Minnesota a short 70 years ago. Wild rice, in Minnesota, is protected based on its cultural and ecological importance.



Wild rice provides many benefits in shallow lakes or shallow areas of deeper lakes. Wild rice provides nursery areas for fish, habitat for dragonflies and other aquatic insects, and hiding areas for ducklings and other wetland birds. Growing near shore, wild rice like other emergent plants (those plants that grow in the water, but above the water line), protects shorelines from erosion and help hold sediment in place, keeping the water clean. In the fall, wild rice feeds thousands of migrating waterfowl as they wing south for winter – many species key in on ripe rice for much needed fuel for their southward migration.



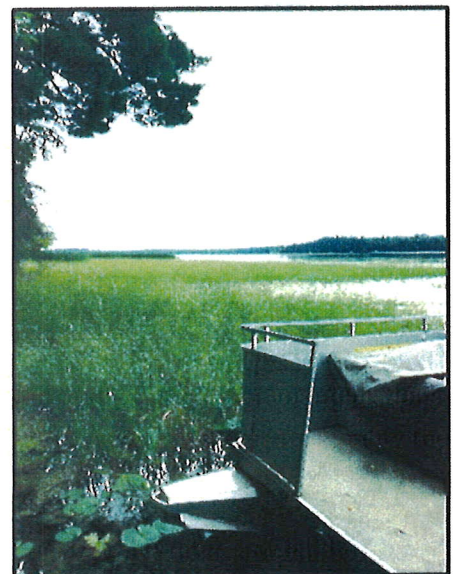
So why is wild rice emerging now? When we see something new happening to our lakes, I like to think about what has changed in or on the lake. Often times, a drop in water levels can bring wild rice back. On Harriet Lake, in Hubbard County, a beaver dam was removed downstream of the outlet and water levels lowered. Wild rice returned. Growing annually from seed, the sediment in a lake may hold thousands of seeds just sitting dormant, waiting for conditions to be right for germination. How long can those seeds sit there? There is a lake over in Wisconsin, Totagatic Lake, in Bayfield County, known for its wild rice. Over the years, due to some blocked outflow, water levels rose and wild rice disappeared. For decades the rice declined until very little grew. One year the outlet was cleaned out, bringing the lake back down to historical levels and the wild rice the next year covered the entire lake.

We know that wild rice can sit in the sediment for years before germinating. What else has changed recently in your lake? Has water quality improved? Wild rice is sensitive to pollutants, so improvements in water quality may lead to wild rice reemerging. Are there new types of boats? Specifically thinking about Wake boats that stir up sediment when used in shallow areas, or even the use of larger motors in the shallows. Both would re-suspend bottom sediment, potentially moving wild rice seed closer to the surface, resulting in germination the following spring.

Wild rice removal is regulated in Minnesota and requires a permit. Your local Aquatic Plant Management (APM) Specialist in the Fisheries Section can answer your questions about control of this, and other emergent vegetation. In Otter Tail County the contact is Jerry Wendlandt at

jerry.wendlandt@state.mn.us.

Submitted by: Annette Drewes, Clean Water Specialist, MN DNR



Ken's Korner:

For the 6 month period May-October we take monthly water tests at 4 locations: (1) Avis Creek - NE side of Big Pine; (2) Toad River - along Hwy 8; (3) North Little Pine Rd; (4) Zorbaz Bridge. Tests are taken for phosphorus levels as it is widely accepted that the amount of phosphorus levels in a lake often determines the ultimate disposition of health for a lake. Tests are also taken by others for chlorophyll and water clarity (secchi). These tests are delivered to RMB Lab in DL for analysis.



Water quality results trend line for Little Pine Lake through 2018 shows improvement. This means phosphorus levels down, chlorophyll down, and water clarity up.

Trend line analysis for Big Pine Lake is mixed as trends do not support a decrease or increase in clarity or data appears to be inconsistent. RMB goes on to say that your interpretation of the trend may differ from that which is offered.

Another approach to evaluating clarity in lakes is to test data compared to Ecoregions. The lakes in Otter Tail County are in the Northern Central Hardwood Forest Ecoregion.

The Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Association (COLA) has an excellent website where you can get much information on lake water sample analysis.



AIS. YES or NO?



Aquatic Invasive Species bring many questions.

YES. We continue to treat Curly Leaf Pondweed on Big Pine to control the spread. What would the lake look like if we had never done that?

NO. There has not been CLP found in Little Pine!

YES. There are signs at the accesses warning about Zebra Mussels.

NO. There have not been Zebra Mussels found in either Big or Little Pine. DNR AIS Specialist Mark Ranweiler tested at Zorbaz bridge

last fall and found no trace of veligers or adult ZM. This summer he reports there have been none found in either lake. Because we are on the Otter Tail River and ZM are found upstream and downstream DNR decided at a meeting in February to designate both lakes. Continue to CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY!

YES. Wild rice is having a good year.

NO. Wild rice is not an invasive species! From DNR Clean Water Specialist Jerry Wendlandt: "The Minnesota DNR has not planted wild rice in any developed lakes within my nine-county work area, which includes Otter Tail County. We have not issued any permits to private individuals on developed lakes for the transplanting of wild rice." Please read the article "Not 'Wild' about Wild Rice?" see why it's a bumper crop.



to

Shoreline News

SWCD Awarded Clean Water Fund Grant Targeting Five Otter Tail County Lakes

The East Otter Tail (EOT) and West Otter Tail (WOT) Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were awarded a Clean Water Fund Grant in the amount of \$167,600 for projects that reduce phosphorous loads on 5 of Otter Tail County Lakes. Big Pine, Little Pine, Walker, Wall and South Lida Lakes have been identified through various monitoring and planning efforts as lake of concern due to their phosphorous sensitivity and occasional nuisance algal blooms.

The EOT and WOT SWCDs are partnering to use this grant to provide cost-share for up to 75% of the cost of projects on these five lakes. Landowners on any of these 5 lakes that are interested in stabilizing eroding shorelines or installing vegetative buffers and/or rain gardens should contact one of the SWCD offices to inquire about the grant.

SWCD staff will make a site visit to determine the need and if the project would qualify for the grant. If it does the staff will develop a plan and cost estimate for the project. If the landowner agrees to proceed a cost-share contract will be developed and approved by the appropriate SWCD board setting aside funding for the project. At that time the SWCD staff will work with the landowner to get the project installed. After the project is installed and certified completed to standards by SWCD staff, the landowner can submit the paid receipts to be approved by the board for reimbursement. If you would like more information about this or other grant programs, please contact the EOT or WOT SWCD offices.



OTC COLA WEBSITE

You are a member of Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations as a LID member. Water samples are taken to RMB Labs each month May to September, analyzed and reported on the COLA website and to the State of MN. Bryan Zepper has done this for BP for 23 years and Todd Colliton has taken it on for LP. Because of the coronavirus COLA was not able to hold member meetings in 2020, losing opportunities to share information.

OTCPLID does not currently have a website, but it is in the works. Go to the COLA website and sign up for the monthly newsletter if you aren't already subscribing. On the website you can click on newsletters or go to the end of the page to easily enter your email.

www.ottertailcountycola.org

Fish Passages

The MNDNR Fisheries is still moving forward with the Otter Tail River outlet dam modification proposals. MNDNR Fisheries is currently working on securing funding through both State and Federal programs. Again it is the responsibility of the MNDNR to secure funding for these projects and will work with the Pine Lakes LID so that a concept and design for each one of the four outlet dams meets all parties' expectations. As far as time frame, if all goes well and funding is secured we could see construction during the winter 2021/early spring 2022.

The framework and partnership that was established with the Pelican Group of Lakes LID (PGOLID) worked well to complete three projects on the Pelican River. This will be the same partnership that the MNDNR and Pine Lakes LID will model to complete our proposed Otter Tail River Outlet Dam Projects. As the MNDNR moves forward with the proposal and plans to modify the outlet dams on Little Pine, Big Pine, Rush, and Otter Tail Lakes, the MNDNR Fisheries will keep the Pine Lakes LID up to date with any new progress.

