



Potato Lake Association

www.potatolakeassociation.org

Spring 2023 Newsletter

PLA Board Officers

President - Open Position

Vice President - Open Position

Secretary - Open Position

Traci & Steve Miller - Treasurer
tracim07@hotmail.com

Larry & Joan Wilhelmy - Director
joanw0301@yahoo.com

Jack Wolf - Director
wolfmynn1@charter.net

Kevin Montgomery - Director
kevinsmontgomery@me.com

2023 Outgoing Officers:

Harley Wells - former President
hgwells43@gmail.com

Kelley Casey - former Vice President
kelley.casey5431@gmail.com

Donna & Rich Krisch - Secretary
donna.krisch@gmail.com
rich.krisch@gmail.com

Annual meeting date is June 10 – *in person!*

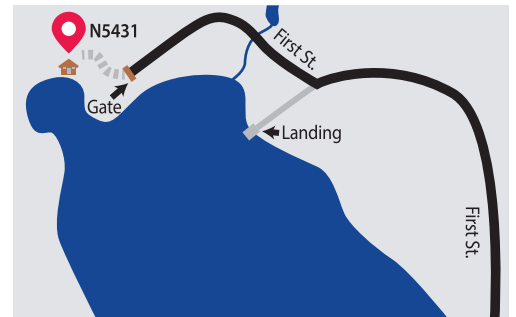
Save the date! The Potato Lake Association annual meeting is in person for the first time in a couple of years. Outgoing board VP Kelley Casey will host at his family cabin (N5431). Come by foot, paddle, or fossil fuel!

Updates include:

- Health of the lake
- Association updates
- Board elections (*We need your help!* See pages 2 and 4)

Date: June 10 at 9AM – rain or shine.
Cookies and coffee will be provided.
Bring a camp chair!

Directions: Heading north on First St. towards the landing, take a right at the fork to stay on First St. Follow it to the gate at the end. Go through the gate on the private road to Kelley's. Look for signs.



The Social Scene

July 4 Boat Parade

Our 9th annual Independence Day Boat Parade is tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 3 at 4 PM. (It's one of those weird Tuesday holidays ;-)

Decorate your favorite vessel – boat, kayak, paddleboard, or even inflatable unicorn – and meet us down at the landing at 4 PM.



We'll have a semi-organized lap around the lake as we celebrate our independence.

If you're boat-less (or would rather just watch) join the fun from your dock. The more the merrier!

Thirty-one is our current record for boats participating. Let's see if we can top that this year!

If there's any change to the day of the parade, we'll update the Potato Lake Association website (News page) and/or the Facebook group page.

Association Picnic – we need a host!

The association is looking for a volunteer to host our the annual picnic.

The picnic is usually held around the first week of August, but can be flexible!



This is a potluck-style event where everyone is encouraged to bring a side or dessert to share and your favorite beverage. The association provides a main dish, paper plates, napkins and silverware (And we can have a porta-potty delivered if needed).

As a bonus, Larry and Joan Wilhelmy get local Spooner businesses to provide gift cards and other prizes for giveaways at the end of the event. This event is a great way to meet your neighbors!

Are you willing to host? Contact Larry & Joan at joanw0301@yahoo.com

Thanks for your service! Honoring our outgoing directors

Harley Wells – served on the board since 2005 and as president for much of this time. In addition to this role, he took water samples of the lake along with Secchi water



clarity readings. These samples and readings are sent the DNR to monitor the lake health to spot warning trends over time.

Kelley Casey – has served on the board since 2007 as board vice president. Besides his VP duties, Kelly has focused much of his attention on maintaining the flow from the spring and seasonal runoff to the Potato Creek outlet. Keeping the lake level stable year round helps keep the shoreline vegetation healthy.

Joe Adler – joined on the board in 2005 and was board treasurer much of this time. In addition to keeping the books, Joe became an expert on lake management. He served as our point person for the groups hired to develop our ongoing lake management plans and for the WI DNR.

Donna & Rich Krisch – have served as board secretary for many years. They recorded the history of the association with meeting minutes, the annual newsletter, and much of the communication from the board to the association.

Not only have these individuals contributed their time and talent to the PLA in their roles, but also have been great stewards to the lake in many unseen ways.

Thank them when you see them. We'll miss them on the board, but look forward to seeing them on the lake!

Keeping an eye on the Potato: The health of the lake

Ice Out:

Our "official" ice out date this year was April 15.

Oxygen readings and other lake health topics:

by Joe Adler

It has been a long winter in Spooner, and long winters usually are not advantageous of Potato Lake. Oxygen readings have been low all winter, although we have seen similar readings in past winters.

Now that the ice is out on the lake, look for any dead fish in the area around your place. If you see any, please call me at 612-356-8525 or Dave Schmidt at 612-840-1656. By the way, Dave has graciously agreed to perform the oxygen readings in the future, and we thank him for stepping forward and providing this service.

We got some good news from Lisa Burns, Washburn County Conservation Coordinator, regarding water tests for zebra mussels. Last fall, Lisa was asked by the DNR to test a number of lakes in Washburn County for zebra mussel veligers. Veligers are the microscopic larvae of zebra mussels, so small that they are difficult to see with the naked eye. We took Lisa out on the lake and she took a number of water samples and sent them to the state labs. The report she received back indicated that no evidence of zebra mussels were found in Potato Lake.

Hopefully it will stay that way, and points up the value of the wash station we installed at the landing.

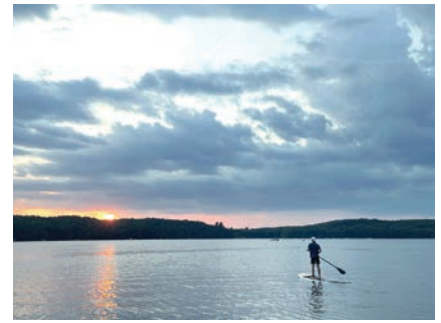
Winter Fish Kill:

Our ice out date revealed the hard winter we've been through. There were dozens of dead fish of all sizes along the east side of the lake. The last major winter fish kill was after the historic amounts of snow and bitter cold during the winter of 2013-2014.



Joe Adler has contacted the WI DNR. He guesses the DNR will come to the lake to do a shock survey to determine the extent of the die off. The DNR does not raise pan fish, so any restocking would need to involve private companies that are approved to raise fish for stocking in lakes. We have never had to get to this point in the past, so he's not sure how far the DNR will go if they find a total die off of any specific species.

We should have more information to share at the annual meeting.



The mystery of our snail problem – and a possible solution

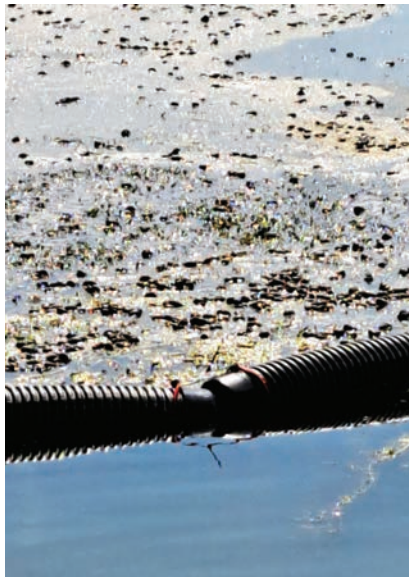
by Peggy Tierney

It was in 2014 that the WI DNR first officially identified Chinese Mystery Snails (CMS) at Potato Lake. These banded snails are non-native snails that have been found in numerous Wisconsin lakes and elsewhere in the U.S. There is not a lot known about these species, however, it appears that they have a negative effect on native snail populations.

The literature says that CMS were brought to America as a food source (they are eaten in Asia – think escargot) – however many lakes have been infested because CMS eat algae. They were brought in to eat lake algae! That’s why you see them floating on algae mats and living in rice beds.



I have seen a gradual increase in CMS populations over the past 15 years. I often see snails hitching rides on HUGE weed mats and algae mats and floating toward my dock. In the past, I would get in the water and use my rake to routinely take the entire mat out of the water and throw it on shore. It’s heavy, exhausting work.



Last year I created a “swimming area” around my dock with floating barriers that I made out of corrugated drain pipe, floaties, end caps and rope. Materials cost around \$20 for each 10 foot section. They only weigh 3 pounds, so they’re easy to move around. I put a 100 foot of barrier around my dock. It worked great to stop the snails and algae from floating into my dock and allowed me to harvest the snails from the water BEFORE they invaded my dock and sank into the muck and the rocks.

It appears to me that the snails are most vulnerable when floating in the water – it’s exposed to predators and easily harvested. You may have other ideas – but what if we created barriers – at the southern and northern bays and trapped the snails and harvested them from the water – after the wind brings them there? That’s what I did. It was easy. What if everybody was educated on how important it is to remove them - and helped remove every snail they see from the water when they see them? They are also good fish bait – better than worms! My friends caught several fish using snails.

That’s my idea. You may have other ideas of how to trap them and harvest them. Hope this helps. I love Potato Lake – and I don’t want it to turn into an algae infested snail infested nightmare!

Don’t forget to pay your association dues!

Use the handy envelope included in this mailing to send your annual dues to Traci Miller, the association treasurer.

The \$25 annual dues are tax deductible and this money helps fund the association’s efforts to “keep an eye on the Potato.”

Together, we can keep this lake a wonderful place for us and future generations to enjoy and create lasting memories.

Please send your annual dues today.

Need a handyman, painter, or other service provider?

Snap this QR code!



This QR code will display a link to the association website and the page with a list of recommended service providers.

These businesses are ones your neighbors have used and approved. It’s like our local Angi’s List!

Want to add someone to the list? Send the info to kevinsmontgomery@me.com



**WE
WANT
YOU**
**to join
our board!**

Our mission: to preserve and protect Potato Lake

Do you have what it takes? The Potato Lake Association is looking for a few good people for its board of directors for our association. The board also represents the association to decision makers at the WI DNR, Washburn county, Crystal township, lake quality associations, etc.

Over the years, the board:

- Hired experts to draft our initial lake management plan, to complete a follow up study and to update our plan based on the study findings
- Secured grants from the WI DNR to help with the costs of our lake management plans and lake improvements
- Worked with the township to improve the boat landing and public parking area
- Set up measures to help identify and prevent the introduction of invasive species

We want you to be a part of the team! No board experience is necessary and it's not a huge time commitment.

Interested? Contact board director Kevin Montgomery at kevinsmontgomery@me.com or call 651-280-7374

About our association: In 1993, some forward thinking property owners at Potato Lake created this association "to preserve and protect the lake and its surroundings, and to enhance the water quality, fishery, boating safety, and aesthetic value of Potato Lake, as a public recreational facility for today and for future generations."

It's a great mission statement with a goal for all of us. We're all interconnected after all – by the lake itself. When each of us is a good steward of the lake – really just being a good neighbor – it benefits all of us. And by working *together*, we can increase our results.

If you haven't already, please join the association.



**Potato Lake
Association**

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