

Moose Lake News

By Jim Onarheim

October is now behind us. The kids had their fun with an exciting night of going trick or treating in downtown Hayward. Mark Gritzmacher and I of Round Lake Fire Department, represented Sawyer County Ambulance at the annual Trunk or Treat event this year. The event this year was located at the Ace Hardware parking lot off Hwy 63. Mark's wife Kathy also was a tremendous help handing out candy. There was an estimate of about two thousand children and family members attending the event. All I know is we gave out a large box filled with a variety of candy to the trick or treaters that came to the event and stopped by our ambulance. Mark and I have done this for several years and enjoy doing this for the service and the community. Hope to see you next year.

(A little history lesson about the Moose Lake Dam.) People have been asking me about the water level on Moose Lake. As most of you know, Moose Lake has its water level lowered every year by Frank Leuschen, our Dam attendant. Frank follows the directions that he gets from the owner of the dam Xcel Energy. As of November 1, the lake is about at its winter draw down level, of 5½ feet from its normal summer level. I talked to Dave Wells and Joel Miller about our current level. Dave just gave me an estimate of how close we were to the full drawdown level. Joel said he just got in from being on the lake with his boat. He told me that the lake was within six inches of where it should be for the winter. Xcel Energy has owned and controlled the dam for many years.

The original dam, called the Goodrich Dam, was built by Jim Goodrich in 1878. It was used to raise the level of the Moose River to float logs during the spring log drives. Another dam, called the West Fork Dam, was built by John and Billy England in 1883, about one hundred yards from the first dam. The current concrete dam, known as the Moose Lake Dam, was constructed by the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company (CFIC) in the winter of 1924-25.

The dam was rebuilt and increased from two gates to three gates, by the CFIC in 2015. This was the first time since the current Moose Lake dam was built in 1925, or 100 years ago. The spillway was replaced ten years ago. Construction began May 18, 2015. During construction it was required to have a modest drawdown of 1.5 feet of the lake until completion.

The project involved replacing the concrete spillway. The two existing nine-foot gates were replaced with three 12-foot wide, stainless steel slide gates. Construction at the dam started Monday, May 18, 2015, and was completed late October 2015. Wisconsin-based Kraemer North America was the contractor that constructed the new spillway.

The Moose Lake Dam is owned by the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company and operated by Xcel Energy. Moose Lake, located northeast of the Chippewa Reservoir on the west

fork of the Chippewa River, serves as a storage reservoir for downstream hydropower production.

During construction, the lake was held at 1.5 feet lower than normal to accommodate construction. The drawdown began on Thursday, May 14, 2015, and was completed by Tuesday, May 19.

“The project increased the discharge capacity at the dam to meet the state requirement to safely pass the 1,000-year flood without overtopping and to replace the 90-year-old concrete,” said Dean Steines, Xcel Energy hydro engineer. “The modest drawdown during construction provided a safer work area and protected the dam in the event of a flood during construction.”

The lower water levels slightly impacted access to boat ramps and navigation on Moose Lake. Boaters were informed to use caution due to potential navigation hazards.

The Town of Round Lake was responsible for the construction of the new concrete bridge over the dam after the spillway project was completed. Louie’s Landing Road was closed to traffic throughout the duration of that project. The public was asked to stay away from the construction area at all times.

Spillway replacement was completed by late October of 2015. This date depended on weather and construction conditions. Construction of the bridge followed completion of the spillway. Winter drawdown of 5.5 feet was back to normal after the bridge project was completed.

As many of you may know Moose Lake has improved to be an exceptionally good fishery since the reduction of the daily bag limits of crappies/panfish and walleyes. One of the best fishing spots for musky on the lake is around Grassy Island. I should say it was a good fishing spot. The reason I say that is, Grassy Island had a good supply of vegetation and cattails growing around this island a few years ago. Boaters have been seen removing this vegetation from around this island so they could have a nice swimming area. Residents from the lake have told me they have seen boaters removing this vegetation. Even if you are a property owner on the lake you are not allowed to remove any type of structure or vegetation. Moose lake has lost a large amount of structure over the past several years. No matter if it is fallen trees from nature, vegetation, or wood of any kind you cannot remove it without a permit. The people that are doing this do not know that it is against the law to remove any such structure from a lake for any reason. People that do this need to be fined by the DNR to the maximum of the law. They are destroying our lake.

Birthdays this week. Betty Parish on the 7th of November. Desiree Ogren on the 8th, Michelle Briggs on the 11th Stanley Olson on the 13th, Kenner Sorsenson on the 15th. Anniversary wishes this week are extended to Larry and Debe Fullington on the 6th, Mark and Patti Stuetgen on the

10th Stan and Donna Loebaka on the 14th of November. Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary to all of you, especially to those that I may have missed.

Stay safe everyone and enjoy your week with cool fall weather. Please send your items of interest to my e-mail address at emta984@gmail.com or call my landline at 715-462-4448 or my cell at 715-577-8880. Moose Lake Improvement association website is <http://mliahaywardwi.org> The Town of Round Lake Web site is <https://www.townofroundlakewi.org> and the Round Lake Fire Department website is <https://townofroundlakefire-rescue.org> JO.