



PICKEREL/CRANE LAKE P&R DISTRICT

Protection and Rehabilitation District

Newsletter



From the Chairman's Desk...

This is a very special newsletter. It contains a 2012 Fish Survey Report written by Senior Fish Biologist, Greg Matzke. We have put as much of the report in this newsletter as space would allow. The complete report can be read on our website www.pickerelcranelakedistrict.org. In my opinion, this report contains data and information presented in a fashion that all of us can understand. I feel that Mr. Matzke has gone out of his way in producing such a document for us. We are very fortunate to have him working in this region and assisting our Lake District and he should be commended for a job well done.

In addition, we have invited a Shore Land Protection Specialist and an Aquatic Plant Specialist to our September 1st meeting. They will each give an informational presentation. Not only will this newsletter be filled with great information but our meeting will be filled with great topics. Please see the enclosed agenda. Remember the new location for our meeting is 1038 CTH "Q", Pickerel. See You There!

Chuck



Introduction from Greg Matzke's 2012 Fish Survey

During the early-to-mid 1990s your fish management team, with input from the public, placed a restrictive size and bag limit on bass in the Pickerel-Crane (P-C) chain of lakes. This regulation was put in place for two reasons. The first and most important reason was to increase the predator population (bass) in an effort to control panfish abundance. By controlling the abundance we hoped to improve the size structure of your panfish populations, by limiting the overall abundance and freeing up more space, food and nutrients for the remaining panfish allowing them to grow faster and larger. The second reason for the regulation was to increase the abundance and size structure of bass to create a quality fishing opportunity. Let's fast forward nearly two decades....

During the past two years that I have been in Florence I have had many people let me know of their displeasure with the restrictive 18-inch size limit on both largemouth and smallmouth bass in the P-C chain of lakes. Both of the past two years there has been a favorable vote at the Forest County spring hearings to reduce the size limit on bass in the chain. This prompted our fisheries management team to take action and see what is happening in the P-C chain and figure out if the current 18-inch minimum size limit (MSL) is the right regulation for this waterbody.

The P-C chain is not the only lake in Forest County that people were unhappy with the regulations, one of these other lakes is Trump Lake in Wabeno. In 2011 we did a survey of Trump Lake and found overabundant largemouth bass, which displayed poor growth rates and size structure; it was very easy to see that the 18-inch MSL was just not doing its job there. I figured I would see a similar situation when we went to survey the P-C chain in 2011. To my surprise we had only a moderate catch rate of bass during our survey. After further analysis the bass population had a pretty good size structure and average growth rates.

I'll be honest, I was shocked at the results in 2011; I completely expected to see some evidence of a negative impact on the fishery due in part to the restrictive regulation, after all that is what the fishermen were telling me and they normally have a good feel on these things. Last winter our fish team came up with a new survey plan to really understand what was happening in the P-C chain. This year we put the plan in action and conducted the most comprehensive bass survey I have ever been a part of, here are our results.

Pickerel Lake - Bass

Crane Lake - Bass

This year, instead of leaving it up to a catch rate (which aren't always the most accurate); we set out to estimate the total bass population in Pickerel Lake. In order to do so we were going to have to catch A LOT of bass....so we spent 5 nights electrofishing Pickerel Lake, catching as many bass as we could. Over those 5 nights we caught 398 largemouth bass, I marked these with an identifiable mark (so I would recognize the fish if I caught them a 2nd time) and let them mix back into the population. After allowing the fish to mix back into the population we then spent two more long nights electrofishing and captured another sample of 157 bass. **For the rest of the data discussing Pickerel Lake Bass and Panfish report see www.pickerelcranelakedistrict.org.**

We conducted the same survey on Crane Lake as we did on Pickerel Lake in 2012. To estimate the population of bass we electrofished three nights attempting to mark as many bass as possible, during those three nights we collected and marked 396 largemouth bass. After allowing the marked fish to disperse into the population we conducted two more electrofishing surveys capturing 235 bass. All fish were examined for clips and after analyzing the data I estimated there to be approximately 2,116 largemouth bass \geq 8.0 inches (6.20 fish/acre) in Crane Lake. As I stated earlier, most of the lakes in our area carry 3-5 adult bass per acre, this puts Crane at an above average level. See www.pickerelcranelakedistrict.org for complete report.

Final Discussion for Greg Matzke's Report

As I have stated earlier, the restrictive bass regulation that is in place on Pickerel and Crane Lakes is mostly to help the panfish population. When the regulation went into place it was thought that another "side-effect" would be improved bass size structure...since you have to throw back all the bass. Now after nearly two decades with this regulation we have enough data to prove that the regulation has in fact done its job and should continue to do its job in the years to come.

The P-C chain is an extremely productive system. When it comes to panfish they can be too productive. This is what was seen in the surveys conducted prior to the 18-inch MSL on bass. The chain created too many panfish; so many that they impacted panfish growth and size structure. The lakes were loaded with tons of small panfish! Today the panfish populations are completely different than they were decades ago - thanks to the restrictive regulations on the bass population.

Crane Lake has just about the perfect panfish population right now. Panfish abundance is still "off-the-charts", but not nearly how it used to be. Since the abundance declined (thanks to the abundant bass population) the size structure has become phenomenal. Right now the average bluegill is 7.2 inches...that is a ridiculously large average size! The bass population does seem to be on the verge of overabundance, but that is what is creating your great panfish population. If we reduced the bass abundance you would just revert right back to an overabundant population of undesirable panfish.

Pickerel Lake still has an overabundance of panfish. Due to the overabundance there are most likely declined growth rates (I will check on this in the next few months). Reduction in panfish abundance would help improve the pan fishery. The best way to do this is to load up on the predatory fish, like largemouth bass. The bass population has not taken off in Pickerel the same way it did on Crane and the abundance is still below average for our area. I would like to see that population actually increase in hopes of creating a more desirable panfish population. However, at its current lower than average abundance bass size structure is awesome! If I wanted to catch a big bass one of the first places I would go is Pickerel Lake.

Right now I like to think fishermen on the P-C chain have the best of both worlds. If you like fishing bass you have a lake (Crane) that has an above average bass population and you could probably catch quite a few. If you wanted to catch a trophy bass you can go to Pickerel and put your time in and you will eventually catch one. If all you want to fish for are panfish you got it made also. If you want to catch a ton of fish, go to Pickerel. If you want to fish a lake where there is still a large population but you will get bigger panfish just scoot on over to Crane. See www.pickerelcranelakedistrict.org for complete discussion from Greg Matzke.

**Notice of Pickerel/Crane Lake P&R
District Fall Meeting**

September 1, 2012 – 9:30 a.m.
1038 County Hwy. Q
Pickerel, WI 54465

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Spring Meeting Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Committee Reports / Walley Stocking & Plant Harvesting
6. WDNR Sr. Fisheries Biologist Greg Matzke's Fish Survey Report
7. Presentation from Ms. Janet Brehm Shore land Protection Specialist
8. Presentation from Mr. John Pruss Aquatic Plant Specialist
9. Budget Hearing / Adoption of Tax Levy
10. Election of two Commissioners
11. Old Business
12. New Business / Email notice of property for sale on Pickerel Lake
13. Public Comment
14. Adjourn

(Two or more members of the Nashville Town Board may be in attendance.)

Treasurer's Report 1/1/12 – 6/30/12

Opening Balance	
CD's Capital Purchases	\$54,853.97
CD Septic Inspections	13,081.40
Savings	7,719.26
Checking	822.02
Variable Rate	48,745.00
Subtotal	\$125,221.65
Receipts	
Tax Levy	\$18,039.64
Reimbursement/Credit	17.38
Interest	668.30
Boat Landing Donations	33.00
Aeration (Scrap Metal)	104.75
Subtotal	\$18,863.07
Disbursements	
Aeration	\$838.75
Boat Landing	160.00
Dues	40.00
Harvester	625.68
Lake Management Plan	17.38
Meeting/Mileage/Tel	104.53
Postage	314.30
Printing	155.62
Rent	2,250.00
Administrative Supplies	7.35
Subtotal	\$4,513.61

Proposed Budget for 2013

Notice has been given that the Pickerel/Crane Lake P&R District will conduct a hearing on the proposed budget for 2013 and adopt a tax levy at the meeting September 1, 2012

Expenses	2013 Proposed Budget
Printing/ Ads	\$400
Webpage	100
Postage	1,000
Administration Supplies	200
Meetings/Mileage/Telephone	500
Dues	100
Insurance	2,500
Lake Monitoring	500
Boat Landings	800
Aeration	2,000
Weed Harvesting	3,000
Capital Purchases	3,400
Lake Management Plan	15,000
Office Rent	3,000
Miscellaneous	500
Walleye Restoration Project	7,500
Total	\$40,500

Revenues	2013
Tax Levy	27,800
Interest	1,500
Boat Landing Donations	200
Lake Management Plan Grant	8,500
Lake Monitoring Reserve	500
Harvester Reserve	2,000
Total	\$40,500

2012 Approved Tax Levy

\$27,800

Percent of Change 0%

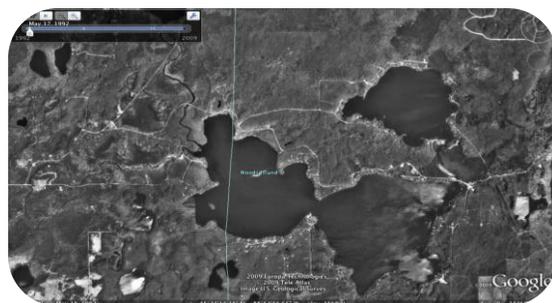
Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Kupfer, Treasurer

Treasurer's Report (Cont'd.)

Closing Balance	
CD's Capital Purchases	\$55,161.86
CD Septic Inspections	13,159.47
Savings	22,267.37
Checking	19.22
Variable Rate	48,963.19
Total	\$139,571.11

Pickerel/Crane Lake District Commissioners & Representatives

Chuck Sleeter – Chair	(715) 478-1038 or (715) 484-4501	/ email: nashchair@frontier.com
Rod Sternhagen – Vice Chair	(920) 766-7985 or (920) 540-4507	
Dan Vosters	(715) 484-3142 or (920) 766-9202	
Kathy Kupfer – Treasurer	(262)255-0174	
Lauren Freston – Secretary email: lafreston@yahoo.com	(715) 484-2910	
Duane Marshall – Town of Nashville Rep.	(715) 484-8198	
Jim Stormer – Forest County Liaison	(715) 484-2022	
Joe Barnett – Langlade County Liaison	(715) 484-3968	



Pickerel/Crane Lake

www.earth.google.com

In order for us to keep our mailing list current, please notify us of your new address if you move. It would also be helpful if you would let us know the name and address of the new owners in the event your property is sold, so we can include them in our mailings. Thank you.

Pickerel/Crane Lake P&R District

P.O. Box 18
Pickerel, WI 54465

[Recipient]