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The Big Chip News View from the Chair

by Mike Gardner CFAPOA Chair Think, Collaborate, Act

The Chippewa Flowage Joint Agency Management Plan was finalized, and Memorandum of Agreement signed in August of 2000. The Lac Courte Oreilles Band, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the US Forest Service agreed that protection and management of the Flowage was best accomplished through cooperation and collaboration. The plan includes many details, but the general land management policy called for "the maintenance of a sustainable and resilient ecosystem and long-term protection and enhancement of the flowage's outstanding natural aesthetic and scenic character".

It is estimated that approximately 8% of the shoreline is privately owned. As property owners, it is fundamental to our prosperity and our stewardship responsibility to understand the values at risk. We need to think about how our watershed



can remain resilient and we must support our thinking with knowledge sharing and planning. Effective, constructive watershed stewardship requires we think, collaborate, and act.

The CFAPOA Board of Directors are committed to developing common understandings and goals for the Flowage and a robust, durable capacity for response that includes all stakeholders and is guided by science.

The Board meets quarterly with the Partners Group and monthly as an organization. To serve on the Board, contact any current Board member prior to the August Annual Meeting. Join us as we act to secure and steward a resilient watershed that will continue to provide critical habitats and water supplies for the future.



Summer 2022

Chippewa Flowage Walleye 2022

by Max Wolter

I'm pleased to report that after our big spring walleye survey we know a whole lot more about Chippewa Flowage walleye than we did a few months ago. I referenced this survey in past editions of this newsletter, but this was our once-a-decade estimate of the total number of adult walleye in the Chippewa Flowage.

These "population estimate" surveys are a large undertaking on any waterbody, but on a lake the size of the Chip it's akin to a small military operation. We had lots of help coordinating and conducting the survey, and I want to acknowledge all the other DNR teams that came from Spooner, Brule, Mercer, Park Falls, Barron, and even Lacrosse and Madison. We also had great collaboration with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and LCO Conservation Department. Many local businesses assisted as well. The Landing and Deer Run offered their boat ramps at a time when ice was blocking most other access points to the lake. Other resorts have been great about allowing our creel clerks to use their grounds to interview anglers (more on that at the end).

Our population estimate is a "mark-recapture" type survey. The first phase of the survey is the "mark". In this phase we use fyke nets to capture any and all walleye that we are able to and "mark" them with a fin clip (you may catch a fish with one of these fin clips this summer, the fin grows back over time). We started netting in the small open water area near CC bridge on April 24 and caught spawning walleye immediately, even though the rest of the lake was still >90% ice covered. As the ice receded of the following days



"Our

(preliminary) estimate is

72,837 adult

walleye.

we expanded the netting operation and brought in more teams to run them all. At our peak we had 80-90 nets in the water and were handling about 3,000 walleye a day. By May 1 we'd captured and "marked" 12,888 different walleye. These are all released back into the lake to mix back into the population.

The second phase is the "recapture". In this phase

we use our electrofishing boats to cover shoreline all throughout the flowage. We selected 97 miles (43% of total shoreline) and conducted the electrofishing surveys over

three nights (May 2-4). We capture all walleye we encounter and record whether they had a fin clip or not. It is that ratio of clipped to unclipped fish that can be put into equations to estimate the total number of walleye in the lake.

In the electrofishing phase we captured 4,604 walleye, 762 of which had a clipped fin.

If you've hung with me this far you must really like fish. And you probably have some questions. I will try to anticipate those and answer them with the remainder of the article:

So what's the estimated number of walleye in the

Chip?: Our (preliminary) estimate is 72,837 adult walleye. There are many more juvenile walleye that are not represented in this estimate.

Cool, but how many of those are legal?: We conduct estimates

by size class as well. We estimate there are 19,168 walleye between 15-20" and another 904 over 24 inches. So right around 20,000 legal walleye.

What about male:female ratio?: We estimate there are 4.4 males for every 1 female. That is right in line with what we observe in healthy walleye populations.

How does this estimate compare to other points in the flowage's history?:

It might help to convert the big numbers down to per acre estimates for this. Our 2022 estimate was 4.8 adults per acre. The last estimate was done in 2011 and was 3.1 adults/acre. In 1990, the estimate was 5.2 adults/acre. It's great to see that we have been able to increase abundance since 2011 and are now approaching what was observed in the 90s. Not a lot of lakes can say that right now. Remember, the larger pattern throughout the Midwest is declining walleye abundance.

How does this compare to our shared goals for the fishery?: In the Chippewa Flowage Fishery Management Plan we set two objectives for walleye: The first was a population with 4-8 adults per acre. We're right in the low end of that range with our recent estimate of 4.8/ acre. The second objective was to have 20-40% over 15 inches. We estimate that 31% of the flowage walleye are over 15". The current population is meeting our targets for both abundance and size. That's not to say things are perfect though! More on that later.

What's the biggest walleye out there?: We captured a number of walleye between 29.0-29.5 inches, but we never cracked 29.5 inches. Considering that sample includes around 17,000 total walleye, I can say confidently that walleye larger than 29.5 inches are very rare in the flowage.

Did you get data on other species?: Yes, some. We recorded lengths and tag data on all musky we captured since we have a lot to learn there. Other species



A tank full of walleye captured in fyke nets sit ready to be measured, clipped, and released.

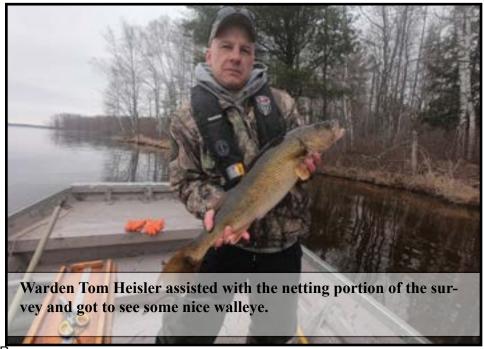
were counted but not measured. That will give us some idea of abundance but not size. With our focus on walleye, we will have less data available for other species this year. We'll be back to a more wideranging focus next year. However, we will do our regular bass and bluegill survey in early June 2022.

Any other surprises?: One thing that was striking was the difference in size structure between the east and the west. The average size of walleye on the east side appears to be about 2 inches smaller than the west side, and gets more extreme the further east and southeast that you head. That means an angling regulation that is

a good fit in one area may not be a good fit elsewhere. That will be a management challenge that we will be looking at in the near future.

What happens next?: Technically, this survey is not done. We also have a creel survey component that will provide a lot of fantastic data. That will run through Summer and into Fall. If you fish often (or are just lucky) you may get stopped by one of our friendly creel clerks. They will ask some questions about what you targeted, what you caught, and how long you were out. If you harvested any fish on that trip they may ask to measure them. Please be cooperative. These data are critically important to managing the fishery and we do not get this opportunity often. Ultimately, we'll want to use all these data to update our management strategy for walleye and other species. CFAPOA members will be an important part of that conversation.

There's always more to learn in fish world, I'll report back soon with more information on the creel survey and anything else we've learned out on the water. Until then, good luck fishing.



Cool Native Shorelines on the Chip

by Tony Schubert Photography by Julie Thompson-Czub



The place where the water meets the land, our shorelines, can be some of the coolest and most interesting places on the lake. The shoreline is also the single most important area affecting the health of our lake and its ecosystem. Owners of lake shore properties have a special stewardship obligation to the ecosystem and the public. That is why the DNR and the State of Wisconsin have special zoning laws specific to shoreline owners.

The shore is the most ecologically diverse part of the entire lake. It is can produce abundant food for the fish and critters that live here. The water's edge is a busy place. Walleye, Northern Pike, bluegills, crappie and bass all spawn in the shallow water along the shore. Loons, ducks, geese and other water birds nest along the banks. Wildlife such as frogs, otters and mink live there too. Hundreds of plants and insects thrive on the shore and are the only food sources for other animals By keeping our shorelines as natural as possible, we are contributing to the great wildlife and fishery that is here on the Flowage.

So, as we develop our properties, it is important to protect the lake and wildlife that we all love. Protecting the lake is really quite simple. One of the most impactful things you can do is create a Buffer Area. A buffer area is a strip of land from the highwater mark on the shore upland about 35 to 50 feet. It is here where we want to preserve or plant the native plants. Native plants can protect the water quality, wildlife, fishery, as well as prevent erosion (cool).

One of the most significant ways our shorelines impact the lake is through runoff. The water that runs off our roofs, roads, pathways and lawns eventually ends up in the lake. This water carries all the pollutants, fertilizer, pet feces, goose poop, and grass clippings to the lake (not cool). Water from our properties enters the lake, either directly over land, runoff, or through the water table, underground. Yes, our septic tank water will eventually make it to the lake. The near shore vegetation can clean up and cool off this water before it enters our lake. Native plants, grasses, ferns, shrubs and trees do a great job of cleaning surface water before it gets in our lake. They

also have great root systems that prevent erosion. A lawn to the water's edge does none of this.

Planting native plants in our buffer area is the best way we can protect our lake from harmful pollution. The easiest way to achieve this is to simply leave the plants that Mother Nature left on your property alone. But if you bought a property that had a lot of native vegetation removed, it can be put back. You can do it all at once or little by little every year. Sometimes it may be as simple as just stop mowing grass and see what grows. Anything you do or don't do (mowing) will start to improve the water.

We want to feature some cool properties with natural shorelines that enhance the water quality. All of these properties have a good view of the water and their plantings have just framed the picturesque vista.

Following are some pictures of our neighbor's shorelines that have native plants and natural shorelines. These types of plantings contribute greatly to keep our lake and ecosystem the best that it can be.





Cool Native Shorelines Continued from Page 4

Pat Sime

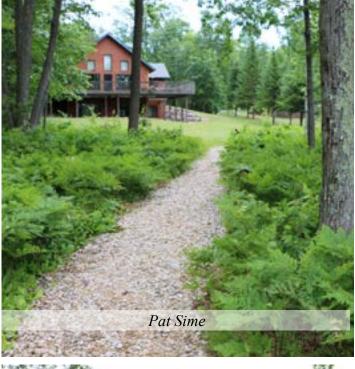
(off River Road)

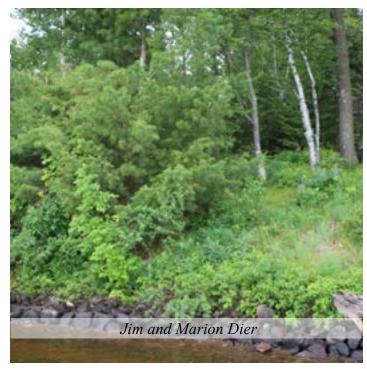
This is the largest buffer area of the 6 properties we are featuring. This buffer area is as wide as the whole lot, with an average depth of 70 feet back from the shore. There is a meandering wood chip path to the dock. Large birch, oak and maples grace the area. The forest floor is covered with various ferns, forest pea, fescue, blue bead and big leaf aster. Milkweed plants are at the edge of the buffer area next to the lawn. Pat uses stepping stones to walk over the wetter edge of the buffer area. Because of the buffer area, geese are never found on her lawn.

Jim and Marion Dier

(off River Road)

Have a 40 X 105-foot buffer area. Jim has not worked very hard at establishing the buffer zone. He mostly just left it alone, pulled some weeds and invasive plants that popped up. There are mature maple and oaks towering over many different ferns, redwood pea, and bishop weed. The lawn near the house is easy to maintain, he does not fertilize it on the lake side and only has to mow it a few times a year. He loves not having to mow and keeping the geese off his lawn near the house.







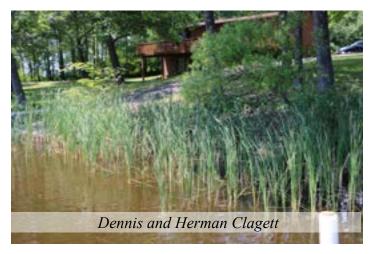


Cool Native Shorelines Continued from Page 5

Dennis and Herman Clagett

on Woodland Drive

This owner was given the Conservation Star designation in 2006. This was recognition given at the time to owners who made shoreline improvements and native plantings. In addition to the improvements made upland to slow runoff, Dennis planted a 70 X 25 buffer zone that now has big leaf aster and soapwart on the shore. Large white pine and Red pine stand near the shore.



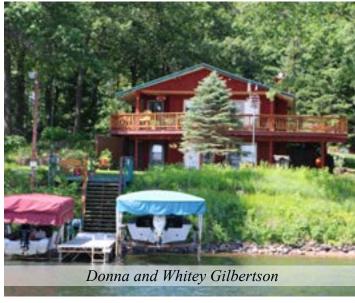


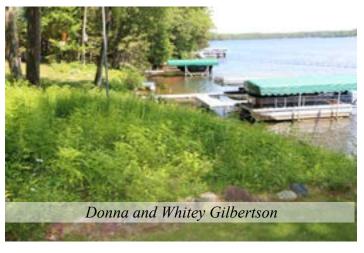


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Donna and Whitey Gilbertson on Chief Lake

They also were given the Conservation Star designation in 2006. This shoreline contains a beautiful arrangement of native plants. This is an example of diverse native plants in a well-groomed, garden like arrangement. In 2006 the Gilbertsons planted around 800 species of native grasses and wild flowers. They waited to see what would come up and survive the best, given the location of their property. Since planting. It has been well cared for and now looks like a professional garden. The buffer area is about 100 feet wide with a 20-foot-wide space for stairs to the lake. It extends 30 feet up from shore to their lawn. The shoreline has many different species of plants including rugosa, sasparilla, honey suckle and raspberry bushes. Red oak, balsam, black spruce and birch trees shade the shoreline and their house.





Cool Native Shorelines Continued from Page 6

7iger Musky Resort — Speros Family Tiger Musky Bay may be one of the coolest bays

on the flowage. There are many property owners using native plants to protect the water and stop erosion. I estimate that 80% of the property owners have native plants on their shoreline. Setting the example for the neighborhood is one of the coolest bars on the flowage Tiger Musky Resort. The resort is almost hidden from view from the big water by aquatic plants, reeds, lily pads and cattails. I like cruising in slowly among the reeds and cattails to the docks, bar, restaurant and gas pump. It seems that a lot of the docks have a place to park your boat on one side and cattails on the other side. The owners have left much of the natural shoreline intact. They even have a "Wilderness Preserve" about 150 feet wide with wildflowers on the shore and tons of aquatic plants in the water. It is a perfect home for turtles, frogs, snails, and shoreline birds.





Kristin and Dean Elmer

on Tiger Musky Bay

Further up the bay is the home of Kristin and Dean Elmer. They have a big lawn that stops about 25 feet from the water's edge. Their major trees are oak, pine, birch and two beautiful hemlock trees. Underneath the canopy there are ferns, reed managrass and virginia spiderwort. The natural shore line is the entire width of their property, except for the 10-foot access to the dock. What really makes this look nice is their neighbor's shore lines are all natural too. It gives the critters in their bay a continuous area to forage and nest.





If you have a cool property you want to share with us, let me know. If you have a property with a lawn to the water's edge, it is never too late to add natural native plants. We would be happy to visit with you and provide you with resources to help make the conversion.

CFAPOA Getting Involved in Aquatic Plant Identification

by Mark Zich

Recently CFAPOA board approved training for two association members to attend Aquatic Plant Training at the Kemp Natural Resources Station in Woodruff, Wisconsin. The training was provided in a daylong workshop on June 28, 2022 by the University Wisconsin-Stevens Point Extension Lakes. Originally Mike Gardner spearheaded this effort to attend the workshop; however, due to family commitments the training was passed to Joni and Mark Zich.

CFAPOA's reason to attend the Aquatic Plant training workshop was so that we can be more active in a cooperative program with the Lac Courte Oreilles Conservation Department and partners to help improve aquatic plant monitoring on the Chippewa Flowage. In the recent past, the LCO partnered with Northland College to conduct an intensive and costly Flowagewide point-intercept Aquatic Plant Survey. Results of the monthslong survey documented that the invasive species Eurasian Milfoil was identified and abundant.

Since that study took place the Partners's Group has attempted to



Wild Celery (vallisneria americana) - forage for canvasback ducks.



Eurasian water-foil (Myriophyllum spicatum) - Non-native invasive species.

mitigate Eurasian Milfoil (EM) by using fall water drawdowns to eradicate and/or reduce the Eurasian Milfoil. Further PG discussions identified the need to better understand how Habitat Drawdowns impact EM; therefore, the Partner's Group has expressed an interest in conducting a lowercost, subset, point-intercept Aquatic Plant Survey to document the impact Habitat Drawdowns have on EM. The plan is for CFAPOA to provide trained volunteers to conduct lower-cost, more frequent aquatic plant studies in the future with the LCO.

Healthy lake ecosystems rely heavily on aquatic plants and they benefit the Chippewa Flowage by acting as a food source, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, improve water quality, stabilize shoreline and waterbody bottom, and improve aesthetics. However, some invasive plant species can be detrimental to a lake and Eurasian watermilfoil is one of those. Eurasian watermilfoil crowds out native plants, reducing biodiversity and diminishes fish

habitat. Dense mats can form near the water surface and entangle boat propellers and interfere with swimming and fishing.

The training also included taking the Aquatic Plant Taxonomic Assurance exam. Those passing the exam will have their names added to the "assured service providers" list published on the University of Wisconsin web site. Assured Service Providers are often required when WDNR funds Aquatic Plant projects through grants.

In summary, the workshop was only a beginning since aquatic plant identification is complex; therefore, additional study of aquatic plant identification materials will be required as well as field work to gain a higher level of expertise. We hope to continue working with the LCO to improve aquatic plant monitoring so we can better understand the needed frequency of Habitat Drawdowns on the Chippewa Flowage and the impacts those drawdowns have on Eurasian watermilfoil

Adopt-A-Shoreline Volunteers

Name	East	West
"Needs Adoption"	T	West
Ron & Jan Bergman		1
	M	1
Mike & Lynn Muench	IVI	12
"Needs Adoption"		12, 13
Gary & Lind Crank		3,5
Tony DeJoode	Т	
LCO Conservation Dept.	H, I, Z	
Jim & Marion Dier	S	
Alan & Lynda Fish		8, 17
Whitey and Donna Gilbertson		2, 18
"Needs Adoption"		10
Roman Rowen	U	
Chris & Patti Jeffords		4
Jerry & Nancy Johnson		6,9
"Needs Adoption"		10, 14
Roger & Kathy Kisch	W	
"Needs Adoption"		7, 14
Rob and Rebecca Nesse	J	
Brian and Sara Priester	О	
Chris & Jess Conrad	A2	
Rick & Linda Olson	R	
Tony & Laurie Schubert	Т	
Dave Carland Family and Friends	X	
Don & Sue Reinardy	E1-2	
Steve & Jane Richardson	W	
"Needs Adoption"		15, 16
Bruce and Gina Dingman	D	
Darrell & Jean Weliihert	E1-2	
Greg and Amy Sanders		11
Mike & Phyllis Gardner	Q	
Mike & Lynn Muench	P	
Dennis Clagett	Y	
Linda Treland	A1	
Tony & Laurie Schubert	U	1



Invasive Species Update

by Dennis Clagett

This summer may bring a resurgence of our #2 invasive species Eurasian watermilfoil. Last fall the lake was down about 3 feet when it froze over. This was a bit more than typical, but not the more effective 5 foot "habitat draw-down" the previous two years. In addition, winter low was less than 8 feet. In my memory this is the shallowest I recall. This may set-up a perfect storm for all aquatic plant growth both wanted and unwanted.

As I write this (6/23/22). The bay I live on has what looks like a cloud of milfoil under the surface about the size of a football field that will be tough to fish and navigate. In addition, summers lower water levels will bring all this growth to the surface. Water levels are controlled by Xcel Energy. Their decisions are based on many factors, and they do their best to consider the people that recreate and live on this great body of water. However, we must understand that the weather has taken on a more important role in their decisions, and we would be wise to begin adapting to the new weather patterns.

This summer will be an opportunity to document, by observation, a potential increase in our number one invasive species, Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) I'm asking members and especially Adopt-A-Shoreline volunteers to contact me about their observations. As a group of citizen scientists our visual data accumulated over the summer, while being "anecdotal" carries weight in discussions with

other stakeholders concerning the Chippewa flowage. For new members reading this and a refresher course for others, Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) is a submerged aquatic plant that poses a serious threat to a lake's native aquatic plants and the animals that depend on diverse living conditions. It is not a native plant of Wisconsin and has no natural predators. A little of this stuff goes a long way, and a little will hold fish, but it can form thick underwater colonies of stems that form vast mats that are all but impenetrable on the surface of the water crowding out both boats AND fish. This stuff is now the most troublesome submerged aquatic invasive plant species in Wisconsin. However, one thing it cannot tolerate is freezing of the roots as can most of our native plants. This is why I usually recommend an early pre-freeze-up draw-down (read habitat draw-down) to get these roots exposed to freezing temperatures.

As to our other troubling invasive: purple loosestrife: This is where our Adopt-A-Shoreline started many years ago and has been remarkably effective in controlling both its population and spread. So, a big thank you to all you volunteers! We always need new and younger members to step in and become part of this program. You are welcome to contact me to sign up.

Please contact me with questions or observations. 715 462 4814 or relagett@centurytel.net



Summer Update from your Clean Boats Clean Waters Team

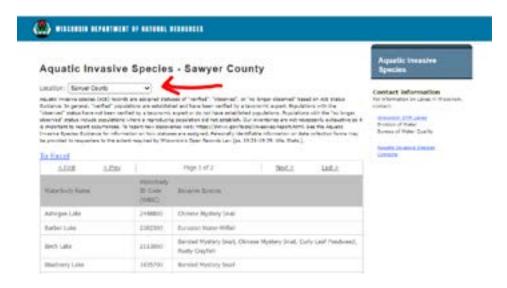
On the beautiful Fishing
Opener weekend, we kicked off
another season of our watercraft
education/inspection Clean Boats
Clean Waters (CBCW) program.
As you know this is our best effort
to keep further invasive species out
of the flowage as well as keep our
invasive species from spreading to
any other lakes.

For those interested in knowing more about Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the Chip (aka Lake Chippewa) or other lakes, follow this link Aquatic Invasive Species (wi.gov) and put in Sawyer County at the red arrow. You can also check out other Wisconsin counties and their lakes should you choose. All of us being educated on existing and potential threats helps us to do our part.

For those reading this as a paper copy, you can type the following address in your computer:

https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/AISByWaterbody.aspx





2022 Landing Blitz!

During the July fourth holiday weekend, the DNR provided us with a supply of free towels for our inspectors to hand out to users of the lake as part of the 2022 Landing Blitz. These towels made specifically for boaters, contain the **INSPECT**, **REMOVE**, **DRAIN** message to serve as a constant reminder for them to follow these guidelines. Our team handed out over 125 towels spreading the message and good will to boot! Following are the specific guidelines as published by the DNR.

TRANSPORT LAWS FOR BOATERS, ANGLERS, AND PADDLERS

Before launching and before leaving the landing, you must:

- INSPECT your boat, trailer, and equipment.
- REMOVE all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- DRAIN all water from boats, motors, and all equipment.
- NEVER MOVE plants or live fish away from a waterbody.
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash.
- BUY minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer. Reuse minnows only under the following conditions:
 - * You may take leftover minnows away from any state water and use them again on that same water.
 - * You may use leftover minnows on other waters only if no lake or river water, or other fish were added to their container.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer on the lake!

Your CBCW team

Membership Update

by Patty Swaffield, Membership Chair

Welcome New Members

Duane & Nancy Fier Larkin & Hugh Kramber Pablo & Renee Miranda

Contributor

Jim & Janet Evenstad Jon, Jason & Kevin Klohs Ted & Paulette Mathews

Steward

John & Dawn Bina Jeffrey & Julia Richards Peter & Alexis Suttle

Membership Levels

\$25: Individual/Property | \$26 to \$124: Contributor – newsletter recognition. | \$125 to \$999: Steward – newsletter recognition and a gift. | \$1000 and up: Lifetime Conservationist – newsletter recognition, a gift, and lifetime membership.

Nominating Board Members

We are looking to expand the Board. We welcome any member to nominate themselves at the Annual Meeting August 7th. Board members serve a 3 year term. We hold meetings monthly, but have skipped meetings during past winters. Recently we have conducted our meetings by using the Zoom application on-line as well as in-person. We expect to continue to use this tool in the future, but we are not sure exactly how it will be used in the long term.

There is much important work the Board of Directors do for the lake. We will surely benefit from the skills and knowledge you can bring to our organization. Please come join us and help make good things happen on the Big Chip.

Summer Drawdown

Xcel Energy recently provided information regarding what appears to be an earlier Chippewa Flowage summer drawdown then is typical. Here is information provided by Rob Olson from Xcel Energy Hydro Operations:

"I think the difference this year is that the Chippewa Flowage watershed has dried out a little quicker this summer than in more "normal" years. Inflows are greatly reduced with East Fork contributing 55 cfs and the West Fork at 35 cfs. Xcel Energy reduced the reservoir discharge to 500 cfs the last week in June and we may make further changes soon if the reservoir level continues to decrease at the present rate. It has been a dry summer thus far and a heavy rain over all of northern Wisconsin would be greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, the 10-day forecast looks limited for rainfall.

Electrical demand has not been out of the ordinary this summer. We always have a few weeks where the combination of heat and plant availability make our reserves a little tight, but we have not seen anything extreme at this point. We will be somewhat conservative with our discharge going forward as we have a long way to go until the end of end of September (summer)."

CHIPPEWA FLOWAGE AREA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION PO BOX 555 HAYWARD, WI 54843-0555

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

CFAPOA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, formed to generally promote, encourage and foster the interests of all property owners. Its major objectives are: to keep the Chippewa Flowage area clean and safe for all people; to protect the environment; to provide a forum for the collection and exchange of ideas; to support acquisition of land for protection and conservation; and to pursue any other lawful objectives that may benefit this pristine lake, its wetlands, wildlife and tributaries.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BOARD MEETINGS AND EVENTS

August 11, 2022 September 1, 2022 October 6, 2022

Board meetings are currently held at 6:00 p.m. at the Town of Hunter Hall as well as via teleconference.. Visitors are welcome to

Visitors are welcome to join. Contact Mike Gardner at mgardner@northflow.net

CFAPOA Board of Directors

CFAPOA Board of Directors			
	Mike Gardner, Chair	mgardner@northflow.net	- Maria
		#715-462-4771	4
	Brian Priester, Vice Chair	bpcfapoa@gmail.com	9
		#715-462-4346	
	Randy Hulke, Treasurer	rdhulke@comcast.net	
		#763-577-0805	
	Kristin Elmer, Secretary	ktans8@yahoo.com	
		608-332-5728	
	Dennis Clagett, Director	Rclagett@centurytel.net	
	Torry Wall Director	#715-462-4814	March 1988
	Terry Wall, Director	<u>Twall26@centurytel.net</u> #715-462-3867	
	Mark Zich, Director	markzich@rocketmail.com	
	Width Ziell, Bil Cetol	#715-214-5020	
	Doug Kurtzweil, Director	douglasjkurtzweil@gmail.com	
	Tony Schubert, Director	tony@contractexchange.net	
	Karl Kann, Director	kfk@hotmail.com	1000
	Terry Herder, Director	esoxboy69@gmail.com	1370
	Julie Thompson-Czub (Newslet	ter) juliet@bevcomm.net	
		#715-492-6704	

CFAPOA Newsletter Editor: Julie Thompson; Newsletter Advisors: CFAPOA Board Members; Newsletter Contributors: Friends, Directors and You!