

A Note From the President

Fall is officially here and the colors are beautiful on Big Sand Lake. It has been a busy year and we have worked on many projects. We continue to dedicate funds to the prevention of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the lake. We have increased hours of boat inspections at the public access. A car counter has been placed at the access and by using the data, inspections hours can be more efficiently used. Our lake monitors continue to gather data and do the water quality testing (Dan Dyre and Richard Sederstrom).

Membership continues to grow; we encourage everyone on the lake to become an active member of the Big Sand Lake Association. The board encourages everyone to stay connected via the Big Sand Lake website, bigsandlake.org. The information on the website continues to increase and it has a full directory of lake owners.

Thanks again to those of you who hosted a social this past summer. The socials are well attended and a great way to meet new people on the lake. If you are interested in hosting an event, contact Linda Van Bruggen, freddie54mn@yahoo.com.

The Lake Management Plan has been updated and will be posted on the website. The website has a plethora of information and members are encouraged to visit it often.

A big thank you to Marlene Fairchild, Cynthia Jones, Bob Klepinski, Terry Klepinski, Cindy Rehkamp, Heather Wittman and Todd Zimmerman who have served on the board. A big welcome to new board members: Bonnie Brand, Bill Eichten, Ellis Jones, Beth Krueger, Scott Preusse, and Aaron Roseth.

Have a great fall and winter season.

Candy Malm

Big Sand Lake Association President

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Fisheries Management:

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HISTORY OF BIG SAND LAKE'S WALLEYE SLOT LIMIT REGULATION

I'm awed seeing very old, turn of the century pictures with a day's catch of 30, 40, or 50 big fish. Through the years, this excess had a toll on fish populations. During the 1980's there was public concern expressed that Big Sand's walleye population was being overexploited. Working with the DNR, a new regulation for Big Sand Lake of 6 walleye per day with one over 20 inches was established in the spring of 1990. This varied from the state wide regulations of 6 per day with one over 24 inches.

For the next few years, from 1990 to 1992, the DNR measured the effectiveness of the regulation by doing concurrent studies that included annual mark and recapture population estimates, mortality estimates, age and growth estimates and creel surveys along with monitoring walleye spawning runs between Lake Emma and Big Sand. The DNR concluded that the "one-over" regulations alone were ineffective at limiting walleye harvest. The public indicated they wanted to continue trying to reduce the walleye population decrease. As a result, the DNR recommended an experimental slot limit. It would limit keeping walleye between 18 and 26 inches and allow one over 26 inches. This was proposed and accepted by the public and implemented in the spring of 1995.

In the fall of 1999, at a public meeting, the DNR explained their study findings which showed some improvements in the proportion of 18 to 26 inch fish in the population but little improvement in walleye larger than 26 inches that they had hoped for. The DNR speculated that the regulation had not had enough time to increase the larger fish and recommended continuing it for another 5 years.

More studies by the DNR were done in 2001 and 2002 along with a population assessment conducted in 2004. Those evaluations suggested that a decrease in growth and condition of the small and medium sized walleye had occurred. As a result, the DNR recommended modifying the regulation increasing the protected length range to 20 to 28 inches instead of 18 to 26 inches, which the public supported. In 2011/2012, the DNR changed the regulations from experimental to special classification which allowed the new regulation to continue without time limits.

A lot has changed since those turn of the century pictures were taken. We can't go back in time but we can take what resources and knowledge we have at the current time to care for our lake and its future.

I'd like to thank Doug Kingsley and other DNR Fisheries personnel for helping with this article.





Organizational Development & Communication:

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A CHILD WENT FORTH EVERY DAY

BY SPENCER BRAND

A child went forth every day,
He was shaped by the same force that shaped the sons before him,
The raw nature, sweet pine, warm sand, brown wood, prickly needles, and tranquil lake,
Shaped him like clay.

The sun colored lab liked the boy,
He threw a broken stick to the dog,
The dock where he stood put above the water, the rocks, the floating plants and the blooming flowers,
All was still for mere moments and made impressions in him,
They became him.

Growing grass from sweet sweat became him,
The rock laid, the harsh cleaners, the splinter covered hands, the wash and smoke
All a great grandfather's blessing,
Lunch of the age old kitchen, which belonged to a building that grew as the land had grown,
The wood floors, the quote covered tables, the fish and deer once prizes now lay dead on the walls,
The man who started it all hung above the fireplace,
The boy will become the man on the wall.

The boy meditates in the quiet of the cabin at the edge of the property,
On the rocks, over the lakes he looks,
Just as many had done before he,
He falls to his knees in the lake,
He cries for them, the new, the old, the ones who are gone, those still suffering, and those that were loved,
Most of all he cries for it could be gone,
But prays for it to stay,
It stays for a boy, who went forth every day,
And made it his.



Spencer Brand is the fourth generation of his family at Pine Cone Lodge. His favorite spot at Pine Cone is the last cabin named Birch on the property. He wrote this poem when he was in high school during a time when the future of Pine Cone was in question. Spencer today is a junior at the U of MN-Twin Cities in Trumpet Performance. At times during the summer, Spencer can be heard playing his trumpet at his favorite place at the edge of the property making it his.



Water Quality:

Richard Sederstrom

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DAYS OF CLARITY AT BIG SAND

After the rather green and cloudy appearance of Big Sand last summer, the clarity of the lake has returned to normal, plus a bit. Our average clarity for any year has been about 24 feet, determined by Secchi disc readings, for a couple of decades now. To illustrate the improvement, back in the 1970s the average was only about half that. This year we will average closer to 28 feet. The cooler summer is mostly responsible for the improvement. So we can rest fairly easy about the consistency of clarity, but not so easy that we don't want to pay close attention to any changes in the future. We have had no nitrogen or other chemical emergencies.

The clearest reading this summer was 44 feet. The clarity was entrancing, and the lake was so calm that Carol and I trolled slowly around the lake looking for fish. We went unarmed. We saw a school of walleye (ok, so maybe suckers) so confident of our placidity that they took all the time they wanted to circle and drift slowly out of sight. We saw bass, both large and small mouth. We saw a school of small crappies. We saw a snapping turtle resting, in ambush no doubt, on the bottom; some 100 feet farther on, we saw another—presumably an optimal distance to maintain tactful relations between natural belligerents. Everyone was behaving peacefully and decorously, even the humans on the boat, listening to Mendelssohn, as I recall.

On the subject of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS): since we are trying to prove a negative, it is not possible to state for sure that we have no individuals of any of these species in the lake. On the other hand, we can state that Carol and I and others have looked and have found no evidence of AIS, either along the shore or in the lake. So far. For the third summer of testing, we have found no evidence of zebra mussel veligers (A veliger is the teeny-weeny larval critter that floats free waiting for some hard surface to stick to, and grow and multiply from. Not “villager,” please). Boat inspectors at the access know just what to look for, and so far most boaters at the access have been reasonable, patient, and even friendly. There have been a few ornery exceptions, but they have been dealt with politely and efficiently.

The issue of AIS is not one that we can rest easy about. More and more lakes are infested with one little monster or another (zebra mussels being the most notorious), and it is possible, even probable, that Big Sand will be infected sometime in the future. There are those who find ways of bowing to what they regard as the inevitable. I have heard, and read, over the last few years, from people who have decided that, since we can't really do anything about the inevitable, we might as well ignore it—both a craven and an arrogant defeatism. They miss the point, which is to continue with our efforts vigorously and with the understanding that we can take joy in the sanity of not backing down when we have no need to.

Most of us are kind to the old lake. Most, maybe all, of the lake's residents understand and love what they have been given, and they are willing to give back. The same can be said for most of our visitors, whether vacationers or day visitors. In these people and in caring people around the state and beyond, is the hope that Big Sand, and other threatened lakes, will maintain the health and balance they have endowed us with for more than a century.

Newsletter

After considering the issue of publishing the Big Sand newsletter as an on-line newsletter, the BSLA board of directors voted to continue at this time with a bulk mailing to all Big Sand residents. Concerns about an on-line newsletter included failed email addresses, computer mail systems shifting group messages to junk mail and members who do not have access to internet either at home or at the lake. If your mailing address has changed in the last 6 months, please update the Big Sand directory list in the 'Members Area' at www.bigsandlake.org or contact us at info@bigsandlake.org or P.O. Box 181, Park Rapids, MN 56470.

If you know of other Big Sand residents who have recently passed away, please contact us at info@bigsandlake.org or send a note to BSLA PO Box 181, Park Rapids, MN 56470

In Memory CHARLES BRUGGEN

Charles Bruggen, 89, formerly of Riverside, IL., passed away in Fairfax, VA, on June 20, 2014, following a long struggle with alzheimers and heart disease. Chuck proudly served as a US Marine Corps officer and combat engineer during the Korean War. A graduate of the University of Illinois, he earned a Master's degree in civil engineering from Purdue. Chuck spent his professional career working for Anning-Johnson Company in Chicago. Chuck loved spending his summers at Big Sand Lake cheering on the Chicago Cubs, watching golf and enjoying time with his family.

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P.O. Box 181, Park Rapids, MN 56470



Calendar of Events 2015

Please check the bigsandlake.org website
for the 2015 Calendar of Events.

If you would like to be notified of winter events
or would like to host a social gathering in 2015,
please contact Linda Van Bruggen,
Freddie54mn@yahoo.com. Thanks!