

MLRA NEWSLETTER #119

JULY 2014

MESSAGE FROM MLRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It has been a while since our last newsletter. For this we apologize. As dues paying members you are entitled to know what your association is doing in your behalf. We are going to make our best effort to get our newsletter back on a regular quarterly schedule beginning with this issue.

At this point we currently have approximately 20 members who have not yet paid their dues for 2014. This is of concern to your board. We think this could simply be because you have not heard from us for a long time and are wondering if there is value in maintaining your association membership. Let us assure you there is. The simple fact is that an association such as ours is in a far better position than individual residents to develop and carry out plans for the betterment of Moon Lake and all its residents.

Here is an example of this point. We recently initiated contact with the Michigan DNR to encourage them to consider reinstating a fish planting program for our lake. The DNR made a decision in the fall of 2011 to discontinue planting trout for a number of reasons. One of the first things the DNR fisheries Manager said to us is that he was glad to hear we had an association, since it was much easier and more effective to work through an association than a few individuals who may not represent the thinking of a majority of residents. This is just one example of why we need as many residents as possible to join and support our association.

Other significant examples include the Water Quality Testing Program that we have participated in for 20 years and membership in ISCCW (invasive species) which includes a periodic survey of our lake for "bad weeds". In addition our association continues to build a fund to be used in the event we are invaded by Eurasian Milfoil. Without our association these programs would not exist, and would cease to exist if our association should dissolve.

To sum it up, we need you and we hope you conclude you need the MLRA - that membership represents a value to you and that you want to be a member.

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RA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (Tom Chase)

Your Board of Directors performs many "behind the scene" duties that contribute to the

health of our lake's eco-system. Many have additional duties that protect our lake's pristine waters through various water quality checks and monitoring the overall environment. This data is reported to the Michigan DNR for their state publications.

Your association provides a website (www.moonlake.org) reporting lake health, nature articles, and DNR assessments from our reporting, and our weather station! We also hope to have an analysis performed on the fish population (e.g. mercury content). The site is home to current and archived newsletters for your review, as well as recent and archived data produced through our weather station.

ANNUAL MEETING OF MLRA

The annual meeting of the MLRA is scheduled for Saturday, August 9, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The location this year is the Land O'Lakes Library. Please park in the back of the library and enter through the rear entrance (north side). The meeting is in the community room.

The agenda tentatively includes the following items: Approval of 2013 minutes, President's Report, Treasurer's Report, Membership Report, Election of board members and officers, Approval of dues for 2015, Water Quality Report, Water Level update, Website update, Loon Report, and Fish Planting Report. In addition, a representative from ISCCW will be present to review the latest news and information about the status of invasive species in our area lakes and the effort to control them.
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Please make an effort to attend - this is the most important meeting of the year for our association.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Our directory has not been updated for quite sometime. Please help us update our directory by completing the attached form (last page) and sending it to Jim Reiels. Thank you.

WEATHER DATA FROM MOON LAKE WEATHER STATION (Bob Turnquist)

A number of of our members are probably not aware that we have a rather sophisticated weather station located right next to Moon Lake (on the roof of Bob and Karen Turnquist's home - Really!). Bob has now been tracking data since November 2010 and you can access this data by going to our website and clicking on "weather". Here is a sample of the type of information available. This data gives you an

idea of how brutal the winter of 2013-14 actually was.

January, 2014 - 20 days with below zero temperatures. The coldest day was 28 degrees below zero, and there was only one day with a temperature above freezing (Jan. 12th).

February, 2014 - Also 20 days below zero and coldest temp at 28 degrees below zero, and only 3 days with a temp above zero.

THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 71 DAYS WITH BELOW ZERO TEMPERATURES THIS LAST WINTER!!

Total rainfall so far this spring and summer is as follows: April - 1.85" (avg. is 2.40"); May - 3.01" (avg. is 2.96"); June - 3.64" (avg. is 3.34"); July to date - 2.47"(avg. is 3.63").

ICE OVER AND ICE OUT INFORMATION and WATER QUALITY REPORT (Dale Sharpee)

ICE OVER AND ICE OUT INFORMATION - The association has been tracking the dates of Ice Over and Ice Out for several years. This history is indicated below (last 4 years only). Our last winter of 2013-14 was the clear winner with 167 days of ice cover, with the last ice disappearing on May 10. This is almost 5 and a half months of ice cover - I would hate to be a fish!

<u>Winter season</u> <u>Days of Ice Cover</u>	<u>Ice over Date</u>	<u>Ice Free Date</u>
2010-11 154	November 27	April 30
2011-12 133	November 30	March 22
2012-13 * 151	November 27	May 9
2013-14 167	November 24	May 10

* Lake reopened in Dec. for several days

WATER QUALITY REPORT - The results of the water quality testing program for 2013 will be reviewed at our annual meeting. Your association initiated testing of water quality in 1995 at the time we joined the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association (MLSA). The tests include water clarity (Secchi Disc), Phosphorus, and Chlorophyll - a. We send

samples to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The results of these tests have consistently shown that Moon Lake is a very healthy lake. However, if tests start to show deterioration of water quality, we are alerted and could take steps to reverse the trend through education and proper management of our own properties. Our water clarity readings so far this year are as follows:

Deepest reading in June this year - 27 feet (24 feet in 2013)

Average for 5 readings this year since June 1 - 24 feet (22.6 feet for 2013)

WATER LEVEL REPORT - (Dale Sharpee and Bob Turnquist)

The status of the lake water level will be reviewed in greater detail at our annual meeting. The water level increased approximately 15 inches from the time of ice over last fall to ice out this spring, and an additional 9 inches since ice out on May 10. The result of this increase is a reading on July 13 of 4.15 ft. on our lake level gauge. **THIS IS FIRST TIME SINCE 2006 THAT OUR LAKE LEVEL HAS MEASURED OVER 4 FEET!!!** We do not want to hear any complaints about not enough room on your beach (just kidding). We estimate that we are now only 16 inches from the historic high water mark. WOW - what an improvement.

TOM WHEELER STEPS DOWN FROM LOON RANGER POSITION

It was with great regret that the MLRA Board accepted Tom's, and his faithful assistant Linda, resignation for personal reasons as our MLRA Loon Ranger. Tom and Linda were dedicated to the duties of our MLRA "Loon Ranger" for many years. While performing those duties, Tom has not only kept our association updated on the loon chicks annual progress, but reported their observation results to the DNR. Tom has spent countless hours during our loon's summer residency checking on the progress of nest, eggs, chicks, and their fall departure. We are very fortunate for this dedication. Thanks, Tom, for your contributions to our association. We are grateful for the service you have provided to the overall health of our Moon Lake community.

WE now need a new Loon Ranger. If you think you may be interested in this position, please contact Tom Chase. Tom Wheeler has graciously offered to spend the time necessary to help train the new ranger on the administrative responsibilities of this program. Bob Turnquist has offered to take over the physical aspects of the program, including maintenance and placement of the nest, and placement and removal of the buoys. Thanks Bob!

LOON RANGER REPORT (Tom Wheeler and Bob Turnquist)

It has been a tough spring for the loons. They nested in May but were driven from their nest by Loon Black Flies. Apparently this phenomenon occurred with nearly every nesting pair in Vilas County, WI. The Loons nested again and sat on the nest for at least a couple of weeks. A loon was observed on the nest on June 11. With all the vegetation on the nest it is possible the nest could have been occupied even earlier. On June 26 the Loons were observed to be off the nest and have not returned. As expected, the Loons have not attempted to nest again so the buoys at the entrance to the west bay have been removed. No chicks this year!

REPORT ON FISH PLANTING PROGRAM (John Sick)

As reported in the "MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS", we are working with the DNR to hopefully reinstate a trout planting program for Moon Lake to begin in May, 2015. The DNR now requires the recording of water temperatures at least once a week for the month of July. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that water temperatures will successfully support trout, a cold water fish. John Sick and Dale Sharpee have taken on this task and so far have taken two sets of readings at 3 foot intervals from 3 feet to 36 feet. Trout prefer temperature ranges from 50 degrees to 68 degrees, and so far the readings indicate suitable temperatures for trout. The highest reading is 74 degrees at 3 feet and the lowest is 52 degrees at 36 feet. Temperatures start to drop dramatically at about 20 feet, which is the approximate thermocline level. The last reading at 20 feet was 63 degrees and 56 degrees at 27 feet. When the DNR discontinued the program in 2011, one of their concerns was the rather dramatic drop in water levels due to our prolonged drought. We have provided data about the recovery of water levels and the DNR has indicated this is a very positive factor. Our DNR representative attended our last board meeting and indicated that, if approved, the type of trout planted would most likely be Splake, which is a hybrid cross between a brook trout and lake trout. The fingerlings planted would be 7 to 9 inches in length. We should know by late fall whether or not the proposed program for our lake is approved - stay tuned.

The DNR has also recommended that we test a sampling of fish from Moon Lake for Mercury. Here is the email we received concerning this matter. "John - I found that we do not have mercury trend data for fish tissue from Moon Lake. If you and your colleagues could collect up to ten legal size and larger smallmouth bass, and freeze them, then we could get them to Crystal Falls fish shop and then down to the Lansing lab. Thank You." Obviously we cannot catch the required number of legal smallmouth at one time. Tom Chase has offered freezer space until we accumulate the 10 fish. If you catch a legal smallmouth and want to donate it, freeze it immediately and then take it to Tom for storage. I hate to lose 10 legal sized smallmouth from our lake, but if we consume fish caught in our lake, it is critical to know that it is safe for us.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

PORCUPINE MOUNTAIN MUSIC FESTIVAL - Every year a very popular music festival is held at the Porcupine Mountain State Park. The festival features a variety of music by bands from across the US and Canada. It is 3 days of great music from August 22 - 24. You have the option of attending separate days or all three days. Tickets to the festival are \$90 for a 3 day pass or \$35 for a one day pass. For those purchasing tickets by phone or internet, a senior discount is available. The number to call to book by phone is 906-884-7663. This festival has been attended by the Turnquists and they give it a big thumbs up rating.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM MLRA ASSOCIATION MEMBERS - If you have comments, concerns, suggestions, or questions about anything appearing in this newsletter, please feel free to contact us by e-mail at jsick@cfl.rr.com. We also encourage you to visit our website at www.moonlake.org. Please enjoy the rest of your summer and above all stay well.

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