



Fall, 2021

www.mybirchlake.org

*Dedicated to the Preservation and Improvement
Of Birch Lake and It's Environment*

From the President –

As 2021 comes to a close, I hope you all had a wonderful year and were able to enjoy some much-deserved relaxation at your lake! Since this will be our last newsletter of the year, I want to wish you all a wonderful upcoming holiday season. I know it is still a challenging time for many and I sincerely hope you are all happy and healthy.

Thank you for continuing to support the Birch Lake Association! This year has not been without its challenges, but the BLA remains strong and focused on protecting your lake. We have kept watch over our precious lakes, monitoring the water quality, maintaining the safety buoys, advocating for more protections, and diligently testing for aquatic invasive species. We successfully adjusted to new social requirements, holding board meetings virtually and the Annual Meeting outdoors. Importantly, membership, although it has fallen, remains strong with more than 170 individual memberships and 50 businesses!!

I am optimistic that 2022 is going to be a great year for our association. Beyond our ongoing work, a couple of initiatives we are focusing on for the upcoming year are shoreline restoration, a loon restoration program, Get the Lead Out Initiative, and undeveloped land management. If any of these topics sparks your interest, please reach out to BLA through our website, or feel free to contact me directly.

As always, I am grateful to have the privilege of working with a fantastic Board that is fun and remarkably hard-working. Every single Board member contributes in many ways to the success of the BLA. I wanted to give a special “thank you” to Jim Madland. In his quiet and unassuming manner, he is always available to lend a hand, and importantly, he has helped amass a wealth of water quality data over many, many years. Several other people contribute to this effort, thank you as well! Jim has been the reliable cornerstone in this ongoing effort. The *data collected is critical* not just to monitor changes in our lake, but also when we apply for grants, etc. and separates us from most other lake associations. Thank you, Jim!!!

As always, please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. Stay healthy and I hope I see you on the lake,
Paul Blomgren pmbloomgren@yahoo.com
President, Birch Lake Association



2022 Dates to Know



January 14 to 16 -- Back to Hack
Feb 27 – End of Bass/Walleye/Northern season
Feb 28 – All ice shelters must be removed
May 14 -- MN Fishing opener (Walleye, Northern)
May 29 – Bass Opener
July 8 to 13 – Sweetheart Days
Fireworks 7/9 at dusk



July 23– TENTATIVE BLA Membership Meeting
September 23-25, 2022 – Chainsaw Event
For information about weekly happenings such as Taco night, meat raffles and trivia nights check out the events section on the Hackensack Chamber website.
<http://www.hackensackchamber.com/>
<https://www.northwoodsartscouncil.org/lakesideconcerts>

Stay Safe – Stay Healthy!

Birch Lake Association Website
<http://www.mybirchlake.org>

Our association website is a wealth of information, including area events, information about lakeshore management, membership and Birch Lake Gear!

You can also keep track of lake happenings on our Facebook page –
www.facebook.com/mybirchlake/

Another resource for area happenings is the Hackensack Chamber Website
www.hackensackchamber.com

BLA is a member of **Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates:**
<http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org/>



Thanks to Jerry Eklund Photography for this great image!

Loons 2021

Jackie Schumacher



The ice went off Birch Lake on April 7th, 2021, loons were seen on the lake even before the ice was completely off the lake. Thank you to Mark and Susan Larison, who placed the platform by the big island on April 11.

On May 2 a pair of loons were seen near the platform and observed in that area often after that. By June 1st there were at least 3 active nests. Natural nests on the little island and in the back of the north bay by Bay View Resort and the platform by the big island.

The first chick was observed on June 3, a chick (#1) and an adult swimming near the artificial platform, while another adult remained on the platform. Although the platform remained active that chick was only seen once. June 23 another young chick (#2) was observed with 2 adults. After that point none of the nests seemed to be active. On July 23 a third new chick (#3) was observed! Both #2 and #3 were observed and healthy and growing until mid-September. After that I was only able to observe one chick (#3) anytime we were out. It was always near an adult. Chick #2 could have moved to another area of the lake, left the lake early or possibly was lost to predation. There often was a single adult loon in the area where the chick #2 was last observed.

On October 12, both juvenile loons were observed with no adults nearby. Typically, the adult loons leave Birch Lake in early October and the juveniles, hatched this season, leave 3 or 4 weeks later. It looks to me like Birch Lake produced 2 healthy loons this year!

We are hoping to participate in the Minnesota Loon Restoration Program over the next few years.



If you are interested in being a loon observer, please contact Jackie Schumacher at jrschu49@gmail.com. We would especially like to have someone from Little Birch and Poquet!



with this event since the Lakeside Concert was moved into the Hackensack Community Building. Concert goers brought their lawn chairs and spread out inside to enjoy the music, while sipping their favorite craft beer/soft drink, both available from Rendezvous Brewery.

Lakeside Concert Series, the newly added weekly concerts spearheaded by Northwoods Arts Council, made an immense impression, both economically and civically, in Hackensack this summer. Even in the wake of ongoing Covid cases, this 26-year-old non-profit organization continued to stay true to its mission of “Bringing the Arts to Life” in the north woods. The response from the community has been astonishing. These regularly scheduled concerts resulted with the community and businesses experiencing different genres of live music every Friday afternoon from 5 PM-7 PM all while enjoying the idyllic setting of being next to the shores of Birch Lake. Josh Duffee returned as well, but this time as a quartet. It was great that so many attendees experienced this type of music for the first time. Save the Date flyers were distributed as a reminder that the usual two-day jazz concerts, with the full Josh Duffee big band orchestra, will return July 8th and 9th in 2022. Grab your tickets when they become available because they sell out fast.

Only one Lakeside Concert was postponed due to inclement weather, which was rescheduled for October 9th, at which time “The Occasionals” were featured as the last concert of the season, Rain or Shine. The supportive Hackensack City Council graciously granted the NAC’s request to put “PLAN B” into effect. Inclement weather did not interfere

Northwoods Arts Council looks forward to bringing the concerts back again in 2022. It is clear these concerts are the perfect venue for creating community, lifting spirits, and bringing people together in the newly renovated lakeside business area in Hackensack. Thank you again to all the organizations that provided financial support to make this project happen: Five Wings Arts Council, Sourcewell, Itasca Mantrap, HLACF and the Hackensack Lions Club. See you June 17th for the kickoff of the 2022 season.



The Martin House and the Garden

In early July, the martin house at the city dock had 95 eggs. When Gary Martin cleaned them out this fall, there were no unhatched eggs and no fledgling carcasses! That means we fledged about 100 healthy purple martins again this year. That’s a very healthy colony! After last year’s renovation of the gardens, things are looking very nice there as well.

HISTORY OF THE BIRCH LAKE REARING POND ASSOCIATION 1960 TO 1975

(Account by Alicemae and William Bradley, Bradley's Resort reprinted from *Celebrating 100 Years*)



“In 1960, several resort owners on Birch Lake, Cass County, MN met to discuss ways to maintain the good fishing that was available in Birch Lake. Several representatives went to the Department of Natural Resources to discuss this issue with the conservation officers. One of the first steps to be taken was for the DNR to place nets in the lake to take fish counts. After this was completed, it was suggested that the association set up rearing ponds to be stocked with walleye fry in the spring by the DNR and to harvest the fingerlings (DNR would assist with the harvest) in the fall and transfer them to Birch Lake.

The Birch Lake Rearing Pond Association was therefore formed in 1960. Members were Hank Henderson (Henderson's Resort); Dr. Roy Swanson (Swanson's Resort); John Greer (Greer's Resort); Vern and Newman Nies (Nies Resort); William Bradley (Bradley's Resort); Verne Garoutte (Bay View Resort); Lloyd Stetzer (Camp Mark); Norbert Thill (Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort); Jack Delbridge (Lighthouse Point Resort) and Robert Mayer (Shady Shores Resort).

This was not a social organization but an association of men who worked to maintain and improve Birch Lake.

The first rearing pond developed was west of Fred Martin's farm and south. This was just a small pond but was approved by the DNR to be suitable as a rearing pond. When they returned in the fall to seine the pond, they found it was too weedy and they were unable to retrieve many fingerlings.

The next rearing pond was to the south of four corners and then to the east. This was a small pond also, but the DNR thought it would be suitable if they could pump water into it all summer from a nearby small lake. This meant the

purchase of a pump and other equipment to do this—the first equipment purchase for the association. This pond proved quite successful, and they were able to produce thousands of fingerlings to stock Birch Lake.

The association decided they needed a more controlled method of growing walleye fingerlings for stocking. At this time they dug a pond at Earl Farmer's farm near Poquet Lake. Mr. Farmer would feed the fry. They were able to aerate the pond; and a light was hung over the pond at night to draw more insects to feed the fry.

This worked out very well. When the DNR checked the pond in early July of that year, they reported LOTS of walleyes and thought this method was very successful. When they seined the pond in late August or September, they were disappointed in the production. The DNR said walleye are cannibalistic and the larger females ate the smaller males, so another method was decided on.

The following year the men dug a second pond on Mr. Farmer's farm adjacent to the first pond. This year the rearing pond was seined in early July and the larger walleye were taken out of the first pond and placed in the second pond. Thus, they had a very large supply of walleye fingerlings to be placed in Birch Lake that year.

The study of the lake, which was done by the DNR during that period, showed the lake to be very healthy. Walter Gulbranson of the DNR said he didn't know how anyone caught any walleyes out of the lake as there was so much feed in the lake.

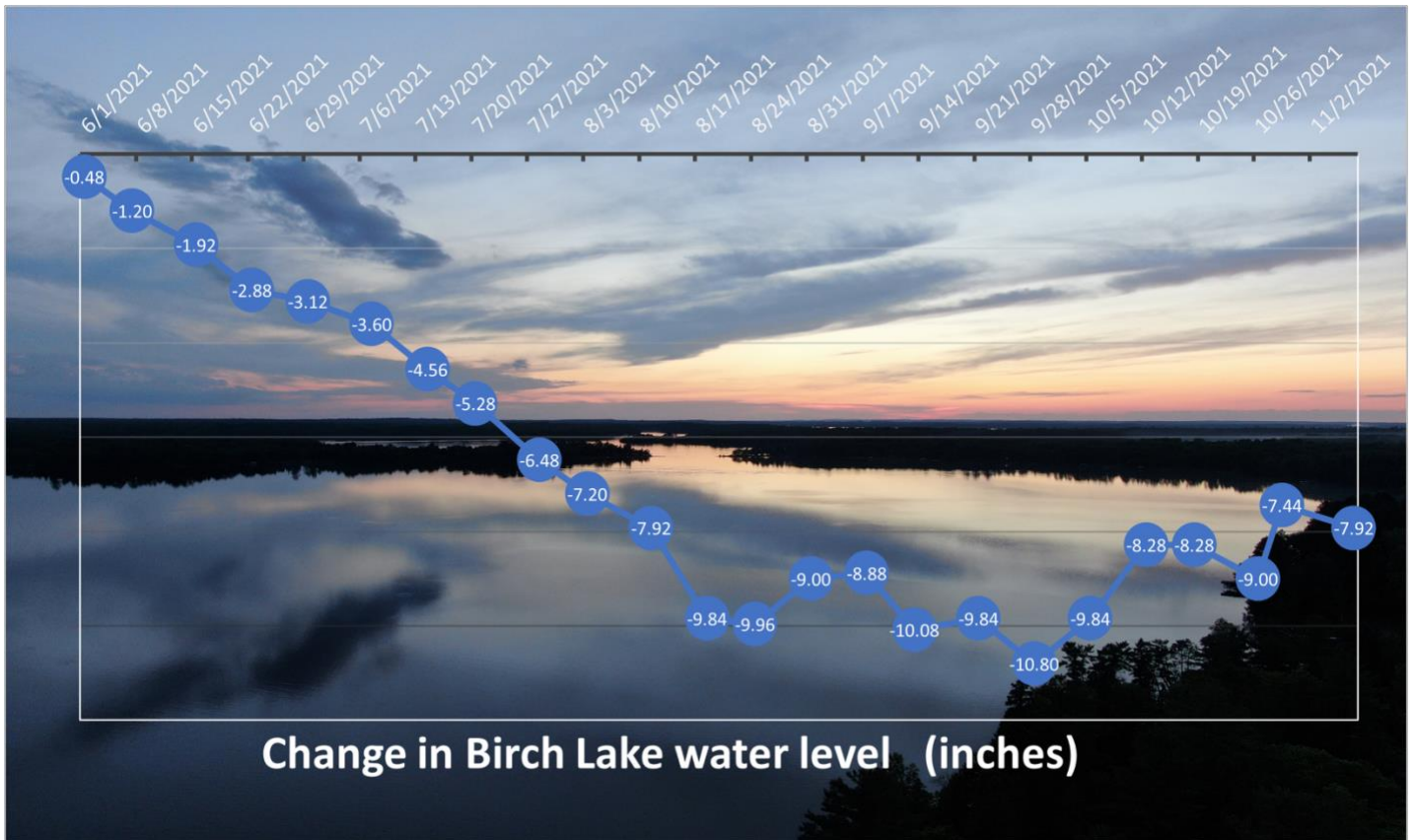
This last pond was maintained for several years. But after it was retired, the DNR placed fry directly into Birch Lake under the supervision of the Birch Lake Rearing Pond members.

There is not written record of the exact dates that each pond was in use. The association existed from 1960 to 1975 and then fell out of existence because many of the resorts had been sold wither to a single owner or in some cases, numerous individual owners. Some just went out of business as resorts and those remaining became weary of the amount of work it required to maintain the ponds and seine the without the help of private owners of lakeshore.”

The Birch Lake Association has always been a work organization. In 1982 the Association was reorganized when resorters became concerned about lakeshore development, increased recreational use and fishing pressure issues. The organizational meeting was held at the home of Dave and Sharon Williams in the fall of 1981 and the first general meeting was held the following year.

Photo:

<https://www.lakesnwoods.com/HackensackGallery.htm>



Change in Birch Lake water level (inches)

A huge *Thank You* to Fred Karlisch for volunteering to officially monitor Birch Lake’s water level. As you can see, this year’s drought was significant!

AIS Report from Mark Larison

Birch Lake is still AIS-pristine. None of these invaders exist in our lake: Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Milfoil, Starry Stonewort, but all of these can be found in lakes within 10 miles from Birch Lake.

This summer, Starry Stonewort was detected in Leech Lake. It has now contaminated a 5-acre portion of Steamboat Bay. Starry Stonewort has never been eradicated from any U.S. Lake, and the treatment is careful hand-picking which can help reduce the risk of spreading further.

The best we can do now is PREVENT contamination and follow Minnesota laws to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species:

- **Clean** aquatic plants and animals from watercraft.
- **Drain** all water by removing drain plugs and keep drain plugs out while transporting watercraft.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash.

Check out Mark’s report “AIS Survey at Birch Lake” on our website – <https://www.mybirchlake.org/>

Additional information regarding our lake quality can be found on the following websites:

- <https://www.rmbel.info/lakes/>
- <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water>
- <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/surface-water/impairment/11-0412-00>

We currently have 172 Family or Individuals, 48 Business memberships. Your new Birch Lake Association booklet should be out to you soon.

BLA Officers 2020

Paul Blomgren, President
 Gary Martin, Vice President
 Steve Hanneman, Secretary
 Tim FunkMeyer, Treasurers

BLA Board Members

Sue Holthaus (Website)
 Shirley Johnson
 Mary Knautz
 Gary Krimmel
 Mark Larison (AIS)

Jim Madland (Water Quality)
 Betty Martin
 Jackie Schumacher (Newsletter)
 Rick Zaske (Water Quality)

Board Contact mybirchlake@gmail.com



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Visit us at: www.mybirchlake.org

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*And all at
once,
summer
collapsed
into fall.
Oscar Wilde*