



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

From the President –



A belated happy New Year to everyone! I hope your holidays were filled with family and fun. As I look back on 2017, which passed far too quickly, I am pleased by what I see. Birch Lake Association had a great year. We

ushered our precious lake through another year through diligent protection and monitoring. The Association membership grew and remains on solid financial footing. I sincerely hope that everyone was able to enjoy the lake and found new comradery in the lake community!!

As I look forward to another year, I am truly energized by the opportunities I see in front of us to continue to flourish as a community. Make no mistake, I am also wary of the challenges we face. Consider this quote from the Aquatic Invaders Summit 2018 about the newest threat to Minnesota lakes, Starry stonewort. "Starry stonewort can overtake spawning beds, make boat navigation almost impossible and is so aggressive it can even crowd out Eurasian watermilfoil." Now that is sobering.

The Association's top priority is to protect Birch and Poquet Lakes and our main threat remains aquatic invasive species. The Board will continue to work on our own and with the MN DNR to minimize the chance of our lakes being infested. But, we all play a part as lake property and business owners. If you see something endangering our lakes, speak up, it is your lake too!

As you will see in this newsletter, we had a productive meeting with DNR Fisheries regarding walleye stocking in Birch Lake. Please take the time

to read the recap and the suggestions about what we can each do to help improve the fishing in our lake.

Enjoy the rest of winter, and I hope to see you on the lake or around town!!

Paul Blomgren

President, Birch Lake Association



Back to Hack fireworks and bonfire



Winning Snowsculpture by the Lighthouse Church

2018 Upcoming Events

Feb 28, 2018: Your fishing license expires! Time to buy a new one for 2018

March 5, 2018 – Fish Houses must be removed

May 12, 2018 – Fishing Opener – Walleye, northern pike (Catch and Release for Bass)

May 26 – Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass Opener

July 4 – BLA Boat Parade – *SUPER HEROS!*



July 6-11 Sweetheart Days (fireworks date TBA)

July 28 – BLA Annual Meeting (location to be announced)

5 PM Social Hour. 5:30 PM Meeting

August 11 – Northwoods Arts Council Art & Book Fair

September 21-23 - Chainsaw Festival

September 13-29 - Fall Has It All!

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!

Be sure to visit regularly.

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/>

Back to Hack 2018



This years Medallion Winners! Birch Lake Assn members, Joyce Komorouski, Hailey Detlefsen, Rick & Diane Zaske.

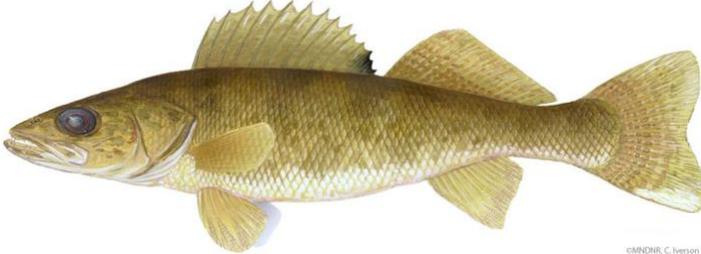


Kids playing on the chunks of ice that were cut out for the Pamda Plunge



Dog sled racing on Birch Lake

DNR Walleye Stocking Birch Lake 2018



In October 2017, it came to the attention of the board that the DNR walleye stocking in Birch Lake for 2018 and going forward would be at lower levels than previous years. The Board requested a meeting with the DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor to discuss this important topic. On December 27th, six Birch Lake Association (BLA) Board Members and two business BLA members met with the DNR for an hour and a half. There were two DNR representatives from the Division of Fish and Wildlife in attendance, Doug Schultz – Area Supervisor-Fisheries and Bill Evarts – NR Fisheries Specialist.

BLA members expressed concern that a decrease in the volume of stocking would hurt the quality of walleye fishing in Birch Lake. We voiced our personal concerns as well as those of membership. The Board members relayed how important the walleye fishing in Birch Lake is to us personally as well as to the Association members we represent. The business members explained how critical quality walleye fishing was to their own businesses and to the broader business environment in the entire Hackensack area.

The DNR representatives listened closely to our concerns and assured us that their first priority was to maintain the quality of Birch Lake's fishery, and to try to improve it. They shared with us a 5 page data analysis of Birch Lake, and walked us through the information. The report can be found on our website at: www.mybirchlake.org.

A brief summary of the study: The DNR significantly increased the amount of stocking done in Birch Lake, and many other Minnesota lakes in 2001. They conducted a state-wide survey of lakes in 2016 to evaluate the impact of the increased stocking. For Birch Lake, they concluded that the **15 years** of increased stocking had not resulted in an increase in the population of walleye in the lake. This information can be found on the 4th page of the DNR data package, in the lower graph titled "Year Class Catch Rate (Age 1-6)". The graph illustrates the netting survey results (GN CPUE = gill net catch per unit of effort) from 1985 to 2012. It shows an average of 0.4 walleye per net between 1987 and 2000, and the same average of 0.4 walleye per net from 2001 – 2012.

We had a very good discussion regarding the results and possible reasons for the stagnant walleye population, Doug Schultz offered several important observations. He suggested that a sharp decline in the perch population and

an increase in the population of smaller northern pike has had a detrimental effect on the walleye population. Fewer perch for food causes the increasingly abundant northern pike to feed on walleye as an alternative, which reduces the fingerling walleye population. This information can be seen on the 5th page of the data package titled "Species Trends and Interactions". You can also find historical netting data in the Lakefinder section of the DNR website at: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/showreport.html?do_wnum=11041200

What can you do: Here are some actions we can take to improve the walleye fishing on Birch Lake, and *look for more details on these suggestions in the near future on our website:*

- **First**, increase natural lakeshore to boost the perch population. To increase the perch population, BLA members need to maintain and increase perch spawning habitat. Perch need **vertical structure** to drape their eggs. This is natural shoreline that includes downed trees, bull rushes and cat tails.
- **Second**, to reduce the population of smaller northern pike fishermen should take out northern pike that are smaller than 25" in length, while returning larger northern pike to the lake. This will relieve the pressure on smaller walleye as food and allow more walleye fingerling to grow to mature adults.

The DNR will continue to evaluate Birch Lake fishery and are scheduled to conduct a netting survey in August 2018. The Birch Lake Association Board will continue to closely monitor the situation and relay any important developments as they arise. The DNR Fisheries has an open door policy and welcomes members to ask questions or join them to observe netting or stocking activities. The BLA Board will continue to work closely with the DNR to represent the interests of our lake and our members.



A special thank you to Rick Zaske for raising this issue and for his continued involvement with the DNR representing BLA!!

Concordia Lake Association Study Confirms - Lake Associations Make Huge Contributions to Lakes

Published by Jeff Forester, 10/02/2017

Lake Associations are the largest (more than 200K), most generous (\$6.2 million annually), most dedicated (1.2 million volunteer hours annually) conservation group in Minnesota. But these are just some of the astonishing findings of the [Concordia Lake Association Study](#). Read the full report here: [Minnesota's Lake Associations: Who They Are and What They Do](#)



In the Jan 26, 2018 issue of *Outdoor News, MN*, Jeff published a long and interesting commentary on Lake Associations in MN. In it he talks about the many contributions lake associations make to the health of the environment as well as the economy of surrounding areas. A partial list of activities includes:

- Secchi disc reading, water chemistry analysis
- Water fowl counts
- Volunteer at boat launches for AIS education
- Navigational buoys
- Clean up after ice fishing
- Partner with Watershed district to promote shoreline restoration
- Invite speakers to meetings to talk about issues surrounding the lakes

Here are a few excerpts from the article.

“There is a spirit of altruism behind much of their work, but it is an altruism based in self-interest. These people love the lake. They have invested both financially and emotionally in it. Most have been at any given lake place an average of 37 years and it is where core memories of their families are based.

Many of them are anglers. According to a phone survey conducted in 2016 for Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates by Striezeck Research, about 62 percent of lake home and cabin owners buy a fishing license each year. In addition, they sell an average of four fishing licenses per property to friends and family that come up to the lake to vacation. With about 220,000 lake home and cabins in Minnesota, that means this group of people is responsible for about half the licenses sold in Minnesota each year.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates is sponsoring the third annual Aquatic Invasive Species Summit at the Earle Brown Center on Feb28-March 1.

<http://aisummit3.mnlakesandrivers.org/>

If you are interested in attending, please contact the BLA Board at mybirchlake@gmail.com
The board would like to reimburse someone to get the information and share it with us.



Neighborhood Watch –

As the seasons change, many of us will not be back at our cabins until the ice melts. Security is always a concern when we're gone for a long time. We count on each other to keep our eyes open for suspicious activity and report those things to the Cass County Sheriff's office. When spring comes, you and your "lake neighbors" might want to consider setting up a Neighborhood Watch area. Information about Neighborhood Watch is available through the Cass County sheriff's office. It can be as simple as getting together once or twice a year, buying a couple of signs and putting together an email list or phone tree.



Scholarships are Available for Deep Portage Summer Camps! Please Apply!!

Do you know some youngsters that would like to go to camp? Each year the Birch Lake Association offers two scholarships to Deep Portage summer camps for children or relatives of BLA members.



Information of the camps is available on the Deep Portage website <http://deep-portage.org/>

or by contacting Deep Portage directly:

By mail at

2179 Nature Center Drive NW, Hackensack, MN 56452

Phone: 218-682-2325 Email: portage@uslink.net

The camp registration form is available at: [Summer Camp Registration](#)

To apply for a BLA Scholarship, please have the student submit a short handwritten letter telling which camp they would like to attend and why, as well as their connection to Birch lake.

Send the letter to BLA, PO Box 125, Hackensack, MN 56452. Letters should be postmarked by May 1, 2018 to be considered. If you have questions regarding the scholarship process, please email Diane at: hackensackcabin@yahoo.com

Become A New Member Or Renew Your Membership

After a busy and productive Membership Drive, the Membership Booklet has been printed and will be mailed to you.

Do you have a new neighbor at the lake? Be sure to tell them about the Lake Association!

Application is available on the website ([Click Here](#)), or from any board member.

Payment is also accepted on the website using PayPal.

The BLA represents you and your interests, with a variety of organizations and committees that are concerned with the quality of our lakes and our watershed. Membership includes a newsletter, website and social media to keep you and non-members informed of lake related issues

Membership is open to everyone. Many relatives and friends of lake residents, as well as local businesses, belong to the Association. The Organization encompasses Birch and Poquet Lakes.

To keep our costs down, we only collect membership dues and print our membership directory in ODD numbered years – like 2017! *The Birch Lake Association is a 501-C4 non-profit; as such dues are not tax deductible.*

Membership Book Corrections:

Arlene Guigare – new home address
6315 55th Avenue N #225
Crystal, MN55428

BLA Officers 2017-2019

Paul Blomgren, President
Gary Martin, Vice President
Barb Harrington, Secretary
Shirley Johnson, Treasurer

Contact Information

Mybirchlake@gmail.com

BLA Board Members

Jim Chmielewski
Denny Harnstrom
Sue Holthaus (Website)
Mary Knautz
Gary Krimmel
Jim Madland (Water Quality)
Betty Martin
Mark Novotny (Business)
Jackie Schumacher (Newsletter)
Rick Zaske (Water Quality)



Box 125, Hackensack, MN 56452
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Visit us at: www.mybirchlake.org

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