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1) MFA's 2021 Annual Meeting

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the MFA's Annual Meeting on its traditional date, Saturday, June 12th. Social time will begin at 8:30 am with the meeting starting at 9:00am. The location for this meeting is Wascott Town Hall (Co.Hwy. T and US 53). Social distancing and mask wearing are encouraged.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Acceptance of 2020 annual meeting minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Membership update
- AIS Grant review
- Clean Boats/Clean Waters Grant
- Fishsticks Grant
- Zebra mussel update and report on decontamination station plan
- Other business

2) Notes from the MFA President

Welcome to the spring Minong Flowage Association (MFA) newsletter. Whether you are new to the Flowage or have been here for years, you share in the joys of life on the Flowage. I hope you have joined the MFA. If you haven't there is information in this newsletter and on our website (minongflowage.org). We are working on behalf of you and the wellbeing of the Minong Flowage. Please attend the MFA annual meeting on June 12. More information later in this newsletter.

The Board of the MFA has many exciting plans in store for the coming year. You can read about many of the plans in this newsletter. But I want to highlight a few.

First, the MFA was successful in getting three grants from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Most notably, we received a large grant for the control of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Did you know we have Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Curlyleaf Pondweed in the Flowage? Years of effort to control their spread have been largely successful. But, once you have it in your lake it is nearly impossible to get rid of. Only one careless boater could re-introduce an invasive species to our beloved body of water. In addition to invaders mentioned above, there is a concern that Zebra Mussels could be knocking on our doorstep. They are in the McKenzie chain of lakes just to our south. With no known predators they can quickly overwhelm a lake, cleaning the water of important fish nutrients and attaching themselves to docks, rafts, etc. A decontamination station is on the drawing board which will allow boaters a quick and effective means to clean off boats and trailers. Look for more information coming soon.

In addition to the AIS grant, the MFA has again received a “clean boats/clean waters” grant. We contract with Boy Scout troops to check boats entering and leaving the Flowage. Please cooperate with boat checkers when you encounter them at the DNR landing and county park. And, to help our fish habitat we received a “fish sticks” grant for the construction of fish sticks along the shoreline. Fish sticks are tree branches secured underwater and to the shore that provide habitat for minnows and other food sources. You will find more information about them in this and future newsletters. If interested, you may build them for your shoreline following certain guidelines. We have the knowhow and will help you with your project.

No spring newsletter would be complete without a look ahead to the coming year. Did you know that by the end of the year the number of campsites with lake access and rental homes will outnumber cabins on the Flowage? The impact of this is more people sharing the use of the Flowage, many of whom are short time users. How will that impact use of the Flowage? Certainly, it will be a busier place. With more people comes not only more use but more misuse. The Board has several initiatives to respond this increasing usage, including encouraging “permanent” campers to join the MFA.

We all need to work together to enjoy and preserve our “Flowage experiences.” Tread lightly on the islands and shoreline. And, obey slow wake zones keeping 100 feet from docks and boat lifts. You can help by being good stewards, by joining the MFA and by encouraging your friends and neighbors to be good citizens of the Flowage. Have a safe and happy summer. See you on the water.

Dave Perrin
President, MFA

3) New Aquatic Invasive Species – Population Control Grant Awarded!

Back in November of 2020, the Minong Flowage Association (MFA), working with Lake Education and Planning Services (LEAPS), submitted a grant request to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for funding to support various activities related to the management of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) in the Minong Flowage. That grant request, for a total of \$86,901.00 over three years, was awarded! Of course, any grant funding awarded by the State comes with a requirement for Sponsor match. For this new project the Minong Flowage Association and its partners need to come up with \$28,494.00 worth of volunteer time, donated services like boat use, partner donations, and cash over the next three years.

The most important activities to be completed under this new grant include a winter drawdown of 4 to 5-ft over the 2021-22 winter season; whole-lake, aquatic plant and EWM surveying before and after the winter drawdown; monitoring of invasive species, water quality, and lake level; and partner and public information and involvement in EWM management/winter drawdown planning.

First documented in the Minong Flowage between 2002 and 2005, EWM is a non-native, invasive, aquatic plant species that grows dense and spreads rapidly - degrading habitat, causing navigation issues, and creating nuisance level mats of surface vegetation. Between then and now, various management activities including physical removal, diver-aided harvest, application of herbicides, biological controls, and drawdown have been used to manage the invader in the Minong Flowage. In late August of 2020, EWM covered over 112 acres or 7.17% of the Minong Flowage's surface area. This was an increase of more than 25 acres from 2019, but still less than what it was in 2018 (142 acres), and way less than what it was at its height in 2008 (335 acres).

Management planning documents approved by the WDNR determine when EWM can be managed and what method of management can be used. EWM was last managed in the Minong Flowage in 2016 when about 25 acres were chemically treated near the WDNR boat landing. At present, the currently approved management method for the Minong Flowage is a limited winter drawdown of the water level to expose rooted EWM to freezing temperatures.

The last time a drawdown of the water level was implemented (in 2013) it was done in order to make repairs on the dam, not to control EWM. At that time the water level was drawn down 5.5 feet beginning in the spring of 2013, and due to issues with the dam repair project, lasted until February/March of 2014. While there were several adverse impacts on the Minong Flowage from that extended drawdown, the "over-winter" portion was very successful at controlling EWM. Current planning for a winter drawdown, only involves the winter months. Monitoring projects have been put in place to better assess any adverse impacts that might occur within the Minong Flowage or connected waters, though fewer are anticipated with the shortened period of drawdown.

The MFA is partnering with the WDNR, Washburn and Douglas Counties, Town of Minong, LEAPS, the National Park Service, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Cranberry Lake Association, Renewable World Energies, and others to implement this winter drawdown. Please stay tuned for your opportunities to ask questions and provide input.

Dave Blumer, Consultant
Lake Education and Planning Services, LLC

4) Clean Boats / Clean Waters.

The Clean Boats/Clean Waters program is a critical factor in our AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) battle. Again, this year, we are partnering with the Boy Scouts of America's Troop #97 to monitor the "DNR boat landing" (on East Flowage Road). The Minong Town Lakes Committee will manage the monitoring of the Totagatic Campground boat landing.

5) MFA Membership

Please consider joining the MFA or renewing your membership if you have not done so for this year. Our continued strength is in the size of our organization. Your dues assist in the annual costs of the lake management activities, newsletters, maintaining our website and our email system that is not covered through grants. Membership keeps you up to date on important activities affecting the lake. The Association also advocates through our lake management plan, ways to improve and maintain the lake's ecosystem, water quality and fishery management.

Membership is only \$25 per year, or \$100 for 5 years. You can renew online via our website using PayPal, or send a check to the Minong Flowage Association, P.O. Box 167, Minong, WI 54859.

Contact Karen Turnquist for your current dues' status. (612/708-7159) MinongFlowage@Gmail.com

6) Fishsticks Grant Update

Our \$950 grant application for continued support of our efforts to replace natural fish habitat was approved! These funds will be used to foster additional Fish-Sticks location on the Minong Flowage. One location is ear-marked for installation next winter and we hope to identify additional sites. If all goes as expected, we intend to expand this effort on a larger scale throughout the lake. Specific details will be presented at the Annual Meeting. For more information on the DNR's Fish-Sticks program go to: [Fish sticks: Improving lake habitat | Wisconsin DNR](#)

7) Zebra Mussel Update and Decontamination Stations

The MFA is very concerned with Invasive Species. Along with Eurasian Milfoil, we are taking steps to investigate potential infestation by Zebra Mussels.

The first step is to install Zebra Mussel Collection Plates in several locations around the Flowage. These plates will be monitored on a regular timetable to see if any Zebra Mussels are growing on the plates. This will identify if we do have Zebra Mussels, where they are on the Flowage, and if they are a threat.

In addition, the MFA, with the help of Washburn County, is looking into installing a Zebra Mussel Decontamination Station at the County Park. This would include signage explaining the threat of Zebra Mussels along with instructions and equipment for decontaminating your watercraft.

In the meantime, we are encouraging property owners and boaters to be aware of invasive species and to take precautions by cleaning boats, trailers, and live wells to help prevent the spread of invasive species.

We will keep everyone updated on Zebra Mussels through future communications including additional information at the MFA Annual Meeting on June 12th.

8) MFA Area Captains

We all love our little spot of heaven on the Minong Flowage! Are you interested in helping preserve the health of the lake and the joys of life on the Flowage? The Minong Flowage Association is looking for volunteers to serve as area captains to help welcome new lake owners and facilitate communication between the MFA board and our neighborhoods.

So, what is a neighborhood captain?

- Not a board position, strictly voluntary
- Greet new neighbors in your area
- Act as liaison between the lake property owners in your neighborhood and the MFA board
- Drop off membership information to non-members and MFA Welcome packet to new neighbors
- Informal gatherings with other Neighborhood Captains several times per year to compare notes and enjoy some good conversation.

Interested? Email Karen Turnquist, Membership Chair and Treasure at minongfatreasurer@gmail.com to learn more!

9) Muskies on the Flowage? – Steve Johnson

“Are there Muskies in the Minong Flowage” is a question I have heard numerous times over the 34+ years I have had a cabin/house on the flowage. If you check the Minong Flowage on the DNR website you will see Muskellunge listed as not present. Volunteers working with the Minong Flowage Association to update The History of the Minong Flowage pamphlet created by back in 2003 have found records indicating the DNR stocked muskellunge in the flowage from 1942 to 1947 but discontinued because of poor survival rates. The Totagatic river eventually runs into the Namakagon River which does

have muskies, so they potentially exist downstream from the flowage. Upstream, the Totagatic River flows from Nelson Lake near Hayward. The DNR does not list muskellunge being present in Nelson lake although rumors do exist, but no confirming evidence in terms of photos are available.

In the 1980s I started hearing rumors of an occasional muskie being caught on the Minong Flowage. I have heard from a friend on the flowage that his neighbor has caught more than one, and I was shown a picture of one of the fish that was caught. Several years ago, it was reported that a muskie was caught through the ice during the Viewpoint Ice Fishing contest. Supposedly pictures were taken, but I have not seen them. I have had people tell me they have caught small muskie (18 to 20 inch) on the flowage which may be true, but it is also easy to confuse small northern and muskellunge as their coloration and markings can sometimes be very similar in the juvenile stage.

In the early 90s I had my first confirmation of the existence on muskellunge in the flowage when late one spring I found a dead muskellunge about 40 inches long floating up to my shoreline. My second confirmation was 8 to 10 years later when I had my dad out fishing with me on the flowage for bass and northern. Dad hooked a big fish and when he got it near the boat we could see it was a large muskie. He brought it to the boat twice but then lost it before we could get it into a net. I wish to this day he had been able to land it as he had never caught one before.

My third confirmation came in 2016 when the DNR was conducting a spring fish survey and had fyke nets above and below Smith Bridge. Craig Roberts, the DNR Fish Biologist for Washburn County was in the DNR boat checking the nets and I was watching from the bridge. Craig hollered to me he had something to show me when they came into the landing to categorize the fish they had caught in the nets. Once they reached the landing, he produced a beautiful 40 inch muskie from the holding tank that they had just retrieved from the net. Several pictures were taken before it was released back into the water. We and the DNR now had undeniable proof that there was a small population of muskellunge in the Minong Flowage and probably a breeding population.



Finally, in late October last fall I was fishing alone in my boat on the flowage for walleye when I thought I was once again snagged. Suddenly the “snag” started to move. Eventually the fish came off the bottom and I could see when it came to the boat it was muskie! Somehow, after multiple attempts, I got enough of it into my small net to get it in the boat where I took a quick picture and measurement before releasing it back into the water. It measured 36 inches and was a beautiful fish in good shape.



If readers are unsure of being able to identify the difference between a muskellunge and a northern pike, I am providing the following picture of a large northern pike captured in the DNR nets in 2016. As can be seen, a northern pike has a more spotted coloration versus a muskellunge which will have subtle stripes or bars on its sides. Northern pike also tend to be more dark green in color while muskellunge will be more brown or bronze in color.



So, if you were wondering if there are muskies in the Minong Flowage, the answer is yes, there are a few. It would be extremely hard to go out and specifically fish for them, but there is always the chance you might hook into one while fishing and be able to land it. I would encourage everyone if you ever land one on the flowage to handle it carefully and release it back into the lake. They are very rare and part of the wonders of our lake. By releasing them, you allow someone else, perhaps someone's child or grandchild the opportunity for an experience of their lifetime. It only took me 34 years to catch one on the flowage.

10) Website notes

Information on major events, board meeting minutes, etc. are posted at MinongFlowage.org. Volunteers can post their hours on the site, tracking these hours greatly aids us in recouping our grant fund dollars.

11) MFA calendar

- June 12, 2021
 - MFA Annual Meeting.
- October 9, 2021
 - Fall Board of Directors Meeting
- January 15, 2022
 - Winter Board of Directors Meeting
- April 16, 2022
 - Spring Board of Directors Meeting
- June 11, 2022
 - MFA's Annual Meeting
 - MFA's BBQ

12) Newsletter Distribution Policy

The **Spring** Newsletter is the only newsletter sent to all known Minong Flowage and Cranberry Flowage Stakeholders **regardless** of their membership status in our association. It announces the date of our annual meeting and advises you about plans and activities regarding the care and management of our lake. All other Newsletters, and general correspondences, are only distributed to MFA members.

Our preferred method of communication is email. We will continue to mail paper newsletters to members in good standing that don't want, or don't use, email for the time being. ***Please confirm your preferred email address to Karen Turnquist*** via MinongFlowage@Gmail.com, or call Karen at 612/708-7159.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:	David Perrin	651/478-4698
Treasurer:	Karen Turnquist	612/708-7159
Membership:	Karen Turnquist	612/708-7159
Communication:	Adrienne Banaszynski	612/384-6550
Secretary:	Kim Zeuli	
Member at-large:	Joe McGrath	
Member at-large:	Tim Overom	
Member at-large:	Craig Krupke	
Member at-large:	David Marsh	

PLEASE REPORT SUSPICIOUS AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY DIRECTLY TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PROMPTLY!

DNR Tip Line: 800/847-9367
Minong Town Constable: Erik Gulbrandsen: 715/466-2519

Minong Flowage Association
Box 167 / Minong, WI 54859

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