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1) MFA's 2022 Annual Meeting

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the MFA's Annual Meeting on its traditional date, Saturday, June 11th. 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).

Agenda

- Welcome
- Acceptance of 2021 annual meeting minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Membership update
- Old Business
 - AIS Grant Update – Dave Blumer
 - Clean Boats/Clean Waters Program
 - Zebra Mussel Update and Decontamination Station Plan
- New Business
 - Other New Business
 - Election of Board Members

2) Notes from the MFA President

As winter starts to fade into memory and spring moves front and center, it's time to prepare for another season on the Minong Flowage. What's different this year is we are waiting to see a couple of things: how long will it take the Flowage to refill, and what are the effects of the drawdown.

Little can be known about either in advance. Mother Nature will fill the Flowage at her own pace. With adequate spring rains, the Flowage will hopefully be filled in time for the fishing opener. At least that's the plan. Of course, the lowering of the Flowage was necessitated by the expansion of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). We were reaching a point where many of the shallower bays and narrow waterways were being choked by the pesky invasive weed. Fishing is negatively impacted as well. Without chemical

treatment as an option, through careful planning and cooperation across a wide array of groups, the drawdown was planned, financed and accomplished. The MFA has had the complete cooperation of Washburn County Highway Department (owner of the dam) throughout this process. And, we are grateful to Brian Danielsen, the head of that department, who coordinated with the dam operator, Renewable World Energy (RWE). Our former President, Steve Johnson deserves a lot of credit for overseeing this time consuming process through frequent communication with Washburn County. Another former President, Dan Maxwell stepped up and documented the drawdown process with pictures and first hand observations. Thank you Steve and Dan. And, a tip of the hat goes to Mother Nature herself for providing the weather (cold and little snow) that hopefully has frozen out the EWM.

So, as we turn our attention to the new season there is some news to report regarding Zebra Mussels. As noted in earlier MFA newsletters, this invasive is found in the nearby McKenzie chain. Spread through inadequate cleaning of boats moving from lake to lake, it is a concern that they would one day start appearing in the Flowage. Once they are in a lake there is no removing them (although researchers at the University of Minnesota have completed sequencing the genome and are looking for a “cure”). Lisa Burns, WDNR has studied the presence of “Zebbs” in the Flowage. As of last fall, there was no sign of them having been brought into the Flowage. Monitoring will continue. LEAPS consultant to the Minong Flowage, Dave Blumer sees no reason why the Flowage would not be suitable for Zebra mussels (hint: did you notice how many native clams and mussels were on the shore during the drawdown?) More on that and a proposed boat decontamination station located at the County Park will be discussed at the annual meeting.

And, finally, this is my last newsletter as my term ends at the annual meeting in June. Two other Board members, Rockne Johnson (who heads the Clean Boats/Clean Water program) and Joe McGrath (who works with Washburn County tourism in promotional efforts) are also ending their terms. **So, the Minong Flowage Association needs your help. Become a member of the Board.** Board meetings are held 4 times a year, and of late have been “hybrid” (Zoom and in person). Through assertive leadership the Board and the Flowage are in good shape going forward. But, the progress we have made and the Flowage that we love cannot exist without stewards like yourself. The only thing required to be a Board member is #1) a love of the Minong Flowage and #2) a willingness to express that love with a little of your time. There is lots of support available, including past Board members. **So, please step up and let me know you are ready to help.**

At the time of newsletter publication, the Minong Flowage was at full pool. This was achieved prior to the 2022 Fishing Opener.

Have a safe and healthy season on the Flowage.
Dave Perrin, President

3) Drawdown Summary – MFA Lake Management Committee

As I write this summary on May 4th, the water level in the Minong Flowage is close to normal level after the refill was started on April 25th. Normal pool levels will be reached in the next day or two, just before the fishing opener. We all are glad to see the lake back at full level.

The drawdown, which was authorized via a DNR permit issued to Washburn County Highway department was started on September 20, 2021 and reached a level of 60 inches of drawdown by November 1 at which time levels were maintained through the winter. As specified by the DNR permit, a refill could not start until all ice was off the flowage. Mother Nature has been taking her time this spring and the flowage did not clear of ice until late Sunday, April 24th. Monday morning, April 25th, Washburn County Highway Department directed Renewable World Energy who operate the dam to begin the refill. Since then, the flowage has been raising level at a rate of approximately 4 inches per day.

The purpose of the drawdown was to control the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil, an invasive species which was discovered in the Minong Flowage in 2002 and has been actively managed through the efforts of the Minong Flowage Lake Association since 2008. Lowering the water level and freezing the root system of EWM as a method of control has been specified by the DNR once the MFA established the EWM had reached a density level specified in the lake management plan. Costs associated with the ongoing management and drawdown are offset by a DNR grant received by the MFA and MFA treasury funds, donations and volunteer time provided by property owners and MFA board members. Weather conditions during this winter with cold temperatures and moderate snowfalls appear to have been ideal for freezing EWM roots.

Monitoring of the flowage as the ice has melted and finally left has to date not indicated any large fish kills that could be associated with the drawdown. Some winter fish kill is normal but with the constant flow of the Totagatic into the flowage during the winter months, there is continuous supply of oxygenated water in most parts of the flowage plus the drawdown was executed at a slow rate to minimize the trapping of fish in shallow areas.

The next 4 to 5 months will be spent evaluating the results and effectiveness of the drawdown. A full lake plant survey will be conducted in late August/early September to assess post drawdown aquatic plant populations and will tell us much about how well the drawdown worked as a management tool. Individual observations by MFA members and property owners are welcomed and can be submitted to the MFA website via email at info@minongflowage.org. A stakeholders meeting is planned to be held in early fall with all the organizations involved in establishing and supporting the Minong Flowage Lake management plan to report the findings of the drawdown results. You can find more information regarding the drawdown and the lake management activities on the Minong Flowage Lake Association Website, <https://minongflowage.org>.

Be safe as you return to the water this summer.

4) DNR's Healthy Lakes Initiative – Fish Sticks

Woody debris is important to the health of a lake. Especially the stability of its shoreline and wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, a casualty of property development is the clearing of the natural occurrence of tree-falls along the shoreline. Estimates indicate that our lake has only 20% of woody debris it had in previous decades. The DNR's **Healthy Lakes** initiative offers a variety of options individual property owners can do to reverse this trend.

One such option is called “Fish Sticks”,(<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/outreach/FishSticks.html>) which is a simple, **but regulated** means of adding woody debris to our shorelines where logistics allow. Fish Sticks are constructed on the winter ice and drop into place in the spring. The MFA has obtained a permit for the construction of pre-approved “Fish Stick” sites in the Minong Flowage. **Note: Simply cutting down a shoreline tree and letting it fall into the lake is ILLEGAL** and detracts from the beauty and health of the shoreline!

Our 3rd “Fish Sticks” site was installed this winter. Interested folks are encouraged to check it out. It is on the southern shore of the bay that precedes the sharp turn towards the dam. It is designated by a 12”x9” Healthy Lakes sign. Anyone interested in additional “Fish Sticks” sites during the winter of 2022/2023 should contact Dan Maxwell: 612/817-8257 or MinongFlowage@Gmail.com

5) Purple Loosestrife

The Problem

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is a highly invasive plant species found in areas with wet soil like ditches and shorelines. The plants can grow to six feet tall and have long, bright purple flower stalks that bloom from July to September. Purple loosestrife is a major problem because it can overtake habitats and outcompete native plants; does not provide suitable shelter, food, or nesting habitat; can limit access to open water; and it can change the hydrology of aquatic systems.

The Solution

Dense walls of purple loosestrife can be overwhelming to control by hand – digging it out is labor intensive, mowing just spreads the seeds, and appropriate herbicides can be difficult to obtain and control. Luckily, we have another option! Purple loosestrife beetles (*Galerucella* sp.) only eat purple loosestrife and depend on them throughout their entire life cycle. These beetles are very effective at reducing purple loosestrife and keeping it in check.

Minong Flowage Action

The Swift Nature Camp raised and released purple loosestrife beetles in 2021. The beetles were collected by LEAPS and then reared by campers. Rearing purple loosestrife beetles requires very little maintenance but reaps high rewards. Volunteers keep the beetles in their net cages for several weeks and make sure the plants stay watered. Then, volunteers get to help release the beetles and see their efforts pay off! Contact the Minong Flowage Association and get involved today!



Campers releasing purple loosestrife beetles on the flowage

6) Wild Ricing on the Minong Flowage – Lloyd Dahlbeg

The beauty of harvesting wild rice on the Minong Flowage is being in the rice bed where it is quiet and peaceful. You can see waterfowl and deer along the banks as you slip through the field of rice. Only Native people and residents of Wisconsin may harvest.

Wild rice is a member of the grass family. It prefers shallow water 6” to 3’ in depth. So, inlet and outlet channels are the place to look. It is an annual but gets re-seeded when the kernels fall into the water and are not eaten by wildlife.

There are a few rules to follow:

- Your canoe must be 17 feet or less and no wider than 38 inches.
- You need a long pole to push the canoe through the rice field. Must be all muscle driven - NO motors.
- The sticks you use to knock the mature rice into the canoe should be no longer than 38 inches.
- You must be a resident (17 - 64 year old) of WI and have a license issued by the DNR.
- Wild ricing is regulated by the WDNR, which sets dates for opening and closing. Those dates can be gotten from the GLIFWC’s website or signing up with the WDNR.
- You can not start before 10 AM as that gives time for the dew to evaporate from the rice stems so they won’t break when knocking the mature rice off. Ricing ends at sunset. (That little bit of information cost me \$200+ which is another story!)

Once you get the rice home, spread it out on a tarp for drying in the sun. This allows all the spiders and rice worms to escape. This also makes for some very happy birds.

Your final step is to bag up your dried rice, take it to a professional processor. You will get about half the weight of your rice after the process. Then, take it home and eat it.

7) Respecting Our Flowage

As we all look forward to another wonderful season on the flowage, the association would like to remind you to treat the water, shoreline and islands with respect.

The signs pictured here were installed last summer to remind those who are residents of the lake as well as those who are visiting or renting of the requested respectful behaviors.

The DNR number is listed on the signs and you are encouraged to keep this number saved in your phone to report inappropriate behaviors.



8) 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.

9) MFA calendar

- June 11, 2022
 - MFA Annual Meeting.
- October 8, 2022
 - Fall Board of Directors Meeting
- January 14, 2023
 - Winter Board of Directors Meeting
- April 8, 2023
 - Spring Board of Directors Meeting
- June 10, 2023
 - MFA’s Annual Meeting

10) 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* via MinongFlowage@Gmail.com, or call Adrienne at 612/384-6550.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:	David Perrin	651/785-4698
Treasurer:	Karen Turnquist	On Leave
Membership:	Karen Turnquist	On Leave
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

MinongFlowage.org / MinongFlowage@gmail.com

Immediate Job Openings

There are immediate job openings for people with any or all the following attributes:

- Love of the water and a desire to keep it pristine
- Interest in meeting neighbors and making new friends
- Making a difference while helping solve problems
- Learning about hydrology and the ecosystem
- Interest in a very part-time but fully rewarding pastime
- Carrying on a 25 year tradition
- The Minong Flowage Association is looking for Board members. Contact President, Dave Perrin at 651-785-4698 or by email at perrindavid1@gmail.com

