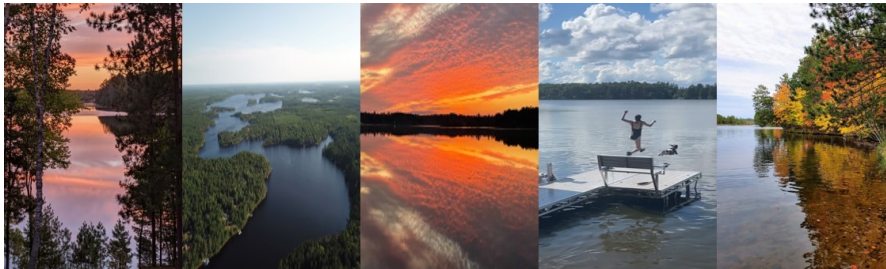




MINONG FLOWAGE ASSOCIATION

SPRING
2024
NEWSLETTER



From the President

Greetings Minong Flowage Association members and neighbors,

Yet another year has somehow sneaked past us and I'm happy to write this update of significant happenings in and around our treasured lake as well as events of the Minong Flowage Association itself.

In 2023 the MFA Board of Directors (several newly elected in 2022) seemed to pull together and work as an effective, cohesive group with each director finding their preferred niche to focus upon. Notable accomplishments:

- A new Aquatic Plant Management plan was written by our lake management consultant with frequent input from our Lake Management Committee. The final draft of the plan has been approved by the MFA Board, and emailed to MFA members and interested stakeholders, for review and input.
- Strived to build better relationships with various DNR representatives from both Washburn and Douglas Counties in regard to tracking fish population, water quality (CBCW), aquatic invasive plants (boat launch inspections), and grant applications & funds received.
- Improved, consistent communication. Current events posted to the MFA Facebook group page, official documents (ex. meeting minutes) published on our website, and sent pertinent emails.

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From the President, *continued*

- By-laws rewrite was completed including a legal review, DNR review, and the final version was emailed to MFA membership for review. Members will vote to approve it at the June 1st annual meeting.

One of the key goals of our current Board is to foster a feeling of “community” within the various neighborhoods around the flowage. Either impromptu or scheduled gatherings, picnics, and campfires can be simple, effective and fun! Another aspect of embracing our community is interacting with the public when MFA Board members attend local town board meetings to keep current with local issues and events as well as to provide input to those governing bodies on behalf of our overall association. MFA Board and association members participate in local, summer festivities such as the July 4th parade, Wascott Fun Day, Minong Days and the popular Ice Cream Boat. All this promotes our community!

Save the Date! Saturday June 1st 9:00AM will be our association’s annual meeting and free BBQ lunch. (See details within this newsletter.) I sincerely invite all association members and interested neighbors and stakeholders to attend. The meeting agenda includes many interesting topics and updates. Our guest speaker will be the DNR Fisheries expert from Washburn County. Please stay for the free BBQ picnic lunch, which will be served right after the meeting is adjourned. It’s a great time to have a burger, chat with other members and maybe reconnect with old friends.

Have a safe, fun, and relaxing summer at the lake!



Harlan Johnson
President - Minong Flowage Association
johnson2424@yahoo.com
612-817-4490



Harlan Johnson, MFA President

Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention—2024

by Dan Maxwell

The 46th annual "Lakes and Rivers" convention was held in Stevens Point April 10th - 12th. This event draws assorted "water people" from the DNR, Wisc. Lakes and Rivers Partnership, University of Wisconsin staff & students and assorted lake associations folks.

The MFA has been invited to moderate one of the 2025 workshop sessions to "tell our story" regarding the many twists & turns we followed in our efforts to control Eurasian Water Milfoil over the past 15 years. Dan Maxwell attended this year's convention to evaluate the suitability of such an effort.

The sessions that address the wake board and wake surfing issues drew the highest attendance at 100 to 150 people, followed closely by workshops on walleyes and wild rice. Noticeably absent was any workshops or discussions on the influx of RV campsites across the state and the dramatic affect such developments will add to usage-pressure on their nearby lakes. A variety of other workshops addressed additional niche topics which drew 10 to 30 attendees. A presentation by the MFA would fall into one of these niche topics. A final decision has not yet been made on a 2025 workshop, but the time, cost and effort required to facilitate a session for 10 to 30 people makes the effort unlikely.

Lake Management Committee Updates

The MFA Lake Management Committee focuses primarily on activities associated with the ongoing management of invasive species in the Minong Flowage. 2023 was another busy year for the committee with the following topics all receiving attention.

- Constituent and stakeholders' communication
- EWM management planning
- Stakeholders Meeting
- Pre-treatment readiness surveys
- Herbicide application to control EWM
- Whole-lake point-intercept (PI) surveys
- Early season, cold water PI survey
- Summer PI survey
- CLP and EWM bed mapping
- PI survey on Delcore Pond
- AIS monitoring and prevention
- Watercraft inspection
- Wild rice monitoring
- Water quality monitoring
- Island and shoreland protection
- Aquatic Plant Management Plan

2023 Maintenance and Control Activities

In 2023, a treatment of two EWM beds consisting of 14.5 acres total in the Pogo's channel area and the County Park area with herbicide took place on May 31. The DNR grant we had at that time did not allow the use of grant funds for any herbicide control actions initiated by the MFA, so the expenses were paid directly out of the MFA treasury. Our treatment permit request to the DNR was granted even though opposition exists from GLIFWC to herbicide treatments in the Minong Flowage. A stakeholder meeting involving the DNR, GLIFWC, and the MFA Lake Management Committee was held prior to the permit request and may have helped the process of receiving the permit. Subsequent plant surveys executed during the summer and fall indicated the treatments were successful in reducing EWM in the two beds, but unfortunately the fall survey showed EWM encroaching back into the bay in the Pogo's channel area.



Plant surveys were conducted during the year to continue the assessment of the results of the winter drawdown in 2021/22 and to track the growth of EWM. In general, the surveys showed that 2023 was a very good year for aquatic plant growth, both native and invasive species.

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DAM FACTS

Minong Flowage is supposed to be maintained at a level between 1010 and 1011 feet above sea level with a target of 1010.8 feet. This can be challenging at times of spring runoff, 100 and 1000 year precipitation events, and periods of droughts.

About two years ago, RWE installed an automated monitoring system allowing pool levels to be checked without having to drive to the dam site. This appears to be helping RWE be more responsive to changing conditions.

The Minong Flowage Association Board of Directors maintains a strong working relationship with the Washburn County Highway Department regarding the operation of the dam. The cooperation and support of the highway department was critical to the recent winter drawdown executed on the flowage.

If there are questions, concerns or complaints regarding the operation of the dam, please contact the MFA board or a Lake Management Committee member.

Lake Management Committee Updates, *continued*

Wild Rice beds in the NE part of the flowage where the Totagatic enters were particularly lush and we saw extensive harvesting activities by tribal groups and Wisconsin senior citizens. I am enjoying wild rice soups from rice I was able to harvest. EWM was visible in multiple locations on the flowage throughout the late summer and fall, particularly in the deeper water (4.5 to 7 ft) areas where it has typically been found in the past. The fall bed mapping survey showed that EWM beds had increased from 115 acres in 2022 to 151 acres in 2023 even though we treated and reduced EWM on 14.5 acres in the spring. Most of the expansion has been found to be in the deep water areas of the NE portion of the flowage. When reflecting on the current EWM bed survey information in relation to the drawdown down in 2021/22 it is evident that the drawdown was effective in reducing total EWM by nearly 50%, primarily in the areas EWM existed and was exposed (4.5 ft depth) but had a lesser effect on EWM that remained below the drawdown level. It is also evident that EWM in the flowage is aggressive and can quickly reestablish. These are data points to be considered by the Minong Flowage as it enters into a new 5 year Aquatic Plant Management plan.

New Aquatic Plant Management Plan

The Wisconsin DNR requires a current Aquatic Plant Management Plan exists for the Minong Flowage in order for the association to apply and receive financial grants and required permits needed to execute management and control activities. A new 5 Year Aquatic Plant Management Plan currently exists in it's final draft form. The MFA Board has approved the final draft plan, a public notice to allow anyone to review this document was printed in the Spooner Advocate, and at this time of this newsletter the 21 day public review and comment period has ended. Additional discussion by members will be allowed at the June 1st annual meeting and then a vote for approval by the MFA membership will be taken. Once submitted to the DNR, we fully expect the DNR will review our plan with some of our key stakeholders, including the GLIFWC and various other tribes.



Eurasian Water Milfoil

It is an extensive document, encapsulating all that has been observed, investigated, and learned since invasive species management activities started on the Minong Flowage in 2009. This background data lends credibility to the future objectives, goals and proposed aquatic plant management strategies for the next 5 years.

One of the main objectives of the Lake Management Committee and the MFA Board is to have an APM plan based upon science and common sense, that protects the wild rice, and provides sufficient management tools and strategies to control invasive species so that our membership and public can maximize their experience on the flowage. The new draft APM plan along with 2023 survey results is available for review on the MFA website, www.minongflowage.org.

In the fall of 2023, the Lake Management Committee submitted a request for a Surface Water Planning Grant to the DNR to support the costs of our 2024 lake management activities. These activities include completing the new APM plan; ongoing monitoring and surveying of plants, EWM, shoreline erosion and water quality; manual invasive species control; and planning for any EWM control actions necessary for 2025. There will be no herbicide treatments of EWM in 2024. We were notified in early March that the DNR had approved our grant request and will provide up to \$10,000 in funds to support our activities. The total projected costs to the MFA for 2024 lake management activities are \$16,029, leaving the MFA responsible for \$6,029. This amount can consist of volunteer time and donations we receive from our membership and stakeholders. All donations to the MFA are tax deductible.

MFA Lake Management Committee

Steve Johnson

Dan Maxwell

Joe McGrath

Harlan Johnson

Water Safety & Access Updates

Buoys and Hazard Markers on the Lake to Help Guide Boaters

by Paul Gundersen

We all have seen a huge increase in boat traffic on the Minong Flowage over the past few years. The Minong Flowage is a tough waterbody to navigate due to its nature, so marking all hazards is probably not possible. Additionally, the type of watercraft with powerful motors and wakes can change the bottom and shoreline structure.

There are several types of marine markers, regulatory and hazard markers. Here is a link to the WDNR regarding markers and buoy placement <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topics/boat/ordinances>.


This contains all of the information regarding buoy placement/permitting. If you are wanting non-regulatory buoys (hazard/danger markers), an ordinance is not necessary. These markers could be milk cartons or other similar size floating items. If the lake warden sees them as a navigation hazard they will remove them. If not, they stay in place.

In 2023, the placement of new buoys supplied by the Minong Flowage Association are larger and have very clear, large graphics.

- Five “No Wake” and two “Slow 5 mph” speed limit are placed in Pogo’s channel leading to the County Road T bridge.
- Four large “Milfoil Area” buoys are anchored and very visible at the last big bend at the south end of the lake towards the dam.
- Three new buoys have been added in the channel leading to the dam.

The MFA has contracted with Whitetail Waterworks for placement and removal.





REMINDER

Slow/No Wake Zone is 100 feet of any:

- Shoreline (including islands)
- Dock, Pier or Raft
- Buoyed restricted area

For more details, go to :
<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/30/v/66/3/b>

Water Safety & Access Updates, *continued*

Wake Boats Update—Concerns Now Statewide

by Harlan Johnson

Lakebed plant-life and fish structure damage caused by high-powered, jet wake boats continues to be a hot topic for the Minong Flowage along with many other shallow, smaller lakes in Wisconsin. These concerns have now gained visibility and are now being addressed by the State of Wisconsin DNR and has even garnered national attention in various periodicals.

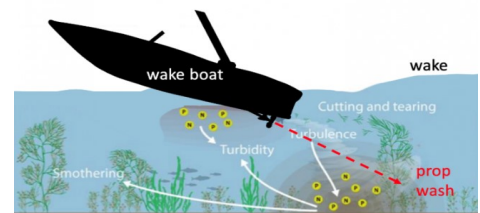
More recently at the local level, on April 17, 2024 the Town of Cable voted to ban the controversial sport of wake boarding on all lakes in their township (reported in the Sawyer County Record, April 24, 2024 edition.) Their new ordinance is supported by nearby lake associations and signs posted at boat launches. Enforcement of this type of ordinance is the tough part. Cable is asking for assistance from the sheriff's office and the DNR along with other boaters who take photos of offending wake boats (showing a legible boat license) and reporting to authorities.

The use of wake boats is highly discouraged on the Minong Flowage because of the lake's overall shallow depth (avg. 9 to 12 feet). However there is no current ordinance limiting usage. Ownership of wake boats by Flowage property owners has dwindled to about 2 or 3 boats mostly due to awareness of lakebed damage and peer pressure. However, the number of wake boats launched at the Flowage's four boat launches (and Cranberry Lake) for daily use is very difficult to track.

A wake boat, by design, creates a pressure wave downward to approximately fifteen feet causing lake bottom disruption when the water depth is too shallow. Published studies have documented a noticeable trail of ripped up aquatic plants floating on the surface in the path of a passing wake boat in shallow water.

Other published articles recommend a compromise to allow wake boarding on large, deep lakes where lakebed damage would not occur and wake boats can maintain a safe distance from shore and other boats. But that option simply is not possible on the Minong Flowage.

The MFA Board will continue to monitor this topic and provide updates via the MFA Facebook page and website.



MFA Rejoins Minong Town Lakes Committee

by Harlan Johnson

The Minong Flowage Association has rejoined and is actively participating in the Minong area lakes oversight committee after a several year hiatus. The Minong Town Lakes Committee is a sanctioned, standing committee of the Town of Minong with the objective to bring together representatives from seven local lakes (most with lake associations) all calling Minong 'home'.

At quarterly meetings the group shares overall lake management information, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) updates, association membership ideas, and most importantly, a collective effort for DNR grant applications. Representing the MFA are Harlan Johnson (Vice-Chair) and Paul Gundersen.

Boat Launch Fee

by Steve Johnson

The question of why is there a “Fee Box” located at the County Park boat launch is occasionally asked by Minong Flowage property owners as well as visitors. The boat launch fee box was installed by the County Park in support of the Minong Flowage Association’s management efforts to control invasive species, primarily Eurasian Water Milfoil back when initial management efforts began around 2008.

The County Park provides ALL fees collected at the boat landing as an annual financial donation to the MFA in support of costs incurred by the MFA each year in invasive species management efforts on the flowage. Since the establishment of the boat launch fee, tens of thousands of dollars have been donated to the MFA by the County Park. The park officials do not police the payment of the fee, it is a voluntary payment by all users of the boat landing, whether they be property owners, campers, or day users of our lake.

Occasionally a park worker or a Clean Boats Clean Waters representative working at the landing will mention the fee box and/or suggest a donation, but they are doing so on their own initiative and concern for the health of the lake. The MFA encourages and thanks all property owners who use the landing and contribute to the boat launch fee revenue. If you choose to not place a donation in the fee box, please respect the park and CBCW personnel at the landing, they are only supporting the MFA and its management efforts on the lake.



Over the last 3 summers, nearly \$5,500 has been collected at the boat launch. Every bit helps.

2023—\$1,554.76
2022—\$1,661.04
2021—\$2,227.49

Clean Boats, Clean Waters

by Paul Gundersen

The Clean Boats, Clean Waters Program provides training to volunteer or paid boat landing inspectors to educate waterway users on how they can prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Inspectors perform boat, trailer, and equipment checks, distribute informational brochures, and pass along important AIS related information.

The CBCW Program is a “front line” defense against the spread of AIS, teaching citizens where invasives are most likely to hitch a ride on their equipment. If you are interested in learning more about the CBCW program on the Minong Flowage, contact Paul Gundersen or any of the board members.



You can also find more information at the University of Wisconsin-Extension at dnr.wi.gov/lakes/cbcw.

Aquatic Invasive Species in the Minong Flowage

by Steve Johnson

There are currently eight non-native species officially documented in the Minong Flowage – Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), curly-leaf pondweed (CLP), purple loosestrife, reed canary grass, hybrid cattail, Rusty crayfish, Chinese mystery snails, and common carp. Of these, only EWM is causing significant issues in the Flowage.

We've provided a quick summary and pictures of these Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) for reference. More detail on each can be found on our [website](#). There is a link on the home page to Appendix C—Aquatic Invasive Species of Concern.

Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM)

EWM is a submersed aquatic plant native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa. It is the only non-native milfoil in Wisconsin. It was first identified in the Minong Flowage in 2001. By 2009 it had expanded to over 300 acres of the flowage and has since been the primary focus of the MFA's lake management efforts.



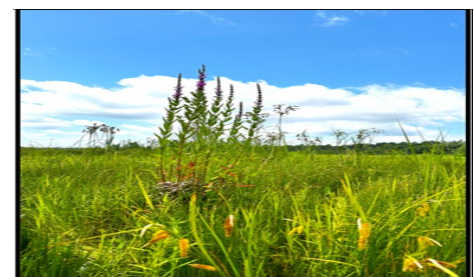
Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP)

CLP is an invasive aquatic perennial that is native to Eurasia, Africa, and Australia. One theory is that it was accidentally introduced to United States waters in the mid-1880s by hobbyists who used it as an aquarium plant. CLP's tolerance for low light and low water allows it to get a head start on and out compete native plants in the spring.



Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife is a wetland herb that was introduced as a garden perennial from Europe during the 1800's. Currently, more than 20 states, including Wisconsin have laws prohibiting its importation or distribution because of its aggressively invasive characteristics. Purple loosestrife was first detected in Wisconsin in the early 1930's, but remained uncommon until the 1970's. It is now widely dispersed in the state.



Reed Canary Grass

Reed canary grass (Figure 6) is a large, coarse grass that reaches 2 to 9 feet in height. It has an erect, hairless stem with gradually tapering leaf blades 3 1/2 to 10 inches long and 1/4 to 3/4 inch in width. Single flowers occur in dense clusters in May to mid-June. They are green to purple at first and change to beige over time.



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Aquatic Invasive Species in the Minong Flowage, *continued*

Hybrid/Narrow –leaf Cattail

Native to southern but not northern Wisconsin, Narrow-leaved cattail and its hybrids with Broad-leaved cattail are becoming increasingly common on the Minong Flowage where they also tend to be invasive (Figure 7). Besides having narrower leaves, the exotics can be told from native cattails by having a relatively narrower and longer “hotdog-shaped” tan female cattail flower, whereas the native species tends to produce a fatter and shorter “bratwurst-shaped” dark chocolate colored female flower. Both reed canary grass and narrow-leaf cattails were found in the Minong Flowage during the 2023 summer PI survey.



Common Carp

The common carp is a large omnivorous fish. It has large scales, a long dorsal fin base, and two pairs of long barbels (whiskers) in its upper jaw. Native to Europe and Asia, it was intentionally introduced into Midwest waters as a game fish in the 1880s. Common carp can have severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands. Their feeding disrupts shallowly rooted plants muddying the water, which in turn releases phosphorus that may increase algae abundance, which can cause water quality to deteriorate, and cause a loss of aquatic plants needed by other fish and waterfowl. They exist in the Minong Flowage but historically not in large numbers.



Chinese Mystery Snails

The Chinese mystery snails and the banded mystery snails are non-native snails that have been found in a number of Wisconsin lakes. There is not a lot yet known about these species, however, it appears that they have a negative effect on native snail populations. Lakes with high densities of mystery snails often see large die-offs of the snails. These die-offs are related to the lake’s warming coupled with low oxygen (related to algal blooms). Decaying snails washed up on beaches will have a strong, foul odor.



Rusty Crayfish

The native range of the rusty crayfish includes Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and the entire Ohio River basin. However, this species may now be found in many northern states including Wisconsin. Its further spread is of great concern since the prior areas of invasion have led to severe impacts on native flora and fauna. It is thought to have spread by means of released game fish bait and/or from aquarium release.



Other AIS

There are several other significant invasive species that exist in NW Wi that the MFA, DNR and County Land and Water organizations actively monitor and attempt to control which currently have not been identified in the Minong Flowage. They are Zebra Mussels, Yellow Flag Iris, Japanese Knotweed, and Spiny Water Flea.

Fun Times Ahead!

2023 Ice Cream Boat

A huge hit with kids of all ages, was the surprise of the Ice Cream Boat cruising slowly along the Minong Flowage shoreline, pulling up to docks to give away free ice cream bars and popsicles to everyone. This was actually a lot of fun for the MFA members in the Ice Cream boat as well. So this coming summer, on hot, sunny, weekend afternoons, listen for the calliope music and look for the Ice Cream Boat (with Minong Flowage banners). Wave the boat over to your dock if they don't immediately see you.

Lots of simple, summer fun for everyone!



Minong Flowage Association



2024 Annual Meeting & Summer Picnic

Saturday, June 1, 2024
Wascott Town Hall

Annual Meeting
8:15 – registration, coffee & pastries
9:00 – meeting call to order

Picnic immediately after meeting is adjourned



Free
BBQ Picnic
for all association members
burgers & brats
salads & beverage

Like to help out or have questions?
Contact us at minongflowage@gmail.com

Final Tidbits from the Board

Bylaws Update

At the 2023 Annual Meeting the Board asked for input from the members about the proposed updates to our Association’s Bylaws. We have taken this feedback as well as input from the DNR to fine tune the document. The Board recently approved these amendments.

The proposed, amended Bylaws document will be emailed to all members prior to our annual meeting on June 1st to allow time to read through the revisions before discussion, make edits if needed, and a member vote. If you have any questions prior to the meeting please reach out to Harlan or Becky. Their contact information is listed below.

Help Wanted! - Board Member Election

There will be 2 Board positions opening in June. We encourage all members in good-standing that have an interest in serving on the board to contact Harlan Johnson (see contact info on cover story) or any other board member prior to our annual meeting.

Serving on the board is an excellent way to learn more in-depth on how/why our Lake Management Plan is executed, how we work with area stakeholders, meet new people, and the list goes on. We meet on a quarterly basis, sometimes even remotely. Whether you are one the flowage part-time or year round, if you enjoy our lake community and would like to get involved to keep it well managed and maintained (and have some fun too) - we would love to hear from you.

Volunteerism = Funding = Quality of Lake Life

Any. Bit. Helps. There are numerous ways to help out, whether it’s an hour here or there with Clean Boats/Clean Waters, pitching in at our Annual Meeting, or doing an everyday (every weekend?) chore of pulling weeds or preserving the shoreline, it all adds up.

A major part of funding aquatic weed control and various other DNR-related projects on our lake comes from logged volunteer hours that is easily done on our website. While it might seem tedious, Dan Maxwell (Lake Management) works very hard to translate volunteer hours into terms and figures the DNR requires to provide funds for various projects in and around the flowage. Every viable hour logged equates to \$15 per hour for funding. Last year alone we logged over 2,000 hours, which equates to more than \$24,000 that we can submit to the DNR for funding. That is HUGE—and it can be even more.

We urge everyone to hop onto our website to log their volunteer hours. And yes, we are working to make this a faster, easier process. This is very important and much appreciated by the MFA Board. Thank you!

BOARD ROSTER effective 5-1-24

President	Harlan Johnson	612-817-4490	johnson2424@yahoo.com	June 2024, end of 1st term
Vice President	Becky White	612-325-2119	beckydwhite@hotmail.com	June 2024, end of 1st term
Treasurer	Adrienne Banaszynski	612-384-6550	adrienne.banaszynski@gmail.com	June 2024, end of 2 nd term
Secretary	Brian White	651-260-1101	brian.white@yahoo.com	June 2024, end of 1st term
Director-at-large	Dave Vogt			June 2024, end of 1st term
Director-at-large	Paul Gundersen			June 2024, end of 1st term
Director-at-large	Marcia Vogt			June 2025, term ends