

## *News from Boot Lake*

It has been another “one of a kind” year on Boot Lake weather-wise punctuated by record rainfall. So let's review 2019 thus far.

We had a late spring again “up norte” on Boot Lake. The ice left the lake on April 25, 2019, slightly later than average. But for most of us it wasn't soon enough as it was a long, snowy and bitter cold winter. With record snowfalls the heavy snow made ice fishing almost impossible as water came up through the cracks and left a foot of slush under all the snow. This made travel on the lake, even with a snowmobile, almost impossible. I learned this the hard way as my fishhouse, even up on blocks, had a foot of water over the floor that refroze. Facing the DNR deadline date for removing the fishhouse off the lake and unable to chop it out of the ice, I reluctantly had to use a chainsaw to cut around the base of the house just above the floor and destroy my 50 year old fishhouse to get it off the lake at the deadline. A couple weeks later the snow and ice melted enough for me to retrieve the floor. But the house I “inherited” from my Dad had a good run and it was just time to get a new one anyway !



Now another summer has come and gone on beautiful Boot Lake. Yes we had a wet spring, yes we had a wet summer, and oh yes, we are having a wet autumn. But we also had some great summer days to enjoy the lake. And there were positives: We had a great berry season; we had two pair of nesting loons on the lake that hatched three baby loons; our lake remains crystal clear; and we “survived” another year without any infestation of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

**The Berries** – With the abundance of rain, wild raspberries and blueberries were plentiful. You have never picked berries ? You need to give it a try. Berry picking is a way to connect with, and find joy in, nature. Whether in the state forests around Lake George, or maybe just along your own driveway, there is always a thrill in spotting glimmers of color in a patch of wild berries.



You don't need fancy equipment. A one-gallon ice cream pail with a handle works well to hold the fruit. You can set it on the ground and drop berries into it as you pick, and unlike a plastic bag, it won't snag on sticks and thorns as you walk. Hiking boots are great for rough or steep areas. Lighter footwear is fine for easy hikes, but don't be tempted to wear sandals, which don't offer enough foot protection. Long-sleeved shirts and pants are recommended to avoid scratches, scrapes, and mosquitoes; Also carry insect repellent and drinking water, particularly in warm weather. To learn more about our wild Minnesota berries check out this article in the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine on the web: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/issues/2019/jul-aug/berries.html>

**Our Loons** – We had three loon platforms on the lake this summer, one at each end and one in the middle in the narrows. A pair of loons hatched a single chick in the middle platform. The other two platforms went unused this year but a pair of loons did hatch two chicks on a natural nest on the north end of the lake. Loons have a low reproductive rate, on average one chick every other year. This low reproductive rate is offset by a long life; loons can live to be over 20 years old so over a lifetime they typically have five to 12 chicks. The adults migrate separately from the juveniles. Young loons may stay on a lake one to three weeks longer then join flocks of other juveniles to migrate south.

So we had four full-time adults and three chicks that called Boot Lake “home” this summer. But compare this to Big Mantrap Lake, several miles to the east of us. Big Mantrap hosted 73 adults and 24 chicks, thanks to its many coves and points, plus its loon nesting platform program.

From egg stage to adult is a 14-week process. They’ll lay generally one to two eggs that are brown in color. It’s 24 to 30 days for incubation. Both male and female sit on the nest.

Minnesota will soon be home to the National Loon Center to be located at the US Army Corp of Engineers Campground in Crosslake, Minnesota. For more information on this exciting project check out their website at: <https://www.nationallooncenter.org>

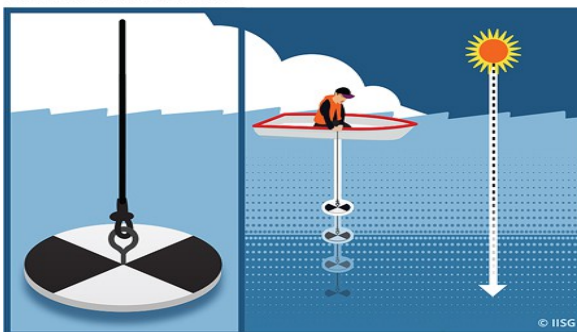


Beloved for their haunting call and beauty, loons are also good indicators of water quality because they need clean, clear water to catch food. They are visual predators, sensitive to disturbance and lakeshore development, indicators of the effect of contaminants – like mercury and lead in the environment – and enjoyable for Minnesotans to watch.

**Our Water Quality** – After an early “scare” of greenish water and a water clarity around 10 feet, the water cleared later in the summer and we had better readings of 17 feet from late July into September. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) reported that this poorer water clarity was common with many lakes in early summer caused most likely by the wet spring and wet early summer.



### Secchi Disk



While new AIS infestations have been discovered in more Minnesota lakes this summer, Boot Lake is not one of them.

To help prevent new infestations, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District was able to provide a watercraft inspector at our public access on Saturdays during the summer. This schedule was mainly to monitor and inspect the arrival of guests staying at our two resorts on the lake. The inspector reported good compliance with AIS laws, and did not note any major violations. Karl Koenig, the Becker County AIS Coordinator, ask that we remind our association members to follow the laws related to the installation of dock and lift equipment. This equipment must be removed from the water for a minimum of 21 days before it can be installed in another lake.



Have a great and safe winter and stay warm !!

Fred Luckeroth  
Chairperson  
Boot Lake Association

## **Shoreland Management**

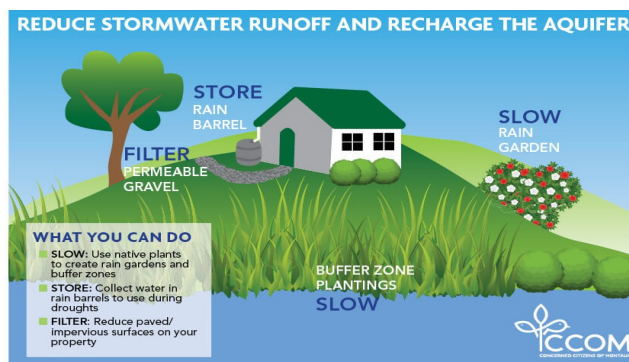
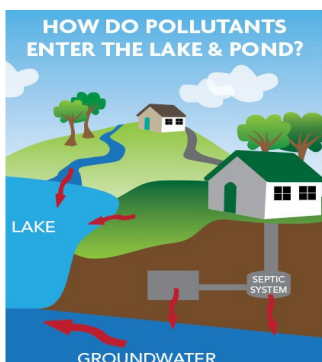
We have reported on this topic in the past and we are again providing news and information because this topic may have the greatest effect on the water quality on our beautiful Boot Lake. In the February 2019 Newsletter we listed seven actions you as a property owner can consider in doing your part to maintain our Lakes water quality. In this issue we will concentrate on three of these actions:

1. Stabilize shoreland property to prevent erosion
2. Minimize runoff from shoreland property
3. Reduce the impact of recreational activity on the lake

Julie Kingsley, District Manager with the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in an article in the local newspaper provided some excellent guidelines regarding these items.

"People like their manicured, green golf course all the way down to the lake. That's not good for the wildlife, not good for the water," Kingsley said. "You need a buffer."

**Creating a buffer zone** of natural, native plants along the lakeshore is beneficial for numerous reasons. Native plant species have longer root systems than grass, which prevent soil erosion. Shoreland owners can plant vegetation that prevents runoff and erosion, while still creating areas of recreation and prime views of the lake. Bluegrass, on the other hand, is a shallow-rooted species that cannot protect soil as well as deeper-rooted native shrubs and perennials. Fertilizers should contain zero phosphorus, reminds Julie Kingsley. Minnesota's Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law was enacted to reduce over-enrichment of rivers, lakes, and wetlands with the nutrient phosphorus. Excessive phosphorus in surface water leads to an overabundance of algae and other aquatic plants.



An alternative that differs from the typical approach to home landscaping is called "lakescaping." The Association has purchased a book called "Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality". It is an excellent source of information for

planting a diverse natural lakeshore landscape. You can learn about techniques to restore wildlife habitat, wildflowers, and clean water. It will help preserve or restore the natural beauty that attracted you to Boot Lake in the first place.

If you would like to checkout the book email us at: [Boot.lake.association@gmail.com](mailto:Boot.lake.association@gmail.com) and we will arrange to get the book to you.

Another detriment to good water quality is shoreland erosion specifically caused by recreational lake activity.

**Wakesurfing** --Imagine: It's a hot summer day, and you're surfing behind a boat as it cuts across the lake. But this isn't water skiing. You're not being pulled by a rope tied to the boat. You're riding a perfectly curled wake, created by the boat itself. That's wakesurfing, a relatively new water sport that's been gaining popularity on Minnesota lakes. But while they're showing up on more and more lakes, wakesurfing boats can also erode shorelines, affecting water quality by stirring up sediment at the bottom of the lake. Wakesurfing boats have a specially designed hull to create a large wake, and a ballast tank that can be filled with water to add extra weight to create that perfect curl. But these boats and their large wakes may be just too much for smaller lakes. The waves produced are three to four times as powerful as skiing or wakeboarding or tubing.

On Boot Lake the greatest damage can occur through the narrows in the middle of the lake. One property owner who has observed wakesurfing boats on the lake provided a couple of photos showing shoreland erosion that has occurred in the narrows.



While the Minnesota DNR has not established any formal regulations regarding these activities, Wakesurfers themselves are calling for self-policing. They want to defend the sport as a whole, while teaching troublesome boat operators how to play nice

***Here are their recommended rules that wakesurf boat operators should follow:***

- Stay to the center of a body of water, and avoid narrow channels or thoroughfares, if possible
- Always stay at least 200 feet away from shoreline, dock, or fixed objects.
- Respect the shoreline and leave immediately and graciously if the property owner requests
- Avoid "working a shoreline," in which repeated runs bombard the shoreline with waves
- When possible, present the non-surfing side of the boat to the closest shoreline
- Avoid gradual turns close to shore.

On Boot Lake probably the best area for activities that create a large wake would be the larger open south end of the lake.

In closing, here again is Julie Kingsley:

***"In Minnesota, water belongs to everybody. Even if you're living on a lake or you're on a river, one thing that's important about this area is that we're the headwaters. What we do here can affect the the watershed below us and the rest of the state."***

## **Boot Lake Association Social Activities**

**Our Mission Statement** is as follows:

To unite the Boot Lake area property owners, residents, and others who share concern in preserving our lake, conserving our wild life, promoting education relative to these ideals, and offering opportunities for social activity.

The Boot Lake Association invites you to join us as we enjoy, share, preserve and revere beautiful Boot Lake. The association meets throughout the year for social gatherings and is overseen by elected officers and a Board of Directors.



The Association organizes and hosts several social activities. We host an Annual Meeting and Pot Luck; we do a Road Pickup and Pot Luck twice a year; and we schedule and arrange the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Boat Parade. In addition, the Ladies of Boot Lake hold a monthly coffee club from September to May in area homes, except for December when we do a Christmas gathering for all at an area restaurant. In addition, the past few years we have dined a few times during the winter at Ice Cracking Lodge, which offers a special 2 for 1 dinner on Thursdays.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for other social activities let us know. Email: [boot.lake.association@gmail.com](mailto:boot.lake.association@gmail.com)

## **Calendar of Events**

- December Christmas Dining Out at Area Restaurant – TBD
- Spring Road Pickup and Potluck – Thursday May 14, 2020

- Annual 4th of July Boat Parade – Saturday, July 4, 2020

- Annual Meeting and Potluck – Sunday, August 9, 2020

Note: We are looking for volunteers to host the potluck events in May and August. If you are willing please email us at: [boot.lake.association@gmail.com](mailto:boot.lake.association@gmail.com)

## **Association Dues**

A reminder, annual dues are \$10. If you haven't already paid you can make check payable to:

Boot Lake Association.

Send your dues to our Treasurer:



Craig Nieman 53199 Sunrise Lane Park Rapids, MN 56470.

***See you on the Lake !!***