



# Shoreline News

**Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association**

June 2010

## The President's Pen

This past year the BPLROA Board has taken major steps to protect our lake and provide a long-term plan to maintain the quality of our waters. The ongoing projects are moving forward and we are realizing the benefits of the effort. The new projects are bigger, broader and will help protect our lake for years to come. Lake stewardship is our primary focus.

The Lake Management Project is a multi-phase effort that will define our lake, position the membership to proactively target for invasive prevention, identification, eradication, and act as the foundation for funding. Please refer to the article later in this newsletter.

With the help of association members, our boat landing is monitored for invasives prior to any watercraft launch. This volunteer effort has been evolving for several years, and is now an integral part of our lake management project.

We are in conversation with the DNR, town of Land o Lakes and Vilas County about the condition of the boat launch. It is a tough task to move these organizations to action, but progress is being made and we are optimistic ramp repair and stone berm removal will occur this year.

Around the lake, mostly on the west end, some stumps are beginning to emerge. They are about one or two feet below the surface and are a potential watercraft hazard. Please review the map on the information bulletin board at the public landing for stump locations. If you see a stump that is not marked, mark it with a milk bottle and notify one of the board members. We hope to have them removed during the month of June.

There has been some homeowner changes on our lake and we welcome all the new residents and hope that your lake experience will be fulfilling. New directories and maps are in development and will be available soon.

Our lake survives, not only by nature, but by the people that use it. The best way protect our lake is to support the on-going board projects. A little time volunteering for one of our projects can go a long way. If you are a current volunteer, we appreciate your time and effort. If you have not yet volunteered any time, please think about it and contact a board member for assistance.

### Mark your calendars for the annual meeting - July 3rd

Everyone have a great summer and we will see you on the water.

Dale Ekkela, President  
Big Portage Lake Riparian Association

### Event Calendar 2010

#### **July 3th Annual Meeting**

LOL Fire barn  
8:30 a.m. – Social  
9:00 a.m. – Meeting  
Quick Board meeting to follow

#### **Sept. 4th– Board Meeting**

Location – Tom Gratz  
8:30 – Coffee  
9:00 – Meeting



**BOARD MEMBERS** – If you would like to serve on the board, please call Dale Ekkela 715-547-6804 or any board member. Everyone is welcome to volunteer. Board terms are 3 years - meetings are held just 3 times per year – Memorial Day& 4<sup>th</sup> of July & Labor Day weekends. No experience necessary. New people & new ideas are always appreciated and very important to the continuing stewardship of Big Portage Lake.

**God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame**  
*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

**TREASURER'S REPORT**  
By Alice Muehlethaler

2010 annual membership dues in BPLROA \$35 per year for family membership and \$20 per year for Individuals.  
Thanks to all of **YOU** for supporting the Riparian Association.

<b>As of 05/28/2010</b>	
Checking Accounts	\$ 4,338.48
Savings Account	323.25
Non-cash Inventory – shirts	50.00
Fidelity Portfolio	14,193.63
Grant Account	12,773.19
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 31,678.55</b>

In 2003, the Board set up the **Environmental Contingency Fund**. Donations made to this fund are specifically earmarked for protecting our lake from invasive plants and other catastrophic problems.  
**Contributions are most welcome to prepare for future needs.**



**LAKE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROJECT KICK-OFF**  
by Jules Eberhardt



The kick-off meeting for the project will be held in conjunction with the BPLROA Annual Meeting at 9:00am Saturday, July 3, at the LOL Fire Barn.

Tim Hoyman of Onterra, (*the lake management planning consulting firm leading the project*), will make a presentation and answer questions about the project. Afterwards he will meet with our project planning committee to discuss the project in more detail including volunteer participation in the field work planned for this year. These activities include water quality sampling and analysis, an aquatic plant survey, mapping and analysis, as well as shoreline and watershed assessments and a phosphorus loading study. Lake user input will also be gathered.

The overall purpose of the project is to help us better understand our lake and help us be better prepared to respond to any “infection” by invasive species.

The Wisconsin DNR awarded BPLROA two grants covering 75% of the estimated cost of the project for 2010 with a third grant application pending for the 2011 portion of the two-year project.

We have the opportunity to offset most of the remaining 25% of project costs through volunteer assistance in the field work as well as participating in the on-going Clean Boats/Clean Water boat landing monitoring program. Just attending the kick-off meeting generates volunteer hour credits – so mark your calendar and we’ll see you at the meeting!

**PROTECTING OUR LAKE  
IS  
EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY**

# PICNIC IN THE PARK



Due to circumstances beyond our control, the BPLROA board deeply regrets having to cancel the August 2010 picnic.

We are exploring social event options for the summer of 2011 and welcome any and all suggestions. You may contact any board member with your ideas.



## 2009-2010 Board Members

Dale Ekkela	President	715-547-6804
John Alt	Vice President	715-547-3364
Alice Muehlethaler	Secretary/Treasurer	715-547-3532
Tom Gratz	Director	715-547-6899
Dawn Eckstein	Director/Newsletter	715-547-3207
Dan Johns	Director	715-547-3766
Dale Reilley	Director	715-547-6305
Jules Eberhardt	Director	715-547-3259
Jill Edwards	Director	
Keith Chapman	Director	715-547-3924
Dave Leifheit	Director	715-547-3780

*Cut out and post by your house phone for easy reference*

# Did You Know ?



One of the largest members of the rodent family, beavers, evolved from the so-called giant beavers—*Castoroides* of North America and *Trogontherium* of Europe—that roamed the Earth more than one million years ago. Dated remains suggest that giant beavers lived as recently as 10,000 years ago. These beavers may not have depended upon water as much as their successors, as no evidence suggests they built dams. Rather, they lived in large burrows in the ground. The species resembled the modern beaver, only much, much larger. With a massive tail more than two feet long and incisors up to six inches long, some fossilized specimens were as large as a black bear.

Modern day beavers are much smaller - body length 24-41 inches and weight 25 to 60 pounds. The beaver tail can be as long as 19". Their habitat ranges throughout North American in ponds, marshes, rivers and wetlands. Beavers live on average

10-12 years in the wild and their diets consist mainly of tree bark from birch, maple, beech, willow birch and aspen; they also dine on aquatic vegetation; buds and roots.

Adult beavers mate for life and live in family colonies consisting of an adult male and female and three to four kits. Mating takes place in winter and after 105 days of gestation, the female gives birth to a litter of up to 8 kits. Once the kits are big enough to leave the lodge, they spend their time playing in the water around the lodge. Kits are buoyant and cannot dive. The young beavers stay with their parents - working in the family business of maintaining the lodge and dam - until around age 2 when they reach sexual maturity and then are chased away by their parents and often stake their own claim downstream. Beavers communicate in a variety of ways - posture, scent, marking, vocalizations and by slapping their tail on water - which can be heard up to a mile away.

Considered the best engineers among rodents, beavers construct dams with mud, brush, stones, poles, vegetation and other materials to create a safe lodging and a good food supply. Each lodge is built near the dam in the middle of the pond. It consists of a nesting chamber, above the water's surface, and several entrances through underwater channels. Wonderful diggers, beavers are known to burrow underground tunnels from the banks to favorite feeding grounds. They also excavate channels to other parts of the stream or river. Beavers work actively to maintain their lodge and repair any damage done by storms or flooding. Most lodges survive winter.

Considered nature's BUILDER - they have a mixed effect on the environment. In rivers where fish must migrate, beavers impede the flow of water and fish thus being directly responsible for their demise. The ponds and wetlands created by a beaver dam attracts insects, birds and other creatures that thrive in still water. As beavers cut trees, new branches grow providing them and other animals with fresh food.

In the 18th and early 19th century, beavers were hunted for their fur intensively which was used as currency. Some historians credit beavers with contributing to the development of the U.S. and Canada than any other animal. In fact, the American beaver is the national animal of Canada and is depicted on their nickel.

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## BPLROA WEBSITE:

If you have not yet visited the website, please do so... [www.bigportagelake.org](http://www.bigportagelake.org)

Much time and effort has gone into the creation of our web site and the on-going maintenance and uploading of data of interest to our members. Many thanks to Ron Steiner - web master and everyone who has provided data for the site.

You can now read past issues of Shoreline News; a summary of past accomplishments and future plans; view a survey map showing depths and information on the lake itself; courtesy codes so everyone can enjoy their lake time even links to other Wisconsin website for information. You can see at a glance the schedule, month by month, where help is needed for the boat landing monitoring and much more. And there are photos - very cool!

This website is the "go to" place for all things Big Portage if you are on-line.



A recent article from the WDNR addresses the coming 4th of July holiday and fireworks:

*"The number of fires started from fireworks each year is staggering, when understanding that most occur during the short July 4th period. In Wisconsin, where firework use is highly restricted, most forest fires starts are in direct correlation to fire danger."*

Since our area is in the midst of a long drought period, it seems sensible that we take every precaution to avoid a fire. In Wisconsin, the following fireworks are **restricted** (not to be used) throughout the State:

- Bottle rockets
- Roman candles
- M-70's
- Firecrackers

Permits are given to towns for annual fireworks displays but are never granted to individuals. There are a few **unrestricted** (OK to use) fireworks allowed to be used by individuals:

- smoke producing devices
- fountains
- sparklers

**PLEASE** consider the risks of having fireworks - based on an 11 year average from the National Fire Protection Agency over 32,000 fires occur due to the mishandling of fireworks. Of this total, over 90% occur outdoors. Furthermore, over 3000 structures & vehicles are lost which leads to costing the general public over \$30 million dollars in property damage alone.

For a few moments of "ooh's and aah's...it could take 100 years to replace the woods surrounding Big Portage - the risk is too great for the reward.

Please do not use or allow guests to use fireworks on our lake. Make plans instead to go into the Land O' Lakes fireworks display which is one of the best in the area.

## 2010 Boat Landing Monitoring - Clean Boats/Clean Waters

*By Dale Reilley*

The Clean Boats / Clean Waters campaign continues this summer and requires everyone to pitch in and help protect our lake. Volunteers are manning the boat landing and inspecting boats and trailers since opening day - first weekend in May.

Our letter and phone campaign, to increase AIS awareness and generate new interest in volunteering at the boat landing, was well received by our lake association members. To date, we have logged approximately 50 volunteer hours - a great start - and more needs to be done.

If you need some training, it is quick, easy and available on the first Saturday of the month at the boat landing from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Or call me 970-210-2708 and I'll arrange a time to accommodate your schedule. Volunteers may work as few as 2 hours at the landing - any time devoted is a help!

All of the volunteer hours are logged so that our monitoring history is available should the unthinkable happen AND this year every hour is a credit toward the Lake Management Project which saves our Association money.

Thanks to all of you who have participated this season and a special thanks to John Alt and Jim Bolick who assisted in the organization of this effort. Together we can protect Big Portage for future generations.

More information is posted on the new Big Portage Lake web site - [www.bigportagelake.org](http://www.bigportagelake.org)

### Big Portage Lake Needs YOU!

Please fill out the 2010 Information form and send it in with your 2010 dues **IF** your form is not marked "PAID"

Any additional donations to the Environmental Fund are always most appreciated and will help with the cost of the Lake Management Project 2010-2011