

Leech Lake

ASSOCIATION



The Voice of Leech Lake

IN THIS ISSUE

From the President	1
DNR Fisheries Report	2-4
US Army Corps Eng	5-6
Healthy "Water" Bodies	6-8
Leech Lake in Antiquity	8-10
Ads/Board of Directors	11
LLA News.....	12

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 19-21

Eelpout Festival

February 25-26

35th Resort,
Retail Buyers Show

March 6

Woman's Expo,
Northern Lights

March 12-13

Moondance Bonspiel,
Curling Club

March 15

Leech Lake Association Mtg

March 27-28

WACC Sports &
Travel Show

Our Mission: To be good stewards of Leech Lake and its environs, recognizing the vulnerability of the lake, and the need for citizens -- both individually and collectively -- to assume responsibility for its care.

Letter from the President,

This first decade of the 21st century has been a wild ride indeed. From 9/11 through four-dollar gas to the near meltdown of our financial markets, good news has been in short supply. But there has been some - particularly in our own Leech Lake community. Good walleye fishing has returned, and with it an upturn in local businesses. And the lake itself remains as beautiful, tranquil, and pristine as ever.

It is the aim of the Leech Lake Association and other like-minded groups to keep it that way. Several steps are underway in this regard. Perhaps most notably, we have been meeting with the DNR since August as part of a 17-member Leech Lake Advisory Committee. Our goal: to make recommendations to the DNR as they write a new five-year plan for managing Leech Lake natural resources. The plan will include objectives and recommendations for habitat protection, walleye stocking, cormorant control, preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species, maintaining water quality, and other factors critical to the health of the lake and the local economy. We are proud to be part of this Advisory Committee, which includes members from the Leech Lake Fishing Task Force, the Leech Lake Tribe, the Isaac Walton League, the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, and other interested experts. Leech Lake Association Board Members John Annexstad, Dennis Leff, Ivan Paulsen, and Dave Laursen are members of the Advisory Committee. Together, I believe we can make a strong contribution to keeping Leech Lake a place where we can all be proud to live



and engage in our own particular pursuit of happiness. Work of the Advisory Committee will wrap up this winter. The DNR will circulate the new plan for public input prior to implementation.

As we enter a new year I want to thank each of you for your time and membership dollars which make our work towards a better Leech Lake possible. Volunteering efforts by our own group and others are both needed and important. According to Doug Schultz of the DNR Walker Office, during 2009 some 60 different volunteers (including some from the Leech Lake Association) contributed over 300 hours with muskie sampling and egg take, walleye fry stocking, and fish sampling operations on Leech Lake. This does not include the time putting out buoys, taking water samples, and distributing Invasive species warning signs to Leech Lake resorts.



If you have not renewed your Leech Lake Association membership for 2010 I urge you to do so now.. A '09 following your name on your mailing label means your membership has expired.. May all of you have a prosperous and happy 2010.

Robert Gisvold, LLA President



Leech Lake Update October 2009
Walker Area Fisheries Office
07316 State Hwy. 371 NW
Walker, MN 56484
218-547-1683



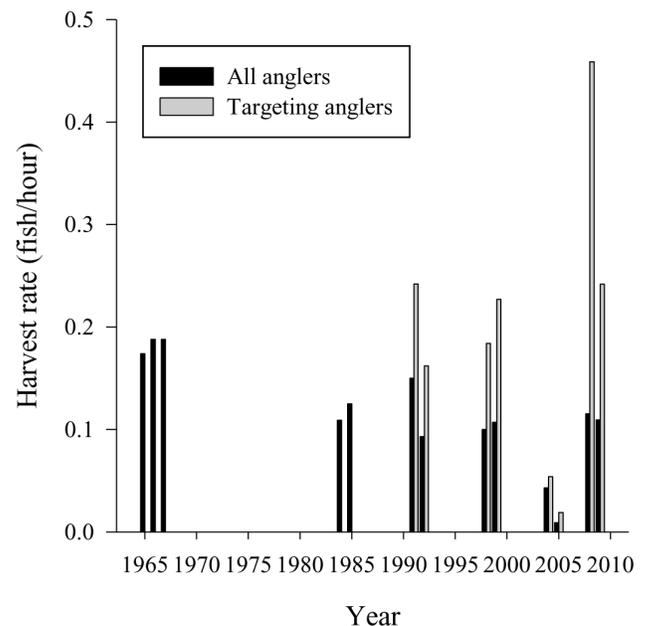
GREETINGS!

This update has been excerpted from a recent report that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR sent to Leech Lake area resorts, businesses, and others interested in DNR activities on Leech Lake. The complete report and earlier reports can be obtained from the Walker DNR office from Doug Schultz (doug.w.schultz@state.mn.us) or Harlan Fierstine (harlan.fierstine@state.mn.us).

2009 FISHING SEASON

- Another great summer of walleye fishing on Leech Lake is in the books. Total fishing pressure during the open -water season was approximately 785, 000 angler-hours, the highest observed since 1999.
- Approximately 102,000 pounds of walleye were harvested. Anglers targeting walleye had a season average catch rate of nearly 1.0 fish/hour and a harvest rate near 0.25 fish/hour (see illustration).
- Nearly 35% of all walleye caught by anglers during the season were within the 18 -26-inch protected slot limit (and had to be returned to the water).
- The current walleye regulation of an 18-26-inch protected slot was originally due for review this winter. However, to accommodate the broader statewide evaluation of slot limits across all of Minnesota's large walleye lakes as well as to obtain an additional year of information, the Leech Lake walleye slot limit will be formally reviewed prior to the 2011 fishing season. The current regulation will remain in effect for the 2010 fishing season.

Walleye Harvest Rates in Leech Lake, 1964-2008



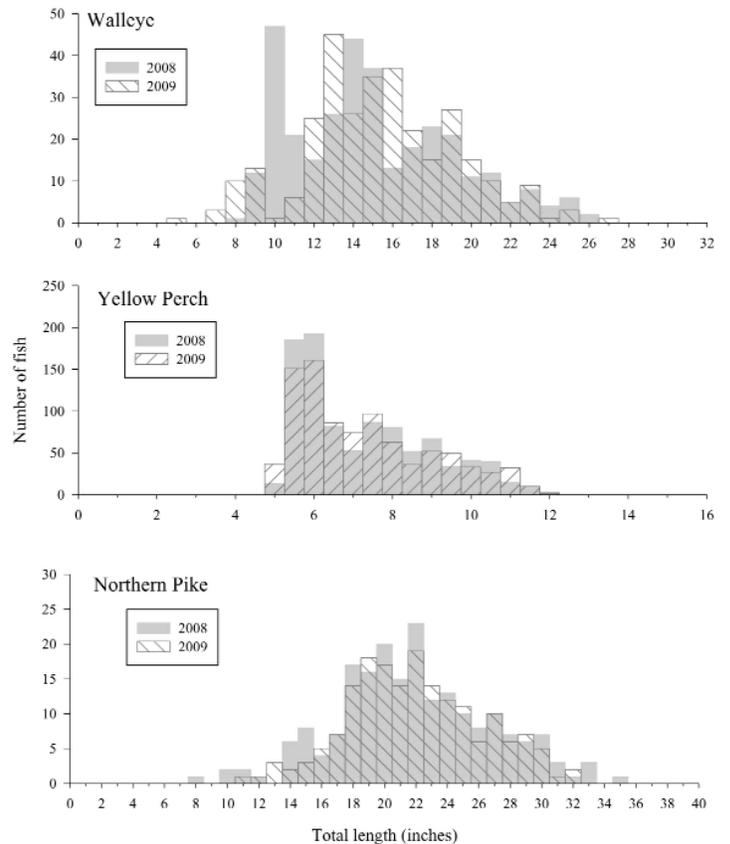
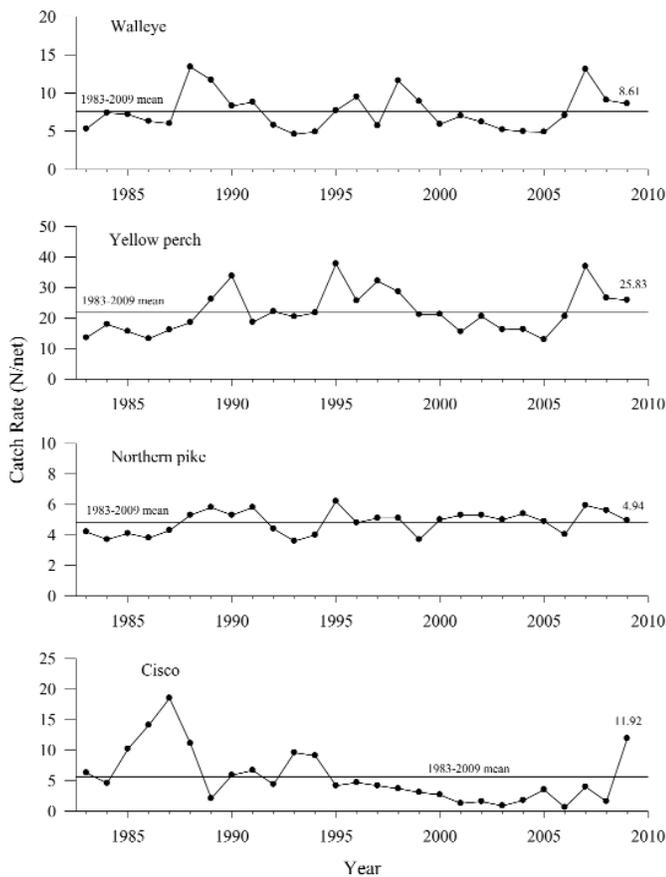
2009 LARGE LAKE SURVEY RESULTS

- Shoreline seining was completed in July, trawling in August, and gill netting and electrofishing in September.
- Seine (65 young-of-year walleye/acre) and trawl (153 young-of-year walleye/hour) catch rates were near the historical averages. Seine catch rates of young-of-year perch were below average, but trawl catch rates of young perch were near the long-term average.
- In the spring of 2009, 22.6 million OTC-marked walleye fry from the Boy River run were stocked into Leech Lake. Of the 366 young-of-year walleye captured and examined, 50% were stocked fish. The estimated hatch rate for wild walleye fry during 2009 was 0.60% - the highest observed since stocking OTC-marked fry began in 2005 and further evidence that natural walleye reproduction in Leech Lake is excellent.

(continued on page 3)

(DNR Report continued from page 2)

- Gill net catch rates (see bar chart) of walleye, yellow perch, and northern pike were similar to last year and remain above long-term averages (see graph showing gill net catch rates from 1983 through 2009). Catch rates of cisco were the highest observed in 20 years. Good survival (recruitment) of young cisco in the last couple years led to the increase in catch rates.
- The size distributions of walleye, northern pike, and yellow perch sampled in gill nets were also similar to 2008 in many respects (see bar chart-next page).
- Of walleye sampled in gill nets, 42% were shorter than 15 inches
- The 2008 year class of walleye appears to be near or below average in strength and, based on young-of-year sampling, the 2009 year class is projected to be in the range of average.
- With strong year classes produced during 2005-2007, below average recruitment during 2008 and potentially 2009 despite higher fry densities than 2005-2007 is not a surprise. While cool summers and slow growth appear to be the primary cause, interactions between previous year classes (ie., suppression) and increased competition with a year class (ie., more mouths competing for same food supply) should not be discounted as possible contributors.
- Currently, the Leech Lake walleye population is in good condition and anglers have been enjoying excellent fishing.



(continued on page 4)

(DNR Report continued from page 3)

INVASIVE SPECIES WATCH

- Eurasian Watermilfoil (EMW) was discovered in Leech Lake in 2004 and has been expanding every year since. Extensive searches have not discovered rooted EMW outside of artificial harbors; however, it continues to be discovered in new locations (22 harbors in 2008). Inspections and treatment continue on an annual basis. Leech Lake also harbors other invasive species, including the rusty crayfish, curly-leaf pondweed, and banded mystery snails. Zebra mussels have not yet been found in Leech Lake, but were recently discovered in the Alexandria area.
- The DNR posts Invasive Species warning signs at all public landings. This year the Leech Lake Association posted such signs at private accesses as well.



DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT CONTROL

The Leech Lake Reservation Department of Resource Management (DRM) conducted cormorant control efforts once again in 2009 and removed 3,084 birds from the lake. As in past years, these efforts were contracted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture with financial assistance from the MN DNR. A telemetry study which tracks cormorant movement and foraging patterns on the lake was also conducted by the DRM during 2009, with data to be analyzed this winter. For more details, contact Steve Mortensen at 218-335-7423, or from the DRM's website (www.lldrm.org/corm.html).



LEECH LAKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LLAC)

- A committee comprised of 17 stakeholders with diverse interests will make recommendations to DNR on walleye stocking, fishing regulations, cormorant management, and habitat protection as the DNR updates its 2005-2010 Leech Lake fisheries management plan.
- The LLAC, which began meeting in August, includes representatives from the Leech Lake Fishing Task Force, the Leech Lake Association, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Leech Lake Watershed Foundation, Izaak Walton League, and Anglers for Habitat, as well as fishing guides and local and statewide anglers.
- The group is charged with recommending a management framework to the DNR that identifies management actions, thresholds, models, and monitoring plans for each of these four key areas.
- DNR leadership is seeking recommendations pertaining to the biological and social aspects related to Leech Lake and will consider the committee's recommendations and other public input when approving a 2011-2015 plan for Leech Lake. Final LLAC recommendations to DNR leadership are expected sometime this winter.
- Information on Leech Lake and the planning process is available online at <http://mndnr.gov/fisheries/management//llmp.html>.

FUTURE WALLEYE STOCKING

- An additional 22.5 million OTC-marked walleye fry will be stocked in Leech Lake this spring (2010) as a result of previous legislative action. Walleye stocking during 2011 and beyond will be spelled out in the DNR's new five-year management plan taking into account recommendations from the 17-member Leech Lake Advisory Committee.





US Army Corps of Engineers

LEECH LAKE RESERVOIR OPERATING LEVELS

The ordinary operating range for Leech Lake is 1293.20 to 1295.70 feet. However, we do our best to operate within a narrow desirable summer range of only 1294.50 to 1294.90 feet with a normal winter drawdown to 1293.80 feet. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of maintaining that range due to climatological variables. The lake level is drawn down during the winter to provide storage for spring snowmelt runoff and rain. The specific amount of the drawdown depends on water level and moisture conditions from year to year. Levels that deviate from our target range can create adverse effects such as flooding, shoreline erosion, ice damage, habitat destruction, inaccessibility for boats to navigate or to utilize launch ramps, docks and lifts, etc. However studies have shown that lower water levels stimulate native aquatic vegetation growth that improves habitat and water quality. To attain target water levels we must look months ahead and make climatological predictions regarding weather patterns. No one can accurately predict weather that far into the future so we use the Climate Prediction Center 30 and 90-day Outlook, current weather conditions, along with monthly and seasonal normal weather data. For example, we are currently taking into account the current weather trend (abnormally dry), current moisture conditions (1" snow moisture content on the ground with 16" frost as of 22 January 2010) and balancing these with normal climatological data for the upcoming months. But there is no guarantee that any of these conditions will hold true.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

For the past few years Leech Lake has been affected by drought that has created unusually low lake levels during some open water months. Not only are annual amounts of precipitation significant but the timing matters. For example, from March 2009 through December 2009, almost 40% of precipitation received during that period occurred during only two of the 10 months. The timing of the precipitation combined with evaporation caused variations from the desirable summer range:



Recent Climatological Precipitation Data for Leech Lake Dam (Precipitation is water quantity and not snow depth):

<u>Month</u>	<u>Normal*</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Ave Lake Level NGVD 1929</u>	<u>Ave Discharge</u>
March 2009	1.06"	3.04"	1294.21	606 cfs
**				
April	1.57"	1.63"	1294.62	949 cfs
May	2.71"	1.55"	1294.59	754 cfs
June	3.87"	2.66"	1294.41	253 cfs
July	4.40"	1.71"	1294.26	141 cfs
August	3.76"	2.24"	1294.12	115 cfs
September	2.82"	0.92"	1293.90	110 cfs
October	2.50"	5.02"	1293.78	109 cfs
November	1.19"	1.10"	1294.10	177 cfs
December	0.71"	1.03"	1294.13	315 cfs
January 2010	0.76"	?		
February	0.50"	?		
March	1.06"	?		

* Leech Lake Dam, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climatological Data, 1971-2000. (NOAA Station No. 214652).

** cfs = Cubic Feet per Second.

THE CURRENT STATUS

At the time of writing this article, January 22nd, 2010, Leech Lake is at 1294.12 feet. The lake doesn't have a "big river" such as the Mississippi providing inflow to easily raise the level but it benefitted from above normal precipitation received last March and again in October. Fall rains bounced the lake up to the current level from the low of 1293.64 feet attained on October 2nd, 2009. The current discharge of Leech Lake Dam is approximately matching inflow thus avoiding a significant winter drawdown and holding the lake at about 1294.12 feet. But there's risk in minimizing the winter drawdown level; we may inadvertently create a high water situation during spring/early summer if climate conditions suddenly turn from abnormally dry to unusually wet. In mid to late February, snow surveys of the Leech Lake Watershed will be performed to ascertain snow water content and the results evaluated. In the mean time local snow water content, water levels, and frost thickness will be monitored weekly. We will adapt our operating plan accordingly as climate conditions and the calendar change but unfortunately after spring snowmelt occurs Leech Lake Dams' ability to regulate the lake level is greatly

(continued on page 6)

(US Army Corps of Engineers Report continued from page 5)

diminished and Mother Nature takes control. Once again timing of seasonal precipitation amounts and evaporation will become the largest factor determining whether we deviate from the narrow summer range. In addition, discharges are coordinated with other Mississippi Headwaters Dams for flood damage reduction, environmental quality, Tribal Trust, etc. All climate data collected is shared with the National Weather Service.

CLIMATE CONDITIONS

For more information regarding climate conditions please visit the following websites: <http://climate.umn.edu/> and <http://climate.umn.edu/doc/journal/hc1001.htm>

MORE INFORMATION

You can visit the Corps of Engineers Water Control website at <http://www.mvp-wc.usace.army.mil/> for more information on the regulation of Leech Lake Reservoir. Questions can be directed to Timm Rennecke at Leech Lake Dam, 218-654-3145.

ROPE STUDY UPDATE

The NEPA process has been completed for the study. At this time, a plan to better simulate a more natural hydrologic regime that would benefit the environment for the Headwaters is not acceptable to the general public. In essence, the recommended plan is an update of the current operating plan with some minor beneficial modifications. It is expected under the recommended plan that the ecosystems within the reservoirs will

experience a gradual decline in desirable qualities, similar to those projected for the current operating plan and disclosed early in the study. For Leech Lake this means water level targets will remain unchanged from the current plan. However minor changes affecting downstream include minimum flows released from Leech Lake Dam during normal reservoir water levels will be increased from the current 100 cfs to 120 cfs. When reservoir water levels fall below 1292.70 feet, releases will be reduced to 60 cfs. A spring pulse of increased flow will be released at times when doing so will have no adverse effect on flooding downstream. The recommended plan including these minor changes have little or no effect and we will begin operating under the plan after updates are completed to our reservoir regulation manual.

RECREATION

The Corps of Engineers, in addition to managing water levels, also offers public recreation on some of their Water Resource Development Projects. Leech Lake Dam and Recreation Area provides public lake access, camping, picnicking, shore fishing, and a variety of other amenities that are available to the public. All facilities will be open for the 2010 season. In addition, Tonga's Launch Service provides marina services and guided fishing trips. Please visit: www.mvp.usace.army.mil/recreation for more information about your local and other Corps of Engineers recreation areas. You can make camping reservations at Leech Lake or other areas on the internet: www.recreation.gov or by calling 877-444-6777. You can speak directly with site staff at Leech Lake Dam by calling 218-654-3145.

Healthy (Water) Bodies

by Susan Kedzic

Leech Lake Division of Resource Management January 2010

It takes willpower. Tremendous willpower-to don the boots, hat, scarf, gloves, snow pants, and coat for my daily walk amid the deep-freeze. I've cut back on office-donuts and office-cookies; I really do seek healthier choices. Two mornings a week I squeeze five minutes of yoga into my day. I've marginally improved my sleeping habits. Sometimes, in the small corner of a weekend, I make space for reading or art. And "at my age" I should be lifting weights to increase bone mass---not there yet!

The corner-stones of health: diet, exercise, rest, and stress reduction are central to "whole" body health. Yet it sure isn't easy; old behaviors are doggedly difficult to tame and other responsibilities fill our lives.

Medical research confirms the corner-stones of health may improve current medical conditions, increase longevity, and prevent disease. And yet, disease prevention is not the primary focus of our 'primary physicians'. Unlike dentists who focus largely on prevention, our doctors are caught in response-mode; they must treat the symptoms we present them (often) from years of abuse, neglect, and/or stress-and even those "bad genes".

Actively caring for our bodies is powerful medicine but it demands we address multiple aspects of our health simultaneously. There is no one-stop-shopping for over

(continued on page 7)

(Healthy "Water" Bodies continued from page 6)

all health, no miracle shot or wonder pill. There is no substitute for active care. But with action and commitment, the results can enrich our quality (and quantity) of life.

The same can be said for the natural places we enjoy.

To many Minnesotans water is a natural backdrop to life; whether fishing, swimming, boating, hunting, or just relaxing, a favorite lake or river is the preferred setting. From these places flow family stories, memories, friends, and traditions. Yet the overall health of our favorite waters is not secure.

Like us, lakes and streams have health requirements too. The corner-stones of health for aquatic systems are habitat, water quality, water flow, and disturbance.

A key element of aquatic health is rooted in the existence of intact native plant communities. Diverse in structure and species, these communities provide shelter, food, and habitat for zooplankton, micro- and macro-invertebrates, minnows, young of the year fish, amphibians, birds, and waterfowl. Here the web of life dashes, darts, mingles, gels, and morphs among the reeds, rocks, and rushes. Within this world a keen observer can explore the strange and fascinating diversity of aquatic life, appreciate the complex biological and chemical interconnections responsible for water quality, and value the link between native plant diversity and invasion potential...the knee bones connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bones connected to the hip bone....

Healthy rooted native plant communities capture and cycle nutrients keeping our lakes on a strict and healthy "nutrient diet". Their intentional or inadvertent removal unleashes a cascade of chemical and biological impacts. Without them, nutrient loading proceeds unhindered and water quality drops.

Like calories for people, excess nutrients are detrimental to lake health. Besides providing food and shelter, native aquatic plants capture phosphorus required for plant growth. When excess phosphorous enters the system (or is released internally), it is hungrily consumed by algae, followed by their offensive algal blooms. **Algal blooms**, in turn, reduce water clarity and consume dissolved oxygen in addition to phosphorous. Dissolved oxygen is critical for both aquatic plant and animal

*"Like us, lakes
and streams
have health
requirements too."*

life-such as darting fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

High water clarity helps maintain proper oxygen levels and increases the depth of dissolved oxygen. Proper levels of dissolved oxygen, at depth, reduce the potential of internal release of phosphorous from lake sediments. When oxygen is abundant it binds with phosphorous as oxidized iron (ferric iron) and discourages algal growth. But when oxygen is depleted (perhaps gobbled by algae), reduced iron (ferrous iron) releases phosphorous, launching another algal bloom.

We increase the availability of nutrients with our activities. We build homes. We install and fertilize lawns. We "improve" shoreline frontage. We clear "weeds" from the beach. While blissfully "improving" our home at the water's edge we are compromising a delicate nutrient balance-either through nutrient loading, native plant removal, and/or disturbance.

In effect, we create the "All You Can Eat Super Buffet" for algae. This "Buffet" of excess nutrients not only deteriorates lake health but has been shown to facilitate the invasion of non-native species.

Removal of native plants undermines aquatic health in another significant way. It alters the structure of the plant community and "opens the door" to invasive species by revealing a vacant and disturbed space. After establishment, invasives themselves may "open the door even wider" to more non-native "hitchhikers" through physical, biological, or chemical changes they create. Once the "door is completely open", regaining lake health is increasingly difficult, if not impossible.

Managing for natural water flow cycles is the "exercise" that natural aquatic systems need. Just as inactivity is harmful to our health, artificially stable water levels (from dams) adversely impact aquatic health. In areas where aquatic organisms are adapted to water level fluctuations, artificially stable water flow results in the decline of critical habitat for native plants and animals. During a significant change in flow, fish spawning beds are scoured and excess sediments are flushed away. Lower water levels expose aquatic seedbanks and stimulate germination, which is vital to the healthy regrowth of native plant life, and is especially critical for wild rice germination.

(continued on page 8)



(Healthy "Water" Bodies continued from page 7)

You could consider disturbance in aquatic ecosystems the equivalent of stress on human health. Stress is natural and an important part of survival, but too much stress is unhealthy. Natural disturbance across the landscape (fire) or within water resources (flooding or drought) is inherent, even necessary, for some plant communities to thrive. Yet natural disturbances occurring today can result in very undesirable species due to the global exchange of non-native invasives. Human-created disturbances (dams, docks, dredging) are significantly different: the scope, frequency, timing, duration, and degree of disturbance are

not often consistent with historic levels. Such disturbances undermine the health of water bodies by removing native plant life and increasing nutrient loads. The old adage: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" has renewed significance to resource managers and landowners alike; because, it is vastly more cost-effective to prevent disturbance than to "restore" degraded habitats.

A similar parallel plagues our modern health care system: we spend heavily on treating initially preventable diseases. We can choose a different paradigm. We can decide to spend our dollars on prevention...but that would require...well...an act of congress. Or a very dedicated and vocal citizenry.

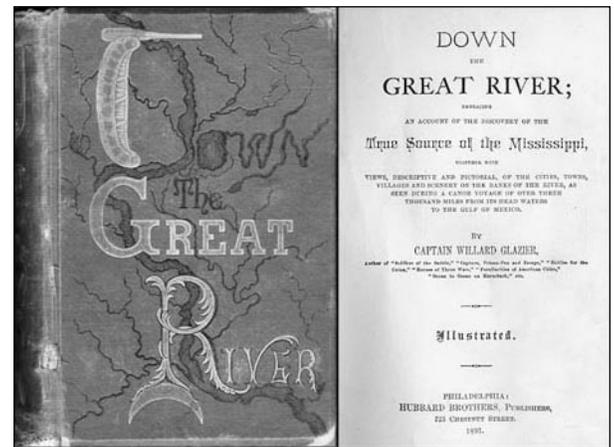
We can choose a different reality for aquatic ecosystems as well. We can focus on creating and enforcing policies that address the underpinnings of health: 1) protect and manage for diverse native plant communities, 2) manage water flow cycles to stimulate natural processes, 3) minimize non-natural resource addition, and 4) minimize non-natural disturbances. So do we stop removing weeds or spiny water fleas from our boats or trailers? No, that is similar to refusing to wash your hands during the peak of flu season. Washing your hands is a "healthy habit" to maintain even if you are currently experiencing tremendous fitness.

Like caring for our own human bodies, actively managing Minnesota's water-bodies will require changing our values, choices, and behaviors to reflect a broader vision of aquatic health. And, it will certainly demand willpower, maybe even tremendous willpower!

The question is: Are we ready?

LEECH LAKE IN ANTIQUITY

In 1884 Captain Willard Glazier, a Civil War Veteran and explorer, traveled by way of Leech Lake to find the "true source" of the Mississippi River. While Schoolcraft had identified Lake Itasca as the river's source as early as 1832, Glazier had heard rumors that there were waters flowing into Lake Itasca from somewhere beyond, and that this "somewhere beyond" was the "true source." He believed that discovering the "true source" would make him famous, and also give him material for a book., which he did in fact write. He recounts his adventures in the book titled "Down the Great River; An Account of the Discovery of the True Source of the Mississippi," published by Hubbard Publishers of Philadelphia in 1891.



His book provides an interesting picture of the Leech Lake country as it was in 1884, before the arrival of the loggers and homesteaders. Excerpts from his book will be included in this Newsletter from time to time. The book also includes an 1880's map of the Leech Lake area, which seems surprisingly accurate for its time (enclosed). In the Summer Issue, Captain Glazier described his trip from Brainerd to Leech Lake. In this issue, he describes his stay at Leech Lake before embarking for the "source."

We Arrive at Leech Lake (in the words of Captain Glazier)

Upon our arrival at Leech Lake our first glimpse...was of a boy about six years of age, who ran out of a wigwam - his copper-colored skin unadorned by a single garment - brandishing a bow in one hand, and carrying arrows in the other. He was very far from being warlike, however, and on seeing his white brothers suddenly disappeared in the bushes. A little further on we came to several wigwams, and finally to a log cabin, over the door of which was

(continued on page 9)

(Leech Lake in Antiquity continued from page 8)

nailed a pine board, bearing the inscription, "hotel." Here we were received by a rough-looking man with long hair and unkempt beard, and wearing in addition to his one other article of clothing a pair of pants made from a red blanket.

The prospect was certainly not an inviting one, and no reason was found for forming a more favorable opinion when we had alighted and inspected his squalid accommodations. But as the government officials were away from the post, we accepted the situation, and as graciously as possible placed our names, figuratively speaking, on the register of the Weaver House. We fared much better than we expected, however, dining on fresh fish and potatoes. Our supper and breakfast were selected from the same bill of fare, varied by the addition of "flapjacks." As a substitute for tenantable beds we swung our hammocks from the rafters of the loft.

This lake is one of the most peculiarly shaped bodies of water that I remember ever to have looked upon. Its characteristics are most striking, presenting an array of curves, peninsulas and bays rarely encountered even in a State which boasts of 10,000 lakes. Its waters are deep and clear in all its central parts, and yield the white fish, bass, pickerel and other species. The banks of its numerous and extensive bays abound in wild rice and attract in the proper season a great variety of waterfowl. The pelican, swan, brant and cormorant are the largest of the varieties that annually visit it. On the shores may be found elk, deer, and bear. Beavers were formerly abundant, but they have in a great measure disappeared. Such a lake in the midst of a hunting and trapping country is always considered a place of importance, and nearly a hundred years ago Canadian fur traders came through the forests and over the lakes and rivers from Montreal to establish a trading post at this point. The village on Leech Lake consists of a half dozen government buildings, as many log cabins, and twenty or thirty wigwams, scattered here and there near one of the arms of the lake.

It was a subject of much regret that my arrival at



Leech Lake was at a season when the Pillagers (Leech Lake Ojibwe) were away on their annual hunting and fishing excursions. Their absence from the Agency was a serious obstacle in our way of further progress. Being compelled to take the final step in my expedition to the source of the Mississippi from this point, it was important that I should complete my equipment by securing an interpreter, reliable guides, and birch bark canoes.

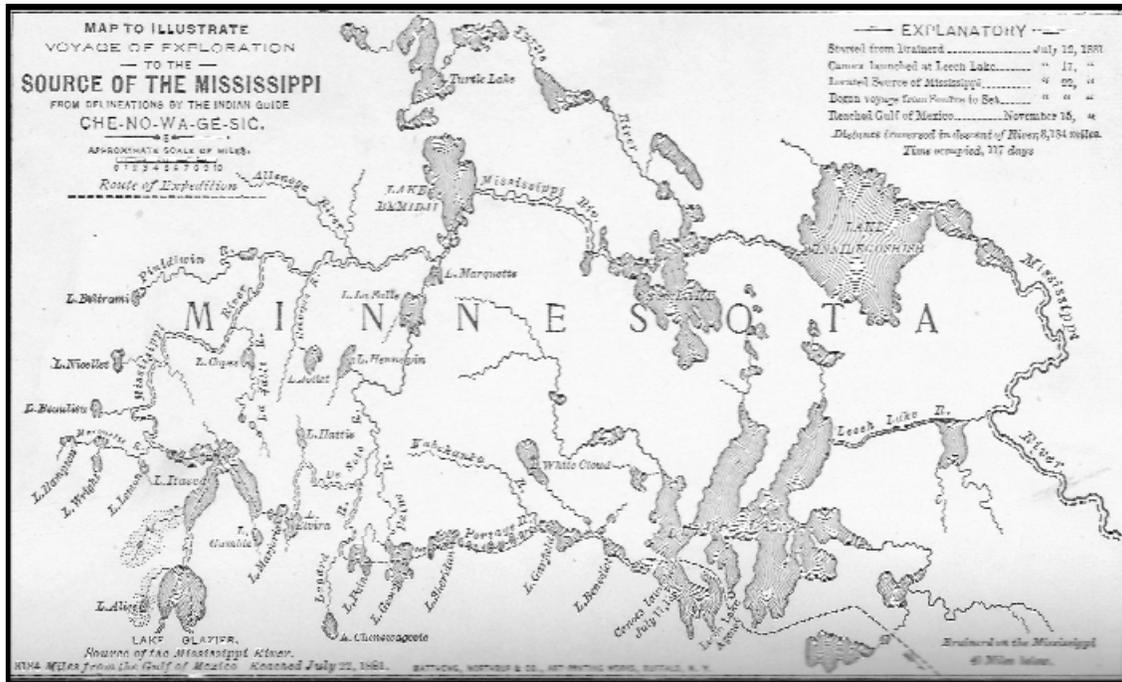
Conversations with Flat Mouth, head chief of the Chippewas, developed the fact that he knew of but one Indian (Chenowagesic) in the Chippewa country who had actually traversed the region which I was about to explore, and that he was then visiting some friends near Lake Winnebegoshish, and was not expected to return until the following Saturday, some three days later. Satisfied that Chenowagesic would prove indispensable to the success of my expedition, I decided to await his return to the Agency. The tedium of my sojourn at Leech Lake was broken by a dinner with Flat Mouth, a visit to the missionary (rev. Edwin Benedict), and conversations with (intpreter) Paul Beaulieu concerning the source of the Mississippi.

Although for many years I had been much among the natives of the forest, my dinner with Flat Mouth was the first instance of a meal with Indian royalty. Flat Mouth, the present ruler of the Pillagers, is a descendant of Aishke-bug-ekozh, the most famous of all the Chippewa chiefs. He is stalwart in appearance, and is endowed with talents which certainly entitle him to this distinction. Having accepted his invitation to dinner, I went to his residence at the appointed hour, accompanied by my brother. I found him living in a comfortable log house of two rooms, well floored and roofed, with a couple of small glass windows. A plain board table stood in the center of

(continued on page 10)



1880 MAP: HEADWATERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI



(Leech Lake in Antiquity continued from page 9)

the front room, upon which the dinner spread. A large dish of bass and white fish, cut up and boiled in good taste, was placed in the center of the table, from which we were served. A birch-bark salt-celler, in which pepper and salt were mixed in unequal proportion, allowed each the privilege of seasoning his fish with both or dispensing with it altogether. Our tea was sweetened with maple sugar. A dish of blueberries, picked on the shore of the lake, completed the dinner.

I was much gratified on this occasion by the presence of White Cloud, chief of the Mississippis, whom I had frequently been told was the most respectable man in the Chippewa country. In early life this chief was both warrior and counselor, and these distinctions he held not from any hereditary right, but from the force of his own genius. I found him most agreeable in conversation and well informed upon those subjects which were of most interest to him. His bearing was grave and dignified, and his oratory such as to render him popular wherever heard. On rising from the table, White Cloud addressed me a few moments upon the object of my expedition. He expressed regret that his white brothers had been so long in ignorance of the source of the Mississippi, and said, although he had not himself seen the head of the Great River, there were many braves of his tribe who were famil-

iar with its location. He hoped I had come thoroughly prepared to explore the country beyond Lake Itasca, and that I would not return to my friends until I had found the true source of the Father of Waters. Continuing, he said: "I am told that Chenowagesic, the Chippewa warrior, will accompany you. He is a good hunter and a faithful guide. He can supply you with game, and paddle your canoe. The Chippewas are your friends, and will give you shelter in their wigwams."

Paul Beaulieu, the interpreter to Major Ruffe, possesses a fund of information concerning the Upper Mississippi...Beaulieu had a theory of his own regarding the source of the Mississippi, based upon the stories of Indians of his acquaintance. Referring to this subject, he said that to the west of Lake Itasca there was another lake, the outlet of which unites with the stream from the former lake and which contributes a much larger volume of water at the junction than the outlet of Itasca. He therefore assumed that this nameless and almost unknown lake was the true source of the Mississippi. In corroboration of the Beaulieu theory, Major Ruffe said that he had heard the same idea expressed by a number of old Indian voyageurs. It will thus be seen that there was a great diversity of opinion among the best informed authorities as to the actual source of the Great River.

(In the next installment, the journey begins.)



PLEASE RECYCLE

Recycling is an important way for us to conserve energy, reduce waste in our landfills and conserve our natural resources for many years to come. Please take a moment to recycle that water bottle, alu-

minum can, or glass spaghetti jar instead of tossing it into the garbage. Our earth will thank you for it.

For more information go to <http://www.environment-green.com/>



Costs for printing and distribution of the summer edition of the LLA Newsletter have been donated by the First National Bank of Walke, and Hummingbird Press.

BOARD MEMBERS

Chuck Allen, Membership	987-2307
cjallen@paulbunyan.net	
Roseanne Budahl, Website	547-1568
Rbudahl@aol.com	
Jack Shaffer, Conservation	363-3817
bellshaf@arvig.net	
Jerry McCauley, Healthy Lakes	836- 2076
icecrack@embarqmail.com	
Jane Ekholm, Legislation	547 -4131
janevanhunnik@hotmail.com	
John Annexstad, Science	547-1404
iceman58@eot.com	
Ivan Paulsen, Natural Resources	836-1510
ipaulsen@arvig.net	

LLA PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Dave Laursen, Editor	dlaurs@arvig.net
Cathy Denker, Composition/Design	cdenker@embarqmail.com

LEECH LAKE ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

Bob Gisvold, President	547-1450
gisvold@kwgc-law.com	
Dennis Leff, Vice President	547-2343
leffs@arvig.net	
Paul Houska, Treasurer	547-3194
houska@uslink.net	
Dave Laursen, Secretary	547-2832
dlaurs@arvig.net	

LEECH LAKE BAND

REPRESENTATIVE

Susan Kedzie	218-335-7442
lldminvasives@lldrm.org	

WELCOMES NEW SPONSORS

We are very grateful to all those who have chosen to become sponsors of our Association (\$100 and above).



Our special thanks to:

- . Ron & Sharon Palmer at Agency Bay Lodge
- . Ann Burns, Edina, MN
- . Jack & Mary Szczepek, Charlotte, NC
- . Robert & Nita-Eagle Frink, Rock Island, IL
- . Paul & Lori Bethun, Grand Forks, ND
- . Robert & Patricia Thompson, Grand Forks, ND
- . Robert & Mary Sue Poirier, Dayton, MN
- . Israel Moe, Walker, MN
- . Thomas & Mary Peterson, Eden Prairie, MN
- . Richard Breda at Acorn Hill Resort
- . Le Roy & Marilyn Rademacher, Jordan, MN
- . Oak Point Homeowners Association
- . Isobelle Brown, Walker, MN
- . Douglas & Kathleen Mickelson, Apple Valley, MN

A special welcome to all our new members, and to all of you who have supported us over the years during lean and difficult times, some recent.



A REMINDER: TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2009-2010



Because our fiscal year runs from July to July, the date of our Annual Meeting is when memberships expire and dues are collected for the coming year. The notation '09 beside your name on the mailing label means that your membership has expired. We sincerely hope that you will renew your membership, and encourage your friends and neighbors to do likewise. There is strength in numbers, and your dues allow our volunteers to carry on their work, which is to protect Leech Lake, guard your interests, and communicate with you through press releases and this newsletter.

Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed application form and return it along with your check in the attached self-addressed envelope.

Thank you in advance,
The Membership Committee

LLA Board Meetings are the second Monday of each month 9:30 AM at the courthouse. Members & Guests welcome!



Leech Lake Association
PO Box 1613
Walker, MN 56484

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WALKER, MN
PERMIT NO. 5**

Forwarding Service Requested