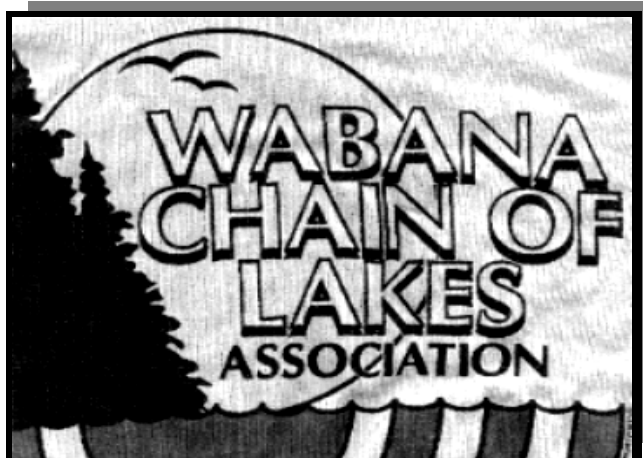


# The Chain Letter

of the



Dedicated to the care and preservation of our lakes, for the enjoyment and safety of all.

## July 2003

### Third issue of the year

Volume 7, Number 3

2003, Wabana Chain of Lakes Association

Editor: Bill Downing, wdowning@uslink.net

38067 Forest Lane, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 218-326-4730

1834 Simpson St, Falcon Heights, MN 55113 651-644-9625

#### Officers:

President: Dick Chambers 326-2809

Vice President: Bud Sage 326-4535

Treasurer: Cathy Rudolph 327-0820

Secretary: Susan Lick 326-6837

#### Advisory Committee.

All the above, plus:

John Adams 326-2206

Steve Bryant 326-5473

Nancy Ellsworth 326-8056

David Lick 326-6837

Joel Solomon 326-5177

George Wilbert 327-1018

John Zimmerman 326-1020

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#### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Another Fourth of July has come and gone, with lots of fireworks around the lakes. As our summer moves along, it proves that time sure does fly.

We are very lucky to have such a beautiful Chain of Lakes with such good water quality. As many news articles have recently stated, those lakes with good clean water demand higher land value. The Wabana Chain of Lakes Association is dedicated to preserving this water quality.

Our next meeting will be on July 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:30-9:00 for coffee, meeting to follow.

Remember, you don't have to live on the lake to become a member!

*Dick.*

# Picnic!

## 13th Annual WCOLA Potluck Picnic

### Saturday July 19th, 2003

#### 6:00 P.M.

**Brats - Hot Dogs - Drinks Provided**  
**Potluck Meal - Bring A Dish To Pass**  
**Everyone Is Welcome - See You**  
**There!**



**MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2003**  
THE WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES  
ASSOCIATION

**Program:** Bob Salmonson and Bart Coleman, Blackduck Office of the Chippewa National Forest, presented a program about eagle chick banding.

**The regular business meeting** was opened with all in attendance introducing themselves.

**Minutes of May 24, 2003** were approved as printed in the June 2003 Wabana Chain of Lakes newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report** read by Cathy Rudolph:

Balance as of 5-24-03 \$6,271.18

Received

Itasca County Soil & Water Conservation District	\$1,067.00
Dues	\$ 540.00
Total Received	\$1,607.00

Paid Out

Printing newsletter	\$ 167.00
Envelopes	\$ 106.30
Paper goods & nametags	\$ 8.90
Mailing labels	\$ 16.74
Total Paid out	\$ 299.41

Balance as of 6-21-03 \$7,578.77

Paid Households for 2003---37

Report was approved as read. The cost of printing the newsletter was discussed. Printing will remain locally done at this time.

**A note** was read by Chairman Chambers from Fred and Kathy Doty about a membership that they were giving friends. Current members bringing in new members will get a coffee cup.

**Cleanup on Unger Bridge** – Bill Berg will get the permits to remove debris from the area.

**July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting** will have no program. The **annual picnic** will be in the afternoon. Volunteers : Jean Koewler, Sherry Miner, Nancy Ellsworth, Pat Chambers, Lynn Roberts, Gary Burkholder, and Steve Bryant. All are welcome.

**The Management Plan** for the Wabana Chain of Lakes is completed. The first area of work will be Focus Area One: Aquatic Environment.

Volunteers: George Klacan, Bill Berg, Bill Downing, Betsy Downing, John Downing, and Sherry Miner.

**County sale of lakeshore.** Bob Sage informed the group about the sale of 200 lots to the present lease owners at 1/3 of the market value. Members were urged to attend and speak at the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, 3PM, Courthouse.

**Wabana Warbler.** Melissa Brooks will send the Warbler to residents at the north end of Big Trout. These residents are actually in Balsam Township.

**Septic system assessment.** Ron Radecki questioned whether the septic system assessment is complete. George Wilbert will get that information. The assessment is for the entire township watershed.

**Newsletter deadline is July 7<sup>th</sup>.** Pictures, articles, and memoirs are encouraged.

**Area blueprint map** has been re-hung in the hall.

**Next meeting** will be July 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 coffee and social, 9:00 regular meeting. **Picnic in afternoon.** All are welcome.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Zimmer, Jean Koewler, substituting for Susan Lick



## WABANA DAM PICTURES

Long-time Wabana resident Agnes Blackmore sent me two photographs, taken many years apart, of the Wabana dam. They are taken from the same vantage point, and show progress in finishing the dam.



*In the upper picture the dam is not complete, and the daring girls are out on the dam without hand rails. In the background you can see the wooden pilings that held the water back while the dam was being completed. The water in the lake is lower than it is now, and none is going over the dam.*

*The lower photograph is more recent, and shows the dam as it still is today.*



## THE DAY LAKE SLEIGH ROAD

Bill Berg

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the Wabana and Trout Lake system floated hundreds of thousands of pine logs down Wabana Creek into the Prairie River, and then into the Mississippi. Trout Lake, being the headwaters, received logs from camps several miles distant in all directions. The logs were hauled on sleighs, dumped on the ice, and boomed, on their way to being sluiced through the creeks.

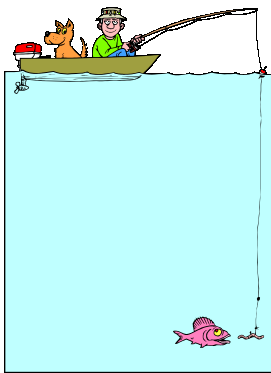
There were three sleigh grades coming from Spider Lake to Trout Lake. One connected the southeast part of Spider to the bay just north of the Joyce Estate buildings, and remains today as an easily walked trail that is about a mile long. This sleigh road actually received logs from the central part of the Spider Lake shoreline, in addition to part of Little Long Lake. You can access this trail by boating north of the Joyce buildings along the west shore, and just before the long point, there is a U. S. Forest Service trail sign. Proceed northwest on the trail, across the Joyce Road, and up a gradual hill. The grade eventually cuts through a hill, and ends (in summer) at Day Lake. The Joyce's had a boathouse at this spot years ago. Cutting the grade through this large hill had to be a feat a century ago, with only horse and human power available.

This sleigh road crossed the lake on the Day Lake ice in winter, and by walking around the north end of Day Lake on a Forest Service trail, you will again be on the sleigh grade and can continue westward. In many places, the logging road construction crews built up the grade, and these areas are easily seen. On occasion, there is even a ditch on both sides of the road. Nearer Spider Lake, there is a deep valley on the north side of the trail, and an old foundation is at the head of the valley.

There are no records what this building was used for, but it was primitive, at best. Eventually, this sleigh trail comes to Day Bay on the east shore of Spider.

Pause for a minute, and imagine the teams of horses struggling to pull sleighs full of logs across the Spider Lake ice, and converging in the forest as they begin the gradual one-mile pull down slope to Trout Lake. Imagine also, the loggers sitting on the shoreline eating their hot noon meal, brought from the nearest logging camp. Imagine the relief the horses must have had as this pull was over, and the apprehension of the next uphill walk to Spider Lake, again to be laden with a full sleigh of logs.

## FROM JACK VELZEN



*Jack Velzen sent me the following story in time for the June issue of The Chain Letter, but it was pre-empted by the need to print the Management Plan in that issue, so people would have it for reference during the June meeting.*

*Since there was time before the next publication deadline, we corresponded about this, and I had a chance to put some questions to him about the policy and behavior of catch-and-release, with which I am not very familiar. (I used to be an avid fisherman, but I have to admit that advancing years make fishing almost more difficult than rewarding, especially with the near disappearance from the Chain of my favorite fish, the crappie.)*

### **I Wonder Why!**

One person's perspective on fishing the Chain.  
Jack B. Velzen

Over the past several weeks, I have had several rather striking, and frankly quite distressing, experiences. Last week *[remember, this was sent*

*the first part of June]*, I spent a week in Quetico Provincial Park (the Canadian side of the BWCA - with even less use than the BWCA) with one of my sons (not the distressing part). We went to gather solitude and catch some nice fish. We did both. We kept a total of two fish to eat during the entire trip.

When stopping at the park entry point station to get our entry permit, we were updated on the fishing regulations. In summary, within Quetico Provincial Park, you may keep walleyes only if they are 18 inches or less, and one trophy over 26 inches. This is an Ontario regulation applying to nearly all NW Ontario lakes - of which they have more than all of Minnesota.

After returning, never being able to overdose on fishing, I did some fishing on the Chain. I happened to hit it right. The walleyes were hot!!! When I arrived at my chosen spot, I noticed two other boats fishing the area. They were together. As we passed, we talked. I asked how the fishing was. They said it was good. They had 8 walleyes over 20" - in the 21, 22 & 23 inch range they said. I saw them on their stringer hanging over the side of the boat. They indicated their friends were doing similarly well. A 22" walleye weighs about 4 pounds.

As I fished (and did similarly well myself - releasing all fish I caught), I watched both other boats. I saw each boat land at least three other fish, and put them on the stringer. Both boats left while the walleyes were still biting. Does that mean they each had their two-person limit? I don't know but suspect that was the case.

*[I asked Jack if he could tell who the people were, and he replied that he really couldn't, but he felt they were not lake residents or local resorters.]*

My calculations indicate that somewhere between 16 and 24 walleyes averaging between 3 and 4 pounds (that is about 56 to 84 pounds of walleyes) were taken from the Chain by 4 people in one day. You do the math. How long will such quality fishing hold up at this rate???? How much fish can one person eat????

Next week I will spend a week fishing a different Ontario lake. There has been a slot limit on this lake for over 10 years. Trophy walleyes are the draw on this lake. I expect to catch many walleyes from 20 to 30 inches. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources continues to maintain

a maximum keeping size of 19.5 inches for walleyes on this lake.

Ask yourself a few questions at this point, if you will.

- Why do so many people choose to go to Canada to fish?
- What is the attitude within Minnesota that continues to permit the fishing down of its fish populations?
- Why do you fish? - for meat? - to save on the grocery bills? - to enjoy the experience? - for the challenge? - for bragging rights? - to prove your expertise?
- How realistic is it that with the constantly increasing sophistication of fishing gear and fisherman, Minnesota lakes can continue to provide quality fishing experiences?
- What can Chain residents do to preserve what is under the water as well as what is above the water?
- What will we leave for quality fishing for our children and grandchildren?
- In what condition do you want to leave the Chain for your children and grandchildren?

Please examine your attitudes toward keeping and killing fish, and talk to others about it too!!!

*[This is the end of the original article that Jack sent. Later on in June, after some emails, Jack continued the saga, with the following email:]*

I just got back from a week in Canada fishing at the lake I mentioned that has had a slot release limit from 19.7 to 25.5. We had a wonderful week of fishing. Sally and I were talking on the way home today, and were reflecting on what has happened to the resort we have stayed at on this lake over the last ten years. When we started going there eight years ago, the owners were trying to revive the business. There had been a slot for maybe four years. Walleye fishing was good but not exceptional. I was attracted to it due to the conservationist attitude the Ontario MNR (same as our DNR) had adopted for the lake.

To make a long story short, during the week, our cabin - Sally and I and another couple - landed 46 walleyes bigger than 20 inches with the largest one being 31", and the 2nd largest being 28". I personally caught the 28, 31, 5 fish over 26, and too numerous to count fish in the 23 - 25 inch range. The resort is so swamped with requests from people

for staying there, there is a waiting list of several years to get the preferred first week of June.

Sally's and my discussion on the way home was about an angle that would also engage the resorts on the chain in seeing the value of preserving walleyes of 20" or greater. (as well, there is a slot on northerns requiring release of northerns over 27" - my biggest northern was 36". This would also apply to smallmouth bass. Sally got one 18". Probably a third of the people at the resort were there to fish smallmouth, which has a release size of 14" and greater).

People would come just to catch and release something that big. The resort space on the chain would grow in demand, not decrease with such regulation. I bet I could even get Wayne - the guy that owns the resort in Canada we go to - to talk to resort owners here to relay his story of what happened with his resort.

*This article ought to stir up quite a lot of discussion, since it raises one side of a problem that is dear to the hearts of all you fishermen! I am going to wait with great interest to receive the emails from those members who agree or disagree with Jack. He says he is comfortable with controversy, and will respond if desired.*

*His fifth bulleted item above, "What can Chain residents do to preserve what is under the water as well as what is above the water? is part of our WCOLA Management Plan, and requires a lot of thought. Is "slot release limits" a way to go?*

*Please email me your opinions—deadline for publication in August newsletter is August 2, 2003, [wdowning@uslink.net](mailto:wdowning@uslink.net)*



Sally Velzen with Canadian walleye.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE AT THE MOMENT**

*Most of us are familiar with the long-drawn-out discussions about the Ordinance. The current standing is: the Planning Commission has done its work and is to make its recommendations to the County Board on July 21. Catherine McLynn, new County Commisisoner for District 2 which includes Wabana Township, sent this on July 7:*

The general consensus of the Planning Commission members seems to be to limit density in the shoreland district while allowing the Planned Unit Development (PUD) option. In the opinion of the PC members, PUD's offer some better controls over set-back and septic compliance and dock location than platted subdivisions under individual ownership.

Recommendations to the ordinance include:

- Allow Planned Unit Developments on only General Development and Recreation Development lakes. None on Natural Environment lakes. Both Residential and Commercial PUD'S allowed. Commercial PUD's include resorts, campgrounds and RV parks.
- Only 3% of the total shoreline can be developed as PUD's. Only riparian lot owners have access to the lakes in a PUD. Back lots in a PUD have no access except through public accesses on the lake.
- No third tier development. Multipliers of 25% and 50% will be used. The DNR has recommended only 25% multipliers to keep down the density levels.

Members of the audience and PC indicated strong support for education, enforcement and improvement of current non-compliant septic and proper shoreland stewardship.

Please contact the Planning Commission members and County Commissioners before the public hearing on July 21 at 9 am. The proposed changes will be available within about a week. You may

send an e-mail to the Zoning Officer [terry.greenside@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:terry.greenside@co.itasca.mn.us) and it will be forwarded to the decision makers. Written comments and verbal presentations supporting or opposing the proposed ordinance are now in order before the Planning Commission makes its final recommendation to the County Board on July 21. The County Board will be, then, open to public comment before they adopt the final draft in August.

The staff in the Zoning Dept and the Planning Commission have done a good job in this entire process. I believe they appreciate the support and the interest many folks are showing in proper management of our county's resources.

Let me know if you would like me to resend my first e-mail about the June meeting where consensus was reached re: towers and gravel pits in the shoreland district and lot sizes.

Please forward this to others.

## **TACONITE**

*You may be as baffled as I was, when a friend told me that he was driving east of Bovey with his bright teenage daughter, who had not driven that way before. He told me: "When we passed the brown sign saying TACONITE, she asked 'Was this settled as a predominantly Mexican community?'" He answered, "No, why?" When she told him why, he saw the logic, but had a good laugh. So did I, when he explained it to me.--Editor*

## **FROM THE LAKE JOURNAL**

*Several items from the Minnesota Lake Journal, published by the Minnesota Lake Association, are of interest to members of the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association. If you are not a member of the MLA, you will not have read these:*

## **Anglers to swap out lead tackle this summer**

The Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are partnering with retailers, conservation, and outdoors groups to

offer lead tackle exchanges across the state this summer. Over 17 lead tackle exchange events are scheduled beginning this month. Anglers can bring lead sinkers and jigs to the event to trade for non-lead ones.

*I went to the web site they suggested for details, but found nothing for the Grand Rapids area. To quote from the web site:*

### **The Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

The Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are partnering with retailers, conservation, and outdoors groups to offer lead tackle exchanges across the state this summer. Over 17 lead tackle exchange events are scheduled beginning this month. Anglers can bring lead sinkers and jigs to the event to trade for non-lead ones.

“We want to offer anglers throughout Minnesota the chance to try out and compare non-lead tackle made from metals such as bitzsmith, tin, and stainless steel,” said Kevin McDonald, coordinator of the OEA’s non-lead tackle program.

Lead is a toxic metal that has adverse effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds. Found in most fishing jigs and sinkers, this metal is poisoning wildlife such as loons and eagles.

Carrol Henderson, supervisor of the DNR’s Nongame Wildlife Program, is enthusiastic about the lead exchange program. “This is an excellent opportunity for people who care about wildlife to cooperate with the fishing tackle industry and reduce the amount of lead being deposited in Minnesota’s lakes.”

This session, the Legislature considered banning the sale and use of lead tackle. But after a series of stakeholder discussions, the groups involved agreed that a better approach was to educate anglers about the alternatives to lead tackle and to offer opportunities to try out non-lead sinkers and jigs.

Along with the OEA and DNR, other partners in this summer’s lead tackle exchanges include Audubon Minnesota, Cabela’s, Duluth Audubon, Gander Mountain, Duluth Chapter of the Izaak

Walton League, Joe’s Sporting Goods, Minnesota Lakes Association and several individual lake associations, National Eagle Center, and Voyageurs National Park Association.

Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance is a state agency dedicated to protecting Minnesota’s environment and assuring a sustainable economy through waste prevention and resource conservation.

*Note the “several individual lake associations”. Would the Wabana Chain association like to look into this?*

### **Lake Water Quality Linking to Property Values**

A study of lakes in north-central Minnesota reveals water clarity is the most important factor in determining lakeshore property values, giving property owners and elected officials firm economic reasons to think about land-use and development ordinances. Failure to maintain septic systems, removing trees, native plants and aquatic vegetation in front of lake property, mowing everything down to the water and heavy fertilizing might increase property value in the short term. But such changes by too many owners will eventually alter a lake’s ecology, degrade its water and diminish property values.

Researchers at Bemidji State University calculated how much property values would rise or fall on 37 lakes if water clarity improved or worsened. For example, if one could see down an extra 3 feet (down to 13 feet) on Leech Lake, a 40-foot lake property’s value would rise by nearly \$17,000. If the lake’s clarity is reduced by more than 3 feet, that would cut values by \$23,760. Read the report on Bemidji State web site.



Hey Members! Don't forget—you bring in a new member, and you get a coffee cup

# Come to the Picnic!

Saturday July 19th, 2003

6:00 P.M.

**Brats - Hot Dogs - Drinks Provided  
Potluck Meal - Bring A Dish To Pass  
Everyone Is Welcome - See You  
There!**

*Why would you not attend?* It's fun! It's free! It's even nourishing! You'll see old friends, make new friends, find out who lives in that neat cabin you admire, try all those delicious Minnesota Hot Dishes. Afraid you won't know anybody? Of course you will know somebody, and you'll meet a lot more people, who I know you will like. After all, we all love the same Chain of Lakes!

## MEMBERSHIP

In case you missed it, the June *Chain Letter* contained a nifty envelope, for you to use when you sent Cathy your \$20 membership renewal. There is no envelope this month (once a year is enough), but you can still mail in your check! Send it to the address in the box below, and give this information:

What the payment is for—\$20 dues for 2003-04 , contribution if desired, etc.

Name(s)

Address

Alternate address, and dates for delivery of the *Chain Letter*

Would you prefer *Chain Letter* delivery by e-mail?

**Or bring it to the meeting on July 19, 9 AM!**

**Present members:** Bring in a new member to the Association, and you will be awarded a free coffee cup, with the WCOLA logo on it.

History buffs: This is the same coffee cup style used in Diners throughout the United States.

You'll want a whole set for your cabin, and here's the way to start!

Wabana Chain of Lakes Association  
Ms. Cathy Rudolph, Treasurer  
36542 Havenwood Drive  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744