

The Chain Letter

of the



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

June 2011

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Updates, if any, noted in **Red** – update your address books!

Visit our

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Add your items to it by sending to Mark Miner,
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JUNE 2011 LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Neighbors,

Summer is upon us though some mornings it is hard to believe with the temperatures dipping into the 30's earlier this week. We have a lot of work to do this year – water testing and secchi disk readings to take, a focus on “Get the Lead Out” of the tackle boxes, and implementing the shoreline restoration projects to name a few.

I hope that you were able to attend the Water Summit. It was a huge success for the community, the sponsors and the host organization – Itasca Waters Legacy Partnership (IWLP). Excellent attendance with people enjoying the 10 classes on water related topics, key note speakers Don Shelby (retired TV anchor) and Kurt Anderson (Minnesota Power), talks, lunch on the Itasca Community College campus and dinner (provided by Kiwanis), music and drumming at the KAXE pavilion later that evening. Very positive feedback from everyone and something to be built on in future years as IWLP works to remind us of the importance of clean water to our lifestyles and economic viability.

Bill Berg suggested we use an article on the history of the Wabana Dam and with all the conversation about fish passage and the discussion of the merits and risks of reconnecting our 4 lakes to the watershed I thought that might be a good idea. So you will find the article Bill provided as well as other selections having to do with the early logging dams and the later cement ones. I also included photographs of the sluices built up in the channels between our lakes.

Ken Zimmer shared at our advisory committee meeting yesterday – that the RAC had their final meeting on funding this years projects and published the list of those they support. There are about 20 of them and they include two new fish passages but not ours as our community was too divided on the project. Time will tell if the DNR and USFS remain interested in getting our support for future funding sources – and if so, we will certainly start earlier in the year and try to get more of you to attend the meetings where the information is shared and WCOLA's decision will be made.

In closing – two additional points. First – Bill Downing asked me to share this:

“Some have asked what I will be doing in the evening of the Summer Solstice, June 21st, and I reply the same as last year. I will be sitting on my dock, with appropriate beverage in hand, maybe some snacks nearby, quietly watching the sun go down over Big Diamond Point, and greeting any friends and neighbors who happen by, preferably boating but all welcome. I'll lay in a supply of some beverages and some snacks, and we'll hope for quieter weather than last Solstice!”

What a generous offer – last year was fun – but Bill is right – driving our little boat all the way back up to the north end of Trout Lake was a bit exciting with the wind, whitecaps, rain and lightning we had last year. Lets hope for better weather this time around.

Finally - please remember to pay your dues – only half of us had as of the first meeting according to Jean's report – and encourage others who care about our lakes and their future but do not belong to WCOLA to consider attending a meeting and joining us. I will see you at the meeting next week end.

John W. Zimmerman Jr., Trout Lake, President, WCOLA

Special WCOLA Events & Announcements

Grand Opening – AMERICAN GIRLS CAMP – As many of you know – Miss Mildred Sebo, a Minneapolis public school teacher, opened a girls camp on Balgillow Island on Wabana Lake in 1929. She ran it as the American Girls Camp until 1937. The Itasca County Historical Society (ICHS) has many interesting photo's and artifacts from the camp and in their display they tell Miss Sebo's story of running this unique girls camp. The Grand Opening is scheduled for June 18th at 10:00 am on the second floor of the Old Central School in Grand Rapids and is followed by a road trip to the island. ICHS members can participate for \$10. Lunch will be provided. RSVP is required. Contact ICHS at 218-326-6431 if you are interested.

Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2011

Saturday, June 18 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)
 9 a.m. Program: Mary Blickendorfer (Itasca County Extension) **Lakeshore Management Guidelines**
 10-11 a.m. Meeting
Saturday, July 16 (picnic)
Saturday, August 20 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)
 9 a.m. Program: TBD
 10-11 a.m. Meeting
Saturday, September 17 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)
 9 a.m. Program: TBD
 10-11 a.m. Meeting
All Meetings will be at the Wabana Town Hall and will last 1 (one) hour!

Minutes from the WCOLA Meeting September 2010

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 by newly elected President John Zimmerman.
 Bill Downing officially handed over the gavel to John.
 Agenda was reviewed and motion to accept by Bill Downing, second by Gib Wilson.

Minutes of the August 21st meeting was reviewed as published in the Chain Letter. Gib Wilson made a motion to accept , second by Dara Skelton.

Treasures report was read by Jean Koewler. We currently have 126 house hold members. Motion to accept treasurers report by Doug, second by Gail.

John Zimmerman gave report from the advisory committee. Meeting dates for 2011 scheduled as follow: May 21, June 18, July 16. August 20 and September 17. John suggested the hospitality committee review dates for the fair and report back on dates for Ice Cream Social and Picnic dates.

Nancy Ellsworth requested a replacement for someone to do secchi disk readings. Believe Diane Rutherford will do and Sherry Miner will do the data.

Audit for 2010 will be done by Roger Linder and Jim Oliznek.

Susan Lick gave update on Shoreline restoration. The following have applied for grants, Jim Edwards, Rick and Vicki Harding, and Libby & George Colborne

Talk on the proposed Wabana Dam/fish passage.

Minutes from the WCOLA Meeting May 2011

9:00 am Program with Kent Lederman of the Law Enforcement of the Chippewa National Forest.

10:00 am President John Zimmermann Jr. called the meeting to order. He welcomed those in attendance. He described the Water Legacy Meeting of the previous day. Recommended that we should attend future meetings.

The Minutes of the previous meeting, Sept 2010, were not available. They will be published in the Newsletter and approved at the next meeting in June.

Treasurers Report

Checkbook Balance - September 17, 2009 \$ 816.34

Receipts:	
Dues	\$ 1,720.00
Contributions	\$ 90.00
Dock Sign	\$ 5.00
Total Receipts	\$ 1,815.00

Disbursements:	
Postmaster – 260 - \$.44 stamps	\$ 114.40
Treasure Bay Printing	\$ 552.05
Aug. Newsletter (\$157.39)	
Sept. Newsletter (\$197.33)	
April Newsletter (\$197.33)	
Roger Linder – Hist. Committee	\$ 236.37
(Countertop display – Township paid half)	
Walmart – mailing labels	\$ 20.18
Grand Rapids State Bank	\$ 3.30
Total Disbursements	\$ 926.30
Checkbook Balance – May 18, 2010	\$ 1,705.04

CD – Renewal date – July 22, 2010 \$ 5,235.40

Total Paid Households: 66

It was moved by Roger Linder that we accept the report, the motion was seconded and passed.

Committee Reports:

Roadside Clean-up: Barbara Zimmer announced the next clean-up on Wednesday, May 25th.

Hospitality Committee: It was announced that the Willsons had needed to resign. Dara Skelton agreed to chair the committee.

Historical Committee: Roger Linder announced the June 18th meeting of the Itasca Historical Society which will focus on the Island in Wabana Lake and the presence of the American Girls Camp.

Membership Committee: Alida Zimmerman reminded us that we need to recruit new members and that she has brochures available.

Program Committee: Bill Berg noted that there was the need of a new chair as of next year. He also announced the probable programs for this year.

June - Blickenderfer
July - Picnic
Aug - John Latimer
Sept - Lake Management

Environmental Committee: Ken Zimmer urged all members to "Get the Lead Out!" This is a program to eliminate lead from the environment and to maintain the health of the animals.

Old Business: Update on the Fish Ladder on Wabana Creek - President Zimmerman gave a review of the history of the project.

Ken Zimmer reported on the RAC meeting held April 28th. The indications are that this program will not be funding the fish ladder. The decision will be made June 2nd.

There has been a survey of the fish in the creek, both below and above the culvert. The official results will be made available later by the DNR but hundreds of fish were trapped and examined including Walleye and Northern Pike.

A fish passage is being built on Hartley Lake which is very similar to the one proposed for Wabana Creek. The residents there supported the project and it will be interesting to watch the progress.

The county will build the bridge, even though the ladder may not be built at this time.

The consensus was we need to have more informational meetings so that the various issues can be addressed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.
Respectfully submitted, Arthur L. Merrill, Secretary

Committee Notes since Last Meeting

(If you are interested in participating in any of these committees, Please contact the Committee Chair)

Membership (Alida Zimmerman) - The membership committee is starting to gear up!!! If you haven't already been contacted, someone from the committee should be phoning or emailing you to say "hello and thank you for your past membership!" We will also be soliciting new members and look forward to sharing ideas with ALL of you at WCOLA meetings this summer.

2011 dues can be paid any time before August 1, 2011. The WCOLA membership form is online (<http://www.wcola.org/WCOLA%20Brochure%20%282%29.pdf>). We are also looking for people who are interested in working on the membership committee. If you have questions about your membership status, membership in general or would like to discuss helping us on the membership committee – please contact Alida Zimmerman (almzimmer@gmail.com or 218-327-3188).

WCOLA History Series HISTORY OF THE WABANA LAKE DAM

This month's history topic is the Wabana Dam History and I have included material on the channels between the lakes as well as during the very early days of logging there are supposed to have been dams / sluices on each of these small channels. There are many sources (cited below) and those with copyright protections were not quoted – but briefly summarized. I would direct any of you wanting more information to read the source documents as they are very interesting if you live on or near our lakes and care about local history. As always – I would love to receive further information/sources any reader has as well and would like to thank those who have trusted me to make copies of their records for preservation and sharing amongst the readers of this newsletter and the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association. - John Zimmerman (jwzimmerjr@gmail.com or 218-327-3188 in case you have material to share)

In **A Sample Survey for Cultural Resources on the Trout Lake Tract – Marcell Ranger District, Chippewa National Forest.(1984)** – Keith Matson, Forestry Technician tells us many interesting things about our Chain of Lakes:

"When the last glacial period ended 12,000 to 10,000 years ago, it left behind a rugged marginal moraine area containing several deep glacial valleys that had filled with water to become Trout, Wabana and Bluewater lakes. Because of this rugged terrain and the deep lakes, hunting game and fishing, in this region were not as profitable for prehistoric people with their primitive nets and spears. This difference became even greater with the development of a subsistence on wild rice which abounded in the shallow lakes but was almost absent in the Trout Lake region. Nevertheless, people did use the region. The waterway

from Wabana upstream to Trout was a part of the chain of lakes and streams which were used, along with short portages, to reach the Rice River which had access to the Bigfork River and Hudson's Bay watershed from the Prairie River and Mississippi River watershed. This then was the highway for these peoples, much the same as Highway 38 is the highway we use to reach Bigfork today.

The first government surveyor to record his work in this region was Nathan Butler. Nathan and his crew came into Township 57 North Range 25 West in September of 1872. He describes the area as quite rolling with soils of second and third rate, and estimates that there is twenty million board feet or more of white and red (or Norway) pine in the township. The stream draining Trout and Wabana lakes is described as 2 rods (33 feet) wide, and a foot deep with a strong current and drivable for logs.

By 1904 the Itasca Lumber Company had completed its logging operations in the Trout Lake region. Some cleanup operations were going on for a few years after this by a few small operators however. It was during these last years of logging that the first permanent settlers started to move into this area.



Photo from Ireton collection – labeled “Old Logging Camp” and believed to be the camp at the north end of Trout Lake

In Timber Connections – The Joyce Lumber Story –

Susan Hawkinson and Warren Jewett tell another part of our local history in their chapter on “Trout Lake Logging and Tourism.” The authors describe how the early dams were built by John Wesley Day to raise water levels to facilitate moving the logs downstream sometime after 1865 and then how the Itasca Lumber Company rebuilt them in a more permanent manner in about 1888 when they undertook a large logging drive in the area. I would recommend this section of the book to any of you who live on the chain of lakes and want to understand this early part of the lake's history and association with logging as a lot of detail is provided.

In another good read having to do with the early times in and around our lakes, Patricia Navratil in her book **Trails Through the Northwoods – A History of the Bigfork Trail** – describes early experiences by locals with the Wabana Dam and relates a great story about one family's

experience trying to cross the stream below the dam when it was open and the wagon was swept downstream. She also gives an interesting history of Dave Cochran – owner of the Wabana Hotel and builder of launches that served to move people and supplies around Wabana and up through the channels as far as the north end of Trout Lake.



This photograph that is likely one of Dave's launches – or one similar - beached at the north end of Trout Lake at the Martin resort after traveling through the chain from Wabana. The photo is from the Nadine Martin Scrapbook – in the Grand Rapids Historical Society collection - and is labeled “Bringing home the piano.”

Bill Berg provided the following piece of our history for this month's newsletter and introduced it with: Summarized below is a brief history of the Wabana Lake dam, as condensed from a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Waters file on Wabana Lake, and excerpted from a memorandum sent by DNR Hydrologist Glen Yakel to retired Hydrologist Howard Christman dated October 3, 2001.

“The first dam at the Wabana Lake outlet was built of logs by the L. Day and Sons Logging Company in about 1885. Shortly after, the Itasca Lumber Company rebuilt this dam and constructed other dams at Clearwater Brook, Bluewater, and Little Trout Lake. While the Wabana dam's height is unknown, it was undoubtedly much taller than today, as it had to be high enough, when opened, to send a head of water carrying thousands of logs down Wabana Creek and Clearwater Creek and into the Prairie River. This step was repeated dozens of times, as logs came from Trout, Bluewater, Spider, Little Long, and perhaps the south part of Ruby Lake. The remains of the logging dam at the outlet of Little Trout are still obvious today.

In 1918, David Joyce built a new dam, this time using concrete. Its height is also unrecorded. According to a memo dated March 16, 1938 from Game Warden Leonard G. Hedman the concrete dam had washed out and needed replacement. On April 13, 1938, Minnesota Department of Conservation surveyed the Wabana outlet in hopes that the new dam could be constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The proposal was submitted on

August 16, 1939 and approved on August 23. In September access easements were obtained from landowners A. K. and Anna Marie Seckinger, and the Prairie River Power Company. The Washington WPA issued a "Start Work Notice" on November 20, 1939, and construction commenced on November 27. The dam was completed on August 6, 1940 at a cost of \$8,010 (\$6,000 Federal, \$1,610 State, and \$400 local).

On October 30, 1947, after 7 years of stop log manipulation between 3.0' and 3.3', the stop logs were set at 2.7' in the center two bays and at 3.0' in the other eight bays, and no further manipulation was authorized. Twenty-one years later (November 19, 1968), at a meeting between lake residents and DNR personnel at the Wabana Town Hall, the DNR agreed to restore the stop logs in all ten bays to 3.0', and to study further modifications to address low water concerns of residents. On June 23, 1970 steel panels were installed in all ten bays at 3.25', which are still in place today."



Photograph of the downstream view of the current culvert where the Wabana Creek passes under Route 49.

In writing about their cabin on the west shore of Big Wabana in Buckmans Cove – Jean Popovich describes the dam being opened somewhat in the summers creating a beach.



Photo and comments above from "Remembering Wabana" by Jean Popovich – labeled L to R – Ernest Hertel, John McCormick, George Whittington



Photo from Gettinger Collection – Unlabeled but likely the Sluice between Little Trout Lake and Wabana on the Little Trout end.- Boat is Emma Jane from Cliff House



Photo from the Barber Collection – labeled "Joyce Estate 1926 or 1927" – this is likely also the Little Trout end of the channel between Wabana and Little Trout.



Photo from the Barber Collection – labeled "Dam on Little Trout Lake"

*The Chain Letter of the
Wabana Chain of Lakes
Association*

June 2011

*There is a lot of great material
inside, Intro letter from our
President, committee
announcements, fish passage
update, upcoming important dates
including the Itasca County
Historical Society's Grand Opening
of THE AMERICAN GIRLS CAMP
display and road trip, a history
article about the Wabana Dam and
much more.*

*Our Next Association Meeting will
be at Wabana township hall:*

Saturday, June 18th

*with coffee and treats at 8:30am
and a great program with **Mary
Blickendorfer** (Itasca County
Extnesion) **Lakeshore
Management Guidelines** at
9:00am followed by our regular
WCOLA business meeting at
10:00am - See you there!*

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION
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