



Briggs Lake Chain Association

February 2024 Lake Report



The President's Report Shelly
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Greetings & Happy February!!!

I hope everyone is safe & healthy this time of year. Like me, some of you are enjoying this unseasonably warm winter weather but would like a “little” more snow cover and others would love large amounts of snow and all the fun that comes along with it. However, the warmer temps cause uneasiness around our lakes and waterways throughout the state. Please be safe when out enjoying winter activities, especially when out on the ice. Watch the MN DNR and local sheriff's departments websites and announcements for ice thickness monitoring levels, for thin ice warnings and how to be prepared for an emergency situation. www.dnr.state.mn.us We want everyone to be safe this winter season.

Ice Day on the Chain 2024 – February 10th.

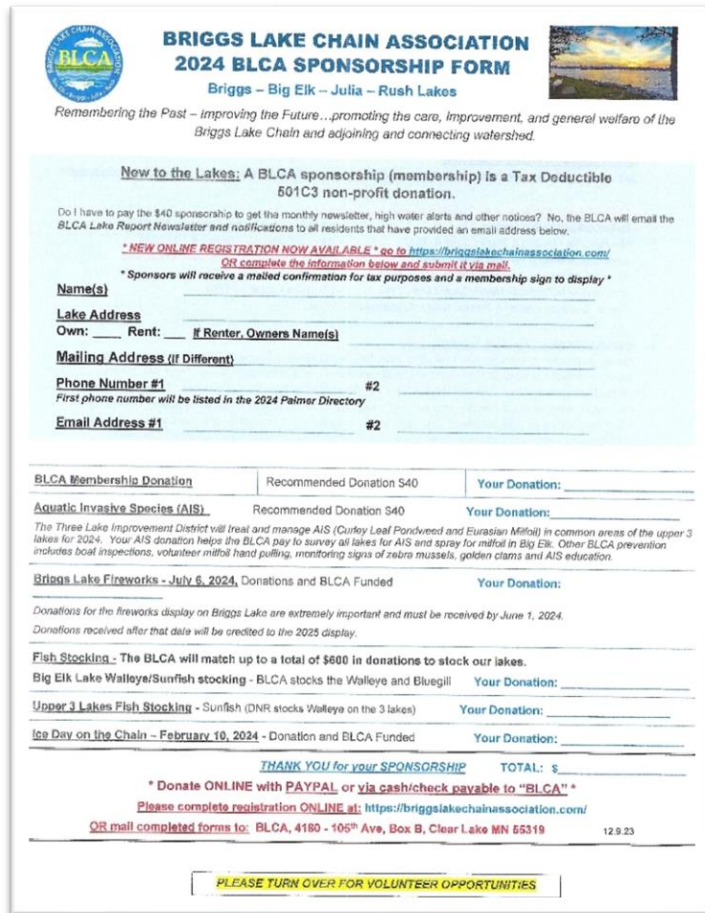
IMPORTANT NOTICE:

In light of our commitment to the safety and well-being of all participants, Ice Day 2024 is unfortunately **CANCELLED** due to the unexpected warm weather and poor ice conditions. We do not take this decision lightly and want to thank all the sponsors and volunteers who have spent countless hours preparing for this year's event.

We look forward to continuing the Ice Day tradition in 2025 and hope to see you all there. Please re-post and share this message broadly to friends, family, and neighbors to avoid any confusion on the day it was supposed to take place, February 10, 2024. Thank you, Ice Day on the Chain committee.

Did you receive your January 2024 mail for our annual BLCA Sponsorship mailing packet?

January was our annual “kick off” to join or renew a membership/sponsorship to the BLCA.



BRIGGS LAKE CHAIN ASSOCIATION
2024 BLCA SPONSORSHIP FORM
 Briggs – Big Elk – Julia – Rush Lakes

Remembering the Past – improving the Future... promoting the care, improvement, and general welfare of the Briggs Lake Chain and adjoining and connecting watersheds.

New to the Lakes: A BLCA sponsorship (membership) is a Tax Deductible 501C3 non-profit donation.

Do I have to pay the \$40 sponsorship to get the monthly newsletter, high water alerts and other notices? No, the BLCA will email the BLCA Lake Report Newsletter and notifications to all residents that have provided an email address below.

*** NEW ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE *** go to <https://briggslakechainassociation.com/> OR complete the information below and submit it via mail.
 * Sponsors will receive a mailed confirmation for tax purposes and a membership sign to display *

Name(s) _____
 Lake Address _____
 Own: _____ Rent: _____ If Renter, Owners Name(s) _____
 Mailing Address (if Different) _____
 Phone Number #1 _____ #2 _____
 First phone number will be listed in the 2024 Palmer Directory
 Email Address #1 _____ #2 _____

BLCA Membership Donation	Recommended Donation \$40	Your Donation: _____
Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)	Recommended Donation \$40	Your Donation: _____
The Three Lake Improvement District will treat and manage AIS (Curley Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Milfoil) in common areas of the upper 3 lakes for 2024. Your AIS donation helps the BLCA pay to survey all lakes for AIS and spray for milfoil in Big Elk. Other BLCA prevention includes boat inspections, volunteer milfoil hand pulling, monitoring signs of zebra mussels, golden clams and AIS education.		
Briggs Lake Fireworks - July 6, 2024	Donations and BLCA Funded	Your Donation: _____
Donations for the fireworks display on Briggs Lake are extremely important and must be received by June 1, 2024. Donations received after that date will be credited to the 2025 display.		
Fish Stocking - The BLCA will match up to a total of \$600 in donations to stock our lakes.		
Big Elk Lake Walleye/Sunfish stocking - BLCA stocks the Walleye and Bluegill	Your Donation: _____	
Upper 3 Lakes Fish Stocking - Sunfish (DNR stocks Walleye on the 3 lakes)	Your Donation: _____	
Ice Day on the Chain - February 10, 2024 - Donation and BLCA Funded	Your Donation: _____	
THANK YOU for your SPONSORSHIP		TOTAL: \$ _____
* Donate ONLINE with PAYPAL or via cash/check payable to "BLCA" *		
Please complete registration ONLINE at: https://briggslakechainassociation.com/		
QR mail completed forms to: BLCA, 4180 - 105 th Ave, Box B, Clear Lake MN 55319		
12.9.23		

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have a **NEW** option this year for renewing your sponsorship or signing up to be a new sponsor. **You can now complete & submit your form AND payment online!!!!**

If you know of any new property owners or would like to learn more about renewing your previous sponsorship, please contact a BLCA committee member or myself so we can reach out to you/them and discuss membership details, water conservation and the various programs we have in place to protect our waterways through the BLCA and Health Lakes committees along with our TLID (Three Lake Improvement District).

If you did not receive your BLCA Sponsorship packet, please contact me or another board member for assistance.

Shoreline spraying for weeds on all 4 lakes: The TLID (Three Lake Improvement District) is the

organization that manages and pays for weed control in the center of the upper three lakes. The BLCA manages the weed control on individual properties on the shoreline of all 4 lakes. The vendor the TLID used for the center of the lakes and BLCA recommended for shoreline weed control on all the lakes last 2 year was PLM.

*** REMINDER:** *PLM's Individual Aquatic Plant Management/Spraying applications were mailed out in November 2023. If you did not receive an application and/or would like one you can contact PLM directly at 218 270 7398 and ask for Kristy Hoge or download an application form on the main page of the BLCA website at www.briggslakechainassociation.com*

*** The deadline to return your application and payment is April 30, 2024. This is so PLM can apply for any necessary permits from the MN DNR on your behalf.**

Two Inlets at Bdé Heñáka - Omashkooz Zaaga'igaans Regional Park: As many are aware, phase one of this new park project began in 2023 and is continuing to be developed on the north side of Big Elk Lake and will continue for several years. It is now open to the public offering one mile of natural-surface trails, scenic views, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Visit this website to watch the progress, get additional information and to download a recreational map. www.co.sherburne.mn.us/1331/Two-Inlets-at-Bde-Hehaka---Omashkooz-Zaa

CA Financials through December 30, 2023



Income to date: \$108,624.38
Expenses to date: \$ 49,857.00
Net Proceeds to date: \$58,767.38
Operating checking \$21,902.60
Money Market/ rapid response fund:
\$103,494.43
Outstanding deposits: None

The 2024 budget was presented and approved at the August general membership meeting.

You may request a detailed year to date 2023 budget or the 2024 budget. Email your request to blca@briggslakechainassociation.com . Include your name, email address, lake address and phone number.

**** If you or your someone you know in the area is not receiving our “Lake Report” monthly newsletter, please contact me, another board member or email blca@briggslakechainassociation.com so we can keep community members notified of volunteer opportunities, community events, new projects and high water/no wake emergencies.**

Upcoming Winter/Spring events 2024:

- **Ice Day on the Chain** – Saturday, February 10th - **CANCELLED**
- **McDonald’s Meats Pork Chop/Brat fundraiser** – May/June
TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details and volunteer needs.
- **BLCA Spring Hwy 25 Ditch cleanup** – April/May TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details and volunteer needs.
- **Spring Garage Sale weekend** – May TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details.



REMINDERS:

- We are still in need of additional BLCA committee members for all 4 of our lakes (Briggs, Elk, Julia, and Rush). We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers, fresh ideas and solutions to continue our water conservation to heal our lakes and evolve with the ever-changing environment.
- The BLCA is still in need of Palmer Directory editor(s) to join the editing team that began work in January for the 2024 directory.

- **Please plan on attending** our monthly BLCA meetings at Palmer Townhall, the 2nd Saturday of each month at 8:30am. To learn about and assist with water conservation, enriching activities, food, and fellowship.
NEXT MEETING: Saturday, February 10th at 8:30am.
- See www.briggslakechainassociation.com for all meeting details for your BLCA & Healthy Lakes committee's and the TLID (Three Lake Improvement District). As well as, previous meeting minutes, water testing results/details, budget documents, upcoming events and tips and tricks for seasonal lake conservation.
- ALSO look for informative posts on our BLCA Facebook page and the BLCA on Instagram.

If you would like to volunteer with us as a committee member or for one of the above-mentioned positions contact myself, Shelly Alger-Peyton, via call or text at 612-283-8362 or via email at sdreimer@frontier.com. I look forward to volunteering alongside you to conserve our waterways in 2024!!!!

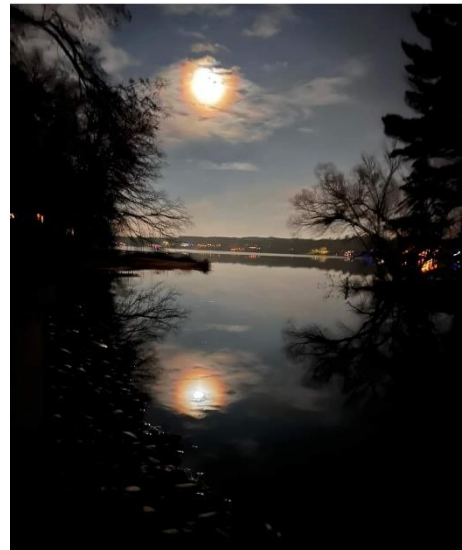
Thanks - Shelly

We want to reintroduce **WE REMEMBER** by **Kenzie Phelps & Chuck Heinemann**

This is his 2009 editorial introducing the column: It has been several months since we published the first “We Remember” article in the Lake Report. Our goal was to tap into the rich memories of some lake residents who have been around the chain of lakes for more than just a few years. We anticipated hearing a treasure of stories, memories, and reflections from people who have known these lakes well before we had Palmer Wireless and Uncle Vito’s Pizza. Paul and Norma Fors recalling the long time it took to complete their home [10 years], the sandy shoreline and good bass and sunnie fishing on Lake Julia, numerous visitors, and the many summers their girls spent at the lake. Frank and Terry Hart remembering the 54 years of opening fishing on Big Elk Lake, he doing the fishing and she doing the cooking for their many guests. Plus summer mass celebrated at their home by Father Al. Barb and George Kydd thinking back on the many challenges of building a home [over 20 years], the sheep in their unfinished basement, life on Speedboat



We haven't had much for a clear sky in the last week, so when I actually saw the moon shine over the unfrozen Julia tonight, I thought I'd catch a snapshot of it.



Bay with their pontoon with a “crummy, crummy motor.” Erma Gallagher recalling the social life early on, the parties, the fireworks, summer visitors who always came at meal time, and several sheriff & #39;s visits. Plus watering pine trees by hand and building a cabin, “their little house,” and then a home. Jim and Linda Wicklund remembering the quiet of winter, the great walleye fishing, relaxing on Turtle Beach, the Lakes Chain Sportsmen Club, the tornado of 1967 and calling kids in from swimming by ringing the old Clear Lake Fire Bell, now residing at the Palmer Fire station. Jean and Larry Sewall thinking back on the “cigar house,” pet turtles, Kenny and Kate’s, Stan and Annes, June weeds, quiet evening serenity, water skiing and family legacy. And did we mention Cottonwood Beach Resort? Seems like all who lived around here in the early years have fond memories of Cottonwood Beach. Add other memories of clear water, pulling weeds, small cabins, summer socializing at the lakes and dirt roads and we begin to get a feel for life on the lakes just a few short years ago.

Ah yes, sweet memories of life on the Briggs Lake chain.

Our first “Remember When” is a repeat story from Steve Demueles written in 2015. When I asked him for his Ok to republish his store, this is his reply. [Wow Brad, it's been awhile since I read that article. I don't see where I would change or add anything. Unfortunately not much has changed since it first came out. Feel free to use it. I have included a picture of our old house \(cabin\) and put a comment on the picture of the high water mark in 1984. Lots of water over the dam. literally.](#)

Thanks [Steve Demeules](#)

This I Remember Steve Demeules 2012 by Kenzie Phelps Imagine: It's 1954, your mom, dad and family are living in north Minneapolis, and your dad receives a letter inviting him to “Come up to Briggs Lake and check out your free lake property!” Chuck Demeules responded to the letter, arriving at what is now known as Cedar Point to a shack advertising this great deal. He was

not, however, interested in interior “free” lots and instead bought 2 lake lots on the point between Briggs and Rush: \$1500 for both lots. Chuck Demeules had second thoughts, consulted an attorney, but his counsel said he couldn't get out of it. Steve and his family are thankful he couldn't. Their property was very unique: 150 ft on Briggs and 160 ft on Rush. Some people could say that during the summer their family moved up to “the lake.” The Demeules, however, now had the distinction of saying they were going up to “the lakes.” Like so many others who bought undeveloped property, the first structure to go up was the biffy. Then Chuck and friends from the Cities built the first home in 1955, complete with basement. Chuck Demeules bought another lot in 1975, paying more for the one lot than the two



original lots together. Steve's dad brought in 60 loads of fill for a significant hole just south of where the current home sits. When recent soil testing was done Steve knew before hand exactly what they would find: sand. In an attempt to widen their property, Steve's dad had a local contractor dump loads of small rock into the water on the Rush Lake side, then cover it with sand scooped up from the lake bottom. High water has proven to be both a problem, and a motivator, for Steve. The problem: they had 2 ft of water in basement in 1965, then again in 1984. Then later, three high water events in 2 years. The motivation: High water. Steve and Virginia rebuilt in 2007, only this time the foundation was 5 feet higher. Despite the basement filling with lake water at times, it served as a safe



Shelly Alger-Peyton



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gathering for them and some neighbors during the 1967 tornado that swept through the area. Steve's dad died in 1999, and several years later his mother, Anne, moved to St. Benedict's Center in St Cloud. Steve and Virginia had been taking care of the place for years, so it was natural for them to take over the property. Steve's mother Anne, like many others, would come to "the lakes" with the kids [Steve is youngest of six siblings] for most of the summer, with dad coming up once during the week and then on weekends. Of the six children, four ended up marrying locals. Early on they closed the place in the winter mostly for lack of things to do. Their Cedar Point road wasn't even plowed in the winter because there were no year round residents. That changed around 1963 once snowmobiles were common and available. Steve's early memories include opening the cabin on Memorial Day and closing Labor Day, and his mother walking every day to the mail box, then located on Co #16. As more people bought property and built cabins, their mail box moved closer and closer to their cabin. He also remembers bathing in the lake with Ivory soap, because Ivory floated: "You couldn't lose it, and it wouldn't end up on the bottom and full of sand." There was not the recreational boating in those days as there is now: most of the boats were row boats with motors. Before the channel from Briggs to Rush was dredged the Demeules would have extra nails on hand to provide to boaters who would inevitably shear a pin as they tried to navigate the shallow channel. An early event of the lake association was the pancake breakfast at Stan Smiths on the north end of Lake Julia. As Steve remembers, "Julia was like another world." Prior to the Briggs/Julia channel being dredged, the Demeules would have to either get out of the boat and pull it, or paddle hard to get through the muck and lilly pads to get to Julia. The channel was dredged in the late 60's, as was the channel from Briggs to Rush [which was about 6 ft deep before it partially filled back in]. The BLCA got a quote for the dredging, but the final bill was much more than the quote. Because the BLCA was unable to pay the difference, Pete Iten and several others from Briggs stepped up and paid the difference. Fishing was good, basically panfish, plus northern and bass. Crappie fishing provided "buckets full of crappies," not large but plentiful. Bass fishing was great, especially using frogs which they found in large numbers near the north end of Julia. There was no air conditioning then, so cabin windows were kept open all the time, allowing the young Demeules family to listen to the Polka bands at night at Cottonwood Beach. Their family would go there often for things like burgers, french fries, candy and pop. At night the adults would take over with Cottonwood Beach selling 3.2 beer and set-ups. Swimming was such a popular activity they would spend most of the day in the water. Although there were some weeds they managed them well by raking. There were occasional dog days in August,

complete with algae outbreaks, although the algae would break up with a strong wind or boat activity, and the water would be clear enough again to see the bottom. Also one of their summer activities was hunting for bullhead minnows, finding the swarms and scooping them out with fish nets. Steve remembers the Hollander farm [known as the Lillie Creek Farm] with their cows wading in the bay just west of the Rush Lake dam. The dam had been built in the 30's, including an active carp trap, and the area around the dam and the small bay to west had Hollander's cows and weeds, but good weeds as Steve recalls. "Copper sulfate days" were usually the weekend before the 4th of July with residents going to Cottonwood Beach to pick up their copper sulfate, paid for by the Lakes Chain Sportsmen's Club and BLCA. Some residents would put a ladder across the front of their pontoons, drape gunny sacks through the ladder holes, then go around to various spots on the lake and apply their copper sulfate, "usually with most of it ending up in front of the pontoon owner's cabin." The biggest changes Steve has seen are the number of people using the lakes and the amount of boat traffic. According to Steve, more than anything affecting lake traffic are the three accesses on the upper lakes. The only public access Steve remembers earlier was the walk-in access on the west side of Briggs. Cottonwood Beach Resort also had a boat launch, but at that time was privately owned. "We used to do a lot of skiing; we sort of owned the lake. Now on busy weekends we don't go out." Steve and family used to ski on the bayou [which had been dredged] from the first turn coming in from Briggs up to the bridge. That was before the new bridge when the water was 10 ft deep at the bridge and no small island, which developed later after one high water event moved sand and muck from the shore and helped fill in the channel. Also on the Bayou was Stan and Ann's by the Co. # 16 bridge: Steve and family members would carry their gas can up the small path to the store for gas and other supplies. What changes would Steve make if he had but one wish? "The ultimate answer to water quality is a sewer system. We're moving in the right direction, but at some point, we can't get any cleaner water without a sewer system. With 60-70 years of private septic systems, we may get to the point of no return with ground contamination.

Do you have a story to Share? Please email it to blca@briggslakechainassociation.com and include some pictures or call Brad Kipp at 612 810 6738 for more information.

New signs will be at the lake landings soon. Thanks to board member Tom Nordin and his team for getting the signs approved by the DNR. Thanks to Rengel Printing for giving the BLCA special pricing to make the signs. Also, Thanks to the BLCA for paying for the signs.



Group by Briggs Lake Chain Association

BLCA Mission statement:
Remembering the Past - Improving the Future - Promoting the Care, Improvement, and General Welfare of the Briggs Lake Chain (Julia, Briggs, Rush and Big Elk) and adjoining and connecting watershed.

ATTENTION

Lake Users!

A New 2023 Law is NOW in Effect
Minn. Statute 97C.363
STORING GARBAGE AND WASTE ON ICE

All outside Garbage, Waste and Debris **MUST** be in a container and secured to your vehicle or shelter at ALL TIMES and **MAY NOT** be placed directly on the ice or in the water at ANY TIME.

Each Violation will be Subject to a \$100 Fine.

For more information, click the QR Code below.
Thank you for keeping our Lakes Clean and Healthy!




We Support Healthy Lakes Briggs - Big Elk - Julia - Rush
Join our lake association at: www.briggslakechainassociation.com