



Briggs Lake Chain Association

March 2024 Lake Report

The President's Report Shelly Alger- Peyton

email: sdreimer@fronter.com cell: 612 283 8362.



*Greetings & Happy
March!!!*



I hope everyone is safe & healthy this time of year. Like me, you may be preparing for even "warmer" weather, Spring projects and predicting when the ice out will happen on our lakes this year. Mid-April has been a typical time frame, but in some years, it has happened in early April. Hopefully, our Spring thaw occurs gradually and without any and/or major flooding like in the past 2 years. Though I know some of you are waiting for those end of the season snow falls that usually happen around the MSHL boys' basketball tournaments and after, to enjoy a few more snow day runs on the snowmobile, sledding and those last winter fishing casts to catch the one that got away. Be safe and prepared for this late Winter/Spring season.

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).

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 or tax-deductible receipt & display placard, please contact me or another board member for assistance.

DON'T FORGET – "Spring Ahead" time approaches so apply for your 2024 BLCA Conservation – Restoration – Lake Steward - Plant Bank Programs!!!



Gentle Footprint Program - is a grant-based program that provides a percentage of reimbursement costs to homeowners for eligible shoreland projects, such as restorations, rain gardens, rain barrels and water diversions. The BLCA has a long history of promoting the improvement of water quality and of supporting conservation efforts. In 2008 the BLCA initiated a Shoreland Education Restoration Program (SERP) to increase awareness of the benefits of restoring shoreland with natural plants and controlling rainwater runoff. These reduced the quantity of pollutants and nutrients in our lake waters. The SERP program originally was funded by the DNR and administered by the BLCA, featured grants to individual property holders to pay for restoration projects. Eventually, the MN DNR stopped funding the grants and the BLCA decided to fund and administer shoreland restoration and runoff control programs under the BLCA and changed the name to “Gentle Footprint” grant program. Apply under the Healthy Lakes link on the BLCA website. www.briggslakechainassociation.com



Lake Steward Program (new for the BLCA in 2024) - through MN Lakes & Rivers the BLCA provides the resources necessary to educate lakeshore homeowners on environmental sustainability through proper shoreline maintenance and facilitates shoreline restoration projects with materials personalized for each region. Watch the BLCA Facebook page and BLCA website for details on how to apply. See www.mnlakesandrivers.org for conservation information.



Healthy Lakes Plant Bank - is an opportunity to apply for a mini-grant to add native seed or plants to our lake area property. Each grant will be for a total of \$200 which can be used to purchase native plants or seed mixes from our partner, MN Native Landscapes (www.mnlcorp.com). MNL can assist in plant seed selection and delivery to BLCA properties. Sample projects include planting up to 108 native plant plugs to your shoreline, enhancing an existing space with native perennial plants, or seeding a pollinator plot on your property. Watch the BLCA Facebook page and website for details on how to apply.

**** WATCH your BLCA newsletter and Facebook page for a Spring 2024 Native Plant GIVE AWAY. ****

REMINDER to ALL with warm weather moving in a Spring approaching. **DOUBLE CHECK &** make a plan with your neighbors and/or family members to keep your belongings safely tied down or stored so they don't **FLOAT AWAY!!!!**

👍 As warmer weather moves in and even though we have not had a lot of snow/precipitation so far this winter, check on all watercraft, lake toys, dock pieces, kayaks, paddle boats, lawn chairs, floaties, gas cans, grills, etc. make sure they are up far enough away from the water and/or tied down so they **will not** float away during possible Spring flooding or high water events.



If you haven't already done so and need to contact Excel Energy (Jeffrey Sherman 320-255-8694) to have a snorkel, put on your gas meter, this is a precaution if your gas was turned off in the Spring of 2022 or 2023 and your gas meter has the potential for getting submerged during flooding contact Jeff before the Spring thaw.

HAVE A PLAN & get contact information for your neighbors if you haven't already done so, so they can watch over your property in the Spring in case there is extreme flooding again and you need to be notified or you need to notify your neighbors.

WATCH your email for any High-Water Notices or any other emergency notices that maybe be sent out to the BLCA newsletter recipients list and posted on this Facebook page.

DON'T FORGET to double check your seasonal resource guide that is on your "Annual Healthy Lakes Checklist" magnet that lake property owners were sent via mail last January along with their 2023 BLCA membership information!!!



*** 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 218-270-3338 or download an application from the main page of the BLCA website at www.briqslakechainassociation.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.

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

Back by popular demand. Steve's presentation at the August 2023 general meeting was the most attended speaker in recent years.

MUST ATTEND EVENT: Saturday, April 13, 2024, BLCA meeting at 8:30am, then Steve McComas "The Lake Detective" and PLM Lake Management PRESENTATIONS and Q&A sessions beginning at 10:00am.





MARCH 10TH, 2024 – Daylight savings time to “Spring Ahead”



Upcoming Spring/Summer events 2024:

McDonald’s Meats Pork Chop/Brat fundraiser – May/June TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

BLCA Spring Hwy 25 Ditch cleanup – April/May TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details and volunteer needs.

2024 MN Fishing Opener – Saturday May 11, 2024, see MN DNR website for rules & regulations www.dnr.state.mn.us

2024 Spring Garage Sale weekend – May 9th-12th, watch the BLCA Facebook page and resident’s signs for date/time details.

Palmer Township Cleanup Day – May 18th – 7:00am-12:00pm, Palmer Township Hall, see Township website for details.

4th of July Boat Parade – **Saturday, July 6th** at 12:00pm, - lineup at 11:30am, Briggs/Rush channel, - Lake parade order Rush, Briggs, Julia - Big Elk Lake, 12:00pm & lineup at 11:30am

4th of July Fireworks – **Saturday, July 6th** at dusk (around 9pm) on Briggs, south end by boat launch.

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 your monthly BLCA meetings at Palmer Townhall, on 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, March 9th 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.

If you would like to VOLUNTEER with us as a committee member or for one of the above-mentioned positions/events 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!!!!

- Shelly

CA Financials through January 30, 2024



Income to date: \$15,617.52
Expenses to date: \$ 0.00
Net Proceeds to date: \$15,617.52
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 2024 budget. Email your request to blca@briggslakechainassociation.com Include your name, email address, lake address and phone number.

Meet a new BLCA board member:

Brad Thom, resident on the Briggs Lake chain for 12 years. I retired 27 months ago as a veteran service officer for the State of MN. Prior to that I retired from the Navy where I served as a chaplain. My favorite activities here are paddling and pedaling.

Editors note: If you are going through the channel from Briggs to Julia and see Brad and Ruth sitting on thier deck give them a wave. If you see him biking around the lake and past you place, you better wave quickly because he is "on the move". A thanks to Brad for joining the team.



Sherburne County Lake Group Representatives,

WaterGuards is pleased to be chosen to manage the Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Program in Sherburne County this summer. We have begun the hiring process for inspectors and would like to extend the job opportunity to your lakeshore owners (and their relatives and friends). We hope to be fully staffed by the end of March (DNR Training will be in April). Could you please distribute the following information in your upcoming association email/newsletter?

Work at a Lake this Summer as a Watercraft Inspector in Sherburne County!

The job is great for 55+, teachers and students.

This position runs from May until September.

The hours are from 10-30 per week. You tell us how much you want to work!

You must be willing to work weekend and holiday shifts. Most shifts are on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, but other days are available at some lakes.

General description: Watercraft inspections are an effort to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species (zebra mussels, milfoil, etc.). Watercraft inspectors educate the public and help to conduct inspections at public water access sites.

Duties: Educate the public on invasive species programs and issues, inspect boats and trailers for invasive species, Conduct a verbal survey & inspection inventory, Document, and record watercraft inspection activities. **Pay starts at \$17.50/hour!!**

For complete position description and to apply, go to: www.WaterGuards.net/employment

We hope to be fully staffed by the end of March (DNR Training will be in April).

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to working with you this summer!

Stephanie

WaterGuards

Stephanie Johnson sjohnson@WaterGuards.net 320.249.7550
www.WaterGuards.net [Book a meeting with me](#)

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

This I Remember When is from *Chuck Heinemann on, Big Elk Lake* written by Kenzie Phelps

You all know about Cedar Point, that small peninsula of land between Briggs and Rush. But did you know there is a Cedar Cove Addition? About the only place you will find the name is on a property deed. Chuck

Heinemann lives in Cedar Cove Addition on Big Elk Lake, and his early memories of life on the lake takes us over dirt roads, through a cow pasture to a small 14 by 16 ft one room cabin.

Chuck's parents, Elwin [sometimes Al, sometimes El] and Marge, bought the property in 1946, and in 1948 built a 14 x 16 ft one room cabin. There was a rollaway for his parents and a cot for Chuck. Other amenities included a wood stove for heat, a Coleman stove for cooking and fresh water in a Red Wing crock. There was also an old ice box, still in Chuck's possession, which now stores his liquid assets. They had a pitcher pump that Chuck remembers having to soak the leather seal and prime each time they came to the cabin.

His parents paid \$200 for the lot, purchased from Alfred and Helen Goenner. It was pasture land along the southwest shore of Big Elk Lake, with very few other cabins around. His dad built the cabin with a



hammer, hand saw, level, square and a few other hand tools, with lumber shipped from Pine River, mainly because it was cheap. There have been a number of additions over the years, the last being in 1970, with remodeling in 2010.

Chuck's mother Marge had three siblings who each purchased land and built cabins on the 3 adjacent lots to the north. Among other things this extended family shared was the outhouse, built with a fine linoleum toilet seat that Chuck remembers well: "We didn't spend much time there in the fall and spring because the seat was so cold."

Getting to their cabin was a trip through the cow pasture, unhooking the gate, driving through, and hooking it up again before arriving at the cabin. In addition to the pasture being part of their scenic drive, the kids would also play golf ["pasture pool"] in open spots. In the days before electricity they would buy an ice block in Big Lake, prop it on the open bumper of their 1936 Studebaker, and head for Big Elk Lake. Carrying it on the bumper prevented dripping inside the car, plus the block would melt just enough by the time they got to the cabin that it would be the right size for the ice box.

Chuck and his mom would spend most of the summer at the cabin, his dad remaining behind in the Cities for his letter carrier job. Because his dad went to work early and was off at 3:00 he would make a trip once or twice a week "up to the cabin." Chuck remembers listening to the radio at night since there was no TV. There were only a couple of other kids his age. Too young to run a boat motor, they would take an Alumacraft duck boat and row just about everywhere kids would want to go, including the inlet and outlet of the Elk River as well as Lilly Creek.

The Heinemann's did not have a boat at first, but Chuck had an uncle who bought one from people who had a cabin on Sugar Lake in Wright County. Off to Sugar Lake and trailer the boat back to Big Elk, each direction requiring a ferry boat ride across the Mississippi at Clearwater. Over the years Chuck recalls his family owning 10 different boats including a canoe, sailboat, I/O, pontoon, and a hand built speedboat.

Fish were plentiful: walleye, northern, bass, crappie and sunfish. Chuck's mother Marge had the biggest walleye catch recorded for Big Elk Lake at the time [8.8 lbs], but a funny thing happened when it got registered at the Elk Lake Resort: Chuck's dad's name was attached to the record. Chuck checked it out on an old log book that Tom Eilers still has: Al's name is still there.

Chuck remembers the lake not being as green as it is now, but acknowledges that it might be a "kid's memory." In the 50's and 60's lake residents would treat the lake with copper sulfate. The process included a makeshift wooden frame across 10 – 12 boats, with men on the bows scooping copper sulfate into the lake while somebody else steered the flotilla around the lake. The group was called the Elk Lake Improvement Association at the time, later the Big Elk Lake Improvement Association.

With four related families all in a row on the lake it felt a lot like a family compound. Saturday nights and cards, with snacks late in the evening, were part of extended family life. Some of his fondest memories included spending time with his parents, enjoying the lake and related activities, and having friends up for the weekend. Being around family was special to Chuck: the lots were small and he could run freely between them. There was always something going on and somebody to talk to.

In the early years they had no car because dad was working in the cities. But Uncle George had a car, and George, and his wife Myrtle, Chuck's mom and Chuck would pack a picnic lunch and go for a drive,

find a nice picnic place and stop for lunch. Chuck remembers another of his uncles frequenting Bob's Bar in Clear Lake, half of which was owned by then Sherburne County Sheriff Chet Goenner, and ordering "3 in 1's.....three shots and a beer." The same uncle had a reputation for stashing a bottle by the light pole behind the cabin for late night libation.

In the 80's after all of the early remodeling, Chuck's parents began spending more time in Florida. While back in Minnesota Marge had a serious fall down the stairs at the cabin and spent 2 months mending in a nursing home. She never came back to the cabin, and his dad didn't come up either. So Chuck, then wife Barbara and son Andy would use it. After Al died his mother gave the cabin to Chuck. After his mom died and he was divorced, Chuck moved to the lake full time, worked some from the lake home, and retired in 2004.

Chuck identifies several big changes since his early years on the lake: Cabins to permanent homes, and the advent of structure and rules, which meant that unlike the early years, cabin and home owners could not do whatever they wanted with their property. He noted that at least on Big Elk Lake, there is not as much sense of belonging now as in his earlier years. As he pointed to the lake, he added: "And the stinky green algae hasn't changed a lot." His biggest wish: That the BLCA increases awareness of the importance of water quality, and continues its hard work improving it.

Chuck's story continues with another chapter. "After being a 'lake bachelor' for a number of years, I met Sue Golding (who shares my love of water). We've made a life together and now summer at Elk Lake and winter in the Florida Keys. I guess I'm following in my parents' footsteps in finding a warm place to spend winters. I was fortunate to become active in the BLCA after retirement, and have been honored to serve on The Board and as the BLCA President. Both Sue and I believe that stewardship of our lake property is a very important responsibility."

Addendum – February 2024

by Chuck Heinemann

Brad Kipp asked if he could reprint my story in the Lake Report and would I add an update to the narrative and include some pictures. I agreed, and though I don't have the story-telling skills that Kenzie Phelps has, here goes...

Sue and me – As you read, Sue Golding and I became a "couple", and we purchased a house together on Little Torch Key (about 26 miles from Key West). We were on a canal and had access to the Ocean and/or the Gulf. Great fishing in either location.

The color of the water when going out in the ocean is simply amazing -- turquoise at first, then a darker blue and finally changing to dark cobalt blue when you get to about 500 feet of depth!

Another benefit of living in the Keys is easy access to a variety of good music – in Key West, of course, but also up and down the Keys. There is usually no cover charge, and the only cost is payment for beverages and a few bucks for the musician's tip jar!

But like many good things, the Keys life came to an end for me in 2015. Sue and I broke up; she would live in the Keys, and I would stay at Elk Lake. Unfortunately, while on a cruise in December, Sue contracted a



respiratory infection which morphed into pneumonia and then she suffered a massive stroke that left her paralyzed. She passed away in March of 2016 on Little Torch Key. RIP, Susan.



Life on Elk Lake – The “four relatives in a row” (cabins) that were mentioned in the earlier story are no more – but they have been replaced by a very excellent group of neighbors. A special treat sometime back was to have Ben Goenner move in next door to me so there is now another Goenner on Elk Lake! (Remember that my parents bought the land from Alfred and Helen Goenner in 1946)!

I absolutely love living at the lake. There is something so refreshing and uplifting about being near the water. One of my favorite times is watching the sun go down from my deck

(often with an adult beverage in hand!). I never tire of the view!

A recent occurrence is the development of the Two Inlets Regional Park on the north and west shores of Elk Lake. It will encompass nearly 400 acres of land and will feature nature and hiking trails in addition to paying respect to the Native American heritage of the land. My mother told me that an Indian Chief was buried there (perhaps on his horse!) The burial has been confirmed – the horse, who knows? But my mother said this, so it must be so! In any event, how wonderful to have the vista preserved in all its natural splendor! **Click link below.**



New Park name honors Native American history

<https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/1331/Two-Inlets-at-Bde-Hehaka---Omashkooz-Zaa>

And next... who knows what memories are still to come for me as I journey through life? Although it's fun to relive the old times it is exciting to look forward to what is ahead. **As my friend in the Keys, singer/songwriter Howard Livingston & The Mile Marker 24 Band, sings it:**

“I might look a little older, might move a little slower. But don't be mistaken by these wrinkles on my face. I can still get 'er done, got a lot of races yet to run. You see I'm headed the other way; I'm getting younger every day.” Chuck

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

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.

