



Briggs Lake Chain Association

March 2025 Lake Report

The President's Report Shelly Alger- Peyton

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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 will occur gradually and without any major flooding like in recent years. Though I know some of you are waiting for the 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 be prepared this late Winter/Spring season.

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.

**** 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.**



*I look forward to volunteering
alongside you to conserve our waterways in 2025!!!!*

- Shelly

Did you forget to complete your 2025 BLCA Membership?

January was our annual "kick off" to join or renew your membership to the BLCA (Briggs Lake Chain Association). **You can complete forms & payments online, or if you prefer you can always mail them in. If you have not received your BLCA Sponsorship packet, please contact a board member for assistance.**



A BIG THANK YOU To Forrest Brothen, his team of volunteers, all of the sponsors, the BLCA and everyone who attended and enjoyed a winter day on the lake and made this event a huge success.



Thank you Briggs Lake Chain Association for the fun Ice day! This little guy is beyond excited for his grand prize winnings!

Funny story is, he was getting discouraged hearing other numbers besides ours getting called, so I decided we would move toward the front as a learning experience for him to see who was winning and explain how raffles work. Well we just got settled into the front row, and lo and behold, our number gets called!!!! He's obsessed with jeeps! This has made his year!!!

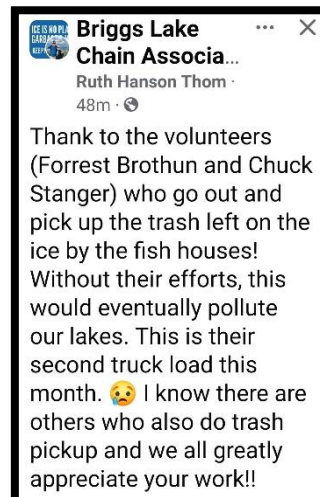


Big fish, little fish and prizes



**A warm fire, food, and fireworks...
A great day at the lake.**

ice by the fish houses! Without their efforts, this would eventually pollute our lakes. This is their second truck load this month. 😞 I know there are others who also do trash pickup and we all greatly appreciate your work!!



Healthy Lakes Ruth Thom & Bre Bauerly co-chairs

Feb. 6, 2025, Healthy Lakes Meeting Summary 6 members in attendance TLID update:

- Briggs Lake received a DNR grant for 6900 for Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) control BLCA board update:
- Big Elk Lake received a DNR grant for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) management
- The Sherburne SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) is working on getting conservation materials to local Air BnBs and VRBOs. They will also be at local farmers' markets this summer with educational materials.
- Bre is making plans for another bare root tree and shrub giveaway in early May. Water Testing Report
- The full report can be found on the front page of the BLCA website.
- Walt will present the report to the township on Monday night.
- The biggest surprise/mystery was that phosphorus levels were up this year, but Chlorophyll A (algae) levels were actually down.
- A water tester for Julia is still needed for this summer. It is a half-hour commitment twice a month, on either Monday night or Tuesday morning. Water Inspection Report
- The full report is available on the front page of the BLCA website.
- This is a report prepared by SWCD with comparisons to other area lakes with AIS inspectors at landings.
- Bre is going to bring our questions to Dan at SWCD to see why the inspection hours on Big Lake are less than ours, but their number of completed inspections are considerably higher. We are wondering if their volunteer hours are included in the report or not. Old business:
- We are waiting to hear from SWCD regarding funding for carp management and the grant process for an alum treatment. New business:
- We discussed the speaker schedule for upcoming BLCA meetings. We may try to get someone to speak to/answer questions about the MN septic compliance law (new in 2021) o April 12th - Carp Solutions rep presentation (confirmed) o May 10th (fishing opener) - ? Maybe a master gardener?? or MN Lakes and Rivers rep?? o June 13th (Palmer Park) - Dan C. - SWCD presentation / Q&A (confirmed) o July 12th - U of M Loon/Eagle speaker presentation Action items:
- Bre—set date(s) for plant giveaways
- Bre—research our questions re: watercraft inspection statistics
- Ruth and Bre—contact 2024 Lake Stewards to see if they are willing to be part of a property tour this summer and/or to answer questions from prospective lake stewards
- Ruth—contact Dave Maiers with name of company that blows out frozen septic lines to see if they want to be in our directory
- Walt—Bring water testing report to the township meeting and request their financial support for this year's testing.
- Ruth—announce need for water tester on Facebook



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 the shoreland with natural plants and controlling rainwater runoff. These reduced the quantity of pollutants and nutrients in our lake waters. The SERP program, was originally 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 seeds 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.mnllcorp.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 the Facebook page for our Annual Spring (May) Native Plant GIVE AWAY. ****

Upcoming Winter/Spring/Summer events 2025:

- **MUST ATTEND EVENT: Saturday, April 12, 2025**
The BLCA meeting begins at 8:30am, then guest speaker Przemek, pronounced “Shemek,” Bajer, PhD
Owner of Carp Solutions LLC presentation and Q&A beginning at 10:00am.



- **McDonald's Meats Pork Chop/Brat fundraiser** – May/June TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details & **VOLUNTEER SIGNUP!!**
- **BLCA Spring Hwy 25 Ditch cleanup** – April/May TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page for details & **VOLUNTEER SIGNUP!!**
- **2025 MN Fishing Opener** – Saturday May 10, 2025, see MN DNR website for rules & regulations www.dnr.state.mn.us

- [2025 Spring Garage Sale weekend](#) – May - TBD, watch the BLCA Facebook page and residents' signs for date/time details.
- [Palmer Township Cleanup Day](#) – Saturday, May 3rd – 7:00am-12:00pm, Palmer Township Hall, see Township website for details.
- [BLCA Summer Get-Together](#) – May 10th, 8:30am - Palmer Township Hall, Guest Speaker TBA
- [BLCA Membership BBQ in the Park](#) – Friday, June 13th – 5:00pm, Guest speaker TBA, Palmer Park Pavillion
- [4th of July Boat Parade & Fireworks](#) - Parades – Saturday, July 5th 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
 - Fireworks – Saturday, July 5th at 9:30pm/dusk, Briggs Lake, south end by the boat launch



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 for the last 4 years has been PLM.

**** REMINDER: PLM's Individual Aquatic Plant***

Management/Spraying applications were mailed out in November 2024. 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.briggslakechainassociation.com

**** The deadline to return your application and payment is***

April 15, 2025. This is so PLM can apply for required permits from the MN DNR on your behalf.



REMINDERS:

- We are still in need of additional BLCA committee members/lake representatives 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 2025 directory.
- **Please plan on attending** your monthly BLCA meetings at the Palmer Townhall, on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 8:30am. To learn about and assist with water conservation needs, enriching activities, food and fellowship.
**** NEXT BLCA MEETING** - Saturday, March 8th at 8:30am**
- See www.briggslakechainassociation.com for all the 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 & BLCA on Instagram.**

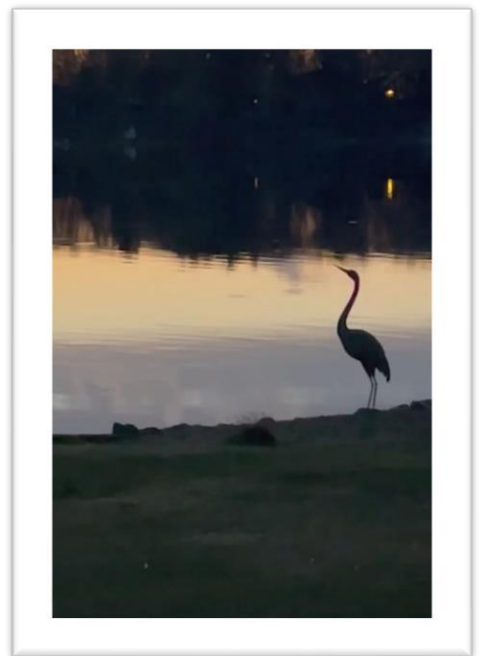
Bradley Thom posted this on Facebook: Paul Fors Yesterday, 2/16, the Briggs Lake community lost one its longtime residents. Paul Fors of Julia Lake passed away at the age of 95 and up to that point had still been living in his home in the NW corner of the lake. Paul, a retired union brick layer, formerly a Bloomington resident, built a number of the homes around the lakes as well as his own. Paul was a Marine, a Korean War veteran and Purple Heart recipient. Along with his wife, Norma, they were very active members of the community, and they were passionate outdoor enthusiasts.

This "Remember When" is a reprint from the May 2024 Lake Report.

This WE REMEMBER: Paul and Norma Fors, Lake Julia 2009 by Kenzie Phelps

Does this sound familiar? "I like to get up in the morning and look out at the lake. It sure beats looking at a parking lot or apartment building." Paul and Norma Fors have been a part of the lakes for the better part of 54 years, first buying two parcels of property in 1955, then living in both a tent and cabin in the years before and during the time it took to build their home.

The building took about 10 years, starting in 1975. Paul, a bricklayer, worked on other people's homes during the week in the twin cities area while Norma drew house plans and made preparations for each weekend jaunt to the lakes. What started out to be a nice small cabin turned into their year 'round home, which they moved into in 1985. According to Paul, "It was a fun project; Norma always had things ready to go."



Lake Julia was the treasure they shared with other cabin owners and weekenders. Paul fondly remembers the lake at that time: “We would walk along the shoreline in waders and catch nice bass and sunnies. There was a nice natural hard sand shore line [now covered in muck] in front of our land and all along the north end of Julia.” At the time there were no speedboats, just fishing boats, so the water and lake bottom didn’t get all riled up.

Paul doesn’t recall problems with lake weeds, and that “the fishing was great.” At one point their property, as well as their neighbors, ran a good 10 feet further out into the lake, but because of erosion problems they lost that part of their property. The road into Lake Julia at that time was just a sugar sand road, and Highway 25 was still unpaved. Their girls used to complain about “going down the sandy road to the lake.”

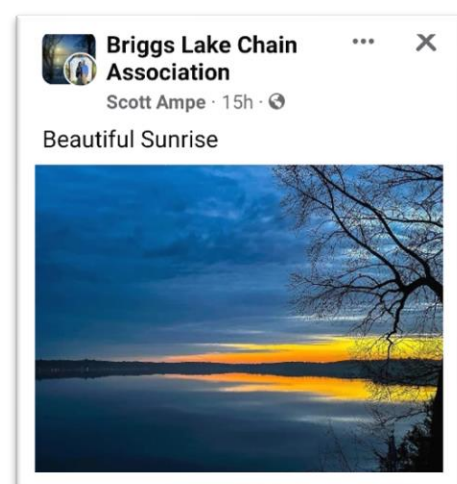
Norma’s fondest memories include driving around the lakes to the Cottonwood Beach Resort to go dancing and meeting other people from the lakes. “Living in the suburbs,” said Paul, “you didn’t know your neighbors. But at the lakes you knew everybody. Every Friday night there was a potluck dinner at the town hall, and a lot of lake people showed up.”

Moving into their home was one of Paul’s warm memories: “We didn’t move in until it was completely done.” Before they started building their home, and during construction, their girls were at the lake all summer, and all kinds of people came to visit. “Our girls practically grew up here. We had good times here.” Adding to their adventures on the lake, Norma’s sister and her husband built a cabin on the east side of the channel between Briggs and Julia.

From their time as weekenders and builders to 2009, the biggest change the Fors have seen is “from cabins to all year homes,” which they don’t see as negative but part of normal change. What Paul doesn’t see as normal change is worsening water quality. If he could make things change, he would improve water quality and clarity, like it was just a few years ago.

Catching Up With Paul Fors In 2024

In 2009 in a **This We Remember** Lake Report article featuring Paul and Norma Fors, Paul said the first thing he likes to do in the morning was look out at the lake. Now in 2024 he still looks out at Lake Julia first thing in the morning. On a recent morning, he spotted Canada geese feeding in the shallows off his shoreline. Only now Paul takes in the early morning quiet by himself, without Norma, his long-time wife and partner. Norma died in 2017 from complications of progressive supranuclear palsy, a rare brain disease that affects body movements such as walking, balance and speech. Paul took care of Norma for over 12 years at their Lake Julia home. She spent the last 8 months of her life at the Monticello Nursing home on the banks of the Mississippi River.



Paul not only enjoyed the view of Lake Julia from his living room, but he was also out on the water often.



In addition to his love of fishing, for 28 years he collected water samples on Julia for the BLCA's water quality monitoring efforts, for which he was recognized and honored by the BLCA, TLID and Palmer Township.

Now 94, Paul is fiercely independent, still living comfortably in his home. In addition to normal housekeeping chores, he attends a Bible study group at Santiago Lutheran Church, has breakfast every Thursday with group of long time friends, goes to acupuncture and other medical appointments, does jigsaw puzzles, and enjoys fishing outings with longtime friend Ronnie Ahlman, who has been on Lake Julia going on 80 years [since he was 2].

So how does he get around to his various destinations? He drives himself to wherever he wants to go! When asked how he backs out of his garage and up his hilly driveway to 42nd street, he said "I don't. I back down my driveway and into the garage." He learned how to do this when Norma was alive since it was easier for her to exit their car on the passenger side and go directly from garage to kitchen!

Among the many things an independent 94 man does, Paul loves to cook. On the day of this interview, he was planning on broiling salmon for dinner. No big deal he said. When not in the mood to cook he drives to various local restaurants for takeout.

Thanks, Kenzie, for sharing this story.

- **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 measure if 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 the Facebook page.
- **DON'T FORGET** to double check your seasonal resource guide that is on your "Annual Healthy Lakes Checklist" refrigerator magnet that lake property owners were sent via mail in recent years with their membership mailing as to the do's & don'ts for seasonal lake conservation!!!

www.briggslakechainassociation.com

DON'T FORGET – “Spring Ahead” time approaches so apply for your 2054 BLCA Conservation – Restoration – Lake Steward - Plant Bank Programs!!!



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.

