

Onland, Rinehart, Severson and Sunset Lake Management Planning Meeting

September 24, 2009

Minutes

Present: Corinna Neeb, Will Neeb, George Rogers, Gary Nilsen, Linda Dean, Amy Dean-Wojcik, Randy Slagg (Portage Co LCD), Nancy Turyk (UWSP CWSE), Jen McNelly (UWSP CWSE), Linda Stoll (UWSP CLUE)

- 1) Those in attendance introduced themselves and received a handout of the agenda and background information for the night's meeting.
 - a. Nancy presented background information on the Portage County Lake Studies project completed in 2007 and subsequent efforts to prepare for the lake planning process.
- 2) Jen presented background information on Ebert and Lime Lake from the Portage County Lake Study. This presentation was similar to the presentation to the community in 2007. (Information can be found in the excerpts from the Portage County lake Study found in the binder or on County webpage)
 - a. The surface water and groundwater watersheds were identified as well as land uses within the surface watersheds. Ebert is surrounded by forests and wetlands and does have some non-irrigated agriculture in the watershed. Lime is surrounded by some forested land, some herbaceous cover and residential properties. It has a confined animal feeding operation and non-irrigated agriculture in the watershed.
 - b. The type of lake will determine many of the management strategies. Ebert is a groundwater drainage lake (groundwater inflow and surface water outflow) Water residence time is 0.4 years. Lime is a seepage lake (inflow and outflow is through groundwater) Water residence time for Lime is 2.4 years.
 - c. There are several factors that influence water quality. In particular, impervious surface can influence the amount of phosphorus and sediment that reaches a lake.
 - d. Shoreland vegetation can reduce runoff and filter out contaminants from surface water flow. Both lakes had a low amount of disturbed shoreline. Lime had two small spots of highly disturbed shoreline.
 - e. It is desirable for lake plans to address sensitive areas on the nearby landscape. Both Ebert and Lime lakes have areas of steep slopes and sensitive wetlands.
 - f. Aquatic plants are important to the overall health of a lake. Ebert has the greatest diversity of native plant species of the two lakes and the greatest number of high quality species (more sensitive to water quality and disturbance) suggesting that the aquatic plant community has experienced fewer disturbances than Lime Lake. Ebert is nearly surrounded by wetlands some of which are the best examples of a fen in Portage County. The fen also contains the fen orchid and a native shrubby cinquefoil. Lime has an abundance of two species of water-meal, which are the smallest flowering plants in the world.

- g. The presence of invasive species requires specific management responses. Lime Lake has Eurasian Water Milfoil as well as two aggressive alien cattails. Currently, Ebert has no aquatic invasive plant species.
 - h. Frogs play a role in the ecology of a lake and can serve as an indicator species for the overall health of a lake's ecosystem. Ebert Lake has three frog species and good habitat around the majority of the lake. Lime has four frog species with primary habitat on the east side of the lake.
 - i. In-Lake Water Data.
 - i. Lake Temperature – Both lakes were stratified, meaning that the temperatures decrease with depth in summer and winter and had mixed temperatures in spring and fall.
 - ii. Lake Dissolved Oxygen – Ebert has sufficient dissolved oxygen levels in the lake throughout the year. There is some decrease in dissolved oxygen levels in the deeper depths of the lake, but this is not uncommon. In Lime Lake there are sufficient dissolved oxygen levels in the upper third of the lake for most of the year. Occasionally during the summer and winter the dissolved oxygen level decreases below 5 mg/L at about 12 feet. This can stress aquatic organisms and should be monitored in case of winter kills.
 - iii. Lake Clarity – Ebert Lake is listed in the “Good” category and Lime in the “Poor to Fair” category when compared to similar lake types in Portage County.
 - iv. Phosphorus Data – Both lakes show decreasing amounts of phosphorus in their water from their historic highs though Lime Lake's levels still place it above the critical level of 30 ppb
 - v. Nitrogen – Ebert Lake shows an increasing level of nitrogen with readings well over the critical level of 0.3 mg/L. Lime shows a relatively stable level with the exception of the 2003 reading which spiked near the critical level.
 - vi. Chloride – Chloride levels in both Ebert and Lime Lakes were at a “medium” level. Chloride does not affect the water quality of a lake but is interpreted as an indication of the impacts of human use land uses on water quality.
 - vii. Atrazine – An agricultural chemical that was detected in Ebert and found at 0.18 mg/L in Lime Lake. While these levels are considered low, it is an indication that agriculture is having some sort of impact on these lakes. Studies have also shown that atrazine even in low levels can have adverse impacts on amphibians in a lake.
 - viii. Trophic Scorecard – combines all of the measurements of water quality, water clarity, and algae to give an overall picture of the lakes trophic status or where the lake is at in the aging process. Ebert has a trophic level of an oligotrophic lake and Lime has a trophic level of mesotrophic.
- 3) Linda covered the content and process of developing a lake management plan. She spoke about the topics typically included in the lake management plan, why we should plan for our lakes and the planning process.
- 4) Linda provided information on who completed the citizen survey and the group reviewed the answers on what people valued about Ebert and Lime Lakes and what improvements might be made to each lake

Value of Ebert Lake

- Privacy
- Decent fishing
- Beautiful view
- This is a little jewel of a lake with almost no development

Concerns for Ebert Lake

- All developable land on the lake should stay undeveloped.
- Keep the lake as it is. Fortunately, much of the shore is wetland and is unbuildable, but some high ground could be developed.
- A spring area in one corner needs protection. It keeps part of the lake open even in subzero weather
- There's no boat landing on Ebert but it needs none. You can get to the lake by paddling or rowing up a shallow outlet stream. This is a little difficult but that's okay. It keeps out big boats and motors

Value of Lime Lake

- Fishing
- Scenery. The lake is pretty when the sun sets
- Privacy, limited public use
- Natural landscape. Shoreline is natural and for the most part undisturbed. Also, nice variety of rocks.
- All of the animals that use it. Variety of species – it's a healthy lake serving a variety of wildlife; the wildlife
- Solitude
- Family get-togethers
- Water quality
- Location

Concerns for Lime Lake

- Bring the water back. Let the dump trucks put the snow on the lake, in Amherst, do this by the boat landing.
- In front of my frontage it is all mud. You can't go swimming or do stuff like that.
- You could maybe dig out a couple deep holes in the lake; dredge lake to make deeper
- Removal of material from swamp and pond to restore water to previous capacity and wildlife to what it used to be. There were once torine shrimp in the watershed areas which fed fish and other wildlife.
- Monitor irrigation wells so the lake won't lose water every year; limit irrigation
- Raise water level; regulate agricultural watering. I see watering during rainstorms in the water table area. 10 years ago water was pumped directly from the lake for watering, which at that time dropped the water level.
- Restrict buildings on shoreline properties. When I purchased the land over 10 years ago, was told no home or structures were permitted (other than existing). The Village has told me that's been changed.
- Springs and swamp on the north side need to be protected from development
- Relocate dairy farm

- Vegetation control. Hand pull to remove weeds/ poison weeds(last resort); cattail weeds
- For residential properties in the watershed, no lawn fertilizer! Its wreaking havoc on lake Michigan. (Have seen firsthand)
- Investigate dog waste disposal

Discussion was held on the survey results and to identify potential overall visions for each lake.

Goals for Ebert Lake

1. Freeze Ebert Lake in time – protect it
2. Adopt appropriate zoning to protect the lake
3. Consider conservation easements to protect the lake
4. Keep shorelines as wild as possible
5. Consider purchasing and protecting any land that comes up for sale.

Goals for Lime Lake

1. Make Lime look like Ebert
 2. Improve water clarity in Lime
 3. Maintain or reduced the number of motor boats on the lake. Encourage small boats (canoes, kayaks,)
 4. Maintain the lake for future generations
 5. Maintain a balanced population of aquatic plants to allow for recreational use of the lake as well as for habitat and stable water quality
 6. Address the decreased water levels.
 7. Keep it tranquil – peaceful.
 8. Improve boat landing conditions– address trash, junk, a sense of disrespect
 9. Monitor and address the Eurasian Water Milfoil in lake
 10. Would like to have a healthy, stable game fish population – Bass good, Northern stunted, not a lot of “keepers”
 11. Address the Blue Green Algae bloom (2009). Algae floating on the surface, very dark,
- 5) Discussion was held on the make-up of the lake planning committee. Linda asked if there were any others that should present or that should be invited to be part of the planning committee. Those present agreed to talk with their neighbors about the process and invite them to the next meeting.
- 6) The committee discussed how decisions should be made. It was agreed that the group would try for consensus but if that was not possible, they would list the differing recommendations in the plans so decision-makers could see that there was a difference of opinion.

- 7) The outline of the three remaining meetings planned for the planning process was reviewed. Those present agreed that the next meeting would be held October 20 at 7:00pm at the Town of Amherst municipal building. The next meeting will cover shoreline management, invasive aquatic species and aquatic plants. The committee will begin to set goals and objectives for those topics. Dates for the remaining meetings will be set at the October meeting.
- a. It was decided that public notices of the meetings should be sent to the Stevens Point Journal, Our Community Spirit, the Portage County Gazette and the Waupaca newspapers. Linda will write up a meeting notice for each meeting and send it to the respective newspapers.
 - b. Informational binders containing information on each lake and the planning process were distributed. Included in the binders were the maps of each lake and their watersheds, results of the Portage County Lake Study specific to each lake, a series of land management tools, information on land trusts and the county and state land stewardship programs, a glossary and Informational brochures that included: The Water's Edge, Aquatic Plants, and The Shoreland Stewardship Series. Committee members were asked to review the information prior to the next meeting.

Information on the meetings and plan drafts can be found at the Portage County website <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/>. Access the lake information by selecting the County Info tab, then Portage County Lakes. Choose the name of the lake of interest.

If you have questions about the survey or the planning process, please contact:

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