

Ebert and Lime Lake Management Planning Meeting

Dec 1, 2009

Minutes

Present: Brian Cory, Linda Dean, Amy Dean-Wojcik, Corinna Neeb, Will Neeb, George Rogers, Ward Wolff, Mike Schulfer, Ron Crunkilton, UWSP, Nancy Turyk (UWSP CWSE), Jen McNelly (UWSP CWSE), Linda Stoll (UWSP CLUE)

- 1.) Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those in attendance to introduce themselves.
- 2.) Dr. Ron Crunkilton, UWSP, provided background information on the fishery of the lakes. He explained that the nature of the fishery in all of the lakes in Portage County was a product of the glacier and the subsequent rainfall that fed ground water and connecting and intermittent streams. He reviewed the 2002-2003 fish study of ten lakes in Portage County which included Lime Lake. Of note was the presence of a hybrid cross between bluegill and pumpkinseed found in Lime Lake. While this is not unusual, it might be evidence of loss of habitat or over-crowding. They also found green sunfish which is not common in Wisconsin, it is typically found in southern states, though can be found in other lakes in Portage County. Lime Lake also had an abundance of yellow bullhead and mud minnow – both tolerant of low dissolved oxygen – which could also be an indicator of past winterkills. Dr. Crunkilton asked if anyone was aware of winter fish kills. No one offered any knowledge on this issue. It was also noted that the current low water levels on Lime Lake may increase the risk of winterkill.

Dr. Crunkilton commented that several species that were reported in the past were missing from this sampling and noted that they could just have been missed, due to the type of sampling or the time of year when sampling was done. Further study using several different sampling methods would be needed to definitively determine what was currently present in the lake.

Dr. Crunkilton explained that the habitat present in and around a lake is important to the quality of the fishery. He commented that across Portage County Lakes it was found that the number of fish species tends to decrease with increased in shoreline disturbance. Lakes with high development had 20% fewer species than those with little or no development. Increases in the bottom area covered by marl also may reduce the number of fish species as it reduces spawning habitat for those fish species that require a gravel bottom. Dr. Crunkilton also noted the importance of aquatic plants and woody material for fish habitat.

Dr. Crunkilton offered the following recommendations for fish management in Ebert and Lime Lakes:

- Protect and enhance shoreline cover
- Maintain gravel bars/bottom

- Manage for native fish
- Do not stock non-native fish
- Maintain large native predatory fish to keep the population of smaller fish in check
- Monitor winter dissolved oxygen for potential problems

Discussion was held on opportunities to enhance the size of fish on the lakes, as it seems there are a large number of fish that are small or just below the current size regulations. Dr. Crunkilton noted in his study a large number of bass that fell just below the 13 inch size limit. The small size of both lakes offers some challenge for management when a harvest is allowed. The WDNR is currently exploring new size regulations for Northern Pike across Portage County and possible size regulations for Bass on select lakes. The Wisconsin DNR will hold public meetings to discuss county specific size regulations and those in attendance were encouraged to attend these meetings to voice their concerns.

Several people mentioned that the Lime Lake boat landing was in need of repair. They felt that weeds and trash were an issue. Also mentioned was the increasing number of cattails at the outlet to Lime Lake. Ebert Lake experienced an abundance of seagulls this year and they were not sure what this might mean.

- 3.) Linda gave a presentation on the responses received in the public survey for the topics of aquatic plants, fisheries and recreation
- 4.) The planning committee for each lake elected to stay together to continue the discussion on fish and aquatic plants. Jen handed out a draft outline for the lake plans. She explained that each suggested action item was colored coded to denote its source. The committees reviewed the items and offered suggestions that were recorded into the document.
- 5.) The next meeting was set for January 5th at 6:30pm at the Amherst town hall.

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.

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

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