

Little St. Germain Lake District
1599 Shields Road
St. Germain, WI 54558



**Little St. Germain Lake District Board of Commissioners
& Term Expirations**

Elected commissioners

Chairman	Ted Ritter	September, 2010	tritter3@verizon.net
Secretary	Lou Mirek	September, 2009	ljmirek@verizon.net
Treasurer	Erv Stiemke	September, 2011	info@stiemkesresort.com

Appointed commissioners

Town Board	Todd Wiese	Open ended term
County Board	Mary Platner	Open ended term

**Newsletter #3
Winter 2008-09**

Mailing labels for this newsletter are obtained from Vilas County tax records.

*Please **DO NOT** request address changes from the Lake District.*

All address change requests must be made in writing to the Vilas County Treasurer at 330 Court Street, Eagle River, WI 54521. Be sure to include your parcel computer number as it appears on your tax bill when requesting a mailing address change.

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WATER CLARITY IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Attendees at the 2008 Little St. Germain Lake District annual meeting on August 31 learned that the Board of Commissioners has been working with the WI DNR and with Barr Engineering in Minneapolis to determine if alum, an aluminum compound sometimes used in lakes to reduce algal blooms, could improve summer water clarity in Little Saint.

Alum treatments in Little Saint would be extremely expensive, would probably be effective for no more than five to eight years (if they work at all) and would have the potential of causing great harm, particularly to fish, if performed improperly. On the other hand, with careful lake assessment and proper treatment planning, alum has the potential of providing effective reduction of algae by means of controlling phosphorous in the water and/or in lake sediments.

The limited space in this newsletter does not allow for an adequate explanation of the ongoing assessment of the potential for alum treatments in Little Saint. Therefore, a two page report has been placed on the lake district website at <http://www.littlesaint.org/>. A link to the report can be found on the home page under the category of "Miscellaneous documents".

LAKE DISTRICT STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

A survey of Little St. Germain stakeholders was conducted during 2008 as part of the update to the long term management plan for the lake (see Exotic Weed Control Update on page 3). Survey questionnaires were mailed to 418 district property owners. The response rate was an impressive nearly 50% with 204 completed surveys being returned. Thank you to all who participated!

An analysis of the survey results is available on the lake district website at <http://www.littlesaint.org/>. A link to the report can be found on the home page under the category of "Miscellaneous documents".

2008 LAKE DISTRICT TAX LEVY TO SUPPORT 2009 OPERATING BUDGET

Attendees at the August 31, 2008 Little St. Germain Lake District annual meeting approved the following 2008 tax levy (to be collected on property tax bills payable in 2009):

Operating expenses	\$8,000
Insurance premium	\$2,000
Exotic weed control	\$29,000
Fish & Wildlife Club/Lakes/Town - lakes improvement matching program	\$1,000
Aeration operations	\$9,000
Long term plant management & water quality	\$20,000
Alum treatment 1 st year loan payment	\$66,000
Walleye stocking	\$10,000
Total 2008 tax levy	\$145,000

The total 2009 operating budget totals \$160,000. It includes \$15,000 for aquatic plant harvesting (weed cutting). This is excluded from the levy because there is a \$15,000 funds carryover from 2008 resulting from harvesting not being done in 2008.

EXOTIC WEED CONTROL UPDATE

Two non-native invasive plant species, Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) and Eurasian water milfoil (EWM), were found growing in Little St. Germain Lake during 2002 and 2003. Both of these plants are capable of:

- ◆ Creating recreational and navigational obstacles by establishing high density populations with heavy mats on the lake surface
- ◆ Displacing desirable native vegetation
- ◆ Reducing dissolved oxygen levels in the lake by limiting sunlight penetration
- ◆ Upsetting the natural balance of fish populations
- ◆ Triggering algae blooms

The Board of Commissioners adopted a five year DNR approved management plan for these nuisance plants in 2003. Fifty percent funding for implementation of the plan was provided from the DNR's Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grant program. Lake district property owners have been paying the balance of the cost through annual tax levies.

Eradication of these plants is generally deemed as impossible. A more realistic goal is to control their growth in a manner that minimizes their negative impacts. That has been accomplished for the past five years through the diligent efforts of volunteers working hand in hand with a lake management consultant and a licensed aquatic herbicide applicator hired by the Board of Commissioners as prescribed in the management plan.

The initial five year management plan and corresponding grant funding expired in 2008.

The Board of Commissioners and supporting volunteers have been working with our consultant (Onterra, LLC) to develop updated plans to carry us forward and to apply for renewed grant funding. If the new grant is awarded, the State cost share will be 75%, a very big improvement over the 50/50 cost split of the past five years. However, the likelihood of the grant being awarded is questionable due to the now huge state-wide demand for grant funding and the anticipated reduction of the State budget. We will know by late winter where we stand on the grant award.

Failure to obtain grant funding would result in a reduction of effort to control CLP and EWM, but our program would continue within the constraints of our annual budget. Regardless of the extent of actual control measures, two critical activities need to be increased by an expanded corps of volunteers:

INVASIVE PLANT MONITORS ARE NEEDED to help watch for new locations of CLP and EWM within the lake. This can best be accomplished by people who are on the lake frequently such as local anglers and recreational boaters. The district will provide them with small specially colored buoys that can be dropped at the site of suspicious plants. Upon placement of buoys, the plant monitors would call Tom Best at Idle Hours Resort in East Bay and advise him where buoys have been placed. Tom would then go to the site(s) and identify the suspicious plants as either one of the harmful exotic weeds or a non-harmful native plant. Therefore, the people watching for CLP and EWM needn't be plant experts, but knowledgeable enough to notice changes in lake plant communities that could be exotic weeds. Minimal training is needed to accomplish this important work.

Anyone wishing to assist with plant monitoring should contact Tom Best by e-mail at tom@idlehours.com or by phone at 715-891-2111.

WATERCRAFT INSPECTORS ARE NEEDED to donate a few hours each summer (or a few partial days?) to monitor boats coming and going at the public boat landing. These watercraft inspection activities need to increase for two very important reasons:

1. The State is now requiring an active invasive species prevention effort to qualify for grant funding to control invasive species. Failure of at least 15 to 20 volunteers to donate a few hours

(Continued on page 4)

once or twice over the course of the spring, summer and fall could jeopardize the district's recovery of EWM and CLP management expenses. This activity requires no more than two hours of advance training, after which volunteers can simply go to the public landing and conduct inspections at their convenience with no further coordination by anyone else.

2. While CLP and EWM are already well established in our lake, there are several other harmful plants, animals and pathogens on the horizon that have not yet arrived. It is critical that boats entering lakes be inspected for the presence of plant material or on-board water that could be contaminated with invisible, but detrimental life forms.

Anyone willing to donate some time for the good of protecting and preserving the lake and maintaining our exotic plant management expense recovery eligibility should contact Lou Mirek by e-mail at ljmirek@verizon.net or by phone at 715-477-2879 or cell 608-698-2745 .

WALLEYE STOCKING UPDATE

Steve Gilbert, DNR Fisheries manager for Vilas County, reported at the 2008 annual meeting that the Lower East Bay and South Bay winter aeration systems have improved winter dissolved oxygen levels sufficiently that stocking of extended growth (7-8") walleyes is now an advisable method of improving walleye populations.

Unfortunately, the State stocking program is not a source for Little Saint walleyes at this time. Steve indicated a willingness on his part to authorize stocking from an approved private hatchery source at lake district expense.

A motion was made and approved to include \$10,000 in the district's 2008 tax levy for 2009 stocking of extended growth walleyes. Commissioner Lou Mirek will coordinate the procurement, permitting and placement of as many walleyes as can be purchased for \$10,000.

LOOKING FOR MORE LAKE DISTRICT INFORMATION?

Visit the website at <http://www.littlesaint.org/> (Index page contents shown below)

Pages on site:

- History of and authority for Little St. Germain district
- History of district valuations and tax levies
- E-mail broadcast system
- Buoy marking program
- Water quality monitoring
- Invasive species management
- Winter aeration systems
- St. Germain Town Lakes Committee

Lake studies on site:

- USGS - Water quality, 2000
- USGS - Phosphorous loading from Muskellunge Creek
- USGS - Water quality
- Barr Engineering - Musk. Creek alum feasibility
- Barr Engineering - Lake sediment alum treatment
- Foth & Van Dyke - Summary of all studies conducted
- DNR - Alum treatments to control phosphorous
- St. Germain lakes - Aquatic plant management plans

Meeting minutes

Annual financial reports

Newsletters:

- Winter 2007/2008
- Summer 2008
- Winter 2008/2009

Miscellaneous documents:

- 2004 panfish survey results
- Beaver control on Muskellunge Creek
- Chapter 33, WI Statutes (lake district law)
- Map, district boundaries
- WVIC FERC dam operating license
- 2008 Stakeholder survey results
- NALMS commentary on alum for phosphorous
- Water clarity / alum treatment update, 2009

Links to other websites