



Hello members, families and friends,

Last week at the annual meeting it was decided that the Board will do more research regarding boats that produce large waves and have the potential of eroding our shoreline. It was discussed with the Stearns County Conservation Officer that we, as lake home owners, can ask boaters to voluntarily stay in the **middle of the lake** and **stay 500 feet away from shore** while they are producing these large waves. Please help maintain and preserve our shoreline! Another route will be to possibly post a sign at the access asking transient boaters that do not live on the lake but enjoy Big Fish Lake to help us with these volunteer measures as well.

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## Missing!

A metal canoe was blown away from the NE part of the lake during last week's wind storm.

Please call Kristi Hoffman if you have seen it.

320-493-0111

Thank you!

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Last week I was asked why we have new **covered** aluminum loon nests that replaced the old wooden **uncovered** nests and the validity of these nests. Over the years, the wooden nests have begun to rot and come apart. They were VERY difficult to put in and out of the water. In 2017, Matt Peters volunteered to make another experimental nest with PVC pipe and that one was placed by the rearing pond in the NE side of the lake. Unfortunately, the nest did not attract any loons at that time. Matt did more research and discovered that the covered aluminum nests were being used successfully in

several other lakes across Minnesota, including Big Watab Lake and Mantrap Lake in the northern part of the state. After doing more research, Matt found out that we could get the nests made at the St. Cloud Technical College for a very good price. It was approved by the BFLA Board to purchase three of these nests.

"Loons prefer to nest on islands or areas out of the wind. Deep water nearby can help loons escape predators, as well as providing a margin of safety against the fluctuating water levels. The bow or closed end of the raft is anchored facing the open water, onshore waves and curious boaters. The stern or ramp end of the raft is anchored facing shore. The raft distance from shore varies with the site, but far enough away from shore to avoid discovery by shoreline predators.

The access ramp is contained within the raft to make the raft compact for easy handling. Some loon families have used the rafts for three weeks after hatching. Loons usually do not return to natural shoreline nests after the chicks hatch because of potential predation, as well as the difficulty for chicks to climb back on a shore nest.

The shape of the canopy is high in the bow and lower in the stern (ramp end). Thirty inches of space above the nest area is provided for loon copulation. The low canopy at the stern reduces the possible detection by shore [and air] predators while giving the loon good visibility, and aids the loon in slipping off the raft undetected. At this time there has been no predation on the Big Mantrap Lake rafts." (From [www.mantraplake.webs.com/loonnestingrafts.com](http://www.mantraplake.webs.com/loonnestingrafts.com))

Because this is the first year for these experimental nests on our lake, we have much to learn. Matt has admitted that he will need to put **a lot** more nesting material on the platforms next year including more bull rushes, mud and dirt. He assumed that the loons would bring in more of their own materials but that was not the case. "We have spoiled our loons to have their nests all set and ready to sit in after the ice is off the lake", says Matt with a smirk.

Update on the loons: There is a loon sitting on the PVC nest that Matt made in 2017 so we will hopefully see the results of that nest soon. There is another pair of loons with a baby over by the old beach and swimming along that shore along that side of that lake. It has been assumed that these birds came from Hermit Lake across County Road 50.

If have any more questions about the loons and their nests, please feel free to call Matt Peters at 320-685-4507.

Thank you for your time and concern for our lake and have a safe summer!

Kit Ferber  
President  
320-249-4800

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