

What Lake Users Have Told Us - We gathered feedback both written and verbal, primarily during Clean Boats Clean Waters duty at the State Park Boat Landing in an effort to gain as broad a perspective as possible, primarily from fishermen on how they view the lake as of fall 2014. Their comments were published in our Fall 2014 newsletter and copied below.

According to Travis Thomas: "I live in Adell and as a kid fished Lake Ellen. However, as an adult I no longer fish the lake due to excessive weeds which prevents me from using my boat on 30% of the lake. The locals call it the "dead sea". I now fish Long Lake extensively which is my first choice with Kettle Moraine coming in second. A few years back I found the area near Chinatown non-fishable due to excess weeds. Same with the shore line by the Boy Scout camp. Today, I can get my boat in close to shore and can swim off the boat due to your weed control. Also I have found that ice fishing has also improved in this area. The lake has never been better. Keep up the good work."

A fishermen who asked to stay anonymous said during an interview at the landing said: "In the past the lake had many weeds of a type I had never seen before actually floating on top making it very difficult to access some of my favorite fishing spots. Since the lake association has been actively working on controlling these new weeds, there has been a marked improvement in access to many areas of the lake, improved visibility and fishing is better than ever.

Stan Emerich, a Long Lake Fisherman said during an interview at the landing said: "I have fished the lake for many years and have always had great success. I had noticed a few years back more weed growth in many areas of the lake with a plant that floats on the surface. Recently these have started to disappear. I was really not aware that there had been an active program in place to attempt to control these weeds. The fishing continues to be great. Long Lake is probably my favorite lake to fish I hope to keep coming back for many years."

According to Ray Schroeder; "Just a few short years ago the lake had begun to be overgrown with weeds that floated in the surface. It was very difficult to get in and out from the pier at times due to the heavy weed growth. Today, it seems much better since there has been active treatment of these weeds. I can access my pier better. I have been fishing the lake for over 40 years and the fishing remains as good as ever with lots of pan fish and bass to be had."

Keith Fisher of Chinatown wrote us and said: "After invasive weeds were pointed out at a lake association meeting I noticed them. I also noticed they were spreading fast. Annual treatments have kept these weeds in check. I could only wonder if nothing had been done. The health of the lake appears good and treatments are keeping bad weeds in check. It will take many years of continued work to eradicate these weeds but no way should we give it up. As long as the DNR agrees I will back the decision to continue treatment. I have been fishing the lake for more than 30 years and the fishing remains pretty much the same. We have a good population of bluegills, crappie and bass. Plenty of northern pike as well. I have been a fishing club member for years but maybe I have to change my mind on that if they don't want to help get rid of these weeds.

Bill Jordan from Sheboygan came in from fishing at the landing and said: "I am part of a fishing club and we fish Long Lake on a regular basis. During the summer we have anywhere from four to six events on the lake. We have definitely noticed improved access during the past several years and no longer see the flowering weeds which lay on the surface of the water. I understand that the local lake association sponsors a program to treat for these weeds using chemicals. Other lakes I fish on have similar programs and I have done some reading on the subject. It seems that there has been a lot of testing on the chemicals used and I don't have concerns about it being in the water. From what I have read, it dissipates very quickly and does not injure fish. Treatment actually has to take place at different water temperatures than when fish spawn. Given the level of fishing pressure on Long Lake every summer and the quality of the fishing, the fish must be reproducing like crazy so I don't think the weed treatment is having a negative effect on the fish or their spawning.

Rita Boegel, a regular fisherman on Long Lake said in writing: "I didn't know the lake was treated. It's a great lake! I have always loved fishing on Long Lake and have never had problems catching fish. There is a very nice man who sits at the landing and makes sure we all clean our boats off before we launch and when we come in to land our boats!

According to Bob Dunn: "Prior to treating there were lots of new types of weeds to the drop-off with scattered patches of sand. Today the lake seems to be exceptionally fertile. The spot treatments seem to be helping with the invasive weeds. Long Lake has always been a good bass lake, however the size and structure of the Northern Pike and Pan Fish have been impacted by fishing pressure. I only fish on Long Lake.

Don Schrauth wrote: "Prior to treating there were many weeds floating on top and water was discolored. Some days it was very hard to fish. Since the association has been treating for these bad weeds, the water is the best I have ever seen it. In the spring the water visibility is outstanding and there are very few weeds floating on top. I would rate the condition of the lake as an eight out of ten.

INTERVIEW WITH TRAVIS MOTL – LOCAL DNR FISHERIES MANAGER

Our own Rich Clements recently had the opportunity to visit with Travis Motl who is in charge of fisheries for our region. Below are Travis' responses to questions posed by Rich.

Rich- Does treatment for invasive weeds kill bluegills and other fish?

Travis – There is no evidence to support this. We do not find dead fish following treatment

Rich – Does treatment kill fish spawn?

Travis - I really don't know. Although there has been decades of research of the particular herbicide used, I am not aware of any specific projects focusing on fish spawn. However, Long Lake has been treated for quite a few years now and there does not appear to be a problem with reproduction in Long Lake.

Rich – How long will the no size limit on Northern Pike continue on Long Lake.

Travis – We will have to wait until the next survey in 2017 then evaluate if size restrictions are called for.

Rich – Why hasn't the DNR put a Northern Pike size limit in place on Long Lake in the past?

Travis – Past surveys have indicated there is an overpopulation of Northern Pike. No size limits on this species are intended to reduce the population to appropriate levels.

Rich – Are there specific plans to turn the lake from a bass lake into a walleye lake given the annual planting of walleyes?

Travis – There are no specific plans or goals to make that happen

Rich – What kind of walleye planting has been done in recent years?

Travis - The DNR will plant 4,735 fingerlings in 2014 (10 per acre) and the following table shows planting during the past few years:

| Year | Long Lake Fishing Club | WI DNR |
|------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 2009 | 2,000 of 5-7" fish | 16,000 fingerlings |
| 2011 | None | 14, 270 fingerlings |
| 2012 | 700 of 10-12" fish | None |
| 2013 | 1,515 of 8" fish | 14,270 fingerlings |

Rich – Are there enough forage fish to feed the existing game fish population plus the additional planted fish?

Travis - Long Lake is extremely fertile and has an abundant food supply for game fish

Rich – Will the walleye planting process reduce the bass population?

Travis – We don't think that is likely. Perch and walleye prey on bluegills as do the bass but Long Lake has an abundant bluegill population that reproduce well. This should actually result in an increase in the size of the bluegills in the lake but will not negatively impact the overall population.

Rich – When is the DNR planning to conduct the next fish survey on Long Lake?

Travis – We will be doing a full survey on the lake in 2017

Rich – Lake Ellwood in northern Wisconsin is being used as an example of why we should not treat for invasive weeds on Long Lake. Does that make sense?

Travis – Lake Ellwood is a completely different kind of lake than Long Lake so drawing comparisons between the two is not logical. Secondly, Ellwood has suffered from other issues related to water level that can hardly be blamed on herbicides. Taking away a fisheries normal habitat and spawning areas due to unusually low water is going to have a very negative impact on the fish population and annual productivity. The lake is now in recovery, the process being managed by Onterra, the same firm that the Long Lake Association contracts with to help with environmental and controlled treatment planning.