

SAVE THE DATE !

MAY 17TH
PLANTING DAY AT THE GOLF
CLUB

APRIL 25, 2021

LOON HOOTS

The Newsletter of the Plum Lake Association

IN THIS ISSUE

REMEMBERING JOE LAKOTA ... PG. 2

SHORT CASTS...PG.3



RETURN OF THE TRUMPETERS



EAGLE FISHING FROM LOG

EAGLE SWIMMING BACK
TO LOG WITH FISH



SIGNS OF SPRING

NOTES FROM A WET JOURNAL

Its 3:20 am in early April. The rain has woken me up, again. Closing the window, I give up the idea of sleep and start the coffee, making notes and planning my last day here for a few days. Next time up will be for the summer, but I have lots to do to earn that privilege in the meantime. The weather matches my mood this early morning.

A bit of new snow on the ground is the only change from the incessant rain - a 4-day rain now, I think, soon to be 5. Spring has started though and still promises: The incessant, happy 5am trumpets from the swans announcing the excitement of sunrise, the first welcome shout from an arriving loon, big white mergansers cruising in the glassy shallows and little black and white bufflehead resting on their way north. Greenheads too, everywhere, without a hen to be seen, a promise of early broods.

Stuck low pressure is lubricating a long journey from ice-out to fishing season, still weeks away. I am ready. Pier is in. Boat is in. Vaccine is in. Friends are coming. The rain will end. You can't help but smile with all that to look forward to.

The promise of spring is VERY special this year. Watch the weather, but hurry back.



Dawn on Aurora Lake in October of 2013 and midafternoon in Horicon Marsh in 2014 have

a common thread for me. They are joined by the marsh skis in the photo and the companionship of Joe Lakota. No one uses marsh skis anymore. Joe and I are a couple of throwbacks to a simpler time.

Joe and I skied into the soft marsh with a shotgun, a few shells in a pocket, one spinner decoy and a Lab. We trailed Ivory, who struggled through mostly water with a few humps of sedge or cattail to provide something to climb on and over. The three hunters were hoping for some fat mallards, Joe's way.

Aurora rewarded us with just one, shot by Joe, flushed and retrieved by Ivory. Horicon marsh, the next year, was more generous and served up 6 greenheads. Joe and I didn't miss that day and neither did Ivory (true story and unusual for all except Lab). It is a great memory of a terrific hunt with a fine friend.

After the Horicon hunt, Joe and I grilled out and slept in the Pintail cabin at South Hole on nearby Fox Lake. The next morning, we hunted in the South Hole. We left the camp in the push-poled skiff, an hour before sunrise through the dark channel and up the creek to the blind. We set out 36 decoys just right for the west wind and then loaded all the gear - guns, shell boxes, hunting bags, snacks and cooler with lunch... LOTS of gear... from our boat in the boat slip into the grass mat covered, 4 man box blind (with a roof to keep us out of the rain). Coffee and donuts were good.

We never pulled the trigger. We never had a duck in range. Ivory was disgusted - her look said Horicon was WAAY better.

I'm telling you this long tale for good reasons - because I treasure my memories of my time afield with Joe and because it demonstrates one of Joe's signature traits; a lean and simple approach to a task, embellished by skills and unencumbered by extraneous baggage. He was efficient, with a laser focus and the physical strength and inner determination to get it done right.

When we fly-fished for bluegills, Joe used only one fly, a rubber legged spider with a fat yellow body. When the bluegills chewed the legs off, Joe would bring them to me to tie on new legs. I tied various new fly patterns for Joe but I knew he wouldn't use them - no need for a new fly. When I am on a stream, there are a dozen fly boxes in my vest (it is a sickness...). Joe would have three flies in his hat. I was introduced to the Plum Lake Riparian Homeowners Association by Joe, who invited me to get involved on the board the year he was elected President. His service was short in years, but important for our lake. It was the year the DNR quietly attempted to build a large public campground on the old girl's camp site on the west end. The camp had closed and the family had donated the land to the Nature Conservancy, who deeded it to the DNR with the provision that it would remain undeveloped in perpetuity. Joe and his brother-in-law and VP of the association, Jim Meyer, found this out and worked tirelessly and efficiently and successfully thwarted that effort. The land remains in a pristine undeveloped state today, thanks to Joe. It is a priceless gift to our lake, benefiting all generations to come.

My memories of Joe, our time together in the field and in the boat, Judy's bluegill dinners and our golf games and cocktail cruises are treasures. Many of us have memories like this of Joe. And, like all things with Joe, they don't take up much space and get the job done efficiently - bringing smiles and warm feelings. They are a gift from Joe for all the years to come.

SHORT CASTS

JOHN ELIASON

As you may know, John passed away a month ago. He was an institution in Sayner and, for me, a great source of information and advice when we bought our cottage in the early 90's. He was kind to me, told me the history of our cottage and referred me to craftsmen that helped us develop a place to raise our kids on the lake. Many of us had a fun relationship with John and he will be missed.

PLANTING DAY AT THE GOLF CLUB IS MAY 17TH!

We will finish up phase one of the native flowering plants and shrubs shoreline renovation and demonstration project at the golf club on Monday, May 17th. The main planting was completed last fall and the remainder is now ready for installation. The balance of the flowers and plants will be on site and we will have Quita Sheehan and Cathy Higley from Vilas County on site to guide us in the installation. If you are here and would like to help, we will start at 11 am. A great way to welcome Spring!

FISHERIES

Early ice-out has our walleye population completing their spawning season before fishing opener. We should have some early information on the status of our fish populations from DNR, who has been on the lake netting walleyes and musky. They will also be conducting a bass population survey and will be doing a creel census this year.

HABITAT

Preliminary planning for potential Fish Stick projects on Plum is beginning. Fish Sticks are bundles of 5 hardwood trees dragged to shallow water shoreline destinations over the ice and chained to the shore to provide fish habitat in our habitat depleted lake. Our next step is to gain approval of our planned scope and location of these structures from DNR. Eric Wegleiter, the fish manager for Vilas County will be meeting with me later this spring when their survey work is complete to review sites. If you believe you have a spot for one on your shoreline, please drop a note to any board member or me at ajr5@aol.com. So far, all locations targeted are on public land.

SPINY

Research is continuing on spiny water flea and this year our lake will be included in some of the field work by UW scientists. We will share updates as they become available.

PLUM LAKE ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 193

SAYNER, WI 54560

President John Richter Vice President Doug Pinney

Secretary Lynn Wiggins Treasurer Sue Lloyd

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Happ

Patty Hepburn

Muffy Pinney

Karen Seehafer

Chris Nyweide

Gail Shea

Jim Thomas

Ann Willer

Jan Wise

Web site: www.plumlakeassociation.org

Email address: info@plumlakeassociation.org.