

# A

## APPENDIX A

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**Public Participation Materials**



*Long Lake of Phelps Lake District*

**Long Lake Management Planning Project**  
*Planning Meeting I*  
 November 15, 2012

Eddie Heath  
 Onterra LLC  
 Lake Management Planning

**Presentation Outline**

- Lake Management Planning Project Overview
- Study Results
  - Water Quality
  - Watershed
  - Aquatic Plants
  - Fishery
- “Big Picture”

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**Study and Plan Goals**

- Collect & Analyze Data
- Construct Long-Term & Useable Plan

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**Water Quality**

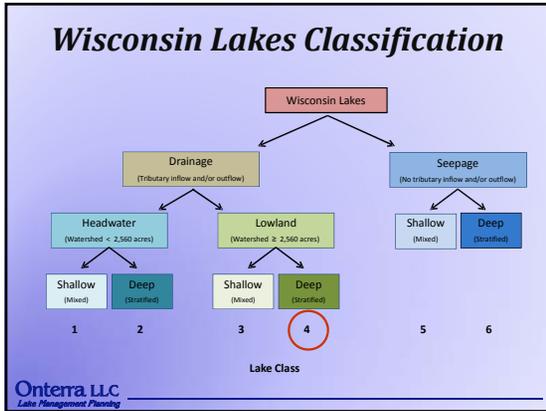
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**Wisconsin Ecoregions**

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**Wisconsin Lakes Classification**

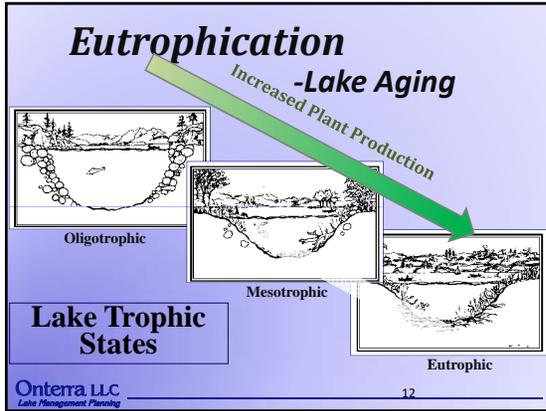
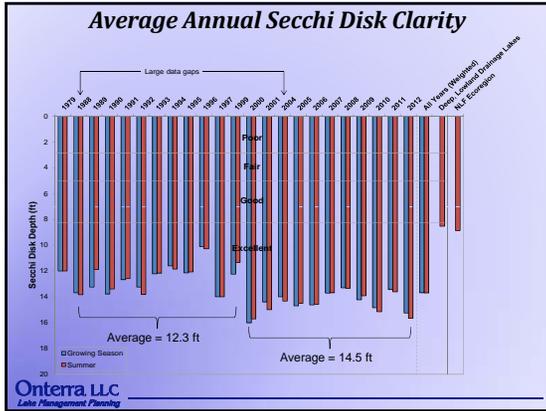
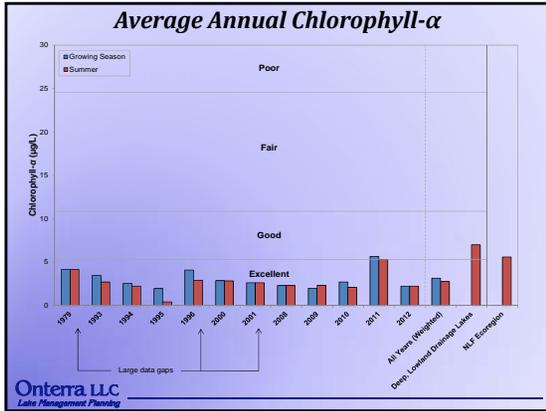
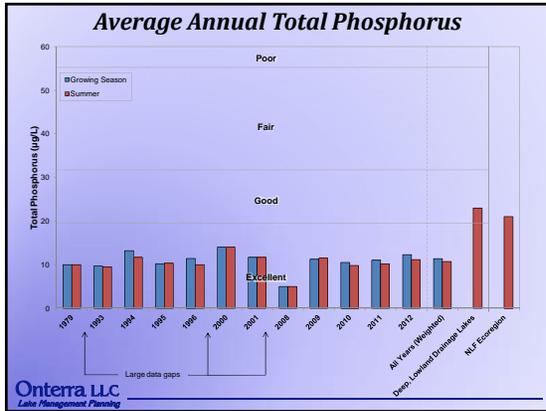
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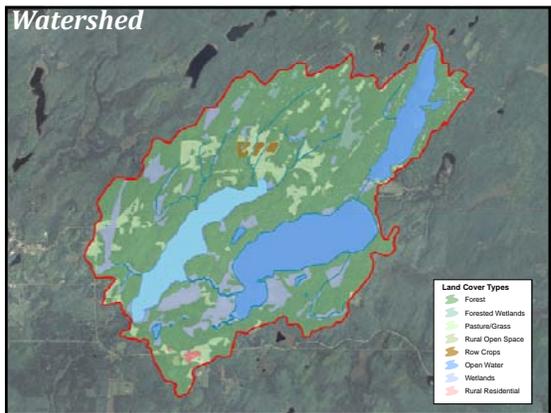
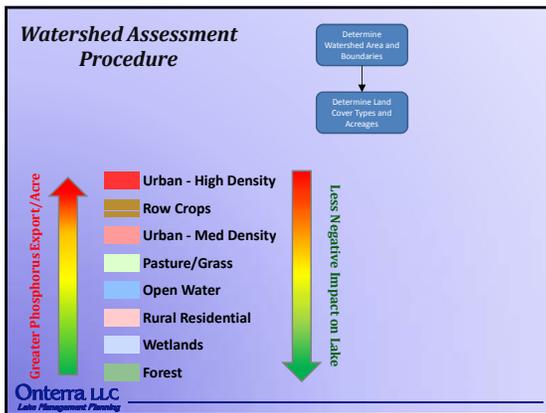
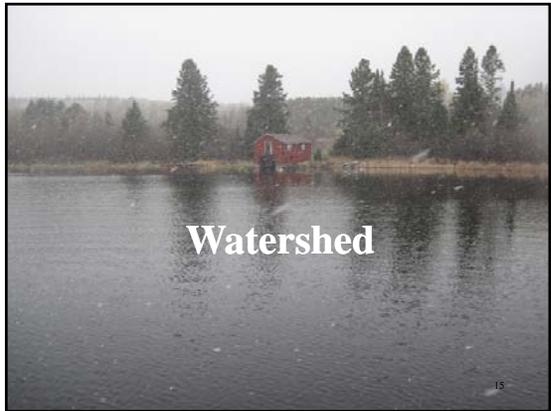
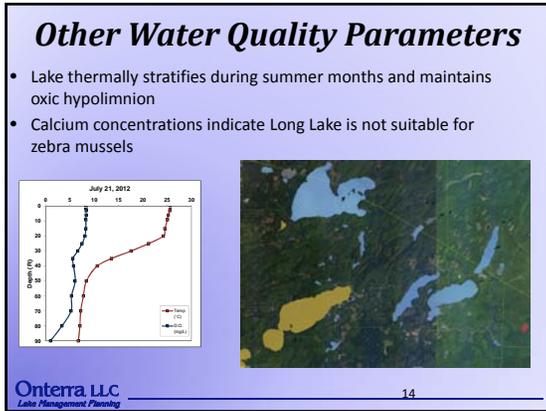
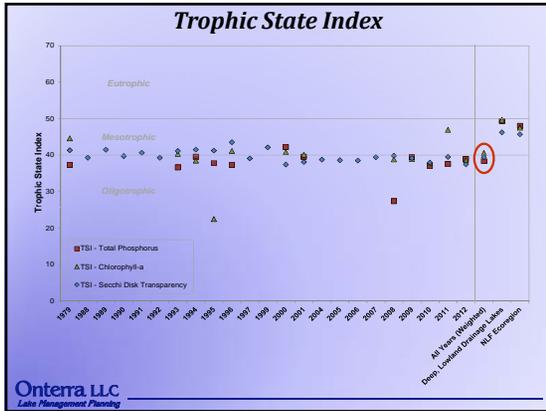


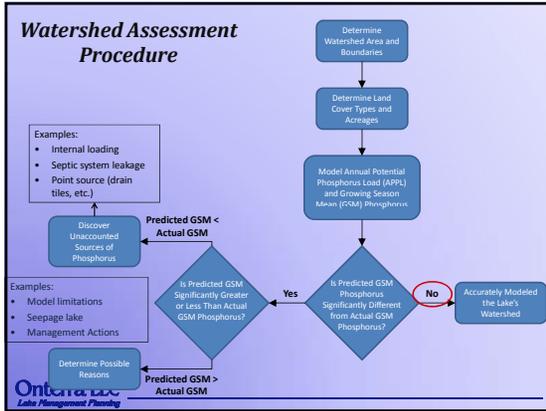
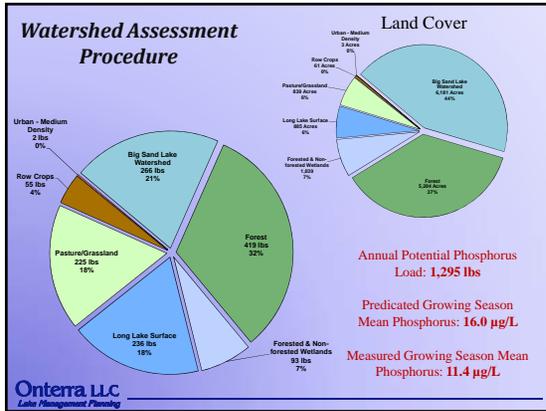
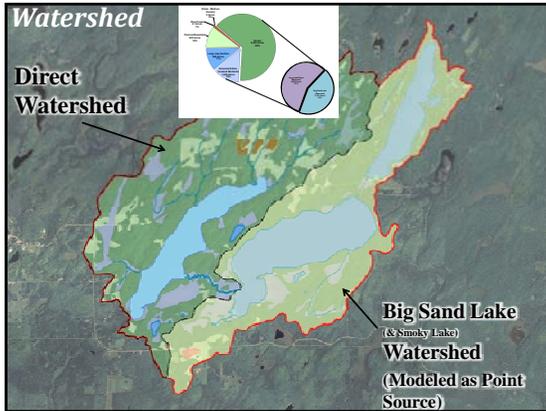
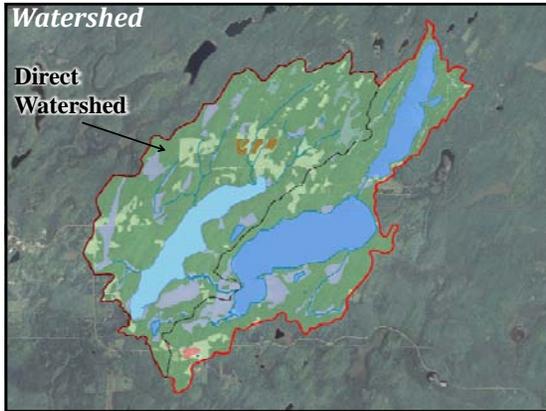
### Water Quality

- ↑ **Phosphorus (Limiting Plant Nutrient)**  
Nitrogen:Phosphorus = 25:1
- ↑ **Chlorophyll-*a* (Algal Abundance)**  
Low abundance  
- Minor seasonal variation
- ↓ **Water Clarity (Secchi Disk)**  
High Water Clarity  
- Increased over last decade

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**Shoreland Assessment**

- Shoreland area is important for buffering runoff and provides valuable habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.
- It does not look at lake shoreline on a property-by-property basis.
- Assessment ranks shoreland area from shoreline back 35 feet

**Urbanized** → **Natural**

**Range**

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**Shoreline Assessment Category Descriptions**

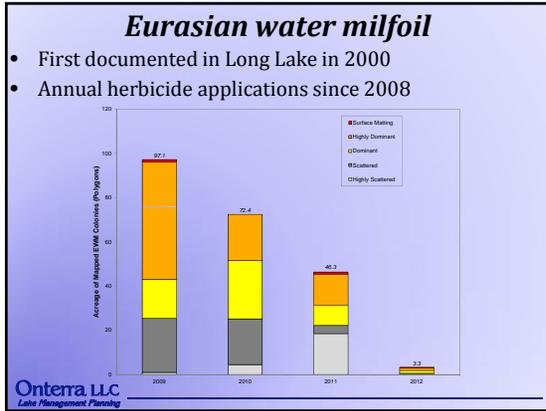
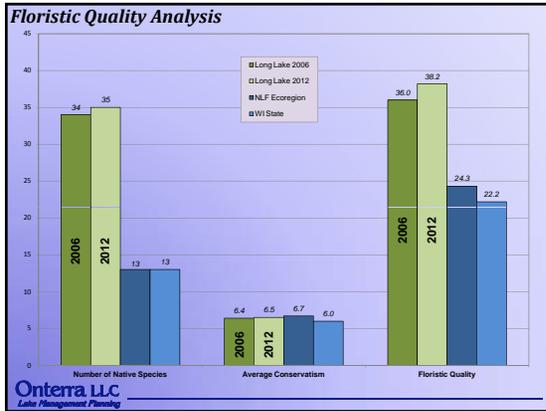
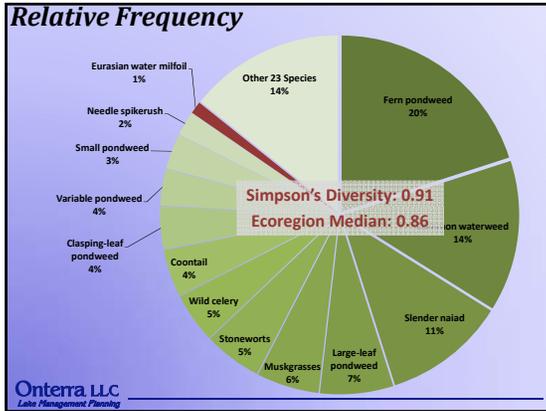
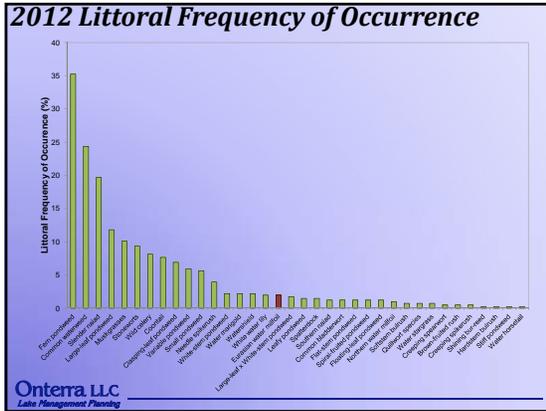
More Natural Habitat →

Urbanized	Developed-Urban	Developed-Semi-Natural	Developed-Natural	Natural/Undeveloped
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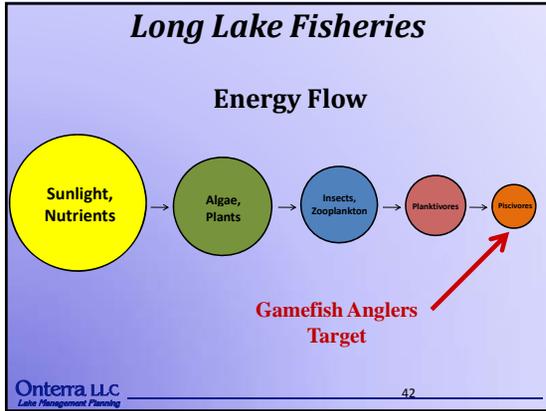
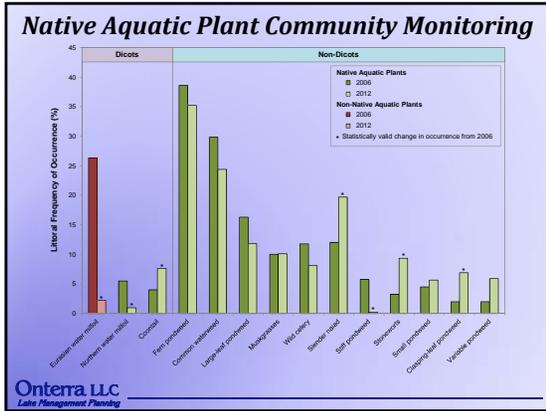
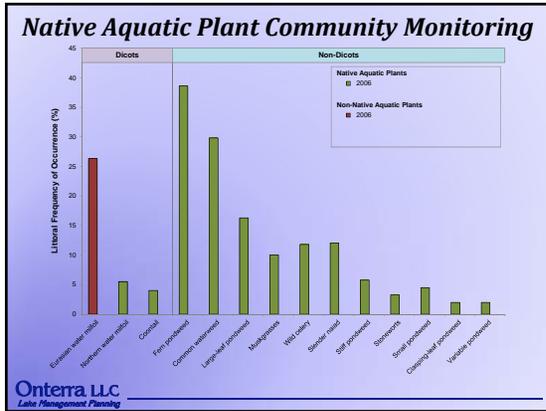
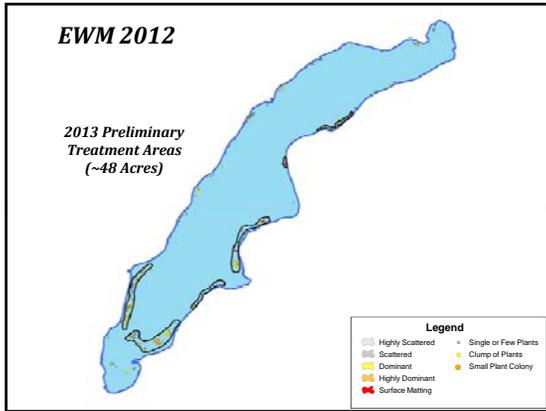
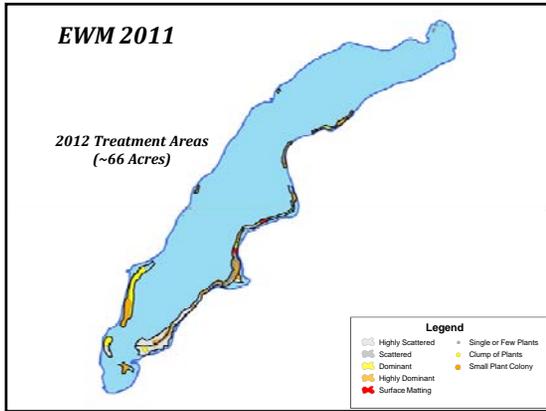
← Greater Need for Restoration

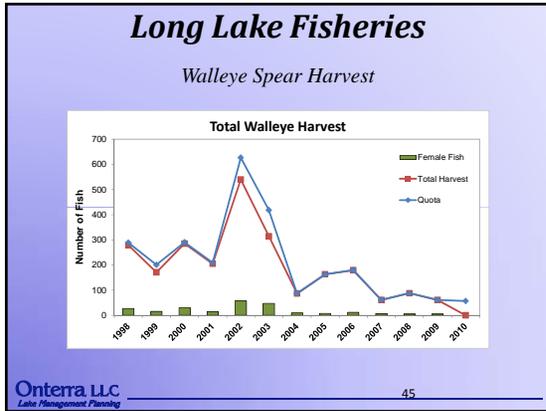
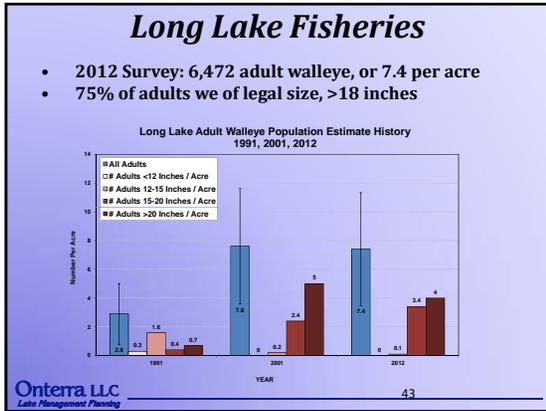
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*Lake Management Planning*











- ### Conclusions
- Water quality is excellent
    - Low phosphorus, low algae, high water clarity
    - Increased water clarity over recent decade likely due to decreased precipitation
  - Overall, watershed is in great condition
    - Land cover exports minimal phosphorus
    - Shoreland habitat mostly natural
  - Aquatic plant community
    - Based upon standard analysis, native community is of high quality
    - Plant community contains a high number of native species and as high species diversity
    - Plant community has maintained quality over the course of EWM control program
    - EWM occurrence has decreased by 92% lake-wide since 2006
- 47

# Thank You

Many of the graphics used in this presentation were supplied by:

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*Long Lake of  
Phelps Lake District*

**Long Lake  
Management Planning Project  
Wrap-up Meeting  
July 6, 2013**

**Eddie Heath**  
Onterra LLC  
*Lake Management Planning*

## **Onterra, LLC**

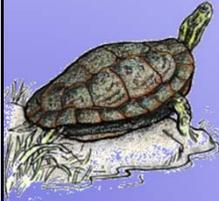
- Founded in 2005
- Staff
  - Four full-time ecologists
  - One part-time ecologist
  - Three field technicians
  - Two summer interns
- Services
  - Science and planning
- Philosophy
  - Promote realistic planning
  - Assist, not direct



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## **Study and Plan Goals**

- Collect & Analyze Data
- Construct Long-Term & Useable Plan

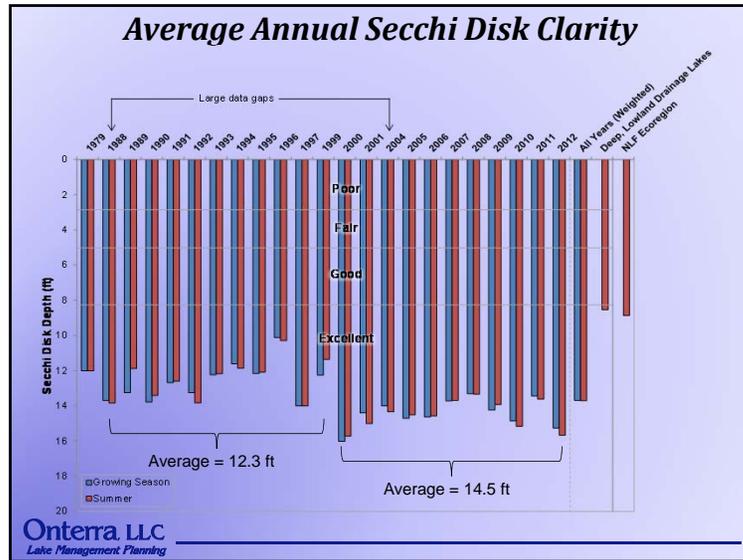


**Onterra, LLC**  
*Lake Management Planning*

## **Conclusions**

- Water quality is excellent
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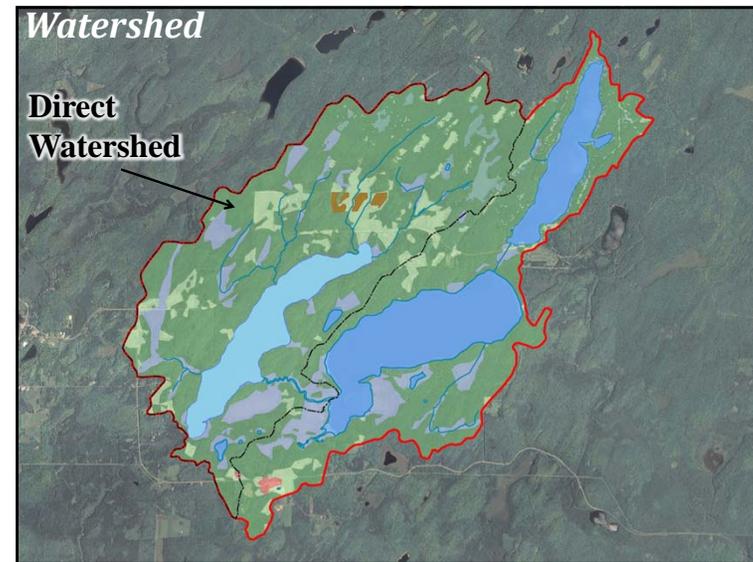
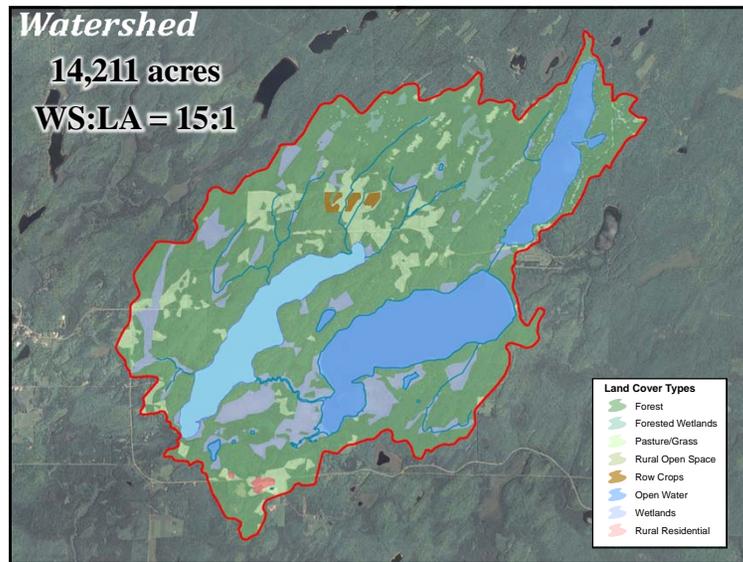
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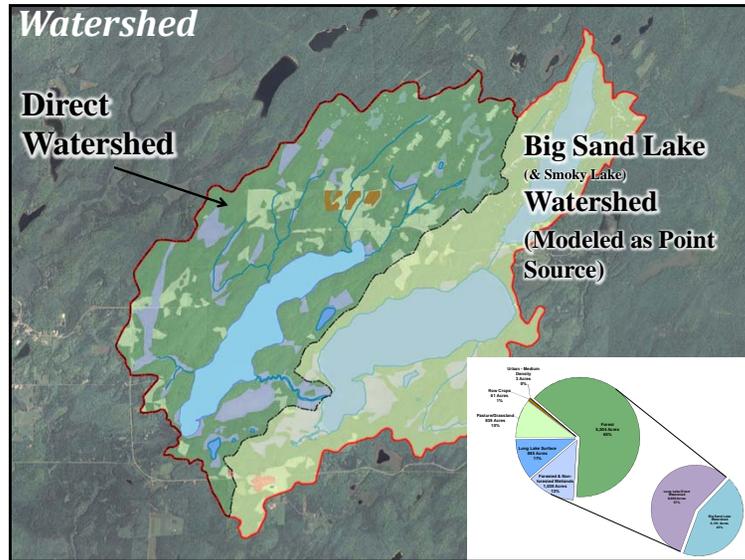


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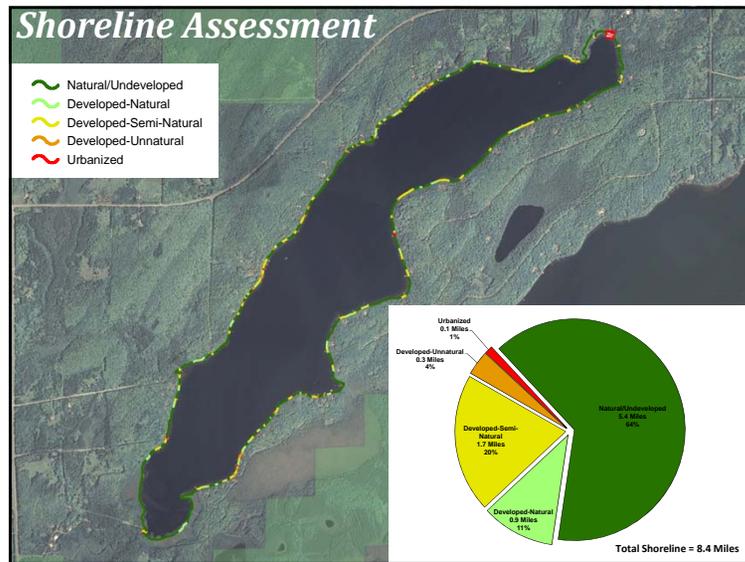




## Conclusions

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## Management Goal:

### Maintain Current Water Quality Conditions

### *Management Actions*

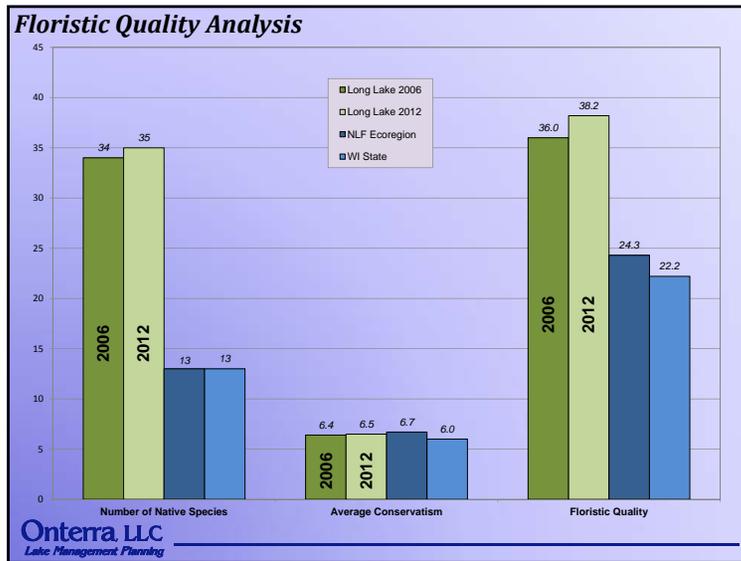
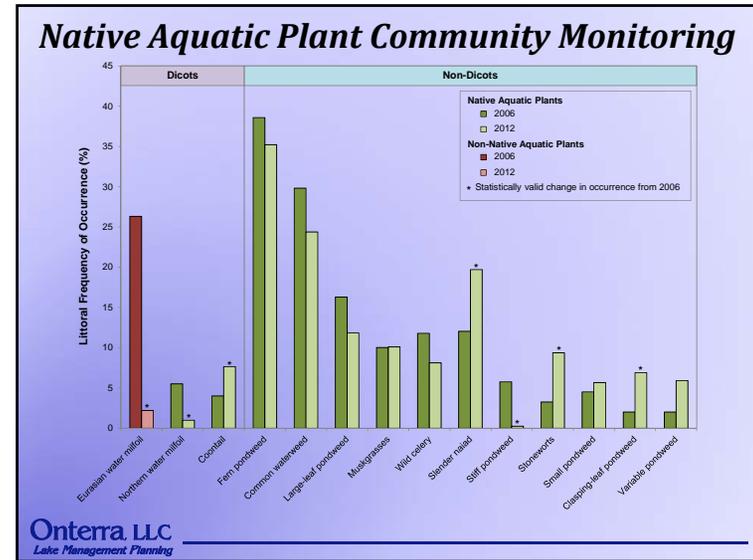
1. Monitor water quality through WDNR Citizens Lake Monitoring Network.
  - Continuation of current effort*

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## Conclusions

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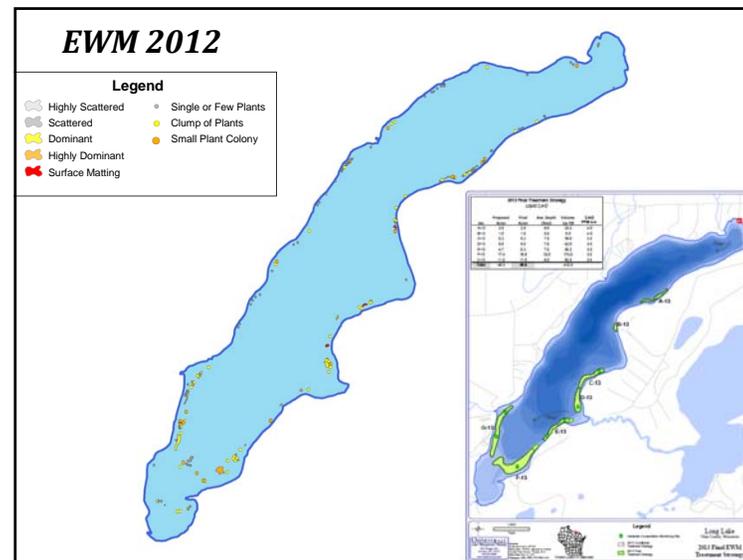
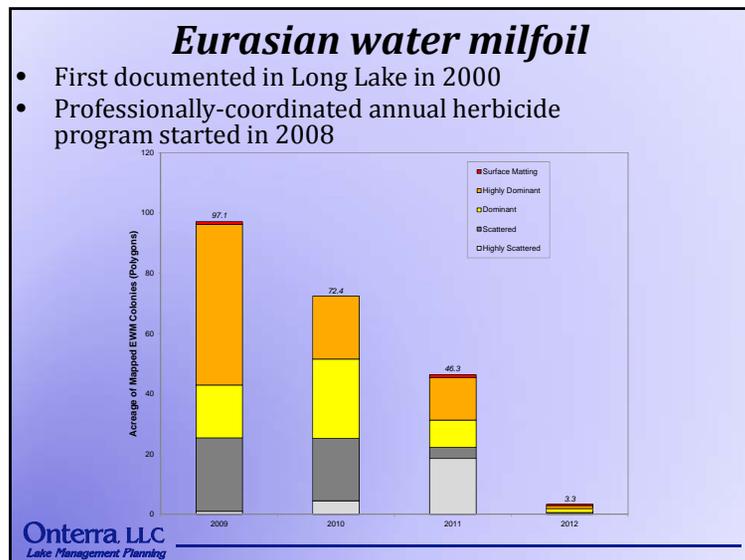
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  - EWM occurrence has decreased by 92% lake-wide since 2006

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### Management Goal:

## **Control Existing and Prevent Further Aquatic Invasive Species Infestations within Long Lake**

#### *Management Actions*

- 1. Continue implementation of an herbicide application strategy to control Eurasian water milfoil infestation on Long Lake.**  
*Continuation of current effort*  
*Recently awarded 5-year grant*  
*Aggressive approach – all colonized EWM will be targeted for herbicide treatment*  
*Ongoing monitoring to determine efficacy and selectivity*

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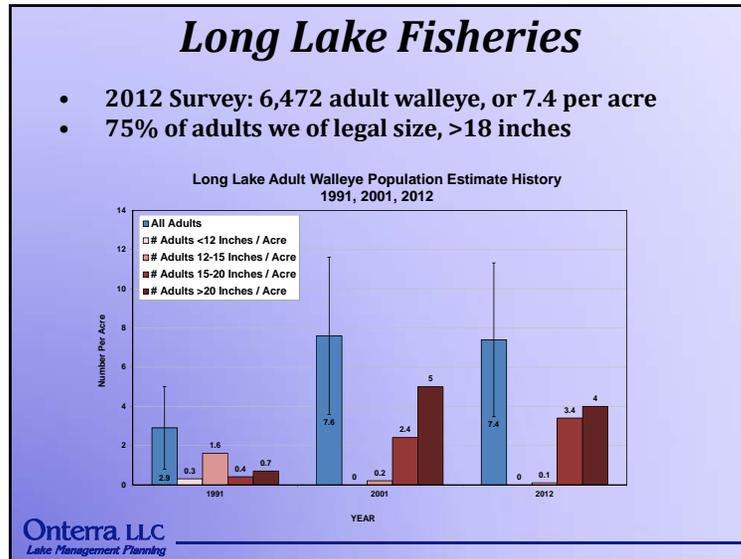
### Management Goal:

## **Control Existing and Prevent Further Aquatic Invasive Species Infestations within Long Lake**

#### *Management Actions*

- 1. Continue implementation of an herbicide application strategy to control Eurasian water milfoil infestation on Long Lake.**
- 2. Continue Clean Boats Clean Waters watercraft inspections at Long Lake public access location.**  
*200 hours of paid inspectors each year*
- 3. Enhance volunteer Eurasian water milfoil surveillance monitoring and hand removal program.**  
*Basemaps on district-owned GPS*  
*2-year trial of paid hand-removal program (~100 hrs/yr)*

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### Management Goal: Improve Fishery Resource and Fishing

#### *Management Actions*

- Continue to work with fisheries managers to enhance the overall fishery on Long Lake
  - Continuation of current effort*
  - Identified primary fisheries-related issues*
    - Continue the walleye stocking program
    - Increase walleye recruitment within the lake
    - Sustain a two-tiered fishery on the lake
    - Limit the impact that rainbow smelt have on the Long Lake ecosystem

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### Management Goal: Increase LLPLD's Capacity to Communicate with Lake Stakeholders and Facilitate Partnerships with Other Management Entities

#### *Management Actions*

- Use education to promote lake protection and enjoyment through stakeholder education.
  - Continuation of current efforts*
  - Numerous educational topics identified*
- Continue LLPLD's involvement with other entities that have responsibilities in managing (management units) Long Lake.
  - WDNR Lakes Coordinator, WDNR Fisheries Managers, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept., Vilas County Lakes Assoc., Phelps Town Lakes Association, Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company*

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# B

## APPENDIX B

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### Watershed Analysis WiLMS Results



Long Lake  
Watershed Analysis

**Date: 10/9/2012 Scenario: Long Lake Current**

Lake Id: LongV\_WS\_Current

Watershed Id: 0

**Hydrologic and Morphometric Data**

Tributary Drainage Area: 7146.0 acre

Total Unit Runoff: 14.00 in.

Annual Runoff Volume: 8337.0 acre-ft

Lake Surface Area <As>: 885.0 acre

Lake Volume <V>: 26550.0 acre-ft

Lake Mean Depth <z>: 30.0 ft

Precipitation - Evaporation: 5.5 in.

Hydraulic Loading: 14271.7 acre-ft/year

Areal Water Load <qs>: 16.1 ft/year

Lake Flushing Rate <p>: 0.54 1/year

Water Residence Time: 1.86 year

Observed spring overturn total phosphorus (SPO): 15.8 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

Observed growing season mean phosphorus (GSM): 11.4 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

% NPS Change: 0%

% PS Change: 0%

**NON-POINT SOURCE DATA**

Land Use	Acre (ac)	Low Loading (kg/ha-year)	Most Likely Loading (kg/ha-year)	High Loading (kg/ha-year)	Loading %	Low Loading (kg/year)	Most Likely Loading (kg/year)	High Loading (kg/year)
Row Crop AG	61.0	0.50	1.00	3.00	4.2	12	25	74
Mixed AG	0.0	0.30	0.80	1.40	0.0	0	0	0
Pasture/Grass	839	0.10	0.30	0.50	17.4	34	102	170
HD Urban (1/8 Ac)	0.0	1.00	1.50	2.00	0.0	0	0	0
MD Urban (1/4 Ac)	3	0.30	0.50	0.80	0.1	0	1	1
Rural Res (>1 Ac)	0.0	0.05	0.10	0.25	0.0	0	0	0
Wetlands	1039	0.10	0.10	0.10	7.2	42	42	42
Forest	5204	0.05	0.09	0.18	32.3	105	190	379
Lake Surface	885.0	0.10	0.30	1.00	18.3	36	107	358

Long Lake  
Watershed Analysis

**POINT SOURCE DATA**

Point Sources	Water Load (m <sup>3</sup> /year)	Low (kg/year)	Most Likely (kg/year)	High (kg/year)	Loading %
Big Sand Lake	6820000.0	0.0	120.6	0.0	20.6

**SEPTIC TANK DATA**

Description	Low	Most Likely	High	Loading %
Septic Tank Output (kg/capita-year)	0.30	0.50	0.80	
# capita-years	0.0			
% Phosphorus Retained by Soil	98.0	90.0	80.0	
Septic Tank Loading (kg/year)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0

**TOTALS DATA**

Description	Low	Most Likely	High	Loading %
Total Loading (lb)	506.7	1293.7	2257.7	100.0
Total Loading (kg)	229.8	586.8	1024.1	100.0
Areal Loading (lb/ac-year)	0.57	1.46	2.55	
Areal Loading (mg/m <sup>2</sup> -year)	64.17	163.84	285.94	
Total PS Loading (lb)	0.0	265.9	0.0	20.6
Total PS Loading (kg)	0.0	120.6	0.0	20.6
Total NPS Loading (lb)	427.7	790.9	1468.1	79.4
Total NPS Loading (kg)	194.0	358.8	665.9	79.4

Long Lake  
Watershed Analysis

**Phosphorus Prediction and Uncertainty Analysis Module**

Date: 10/9/2012 Scenario: 66

Observed spring overturn total phosphorus (SPO): 15.8 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

Observed growing season mean phosphorus (GSM): 11.4 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

Back calculation for SPO total phosphorus: 0.0 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

Back calculation GSM phosphorus: 0.0 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

% Confidence Range: 70%

Nurnberg Model Input - Est. Gross Int. Loading: 0 kg

Lake Phosphorus Model	Low	Most Likely	High	Predicted -Observed (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	% Dif.
	Total P (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Total P (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Total P (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )		
Walker, 1987 Reservoir	6	15	26	4	35
Canfield-Bachmann, 1981 Natural Lake	8	16	24	5	44
Canfield-Bachmann, 1981 Artificial Lake	8	15	22	4	35
Rechow, 1979 General	4	9	16	-2	-18
Rechow, 1977 Anoxic	9	23	40	12	105
Rechow, 1977 water load<50m/year	5	12	20	1	9
Rechow, 1977 water load>50m/year	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Walker, 1977 General	6	16	28	0	0
Vollenweider, 1982 Combined OECD	6	14	21	0	0
Dillon-Rigler-Kirchner	4	10	17	-6	-38
Vollenweider, 1982 Shallow Lake/Res.	5	10	17	-4	-29
Larsen-Mercier, 1976	6	14	25	-2	-13
Nurnberg, 1984 Oxidic	5	12	20	1	9

Long Lake  
Watershed Analysis

Appendix B

Lake Phosphorus Model	Confidence	Confidence	Parameter	Back	Model
	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Fit?	Calculation (kg/year)	Type
Walker, 1987 Reservoir	8	24	FIT	0	GSM
Canfield-Bachmann, 1981 Natural Lake	5	46	FIT	1	GSM
Canfield-Bachmann, 1981 Artificial Lake	5	43	FIT	1	GSM
Rechow, 1979 General	5	15	FIT	0	GSM
Rechow, 1977 Anoxic	13	36	FIT	0	GSM
Rechow, 1977 water load<50m/year	6	19	FIT	0	GSM
Rechow, 1977 water load>50m/year	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Walker, 1977 General	7	28	FIT	0	SPO
Vollenweider, 1982 Combined OECD	6	24	FIT	0	ANN
Dillon-Rigler-Kirchner	5	15	FIT	0	SPO
Vollenweider, 1982 Shallow Lake/Res.	5	18	FIT	0	ANN
Larsen-Mercier, 1976	8	22	Pin	0	SPO
Nurnberg, 1984 Oxidic	6	20	FIT	0	ANN

# C

## APPENDIX C

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### Aquatic Plant Survey Data





















































# D

## APPENDIX D

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WDNR Fisheries Reports







**WISCONSIN DNR  
FISHERIES INFORMATION SHEET**

**LAKE:** Long

**COUNTY:** Vilas

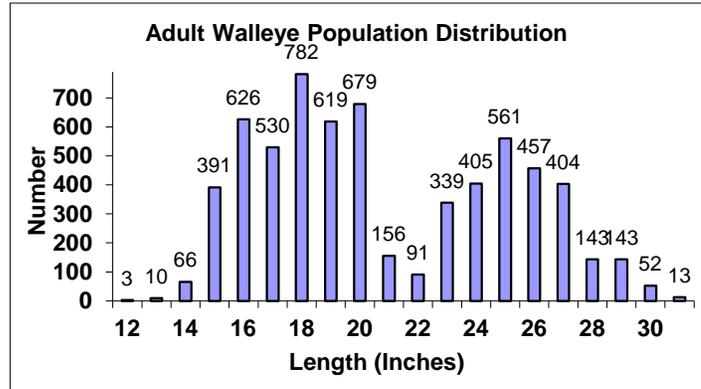
**YEAR:** 2012

The Department of Natural Resources surveyed Long Lake, Vilas County, from March 24 through June 4, 2012, to determine the health of its fishery. The survey was primarily focused on estimating the abundance of the lake's game fish populations. Long Lake is a drainage lake with predominately sand, gravel and rock substrate. This lake has a surface area of 872 acres, 8.3 miles of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 95 feet.

**Walleye**

We conducted a mark-recapture survey of Long Lake to make an estimate of the number of adult\* walleye present. We captured and marked (fin clipped) 707 adult walleye in 20 days of netting and captured 234 adult walleyes during one night of electrofishing to complete this estimate.

Based on these results, we calculated that Long Lake is home to 6,472 adult walleye (7.4/acre). Approximately 75% of the adult walleye were legal-size, 18 inches long or larger. The average size of the adult walleyes in Long Lake was 19.7 inches long and the largest walleye we captured was a 31.6 inch long female.

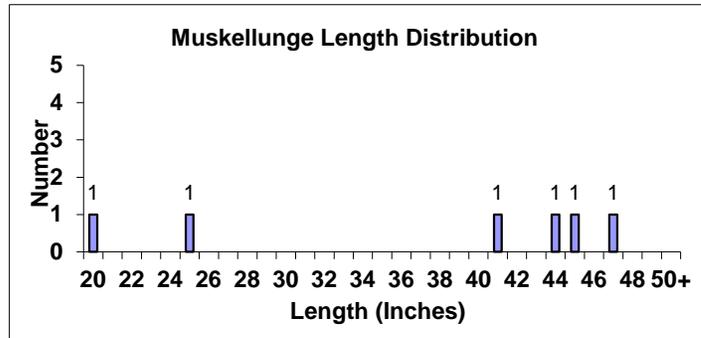


\* Note: Adult walleye are defined as all sexable walleye regardless of length and any captured of unknown sex  $\geq$  15 inches long.

**Muskellunge**

We captured and marked (fin clipped) only 6 adult muskellunge in 30 days of sampling. We did not capture enough muskellunge to estimate the adult muskellunge population present.

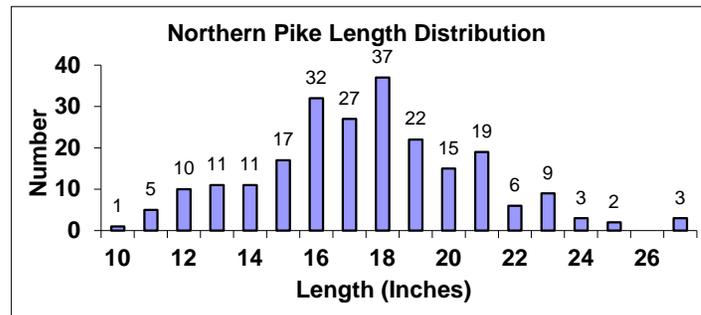
Approximately 66% of the adult muskellunge were 40 inches long or larger and none were longer than 50 inches. The largest muskellunge we captured was a 47.3 inch long female that weighed 29.5 pounds.



**Northern Pike**

We captured and marked (fin clipped) 230 adult northern pike during all our spring sampling efforts.

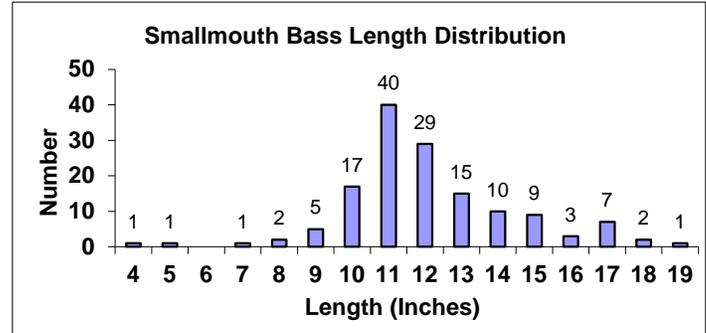
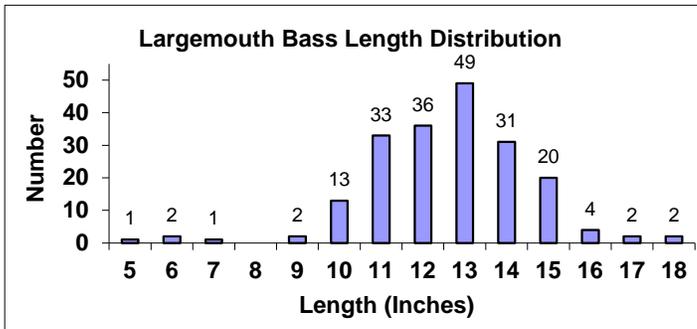
Few large pike were captured during the survey. Only 24.5% were longer than 20 inches and none were over 30 inches in length. The largest pike captured was a 27.8 inch female.



### Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass

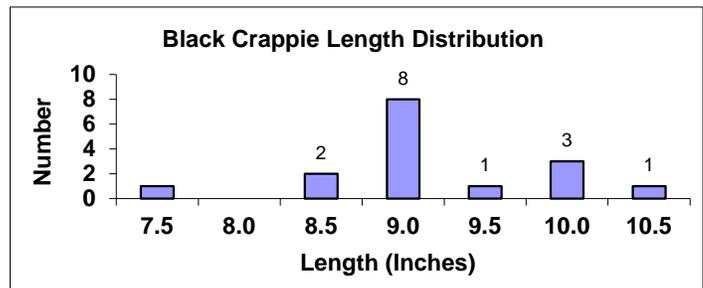
We did not attempt to make a population estimate of either bass species present. Only 197 largemouth bass were captured during all our sampling of Long Lake. The biggest largemouth bass captured was 18.8 inches long.

Smallmouth bass abundance was also low; only 143 were captured during the entire survey. Smallmouth bass captured ranged in size from 4.2 to 19.2 inches long.



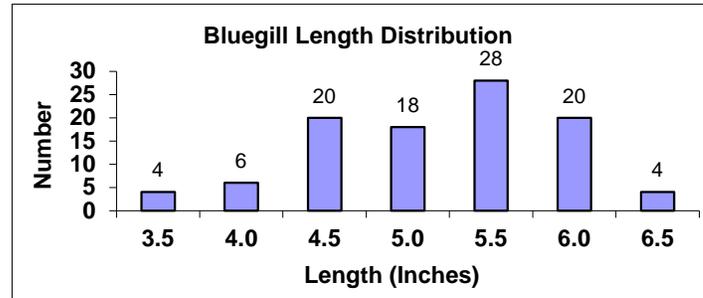
### Black Crappie

Black crappie are considered to be low in abundance based on the number captured in our nets. There are a few larger crappie present that did not turn up in our random sample used to produce the graph in this summary. We did capture a 12.2 inch fish in our nets early in the survey.



### Bluegill

Bluegill are the most abundant panfish species in Long Lake. Few large bluegills are present in the lake. A random sample of 100 bluegills measured found none larger than 7 inches.



### Other Fish Species

All the catch per effort data present here should be viewed as minimum estimates of abundance. Small mesh fyke nets were set during April to monitor rainbow smelt abundance. Smelt were extremely abundant and over 5,000 were captured in a single net over a two day period. On April 26, 8,325 yearling lake trout (7.0 to 8.0 inch) were stocked into Long Lake. For several days after this young lake trout were captured in our nets. Other fish species captured or observed during this survey but in lower numbers were: Pumpkinseed, yellow perch, rock bass, white sucker, and black bullhead.

**Table 1. General Fishing Regulations for Long Lake, Vilas County, 2012**

<b>FISH SPECIES</b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>	<b>DAILY LIMIT</b>	<b>MINIMUM LENGTH</b>
Lake Trout	May 5 - Sept. 30	1	30 inches
Walleye	May 5 - March 3	2*	18 inches
Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass	May 5 - June 15 (C&R) June 16 - March 3 (Harvest)	None 5	14 inches
Muskellunge	May 26 - Nov. 30	1	50 inches
Northern Pike	May 5 - March 3	5	No minimum length

\*e normal bag limit is 3 but due to tribal spearing quotas it was lowered to 2 for the 2012 season

A brief summary of selected fishing regulations for Long Lake is included above (Table 1). While the regulatory information provided was current at the time the surveys were conducted, it is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for the current fishing regulation pamphlet. You may obtain a copy of current fishing regulations when you purchase your fishing license, or download a copy from our web site at:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/fish/regulations>

For answers to questions about fisheries management activities and plans for Long Lake, Vilas County, contact:

Steve Gilbert, Fisheries Biologist  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
8770 Highway J  
Woodruff, WI 54568  
Phone: (715) 356-5211 Ext 229  
Email: [Stephen.Gilbert@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Stephen.Gilbert@Wisconsin.gov)



DATE: July 21, 2008

FILE REF: 3600

TO: Steve Hewett, GEF 2, F/H 4, Madison

FROM: Steve Gilbert, Woodruff

**SUBJECT: 2009 WDNR Fisheries Rule Development Proposal**

**Title:** Walleye Regulation Change - 18 inch minimum size limit, three Fish bag limit

**1. Author:** Steve Gilbert, Fisheries Biologist – Vilas County

**2. Waterbody:** Long Lake, Vilas County (T41N R12E Sec 7)

**3. Proposal:** Walleye Regulation Change - 18 inch minimum size limit, three fish bag limit

**4. Statement of management objectives:**

To increase the number of adult walleye ( $\geq 8.0$ / acre), reestablish significant natural walleye recruitment ( $\geq 20.0$  YOY/mile), and provide continued angler harvest opportunity of large walleye in Long Lake, Vilas County. Also, provide biological control of an abundant rainbow smelt population.

**5. Description of Fishery Status:**

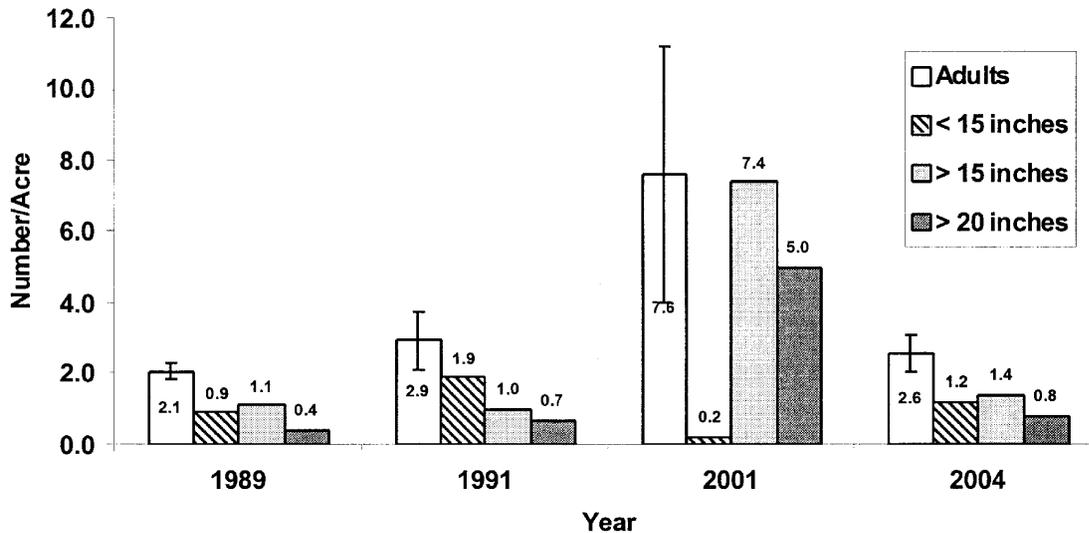
Long Lake is 872 acres, oligotrophic, and has a maximum depth of 95 feet. It is a drainage lake providing the headwaters of the Deerskin River. The lake is located 3 miles east of the town of Phelps and 98% of its 7.9 miles of shoreline are privately owned (Black et al. 1963). There is a town landing located on the north shore that provides public access. The Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company owns a small dam at the outlet that has minimal effects on water levels.

The lake had a history as a very good naturally reproducing walleye fishery. Smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, muskellunge, and northern pike are the other gamefish species present. The panfish fishery consists of low numbers of yellow perch, bluegills, and black crappie. The lake also supports a cold water fishery. The Wisconsin DNR has recently stocked lake trout into the lake and there are also cisco present. Rainbow smelt were illegally introduced into the lake in the early 1990's and their numbers have exploded in the lake threatening the entire fish community.

**Walleye Fishery**

Prior to the introduction of smelt, the walleye population averaged between 2 and three adults per acre and was known for trophy fish (figure 1). Walleye numbers at this time were supported by excellent natural recruitment. Recent failures in natural recruitment have resulted in a decline in fish under fifteen inches in length. The 2004 survey shows a change in this trend, but all these fish are a result of the only successful stocking event in 2001.

Figure 1. Adult Walleye Population Estimate History for Long Lake, Vilas County. Error bars represent the 95% confidence intervals.



### Walleye Recruitment

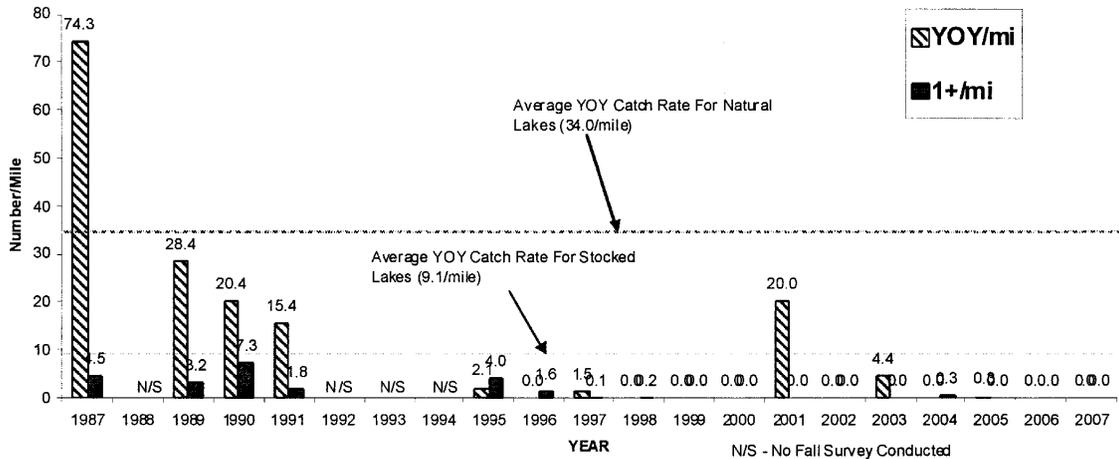
Fall electrofishing surveys found an average of 34.6 young of year (YOY) per mile prior to 1992 (figure 2). From 1993 to the present 10 fall surveys conducted in non-stocked years have averaged only 0.4 YOY/mile. This time frame coincides with the introduction and establishment of an abundant rainbow smelt population in the lake.

Three attempts (2001, 03, and 05) by the department to stock the lake with 50 spring walleye fingerlings per acre (< 2.0 inches) had limited results. Fall electrofishing surveys in these three years were 20.0, 4.4, and 0.3 YOY/mile respectively. Stocked fish were oxytetracycline marked and results from our fall sampling found that all YOY captured in these stocked years were stocked fish. The reason for the failure of stocking is directly related to the abundant smelt population. Smelt can potentially prey on young walleye and compete for the same food. This trend in walleye populations has been documented in other Vilas County waters where smelt have been introduced (Mercado-Silva et al. 2007).

In 2007, the department stocked 7,229 large walleye fingerlings ( $\geq 6$  inches) in Long Lake in hopes that these fish would be too large for smelt to prey on and could feed on juvenile smelt. This strategy has worked well on Sparkling Lake, Vilas County and resulted in overwinter survival of large stocked fingerlings averaging 48.6% over a four year period (Gilbert 2007).

The department is working with the Long Lake of Phelps Lake District to stock about 7,000 large walleye fingerlings on an annual basis for the next ten years. The goal is to increase adult walleye numbers to a point where we again see natural recruitment. The department will stock large fingerlings in odd numbered years and the lake district in even years during this time period.

Figure 2. Fall Walleye Recruitment History for Long Lake, Vilas County 1987 to 2007  
 CPUE is from one circuit of the entire shoreline using electrofishing gear.



### Walleye Harvest

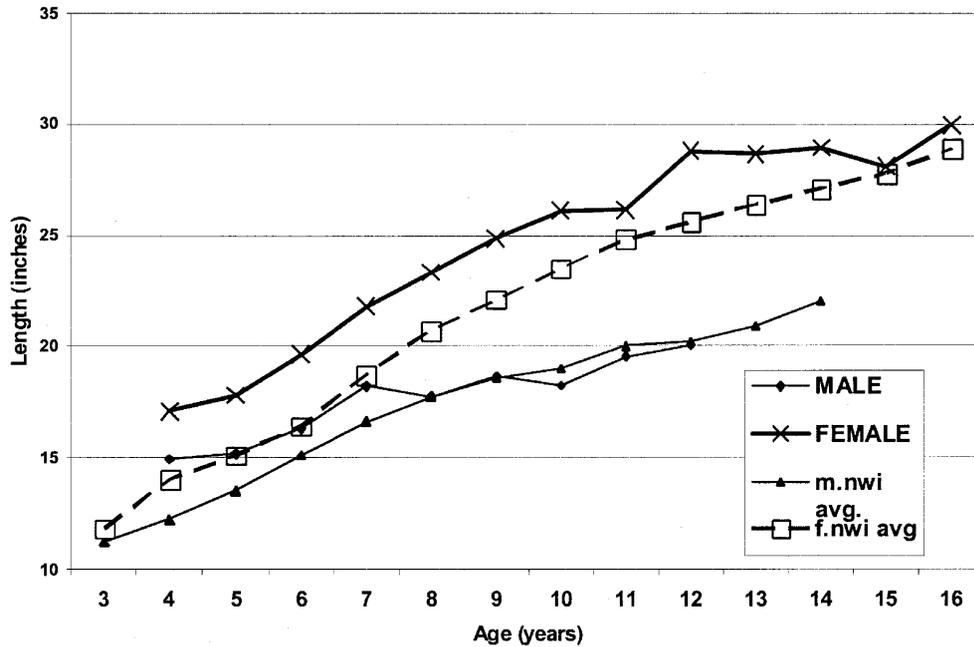
The last creel survey of Long Lake was conducted in 1991. At this time the walleye regulation on the lake was a 15 inch minimum length and 5 fish bag limit. Based on the results of the survey, anglers caught 2,724 and harvested 237 walleye for the entire season. Catch and harvest rates of anglers specifically seeking walleye were 3.1 and 37.0 hours per fish respectively. This survey occurred at a time of good natural recruitment and results should be viewed as minimum goals for the success of this regulation and stocking effort. Also, based on modeling of Wisconsin walleye populations, an 18 inch minimum size limit will result in slightly higher harvest rates over time (Hewett 1998).

Long Lake is in the ceded territory and tribal harvest of walleye does occur. Current tribal harvest is between 60 and 90 walleye each year on Long Lake. The WDNR and the lake district are attempting to work with tribal leaders and biologists to set a harvest level that would aid in the rehabilitation of this important walleye fishery.

### Walleye Growth

Walleye scale and spine samples taken in 2001 from Long Lake walleye indicate above average growth compared to other lakes in our region (figure 3). Female walleye do not start to mature in Long Lake until they reach age 4 and average of 17.1 inches I length. An 18 minimum size limit would allow almost all female fish to spawn twice before reaching legal length. This good growth is probably due to the rainbow smelt population and the lack of competition for this food resource.

Figure 3. Spring 2001 Adult Walleye Length at Age, Long Lake, Vilas County



### 6. Justification of Selected Regulation:

The current 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish bag limit (2 fish in most years due to tribal declarations) is not adequate to protect the female walleye population from anglers. Changing the walleye regulation to an 18 inch minimum and three fish bag limit should increase walleye numbers and maintain quality.

This regulation change should improve walleyes numbers and increase predation on rainbow smelt. Recent research on rainbow smelt indicates that a combination of an 18 inch size limit and stocking can substantially decrease smelt numbers in a lake (Krueger 2005).

Future plans call for monitoring walleye recruitment and the survival of stocked fingerling on a regular basis. A walleye population estimate and creel survey should be conducted on the lake in 7 to 10 years after implementation of the regulation to evaluate any changes.

### References

- Black, John J., Andrews, L. M. and C. W. Threinen. 1963. Surface water resources of Vilas County. Wisconsin Conservation Department, Madison, Wisconsin. 316 pages.
- Gilbert, Stephen J., 2007. Evaluation of stocking of large fingerling walleye, Sparkling Lake, Vilas County Wisconsin 2006 progress report. 21 pages.



Hewett, Steven. and Timothy Simonson. 1998. Wisconsin's Walleye Management Plan: Moving Management into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Administrative Report #43. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 81 pages.

Krueger, Damon M., and Thomas R. Hrabik. 2005. Food web alterations that promote native species: the recovery of cisco (*Coregonus artedii*) populations through management of native piscivores. *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 62: 2177-2188.

Mercado-Silva, Norman, Greg Sass, Brian M. Roth, Stephen J. Gilbert, and M. Jake Vander Zanden. 2007. Impact of rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) invasion on walleye (*Sander vitreus*) recruitment in Wisconsin Lakes. *Can. Jour. Aquat. Sci.* 64: 1443 – 1550.

## **7. Public Comment:**

The Long Lake of Phelps Lake District has reviewed this proposal and strongly approve of this regulation change.

This regulation change should cause no conflicts with tribal harvest. Tribal members will continue to harvest walleye from this lake as they have in the past. Increasing the walleye population of Long Lake will have no negative impacts on annual tribal walleye harvest.

## **8. Previous Action:**

Past walleye fishing regulations on Long Lake have followed the general inland rules for the state. The current walleye regulation on the lake is the 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish bag limit.

This is the first time that an 18 inch minimum length and one fish bag limit has been proposed for this lake. Currently only one other lake in Vilas County has this same regulation. This does not include the many waters of the Lac du Flambeau reservation that all have the 18 inch minimum and the 3 fish bag limit by special memorandum of agreement with the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

If no action is taken the Long Lake walleye fishery will remain low density and no natural recruitment will occur. Rainbow smelt numbers will remain high and the native fishery of the lake will decline. Walleye stocking would be discontinued and management emphasis would be directed at species more compatible with rainbow smelt infestations.

## **9. Draft Question:**

**Long Lake Walleye Regulation** – Increase the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 18 inches and reduce the daily bag limit from 5 fish in total to 3 fish in total.

The current 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish bag limit is not adequate to protect walleye stocked as part of a joint 10 year effort of the WDNR and the lake district. It is recommended that the walleye regulation on this lake be changed to an 18 inch minimum and 3 fish bag limit. This regulation should improve walleye catch rates, increase numbers of adults present providing additional angler opportunity, protect female walleye for an additional two to three spawning

seasons, and hopefully reestablish natural walleye recruitment. Increasing numbers of walleye may also help control abundant numbers of rainbow smelt that are responsible for the decline in this important walleye fishery.

**Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 five to 3 in total for walleye on Long Lake in Vilas County?**

DATE: July 21, 2008

FILE REF: 3600

TO: Steve Hewett, GEF 2, F/H 4, Madison

FROM: Steve Gilbert, Woodruff

**SUBJECT: 2009 WDNR Fisheries Rule Development Proposal**

**Title:** Muskellunge Regulation Change - 50 inch minimum size limit

**1. Author:** Steve Gilbert, Fisheries Biologist – Vilas County

**2. Waterbody:** Long Lake, Vilas County (T41N R12E Sec 7)

**3. Proposal:** Muskellunge Regulation Change - 50 inch minimum size limit

**4. Statement of management objectives:**

There is a lack of trophy fishing regulations for muskellunge in the Northern Region. Vilas County has over 200 lakes that contain muskellunge (WDNR 1995), more than any other county in Wisconsin. Only 12 (10 at 40 inch and 2 at 45 inch minimum) of these have special regulations for muskellunge. Preliminary evaluations of our 40-inch minimum waters indicate this regulation has not significantly increased the numbers of fish greater than 40 inches in length when compared to a 34 inch minimum size limit (Margeneau 2000). Long lake has the potential to produce true trophy ( $\geq 50$  inches) muskellunge if afforded more conservative protection than a 40 inch minimum size limit.

**5. Description of Fishery Status:**

Long Lake is 872 acres, oligotrophic, and has a maximum depth of 95 feet. It is a drainage lake providing the headwaters of the Deerskin River. The lake is located 3 miles east of the town of Phelps and 98% of its 7.9 miles of shoreline are privately owned (Black et al. 1963). There is a town landing located on the north shore that provides public access. The Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company owns a small dam at the outlet that has minimal effects on water levels.

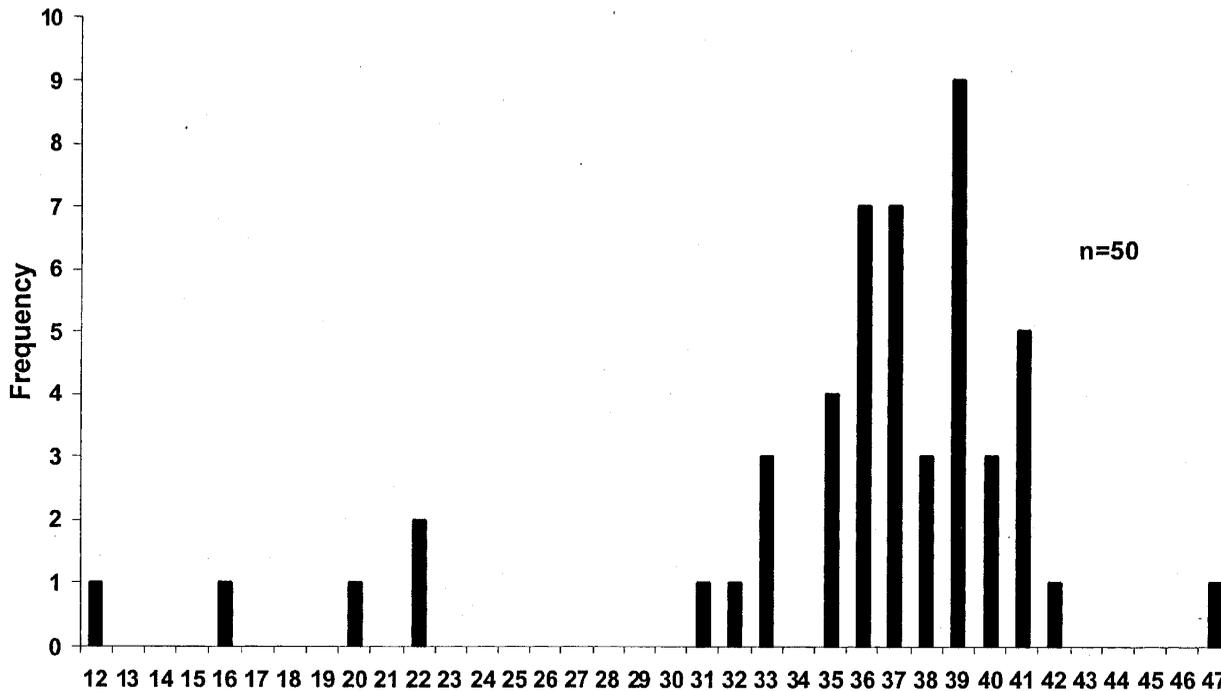
The lake has a history as a low density muskellunge fishery with trophy potential. Smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, walleye, and northern pike are the other gamefish species present. The panfish fishery consists of low numbers of yellow perch, bluegills, and black crappie. The lake also supports a cold water fishery. The Wisconsin DNR has recently stocked lake trout into the lake and there are also cisco present. Rainbow smelt were illegally introduced into the lake in the early 1990's and their numbers have exploded in the lake threatening the entire fish community.

**Muskellunge Fishery**

In 2001 a comprehensive fishery survey was conducted of Long Lake. As part of this survey information on the muskellunge fishery was collected. Fifty muskellunge were captured using

fyke nets and electrofishing gear. The largest fish captured was a 47.0 inch long female. We did not attempt to make a mark recapture population estimate as part of this survey. RSD 34 and 40 values calculated using a stock length of 30 inches, were 89 and 22 respectively. These RSD values are above those reported for other northern Wisconsin muskellunge waters (Margenau 2000, Hanson 1986). RSD 45 values were not calculated for these other lakes, but Long Lake had a value of only 2. RSD values based on length frequency data are a good indicator of actual population structure (Hanson 1986). If this is the case then there are very few muskellunge greater than 45 inches in length in this population.

Figure 1. 2001 Muskellunge Length Distribution for Long Lake, Vilas County.



### Muskellunge Recruitment

Currently the muskellunge population of Long Lake is maintained through natural recruitment. The lake has been stocked only once (1996) with fingerling muskellunge since 1958. Spring netting and fall electrofishing surveys indicate that there is natural recruitment in most years.

### Muskellunge Harvest

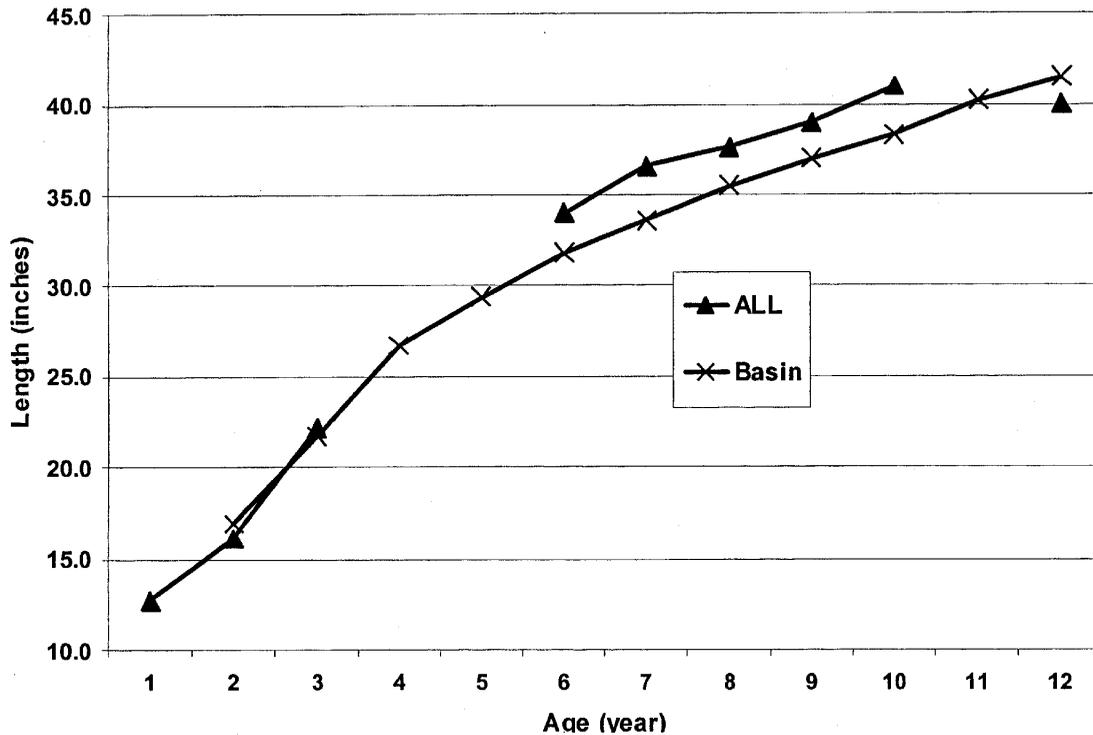
The last creel survey of Long Lake was conducted in 1991. At this time the muskellunge regulation on the lake was a 32 inch minimum length and 1 fish bag limit. Based on the results of the survey, anglers caught an estimated 69 and harvested 25 muskellunge for the entire season. This harvest is based on three fish reported to the creel clerk as harvested. Two of these fish were measured and they were 38.0 and 38.5 inches in length. Catch and harvest rates of anglers specifically seeking muskellunge were 57.8 and 121.9 hours per fish respectively.

Long Lake is in the ceded territory and tribal harvest of muskellunge does occur. Only two muskellunge have been harvested by tribal members from Long Lake since 1985.

### Muskellunge Growth

Muskellunge scale and spine samples taken in 2001 from Long Lake indicate above average growth compared to other lakes in our region (figure 2). This good growth is probably due to the abundant forage base that includes rainbow smelt, cisco, and white sucker .

Figure 2. Muskellunge Length at Age (all sexes combined) for Long Lake, Vilas County. Basin averages are from sexes combined data from lakes located in the headwaters basin of northern Wisconsin.



### 6. Justification of Selected Regulation:

The current 34 inch minimum size limit is not adequate to produce significant numbers of muskellunge 50 inches or greater in length. Long Lake has the size, growth rate, and forage base to produce greater numbers of trophy muskellunge. There is also a significant segment of the angling public that would like to see greater opportunities to catch larger muskellunge. In 1999 a survey was conducted by the Wisconsin department of natural resources of 1,400 anglers who fish muskellunge in Wisconsin (Margenau 2004). The survey found that 62% of anglers felt that a trophy muskellunge was a fish 50 inches or longer in length. Changing the muskellunge regulation to a 50 inch minimum should increase numbers of trophy sized fish in Long Lake and provide an additional angling opportunity in Vilas County.

Future plans call for monitoring muskellunge recruitment each fall. A Muskellunge population estimate and creel survey should be conducted on the lake in 10 to 15 years after implementation of the regulation to evaluate any changes.

## **References**

Black, John J., Andrews, L. M. and C. W. Threinen. 1963. Surface water resources of Vilas County. Wisconsin Conservation Department, Madison, Wisconsin. 316 pages.

Hanson, David A. 1986. Population characteristics and angler use of muskellunge in eight northern Wisconsin lakes. Am. Fish. Soc. Spec. Publ. 15:238-248.

Margenau, Terry L. and Steven P. AveLallemant. 2000. Effects of a 40-inch minimum length limit on muskellunge in Wisconsin. N. Amer. J. Fish Mgt. 20:986-993.

Margenau, Terry L. and Jordan B. Petchenik. 2004. Social aspects of muskellunge management in Wisconsin. N. Amer. J. Fish Mgt. 24:82-93.

Wisconsin Muskellunge Waters. 1995. Wisconsin department of natural resources. Publication RS-919-96.

## **7. Public Comment:**

At the 2008 spring Vilas County conservation congress hearing this regulation was submitted as a resolution. It passed by a 54 to 24 vote and was submitted to the conservation congress warm water committee and passed their review as well. The Long Lake of Phelps Lake District has reviewed this proposal and approves of this regulation change.

This regulation change should cause no conflicts with tribal harvest. Tribal members have speared only two muskellunge from Long Lake since 1985. Increasing the muskellunge population of Long Lake will have no negative impacts on annual tribal muskellunge harvest.

## **8. Previous Action:**

Past muskellunge fishing regulations on Long Lake have followed the general inland rules for the state. The current muskellunge regulation on the lake is a 34 inch minimum size limit and 1 fish bag limit.

In 2003, a 50 inch minimum regulation was proposed for Long Lake along with 17 other lakes across Vilas and Oneida Counties. At that time it was voted down statewide (1,246 to 2,278) and at the county level (29 to 149). Currently no lakes in Vilas County have a 50 inch minimum length regulation.

If no action is taken the Long Lake muskellunge fishery will remain low density and few large musky will be harvested.

**9. Draft Question:**

**Long Lake Muskellunge Regulation** – Increase the minimum length limit from 34 inches to 50 inches.

The current 34 inch minimum size limit is not adequate to produce a trophy muskellunge fishery.

It is recommended that the muskellunge regulation on this lake be changed to a 50 inch minimum length limit. This regulation should improve muskellunge catch rates, increase numbers of adults, and provide an opportunity to catch fish 50 inches and longer.

**Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 34 inches to 50 inches for muskellunge on Long Lake in Vilas County?**

Revised 8/8/2008 SJG





Long Lake of Phelps Lake District

October 20, 2012

Commissioner's Meeting

Agenda Item: Fish Stocking Update

- From 2007 through 2012 approximately 31,939 large walleye fingerling have stocked in Long Lake by the DNR (22,949) and the LLPLD (9000) at a total cost of \$63,878.00. LLPLD has stocked 3000 each in 2008 , 2010 and 2012.
- Survival rate has been good, but natural recruitment is still minimal due to the smelt.
- See attached document for the results of the 2012 WDNR comprehensive fisheries study.
- In 2012 the WDNR stocked 6100 large lake trout fingerlings and plan to stock another 6100 fingerlings in 2013 to help address the smelt issues.
- In 2013 the WDNR are planning to stock approximately 300 Muskellunge.

