



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello Big Sanders!

Spring has sprung and we're about to kick off the Big Sand Lake Summer Season!

I am pleased to report our total membership totaled 177 in 2024!! Way to go Friends and Residents of Big Sand Lake!

This newsletter kicks off our 2025 Membership Campaign! Soon you will receive a separate mailing for renewing or joining as a new member; in addition, you will find information for contributing to our important Big Sand Charitable Fund. The Big Sand Lake Association Board is very proud of our high percentage membership! Our member support and passion allows the association's vision: "We are committed to the preservation of Big Sand Lake for current use and for the use of future generations" to actively move forward! Please renew your membership ~ let's beat 177 members in 2025!!

Our annual meeting is scheduled for June 21 at Pine Cone Lodge. Over the Winter, the lodge has undergone renovations and rebuilding. BSLA thanks the Brand Family for once again hosting our annual meeting!

So... What has the Board been working on over the Winter?

The Board approved Bylaw revisions this past Fall. As stated in our current Bylaws, members must be notified in writing 15 days in advance of the member approval vote taking place. You will receive a mailing around Mid-May to Early June describing the recommended changes. The recommended changes will be voted on at our annual meeting.

The Board approved the printing of a new BSLA Member Directory. The Membership committee is working diligently to obtain accurate contact information for the directory. We expect the directory to go to print in 2025.

The Board approved the RMB Environmental Lab's Water Quality 7-year report. In the past, we have done this report every 5 years since 2012. However, due to the Covid break, the 5-year 2022 report was missed. The report has been completed and will soon be available on our website under the Water Quality Reports tab.

The Board unanimously approved the purchase of 8 new Buoys for the lake. Thank you to Dan Dyer for his research and efforts related to this project. Please see additional details in the "Buoy" article.

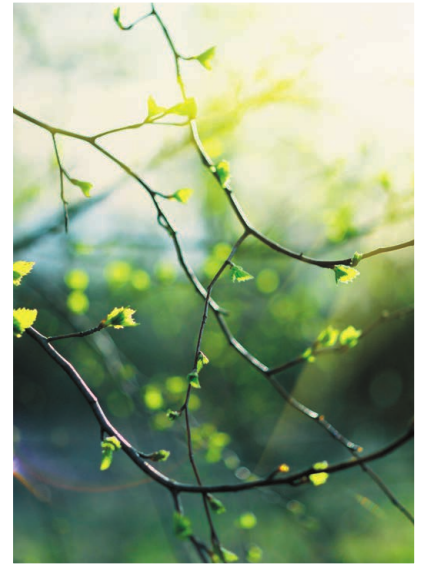


The Board approved the purchase of new tools for the Big Sand Lake Access. Thank you to Dr. Richard Provinzino for his research and efforts related to this project. Please see additional details in the 'New Tools' article.

Steve Kimpton is our HCCOLA representative. Please see his article keeping us up to date on HCCOLA activities. Thank you, Steve, for participating in HCCOLA, representing BSLA.

Please consider volunteering with BSLA! We have a variety of volunteer choices. Please contact me or any board member and we'll help you explore possibilities! A Big Thank you to ALL our current volunteers!

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PRESIDENTS LETTER

Continued

Thank you, members, for the wonderful support you give BSLA allowing this organization to do everything we can to protect our beautiful resource. BSLA was begun in 1988 through the efforts of several gentlemen who resided on my family's shared lane. I followed the beginnings and attended early meetings. With the passing of time, I am very proud of the continued support and passion we see in our membership and volunteers! For 37 years, BSLA has grown and evolved as an active, well organized Lake Association watching over our beloved Big Sand Lake! Cheers To Many More!!

Catharine Williamson
BSLA President



Greetings from **YOUR BSLA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

It's Spring and time to renew your Big Sand Lake Association membership, or to become a NEW member! All new BSLA members are eligible for a one-year complimentary membership!

If you haven't already, you will soon receive a BSLA mailing with information for renewing your BSLA membership and information on contributing to the Big Sand Charitable Lake Fund which funds the extremely important AIS Watercraft Inspection program.

But why wait! Show your love for Big Sand Lake and take a moment right now to take care of paying your 2025 BSLA membership dues. To renew or join online, go to <http://www.bigsandlake.org/>, click on the "Membership" tab and follow the prompts.

The online process is secure, easy and quick if you know your password.

What happens if I don't know my password? Click on "Forgot My Password". You will automatically be sent the password that has been assigned to you if your "primary email" address is in the system. You can personalize your password on the "Update My Membership Info" form.

If you cannot log into the website, please just use the membership form enclosed in the BSLA mailing mentioned above and mail in a check. We apologize for the cumbersome process but unfortunately "it is what it is"! We are working hard on simplifying the process.

Our 2025 membership goal is to match, if not exceed, the 177 memberships received in 2024. Approximately 70% of Big Sand residents are members of the lake association. It would be wonderful if we could achieve 100%. To help us reach that goal, as stated above, first time BSLA members will receive a complimentary first year membership!

Plans are underway for an "Every Cabin Visit" this summer beginning shortly after the Annual Meeting in June and concluding by August 18. Volunteer neighborhood 'captains' will be recruited to assist with this project. Please consider stepping up to help with this project. Contact Jo Kilander, jolkilander@gmail.com to sign up. (Don't miss the "L" after Jo in Jo's email)

Thanks everyone! We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting to be held at the new Pine Cone Lodge on Saturday, June 21.

With appreciation,

The Membership Committee:

Linda Lee, Al Judson, Jo Kilander, Barb Kimer, Catharine Williamson

HELP US *Stay Funded for the Future*

In 2024 the Big Sand Lake Association (BSLA) and the Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund Committee (Charitable Fund) joined fabulous fundraising forces with a single, combined, direct mail request. Our intention was to ask the association members for support one time per year, and to continue to educate members about the differences and purposes of the two entities. We felt that the effort was reasonably successful. Approximately 75% of members renewed their BSLA dues, and the Charitable Fund raised enough to fully fund the 2024 watercraft inspection program. We are back at it for 2025! Please watch your mail for our letter, which asks you to do two important things. First, we ask you to **renew your annual dues** to remain an active member of our Big Sand Lake Association. Second, we ask that you **make a contribution to the BSLA Charitable Fund of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation** to help cover the cost of the 2025 summer DNR watercraft inspection program at the public access, and to help us grow the fund for future needs.

Need a refresher?

THE BIG SAND LAKE ASSOCIATION

The Big Sand Lake Association Board conducts many important activities to “promote and maintain the environmental, economic, and recreational protection of Big Sand Lake,” and to make it a safe and wonderful place to own a home or cabin. We maintain the bigsandlake.org website, distribute newsletters, maintain a member directory, conduct lake water testing, apply for grants to help offset the cost of DNR watercraft inspection at the boat launch, coordinate social events and so much more.

Annual dues to pay for the activities of the Big Sand Lake Association are set at \$50 for members/property owners, and Associate Member dues are \$20 per year for family, friends, and non-property owners. Think of the BSLA treasury as our household checking account, taking care of smaller day-to-day expenses.

Dues are paid directly to BSLA, either online at bigsandlake.org (under the membership tab) or with a check in the envelope you will receive.

THE BIG SAND LAKE CHARITABLE FUND

The Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund was established in 2009 to “preserve, protect and enhance Big Sand Lake and its environs.” It is managed by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. Examples of how the fund has been used include helping to pay for the costs of the annual DNR watercraft inspections, and for the special aquatic survey conducted last year. In addition, the fund is available to support other large expenses or special projects necessary to protect the lake, including quickly addressing any possible AIS infestation emergencies.

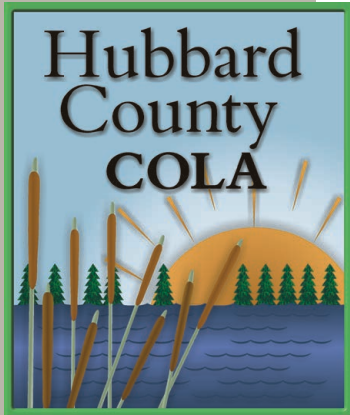
A priority of the Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund has been to raise money each year to pay for the cost of DNR boat inspectors stationed at the Big Sand Lake boat launch to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species into the lake. This summer there will be 1,100 inspector hours contracted with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). After grants received from the state of Minnesota and Lake Emma Township, the balance of the DNR watercraft inspection bill is \$15,940, and we are once again seeking donations to cover the cost. **Therefore, in addition to paying your annual membership dues, please donate to the Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund to help cover the cost of this critical activity that is our best weapon against the spread of aquatic invasive species.** To donate to the Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund, go to the bigsandlake.org website, and click on the yellow “Charitable Fund, Donate Now” button on the right side of the page, which takes you directly to the Northwest Minnesota Foundation website, or mail a check in the envelope you will receive. Donations to the Charitable Fund should be designated as “General Spendable.”

Thank you in advance for your generosity! Truly, a strong and engaged lake association membership will benefit us all for years to come!

With gratitude and appreciation,

The Big Sand Lake Association Board of Directors
The Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund Advisory Committee

COLA Update



BSLA is a longstanding member of the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HCCOLA). The mission of HCCOLA– to protect the quality of our lakes, preserve the value of our shorelands and promote the responsible use of our waters – is well aligned with ours. The organization provides support in our work to control aquatic invasive species (AIS) and provides a helpful interface with pertinent MN DNR activities.

HCCOLA 2025 meetings and activities will start in late March. Highlights will be included in our Newsletters. For this edition, here are some excerpts from the HCCOLA Winter 2024/25 Newsletter that you may find interesting. Status of invasive species in Hubbard County lakes: (Reminder: BSL has no confirmed AIS cases!)

- Six lakes have confirmed zebra mussels, with one new case in 2024. Nearby: Long Lake
- Two lakes have Eurasian milfoil
- Two lakes have starry stonewort. Nearby: Long Lake
- Twenty-six lakes have Chinese or Banded Mystery Snails. Nearby: several lakes
- Four lakes have curly leaf pondweed. Nearby, those are: Fish Hook, and Spider lakes

Water quality status of Hubbard County lakes:

- 78% were graded as “B” or better. None received an “A”. BSL is rated “B”
- Data for individual lakes can be found on-line at these sites, or on the HCCOLA website Hubbard County Watershed Health Assessment Scored Lakes DNR Lake Finder (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/search.html?name=&county=29>)

Preventing the spread of AIS – Hubbard County boat inspections:

- In 2024, about 3% of the inspections detected contaminants. About 37% of the inspected boats came from infested waters.

Increasing focus on wake boat restrictions

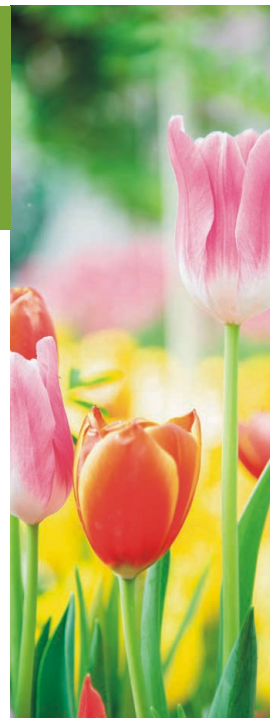
- Why? potential shoreline erosion and habitat impact
- Thirty-one localities in Wisconsin have enacted restrictions
- The University of Minnesota will release a study this year
- Webinars are available on the topic at (<https://mnlakesanddrivers.org/webinars/>)

Please contact Steve Kimpton (kimptons58@gmail.com) or any Board member if you have questions about HCCOLA.

Walking the Roadways around Big Sand Lake



As spring and summer approach, we wanted to take this time to caution everyone, and their guests, that walking on the roads - especially Highway 7 and 40 can be dangerous. Drivers cannot always see around the bends and overhanging trees create shadows. Compound that with neutral or dark clothing, and walkers disappear from a driver's field of vision. Please consider wearing a reflective vest of some kind if you prefer to walk on the roads, and/or consider using one of the many trails we have in our area for biking and walking. As a reminder, there is scheduled construction at the intersection of 7 and 40 this year to install a roundabout. We encourage you to think safety first!



LONG LAKE WASH STATION AND NEW TOOLS

FOR BIG SAND ACCESS

Starry Stonewort is located on the South Public Access near the town of Hubbard. To try to prevent the spread of this very damaging Starry Stonewort, the township of Hubbard has purchased and installed a CDS Solar Cleaning Station. The unit cost is \$35,000. They will be paying for the costs of the station for the first 3 years which is about \$1,500/yr.

Aaron Andersen, of Hubbard County AIS, suggested that we get approval for AIS signage at our access from the DNR and placement of a cleaning brush, drain plug wrench, and tongs to encourage cleaning of boats at entry and exit from our lake. The DNR will place the sign, and we will place the above tools at the sign.

In addition to the CDS Station, the Long Lake Association is trying to control the spread with hand harvesting, copper sulfate, and 5 layers of burlap held down with sandbags to prevent sunlight necessary for the growth of the Starry Stonewort.

Additionally, our lake association has placed several zebra mussel traps to monitor for any possible spread of zebra mussels to our lake.

Dr. Richard Provinzino
Committee Chair



BIG SAND LAKE BUOY UPDATE



Dan Dyer retrieved our BSLA buoys from the Sheriff's department over the Winter. Unfortunately, they were badly damaged beyond use. Damage included being crushed along with cracking and peeling. Dan researched the purchase of new buoys. He located a vendor who produces a significantly stronger buoy. The good news, pricing is lower than purchasing from our former vendor. The BSLA Board has unanimously voted to approve the purchase of new Regulation buoys for the lake. The Board is confident we are purchasing a superior product that is expected to have twice the lifespan of our former buoys. The Board looks forward to improving the safety for all who use the lake! Thank You Dan for your efforts surrounding this project!

NORTHERN WATERS LAND TRUST

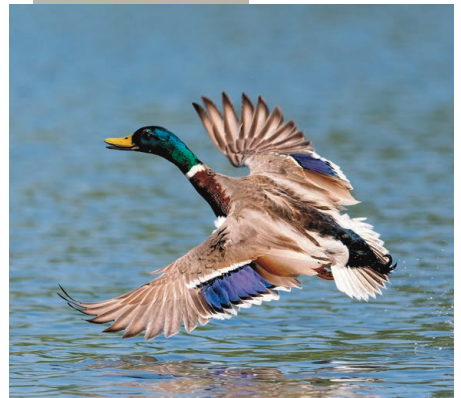
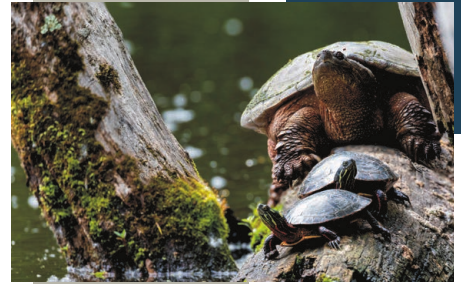
Ally Mazurek, NWLT Grants Manager and Water Conservation Specialist provided us with this overview of *Northern Waters Land Trust*

Northern Waters Land Trust is a non-profit organization with the mission of preserving land to protect water. They are passionate about preserving the natural beauty and ecological health of Northern Minnesota's lakes, forests, and wetlands. Northern Waters Land Trust partners with landowners to protect critical landscapes through conservation easements and land acquisitions, ensuring wildlife populations and future generations will be able to enjoy and benefit from them for years to come.

Conservation easements are powerful tools for land protection that benefit both landowners and the environment. By placing a conservation easement on their land, landowners ensure that their property remains free from development and is preserved in its natural state. These protected lands serve as vital habitats for wildlife, improve water quality in nearby lakes and rivers, and help maintain biodiversity. For landowners, these efforts can provide financial incentives and preserve the legacy of their land, all while allowing them to continue their use of the property in a sustainable manner.

Northern Waters Land Trust takes a watershed-based approach to land conservation. We know that the water quality in our lakes is directly tied to the health and land use practices of the land surrounding them. If we can protect 75% of the forested land within a watershed, this ensures that the lake ecosystems are resilient to future stressors, such as those posed by land conversion and climate change.

Both Kabekona Lake and Ten Mile Lake Watersheds have recently achieved 75% land protection, thanks to collaborative efforts by Northern Waters Land Trust, Ten Mile and Kabekona Lake associations, the Department of Natural Resources, Counties, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, private landowners, and other conservation organizations. Northern Waters Land Trust has helped to protect thousands of acres of land within these watersheds and its broader service area, improving the health of local ecosystems and contributing to cleaner water. Northern Waters Land Trust continues to work towards this 75% goal within all its priority watersheds, including the Big Sand Lake watershed, to keep intact the natural places that make Northern Minnesota one of the most beautiful places to live and recreate.



WINTER SOCIALS *And* SPRING FEVER



As I write this, it is 64 degrees outside! How can I not think about springtime on our beloved Big Sand Lake. I'm always envious of those residents who call Big Sand home year-round. Once again, a big thanks to Linda Van Bruggen for organizing winter gatherings to deepen friendships and make new ones. Monthly happy hours at Zorbaz filled with conversation and laughter (see picture), plus two outdoor picnics with snowshoeing and bonfires (thank you Wick and Holly Corwin) highlight the winter fun!

As we look ahead to spring, please put the June 21st BSLA Annual Meeting & Picnic on your calendars now. The meeting will be held at the NEW Pine Cone Lodge! Many of you have shared your special memories of staying at or visiting the resort as children and we are so grateful to the Brand family for allowing us to be one of the first groups to see their newly reimagined Big Sand landmark.

In the coming weeks, look for emails from me announcing Ladies Happy Hours and Coffees, plus some Couples Socials. If you want to be added to my email list (or Linda's winter list), please contact me via email, text or phone.

See you on June 21st!

Jo Kilander • BSLA Social Chair • 701-361-9871 • Jokilander@gmail.com

IN MEMORY

*Memories made of friends
forever in our hearts*

JODY BRUGGEN

MARLENE FAIRCHILD

DEBRA GOLTZ

RUTH LARSEN

ANN NELSON

STEVE NELSON

**MARGARET
"DORSEY" PHELPS**

*BSLA commemorates residents
known to us who have passed away
since our last communication
or during the last year.*

*We apologize for any omissions.
Family members and friends are
encouraged to notify us
and submit an article
about the individual's life
and connection with Big Sand Lake
for publication in the
Big Sand newsletter.
Please contact us at:
admin@bigsandlake.org.*

*If you wish, memorial donations may be
made to the Big Sand Charitable Fund.
A link for donating is on our website,
www.bigsandlake.org.*

Jody Bruggen (July 12, 1929 - August 26, 2023). In July of 1951, Jody & Dick Bruggen honeymooned in the newly constructed Bruggen Cabin on Big Sand Lake's east shore. There were many gatherings of family and friends throughout their 56 years of marriage. Dick died on June 30, 2007, at Big Sand on their wedding anniversary. Their children and grandchildren continue the yearly migration north from Missouri and North Carolina to enjoy the beautiful pines, clear water, fish, and loons of Big Sand Lake.

Marlene Fairchild (January 29, 1936 – January 13, 2024), a nearly 60-year summer resident on Big Sand Lake, passed away in January 2024. During her younger days, Marlene often lay on a folding chair on the sandy beach, reading or enjoying her family and friends, while during her older days, she enjoyed reading the newspaper on her deck. On cold or cloudy days, she was in her garden planting nasturtiums or preparing meals in the kitchen. Marlene loved Big Sand Lake and believed in the importance of the BSLA – we miss her smile and her laugh!

Debra Goltz - October 18, 1927 – April 2, 2024

Ruth Larsen – October 1, 1927 – October 4, 2020

Ann Nelson – July 29, 1941 – December 20, 2022

Steve Nelson – November 13, 1943 – July 18, 2023



Margaret "Dorsey" Phelps, age 82, passed away on October 31, 2022, in Iowa City, Iowa. Although she was not able to visit her cherished "Point House" in her final years, she continued to make plans for its improvement and care, as she had for the previous 30 years. She knew and appreciated the restorative powers of Big Sand Lake since her parents bought the place from Howard Fletcher in 1968. Howard and his wife Linda had built a year-round home next door and sold the 1918 'cabin' and its contents to Dorsey's parents, Gerry and Betty Wetlaufer, the men having been great fishing buddies. Dorsey and her husband, Chuck, began spending a few weeks every summer there with siblings, cousins, and their own children.

Dorsey enjoyed fishing with her dad in the early years, gathering with family, and watching long sunsets. She always had a gourmet meal waiting for the weary traveler and had many art and science projects for her kids and grandkids. She strove to keep the place as true to the original as possible, making curtains and painting household objects that transported visitors to a simpler time. Dorsey's son, James Phelps (Dana), and her brother John Wetlaufer (Helen Turley) will continue to care for the family property.



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BSL 2025 CALENDAR

ANNUAL MEETING / FAMILY PICNIC SATURDAY, JUNE 21, PINE CONE LODGE

10:30AM REGISTRATION

(Coffee/Treats/Socializing)

11:00AM ANNUAL MEETING

NOON FAMILY PICNIC

This annual event is a wonderful time to socialize with fellow Big Sand Lake residents and to learn of the current activities and plans for the lake association.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



SOCIAL MEDIA



Check out the Big Sand Lake Association Facebook page and Instagram for Big Sand current events, photos and area happenings. For easy access, click on the Facebook and Instagram icons located on the right hand column on the homepage at www.bigsandlake.org.