VAN VLIET NEWS

Summer 2004

Nancy Frank, Steve Smithson and Dick Novak work with Steve McComas at our first workday.

Annual Meeting Notice

The Annual Meeting of the Van Vliet Lake Association will be held this year on **Saturday, August 14th beginning at 10 AM** at the **North Lakeland Discovery Center** just north of Manitowish Waters on Highway W**.**

The agenda will include an update on progress of the management planning activities and a new project which is aimed at achieving permanent preservation of the Van Vliet Hemlocks as land for everyone to enjoy and learn from. We will also conduct our Annual Business meeting.

Snacks and a beverage will be available after the meeting.

We're On Our Way

After too many years of trying, we are finally started on the development of a plan for Van Vliet Lake. Steve McComas of Blue Water Science did his initial work over the weekend of June 5th while we also held an information meeting about the plan at the Presque Isle Town Hall.

On Friday, June 4th, 11 volunteers including George Kupfer, Jorja Burke, Jill Wilm, Dick Novak, Nancy Frank, Steve Frank, Lynn Ahlstedt, Jim Sprester, Steve Smithson, Linda Smithson and Tom Olson worked with Steve McComas on the first group project of the summer. They worked on two separate data gathering projects – the first focused on a survey of shoreland vegetation and the second on

understanding water flows into the lake. The benefit of the shoreland survey is to better understand the nature of the natural surroundings on the lake and the impact of development. The understanding of the flows will aid in understanding the watershed for Van Vliet.

Dick Novak, George Kupfer and Jorja Burke collect data with Steve McComas.

The volunteers worked closely with Steve McComas and gained a much better understanding of the issues facing the lake. In addition, they had a great deal of fun. All would encourage others to participate if possible during the upcoming workdays. After the efforts of the afternoon, everyone gathered at Steve and Linda Smithson's lake home for refreshments.

Jim Sprester, George Kupfer, and Steve Frank collect water flow data with Steve McComas.

On Saturday, June 5, 2004, there was an Association meeting at the Presque Isle Community Center. Twenty eight members and friends gathered to hear Steve McComas discuss the project, the nature of the report to be submitted and timing. Many good issues were discussed.

Jill Wilm, Lynn Ahlstedt and Steve Frank gather data with Steve McComas.

The keys for this summer will be to gather data so that conclusions can be drawn about the overall health of Van Vliet Lake. From those conclusions will come follow-up recommendations about additional study, monitoring programs or potential management options. At this point, it is far too early to predict the conclusions.

Mr. McComas expressed enthusiasm about the project. He felt that Van Vliet represented a very interesting and complex system as a headwaters lake for the Presque Isle River and very close to the continental divide for waters flowing to either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico.

Steve McComas will be returning both in July and August to collect additional data. Opportunities to assist in that collection are presented later in this newsletter.

The Planning Committee (Steve Smithson, Jill Wilm, George Kupfer, Dick Novak and Jeff Burke) are to be thanked for their excellent efforts in getting our grant and getting this project underway.

Help Needed!

Our consultant, Steve McComas of Blue Water Science, will join us on Van Vliet again on Friday, July 9th and on Friday, August 6th. The tasks to be performed and our needs for volunteer help are as follows:

Friday, July 9th – Beginning at Noon at Boat Landing

(1) Survey, collect and map submerged aquatic plants from12 noon to 3pm. This will be done at approximately 25 locations (transects) for 3 hours.
Volunteers 2 minimum, 3 desired in boat for 1.5 hour shifts—6 total.

Ability to wield a rake is required

Set 1-2 Crayfish traps—monitoring for rusty crayfish during above time on lake. Leave in overnight and arrange for volunteers to check every few days and possible relocate.

Volunteers also needed for on-going, periodic monitoring—**1-3 total.**

(2) Visit Outlet of Presque Isle and into river to document outflow—1.5 hours, 3pm to 4:30-5:00pm
Pictures, notes—volunteers needed **2-3 plus any others interested.** Tow canoes or kayaks behind boats or load on a pontoon.

Friday, August 6th – Beginning at 11 AM at Boat Landing

(1) Survey, collect and map emergent aquatic plants plus any other submergent—11:00am to 12:30pm
Shoreline locations primarily

Volunteers—**2 minimum, 3rd desirable for 1.5 hours in Steve's boat. Ability to wield a rake is required**

(2) Sediment Collection for future analysis—12:30pm to 2:00pm or after lunch break.
Locations of known deposits

Volunteers—**2 minimum, 3rd desired for 1.5 hours in Steve's boat.**

To volunteer, please contact:

Steve Smithson
(952) 944-6121 , or
steve@smithson-associates.com

Another New Project

In the last issue of the Van Vliet News, we talked about the parcel owned by the State Board of the Commissioners of Public Lands ("BCPL") which they call the "Van Vliet Hemlocks". There are a map and some pictures on the website (www.vanvlietlake.com).

A small lake in the Van Vliet Hemlocks (photo by Barbara Olson)

This parcel is a real treasure. The BCPL has identified it as one of their grade "1" natural areas. A walk through it will only convince you. We have arranged for a **hike through the property** with naturalist, Dave Picard, of the BCPL. The hike will be **Thursday, July 8th at 10:00 AM.**

Meet at the boat landing at 9:45. We expect the hike to last from 1 ½ to 2 hours. Dave will cover trees and vegetation, logging history, glacial landforms and, as a special treat, will be on the lookout for orchids. Watch the website for more information. Don't miss it.

But there is also reason for concern. The BCPL's duty is to maximize revenue off of such parcels. Where the parcels are of particular importance for ecological reasons, they have minimized their logging efforts in recent years (this parcel hasn't had any timber harvested since the 1980's – and then it was limited). It still has great old growth hemlocks and hardwoods – and several small lakes plus the frontage on Van Vliet and Averill (see the map on the website). But, the current state budget situation may increase the pressure on the BCPL to do more logging (or even divest of some of these parcels). We believe that either outcome is very negative for Van Vliet Lake. Recent activity in the Legislature in Madison has caused increased concern for those who follow these issues closely.

Several members of the Association walked the parcel with staff of the BCPL (including its Director) to get a better understanding of it in early May. We all came away convinced that we needed to do whatever we could to preserve this parcel for all.

Tom Olson has had several meetings with the Director of the BCPL, the Executive Director of the Natural Resources Foundation and has made numerous contacts to develop information. The Van Vliet Lake Association Board has authorized the appointment of a special committee to be formed to work with potential partners to preserve this parcel. For the time, it is called the "Friends of the Van Vliet Hemlocks" and will operate as a committee within the Van Vliet Lake Association, It will be co-chaired by Steve Frank and Jill Wilm. George Kupfer is also a member. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to contact Steve (at 608 836-6000), or Jill at (715 686- 7396) or by contacting us at mailbox@vanvlietlake.com

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It is still too early to determine the options and strategies available to us. However, the Committee has begun considering the approach to preservation of this property. There will be an update at the Annual Meeting and information on the website as it develops.

Several ideas being considered are to ally ourselves with various land trusts and land preservation organizations to learn as much as possible about preserving these kind of properties – and indeed to ally ourselves with them in a plan of action at some point. Further, we hope to be able to develop educational materials and trail maps so that more people can enjoy this tremendous asset. We want your ideas on this project.

By the way, your membership in the Van Vliet Lake Association gives you automatic membership in the "Friends of Van Vliet Hemlocks" for 2004. It may be that, in the future, a separate budget will need to be developed for this Committee if activities warrant it.

Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, August 14th at the North Lakeland Discovery Center** near Manitowish Waters on Highway W. It will begin at 10 AM. This change in date has been done to accommodate some members who have indicated that the traditional 4th of July weekend is difficult for them due to other activities. It also works well to spread our several meetings for this summer. We will check with you all next year to determine the best date.

The agenda will include the following:

- Update on the Management Plan
- Update on the Van Vliet Hemlocks project
- Elections

We expect to be completed with the meeting by 12:30. There will be refreshments afterwards at the Discovery Center

Elections

The Board has nominated the following individuals for election at the summer meeting (nominations are also accepted from the floor). The following seats are up for election with the nominees below.

President – Tom Olson
Vice President – Jill Wilm
Member-at-Large – George Kupfer
Member-at-Large – Bill Schroeder.

If you are interested in running for election, please contact us at mailbox@vanvlietlake.com or by letter to Nancy Frank at 4918 Fond du Lac Trail, Madison, WI 53705. As indicated earlier, nominations are also accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

Tim Bowler has decided not to seek re-election this year. Tim indicated to us that he is extremely busy with work at the resort and cannot give the time he feels necessary to the association. We want to thank Tim for his service.

Website

The new website is getting a good response – and we want your suggestions for improvement. We are going to try to update it every few weeks with additional news and comments from the Association.

We also want to thank Andy Olson for his efforts in design, implementation and updating the site. Andy grew up visiting Van Vliet Lake but now lives with his wife and daughter in Portland, OR. He doesn't get to Van Vliet nearly as often as he and his family would like. Andy said his volunteer efforts were his way to "give back" to Van Vliet Lake for all of the joy it had given him.

The website is primarily designed for members and residents. As a result, it is set up so that web "search engines" will have difficulty finding it – thereby increasing the privacy of the site. If you plan to visit it, you should add it in to the "Favorites" area on your computer. Once again, it is located at http://www.vanvlietlake.com/index.htm .

Once again, send your comments on the site to mailbox@vanvlietlake.com .

Wildlife Survey

Don't forget that, as part of the management plan, we are conducting a wildlife survey. A form was attached to the last newsletter. Please return it to the address shown. There is also a form on the website in the section for the Management Plan. You may print additional copies from that or request them by calling Tom Olson at (608) 831-0837.

Dues

With this newsletter, you will find a Membership form. If you have already paid, please ignore the form. Please note that dues are now $10 per voting member – rather than $10 per family. All who are eligible for membership may join (anyone who owns or resides on property within 1 mile of Van Vliet Lake).

To vote on issues at any meeting or be on the Board, you must be a member.

Gloria Goehring

Gloria Goehring, who owned a lake home on Van Vliet Lake (on Baer Road) for several decades, died in late May. She was a good friend and neighbor to many of us who had gotten to know her over the years. Her husband, Al, who many of us recall as a very avid fisherman died several years ago.

New Neighbors

Don and Jeneane Blom of Riverside, Illinois have purchased Jim and Barb McAdam's property on Crab Lake Road. They have fished on Van Vliet for many years. Please welcome them.

Membership Form

There is a membership form attached to this newsletter. If you have already paid for 2004, thank you. If not, please consider supporting the Association this year. As you can see, there is much going on. We appreciate your support. Also, please consider volunteering to help at one of the workdays. It will be a great opportunity to learn more about your lake.

MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP

Name_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip Code_____

Lake Address (if different_____

_____

Phone Number (home)_____(lake)_____

E-mail Address_____

Other Comments_____

_____

Yes, we are still working on the Van Vliet Lake Directory! We are hoping to be able to give it to Association Members in the near future. If you would like to be included, please check below.

_____No – don't include me.

_____OK to include the following: (check which)

_____Name(s)_____Presque Isle address_____P.I. phone

_____e-mail _____other address_____other phone

Enclosed please find my membership check in the amount of (min. $10 per voting member) payable to the Van Vliet Lake Association, Inc. (Note – last year, the membership voted to make the minimum dues $10 per voting member rather than $10 per family – membership is open to all property owners within 1 mile of Van Vliet Lake or persons resident within 1 mile for at least 30 days per year).

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(clip here for your records)

Your membership is tax deductible. Your check is your receipt.

Mail to: **Nancy Frank, Treasurer**
Van Vliet Lake Assn, Inc.
4918 Fond du Lac Trail
Madison WI 53705

2004 Van Vliet Lake Association Dues
check #_____; amount_____