

...continued from page 2

These efforts, in combination with ongoing invasive species control will help provide wildlife habitat, encourage a diverse native plant understory that hold soils in place and continue to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

We are truly grateful for our volunteers and their hard work. A large amount of downed material remains for collection and will be available for

area residents during future work days. If interested in collecting wood for your personal use, please contact the office.



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Vol. 24, No. 1

Spring 2017

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FROM THE HELM

The Lake Ripley Management District has been conducting pontoon classrooms for Cambridge High School biology students for several years. The students are given an opportunity to come on the Lake and learn some of the monitoring methods that the Lake District performs every year to gauge the health of the Lake. They also are able to learn about other studies conducted that have helped to piece together historic information.



The future of Lake Ripley lies with our children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces. Therefore, we are expanding the pontoon classroom program to include residents, visiting families, and children of the Lake District. A limited number of participants will be able to register for a two hour event on June 24th. Younger children will have to be accompanied by an adult. This program will teach young and old what the Lake District does and why.

Each pontoon will have an instructor who is an expert in their field and will give participants a hands-on experience in lake monitoring methods. Later, in this newsletter, you will find a detailed program, and how to register for the Pontoon Classroom.

I have used this space in the past to talk about lake and land ethics. Hopefully, this experience will give our residents and young people a technical basis to begin forming their long term attitudes about Lake Ripley and what it takes to protect and preserve this wonderful resource.

As you may know, the Lake Ripley Management District is purchasing the wetlands at the inlet to Lake Ripley from the DNR. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Cambridge Foundation, Pheasants Forever, the Oakland Conservation Club and individuals for their generous donations toward the purchase. We are still accepting donations and pursuing grants to help pay for the purchase and management plan.

John Molinaro, Chair

Hands-on learning at the Lake!

As John mentioned in his Chairman's address, our existing educational programs are expanding to include residents and their families in our pontoon classroom. This program brings together professionals who have and currently assist the Lake District with various past and ongoing monitoring efforts and scientific surveys.



Students use sampling equipment to collect lake bed sediment samples. What does this tell us about our lake-Join us on **June 24th** to find out! Credit: P. Leverson

This is your opportunity to jump into the science behind lake management with this family fun activity. Each pontoon will feature a different area of monitoring.

Pontoon Classroom Topics:

- ✧ Surveys and equipment to monitor lake bed sediments and what they tell us about our lake's history
- ✧ Identifying and monitoring aquatic plants– the good, the bad, and the carnivorous
- ✧ Ongoing collection efforts of both physical and chemical data of our lake

Please join us for this free program scheduled for Saturday, **June 24th from 9 to 11 a.m.** Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Participants should contact the Lake District office to register as space is limited. More information on the event will be discussed during registration.

This event wouldn't be possible without volunteer support of pontoon boats and captains. We are looking for a few more pontoon boats and captains to help make this event a success.

We hope to see you and your family on June 24th to learn more about what we do to protect the lake for future generations.

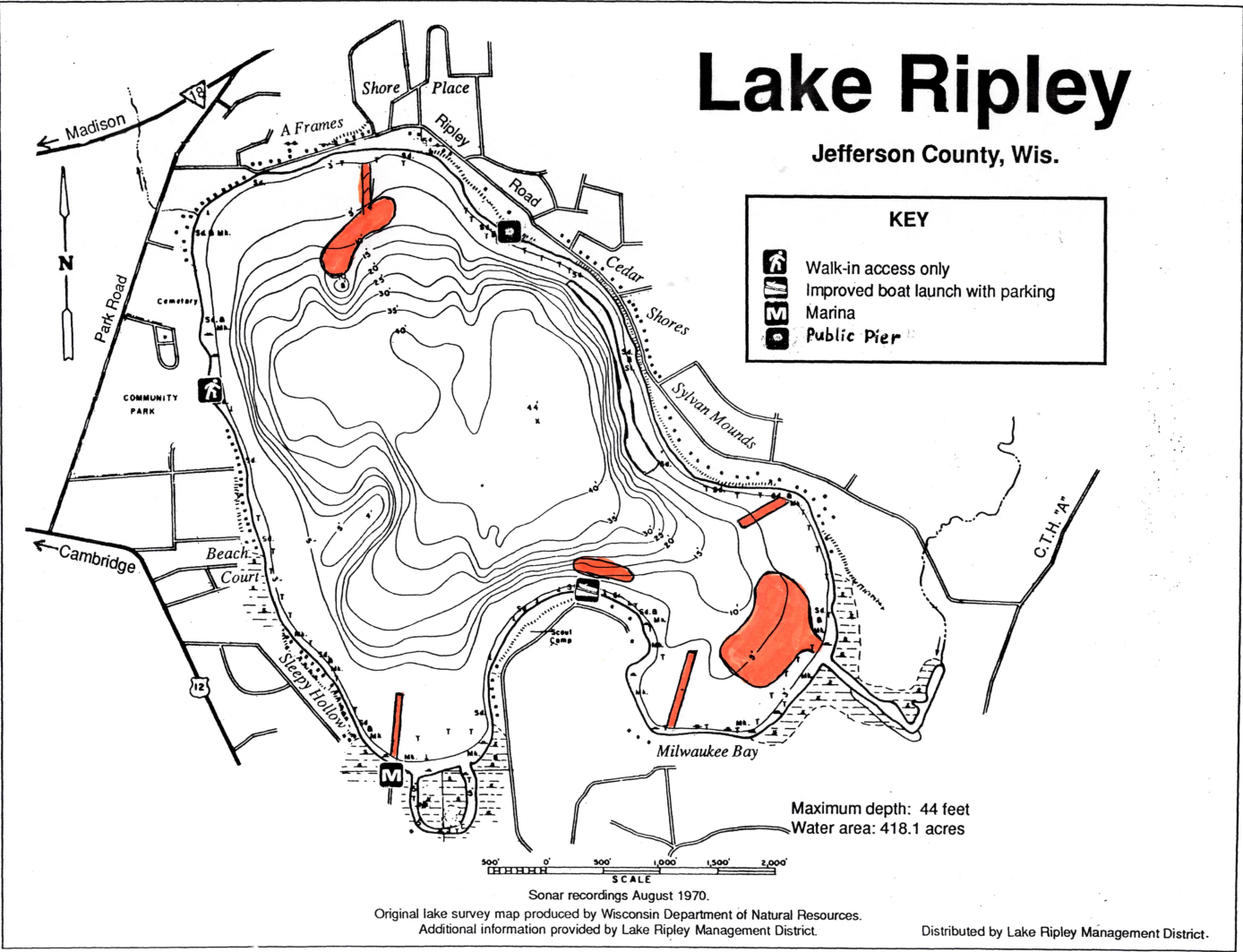
TIMBER!!!

It was another busy winter to get work done in the preserve. This season we took to the trees to reassess the needs of our woodland areas. With the help of DNR Forester Randy Stampfl, recommendations were made to further enhance our woodlands.

With the help of a local tree service, previously girdled trees were felled to help open up the canopy, which helps to establish soil holding ground covers. Many dead trees were along the nature trail and had fallen against live trees. With the use of a skilled climber, these trees were taken down with no damage to other trees.

With over 40 trees on the ground along the trail a dedicated team of over 30 area volunteers, UW-students, and board members donned their work gloves and sharpened up chain saws to cut up and remove the downed trees. This hard working group helped establish woodland habitat areas, cleaned out 5 wood duck nesting boxes, opened up areas of the woodland trail for restoration vehicle access, and cut and hauled out over 12 truck loads of fire wood! It was a great success!

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Another season of plant harvesting will be starting soon. Each year has many variables that can impact aquatic plant growth such as light, water temperatures, nutrients and water depth. An early ice off date and mild spring temperatures could mean earlier plant growth.

We continue to evaluate our harvesting program to ensure we are balancing the values of our lake users while protecting the services that our diverse plant community provides.

Our harvesting crew frequently receives questions on where cutting is allowed. This map shows the locations we are permitted to harvest in orange. These areas are defined by DNR permit rules which allow for navigational lanes to open water and to reduce invasive species populations.

We request that boaters do not contact our captains while on the water. It is nearly impossible to hear over the sound of the engine. The twin paddle wheels can make close contact with boaters dangerous.

Please contact the district office for if you have harvesting questions or concerns. We hope you can use this map on your boat as a reference to navigation lanes and our harvesting areas. By using these cut channels, we hope to lessen boater frustration of clearing props, find easy access to open water and protect valuable plant beds.

You, our residents, are also great eyes for spotting something new in the lake. If you see something you haven't noticed before-please collect a sample and contact the office.

Wetland Purchase Updates

The last newsletter included information on a 40 acre parcel of wetlands located within the Lake Ripley watershed that was available for sale by the WDNR.

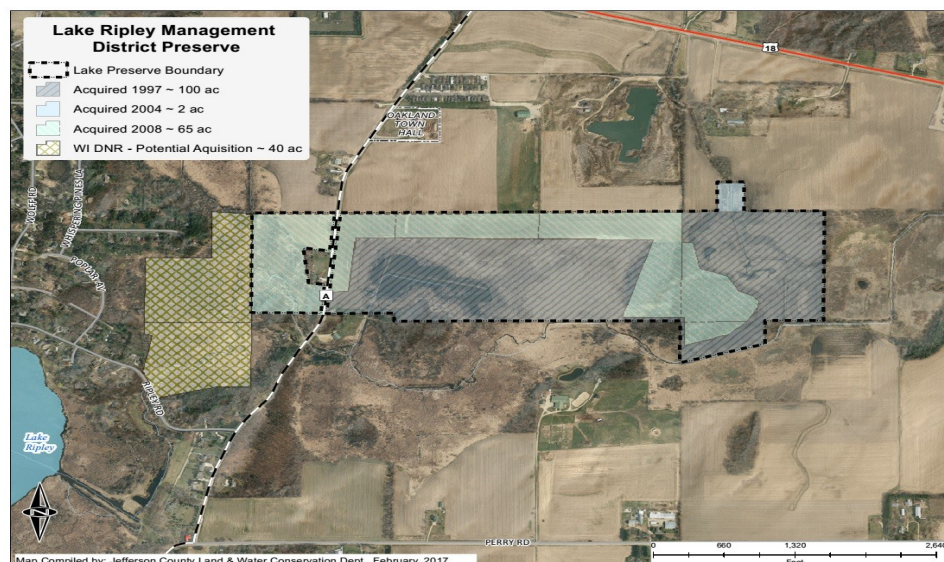
This parcel is located off Ripley Road and adjacent to the western edge of the Lake District Preserve with approximately 2,200 feet of two-bank frontage along the lake's only perennial inlet.

The Lake District was made aware of the potential sale earlier in the summer of 2016 and took several steps to ensure we were considered as potential buyers. At the 2016 Lake District Annual Meeting the potential of this land sale, the importance for preserving wetland areas and financial considerations were discussed by Lake District land owners.

Your desire to protect this wetland from potential development pressures or loss of important wetland functions such as flood control and wildlife habitat was discussed. Your vote unanimously approved the Lake District to purchase these wetlands through various financial strategies.

Next Steps

Towards the end of the year, the DNR's Bureau of Facilities & Lands established a selling price of \$41,600.00. As the price was not known during the annual budget process, and to ensure there were no large increase to district taxpayers, residents approved a moderate increase from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to the capital reserve fund which is used for expenditures such as these.



This same fund also takes into account other capital investments such as equipment used in our aquatic plant harvesting program.

We continue to consider all financial options available to purchase the parcel. We have contacted local conservation groups to assist us in the purchase costs and evaluation of the property for future management considerations. Partnering with the US Fish & Wildlife Service will help in assessing the wetland.

We are truly grateful to the Cambridge Foundation who has pledged \$20,000 in support of this purchase. We are also thankful to Pheasants Forever and the Oakland Conservation Club with their contributions. The community support for projects such as these has been and continues to be outstanding!

The LRMD Board is grateful for the past support of area landowners, businesses, organizations and other partners who have seen the value in preserving natural areas in lands surrounding Lake Ripley. If you would like to participate in our efforts towards the purchase and management of these wetlands, please contact the Lake District office. Tax deductible donations are greatly appreciated and can be sent to the office. Thank you for your support!

LRMD Native Plant Sale

This spring LRMD coordinated with local property owners on an opportunity to order native plants at reduced prices. As seen time and again, Lake Ripley residents seized the chance to help area wildlife and help to keep the lake clean.

With this order over 1,200 native plants will be planted. These plants will be used in projects establishing shoreline habitat, reducing erosion in ditches, provide color contrast in established gardens and enhance rain garden infiltration.

Plants will be available for pick up at the Oakland Town Hall on Friday, May 19th, from 8 a.m. to noon and Saturday, May 20th, from noon to 1 p.m.



This shoreline is enhanced by native plants for beauty and privacy.

Lake District Meetings

Interested in knowing more about what we do or how you can get involved, please join us for an upcoming Lake District meeting.

Board meetings occur at least every quarter. However, during warm weather, monthly meetings are necessary. Updates on our financial standing, projects, programs, water quality information and other items are reviewed by the

Board.

The August meeting is our Budget Hearing and Annual Meeting which is different than a Board meeting. Here, you, our Lake Ripley residents, receive a Chairman's report, receive results of the annual financial audit and a comprehensive treasurer's report, review and approve the next year budget, elect commissioners and report on or consider projects or other actions listed on the agenda.

Meeting notices and agendas are found on our website, published in the Cambridge News, and also placed at the Oakland Town Hall, Hering's Lake Ripley Inn, and Lake Ripley Family Restaurant.

We hope to see you at one of our upcoming meetings to learn more about current district news. Meetings are held at the Oakland Town Hall at 9 a.m. Upcoming dates include:

- ✧ April 22-Board Meeting
- ✧ May 20-Board Meeting
- ✧ June 17-Board Meeting
- ✧ July 15-Board Meeting
- ✧ August 19-Budget Hearing/Annual Meeting

This year's Budget Hearing and Annual Meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2017. Two positions are open for consideration. Longest serving member, John Molinaro is not seeking reelection. Incumbent Craig Kempel has indicated his desire to run for a second term. Persons interested in running for the Lake District Board should provide written notice 45 days prior to the Annual Meeting. Notice should be sent to the district office. Nominations are permitted at the Annual meeting and can be included as a write-in candidate.

Miss a meeting? Don't worry, most meetings are recorded by Cambridge Cable TV 98 and can be viewed with their local programming or on the web. Visit www.ci.cambridge.wi.us, click on Cambridge Cable Access Channel on the left hand of the page, then click on video highlights.

Lake Ripley Fall Electrofishing Summary Report – 2016

Fall Electrofishing - Defined

Fall electrofishing was conducted on Lake Ripley in Jefferson County on October 4, 2016. Fall electrofishing, conducted using a large boomshocker boat, allows for the collection of young-of-year (YOY) walleye and adult bass that are often under-sampled by other gear types. In order to standardize fisheries data, total effort in the form of time spent shocking and/or miles of shoreline shocked is recorded and presented as catch rates or catch-per-unit effort (CPUE). Fall electrofishing provides an indication of the health of the fishery through estimates of gamefish and panfish relative abundance (catch rate or catch per effort), gamefish population size-structure (size distributions) and gamefish and panfish recruitment (young-of-year catch per effort). Sampling on Lake Ripley was conducted at two gamefish stations, both 1.5 miles long (3 miles and 1.65 hours total effort) where only gamefish were collected and included stations 1B and 2B (see map). Two additional catch-all stations, each .5 miles long (1 mile and 0.63 hours total effort) were sampled where all fish species were collected and included stations 1A and 2A. Length measurements were taken from a subset of fish and all fish were returned to the lake. The average water temperature was 65°F and water clarity was good. This summary report presents fall electrofishing data from 2016 with comparisons to previous fall surveys.

This report was compiled by: Laura Stremick-Thompson, WDNR Fisheries Biologist-Horicon 920.387.7876 or Laura.StremickThompson@wisconsin.gov

Gamefish Summary

Largemouth bass	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	168	124	180	173
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	74	50	74	58
Length Range (inches):	3.8-15.8	2.7-16.2	2.2-18.4	2.1-18.6
Average Length (inches):	7.8	7.8	6.7	8.4

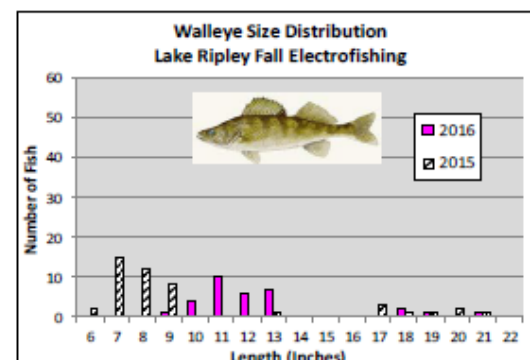
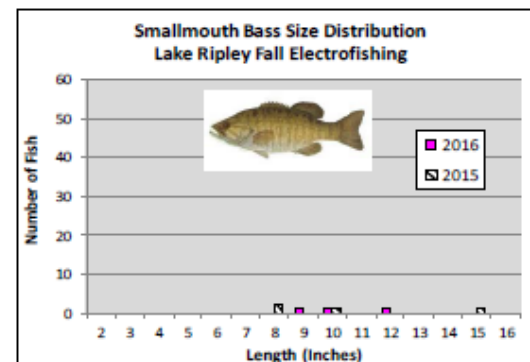
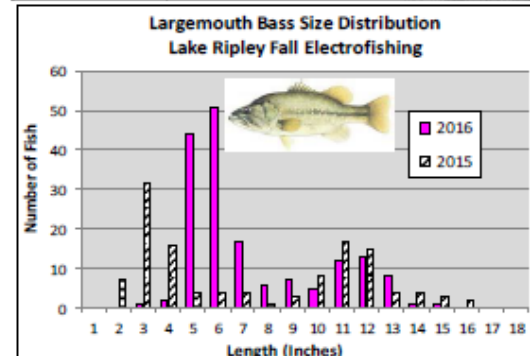
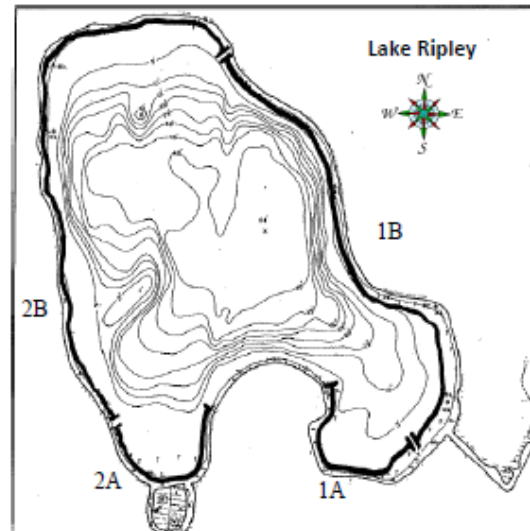
2016 largemouth bass catch rate was 74/hour, compared to 50/hour in 2015, 74/hour in 2014 and 58/hour in 2013. The number of largemouth bass over 14-inches (current legal harvestable size) was 1% in 2016, compared to 7% in 2015, 6% in 2014 and 5% in 2013. The majority of fish sampled in 2016 (57%) were 5.0 to 6.9-inches in length. The lake's largemouth bass population is naturally reproducing and no stocking is currently conducted by WDNR.

Smallmouth bass	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	3	4	14	4
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	1	2	6	1
Length Range (inches):	9.7-12.6	7.6-14.7	3.1-15.6	7.5-10.9
Average Length (inches):	11.1	10.0	6.0	9.8

2016 smallmouth bass catch rate remained low at 1/hour, compared to 2/hour in 2015, 6/hour in 2014 and 1/hour in 2013. The lake's smallmouth bass population is naturally reproducing and no stocking is currently conducted by WDNR.

Walleye	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	32	46	12	17
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	14	19	5	6
Length Range (inches):	9.9-21.4	6.7-21.7	7.7-20.5	8.2-22.3
Average Length (inches):	12.9	10.1	16.5	16.8

2016 walleye catch rate increased in both 2016 and 2015 primarily due to stocking. As part of the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative, the lake is currently stocked in alternate (odd) years at an assigned stocking rate of 15 large fingerling walleye per acre. Stocked in the fall, large fingerling are the largest-size walleye available through the state hatchery system. In 2015, Lake Ripley was stocked with 19,564 large fingerling (7-inch) walleye. The majority of walleye sampled in 2016 fall electrofishing were 10.0-11.9 inches, most likely representing the fish stocked in 2015.



Northern pike	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	11	19	22	12
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	5	8	9	4
Length Range (inches):	16.0-33.1	11.2-24.8	8.8-29.7	10.1-38.3
Average Length (inches):	23.0	19.0	18.2	26.3

The largest northern pike sampled during 2016 fall electrofishing was 33.1 inches in length. Electrofishing is not an effective method for sampling northern pike, as pike population data is best obtained using fyke nets set during spring spawning. The northern pike population in Lake Ripley is naturally reproducing and no stocking is currently conducted by WDNR.

Panfish Summary

The panfish community of Lake Ripley is typically comprised of bluegill, yellow perch, rock bass, white bass, pumpkinseed, black crappie and green sunfish. Bluegill were the most abundant panfish species sampled in 2016 fall electrofishing, followed by pumpkinseed, rock bass and yellow perch. A small number of black crappie (8 fish, or 13/hour) were also sampled.

Bluegill	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	115	175	240	254
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	183	244	358	348
Length Range (inches):	1.9-8.1	1.2-8.6	1.5-8.8	1.4-7.8
Average Length (inches):	4.6	5.0	5.6	4.3

2016 bluegill catch rate was 183/hour, compared to 244/hour in 2015, 358/hour in 2014 and 348/hour in 2013. In 2016, 23% of the bluegill sampled were greater than 6-inches in length, compared to 46% in 2015, 43% in 2014 and 10% in 2013. Young-of-the-year (YOY) bluegill were abundant indicating good reproduction in 2016.

Yellow Perch	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	17	37	26	9
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	27	52	39	12
Length Range (inches):	3.4-8.2	2.3-5.2	2.3-6.1	2.5-5.0
Average Length (inches):	5.2	4.1	3.6	3.6

2016 yellow perch catch rate was 27/hour, compared to 52/hour in 2015, 39/hour in 2014 and 12/hour in 2013.

Rock bass	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	18	11	20	15
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	29	15	21	21
Length Range (inches):	4.7-9.0	4.0-8.6	3.3-9.9	4.5-9.8
Average Length (inches):	6.5	7.1	5.8	7.0

2016 rock bass catch rate was 29/hour, compared to 15/hour in 2015, 21/hour in 2014, and 21/hour in 2013.

Pumpkinseed	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Catch:	21	11	7	26
Catch Rate (fish per hour):	33	15	10	36
Length Range (inches):	2.9-7.4	1.7-7.8	1.9-7.0	3.0-8.0
Average Length (inches):	5.1	6.2	5.4	5.7

2016 pumpkinseed catch rate was 33/hour, compared to 15/hour in 2015, 10/hour in 2014 and 36/hour in 2013.

Non-game Species

Lake Ripley supports a diverse non-game fish community including: bowfin, grass pickerel, white sucker, brook silverside, golden, emerald and mimic shiners, bluntnose minnow, fathead minnow, yellow, black and brown bullhead, longnose gar, central mudminnow, blackstripe topminnow, Johnny darter, Iowa darter, bigmouth buffalo and common carp. Historically, Lake Ripley also supported populations of several intolerant fish species, including blackchin shiner, blacknose shiner and banded killifish (also a State Special Concern (SC) species). It also supported two additional SC species, the lake chubsucker and least darter and one Threatened (T) species, the pugnose shiner. Due to their small body size, large boomshocking gear is not ideal for sampling most of these species during fall electrofishing. However, larger-bodied fish such as the lake chubsucker can be detected more readily using this gear. Lake chubsucker were sampled during 2016 fall electrofishing (1 fish, 2/hour), and in 2015, 2011, 2009 and 2006, but were absent in 2012, 2013 and 2014 fall electrofishing. Small numbers of common carp (2 fish, 3/hour), grass pickerel (6 fish, 10/hour), yellow bullhead (11 fish, 17/hour), white bass (1 fish, 2/hour), bowfin (1 fish, 2/hour), bluntnose minnow and golden shiner were also sampled during 2016 fall electrofishing.

