

WMTLA Board

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One position is vacant.

Save the Date - Spring Fling 2017 - Saturday April 29

Fish News: A New Approach

By Morgan Maddox

Spring has sprung and with that comes new beginnings! Wee-Ma-Tuk Landowner's Association, with the help of landowner Ryan Maddox, has teamed up with Nate Herman of Herman Brothers Lake and Land Management this spring to survey, stock, and manage the lakes of Wee-Ma-Tuk. Nate is extremely excited to partner with us on the venture to make our lakes as healthy and prosperous as ever. Herman Brothers is a very well-known outfitter who has been developing properties for generations. They specialize in every phase of lake management, but most importantly in the longevity of the lakes. Nate and Ryan will begin their venture in late April/early May by surveying 4 lakes of Wee-Ma-Tuk. The lakes were chosen based off of population, which are Traer, Marie, Wood, and the Big Lake. Once surveyed, Nate will lay out a plan for each lake detailing what fish need to stay, what fish need to go, and what fish we will need to add to better emphasize the environment of each lake. Four lakes were selected this year due to budget estimates, but based off of Nate's determinations and our budget there could be more lakes surveyed/stocked in the 2017 year. We plan to continue our relationship with the Herman Brothers for many years to come in order to come to know all lakes of Wee-Ma-Tuk and to maintain their conditions. And please remember, the dues we as Landowners pay help to maintain and improve our properties by giving us the opportunity to form relationships such as this!

Nate is more than happy to answer any questions you may have regarding your lake's health, fish stock, or any other general lake management questions. He urges landowners to make smart decisions regarding their waters and to know that the smallest detour from a plan could set the environment in the wrong direction. If you would like to contact Nate directly, please feel free to do so by emailing him at www.hblakemanagement.com. You can also review the Herman Brothers and their services by visiting their website at <http://www.hbpondmanagement.com>. Please keep an eye on our Wee-Ma-Tuk Facebook page and www.weematuk.net for updated information from each lake survey and for the recommendations that Nate Herman sets forth. His direction will make the lakes of Wee-Ma-Tuk thrive, and we couldn't be happier to have him!

Addressing an Issue

By Chris Strong

We've become aware of problems with our mailing list. Over the years, with buying and selling of property, names have come and gone without our awareness. Although we're notified of some (by no means all) properties changing hands, we aren't supplied with new owners' names.

Last fall, we adopted a property owners' list from the Drainage District, figuring it would be an improvement over our own list. It resulted in many undeliverable newsletters, and we were told of some members who didn't receive one at all. We learned later that the Drainage list was at least one year old. While the results weren't perfect, they were probably better than the previous mailout.

Board secretary Morgan Maddox secured a copy of the Water District mailing list, hoping for better accuracy. The problem here is that owners of empty lots don't get water bills, and won't be listed.

Our old list includes vacant lot owners, but they are not designated as such. It's obvious that an out-of-WMT address will be displayed, but no way exists to distinguish those owners from part-time homeowners who receive mail at their primary residence.

So we're working on it by removing WMT addresses from our own list, leaving only out-of-town addresses, then deleting duplicates, a task made maddeningly complicated by Microsoft Excel's refusal to display two files at once—even on two screens. After we eliminate duplicates, this approach should add empty-lot owners to those receiving a water bill. That should be everybody.

If you're reading this, it means we were at least partly successful.

Message from the President

By Chris Strong

About five years ago, a dozen or so American white pelicans visited Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk for a couple of days in April. They created quite a buzz, with locals putting up photos and trying to get an accurate count. We hadn't seen them before, so we did some cursory research:

1. They're big: Length-50–65 in (4 to 5 ½ feet)
 Wingspan--96.1–114.2 in (8 to 10 feet)
 Weight--158.7–317.5 oz (10 to 20 pounds)
2. They breed here, and nest elsewhere. See my WMT video Dragnest on YouTube, or at weematuk.net/Media. You should watch it anyway; it's funny, and Al Coleman's breakthrough performance as the Birdman of Wee-Ma-Tuk is noteworthy.

The years since have brought a growth in pellicie tourism, and at this writing, about 150 of them are floating, flying, fishing, and—um—hooking up right in front of my house. And they've been on the lake for a week.

The increase in population has made other behavior more apparent. Yesterday about a hundred of them packed themselves together at the end of our cove like Black Friday shoppers. "Sometimes, groups of pelicans work together to herd fish into the shallows for easy feeding" (allaboutbirds.org). Their level of teamwork is noteworthy: "They will form a line and start swimming towards shore while flapping their wings and herding their prey towards the shore. Sometimes, one group of pelicans will even drive the prey towards another group of pelicans" (nhptv.org).

Boy, do they eat: "The American white pelican eats up to three pounds of fish per day. It also eats salamanders and crayfish" (nhptv.org).

One Facebook contributor suggested that the big birds' numbers and length of stay indicate that our lake has a lot of fish. Maybe so—but I have to wonder how many will be left when the visitors depart. There's an apparent difference of opinion about carp. Internet sources list carp and shad as diet mainstays, but friends have told us that the pelicans don't prefer carp. (I guess nobody else does, either.) The Audubon website: "[The pelican]. . . primarily eats 'rough' fish of little value to humans; also crayfish, salamanders" (audubon.com).

As a Board member pointed out, it's a good thing we haven't stocked the fish yet. A lot of our investment would have become pelican food.

Another little mystery is the small diver ducks that swim about among the big guys. A good guess might be that they go down for fish that have had the good sense to swim out of reach of those long orange bills. The pellicies apparently don't mind sharing the wealth. One wing-swat would knock a little duck silly.

Other questions persist: where do the pelicans go from here? When? Where will they nest? Do they have a blood feud with the Canadian geese, which seem not to be around at the moment?

If you have answers, hit me at chris@weematuk.net. I'm a lifelong learner.

Drainage District Update

By Bill Phillips

The Wee-Ma-Tuk Hills Drainage District was formed in the late 1980's to maintain the drainage structures and earthen dams throughout the Wee-Ma-Tuk area. Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk is the lowest lake in the chain of lakes draining into the former Put Creek. The lakes at the perimeter of Wee-Ma-Tuk, like Hank's Lake, Lake Louise and Long Lake are nearly 50 feet higher than Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk. The system of earthen dams and drainage tubes installed in the 1950's conveys water efficiently from the higher lakes to Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk and then to Putt Creek.

Each year the Drainage District issues a statement for an assessment of \$100 for single properties in Wee-Ma-Tuk. The assessment was ordered by the courts in Fulton County as necessary to meet the obligations for debt and maintenance of the dams and drainage structures.

The large dam on Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk was improved and repaired approximately 4 years ago at a cost of over 1.2 million dollars. The Drainage District received a grant from Department of Natural Resources for most of the project cost and paid the local share through a bank loan. The District makes annual payments of about \$15,000 to pay off the original \$280,000 loan.

The income from the assessment is also used to pay to inspect the dams, maintain the drainage structures and look ahead to other areas and concerns affecting the Drainage District.

This past year, the overflow tube at McCamey Lake was washing out and threatened to wash out a substantial portion of the damn at the south edge of McCamey Lake. The drainage tube was encased in concrete from the previous installation. The removal was difficult and the replacement with a new drainage tube and anchor system was completed without incident. At the same time, an overflow on the surface of the dam was created at the west end of McCamey dam to channel water around the end of the dam in the event the lake filled up at a rate faster than could be handled by the overflow tube.

The cost for this project was approximately \$8,000. The District had other projects during the year including repair to inlet screens at various tubes, cleaning tubes and waterways and had the required 3 year inspection the large Dam at Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk.

The District Board is also looking into other items necessary to keep the district water's flowing as originally planned. The district is conducting a study to see if other structures are vulnerable to erosion. If so the Drainage District board plans to take actions to minimize the cost for the repairs.

The Drainage District board consists of Bill Phillips, Bob Ackerman, and Kim Smail.

Spring Fling April 29

By Chris Strong

You don't have to fling anything. Just save the Saturday. It's April 29 at the Country Club. Board members will be milling around, setting things up from about 5 pm. Some would regard this as the start of cocktail hour. Food will be ready by 6, and the meeting will start at 7.

Judy Kemper and the WMTCC kitchen crew will provide essentially the same great food that enhanced our Fall 2016 meeting:

Pasta
Marinara or Alfredo Sauce
Meatballs or Shredded Chicken
Steamed Broccoli or other vegetable
Salad
Garlic Bread
Tiramisu, Cheesecake, or Other Pie and Cake
Unbelievably, still only \$12.95.
(Please RSVP to the club at 309-326-2500.)

We'll update you on everything that's happened since the Fall Meeting, then start the door prizes and 50/50. There might also be some entertainment.

Included in this newsletter is a dues payment form for 2017. You can mail a \$75 check to:
WMTLA/PO Box 211/Cuba, IL 61427 or pay during cocktail hour.

In other news:

The WMT Events Committee will sponsor a Three-Person Fireball on May 26. While the name suggests a NASCAR event, it's a golf scramble. Golf at 1 pm, cocktails at 6, BBQ and music 7-11. There's a signup sheet at the club. Proceeds buy fireworks.

We're still short a Board member. If you'd like to volunteer, the meeting would be a good time to do it.

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