

# **PELICAN GROUP OF LAKES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (PGOLID) 2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Introduction:**

Minnesota Statutes section 103 B.571 (4) require Lake Improvement Districts to file an Annual Report to the County Board, the Commissioner of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This direction has been and will be interpreted to be the Otter Tail County Commissioners, Land and Resource Management Director Chris LeClair, the DNR Commissioner, and Jim Courneya at the MPCA office in Detroit Lakes.

The functions of the PGOLID are overseen by a nine member board of directors that are elected by property owners to 3 year terms with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. Following is a list of the directors for 2021 and the year in which their term expires:

Bert McDonough, Chairman, 2021  
Bob Leonard, Vice Chairman, 2022  
Dave Haarstad, Secretary, 2021  
Dave Stene, Treasurer, 2023  
Karen Hart, 2023  
Erika Gilsdorf, 2021  
Nick Valentine, 2023  
John Kruse, 2022

## **Current Program Status:**

### **1. Water Quality Preservation:**

PGOLID, through RMB Labs, employs a Lake Resource Coordinator to sample the lake and stream water to identify and pursue opportunities that reduce nutrient loading and thereby preserve water quality for additional generations. Diagnostic monitoring is employed to ground truth modeling estimates and verify the functionality of watershed systems. This information is incorporated into a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan. All monitoring results and the Lake Management Plan are available on the PGOLID website: [www.pgolid.org](http://www.pgolid.org).

- a. The Lake Resource Coordinator samples the streams surrounding the PGOLID lakes monthly, during snow melt, and after storm events. The sites include the inflow at the Highway 20 bridge, the Spring Creek inlet, the Bob Creek inlet and at other locations throughout the watershed.
- b. The Lake Resource Coordinator also monitors 6 mid-lake sites in Pelican, Little Pelican, Bass and Fish Lakes. These sites are tested for total phosphorus, chlorophyll a (algal concentration), clarity, water temperature, and dissolved oxygen.
- c. The Lake Resource Coordinator pursues Special and Research Monitoring Projects. Currently the Coordinator is intensively monitoring the Spring Creek sub-watershed to identify the source of the anomalously high nutrient levels. If possible a nutrient reduction project will be proposed to address this

nutrient loading. The Coordinator is also exploring changes in lake aging post zebra mussel infestation through nearshore sampling and monitoring using a newly developed Dock Observer Program.

## **2. Mosquito Control and other environmental issues**

The PGOLID Board oversees the management of pests that influence the lake environment. These pests can destroy trees, carry diseases, and generally have a negative impact on the quality of the lakes experience for residents as well as guests. In recent years the primary concern has been the impact from mosquitoes which have the potential to carry diseases such as West Nile Virus. PGOLID employs a contractor to implement a spraying program to control mosquitoes during the summer months. Treatments are performed by a low volume truck mounted fogging unit drives a circuit around the lake perimeter and generally occur on Thursday evenings. In addition the monitoring effort for Tent Caterpillars which have been present in this area continues. No spraying has occurred for the Tent Caterpillar.

## **3. Invasive Species**

Preventing the establishment of invasive species or controlling their spread through our lakes is primary activity of PGOLID. In 2020 PGOLID continued several programs including ongoing education, developing a Rapid Response Plan, chemical and mechanical control of Flowering Rush and Curly Leaf Pondweed, and multiple aquatic plant surveys. Three invasive species have been confirmed in the PGOLID lakes – Zebra mussels, Curly-leaf pondweed, and Eurasian flowering rush. Grant funding was obtained from MN DNR to assist with invasive plant control in 2020.

- a. The Lake Coordinator monitors the effects of Zebra mussels are having on our lake systems. The Lake Coordinator has been working with MPCA, MN DNR, and MAISRC to obtain funding to research how zebra mussels have changed the nutrient cycle in our lakes. Residents have noted increasing amounts of weeds and slime in the shallow waters interfering with recreation and harboring lake pests.
- b. Curly Leaf Pondweed forms large mats early in the summer interfering with recreational activities. Around July 4<sup>th</sup> the mats die off and cause nuisance conditions. PGOLID has been treating Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) in the lakes for the past 15 years. This treatment costs up to \$26,000 per year. CLP coverage and thickness has decreased drastically since 2015 with no areas treated in some years. For more information visit the PGOLID website here: <http://pgolid.org/programs/ais/>.
- c. Eurasian flowering rush is established in the Pelican River down to Little Pelican Lake and in Bass Lake. These stands of Flowering Rush are spreading slowly despite efforts to hand pull the plants multiple times annually. In future years herbicide applications will be necessary to control the spread of Flowering Rush in the Pelican Group of Lakes and beyond down the Pelican River system to Lake Lizzie, Lake Lida, and Prairie Lake.

## **4. Navigation Aids**

The LID owns and maintains 42 buoys that are strategically placed to mark channels, rocks, no wake zones, and other navigation needs. A contractor is hired to deploy and retrieve the buoys annually. Recently solar powered lights were added to the tops of the buoys for added safety at night. The buoy decals were refurbished for increased visibility and buoys are replaced regularly. The locations of the buoys can be found on our website: <http://pgolid.org/programs/safety-bouys/>.

## **5. Dam to Rapids**

Since the early 1930's, the water levels on the lakes in the LID have been controlled by a concrete structure of three weir levels, which is located in the Pelican River below Fish Lake. This dam was aging and not functioning properly anymore. In 2016, PGOLID was awarded a [DNR Conservation Partners Legacy](#) grant to

partially cover the \$364,000 cost of replacing the existing Dam with natural rock rapids. Details and photos are available on the PGOLID website here: <http://pgolid.org/dam>.

In 2019 the PGOLID Board agreed to be the fiscal agent for the \$419,000 Prairie Lake and Lake Lizzie Dam to Rapids projects. These projects were successfully completed in 2020. Also in 2019 the PGOLID Board agreed to be the fiscal agent for the \$25,000 Elizabeth Dam to Rapids project site survey. The survey was completed in 2020 with the hope of restoring the Elizabeth rapids in the future.

In total PGOLID has administered over \$800,000 in funding for Dam to Rapids projects in the Pelican River Watershed in cooperation with MN DNR, USFWS, and local partners.

## **6. Tree Program**

In 2016 PGOLID started a tree planting program with the goal of increasing the number of young trees around our lakes. Many of the trees around the lakes are mature and there are few young trees coming up as replacements. This project hopes to promote tree planting on the shorelines of the Pelican Group of Lakes providing shoreline stabilization, fish, and wildlife habitat. There have been 201 trees planted through this program.

## **7. Outreach and Education**

PGOLID puts a high value on the dissemination of information to engage our constituents in preserving our lake environment. Educational programs have included: seminars for lake residents, presentations at PGOLID and PLPOA meetings, articles for the PLPOA newsletter, maintenance of the PGOLID website, availability as a contact and resource for PGOLID residents. Education has focused on the following topics: water quality, invasive species, shoreline restoration, septic system and holding tank maintenance, aquatic plants and algae, the importance of native aquatic plants, boater stewardship, and DNR regulations.

PGOLID has a website that is simple, easy to use, and works on mobile devices. Information about PGOLID, the annual meeting, and programs can be found on the website: <http://pgolid.org>.

## **8. Cormorant Watershed Agreement**

The Cormorant Lakes Watershed District (CLWD) manipulates the water levels in the Cormorant Chain of Lakes through a controlled outlet where Spring Creek exits Big Cormorant Lake (NE of Cormorant Village). PGOLID maintains an agreement with the CLWD that regulates how much water can be discharged from Big Cormorant Lake into Spring Creek because this discharge can affect Pelican Lake's water levels. In 2013, PGOLID signed an agreement with CLWD. This agreement is especially important when the lake levels are at or exceed the Ordinary High Water Mark.

## **9. Water Surface Use Ordinances**

The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners has delegated to PGOLID the authority to establish water surface use ordinances, all of which are subject to final approval of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The PGOLID Board and the Pelican Lake Property Owners Association Board (PLPOA) have jointly chosen to educate property owners and visitors on crowding, noise, wakes, and other issues to obtain their voluntary assistance. At the present time there are no plans to seek approval for water surface use restrictions.

Respectfully submitted,

PGOLID Board of Directors