



## **Little Tamarack Flowage Baker Spring Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District**

### **AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER**

Here is some interesting information provided by the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership newsletter, Vol. 42, No. 3:

#### ***“2017 Large Rainfall Causes Algae Blooms and Lower Water Clarity***

*Summer 2017 is shaping up to be extraordinarily wet for Wisconsin, with some portions of the state seeing over two times their normal rain total. Wet summer weather often leads to poor lake water clarity, due to sediment washing in and algae blooms. Runoff from summertime rains provides the perfect fuel for reduced water clarity. Storm water picks up sediment particles and delivers them to our lakes. Higher water level means that the nutrient-rich area of the shoreline is washed into the lake, providing even more fuel for algae along with more sediment.”*

On the Flowage Chain, Baker Lake was the hardest hit, with algae blooms through July, finally getting better through August. Water clarity had improved in mid-August, but still not at the usual 8-9 ft.

You might think that Spring Lake would not have a problem. But its water clarity was lower than the norm. Storm water has washed nutrient-rich sediments into Spring Lake too, probably down the ridge on the south side.

The Flowage is doing relatively well. There is not as much runoff, since the properties are relatively flat. Its water clarity is a little low, but in the average range.



# **LOONWATCH**

SIGURD OLSON ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE

Northland College, Ashland, WI

## **AUGUST LOON UPDATE**

### **HINTS OF FALL MIGRATION**

It starts with a chill in the morning air. We are all trying to soak in the last breath of summer heat and lake activities. If you are an early bird, you know those 5a.m. mornings are dark once more.

Evidence of fall migration abounds. Large flocks of Canada geese and seagulls are invading mowed lawns. And flocks of songbirds can be seen flitting from treetop to treetop. Our adult-sized loon chicks are beginning to test their wings for their maiden flight down to the Gulf of Mexico. And the adults are starting to molt, as evidenced by the appearance of gray feathers near their bills.

As autumn takes hold, we will say goodbye first to the floaters, then the loon parents, and finally the chicks, who are the last to migrate.

## AUGUST OBSERVATIONS

**Why are some loons gathering in groups?** In late summer, loons that lost nests and/or chicks join other floaters, and are the first loons to migrate.

**Why are parent loons sometimes ignoring their chicks?** Parent loons have been teaching their chicks to hunt by giving them half-dead prey items to chase. Now they can hunt for themselves. Loon chicks will continue to chase their parents around the lake seeking an easy hand-out.

**When are chicks independent?** By the time chicks are 12 weeks old, they are considered to be fully fledged; capable of hunting for their own meals and taking care of themselves.



In the left photos, this large chick is still following its parent closely, probably looking for an easy meal. Notice the parent's face near the bill. No, it's not getting old like a dog, but rather, beginning to molt its feathers. Soon it will look like its chick with greyish-brown plumage. The right photo shows a loon chick preparing for its first flight.

**The website** has a security upgrade. You will note that the web address has changed from <http://> to <https://>. The addition of the "s" means you can now securely browse without fear of hacking.

There has also been an update to the "Gallery" section adding a couple of Al Williamson's musky photos. Send in more of your favorites!!

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