

# Friends of the Gile Flowage (F.O.G.) Newsletter



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*Protecting and enhancing the Gile Flowage for now... and future generations*

Late Summer, 2006

## Flowage Factoids



### Did You Know...

That the infamous “Flambeau Trail, crossed what is now the Gile Flowage? It was a 40-mile portage from Lake Superior, across the Penokee Mountains and past the non-navigable rapids and waterfalls of northern Iron County, to the navigable rivers located to the south. The Trail connected the Ojibwa villages and later fur trade posts on Madeline Island and Lac du Flambeau. The trail was used by Native Americans and then fur traders until the mid-1800’s. The Flambeau Trail was considered the toughest portage in the old Northwest Territory. Thousands of pound of beaver furs and trade goods were packed across it during the fur trade era. Records place the trail as crossing the Montreal River near Gile Falls (near Hwy. 77 bridge), tracking south past Big Island, crossing near the Maplewood Rd. subdivision, before proceeding south to Long Lake. At Long Lake, the navigable Turtle River offered easier transportation by canoe for the rest of the journey to Lac du Flambeau.

## FOG Fights Aquatic Nuisance Species

Gile Flowage boaters are getting a special gift when they launch at boat landings or while they are out on the water. Friends of the Gile Flowage (FOG) volunteers, assisted by Conservation Warden John Windt, are helping to distribute “boater welcome kits” as part of the “Be A Friend of the Flowage” campaign to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species into and out of the Gile Flowage.

The kits contain practical items designed to encourage boater’s help in stopping aquatic invasives including a new Gile Flowage brochure and map, 27-inch adhesive fish ruler, and special litter bag. Some kits also include a postage paid confidential boater survey requesting feedback from Flowage users about the project.

The most popular item in the boater kit is the new full color Gile Flowage brochure, featuring a detailed map with important boating and recreational information about the Flowage. The map was created by FOG member Joel Enking. The map will also be incorporated into four new boat landing signs that will be erected at the County C, Gile Park, Sucker Hole, and Pence 4H boat landings as part of the “Be A Friend of the Flowage” project (see inside more information)

Aquatic invasive plants and animals could threaten the Flowage’s water quality, recreation, and fishing values. These non-native plant and animals can hitch-hike on boats, trailers, motors and travel from lake to lake. As more people trailer boats into the Flowage, the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species increases. They can also be transferred in live wells, bilge water, and bait buckets that are dumped into a water body. Once established in a lake, they are difficult and expensive to control.

The Gile is at risk of being invaded by a number of aquatic exotic species already found in nearby lakes including Eurasian Water Milfoil and Purple Loosestrife. Because the Gile is the only inland Wisconsin lake where spiny water fleas and the “mystery snail” are found, these species could spread from the Gile to infest other lakes.

Boaters are the first line of defense in stopping the spread. The welcome kit uses a positive message asking boaters to help “R.I.D.” the Flowage of aquatic invasive species by: **R**emoving any animals or plants from their boat, trailer, or motor, **I**nspecting all equipment for aquatic hitch-hikers, and **D**rainng and dumping bait buckets and bilge water away from the lake.



*DNR Warden John Windt gives a new Gile Flowage Boater Welcome Kit to Mr. Evert Nasi. The kit encourages boaters to help stop the spread with positive messages about how they can help.*

*Continued page 4*

## The Fish Crib Saga Continues... FOG Members Give Needed TLC

After two years of planning, waiting for permits, FOG member dues going toward the purchase of 13 cords of wood, and the work of dedicated FOG members and DNR staff to construct 29 fish cribs last winter,... the infamous cribs are still lined up on the Gile's eastern shore awaiting placement in the Flowage.

The problem happened when late spring storms lashed the cribs before they could be towed out to their final resting places near the Big Island. Most of the cribs sustained damage and needed to be rebuilt.

Once again FOG members came forward to help out, together with trusty Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource employees Jim Zaleski, and Jim Cox who helped first helped build the cribs. Unlike the winter day when the cribs were first constructed, the volunteers now were working in this summer's record heat to fix them. FOG members Jim Kaffine, Stan Matusewick, George Hucker, Harold Schumde provided unsolicited help to rebuilt the damaged cribs and restuff them with newly cut brush.



*FOG members George Hucker and Jim Kaffine cut and haul new brush to needed to restuff the fish cribs.*

The cribs will serve as artificial nursery areas for young game fish and will help improve fishing on the flowage. Because the Gile Flowage lacks natural structure needed for fish production, construction of fish cribs has been a priority for FOG. The plan remains that the WDNR to their final location south of the Big Island as soon as water levels allow the move.

Once again: Thank you to FOG members Jim, George, Stan, Harold, and DNR friends Jim Cox and Jim Zaleski for their assistance with this big project to improve fishing on the flowage. We could not have done it without you!!

## NEW FLOWAGE BOAT LANDING SIGNS INSTALLED

The Gile Flowage has four new boat landing signs, thanks to a partnership between FOG and the Town of Carey with funding from the US Boat Foundation and Wisconsin DNR grants. These educational kiosks are part of the campaign to encourage boaters to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species into and out of the Flowage. "We designed the signs to include detailed map of the Flowage to attract the boater's attention and expose them to the message of helping us R.I.D. the Flowage of aquatic invaders", states FOG President Cathy Techtmann who created the sign layout.



*Volunteer installation crew showing off the new double paneled Gile Park boat landing sign (left to right) Harold Schumde, Cathy Techtmann, Chuck Tronvig, Stan Matusewick, Cal Ashebrook, Chuck Splonskowski, Clyde Smith. Judy Tronvig-photographer.*



FOG member Joel Enking created the GIS based Flowage map. FOG member Chuck Tronvig donated his labor and skill to build the attractive rustic wood sign structures. The Town of Carey donated equipment and manpower to help install the signs with help from FOG volunteers. The signs are the Gile Park and County C boat landings are large 2-sided signs with a display panel for local information and updates. The Pence 4-H and Sucker Hole boat landing signs are single sided. Our special thanks to Carey Town Chairman Chuck Splonskowski, Carey Road Crewman Cal Ashebrook, and our dedicated FOG volunteers Chuck Tronvig, Judy Tronvig, Clyde Smith, Stan Matusewick, Harold Schumde, Cathy Techtmann for devoting an entire day to get this important project completed. Check out these great new signs for yourself!

*Installing a single panel type sign at Sucker Hole boat landing. Judy Tronvig, photographer*

## FROM THE FLOWAGE... Annual Meeting Speaker Jeff Roth Gives “State of the Gile Flowage Fishery” Update

The 2006 Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Gile Flowage was held on Saturday, June 10 at 10am at the Gile Park with sunny skies and lots of great food. The annual meeting date was changed from Memorial Day weekend to mid-June to avoid conflicts with graduation parties.

Jeff Roth, Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Biologist, took time from his busy Saturday fish stocking schedule, to update FOG members on the state of the Gile Flowage fishery. Here are the highlights of his presentation.

Jeff noted that smallmouth bass have increased in abundance in the past 15 yrs based on sampling where electro-fishing catch rates rose from 43 fish/hr in 1993, to 61/hr in 2003 to 93/hr in 2006. Size structure and growth rates have declined over the period and is likely the result of a diminishing forage base (crayfish).

Jeff said that he submitted a proposal to allow harvest of bass less than 14" (to help decrease overall numbers) plus one fish over 18"/day. This regulation will help to maintain fishing quality (those 14-18" protected) while decreasing overall abundance and allow trophy fish to be taken.



*Featured speaker Jeff Roth, Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Biologist, had an encouraging report on the Gile Flowage fish populations.*

### **Jeff asks that folks attend the spring DNR hearing held in Hurley in April, 2007 and vote in favor of this new regulation.**

The walleye fishery is significantly improved in terms of numbers and size structure since the "one over" 14" regulation went into effect in 1997. In 1993 we had 5,940 adult walleyes >10". In 2003 we had 8,580 adults >10". In 1993, 33% were >15" and by 2003 50% were >15". The DNR plans to continue evaluating this regulation in 2008-2009 and if necessary, modifications to the regulation will then be proposed.

Great Lakes strain of musky will be stocked in the future into the Gile Flowage rather than an inland strain to be consistent with watershed management



The panfish regulation proposed in the Gile Flowage management plan will wait until the statewide panfish committee approves. Jeff stated that the fear is that there will be too many different regulations on the books and he wants to make sure the DNR can simplify regulations while maintaining individual lake needs.

If you and the kids are having more fun catching bluegills, here's the reason. Jeff noted that 19,588 adult bluegills/pumpkinseeds were stocked in the Flowage in 2006 and approximately 33,000 were stocked in 2005 to help control spiny water fleas. To date it appears this has helped the "flea problem" with the added benefit of some nice size panfish are being caught as well. People we talk with really like catching those tasty bluegills and sunfish!

*Bluegills are not only fun to catch and eat, they may hold a key to control ling spiny water fleas which have invaded the Flowage*

Jeff felt that the Gile's fishery as a whole would benefit from a moderation of the drawdowns. He said that the DNR is planning to negotiate with Excel Energy this winter to see what compromises can be made.

Cathy Techtmann, FOG President, proclaimed Jeff an honorary "Friend of the Gile Flowage" and presented him with a FOG baseball cap.

## Special Thanks

To the Wisconsin DNR and the US Boat Foundation for their grant support which allowed FOG to produce the new Gile Flowage Boater Kits and new boat landing signs. A very special thanks to the Town of Carey who partnered with FOG to administer the grants and who donated time and town resources and FOG members who donated their time and expertise to making these big projects a reality!



Town of Carey



Kayakers Paul Daniels of Ironwood, MI and Carol Houck of California were contacted at the Gile Park Boat Landing and received a Boater Welcome Kit from Officer John Windt and FOG President Cathy Techtmann.

## FOG FIGHTS AQUATIC INVADERS (continued from page 1)

The kit includes the first ever Gile Flowage brochure, a handy adhesive fish ruler, and a plastic litter bag. The full-color brochure was designed by FOG president Cathy Techtmann and features a detailed flowage map created by Joel Enking, FOG Board member and GIS specialist. The Flowage map will be featured on new boat landing signs that will be installed at major boat landings this summer.

Some boater welcome kits also include a confidential, postage paid survey. "We hope boaters will return the surveys so that we can learn more about their interests and how we can serve their needs", explains Techtmann. FOG Board members Dan Bormann, Jeanne Matchefts, Jim Kaffine, Peg Sutherland, and Gary Miles helped in developing the "Be A Friend of the Flowage" materials.

The Gile Flowage Boater Welcome Kits are funded by grants from the US Boat Foundation and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, under a grant written in partnership between the Towns of Carey and Pence, and the Friends of the Gile Flowage lake association.

The mission of the Friends of the Gile Flowage, Inc.

...is to preserve and protect the **Gile Flowage** and its surroundings, and to enhance the water quality, fishery, boating safety, and its aesthetic values, as a public recreational facility for today and for future generations. Membership in FOG is open to any individual, family, business, or organization that subscribes to this mission



Box 227, Montreal, WI  
54550



On-The-Web at <http://rueruel13.tripod.com/index.html>  
Please note that in the URL the character before the number 3, is the number 1, not a letter "l". Thanks to Peg Sutherland for maintaining our site!

## 2006 FOG

### Board of Directors

**President:** Cathy Techtmann

Phone: 715.561.2185

**Vice-President-** Open

**Secretary-** Open

**Treasurer-** Jeanne Matchefts

**Board Members At Large**

Gary Miles            Jim Kaffine

Gary Hopp

New Member: Alan Sobczak

## KUDOS

To our outgoing Board members who served so faithfully as we started FOG and who continue to help out behind the scenes:

Secretary-Peg Sutherland who kept fabulous minutes and records of FOG's first years in the best organized binder we've ever seen and who created & maintained the FOG website

Vice-Pres. Dan Bormann for help with newsletters, annual meetings, FOG mailings, fish cribs, and overall moral support

Joel Enking- for his technical GIS skills, organizational ability, and great ideas