

Chicog-Then and Now for October, 2024

JoAnn Malek

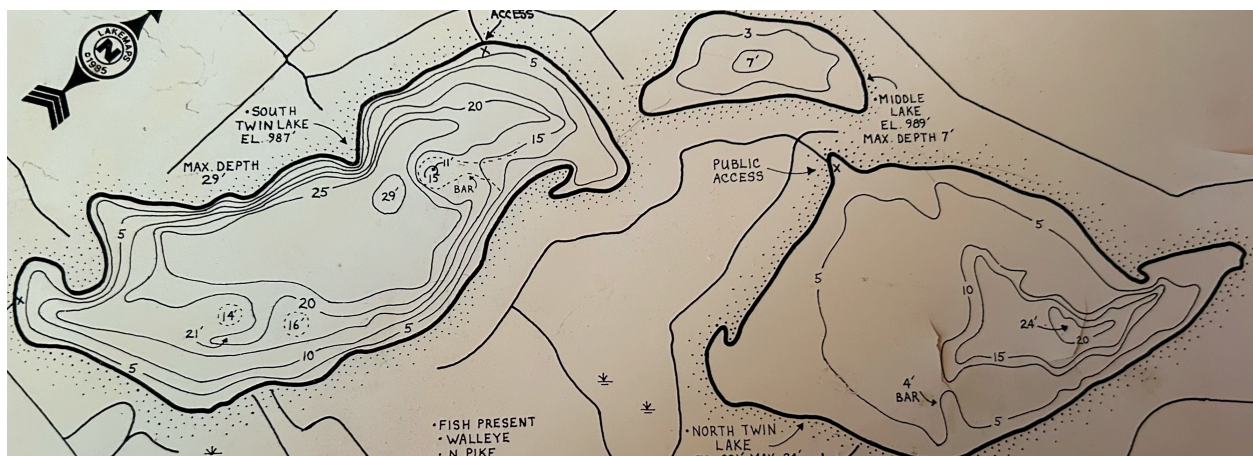
Has there always been a Middle Twin Lake? Apparently Ralph Dahlgren, first owner of Shangri-La Resort, used to mow a field between North and South Twin Lakes. Where was the lake? We asked, and collected some interesting pieces of information. Thanks to all who responded.

Melanie McCall referred me to Stuart Braem, both representing the Twin Lakes Preservation Association. Stuart wrote that he, too, had heard that in some earlier year(s) what is now Middle Lake was totally or partially a grassy field.

Ann Jackson of South Twin wrote that in the mid-late sixties there were dead trees of 6-8 inch diameter sticking up out of the lake bed of Middle Twin and in the bay on South Twin. The lakes would have been very low for enough time to grow trees of that size. Ann remembers that in the early sixties the center lake was not completely dry and there were mud flats along the shore.

Michael Mishou found a 1915 Atlas on the internet which labels Twin Lakes as one lake with “middle” shown as a large bay on the north side of the southern lake. Currently, the Wisconsin DNR does not include Middle Twin in their extensive list of Wisconsin lakes

Michael studied Washburn County Plat Books, too. The 1946 plat book shows two bodies of water, labeled South Twin L and North Twin L; the middle lake is shown clearly as being part of North Twin. Plat books in 1960,1963,1966 show middle as part of South Twin. The 1975,1977,1984 plat books show middle as part of South Twin but now label it as Middle Lake. Computer-generated plat books from 1996,2001,2008 show Twin Lakes as one continuous body of water. The 2020,2024 plat books show three distinct lakes. “...stuff changes over time,” Mike quips



Last month I met with Shelley Roy, educator, author, citizen of the world. Her family has been coming to Chicog since 1947. Her great-aunt and uncle, Evelyn and Harvey Fitzenberg, had a place on South Twin. Her parents, George and Shirley Workman, built one of the first cabins on North Twin. “Yes, there has always been a third lake. In fact it used to be bigger,” Shelley reports. “It has always been swampy. Creeks connected the three lakes, with water flowing from North to Middle to South Twin.”

When a new landowner dammed the creek from North to Middle, angry neighbors destroyed it one night, then contacted the DNR because the dam was illegal. Shirley estimates that it was in 1965 that DNR put in a culvert which messed with the flow as well as depth of the lakes. The lakes became more weedy.

It has been possible to drive a boat on the creeks between the lakes. Shelley remembers Friday evening fish fries at Shangri-La Resort on South Twin Lake, with fish from the lake. Ralph’s wife Elsa Dahlgren prepared all the food from scratch. In the early seventies, Shelley and her friends could travel between the lakes in the family speedboat, heading to Shangri-La for ice cream.

Shirley Workman once estimated a ten-year cycle for Twin Lake water levels. This year the lakes are very low, with just a trickle of water sitting in the culvert. Perhaps low enough that someone might mow the grasses?

As we talked, Shelley mentioned a long-ago Chicago newspaper lottery that offered ninety-foot lake lots in Washburn County. My library friends need more information before they can dig further. Contact me at jojamalek@yahoo.com if you know anything about this provocative opportunity from days gone by.

IMPORTANT OCTOBER DATES

Wednesday 10/9, 6pm, monthly Chicog meeting

Wednesdays 10/9&23, Namekagon Transit service

Saturday, 10/12, 8-12, Fire Department Pancake Breakfast

Tuesday, 10/22, 10:30am, Ladies of the Lake event, Trinity Woods

Wednesday, 10/23, 10:30-12, Books&Bread, Beaverbrook

Thursday, 10/24, 11-1, Bibliodragon, town hall

Town Website: www.townofchicog.com

Thank you for reading Chicog-Then and Now