

## **THE BIRTH OF LEISURE LANE    Jack Rolfs**

In the beginning there was no Leisure Lane. But there was a township road (probably unnamed) that went around the south and east sides of Upper South Long Lake. In the mid-1950's a company called Wood-Shol, out of Minneapolis, acquired about 2/3rds of a mile of the south shoreline of the lake and platted it for a development that they named Deepwood Shores. As part of the development they put in a 'lakeshore road' to service the 27 or so lakeshore lots they put up for sale (for prices ranging from \$600 to \$1600). The name of this new lakeshore road on the plat was Leisure Lane.. The original township road through this area ran to the south of the new Leisure Lane and these parallel roads were both in use for several years. There also were 15 'off-lake' lots originally platted between the two roads as part of the Deepwood Shores plat. Leisure Lane was only a little more than a half-mile long, extending from what is now #9777 Leisure Lane to where it rejoined with the original township road at #9947. In the middle of this new development there was a section of the lakeshore that was not included in the plat since it was reportedly tied up in a court action related to an earlier grass fire that got out of control and burned down the only 'old' lakeshore home in that area. That section was later platted and developed as Cooper's Deepwood Shores and a home was built on the former home site by Dr. C. N. Cooper.

By the summer of 1957 Leisure Lane was usable, there was electrical power along the road and two 'spec' cabins were built by Wood-Shol Co. to demonstrate what this wilderness shoreline would be like if you bought one of the lots. At least one of the cabins was first 'occupied' in the fall of 1957 and development of other lots followed quickly starting in 1958.

It's not clear when the entire road, from County Rd. 23 to County Rd. 24, was named Leisure Lane. Since the Post Office for many years determined address numbers they likely also picked names for the roads back then.

At some point in time Maple Grove Township abandoned the redundant section of road south of Leisure Lane and designated the current roadway as the township road. There was also a roadway change when the right-of-way was moved further from the lake along the south shore to the east of the small creek that enters the lake on that shore. That got the road behind the homes in that area and eliminated a sharp curve at the lake edge.

There was one other early adjustment to what is now Leisure Lane. Until the late 1950's County Rd. 23 was routed next to the easternmost shore of Lower South Long Lake, running in the narrow area between the lake homes there and the shore itself. Around 1960 the roadway was reconstructed from the top of the hill to the south, where Soderman Rd. now intersects Hwy 23, northward across a new bridge over the Nokasippi River to where it joined up with the old road near the present intersection with Narrow Lane Rd. Sometime later the old '23' bridge was declared unsafe and closed to all vehicular traffic and then eventually removed to end foot traffic over the bridge. The Leisure Lane name was extended to include the short section of road west of County Rd. 23 and along the lakeshore sometime during these changes.

Now that the road name has survived the E911 remapping of Crow Wing County several years ago it will probably exist as Leisure Lane for a long time to come. One might wonder how the people living on Leisure Lane who are still going to work every day feel about the name, but it sure fits the retired population well.