



# On The Lake

## NEWSLETTER

LAKE MINNETONKA ASSOCIATION • *The VOICE for Lake Minnetonka Lakeshore Owners and Businesses*

### Our Mission

The Lake Minnetonka Association, a nonprofit organization, works to promote the preservation, protection, and the reasonable use of Lake Minnetonka through volunteers, lakeshore owners, and businesses. The Lake Minnetonka Association serves as an information resource and advocate for the Lake Minnetonka community.



## The Water is Clear, but is the Lake Healthy?

Lake Minnetonka's water is remarkably clean given how heavily it is used, the intensity of surrounding urban development, and its long history of mismanagement. But water quality alone does not make for a healthy lake. A healthy lake is one whose physical, biological and chemical properties are in balance. Meaning there are enough nutrients to sustain healthy algae and plant communities in order to support the various links in the food chain, and where the plant and animal species interact with each other so no one species out-competes another. It also means the lake's shorelines are stable and physical properties such as water temperature, chemistry and depth stay within the parameters in which the ecosystem evolved.



A murky or weedy lake may not mean a lake is unhealthy. Studies of algae fossils in lake bottom cores (from long before Europeans settled the area) found that bays in the upper part of Lake Minnetonka had more algae than in the lower bays. Also, early photographs show many of the western bays to be quite weedy as compared to how it looks today.

**A healthy lake is a relative term.** In the early 1970s, the state of Minnesota classified lakes into three groups: natural environment lakes, recreation lakes, and general development lakes. Lake Minnetonka is a "general development lake."

This allows for greater shoreline development and a diversity of recreational use. So when assessing the health of Lake Minnetonka, the value the public places on things such as aesthetics, recreational use, and economic development must also be considered.

### So, is Lake Minnetonka a healthy lake?

Much depends on who you ask. Unfortunately, the agencies charged with managing Lake Minnetonka and its watershed work in silos – fisheries focus primarily on game fish, cities focus on land use, the watershed district focuses on water chemistry, park departments focus on recreation, and, if not for the Lake Minnetonka Association and its partners, no one is doing much to control aquatic invasive species (AIS). The current approach to lake management used by local government is ineffective because each agency only relies on one or two indicators of lake health. They do not follow a wholistic approach to lake management, nor take into consideration public values. The agencies will say they are doing a good job, but are they?

Lack of agreement on how the lake is used and managed has led to many conflicts in how spending is prioritized, what sort of regulations should be enacted, and how to balance recreation, development, and natural resource protection. Some programs, such as

*(continued on page 2)*

# From The Helm

By Tom Frahm, LMA Board President



## Preventing new Aquatic Invasive Species Pollution

How do we prevent boaters from transporting new aquatic invasive species (AIS) pollution into Lake Minnetonka? In an ideal world every boat access would be monitored 24/7. I believe to be effective, at a minimum, boat accesses should be monitored between 5:00 am and 9:00 pm daily. But the cost of having inspectors monitor boats at every access on the lake during this time period would be prohibitively expensive. Currently, Lake Minnetonka has inspectors at four of our busiest accesses for about 30% of daylight hours. The best alternative to hiring more inspectors is electronic monitoring, and the only tested product I've been able to find is called **I-LIDS** (featured in our last newsletter). An I-LIDS system consists of a video camera, cellular modem, signage and audio message system which lets a boat owner know at the time of launch that they are being monitored, and what to do in order to prevent AIS pollution from entering the lake.

I have spoken with several lake associations in Minnesota and Wisconsin who are using the I-LIDS system and the consensus is that the monitoring and audio messaging have a very positive effect on how boat owners view preventing and transporting AIS pollution into lakes. Boat owners follow the instructions and do not seem upset about the process. All of the associations were very happy with the performance of the I-LIDS system. One user plans to add I-LIDS to four additional boat accesses in their county.

It is my hope we can place I-LIDS at four of our busiest boat accesses by next year and eventually have them at all Lake Minnetonka boat accesses.

## Is the Lake Healthy?

(continued from page 1)

the now defunct Lake Minnetonka Conservation District's Eurasian watermilfoil harvesting program have hurt the lake's ecosystem; poorly conceived and managed regulations have resulted in very expensive lawsuits; and there is even talk about closing down some bays to certain types of boats. Over the past 50 years, hundreds of millions of tax dollars have been spent by various water management agencies as they muddle along without any agreement on what a healthy Lake Minnetonka looks like.

There is general agreement among lake scientists that AIS is the greatest threat to lakes, yet local water management agencies have not made AIS prevention and control a priority. **But we have.** The Lake Minnetonka Association implements programs to prevent new AIS from getting a foothold in Lake Minnetonka; we partner with lake residents and agencies to control the growth of invasive weeds; we are exploring new technology such as I-LIDS to monitor accesses; we support the AIS and boat wake research being done at the University of Minnesota; we produce quality educational materials; and we promote honest and thoughtful public debate on lake management issues.

**The Lake Minnetonka Association is the voice for lakeshore owners and businesses. We will continue to implement, advocate for, and support programs to protect the ecological health of the lake that reflect a fair and balanced approach to its recreational uses and development.**

## Hiring businesses to



## water-related equipment

When hiring a business to decontaminate, install or remove your boat, dock, lift, or lake-fed lawn irrigation system, first check to see if the business has a **current lake service provider permit**. Businesses that have completed the required Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) training and obtained their lake service provider permit will have a permit sticker in the lower driver's-side corner of their vehicle windshield.

You can also search the list of companies with current permits by county at [mndnr.gov/lsp](http://mndnr.gov/lsp). If a lake service provider business is not listed, you can check directly with the business or with the MnDNR to see if they're in the midst of renewing the permit or they don't have a permit and need information about getting a permit.

To learn more, visit [mndnr.gov/lsp](http://mndnr.gov/lsp), or contact the MnDNR's AIS Training Coordinator at [lsp.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:lsp.dnr@state.mn.us)

## "On The Lake"

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### How to Contact the LMA

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[facebook.com/lakeminnetonkaassociation](https://www.facebook.com/lakeminnetonkaassociation)



### LMA Board Members

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# A Little GOOD News...

This year, the Lake Minnetonka Association completed its bi-annual surveys for **invasive starry stonewort** in Lake Minnetonka and found **none** in the lake. Sixteen of the busiest private and public access sites were checked along with over 1,000 private sites making Lake Minnetonka one of the most carefully watched lakes in the state.



Photo: MnDNR

Starry stonewort is a highly invasive algae which spreads rapidly and forms dense mats which can make boating and recreation very difficult. It is spread primarily by the movement of water-related equipment from infested lakes. Fragments can get tangled in trailers, motors, anchors and inside watercrafts (boats, canoes and kayaks). Small bulbils (or "buds"), which may be hidden in mud and debris, can stick to trailer bunks, anchors, ropes, fabric, footwear, as well as scuba, fishing and hunting gear. A small fragment or bulbil can start an infestation.

Starry stonewort has never been eradicated from any U.S. lake. Once established, it can cost tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars to control. Starry stonewort was first confirmed in

Minnesota in 2015 and is now found in 16 lakes. If introduced in Lake Minnetonka, it can quickly spread throughout the lake and to other lakes in the state. However, it can be prevented if water users inspect and clean their boats and equipment. If starry stonewort is found early enough – it is possible it can be controlled/managed.

The MnDNR reminds boaters and anglers to follow Minnesota laws to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species:

- **Clean** aquatic plants and animals from watercraft, trailers, and water-related equipment
- **Drain** all water by removing drain plugs and keep drain plugs out while transporting watercraft
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash

But also know that some invasive species are small and difficult to see on your boat or equipment. To remove or kill them, take one or more of the following precautions before moving to another waterbody, especially after leaving infested waters:

- **Spray** with high-pressure water
- **Rinse** with very hot water (120 degrees for at least two minutes or 140 degrees for at least 10 seconds)
- **Dry** for at least five days

This year's Lake Minnetonka Association's Starry Stonewort Survey was funded through a grant from Hennepin County's AIS Prevention Program. Grants are available to help local units of government and organizations implement projects that prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



## YOUR LOCAL BOATING RESOURCE



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# Lake Minnetonka Association ANNUAL MEETING

**Monday  
November 16th, 2020  
5:15 pm**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Lake Minnetonka Association will be conducted remotely using electronic means. Everyone is welcome; however, only current members of the Lake Minnetonka Association are permitted to vote.

**For information and instructions on how to participate in our Annual Meeting, go to:  
[www.LMAssociation.org](http://www.LMAssociation.org)**

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## Wild Rice

Wild rice was once ubiquitous in the shallow marshes and quiet bays around Lake Minnetonka. The large beds of wild rice are long gone, but pockets of the plant have been reported near Stubbs Bay and in the wetland east of the Grays Bay dam.

**How to identify wild rice:** Wild rice grows above the water surface in calm clear water; it is rooted in soft, mucky sediment; clusters of green, ribbon-like leaves are tapered; leaves float on the surface during late spring and early summer; and stalks grow 3 to 10 feet tall by early July. Grains are yellow or red and appear at the tip of the stalk in August.

**Friend or Foe:** Absolutely a friend. Nowhere has natural wild rice been more important nor had a richer history than in Minnesota. In a 2008 report to the Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) stated, "no other native

# What's That WEED? (Or Plant?)



Minnesota plant approaches the level of cultural, ecological, and economic values embodied by this species. Natural wild rice has been hand harvested as a source of food in the Great Lakes region for thousands of years." In addition to gracing many of our dinner tables, wild rice is an important food source for wild birds, especially waterfowl and red-winged blackbirds, and it provides nesting cover.

**Management strategy:** It is best to let wild rice grow. In addition to providing good habitat for wildlife, wild rice is a substantial food crop worth millions of dollars to the state's economy each year. Harvesting wild rice is open to Minnesota residents and nonresidents. However, it is regulated by the MnDNR and one-day licenses or annual licenses are required. The harvesting season for wild rice is August 15 to September 30, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. The harvest of "green" (unripe) wild rice is unlawful.

## Boat Wake Research

The University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory has recently launched a research initiative to measure the **height and energy of waves and the depth and force of propeller wash** generated by wake boats and other large watercraft. The research will help to better understand and quantify the impacts boat wakes have on lake bottoms and shorelines. This information can help build an understanding on how best to manage and protect our lakes and rivers for future generations.

University researchers will deploy sensor arrays and cameras above and below the water surface. These collect data on wind, waves, and on watercraft-generated wakes and propeller wash while being operated under different conditions and lake depths, and at various distances from shorelines. Observations of impacts to the surrounding environment will also be collected. The project looks to develop a prototype wave monitoring sensor station and training program to enable interested citizen scientists and organizations to collect data on their lake, and will build and support a statewide monitoring network.

# Enjoy Fall on the Lake


Fall can be spectacular on Lake Minnetonka.


While many boats have been tucked away for the winter, there may be a little time left to enjoy the last few boating days of the season. Many birds started their migration early in August, but you may still spot sand hill cranes, large raptors, and certain species of waterfowl that are beginning their journey south. You may even spot a few monarch butterflies that got a late start on their migration.





## FALL CLEAN-UP GARDENING TIPS

It is a good time to start preparing your garden for the winter and get a healthy start for next spring. Here are a few tips:

 **Clean up – but not too much!** Get rid of dying or diseased plants but let other plants (especially native plants) remain. Seed heads can provide food for wintering birds and animals and stalks provide shelter and help hold snow, keeping moisture in the soil and providing insulation from hard freezes. Plants such as peonies and phlox are prone to mildew and should be cut back. Garden detritus, especially near lakeshore, provides winter habitat for hibernating amphibians.

 **Water perennials, shrubs, and trees and protect sensitive plants** by spreading a 3-4 inch layer of straw over them and wrap shrubs to prevent winter burn. Also, wrap the trunks of young trees to prevent damage from rabbits and rodents.

 **Plant hearty bulbs** – fall is a great time to plant bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, iris, crocus and lilies.

 **Avoid pruning trees** – the best time to prune trees is late winter or early March to avoid exposing them to pathogens and pests.

## Help Keep the Lake Minnetonka Association Business Members Strong

The Lake Minnetonka Association encourages everyone to continue to support our Business Members and keep our local economies healthy!

(See page 7 for our Business Members listing)

## Bay Treatment Program Update

Once again, treatments for Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) and EWM hybrids greatly exceeded the program's original goal. The Lake Minnetonka Association Board of Directors thanks the Bay Captains for all their work in making the bay treatments possible and keeping the lake open for boaters and others to enjoy!

The Lake Minnetonka Association received calls this fall about large amounts of wild celery washing up along shorelines, and concerns that the Bay Treatment Program has been so successful in getting rid of EWM, that wild celery has taken over. After talking with lake scientists, we found that wild celery is becoming a nuisance statewide in both treated and untreated lakes. It is not clear why this is happening – it might be due to natural plant cycles, increased clarity caused by zebra mussels, warmer water, etc. While the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

recognizes this plant may be a nuisance to boaters and lakeshore owners, they will not permit the use of herbicides to control it.

BAY	WEEDS TREATED	ACRES TREATED
Carmans*	Eurasian watermilfoil	20
	Curlyleaf pondweed	20
Carsons/St. Louis	Eurasian watermilfoil	10
	Curlyleaf pondweed	9.6
Crystal	Eurasian watermilfoil	20
	Curlyleaf pondweed	15
Gideons	Eurasian watermilfoil	9
	Curlyleaf pondweed	37.8
Grays	Eurasian watermilfoil	43.9
	Curlyleaf pondweed	0
North Arm	Eurasian watermilfoil	5
	Curlyleaf pondweed	47.7
Phelps	Eurasian watermilfoil	48
	Curlyleaf pondweed	0
St. Albans*	Eurasian watermilfoil	0
	Curlyleaf pondweed	5-10

\*Treatment is part of a Lake Improvement District

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# Thank you to members who have joined or renewed in the past year. Your support helps our efforts to protect the lake we love!

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- |                                 |                                     |                                  |   |                                  |
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**PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete this form and mail it with your tax-deductible contribution to:  
The Lake Minnetonka Association, P.O. Box 248, Excelsior, MN 55331

Make checks payable to "The Lake Minnetonka Association" or contribute online: [www.LMAssociation.org](http://www.LMAssociation.org)

### I WANT TO SUPPORT THE LAKE MINNETONKA ASSOCIATION AT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- Basic \$50 - \$199    Sustaining \$200 - \$499    Captain \$500 - \$999    Commodore \$1000+    Business \$350

Other or additional contribution..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Bay: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information on how I can help to get my bay to join the Lake Minnetonka Association's Bay Treatment Program to control Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed in my bay.

**CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

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