



# 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.



## What Changes will the “New Norm” of Weather Bring to Lake Minnetonka? 2019

Water levels on Lake Minnetonka will likely remain high through this fall if ongoing precipitation trends continue. The forecast by the National Weather Service for the rest of the year favors normal to higher than average precipitation and temperatures for the Twin Cities area. This will likely put 2019 as one of the wettest years since 1892.

Higher spring and fall precipitation and temperatures are becoming the “new normal” for Lake Minnetonka. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the average annual precipitation has been above the long-term average for the past 25 years and is expected to increase 15%-20% over the next 30 years. It also reports Minnesota has warmed about two degrees since the early part of the 20th century and that temperatures will continue to climb.

It is expected that much of the precipitation will occur in high intensity storms followed by periods of drought. Evidence of this has already been documented by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

They indicate high intensity or “mega rainfall events” have increased significantly since 2000.

If the current weather trends continue and predictions are accurate, some of the things we can expect to see in the future around the Lake Minnetonka area could include:

- **More frequent high water (no-wake) restrictions.** Changes in storm intensity and frequency have the potential of increasing water levels in Lake Minnetonka, especially early in the boating season.
- **More polluted runoff** entering Lake Minnetonka and earlier blue-green algae blooms. Intense rainfalls can overwhelm city storm sewers and “wash” phosphorous and other pollutants into the lake. In turn, these pollutants spur the growth of algae and lake weeds.
- **More shoreline erosion.** High water may increase shoreline erosion, and after water levels drop, shore banks may become unstable and prone to collapse. High water may also drown out vegetation along shorelines, further increasing the potential for erosion.

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**JOIN the Lake Minnetonka Association** – Help protect the lake we love. (See page 7)

# From The Helm

By Tom Frahm, LMA Board President



## Lake residents must join together to enact laws that prevent AIS pollution

In August, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) held three aquatic invasive species (AIS) information gathering meetings in Minnesota. The Lake Minnetonka Association Director, Eric Evenson, and I were able to attend one of these meetings along with over one hundred attendees from across the state.

The purpose of these meetings was to bring together local residents, lake associations, and anglers to share thoughts on what needs to be done to address important issues related to angling, public water access, and preventing the spread of AIS.

The meeting started in a big round table forum to discuss what topics the group wanted to examine. The MnDNR and attendees selected 16 of the most important issues, and then divided into small groups, each focusing on an issue. Each session was one hour, with the group leader taking notes to give back to the MnDNR facilitator.

I led a session on *Boat Access Control*, where we discussed several methods of controlling AIS pollution, including larger

finer, electronic boat monitoring, boat decontamination, etc. I also attended three other sessions in which the topic of boat access control was mentioned.

It became obvious that the people attending this meeting were divided into two groups, lakeshore residents and non-resident lake users. While all were worried about the spread of AIS pollution, the non-resident lake users were opposed to any types of controls that may prevent them from getting on the lake(s) quickly. Whereas, the lakeshore residents were in favor of stronger controls to help limit the introduction and spread of AIS. There was no compromising.

The fishing industry and angling groups are using trained, professional lobbyists to fight efforts to get stronger access controls. They even flew a lobbyist in from Washington D.C. to attend this meeting.

The only way to protect our lakes from increased AIS pollution is for lakeshore residents to become active and organized. We need to get the MnDNR and other state/local government agencies to enforce rules and implement programs to stop the spread of AIS pollution.

Local residents generally carry more clout at the Capitol than high-priced, professional lobbyists. That's why we need your membership and support. Without you, the future of Lake Minnetonka will be left in the hands of special interests groups rather than those who are serving the lake community and working to protect Lake Minnetonka.

## TAX INCENTIVES FOR GIVING BACK TO THE LAKE

The Lake Minnetonka Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your membership and contributions are tax-deductible and are used to preserve and protect Lake Minnetonka. There are several options available for charitable giving. Here are just some to consider:

- **Direct giving** – This is the most common type of charitable giving and is usually used for smaller donations.
- **Donor advised funds** – A “donor-advised fund” is an IRS approved vehicle which allows individuals to take the tax advantages of charitable giving while holding off the decision as to which charity is best for them. Most brokerages can help set one up.
- **Charitable gift annuity** – This involves a little more work to set up, but can be a wonderful way to leave a legacy. A contract is established with a charity that allows individuals to transfer assets to a nonprofit organization in return for a partial tax deduction and a fixed income for the donor’s lifetime. After the donor dies, the charity keeps the remainder of the gift.

Giving to local charitable organizations, such as the Lake Minnetonka Association, keeps your money in the community and will help you build your own legacy of philanthropy. If you are considering charitable giving, we hope you will support our efforts to protect the legacy of Lake Minnetonka and encourage you to talk to your financial advisor about options which work the best for you.

### “On The Lake”

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#### LMA Board Members

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## Spatterdock

Spatterdock is a common lake weed found in shallow, near shore areas throughout Lake Minnetonka. Spatterdock, sometimes known as yellow pond lily or cow lily, are one of three species of pond lily found in Lake Minnetonka.



Photo: Peter Milto/Shutterstock.com

### How to identify spatterdock

Spatterdock is easily identifiable by its large, roundish floating leaves and distinctive globular yellow flower. It is easily distinguished from the more common white water lily and lotus by its golden yellow flower and slightly smaller and less rounded leaves.

# What's That WEED?

### Friend or Foe?

Spatterdock is a friend and is part of a healthy lake ecosystem. The seeds and roots are important food sources for muskrats and waterfowl.

Its roots are edible,

and while reported as bitter tasting, they can be dried and ground into flour.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) recommends it is best to leave these plants alone. In addition to being an important food source for native animals, large leaf floating plants such as spatterdock dissipate wave energy and help to prevent shoreland erosion. If they interfere with boating or swimming and removal is absolutely necessary, try hand-pulling or cutting. For information on what controls are allowed, contact the MnDNR.

## The "New Norm" of Weather

(Continued from page 1)

- **More frequent beach closures.** More polluted runoff may lead to higher levels of E. coli in swimming beaches and could lead to more closures of public swimming areas.
- **Higher ground water levels near shore.** Higher lake levels will increase near-shore ground water levels and may result in basement seepage, settling or cracking of sidewalks and patios, and loss of mature trees and landscaping.
- **Earlier ice-off dates and less stable ice conditions.** In the last twenty years, ice-off has occurred fourteen times before the median ice-off date of April 14th and longtime lake residents report ice-on dates are getting later.
- **Sanitary sewer overflows.** Intense rainfall events can overwhelm aging sanitary sewers, causing sewage to back-up in homes and surface discharge of untreated sewage.
- **More nuisance weeds.** Warmer conditions will increase the survivability of many invasive lake weeds. Lack of snow cover on ice will create a greenhouse effect which can lead to some weeds becoming a problem earlier in the season.
- **Fisheries and lake ecosystem changes.** Survivability of new invasive, non-native plants and animals will increase as temperatures warm. Zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil have already negatively impacted Lake Minnetonka's ecosystem and new invasive species such as hydrilla, quagga mussel, and frog bit will have an even greater impact on the lake. Fish species that can tolerate warmer temperatures such as largemouth bass may displace those that favor cooler water such as walleye.

**Many of the problems caused by changes in the weather patterns cannot be easily solved; however, here are a few things that could be done today to offset some of these problems.**

1. Review and update the Grays Bay Dam Operations Plan. The dam operations plan is over two decades old and should be reviewed. The discharge elevations, rates, and operation guidelines could be changed, if necessary, to better control water levels and to account for the current and projected changes in temperature, precipitation and rainfall intensity.
2. Continue aquatic invasive species (AIS) early detection programs, such as the Lake Minnetonka Association's starry stonewort early prevention program, to find and eliminate invasive plants and animals before they become established in Lake Minnetonka.
3. Continue the Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curlyleaf Pondweed Control Program. In addition, create citizen-led Lake Improvement Districts, dedicated to AIS prevention and control, such as those created by homeowners on Carmans and St. Albans Bays.
4. Evaluate and change High Water Ordinances so that compliance and enforcement is consistent, easier and more effective.
5. Enforcement of existing rules to inspect and maintain urban stormwater ponds in accordance with state and watershed rules.

## Wild Celery continues to be a nuisance in several bays

Halting the Eurasian watermilfoil harvesting program reduced the number of complaints about milfoil washing up on beaches and around docks, but homeowners across the lake are now reporting more wild celery washing up on their shorelines. It may be of little consolation to someone raking up load after load of this weed, but wild celery is becoming a greater nuisance in lakes all across the state – not just in Lake Minnetonka. Experts are not sure why this is happening and feel it may be related to weather conditions, clearer water, and normal “boom or bust” plant cycles.

While boat traffic and waterfowl may exacerbate the problem, wild celery normally releases from the lake bottom in the fall and is carried by currents to the shore. It is good for wildlife, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recommends it be left alone. Herbicides don't work well to control this plant. Hand-pulling or raking sometimes works, though floating plants often re-establish themselves in shallow water.

Photo: Robert Vidéki, Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org

## Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curlyleaf Pondweed Control Program Update

All treatments for Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed were completed in advance of this year's July 4th holiday. Preliminary reports from the fall plant surveys indicate the treatments were very effective and several native plant species are becoming re-established. Studies have found herbicide treatments are the most cost-effective approach, both long-term and short-term, in controlling Eurasian watermilfoil. In many cases the treatments are less expensive than cutting.

BAY	WEED	ACRES TREATED
Carmans*	Eurasian Watermilfoil	36.9
	Curlyleaf Pondweed	22.5
Gideons	Eurasian Watermilfoil	43
	Curlyleaf Pondweed	20.2
Grays	Eurasian Watermilfoil	25
	Curlyleaf Pondweed	0
North Arm	Eurasian Watermilfoil	0
	Curlyleaf Pondweed	47
St. Albans*	Eurasian Watermilfoil	25.6
	Curlyleaf Pondweed	8.75
St. Louis/Carsons	Eurasian Watermilfoil	17.4
	Curlyleaf pondweed	13.17

\* Treatment is part of a Lake Improvement District

## Researchers Optimistic About the Control of AIS

In his opening remarks at this year's Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) Showcase, its director, Dr. Nick Phelps said he was very optimistic about efforts to control aquatic invasive species (AIS) and told attendees, “we are getting smarter and [public] engagement is getting stronger.” The MAISRC is quickly becoming one of the nation's leading research institutions for the control of AIS. Some of the research of special interest to Lake Minnetonka residents and users include:

**Zebra Mussel Control** – In partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey, researchers used low-dose copper treatments targeted at zebra mussel larvae (veligers) in summer 2019. St. Albans Bay was treated and Robinsons Bay is being monitored as a control reference. Larval suppression could be a very useful technique to suppress overall populations. MAISRC is also researching enzymes that can be mixed with coatings which make it difficult for zebra mussels to stick to boats and other surfaces.

**Carp Control** – Researchers worked this past summer to develop new ways to remove invasive common carp from Halsteads Bay in Lake Minnetonka. Researchers also examined the possibility of genetically engineered barriers to sexual reproduction of carp and biocontrol methods to control carp populations.

**Proactive Starry Stonewort Control** – Research is underway to look at the impact starry stonewort has on native plant communities, what environmental conditions are associated with nuisance growth of starry stonewort, and what its seasonal growth cycles and patterns are. MAISRC researchers suggest that early detection efforts are important for finding starry stonewort before it becomes established and more difficult to control.

**Improving Eurasian and hybrid watermilfoil management** – Research is being conducted to assess the response of hybrid watermilfoil to herbicide treatment. This summer, field work was conducted at Grays Bay, Smiths Bay, and North Arm Bay. Results of earlier research shows that in areas with good water clarity, native plant diversity and density increases after herbicide treatments.

## We All Benefit When We Work Together. Let's Make a Difference.

By being a member of the Lake Minnetonka Association, you are part of a larger network of lake associations across Minnesota that focus on water quality, control of aquatic invasive species (AIS), and keeping residents informed and educated on lake issues. Elected officials and government agencies acknowledge they are not able to tackle all of the problems of lake management without the help of lake associations.

Through the passion and commitment of lakeshore residents and members like you, positive change occurs. Lake Minnetonka Association members are the stewards of Lake Minnetonka and leaders in protecting the lake.

### Your membership matters – it makes it possible to:

- **Provide ongoing support** of Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed control efforts that have kept several bays open for recreation and which are restoring the native plant community.
- **Support and advocate** for legislation to improve governance and management of lakes, reasonable use and regulation, and provide leadership for positive change and protection of Lake Minnetonka.
- **Provide communications, educational workshops and events** that deliver insights and information useful for people who live and play on Lake Minnetonka.
- **Continue to implement new programs** such as our lake-wide Starry Stonewort Survey to proactively search for and treat this and other AIS before they become established.
- **Maintain accountability** of government agencies that are charged with the protection of Lake Minnetonka.
- **Continue our partnerships** with local businesses to clean-up after the July 4th celebrations around Big Island.
- **Serve as a resource and dynamic advocate** for the Lake Minnetonka community and the voice for Lake Minnetonka lakeshore owners, and businesses.

**If you, your family, or business are not already members of the Lake Minnetonka Association, please consider joining your neighbors, and help protect the legacy of our lake by becoming a member of the Lake Minnetonka Association.**



**Proud Supporter of the  
Lake Minnetonka  
Association**

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612-486-4200**

## New LMCD Watercraft Wastewater Discharge Rules

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) is in the process of changing its rules related to watercraft wastewater discharges. The proposed code amendment clarifies current LMCD regulations and reinforces the state and federal laws that currently make it illegal to discharge wastewater from watercraft into many waterbodies in Minnesota and throughout the country.

The proposed LMCD rules will require sewer pumps, macerator pumps, or grinder pumps be removed from the watercraft before placing the watercraft on Lake Minnetonka. The new rules will also mandate inspections and will make it illegal to urinate or defecate directly into the lake.

## Eurasian Watermilfoil May Harbor Harmful Bacteria

While the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center was looking for potential microbiological controls of Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels, they also found that Eurasian watermilfoil is associated with elevated concentrations of E. coli and human pathogens which could be hazardous to human health. More information is available here: [https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/sites/maisrc.umn.edu/files/association\\_between\\_submerged\\_aquatic\\_vegetation\\_and\\_elevated\\_e\\_coli.pdf](https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/sites/maisrc.umn.edu/files/association_between_submerged_aquatic_vegetation_and_elevated_e_coli.pdf)

## NO News is GOOD News!

**To date, starry stonewort has NOT been found in Lake Minnetonka.** The Lake Minnetonka Association began an "early detection" program for starry stonewort this spring. For those not familiar with the algae/plant, it forms extremely thick mats that makes water use almost impossible, and destroys fish and plant habitat. However, if found early enough and treated, the spread of starry stonewort can be controlled. This is the most robust early detection effort any organization in Minnesota has taken to date. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has expressed appreciation for the proactive approach taken by the Lake Minnetonka Association, and if found, has committed to working with us to keep it from spreading across the lake or to other lakes.



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

Become a Lake Minnetonka Association Member – please send your tax-deductible contribution today.

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