



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.



Lake Minnetonka Association's New Starry Stonewort Inspection Program

The Lake Minnetonka Association is working with aquatic plant specialists to inspect the busiest access points on Lake Minnetonka for the presence of starry stonewort.

Starry stonewort is an extremely invasive algae that forms dense mats and which make boating and water recreation almost impossible. Last year it was found across a 14-acre area in Medicine Lake in Plymouth – just a few minutes north of Lake Minnetonka. The year before, it was found in Lake Sylvia, west of Lake Minnetonka in Wright County.

Because of this, the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota revised its risk matrix to list Lake Minnetonka as one of the top five lakes in Minnesota likely to become infested with starry stonewort.

We must do whatever we can to prevent this plant from becoming established in Lake Minnetonka.

Based on information from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the MAISRC, the most likely place starry stonewort will be found is at, or near a busy lake access. Therefore, the Lake Minnetonka Association will do multiple inspections on the busiest public and

working access sites on Lake Minnetonka in 2019. While the inspections are driven by concerns about starry stonewort, plant specialists will also be looking for other possible new aquatic invasive species (AIS) that may be introduced in the lake.

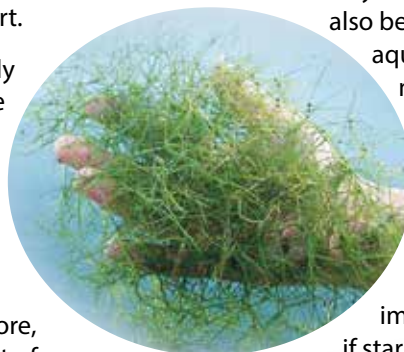


Photo courtesy of the Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality

If starry stonewort or other new AIS is discovered, the DNR, the property owner(s), and other agencies managing Lake Minnetonka will be notified immediately. The DNR has indicated if starry stonewort is found, its removal will be priority.

Most experts agree at some point a careless or indifferent boater will introduce starry stonewort into Lake Minnetonka. Because Minnesota currently lacks an effective program to control the spread of starry stonewort, the only tool left to prevent its spread is early detection. With early detection, it may be possible to control starry stonewort before it becomes a problem lake wide. If allowed to spread, lakeshore owners and marinas could be collectively saddled with hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep this plant from infesting their docks and swimming areas. The Lake Minnetonka Association is leading the effort to prevent this new threat to Lake Minnetonka.

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

From The Helm

By Tom Frahm, LMA Board President



In my estimation, Lake Minnetonka is one of the most beautiful and unique natural resources in the United States. I base this on my 47 years of living on the Lake and my working years of traveling around most of the larger cities in this country. There was not another lake or recreational facility which came close to Lake Minnetonka as far as beauty, recreational use and location near a large city.

I have now been president of the Lake Minnetonka Association for five years. During that time, I have visited and talked with many of our political entities (LMCD, MCWD, city and state politicians, etc.) about the problems threatening to destroy this beautiful lake. I get a variety of responses. The most popular being, "the rich people on Lake Minnetonka can fend for

themselves", or "Lake Minnetonka is unique, we don't know what to do," or I sometimes just get the "deer in the headlights" stare.

No one seems interested in taking the steps necessary to preserve this lake. I want to make sure that the people living on this lake truly understand what a wonderful natural resource this lake is.

Two of the biggest problems we have are aquatic invasive species pollution and trash pollution. In my opinion, to bring these two pollutants under control, two things need to be done: there needs to be rules and meaningful fines for individuals that contribute to these problems and there needs to be controlled usage of all private and public boat accesses to Lake Minnetonka.

The Lake Minnetonka Association continues to work hard to achieve solutions to these problems. We will continue to interface with other state and local lake associations, politicians and local businesses/residents to try to produce the love and attention required to protect and preserve Lake Minnetonka for future generations.

WHERE IS THE LOVE?

Don't be the person who introduces the next AIS into Lake Minnetonka...

Buy and sell only decontaminated equipment that has been out of the water for at least 21 days.

Buyers (and sellers) need to take extra caution when removing boats, docks, lifts, or other water-related equipment from lakes and rivers. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds everybody to carefully inspect all water-related equipment to make sure there are NO aquatic invasive species (AIS) attached.

Look on the posts, wheels, inside pipes, and underwater support bars of docks and lifts, as well as any parts of boats, pontoons, and rafts that may have been submerged in water for an extended period. In newly infested waters, adult zebra mussels may not be abundant and you might notice only a few mussels on your equipment.

Minnesota law requires that if you plan to move a dock, lift or other water equipment from one lake or river to another, all visible zebra mussels, faucet snails, and aquatic plants must be removed whether they are dead or alive. You may not transport equipment with prohibited invasive species or aquatic plants attached.

After you decontaminate a dock or lift, Minnesota law also requires docks and lifts to be out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them in another body of water.

The longer the dry time, the better!



Did you know?...
It is estimated over 62,000 boats are launched from public accesses on Lake Minnetonka each year.

"On The Lake"

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How to Contact the LMA

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LMA Board Members

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Zebra Mussel Research to be done in St. Albans and Robinsons Bays



The United States Geological Survey and the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) are partnering on research that will evaluate the viability of low-dose copper treatments as a control method for zebra mussels. The project started in 2018 with preliminary sampling and baseline data collection, and will continue this summer with the treatment of St. Albans Bay.

Copper sulfate is one of the oldest and most widely used fungicides and algaecides in the world. Recent research completed by the MAISRC and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District found that EarthTec QZ® (a copper sulfate formulated product) applied at a low dose may be an effective way to suppress the survival and settlement success of zebra mussel veligers (larvae). Since the reproductive lifespan of zebra mussels is about three years, reducing veliger survival may be a means to significantly reduce the impacts related to zebra mussel infestations. Low-dose treatments also aim to reduce costs and potential non-target impacts.

The current plan is to set five buoys in both St. Albans and Robinsons Bays in approximately 12'-15' of water in mid-May along with a few submerged plate samplers. EarthTec QZ® treatments in St. Albans will be done towards the end of July and Robinsons Bay will serve as an untreated control bay. Final pull out of the gear will be done in October. The impacts, if any, which the treatments may have on zooplankton, benthic invertebrates, and fish will also be assessed during the study. There are no hazards associated with the application of EarthTec QZ® and there are no entry, water use, or fish consumption restrictions after the application of EarthTec QZ®.

Learn more about this study at www.maisrc.umn.edu/copper-control

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Bay Project Update

2019 Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curlyleaf Pondweed Control Program

In 2008, the Lake Minnetonka Association partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) to determine if weed control treatments would be a cost-effective alternative to harvesting Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). Today, based on ten years of careful data collection and review by an independent third party and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), we can confidently say the treatment program has met or exceeded the original program expectations and is a safe, cost effective alternative to harvesting (cutting).

Currently, six bays participate in the Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curlyleaf Pondweed Control Program.

The Lake Minnetonka Association manages the treatments on Gideons, Grays, Carsons/St. Louis, and North Arm Bays. Treatments on St. Albans and Carmans Bays are managed by lake improvement districts (LIDs), created by lakeshore residents to pay for the treatments.

Treatments are more cost effective than

cutting. Treatments with herbicides is the most economical and ecological method to date for long-term EWM control. Bay treatments have removed over 500 acres of the invasive plant from Lake Minnetonka. Today, St. Albans Bay is essentially EWM free, and the other bays treated have seen over an 80% decrease in its occurrence. Whereas, research done by the DNR has found that after *cutting*, EWM tends to grow thicker and faster.

In the bays treated, native plant diversity is returning.

Also, fragmentation caused by cutting likely contributed to the rapid spread of EWM across Lake Minnetonka and may now be spreading flowering rush in parts of the lake.

Treatments restore native plant populations while, cutting harms them. EWM forms dense canopies that shade and out-compete native plants. Harvesting simply gives EWM a "haircut" and causes the canopy to grow thicker, whereas treatments kill EWM and allow native plants to return. In some of the bays treated, up to eight new species of native plants have returned. Restoring native plant diversity helps to restore native macrophyte and fish populations

that rely on native plants for food and habitat, and makes it more difficult for new AIS to become established.

Bay treatments on Lake Minnetonka are working because they are built on a foundation of good science and local expertise, thoughtful project management, broad public support, and a strong partnership with the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and the DNR. Much of the success of this program is due to the Bay Captains' hard work and the financial support of bay residents, businesses, and communities. Each person or organization who contributes their time or resources to this effort is helping to protect the legacy of Lake Minnetonka.

We look forward to the 2019 season!

For more information please contact the Lake Minnetonka Association at: (952) 470-4449.

The Highs and Lows of Lake Minnetonka

Water levels on Lake Minnetonka naturally fluctuate about 18 inches each year. But when water gets high, like this spring, lake managers carefully watch water levels to control the discharge at the Grays Bay dam to prevent lake and downstream flooding. High water levels can also trigger boating restrictions.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT WATER LEVEL BENCHMARKS*

Highest recorded level (2014)

931.11 ft.

Top of the spillway at Grays Bay Dam

930 ft.

Lake Level as of late-April, 2019

929.97 ft.

Ordinary High Water Level
(set by the Minnesota DNR)

929.4 ft.

Normal Summer Level (variable)

About 929 ft.

Lowest Recorded Level (1937)

921.8 ft.

*recorded in "feet above sea level"

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Hiring businesses to install or remove 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 (DNR) training and obtained their lake service provider permit will have a permit sticker in the lower driver's-side corner of their vehicle's windshield.

You can also search the list of companies with current permits by county at mndnr.gov/lsp. If a lake service provider business is not listed, you can check directly with the business or with the DNR 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 or contact the DNR's AIS Training Coordinator at lsp.dnr@state.mn.us

Source: Minnesota DNR

Eurasian Watermilfoil Harvesting Update

Over the past several months, the Lake Minnetonka Association, local marinas, and others raised concerns that the harvesting program run by the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) may contribute to the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). In response, the LMCD is pausing their harvesting program in 2019 to hire a consultant to review the program and to update their Vegetation and AIS Management Plan.



Milfoil harvesters used on Lake Minnetonka

A staff report provided to the LMCD Board concluded:

"...with the continuing spread of AIS including the introduction of starry stonewort in a nearby lake, and the uncertainty of hybrid Eurasian watermilfoil, the need for a vegetation and AIS master plan is crucial. Oftentimes, AIS are not effectively eradicated, instead becoming nuisances and hazards that require expensive management to control. The costs of AIS management are significant due to the size of Lake Minnetonka--more than 14,000 acres. Since Lake Minnetonka is one of the busiest lakes in the state, the risk of spreading AIS to other lakes increases, emphasizing the need for universal support for AIS efforts on Lake Minnetonka."

While the LMCD feels it is unlikely their harvesters will be used this summer, they may hire private contractors to harvest Eurasian watermilfoil in areas where it becomes a nuisance.

Life Is Better On The Lake!

**Birthdays • Sweet 16's • Anniversaries • Wedding Events • Retirements • Neighborhood Parties
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Lake Minnetonka Public Cruise Schedule Through October 20th

- **Sightseeing Cruises** – Mon, Wed, Fri: 11:30 am-1 pm, Saturdays & Sundays: 2:00-3:30 pm
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What's That WEED?

Water stargrass or grassleaf mud plantain (*Heteranthera dubia*) is a native plant common to parts of the United States and Canada, and can be found submerged in shallow water or

on shore in marshy areas in and around Lake Minnetonka. Its appearance may vary due to water conditions, such as turbulence. Plants growing on land typically have a shorter flower stem than those growing in the water.



Identification Hints

In late summer, water stargrass can form dense carpets of ribbon like foliage, dotted with small, yellow star-like flowers. Submersed water stargrass does not have the yellow flower and can be easily mistaken for narrowleaf pondweed. Leaves may grow up to 5½ inches long when submerged but are shorter and thicker when growing above water. Leaves are grass-green, ribbon-like (narrow and flat), with blunt tips.

Friend or Foe?

Water stargrass is part of the natural ecosystem of Lake Minnetonka and is generally not a nuisance to boating or swimming. However, with climate change and increased water clarity due to zebra mussels, the density of water stargrass appears to be increasing. Water stargrass is consumed by

ducks and other water fowl. Submerged portions of all aquatic plants provide habitat for many micro and macro invertebrates. These invertebrates in turn are used as food by fish and other wildlife species (e.g. amphibians, reptiles, ducks, etc.).

Images source TAMU Aquaplant, <https://aquaplant.tamu.edu/>

Important Safety Notes

- "Little Alan's Law" went into effect on August 1, 2018. Drivers convicted of a DWI will face additional charges no matter what type of vehicle they were operating during the event.
- Water-skiing, tubing, wake-surfing and similar acts are prohibited between one-half hour after sunset to sunrise of the following day.
- CAUTION: Check with your engine manufacturer before using fuel with 15 percent or greater ethanol.

Source: Minnesota DNR



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Lake Minnetonka
Association**

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OR RENEW YOUR
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VOICE for lakeshore owners and businesses.**

Your support makes us stronger!

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Make checks payable to "The Lake Minnetonka Association" or contribute online: www.LMAssociation.org

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The Lake Minnetonka Association is
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Lake Minnetonka Association's New
Starry Stonewort Inspection Program... page 1

From the Helm: Where is the Love?..... page 2

Don't be the person who introduces
the next AIS into Lake Minnetonka page 2

Zebra Mussel Research to be done
in St. Albans and Robinsons Bays..... page 3

Bay Project Update..... page 4

Hiring businesses to install or remove
water-related equipment page 5

Eurasian Watermilfoil
Harvesting Update..... page 5

What's That Weed?..... page 7

Important Safety Notes..... page 7



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