

# LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

---

A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Spring 2022

---

## *Chairman's Corner*

by Kristin Jaquith, *Lake Association Board Chairwoman*

### ***Welcome back to the lake!***

We finally have Spring and warmer temperatures. We had our lake ice-out on April 20th this year. It is so great to see our neighbors putting out their docks and lifts, and boats finally back on the lake.

Thank you to all who have renewed your lake association memberships. We are working hard to continue to preserve and protect our wonderful lake. Thank you also, to all the businesses that have continued to advertise in our lake directory. Please support the businesses that support us. We do rely on membership to help with our lake projects and treatments. We will be publishing the lake association directory in the next coming weeks and we would love to be able to send you your copy, so if you have not returned your membership, I encourage you to do so.

Our annual lake association meeting will be on July 16th, at 10:00 am, at the Beckville Picnic Grounds. We are in need of Board members, we would love to have many of you join us. We hope to see you for this year's meeting – please mark your calendars.

We have been holding our monthly lake association meetings via Zoom & at Shadys on Lake Ripley. We currently meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7pm, and meet for up to an hour.

We have applied for multiple grants this year to help defer costs of treatment and inspections. We were awarded grants from the DNR and Meeker county for 2022.

We look forward to seeing you on the lake this Summer, take care and stay healthy!

### **Annual 4th of July Parade**

1pm starting at the West Lagoon.

Last year went off without a hitch!

Feel free to take the lead!

Remember to practice good boat safety  
and give each other space.



# *Fish Catch and Take*

by Karen Peterson

This last year the DNR sought input on changing the regulations on sunfish limits on many lakes in the surrounding area. The DNR has stated that the regulations are designed with sunfish biology in mind.

“Sunfish spawn in large nesting colonies during the spring and early summer. Parental male sunfish build and defend nests. Females select a male, lay eggs, and leave the eggs for the male to protect. The largest sunfish often get the best spawning sites. These nest building male sunfish play an important role in regulating the population’s size structure.”

“When anglers keep the largest sunfish, the remaining small males don’t need to compete with large males to spawn. With the large males gone, the small males devote less energy to growing, mature and spawn at smaller sizes, and fail to grow to the size preferred by anglers.”

Sunfish is a generic name for fish that include bluegill, pumpkin seed, green sunfish, orange-spotted sunfish, longer, warmouth and their hybrids, the DNR says.

A public meeting about fishing regulations on Lake Minnie Belle was held on September 18th, at the Meeker County Courthouse. The purpose of the meeting was to gather input regarding the reduced limit of 10 sunfish per day to 5 sunfish a day per person.

“The final batch of new sunfish regulations has been released.” Dave Weitzel, Grand Rapids area fisheries supervisor stated in a news release. “We’ve had an impressive amount of public support all along for these regulations. Anglers spoke up that they want large sunfish in our lakes.”

With these new regulations, anglers can keep only the prescribed number of fish per day – it’s 5 or 10 on most lakes with these special regulations – but anglers can return the next day for another limit if they don’t exceed the statewide inland water possession limit of 20 sunfish per angler.

Area lakes that have a 5 sunfish limit per day are listed at the link below. Check the 2022 Minnesota Fishing regulations booklet for further information on fishing regulations and on signs at water accesses.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/news/2022/03/01/new-sunfish-regulations-effect-52-lakes>

## *Adopt-a-Highway Program*

Lake MinnieBelle Improvement Association participates in the Minnesota Adopt a Highway program. You may have noticed the signs on Highway 22.

We just had our Spring Ditch Clean up. We had a fantastic turnout this time around. Not only did we have many volunteers show up on the night of, we had many volunteer their time prior to and even after. We are so thankful for the many volunteers that helped to keep our lake area clean. Together we truly make a difference.

We will be doing a Fall Clean up in Early October. Please watch Email and Facebook for updates. (We might have a cold beverage after the cleanup.)

More information? Contact Don Kotila (donrk58@yahoo.com) or one of the other LMBIA board members.

For those that have helped in the past, we thank you!

## 2022 Grant Updates

This year we were able to apply for three Grant opportunities. Meeker County AIS, DNR & MCAL.

In the fall of 2021, we applied for the 2022 Meeker AIS Grant Program. We were awarded the maximum amount. Award amounts for this grant are as follows, AIS Treatment: \$5,000.00, AIS Inspection Hours: \$7500.00. We are grateful for this help from Meeker County and their commitment to protecting our lake.

We also applied for and were awarded a Grant with the DNR to help with lake treatment of Eurasian Watermilfoil. We were awarded \$6000.00. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Invasive Species Program offers Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grants. These grants are intended to help fund the control of curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil or flowering rush. This offer is an opportunity for local entities such as lake associations, watershed districts, cities, and counties to receive

state funding from the DNR for the control of these invasive aquatic plant species. Funding is for reimbursement of expenses incurred while conducting local AIS control projects. Reimbursable expenses include the cost of the third-party delineation survey and the costs directly related to and solely for invasive plant control according to an Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) Permit.

We also applied for a grant through MCAL for a project we are looking at working on MBO9. We were awarded the grant \$4000.00, it is contingent on a plan to plant a CRP buffer to reduce flow of water from a field into the lake. More to come on this as it is still in the works.

If you have any questions on these grants or would like to offer any help in grant writing opportunities, please contact Board member Kristin Jaquith at [kristinjaquith@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinjaquith@hotmail.com) or 320-282-5673.

---

### NOTICE:

We have retained Clarke Companies again this year to assist us with lake survey, analysis, permit applications and the treatment process. The exact acreage and areas of treatment will be determined after Clarke has completed the pre-treatment survey. The costs of treatment will cover Eurasian Milfoil plus the survey and permit applications fee. Estimated area of coverage is about 20 acres. Clarke will be responsible for posting notification signs and/or buoys in the treatment areas. Minnesota DNR treatment signs will be posted on those properties that are within 150 feet of all treatment areas. It will be the responsibility of the shoreline owner to remove the notification signs on their property. Signs can be removed approximately 21 days after treatment of Eurasian Milfoil.

**IF YOU WISH TO OPT OUT OF THE TREATMENT ON YOUR LAKESHORE, YOU MUST COMPLETE AND RETURN THE INSERT FORM IN THIS NEWSLETTER.**

If you are considering treating a part of your lake shore for vegetative growth, you must receive a DNR permit. Clarke Companies and Midwest Aquacare have been used in the past. These companies will assist you with the permitting and treatment.

# What is One Thing You Can Do Today to Protect the Lake You Love?

*The answer is to join Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, (MLR) if you are not a member already. There is no other group in Minnesota that does so much to protect the lakes and rivers we all love.*

As Bernie Steves, President of the Otter Tail County AIS Task Force, says *“No group has done more to protect water than Minnesota Lakes and Rivers.”*

**JOIN Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates  
NOW to protect the lake you love!  
You can make a contribution online at  
[www.mnlakesandrivers.org](http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org).  
Or, mail a contribution to  
MLR, PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122**

Your membership in Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates provides a significant Return on Investment. MLR has successfully lobbied to lower property taxes on lakeshore, create grant programs through DNR that support lake association programming, trainings and education from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center for lake home and cabin owners, and technical assistance from local units of government to support property owners and lake associations.

When our members told us they were seeing more boating conflicts, dangerous boating, damage to shorelines and lake bottoms, and rude boating behavior, MLR took action.

Last year we worked to *fund research (\$160k) at the St. Anthony Falls Lab*, the oldest fluid dynamics lab in the US, to study the height and energy of different wakes, from an 18 foot runabout to a wake surfing boat. The study was released in February. Check the blog section of the new MLR website (<https://mnlakesandrivers.org/>) to see the released study.

Last fall we worked to build a broad base of partners, including Hennepin and Goodhue County sheriffs, the National Marine Manufacturing Association, Marine Retailers Association of the Americas, the Community of MN Resorts, Tonka Bay Marina, and

MN DNR in *support of a new boater education and certification requirement.*

- Minnesota is one of only 8 states without a watercraft certification program,
- Boating deaths broke a decades old record the summer of 2021,
- Boating sales of paddle craft and larger pontoon and wake surfing craft have been up over 30%, escalating conflicts among user groups,
- Training will include Best Practices for safety, reducing user conflicts, preventing the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, preventing damage to shorelines from wake action and protecting lake bottoms from prop thrust.

During the pandemic more and more people bought lakefront property to self isolate. More sales created a spike in the value of shoreline. The resultant increases in property taxes are now starting to show up on proposed property tax statements. This is resulting in a rise in market driven property taxes. *MLR is working this session to create a state buydown to offset these market driven tax increases.*

MLR has gotten calls about both the cost and red tape lake associations must navigate to manage aquatic invasive species in infested lakes. The DNR does not typically take any action to treat AIS once they are in a lake, yet the DNR has stringent and costly permitting requirements. Local governments and lake associations bear the cost of lake management and are required to do the planning and execution of the work. Lake home and cabin owners like you pay the costs directly through contributions to your lake association or through local property tax levies. MLR took action, we:

- *Surveyed Lake Associations about the DNR aquatic plant management programs* to document the issues. You can find a report of the results on the blog on our website.
- *Lobbied to create a \$850k grant program* for lake associations working to control AIS.

*(continued)*

## *What is One Thing You Can Do Today to Protect the Lake You Love? (continued)*

MLR has launched four programs as well in our efforts to protect your lake and river heritage and investment. While COVID-19 disrupted our pilots last summer, we had good feedback and impact and will work this summer to expand them.

- ***Stop Starry*** - with funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, MLR is providing boat cleaning stations at the public accesses of lakes infested with Starry Stonewort so boaters can Clean, Drain and Dry as they leave. This will lower the risk of AIS spread to the lake you love.
- ***Lake Steward*** rewards and recognizes property owners who have preserved their shoreline and supports those who want to restore their shore.
- ***Up the Creek Meats*** connects lake associations with meat producers in their watershed that use regenerative agriculture practices and work to protect water in their operations. You can buy food directly from producers that farm in a way that protects the water in
- ***Project WET*** is a national program that trains people and provides curriculum so they can engage audiences from classrooms to fair booths to Chamber of Commerce events. Education is the first step in protecting our lake heritage.

MLR's mission is to, "Protect Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging strong links among lakes, lake advocates and policy makers." *Our strategy focuses on four legs: (1) advocacy at the Minnesota Legislature, (2) promotion of aquatic science, (3) education and*

*organization of lake home and shore line owners to create a strong advocacy base, (4) professional media outreach to get your issues and accomplishments into local and state media.*

We cannot do this work without your generous contributions. Unlike most conservation groups, MLR receives the majority of its funding from individual members like you. There is no other group so focused on the issues important to you and we have a long track record of success.

By joining MLR you will receive communications on our legislative efforts, action alerts that make it easy for you to contact your legislators on important legislation, an invite to our annual "Water Connects Us All" annual meeting as well as free webinars and events. But more than that, you will be supporting the statewide lake group that does more to protect the lake and the good times you have for the future.

**JOIN Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates  
NOW to protect the lake you love!  
You can make a contribution online at  
[www.mnlakesandrivers.org](http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org).  
Just click on the "JOIN" button.  
Or, you can send a contribution to  
MLR, PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122**

MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates  
PO Box 22262 ~ St. Paul, MN 55122  
[www.mnlakesandrivers.org](http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org) ~ 952-854-1317  
[judy@mnlakesandrivers.org](mailto:judy@mnlakesandrivers.org)

## *MBO Outlet*

A project in the making for a long time has been to improve the flow of water out of Lake Minnie Belle, through the wetland on the north side of the lake. This article will describe efforts to ensure proper water flow out of Lake Minnie Belle, and prevent backflow of water from the wetland on the north side of the lake.

### **Background:**

The wetland is used to pass the drainage from Lake Minnie Belle to a controlled standpipe structure and then directed to Sucker Creek. Over the years the adjoining farmlands have installed tiles to better drain their property and the resulting silt has filled in some of the wetland and vegetation has grown, all of which impedes the flow. The wetland is no longer capable of handling the surge during rain events from the farms that tiled into the area since the location was developed for the lake drainage. There also have been issues with culverts blocked with debris, and ice buildup in the spring.

### **Control Structure:**

The picture below shows water flowing into the lake, over the control structure (dam). This could happen when there is a large rain event and/or a blockage downstream, and the lake is lower than the control structure. The control structure has an elevation set by the DNR, at an elevation of 1141.4 feet. Water flows through the wetland to an exit control structure (standpipe) with an elevation of 1141.1 feet. This provides a 4" drop from the control structure to the standpipe through the wetland.



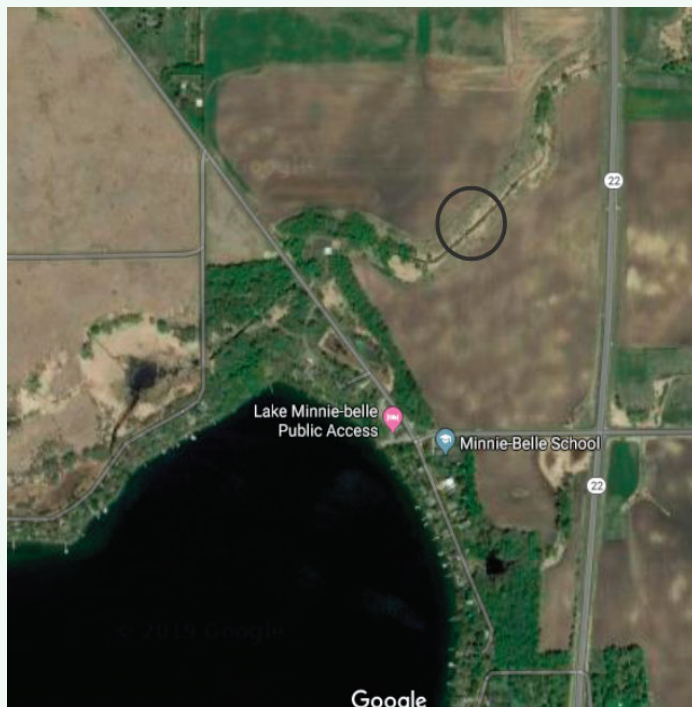
## WETLAND EXIT STRUCTURE AT EAST END OF WETLAND (standpipe)

Elevation of 1141.1 feet.

The wetland exit structure is located on the west side of 620th St. and water flows to 624th St. (old Hwy. 22), then onto MN Hwy. 22. This is the start of Sucker Creek, which flows to Lake Manuella.

### Improving flow through the wetland:

An excavating company was hired to dredge the silt and vegetation from the south end of the wetland, north and along 205th street, to the exit standpipe. The work is considered a “No Loss” impact to the wetland. This trench will increase the surge capacity by increasing the flow of water through it during heavy rain events. We worked closely with Meeker County Soil and Water conservation group, the



*1Culvert location*

local township board and the DNR hydrologist to minimize any impact to the area.

### NEW CULVERT INSTALLED EAST OF 624TH ST.

Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association is responsible for maintaining water flow from 624th St. to Hwy. 22. In late 2019 it was discovered an old culvert located east of 624th St. was blocking water exiting the wetland and Lake Minnie Belle. Working with the landowner, renter and Greenleaf Township, the culvert was replaced and water flow was restored to normal flows. Below is the location of the culvert.

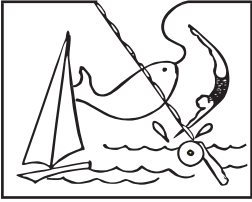
### ELEVATION SURVEY BY MN DNR

The Lake Minnie Belle Association Board worked with the MN DNR to survey key points from the lake outlet to Hwy. 22. This survey verified the elevations of previous surveys, to make sure the waterway has sufficient fall for the water to effectively run out of the lake. There appears to be sufficient fall throughout the system to allow for flow, however, as with most streams in this part of the world, this gradient is

relatively gradual, and may result in some backup in the headwaters areas until the wetland outlet structure and downstream channel thaw in the spring. At the time of this survey, please note that water levels within the lake are approximately 1.6 feet below the crest of the outlet structure.

### SUMMARY:

The outlet waterway is currently working as designed. We will still have ongoing challenges with plugged waterways, culverts and ice. These issues will have to be dealt with proactively by monitoring for blockage and repair as they arise. If you have further questions contact a Board member. Thank you!



LAKE MINNIE BELLE  
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 34, Litchfield, MN, 55355

## Check Us Out!

LMBIA website:  
[www.lakeminniebelle.org](http://www.lakeminniebelle.org) (under construction)

LMBIA on facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/lmbia](http://www.facebook.com/lmbia)

LMBIA Email:  
[info@lakeminniebelle.org](mailto:info@lakeminniebelle.org)

DNR website:  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

# LAKE MINNIE BELLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of the month, either via web or TBD space.  
Announcements posted via Facebook.

### Jeff Bullert

Website/Communications  
5054 134th St. NW  
Clearwater, MN 55320  
(763)445-9533  
[jeff.bullert@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.bullert@gmail.com)

### John Gillard

19997 612th Ave  
Litchfield, Mn 55355  
(320) 296-6129  
[jggillard6@gmail.com](mailto:jggillard6@gmail.com)

### Kristin Jaquith

Chair/Newsletter/AIS  
61865 205th St.  
Litchfield mn 55355  
(320) 282-5673  
[kristinjaquith@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinjaquith@hotmail.com)

### Don Kotila

AIS/Projects  
19573 612th Avenue  
Litchfield, MN 55355  
(320) 693-6812  
[donrk58@yahoo.com](mailto:donrk58@yahoo.com)

### Robert Kruger

MCAL  
(320) 894-6361  
[wilkrug@msn.com](mailto:wilkrug@msn.com)

### Todd Kuechle

Treasurer  
20363 624th Avenue  
Litchfield, MN 55355  
(320) 221-2357  
[appraise@hutchtel.net](mailto:appraise@hutchtel.net)

### Dean Nissen

61956 193rd St.  
Litchfield, 55355  
[nissen7@yahoo.com](mailto:nissen7@yahoo.com)

### Karen Peterson

Secretary/AIS/Projects  
61865 205th St.  
Litchfield, MN 55355  
(612)210-6333  
[Krnpete@gmail.com](mailto:Krnpete@gmail.com)

### Chris Wilke

320-583-4334  
[chris@chriswilke.com](mailto:chris@chriswilke.com)

## LMBIA Annual Meeting

July 16<sup>th</sup> @ 10 am

Beckville Picnic Grounds

Please Bring your own Chair

We are looking for new board members, maybe it  
can be you?



In an effort to be more cost conscious,  
this newsletter is printed in black.  
To view the newsletter in color,  
check out our website,  
[www.lakeminniebelle.org/newsletters](http://www.lakeminniebelle.org/newsletters).