

# LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

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A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Spring 2024

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## *Chairman's Corner*

by Kristin Jaquith, *Lake Association Board Chairwoman*

### *Greetings to all,*

As I type this letter of greeting, I feel this is undoubtedly the most important communication to you that I have written. Lake Minnie Belle faces the greatest threat to its health and water quality that it has ever faced. Our beloved lake is at high risk from the aquatic invasive species (AIS), Starry Stonewort – often called “*The Lake Killer*”. The actions we, as an association, collectively take today and in the near future will determine if the water quality, clarity and accessibility of the Lake Minnie Belle we all know and love still exists for future generations. As your Chair of LMBIA, I know I can speak for the entire Board when I say that we need your help and partnership to conduct the aggressive and proactive approach that is needed to keep our lake the beauty it is today.

We are working with the Greenleaf Township Board to minimize our exposure to AIS, specifically Starry Stonewort by directing all incoming and outgoing boat traffic to the North DNR launch. Our 2024 Boat Inspection Program will be expanded greatly to cover early morning and later evening times. We will be expanding the length of the inspection season as well. This year we will be adding an Early Detection Corps of Association Members who will be trained to identify Starry Stonewort and other invasives. This Corps of members will be asked to throw a rake from their dock and/or shore to check for weed growth and changes throughout the summer season. If you are interested in participating in this group, or you simply would like more information, please contact Board member Don Kotila (320-221-3164) or me.

You may be thinking to yourself, “what can I do to help?”. First, I encourage you to watch the video “Protecting Lake Minnie Belle Against Starry Stonewort” to learn about Starry Stonewort and the risks posed to Lake Minnie Belle. You can find the video on our Facebook page, it has been emailed to you, and there is a QR code in this newsletter that you can scan to view it. Second, we need your help to secure a positive, collective outcome with the Greenleaf Township Board. Watch for emails, texts and social media posts over the next few weeks that will describe what you can do and the recommended actions you can take toward this endeavor. The Greenleaf Township Board meeting is on February 13, 2024, at 7pm. I encourage you to attend to support our efforts. Whether or not you are able to attend, calling or sending a letter/ text to the Township Board Members indicating your support would be helpful. And finally, talk

to your neighbors and others on the lake and help engage them in our quest to protect our beautiful lake. We need to work together to ensure that in the future, the lake and the surrounding environment are here, are accessible and are desirable for generations to come.

While I am very much focused on preventing Starry Stonewort, there are other concerns that will receive the LMBIA Board’s attention as well. This past fall, a group of folks with property on the lagoon voiced concern about the narrowing channel into the lagoon. We will be revisiting the last dredging project to see how it was accomplished as we search for a solution to this problem. We need someone that is concerned about this issue and has property in the lagoon to be a point of contact for us throughout the process. This would not be a huge time commitment, we just need a representative to coordinate with. Please email or call me if you are interested in acting as this representative as we work to resolve the channel issue. We are also working on resolving issues with Minnie Belle Outlet (MBO) 9 runoff from fields. We are very fortunate that one of our members donated land on the Eastern side of the lake that has been committed to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). For the foreseeable future, this land will be planted with species that re-establish land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Specifically, this land will help mitigate and filter unwanted runoff from fields through MBO 9 and into our waters. Finally, and as usual, we will be addressing other concerns and issues as they arise. We are also still addressing and exploring options for the continuous issues at Sucker Creek.

The future of our little piece of tranquility here in Meeker County lays in our hands. As I write this I wonder - Am I doing enough? Are we missing a piece to this puzzle? What else can we do? My commitment as your Chair, and to you as my neighbors, is to never give up working on solutions, to continue my position on the Meeker County AIS Committee, and to do whatever I can to work with and collaborate with every entity possible to prevent the spread of AIS in our lake. As always, feel free to reach out with ideas, questions, or concerns. I look forward to working with you all to continue protecting Lake Minnie Belle - preserving its beauty and health now and into the future.

**Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Survey**

**Surveyor(s):** Dan McEwen and Don Kotila (LMBIA)      **Survey Date/Times:** 9/13/2023 (13:00 – 17:00 CDT)

**Environmental Conditions**

Air temperatures were 65 °F with sunny conditions and no precipitation. Winds were calm and water surface was undisturbed at all sites. Underwater visibility was good (approximately 10 ft).

**History**

MN DNR Infested Waters List (9/11/2023) lists Minnie-Belle as having been infested with Eurasian watermilfoil in 2010 and zebra mussels in 2020. Curlyleaf pondweed (listed 1993) and banded mystery snails (listed 2015) were listed in EDDMaps. There are no other known infestations in the lake.

**Diagnosis**

- Brittle naiad (BN): Not detected
- Curlyleaf pondweed (CP): Present**
- Eurasian watermilfoil (EW): Present**
- Flowering rush (FR): Not detected
- Rusty crayfish (RC): Not detected
- Starry stonewort (SS): Not detected
- Zebra mussels (ZM): Present**
- Chinese mystery snail (CMS): Present**
- Banded mystery snail (BMS) Present.**



**Outcome Summary**

No previously undetected aquatic invasive species were found. Adult zebra mussels were dense on hard surfaces at each location. There was a diverse size structure of zebra mussels, indicating the existence of multiple year classes. Eurasian watermilfoil was found at 2/3 locations but was not dense. Most of the watermilfoil observed were native species. Banded mystery snails were the most abundant AIS detected. They were littered over large areas of the bottom around the launch area. Curlyleaf pondweed was found at moderate densities only at the east site and only at deeper areas (10+ ft). A list of all species observed during the dive are as follows (AIS are underlined): Canadian waterweed, clasping-leaved pondweed, coontail, flat-stemmed pondweed, flexuous naiad, Illinois pondweed, long-leaf pondweed, marsh marigold, muskgrass, northern watermilfoil, sago, spiral ditchgrass, variable leaved pondweed, water celery, water stargrass, white-stem pondweed, banded mystery snail, Chinese mystery snail, curlyleaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, and zebra mussels. All sites were dominated with thick growth of water celery at depth zones greater than 4 ft.

**Survey Description**

Minnie-Belle Lake Public Boat Launch and two private launches including one on the east side of the lake and the other on the west side of the lake (see photo, red boxes above). All sites were dived with SCUBA transects.

# SITE SUMMARY

| LAUNCH                          |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Common Name                     | Public    | East      | West      | FREQUENCY |
| <b>AQUATIC NATIVE SPECIES</b>   |           |           |           |           |
| Canadian waterweed              | 0         | 0         | 1         | 33%       |
| Clasping-leaved pondweed        | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Coontail                        | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Flat-stemmed pondweed           | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Flexous naiad                   | 1         | 1         | 0         | 67%       |
| Illinois pondweed               | 0         | 1         | 0         | 33%       |
| Long-leaf pondweed              | 0         | 0         | 1         | 33%       |
| Marsh marigold                  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 33%       |
| Muskgrass                       | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Northern watermilfoil           | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Sago                            | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Spiral ditchgrass               | 0         | 1         | 0         | 33%       |
| Variable leaved pondweed        | 1         | 1         | 0         | 67%       |
| Water celery                    | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Water stargrass                 | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| White-stem pondweed             | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| <b>AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES</b> |           |           |           |           |
| Banded mystery snail            | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| Chinese mystery snail           | 0         | 0         | 1         | 33%       |
| Curlyleaf pondweed              | 0         | 1         | 0         | 33%       |
| Eurasian watermilfoil           | 1         | 0         | 1         | 67%       |
| Zebra mussels                   | 1         | 1         | 1         | 100%      |
| <b>SUMMARY</b>                  |           |           |           |           |
| <b>NATIVE SPECIES</b>           | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>11</b> |           |
| <b>INVASIVE SPECIES</b>         | <b>3</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  |           |
| <b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>            | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>15</b> |           |

Association members,

Your LMBIA Board is working on strategies to prevent Starry Stonewort from infecting Lake Minnie Belle. Starry Stonewort is an invasive algae and would drastically change the usability of our lake. Please view the video below using the QR Code provided or the link, as it is eye opening to the tragic effects this aquatic invasive species would cause to our lake. Please feel free to share this video.

We are working with the DNR, Meeker County and Greenleaf Township on a prevention strategy.

Please watch for further communication with ways you can help us keep our lake clean, healthy, and how we can work together to combat AIS. Protecting our lake starts with all of us.

Thank You,

Board Members

Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association Link:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAF4HAPdV-g/kUWOoJcE-sOgjeaslRqpww/watch?fbclid=IwAR3h4dzLO\\_PKegPkJN2XyiEG5kyIBojNvxpZHdzvD80I7Qmb07vNnM6H6ZA](https://www.canva.com/design/DAF4HAPdV-g/kUWOoJcE-sOgjeaslRqpww/watch?fbclid=IwAR3h4dzLO_PKegPkJN2XyiEG5kyIBojNvxpZHdzvD80I7Qmb07vNnM6H6ZA)

QR Code – To use this, simply hold your device camera over the square and a weblink will show up. Click the link and view.



### What is starry stonewort?

Starry stonewort is a grass-like form of algae that are not native to North America. The plant was first confirmed in Minnesota in Lake Koronis in late August of 2015. Plant fragments were probably brought into the state on a trailered watercraft from infested waters in another state.



Starry stonewort pulled from Minnesota's Lake Koronis, August 2015

### How to identify starry stonewort

Starry stonewort is similar in appearance to native grass-like algae such as other stoneworts and musk-grass. Native stoneworts and musk-grass are both commonly found in Minnesota waters. Starry stonewort can be distinguished from other grass-like algae by the presence of star-shaped bulbils.



A starry stonewort bulbil or star-like structure produced by the plant. Bulbils are likely how the plant reproduces.

### Why is starry stonewort a problem?

Starry stonewort can interfere with recreational and other uses of lakes where it can produce dense mats at the water's surface. These mats are similar to, but can be more extensive than, those produced by native vegetation. Dense starry stonewort mats may displace native aquatic plants.

Like all plants, starry stonewort may grow differently in different lakes, depending on many factors. At this time, we cannot predict how it might grow in any one Minnesota lake.

### How does it spread?

Starry stonewort is believed to be spread from one body of water to another by the unintentional transfer of bulbils, the star-like structures produced by the plant. These fragments are most likely attached to trailered boats, personal watercraft, docks, boat lifts, anchors or any other water-related equipment that was not properly cleaned.





### **What can people do to prevent its spread?**

The most important action you can take to limit the spread of starry stonewort and other non-native aquatic plants is to remove all vegetation and animals from your watercraft and any water-related equipment before you move it from one body of water to another. Make sure you drain all water from your watercraft and bait bucket and dispose of any unwanted bait in the trash.

### **What can be done to reduce starry stonewort?**

The potential to manage the plant is not well documented. It appears that treatment with herbicides can suppress starry stonewort. Some states use hand pulling, which may be a way to reduce biomass in small areas. Mechanical removal can also be effective. In the case of a newly discovered population of starry stonewort that has a limited distribution in the lake, mechanical harvesting is not recommended because it might create fragments that would speed the spread of the invasive plant within the lake.

We have retained Clarke Companies again this year to continue to assist us with lake survey, analysis, permit applications and the treatment process. The exact acreage and areas of treatment, if any will be determined after Clarke has completed the survey. The costs of treatment will cover Eurasian Milfoil treatment plus the survey and permit applications fee. This will only happen if it is identified that re treatment, or new treatment is necessary. 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.

# Chain of Lakes Garage Sale

This summer area lakes are planning a Chain of Lakes garage sale weekend.

June 6/7/8 2024

More details will be sent out in the Spring

If you would like to participate and be advertised please email Glenn  
glenn.klaphake@gmail.com

We want to thank ALL members for supporting our Association & our quest for the preservation of Lake Minnie Belle.

Without your continued support, we would not be able to do the work we do. Our 2024 Directory is in process and We are looking for advertisers. If your business or a business you support would like to be featured, please reach out to

Board Member Jeff Bullert - jeff.bullert@gmail.com

We are so appreciative of the support of our memberships, and we thank you for your donations of time, talent and gift.

## Promote Your Business and Support the LMBIA



Promote your business for as low as \$40.



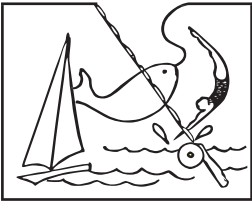
Full Page Ad \$100

Half Page Ad \$75

Quarter Page Ad \$40

[www.lakeminniebelle.org/business-sponsors](http://www.lakeminniebelle.org/business-sponsors)

Questions? [info@lakeminniebelle.org](mailto:info@lakeminniebelle.org)



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 3rd Tuesday of every month at Shaggy's Bonfire, 7pm.  
Announcements posted via Facebook.

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## LMBIA ANNUAL MEETING

July 20th @ 10 am  
Beckville Picnic Grounds  
Please Bring your own Chair  
(If rain, we will meet at the church hall)

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).



Dear Lake Property Owners:

The Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association (LMBIA) has contracted to treat Eurasian Water Milfoil in Lake Minnie Belle this year, 2024.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may grant to the LMBIA a waiver of the requirements that the association obtain the signatures of approval of owners of lake shore property. Instead, LMBIA will notify property owners of the treatment through alternate forms. This notice is one form that we are using to notify property owners. A second form of notification appears on the front page of the Spring LMBIA newsletter that you received in the mail.

With regard to the treatment for this year, 2024:

1. The proposed date for treatment of Eurasian Water Milfoil if needed will be in late June or early July. The treatment will be performed using ProcelaCor per the directions, restrictions and precautions on the EPA registered label.
2. If you desire that the treatment of Eurasian Water Milfoil not occur adjacent to your property please notify the LMBIA board of directors immediately at the following address:

LMBIA  
P.O. Box 34  
Litchfield, MN 55355

Sincerely,  
The Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Board of Directors

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I have read the annual letter sent on or before June 1st of this year and reviewed this document.  
I request that no herbicide treatment occur adjacent to our shoreline property.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owners Name \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (If different from lake property address) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

All requested information must be entered for verification purposes.