

# LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

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A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Spring 2023

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## *Chairman's Corner*

by Kristin Jaquith, *Lake Association Board Chairwoman*

### *Happy Spring!*

We finally have Open water and Warm weather. Depending on how you classify an ice-out, it was either April 20th, the same date as last spring if you can believe it, on this day there was open water from the East landing to the West and the lagoon was open, although the northern side of the lake had some ice floating, but by April 21st the entire lake was open. Although it seemed later than usual, with our unending snow and recent rains, it gives us hope for rising water levels.

I want to send out a 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 rely on your membership to help with our lake projects, preservation and weed treatments. We will be publishing our lake directory in the next coming weeks and we would

love to be able to send you your copy. If you have not returned your membership, I encourage you to do so.

Our annual lake association meeting will be on July 15th at 10:00 am at the Beckville Picnic Grounds. If you have any interest in being a Board member, or have interest in helping with projects, we would love to have you join us. We hope to see you, please mark your calendars.

We are planning some fun around the 4th of July. The articles that follow will provide details.

We have been holding our monthly lake association meetings via Zoom & at Shady's on Lake Ripley. We currently meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm, and meet for up to an hour.

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

## **LMBIA ANNUAL MEETING**

July 15th @ 10 am

Beckville Picnic Grounds

Please Bring your own Chair

(If rain, we will meet at the church hall)

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# *Your Membership Dues At Work: Boat Inspections*

Protecting our beautiful lake from invasive aquatic species is all of our responsibility and accountability. A core defense in keeping Minnie Belle healthy is a strong boat inspection program and this has never been more important than now. Let me tell you about the next invasive aquatic species we're needing to defend against called starry stonewort.

Starry stonewort is an invasive aquatic plant that poses a significant threat to the health of any lake. Originally from Eurasia, this plant has spread rapidly across North America, choking out native vegetation and disrupting aquatic ecosystems.

One of the dangers of starry stonewort is that it can quickly form dense, smelly mats on the surface of the water, blocking sunlight and preventing oxygen from reaching other aquatic plants and animals. This can lead to the death of fish, frogs and other creatures that rely on a healthy aquatic environment.

Starry stonewort is also a prolific reproducer, with each plant capable of producing up to 2 million seeds per year. These seeds can be easily spread by boats, fishing gear and other watercraft making it difficult to control their spread. Once in a lake and established, starry stonewort is difficult, if not impossible to eradicate. This is a very real issue for us as starry stonewort can be found in Lake Koronis, who has struggled with it for years, and we have boats visiting Minnie Belle from Lake Koronis throughout the summer.

Starry stonewort is a serious threat to the health and vitality of Minnie Belle. Our core defense against it, and other invasive species, are the boat landing inspections which will run May 15-September 30. Your annual LMBIA dues fund up to 570 hours of inspections at a cost of \$15,000 and the county matches our contribution. This allows us to staff inspections for approximately 8 hours a day throughout the summer. For those who are members of LMBIA, thank you for your annual membership as it helps us protect our beautiful lake. For those that aren't, please consider joining us in the fight to keep Minnie Belle pristine by becoming a LMBIA member, as it's all our responsibility and accountability to protect and keep Minnie Belle the jewel it is today.

## *Protecting Our Lake*

As we all know, Lake Minnie Belle is unique in many ways. Several of the surrounding lakes in this area are part of a flowing water system, but we are not. Indeed, water from Lake Minnie Belle flows to Lake Manuella then to Stella, then to Washington. This isn't to say that no water flows into Lake Minnie Belle from the surrounding area and for sure this spring there was flowing water from the north, west and south.

The water flowing into the lake is monitored intermittently for mineral and bacterial contamination. One of the greatest sources of contamination (historically) was the flow off of the farm field to the south of the lake. Your LMBIA board worked with the land owner to convert the farm land of concern to Conservation

Reserve. This should allow water from the field to be absorbed into the ground rather than running off and into the lake, hence keeping the lake cleaner and providing less nutrients for lake weed growth.

The process for this has taken several years beginning with water testing to identify the problem. A grant from Meeker County thru the Meeker County Area Lakes Association was necessary to allow and assist in the planting of the conservation land which forms the barrier to protect the runoff. The land owner, who is a member of the LMBIA, has been particularly helpful in accommodating this whole process. We on the Board of the LMBIA are extremely grateful for progress on this project.

# Lake Minnie Belle Aquatic Plant Treatment Plan for 2023

The Lake Minnie Belle Lake Association Board wants to keep all lake owners informed of planned activities involving prevention and control of invasive species including Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed.

As you know, Lake Minnie Belle is a very clear lake, which helps promote growth of aquatic plants. As we take steps to control invasive species, Curly Leaf and Eurasian Milfoil, natural aquatic plants will take their place. Lake Minnie Belle has over 15 native aquatic plants. Northern Water Milfoil (see picture) is one of the native aquatic plant in the lake, therefore not in the treatment plan.

In 2022 we contracted with Clarke to treat 41.2 acres of Eurasian Milfoil. In the past we had only been allowed to treat up to 15% of the lake littoral acres, or about 20 acres. We were able to obtain a variance from the DNR to go beyond the 15%, and treat most of the Eurasian Milfoil that was identified by the Clarke and DNR survey. The area in front of the DNR land on the Northeast side was not included in the treatment. We also used ProCella Cor as a herbicide, instead of 2-4 D. This has been proven to be more effective on Eurasian Milfoil and little to no harm to native plants.

We have not had to treat for Curly Leaf Pondweed the past few years. Treatment will be determined by the survey in April / May.

In late August / early September we will be surveying for Starry Stonewort. That survey is done by a company called LimnoPro, using scuba gear. This survey is conducted around the DNR public access. Past surveys have found no sign of Starry Stonewort.

Below is our schedule for surveying, and treating Curly Leaf and Eurasian Milfoil.

Late April - Early May: CLP survey

Early-Mid May: CLP treatment if need be

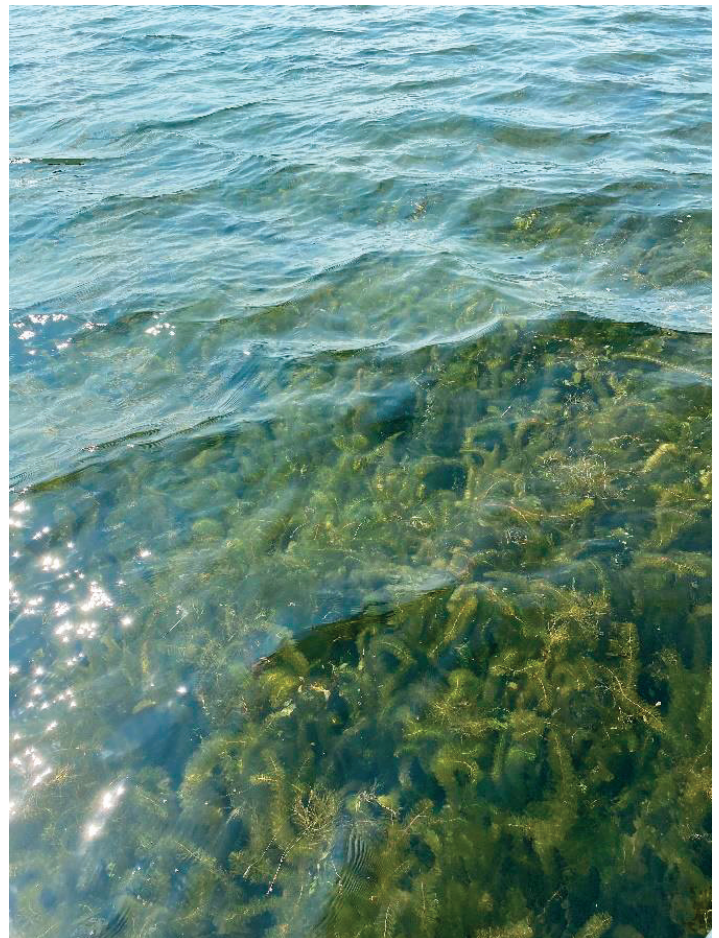
1st or 2nd week of June: CLP post treatment survey/ EWM survey + Shorelines (if all works out in one visit, if not broken up into more than one).

June/July: EWM management if need be (but we are assuming with the level of Procella Cor treatment in 2022 this will be unnecessary).

And then, another post management survey if any additional management is performed. Late August / early September: Starry Stonewort survey.

## Native Northern Milfoil

Actual picture from Lake Minnie Belle



# Fish Consumption Guidelines

Fish consumption guidelines help people make choices about which fish to eat and how often. Following the guidelines enables people to reduce their exposure to contaminants while still enjoying the many benefits from fish.

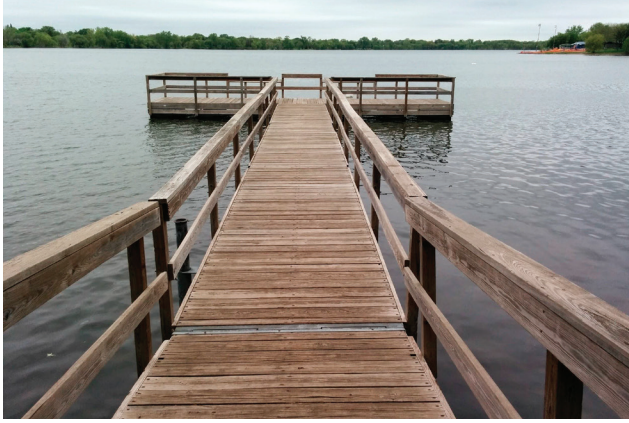
When eating fish from this lake, follow the MDH Statewide Safe-Eating Guidelines opens in a new browser tab except for species listed below. Contaminant levels are higher in these species. Fish contaminant data for this lake is available by request.

## Pregnant women, Women who could become pregnant and Children under age 15

LAKE NAME County, DOWID	Species	Meal Advice			Contaminants
		1 meal/month		do not eat	
MINNIE-BELLE Meeker Co., 47011900	Bullhead	all sizes			Mercury

## Men, Boys age 15 and over, and Women not planning to become pregnant

LAKE NAME County, DOWID	Species	Meal Advice				Contaminants
		2 meals/week	1 meal/week	1 meal/month	do not eat	
MINNIE-BELLE Meeker Co., 47011900	Bullhead		all sizes			Mercury



## DOCKS AND DONUTS SUNDAY, JULY 2ND 10-11 AM / WEATHER PERMITTING

Decorate your Dock using a 4th of July theme.

Association Board members will cruise the lake for the most festive dock. We will be looking for the following criteria:

- \*Use of Red, White and Blue
- \*Decorations connected to the 4th of July Patriotism
- \*Creativity/Imagination
- \*People, pets can be part of the decorations along with props

The winning dock will be greeted by board members with a carafe of coffee and donuts to serve with your morning breakfast.

Join in the fun!!

# Stars and Stripes Regatta

When: July 4th @ 1 PM



Get ready for an unforgettable July 4th celebration on the water! Join us for the *Stars and Stripes Regatta* boat parade where you can show off your patriotic spirit on your beautifully decorated boat. Cruise through the parade route with fellow boaters enjoying the festive atmosphere and chance to win awards for best decorations! Let your creativity run wild and have some fun with friends and family!

## How Does It Work?

- Motor your decorated boat on down to the big lagoon by 12:45pm to secure your boat number
- Follow the Grand Marshal boat around the lake to be judged by 7 different members of the Lake Association Board.
- The parade will end back at the big lagoon where winners will be announced!
- This year, no water balloons (bad for lake/wildlife) and if you want to spray water on other boats, please do so behind the decorated boats and in a safe fashion.

1st place Winning Boat

2nd Place Boat

3rd Place Boat

### 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, Aug 2015

### How to identify starry stonewort

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

### 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?

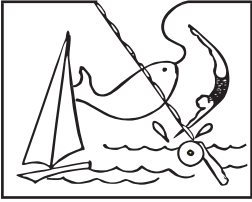
The most important action you can take to limit the spread of starry stonewort and other nonnative aquatic plants is to remove all vegetation and animals from your watercraft and any water-related equipment before you move it from one body of water to another. Make sure you drain all water from your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



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



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.

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## LMBIA ANNUAL MEETING

July 15th @ 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).