

LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Spring 2020

Chairman's Corner

by Julene Schatz, *Lake Association Board Chairman*

Happy Spring!

As I write this, we are all still in the middle of the lockdown and have no hope of getting out of solitary confinement until May. Won't it be glorious when we can finally get back out on the lake and enjoy our wonderful outdoors with our family and friends! We had our lake ice-out on April 7th this spring. It was fun to see my lake neighbors putting out their docks and lifts. I even saw a boater taking his boat for a spin around the lake.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you that have renewed your lake association memberships. The board does appreciate the trust you place in us and know that we strive to work for all of you for the preservation of our wonderful lake. Thank you also, to all the businesses that have continued to advertise in our lake directory. These are difficult times for all, but especially our small businesses. Please support the businesses that support us. We are close to the same number of members that we had last year at this time and the board does rely on membership to help with our lake projects. I know some of you don't think about joining until you have officially opened up your cabins, but I would encourage you to do so now. We will be putting together the lake association

directory in the next coming weeks and we would love to be able to send you your copy.

As a reminder, we will be having the annual lake association meeting on July 18th at 10:00 am at the Beckville Church. Not the campground. Last year the weather didn't cooperate for us to hold the meeting outdoors. The church fellowship hall worked out so nicely that we have asked to use the space again this year. Hope to see a good turnout for this year's meeting. Mark your calendars.

With the state of Minnesota in a lockdown, the challenge of conducting meetings and getting our lake projects moving forward has been a real hurdle. Most of the state agencies that we work with are not meeting, making it difficult to get answers that are needed to conduct lake association business. We have been holding our monthly lake association meetings via Zoom. We hope to be back at the Bonfire for our regular monthly meeting on the 4th Tuesday of the month in May.

Looking forward to sunny days, warm temperatures, hungry fish and lots of fun times back on the lake. Stay safe and healthy.

Adopt-a-Highway Program



Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association is again participating in the Minnesota Adopt a Highway program. You may have noticed the signs on Highway 22, about a 2 mile stretch between 190th St. and CR 28, 5 miles south of Litchfield. What is Adopt a Highway Program?

It is a program that enables a group or organization to help keep our environment clean. Participating in the program shows LMBIA is concerned about a clean environment, wants to make a contribution to the environment and saves the taxpayers money.

LMBIA is looking for volunteers to help with this effort. The fall 2019 cleanup had 18 participants. Safety for the participants is the #1 concern during the cleanup. High visibility vests and bags are supplied. There will be a short safety meeting with all participants prior to embarking on the cleanup. There are several safety considerations along with vehicle traffic, such as poisonous plants, needles,

weapons, hazardous chemicals, etc... What do I need to bring? It is recommended you bring gloves, sunscreen, and insect repellent. What is expected? Depending on how many volunteers, we divide up the 2 miles into sections, so at least 2 people are in each section and on each side of the road. You must be able to walk the road ditch, pick up trash and put it in supplied bags. Who can participate? Anyone 12 years of age or older.

Where? When? Due to the Covid 19, Governor Stay At Home order until May 4th, the spring cleanup will tentatively be after May 4th, the exact date will be on the Lake Minnie Belle website and Facebook page. We will be starting at 5pm and meet in the DNR public access parking lot. How to sign up? Contact Don Kotila: donrk58@yahoo.com or one of the other LMBIA board members. Thanks to all those that have helped in the past and look forward to seeing new and past participants.

Courtesy Among Neighbors

Last month a Minnesota Senate bill was created with the intent of enforcing the sport of wake surfing to be 200 feet from shore, docks, swimmers and other boats. The bill will head to the Senate floor for consideration. If the Senate approves bill, it will go to the House.

This is a hotly contested topic across the state of Minnesota and in other states. A decade or two ago, there was another hotly contested topic – Personal Watercrafts. Some might still consider it an issue today. This story is not about the likelihood of the bill's approval in the Senate or House nor is it to state an opinion on wake surfing or personal watercrafts.

Rather this is to offer reminders on how we can enjoy Lake Minnie Belle together even with each of us having different interests. The below were created by the boating industry and Minnesota DNR, but they really can apply to all of us regardless the watercraft we are using on the lake. They are useful in remembering that we have over 200 neighbors all out to have a good time on the lake.

The Water Sports Industry Association created “**Neighborly Courtesy**” guidelines

- Enjoy Reasonable Music Volume
- Limit Repeat Passes
- Stay at least 150 feet off shore

In a DNR PWC publication, they pointed out for all to “**Use Sound Judgment**”

- Keep the neighborhood peace and quiet in mind. Try not to ride for long periods in a small area. Instead, do your riding out in the lake and away from shore and other boaters.
- Talk to your neighbors. See if your riding bothers them. Sometimes, just taking them out for a short ride will help them understand the fun of personal watercraft riding.
- Don’t modify your machine or do anything to make it louder. It’s illegal and discourteous to others around the lake.
- Steer clear of illegal drugs and alcohol. Intoxicated operation of a watercraft is not only illegal, it’s also highly dangerous.

When you are out having fun and you know that you are not breaking any laws, please stop and consider the impact on your neighbors. It also includes when you are leaving or coming back to the shore showing regard for homeowners’ shorelines and docks. Your neighbors are those on shore, swimming in the water, on a boat floating in the water or next to a dock, plus all of those enjoying the lake in motorized and non-motorized watercrafts. Remember this summer that a little common courtesy can go a long way!

The Magical 150

In the Minnesota Boating Guide 2020 “150 feet” is mentioned eight times. Tow ropes cannot be longer than 150 feet. Personal watercraft must travel at slow no-wake speed within 150 feet of shore, docks, swim rafts, swimmers, or motorized/nonmotorized boats. Boats must remain 150 feet away from a scuba diving flag.

But, how much is 150 feet? 150 feet is 50 yards, half a football field. In Outdoor Target Archery compound athletes shoot at targets set 50 meters (55 yards) away. The target shown is 50 yards away.

A 14-story building is about 150 feet. It takes 2½ bowling lanes to get to 150 feet. Three semitrailers need to be lined up to get to 150 feet. The MLB distance between home plate and 2nd base is 127 feet, so a catcher is throwing less than 150 feet to get a runner out. Some of the most famous Hail Mary passes in the NFL are around 50 yards; some more, some less.

When you are out on Lake Minnie Belle and are trying to be courteous and stay 150 feet from others, use some of these examples to help. It might be further than you think!



Zebra Mussel Monitoring



Zebra mussels are small animals with a striped, D-shaped shell composed of two hinged valves joined by a ligament. The shells are typically one-quarter inch to one and one-half inches long, depending on age, with alternating yellow and brownish colored stripes. Adults are typically fingernail-sized. Zebra mussels attach to hard surfaces underwater.

Invasive species such as Zebra mussels cause recreational, economic, and ecological damage—changing how residents and visitors use and enjoy Minnesota waters.

Whether or not a lake is listed as infested, Minnesota law requires water recreationists to:

- Clean watercraft of all aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species. (after exiting and before entering the lake)
 - This includes anchor ropes, trailer bunks, transducers/brackets, anywhere invasive species can collect
- Drain all water (out of reach to the lake) by removing drain plugs and keeping them out during transport.
 - This includes ballast containments, livewells, and bilge.
 - Lower the motor and let drain
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.
- Dry docks, lifts, swim rafts and other equipment for at least 21 days before placing equipment into another water body.

So far Lake Minnie Belle does not have Zebra mussels. Only Lakes Washington and Stella in Meeker County are listed in the DNR website as having Zebra mussels.

Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association will continue to monitor the lake for zebra mussel infestation. We do that by placing “traps” on various docks around the lake.

The traps are placed on docks in May, inspected throughout the summer, and collected in October. A thanks to the dock owners that let us place the traps.

The link below is a fact sheet on Zebra Mussels http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural_resources/invasives/aquaticanimals/zebramussel/fact_sheet-zebra_mussels.pdf

Treatment of Eurasian Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed

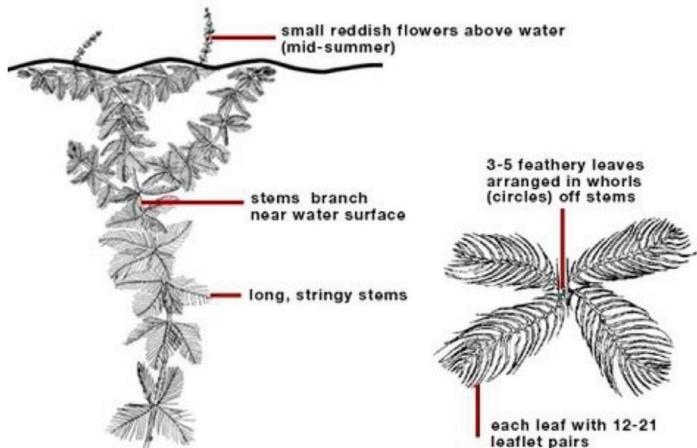


Image courtesy of Sea Grant Minnesota

(Eurasian Milfoil)

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 early in May. In the past, the cost of treatment is estimated to be \$640 per acre for curly leaf and \$395 per acre for Eurasian milfoil; plus the survey and permit applications fees. 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 10 to 14 days after treatment for curly leaf and 21 days after treatment of 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 Aqua Care have been used in the past. These companies will assist you with the permitting and treatment.

Decontamination Stations

Good morning and welcome to Spring. Now that the long Winter has finally left us, we can all turn our attention to enjoying the anticipated warmer temperatures and the activities on our lake.

One of the goals of your lake association is to try to keep Lake Minnie Belle clean and free from unwanted visitors. One of the ways we do this is by chemically treatment of the Eurasian Water Milfoil and the Curly Leaf Pondweed annually.

There are however additional concerns that we are trying to be proactive in keeping from our waters. Zebra mussels and Starry stonewort have been found in a few of the lakes close to us, Stella and Washington and Koronis just to name a few. Once these unwanted visitors invade a lake it is very costly, if not nearly impossible, to try to get rid of them.

So, how do we prevent these invaders from taking up residence in our lake? One way to continue the boat inspections that are presently performed at the landings and to continue with the Clean, Drain and Dry programs. Another way to be proactive is to use decontamination stations.

What is a Decontamination Station? Decontamination units are portable, self contained, high pressure, high heat wash units that allow us to decontaminate watercraft at the public water access without allowing any of the wash water to run off. They are effective in the removal and killing off invaders before they enter our water, such as Zebra mussels. There are presently a number of these types of units installed in Minnesota. Some are more like a car wash, that only cleans the watercraft and others have the high pressure, heated water that actually kills the invaders. Presently, we are looking into both types as possible detergents to the spread of unwanted visitors to our lake.

There are 2 companies that we are presently looking at, Landa and CD3, both have units installed in Minnesota. One is at Koronis and is the Landa, high pressure and temperature unit and the others are the CD3 washing stations with over 15 in the state.



There are many questions that need answering: where to put it? portable or fixed? initial cost, operational costs? who will be able to use it? Is it manned everyday? What DNR permits are needed? Will the county AIS team assist in the project? Etc.

One thing we do know, is that it only takes one watercraft that has mussels on it to infect our lake, so again, we are attempting to be proactive and protect our lake.

In an effort to be more cost conscious, this newsletter is printed in B/W. To see the color images for all photographs, check out our website, www.lakeminnebelle.org/newsletters. There may also be some modifications to the directory as well.

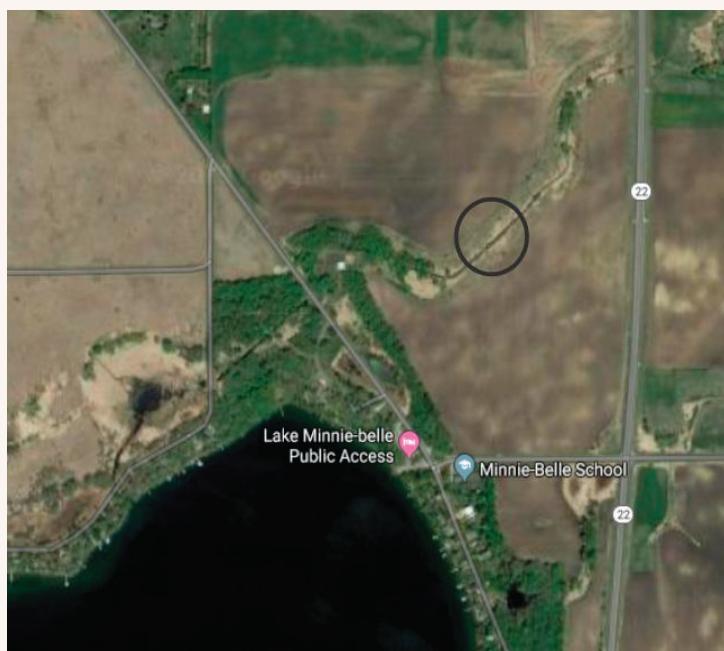
Sucker Creek Update

Many of you will remember that last year one of the big projects the lake association worked on was the dredging of the lake outlet (MBO) and Sucker Creek. This was needed to help with our high water levels. This project was completed last fall. It involved opening the drainage route from the outlet structure on the lake to the outlet structure that drains into Sucker Creek. It was noted at the time that Sucker Creek itself was plugged from the runoff outlet structure to where it runs underneath 624th Ave (or old Hwy 22). This was dredged at the expense of the township, as they are in control of this section of the creek. That proved to be a good fix for our high water levels that we encountered last summer on the lake. We all remember the “no wake” rules for several weeks that impacted our boating.

However, it was discovered in late December that we again had high water levels in that section of Sucker Creek that had been previously dredged. The section of Sucker Creek that runs underneath current Hwy 22 was at very low levels indicating that we again had a flow problem in the creek. After some investigating, it was discovered that the section of the creek that runs from 624th Ave to Hwy 22 had a farm road access culvert that was plugged and was prohibiting the outflow of water from the lake downstream. We again were having outflow problems from the lake. The farm owner was contacted and it was discovered that this section

of Sucker Creek was placed under Lake Association control and we would need to address the outflow problem. Needless to say, this was a very precarious time of the year to get anything done as it was now early January. We knew this needed to be addressed in January so we wouldn’t have a major runoff backflow problem into the lake in the spring. After discussion with the landowner and the renter who farms the land, it was decided to have the culvert removed and the blockage addressed to allow for the free flowing of the creek once again. We did contract with Rickert Excavating, who were able to come on very short notice. They were able to get the creek flowing by digging a channel that runs parallel to the existing culvert. They were unable to remove the culvert in January, but were able to get the creek flowing once again. As of today, the creek is open and running freely. We are currently working on removing the existing culvert and replacing it so that the farm road will once again be usable. The lake association will be replacing the cost of the culvert, but the land renter will be absorbing the cost of installing it.

We are very hopeful that this will ultimately be the final expense that the association will incur for this outlet project. This has been a challenging project with the weather, government shutdowns and social distancing. Now, lets hope for some warm weather so we can get out on the lake.



MinnieBelle Aquatic Vegetation Report

by Stan Kittelson

We are very happy to report that an Aquatic Plant Survey of the entire lake Littoral area (plant growth area) of about 170 acres was conducted last summer. Historically, MinnieBelle has conducted an Aquatic Plant Survey about every ten years going back to the 1950's. This latest survey was a very technical and comprehensive survey done by Limnopro Aquatic Science. Two rake sample points per acre were taken in July and August. While MinnieBelle has done an Aquatic Plant Survey about every ten years, it is recommended that we should conduct a survey every three years due to the rapid aquatic culture changes the lakes are now experiencing.

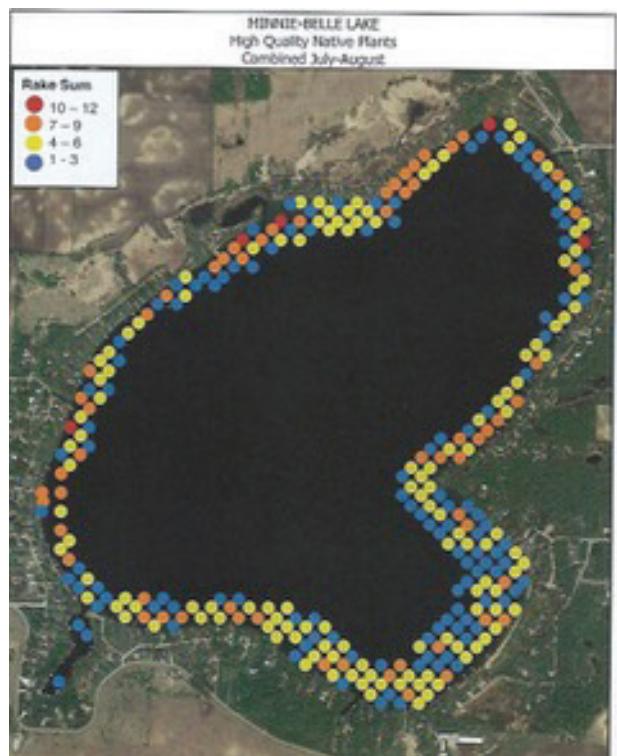
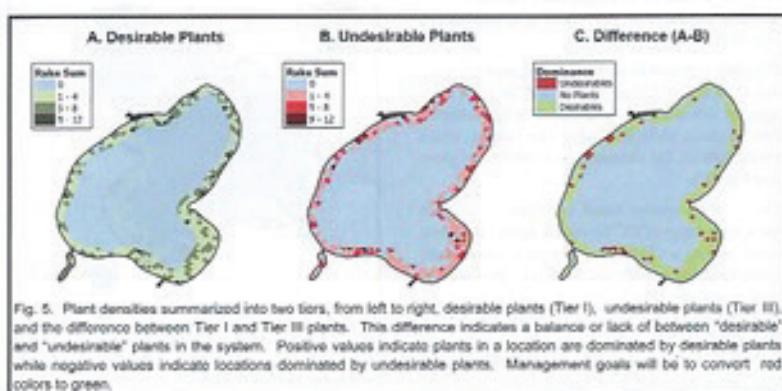
From Report: There were three primary objectives for this survey including (1) to assess the native plant community for negative response to historical chemical treatments of invasive plants, (2) to estimate current coverage of Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Watermilfoil, and (3) search for other potential invaders not yet known to be in the lake such as Starry Starwort.

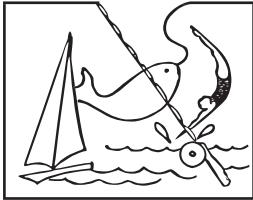
Conclusion From Report: The primary motivator for doing this plant survey was to determine whether treatments of invasive species over the past 15 years have negatively impacted the high quality plant community within MinnieBelle Lake. The native plant community remains robust and of

high quality. There is no evidence that quality of the overall plant community has declined since the last lakeside survey was done in 2004.

We can certainly be pleased with the survey results. While MinnieBelle has a record of a high quality native plant population relative to other regional lakes, this plant quality is not a future guarantee. Ultimately, the lake user and LMBIA will have to continue to actively manage the quality of our lake and look out for other potential invaders such as Starry Stonewort that are in nearby area lakes. Every survey we do provides us with a new trend line for monitoring the Limnology of our lake and for corrective action if necessary.

This survey was not undertaken just for the technical data derived, but also as a benefit to all the property owners and users of our lake. Enjoy the lake this summer.





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IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
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Check Us Out!

LMBIA website:
www.lakeminniebelle.org (under construction)

LMBIA on facebook:
www.facebook.com/lmbia

LMBIA Email:
info@lakeminniebelle.org

DNR website:
www.dnr.state.mn.us

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Board meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of each month (except December), at the Bonfire Bar & Grill at 7:00 PM.

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There will be 4 Board Positions available at the Annual Meeting on July 18th, with 2 existing Directors running again.