

LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Spring 2021

Chairman's Corner

by Julene Schatz, *Lake Association Board Chairman*

Welcome back to the lake!

After a long year of covid lockdowns and social distancing it appears that we may be able to resume some semblance of normalcy this summer. It has been a year of many changes for all of us including our lake. This past fall we discovered that our lake had been invaded with zebra mussels. As a lake board, we have been trying for years to keep our exposure to these invasive creatures as low as possible. Unfortunately all of our preventative measures have not kept them out of our lake. We have had multiple sites around the lake show signs of infestation with them. Due to all of the areas that have been invaded, the DNR is unable to do any type of treatment to our lake. We had hoped to have a lake survey done this summer when the water temperature increased to see what our population of microscopic zebra mussels were. Unfortunately once you have multiple areas infested this is a mute point as no treatment options exist at this time. So, what do we do now? We have been working hard all winter on what plan of attack to take. After much discussion with many

governing bodies, we have decided that our best bet is to try and keep our zebra mussel population as low as possible by continuing 7 day a week boat inspections at the DNR landing. Also, working with the Meeker County AIS coordinator we have procured a decontamination unit to be stationed at the landing all summer. This will be managed by level II DNR trained AIS inspectors. They will use this decontamination unit on any watercraft they feel is a threat of spreading not only zebra mussels, but also starry stonewort and any other AIS species.

Needless to say the board appreciates all of our members that help fund these programs. If not for our lake association members we would not be able to continue the battle on this level to fight these invasive pests. So, thank you members for your continued support of the lake association and the trust you place in your board.

Adopt-a-Highway Program



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

What is the 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.

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 two miles into sections,

so at least two 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? About a two mile stretch between 190th St. and CR 28 on Highway 22, about five miles south of Litchfield.

When? Sometime in the spring, (April/May) and in the fall, (September/October).

How to sign up? Contact Don Kotila (donrk58@yahoo.com) or one of the other LMBIA board members. Information on details will be forthcoming on the LMBIA website and Facebook page.

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

Hopefully some of you can help us in the spring or fall, or both! (We might have a cold beverage after the cleanup.)

2021 Grant Updates

This year we were able to apply for two Grant opportunities. With the help of these Grants we are able to free up general funds to help cover Inspection costs at the DNR landing on the East side.

In the fall of 2020, we applied for the 2021 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: \$6,250.00; AIS Education and Training: \$1,250.00. 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 Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Watermilfoil. 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.

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 or (320) 282-5673 .

History of the Lake

Welcome spring, a time to begin anew. This is also a time to reflect back on the history of the lake. As you may recall, Minnesota became a state in 1858, just before the Civil War. The federal government was paying off debts and one was to a seaman in the Navy dating to 1855. He apparently received 160 acres in Meeker County which he then sold to my great-great grandfather in 1861. This sale was approved by the President at that time, Abraham Lincoln, hence that name appears on many of the land abstracts.

The land, on the eastern side of the lake, was farmed for almost a hundred years before lots began to be sold after WWII. Each of the descendant sons, including my grandfather, had a number of lots to sell. They all decided that the roads to the individual sections would be kept separate and thus there is no road that goes around the whole lake. This situation troubles some but pleases most of the property owners.

As we enjoy the lake this summer and swim in the coolness of the water, we can recall that in previous generations more cattle bathed than people. Also, in the history of the world, we lakeshore owners occupy only a small dot.

Robert Kruger

Zebra Mussels – What do we do now?

What can we do to protect our boat and motors now that we have zebra mussels in our lake? There are some simple steps that owners can follow to protect their investment and prevent the spread of AIS into our water.

Boat hull, engine maintenance and cleaning are the key to saving dollars in repair costs caused by damage from the mussels. When immature zebra mussels (veligers) are in the water they can be drawn into the engine cooling system. Here they can grow into adults and can block intake screens, hoses etc. The best way to avoid this type of damage is to:

Use a **boatlift** to completely remove the watercraft from the water. This will prevent the attachment of the mussels to the hull or other parts of watercraft. **Use your boat.** If you have to leave your boat in the water, run the engine at least twice a week at slow speed for 10-15 minutes. Hot water will kill the zebra mussels in your engine's cooling systems. Always lift your motor out of the water between uses. Discharge any water that remains in the system as this water may contain veligers. Another tool available for purchase is a **motor muff**. These devices flush away soil particles and other foreign materials to extend the life of your engine. Check at local marinas or online for purchase and directions for use. **Antifouling paints.** These can be applied routinely to boat hulls or docks. It is best to purchase anti-fouling paints or protective coatings from an area boat dealer or marina. **Pressure washing.** Boats and equipment may be pressure washed to remove veligers and juvenile zebra mussels. Biologists recommend using high-pressure hot water (104 degrees) if possible. It's ok to use high pressure cold if hot water isn't available. Hopefully some of these tips will help manage this new troublemaker in our lake.



Treatment of Eurasian Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed

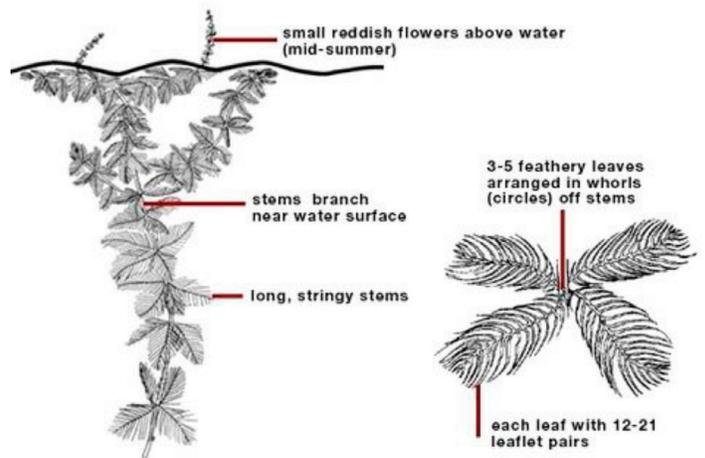


Image courtesy of Sea Grant Minnesota

(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 INSERTED FORM INCLUDED IN THIS NEWS-LETTER. 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.

2021 Watercraft Inspection Program on Lake Minnie Belle



This article is an overview of the 2021 Watercraft Inspection program on Lake Minnie Belle.

Lake Minnie Belle is one of the most used recreations lakes in the region. Therefore the risk of infestation of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) is great. Because of this high risk, it has been necessary to inspect watercraft before entering the lake.

Meeker County provides funding for 3 days of inspections per week, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The Lake Minnie Belle Board of Directors authorized 4 additional days of inspections, Monday thru Thursday. This is paid for using funds from the Lake Association dues General Fund, and grants from Meeker County AIS.

The inspections are conducted at the DNR Public Access on the Northeast side of the lake. For 2021 the inspections start in May, and end Labor Day in September, there were over 3400 inspections in 2020. Of those inspections, about 1800 were watercraft entering the lake.

The Township controlled accesses on the east and west sides of the lake will be controlled by a key/cable, for authorized nearby off lake owners. The goal is to have all watercraft inspected at the main DNR access.

Some details/results of the 2020 inspections.

Plugs in when inspected – 12 – This was taken care of before launching

Number of watercraft inspected that had last been in a lake with Zebra Mussels – over 283

Number of watercraft inspected that had last been in a lake with Starry Stonewort – 17

So far there has not been any indication of Starry Stonewort in Lake Minnie Belle.



Starry stonewort is an invasive algae can form dense mats that choke out native species and make boating and swimming difficult. So far, it's infested at least 13 Minnesota lakes.

Our first priority is to prevent starry stonewort from entering Lake Minnie Belle. That is why the decontamination unit is so important for Lake Minnie Belle. Once the lake is infested with Starry Stonewort, treatment / eradication is difficult.

We also need to put a lot of effort into surveillance and early detection. We need to find these populations when small, at a stage where there is a broader range of options to treat.

Plans for 2021 starry stonewort surveillance are; use of rakes to sample weeds in the lake, scuba diving to survey identified high risk areas of the lake, and lake shore owners monitoring their surrounding shore line. Please report any suspicious AIS to a Board member.

Zebra mussels were confirmed to be in Lake Minnie Belle, on October 5th, 2020, by the MN DNR. Below is a picture of a zebra mussel found on one of the traps.

continued

2021 Watercraft Inspection Program on Lake Minnie Belle (continued)

At this time, the lake is in a control stage for Zebra Mussels. There are no plans at this time to try to eradicate them from the lake. We will continue to monitor/inspect with traps, rakes and diving.

Plans are in place to have a decontamination unit at the DNR landing 7 days a week, to help stop the spread of AIS. This unit will be manned with trained inspector{s}.

Inspectors alone cannot stop the spread of AIS. Prevention is the best way to keep AIS out of our lake. Each boat operator must do their part in prevention by:

CLEAN-DRAIN-DISPOSE – Clean aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species from watercraft. Drain lake or river water from all equipment and keep drain plugs out during transport. Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash, not in the water.

Recommended additional action: Dry boat for five days or more before launching in other waters.

Thanks to all who do their part to prevent the spread of AIS.



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 😊



Boat Inspections!

Now that our lake has been infested with zebra mussels, our best course of action is to try and keep the load level of infestation as low as possible. There are no current treatments for zebra mussels with this widespread of an area. We have multiple confirmed locations around the lake. The best method for reducing contamination is to continue to prevent more watercraft from spreading veligers or other AIS into the lake. As a board we have decided to have DNR trained AIS inspectors monitor the DNR landing 7 days a week. We have also been able to get a decontamination unit placed at the landing for use everyday.

Decontamination – Decontamination means to wash, drain, dry or thermally or otherwise treat water-related equipment in order to remove or destroy AIS. Decontamination units are portable, self-contained, high pressure, high heat wash units that allow a watercraft to be decontaminated at a public access without allowing any of the wash water to run off.

We have been working with the Meeker County AIS coordinator, Ariana Richardson who has

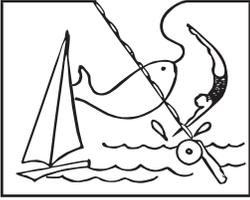
been able to make this happen for our lake. At one time we thought we would need to purchase a unit for our use, but the county will now provide the unit. This unit will be staffed with a Level II AIS inspector as required by the DNR. We are also working on getting inspectors staffed for any fishing tournaments and leagues that happen after normal hours.

As you may guess, none of this will come without cost. AIS grants have been applied for as well as a new DNR grant. We will be getting

help with the cost of these inspections from these grants, but it won't pay for the total cost. Once again, we rely on our membership dues to help run these programs. If you have not sent in your membership check, please do so. We need everyone to help with this fight. Remember that adult zebra mussels can be carried to new water bodies when they are attached to boats and plant fragments. Veligers can be transported in water!



- Inspect and remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from your boat, trailer, and equipment
- Drain all water from your motor, livewell, bilge, transom, etc.
- Dispose of unused bait in the trash
- Wash your boat and equipment with hot and/or high pressure water, particularly if moored for more than one day, *OR*
- Dry your boat and equipment thoroughly (in the sun) for five days



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

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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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.

Julene Schatz

Chair
19647 623rd Avenue
Litchfield, MN 55355
(320) 583-6628
jschatzrn@gmail.com

Todd Kuechle

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

Tom Rotz

MCAL
61269 193rd Street
Litchfield, MN 55355
(715) 630-4774
tom.rotz@icloud.com

Don Kotila

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

Karen Peterson

AIS/Education
2566 Schumacher Court
Mayer, MN 55360
(612)210-6333
Krnpete@gmail.com

Stan Kittelson

Water Quality
61898 193rd Street
Litchfield, MN 55355
(320) 693-7351
skittelson@gmail.com

Kristin Jaquith

Vice Chair/Newsletter/AIS
61030 195-1/2 St
Litchfield, MN 55355
(320) 282-5673
kristinjaquith@hotmail.com

Jeff Bullert

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

Laurie Boll

Secretary
19739 623rd Avenue
Litchfield, MN 55355
(320) 221-0733
ljboll@hotmail.com

Robert Kruger

Projects
(320) 894-6361
wilkrug@msn.com

LMBIA Annual Meeting

July 17th @ 10 am

Beckville Picnic Grounds

Please Bring your own Chair

We are looking for at least one new board member.

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.