

LAKE MINNIE BELLE MESSENGER

A Newsletter from the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association

Fall 2016



New Projects Around The Lake

By Steve Stepien

The Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association has requested a permit and received verbal confirmation from the DNR area hydrologist to remove the silt and vegetation around the outlet standpipe located on the west side of 620th Ave adjacent to the DNR/AMA land. Work will include the removal and disposal plus replacement of the rip rap along side the road side to prevent erosion. The cost will be covered by LMBIA with the approval of Greenleaf Township board. Work is scheduled to begin after the first of November this year. There has been a significant reduction of water flow due to the build up of silt and the growth of narrow leaved cattails. Additional work to increase the water flow is being planned for the early summer of next year. The work is still being planned but may include the elimination of a swath of vegetation from the stand pipe to the center of the swamp. There is also discussion of dredging a channel through that area from the stand pipe to the retaining structure in the area where we have easement rights. One other consideration is the reestablishment of a marsh rat habitat in the swamp which would help to create a more permanent pathway for the water. The high water has caused some alarm and we

are working to address the issues. If you have comments, concerns or suggestions we would always welcome your input. Old highway 22 (615th Ave from Lake Minnie Belle to Litchfield) was resurfaced this fall. This is in preparation for the resurfacing of the real highway 22 which is scheduled for next year. We are also clearing out the small trees and shrubberies from the oak island at the junction of 205th St. and 624th Ave. directly to the east of the DNR public landing. There have been three accidents at that intersection this year and with additional traffic next year this should help with visibility.

A tour of our drainage ditch that extends to Sucker Creek was conducted this spring and found no blockage or hold up of the water flow. When the water does recede we plan to go through and remove any downed trees and excess under growth. Volunteers are welcome! With the excess amount of rain this year we have identified two areas on the south side of the lake where run off into the lake has become a concern. Tentative plans are being formulated to address the issues but individual property owners will have to be notified and agree to the work we are thinking about. Plans should be firmed up this winter and efforts will be made this spring to prepare for modification.

Greetings,

My name is Tom Hess, I have the honor of being the chairman of the Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association, LMBIA. Besides myself, there are 10 other dedicated lake property owners who make up the board of directors. We meet the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Bonfire, space provided courtesy of Dick and Suzanne Burgart. Since we represent you, these are open meetings and we encourage you to attend at any time.

For 23 years my wife, Jeanine, and I have been blessed to live on the lake next to the Beckville Picnic Grounds in the South Harbor (formerly called the Lagoon). I was recruited my second year on the lake to become a board member and a year later became chairman.

During the next 12 years as a board member we were very busy continuing the hard work begun by previous lake members who felt our lake was in decline. They convinced the MPCA (MN Pollution Control Agency) to initiate a LAP (Lake Assessment Program) evaluation of our lake. This study discovered some deficiencies and some critical situations that needed addressing to maintain the pristine condition of the lake. Following this study, a more comprehensive study was undertaken and a focused plan was put in place to address the problems found. After many, many volunteer hours by dedicated lake members, funding was approved from the MPCA, with matching funds from Meeker County, Greenleaf Township, and BSWR (Bureau of Soil and Water Research). Our Lake Association has spent over \$350,000 dollars over the past 20 years to address and work on projects to control water quality problems which had been discovered by our fellow lake members and directors and through these studies. Even though it has been 20 years since the start of this journey, it is not over.

If we want to continue calling Lake Minnie Belle the crown jewel of Meeker County, there is yet much work to do. Presently the issues involve AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) in the form of Curly Leaf Pondweed, which has been on the lake forever; Eurasian Watermilfoil, which has increased from 5 plants 5 years ago to where we treated 21 acres last year and 18 acres this year; Zebra Mussels, which we do not have but are constantly monitoring for; Starry Stonewort, also not on our lake but new to Minnesota discovered last year. This AIS form was first found on Lake Koronis and they have initiated a 5-year plan to try to contain it with a price tag of \$800,000. Scary.

It is up to each and every one of us to be vigilant, care how the lake is used both by us and visitors and be ready to help in any way we can to continue our mission of keeping Lake Minnie Belle a star quality lake.

Thank you for what you do.

Tom Hess, LMBIA Chairman

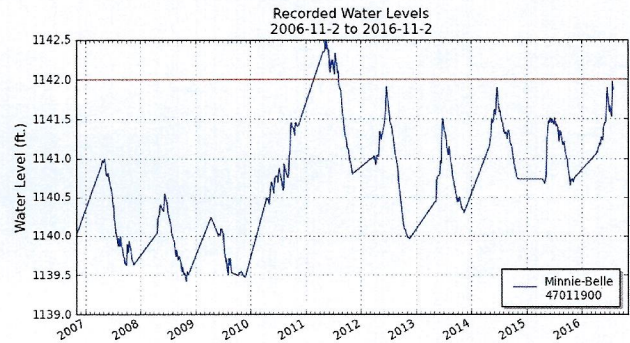
Newsletter and Directory Changes: The board is making changes to both the newsletter and the lake directory. We hope to provide property owners more information which includes data, charts and graphs. We are also hoping to present a more thorough format in the spring newsletter. We will be updating the lake website and our Facebook page and hope to have that work completed shortly after the first of the year. Please bare with us as we attempt to keep everyone more up to date on the efforts being made to protect and preserve our beautiful lake. Your feedback is welcomed.

Lake Water Monitoring

By Stan Kittleson

What lake is near the top of Central Minnesota lakes in water quality? If you guessed Lake Minnie Belle, you are correct. To help us maintain our top water quality position, we do five summer water tests a year for Phosphorus, Chlorophyll-a, and Transparency (water clarity). The results of these tests are forwarded to the MPCA. These tests provide us with a continuous trend line for monitoring changes in our lake water quality. Additionally, point source water

inlets into the lake are also monitored as summer weather conditions dictate. Keeping the lake water quality trend line in the positive is our goal to help insure a pristine lake for all to share.



2016 Annual Meeting Summary

By Laurie Boll, Secretary

July 16, @ 9:30 AM. President Tom Hess welcomed about 50 people to the meeting.

Tom announced that the MB2 project has not yet been completed. Due to heavy amounts of rain this summer it is planned for August at a cost of \$25,866. Lindberg Construction of Dassel was awarded the bid. Monies are coming from MCAL at \$7700, \$5000 from Greenleaf Township, \$7500 from Meeker County SWCD, leaving a balance of \$5666 from LMBIA. LMBIA Membership: Tom gave the report that the current membership is only 154.

Aquatic Invasive Species Updates

Zebra Mussels: Cliff Willhite brought the Zebra Mussel Indicator. Tom added that in the early baby stages of Zebra Mussels, the surface of the plates on this indicator will be like sandpaper. He explained that the indicators will be at three board members docks. The locations are at Hess's, Baril's, and at the Boll's residence.

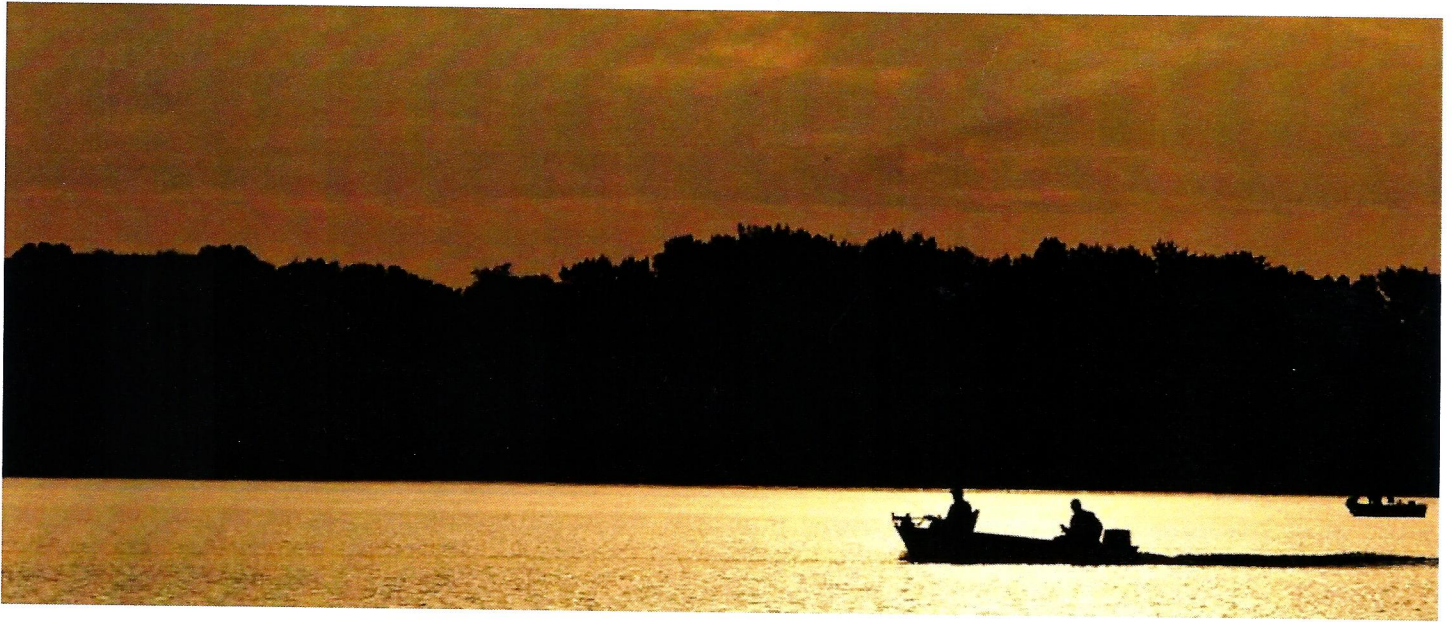
Eurasian Milfoil: Cliff went on to inform everyone that Curly Leaf was not treated this year due to the need to treat 18.02 acres of Eurasian Milfoil which was treated on July 6th.

Starry Stone-Wort: Cliff brought up the concern of Starry Stone-Wort grass that has infested areas of Lake Koronis. He asked everyone to remind friends and family that it is illegal to transport lake water from one lake to another in minnow buckets and in live wells or in any other form. We do not want this in Lake Minnie Belle.

Richard (Dick) Baril and Larry Rewerts were thanked for their years of service on the Board. Tom also announced that Marilyn Buboltz has agreed to be the next LMBIA Newsletter Editor with Schmidtbauers doing the set-up.

Election of Board Members: Steve Hatlestad, Steve Stepien, and Shirley Kronbeck agreed to be on the ballot. Tom stated that both Steve Hatlestad and Steve Stepien have volunteered to be on the ballot to fill the 2 board vacancies and Shirley Kronbeck agreed to run again. Floor was opened for nominations. No other nominations were received. The slate of nominees was approved by all.

Tom introduced Gene Jeseritz from the DNR / Department of Fisheries. He gave an informative talk about Lake Minnie Belle's Net Catches from 1957 to 2014 of all species of fish. He had handouts for everyone.



Aquatic Invasive Species

By Steve Stepien

Board members attended two different conferences regarding AIS this fall. One at the University of Minnesota and another summit in St. Cloud. There has been significant research into the transfer and control of both Eurasian Watermilfoil and the infestations of Zebra and Quagga mussels. Funding for the inspection of boats and trailers when entering and leaving our lakes has become available and mandatory inspections will begin at our DNR landing this coming year. Please do whatever you can to assist the inspectors. Additional legislation is in progress to insure boat and trailer decontamination and inspection occurs anytime a boat enters or leaves our lakes. The costs of controlling these invaders is can be enormous. We are currently putting together a reaction plan should we detect Zebra or Quagga mussels in our lake. This plan will be in place with the DNR so action can be taken once their presence in our lake has been verified. We have testing devices bracketing the landing and addition stations around the lake.

The current control method is the use of Zequanox. Not classified as a man made chemical, Zequanox is composed of dead cells from a

naturally occurring microbe and are readily consumed by Zebra and Quagga mussels while not being consumed by our resident clams and snails. This product is only to be used in the late fall when the natural mussels begin to go dormant. Once a lake is infected the growth becomes rampant within a short period of time. There are other chemicals that are currently in lab and field trials but effectiveness and availability are still uncertain. The research has shown that transfer from lake to lake correlates with boat traffic rather than natural birds or animals. Don't forget that used docks and lifts can also be infected. If you are buying or selling one please be sure to power wash and decontaminate them before transfer. The juvenile snails can be as small as a grain of salt so do not rely solely on you eye sight.

A more thorough update is planned for the spring newsletter along with videos that we plan to place on the lake web site (<https://sites.google.com/site/lmbiaorg/>). The infestation of starry stonewort in lake Koronis and Big Turtle Lake is another serious concern. Very little research has been done and at this time there is no known method of eradication. Both humans and wildlife can accomplish transfer. We hope more information will be available this spring.

AIS Treatment Tips

By Cliff Willhite

We have had good results with the weed treatment and inspections the last two years with Clarke Aquatic Services. We do need some weeds in the lake to give us some fish habitat, but keep a look out for problem areas of Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed around the lake.

Remember to dispose of unwanted bait, worms, and fish parts in the trash. When keeping live bait, drain bait container and replace with spring water or dechlorinated tap water. You can not leave the lake with lake water on your fish or come on the lake with water from another lake. To help in keeping your fish fresh, you have caught, I have been told to pack them on ice. Remember to drain all water from all parts of your boat, like the motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers.

Remember we have a lot to lose with our lake being so clear and clean, so be on the look out for anything new, because there is a lot of different invasive species on other lakes.

Bur Oak Blight

By Marilyn Buboltz

It appears as though many Oak trees around the lake have been effected by a disease. Frequent rain events at the time new leaves were reaching their mature size can create highly favorable conditions for infection by the fungus that causes Bur Oak Blight, often referred to as BOB. The BOB fungus survives the winter on infected leaves that remain attached within the tree canopy.

Although the infections occur in spring, the most obvious symptoms do not appear until the end of July or early August. When autumn leaf drop occurs, many leaves infected with bur oak

AIS Treatment History

Eurasian Watermilfoil

2010: 6 Plants Found, Pulled by DNR Divers
2011: 0 Plants Found
2012: No Money- Government Shutdown
2013: Treated 4.4 Acres
2014: Treated 3.3 Acres
2015: Treated 19.2 Acres
2016: Treated 18.1 Acres

Curly Leaf Pondweed

2014: Treated 2.86 Acres
2015: Treated 3 Acres
2016: No Treatment (Concentrated on Eurasian Watermilfoil)

Zebra Mussel

2016: No Zebra Mussel

There are currently no Zebra Mussels in Lake Minnie Belle, but be on the lookout for them. The lake board has four Zebra Mussel inspection plates out around the lake. I was on Lake John last fall for some training, looking for these species. Yes we found lots of them, in all sizes.

blight remain attached to the tree. Bur oak blight is a slow moving disease. The leaves in the lower canopy are usually first to be infected. Each year, the disease infects a greater portion of the tree canopy. Once bur oak blight has been confirmed, a management plan can be created.

For more information regarding Bur Oak Blight go to www.extension.umn.edu and search "Bur Oak Blight". There are several informative articles.

Stockman's Greenhouse and Landscaping in Litchfield can be a resource for identification and treatment of Burr Oak Blight. Contact them if you suspect your tree is effected.

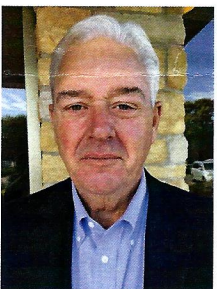
New Board Members

We are happy to introduce the Board Members elected at the Annual Meeting July, 2016. We appreciate their dedication to Lake Minnie Belle, and the lake's ongoing improvement.



Steve Stepien: Steve has lived on Lake Minnie Belle for 54 years. This is his second term as a board member previously serving from 1996 – 2000. Steve quite literally knows the lake from top to bottom as he has scuba dived the lake

extensively and enjoys boating and fishing. His years on Lake Minnie Belle speak for his dedication to preserve the quality of the lake. Steve's primary responsibilities will be advancing lake improvement projects and AIS.



Steve Hatlestad: Steve and his wife Peg have enjoyed Lake Minnie Belle since 1987 when they purchased their first seasonal home. 4 years ago they built their current home where they live year around. Steve is dedicated to help serve on the

Board to preserve the quality of our lake and protect all of our investments as property owners. Steve's primary responsibilities will focus on LMBIA membership and directory advertising.



Shirley Krombeck: Shirley and her husband Russ have been on the lake since 1968. They have been living here year round since 2002. This will be Shirley's third term on the board, where she has been the treasurer since she was first

elected. Her major responsibilities will include increasing membership and collecting dues.

2017 Membership Changes

The Board has moved their meeting to the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at the Bonfire. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings.

Membership fees are now due January 1, 2017. This change is an effort to improve accuracy of the LMBIA directory which will be mailed to paid members in May (one directory per paid membership). There also had been some confusion regarding what is our "membership year". LMBIA membership is January 1st through December 31st.

Annual Membership dues will increase to \$40.00. The increase of dues will provide a balance in our budget that will allow for continued progress with our goals and projects in the Lake Minnie Belle management plan. It will also give us a balance if we need to act quickly to treat other invasive species if identified. Please note the former "Milfoil Fund" is now the "AIS Fund".

Our membership dues have not been increased for many years and we will now be more aligned with the other local lake associations. Membership and all donations to LMBIA are tax deductible.

Please detach the membership form and mail today! Together we can protect the quality of our lake! We need your support!



2017 LAKE MINNIE BELLE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Last Name _____

First Name _____ Spouse _____

Lake Address _____, Litchfield, MN, 55355

Permanent Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Primary Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

(Email addresses are only used for specific notifications to lake residents and are not given to any outside sources.)

If you are a member who purchased additional lot(s); list the lake address(es) below.

Lake Minnie Belle Membership Fees: \$40

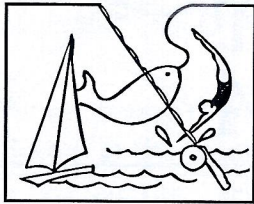
Would you like to make an additional contribution to the AIS fund? _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Membership fees are due January 1st, 2017!

Please complete and return with your check payable to LMBIA.

Mail to: Lake Minnie Belle Improvement Association, PO Box 34, Litchfield, MN, 55355



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

Check Us Out!

LMBIA website:
<https://sites.google.com/site/lmbiaorg>

LMBIA on facebook:
www.facebook.com/lmbia

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

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