

THE CULLEN CURRENTS

Fall, 2017



Don't give hitchhikers a ride!

Whether you're a waterfowl hunter, fall angler, or a "brave-the-cold-weather" boater, please do your part to make sure you don't let Lower Cullen zebra mussels hitch a ride with you into another lake. This includes travel from one Cullen Lake to another! Be sure to check all your equipment, including the less obvious things such as waders, hip boots, decoy lines, hunting

dogs, anchors, pushpoles, and ATVs, and remove any aquatic hitchhikers before entering another lake. Also, empty anything that contains even a little water before moving on because tiny aquatic hitchhikers could be hiding in it.

Don't let other lakes fall victim to an aquatic hitchhiker!

Cullen Currents recipients change

This is the last Cullen Lakes Association newsletter that will be sent to non-CLA members. This is an effort to reduce the expenditure of funds that can be better put to use combatting aquatic invasive species (AIS).

The CLA Board made this decision at its September board meeting because it has seen no evidence of any benefit in sending non-members the quarterly newsletter. No non-members have contributed to the high cost of treating curly-leaf pondweed, even though they benefit from it, and none have shown any willingness or desire to contribute in any way to the lake association.

CLA establishes a Legacy Fund

The Board of Directors set up a Legacy Fund with the over \$46,000 bequest CLA received from the Morraine Norden Estate last year. The intent of the fund is to finance specific lake association projects either with a set maximum amount from the fund or with the interest earned on the principal. All the details have not been decided yet.



Recently, the Lyle Johnson family designated memorials for him to be given to CLA and added to the Legacy Fund. Lyle's family asked that the memorials be designated for use in protecting/preserving/restoring the quality of the Cullen Lakes. These memorials increased the fund by over \$1,000.

CLA is now on Facebook

Alli Isaacson, of Eagle's Nest Resort on Lower Cullen Lake, has volunteered to create and manage a Cullen Lakes page on Facebook — www.facebook.com/cullenlakesassociation. If you have any photos, announcements, or news you'd like posted, send them to Alli at info@eaglesnestnisswa.net. Alli will post your contributions as appropriate.

Currents on the Cullens

New Owners:

Susan & Erik Meints, Upper Cullen (U17,22)
Austin Omodt & Kelsey Burns, Middle Cullen (M116)

Deaths:

Lyle Johnson, Lower Cullen (L52)

Annual Meeting highlights issues of zebra mussels

by Carol Lindahl

Nearly 50 members of the Cullen Lakes Association attended the August annual meeting and heard Tim Plude, DNR invasive species specialist, address the issue of zebra mussels. He spoke of the infestation of zebra mussels in Lower Cullen, which was discovered last fall. Recent testing has found a viable (reproducing) population in Lower Cullen but no veligers (the larval stage of zebra mussels) in Middle Cullen.

Plude described zebra mussels as filter feeders that filter out plankton, which are also needed to feed the fish population. Zebra mussels attach to any solid surface (rocks, docks, boats, etc.) and as adults are small with very sharp edges, which can be dangerous to anyone who might step on or touch them. He said the way they affect a lake differs depending on its nutrient level and bottom structure. While every adult zebra mussel produces lots of veligers, about 98-99 per cent will not survive. He recommended that people using pumps on the lake run hot water through them periodically, as that will kill the veligers, and add filters to prevent adults from getting into the system.

Plude then opened the meeting for questions from the attendees and a lively discussion followed. Highlights include:

**Can we block the channel to prevent boats moving the mussels from Lower to Middle? The DNR did this to protect Kimball Lake.* Plude answered that the DNR doesn't do that anymore because it is not a viable long-term solution. (Kimball is now infected and the rocks in the channel are coming out.) He recommended creating more awareness of boats moving through the channel of the risks of transporting veligers in drops of water and adult zebra mussels that can detach from a boat moving through the water.

**What is the DNR's plan? Making it voluntary doesn't work!* Plude replied that ultimately the DNR needs tools to control zebra mussels and right now none exist. The DNR has a dual push on education and enforcement via boat inspection.

**The lake owners should be able to control access to the lakes because we are the ones who suffer from the consequences, or at least we should be able to block accesses when they are not manned by inspectors.*

**Do adult zebra mussels swim?* No, but they can crawl.

**If a lake becomes infested does it always stay infested?* Yes. Attempts to kill off an entire species have so far been unsuccessful.

**Will taking boats and docks out of the water for the winter kill off the mussels?* Yes. Also, scraping them off will decrease the base surface areas for the mussels to attach to, so that can be helpful the following season.

**How does this compare to other invasives?* CLP and purple loosestrife have been around for a long time, but both have treatments.

**Most of the problems have arrived here via the Great Lakes and ships dumping ballast water. What is being done to hold them responsible?* Ballast water is being regulated. Ships must have a treatment system and switch out fresh water with saltwater to prevent invasives from being transported.

**What about the genetic research to create a non-producing population?* Gene manipulation is being worked on but this is a long way off as a solution, and there are ethical issues that come with it. Genetic work is also being done to describe the genome of mussels to determine where they came from. All the infestations in the Brainerd Lakes area have the same genetic structure, indicating they all came from the first infestation in Lake Ossawinnamakee.

**How long can veligers survive in stagnant water?* This is being studied.

**Does the DNR have training and certification of companies that take out docks and move boats and lifts around?* Yes. All lake service providers need to be licensed and have passed a training program educating them on these issues. Members are urged to make sure any service providers they hire have this certification.

CLA members attending the meeting also approved the budget for 2018 and elected these members to two-year terms on the Board of Directors: Paul Beilfuss, Lower; Jim Burrell, Lower; C.B. Bylander, Upper; Charlie Boudrye, Middle; Patty Hicks, Middle; Dan Hurley, Lower; Joel Knutson, Middle; Anne Kostreba, Lower; Carol Lindahl, Lower; and Debi Oliverius, Middle.

Membership discussion included several topics.

*Members asked what groups represent our interests to the State Legislature. Two groups were highlighted: Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance (LARA) and the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR). The CLA is a member of LARA and our members are encouraged to visit its website (crowwinglara.org) for its newsletters and links to other information about the lakes and on-going concerns. MLR has a citizen action network that sends emails on issues to interested individuals (sign up at mnlakesandrivers.org). Remember, the best way to have your voice heard is by direct communication with your state representatives.

*Fishing tournaments were raised as a concern due to the additional boat traffic they bring to a lake. Depending on the size of the tournament, they are regulated by the DNR or by the local county.

*Donors to the CLP control effort were thanked again and the need for continued funding was underscored.

Mark your calendars now for the 2018 Annual Meeting — 9 a.m., Saturday, August 11 at the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Nisswa.

CLA Committees — 2017-2018

2018 Operating budget

Paul Beilfuss, Budget & Finance Committee chair

The following budget was approved by the membership at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

Income

Membership Dues	\$6,000
Donations (General)	1,000
Donations (Curly-leaf Pondweed)	31,000
DNR Grant (projected)	<u>0</u>
Total Income	\$38,000

Expenditures

Administration Committee	
Annual Meeting:	
Supplies, Postage, Printing	\$250
Food	100
Board Meeting Room Donation	100
General Office Supplies	75
LARA Membership	75
Soteroplos Scholarship	<u>250</u>
	\$850
Water Quality Committee	
Water Quality Monitoring	\$700
Education Committee	
Map/Guide Update	\$160
Newsletter Postage	525
Newsletter Printing	900
Web Site Management	<u>125</u>
	\$1,710
Aquatic Invasive Species Committee	
AIS Annual Control (Clarke)	\$43,000
Membership Committee	
Supplies and Printing	\$250
Postage	300
New Owner Packets	<u>50</u>
	\$600
Other	
Board Liability Insurance	\$950
Miscellaneous	<u>250</u>
	\$1,200
Total Expenditures	\$48,060

2017 Budget (Deficiency) (\$10,060)
 (Estimated income less estimated expenditures)

Administration

Carol Lindahl — chair
 Paul Beilfuss
 John MacGibbon

Budget & Finances

Paul Beilfuss — chair
 Joel Knutson
 Jack McNamara
 Debi Oliverius

Education

C.B. Bylander — chair
 Ann Beaver (newsletter)
 Rich Johnson
 John MacGibbon
 Debi Oliverius

Environmental Issues

Anne Kostreba — chair
 Jim Burrell
 Patty Hicks
 Dan Hurley
 Jack McNamara

Fisheries

C.B. Bylander — chair
 Dan Hurley
 Joel Knutson

Invasive Species

Ann Beaver — co-chair
 Carol Lindahl — co-chair
 C.B. Bylander
 Rich Johnson
 Debi Oliverius
 Denny Opsahl

Lake Management Planning

president — chair
 all committee chairs

Land Development

Ann Beaver — chair
 Charlie Boudrye
 Jack McNamara

Membership

Carol Lindahl — chair
 Ann Beaver

Water Quality

Ann Beaver — chair
 Jim Burrell
 Debi Oliverius
 Denny Opsahl

Minnesota's Lake Associations: Who they are and what they do

An in-depth report on a survey of lake associations was published in September by Concordia College (Moorhead) researchers.



This groundbreaking report, sponsored by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR), finds that lake associations voluntarily contribute more than \$6.25 million and 1.2 million volunteer hours annually in lake

preservation and management activities, but feel shut out of environmental policy-making and decisions.

The top concerns of lake associations include aquatic invasive species, overall water quality, runoff control, aging of lake property owners and lack of trust in and connection to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Another tidbit from an earlier study: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, with its lake association members, is also the largest angling group in Minnesota, responsible for nearly 550,000 fishing license sales and nearly \$400,000 spent towards fish stocking.

The executive summary from this report follows. See the full report and analysis at www.mnlakesandrivers.org.

This executive summary provides empirical data on who Minnesota lake associations are, the scope of the lake conservation activities that they engage in, the major concerns they have, and the main hurdles they face. Survey methodology was used to gather data from 250 respondents, representing 186 lake associations (CLA included) in Minnesota. Methods of analysis included descriptives, frequencies, and correlations. Examination of descriptive statistics and frequencies revealed the following:

- Most Minnesota lake associations were formed in the 1960s and 70s. The main reason for forming a lake association is the preservation/protection of the lake. Specifically, the top goals most lake associations have are to control aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the lake and to improve the quality of the lake water.
- Most lake associations in our sample report that their members are motivated to reach the lake association's goals and welcome membership by anyone interested in the welfare of the lake, not just owners of lake properties.
- Most lake association have 100-400 members and 10 or more board members. Even though about half of lake association board members have expertise in specific lake conservation areas such as fisheries and/or AIS, only about 5% of them are able to contribute to legislation affecting the lake.

- Collectively, the 500+ Minnesota lake associations donate about \$6.25 million, annually, to the care of Minnesota's lakes.

- Collectively, the 500+ lake associations in Minnesota contribute about 1.2 million volunteer hours annually to lake conservation activities, including AIS inspection, attendance of meetings, water quality testing, and community education/outreach activities.

- The top three concerns of lake associations in Minnesota are: AIS, overall water quality, and runoff control.

- Most respondents agree or strongly agree that their associations face hurdles in becoming more engaged in lake conservation activities.

- The top three challenges that Minnesota's lake associations face as they work on achieving their goals are: inadequate member participation (i.e. the needs far exceed the available human capital), not being heard/taken seriously by the DNR, and the aging population of lake property owners.

- Most respondents do not agree that their lake associations are authentically included in the lake planning process.

- Most respondents do not feel that their lake associations have real authority over the lake.

- Most respondents do not think that the DNR has sufficient lake management policies in place. Qualitative data, obtained from observations at field visits, email and phone communications, and an open-ended survey question, revealed that AIS, lack of communication with the DNR, managing water quality, and engaging members are major concerns of many lake associations.

Lake association members assert that AIS infestations greatly impact their lives and are eager to engage in more collaborative conservation efforts with the DNR. Miscommunications about decisions affecting the lake and about allocation of funds may result in the projection of major concerns and hostilities directly toward the DNR.

The report concludes that Minnesota's lake associations play a crucial role in protecting and managing Minnesota's lakes and recommends more communication and collaboration between policy makers and lake associations.

reprinted from a Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates citizen alert email notification

Editor's note: MLR is the statewide lake advocacy group mentioned at the 2017 CLA annual meeting.

Editor's note: Following are the committee reports from the 2017 Annual Meeting.

Administration Committee

Carol Lindahl, chair

The Administration Committee organized the 2017 Annual Meeting, in conjunction with the full Board of Directors. Each year the organization strives to provide an interesting program and displays. The Committee has compiled a procedures manual for the CLA, as recommended in the Lake Management Plan's goals and objectives. These procedures will be reviewed and updated as needed during the coming year.

Education Committee

C.B. Bylander, chair

The CLA Education Committee continued to provide timely and helpful information about the Cullen Lakes through *CullenCurrents*, the quarterly newsletter that Ann Beaver edits, and www.cullenlakesassoc.org, the association's website that Dan Meixner administers.

The committee also mailed zebra mussel information to all Cullen Lakes property owners this spring as part of an invasive species awareness and education effort. This mailing, a proactive response to the October 2016 discovery of zebra mussels in Lower Cullen Lake, was done at no cost to the association. It was funded by a Crow Wing County invasive species awareness grant that the association applied for and received. The Education Committee intends to apply for another invasive species awareness grant in the spring of 2018, if still available through Crow Wing County.

Invasive Species Committee

Ann Beaver and Carol Lindahl, co-chairs

In mid-February we submitted our DNR permit applications for our spring treatment of curly-leaf pondweed (CLP). We submitted our applications for DNR grant funding within hours of learning the application period had opened. We learned a few days later that although we had sent in our application materials on the first day the grant program was open, the DNR received 142 applications that day and was able to fund only the first 91 received. Sadly, we were not among those first 91 received, so we did not receive any DNR grant funding this year. On May 15, Clarke Aquatic Services treated 18.41 acres of CLP on Middle Cullen. On May 18 they treated 33.16 acres on Upper Cullen and 26.19 acres on Lower Cullen. According to the June post-treatment surveys conducted by Clarke Aquatic Services, the results of this year's treatment again appear to be very good. During these surveys Clarke also mapped CLP found elsewhere in the lakes, some of which may be considered for treatment in 2018. However, since the DNR limits the number of acres that may be treated in each lake, we will have to make

careful decisions on which areas to treat, giving larger concentrations of CLP preference due to the higher cost involved in treating smaller areas.

As for purple loosestrife, we ask you to monitor your own shoreline and either pull out/dig up or poison any loosestrife you find. One mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually, so if this invasive species is not dealt with our shorelines can be taken over by it. *If it's on your shoreline, it is your responsibility to get rid of it.*

In early July the DNR collected plankton samples in Lower and Middle Cullen Lakes to look for juvenile zebra mussels (veligers). Veligers were found in low numbers in the Lower Cullen sample, which tells us there is a population of zebra mussels reproducing in the lake. No veligers were found in the Middle Cullen sample. Because of these findings, there is no longer a need to report zebra mussel sightings in Lower Cullen to the DNR. However, Middle Cullen folks should be on the lookout for zebra mussels in the lake or on equipment that has been in the lake and report any findings to the DNR.

Water Quality Committee

Ann Beaver, chair

This report changes very little from year to year, which is a good thing. The results of our water sampling since the last annual meeting continue to show the water quality of the lakes falls within the normal range for lakes in our ecoregion. Monthly results vary some from year to year, due to weather conditions, but the overall condition of our lakes remains fairly consistent. A more detailed report will be included in the winter, 2018 newsletter. We continue to update the CLA Lake Water Quality Plan for each lake at the end of the testing season so they may be included in our applications for DNR grants for the treatment of curly-leaf pondweed.

Land Development Committee

Ann Beaver, chair

There have been no land use applications before the Crow Wing County, Nisswa, or Pequot Lakes Planning Commissions/Boards of Adjustment this year that have required our attention, so this past year was again a relatively quiet one for the committee.

Membership Committee

Charlie Boudrye, chair

Dues-paying members in the Cullen Lakes Association number 250. Of those, 14 are Associate Members, meaning they are a family member of a lakeshore property owner. In addition, there are six complimentary members (new property owners on the lakes).

CULLEN LAKES ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 466
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To protect, preserve, and enhance the three Cullen Lakes and their environs in order to ensure the continued vitality of the lakes, high quality fish and wildlife habitat, safe and healthful family living, and the survival of these natural gifts for future generations.

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