

THE CULLEN CURRENTS



Fall, 2011

2011 Lake-Friendly Awards

At the 30th Annual Meeting of the Cullen Lakes Association (CLA), one property on the Cullen Lakes Chain was honored for having a lake-friendly shoreline. Recipients of the 2011 Lake-Friendly Shoreline Award are Tom and Cokey Thiss, Lower Cullen Lake (L32 on the map/guide). Tom and Cokey were present to receive their award.

No one applied this year for the Most Improved Shoreline Award, thus none was given. Each year up to one property per lake is eligible for the former award and one on the chain is eligible for the latter award.

Past recipients of the Lake-Friendly Shoreline Award are:
Upper Cullen -- Vizma Podnieks, Ed & Frieda Rehwaldt, and Gary & Barb Precht

Middle Cullen -- Dan & Karen Meixner, Tony & Melinda Loberg, and Jim & Connie Rockwell

Lower Cullen -- David & Jeanne Mooty, Bill & Ruth Brombach, Tom & Jo MacGibbon, Jerry & Bev Johnson, Roger & Vicky Lavoie

Past recipients of the Most Improved Shoreline Award are: Charlie & Marie Boudrye, Middle Cullen; Jack & Bobbie Kettlewell/Bill & Sally Worm/Stan & Laura Ringold, adjacent Lower Cullen shorelines; and Joe & Barbara Hogan, Lower Cullen.



Cokey & Tom Thiss

photo by John Szafranski

Through the many years they have owned their lakeshore property, Tom and Cokey have worked hard to maintain a natural shoreline that can withstand and/or recover from the occasional damage inflicted upon it by the forces of nature, especially wave action and ice movement. CLA is pleased to be able to honor them for what they have done -- and for what they have not done -- on their shoreline.

New State Law Requires Lake Service Providers to Have Valid DNR Permit

It is now mandatory in Minnesota that lake service providers (LSP) -- individuals or businesses hired to install or remove water-related equipment or structures from waters of the state -- obtain a permit from the DNR before providing any services.

Every LSP must have a valid permit in possession while providing services. LSP must complete invasive species training and pass an examination to qualify for a permit. Permits are valid for three years. Persons working for service providers that have a permit are also required to complete DNR aquatic invasive species (AIS) training. LSP who attended previous AIS seminars must attend again this year in order to receive the new certification. By attending the seminars, LSP will also learn up-to-date information on regional AIS infestations; learn the regulations that apply to moving boats, docks, lifts and equipment; discuss best strategies to remove AIS; and learn how one can work with the DNR and local lake associations to prevent the spread of AIS.

New Permission Form Process Simplified

by John Szafranski

It's been three years since CLA last sent Cullen Lakes property owners the official Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) form requesting permission to spray for curlyleaf pondweed (CLP) within 150 feet of their lakeshore. CLA was very successful in obtaining permission forms from all but two owners during the last cycle. This allowed the DNR to issue mostly property-unrestricted permits and allowed our application contractor, Professional Lake Management, to be very efficient in the spray process.

Per DNR regulation, *the last permission forms have expired* and we must now obtain newly signed forms from each lakefront owner, which will again be good for three years (2012 through 2014). The last cycle of obtaining permission forms required some effort by the owners to fill in the form with the information required. Particularly troublesome for many was knowing the official 911 lake address for their property, a critical item of information.

To make this next cycle of permission forms easier for owners to complete and return, *CLA will now send out pre-printed forms* with most of the required information already entered. We will use data we have from our current membership list, County records, and the previously signed permission forms.

Upon receiving the form, all the owner will need to do is: 1) review the information for accuracy and make any necessary corrections, 2) add any missing information, and 3) sign, date and return the form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Permission forms will be sent to all owners by November 15, 2011. We ask that you **immediately** review the form, make necessary corrections and additions, sign and date it, and send it back using the postage paid envelope. With everyone's cooperation we can make this a relatively painless process for obtaining our annual DNR permits for the continuing control of curlyleaf pondweed in the lakes.

Thank you for your continuing support and cooperation!

Currents on the Cullens

New owners:

Middle Cullen -- John & Vicki Martini (M48), Tony & Lorelei Drkula (M95)

Deaths:

Laverne Sifert, Middle Cullen (M89). Sharon Ganley, Middle Cullen (M8)

Fund-Raising Campaign Ends

by Carol Lindahl

Thank you to everyone who made a three-year pledge to the Cullen Lakes Association (CLA) campaign to raise funds for the treatment of curlyleaf pondweed (CLP), an invasive species prevalent in all three Cullen Lakes.

We are now in the final stages of closing out the campaign and ask that all remaining pledges be paid. If you have a pledge payment due, a letter and return envelope was sent to you in early October.

Keeping CLP under control has many advantages to the lakes, including recreational use opportunities and water quality. We anticipate that identifying the growth of and treating CLP will be an on-going concern of the CLA and expenses will continue to increase.

We feel fortunate to have so many property owners who have supported this campaign. All donors (unless they have requested to be anonymous) will be recognized in the final campaign report in the winter newsletter to be sent out in January 2012.

We will continue to provide updates to you at the Annual Meeting, via the quarterly newsletter and on our website, www.cullenlakes.org, as CLP treatment progresses each spring.

We will also continue to seek grant funds from the DNR for the treatment of CLP. We have been successful in receiving grants for Lower Cullen treatments for the past three years.

2011 Soteroplos Scholarship Recipient

CLA received the following letter from this year's Soteroplos Scholarship recipient at Central Lakes College.

I would like to thank you and the Ted Soteroplos Memorial Scholarship for your generosity that means so much to me and my future goals. Without your contribution I would have a difficult time with my schooling.

This is my third year at CLC, and I am finishing my generals and completing my AAS degree in Horticulture. I am glad that my education is as important to you as it is to me. Once again I would like to thank you for your contribution to my and everyone else's continued education.

*Sincerely,
Malcolm Jones*

*Editor's note: If you would like to make a contribution to this scholarship fund, you may send it to CLA, noting it is to be added to the fund.



Reflections from a Beaver Lodge

by Ann Beaver

For those of you who have not been at the lake this first week or so of October, you have missed some beautiful late summer-like weather. However, the almost completely dry September and the warm, windy days of early October have left the area in a “red flag” fire warning. Even though we had just over an inch of rain recently (it all fell in about an hour), the leaves and pine needles still crunch underfoot. As I write, the DNR has suspended all burning permits and is asking people to exercise extreme caution with recreational fires. I can still remember just a year or two ago when a passing motorcycle literally “sparked” a fire along Wilderness Ridge Road. Fortunately, the fire was quickly contained. The most frustrating part of the experience for residents along that road was that the road is private and the motorcycle was an intruder.

As will likely be the case whenever I sit down to write this column in the future, it will contain a potpourri of my thoughts and observations as well as items deemed worthy of mention by the CLA Board of Directors but are not enough for an article devoted just to them. So, let the potpourri begin!

*One thing prime on the mind of many of us here in the lake country of central Minnesota is preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), especially zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil. Zebra mussels are particularly on my mind, since I know that many people on the Cullen Lakes, as well as their visitors, use their boats in Gull Lake (discovered to be infested by zebra mussels last year) and in one or more of the Cullen Lakes. I can only hope they are taking the necessary precautions, such as not putting their boats back into the Cullen Lakes before draining all water from the boat and power washing the exterior or letting the boat air dry for five days or more. Doing all that may be a pain in the neck, but not doing it could well result in introducing zebra mussels into the Cullen chain.

*One more thing along this line and then I’ll try to lighten up. If you have read page one of this newsletter, you know that the people you hire to do your dock/boat lift work and help you deal with your boats must have a permit from the DNR that indicates they have gone through the required training related to AIS. It will be your responsibility in the future to make sure they have this permit. If they can’t

provide proof of this permit to you, **don’t use them.** There are plenty of lake service providers, as they are called, who have or by next spring will have received the proper training to be able to acquire the DNR permit to work in public waters (and that’s what the lakes are, even though we like to think of them as “ours”).

*On the preceding page you hopefully read the article about receiving, signing, and returning the “permission to spray” form that will be sent to you in mid November. Contrary to what we had previously been told by the DNR, the new form will be good for three years, not just one. Of the more than 280 property owners on the three Cullen Lakes, only two did not return this form to us when we had to collect them three years ago. However, getting that return rate took a lot of time and effort of the CLA Board members who were assigned people to follow up with and, in some cases, literally hound to get the form signed and returned before spring. Please help us this year by checking the accuracy of the pre-printed information on the form, providing any missing information, signing and dating the form, and returning it to us within days of receiving it. The volunteers who serve as the CLA Board of Directors would so appreciate not having to do so much follow-up with these forms. By signing the form you are simply giving us permission to treat curlyleaf pondweed if it is located within 150 feet off your shoreline. Technically, the DNR could treat it anyway, since the lakes are public waters, but they are asking, as a goodwill gesture, for your permission to do so.

*There are still a handful of past CLA members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2011. I hope this is merely an oversight on their part. If your name is highlighted on the address page of this newsletter, you are one of this handful. I hope you will send in your \$25 dues and continue to support your lake association.

*At the October 8 Board of Directors’ meeting we discussed having a Facebook page for easy dissemination of information to our younger lake people. Unfortunately, most of the CLA Board is not tech savvy enough to be able to do this. Is there anyone out there in our readership who would be willing to take this on? I’m so tech “unsavvy” I don’t even know what a Facebook page involves, so I don’t really know what I’m asking!

*There evidently are a fair number of people hunting water fowl in the area this fall. Every morning since the season opened I, or rather our Shih Tzu, who sleeps on the bed, have heard gunshots exactly 1/2 hour before sunrise (the legal time for hunting each day). It is precisely at that time the he bolts off the bed and runs for cover, not to be seen or heard from again until later in the morning when the hunters have gone home. It must be tough to have the good hearing of a dog!

I wish you all a good rest of the fall, outside chores finished before the snow starts to fall (hopefully a while yet), and an enjoyable first part of winter, wherever you are.

Editor's note: Following are the committee reports from the 2011 Annual Meeting.

Administration

The Administration Committee organized the 2011 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 also continued working on creating a procedures manual for the CLA, as recommended in the Lake Management Plan's goals and objectives. The committee has reviewed the Association's financial status and believes that our finances are in good shape.

Budget and Finances

An annual financial audit was completed in the spring and no issues were found.

Education

The Education Committee maintains two major sources of information about the Cullen Lakes and the lakes association: Cullen Currents, published quarterly and edited by Ann Beaver, and the Cullen Lakes website, www.cullenlakes.org, under webmaster Charlie Boudrye. In addition, the committee makes other resource materials available to members at no charge. The book, *Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality* and the "Restoring Your Shore" CD ROM program by the Department of Natural Resources are both available by contacting Ann Beaver.

Environmental Issues

Highway pick up

Seventeen people helped with the Labor Day weekend highway pick up last year. An amazing turnout! This year's pick up schedule was canceled at the request of the Minnesota Highway Department. Roadwork was going to begin in early May and continue through the fall, and MnDOT did not want volunteers working on the highway shoulders when crews might be working on the road.

Shoreline restoration/preservation

At this Annual Meeting CLA is presenting its fifth annual Lake Friendly Shoreline Award. Congratulations to this year's winners:

Lower Cullen – Tom and Cokie Thiss

CLA did not present its Most Improved Shoreline Award this year since it is an award a property owner has to apply for and no one did.

Sincere thanks to those of you who are leaving a buffer of unmanaged native plants along the water's edge and/or are working to restore your shoreline to a natural state or choosing to leave it in its natural state. A buffer at least ten

feet deep is the best, but even an area a couple feet deep of native plants on the shoreline will help. Your individual efforts will make a cumulative positive impact on lake water quality and wildlife habitat!

Invasive Species Committee

Curly-leaf pondweed

Curlyleaf pondweed (CLP) in Lower and Upper Cullen Lakes was treated in mid May by our contracted applicator, PLM Lake and Land Management Corp. CLP in Middle Cullen Lake was not able to be treated because it was not growing sufficiently and early enough to be surveyed and treated before our DNR treatment permit expired on May 31. This was a big disappointment to the Board of Directors as well as to the Middle Cullen property owners off whose shoreline it eventually manifested itself. This same situation was true for the northeast bay of Upper Cullen and in a few sites on Lower Cullen. The committee will be working with PLM and the DNR to find an acceptable way to treat this slow growing CLP next year without killing all the native vegetation that is growing by the time the CLP becomes evident.

Committee members continue working to develop accurate and updated maps to assist PLM and the DNR in finding the CLP more easily during the spring surveys and to help ensure effective treatment of the CLP. **You can do your part** by: 1) learning to recognize CLP, 2) not boating through areas of CLP, and 3) by removing from the lake any CLP plant fragments you find floating around while you are on the lake. If you happen to find CLP growing in shallow water off your shoreline, pull it out and dispose of it on land.

Purple loosestrife

Committee members are also monitoring the Cullens' shorelines for purple loosestrife and working with the DNR to treat the plants with an herbicide. Again, **you can help** by learning to identify this invasive plant and letting us know where you find it. Legally, it is the responsibility of each property owner to rid the property of this invasive plant, but CLA and the DNR are willing to help.

Other invasives

The two invasive species not yet present in the Cullen chain that we are most worried about at present are zebra mussels (found as close by as Gull Lake) and Eurasian water milfoil (also present in several area lakes). The committee has been working and will continue to work closely with the Education Committee to educate Cullen Lakes property owners about everything they need to do to comply with current law and other preventative actions they can take to prevent the Cullens from becoming infested with these species for as long as possible. **Your job is** to take the threat of invasive species seriously and do all you can do to prevent them from spreading from one lake to another.

Water Quality

The committee continues to do monthly water testing from May through September. Results from last year and thus far this year show the lakes to be within the normal range for lakes in our ecoregion. A complete report will be published in the winter 2012 newsletter and posted on the CLA web site. To assist in applying for DNR grants for the treatment of curlyleaf pondweed, CLA has a Lake Water Quality Plan for each lake. The plans were written in 2008 and the water testing results are used at the end of each year to update these plans.

Lake Management Planning

The 2011 updated CLA Lake Management Plan is used by committee chairs and CLA officers to help guide them in their activities throughout the year. The Plan is available for viewing on the CLA web site: www.cullenlakes.org. Go to the News Page and click on "Lake Management Plan."

The CLA Directors encourage you to join them in their work by serving on the Board of Directors or as a non-board member on one or more of the CLA committees. To do so, simply contact the chair of the committee(s) you are interested in.

Land Development

The committee monitors land use applications that involve properties on the Cullen Lakes and in their watershed, for what happens on land has a direct effect on lakes and streams. The three jurisdictions that regulate land use on the Cullen Lakes' shorelands are Crow Wing County (most of Upper and the east half of Middle), the City of Pequot Lakes (the far western part of Upper, the west half of Middle, and the very northeast portion of Lower), and the City of Nisswa (all of Lower except the very northeastern part). The committee has copies of each jurisdiction's land use ordinance and it bases CLA's position on rezoning, variance, and other land use requests on how well the request complies with the requirements of the ordinance and on the potential environmental consequences of any allowed deviation from the ordinance.

This past year was once again a relatively quiet one for the committee. Efforts were concentrated on monitoring the continued renovation of Wilderness Resort Villas on Middle Cullen.

Membership

As of August 1, membership in the Cullen Lakes Association stands at 241, of which 238 are paid members and three are Complimentary Members (new property owners on the lakes). Of the paid members, 22 are Associate Members, meaning they are former lakeshore

property owners, property owners in the lakes' watershed, or family members of a lakeshore property owner.

Curlyleaf Pondweed Fundraising

Our very successful fund drive for treatment of Curlyleaf Pondweed (CLP) is winding down and this will be the last formal report from the Chair on the financial aspect of this project.

As of August 1, 2011, we have received donations of \$100,288 from 200 owners, representing nearly 70% of all properties. Donations of \$3,310 were collected in 2011 from 19 owners. After allowing for uncollectible amounts, only \$2,290 in unpaid pledges from 12 owners remains. We expect to collect these commitments in the year ahead. The figures above do not include DNR grant funds received for treatment of Lower Cullen Lake, which are shown in each year's treasurer's report.

CLA Committees -- 2011-2012

Administration

Carol Lindahl, chair
Paul Beilfuss
Gary Jackson
John MacGibbon
Tom MacGibbon
John Szafranski

Budget & Finances

Gary Jackson, chair
Charlie Boudrye
Carol Lindahl

Education

John MacGibbon, chair
Ann Beaver
Paul Beilfuss
Tom MacGibbon
Dan Meixner
John Szafranski

Environmental Issues

Ann Beaver, chair
Rich Johnson
Jim Kostreba
John MacGibbon
Tom MacGibbon

Fish Management

Denny Opsahl, chair
Paul Beilfuss
Gary Jackson
Dan Meixner

Invasive Species

John Szafranski, co-chair
Rich Johnson, co-chair
Ann Beaver
Paul Beilfuss
Dan Hurley
Jim Kostreba
Carol Lindahl
Denny Opsahl
Phil Reichenbach

Lake Management Planning

president, chair
all committee chairs

Land Development

Ann Beaver, chair
Charlie Boudrye
Jim Kostreba
Phil Reichenbach

Membership

Charlie Boudrye, chair
Ann Beaver
Carol Lindahl

Water Quality

Ann Beaver, chair
Charlie Boudrye
Rich Johnson
Dan Meixner
Denny Opsahl

Reduction in Purple Loosestrife Seen

by John Szafranski



Owners on Middle Cullen Lake may have noticed that this summer there was less purple loosestrife to be seen than in previous several years. Although we have no objective measures to compare, surveys by several CLA Board members indicate a plant reduction of 50% or more compared to 2010 and 2009.

At a recent meeting with several Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) representatives, they said the loosestrife population was down throughout the entire state of MN. The reasons ventured included:

- The cool spring with abundant precipitation caused vigorous growth of other native species which helped stunt or hold back loosestrife.

- The biological control of loosestrife using leaf-feeding beetles (*Galerucella*) which the DNR has been promoting for a number of years is beginning to have some observable and positive effect.

In the case of Middle Cullen, several other key reasons may be that:

- The DNR has chemically sprayed the loosestrife for the past two years, at no cost to CLA or property owners. DNR staff has also observed beetles on some Middle Cullen loosestrife plants, the result of seeding of beetles on loosestrife several years ago.
- Several owners, on whose property loosestrife has been spotted, have taken aggressive action on their own to pull out offending plants.



While this is good news, as with many other invasive species, loosestrife is difficult to control, difficult to predict, and virtually impossible to eradicate. It will continue to require our vigilance in observation, surveys and treatment over the years ahead—both by CLA and individual owners.

Why are we so concerned about Purple Loosestrife?

According to the University of Minnesota, in an article published in 1998 by Alyson Loos and David Ragsdale, purple loosestrife presents a serious problem. We quote:

“Purple loosestrife is an aggressive perennial plant of European origin found throughout Canada and the United States. Minnesota currently has over 1800 known sites infested with purple loosestrife that collectively cover approximately 38,000 acres. Purple loosestrife is a serious concern because it displaces native wetland plants and can become the dominant plant, thereby reducing species diversity and changing the ecosystem of a wetland. A single purple loosestrife plant with multiple stems can produce between one and two million seeds that are easily dispersed along rivers and waterways. Even a few purple loosestrife plants pose a serious threat to an entire wetland.”

We remind our members and owners that control and eradication of purple loosestrife is the responsibility of the individual property owner---by Minnesota statute. When you find purple loosestrife on your property please help to prevent further spread of this invasive plant by digging it up, roots and all---preferably early in the season before it goes to seed. Place it in a plastic bag, and dispose of it in a landfill. Composting is not advised because the seeds may not be destroyed and could generate new growth.

Keep Your Mailing Address(es) Current

If you are one of the many Cullen Lakes property owners who have two different mailing addresses during the year, **please provide CLA with both addresses and the dates during which each is in effect.** This will ensure that you receive all mailings (including the quarterly newsletter) from CLA in a timely fashion. It will also save CLA money in extra postage when a mailing is returned to us. Anything we mail to you using the bulk mailing rate (a savings of 16 cents per item) cannot be forwarded and is returned to us with postage due. Thank you!

Order Your 2012 Cullen Lakes Calendar Now!

This marks the third year that the Cullen Lakes Association has printed an *exclusive* calendar devoted to our Cullen Lakes. It has grown in popularity each year. Because of this and our desire to place even more of these beautiful calendars in our owners' hands, we have reduced our price this year to the lowest ever---*just \$15 each!*

These wall hung or appointment calendars feature *spiral binding, quality heavy weight coated paper, are hole pre-punched* for hanging and contain *gorgeous full color photos* taken on and around the Cullen Lakes. They make an attractive addition to your home or cabin as a reminder of your many good times and scenery seen at the lake. They also make wonderful Christmas or birthday gifts for family or friends who have enjoyed our Cullen Lakes. *Note that all net proceeds from calendar sales go to CLA for funding its environmental programs.*

Below are several of the beautiful photos you'll find in the 2012 CLA calendar. Note that this is the first year we've included a *winter scene* photographed and contributed by a CLA member.



Send in your order ***now*** using the order form below. Orders must be received by November 15 to assure delivery for Christmas by December 15.

Cut at dotted line below

Cullen Lakes Association 2012 Calendar Order Form Price---including all shipping & handling---\$15 each

Name (please print)	Shipping Address	Number of Calendars	\$ Amount
			\$

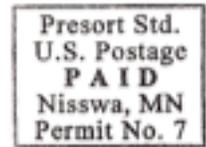
***Please make checks payable to:
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***Send this form with your check to:
John Szafranski
11391 N Mountain Breeze Dr
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***Please do not send
cash or money
orders. Checks only***

Note: All orders must be received no later than November 15 to assure delivery by December 15. Orders received later than November 15 will be shipped as soon as calendars are available—usually within 2 weeks.

CULLEN LAKES ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 466
NISSWA, MN 56468



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.

Return Service Requested

CLA BOARD 2011-2012

BEAVER, Ann (Lower Cullen)
218-568-5904
beaver@uslink.net

KOSTREBA, Jim (Lower Cullen)
320-252-3674
ajkostreba@charter.net

REICHENBACH, Phil (Middle Cullen)
651-235-8707
reichenbachmeister@gmail.com

BEILFUSS, Paul (Lower Cullen)
218-963-6028
boomer284@charter.net

LINDAHL, Carol (Lower Cullen)
651-206-1330
lindahllcarol@hotmail.com

SZAFRANSKI, John (Middle Cullen)
520-468-8719
johnconn3537@comcast.net

BOUDRYE, Charlie (Middle Cullen)
218-963-7494
eagleye@nisswa.net

MACGIBBON, John (Lower Cullen)
952-440-3757
jmacgibb@crdus.jnj.com

Officers
President: Ann Beaver
Vice President: John MacGibbon
Secretary: Carol Lindahl
Treasurer: Charlie Boudrye

HURLEY, Dan (Associate Member)
612-481-3766
lonegoose15@aol.com

MACGIBBON, Tom (Lower Cullen)
651-490-5129
tmacgibbon@comcast.net

JACKSON, Gary (Middle Cullen)
763-694-0387
gkjackson6@aol.com

MEIXNER, Dan (Middle Cullen)
218-568-8367
starbail@uslink.net

Newsletter editor: Ann Beaver
CLA web site: www.cullenlakes.org
Web master: Charlie Boudrye

JOHNSON, Rich (Lower Cullen)
239-455-8440
rhdbjohnson@yahoo.com

OPSAHL, Denny (Upper Cullen)
651-482-1297
djopsahl@comcast.net