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# THE CULLEN CURRENTS

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Spring, 2019



## 2019 Curly leaf pondweed treatment

In its April 30 pre-treatment surveys of the Cullen Lakes our contractor, Clarke Aquatic Services, found much less curly leaf pondweed (CLP) than in past years. This could indicate there will be less of it this summer, it could be that the heavy snow cover on the lakes retarded its winter growth, or it could be a combination of the two. It will likely take a few more years' experience to know if the CLP has been greatly reduced in the lakes.

Clarke proposed the treatment of 3.9 acres in Lower Cullen in the area where the stream flows into the lake. They found three other very small areas of medium density CLP, but they were not large enough to be successfully treated.

Clarke found CLP in six locations in Middle Cullen, but proposed treatment in only three of them due to the very small areas involved. They proposed treating 4.84 acres: one area where the stream enters the lake from Upper Cullen, one area in the bay between the Reed property and Wilderness Resort, and one area off the shoreline directly south of that bay.

Clarke proposed treatment of a total of 8.32 acres in Upper Cullen in three of the five areas where CLP was found: the NE bay, the SW bay, and the NW bay. The other two areas were too small to be successfully treated.

Before issuing the permits to allow treatment, Tim Plude, DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, visited the sites to verify there was enough CLP to merit treatment with a herbicide. He granted the permits for Upper and Lower Cullen Lakes, as proposed by Clarke, but he did not find enough CLP in Middle Cullen for him to authorize treatment with a herbicide.

If you find CLP off your shoreline and the water is shallow enough, you can get remove it by gently pulling it from as close to the lake bottom as possible and removing it from the lake.

## Remember: Don't give zebra mussel hitchhikers a ride!

With the open water recreation season starting, it is imperative that we do all we can to prevent zebra mussels, in the adult form and especially in the basically invisible veliger form, from hitchhiking from Lower Cullen into Middle Cullen via the channel. This invasive species can't make the trek on its own, since the stream's current into Lower Cullen is too strong.



Please be sure there are no visible zebra mussels attached to your boat or other water related equipment as you travel from one lake to the other.

And just as important, do your utmost not to transport Lower Cullen lake water into Middle Cullen. That is the only way zebra mussel veligers can get from Lower Cullen into Middle Cullen.

***Save the date!***

***2019 CLA Annual Meeting  
Saturday morning, August 10  
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.***

## Shoreline light pollution or trespass

by Robert Eliason, Gull Chain of Lakes Association  
Environment Committee member

Forty some years ago when our kids were young, we wanted them to experience the wonder of the night as we were able to as youngsters. At our cabin, we would often go out, braving mosquitoes, to look at the sky. We saw the Milky Way with so many stars that it was difficult to discern constellations. We saw shooting stars and on rare occasions enjoyed the splendor of the Northern Lights. The shoreline was dark, and the lake had a very wild feel. We knew that we were indeed “up north”.

We did the same things with our grandchildren, but the experience was not as before. There was much, much more outdoor lighting around the shore. The Milky Way wasn't as milky; the constellations seemed easier to discern. The lake didn't feel as wild. It was disappointing that so much had been lost in just a couple of decades.

Today, we still like to sit outside to view the heavens, but the stray light from shoreline lighting has become worse. This stray light has reduced our enjoyment of the night sky. Basically, it has diminished our use of our property. In addition, we have had stray light from neighbors across the bay illuminate rooms of our cabin, including our bedroom. We felt that this light had invaded our privacy; it was trespassing on our property, in our cabin.

We can mitigate the stray light around our lakeshore without really diminishing people's desire to have outdoor lighting. All it takes is to use appropriate light fixtures and to plan accordingly. Ordinary outdoor/exterior lighting normally uses unshielded fixtures that are responsible for stray light. A full cut-off shielded light fixture directs light downward and cuts off light from shining horizontally and skyward. (Appropriate fixtures are illustrated at [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org).)



Directing all the light downward can actually have the effect of increasing the brightness of the illuminated area. This, in turn, allows a lower wattage bulb to be used, which has the additional effect of reducing energy use.

When considering your lakeshore lighting, the lighting should be bright enough to provide adequate illumination without being so bright that it lights up the whole neighborhood. By changing our lighting habits, I believe that some of the wild up north feel can be reclaimed. It will require individuals, businesses and government entities to make a commitment to alter their current lighting in a way that prevents stray light. By doing so, both light pollution and light trespass will be mitigated.

## Cabin Check:

### *Don't Forget to Test Your Well Water*

by Jodie Tweed

as published in the April/May 2019 issue of  
*Lake Country Journal* magazine

AS YOU'RE OPENING UP THE FAMILY CABIN THIS SPRING, it's also the perfect time to check your well water for harmful contaminants by taking a sample of your drinking water.

“You've got a lot of other things to do when opening up the cabin. It's an easy time to add this to your list,” explains Sarah Fogderud, client services manager for A.W. Research Laboratories in Brainerd.

Fogderud says if homeowners haven't tested their private well water in more than five years, it's recommended they test for at least coliform bacteria, nitrate, and lead. It's particularly important that cabin owners whose wells have been stagnant for most of the year flush their water for awhile before taking a water sample. She stressed that you can't smell or taste these harmful contaminants in your drinking water.

Kits can be purchased and picked up at A.W. Research Laboratories, 16326 Airport Road, Brainerd. Samples need to be brought to the lab within 24 hours of sampling and results will be ready within three to five business days. If your well tests positive for coliform bacteria, then you'll need to chlorinate your well. A reverse osmosis system is required to filter out nitrate and arsenic.

A.W. Research Laboratories has partnered with several lake associations in the Brainerd lakes area, offering discounts on water sampling kits to property owners on the lake. Check with your lake association to find out if you can receive a discounted kit. Otherwise, water sampling kits vary from \$22 for total coliform bacteria testing to \$110 to test for total coliform, nitrate, lead, arsenic, and manganese. Visit [awlab.com](http://awlab.com) to learn more and order a sampling kit or call 218.829.7974.

#### **Test Your Well for:**

- **Coliform Bacteria** (Every year)
- **Nitrates** (Every other year)
- **Arsenic** (At least once)
- **Lead** (At least once)
- **Manganese**  
(Before a baby drinks the water)

The Minnesota Department of Health offers a wealth of information on water quality and well testing online at [health.state.mn.us/wellwater](http://health.state.mn.us/wellwater).

*(Information Provided by the Minnesota Department of Health)*

## CLA membership update

As of May 18, 2019 we have 237 paid members and 6 complimentary members (new owners). Membership letters for 2019 were mailed in early December to allow for those wanting to use a donation for 2018 tax purposes to do so. A second dues notice was mailed in late March to those who had not yet sent in their 2019 dues. This brought in dues and donations from 24 more people. However, there are still 24 past CLA members who have not sent in their dues yet. *If your name is highlighted on the mailing label, you haven't yet paid your dues.*

If you haven't already sent in your \$25 membership dues (and hopefully a contribution towards the treatment of curly-leaf pondweed), please take the time now to write your check, make any necessary corrections to your personal data on the membership letter you received, and mail them both to CLA, PO Box 466, Nisswa, MN 56468.

For those lake properties that are co-owned, we encourage all owners to have their own membership in CLA. This not only provides additional support for the lake association, it also guarantees all owners will receive important information concerning the lakes.

Please help us keep our membership records current by sending any changes in your mailing address, email address, or a change in ownership of your property to either Ann Beaver, newsletter editor, or to Carol Lindahl, Membership Committee chair. Their contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

## Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) management donations update

Again, the CLA Board of Directors heartily thanks all who have contributed thus far to the 2019 CLP treatment fund. The very positive response is truly impressive.

Here are some of the statistics as of May 18:

\*186 property owners and family members (there are 237 paid CLA members so far this year, so that's 79%!) have made a CLP donation.

\*70 contributions were the \$250 suggested in the membership mailing. This does not include the co-owned properties whose owners split the donation among themselves. (We don't expect co-owners to each contribute the suggested amount.)

\*22 contributions were more than the suggested \$250.

\*Contributions have ranged from \$25 to \$975.

\*Contributions total \$35,856.

THANK YOU!

## Lease of a residential unit

Responses received by the newsletter editor to the article in the winter newsletter by Dawn Bittner, Pequot Lakes Zoning Specialist, indicate that at least several properties on the Cullen Lakes are being offered/used as rental properties, sometimes causing disruption to the neighboring property owners. The following is a summary of the land use ordinance requirements of the three jurisdictions that regulate land use on the three Cullen Lakes.

Pequot Lakes: a maximum of four leases per dwelling per year. Nisswa: a maximum of three leases per dwelling per year. Crow Wing County: no regulations on residential leasing at this time.

If a rental property near you is causing a problem, please contact the owner of the property to let them know.



## Fourth of July boat parades

Each of the three Cullen Lakes will again have a Fourth of July boat parade informally organized by its lakeshore property owners.

Participants should gather at the east end of their lake on July 4 shortly

before 2:00 p.m. and plan on making one entire trip around the lake.

Please send photos you take of your parade to the newsletter editor to be included in the summer newsletter.

## 2019 CLA annual meeting

The 37th annual meeting of the Cullen Lakes Association will be held **Saturday, August 10** at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Nisswa.

Coffee and rolls will be available and exhibits will be ready for viewing starting at 8:30 a.m..

The meeting will begin at 9:00 and will feature a presentation on the Hirschey/Maguire family's 100 years on the Cullen Lakes. The regular business meeting will follow the presentation. The meeting will be over by 11:00, leaving you the rest of the day to enjoy lake activities and other recreation.

## Fifth Annual Cullen Lakes Yacht Club Regatta--2019

by Dan Long

Check out your goosenecks, cleats, Cunninghams, outhauls, boom vang, tillers and spars. Make sure your



sails are repaired and in good condition. Replace damaged or frayed lines. Wash your hulls. Find your favorite sailor's cap or buy a new one (as one sailor

will have to do, after losing his in a capsizing maneuver last summer). Mark **Saturday, July 20** on your calendar. You are now ready for the Fifth Annual CLYC Regatta. As always, it will be a splendid affair not without incident. More specific details will follow as July 20 approaches and the ice is gone. Think spring. Think summer. Think about going sailing. Til then . . . steady as she goes.

### Swim here often?

One of the most popular places to swim on Lower Cullen is the sandy delta where the stream from Middle Cullen enters the lake. It's great for kids because it's fairly shallow and it's great for everyone because it's in full sun all day. On warm, sunny days you'll find many pontoons and other watercraft anchored in the area enjoying the water and sunshine.

The number of anchored boats can cause a problem, however, if the boats are too close to one another. The stream and its delta are navigable public water. Other watercraft must be able to travel safely through the area and not be a threat to swimmers. If you are enjoying this area on a busy day, please spread out throughout the large, sandy-bottomed shallow area to allow others to pass through safely.

And while enjoying this great delta area, please be courteous of others, both in/on the water and on shore. If you play music, keep the volume down. Take all your trash home with you. Stay off people's docks and shoreline and keep your dogs off them, too.

Continue to use and enjoy this wonderful part of the lake, but do so in ways you would want others to do if it were located just off your shoreline.

## Know rules if considering a hydraulic jet

Are you considering a hydraulic jet for your dock? If so, it is best to know the rules before you make a purchase. That's because hydraulic jets (HydroSweep Pro, Aqua Thruster, Aquasweep, etc.):

- \*Cannot be used in any way that disturbs the lake bottom or uproots aquatic plants.
- \*Jets can be used to blow floating surface debris and floating algae away from the dock without a permit as long as the bottom is not disturbed.
- \*Even jets that are not pointing at the bottom can disturb sediment, especially in shallow areas or in a lake with a soft bottom. Some sites may not be suitable for a jet no matter the orientation.

Though well-intended, do know that hydraulic jets can negatively affect your neighbors. Improperly used jets can cloud water, thereby reducing everyone's enjoyment of the lake. Even legal use of hydraulic jets may result in mats of plant debris that can be a nuisance to neighbors.

Hydraulic jets can also have fish and water quality implications. Sediment disturbed from the bottom of a lake can cover and choke the plants and structure fish need to survive and reproduce. Native vegetation increases a lake's potential to absorb excessive nutrients. Uprooting native plants increases the risk of invasive species taking hold.

So, be aware of these realities when considering your purchase. The Department of Natural Resources takes seriously the incorrect use of these products because altering the lake bottom or uprooting aquatic plants using these devices is illegal.

If you are found illegally using a hydraulic jet, a state conservation officer may issue you a citation, restoration order or both.

### *Currents on the Cullens*

#### **New owners**

Nick & Danielle Lesmeister — Lower Cullen (L93)

#### **Deaths**

Carole Woog Lick — Middle Cullen (M119)

Dale Settergren — Lower Cullen (L83)

Darlene Asmus — Lower Cullen (L79)

## Spring is spawning season

by C.B. Bylander

The recipe for good fishing starts with eggs, and Mother Nature has been cooking like crazy in recent weeks.

Statewide, billions of fish hatch in spring as part of a seasonal sequence that has evolved over thousands of years. For game species, this annual replenishment begins with the northern pike, a species that starts to spawn while ice still covers lakes. Next come the muskellunge. As waters warm and days grow longer, walleye, perch, bass, crappie and bluegill follow suit, and largely in that order. Suckers and other prey species spawn in spring too.

The beauty of the spawning sequence is that newly hatched predators always have newly hatched prey to feed upon. Little northerns find even littler perch and walleye to eat. Little bass find even littler bluegill. Nature devised a way for each species to sustain itself, and it's pretty darn cool.

Though Mother Nature serves up fresh batches of fish each year the total numbers vary greatly depending upon water temperature. Walleye, for example, rarely flourish when an early warm spell is followed by extended cold. That type of weather pattern retards zooplankton production, the microscopic organisms that mosquito-sized fish depend upon after they have absorbed their yolk sac. Still, one year's bust is often followed by another year's boom as late springs typically result in stronger walleye year classes.

The bluegill is very common in the Cullen lakes, and unlike most Minnesota fish species the bluegill spawn lasts a long time. Some bluegills spawn in May when water temperatures hit about 60 degrees. Others don't spawn until early July when water can be 80 degrees. This is called asynchronous spawning, which is nature's way of ensuring a good year class of fish will be produced because the spawn is so drawn out.

Crappies are common in the Cullens too. Anglers who fish shallow bays for crappie shortly after ice out often mistakenly think the fish are spawning. In fact, crappies move from deep water into warmer dark-bottomed bays to stimulate gonad growth. Spawning comes later. Crappie spawning success in northern Minnesota is often exceptionally good or exceptionally poor, leading to boom and bust year classes of crappie. For anglers, there is a boom and bust cycle too. The best crappie fishing occurs about five years after a huge year class has hatched. These "hot bites" are when localized fishing pressure peaks.

Though most walleye caught in Minnesota are the result of natural spawning the DNR does stock about 1,000 lakes with walleye. Typically, fisheries crews collect

about 580 million eggs from spawning females each year at 10 different egg collection sites.

You and others can help ensure good fishing by protecting water quality, spawning areas and near-shore fish nursery areas. When nature grows fish no fish-hauling trucks, gas or state agency staff time are required. Moreover, keeping sediment out of lakes and rivers is critical. Once a gravel or rocky substrate spawning site is covered with silt it becomes useless.

### The Sunfish Myth

excerpted from an article by Scott Mackenthun in the May-June 2019 *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*



Sunfish. You can never catch too many — or so we thought. Minnesota anglers are learning that in order to grow bigger sunfish, we will need to keep fewer of them.

While walleyes are Minnesota's state fish, sunfish take the prize for being the most widely distributed sport fish across the state, as well as the most harvested fish. Sunfish are often a child's first fish caught and a staple at fish fries.

Fisheries managers and anglers alike once believed you could never overfish sunfish. Today, we know that's a myth. Minnesota sunfish abundance is as good as or higher than historical levels, but fish size has declined. In many places, years of keeping large fish and releasing little ones to grow up has backfired. We have over harvested large sunfish.

Anglers' longtime reliance on sunfish species for meals of fish, it turns out, has had unintended consequences. Because sunfish group up in schools and are eager biters, they are vulnerable to harvest. Sunfish angling is open year-round in Minnesota, including in the late spring and early summer when large males guard nests during spawning. Anglers often prefer keeping the largest sunfish caught to yield the largest fillet, which can have negative effects by removing the largest, latest maturing, and fastest growing fish, in particular males. Research has shown that decades of harvesting large numbers of sunfish have created unbalanced fish communities with far too many small sunfish and very few large ones.

Studies done in both Minnesota and Wisconsin show that angler harvest is frequently the most important factor affecting sunfish size, and in most cases, if anglers want larger sunfish, they need to keep fewer. Even though the current limit of sunfish is 20, consider if you really need that many for a satisfying meal.

Starting this spring, limit your catch, don't catch your limit!

**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.

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