

the vermilion sportsman



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A non-profit organization, founded in 1968 and dedicated to the improvement of Lake Vermilion"*

Vol. 32, No. 3 1800 MEMBERS COOK & TOWER, MN AUGUST 2006

President's Message

Once again it's time to start getting ready for the Annual Meeting. The committee has been busy lining up a program we hope will entertain and inform you. We would like to have a big turnout and if any members have comments or suggestions or, for that matter, have candidates for the Board of Directors slots, let Paula Bloczynski, our Nomination Committee chair, know. Just recently, John Zwieg has decided not to seek another term on the board so there are two immediate openings to be voted on at the meeting. Miller Friesen has indicated he will continue to stay on until he has definite word on the sale of his place. If it happens soon, we will have a third opening. I'm sure there are members who would be a definite asset to the board who only need a slight push to seek election.

I also want to thank Mardy Jackson for stepping in to take over the Membership Committee duties from Cathy Raps. Both Cathy and Mardy are to be commended for such a smooth transition.

My prediction of a cold spring was only partially right! It was a cold and rainy fishing opener weekend, but turned nice the following week. As of right now, we're getting close to the prop dinging water level (down about one foot in the last month) due to lack of rain. It's a good idea to carry a spare prop for emergencies.

Fishing was good on opening weekend and has stayed pretty good in spots since then. Of course the mayflies have been plentiful the last few weeks, which tends to slow things down a bit. Hopefully, action will pick up now that the walleyes have moved out to deeper waters. It has been a bit unusual this year with many more boats trolling in front of our place and our neighbor getting lots of sun-fish off his dock after dark. I would hope that this is a sign of greater fish population having to forage over a wider area.

The decision by U.S. Steel Minntac to propose discharging the tailings water into the West Two Rivers/St. Louis River watershed did not sit well with the south St. Louis County people. The permit still needs to be approved by the MPCA, but I think this would be the least harmful solution.

The County Planning Commission held a public in-

Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.

38th ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Saturday, August 12

Fortune Bay Resort on Lake Vermilion
Social Hour - 5 p.m.; Buffet - 5:45 p.m.

Adults - \$14; Children age 12 and younger - \$7

***Reservations necessary, by Monday, Aug. 7,
to one of the following members:***

COOK:

Vi Harris, 666-2300

Liz Borken, 666-0579 or E-mail: lizb@northlc.com

Nan Lundblad, 666-2316

or E-mail: lundblad@accessmn.com

TOWER:

Shirley Korpela, 753-3034

Julie Friesen, 753-2500

Paula Bloczynski, 753-2107

Dr. Lynn L. Rogers, renowned wildlife biologist,
educator and black bear researcher
will be the featured speaker

put meeting on June 22, 2006, for the U.S. Steel proposed development called the "3 Bays on Vermilion." The draft EIS is ready for review and is up on the St. Louis County website now. If you want to learn more about this project visit their website. They've revamped their website so I would suggest you note the new website URL!

The St. Louis County
website is: <http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us/slcportal/>
Their E-mail address is: planninginfo@co.st-louis.mn.us

(Continued on Page 2)

Ely bear expert Lynn Rogers will headline 38th Annual Meeting, August 12, at Fortune Bay

Our Sportsmen's Club's 38th Annual Meeting and dinner is set for Saturday, August 12, at Fortune Bay Resort. This is the 10th year we have had the dinner meeting at Fortune Bay and, as in past years, the meeting will be held in the resort's second floor banquet room.

The featured speaker this year is Dr. Lynn L. Rogers, principal biologist at Ely's Wildlife Research Institute. He is currently working with the institute to establish the North American Bear Center in Ely. Dr. Rogers, who has a doctorate in Ecology and Behavioral Biology from the University of Minnesota, has spent more than 35 years learning about wildlife and sharing his information with the public. The most recent documentary about his work, "The Man Who Walks With Bears," is a frequently-aired film on the Animal Planet channel.

Please phone in your reservation by Monday, August 7.

The following members will take your reservations: COOK: Vi Harris, 666-2300, Liz Borken, 666-0579 or Nan Lundblad, 666-2316. TOWER: Shirley Korpela, 753-3034, Julie Friesen, 753-2500, or Paula Bloczynski, 753-2107.

We're planning a social hour beginning at 5 p.m., followed by a 5:45 p.m. buffet. Dinner prices are \$14 for adults and \$7 for children age 12 and younger.

After dinner, the business meeting agenda will include reports from the officers and election of board members. This year we will be electing members to fill the 3-year board positions currently held by Cathy Raps, John Zwieg, Mardy Jackson, Mel Hintz and Joe Panichi. The nominating committee (Paula Bloczynski, Dale Lundblad, Mardy Jackson and Walt Moe) will present a slate of board candidates at the annual meeting. The slate will include those board members seeking re-election plus nominees to replace Cathy Raps and John Zwieg. Of course, nominations can also be made from the floor with the nominee's permission.

Information will also be available at the meeting on such topics as day-use picnic sites, navigation lights, fishing and wildlife, exotic species monitoring, water quality, and the annual loon count.

The ever popular door prize drawing will include framed wildlife prints and Twins tickets, among many other prizes.

The club's annual dinner meeting is always casual — come as you are in vacation attire — and we'll plan to wrap up the evening early so that our boat-access folks have plenty of daylight for their trip home.

This is our one get-together of the year and a great opportunity for members to socialize, get new information and bring up matters of personal concern regarding club business or problems around the lake.

We hope to see you on Saturday, August 12. Please mark your calendar, phone in your reservation and plan to join us at Fortune Bay Resort for the Sportsmen's Club's 38th annual dinner meeting.

— Paula Bloczynski, Secretary

ATTENTION FISHER PEOPLE

If you are a regular reader of the Sportsmen's Club Newsletter, then you know how we have stressed the DNR's saying, "Get the lead out," referring to your fishing tackle boxes.

Lead is a toxic metal and can have negative effects on nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds.

Lead sinkers and jigs kill loons! Here is an opportunity to get rid of your lead tackle for free. There will be a series of "lead tackle exchange" days set to take place at a variety of bait and tackle stores throughout the summer in Minnesota.

Start with Northwood Bait and Tackle in Cook on July 28, 2006, from 1 to 6 p.m.

• President's Message

(Continued from front page)

Their US mail address is: Suite 100
227 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802

One surprise that occurred at the meeting was U.S. Steel decided not to pursue the "Conservation" plan that was to be a "Planned Unit Development." Instead they intend to go with a conventional subdivision plan. We don't know the reasons for the decision, but this will not require amending the Tower-Breitung Plan nor be in conflict with the proposed Lake Vermilion Management Plan.

The Lake Vermilion Management Plan should be presented to the County Commissioners soon once the language dealing with resorts is agreed upon.

Just recently, a member called me about a buoy on Vermilion being out of position. Some time back we ran a little article on how to report this to the St. Louis County Sheriff. I decided to try out the system myself and found that the procedure is as described. We are running that article again as a reminder that anyone can report the problem directly without having to contact a board member. Some more hazard and channel marker buoys have been added this year so please take note of that so you don't report on one of the new buoys.

Remember, we have another shore lunch/picnic site operational now as described in our last newsletter. GPS location is on our website.

Wishing you all great fishing and enjoyment of our great Lake Vermilion! See you at the Annual Meeting!

Walt Moe, President

What does acid rain have to do with mercury in fish?

Those clear, algae-free lakes in remote northeastern Minnesota, the ones surrounded by wetlands and dense forests, far from most pollution sources — are the most likely to have heavily mercury contaminated fish, unhealthy to eat.

It's a scientific conundrum. The very qualities that make a lake clear and attractive are environmentally correlated with both acid rain sensitivity and bioaccumulation of mercury.

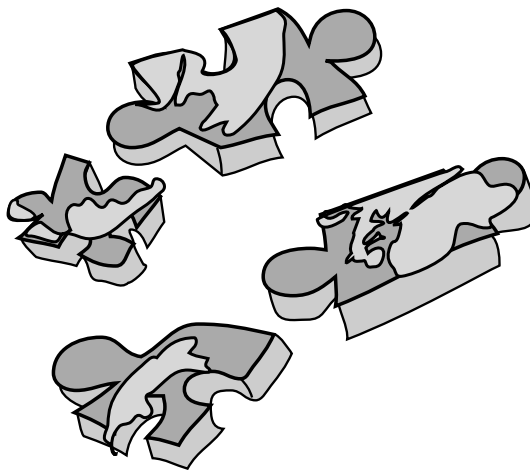
What does acid rain have to do with high levels of mercury in northern lake fish?

When sulfur-containing coal is burned in power plants and industry, sulfur oxides are created. In the atmosphere, sulfur oxides are then oxidized to sulfates, which combine with other chemicals in the atmosphere to form acid rain.

Along with acid rain, airborne mercury washes out of the atmosphere and ends up in the sediments of lakes and wetlands. Under certain circumstances, bacteria in the mud called sulfate-reducing bacteria (SRB) begin to convert the sulfate to sulfide. This is a double-edged sword: sulfide formation neutralizes the acid from acid rain but, at the same time, converts mercury into methylmercury, a very toxic form of mercury.

"This is a good news, bad news story," said MPCA scientist Dr. Ed Swain. "The good news is that because of strong SRB activity, there are no acidified lakes in Minnesota, unlike some parts of the country. The bad news is that those same SRBs turn mercury into methylmercury, the form that accumulates in fish and is unhealthy for us to eat.

"Nobody really knows the whole picture of all environmental factors that control mercury bioaccumulation in fish," Swain said. "But we know pieces. One piece is that a lake naturally low in sulfate that receives extra sulfate from acid rain probably experiences an increase



*Things aren't
always as they
appear.*

in mercury methylation, and therefore fish contamination."

The geology of northeastern Minnesota lakes makes them naturally low in phosphorus, sulfate, and the alkalinity that would neutralize acid rain. Low phosphorus results in smaller populations of both algae and fish; and being low in alkalinity makes the lakes far more sensitive to acid rain.

In southern Minnesota lakes, much higher natural concentrations of sulfate may actually inhibit mercury methylation. This is because sulfide increases mercury methylation at low concentrations, but oddly enough, decreases mercury methylation at high concentrations.

The MPCA, University of Minnesota, Gustavus Adolphus College and the Science Museum of Minnesota recently collaborated on a study of the effect of sulfate on mercury methylation. Study results are expected to be published soon.

— Mark Sulzbach

www.pca.state.mn.us
Minnesota Environment • Spring 2006

*"Friend, the fire has gone out
and the night grows late.
It is time to head to the tent,
for tomorrow is a long day.
Perhaps somewhere along the
trail we will meet again."*

BOB CARY,
"The Big Wilderness Canoe Manual," 1978

Six New Hazard Buoys Placed in Lake Vermilion

Buoy contractor Mark Eyre recently informed the Sportsmen's Club of the placement of six new hazard buoys on the lake. The Sportsmen's Club receives input from members and the public regarding the need for additional buoys and makes recommendations to the contractor, who evaluates the need and then presents a request to the County. The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office is the government authority which has the responsibility to place hazard and channel marker buoys on Lake Vermilion. Because of limited funding, only the newly identified hazards which are determined to present the greatest danger to boaters are approved for additional buoys.

The new buoys are located in the following areas and have the following identification numbers and G.P.S. coordinates:

- 1.) In the entrance to Wolf Bay entering from Niles Bay - v58c - N47.93005 W92.47134
- 2.) Southwest of Black Duck Island, Frazer Bay - V44F - N47.89206 W92.41756
- 3.) Southwest of Thirty Six Island, Frazer Bay
-v50a - N47.87210 W92.46580
V50G - N47.87067 W92.46244
v50R - N47.87008 W92.46224
- 4.) West of Indian Point, Big Bay - V18C - N47.87451 W92.26333

These new buoy locations will be provided to publishers of navigation maps so they can be included in new editions.

The board of the Sportsmen's Club thanks buoy contractor Mark Eyre and St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputy Dirk Davis for providing these new buoys and for their commitment to boating safety on Lake Vermilion.

Dale Lundblad — Board Member

REPORT MISSING HAZARD BUOYS

We are very fortunate Lake Vermilion is one of the few lakes in St. Louis County which is provided with hazard and channel marker buoys. The white hazard buoys not only mark hazards to navigation, they each have identifying numbers on them which correspond to a readily available navigation map.

While these buoys are accurately placed in the spring, they can often be moved by wave action or lost due to storms or boaters tying up to them and accidentally moving them into deeper water. If you are familiar with the location of a hazard buoy and observe that it is missing, has moved from its proper location or has washed up on shore, it is important you report it immediately!

According to St. Louis County officials, who administer the buoying program, the most effective way to do this is to CALL 9-1-1. Report it as a non-emergency and describe the location and number of the lost buoy. They will then notify the buoy contractor on Lake Vermilion who is obligated to correct the problem within 24 hours.

A hair-raising experience for a conservation officer and a bear

CO Randy Hanzal (Brookston) had several problem bear calls during June, including one case where a large plastic jar was stuck on a bear's head. Several attempts to remove the plastic jar were unsuccessful. Finally the bear was hog-tied and the bucket was literally cut off. The bear appeared healthy when released, but probably somewhat embarrassed. The day before, a man was cited for littering, then complained about the high-priced ticket and wanted to know, "What's the big deal? It was just a couple of cans and a candy wrapper." Every year many animals and birds are injured or killed by our trash left in their homes.

In another story ... While on patrol, CO Dale Ebel (Duluth) was flagged down by a person in a parking lot. Pulling over he saw a skunk with a pop can stuck on its head. Ebel slowly walked up and put his hand on the skunk's back while at the same time holding the pop can. After several tries the can popped off the skunk's head. Ebel wrote, "He raised his head and looked right at me. He slowly backed off and walked away with his tail down, which I was really thankful for." At last sight the skunk was walking into the woods.

NEW LAKE VERMILION CATCH AND RELEASE RULERS AVAILABLE



The Sportsmen's Club in cooperation with the Lake Vermilion Resort Association and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has produced a new catch and release ruler for anglers' boats. The ruler contains the new slot information for walleye as well as the established slot information for northern pike. Those Special Regulations on Lake Vermilion are as follows:

Walleye: 17-26 inch protected slot, with one fish allowed over 26 inches. 4-fish bag limit.

Northern Pike: 24-36 inch protected slot, with one fish allowed over 36 inches. 3-fish bag limit.

The rulers are free and can be obtained by anglers at the following locations:

- Visitor Information Center — MN DNR Tower Facility, 650 Hwy. 169, Tower, MN
- Visitor Information Center — USFS La Croix Ranger District, 320 N. Hwy. 53, Cook, MN
- Lake Vermilion Resorts
- B.I.C. Realty Office — 219 South River St., Cook, MN

New law addresses issues facing Lake Vermilion boathouse owners

Local state legislators Sen. Tom Bakk, D-Cook, and Rep. David Dill, D-Crane Lake, co-sponsored the bill HF2994 - Replacement and Repair of Watercraft Storage Structures, which passed in this year's legislative session.

This bill changed some of the guidelines for restoring watercraft storage facilities to better than new or total replacement. In 1979 the Legislature passed a moratorium on boathouse construction. As a result, owners of boathouses built prior to 1979 had been allowed to maintain only 50 percent of the structure in any given year. The new law does not allow owners to increase the area of the boathouse, but they could extend the height by one foot to accommodate taller boats. They could also replace the foundational structure as long as they use only materials non-toxic to aquatic life below the average high water mark. The bill also allows existing boathouses to be consolidated or moved off the water onto the owner's property. Boathouse owners would apply to the DNR for a permit to renovate, which would also require the approval of the local government unit and proof that the boathouse existed prior to 1979.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS and OFFICERS 2005-2006

(All Area Codes 218)

COOK (55723)

Ray Harris 7341 Oak Narrows Rd. 666-2300
Dale Lundblad 9082 Little Sweden Rd. .. 666-2316 (B.I.C. 666-5352)
John Zwieg, **Vice Pres.** 2621 Timberlore Trail 666-5008
Joe Panichi 2754 Niles Bay Forest Rd., Buyck 55771 .. 666-5204
Rick Borken 2810 Niles Bay Forest Rd., Buyck 55771 .. 666-0579

TOWER (55790)

Bob Wilson, **Treas.** 1501 Echo Pt. 753-5544
Paula Bloczynski, **Sec.** 4443 Big Rock Rd. 753-2107
Mel Hintz 6119 Pike Bay Drive 753-2401
Mardy Jackson, **Mem. Rec.** 2065 County Road 77 753-3549
Miller Friesen 2144 Birch Pt. Rd. 753-2500
Walt Moe, **Pres.** 3331 Nisen Dr. 753-3816

SCLV Board Meetings are held monthly on the second Wednesday, and are open to all SCLV members. Check with a board member for time and location.

Update on 'Little Girl'

Some of you may recall a story I wrote in the November Sportsmen's Newsletter about a ruffed grouse that became an uninvited pet of my neighbors Jack and Lois. For some of you unfamiliar with the story, I'll briefly recap some of her antics.



Jack would drive his four-wheeler up the long driveway to get their mail as Little Girl would follow right behind him up and back. He'd sit down at the picnic table to read the paper, and she'd become distressed at his inattention and hop right up on the newspaper. Everywhere he went, there was Little Girl at his heels.

When Lois brought the corn out in a pan to feed her, she'd shake the pan and call, "Little Girl," and Little Girl would come running from wherever she was.

Her most frustrating antic was to run back and forth in front of the wheels of the car when they were going someplace, causing them to inch up the driveway for fear of hitting her. (I, too, had this experience, and for trying to shoo her into the woods, got my ankles pecked at all the way down my driveway for my efforts.)

I think the most bizarre thing was when Jack and Lois decided to re-roof their sauna, and guess what? She flew right up there and joined them!

At last came the day when it was time for Jack and Lois to leave for their "winter haven," and they reluctantly left Little Girl behind. "Yes," I told them, "I would feed her corn." I don't think she ate a single kernel of corn I put out for her. She hung around my place for about a week or two, and then disappeared.

But come spring, all was not lost — she returned when Jack and Lois did. The summer was back to normal and Little Girl re-adopted them.

But at the end of the summer, a pair of pine martens moved into the woods behind their home. Lois saw this pine marten gathering insulation, etc., assuming she was building a nest and would be moving in for a spell. And one day Little Girl took off in flight barely escaping the charging pine marten. They saw very little of their pet grouse for a week or so, and then — not at all.

I ended that story with a question: Did the pine marten get Little Girl or did she make her escape? We'll wait until spring.

Well, Jack and Lois returned this spring, watched and waited. No Little Girl. Now it is summer, and still no Little Girl.

So we ponder the law of nature, survival of the fittest, the food chain and all that. We wonder if that exceptional grouse escaped the pine marten and is eating corn from someone else's pan where it's safer. We'll never know.

— Mardy Jackson

Josh Gillson 2006 Scholarship Winner

Cook High School graduate Josh Gillson is the recipient of the Barb Shook Memorial College Scholarship this year. He will receive \$1,000 for his first year at college.



Josh is the son of Rock and Lee Gillson, owners of Life of Riley Resort in Norwegian Bay. Over the past years Josh has been an active advocate of preserving Lake Vermilion so that future generations will enjoy the treasure that we enjoy today. He worked on several projects including water quality tests and monitoring the number of fish caught in the lake.

Josh will be attending UMD this fall with a major in environmental studies and a double minor in Lake Analysis and Geology. Congratulations, Josh!!!

(There were no applicants from Tower.)

HELP US WITH OUR NEW NEWSLETTER FEATURE ARTICLE!

SEND US YOUR MOST EXCITING OR HUMOROUS LAKE VERMILION FISHING STORY. THE STORY JUDGED TO BE THE BEST BY OUR STAFF WILL RECEIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND A PRIZE.

SEND OR E-MAIL YOUR ENTRY TO:

DALE LUNDBLAD
9082 LITTLE SWEDEN RD.
COOK, MN 55723

lundblad@accessmn.com



TURN IN POACHERS

24 Hours: 1-800-652-9093

The Sportsmen's Club recently sent a contribution to an organization we think is very worthy. Turn In Poachers (TIP) was founded 25 years ago with a theme of "Protect our Resources for the Future." This theme strikes a chord with the SCLV and is one we heavily promote ourselves. TIP's function is protecting wild game and fish from poachers so that we can all share in the enjoyment of hunting and fishing. Soon we will link our

website, lakevermilion.com/SCLV/, with theirs, turninpoachers.org and they will link theirs to ours. After you read the following information you may want to consider helping this private, non-profit organization with their work.

Turn In Poachers, TIP Inc., is a private (501C-3), non-profit organization of conservationists concerned about poaching problems. TIP Inc., provides all reward monies for the program. The enforcement division cooperates with the TIP program, which was instigated to encourage the public to report natural resource violations. The information and the person reporting can be kept confidential. Persons reporting violations are asked to obtain as much information from observation as possible, and to report all violations as soon as possible. If an arrest is initiated, the person reporting the violation may be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000, depending upon the seriousness of the crime. The reward amount will be determined by an impartial panel. Since its inception in 1981, this program has been a deterrent to the senseless waste of wildlife and is extremely beneficial to the DNR Enforcement Division.



Red Lake overlimit of crappies and walleyes (no season) Winter 2005

Tips are received through a 24-hour phone line which is answered at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Enforcement Division and Minnesota State Patrol – Dispatchers, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

SPORTSMEN'S CLUB WEB SITE

<http://www.LakeVermilion.com/SCLV>

**Statewide toll-free:
1-800-652-9093
24 hours a day,
365 days a year**

Invasive Species

by Bob Wilson

On May 26 and May 27 your SCLV conducted boat inspections at the Hoodoo Point, Moccasin Point and Timbuktu public boat ramps. As always there is good news and there is some news of concern. None of the boats and trailers checked had aquatic weeds or visible zebra mussels on them and in fact the majority were remarkably clean. That speaks well for the average guys and gals trailering their boat. The most troubling aspect of the boat checks were the number of boats that had been in lakes known to have Eurasian milfoil or zebra mussels. We are not talking about a large number, but enough to remind us that we need to continue to do everything possible to publicize the threat that invasive species pose to Lake Vermilion.

In total, we looked at 87 boats. At approximately the same time last year we checked 83. The comparison between the two years seems amazingly close, but it is too early in our record keeping process to jump to any conclusions.

Following is a list of the lakes where boats were launched last before coming to Lake Vermilion. Some boats had just come out of storage for the beginning of the boating and fishing season and, while we looked at some of them, they are not included in the list below.

Where boat launched last?

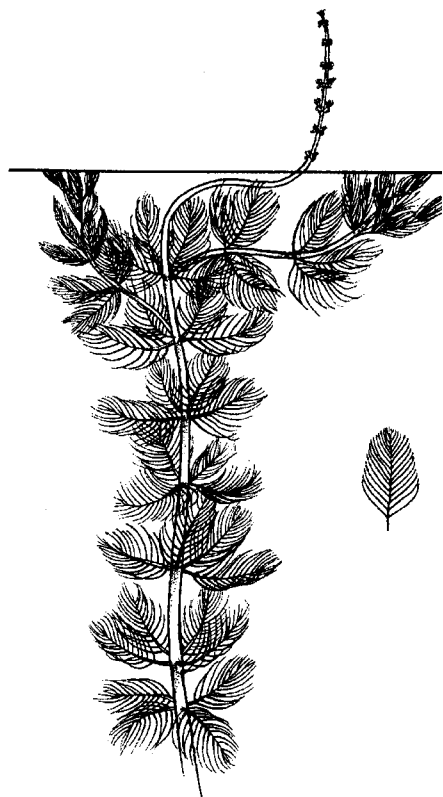
Vermilion	52	Dark	2
Mille Lacs	2	Crane	1
Minnetonka	3	Iron Ore Pit	1
Birch	1	Rainy	1
Big Sturgeon	2	Devils Lake, ND	1
Prior Lake	1	Ely Lake	1
St. Marys	1	Island	1
White Bear	1	Pelican	1
White Iron	1	Gull	1
Everglades, Fla.	1		

Total 75

Notice that the majority of boats were last launched in Vermilion (60 percent of boats inspected). If you have a cabin or home on Vermilion, you have to like that statistic. Another obvious fact is that boats are coming from a wide variety of lakes and in one case the Everglades of Florida (it was very clean). Worrisome is that several boats were last in lakes infested with exotics, most notably Mille Lacs (2 - zebra mussels) and Minnetonka (3 - Eurasian milfoil). White Bear and Prior also have milfoil. Scale these numbers up to perhaps 500 to 1,000 boats entering Vermilion on the Memorial Weekend and we have a major concern.

We will have conducted another boat inspection at the same ramps by the time you read this article. On

June 30 and July 1 our volunteers will be helping out again. They deserve a lot of credit for coming out on holiday weekends; thanks to Jeff Lovgren, Wayne Suoja, Frank Siskar, Rod McPeak, Jim Charles, John Aronson, Harold Korpela, Darryl and Joan Johnson, Paul Hanson, Bob Reed, Rusty and Gayle Miller, Bucky Flankey, Jim Boesen and Warren Vollmar. Some of our board members, John Zwig and wife Claire, Mel Hintz, Ray Harris, Walt Moe and me were also on duty!



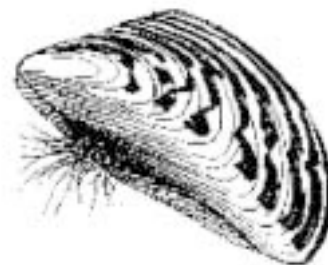
EURASIAN WATER-MILFOIL

So are we doing anything else you might ask. As we feel that getting publicity for this ongoing danger to Lake Vermilion is of vital importance, your SCLV has undertaken other activities in order to be in front of the public with this issue. You may have heard a Public Service Announcement (PSA) concerning "invasives" on WELY (Ely, MN) and two stations out of Grand Rapids, KAXE and KGPZ. These stations can be received at most points on Lake Vermilion. We have obtained these authorized PSAs, starring Ron Gardenhire, Minnesota Twins manager, from the DNR in St. Paul and have given them to these radio stations for play. KAXE was e-mailed the script so they could talk it through themselves. So far they have agreed to air them at no cost to the club. In addition, perhaps you have seen our advertising in the local papers in conjunction with the Memorial Weekend. It shows a boat and trailer loaded with weeds with the title "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers." We will be running more ads of this type in local papers at key times throughout the summer.

We have also started sending letters to fishing tournament directors and/or sponsors asking for their cooperation in holding boat inspections prior to launch. As some of the participants may come from states or areas where there is little emphasis on preventing exotics, we hope this added reminder may be of help. It is not that tournaments are more likely to introduce exotics into the lake than

individual fishermen and/or out-of-state boaters, for example, but it is an opportunity to communicate our concern to a large group of organized fishermen all at one time. The DNR, through their permit procedures and regulations, do hold the tournaments responsible for checking contest boats.

One of the publicity items we are investigating is the possibility of renting a billboard on Highway 53 north of Virginia before 53 reaches Highway 169 to Tower and Ely. This could be an ideal reminder of the "invasives" problem and catch the eye of travelers heading for both ends of the lake. The fee for doing it is quite high and your club could not do it alone. It would have to be a joint venture between ourselves, the DNR, the Sea Grant Organization and perhaps even the towns and townships around Vermilion. The entire lake community would benefit. However, local and state government budgets and associated expenses are already set for this year. We will be getting more serious about this high visibility advertising method next year. Remember, once our lake becomes infected with exotics of any kind there is no turning back. Once you have them there is no known present method of eliminating them. Stay tuned to your SCLV and help "Prevent the Spread of Exotic Species."



ZEBRA MUSSEL

Swimmer's Itch — Summer's Torment

Barb Liukkonen, Water Resources Center, 612-625-9256, liukk001@umn.edu

[This article is adapted from the new Extension "Lake Home and Cabin Kit"]

What is Swimmer's Itch?

Swimmer's itch, technically known as *Schistosoma dermatitis*, is a common malady around Minnesota's lakes during mid-summer. It appears as red, itchy, bite-like welts within several hours of leaving the water. The irritation may last from a few days to several weeks, depending on an individual's sensitivity. About 30-40 percent of people who come in contact with the parasite are sensitive and experience irritation. There are no reported long-term effects from swimmer's itch and the parasite that causes it will not survive in humans.

Where Does it Come From?

Swimmer's itch comes from a microscopic flatworm parasite *Schistosoma cercariae* that lives as an adult in aquatic birds or mammals, usually waterfowl. The adult worm sheds its eggs into the feces of the host, and the eggs are released into the water where they hatch into free-swimming *miracidiae*. The *miracidiae* swim in search of an intermediate host, one of four species of snail that inhabit shallow waters in Minnesota. The host snails live in all sorts of areas including weedy, rocky, and sandy bottoms. After 3-4 weeks in the snail, a second free-swimming stage, called a *cercaria*, emerges, in search of a primary host (another bird or mammal) to complete its life cycle. The *cercariae* are about 2 mm long and barely visible.

The release of *cercariae* typically occurs in late June or early July, when lakes are nearly at their warmest summer temperatures. If the spring has been very warm, problems with swimmer's itch may begin earlier in the summer. Most *cercariae* are released around midday, and will swim to the surface to increase their chances of finding a host. Wind and currents have been shown to carry *cercariae* as much as four miles from the area they were released.

In some areas snail populations may be as high as 400 per square meter, and one infected snail may release up to 4,000 *cercariae* per day. Even if not all the snails are infected, that can mean millions of *cercariae* on a typical beach each midsummer day.

When a swimmer leaves the water and the waterdrops on their skin begin to evaporate, the tiny *cercariae* burrow into the skin in an effort to survive. The swimmer may feel tingling on exposed parts of the body. Where water is held near the skin (at waistbands and leg openings) the *cercariae* have more time to burrow in. The *cercariae* are killed by the body's natural defense mechanisms, but they cause a welt, or red itchy spot like a mosquito bite. People cannot become a host for the parasite, either through skin penetration or by swallowing lake water.

Is there any treatment?

Some sunscreens and lotions may reduce the infections, although nothing is known to be completely effective. If you get swimmers' itch, lotions or ointments may relieve the itching. In severe cases, you may need antihistamines or steroid creams that can be prescribed by a physician.

People often want to control the snail hosts or the free-swimming *cercariae*, but neither option is practical because the *cercariae* can swim or be carried long distances. To control severe infestations of snails, the application of copper sulfate in the lake is a possibility, but it requires application over a large area and copper sulfate can also kill small fish. Waters treated with copper sulfate should not be used for 48 hours after application. ANY chemical treatment in the water requires a permit from the Department of Natural Resources, Section of Fisheries. Contact your regional DNR fisheries office for assistance and permit information.

How Can I Avoid Swimmer's Itch?

You can reduce the likelihood of suffering swimmer's itch by following these simple guidelines. Although even careful adherence to the recommendations may not be 100 percent successful in preventing an outbreak, you can minimize the extent of irritation and itching.

- *Dry off as soon as you leave the water. Rub your skin briskly to remove waterdrops before they begin to evaporate. Be sure to dry underneath waistbands and around leg openings of swimming suits. Encourage children to dry off thoroughly each time they leave the water.*
- *Shower with soap and fresh water or change into dry clothes as soon as possible after swimming.*
- *Don't wade or play in shallow water, especially in weedy areas. Swimming off of a raft or pontoon minimizes your exposure.*
- *Clean beaches of weeds or other debris that have washed up on shore. They can harbor the snails.*
- *Don't swim when there has been an onshore breeze that may have carried parasites to your beach.*
- *Don't feed geese and ducks or allow them to congregate near your beach. Waterfowl are an important adult host for the parasites.*

Care for the shore

*Reprinted with permission from the
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by KEVIN STRAUSS

Staff Writer

While many Minnesotans are settling or retiring “on the lake” in our region, that lifestyle comes with challenges like: how do we landscape? While some lakehome owners might think that landscaping here is no different from landscaping in the Twin Cities, nothing could be further from the truth. Highly fertilized suburban-style lawns can lead to fertilizer pollution in northland lakes.

“People used to think that having green grass right up to the shoreline looked good and they would clear the native vegetation of trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses,” said Department of Natural Resources Tower Area Fisheries Supervisor Joe Geis.

According to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Research Scientist Jesse Anderson, the more development there is on a lake, the more runoff washes into a lake and the more nutrients and fertilizers end up in the lake. It is those nutrients that cause algae blooms and turn clear northern lakes into a pea soup of green algae plants. In extreme cases, when the algae dies, it decomposes in the lake, making the lake smell rotten and using up much of the oxygen in the water and suffocating fish.

To help keep your lake healthier, less is more in property management.

“We suggest that people don’t mow their whole yard and let native plants grow up on the shoreline,” said Geis. “That vegetative cover reduces the runoff to the lake.”

According to United Landscapes owner Jack Williams, many lake homeowners who hire him are doing more landscaping with native flowers, trees and shrubs.

“People are shying away from mowing right to the edge of the lake,” said Williams. “Why would you want to ruin your lake (with fertilizer runoff)?”

According to Williams, people are also moving to “lower-maintenance” plants like red (Norway) pine and native wildflowers. These “xeriscape” plants don’t require fertilizer or artificial watering. They are also moving toward using pavers rather than concrete sidewalks and gravel driveways rather than paved driveways to reduce the amount of water runoff from a yard.

Geis also suggests that homeowners avoid using fertilizers near waterways. If you think you need a fertilizer, get a soil test first and if you need a fertilizer, get one that doesn’t have any phosphorus. Phosphorus is the main limiting factor for algae growth in lakes.

Ely Flower & Seed owner Bonnie Starkman says that a lot of lakehome owners are planning for a lawn and then a 40-foot “buffer zone” of tall grass, bushes and trees that will catch any lawn runoff and prevent yard chemicals from reaching the lake. This kind of landscaping re-

quires less work and also makes for a beautiful border for northland lakehomes.

When thinking about landscaping on a lake, consider both the land and the water. Homeowners who let grass, wildflowers and shrubs grow tall on the lakeshore have fewer erosion problems since the stronger root systems are growing on their lakeshore. In addition, water plants like cattails, bulrushes and water-lilies also absorb fertilizers and reduce wave action and further reduce shoreline erosion.

The DNR also recommends that lakehome owners plant only native flowers and shrubs on their property. Some non-native plants, like purple loosestrife can become weeds, spreading quickly on lakeshores and waterways and displacing native flower and grass species.

For more information on lakeshore landscaping, check out *Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality* and *Restore Your Shore: A Guide to Protecting and Restoring the Natural Beauty of Your Shoreland* (CD-ROM). Both books are available from Minnesota’s Bookstore www.minnesotasbookstore.com, or 800-657-3757. Fact sheets are also available from the University of Minnesota www.extension.umn.edu, or 800-876-8636.

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