

the vermilion sportsman



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

Vol. 36, No. 3 2000 MEMBERS COOK & TOWER, MN AUGUST 2010

Take-A-Kid Fishing Day a Huge Success!

On June 23, 43 kids, ages 10-15, took part in the first annual "Let's Take a Kid Fishing" event on Lake Vermilion. The kids, paired two per boat, were treated to an afternoon of fishing with some of the most experienced fishing guides on the lake. Though the walleye bite was slow, most kids caught fish including a 40-inch northern, several slot size walleyes over 20 inches, and an array of smallmouth bass and panfish.

If the fishing was slow, you sure could not tell by the expressions on the kids' faces. There were plenty of smiles and excitement throughout the afternoon. The happiness was especially evident during the noontime departure at the Fraser Bay landing when the kids boarded the well-equipped guide boats full of anticipation about the fishing that lay ahead. After boarding, the guides presented each kid with an official "Let's Take a Kid Fishing" hat and then they were off to catch the big one.

Besides showing the kids how to fish, the guides talked to them about other topics. Things like catch and release, proper fish handling, preventing the spread of invasive species, and fishing ethics. Earlier that day at the Guides breakfast, Nadine Meyer, DNR Minn Aqua Specialist, presented each guide with a set of Pier Notes designed to assist them in educating the kids.

After fishing, the kids and their parents were treated to a delicious walleye shore lunch at the Fraser Bay Landing prepared by the Fortune Bay Resort and Casino. Besides donating the fish, they brought in their mobile kitchen and dining room complete with tables, chairs, and a large canopy in case of rain. During the supper hour, each kid was given a fishing rod and reel, as well as a Let's Take a Kid Fishing t-shirt and backpack filled with fishing information and tackle.

Planning for this event started three months in advance



and included a raffle to raise funds to cover the expenses. Raffle prizes included half-day fishing packages donated by Lake Vermilion Guides League members Phil Bakken, Doug Knoer, Buck Lescarbeau, Paul Pollock, Jim Postudensek, and Cliff Waggenbach. In addition, resort packages were donated by Fortune Bay, Pehrson Lodge, Pike Bay Lodge, Spring Bay Resort, and Vermilion Dam Lodge. Also included in the raffle were a half-day chartered fishing trip on Lake Superior from Early Riser Guide Service and a Limo ride from Cook Luxury Limo. Nearly 50 volunteers including a long list of local organizations, businesses, and governmental units helped make this a very successful first time event. Organizers plan to repeat the event next year.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Greetings friends and neighbors,

Nearly all of us have at least one "it is a small world" story about an episode linking us to something or somebody in a distant place. Earlier this summer we were dining with friends at a resort in Upper Michigan some 250 miles from here, when I noticed a Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker poster near the cash register. At first glance, I did not think too much about it as many of the lakes over there are infested with Eurasian watermilfoil. However, it soon captured my attention when I recognized the photo on the poster as one used in invasive species materials in Minnesota. As I examined the poster more closely, I was completely surprised to see our SCLV logo included near the bottom of the poster along with other sponsoring agencies. Of course, I seized the opportunity to proudly explain to our friends that the SCLV Invasive Species program led by Board Member Bob Wilson is far reaching extending hundreds of miles across state lines.

At last, the new Vermilion State Park is a reality. After more than two years of negotiations, the U.S. Steel sale to the State closed on June 8 at a reported cost of \$18 million. The newly acquired 3000 plus acre parcel contains over five miles of undeveloped shoreline and is the first new state park in Minnesota in over thirty years. The DNR has already initiated a resource inventory on the property and has convened a Citizen Advisory Committee to assist in the preparation of a Master Plan to guide development of the new park. The planning process, which provides opportunities for public input, is scheduled for completion by this December so the DNR can pursue funding for park development in 2011. By statute, no new development can occur until a master plan has been completed and approved by the DNR Commissioner. The Citizen Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from governmental units, special interest groups, the resort industry, and non-profit organizations including the SCLV.

June 23 was a special day as it marked the first annual "Let's Take a Kid Fishing" event on Lake Vermilion. Forty three kids, ages 10-15, spent an afternoon fishing with one of the top guides on Vermilion. The fishing was followed by a walleye shore lunch served at the Fraser Bay DNR public landing. Each participant received a Take a Kid Fishing hat, T-shirt, backpack, and a fishing rod and reel. Planning for this event began last March with SCLV Board Member Ed Tausk taking the lead in obtaining support from the Lake Vermilion Guides League, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Fortune Bay, Timberwolves Snowmobile Club, and many other organizations and volunteers who contributed greatly to the success of this inaugural event. THANK YOU to all who volunteered and/or provided financial support for this worthwhile program.

The SCLV Board has received several recent reports concerning the increased number of cormorant sightings on Lake Vermilion. These reports are confirmed by a DNR cormorant nest count during late May which showed a significant increase from the count taken three years earlier. The Sportsmen's Club and other lakewide organizations including the Resort Association and the Lake Vermilion Guides League are concerned about the potential impact of this cormorant increase on Lake Vermilion fish populations. Cormorants are voracious feeders consuming on average one pound of fish each day. Not long ago, the Leech Lake walleye population was decimated largely due to a huge build up of cormorants. It wasn't until the DNR reduced the cormorant population under a special federal permit, that the walleye fishery began to recover. We do not wish to repeat the Leech Lake scenario on Lake Vermilion. Though we are not at that stage now, we plan to monitor this situation so we can be proactive in responding to increased cormorant predation on our walleye population if necessary. Beginning this year, our volunteer loon counters will be noting cormorant sightings as part of the annual lakewide loon count conducted in mid-July. The results of this effort will be reported in our fall newsletter. An article from Duane Williams, DNR Large Lake Specialist assessing the cormorant population on Lake Vermilion and their proposed response is included in this newsletter.

Lastly, if you are interested in sport fishing, you won't want to miss our annual meeting on Saturday, August 14, at Fortune Bay. Our featured speaker, renowned fishing guide Tom Neustrom will share some of his expertise on how to improve your fishing success. This is also a great opportunity to recruit new members for our organization by bringing them to the meeting as your guest. I look forward to seeing you there.

Mel Hintz, President

Donations for Annual Meeting Raffle

The door prize raffle at our August annual meeting is very popular. With your help, we can make it even better.

We would be pleased to accept donations of new fishing or camping gear, Lake Vermilion items, framed wildlife photos, homemade crafts ... whatever you think would be appreciated by your fellow Sportsmen's Club members.

Donations can be dropped off with any board member or brought to the annual meeting. For questions, call Renee Aro, 753-2129.

Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.

42nd ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER

Saturday, August 14, 2010

Fortune Bay Resort

Social Hour at 5 pm -- Buffet at 6

Adults-\$16

Children-\$8 (12 and younger)

Reservations necessary by Monday, August 2

R.S.V.P. to one of the following:

COOK

***Lauren and Sheri Sawatzky, 666-5512 or
bubba@accessmn.com***

***Dale and Nan Lundblad, 666-2316 or
lundblad@accessmn.com***

TOWER

***Jeff and Kathy Lovgren, 753-2413 or
lovgren@frontiernet.net***

***Tom and Renee Aro, 753-2129 or
reneearo@me.com***

FEATURED SPEAKER

***Tom Neustrom, recognized as a top walleye
fishing guide in the country, "Legendary
Guide" in the National Freshwater Fishing
Hall of Fame, member of MN DNR Fishing
Roundtable, Red Lake Advisory Council and
MN Walleye Advisory Committee***

Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion

42nd Annual Meeting

Saturday, August 14 at Fortune Bay Resort

The 42nd Annual Meeting and Dinner of The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion will be held on Saturday, August 14, 2010 at Fortune Bay Resort in The Woodlands Ballroom. The featured speaker at this year's event is professional fishing guide and fishing industry advocate Tom Neustrom.

Mr. Neustrom guides on more than 35 lakes throughout Minnesota. When not fishing, he spends much of his time leading fishing seminars, writing articles, attending Minnesota DNR meetings, and conducting a fishing school to share his fishing expertise with others. Tom has been recognized by In-Fisherman, North American Fishing Club, Fishing Facts Magazine, and Minnesota Sportsman as one of the top walleye fishing guides in the country. Since 1992 he has hosted "Guides Corner" heard on KMFY-FM radio from Grand Rapids, Minnesota. In February 2009, Tom was inducted as a "Legendary Guide" into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in Hayward, Wisconsin. He has been appointed to the Minnesota DNR Fishing Roundtable, Red Lake Advisory Council, and the State Walleye Advisory Committee. If you like to fish, you have a wonderful opportunity to hear one of the best fishing guides in Minnesota share his 33 years of experience.

Please make your reservations by Monday, August 2 for this special event. The following Club members are looking forward to your call and reservations: COOK — Lauren and Sheri Sawatzky, 666-5512, bubba@accessmn.com or Dale and Nan Lundblad at 666-2316, lundblad@accessmn.com; TOWER — Jeff and Kathy Lovgren at 753-2413, lovgren@frontiernet.net or Renee and Tom Aro at 753-2129, reneearo@me.com.

Social hour begins at 5:00 pm, followed by a buffet dinner at 6:00. The cost for the evening is \$16 for adults and \$8 for children 12 and younger. The meal price includes one free raffle ticket for the popular door prize drawings.

The annual business meeting will be held after dinner. The agenda will include reports of the directors and committees, the election of directors, old and new business including matters of concern to members.

Nominations for directors will be taken from the nominating committee as well as from members on the floor. Nominations submitted should have the nominee's permission.

Attire is casual. This is the Club's biggest get-together of the year and a wonderful opportunity to visit with old and new friends from around Lake Vermilion.

The board of directors and members of the annual meeting committee look forward to seeing you. Please mark your calendar and make your reservation to join us at Fortune Bay Resort on Saturday, August 14, 2010.

THE VERMILIONAIRES... BY MARDY JACKSON

This is not a test, just a question. Do you recall in the last newsletter, I wrote an article entitled, "Mr. Snowmobile"? Mr. Snowmobile was Bob Daggit, and his view of summer was just an interlude to go through before the snows fell again. So, we decided we'd need to take this issue in hand to enhance his enjoyment of our beautiful summer on Lake Vermilion. The WE were Becky and Jerry Ketola, Bob Jackson and myself. We did some brainstorming and came up with a plan we felt might do the trick and fun for ourselves as well. Here is the plan.

We'd go out for dinner by boat every Friday night, something to look forward to all summer long. So there were three couples to even out the responsibilities, Ketolas, Daggits and the Jacksons. One couple would make the reservations for dinner and drive their boat, another would bring hors d'oeuvres and the third would bring the cocktails. Each week we would rotate. The couple driving the boat would not divulge the destination for our dinner reservations,

keeping the other couples in suspense as to where we were going to have our dinner. That was the fun part. We would motor all around the lake to confuse the others, and then pull into a nice bay for our cocktail hour. Keep in mind, this was back in the middle '70s when we started this and there were many resorts and places on the lake serving dinner. Vermilion Club still here, Bay View Lodge, Everett Bay Resort, Retreat Lodge, Pehrson's, Red Onion (now called The Landing), Life of Riley, Daisy Bay Resort, and Stinsons' Vermilion Beach Village (now called Wolf Bay Lodge). As you can see, we had many choices back then.

From time to time we had another couple join us. It was Jack and Pat Wydella, then owners of Vermilion Beach Resort (now split up into many private homes) who gave us the name "The Vermilionaires." J.D. and Mary Alice Kent were frequent guests as well as Carla and Tom Moore (past president of the Sportmen's Club of Lake Vermilion).

We had many adventures through the years, some scary and some funny. It was usually dark before we arrived home from our dinner and we became quite adept at knowing the lake and reading the tree line. We were up at Life of Riley's Resort at the end of Norwegian Bay when a bad wind and rain storm came up. Jerry and Becky's boat, The Boston Whaler, was our transportation that night; and it rode the huge waves with more confidence than we felt. Of course, no moon, pitch black, and very ominous! We drove the whole length of the lake back with bated

breath and two spotlights aimed at the shoreline. We made it back without any incident and were thankful to at last arrive home.

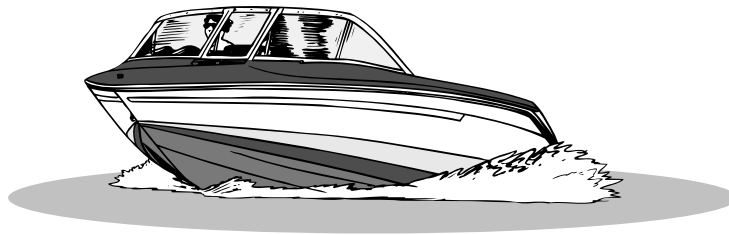
When we wanted an authentic German meal it was to the Wards', at Everett Bay Lodge for Gerlinda's homemade Spaetzle. And what a cook!

Then there was the night we were heading up to the Retreat Lodge. We'd had our cocktail party and were heading out of the bay towards our dinner destination. The Jacksons were driving the boat that night, a Starcraft I.O., when one of the tanks ran out of gas. Bob went back to switch tanks. This night we had Tom and Carla Moore with us and were a bit crowded so Tom had to sit on the engine cover. After switching tanks, Bob started up the engine and it immediately

conked out. This went on longer than it should have before we realized the engine cover that Tom was sitting on had come down on the fuel line. We all felt a bit foolish, but it was good for a good laugh.

But the funniest incident happened on one Sunday afternoon after we'd had dinner Friday night at Glenwood Resort. That Friday night, Sandy Ives bent the rules and fixed us a special dinner; normally they only served pizza. In appreciation, the following Sunday afternoon we decided to bring some additional business and go for pizza. We were heading over to Glenwood Resort and we were on the back side of Pine Island when we came across the Kents. We pulled alongside their boat and suggested they follow us and join us for pizza at Glenwood Resort. They agreed. J.D. started the engine and put it into gear, but the only gear that worked was reverse. So, we were bow-to-bow as we followed them and the looks we got from other boaters were a riot! We were laughing hilariously and even J.D. had the merest trace of a smile. We finally arrived at Glenwood for our pizza and had a fun afternoon. On the ride back we added the Kents to an already crowded boat and what a wild ride it was! Next day Aronsons picked up J.D.'s boat and towed it back to the marina.

Needless to say over the years, our plan made everybody happy, and we got Bob Daggit thinking more on the present, and we heard a little less on winter and snowmobiling. Now, there are only three of the Vermilionaires remaining. Becky and Jerry Ketola, and me, Mardy Jackson. We plan to go for one more dinner by boat in the memory of Virginia and Bob Daggit and Bob Jackson. The memories and the adventures of those fun years in our younger days will live as long as we do.



Safe Boating on Vermilion with Hazard Buoys

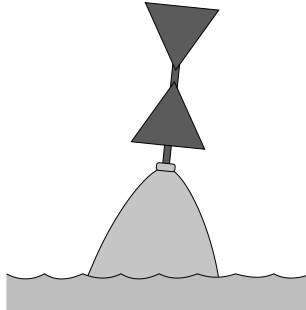
With all the different kinds of boating activity on the lake from fishing to pulling kids on tubes or skis, pleasure boating or businesses boating to jobs, the boat operators need to understand the rules of hazard buoys. Boating too close or too fast by a hazard area can quickly ruin the type of activity if you hit the hazard and do damage to your boat or motor.

The hazard or channel buoys are placed on the lake to assist the boater by marking channels, denoting unsafe areas, directing traffic, protecting resources and other functions. There is a general view that most of the hazard buoys are marking only one hazard right at the buoy. The hazard buoy can be marking a single larger boulder or a rock reef. These rock reefs can be anywhere from 50 ft to 200 ft in diameter and have only one or two buoys marking the whole reef. It is important to stay 10 boat lengths or 200 ft away from the hazard buoy. When approaching a hazard area a good rule of thumb is to slow down to 4 to 5 mph, a no wave speed and trim up the motor. The buoys need to be in 4 to 5 ft of water so they will not always be right on top of the hazard area.

There are a total of 216 buoys on Lake Vermilion (21 red channel, 21 green channel and 174 hazard). The buoys are placed on the lake by a combination of the map from the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department along with a list of GPS coordinates and visual sight of the hazard area. Please remember that all GPS navigation units state the warning "do not rely on this product as your primary source of navigation." There can be a difference in actual location of a marker by the GPS coordinates between two different navigation units. There is usually

a plus or minus accuracy listed on the navigation unit depending on type of unit and age of unit. Please remember that not all rocks or reefs are marked on the lake; the County has tried to mark the major hazards on the main boat routes. Also remember that as the lake level rises or falls the ability to see these hazards vary. If the boater is in an unfamiliar area always be on the safer side and travel at a slower speed. All boaters have to be

aware that these buoys can move due to wind, waves, current or other reasons. We have had a couple buoys get hit and boosted up already this summer due to boats, please be careful. The buoys and services are paid for by the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department, which is covered by taxpayers' money.



We try to get the buoys out on the lake as soon as the ice is completely off and will not pull the buoys until after October 25th or unless winter decides to set in early (water temps reach 35 degrees). We will place

an ad in the local papers to let the public know when we will start placing or pulling the buoys on Lake Vermilion.

Please report any damage to buoys or buoys that appear to have moved or broken loose to us. Also let us know if you see loose buoys or parts of buoys washed up on shore so we can pick up the debris as soon as possible and keep the lake clean.

Have an enjoyable and safe season on the lake.

Vermilion Barging Inc.
Lauren & Sheri Sawatzky
218-666-5512

BOARD OF DIRECTORS and OFFICERS 2009-2010

(All phone numbers are Area Code 218)

COOK (55723)

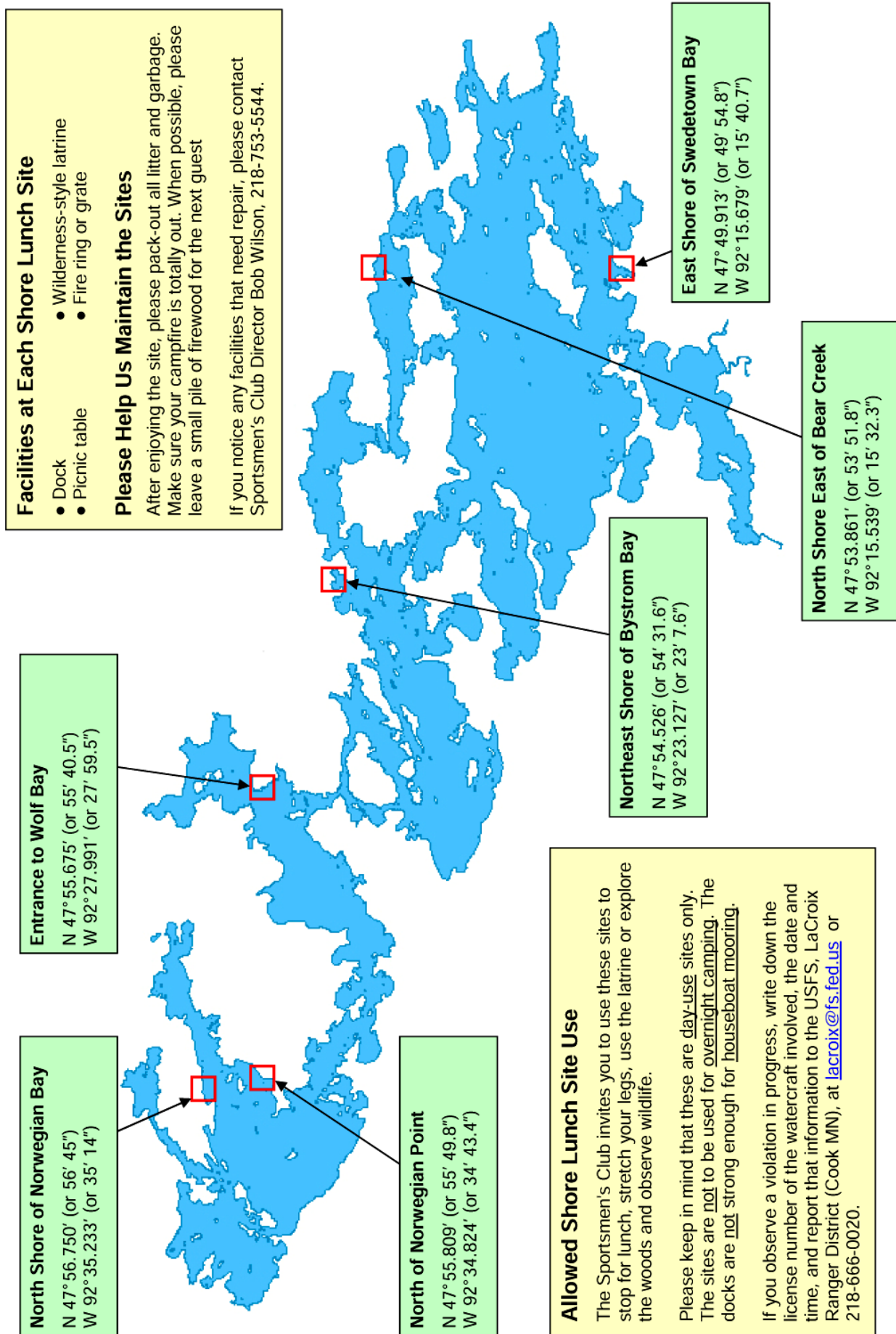
Sheri Sawatzky, **Sec.** 2750 Wakemup Village Road West 666-5512
Dale Lundblad, **Vice Pres.** 9082 Little Sweden Road 666-2316 (B.I.C. 666-5352)
Gary Whitenack 9140 Hibbing Point Road 666-2153
Ed Tausk Vermilion Dam Lodge 666-5418
Jim Mueller 8782 Raps Road 666-0588
Gary Lundquist PO Box 236 666-2756

TOWER (55790)

Walt Moe 3331 Nisen Drive 753-3816
Mel Hintz, **Pres.** 6119 Pike Bay Drive 753-2401
Renee Aro P.O. Box 872 753-2129
Bob Wilson, **Treas.** 1501 Echo Point 753-5544
Jeff Lovgren (Member Records) 2113 Birch Point Road 753-2413
Mardy Jackson 2065 County Road 77 753-3549

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.

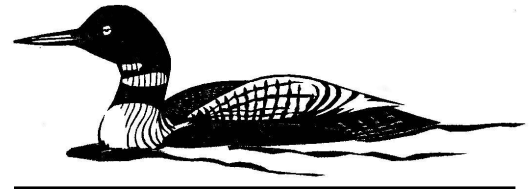
Shore Lunch Sites on Lake Vermilion



The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc., developed and maintains these shore lunch sites in cooperation with the US Forest Service and the Minnesota DNR.

For additional copies of this map or for information about other Sportsmen's Club activities, go to www.sportsmensclublakevermilion.org or email info@sportsmensclublakevermilion.org.

LOON SURVEY, 2010



You couldn't fault the day for the drop in numbers in our search for the loons today. It was a regular Shangri-La this Monday, July 12th when the 22 boats started the count at 9 a.m.

Dick and I finished up about 11:30 a.m. and had three more loons in our territory than we had last year. So I was caught off guard when the reports started coming in with drops in the counts from last year. Three of my territories at the East End of the lake had a drop of 10 loons each. One of Clare's territories on the west end dropped seven from last year and Wolf Bay had none, when they had four loons last year.

Our total count for the whole lake is 221—last year we had 281! The Tower end was down by 40 loons and the Cook end down 20, the ratio being constant with previous counts so all total we are down 60 loons from last year.

Why? I can only speculate. The lake levels were down when the loons arrived (they nest next to the shore) and the lake level rose 10 inches so maybe some nests got washed out. But the chick count was only down by six. Last year the total chick count was 29, this year it was 23. Our loons migrated from the Gulf before the oil spill so that wasn't the reason for the drop in the count. I wonder, could the increase in the Cormorant population have anything to do

with it? Interestingly, the territories that were down by 10 loons all were around Potato Island, the primary nesting place for the Cormorants.

Juveniles when leaving our lake stay in the Gulf for three years before they are mature enough to return. In the last three years the total young ones we contributed from Lake Vermilion to the Gulf was 92. They are the promise for the future on our lake if the oil spill doesn't do its damage to them.

In 2005, the count was down to 228 and in 2003 it was down to 208. So perhaps, the drop is just the normal fluctuation of Mother Nature that has kept our count down this year. Your guess is as good as mine.

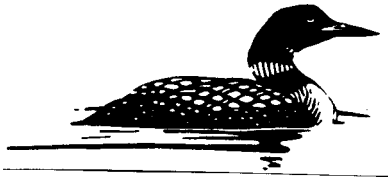
This will be my last loon report to you, I am passing the baton to Claire Zwieg, who has been the coordinator for the west end of the lake for many years. Because of my Macular Degeneration, I am forced to resign from the board of directors of the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion and as the "Loon Lady of the Lake." I have loved doing the loon count and will miss it terribly and hope you will all give Claire the great cooperation you all have given me.

Thank you,
Mardy Jackson

Need Extra Copies of the Shore Lunch Site Map?

If you'd like to print a color map of the shore lunch sites on Lake Vermilion for your tackle box or your boat's glove box, please go the Shore Lunch Site section of our website. You'll find it easy to download and print the PDF-format map on your home computer.

OUR LOONS — GUSHING OIL



This spring our loons had migrated north before the big oil tragedy in the Gulf. However, sadly, what was left behind in the Gulf were the chicks born here on Lake Vermilion for the last three years. Who knows how many of them have been affected. With the clean-up going on, one wonders how much oil will be left behind; or even how much progress will be made in the clean-up before our loons will migrate back to the Gulf in the fall. This year our loon count will not be affected but — next year? We are all united in the plight of our Lake Vermilion loons and we need to send down our best and strongest vibes on their behalf.

— Mardy Jackson

CORMORANT COLONY ON POTATO ISLAND



Cormorants on Lake Vermilion

The DNR Fisheries office in Tower has recently been hearing concerns about increasing numbers of cormorants on Lake Vermilion. Many anglers and lake residents are concerned that increased cormorant numbers might negatively impact fish populations. Cormorant numbers have increased dramatically in North America since the 1960's, when their population was at a historic low level due to environmental contaminants, especially DDT. As the cormorant population has recovered, conflicts with anglers have increased. While anglers often perceive cormorants are damaging fish populations, actual documented cases where this has occurred have been rare.

Leech Lake is an example where high cormorant numbers may have contributed to a decline in fish populations. During the period from 1998 to 2004, the cormorant population on Leech Lake increased dramatically, culminating in a population of 2,524 nesting pairs of birds. During that same time frame walleye and perch populations declined. DNR Fisheries biologists found compelling evidence that high cormorant numbers may have been responsible for declining perch and walleye populations. Eventually a management plan was developed that included reducing cormorant numbers to 500 nesting pairs. The management plan also included a protected slot limit for walleye and some limited walleye fry stocking. Fish populations have since recovered.

Cormorants have been present on Lake Vermilion for many years, at a relatively low population level. Cormorant nesting was documented on two small rocky islands in northeast Big Bay during the 1990's. These islands are quite small and could not support very many nesting cormorants. Sometime around 2000 cormorants abandoned nesting on these two small islands and began to nest on Potato Island, a slightly larger island located near the middle of Big Bay. In 2004, a statewide survey documented 34 cormorant nests on Potato Island. Because cormorant numbers seemed to be increasing, the DNR initiated a more intensive monitoring program to regularly count nests on Lake Vermilion. In 2007, the number of cormorant nests had increased to 128, and in 2010 there were 307 nests on Potato Island.

While the number of cormorants on Lake Vermilion has increased over the last several years, no unusual changes in fish populations have been observed. Poor walleye fishing on West Vermilion in recent years was due to poor reproduction in 2004 and 2005, and was not

related to increased cormorant numbers the last couple of years. However, the rate of increase in nesting cormorants is of some concern. A major increase in cormorant numbers from the current population could potentially impact walleye and perch populations. To prepare for that possibility, DNR Fisheries staff will develop a management plan to address the cormorant issue over the next year or so. The plan will likely include increasing cormorant nest counts from every third year to every one or two years. Fish abundance will continue to be tracked by annual population assessments. Mortality rates for juvenile walleye will be calculated and monitored for changes. Additionally, DNR staff will begin work on a cormorant model for Lake Vermilion that could be used to predict when cormorant abundance might reach a level of concern. If cormorant numbers reached a critical level, management action could then be taken to reduce cormorant numbers.

Cormorants are protected by the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, which makes indiscriminant killing of these birds illegal. Limited control of cormorants is allowed in Minnesota under a depredation order issued by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. There must be strong evidence that cormorants are causing significant damage before any control action could be initiated. Cormorants have been part of the landscape in North America for centuries. At reasonable numbers they are not a threat to fish populations. However, to ensure protection of fish populations on Lake Vermilion, DNR Fisheries will have a plan to monitor the cormorant population, detect changes in fish abundance and mortality if they occur, and begin control measures if necessary. If anyone has questions about cormorants on Lake Vermilion or other fish management questions, please feel free to contact me.

Duane Williams, Large Lake Specialist
MN Dept. of Natural Resources
218-753-2580 ext. 224
duane.williams@state.mn.us

*Check out pages 10-11 to see a copy of the
Sportsmen's Club Invasive Species
Prevention - Table Placemat
See Placemat column on page 12*

SPORTSMEN'S CLUB TABLE PLACEMATS

Starting in the spring of this year we ordered 15,000 table placemats for use at area restaurants. The purpose of the placemat is to find new ways to communicate with our public about how to prevent Exotic Invasive Species from infesting Lake Vermilion. A black & white, actual size version is shown on the previous two pages so you can review our intent and message. The mat actually has two parts: (1) is a rather handy map of the lake with all of its bays and islands so people will be drawn to looking at it. Once viewed, but more importantly (2), is the information on how to clean your boat when transporting it from lake to lake. Keeping the boat and trailer free of all weeds and draining all of the water before leaving the launch site is **the message**. It will take all of us, permanent residents, cabin owners and visitors alike to keep a clean boat if we are to preserve Vermilion's waters in the relatively uninfected (excluding Rusty Crayfish) condition that now exists. ***Remember, one slip-up, like a terrorist on a plane, can have huge consequences.***

We have had many compliments on the placemat and have heard many people have taken them home for use on their table. We have partnered with the Minnesota DNR on their cost. They are just as anxious to keep a relatively non-infested Lake Vermilion clean as we are determined to prevent a major infestation. If you haven't seen the mat in color, patronize your local restaurants as mentioned below. The Club has provided them free copies. If you don't see them, ask for them, I can get them additional mats. Of course, some restaurants find using placemats a handy convenience and others not so much. If you would like some for your home and you can't find them give me a call, I'll be happy to provide some (Bob Wilson 218-753-5544).

PARTICIPATING LOCAL AREA RESTAURANTS

Bayview, Benchwarmers, Black Bear, Crescent, Good Ole Days, Montana, South Switch, The Landing, The Wayside, Tower Café.

Bob Wilson – Board member

“Invasive Species”

by Bob Wilson



IMPORTANT! There is a new boating law in effect July 1, 2010

Sec. 25 Minnesota Statutes 2008. Section 84D has been amended by adding subdivision 4, part (a) to read as follows:

Subd. 4. Persons leaving public waters. (a) A person leaving waters of the state must drain boating-related equipment holding water and live wells and bilges by removing the drain plugs before transporting the watercraft and associated equipment on public roads. Drain plugs, bailers, valves or other devices used to control the draining of water from ballast tanks, bilges, and live wells must be removed or opened while transporting watercraft on a public road. Marine sanitary systems and portable bait containers are excluded from this requirement. A person must not dispose of bait in waters of the state.

SCLV volunteers were most recently checking boats for Invasive Species at selected public ramps on July 2 & 3. We were prepared to advise the boat owners about the new law and emphasize how important it was that all bilge and live well water be evacuated from the boat on land before it was launched into Lake Vermilion. To our pleasant surprise, many of the interviewed boaters had heard the news on TV or radio that day or the evening before and in some instances were actually telling us about it. Some even said it made a lot of sense and wondered why this law hadn't been implemented years before. Previously, the law did state that any boat coming out of a DNR declared infested lake, must pull the plug and drain all the water from the boat. Now this procedure is applicable to all Minnesota lakes every time the boat is to be transported on a public road. Drain plugs must be out of the drain hole when trailering the boat on the public roads. The last sentence of the above law is equally important; ***do not dispose of bait in waters of the state. Clear Enough!!***

(Continued on Page 13)

INVASIVE SPECIES... *Continued from Page 12*

In addition to the law, here are just two reminders of why you do not want to transport boat water from lake to lake!

Zebra mussels – This mussel's microscopic free-swimming larvae are called veligers. You won't notice them in your bilge water or live-well water. After being released in the lake, the larvae can mature in one to two years and grow to two inches in length. They can attach to any hard surface and can form thick mats of several hundred thousand individuals per square meter. Colonies can clog pipes, valves, damage pumps, generators and & motors. A single female can produce up to 1 million eggs per year.

Spiny Waterflea – A species of zooplankton that competes with other larval fish for the same food. Can grow to 1/4 to 3/8 inches as an adult. Can collect on fishing lines during trolling and accumulate in such high numbers that, at times, the line cannot be reeled-in. In some U.S. locations the Spiny Waterflea has become such a nuisance to anglers that fishing may become impossible during periods of peak abundance.

Good boat hygiene is critical! Boats that have been washed and dried for 5 days or more are much less likely to spread non-native exotic species.

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Boat checks are now being performed on Vermilion by DNR inspectors by virtue of the \$2000 DNR grant program we contracted for this spring. The program entitles Lake Vermilion to receive a minimum of 333 hours of boat inspections by DNR employees. As I mentioned in the previous newsletter, governmental units around the lake should participate in this prevention program starting next spring.

Our SCLV volunteers deserve special mention for conducting the three boat inspections we have held to-date. The number of "clean" boats we see is actually rather remarkable. None of our inspections have revealed any invasive species attached to boat or trailer. Are we fortunate! Take a look at our volunteer names and the number of boats/owners we have talked to starting with the fishing opener. Say thanks to these folks if you see them, for helping to protect our beautiful Lake Vermilion!

## **SCLV Boats Inspected**

### **May 14 (Fish Opener)**

121

### **May 28 (Memorial Weekend)**

30

### **July 2 & 3 (4th Weekend)**

43

### **Volunteers**

John Aronson  
Mark Baumeister  
Mel Hintz  
Joan Johnson  
Kathy Lovgren  
Ed Majerle  
Rod McPeak  
Bob Reed  
Gary Whitenack

Renee Aro  
Paul Hanson  
Don Housenga  
Dick Johnson  
Larry Lang  
Gayle Miller  
Walt Moe  
Frank Siskar  
Bob Wilson

Tom Aro  
Skip Hendrickson  
Darryl Johnson  
Jeff Lovgren  
Bill Mollard  
Rusty Miller  
Ray Pohto  
Alberta Whitenack



## **STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

# VERMILION SAFE BOATER'S GUIDE

The boating season on Lake Vermilion is now in full swing and our beautiful lake is experiencing the heaviest boating activity of the year. Because lakes do not have designated lanes, like highways do, it can be both confusing and dangerous if boat operators are not familiar with the basic traffic laws of waterways when encountering other vessels. The following information will help you to protect yourself, your passengers and others who share the public waterways.

## NAVIGATION RULES - TRAFFIC LAWS OF THE WATERWAYS

Collisions can easily be prevented if every vessel operator fulfills these three major responsibilities:

- 1.) **PRACTICE GOOD SEAMANSHIP.** It is the responsibility of every vessel operator to take all necessary action to avoid a collision, taking into account the weather, vessel traffic and limits of other vessels. Such actions should be taken in ample time to avoid a collision and at a safe distance from other vessels.
- 2.) **KEEP A PROPER LOOKOUT.** Failing to keep a sharp lookout is the most common cause of collisions. Every operator must keep a proper lookout, using both sight and hearing at all times. Watch and listen for other vessels, navigational hazards and others involved in water activities.
- 3.) **MAINTAIN A SAFE SPEED.** Safe speed is the speed that ensures you will have enough time to avoid a collision and can stop within an appropriate distance. Safe speed will vary depending upon conditions such as wind, water conditions, navigational hazards, visibility, surrounding vessel traffic density and the maneuverability of your vessel. Always reduce speed and navigate with extreme caution at night and when visibility is restricted.

## ENCOUNTERING OTHER VESSELS

There are rules that every operator must follow when encountering other vessels and those rules involve two basic terms:

- 1.) **THE "GIVE-WAY" VESSEL.** This vessel is required to take early and substantial action to keep away from other vessels by stopping, slowing down, or changing course. It should avoid crossing in front of other vessels. Any change of course and / or speed should be large enough to be readily apparent to another vessel. A series of small changes should be avoided.
- 2.) **THE "STAND-ON" VESSEL.** This vessel must maintain its course and speed unless it becomes apparent that the give-way vessel is not taking appropriate action. If you must take action, do not turn toward the give-way vessel or cross in front of it.

The action a vessel operator should take when encountering another vessel depends upon two questions:

### 1.) How are the vessels propelled?

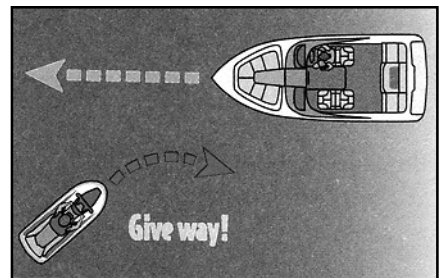
- \* Two power-driven vessels
- \* Two sailing vessels
- \* A power driven vessel and a sailing vessel.

### 2.) How are the two vessels approaching one another?

- \* **Meeting head-on:** a vessel operator sees another vessel ahead or nearly ahead
- \* **Paths that cross:** two vessels are on a crossing path so as to involve risk of collision
- \* **Overtaking:** a vessel is coming upon another vessel from behind or nearly behind the other vessel

#### Paths That Cross

The vessel on the port (left) is the give-way vessel.  
The vessel on the starboard (right) is the stand-on vessel.



*(Continued on Page 15)*

## THE RULES THAT FOLLOW WILL COVER MOST OF THE SITUATIONS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AS A RECREATIONAL BOATER ON LAKE VERMILION

### Power Driven Vessel Encountering Power Driven Vessel

- \* **Meeting head-on.** Neither vessel is the stand-on vessel. Both vessels should turn to starboard (right).
- \* **Paths that cross.** The vessel on the port (left) is the give-way vessel. The vessel on the starboard (right) is the stand-on vessel.
- \* **Overtaking.** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.

### Power Driven Vessel Encountering Sailing Vessel

- \* **Meeting head-on.** The power driven vessel is the give-way vessel. The sailing vessel is the stand-on vessel.
- \* **Paths that cross.** The power driven vessel is the give-way vessel. The sailing vessel is the stand-on vessel.
- \* **Overtaking.** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel, regardless of whether it is a sailing vessel or a power-driven vessel. The vessel being overtaken is always the stand-on vessel.

### OPERATING IN NARROW CHANNELS

- \* A boat in a narrow channel must keep as far to the right of the channel as is safe and practical.
- \* You must not anchor in a narrow channel.
- \* You must use the appropriate sound signals and use caution while operating in a narrow channel when:
  - \* Overtaking or being overtaken.
  - \* When your view is obstructed such as when you approach a bend in the channel.
  - \* If you are leaving a dock, slip or tie-up mooring, you must give way to all approaching vessels.

### RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN VESSELS

If operating a power-driven vessel, you must give way to:

- \* Any vessel not under command, such as an anchored or disabled vessel.
- \* Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a vessel towing, laying cable, picking up navigational markers or DNR crews doing fish studies or water testing.
- \* A sailing vessel unless it is overtaking.

Have an enjoyable and safe boating season! Dale Lundblad - Board Member

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## NAVIGATION LIGHTS:

Navigation lights on Lake Vermilion were installed many years before the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion (SCLV) was formed and I'm not sure when the SCLV took over maintenance of them. Aids to Navigation include channel marker buoys, hazard marker buoys and Navigation lights to aid in nighttime travel on the lake. The following paragraph is taken from the Minnesota Boating Guide:

**WATERWAY MARKERS** *Official waterway markers may be in the form of a buoy, sign or light, either in the water or on shore. They assist the boater by marking channels, denoting unsafe areas, directing traffic, controlling speed, protecting resources and other functions. Official markers are usually placed by the U.S. Coast Guard, state, county or local governmental unit. **Private markers of any type may not be placed in the water overnight without a permit from the county sheriff.***

All the Navigation Light locations are indicated on maps of the lake, so if someone installs a light on their property that mimics the blinking amber colored lights used for Night Navigation, great confusion can occur that endangers boaters unfamiliar with the extra lights. As noted above, the Sheriff of St. Louis County has jurisdiction over placing of markers of any type overnight in the water. There have recently been 2 such lights installed that mimic the blinking amber Nav lights and have been reported by boaters that knew they were not in the proper locations. If anyone has information as to where these lights are or were located we would ask that you relay that information to me, Walt Moe at 753-3816 or John Zwieg at 666-5008 or one of SCLV directors.

Also, if anyone has historical information on when and how the original lights were installed please contact me so we can add that to our historical records.

Walt Moe

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# VERMILION MUSKIES - Past and Present

By: Paul Pollock, Lake Vermilion Guides League

I remember the first Vermilion muskie I saw like it happened yesterday. My Dad and I were trolling for walleyes in Pike Bay and the fish hit a small stick bait. After a good battle, the silver fish with red fins and spots left us in awe before she took off into the coffee colored water.

A few more incidental muskie catches weren't enough to get me to actually target muskies. The impetus that got me casting the big sticks was the constant prodding from a friend of mine that muskie fishing was right up my alley. Being a lifelong walleye and pike fisherman, I guess it was the logical progression.

On my first trip in Tom's boat, I had my first follow. I'll never forget how effortless that muskie looked while following my Suick jerkbait. Just the sight of that fish (which was probably a low 40 inch class muskie) was enough to get the heart a pumpin' and the corpuscles jumpin'...No pun intended, I was hooked!

On the ensuing trip, Tom hooked a 41 inch muskie and I somehow managed not to abort the net job! That was our only muskie that day, but on the next trip I managed to catch and release a 44 incher, which was the biggest muskie in his boat at the time. That was all it took to send me to Gander Mountain to purchase the first in a long line of St. Croix muskie rods, a venerable 6 foot Premier.

Back in the late '90s, muskie fishing was a lot different than now. The biggest difference was the lack of pressure. I could literally run from spot to spot or camp on a spot without seeing another boat casting for 'skies. The lack of pressure helped as far as learning because I could stop and cast a veritable potpourri of weed and rock structure and spend the time necessary to learn their nuances.

I was also able to amalgamate many baits and tactics into my arsenal, many of which I still use today. Staples in my arsenal back then included bucktail spinners such as Eagletails, Harassers, and Buchertails; jerkbaits and gliders including Suicks, Bobbies, Eddies and Reef Hawgs; and topwaters such as Creepers and Globes.

It seems all the rage then as now was bucktails and topwaters. I was a bit of an anomaly because jerkbaits and gliders were my fascination. I just loved the way I could manipulate the action of a bait by changing the way I worked the rod. Next, I started experimenting with weighting systems, fin bends, and hook modifications, but I digress.

My first 50 inch muskie came in the fall of 1998. She fell for a sucker colored Eddie Bait while fishing a rocky shoal with my Labrador Retrievers Zeke and Mookie. I'd noticed a lot of baitfish on the electronics as well as dimples in tight on the rocks. I pitched the Eddie in and the fish destroyed it on the first pull of the rod. The battle was epic and complicating matters was the fact that I was alone with two dogs in a 15 foot boat!

The big fish kept bullgoggling it deep, but I finally managed to turn the fish and ease it into the waiting net. I actually dropped to my knees as my legs were the consistency of lime gelatin! She stretched the tape to 50 inches and sported a 25 inch girth, probably weighing in the upper 30 to just over 40 pound range. After a couple bad pictures and a successful release, the magnitude of what had just happened hit me. I'd boated a 50 inch muskie in my first full season of muskie fishing.

The fact that there was a 50 inch muskie in the lake in the fall of 1998 is amazing. If she was a fish from the first stocking of Leech Lake strain fingerlings from 1987, she exhibited a fantastic growth rate. The next August my friend Garrett caught and released a 51 inch muskie on which I was the net man, the picture of which still hangs on the wall of Bay View Lodge. Those were no doubt some of the first 50 inchers taken from a lake which is now famous for them.

I've always been a bit of an adventure seeker, so night fishing was the next big endeavor. After reading several articles in Musky Hunter and Esox Angler Magazines, I became intrigued at the prospect of catching them at night. Little did I know that several years later, I would in fact be reading my own articles in the pages of Esox Angler.

Garrett and I dove right into it and soon realized that not only was it effective but the number of big fish was impressive. There's something about pulling in a 50 plus inch fish under the ebony cloak of darkness that can't be explained. It must be experienced....It's the ultimate adrenaline rush! As an added benefit, we had the entire lake to ourselves. Very rarely did we even encounter other night fishermen. Keep in mind this was before the advent of GPS which has given people a lot more confidence to venture onto this big lake at night.

In those days, Garrett, Chris, and Arvid were my primary fishing partners and we put some serious numbers and size in the net. Muskies are never "easy" to catch, but back then followers were converted into eaters more frequently and multiple follows from the same fish were common. The pressure became more noticeable in '03 and '04 and by '06 it was nuts out there at times.

Trolling was another tactic that I dove headlong into in 2000 and right off the bat I experienced some 4 and 5 muskie days and a 50 by 24 inch muskie in October of 2000. As we moved into the '03 to '05, some of the muskies we released were simply voluminous pigs. A couple of the 53.5 inchers with 25 inch girths were the biggest and left us wondering if and when a state record class fish would come from Vermilion. A common topic of conversation was if we'd keep it when we got it. A resounding "No" continues to be the most common answer.

*(Continued on Page 17)*

I spent a lot of time tinkering and refining baits and tactics while fishing the lake from east to west. Globes and Creepers became Top Raiders and Creepin' Toms. Eagletails and Buchers became Cowgirls and DC10's. All of the oldies are still goodies, but the market has exploded with some great new baits as muskie fishing has increased in popularity.

This increase in popularity has coincided with more pressure on Vermilion. The fish have become conditioned to many baits, consequently my tactics are always being refined. Show 'em something a bit different i.e. speed, size, color. etc. and reap the rewards.

What's impressive is that even with the increase in fishing pressure, my catch of 50 plus inch fish has remained stable or increased every season. There is simply a lot of big muskies in the system. A recurring theme among muskie fishermen is trophy fish, but the "average muskies" on Vermilion are impressive as well. Most of the muskies in my boat run 40 plus inches and many years, most are in the 43 inch and above class. My personal best muskie to date is a 55 incher caught two summers ago. I've caught much heavier fall fish, but the double nickel did it for length.

Lake Vermilion has become one of the hottest muskie lakes in the country. Many of the resort owners can tell you that a high percentage of their business comes from muskie fishermen. It's also been a boon to local businesses and guides alike. After much encouragement and prodding from people who'd caught muskies with me, I started guiding in 2005.

Like the fishing on Vermilion, my guiding business has continued to evolve. What started with word of mouth and business cards has blossomed into a much bigger operation. Juggling a full time job at Hibbing Taconite with fishing/guiding presents a bit of a challenge at times, but the boat still manages to hit the water over 125 days a year.

I truly enjoy the teaching aspect of guiding and there's nothing more exciting than being a part of a first or personal best fish. I also stress courtesy, ethics, and proper catch and release. Writing is another way to convey my passion for the sport and I've written a lot in recent years.

Every year brings something new and hot in the muskie world. The last couple years, "Pounders" and 15-ounce BullDawgs have become the rage within the muskie community. Some truly impressive fish are being taken on these baits each fall. I've amalgamated these baits into my fall arsenal, and I continue to troll as well.

Fall is still my favorite time on the water. The whitefish and tullibee spawn concentrates some of the biggest muskies in the system, and brought my heaviest muskie, a 54 inch tanker in the upper 40 pound class in the fall of 2006. Again partnered up with Garrett, that one left an indelible mark in my memory with its jumps and power dives. Oddly enough, after all these years and all the fish, I ended up on my knees, my legs the consistency of gelatin after that one as well! We've had some great days on the water.

With many creative minds out there, I'm left wondering

what the next "hot bait" to hit Vermilion will be. I sometimes chuckle at how "monkey see, monkey do" muskie fishing has become, but that being said, each year does bring about new baits and tactics that put fish in the net. Discern the working pattern/bait combination and catch fish. That's the puzzle one has to piece together to figure out the sometimes enigmatic muskie!

As we move into 2010 and beyond, I look for the muskie fishery on Vermilion to continue to change. The new State Park will bring more people to the east end and the number of people fishing the lake in general will continue to grow. It's amazing to reflect on all the hours spent beating the water to a froth, the cold fronts and the heat waves, the snowstorms and ice in November...Caught fish and lost fish, but one common denominator holds true. The muskie fishery is healthy and the solid forage base will continue to ensure a viable trophy fishery for many years to come.

Lake Vermilion Guides League -  
Experienced Professional Minnesota Fishing Guides  
PO Box 748  
Tower, MN 55790  
[info@lakevermilionguidesleague.com](mailto:info@lakevermilionguidesleague.com)



Paul Pollock and Judy Pearson

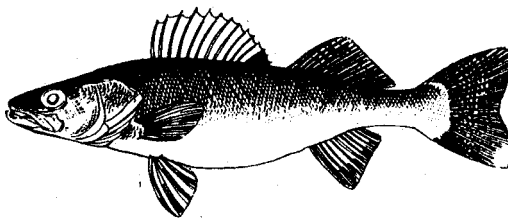


# WEST END WALLEYE FISHING

## Status of the Walleye Population on the West End of Lake Vermilion

The DNR Fisheries office at Tower has again been receiving complaints of poor walleye fishing this summer on the west end of Lake Vermilion, especially for eating-sized fish. This is the third consecutive year that walleye fishing has been poor on the west end of the lake. The SCLV, resorts, and bait shops have also been receiving complaints about poor walleye fishing. I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss the status of the walleye population on the west end of the lake, explain why walleye fishing has been poor, and discuss what the DNR is planning to do about the situation.

The DNR Fisheries office in Tower conducts annual fish population assessments on Lake Vermilion as part of the statewide Large Lake Program. Specially designed gill nets are set at standard locations around the lake each year in September. Fish catches from these nets provide information on species composition, abundance, size, age, growth, etc. The walleye gill net catch on West Vermilion in 2009 was 12.1 fish/net, which was actually above the historical average. However, many of these walleye were over 17 inches long and were within the protected slot. Most of these larger walleye were from strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003. The 2002 year class of walleye was the strongest produced on West Vermilion in over 25 years. While these larger fish provide excellent angling opportunities for catch and release fishing, many anglers also want to catch fish they can keep and eat. Unfortunately, as many anglers would suspect, the gill net catch of 13-17 inch walleye has been well below average the last couple of years. Low numbers of these keeper-sized walleye was due primarily to poor reproduction in 2004 and 2005, and only fair reproduction in 2006. There was some good news to report from the 2009 assessment. The gill net catch of 11-12 inch walleye was well above average, due to a strong year class produced in 2007. These fish should provide better fishing opportunities next year.



Poor walleye reproduction in 2004 was due to unusually cool weather that spring and summer, which resulted in very slow growth of young-of-the-year walleye. We have learned from our sampling program on Lake Vermilion that small, slow growing young-of-the-year walleye have poor over-winter survival and usually produce a weak year class. The same pattern of cool summer weather, slow growth, and poor over-winter survival was also observed in 1992, 1993, and 2000.

Walleye reproduction was also poor in 2005, although the reason for that is unclear. An electrofishing boat is used each September to sample young-of-the-year walleye and evaluate reproduction for the year. While growth of young-of-the-year was near average in 2005, the total catch was the lowest ever observed. Yellow perch

also experienced poor reproduction in 2005, so there may have been some type of weather event in the spring that affected egg or juvenile fish survival. Another possible explanation for poor reproduction and survival of the 2005 year class might be year class suppression. This occurs when fish from strong year classes compete with and prey on following year classes. Strong year classes of walleye were produced in 2002 and 2003, and it is possible they had a suppressive effect on the 2005 class.

The 2006 year class appears to be about average in strength on West Vermilion. On East Vermilion, the 2006 year class is much stronger than average and has provided better fishing for keeper-sized fish on that end of the lake. It is unknown why the 2006 year class is stronger on East Vermilion, although differences in year class strength between the two major lake basins have been observed in the past.

When walleye numbers are low and fishing is poor, the DNR usually hears a variety of reasons to

*(Continued on Page 19)*

explain poor fishing success. Some anglers believe muskie have reduced the walleye population, however that is very unlikely. A few years ago walleye abundance was at an all time high on Lake Vermilion, well after muskie became established in the lake. The DNR conducted a thorough review of muskie management in Minnesota a few years ago, and did not find any evidence that muskie introductions reduced walleye populations. Muskie and walleye have coexisted in many lakes across North America for centuries. In fact, many of the best muskie lakes in Minnesota and Ontario are also excellent walleye lakes. This would not be possible if muskie decimated walleye populations, as is sometimes suggested.

Some anglers are blaming the 17-26 inch protected slot limit for the current size imbalance in the walleye population, however most of what happened to cause this situation happened before the protected slot was implemented in 2006. Poor reproduction in 2004 and 2005 could not possibly be related to the slot limit. That being said, it is possible the slot limit may have contributed to year class suppression on younger year classes after fish from the strong 2002 and 2003 year classes began entering the protected slot in 2007. It is important to remember there are many lakes in Minnesota that have slot limits and walleye fishing remains very good on most of these lakes.

Stocking has not been a factor in the current situation. Lake Vermilion has been stocked annually for many years and the number of walleye fry stocked has not changed significantly in recent years. Increased stocking would not be helpful to correct the situation, because the problem is not related to low numbers of walleye eggs or fry.

The effects of weak or strong year classes in walleye populations generally diminish as these fish move out of the population and new year classes come into the population. The DNR will closely monitor the walleye population in 2010 and will be especially looking for younger strong year classes coming into the population. As stated earlier, the 2007 year class appears to be stronger than average and should help improve fishing next summer. The 2008 year class looks close to average, while the 2009 year class will likely be a very poor year class. 2009 was one of those years with cool spring temperatures, slow walleye

growth, and poor survival, similar to what happened in 2004.

The DNR recently started a research project that includes marking all stocked walleye fry going into Lake Vermilion. This will allow us to determine the amount of natural reproduction in the lake and see if there is something unusual happening in the early life history of walleye affecting survival. Various stocking rates will be used to help determine optimal stocking rates and maximize return to anglers.

As stated earlier, most of what happened to cause the current situation on West Vermilion, occurred before the protected slot began in 2006. However, if future population assessments indicate the protected slot is contributing to poor reproduction and survival of small fish, we would consider dropping or changing the protected slot regulation. The DNR has no interest in seeing the walleye population remain as it currently exists on West Vermilion. It is likely the current state of the walleye population on West Vermilion was caused by the unusual confluence of events I have described and the walleye population will recover as new strong year classes move into the population. DNR Fisheries staff will meet with Lake Vermilion stakeholder groups later this year to review current data and plan future management goals. If anyone has questions about the walleye population on Lake Vermilion, please feel free to contact me.

Duane Williams, Large Lake Specialist  
MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
218-753-2580 ext. 224  
[duane.williams@state.mn.us](mailto:duane.williams@state.mn.us)

### Is Your Membership Current?

You may have noticed that we've added a date after your name on the newsletter mailing label. We want to make it easy for you to know if your membership dues are up to date.

For example, "**Pd 2010**" indicates our records show you're paid through calendar year 2010.

### **Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.**

Jeff Lovgren, Member Records • P.O. Box 696 • Tower MN 55790  
lovgren@frontiernet.net • (218) 753-2413

Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st

☐ 2010 New Member      ☐ 2010 Renewal

Membership level

☐ \$10.00 Individual      ☐ \$20.00 Family  
☐ \$15.00 Couple      ☐ \$50.00 Business or Organization

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above.

## **Become a Member**

Join those who love Lake Vermilion as much as you do. Help us continue the many activities you've just read about.

Not sure? Check us out at our website [www.sportsmensclublakevermilion.org](http://www.sportsmensclublakevermilion.org). We're pretty sure you'll like our vision for the future and the work we have under way now to make Lake Vermilion even better.

Please use the form on this page or the form on our website. Make checks payable to the "Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion." The Sportsmen's Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Join us as we work to improve this great lake. Together we can have an even bigger impact!

**HELP US MAKE A BEAUTIFUL LAKE EVEN BETTER!**



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