

the vermilion sportsman



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preservation and improvement of Lake Vermilion"*

Vol. 36, No. 4 2100 MEMBERS COOK & TOWER, MN NOVEMBER 2010

News from Lake Vermilion State Park

- **Two day-use areas within the park are now open to the public**
- **Coming soon: hunting and snowmobiling opportunities**
- **A community celebration was a success**
- **Park assessments, planning, resource work continue**

Day use opportunities

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced that two day-use opportunities are now available to Lake Vermilion State Park visitors. One is accessible from land and one from the water.

By land: The Alaska Shaft Trail (originating from Soudan Underground Mine State Park) is open for hiking into the new Lake Vermilion State Park site. The 2.4-mile hiking loop includes a spur on the northeast corner that ends in a beautiful overlook into the rolling terrain of Minnesota's newest state park. Begin your hike with a visit to the Soudan Underground Mine State Park headquarters.

By water: A boat-up picnic area is open in the northeast corner of the park in Armstrong Bay. By water, look for an old boathouse and the

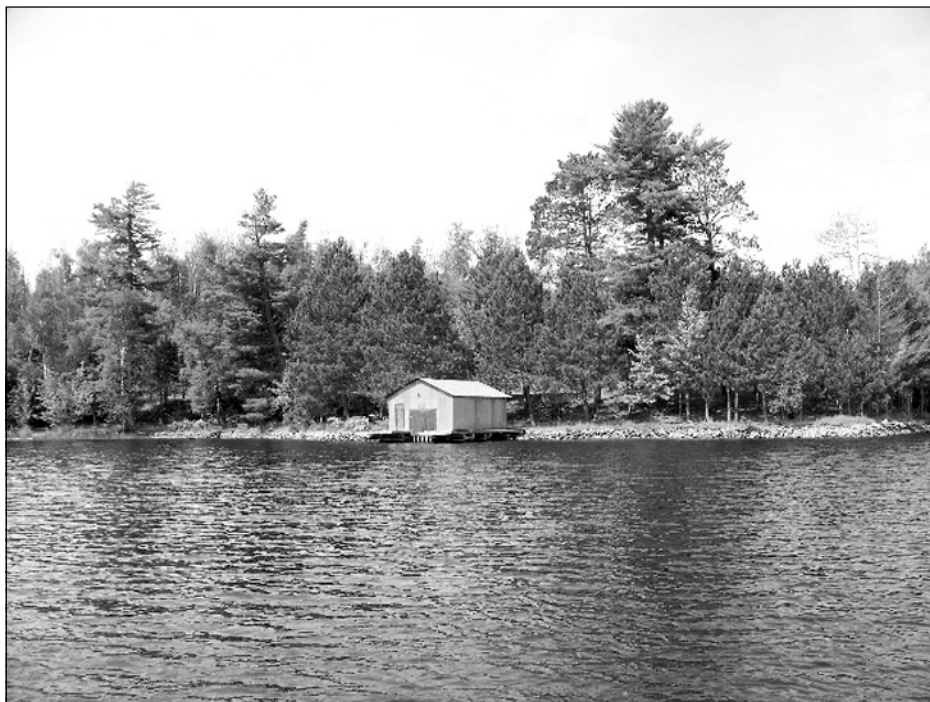
classic brown-and-gold Lake Vermilion State Park sign. The area has a fire ring and picnic tables.

Coming soon

Hunting opportunities: Lake Vermilion State Park will be open for firearm deer hunting by permit this fall. Fifty permits were available (deadline Sept. 9) for a special hunt Nov. 6 - 14.

Winter trail opportunities: DNR is planning temporary snowmobile and winter hiking/

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New boat-up day use area in Lake Vermilion State Park.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Greetings friends and neighbors,

Fall is my favorite season of the year, hands down. The only problem is it does not last long enough. There is far too much to do during those few short weeks leading to the onset of winter. The outdoor opportunities are abundant: walleye fishing, musky fishing, grouse hunting, hiking, biking, leaf looking, and deer hunting plus many other fun activities either on the lake or in the surrounding woods. And, we can enjoy these when there are no bugs and in many cases we have the lake and woods virtually to ourselves. In addition to these fun activities, we lake dwellers have our fall projects like pulling out the boat lift, lifting the dock, winterizing the boat, covering the septic and so on. In a sense it is the reverse of our spring projects without the luxury of time. Wait too long and the projects become more difficult. A few years ago I had to chop ice to remove our boat lift from the lake. Each nice day brings a fresh dilemma, should I work, i.e. take care of the fall projects, or should I play? There is no right answer; however there is an old saying that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." So, you decide the right mix of work and play, but be sure to make time to play on Lake Vermilion during the fall season. And, if needed, you may borrow my axe to get your boat lift out of the lake!

Last fall the SCLV Board established a set of goals for this past year aimed at protecting and improving the lake. These goals were included as part of the President's Message in the November 2009 Newsletter which is available on our website. It is exciting to realize that with the combined efforts of our dedicated hard-working board members coupled with the help of a host of willing volunteers, we met nearly all of our goals. In no particular order, here are our accomplishments and activities for the past year: water quality monitoring, sucker sale, take a kid fishing event, loon count, quarterly newsletter, shore lunch site maintenance and signage, cormorant survey, navigation aid maintenance, invasive species programs (including boat checks, lake-wide ramp inspections, and placemats), annual meeting, volunteer appreciation dinner, website maintenance, and development of a SCLV rack card. Also, with the help of many, we met our goal of increasing membership by five percent. We now have over 2100 members and, in all likelihood, are the largest lake association in Minnesota. Many, many thanks to all

who had a role in these accomplishments. The contribution of your valuable time is an investment in Lake Vermilion enjoyed by thousands of people each year.

Our annual membership renewals will be sent out in the next few weeks. Our membership fees of \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a couple, and \$20 for a family are among the lowest for any lake association in the state. As you can see from the list of accomplishments above, our membership fees are put to very good use in protecting and improving Lake Vermilion. So, as you renew your membership, I would encourage you to consider a tax-deductible contribution to the SCLV. It is, indeed, an investment in this great lake that we are privileged to use and enjoy. Contributions are tax deductible and you may designate how they are used on the membership renewal form.

At our October Board Meeting we developed goals for the upcoming year. In addition to renewing many of our goals from last year, we are planning some new initiatives in the areas of water quality, boating safety, and improving the Lake Vermilion fishery. These will be covered in the next issue of our newsletter. We also welcomed two new board members, Warren Anderson and Howard Ankrum, who will be an integral part of board activities this next year. We wish to recognize and thank outgoing board members Mardy Jackson and Gary Lundquist for their years of service on the board.

Progress continues on developing the master plan for the new Lake Vermilion State Park. Please watch the local newspapers for announcements on upcoming meetings and opportunities to provide input as to development of this new park. The master plan is scheduled for completion in December so the DNR may use it as a basis for funding requests during the 2011 legislative season.

Lastly, as you prepare to take part in your annual Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions, your SCLV board wishes you much happiness and safe traveling during this exciting season of the year.

Mel Hintz, President



SHORELAND RULES UPDATE PROJECT

Creating Standards for Lake and River Conservation

August 2010 Newsletter

Governor Pawlenty Returns Draft Rules for Further Work

On August 11, 2010, Governor Pawlenty returned the draft shoreland rules to DNR for further work. At the same time, he returned the draft structure rules for similar reasons. His primary concerns were:

- Whether the rules provided adequate flexibility for local governments with diverse resources and development issues;
- Finding an appropriate balance between protection of Minnesota's lakes and waterways and the rights of citizens to enjoy them and their property;
- The potential impacts of changing the regulatory threshold for basins located near municipalities;
- The draft rules may be too much of a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

DNR has been directed to revisit the scope and intent of the rulemaking with its stakeholders and the legislature. Meanwhile, the governor noted that local governments are free to adopt the same or similar rules as those in the draft DNR proposal. "Some local units of government have already taken such steps," he said. "I encourage all local units of government to work with the DNR to move forward together in areas where additional regulations will achieve desired goals."

Minnesota Statutes 103F.221 allow local governments to adopt standards that are stricter than the statewide minimum shoreland standards found in the current rules. The current shoreland rules have a flexibility provision that allows local governments to deviate from the strict adherence to certain statewide standards in certain instances if they can demonstrate to DNR that their alternative approach satisfies the intent of the standard.

Until such time as new shoreland rules have been fully promulgated, DNR will accept any local government's ordinance amendments that follow the draft rules as substantially meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements. Because certain elements of the draft rules do deviate from current rules in appearing to be less strict (e.g. relaxed height and lot size restrictions in cities), it is necessary that a local government request flexibility approval from DNR in order to use them.

Stay Connected

The project Web site at <http://mndnr.gov/waters/shoreland.html> remains active while DNR assesses the Governor's comments. At the Web site, there is a list serv available for sign up to receive updates. Public comment related to shoreland rule development is welcome and can be directed to the Web site.

Lake Vermilion State Park

(Continued from front page)

snowshoeing trails for the 2010-2011 winter season. Watch the DNR Website for maps, which will be available in early November.

Community celebration

A community celebration open house on September 22 brought approximately 200 people to the Breitung Fire Hall. Those attending were treated to a picnic supper, had a chance to provide input on what should be in the park, and heard from DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten, Tower Mayor Steve Abrahamson, and Breitung Township Chair Tim Tomsich.

Planning, assessments and resource work continue

Planning: The LVSP Citizen's Advisory Committee met again September 29 to continue working on its recommendations for the park master plan. Subcommittees formed around the issues of Infrastructure, Visitor Services, Interpretation and Education, and Resource Conservation. The

master plan will guide the development and administration of the park. The process includes public input opportunities. A Web-based early public input questionnaire closed September 30. If you missed that opportunity or want to provide more comments, there will be a 30-day public review period along with two public open houses (one in the Twin Cities and one in the Tower-Soudan area) once the draft master plan is complete.

Assessments and resource work: DNR, Minnesota Historical Society and Conservation Corp Minnesota (CCM) staff have been working to get the park ready for use. CCM has been widening trails and clearing out debris, state park staff has readied the day-use areas and shored up a bridge, resource staff are doing resource assessments of plant and animal life, and DNR and MHS are studying cultural resources. For more information about the park planning process, visit www.mndnr.gov/vermilion.

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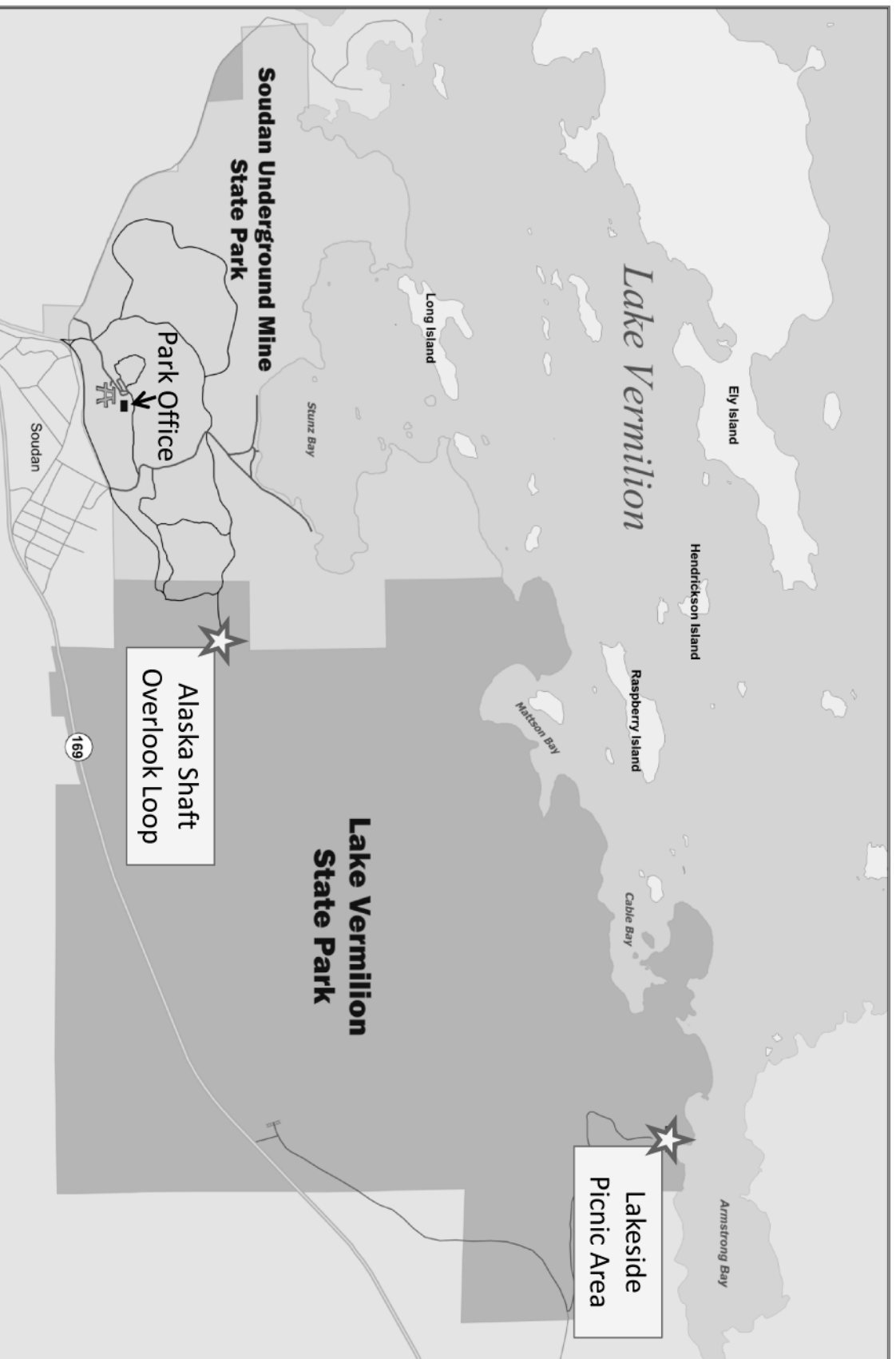
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SCLV Board Meetings are held monthly on the second Wednesday, and are open to all SCLV members. Check with a board member for time and location.

Areas Open for Day Use Activities

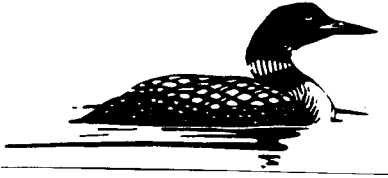
Lake Vermilion State Park—August 2010



The lakeside day use area is accessible only by lake, and includes picnic tables, fire ring and portable toilet. The 2.4-mile Alaska Shaft hiking trail is accessible by parking at Soudan Underground Mine State Park.

MOTHER NATURE'S REVENGE

by Mardy Jackson



Oh, yes! You try to defy Mother Nature and things just don't work out so well as a pair of Loons in my bay (Fabian) found out.

It was probably around mid August when something caught my eye out on the lake in front of my cabin. A pair of Loons were mating and I thought "Oh no"! Too late in the summer to bear a chick, as it wouldn't have time to mature for the Fall migration. The timing was way off. If they bore a chick, they'd be sorry, and most importantly, so would the chick. I started thinking about the whole situation and came up with this scenario.

Their nest was probably destroyed earlier during the normal nesting season, which is according to Mother Nature's PLAN. So THEN – around the middle of July, they see all those other loon pairs with their chicks. Our pair hasn't produced a chick, and that's their main role in life. So this begins to wear on them. And Voila! They decide to try once more.

Now this saying "Crazy as a loon" could certainly apply to this couple. For one thing, loons normally mate on land, and secondly they are going against Mother Nature's PLAN.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, er er, I mean cabin, I am hoping against hope that the nesting is not producing a chick at this late date!

Mother Nature's PLAN for Loons goes like this. They arrive at their birth lake about mid April (average date is about April 23) and nest about mid May. About 30 days later, the chicks are born. So this gives them about 3-4 months to grow and get strong enough to migrate to the Gulf. The adults usually take off, (not in flocks) mid to late September leaving behind the healthy juveniles to get stronger. And the juveniles, generally, leave about mid October. That is MOTHER NATURE'S PLAN. So the pair of Loons we are following, stick their bills up in the air and say, "We're doing this according to OUR PLAN". They just might be sorry about that. They had their chick and very pompously swam around the bay showing off their progeny with great satisfaction.

Time moves on and we are into November and it is very cold, and all their friends and relatives have "flown the coop". From the end of the bay, here come Mom and

Pop Loon on either side of their offspring, running across the surface of the water, flapping their wings, and showing junior how to get airborne, before they bump into Strawberry Island. Didn't work. So back they all swim to the end of the bay for another try. Back and forth they went, and as they came by my cabin I was using all the body English I knew how while brushing away my tears. It was a wonder I didn't take off myself. There was so much energy expended both on their parts as well as my own. I admire their perseverance and courage, but it looked hopeless.

Next day same thing, a whole morning of failed attempts. And then around noon, miracle of all miracles finally the chick became airborne and off they went up into the distance. I shook the timbers in my cabin by my loud shout of "Yes"! Maybe that will teach the Loons next time around to stick to MOTHER NATURE'S PLAN!

Remember the SCLV during the Holiday Season!

Are you looking for suggestions for gifts this holiday season? Why not a gift membership to the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion? A gift membership for your family or friends is a great way to keep them in touch with Lake Vermilion all year. Just send us the recipient's name, address and dues and we'll send you a gift certificate that you can give them for Christmas.

We also ask that you remember us in your end-of-year tax planning and estate planning. Your charitable donations will help the club to fulfill its mission to promote and enhance the outdoor experience of Lake Vermilion for future generations, protect and improve the water quality and educate the public regarding issues which impact the lake. A representative from our Board would be happy to personally discuss the benefits of making a gift to the club. The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

LOON FATALITIES NOTICE

At the St. Louis County Commissioner's meeting held at Greenwood Town Hall, a petition was presented to set a "NO WAKE" speed limit in the Oak Narrows channel between the East and West ends of Lake Vermilion. Petitioners presented evidence that boats speeding through this narrow channel were causing loon deaths by both direct collisions and high wakes destroying the loons' nests. The Commissioners have taken this petition under advisement and will work with the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department. We will keep you advised in upcoming newsletters and online.

Loon deaths prompt call for Hinsdale speed zone

By Marshall Helmberger

A group of Lake Vermilion residents is asking the St. Louis County Board to set speed restrictions in the Hinsdale Narrows on Lake Vermilion in order to protect both the public and wildlife from unsafe boat traffic in the area.

Cabin owners in the vicinity of the narrows say they have been concerned for a long time about the dangers posed by heavy traffic in the narrows, but they say the situation has worsened in recent years with the proliferation of large speed boats and jet skis on the lake. "On holidays and nice weekends, it's like a freeway out there," said Ron Wilson, whose family has owned property in the narrows since 1970. "It's a fatal accident waiting to happen."

For some wildlife, the accident has already happened. Wilson and others in the area recently documented the Aug. 22 death of an adult loon in the narrows, which appeared to have been struck by a boat on a particularly busy weekend. The loon was one of a pair that has been nesting in the area for several years. This year, the loon pair had successfully hatched two chicks, one of which went missing at the same time that the adult loon was found dead, according to Wilson.

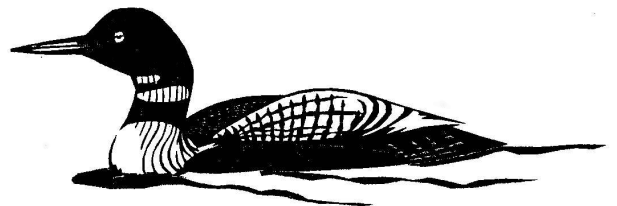
The hatching of the chicks this year was improbable. According to Wilson, the loons' nest was washed off its rocky perch this spring due to a combination of rising water levels and the wakes from large boats. But Wilson said he recovered the nest and its two eggs from the water and the loons successfully incubated both of them.

That little victory now feels hollow for Wilson and others in the area, who say the deaths of the loons have finally prompted them to act. Wilson and others in the area began a petition effort a few weeks ago and took their case to county commissioners at a county board meeting set for Tuesday, Sept. 28, at the Greenwood Town Hall.

The group is asking for a 25-mile-per-hour speed zone in a roughly three-quarter of a mile-long stretch of the narrows, running from Smart Bay to a point about one-half mile east of Oak Narrows.

The group is asking for the zone to be marked and enforced, particularly on busy weekends when the problems are greatest.

Doug Wallace, a Smart Bay resident and supporter of the effort, said it's a matter of public safety. "We're not only looking to protect loons, but also children at play, and to protect other boaters who are being hammered by these big boats," said Wallace. "There have already been a number of near collisions."



“Invasive Species”

by Bob Wilson



(End of Season thoughts and ramblings on the exotic species we don't want!)

In this beautiful mid-October, I believe it is safe to say that we have had a good invasive species prevention season outcome as no boats were found during our inspections with noxious weeds or illegally transported aquatic animals such as zebra mussels. Our efforts, along with the DNR inspection program, educational publicity on the subject from the DNR and ourselves and of course, boat owners with clean boats and trailers plus good luck (*not to be underestimated*) have all combined to get us through another summer relatively unscathed. To verify this condition, we recently completed a different type of inspection. SCLV volunteers, traveling in their boats, checked every ramp/water access on Lake Vermilion for what we feel are the most severe threats to the lake at this point in time.



ZEBRA MUSSEL

It worked like this. Five teams of volunteers divided the lake into sections and inspected each of the 41 combined public, resort and marina ramps/docks and surrounding areas. For zebra mussels they investigated docks and shoreline objects such as rocks or driftwood for any indication of clinging barnacle like objects. They examined, and if possible, felt the underwater dock posts for any signs. One team went farther and used an underwater camera. They believe that this is the ideal method for checking the underwater portion of docks in the future. For Spiny Waterfleas, a fish or minnow net was trolled through the water around the dock and ramp area to see if any would accumulate in the

netting. Simultaneously, the net was raised and lowered in the water column as the waterfleas may be concentrated at certain depths. For the regular fisherman, Spiny Waterflea can oftentimes be observed in an infested lake as they tend to bunch-up on fish lines and anchor ropes. Eurasian Milfoil and Curly Leaf pondweed had to be visually sighted by the volunteers, but the logical place to do so is at lake access ramps. As a result of this overall exercise, we are all very pleased to be able to say that none of these exotics were found. To add to this effort, the Vermilion Dock Service companies, Eagle Docks, Wright Docks and Manick Docks will be looking at the private docks they lift to see if they spot any “zebras.” As the SCLV volunteers did not find any in ramp areas where boat traffic would be much higher than private docks, we don't expect the dock services will find any, but another check will be important and enlightening just in case. We much appreciate their help.

It took fewer volunteers to check the ramps by boat than we normally need to perform boat checks in the summer. Protecting Lake Vermilion is our goal. Say thanks when you see these folks.

West End Teams

Dale & Nan Lundblad
Warren Anderson, Gary Whitenack & Jim Mueller
John Zwig & Terry Grosshauser

East End Teams

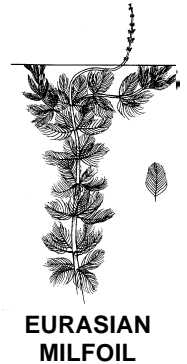
Darryl Johnson, Walt Moe & Paul Hanson
Ed Majerle & Dick Johnson

Picking up on the 41 water access ramps mentioned above, weren't you surprised at this number? While a great number of ramps are expected on a large lake, 41 seem excessive to me. These ramps didn't all appear at once and have been added, modified and changed over the years. In the past, the DNR believed they were doing the public a favor by making the task of boat launching convenient with numerous ramps and ensuring public waters were indeed public. No private lakes allowed. There is still reason to believe the DNR maintains this view regardless of the current invasive species threat.

The obvious problem with high numbers of lake ramps is the multiple paths for invasive species entry they create. Many resorts no doubt feel a great need to serve their customers by offering a convenient and easy way to launch boats as part of a generally appealing atmosphere conducive to a return visit. In addition, while 15 public ramps exist on Vermilion, nine on the east end alone, they may not be close to some resorts. In the case of general marinas, it almost goes without saying that they must have water access ramps. So, what to do about all of these entry points? The situation is complex and it's almost impossible to solve completely without really upsetting several political “apple carts” and economic tipping points. Here are a

few of my ideas focusing on the “ramp situation.” Keep in mind they are mine only and do not reflect the opinion of the SCLV Board (the management — you’ve heard this statement before).

Allow me this piece of rationale; there are too many water access ramps on Vermilion to even have a chance of minimizing the entry of AIS! By the way as a reminder, we currently have Rusty Crayfish almost lake-wide and a little Curly Leaf Pondweed by the public entry ramp in Everett Bay and some in Stuntz Bay. If I were given the ability, I would significantly reduce the number of ramps available on the lake. Those remaining open, marinas excepted, would be public ramps. Resort customers would use these public ramps and if a ramp were too far away for practical use by some resorts, I would recommend the DNR build ramps serving strategic areas so that the lake could be adequately served in total, but the number of overall ramps significantly reduced. The key word may be adequately, and of course studies would have to be performed to determine the best ramp distribution. However, our inspection records and those of the DNR show many of the current public ramps are often very lightly used and/or in my opinion, located very close together; Moccasin Point and Black Duck Bay are within a mile for example and the two ramps at Hoodoo Point are very close, one rarely used. In any case, the remaining ramps would have to be somewhat constantly monitored via DNR or volunteer personnel, video cameras or by other electronic means during the summer months. Resorts insisting on retaining their ramps as well as the marinas would need to be certified by the DNR and subject to surprise inspections during the summer months. Significant fines would result for not maintaining inspection standards and the DNR, in tandem, would also need to greatly increase the monetary fine potential on individual boaters found illegally transporting AIS. Currently, and I’m not alone in this thought, fines for boaters are truly small and would not deter boaters from accidentally repeating their last performance. Enforcement would have to be stepped-up at the same time. Of course these ideas sound very harsh, expensive to implement and inconvenient for some businesses and customers. However, these and many other ideas are being considered at various meetings of the DNR as we are going to press. I’ll be attending some of them. AIS is still spreading, Gull Lake in the Brainerd area has just been infested with zebra mussels. More effective prevention methods have to be implemented. Gull is probably a busy, high traffic lake similar to Vermilion in some ways, which brings me to my next point.



I keep hearing from friends and casual acquaintances alike that finding zebra mussels and the other AIS plants and animals in Vermilion is a sure thing, inevitable, a matter of time and other similar pronouncements. Tell the truth, so have you. My thought is “inevitable” could still be a long way off. Consider these facts. There are 11,842 lakes of 10 acres or more in Minnesota. Zebra mussels are currently confirmed in 29 waters, including areas of Lake Superior, the Mississippi River from Crow Wing County to the Iowa border, the Alexandria area chain of lakes, Pelican Lake near Detroit Lakes, Lake Minnetonka, and the St. Croix River from Stillwater downstream (Gull Lake is not yet officially counted). Do the math, $29/11,842 = .24\%$. Eurasian Milfoil is present in over 230 waters, 1.9%. Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) is known to occur in 759 lakes in 70 counties in Minnesota, 6.4%. We have two relatively small patches of CLP under observation. Of course large, well visited, lakes are logically more susceptible. However, should we give up, sit back and relax and just wait for the inevitable? I don’t think so. Here is a stretch, but try thinking of it this way. Lake Vermilion is our patient and we are its Doctors. If you look into the future, at let’s say the year 2030, some of us could easily say we are not likely to be around to enjoy it (a dark thought). Does that mean we shouldn’t go to the Doctor with our aches, pains and other medical problems now before they get really serious because after all it’s inevitable that sooner or later we won’t be around? I don’t personally know anyone who thinks like that, in fact, the reverse would be the common choice among my friends. So it is with Lake Vermilion, the SCLV will keep pushing our AIS prevention program and continue to do what it can along the way with help from the DNR and you.

COUNT ON IT and BE CAREFUL OUT THERE (minor plagiarism)!



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SPORTSMEN'S CLUB CHARTER MEMBER LOOKS BACK AT 70 YEARS ON LAKE VERMILION

Edwin M. Woolverton has lived on Lake Vermilion for most of his 94 years. He is certainly one of the lake's most colorful personalities. He refers to himself as an artist, wood carver, maker of duck decoys, birch bark and ash baskets and witness to Gaia - The Wonder Of It All. As a Charter Member of the Sportsmen's Club, Ed has been one of our lake association's most loyal supporters over the decades, contributing a significant amount of money to the Club's efforts to monitor and protect the lake's water quality. He can now add historian to his list of the "hats" he has worn. He has honored my request by writing the following "look back" at his fascinating life on the lake.

Dale Lundblad — Board Member

A LOOK AT LAKE VERMILION FROM AN OLDTIMER

I came to the lake 70 years ago, a young man. I am 94 now. I still live on the lake six months a year, but I am a snow bird with 35 years of wintering in Florida right on the Gulf in a small mobile home park.

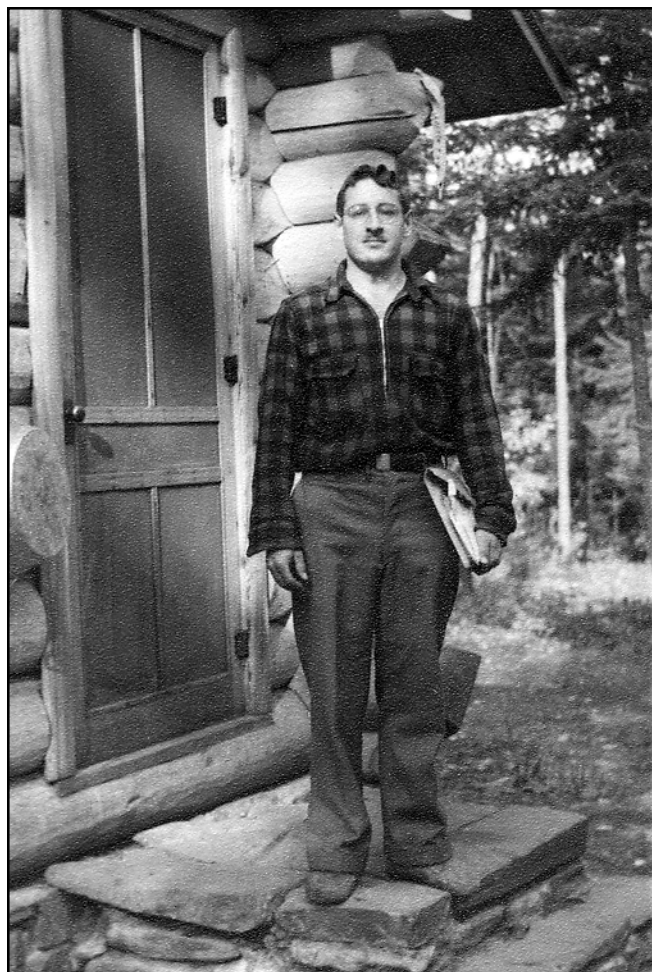
I found Lake Vermilion thanks to Mark Ludlow's father, Hod, whom I met in southern Minnesota at a Boy Scout water safety training course. He invited me up to this country to help him guide canoe trips for the Scout canoe base out of Ely on

Moose Lake at the end of the Fernberg Road. In fact, Hod built the beautiful log canoe base with log workers from here. Hod lived on Ludlow's Island, now a high-class resort. Hod knew what he wanted and started the resort, living with his wife, Lil, in the only small building there.

I guided canoe trips for two summers. The third summer, Bill Trygg from Cook came looking for someone to sit in a lookout tower for the summer. The idea appealed to me and I was flown to Lake Kekekabic in the BWCA for the next five months. At the end of the summer I had \$400 coming to me. Bill Trygg said, "What are you going to do with all that money?" I said, "I don't know." Bill said, "I will sell you land on Lake Vermilion and you will never regret it." I liked Bill and already knew I wanted to live on Lake Vermilion, so he sold me eight lots on the end of the newly made Oak Narrows road for \$50 a lot and, of course, I never regretted it. I sold those lots to Dick Lavine, my best friend, who built Timbuktu Resort there.

I first lived on the lake on Hinsdale Island where I built a small cabin. To get my mail I walked the five miles to Polley's Resort, run by Leon and Marie Polley. Leon was a friend of Hod's, also brought to the lake by Hod. Polley's Resort is now owned by son Tod, good friend of my son Richard. They grew up on the lake together. I soon moved to near Polley's during World War II where I bought a cabin and 100 feet of lakeshore for a thousand dollars. I actually enjoyed the war. I didn't have to wear a uniform thanks to health problems, so I lived up here during the summers and spent the winters on ships in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. Work on ships was extremely easy to get with most available men in uniform. The last year of the war I found where the money was. I spent nine months helping build an air base out in the middle of the Atlantic, Santa Maria Island in the Azores.

I came back to the lake with money in my pocket, bought a cabin near Polley's and invested in more lakeshore, which was worth nothing. Half the lake was available for paying the back taxes. The Daytons bought their four miles of lakeshore with beautiful log buildings from a bank for \$6,000. I got married, spent three summers caretaking Kunzes', the place with the huge two-story boathouse on Muskego Bay. Then spent 27 years, my



Ed at the Kekekabic Lookout Tower cabin in the 1940s.

(Continued on Page 11)

A Look at Lake Vermilion

(Continued from Page 10)

wife, Marie, and myself, as caretakers for GRANELDA, the Daytons' summer place. The next caretakers, Cathy and Jerry Schoon, were there 25 years, and the next caretakers have now been there 13 years. Bruce Dayton's son Mark is now running for governor. Taking care of Daytons' was a dream job. We got paid the year around, but they only came four or five months a year.

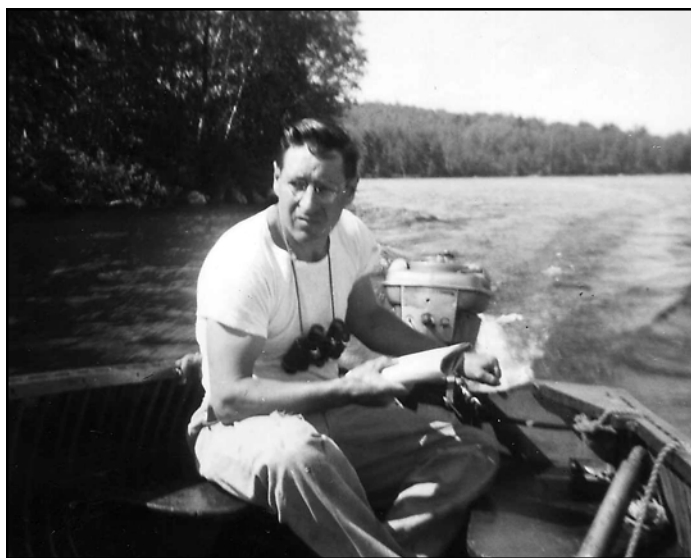
I helped bring electricity to the lake. With a crew of four we cut and burned the trees for miles and miles of right-of-way.

I live on Treasure Island now. I have owned the north end of the island for 40 years. Monte and Mary Parr named the island. Retired missionaries, they decided to become resorters. They had cabins on the island as well as Treasure Island store at Peterson's Landing. Mary Parr just died at 98. Peter and Pam, their children, each have a cabin on the island.

My entire 70 years on the lake have been with no road to my door. Boat access only. Except for winter when the ice will hold up a car and you have the luxury of being able to drive to your home. That, of course, can be a real problem with heavy snows and bad ice.

I must mention trees. In early days, before my time, Vermilion was covered with large, beautiful pines that somebody logged off. Treasure Island was bare of pines. I planted a number on the north end, some of the first now 16 inches in diameter. GRANELDA, Daytons' place, had no pines. The caretakers have planted thousands.

Both of my children live here on Treasure Island, in two separate homes. I walk clear around the island almost every day hoping to make it a few more years.



Ed in a wooden fishing boat with vintage outboard motor on Lake Vermilion.

Winterizing Your Septic System

Or

Winter Reading from the John

The St. Louis County Environmental Services Department recognizes that one of winter's challenges is keeping your septic system from freezing. We hope these words of advice and information resources may be helpful.

SEASONAL CABINS

For those of you who have seasonal cabins, knowing the proper way to close a septic system for the winter helps when you reopen the cabin in the spring.

Turn off your water and completely drain your plumbing and fill all the traps with RV antifreeze, the kind intended for potable water lines. Do not use automotive antifreeze, salt or commercially available additives as these will harm your septic system.

If you have a high efficiency furnace, reroute the condensate water to a drain that is not connected to your septic system. If you choose to leave your water on, be sure to check for any leaks, especially a slow leak in the toilet or dripping faucet.

You may wish to stop cutting the grass over the drain field after Labor Day to help catch snow and insulate.

YEAR AROUND

Keeping things warm is the key for those of us who live here on a year round basis. Here are some tips to keep things perkin'.

Keep your septic tank warm. The warmer the tank is, the better the bacterial action. Try doing an occasional load of laundry in hot or warm water or a hot bath instead of a shower. A thick layer of straw or leaves is a good form of insulation. If your system is in a windy spot use pine bows or old sheets to keep the leaves or straw in place. Rigid foam, at least 2 inches thick, or insulated construction blankets are another option, but apply only when the soil temperature goes below 40 degrees so you don't cut off necessary oxygen to your system. Commercial tank heaters can be used in extreme cases or in a midwinter emergency.

The line from the tank to the field is also important. Whether the line is pressurized or gravity, there can be dips or bellies in the line that can hold water and freeze. Use the methods listed above to also insulate this line all the way to the field. This is particularly important with a pressurized system.

For those of you with tank filters, now is a great time to clean them.

If you are going to be gone for extended periods during the winter consider a house sitter just to keep things warm and working.

For more information go to www.stlouiscounty.org/septic and click on the listings under Tips and Resources, or call the St. Louis County Environmental Services office at 749-0625.

John A. Lindquist

SPORTSMEN'S CLUB OF LAKE VERMILION

2010 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

Volunteers, their guests, and board members of the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion gathered for a delightful evening of fun, fellowship and good food on Tuesday, October 5, 2010 at The Crescent Bar and Grill on the Cook end of Lake Vermilion.

The purpose of the event was to recognize and honor the work of volunteers who have contributed at least six hours of their time to further the goals of the Sportsmen's Club. They pitched in on the annual loon count, invasive species boat checks, monitoring shore lunch sites, lifting docks at the lunch sites, working at the spring Sucker Sale, helping with the first annual Let's Take a Kid Fishing event, or monitoring water quality.

Without the aid of many hands the goals of the Club would simply be out of reach. Mel Hintz, the Club's President personally thanked those in attendance for their hard work and encouraged the honorees and others to continue their work to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. Following is a list of the volunteer honorees:

Edna Albertson
Gary Albertson
Warren Anderson
Howard Ankrum
Jarri Ankrum
Renee Aro
Tom Aro
John Aronson
Dawn Berg
Mal Berg
Joanne Bergman
Ed Borowiec
Rick Borken
Bob Burgess
Carol Burgess
Jim Charles
Carmen Deluca
Ruth Deluca
Barbara Dobson
Karen Ducharme
Leo Ducharme
Dorothy Edwards
Paul Edwards
Ann Gribble
Jim Gribble
John Gribble
Irv Gustafson
Carolyn Hanson
Paul Hanson
Marshall Helmberger
Steve Herr
Ellen Hintz
Mel Hintz
Don Housenga

Mardy Jackson
Charlotte Jacobson
Jerry Jacobson
Gene Jenkins
Margarette Jeske
Ted Jeske
Darryl Johnson
Joan Johnson
Don Johnson
Jane Johnson
Dick Johnson
Bev Kmett
Ron Kmett
Bob Kocks
Harold Korpela
Shirley Korpela
Larry Lange
Ozzie Leciejewski
Rose Leciejewski
Steve Lotz
Jeff Lovgren
Kathy Lovgren
Dale Lundblad
Nan Lundblad
Gary Lundquist
Ed Marjerle
Michael Marquette
Sally Jo Marquette
Al Mazion
Rose Mazion
Rod McPeak
Tom Mesojedic
Carolyn Miller
Norm Miller

Gayle Miller
Rusty Miller
Marcie Moe
Walt Moe
Bill Mollard
Jim Mueller
Rollie Mueller
Eric Olson
Karen Olson
Ray Pohto
Bob Reed
Chuck Richards
Sheri Sawatzky
Dave Schwartz
Lucie Schwartz
Kay Henry
George Henry
Frank Siskar
Curly Skogman
Jodi Summit
Ed Tausk
Bruce Tode
Shirley Tode
Steve Towle
Robert Ulseth
Judith Ulseth
Ann Vollmar
Warren Vollmar
Alberta Whitenack
Gary Whitenack
Bob Wilson
Ed Zottola
Claire Zwieg
John Zwieg

Guide's Corner

Crossover Ice Tactics for Shield Lakers, Pike and Walleye

by Paul Pollock, Lake Vermilion Guides League

The snowmobile eased to a stop, and my fishing partner Glen and I disembarked, well aware of the fact that our work was only beginning. In short order we were padding along in snowshoes, sleds in tow, as we broke trail through the snow of early January.

Our destination was a deep, clear lake with good numbers of trophy pike, walleye, and lake trout. Intermittent wolf tracks crossed the trail as we chatted amicably about past trips into the B.W.C.A. We quickly worked up a sweat in spite of the sub-zero temperature, and the layers of clothing came off quickly.

After a three mile walk, we dove headlong into the arduous task of drilling our holes with a hand auger. After drilling eight holes, four sets of two holes adjacent to each other, the ice saw came out, and two holes became one big one. Next we set the tip ups and erected our one man shelters. Once inside, we began watching the up and down movement of our jigs on the screens of our Vexilars, contentedly listening to the soft hiss of our heaters.

LOCATION

In the clear, deep, oligotrophic lakes of northern Minnesota and northwest Ontario, I focus my attention on main basin points, islands, and reefs, and the stretches of shoreline in between them. Walleyes will congregate on the gravel and rock bottom areas on top of and on the edge of the reefs, while big pike and lakers will traverse the entire water column in and around these areas.

The fish key on the pelagic (open water) baitfish such as lake herring, ciscoes, tulibee, and smelt. It's always beneficial to have these baitfish present on your electronics, but if they're not immediately discernible, they'll usually make occasional ghostlike appearances throughout the day. Reefs that originate in 80 or more feet of water, and top off at 20 to 40 feet are prime real estate. Trophy pike and lakers often suspend immediately adjacent to the reef over 40 to 80 feet of water. Walleyes will normally be found in 20 to 40 feet of water in closer proximity to the bottom, though I've caught them suspended in water as deep as 80 feet. With the advent of evening, walleye will often slide well up onto the structure to feed on shallower schooling baitfish.

Islands and large points, rock walls and steep breaking stretches of shoreline are key structural elements. I refer to the stretches of featureless shoreline between these main structural elements as travel areas, and they can be propitious fish producers as well. On a lake map look for the tight contour lines next to shore and out over the main basins, then note the areas between them and plot out your strategy accordingly.

The mid-day sun was at its highest point as we enjoyed the olfactory pleasure of cooking venison sausage. Three lakers and a walleye had already been iced, and I was feeling giddy as I cast a glance at the expansive stretch of ice where I noticed the bright orange flag of my tip up flapping in the northwest wind. As I approached the hole, I could see the shaft of the tip up spinning like a top, and immediately felt that addictive surge of adrenaline.

The tip up had been suspended about 15 feet down over 60 feet of water so the biggest question was, "pike or lake trout?" I grabbed the tip up and set it aside, and as I pulled back on the line, I inherently knew that this was a good fish. A give and take battle ensued, and every time I'd gain some line, the fish would take it back with a powerful run. After a fifteen minute battle the line stripping runs and head shakes subsided, and I got her head turned and in the hole. A second later, 43 inches of shimmering January pike slid through the hole. After a couple quick pictures, I held her in the hole to recover, and with a powerful kick of her big tail, she swam off into the gin clear depths.

HANG 'EM HIGH

Tip ups are a very effective weapon in my winter arsenal. Since big pike and lakers often suspend within sight of the ice, hanging a live sucker or cisco in the upper half of the water column can reap some great rewards. Opportunistic pike and lakers often cruise right below the ice looking for an easy meal of dead fish, and in the ultra-clear water, the fish can see a long ways. Consequently, fish that are cruising lower in the water column won't hesitate to rise up and grab a benevolent meal.

Hook a number 2 Gamakatsu Octopus hook lightly through the back of the sucker so they swim naturally. With the ciscoes, use a small piece of wire to thread the line from the top of the back and out through the mouth. The barb on the hook protrudes from the side of the mouth, and a double barrel swivel connects the leader to the main line. Loop the leader around the cisco so the bait hangs upright, and hang the sucker anywhere from 5 to 30 feet below the ice. The ciscoes and leaders can be pre-rigged at home to avoid the unenviable task of rigging them with cold fingers in sub-zero weather. Get to the tip up as quickly as possible and set it quickly to ensure the best chance of a mouth hooked fish.

PROBE THE DEPTHS

Hanging the same type of setup within a couple feet of bottom will pay off handsomely as well, especially on walleye. Though they will suspend like pike and lakers, as a general rule, 'eyes will maintain a closer proximity to the bottom. It's tough for fish to refuse an easy meal, and laying that cisco right on the bottom has produced many nice pike and lake trout as well.

Some fish are like humans-they're lazy, and at times the fish respond better to a presentation that's closer to the bottom. Pike and lakers won't hesitate to grab the dead offering, but the walleyes generally prefer the live bait.

The sun had just hit the tops of the trees, and I was suffering from a serious case of "vexi-vision" from staring at my electronics all day. Suddenly the prolific smelt cluttering the bottom 36 feet down disappeared from my screen. In short order, a thick red line appeared, and immediately I snapped out of my trance. I popped

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Guide's Corner

(Continued from Page 13)

my airplane jig one more time. Simultaneously I felt the hit and set the hook hard.

The dead weight indicated a nice fish, and the lack of rolling or long, power runs told me this wasn't a pike or laker. The constant head bobbing signified a walleye, and several minutes later, my thoughts were confirmed with the sight of an enormous walleye 10 feet below the ice. A short time later, as I wrestled her through the hole, I marveled at the dark black and gold colors adorning her impressive length. She stretched the tape to 31 1/2 inches, and as the heavy January darkness ensconced the lake, I smiled with the satisfaction of another great day on the ice.

LET 'EM FLY

Airplane jigs are another efficacious tool for hard water pike, walleye, and lake trout. One to three ounce sizes work well for pike and lakereels, and the one ounce sizes are great for old wax eye. Cut the head off of a power tube and slide it over the back hook. The protruding tentacles are a great attractant and add life to the jig. Try removing one of the bungee tails from a bungee grub and attaching it to the tail hook. The tail will protuberate from the solid body of the jig, and result in some vicious strikes. I also like to fillet the side of a cisco and attach it to the tail hook with the scale side of the fillet facing down.

When tipping them with a power tube or twister tail, a hard ripping action puts a good "spin" on the jig. Amalgamating the ripping action with intermittent pops causes the airplane to "hop and drop" which is often when the fish hits it. A light, popping action on jigs tipped with a cisco causes the cisco fillet to swim and undulate, and it's particularly effective on walleye located near the bottom.

White, silver, red, and brown color combinations with a white, chartreuse, or orange tube or twister tail have produced the biggest dividends. Red hooks can be used as an added attractant. Be sure to jig the entire water column, as pike and trout especially are opportunistic feeders, and can be caught directly below the ice. Each lake has its idiosyncrasies as far as which colors produce, so experiment with different concepts, and let the fish tell you what they want. On sunny days, I've had the most success on white and silver whereas on cloudy days, I've done well on brown and red.

FLUTTER AND FALL

Kastmaster, Cast Champ, and Laker Taker spoons have also been consistent producers. I tip them with a half a minnow and impart the action to the bait by giving the rod a hard, upward rip and subsequently letting the bait fall. The spoon will flutter and dart as it descends and this is when the majority of the strikes occur. Firetiger, silver/blue, and gold/orange color concepts are consistent producers, and again, experiment with different colors. When you find one that works, stick with it.

Sunset was imminent as the trees cast their fleeting shadows over the vast expanse of white. My eyes were glued to the translucent glow of my electronics as I reflected on an already successful day. Two lakereels and a dandy mid-30 inch pike had been landed so

far and the changing light conditions had me anticipating another.

Suddenly my hypnotic trance was broken as I watched a red line shoot up the screen, and as it converged with the line of my jig, I felt a hard thump. As I set the hook, the rod doubled, and the fish took off on a super charged run. The heavy weight was immediately apparent, and I eased back my star drag in anticipation of a long battle. The fish didn't disappoint. Intuitively I knew the long power runs and head shakes meant lake trout. After a fifteen minute back and forth battle, she finally tired and I eased her through the hole, where it was immediately evident that this was my biggest lake trout ever. She measured out at 37 inches long and sported a portly 22 inch girth, no doubt tipping the scales at around 20 pounds. As the sun sank below the towering white pines, I reflected on how fortunate I am to live in a fisherman's paradise.

TIPS ON EQUIPMENT

Electronics: Good electronics are paramount. If baitfish appear on your screen or a thick red line indicating a fish becomes evident, adjust your presentation to that level. I use a Vexilar FL 18, and several models are available from different manufacturers.

Rods and Reels: For pike and lakereels I use custom made 3 foot rods paired with a good levelwind (baitcaster) reel. A good star drag is a must, as a big pike or laker will give your drag a workout. Many of the walleyes we catch are trophy specimens as well. Ice fishing for trophy pike, walleye, and lakereels is not the time to be using light line! I spool my reels with 14 pound Maxima Chameleon. This stuff has amazing abrasion resistance which is huge when a big fish is pinging back and forth in your hole. It's also nearly invisible in the water.

Tip Ups: Several good brands are available, but I prefer Frabill Arctic Fire models spooled with 17 pound Maxima. Make sure you've got at least 400 feet of line on them, as it's not unusual for a big pike or laker to nearly spool you before you reach the tip up.

Augers: For walking trips I use a Jiffy 8 inch hand Auger, and on snowmobile trips I use a 10 inch Jiffy Legend Stealth. On walk-in trips I use a collapsible ice saw to make two eight inch holes into one big hole. When it's time to pull a trophy fish through the hole you'll never regret the extra work involved!

Sleds and Shelters: I use Pak Shak one man shelters for walk-in trips. Their light weight and portability make them ideal. A simple plastic sled, 6 feet long by 18 inches wide with bungies to strap down gear is perfect. A waist strap for ease of pulling also helps.

Heaters: On walk-in trips, a one burner stove with a couple one pound propane cylinders will keep you toasty warm. On snowmobile trips I use a sunflower heater with a ten or twenty pound propane tank.

When traveling by snowmobile I use an Otter Magnum Lodge sled house with a pin style hitch. Many good brands are out there, and it's a matter of personal preference.

Snowmobiles: A long track model with at least 440 c.c. is a must. A two-up seat and a rack for gear are also nice to have. Always carry spare belts, plugs, and a tool kit. Twenty miles into the back country and broken down from bad plugs or a belt is not particularly enjoyable!

Planned Highway 169 Upgrades and Realignment

On August 19, 2010, the public was invited to attend a Highway 169 task force meeting held at the Tower Civic Center. This meeting was chaired by Brian Larson, MNDOT project manager, who provided current status of two proposed upgrades to highway 169 in the Tower vicinity.

The two segments of highway 169 being studied for improvement are identified as the "13 Hills Area" and the "Eagles Nest Lake Area". A synopsis each of these planned highway improvements is as follows:

"13 Hills Area": This is a 6.2 mile section of highway 169 from Kent Road to .25 miles south of highway 1. The highway deficiencies being addressed with this upgrade are substandard curves and hills, narrow shoulders, inadequate clear zones, and limited safe passing.

"Eagles Nest Lake Area": This is a 5.4 mile section of highway 169 from .25 miles west of Six Mile Lake Road to Clear Lake (Eagles Nest Lake Area). The highway deficiencies for this section of highway are the same as for the "13 Hills Area" plus shading causing unanticipated icing. This "Eagles Nest Lake Area" highway upgrade is considerably more complex as it potentially involves a relocation of this section of highway.

Three Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion board members attended this meeting because construction activities in the Eagles Nest Lake Area could potentially release sulfates into Armstrong

Bay of Lake Vermilion. Mineral exploration activities conducted in this area have identified the potential for massive sulfide deposits. Drainage from the sulfide bearing rock, if not handled properly, could result in increasing the already high levels of sulfate in Armstrong Bay. Two proposed relocation maps were presented by MNDOT with a route north of current highway 169 and another south of current 169. Depending on the route chosen for highway realignment there is the potential for sulfate containing rock being unearthed during construction and in turn sulfates migrating to Lake Vermilion or Six Mile Lake.

Brian Larson of MNDOT discussed this issue of sulfate bearing rock and advised that MNDOT is very aware of this concern and has hired two Natural Resource Research Institute scientists to do a soil analysis for both potential new routes for highway 169 in the Eagles Nest Lake area. This soil analysis is to be completed in the fall of 2010. In addition, MNDOT will be hiring a consultant to complete an Environment Assessment Worksheet (EAW).

When the EAW is completed, public meetings will be scheduled to share the results of this assessment. Several SCLV board members will definitely attend this meeting and share with our members the results of this assessment and proposed actions.

Lastly, I should mention that the timing to begin construction of highway 169 upgrades is June of 2012 and the exact construction details are still under consideration as current estimates of the upgrade cost total 33.7 million dollars and available funds are 23.1 million dollars. This will definitely require prioritization of the sections addressed with this upgrade.

Gary Whitenack
Board Member

WE THANK YOU

Our annual dinner meeting last August all came together nicely. One of the exciting parts of the evening is the drawing of the raffle tickets for all the wonderful door prizes that were donated. We'd like to thank the following for their contributions in making our dinner so much fun! They are:

Gruben's Marina
The Timberjay
Vermilion Club
The Tower News
Mike Hillman
Kathy and Jeff Lovgren
Vermilion Dam
Cook New-Herald
Moosebirds
Ed Zottola
Northwoods True Value
Aronson Boat Works
Phyllis Burgess

Wayside Cafe
Birch Point Marine
Fortune Bay
Marcia Bonicatto
Pier 77
Renee and Tom Aro
"Y" Store
Good Old Days
"Y" Liquor Store
Nancy Luloff
"Y" Express Lube
Marcie and Walt Moe

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

☐ 2011 New Member ☐ 2011 Renewal

Membership level

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

Member Name _____

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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. 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!

Membership Renewal for 2011

It's that time again! In early December, you'll receive a letter requesting that you renew your membership for 2011.

Please check your dues status and contact information shown in the letter. Let us know of any errors. We don't want you to miss a single newsletter.

HELP US MAKE A BEAUTIFUL LAKE EVEN BETTER!



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