

# ***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"*

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## **SAFE BOATING**

The 2012 boating season is here early. The majority of the ice was off Lake Vermilion the first few days of April. Everyone is anxious to get out on the water or out to their property or cabin. We want everyone to have an enjoyable, fun and safe experience on the lake whether it is fishing, boating or for work.

Please remember or refresh yourselves with the important rules with boating on the lakes. Vermilion and a few of the surrounding lakes have either hazard or channel buoys or both to aid with safe navigation on the lakes. Keep in mind that not all hazards on a lake are marked. The responsibility for safe operation of a watercraft rests with the operator and is not relieved by the presence of hazard and navigation buoys. All watercraft operators should make themselves familiar with a depth contour map of the lake, printed or electronic, prior to operating a watercraft on that body of water.

Most important to note is that Vermilion will be starting the season with low water levels, unless we get lots of rain in April or early May. SO PLEASE BE EXTRA CAREFUL. There will be rocks and reefs that are not marked and normally would not be an issue but with the low water levels are exposed or just below the surface. Another area of concern is in the narrows. Remember that if you are meeting a boat coming from the other direction and you slow down to let them through, that your back end of the boat drops down in

the water and you may hit bottom or rocks. Resorts, marinas, property owners please be aware of the situation and please remind your guests of the low water levels and added dangers.

GPS units, electronic maps, and printed maps are not always as precise as some assume them to be, so be sure to slow down and be observant when getting in the vicinity of shallow water or a hazard as indicated by these sources. REMINDER: all of your GPS navigation units state the warning — do not rely on this product as your primary source of navigation. The coordinates off the GPS maps or hazard buoys are not always exactly on the rock pile. Note the placement of the buoys varies some each year depending on the water level. The buoys are placed so the anchor weight and chain sits down about 4 to 5 feet in the water. This allows for the movement of the buoy and cable with the wave action, so it does not rub on the edge of the rock and break the cable or damage the bottom of the buoy. Do not rely entirely on buoys because they can move due to wind, waves, current or for other reasons. Channel markers are the red & green buoys — always go between them.

White buoys with the orange diamond are hazard buoys meaning stay away, hazardous area. These buoys mark rocks, reefs and shallow water. They do not always sit right in the middle of the hazard area or

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

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### Greetings friends and neighbors,

If you have recently moved to this area or are a summertime visitor you may be wondering.... what is this Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion (SCLV) all about? Or, perhaps you have been here for quite some time and presume we are a fishing and hunting club as our name seems to imply. Without a doubt, the notion that we are a fishing club got started long ago when the SCLV was formed in 1968 to address the declining walleye fishery at that time. However, times have changed, and we are now involved in many different activities related to the future of Lake Vermilion. During the forty plus years we have been in existence, the Sportsmen's Club has evolved into an organization that functions as a full-fledged lake association. We have a twelve member board of directors which meets monthly and is responsible for an array of programs aimed at improving and protecting the lake.

So, how can you learn about the mission and the current programs of the SCLV?

First, you can visit our website at: [www.SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org](http://www.SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org). That's the easiest way to see the wide range of activities we have underway. There you'll find a commitment to protecting the lake by monitoring water quality, preventing the spread of invasive species, and promoting sound shoreline and watershed practices. You'll also see our interest in night navigation lights, shore lunch sites, safe boating education, and protecting Lake Vermilion's fishery. This is an excellent site containing our mission statement, information about our history, external links to local, state, and national organizations, contact information for board members, and information on how to join our organization.

Another way to learn about the SCLV is to read our quarterly newsletter, ***The Vermilion Sportsman***. Each issue provides coverage of our current activities and reflects the combined efforts of many

individuals who commit their time to write an article for the newsletter. The March 2012, issue is an excellent example illustrating the broad range of programs where the SCLV is involved. It features several informative articles authored by both current and former board members and an article by our local DNR fish biologist on the slot limit modification. Putting together a newsletter requires a lot of hard work and Dale and Nan Lundblad, who have served as the editors of our newsletter for many years, are doing an excellent job in the design, layout, and the content of each issue. I have personally received countless favorable comments from both members and non-members about the outstanding quality of our SCLV publication.

Lastly, you can learn about the SCLV by contacting any of the board members listed in this newsletter. We would be more than happy to talk with you. If you are a member of an organization, we are available to speak to your group.

As you read this issue of ***The Vermilion Sportsman***, you will find articles on aquatic invasive species, boating safety, water quality, federal islands, the Lake Vermilion fishery, and the cormorant impact on Leech Lake. It is readily apparent that the SCLV is active in many areas working to insure that Lake Vermilion retains its status as one of the most beautiful lakes in Minnesota. If you are not already a member, I invite you to join the more than 2200 people that are part of this organization. Lake Vermilion is definitely worthy of your support.

Have a great fishing opener, boat safely, and please remember to mark your calendars to attend our annual meeting on Saturday, August 4th at Fortune Bay. We have an excellent program planned featuring Federal Wildlife Research Biologist, Kevin Kenow, who will speak about the loon migration study he heads up for the U. S. Geological Survey.

Mel Hintz, President

# SAFE BOATING

*(Continued from front page)*

directly on top of the rocks. Some hazardous areas are 100 to 200 feet in diameter and have only one buoy marking the whole area. Many hazards near shore are also not marked. When you are operating near shore, in channels or narrows, and congested areas you should be at slow speed and be observant for all hazards, submerged or not. When approaching a hazard buoy a good rule of thumb is a no wave speed of 4 to 5 mph or slower and trim up lower unit or motor approximately 10 boat lengths away (160 to 200 ft. away). When accelerating you have to remember that your back end of the boat is auguring down in the water until sufficient speed is reached to get the watercraft to plane out. The larger the watercraft the deeper the auguring is. Slower and steadier acceleration will reduce the chances of your prop striking bottom during acceleration.

And remember you are required to have a Type I, II, III, or V PFD for each person on board (Type IV throwable PFDs no longer meet the requirement). If your boat is 16 feet or longer you are also required to have a Type IV throwable on board. Don't just have the PFDs available on board, please wear them and save lives.

Finally, be courteous and respectful of others when on the water and do not operate a watercraft when you are under the influence of alcohol.

Have a great summer and safe boating!

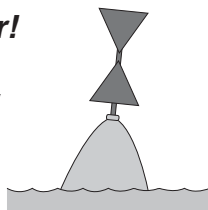
Sergeant Dirk A Davis,  
St. Louis County Sheriff's Office  
and Sheri Sawatzky

## BUOYS ON VERMILION

**Please call us on missing, damaged or buoys that have drifted off the hazard area.**

*Have a great summer!*

**Lauren and Sheri Sawatzky  
Vermilion Barging Inc.  
218-666-5512**



# SPORTSMEN'S CLUB OF LAKE VERMILION, INC.

## *44th Annual Meeting And Dinner*

**Saturday, August 4th**

**Fortune Bay Resort  
Social Hour: 4:30 p.m.  
Dinner 5:30 p.m.**

*Please mark your calendar  
and plan to attend*

### **SPEAKER:**

**Mr. Kevin Kenow  
Federal Wildlife Research Biologist  
Speaking about  
Loon Migration Study**

*Watch for reservation information  
in the August issue of the newsletter*

# Q&A About New Aquatic Invasive Species Rules

## Decal Required on Watercraft

March 30, 2012

### Q. What is the aquatic invasive species rules decal and how do I get one?

A. A new law passed in 2011 (Minnesota Statutes 86B.508) requires a watercraft owner or operator to obtain and attach an aquatic invasive species rules decal to all types of watercraft prior to launching on, entering into, or operating on any waters of the state. The decals are available at DNR offices, Deputy Registrar offices where licenses are sold, and large sport shops, as well from DNR Watercraft Inspectors and conservation officers. They will be included in the envelopes of new and renewal watercraft licenses mailed from DNR. They are free.

### Q. What does the decal look like?

A. There are two parts to the decal (shown right). Watercraft owners and operators must display the top portion of the decal on all watercraft prior to launching on, entering into, or operating on any waters of the state.

The second portion of the decal, at the bottom, is intended to be placed on the winch post of watercraft trailers or other area to remind boaters to remove the boat's drain plug as required by state law when leaving the water access area — and to replace the plug before launching.

### Q. Where does the decal need to be attached on the watercraft?

A. The decal must be attached to the watercraft, but state law does not specify where it needs to be attached. It does not need to be in view of the operator as with the personal watercraft decal. It does not need to be placed near the watercraft registration decals and is not recommended to be in that area of the boat. It is recommended to display it where it can be read and can be shown to an officer upon request.

If the owner does not want to stick the decal on the boat because it is an antique wooden boat or other unique boat, they may attach the decal to an object or laminate it and attach it like a luggage tag.

### Q. Do they need to be on watercraft, even if the watercraft does not need a license?

A. Yes, all watercraft including seaplanes and duck boats are included under the law.

### Q. Is there a penalty if I launch a boat without one?

A. Currently, there is no penalty in effect, but a warning can be issued. Now that the decals are available, it is expected that boaters will be obtaining the new decals and conservation officers will be providing the decals to boaters who have not obtained one. After August 1, 2014, it will be a petty misdemeanor for boaters who don't display the decal on their watercraft.



## MINNESOTA Aquatic Invasive Species Laws

These laws are intended to protect your lakes and water recreation from harmful effects of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Under state law, your compliance with AIS inspection requirements is an express condition and legal requirement of operating or transporting water related equipment.

### You must...

**CLEAN** visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels and other prohibited species, off of watercraft, trailers, and equipment before transporting from any water access.

**DRAIN** water from the boat's bilge, livewell, motor, ballast tanks, and portable bait containers before transport from water access site or shoreline property.

**KEEP** drain plug out and water draining devices open while transporting watercraft.

### You may not...

**TRANSPORT** aquatic plants, water, or prohibited invasive species, (e.g. zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil).

**DUMP** live bait into state waters, on the shore, or on the ground.

**LAUNCH**, or attempt to place, watercraft or trailers with aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or prohibited invasive species into any waters of the state.

**2012**

This decal is only a summary of the laws as of August 2011.

[www.mndnr.gov/invasives](http://www.mndnr.gov/invasives)

peel here and place bottom portion on trailer near winch

**CHECK THE DRAIN PLUG!**

**Please wear your life jacket.**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



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# Fisheries Management on Lake Vermilion In 2011

## Introduction

Lake Vermilion is part of the statewide Large Lake Program, an intensive fisheries management program on the 10 largest lakes in Minnesota. The Large Lake Program was started in 1984 when it became apparent that more detailed biological information was needed to properly manage these important lakes. A Large Lake Specialist was assigned to each lake to manage the program at the area level. The Large Lake Program includes annual fish population assessments, annual water quality monitoring, and regularly scheduled creel surveys.

A variety of sampling gear is used during population assessments to collect the various fish species and life stages; including gill nets, trap nets, beach seines, and an electrofishing boat. Sampling for each gear type is conducted at the same time and place each year in order to determine population trends for the major species. Data is also collected on length, weight, age, and growth for each of the major species.

Creel surveys are scheduled on Lake Vermilion for two consecutive years out of every six years. Creel survey is a scientific method of estimating fishing pressure and fish harvest from a series of boat counts and angler interviews. The last creel surveys were done in 2008 and 2009 with the next cycle of creel surveys scheduled for 2014 and 2015.

The results of the 2011 fish population assessment are presented in the balance of this report. We encourage anyone with questions or comments to contact the Tower Fisheries office or stop by our office for a visit. We are located just west of Tower on Highway 169.

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## Walleye

The walleye gill net catch in 2011 was 17.9 fish/net, well above average for Lake Vermilion and the highest walleye catch since 2007. Walleye gill net catches were slightly below average from 2008 to 2010 due to poor reproduction in 2004, 2005, and 2008. The improved catch in 2011 was due to good reproduction in 2010 and unusually high catches of older year classes.

There are often differences in fish populations between the two major lake basins, East Vermilion and West Vermilion, and some of the assessment data is analyzed separately. The 2011 walleye gill net catch on East Vermilion was higher than the catch on West Vermilion, which is typical. Walleye gill net catches are usually higher on East Vermilion, while the average size is larger on West Vermilion.

Walleye populations in large natural walleye lakes often fluctuate in response to strong and weak year classes. Generally, strong year classes are produced every few years, which is sufficient to maintain a good population. Because fish production is limited by

lake productivity, it would be impossible for lakes to sustain strong year classes every year. Lakes with excessive walleye harvest tend to have highly variable reproduction and walleye abundance. Lakes with low walleye harvest tend to have more stable populations.

The mean length of gillnetted walleye was 14.6 inches, which was well above the historic average. Good numbers of large and medium sized walleye were sampled during the survey. Many of the larger walleye were sampled on West Vermilion and came from strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003. The gill net catch of 13-17 inch walleye was well above average, reflecting good reproduction in 2006 and 2007, especially on East Vermilion. The gill net catch of 9 inch walleye was also above average, indicating the 2010 year class may be stronger than average. The gill net catch of 10-11 inch walleye was below average, reflecting only fair reproduction in 2009.

Walleye year class strength can be represented by indices that are calculated from gill net catches of each year class for several years of netting. The strongest year classes produced in recent years were the 2006 and 2007 year classes. Both year classes are stronger on East Vermilion than on West Vermilion. Strong year classes were also produced in 2002 and 2003.

Year classes produced in 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2009 were all weaker than average. Unusually cool weather in 2004 and 2009 probably affected walleye reproduction in those years. Weak year classes of walleye on Lake Vermilion are often related to cool spring and summer weather which can negatively affect first-year growth and survival. Nearly all of the major fish species experienced poor reproduction in 2004. Most species probably had poor reproduction in 2009 as well, due to the cool spring and summer weather that year.

It takes at least two years to calculate a year class strength index for any individual year class, therefore indices have not yet been calculated for the 2010 and 2011 year classes. One year of netting indicates the 2010 year may be stronger than average, especially on East Vermilion.

Fall electrofishing is used to sample young-of-the-year walleye and help determine reproductive success for the year. The 2011 fall electrofishing catch of young-of-the-year walleye was 210 fish/hour, which was well above average. The electrofishing catch improved after unusually low catches in 2009 and 2010. East Vermilion had a much higher electrofishing catch than West Vermilion. Electrofishing catches are usually higher on East Vermilion.

The mean length of young-of-the-year walleye sampled by electrofishing in 2011 was 5.1 inches, slightly below average. Data from our sampling program indicates growth of young-of-the-year walleye is an important factor in future survival, with large fast growing young-of-the-year walleye producing strong year classes and small slow growing fish producing weak year classes. It is believed large young-of-the-year walleye have better over-winter survival than small fish. The mean length of young-of-the-year walleye and the total number caught can be used in a predictive model that will give a good indication of how strong a year class will be. The mean length and total catch indicate the 2011 year

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# Fisheries Management on Lake Vermilion... *(Continued from page 5)*

class will likely be stronger than average on East Vermilion, and slightly below average on West Vermilion.

Angling prospects for walleye look favorable in 2012. There are good numbers of 13-17 inch walleye in the population, especially on East Vermilion. Most of these fish are from strong year classes produced in 2006 and 2007. The number of keeper-sized walleye has also improved in the Niles Bay area of West Vermilion. Prospects for catching quality sized fish (over 18 inches) are also favorable, especially on West Vermilion. There are high numbers of walleye over 18 inches in the population from the strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003, however these larger fish must be released in order to comply with the special regulation on Lake Vermilion.

The special walleye regulation on Lake Vermilion was modified in 2012 to an 18-26 inch protected slot, with one fish allowed over 26 inches, and a four-fish bag limit. The regulation change takes effect May 12, 2012. The previous special regulation was implemented in 2006 and had a protected slot of 17-26 inches. The regulation change was prompted by angler concerns over catching keeper-sized walleye on West Vermilion. Due to strong reproduction in 2002 and 2003 and several years of poor to fair reproduction since then, the walleye population in that lake basin has been dominated by larger fish and anglers have had difficulty catching walleye less than 17 inches to harvest. The DNR agreed to review the regulation and see if the protected slot could be modified to allow harvest of larger fish while still meeting management goals for the lake.

A number of protected slot regulations were considered during the review process. Public input was also solicited and a public input meeting was held Sept. 29, 2011. Of the comments received: 25% favored keeping the slot, 70% favored modifying the slot, and 5% favored dropping the slot entirely. Of those offering specific recommendations: 41% favored a 20-26 inch protected slot and 28% favored an 18-26 inch protected slot. After considering all the biological data and public input, it was decided the 18-26 inch protected slot was the best choice to allow some additional harvest while keeping harvest at a safe level.



## **Northern pike**

The 2011 gill net catch of northern pike was 0.9 fish/net, which is near the historic average. Gill net catches of northern pike have historically been fairly stable at a relatively low level. West Vermilion usually has higher gill net catches of northern pike than East Vermilion, reflecting higher abundance in that lake basin.

The mean length of northern pike in the gill net catch was 27.4 inches, well above the historic average. Northern pike lengths ranged from 16.4 inches to 39.1 inches. Northern pike reproduction is usually fairly consistent from year to year, without exceptionally strong or weak year classes. Several age 1 fish were sampled suggesting the 2010 year class could be stronger than average. Angling prospects for large northern pike are better than average in 2012. Anglers may also catch more small fish than normal because of the 2010 year class.

A special regulation for northern pike has been in effect since 2003: a 24-36 inch protected slot, with one fish allowed over 36 inches. The bag limit remains at three fish. The regulation is part of a statewide initiative to improve the size structure of pike populations in a number of lakes across the state. Historical fishing records indicate the number of medium and large pike has declined dramatically in Minnesota lakes over the past 50 years. Lake Vermilion was chosen for this special regulation because of its potential to produce quality sized fish.

## **Yellow perch**

The 2011 gill net catch of yellow perch was 15.2 fish/net, well below the historic average. It was the fifth consecutive year of low perch gill net catches. Low perch catches have been due to a series of poor year classes from 2004 to 2008. The perch catch on West Vermilion was slightly higher than the East Vermilion catch, which is typically the case.

The mean length of gillnetted perch was 7.3 inches, which is near the historic average. All sizes of perch were poorly represented in the gill net catch. Perch reproduction has generally been poor in recent years, although moderately strong year classes were produced in 2003 and 2009. One year of netting suggests the 2010 year class may also be stronger than average.

Perch fishing is relatively insignificant on Lake Vermilion, with most of the harvest coming from anglers fishing for other species. There are more large perch in East Vermilion and most of the harvest comes from that lake basin. Perch in East Vermilion grow faster than West Vermilion perch, probably because they feed extensively on juvenile rusty crayfish that are abundant in that area of the lake. Perch growth is likely to improve in West Vermilion as rusty crayfish become more abundant in that lake basin. Perch are also an important prey item for several species of gamefish, including walleye and northern pike.



## **Smallmouth bass**

An electrofishing boat is used as the standard sampling gear for smallmouth bass because they are not often caught in standard assessment nets. The 2011 smallmouth bass catch was 35.0 fish/hour of electrofishing, which is near the historic average. The smallmouth bass catch on West Vermilion was considerably higher than the catch on East Vermilion. Smallmouth bass catches are usually higher on West Vermilion while the average size is larger on East Vermilion..

Smallmouth bass sampled by electrofishing had a mean length of 11.1 inches, well above the historic average. Good numbers of 12-17 inch bass were sampled from strong year classes produced in 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2006. Weak year classes of smallmouth bass were produced in 2004 and 2008. A low catch of age 2 fish suggests the 2009 year class may also be weaker than average.

Angling prospects for smallmouth bass look favorable in 2012. There are good numbers of medium sized and large fish in the population from strong 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2006 year classes. Anglers may catch fewer small fish than normal due to poor reproduction in 2008.

There is not a sampling program in place that targets largemouth bass. Recent creel surveys and angler reports indicate the largemouth bass population has increased, especially on West Vermilion.

### **Muskie**

Muskellunge were not known to be native to Lake Vermilion, although there are some unverified accounts of muskie being caught prior to 1960. The first muskie stocking occurred in 1968. Leech Lake strain muskie have been stocked regularly since 1987.



Muskie population assessments are done every 4-6 years on Lake Vermilion. Due to the large size of the lake, East Vermilion and West Vermilion are done in different years. An assessment was done on East Vermilion in 2011 and an assessment is scheduled for West Vermilion in 2012. Muskie trap net assessments target spawning fish in the spring shortly after ice-out.

The muskie trap net catch on East Vermilion in 2011 was 2.8 fish/net, slightly higher than the last catch in 2005. Muskie trap net catches have been gradually increasing since they were introduced as more year classes recruit to the spawning stock. To date, muskie catches have been higher on East Vermilion than West Vermilion.

The mean length of trapnetted muskie was 44.9 inches, similar to the last assessment in 2005. Male muskie had a mean length of 42.9 inches, while females had a mean length of 48.5 inches. Nearly 14% of the muskie sampled were over 50 inches long. The largest muskie sampled was 54.6 inches long.

### **Invasive Species**

There are several invasive species known to be present in Lake Vermilion. Rusty crayfish are very abundant in East Vermilion and have recently become established in West Vermilion. Curly-leaf pondweed is now present in Everett's Bay and Stuntz Bay in East Vermilion. Chinese mystery snails were discovered in 2011 in Spring Bay at the far west end of the lake. These invasive species were probably introduced by careless anglers or boaters.

The DNR has taken several steps to prevent the spread of invasive species. It is illegal to transport invasive species, water, or aquatic vegetation from lake to lake. The DNR also established a program to educate the public about invasive species and inspect boats at some public accesses. A new invasive species plan was recently announced that will include increased enforcement and education efforts. New guidelines have been adopted to ensure DNR hatcheries and private aquaculture operations do not harbor or spread invasive species. New regulations have been adopted that limit the use of smelt and cisco for bait. These species are known carriers of VHS, a virus that is lethal to many species of fish. There is now mandatory training on invasive species for lake service providers, including businesses that install or move docks and boat lifts. Recent legislation increased funding for invasive species programs and increased penalties for violating laws related to invasive species.

The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion (SCLV) also has a monitoring program to keep invasive species out of Lake Vermilion. SCLV volunteers conduct voluntary boat inspections at public accesses several times a year. The SCLV has also used a vari-

ety of educational methods including billboards, brochures, and restaurant place mats to inform anglers and boaters about invasive species.

Anglers and boaters should always take preventative measures to avoid moving invasive species to other lakes. Boats and trailers should be cleaned or dried before moving to other bodies of water. All bilges and live wells must be drained. All drain plugs must be removed and left out for transport. For more information on invasive species and new regulations, go to the DNR website at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov).

### **Cormorants**

In recent years there has been a large increase in the number of cormorants on Lake Vermilion. A nesting colony on Potato Is. grew from 32 nests in 2004 to 338 nests in 2011. Potato Is. is located in Big Bay in the eastern part of the lake. Many anglers and lake residents are concerned that increased cormorant numbers might harm gamefish populations, especially walleye. Documented cases where cormorants have impacted fish populations are rare. Cormorants generally exist at population levels that do not significantly impact fish populations. On Lake Vermilion, there has not been a major impact on the walleye population. The walleye gill net catch was above average in 2011 and it appears strong year classes were produced in 2010 and 2011. Cormorants are protected by the Migratory Bird Act, which makes unregulated killing of these birds illegal. Some limited control of cormorants is allowed through a depredation order managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, there must be evidence of damage before control would be approved. Cormorant numbers and fish populations will be monitored closely, and cormorant control will be proposed should evidence develop that gamefish populations are being impacted.

### **Fishing Tournaments**

There are five fishing tournaments scheduled so far on Lake Vermilion in 2012. Permits from the DNR are needed for most fishing tournaments, and permits have been issued or applications received for the tournaments listed below. The DNR considers fishing tournaments to be a legitimate activity on Minnesota lakes, and manages them in a manner that will protect fish populations and minimize conflict with other lake users.

- May 19: City Auto Glass Walleye Classic, 125 boats.
- May 20: Excell Bass Tournament, 40 boats.
- June 23: Minnesota Super 30 (Bass), 50 boats.
- August 4: Lake Vermilion Musky Challenge, 50 boats.
- August 28: Super Slam Bass Tour, 50 boats.

### **Walleye Stocking**

The Minnesota DNR operates a major walleye egg-take station and hatchery at the mouth of the Pike River on Lake Vermilion. Walleye produced at the hatchery are used for stocking programs in northeastern Minnesota and other areas of the state. A portion of the fry produced each year are stocked back into Lake Vermilion. In recent years, 5-20 million walleye fry have been stocked into Lake Vermilion annually.

A research project began in 2008 to evaluate walleye fry stock-

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# Fisheries Management on Lake Vermilion... (Continued from page 7)

ing on several lakes with egg-take stations, including Lake Vermilion. The project involves marking all walleye fry stocked back into the research lakes for five years. Walleye fry are marked by immersion in an oxytetracycline bath. This leaves a permanent mark on bony structures in the head that can be identified at later stages of life. The goals of the project are to determine how many walleye fry are produced naturally in these lakes and the optimal stocking rates to produce strong year classes. Similar marking projects have been done on Red Lake and Leech Lake, which contributed greatly to the understanding of walleye reproduction in those lakes.

Because of water chemistry issues, marking was unsuccessful in 2008 and 2009. Adjustments were made in the methodology and good marks were attained in 2010 and 2011. Based on the ratio of marked and unmarked young-of-the-year walleye sampled by fall electrofishing, an estimated 670 wild fry/littoral acre were produced in 2010. The littoral area is the portion of the lake less than 15 feet deep and the most productive area of a lake. In 2011, an estimated 660 wild fry/littoral acre were produced. This is in addition to the fry that were stocked into the lake. Total fry density (wild + stocked) was estimated to be 1,070 fry/littoral acre in 2010 and 1,660 fry/littoral acre in 2011. Strong year classes of walleye were produced on Red Lake and Leech Lake at total fry densities of 300-600 fry/littoral acre, much less than total fry densities on Lake Vermilion in 2010 and 2011. While it is important to have sufficient walleye fry for producing good year classes, excessive stocking beyond that level is probably not productive.

## Habitat and Water Quality

Preserving fish habitat and water quality continues to be a management priority on Lake Vermilion. The DNR has several programs that protect fish habitat and water quality by regulating shoreline alterations and the removal of aquatic plants. Aquatic vegetation and shallow near-shore areas both provide critical habitat for

a number of fish species. Individual property owners can also take steps to manage their shoreline in an environmentally sound manner. Information can be found at the DNR website: [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov).

## License Fee Initiative

Minnesota's Game and Fish fund is in dire condition. It is projected to "go negative" by as early as July 2013. This means the DNR will need to make significant cuts that affect the quantity and quality of hunting and fishing unless the State Legislature approves license fee increases during the 2012 session. The primary reason for the poor condition of the Game and Fish Fund is that hunting and fishing license fees have not increased since 2001. This is the longest period of time without a fee increase in more than 40 years.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is highly dependent on funds from the Game and Fish fund. For the Section of Fisheries, 94% of the operating budget comes out of the Game and Fish Fund. The Section of Wildlife receives 96% of its operating budget from the Game and Fish Fund. Other funding sources like the Legacy Amendment and State Lottery cannot be used for core DNR functions. These funds are used for special projects and were never intended to supplement traditional DNR funding sources.

Under the license fee initiative proposed by the DNR, the cost of a resident individual angling license would increase from \$17 to \$24. Fees for other types of licenses would go up as well. The license initiative would also create several new license types based on preferences expressed by anglers and hunters. If the Legislature approves the DNR proposal, the Game and Fish fund should remain solvent through 2019. For additional information on the license fee initiative, go to the DNR website at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov) and click on "The Bottom Line." Your opinion matters. Please voice it to your state legislators.

To see the complete report, including graphs, go to our website: [www.SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org](http://www.SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS and OFFICERS 2011-2012

(All phone numbers are Area Code 218)

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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.



# *Daisy Bay Night Skies*

Tom Aro - Spring 2012

*100 billion stars in the Milky Way!  
Each with at least one companion planet!  
So said astronomers last Wednesday.  
The mind boggles.  
I am stunned by this news and must look again.*

*So come a clear summer's night, borne after 12 o'clock  
I will go to my planetarium - a lawn chair set on the dock.  
Binoculars in hand I will peer down the bay,  
Over the islands, to a darkened far shore  
Then turn to the heavens to see what's in store.  
A blackness, pierced by a million points of sparkling white light.  
The North Star, the dippers, big and small, oh what a sight!  
All easy to find in their celestial display.  
With back-drop to all, the ghost Milky Way.*

*The dippers, I speculate, emptied their contents up there  
Their glow drifting off to who really knows just where.  
But astronomers now dive deep into this far away space  
Returning with findings we know not quite how to place.*

*Our solar system, the one found in an Encyclopedia Britannica,  
Once thought to be unique; almost understandable;  
The one that formed our science, our mythology our religions,  
Lies shattered, eclipsed by these new revelations given.*

*As I try to absorb this new cosmos, and where do we belong?  
I fight back the thought of man's insignificance, its such a woeful song.*

*100,000,000,000 Milky Way stars, oh what stars galore  
Each with one Earth, one Mars, one whatever.... or more!  
Planets as common as grains of sand on the beach.  
I fear no longer is our orb's uniqueness in reach.*

*So now as we humbly wave to our new found heavenly kin  
We must ponder again, where did it all really begin?*

*And as I wait for that answer from you of the 100 billion  
I am at peace here... planet earth... Daisy Bay... Lake Vermilion*



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# THE NATURAL NIGHT: A DISAPPEARING RESOURCE

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Tom Aro's excellent poem eloquently speaks to one of the unique benefits of living on or visiting Lake Vermilion: the opportunity to observe a spectacular, star-filled night sky. As more people seek to build or remodel homes and cabins on the lake however, the uninformed installation of exterior lighting is slowly beginning to threaten this valuable resource.

According to the International Dark-Sky Association, the recognized authority on light pollution, "Once a source of wonder and one half or the entire planet's natural environment, the star-filled nights of just a few years ago are vanishing in a yellow haze. Human-produced light pollution not only mars our view of the stars, poor lighting threatens astronomy, disrupts ecosystems, affects human circadian rhythms and wastes energy to the tune of \$2.2 billion per year in the U.S. alone." The IDA, founded in 1988, was the first organization to call attention to

the hazards of light pollution. The organization promotes one simple idea: "Light what you need, when you need it. We know some light at night is necessary for safety and recreation. We work with manufacturers, planners, legislators and citizens to provide energy efficient options that direct the light where you want it to go, not uselessly up into the sky."

The following Simple Guidelines for Lighting Regulation introduction was created by the IDA as an educational guide for communities and units of government who wish to limit unnecessary light pollution for the benefit of their citizens. To view the entire set of guidelines, please visit the website: <http://www.darksky.org/> If this issue is important to you, bring it to the attention of your local unit of government. Let's preserve Lake Vermilion's dark and star-filled night sky.

Dale Lundblad - Board Member

## SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR LIGHTING REGULATIONS for Small Communities, Urban Neighborhoods, and Subdivisions

**The purpose of the regulation is to:**

- Permit reasonable uses of outdoor lighting for nighttime safety, utility, security, and enjoyment while preserving the ambiance of the night;
- Curtail and reverse any degradation of the nighttime visual environment and the night sky;
- Minimize glare and obtrusive light by limiting outdoor lighting that is misdirected, excessive, or unnecessary;
- Conserve energy and resources to the greatest extent possible;
- Help protect the natural environment from the damaging effects of night lighting.

All outdoor lighting fixtures (luminaires) shall be installed in conformance with this Regulation and with the provisions of the Building Code, the Electrical Code, and the Sign Code, as applicable and under permit and inspection, if such is required.

### **Comment: Practical Considerations**

1. The idea that more light always results in better safety and security is a myth. One needs only the right amount of light, in the right place, at the right time. More light often means wasted light and energy.
2. Use the lowest wattage of lamp that is feasible. The maximum wattage for most commercial applications, 250 watts of high intensity discharge lighting, should be considered the maximum, but less is usually sufficient.
3. Whenever possible, turn off the lights or use motion sensor controlled lighting.
4. Incorporate curfews (i.e. turn lights off automatically after a certain hour when businesses close or traffic is minimal). This is an easy and fast way to initiate dark sky practices.

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# *“Invasive Species”*

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by Bob Wilson



In many cases, it is very instructive to observe and take lessons from people who are better at performing certain tasks than you, maybe because they have more training, more education, more experience, or possibly more authority to accomplish the task. To some degree such is the case with the DNR boat inspectors who were stationed at various public ramps across Lake Vermilion in 2011. While our Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion (SCLV) volunteer inspectors do a very good job and some have been performing this function for several years, the DNR inspectors are trained to ask more questions of boat owners and record their answers in a more organized form than we even try to accomplish. Of course wearing the DNR uniform gives the inspector more authority and causes the boater to usually pay close attention. They have advantages that we don't quite have, but overall it's important to mention that we find the boat owners to be very cooperative. However, the data the DNR gathers we presently can't match and is definitely useful in assessing how the boaters are treating us here on Vermilion.

In the next pages, Bruce Anspach, the DNR boat inspection supervisor in our area in 2011, presents his report on Vermilion. Your SCLV contributed \$3875 to the DNR for this work. Per the contract, we purchased 500 hours of service and the DNR matched those hours with another 500. As Bruce states in his write-up, they provided an actual total of 1097.75 hours and 1,281 inspections, the most in the four year span we have been purchasing this service.

The data will tell you that the majority of boats visiting our shores are very clean. We are indeed very fortunate. No exotic weeds or creatures were found, but a few boats did carry some vegetation on them. Several did come from zebra mussel infested lakes, but did not have any attached to their equipment at the time of the inspection. Many boaters did not have their transom drain plugs removed when they pulled into the ramp to launch. This is definitely against the law. Despite a reasonably good showing by our local and visiting boaters, Lake Vermilion is still in some danger of being infested with additional Invasive Species. See what you think about the DNR's information! What's your conclusion?

## **2011 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Vermilion**

Author: Bruce Anspach, Watercraft Inspection Assistant  
Invasive Species Unit, Ecological Resources, MN DNR — 12/1/11

### **Introduction:**

The watercraft inspection program's goal is to reduce the spread of invasive species into and around the state. To accomplish this we complete at least 10,000 hours of watercraft inspections each year, work with citizen groups and educate the public at events such as the state fair.

In January of 2008 the MN DNR Invasive Species Unit created a grant program to allow citizen groups to increase the number of hours of inspection at their water accesses. This was done as a way to increase watercraft inspections in the state, work with citizen groups and satisfy requests from citizen groups for more hours of inspections at their accesses.

The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in April of 2010 for 500 hours of inspection time during the 2011 watercraft inspection season. The contract dates were May 14th through October 1st of 2011. Two watercraft inspectors were hired in the Vermilion Lake area and some were assigned to work at Lake Vermilion accesses to accomplish the 500 hours.

The inspection process consists of a six-question survey that ensures that boaters are aware of the issues surrounding invasive species and incorporates the inspector walking the boater around the watercraft to show them where they should be looking for invasive species. Survey questions focus on boater knowledge and behavior with information given on the impacts of invasive species and what can be done to prevent their spread.

The data in this report will be based on all hours and inspections done at Lake Vermilion in the 2011 season.

### **Inspection Results:**

Watercraft Inspectors worked 1,097.75 hours (864.25 hours of access time and 233.5 hours of drive time) at the Lake Vermilion accesses. During this time 1,281 inspections were completed (table 1).

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results... *Continued from page 11*

**Table 1. Lake Vermilion summary of inspections in 2011.**

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. Per Hour
Head O'Lakes	30	17/13/0	34	0.88
Stuntz Bay	54	36/18/0	55.5	0.97
Hoodoo Pt. N.	576	357/214/5	237	2.43
Black Duck Bay	115	67/47/1	131.75	0.87
Everett Pt.	112	68/44/0	118.5	0.94
Moccasin Pt.	200	106/93/1	140.75	1.42
Frazer Bay	46	14/31/1	22.75	2.02
Oak Narrows	48	18/30/0	45.5	1.05
Wake Up Bay	100	55/44/1	78.5	1.27

Out of the 1,281 watercraft inspected at Lake Vermilion, 25 had vegetation attached to the trailer or boat, 7 entering and 18 exiting the lake. The entering watercraft were inspected prior to entering the water and watercraft users were asked to remove any vegetation. No other plants or animals were found.

The following information has been provided as a summary of the inspections done at Lake Vermilion in the 2011 season. Information we gather helps us understand risks involved, for example boaters coming from waters infested with zebra mussels are more likely to transport zebra mussels than those coming from non infested waterbodies.

The surveys done during the inspection process found that 23 boaters out of 1,281 inspections completed, or more than 1.79%, had come to Lake Vermilion from a waterbody in Minnesota known to be infested with zebra mussels. The majority of the watercrafts were coming from the Mississippi River (table 2).

**Table 2. Watercraft entering or exiting Lake Vermilion that last used zebra mussel infested waters**

Last Waterbody	Enter/Exit	Number Of Watercraft
Mille Lacs Lake	Enter	4
Mille Lacs Lake	Exit	3
Mississippi River	Enter	5
Mississippi River	Exit	4
Pelican lake	Enter	1
Prior Lake	Exit	1
Superior	Enter	3
Superior	Exit	2

The surveys found that about 8.04% of the boaters who were inspected either entering or exiting Lake Vermilion had come from another state. These boats likely represent another high-risk group (table 3).

**Table 3. Watercraft from states other than MN who used Lake Vermilion.**

State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM Present in State
AR	Enter	4	
AR	Exit	1	
AZ	Exit	1	X
CA	Exit	1	X
CO	Enter	1	X
CO	Exit	1	X
FL	Enter	3	
GA	Enter	1	
GA	Exit	1	
IA	Enter	7	X
IA	Exit	4	X
IL	Enter	10	X
IL	Exit	4	X
IN	Enter	3	X
IN	Exit	2	X
MI	Exit	1	X
MO	Enter	1	X
MO	Exit	1	X
ND	Enter	1	
NH	Enter	1	
OK	Enter	1	X
ONTARIO	Enter	1	X
TX	Enter	1	X
TX	Exit	1	X
WI	Enter	33	X
WI	Exit	17	X



We use a decal with the current year on it to track if a boater has been inspected in the current year. Boaters who have been inspected in the current year are more likely to be educated about invasive species and how to prevent their spread. Below is the number of inspections broken down by whether they had a current year decal and would be a repeat, had a previous year's decal and had talked to us in past years, or had never spoken to us before (table 4).

**Table 4. Decal summary at Lake Vermilion, comparison from 2008 to 2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Inspections</b>	<b>Entering</b>	<b>Exiting</b>	<b>Curr Yr Dec</b>	<b>Prev. Yr Dec</b>	<b>No Decal</b>
<b>2008</b>	400	247	146	33	63	304
<b>2009</b>	554	287	240	133	75	345
<b>2010</b>	471	263	205	56	113	302
<b>2011</b>	1,281	738	534	276	288	715

We have data for 1,281 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 12 (or 0.93%) of them were not familiar with invasive species. These numbers illustrate that most of the boaters who are using Lake Vermilion are aware of the problems associated with invasive species and the specific problems that are caused by Eurasian water milfoil and zebra mussels.

Due to the new drain plug law that was enacted on July 1st of 2010 the Watercraft Inspection survey now includes data showing if the watercraft inspector observed that the drain plug was out when arriving at the access and was removed before leaving the access. Out of the 738 boaters who were entering the water 204 did not have their drain plug out while arriving. These watercraft users were asked to drain all water away from the access. Out of the 534 exiting boaters 144 had water in their watercraft at the time of inspections, these watercraft users were reminded to remove their drain plugs and drain all water from their watercraft before transporting. We also asked entering boaters how long their watercraft were out of the water prior to the inspection and exiting boaters how long their watercraft had been in the water. The amount of time watercraft are in or out of the water impacts the risk of transporting invasive species. Watercraft inspection surveys show that 454 watercraft were out of the water at least 3 days before coming to Lake Vermilion and 264 were in the water less than one day, both of which lower risk.



**EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL**

### **Discussion:**

Our goal in the 2011 season was to accomplish 860 hours (500 grant hours and 360 DNR hours) of watercraft inspection at Lake Vermilion. We were able to accomplish 1,097.75 hours.

Even with the three-week state government shutdown we were able to accomplish our planned hours because we had interns working though October 11th in the Vermilion area. Of those hours, 1,008 fell between the dates of the grant, May 14th through October 1st (791.5 hours of access time and 216.5 hours of drive time). We more than doubled our inspection efforts this year compared to last year. Also we were only at 9 accesses this year compared to last year of 12, removing our inspectors from some of the less used accesses.

*(Continued on page 14)*

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# *Invasive Species...* Continued from page 13

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## **Boat Inspections 2012**

The SCLV will conduct boat inspections during the spring and summer of 2012. So far we are targeting these dates: May 11th in conjunction with the “opening of fishing,” and May 25 and/or 26, the Memorial Weekend. If you are unfamiliar with this activity, but would like to help along with the rest of our volunteers, please let me know (218-753-5544).

### **Aquatic Invasive Species Penalties**

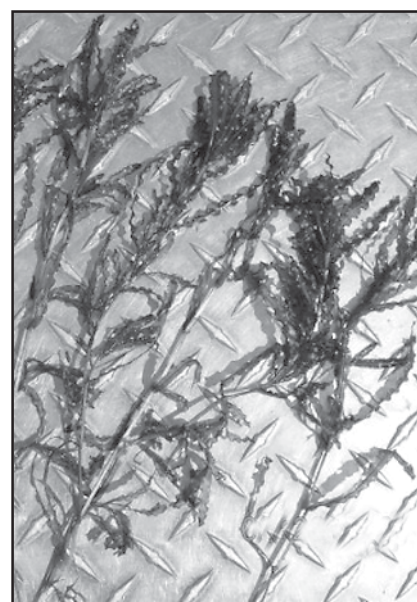
*Save yourself some \$\$\$, abide by the law! Keep Vermilion clean of AIS!*

#### **Civil Citation penalties as of January 1, 2012:**

- Fail to Drain Water .....\$50
- Transport Aquatic Plants on Public Roads .....\$50
- Launch with Plants Attached .....\$100
- Transport Infested Water w/o Permit .....\$200
- Transport or Possess Prohibited Species .....\$250
- Launch into Non-Infested Waters with AIS Attached ..\$500
- Subsequent Offenses .....\$1000
- Refuse Inspection .....Lose Boat License for up to 1 Year

The DNR is asking the Legislature to double these penalties. Infesting an entire lake is a very serious offense.

**Reminders** - If you see Curly Leaf Pondweed in any other bays except Stuntz and Everett where it already exists, let the Sportsmen’s Club know. If you see Chinese Mystery Snails in a place other than Spring Bay, let us know. Thanks and have a great summer.



**CURLY LEAF PONDWEED**



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!™**

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



**CHINESE MYSTERY SNAILS**

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# Lake Vermilion Water Chemistry Versus Zebra Mussels

by Gary Whitenack, SCLV Water Quality Committee Chair

After four years of being a board member of the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion(SCLV) I continue to be amazed by the diversity of issues the SCLV addresses.

An example of this diversity is the fact I am still warming up after this morning's activity as an SCLV volunteer assisting in the sale of suckers removed from Lake Vermilion by the DNR as a byproduct of the spring trapping of spawning walleyes for support of the Pike River DNR fish hatchery. SCLV volunteers handle the sale of this rough fish as the lake benefits from rough fish removal and we connect with customers who are glad to make use of this fish. By the way the temperature this morning (April 9) during sucker sales was 24 degrees, snow flurries, and we fortunately sold today's inventory of 900 pounds of suckers in 20 minutes to happy customers. Another SCLV activity I was not even aware of until I became an active SCLV volunteer. A story for another time is all I have learned about the customers' use of these suckers!

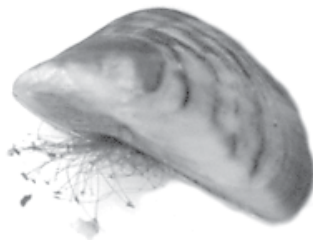
Enough rambling. With this article I am anxious to share with you what we are learning about Lake Vermilion's water chemistry and what impact it may have on our success in keeping our lake free of the invasive species that I most fear invading our lake — ZEBRA MUSSELS.

In discussions with DNR biologists in St. Paul we have learned that very low levels of calcium in lake water (10 to 20 PPM, parts per million) may inhibit successful reproduction of zebra mussels. Also encouraging is the fact that the geology of our north-eastern Minnesota lakes results in lower calcium concentrations, however, it is a chemical not normally measured as part of normal lake sampling. This was true for our lake as we had no historical calcium data for Lake Vermilion.

To gather calcium data for Lake Vermilion we

sampled water at eight locations from the far east end (Armstrong and Pike Bays) to the western most end (Head of the Lakes Bay). The sites sampled were the same ones used for the 2008 advanced water quality study completed by the SCLV in cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

At the very low levels of calcium we were attempting to measure we had to find an analytical lab with some very sophisticated (ie: expensive) equipment to test our samples. Luckily we have such a lab close by in Virginia, Minnesota and they supplied us with sampling vials containing predosed stabilizing chemicals for our water sampling.



**ZEBRA MUSSEL**

The good news! Our Lake Vermilion calcium levels ranged from 6.9 PPM on the western end of the lake to 12.9 PPM on the eastern end. Also our duplicate samples at two test sites closely matched the initial site sample so we have confidence in our sampling technique. We were hoping our results would be 10PPM or less so very very encouraging.

What's next? As there is so little calcium data available for our Minnesota lakes we have decided to sample for calcium the water from a Minnesota lake where zebra mussels have had great reproduction success. As soon as we have this calcium data we will share this with you in a future SCLV article. I can hardly wait to see what this data tells us.

**A NOTE OF CAUTION:** Although we may be a lake with very low calcium concentrations the DNR biologists carefully warn us that still much is to be learned about zebra mussel reproduction and even though our lake's calcium concentrations are very low the zebra mussel may still survive in our waters but have limited reproduction success. This means we still have to do all we can to ensure we do not have any zebra mussels enter our lake by any means (boats, dock lifts, etc). This preventative action is also critical as zebra mussels are only one of the aquatic invasive species threatening our lake.



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# VERMILION SAFE BOATER'S GUIDE

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As we begin another boating season on Lake Vermilion it is important that we all enjoy navigating the lake in a manner which is safe and courteous to fellow boaters. Each year as I travel the lake, it becomes apparent to me that many boaters are unsure of what to do when encountering another boat or other watercraft, especially in the more congested areas of the lake. The following are examples of the most common encounter situations and the rules governing them according to The United States Coast Guard - Navigation Rules for Inland Waters. Enjoy the lake safely! —Dale Lundblad, Board Member

## — INLAND — *Steering and Sailing Rules*

### **RULE 13** ***Overtaking***

(a) Notwithstanding anything contained in Rules 4 through 18, any vessel overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken.

(b) A vessel shall be deemed to be overtaking when coming up with another vessel from a direction more than 22.5 degrees abaft her beam; that is, in such a position with reference to the vessel she is overtaking, that at night she would be able to see only the sternlight of that vessel but neither of her sidelights.

(c) When a vessel is in any doubt as to whether she is overtaking another, she shall assume that this is the case and act accordingly.

(d) Any subsequent alteration of the bearing between the two vessels shall not make the overtaking vessel a crossing vessel within the meaning of these Rules or relieve her of the duty of keeping clear of the overtaken vessel until she is finally past and clear.

### **RULE 14** ***Head-on Situation***

(a) Unless otherwise agreed, when two power-driven vessels are meeting on reciprocal or nearly reciprocal courses so as to involve risk of collision each shall alter her course to starboard so that each shall pass on the port side of the other.

(b) Such a situation shall be deemed to exist when a vessel sees the other ahead or nearly ahead and by night she could see the masthead lights of the other in a line or nearly in a line or both sidelights and by day she observes the corresponding aspect of the other vessel.

(c) When a vessel is in any doubt as to whether such a situation exists she shall assume that it does exist and act accordingly.

(d) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this Rule, a power-driven vessel operating on the Great Lakes, Western Rivers, or waters specified by the Secretary, and proceeding downbound with a following current shall have the right-of-way over an upbound vessel, shall propose the manner of passage, and shall initiate the maneuvering signals prescribed by Rule 34(a)(i), as appropriate.

*(Continued on page 17)*



On April 13, SCLV volunteers finished the annual spring ritual of selling suckers trapped during walleye egg-harvesting operations at the DNR's Pike River Hatchery. Suckers are sold on a first come-first serve basis at a price of \$5.00 per hundred pounds. This year, 11,300 pounds were sold, which is typical for the more than 40 years we have participated in this activity assisting the DNR. SCLV member Ozzie Leciejewski heads up this activity with the assistance of many volunteers.



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## ***Steering and Sailing Rules...*** *Continued from page 16*

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### **RULE 15**

#### ***Crossing Situation***

(a) When two power-driven vessels are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the vessel which has the other on her starboard side shall keep out of the way and shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel.

(b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), on the Great Lakes, Western Rivers, or water specified by the Secretary, a power-driven vessel crossing a river shall keep out of the way of a power-driven vessel ascending or descending the river.



(ii) The latter vessel may, however, take action to avoid collision by her maneuver alone, as soon as it becomes apparent to her that the vessel required to keep out of the way is not taking appropriate action in compliance with these Rules.

(b) When, from any cause, the vessel required to keep her course and speed finds herself so close that collision cannot be avoided by the action of the give-way vessel alone, she shall take such action as will best aid to avoid collision.

### **RULE 16**

#### ***Action by Give-way Vessel***

Every vessel which is directed to keep out of the way of another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to keep well clear.

(c) A power-driven vessel which takes action in a crossing situation in accordance with subparagraph (a)(ii) of this Rule to avoid collision with another power-driven vessel shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, not alter course to port for a vessel on her own port side.

### **RULE 17**

#### ***Action by Stand-on Vessel***

(a) (i) Where one of two vessels is to keep out of the way, the other shall keep her course and speed.

(d) This Rule does not relieve the give-way vessel of her obligation to keep out of the way.

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## ***Sportsmen's Club Caps Are Back!***

Yes, it's been a long wait. After many requests from our members, we again have caps and visors for sale.

We have a number of styles, colors and sizes. An order form with pictures of our cap and visor selection is available on our website [SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org](http://SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org). Contact Kathy or Jeff Lovgren (218-753-2413, [lovgren@frontiernet.net](mailto:lovgren@frontiernet.net)) for more info.

#### **COST OF THE CAPS AND VISORS:**

Cap .....	\$12.00
Visor .....	\$ 7.00
Shipping .....	\$ 3.00 (up to 4 items)



Wear your caps and visors proudly to show your support for your lake association. Thanks for helping us protect and improve our great lake.

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# A Leech Lake Walleye Restoration Effort — *Does this apply to Lake Vermilion?*

Could there be a day soon that lakes like Vermilion will not have funding from the state for fishery management and stocking? If so, who would take over that important role and how would it be funded? Could we see a day where the DNR continues to manage the state's fisheries but funding for stocking would have to come from the private sector?

These questions may seem far-fetched until you consider the bill that is being debated in the Legislature to increase fishing license fees to keep the DNR from operating in the red by as early as 2013.

The main reasons for the DNR's revenue shortfall are a decrease in the number of people buying fishing licenses — especially the younger generations — and cuts in federal funding to the state's fish and game programs.

The DNR could soon be forced to make some tough decisions on cuts. For Vermilion, could that mean losing our DNR lake specialist and/or our hatchery? If so, Vermilion's fishery probably would be managed from a regional or state office and that would clearly mean less attention to our lake.

We can't ignore the facts. We need to start thinking about how Lake Vermilion could be affected and what our roles would be as a "Lake Community" to ensure the lake's quality and the economic security of our area.

In March, I was part of a Lake Vermilion group (resort owners, guides and Sportsmen's Club members) that traveled to Walker to meet with Leech Lake community members. The folks there had formed a task force in 2004 to address a public outcry over the lake's condition. Leech Lake had been overrun by cormorants (more than 10,000); an explosion of rusty crayfish was wiping out spawning habitat; the perch population had plummeted; walleyes weren't reproducing and the walleye fishing was horrible, with the average angler requiring 100 hours of fishing to catch one walleye.

The economic impact was huge — people had simply stopped coming to Leech. More than 20 small businesses were closed. Many resorts had to break up and sell off for lack of business. Real estate values fell. Restaurants, hotels, gas stations and store-front businesses lost considerable income. Casino revenues dropped. And the state lost sales-tax revenues.

The Leech Lake Task Force's objective was to work with local DNR officials and come up with a five-year plan that would restore the lake's walleye fishing and turn around the local economy.

The task force hired Dick Sternberg, a retired DNR fisheries biologist and well-known fisherman, to bridge communications with the DNR and to provide a different viewpoint. The task force and DNR developed a solid plan that included aggressive stocking (Leech was not a DNR-stocked lake previously), removal of the cormorants (due to the Leech Lake Band of Chippewa's support), changes in fishing regulations and protection of spawning habitat.

Within three years, the walleye fishing started to come back.

At the end of the five-year plan, the DNR formed a new committee called the Leech Lake Advisory Committee, which is made up of 17 stakeholders, including business owners, guides, resort owners and tribal officials. One of the main goals of the committee is to make decisions on not only what is good for the lake but also what is good for the economy.

Today Leech Lake continues to recover as a great fishing lake and provides a good example of how a Lake Community can work together with the DNR and participate in the management of a lake's fishery.

I think what is important to note about the Leech Lake experience is that the success there was not

*(Continued on page 19)*



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## Walleye Restoration

*(Continued from page 18)*

due to any of the task force members having any more knowledge or better ideas to fix the problems over the local DNR fisheries officials. Instead, the task force brought to the table an economic component that was incorporated in the objectives for the DNR's recovery plan for Leech. Those economic objectives drove changes in the DNR's approach to fixing the problem (i.e., stocking the lake). In addition, the task force represented the business community in bringing to the table financial strength and political support that helped provide the DNR with the resources necessary to accomplish their goals.

Another lesson learned from the Leech Lake story is it clearly demonstrated the correlation between the quality of a lake's fishery and the direct impact on that lake's tourism.

Our group went to Leech to hear from the task force members about how they got their lake turned around. Our group has been concerned with seeing many of the same patterns starting on Vermilion (cormorants and rusty crayfish proliferating, perch population decreasing, etc.). Our objective was to learn what might work to prevent Vermilion from getting to where Leech ended up in 2004.

We all came away with the understanding that Lake Community participation (businesses, tribal officials, resorts, fishermen, guides, property owners, etc.) working with the local fishery management is the key to accomplishing any changes. Our situation might be different than Leech Lake, but how they accomplished the changes there is a lead we should follow.

Given the DNR's financial situation and our lake's troubling issues, it should be obvious that we need to get more involved as a Lake Community and start taking actions to protect our lake. Discussions have already started among Bois Forte tribal members, Sportsmen's Club members, fishing guides and resort owners to develop a Lake Community effort to help Vermilion.

My hope is that everyone who has a stake in Vermilion's future will get behind these efforts.

Ed Tausk  
Vermilion Dam Lodge

## Don't Fish Memories

Don't get me wrong... memories are a wonderful thing, but fishing them can bring disappointment.

In my many years as a fishing guide across three states, I have heard one consistent statement from fishermen and women when asked the question, "How was it out there?" Their answer is often the same, "Not like it used to be... we really used to pound them off of Jack Pine Point."

Sound familiar? This season try some new water if your "honey hole" isn't productive. Try that area around the next point or the next bay down that you've thought about trying in the past. Yes, you might burn a little more gas and a little more time, but you'll most often find that the reward will be well worth the effort. Besides, you may discover a new honey hole and make a lot of new memories!

Remember... it's the small adjustments to your fishing routine that will make all the difference and put more fish in your net at the end of the day.

Have a great fishing season! We'll see ya on the water.

Billy Rosner  
Board Member



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# The Good Old Days on Lake Vermilion

More Memories by Frank Franson

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One afternoon a young man in his mid 20s showed up at Grand View Resort. He was Tom Bowen from Cook and worked for Jesse Swanson once in a while. Tom had a major problem. He had been towing a barge with four 50-gallon barrels of gasoline on it, across Niles Bay. Barges in those days were made out of two-inch thick planks. The planks in the water swelled and quit leaking between the joints. When weight was put on the barge, it would sink more and the dried planks would leak between the seams. Barges carried a water pump on them to pump out the water.

It was a windy day and the barge was leaking and water was splashing over the sides. Tom anchored the boat and went onto the barge to pump it out. The pump would not start. Finally the waves and water in the barge caused it to tip enough so the gas barrels slid into the lake. He was close to the small island in the mid-south part of Niles Bay. He anchored the barge and came to the resort to get the water pump he knew was there and to get my assistance.

We took the pump, two pair of ice tongs and a rope with us. We got the barge pumped out and started looking for the gas barrels. The difference in density between gasoline and water is enough to overcome the weight of the empty barrel. A barrel full of gasoline will float, but not by much.

Two of the barrels were near the shore of the island and the other two were floating in deeper water. The barge had a hand-cranked winch on it that was used to get the water-logged cedar post buoys and anchors out of the water in the fall. We tied a loop in the middle of the rope and put it in the winch hook. We tied one handle of each ice tongs to the rope. The top and bottom of gas barrels are one and a half inches below the sides. We put the ice tong hooks under the lip on each end of the barrel and cranked away! Four hundred pound barrels are not easy to tip up so they rest on their bottoms, but we made it.

I stayed on the barge to operate the water pump and Tom towed it to Grand View. With the water pump working, we didn't have any more problems. We tied the barge tight to the dock and rolled the barrels onto it and across the lawn to the storage building. I now had a good supply of gas to sell to the tourists. There was a hand-cranked gasoline pump that screwed into the filler cap opening in the top of the barrel.

Tom and I were on one other job together. Jesse had an older cedar strip 14-ft. boat that he wanted brought into Wolf Lake. There was a narrow path about a mile long that

went from the resort to Wolf Lake. If a boat was there, the tourists could walk there to fish for walleyes when they were not biting on Vermilion.

There also was a wider half-mile portage into Wolf Lake from Wolf Bay. We towed the boat from the resort to the portage. It was too heavy to carry, so we had to drag it across. If portage wheels existed then, we did not have them. We were very careful not to scrape the boat on rocks or gravel. There is a variety of materials that can be used to protect a boat when dragging it - branches, leaves, moss, pine needles, hay and birch trees that had died and blown over. Those were the best things to use. About halfway across the portage, we found two pieces of wood, four feet long and four inches in diameter. The wood was a little punky, but still had strength to it. We kept those with us until we got to Wolf Lake. I rowed the boat across the lake to the Grand View trail and walked back. Tom drove the boat back to the resort.

The Wolf Lake walleyes were not big, but they were the good eating size. Tourists would fish along the edge of the weed beds and often came back with their limit of eight. They were happy. It sure beats getting "skunked" on Vermilion!

## WINDS SHE SAID

*Each wind only comes once  
No matter how long you wait  
It won't come again  
To brush your hair back  
Whisper secrets in the leaves  
You can't quite understand*

*It won't come again  
To ripple puddles after the rain  
Push your curtains in to the room  
Whirl dust along the wall  
Pictures you can't quite see  
Each wind only comes once*

— Clayton Medeiros



# BLM ISLANDS GETTING AN UPGRADE

by Derek Strohl, Natural Resources Specialist,  
Bureau of Land Management, Northeastern States Field Office

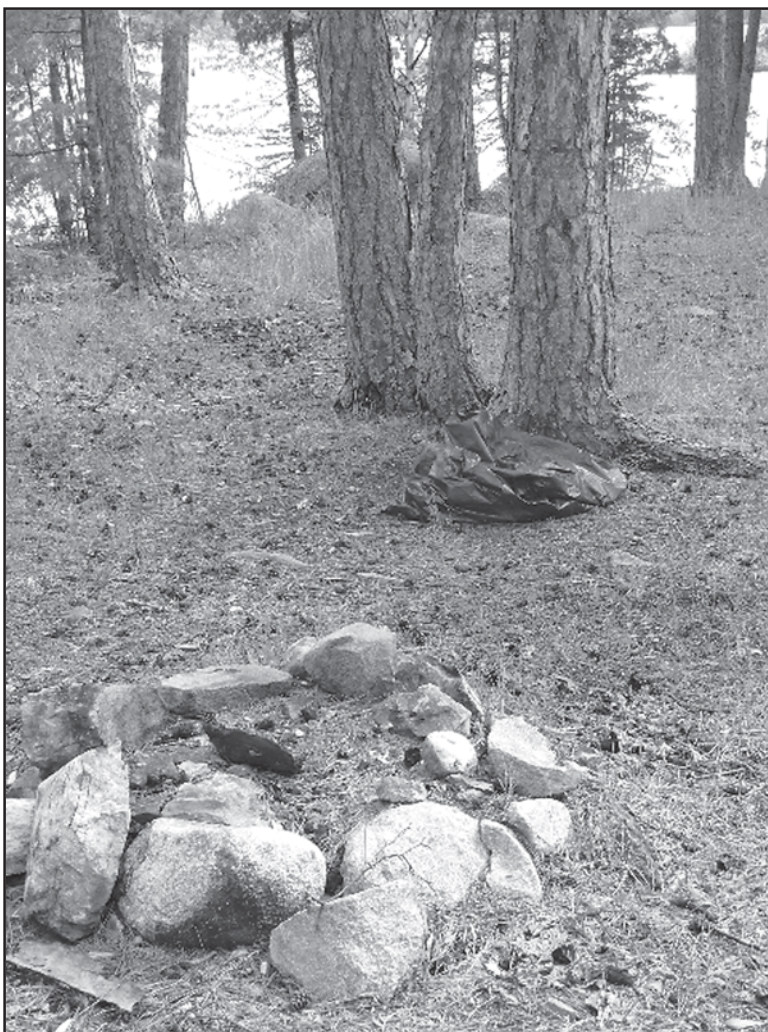
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is providing Lake Vermilion boaters a sanitary way to answer nature's call. The BLM has decided to take steps, most notably, installing a wilderness latrine on an island, to curb littering on a few of its small islands. In recent years, monitors with the DNR and the Bois Forte Band have noted an increasing frequency of finding human waste and toilet paper on a few islands in the east end of the lake. The BLM and its partners discussed this matter at length and settled on a plan to install a latrine, on an experimental basis, on an island between Cable Bay and Raspberry Island. The BLM will use a latrine that looks at first glance much like the ones used by the Forest Service in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. However, the thin soil on the islands prohibits the use of an unlined pit, since pathogens and nutrients from such a design would contaminate the lake. Instead, the BLM will use a design that contains a bucket that will be periodically removed and the contents disposed of according to St. Louis County sanitary sewage regulations.

In order to alert boaters of the availability of an island latrine, the BLM will post signs on several other islands within about a mile of the latrine, giving boaters the bearing and distance to the latrine and its GPS coordinates. After all, when you gotta go, you need to get there quickly.

Finally, the BLM will plant native trees, shrubs and ground vegetation on a few of the islands that have been heavily trampled in the west end of Lake Vermilion. You might see signs on a few islands this year asking you to avoid certain areas in order to allow them to recover. These are areas where heavy foot traffic has killed all the ground vegetation and where people have cut trees for firewood. While the BLM aims to keep the islands open for small groups and their campfires, we want to remind people to bring their own firewood from sources on shore. That way, we will let those small trees grow into stately pines that support eagles and ospreys and create Lake Vermilion's world-class scenery.

Please don't hesitate to contact Derek Strohl at [dstrohl@blm.gov](mailto:dstrohl@blm.gov) or call 414-297-4416 if you have questions about the BLM's plans or the Lake Vermilion islands in general.

And don't forget to pack TP and hand sanitizer when you're heading out on the lake.



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# LAKE 'SERVICE PROVIDER' TRAINING

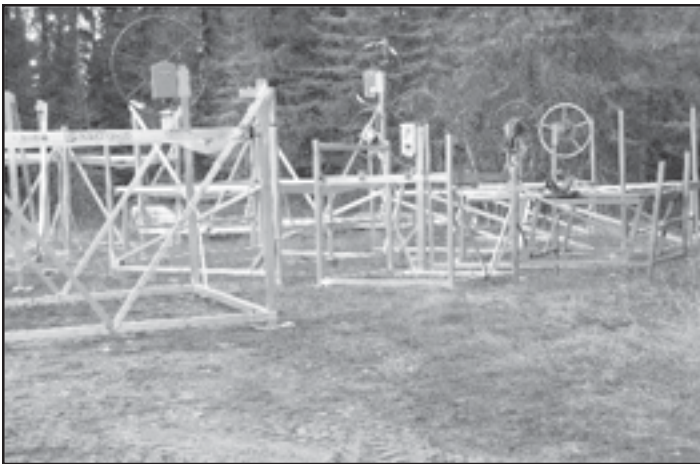
By Sheri Sawatzky & Bob Wilson

In 2011, Minnesota passed several new laws related to prevention and management of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Included within these laws, the MN DNR addresses the possibility that not only boat and trailer owners were occasionally transporting exotic weeds and creatures to non-infested waters, but docks, boat lifts and other water-related equipment could also be harboring these same species and they were sometimes being sold and moved from lake to lake.

In an effort to help manage and better contain this movement of equipment between water bodies these new Minnesota laws require all Lake Service Providers to apply for and obtain a permit with the DNR. Obtaining the permit means that the owner of the business must take an AIS training course at a designated location on a specified date. In our area, the first course was held in the Mt. Iron Community Center on March 30 and for those Vermilion businesses missing that one, a second was held at the Grand Ely Lodge on April 20.



The training is a three hour workshop to educate the service provider about AIS, including how to identify invasive species, how to inspect their equipment and what practices they can implement to reduce the risk of transporting AIS. The course covered aquatic invasive species like Zebra Mussels, Curly-leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Water Milfoil, Rusty Crayfish and Spiny Waterfleas. The instructors also covered the new MN AIS laws as they relate to the service provider & the proper inspection/decontamination protocol. The workshop covered best practices like having designated equipment or tools for infested waters, scheduling jobs for infested lakes last or protocol for washing or drying of boats & equipment coming from infested waters.



Following the completion of the course an examination was given and once approved along with a payment of \$50, the business owner is sent a DNR permit valid for their business for three years. Once accomplished, the business owner employees were to take an on-line DNR course and receive a completion certificate so they too would be educated in AIS identification and the problems transplanting AIS can cause.

More definitively a Lake Service provider is an individual who installs or removes water-related equipment or structures from lakes or rivers for hire. To elaborate, these are businesses that install, remove or move docks, boat lifts, boats, trailers, watercrafts, rafts, vessels, tools, implements, devices,



buoys, ballast tanks or anything else capable of containing or transporting AIS, plant life or water. While the understanding of what actually constitutes a “service provider” can become a little tricky, on Vermilion we think of dock builders, marinas and barge companies primarily. We also think this training should be extended to resorts that rent boats possibly for use in other waters and fishing guides that move their boats from lake to lake offering their services over a wide area where they and their customers may launch into infested lakes and return their equipment to a non-infested lake like Vermilion.



To implement this training program the Minnesota DNR partnered with Minnesota Waters (MW), a 501 C3 nonprofit organization, to provide the statewide training workshops this past winter & into spring. Their overall mission is to promote responsible stewardship of Minnesota’s water resources by engaging citizens, local and state policymakers and other partners in the protection and restoration of the states lakes and rivers. The Sportsmen’s Club of Lake Vermilion has been a member of MW for several years as we are in agreement with their goals and include some of the same goals in our mission statement. Two representatives from Minnesota Waters taught the course and the DNR had conservation officers and their regional AIS specialist available to answer questions at the conclusion of training.



*Several Lake Vermilion business owners were present at the Mt. Iron Community Center on March 30. Sheri Sawatzky and her husband, Lauren, took the course as service provider business owners (Vermilion Barging) and Sheri is the Sportsmen’s Club Secretary. Bob Wilson attended as an observer as the Sportsmen’s Club AIS prevention coordinator.*



*Three-fourths of the Earth’s surface is water, and one-fourth is land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn.*

*~ Chuck Clark*

### 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

☐ 2012 New Member      ☐ 2012 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!

## Membership Renewal for 2012

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2012, you received a reminder letter in April requesting that you renew.

Please check your dues status and contact information shown in that letter. Your dues status is also shown on this newsletter label. Please let us know of any errors.

## HELP US MAKE A BEAUTIFUL LAKE EVEN BETTER!



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