

# THE VERMILION



Vol. 45, No. 1 • A Quarterly Publication of the Vermilion Lake Association • Winter 2018

*To Protect and Improve Lake Vermilion*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**A**s you can see by the front page, we have added color everywhere in the newsletter. We are very excited about the opportunity to improve what has been and will continue to be the key brand of the Vermilion Lake Association. Needless to say, the newsletter is popular amongst members and non-members, and we hope color and other layout changes will attract additional members that use Lake Vermilion. We always welcome your pictures of Lake Vermilion so that we could use them within our newsletter.

Ed Tausk, owner of Vermilion Dam Lodge and member of the Lake Vermilion Resort Association, has left the VLA board recently after 12 years serving on our the board of directors. We would like to thank Ed for the many activities and projects he has worked on. What stands out in my mind is his leadership in running "Take A Kid Fishing," an excellent program to introduce fishing to more kids. It has been very successful, and it is looked forward to by many area kids each year. He also worked on the initial efforts to gain control of the cormorant population, and he was on the Lake Vermilion fishing management group. Joining our board will be Eric Hanson from Pehrson Lodge and the Lake Vermilion Resort Association. We welcome Eric and believe he will be a great addition to our board. In addition, Pat Michaelson has volunteered to coordinate our volunteer communication and recognition area. We believe she will improve our capabilities substantially in the future.



**Terry Grosshauser**  
VLA President

This newsletter also includes an article on the new northern pike statewide regulations and the impact on Lake Vermilion. The special regulations for Vermilion will remain in place for 2018 with a local public review during 2018 with consideration for a change to the new northeast zone regulations in 2019. Please see the article for the details.

On the AIS front, we increased overall boat inspections in 2017 by 39% over 2016. This is a large increase and represents a large increase in inspections for private launch sites due to our increased emphasis primarily on campgrounds and resorts. The Vermilion Lake Association has secured grant funding for 2018 for boat checking and other AIS projects. This is great news and represents the dedicated work of Jeff Lovgren.

From boat inspection data in 2017, we know that 32 boats were inspected coming last from lakes that contained starry stonewort, a huge risk and emphasizes the need for boat inspections. We will be prepared for another strong year in 2018 in protecting Lake Vermilion. Please see other articles on AIS in the newsletter.

We continue to work with the Lake Vermilion Resort Association on potential options to address the cormorant population on the lake. We know that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not be able to authorize control measures again this year.

We have had to change the 50th anniversary celebration date from what was presented in August. The new date for the celebration will be on Saturday, August 11 from 1-5 PM at Camp Vermilion. Please mark your calendars for this event for the entire family.

I welcome your communication and suggestions on any subject.

# Celebrating our 50th Year



## Year-Long Celebration

**T**he Vermilion Lake Association has reached an important milestone! And we want to celebrate it with the entire community.

Throughout 2018, we will reflect on our past, honor those who have brought us this far, and share our vision for Lake Vermilion's future. Watch for details soon on our website, in our quarterly newsletters, and in local newspapers.

This celebration will culminate with a **free picnic** for the entire Lake Vermilion community on **Saturday, August 11, 2018, from 1 – 5 PM** at Camp Vermilion outside Cook.

We're planning a variety of activities, a picnic lunch, raffle drawings and door prizes. Details about this festive event will be forthcoming. Please save the date now.

## Thank You To Our Sponsors

The Vermilion Lake Association appreciates the generosity of our sponsors who make this year-long celebration possible.

### Platinum Sponsors



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B.I.C. Realty



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Vermilion Land Office- Barb Hegg

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Fortune Bay Resort Casino



# Twilight Time



Tom Aro  
VLA member

*“Heavenly shades of night are falling, it’s twilight time.  
Out of the mist your voice is calling, ‘tis twilight time...”  
I’ll hear you, my dear, at twilight time....”*

Oh beautiful North Star....my Daisy Bay Polaris,  
My life wheels around your constant glow.  
Your light, guiding our life’s journey,  
The beacon, steady, showing the way...always.

But of recent I feel a cold wind.  
A wind blowing at us from the future.  
What comes with this bitter chill?

A gauzy shroud, falling slowly round us.  
Times and names and events...,  
Some, they meld into the mist rising from the bay.

What foreboding prophesies are being told?  
Is our anchored but fleeting place in this world under siege?  
An oncoming storm? ... Clearing its throat, whose clouds  
eat our moon?

Dread is taking residence.  
The future...one of acceptance, for certain.  
But, the pain my heart feels is deep.  
And, alone.... in silence.... for you.... I weep.

*“Each day I pray for evening just to be with you,  
Together at Twilight Time.”*





# Labradogs at the Lake

For all dog lovers in the world, there isn't anything that pales to the sadness the day you have to say goodbye to your loyal and faithful companion. Even now, tears well in my eyes as I begin writing this article. At the beginning of last summer, my wife Nancy and I lost our beloved Lab Maggie of fourteen years. Playing fetch everyday whether in the yard or in the water. If I lost track of time she would not let me forget and would remind me it was time to play.



**Jeff Stebbins**  
VLA Member

At first, we were so saddened, we said never again to another dog. However, there is something that just seems to go with lake living, a Labrador dog (Labradog). So we both agreed. Maggie could never be replaced, but it was time to take on the challenges of a new puppy.

The search began to find a new little four-legged friend. With a look on the internet one evening, I found a casual breeder who had a litter of pups four-weeks old. I made a call, then the next day I paid a visit. You see, there just was something right about

my conversation with him and I had good feelings about this litter.

When I arrived, there were eight pups, all mostly interested in their mother and what she had to offer them in the form of nourishment. All but one that is; she came over to me. I picked her up and sat down with her on my lap. After about five seconds she curled up, stuck her nose under my arm and fell asleep. She didn't move a muscle. The breeder came over to me and asked if I had made a choice and I replied, no, she did.

When we returned four weeks later to bring her home, the same thing happened. She left her litter mates and walked right up to me. She looked up as to say where have you been these last four weeks. We set her in the back seat for the drive home and she slept all the way there. When we arrived, we let her out and she walked around the yard like she owned the place.

The void both Nancy and I felt is now filled. However, we both had forgotten how much patience is required for a new energetic puppy. We were also reminded: a good Labrador puppy is a tired Labrador puppy.



# “Lake Vermilion at Her Best” Photo Contest

**W**e all know Lake Vermilion is a scenic treasure, an unequaled place to visit, and a great place to live. Let's tell that story to everyone at every opportunity!

During our 50th Anniversary, our lake association wants to share many of your favorite images of Vermilion on our website, on Facebook, in our newsletters and in local newspapers.

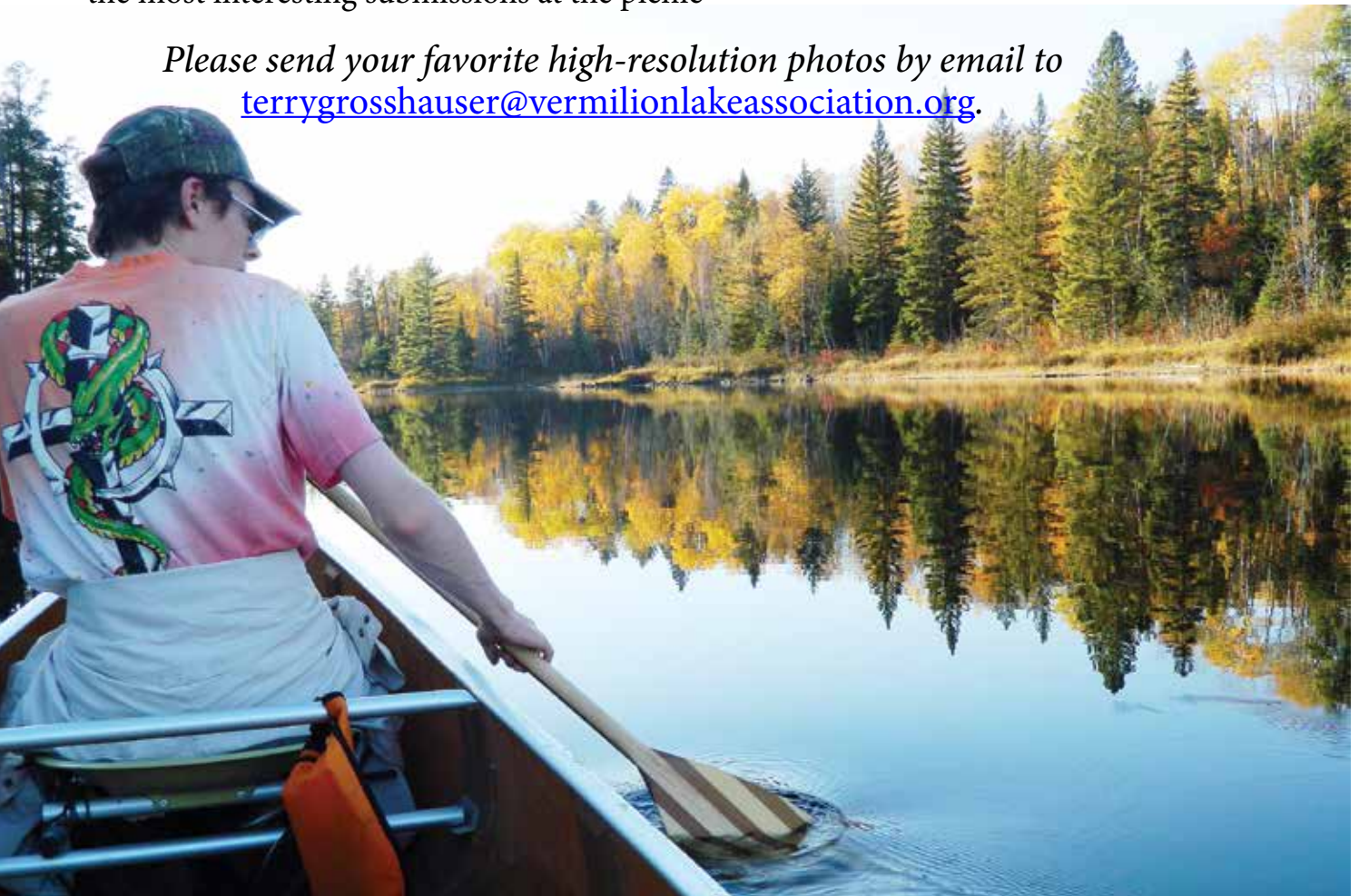
As an incentive, we've created a photo contest at our 2018 Community Picnic on Saturday, August 11 at Camp Vermilion. We'll display the most interesting submissions at the picnic

along with your name. Attendees will vote on their favorites. The top three vote-getters will be awarded prizes. Look for more details in our May newsletter.

Landscapes, sunsets, kids having fun, dogs, wildlife, picnics, fish, etc ... whatever. All we ask is that you give us permission to share your photo treasures with our lake association members and the Lake Vermilion community. You will receive credit as the photographer.

Let's all have some photo fun!

*Please send your favorite high-resolution photos by email to [terrygrosshauser@vermilionlakeassociation.org](mailto:terrygrosshauser@vermilionlakeassociation.org).*



# MINNESOTA SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

## *Part of What Makes Our Winters Great*

**M**innesota snowmobile clubs maintain and groom about 21,000 miles of trails which interconnect cities, towns and businesses with the State Snowmobile Trail System. Here in our favorite area of the state these trails are groomed by the Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club to the west and the Vermilion Penguins Snowmobile Club to the east of Lake Vermilion.

The season begins by preparing the groomers, club snowmobiles and drags in late fall.

As the trails dry out, club members work on clearing the brush that has fallen or over grown the trails.

As the ground freezes and we start to get snow, club members ride the trails on snowmobiles knocking down grass and weeds and compacting snow so the frost can drive deeper into the ground. Snowmobiles can travel on the soft areas of marshes and swamps where a groomer tractor would break through and become stuck. These accidents do happen, and I am sure tales of woe can be found on the internet. Secrets today are hard to keep. As the snows build up and the frost goes deeper, the clubs can start the process of grooming with the larger machines and drags. This year, 2017-2018, the first decent snowfall didn't happen until January 10. Around the Lake Vermilion area we received 8-10 inches of snow. This snow is grooming well and will establish the firm base that is needed for good trails.

Another big part of the job is placing the signs and stakes to mark the trails on Lake Vermilion itself.

The Cook Timberwolves stake from Grassy Point Portage west to the Landing while the Vermilion Penguins stake from Grassy Point Portage east to Mud Creek and south to the Tower-Soudan area.

Most of this work is done by club volunteers, but

sometimes the club may need to hire contractors for trail reroutes. This work may consist of cutting trees, clearing brush and even blasting a rock or two. Any project of this type must be approved by both the Minnesota DNR and the U.S. Forest Service.

Statewide snowmobile clubs get funding through the Minnesota Grant-In-Aid program. This is augmented by club fundraisers, member dues and donations.

So when you are out on the trails, think of the clubs and people that work to make your ride enjoyable. If you see a crew on the trail feel free to stop, talk with the workers and maybe throw a branch or two off of the trail. There are many miles of trails and even more trees that want to reclaim them.



**Jerry Lepper**  
VLA Treasurer





# RMB Labs to Return to Vermilion in 2018

*Will check status of invasive weeds in Lake Vermilion*

**E**arly detection of new AIS infestations is key to control or eradication. RMB Environmental Labs from Detroit Lakes will return to Lake Vermilion this June to re-check known infestations, especially curly-leaf pondweed, and to monitor major public accesses for new infestations.

Depending on what is found



**Howard Ankrum**  
VLA Board Member

by RMB and the MN DNR this spring, our AIS team will consider options for removing small beds of curly-leaf this summer.

I hope many of you have been able to access RMB's 2017 Aquatic Vegetation Survey on the VLA website at [VermilionLakeAssociation.org/ais-prevention/planning-reports/](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org/ais-prevention/planning-reports/). The report will help you identify the various types of weeds as you travel around our lake. The Vermilion AIS team would appreciate knowing what changes you observe over time.

## Thanks to Those Who Support Our AIS Work



Funding and support provided by Vermilion Lake Association donors and volunteers



Funding provided from St. Louis County's AIS Prevention Program



Funding provided from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature



## Vermilion Lake Association Caps Now Available

They're here! Wear your new caps proudly to show your support for your lake association.

The price is right: \$15, plus \$3 shipping for any number of caps to one address. Free local pickup.

Check out the three style choices at our website

[VermilionLakeAssociation.org/caps](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org/caps).

For more info, contact Sheri Sawatzky (218-666-5512, [sherisawatzky@gmail.com](mailto:sherisawatzky@gmail.com)).





Vermilion Lake Association volunteers at last summer's Lake Vermilion Antique and Classic Boat Show.

## 2018 Lake Vermilion AIS Program Gets Underway

After several months of planning, reviews and funding applications, the Vermilion Lake Association (VLA) has formally kicked off its 2018 aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention activities. The prevention program at Lake Vermilion includes over 20 projects, with special emphasis on watercraft inspections and on early detection of new infestations.

"The AIS challenge at Vermilion is very large," said Terry Grosshauser, president of the 2,400-member lake association. "About 16,000 boats launch at Vermilion's 40 public and private accesses each year. With serious vegetation threats like starry stonewort expanding rapidly in Minnesota



**Jeff Lovgren**  
VLA Board Member

lakes last year, we must do all we can to protect Lake Vermilion and its business community."

Countering this growing threat takes an army of volunteers and significant funding. "Our AIS volunteers will donate over 3,000 hours in 2018," said Jeff Lovgren, Lake Vermilion AIS program leader. "We cannot do this without their generous time commitment."

Funding for AIS prevention is provided by donations to the VLA and by grants from St. Louis County and the Initiative Foundation. St. Louis County Commissioners recently approved a \$59,000 grant to support AIS projects during 2018. Last October, the Initiative Foundation approved two grants totaling \$93,000 over two years to pilot

ideas to improve watercraft inspection efficiency at Vermilion's public accesses and to increase boat inspections and early-detection activities at lake businesses.

"Strong partnerships make this difficult and complex task possible," continued Lovgren. "We are pleased with the close working relationship that has developed among our lake association, the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, the Burntside Lake Association, the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, and the business community around Lake Vermilion. That partnership will become even stronger in 2018."

Additional information about the Lake Vermilion 2018 AIS program can be found at the VLA website, [VermilionLakeAssociation.org](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org) under the "AIS Prevention" tab.

# Boat Inspector Provides Superb Customer Service



Storms were forecast the day a couple of long-time Vermilion Lake Association members traveled from their home in the Twin Cities to enjoy the 4th of July holiday at their cabin on Vermilion. As they launched their boat at Stuntz Bay to get to their cabin just to the north, the lake and sky were already looking ominous. Due to the impending rain, the couple quickly loaded their boat, and without realizing it, left behind a special rod and reel that had recently been repaired.

It wasn't until the next morning that the couple discovered the rod and reel had been left behind.

Initially thinking their special rod and reel may be gone forever, they were heartbroken. After all, it was a long holiday weekend – the busiest weekend of the year. Who's to say someone saw the rod and reel? Then they remembered the pleasant conversation they'd had with a North St. Louis SWCD watercraft inspector at the landing.

He was a young man attending Vermilion Community College in

Ely who was also working seasonally as an AIS watercraft inspector. Hoping there may be a chance the inspector picked up the rod and reel to keep it safe, they made a few phone calls. Imagine their delight when they learned the

inspector had indeed spotted the rod and reel at the Stuntz Bay dock. He had picked it up thinking the owner may come back to claim it. Thankful and appreciative that the inspector had stored the rod and reel for safekeeping, they made arrangements to meet. And the special family rod and reel was returned to its happy owners who sent a gracious note of appreciation to the Vermilion Lake Association and the SWCD commending the inspector's understanding and honesty.

North St. Louis SWCD and Vermilion Lake Association have developed additional training for watercraft inspectors on AIS biology and identification and on providing a high level of customer service.



**Emily Nelson**  
North St. Louis SWCD



# Assessing Lake Vermilion's AIS Risks to Prioritize Our Activities

The resources to completely defend Lake Vermilion's fishery and business community will never be available. We're committed to deploying the resources we can muster on our highest priority risks as efficiently as we can.

Those high-priority risks have evolved rapidly over the last couple years. By 2017, starry stonewort – a relative new-comer to Minnesota's AIS roster – has been found in 6 counties and 11 lakes, including Upper Red, Cass and Winnebigoishish, after its discovery in Lake Koronis in 2015. This grass-like macro algae can produce dense mats, can interfere with recreation, and can alter habitat for young fish. It's understandable that property values would decrease at lakes and along shorelines with starry.

In the last couple years, hybrid watermilfoil has also made headlines. Little is known about crosses between invasive Eurasian watermilfoil and our native



**Jeff Lovgren**  
VLA Board Member

Northern watermilfoil, but anecdotal reports suggest increased invasiveness and evidence of herbicide resistance. In Lake Vermilion, native watermilfoil co-exists with other native vegetation. We have no known Eurasian watermilfoil – an indication our habitat and water chemistry may not be suitable. However, at this point, no one knows whether certain Eurasian x native hybrids may thrive in Vermilion and overwhelm our native vegetation.

Zebra mussels, on the other hand, may be a ray of hope. Zebras need sufficient dissolved calcium – about 20 milligrams per liter – to grow and reproduce. Most of Lake Vermilion is below 13 mg/l – well in the safe zone. An exception is East Two River, which flows into Vermilion's east basin, with calcium above 20 mg/l at certain times of the year. However, its <7.0 pH prevents zebra mussels from becoming established. To be safe, we will continue to monitor east-basin water chemistry for a few years.

Starry stonewort and hybrid watermilfoils are major threats and have moved ahead of zebra mussels at the top of Lake Vermilion's AIS concerns. Our current risk assessment – including what we don't know – is summarized in the chart below.

Species	Introduction Risk	Habitat Suitability	Impact if Population Established	
			Fishery & Ecosystem	Recreational Boating
Starry stonewort	Increasing as more Minnesota lakes become infested.	Unknown. Limited to specific bays?	Serious stressor. Unknown impact on each fishery.	Severe in bays with suitable habitat.
Hybrid and Eurasian watermilfoil	Very high.	Unknown. Limited to specific bays?	Serious stressor. Unknown impact on each fishery.	Severe in bays with suitable habitat.
Zebra mussels	Very high.	Unknown. Limited to calcium hotspots with suitable pH?	Serious stressor. Filters zooplankton, limiting growth of fry.	Negative but water clarity appeals to some.
Spiny waterfleas	Found in Big Bay in 2015.	High. Likely to spread beyond east basin.	Serious stressor. Consume zooplankton, limiting growth of fry.	Low.
Curly-leaf pondweed	Present in 3 small areas.	Moderate/high in specific bays.	Limited to specific bays with suitable habitat.	May become severe in bays with suitable habitat.
Rusty crayfish	Present in east basin and west to Niles Bay.	High for sandy, rocky, rubble bottoms.	Weed bed destruction impacting several fish species.	Low to moderate.

# AIS Teams in Three Counties Begin Project to Support Resort Businesses

**A**quatic invasive species (AIS) prevention teams in Itasca, Cass and St. Louis Counties are joining forces to pilot innovative ideas to help resort, lodge, campground and marina owners protect their lakes. This two-year project will focus on increasing boat inspections and early-detection activities and on supporting stewardship at these lake businesses.

The project is led by the Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and is funded in part by a grant from the Initiative Foundation. Also participating in the project are Cass SWCD, North St. Louis SWCD, Vermilion Lake Association (VLA) and Burntside Lake Association (BLA).

“Our lake association has worked with North St. Louis SWCD and Burntside Lake Association for several years as we battle AIS together,” said Terry Grosshauser, VLA president. “This \$60,000 grant from the Initiative Foundation will allow us to better support our lake businesses at Vermilion and Burntside.”



**Jeff Lovgren**  
VLA Board Member

In 2017, North St. Louis SWCD and Vermilion Lake Association began working with Vermilion’s resorts, campgrounds and marinas with private accesses to expand boat inspections and vegetation early detection.

“We found the business owners to be very committed to AIS prevention and eager to work with us,” said Emily Nelson, a DNR-trained AIS Detector and inspection supervisor at North St. Louis SWCD.

“And we learned a lot about how to make the program even better in 2018. This funding will help us do that.”

A key principle within the AIS prevention community is sharing ideas with others.

“Everything learned at Vermilion will be applied to Burntside,” emphasized Ward Nelson, BLA president. “But now, through this multi-county project, AIS teams in Cass and Itasca will also benefit from our work. And we will more quickly benefit from theirs.”

“Developing innovative methods to apply what works in one region to other regions is a key objective of this project,” added Jeff Lovgren, VLA AIS program leader. “We anticipate that will not be easy. Vermilion, for example, has 23 private accesses concentrated on one lake. On the other hand, Itasca County has over 100 resorts and lodges spread widely over many lakes and a large geographic area.”

Significant funding for this project was provided from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature. The Initiative Foundation selects innovative projects to support and oversees those projects.





# Lake Vermilion AIS Team Kicks Off Project to Improve Watercraft Inspection Efficiency

**W**ith funding support from the Initiative Foundation, the Lake Vermilion aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention team will lead a two-year project to further improve the efficiency of boat inspection work at 17 Lake Vermilion and 5 Burntside Lake public accesses.



**Jeff Lovgren**  
VLA Board Member

Watercraft inspections at Vermilion and Burntside are conducted by North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in partnership with the Vermilion Lake Association and the Burntside Lake Association. All three organizations are involved in this pilot project.

“While boat inspections are the most effective means we have to prevent new AIS infestations, they are also labor intensive and our most expensive AIS undertaking,” said Jeff Lovgren, AIS program leader at Lake Vermilion. “Our partnership has an obligation to become even more efficient every year, and we’re pleased to receive a \$33,000 grant to pilot some innovative ideas to make that happen.”

“The key to inspection efficiency is to deploy our inspectors at the busiest public accesses at the busiest times of the day for the entire boating season,” said Anita Provinzino, North St. Louis SWCD administrator.

“To do that, we need an accurate model to predict arrivals and exits at public accesses,” observed Carrie Ohly-Cusack, Burntside AIS task force leader. “During the pilot project, we will gather data using mag-

netic traffic sensors, access cameras, and cameras overlooking the access parking lots at both lakes to supplement data from our inspectors.”

The traffic data at Burntside and Vermilion will be merged with information about fishing conditions, weather and wind direction, and the effect of fishing opener, weekends, and holidays to develop a predictive model. The intention is to use the model to predict boat traffic patterns and incorporate those into a flexible, fast-reaction staffing system.

During the second year of the project, the predictive traffic model will be tested at a third nearby lake with multiple public accesses before being shared more widely across Minnesota.

Significant funding for this project was provided from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature. The Initiative Foundation selects innovative projects to support and oversees those projects.



# *Celebrating Our History: An Interview with Dale Lundblad, Director Emeritus*

In the past issue of our newsletter, we interviewed John Aronson who revisited his experience as a founding member of the Sportsman Club. John highlighted many of the very early accomplishments, including the work of the club to reestablish the fish hatchery, navigation buoys and water quality. In this issue I interviewed Dale Lundblad who revisited many of the other early accomplishments.

Dale joined the board in 1978, and served for 40 years, including a term as president, until his retirement in 2017.

As a biologist, Dale was concerned about the water quality of our lake, as no testing was being performed. Together with Ruth Murphy, the board successfully initiated water quality testing, initially at public swimming beaches, then expanded it to broader lake locations. Subsequently, the board successfully lobbied with the state to replace the outdated Tower/Soudan wastewater treatment plant, a source of significant water pollution, with a modern treatment plant, complete with holding ponds, which continues to serve the community today.

About this same time, the club worked to improve navigation on the lake. This included the yearly placement of bands on the navigation buoys that, with a numbering system, improved boaters' ability to locate their position on the Fisher Maps. In addition, the club organized volunteers to construct navigational beacons. Initially these were powered with batteries and needed frequent replacement and other maintenance. As technology improved, they were upgraded to solar power. These navigational beacons have continued to provide safety to boaters thanks to the work of our volunteers.

In 1983, Dale recalled the first loon count that was performed on our lake. This was initially run by Mardy Jackson and has continued to today. It is the longest continuously running loon count on an individual lake

in the country!

In the late 1980s, Dale and the board worked with the DNR to improve the northern fishery. This included the

establishment of two rearing ponds, the primary one located at Sunset Creek, near the Landing Restaurant. The club's volunteers would trap northernns as they swam up the creek to spawn, and relocate them to the rearing pond, where the fry would be protected for a period of time, then subsequently restocked back to the lake. Dale recalled the tedious work in the cold April mornings. There was one time a huge snapping turtle was inadvertently captured and had to be handled.

The club enjoys a good working relationship with the DNR, to improve the fishery. This included purchasing and donating a new 16-foot boat for the DNR to perform their annual creel census. The boat was replaced every two years for a period of time, until the DNR was able to fund this boat on their own. In addition, the club made a significant financial contribution toward the purchase of an electrofishing boat so the DNR could better monitor the walleye population. Dale believes this equipment is still in use today.

Dale also recalled the club initiating a program to design and build wood duck boxes that were needed to help improve the population of wood ducks and golden-eyes.

Dale has made many contributions in his 40 years and helped to lead the transition from more of a social club to the culture of a lake association. He led the effort for our name change from the Sportsman Club of Lake Vermilion to the Vermilion Lake Association. We thank Dale for his 40 years of dedication and service to our organization.



**Dale Lundblad**



**Dwight Warkentin**  
VLA Vice-President



# Water Clarity May Be Impacting Walleye Populations

**W**ater clarity has been improving since the late 1990s due to increased regulation of septic systems around lakes. Along with the increased clarity due to zebra mussels, there may be an impact on walleye populations.

Gretchen Hansen, a researcher working for the Minnesota DNR, presented at the DNR Roundtable event in early January about her future studies concerning the impact of spiny water fleas and zebra mussels. This coming summer she will be testing the impact on major walleye lakes in Minnesota including Lake Vermilion.



**Terry Grosshauser**  
VLA President

Hansen in her presentation also indicated that increased light due to clearer water in many lakes has reduced the habitat suitable to walleyes in those lakes. Research from a Canadian study also found correlation of reduction in the walleye population in lakes with water clarity improvements.

Using historical data primarily, Hansen was able correlate increased light with the reduction of the walleye populations. There are many factors that impact the walleye population, and clarity improvement may not be the only reason why walleye populations like Mille Lacs have crashed. However, in Mille Lacs, the visibility increased by approximately 6 feet prior to the introduction of zebra mussels and another 6 feet after the introduction.

The theory, as explained by Hansen, is that the clearer water forces the smaller walleyes into deeper water where the lower light levels are more acceptable to the walleye. However, this forces them into waters where more large predators exist. For Mille Lacs, the well-documented comment by the DNR is that there are plenty of walleye hatching, but the lake is losing these small fish prior to reaching three-years old.

Doctor Hansen will be working on Lake Vermilion this summer studying the impact of spiny water fleas on the fishery. We will try to contact her to understand better if the clarity improvement on Lake Vermilion is possibly somewhat responsible for the decline of walleyes on the west end of the lake. We will pull together water clarity data on the entire lake and determine how the clarity has improved on Vermilion and where it has improved. The local DNR has indicated that there are plenty of fry hatching on the west end and throughout the lake, but the large numbers of fry do not seem to survive to three-years old on the west end, similar to the issue identified on Mille Lacs.

There are obviously many factors to consider on Lake Vermilion: High numbers of rusty crawfish, reduced weed growth, larger fish because of slots for walleyes, northern and muskies, increased water clarity, and longer seasons due to warmer temperatures. One thing is for sure: good fishing locations are changing all the time and we need to carefully understand these factors going forward so we do not end up like Mille Lacs. Also, fishing in deeper water for walleyes may be important going forward.



# Years Gone By...

**I**t was 1960. My aunt and uncle had purchased property a few years prior on the road-access side of Oak Narrows. My uncle had finished building the cabin and it was time to build the sauna. I was quite young then and the only thing I can remember about the construction was an interior wall on which I helped nail shiplap. I can tell you the exact spot I did that. It is funny how you can remember such detail and nothing else.

My uncle and aunt have since passed away and my wife and I now own the property where we built a new retirement home on the site of my aunt and uncle's cabin. It was time to give the old sauna a facelift, which we did a few years ago. We took down the old paneling in the dressing room and replaced it with cedar. There on the inside of the siding now visible, written in pencil, most likely my uncle's carpenter pencil, were my uncle's name along with names of another uncle and cousin who were helping with the construction. The other uncle, Frank, who I knew



**Rob Joki**  
VLA Board Member

only by his nickname, Ham, was the same one I mentioned in last quarter's newsletter in the fishing story.

The writing read as follows:

**Old Man Joki, age 47**

That is Edward A. Joki,  
Zim, Minn. Oct. 16, 1960

**Frankie P. Intihar, age 13**

597 13<sup>th</sup> Street North  
Virginia, Minn.

Too young to  
Cut the Mustard  
October 16, 1960

**Frank Intihar, age 53**

Carp. Helper



We cut out and saved the pieces of exterior siding.  
What's in your walls?

## In Memoriam...

**T**he Vermilion Lake Association regularly receives donations in memory of loved ones or friends. We are grateful for these gifts and also wish to honor those who have passed away:

**William C. Allen**  
**Ruth Amundson**  
**Big Hank Bockus**  
**Phillip E. Bodine**

**Robert Budolfson**  
**Leah Carr**  
**Michael Christophers**  
**Jamie Como**  
**Joseph DeAngelo**  
**Rick Dyer**  
**Marion Eloff**  
**Fred Erickson**  
**Dennis Fabozzi**  
**Tim Flanagan**

**Barbara Harkonnen**  
**Don Holloway**  
**John Holmes**  
**Helge Holmgren**  
**Don Housenga**  
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**Jim Kvale**  
**Bill Matthews**

**Robert Nicolai**  
**Riley Niepagen**  
**Elio Pietrini**  
**Mark T. Schelske**  
**Robert E. Smith**  
**Bill Vollendorf**  
**Mariann Wood**  
**Ed Woolverton**



# NORTHERN PIKE REGULATIONS

It is 2018 and this spring there will be new northern pike regulations for the state of Minnesota. The changes will include three northern pike zones with different limits and length regulation for each zone. There will be a northeast zone, a north central zone, and a southern zone. Lake Vermilion is in the northeast zone and there will be a change for this zone EXCEPT where special regulations exist today and Lake Vermilion has a special regulation in place for northern pike.



**Terry Grosshauser**  
VLA President

The current special regulation for Lake Vermilion is that all north-

ern pike from 24-36 inches must be immediately released with only one fish over 36 inches in a three fish possession limit. This regulation will continue for 2018 on Lake Vermilion

The special regulation to be used in 2018 will be under consideration for a regulation change to match the northeast management zone regulation. This process will follow the standard DNR rulemaking procedures with opportunity for general public input in 2018. The public input meeting will be held in the late summer or early fall. The earliest implementation of the northeast zone regulation for Lake Vermilion would be in May 2019

if there is public support.

The northeast zone regulations will allow an angler to keep two pike and must release all from 30-40 inches with only one over 40 inches allowed in possession. Spearers also would be able to take two pike but only one may be longer than 26 inches. At this time the only option to be considered in 2018 will be the new northeast zone regulation outlined above.

Please check out our website or local newspapers for the timing of the DNR input meeting in late summer or early fall. It is important that the public provide input on any proposed regulation changes being considered.

## Board of Directors and Officers 2017-2018

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# Do You Have a Natural Shoreline?



**T**his is a photo of my yard. You will notice that even though I have a mowed lawn, that lawn is not mowed up to the shoreline. Each year, my buffer zone is getting wider with the addition of native plants.

My shoreline also has a slight berm which slows down any runoff. This type of landscape allows water to soak in rather than run off, and the plants absorb nutrients which, if flowing into the lake, cause algae blooms and excessive aquatic vegetation growth.

Note that I have only one path down to the lake with no hard or paved-over surfaces, thus allowing water to permeate slowly into the soil and roots.

## The benefits of vegetative buffers are:

**1. Stabilize the shoreline and prevent erosion.** Vegetative buffers help protect water quality by reducing runoff. Roots of native plants run deep, helping to

stabilize the shoreline by holding the soil together.

**2. Reduce runoff.** Unlike the shallow, compacted roots of turf grass, which allow little water to penetrate the soil, the deep roots of native plants and grasses allow water to filter down into the ground where the nutrients in the water are absorbed by the roots.

**3. Provide habitat.** Vegetative buffers with native plants provide a diverse habitat for butterflies, birds and other wildlife. Buffers can also act as a deterrent for unwanted wildlife such as geese which prefer a wide-open lawn down to the shoreline. Also, the native aquatic plants such as cattails and bulrush have amazing filtering abilities and act as natural water purifiers. The rooted aquatic vegetation is also a fish nursery which provides critical refuge habitat for young fish.

**4. Easy maintenance.** To maintain a vegetative buffer, just leave it alone. Native plants require little or no maintenance such as watering, weeding, fertilizing or mowing.



**Wayne Suoja**  
VLA Board Member



# A Case Study: Shoreline Stabilization

**O**n a beautiful July morning of 2017, a barge laden with equipment and materials sailed into Daisy Bay. This barge and its crew had a day of work ahead, a day of work all to benefit the water quality of Lake Vermilion.



**Phil Norvitch**  
North St. Louis SWCD

Earlier, a family on Birch Point contacted the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (NSL SWCD) with concerns of an eroding shoreline. NSL SWCD staff met with the concerned landowners and developed a plan of how to help resolve the issue. This shoreline stabilization effort will reduce the amount of sediment entering the lake and will serve a part in conserving the integrity of Lake Vermilion for years to come.

If you have concerns of erosion occurring on your property or would like to find ways to reduce storm water runoff into the lake, give NSL SWCD a call. Our staff will set up a time to meet on site, work with you to meet your land management goals, and help you along with your conservation efforts from start to finish. Partial funding may be available to help you get your project on the ground. Additional funds are currently available for community-based projects. Technical assistance is provided free of charge.

Winter's a great time to plan a spring project.

**For more information, please contact Phil at 218-471-7287 or [phil@nslswcd.org](mailto:phil@nslswcd.org).**



**Work being done on a Birch Point shoreline.**



**Severe erosion on shoreline**



**Stabilized shoreline after project installation**



**Vermilion Lake Association**  
**P. O. Box 696**  
**Tower, MN 55790-0696**

## *Volunteers Make the Difference*

The Vermilion Lake Association has been fortunate over the years to have a dedicated group of leaders and volunteers to staff our important activities. We are grateful for their help.

Please consider joining this team. We have needs for both workers and leaders, for those with only a few hours to spare, and for those who can make a larger time commitment.

If you think you may be interested, please contact Pat Michaelson, VLA Volunteer Program Leader, at 612-306-7702 (cell) or [plmichaelson@gmail.com](mailto:plmichaelson@gmail.com).

### **Vermilion Lake Association**

Sheri Sawatzky, Member Records • P.O. Box 696 • Tower MN 55790  
[sherisawatzky@gmail.com](mailto:sherisawatzky@gmail.com) • (218) 666-5512

Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st

☐ 2018 New Member      ☐ 2018 Renewal

Membership level

☐ \$15.00 Individual      ☐ \$20.00 Couple  
☐ \$25.00 Family      ☐ \$50.00 Business or Organization

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

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

Street \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email (requested) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (requested) \_\_\_\_\_

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 [VermilionLakeAssociation.org](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org). We're pretty sure you'll like our vision for the future and the work we have underway now to make Lake Vermilion even better.

Please mail a check with the form on this page or join at our website using PayPal or a credit card.

The Vermilion Lake Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

### **Renew Membership for 2018**

If you have not yet renewed your lake association membership, there's still time. You can renew at the [VermilionLakeAssociation.org](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org) website or use the form on this page.