

THE VERMILION



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To Protect and Improve Lake Vermilion

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Ballot insert: Please return by Aug. 15

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the August issue of Vermilion Lake Association's newsletter or, as some people call it, our magazine. This certainly has been a challenging year, but it is nice that you have something great to look forward to and that is enjoying Lake Vermilion and all it offers. This newsletter usually explains what to expect at our annual meeting, but this year we have canceled that event. Even with more information, there are issues reserving a site, and turnout would probably be less than 50-percent. There still could be concerns of a second wave that people would definitely want to avoid. For the safety of all members, it was a good decision to cancel the annual meeting this summer. Please take the opportunity to enter our Lake Vermilion picture contest and submit your vote on the top three pictures of Vermilion (details on page 3).



Terry Grosshauser
VLA President

The organization is staying very active this summer: loon and cormorant count, navigation light maintenance, water quality, lakefront restoration, picnic site maintenance/clean ups, loon nests, website updates, and of course AIS volunteer efforts. Thanks to all of our volunteers who continue to manage each of these activities safely. The recognition party that we usually hold in late August is canceled. With the problem of obtaining a location and the recent increase in COVID-19 in the county, we feel that it would be better to cancel this event for this year. Also, the strong increase in the number of people enjoying the lake presents unknown potential risks from the virus

Cover photo: Loon on platform nest. Photo by Chris Woody. See story on page 6 on "Loon Nest Progress."

in the next two months. I would like to thank our volunteers for all of their dedicated work this summer, you are amazing.

In this newsletter you will find several articles about water quality and some work that our volunteers perform each year to track water clarity. This is important since the MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) currently reports that water quality in the state varies significantly. In southern and southwest Minnesota only 18-percent of the lakes "meet water standards for aquatic recreation," and in the central and metro lakes area only 50-percent of the lakes meet these standards. In the north and northeast portion of the state 92-percent of lakes meet these standards. While we have very good water quality in Lake Vermilion, the problems are moving north, and we as stewards of our lake need to be aware of any changes to our water quality. Check out the articles, and remember a lot of water quality issues are manmade and we can prevent significant issues by managing our septic systems, not using chemicals on our lawns, limiting water drainage into the lake from lawns, and limiting any fertilizer use on lawns.

Even with the COVID-19 limitations, North St. Louis County Soil and Water was able to hire boat inspectors and train them with the new on-line training from the DNR. Using data from previous years, we have learned which launch sites have the most boats coming from infected lakes, and we have plans to have inspectors at these locations at times when most of these boats arrive, based upon history. As more lakes in the county request funds for AIS inspections, our funding becomes more limited each year, so being efficient with our deployed resources is very important. The first two fishing tournaments were canceled by the DNR this year. Cooperation with the resorts increases every year. Our sentry program where we check around launch sites for invasive weeds is expanding to cover public and most of the resort launch sites this year. We have one of the most comprehensive programs in the state, but we need lake residents to ensure that their guests

Continued on next page

VLA In-person Annual Meeting Canceled for 2020

We will miss seeing many of you at our annual meeting gathering.

In lieu of the meeting, we ask that you please:

Complete and mail the ballot inserted in this newsletter to vote for directors and photo contest winners. Must be postmarked by

August 15.

View the VLA You Tube update from President, Terry Grosshauser on our website, VermilionLakeAssociation.org

Review Treasurer Jerry Lepper's report also on the paper insert.

Contact any Board member or

submit questions or suggestions through our website link: vermilionlakeassociation.org.

We're hopeful you and your families are enjoying a wonderful, safe summer on beautiful Lake Vermilion.....and look forward to seeing you next year at our 2021 Annual Meeting.

"Wonders of Nature" 2020 Photo Contest

Members can vote for their favorite on the enclosed ballot

Check out the gorgeous photos that were entered into this year's Vermilion Lake Association photo contest (vermilionlakeassociation.org). Vote for your top three picks on the ballot on the paper insert included in this newsletter when you also vote for next year's board members.

Ballots must be postmarked by August 15. Winners will be notified by phone or email when the ballots are tallied. First prize-\$75; second prize-\$50; third prize-\$25. The top three will be recognized and published on our website, in our newsletter and/or social media.

President's Message....from page 2

bringing boats are checked at one of the launch sites having inspectors.

Some exciting news: The board has been looking at projects to improve Lake Vermilion, and we have several ideas that we are exploring to determine feasibility and cost. There are several projects under evaluation now as we gather more information. One of the projects would involve a new picnic site on the lake. Picnic sites are extremely popular around the lake and another one would add to the eight we already maintain.

If you have not visited the Vermilion Lake Association website lately, please do. Many areas have been updated, and we continue to add to our links to videos on fishing and techniques to improve your fishing. I have received a couple of favorable responses to support reducing the limits on bluegills with the goal of improving overall size. Be careful and safe this summer and enjoy Lake Vermilion. It is a wonderful resource.



Monitoring Wolf Creek

by Doug Wallace & Peggy Hunter,
VLA members

Citizens monitoring the conditions of Minnesota's streams is an inspiring story. Each year hundreds of trained volunteers measure water quality from creeks and streams throughout the state. It is one of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's remarkable under-the-radar programs.

We monitor one of those streams, Wolf Creek, which flows into Lake Vermilion. The stream flows from the southern shore of Wolf Lake, a charming pristine body of water located in the middle of a USFS

roadless forest, a stone's throw from the west arm of Trout Lake (BWCAW). This tiny lake can be accessed by a mile-long portage that begins along the southern shore of Wolf Bay.

Wolf Creek meanders through wetlands, ripples over two or three beaver dams, until pleasantly bubbling into Smart's Bay.

We take readings of Wolf Creek's clarity 5 to 8 times from May to September using a SecchiTube. Our sampling location is a small pool about 100 yards up from the creek's mouth. Using a bucket, we pour a sample into the SecchiTube, with our back to the

sun, look down the tube until we no longer can see the disk, then gently raise it until it reappears. We record the depth to the nearest centimeter. The SecchiTube has a centimeter scale along its side. We also note the creek's level and whether a photo was taken.

We calculate the water's appearance, using a scale from #1A (transparent) or #1B (tea colored) to #5 (muddy and green), noting whether the reading was preceded by a recent rain event. Wolf Creek's appearance has never dipped below #1B (tea colored) during 8 years of monitoring.

Continued on next page

Volunteering is as important as it is fun!

It was a bright and beautiful morning on a choppy Pike Bay as we motored away from the dock. Our destination was to meet up with Doug Wallace and Peggy Hunter, located on Grassy Point in Smart's Bay. Luck was on our side as we reached Lake Vermilion's Big Bay. The wind and chop had subsided, and Big Bay was almost calm.

With our lake map in hand we knew it would take almost an hour to arrive at our destination. We checked the map frequently and pointed out islands, landmarks, and cabin dwellings as we moved across the lake. We rounded Gold Island and found our way through the channel leading into Smart's Bay. Doug had told us to look for the double docks. We had finally arrived, and Peggy was waiting for us.

With the boat tied up, we started our next journey up the walkway. Steep steps built over huge rocks and boardwalks traversing back and forth through the woods lead us to their home high above the lake. Their beautiful A-frame home awaited us at the top. We decided to enjoy the scenery and view as we chatted on their large deck.

In 1966 Doug started looking to purchase property on the lake and found just what he was looking for. Seven years later an A-frame was built from a kit and additions continued through 2000. He and his

wife, Peggy, have spent many wonderful years on the lake. They love their canoes and are out paddling in them daily. They decided to join the VLA as members in 1999.

Doug and Peggy are the coordinators of and have been a part of the Citizens Monitoring Group for Wolf Lake Roadless Forest for over a decade. As part of their work they test water quality over the course of each season. The results of these tests are reported to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Wolf Lake flows into Wolf Creek which flows into Lake Vermilion near their home. (See the article about their work on page 4.)

Doug did extensive work to prepare and submit a VLA grant application to the MPCA this past winter. Even though it was not selected, he is not giving up, knowing that water testing on Lake Vermilion is especially important along with the water testing from rivers and streams that enter our lake.

Thank you both for all you have done and continue to do to keep our lakes and streams alive and healthy.

Opportunities to volunteer for the Vermilion Lake Association are just an email away. It's easy, just contact Pat Michaelson, Volunteer Program Leader at: plmichaelson@gmail.com or check out our website at <http://www.VermilionLakeAssociation.org>.



Penny Jackson
Author and
VLA Volunteer

Wolf Creek...from page 4

The second measurement is to estimate the creek's recreational suitability on a 5-point scale of "Very Good" (beautiful) to "Very Poor". It's consistently judged #1. Since Wolf Creek is shallow for the most part, wading is about the only way it can be used for recreation.

Finally we take the temperature of the creek's water.

Usually it is in the low 60s in May, low 70s in July, and high 50s in September. All of this data is recorded and sent in October to the MPCA. It is also used as a section in an annual monitoring report conducted for the Superior National Forest — the Wolf Lake Roadless Forest Citizens Monitoring Program. But that's a story for another day.

Loon Nest Progress 2020

Our loon nest project was started four years ago by Mel Hintz, and we had volunteers deploy our three loon nests in 2020. The nests must be deployed the first week following ice out. I just read an article about a study done in Canada measuring the success of loons nesting in the natural environment vs on artificial loon nests. The success rate of eggs hatching was significantly higher with the artificial loon nests. One might ask why? The reason given was the increased protection from winged and land predators. The protection over the top of a loon nest is effective in saving the eggs from winged predators--eagles, osprey, owls, and blue herons. The sticks prevent their landing on the nest, and several land predators will not swim out to an artificial nest. Our nests have been improved with more sticks and a wire cage. (See cover photo.)



Terry Grosshauser
VLA President

that was successful last year was successful again this year with two chicks hatched. Please check out the video on our website showing the parents, one chick, and the nest. The nest now has more vertical sticks to limit access by predators. Loons will leave a nest with eggs for short periods of time, and predators can land on a nest without vertically-placed sticks. This is a unique video; one chick has hatched and is in the water and then goes up onto the back of one adult while the other adult gets back on the nest to incubate the second egg. Usually the second egg hatches within one day after the first egg. The timing of this video is amazing. The other two nests were not successful, although there was some interest at one. The other one actually had the loons mate on top of the nest, but it did not result in eggs this year. If you would like to build a loon nest, please visit our website for the building plan. The nests work



best in bays or coves where wave activity is not too strong.

The state of Minnesota will receive funds from the BP oil spill fund with emphasis on improving the populations of loons in the state. All activities related to this project have been put on hold by the state owing to the coronavirus. Eventually there will be a program aimed at getting the lead out of fishing tackle. A significant percentage of loons each year are lost due to lead poisoning. More information will be available in 2021.

So how did we do? The same nest

The Vermilion Lake Association regularly receives donations in memory of loved ones or friends. These gifts were received between Jan. 9 and June 23, 2020. We are grateful for these gifts and also wish to honor those who have passed away:

Dr. William C. Allen

Mike & Lucy Begich

Hallie Brickner

Dave Brown

Claire & Lou Coviello

Dennis Fabozzi

Don & Gladys Fasteen

Jan Ferguson

Ann & Tim Flannigan

Thor Levison

Dale Lundblad

Vern & Elinor Lundburg

Richard Okerstrom

*Jim & Norma
Postudensek*

Marje & Bill Ranck

Steve Towle

*Jack & Dorothy
Whiteside*

Ed Woolverton

Water Quality Monitors

We had an excellent response for volunteers to do Secchi disk readings on Lake Vermilion for 2020.

The new volunteers were Peter

Anderson, Craig & Carol Beveroth, Joe & Nancy Den-
nie, Tami Forsline,
Peggy & Robert
Fry, Ron Kmett,
Laurie & Don
Potter, and Jeff
Stebbins. In 2019,

Wayne Suoja joined long time
volunteers Robert & Liz Dahl, Bob
McNamara, Steven Lotz, and Kar-
in & Georgia Marjanen. In 2019,
these five volunteers monitored
water quality on 10 sites, and
overall, 58 water quality readings
were taken with the highest clarity
reading of 12.5 feet in early June,



Wayne Suoja
VLA Board Member



and the lowest reading of six feet
in mid-July. These volunteers also
record the date, time, physical
condition, recreation suitability,
and water color.

East Vermilion's water clarity
trend shows no change at this
time- meaning clarity is stable. A
trend could not be detected for

West Vermilion, and Pike Bay had
an insufficient amount of Secchi
data to run a trend analysis at this
time. This shows how critical the
work of Citizen Water Monitors
for Vermilion is for water clarity
data. If you would like to be a
monitor for 2021, please contact
Wayne Suoja at 218-753-2162 or
e-mail at wsuoja@frontiernet.net.

Board of Directors and Officers 2020

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Bob Pearson, 5773 Puncher Point Rd, Tower, MN 55790, 218-753-4212, rpearson@duluthlaw.com

Zebra Mussel Early Detection on East Two River

The DNR's 2019 discovery of zebra mussel veligers at Muskeg Bay in Lake of the Woods has important implications for Lake Vermilion. Both lakes have generally low calcium levels, well below the levels thought suitable for zebra reproduction.

No veligers (larvae) or adult zebra mussels have been found at Lake Vermilion. However, the Lake of the Woods discovery re-opens the question on whether zebras might conceivably get a foothold at the mouth of East Two River where it enters Pike Bay. East Two River has relatively high calcium levels at certain times of the year when rainfall is low.

As a precaution, VLA volunteers will resume a comprehensive adult and veliger early detection plan on East Two River. Here's a summary:

► Our East Two vegetation sentry crew will keep an eye out for adult or juvenile zebras on vegetation they collect on their rakes. Hand-

dled by VLA volunteers Jill Korpela-Bontems and Terry Vagle.

► VLA volunteer Gary Haugen will work with Your Boat Club to check boat lifts as they come out of the river each fall, looking for adult zebras.

► We will partner with a property owner near the mouth of East Two River to install a zebra sampling plate at his dock and to check his boat lift each fall. VLA volunteer Wayne Suoja is covering this activity.



► VLA volunteers Renee and Bob Pearson will conduct two plankton net tows in July and August near the mouth of East Two River. Material collected in the net will be examined by RMB Environmental Labs to check for zebra mussel veligers.

AIS Program Goals

The Vermilion Lake Association has set three high-level goals for our AIS program. Our emphasis is on those invasives which would be game changers for our fishery, recreational lake use, and our business community.

- Goal 1. Prevention.** Prevent all new aquatic invasives from being introduced at Lake Vermilion.
- Goal 2. Early Detection.** Detect all new AIS infestations quickly, before they have become established.
- Goal 3. Containment.** Prevent the expansion of all existing infestations.

Details about our 2020 AIS Prevention Plan are available on the "AIS Plans and Reports" page of our VLA website.

Our Vermilion AIS team will watch closely as DNR scientists study the Lake of the Woods discovery. Until more is known, as a precaution, VLA volunteers will continue to check for zebras at Vermilion's East Two River.

VLA Expands Sentry Early Detection at Vermilion Resorts

In 2020, the VLA is expanding its successful AIS vegetation early detection program at Vermilion's public boat accesses to include many private ramps located at resorts and marinas around the lake.

Lake Vermilion has four AIS Detectors -- Jim Graham, Mary McNellis, Wayne Suoja and Bob McNamara -- all trained by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota to identify many types



of invasive species which threaten our lakes. These four Detectors each work with a group of resorts to check the area around the resort docks for suspicious vegetation. Following the concept pioneered at our public accesses, these surveys are conducted three times a year in June, July and August using a double-sided rake to gather samples.

Thanks to our Detectors and to our resort partners for helping with this key element of our AIS program at Lake Vermilion.

VLA Volunteer Recognition event canceled for 2020

It is with sadness but the utmost safety in mind, that we've made the decision to cancel our annual VLA Volunteer Recognition this year. We enjoy the end of summer gathering, thanking each of you for the sig-

nificant contributions you make. To accomplish the numerous projects and activities in which the VLA engages requires a large number of dedicated volunteers. There are nearly 150 of you and our numbers continue to grow.

Thank YOU for the work you've done....and will continue to do. We look forward to seeing you again next year and appreciate your understanding and support!

Featuring Lake Vermilion's "Most Unwanted" Species...the first in a series.

Hybrid Watermilfoil (Eurasian northern watermilfoil cross)

What is it?

Hybrid watermilfoil is the offspring of northern watermilfoil – a beneficial native species – and Eurasian watermilfoil – an aggressive invader which can overwhelm a lake's native vegetation. Vermilion has no known infestations of Eurasian watermilfoil or its hybrids, despite almost certainly being introduced since the invasive Eurasian parent was first noted in Minnesota 33 years ago.

Why don't we have Eurasian watermilfoil at Vermilion?

Vermilion's water chemistry is quite different from lakes in the Twin Cities area where Eurasian watermilfoil is common. It is likely that Eurasian introduced by trailered boats at Vermilion did not grow well in our low-alkalinity, low-pH habitat. Native vegetation more suited to our water chemistry kept it out.

Why is hybrid watermilfoil a big deal?

When Eurasian hybridizes with northern watermilfoil – one variety of which is native to Vermilion – many genotypes can form with a variety of characteristics. In time, one of those genotypes may have the aggressiveness of the Eurasian parent and the habitat preference of its northern parent. Such a genotype could be a problem for Vermilion.

What are we doing to protect Vermilion?

Our boat inspectors and early detection sentries watch carefully for any vegetation that even remotely resembles watermilfoil.

What can property owners and visitors do?

If you see a suspicious infestation of any vegetation that you don't recall seeing at that location before, call the VLA AIS Hotline 218-288-1080. An AIS Detector will respond to help make an identification.

Can a property owner tell the difference among Eurasian, northern and hybrid watermilfoil?

Maybe. Eurasian tends to have 12-21 leaflet pairs. Northern 5-10. But the possibility of a hybrid complicates the determination, as leaflet pairs can have intermediate counts. Let an AIS Detector help.

Where can I get more info on hybrid watermilfoil?

Please visit this Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center webpage on Eurasian and its hybrids:
<https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/about-eurasianwatermilfoil>



Eurasian watermilfoil. Photo credit: MAISRC

How to Report Suspicious Vegetation at Vermilion

Jeff Lovgren, VLA Board Member

Early detection of new aquatic invasive species (AIS) infestations is a team effort. The key to our success is property owners, lake visitors, volunteer access sentries, and AIS Detectors all working together.

Because our highest priority threats are vegetation that tend to become first established where introduced, be especially vigilant at Vermilion's public and private accesses.

Please report any suspicious aquatic vegetation or invertebrates which you do not recognize as native to Lake Vermilion to our AIS Detector team. Contact

our AIS hotline by either email or phone at:

AIS@VermilionLakeAssociation.org

(218) 288-1080

A member of our AIS Detector team – listed below – will get back to you promptly.

Jim Graham jcgrahamsr@gmail.com

Bob McNamara bob@bobmcnamara.com

Mary McNellis mmcnellis@stcroixre.com

Wayne Suoja wsuoja@frontiernet.net

VLA Caps make a great present!



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.

For more info, contact Sheri Sawatzky at 218-780-8178 or email sherisawatzky@gmail.com.

Donations

The Vermilion Lake Association has qualified as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). Your charitable gifts and membership dues are generally tax deductible for federal income

tax purposes. Please consult your tax professional.

To accommodate a wide range of donor interests, the Vermilion

Lake Association has three funds to which gifts may be directed. Any size gift is appreciated and acknowledged.



General Fund: Gifts to this fund are used for a broad range of lake association activities.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Fund: Gifts to this fund are used to prevent new AIS infestations and to manage infestations already present.

Shore Lunch Site Improvement Fund: Gifts to this fund are used to improve and maintain Lake Vermilion's eight shore lunch sites.

How to Make a Donation

If you'd like to send a check, please make it payable to "Vermilion Lake Association, Inc." and mail to the

address below. If you wish, you may direct your donation to a specific fund.

All gifts are appreciated and acknowledged. Please include your name, email, and mailing address.

If this is a memorial gift, please let us know who the gift is in memory/in honor of.

Vermilion Lake Association, Jerry Lepper, Treasurer, P.O. Box 696, Tower, MN 55790

Donate online at <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/get-involved/donate/>

Trout Lake: My Decades There

Rob Bryer, Fishing Guide

No matter how many years go by, certain things you remember. My introduction to Trout Lake is no different. I first started going up there in the late 1960's with relatives; it was their weekend getaway. My family had the summer home on Vermilion, but my parents never ventured across into Trout.

Camping with my relatives on Trout Lake was a big adventure for someone my age. My uncle knew a few good walleye spots, so fishing seemed to always be successful. During my pre-teen years a friend and I would either venture across the truck portage or carry the small boat and motor across the canoe portage. For young kids, we caught a lot of fish. But it wasn't only Trout Lake we would fish. Back before the current legislation, boats and motors were allowed in adjoining lakes. Little Trout and Pine lakes were accessible by river or canoe portage. Merritt Lake was only by portage. We fished them all.

The spring that I received my driver's license, I asked the late Jim Nelson, who ran the truck portage, about working for him that summer. For my fishing career, it was a game changer. Many of the great fishing guides from the Lake Vermilion area fished Trout Lake a lot. The walleye were big and plentiful, they were forthcoming about their spots, and to a teenager it was big. I took their knowledge and used it as a foundation to better my skills.

High school came to an end, and I needed to get into the real world. I needed a break from school, and my plan was to do a four-year degree in forestry starting the following year. I started with the U.S. Forest Service that fall at the LaCroix Ranger District in Cook. During my employment, a full time position opened up, and I applied for and got the job. I worked at the onset of my career setting up timber sales, helping fight wildfires, and working in the wilderness doing campsite and portage maintenance, which brought me to Trout Lake numerous times. In the early 1990s the federal court decided the mechanical portage was not necessary, so the truck portage was halted. To get a boat across, you hauled it on portage wheels. Then a couple got a contract to try hauling boats across by dog team. It worked, but wasn't economically viable for them and was discontinued after a year. Eventually the courts reversed the decision on the mechanical portage and the new contractor utilized an ATV with trailering to get people across. After close to twenty years it's still the current method, and it's very efficient.

Then came retirement. I considered going into guiding full time



and, after much deliberation and encouragement from people who knew my love of fishing and history with the area, I decided to go for it.

Fishing on Trout Lake has changed, and the walleye catch isn't what it once was. The lake trout fishing is very consistent, and the smallmouth bass population is very strong.

My trips during the early season focus on lake trout and walleye. Then, as mid-June approaches, I target walleye and smallmouth. Most of my clients enjoy the wilderness setting with few people and no large boats. Trout Lake truly is a gem close to our backyard.

Shore Lunch Sites

Mike Ptak, VLA Member

Our shore lunch sites have had a number of improvements this year. The Bystrom Bay site had a new dock installed by Eagle Docks. The Bystrom Bay and Bear Creek sites got new picnic tables courtesy of The Lake Vermilion Guides League and Docks on Wheels. Many thanks to the Guides League and members who put the tables in place: Phil Bakken, Cliff Wagenbach, Lonnie Johnson, and Mike Estrin.

Over the years, the Vermilion Lake Association, through cooperative agreements with the USDA Forest Service and the Minnesota DNR, has established eight shore lunch sites around Lake Vermilion. Each is equipped with a safe dock, a picnic table, a fire ring/grate and a wilderness latrine. Volunteers from the Vermilion Lake Association maintain the sites as a community service.

The Vermilion Lake Association invites you to use these sites to stop for lunch, stretch your legs, use the latrine (follow the signs!) or to explore the woods and



observe wildlife. After enjoying the site, please remove any litter and make sure the campfire is totally out. Please keep in mind that these are day-use sites only. They are not to be used for overnight camping. And the docks are not strong enough for houseboat mooring.

If you observe a violation in progress, write down the license number of the watercraft involved, the date and time, and report that information to Vermilion Lake Association volunteers Mike Ptak, 612-986-7984 (East End), or John Zwieg, 218-666-5008 (West End).

If you would like to volunteer to help maintain these sites, contact Pat Michaelson at plmichaelson@gmail.com.



National Book Release & Fundraiser **America's Lake Vermilion...Its Seasons, Stories & Spirit**

By John E. Abel

There's an expression I've heard many times when someone is talking to a group of people who share the same interests and beliefs. It's said they are "preaching to the choir." When my old friend Tom Hill and I decided to publish a book about the people and images of Lake Vermilion, we wanted the volunteers of the Vermilion Lake Association (VLA) to be the centerpiece of the story. After all, you're the choir! As you'll find out, our book is dedicated to you and to our Creator...so you're in pretty good company.

We started two years ago. Tom wanted to photograph the lake in all four seasons and I wanted to talk to as many people as I could to find out why you do what you do. Could the work being done here to preserve this natural resource serve as a model for other communities across the country? I wanted to find out how you protect it and keep it as remarkable as the first time I saw it in 1989.

My friend Mark Ludlow told me to talk to Dwight Warkentin. Serving on the VLA Board, we were told Dwight will be a good resource of information to find out what's going on, how many people are involved, and why this volunteer organization is so important to the health of the lake.

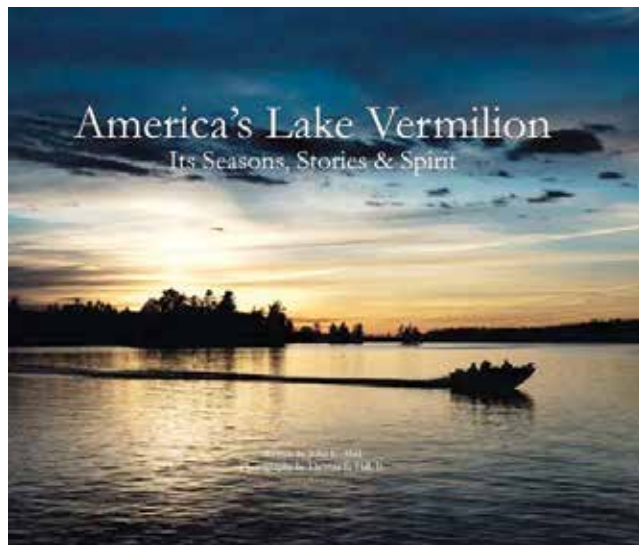
So, we drove to Dwight and Rachel's home overlooking Niles Bay and spent the better part of an afternoon listening and learning.

And we discovered something the 1,400 members of this organization have in common...a heart-felt commitment to Lake Vermilion.

And that's how the book began. Over the course of the next year, we connected with VLA Board Members Terry Grosshauser, Sheri Sawatzky, Pat Michaelson, Jeff Lovgren and John Yocum along with a cross section of people whose passion for this lake is something worth noting.

One conversation led to another and before long we had stories from the Vermilion Fire Brigade, Bois Forte Tribal Council, U.S. Forestry Service, Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota Horticultural Center, a fishing guide, a Catholic priest, a Presbyterian minister, a Lutheran camp director, a pilot, a family from Iowa with a dream, two Labrador retrievers and a couple who saved an eaglet on Raspberry Island. And you won't want to miss the story of two lovebirds who spend their summers in an octagon-shaped cabin on Taylor's Island. They're both 91 years old.

But the lasting impression you'll most likely take away from the book is the photography. Tom did a great job capturing the seasons of Vermilion with all of its color



and changing "personality." But his efforts did not come without personal sacrifice. On one trip, he tore his rotator cuff. On another trip, he broke his camera. And there was the time when he almost fell out of a Cessna trying to get an aerial shot of Vermilion Dam. Photography can be dangerous! With over 200 pictures, I hope you'll find a favorite that captures your Lake Vermilion.

Nine dollars from every book sold to VLA members will support the VLA Aquatic Invasive Species Fund. On that Sunday afternoon in May of 2019, Dwight told us about the important work being done to help prevent the introduction or spread of AIS. We wish to support your good efforts by providing \$9 for every book you buy directly to the fund to help keep Lake Vermilion healthy.

This beautiful book is available now for only \$39.99 at www.americalakevermilion.com. Please use the promotion code VLA on the order form.

Vermilion Smallie Fishin' Basics: Where to start and with what

Lake Vermilion is one of the best fisheries in the state, and on a side note with that being said.... the bass fishing is a hidden gem. Many anglers head to Vermilion to fish for walleyes and muskies, and the bass seem to take a back seat to the notoriety. This article is the smallmouth starter kit for fishing Vermilion, and it won't break the bank!

Getting "smallie ready" for Vermilion is pretty basic. What to bring:

- ❖ Good lake map
- ❖ A plan
- ❖ Polarized glasses
- ❖ Boat control...don't go too fast...fish precisely

Tackle: See photo below...

- ❖ 4" skirted grub on a 1/4oz jig
- ❖ 4" Tube- 1/8-3/8oz jig insert
- ❖ 5" cenko...rigged wacky, Texas, or cut shorter for a "ned rig"
- ❖ Popper w/hair on tail
- ❖ Whopper plover mini
- ❖ Scatter Rap
- ❖ X-Rap

Looking for new bass territory can be a lot of fun.



We all have our favorite go to spots, but Vermilion has 1,200 miles of shoreline to fish, so it's fun to go window shopping and try a new stretch of water. When looking for smallmouths I always gravitate towards boulders, or boulders w/ weeds in transition, or open water reefs w/ boulders, and the mouths of bays and main lake points adjacent to them. When scanning a shoreline, the best tip I can give is to look for the biggest round

rocks you can find that tail into smaller rock with sand/gravel. These transition spots usually hold fish pre-spawn, spawn, and post-spawn. Look for and try these locations for a productive trip on the water!

Steve Amundson Spring Bay Resort & Guide Service
218-780-5941



Antique and Classic Boat Show Canceled

This year would have marked the 30th Annual Antique and Classic Boat Show on Lake Vermilion, held at the Landing Restaurant. Unfortunately, this event has been canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. The show was scheduled for Sunday, September 6, from 12 noon to 4 p.m. This event is always very popular with the public. They not only get a chance to see some very unique boats but are also able to speak with the boat owners themselves, to learn the history of those wonderful boats. The admission is free to the public.

The Lake Vermilion Antique & Classic Boat Show is honored to have the Vermilion Lake Association as one of its honorary Boat Show Sponsors. In 2018 the Boat Show was able to donate \$1,500 to VLA, plus another \$1,000 from 2019. The donated funds are specifically designated to help maintain and improve the docks of the current eight shore lunch sites on the lake.

ACBS is an International Organization dedicated to the preservation of antique and classic watercraft. With 58 local chapters in the United States, Canada and Europe, there are regional shows throughout the entire western world including Lake Vermilion. The local Chapter in our area is

the Bob Speltz Land O Lakes Chapter. The organization was established in 1975 with the mission to preserve and protect the heritage of our boating history. In the early 1970's these old boats were either brought to the dump or to the burn pile, destined for destruction as it was felt they had no value. It was only through the dedication of our early ACBS Founders and dedicated owners that these boats remain today. If you would like to learn more about the organization, please go to www.acbs.org.

The Boat Show committee of Sandy Jackson and Mark Ludlow would like to thank outgoing member Jeff Stebbins for his dedication and commitment over the years in helping to organize the show. Jeff and his wife Nancy graciously hosted the Captain's Dinner every year. Jeff and his famous BBQ pulled pork and chicken will be sorely missed. Thank you, Jeff!

We look forward to 2021 and the return of the Lake Vermilion Boat Show. In these uncertain times it is so important to keep supporting the Lake Association through direct donations so they may continue all their wonderful work.

Help protect Lake Vermilion by using Amazon Smile, Part III



During the past year Amazon Smile participation has almost doubled to 56 members. Total donations from Amazon based on your qualifying purchases were \$214.50. When you shop at the Amazon Smile website and designate the Vermilion Lake

Association as your selected charity, Amazon will make a donation to the association based on the value of your purchases. There are still 1,244 of our members who could participate.

When you shop at Amazon, go to the [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) website, designating The Vermilion Lake Asso-



ciation as your charity.

If you have started to shop at Amazon.com and then remember you want to use Smile, leave everything in your shopping cart, log off Amazon and then log back

in using Smile.Amazon.com. Your purchases will still be in your shopping cart and Vermilion Lake Association will receive the Amazon half-percent donation on qualifying purchases.

Thank you for helping the Vermilion Lake Association protect and improve Lake Vermilion.

Lake Gazing...a summer's day

I often find myself gazing for hours at Vermilion's sky-blue waters, her islands off our dock, her forested far shores....I've seen it all a thousand times. Enraptured by the view.

Yet, in these moments I sometimes wonder why am I here, miles from anywhere?

A silent siren calls to answer...., "absorb her beauty....her tranquility....her constant".

Hunkering-down from COVID's summer scourge, jarred by demonstrations everywhere..... what a summer! Lets take a deep breath and welcome and embrace some Vermilion "Lake Gazing".

Perhaps music, a bridge between the material and the spiritual, helps connect the dots in bringing Lake Gazing to life.....Let's listen.

Facing east over a big water view, the sun rising over the bay; summer's show opens. Dawn ushers in the Age of Aquarius... "Good Morning Star-shine" setting the mood.

"Good morning star-shine....the earth says hello.

You twinkle above us.... We twinkle below...."

For a starter can it be better said?

Movin' on, "Porgy & Bess's" "Summertime" comes to our day's gazing concert.

"Summer time.....and the livin' is easy,

Fish are jumpin'.....and the cotton is high"

Not much cotton up here so we'll have to settle for cat-tails and white pines.

But you get the picture, lake livin' and gazin' IS easy.

Eventide, still in search for the siren song...that which keeps us here. The Eagles nail it?

The three simple words of their tune.... "Peaceful, Easy, Feeling". Is that it?

"Cause I got a peaceful.....easy feeling.

And I know.....you won't let me down

Cause I'm already standing.....,

I'm already standing.....,

Yes, I'm already standing.....on the ground".....well not quite.

As night falls and the moon rises, shimmering across the bay. My siren song! Sung at churches & funerals & celebrations....this is it!

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made.

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder

Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee

How great Thou art....how great Thou art...."

So gaze away! Let your soul sing, embrace the awesome wonder, our lake, "hand made"..... a gift to all.

Tom Aro - Summer 2020



Avoiding Minnesota DNR Survey Nets

Every year since 1984, Fisheries staff from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have used 250 foot long gill nets in Lake Vermilion to assess the fishery. The nets are deployed overnight (roughly 24 hours) during weekdays at the same 20 netting locations annually from late August through mid-September. Nets are set in 2 or 3 locations each night until all 20 netting locations have been sampled. The nets are set perpendicular to shore to sample a range of depths. Combined these methods create a standardized sampling program that is important for tracking trends and evaluating fisheries management strategies.



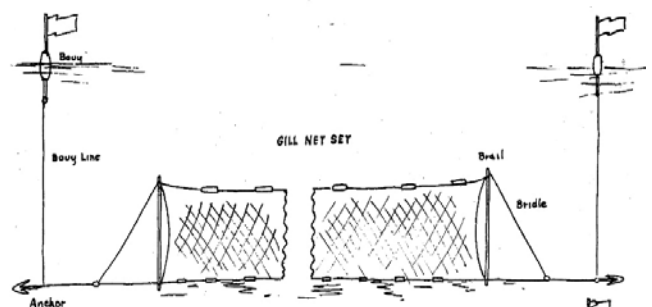
Matt Hennen
Large Lake
Specialist DNR

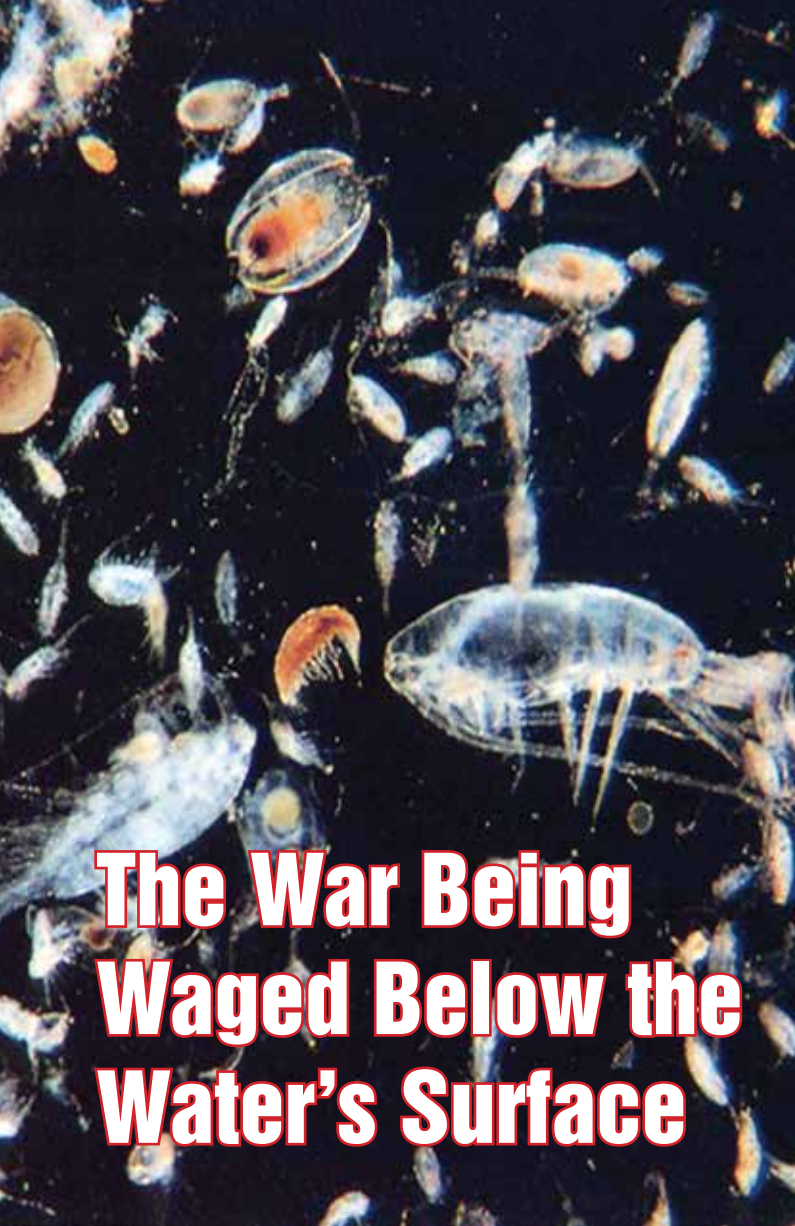


Unfortunately, each year one or more of these nets are “tampered” with in some manner which could affect the results of the survey. There are multiple ways the nets are tampered with. Anglers occasionally will fish between the two DNR marked buoys that

are roughly 250 feet apart designating the two ends of the gill net. This results in their gear becoming entangled in the net. Sometimes anglers will pull up the net to remove their gear, cut holes in the net to get their lures out, or simply break-off in the net. We find lures and hooks almost every year in nets. Also, sometimes people can’t control their curiosity and will pick up one of the buoys and anchors that are attached to the net just to see what it is or what is in the net. We generally can tell when this occurs as the nets are not reset properly.

We urge you to avoid these nets for the few nights a year that they are present in Lake Vermilion and other lakes that are being surveyed. If you happen to get tangled in a net while fishing or come across a net and are curious as to what it is, feel free to call 218-300-7802 or email tower.fisheries@state.mn.us.





The War Being Waged Below the Water's Surface

Matt Hennen, DNR Tower Area Fisheries and Heidi Rantala, DNR Fisheries Research Scientist

There's an epic battle going on in the water column in Lake Vermilion and you're probably not even aware of it. The spiny water flea, an invasive zooplankton, has waged a war on the native zooplankton community. Spiny water flea, native to Eurasia, were unintentionally introduced into the Laurentian Great Lakes through the discharge of contaminated cargo ship ballast water. From there, they spread to many inland lakes through various ways. As of last fall, 38 Minnesota lakes were listed as infested with this invasive zooplankton.

Zooplankton are small animals in the water column, including the immature stages of larger animals. In freshwater, they are typically microscopic, floating

or weakly swimming animals that drift with the watercurrent. They make up an important tier in the food web as they eat bacteria, algae, and other zooplankton. They also provide an important prey source for fish, insects, and other zooplankton, thereby connecting the base of the food web with higher predators. Many of the important fish species in Lake Vermilion rely on zooplankton as a prey source during some or all of their lives, including walleye, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, panfish, and cisco (tullibee). Zooplankton have relatively short lives (days to months), and respond quickly to stressors (such as pollution, invasive species, and warming water) in lakes. Changes in the zooplankton community can alert us of these stressors before we would otherwise notice them.

Since 2012, DNR Fisheries staff have collected zooplankton samples at sites across Lake Vermilion from May to November. We send the samples to DNR Ecological and Water Resources staff in St. Paul for analysis. This sampling was initiated primarily to provide early detection of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and to collect background data prior to AIS infestations. Following angler reports, we first sampled spiny water flea in Big Bay of East Vermilion in 2015. They were likely present at some lower level before being detected in samples. We found spiny water flea in West Vermilion for the first time in 2018 in Niles Bay, and in 2019 we collected them in Wakemup Bay, indicating lakewide distribution.

Since spiny water flea invaded the east basin of Lake Vermilion, the biomass (the weight of all the zooplankton in one liter of water) has decreased, while the number of zooplankton in a liter of water (abundance) has not noticeably changed. It might seem strange that the number of animals in a liter of water has not changed but their weight has. This is because the abundance of some zooplankton species has declined and others have increased. The average weight of some zooplankton species (especially some of the larger species) has decreased, however. Spiny water flea like to eat the smaller zooplankton, but all species of zooplankton start out small, making most individuals vulnerable to predation at some time during their lives.

We like comparing this to a bucket of Halloween candy offered to trick-or-treaters with the option for them to take a couple. Imagine if you started with a full bucket of all different kinds and sizes of candy, but mostly small candies. While some kids may randomly just grab whatever candy is on top, some kids may dig around a bit and take the biggest and best pieces they can find (for me that is Reese's Peanut Butter Cups). After grabbing a handful, they might even trade some of their smaller pieces of candy for more desirable options, maybe exchanging their hard Double Bubble for a Snickers. You keep refilling the bucket (analogous to zooplankton reproducing), but the number of those bigger pieces become fewer and fewer. . While the number of pieces of candy is not noticeably different, the weight of the bucket is lighter.

As of now, the biggest changes to the zooplankton community in the lake are in East Vermilion which has a longer history with spiny water flea presence. The declines in zooplankton biomass have not occurred in West Vermilion after two years of spiny water flea in the basin. However, it is likely that the changes will happen given the history of spiny water flea in other lakes, including Rainy Lake and Lake Kabetogama.

Since these changes generally occur at the microscopic level, it's difficult for people to see any changes. Questions we often get are:

What do these changes mean for the fish community?

That's the million dollar question and the answer is we really don't know for sure. Lakes in Minnesota with longer histories of spiny water flea presence

have not shown any dramatic changes in their fish communities. A couple of studies in Minnesota lakes invaded by spiny water flea found reduced growth rates of young-of-the-year yellow perch and walleye and reduced size of young-of-the-year walleye at the end of summer. This may be critical, as the first year of growth is important for winter survival and recruitment to the fishery.

Do fish eat spiny water flea?

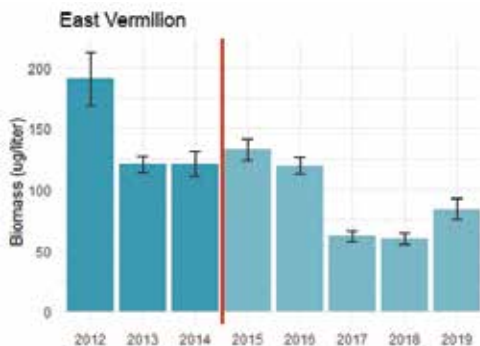
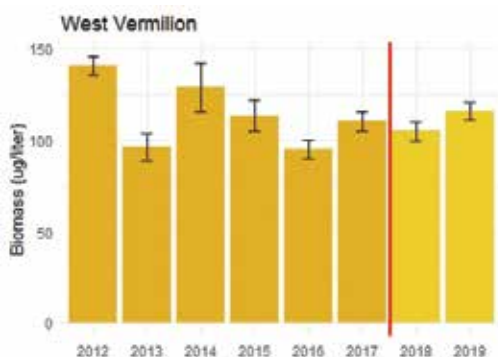
Yes, several species of fish in Lake Vermilion eat spiny water flea including bluegill, cisco, pumpkin-seed, smallmouth bass, walleye, and yellow perch. There is some indication that the tail spine (which is very long and barbed) protects spiny water flea from being eaten by very small fish and may cause injury to some fish as they move through the digestive tract.

Can't we just get rid of them?

The short answer is, unfortunately, no. There are no specialized methods to target and remove a microscopic zooplankton species from any lake and, realistically, there will likely never be. The positive news is Lake Vermilion is a resilient, ever-changing system that has been adapting to changes for thousands of years. The lack of an effective way to remove this and other invasive species from our lakes emphasizes the importance of preventing the spread of non-native species.



A spiny water flea in the belly of a young walleye





Vermilion Lake Association

PO Box 696

Tower MN 55790

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.

Vermilion Lake Association

Sheri Sawatzky, Member Records • P.O. Box 696 • Tower MN 55790
sherisawatzky@gmail.com • 218-780-8178

Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st

☐ 2020 New Member ☐ 2020 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. 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.

Do You Qualify?

Trick question. Anyone can join the lake association whose mission it is to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. No need to be a property owner. No need to be a fisherman or a kayaker. Just someone who cares about our great lake and wants to protect her for the next generation.

Vermilion Lake Association (VLA)

2020 “Annual Meeting” Ballot

Clearly mark your choice for each of the two (2) actions, sign and indicate membership category, then return ballot by U.S. mail, postmarked no later than August 15, 2020.

The VLA By-Laws specify: ...Only active...(dues paying)...members shall be allowed to vote. Voting representation shall be as follows: three (3) votes with family membership; two (2) votes with couple membership; one (1) vote with single membership; and one (1) vote with business or organization membership. Those members voting shall be considered as constituting a quorum...

For these purposes, action will be taken by simple majority of ballots cast and returned as provided for herein.

There are 3 voting spaces below to accommodate family memberships. Members with a couple, single, or business/organizational membership will utilize 1-2 spaces respectively.

Nomination for Directors: The Board recommends approval of the following reappointments for 3-year terms

Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terry Grosshauser
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eric Hanson
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jerry Lepper
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Yocum

Wonders of Nature Photo Contest: Specify your first (1), second (2) and third (3) place choices

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Voter 1: Photo #	_____	# _____	# _____
Voter 2: Photo #	_____	# _____	# _____
Voter 3: Photo #	_____	# _____	# _____

Signatures and membership category ☐ Family ☐ Couple ☐ Single or Business/Organizational

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

Return Ballot by U.S. Mail, postmarked no later than August 15, 2020 to:

**Vermilion Lake Association
PO Box 696
Tower, MN 55790**



Vermilion Lake Association

Formerly Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion

Since 1968, a non-profit lake association dedicated to the improvement of Lake Vermilion
P.O. Box 696, Tower MN 55790

For the Years Ended June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2019 - Unaudited

<u>Revenue</u>	Fiscal 2020	Fiscal 2019
AIS Grant Received - Initiative Foundation	\$ 29,007	\$ 84,846
AIS Grant Reimbursement - St. Louis County	42,269	42,618
Memberships	27,705	26,625
Gifts Received & Memorials	38,645	15,197
Annual Meeting & Appreciation Dinner	6,375	200
Cap, Patch & Decal Sales	360	1,055
Miscellaneous	46	2,085
Total Revenue	144,407	172,625
<u>Expenses</u>		
AIS Grant Expenses	\$ 76,326	\$ 104,534
Newsletters (Quarterly)	14,198	14,490
Insurance (Liability)	9,751	9,735
Public Relations/Promotions	6,252	4,041
Projects (Inv. Species, Dock Repair, Shore Lunch)	4,744	1,483
Annual Meeting & Dinners	6,418	1,543
Member Services	2,243	1,756
Professional Services	1,720	1,325
Donations (Kid Fishing, MN Lakes & Rivers)	300	600
Anniversary Celebration	-	5,989
Office Expense (Copies, Postage, Supplies)	686	2,151
Navigation Aids/Lights/Repair	285	-
Miscellaneous	350	351
Total Expenses	123,272	147,997
Change in Net Assets	21,134	24,628
Net Assets Beginning of Year	63,999	39,371
Net Assets End of Year	\$ 85,133	\$ 63,999