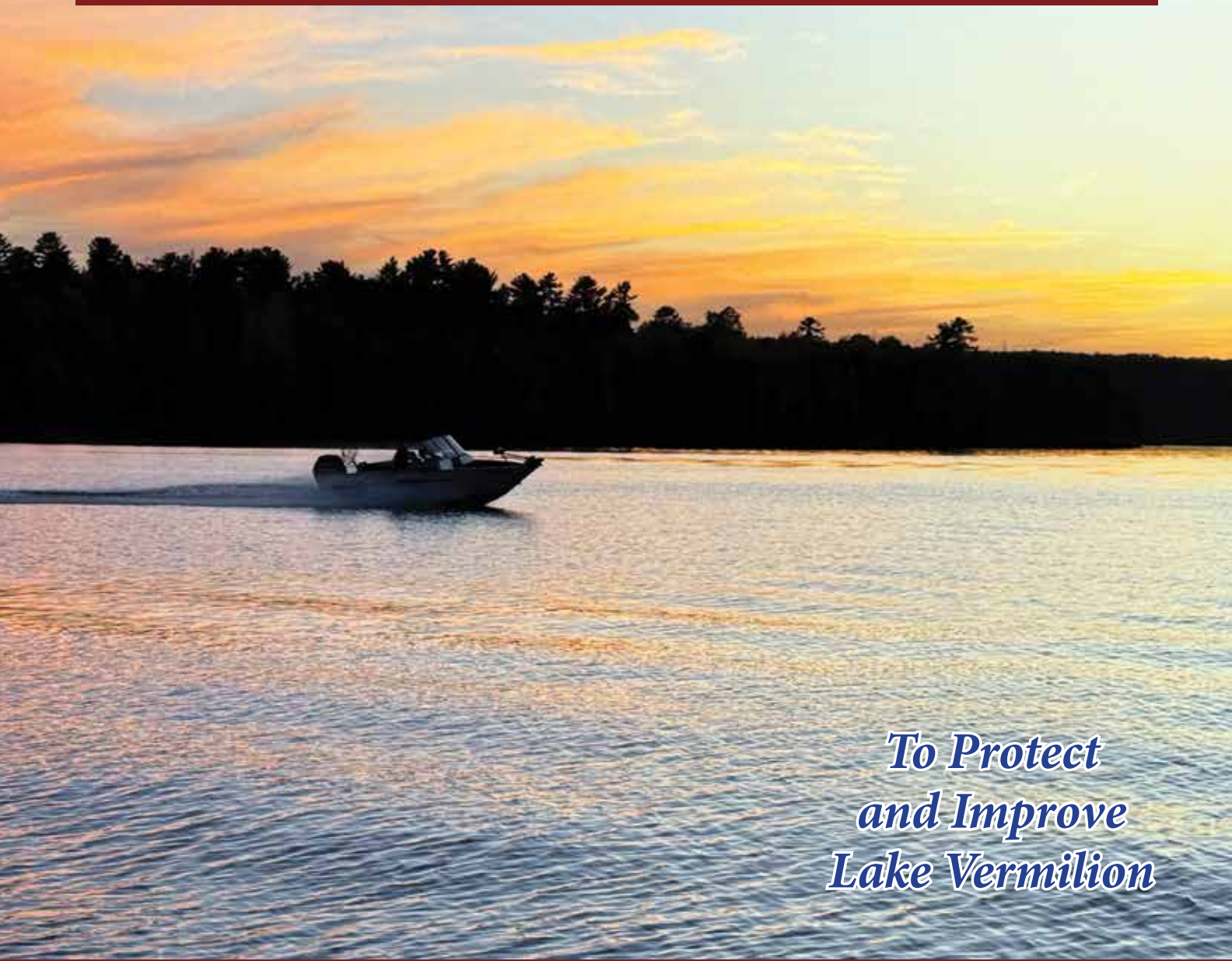
The Vermilion

Vol. 53, No. 4 • The Quarterly Newsletter of the Vermilion Lake Association • Fall 2026



To Protect and Improve Lake Vermilion

IN THIS ISSUE

Is your property Firewise?...page 3
VLA annual meeting update...page 4
Water quality updates...page 6
Duck Tales...page 8
2026 Loon Count...page 10
Antique and Classic Boat Show...page 12
Thanks to our volunteers...page 14-15
Lake water vs. well water systems...page 16

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Lori Ptak
VLA President

By the time you read this we will have our cabin closed up and the boat put away for the winter. We had some really low levels of the lake by the end of the summer, with some reports of cabin owners having to put boats away early because the water level at their docks was too low. Late summer rains have put us in a little better space to be able to keep our boat out until closing time (a necessity for boat access property!). With the wildfires in nearby BWCA for much of July, these rains were a relief.

Hopefully you have received emails and seen postings informing you of our efforts as a lake association to gather information regarding the permit application to the MPCA by Minntac. This has involved lots of phone conversations and meetings with representatives from the MPCA. Many of our board members attended the public meeting on September 29, hosted by the MPCA, to hear more information and ask questions. As a lake association whose mission is to improve and protect Lake Vermilion, we are interested in keeping our water as clean as possible, in order to keep the lake healthy and thriving for current and future generations to enjoy. Please continue to check your emails, social media, and our websites for updates.

One topic discussed at most of our monthly board meetings is how to grow our membership numbers. We are finding that as some of our longtime members pass away, their children are unaware of their membership in the VLA and fail to renew even when the property is kept in the family. One way to ensure that the family keeps informed about the issues and news of the lake is to give membership to your adult family members who are at different addresses. We are planning to give a gift membership to each of our adult children this year (shhhhhhh!). See the back page of this issue. There is strength in numbers!

Looking ahead to 2027:

My two-year term as president will be ending in December, and the board will be appointing a new president for 2027. Look for the Winter 2027 issue for updates. It has been an honor to serve as president, and I learned even more about the amount of cooperation needed between all stakeholders on the lake to protect and improve our lake. This includes you, our members.

We are looking at the real possibility of a significant reduction of AIS Prevention funding for the next two years. While we are looking at other funding sources, such as grant writing, we may need to consider raising our annual membership dues. Our dues are some of the lowest in the state, which cover this colorful and informative magazine that you receive four times a year. This would require membership approval, and we welcome your feedback.

Take care and take advantage of the outdoors before the snow flies. And remember, Be Like Bob and tell your neighbors about the Vermilion Lake Association!

Lori Ptak, President

The Vermilion Lake Association newsletter is published quarterly and mailed to members.

Managing Editor: Jessica Templeton, Communications Leader

Content Editors: Terry Grosshauser, Fisheries Leader, and Lori Ptak, VLA President

Typography and design work by the Timberjay

Cover photo: Aaron Cabbage, VLA volunteer

We welcome your contributions! Have a "legend of the lake" to share? Is there a topic you would like to see covered in a future issue? Send story ideas and photos to Jessica at communications1@vermilionlakeassociation.org.

Firewise: Are you ready for a wildfire?



Sara Bright
VLA Board Member/
Lake Steward Program
Leader

Did the wildfires in our area in the last few years have you thinking about how to protect your cabin and property from wildfire? It certainly did for us. When we built our cabin, we made a point of choosing materials that make it less likely to catch fire from wind-blown embers, which is the number one way in which wildfire spreads. In addition, we used Firewise principles to guide our landscaping choices.

Searching online, you will find there are multiple sprinkler system designs for the purpose of protecting structures from wildfire: roof mounted spray heads or reciprocating sprinklers, contractor or DIY installations, permanent and on-demand mounted systems.

During the 2026 season, we decided to protect our property by having a wildfire protection system professionally installed around our buildings and dock area. We worked with a company called Wildfire Protection Systems. Their solution is a ground mount system connected to a centrifugal pump converted to propane which draws water from the lake. It can run





unattended for 24 hours on its dedicated fuel supply, applying the equivalent of about 3" of rain over the area of the property where the cabin, outbuildings, and docks are located. This design works to hydrate vegetation, increase humidity of the area, and lower the temperature. All of these help to protect structures and vegetation from wind-blown embers or direct approach of a fire. The pipes and sprinkler heads for water delivery are well-hidden by paint color and vegetation. Water lines may also be buried under pathways or trails. During a fire event, the propane tanks can be easily swapped out should the situation require it.



While there are remote start options, we selected to start the system ourselves because we are typically on the lake during spring and fall, which are considered fire seasons in our part of the country. Property owners can contract to have the system started and maintained in the event of a fire, or to start up in the spring and shut down in the fall. Living on property that is nestled up against the Superior National Forest, we sleep better knowing we have protection from wildfire with this system in place.

Some helpful resources:

Be Firewise: Home Hardening in The Vermilion Summer 2025:
https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/SUMMER-25-VLA-Newsletter-email.pdf

California Fire (Cal Fire) resources for before, during, and after wildfire: https://www.readyforwildfire.org/.

The company that installed our system: https://wildfiresprinkler.com/

VLA's 2026 Annual Meeting

The Vermilion Lake Association held its Annual Meeting on August 1, 2026 at Camp Vermilion, with about 110 members and guests attending. We once again had information tables highlighting our key programs, including Lake Steward, Shore Lunch Sites, Fisheries, and Loon Count. Also present were representatives from North St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers.



After a delicious meal of barbequed chicken provided by Chef Brian at the camp, President Lori Ptak called the meeting to order. The membership approved the minutes and treasurer's reports from 2025. Board Members Terry Grosshauser, Eric Hanson, and Sara Bright were elected for another 3-year term each. Many thanks were given to board members Andrine Lemeiux , Jerry Lepper, and John Yocum, who retired from their positions.





Top: Attendees browse the informational booths before the dinner and program.

Above: Centerpieces created and donated by VLA member Terrie Heinman.

Left: Displays included information about helping loons.

President Lori Ptak presented a slide show highlighting the board and other volunteers' work, including updates on the Vermilion Dam project, the popular Loon Cam, and the work with the MPCA gathering information on mining discharge permits. Lake Steward Leader Sara Bright presented a Lake Steward award to Kathy Moccio.

Our keynote speaker this year was Jeff Forester, Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers. He is also a VLA Member and long-time Lake Vermilion cabin owner. His topic was "VLA: Building the Power to Protect Our Lakes." Jeff emphasized the importance of the work of lake associations like ours in protecting our water, but talked extensively about needing a coordinated statewide effort to keep water safe into the future. For more detail about his talk, go to the August 14 edition of the *Timberjay*, located in the "North Country" section.

A good ending to the evening was the raffle for door prizes. Thanks to Thomas Anderson and WA Fisher for donating puzzles, John E. Abel for donating his book "America's Lake Vermilion," and Terrie Heinman for creating and donating table centerpieces.

Starry Stonewort - A Star You Don't Want to Catch in Your Lake

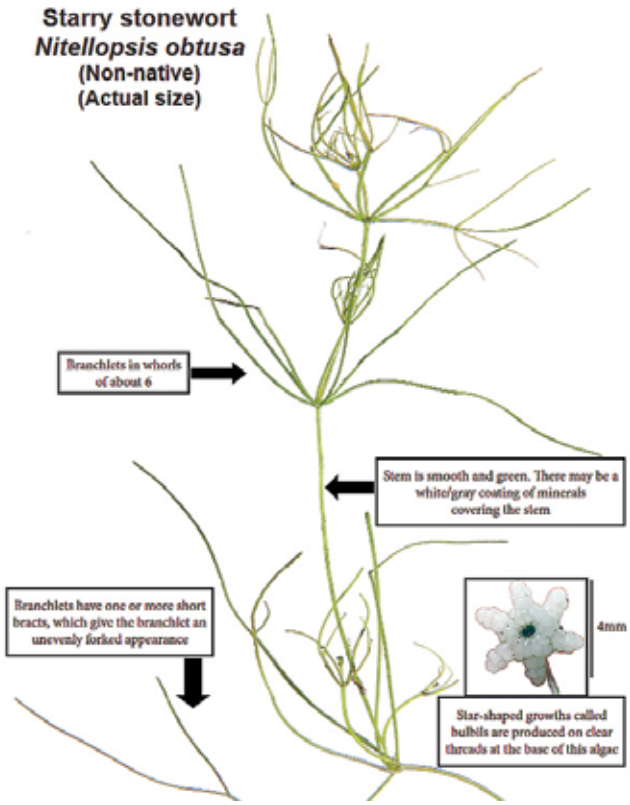
As of September 2026, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has confirmed the presence of starry stonewort in 40 water bodies across the state. This milestone was reached following the recent discovery of this invasive algae in Six Mile Lake, located in Cass County, within the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation. It follows the other 2026 confirmations, including Spider Lake in Hubbard County. Fortunately, It has yet to be discovered in any water bodies within St Louis County. While 40 infested water bodies is a small fraction of Minnesota's 10,000+ lakes, it remains a high priority for containment; it spreads easily via fragments attached to trailered boats, personal watercraft, docks, boat lifts, anchors or any other water-related equipment that was not properly cleaned. Once established, it is difficult to manage.



Nancy Watkins
VLA Board Member/
AIS Co-Leader

Starry stonewort has thin, bright green branchlets which are variable in length and arranged in whorls around a central point along the stem. The branchlets typically extend in acute angles from the stem node and are irregular in length. As a macro-algae, there is no vascular system. Though similar in appearance to other native stoneworts and musk grasses found in Minnesota's waters, its distinguishing feature is the presence of tiny, cream-colored, rice-size, star-shaped bulbils. These bulbils are present through the growing season but most obvious during its peak growth from late July until late September. Starry stonewort acts as an "ecosystem engineer," forming thick, dense underwater mats, which can be seven feet in depth and crowd out native plants, smother fish spawning beds, and disrupt the food web. It impairs recreation by clogging boat motors, and makes it difficult to swim.

Starry was first discovered in 2015 in Lake Koronis, a 3,000 acre lake located in central Minnesota. Starry initially covered 53-55 acres before expanding to 250 acres. Today it annually costs roughly $200,000 to keep public access areas usable through an integrated management approach. This involves using



an ecoharvester to pull up thick weed mats, scuba divers manually removing fragments and applying a specialized copper algaecide. It is important to note that though mechanical and algaecide treatment can greatly reduce the biomass, the star shaped bulbils, which are in the sediment, can regenerate into new plants and remain viable after treatment. Copper based algaecide does not slow expansion. Small patches may be controlled through hand removal. Once established in a lake, starry stonewort is never eradicated.

There is ongoing research examining the impacts of starry stonewort on native plant communities, environmental conditions associated with nuisance growths and its seasonal growth cycle. What are the habitat characteristics, water chemistry, and sediment properties that influence its growth? Where are key points in its life cycle? A better understanding of these variables aid in evaluating the best treatment approaches. However, the best plan is to prevent its introduction into the lake. All boats should be cleaned, drained, and dried.

Water Quality Updates

Do you eat fish from Lake Vermilion? I would guess that the answer from our membership is a resounding YES (provided we can catch them – another topic). In March, the Minnesota Department of Health came out with new recommendations for fish consumption in Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties – for walleye, do not eat fish larger than 18 inches, and only one walleye under 18 inches per week. These guidelines have come about due to high levels of mercury being consumed by the fish. So why is this? Naturally occurring mercury in the geology, 150+ years of burning coal, and mining are the primary contributors. So, what do we do? Since nothing can be done about the geology nor coal burning, we can do something about mining. Ask the Minntac mine in Mountain Iron to cut back on the amount of sulphate it is dumping into the watershed (sulphate enables mercury in lake sediment to be released and consumed by walleye and other aquatic life).



Craig Beveroth
VLA Board Member/
Water Quality Leader

The MPCA took comments on the sulphate standards, but comments were only accepted until Oct. 26. You may also let your local legislator, Roger Skraba, know how you feel about the mine pollution. Keep in mind that the VLA is anti-pollution, not anti-mining.

Water sampling by VLA and North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (NSLSWCD) from January 14 to September 9 shows sulphate levels range from 19-54 mg/L in Pike Bay from the West end (Pike River as it empties into Pike Bay) to the East end (east of Whiskey Island). Target levels are less than 10 mg/L. As above, these levels of sulphate contribute to elevated mercury in the fish.

Fermilab project

Confused about the Fermilab's neutrino project near Ely Island? The VLA is aware of the Fermilab project



and has been working with them since spring of this year. We made our members aware of the project through our summer newsletter. To our knowledge, deployment of the MUM detector presented no problem to Lake Vermilion, although recent sonar, sub-bottom profiling, and core sampling done by the Seaworks Group shows a 100-150-foot-deep trench filled with mud and silt at the deployment site. Sediment disruption is a concern. Fermilab is reevaluating the location of the detector, and it will be moved. We are unaware of any high voltage infrastructure issues, but power requirements are being set up on the Ely Island property of one of our VLA members. Per Fermilab, power required to operate the detector is about 300W (the same amount of power required to operate a hair dryer); Lake Country Power indicates that there is no problem pulling the needed power from the existing transformer on site. Bottom line is that the Fermilab project is not a negative issue for the lake. It's very similar to the University of Minnesota neutrino project at the Soudan Mine a few years ago; there are no secret government facilities spewing radiation being built on Ely Island per the circulating rumors.

Water levels

An update to water levels as reported by the DNR volunteer in Daisy Bay – as of September 10, the water level is down 14.75 inches since ice out on April 28.

As winter approaches, be aware of how much de-icing salt you use. Most of it eventually makes its way into Vermilion, which is negative for plants and fish.

Lake Steward Update

The Lake Steward volunteers visited 10 properties this season so far. If you haven't submitted your quiz to Score Your Shore, see the box below and apply! We always enjoy meeting everyone who cares for the lake, whether their property is ready for an award or there is some work to do. The VLA places great value in the education of our members on shoreline restoration and continued care. We are happy to visit members and provide them with consultation on what needs to be done to protect our lake, and how to qualify for a beautiful Lake Steward sign. As you motor around the lake, remember to look for our signs - there are 56 of them out there!



Sara Bright
VLA Board Member/
Lake Steward Program Leader

We are including two of our 2026 sign recipients in this issue of *The Vermilion:* one family has an undisturbed lakeshore and the other has restored theirs. Peggy Hunter and her late husband, Doug Wallace, have enjoyed many years on our lake. Now Peggy shares her time on the lake with her daughter and son-in-law, continuing to relish the beauty of their minimal footprint on the shoreline. The Hunter-Wallaces highly valued the native landscape, and we are very pleased to highlight their commitment with a Lake Steward sign.



The Tamte family

The Tamtes are a bit newer to the lake, and their beautifully landscaped home and upland area away from the shore met many of the requirements of the Lake Steward program, but they needed a buffer at the shoreline. Tom spent many hours preparing the shoreline soil and seeding several times to finally achieve an abundant buffer of native flowers and grasses. Now Lisa and Tom can enjoy the birds and pollinators that visit their shoreline and proudly display their Lake Steward sign.



The Hunter-Wallace family

Be a lake steward!

Are you curious about whether your property qualifies for a Lake Steward award, or are you looking for ideas to improve alignment to best stewardship practices? Visit the VLA website and take the "Are You a Lake Steward?" survey!

https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/other-programs/become-a-lake-steward/

We are always looking for volunteers for the Lake Steward program. We will provide training and mentoring to all new volunteers. Contact Sara Bright, Lake Steward Program Leader: lakesteward@vermilionlakeassociation.org



Duck Tales

photo by Chris Moody

It was another glorious summer night on Lake Vermilion, and my family and I were taking it all in. We put the fishing rods down and leisurely cruised the shoreline, just enjoying the beauty around us. The sun was not quite ready to set, so there was no hurry to get into position to watch it, a ritual that we try to do every night. There is nothing like a gorgeous Lake Vermilion sunset to end a day out on the water.



Alan De Angelo
VLA Member

While slowly moving along the shore of a small bay, I noticed something quite odd. There was a female merganser laying on its back looking at its feet. After I pointed it out to my family, I made a wide, slow loop, hoping not to startle the bird. I wanted to get in closer to take another look. On the second approach, I saw a female mallard duck sitting on a pier looking at the merganser that was still laying on its back, looking at its feet. It was the craziest thing I've ever seen ducks do. It was then that I spotted it. About three to four feet behind the merganser laying on its back, looking at its feet, was the dorsal fin of a musky. This fish had a large appetite to be sure; a full-sized merganser would be a hearty meal. As I got closer and closer, the fish got spooked, and with a big swirl, released the merganser. The merganser flipped upright and ran across the water as fast as it could, stopping amongst some very shallow rocks along the shoreline. You could almost feel the bird's relief. Meanwhile, the female mallard just sat on the edge of the dock, watching the whole thing unfold. Probably thinking she was glad the musky had a taste for merganser and not mallard that night.

While I didn't have a camera ready to record all of this, I did have a rod rigged with a bucktail, and I quickly fan cast the area. I didn't think the fish would strike, but you never know. I had to try.

Years ago, in the '70s, I was driving my boat close to a weedy, lily pad-filled bay in the early morning hours. A family of mallards was crossing the mouth of the bay - a mother and her nearly fully-grown line of chicks. Suddenly, the water literally exploded. When the commotion died down, there was one

Continued on next page

Two new board members added

The Vermilion Lake Association board appointed two new directors at our September 2026 meeting.

Al Wade has been a longtime VLA volunteer and newsletter contributor. He lives on the east end of the lake with his wife Ellen, but spends the winter in Florida. Al is also a fishing guide on the lake and will be a great addition to our Fisheries team. See his poem on page 18.

Sven Risom spends his time on east end of the lake and the Twin Cities with his wife Laura. He is a VLA volunteer with the loon count program and water quality testing. Sven will be leading our newly expanded Loon Program, which will include our longtime loon count and popular loon cam. Sven is planning to include more education, loon rescue, monitoring, nesting/platforms, and volunteers to the program. Look for more information in our Winter newsletter.



Holiday Giving Ideas

Looking for a gift AND a way to support the lake? Give the gift of a membership to the Vermilion Lake Association. Your family member, neighbor, and/or fellow lake lover friends will not only get a great magazine four times a year; they will get useful information on how we all can improve and protect our lake for future generations to enjoy!

Go to https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/ or see the back page of this issue and give a gift membership.

Another idea is to give to the Association in the way of a memorial for a loved one or donation to one of our three funds: General Fund, AIS Prevention, or Shore Lunch Site Improvement. And don't forget about our Vermilion Lake Association caps! They can be found under the "Merchandise" tab on the website.

Please note that anytime it says "PayPal" for a payment option, you can use a credit card.

Ducks...from previous page

less youngster. Back then, the lake was full of large northerns and it was common to catch an eight-to-ten-pound fish, or larger. Our family's largest northern was around the sixteen-pound mark. You almost never heard about muskies being caught back then, but big northern ruled the lake. It all happened so fast, I couldn't tell you if it was a northern or a musky. All I know is that it was BIG and it had a hearty appetite.

Loons seem to be more solitary creatures. When seen, they are usually alone, in pairs, or a pair with chicks. Imagine my surprise when, one night while fishing in Niles Bay, I cruised up on a large gathering of adult loons. There were two groups in very close proximity to one another. The first group of thirteen birds was closest to me, and a second group of five was just a long cast away. I wondered what the gathering was all about. A quick Google search found that in the fall, these groups, or "rafts," of loons gather socially, which allows them to prepare for migration, practice group feeding, socialize with non-breeders, and build foundational skills. You learn something new every day.

2026 Lake Vermilion Loon Count

By Laure Maki,
VLA Loon Count Leader



Sven Risom and Karl Andreason helped with this year's count.

July 13 was a beautiful but hot day with temperatures approaching 90 degrees at noon. The winds were under 10 mph, but the lake was choppy. Sixty-three volunteers from the Vermilion Lake Association began their annual loon count at 9 a.m. in their designated areas looking for loon pairs, chicks, and singles. The lake levels were low, so boats needed to be cautious in bays, which may have prevented spotting loons closer to shore. The choppy waves also made it difficult to see the birds, which may have accounted for the decrease in numbers this year. A total of 141 loons were spotted. This is down from 165 in 2025 and 193 in 2024. The breakdown is as follows:

West: Pairs 12. Chicks 13. Singles 18.
Total west end 55.

East: Pairs 13. Chicks 18. Singles 42.
Total east end 86.

Total adults were down 31 and chicks up 5 over last year. Cormorants are also counted, and the information sent to the DNR.

Minnesota has the largest loon population in the lower 48 states. In 2025, Minnesota's adult loon population remained stable at approximately 12,000 adult birds. However, there is a concern for a decline in juvenile survival rates, therefore the need for long term monitoring.

The Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program is a long-term project of the Nongame Wildlife Program. Hundreds of volunteers collect information about common loon numbers on more than 600 lakes. These lakes are distributed among six regions, or index areas.

Loons are good indicators of water quality because they need clean, clear, noncontaminated water to catch food and are sensitive to lakeshore disturbances.

Volunteers perform the annual count on each lake one morning in the summer and count the number of adult and juvenile loons. The observations are shared with the DNR. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers, they have over 20 years of data on more than 600 lakes. This long-term data gives them the ability to detect changes in the adult population and reproductive success of the state's common loons and to anticipate any problems that could jeopardize the future of our state bird. (www.dnr.state.mn.us).

The website for the Minnesota DNR Loon Watcher Survey provides information, as does the loon monitoring program: www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame.

The Lake Vermilion Association and facilitators, Laure Maki and Jill Korpela-Bontems, thank the 63 volunteers.

Our Loon Population is Declining. What's Happening?

On March 13, 1961 Governor Elmer L. Anderson signed legislation designating the loon as Minnesota's state bird, beating the goldfinch, pileated woodpecker, and wood duck. Today loons are synonymous with northern Minnesota cabin culture. Numerous lakes, resorts, and festivals pay tribute to the loon, and it is not difficult to find a gift shop stocked with loon-centric souvenirs.



Nancy Watkins
VLA Board Member/
AIS Co-Leader

Minnesota's loon population of 12,000 is second only to Alaska and has remained stable for decades. However, in recent years Minnesota and Wisconsin have seen a decline in young loons returning as breeding adults. The number of loons counted on Lake Vermilion has also shown a notable downward trend. Laure Maki, Vermilion Lake Association member and organizer of this year's count, reported volunteers tallied 31 loon chicks and 110 adults for a total count of 141. Extenuating factors such as low water levels preventing access to some shallow parts of the lake, along with a noticeable chop, may have contributed to the lower count. However, this represented the lowest total number of loons found during the annual count since 1985.

Walter Piper, a professor at Chapman University in California, has been monitoring loons, banding adults and chicks in Wisconsin since 1992. In 2021 he expanded his research to Minnesota lakes. Piper's team found survival in the Upper Midwest has remained steady. Once loons reach 6-7 years of age they have approximately a 91% survival rate. Though adults appear to be doing well, the survivability of banded chicks has been alarming. In the 1990s and early 2000s, 40% of chicks would return from their winter nesting areas. This number has now declined to 10% or less.

Though there are many variables contributing to this decline, he found the water quality in July is strongly correlated with loon chick weight. Loons are visual predators, relying on clear water to spot and catch fish. If water quality is impaired, loon chicks suffer, as adults are unable to gather much food. Chicks who have had the benefit of plentiful food and good habitats have an increased rate of survival. Water quality is also impacted by climate change. Increased air temperatures drive heavy rainfalls. Human disturbances, such as landscaping, which removes natural vegetation, increases runoff of nutrients, contributing to increased algae blooms and further degrading water quality.

Boats that produce large wakes are also a culprit in not only impairing water quality, but also destroying crucial natural habitat and existing nests. An increased number of boats also contributes to a greater frequency of bird strikes. Studies also indicate that lead poisoning through the use of lead tackle and jigs contributes to significant mortality. Loons that frequently ingest fish containing these tackles can die within a few weeks.

There are also winter threats. Minnesota loons migrate to the southern coasts and the Gulf of Mexico. These areas not only are impacted by oil spills and increased chemicals, but have also experienced significant storms. These storms have contributed to coastal destruction, decreasing nesting opportunities.

The average lifespan of a loon is 20 years of age, with a range spanning 15 to 30 years. Because loons do not reach sexual maturity until they are 6-7 years of age, combined with a slow reproductive rate, their long lifespans are critical for maintaining a stable adult population. The decreased number of chicks will eventually decrease the number of adults.

There are opportunities to reverse this trend. The Vermilion Lake Association is currently in the process of developing a loon program with a designated leader. Stay tuned for more information.

Lake Vermilion Antique and Classic Boat Show

By Sandy Jackson, VLA Volunteer

Fair winds, clear skies and moderate temperatures provided a great weekend for the boat owners and for everyone who came out to view a great assortment of beautiful boats.

For the boat owners, the festivities started on Friday with a meet-and-greet hosted by Vermilion Classic Boatworks in Tower, where owners Jeff Larson and Dana Hein had on display a variety of "Outboard Classics."

Saturday morning brought a gathering of 12 of the antique boats for the morning boat parade. The parade started at Muskego Resort and headed west, before making its way to Wolf Bay Lodge Restaurant for lunch. That evening the boat owners came together for the traditional Captain's Dinner, which was hosted by Mark and Sally Ludlow on Taylor's Island.

Sunday, boat show day had arrived, hosted by the new Lakeside Bar and Grill. The new owners, Ken Brown and Jordan Caviness, provided us with a wonderful, updated location. Food and beverages were provided by the Sawmill Saloon and Restaurant in Virginia. The return of Doug Ellis and his band was a fun favorite and rocked the house.

There was a crowd in the Vermilion Lake Association's tent all day. All of us are boating enthusiasts, so we appreciated the Vermilion Lake Association helping us to understand what it takes for our beautiful lake to remain healthy and viable. Thank you!



Peoples Choice Award went to "Rapture." A 19-foot 1939 Custom Barrel Back Chris Craft, owned by Paul Johnson of Ely.



Captain's Choice award went to "My Endeavour." A 16-foot 1947 Rocker Chris Craft, owned by Paul Van Deen of Ely.

We want to thank all our new and old sponsors for their participation, as well as the Boat Captains and their families. Without their efforts, we would not have been able to provide such a fantastic weekend. Thank you once again to Lakeside Bar and Grill for hosting this wonderful event.

The date for next year's show is Sunday, September 6, 2027. Anyone interested in displaying their antique or classic boat, whether it's wood, fiberglass, or homebuilt, please contact lakevermilionboatshow@aol.com for more information.

Congratulations to our winners!



Vermilion Lake Association

Caps Now Available

Wear your new hat proudly to show your support for your lake association. The price is right!

Cap prices are $20, plus $7 shipping per order. When you order 3 or more, the shipping will be $9.00. Free local pickup is available.

Order online at www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/merchandise/caps/

For more information, contact us at communications1@vermilionlakeassociation.org

Thank you for helping us to protect and improve Lake Vermilion!

Board of Directors and Officers 2026 - 2027

Cook

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Eric Hanson, Head-O-Lakes Bay, Resort Representative, 218-666-5478, 218-780-1563, eric@pehrsonlodge.com

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Sven Risom, Loon Program Leader, Indian Point, 401-932-8510, sven.risom@gmail.com

Al Wade, Fisheries, Daisy Bay, 952-807-2665, efw1123@aol.com

Thanking our 2026 VLA Volunteers

Annual Meeting

Michaelson, Pat- Co-Leader
Ludlow, Kelly- Co-Leader
Heimann, Jeff
Heimann, Terrie
Korpela-Bontems, Jill
Lepper, Jerry
Maki, Laure
Ptak, Michael
Ptak, Lori
Rushing, Rachel
Schmidt, Barbara
Schmidt, Mark
Swanson, Nancy
Tamte, Lisa
Teeter, Rick
Wade, Ellen

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Haugen, Gary- Co-Leader
Watkins, Nancy- Co-Leader
Ankrum, Howard
Bryers, Rob
Clines, Larry
Condon, Pat
Dinsmore, Jason
Esbensen, George
Gibbs, Rob
Heimann, Jeff
Heimann, Terry
Jackson, Byron
Jackson, Penny
Knox, Tom
Korpela-Bontems, Jill
Laurinaitis, Julie
Lovgren, Jeff
Lovgren, Kathy
Marxhausen, Ann
Marxhausen, John
McNamara, Bob
Oberstar, Paul
Oberstar, Sally
Patterson, Rick
Patterson, Sharon
Peach, Dick
Pohlman, Bob
Siskar, Frank
Suoja, Wayne
Vohs, Richard
Watkins, Doug
Welke, Wayne
Ulseth, Robert
Zigler, Sandy

Board Members

Beveroth, Craig
Bright, Sara
Grosshauser, Terry
Hanson, Eric
Hanson, Mary
Haugen, Gary
Lemieux, Andrine
Lepper, Jerry
Ludlow Kelly
Michaelson, Pat
Moccio, Kathleen
Ptak, Lori
Schmidt, Mark
Tamte, Lisa
Templeton, Jessica
Warkentin, Dwight
Watkins, Nancy
Yocum, John

Communications

Templeton, Jessica- Leader
Brown, Don
Cabbage, Aaron
DeAngelo, Alan
Grosshauser, Terry
Michaelson, Pat
Moccio, Kathy
Ptak, Lori
Yocum, John

Donor Volunteers

Cownie, Jim
Cownie, Patty
Muhich, Denise
Muhich, Mark
Niepagen, Anne
Niepagen, Lee
Olson, Eric
Olson, Karen

Fisheries

Grosshauser, Terry- Leader
Deangelo, Alan
Eisenhauer, James
Lohman, Dennis
Peach, Richard
Riggs, Michael
Wade, Al
Warkentin, Dwight
Wellman, Brian
Yocum, John

Lake Steward & Shoreline Restoration

Bright, Sara – Leader
Forester, Jeff
Lanigan, Kevin
Larson, Sue
Litherland, Mark
Suoja, Wayne

Loon & Cormorant Count

Korpela-Bontems, Jill- East Leader
Maki, Laure- West Leader
Allen, Jerry
Allen, Lori
Anderson, Joann
Anderson, Warren
Andreasen, Karl
Annen, Valerie
Begich, Ann
Begich, Thomas
Bergman, Joanne
Beveroth, Carol
Beveroth, Craig
Bies, Charles
Bies, Susan
Biddle, Paul
Blackwell, Laura
Blackwell, Tom
Bonicatto, Marsha
Bontems, Jerry
Botruff, Barry
Botruff, Penny
Boutto, Barb
Bremer, Corliss
Bremer, Melvin
Brooks, Caroline
Buccicone, Jenny
Cebelinski, Frank
Cebelinski, Sue
Conger, Bailey
Conger, Bill
Cooney, Tom
Cooney, Terri
Duncan, Jeffrey
Duncan, Pam
Dunphy, Steven
Eisenhauer, Betsy
Enroth, Gerald
Fergeson, Carol
Freeman, Linda

Freeman, Roger
Gabor, Michael
Gabor, Shannon
Grosshauser, Bonnie
Grosshauser, Terry
Harelstad, Mark
Hertog, Gary
Hoffman, Ali
Holmes, Sali
Holmes, Stephen
Housenga, Pauly
Hujanen, Alvin
Hujanen, Florette
Hutchins, Don
Hutchins, Pam
Jeske, Greta
Johnson, Mariliyn
Johnson, Trish
Kurtz, David
Larson, Sue
Leciejewski, Val
Lenertz, Steve
Levy, Mary
Lindberg, Reany
Lindberg, Steve
Lipton, Steve
Lipton, Susan
Marbaker, Dottie
Marbaker, William
Mcgillivray, Elaine
Mcgillivray, Peter
Miesel, Keith
Moccio, Kathleen
Moore, Rick
Moore, Susan
Nelson, Heidi
Nelson, Norm
Ojala, Linda
Panichi, Joe
Panichi, Kathy
Parkes, Ann
Pohlman, Bob
Pohlman, Kathy
Ptak, Lori
Ptak, Michael
Risom, Sven
Sawatzky, Bubba
Schultz, Mark
Schultz, Sandy
Slick, Christina
Smith, Sharon
Suoja, Wayne
Taitt, James
Tode, Bruce
Twite, Denise
Twite, Robin
Ulseth, Judy
Ulseth, Robert
Villnow, Dan
Villnow, Liz
Walker, Kern
Walker, Mary
Weller Smith, Mary Ellen
Wied, Karl
Wied, Janet
Yocum, Jaynee
Yocum, John
Zwieg, John

Loon Cam & Live Loon Cam

Sederstrom, Noel – Leader
Hanson, Eric
Michaelson, Bill
Michaelson, Pat
Paulson, Cheryl
Paulson, Cornie
Pietrini, Kevin
Porter, Jake
Ptak, Lori
Sederstrom, Chris
Tamte, Tom
Teeter, Rick

Navigation Lights

Bontems, Jerry- East Leader
Gilbertson, Mike- West Leader
Jenkins, Mike- West Leader
Jenkins, Nancy

Resort Ambassadors

Condon, Pat
Haugen, Gary
Tjaden, David
Moccio, Kathy

Shore Lunch Sites

Ptak, Michael- Leader-East
Teeter, Rick- Leader-West
Andreasen, Karl
Bonach, Edward
Born, Chris
Bremer, Melvin
Bremer, Corliss
Cabbage, Aaron
Coplin, Wade
Coplin, Ted
Fossum, Ted
Fossum, Caren
Gribble, Jim
Gribble, Ann
Hartley, Tom
Hartley, Sue
Johnson, Robert
Johnson, Trish
Knox, William
Lauer, Kathleen
Lipton, Steve
Lipton, Susan
Maki, Steve
Mathis, Carl
Mathis, Lori
Ptak, Lori
Saddoris, Tad
Schultz, Mark
Schultz, Sandy
Smith, Chris
Smith, Kathleen
Swanson, Nancy
Teeter, Rick
Templeton, Jessica
Ulseth, Robert
Ulseth, Judy
Wipf, Mollie
Wollmuth, Timothy
Zwonitzer, Dan

VLA Dock Sign

Lenertz, Steve

Volunteer Coordination

Lemieux, Andrine-Co-Leader
Michaelson, Pat-Co-Leader
Bies, Susan
Carson, Beth
Klapmeier, Patty
Towle, Pam
Wade, Ellen

Water Quality

Beveroth, Craig- Leader
Beveroth, Carol
Conger, Bill
Cotter, Carrie
Dahl, Rob
Dahl, Liz
Enroth, Jerry
Fogelson, Tracie
Forsline, Tami
Hunter, Peggy
McNamara, Bob
Potter, Don
Potter, Laurie
Risom, Sven
Stebbins, Jeffrey
Suoja, Wayne
Wied, Karl

To Drill or Not to Drill?

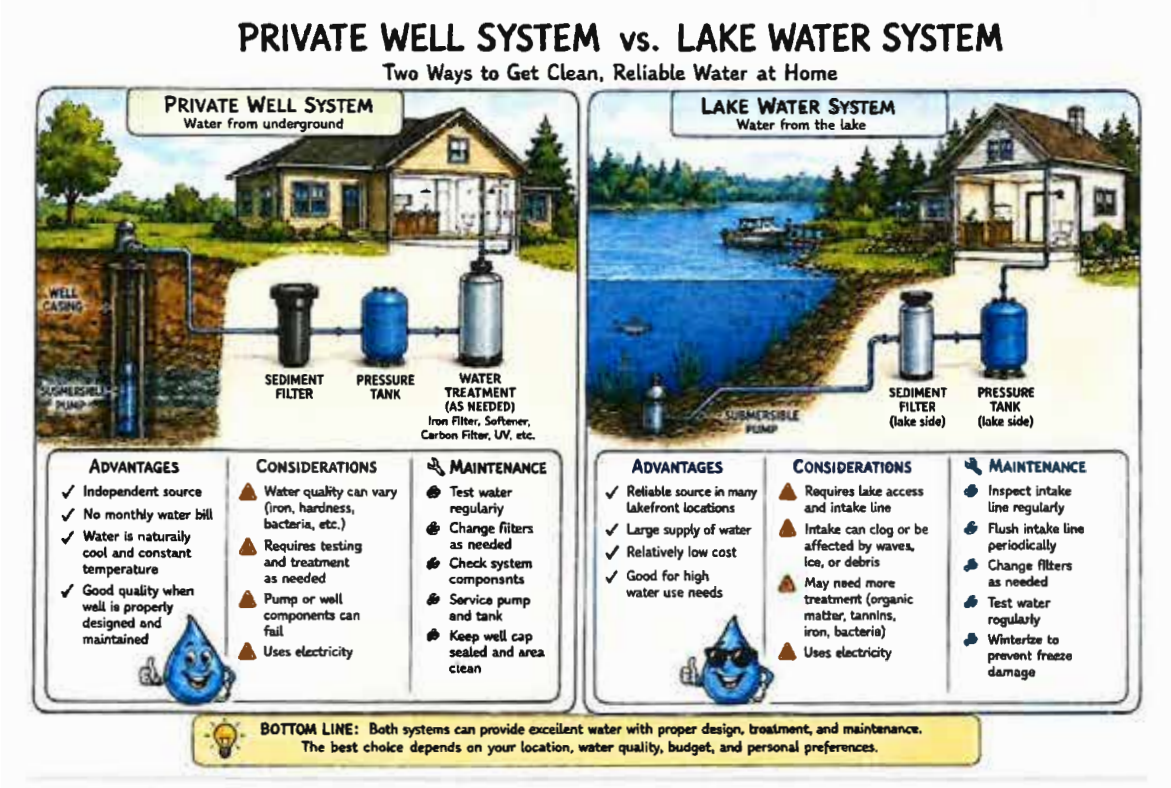


Image for Illustration Only, Credit AI Nano Banana/Chat GPT

by Don Brown, VLA Volunteer

We all love water - that's why we are on a lake - duh! We play, swim, boat, and fish in it and love to watch the sun rise and set over it. But we also need it as an essential part of life. We use it: to drink and to mix drinks; to cook and to cool; to water our plants and pets; and to wash everything and anything from our bodies to our clothes to our pets and vehicles and even our homes and so on. Sixty percent of our body weight is water. In short, life without water would be pretty dry (pun intended).

Until recently, we hauled it in buckets, stored it in tubs and heated it on fires. But times have changed, and we now demand it instantly, at our fingertips, 24/7, both hot and cold. No more hauling, period!

So the question becomes, how do we get that convenience at our lake homes? We have basically two sources: a lake (surface) water system or a drilled well that taps an underground aquifer.

How that water gets to the plumbing in our homes is basically the same for both systems, but one operates mostly horizontally and the other vertically. A pump pushes water from its source through a pipe to a pressure/storage tank. This tank, in turn, is plumbed (with a "b") to the various fixtures in your home - sinks, toilets, clothes and dishwashers, etc. When you turn on a faucet, flush a toilet or start a washer, a valve opens and the pressure in the tank pushes water to where you want it to go.

So whether you are buying or building, you will have to choose which system is best for your specific use. Both have cons and both have pros.

LAKE WATER

The primary benefit of a lake water system is cost; they are generally far less expensive, primarily because it is not necessary to drill through seemingly endless rock to get a water line to the lake; a trench

Continued on next page

Water...from previous page

below the frost line will suffice (but if not possible, heat tape can be added to prevent the line from freezing). Another benefit is that with some talent and lots of YouTube videos, you can DIY a lake water system whereas most of us don't have the talent or equipment to drill a well thru bedrock!!

Water quality is a mixed bag. Lake water is generally very different than well water. It is soft, meaning mostly free of dissolved minerals. So soft you will not need a softener/conditioner. It is also dirty - with both organics, like bacteria and plant/animal debris and inorganic particles like sand. A lake system is much more vulnerable to pollution from surface runoff or anything else your neighbors put in the lake. And because it is dirty, filtering will be required for general household use, and extreme filtering will be needed to make it drinkable. Filtering, although not expensive, requires maintenance.

On the downside, a lake water system can be less reliable, as wave action (and even fishing or just boating too close) can damage the tubing and/or the electric lines that serve the pump. And pumps can get damaged from sucking in sand and other debris. Repairing that damage can be difficult and costly, especially when ice covers the lake or is going in or out.

WELL WATER

The biggest benefit is generally an endless, reliable supply of clean potable water, which may not be to your taste but likely won't kill you or make you sick. Bacteria may enter during the drilling process, but can usually be eliminated by shocking the system with some type of chlorine.

The big problem, especially around here, is dissolved minerals like iron, magnesium and calcium which, although not deadly, can be very unpleasant. Hard water can be hard (pun intended……again) on your plumbing, fixtures, skin, hair, laundry and so on. For example, too much iron can turn your platinum blond into a flaming ginger in one short shower.

Fortunately, there is a solution, albeit not a cheap fix for this: a water softener/conditioner which, through complex chemical and electrical processes, can remove essentially all dissolved minerals (there are important exceptions like the arsenic at the Greenwood town hall - make sure you test for and address as necessary that deadly substance). Culligan and Kinetico are probably the most well-known due to heavy advertising but there are many others from DIY systems at big box stores to local or regional suppliers and outlets. Which is best is somewhat subjective - but those that will tailor a conditioning system to the specifics in your water - all hard water is not the same - are ideal. Be prepared to sort through a bunch of confusing information, some of which is pure salesmanship. Find a trusted supplier to help.

The most asked question about wells is how deep will my well need to be drilled? This is important because wells are generally billed by the foot. Sadly, there is no pat answer; depths can vary considerably from about 30 feet to hundreds of feet. The drillers usually stop drilling at about 300, at which point they will frack (force open water-bearing cracks in the rock) to get the water flowing freely. This adds considerable expense.

We saved maybe your most important question for last. What is the cost of these systems? There are so many variables and unique circumstances that there can be no pat answer to that question - only ranges and estimates of averages. Both will require approximately the same equipment with a cost estimate of $4-6K. Lake system labor will likely double that. Wells can get expensive because drilling deep is complex and expensive and, depending on depth, can run double or triple a lake system or even more.

Now that we have water and know how to get it where we want it, we will need to get rid of the wastewater that results, which is another topic, not as deep and a little messie, but just as necessary…..and just as costly, for another day.

I Took My Dog Out Fishing...

by Al Wade, VLA Board Member and fishing guide



I took my dog out fishing, and you know, he's got a good nose.

He can smell those grouse and pheasants but a walleye, well who knows.

Maybe he can sniff the lake and point out where they swim, and maybe he can make them hold so I can cast my bait at them.

You know, really pinpoint where they live and how many there are of them.

Yep, my dog, he's got a good nose. He really is a gem. But when I point at the lake, he just looks confused when I holler sic 'em.

Or maybe I should make a walleye dummy and throw it in the yard. Make it look so real, just like an 'eye exact. I'd hide that dummy in the rushes down there by shore, for my dog to track.

And when he'd go and find it, and fetch it back to hand. I'd reward him with a pet and give him a walleye snack.

So I've got my dog well trained up, to find that walleye hole. We take the boat and drive and drive, crisscrossing all the lake. I've got him smelling far and wide but no walleyes yet for goodness sake. Every time I yell, "hey dog why can't you find those 'eyes'."

He just looks back as if to say. You know a dog is all I am. But you needn't need to yell. Because, even a dog with a really good nose, knows the water has no smell.

Maybe it was a dumb idea. Doomed to never work.

My dog, you know, has a really good nose. He can smell those grouse and pheasants. But, as for walleyes that's a bust. He really ain't no help. Can he hunt a walleye? Well, the answer is a NO!

Though, that dog still likes to find that walleye dummy. Track it down and fetch it back. But what he really likes the best, and what he's really good at, is eating a walleye snack.

Vermilion Dam Update

For lake users who are not aware of the portage from Lake Vermilion to the Vermilion River, now may be a good time to check it out. The Vermilion Lake Association has partnered with the DNR and the U.S. Forest Service to improve access and usability.



Mike Ptak
VLA Member/Shore Lunch Site Leader

There is now a 40' dock on the lake side, which was provided and installed by the DNR. The VLA worked with the U.S. Forest Service to make a bench available (provided by the VLA), and a side trail for viewing the rapids and taking a rest.

If you continue down the portage, you now will find a wooden dock donated by the DNR and refurbished with your Lake Association membership fees and donations. The DNR has also provided a ramp and floating dock to allow for fishing in the river inlet. Check this out for a leisurely hike, and perhaps, some river fishing.

This has been an ongoing 2-year project, and we had many VLA member volunteers who helped complete this project. A special thank you to nearby resort owner Ed Tausk, who has ferried volunteers from land to the dam dock, and was instrumental in the conception of this project. To all members upon renewal of membership, consider signing up to volunteer for one of many opportunities. It is a great way to help support the treasure we love. We have 265 volunteers and can always use more. It's a great way to meet others who enjoy the lake.





In Honor and In Memory

The VLA is grateful for the gifts given in honor of friends and loved ones, as well as those given in memory of dear friends and family who have passed. Gifts have been given in gratitude for and remembrance of the following people:

James Lynch

Robert Ranck

Ann Cownie

Kimbely Lundgren

Richard M. Wagner

Drew Richard Weber

Thomas Ray Pearson

Norman Miller

Gunnar's and Jeanne Enroth

Bob Jones

Jeremy Johnson

Archie and Harriett Harris

Sharon Rowbottom

Vermilion Lake Association
PO Box 236
Cook, MN, 55723

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 at volunteercoordinator@vermilionlakeassociation.org

Vermilion Lake Association

Lisa Tamte, Member Records • P.O. Box 236 • Cook MN 55723
ltamte@gmail.com • 612-475-3064

Membership year runs from January 1st - December 31st 2027

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

☐ Gift Membership (from_____)

Membership level
☐ $20.00 Household
☐ $50.00 Business or Organization

Member Name _____

Spouse/Partner Name _____

Mailing Address:

Street _____

City _____State _____ Zip _____

Email (requested) _____

Phone (requested) _____

Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above, or go to our website: https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/

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) nonprofit organization.

Yes, You CAN Become a Member

You do not have to be a property owner, resident, or an angler to become a member of the Vermilion Lake Association. Anyone who cares about improving and protecting our lake for future generations to continue to enjoy Lake Vermilion can join. You will get four colorful newsletters sent to your home per year, informing you of volunteer opportunities, protection efforts, and other current happenings at the lake.