

WILLMAR AREA LAKES ASSOCIATION

-May 2019-

Greetings WALA members and future members. Spring is in the air, even if the ice is not off the lakes yet! The Willmar Area Lake Association (WALA) consists of private homeowners surrounding Willmar Lake and Foot Lake as well as private businesses and public entities such as Kandiyohi County and the city of Willmar. There is the potential for 177 private home owners and additional businesses/public entities to become members. Our current membership stands at 61 households and growing. Foot and Willmar Lakes accounts for 14 total miles of lakes shore and over 1,139 total acres.

The Board of Directors have been meeting regularly since the initial meetings held in June and July of 2018. Our goal with this newsletter is to keep you informed regarding what efforts are being made to carry out the Association's mission which is to: preserve, protect, and enhance the quality of Willmar Area Lakes.

Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams are some of our most treasured resources. Minnesotans enjoy our local lakes whether it is recreational activities such as boating, kayaking, swimming, fishing, or enjoying an evening sunset.



Our Mission:

To preserve, protect, and enhance the quality of the Willmar area lakes

There are countless benefits to clean lakes that impact all of us from tourism and economic benefits as well as the impacts on the ecosystem as a whole.



SAVE THE DATE

Willmar Area Lakes Association Annual Meeting

May 22nd, 2019

5:00PM to 8:00PM

Location:

Willmar Community Center

624 US Highway 71

Willmar, MN 56201

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meet the Willmar Area Lakes Association Board of Directors:

Craig Holmgren – President

Carmen Clementson – Vice President

Rick Schwantes – Treasurer

Wayne Mitchell

Bruce DeBlicck

Aaron Schmidt

Jeff Berghuis

Randy Frederickson

-What Issues Do We Face?-



Curly-leaf pondweed is a non-native, invasive submersed aquatic plant.

In spring, curly-leaf pondweed can interfere with recreational and other uses of lakes and rivers by producing dense mats at the water's surface. Matted curly-leaf pondweed can displace native aquatic plants. In mid-summer, curly-leaf plants usually die, and dying plants accumulate on shorelines.

In a number of Minnesota lakes, low water clarity and algal blooms are found in mid-summer after the curly-leaf pondweed dies.



Common carp are one of the world's most widely introduced and invasive species of fish. Currently, they dominate the fish biomass of many shallow lakes, rivers, and wetlands in North America and around the world, including many lakes in central and southern Minnesota. Common carp degrade water quality and destroy habitat for waterfowl, fish and amphibians. They are voracious feeders that forage primarily on plant seeds and insect larvae that live in lake sediments. While searching for food, carp burrow into lake sediments and in the process, they uproot aquatic vegetation, increasing water turbidity and releasing large quantities of sediment-bound nutrients, which stimulate algal blooms. It is estimated that over 70% of lakes in southern Minnesota have lost their plant cover and suffer from excessive algal blooms due to carp's foraging activity. Tens of thousands of hectares of waterfowl habitat have been devastated by common carp.



Storm drain contamination is one of the major causes of pollution in our lakes and streams. Storm drains do not treat the water that they collect. This means that pet waste, motor oil, and other contaminants are washed into the streets, which flow directly into our lakes. There is no difference between dumping these items into the streets and dumping them directly into the lakes. Storm drains are also designed to prevent flooding. When dirt, grass clippings, leaves, etc are left on the road they can accumulate on the drains and potentially result in flooding. Also, as grass clippings and leaves break down along with any fertilizer that washes into the storm drains, they make their way into the lakes which can boost aquatic growth for plants such as curly leaf pondweed.

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Actions Taken So Far

Carp Removal

Carp have infested both Willmar and Foot Lakes. In September and December of 2018, over 66,000 pounds of carp were removed from Willmar Lake. New technologies such as carp tagging, and professional carp assessments are available but tend to be costly. Carp alter lake habitat and water quality conditions, often creating conditions that foster the growth of curly leaf pond weed. Barriers can also be installed to limit access to a lake for the carp.

The Department of Natural Resources coordinates these efforts and is the only authorized entity to take this action. The Willmar Area Lakes Association will continue to coordinate efforts with the DNR, PCA, AIS, the Hawk Creek Watershed, and other agencies.



Water Testing

Tracking water clarity is like monitoring your blood pressure - it tells us about the health of a lake or stream. It indicates the amount of light penetration into the water. For lakes, a low clarity reading reflect excess algae. Consistently low clarity readings indicate poor water quality and can affect plant, insect, and fish communities and reduce recreational opportunities. Long-term water clarity data collected by citizen water monitors help detect signs of degradation to a lake or stream. It is generally easier and less expensive to restore a lake or stream if problems are detected early.

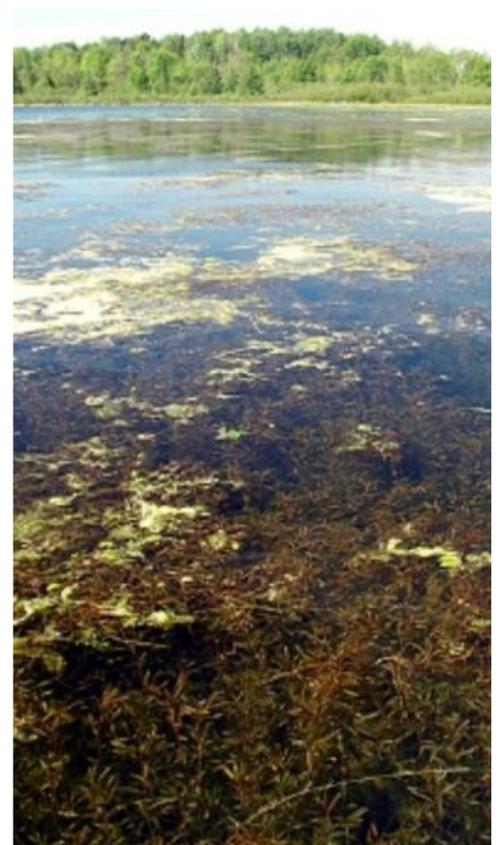
Volunteers take readings by lowering a Secchi disk into the lake. A Secchi disk is an 8-inch, circular, all-white metal plate attached to a calibrated rope. Volunteers find the disappearance/reappearance point of the disk as it descends into the water and record the reading in feet. A high Secchi disk reading reflects better water clarity.



Pictured above, Ron Revier who is a volunteer for the PCA, takes a Secchi disk reading on Foot Lake.

Vegetation Treatment

In the spring of 2018, Foot Lake had a mat of brown growth on top of the winter ice which is caused by an infestation of curly leaf pond weed. We have focused much of our attention on how to manage this invasive species. The WALA board submitted a grant application to Kandiyohi County for Aquatic Invasive Species Funds in November of 2018. Our grant was funded with the caveat we as an organization provide matching funds. The funds will be used to apply herbicide treatment to the lake under the direction and in collaboration with the DNR, PCA, and Kandiyohi County. The treatment must be completed in early spring when the water temperature is between 50 and 60 degrees.



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Follow us on Facebook for frequent communication on:

- ❖ Updates on Projects
- ❖ Annual Meetings
- ❖ Other Relevant Communications About Our Lake/Area



Search Facebook for “Willmar Area Lakes Association” or visit www.facebook.com/willmararealakesassociation and click the “LIKE” button



You can also visit us at our website at: www.willmararealakesassociation.com

-What Can You Do To Help?-

The desired improvements we all wish to see in our lakes are not something that can be achieved through the efforts of a few people. It takes a village. Your cooperation, efforts and contributions will bring about results in a much more efficient manner. Here are a few examples of things every individual can assist with:

- ✓ Storm Drains – Locate any storm drains in your area. Keep them free of trash, leaves, branches, and any other debris to allow storm water to drain quickly.
- ✓ Grass Clippings – Do not blow or rake grass clippings and leaves into the street. These will runoff with rainwater into the storm drains and end up in the lakes. Be sure to sweep up any grass clippings after mowing.
- ✓ Fertilizer – Avoid fertilizing if possible. If you must fertilize, use a phosphorus free fertilizer. Most of the stores carry several of these options.
- ✓ Leaf Removal – Bag up any leaves and other brush rather than raking them into the road or dumping them in an unused area. These will break down and runoff into the lakes.
- ✓ Boat Cleanup – Be sure to follow all guidelines in regard to cleaning your boats, kayaks, canoes, etc.
- ✓ Adopt a Storm Drain – Adopt a storm drain (or several) at www.adopt-a-drain.org.
- ✓ Volunteer – Any assistance you can provide is always welcome. We are always looking for help to pick up trash along the lake. There are also many projects that will require manpower. Reach out to a board member to volunteer.
- ✓ Address Erosion/Issues – If you see any examples of erosion or other problems both on your own property or elsewhere on the lakes, bring it to the attention of either the DNR or the board.
- ✓ Join the Willmar Area Lakes Association! Being a member is the best way to make a difference. Your contributions help all of the projects we take on happen. Fill out the below form and submit via mail at the address below.



Become A Member

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone Number (Home): _____

Phone Number (Mobile): _____

Email Address: _____

Annual Dues: \$50

*Make checks payable to:
Willmar Area Lakes Association
c/o Craig Holmgren
PO Box 363
Willmar, MN 56201

If you have questions, concerns, or ideas for the Willmar Area Lakes Association, please email them to willmararealakesassociation@gmail.com