



RALALA

THE LAKE ASSOCIATION OF LAWRENCE, LEAVITT,
ROOSEVELT AND SMOKEY HOLLOW LAKES

FALL/WINTER 2025

Zebra Mussels Confirmed in Lake Roosevelt

By Robert Lee, Boardmember

What Happens Next?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently confirmed there are zebra mussels in Lake Roosevelt. Based on the sizes of mussels found by RALALA divers and the DNR, the infestation has likely existed for at least two to three years.

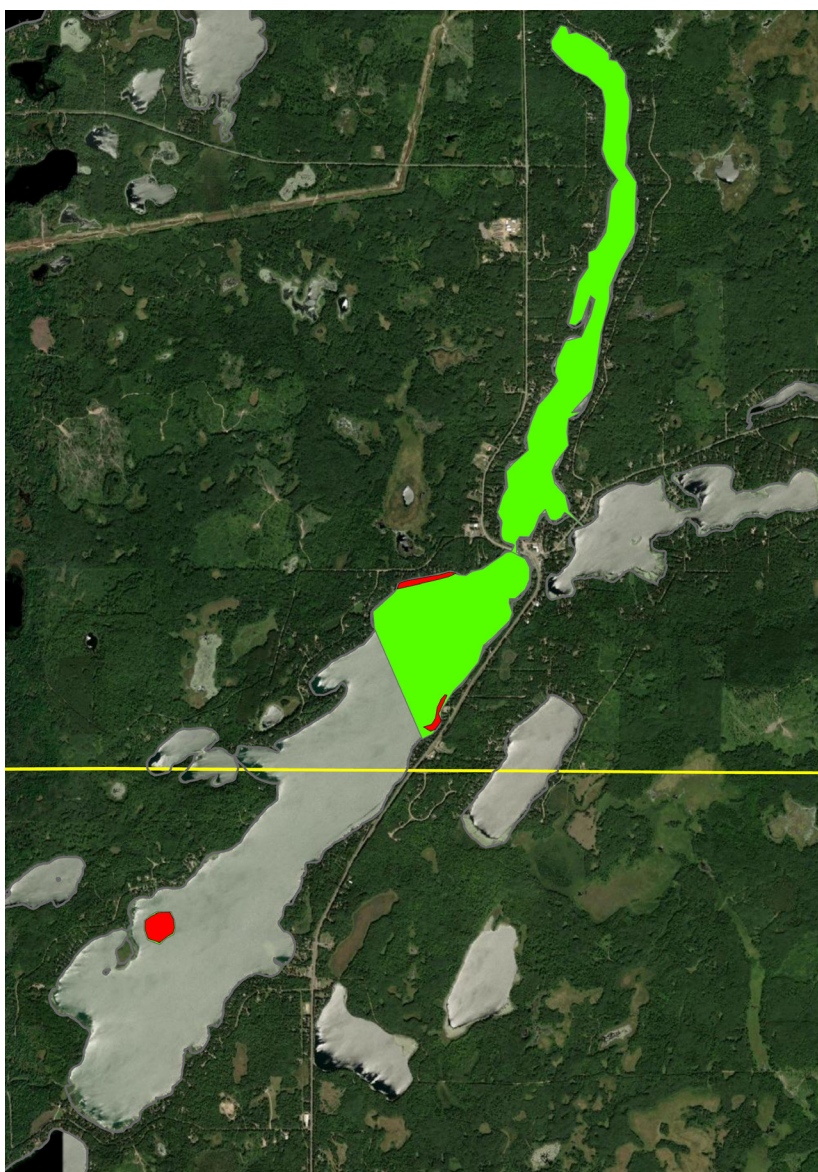
The map shows search areas and where mussels were detected. Divers caution that other areas may still be affected. They emphasize that their ability to find tiny mussels that blend in with the surroundings is also affected by vegetation and water clarity. RALALA has also received multiple reports of mussels attached to docks and boat lifts. All were in the general area where divers found mussels.

What to Expect

Effects of zebra mussel infestation vary from lake to lake, but here are a few things you might expect:

- Zebra mussels will make the lake clearer because they consume phytoplankton, zooplankton and decaying matter. The clearer water allows sunlight to reach deeper and encourages aquatic plant growth at greater depths, including invasive species such as Eurasian watermilfoil.
- A lower survival rate of fish fry and minnows due to less food supply may eventually result in fewer adult fish.
- Some studies have linked zebra mussel infestations to higher mercury levels in fish.
- Dead mussels and their waste on the lake bottom may contribute to algae blooms.

Continued on Page 2



- Lake Outline
- Region AIS Specialist Work Area
- Zebra Mussel Search Areas
- Confirmed Zebra Mussels

Zebra Mussel Investigation
8/27/2025
Roosevelt Lake

VISIT OUR RALALA WEBSITE ralalalakes.org TO BE MORE INFORMED

President's Message

By Bob Eddy



Channel Between Lawrence and Roosevelt Lakes Remains a Deep Topic

Over the past five years, RALALA has received occasional reports of boats getting stuck in the channel between Lawrence and

Roosevelt lakes. These incidents typically occur during drought periods, when low water levels naturally affect the channel's depth and navigability.

RALALA launches an initiative to assess and address navigation challenges

In response, the RALALA Board has launched an initiative to better understand the situation and explore potential solutions. Details can be found in the June, July and August 2025 meeting minutes, but here's a summary of current findings and next steps.

Key Observations

- Dredging the channel is time consuming, complex and costly. Early estimates place the cost at more than \$100,000, with potential for additional overruns.

Continued on Back Page

Zebra Mussels *Continued from Page 1*

- The mussel population is likely to expand over time. Many lakes see cycles in which the population explodes and later subsides when the food supply is exhausted. Eventually the population stabilizes.
- Roosevelt will be officially listed as an infested lake. The DNR posted notification signs at Roosevelt and Lawrence boat ramps.

What You Can Do

According to the DNR, there currently is no treatment that meaningfully reduces an established zebra mussel population. However, there are limited actions you can take:

- Expect mussels to attach to docks and lifts. Scraping them off will not reduce the population, but may be necessary to keep equipment functioning. Use gloves and take caution—the shells are sharp.
- If possible, store your boat on a lift. Cleaning mussels off a boat or motor may be a difficult recurring job. At a minimum, tilt outboard motors clear of the water so veligers (juvenile mussels) cannot enter the cooling system and cause serious damage.
- Depending on infestation density, wear gloves when handling docks and lifts and watershoes when wading in the lake.
- State law requires that any dock or lift used in Roosevelt must be stored on land for at least 21 days before it can be moved to another lake.

Prevention and Monitoring

- Inspectors at ramps will look for mussels on watercraft and equipment, including bilges, live wells, ballast tanks and jet propulsion systems. More boats may require decontamination.
- The RALALA Board continues to research ways to reduce the impact of zebra mussels and to prevent spread to nearby waters. The RALALA Board will share updates when new information becomes available.



Youth Boat Training Returning

The popular Youth Boat Training Program offered by the Crow Wing Sheriff Water Patrol is scheduled to return from 9 a.m. to noon on June 18, 2026.

Participants in the 2025 Youth Boat Training

The program, which is open to youth ages 12 to 17, will be held at the Lakeside Cookhouse, previously named The Channel Bar & Grill. Lakeside Cookhouse will provide lunch to attendees. More details will be available in Spring 2026

RALALA Thanks Donors

The RALALA Board of Directors is grateful to all members and donors. Environmental Quality Projects and Initiatives (EQPI) donations, which are in addition to the \$50 membership dues, make a real difference in what RALALA can do to prevent and manage aquatic invasive species (AIS). As a result, RALALA recognizes large contributors to the EQPI fund.



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Share your RALALA Lakes Experience

Are you interested in submitting articles or original photos to the RALALA newsletter? We want to hear about the area's history, social events, boat parades, wildlife, preservation efforts and more.

If you would like to share information or photos, please contact Communications Director Betsy Skagen at bskagen@gmail.com.

Make sure to note RALALA Newsletter in the subject line.

RALALA Hosts Annual Meeting and Picnic

By Diana Lee, Treasurer



Gary Langer, RALALA vice president, presented information on launch site management and youth boater training.



Craig Haynes was the lucky winner of the "Larry the Loon" door prize drawing at the annual meeting.

RALALA's annual meeting took place Aug. 9 at the Crooked Lake Township Town Hall. The two-hour session was followed by a "brats and dogs" picnic lunch — a great opportunity for neighbors to meet one another.

Each year, the RALALA Board of Directors looks forward to connecting face to face with members and updating lake property owners on current activities, projects, initiatives and the organization's financial condition. It also provides a valuable forum for members to share ideas and concerns that help shape the Board's priorities.

This year's meeting included an in-depth presentation from President Bob Eddy on RALALA's ongoing efforts and accomplishments. Vice President Gary Langer provided an update on boat launch site management and Treasurer Diana Lee presented a financial report.

Sheila Langer, RALALA's loon liaison with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, gave an update on the local loon population.

Members who were unable to attend can find details about the meeting on the [RALALA website](#). Click "More" and then "Minutes" to view the PowerPoint presentation, slides about loons and the meeting minutes.

Members of RALALA share the same goals — keeping our lakes and habitats healthy, protecting property values and maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment for residents and visitors. When we achieve these goals, the entire community, including businesses, benefit.

Next year's annual meeting is scheduled for the second Saturday in August. The board hopes to increase attendance by better advertising the event and providing timely reminders via email and social media. Board members look forward to seeing you there, and continuing a shared commitment to healthy, thriving lakes.



Bob Eddy, RALALA president, keynote speaker at the 2025 annual meeting, shared information about RALALA's ongoing efforts and accomplishments.

This newsletter was brought to you by the work of RALALA volunteers:
Kim David, Art Director Betsy Skagen, Director of Communications & Marketing



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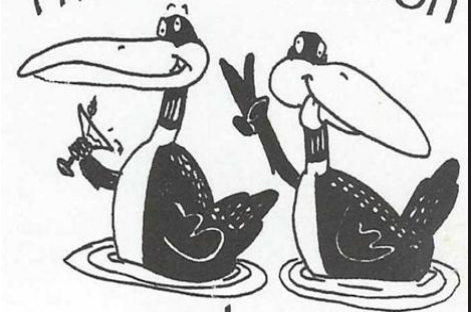
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OUTDOOR SEATING



Above: The east facing Schaefer property on Smokey Hollow Lake is beautiful in winter. Left: A young Bill Schaefer, Jr. enjoyed the fruits of his labor after berry picking with his family many years ago.

Reflections of a Lifetime on Smokey Hollow Lake

By Matthew (Bill) Schaefer, Jr.

Some things change and some remain the same. My 73 years on Smokey Hollow Lake have been a gift filled with joy and cherished friendships on this small, serene lake in Crooked Lake Township.

A Family Legacy Begins

In the early 1950s, my father, Matt Schaefer, purchased one of 13 original lots sold by D.L. Raustadt. We were the first family to settle on the west side of the lake. Over time, other family members also bought property, creating a close-knit community of relatives and friends who shared a love for the water and the land.

Early neighbors included the Berry, Huff, Wessman and Schaefer families. Soon after came the Schroeders, Andersons, Thorvigs, Michauds, Valtinsons and H.O. Bogren. For a time, several Greyhound bus drivers bought cabins on Smokey Hollow as peaceful retreats from city life. We were told the east side of the lake, owned by the state, would never be developed—but progress eventually reached our quiet corner, too.

The Joy of the Lake

Smokey Hollow Lake has always lived up to its name. On calm mornings, a mist rises from its surface like smoke from a fire.

The summers of my youth were filled with laughter, swimming at sunrise and sunset, and even swimming in the rain. My dad built an eight-barrel raft, and we played tag around it for hours. We picked berries, watched bears at the dump, fished, wandered through the woods and played yard games long forgotten by most. The loon calls at night and the beaver splashes remain some of my most vivid memories.

Smokey Hollow was our playground—a perfect size and shape for water skiing. Each evening, the water, smoothed to a mirror finish, was an invitation for us to ski and balance on stools atop wooden discs.

We pretended to be part of the Tommy Bartlett Ski Show, where we performed a “bubble ride”. We lay on our backs behind the boat as a bubble of water formed over our heads, creating a pocket of air to breathe.

Moments of Awe and Resilience

One unforgettable day came more than 50 years ago when a powerful tornado tore through the area. I was on the lake fishing when the sky turned an eerie color, and everything went still. I raced to shore before the storm hit.

My Uncle Frank, who owned an excavating company, worked alongside our family and the National Guard to help recover bodies and clean up after the storm. It was a day of devastation I will never forget.



For nearly 20 years Bill Schaefer, Jr. helped protect Smokey Hollow Lake by using Secchi disks and tubes to assess water quality.

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Reflections of a Lifetime on
Smokey Hollow Lake



The Schaefer family's love for Smokey Hollow Lake has existed for four generations. Here, Bill's granddaughter, Scarlett Schaefer, collects lake water to help the MPCA track water quality.

Protecting What We Love

Through our RALALA membership we learned about the importance of lake conservation and how a collective effort safeguards all RALALA lakes. For example, Smokey Hollow Lake sits 14 feet higher than Lake Roosevelt and drains into Roosevelt through a small stream on its northwest corner.

In 1995, we became beach captains and began Secchi testing, which is a citizen monitoring program run by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The MPCA provided us with Secchi disks and tubes to collect lake water, and then used the data from our collection to track trends, assess water quality and inform management decisions for water bodies across the state.

Our years of water testing ended in 2023, but our concern for the lake continues. We've learned how aging septic systems, lawn fertilizers and shoreline clearing threaten lake health, and how transient boats can bring invasive species. We are grateful that Smokey Hollow remains free of invasive species.

A Lasting Gratitude

I am thankful for a lifetime of memories with friends and family. I hope every family on our local lakes can share in the same sense of wonder that Smokey Hollow Lake has given mine.

Area Lakes Saw a Busy Year for Loons

By Sheila Langer

Thanks to all who kept a watchful eye out for loons and loon chicks this summer.

Loons Face Many Dangers

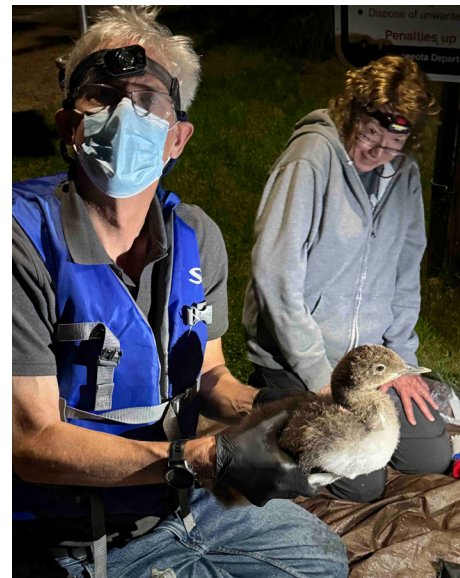
Loons nest at the water's edge because they have trouble walking on land. Unfortunately, high water levels can wash eggs away and some nests are more visible, making them vulnerable to predators. Nesting loons take turns on the nest incubating their eggs for about 28 days. Eagles, ospreys, crows and racoons threaten eggs and chicks. Snapping turtles, muskie, northern, walleye and, sadly, humans can be another significant threat to loon populations.

Lake Roosevelt had six pairs of nesting loons, while Lawrence and Smokey Hollow lakes each had one nesting pair. RALALA does not have information for Leavitt Lake. Here is the breakdown:

- Four pairs of loons nested successfully on Roosevelt and raised seven chicks. In 2024, only two chicks survived the summer.
- Lawrence had one pair of nesting loons and one chick.
- In addition, two nests failed. On June 4, a Woods Bay pair were chased from their nest by eagles. On June 10, a pair nesting on an island in south Roosevelt abandoned their nest because of human disturbance. When loons are chased off the nest for too long, eggs are no longer viable. No chicks were reported on Smokey Hollow.



Dr. Piper placed two bands on each leg of a loon. By using unique colored band combinations, Dr. Piper is able to track the loons throughout their lives.



On July 26, Dr. Walter Piper (left), biology professor and head of The Loon Project, worked with Volunteer Terry Raammer (right) to band 11 loons on Lake Roosevelt.

Area Loons Help Research

On July 26, Dr. Walter Piper banded four adult loons and seven juveniles on Lake Roosevelt and one adult and one juvenile on Lawrence Lake. The banding was part of Dr. Piper's Loon Study Project, which includes loon populations in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Loon Banding occurs at night. A boat with a large light illuminates the lake to help researchers look for loons. Researchers use a muskie net to scoop the loons from the lake. They put the loons into a padded plastic bin with a cover and take them to shore for banding. A team member holds the loon, while another draws a drop of blood and takes a feather. The team then weighs the loon and places two-colored bands on each leg. By using unique colored band combinations, Dr. Piper is able to track loons throughout their lives.

Protecting Loons' Lives

Swallowing just one lead sinker or getting tangled in fishing line can kill a loon, eagle or waterbird. RALALA, the Crooked Lake Township Lakes and Shores Committee and the Lake Washburn Association work to reduce this danger by removing lead tackle from the area. At the Lions' Corn Feed in August, these organizations collected more than 54 pounds of lead tackle.



Roosevelt and Lawrence
Area Lakes Association
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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



President's Message *Continued from Page 1*

- Dredging requires significant coordination with state and community agencies, local residents and property owners on the channel.
- Material removed from the channel must be properly handled and disposed of in adherence to DNR and state regulations.
- Erosion, not inflow, may be the main issue. Preliminary information indicates material is not flowing in from Lawrence, but that sand is collapsing into the channel from adjacent properties on both sides of the lake. Thus, dredging may be only a temporary solution unless the adjacent properties are shored up with riprap or bulkheads.
- All of these factors could add substantial costs to the project.

Next Steps

In the short term, RALALA plans to take the following actions:

- **Measure channel depth.** In spring 2026, RALALA will begin a systematic measurement project to track depth at various points along the channel. This will continue through next year. RALALA can then

establish baseline measurements. Currently, there are no historical depth records. Once RALALA establishes baseline measurements, it can better assess the extent of the problem.

- **Gather cost estimates.** The RALALA Board is working with a local contractor to develop preliminary cost projections and evaluate feasible dredging methods. These figures will need validation by several regulatory agencies.
- **Clarify approvals.** The Board is reviewing what permits and approvals would be required for any work within the channel.
- **Identify funding options.** Securing financial support will be the biggest challenge. We, as a community, will need to work together to explore funding opportunities as the initiative progresses.

Looking Ahead

While a simple solution would be nice, the situation is far more complicated. We have many important decisions in front of us and we will need a significant amount of support from the community.

The Board remains committed to transparency and continued updates as this initiative moves forward.