



## RALALA Events

### May

- 15** Board Meeting
- 17** RALALA Adopt A Highway Spring Cleanup
- 18** Water Quality Testing of RALALA lakes

### June

- 15** Water Quality Testing of RALALA lakes
- 19** Board Meeting
- 19** Youth Boater Training

### July

- 13** Water Quality Testing of RALALA lakes
- 17** Board Meeting
- 19** Emily Day
- TBD** Annual Boat Parade—date to be determined

### August

- 9** RALALA Annual Membership Meeting, 9 a.m., Crooked Lake Town Hall
- 16** Annual Lions' Corn Feed
- 19** Water Quality Testing of RALALA lakes
- 21** Board Meeting

### September

- 14** Water Quality Testing of RALALA lakes
- 18** Board Meeting
- 20** RALALA Adopt A Highway Fall Cleanup

### October

- 16** Board Meeting

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**TO BE MORE INFORMED**

# RALALA LAKES ASSOCIATION

MESSAGE FROM BOB EDDY, RALALA ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

## President's message

# A Call for Support in Challenging Times

*By Robert Eddy*



I hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

As we all know, these current economic times have presented us with challenges unlike any we've seen in recent years. Rising costs, shifting markets and general uncertainty have placed a strain on organizations and individuals alike—including our own lake association.

Despite these hardships, RALALA remains committed to our mission and our community. Our programs, initiatives and services are important—now more than ever—and we need your help to continue this important work.

You probably received our membership package in the mail. We are asking for your renewed membership and additional contribution. Every dollar makes a meaningful impact. Your generosity will help us:

- Survey and treat aquatic invasive species (AIS) on our lakes
- Continue to improve efforts reducing the risk of additional AIS
- Continue to ensure our beautiful lakes remain healthy, to protect our lake investments and to help future generations enjoy our lakes
- And much more

We understand that not everyone is in a position to give, and that's okay. But if you are able, we would deeply appreciate your support. Together we can weather this storm and emerge even stronger.

Thank you for being a valued member of our lake association.



Photo by Greg Floyd



# Do Your Part to Protect Loons

By Sheila Langer



*If a loon is agitated, it may rear up and thrash around in the water. If you are close to a loon that is calling or displaying agitation, please move away.*

## Fish loon safe

Leave no line behind and recycle used fishing line in the recycling containers found at the landings of lakes Roosevelt, Lawrence and Washburn. When sorting your tackle box, remember to remove lead-based tackle, especially split shot sinkers, which are particularly deadly for loons. Use non-lead fishing tackle. Ingesting one lead sinker or jig will kill a loon, eagle or waterbird. Lead tackle can be dropped off at the Lions' Corn Feed on August 16.

## Be an ethical angler

Never fish near loon nests or swimming loons. Properly dispose of extra bait in the trash on land. Never feed loons.

## Keep your distance

Watch loons from at least 200 feet away. Close encounters can be deadly for swimming and nesting loons. Use binoculars or spotting scopes from a safe distance. Because loons prefer islands for nesting, avoid islands before July 15 of each year.

## Protect native vegetation

*Don't mow, let it grow.* Loons often nest on natural shorelines and use natural materials to build their nests. Natural vegetation also protects water quality by slowing and absorbing runoff materials from entering a lake. Restore your shoreline with native plantings.

## Reduce your impact

*Use only phosphorus-free fertilizer on shorelands.* Fertilizer that runs from yards into lakes increases aquatic plant growth, making it difficult for loons to swim and find food. Pollutants from fertilizer, pesticides and rooftops are contaminating our lakes.

## Watch your wake and steer clear

*Be a responsible boater.* Never chase loons or run motorboats or personal watercraft over areas where loons have been seen. Loons and loon chicks have died from being hit by boats and propellers. Watch your wake. Observe no wake zones near wetlands and shorelines. Adhere to wake boat industry standards: 25 feet water depth and 200 feet from shore.

*Lake conditions and abundant food during the first few months of a loon's life set the course for its survival.*



Photos by Sheila Langer, RALALA Loon Liaison



## Report harassment

*Harassing wildlife is illegal in Minnesota. Report any unusual loon activity or harassment of loons to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at 651-296-6157, ask to be directed to a loon conservation officer to report an incident. If you can do so safely, document harassment with photos or video.*



*Keep your distance from nesting loons. If you approach too near a nesting loon, the loon may sense threat and abandon its nest.*

## Silver spoon effect helps survival

*The first few weeks and months in a loon chick's life set the course. Dr. Walter Piper, who heads up the Loon Project in Minnesota and Wisconsin, calls it the Silver Spoon Effect. What this means is that lake conditions and abundance of food when a loon chick is being raised affects its survival and its later breeding success. Studies show that a chick's mass accurately predicts how long the loon will live and how many young it will raise.*

## In Remembrance Chris Smith, 1967-2024

*Chris Smith provided years of business and volunteer service to RALALA and the greater Outing Community. Chris passed away November 25, 2024.*

Born in Des Moines on July 21, 1967, Chris graduated in 1985 from Des Moines Technical High School as an air-frame and powerplant trained technician.

Chris' connection to Outing came from his great-grandfather, who owned a cabin in Iowa Camp on Lake Washburn since the 1930s. Later, Chris' family vacationed at Mechelke's Birch Bay Lodge on Lake Washburn.

In the late 1980s, Chris moved to Outing, where his parents operated Smith's Country Store.

Chris enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing and snowmobiling, and believed the Outing area was the best place on earth. He and his brother, Tim, raced motorcycles at Brainerd International Raceway. A member of the Outing Gun Club, Chris placed high each season in trap shooting. He also served on the Crooked Lake Volunteer Fire Department for 38 years, and according to family, could "plow snow faster than anyone in Minnesota."

Chris worked in construction until the mid 1990s, when he was hired by Land O' Lakes Marine as a factory trained and certified outboard and sterndrive technician, welder and fabricator. In 2023, he took over the service and boat storage departments, running it successfully as Crooked Lake Boat Works, LLC, until his passing.

Chris lived by an exceptional moral code. He was honest to a fault and did his best to treat everyone he met with kindness and humor. He is survived by his son, Taylor Carstens of Outing; his daughters, Abigail Smith of Outing and Dakota Carstens of Brainerd; his mother, Janet Smith of Outing; his brother, Timothy (Lisa) Smith of Rogers; his sister, Michelle (Joe) Switzer of Cromwell; and two grandchildren. Chris was preceded in death by his father, Ricky Smith.



## RALALA Needs Volunteer Help

- **Adopt a Highway.** Six to eight volunteers are needed to help clean two miles of Highway 6, just north of the City of Emily. It begins at 9 a.m. and takes about 90 minutes. Garbage bags, high visibility vests and pickup tools provided.
  - Spring cleanup: May 17
  - Fall cleanup: September 20
  - In case of bad weather, the clean-up will be moved one week later



- **Water Quality Testing.** RALALA needs volunteers to help with monthly water quality testing efforts on Leavitt, Lawrence, Roosevelt and Smokey Hollow lakes. The testing takes 15-20 minutes at designated locations on each lake and is completed from a boat that you provide. Testing begins in May and runs through September. Volunteers will be fully trained.

If interested in volunteering, please send an email to [ralala.lakes@gmail.com](mailto:ralala.lakes@gmail.com).

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### RALALA seeks to fill open board positions

RALALA is looking for three volunteers to join the lakes association board.

RALALA is seeking individuals with specific experience or skill sets:

- Building and populating a social media presence
- Information technology experience to manage the member database and website

RALALA is also seeking a board member interested in:

- Aquatic invasive species and the programs used to manage them
- Managing the yearly membership drive

The RALALA Board of Directors typically has 13 members who provide direction in supporting the mission to preserve and protect Leavitt, Lawrence, Roosevelt and Smokey Hollow lakes and the Pine River Watershed.

If you are interested in helping shape efforts to preserve and protect our lakes, please send an email to [ralala.lakes@gmail.com](mailto:ralala.lakes@gmail.com) with "Board Position" as the subject.

This newsletter was brought to you by the work of RALALA volunteers:

RALALA Art Director: Kim David

RALALA Communications Director: Betsy Skagen

## RALALA Membership Summary

**Thanks to so many friends of the lakes who have joined RALALA.**

In 2024 we had 284 members. Thirty-four local businesses joined during the year. Please notice their advertisements in our newsletter and support them with your business.

**For anyone who has not joined or renewed a membership in 2025, please send a check for the \$50 membership fee and any additional designated donations to RALALA at P.O. Box 139, Outing, MN 56662**

**We thank all of you for your engagement, support and actions!**

**If you have any questions, please send an email to [ralalalakes.org](mailto:ralalalakes.org)**





# Advertisers Supporting Lawrence, Leavitt, Roosevelt and Smokey Hollow Lakes

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RALALA thanks both our individuals members and business members for ongoing support. Many local businesses have increased their support this year by participating in the RALALA Advertising Section. Shop local and preserve our lakes!



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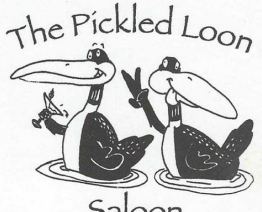


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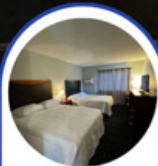
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## Free Minnesota Youth Watercraft Operator Training Set for June 19

RALALA, in partnership with the Crow Wing Sheriff's Department, is sponsoring a free Youth Watercraft Operator Training course at the Channel Bar and Grill in Outing on June 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. Lunch will be provided by RALALA.

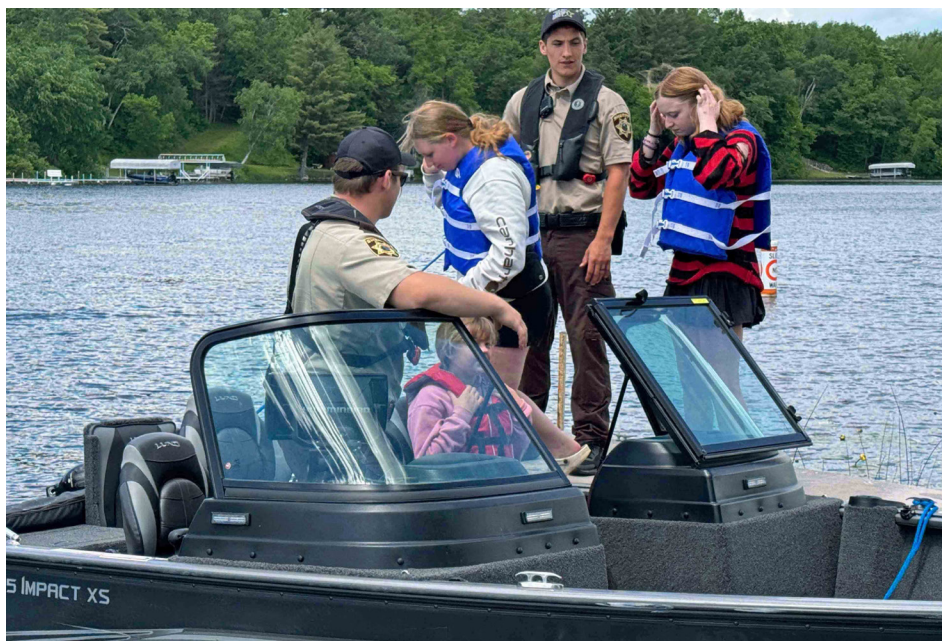
The Watercraft Operator course, led by Crow Wing Sheriff personnel, is for youth ages 12 (or those turning 12 this summer) to 17. Adults are also welcome to attend.

The course consists of classroom instruction followed by an in depth test. Upon successful completion of the test, each individual receives hands-on water operation training in boats provided by the Crow Wing Sheriff's Department. Each participant will receive a Watercraft Operator Certificate from the State of Minnesota.

To register: email the following information to [dpjohn53@gmail.com](mailto:dpjohn53@gmail.com)

- Name and age of youth attending
- Address
- Name, phone number and email address of parent/guardian
- Statement whether parent/guardian grants or declines permission to use photo(s) of your child for publicity purposes.

If you have any questions, contact Dave Johnson, [dpjohn53@gmail.com](mailto:dpjohn53@gmail.com) 320-894-5903.







## Aquatic Invasive Species Decontamination Unit Available Beginning May 21

By Gary Langer

According to research conducted by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISCR), most aquatic invasive species (AIS) are introduced at public water access points.

Since there are no effective methods to eliminate AIS once it is introduced into a lake, prevention is the most important strategy in this battle. MAISCR advises that watercraft decontamination with hot water at launch sites and oversight by trained AIS inspectors is the most effective prevention strategy.

Data from 2024 showed an increase in decontamination efforts at Lake Roosevelt:

- |                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| • Watercraft launches         | 1,462 |
| • AIS inspection hours        | 942   |
| • Watercraft decontaminations | 63    |

*ABOVE: Encourage summer visitors to decontaminate their boats before launching in any of the area's lakes. The decontamination unit is available Wednesdays-Sundays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Lake Roosevelt Landing.*

- Watercraft launches from zebra mussel infested lakes:
  - o May—5 percent
  - o June—16 percent
  - o July—26 percent
  - o August—26 percent
  - o September—23 percent.

RALALA is encouraged by the increase in decontaminations. However, the high percentage of watercraft from zebra mussel infested lakes means decontaminations need to substantially increase.

Please encourage your summer visitors to decontaminate their boats before launching in any of the area lakes. **The decontamination unit is available to all watercraft owners at the Lake Roosevelt Landing every Wednesday to Sunday from May 21 through September 14. Hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

You can also join RALALA at 10 a.m. on June 14 at the Lake Roosevelt Landing, when AIS Lake Technician Steve Henry will provide a watercraft decontamination demonstration.



# Darril Wegscheid, Longtime Volunteer, Retiring from Board of Directors

By Bob Lee

In August, Darril Wegscheid will retire from the RALALA Board of Directors. The service he has provided to the association over the years is simply remarkable. In 1997, Darril began more than 25 years of volunteering for the association after he and his wife, Mary Kowalski, purchased a home on Lake Roosevelt. In 2013, he joined the RALALA Board of Directors, where he has served ever since.

Protecting our lakes has been important to Darril for many decades. In the 1970s he became involved in environmental issues. Then, while serving as a Minnesota State Senator (1983-89), he engaged in early efforts to combat aquatic invasive species (AIS). During that time he worked with a wide array of environmental experts and later shared his knowledge and contacts with RALALA.

It is impossible to catalog everything Darril has done for RALALA and area lakes. He spent thousands of hours representing RALALA while working with other associations and while serving on AIS related panels. He directed membership efforts and helped establish RALALA technology systems, such as the member database, mass e-mailings and data input forms. He spearheaded a plan for preserving and protecting our watershed; oversaw the collection of water samples for analysis; helped find, acquire, install and maintain the iLids at launch sites; and initiated the installation of a lake level monitoring station.

Whenever RALALA needed volunteers—whether it was to sell raffle tickets, clear debris from Crooked Creek, meet with local businesses or encourage new members to join—Darril was there.

The RALALA Board will miss Darril and deeply appreciates his countless contributions and many years of service. He has assured the board that he will continue to volunteer and oversee some of the programs he initiated.



*Darril (left) Wegscheid explains to another longtime RALALA volunteer, Roger Brekken, how to use a device that measures water clarity in streams entering our lakes.*

## Become a Lake Steward



The land closest to the water has the greatest impact on our lakes, yet many lakeshore homeowners are unaware of how their choices affect water quality, wildlife and our lake heritage. The Lake Steward Program empowers homeowners to evaluate their practices and take incremental steps to protect our waterways for generations to come. Through this neighbor-to-neighbor interactive initiative, we're fostering commitment and pride in the natural beauty of shorelines that absorb runoff, stabilize soil and provide essential habitat for Minnesota's treasured wildlife.

**RALALA** is continuing its Lake Steward partnership with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates to promote and support the managing of our lands to improve water quality in our lakes. **It is much easier and more cost effective to prevent degradation of our lakes than to repair them. Please join these efforts!** Start by using this link to take the **Lake Steward Quiz** and find out what you are doing well and how you can improve.

<https://mnlakesandrivers.org/lake-steward/>



Roosevelt and Lawrence  
Area Lakes Association  
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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



Shoreline recession, erosion damage and destruction, as well as wildlife habitat disturbance caused by wave action, have increased significantly because a greater number of boats, many with increased horsepower, cruise the lakes. **RALALA reminds you to be aware of the impact of your wake and we encourage your safe and respectful watercraft operation.**

## Members Support Local First Responders and Fireworks *By Diana Lee*



*Treasurer Diana Lee was delighted to present donations that RALALA members made to the Outing Fireworks to LeAnn Werner of the Outing Area Chamber of Commerce*



*Lloyd Thyen from the RALALA Board of Directors handed off member donations to the Outing Quick Response Team. Pictured (front to back) are Response Team members Connie Pollock, Terri Julkowski, Lynn Remington, LeAnn Werner, Mark Werner and Krista Kommer.*

For several years, RALALA has provided members with the opportunity to donate funds to the area's first responders and to the Outing Fireworks. In 2024, members showed their appreciation of these services by responding with generosity.

In April, RALALA delivered these 2024 "pass-through" donations:

- Emily First Responders (City of Emily): \$1,690
- Outing Quick Response (Crooked Lake Township): \$4,395
- Fireworks (Outing Chamber of Commerce): \$3,090

Allocation of donations for Emily and Crooked Lake Township first responders was determined by the local address of the donor.

**Nice job RALALA members!**



*RALALA Treasurer Diana Lee recently delivered member donations to Emily Fire & Rescue Chief Blair Mileski.*