



RALALA

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

SUMMER 2026

RALALA Addresses the Channel Depth Between Lawrence and Roosevelt lakes

By Bob Lee, RALALA Board Member

Members of the Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association (RALALA) have reported shallow water in the channel between Lawrence and Roosevelt lakes for at least the past 15 years, usually following prolonged dry periods or winters with below-average snowfall.

Over the years, many have asked RALALA to do something about the issue. For the past year, the Board has been researching the situation and possible solutions.

The Board first had to determine who is responsible for maintaining the channel.

Channel Depth continued P.2



Photo by Betsy Skagen

For the past year, the RALALA Board has been studying whether the channel between Roosevelt and Lawrence lakes is becoming shallower and what solutions may be available. The effort includes regularly measuring and recording water depths. In July, the RALALA Executive Board — Bob Eddy, Gary Langer and Diana Lee — along with Boardmember Bob Lee, who is spearheading the project, took an exploratory trip through the channel. Pictured clockwise from left are Sheila Langer, Bob Eddy, Gary Langer, Jim Villcheck, Bob Lee and Diana Lee.

Reflections on a Family Legacy on Leavitt Lake

By Amanda Mattila

I've been coming to our family's cabin on Leavitt Lake my whole life. Now in my forties with kids of my own, the cabin remains our happy place. However, the story of the Fri-Scha-Ka cabin and the Fritz family on Leavitt Lake started long before me.



A sunbather relaxed at the original Fri-Scha-Ka cabin. The cabin was destroyed in the 1969 tornado.

My grandpa, Louis Fritz Sr., and his friends, Harvey Kalla and Art Schafer, bought land on Leavitt Lake on July 17, 1952. At the time, they paid only \$40 per lot and bought the property sight unseen. They bought one piece of land together, and my grandpa bought a second adjoining lot. Their plan was to build a cabin for hunting and fishing trips.

Grandpa, Harvey and Art worked for The Great Northern Railway and used stripped-down wood from old boxcars to

Family Legacy continued P.2, P.3

Channel Depth continued from P.1

The answer appears to be no one. Neither the State of Minnesota, Crooked Lake Township, nor Cass County claim responsibility for maintaining the channel. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), however, does claim the right to permit and regulate any dredging project, including disposal of dredged material. Depending on the scope of the project, other state agencies also may be involved.

The next question facing the Board was whether the channel is actually becoming shallower and, if so, why. At this point, there is no clear answer. Reports have been too sporadic to draw firm conclusions. While dry years clearly affect water depth, it is unclear whether the long-term condition of the channel is worsening.

RALALA asked a local contractor to inspect the channel and provide an opinion on possible solutions. He said the problem is probably not caused by sediment washing down from Lawrence Lake because the material on the channel bottom differs from the lake bottom. Instead, he suggested excess sand and mud in the channel was the result of the banks gradually collapsing into the channel. If that is the case, more research about how to stabilize the banks is needed, and cooperation from adjacent property owners would be important.

The contractor said dredging is possible, but likely expensive, because of the channel's length—approximately 550 feet—and the amount of material that would need to be removed and disposed of at a DNR-approved site. Although he was unable to provide an estimate, the contractor said the cost would likely be in the tens of thousands of dollars, assuming a nearby disposal site could be found.

The RALALA Board determined it is important to gather more data before determining what action to take. This summer, volunteers are surveying the channel by measuring water depth every 20 feet along the centerline and along two additional lines 10 feet to the right and left of the centerline. They will also record the lake level using the DNR gauge at the Lake Roosevelt public access. RALALA will repeat this survey



A waterlily blooms in the channel.

Family Legacy continued from P.1

build the cabin. Every Friday they drove to Outing to work on it. They named it Fri-Scha-Ka, combining parts of each of their last names.

On Aug. 6, 1969, a tornado ripped through the Outing area. The Fri-Scha-Ka cabin did not survive.

My aunt, Pat (Fritz) Meyer, remembers the downstairs walls being blown out while the upstairs, still fully intact, came crashing down onto the main floor. She talked about an old, large, heavy wooden table with legs like tree trunks. Grandpa always said, "In case of a storm, go under the table." Pat says no one would have survived under that table.

My uncle, Tim Fritz, told me about heading to Outing the day of the tornado. He and the other people in the vehicle had no knowledge about the storm that had wreaked havoc in Outing; they saw some tree damage, but nothing alarming. When they turned onto County Road 58, a state trooper stopped them. They explained they were going to their cabin on Leavitt.

next year to determine whether the channel is actually becoming shallower, after accounting for changes in lake level.

Once RALALA knows whether the channel is deteriorating, the Board will be in a better position to determine whether it should pursue a channel improvement project and what funding assistance may be available from other organizations.

He simply replied, "No you're not."

The trooper did, however, allow them to walk from town. West Leavitt Lake Road was crisscrossed with downed trees. Volunteers had cut a narrow path through the debris with chainsaws. Pat vividly remembers that nearly all the trees were gone. My dad, Bruce Fritz, remembers one giant oak was the only tree left standing. Remarkably, it still stands today.

Thankfully, the families were able to clean everything up, salvage what they could and build a new cabin in time for deer hunting.

As families grew, conflicts arose over the use of the cabin. Grandpa and his friends couldn't believe it. In 1974, Harvey and Art sold their shares. Grandpa Louie and Grandma Lucille kept their share, and over the years, several of their children became owners as well.

As those families grew, many eventually bought cabins of their own, some in the Outing area. Today, Peter, Rosie and Tom Fritz own the Fri-Scha-Ka.



The Fritz family rebuilt the cabin after the 1969 tornado. It is still enjoyed by generations of Fritz family members.

Family Legacy continued from P.2

Grandpa had also sold the original parcel he purchased himself to a neighbor. Years later, my parents, Bruce and Linda, bought that property and built our family's cabin there. I love knowing that a piece of my grandpa's history became part of our own family's story.

As kids, we spent countless hours at the Fri-Scha-Ka. It has a loft where everyone sleeps. My cousins and I fought over the top bunk and played Barbies for hours on the floor. Sleeping



In 1963, the Fritz, Kalla and Schafer families often used the Fri-Scha-Ka cabin for hunting. According to family lore, the hunting was bountiful for many years.

there during a rainstorm was always my favorite because the pitter-patter on the roof lulled you to sleep.

I remember riding to town in the back of the pickup for ice cream at Owls & Things, swimming at Roosevelt beach and buying penny candy across the street. Watching the Fourth of July fireworks from the boat was the best.

I remember sitting around many campfires and commenting on the beauty of all the stars, while listening to the loons. Sometimes while playing in the woods, we'd find bits of debris we were told had been left by the tornado. I even learned to water-ski on Leavitt behind a boat with only a 25-horsepower motor.

Outing and Leavitt Lake hold a special place in my heart. I take great pride in saying my grandpa's family has had a cabin there since the 1950s. I think he would be over the moon knowing his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren still love heading to the cabin.



Leavitt Lake boat landing in the 1950s.

Editor's Note: Has your family come to the Outing area for several generations? If you are interested in sharing your family's story, please email ralala.lakes@gmail.com, Attention: Betsy.

President's Message

By Bob Eddy, RALALA President

I hope you're enjoying a wonderful summer and have had the opportunity to spend many pleasant days in our beautiful lake country.

I'd like to share updates on two important issues affecting the RALALA area.

First, RALALA recently completed its aquatic invasive species survey of Lake Roosevelt. The survey found Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) on the east side of South Roosevelt and a small amount in North Roosevelt, in the bay leading to the channel connecting to Lawrence Lake.

As you may recall, we treated the east side of Roosevelt with the herbicide Diquat two years ago. The treatment was very successful throughout 2025, but it now appears that additional EWM is beginning to return. Our plan is to treat this area with ProcettaCOR, the herbicide we used on the west side of Roosevelt in 2025. So far, we have not seen EWM return in that area. We will notify members by email as soon as a treatment date has been scheduled.

The second update concerns Lake Roosevelt's zebra mussel infestation. As many of you know, RALALA is participating in a research project with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) called the Zebra Mussel Safari.

Nineteen volunteers from Roosevelt and Lawrence lakes have been

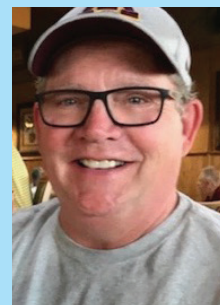
deploying zebra mussel sampling devices from their docks since late May, and the study will continue through September. At the end of the season, the devices will be collected and photographed using University of Minnesota software that automatically counts zebra mussels. Water samples will also be collected at each location.

The information gathered will help researchers better understand how water chemistry influences zebra mussel growth across the many lakes participating in the study. This research will continue annually for the foreseeable future.

I would like to personally thank each of our Zebra Mussel Safari volunteers for their commitment to this important research. Their efforts are contributing valuable information to the scientific community and to the future health of our lakes.

Finally, I hope you'll join us for our Annual Meeting on **Saturday, August 8, at 9 am**, at the Crooked Lake Town Hall. We are pleased to welcome a featured speaker from MAISRC, who will discuss the impacts of zebra mussels and provide an update on the latest scientific research and what it means for our lakes.

I look forward to seeing many of you there.



Honoring the Legacy of Bill and Jo Ellen George

By Gary Langer, RALALA Vice President, and Mike Rumppe

The Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association is deeply grateful for the generous gifts of Bill and Jo Ellen George. Their lasting commitment to conservation will help preserve and protect the RALALA area for future generations.

William (Bill) George was born in Minneapolis in 1940 and spent much of his youth vacationing with his family in Minnesota's outdoors, including visits with relatives on Leavitt Lake.

Bill graduated from West High School in Minneapolis in 1957 and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he served four years as an aerial navigator. After his military service, he joined the hardware design staff at Control Data Corporation before moving to Ancor Communications, where he worked until his retirement.



Bill in front of the Woods Bay cabin that he and Jo Ellen built in the late 1980s.

Bill's love of the Outing area played a key role in his decision to purchase his first cabin on the south side of Leavitt Lake in 1970, shortly after the 1969 tornado. At the time, only the cabin and garage remained standing. The roof and



Bill in front of his first cabin on Leavitt Lake. Bill's love of the Outing area as a child played a critical role in his decision to purchase his first cabin on the south side of Leavitt in 1970 shortly after the 1969 tornado.

chimney needed repair, nearly all the trees had been blown down, and years of clearing brush, burning debris and splitting wood followed.

Over the years, Bill continued improving the property and later acquired land on the north side of Leavitt Lake, where he planted hundreds of red and white pine seedlings.

Family and friends gathered often at Bill's cabin to enjoy hunting, fishing, boating, games and great food. If they were lucky, the evening ended with Bill's favorite blackberry brandy.

Bill later married Jo Ellen Batty-George, who shared his love of nature and the Outing area. Jo Ellen spent her entire career in health care, first as a registered nurse and later as a nurse practitioner. She traveled around the world, but there was no place she loved more than their cabin.

In the late 1980s, Bill and Jo Ellen began searching for property where they could build their dream cabin. They found a location on Lake Roosevelt's Woods Bay. Construction began around 1990 with careful attention to preserving the natural landscape. Trees removed from the

site became interior support beams, while cedar branches were woven into decorative latticework. The cabin was completed in 1995 and was later featured in a multi-page article in *The Lake Country Journal*.

As retirement gave them more time at the lake, Bill and Jo Ellen expanded their support of organizations dedicated to conservation and the outdoors. Their generosity benefited the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, the Arbor Day Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Boundary Waters, Clean Air Minnesota, Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and RALALA.

Bill and Jo Ellen spent as much time as possible at their cabin, even when health challenges made travel more difficult. Jo Ellen died in 2022 following complications from ovarian cancer, and Bill died in 2023 from complications of Parkinson's disease.

Their legacy lives on through the trees they planted, the friendships they nurtured and the generous gifts they made to protect the lakes and natural places they loved.

**This newsletter was brought to you by the work of RALALA volunteers:
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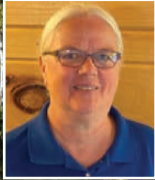
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TUESDAY: Fajita Night

WEDNESDAY: Pasta Night

THURSDAY: Beef Chimichangas

FRIDAY: All you can eat Crab Legs

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RALALA

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August 16

Get the Lead Out

at the Corn Feed

RALALA will

participate in the event

SEPTEMBER

September 19 to 9 am .

Adopt a Highway

Fall Cleanup

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**TO BE MORE
INFORMED**



Area youth participated in watercraft operator training on June 18. This hands-on educational event focused on boat safety, responsibility and real-world skills on the water.

Youth Gain Boating Skills and Safety Knowledge

By Gary Langer, RALALA Vice President

Youth boating enthusiasts gathered in Outing on June 18 for the Youth Boat Operator Class—a hands-on educational event focused on boat safety, responsibility and real-world skills on the water.



Sheriff deputies from Cass and Crow Wing counties provided classroom instruction and brought patrol boats for demonstrations.

Jointly sponsored by the Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association (RALALA) and the Lake Washburn Association (LWA), the class was conducted by officers from the Crow Wing County and Cass County sheriffs' departments. Deputies provided classroom instruction and brought patrol boats for demonstrations, giving students the opportunity to practice operating a boat in real conditions.

The Lakeside Cookhouse (formerly known as The Channel) generously provided space for the classroom portion of the training and free lunches for all participants. Special thanks to Paul Huynh and his staff.

Open to youth ages 12 to 17, the course covered Minnesota boating laws, navigation rules, equipment requirements, emergency procedures and environmental awareness. The day concluded with a written test and hands-on boating exercises. Upon

passing the course, participants earned Minnesota Watercraft Operator Permits, enabling them to legally and safely operate watercraft under state guidelines.

This kind of program not only teaches critical safety skills, but also brings the community together around our shared love of the lakes. RALALA is grateful to the local businesses and law enforcement officers who helped make this event a success.

The training continues to grow in popularity each year. Organizers, who are committed to lake safety and youth education, hope to see even greater participation in future events.



Upon passing the course, participants earned Minnesota Watercraft Operator Permits, enabling them to legally and safely operate watercraft under state guidelines.

Minnesota Expands Boater Permit Requirements

By Diana Lee, Treasurer

Minnesota passed a law in 2025 requiring some adults and youth who operate motorboats, including personal watercraft, to carry a valid watercraft operator's permit, also known as a boater safety certificate.

Beginning July 1, 2026, the state expanded the requirement to individuals born after June 30, 2000. The permit requirement will gradually apply to older age groups over the next couple of years.

To obtain a permit, boaters must complete a state-approved boater safety education course. Courses are available in flexible formats, including online. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the permit requires a one-time fee of \$34.95 and remains valid for life.

Those without a permit may still operate a boat if a qualified accompanying operator is on board. Otherwise, those caught without a permit could face up to \$130 in fines.

Children under 12 are banned from operating personal watercraft or any motorboat over 75 horsepower.

Even if a boater is old enough to not be affected by the new law, many boat rental companies now require the permit for all renters.

For more information, visit the [DNR website](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us).



**Roosevelt and Lawrence
Area Lakes Association
P.O. Box 139
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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



The drive up north got a little nicer this spring thanks to RALALA volunteers who cleaned a two-mile section of Highway 6 north of Emily. With 20 volunteers helping, the work went quickly and the day was beautiful.

Special thanks to Gary and Sheila Langer and Bob and Diana Lee for organizing the spring event. Other volunteers included Martin and Janine Langemo, Gregg



and Amy Enos, Greg and Sandy Floyd, Joyce and Tony Tillemans, Brian and Susan Frericks, Anne and Dave Bonnerup, Mary Jo Exley, Carole Godbout, Kim David and Betsy Skagen.

Please join RALALA at 9 a.m. on September 19 at the Emily public parking lot (adjacent to Ace Hardware) for the Adopt a Highway fall cleanup.

Rah Rah for RALALA Organization Featured at Lakes and Loons Festival

By Sheila Langer



The Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association (RALALA) was honored to be the featured lake association at the National Loon Center's third annual Lakes and Loons Festival on Saturday, June 27, in Crosslake.

Visitors learned about RALALA's ongoing efforts to support loon populations and maintain healthy lakes. Volunteers answered questions about loon conservation and the association's mission to preserve water quality for wildlife habitat and future generations.

Volunteers enjoyed engaging with the community and sharing their passion for environmental stewardship. The loon trivia game proved to be a popular educational activity for participants of all ages.

RALALA was grateful to participate in the family-friendly event alongside more than 40 other vendors. The wide variety of exhibits and demonstrations offered visitors opportunities to explore the natural world and celebrate Minnesota's lakes and wildlife.

Gary Langer, vice president, Sheila Langer, Bob Eddy, president, and Diana Lee, treasurer, answered questions regarding loon conservation and RALALA's efforts to preserve water quality.



**Saturday,
August 15**

*The Crooked Lake Township
Lakes and Shores
Committee*

**Visit the CLT-LS Booth
at the Lions Corn Feed**

Event Details



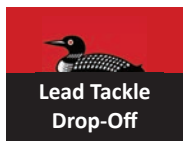
Event Date

August 15
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM



Location

Pickled Loon Saloon
44025 Hwy. 6
Emily, MN



What to Bring

Any lead fishing tackle
Minimum of 2.0 oz
to qualify for prizes

Activities

**Lead Tackle Contest
T-Shirt & Tote Coloring Transfers
Army Corps Giveaways
Lake Association & AIS Info**

Prizes

Grand Prize for most lead weight

Minn Kota Endura Max
5 Speed Trolling Motor

2nd Prize for most lead weight

18 Holes + Golf Cart
at Emily Greens Golf Course
for 4 people

Raffle Prize \$50 Gift Cards

Deer Haven on Thunder
Pickled Loon Saloon
Red Pine Cookhouse
Village Inn

Raffle winners will be announced at 3:00 PM.
Winners need not be present to win.



Contact Information
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Help rid our lakes of this poisonous material that kills loons and other wildlife.