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FALL/WINTER 2024

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RALALA LAKES ASSOCIATION

MESSAGE FROM BOB EDDY, RALALA ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

As many of you are aware, the 2024 season, much like 2023, was a complex and interesting year for the Lake Association. I feel that recap-ing our 2024 Annual Meeting is a great way to bring everyone up to speed on our accomplish-ments and the challenges we all face.

RALALA's mission is to preserve and protect the lakes and watershed. This is accomplished by de-signing, organizing and funding volunteer projects and initiatives. In conjunction with state and local resources, we also design and execute educational programs for our members and the community.



2024 Efforts and Accomplishments

Managing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Since 2016, our member lakes have been systematically sur-veyed for Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). We had a significant increase in AIS on the south end of Lake Roosevelt and a number of locations on the north end. (See AIS Update in this newsletter).

Managing AIS through Prevention

Research shows AIS is typically introduced to the lakes at boat launch sites, so we expanded prevention efforts. Please see the article in this newsletter covering the new decontam-ination unit that was located at the Roosevelt launch site this season. We also extended inspector hours at both Roosevelt and Lawrence launch sites.

Managing AIS through Early Detection

We continued the early detection process of our high usage Roosevelt and Lawrence launch sites to detect the presence of starry stonewort and/or zebra mussels. Early detection and removal provide the only chance of elimination, since there are no treatments available at this time. The good news is neither of these invasive species were found.

Managing the Land to Improve Water Quality

The Lakes Steward program encourages lakeshore owners to establish, or restore, natural shoreline to prevent contam-ination from entering lakes and prevent shoreline erosion. RALALA now has 18 residents who have obtained Lake Stew-ard status and another 20 people in the process of qualifying for this award.

Managing Water Quality

Each month, May through September, volunteers collect water samples from our member lakes. These samples are profes-sionally analyzed and results recorded in a state database. In addition, RALALA implemented a professional collection and analysis of water to monitor early signs of a leak from the Enbridge Pipeline. (See the Enbridge Update p. 7).

Challenges Going Forward

It is critical that RALALA stays on top of rapidly changing challenges including:

- Research revealing new AIS prevention and treatment information.

BUILDING AWARENESS • ENCOURAGING ACTION

Watercraft Decontamination is Increasing, Resulting Data Reveals Areas of Concern

By Gary Langer

In recent newsletters, we shared information about the new watercraft decontamination unit located at the Lake Roosevelt Public Launch Site. Here is a recap we thought would be of interest to our membership:

- In 2016, a watercraft decontamination unit was stationed near the Crooked Lake Township Town Hall during summer weekends. This was an important decision as we worked to keep Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) out of our lakes.
- Based on Cass County activity numbers, RALALA realized the Crooked Lake Township decontamination location was problematic because of the distance from the Lake Roosevelt launch site. There were only 33 watercraft decontaminations in 2022 and 30 in 2023.
- With decontamination numbers low and AIS continuing to spread across the state, RALALA entered into a partnership agreement with Crooked Lake Township and Cass County Soil and Water District in Fall 2023. The partnership made plans to staff a Landa Decontamination Unit at the Lake Roosevelt launch site. Cass County purchased the decontamination unit at a cost of \$32,000.
- During the summer of 2024, the decontamination unit was stationed at Lake Roosevelt every Thursday thru Sunday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from May 16 through September 8.
- The following data shows Lake Roosevelt Watercraft activity as reported by Cass County AIS Lake Technician Steve Henry:

• Watercraft launches	1,462
• AIS Inspection hours	942
• Watercraft decontaminations	63
• Watercraft Launches from zebra mussel infested lakes:	
May	8%
June	16%
July	26%
Aug.	26%
Sept.	23%

RALALA is encouraged by the increase in decontaminations. However, based upon the high percentage of watercraft from zebra mussel infested lakes, the number of decontaminations needs to increase to 150 in 2025.



To address this, RALALA has begun making plans for the summer of 2025.

- Improved signage about the decontamination unit on Highway 6.
- Ongoing education for watercraft users and the general public, including a planned decontamination demonstration in June 2025.
- Encouragement of watercraft owners to use the decontamination unit.
- Partnering with Cass County to increase the availability of the Landa Decontamination Unit by making it available every Wednesday through Monday.

The use of the Landa Decontamination Unit will also help RALALA determine how we can improve AIS prevention efforts in the future. We know that Lake Roosevelt has Eurasian Watermilfoil. We also know that with financial support from our membership, business members and local agencies, we should be able to manage, but probably not totally remove, this threat. We also need to work with RALALA membership and the community at large to keep zebra mussels and starry stonewort out of Roosevelt, Lawrence, Leavitt and Smokey Hollow lakes.

BUILDING AWARENESS • ENCOURAGING ACTION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM P. 1

- Urgency to protect water quality through appropriate shoreline and land management techniques.
- Understanding impacts of changing climate and weather events.
- Effects of development activities on or near the lakes.

Our goal is to develop programs and share information to keep you educated and engaged.

Planning Ahead for 2025 Critical Challenges

AIS Prevention

- Conduct annual surveys and treatment of EWM.
- Deploy decontamination unit at Lake Roosevelt launch site in partnership with Crooked Lake Township and Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Fund additional inspector hours at launch sites.
- Contract diver surveys for zebra mussels and starry stonewort and, potentially, EWM management.

Shoreline Management

- Educate property owners about the urgency of shoreline buffers to protect water quality.
- Support property owners' restoration projects.
- Continue collaboration with the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates Lake Steward Program.

Water Quality Monitoring

- Collect monthly (May-September) water samples and clarity data.
- Fund professional collection and analysis of stream water samples for early detection of Enbridge Pipeline leakage.

Funding

Costs of managing these programs have increased significantly over the last two years.

- The largest and most variable cost is for milfoil treatment. Costs for 2024 were about \$64,000. This was an increase of \$35,000 over our budgeted amount.
- Our total expenditures for 2024 are forecasted to be about \$90,000.
- RALALA expanded our fund-raising activities this year. We raised about \$82,000 via memberships, gifts and donations. That left us with a deficit of about \$8,000, which we funded from a rainy-day savings account.

We will continue to look at additional options to increase funding for our services. We have been able to respond quickly in the past to events that threaten our lakes due to the commitment and generosity of many of you. Thank you.

We ask all of you to consider making additional donations to RALALA to support the important work protecting our lakes for ourselves and future generations.

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Volunteer Spotlight

RALALA is fortunate to have benefitted from the exceptional time, creative thinking and project development of **Anne Bonnerup** for the past 12 years.

In August, Anne retired from the RALALA Board. She certainly left her mark on RALALA and the greater community with the projects she implemented and the lasting environmental education she spearheaded.



Anne has been coming to Lake Roosevelt all her life. She has seen the impact on area lakes as the number of seasonal, and now year-round, residents has increased. Her passion for the area is obvious: she became a self taught shoreline expert as she wrote and developed the Protect Our Lakes Program.

She also created the Bennie program, which helps members access experts in shoreline maintenance and lake restoration.

As part of the RALALA Board, Anne helped develop the newsletter, editing it for RALALA Art Director Kim David. She also wrote much of the literature that RALALA shares at events.

The RALALA Board will miss working with Anne and benefiting from her many talents. However, we know the legacy of her work will continue as more and more people become DNR Lakeshore Stewards and create natural shorelines.

Thank you Anne for your many years of volunteering and for all that you taught us about our environmental responsibilities.



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DNR Lake Level Monitoring Update Roosevelt & Lawrence Lakes

Lake Level Minnesota is a program in which volunteers and cooperative organizations collect and report lake levels throughout the state. Volunteer observers help the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) create permanent and credible public water level records.

Data for Roosevelt and Lawrence lakes is posted on the Minnesota DNR Lake Finder website. You may view data by individual lake at: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/lake.html?id=11004302>.

Through this monitoring, volunteers observed that from Fall 2023 through the Spring 2024 thaw, the outlet via Crooked Creek was severely restricted due to extensive beaver activity. Roosevelt's high-water level was nearly up to the record maximum level of the 2012 "Duluth Deluge" of 1270.77 feet.

Once the beaver obstructions were cleared, the area entered a period of frequent rains and the lake was slow to recede. Lake Roosevelt had "high water" until midsummer.

About mid-summer, when the lake reached more normal levels, the weather switched to "dry". According to the Minnesota State Drought Monitor, the area is now in severe drought. Lake Roosevelt is currently at the lowest level on record, but that documented record is historically short.

Water level fluctuations caused by drought, extreme rain events, flooding and beaver activity can create adverse effects. Volunteers monitoring the creek and the newly installed gauges will help RALALA better manage the impact of fluctuating lake levels on shorelines and lakeshore properties.

Volunteers use gauges to see changes in water levels before and after significant rain events. The gauge pictured on the top is located at the Lake Roosevelt boat launch and the gauge pictured on the bottom is located on Lawrence Lake at the Luscher Park boat launch.



Photos by Sheila Langer

AW Labs Reports Enbridge Water Testing Results

RALALA has contracted with AW Labs to test the water quality in Spire Valley Creek that feeds into the north end of Lake Roosevelt. RALALA took on this initiative as a way to monitor water safety after the Enbridge pipeline was constructed in 2023.

August 2024 was the twelfth month of testing with no identified issues. Because there have been no problems noted for 12 consecutive months, the testing will now take place twice a year in January and June. The water testing report is available to RALALA members at: [8-28-2024 Spire Valley Creek Test Results](#).

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Eurasian Watermilfoil on RALALA Lakes in 2024: A Special Update

As you may have heard by now, Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) expanded significantly over the last two years on Lake Roosevelt. Thankfully, Lawrence Lake is now clear from the EWM that was found late last year and Leavitt and Smokey Hollow lakes have not seen any EWM. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the organization that surveys and treats RALALA lakes. According to the DNR, the last two seasons provided a near-perfect environment for the expansion of EWM and other lake weeds and plants.

What Caused the Growth of EWM this Year?

It appears that the significant growth was influenced by a number of factors over the last two years.

In 2023, we had minimal rain. This reduced runoff into lakes, allowing the lakes to stay very clear. When lakes are clearer, the sun penetrates deeper into them and helps EWM plant fragments grow in areas we have never seen before. Also, lakes had higher temperatures—you may recall Lake Roosevelt had a fish kill due to the high temperatures—this, along with sun penetration, provided a strong growth cycle in 2023.

The 2023-2024 winter season did not help the situation. In a typical winter, ice and snow cover provides a dark environment and many plants and weeds do not survive. This scenario did not happen during the 2023-2024 winter season. Instead, we had minimal snow cover, and even saw open water on lakes in January. In addition, lakes experienced high water temperatures in the spring because of the minimal ice and snow. In fact, the DNR said it saw plants growing under the ice cover because the sun could penetrate it easily.

The map on page 9 shows the location of EWM on Lake Roosevelt, you may note that there is no EWM on Lawrence Lake.

Update continued on next page

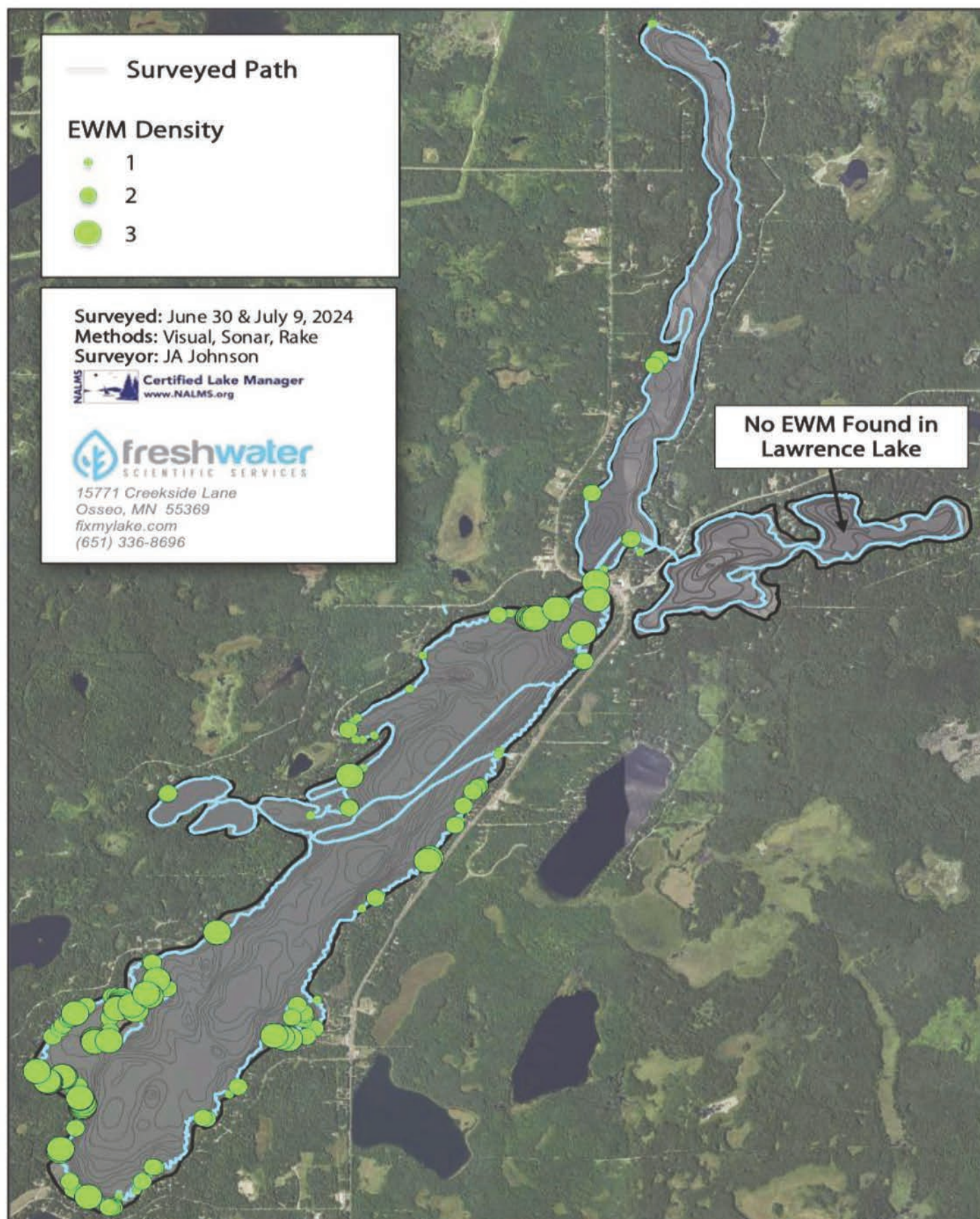


Before you go out, check this handy ice thickness chart as a guide to determine if the ice is safe.

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly-formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old, partially-thawed ice may not.

- Ice seldom freezes uniformly
- Ice formed over flowing water and currents is dangerous
- The insulating effect of snow slows down freezing.

Roosevelt Lake (#11-0043) & Lawrence Lake (#11-0053) Eurasian Watermilfoil Delineation: 2024



Eurasian Watermilfoil Survey and Treatment Costs by Lake

The following spreadsheet shows survey and treatment costs RALALA has encountered since EWM was first discovered on Lake Roosevelt. The spreadsheet does not include the additional expense of surveying for other AIS types (such as zebra mussels or starry stonewort) nor expenses incurred for launch site monitoring.

The treatment in 2023 and 2024, increased by 353% and 165% respectively. This is a massive increase and far exceeded RALALA's budget forecast for each of those years.

The cost for RALALA to manage EWM since 2016 is approximately \$200,000.

Leavitt									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Survey Cost	\$0	\$0	\$528	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$200	\$590	\$610
Treatment Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lawrence									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Survey Cost	\$0	\$0	\$822	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$200	\$915	\$1,380
Treatment Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,055	\$0
Roosevelt									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Survey Cost	\$3,200	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,962	\$1,900	\$2,050	\$2,050	\$1,850	\$2,040
Treatment Cost	\$22,497	\$14,524	\$8,866	\$6,601	\$15,891	\$6,965	\$7,007	\$21,900	\$63,690
Smokey Hollow									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Survey Cost	\$0	\$0	\$612	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$200	\$680	\$700
Treatment Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	\$25,697	\$16,124	\$12,428	\$8,913	\$18,141	\$9,365	\$9,657	\$26,990	\$68,420
Acres Treated	12.1	11.2	3.7	3.3	8.1	4.6	3.3	14.96	39.78

Update continued on next page

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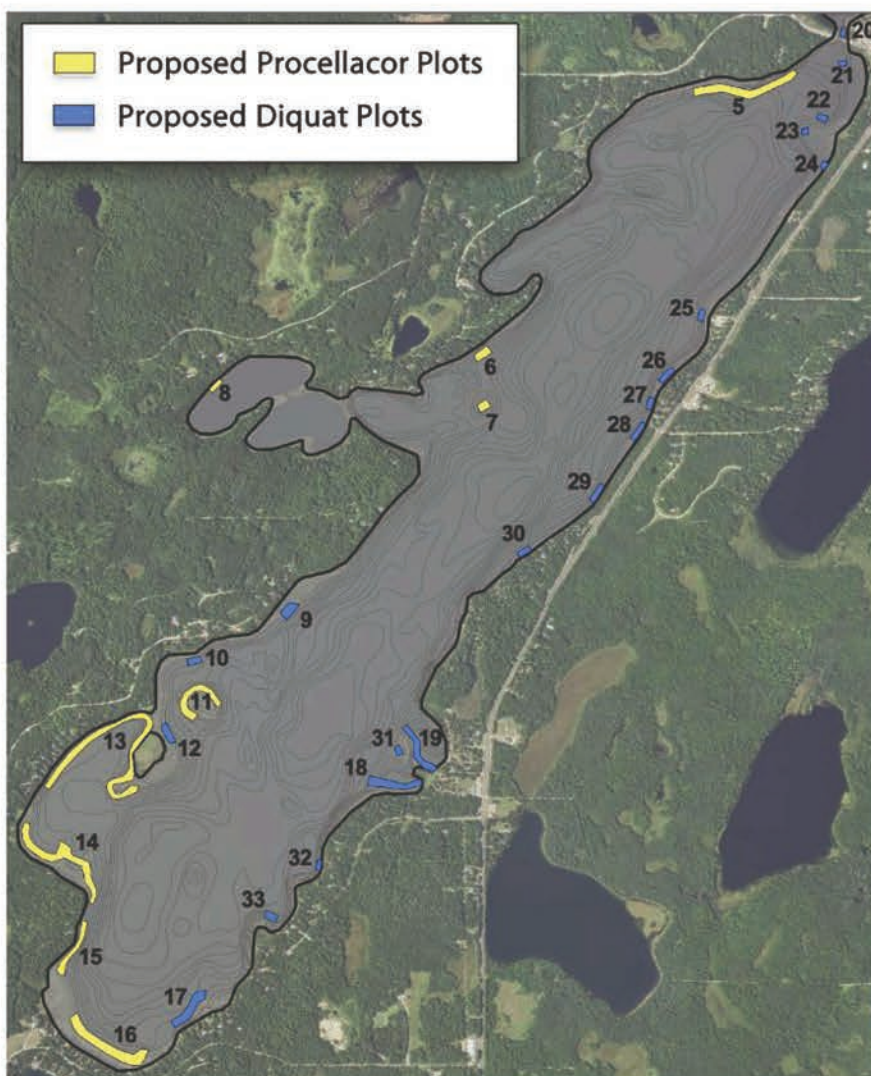


How did we Treat EWM this Year?

The treatment plan for 2024 used a combination of two different products. We used ProcellaCor for a portion of Lake Roosevelt and Diquat for the remaining portion of the lake. The attached treatment maps show the treated areas and the product that was used in each location. While the map shows proposed locations, these became the actual locations treated on August 12.

Roosevelt Lake (Southern Basin) (#11-0043) Eurasian Watermilfoil Management Plots: 2024

Plot	Area (acres)	Mean Depth (ft)	Mean EWM Density (1-3)
5	4.10	7.6	2.0
6	0.67	8.7	2.3
7	0.47	7.2	1.5
8	0.35	8.6	1.5
11	2.30	6.5	2.2
13	7.13	4.7	2.0
14	4.73	5.9	2.2
15	1.54	8.3	2.3
16	4.43	6.8	1.7
9	0.81	6.6	2.5
10	0.45	5.2	2.0
12	0.71	6.1	2.3
17	1.91	7.1	2.0
18	1.90	5.8	1.9
19	1.71	5.9	1.8
20	0.18	6.7	2.0
21	0.20	6.1	2.5
22	0.31	6.6	2.5
23	0.19	5.9	2.0
24	0.21	5.7	2.0
25	0.34	5.6	1.0
26	0.51	6.2	1.8
27	0.34	5.6	2.0
28	0.51	5.2	1.5
29	0.54	5.7	2.3
30	0.39	6.4	1.5
31	0.27	5.9	2.0
32	0.24	5.6	2.0
33	0.47	5.7	2.0
Total	37.91 acres		
Auxin	25.72 acres		
Diquat	12.19 acres		



Auxin-Mimic Herbicide (ProcellaCOR) Plots (yellow)

Based upon budget limitations, the lake group has worked with Freshwater and PLM to select prioritized plots to treat with procellaCOR. These plots tend to have denser growth (5,11,14-16), are potential fragment superspreaders (5-7, 11, 13), or are new sites of localized infestation (plots 1-4, 8).

Contact Herbicide (Diquat) Plots (blue)

The remaining plots were designated for treatment with diquat based upon smaller plot size and lower potential to spread fragments (isolated within a bay). We expect that the EWM in these diquat-treated areas will regrow next year, so these treatments are intended only as a stop-gap measure to reduce spread by fragmentation and reduce reinfestation of the areas treated with procellaCOR. If warranted, some of these areas may be treated with a systemic herbicide in the future to provide more long-term control.

Update continued on next page

Roosevelt Lake (Northern Basin) (#11-0043)

Eurasian Watermilfoil Management Plots: 2024

The RALALA survey consultant reviewed a sampling of the lake during the week of August 19 and found no active EWM plants. We hope this means that the treatment was successful, but will confirm this in the 2025 survey. We know we need to address some regrowth where we used the Diquat Herbicide, but we are hopeful that the ProcellaCor treatment areas will eliminate the majority of the plants in those areas.



 Proposed EWM Plots

Plot	Area (acres)	Mean Depth (ft)	Mean EWM Density (1-3)
1	0.10	8.2	1.0
2	0.39	6.9	2.0
3	0.25	9.2	2.0
4	0.19	8.2	1.7
Total	0.93 acres		

Given that these are newly identified sites and still very localized, we recommend treating these sites aggressively with a systemic herbicide (procellaCOR).



Eurasian-watermilfoil-plant

Steps that can be Taken to Help in the Future

RALALA has come up with the following actionable items to help address EWM:

- Monitor the lake and report any plant(s) that you believe are invasive, such as EWM. You can report them to [RALALA](#).
- When boating, stay clear of all weed and plant beds on the lake. Motoring through the weeds creates an opportunity for any EWM to be cut up, and the fragments can easily become new EWM plants. Minimizing impact on plant and weed beds will reduce EWM growth.
- Become an official EWM Detector. Registration for this program has closed for 2024, but will open again in 2025.
- Encourage neighbors to join RALALA and donate to help support the treatment of EWM. You may provide membership dues and donations here. If you prefer, you may download the membership form here.
- Consider becoming a volunteer AIS Detector. This course is available via the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota. This is an online course.
- If you donated to RALALA this year, we would like to thank you for your generosity and support. If you have not donated, please consider doing so to help manage EWM on our lakes.

RALALA BENNIES are available:

RALALA will **reimburse** property owners **\$100** of the **\$150** fee for Crow Wing SWCD site visits or **\$500** for completed eligible projects. Cass SWCD provides site visits at no charge.

ralala.lakes@gmail.com

Attention: BENNIES



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Many Property Owners Attend 2024 RALALA Annual Meeting

RALALA saw good attendance at its annual meeting on August 3. Nearly 50 people attended the event.

Immense work by members of the RALALA Board goes into hosting the annual meeting. Board members strive to create an event that is both interesting and informative for lake property owners. The Board wants to extend a special shout out to Board President Bob Eddy, whose effort was especially remarkable and appreciated.

The meeting began by addressing annual business items, including approval of 2023 Annual Minutes, a treasurer's report, election of directors and the president's summary of RALALA's objectives and activities.

Guest speaker Maddi Nistler, from the National Loon Center, provided an entertaining and educational presentation on Minnesota's beloved loons. We learned about their life cycle, geographical populations, migration timing and flyways, breed varieties, loon call meanings, nesting facts, threats to loons and how we can help protect their health and safety. She also updated us on the soon-to-be-built National Loon Center in Crosslake that is estimated to be completed in 2026.

Above: President Bob Eddy presenting at the Annual Meeting

RALALA President Bob Eddy provided information on a variety of topics and issues driving RALALA's projects and activities including:

- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Measures.
- History of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) found and acreage treated 2016-present.
- 2024 EWM survey survey and the results.
- And much more – check out the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes on the RALALA website: <https://ralalalakes.org/>.

RALALA Vice President Gary Langer provided an update on launch site management, including the new Landa Decontamination Unit, expanded inspector hours, new kiosk and signage and what RALALA is doing to help protect the health of our lakes and prevent the introduction of invasive species.

Please consider attending the 2025 annual meeting next August. In addition to providing you with worthwhile information, it is a chance for the RALALA Board to hear your comments, questions and concerns, which in turn help drive the organization's goals, activities and decisions. You can check the RALALA website to see all meeting minutes as well as a list of directors and officers.

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Finding out why Loons are Disappearing from our Lakes



Editor's Note: *Sheila Langer participates in the Loon Project, a scientific investigation of Minnesota's declining loon population that is directed by Walter Piper of Chapman University in Orange, California. You can learn more about the Loon Project at <https://loonproject.org/>.*

In early May 2024, a few members of RALALA, myself included, began monitoring loons. Loons start returning to our lakes shortly after ice out. Early loon arrivals are territorial as they actively seek partners and nesting sites.

We started the season off on Lake Roosevelt with a higher water level than in recent years, which left some old nests unusable.

The loons were not the only birds taking up residency on our lakes. Lake Roosevelt had eagles in at least three locations keeping a watchful eye out from their vantage points, the tallest trees.

Around the third week of May, a torrential downpour delivered nearly four inches of rain just as two loon pairs began nesting on south Roosevelt's islands. This coincided with black flies making their annual appearance. Nesting loons become sitting targets as each mate takes turns incubating their eggs. The infestation can become so miserable that loons are forced to abandon their nests.

In addition to the two nesting pairs on south Roosevelt, a third nesting pair was spotted on north Roosevelt. We had great expectations that loon chicks would soon be hatching.

On the morning of June 7, the loons on south Roosevelt were agitated. They were flying low across the lake and their distress calls echoed in the bay. The loons were sounding an alarm that a threat was nearby. When we inspected, we discovered two south Roosevelt nests were gone. We wondered about the reason. Was it the high-water level? Did these two loon families nest too close to one another and cause a territorial dispute? Or was it because of the eagles? Whatever the reason, both nests on south Roosevelt were gone and both pairs of loons soon left the area.

Days later, I took another look around south Roosevelt hoping to see the loons. Loons have been known to re-nest if their nests are lost early enough

in the season. Sadly, this was not the case with these two pairs of loons.

As we continued to monitor the lake, we were relieved to see the loons on north Roosevelt were still sitting on their nest. Thankfully, this pair had one chick that hatched around June 11. North Roosevelt is the narrow part of our lake and this mated loon pair has raised a chick in this area in previous years. Many boaters using the lake have learned how to keep a watchful eye out for this family, and the adult loons have become seasoned at dodging skiers and jet skis.

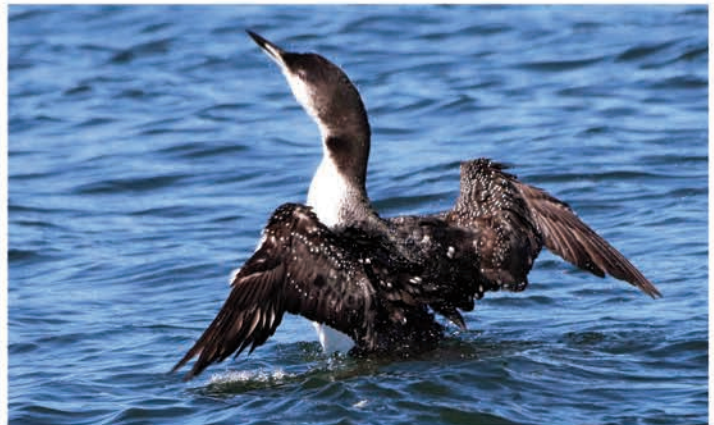
On June 23, we spotted one more pair of loons on south Roosevelt's islands. This pair had one fluffy black chick with them. Both adults were busy searching for minnows and small fish to feed their new arrival. This chick was a full week younger than the chick on north Roosevelt.

Our final summer count for Lake Roosevelt was four nesting loon pairs. Two of these nests failed. The remaining two nesting loons each had one chick. These two loon chicks matured into independent juveniles and took part in the fall migration. Smokey Hollow Lake also had a nesting loon pair with two chicks.

Why would such a big lake like Roosevelt only have two chicks successfully hatch? Why were these two loon families only hatching one chick instead of the traditional two? Hopefully Dr. Walter Piper's study program will help provide answers. On July 24, Roosevelt's adult loons and their chicks were banded by Dr. Piper's team and the bands were visible the following morning.

RALALA and I extend a special thank you to those who helped with loon monitoring this summer: Bonnie McGowan, north Lake Roosevelt; Deb Nicholson and Roger Brekken, south Lake Roosevelt; and Melissa Anderson, Smokey Hollow Lake.

If you would like to volunteer to help monitor the loons on Roosevelt, Lawrence, Leavitt or Smokey Hollow lakes next summer, we would love to hear from you. Please contact RALALA at ralala.lakes@gmail.com.



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently published two articles on shoreline best practices. One article explains how to use trees and shrubs to stabilize the shoreline, while the other focuses on planting perennials to anchor the shore and provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Planting Trees and Shrubs on Your Shoreline

Shoreline vegetation provides critical habitat for some of our most important plants and animals. It shades the water, buffers wave action, filters runoff, stabilizes eroding shores, and preserves the scenic character of our waters.

A mass planting with bareroot trees, shrubs, and small containerized herbaceous plants is an excellent way to restore your shoreline and encourage quick establishment. Pick plants based on their site preferences (e.g. soil/light/moisture), and plant them thick to minimize erosion.

- Preserve any native plants that are established on your shoreline and plan your design around them.
- Keep dead and fallen trees to provide habitat for fish, ducks, birds, and turtles.
- In addition to trees and shrubs, add a groundcover of smaller forbs, grasses, and sedges. Recommended species can be found in the companion flyer *Planting Perennials on Your Shoreline* (https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/shoreland/shoreline-herbaceous.pdf) or online at bwsr.state.mn.us/seed-mixes.



Tree and shrub list

The tree and shrub species listed here prefer moist to medium-wet soil conditions but should be adaptable to a wide range of soil types, regions, and locations.

Low shrubs

False indigo (F)
Leatherwood (No)(S)
Northern bush honeysuckle (S)
Sweet gale (No)(F)

Understory trees

Blue beech (So)(S)
Chokecherry
Northern white cedar (No)

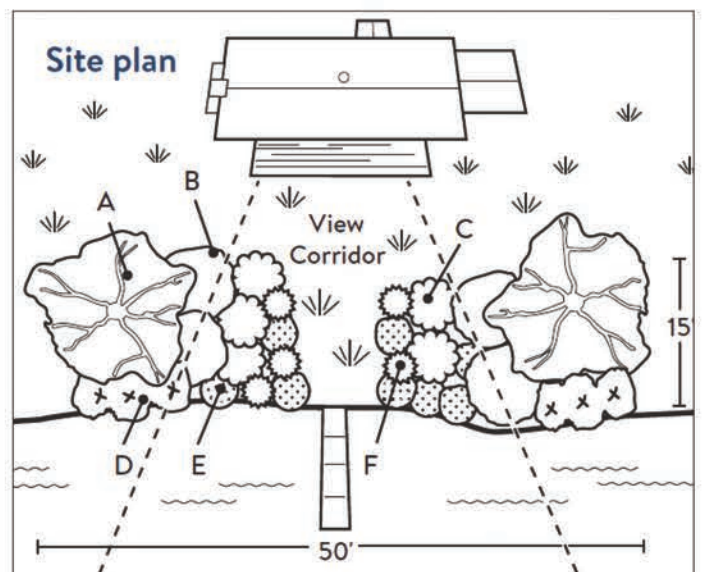
High shrubs

American elderberry (So)
Beaked hazelnut (No)(S)
Bladdernut (So)(F)(S)
Chokeberry (No)(F)
Nannyberry (S)
Ninebark
Pussy willow (F)(M)
Red-osier dogwood (S)
Silky dogwood (So)(F)

Canopy trees

American basswood (S)
Hackberry (So)(F)
Red maple (F)
Silver maple (F)

(No)= Northern MN only
(So)= Southern MN only
(F)= Flood/water tolerant
(S)= Shade tolerant
(M)= Use in moderation



Key

A. American basswood
B. Chokecherry
C. Nannyberry
D. Pussy willow
E. Red-osier dogwood
F. Northern bush honeysuckle

Planting Perennials on Your Shoreline



Shoreline vegetation provides critical habitat for some of Minnesota's most important plants and animals. It shades the water, buffers wave action, filters runoff, stabilizes eroding shores, and preserves the scenic character of our waters.

A mass planting with bareroot trees, shrubs, and small containerized herbaceous plants such as those listed here is an excellent way to restore your shoreline and encourage quick establishment. Pick plants based on their site preferences (e.g. soil/light/moisture/winter hardiness), and plant them thick to minimize erosion.

- Preserve any native plants that are established on your shoreline. Plan your design around them.
- Keep dead and fallen trees to provide habitat for fish, ducks, birds, and turtles.
- When planting immediately adjacent to shore, tilling is not recommended as a site preparation method because it can cause erosion and runoff into the water.
- Supplement your planting with trees and shrubs because they have stronger roots. Recommended species can be found in the companion flyer *Planting Trees and Shrubs on Your Shoreline* (https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/shoreland/shoreline-trees-shrubs.pdf).
- View additional species and seed mixes online at bwsr.state.mn.us/seed-mixes.

Plant list

The species listed here prefer moist to medium-wet soil conditions but are adaptable to a wide range of soil types, regions, and locations.

Grasses and Sedges

Bottle brush sedge
Canada bluejoint grass (M)
Common rush (No)(F)
Fowl manna grass
Fox sedge
Prairie cordgrass
River bulrush (F)
Switchgrass (F)(M)
Virginia wild rye (S)

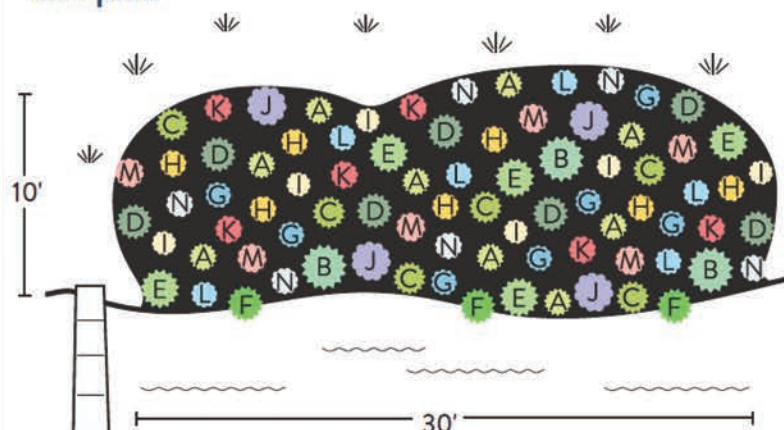
Forbs

Anise hyssop
Black-eyed susan
Blue flag iris (F)
Blue vervain
Canada anemone (S)
Common boneset
Golden alexander (S)
Grass-leaved goldenrod
Great blue lobelia (So)
Great St. John's wort

Ironweed (So)
Joe-Pye weed
Meadow blazing star (So)
Monkey flower
Mountain mint
New England aster (So)
Obedient plant
Ox eye sunflower
Riddell's goldenrod (So)
Sneezeweed
Swamp milkweed (F)
Tall cinquefoil (S)
Turtlehead
White meadowsweet

(No)=Northern MN only
(So)=Southern MN only
(F)=Flood/water tolerant
(S)=Shade tolerant
(M)=Use in moderation

Site plan



Key

Grasses and sedges

A Bottle brush sedge #9
B Canada bluejoint grass #3
C Common rush #6
D Fowl manna grass #7
E Prairie cordgrass #5
F River bulrush #3

Forbs

G Blue vervain #7
H Golden alexander #7
I Grass-leaved goldenrod #6
J Joe-Pye weed #4
K Mountain mint #6
L Obedient plant #6
M Swamp milkweed #6
N White meadowsweet #6

Perennials should be spaced 1.5' - 2' apart. A good mix of plants contains a foundation of native grasses and sedges.

The Common Loon

Article and photos by
Trista Snapko



As ALL Minnesotans know, there is nothing common about our loons. With piercing red eyes, blue-green iridescent necks and intricate feather patterns, their haunting calls echo throughout our lakes. This Minnesota State Bird evokes a profound sense of time and place that many of us connect to our youth and our journeys into lake country.

Our state is home to over 12,000 loons. The highest population of loons in the contiguous United States. Although considered stable, the MNDNR designated the Common Loon as a Species in Greatest Conservation Need in 2015.

The biggest threat to our loons include climate change, shoreline over development, increased recreational activity, and lead poisoning. Also included is the short and long term impact of oil spills along the Gulf of Mexico. The Minnesota loon population was greatly affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010.



Earlier this year we witnessed an intriguing loon activity called "wing-rowing". This is a performance that loons execute to move themselves quickly across the water to create distance from threats such as humans or other territorial loons. You can imagine how much energy it consumes. Here's a video of it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGTZi3Awks>

Another thing about these fascinating waterbirds is that during migration season loon parents will leave behind their young. A lot of us will see large social gatherings of juvenile loons (also called asylums, rafts or a water dance) congregating on the south end of Roosevelt. That's because the adult loons have already left, making it seem like the juveniles have been abandoned. This isn't exactly true. Some theories are that the adults, aware that their young are not quite prepared for their long distance journey south, leave first in case the lake begins to run out of food. This is instinctual and a behavior that would ensure that their young have enough to eat. Another theory is that the loon parents' survival skills take over and they head south, regardless if their young can fly or not.

Like many Minnesotans, loons go south for the winter. They end up wintering around the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida coasts. The juveniles, who migrate south later than their parents, remain as "snowbirds" down there for over three years before returning near

their nesting grounds in Minnesota. This is interesting behavior and something that adds to the loon mystique. When we see the social gatherings in autumn we notice them flapping their wings in preparation for their maiden flight.



So, if you get a chance to be on our RALALA lakes in late September and October, you'll likely see some young loons hanging out together and it's very normal.

Unlike most birds, loons are special because they spend almost their entire lives on the water. They are water dependent birds and need a large body of water to gain speed for taking flight. They can also fly 75 mph at a 5,000ft altitude and live 20-30 years old.

Dependent upon eyesight to hunt, loons thrive in lakes with good water clarity. If you have a cabin or a lake home consider yourself lucky to have loon activity on it. It's a very good sign and important to keep doing everything you can to preserve and protect the waters that attract loons. Maintaining a natural shoreline free of pesticides is essential in keeping our lakes clean for these aquatic beauties for generations to come.



Living with Ice Ridges on Your Shoreline

Cynthia Hagley
University of Minnesota Duluth

If you've ever heard the heart-stopping sound of lake ice cracking under your feet, then you have firsthand knowledge of the tremendous power contained in that sheet of ice. What you are hearing (and feeling) when the ice cracks and snaps on cold nights, is the ice contracting in response to cooling air temperatures. The opposite situation causes ice ridges to form – warmer air temperatures cause the whole ice sheet to expand with great force, pushing against the shoreline. Added to this are the impacts of wind moving ice around as lakes thaw. In some cases, such as along hard rocky shorelines, we get to enjoy beautiful pressure ridges in the ice, but quite often the result is a newly formed earth mound or ice ridge pushed up against the shore. Most ice ridge impacts usually occur in years with repeated temperature fluctuations and little insulation from snow.

Although property owners may be unhappy about this natural process, it is not something we can prevent. In fact, these natural ridges can be beneficial



to the lake by collecting nutrients and sediments on the shore ward side of the ridge, preventing them from reaching the lake and harming water quality. In natural situations, plants thrive in these fertile ice ridge areas, helping stabilize the shoreline and creating habitat for birds and wildlife.

The easiest approach to avoiding ice ridge problems is to minimize disturbance of the natural vegetation along your shoreline and to keep your personal property out of harm's way. This is one reason why shoreland regulations include "setbacks" restricting development near the shore.

Unfortunately, many of us are living with already-disturbed shoreline, where ice ridge damage has caused significant problems. If your shoreline fits this description, what alternatives do you have?

Rip rap, often used to prevent shoreline erosion, is a barrier of large rocks placed along the water's edge. While it can be effective against waves, rip rap is still vulnerable to damage from ice. During freeze-thaw cycles, ice expands and contracts, pushing and displacing rocks, which can weaken the structure over time. Additionally, ice sheets forming on

Ice Ridges continued on P. 24

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Thank You, Volunteers



Left to right:
Kim, Sara, Greg,
Larry, Kristina,
Erick, Daniel, Jan,
Mark, Roger.

RALALA extends a big thanks to volunteers who participated in the fall clean-up of the two-mile stretch of Highway 6 north of Emily.

Volunteers are always welcome. Watch for Fall 2025 clean-up dates in our newsletter, on our website <https://ralalalakes.org/> and on our Facebook page.

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Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District Pre-Order 2025 Tree and Plant Sale

Every year the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (CWSWCD) conducts a sale. Customers pre-order trees, shrubs and plants on line. The sale begins in January until supplies run out, with plant pick-up in May.

Order Online, In Person or by Phone:

January 3 to March 31, 2025
(or until products are sold out).

Discount on January 3rd only!
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No mail orders accepted.

Pick Up:
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May 1 and May 2, 2025

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Returns: Returns for trees and plants are accepted before 4 p.m. on February 14, 2025, with a \$25 restocking fee.

For more information:

www.cswcd.org/nativetreeseedlings



Wildlife around Lake Roosevelt. Photo by Greg Floyd



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Protect Our Loons by Getting the Lead Out



Lead is dangerous to loons, swans and any water birds that pick up small stones from the lake bottom to aid in their digestion. Just one split-shot sinker can kill a loon. In fact, lead poisoning is the most significant cause of mortality in adult loons.

To help remove lead sinkers from area lakes, RALALA and the CLT Lakes and Shores Committee worked together to increase public awareness about this serious issue. The two organizations hosted an engaging booth and display at The Lions' Corn Feed on August 17. The annual family-friendly event draws a large crowd with a variety of activities, music, booths and great food.

The focus of the joint effort was three-fold: raising awareness and understanding about aquatic invasive species (AIS), water safety and the dangers of lead in tackle boxes and lakes.



Get the Lead Out Event Highlights

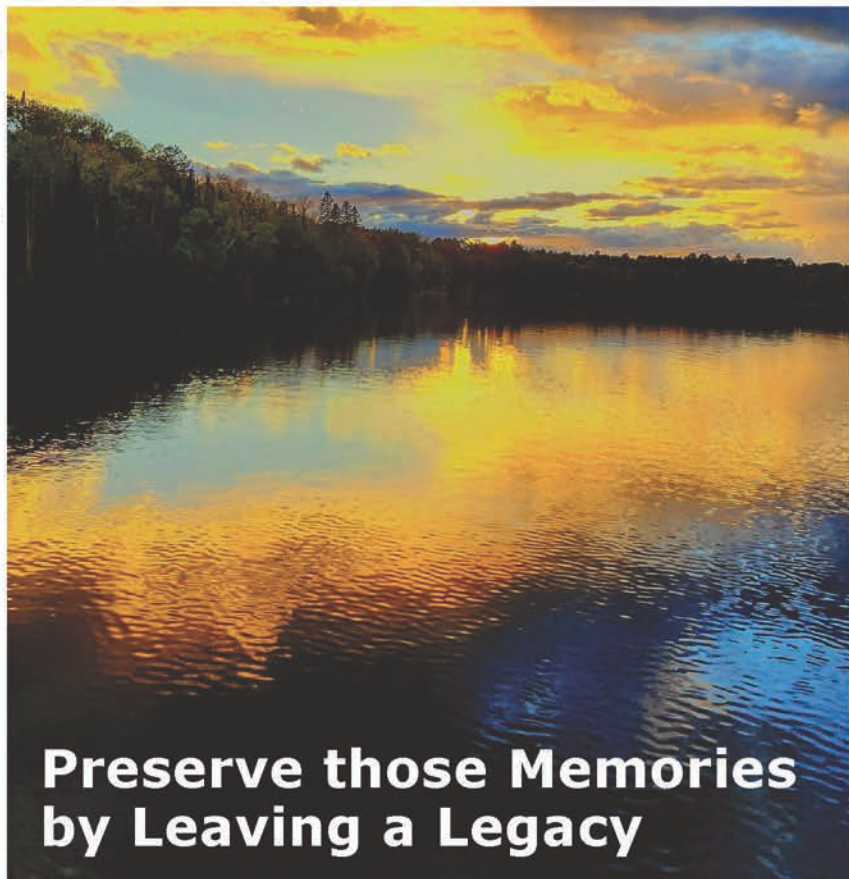
- We collected nine pounds of lead tackle. When added to the lead tackle collected during the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Lions Corn Feed events, it totals 110 pounds of lead tackle—a state record.
- 40 young visitors received water safety material donated by the Crosslake Army Corp of Engineers. Children also colored water safety transfers that were then ironed onto a free shirt.
- Cass County AIS Lake Technician Steve Henry shared educational information about AIS.
- Two hundred packets of non-lead tackle were given to people who visited the booth.
- RALALA shared information about its mission to preserve and protect our lakes and watershed for today and for future generations.



A big thank you to the following local businesses for contributions of prizes. Individuals who brought in lead tackle were eligible to win prizes in a drawing.

- Land O' Lakes Marine
- Crooked Lake Cafe
- Village Inn
- The Channel Bar
- Emily Greens
- Red Pine Restaurant
- Pickled Loon Saloon
- Cat's Meow

The 2025 Lions' Corn Feed will be held on August 16. RALALA encourages you to sort through your tackle boxes and remove any lead tackle as the season draws to a close. Non-lead tackle is now readily available for purchase where fishing supplies are sold.



Preserve those Memories by Leaving a Legacy

We all have our favorite lake memories. Maybe it was the look on your kid's face the first time they landed a fish, or perhaps it was when you saw the grandeur of the Northern Lights or maybe it was when you fell asleep listening to the haunting sound of loons calling out during the night.

Sadly, our lakes are facing some serious threats, and special memories like these may not continue without your help.

With the increase in contaminants and encroaching Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), we are under a constant threat of losing what we cherish. Since 2016, RALALA has spent more than \$215,000 on AIS prevention and treatment. Our modest dues don't even come close to covering these escalating costs. This is where you can help.

Please give some thought to the following ways you can leave your lake legacy.


1. Make a year end (or any time) tax deductible contribution. RALALA is recognized by the IRS as a Tax Deductible 501(c)(3) Public Charity. You can still show people your lake passion by making donations, even if you don't itemize.
2. When suggesting memorial donations for a loved one, or directed by a family to donate to a charity of your choice, don't forget to add RALALA as a recipient. We will make sure each donor receives a thank you note along with the tax information.
3. Lastly, consider RALALA when you do your own estate planning. Leaving an unpolluted healthy fishing and recreation lake to your heirs is just as important, if not more so, than leaving them your cabin.

Help fund the many important projects of RALALA, because you care about preserving and protecting our lakes for future generations and the many memories to come.


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Wildlife around Lake Roosevelt.
Photo by Greg Floyd





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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



RALALA Grateful for Ongoing Support

This is the season of gratitude. In addition to the support we receive from membership dues, members' generous donations to EQPI and business sponsors/newsletter advertisers, we want to take this opportunity to thank the local community organizations and government entities that assist us with expenses related to AIS prevention and treatment – in the form of grants or via direct payments to vendors. In 2024, RALALA received financial assistance from:

- **Crooked Lake Township**
- **City of Emily**
- **Outing Chamber of Commerce**
- **Crooked Lake Township Fire Department**
- **Cass County Soil & Water Conservation District**

Ice Ridges continued from P. 19

the water can exert pressure on the rocks as they move, leading to further instability and potential erosion.

A more resilient solution is a natural shoreline anchored by trees and deep-rooted native plants. Native vegetation absorbs wave energy, reducing erosion while providing a flexible, self-sustaining buffer that withstands ice better than rigid structures. This approach not only stabilizes the soil, but also supports local biodiversity and improves water quality, making it an effective, environmentally friendly alternative to rip rap.

Remember – the cheapest, most natural and sustainable, and most effective



solution is to accept ice ridges as part of a natural shoreline, retain or plant native vegetation and enjoy those amazing winter nights of cracking ice.

www.dnr.state.mn.us/rvs/sl/ridges.html

Note: As you consider alternatives, remember that it is best to check with your local Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Area Hydrologist and county Soil and Water Conservation District (go to <https://www.shorelandmanagement.org/us.html> for contact information). They can give you advice, and provide information if permits are required for some activities.