



**Lake Washington  
Improvement Association**  
of Meeker County



***Fall 2021***



*Is Our Lake Changing?*

*Read Our DNR Comments - Page 13!*

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# FALL NEWSLETTER, 2021

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The Lake Washington Newsletter is published three times a year (Spring, Summer and Fall) by the Lake Washington Improvement Association. It is distributed free to lake property owners and friends around Lake Washington.

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# End Of The Dock

*By Steve Grotbo, President*

It was great to finally have an in person event at our annual meeting. The food was great, especially the pork chops. I really enjoyed the Q & A portion, which I think most agree is better compared to having a speaker. If you still have questions, feel free to drop a note or give a call.

We are in need of another board member as Cindy Hewitt has gotten too busy with her day job. Ray Brueggemeier has put his name in the hat for the May elections. If any others want the opportunity to serve on the board, please let us know.

The new culvert / bridge between Stella and Washington is now scheduled for next year. This coincides with the re-paving of CSAH 14 being delayed to 2023 due to funding. Once Congress passes the multi trillion dollar infrastructure improvement and we get a very small percentage of that money, the passage way should be completed. The DNR verbally agreed to not having a bottom, so making progress.

Many people expressed concerns about the low lake level. The resident historians tell me that 1988 was much worse and by the following year everything was back to normal. Apparently the 1930's were even worse, which is why the dam was built in that timeframe. If you are struggling to get your boat off the lift, check out the E-Z Dock & Lift ad at the front of the newsletter. Their barges can lift your boat safely off so you are ready for winter.

Weed control for homeowner's property was brought up during the annual meeting. Unfortunately Lake Restoration fell short of getting the 20 homes signed up for doing treatment this season. Perhaps next season they will hit the 20 count in early spring.



# Zebra Mussels

By Dave Rathe

Mike Wosmek installed the zebra mussel “hotels” (settlement plates) in the same locations as last year on May 31<sup>st</sup> and picked them up Labor Day, September 6th. Thanks Mike and thanks to the homeowners gracious enough to allow a hotel on their dock!

It was hard to believe this year, but there was only 1 (yes just one) zebra mussel on any of the hotels. The reason for this may be the dry and low water levels this summer. Or, unfavorable water temperature for zebra mussel propagation. Equipment removed from the lake also shows significant reduction in new zebra mussels.

One thing of note, reports from Stella indicate they had a big hatch of zebra mussels this summer. Lake Stella’s water temperature is lower than Lake Washington’s by several degrees throughout the summer. So, this might be an indicator of why there are population propagation differences this summer between the two lakes.

Zebra Mussel “Hotel” (Settlement Plate) Locations



Lone Zebra Mussel at Site #6



One of 11 zebra mussel hotels used in Lake Washington. Plates are either white or gray.



The hotels have been photographed, cleaned, and repaired so they are ready for next year. Unfortunately, there is currently no zebra mussel management approach applicable to Lake Washington.

# 2021 Grant Funding Programs

By Sharon Daniels, Grant Coordinator

Cooler Fall weather is here and the colors are beginning to change; summer is over! With Fall upon us it is now time to begin the grant process for MCAL and AIS for 2022.

Board members and others have been busy all year long doing projects around the lake; thus, the In-Kind (volunteer hours) have accumulated. I am working on completing an excel chart showing in-kind hours for 2021. There are 784 volunteer hours! THAT'S A LOT OF VOLUNTEER HOURS INTO KEEPING THE LAKE AT ITS BEST BY MANY PEOPLE! THANKS TO ALL! In September I started to gather receipts for expenses for completing the lake projects and I will be billing out invoices for reimbursement from grant money allotted to us in 2021 by Meeker County Association of Lakes (MCAL), as well for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).

October 22, 2021 is the deadline to have the AIS grant application (aka: Request for Proposal / RFP) completed for 2022. AIS end of year reports (EOY) are due October 29, 2021, and all invoices for reimbursement must be completed and turned into the AIS coordinator prior to November 15, 2021. In 2022 the board will be monitoring for Eurasian Milfoil, and other AIS species, and requesting treatment as necessary. Any grant funding approved for 2022 will go toward AIS inspections and treatment, I-LIDS monitoring and maintenance, and AIS education for new board members.

The MCAL grant application is due November 1, 2021 for year 2022. I will be requesting reimbursement from grant funds for 2021 completed projects prior to October 15, 2021. The Meeker County Board of Commissioners have made some changes to the grant funds. Firstly, if we do not use the fund amount granted in 2021, then we lose the dollars not used - there is no longer a carryover of funds to the next year. Secondly, water testing funds requested will now come out of the same allotted monies as all MCAL projects (water testing used to be reimbursed from a separate fund through Meeker County).

There are a lot of new county board members this year. Take some time to learn who they are and call upon them. They need to be urged to make the lakes a priority, to increase the funding out of the budget, and to realize Meeker Lakes are vital to this county and have a huge impact on drawing people to live and stay here and enjoy all recreational activities on our lakes.

LWIA board members have identified MCAL projects for 2022 for the MCAL application. They are: continue the process of water testing and monitoring the water flow of 20 lake inlets around the lake for sediment and other concerns.

These projects are vital to us as lake owners, and to the public to keep our lake at its best. We apply for approved grant funding and request reimbursement to help defray the costs of all our projects each year. If anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns in regards to grant processing you can reach me at [sdaniels@grdaniels.com](mailto:sdaniels@grdaniels.com).

To all the volunteers that helped work on projects during 2021, **THANK YOU!**

**An angel appears and says, "I'll grant you whichever of three blessings you choose. Wisdom, beauty, or ten million dollars."**

Immediately, the man chooses wisdom. There is a flash of lightning, he is transformed, but then he just sits there, staring down at the table.

One of his colleagues whispers, "You have great wisdom. Say something!"

The man says, "I should have taken the money."

# Cormorants And Pelicans

By Steve Grotbo, President

The consensus seems to be that the cormorants were not nearly as bad this season. The number of cormorants at Pigeon Lake has not changed, but it seems they are feeding at other area lakes. So getting a permit associated with Lake Washington does not seem feasible at the moment.

The key data that caught my eye was walleye count from the July 26<sup>th</sup> DNR “standard gill net sets”. Here it shows 192 walleye with an average weight of 1.3 pounds. The following are the counts for each type of fish, for which you can see walleye is the largest.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>
Walleye	192
Bluegill	167
Black Crappie	90
Largemouth Bass	44
Smallmouth Bass	39
Yellow Bullhead	35
Northern Pike	31
Yellow Perch	25
Pumpkinseed	17
Hybrid Sunfish	11
White Sucker	8
Golden Shiner	7
Black Bullhead	6

What really interested me was a study done in Wisconsin on how “Walleye populations in many Wisconsin lakes are declining, while largemouth bass populations in many lakes are increasing”. My thought is that Lake Washington follows Wisconsin lakes as compared to northern Minnesota from a climate standpoint. This study points to the fact that walleye need the cooler water and thus won't be in the traditional parts of Lake Washington. So I guess for the best walleye fishing you need to find the cold spots of the lake. The full study is available at: <https://labs.waterdata.usgs.gov/visualizations/climate-change-walleye-bass/index.html>.



# Water Quality

By Dave Rathe

**Lake Water:** Despite the recent rain, Lake Washington's water level is down significantly over the last several weeks. The estimated drop in lake level is between 16 and 22 inches. The US Drought Monitor ([droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)) has Meeker County in a "severe drought" condition. This likely will change with the recent rain on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Severe drought is defined as crop & pasture losses likely, water shortages common, and water restrictions imposed.

4 of the 5 planned lake water samples have been completed as of this writing, with September's sample remaining to be taken. The samples are taken from Site 101, which is one of the deepest parts of the lake. Each sample measures the amount of algae (Chlorophyll-a) and nutrients (Total Phosphorus) in the water. We also take a Secchi disk reading to determine the clarity of the water in feet at sites 101, 205, 207, 208, and 209 every two weeks. We lower the white Secchi disk into the water and measure the depth reached when we can no longer see the disk.

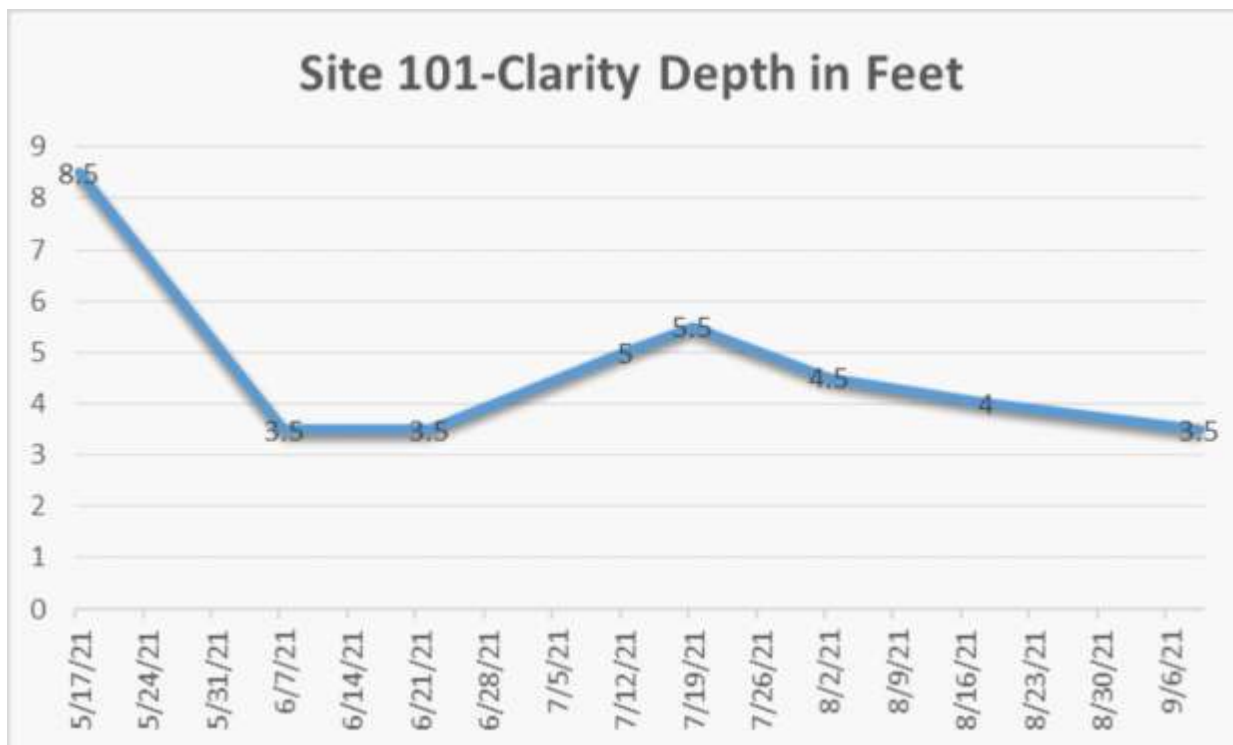
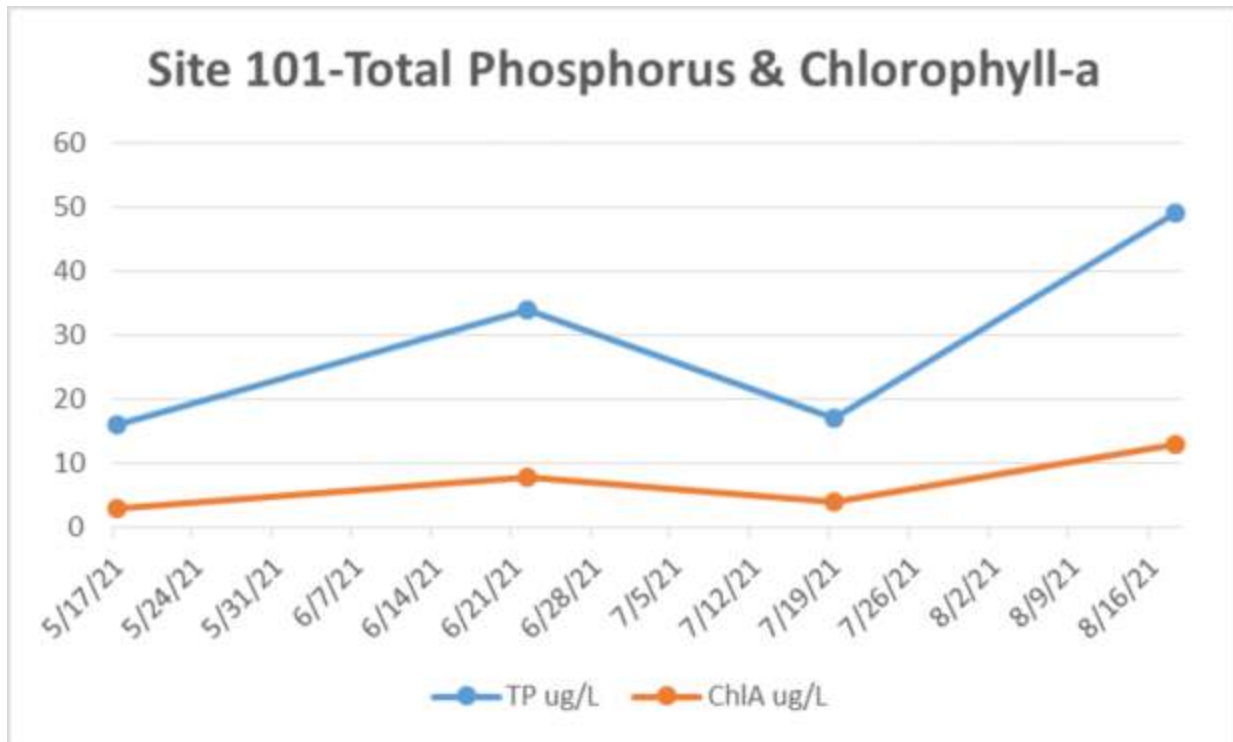


*Note: Clarities at 205, 207, 208, and 209 sites are typically within +/- 0.5 feet and therefore not shown in the graphs on the following page.*



## Water Quality (continued)

Total Phosphorus and Chlorophyll-a averages for 2021 are very close to 2020. However, the clarity average is about 0.5 feet less clear. This may be due to the low water levels seen this summer.

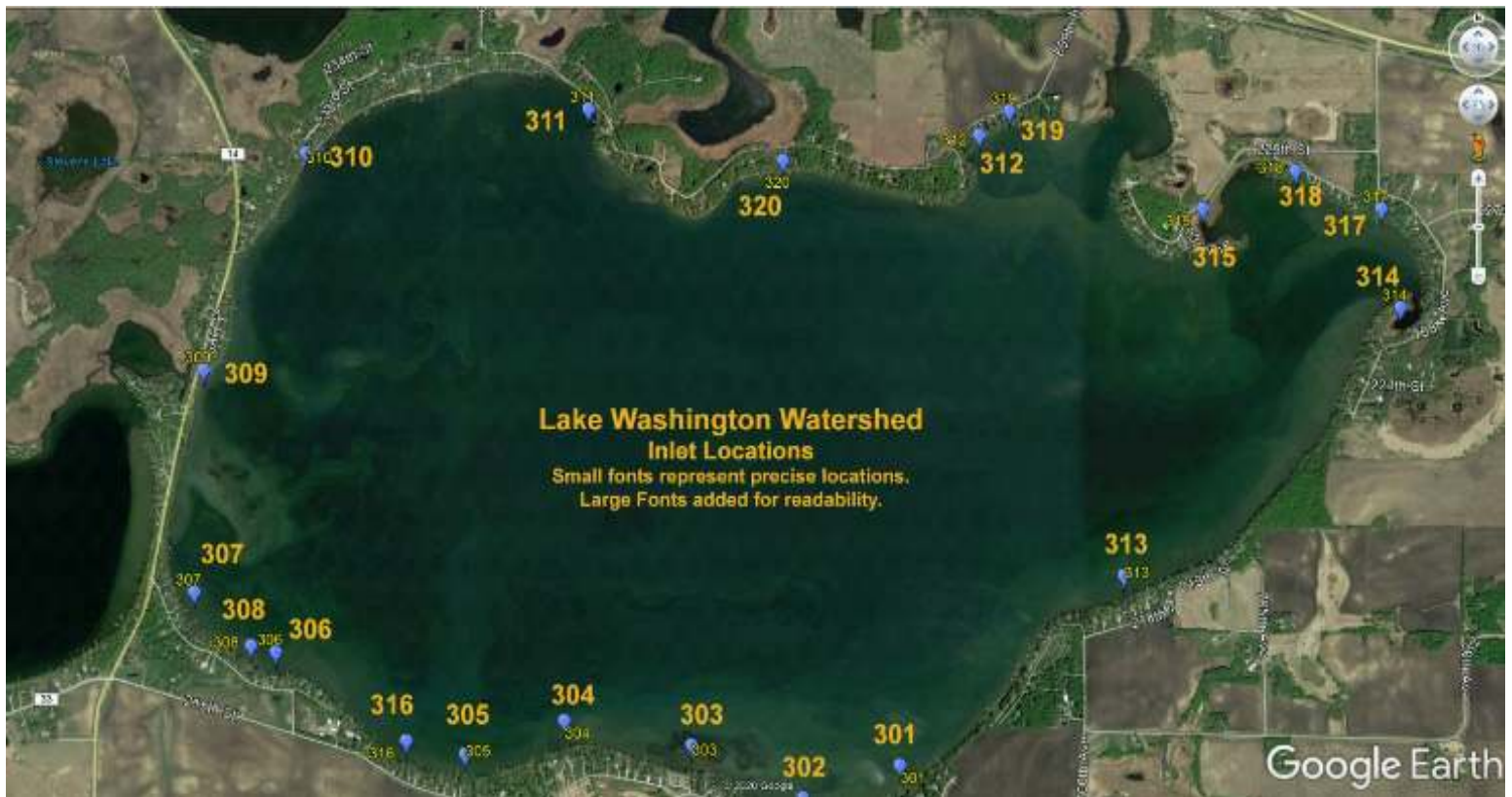


## Water Quality (continued)

Information on lake water and inlet water data including graphs, maps, etc. is on the Lake Washington Improvement Association web site, <https://lwiaonline.com/>. More improvements are planned in this section, so stay tuned. Water analysis is performed by RMB Environmental Labs out of Detroit Lakes, MN.

The water clarity (Secchi disk) tests, as well as, phosphorus and chlorophyll-a data will be submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at the end of the year.

**Inlet Water:** The plan this summer was to test some of the inlet water coming into the lake, after a significant amount of rain. Due to the drought, these tests were not conducted.



No sampling of inlet water from Lake Stella was planned, as the Lake Stella Improvement Association is pulling water samples this summer. Data from Lake Stella is planned to be included in the Lake Washington web site this winter.



# Watercraft Inspection

By Dave Rathe

The Internet – Landing Installed Device Sensor system (I-LIDS) was installed on May 5<sup>th</sup> and removed September 10<sup>th</sup>. This is ahead of the planned removal date of October or November. The system stopped working shortly after Labor Day. It appears the unit is not charging the batteries even though the solar panel is providing voltage to the battery charging circuitry. Cause of the problem is still under investigation. I-LIDS will not be reinstalled this summer because repairs are likely to require several weeks to complete.

The “Special Use Permit” from MN DNR Parks and Trails has expired. A new permit application will be submitted for I-LIDS use at Ellsworth Landing.

The I-LIDS system is effective in improving boater compliance to MN DNR rules regarding boat decontamination prior to launching and prior to leaving the landing, particularly when there are no boat inspectors at the landing.

Meeker County and the MN DNR have been conducting boat inspections and boat decontamination on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays throughout the summer. The inspectors help boaters clean, drain, and dry boats internally and externally. The DNR boat decontamination unit uses 120° F water, which kills the Zebra Mussel free-living planktonic larvae within the water, called veligers.

Lake Washington has these aquatic invasive species (AIS): Curly-leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Water milfoil, and Zebra Mussels. Other AIS in Minnesota of concern for Lake Washington are Spiny Waterflea and Starry Stonewort.



The MN DNR maintains an Infested Waters List, which includes lakes, rivers, ponds or wetlands containing AIS that could spread to other waters. To view the Infested Waters List, you can download the [spreadsheet](#) here.

## Watercraft Inspection (continued)

If anyone suspects an aquatic invasive plant or animal new to Lake Washington, they should:

- Note the exact location (GPS coordinates or point on a map, lake, county, nearest city, etc.).
- Take clear photos showing all parts of the plant/animal and another item showing scale or keep the specimen.
- If you keep the specimen, place it in a tightly sealed container with a small amount of water. You may transport this directly to a DNR office for identification.
- Contact the [DNR Invasive Species Specialist](#) in your region.

Remember to Clean In and Clean Out when launching or loading all watercraft. Drain all water, and dispose of unused bait. Remember, Minnesota law requires docks and boat lifts to be out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them into another body of water.

There is a trash can at Ellsworth landing provided by the Lake Washington Improvement Association. Please help keep the landing clean of trash.



### *Pat's Corner*

By Pat Hanson



I have attended the Meeker County Association of Lakes (MCAL) meetings. We have over one hundred lakes in Meeker County!! However, we only have a small amount of Meeker County Lakes Associations that have organized! MCAL allows each lake association to have one vote. We discuss problems, local lake news, parades, membership association meeting, grants from MCAL and AIS. Sharon Daniels is our Lake Washington grant writer.

We do share what our own lake association is doing and share our terrific Lake Washington newsletter. Thanks Ron Bubany! We have terrific Lake Washington board members that put many voluntary hours in to help our lake. Thanks to all.

We have many committees doing their volunteer jobs. Skip has been one on our board that has worked on different Lake committees. Thanks Skip for all you have done for our Lake Washington. Keep your sense of humor and smile as is my memory of you!

# From Our Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

From: Mackenthun, Scott (DNR) <[scott.mackenthun@state.mn.us](mailto:scott.mackenthun@state.mn.us)>

Greetings Gentlemen,

Last week [7/26/21 -ed] we wrapped up netting at Washington. [Read report [here](#) - ed]. You've heard me talk about system change and shifting habitat type – transparency changes that have been slowly occurring but that were then greatly accelerated by zebra mussel introduction. Clearer water is also warmer water and additional light transmission means more rooted aquatic plant growth. Those changes in the habitat usually are reflected in changes to the fish community.

We have a record high catch of bluegill, pumpkinseed sunfish, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass. Walleye jumped up in a big way, to just under 13 per net. That's encouraging, but in the long run I'm still pessimistic on walleye futures with these kind of habitat changes – it's still a loss of optimal temperature and transparency for walleye. The 2021 walleye gill net catch, which we'll need to age to confirm, seems to show a strong 2019 year class as well as a fairly good 2018 year class. I'd be a very happy camper if those 2018 and 2019 fish give us another strong showing in 2 years and fuel strong fishing in the interim.

The pattern I fear for Washington (not an established pattern, just one I don't want to see!) and that has been seen in these shifting and changing lakes is deleterious changes in recruitment – walleye that can get hatched naturally or stocked and show up after their first growing season when we electro-fish for them then seem to disappear later – not picked up by anglers nor gill nets. No one really knows what causes the recruitment changes since a lot happens in the life of a walleye between ages 0+ to 3 or 4.

I noted my pessimism above – I should be more optimistic as it's good to see the walleye in the gill net! I just want to see them again and see more year classes in the future and hold onto some consistent recruitment. We had a 2017 year class we saw as 2 year olds that appeared strong during our jaw tagging study and fell back to very low levels. Those kind of recruitment losses, consistently repeated are tough to take. We don't have a pattern of recruitment failure and I hope we don't...I guess I just worry, sort of like a parent worries about their kid! Doesn't get you anywhere productive and it's out of your control, but it sure makes it better/easier if your worries don't come true.

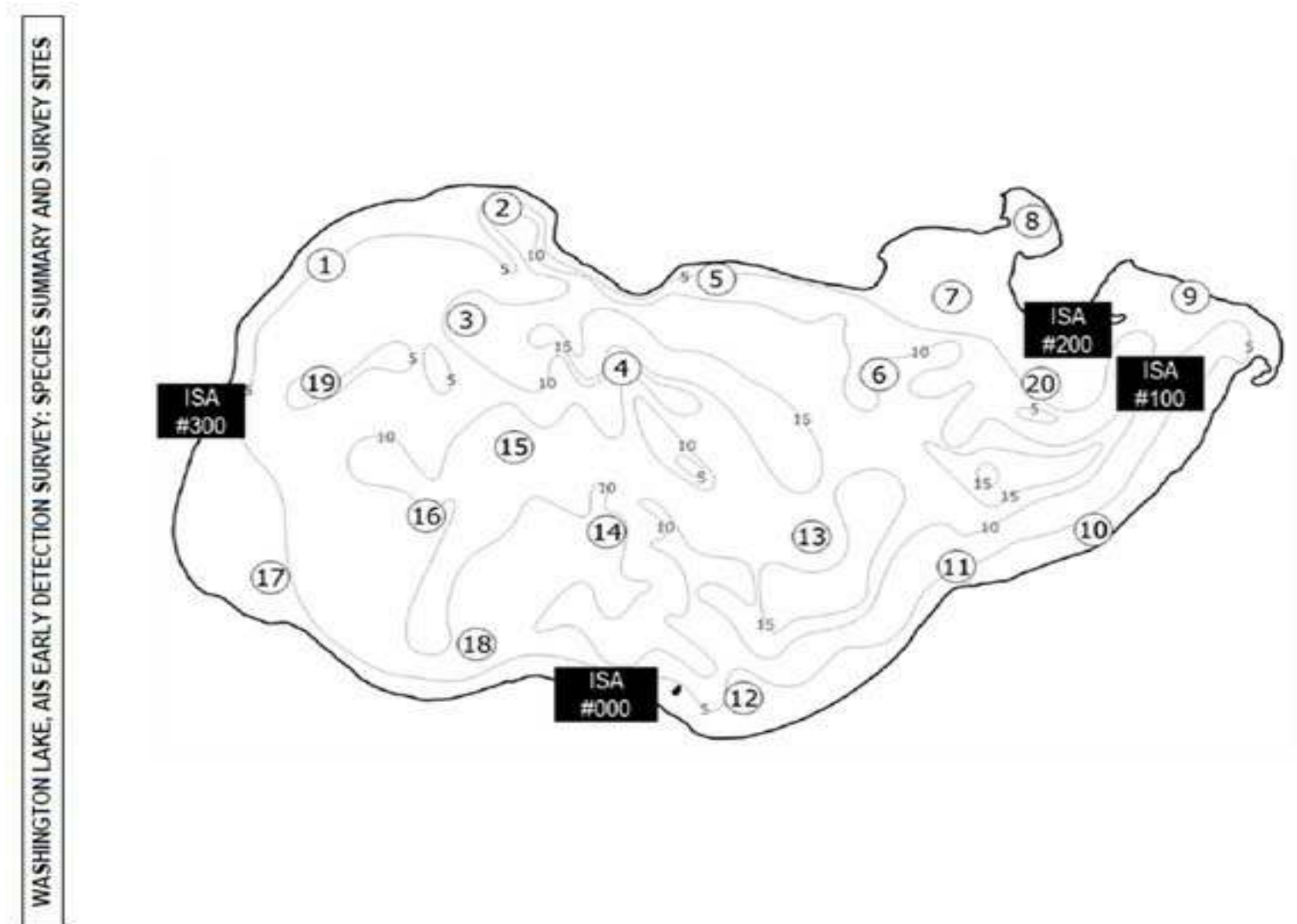


# Aquatic Invasive Species

By Mark Johnson, AIS Coordinator

This year our vegetation surveys were focused on finding new growth clumps of Eurasian Water milfoil near the shorelines and random waypoints where traces of Eurasian Water milfoil were previously found in 2020. Our surveys did not detect any Eurasian Water milfoil and oddly did not detect much Northern Milfoil (native) either.

In August, we hired LIMNOPRO Aquatic Science to conduct an Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Survey. This survey looks at 20 random waypoints across the whole lake plus at all three boat landings and the inlet from Lake Stella. This survey found curly leaf pondweed, zebra mussels and carp (all known invasive species). This survey did not detect any Eurasian Water milfoil. LIMNOPRO's full report can be found on our LWIA website. The map below shows the waypoints surveyed by LIMNOPRO.



Our plan for next year is to have LIMNOPRO conduct this survey again in June and continue our own vegetation surveys – as we do every year. See you on the lake!

# Committee Reports

## Social Committee

*By Sandy Wosmek*

Fall is in the Air -----

Another summer lake season is drawing to an end and we hope everyone had a great summer - full of fun, rest, and relaxation!

We did have our Annual Meeting and Pork Chop Meal in August (instead of May) with about 80 people attending. Although we wished for a few more people, all went well. It was a nice evening for catching up with our lake neighbors.

I hope 2022 will bring better times!

-----COVID NO MORE----- NO RESTRICTIONS----- (Is this wishful thinking??)

Hope we can be back next year in May for our annual meeting and August for our potluck dinner. Watch the spring newsletter for all details.

Have a safe, healthy, and enjoyable fall and winter.

## **Membership / Shoreline Captains**

*By Laurie Johnson*

**Thank you** to the 206 folks that have submitted their membership fees. We had 208 submit for 2020 and 239 for 2019.

**Thank you** to those that have completed the LWIA 2021 survey. To date we have had 79 submit their feedback. We have extended the date to the end of the year and will present findings in the Spring. If you would still like to submit your feedback, you can find the URL on the home page of our website <https://lwiaonline.com> or here <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/7QQwSTS/LWIA>.

**A big thank you** to all of our Lake Washington Shoreline Captains. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated! We are always in search of additional folks to help keep your neighbors up to date and to act as a liaison with the board. If you would like to volunteer, please let me know.

Jim Barnes	John Fink	Gloria Kotilla	Jenna O'Brien	Sue Schmidt
Pam Coppa	Phil Flores	Jo Lukes	Bob Paulson	Steve Ullom
Sharon Daniels	Jenny Kjell	Mary Jo Lyke	Connie Paulson	Sandy Wosmek

## Finance Committee

*By Lyle Walker*

The 2021 season is coming to a close. Although activity was hampered somewhat by the ongoing pandemic and very low lake levels, the Lake Association financial position remains strong. Memberships for 2021 number 206. This is comparable to 2020, but down 14% from 2019. Donations to the Dassel Fire Department total \$1,835, donated by 76 Lake Association members. These funds will be forwarded to the fire department in October. The current cash position, with all bills paid, is \$117,950.