

Lake Washington Management Plan

*Lake Washington Improvement Association
Of Meeker County*

2022



Previous Versions (1988, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2016)

VISION: A Lake Washington management plan providing long-range direction, sustainable decision-making, flexibility, and cooperation from all stakeholders addressing the concerns and needs in a time sensitive manner.

MISSION: A renewable plan to provide high quality sustainable practices to protect, maintain, and improve the water quality and value of Lake Washington as a resource for generations.

Introduction:

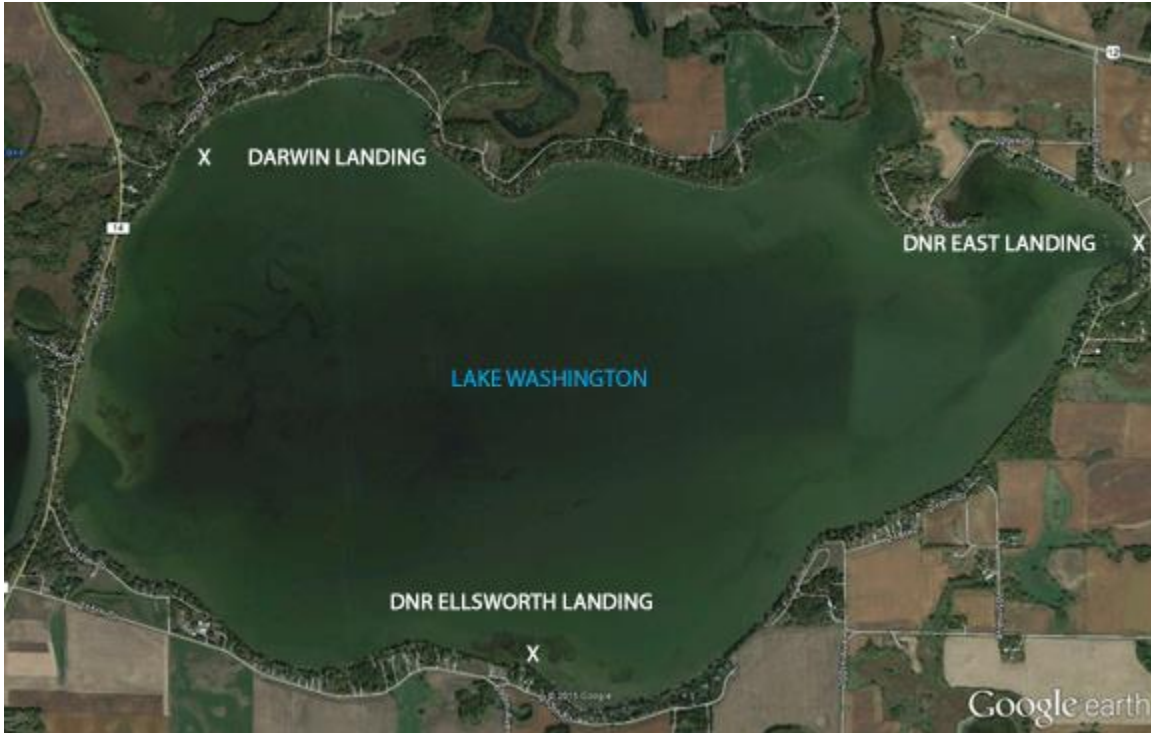
Lake Washington's Management Plan is designed to address current concerns and issues and look at long range planning for the lake community. The plan is intended to be a dynamic document providing direction and aid in cooperative decision making for residents of the lake, members of the lake association, state organizations, county and state government, and the public at large with vested interests in establishing and maintaining high standards of water quality and sustainable use of this lake as a natural resource for generations to come.

Lake Washington Facts:

Lake Washington community is one of seasonal and permanent homes. Approximately 50% of all lakeshore and lake-view properties are year round residences at this time. There continues to be improvement, additions or rebuilding of existing home-sites, along with the potential for additional building on undeveloped lakeshore and lake-view property.

Lake Washington is situated in the southeastern part of Meeker County, between the cities of Dassel and Darwin, Minnesota. Four different townships Darwin, Dassel, Ellsworth and Collinwood intersect the lake. The lake covers 2,639 acres with 10.6 miles of associated shoreline; of this acreage 2,449 acres are littoral. The lake is relatively shallow with a mean depth of 8.6 feet, maximum depth of 17 feet and considered an eutrophic lake. The configuration of the lake is oblong, with a 3-mile long major axis oriented in an east-west direction and 1.5 mile north-south axis. The primary inlet from the surrounding watershed is via Lake Stella on the west side of the lake. The outlet is located on the north-northeastern edge of the lake and discharges into Washington Creek. The watershed draining into

Lake Washington is 22,063 acres. Several smaller lakes, streams, culverts, and creeks in the watershed eventually drain into the lake. The land in this watershed is a mixture of agriculture (primarily crops), with some larger stands of deciduous trees, and other large areas in Conservation Reserve Program acres.



Lake Washington provides opportunities for many uses by property owners and the general public. There are three public landings. One located on the south shore (Ellsworth Landing) and the second is located on the east shoreline. The Minnesota DNR maintains both. The third is located on the Northwest shoreline (at the west end of 233rd street) maintained by Darwin Township.

Lake Washington has been infected with three Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS): Eurasian Water Milfoil discovered 1999, Curly Leaf Pond Weed pre-1993, and Zebra Mussels discovered upstream in Lake Stella in 2015.

The Lake Washington Improvement Association Board of Directors of Meeker County has determined the following five areas to be essential elements for this lake management plan. Goals have been developed in each area with specific strategies to help achieve these goals. Some areas are actively being worked, other areas need continuous monitoring, while others

are long range in nature and yet others will provide historical documentation so future generations will know what and how we attempted to tackle the problems of our day.

I. Water Quality: Water quality testing is completed from April through September. Currently tests are conducted for total phosphorus (nutrient needed for plant growth), chlorophyll-A (measures amount of algae in the water), secchi disk (measures water clarity), trophic state index is calculated using these measurements. Will begin in 2022 to record water temperature, water level, and monthly precipitation in our data collection.

Goal: To maintain and/or improve the water quality in Lake Washington.

Strategies:

- Test water quality from April through September each year. Share secchi disk readings with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- Maintain records for yearly comparisons.
- Monitor water levels.
- Record ice in and ice out dates.
- Analyze the water quality data we gather each year in Lake Washington, use this information to provide direction for planning.
- Explore all sources of water / runoff into the lake and the impact this has on the water quality.
- Continue exploring watershed (inlet water flow and water quality), and septic options to minimize the impact on lake water quality
- Make water quality test information available on Lake Washington Improvement Association website. (www.lwiaonline.com)

II. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management: The Minnesota DNR and Lake Washington Improvement Association (LWIA) have been managing Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) from 1999. Treatment areas have been 0 to 100 acres.

Goals: Manage EWM and Curly Leaf Pond Weed (CLPW) to minimize its impact on recreation, while encouraging the development and growth of natural vegetation. Implement actions to reduce or eliminate the spread of AIS both into and out of Lake Washington.

Work with the DNR and the University of Minnesota to track the spread of Zebra mussels in Lake Washington.

Actively monitor Lake Washington for other potential AIS infestations that are present in surrounding lakes in cooperation with the DNR, MCAL, Meeker AIS, MAISRC U-M. Contract with an independent outside lake management company to identify current and potential future AIS infestations.

Strategies:

- Develop and monitor the lake for invasive species to identify needs, determine treatment options, and provide treatment earlier in the year to obtain maximum benefits of the treatment. The current plan proposes treating 20% of the EWM currently surveyed in the spring, up to 100 acres each year. This will allow the Invasive Species Committee/Lake Washington Association to develop a long range budgeting plan for the treatments. The areas treated for EWM will rotate around the lake as the committee sees necessary to provide coverage for specific sites around the lake.
- Continue conducting lake vegetation surveys to establish a picture of what the lakes vegetation looks like on a year to year basis. Consult with a Professional Vegetation and AIS survey vendor i.e Limnopro, Lake Restoration, or similar to conduct yearly vegetation surveys and AIS assessments, along with providing management of AIS when needed
- Continue partnerships with local and state units to work together providing information, expertise, support, and knowledge about needs and updated technologies/treatment/management options.
- Annually seek (financial and professional) support from all state and local agencies that are stakeholders in this management plan.
- Seek permits and grants as required from local and state agencies for EWM and CLPW treatment and management strategies for zebra mussels.
- Use Zebra mussel settlement plates to monitor and record their spread.
- Install, maintain and monitor a self-contained video inspection system at Ellsworth landing to capture boat launches and provide an audio message to remind boaters to clean and inspect their watercraft.

III. Education/Communication/Involvement: Education, communication and property owners involvement are cornerstones for Lake Washington Improvement Association's (LWIA) public relations to all stakeholders.

Goals: To keep all stakeholders educated, informed, knowledgeable, and involved in matters impacting the lake and surrounding areas. Provide direct lines and means of communication with all people concerned with the life, health and well-being of the Lake Washington Community.

Strategies:

- Hold 2 annual meetings one in May and one in August
- Publish 3 newsletters per year – informing membership of current issues, planned actions, and upcoming events. Look at ways to increase information in newsletters.
- Maintain working relationships with the Mn DNR, local and state Soil and Water Conservation, Meeker County Commissioners, and Meeker County Association of Lakes (MCAL), MPCA, Meeker AIS, Townships to keep members informed of changes to rules, laws, and new information members can use to improve quality of life, maintain and improve lake water quality.
- Use Shoreline Captains as a means to gather and provide information and bring feed-back from lake shore owners directly to the board.
- Provide local, county, and state officials with the most current information on issues, subjects, and concerns of the lake community.
- Periodically update the Lake Washington Directory
- Develop and maintain an email database to more easily contact and communicate with members and others.
- Form committees to learn and more fully understand issues, develop ideas and provide the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions.

- The lake association through donations installed a Civil Defense warning alarm siren at the Ellsworth Landing. This siren is being maintained by the Meeker County Sheriff's Department since April 2010.
- Develop additional ways to get information out in a timelier manner.
- Conduct surveys to enhance feedback to the Board.

- Improve and update regularly the Lake Washington Association website (www.lwiaonline.com)
- Provide area newspapers with information about happenings on Lake Washington.
- Encourage lake residents to belong to the Lake Washington Improvement Association (LWIA) with the ultimate goal of having all property owners be members.
- Encourage lake residents to support “Neighborhood Watch”, “Crime Stoppers”, and signup for Code Red notifications.

IV. Wildlife Management: Wildlife and especially fishing are very important parts of the culture of Lake Washington.

Goals: Support and be active members in the local Minnesota Fisheries plans for monitoring and managing the fish populations in Lake Washington. Support wildlife management in conjunction with the DNR to enhance lake recreation.

Strategies:

- Work with local DNR office to develop cormorant management for the local halo of lakes.
- Maintain open communication with the DNR and support their fish management plans for the lake.
- Support fish surveys and share this information with property owners.
- Stay informed of the fish populations and what we as association members can do to support fish management.
- Explore ways to encourage healthier fish environments.
- Encourage lake residents not to feed waterfowl to reduce the likelihood of AIS introduction and swimmers itch.

V. Shoreline and Watershed Management The shoreline and watershed practices have a significant impact on runoff, filtering of waters entering the lake, and lake structural integrity.

Goals: Continue to promote and support efforts by local and state organizations to enhance Lake Washington's shoreline. Encourage the development of improved shoreline management practices. Reduce the quantity of harmful chemicals and silt entering Lake Washington, through active participation with plans to better understand and manage the watershed.

Strategies:

- Support plans and encourage projects enhancing the lake's natural beauty and provide for stabilization of lakeshores including; potential holding pond locations, other watershed and lake shore improvements.
- Provide in-kind services to encourage the sponsorship of projects by local and state organizations. Provide information about what these projects do and survey stakeholders about their options. Keep lakeshore property owners informed of plans and projects.
- Provide continued education and updates about lake-scaping and shoreline management.
- Provide resources in the way of plans and nurseries providing high quality plants intended for use around the lake.
- Share books, CD's from the DNR, and videos we have or know of.
- Talk to other lake associations that have created Lake Improvement Districts (LID) and how they did it.