



Newsletter

LAKE WASHINGTON IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION



END OF THE DOCK

By Dave Rathe

I did a dumb thing last 4th of July, went to step off the pontoon on to the dock and missed it by a foot. Ouch! I had looked at the distance to the dock and then looked away for a couple of seconds, then took a step, by then the pontoon had moved.

I ended up ramming my right shoulder on the dock. Took a while for the shoulder to heal, I don't bounce back like I did when i was in my twenties.

Bad miss steps from boat to dock or dock to boat is when you hit your head or get your chest crushed between the boat and dock. Neither one is good. Remember this summer to be careful and safe going between boat to dock and back. Secure the boat to the dock, make sure the boat is stable. Don't jump or push off and look where you are stepping.

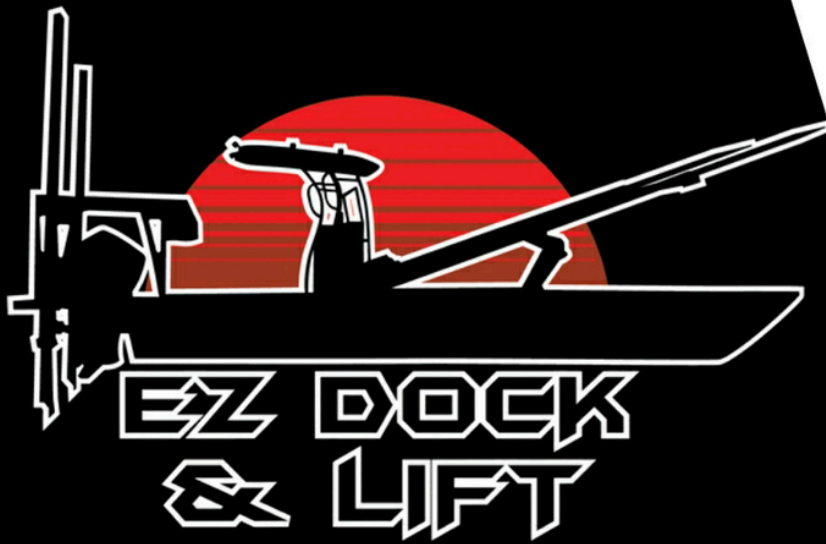
Thanks to my neighbor for rushing over to make sure I was OK!

As you read through this newsletter, you'll notice it is organized around the five key focus areas that guide the Lake Washington Improvement Association's Management Plan.

Each section highlights initiatives tied to these goals —providing a clear picture of how your support is helping to preserve and enhance Lake Washington for today and for future generations.

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WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER IN 2025

As we look ahead to the 2026 lake season, it's worth taking a moment to reflect on all that was accomplished in 2025. Thanks to the support of our members and volunteers, LWIA continued to make meaningful progress in protecting and enhancing Lake Washington.

Here's a brief look back at some of the initiatives that helped keep our lake healthy and our community connected.

After 2 years of drought and only about ½ the normal snow fall, 2025 was a very rainy year starting in May through August. There were several very heavy rains during this time resulting in no wake zones around the lake for most of June and July. Several times during the summer there was over a million gallons of water per hour coming into Washington from Stella.

There was plenty of water coming through the new culvert, allowing for many boats to travel between the lakes. There were very serious ice ridges that actually formed in January due to unusually warm temperatures during the winter. These ice ridges did significant shoreline damage along all the northern shorelines. Creating 5-7 foot sand berms on the beaches.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Cormorants and white pelicans continue to populate our lake during the summer months. The big difference is there are hundreds not thousands. The I-LIDS unit at Ellsworth landing continues to do video monitoring of boat traffic coming in and out of the lake. A total of 10,258 were captured with 2,879 reviewed. Meeker AIS did have volunteers at the landing most weekends through the summer. The DNR rotated a decontamination unit between Washington and Stella throughout the summer.



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Milfoil, zebra mussels, and curly leaf pond weeds continue to be monitored through whole lake AIS surveys conducted by Limnopro and our vegetation committee. This year the Limnopro milfoil survey found little infestations throughout the lake.

The Vegetation committee, through the use of under-water camera and rake sampling have been monitoring an area of milfoil, east of Ellsworth landing out several hundred feet from the shoreline. Zebra mussel inspection plates were again put at the same 11 sites around the lake.

That committee has joined a study being conducted by MAISRC at U of M of 12 central MN lakes. This involved a slightly different schedule for fall retrievals and documenting along with sampling that was shared with the research committee. They found hundreds of ¼ inch veligers on all the inspection plates. This was an increase from recent years.



SHORELINE AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Mike Wosmek supervised several Water Shed projects to reduce the flow of water and silt into the lake.

- ➔ The other project was at site #306 (the holding pond on the southwest corner of the lake that LWIA had constructed over 10 years ago.
- ➔ After water quality testing showed the water coming out of the farm tiles was cleaner than the water flowing from the pond.
- ➔ He spearheaded a project of connecting the farm tiles to piping that went around the pond and reconnected to the inlet pipe.
- ➔ Along with the Water Quality testing committee they continued testing many of the 21 inlets flowing into the lake.
- ➔ Monthly water quality testing indicated the water quality continues to be consistent with previous years and secchi disk readings in the 3 - 7 foot range through the summer.

EDUCATION , COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

Grant Update:

Sharon Daniels continues to lead the grant committee and was able to get grants from Meeker Co. AIS for milfoil treatments (which we did not treat this year), MCAL (\$5,968.83) for water testing and sediment monitoring and repairs for inlet #306 and #312, member stickers (Shoreline Captains gave these to paid members), DNR grant monies (\$1554.00) paid for the Limnopro AIS survey.

Social Update:

Sandy Wosmek reported about 90 people attended the Annual Membership/Pork Chop dinner on May 3. Representatives from MCAL (Randy Nass and Kim Hempel) provided us with the history (LWIA members) were very significant founding members and continue to contribute to the organization.

Board Update:

- Sharon Daniels, Ray Brueggemier, Laurie Johnson, and Sean Thorson were elected to 3 year board terms.
- Ron Bubany, a LWIA Board member for over 20 years retired this year. Over his time he has served on nearly every board committee. He is best known for putting together our Newsletters (sent out three times per year) with a flair of professionalism and humor that has made them famous throughout the state.
- Lyle Walker (Board member and Treasurer for over 20 years) retired this year. He was a guiding force that brought us through the financial knowledge needed to incorporate and get 501 c (3) status. His guiding knowledge kept us on an even keel. He often reminded us "We are a couple of Milfoil treatments away from being broke."
- As of 10/1/25: Membership 193 – Volunteer hours 1050 – Bank Balance \$150,576.74.



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Aquatic Invasive Species MANAGEMENT

Protecting Lake Washington: Aquatic Invasive Species Update

by Mark Johnson

Each year, protecting Lake Washington from aquatic invasive species (AIS) remains one of LWIA's highest priorities.

In 2025, the Lake Washington Improvement Association (LWIA), in partnership with LIMNOPRO Aquatic Science, conducted vegetation surveys to monitor for invasive species. LIMNOPRO completed an early detection survey in June, followed by additional surveys by LWIA board members throughout July and August.

The encouraging news is that Lake Washington continues to be free of widespread invasive plant issues. However, a small area of Eurasian Watermilfoil was identified. This site will be closely monitored in 2026 to assess any spread and determine if treatment is necessary. Early detection like this is critical—and it's exactly why these surveys matter.

Why Prevention Matters

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, aquatic invasive species are most often spread by people moving boats, trailers, and equipment from one body of water to another. What starts as a small, isolated patch can quickly expand if not managed early.

Once established, invasive species like Eurasian Watermilfoil can:

- Outcompete native plants
- Disrupt fish habitat
- Interfere with boating, fishing, and swimming

A Shared Responsibility

Lake Washington is in a strong position today because of proactive monitoring and because of a community that cares. As we head into the 2026 season, your awareness and actions continue to make the difference. Together, we can keep Lake Washington healthy for generations to come.

Did You Know?

A single fragment of Eurasian Watermilfoil—as small as a few inches—can take root and grow into a new plant. That's why removing even the smallest pieces of vegetation from boats and trailers is so important.

Did You Know?

Minnesota law requires you to clean, drain, and dispose before leaving any water access. These simple steps are one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Did You Know?

Most aquatic invasive species are spread unintentionally by people moving boats, docks, or equipment between lakes. A quick check at the landing can make all the difference.

Did You Know?

Lake Washington remains in strong shape thanks to early detection efforts and a community that takes prevention seriously. Your actions truly help protect this lake.

Zebra Mussel Monitoring

by Mike Wsomek

We will be working with the University of Minnesota (Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center) again this year. I will be installing 11 zebra mussel sampler plates in May and remove them the middle of September. I follow the instructions that the U of M gives (same instructions to all lakes participating in the research).

In general it is important we do not remove the samplers from the water. Unlike earlier detection studies, we do not want to pull the samplers out of the water to check regularly. In fact it is best to leave the samplers undisturbed until removal in the fall.

In the fall newsletter we hope to give the information and the findings the U of M (MAISRC) has collected. I will keep you informed on the updates.



Eurasian Water Milfoil History in Lake Washington

by Steve Ullom

1998

The presence of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) in Lake Washington was verified by the DNR in September of 1998.

1999 - 2001

The DNR hired various vendors to treat areas primarily in the northwest bay and areas adjacent to Ellsworth Landing.

2002

The DNR declared Washington as a maintenance management lake and they would no longer treat the EWM.

2003

In 2003 some property owners hired a harvester company to cut paths from their docks out into the lake.

2004

The Board and property owner built a spreader on a boat, used a laptop and GPS to plot the treatment of 168.2 acres, primarily in the northwest bay over to near Ellsworth Landing.

2005 - 2006

There were no treatments.

2007 - 2009

In 2007 16 acres, 2008 28 acres, 2009 78 acres were treated.

2010

There were no treatments.

2011 - 2013

2011 68.75 acres treated; 2012 70 acres and 2013 190 acres treated (north of culvert, in front of Ellsworth Landing, west of Cedar Point, and between Rocky Point and Rod n Gun Club).

2014 - 2019

There were no treatments.

2020

70 acres in water greater than 10 feet were treated (this was an area west and south of the deep part of the lake we had been monitoring for many years and was beginning to spread).

2021 - 2025

There were no treatments.

TOTAL Over the past 27 Years we have treated 790 acres at a cost of \$265,749.00. We were able to get \$95,153 in grant monies over the years.

Watercraft Inspection

By Dan Komarek

As winter finally releases its grasp, my attention begins to turn to that most spring-like of activities - - getting ready to re-install the I-LIDS remote monitoring system just in time for the fishing opener and before boating season hits high gear (long winters have me reaching way to far down the task list).

As usual it will remain in place at the Ellsworth landing until early October, when we will take it down once again for winter storage.

In the meantime, we will be recording the boat launches I-LIDS captures, and reviewing them for potential violations (and risk of Aquatic Invasive Species entering Lake Washington) with the assistance of Lake Shield LLC, which took over support of the I-LIDS technology last spring.

Potential violations, if found, will be referred to the County for follow-up. Fortunately, the audio message and signage help remind boaters to do their part and Clean, Drain, Dry, and Dispose of any aquatic vegetation, plus live well, bilge, impeller, or ballast water; and remove drain plugs during transit.

This summer, you will also likely see Watercraft inspectors at Ellsworth Landing many weekends and holidays. We understand Meeker County has scheduled the boat launch inspections once again this year continuing until after Labor Day, when it wraps up for the season. MN DNR may also station a boat decontamination trailer at the Ellsworth Landing again this summer - keep an eye out for it.



A Little History - I-LIDS Numbers

in 2025 (beginning of May through early October) I-LIDS recorded:

- 10,200+ videos
- About a quarter of the videos are reviewed each year for potential violations.
- 420 launch videos were noted

Minnesota Law Requires You To:



Clean watercraft, trailers, and equipment to remove aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species.



Drain all water and leave drain plugs out during transport.



Dry docks, lifts, and rafts for 21 days before moving them from one waterbody to another.



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Shoreline & Watershed MANAGEMENT

Lakeshore Restoration

Lakeshore restoration in Meeker County, MN, often requires permits from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and local zoning authorities for projects involving stabilization or repairs. Riprap and erosion repair may be exempt from a DNR permit if they meet specific criteria, such as being under 200 linear feet, using proper materials, and following steepness guidelines.



PERMITTING & REGULATIONS

- DNR Public Waters Work Permit: Required for significant shoreline changes, though some, such as certain ice ridge repairs or small riprap projects, may be exempt if they meet specific, rigorous conditions
- Riprap Guidelines: Must be natural rock (6–30 inches), include a filter layer, have a slope no steeper than 3:1 (horizontal to vertical), and not exceed 200 linear feet.
- Meeker County Zoning: Local permits may be required for grading, excavation, or filling in shoreland areas.
- Wetlands: Projects affecting wetlands may require approval from the Soil and Water Conservation District..



ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR HOMEOWNERS

- Contact Local Authorities: Contact the Meeker County Planning & Zoning office to check if local permits are needed for your specific shoreline project.
- Contact the DNR: Reach out to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Area Hydrologist to determine if your project qualifies for an exemption or requires a permit.
- Use Professionals: Engage licensed contractors experienced in MN shoreland regulations, such as bioengineering or riprap, to ensure compliance.
- Permit Fee: For certain erosion control projects (like riprap), the permit fee is limited to \$75.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ice Damage: Repairs for ice ridges may not need a permit if they are within one year of the damage, under 200 feet, and properly stabilized.
- Vegetation: Avoid removing emergent vegetation, which may require a separate Aquatic Plant Management permit.
- Slope Requirements: Riprap must be placed at a slope of no steeper than 3:1.

With regards to ice ridge damages, generally one is able to restore the shoreline back to its original state without having to get a permit (from local authorities - Meeker Zoning and Planning). But if any sand or gravel (more than 6 inches deep and 50 feet wide) rocks, rip rap or the such is added a permit is needed. The DNR generally does not get involved with permitting for situations like this, they leave that to the homeowner. One is required to remove any vegetative matter from the beach area when restoring it.



New Boater Education Law

Effective July 1, 2025

Starting on July 1, 2025, a new law requires some adults and youth who operate motorboats—including personal watercraft—to have a valid watercraft operator's permit (commonly also known as a boater safety certificate).



People who already have a watercraft operator's permit are not affected by the law, which is designed to make boating safer by ensuring everyone operating a motorized watercraft knows the rules and is properly trained.

Here's a breakdown of the key points:

- **Adult operators: Permit requirement:** Some adults (defined below) need a valid operator's permit to drive any motorboat or personal watercraft starting July 1, 2025.
- **Exemptions:** Some adults are exempt from this requirement. Check the law for specific exemptions. **Supervised operation:** People without a permit still can operate a boat, but only if there's an accompanying operator (defined below) onboard.
- **Young operators: Restrictions on high-powered watercraft:** Young operators (people less than 12 years old), can't operate a personal watercraft or any motorboat with a motor over 75 horsepower.
- **Low-powered motorboats:** Young operators can operate a motorboat that's not a personal watercraft and has a motor under 75 horsepower as long as there is an accompanying operator in the motorboat.

Who is considered an adult operator?

Is 12 years old or older, and Was born after these dates:

- June 30, 2004 (started July 1, 2025)
- June 30, 2000 (starts July 1, 2026)
- June 30, 1996 (starts July 1, 2027)
- June 30, 1987 (starts July 1, 2028)

This means people born after June 30, 2004, will need a permit to operate a boat starting in 2025. The permit requirement will gradually apply to older age groups over the next few years.

Scan for more information or to take the watercraft operator's permit course



Who is considered an accompanying operator?

A person 21 years of age or older who:

- Is in a personal watercraft or other type of motorboat;
- Is within immediate reach of the controls of the motor;
- Possesses a valid operator's permit or is an exempt operator.

Who is considered an exempt operator?

"Exempt operator" means a motorboat operator, including a personal watercraft operator, who is 12 years of age or older and who:

- Possesses a valid license to operate a motorboat issued for maritime personnel by the United States Coast Guard under Code of Federal Regulations, title 46, part 10, or a marine certificate issued by the Canadian government.
- Is not a resident of the state, is temporarily using the waters of the state for a period not to exceed 60 days, and: who meets any applicable requirements of the state or country of residency; or
 - possesses a Canadian pleasure craft operator's card;
 - is operating a motorboat under a dealer's license according to section 86B.405; or
 - is operating a motorboat during an emergency.

Holding Pond History

By Mike Wosmek

Here is a timeline of what Lake Washington Improvement Association has done to improve the sediment holding pond on the southwest side of the lake throughout the years.

About 200 acres of farmland has a natural waterway into the lake. The sediment pond will hold back total phosphorus and suspended solids from going into the lake. What we have seen is after a big and fast rain, about 3 or 4 inches, the water will pull out the green algae out of the pond and go into the lake.



2014

The sediment holding pond was started in April 2014 and installed in November 2014, flowing into inlet #306.

Working with the DNR, County, farmer, landowner, LWIA, and Lindberg Excavating the sediment pond was completed. Lindberg Excavating installed a 4 subground intake system, this involved removing the old open tile that collected the water, dug down 4 feet deep by 15 feet long by 3 feet wide.

2021

In June we got the OK for Rickert Excavating to clean out the pond with a long arm backhoe. With the removal of the open tile inlets we had very little sediment added to the pond.

They then cut a hole in the main tile line below, wrapping it with burlap, adding pea rock part way up, then adding 1 1/2 inch rock the rest of the way up to the surface. This allowed water to seep slowly into the main drain tile. This helped keep the phosphorus and nutrients from flowing into the sediment pond.

2022

In spring, the farmer (Ahlgren) had a plugged tile line. They had to go into the standing water and dig up the tile line. When the standing water ran out black sediment came into the pond. That was a one time thing.

The water from the farm tile was better than the water in the middle of the lake. The one bad thing about the sediment pond was the green algae. After a big fast rain, about 3 or 4 inches the water will pull out the green algae out of the pond going into the lake. This was a concern of the lake property owners.

2023

In October, I was given the OK from the DNR, Meeker County Soil, and the farmer to install a new three-up Agri Drain tile inlet on the farm tile, This inlet will not allow sediment into the pond.

Once again working with the DNR, Meeker County Soil, the farmer (Ahlgren), and the landowner to do more work at the pond and tie into the tile lines and tile around the sediment pond into the lake. Also I added 3 Agri Drains in the pond. Now no green algae will be able to go into the lake.

2024

Our 10 year land contract for the pond with the landowner was up in 2024. We tested the water coming into the pond, also tested the water at ice out in May of 2025.

2025

The water now bypasses the sediment pond. Job was completed December 9, 2025.

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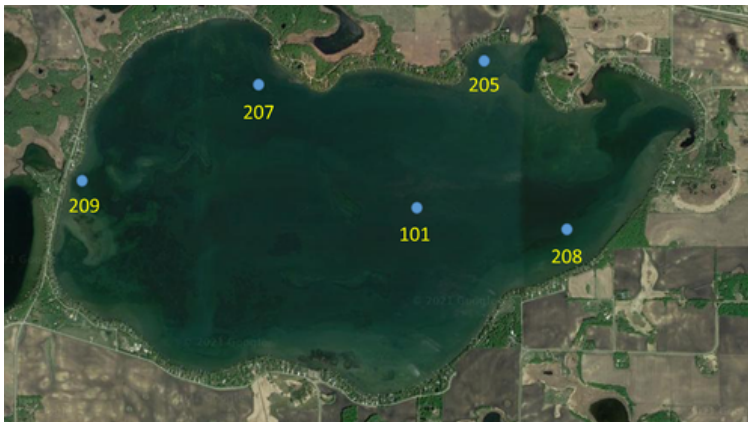


Water Quality Testing

By Dave Rathe

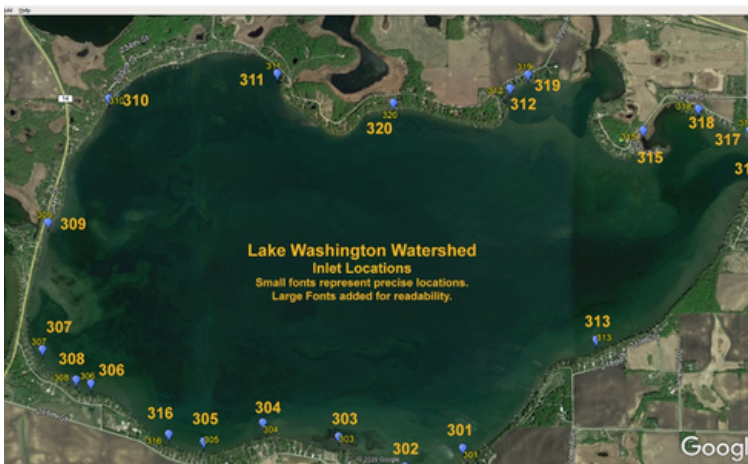
Lake Water

We are planning to pull water samples once a month again this summer. The samples will be tested for phosphorus and chlorophyll-a by RMB labs and pulled from Site 101. Twice a month we will check clarity, surface water temperature, and flow rate from Stella..

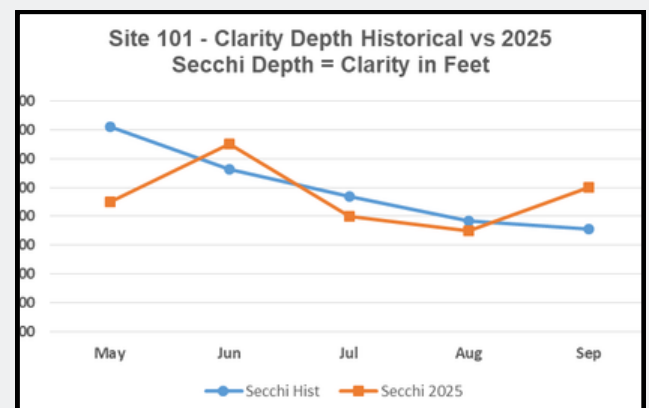
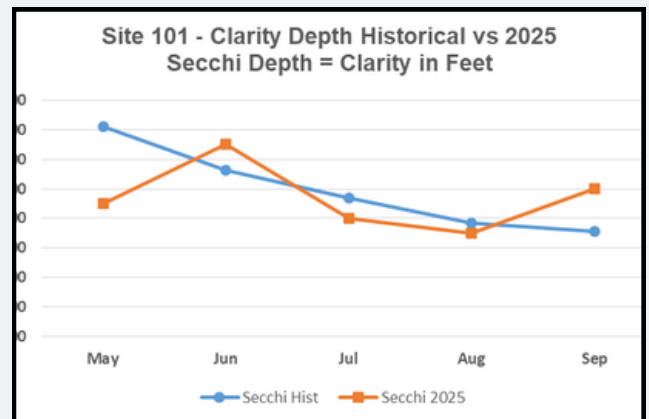
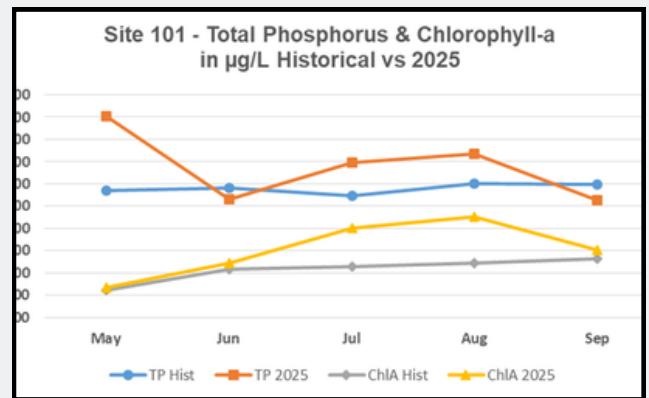


Inlet Water

We plan to pull inlet water samples from 6 inlets this summer. The focus will be inlets that have had recent work done on them.



I have updated the lake water graphs from last summer as we didn't have August and September data in the fall newsletter. I didn't show the temperature and clarity data from the other Sites as it is usually quite close to the readings at Site 101. At the end of the summer the clarity and temperature data will be submitted to the MN Pollution Control Agency.





BACKYARD REFLECTIONS

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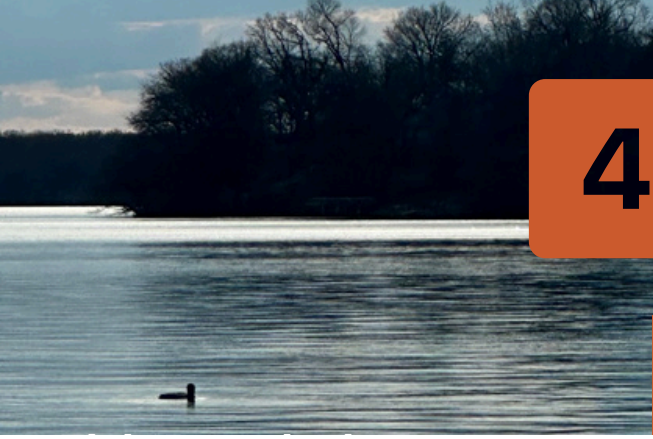


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Wildlife MANAGEMENT

By Tanner Stevens
Assistant Area Supervisor | Hutchinson
Area Fisheries

Spring is upon Lake Washington and soon the fishing season will be here. Lake Washington is the largest lake in the Hutchinson fisheries area, and one of the most storied. It's a diverse and unique lake that has something for everyone.

This past year was a busy one for Lake Washington with multiple surveys, stocking, and a new lake management plan.

At the Hutchinson office we use adaptive management for our lake management. This means we are continually crafting surveys to address issues, learning from the surveys, and focusing our management on what we learned. Then we rinse and repeat, continually building upon what we observed. We had four surveys this past summer.

The main survey was a standard survey in July. This includes both fifteen gill nets and fifteen trap nets. This survey is done every two years in order to closely track the Walleye population in addition to many other species. We also completed a spring panfish survey in late April.

The last time this was done was in 2019. This is a more intensive look at Bluegill and Black Crappie populations. As usual we completed our annual fall young-of-year Walleye survey and fall Yellow Perch fine mesh gill net survey

These surveys allow us to look at Walleye and Yellow Perch reproduction. All these surveys combine for a complete view of Lake Washington fish populations. The Walleye gill net catch was lower this year than in the past couple years. We saw a bounce back in the Walleye population following a historic low gill net catch in 2019.

While the gill net catch was lower, the Walleye population is still in good shape. Year classes were present in four of the last six years. With all year classes in good numbers. The two missing year classes are 2020 and 2021. The 2021 class never materialized despite being a stocked year class. Fish from this year class have never been seen. What was surprising was that the 2020 year class went missing. While early indications didn't appear that the 2020 year class would be strong.

Gill net catches in 2021 and 2023 showed good numbers of fish. It's unknown why as five year old fish, they would go missing. We have seen this before with the 2017 year class when we tagged just shy of 1,000 10"-12" fish. These fish and year class would never be seen again. Despite opportunities for tag reports, gill net surveys, and electrofishing. Occasions like this is what makes Walleye management difficult.

We caught 50 young-of-year Walleye during fall electrofishing for a catch rate of 37.5 fish/hour. This is a recent catch rate and good for a year with early ice out and terrible Walleye reproduction.

Overall though the Washington Walleye population is in good shape. Natural reproduction has been great and likely has been carrying the Washington population for many years.



Other highlights from the gill net survey include record numbers of Northern Pike.

These are the results of a strong year class across the Hutchinson area a couple of years ago. Many of you have probably noticed more pike recently. One concern was the absence of Smallmouth Bass in gill nets. This was the first time since 1993 no Smallmouth have been sampled. Manuella also had the same situation. We will closely be following the Smallmouth population in future years and may have some increased sampling.

During the spring panfish survey, we saw many more small Bluegill than in 2019 and fewer large fish. Trap nets catch during the July survey also continued to increase. The Bluegill population appears to be in flux, and we'll be watching closely to see if larger fish appear in a few years.

Few Black crappie were sampled during the spring panfish survey, however better than average numbers of crappie were caught in July. It appears that there's a year class of small fish that is still working its way through the system.

Finally large numbers of small Yellow Perch were caught in the fall fine mesh gill net survey.

This survey is an attempt to look at Yellow Perch reproduction and Walleye reproduction together. While its still early Yellow Perch numbers are considerably higher than in 2019 and 2021 and suggest that the population has bounced back. This also coincides with a general reduction in zebra mussels.

Most perch in this survey are 42 inches and smaller but are mature. It's still unknown why perch are maturing at such small sizes, but the max age observed recently is only 2 years old.

Historically this plan was revised every five years after a survey. In recent years plans are revised generally when biologists foresee a change or after 2-3 surveys. Washington was last revised in 2021 and was slated for this year with the foresight of a full Walleye stocking evaluation in 2026. Most components of the plan remained the same from 2021 to the current plan.

The largest change was Walleye stocking. This was done with great care and intensive data analysis. Annual fall electrofishing surveys and biennial gill net surveys provide large amounts of data with multiple opportunities to evaluate year classes. This increases confidence in the data.

What we found was that stocked, and non-stocked year classes were generally equal in strength, with stocked year classes a little better.

However, a stocked year class is not entirely the result of a fry stocking. Natural reproduction still occurs during years that Walleye fry are stocked. It's reasonable to assume that natural reproduction occurs at a similar level during stocked and non-stocked years.

Using this assumption natural reproduction is responsible for approximately 2/3rds of juvenile Walleye produced in Washington. This is more than enough to support the Lake Washington Walleye population.

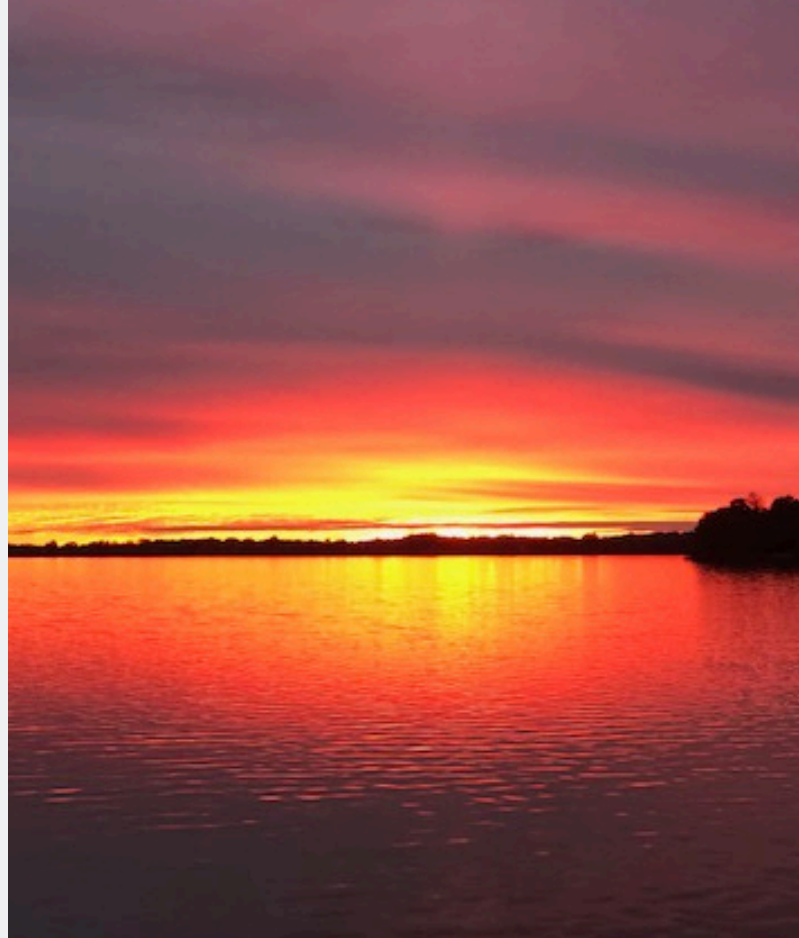
The largest change to Lake Washington comes in the form of a new management plan.

Despite strong evidence for Walleye natural reproduction, we have inserted a stocking contingency. If fall young-of-year electrofishing rates are below 20 fish/hr for two straight years, we will stock the next year. This allows for periodic poor years but also responds quickly if natural reproduction drops off.

This same contingency is also in place on Belle, Big Swan, and Marion has only been triggered once on Big Swan since being put in place.

We have seen a bounce back in fish populations since zebra mussels hit their peak roughly 6 years ago. We continue to closely watch Washington, and the rest of the lakes in the chain. As always if you have any questions, please contact the Hutchinson fisheries office.

“Overall, Lake Washington is in good shape. ”



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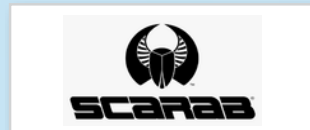


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Education, Community & INVOLVEMENT

Pat's Corner

By Pat Hansen

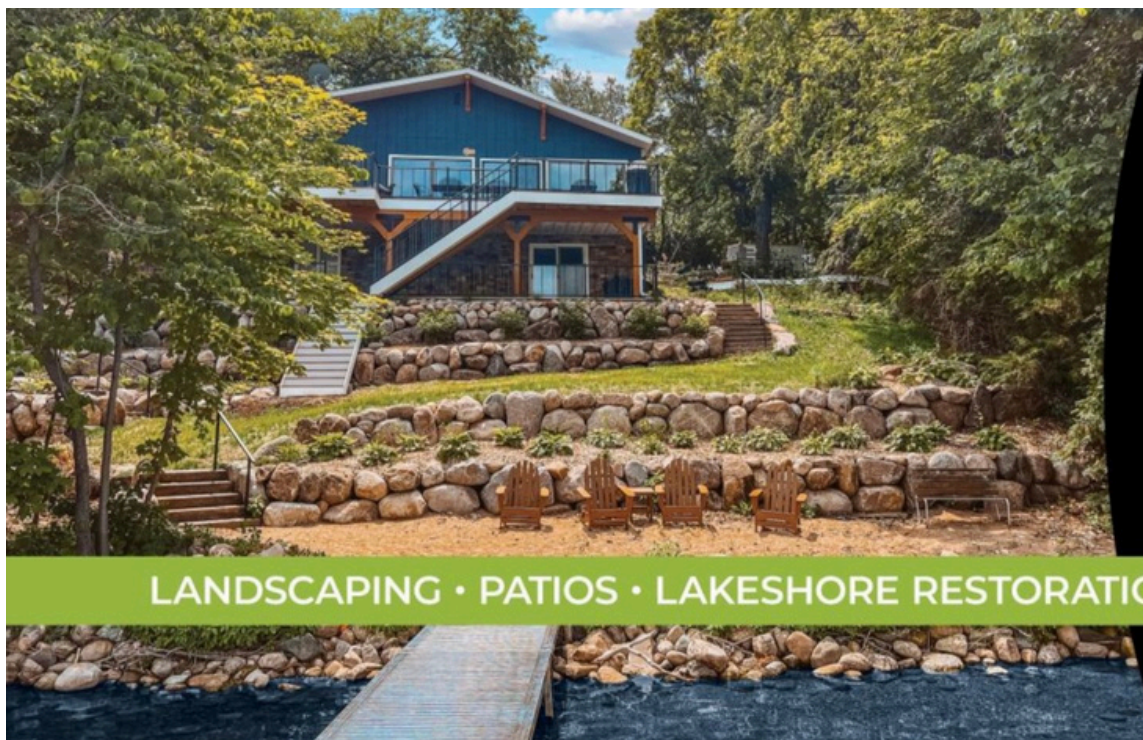
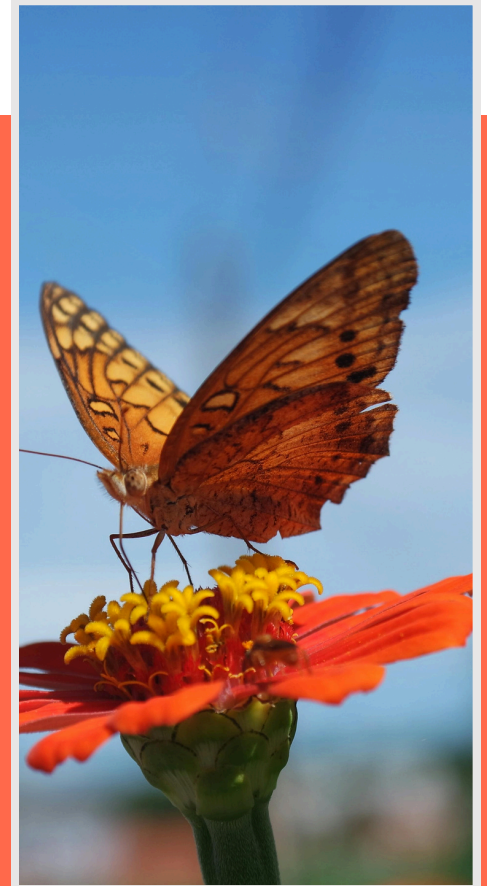
Happy spring. I am writing this on the first day of spring. Enjoy the nice spring air and watch the snow absorb into our ground.

Did you know some butterflies lay eggs on just one kind of plant?

By tasting that plant, they know which one is RIGHT. Sometimes butterflies taste the wrong plant, so they fly to another plant and taste again. When they find the right plant, they lay their eggs there. Soon the eggs hatch. The hungry babies eat the plant their mother chose!

Do you have spiders around?

One kind of spider makes a web underwater. It weaves its web in water plants. Then it carries bubbles of air down to fill the web. The water spider lies still on its web. Soon a water insect swims near it. The spider dashes out and catches the insect! It brings its catch back to the air-filled web to have a little meal.



LANDSCAPING • PATIOS • LAKESHORE RESTORATION • CONCRETE



Membership Update

By Laurie Johnson

There's something special about the moment the lake comes back to life. The ice gives way. Docks reappear. Boats hum in the distance. Neighbors reconnect after a long Minnesota winter. And just like that, Lake Washington becomes more than a place, it becomes our shared rhythm again.



Welcome Back to Lake Season, 2026

Tucked inside this newsletter, you'll find your LWIA membership card. It's simple—fill it out, drop it in the mail, and you're officially part of what keeps this lake thriving. Your dues directly support efforts like aquatic invasive species prevention, water quality initiatives, community events, and the quiet, behind-the-scenes work that keeps Lake Washington healthy and vibrant. In many ways, your membership is a vote for clean water, for strong community, and for the future of this lake. Every year, we're reminded that this isn't just about maintaining a lake, it's about sustaining a place that means something to all of us.

And here's something fun to look forward to—for the second year, our Shoreline Captains will be delivering LWIA stickers to all 2026 paid members. Place yours proudly on your mailbox, boat, fishing box, or wherever you spend your time enjoying the lake—it's a great way to say, "I'm part of this."

HELP US COVER THE SHORELINE

We're looking for a few more neighbors to serve as Shoreline Captains in open areas around Lake Washington. If you've ever thought about getting more involved, this is a simple and impactful way to do it.

It's easy: stay connected, share updates, and help keep your section of the lake informed.

- ✓ Minimal time commitment
- ✓ Great way to meet neighbors
- ✓ Meaningful impact on our lake community

Be the connection. Be the voice.
Be the neighbor who helps keep our lake strong.

To our current Shoreline Captains: thank you.
Thank you for reaching out, sharing information, answering questions,
and helping neighbors stay connected.
Your role may seem simple, but it makes a meaningful difference
in how we care for Lake Washington—together.

The Lake Washington Improvement Association Board is grateful to all of our Lake Washington homeowners for your continued support of the Lake Washington Improvement Association. Your involvement—whether through membership, participation, or simply caring for the lake—helps protect and preserve this special place for everyone.

We welcome you to stay connected and involved. Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, March through October, and all homeowners are invited to attend. If you're interested in getting more involved, we are always looking for volunteers to help with projects throughout the season. Your time and ideas make a meaningful difference.



2026 Grant Programs

By Sharon Daniels, Grant Officer



Approved Grants for 2026

- MCAL/ Meeker County Lakes Association = \$4,000.
- DNR = \$0.00 (2026 our grant application was in good order, but DNR ran out of grant funds before our application was chosen).
- AIS/Meeker County = \$0.00 (December 2025 preliminary approval of \$6,102.00.00 was granted); Final AIS application due 3/10/2026. Board members said no treatment would be completed in 2026; therefore, I did not complete the application.
- Novel Grant / Meeker County: a preliminary approval of \$2,666.00 has been granted for I-LIDS for 2026. I completed final application prior to 3/10/26. Waiting for approval.
- MAISRC Research Center Pre-Proposal Grant: I applied for 2026 grant. On 3/3/2026, I received an email saying our application was received. Invitations for proposals will be sent April 2026.

LIMNOPRO Survey:

There will be \$0.00 of grant money available to be reimbursed for this expense in 2026. The DNR does reimburse these surveys through Grant Funds, but we do not have grant funds available in 2026. AIS does not reimburse for surveys even if we had grant funds. Survey expense is approximately \$3,000.00 - \$3,500.00.

We have used LIMNOPRO for surveying the past couple of years and we want to continue to survey each year, as this helps us to know if we have aquatic invasive species (AIS) as milfoil, zebra mussels, spiny water fleas, starry stonewort, etc.

Watershed Projects:

There is \$4,000.00 MCAL Grant Funds available for projects around the lake as culvert diversion/watershed projects in 2026. In 2025 we had major work completed on inlet projects and paid \$10,820.43 in 2026 for these projects thus far; MCAL will reimburse for \$4,000.00.

We do monthly water quality testing, I-LIDS maintenance, along with zebra mussel inspections, milfoil monitoring, tile inlet projects, buffer strips, holding pond maintenance, etc. all with volunteer help.

As stated, there are costs to complete these projects and that is why these grants are important to us.

Should anyone have questions in regards to permits, treatments, etc., contact

- Eric Katzenmeyer, MN DNR AIS specialist
- eric.katzenmeyer@state.mn.us
- 320-234-2550.

Any questions with AIS, Meeker County, contact

- Ariana Richardson
- ariana.Richardson@co.meeker.mn.us.

To all the volunteers that work on projects during 2026, as soon as a project is completed:

- Email me your "in-kind" volunteer hours to sdaniels@grdaniels.com.
- Include any receipts for expenses
- I will then forward the receipts to MCAL for reimbursement.

Thanks! to all those that volunteer their time and efforts to keep our lake at its best!

Swimmers Itch

What You Should Know

As we look ahead to another beautiful Minnesota lake season, it's important to be aware of a common—but preventable—summer nuisance: swimmer's itch. Swimmer's itch is a temporary skin irritation that can occur after swimming in freshwater lakes like Lake Washington. While it can be uncomfortable, it is not dangerous and does not spread from person to person.

According to the Minnesota DNR and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), swimmer's itch is caused by microscopic parasites that naturally live in lakes. These parasites use snails and waterfowl as part of their lifecycle. When the parasites are released into the water, they can mistakenly come into contact with humans. Because humans are not suitable hosts, the parasites die shortly after contact—but this can trigger an allergic skin reaction.

What does It Look Like?

Symptoms typically appear within a few hours of swimming and may include:

- Tingling, burning, or itching skin
- Small reddish pimples or blisters
- Rash typically on exposed skin (not covered by a swimsuit)

What If I Get It?

- If you develop swimmer's itch, use anti-itch creams (like hydrocortisone or calamine lotion),
- Take an antihistamine if needed and avoid scratching to prevent infection.
- Symptoms usually resolve on their own within a few days to a week.

How to Prevent It?

- Before swimming, avoid areas with heavy vegetation and try to swim in deeper water
- After swimming, towel dry immediately and vigorously (this is one of the most effective steps), change out of wet swimsuits and shower as soon as possible

When is it Most Common?

- In warm summer months (June–August)
- In shallow, weedy areas of the lake
- On calm days, when parasites are more concentrated near shore

Can My Dog Get Swimmers Itch?

Yes—dogs can get swimmer's itch, although it tends to look different than it does in people. The reassuring part is that, as with humans, it's not dangerous and not contagious. It's simply an allergic reaction, and it typically clears up on its own.

What happens with dogs? Just like in humans, the parasites can come into contact with a dog's skin while they're swimming or wading—especially in shallow, warm water near shorelines where snails and waterfowl are present. In dogs, you may notice:

- Excessive scratching or licking after swimming
- Red bumps or welts, often on the belly, legs, or areas with less fur
- General skin irritation or restlessness

When to call the vet? If your dog seems very uncomfortable, the itching is intense, or the skin looks inflamed or infected, it's worth checking in with your veterinarian.

Social Events

By Sandy Wosmek

Spring is in the air and another new lake season to begin! Many memories to be made and much fun is ahead. LWIA held the first board meeting in March, and social plans for the year were discussed.

Hope to see many of you at the annual meeting as this is a good time to pay your lake membership dues and enjoy the free meal for members.

Also, visit with your lake neighbors, hear information from the board members, (maybe decide to join the board or volunteer to help on a committee), listen to the speaker and understand the lake issues and other topics on what can be done to improve Lake Washington.

We all want to enjoy the lake and keep it in the best shape as possible. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about the lake contact a board member or your shoreline captain. Have a great lake season!

SUMMER POT LUCK

The date is TBD. Watch for more info in the following months.

CONTACT US



Lake Washington Improvement Association
PO Box 68 Dassel, MN 55325



www.lwiaonline.com



info@lwiaonline.com



Lake Washington Improvement Association
• Submit your lost & found inquiries here

LAKE WASHINGTON IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION



2026

ANNUAL MEETING PORK CHOP DINNER

SATURDAY, MAY 2 Dassel Rod and Gun Club

Guest Speaker:
Kristan Maccaroni
DNR Supervisor

- Social Hour: 5:00 p.m. (bring your own refreshments)
- Meal: 6:00 p.m. FREE pork chop meal with all the fixings
- Program: 7:00 p.m. Listen to a speaker, board committee reports, any other business and open discussion.

MEAT RAFFLE: Meat trays provided by **Benny's** in Hutchinson.
PORK CHOPS: **B&B Sports** in Hutchinson is once again paying for the pork chops.

Please thank these folks when doing business with them.



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SUPPORT YOUR LAKE
BECOME A LAKE WASHINGTON
ASSOCIATION MEMBER

2026 Membership Cards are included in this Newsletter. Please complete yours and mail it to LWIA PO Box 86, Dassel MN 55325.

More information on page 20

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YOU ARE INVITED
ANNUAL BOARD MEETING
& PORK CHOP DINNER

Saturday, May 2
Dassel Rod and Gun Club

- 5:00 PM Social Hour
- 6:00 PM Pork Chop Meal FREE to Members
- 7:00 PM Program with Guest Speaker:
Kristan Maccaroni, DNR Supervisor

More information on page 23