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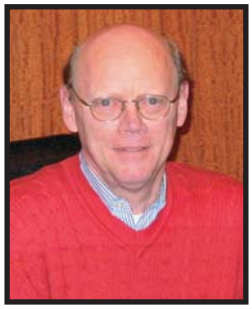
Lake Minnetonka Conservation District Newsletter

Message from the Chair



"The State of the Lake"

Many government agencies annually report the state of their organization (the State of the State, Union, etc.) by preparing a report for their stakeholders. Therefore I am pleased to follow this pattern with this report of "The State of the Lake."

1. Milfoil Management – The LMCD harvested milfoil again in 2006 – its 18th year of cutting and hauling it away. Harvesting is not a permanent solution, merely a way to make the major traffic lanes more navigable. To supplement the harvesting initiative, the LMCD, Lake Minnetonka Association, MN DNR, and the Army Corps of Engineers partnered on a "demonstration" project in 2006. The project was designed to test the effectiveness of herbicide treatments which were applied to designated test areas on three bays. The initial opinions regarding the effectiveness of the treatments are positive, although the full results of the project cannot be confirmed until the summer of 2007, when the Army Corps of Engineers will complete its analysis. If the project results warrant expansion, a fundraising campaign will be considered. The LMCD is willing to assist in such a fundraising drive. Help will be needed from many other organizations, agencies, and stakeholders.

2. Shoreline Inventory Project – The LMCD conducts an inventory of watercraft stored along the Lake's shoreline every two years; the primary objective is to document the numbers and types of watercraft stored on the Lake. An inventory was taken in 2006. The storage count remains consistent with historical counts. You may view the full Report at http://www.lmcd.org/pages/reports.htm.

3. "Future of the Lake Day" – The LMCD partnered with Crystal-Pierz Marine for the past two years to put on this special event to educate people about the enjoyment and preservation of the Lake. The event included exhibits on safe boating, invasive species, sailing, fishing, and more. While the event welcomed everyone, it especially catered to the youth of our community, since the future of our Lake will be in their hands. These two events were successful, but the LMCD Board has decided that there are not adequate resources available to proceed with this event in 2007. The LMCD is hopeful that an event of this type can be launched again in the future; to do so will take more volunteer efforts and financial resources from the broader community.

4. LMCD Newsletter – The first LMCD newsletter was published in 2006. The primary purposes of the newsletter are to improve the public's knowledge of the LMCD's role in managing the Lake and to educate the public on the rules and regulations. This is the first of two newsletters planned for 2007.

5. Public Access Inspection Program – The LMCD has partnered with the MN DNR since 2002 to inspect watercraft that are being launched; the goal is to inspect incoming watercraft for the prevention of introducing new invasive species into the Lake. In 2006, over 1,900 hours were allocated during the summer to inspecting boats at high volume public accesses, during peak days and times. A similar program is planned for 2007 and is summarized on page three.

6. 2006 Regulations Update – Key projects include: 1) Winter and summer rules were updated by printing new summer brochures and winter and summer signage. 2) De-icing rules were updated and communicated. 3) The Board decided that better enforcement of existing ordinances was required. The staff spent many hours on the Lake looking for potential storage and docking violations. This data is now being analyzed, and letters will be sent to lakeshore owners where the potential violations were observed. See further details on page 4.

7. Updates to LMCD Code – A thorough review of existing LMCD regulations is planned for 2007 and changes will be made where necessary. One targeted area that will be reviewed is the protection of wetlands and shallow water areas.

In closing, we feel that "The State of the Lake" is good. However, there is always more to do:

- The lack of boating courtesy by some boaters degrades the boating experience for everyone. Additional education and enforcement will be done.
- The threat of new invasive species (especially zebra mussels) reaching our Lake is very real. We need the cooperation from the private sector and other government agencies, as well as substantial funding, to prevent this from happening. I hope that you will consider helping this project by making a donation to fund the LMCD's efforts.
- The LMCD is committed to improve the enforcement of existing ordinances.

The LMCD welcomes your questions and feedback regarding our initiatives. Please feel free to e-mail me if you have any questions or comments (tskramstad@lmcd.org). We hope you have a safe and enjoyable boating season!

Tom Skramstad (Chair)

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Save the Lake Fund

What is the Save the Lake Fund? – Save the Lake is a non-profit initiative of the LMCD that was established in1968. This privately raised reserve fund invests in programs that benefit the environmental and recreational needs of Lake Minnetonka.

Why was the Save the Lake Fund created? – Save the Lake was created to provide supplemental funding for the enhancement of public program initiatives on Lake Minnetonka. The LMCD's main funding source for environmental and recreational needs are provided through the LMCD's 14 member cities by way of a levy.

What type of projects are funded through Save the Lake? – Save the Lake traditionally funds public safety, environmental, and public service/educational projects. Potential projects are reviewed by the LMCD utilizing existing Save the Lake Program Funding Criteria. You may view the Criteria on the LMCD website at www.lmcd.org, under Save the Lake.

Are donations to the Save the Lake Fund tax deductible? – Save the Lake donations are generally tax deductible to individuals under the IRS Code 26 USC Section 170 (b) (1) (a) because contributions to any political subdivision of any state for exclusively public purposes are tax deductible. The LMCD is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota under Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.605, Subd. 1.

How much Save the Lake Funds are raised annually? – Between $25,000 and $30,000 is raised annually, with approximately 90 percent of the funds raised being spent on projects.

What projects are planned for in the 2007 Save the Lake Budget? – Five primary projects are included in the 2007 Save the Lake Budget. These include: 1) $2,000 for the Solar Buoy Light Program, 2) $6,680 for the 2007 Public Access Inspection Program (see page 3 for further details), 3) $35,376 for the 2007 I-LIDS Project (see page 3 for further details), 4) $800 for the 2007 Winter Ice-Cleanup Project, and 5) $300 for the 2007 Voluntary Safety Flag Program. In 2007, the LMCD approved funding $300 to assist Greyson Hensley, a Shorewood resident, in implementing a proposed Voluntary Safety Flag Program as an Eagle Scout project. Orange flags will be purchased and distributed to the public, which will be used to signal to other boaters while an individual recreating in the water is down. For further details of this program, please contact Greyson at www.lkhensley@mchs.com. Further details of the 2007 Save the Lake Budget are available at www.lmcd.org/Save the Lake.

What should you do if you're interested in donating to Save the Lake? – Please contact the LMCD office at (952) 745-0789.

2007 Milfoil Harvesting Program

Since 1987, the LMCD has coordinated a mechanical harvesting program on Lake Minnetonka to manage Eurasian Watermilfoil (milfoil). The primary objective of this program is to address impediments to public navigation caused by milfoil. Plans for the 2007 Milfoil Harvesting Program have commenced, with a 10-week season planned from June 7th through August 17th.

The North Upper Lake Option will be implemented in 2007. Harvesting is planned to commence on Crystal, Maxwell, and North Arm Bays first. The program will then continue to other bays on North Upper Lake, before proceeding to bays on South Upper Lake. After harvesting has been conducted on South Upper Lake, harvesting will move to bays on Lower Lake South and Lower Lake North. Further details of the North Upper Lake North Option, including weekly updates on bays already harvested and bays to be harvested, will be located on the LMCD's website during the season.

Little, if any, harvesting will be done in the areas of Carmans, Grays, and Phelps Bays that were treated with herbicides in conjunction with the 2006 Milfoil Demonstration Project. This summer, the Army Corps of Engineers and the MN DNR have planned further fieldwork in those areas to determine the effectiveness of the 2006 herbicide treatments.

When the harvesting equipment is in your bay, the LMCD will harvest milfoil that causes impediments to public navigation. Specifically, the harvesting crew will take into consideration impediments to private docks, public docks, commercial docks, and public accesses. The crew will create channels to open water and, at most, will harvest up to your dock. Any management of milfoil within a dock use area is the property owner's responsibility. For public assistance, the LMCD maintains a current list of private contractors licensed by the MN DNR at www.lmcd.org/Pages/Eurasian.htm.

Your questions and comments on this program are welcomed. Additionally, you are encouraged to contact the LMCD if you would like to have the harvesting crew scout an area to determine whether milfoil is causing a navigational impediment. To do so, please feel free to contact 2007 Milfoil Project Manager Judd Harper (jharper@lmcd.org) or LMCD Executive Director Greg Nybeck (gnybeck@lmcd.org); (952) 745-0789.

2007 Aquatic Invasive Species Program

The LMCD has been very active in preventing the introduction of new aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Lake Minnetonka in recent years. Learning from the introduction of Eurasian Watermilfoil in 1987, the LMCD maintains that it makes sense to be proactive in this endeavor rather than reactive. The LMCD is especially concerned about the introduction of zebra mussels, which are getting closer to Lake Minnetonka. If introduced into Lake Minnetonka, there is no known remedy to eliminate zebra mussels. A list of zebra mussels infested waters in the State of Minnesota, per MN DNR, can be viewed on the LMCD's website at www.lmcd.org/Pages/Zebra/htm.

A three component approach has been adopted by the LMCD to address AIS in 2007. Further details of these three components are detailed below:

Continuation of the Public Access Inspection Program

Since 2001, the LMCD has contracted with the MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Program to inspect watercraft/trailers prior to launching into Lake Minnetonka at high volume public accesses during peak times. Through 2006, approximately 7,850 hours of these inspections have occurred at an investment of $108,000. In 2007, this will continue to be the backbone of the Lake Minnetonka AIS Prevention Program because the physical presence is the best means to educate the public and inspect watercraft. Details of this component in 2007 include:

- Duration – May 18th through September 16th (1,920 hours).
- Inspection Days – Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays.
- Times of Inspections – Fridays (11 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.); and Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).
- Public Accesses (4) - 1) Grays Bay, 2) Maxwell Bay, 3) North Arm, and 4) Spring Park.

It has been estimated by the MN DNR that around 50% of the watercraft launched into Lake Minnetonka through public accesses will take place during these inspection days and times.

Implementation of I-LIDS

In 2006, the LMCD funded a $2,000 grant to Environmental Sentry Protection, LLC to determine the feasibility of developing a boat launching monitoring system to aid in the prevention of the spread of AIS. Based on the results of the 2006 pilot project, this component of the 2007 AIS Prevention Program will install, operate, and maintain one Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor (I-LIDS) unit at the four primary accesses identified in the Public Access Inspection Program. This component will compliment the first component by taking video sequences of watercraft/trailers seven days a week, 24 hours a day (an estimated 13,000 hours) from May 12th through October 11th. 100 percent of the video sequences will be reviewed to monitor the frequency of AIS being transported to Lake Minnetonka, when paid MN DNR inspectors are not inspecting watercraft/trailers. Two primary goals for this component include: 1) to reduce the risk of AIS introduction into Lake Minnetonka by monitoring boat launchings and modifying boater behaviors, and 2) to improve the education of the general public relating to AIS by notifying potential violators in writing (if possible) of a potential violation.

Creation of a Volunteer Inspection Program

This component will also compliment the Public Access Inspection Program component by providing on-site inspections of the remaining seven secondary public accesses on Lake Minnetonka. These public accesses include: 1) Carsons Bay, 2) Wayzata Bay, 3) Echo Bay, 4) Halsted Drive, 5) Cooks Bay, 6) Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, and 7) Phelps Bay. The intent of this component is to inspect watercraft/trailers at secondary public accesses during the same duration, days, and times as provided by the MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Program. The LMCD is looking for volunteers for this program. If you have interest in volunteering your time in 2007, please contact the LMCD office at (952) 745-0789.

LMCD RULES FOR SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LOTS

The LMCD Code of Ordinances consists of five chapters that contain the rules and regulations of Lake Minnetonka. The basic rules governing the area within which docks and boat storage are allowed and the number of watercraft that may be stored may be found in Chapter 2 and are relatively simple for the great majority of single family residential lots around the Lake. The following is a brief, general description of those rules.

AREA AVAILABLE TO PLACE DOCKS AND STORE BOATS (SECTION 2.01, Subd. a & b)

Each lakeshore lot is allocated an area of the Lake referred to as that lot's Dock Use Area (DUA). All docks, watercraft storage, swim rafts, trampolines and the like must be kept within this DUA. The DUA has: 1) length limitations, which are measured from the shoreline, and 2) side setback limitations, which are measured from the side property lines as extended into the lake.

DUA Length; measured from the ordinary high water mark – 929.4' elevation (Subd. a):

- The length of the DUA is generally the same as the width of the lakeshore frontage (maximum 100').
- Sites with lakeshore frontage between 40' and 60' that were in existence on 2/5/70 may extend the dock to 60'.
- Sites with lakeshore frontage of less than 40' may extend the dock to 4' of water depth or 60', whichever is less.

DUA Side Setbacks; as measured from the extended side property lines (Subd. b):

- 0' to 50' from shore (10' side setback).
- 50' to 100' from shore (15' side setback).
- Docks with canopies; See Section 2.12, Subd. 3 (20' side setback).
- Sites in existence on 2/2/70 that have 50' or less in frontage (5' side setback).
- Side opening slips (depth of the slip, minimum of 20').
- Subject to some restrictions, consenting neighbors may combine their DUA for a common dock or adjust their DUAs or setbacks between their two lots.

LIMITATIONS ON NUMBER OF WATERCRAFT (SECTION 2.02)

LMCD Code limits the number of restricted watercraft that may be kept at a site. The number of unrestricted watercraft is not limited, although they must be stored within the DUA. Unrestricted watercraft, which are defined in Section 1.02, Subdivision 55c of the LMCD Code, are generally small watercraft that are non-motorized or have motors of 10 horsepower or less. A personal watercraft (jet ski, etc.) is a restricted watercraft.

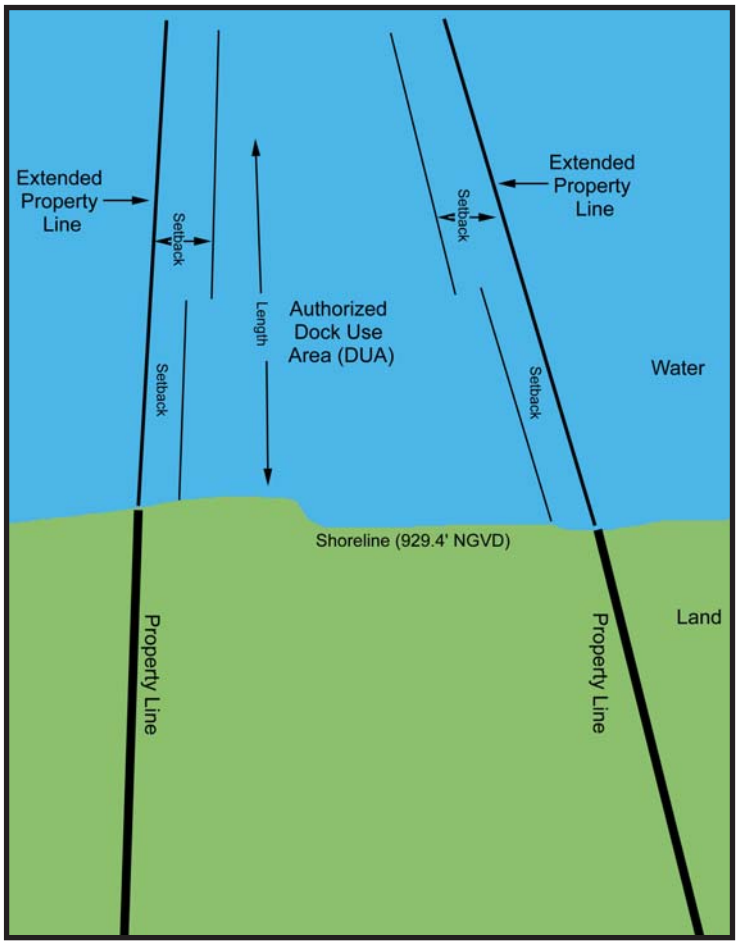
- The watercraft storage rule that applies to most single family residential lots on the lake allows the storage of up to four restricted watercraft if all the following tests are met:
  1. There is only one single-family residential structure on the site.
  2. The dockage rights at the site are owned exclusively by the owners of the site.
  3. All restricted watercraft kept at the site are owned by and registered to persons who live on the site.
- If the lot and the use of the lot do not meet these tests, other rules apply. The general rule is that one restricted watercraft is allowed for each 50 feet of shoreline. However the rules allow storage of a greater number of restricted watercraft in some cases.

DOCK CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS (SECTION 2.12)

LMCD Code, which is consistent with State regulations, allows dock dimensions to exceed eight feet in length or width, but not both (Subd. 12). This rule applies to all docks on Lake Minnetonka, including decks and platforms.

Persons who have questions about these rules are encouraged to contact the LMCD office or review the LMCD Code at www.lmcd.org/pages/codeint.htm. Landowners should also be aware that docking and boat storage may also be subject to city regulations and you are encouraged to contact the municipality that you reside in.

Example of Dock Use Area (DUA)



LMCD Code Enforcement Efforts

In 2006, the LMCD developed and implemented a process for enforcement of LMCD storage ordinances at single family residential lots. This project was identified as a task to be completed in the Lake Minnetonka Boat Density Committee Action Plan.

Prior to the 2006 boating season, the LMCD established two enforcement activities as "high priority". These included: 1) Sites storing three or four larger restricted watercraft that did not meet the three criteria outlined on page 4, and 2) Sites storing five or more restricted watercraft that did not have a multiple dock license. Two other lower priority enforcement activities were established by the LMCD. These included: 1) Dock and platform dimensions that exceed what is outlined on page 4, and 2) Long docks (wetland and non-wetland areas). A summary of these four LMCD Code enforcement activities is documented below:

- **Sites storing three or four larger restricted watercraft** – 58 residential sites (approximately 1.7%) were storing three or four restricted watercraft that were not all owned and registered to residents of the site. It is possible that some of these sites may comply with LMCD Code because of a combined dock situation.
- **Sites storing five or more restricted watercraft** – 81 residential sites (approximately 2.3%) were storing five or more restricted watercraft. It is possible that some of these sites may qualify for a multiple dock license because of a combined dock situation or the site has an adequate amount of 929.4' shoreline.
- **Dock and platform dimensions** –133 residential sites (approximately 3.8%) had platforms that exceeded eight feet in both width and length.
- **Long docks (wetland and non wetland areas)** – This was not documented in 2006.

The following 2007 LMCD Code enforcement priorities have been established:

- **Sites storing three or four larger restricted watercraft** – 1) Bring these 58 sites into compliance through educational letters and communications, 2) Re-inspect these sites during the boating season, and 3) Inspect the remainder of Lake Minnetonka for potential new violations.
- **Sites storing five or more restricted watercraft** – 1) Bring these 81 sites into compliance through educational letters and communications, 2) Re-inspect these sites during the boating season, and 3) Inspect the remainder of Lake Minnetonka for potential new violations.
- **Docks and platforms** – Enforcement priorities of these 133 residential sites have not been finalized by the LMCD Board.
- **Long docks (wetland and non-wetland areas)** – the LMCD Board has not finalized enforcement priorities of this enforcement activity.

LMCD Summer Rules

Some of the LMCD summer rules on Lake Minnetonka are more restrictive than the State of Minnesota's rules.

Two examples include:

1) slower speed limits for all watercraft, and
2) an observer requirement (at least 12 years of age) when towing a person on water skis, an aquaplane, surfboard, saucer, or similar device. It is the responsibility of the operator to understand and comply with all Lake Minnetonka summer rules.

Signage that summarizes Lake Minnetonka summer rules was updated by the LMCD in 2006 and installed at most major summer public accesses. Detailed to the left is a copy of this sign.

A full copy of Lake Minnetonka summer rules can be obtained at the LMCD office or at www.lmcd.org. If you would like more information on the State of Minnesota's rules, please visit the MN DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the LMCD? The LMCD, created through state enabling legislation in 1967, is the regional governmental agency of Lake Minnetonka responsible for a variety of surface use activities. Each of the 14 municipalities surrounding Lake Minnetonka appoints one member to the Board of Directors, which governs the agency. A listing of the municipalities and LMCD representatives may be found at www.lmcd.org.

What does the LMCD do? Some of the activities of the LMCD include: 1) licensing and permitting of multiple docks, de-icing sites, charter boats, and liquor licenses, 2) management of aquatic invasive species programs, 3) coordinating with Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol on enforcing of LMCD surface use regulations, such as speed limits and "Quiet Water Areas", and 4) coordination of periodic Lake Management studies listed on the website under Reports.

Who should I contact for violation of LMCD surface use regulations? For general information or questions relating to public safety and the use of Lake Minnetonka, you are encouraged to visit the Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol website at www.waterpatrol.org. If you have a complaint or are a witness to a traffic/safety hazard event, you are encouraged to contact the Hennepin County Dispatcher at (763) 525-6216. For questions on docking and boat storage, please call the LMCD.

What activities does the LMCD not regulate? The LMCD receives a number of telephone calls relating to shoreline enhancement projects; primarily riprap, dredging projects, and lake level/discharge questions on Lake Minnetonka. These projects are within the jurisdiction of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and you may contact them at (952) 471-0590 or at www.minnehahacreek.org.

For a more detailed overview of Frequently Asked Questions, please visit the LMCD's website at www.lmcd.org.

Meetings & Calendar Dates

LMCD Board Meetings are scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at Wayzata City Hall, 600 Rice Street, at 7:00 p.m. The following is a list of upcoming meetings and events; subject to change:

April 11, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
April 13, 2007	EWM/Exotics Task Force Meeting
April 25, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
May 9, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
May 12, 2007	I-LIDS Program Commences
May 18, 2007	Public Access Inspection Program Commences
May 23, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
May 28, 2007	LMCD Office Closed – Memorial Day
June 7, 2007	Milfoil Harvesting Program Commences
June 8, 2007	EWM/Exotics Task Force Meeting
June 13, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
June 27, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
July 4, 2007	LMCD Office Closed – Independence Day
July 11, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting
July 25, 2007	LMCD Board Meeting

LMCD Board Meetings can be viewed at: 1) Mediacom cable (cable channel 20) each Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m., or 2) at http://www.lmcc-tv.org, by utilizing the following three easy steps: a) scroll down to "Government Access 20", b) click "On Demand: Click here to be directed to a listing of our 5 Channel 20 meetings", and c) select LMCD. You may also reach the LMCC's web site through the LMCD's website at http://www.lmcd.org/pages/links.htm.

EWM/Exotics Task Force Meetings are conducted in the LMCD office @ 8:30 a.m.

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