



LAKE MINNETONKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Preserve and enhance the "Lake Minnetonka experience"

**WINTER
2022-23
NEWSLETTER**

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to winter on Lake Minnetonka! The busyness of summer has changed to the crisp air and enjoyable winter activities on the lake. While summer on the lake is very busy, winter recreation has increased over the years. We have seen many property improvements over the years, and winter is also a time that many dock projects are planned and/or constructed.

Lake Minnetonka is a unique asset, and it's our mission at the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) to ensure your family – and future generations – can enjoy it to the fullest. We are a regional governmental agency that brings together 14 different cities, two counties, and many state and local agencies to protect, preserve and enhance Lake Minnetonka's environment, economy and vitality. Since 1967, the LMCD has worked to adopt rules, provide resources and funding, and create educational programs.

In this newsletter, you'll find information about lake safety and LMCD programs, including what our organization and our partners are doing to prevent and manage aquatic invasive species. We also launched a new website with more information for lakeshore owners, visitors and people doing business.

I greatly appreciate the cooperation and respectfulness of various stakeholders that are quietly behind the scenes helping to implement our lake safety and conservation initiatives. Even as the weather chills, there is so much to enjoy on Lake Minnetonka. I thank our board, cities, agencies, businesses, residents, visitors and all stakeholders who work together to make a difference. I hope you, your family and friends have a safe and healthful 2023!

VICKIE SCHLEUNING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



LAKE SAFETY

NEW WATERCRAFT SPEED LIMIT TAKES EFFECT IN 2023

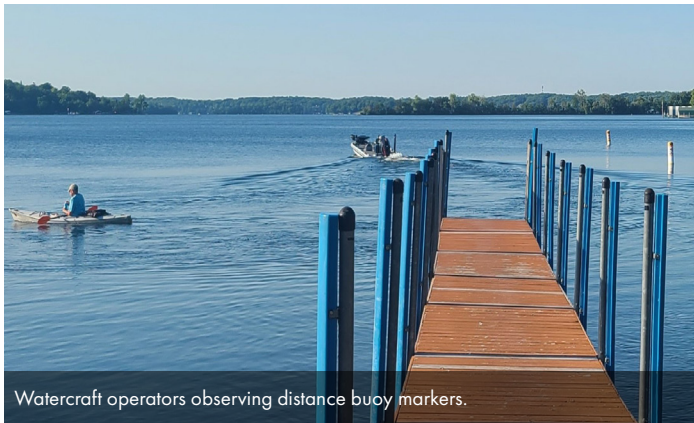
After listening to community members and conducting research, the LMCD board approved an updated rule in August regarding watercraft speeds near the shoreline.

Beginning January 1, 2023, the new rule will place a five miles-per-hour speed limit on all boats within 300 feet from the shore. This is an increase from the current 150-foot distance.

The current rule requiring a 150-foot distance from docks, anchored boats, swimmers or scuba divers' warning flags throughout the lake will not change.

Thank you to everyone who participated in a district listening session, attended board meetings and submitted public comments on this issue.

You can learn more about the new rule at lmcd.org/safety/safety-boat-generated-wakes.



Watercraft operators observing distance buoy markers.

KNOW THE DISTANCE, GO THE DISTANCE, OWN YOUR WAKE

Buoys are considered the “road signs” of the water and help remind boaters and other lake users about regulations and known hazards. This summer, the LMCD installed distance buoy markers as a pilot at Cook’s Bay public launch at Surfside Park. These buoys helped test

your skills in recognizing the distances of 150 feet and 300 feet (a football field) on the water. This site was chosen due to the safety and nuisance concerns noted in this area. Thank you to the City of Mound, residents, Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office Water Patrol, and Tonka Built for assistance in placing, relocating and providing feedback during the pilot. A short video will also be released in 2023 to promote responsible boating and to help educate lake users about distances. Check out the new buoy education webpage on the LMCD website.

SOLAR LIGHT PROGRAM

Some channel buoys are lit by solar lights to help with safe navigation and to reduce nuisances through designated channel areas during the nighttime or sudden inclement weather. 106 solar lights are installed each year.

Over the past five years, the LMCD has been replacing the older solar light models that are no longer working as efficiently. As a result, in 2023 most of the lights and replacement solar lights will be the upgraded versions.

Thank you to Al & Almas and Paradise Charter Cruises for installing the solar lights, Al & Almas for removing the lights, LMCD staff and volunteers for helping to maintain the lights, and Save the Lake donors for contributing to the solar light program.



LMCD staff clean, replace batteries and maintain solar lights each season.

PRESSURE TO COMMERCIALIZE

Periodically, there is increased pressure to commercialize Lake Minnetonka, as experienced the past few years. Whether special events or watercraft businesses, the LMCD works with several agencies to promote businesses and activities that are safe and protect the lake. For example, in order to operate a charter/watercraft for hire business, the operation must be registered with the LMCD and meet certain health and safety requirements. We work with some agencies that regularly inspect safety equipment such as boiler systems, fire extinguishers and personal flotation devices, in addition to joining training sessions with LMCD staff.

Thank you to the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Hennepin County Environmental Health and Epidemiology, and the cities of Mound, Wayzata, Excelsior, and Minnetonka for their coordination in these activities to promote safety and minimize nuisances.

BOATER SAFETY EDUCATION

Thank you to everyone who participated in this summer's boater safety class! The benefit goes well beyond the attendees as they share the knowledge with family and friends. According to the U.S. Coast Guard 2021 Recreational Boating Statistics, 75% of deaths in 2021 occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction.

Each year, the LMCD board members and staff partner with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), Mound Fire Department, Jay Soule (Al & Almas), and this year, Georgette Jabbour (Tonka Bay Marina) to host a hands-on class for adults and children 12 years and older.

The State of Minnesota requires young people to obtain a Watercraft Operator's Permit to operate certain watercraft. Our annual class is also a great opportunity for adults interested in learning more about boat safety and may be eligible for insurance discounts. We hope you join us for our next course in summer 2023!



WINTER SAFETY REMINDERS

Lake Minnetonka is a treasure all year long, including the colder months. The following tips will help keep your activities safe and enjoyable, and protect the lake this winter. Learn about additional safety measures at lmcd.org.

BE PREPARED AND RESPONSIBLE

Let others know your schedule before venturing on the ice and be prepared with a survival plan and safety equipment in case of falling through the ice. Remember, the use of alcohol or drugs can impair your senses.

CHECK ICE DEPTHS OFTEN

Ice depths can vary so be sure to check ice thickness using an ice chisel, ice auger or a cordless drill with a long 5/8 auger bit. Also park vehicles at least 50 feet apart and move every two hours to prevent sinking.

SPEED LIMITS AND SHORE ZONES

In general, the shore zone (within 150 feet of shore) helps protect non-motorized activities such as snowshoeing, skating and cross-country skiing. Motor vehicles may traverse the shore zone by the shortest direct route but are prohibited from driving faster than 25 mph in the shore zone. Outside the shore zone, speeds are 50 mph daytime and 30 mph nighttime, but adjust speeds to the conditions. Other speed limits exist near structures and people.

ICE SHELTER AND VEHICLE REGISTRATION

All portable and non-portable ice shelters left unattended must be licensed through the MN DNR. The ice shelter license must be readily visible from the shelter's exterior. Ice shelters left out overnight must have at least two square inches of reflective material on each side.

All snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-road vehicles (ORVs) must be registered through the MN DNR. For more information, please visit dnr.state.mn.us.

LITTERING AND PET WASTE

It is unlawful for the operator of a motorized vehicle or any person to deposit any garbage, rubbish, feces or other litter on the ice. Plan ahead to bring any waste or garbage with you when leaving. This includes cleaning up your pet's feces.



PROTECTING LAKE MINNETONKA

PREVENTING AND MANAGING AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

The LMCD is committed to conserving the quality of Lake Minnetonka, including the prevention of pollution and aquatic invasive species (AIS).

AIS are non-native plants, animals and other organisms that live primarily in water. They can drive out and eat native plants and wildlife and spread disease. With the continuing spread of starry stonewort and other invasives, the threats to Lake Minnetonka are greater than ever.

By working together, we can minimize the spread of AIS, and the harm to our environment, our economy and enjoyment of our lake.

STARRY TREK: AN ANNUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

For several years, the LMCD has partnered with the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and MN DNR to host the annual Starry Trek event in August at Lake Minnetonka.

Volunteers gather to learn about AIS and then search for starry stonewort and other invasive species on Lake Minnetonka and other lakes in the west metro. Starry stonewort was not found this year in Lake Minnetonka during this event or other investigations. Similar events were hosted around our state. In 2022, volunteers searched a total of 289 public water accesses on 248 different bodies of water in Minnesota.

LMCD also receives and investigates reports from people about suspicious vegetation and aquatics throughout the year. Thank you for helping protect our lakes and waters!



Volunteers, including a scuba diver from Environs LLC, participated in Starry Trek in August 2022.



Starry stonewort: A threat to Lake Minnetonka.
Report any suspicious aquatics to LMCD.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF AIS DURING WINTER

Did you know that AIS can be spread during the winter? Certain AIS remain hardy in winter, and if proper prevention measures aren't taken, AIS can spread. Some steps to prevent the winter spread are provided below. Anglers and other people should always practice the following when stepping onto or when leaving the ice:

- Inspect machinery and equipment such as ice augers, snowmobiles and fishing equipment for attached aquatic plants, animals, or mud.
- Remove all attached plants or animals from machinery and equipment.
- Drain all water from livewells, buckets and other equipment.
- Never move live fish away from a waterbody.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.

Spending a few minutes practicing these five simple tips can help preserve and protect waterways.



How can you help stop invasive species?
Use the Clean. Drain. Dispose method throughout the year.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAYS' AIS MANAGEMENT

The LMCD launched a new funding program for AIS management last year for newly organized large-scale bay treatments. You can submit an AIS bay treatment plan and, if approved, the district will pay up to 35% of the cost of an AIS survey and up to 25% for the first-year treatment cost. Learn more about the grant and tips for organizing a bay at lmcd.org/lake-shore-owners.

NEW TOOLS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AIS

New AIS prevention tools were installed at Carson's Bay Public Launch and Gray's Bay Public Launch this year. LMCD provided some funding, along with a grant from Hennepin County, for new CD3 units to provide boaters access to tools to remove AIS from watercraft entering and exiting Lake Minnetonka. These AIS prevention projects were made possible through the collaborative efforts of Hennepin County, MN DNR, the City of Minnetonka and the City of Deephaven, helping to protect our lakes and waterbodies!

Gray's Bay Public Launch is considered the busiest launch in Minnesota. According to Hennepin County, there were 3,117 total tool uses at this access compared to a total of 25,142 total tool uses recorded in Hennepin County, so Grays Bay accounts for 12% of the total. Thank you lake users for protecting our lakes!



TAKE THE PLEDGE

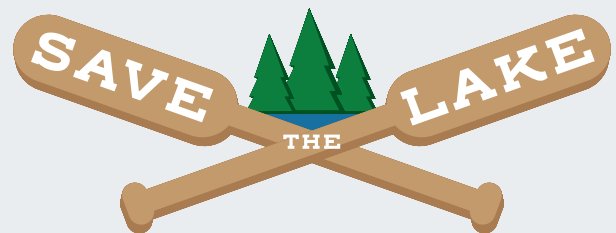
The MN DNR rolled out a new online pledge to help prevent the spread of AIS. Anyone 18 years or older can visit the Pledge to Protect Minnesota Waters on the MN DNR website to take the pledge. The pledge affirms that participants will follow Minnesota's "Clean, Drain, Dispose" laws and will encourage others to do so. Visit dnr.state.mn.us/data/ais-pledge.

BOATER SAFETY EDUCATION LEGISLATION

The LMCD supported legislation that would require safety education for boaters in Minnesota. While progress was made in developing the language and support for the boater safety education bill, the bill did not pass during the legislative session. In 2021, the USCG counted 4,439 accidents that involved 656 deaths, 2,641 injuries and approximately \$67.5 million of property damage as a result of recreational boating accidents. Only 16% of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator received a nationally approved boating safety education certificate.

QUIET WATER AREA DESIGNATED AT CEDAR POINT WEST

In June, the LMCD Board approved a resolution designating a Quiet Water Area at Cedar Point West buoy channel between Cooks Bay and West Upper Lake. The decision comes after the LMCD received a multitude of complaints and after staff observations noted concerns for public safety, boat traffic violations and environmental impacts with a high boat traffic volume passing through the channel. Hennepin County installed slow wake buoys this summer at this buoy channel. Boaters should navigate between the channel buoys since shallow water depth hazards exist between the buoy and shore.



Save the Lake is an initiative that was established in the 1970s to provide a supplemental funding source to the district's primary operating budget. This fund was created to help address the Lake's needs of public safety, environment, public service and education. With your support, the LMCD has been protecting the legacy of Lake Minnetonka since 1967. Your generous donation today will help protect the lake for generations to come!

Visit lmcd.org/save-the-lake to learn convenient ways to contribute to lake initiatives.



LAKE MINNETONKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

TEAM

VICKIE SCHLEUNING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Executive Director is the executive and operating officer of the LMCD. Vickie is responsible for implementing the strategic plan and all operations, management and promotion of activities of the LMCD. She has more than 30 years of experience in public administration in a variety of areas. Vickie graduated from South Dakota State University with degrees in health science and microbiology with a chemistry minor and received a master of business administration degree from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management.

TAMMY DUNCAN

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



Tammy has been with the LMCD for more than 10 years. As the Administrative Assistant, she manages all aspects of the office including customer service, payroll, financial record keeping, administrative operation, human resources and other various functions critical to the success of the organization.

THOMAS TULLY

ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNICIAN



Thomas joined the LMCD in spring 2022 as the Environmental Administrative Technician, helping to ensure compliance with district regulations. This position serves as a primary contact for licensees, partner agencies, residents and businesses to provide technical assistance regarding dock construction, aquatic invasive species and a variety of lake initiatives. A Lake Minnetonka area resident himself, Thomas holds a degree in water resources from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

MAISYN PRUETER

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR



Maisyn joined the LMCD in February 2022 as the Administrative Coordinator, performing a wide variety of administrative, technical, communications and clerical support for the organization. She enjoys preserving the lake she has called home her entire life. Maisyn graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a degree in environmental sustainability.

THE BOARD - 2022

The LMCD is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors composed of one member appointed by the city councils of the 14 municipalities that border Lake Minnetonka.

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TONKA BAY

VICE CHAIR
ANN HOELSCHER
VICTORIA

SECRETARY
DAN BAASEN
WAYZATA

DIRECTOR
BILL COOK
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TREASURER
RICH ANDERSON
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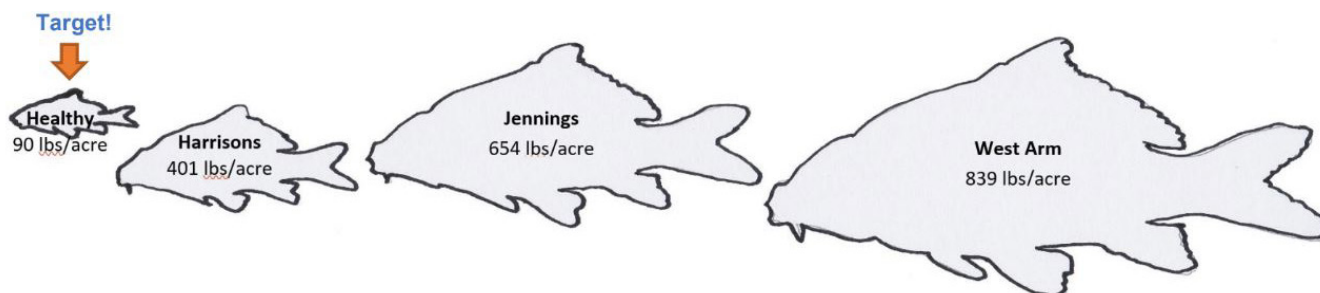
CARP STUDY FINDINGS

Harrisons Bay Association recently studied the number of carp in select Lake Minnetonka bays and found significantly high populations of the invasive species.

Working with the University of Minnesota this fall, the association studied three bays suspected to have high populations: Harrisons Bay, Jennings Bay and West Arm Bay. The study assessed the carp populations and also tagged carp to better understand their migration patterns. This study was partially funded by the LMCD.

Carp is a large omnivorous fish native to Europe and Asia. They were first introduced into Midwest waters in the 1880s. According to the MN DNR, carp are one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species due to their wide distribution and severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands. Their feeding disrupts shallowly rooted plants, muddying the water and releasing phosphorus that increases algae abundance. The decrease in water quality also causes a decline of aquatic plants needed by waterfowl and fish.

A healthy target is 90 pounds of carp per acre. Instead, Harrisons Bay was found to have 401 pounds of carp per acre, Jennings Bay has 654 pounds of carp per acre and West Arm Bay has 839 pounds of carp per acre.



LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more about lake safety, efforts to preserve Lake Minnetonka and LMCD programs? New to the lake? There are several ways to stay informed:

- ✉ Sign up for our newsletter at bit.ly/3SLNTEp
- 🌐 Visit our website at lmcd.org (The Lake Shore Owners section is an especially great resource for lake-friendly living tips.)
- 📘 Follow us on Facebook @[LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict](https://www.facebook.com/LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict)
- 🐦 Follow us on Twitter @[LakeMnkaCD](https://twitter.com/LakeMnkaCD)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Harrisons Bay Association is seeking grants and donations to fund additional research and management initiatives.

Next spring, the group hopes to install a barrier in Painter Creek and netting to gauge its effectiveness at deterring carp, as well as track the migration of the carp they tagged this past fall. Other future activities include further research in order to develop a comprehensive management plan that is properly scaled based on research findings.

You can learn more about this project and donate at HarrisonsBay.org.

OTHER CARP EFFORTS

There have been other efforts to understand and manage the carp population on Lake Minnetonka. Since 2016, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the University of Minnesota completed a multi-year carp assessment in the Six Mile Creek chain of lakes west of Lake Minnetonka, including management work conducted at Halsted Bay.

Management methods such as migration barriers and removal have been implemented in efforts to maintain the carp density at acceptable levels.

You can learn more about this project at MinnehahaCreek.org/Project/Six-Mile-Halsted-Bay-Carp-Management-Study.

