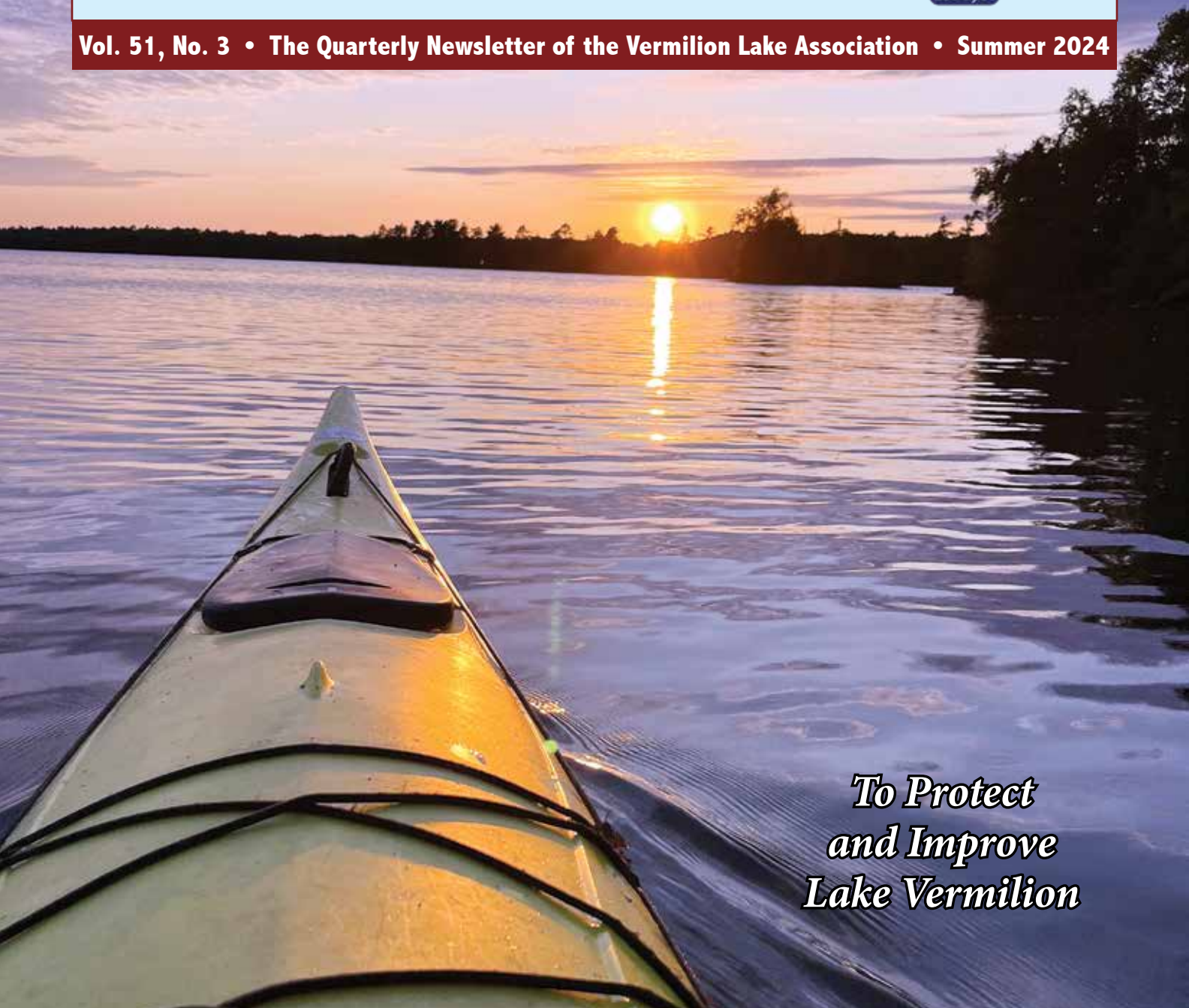


THE VERMILION



Vol. 51, No. 3 • The Quarterly Newsletter of the Vermilion Lake Association • Summer 2024



*To Protect
and Improve
Lake Vermilion*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Lake Neighbors and Friends,

As I write this, three days after the devastating rainstorm that raised our lake level and flooded Cook, I am reminded of the countless acts of support so many have shown to our community - people helping their neighbors with flooded docks, wet basements, and washed-out driveways. The list goes on. These acts of kindness have strengthened our resolve, and we will get through this unfortunate storm. We are a small community, but strong in our resolve. Thank you for all your help to your neighbors and our community. Please support the businesses of Cook and elsewhere as they rebuild.



Dwight Warkentin
VLA President

With the help of our volunteers and Eagle Docks, we have removed all pallets from our shore lunch sites but hope to restore them to full use in a few weeks, after the water level lowers. Our latest shore lunch site on Smart Bay was just put into operation prior to the storm. Hopefully you will enjoy this along with our other eight sites later this summer.

I am sad to report the passing of Sheri Sawatzky who was our longest serving board member at 15 years. Many of you knew her, not only through the VLA but also service with her septic business. She was a special person, a friend of many, and she will be missed.

Please plan on attending our annual meeting at Camp Vermilion on July 27. We will be voting on board members, reviewing the many accomplishments of the VLA, plus it will be another opportunity to socialize with your friends on the lake. We have a special speaker who will address loon habitat, our photo contest, many informative displays, plus another great meal from the Camp. I think you will enjoy this annual event. Details for RSVPs are included in the newsletter.

I am pleased to report we have no known infestations of starry stonewort, zebra mussels, or Eurasian milfoil. Our sentries will be in full force monitoring critical areas of concern. But we all must be vigilant to help protect our beautiful lake. Please see the aquatic invasive species (AIS) report in this newsletter.

I hope you enjoy reading our informative articles. Thank you to all the contributors who make this newsletter possible. Also, thanks to all our many volunteers who make our association successful.

With our current high-water levels please minimize your boat wake around the shoreline, respect your fellow boaters and shoreline residents, stay safe, and hopefully we can all enjoy the rest of the summer.

Regards,

Dwight Warkentin, President VLA

The Vermilion Lake Association newsletter is published quarterly and mailed to members.

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Send story ideas and photos to Lori Ptak at lori@ptak.org

Cover photo by Mike Ptak, VLA Member/Volunteer

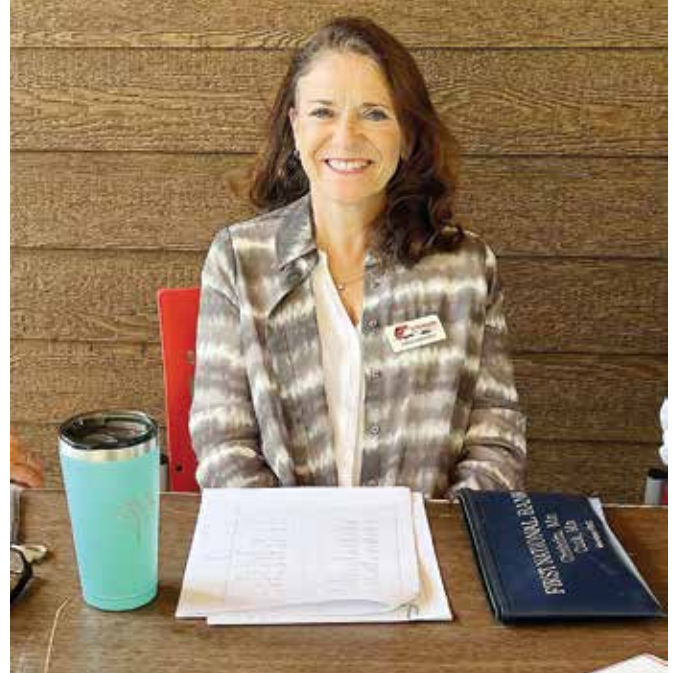


VLA honors board member Sheri Sawatzky

On June 12, 2024, Sheri Sawatzky passed away after a courageous fight with cancer. We will honor Sheri with this edition of the newsletter.

Sheri has been a board member and officer since 2009. During this time, she was the secretary and membership coordinator for the Sportsmen's Club, now known as the Vermilion Lake Association. She volunteered tirelessly giving of her time even though she had little time to give because of running her own business. She played a key role in supporting several different presidents and participated in the interview process for new board members. Each member of the board has responsibilities for different areas that the lake association supports, and Sheri's responsibilities were very important to the growth in funds that we now have. Lauren, Sheri's husband, and Sheri also participated in deploying one of the first successful loon nests with a camera to watch the loons.

I know she will be missed since she attended all of our volunteer recognition events and annual meetings. She was always ready to volunteer or offer her help and everyone could depend on her. Her smiling,



positive attitude was welcoming to members and volunteers at these events.

Speaking for the membership and the board, we send our best wishes to Lauren and Sheri's family at this very difficult time. For Sheri: Go Pack Go.

The Board of Directors – Vermilion Lake Association

Reminder!

What: *Vermilion Lake Association's Annual Meeting*

Where: *Camp Vermilion, 2555 Vermilion Camp Road, Cook*

When: *Saturday, July 27, 2024, from 4-7 pm*

4-5 pm - gather at the dining hall

5-6 pm - buffet dinner of smoked brisket, sides and wood-fired brownies

(\$15/adults, \$5/under 10)

6-7 pm - a brief meeting and our speaker, Natasha Bartolotta from the Nat'l Loon Center

Also including a Photo Contest: Members send up to 3 photos to lori@ptak.org

RSVP Required by Friday, July 19 to Terrie Heimann, jtheimann@live.com, 218-666-6057

or Pat Michaelson, plmichaelson@gmail.com, 612-306-7702

The Loons' Darkest Day

By Noel Sederstrom, VLA Volunteer,
Live LoonCam Team

In the pitch black of midnight, a truly terrible day began unfolding for the loons we've been monitoring this May and June on Lake Vermilion. Starting with fear and terror, turning to joy, then confusion that spiraled into despair and fury—Mom and Dad Loon lived through every bit of it before Friday, June 14 came to an end.

Nature's life-and-death drama of that day was captured by the Vermilion Lake Association's Live LoonCam, an Axis surveillance camera with infrared night vision capability. It is bolted to a weighted post platform in the water, and powered by a data ethernet cable. An attached parabolic mic picks up audio from wherever it's pointed. We're able to send images and audio to the internet thanks to upload support from Access Broadband of Virginia. The high-resolution images recorded by the camera can be downloaded and edited into video features, one of which is driving the narrative here. Our Live LoonCam gives us a window into



Continued on next page



the loons' world. Some days what we witness is riveting.

Seven minutes past midnight on June 14, a mink slid through the bushes without a sound and launched a sneak attack on Mom Loon. The loon was guarding her egg on the nest the pair had built alongside a tiny island off the mainland. There had been two eggs, and it's still unclear what happened to one of them. We think the rising waters of Lake Vermilion during the week of May 21 may have swept it away.

As the mink attacked in the total darkness, the loon tried to spear it with her beak, taking stabs in the dark over and over. Then the mink bit the loon and held on, and they began furiously thrashing around the nest, with the egg bouncing back and forth. The loon was blind in the dark, but our camera's infrared imaging lets us see what happened.

The loon prevailed in the fight and was able to scare it off with screams for help from her mate. She was on high alert all night.

As dawn arrived, Mom Loon stood up to roll the egg, a necessary step every so often during incubation to promote healthy metabolism of a developing chick. A little after 6 a.m., she discovered the egg had cracked open and immediately began preparing for the little one.

Then came heartbreaking scenes from the loon's nest. At first, she believes a tiny loon chick is beneath her. But a couple of hours later as she clears away the eggshell, she realizes there's no chick there and begins searching for it in the nest... in the nearby bushes... and in the water of the lake. Dad Loon joins in the search.

We can make an educated guess that there never was a developing chick in the egg, that it wasn't viable, and that when the egg cracked open, the fluid inside



just seeped into the nest area and was gone. For an egg to protect a developing chick, it must be kept warm. The rising cold waters of Lake Vermilion back in late May could have interfered with everything.

Back to the loons' darkest day. As they widened the search for their missing loon chick, their despair would turn to fury. One of them attacks something in the bushes, doing its best to intimidate whatever creature was hiding in there. Later, in anger and frustration, the loon drives off a blackbird snooping around where the chick should have been.

As their nightmarish day tapered down toward sunset, Mom Loon ventures back to her nest, checking one last time. She looks around at the place she crafted with care, where she had been spending so much of her time the past month, inspecting every twig and piece of debris. Then she finally moves on. Will she try again this summer? We wait to see.

What is the “Mystery” about Chinese Mystery Snails?

Aaron Kania submitted this picture of Chinese Mystery Snails that he found in Pike Bay west of Aronson Boat Works. How did these exotic snails find their way into our waters and what is the mystery? The origin of these snails is not a mystery.

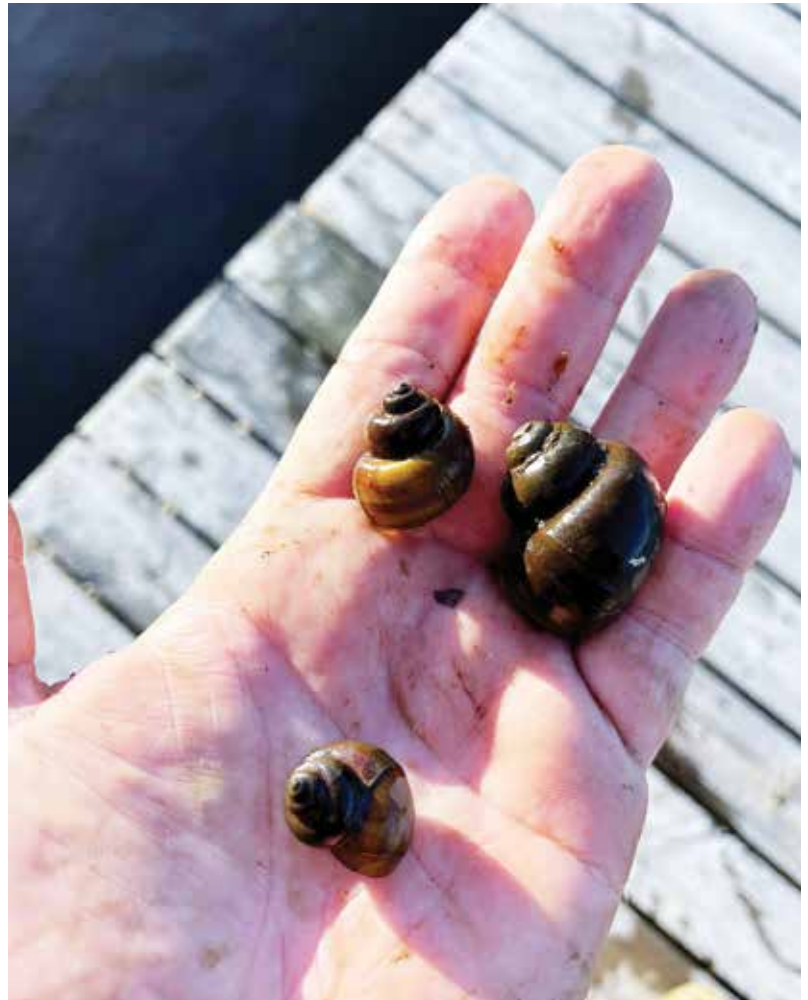


Chinese mystery snails were originally imported to California in the late 1800s as a food source for Asian immigrants and later became popular for use in home aquariums. Somewhere in that time frame, the where and when is unknown, a small population was introduced prob-

ably when an aquarium was emptied into a lake or stream. Today, these snails can be found in states surrounding the Great Lakes and are present in over half of Minnesota’s county lakes. A small population of these snails was first identified in the western tip of Lake Vermilion in 2011. There are no doubt scattered colonies throughout the lake that have gone unreported as they are not recognized as invasive.

Chinese Mystery Snails have an olive to brownish, corkscrew-like shell. They can grow up to two inches in length, the size of a golf ball. Their lifespan is usually one to two years but can be up to four in cooler waters. A unique feature of these snails is the operculum, “trapdoor,” covering the entrance to the shell making it possible to survive out of water for days. Females suddenly, “mysteriously,” give birth to young, fully developed snails which are as small as a grain of rice. Think of guppies.

Though Chinese Mystery Snails are classified by the DNR as an invasive species, their presence does not trigger an infested waters designation as with species like zebra mussels or spiny water fleas. Their long term ecological effect is unknown. But they are a



threat as they outcompete native snails, spread parasites to water fowl and have been known to disrupt nesting fish, particularly largemouth bass. Large colonies have been known to die off at the same time, their bodies washing up on the shorelines creating a smelly mess. While some snails can be controlled with chemicals, such treatments are not effective with Chinese Mystery Snails due to the trapdoor which protects them from drying out or from chemicals in the water.

As adults and young snails may be hidden in mud and debris, sticking to anchors, ropes and fishing gear, there are things we can do to stop the spread. Please remember to clean, drain, dispose and dry boats, trailers and water related equipment before entering another Minnesota lake.

Meet Your Team of AIS Sentries



The Vermilion Lake Association has been fortunate to have a dedicated team of 10 sentries who monitor 24 public and private watercraft launch sites for invasive species. Screening is done monthly during the summer beginning the latter part of June. If you see a sentry throwing a rake into the water thank them for the work they are doing to protect our lake.

Pictured are (from left) Jeff Heimann, Larry Clines, Nancy Watkins, Jack Marxhausen, and Bob McNamara.

Starry Stonewort confirmed in Pokegama Lake by Grand Rapids

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources posted a news bulletin on June 7, 2024 confirming that the invasive algae, starry stonewort, was interspersed with native plants on and around a boat ramp on the southwest end of Pokegama Lake. The DNR has updated signage at public accesses and is working with Itasca County to provide decontamination units and expanded watercraft inspections. This is a serious threat to our lake.

Starry stonewort was first confirmed in 2015 on Lake Koronis,

a lake in central Minnesota. It has since spread and has now been found in 30 water bodies in Minnesota. It is an algae that looks very similar to some of our native aquatic plants.

Starry stonewort can form dense mats which can interfere with recreational uses of a lake and compete with native plants. It is most likely spread when fragments have not been properly cleaned from trailered boats, personal watercraft, docks, boat lifts, anchors or other water-related equipment. Though it has never



been eradicated from any U.S. lake or river, early identification can be crucial to carefully remove small areas to reduce the risk of spread.

Information on how to identify starry stonewort can be found on the DNR website

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquaticplants/starrystonewort/index.html>

Algae: The Good, the Bad, and the Slimy

Mark Edlund PhD, St. Croix Watershed Research Station, Science Museum of Minnesota

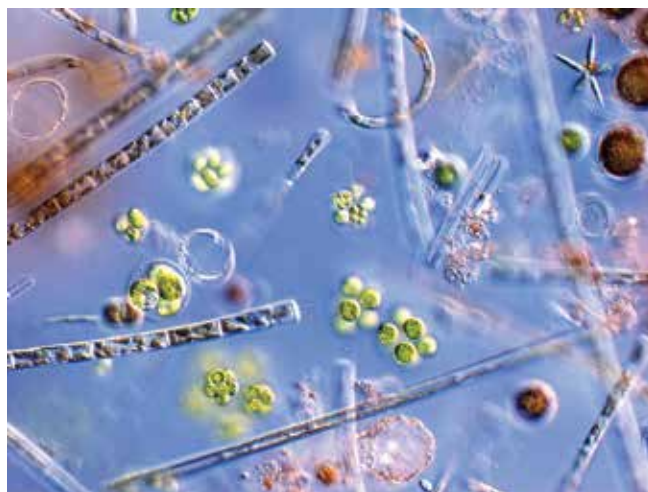
The GOOD

When we look into the water of our favorite lakes, we see pretty rocks, little fish, plants, and sometimes—even if we aren't looking for it—we see algae. Let's talk about algae—what it is, what it isn't, and the good and bad of algae.

Algae can be found almost everywhere. They grow in the oceans, streams, lakes, bogs, on tree bark, on soil, even in your birdbath! They're super important. About 50% of the oxygen production on earth is done by algae—that's every other breath you take! Algae also form the base of our aquatic and marine food webs. They convert energy from the sun to food through photosynthesis, then little animals eat the algae, which in turn get eaten by, for example, minnows, and that walleye you had for dinner is just the top of the food web that began with algae!

What are algae—from a science perspective, algae are non-vascular photosynthetic things that typically live in our waters. Non-vascular means they aren't the plants that most of us think of (ferns, grass, trees, and flowers), and photosynthetic means they are able to take sunlight and use it to produce food using chlorophyll to capture that sun energy. So freshwater algae are greenish, often small, and they don't have flowers. But algae are so much more!

What algae aren't—we know algae aren't flowering plants, but many things get confused with algae. Duckweed, that tiny stuff that floats on the surface of ponds, is actually a group of flowering plants, not algae. The bigger duckweeds even have flowers and a little root if you pick them out of the water. Mosses are also simple plants but they aren't algae either. Even animals are confused for algae. Did you know that many of our northern lakes have freshwater sponges in them? They're usually green and grow on rocks, but they are an animal that filters our water. They are green because they have algae that live inside their cells in a symbiotic relationship—the algae is protected from getting eaten, and the sponge gets



A drop of lake water has many different types of algae.



Not algae! Duckweeds and sponges are actually flowering plants and animals.

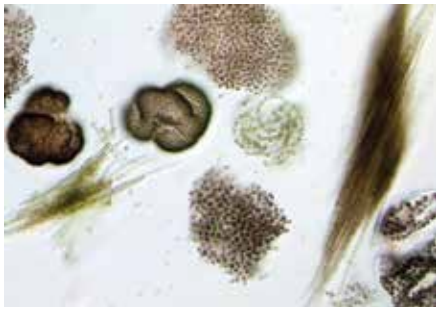
some extra food from the algae's photosynthesis.

The algae actually represent many different groups in

the tree of life—they are the mutts of the microscopic world and found all over the tree of life. Some are actually bacteria, but most are “eukaryotes” with an identifiable nucleus and chloroplasts. We separate the groups based on their color (green, red, brown, golden), their life cycle, and how they store food. Let's look at some of the common groups of algae you might see in Lake Vermilion.

The BAD

Cyanobacteria—the blue-green algae are actually photosynthetic bacteria and are common in lakes, streams, and wet soils. The blue-green algae are well adapted to living in lakes—they've been around for 3.5 billion years! They have the ability to adjust their buoyancy in the water column (to get light and nutrients as needed), they often grow in large colonies that are not preferred food by zooplankton, but



Be careful! Cyanobacteria can form summer/fall nuisance blooms and produce toxins.

they are most notorious for their production of skin-, liver- and neurotoxins under certain growth conditions (the bad!) called harmful algal blooms or HABs. We saw a nasty cyanobacterial blooms in Vermilion in summer of 2023; please follow the state’s recommendation for your kids and pets—“When in doubt, stay out!”

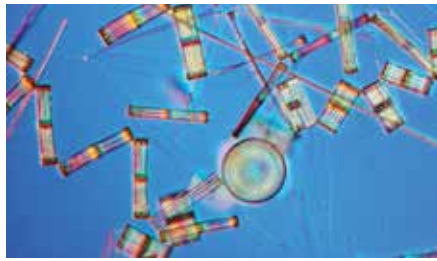
The SLIMY



Springtime growths of green algae look bad, but are harmless.

Green algae—the green algae range in size from single cells to large filaments that are common on rocks and logs along the shorelines of many lakes. They are often common in mid-summer growing among aquatic plant beds, but also produce nuisance accumulations of harmless green slimy bubbly goo in the spring as they capitalize on longer days, warming temperatures, and spring nutrients.

Diatoms—the diatoms have a cell wall made of biologically pro-



Diatoms have a cell wall made of ornamented glass shells. Beautiful under the scope.

duced glass. The size, shape, and pattern of the shell helps to identify each species. Diatoms live suspended in the water, especially in the spring and fall, giving the water a brownish tinge. Because they are made of glass, they are heavier than water and need that spring/fall mixing to stay up in the water column. Others live attached to plants, rocks, and sediment. If you look closely, sometimes you can see a slimy gelatinous film on rocks—that’s diatoms!



Eiffel tower-shaped cells of the dinoflagellate Ceratium are huge...under the microscope.

Dinoflagellates—the dinoflagellates or dinos are large, single-celled algae; most species surround themselves with a shell of cellulose plates (called a theca) and can swim with their flagella. Dinosaurs can be very common in lakes under the ice or in the middle of summer. The dinoflagellates are probably best known for producing red tides in nearshore marine settings, fortunately this phenomenon does not happen in

our lakes!

Golden-Browns— the golden brown algae or chrysophytes live in small motile colonies or as single cells. Many of the forms have small glass scales that cover their cells (Mallomonas) or live in organic vase-shaped structures. The chrysophytes are typically common in cooler months of the year and also impart a brownish tinge to the water.



Glass scale surround this motile chrysophyte called Mallomonas.

Those are some of our most common algae types in Minnesota lakes. But there are at least 12 other groups of algae out there, some you’ve seen—think of the big brown kelps and red algae that live our our marine coastlines. They aren’t found around Lake Vermilion, except in your lobster shipment, but many other types of algae can be found in our lakes with some careful looking.

Next time you stand on your dock and stare out over the beautiful lake, take a minute to look down in the water to ponder, appreciate, and respect the smaller things in our lake’s life. Take a deep breath of algae-produced oxygen and cast out your line to become the top predator in a food web that begins with algae.

About the author: Mark Edlund, PhD is an aquatic biologist and Director of Aquatic Research and Collections with the Science Museum of Minnesota’s St. Croix Watershed Research Station in Marine on St. Croix, Minn.

Beautiful, Accessible Shore Lunch Site Completed in Smart Bay



1 How many hearty VLA volunteers and community partners does it take to build an INCREDIBLE Accessible Shore Lunch Site?.....You'll note from the pictures here.....a whole crew!!

1: John Zwieg and Mike Ptak, Shore Lunch Site Leaders, plan for the new site late last fall at a former DNR Camp Site

2: The dock build (8 ft wide and 42 ft long) and efficient install provided by Eric and Karen Olson of Eagle Docks expedited the buildout of the site mid-April

3: Chris Born, VLA Project Leader, and team lay out a plan for a gently sloped path that makes access to all parts of the site easy to navigate from a wheelchair, scooter, walker or other assistive device



4: While a generous donation by Vermilion Barge and Gravel provided the bobcat work, the volunteer team had LOTS of shoveling to create this user-friendly site

5: A wide path leads to the new accessible latrine concealed by a privacy wall

6: Captured here after a day of hard work.....some of the volunteer team

7: A large, sturdy, accessible picnic table built by Mike Estrin of the Guides League gets its final modifications



8: Plaques are placed recognizing Ray Harris and wife Vi as the site's Honorary Designees for his years of service to the VLA

9: The beautiful site is complete and ready for ALL to enjoy. Find it in Smart Bay at Muskrat Channel.

VLA volunteers:

Chris Born, John Zwieg, Mike Ptak, Sue Larson, Nancy Swanson, Rick Teeter, Tom Knox, Mike Jenkins, Mike Estrin

Community Partners:

Jim DeVries, DNR State Park Supervisor; Eric & Karen Olson Eagle Docks; Blaine Olson, Vermilion Barge & Gravel; Dan Mault & Eric Burckhardt, Cook Building Center; Vermilion Guides League.



Island Residents Become Lake Stewards

The Lake Steward program kicked off the summer season of activity by awarding three Lake Steward signs to long-time property owners on Pine and Ely Islands. Mary St. Onge's family (bottom left with Sara Bright and Lori Ptak, VLA Vice President) has been on Pine Island for



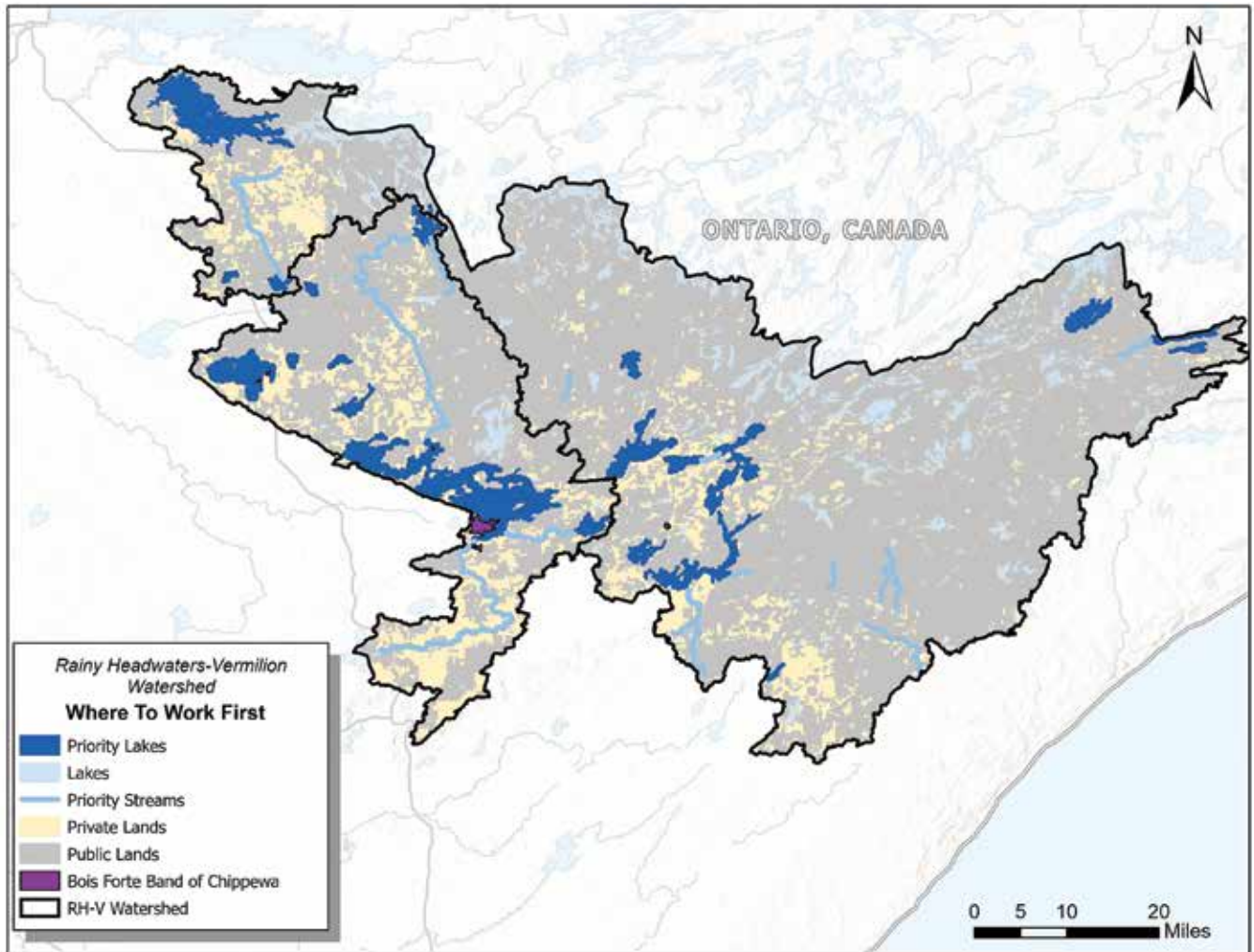
Sara Bright
VLA Board Member/
Lake Steward Program
Leader

100 years and continues to work to preserve family legacy and promote a healthy future for our lake. Jim and Connie Birmingham (right) are just up the shore from Mary and Bill. Jim has been on the lake since 1954, with Connie joining him when they married. Jack and Anne Marxhausen (bottom right) built their place in 1991. As Jack says: "We've never taken a day on the island for granted, we are so blessed to have this place on this spectacular lake." If you are in these areas, keep an eye open for their beautiful new Lake Steward signs!

Our Lake Steward team is planning more property visits this season. Would you like input from our team on how to improve your property to become a Lake Steward and receive one of our beautiful signs? Take the quiz (see the link below) and we'll follow up to schedule a visit!



<https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/other-programs/become-a-lake-steward/>



Watershed Draft Plan is Approved

The Rainy Headwaters-Vermilion Watershed Comprehensive Plan draft was approved by the State Board of Water and Soil Resources in April and is starting to get underway. This local plan will direct funding to protect, improve, and in some cases, restore water resources across the watershed for the next 10 years.



Becca Reiss
VLA Member,
SWCD Community
Conservationist

The plan has eight goals to reach in 10 years ranging from two miles of lakeshore restored to natural vegetation to sealing 50 unused wells. There are many actions that can assist with reaching goals as well such as technical assistance with landowners and education and outreach. Lake Vermilion was identified

as one of the priority water resources in the plan and the planning partners greatly appreciate Vermilion Lake Association members participating in stakeholder meetings held during the planning process.

You can learn more about the plan including the full draft expected to be approved by the state in late April at www.nslswcd.org/rrhwvr. North St. Louis SWCD looks forward to working with the Vermilion Lake Association and Lake Vermilion landowners to complete voluntary projects to protect the lake and larger watershed.

For best results when trolling “Match the Hatch”

Think small when trolling in the late summer and big when trolling in the late spring

Over the years, I’ve come to realize that my walleye fishing fits into five distinct patterns in the open water season. From the opener until about Memorial Day, I usually fish with minnows right off my dock early and then switch to leeches after the first two weeks or so. If I go out in the boat during that time, I have



a few spots close to shore where I use minnows and leeches. There are two times of year I spend a lot of time trolling artificial baits: a 3-week or so period in the late spring from

late May to mid-June, and then a 6-week or so period in the late summer beginning in early August until mid-September. During the middle of the summer from late June to early August, the lake is so full of food from bug hatches that walleyes get hard to catch. I don’t fish too much anymore for walleyes in the middle of the summer, but when I go, I use crawler harnesses in well-known spots like Lighthouse Reef in Big Bay south of Pine Island, or a few deep water spots in Big Bay. When the calendar says it’s officially fall around September 20 until the end of the open water season, I focus on fishing minnows with jigs and Lindy rigs.

During trolling in the late spring, I typically use larger lures than the ones I use in the fall. Bait fish that were spawned a year before have had all winter to grow. Some of my favorite late spring lures are shown in the photo below. The first lure shown, the 5 1/2-inch green Rebel, has been my biggest winner during this period.



During the second half of the summer (August to mid-September) as the water begins to cool but before it starts getting real cold, I spend a lot of time trolling. Smaller lures produce big results. Yellow perch minnows are a primary forage species in Lake Vermilion. They spawn in the spring (April to early May) and by late summer, the hatchlings have grown to 1 to 2 inches in size, and are finally big enough for walleye to feed on. As the water begins to cool, the fish start binge feeding in preparation for winter. The lake is no longer full of food from bug hatches like it was in June and July. Also, more bait is exposed in open water due to shallow weeds dying off.

The lure size should “match the hatch” for best results. August to mid-September is one of the most particular times for matching the hatch because walleyes are zoned in on pursuing large schools of small perch minnows and will focus on lures the same size as the prey they are chasing. Trolling minnowbaits and crankbaits is a reliable way to catch the 13 to 20 inch eater-sized walleye that everyone likes to catch in Lake Vermilion. Keep the bait close to the bottom using trolling

weights or lead-core line. Trolling speed should be 1.3 to 1.7 mph. I also like to use a 6 to 7 foot fluorocarbon leader. The photo below shows some of the big winner lures that I have used in the late summer; the first one shown, the 2-inch Rainbow Trout sinking Rapala has caught the largest number of fish for me.



At this point, one might be tempted to ask, “Since I’m after bigger fish, isn’t it better to use bigger lures?” What’s important to remember is that at this time of year, walleyes are chasing clouds of perch minnows. I’ve caught plenty of 16 and 17 inch walleyes on those small lures. When I try big lures in the late summer trolling season, the only thing I ever seem to catch are northerns. It should be remembered that this advice is specific to Lake Vermilion where the majority of what we catch is in the 12 to 17 inch size. For anglers fishing in remote lakes in Canada, where the average walleye is significantly bigger like 25 to 30 inches, much bigger baits would be indicated.

Classic Boat Show Set For Sept. 1



We are happy to announce that the 32nd Lake Vermilion Antique and Classic Boat Show will be held on Sunday, Sept. 1 from noon to 4 p.m. and will be hosted by the Landing Restaurant and Moosebirds on Vermilion Dr. in Cook.

We are always delighted to have the Vermilion Lake Association as an honorary sponsor. Their presence at the show allows the Association to display and educate the public of its achievements, goals and plans for the future. We are fortunate that Lake Vermilion has an organization that is so dedicated to the welfare of the lake. Visit with them at their booth to learn how to become a lake steward and prevent Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) spread.

This event is open to the public and we encourage everyone to come see the beautiful boats and chat with the owners. Vote for your favorite boat. Then kick-back and enjoy a Landing's burger, a beverage, walk down the street for an ice cream treat at Moosebirds and then stay for the awards presentation at 4 p.m.

Anyone interested in displaying their antique or classic boat, whether it's wood, fiberglass, handmade or homemade, in the water or land display, please contact us for more information.

Happy Boating and see you at the show!

For more information, contact Sandy Jackson lakevermilionboatshow@aol.com

Dock Signs Show Member Support for our Mission.... to protect and improve



The 12x18 inch sign is designed to attach in either corner of dock front with self-tapping sheet metal screws or stainless hose clamps. Some members are choosing to mount them on their boat houses as well, or even at the entrance of a driveway. These striking aluminum signs with UV protection can be ordered at

<https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/merchandise/membership-signs/>

In Memory...

The Vermilion Lake Association regularly receives donations in memory of loved ones or friends. These gifts were received in April and May, 2024. We are grateful for these gifts and also wish to honor those who have passed away.

Bob Schneider

Gerry and Marion Rosenberger

Lauri Aho & Dick Okerstrom

Bud Carter, Tom & Nancy Ernst

Gerry Herringer

Leah Carr

Carl & Betty Davis, Richard Weber

Harvey "Harpo" Maki

Ray & Vi Harris

Don Pilger

Herman and Agnes Mesojedec

Robert & Violet Jurek

Fred Urbaner

Joseph & Evelyn DeAngelo

Thor Levenson

Garret Westby

Judy Moline

Vicki Olson



The Sun is Here!

Wear your new caps proudly to show your support for your lake association. The price is right! Cap prices are \$20, plus \$7 shipping per order. When you order 3 or more hats the shipping will be \$9. Free local pickup is available.

Order online <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/merchandise/caps/>

For more information contact Jerry Lepper, 218-753-2629 (H) or 218-404-2320 or email at jnclep4@frontiernet.net

Board of Directors and Officers 2024

Cook

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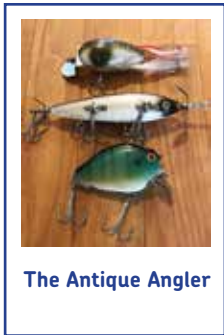
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Neko Rig for Bass

Antique Angler here with a relatively new rig for fishing for bass that is considered a finesse rig which might increase your bites during a poor fishing day. The rig gets the bait to the bottom, and it will stand up with enticing action of the plastic worm. This rig works best in deeper water during hot summer months.



The Neko rig starts with a plastic worm, and if you want more movement, use a worm with a tail. Most likely you have either heard of or used wacky rig in the past, and the Neko rig is like the wacky rig but a little different. The wacky rig uses a Gary Yamamoto straight worm with a hook through the middle of the worm. The worm is cast out

usually in shallow water and sinks slowly since there is no weight other than the hook in the worm. The worm, as it sinks, provides an enticing wiggle to bass and this combination has become one of the most successful bass baits in a very long time.

The Neko rig is somewhat like the wacky rig, however it uses a hook with weed guards (see picture) and an O ring where the hook goes between the O ring and the worm. The key addition is a small weight that goes into one end of the worm. The weight allows for a faster drop into deeper water and when it hits the bottom, the longer end of the worm stands vertically on the bottom. Depending on how deep the water is, a weight can be in the 1/32 to 3/16 oz range.



You also can put your hook directly through the worm like the wacky rig, however the O ring is the best approach to be able to catch several fish before the worm fails. The O ring is positioned towards the weighted end of the worm allowing more movement by the other end of the plastic worm, which can help attract fish and trigger strikes.

The other advantage the Neko rig has is the use of hooks with weed guards. The weed guards are very good since the rig is sinking to the bottom and chances are you are going to be casting in the areas with weeds, debris, and other structures. The weed guard will help to prevent the hook from getting snagged on this cover. Now look for areas of deeper water that bass may be using. Cast the lure out and let it sink to the bottom, then twitch it a few times, letting it bounce off the bottom each time. No bites? Try slowing down your retrieval as the fish may be looking for a slower presentation. Good luck with this presentation, I am sure that you will find it to produce some additional catches and there is nothing like a fight from a nice size bass! It works for either smallmouth bass or largemouth bass. The old Antique Angler approves of this approach.



The navigational lights on Lake Vermilion are a very important safety feature for all boaters. There are 28 solar powered lights set at strategic points to help guide nighttime navigation. It is very important to keep these operational so we are asking anyone who sees one that needs attention to please notify one of the following people:

John Zwieg : 218-750-3971

Mike Jenkins : 763-226-4911

Jerry Bontems : 218-404-6663



Above: The Bystrom Bay shore lunch site.

Below: The new shore lunch site with the dock boards removed to keep them safe from rising water.

Below right: Weighting down the dock boards at the Ptak cabin.

June Storm Breaks 2022 Lake Level Record

As of Monday, June 23, the lake level rose to break the record set on May 23 of 2022 by 0.12". Rainfall that day was reported between 7-10" depending on where you were at the lake. At 1359.67 ft, cabin owners scrambled to secure docks, boats, and lifts from floating away. Boaters were warned to lower speeds and watch for floating debris in the lake. Volunteers and Eagle Docks worked to secure and/or remove dock boards from most of the shore lunch sites.



link below). This site has water levels reported from a volunteer who measures levels in Daisy Bay. To view levels in real-time, go to MN DNR Waters CSG, which is measured by Cooperative Stream Gauging at the Vermilion Outlet near Buyck (see link below).

To view water level data, go to DNR Lake Finder (see

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/showlevel.html?downum=69037800>

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/csg/site.html?id=73050001>

Skol! It's Lake Water

by Joanne Bergman, VLA Member/
Volunteer

Whether or not arrival at your summer place is by water access, no one lives comfortably at the cabin without access to safe drinking water. The means to accomplish this life-affirming need includes dipping your camp cup directly into the lake (not recommended), hiring a well driller, carrying plastic jugs to and from the spring, or installing a dependable purification system.

Long ago, you might quite safely fill your canteen from the lake to enjoy a refreshing drink. Few cabin dwellers would take that risk nowadays, and we don't have to. Besides drilling a well, our options are to install a filtration and purification system or to bring in delicious water in jugs from the spring. That last option gets heavy if you're hauling to a boat-access only site.

I talked to one self-described "old timer" who admitted that, in his younger days, he thought nothing of drinking straight lake water. Nowadays Boundary Waters campers have portable filtration kits in their packs, and many of us cabin dwellers have quite satisfactory submersible pumps and purification systems.

A local plumber described the various systems available on the lake. In the "whole house" option, all incoming water is filtered and purified throughout the entire cabin or lake home, including the showers and commodes.

Few opt for chlorination, and many of us choose POU, the "point of use" option. In POU, filtered and purified drinking water comes in (most often to the kitchen). The water is purified via reverse osmosis and a UV light and is served up through a small-diameter separate faucet that most reserve for drinking, not dishwashing.

Yet another option is a well. Water brought up from



deep underground is often soft, lovely, and tasty. On the other hand, it may be hard, discolored, and nasty. A drilled well is the most maintenance-free option—but also the costliest. The costs are particularly high for cabins with no road access, when you factor in moving the machinery over the lake, plus the extra time and labor required. Many companies test water samples from new wells for contaminants such as arsenic.

Professionals will also test your water if you find "nuisance" issues such as stain or an unpleasant taste or smell.

Jim and Amy Andrews bought their cabin in 2017, when their lake water system was already in place. Systems like theirs include two filters that remove particulate, a reverse osmosis filter, and a UV light to rid the water of any bacteria. Jim and Amy describe the results as "the best drinking water I've had in my life."

When Jim Lakmann was a boy in 1955, his family cabin on Raps Road was a tiny summer place. In 2000, Rod Edblom rebuilt it. The gravelly shoreline drops off gradually, and the pump is 75' from shore.

Continued on next page

Reporting Boating Violations or Too Many Fish

We have been getting inquiries on how to contact Conservation Officers or the Sheriff about issues on the lake so please add this to your cell phone so you can respond quickly to an issue on the lake.

There are a few ways to report a violation:

- ▶ Call 800-652-9093 24 hours a day, or key in #TIP on your cell phone.
- ▶ You may also call Minnesota State Patrol's Non-Emergency Line at: 651-582-1544. This is also a great option, as it alerts the nearest Conservation Officer and may yield a faster response time.
- ▶ All violations reported through our online form at tip411 (see link below) will be investigated. Please provide as many details as you can to help the Conservation Officer with the investigation.
- ▶ Identifying Factors: Pictures, number of people, location on the lake, boat registration number (if you can get close enough to them), boat color, motor color, state of boat registration, color and type of clothing the individual/s are wearing.
- ▶ Violators' identity: If you know the identity of the individual(s) committing the violation, please indicate their name(s) on the form.

▶ Contact information: If you'd like a call back, please provide State Patrol or the TIP Line with your contact information. If you wish to remain completely anonymous, you must contact TIP by phone.

How important is timing in contacting you about suspected issue?

▶ Timing is everything. There's not much we can do if you lose sight of the suspect or if it's hours/days later you decide to contact a Conservation Officer. Call as soon as you can with as much detail as possible.

Are there other violations that people should report? Noisy boats, reckless jet ski and boat operators, removal of aquatic vegetation such as cattails or lily pads near the lakeshore. Watercrafts and/or trailers with weeds still attached and being transported.

You may receive a reward of up to \$1,000 for reporting a violation that leads to an arrest. The reward amount is determined by the seriousness of the crime reported.

Stay safe! Never put yourself in a dangerous position, and never take the law into your own hands.

https://www.tip411.com/tips/new?alert_group_id=22714

Lake Water...from page 18

For 23 years, heat tape around the water line has over-wintered flawlessly. Jim, an octogenarian, has seen some changes in the lake: an increase in pollution and weeds and a decrease in walleye catches.

Those who enjoy shoreline fishing should be aware of the submersible pumps. Located 70 or 75 feet distant from the shoreline, the pump stays under water year-round. The pump sits on a PVC stand, secure below the surface with an attached line to bring water to the cabin. If a lead-core, unbreakable fishing line hap-

pens to get stubbornly entangled around the pump, trouble may ensue. The pump is pulled from its stand, the water line bends and kinks, and that cabin is out of luck and out of water.

We all have lakeside experience enjoying, appreciating, and admiring beautiful Lake Vermilion. We may also feel gratitude for the technology enabling us to quench our thirst with pure, delicious, rejuvenating lake water.



Vermilion Lake Association
PO Box 236
Cook, MN, 55723

Volunteers Make the Difference

The Vermilion Lake Association has been fortunate over the years to have a dedicated group of leaders and volunteers to staff our important activities. We are grateful for their help.

Please consider joining this team. We have needs for both workers and leaders, for those with only a few hours to spare, and for those who can make a larger time commitment.

If you think you may be interested, please contact Andrine Lemieux, VLA Volunteer Program Leader, at 218-979-7893 (cell) or Lemieux.andrine@gmail.com.

Vermilion Lake Association

Lisa Tamte, Member Records • P.O. Box 236 • Cook MN 55723
ltamte@gmail.com • 612-475-3064

Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st

2024 New Member 2024 Renewal

Membership level

\$20.00 Household membership
 \$50.00 Business or Organization

Member Name _____

Spouse Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email (requested) _____

Phone (requested) _____

Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above.

Become a Member

Join those who love Lake Vermilion as much as you do. Help us continue the many activities you've just read about.

Not sure? Check us out at our website VermilionLakeAssociation.org. We're pretty sure you'll like our vision for the future and the work we have underway now to make Lake Vermilion even better.

Please mail a check with the form on this page or join at our website using PayPal or a credit card.

The Vermilion Lake Association is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

Do You Qualify?

Trick question. Anyone can join the lake association whose mission it is to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. No need to be a property owner. No need to be a fisherman or a kayaker. Just someone who cares about our great lake and wants to protect her for the next generation.