

A Window of Opportunity

By Dick Osgood, LMA Executive Director



Dick Osgood

The LMA, working on behalf of lakeshore owners and businesses, sees a window of opportunity for Lake Minnetonka. We see this especially in our three program areas and intend to ramp up our advocacy. As we have discussed over the past several years, the three M's – milfoil, mussels & motorboats – have been and remain important and relevant areas for LMA's attention. Indeed, these areas are so critical to the work of the LMA, the LMA Board is planning to provide additional attention, resources and clarity to these issues.

To do this, we need your help!

We believe we have demonstrated that we are an effective and credible voice on behalf of these issues. We also believe there is a window of opportunity to further advance our members' interests in these areas. To that end, the Board is working with me to:

- Develop case statements, work plans, budgets to focus our work (the case statements appear in this newsletter).
- Increase our membership support (most of you receiving this newsletter are not financial supporters of the LMA).
- Position the LMA to increase our leadership and visibility on the lake community.

We believe our hard work over the past five years has put the LMA in a favorable position to take advantage of this window of opportunity. Please spend a few minutes to become familiar with the important issues facing our beautiful lake, provide financial support to the LMA, and contact me with your thoughts, concerns and questions. Thanks.

An insert in this issue of On the Lake contains a list of LMA members and supporters. Please check this list, and if your name is not included, please send your membership contribution today to support the good work of the LMA. The LMA serves as the voice of Lake Minnetonka lakeshore owners.

LMA's Three Program Imperatives

By Dick Osgood, LMA Executive Director

In the articles that follow, we highlight our analysis of the three program imperatives – Milfoil, Mussels & Motorboats (Boat Density) – that we will tackle in 2007. These case statements were developed to guide our planning and work activities in 2007 as well as to communicate to our members. Please contact the LMA with questions, comments or concerns.

CASE STATEMENT: Eurasian watermilfoil

LONG-TERM GOAL

To eliminate milfoil problems in Lake Minnetonka.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO HAPPEN IN 2007?

1. The Eurasian watermilfoil demonstration project to be expanded to entire bays on Lake Minnetonka.
2. A Lake Vegetation Management Plan to be developed and ready for implementation in 2008.

THE SITUATION

Eurasian watermilfoil, EWM, was discovered in Lake Minnetonka in 1987. Since that time, it has spread to every place around the lake where it can inhabit. EWM causes recreational and ecological impacts, including interfering with boating and fishing, fragments piling up on lakeshores, fragments piling up at boat ramps to the point where boats are transporting it on public roads, diminishment of fish habitat, and impoverishment of native plant communities.

EWM is managed in one of these ways:

- Tolerance
- Small-scale cutting, pulling or harvesting by individuals

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Milfoil Demonstration Project – What Next?

I have toured the three demonstration sites several times during the summer. On the basis of my observations, I can tell you that milfoil was controlled. The treatments were especially effective in Gray's and Phelps Bays, but not as effective in Carman's Bay. This is a good news-bad news story. The good news is there are at least two treatments that we now know are effective. The bad news is the lakeshore owners around Carman's Bay did not get the relief they had hoped for.

I know there are comprehensive solutions to the milfoil problem, based on my knowledge of experiences around the country. Thus, we see this project as a stepping stone to eliminating the milfoil problem in Lake Minnetonka (see the case statement above). At this point, we have recommended that 1) the demonstration project be continued in 2007 to include whole bays and 2) a lake vegetation management plan be completed in 2007 to guide future control efforts. Both of these recommendations pose challenges, but we believe are appropriate next steps.

In the coming few months, the LMA will be working with the other project partners (LMCD, MN DNR and others) to fully evaluate the results of this year's demonstration project, provide the feedback we have received from our members and keep advocating for a long-term solution.

MCWD Plan

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has drafted its Third Generation Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan and is seeking

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comments over the next two months. The plan identifies issues and problems, proposes management strategies and will guide the District's management activities for the next decade. Public comments are being sought and the LMA will be preparing and submitting comments by the November 21st deadline. Interested people can view the plan at the District's web site (www.Minnehahacreek.org). If you have concerns you would like the LMA to consider, please contact us.

Zebra Mussel Prevention Plan

The LMA, in cooperation with the LMCD, will be drafting a Zebra Mussel Prevention Plan as requested by the Commissioner of the MN DNR. Earlier this summer, representatives of the LMA and LMCD met with the Commissioner to ask for consideration of removing some of the obstacles to implementing a comprehensive prevention program on Lake Minnetonka. The Commissioner asked us to develop a specific proposal for further consideration. Over the next few months, we will be meeting with the DNR to further develop our action plan.

Think about this...

- Michigan has 250 lakes with zebra mussels, Wisconsin has 100
- 11 new lakes have been infested with Eurasian watermilfoil this year
- Hydrilla, another invasive plant, has been discovered in an Indiana lake
- Milfoil has been controlled in 10,000-acre Houghton Lake (Michigan) for several years

The proposed plan will be guided by the zebra mussel case statement (see article above) and we will keep our members informed about the progress of this plan.

Osgood Elected to International Board

Dick Osgood, LMA Executive Director, elected to become the President of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS). Dick will serve a three-year term (President-elect, President &

Past-President) beginning in November. NALMS is an international professional organization of lake managers. Dick is also serving as an officer on the Board of Directors of Minnesota Waters, a state-wide organization representing the interests of citizens and lake and river organizations.

Minnesota Waters is a chapter of NALMS and the LMA is a member of Minnesota Waters. For more information on these organizations, see www.NALMS.org or www.MinnesotaWaters.org.

"From The Helm"

by Mike Mason, LMA Board President



Mike Mason

Yikes! The LMA has a full an active agenda. We have accomplished a lot recently and we are gearing up to do even more this coming year. The articles in this issue of On the Lake well demonstrate the LMA's effectiveness and tenacity at critical issues facing Lake Minnetonka.

Now, as much as ever, we need the help of our members. First of all, please let us know if we are on target or if not. We make great efforts to be the voice of and advocate for the interests of lakeshore owners. Secondly, included in this issue is a list of those who have become members and supporters of the LMA. Please review this list and, if your name does not appear, send in your membership support today. We intend to ramp up in 2007 and depend on increased membership involvement and support to do that.

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer on Lake Minnetonka. The colors around the lake are beautiful this time of year and remind us that winter is approaching. While the activity on the lake may be waning, the activity at the LMA continues full stride. Thanks.

Mike Mason

JOIN AS AN LMA MEMBER TODAY OR SEND A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION. YOUR SUPPORT MAKES LMA STRONG

Thank you to LMA members who have joined or renewed their membership. Your dues help support the important work of the LMA. WE NEED MORE LAKESHORE OWNERS AS MEMBERS. Without a solid base of support, the LMA cannot continue to provide a voice for the betterment of our beautiful lake.

THANK YOU, CONTRIBUTORS SINCE LAST LMA NEWSLETTER! CAPTAIN (\$500 - \$999)

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THE LMA NEEDS YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As you can see from the articles in this newsletter, Lake Minnetonka is facing several critical challenges that require strong advocacy and timely actions. The LMA is able to confront these issues in a positive, effective manner, but we need your financial support. Your support will allow the LMA to:

- Continue and increase our advocacy on behalf of lakeshore owners.
- Work with agencies, elected representatives and municipalities to coordinate and facilitate action.
- Provide financial support for inspection programs and milfoil demonstrations which will result in assured protection and better management of the lake.

These activities, to be meaningful and effective, are expensive. LMA members have 'stepped up' in the past to challenges like this.

It is time to show your support again. Thanks.

LMA BUSINESS MEMBERS

Please support the following lake-area businesses that contribute to the LMA:

Al & Alma's Supper Club	Howards Point Marine	Mahogany Bay	Bob & Mary Ritter, Realtors
Altstatt Financial Strategies, Inc	Dan Johnson, Coldwell Banker Burnett	MarineMax Minnesota	Bob & Sally Schneider
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JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY! We appreciate new or renewing members using this form—thanks!

Please complete this form and mail it with your tax-deductible contribution to the Lake Minnetonka Association, P.O. Box 248, Excelsior, MN 55331. Make your check payable to the "LMA." Thanks!

Name(s): _____ E-mail: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: _____

1. I want to support the LMA at the following membership level:

- Basic \$50 - \$199 Sustaining \$200 - \$499 Captain \$500 - \$999 Commodore \$1000+ Business \$250

2. I want to support the "LMA Exotic Species Fund"\$ _____

3. Other or Additional\$ _____

The LMA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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- Large-scale harvesting using mechanical harvesters (LMCD) to keep navigation areas clear
- Small-scale herbicide treatments by individuals
- Medium-scale treatments – 2006 demonstration project

EWM control options and areas have been limited due to a) DNR rules, b) LMCD budget constraints, c) lack of new or alternative tools or d) a lack of a comprehensive management plan. The 2006 milfoil demonstration project, a result of direct action by the LMA and LMCD, has been well-received by adjacent lakeshore owners and others and has used safe and proven methods.

There have been several complicating factors in the discussion regarding milfoil control in Lake Minnetonka:

- Does EWM pose the only plant nuisance, especially with respect to lakeshore owners' concerns?
- Whether or to what extent native plants should be protected.
- Is the use of selective herbicides (those controlling EWM, but not native plants) appropriate for use on a wide-spread basis?
- Can, or should, EWM be controlled lake-wide.
- Who should pay for comprehensive EWM control?
- Should agencies other than the LMA and LMCD be involved?

LMA'S POSITION

It is the LMA's position that EWM does not pose the only plant nuisance in Lake Minnetonka, but in light of EWM's overwhelming impact, it is an appropriate trade-off to forego some controls of native plants to accomplish more comprehensive control of EWM. Native plants should be

better protected because they are important for the health of Lake Minnetonka. Selective herbicides are an appropriate tool for comprehensive EWM control, although certainly not the only tool that should be considered. Lake-wide control of EWM is feasible. In addition to the LMA and LMCD, other agencies such as the MCWD and the DNR should be involved with developing a Lake Vegetation Management Plan, permitting and funding EWM control in Lake Minnetonka.

THE CHALLENGE

The overriding challenge to be addressed is to advance the idea that lake-wide milfoil control is possible and accomplishing this will make Lake Minnetonka healthier. This idea must be advanced with some of our members, with the media, with angling interests, with the LMCD, with the MCWD and with the DNR. In advocating for this goal, the LMA must provide assurances that good science and policy is guiding our quest. The LMA must strike a balance between many interests, while at the same time aggressively seek to restore Lake Minnetonka.

2007 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. The LMA will work through the LMCD Exotic Species Committee and other avenues to conduct an expanded demonstration project in 2007 that includes the treatment of entire bay(s).
2. The LMA will work through the LMCD Exotic Species Committee and other avenues to develop a Lake Vegetation Management Plan in 2007 for implementation in 2008.
3. The LMA will work through Minnesota Waters to advance tools and policies that will allow comprehensive Eurasian watermilfoil control.

CASE STATEMENT: Zebra Mussel

LONG-TERM GOAL

To keep zebra mussels (and other invasive species) out of Lake Minnetonka.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO HAPPEN IN 2007?

1. A comprehensive inspection program to be in place that will minimize the risk, to the greatest degree possible, of zebra mussels being introduced into Lake Minnetonka

THE SITUATION

Zebra mussels are not now in Lake Minnetonka. Zebra mussels are in several Minnesota water bodies, including Mille Lacs Lake, the St. Croix River and the Mississippi River. Zebra mussels in Lake Minnetonka would be a disaster because they would cause serious and irreparable damage to property, recreation and the environment. Most importantly, once zebra mussels have been introduced into Lake Minnetonka, there is no known remedy, so prevention is the only rational option.

Right now, prevention efforts are incomplete, not well coordinated and rely to a great degree on voluntary compliance. Individually, efforts at the state level and on Lake Minnetonka, are worthwhile elements of a comprehensive program. However, more is needed.

Right now, zebra mussel (and other invasive species) prevention programs and efforts include an education and awareness campaign by the MN DNR and others, a education-oriented watercraft inspection program on some Lake Minnetonka accesses at some times and the voluntary actions taken by informed and responsible boaters. However, these efforts can be better targeted and more comprehensive. For example, less than 3% of the boats leaving Mille Lacs Lake, the heaviest used lake in Minnesota, were inspected in 2006. Also, only 15% of boats coming into Lake Minnetonka through public accesses were inspected. Even though we are confronting, at least for now, a low percentage risk, the flip side cannot be reversed.

Providing comprehensive inspections will be challenging. To be successful, we must overcome:

- Substantial costs and administrative programs

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- Balancing and reconciling the right to access versus the need to protect the lake
- Significant changes in state policy, rules or statutes
- And the attitude that a zebra mussel introduction is inevitable

LMA'S POSITION

It is the LMA's position that zebra mussels and other invasive plants and animals can be kept out of Lake Minnetonka with minimum hardship. Relying on education, awareness and voluntary actions alone is not adequate. A comprehensive inspection program on all accesses (public and private) as well as on tributary lakes is needed now – unfortunately, time is not on our side. Because the impact of zebra mussels to Lake Minnetonka is so great and irreversible, we must consider costs and inconveniences as a fair trade-off to protecting our lake.

THE CHALLENGE

The overriding challenge is to quickly align appropriate state, local and private interests to accomplish our goal. The risk of

a zebra mussel introduction in Lake Minnetonka is imminent. In advocating for this goal, the LMA must provide a balance that recognizes the rights of the public to enjoy Lake Minnetonka are while at the same time providing credible and complete protection.

2007 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. The LMA will work through the LMCD Exotic Species Committee and other avenues to develop a comprehensive zebra mussel protection plan to be implemented in 2007. This plan will include these elements:
 - a. Comprehensive physical inspections
 - b. Closure of some access at some time to facilitate the inspections
 - c. Assessing fees to pay for the inspection program
 - d. Inspections on tributary lakes
 - e. Consider the use of automated surveillance devices as an enforcement tool
 - f. Include road-end accesses, private facilities and tournaments

CASE STATEMENT: Boat Density

LONG-TERM GOAL

To assure that a) boating on Lake Minnetonka remains safe, b) boat storage and docking is provided reasonably, appropriately and equitably, and c) boating and boat storage do not harm the lake environment.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO HAPPEN IN 2007?

1. The LMA to evaluate all aspects of boat density issues and concerns and make specific recommendations to address those concerns as guided by the long-term goal.

THE SITUATION

Lake Minnetonka is the most heavily-used lake in Minnesota. Lake Minnetonka is a highly desirable and attractive place for recreational boats and anglers. The lakeshore, already crowded with resident docks, multiple docks, municipal docks and commercial facilities, is experiencing additional pressure to squeeze in even more. In addition, due to the great demand, many residents engage in the non-sanctioned rental of docks.

In a seeming contrast, boat counts spanning three decades

appear to show no overall increase in the use of the lake. Also, Lake Minnetonka is a safe lake, thanks to a substantial water patrol presence. However, the lack of objective documentation of increases and the overall safeness of the lake are in contrast to many boaters' perception and experience. Not considered in the boat counts is the fact that the nature of lake use is changing – there are fewer fishing boats and more power boats, the size of boat motors is increasing and the boat length is increasing. Thus, while overall numbers are not increasing, the impact of boating is clearly changing. Recent calls for increased civility is one 'red flag' indicating changing boating impacts.

The demand for lake access and the high premium for lakeshore properties is putting additional pressures on the lakeshore and creating conflicts. Recently, several developments have been considered or proposed that include the addition of multiple boat access facilities. Consideration of these developments has been controversial, in substantial part because the LMCD, which regulates boat storage and docking on the lake, has conflicting, outdated or subjective policies to guide their decisions. In addition, the environmental impacts associated with docking and boating are inadequately considered. The result is a less-than-desirable, arbitrary or

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THE MISSION OF THE LMA

The Lake Minnetonka Association, through volunteers, lakeshore owners and the Lake Minnetonka community, works to promote lake preservation and the reasonable use of Lake Minnetonka.

Serving as an information resource and advocate for the lakeshore owners, the Lake Minnetonka Association focuses on the areas of lake preservation and protection that are appropriate for the entire lake community.

Also, the Lake Minnetonka Association promotes social interaction among members through association events. By forming a lasting relationship with members of the lake community, the LMA creates a kinship of lakeshore owners involved in the protection of Lake Minnetonka.



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ad hoc approach to the regulation and management of boating concerns on Lake Minnetonka. This is especially troubling to more and more LMA lakeshore residents, whose expected lake rights have been constrained or denied, while large public and private developments include dozens of docking spaces for non-riparian properties.

The LMCD established a Boat Density Subcommittee in December 2003, with the charge to “audit the 1974 Boat Density Policy Statement and with the Lake Use and Recreation Management chapter in the 1991 Management Plan for Lake Minnetonka.” This committee met off and on until June 2005 with no substantial resolution or actions with respect to its original charge. As a result, the concerns that prompted the subcommittee’s work still exist.

The LMA has addressed related concerns over the past several years by considering and adopting various position statements as the need became apparent. The LMA intended that the position statements be useful guides for public policy and regulatory approaches. However, it is now clear that these statements, while useful, do not provide the comprehensive approach that is needed.

LMA’S POSITION

A clear, credible and concise boat density policy is needed for Lake Minnetonka. The LMA believes it is the LMCD’s job to establish such a boat density policy for Lake Minnetonka, but

it is clear that this update is not forthcoming. Because a comprehensive boat density policy that is consistent with our stated goal is in our members’ best interest, the LMA will conduct a boat density study and make specific recommendations.

THE CHALLENGE

Boat density issues are broad, including:

- lakeshore boat storage and mooring
- public, private and commercial uses
- public access policy
- lake surface use and regulation
- riparian rights
- enforcement
- environmental impacts

As well, boat density issues are complex and there are multiple, often competing, interests. An evaluation of boat density issues and recommendations to address those issues will almost certainly be controversial. Finally, it is presumed the LMCD will be called upon to implement most, if not all, of the recommendations that arise from our evaluation and they have not demonstrated an openness to do this.

2007 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. The LMA will evaluate all aspects of boat density issues and concerns and make specific recommendations to address those concerns as guided by the long-term goal.

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