Grand Lake Area Association

The Scoop At Grand Lake

ISSUE 8 MAY 2010

Mark Your Calendar

Join us for the spring meeting of the Grand Lake Area Association on Saturday, May 29th 9:00 am Rockville City Hall

Mark your calendar for the combined Grand Lake Association and Grand Lake Improvement District meeting. Saturday, August 29th 9:00 am Rockville City Hall

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President's Message

The Spring of 2010 has been wonderful—with an early ice out on March 31st, an abundance of sunny days and unseasonably nice temperatures.

Thanks to the work of many residents and property owners on Grand Lake, we now have a well-functioning Lake Improvement District (LID) that provides sustainable funding for aquatic vegetation and water clarity projects.

Thanks to the City of Rockville for their foresight in approving updated shoreland and stormwater management ordinances that will help guide current and future development in a way that protects our waters.

Thanks to the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Sauk River Watershed District for their guidance on identifying priority projects in our watershed, and for their technical expertise and assistance in putting together shoreland and watershed improvement projects.

Have a great summer!
Can you beat this record?

Thanks to all current and past board members of the Grand Lake Area Association and the Grand Lake Improvement District for all your hard work over the years.

Why all the thanks? All of these efforts will continue to pay off in protecting our investment, improving water clarity, and making Grand Lake the premier lake in the area.

Please join us at our spring Grand Lake Area Association meeting to be held on Saturday, May 29th (9:00 am at Rockville City Hall), Now that we have a Lake Improvement District (LID) and listened to citizen input about the distinct missions of the LID and the Grand Lake Area Association, it's time to make decisions and hold elections for the Grand Lake Area Association Board. You will also hear about upcoming 4th of July festivities, 2009 water clarity reports, and information about our program to manage curleyleaf pondweed.

- Scott Palmer

Some History of the Grand Lake Association

according to the recollections of Ed Zapp Jr.

The Grand Lake Property Owner's Association was started for the lake people to be able to address mutual needs and concerns that they had about the lake and its' surrounding areas.

It was originally formed by the owners of property on the Northeast and East shores of the lake. Its original main purpose was to address the road upon which all traveled to get to their properties. The original dirt road served the Mitchell farm that was located on the Northeast shore of the lake. As the years went by, the Mitchells sold off all the lake shore they owned and the old farm road was then the main ingress and egress to the shore properties. It was a narrow road through the old pasture and consisted of two ruts and a grass patch in between them. If a vehicle approached, it was necessary to back up and pull over to let the auto pass. The neighbors were also worried that the old farm land would be purchased by Bell Lumber in Cold Spring in order to supply them with the raw materials to make railroad ties and rough sawn lumber. Around 1950, the neighbors got together and formed what eventually grew into the Association.

SHORELAND RULES UPDATE

Shoreland restoration project on Grand Lake

In 2007, the Minnesota Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to commence rule-making to update the statewide minimum shoreland conservation standards. The first shoreland standards for counties was promulgated and adopted in 1970 and last revised in 1989.

One impetus for the legislation to modernize shoreland development standards was the significant change in the pattern of development being experienced on lakes and rivers. Development pressure is increasing with more dwelling per lake each year and a trend of more year-round lake homes being built.

A draft of Shoreland Rules and accompanying Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR) was completed in April 2009. The draft rules are now moving through an internal review that is required before they proceed to public hearings.

Public hearings will probably occur in late spring or early summer 2010 time frame.—a time that should allow both seasonal and permanent shoreland property owners and other interest groups to participate. We will post information on our website and provide email updates as more information about these hearings becomes available.

In the meantime, the DNR has encouraged local government to initiate their own ordinances even now while the draft rules are not yet final. Rockville has been proactive in taking this approach to protecting our local waters.

For more information, visit the DNR website at http://mndnr.gov/waters/shoreland.html.

Did you know?
Just five bags of leaves and organic debris can contain one pound of phosphorus. Over time, this can lead to the growth of 1,000 pounds of algae. Phosphorus is the leading and most serious source of pollution for lakes causing excessive growth of aquatic plants and eutrophication.
Please keep your shoreline clean!

Why Does the Water Quality Get Worse Throughout the Summer?

Lakes change a great deal over the course of a year. Changes are caused by seasonal weather patterns, watershed influences, and the life cycles of the lake's biota. During the winter, ice and snow severely limit the amount of light available for photosynthesis under the ice, so there is not much algal growth. In the spring, snowmelt washes nutrients into the lake. Many of the nutrients are used by rapidly growing aquatic plants near the shoreline, resulting in a "clear water" phase.

As the aquatic plant growth slows in mid– to late-summer, incoming nutrients and nutrients from decomposing aquatic plants become available for algae. Available nutrients, combined with warm water and plentiful sunlight, can result in a period of heavy algal growth, potentially making the lake green and scummy. Mid-summer water quality problems may be particularly acute if you live on a shallow lake where high winds can mix warm surface water all the way down to the lake's bottom waters. When this happens, nutrients are released from the mud and sediments up into the surface water where light is plentiful and algae can flourish. In autumn, the combination of decreased daylight, cooler temperatures, and more zooplankton grazing on algae, reduces algal growth and yields clearer water once again.

A shorter ice-fishing season?

Ice Out Dates excerpts from article by Cindy Hagley

If you are one of the hundreds of people living along one of Minnesota's lakes—who keep track of when ice forms each fall and when it breaks up each spring—you may have noticed a trend. On average, ice is forming later in the fall and leaving lakes earlier in the spring. That may seem like a good or bad thing, depending on what you like to do with your free time (ice-fisherman's fright is boater's delight?), but to scientists who study lakes and to those who study climate, it raises some questions and concerns.

How significant is this trend? All sources show a steady trend of fewer ice days in the 150 years from 1846 to 1995. Many lakes and rivers now freeze nearly six days later and break up six days earlier. What does this trend mean for our lakes: Shorter ice-cover periods could prove positive for fish in shallow, productive lakes. Less ice cover could reduce or eliminate winter-kill by shortening the time that the water is sealed off from the atmosphere and the sunlight that fuels oxygen-producing photosynthesis by algae and plants. On the other hand, ecological modeling tells us that longer and warmer ice-free periods could have more complex impacts on cool and cold water fish habitat throughout the state. No matter what the summer impacts are, those who enjoy winter sports on our lakes will have to pack our fun into shorter seasons and keep an ever vigilant eye on ice safety.

Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District Protects Shoreline Areas Long-Term

By Greg Berg, Shoreland Specialist SWCD

In 2000, the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) hired a full time Shoreland Specialist to focus on shoreland restoration projects. The Shoreland Specialist began working with lake associations and other groups to complete shoreland re-vegetation projects, otherwise known as lakescaping or creating shoreland buffers. Shoreland buffers protect aquatic ecosystems and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. They make use of deeply rooted plants to keep soil in place, filter nutrients and pollutants from stormwater runoff, and reduce flooding. Shoreland buffers also discourage nuisance geese, provide privacy, and require low maintenance, while adding beauty and diversity to the landscape.

As the Stearns County SWCD shoreland restoration program evolved, it became apparent that many waterfront owners were finding the value in planting or protecting native vegetation along shorelines. Landowners could request cost-share monies for shoreline re-vegetation projects, and as the number of projects grew, and cost-share monies increased, the Stearns County SWCD Board wanted assurance that the projects would remain in place for the long-term, as intended, even if the properties changed ownership.

To protect shoreline areas long-term, a process was initiated in 2006 with input from staff from the Stearns County SWCD, Environmental Services, Auditors/Surveyor's Office, Recorder's Office and Attorney's Office advising the SWCD Board regarding the logistics of protecting shorelines in perpetuity.

In April 2007, the Stearns County SWCD Board adopted a policy requiring a permanent deed restriction to be signed for most shoreline projects with the SWCD (along lakes, rivers, and streams in Stearns County). As a result, project documentation must include a cost-share agreement, an as-built drawing of the area of the project, vegetation plan details, operation and maintenance requirements, and a recorded deed restriction through the County Recorder's office. Once the project is complete and the landowner(s) has signed all the required paperwork, the document is recorded. After the recording is complete, the SWCD pays the cost share to the landowner.

From 2007 to 2009, the Stearns County SWCD recorded Shoreland Deed Restrictions on 13 separate properties. Many more landowners have initiated projects that will result in additional deed restrictions in 2010 and beyond.

In 2009, the Stearns County SWCD took the process a step further developing a Shoreland Deed Restriction for prior projects, subdivisions and landowners who simply want to protect their shoreline properties. Since the process has been developed, two additional landowners have requested deed restrictions be placed on their shoreline properties.

As part of the Stearns County SWCD Shoreland Deed Restriction process, locations of the restricted properties are scanned and linked to a GIS-based map of the County where the restricted properties are located. In addition, the Stearns County Environmental Services Department has created a database that flags these properties as "restricted" so that no work permits are issued that would violate the deed restriction.

If you have interest in learning more about the Stearns County SWCD Shoreland Deed Restriction process, contact Greg Berg, Shoreland Specialist with the Stearns County SWCD at 320-251-7800 extension 143, or greg.berg@mn.nacdnet.net.

Palmer shoreland restoration project on beautiful Grand Lake

"We worked with Greg Berg last summer on a shoreland restoration project and found him to be very knowledgeable and extremely helpful throughout the process." *Scott Palmer*

Grand Lake Area Association

Enjoy…

Explore…

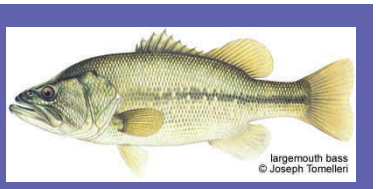
Protect…

Preserve...

Lake Improvement District Board

Scott Palmer, Chair
Georjean Fischer-Fabel
Jim Meinz
Scoop Reif
Terry Rothstein
Joe Sponheim
Bob White

Test Your Minnesota Fish Fact Knowledge:


largemouth bass
© Joseph Tomelleri

1. What state is first nationally in the sales of fishing licenses per capita?
2. What are the first, second and third most caught fish in Minnesota?
3. How many fish species are found in Minnesota?
4. How many fishing licenses (of all kinds) were sold in 2009?
5. How many walleye fingerlings are stocked in Minnesota lakes annually?
6. What is the state record for the biggest largemouth bass ever caught?
7. What is the state record for the largest walleye ever caught?

1. Minnesota
2. 1st—panfish, 2nd—walleye, 3rd—northern
3. 158
4. 1,371,106
5. 2.5 million
6. 8 pounds, 15 ounces (in 2005)
7. 17 pounds, 8 ounces (in 1979)

http://www/grandlakeassociation.org/