



Ripples

CROW WING COUNTY
LAKES AND RIVERS ALLIANCE
P.O. BOX 53, PEQUOT LAKES, MN 56472

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LARA Priorities: Three Things We Do Well

By Phil Hunsicker

Instead of a full-blown strategic planning session, LARA board members met earlier this year to brainstorm the three things LARA should do well. Some, we're already doing well. Others, we will have to work a bit harder. These three "reasons for being" take into account what our members have expressed that they would like us to do, what our board feels comfortable doing, and also considers what other groups are already doing so we don't repeat efforts. We view these ideas as ways to help

us focus our efforts. We can't do everything well, but we should be able to do three things well. If you think we are missing the mark, let us know. And if you think we got something right, don't be shy about telling us. A little positive reinforcement goes a long way.

1. We use our financial resources, mostly from the collection of membership dues, to make a difference in Crow Wing County and in the larger region. We recognize and reward projects, individuals and organizations that contribute to a healthy natural environment in Crow Wing County in multiple ways:

- We administer the CWEPA grant process, which contributes approximately \$2,500-\$3,000 per year to land and water conservation projects happening in Crow Wing County;
- We contribute \$200-\$300 per year to support the annual Lake-Friendly Development Awards, which recognize ecologically sound development alternatives on riparian properties in the region;
- We dedicate approximately \$100 each year from the LARA budget to support the selection of a Water Warrior Award winner;
- We support the activities of the MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates (\$150/year), which lobbies for statewide lake interests in St. Paul; and
- We support MNCOLA (\$150/year), a statewide COLA/LARA collaborative created to give COLAs and LARAs greater influence on statewide lake issues.

In the past, we have applied for and received DNR grant dollars and used LARA matching dollars for AIS awareness and education campaigns. In the future, LARA will look at opportunities to make contributions to local efforts involved in resource protection. For example here are three ideas:

President's Message

By Phil Hunsicker

If you attended the second Aquatic Invaders Summit in St. Cloud on October 5-6, you may have spotted a young guy filming conference attendees who were willing to sit down and tell their stories about aquatic invasive species (AIS). The videographer, Riley Nelson, is a recent graduate of Central Lakes College's videography program, and he was hired by LARA to capture stories about how AIS has affected their communities, how the county money is making a difference, and how important partnerships and collaborations are when it comes to doing AIS prevention work.

Riley interviewed a lot of people and felt that he captured some really good stories. His task now is to rummage through all the personal tales he collected and creatively piece parts of them together to come up with something impactful, something genuine, something positive, and especially, something that comes from the heart. Unlike Hollywood, however, Riley has to package it up into a film that is less than four minutes in length. LARA will post the completed film on our website, and we're also thinking of other ways to use the film and the raw footage. One idea is to present the film to our legislators so they understand that AIS impacts individuals and communities all across the state. Another idea is to post individual stories from time to time on our website and on social media so you and many others can see and hear whole, uncut stories and not just bits that were spliced together. We plan on making the videos available for anyone who would like to upload them to their own websites.

East Twin Lake Association is selected as the recipient of the 2017 CWEPA Fund grant

By Ann Beaver



In October Tom Adams, president of the East Twin Lake Association (ETLA), learned his request for \$3,000, funds which will be matched by the lake association, was selected as the recipient of the Crow Wing Environment Protection Advised (CWEPA) Fund 2017 grant. The funds will be used to plant 5-7 foot trees, seedlings, and groundcover to stabilize and restore the lake's west shoreline along the recently expanded four-lane Highway 371 and the relocated Paul Bunyan Trail. To allow for the highway expansion and trail relocation almost all the trees and vegetation between the existing highway and trail had been removed. The lake no longer had any visual or noise buffer from the highway and the stability of the shoreline had been somewhat compromised.

According to Adams, the East Twin Lake Association has been working with Theri Wasniewski, Central Lakes College Horticulture instructor, to design the restoration project to include a variety of trees that are 5-7 feet tall when planted. While not deer proof, that height gives them a much better chance of survival. Wasniewski's class will help with some of the labor involved in

the project. The planting of larger trees will be supplemented by seedling plantings and some ground cover type plantings which presumably help minimize critters eating the new tree plantings. Adams said, "To help ensure the care and watering of the plantings, lake association members will be 'adopting' trees and will take responsibility for watering them. With seedling plantings, the survival rate is 50% if one is lucky, but these plantings are relatively inexpensive and the ETLA has been building some funding for supporting the overall health of the lake, both in terms of invasive species as well as shoreline maintenance. Over time, some of these funds could be used to do periodic further plantings."

MNDOT has some monies budgeted to do plantings along the whole Highway 371 project (Nisswa to Jenkins) but those monies are minimal and will not be available until 2019-2020 and the plantings would be restricted to putting in seedlings only. The ETLA has received approval and support of its project from both MNDOT and the DNR. 🐿

President's Message

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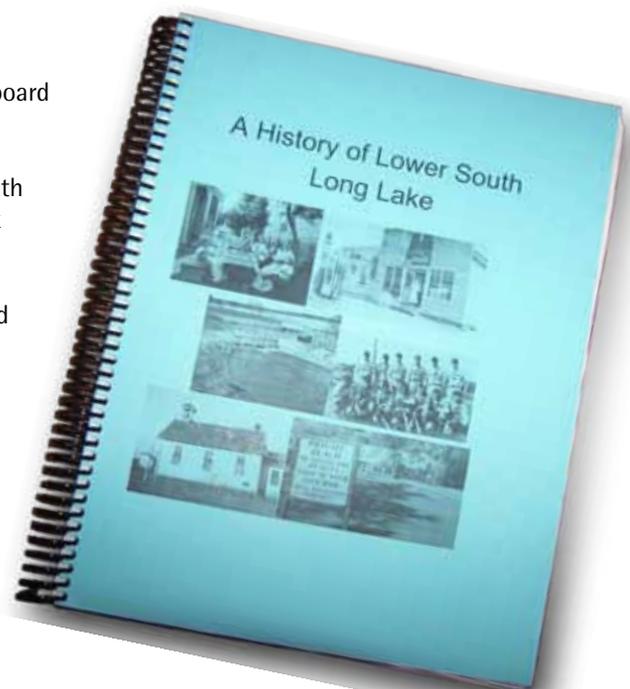
Some wise person once said: "There are two ways to share knowledge. You can push information out to people, or you can pull them in with a story." We're attempting the latter. If you have any creative ideas as to how we (or you) could use our film to make an impact, share them with us. We're still trying to figure that part out.

We'll let Hollywood continue to put out bad sequels to bad original movies with tired storylines and little to offer for the thinking person. We're going for a short, impactful film that gives you something to think about and talk about. So the answer to the question is "No, LARA has not gone Hollywood, but if producers offer us a dump truck of money for the film because Brad Pitt has said he wants to play the role of a zebra mussel, we may just mull over their offer." 🐿

The History of Lower South Long Lake

By Mike O'Brien

Mike O'Brien, LARA board member, has written a book entitled "The History of Lower South Long Lake." The book can be viewed at the Crow Wing County Historical Society and is now available for purchase. 🐿



Priorities

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- We contribute to the on-going effort to re-design the Mississippi River as it flows through downtown Brainerd,
- We collaborate more closely with Central Lakes College to help them train the next generation of lake professionals, community leaders and lakeshore property owners. Kent Montgomery at the college suggested a possible partnership between LARA, CLC and Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. on water quality sampling and analysis that the two colleges currently perform in the area.
- We use our money to send elected county officials to appropriate training. We have offered this in the past, but have never had a request come in from the county.

2. We build better working relationships between county government, LARA, and the lake associations we represent. We do this by initially taking small steps to build mutual trust and understanding between LARA, our members, and Crow Wing County government. LARA wants lake association opinions to be valued – even solicited – by county government. Here are some ideas on how we could achieve our goals:

- First, open communication needs to be improved, so LARA should take the high road and initiate more frequent in-person conversations with county government personnel (Chris Pence and Jacob Frie) about lake association concerns. County personnel could be invited to attend LARA board meetings on a quarterly basis. LARA will ask the county if there is any pertinent, lakes-related information they would like to place in the quarterly LARA newsletter.
- If the LARA board hears from lake associations about a specific issue/complaint they have with the county, LARA will get ahead of the rumors by meeting directly with the county, sharing the information we are hearing, and asking the county to respond. That information will then be shared back with our members. LARA will look for more opportunities to partner with the county on open house events, speaking events, etc.
- All that said, LARA will continue to remain vigilant in our efforts to make sure the county and other LGUs are adequately protecting valuable water resources. We shouldn't forget that we are a voice for the smaller lake associations that don't have a lot of money or influence, but have plenty of frustrations. This task requires time and energy. Perhaps a new board member would be interested in leading this effort.

3. We enhance our relevance by being more media-conscious and by keeping our members aware of timely, pertinent information, as well as educational opportunities available to the public. We do this through:

- multiple communication channels including a well-maintained website, a Facebook site, quarterly newsletters, and email blasts to lake association contacts,
- monthly board meetings that are open to all,
- an annual meeting in August,
- the Ambassador's Program (need to do this much better),
- and we become the go-to informational center (perhaps through our website and email blasts to our members) for other environmental events happening in the area.
- When appropriate, we use the media to get out our stories by submitting press releases and opinion pieces to local newspapers.
- We do a better job of tooting our own horn and the good work that others are doing. When it comes to educational events, we will look for ways to collaborate with others rather than doing it alone. We already do this by partnering with others to sponsor the Lake-Friendly Development Awards and the Environmental Forum – an opportunity for voters to meet candidates running for public office and to hear their environmental viewpoints on a variety of issues.
- We will actively promote speaking events offered through the Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) by using our website, newsletter and email blasts to announce upcoming speakers and topics to our members.
- We will look into getting a good annual meeting speaker each year that draws an audience – even if we have to pay them or cover their mileage. We will also look at other venues for our annual meeting and other educational meetings – the Arrowwood Lodge, for example, rather than in the Lake Edward Town Hall, a nice accommodating building, but lacking in amenities.



Get to know your Board Members

Eleanor Burkett

What prompted you to become a member of the LARA board?

By joining the LARA board, I thought it would be a good way to stay in touch with what is happening within Crow Wing County on our lakes and rivers. My work is statewide, and I want to stay in touch with issues and the great works that people are doing in my own backyard.

What lake or river are you most connected to (in Crow Wing County)?

The Mississippi River and I kayak on many lakes throughout the county. In the past 16 years of living and working here I have worked with many shoreline property owners and have enjoyed living, working and recreating in Central Minnesota.

What lake or river environmental issue is most important to you, and what are you doing to help the cause?

I work for the University of Minnesota, Extension in partnership with the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC), Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program. I have developed curriculum to help people identify aquatic invasive species and report findings using a web application that is easy to use, called the AIS Detector Program. This program is designed to aid in early detection and rapid response of AIS in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



What can others do to help with this cause?

Interested people can go to www.maisrc.umn.edu to learn more about the program and sign up for program updates at: <http://z.umn.edu/aisextension>.



An AIS Reminder to All Lakeshore Owners

By: Phil Hunsicker

Our neighbors living on Lower Cullen Lake, Lake Hubert, and Kimball Lake were recently surprised when they pulled their docks and boat lifts for the winter and they found zebra mussels attached. This is a good message for anyone who has a dock or a boat lift: Check your equipment for aquatic invasive species (AIS)!

Early detection is important if we have any chance of managing new zebra mussel infestations. So don't just pull your docks and boat lifts and assume everything is fine. If you hire a Lake Service Provider business to do the work for you, make sure you remind them to do a thorough inspection of all your equipment.

Also, if you buy or sell a dock, a boat lift, or a swim raft, and that piece of equipment is going from one waterbody into another, the law says water-related equipment like that must stay out of the water for at least 21 days. This law is hard to enforce, so it's up to us (the buyers and sellers) to make sure we do what's right. 🐦

Aquatic Invaders Summit II

The PowerPoint Presentations from sessions given at the Aquatic Invaders Summit II have been converted to PDF and posted online. To view them, click on the direct link [here](#).



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