



Ripples

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

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New Citizen Science Program Seeks Volunteers in the Battle Against AIS

By Megan Weber

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center in partnership with University of Minnesota Extension has launched a new volunteer network and science-based training program, AIS Detectors. Participants will learn how to properly identify and

report new findings of aquatic invasive species (AIS) such as starry stonewort, zebra mussels, round goby, and others. After being trained, AIS Detectors will serve a critical role by helping the DNR respond to reports of possible AIS, weeding out false positives, being on the lookout for new infestations, assisting on AIS projects and research across the state, and providing outreach to their communities.

This program is a great fit for anyone over the age of 18 that has a desire to learn more about aquatic invasive species and get directly involved in critical work surrounding AIS prevention, research, management, and education. Participants

complete a self-paced online course (approximately 8 hours) along with a one-day in-person workshop in order to earn their certification as an AIS Detector.

The AIS Detectors program has held its first four workshops in late April and early May and they have proven to be fun, interactive days for instructors and participants alike. Activities included during the in-person workshop include hands-on identification of specimens, working through scenarios, and hands-on AIS reporting. One participant at the Mankato workshop said, "Presenters were excellent. They were friendly, enthusiastic and made the experience effective and fun!"



President's Message

By Phil Hunsicker

There is no Difference Between a Plumber and a Scientist

I feel like venting. Where do many of our elected leaders get off thinking they know more about the environment than our recognized experts? They say, despite all the empirical evidence to the contrary, that climate change is a hoax. Really? If you hired a plumber to come to your home to fix a problem and they said, "Based on my training and my many years of experience, here's what I recommend to fix your problem..." would you say, "You don't know what you're talking about. I, who have no training or experience in plumbing, know better than you. In fact, I've decided that my leaky pipe isn't even a problem. I think I'll just ignore it." That is no different than the nonsense environmental know-nothings are spouting these days. This attack on science and the environment would be laughable if it wasn't so pervasive and destructive, especially to future generations that are depending on us, right here and right now, to not treat the Earth like a low-rent apartment. And this "belief" that people who dedicate their lives to making the planet healthier for all are liars, co-conspirators, unpatriotic, and against any and all business activity, is as crazy as saying the sun revolves around the Earth, which is flat. Like plumbers, scientists are highly trained problem solvers. Most do their jobs while abiding by a strict code of ethics. They don't lie. They don't seek ways to rip people off. And they don't support people in their profession who do. I know this for a fact because I have been doing environmental work around the world for forty years. It is a profession worthy of the best brains and the biggest hearts. It

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Battle against AIS

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There are three in-person workshops remaining in Grand Rapids (June 2nd), Bemidji, (June 9th), and Brainerd (June 16th). Space is available on a first come, first served basis. The course registration fee is \$175 which includes unlimited access to the online course materials, a printed copy of the online training information, a water-proof AIS field identification guide, the in-person workshop (with lunch and refreshments), and networking opportunities with other AIS Detectors and AIS experts. Scholarships are available to offset the costs of this training if this cost presents a financial hardship.

According to one of the participants from Alexandria, "I think this program was very well thought out. Great information. Technical information was easy to understand. Everyone [was] very supportive." If you are interested in becoming an AIS Detector and joining one of the upcoming workshops you can learn more about the program, scholarships, and registration at www.aisdetectors.org. Questions can be directed to aisdetectors@umn.edu. 🐾

Central Lakes College and Gallaudet University Students Helping to Understand Area Lakes

By Kent Montgomery

Over the past several years, students from Central Lakes College and Gallaudet University, a school for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Washington D.C., have been working together to help monitor the health of several area lakes. Students have collected information on indicators of water quality, including dissolved oxygen profiles, total phosphorus concentrations, and zooplankton abundance, and modeled inputs from the surrounding watershed to the lakes. Their work is helping to understand the connection between land conditions and use in the surrounding watershed and water quality in the lake.

The partnership began when Dan Lundberg, a chemistry professor at Gallaudet who lives in Lakeshore, brought some students back with him for the summer to gain experience working with area lakes. Their work initially focused on Agate Lake, near Gull Lake, where a smelter had operated in the 1960s. Shortly afterwards, the collaboration with Central Lakes College was developed and work has expanded to include a number of other lakes around the region. Currently, students are concentrating on a couple lakes each summer, using the information they collect to create a guide for lake residents that identifies areas of the watershed for protection and mitigation. Last summer, LARA helped further their efforts by providing funding for laboratory materials used in chlorophyll a (algae concentration) analysis of lake samples.

Area lakeshore owners are not the only people who benefit from this program. The students gain valuable experience from applied research and presentation of their results to lake residents and professional audiences. These experiences transfer directly back to the classroom, enriching their learning. The opportunity for hearing and deaf students to work collaboratively on a project also provides them with insights into cultural relationships as well as ecological relationships. This year, the students will be finishing their work on Crow Wing Lake and Agate Lake (near Deerwood). For more information about this project, contact Kent Montgomery at (218) 855-8155 or kmontgomery@clcmn.edu. 🐾

President's Message

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is a profession not deserving of the criticism it is currently receiving from the ill-informed. I'm issuing a challenge to everyone out there who is as fed up as me. If you hear this nonsense about confusing science with science fiction, or real facts with alternative facts, say something. Polite, non-confrontational silence is no longer an acceptable response. Stand up and speak up for science. Say something intelligent when you hear something harebrained. Believe me, you'll have plenty of opportunities. And use your vote to say something to those seeking our approval to represent us. It's time to point out bad behavior whenever we encounter it. It's time to take the plumber's advice and fix the leaky pipe. 🐾

Lake-Friendly Development Awards: June 15, 2017

By Phil Hunsicker

On June 15th at 3:00 p.m. in the Land Services Building on Laurel Street in downtown Brainerd, the 14th Annual Lake-Friendly Development Awards will be handed out. LARA has been a partner since the inception of the awards back in 2003. All are welcome to attend. It is roughly 90 minutes of highlighting the positive instead of pointing fingers at the negative, and we can all use that in our lives. This year's guest speaker will be Carrol Henderson with the DNR's Non-Game Wildlife Program. Carrol will talk about BP oil spill dollars making their way up to Minnesota to help our loons that winter in the Gulf of Mexico. Carrol is a knowledgeable and engaging speaker. You don't want to miss this one!

In addition to LARA, the organizing committee for the awards includes the Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District, University Extension, the DNR, the Brainerd Lakes Area Audubon Society, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, and The Nature Conservancy. We all contribute what we can to pull these awards off every year. LARA contributes roughly \$200 every year because the awards support our mission of healthier lakes. We also think it's a great way to spend your dues contributions. Come and see for yourself. 🐾

Get to know your Board Members

Kent Montgomery

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

I've lived near and worked with lakes and rivers most of my life and value their place in our ecological and economic environments. Through this work, I've seen the value of COLA groups in working with common issues across many individual Lake Associations and lake property owners. I've also come to learn that most of our water quality issues originate with land management practices. LARA is a tremendous voice in our community advocating for water quality and appropriate land uses.

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

We live near Lower South Long Lake – our land drains to this lake.

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

Appropriate land use practices in watersheds, particularly in near shore area. My students and I work with analyzing and modeling landscape influences and monitoring conditions on water bodies that are tied to these watersheds. We try to give lake associations tools with which to engage their neighbors around the lake in effective ways.

What can others do to help with this cause?

Introduce people to the environment. We all have to first develop a relationship with our environment before we can begin to care about it and work to preserve it. Reach out to others, especially groups who don't have ready avenues to experience the outdoors.



No LARA Annual Meeting this Year

By Phil Hunsicker

Because attendance at LARA's annual meeting the last two years has been sparse – just 14 attendees including the LARA board last year and 16 in 2015 – LARA has decided to cancel the annual meeting for 2017. Board members reviewed our by-laws to see if this was a possibility, and we found that the language doesn't say that we have to have a physical meeting with our members, but we do need to share with our members every year what the organization has been up to. We will do that electronically this year with all of our member associations.

In this age of instant communication through digital connections, and with our website and Facebook sites, perhaps an in-person annual meeting isn't needed – at least this year. Next year we will revisit this issue. Last year, we surveyed our member associations and asked them their opinions. Would members attend an all-business, no-frills annual meeting that lasts no longer than 30 minutes? Or would a digital sharing of annual meeting information be enough? Most said the digital meeting would be enough. If you have any opinions on how to pull off a well-attended annual meeting next year – besides offering cash or providing live entertainment by Adele or Keith Urban – please let us know. We are all ears. 🐦

2018 CWEPA Fund Grant Deadline

CWEPA grant applications are due Sept. 30, 2018 – details available at crowwinglara.org/grants/cwepa/. 🐦

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