



CrowWingLARA.org

# Ripples

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

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## Personal and State Responsibility for AIS

Last week the Minnesota DNR announced that a boat and trailer recently used on Lake Minnetonka was found with both zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil as it left Lake Bemidji. Personal responsibility did not work this time [as hoped] to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

The DNR news release also noted the dismal compliance of Minnesota boaters with the AIS laws.

Even more disturbing, is that in the last six weeks, the DNR announced that three more lakes chains have been infested with zebra mussels. The list of zebra mussel-infested waters

now has grown to about 163 Minnesota lakes. These range from the metro area and central lakes to many popular destinations such as the Brainerd lakes area, as well as lakes farther north in Itasca and St. Louis Counties.

Some of the nastier invasive species, like zebra mussels, cause permanent damaging ecological impacts to the fish habitat. The resulting long-term changes will damage our state's economy, recreational activities, tourism and our way of life. Minnesotans do not want to see disruptions in the fish habitat, lakes bogged with thickets of weeds, beaches full of shell shards, and clogged water supply infrastructure. AIS infested waters put our Minnesota heritage at risk.

It is time to re-think the current approaches to stop the spread of AIS as they just are not working. The original strategy was to educate boaters on AIS and hope that they would take AIS on as their personal responsibility. Education and awareness was coupled with occasional inspections and decontaminations at infested lakes. That unsuccessful model must be replaced by new approaches to stop the spread of the species now in Minnesota and new species that, unfortunately, are at our doorstep.

You can't stop new species from entering a lake when AIS inspections take place on the way out of a lake. Minnesota needs to dramatically accelerate watercraft inspection and decontamination efforts to make sure that all boats entering our public waters are free of AIS.

MN Coalition of Lake Associations (MN COLA) has applied to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for a grant to purchase more decontamination units and the land to locate them on if necessary. These funds would be available to Local Government Units. Having decontamination units widely available to the public will make it easier for well-intending boaters to fulfill their personal responsibility in halting the spread of AIS.



Decontamination is effective on many types of AIS as well as the zebra mussels. If an owner requests their boat be decontaminated they should never be turned away, as has been reported.

So far, research efforts seem to be as spotty as personal responsibility. While stopping the Asian carp has become the top priority, the mussels have been left to claim one lake and watershed after another.

Personal responsibility is key to stopping the spread of AIS, but it isn't enough. No one has the right to infest a lake. There

must be consequences to irresponsible actions. Government involvement is critical to ensure that the AIS laws are being followed and our public waters are being protected.

It is time for the Legislature, the Governor, and the DNR to take bolder action that will stop the spread of AIS. Our future generations are counting on them to do more.

*Tom Nelson, President*

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*LARA is a proud member of the Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations (MN COLA), a statewide citizen network of County Lake and River Associations, representing the interests of over 40,000 advocates, organized to protect and improve the waters and shorelands of the State of Minnesota.*

# A History of the Water Warrior Award

By: *Phil Hunsicker*

## Beginnings:

This award was started by the Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance (LARA) a number of years ago to recognize individuals or organizations that have worked tirelessly and selflessly to preserve Crow Wing County's rich water resources.

Past recipients have included *Ted Soteroplos* who helped found LARA, County Commissioner *Ed Larsen* and *Paula West* of the Former Minnesota Lakes Association.

Past prizes have included modest checks to be donated to the winner's favorite charity (and LARA always secretly hoped that LARA was their favorite charity).

## Current Award:

The Water Warrior Award wasn't given out on a regular basis, but beginning in 2005, LARA decided to make the Water Warrior Award an annual event to be given out at the LARA annual meeting held at the end of each summer.

In 2005, the first year of the revival of the award, LARA recognized the herculean efforts of LARA's outgoing president, *Tom Beaver*. We awarded Tom a framed print done by Baxter artist *Jan Finger*, along with a poem written by incoming president, *Phil Hunsicker*. The poems have continued each year along with Jan's prints, but we have also included framed photographs by *Mike Duval*, a former LARA board member.

In the years following Tom Beaver's award, we have recognized:

County Planner *Bonnie Finnerty* (2006) for her efforts to revise shoreland zoning in the county

*Sandy Holm* (2007), a LARA board member and water quality monitoring expert with Minnesota Waters

*Jack Wallschlaeger* (2008) who had been active in the Whitefish Area Property Owners Association (WAPOA) and the Pine River Watershed Alliance

*Ron Meyer* (2009) for his efforts in organizing legislative forums that got legislators from St. Paul to come north to hear about pressing lake issues from lakes advocates, and how our elected representatives can help

*Clyde Clement* (2010) for his work with the Brainerd Lakes Area Invasive Species Task Force which trains lake professionals like dock installers and fishing guides on how to keep aquatic invasive species from spreading from one lake to the next

*Don Hickman* (2011) of the Initiative Foundation for leading the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership and for helping to start the CWEPA Fund

*Dan Swanson* (2012) of the DNR for his service to lake associations dealing with aquatic invasive species

*Dan Steward* (2013) of the Board of Water and Soil Resources for his work with the county to create a revised water plan that recommends best management practices based on watershed boundaries rather than political boundaries.

## Criteria for Choosing the Winner of the Water Warrior Award:

LARA board members may nominate an individual or organization for the Water Warrior Award. Members of LARA may also nominate candidates, but the ultimate decision is left up to the discretion of LARA's Education Committee. The award is to recognize an individual or organization that is working tirelessly and selflessly for the preservation of Crow Wing County's most precious natural resource: its water. Examples of criteria for selection as a Water Warrior can include, but are not limited to, the following: an effort to educate a community on water-related issues; creation of ordinances or laws that serve to preserve water, shoreland, or quality of life; being engaged, principled and an inspiring example to others. 🐾

## A Note From the Editor

We have launched our updated website! We hope you will find it a useful source of information. Go to [www.CrowWingLARA.org](http://www.CrowWingLARA.org). As always, you can e-mail comments and suggestions to [CrowWingLARA@gmail.com](mailto:CrowWingLARA@gmail.com).



# Ode to a Warrior 2013

By: *Phil Hunsicker*

This gentleman is long overdue,  
To be chosen as a Water Warrior.  
I don't know why we waited so long,  
And for that, we couldn't be sorrier.

Our winner this year is humble.  
He rarely accepts credit or praise.  
He'd rather highlight the efforts of others,  
While he continues to work weekends, nights and long days.

It doesn't matter if he's using felt-tip technology in his office,  
Or on a lake paddling his canoe.  
This old-school guy is ironically never satisfied with the same old.  
No, he's always looking for the new.

"He knows his stuff," says one of his admirers,  
"Whether he's in the woods or in St. Paul at a legislative hearing."  
In one place, scary creatures await to tear you apart,  
But in the woods there's nothing so civilized to be fearing.

Filling out paperwork and dealing with red tape.  
These are examples of things not fun.  
He'd rather be hunting, wild ricing and raising Airedale terriers,  
Or searching high and low for a brand new Ithaca Shotgun.

How does one accurately assess lake sensitivity?  
Should we restrict certain activities or let 'em?  
Our big-picture thinker tells us to look at Septics,  
Livestock, Erosion, Development and Miscellaneous,  
And he calls his clever acronym, "SLEDM."

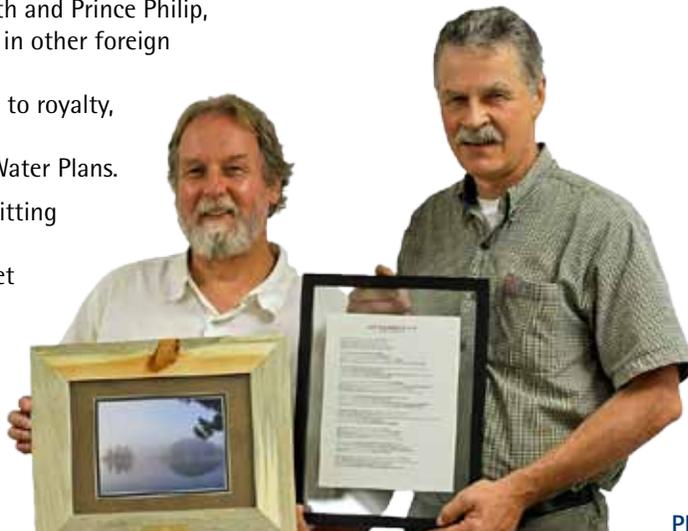
Our Water Warrior refuses to panic,  
When the flames of disagreement are fanned.  
He knows that there are very few problems,  
That can't be solved with a coffee cup in hand.

England has Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip,  
And Kings and Queens rule in other foreign lands.

Crow Wing County is home to royalty,  
too, you know?  
Here we have the King of Water Plans.

Our King is no figurehead sitting lazily on a throne.  
No, ours will continue to get out there to sweat and toil.

Obviously our water Warrior for 2013  
Is Dan Steward with the Board of Water and Soil.



# LARA Announces 3rd Annual CWEPA Fund Grant

by *Ann Beaver*

The Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance (LARA) announces the 3rd annual grant to help fund environmental stewardship projects within the County through an endowed fund with the Initiative Foundation, based in Little Falls. The initial gift that established the fund came from the assets of the Crow Wing Environment Protection Association (CWEPA), a nonprofit organization that dissolved, but sought to leave a legacy to the community through its initial gift of nearly \$57,000.

In the first year of the grant, the earnings from the fund were used to help two lake associations to more rapidly assess the introduction of aquatic invasive species. The Cullen Lakes Association was awarded matching funds to allow the lake association to watch for the introduction of aquatic invasive plants and evaluate any changes to native plant populations. The Lake Hubert Conservation Association was also awarded matching funds to encourage the involvement of property owners in monitoring and preventing the influx of aquatic invasive species. Both projects include skills training, leadership development, membership recruitment, and educational components that are expected to result in measurable changes in behavior.

In the second year of the grant, earnings from the fund will be used by the City of Nisswa to plant trees along the reconstructed Hwy. 371 near downtown where the loss of mature trees in the MnDOT highway right of way destroyed the natural wooded buffer between the highway and the surrounding roads and buildings.

CWEPA Fund grants are available to all non-profit or local government organizations wishing to complete an environmental project in Crow Wing County. Proposals must align with the mission of protecting or restoring the natural resources of Crow Wing County. Completed applications must be submitted by November 30, 2013. Grants will be awarded in March 2014.

Grant applications are available on the LARA web site – [www.CrowWingLARA.org](http://www.CrowWingLARA.org) grants/cwepa or by emailing Ann Beaver at [beaver@uslink.net](mailto:beaver@uslink.net).

Anyone interested in learning more about the CWEPA Fund or making a tax-deductible contribution to the fund, should contact Phil Hunsicker at 218-824-5095, or by email at [phunsicker@q.com](mailto:phunsicker@q.com). 🐸



# Get to know your Board Members

*Sandy Holm*

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

I was working with the Minnesota Lakes Association, later known as Minnesota Waters, to develop water quality monitoring programs for lake and river associations. I had heard of LARA, but was not familiar with their work. So I decided to attend the LARA annual meeting. I was hooked and volunteered to be a Board Member.



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

Horseshoe Lake.

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

Land Use. Whatever is done on or under the land eventually ends up in a water body downstream. Most people don't seem to understand the cumulative effect of their activities on our most necessary and precious resource, WATER. In my working life I was involved in helping water oriented associations assess their watersheds and develop management and monitoring plans to protect their water resources. Now I volunteer in several regional non-profit organizations involved in education and protection of both land and water resources.

*What can others do to help with this cause?*

We can't take clean water for granted. It's cheaper to keep it clean than clean it up later. If you live on a lake become active in your lake association. If you don't live on a lake, there are other organizations that protect and educate about land and water resources.

We also need to be represented on all levels of government by officials who act on science-based facts, not whimsy or politics, when considering legislation that affects our land and water resources. Learn where the candidates stand on environmental issues. We can't live without clean water. Take that into consideration the next time you vote. 🗳️

# Keep Grass Clippings, Leaves, and Washed Up Aquatic Plant Material Out of the Lake

*Excerpt from Crow Wing County Landowner's Guide*

Grass clipping, leaves, and aquatic plant material that wash up on shore all contain phosphorus, which is released when the plant material decomposes. To prevent phosphorus from getting into the lake:

- ✂️ Use a mulching lawn mower and leave grass clippings on the lawn as natural fertilizer.
- ✂️ Collect and compost leaves and clippings, or haul them away from the lake to a disposal site.
- 🍂 Rake up aquatic plants, leaves, and other organic matter on the shore and dispose of away from the lake. Hint: It makes great mulch on the garden which can later be worked in as a soil amendment.
- ✂️ Do not burn leaves near the lake; it destroys the organic matter releasing the phosphorus, which could then be washed into the lake.



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