

# Lake Washburn Association

Working to protect our lake and its environment for future generations

Fall / Winter Newsletter  
2010

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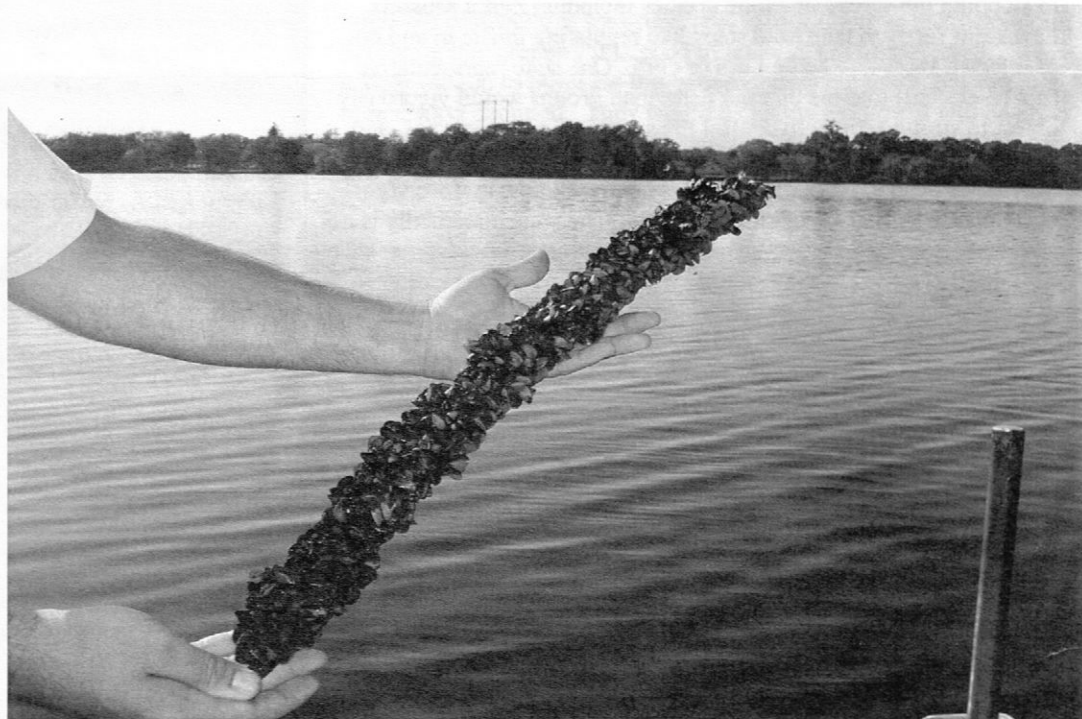
## Message from the President:

### Zebra Mussels Discovered on Gull Lake!

I have been to several conferences since the discovery of Zebra Mussels in Gull Lake. The commentary is somewhat varied... Some say it is inevitable that Zebra Mussels spread to all lakes. Some point out how many states have been successful in stopping Zebra Mussels (Zebbs). I do not want to throw in the towel....

Zebbs are fundamentally different from Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Currently, there is no fix or control for Zebbs. None. Once in a water there is nothing to do. The Zebra Mussels consume phytoplankton from the lake's water and excrete a sticky mucous. Phytoplankton is the main food source for bait fish. Bait fish are the main food source for game fish. So the fishery declines over time as food is removed at every level. In the early stages fishing appears to improve because fish are forced to be more aggressive to get food, and the increased water clarity allows them to hunt more effectively. Thus for a period of time you have more aggressive walleye who have to compete more for food and hit lures more often. Unfortunately that is not sustainable, and the fishing

Continued on page 2



This is a tree branch that was taken from Zebra Mussel infested water...Can you see any of the branch? (Courtesy of MN DNR).

## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER!

Please Join (or renew) Your Membership today. See Page 19 for form!

## Zebra Mussels Continued...

eventually becomes much worse. Additionally, walleye spawning grounds can be destroyed, because the clean rocky bottom that the walleye need to spawn becomes covered with zebra mussels and the mucous they excrete.

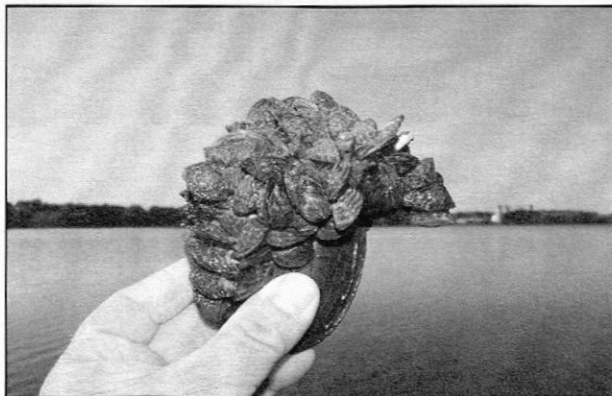
The effect on recreation is also dramatic. The shells of Zebra Mussels are sharp and they will attach to any surface in the water. You need to wear shoes to protect your feet from cuts, and you need to be careful when touching anything underwater because you can cut yourself easily.

Boats, motors and docks experience tremendous damage, and cleaning the Zebra Mussels off the boats and motors is laborious at best. Anyone who tells you there is an upside to Zebs is simply not informed. It is a little like saying colon cancer is not so bad because you lose weight.

Also Zebs can be stopped. Western states have been aggressive and had remarkable success. It just requires a serious political commitment. In many western states authorities stop all boats and clean them to ensure nothing enters the state. In Minnesota, many feel we should all have easy access to public waters... However, we also have a duty to protect the waters.

I have spoken with some state representatives and senators (Republicans and Democrats) and all claim they have a commitment to stopping the spread of exotic species including Zebra Mussels. Few seem ready to take bold steps like regulating traffic in and out of infected lakes like Mille Lacs or Gull. One state representative (not re-elected) told me that the fisherman groups would vigorously object to strong actions to control the spread of exotic species, and she would face a backlash.

Maybe we need to let our state representatives know that we vigorously object to the lack of strong actions. The state historically is not afraid of strong actions and strict penalties. As an example, a person who poaches a deer loses his rifle, truck or SUV, ATV, pays stiff fines, and losses of hunting privileges. Poaching is bad, but the harm to the state is one deer in that case. A person transporting Zebra Mussels faces a maximum \$1,000 fine, and the likelihood of being caught is far less. The economic and environmental impact of spreading Zebra Mussels is tremendous, permanent and irreversible. Are our Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) penalties enough to encourage compliance? Are we serious about stopping the spread of AIS and especially Zebra Mussels? I would encourage each and every one of you to contact your state representatives and senators and make it clear that: we can be very loud; we vote, and that serious action needs to happen if we are going to save our lakes.



Can you tell which part of this clam was buried?  
(Courtesy of MN DNR)

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# Bear Paw Peninsula Preserved!

## *Editor's Note:*

The Bear Paw Peninsula was acquired by the Minnesota DNR this fall, and the DNR will convert the peninsula into an Aquatic Management Area (AMA). This circled portion of the map below shows the Peninsula which is to the northwest of Dagget creek as it flows out of Washburn. This was a long and tireless effort taken on by Dave Harrington and his mother Barbara. David and his mother sold the peninsula to the DNR at below market value in order to ensure the preservation of the peninsula in perpetuity. We should thank them as we enjoy the natural beauty, and as we catch walleye who most likely spawned on this treasured shoreline.

## **By Barbara Harrington**

The Bear Paw Peninsula property was purchased in 1945 by Jim and Mae Witkus and has remained in its original state with the following two exceptions.

First, the natural creek flowing out of Washburn used to run through the middle of this property to Cub and Donut Lakes. In 1936 the CCC workers blocked both ends of the creek and cut a new creek where it is now adding a small dam. Conservation department used to regulate water level in Washburn by adding or subtracting wooden planks in the damn until they were replaced by permanent concrete.

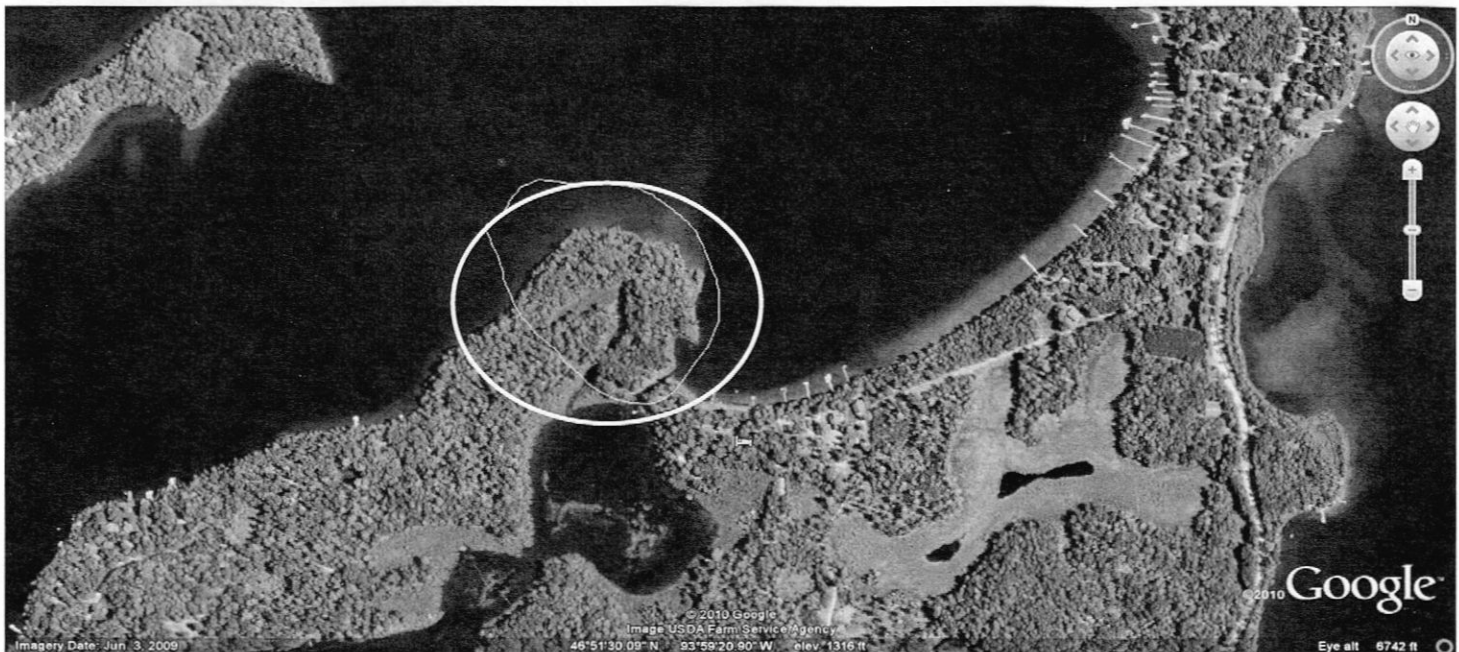
The second change was when a group of resort owners wanted to develop a rearing pond to raise fish fingerlings to plant in Washburn and Roosevelt. In the early 1950's the original

creek bed was loaned, by Witkus, for use as a rearing pond. A dozer was brought in to clear brush and cattails, smooth out the old creek bed to make a rearing pond. The CCC's had put in a road to rearing pond from Birch Bay Road, so Conservation trucks, the first year, brought in northern pike fry to raise in the new pond.

There was a pump on the Bear Paw end of the pond to pump fresh water into the rearing pond. Conservation crew came to periodically check on growth of northern and decided in 2 weeks these fingerlings will be ready to seined out. The crop looked good after test netting. So Jim and other fellows met Conservation crew to help net and transport these fingerlings. The large net was dragged on to shore of rearing pond...but it held only a few substantially sized young northern. Everyone shook their heads, including the Conservation crew: Where had all the fingerling northern pike we saw 2 weeks ago go??

They learned when northern pike fingerlings reach a certain size in a rearing pond...they eat each other! After that walleye fry were raised successfully in the rearing pond until fishery biology decided natural walleye spawning in a lake was more productive than rearing ponds.

Since the best walleye spawning area in Washburn is the rocky point bordering this property it is good to know it's now preserved. Many people wanted to purchase this property over the years, but Jim and Mae always declined. They would be happy to know it will be preserved in natural state. The remaining Bear Paw property continues as a small resort renting cabins from May to October.



The circled area above is Bear Paw Peninsula, which is now an Aquatic Management Area, thanks to the Harrington family's generosity and vision.

## Some Big Northern Biting but Keeper Walleyes are Elusive

By John Harris, Fisheries Committee Chair

First off, the really good news for our fishery is that the DNR acquired Bear Paw Point, one of only two prime walleye spawning areas on Washburn. While the spawning area extends beyond the DNR acquisition, this should help assure the ongoing viability of much of that area as a vital spawning ground.

Despite an increased effort to obtain angler experience information via the fishing logs, only about 12 logs were turned in to Howard Dutton in 2010. While the logs that were turned in provide helpful information, clearly most anglers on Lake Washburn are not bothering to report their results and/or the report format is not conducive to easy use. In any event, the project seems to be one that does not have widespread angler support.

Aside from the fishing logs, anecdotal information indicates that in 2010 a lot of small and a few quite large (12+ lb) northern were caught with most being released including the large fish; that numerous bass were caught but that the bass tournament was not highly successful; that some very small walleye were caught (possibly from the 2009 DNR stocking); and, that

keeper-size walleyes were unusually tough to come by. It is difficult to attribute fishing results to any one factor and, the results this year may very well have been similar to what was experienced in past years. Many of us are just casual anglers and our efforts decrease if we don't catch nice fish in the first couple of outings. This year we had an early spring and an early walleye spawn; lake water temps that seemed a little cooler than usual although I do not track the temp; and, a fairly constant high water level. Were these factors in fishing success? Probably to some degree, but if a factor, there is no way to know if they were a help or a hindrance.

What happens in 2011? Howard Dutton will summarize the information from the 2010 fishing logs. The Fisheries Committee will then make a decision about continuing the fishing log which at this point seems unlikely. If the log is continued, a new format will probably have to be developed. The committee will consider doing another brief study of walleye spawning sites and we will continue to try to identify bass and crappie spawning beds. Anyone who knows of or thinks they may know of a bass and/or a crappie spawning bed is encouraged to contact John Harris at: [jnhnj@yahoo.com](mailto:jnhnj@yahoo.com) or 792.5725.

## Freedom

By Bob Holman

Being a young lad of 12 or 13, I always looked forward to heading north to the cabin. Being able to walk in the woods along an old logging or deer trail, sitting on the dock looking at cloud formations, playing in the sand, swimming - what great fun. But the real freedom came when we purchased a 14 foot aluminum fishing boat. That boat and an early 1950s Johnson 5 horsepower motor gave me the freedom to explore Lake Washburn. Just getting away to be alone and challenge nature; being a young decision maker on where to go, what section of the lake needs exploring today, how long to be away (sometimes I made bad decisions here) - now that was real freedom. It wasn't fast for sure but to a young boy with the wind in my face and the water splashing over the bow it seemed so. Just think, I controlled my own destiny - at least for a few hours each day. And what about tomorrow? Another challenge, another part of the lake to discover. Most of the time, I was alone on the water. Back then there very few speedboats, pontoons, paddleboats - if anything, perhaps a lone fisherman or another young explorer. Yup, real freedom. Then my Dad must have had a dream or something for soon there was a new motor - a Mk 25 Mercury! What a great purchase - real progress now - thanks Dad. I doubt the boat was rated for such enormous power but I wasn't concerned. Now I could really zip around the lake. By then, I had explored all areas of the lake. A good thing too since back then there were no buoys and I was able to avoid the rocky areas. Eventually the fishing boat was put aside and a 12 foot Alumicraft with a 30 hp Mercury took its place. And over the years other speedboats replaced the old ones. All provided great memories. And to this day, I still enjoy exploring all the shorelines around the lake. There are always new things to see. Washburn is very special to me as it should be to all of us. We need to care for it so many new generations are able to create memories similar to those I had as a child.

Funny thing, we still have that old fishing boat, the 5 hp Johnson motor and a newer 6 hp Johnson. We must be saving it for when our grandchild turns 12. Hard to part with those things that were such an important part of growing up - great fun and best memories.



## Emily home to a Billion of Pounds of Manganese?

Emily is home to one of the largest high-grade deposits of manganese in North America which is located on a five-acre site at the edge of town. Manganese is a mineral used in steel and aluminum production. Work began in mid-November at a demonstration mining project in the town of Emily.

A subsidiary of Crow Wing Power is conducting the 45-day test to see whether it's feasible to extract manganese ore through a single well using high-pressure water. Manganese is used for making steel and batteries. For years, large, international mining companies have had their eyes on the manganese in Emily. But the land was recently purchased by Crow Wing Power, the local electric cooperative. Co-op officials say they want to mine it themselves, and share the profits. Experts think there could be a billion pounds of manganese in the ground, just a couple miles from the town center in Emily. Because U.S. currently imports nearly all of its manganese from Africa and Asia, that increases the strategic importance of the deposit.

Crow Wing Power bought the land to keep the resource in local hands. The former owner had offers on the table from mining companies in India, China, Australia and the Ukraine. The mineral is used in emerging scrubber technologies designed to re-

duce emissions from coal-fired power plants, which are a source of the cooperative's electricity.

The kind of mining that's proposed is borehole extraction process involves drilling holes 200 to 400 feet into the ground, then using pressurized groundwater to flush out the manganese in a slurry form. The water would be filtered and returned back into the ground. The recovered manganese would be shipped to a minerals lab in Coleraine for processing.

Experts believe the process will be environmentally friendly, but tests have to be done to make sure. It's also unclear if the process will work for manganese mining. Borehole mining has been used for everything from diamonds to iron ore.

Crow Wing Power is working with state and federal regulatory agencies on an environmental assessment of the project, including water quality testing. It would be two years before any commercial operation begins.

Crow Wing Power has said it won't pursue the mining if it's harmful to the environment. A commercial operation would be years away, but could potentially extract a billion pounds of manganese ore from the site. Profits would be shared with members of the Crow Wing Power electric cooperative.



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# The Water of Lake Washburn

By Jane Bradec Leeper

There it is.....calm  
There it is.....blue reflecting the sky above  
There it is.....sparkling so bright it is blinding  
There it is.....the Water of Washburn.....Lake Washburn

Water is what makes a lake. A lake is usually what most of us call up north. Growing up, our "Up North" was Birch Bay Lodge on Lake Washburn.

The memory is clear, crystal clear, as I am standing here right now. Standing as teenage girl in cabin #6 Birch Bay Lodge, looking through a gridded window pane. Looking out and slightly downhill, I see the water. I see the sun setting, setting on the water, in Birch Bay. It was a beautiful sight. The gold, the yellow, the white, the pink, the blue. It is a beautiful sight. The calm sparkling water is framed with green cedar branches and white pine boughs. It is a beautiful sight. I see it, the water of Washburn, through the panes and pines. It is vivid cherished memory.

When staying at the Birch Bay Lodge, we mostly spent our time only in the water of the bay. To us kids, that was "the lake." We would occasionally paddle boat or pontoon across the bay and along the shore up to Dead Man's Point. We did not know how big and how beautiful Lake Washburn really was.

Many years have come and gone since I looked through that cabin window. Now here I am fresh into my forties, married, three teens of my own. And what is calling to all of us? Up North. Water. Lake Washburn. It is the water of lake Washburn that's calling us up north.

We as a family have come to know and enjoy Washburn. Its inlets and outlets, channels, narrows, its shallows and its depths. We love it. All 1554 acres of water. Be it the many loons that grace the water of Washburn, or the bald eagles that soar overhead, or the much untouched natural shoreline. Be it the fishing, or the swimming, or the sunset cruises. It is there for all of us.

We have come to know a sense of place on the water of Washburn. And for for me especially, that place out from cabin #6 in Birch Bay, where the sun once set for a teenage girl. The place on Washburn that holds my favorite water of Washburn.

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## A mystery to solve; can you help?

By Bob Holman

When asking permission to put up a Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers sign on Howard Dutton's property, I noticed a very old vertical log "cabin" near his lodge. While he didn't know if that was the one, he mentioned there used to be a cabin on the big island in the west lake that was disassembled and moved to his property in the late 1930's. I use to duck hunt on the east shore of the island and parked the boat on the west side. I remember walking across the island over a slight rise and identified a cement/stone foundation that

could very well have been the location of that cabin. We have a 1937 map of the Washburn area and it does show a dwelling on the island at that time.

If anyone knows what it was used for, who occupied it or other interesting facts about that cabin, please let me know. I plan to explore the island early next spring when the loon nest is put out in the island's east bay, locate the foundation and measure it to see if the cabin on Howard's property can be identified. A fun mystery remains unsolved today - perhaps a solution next spring.

## Bowfin "dogfish" an interesting Pre-historic Fish

By Ted Johnson

We seem to have a good number of dogfish, also known as Bowfin, on Washburn, and frankly I was living in denial a little bit, because I always assumed they were a rough fish and their presence was not a great indicator about our lake. I decided to do some research after catching an 8 pound dog fish this summer. The research was interesting. I stumbled across a whole website dedicated to Bowfin—the heading read, "America's Toughest Sportfish for 100,000,000 years!" It seems that these are adaptive tough fish... They can live in low oxygen environments and muddy murky waters, and have a unique adaption. Bowfin can gulp air into a swim bladder which is lined with blood vessels and serves as supplementary source of oxygen. They essential have a hybrid lung system capable of using air or water as an oxygen source. Often you will see Bowfin surface to get the air. Bowfin, due to their hybrid lung system, can survive several hours out of

water. According to one account a live Bowfin was found in moist soil in a field that had been flooded weeks earlier. As a predatory fish they are a lot like Bass or Northern. They tend to be in shallower water and eat the same things... Bowfin eat fish, crayfish, insects, amphibians, and crustaceans. They are not good eating from what I have read... They are however great fighting fish like Bass, in fact when I have caught them I assume they are Bass until I can catch a glimpse... These are odd fish that have made it from the Cretaceous period all the way until present day.

The State record bowfin weighed in at 11 pounds 4 ounces. There is no limit on Bowfins, but the DNR does not advocate removing Bowfins. Bowfins are in competition for more "desirable" game fish, but having caught a couple of large ones, they are fun to catch. They also do not seem to be invasive and crowd out Walleye, Bass and Northern.



A bowfin enthusiast!

New Exotic Species Discovered in Washburn:

## The Chinese Mystery Snail

Late this summer an alert lake resident noticed a snail which he had seen in the past in the lake and was not able to identify it. So he contacted the DNR who identified the snails as Chinese Mystery Snails. The snails are present on other lakes in Northern Minnesota such as Lake Winnibigosh.

The Snail is exotic and does squeeze out natives to some extent, but its impact is almost negligible compared to Zebra Mussels. They eat zooplankton and phytoplankton, and in that way they are similar to Zebra Mussels. That is where the similarities end. The snails are not vigorously invasive, but they are also not desirable.

The Chinese Mystery Snail is native to Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, South Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Java.

The shell of the Chinese Mystery Snail is smooth and strong. It is a uniform color throughout without banding and is usually a light to dark olive-green. The shell can have 6 to 7 whorls. The whorls are strongly convex and each suture is very indented. The outer lip is either round or oval and has a black color to it. The shell can grow to a couple of inches in length.

The females will give birth to live, crawling young. Mystery Snails have a feature called a "trap door" which allows them to close up the opening in their shell when water conditions are unfavorable. This poses problems when trying to eradicate with chemicals because the Chinese Mystery Snail can close up and wait until the chemical has dissipated before opening again.

In 1892, Chinese Mystery Snails were imported into live markets in San Francisco. In 1911, a thriving population was found in the San Francisco Bay. They were found in Boston, Massachusetts in 1915 and in 1950 Florida reported finding a population. By 1965, Chinese Mystery Snails were established both on the west coast and on the east coast as well as some of the Gulf States like Texas. The great Lakes have been affected also; Lake Michigan and Chinese Mystery Snails were probably introduced into the United States through releases from the aquarium industry. This Snail is readily imported for Asian food markets. Therefore, some releases may have been intentional in an effort to create a local food source. Once in a body of water the Chinese Mystery Snail could be transported via bait buckets and water holding areas on boats.

Specific control methods for the Chinese Mystery Snail have yet to be developed but there are some general Snail management techniques that could be applied. Biological control is always a method that most people support because it usually causes the least amount of damage to other aquatic organisms—currently the Minnesota DNR has not approved a biological control for Chinese Mystery Snails. There is also the option to use a chemical control method. There are copper compounds that are sold as Snailicides but they are usually not selective in the Snails they kill. Again these too are not approved by the DNR. They can



**The Chinese Mystery Snail. Feel free to remove**

also be removed manually from your shoreline. This will help keep the numbers down.

To help stop the spread of the Chinese Mystery Snail a few simple steps should be followed.

- Learn to identify the Chinese Mystery Snail and other exotic Snails. Remove them if you can!
- If you have Snails or other animals in an aquarium and you no longer wish to care for them, you should euthanize the animals before disposing in the trash. **DO NOT RELEASE THEM IN THE WILD!**
- Remove mud, plants, fish, and animals from all of your equipment and drain all water from the bilge and livewells before leaving the launch area.
- Clean your equipment with hot water or a pressure washer and allow it to dry for five days before transporting it into a new body of water.
- Never release plants or animals into a different body of water from which they came.



## Correction & Goal:

# EWM can be eliminated! Make Washburn the 1st in Minnesota!

### By Ted Johnson

When we found Eurasian Water Milfoil in July of 2009, I did a great deal of research and question asking to learn about EWM. I asked several experts if any lake had gotten rid of EWM and the answer was no. THAT WAS WRONG!!!

I was invited to panel discussion in St. Paul a couple of weeks ago, and several out of state professors said they had been involved in projects where EWM was removed from a lake. I verified one of their claims with the Washington State DNR. It turns out in Washington state they have **eliminated EWM in about 25 lakes so far.**

According to Kathy Hamel, Aquatic Plant Specialist with the Washington DNR, "The lakes with 100 percent eradication seem to be those lakes with good water clarity. Efforts generally start with an herbicide treatment (depending on the stage of infestation) and then lots of follow up with hand pulling."

That should sound a lot like our approach and situation! We have a couple of great advantages:

- We caught EWM very early, and we reacted quickly (treating about a month after discovery)
- We have done good survey work and scuba diving picking from the start.
- So far, we have had the resources to respond quickly.

Washington has been more liberal in what they have allowed by way of treatments. For instance, one 300 acre lake which was over-run with milfoil received a full lake treatment. The lake virtually eliminated milfoil and actually has more biodiversity of plants now than before milfoil arrived. Currently, Minnesota DNR does not allow full bay or full lake treatments. Additionally some lakes have used matting over areas where the milfoil seemed to return year after year to certain isolated spots. That too is not allowed by the Minnesota DNR.

My hope is that our reaction to the news that we can win this battle is... let's double down the efforts and win! We might win with our current effort level, but the more effort we throw at EWM the more likely we are to succeed, and the more likely it is that we succeed faster!

## The LWA Secretary's recap of 2010

### By Rachel Pollock

We had a busy year at the Lake Washburn Association! First and foremost on everyone's mind, the Association was busy dealing with the Eurasian Milfoil infestation on East Bay of the lake. The Association conducted monitoring activities of the area treated with chemicals in the fall of 2009, organized scuba and snorkel harvesting of the Eurasian Milfoil plants that survived the chemical treatment, and organized boat monitoring throughout the summer. At our August General Membership Meeting, we unanimously approved a reimbursement policy for out-of-pocket costs of scuba divers assisting in our efforts (a relatively cheap way to conquer our Eurasian Milfoil problem!). In the fall, Ted Johnson coordinated an application of chemicals on the small area of Eurasian Milfoil left after the harvesting during the summer.

The Association applied for, and received, grant funding for educational activities associated with aquatic invasive species ("AIS"), which has helped us put up signs along many roads leading to the lake and has helped us create informational sheets regarding AIS. The Association also received a small grant from the DNR, which, with funding from the Association (donated by our generous members), allowed the Association to hire a full-time boat monitor during the summer, helping us prevent the introduction of more AIS into our lake. Immediately prior to our August General Membership Meeting, the University of Minnesota extension service conducted an AIS training session, helping our

members to identify plants that don't belong in our lake.

The AIS Committee also worked hard behind the scenes to determine other funding sources for non-chemical treatments for Eurasian Milfoil (such as the use of weevils). Those efforts will be ongoing in the coming year. Assisting the AIS Committee in the coming year will be our new beach captains, who will play a critical role in early detection of AIS (volunteer if you're interested!).

At our June General Membership meeting, Paul Lundgren from the Forestry Division of the Minnesota DNR came to speak to the Association about the logging that will be completed within the next few years in the Lake Washburn Solitude Area. Although the logging will not involve clear cutting, it generated much discussion about responsible forestry practices, and the subject was of interest to many members.

The Association raised funds this year through memberships, generous contributions from supporters, a Pampered Chef fundraiser, a lake-wide garage sale effort over the Fourth of July weekend and sales of logo merchandise. The Association hopes to organize a silent auction in the summer of 2011, so please feel free to donate or volunteer! In addition to spending funds on boat monitoring, water testing, combat of Eurasian Milfoil, buoy placement and the like, the Association continued its practice of donating to important local organizations that enrich our community, like the Outing Chamber of Commerce. In case we haven't said this enough, a big thank you to all those that have made the Association a success this year, all those working tirelessly on behalf of our beautiful lake, and all of our generous members and contributors.

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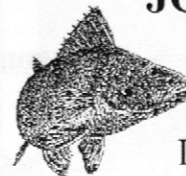
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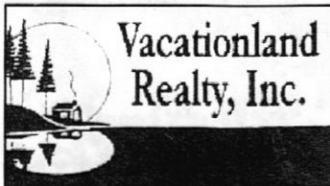
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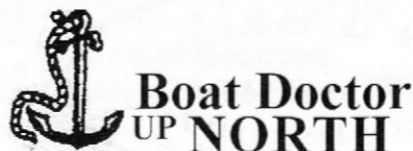
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# A Perspective of a new LWA Director

By Larry Pfaff

"STUDY, DEVELOP AND ENCOURAGE PRACTICES TO PROTECT/RESTORE THE BEAUTY AND ECOLOGY OF OUR LAKE. The mission statement of our lake association.

On July 30, 1995, the Articles of Incorporation of the Lake Washburn Association (LWA) were approved by a group of shore owners, and others, whose foresight and vision identified their determination to give our lake, and it's quality, to someone beyond them.

As one of the newest Board members of the LWA, I welcomed the request to make a few modest observations to this newsletter.

For some years, I have been aware of the LWA Board, seemingly going about some determined business. Quite frankly, I observed them as well meaning individuals, forging ahead with a purpose.

When I became a Board member, I realized how very wrong my perceptions were.

The members of the Board of the LWA are extremely focused, organized, and have a clear understanding of what it will take to preserve our lake's future.

I hope that you are also impressed, and thankful, that this silent army of people, without acclaim, test our lake's water, create newsletters, cleanup 48, replace/removal buoys, monitor boats, encourage the presence of loons, check water chemicals, and employ scuba divers to check for invasive species. I am sure I omitted other contributors, such as shoreline volunteers.

A quick observation on shoreline management. The LWA Board has no interest in supporting a legislative directive regarding a restrictive/punitive approach to the landowners' choice of how they use their property. However, State shoreline reform appears to be inenviable. The next governor is most likely to endorse, among many items, immediate compliance to the setback correction of hard surface runoffs, and the establishment of natural filtration plantations in lieu of lawn mowing practices near the water. There is access to monies to correct this pending compliance, including labor and planting costs. Again, the LWA Board is not requiring you to do anything, but we are a resource pending some external pressure. Our Board interest is that we understand, as a lake community, that certain practices do not complement the integrity and quality of our lake. And with candor, we do not have a buy-in with all of our good friends and neighbors in that regard.

Lastly, part of my commitment to our LWA Board is to seek potential funding for our future efforts. I would leave you with a response I get from interested donors, and a question to you, and LWA non-members. They ask me, "Why do not all of your lake residents endorse the purpose of your Association by becoming members? Don't they support what you are trying to preserve about your lake?"

Please plan on attending a silent auction this spring that will be fun, and financially assist in our necessary work.

My sincerest wishes to you and your family in this Holy season on Lake Washburn.

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## *MPCA Suspects Sulfate a factor behind decreases in Wild Rice*

**By Stephanie Hemphill, Minnesota Public Radio**

Duluth, Minn. — High levels of sulfates released from Minnesota's mining industry are suspected of diminishing Minnesota's native wild rice beds. The state is reconsidering its current standard for sulfate in wild rice waters, but until recently it hasn't been enforcing the existing standard.

The issue is particularly important now, because a half-dozen companies are exploring for copper and nickel in northeastern Minnesota and could build mines to extract the minerals. The mines would likely release elevated levels of sulfate, a form of sulfur that comes off the rock when it's dug up and exposed to air.

The rivers and lakes of northeastern Minnesota used to be full of wild rice. The Ojibwe call it mahnomen, and it's not only a staple of their traditional diet; it's regarded as a special gift of the creator.

There are still wild rice beds in the region, but Ojibwe elders say they're not nearly as rich and plentiful as they used to be.

A lot of factors have contributed to the decline -- changing water levels, clearing shorelines for beaches, acid rain. But in one area, attention is focused on pollution from iron mines.

Len Anderson is a retired science teacher who has paddled and harvested wild rice in the area for years. He points to research the DNR has done that shows a spike in sulfates in the St. Louis River as it winds its way south of the mines, collecting water from tributaries, like the Partridge River.

"Above the Partridge River, the river's choked with wild rice, and of course flocks of ducks that go with it. When you get to the Partridge River -- the end of wild rice," said Anderson.

"That's when the first mining-impacted water hits the St. Louis River. It's the Partridge River."

Anderson says sulfate interferes with root development and the wild rice doesn't grow well. The sulfate comes from sulfide in rocks exposed to air during mining operations.

Existing taconite mines have been sending extra sulfate into the water for fifty years.

But now, half a dozen companies are exploring and planning to build a new kind of mine that's expected to produce much more

sulfate. They've found copper and nickel in rock that contains more sulfide than most iron ore formations.

Minnesota has had a standard in place since the 1970s, to protect wild rice beds from sulfate pollution. But the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency only started trying to enforce the standard this year.

"Apparently they suddenly discovered their rule," said Mike Robertson, an environmental consultant with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

Robertson says the MPCA only began enforcing the rule this year, when two mines applied for permits to expand. The permit work is moving ahead, but no one knows if the companies will be able to meet the standard of 10 parts-per-million of sulfate in water.

"The permits have quite lengthy timelines in them for compliance. That's one of the issues going forward -- to determine the technology, the cost, and the feasibility of meeting that standard," said Robertson.

With the volumes of waste rock and water from mining operations, there's no doubt it will be very expensive.

The Chamber argues the standard is arbitrary, and is not based on recent scientific research.

The group also says the rule was originally written to protect paddy-grown rice, not native wild rice, and should not be used as a standard in waters where wild rice grows.

Robertson also argues the rule could be applied to many types of facilities, including wastewater treatment systems, not just mines. The PCA says until recently it had very little information about sulfates, and about which waters have wild rice growing in them. The agency says it made case-by-case permitting decisions.

The agency also says it was focusing on other concerns, such as excess nutrients, mercury, and other issues related to aquatic life and human health.

In an e-mail, MPCA spokesman Ralph Pribble says the agency has begun a review of the wild rice rule. He says over the next couple of years "we are looking to clarify the definition of water used for production of wild rice," and in the future the agency may update the numeric limit.

It's part of a periodic review of state water standards, which is required by the federal government.

Shannon Lotthammer, who is supervising the process at the MPCA, says the agency is hoping to get some answers from research going on now at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

"What we need is those toxicity studies, to show how different concentrations of sulfate affect wild rice health and viability and growth," said Lotthammer.

The PCA also wants to make a list of which bodies of water have wild rice growing in them and therefore need protection. But that could be a controversial process, since tribal groups say the mines and other sources of pollution have already wiped out so many of the stands that once sustained them.



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## LLWF Mission of Sustainability and Stewardship

### *Message From the Leech Lake Watershed Foundation*

Picture the sun rising over a fog-shrouded island or the evening sunset exploding with beautiful hues of red and pink as the sun disappears below the horizon of pine trees across the lake.

Near shore are abundant stands of bulrush, the home and birthing place for many species of fish and wildlife. Overhead an eagle majestically soars with its wings spread wide. And then comes the cry of the loon—a symbol of lake country and sound that more than any other typifies why we love our special lake places here in the Leech Lake watershed.

If the projected population growth of up to 50% by 2030 in Cass and surrounding counties becomes a reality, considerable stress will be placed on these lakes we call home and “up north.” As more shorelands are developed, the looming question is: what will the quality of our waters, forests, and fish and wildlife habitat be 20 years from now?

We don't want to stop growth; the sustainability of our communities depends on it. Our communities also depend on the high quality natural resources that beckon people to our region. The fishing, hunting, water sports, trails, beautiful scenery, wildlife watching, and cultural history all draw people to live, shop, vacation, and recreate here. The natural resources of the Leech Lake watershed are the economic backbone that sustains local communities and their economy. Our region's future depends on balance...balancing growth with protection of the natural resources that we enjoy and upon which our communities depend.

Protecting and sustaining the health of our lakes will depend on: 1) **land conservation** to protect the most critical and still undeveloped or minimally developed shorelands that would have the greatest impact on water quality and habitat if they are developed; and 2) **good land management** on developed shorelands to minimize runoff to the lake and disturbance of habitat.

Preventing development or minimizing further development using various conservation tools is an important way private landowners can limit the impact their shoreland property has on the quality of the lake now and in future years.

Placing a conservation easement on your land is a viable tool to preserve the land from future development while still retaining ownership. The easement is a legally recorded agreement by which the landowner voluntarily restricts the development of the land into perpetuity. The development rights are given to a qualified organization or government entity to hold forever and to insure that the conditions of the easement are met. The landowner retains the use of the land, and can even set aside future building sites, but essentially the land stays undeveloped forever. The landowner and public benefit is the preservation

of the natural resources and wildlife habitat and protection of water quality. Placing a conservation easement on the “land you love” is a living legacy for the enjoyment of those who come after you.

Other landowners may choose to donate or sell their land to the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation or another qualified organization or government agency which then places the land in public ownership and manages it into perpetuity for water quality and habitat protection along with public enjoyment. Either way, with a conservation easement or land conveyance, these protected lands are continuing to work for us through the preservation of the natural resources.

For shoreland property owners, “good land management” involves practicing lake stewardship to protect water quality and habitat. Water running off the land can pick up nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen and carry them to the lake where they can also feed the growth of aquatic plants and algae and lead to impairment of water quality and recreational use. Runoff can be curbed with lake stewardship practices including proper lawn care and the use of zero-phosphorus fertilizer (*it is the law*), picking up pet waste, preventing shoreland erosion, and proper septic system maintenance. It can also be reduced by minimizing hard surfaces, like driveways and walkways, and limiting clearing and grading of native vegetation.

Runoff can be captured and cleansed so it doesn't reach the lake by using shoreland vegetative buffers and by redirecting rainfall to rain barrels and rain gardens to keep the rain where it falls rather than running off the land.

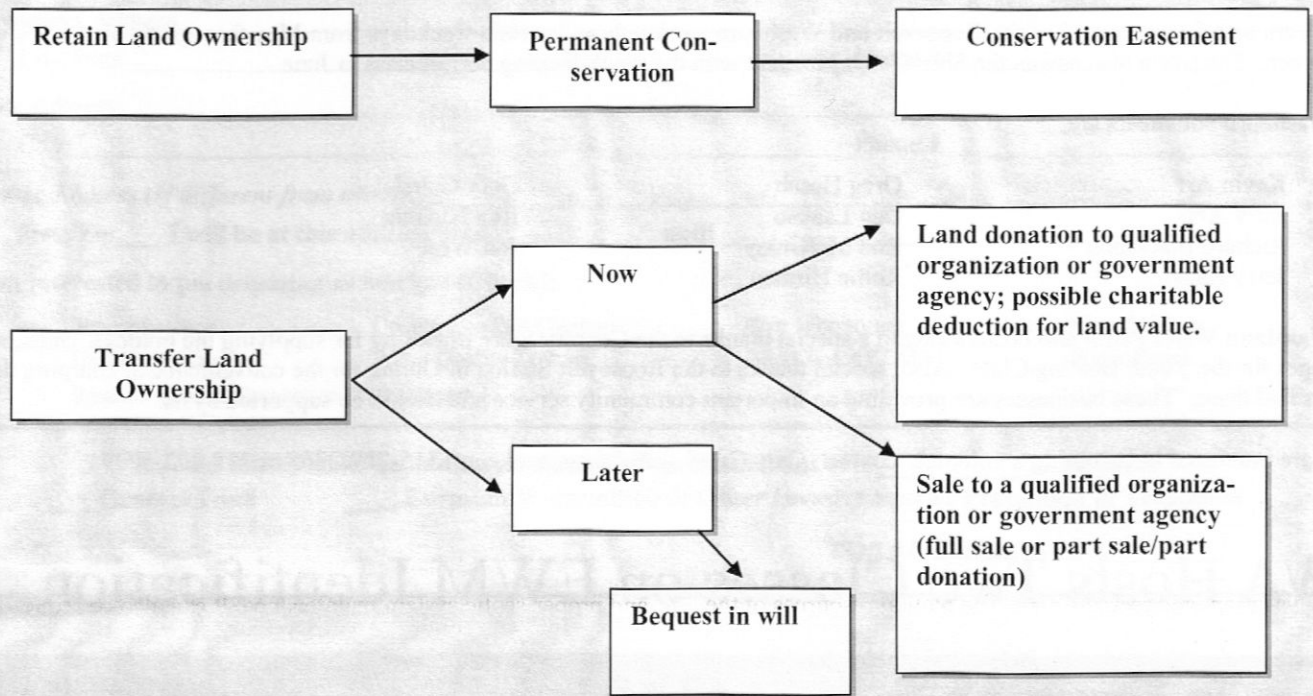
Aquatic habitats can be protected by minimizing the removal of submerged vegetation. Clear by hand only the amount of submerged vegetation needed to provide a small swimming area. Minimize the destruction of emergent plants such as bulrushes and water lilies. They help purify the lake by removing nutrients, provide shelter and spawning areas for fish and other wildlife, and protect the shore from eroding wave action, and they can only be removed with a permit from the DNR. **The activities that we do or don't do on the land will determine the future quality of our waters.**

The Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation is your partner to insure that population growth in this region is balanced with conservation of natural resources. Working together we can protect the irreplaceable natural resources that underpin the economy, recreational opportunities and quality of life that make the Leech Lake watershed such a great place to live and play.

This was reprinted from the Leech Lake Watershed Foundation Fall 2010 Newsletter. LLWF has a website at [leechlakewatershed.org](http://leechlakewatershed.org)



## Land Conservation Decision Tree



## Washburn's first year of full time boat monitoring!

### By Brad Johnson, Boat Monitoring Chair

Boat monitoring in 2010 was a big success. Lake Washburn volunteers' efforts combined with the DNR provided the opportunity to monitor hundreds of boats throughout the summer. Once again, we provided boat monitoring on the Fishing Opener, Memorial Day and July 4th weekends. In addition, the DNR was at the public boat landing a total of 500 hours. Between our volunteer and DNR hours, in all we essentially had over a full time employee doing boat monitoring this summer.

As in the past, all boat monitoring provided by The Lake Washburn Association is on a volunteer basis. A BIG thanks to all of you who participated in 2010. New volunteers would be very much appreciated. I realize these weekends are usu-

ally extra busy, but it would certainly help our efforts if you could break away for a couple of hours. You will have plenty of assistance if it's your first time. As in the past, the time slots are 2 hours each starting at noon on Friday and running through noon on Monday.

Our Eurasian Water Milfoil efforts have been a huge success. Effective boat monitoring is an important part to controlling and eventually eliminating the Eurasian Water Milfoil. In addition, the risk of other aquatic invasive species being introduced is always a concern. Species such as Spiny Water Fleas and Zebra Mussels, which have no known treatments, continue to spread throughout Minnesota lakes. Only continued combined efforts will help fight the spread.

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## CASS COUNTY SHERIFF'S WATER PATROL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

### By Gary Gabel

The Sheriff's Water Patrol Program has three purposes:

1. Promote water safety.
2. Educate boaters on the current laws and rules.
3. Assist the Cass County Sheriff's Department at the local level.

Volunteers patrol Lawrence, Leavitt, Roosevelt and Washburn weekends and certain weekdays from May through the first week of September. The patrol also assists the Sheriff's Department with the youth boating permit class in June.

The Washburn volunteers are:

Kevin Arf  
Jerry Abts  
Richard Blackmon  
Jerry Hagel

Greg Hosch  
Dan Laakso  
Rod McKinley  
Rollie Hirman

Gary Gabel  
Ron Nichols  
Jon West

The Washburn Water Patrol and boaters extend a special thanks to the Country Store in Outing for supplying the hotdogs, chips, and beverages for the Youth Boating Class. Also, special thanks to the Roosevelt Station in Outing for the convenience of charging the Patrol's fuel there. These businesses are providing an important community service and should be supported by us.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer contact: Gary Gabel, [gabelggsg@aol.com](mailto:gabelggsg@aol.com), 515-289-2265 or 218-792-5709 .

## LWA Hosts Two Classes on EWM Identification

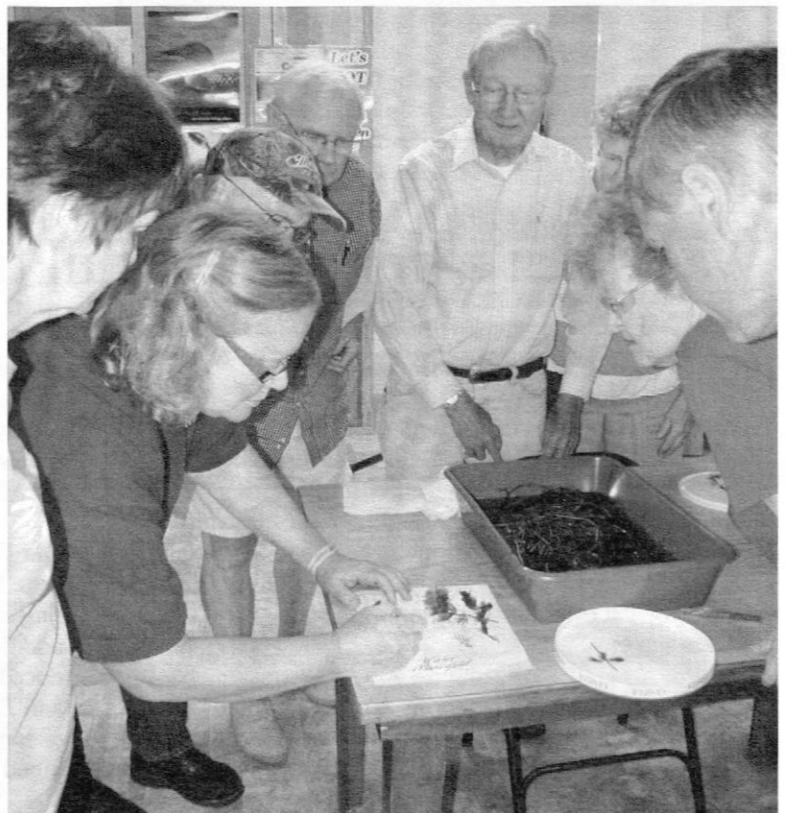
In order to make sure everyone feels comfortable identifying Eurasian Water Milfoil. The Association contracted with the University of Minnesota Extension service and offered two classes right in Outing.

The first sponsored class was held June 14 at the Village Inn and was attended by around 25 people. The second was held immediately before the August General meeting, and was equally well attended. In all we had approximately 50 LWA members go through the class.

The class consisted of a little presentation on terminology and look-a-like plants. Then the attendees were broken into small groups and had to identify Eurasian Water Milfoil from plants that are look a likes. Each class accomplished its goal. No one left with out feeling confident they would recognize EWM and not be fooled by Northern Milfoil or Coontail.

Even though most of us have EWM identification cards from the DNR more than one of us has been confused when actually looking at a plant that washed up on the beach... The class walked everyone through how to ID EWM in a fool proof way.

We are likely to offer the course once next year. Thanks to Mary Blickendorf and Elenor Burket from the Extension service for teaching!



Elenor Burket, University of MN Extension, shows LWA members how to identify Eurasian Water Milfoil.

## **Lake Washburn Association**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Species Prevention & Treatment |   |  |                                       |

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- Incentives to help owners preserve Shoreline Habitat and Forrest Lands

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[www.msrepo.org](http://www.msrepo.org) \* 952 854 1317



Lake Washburn Association

PO Box 26

Dating, MN, 56662

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DATING, MN  
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Your Membership Status is here →

## YEAR-END APPROACHES!!!

### We need your memberships and Aquatic Invasive Species Fund contributions!

We all love and enjoy the lake, and your membership in the Lake Washburn Association is critical. The association cannot force anyone to join, but we provide services to everyone on the lake. If you are reading this, you are receiving one right now. Other services range from our Eurasian Water Milfoil treatment and removal efforts to placing loon nesting platforms around the lake. Your dues support all these efforts and programs and the higher the membership participation, the less financial stress on your neighbors to carry the burden. Many people contribute extra and dedicate even more funds to the Aquatic Invasive Species Fund specifically. Please do your part! Please pay for the services you receive. We understand some are in position to give more, but we should all be able to contribute something.

*ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE **TAX DEDUCTIBLE!** SO WITH DECEMBER 31st APPROACHING PLEASE REMEMBER LWA!*

**MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTION FORM ON PAGE 19.**