

Windemere Township Lakes Association

<http://windemere.mnlakesanddrivers.org/>



WINDOW

If you want information, just open a window"

Fall 2025



Talking on Water

By Dan Benzie, Chair WTLA

As you watch the golden autumn leaves gently float by, hopefully it reminds you of golden crappie fillets floating to the surface as you have created lakeside memories with family, friends and fish fries. While reminiscing of all the lake activities you enjoyed this summer you will read in this edition of the WINDOW the work your lake association has been involved in.

Having had very successful treatment of milfoil in Sand and Sturgeon lakes, we have now discovered its presence on Island Lake along with our first reports of Curly Leaf Pondweed. While both of these invasives will require continued surveillance and chemical treatments, for other invasive we have partnered with a tiny voracious beetle with an appetite for only Purple Loosestrife, which has become prevalent throughout the township lakes.

Other good news is WTLA has been granted 501c3 status by the IRS. In your year-end giving plans we encourage your support of the lake association with a tax-deductible gift. We thank you for all the care you give to our area lakes and your membership of WTLA.

See you on the water in the Spring!

Beetles for Purple Loose Strife

By Denise A. Barby



Purple Loosestrife has become a growing problem for many lakes in our area! Although they are beautiful to look at, they are very destructive to the ecosystem and choke out our native plants that our fish and wildlife depend on. I had an opportunity 3 years ago to become a volunteer with Wild River Conservancy based out of Osceola WI, to help with the raising and releasing of *Galerucella* beetles. These beetles eat Loosestrife and can do considerable damage to the plant. Once introduced, they will lay eggs on the leaves. These will hatch and the larvae will start to eat the plant- in fact the larvae will do more damage than the beetles themselves. The larvae will eventually turn into beetles and the whole process begins again. These beetles will also hibernate under the roots of the Loosestrife over the winter. In the spring they will start the process all over. They also have the capability to fly 3 to 5 miles to another area and start a whole new cycle. As a volunteer, I receive a pool and 5

Loosestrife plants in the spring with netting to cover each plant. Once they have become tall enough, I am given 10 beetles for each plant. These beetles will then start doing their thing and reproducing, all contained in the netting. Usually in early July, my beetles are ready to release to an infested area. My 50 beetles have now become 200 or more!

Last year was the first year that I released the beetles here on Island Lake. I am happy to report that there has been evidence that not only did they survive the winter, but that they have spread to at least another area half a mile away. Although this is not a fast fix, it is more natural and effective in the long term than chemicals. I am very excited to be part of this program and have my 3rd batch almost ready to release here again in a few weeks. Can't wait to see the impact these beetles will make after a few years here!

Volunteer Monitoring and Shoreline Stewardship

By Kirstin Stutzman, MPCA Volunteer Water Monitoring Program Specialist

For over 50 years, volunteers have gathered critically important water clarity data on lakes and streams throughout the state of Minnesota. For some bodies of water, volunteer monitoring provides the only data available, making this work indispensable.



At least twice per month during the summer, volunteers measure water clarity using a Secchi disk or tube at designated locations on lakes or streams. During each visit, they record their reading and observations on the physical and recreational conditions of their lake or stream. They submit the information at the end of each monitoring season. No prior experience is needed, and the monitoring equipment is provided free of charge.

Water clarity is an important indicator of lake and stream health; it shows the amount of light penetration into the water. For streams, low clarity reading often reflects excess sediment. For lakes, it's excess algae. These conditions can affect plants, insects, and fish communities and impact recreational opportunities. The MPCA uses volunteer-collected data to make decisions on watershed protection and restoration.

How can you help?

- Become a volunteer! You can sign up for the MPCA's Volunteer Water Monitoring program online: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/get-engaged/find-a-site-and-sign-up>.
- Become a shoreline steward! There are many shoreline practices that can lead to improved water quality, such as planting native vegetation along the shoreline and refraining from mowing or removing vegetation from the shoreline. The MNDNR provides a practical guide to maintaining your shoreline. https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/waters/healthy_shorelines_feb-2012.pdf

Purple Loosestrife A Threat

By Becky Haass, Zoning Technician Carlton County

Many people in lakes and wetland areas are familiar with AIS that are present in Minnesota such as Zebra Mussels and Spiny waterfleas. Additionally, many are familiar with some plant-based AIS such as Eurasian Milfoil because of the significant impact it can have on water recreation. Less may be familiar with more terrestrial based AIS species because they do not seem to have such a direct human impact, however they are also damaging to the environment and our surroundings.

Purple loosestrife is an AIS wetland plant that can grow in areas such as a few feet of water, dry shore near the water line or in ditches. To the unknowing person, it just looks like a pretty purple flower. In fact, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Purple loosestrife was sold for many years as a decorative ornamental plant.

Purple Loosestrife is a fast-growing plant with a dense root system and dense growth that can compete and overtake native plants. Its growth is usually not suitable for nesting, food or habitat of native animals. If not curtailed, its dense growth can “take over” and become difficult to control.

There are a few ways to remove Purple loosestrife including herbicides, however, that requires a permit and coordination with the DNR. There are also certain beetles that can be utilized to control the plant. For smaller areas, the physical removal and proper destruction of the plants can be very successful. I would be happy to help anyone who wants assistance identifying Purple loosestrife and suggestions for removal. I can be contacted at bhaass@hotmail.com

What About Those Crappies?

By DNR Fisheries News

The DNR is conducting a statewide research study focusing on black crappie populations. Hinckley Area Fisheries Office has collaborated closely with this project and began sampling Island Lake in Spring of 2025. Surveys are conducted when water temperatures are in the low to mid 50s. These are pre-spawn temperatures when males and females are actively cruising the shallows prior to establishing nests.

Black Crappie are one of the most targeted fish species in Minnesota.



Unfortunately, despite long-term datasets, many questions about their populations remain. To better understand these populations, a statewide research project was initiated

in the spring of 2024. Lakes included in this study will span Minnesota and will vary in size, productivity levels, and black crappie harvest regulations. The DNR goal is to collect information from 30-40 lakes annually, for a project total of 100+ lakes by the end of 2026.

This project will shed some light on population characteristics of Minnesota's crappies (i.e., how fast individuals grow, and which lakes tend to have the fastest growth). An improved understanding of these populations will

allow MNDNR to improve the management of the species.

Finally, high-quality data from this project will be used to explore the effects of various harvest regulations, determining if reduced bag limits may improve average size of crappies and if so, what types of lakes may be best suited to see improvements. Collectively, this project hopes to dramatically improve our understanding and management of crappie populations in Minnesota.

2026 WTLA General Meetings: General meeting space has been reserved at the Social Hall in Holy Angels Catholic Church, 60 Hartman Dr, in Moose Lake, at 9:00 AM. Please communicate with your Board by emailing at windemerelakes@yahoo.com. Guest speakers will be announced in our Spring Newsletter.

June 13 - TBD
July 11- TBD
August 8 - TBD

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