

# MLR *Update*

## Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Our Mission: To protect Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates and policy makers.

### Letter from the President

2017 has been an exciting year.

Beginning in January 2017 MLR Board members and staff began Civic Governance Training, a new approach to policy making that emphasizes the local capacity for active citizens to claim a jurisdiction and build a cross sector action base. MLR and the Citizen's League have joined together to pilot this Civic Governance framework in two areas, Cass County and Ramsey County.

As part of this effort, MLR funded an academic study by Concordia College, Moorhead on lake associations. What we learned astonished us. Lake Associations contribute \$6.25 million annually to lake improvement and protection effort and dedicate 1.2 million hours of volunteer service which would translate into 600 full time jobs, or at \$15 per hour, a value of \$18,000,000! Lake Association boards include water resource professionals and academics as well as elected officials. There is significant capacity across the state in Minnesota's more than 500 lake associations, but they have never before been organized. MLR is changing that.

The Concordia Study shows that lake folks are already engaged. What they lack is power. So MLR will work to bring lake association efforts, communications and advocacy into alignment, to build a powerful constituency around water issues, and advance an agenda that will serve our mission to, "protect Minnesota's lakes and river heritage for current and future generations."

I am very proud of the work our members do and it is an honor to be able to serve on the MLR Board. Best of all to you and your families over the holiday season. I expect great things for lakes in 2018. *Ted Johnson*

### Membership in MLR

Membership in MLR is proved protection of our core values. Join or renew online. Visit our website to print out a form and mail your contribution or make a credit card or bank transaction online.

<http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org/join-renew>

### A first for Minnesota: Wright County makes watercraft inspections for aquatic invasive species mandatory.

The move signals a get-tough attitude toward a threat to Minnesota Lakes.

In 2012 MLR pushed a bill that would create the type of mandatory, regional inspection and decontamination program that has been so effective in the Western States.

Unfortunately, the DNR never made use of this new authority and were not encouraging when local groups tried. But the Wright County Soil and Water District, Lake Association folks and County Commissioner pushed through DNR red tape, and got the job done.

Wright County makes watercraft inspections for aquatic invasive species mandatory <http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org/2017/07/07/in-a-first-for-minnesota-wright-county-to-make-watercraft-inspections-for-aquatic>



Two years ago, in 2015, the MLR Board convened a two day Board retreat. We identified shared values, wrote a mission statement driven by those values, and created a five year plan to achieve those values.

Two years later we have achieved many of the goals we set then and made significant progress on the others. The reason is each of you.

YOU are Minnesota's lakes and rivers advocates!

Our strategy is based on an old but powerful idea: organize a broad cross sector base of people at the local level, the county level and the state level to pursue public policy that supports the vision of protecting Minnesota's lake and river heritage for future generations.

At the local level we went to where people were already organizing themselves, lake associations. I drove the state, listening to lake association concerns and sharing MLR's vision of a large grassroots base organized to protect lake and river heritage in Minnesota.

Lake Associations resonated with this vision and joined MLR. We put the Citizens Action Network in place to both increase communications between MLR and you, AND increase your communication with policy makers. YOU are Minnesota's most effective lakes and rivers advocates!

MLR is now the largest lake and river advocacy organization in Minnesota.

At the same time, another of MLR's long standing issues has moved to the forefront, the threats excessive property tax on shoreline, and lack of local voice in policy making are having on Minnesota's lake and river heritage:

- A proposed tax for Snowbirds who spend summers in Minnesota and winters in warmer climes, the so-called Snowbird Tax failed to pass.

## It's Official - Lake Associations are the largest, most dedicated and most generous conservation group in Minnesota

Concordia Study, Minnesota's Lake Associations, Who They Are and What They Do, confirms and quantifies what many of us suspected. Lake Associations are the largest (more than 200K), most generous (\$6.2 million annually), most dedicated (1.2 million volunteer hours annually) conservation and angling (\$375K annually for fish stocking) group in Minnesota. But these are just some of the astonishing findings of the Concordia Lake Association Study.

*Concordia Lake Association Study*

<http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org/sites/mnlakesandrivers.org/files/files/mn-lake-association-survey-2017-report.pdf>



- In 2017 the State general Tax on cabins was capped.
- Legislation has been introduced to remove the sales tax from lake association plant management activities.
- The MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will consider a resolution to support the Sustainable Shoreline Incentive Act, which would provide direct funding to shoreline owners who protect, enhance or restore shoreline in a way that benefits local water quality.
- Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act payments have not only been protected, but increased.
- Conservation Easements on shoreline may now receive a reduction in property tax assessment.

This new strategy is producing significant results. But we are not there yet.

In 2018 MLR will:

- Continue to work to unify all lake and river advocates in Minnesota into an ever more powerful advocacy force,
- Help local lake associations build greater civic infrastructure around water in their communities,
- Foster stronger and more active Coalition of Lake Associations at the County level,
- Focus this advocacy energy with consistent messaging and active lobbying in order to shape public policy in a way that protects Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations.

The articles included in this newsletter should begin to get you up to speed on MLR activities over the last year.

This is an incredibly exciting time for MLR. We look forward to 2018.



Jeff Forester

## Protecting Minnesota's Waters - If You Don't Get Involved, the Job Won't Get Done

Government cannot solve our water problems for us. But with strong, authentic public/private partnerships we can begin to make headway.

*If You Don't Get Involved, the Job Won't Get Done*

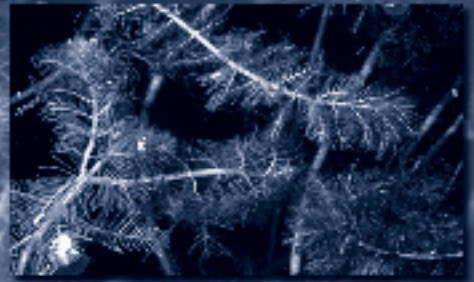
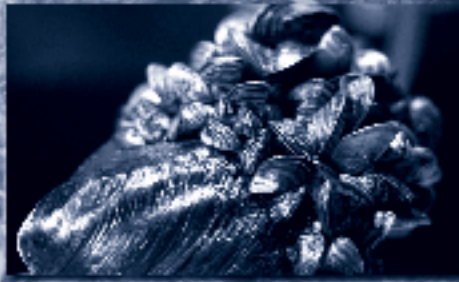
<http://www.startribune.com/protecting-minnesota-s-waters-if-you-don-t-get-involved-the-job-won-t-get-done/407145456/>

## Walleye Fishery in Decline Across Midwest - Wisconsin projected to have only 4% of walleye lakes by 2040

Researchers at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources discover that warming waters and expanding bass populations are coinciding with dramatic decline in both size and abundance of walleye.

*Warming Waters to Play Havoc with Fisheries Around U.S.*

<http://www.outdoornews.com/2017/06/26/warming-waters-play-havoc-fisheries-around-u-s/>



# ***Aquatic Invaders Summit III***

**An Exploration of Local Collaboration, Innovation and Opportunity**

**Feb 28-Mar 1, 2018 | Earle Brown Heritage Center | 6155 Earle Brown Dr. | Minneapolis, MN**

**2018 Aquatic Invaders Summit III  
February 28 - March 1, 2018  
Earle Brown Heritage Center  
Minneapolis, MN**



To view a video of last year's participants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqXbyn8yVOE>

This year's Summit, hosted by WCCO Newsman Don Shelby, will focus on AIS programs and innovations across the state. The presentations were chosen to provide actual boots on the ground applied science that will help prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in Minnesota. If you are concerned about Aquatic Invasive Species and the health of lake ecosystems in Minnesota, attend the Aquatic Invaders Summit.

This year it will be possible to attend remotely. MLR will live stream sessions, so if you "fly south" for the winter, you can still attend, ask questions using the chat feature, and benefit from the experience of others around the state engaged in the same work as you.

To Register and learn more go to: [Aquatic Invaders Summit III](http://aisummit3.mnlakesandrivers.org/)  
<http://aisummit3.mnlakesandrivers.org/>

## **MLR 2018 Annual Meeting**

**March 1, 2018, 1:45-2:45 pm  
Earle Brown Heritage Center  
Minneapolis, MN 55430**

This year the MLR Annual Meeting will follow the Aquatic Invaders Summit. For the first time ever, the MLR Annual Meeting will be live streamed to MLR members. So if you have "flown south" for the winter, you can still attend the MLR Annual meeting. This will be a great meeting with great speakers and many new faces in attendance. You do not need to attend the Invaders Summit to attend the Annual Meeting. You will also be able to attend via the internet. I look forward to seeing you there.

### **Lake Associations Accomplish Lake Restoration by Forming Partnership**

People talk about the importance of creating partnerships to solve water quality problems. Lake Associations that build strong civic infrastructure with active leaders in their jurisdictions can and have often reversed lake degradation. One example is Bald Eagle Lake in Ramsey County.

[https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNPCA/bulletins/190894a#link\\_1490718451777](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNPCA/bulletins/190894a#link_1490718451777)



## Tribal Resource Managers Link Decline in Walleye to Impacts of Zebra Mussels and Spiny Water Flea

It is the AIS, Folks. Said Tribal Commissioner Bradley Harrington Jr.: "The best evidence comes from zooplankton and invasive species counts. ... Microscopic zooplankton is eaten by forage fish [sunfish, minnows, perch] and forage fish are eaten by bigger fish such as walleye. Biologists have tracked drastic reductions in the amount and type of zooplankton in Mille Lacs.... Biological and abiotic impacts from these invasive species may be increasing cannibalism of juvenile walleye, reducing fish habitat, and reducing forage fish species that "buffer" against juvenile walleye predation."



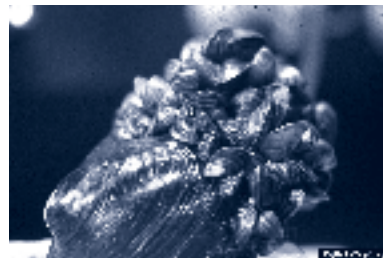
**Ojibwe Leader Says Mille Lacs Walleye Have Not Recovered Yet**  
<http://www.startribune.com/ojibwe-leader-says-mille-lacs-walleye-have-not-recovered-yet/448842053/>

## Want to See an Invasive Species Plan With Teeth? Head Out West

Following a trip out West outdoor writer Dennis Anderson realized that Minnesota was way behind the curve when it came to AIS programs.

"FERNIE, BRITISH COLUMBIA – Canada's western provinces, along with states in the northwest U.S., are serious about keeping aquatic invasive species (AIS) out of their waters."

**Want to See Invasives Prevention Plan with Teeth? Head Out West**  
<http://www.startribune.com/anderson-want-to-see-invasives-prevention-plan-with-teeth-headoutwest/441648893/>



## The Full Story of Aquatic Invasive Species Up to This Point

Tony Kennedy, a reporter from the Star Tribune did a two-part series about the spread and impacts of

Aquatic Invasive Species, and what the solution would be. It is an excellent article.

**Infested Waters-Tony Kennedy** <http://www.startribune.com/how-the-scourge-of-zebra-mussels-spread-across-minnesota/423913703/>



## Study Finds Rising Expenses at Odds With Cabin Ownership

MLR surveyed cabin ownership trends 2016 and found that lake home and cabin owners in Minnesota are getting older and not any

richer. Health care costs are a major concern. This raises issues for our lakes since these people are the forefront of protecting them.

**Study Finds Rising Expenses at Odds With Cabin Ownership**  
<http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/4225052-study-finds-rising-expenses-odds-cabin-ownership>

## MLR Board of Directors

### Ted Johnson

President

Lake Washburn in Cass County

### Barbara Halbakken Fischburg

Secretary

Detroit Lake in Becker County

### John P. James

Treasurer

Lake Gervais in Ramsey County

### George Crolick

Lake Eshquaguma in St. Louis County

### Ron Erhardt

Woman Lake in Cass County

### Susan Henken Thielen

Lake Washburn in Cass County

### Mary Manns

Caribou Lake in St. Louis County

### John Nowicki

Lake Osakis in Douglas County

## Staff Members

### Jeff Forester

Executive Director

[jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org](mailto:jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org)

### Judy Corrigan

Executive Administrator

[judy@mnlakesandrivers.org](mailto:judy@mnlakesandrivers.org)

952-854-1317

Please visit our website,  
[www.MNLakesAndRivers.org](http://www.MNLakesAndRivers.org)



 MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates - MLR

 @JeffForester1