

Dear Christmas Lake Homeowners,

Spring has arrived and soon your attention will be on getting onto the lake. There's a lot going on for our homeowner's association this year, so I thought I would recap some of it.

As you should know, we are electing the full Board of Directors soon. This step is appropriate to get back into compliance with our bylaws. For those who want to be on the ballot, expect information soon about what to submit, where to send it, and by when. Then you all should be on the lookout for information on how to vote. As per our bylaws, the members of the association votes for the Board, and the Board elects the officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) from within the members of the Board. Our intention is to have the voting done so we can present our new board members at our Annual Meeting.

And speaking of the Annual Meeting, it will be from 7 pm – 9 pm on Monday, May 21st in the Auditorium at Excelsior Elementary. Please mark your calendars for that event. It is a great opportunity to reconnect with your old neighbors and meet your new neighbors. The meeting is always informative and occasionally exciting.

Roger Norberg is once again coordinating our dock and lift put-in activity. We are striving to get more of you to use this service in the spring and in the fall. We are starting our 4th year and it is getting smoother and smoother. Now over 40 residents use the services of our three service providers. These three service providers can handle the breadth of equipment you all have on the lake. They provide us with great and timely service at a very reasonable cost point. If you have been handling this yourself or coordinating with another service provider, I ask that you contact Roger Norberg to talk about getting on the program. I believe you will like how easy it is. The docks and lifts get put in early and taken out late, and that works very well for most of our residents. Roger can be contacted at (612) 991-8910 and rnorber@me.com.

A small point here, but the Homeowner's Association pays for these services and then we invoice you directly. We are having challenges getting reimbursed from a few homeowners for take-out work done last fall. If you have received a follow-up invoice, please check to make sure you have paid for the services you received.

One of the primary intentions of this coordinated dock and lift program is to reduce the number of barges and other service provider watercraft that come onto the lake. Those kinds of watercraft are very difficult to decontaminate, so we minimize the risk of new AIS by limiting the different service providers who need to launch their watercraft. Our three providers expect and plan extra time to be decontaminated at the boat landing before they launch. We all benefit from not having other service providers launch their barges and similar watercraft, so we ask that you do not arrange for any other service providers to launch their watercraft to put-in and take-out docks and lifts. Contact Roger if you have any questions.

As always, you can schedule dock and lift put-in's and take-outs at any time if you use a service provider who enters the lake from the shore without launching a watercraft.

We also coordinate launching pontoon boats into the lake on a trailer that is only used on Christmas Lake. That helps us reduce the risk of spreading another AIS into the lake. We will send out link to a sign-up program and ask that you coordinate your pontoon launch with us through that system. Our trailer can handle most, but not all of the pontoon boats on the lake. Contact Roger or me if you have a new pontoon boat being delivered to the lake to see if we can handle it with our trailer.

We do something special for inboard boats too. We have a dedicated A-frame trailer that only goes into Christmas Lake. Like with the dedicated pontoon trailer, our intent is to reduce the risk of getting another AIS in the lake. Most of the inboard boats without trailers are stored over the winter with Minnesota Inboard and they have direct access to the trailer to get those boats put in when you want. This trailer can be used for virtually any V-hull boat so contact us if you have no trailer to see if we can handle your boat.

Whatever your watercraft, if it is on your own trailer, you can launch at any time.

But please be aware that we aggressively protect the lake by decontaminating every commercial trailer that is needed to put your boats in the water. If you've been here for the past several years you know that we stop each commercial trailer before it launches so that the trailer can be decontaminated. We aren't worried about your boats having any live AIS in the spring, but we are worried about the trailers that go from lake to lake to launch boats. We ask that you inform your storage company that their commercial trailers will be decontaminated before launch.

Our AIS inspection and decontamination program will be starting up sometime after April 15th. The exact date we start is dependent on ice out and weather conditions. We are again contracting with Waterfront Restoration for our inspection staff. I keep a pretty close eye on their performance, and they have been eager to improve on areas that we think need attention. But that said, I ask that you contact me directly if you see something that isn't quite right in their service.

We are fortunate to have received a \$10,000 grant again this year from Hennepin County to help fund our AIS program. And we will be receiving a cost-share grant from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District too, but their match amount will be less than in prior years with more for our homeowner's association to make up.

On May 14th I have the opportunity to present an update on our AIS program to the City of Shorewood at a working session of the City Council. Hopefully some of you will be able to attend and visibly show your support to the Council. I'll send out more details as we get closer. I intend to ask the City Council to consider providing a financial grant for our AIS program to help defray some of our cost.

We hope to have a discussion at the meeting about a foundation that we are working to establish. It will provide a way for you to leave a long-term gift in support of our lake and it should help us avoid the need for future capital drives. Vanessa Szalapski, one of our newest homeowners, is working on a pro-bono basis with the support of Dorsey and Whitney.

As you probably know, our Eurasian watermilfoil (the invasive species) has been very much in check over the last several years as a direct result of a pilot study performed by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District about 5 years ago. The Eurasian watermilfoil is still in the lake but is getting knocked down later in the season by weevils boring holes in the stems of the plant. Milfoil weevils have always been in the lake but there haven't been enough of them to deal with the vast quantities of milfoil that we have now. The pilot project took our weevils, massively reproduced them, and introduced them into the lake. Over a few years, the weevils got all around the lake and now they are of sufficient quantities to do damage to the Eurasian watermilfoil. Essentially, we tipped the balance in favor of the weevils. This is a highly desirable biological control mechanism; one that dies back on its own based on having sufficient food to eat. We are intending to do one more season of weevil stocking this summer with the help of Dr. Sallie Sheldon of Middlebury University. Sallie received her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota where her research was focused on the plants in Christmas Lake. We are fortunate that John Saunders, one of our homeowners, is a close personal friend of Sallie and he helped make this connection happen.

As always, feel free to contact me at 612-209-2075 or jshneider@visi.com.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting or sometime soon.

Joe Shneider
President, Christmas Lake Homeowner's Association