

Dear Christmas Lake Homeowners,

Our big snows, cold, and ice look like they are going away... finally! 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 may know, we got back into compliance with our bylaws with the Board of Directors' election last spring, when we elected the full board. This year we have 3 Board seats to fill as 3 current Director's terms are expiring. For those who want to be on the ballot, expect information soon about what to submit, where to send it, and by when. Then be on the lookout for information on how to vote. Once we complete the Board election, the Board then elects the 3 officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) from within the members of the Board. As we did last year, we plan to have the voting done so we can present our new board members at our Annual Meeting.

The date for our CLHA Annual Meeting is being determined so look for more information about that as well. 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. He sent out a note already. We are striving to get more of you to use this service in the spring and in the fall. From an AIS prevention viewpoint, it's better for the lake to have fewer service providers launch watercraft to get this work done. Roger can be contacted at (612) 991-8910 and rnorber@me.com.

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 a link to a sign-up application 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.

If you have your own trailer, you can launch your watercraft 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. This is the 3rd year we have received funding from Hennepin County. And we will be receiving a cost-share grant from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District too, but their match amount will be much less than in prior years. They have been phasing out their cost-share grant program for AIS prevention. Last year we were also fortunate to receive a \$5,000 contribution to our AIS prevention efforts from the City of Shorewood. We hope that will happen again this year. As you probably know, our homeowners pick up the remaining costs for our AIS prevention program and we do that through your dues to the Christmas Lake Homeowner's Association. So now more than ever, we look forward to your willingness to pay your dues.

And in the good news category, Eurasian watermilfoil (the aquatic invasive species) in Christmas Lake 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 6 years ago. We helped it along this past summer when we ran our own program. Led by John Newhouse and Dr. Sallie Sheldon of Middlebury College, a number of residents and their high school and college-aged students helped out, and it was a great experience that yielded the desired results. Over 10,000 weevils were reproduced and stocked back into the lake. The process was videoed by Dena Wetzel so we could share our work with other lake associations across the state and across the county. We plan to do one more year of weevil production at Christmas Lake and then we should have achieved the holy grail of aquatic invasive species management... using a biological agent to control our infestation of the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil.

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