

# Lake Association News

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 2

SPRING 2012

GREATER JEFFERSON GERMAN LAKES ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL MEETING MAY 26,  
MARYSBURG HALL, 10:00 AM TO NOON

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Inside this issue:

- Opinions* 2-3
- Fishing Contest* 4
- Weed Cutting* 6
- Boat Parade* 8
- Clear Lake* 10
- Required Decal* 11
- Zebra Mussels* 15
- War on Nature?* 16

## Potential Annual Meeting Topics

### Septic Survey:

Is the current practice of using septic systems working? How will the Sewer Advisory Board interpret the findings of the survey?

### Invasive Species-Weeds:

What should be done about curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian milfoil?

### Invasive Species-Zebra Mussels and Asian Carp:

What can be done to prevent these invaders from taking over our lakes?

### Boat Passes:

Can they be improved?

### Projects to control nutrient run-off into the lakes:

Update on current projects to improve water quality.

### Lake levels:

Is this the start of another low water period?

### Aquatic plant management plan:

Needed to get grant money

### Coalition of Lake Associations

What can we learn from other associations?

### Sportsmen's Club

Are there lake projects we can work on together?

### Storm Sirens

Who should maintain and pay for these?

### County Road 104 upgrades

### Elections:

This is your chance to get involved.

### Your concerns:

This is the place to share problems and solutions.

*"How do you explain the paradox of why people love lakes, but continue to do things that ruin them?"*

# Opinions

## If you don't want city sewer around the lakes, have your septic system tested!

The first step towards clean lake and ground water is to know if our current system of individual and cluster septic systems is working. How do we know if our systems are working? Take advantage of a free test (plus a free tank pumping and extended time to correct any problem that is detected).

These free tests started last summer. Here is what we know today:

This summer Wenck will continue to check septic systems around the lake to see if they are compliant, non-compliant, or failing.

According to Peter Miller of Wenck, there are 691 properties around the lake on septic systems of some kind. They have been able to verify that 55 are working systems that have been certified as compliant.

Sometime next year the Sewer Board will meet to make decisions concerning the method or methods we will use to treat septic waste around our lakes in the future. Since the inspections are free, and include a free pumping, and an extended period of time to correct non-compliant systems, what will the Board assume about the other 636 properties on septic systems?

We can either wait to see what they will assume or we can we get those 636 to volunteer to prove their systems are working and prove that we don't need a sewer pipe. Please volunteer and encourage your neighbors to, as well.

Buster West, editor

*To the editor:*

*Wow! This website with newsletter information is fantastic! Thanks!*

*Karen and Dennis Noltee*

To the editor:

The online newsletter is a great improvement. I'm all for going paperless wherever possible. Keep up the good work.

Sandy Parks

*Any opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Lake Association.*

## **No voluntary septic inspection for me!**

To the editor:

The new Newsletter looks great. Thanks for getting it sent electronically.

I know my system is non-compliant--it was installed in 1976 and probably not upgraded after that, except for a bit of added drainfield.

As I looked at the survey information, I determined that if I gave permission for the survey, I would be put on the list of non-compliant owners and be given a relatively short deadline for replacing the system, complying with the existing standards, which I still feel are not the best.

Or, I could wait until I HAD to do something, my sewage surfaced, etc. or I got caught (highly unlikely) and I would be given a relatively short deadline to replace my system. And I could hope that possibly a better system of sewage control would be in place at that time.

Waiting seemed like my best interest, so I didn't return the survey permission.

My point is that I'm sure I'm not the only one to reach these conclusions--so I think that it is a fair assumption that at least 75% of those who refused permission for an inspection KNOW that they have a non-compliant system. Whether they are willing to do anything about it is another question.

Thanks for all your work,

Name withheld by request

## **Rumors response**

Buster.....Oh but you know how it goes....it's so much more fun and interesting to just listen to the rumors and pass the negatives ones on with glee! It takes less work to do that also!

And, what if one goes to their meeting and finds out the truth is positive...?

Thanks, Buster for this wonderful email....this is a great idea and you've handled this in a manner that put a smile on my face and when we get back from AZ I'll just see if we can't work it out to attend one of those meetings! By the way, what happened to all those property owners who were so in favor of inspections? Were those rumors by chance? Or were there a few who were speaking loudly on behalf of mystery property owners?

Karen Noltee

# **GJGLA "Jig-A-Bass" tournament**

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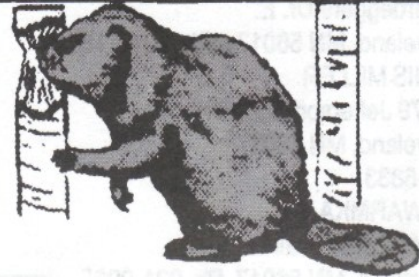
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# Commissioner Notes

I would like to just up-date everyone, on what's going around the area lakes. We are currently in contact with Mike at Soil and Water, Lauren Klement at Environmental Services. They are working on possible funding sources to help pay for some projects. If funded, the projects could be completed, the goal is to stop surface run-off into the lake in these areas. Just a reminder to area lake home-owners, there is still time to sign-up for the Free Septic Inventory Inspection. Any questions call Kathy at Environmental Services, 507-357-8538.

With the help of the staff at Uof M Extension Services, Le Sueur County, there is a web site Lake Home-owners can go to for information that could interest them. Some listed are, Caring for Shoreland Lawns and gardens, apply Fertilizer and weed control products Etc. [www.lakeaccess.org/landowers.html](http://www.lakeaccess.org/landowers.html) These are just some ideas from the U of M.

Thank you for living in Le Sueur County, Commissioner Steve Gump Rohlfing

If you have any Questions Call me at 507-317-5095 or email at [srohlfing@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:srohlfing@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

## Weed Cutting?

I received the following email from a fellow property owner. If you are interested in cutting weeds, please contact Tammy. Her email is: [nursetamn@msn.com](mailto:nursetamn@msn.com)

Hi,

I had contacted a company about cutting and harvesting the weeds by my dock and creating a path. Unfortunately they will not consider doing it unless we have a group or association interested. I was wondering if you would be interested in contacting the other lake owners and seeing if anyone would be interested in this service. Below is the email I recieved from them in response, the web site is also noted in the email.

Let me know if there are others interested. I am in Swedes Bay on East Jefferson.

Thanks

Tammy Schaeffer

### "Lake Watch" alerts

So far we have 242 valid email addresses who have signed up for our "Lake Watch" email alerts. Thanks for your interest.

Lake Watch" email list. Contact the Lake Association if you would like to be on the "Lake Watch" list. [lakeassociation@hickorytech.net](mailto:lakeassociation@hickorytech.net) or [buster@hickorytech.net](mailto:buster@hickorytech.net)





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# Little Jefferson 4th of July Boat Parade

Decorate in red, white & blue or pick a theme and be creative!

1:30 registration at floating dock  
2:00 parade starts

(Stop by floating dock after parade to see if your boat has won!)



If you have questions, would like to help with the boat parade or have a prize to donate, please call Carynn Klingel 931-9441.

**Thanks to all who participate...boaters and shoreline fans!  
See you on the lake!**



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# Group sets sights on battle with weed

## Clear Lake may get chemical treatment

By Brian Ojanpa  
bojanpa@marquettepress.com

**WASECA** — A group of Wasecans wants to wage war on a befouling lake weed.

It is hoped state grants and local contributions can raise the \$7,500 needed to chemically eradicate curly-leaf pondweed from Clear Lake.

If funds can be raised, a portion of the lake would

be treated with Endothal when water temperature reaches a requisite 60 degrees. Chemical treatment has been effective in treating the invasive species in hundreds of Minnesota lakes.

Waseca Lakes Association President Duane Rathmann said Endothal's expense has kept it from being used on Clear Lake in the past, but with this winter's mildness

especially conducive to a banner year for the weed, the time is right to fight it.

"Curly leaf is the biggest contributor to algae blooms in our lakes," Rathmann said. "It has a crazy life cycle. It's germinating right now and it dies in mid-June."

"It's so invasive it takes over everything else, including the plants you'd like to have."



Submitted photo

An effort is under way to rid Clear Lake in Waseca of curly-leaf pondweed, an invasive scourge that befouls water and chokes out desirable plant life.

Please see TREATMENT, Page B2

## TREATMENT: Weed problematic in two areas

Continued from Page B1

The weed also is a hindrance to boating and swimming because it rises to the surface in smelly, mat-like form in late-June/early-July.

Joe Pallardy of the Minnesota State University Water Resources Center told Waseca city officials the weed is problematic on two south shoreline areas totaling 30 acres, the only areas that would be treated on the 635-acre lake.

Rathmann said if the necessary funding can be achieved, the treatment

would serve as a trial to determine whether to make it an annual program.

"This wouldn't be a one-shot deal by any means," he said.

Curly-leaf pondweed, originally used by hobbyists as an aquarium plant, is prevalent in the United States and is spread to new bodies of water by boats and trailers.

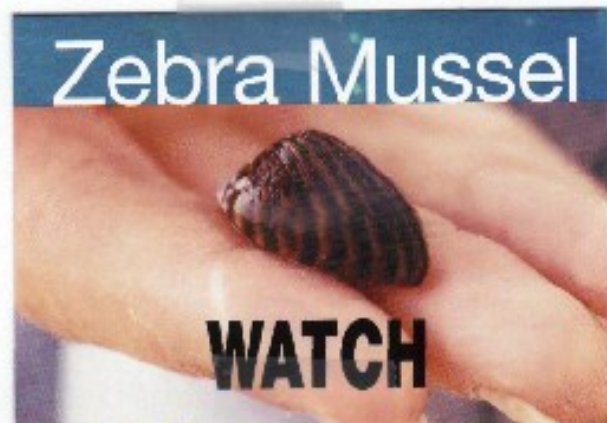
In mid-summer it begins to decay, taking needed oxygen out of the ecosystem and causing algae blooms.

The dense thickets it creates make it difficult to

swim, boat and waterski, and the resulting reduction of recreational use on a lake can lead to reduced property values.

03-26-2012

### Bighead and Silver Carp WATCH



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# Q&A About New Aquatic Invasive Species Rules Decal Required on Watercraft

March 30, 2012

## Q. What is the aquatic invasive species rules decal and how do I get one?

A. A new law passed in 2011 (Minnesota Statutes 86B.508) requires a watercraft owner or operator to obtain and attach an aquatic invasive species rules decal to all types of watercraft prior to launching on, entering into, or operating on any waters of the state. The decals are available at DNR offices, Deputy Registrar offices where licenses are sold, and large sport shops, as well from DNR Watercraft Inspectors and conservation officers. They will be included in the envelopes of new and renewal watercraft licenses mailed from DNR. They are free.

## Q. What does the decal look like?

A. There are two parts to the decal (shown right). Watercraft owners and operators must display the top portion of the decal on all watercraft prior to launching on, entering into, or operating on any waters of the state.

The second portion of the decal, at the bottom, is intended to be placed on the winch post of watercraft trailers or other area to remind boaters to remove the boat's drain plug as required by state law when leaving the water access area — and to replace the plug before launching.

## Q. Where does the decal need to be attached on the watercraft?

A. The decal must be attached to the watercraft, but state law does not specify where it needs to be attached. It does not need to be in view of the operator as with the personal watercraft decal. It does not need to be placed near the watercraft registration decals and is not recommended to be in that area of the boat. It is recommended to display it where it can be read and can be shown to an officer upon request.

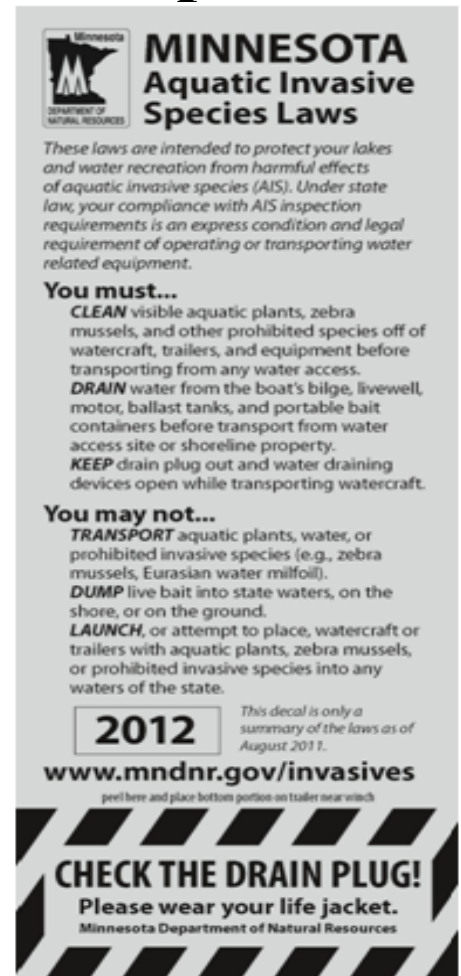
If the owner does not want to stick the decal on the boat because it is an antique wooden boat or other unique boat, they may attach the decal to an object or laminate it and attach it like a luggage tag.

## Q. Do they need to be on watercraft, even if the watercraft does not need a license?

A. Yes, all watercraft including seaplanes and duck boats are included under the law.

## Q. Is there a penalty if I launch a boat without one?

A. Currently, there is no penalty in effect, but a warning can be issued. Now that the decals are available, it is expected that boaters will be obtaining the new decals and conservation officers will be providing the decals to boaters who have not obtained one. After August 1, 2014, it will be a petty misdemeanor for boaters who don't display the decal on their watercraft.





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**"Everyone on Lake Washington hates their new sewer system, the grinders don't work and there are all of these hidden fees!"**

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**Board meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM Mankato Airport**

**Attend a meeting with your questions or email [lwsd@hickorytech.net](mailto:lwsd@hickorytech.net)**



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# Zebra mussels in retreat on stretch of St. Croix

## ◀ MUSSELS FROM A1

some point later in the summer something was happening that was wiping out a whole class of mussels."

Higher, turbulent water that persisted into August might have flushed zebra mussels out of the St. Croix last year, Karns said. A carpet of crushed shells on the river bottom also suggests that common carp have been feasting on them.

Zebra mussels represent a significant threat to the St. Croix and other Minnesota rivers and lakes because they multiply rapidly and attach themselves to native mussels, killing them and altering ecology and food chains. Their hard shells also cut swimmers' feet and fishing lines and inundate docks.

Found now throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi regions, they have rapidly spread to a number of state lakes in recent years, their microscopic larvae transported in bait buckets and bilges.

The dozens of native species



Associated Press

## ZEBRA MUSSELS' SPREAD

- **Zebra mussels** have been confirmed in 29 lakes and nine rivers in Minnesota, and are suspected in 30 additional connected lakes.
- **The mussels accumulate** on boats and clog motors, litter beaches with razor-sharp shells, and change the ecology of fisheries by consuming food that small fish need to survive.
- **They can spread easily**, carried in bait buckets or on boats.
- **Some people are urging** mandatory inspections and boat washing to keep the mussels from being transported carelessly or inadvertently by boaters who move from lake to lake.

in the St. Croix — five of them endangered — play an important role in the river's ecology because they filter water and are eaten by fish, ducks and otters. Because of their long lifespans — 70 to 80 years — native mussels give scientists a critical measurement of the

river's health over time.

"They're sort of the coral reefs of the healthy water systems," said Rich Baker, endangered species coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). More than half of the state's 50 mussel species now are classified as endangered, he said.

Zebra mussels began appearing in the St. Croix in 2000 when they were found attached to boats.

The 2011 findings were the first to show a reversal of the zebra mussel's invasion of the St. Croix, which Baker said was the healthiest natural mussel population in Minnesota.

"We still need to find out what's driving the dynamic, but anything about fewer numbers is good news," Baker said of Karns' findings.

Karns cautioned that the apparent demise of zebra mussels in the St. Croix needs further study.

"I don't want to suggest for a moment that zebra mussels have gone away," he said. "Populations of any kind are going to vacillate over time. Nothing stays constant."

Karns looks forward to see-

ing the monitoring results from this year, a low-water year, to see if the mussels make a comeback.

None have been found north of the Stillwater Lift Bridge but like the more troublesome Asian carp, the invasive zebra mussel finds ways to defy scientists, said Karns, who prepared the study for the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers in St. Paul. He works out of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway headquarters in St. Croix Falls, Wis.

Zebra mussels aren't the only species under study in the St. Croix River. Three more species — sheepsnose, snuff-box and spectaclecase — were added to the federal endangered list in recent weeks. The Higgins eye and winged mapleleaf have been on the list for years.

A new survey, beginning after Memorial Day, will determine which natural mussels might lie in the path of a new St. Croix bridge just south of Stillwater.

Baker said the DNR, on behalf of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, will finish that work in June.

"We don't know what is going to be found specifically in the footprint of the bridge project," he said. "We don't move mussels unless we need to."

Jason Alcott, a natural resources program specialist at the Minnesota Department of Transportation, said survey results should be available in late June or early July.

The agency will discuss findings with the DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before deciding how to proceed, Alcott said.

Earlier studies of mussel populations need updating, he said, because "it's an ever-changing environment out there."

Kevin Giles • 951-925-9037

Writer: Gestrilgiles

## Zebra mussels in retreat on stretch of the St. Croix

By KEVIN GILES • kgiles@startribune.com

A St. Croix River menace that's waged war on the healthiest native mussel population in Minnesota has retreated, bringing hope of a turning point in what had seemed a relentless invasion.

The fingernail-sized zebra mussels that crept into the river's wider, deeper pool known as Lake St. Croix more than a decade ago diminished in significant numbers at eight monitoring locations last year, said Byron Karns, a National Park Service biologist who issued a report this week detailing his findings.

"When we went out in August to do these collections, there weren't any [zebra] mussels to count anymore," said Karns, who had noticed changes since 2006 in the 25-mile stretch of river between Stillwater and Prescott, Wis. "It suggests at

Mussels continues on A6 ▶

04-05-2012



**N**ow that a leaping silver carp and its kissin' cousin, a big-head carp, turned up in a commercial fisherman's net near Winona, Minn., sportsmen, environmentalists, scientists and politicians of all ideological stripes are hoarding the Stop Aquatic Invasives bandwagon.

Members of Minnesota's congressional delegation introduced a bill for Upper Mississippi Conservation and River Protection (CARP, naturally) to close the lock and dam at St. Anthony Falls if Asian carp are found north of Hastings. The legislation would tap into a \$50 million federal fund for controlling the spread of Asian carp. (These fish, by the way, are not closely related to the common carp, widespread in Minnesota waters for a century.)

On a state level, legislators are moving a bill to spend more money in the fight against Asian carp, zebra mussels, and other exotic species — that is, species of plants and animals introduced from somewhere else.

Legislators are considering spending \$13 million to install electric fish barriers and \$16 million in bonding to make the Coon Rapids Dam carp-proof.

Some lakeshore residents want money from the Clean Water Legacy fund to fight zebra mussels. There is also a proposal to tap the fund for \$1.8 million (with more money coming from bonding and the lottery) to start up an aquatic invasive species research center at the University of Minnesota. Peter W. Sorensen, the fisheries professor who proposed the center, says it's time to declare "war" on aquatic exotic species.

So war it is. But here are a few things to keep in mind. Because as Mark Davis, chairman of the biology department at Macalester College and author of the scientific text "Invasion Biology," recently told me, "A lot of money has been made by amping up the fears of invasive species."

### **The bad news: This is really hard**

Biology is really tough to control. We don't have nearly as much dominion as we'd like to believe. Options for controlling uninvited plants and animals often come at great cost to our prosperity, enjoyment and freedom.

Exotic species move through trade, travel and tourism. People move; organisms follow, from pathological viruses to forest pests to aquatic weeds. Humans are unwilling to give up trade and travel (and the prosperity that comes from them) to stem the spread of deadly disease. What are the chances we will curtail our travel to prevent the spread of carp and buckthorn?

**Breining continues:** Destruction isn't necessarily the outcome. **OP4 ▶**

**It seems that Mother Nature and human nature conspire against victory. So what if we lose?**



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Zebra mussels will be a sticky problem as long as recreationalists, among others, desire to move from place to place.

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## INVASIVE SPECIES AND THE WAR CAME

### ◀ BREINING FROM OP1

In Minnesota, the most effective and immediate way to cap the spread of zebra mussels? Easy. Close the public access we've spent decades and millions of dollars to develop. Peter Sorensen argues we should consider returning to a day when we rented boats at the lakes where we vacation.

I, for one, live for each new opportunity to carry my canoe to a different stream or lake. I would be loathe to give that up. And I suspect a lot of others feel the same way about the freedom to travel with their own boats.

Even nature works against us in the spread of exotics. In a paper published recently in *PLoS One*, Netherlands Institute of Ecology biologist Casper van Leeuwen demonstrated that some species of small snails can survive a trip through the intestinal tracts of mallards and, in theory at least, hitch a ride to waters hundreds of miles away.

Our largely successful fight against sea lampreys in the Great Lakes during the last half century hinged on two things: First, control was worth the money and effort because lampreys were causing very expensive damage by preying on lake trout, a popular sport and food fish. Second, lampreys were uniquely vulnerable when they gathered in small tributaries to spawn. Many other species of aquatic invasive species show no such vulnerabilities and can probably never be controlled, much less eradicated.

### The good news: It's not as bad as it seems

Despite our fears, exotic species will not, as many fear, "destroy the ecosystem."

Some diseases and agricultural and forestry pests are scary indeed. Who wouldn't want to bar the door against avian flu and emerald ash borer?

But other species, even ones that make our skin crawl, not so much. The dreaded silver and bighead carp, for example, have left an ambiguous body of evidence in the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Kevin Irons, aquatic nuisance species program manager for the Illinois DNR, reports that the carp, which strain the water for tiny plankton, present stiff competition for native bigmouth buffalo fish and American gizzard shad. But there's no evidence they wiped out anything, or even caused the decline of any game fish. "I don't believe we've lost any species," he says.

In fact, the ascendance of Asian carp in the last decade has doubled Illinois' commercial fishing harvest. "That's our prima-

ry business," said Jesse Schafer, of Schafer Fisheries in Illinois. "We harvest millions of pounds of them a year." Most are shipped to the coasts and to Asia. Commercial fishermen are taking so many Asian carp that Schafer sees the size and abundance of fish dropping. "You can't get rid of them, but you can overharvest them," he says.

Meanwhile, commercial fishermen continue to net the native buffalo fish and sheepshead. "I don't think the Asian carp have really affected them too much," says Schafer. "It seems some of the game fish are actually more plentiful because they're eating the Asian carp eggs and small fish. The bass are having a smorgasbord. It's the same with the catfish, too. Mother nature's taking care of itself."

Anecdotal? Sure. But it does suggest the sky hasn't fallen.

### Do no harm

Carp-phobia has created a psychology of walls and fences. Just as we've built a wall along the Mexican border to keep out alien humans, politicians and citizens are clamoring to build bubble barriers and restore dams on major rivers to prevent the spread of alien aquatic species.

But building bulkheads does no favors for the environment, especially our fisheries. Recently, we have removed dilapidated dams on streams such as the Kettle and Cannon to allow fish to move freely over dozens of miles of stream — a real boon to game-fish populations. DNR fisheries biologist Luther Aadland has made a career of creating fish passageways around stream-choking dams to "reconnect" hundreds of miles of waterways. It would be a shame to stymie or undo this beneficial work for the sake of a carp crusade. Says Aadland, "Dams are the biggest cause of extinction and extirpation of native species, while reservoirs and the altered habitat associated with dams are the biggest propagators of nonnative invasive species."

### Science, not advocacy

If Sorensen succeeds in establishing an invasive-species research center at the university, "the idea would be to bring some focus to issues in Minnesota," he recently told me, "to develop new tools to solve invasive-species issues in Minnesota. The idea is to be as flexible and imaginative as possible."

Indeed, when it comes to exotic species, there are plenty of interesting and important research questions.

On the level of basic research: Are exotic species suitable substitutes for native species to provide "ecosystem services," such as

wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, erosion control or pollution reduction? Do new species increase biodiversity or subtract from it? Is local diversity (by, for example, the introduction of new species) a valuable thing? Does it outweigh the loss of diversity at the global level (if, for example, endemic species go extinct)? Are species introduced by the hand of humans quantitatively distinguishable from species that arrive by "natural" means?

The opportunities for applied science are likewise interesting. In fact, Sorensen has worked on many of them. Is there something in the life cycle or behavior of a nuisance such as common carp that makes it vulnerable to control or capture? Can the signature chemical pheromones emitted by fish be used to control or eradicate nuisance species? Can exotic species be suppressed through the introduction of other exotics? How can we predict which species will become nuisances and which will not?

These are questions worth pursuing. But they are a far cry from the "war" on invasive species that Sorensen has also recommended. That promises to be as much a bargain as a war on drugs or a war on terror.

### It's the habitat, stupid

One of the wisest observations on the exotic species scare comes from an unexpected source, Ben Subramaniam, an associate professor of women's studies at the University of Massachusetts. She's struck by the militaristic and "xenophobic rhetoric" that blames "aliens" for problems of our own making, distorting our view and even our management. "The solution becomes stopping these alien species and focusing on them rather than on things such as development and what we are doing about habitat," Subramaniam told me. Blaming exotics "adds to the hysteria without doing anything that is actually going to help."

Waterfowl haven't declined because of carp. Wetlands haven't disappeared because of purple loosestrife. Bald eagles weren't once imperiled because of English sparrows. And moose aren't dying off in northern Minnesota because of buckthorn. If anything is "destroying ecosystems," it is the usual cast of villains — pollution of air and water, destruction of habitat, poor land management.

So when it comes time to apportion Legacy grants or appropriate state and federal funds, sure, devote some to research and control of invasive species. But realize the best use of money, time and labor for a better natural world is restoration of natural habitat, clean water and clean air.



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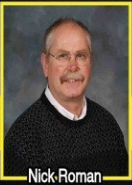
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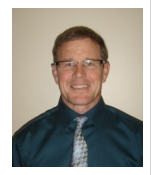


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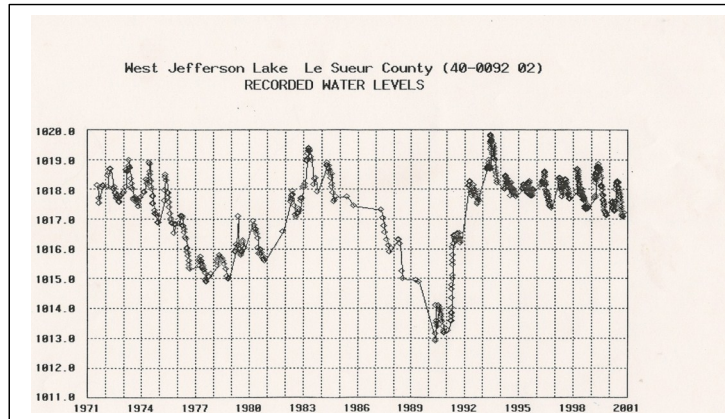
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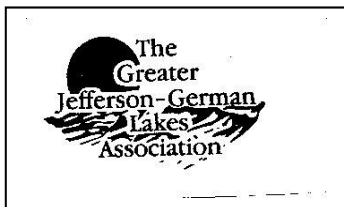
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The mission and purpose of the Association is to:

- Promote and coordinate water management, water quality, and water control in the Jefferson German lakes water basin.
- Further communication between members of the Association and other parties interested in the Jefferson German lakes water basin.
- And do all other things of common interest and benefit with regard to water management, water quality, and water control regarding the Jefferson German lakes water basin.