



Upper Hay Lake Association

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Spring Newsletter

April 2020

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Greetings from Your President!

Although this spring seems different because of COVID-19, I am still looking forward to spring at Upper Hay Lake. Spring has always been my favorite season at the lake. The songbirds are busy gathering twigs and the loons are ready to send us their piercing and beautiful calls. The sounds of both give my heart joy and peace.

Due to COVID-19, the annual meeting scheduled for Saturday May 16th has been postponed. The UHLA board is considering having a picnic in August or having Burger Night on Thursday, August 6. We will keep you informed of the decision. As the summer progresses, we will determine if the boat parade on July 4th will take place.

Nicole Erickson of Crow Wing County will have a master inspection hours schedule finalized by April 17th. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Crow Wing County will have their doors closed to the public until April 30th. The DNR Watercraft Inspector Program supervisors and trainers are busy coming up with an alternative plan to get the inspection season started in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are still waiting to hear from the Commissioner's office. Nicole will send us updates as soon as she receives notification. I am happy to report that Upper Hay Lake was allocated 300 hours of inspection time at our public landing.

Recently I got an email from Jim Schultz regarding WAPOA's annual tree sale. According to Jim, orders can be placed by contacting Jeff Laurel at jlaurel@tds.net or by phone at 952-217-9429. Trees and shrubs can be picked up at Ideal Town Hall on Friday May 8th, 1pm - 5pm or at the Crosslake Community Center on Saturday May 9th, 9am - noon. It is recommended that the trees and shrubs be planted within a few days of pickup for best growing success.

Like you, my life has been dramatically altered. Especially after being gone for two months this winter, it has been difficult to not to see the grandchildren for the past month. I am also concerned about our son, a physician at Maple Grove North Memorial, who is admitting patients who are COVID-19 positive. This is a time when we all stay together as we stay apart. I look forward to connecting with Upper Hay Lake residents. I hope this letter finds everyone safe and doing well.

Claire Steen

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Things To Consider When Buying A Boat Trailer

Will I be taking the boat to Canada or Mexico?
Will it only be used to put in once and out in the fall?
Will it haul the boat to other local lakes?
Will you get a bigger boat in the future?

If you buy a package from a dealer, they use the least trailer they can. Great if you are only taking your boat a short distance.

If you are going to Canada with your boat, get a bigger trailer and include trailer brakes.

Mickey Perwien

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"A Few Thoughts During This Difficult Time:"

In a recent email from Paul Austin, Executive Director, Conservation Minnesota:

"Despite differences in everyone's COVID-19 experience, there is one theme that shows up in almost every conversation: how important nature and the outdoors are to staying healthy and coping with the stress people are feeling. It may be a daily walk, a visit to a park, or even watching squirrels

Environmental Stewardship Today, for Tomorrow

and birds out the window, but it seems like everyone I talk to is finding something important in the outdoors.

It is no secret that Minnesotans love the lakes and outdoors that make our state unique. But perhaps we are all noticing it just a little more these days.

I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy, and that you get a moment today to enjoy nature."

Great News from the U of M!

The Zebra Mussel Genome has been mapped!

Scientists at the University of Minnesota have mapped the genome of the zebra mussel. The entire genetic code has been pieced together. SO WHAT?

This will allow researchers to pinpoint the exact genes that have allowed the mussel to thrive. Those genes could also provide clues to weaknesses that could slow or stop their spread.

This information could help researchers manipulate the mussel genes so they essentially self-destruct – destroying their ability to reproduce, or grow shells, or produce the adhesive they need to cluster and attach to boats, docks and lake beds.

The genome sequence makes it possible to target a single species in a way that chemical pesticides and poisons might never accomplish.

Aren't we glad that the U of MN and MAISRC and others are working hard to find a way to prevent the spread of zebra mussels?

Richard "Whitey" Larson
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A Tough Winter

2020 will live in the minds of millions for years to come. The COVID-19 virus has affected absolutely everyone. As we sit at home we try to find things to occupy our time. Most of us are searching the web for toilet paper! "Temporarily out of stock". TEMPORARILY?? When does "temporarily" end? Seemingly never. On the plus side, parents are spending time with their children. Families actually can sit down for meals together. Some parents are learning their child is not the "terrific student" their bumper sticker proclaims. Never the less, parents do their best. But here we are and let's make the most of it. I am incredibly impressed how the vast majority of folks are remaining sequestered. Seeing the streets of New York and Los Angeles empty says a lot about how we Americans can stick together in times of crisis, setting aside the petty differences that seem to capture the headlines lately. Maybe this will bring us all back together. We can hope.

Annual Meeting Cancelled

It should come as no surprise to anyone, but our annual meeting, normally held in May, will not occur. The VFW is closed, the virus is still out there and we are asked to "hunker down". We will see what happens later in the summer. We will keep in touch. In the mean time, stay safe and stay healthy. A prayer or two is certainly in order.

AIS

Again this year, Upper Hay has been allocated many hours of Inspection support from the county. The county intends to allocate 17,040 hours to inspecting watercraft — 140 more than last year — at 42 public accesses selected through a data model to determine risk of AIS. The model takes into account the location of infested and un-infested waters, the average number of boats inspected per hour at 48 accesses and the estimated number of watercraft moving from infested lakes to un-infested lakes, both within the county and across county lines.

At this time, officials are struggling with determining exactly HOW this will work in light of the pandemic. I guess we will just have to wait and see. That being said, we surely are aware of what procedures we must follow to avoid the spread of

AIS. Let's be sure we ALL do our part to keep Upper Hay free of unwanted species.

New Boating Issues

I can't imagine that anyone would not have noticed the boating changes that have occurred in the past few years. Fishing boats are capable of speeds over 40mph. Folks water ski behind pontoon boats. Wake boarding is a new "thing" with boats capable of producing 6' high waves. Nice, but not something a person in a canoe, kayak, or paddle board wants to encounter. The Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Association has been working to advance legislation that would require the MN DNR to recommend a boaters operating certificate to address public safety concerns, reduce conflicts among user groups, prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, prevent shoreline erosion and nesting waterfowl like loons, and prevent the destruction of sensitive aquatic habitats and fish spawning areas that is based on the best peer reviewed science. This concept has been endorsed by angling groups, resort and marina owners, lake associations and even the boating industry. This idea certainly makes a lot of sense. Stay informed on this issue as it could affect most of us.

Recent research roundup

In recent months several studies have been published by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) including:

- Estimates for how long starry stonewort can survive out of water and still spread through overland transportation on watercraft and trailers,
- A project demonstrating a new sampling device utilizing underwater video can be used to study AIS, and
- An examination of herbicidal treatments and environmental factors on curlyleaf pondweed with important insights for adaptive management strategies.

If these topics are of interest, check them out.

Loons

Just a reminder that our resident Loons are just about to arrive. We set out nests and have had success in hatching often. But please remember to keep your distance from nests and the loons

themselves; especially when the young have hatched. Safe boating and have a great summer.

Bruce Ohland

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From Your Treasurer

As of this writing we have 65 paid memberships, which is a little more than last year. If you haven't paid your 2020 membership dues, please do so now. I will again be sending out individual notices to those who have not paid by June 1. Our 2020 dues received to date is \$1,515 with an additional \$865 in extra donations. We have a total of \$2,380.00 in receipts. I will have a complete report of our finances available at the Annual Meeting, whenever that may happen.

Ken Meyer

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The following article was provided by John Forney of WAPOA, and was written by Kris Kristufek:

Loons Returning

Common Loon, *Gavia immer*, is Minnesota's State Bird and an icon of northern lakes. Its presence and calls in the summer mesmerize land and lake lovers alike. The Common Loon nests on our northern lakes and large ponds in the forested areas and winters in the marine bays and southern coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean.

We soon will have our loons back in our area. They arrive as soon as the ice is out and begin the mating ritual and nest building. Loons require a large area of water, up to 20 acres or more, called a "territory" to successfully nest. A male loon will fight to the death to defend his territory from other male loons seeking to successfully mate. Loons nest in back bays where there is safety from boaters and other water activity. They will nest near the shore line and occasionally will use artificial nest platforms.

Now, watch live streaming video of local loons build their nest, lay their egg and incubate it. See the chick hatch and then within hours, start its life in the water. Through a special arrangement with a local resident and generous funding by Pelican

Lakes Association and Pelican Lakes Conservation Club, watch it all on your computer at www.mousseaubay-looncam.from-mnl.com. Enjoy the LoonCam using new professional video camera equipment to be installed this spring. This equipment will create "world-class" picture and sound direct and live from the nest. This free video is available 24/7 during the nesting season on the internet.

Common Loons have a number of distinctive calls. One of the best known is the tremolo, a fluttering sound like crazed laughter. They use this call when they feel threatened. Another well known call is the double noted wail, which functions as a gathering call. The yodel is a call only given by the male during territorial defense. The last call commonly heard is the hoot, a one note vocalization used by family members to locate one another.

During the winter the loons molt their "breeding" plumage, the familiar black and white feathering, to a rather plain grayish brown plumage called its "primary" feathering. In late winter, a total molt occurs and the breeding plumage results prior to migration back to our northern lakes for the summer breeding and nesting season.

Loons are devoted monogamous parents with pair bonds lasting multiple years. If a nesting failure occurs, often mates will change partners, however. A breeding pair will defend its territory consisting of an entire small lake or a protected bay within a larger lake. Pairs exhibit site fidelity and will reuse a nest site from the previous year if they successfully hatched chicks there. Loons can live up to 35-40 years!

Nests are built on land using dead marsh grasses and other plants or on floating bogs in shallow water near deeper water so they can swim to and from the nest without being seen by predators. Both the male and female take turns incubating the eggs and protecting the nest. They raise one or two chicks each year. The dark, downy chicks can swim and dive after a day or two of hatching and have the endearing habit of riding on the back of their parents. Chicks are fed by both parents. As soon as they learn to fly, after about 12 weeks of

life, they leave their birth territory during the fall migration to salt water wintering grounds. These young juvenile loons remain in salt water for 3-4 years before returning to within 15 miles of their natal lake to find a mate and begin the mating ritual.

Loons chase prey underwater. They hunt by sight and require clean water to successfully locate food. They mainly feed on small fish, crayfish, crustaceans, frogs, insect larvae, snails and aquatic plants. Loons usually swallow their prey underwater but will bring larger food to the surface to soften it before ingesting.

Loons are built like torpedoes, with long low-slung bodies and solid bones, which decreases their buoyancy and allow them to submerge quickly. They can dive up to 250 feet and remain underwater for 5 minutes or more. Their large webbed feet, set far back on their bodies, allow for efficient propellers as they pursue prey.

If you are out boating, please give loons at least 150 feet of distance, do not crowd them. Enjoy this bounty that Nature has given us.

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