

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.

In Your Corner

a message from Executive Director Jeff Forester

We are at a good news/bad news time for both our lakes and the lake heritage we will pass on to the next generation.

The Bad News

In 2016 the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reported that 40% of Minnesota's surface waters were impaired, many to the point where fishing and swimming were no longer advisable. In 2019 they updated this alarming number to 56%. Fish species are declining, hydrology is changing, Aquatic Invasive Species continue to spread. Salt, industrial effluence, and agricultural pollution are supercharging algae blooms in our lakes.

The Good News

As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

You and the more than 3000 other MLR members and 250 member lake associations are the good news.

There are over 525 lake associations in Minnesota and more than 300,000 lake home and cabin owners. MLR

is growing in both membership and capacity. Together we will reverse the disturbing trends and leave future generations a future that includes pristine waters.

Five Simple Strategies

MLR has had significant successes but there is more to do. MLR has five simple strategies. In each of these areas there is a role for you to play:

- 1. Build a Base** - There are only 70,000 pheasant hunters in Minnesota. 46,000 or **67 percent** are members of Pheasants Forever. **Currently less than 1% of lake home and cabin owners are members of MLR. Imagine the impact we would have if 10%, 30,000 people were engaged, or 50%, 150,000 families joined MLR to work for healthy and clean lakes and rivers.**

What you can do:

Your 2020 renewal form will include an extra membership form. Please send this, along with a short note, to a friend or family member who shares our goals.

ANNUAL MEETING CANCELLED

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are cancelling the MLR Annual Meeting.

We are looking into rescheduling for later in the year and/or virtual options -- possibly a live webinar.

MLR 2020 Annual Meeting "Water Connects Us All"

Save the Date

Friday evening and Saturday, May 29 - 30, 2020

At the U of M College of Agriculture, St. Paul
Speakers, Showcase and Field Trips

This year's MLR Annual Meeting will feature innovations and programs from lake associations across Minnesota, top researchers from the University of Minnesota in aquatic plants, aquatic invasive species, hydrology, agency leaders and engaged and passionate members. Planning is underway.

"Last year's meeting gave me such energy and focus. I met so many people who were passionate about protecting lakes and rivers, and the speakers and presenters gave me a road map to success. Thanks MLR for a great two days." MLR Member Beth Rubin

In Your Corner continued

2. **Communicate** - MLR works to get media attention on lake issues like lead poisoning of waterfowl by fishing tackle, high or low water, destructive boating practices, pollution. We also work to get articles to members that they can use in their lake association newsletters or try to publish in local weekly papers.

What you can do:

- Follow MLR on Twitter and Facebook.
- Share our content.
- Write letters to the editor on lake issues in local and state press.

MLR Works to Protect Lakes from Failing Septic Systems

Some years ago MLR worked to establish a low/no cost loan program to upgrade failing septic systems near lakes. Now they are offering education to owners to make sure the system works properly.

"Failing septic systems can have a huge impact on water quality, and it doesn't take many of them," said Jeff Forester, executive director of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates.

"... if people understand how their septic systems work and they can take steps themselves to keep them functioning, it will save them money. It will help protect water quality," Forester said.

Teaching homeowners septic 'secrets' to protect water
https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/01/10/teaching-homeowners-septic-secrets-to-protect-water?fbclid=IwAR3t2ezaZOHCMTtoOSCLsIt5a8HewHON4oMsvl0x1Qh5vgES21G_acEuXz8

3. **Advocate** - Our lakes get consistent, effective and professional lobbying at the Capitol with two full time lobbyists representing your issues. The legislative process will be key to solving many of these difficult challenges our lakes face. Direct grassroots action complements lobbying. The more people that engage, the greater the impact.

What you can do:

- Act on MLR action alerts during the legislative session,
- Run for a local Watershed District, County or Township Board,
- Attend local public meetings and advocate for lakes.

4. **Support Science** - MLR worked with Dr. Peter Sorensen at the Capitol to secure the funding to create the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center. In 2019 we successfully worked to secure hundreds of thousands of dollars in ongoing funding. **But more research is needed, not only in AIS, but in a host of lake-related issues.**



Study: Invasive Species Reduce Size of Popular MN Fish

In some Minnesota lakes, invasive species are limiting the growth of a popular fish, according to a new study of the effects on walleye.

University of Minnesota researchers say the culprits are zebra mussels and spiny waterflea. They found in lakes where these are present, they can reduce the growth size of walleye from 12% to 14%. The species take away zooplankton, a food source for the fish.

Jeff Forester, executive director of MLR, said the findings should spur stronger action by the state to prevent the spread of these species.

"What we've been doing -- this kind of emphasis on education and personal responsibility -- that's not getting it done," he said. "I think it's slowed the spread, but it certainly hasn't stopped it."

<https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2020-01-29/water/study-invasive-species-reduce-size-of-popular-mn-fish/a69044-1>

What you can do:

Donate to MLR specifically in the name of science. Your contributions to MLR are an investment in science and leverage public dollars for the public good.

5. **Build Strong Civic Partnerships** - Minnesota's lake and river issues cannot be solved by state or local government alone. No non-profit or civic group can reverse the disturbing trends alone. Success will take a broad coalition of agencies and groups working together for the public good.

What you can do:

- Work to create partnerships with faith groups, chambers of commerce, scouting, schools, farming coops and others and your lake association to address water quality issues in your area.
- Build relationships around clean water in your area.

MLR joins with Fish and Waters Conservation Fund to "STOP STARRY"

The Fish and Waters Conservation Fund, a 501c3 non-profit and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers have joined together in a project to install boat cleaning equipment at ALL ACCESSES on the 14 Starry Stonewort infested lakes in Minnesota. Our goal - to prevent starry stonewort from spreading to the lake you love.

<http://fishandwatersconservationfund.org/programs/>



Connections and Education

MLR has a number of programs and focus areas to advance each of the above strategies and support your work on the lake you love. At the 2020 Water Connects Us All conference you will have an opportunity to learn more about these programs, connect with other lake lovers and lake associations, and learn from each other.

Also look for MLR's series of webinars on subjects from creating a cabin trust to ensure the good times continue for the next generation, Get the Lead Out efforts to protect loons and other waterfowl, regenerative agriculture practices that protect water and maintaining your septic system for best economy and functioning.

Demographic Changes Put Pressure on our Land and Waters

There has been a more than 25% increase in population in Minnesota from 1994, when MLR formed until today, from 4.387 million to 5.611 million. This increased population puts increasing impacts on our land, and therefore our waters:

- 🌊 Minnesota leads the nation in the growth of drain tiling with a 37% increase since 2012,¹
- 🌊 According to sales tax statistics, tourism to our lake districts continues to increase,
- 🌊 Better roads have brought more and more people to our lake districts and accelerated lakeshore development, impacting riparian habitats,

Under the 'One Minnesota' banner, natural resource protections stand to gain, but the clock is ticking

"The last 50 years of Minnesota conservation efforts have shown that new legislation, new laws and regulations probably are not enough by themselves to rehabilitate our damaged ecosystems. A legal framework can help, and is essential, but we have witnessed these important laws going unenforced due to lack of will. After a decade of Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funding, dollars alone are not an answer either.

We cannot buy our way out of our environmental woes.

What has been lacking are efforts to develop civic leadership at the local level with regard to water. Building civic infrastructure in our communities of a broad cross-sector base around water issues is a role for which lake associations are uniquely well positioned."

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2019/02/under-the-one-minnesota-banner-natural-resource-protections-stand-to-gain-but-the-clock-is-ticking/>

Will Minnesota allow its water to be a publically traded commodity? Are we going to be in the business of selling our most precious public resource?

With snowpack in the Rockies declining, and population growing, water shortages are becoming more acute in the West. A number of entrepreneurs have applied to pump groundwater from Minnesota and ship it West on trains - up to 500 million gallons a year. In addition, the pipelines that currently cross Minnesota, and the ones that are being planned, can pump water as easily as oil. When water becomes as valuable as oil, they can pump the other direction, from East to West.

It is time to get strong protections in place for our water. Minnesota should not be in the business of selling our most precious public resource.

<https://www.clickondetroit.com/consumer/2018/07/18/residents-outraged-by-new-water-deal-allowing-nestle-to-pump-millions-of-gallons-from-michigan/>

- 🌊 New larger and more powerful watercraft, better sonar and fishing technology, the explosion of fishing tournaments have all increased our ability to impact fisheries, shoreline and aquatic plants,
- 🌊 Boats and water related equipment are far more portable than 25 years ago, and continue to spread aquatic invasive species.

All of our lake issues are connected to human activity. In this there is hope since the solutions will also be driven by humans.

There has never been a greater need for MLR. Our history of legislative successes, our growing membership base, the increased awareness and action by lake home and cabin owners across the state give me hope for our future. It is an exciting time to be doing this work. It is an honor to work for each of you.

Thank you for all you do, and please keep in touch,



Jeff Forester

¹ <https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2019/08/use-of-tile-2017-us-census-of-agriculture.html>

A New Way of Getting Things Done

MLR's Civic Organizing Pilot in Ramsey County Builds Civic Engagement to Protect Ramsey County's Lakes from AIS "Aquatic Invasive Species and You! Uniting to Prevent Aquatic Invasive Species"

https://www.presspubs.com/white_bear/news/uniting-to-prevent-spread-of-aquatic-invasive-species/article_4fac3e9e-1c56-11ea-a393-ab4dc8c77e36.html

Fighting for Minnesota's Lakes

MLR works to build a constituency for Minnesota's lakes as the first, best step towards protecting them and managing the impacts of changing weather.



"The group is working to develop what it calls "a constituency" - much like backers of agriculture or forestry - to help rivers and lakes survive in the future."

<https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2019-07-19/climate-change-air-quality/fighting-for-minnesotas-lakes/a67208-1>

MLR Board of Directors

George Crolick	Lake Eshquaguma in St. Louis County
Ron Erhardt	Woman Lake in Cass County
Barbara Halbakken Fischburg	Detroit Lake in Becker County
Susan Henken Thielen	Lake Washburn in Cass County
John P. James	Lake Gervais in Ramsey County
Mary Manns	Caribou Lake in St. Louis County

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Please visit our website,
www.MNLakesAndRivers.org



MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates - MLR @JeffForester1

MN Lakes and Rivers Membership Form

Membership in MLR is proven protection of our core values. You can fill out this form or 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>

<p>Permanent Residence Information (where you live and vote)</p> <p>_____ <i>First Name</i> <i>Last Name</i></p> <p>_____ <i>Address</i></p> <p>_____ <i>City</i> <i>State</i> <i>Zip</i></p> <p>_____ <i>Phone</i> <i>Email</i></p> <p>Lake/Land Information</p> <p>_____ <i>Lake Name</i> <i>County</i></p> <p>_____ <i>Lake Address (if different than above)</i> <i>City</i> <i>Zip</i></p> <p>_____ <i>Lake Association Name</i> <i>Are you a member?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>I'll make a contribution of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$60 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <hr/> <p>Payment Information</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Check (Payable to MLR)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card or contribute online at www.mnlakesandrivers.org (Click on "Membership")</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> AmEx</p> <p>Card # _____ Exp. Date _____</p> <p>Signature _____ Security Code: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Payment (ACH) (enclose voided check or fill out info below)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account <input type="checkbox"/> Savings Account</p> <p>Bank Routing # _____</p> <p>Account # _____</p> <p>Signature _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Become a Sustaining Member</p> <p>Many members find it easier to make a small ongoing monthly contribution to MLR directly from their bank account or credit card. (Please enclose a voided check or credit card #. \$7/mo minimum.)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> \$8/month <input type="checkbox"/> \$10/month <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____/month</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>	

Mail to: **MLR**, PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122

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