

JESSIE LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



JESSIE JABBER

VOL.27, NO.2

FALL 2024

GREETINGS FROM JLWA PAST PRESIDENT HOLLISTER MADSEN

I hope everyone had a great summer and was able to enjoy the mild fall we experienced. This year certainly has presented us all with some challenges for the JLWA with the stepping down of our president, Paul Christl and most of the officers. Thanks to Joe Durbak, our Vice President, for stepping in to lead us thru this year and now we have the challenge of rebuilding the board members to continue into 2025 and beyond. Until we fill the open officer positions, the existing 4 directors will continue to manage the Association duties. I am confident in our membership that we will have volunteers to step in and fill the open positions. Working together, we will get the association back on track.

The new environment on Jessie Lake will cause all of the property owners and visitors to the lake to take a different approach on handling the zebra mussel situation. The lake will be going thru a transition over the next several years, from a change in water quality, increase in vegetation and walleye fishing patterns. As with many of the neighboring lakes, it was inevitable that this would occur. This will require diligence on our part to keep this from spreading when transporting boats, docks or lifts to other lakes. For those of you who are familiar with the situation that Sand Lake has gone through with zebra mussels, the lake will eventually adjust, as will the users of the lake.

We have had a relatively dry summer and the Jessie Lake level is down from the start of the year which is pretty normal. Our mild fall will have an impact on the freeze-up for many of the lakes in our region. For Jessie Lake, the average Ice in date is November 26, the latest ice in is December 20. You can view the ice in/ice out statistics on all of our lakes on the DNR website. For our Association lakes, this can be found on our JLWA website under JLWA Lake Information, <https://jessielake.mnlakesanddrivers.org/>.

To all our members, I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous new year!

OPEN JLWA OFFICER POSITIONS

We have 4 open positions for officers of JLWA. They are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The duties for each position are outlined below:

President. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Board and of the membership, have general supervision of the affairs of the Association and be a focal point within the community, for Association issues. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, with power to call and attend committee meetings. Each outgoing President shall be a member of the Board of Directors for the following year

Vice-President. The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and assist the President in any other way necessary

Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible for overseeing the Association records, maintaining the membership roll, recording minutes of all Association meetings and mailings to members.

Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have general charge of the finances of the Association, supervise the bank accounts, pay Association bills and write checks as directed by the Board.

The Treasurer shall provide updates at regular meetings and shall provide an annual report at the annual meeting.

The terms of officer position are for 1 year and they are up for re-election at the JLWA annual meeting. If anyone is interested in any of these officer positions, please contact me directly at my email hollistermadsen@gmail.com or any of the directors. Their contact information is located at the end of the Jabber or on our website, <https://jessielake.mnlakesanddrivers.org/>.

JLWA ANNUAL MEETING – AUGUST 24, 2024

By Glenn Weismann, Acting Secretary

Joe Durbak (Acting President) called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. There were 13 members present. The meeting was held at the Jesse Lake Lutheran Church. Joe introduced the officers and Board members of JLWA. Present were Joe Durbak, Hollister Madsen, Jim Wilson and Glenn Weismann.

Agenda – The agenda was accepted without additions or corrections.

Treasurers Report – The treasurers report was given by Joe showing a beginning balance of \$10,059.19 and a closing balance of \$9,889.14.

Membership – Currently 73 members have paid dues for 2024. The number is down 18 from 2022 and down 30 from 2018. It was suggested by one of the members that we should have a membership drive next year. Anyone interested in organizing that should contact Joe. It was mentioned the Board is looking into an online method for paying dues that are due in Jan.

UPDATE ON SUMMER EVENTS

Fishing Contest – The annual Northern Fishing Tournament was not held this year due to very low participation the past few years. A motion was passed during last fall's meeting to discontinue the fishing tournament until a later date.

Boat Parade – The Jessie Lake 4th of July boat parade started with 8 boats, but rain came so it fell apart and ended with 2 boats. No report on Little Jessie parade was available.

Summer Picnic – The summer picnic/spring meeting was held at Rhonda Nichols on July 27. Twenty-three members attended and enjoyed the evening. A date of June 21, 2025 has been set at Rhonda's.

Beaver Trapping – Joe reported that our beaver trapper Jerry Kazcor said that he trapped 23 beaver last winter/spring at various locations in the watershed.

JLWA Website Update - Content was recovered from the previous website and current information can be found at www.jessielake.mnlakesanddrivers.org . Paul Christl has volunteered to continue as the webmaster and any suggestions for content should be given to him.

Lake Information Update – Harold commented on the sudden green algae bloom that showed up now after 3 months of clear water with 10-17 foot clarity. The Secchi reading in August was only 5ft and he was not sure why Zebra mussels quit eating. He would like to step down from the water testing duties after 26 years. His neighbor Jerry Swenson has volunteered to take over and Harold will work with him next year. Water is tested each month from May to September and Secchi disc readings are taken every 2 weeks. Data is reported to the MPCA.

AIS Boat Cleaning Stations. – Harold reported there are 4 cleaning stations to be installed later this year if SWCD gets delivery in time. They are to be located at the landings on Jessie and Little Jessie plus one at Rising Eagle Resort and Jessie View Resort. The cost for these stations will be covered by a donation from an anonymous member.

Roadside Cleanup – The fall cleanup on September 19 was coordinated by Angie Hurley and a small crew of 5 people helped. They met at Jessie View Resort, 45756 County Road 35 at 5:00pm. and went to Riley's for burger night after the cleanup. About 4 bags of garbage were collected.

NEW BUSINESS

Jabber Editor – Harold reported that he needs someone to take over as editor of the Jabber. Please consider volunteering for that position as it would be nice to keep having a newsletter.

Elections of Officers – Members were nominated and approved by those present for the officer/director positions and the slate of directors/officers for 2024 is as follows:

President – Open

Vice President – Open

Treasurer -- Open

Secretary – Open

2 Year Director – Glenn Weismann

2 Year Director – Greg Kuntz

1 Year Director – Jim Wilson

1 Year Director – Joe Durbak

Open Discussion – There was a discussion on the fall meeting date and it was suggested to have it 2 weeks before Labor Day weekend to improve attendance. Also, it was mentioned we could add a question on the membership form when they would prefer the meeting date. What lake the member lives on should also be added. Someone suggested we could all go to Riley’s after the meeting and the Association could pay the bill for burgers. Or we could go back to the pot-luck as in the past. Picking up the liter on our public access roads was suggested as a future project.

Door Prize – Krista Hagen and Kennan Kuntz won the door prizes, a gift certificate to Riley’s.

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 10:20

UPDATE ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

By Harold Goetzman, Editor

Zebra mussels

The DNR has listed confirmed Zebra Mussels in 270 lakes, rivers and wetlands. Another 194 bodies of water are listed because they are closely connected to confirmed lakes. In 2023 there were 21 new listings in MN. Minnesota’s 11,000 lakes now have 8% listed as infested with AIS and about 4% have Zebra Mussels. The new lakes in our area (Itasca Co) with Zebra Mussels are Jessie Lake, Turtle Lake and Trout Lake near Coleraine. Two years ago, Little Jessie joined the list. A great deal of care should be used to drain, clean and dry your boat if you have fished in an infested lake including Jessie, Turtle, Little Jessie, Sand, Winnie or Bowstring Lake. Also, all bait water and live-well water needs to be discarded.

MN law requires keeping docks and lifts out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them into a different body of water. If you sell your dock or lift to someone on another lake, be sure to have them wait to use it if it hasn’t been out of the water long.

Starry Stonewort

The newest invasive species that was found in 2015 is called “starry stonewort”. It is a grass-like macro algae with a small star-shaped flower. The algae produce dense mats that choke out native plants and is typically spread by lake users who transport fragments of the plant. No successful treatment to stop the spread has been found.

A new infestation of starry stonewort has been found in Itasca County this year in Pokegama and Dora Lake was new last year, plus 2 more MN lakes were also added in 2024. With these 3 new state-wide confirmations of starry stonewort, Minnesota now has 26 lakes with it.

General

We have a number of other lakes in our area and our Association, which we need to keep free of AIS. I think with the discovery of Zebra Mussels in Jessie and Bowstring, that we all need to take extra care to keep our other lakes AIS free, so carefully do the steps of drain, dry and dump bait water.

Since Jessie will be in a time of very fast Zebra Mussel growth, be very careful about going from Jessie to other lakes. Also, if you put Jessie water in your live-well be sure to discard. A list of AIS infested lakes is published on the DNR website

SWCD AIS UPDATE FOR ITASCA COUNTY

Itasca County received about \$650,000 in state funds for the 2023–2024 AIS program. I think the SWCD staff did a great job of continuing to monitor our county lakes for AIS in 2024. Bill Grantges, the Itasca County AIS program coordinator and Chris Evans, the Control and Monitoring Coordinator gave me a brief summary of the 2024 AIS activities. All known AIS locations have received control measures when possible.

Prevention Program - By Bill Grantges, AIS Program Coordinator, SWCD

The prevention program includes the watercraft inspection and decontamination at public water accesses. During the summer months there were both paid inspectors and many volunteers carrying out boat inspections that totaled over 30,000. There were hundreds of decontaminations completed at 35 landings on Itasca County lakes. The County now has 4 decontamination units that were used during the summer at various lakes. The AIS inspectors were also present at a number of fishing tournaments in Itasca County. The County AIS crew inspected several hundred boats at the Jessie Lake landing this summer and fortunately no infested boats or trailers were discovered. The boat traffic all over the County was similar to previous years. Details on how many violations of the state rules for plug and water removal was not available.

Control and Monitoring Program -- By Chris Evans, AIS Specialist, SWCD

Itasca SWCD Aquatic Invasive Species Control & Monitoring crew performed early detection surveys on 62 lakes in Itasca County in 2024. The only 2 new AIS discoveries were Curly Leaf Pondweed near the public access on Little Turtle Lake in Talmoon and one Zebra Mussel was found in Split Hand Lake, south of Grand Rapids, attached to the veliger settlement sampler that we hung from the public access dock. Subsequent searches of Split Hand did not produce any other Zebra Mussels. We will continue to thoroughly survey the lake in future seasons to determine if there is a breeding population of Zebra Mussels or not.

Our crew collected 54,615 Purple Loosestrife Defoliating Beetles and relocated them to dense patches of Purple Loosestrife at 27 different sites. Around 20,000 of these beetles were donated to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and to the MN DNR to be released at Loosestrife sites that they manage on Leech Lake and the Sturgeon Chain of Lakes on the Itasca / St. Louis County border.

Zebra Mussel populations that were newly discovered in 2023 in Trout, Turtle, and Jessie Lakes have all shown signs of rapid reproduction and spread throughout their respective waterbodies. Some residents from Jessie Lake have reported such a dramatic spike in the Zebra Mussel colony that the wheels of their docks and boat lifts were 100% encrusted with mussels when they removed them from the water this fall.

The 2024 field season was our 1st opportunity to utilize SCUBA diving as an effective tool to search for and control Aquatic Invasive Species. Such projects include the hand-removal of Curly Leaf Pondweed from Deer Lake, the removal of Flowering Rush from Spider Lake and efficiently searching for Zebra Mussels at many high-risk locations.

Little Jessie Lake - Our crew found two Zebra Mussels in Little Jessie Lake in the 2021 season. We made visits to Little Jessie again in 2022, 2023 and 2024 to try and locate a breeding population of the invasive mussels and there were **none** found. We will continue to survey Little Jessie in future seasons.

GILL NET SURVEY ON JESSIE LAKE

By Brett Nelson, DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor

Greetings Jessie Lake Association! My name is Brett Nelson, and I am the new area fisheries supervisor for Grand Rapids. I started my new position in late-June and have been spending the last few months familiarizing myself with the vast number of resources this area has to offer. I started my career with MN-DNR Fisheries a little over a decade ago in Baudette, MN. While working on the borderland my responsibilities included fisheries management work on a variety of waterbodies ranging from small lakes to large lakes and rivers. Until recently, my position was the large lake specialist for Lake of the Woods, where I led the annual monitoring program. I am grateful and excited for the opportunity to work in Grand Rapids as I'm originally from central-MN. In this Jabber edition, we will provide some preliminary survey results from our work this past summer on Jessie Lake.

The most recent Lake Management Plan (LMP) for Jessie Lake was last revised in 2022 that outlined Walleye as the species of primary management interest and Northern Pike and Yellow Perch as secondary species of interest. The long-range goal outline for Walleye is to maintain a gill net catch rate of 9 per net (lake average; hereon referred to as #/net), with at least 6 year-classes present and no more than 40% of the catch from a single year-class (too many fish from one year class is a characteristic of a boom-and-bust Walleye fishery). Presently, Jessie Lake is stocked annually with 682,000 Pike River strain Walleye fry (which began in 2023 and is a slight reduction from the past decade). Past evaluations indicated that fry stocking is needed to meet management goals, but there was no evidence to suggest a benefit from a high stocking density (previous stocking rates were nearly four times the typical recommended rate).

Based on the recent gill net survey results from August of 2024, the Jessie Lake Walleye population is healthy. Walleye numbers (7.3/net) were average for Jessie Lake in 2024, but just under the goal of 9/net. Since the 1950s catch rates have varied substantially from <4 to 22/net; but have typically exceeded 10/net the past couple of decades. It should be noted that that high catches may not necessarily represent good conditions for anglers or a healthy fishery (for example, a large catch represented by a single year-class may indicate poor survival from most years). Overall, Walleye sizes observed this past survey indicate a healthy population with a diverse range of sizes. Two notable modes were evident in the Walleye size distribution (13/14" and 17/18") suggesting the presence of harvestable size fish with upcoming recruits as well. In addition, 11 fish > 20 inches (up to 26") were sampled that provides the opportunity to catch larger Walleye and the presence of spawning stock.

Night electrofishing surveys were conducted this fall on Jessie Lake, Island Lake near Northome and Lake Winnibigoshish to evaluate/predict the strength of this past year's Walleye hatch/stocking. Electrofishing yielded low numbers of Walleye of average to small in length for all three lakes.. This suggests that the 2024 year-class is likely to be poor and likely attributed to unfavorable environmental conditions and/or low prey abundance utilized by small Walleye.

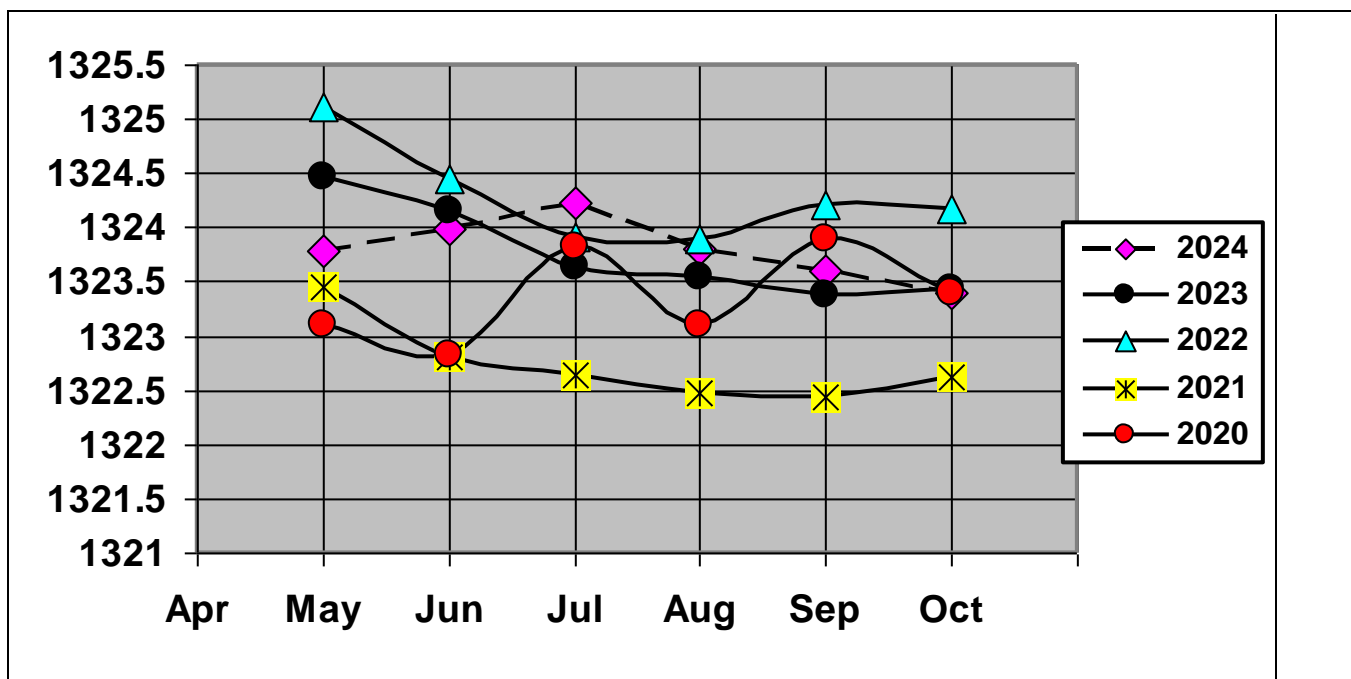
Other species of interest sampled this past August were Northern Pike and Yellow Perch. A favorable fish community for Walleye management such as on Jessie Lake include a low-density Northern Pike fishery (<6/net) and a robust Yellow Perch population (catches exceeding 8/net). Catches observed this past August were 3.3/net for Northern Pike (near lake average) and 81.9/net for Yellow Perch (far exceeding lake average), suggesting an optimal predator-prey balance presently.

JESSIE LAKE WATER LEVELS – 2024

By Jim Anderson, JLWA Volunteer

The water level is measured once a week and the numbers are reported to the DNR and posted on their website. I have collected 21 years of water level data and the previous 11 yrs were by Bill Nelson.

This year, the ice went out on April 7th, which was 29 days earlier than last year and 18 days earlier than the average of April 25th. The first measurement of the water level on June 1st was 1323.99 feet above mean sea level, which was about 6 inches lower than the previous spring of 2023 (low 2024 winter snow level). For the opening of fishing season, we had a good water level. The beginning of the summer we had some rain so the lake was up about 3 inches by the first of July. The rest of the summer continued to have almost no rain and the lake level kept falling and by early August the lake had dropped 5 inches from the peak on June 29th. Then the level continued slowly falling showing another 2 inches lower by the end of August. The lake kept dropping in September and ended at 1323.39 feet on September 28th, which was similar to the level in 2023. When the gauge was pulled the end of September the water was 7 inches lower than June 1st so we had a significant change in level during the year. This level was about the same ending as 2020 and 2023, but still about 12 inches higher than the end of 2021, which was the lowest ending level in the last 5 years. Most people had to remove their boats early that year. Our weather has certainly varied a lot over the past five years. The graph below shows the water level trends.



Jessie Lake five-year summer water levels (Feet Above Sea Level)

*Water level Monitor Needed

Jim is looking for someone to take over the water level monitoring and moving the gauge to your place next year in the spring as he is no longer able to do it. If you are interested in continuing this project you can contact Jim for details at jimnreet@bigfork.net . Thanks.

JESSIE LAKE WATER QUALITY 2024

By Matt Gutzmann, Water Resource Specialist, Itasca SWCD

This season was the 27th straight year of volunteer water quality monitoring on Jessie Lake! These water quality trends are an incredibly helpful tool for those of us who work in the water conservation field and we have a tremendous amount of appreciation to the Lake Association volunteers that work so hard to advocate for the water.

When we talk about water quality, it usually boils down to three pieces of information; phosphorus, algae (Chlorophyll-a), and water clarity. Phosphorus is a chemical used as food for algae to grow, higher phosphorus levels usually mean higher algae levels, and lots of algae in the water causes lower water clarity (it looks green, as Jessie Lake often does in late summer).

As many of you are aware, zebra mussels were found in Jessie Lake last fall. These invasive species are filter feeders that pump water through their gills and use different plankton and bacteria as food. This may improve the water clarity, but it doesn't tell the whole story. As zebra mussels filter water to get their food, they consume much of the phosphorus for several months and then pee it out into the water. This large amount of available phosphorus can make algae levels higher in August and September turning the water green. Continuing to monitor Jessie Lake will be very helpful to understand how invasive species like zebra mussels affect lakes like Jessie Lake.

Trends in Jessie Lake -- The water quality in 2024 was interesting. Looking at long-term trends, the lake is showing improving phosphorus trends, which is great! Water clarity is a mixed bag showing improving clarity in the past 20-years but some short-term decline in the past 10-years. The algae levels, however, continue to show higher concentrations of Chlorophyll-a. If algae need phosphorus to grow, why would algae levels go up when phosphorus levels go down? Well, it could be a few things. While the phosphorus amounts are decreasing, they're still quite high and probably not to a point that this food source will limit the algae that grows.

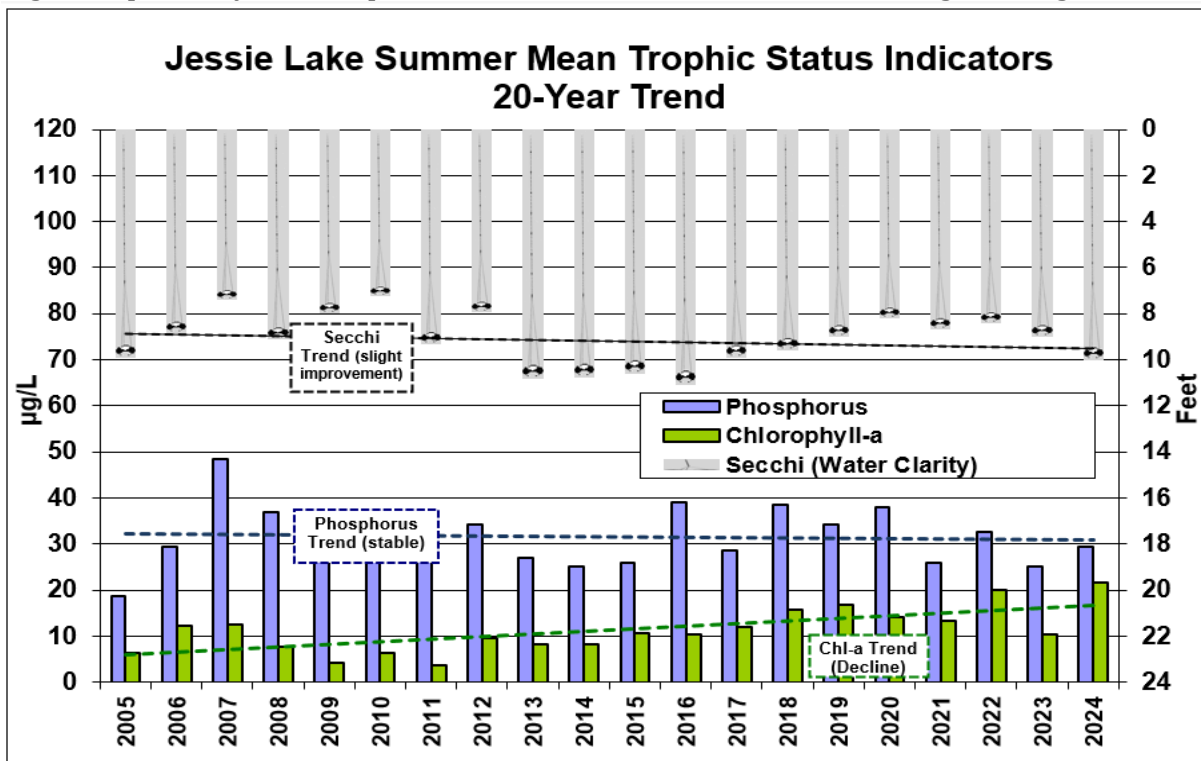


Figure - 20-year trends in Jessie Lake 2005-2024

The direction of the lake means that even a moderate wind from the NW can cause some big, turbulent waves on the lake. Smaller, or deeper, lakes might have an “upper” and “lower” layer in the lake that don’t mix, Jessie Lake probably does mix those layers down to 30 or 40 feet deep during higher wind events which can stir up phosphorus that is usually at the deeper layers.

Also, weather patterns can affect concentrations. A period of warm, sunny, and calm conditions after a wind-mixing event can be excellent conditions for algae growth and is often when we see algae blooms form on the surface of the water.

It’s important to remember there are still things that property owners can do to lower the levels of phosphorus in the lake! Avoid the use of fertilizer, or use phosphorus-free fertilizer, on your lawn. If you mow down to the lake, try to let it grow (no mow) naturally for five or ten feet (or more), or spread some pollinator seeds or flowers near the lake if you want some more diversity- most of these plants don’t grow more than a few feet tall and won’t block the view from your window. Keeping the ash out of your fire pit and cleaning up pet waste are also simple things that reduce phosphorus in the lake. We might not be able to control all the sources of phosphorus, but with a little bit of effort people can make improvements toward better water quality.

If you would like more information or ideas on how to improve water quality, visit our website or give us a call with any questions! www.ItascaSWCD.org 218-326-5573.

POTPOURRI

By Harold Goetzman, Editor

Loon Counting. Teresa Chicoine reported that she had completed the loon counting on Jessie Lake this summer and her report follows: One of my favorite things about spring is the return of the loons to Minnesota lakes with their distinctive and beautiful calls. After a season of counting loons on Jessie Lake, we can report a peak number of 4 loons were observed on a single trip. This is a significant decline from the 7-8 loons counted in 2023. Perhaps the high water this spring made it difficult to find suitable nesting sites and they moved on to other lakes. While we didn’t see a loon family this summer, we did see an adolescent loon later in the season that was around for a couple weeks. This was after the adults had migrated. I would love to think that this juvenile loon will be a permanent resident of our lake next year. Hopefully, we will have suitable water levels next spring for nesting and see little ones.

Roadside Clean-up. Our fall roadside cleanup event was coordinated by Angie Hurley. She reported-- “There was a small, but mighty crew of 5 for the fall roadside cleanup. About 4 bags of liter were picked up. Additional members who were unable to participate in the clean-up joined the group at Riley's for an enjoyable evening of food and conversation.”

We need to be diligent and continue this effort as the amount of trash collected shows it is always necessary to pick up. The County provides garbage bags and vests, so it is a good public service event for JLWA. Think about helping next year, which will be year 20 for this program.

Beaver Trapping 2024. Our beaver trapper, Jerry Kaczor reported the following: Here are the results of Spring beaver trapping. A total of 23 beaver were taken: 12 from Spring Creek, 8 from Jessie Lake, 2 from Little Spring Lake and 1 from Tillys Creek. Also, I was informed of beaver problems on Peterson Lake so I will plan to trap on Peterson Lake. Thank you and have a safe and healthy winter!

Trumpeter Swans. We now have about 30,000 trumpeter swans in MN which have grown from the first 48 eggs brought from Alaska in 1960 by Carol Henderson of the DNR. We saw a group of 15 swans eating in front of the cabin one day this fall, but only 3 juveniles. Several days later we saw 18 flying in formation heading south in migration.

JLWA Website. The website has been updated by Paul Christl to fit the format for our new provider at MN Lakes and Rivers. Paul will be the new Webmaster so feel free to contact him at 701 729 2351. Our new website address is: <https://jessielake.mnlakesandrivers.org/> and if you have any input on the website content or suggestions for improvements, please contact Paul.

DID YOU KNOW?

By Harold Goetzman

- The UN reported that invasive species costs the world economy \$423 billion each year.
- Last winter was the warmest on record since the 1800’s. It was 10 deg. warmer than normal in MN.
- A third of all crops rely on bees and other pollinators, but bee populations are rapidly shrinking due to pesticides and loss of habitat.
- One-third of America’s wildlife species are at risk of extinction. Over 1600 species are already listed as threatened or endangered.
- Over 45,000 bridges in the US are designated to be in “poor condition” by civil engineers.
- You can contact the DNR AIS Specialist, Rich Rezanka, in Grand Rapids at 218-328-8821 or call Chris Evans (218 999 4436) and Bill Grantges (218 999 4432) at SWCD.
- Jessie Lake has not frozen over as of Dec. 4 (long-term average is Nov. 26th).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Our sincere thanks to the following households that made financial contributions in 2024 to the JLWA: Rod and Ethel Benham, Ron and Lynn Beranek, Bill and Melissa Coleman, Fred and Cleo Conrad, Paul Christl, Harold and Diane Goetzman, Tom Hackler, Jessie View Resort, Larry Johnson, Shirley Johnson, William and Jody Mogren, Jon Morrison, Rhonda Nichols, Mike and Theresa Peterson, Michaela Raymond and Val Conner, Jeff and Linda Reinke, Rising Eagle Resort, Clint and Lesli Sand, Terry and Dorothy Seestrom, Mike Sommer, Bill and Christine Threinen, Wayne and Jeanne Tollagson, James and Jennifer Wilson and Denise Zaska. Thanks, also to the many unnamed volunteers who have spent many hours during the year, which are priceless.

MEMBERSHIP

The JLWA presently has 73 paid members. The Treasurer will send out an invoice for dues (\$15) in early January.

CLIP AND SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

<u>JLWA OFFICERS</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>
President – Open		
Vice President – Open		
Treasurer –Open		
Secretary –		
<u>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</u>		
Jim Wilson	218 398 0114	wilsontrees@hotmail.com
Glenn Weismann	763 276 5632	glenn@boilermakerslocal647.com
Greg Kuntz	612 805 8480	grkun1@aol.com
Joe Durbak	256 337 6828	joedurbak@yahoo.com
Hollister Madsen - past President	952 221 0143	hollistermadsen@gmail.com
<u>JABBER EDITOR</u>		
Harold Goetzman	218 326 3908	hgoetzman@yahoo.com
<u>WEBMASTER</u>		
Paul Christl	701 729 2351	paulrrhg@gmail.com