

THE CULLEN CURRENTS

Spring, 2021

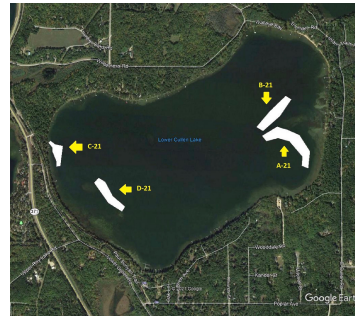


2021 Curly leaf pondweed treatment

Ice out was on April 4 for Upper Cullen and on April 6 for Middle and Lower Cullen. On April 26 and 27 Clarke Aquatic Services staff surveyed the three lakes for curly leaf pondweed (CLP) in preparation for treating areas with enough growth to be a nuisance to water recreation during late spring and summer. Both days were cloudy with moderate winds. The surface water temperature fluctuated between 45 and 47 degrees during the surveys.

In Lower Cullen most of the CLP was sparse, but staff did find areas with dense growth. In Middle and Upper Cullen most of the CLP was dense in the proposed treatment areas. Most of the CLP found was 4 to 18 inches long and still early in its life cycle. The surveys found less CLP than in past seasons. Clarke has recommended treating 19 acres in Lower Cullen, 5.5 acres in Middle Cullen, and 7.7 acres in Upper Cullen.

On May 3 and 4 Central Minnesota Aquatics and Dan Swanson conducted surveys to verify Clarke's findings and proposed treatment areas (see article at right). All the appropriate paperwork was forwarded to Tim Plude, DNR Aquatic Invasive Species specialist, who issued the required permits. Treatment will likely take place in mid May.



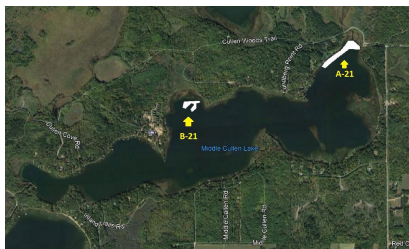
Lower Cullen proposed treatment areas

CLA receives two DNR grants for CLP treatment

Thanks to the diligent grant application work of Carol Lindahl, AIS Committee co-chair, Upper and Middle Cullen Lakes have each been awarded a DNR grant to treat curly leaf pondweed this spring. Upper Cullen was awarded \$1,650 and Middle Cullen will receive \$2,400. We feel especially fortunate to have received these two grants because a lottery system was used for the first time this year.

CLA is under a three-year contract with Clarke Aquatic Services to do a pre-treatment survey, chemical treatment of CLP, and a post treatment survey each year. However, as was true last year, a condition of the DNR grants is that CLA must arrange for an aquatic plant surveyor who is not the treatment contractor to do a delineation survey of the areas of CLP to be treated in each lake.

After comparing survey costs of several Minnesota companies, CLA signed a one time contract with Central Minnesota Aquatics to survey and verify the Middle Cullen treatment polygons proposed by Clarke. Dan Swanson, retired DNR Aquatic Invasive Species specialist, has agreed to do the same for Upper Cullen. The cost of each of these additional surveys is \$1,000, which reduces the grant funds available for the actual treatment. However, CLA is still appreciative of the remaining grant funds that will be used for the CLP treatment.



Middle Cullen proposed treatment areas

Upper Cullen proposed treatment areas



Aquatic plants management

from a MN DNR brochure

Aquatic plants and you

Plants are an essential part of lake communities and benefit a wide variety of organisms, including you. Although aquatic plants are sometimes a nuisance for lakeshore property owners, it is important to remember that they are critical for a healthy lake environment. Here are some reasons why.

Aquatic plants:

- *help prevent shoreline erosion by breaking up wave action;
- *provide natural food and shelter for fish and wildlife;
- *are one of the first links in the aquatic food chain; and
- *improve water clarity and quality.

The nuisance factor

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes that aquatic plants, algae, snails, and other aquatic life are sometimes a nuisance. Nuisance aquatic plants can be addressed through the department's Aquatic Plant Management Program. This program issues permits for controlling or destroying aquatic plants or invertebrates in public waters. One goal of the program is to ensure that methods used to manage nuisance conditions will be effective without harming beneficial aquatic plants and the environment. Before removing or treating aquatic vegetation or organisms in the lake, be sure you understand the rules for these activities.

Different aquatic plants

The amount of control allowed often depends on the kind of plant growing in the area. Aquatic plants are categorized as follows:



Submerged plants have stems and leaves that grow entirely underwater, though some may also have floating leaves. Pondweeds and coontail are well-known examples.

Floating-leaf plants are rooted in the lake bottom, but their leaves and flowers float on the surface of the water. Water lilies are a well-known example.



Emergent plants are rooted in the lake bottom, but their leaves and stems extend out of the water. Cattails and bulrush are well-known examples.

Algae have no true roots, stems, or leaves and range in size from tiny one-celled organisms to large, multi-celled plantlike organisms, such as chara. Many algae are free floating and, when present in large numbers, can make the water appear green.

Projects that do not require permits

*Lakeshore owners do not need a permit to cut or pull **submerged vegetation** in a small area for swimming or boat docking. This area may not extend along more than 50 feet of the owner's shoreline or one-half the length of the owner's total shoreline, *whichever is less*. The area may not exceed 2,500 square feet, except that a boat channel, not to exceed 15 feet in width, extending to open water may be maintained. This 15 foot channel shall be included in the maximum shoreline feet allowed above. Such cutting or pulling may be done with power operated cutters, rakes, and other equipment that does not significantly alter the lake bottom. Vegetation that is cut or pulled must be immediately and permanently removed from the water and disposed of on high ground where it will not re-enter the lake.

*In **floating-leaf vegetation**, a channel 15 feet wide extending to open water may be maintained mechanically without a permit.

***Emergent vegetation** may not be removed without a permit under any circumstances.

An Aquatic Plant Management Permit is required to:

*Remove more than 2,500 square feet of **submerged vegetation** by cutting or pulling or an area exceeding 50 feet along the shoreline or one-half the owner's total frontage, *whichever is less*.

*Apply **herbicides or algicides** for aquatic plant control in public waters.

*Remove water lilies or other **floating-leaf vegetation** in an area exceeding a 15 foot wide channel.

*Move a bog of any size that is free floating or lodged in any area other than its original location.

*Destroy **emergent aquatic vegetation** in public water.

*Transplant aquatic plant into public waters.

*Install or operate an automated plant control device.

For more permit information go to dnr.state.mn.us.

Currents on the Cullens

New Owners

Eli & Dana Olson, Upper Cullen (U20)
Jim & Julia Thorius, Middle Cullen (M97)
Mark & Michelle Miller, Middle Cullen (M97)
Frank & Allison Forcier, Middle Cullen (M39)

CLA membership update

As of May 3, 2021 we have 247 paid members and 8 complimentary members (new owners). Membership letters for 2021 were mailed in early December to allow for those wanting to use a donation for 2020 tax purposes to do so. A second dues notice was mailed in late March to those who had not yet sent in their 2021 dues. This brought in dues and donations from several more people and checks continue to trickle in. However, there are still 16 past CLA members who have not sent in their dues yet. ***If your name is highlighted on the mailing label, you haven't yet paid your 2021 dues.***

If you haven't already sent in your \$25 membership dues (and hopefully a contribution towards the treatment of curly-leaf pondweed), please take the time now to write your check, make any necessary corrections to your personal data on the membership letter you received, and mail them both to CLA, P.O. Box 466, Nisswa, MN 56468.

For those lake properties that are co-owned, we encourage all owners to have their own membership in CLA. This not only provides additional support for the lake association, it also guarantees all owners will receive important information concerning the lakes.

Please help us keep our membership records current by sending any changes in your mailing address, email address, or a change in ownership of your property to either Ann Beaver, newsletter editor, or to Carol Lindahl, Membership Committee chair. Their contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) management donations update

The CLA Board of Directors would like to thank all who have contributed thus far to the 2021 CLP treatment fund. The very positive response is truly impressive.

Here are some of the statistics as of **May 3**:

*189 property owners and family members have made a CLP donation. There are 247 paid CLA members so far this year, so that's 77%!

*78 contributions were the \$250 suggested in the membership mailing. This does not include the co-owned properties whose owners split the donation among themselves. (We don't expect co-owners to each contribute the suggested amount.)

*34 contributions were more than the suggested \$250.

*Contributions have ranged from \$25 to \$1,250.

*Contributions total \$39,475.

THANK YOU!



Fourth of July boat parades

Each of the three Cullen Lakes will again have a Fourth of July boat parade informally organized by its lakeshore property owners.

If there are coronavirus guidelines in place at the time, they should

be adhered to so participants can safely enjoy this annual event.

Participants are asked to gather at the east end of their lake on July 4 shortly before 2:00 p.m.

Please plan on making one entire trip around the lake so on-shore observers can view all parade participants.

For safety reasons, please avoid excessive speed and do not weave in and out of the line-up of boats. There were several near misses during last year's parades, near accidents caused by dangerous boating in the name of having fun.

Send photos you take of your parade to the newsletter editor to be included in the summer newsletter.

Zebra Mussel reminder

Lower Cullen has zebra mussels. Zebra mussels have razor sharp edges. Remember to wear water shoes when

playing / swimming in the lake. If you are going to be handling items that have been in the lake for a while, it is a good idea to wear sturdy gloves to protect your hands from zebra mussels that may be attached to the items.



Loon questions you may not even have wondered about

from Loon Magic, by Tom Klein

Do loons use their wings while diving? No. The wings are used to help execute sharp turns while chasing prey, but they are not used for propulsion. The large webbed feet supply the power. Wings are typically held tight to the body during dives.

What's the wild calling at night all about? The extravagant calling at night is probably part of territorial defense. Loons like to keep track of each other. In daylight they can see each other, but at night they have only calling.

What does loon courtship look like? There will never be an X-rated loon movie. Loon courtship is rather mild: combinations of short dives, bill dipping, and bill flicking while quietly swimming near the shoreline.

How long after copulation will the eggs be laid? That's a rather personal question and no biologist seems to have the answer. It is a short period of time, though, measured in days rather than weeks.

Who builds the nest? Loons have been liberated for millions of years. Males and females divide about equally the nest building duties. They are not careful builders. They simply throw whatever vegetation is handy on the nest.

What is the "penguin dance"? Well named, the loon's penguin dance is the bird's most dramatic territorial display. Loons literally stand on the water by violently kicking their feet while holding their head down with their bill tight against their breast. It requires a lot of energy to perform. Anyone accidentally stimulating or encountering the dance should retreat immediately.



Okay, what is this foot waggle business? Every ten to twenty minutes loons will extend a foot and wave it. It could be that the foot is being used as a crude solar collector to pick up heat. The waggle certainly conserves heat since the blood vessels in the foot would release heat to the water. Supporting this notion is the fact that after the waggle, the foot is usually tucked up under the wing — a place to keep it warm. Or it could be that the foot waggle is part of a stretching exercise, loon yoga perhaps.



Loon Watcher volunteer sought for Lower Cullen Lake

Volunteers who live on lakes or regularly visit lakes can participate in the DNR's Minnesota Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey. "Loon watchers" observe loons on their lake and report at the end of the season. Volunteers provide information on nesting success, number of loons observed, interesting occurrences and problems that may negatively affect the loons.

The current Lower Cullen Loon Watcher volunteer would like to retire from the position and pass the baton (or binoculars) on to someone new. If you are interested in taking over this easy and enjoyable job, please contact Ann Beaver (beaver@uslink.net).

Another wonderful boating season is upon us! by Debi Oliverius

The Minnesota DNR launched a recent survey to gather data from Minnesota boaters regarding several areas of interest and concern. Areas of inquiry included type and size of boats used, frequency of use and on what size of waterways. Also, there were questions regarding boat registration fees and how boaters feel this money should be used to improve Minnesota boating (for example, improvements at public landings). The survey is also gathering data regarding safety issues and information regarding the use of larger boats on smaller waterways in the interest of not only safety but environmental concerns.

The University of Minnesota has proposed a three year project to evaluate impacts of boat-generated waves and propeller wash on our lakes and shorelines. The waves generated by watercraft interact with sediment and vegetation on the lake bottom and shorelines. The study will target the following outcomes:

- Data to inform watercraft operational guidance including recommended distances from shoreline for operation of enhanced wake boats to minimize erosion, damage to property and maintain safety for all.

- Data to inform the recommended lake depth for watercraft operation, including for wake boats. (Wake boats are engineered to create a massive wake nearly twice the size of a typical motorboat—large enough to allow surfing directly behind the boat.)

The Cullen chain of lakes is impacted by the above concerns, particularly due to the smaller size and configuration of each of the three lakes. Please keep in mind that a personal watercraft (PWC or jet ski) must travel at slow no-wake speed (5 mph or less) within 150 feet of non-motorized boats, the shore (unless launching or landing a skier), docks, swim rafts, swimmers or any moored or anchored boat. Operations of PWC is only allowed only from 9:30 A. M. to 1 hour before sunset.

Learning to live with bears

information excerpted from a DNR pamphlet

Editor's note: Reports have been received of a nuisance bear (or bears?) visiting cabins and homes along the south shore of Middle Cullen Lake and the north shore of Lower Cullen Lake. The bear has likely destroyed bird feeders and raided garbage cans in many other areas as well.

The black bear is a symbol of Minnesota's wild forest lands. Yet black bears also can live successfully in close proximity to people. Conflicts between people and bears can arise when bears, usually seeking food, cause damage to personal property. Such conflicts have increased as more people build homes and cabins and recreate in northern Minnesota.

Bears are common throughout the northern half of Minnesota, with Crow Wing County being near the southern edge of their primary habitat. They live primarily in forested areas and sometimes wander into the yards of rural residences.

A bear will take advantage of any foods available and will attempt to eat anything that resembles food in looks, smell, or taste. Bears are attracted to homes and cabins by garbage and bird feeders. Pet food, charcoal and gas grills, fruit trees, and gardens may also attract bears. Once a bear finds food around your home it will likely return.

To minimize bear problems on your property:

- *Reduce garbage odors. Rinse food cans and wrappers before disposal.
- *Compost vegetable scraps.
- *Keep meat scraps in your freezer until garbage pickup day.



- *Wash garbage cans regularly and use lime to cut odors.
- *Keep garbage cans in a bear-proof container or in a garage until the morning of pickup.
- *Remove bird feeders in the spring. If you persist in feeding during summer, remove seed, suet, and hummingbird feeders at night.
- *Keep pet food inside.
- *Keep barbecue grills and picnic tables clean.

If a bear comes in your yard:

- *Don't panic! Don't shoot! Don't approach it!
- *Most bears fear people and will leave when they see you. If a bear woofs, snaps its jaws, slaps the ground or brush, or bluff charges, **you are too close!**

If a bear refuses to leave:

- *Make loud noises or throw something to scare it away.
- *Always allow the bear an escape route.

If a bear is treed:

- *Leave it alone! The bear will usually go away when it feels safe.
- *Have people leave the area.
- *Remove your dog from the area.



Learn to tolerate bears. Trapping bears does not resolve the fundamental problem, which is an abundant food source provided by humans. Research and experience have clearly shown that removing the food that attracts bears resolves bear problems much more effectively than attempting to trap and destroy or relocate the bear.

If the DNR determines a bear must be trapped, the bear will likely be destroyed. Relocating a trapped bear isn't a solution — it may return to where it was caught or become a problem somewhere else. The DNR will not have bears trapped for causing minor property damage such as tearing down/destroying bird feeders or tipping over garbage cans.

2021 CLA Annual Meeting

The CLA Board of Directors has not yet met this year, so no firm decision on the membership's Annual Meeting can be announced. However, if the status of the Covid-19 pandemic allows for an in person meeting, it will be held **Saturday, August 14 at 9:00 a.m.**, so save the date!

More information will be shared in the summer newsletter (July) and via a special Annual Meeting mailing sent to all CLA members. Information will also be posted on the association's web site and on its Facebook page (both addresses located on the last page of this newsletter).

CULLEN LAKES ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 466

NISSWA, MN 56468

To protect, preserve, and enhance the three Cullen Lakes and their environs in order to ensure the continued vitality of the lakes, high quality fish and wildlife habitat, safe and healthful family living, and the survival of these natural gifts for future generations.

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