
THE CULLEN CURRENTS



Fall, 2021

2021 CLA Annual Meeting

More than 50 people attended this year's Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 14. Coffee and donuts were available throughout the meeting and members had the opportunity to view a variety of exhibits both before and after the meeting.

The business meeting began shortly after 9:00 a.m. Carol Lindahl, treasurer, presented her treasurer's report which was then approved by the membership. John MacGibbon, Nominating Committee chair, presented the slate of candidates for reelection/election to the Board of Directors for two-year terms. The slate of candidates as presented was elected by unanimous vote.

Paul Beilfuss, Budget & Finances Committee chair, presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 which the membership approved as presented. The budget shows member donations at the same level as this year and projects an operating deficit of \$1,680. He indicated that CLA will continue to have to treat CLP and he thanked all donors who supported this effort.

A drawing was held to select ten attendees to receive a CLA logo mug or glass. Mugs and glasses were also for sale after the meeting.

The business meeting ended with membership discussion of a variety of topics.

The business meeting was followed by an interesting and entertaining presentation, Uncommon Facts about Common Birds, by Stan Tekiela, nationally known naturalist, wildlife photographer, writer, and syndicated columnist. After the presentation, attendees were able to purchase a wide variety of books written and signed by Tekiela.

CLA Board elects its officers

The Board elected the following officers at its August 14 meeting:

President — Ann Beaver
Vice president — Debi Oliverius
Secretary — John MacGibbon
Treasurer — Carol Lindahl

Zebra mussels confirmed in Middle Cullen Lake



Gina Mikol. <http://www.scientificillustrator.com>

As of October 9, three Middle Cullen properties have reported finding zebra mussels on items taken out of the lake and/or found in the lake. These properties are on both the north and south shores of the lake and in the eastern half of the lake. Presumably more reports will be coming in as people remove their docks, lifts, watercraft, etc. this fall.

Curly leaf pondweed treatments have excellent results over the years

Clarke Aquatic Services has been treating the curly leaf pondweed (CLP) in the Cullen Lakes for nine years. Overall, the treatments have been very successful, as witnessed by the greatly reduced acreage needing to be treated in recent years.

Total eradication of CLP is not possible and thus is not the goal of the treatment. Rather, the goal is to minimize areas of CLP that interfere with recreational use of the lakes.

New Cullen Lakes videos on website and Facebook were a pleasure to produce

by C.B. Bylander, Education Committee chair

This past summer your Cullen Lakes Association produced two videos that can be viewed on our website and Facebook page. The three-minute movies include scenes you'll likely enjoy, including aerial views of all three lakes.

If you are among those who have already viewed the videos, thanks for watching. We appreciate it. If you are among those who haven't watched the videos, well, that is easy to change. Just go to the Cullen Lakes Association page on Facebook or the "Lakes" page on the Cullen Lakes Association website. That's where you can watch a video on our chain of lakes and another on the fish within them.

Why the videos? Two reasons.

The primary reason is to keep our lake association strong. We have a great association because a high percentage of property owners are members who truly care about the Cullens. As a board, we decided one way to sustain this unity is to visually show how water connects us. So, we scripted a video that shows where Upper Cullen starts, Lower Cullen empties, the benefits of lake protection and the joys of water recreation. Similarly, fishing is an activity that connects us. So, we created a video that talks about things we can do keep our fish populations healthy. The fishing video includes scenes of a Department of Natural Resources fisheries crew doing survey work on Lower Cullen this past summer.

The second reason for the videos is to honor Lowell and Morraine Norden, who donated more than \$46,000 to our lake association following their passing. This unprecedented donation (they had been cabin owners on Lower Cullen) is kept in a special "legacy" account, meaning funds are to be used only for projects with lasting or broad impacts. The videos fit that bill.

For what's it is worth, the bill – a mere \$1,500 per video – was quite small thanks to the volunteerism of board member and others. We saved money because:

- I wrote the scripts.
- John McGibbon agreed to narrate them.
- Ann Beaver and Debi Oliverius were "talent," kayaking all three lakes as a vehicle to keep the narrative flowing.
- John Maguire arranged for Jessica Hirschey and Matt Talese to do a cool jet-ski shot. Maguire also enlisted Virginia Maguire to rustle-up friends for a boating scene on Lower Cullen's sunken island.

- Michael Bylander volunteered to do the slalom skiing.
- Julia Mehaffey volunteered to do the paddleboarding.
- Little Lou Thomas gladly jumped from the dock into the arms of grandma Diane MacGibbon. Lou flashed a winning smile into the camera right off the bat, which was perfect as the scene aimed to evoke an intergenerational connection to water.
- Mark Ambroz, the videographer we hired, was very efficient and easy to work with.

Who knows if we will produce another video in the future? Time will tell. However, one thing is certain. Video can be effective way to tell stories of the Cullens . . . and I suspect we can all envision another tale to tell.

Take care. Have a good winter.

Wanted: Lake photos!



Did you take any photos at the lake this year that you really like? Are they photos that others might enjoy, too? Please consider sharing them on CLA's web site and/or Facebook page:

www.cullenlakesassoc.org
and www.facebook.com/cullenlakesassociation.

Caring for Land and Waters

This is the place for the naturally curious to discover so many ways to take care of the place you treasure. Explore ways to love your lake, learn more about water quality, and find contacts to help. It's all available at www.loveyourlake.info.

The site currently includes 36 short articles, each a one to three minute read. "As a blog, the site is never really done," said Jodi Eberhardt, the creator of the site and board member of the Pine River Watershed Association and the Land and Waters Trust. "We just add to it as we have things to share." Some of the articles on the site are: Preserve or Restore Native Shoreline Vegetation; Leave a Legacy with a Conservation Easement; How to Plant a Rain Garden; What Does Phosphorus Do to a Lake?; Protect Your Septic System from Freezing; What Causes a Septic System to Fail?; Protect Drinking Water; When It Rains It Pollutes; and Practice Low-Impact Boating.

Everyday conservation: Burn cleaner

from the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer
January-February 2021

Do you burn wood in a stove, fireplace insert, or other appliance to help heat your home or cabin in winter? If so, make sure you're burning as cleanly as possible.



Wood smoke is especially polluting. It emits the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and methane, and it contains toxic and fine particulates that can harm health. In Minnesota, wood burning is the largest source of particulate pollution.

The most efficient wood stoves, fireplace inserts, and other wood-burning appliances — including outdoor wood boilers and furnaces — are those certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to meet new, cleaner standards. These appliances are the only ones allowed to be sold in Minnesota since May 15, 2020. If you have an appliance sold before then, consider upgrading to a new model. A bonus: Low-emissions appliances are often the most efficient, meaning you spend less time chopping wood and reloading them.

Anyone who heats with wood should always take these steps to improve efficiency and safety:

*Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood. Use a moisture meter to ensure your wood is less than 20 percent moisture.

*Maintain your stove, fireplace, or other wood-burning appliance.

*Have your chimney cleaned regularly by a certified chimney sweep.

For more information on wood smoke and cleaner burning, see www.pca.state.mn.us/air/wood-smoke.

Currents on the Cullens

New Owners:

Bradley Waidelich, Lower Cullen (L77)
Bruce & Jody Gebhart, Lower Cullen (L59)

Deaths:

Joe Hogan, Lower Cullen (L106)

Year end report (fiscal year ended 9/30/21)

by Carol Lindahl, treasurer

Income

CLP Donations	\$40,450.00
Membership Dues	6,425.00
General Support Donations	525.00
Interest	268.54
Merchandise Sales	70.00
Grants	4,050.00
Legacy Fund Transfer to Operating Fund	3,200.00
Total Income	\$54,988.54

Expenses

Administration Committee

Annual Meeting/Supplies	\$344.28
Annual Meeting Speaker	300.00
Room Use Donation	250.00
LARA Membership	75.00
Soteroplos Scholarship	250.00

Sub Total **\$1,219.28**

CLP Treatment **\$28,254.82**

Water Quality Monitoring **\$720.00**

Education

Guide/Map Update	\$175.99
Newsletter Postage	496.74
Newsletter Printing	816.88
Web Site Management	302.20

Sub Total **\$1,791.81**

Membership **\$748.50**

Other

Board Liability Insurance	\$873.00
Misc.: Postage, PO Box	222.81
Special Projects (Legacy Fund)	3,200.00

Sub Total **\$4,295.81**

Total Expenses **\$37,030.22**

Current Assets

Checking Account	\$ 6,452.91
Business MM — General Fund	54,896.31
Total	\$61,349.22

Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation

Investment Funds

CLA Legacy Fund	\$ 58,903.48
CLA Activities Fund	117,604.55

Editor's note: Following are the committee reports that were presented at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Administration Committee

Debi Oliverius, chair

The Administration Committee organized the 2021 Annual Meeting in conjunction with the full board of directors. Each year the organization strives to provide an interesting program and displays. This year, Stan Tekiela, a naturalist, author, and syndicated columnist, is presenting an ornithology program entitled Uncommon Facts About Common Birds. Postcard reminders were mailed to all CLA members and several were also distributed in the community.

Budget and Finances Committee

Paul Beilfuss, chair

The proposed operational budget for the 2022 fiscal year was approved by the Board on July 24, 2021 and it was submitted to the membership for approval. The FY 2021 budget is well-balanced regarding income and expenditures according to monthly treasurer's reports.

The greatest portion of budget expenditures is the annual cost of CLP control. The remainder of the annual operational expense budget is relatively modest and regularly scrutinized through the treasurer's monthly report. The committee will once again seek CLA members' considerable generosity in the 2021 membership mailing to support the budget for CLP treatment next spring.

Education Committee

C.B. Bylander, chair

The Education Committee proposed to the board that Legacy funds be used to produce a video on the Cullen Lakes Chain that would promote good land and water stewardship. The board approved this request. As committee chair I identified a contractor, developed a script and worked with other board members to produce the video, which will be available in August. Cost was \$1,500. The three minute video will be added to the Cullen Lakes Association website and promoted on Facebook and other social media.

Environmental Issues Committee

John Maguire, chair

The Environmental Committee looked into participating in a Get the Lead Out program promoted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because the deadline for participation was before the CLA Board could discuss it in full this spring, both this committee and the Fisheries Committee decided against participating in the program.

Both committees believed we could get the information out to our members via the newsletter.

The committee also looked into the Lake Steward Program initiated by the Gull Chain of Lakes Association and promoted by the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR). MLR would like to have lake associations model the Gull Lake program and would like to initiate the program statewide to enhance and protect water quality. We will continue to research and explore the possibility of CLA adopting this program. In many ways it promotes the same issues and goals as CLA's previous Lake Friendly and Most Improved Shoreline Awards and could serve as a replacement for those awards. We submitted several related websites for inclusion in the summer newsletter. If you would like to take the MLR Lake Steward's quiz, simply google MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates, Lake Steward Program and click on the link. You will find a simple 10 question quiz.

We alerted the newsletter editor about the arrival in northwestern Crow Wing County of the invasive and deadly oak wilt and suggest an article about it should be included in the summer newsletter.

Fisheries Committee

C.B. Bylander, chair

The Fisheries Committee proposed to the board that Legacy funds be used to produce a video on the fish of the Cullen Lakes Chain that would promote maintaining quality fishing. The board approved this request. As committee chair I identified a contractor, developed a script and worked with other board members to produce the video, which will be available in August. Cost was \$1,500. The fish video will be added to the Cullen Lakes Association website and promoted on Facebook and other social media.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducted a fish population assessment of Upper, Middle and Lower Cullen Lakes this summer. This type of assessment is done about once every five years. Assessment results will be posted on the DNR website later this year. Video of some of this work will be included in the upcoming Cullen Lakes Association Fish of the Cullen Lakes video.

Invasive Species Committee

Ann Beaver and Carol Lindahl, co-chairs

Curly leaf pondweed (CLP) In early 2021 co-chair Carol Lindahl filed the paperwork with the DNR to renew our Invasive Aquatic Plant Management permits for treatment of CLP in the three Cullen Lakes. She also applied for DNR grants for the treatment in all three lakes. Grants were awarded through a lottery system this year and Upper and Middle Cullen Lakes were awarded grants of \$1,650

and \$2,400 respectively. One requirement of the grants was that we had to have the lakes surveyed by a contractor other than our treatment contractor. This we did for a cost of \$1,000 per lake. Our contractor, Clarke Aquatic Services, conducted the treatment on May 19. Acres treated were 7.7 in Upper, 5.5 in Middle, and 18.9 in Lower. Clarke did a post treatment survey/assessment on June 17 and 18. They found the treatment was 75% effective in Upper and Middle Cullen and 95% effective in Lower Cullen.

Purple loosestrife We again ask you to monitor your own shoreline and either pull out/dig up or poison any loosestrife you find. There is a display on this invasive species at this Annual Meeting or you can find information on the CLA web site. Please refer to it and familiarize yourself with the plant's identifying characteristics. One mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually, so if this invasive species is not dealt with, our shorelines can be taken over by it. *If it's on your shoreline, it is your responsibility to get rid of it.*

Zebra mussels This invasive species has become widespread in Lower Cullen Lake. Last fall many people had to scrape or power wash the mussels off the watercraft and other equipment they had left in the water all summer. Zebra mussels attach themselves to anything solid in the lake and their microscopic juveniles can hitch a ride in any Lower Cullen Lake water. Please do all you can to prevent them from hitching a ride to another lake in your watercraft. Although there have yet to be any reports of zebra mussels in Middle Cullen, people should be on the lookout for them in the lake or on equipment that has been in the lake. If you are on Middle or Upper Cullen Lake and discover what you think might be a zebra mussel, please report it to the DNR and to one of us.

Land Development Committee

Ann Beaver, chair

The only land use application before the Crow Wing County, Niswaga, or Pequot Lakes Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment this past year that we were notified of was a request by an Upper Cullen property owner for a variance from the Ordinary High Water (OHW) setback for a proposed guest cabin and a minor setback variance for a septic system from the bluff impact zone. We submitted a letter of objection to the OHW setback, citing another location for the guest cabin/guest quarters that would not require a variance. We cited what we thought were the relevant parts of the county ordinance that supported our objection, but the county board of adjustment decided the variances requested were reasonable. The property owner sent the CLA a letter explaining his intentions for the property, saying he respected our submitted comments and wanted to give us some additional background information.

Membership Committee

Carol Lindahl, chair

CLA membership currently stands at 267. This includes 246 current property owners, 12 associate members (former owners or family members of current owners), and 9 complimentary memberships (new owners). We are grateful for the on-going support and participation of our members.

Nominating Committee

John MacGibbon, chair

The CLA Board currently has 12 members, the minimum required by the association's by-laws. Of those 12, the terms of 7 are ending as of the 2021 Annual Meeting. Due to time constraints, Mike Lawrow has chosen not to stand for re-election. We thank Mike for his two years of service to the association. Two Middle Cullen residents have expressed interest in serving on the Board.

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of candidates to the Cullen Lakes Association membership for election to the Board of Directors to two-year terms.

current board members:

Paul Beilfuss	Lower Cullen
Patty Hicks	Middle Cullen
Dan Hurley	Lower Cullen
Joel Knutson	Middle Cullen
John Maguire	Middle Cullen
Debi Oliverius	Middle Cullen

new board member candidates:

Lora Grauman	Middle Cullen
Randy Steenholdt	Middle Cullen

Summer 2021 was one for the record books!

The temperatures were hot, above average for most of the season. The skies were mostly sunny. The rain was almost non-existent. The lake levels kept going down. By late summer you were lucky if you could get your boat off the lift without muscling it off. And once you were out on the lake, you had to stay well off shore because the aquatic plants appeared to be on steroids and your propeller or paddle kept getting entangled in the plants.

If you remember the article in the summer newsletter, this overabundance of aquatic plants was due to perfect growing conditions (heat and sunlight that could easily penetrate the areas of the lake where plants grow because the lake level was drastically down).

Because aquatic vegetation is beneficial to a lake's ecology, the DNR limits the amount and location of the vegetation property owners (and lake associations) are allowed to remove.

Let's hope for a more normal and less "weedy" summer of 2022!

2022 Operating budget

Paul Beilfuss, Budget & Finances Committee chair

The following budget was approved by the membership at the August 14 Annual Meeting.

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 6,000
Donations (Curly-leaf Pondweed)	38,000
Interest income	<u>250</u>
Total Estimated Income	\$44,250

Expenditures

Administration Committee

Annual Meeting:	
Supplies, Postage, Printing	\$250
Food	75
Board Meeting Room Donation	250
LARA Membership	75
Soteroplos Scholarship	250
MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates Membership	200
Guest Speaker	<u>300</u>
	\$1,400

Water Quality Committee

Water Quality Monitoring	\$750
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Education Committee

Map/Guide Update	\$ 200
Newsletter Postage	500
Newsletter Printing	1,000
Web Site Management	<u>325</u>
	\$2,025

Aquatic Invasive Species Committee

AIS Annual Control (Clarke)	\$40,000
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Membership Committee

Supplies and Printing	\$250
Postage	300
New Owner Packets	<u>80</u>
	\$630

Other

Board Liability Insurance	\$900
Miscellaneous	<u>225</u>
	\$1,125

Total Expenditures **\$45,930**

2022 Budget (Deficiency) **(\$1,680)**

(Estimated income less estimated expenditures)

CLA Committees — 2021-2022

Administration

Debi Oliverius — chair
Paul Beilfuss
Joel Knutson
John MacGibbon

Budget & Finances

Paul Beilfuss — chair
Joel Knutson
Carol Lindahl
Randy Steenholdt

Education

C.B. Bylander — chair
Ann Beaver
John MacGibbon
Debi Oliverius

Environmental Issues

John Maguire — chair
Lora Graumann
Patty Hicks
Dan Hurley
Denny Opsahl

Fisheries

C.B. Bylander — chair
Dan Hurley
Joel Knutson

Invasive Species

Ann Beaver — co-chair
Carol Lindahl — co-chair
C.B. Bylander
John Maguire
Debi Oliverius
Denny Opsahl

Lake Management Planning

president — chair
all committee chairs

Land Development

Ann Beaver — chair
Patty Hicks
Randy Steenholdt

Membership

Carol Lindahl — chair
Ann Beaver

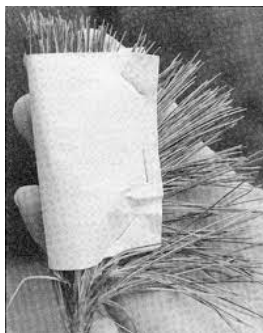
Water Quality

Ann Beaver — chair
Eric & Denise Whitson
Debi Oliverius
Denny Opsahl

Protect your white pines this fall

White pine buds are a favorite food of deer and need protection to discourage deer browsing. This can be done using bud caps or fencing.

A bud cap is a lightweight, 4" x 6" piece of paper that is folded in half and stapled around the terminal shoot and bud of the tree. Use at least three staples and catch some needles with the staples to help hold the paper in place.



Deer browsing of side branches is usually not detrimental to the health and survival of young white pines.



Bud capping should be done in the fall before snow covers the ground. Trees can grow up through the paper during the next growing season, so bud caps do not need removal unless you find them too unsightly. Reapply bud caps every year until the tree is at least four feet tall and out of easy reach of deer.

Consider fencing seedlings and small trees when the threat of deer is great, which is usually the case in the Cullen Lakes area.

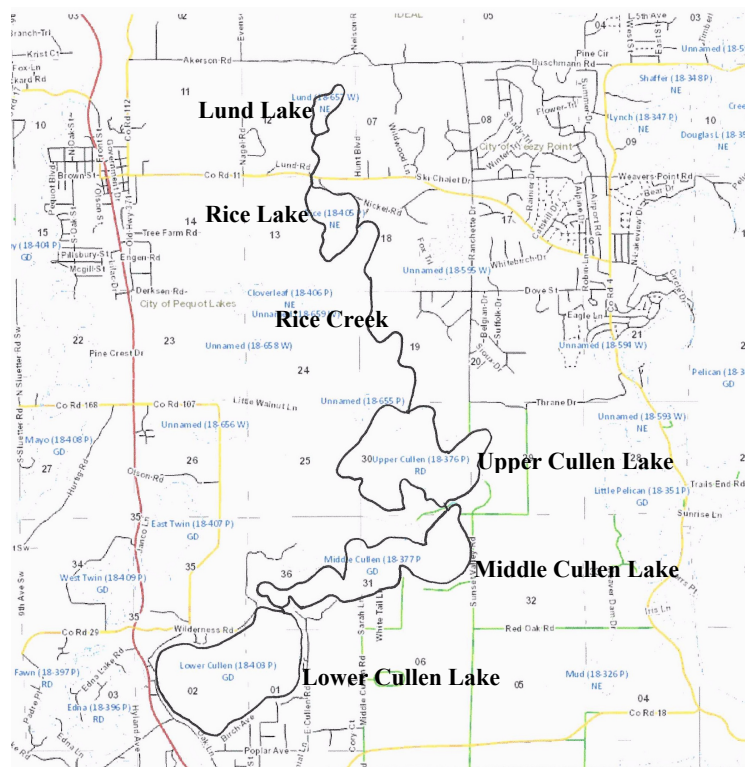
Encountered any wasps lately?

Wasps are out in force looking for food this time of year. This isn't the only time they are foraging for food, but it is the time that people are most likely to encounter them. The best way to avoid wasps is to remove what is attracting them, which is food, beverages and garbage.

Late summer/early fall is when wasp colonies are at their peak. Wasps have been working all summer long, the queen has been reproducing, and the colonies have been growing. Some wasp colonies have several thousand individuals at this point in time.

Wasp nests are not particularly messy. However, if you find them in places where people will come near them, you may want to get rid of them to avoid being unexpectedly stung. They don't reuse a nest the following year, so if you can wait until the first or second good solid freeze, the wasps will disappear on their own.

Headwaters of the Cullen Lakes



Interesting facts about the Cullen Lakes and their watershed

The following facts are from a summary of a report prepared by the CLA Water Quality Committee in 1991 which was reviewed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Estimated Lake volumes

Upper Cullen — 1.8 billion gallons
Middle Cullen — 2.6 billion gallons
Lower Cullen — 3.3 billion gallons

Size of watersheds

The total area drained by the three Cullen Lakes is about 18 square miles. It runs south from a point a mile or so above the northern Crow Wing County boundary. It is essentially the drainage area of Rice Creek (in some records named Cullen Brook) running from Lund and Rice Lakes into Upper Cullen, with the Sibley Lake watershed on the west and the Pelican Lake watershed on the east.

Upper Cullen gets the brunt of the drainage. About 14 of the 18 square miles drain directly into Upper, only about 2.5 square miles drain directly in Middle, and 1.5 square miles drain into Lower.

Each lake discharges considerably more water than it receives as surface water from the bodies above it in the chain, the difference apparently coming from groundwater.