VOLUME 22 ISSUE 3

FALL 2013

Lake Association News

Website: http://jgla.org Email: lakeassociation@hickorytech.net

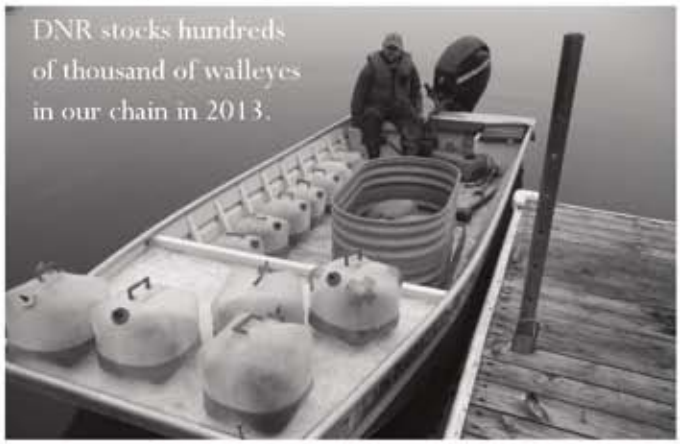
GREATER JEFFERSON GERMAN LAKES ASSOCIATION

FALL MEETING NOV. 16

Our annual meeting will be held on Saturday, November 16 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church on the north side of German Lake.

The meeting will start at 10:00, please come early so we can start on time.

This is your chance to provide feedback on the issues that concern our lakes. The county has been mum on providing a venue for public input concerning the septic inventory. Ditto for funding the sirens if we would raise the money to install them.



DNR stocks hundreds of thousand of walleyes in our chain in 2013.

The same goes for the improvements to county #104 which have been promised for years.

These topics and more should provide lively discussion.

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2013 Dues

It is not too late to join the other property owners who have committed to improving the lakes by joining the Lake Association.

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Greater Jefferson German Lakes Association

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"How do you explain the paradox of why people love lakes, but continue to do things that ruin them?"

Milfoil Survey results:

When those on the Lake Watch email list were asked if they thought milfoil had increased, decreased or stayed the same:

- 54 % indicated slight to significant increases
- 40% indicated a decrease or no change
- 6% said yes

There were lots of comments. See below:

I think in front of property and also lake. Don't know about other lakes

Yes, Yes and I assume Yes. This year the weeds appeared to come a second time. I hope we can do something to help the lake chain.

Yes, they all increased. We are on the far end of West Jefferson and we have always had the early weeds so we are used to that. This second crop was new to us. As we are out on the lake we noticed weed areas that we have never seen before so it is definitely spreading. We love our West Jefferson and know all the lakes are facing the same issues.

This was our 33rd year at this location, I can see no difference since we first arrived.

Thanks for sending this out. I think we have seen a big increase (see responses below), but not sure if I am correctly identifying the plant. What have you seen?
Through my observations I believe the milfoil has increased in all of the above areas.
That being said I do not support any use of chemicals. I think there is a lot more that individuals can do such as creating buffer zones, not spray dandelions and cleaning boats of weeds. Thanks.

I have been coming up and fishing East Jefferson since the late 70's early 80's and this year is absolutely the worst I Have ever seen it.

I didn't see much if any milfoil in front of our cabin this year.

None washed up on our shoreline from the boats cutting it off and I didn't see any floating around the dock.

I can't speak for any other part of East Jefferson.

Curly leaf pond weed was still there.

This morning, a fishing-type boat bearing two people roared to about 40 feet off the end of our dock and stopped, the guy in front threw out something like a grappling hook, pulled it in, looked at it, repeated the process, then they roared off to another location. ???? (editor's note. It looks like someone is actually monitoring the milfoil. Does anyone know who it is?)

I don't think I can answer this question as related to East Lake Jefferson or the other lakes in the chain, but I have been cleaning weeds in front of my property for what seems considerably longer than the other 21 years I've lived here. Even that is only a guess. This week has been extremely heavy with two days of wind from the northwest blowing them on the shore.

we do believe that the milfoil has stayed the same at this time of the year but the curly leaf seems to have increased.

Item 1. We have noticed an increase in milfoil in Middle Jefferson, but is seems to be located along the trolling patterns that the bass fishermen use during tournaments. This year the algae in Middle Jefferson has been so bad that the pondweed and milfoil are not able to be seen. I am not aware of the amounts of milfoil in the other lakes except that people I have come in contact with have stated that it is a growing problem.

Item 2.A lot of lake residents are getting irate at the county's lack of action when it comes to agricultural runoff. evidently they are not aware of the fairly inexpensive filtration systems available to treat farm runoff and yet they will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of grant money for a somewhat useless septic inventory. Most of that money could have funded a very large number of lakeshore improvement programs that we never see funding for. If you look at the overall cost of the inventory to date and the total number of properties inspected, it was a real money maker for the company doing the inspection. (They inspected my property and spent less than one hour doing it, including pumping my tank). Take that times the number of properties inspected and the price per property inspected was extremely high. To me it didn't give a very clear picture of the problems we have in our chain of lakes. It only addressed a small part of the problems.

Item 3. We have an incapable, underfunded Minnesota DNR who acts largely in the metro area and other locations that have political power. Until that situation changes we will never see our county lakes improved upon without direct intervention and funding by each property owner.

Item 4. I am completely baffled as to why we have to put up with low lake levels during dry years just to appease the Cannon River Watershed when all it would take is to raise the discharge gates on German lake.

Item 5. I am probably wrong in most of my assumptions and opinions, but I am not alone in being wrong if that is the case.

The answer to all three questions is, increased.

Thank God I haven't seen any on west jeff and I hope I never do. Nice clean little lake.

The milfoil on East Jefferson in front of our home has stayed the same from its worst a couple of years ago. On the lake it is the worst in the Summer Breeze area.
We have had a second bloom of curly pond weeds. In our 20+ years on the lake this has never happened.

The Milfoil in front of our property has increase a little

It has stayed the same (in front on our property. I would say it has increased slightly over the years on Little Jefferson. I notice the spread mostly in between the first and second bays (from boat landing)

the millfoil on my lake (big jeff) seems to have stayed the same as last year.

(Continued on page 5)

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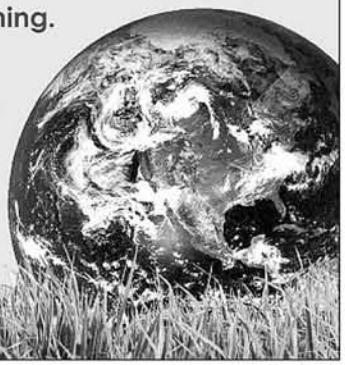

More Milfoil comments!

(Continued from page 3)

Without doubt the mill foil has more than doubled since last year. Our end of the lake is terribly loaded with this crap. In addition now we are seeing a increase of slimy algae that also I believe is a direct result of the vast amounts of nitrogen being pumped through the drain tiles or run off from the adjacent fields so they farmers can reach for 300 bushels per acre.

The milfoil in front of our property has gone from a couple of plants to dozens, The plant in Middle Jefferson Have really increased ,East jeff has also increased. I don't know about the other lakes haven't been on them

We have a cabin on big Jeff. NW corner by Jefferson Shores French Addition. We have considerably less Milfoil than last year. We did spray this year though. Two crops of curly leaf this year , early crop pretty bad.

It appears to be getting worse all over the lakes. In front of our house it is spreading each year.

I think this year it was quite thick in front of our dock. Same with the rest of the lake. It seems like it has increased a little from last year. I don't know about the other lakes. The curly pond weed was especially bad this spring.

There has been a significant decrease in milfoil in front of our cabin and in the lake this year. I have no idea why.

Maybe a slight decrease in all areas. Not much different. South shore middle, Jeff

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June 10 meeting of the Jefferson German Lakes Sewer Board

The results of the survey are in. Peter Miller of Wenck and Associates presented the full report to more than 100 people who packed the 4H building in LeCenter.

The following is a summary of the findings:

- 675 property owners were sent letters offering a free inspection and pumping of their tank
- 344 volunteered to participate
- 142 were compliant
- 57 were compliant but were using a temporary solution (such as a holding tank)
- 145 were non-compliant

The Sewer Board announced that they would be meeting in July and August to decide on how this information would be used and to take additional public input. (Editor's note: To the best of our knowledge these public input meetings never occurred.) They also took input from the public.
Below are some samples:

- This is a large number on non-compliant systems. We need a permanent solution.
- Are there enough installers to get this done by December 31, 2017?
- We need to have an extended time frame so a cluster system can be designed and installed.
- I was compliant in the 90"s. Why am I not compliant now?
- Many of us volunteered to be tested knowing we would probably fail. Will this be enforced only against the volunteers or will all the rest be required to do inspections?
- If I upgrade my system, will my property's assessed value and taxes increase?
- If non-volunteers get inspected now, will non-compliant systems also get to wait until the end of 2017 to upgrade?
- With more than half of our systems either non-compliant or on holding tanks, now is the time to look at all of the options for our lakes: individual systems, cluster systems, city sewer or some combination of the above.
- The county should stay out of the solution. Each subdivision should find its own solution.
- Everyone should be required to be inspected before the deadline
- Should property owners on the lakes have representation on the sewer board?
- Should we be doing upgrades on non-compliant systems now or wait until we know more about the cost of other options?

"Lake Watch" alerts

If you were on "Lake Watch Alerts" you would have received this alert in June. So far we have 259 valid email addresses who have signed up for our "Lake Watch" email alerts. Thanks for your interest.

If you are not receiving alerts and would like them, please let me know.

Lake Watch" email list. Contact the Lake Association if you would like to be on the "Lake Watch" list. lakeassociation@hickorytech.net or buster@hickorytech.net

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Letter to Le Sueur County Commissioners

From

Greater Jefferson German Lakes Association

1. The Sewer district should require that property owners who were eligible, but elected not to participate in the JGSIP and who do not have a current certificate of compliance on file with Le Sueur County, submit a completed compliance inspection (paid for by the system owner) within 1 year after the end of the study.

2. Any property that does not provide a certificate of compliance within 1 year of the study be considered non-compliant.

3. All non-compliant systems will be given until 12-31-2017 to become compliant.

4. The Sewer District should compare the long term costs and benefits of individual septic systems, or group systems such as cluster septic systems or city sewer type systems, or a combination of the three.

5 Persons seeking permits for non-compliant (but not failing) systems must be informed that group systems are a possibility and they may want to check with the county or others in their development before going ahead on their own.

6. The Sewer Board should be restructured, to include the 5 county commissioners and 2 members of the public who are property owners on the Jefferson German chain of lakes.

7. The Lake Association Board for the sake of clarity of understanding will be glad to answer any questions the Sewer Board may have, or to meet with you to discuss the above recommendations.

CANNON RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP'S

WATERSHED WATCHER

VOLUME XXII, NO. 3 OF 4 AUGUST 2013

Sewer System Installation Begins on Roberds Lake

On July 29th, construction began on the new Roberds Lake sewer system. The start of construction is the culmination of over five years of work by residents around the lake, county staff, and many others to make this project a reality. Once completed, this will be the largest sewer system, with over 200 homes connected, that CRWP's Southeast Minnesota Wastewater Initiative has helped put in place and the nineteenth sewer system CRWP has helped complete over the last eleven years.

Aaron visits the construction site on Belview Trail.

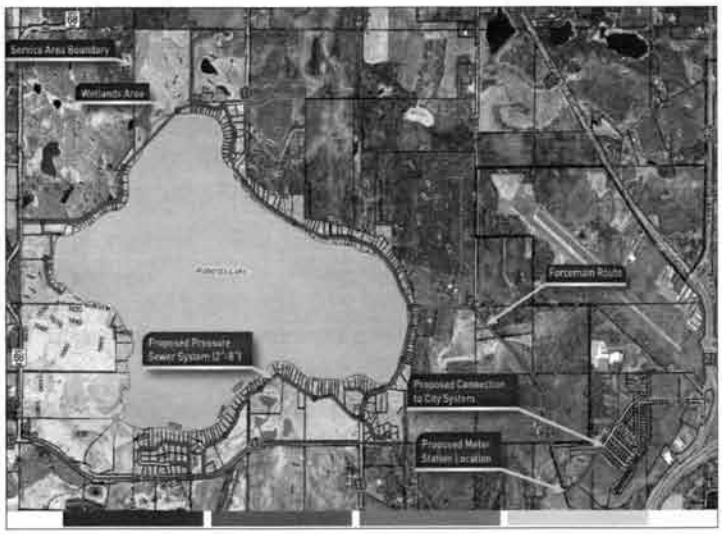
Constructing a new sewer system around a lake is a challenging process because of the existing infrastructure (homes, roads, wells, driveways, etc.) all squished together in a small area, and the environmental sensitivity of the area. To deal with these issues, the sewer lines will be installed using a technique called directional drilling.

In directional drilling no trench is opened up to lay the lines in the ground. Instead, a machine bores a hole a few feet underground where the sewer line will go and then the sewer line is pulled through the hole. There is a tracking device on the boring equipment underground which allows the operator of the machine to steer the boring equipment to keep the sewer lines located in the right place and at the correct depth. Small pits are dug at the beginning and end boring run to collect water and allow pipes to be connected.

The boring can be done under roads and driveways and causes minimal disruption to the existing landscape. This not only reduces damage to roads and disruption on people's properties, it also reduces the potential erosion into Roberds Lake caused by the project.

The main sewer line around Roberds Lake and the connection to the City of Faribault's sewer system is scheduled to be completed by September 15th. Roughly half of the properties should be connected to the new sewer system this Fall, with the rest being connected Spring 2014.

By Aaron Wills



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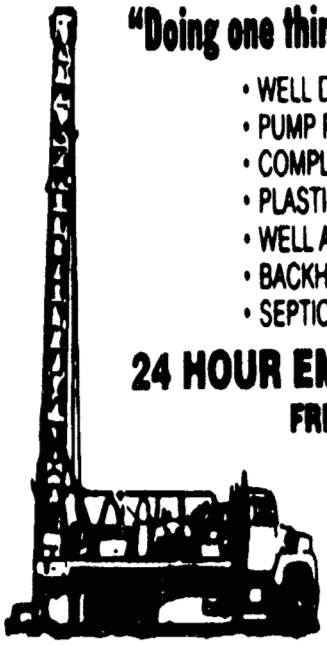

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Paucity of research in area is one motivator

By Dan Linehan
dlinehan@mankatofreepress.com

Our knowledge of pre-European settlements in Le Sueur County is just not good.

"There is virtually nothing known about the county," said Ronald Schirmer, an associate professor of anthropology at Minnesota State University. "It's awful."

Unlike their counterparts in the metro area and northern Minnestoa, many south-central counties are likewise undocumented.

Schirmer is leading a study to help change that. The Le Sueur County survey began last month and is funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, which receives 19.75 percent of the sales tax revenue from the Legacy amendment.

Schirmer and his student assistants were in Le Center on Saturday at an event hosted by the Le Sueur County Historical Society. Visitors crowded around tables in a sort of "Antiques Roadshow" for Native

Please see SURVEY, Page A7

SURVEY: Le Sueur County history researched

Continued from Page A1

American artifacts.

Donna Schumacher brought two stone cutting tools that Schirmer said were between 3,000 and 8,000 years old. She had found them at her parents' farm about 35 years ago and had wondered about them.

A paucity of data

The 94 documented archaeological sites in the county barely begin to describe the people who lived here before Europeans came, Schirmer said.

And most of those sites don't give us good information, he said, because only 30 of them have more information about when the artifacts were created. Only one of the sites has an artifact, in this case a projectile point fragment, from before about 7,500 B.C. It is believed that Native Americans settled here about 12,000 years ago, Schirmer said.

The study set a goal of 20 new sites, but about a month in they've already found 30.

The people's help

Schirmer said the study will attempt to cover as much of Le Sueur County as it can, but they're still looking for residents who know good places to look.

For a long time, archaeology has been confined to something of an ivory tower, Schirmer said. His predecessors didn't do much talking with area historical societies or amateur collectors.

"I'm trying to undo that," he said. Part of that effort involves talking to land owners and private collectors — "informants," in academic language.

Though he didn't say it, part of that work also involves treating amateurs' contributions with respect, which appeared to be a skill of Schirmer's.

"It's a wonderfully important little piece," he told someone while inspecting their artifact. "I would love to see where this is from."

Landowners don't have to worry about losing their property rights if Schirmer's team comes across an artifact, he said.

There's one exception, for burial mounds, but if the land is already cultivated it can continue being farmed even if a burial mound is discovered. While the discovery of a burial mound could prevent land from being developed, these surveys are typically done in natural areas that likely wouldn't be built upon in any case.

The state doesn't divulge the location of archaeological sites, so landowners don't have to worry about curious visitors if something is found on their land.

Collectors, likewise, are at little risk as long as they are looking in private land with the permission of the landowner. It is illegal to collect on public land without a permit.

Schirmer said the study will attempt to cover as much of Le Sueur County as it can, but they're still looking for residents who know good places to look. (He can be reached at ronald.schirmer@mnsu.edu.)

Art and Barb Straub of rural Le Sueur are two of those amateurs. Art said he and his wife are "river rats" who love to spend time along the Minnesota. The land has been in their family since 1857, and they brought a handful of artifacts for Schirmer to inspect.

One, a pottery shard, is from around 1150, Schirmer said. The Native Americans who made this pot flecked it with glittery pieces of granite to make it stronger.

They also brought a bone tool that Schirmer called a "flesher." It's used to remove fat from animal skins. Though it seems counter-intuitive that a bone would persist outdoors for very long,

Schirmer said he's discovered bone tools thousands of years old.

The study is slated to be finished next June, and Schirmer said it will include a report — understandable by the layman — of what they found.

He praised the Legacy amendment for an infusion of money into what had been a languishing area of study.

"It's literally a renaissance for Minnesota archaeology," he said.

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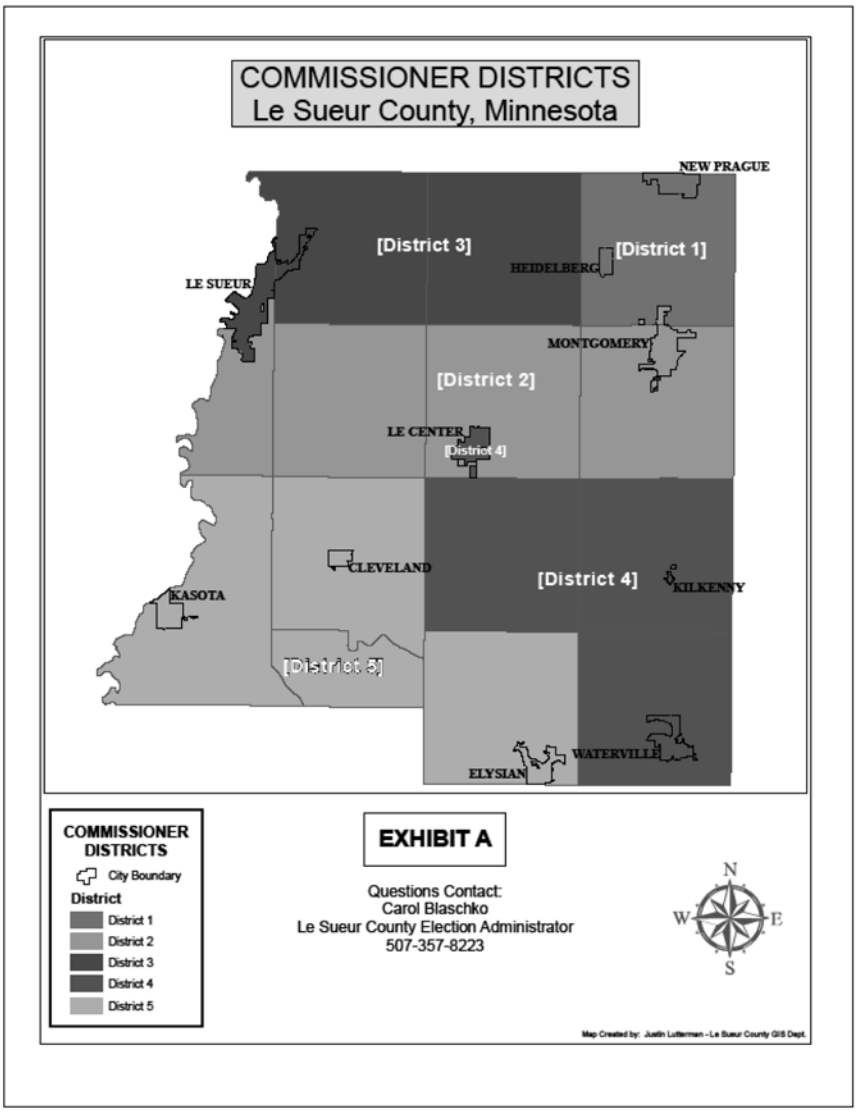

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The Greater Jefferson-German Lakes Association

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Mission Statement

The mission and purpose of the Association is to:

- Promote and coordinate water management, water quality, and water control in the Jefferson German lakes water basin.
- Further communication between members of the Association and other parties interested in the Jefferson German lakes water basin.
- And do all other thins of common interest and benefit with regard to water management, water quality, and water control regarding the Jefferson German lakes water basin.