

In this issue:

Page 1

Assn President
Message

Page 2

LID Nominees

Township News

Page 3

Dates to
Remember

Lake Association
Board of Directors

Membership Comm

Page 4

LID President

Page 5

AIS Vol. Opportunity

Book
Recommendation

Page 6

Lake Survey

Page 7

Weather & Safety

Page 8

Legal Notice

Page 9

Jokes

Page 10
Lake Steward
Committee

The Chatty Loon



Upper South Long Lake Improvement Assn. Newsletter
PO Box 201, Brainerd MN 56401

Spring 2026
Edited by Jodi Hickey

President's Message



Hey there to all of you Upper South Long Lakers! I'm told by those in the know that it was a very good year for ice fishing. But the winter of '25 & 26 is now behind us as we look forward to a new summer on the lake.

Some members were surprised by the dues increase this spring. Despite efforts to keep everyone informed, some still miss the news. Please let your friends and neighbors around the lake know the reason for the increase—it was discussed and voted on at our membership meeting. Encourage them to attend meetings and read the newsletter thoroughly.

The Lake Association's top priority is enhancing the lake's water quality and appearance. It takes all of us working together to make this happen. Each individual property owner must assess their unique situation and determine how their property impacts the overall quality of the water they swim in, boat in and fish in. No matter if you own 50 feet or 300 feet of shoreline, or if you're an association member or not, it's important to take responsibility and care for your property. We all share the role of being stewards of the lake.

AED placement update: We are struggling to find just the right spot for our second AED. If you have a garage with power and near a road, or a power pole with your meter attached near a road and are willing for us to hook into your electricity, please let us know. You will be compensated for the extra expense on your bill.

After completing coursework through the University of Minnesota Extension Program, **Mary Ann Laubach** has successfully attained recognition as a **Minnesota Master Naturalist**. She is continuing her education to pursue additional certifications. We appreciate her dedication and are fortunate to have her serving on the LID board of directors (Ruth Nabor, President).

We are always in need of more volunteers so that our two organizations can remain active and vibrant. The Lake is asking for your help.

Thank you for your stewardship,

Dan M.

LID Nominees

SEEKING NOMINEES FOR THE LID BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Each year, the opportunity arises for interested individuals to be placed on the ballot for becoming a board member of the LID (Lake Improvement District). The LID board is responsible for making decisions affecting the health of Upper South Long Lake. It is funded by the tax assessment which you can find on your property tax statement. Most of those funds are currently spent on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) control (specifically Eurasian Watermilfoil, Zebra Mussels, and Curlyleaf Pondweed).

If you wish to be placed on the ballot for a two-year term which would run from August 1, 2026 until July 31, 2028, contact president, Ruth Naber, at rnabsnab@aol.com or 218-764-3423. You may also nominate someone else, but they will not be placed on the ballot until they have been contacted and have agreed to be added to the ballot.

Nominations must be received by: June 17 th , 2026

Township News

By Bill Kronstedt

In regards to the upcoming bridge replacement on Leisure Lane, the information as of April 7 th is that the state has received the proposal and returned it for some minor corrections. Upon return, it will be reviewed for eligibility and securing of funds if available. So we continue to wait.

Just to keep you informed regarding other construction in the area, the state will be starting major construction on State Highway 210 (Washington Street) in town which will go into next year. You can refer to the website - mndot.gov/d3/projects/brainerd for more information. Other projects going on are in Garrison at Hwy 18 and 169 and at the south end of Mille Lacs at Hwy 169 and 27 – all going on this summer.

Dates to Remember

Lake Association Board of Directors

Meeting Dates for 2026

May 16th USLLIA spring meeting
July 25th LID meeting & picnic
August 29th USLLIA late summer meeting

All meetings start at 10:00 a.m.
All meetings will be held at the Paradise Shores Resort Party Shed

Dan Martonik, President
Jeff Gans, Vice President
John Pietruszewski, Secretary/Treasurer
Ron Trosvig, Past President
Terry Lahti
Chuck Yancey
Randy Peterson
Jerry Buettner
Jodi Hickey
Helen Martonik

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for all of the things they do to make our lake the best it can be.

Dan Martonik, President

Membership Committee



Helen Martonik
Membership. Spring 2026

Hi, this is Helen letting you know that I've received the 2026 stickers for your loon signs. At our spring meeting, I will have them at the front table for you to pick up. If you have neighbors that you know have paid their dues but can't make the meeting, please pick them up for them.

Also, if your sign is damaged, see me to get a replacement.

See you on the lake,

Helen Martonik



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From the LID President

From the LID President

Writing this as the, hopefully, last significant snow of the season is accumulating. The LID board of directors met in early February to begin preparations for the 2026 open water season. Again, we have applied for a DNR grant to assist with the treatment of invasive species (AIS) in Upper South Long Lake. Again, we were denied those funds. As Starry Stonewort begins to be found in more MN water bodies I believe it will be more likely that those grant funds are directed to those water bodies.

Contracts have been signed with Freshwater Scientific to survey the entire littoral zones of the lake to locate beds of Curlyleaf Pondweed (CLP) and Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM). That survey will be conducted in late spring or early summer. We are currently awaiting permits from the DNR to treat the CLP beds identified in the 2025 survey. The chemical used must be applied while water temperatures are between 50 and 60 degrees.

In other action the board elected officers: myself as President, Chris Potka as Vice-President, Gary Hopping as Treasurer, and Connie Theien as Secretary. To fill the vacancy created by the death of board member, Steve Bardolph, last fall, the board elected Kevin Hickey to fill the term until July 31, 2027. Welcome to Kevin! Other current LID board members are: Al Steiff, Ray Sickler, Bill Kronstedt, and Mary Ann Laubach.

The LID continues to operate with the assistance and cooperation of partners, especially the Upper South Long Lake Improvement Association (USLLIA). Other relevant groups include Crow Wing County Land Services, CWC Soil and Water Conservation District, and the MN DNR. Most of the AIS prevention assistance from CWC utilizing funds provided years ago by the MN state legislature remains unchanged. AIS inspections at the public access, however, will begin the weekend of Memorial Day rather than the weekend of fishing opener.

Lakeshore owners are reminded that aquatic plants and algae thrive on nutrients running off properties. Please do your part by maintaining a 20-25 foot buffer zone (no mowing), planting native plants with deeper root systems, and not fertilizing your lake property. Every small gesture will help reduce the growth of vegetation in the lake.

Have a great summer!
Ruth Naber, LID President



Minnesota Master Naturalist

Aquatic Invasive Species “Volunteer Educator” Opportunity

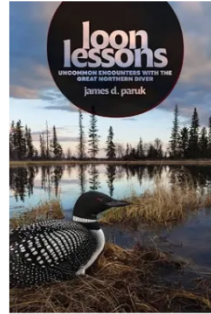
In an effort to control the transport of AIS (Eurasian water millfoil, curlyleaf pondweed, zebra mussels, spiny waterflea, and starry stonewort), the DNR is offering a free DNR AIS Educator training in June for anyone who is interested in “educating” watercraft operators about these nasty organisms that can cause great harm to a healthy lake’s ecosystem. The volunteer educator is NOT a DNR AIS watercraft inspector. Once trained, the commitment involves occasionally spending a few hours during busier times (when we are without a certified DNR AIS inspector) at the boat access providing educational materials about the impact of AIS and how to prevent the spread between bodies of water. The DNR will provide all the training and materials the volunteer educators will need to spread the word. Again, volunteers will not be inspecting any watercraft...just chatting with others about keeping an eye on their watercraft for any unwanted hitchhikers.

If keeping our beautiful lake healthy and free (or nearly free) of aquatic invasive species is a strong calling for you, please consider this opportunity to educate others. Even a small commitment of time at the access will make a difference.

For training information and questions, please contact:

Mary Ann Laubach
USLL Lake Improvement District Director
Minnesota Master Naturalist
mrs.laubach@gmail.com
612-247-2708

Book Recommendation

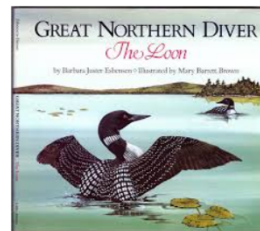


Loon Lessons: Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver

By James D. Paruk

I don't what I was more excited about this spring...seeing my first robin or hearing the loons back on the lake! Being a pretty recent transplant from the Twin Cities, my heart still gets excited every time I hear or see the loons. Their beauty, size, sounds, and behaviors continue to amaze me each season that they

return to the lake. We have a beautiful front row seat to their nesting habitat on the northeast corner of the lake. It is such a treat for us to watch them arrive, fish, defend their territory and raise their young. If you are as enthralled with these beautiful waterfowl as me, you may enjoy reading Loon Lessons: Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver by James D. Paruk. The author has spent over 30 years studying all things Common Loon: the biology, the migrations, and the unique attributes of this mysterious bird. Paruk writes with a sense of humor and lightness which makes it easy for readers to absorb and enjoy learning about the loon. After reading the book, I have a much deeper appreciation and love for our loons. We are so fortunate that these beautiful birds “choose” our lake to visit and to raise their young every year. I hope you find time to enjoy Loon Lessons!



If you have a young reader in your midst, you may want to find a copy of Great Northern Diver: The Loon by Barbara Juster Esbensen (Illustrated by Mary Barrett Brown). This beautiful picture book gives young readers facts about loons paired with gorgeous, realistic watercolor images. What makes this book so fun to read is that the setting could be on any northern Minnesota lake.

Enjoy!
Mary Ann Laubach
Minnesota Master Naturalist
LID Director

Lake Survey by Terry Lahti

Lake Survey 2025

Recent and past DNR Upper South Long Lake, Lake Surveys can be found on the MN DNR LakeFinder for everyone to view. The DNR Fishery Manager stated on the 2025 survey that they found fewer northern pike with a decent size distribution and a bump up in perch and walleye numbers - all are positives.

LakeFinder - Upper South Long Lake, July 2025 Lake Survey Report (from DNR Website)

Upper South Long is an 804 acre lake 10 miles southeast of the city of Brainerd in Crow Wing County. Walleye is the primary management species, with the lake being stocked every other year (odd years) with 283 pounds of fingerlings. When surplus Walleye fry are available, up to 300,000 may be stocked; this last occurred in 2025. Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, and Black Crappie are other species managed on this lake. A standard survey using gill nets, trap nets, and spring electrofishing was conducted in July 2025 to assess fish populations and provide angler information.

The Walleye numbers (2.3 per net) were the highest since 1999. With 57% of the fish measuring over 15 inches and fish up to 28.3 inches sampled, anglers should have a good chance for some quality fish.

The Northern Pike numbers (1.6 per net) were the lowest since 1994. Upper South Long is lacking the typical "hammer handle" population that many of the area lakes possess. With fish measuring 21.9 to 29.9 inches, anglers have a great chance at some medium size pike.

The Largemouth Bass population still looks good, even with night electrofishing numbers (60 fish per hour) down from last time. A broad range of sizes was captured, with fish ranging from 4.4 to 18.9 inches. With 57% of the fish measuring over 14 inches, there is potential to catch nice fish.

Panfish numbers were average for this type of lake, but size didn't offer much for anglers. Only 14% of the Bluegills were over 7 inches and only 31% of the Black Crappies were over 8 inches. Bluegill maxed out at 8.2 inches and the largest Black Crappie was 10.9 inches.

Other fish species sampled included Bowfin (Dogfish), Brown Bullhead, Greater Redhorse, Hybrid Sunfish, Pumpkinseed, Rock Bass, Tullibee (Cisco), White Sucker, Yellow Bullhead, and Yellow Perch.

Fishing Season Opener Dates and New Largemouth Bass regulations 2026

Walleye

May 9, 2026, – possession limit 6 combined (only 1 walleye over 20" in possession)

Northern Pike

May 9, 2026 – Possession limit 10 (not more than 2 over 26", all from 22-26" must be released)

Largemouth Bass

(NEW) March 1- May 22, 2026, and September 14, 2026 - February 28, 2027 - Catch and Release only

May 23 – September 13, 2026 – possession limit 6 combined



Weather and Safety by John Pietruszewski

Weather around USLL for the past three years:

Category	2023	2024	2025
Avg Low Temp	34.81° F	36.89° F	33.37° F
Min Low Temp	-22.5° F	-18.65° F	-30.1° F
Max Low Temp	73.4° F	73.2° F	75.2° F
Number of times Low Temp below Zero	26	15	45
Avg High Temp	53.8° F	54.83° F	52.86° F
Min High Temp	-0.6° F	-3.6° F	-13.5° F
Max High Temp	101.1° F	90.7° F	93.6° F
Number of times High Temp below Zero	1	3	4
Number of times High Temp 90° and above	5	1	4
Annual Avg Temp	44.31° F	45.86° F	43.12° F
Yearly Rainfall	19.4 in	21.53 in	19.72 in
Yearly Snowfall	69.7in	24.38 in	41.15 in
Yearly Precipitation (CoCoRaHS Gage)	18.22 in	27.91 in	26.78 in
USLL Height Change (May – Oct)	17.5 in	16.32 in	8.76 in
	4/30/202	3/13/202	4/12/202
Ice Off	3	4	5
		12/2/202	12/4/20
Ice On	1/9/2024	4	5

Some safety reminders:

Don't overload your boats and pontoons, follow the recommended guidelines.

Have a PFD for every person readily available.

Children under 10 years old must wear a properly fitted PFD while the craft is underway.

One Type IV throwable is required on boats 16 feet or longer.

Anyone less than 13 years old can not operate a personal watercraft

Personal watercraft can only be operated from 9:30 am to 1 hour before sunset.

Campfires should be always attended, don't allow the ashes to wash into the lake.

A light must shine on the US Flag when flown at night.

Enjoy the lake,

John Pietruszewski

Secretary/Treasurer

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Legal Notice

Location

Crow Wing County, Minnesota

Notice Text

NOTICE

Upper South Long Lake Improvement District

P.O. Box 201

Brainerd, MN 56401

The Upper South Long Lake Improvement District (USLLID hereafter) has contracted to treat Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil, Aquatic Invasive Species in Upper South Long Lake in 2026.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has granted to the USLLID a waiver of the requirement that the improvement district obtains the signatures of approval of owners of lakeshore property. Instead, the USLLID will notify property owners of the treatment through alternate forms. This notice is one form that the USLLID is using to notify property owners. Other forms include but are not limited to notification on the USLLID member email list and Upper South Long Lake Improvement Association social media page(s).

With regard to the treatment for this year, 2026:

1. The proposed date for treatment: April 15, 2026 through October 31, 2026
2. The target species for the treatment: Curly Leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Water Milfoil
3. The method of control or product being used: EPA and MDA registered aquatic herbicides, such as but not limited to, Endothall, Diquat dibromide, Flumioxazin, Florpyrauxifen-benzyl
4. How landowners may request that control not occur adjacent to the landowner's property: If you desire that the treatment of Curly Leaf Pondweed or Eurasian Water Milfoil not occur adjacent to your property, please notify the USLLID immediately at the following address and email address below:

P.O. Box 201

Brainerd, MN 56401

raysickler@gmail.com

(Apr. 1, 2026)

<https://brainerddispatch.column.us?activeNotice=ps3WDetHrPQtnXDP9gYz-0>



Some Jokes that are Okay to say in Public

A boy met a pirate who had a wooden leg, a hook and an eye patch.
“Wow, Mr. Pirate!” he said. “What happened to your leg?”
The pirate answered, “A shark bit it off.”
“Cool! What happened to your hand?”
A pirate chopped it off in a sword fight.”
The boy kept going. “What happened to your eye?”
“A sea seagull pooped in it.”
The boy said, “You can lose an eye from that?”
The pirate said, “It was the first day with the hook.”

A Pastor who was giving a children’s sermon on vestments asked,
”Why do you think I wear this collar?”
A boy called out, “Because it kills ticks and fleas up to thirty days?”

I told my suitcases there won’t be a vacation this year.
Now I have emotional baggage.

When I see the names of lovers carved into a tree,
I don’t find it romantic. I find it weird how many people
take knives with them on dates.

Every morning my wife wakes up to make instant coffee so she’ll
have enough energy to make the regular stuff.

Some people ask what’s the secret to our long marriage.
It’s like this: We take time to go to a restaurant
twice a week. A little candlelight, dinner, soft music
and a slow walk home. She goes Tuesdays, and I go Fridays.

When I yell at my dog to stop barking, I wonder if he’s thinking,
“This is awesome! We’re barking together!”

A struggling author called a publisher to inquire about a
manuscript he had submitted a few weeks earlier.
“It’s well-written,” the publisher said, “but we only publish work
by well-known names.”
“Great!” the author exclaimed. “My name’s Smith!”

Lake Steward Committee

Happy Spring from your Lake Steward Committee!

We will be busy getting trained in by the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates before the spring Lake Association meeting. This will give us better information and resources for you as we all work together to make Upper South Long Lake even better.

Some of the things that you will hear more about are managing runoff from impervious surfaces, shoreline buffer areas, natural plantings, and maintaining septic systems. We are here to educate you in the ways an individual landowner can help improve our lake and provide resources where needed to help you.

All of us want our lake to be the best it can be. If you are considering selling a recent market overview from a leading real estate company also indicates that buyers of lakeshore properties are placing a greater emphasis on lake quality (and) condition”.

Contact me if you have any questions and/or want to know more.

Linda Herzog

612-978-4080