



# Minnesotans *for Healthy Lakes*

Newsletter- Spring, 2007

Dear Members and Other Friends of MHL:

*Minnesotans for Healthy Lakes (MHL) is an organization of Minnesota citizens, who join together to maintain and enhance the water quality of Minnesota lakes and their usability for recreational purposes. We engage in citizen education, advocacy with the DNR, and lobbying of elected representatives to bring about improvements in practices, rules, and statutes regarding the care and good stewardship of our lakes. We focus particularly on more aggressive treatment of invasive species of aquatic weeds to prevent their continuing spread in Minnesota waterways.*

This is our Spring Newsletter, published to keep you up-to-date on the activities of MHL:

- 1.) **Progress at the State Capitol:** The MHL Board of Directors and our lobbyist have been busy at the State Capitol talking with legislators and attending Senate Environment Committee hearings. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, we gave testimony in support of our bill, SF 506, in conjunction with Senator Gen Olson, the Chief Sponsor of this bill. Several other Senators from both sides of the aisle had also signed on as co-sponsors.

Selected comments from the Committee members during subsequent meetings include:

“This amended language makes it clear to the DNR Commissioner that we (the Environment Committee) are very interested in this (APM Rule-Making ) process and intend to have oversight of it.” Sen. Olson.

“Regarding rural lake homeowner associations, will they now have a voice in the rule-making process?” Senator Engebretsen (The answer from the Committee Chair was, “Definitely, yes!”)

“One of the things we learned through Senator Olson’s bill is that there needs to be a *lot more* mediation in the rule-making process.” Chairman Chaudhary

The motion to include portions of our bill in the Senate Environment Committee Omnibus Bill (SF1316) was supported by a 10 to 1 vote! This bill will go to Conference Committee where representatives of both the House and Senate will make the determinations of what is *actually* included in the combined Omnibus Bill which goes to the floor of both houses.

Later, during confirmation hearings for DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten on April 17<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioner was challenged by the Senate Environment Committee about how citizens with aquatic weed concerns were ignored by the DNR. The Chairman also raised general concerns about the entire rulemaking process at the DNR, noting that the DNR’s testimony was *radically different, factually*, than that of citizens testifying. (An astute observation!!!!)

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Several of you, our constituents, responded to our earlier calls for action by contacting your elected representatives. We can assure you that your actions are having an effect!! This grassroots pressure definitely influences politicians to respond to the concerns of voters.  
*Thank you for your help!*

We think it is fair to say that MHL has established itself as a voice to be reckoned with on aquatic weed control issues. We have won a battle here, but certainly not the war. If MHL, or some other entity, doesn't stay on the shoulder of the DNR, the gains we have made will melt away like the snows of spring.

- 2.) **New Executive Co-Director:** The amount of work at MHL to represent the interests of Minnesota lakeshore property owners has grown to the extent that one part time Executive Director cannot handle it. For this reason, Jim Eide has joined us as Executive Co-Director. Jim is President of the Cedar Island Lake Home Homeowner Association in Maple Grove and already serves on the Board of Directors of MHL. You will see his smiling face soon on our website. [www.mnhealthylakes.org](http://www.mnhealthylakes.org) Welcome aboard, Jim!
- 3.) **Don't take it lying down!!** With the field season almost on us, and many of you in the process of filing requests for aquatic plant management (APM) permits, we want to *strongly encourage* you to *challenge* permit denials or reductions in allowable treatment from what you request. The instructions as to how to do this are on the letter you receive from the DNR. We also ask that you send MHL a copy of the letter from the DNR as well as your challenge letter. We will continue to hold the DNR accountable if it appears that they are attempting to enforce the new rules that have not yet been approved.
- 4.) **New technical articles available:** One of the stated purposes of MHL is to help educate the public on issues involving aquatic plants and their management. We are in the process of adding several new and very enlightening articles to our website. If you haven't visited it recently, may we suggest that you do so soon?
- 5.) **Help us contact you:** We attempt to reach as many of you by e-mail as we can in order to conserve our mailing expense. However we seem to have quite a number of e-mails rejected, which may be in part due to your anti-virus or anti-spam software. Would you help us by placing [minnesotansforhealthylakes@yahoo.com](mailto:minnesotansforhealthylakes@yahoo.com) on your "Safe" list?
- 6.) **Will you stand with us?** As you may already have recognized, MHL is the *only* organization that represents the interests of Minnesota lakeshore property owners **specifically and effectively** in the area of control of aquatic weeds. If you are not already a member, we encourage you to join us today. You may obtain a copy of our Membership Application from the MHL website, or call us at the number shown on the first page of this Newsletter. We can't do it alone, and we need the help of *every concerned lakeshore property owner* if we are going to overcome *decades* of DNR indifference to the concerns of these stakeholders.

For healthier Minnesota Lakes!

Bill Iacoe  
Executive Co-Director