

Winter 2008 Newsletter



Attention Lakeshore Property Owners:

Just like you, we have properties on Minnesota's beautiful lakes. We write to you today about an issue that should concern every lakeshore owner – a set of new rules, proposed by the Minnesota DNR, regarding the control of aquatic vegetation.

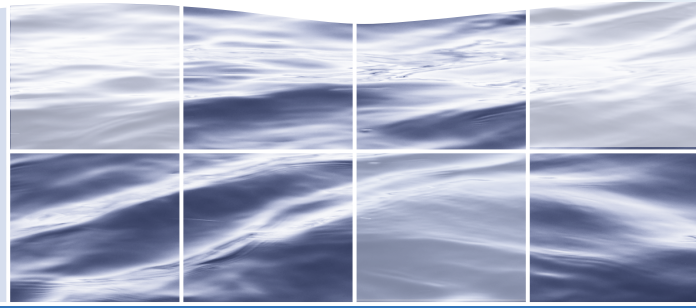
For decades, you as Minnesota lakeshore owners have been routinely allowed to treat 100 feet or the full width of your shoreline, whichever is less, to control aquatic plants. The new rules which are actively being promoted by the DNR will change this to 100 feet of shoreline, or one-half the width of the shoreline, whichever is less. This is a huge change and will have significant impact on your recreational use and appreciation of your shoreline, not to mention the impact on your property values!

This property-by-property micro-management by the DNR is in addition to the decades-old rule which limits treatment to 15% of the littoral area of the lake (the area less than 15' in depth) but now extends it to include exotic invasive species like Eurasian water milfoil and curlyleaf pondweed. While the formula may sound complicated, the bottom line is that we will too often find our permit requests denied or seriously scaled back by the DNR. These new rules have now been released to the public and are on their

way to becoming law, unless we as homeowners and voters, make our voices heard to our legislators!!

The proposed rule change does not make sense in light of the rapid growth of Eurasian water milfoil, curlyleaf pondweed and other invasive species in our lakes. Certain aquatic plants, both native and exotic, sometimes are so invasive and dense that they literally crowd out most other species and do not allow safe recreational use of the shoreline. The enclosed article shows an example of the negative effect the DNR's 15% rule had on Lake Alexandria near Little Falls. We should be allowed to treat invasive species more aggressively, not less aggressively!

During our discussions with the DNR over the past four years, DNR staff have repeatedly stated that the 15% limit was based upon scientific facts. Yet, on March 28, 2007, during testimony before the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, they testified, "We don't have any quantitative studies that show that the 15% is an exact threshold. We think it is fine and it's somewhat intuitive." In fact, the 15% threshold was chosen in the 1970s because very few lakes were treating more than 15%. This limit had no scientific basis at the time, and it has none today! Those few lakes that were treating more than 15% in the '70s



were allowed to continue to do so under the “Grandfather Provision” of the APM Rules.

Under this provision, a number of lakeshore associations have been permitted to treat upwards of 50% of the littoral area of their lakes for more than 30 years, without environmental degradation. Some of these lakes are among the most popular and heavily used in the State.

Thus, these new rules would force on us the conservative shoreline limit, on top of a conservative area limit, without scientific evidence to support either! If anything, the experience of the grandfathered lakes over several decades, plus the studies by nationally-known experts, tell us that these conservative restrictions are unnecessary!

Minnesotans for Healthy Lakes (MHL) is the only organization in Minnesota working aggressively to maintain the right of lake associations and lakeshore owners to control the spread of invasive plants and protect the reasonable use of their shorelines.

If the proposed DNR rule change is of concern to you, take action now. The 2008 legislative session has begun and the proposed rule is scheduled to take effect in Spring 2009. Only the Minnesota Legislature stands between this rule and its implementation!!

A.) Contact your state senator and representative in person, by phone, letter and/or e-mail and let them know of your concern. Ask them to support MHL’s bill: House File 893/Senate File 506.

If you don’t know the names of your legislators, call 888-234-1112 toll free for the Senate and 800-657-3350 for the House of Representatives. You can also enter your zip code into the search form at this Web site: <http://geo.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/districts/start.html>.

You can visit the MHL web site and review the language of our bill and download a sample letter to send to your legislators. Better yet, revise the letter to reflect your personal style.
www.mnhealthylakes.org

B.) Join MHL in our efforts to represent the interests of lakeshore property owners statewide. We are a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization and welcome your tax deductible contribution. Please send \$1000, \$500, \$250, \$100, \$40 or whatever amount you can afford and stand with us in protecting the quality of our lakes and lakeshore properties.

Thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely,

Bill Goins
Co-Chair, Minnesotans for Healthy Lakes

William Iacoe
Co-Chair, Minnesotans for Healthy Lakes