

The Lake Riley Launch

March 2013

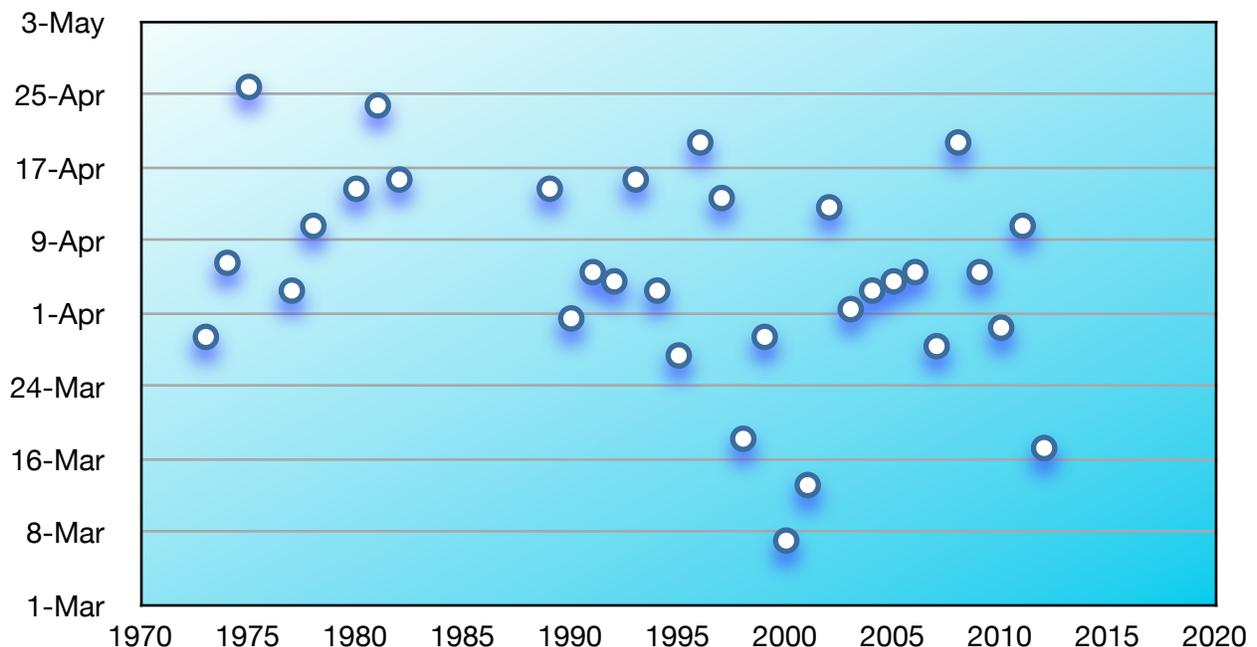
*An email newsletter for
Lake Riley Improvement Association Members*

Lake Dates. Mark your calendars now for the 2013 Lake Riley Improvement Association (LRIA) annual meeting. It will be held on **Tuesday, April 23rd from 7-9 p.m.** **PLEASE NOTE: THIS YEAR WE WILL HAVE OUR MEETING AT THE CHANHASSEN AMERICAN LEGION, 290 LAKE DRIVE EAST, CHANHASSEN, MN 55317.** Also - do come for an informal social hour of dinner beforehand at 6 p.m., a benefit of meeting at this location. One of the big topics for discussion will be our vegetation management plan and what it will involve, both lake-wide and as individual lakeshore owners.

The next **Evening with the Watershed** meeting will be Thursday, May 2, also at the Chanhassen Legion. A reminder will be sent out shortly before both of these meetings.

Lake Ice. Ice-out in 2012 was among the earliest in Lake Riley records - March 18th - but not the earliest, as you can see. Hard to believe, but our dock went in on March 25th last year! NOAA's Three-Month Outlook for February-March-April shows slightly above-normal temperature and slightly above-normal precipitation. Any bets on when the ice will leave us this year?

Lake Riley Iceout Dates



Remember to look and listen for the loons as soon as the ice is gone; they arrive immediately after the ice breaks up. Loons can't stand on land. They fly to large rivers or bodies of water that are open and then they wait for the small lakes to open to begin the nesting season. They keep checking the situation daily, which is why they often arrive on the day the ice finally goes out. I think they'll have a long wait this year!

Vegetation Management Plan. The special LRIA vegetation management plan meeting was held Monday, Jan. 28, 2012. Mike Domke, president of LRIA, introduced Claire Bleser, District Administrator of the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District, who led the evening's discussion.

Claire reviewed information on increase of curlyleaf pond weed from 2011 to 2012 and gave a brief explanation of why we would treat curlyleaf. She then gave a brief explanation of why we would want an alum treatment, originally considered about 5 years ago by the watershed district, but put on hold

because of the carp study. Alum puts a "blanket" on bottom of lake and keeps phosphorus from mixing in the lake. High phosphorus levels encourage high algae growth.

Our watershed board, in conjunction with the scientists studying our lake from the U. of M., are recommending lake-wide treatment of curlyleaf this spring, followed by a lake-wide alum treatment as soon as it is possible. These steps are recommended for the larger purpose of promoting a renewal of native vegetation in Lake Riley, balancing the fish population of the lake, and reducing the algae in the water, restoring Lake Riley's complex ecosystem to make it a clearer, healthier lake.

Getting permission to treat with Alum is a long process (at least a year long) that has already begun and we will be working with the MN pollution control agency and DNR to accomplish this. This vegetation management plan needs signatures from lake residents to signal to the DNR and others that the lake residents are solidly behind it. That is important for large undertakings like this. **Note: 75% of lake residents signed the petition for our plan, which has been submitted to the DNR.**

Why get rid of curlyleaf pondweed? It is an invasive. It was pervasive in our lake last spring. It grows early in the season, beginning under ice, so it takes over in springtime. It crowds out areas for development of native vegetation. Dieback, typically in July, adds more phosphorus to lake.

How does it impact milfoil? Curlyleaf, in and of itself, doesn't affect milfoil much, but if curlyleaf is managed natives will have the chance to compete with milfoil. If we're successful with this effort we may address the management of milfoil in the future. If we have poor clarity AND curly leaf, there is NO chance for natives. If you curb the curlyleaf early in the season, natives have a chance. Curly leaf treatment is early in spring and dies off in mid-June to July but drops hard buds (turions) which seed future curlyleaf.

Why don't we treat for milfoil now? Herbicide treatment for milfoil would likely also eradicate the native vegetation because of similar growing seasons, whereas treatment for curlyleaf is earlier and does not affect the native vegetation much.

Riley's native aquatic plants are in terrible condition, with not much refuge for fish. It is complex puzzle with one key piece being fish. When we get the plants in balance, then we can get the fish habitat back in order. As with many lakes, Riley has problem with huge panfish population. Riley probably has 300,000 panfish - SMALL ones. Having big fish in lake help smaller ones to mature and grow. Large fish need good native vegetation and habitat, which Riley is lacking. Along with the problem of lack of habitat is fishing pressure. The big fish get taken by fishermen, leaving so many small ones that they eat all the zooplankton. The zooplankton is what eats the algae and keeps the lake clear. So the vegetation, the fish, the zooplankton are all in this complex ecosystem. Restoring native plants is big step forward to restoring the fish habitat; getting rid of the curlyleaf is a big step forward restoring natives.

In the future we may need to go to the DNR to request changing fishing regulations for Riley, which they are reluctant to do. But anglers can fish out the big fish in a month or two. Bass and pike are necessary to keep the balance. "You want balance and complexity in ecosystems."

Re-cap of management plan time line:

- 1: residents sign petitions to show our support for this plan
- 2: this spring: a lake-wide treatment of curlyleaf
- 3: we will all learn more about how we will be able to control our individual dock area vegetation for boat access and swimming
- 4: alum treatment: hopefully 2014.

Note: If curlyleaf treatment is approved for this spring, we will all be given information about how lakeshore owners can manage vegetation around their docks and swim areas this summer. It will be a topic at the annual meeting.

AIS Discussion in Chanhassen. For those who are interested in the aquatic invasive species (AIS) issue, and prevention of the spread of zebra mussels, Laurie Susla with the Lotus Lake Conservation Alliance (LLCA) has notified us that the Chanhassen Parks & Recreation Commission will have a discussion regarding AIS prevention at their meeting at 7:30 on Tuesday, March 26th, in the Council Chambers at the Chanhassen City Hall. The Parks & Rec. Commission will hopefully pass at least one motion advising the City Council how to better protect the lakes. Laurie invites and encourages as many people as possible to attend this meeting.

Polar Plunge at Lake Riley. The Eden Prairie Plunge presented by Law Enforcement for Special Olympics Minnesota took place at Lake Riley on Saturday, Mar. 9th. [Take a look at the photos](#) - they had a wonderful event!

Uhhh...I don't think so!



Blocks of ice on Lake Riley left after the Eden Prairie Polar Plunge on March 9, 2013 tell a different story than the sign. Photo by David Florenzano.

This e-newsletter is planned for publication in March, June, September and December.
If you have questions, comments or ideas about this bulletin - or if you need to add or update an email address -
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