



FILIA, P.O. Box 135, Aitkin, MN 56431 • FILIALake@gmail.com • FarmIslandLake.org

New FILIA President

Please welcome Bill Haroldson as the new FILIA board member president. He has served on the FILIA board for 15 years, including being the V.P., and has made many contributions toward lake stewardship. Bill is active in community lake activities, which includes being the V.P. for ACLARA (Aitkin County Lakes and Rivers Association). Dennis Kraimer's 3-year term as president had ended.

Letter from the FILIA President

Hello FILIA Members,

My name is Bill Haroldson, your newly elected President of FILIA.

I would like to start by thanking the Board for their support and confidence in allowing me to carry out the role and duties as President of FILIA.

Also, I would like to thank Dennis Kraimer for his leadership and contributions to FILIA during his term.

And thank you FILIA Members for your continued support and efforts to protect and preserve FIL's water quality and pristine beauty.

The threat of AIS Aquatic Invasive Species is a great concern for FIL, Aitkin County and Minnesota. Protecting our waters through education, volunteering and being proactive will certainly help to assure that FIL will remain clean and natural, so that your family legacy now, and in the future, will be preserved.

Again, thank you FILIA Members!

Enjoy this fine fall season and its Holidays.

God Bless,

Bill

204 paid members!

Membership Update

54% of 375 property owners have paid their voluntary membership dues. An application is at the end of this new attached, and is on the website.

You can also pay dues online at FarmIslandLake.org. Past and present member lists are online. **A member is someone who has paid their dues.**

FILIA had 238 members in year 2021 and 235 in 2020, so it would be great to receive dues from



those who have not yet paid. It does make a difference!

A large lake association membership base provides FILIA with a strong voice when it comes to the affairs involving lakeshore ownership, including grant applications, government, county, and local agency activities.

If you have not been a FILIA member in the past, please consider joining this year. If you are already a member, we hope you will continue to support the stewardship that FILIA provides.

The 2024 Boat Parade will be Thursday July 4th

The parade date will be announced in newsletters, the website and in the Aitkin Independent Age newspaper when closer to the parade date.

★ We will need someone to lead the parade next year.



Please refrain from throwing balloons. It is dangerous to both humans and animals. Every year there are a lot of balloons that must be picked up out of the lake and along shorelines.

STOP Starry Stonewort

Starry stonewort is an Aquatic Invasive Species that can rapidly make a lake unnavigable, growing from the bottom to the surface filling a water column. It presents as tightly woven, thin strands of algae anchored by a star-shaped bulb. More information can be found at

https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural_resources/invasives/aquaticplants/starry_stonewort/fact_sheet_starry_stonewort.pdf

The most important action you can take to limit the spread of starry stonewort and other nonnative aquatic plants is to remove all vegetation and animals from your watercraft and any water-related equipment before you move it from one body of water to another. Make sure you drain all water from your watercraft and bait bucket and dispose of any unwanted bait in the trash.

Don't be fooled by these look-alikes

Starry stonewort looks similar to many native, beneficial grass-like algae, such as other stoneworts and muskgrasses found in Minnesota lakes and rivers, but can be distinguished based on its production of star-shaped bulbils.

Look-alikes:

Muskgrasses (native)

Stoneworts (native)

Sago pondweed opens in a new browser tab (native)

Narrow-leaf pondweeds (native)



MN DNR Starry Trek Results 2023

Starry Trek is a statewide event focused on searching for one of Minnesota's newest aquatic invasive species, starry stonewort (and other invaders). Starry stonewort is an invasive algae that was first found in Lake Koronis in 2015 and has since spread to nineteen Minnesota lakes

There were 10 volunteers here locally in Aitkin County, 2 more than last year. Our board member and new president, Bill Haroldson, was one of the volunteers. The sampling was taken from 14 landings on 11 area lakes, including Farm Island Lake.

All lakes came back NEGATIVE.

Statewide, there were 187 participants with 258 accesses on 215 bodies of water. All results came back NEGATIVE.

Two types of snails were found in FIL. Banded mystery snails were collected. They have been previously reported. The Chinese mystery snails are new to FIL this year. Please google both species to learn more. Read the full report at <https://maisrc.umn.edu/starrytrek>

Looking for People with Waders

Loon ANPs - The FILIA board is looking for people who will help with placement and removal of the loon ANPs (Artificial Nesting Platforms). The platforms are placed in the lake just after ice-out, around mid-May, and pulled out of the lake around the beginning of September, after loons have left their nest.

Bog Removal - We also need folks to help with removal of large bogs when the ice is melting in the spring, around May. This would be on an as-needed basis, should a large bog need to be moved to prevent property damage. This happened in the spring of year 2022 when a large bog was moved away from the east side of Dahle's Bay. The board filed for a permit with the DNR to remove the bog. Please contact us at FILIAlake@gmail.com or call 218-851-7026 for more information and to volunteer.



Lake Statistics

On October 16th the lake clarity was 9 feet.

On September 16, the lake's level was 9.5 inches under OHWL, low for this time of year. On October 12, the lake rose less than a quarter of an inch, even though FIL received just over 6.75 inches of rain during this same period. One can surmise that most of this well needed rain was absorbed into the ground, due to the continued drought conditions in the area.

There was a low algae bloom this fall.

Check the comparison of the OHWL sign at the northeast on Dummer's Bay. We had a lot of rain in September, yet the lake level remained much the same.



Sep 9, 2023 • 8:40 AM



Oct 12, 2023 • 12:35 PM

Loving Our Lakes to Death

Here is a revised segment from the feature story in the Lake Country Journal October/November 2023 Issue.

The article is by Mark Casey, who attended FILIA's annual meeting this year to hear the AIS presentations. Read the entire article at <https://www.lakecountryjournal.com/general-6> **Note that FILIA's next year's annual meeting speaker will be Minnesota Lake's and River's Executive Director Jeff Forester, who is quoted in this article.**

120,000 people own cabins in Minnesota, according to state revenue department data. Over decades, many are passed from generation to generation. And those cabin owners, old timers and newbies, are concerned about their lakes and are actively working to improve them. Nearly a hundred of them filled the Hazelton Town Hall last June for the annual **Farm Island Lake Improvement Association** meeting. It's a springtime ritual repeated at five hundred or so Minnesota lakes associations, more than any other state.

For nearly three hours on a gorgeous spring Saturday, homeowners sat through presentations on AIS from the Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District. They heard reports from the [FILIA] "Loon Watch" team on sighting and nests, along with warnings to throttle back pontoons when the birds are close by. Underlying the questions, neighborly small talk, and door prizes, was a thread of constructive concern.

For Minnesota Lake's and River's Executive Director Jeff Forester, the engagement is essential. Forester's recipe for successful water protection is: "A strong lake association, a strong civic organization in the community partnering with a local government unit, like a soil and water conservation district, and then leveraging resources from the federal and state level to change it."

Promote And Protect Clean Water

Individually, we don't need a million dollars to help. What we do is on a smaller scale, but it'll have real impact when multiplied across 11,000+ lakes; 6,564 rivers and 10.6 million acres of wetlands. Love and protect the water by:

- Making sure your septic tank is pumped at least every two years.
- Not using fertilizer on your lawn, especially on a waterfront.
- Planting native grasses and flowers.
- Keeping grass clippings out of the water.
- Being nice to the people at public access checking your boat for AIS.
- Joining and supporting your lakes and rivers associations.

Get the Lead Out

Get the Lead Out is an educational program with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency working to protect and restore the population of common loons and wildlife in Minnesota by reducing their exposure to lead-based fishing tackle.

To learn more about Get the Lead Out, visit <https://lakeadmin.org/get-the-lead-out/> or

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LeadOutMN/>



If you witness a concern, please call the Aitkin County Sheriff's office at 218-927-7435 and provide as much information as you can. Location and photos and videos really help. Our local law enforcement really does want to hear from you.

Important Phone Numbers

Aitkin County Sheriff & Water Patrol	911 or 218-927-7435
MNDNR Hotline	651-296-6157
AIS Specialist	218-203-4354

Pictures of Farm Island Lake and Video Expertise

We are looking for fun images of Farm Island Lake to include in a video to be presented at the annual meeting on June 8, 2024. Please send to our email address FILIALake@gmail.com.

Also, need someone with video experience to help put the video together.



Patriotic Kingfisher

Tame Fish Lake Road update

Aitkin County had a few months delay in getting started due to matters beyond their control. They are hopeful to get the road paved before the snow. Road completion is now weather dependent.

The south landing is not as open in the turn around to the landing as it was, and there is less parking. People with larger boats, and pontoons may find getting around in the south access difficult next year.

At the south public access there has been added a gabion wall to support the new road. A gabion wall is a retaining wall made of stacked stone-filled gabions tied together with wire. Gabion walls are often used as retaining structures such as revetment and tower walls, retaining walls, and embankments and cuttings. Gabion is derived from gabbione, an Italian word meaning "big cage." Efficient drainage is essential for retaining walls. This makes gabion baskets the ideal material to build retaining walls.



Gabion wall at south public access, on Tame Fish Lake Rd.

Why is it called Tame Fish Lake?

I have heard this story from multiple sources, so hopefully it's true. Years ago, people on the lake fed the fish. The fish became very tame and would come when the people appeared. Hence the name, Tame Fish Lake.





DNR Fisheries Management Update

From Rick Bruesewitz, Aitkin Area Fisheries Supervisor | Fish and Wildlife
Phone: 218-429-3037, Email: rick.bruesewitz@state.mn.us

Note: The 2023 Gill Net DNR charts that Rick mentions are on our website at <https://www.farmislandlake.org/newsletters-1>

We surveyed the lake this summer and found good numbers of walleye. They were 8/net in the gill net assessment and had good size structure and good numbers of recruits (you ones) coming up.

Unfortunately, we also had the highest number of northern pike that we have seen at almost 16/net. They were small too with less than 10% over 24 inches and even fewer over 26 inches. I'm not sure, but this might be related to the clearer water. We'll see.

Like you, we also saw way more smallmouth bass. None to 21" but numbers of them such that in there were actually more in the gillnets than there were Largemouth Bass.

We also finished fall electrofishing for juvenile walleye last Saturday. Normally we wouldn't work on the weekend for this survey but we had really been battling the wind and so I didn't want to take a chance on not having two good nights this week (we had also needed to do Big Sandy). Results were pretty mediocre. Young of the year catch rates were only about 13.5, which is about ½ of average. That said, we have seen other decent year classes appear after a mediocre catch so we'll just wait and see.

Lastly, I want to chat a little about water quality. While water clarity is improving, the depth where there is at least 2 parts per million of dissolved oxygen is getting shallower. This is a function of the watershed and essentially oxygen consumption in the deep water. It is showing a disturbing trend such that the lake is clearer yet oxygen is going away sooner in the deeper water. This limits walleye habitat from two directions. Very similar to the thermal issues with Cisco (Tullibee), they are essentially getting squeezed and thus lose habitat that ordinarily would be available to them.

Below are a few charts for you to peruse. Feel free to sling questions my way.
Rick

FILIA Note: The 2023 Gill Net DNR Charts are located at <https://www.farmislandlake.org/newsletters-1>

Boating and Fishing Regulations

It's never too late, or too early, to remind folks that the DNR Boating and Fishing Regulations are on our website under Useful Info: <https://www.farmislandlake.org/useful-links> and are also listed on the DNR website.



Note: When government, local agency and county information is included we are serving as the messenger to keep you informed of their activities concerning Farm Island Lake.

5 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PROTECT OUR LAKES

The lake is a special place where plants, wildlife, fish, and people are neighbors.

Give wildlife space

Stay at least 200 feet away from wildlife, nests, and marked breeding areas.

Close encounters can disrupt activities like nesting, breeding, and finding food.

Keep the shoreline natural

Leave logs and submerged vegetation in place. Keep shoreline vegetation intact.

Driftwood, downed trees, and plants provide habitat for fish and wildlife, hold soil in place, and filter pollutants and excess nutrients that fuel algae.

Observe no-wake zones

Slow to no-wake within 200 feet of the shoreline and wildlife.

Wakes can cause erosion, disturb animals, and damage vegetation.

Prevent the spread of invasive species

Before leaving the water access, Clean, Drain, and Dry all gear.

Invasive species can overtake native plants and animals, creating ecosystem imbalances.

Avoid pesticides and chemicals

Try to use non-chemical management methods on your lawn and garden.

Introduce beneficial insects and wild, native plants. Use physical methods, including hand weeding, mulching, or setting traps, to reduce chemical use outdoors.

"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

—John Muir

Loon Watch



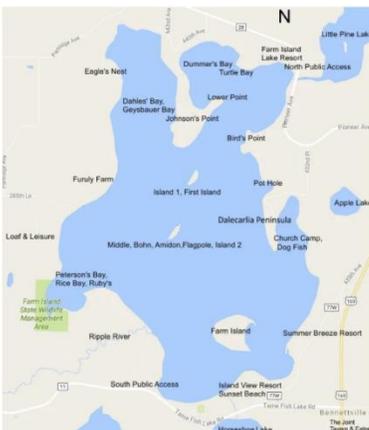
The adult loons have migrated south, with the immatures staying longer to gain strength for the long trip south.

AIS Brochure

“WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FARM ISLAND LAKE”

Find the brochure at

<https://www.farmislandlake.org/copy-of-score-your-shore-1>



A printable version of this map is on our website.

Minnesota law requires water recreationists to:

- **Clean watercraft of all aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species.**
- **Drain** all water by removing drain plugs and keeping them out during transport.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash and dispose of bait water.
- **Dry** docks, lifts, swim rafts and other equipment for at least 21 days before placing equipment into another water body.

For more information on the Minnesota law, which holds true whether or not a lake is listed as infested – go to this online link. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/laws.html>

Be sure to inform your visitors and neighbors of this important Minnesota regulation, which is also important and necessary to keep our lake clean and free of invasive species.

A printable version is on our website, to post on your refrigerator for all to see.



- The FILIA Board Members, to fulfill our mission of stewardship for Farm Island Lake, strive to maintain good communications and collaborative efforts with lake association members, Aitkin County, and state agencies. To name a few - the DNR, Aitkin Area Fisheries, Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Invasive Species Specialist, etc.
- When government, local agency and county information is included we are serving as the messenger to keep you informed of their activities concerning Farm Island Lake.
- The FILIA board members act in good faith as volunteers and assume no responsibility for the boat parade or other FILIA activities.

Annual Meeting Recap held June 17

1. Guest Speaker: Kyle Fredrickson, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator, Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District. Contact Kyle at 218-927-7285 or kfred.aitkinswcd@gmail.com
 - a. Kyle spoke about the zebra mussels. The zebra mussels in Mille Lacs seemed to have reached a point where they have maxed out their reproduction capacity and are now declining. The evidence is from a drone that showed a lot of zebra shells on the bottom of the lake.
 - b. Farm Island Lake is not near the top of the zebra infestation curve. We can only continue what we are doing by not transporting water in boats, keeping all parts of the boat clean, especially places like anchors.
 - c. Water and mud on boats etc. transport a lot of viruses and contaminants, some of which are known and a lot of which is unknown. That is why **CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY** is so important.
 - d. 1591 Aitkin County inspections at landings have been done this season. 142 Boats were checked in a 3-day span at the FIL south access alone.
 - e. Small business-size cards were available that showed a lot of the different invasive species.
 - f. EDDMAPS is an on-line site that allows input as to where invasive species are being found.
 - g. Big Mouth Buffalo fish is a native fish and is very beneficial in controlling AIS. This fish is a filter feeder and they do eat veligers (young zeebs). They are not a member of the carp family.
 - h. Decontamination units for boats are currently located:
 - a. Farm Island Lake – North Access (due to the high number of boats being put into FIL)
 - b. Big Sandy and Minnewawa Lakes share time with one decontamination unit.
 - c. Spirt Lake
 - i. Per the speaker education on AIS and what can be done to prevent the spread is extremely important.
 - j. The regulation of the transfer of wood (i.e., firewood) has helped stop the movement of non-native insects.
 - k. The speaker also indicated that there may be funds available in the future for native restoration instead of rocks.
2. There were 61 attendees at this annual meeting
3. The newsletters are emailed to 499 email addresses. Please be sure we have your email to ensure receipt of newsletters and updates. Receipt of the newsletter does not mean you are a member. You need to pay the voluntary dues to be considered a FILIA member.
4. Loon restoration project
 - o Partnership with the DNR that provided monies, and instructions for the building of two artificial nesting platforms (ANP)
 - o FILIA members built and placed the ANP's – one in Peterson's bay, and the other in the Church camp bay.
 - o Loons didn't nest on them this year, which is not unusual for the first year. In addition, they will need to be placed further into the lake next year as the cattails grew up around them limiting the loons' access to open water.
 - o Loon count this year 22 loons and 5 occupied nests.
5. The annual mass mailing of the FILIA newsletter was mailed Tuesday May 30th to all 375 property owners.
6. FILIA financial report is on the website.
7. 913 unique visitors visited our website so far this year. Last year there was a total of 1,167 unique visitors.
8. ACLARA update was given, discussion about Curly leaf Pondweed and the boat parade, among other items.

To print just this page for your application, in your Print Settings at the Pages input prompt, type in 11

FILIA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FarmIslandLake.org

BECOME A MEMBER AND HELP PRESERVE AND ENHANCE FARM ISLAND LAKE

Dues are **\$25.00** a year per property owner from January to December.

You can pay online at your FILIA website, or bring this form to the annual meeting, or mail it to:

Farm Island Lake Improvement Association (or FILIA)

Date: _____

PO Box 135

Aitkin, MN 56431

Name _____

Home Address _____

No need to write your home address if your correct address is on your check.

Lake Address _____

Phone-best year-round contact phone(s) _____

Email-best year-round contact email(s) _____

Your email addresses will be used to send you newsletters and other FILIA news. It will not be sold or shared.

Additional money for the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Fund \$ _____