



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



**FILIA annual meeting recap**

- Kyle Fredrickson, AIS Coordinator for Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), discussed Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and forestry/land management. Zebra mussels are here to stay. We need to continue to be diligent on stopping other AIS from entering the lake. See article below about spiny waterflea.
- The meeting attendees voted to move the annual meeting to the second Saturday of June each year. So, year 2024 meeting will be June 8, 2024.
- Dennis Kraimer and Gordy Vetsch were re-elected to the FILIA board. Current board members are listed in this newsletter and on our website. It is a 3-year voluntary position. Thank you Dennis and Gordy!

**Aitkin County AIS Inspection Summary May – July 4, 2023**

These numbers were taken when an AIS inspector is on-site at the public accesses. It does not include those days that an AIS Inspector is not on-site. Nor does it include watercraft coming from a resort or a private dock.

AIS Inspection Summary						
May - July 4, 2023						
Lake	Plug in on arrival	Drain	Mud/plants found_in	Decon nec_in	Decon choice	Count of surveys
1015901, Farm Island, North	23	8	3	3	4	644
1015902, Farm Island, South	4	4	1	1	2	658
Total count						1,302
Other Aitkin County lakes with large survey counts						
Cedar						529
Big Sandy (total)	11	7			7	419
Big Pine			2	2	9	407
Clear	4	3	1	1	3	339
Round (Near Garrison)	1	1				331
Ripple	8	4	2	2	5	327
Lone Lake	41	22				287

## Are You a Lake Steward?

We love our lakes and lake places. We want to pass them on to our kids and keep the good times at the lake for the next generation.

The way we manage our land has big impacts on the health of the lakes we love. Lake health is key to ensuring that the good times at the lake are there for your children and grandchildren.

Do you manage your land in a way that protects water quality and lake health?

Take the short quiz to find out if You Are a Lake Steward (Click on the image.) <https://mnlakesanddrivers.org/lake-associations/lake-association-programs/lake-steward/>

### 193 paid members!



51% of 375 property owners have paid their voluntary membership dues. An application is at the end of this newsletter, also is attached, and is on the website.

You can also pay dues online at [FarmIslandLake.org](http://FarmIslandLake.org). Member lists are also online.

Take the Quiz and find out.

Are you a  
**LAKE  
STEWARD?**

Does your  
**SHORELINE  
PROTECT  
WATER QUALITY?**

Take the Quiz and find out.

### The boat parade had 49 participants this year.



### Lake Clarity update / Lake Level

- 7 feet clarity at ice out (May 2), which is normal.
- 14 feet clarity on June 16, 2023
- Water level is 7" down from Ice out which is normal.
- In August-September the lake will go down significantly due to the algae bloom.

The OHWL (Ordinary High Water Level) is measured in the spring, at ice-out.

More data is on your website:  
[FarmIslandLake.org](http://FarmIslandLake.org)

## New appreciation for a Minnesota fish long considered junk – Buffalo Fish

Buffalo fish eat zebra mussel veligers (zeeb youngling)! The bigmouth buffalo doesn't age like many species, freshwater fish researcher Alec Lackmann said. They remain healthy and strong even into their 90s. Lackmann works with bowfishers, because it's a good way to study fish specimens that would otherwise be discarded. But he argues this fish deserves a bit more respect, and perhaps some protection.



"It's one of the most exceptional freshwater fish species in the world — one of the longest-lived vertebrates in the world, and we could learn a lot from a medical standpoint if only we can have the opportunity to study them and learn more about them," he said.

"They're basically a species that's been neglected over the past century because they got misconstrued and misclassified as a carp over time," he said. "They superficially look like a carp; they're big-bodied; they have huge scales; they just look kind of similar, but actually they're not a carp."

They're filter feeders, eating tiny plankton in the water. And in another interesting twist, Lackmann said he discovered they eat veligers, baby zebra mussels, a major and problematic invasive species in Minnesota. He hasn't published that finding yet, though. Read entire article by Dan Gunderson :

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/06/10/new-appreciation-for-a-minnesota-fish-long-considered-junk>

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

## 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.*



## DNR Fisheries Management Update

Update from DNR Rick Bruesewitz as of May 12, 2023. Things looked real good last fall. Best young-of-year walleye catches for several years. Also, we will be conducting a standard survey this year. That will also include electrofishing for bass this spring - next couple of weeks I would guess. We also have a creel survey planned for next year (2024). Rick's contact info. 218-429-3037 Rick.bruesewitz@state.mn.us. The 2022 Fisheries report is on our website <https://www.farmislandlake.org/newsletters-1>

The Walleye population on FIL is doing well with those under 16" doing great, per the DNR.

## 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



As of July 23, there were 17 adult loons and 8 chicks.

## A sneaky cloning culprit - spiny waterflea

Article from Bargain Hunter, Aitkin, by Veronica Lundquist, July 14, 2023. For the Aitkin County Aquatic Invasive Species Committee



### Spiny Waterflea close-up.

We are going to talk about a species that is even smaller than a zebra mussel. Which, because of its size, can easily exist without being noticed. This species is known as spiny waterflea.

Now you may be thinking, can my dog get this type of flea? The answer is no and they are not even an insect. Technically they are a crustacean that can be found in freshwater lakes. They may not harm your pet, but they can do significant damage to lakes.

Spiny waterfleas are microscopic animals, the adults range from one-quarter inch to five-eighths inch long and have a distinctive black eyespot. To make finding them more difficult they are opaque. When they are found, they tend to be in a larger cluster. Anglers often say it looks like a wet blob of cotton.

Spiny waterfleas are a predatory species that feed on other native zooplankton. Zooplankton are tiny water creatures that feed on algae and bacteria, forming the base of the food web. Waterfleas typically hang out in the shallower water, but so do predators. Thus spiny waterfleas have adapted in a way where they hide from predators out in the deeper waters during the day. Then in the evenings the waterfleas feed on the zooplankton when all the predators have moved out of the area. The zooplankton feeding is in direct competition with smaller fish species that eat zooplankton.

As mentioned before, spiny waterfleas are very good at adapting to their surroundings and surviving. Another adaptation they have is the ability to clone. When resources are available and the water is warm, typically in the spring and summer months, they are able to clone and reproduce. They are also able to produce eggs. When resources are low or the lakes are cool, they can produce eggs that are resistant to drying and freezing. The eggs are able to survive in tough conditions that eggs of other species could not.

The spiny waterfleas do not have many predators due to a large barbed tail that can be used as a defense mechanism. These spiny tails cause a lot of damage to the intestines of fish that consume them. The barbs on their tails poke holes in the stomachs of small fish, ultimately killing them. This can drastically drop the populations of smaller fish that larger fish feed on. Although there is a species of fish that has managed to consume these invasive species. The native pumpkinseed sunfish has found a way to break off the spiny tail of these waterfleas and be able to consume great numbers of these spiny creatures.

How did these tiny creatures get in Minnesota lakes? The spiny waterflea is native to Europe and Asia and was unintentionally transported in contaminated cargo ship ballast water. It was first discovered in Lake Ontario, then was discovered in Lake Superior and from there made its way across the states.

The easiest way to control spiny waterflea is public awareness and knowledge. The more we know about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species the better we can protect lakes.

The best way to prevent the spread of spiny waterfleas is to clean all fishing and boating gear after being in any lake. You never know what is “just under the surface.” Individually, they are very difficult to see, folks usually notice them in clusters that look like wet cotton.

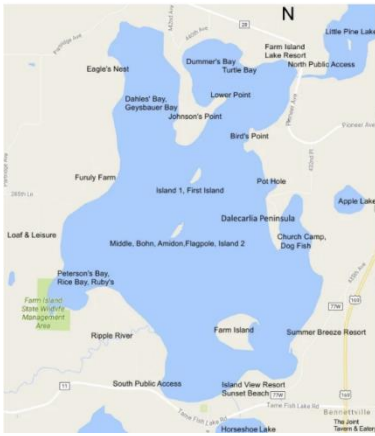
The recommended way to clean your equipment is with water and at least 104 degrees fahrenheit. This helps to remove spiny waterfleas that could be stuck onto equipment and the hot water helps to kill the critters that remain stuck. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recommends “Air dry for more than six hours to kill any spiny waterflea eggs.” Don’t forget about how these critters got here in the first place: Ballast tanks. Do your part and ensure ballast tanks, livewells and any other areas that hold water are properly rinsed and dried before entering other bodies of water.

### **Removing lake plants could require a permit**

The MN DNR reminds lakeshore property owners that a permit may be required to remove aquatic plants. Aquatic plants provide food and shelter for fish, ducks and wildlife. They also stabilize the lake bottom, which helps maintain water clarity, and protect shorelines from erosion by absorbing energy from waves and ice.

Specific regulations govern what situations require permits for aquatic plant removal and can be found at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/shorelandmgmt/apg/regulations.html>, along with the required permit.

- 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.



## Farm Island Lake AIS Information 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.

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*I summarized the next two articles by Dan Determan from Echo Journal's Love of the Lakes 2023 Edition*  
<https://www.pineandlakes.com/news/minnesota/love-of-the-lakes-magazine-2003>

### Climate weirdness - Ice-Out and Ice-In dates have become less predictable

As a destination for anglers and tourists, the Brainerd lakes area relies on the ice to leave area lakes in a timely fashion every spring. However, ice-out is becoming harder and harder to predict for experts and officials. “When I was a kid growing up in northern Minnesota, ice always left the lakes by May 1, plus or minus a week,” University of Minnesota-

Duluth professor and limnologist John Downing said. “You could pretty much count on it, but now it spans seven weeks. It can go out as early as late March or as late as the 18th of May ... That is a huge deal when you consider that your standard open water season is 12 weeks.”

In the Brainerd lakes area, Downing said the average ice-out date is now around April 24, but that date can vary dramatically. “‘Climate weirdness’ is what I call it,” Downing said. “It is getting harder to predict. That is why we are working on this is to try and give some guidance to people and help them understand when they can get to the cabin and put their dock in, or put their boat in the water.”

Downing said that the now-unpredictable nature of ice-out and ice-in is not only surprising, it may also be the new normal moving forward. “This is a real change in our climate patterns,” Downing said. “I do think the variation is here to stay, and actually, the creep toward early ice-out has been shown right across North America.

### Boaters are encouraged to be safe and remember the ‘golden rule’

“It goes back to the golden rule – **treat others like you want to be treated**. If you are fighting over a fishing spot or you are complaining about somebody that’s too slow at the landing or things like that, just understand that everybody’s situation may be a little different. Offer to help.”

- Jim Guida, conservation officer

“‘Boater etiquette’ also means controlling your wake,” Guida said. “If you are driving a boat at a high rate of speed around nonmotorized watercraft – and they are at risk of capsizing or damage by your wake – you are accountable. ... If your wake is destroying the shoreline or harassing wildlife or harassing boaters, you have to be accountable to that.

“We understand that wakeboard boats are very popular, and it is very, very common to see wakeboard boats on Minnesota lakes,” Guida said. “If they operate within the guidelines of state law, they have an opportunity to utilize a lake as a form of recreation just like an angler has to catch fish, a sailboat has to sail or a canoeist to paddle. All of those things need to work together.” Guida encourages those boaters to use a less-populated area of the lake whenever possible.

Of course, being the best boater one can be also means checking your gear for stowaways, as the issue of aquatic invasive species becomes more of a problem in the area. “We always want to clean, drain and dry

boats prior to and when leaving water,” Guida said. “Any bait that’s retained needs to be placed in a separate quantity of water that has not been on that lake, and that helps slow the spread of aquatic invasive species.”

Though invasive species are present in many area lakes, Guida said boaters have become much more aware of the situation, and much more cautious about spreading them to other bodies of water.

“I think it is becoming common practice now to remove the drain plug when leaving a lake and drain all the water off the boat,” Guida said. “That’s good because it is preventative, and one measure I think people need to continually be vigilant about.”

Guida said boaters need to remember to consider the needs of those in their own watercraft as well. “I think one of the most important rules in the early fishing season as always, is make sure you have plenty of life jackets on board for yourself and all the occupants,” Guida said. “Additionally, one throwable Type-4 (personal flotation device) is required for boats that are 16 feet or greater.

“If you’re planning on fishing after dark, make sure your navigational lights are functioning, including a 360-degree white light to the rear and a green and red light to the port and starboard,” he said.

Having proper-fitting life jackets is especially important shortly after ice-out, when the water is still cold and the risk of drowning is much higher. “Buy a comfortable life jacket so you don’t have any problem wearing it.

“The boat owner is ultimately responsible, but as an adult, we all have a responsibility to make sure that the boat has the required equipment on it before it leaves the dock,” he said.

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### **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.







Your comments are welcome.

To print just this page for your application, in your Print Settings at the Pages input prompt, type in 9

# 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** \$ \_\_\_\_\_