



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

June 13 Annual Meeting 9-11:00 AM

May 2 Spring Board Meeting 8:00 AM

July 4 4th of July Boat Parade Noon

Sept. 5 Fall Board Meeting 8:00 AM

The annual meeting is at Hazelton Town Hall 4248 US HWY 169, just 2.5 miles south of Tame Fish Lake Rd.

Board Member Opening

We have an opening for a new board member. Contact me if you're interested in getting involved in the lake community and its stewardship. FILIALake@gmail.com.

Board members serve a voluntary 3-year term. They meet two times a year, the first Saturday in May and September, and attend the annual meeting.

31 paid members so far!

- 207 members in 2025

Read below:

- Why FILIA dues matter
- Current member list



Starry stonewort scuba dive survey

On September 13, 2025, a scuba diver was hired to perform an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspection, specifically starry stonewort, at the north and south public accesses. The results were that starry stonewort was not observed at either boat launch, indicating that it has not found its way into Farm Island Lake.

[Read the full report](#) on our website with detailed activity description and maps, videos and pictures. Our website contains information on how to identify starry stonewort, curly-leaf and other AIS.

How does a turtle breathe underwater for 5 months? Find the answer below.



Membership Facts

- **Annual membership dues can be paid at the beginning of each year.**
- **Membership lists and an application** are on your website FarmIslandLake.org. An application is at the end of this newsletter.
- **Pay dues online!** About 33% make online payments and contribute to the AIS Fund.
- **FILIA is a non-profit organization.**
- **Be sure we have your email** to ensure receipt of newsletters.
- **Stop Aquatic Invasive Species!** Additional monies can be paid toward the AIS Fund with your mailed application or pay online.
- **372 property owners** in 2025.
- **Newsletters are emailed to 509** recipients. Non-paying property owners also receive newsletters.
- **223 (60%) members is the average** membership over the last 5 years.

Greetings from Aitkin County Sheriff Dan Guida

Received 3/10/2026

Greetings from Sheriff Dan Guida,

The 2025 addition of another Recreation Enforcement Deputy was a success and the numbers of interactions with snowmobiles, ATVs and boats have doubled. The patrol hours for Farm Island Lake have also doubled and I hope you have seen a positive impact. Proactive numbers are difficult to track but I know that the increased patrol makes a safer lake.

Thank you for your support in this process as it is taxpayers who fund our operations.

My staff reported that last summer the wakeboat/jetski operators were operating “better” than previous years on Farm Island. I hope this was due to educational efforts to remind everyone that they are responsible for their boats’ wake. The staff also shared they fielded less loud music complaints. Good job for all of you, and remember that most people with residents/cabins on Farm Island are not involved in these issues. We see that guests of the residents are responsible for about half of our calls, so please make every effort to educate those you share with before sending them out to the water!

I want to thank all of you for a great winter. Your calls are always welcome and if you see something, say something and we will do our best to help with the problems!

Sheriff Dan Guida



Release 16-to-19-inch Walleyes

The walleye slot limit on Farm Island Lake is 16” to 19”. Fish this size are to be immediately released. On Farm Island Lake the slot limit from 16 to 19 inches designates the size to NOT keep. This protects the best breeders on Farm Island Lake, per the DNR, and has been a special regulation since 1996.

Minnesota New Boater Education Law

Read more here: [New Boater Education Law](#)



Fingerlings Stocked by FILIA / DNR Electrofishing Survey October 2025

Based on Rick Bruesewitz's (Aitkin Area Fisheries Supervisor) report, below, the FILIA board members unanimously voted to stock 400 lbs. of walleye fingerlings October 25, 2025. [See more pictures and videos](#) on our website.

Rick Bruesewitz's report emailed October 10, 2025

Our electrofishing survey showed pretty poor results for Farm Island for both young-of-the-year and yearling Walleye. We saw none of either age class.

Production fingerlings are pretty scarce this season (poor production across the state in our ponds) but I ...will stock 389 lbs. ... in Farm Island. This is just a tad less than what we stocked in 2019 (425 lbs.) when we appeared to have two bad years in a row.

Farm Island is showing similar symptoms to other zebra mussel lakes, where Walleye production tanks for 5-10 years before it picks up again.

If the lake association wanted to buy more fingerlings (100-400 lbs.) from private growers (must be Mississippi strain) I would be supportive. It is likely that I will be putting FI on an "every other year" fingerling plan at modest density along with annual fry.

Let me know if you decide to pursue additional fish.

Later, Rick

Aitkin Area Fisheries Supervisor | Fish and Wildlife | 218-429-3037 | rick.bruesewitz@state.mn.us



Minnesota DNR adds new catch-and-release bass season

Anglers can now fish for bass before the traditional May fishing opener

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' fishing regulations for 2026 include a new catch-and-release season that makes fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass open all year on inland waters. These changes for bass fishing and a variety of other new regulations are listed on pages 13-14 of the [Minnesota DNR Fishing Regulations book](#).

The harvest season dates for bass remain the same. Now, though, anglers are able to catch-and-release bass starting Feb. 23.

"We're improving bass fishing opportunities after hearing strong support from anglers for earlier bass fishing," said Eric Altena, Little Falls area fisheries supervisor. "Bass populations are thriving and have increased abundance and sizes, and compared with past decades, have broader geographic distribution in our state."

Since bass spawning peaks in late May, which is later in the year than some other species, there is no biological evidence that catch-and-release bass fishing poses a conservation issue for the fish.

Why Filia Dues Matter: Protecting Our Lake

When property owners pay FILIA membership dues, they help keep the organization running and support community programs. These dues pay for important services, advocacy, and improvements that benefit everyone, including property owners. By contributing, property owners build a strong, unified group that can solve problems, keep property values up, and improve life for all members.

1. Membership dues go towards:

- Newsletters & communications
- Bulk mailing of printed newsletter
- Postage & PO box rental
- Website & domain name for FILIA (FarmIslandLake.org)
- Annual membership meeting
- Organization donations
- General Liability & Board of Directors' Insurance

2. FILIA keeps property owners apprised of lake activities and critical issues that affect Farm Island Lake via the annual meeting, newsletters and the FILIA website and other communications as needed.

3. FILIA works to monitor our lake's water quality and undertake projects to reduce the amount of sediment and phosphorus directly entering Farm Island Lake.

4. FILIA actively applies for grant monies to support our work on both AIS and water quality. Matching funds are often required on some grants.

- In past years we have received AIS educational grants which are used to offset the cost of publishing and mailing the annual bulk mailed newsletter.

- FILIA will continue to apply for future invasive aquatic plant management grants.

5. FILIA represents you and your interests with government agencies – Aitkin County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Aitkin County soil and water conservation district (ACSWCD), Aitkin County Lakes and Rivers Association (ACLARA), Minnesota Aquatic Research Center (MAISRC) and others.

6. FILIA represents you and your interests with other organizations working to prevent the spread of AIS and maintain our water quality. e.g., MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR), MNDNR etc.

7. FILIA members have access to notices regarding lake activities, water levels, boating & fishing regulations, and much more information by visiting the website.

8. FILIA collaborates with the Aitkin County sheriff water patrol and the MNDNR.

Minnesota DNR proposes harvest limits for native rough fish

New rules would improve conservation for many Minnesota fish [Read more.](#)

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources invites the public to comment on proposed rules related to daily and possession limits on native rough fish. Under the new proposed rules, these fishes – including bowfin, buffalo, carpsucker, freshwater drum, goldeye, mooneye, quillback, redhorses and suckers – would also get a variety of other protections.

Some examples of protections include noting that structural practices such as dams that hinder migration of these fish are no longer appropriate or desired, excluding bowfin from commercial harvest, and clarifying that native rough fish and also common carp taken by angling or dip netting can be returned to the water.

“We are continuing efforts to conserve these important species,” said Shannon Fisher, DNR fisheries populations monitoring and regulations manager. “Over the last handful of years, we’ve seen renewed appreciation for the role these fish play in aquatic ecosystems of our rivers and lakes.”

Boating and Fishing Regulations

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.



<https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/boatwater/boatingguide.pdf>

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.

Aitkin County Planning and Zoning



If you are building, remodeling or working on shoreline, contact Aitkin County at 218-927-7342 or [click here for their website](#) to be sure you are up-to-date on their codes.

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 and water patrol: 911 or 218-927-7435

MNDNR Hotline: 651-296-6157

AIS specialist: 218-927-7298

Aitkin Area Wildlife: 218-429-3053

Removing lake plants could require a permit

Under Minnesota law, aquatic plants growing in public waters are the property of the state. Because of their value to the lake ecosystem, they may not be destroyed or transplanted unless authorized by the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources as stipulated in the Aquatic Plant Management Rules.

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.

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.

Farm Island Lake Water Quality Monitoring Results from 2025



Test samples for chlorophyll “a” and phosphorus were collected by Bill Haroldson and board member Russ Hoppe. Farm Island Lake is solidly within the expected range - meaning things looked pretty good last summer. However, water quality can vary quite a bit with the weather. Lots of rain can add more nutrients and sediment to the lake. Lots of heat can encourage algae growth.

Find out more at <https://awlab.com/lakes-program/>

Who to Contact for Lake Shoreline Questions

These are the agencies to contact about lake shoreline questions.

- The Aitkin County Environmental Services (Planning & Zoning) is involved with lake activity from the shoreline away from the water, in other words, above the water line. A permit is required for rip rap and major weed clean up.
Contact: 218-927-7342 , aitkinpz@aitkincountymn.gov
- The DNR is involved from the shoreline into the water. Contact Brian Roulet, Aitkin County SWCD AIS Project Coordinator at Roulet.aitkinswcd@gmail.com , 218-927-7298.

- 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.

Shoreland Management – Protect the Lake and the Wildlife

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/shoreland/index.html

Maintain and/or restore natural vegetation along your shoreline.

What Natural vegetation does:

- Holds soil in place protecting shorelines from increasingly intensive rain events and rising water levels
- Slows runoff and stores moisture
- Filters out nutrients, which along with rising lake temperatures, accelerates algae blooms
- Provides habitat so species can survive in a changing climate
- Increases property values by keeping lakes clean.

Get the Lead Out

More retail stores are selling lead-free tackle. Be sure to look for it.

Get the Lead Out (GTLO) is an educational program by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) that aims to reduce the amount of lead-based fishing tackle to which loons are exposed.

- **Goal:** Protect and restore the loon population in Minnesota.
- **Methods:** Educate and promote lead-free tackle alternatives, and provide tackle exchanges where people can trade in lead-based tackle for lead-free tackle.
- **Benefits:** Helps protect wildlife and human health.



Here are some tips for identifying lead tackle:

- Lead is a soft, dense metal that is easy to mold and shape.
 - Lead is gray and dull in color.
 - If you scratch lead on paper, it will leave a gray mark.
- Lead poisoning can have negative effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of birds and mammals. Loons with lead poisoning may experience physical and behavioral changes, such as loss of balance, gasping, tremors, and limited flying abilities.
- Depending on how much lead a loon swallows, it can die within two days to three weeks.

[Click here to learn](#) more about Get the Lead Out or visit the [Facebook page](#).



Ice on-out dates for 2025

Ice-out April 12

Ice-on December 4

The Painted Turtle

I just survived five months underwater without surfacing to breathe.

Read more... <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/paintedturtle>



HELLO, I'M THE PAINTED TURTLE

I just spent 5 months underwater. I breathed through my butt.

5 MONTHS UNDERWATER — October to March. Heart rate: 1 beat every 10 minutes. Metabolism at 0.2% of normal.

CLOACAL RESPIRATION — She breathed through specialized tissue in her cloaca. Dissolved oxygen absorbed directly from water.

SHELL = SURVIVAL TOOL — Dissolved calcium carbonate from her own skeleton to neutralize lactic acid in her blood.

BASKING POSITION — Legs fully extended. Maximum surface area exposed to sun. She needs vitamin D and heat to restart muscle function.

THE MUD BED — She was buried right there, in the pond bottom, for 152 days.



**She used her bones to survive not breathing.
Don't throw rocks to see if she's alive.**

She's alive. She fought harder than anything else in your neighborhood to get here.

Minnesota DNR proposes to reduce statewide walleye limit from 6 to 4

New rules would also clarify the regulations for anglers on border waters

Minnesota anglers would be able to keep four walleyes instead of six in a proposal by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to update a statewide inland water walleye fishing regulation that's been in place since 1956.

The rule change if approved, would go into effect March 1, 2027. The current regulation of only one walleye over 20 inches in possession would remain in place.

"The DNR is taking proactive steps to help ensure future generations can continue to enjoy the excellent walleye fishing we have in Minnesota," said Brad Parsons, fisheries section manager. "Over the last 70 years that the current limit has been in place, many factors have changed, including climactic conditions, invasive species introductions and fish-finding technologies."

The proposed rule would also clarify that, when fishing regulations for inland waters are different from rules listed in other parts of the fishing regulations, the rules in other parts of the regulations take precedence. Examples include border waters regulations, when waters are closed to taking fish, or waters with other restrictions on taking fish. This change would be applicable to all species.

"We have discussed this walleye limit proposal informally for a long time, including working with anglers and interested groups to see if this is something anglers would support. Now we're going through the formal process to propose the change and gather input," Parsons said. "This proposal is informed by what fisheries research and sampling data point to about walleye in the future."

More information about the proposal is available on the [Minnesota DNR website](http://mndnr.gov/fisheries/management/walleye-limit.html) (mndnr.gov/fisheries/management/walleye-limit.html).

PWC Regulations

- **PWC (jet skis) hours of operation are between 9:30 AM and one hour before sunset.**
- PWC must travel at slow-no wake speed (5 mph or less) within 150 feet of shore, docks, swimmers, swimming rafts, any moored or anchored watercraft, or nonmotorized watercraft. Exception is when a PWC is launching or landing a water skier by the most direct route to open water.
- **It is illegal to chase or harass wildlife**, or weave through congested watercraft traffic or jump the wake of another watercraft within 150 feet of that boat.



Wear a USCG-approved life jacket!

Minnesota's personal watercraft laws

https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/safety/boatwater/pwc-brochure.pdf



The **Blue Fire Number**, which is your address, is used by emergency responders to locate your property. Contact the Aitkin County Highway Department 218-927-3741 to order. In an emergency, you and guests should be able to give detailed directions on how you can be reached.

Board of Directors

Gordon Vetsch..... President	Jennifer McGuire... Treasurer	Scott Scheele
Russ HoppeV.P	Cindy Chuhanic	Mark Fjerstad
Cheryl McDonough..... Secretary	Dennis Kraimer	Open Position

FILIA Website

There is a ton of information on the FILIA website. You can pay your membership dues online, see the FILIA Financial Report, annual meeting minutes, past and present newsletters, bylaws, membership lists and application, AIS information, boating and fishing regulations, and much more! Check it out at FarmIslandLake.org.



The year-end financial report is on your website on the [Administrative](#) page.

Have a safe and joyous year!

Sincerely,
Cheryl McDonough
Editor, FILIA Newsletter
filialake@gmail.com
Your comments are welcome.

FILIA
PO Box 135
Aitkin, MN 56431

FarmIslandLake.org

[Click here for a printable version on our website so you can post it.](#)

Prevent aquatic invasive species – Clean, Drain, Dry

Regardless of the activity—boating, paddling, fishing, moving shoreline equipment, using recreational gear on the water, or caring for aquarium pets or water gardens—everyone can do their part and take several simple actions to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Be sure to follow Minnesota laws:

- Clean watercraft, trailers and equipment to remove aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species.
- Drain all water and leave drain plugs out during transport.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.
- Never release bait, plants or aquarium pets into Minnesota waters.
- Dry docks, lifts and rafts for 21 days before moving them from one water body to another.

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.

And take these additional steps to reduce the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species whenever possible:

- Decontaminate watercraft and equipment – find free stations on the Courtesy Decontamination page of the DNR website (mndnr.gov/Decon).
- Spray with high-pressure water or rinse with very hot water (120 degrees for at least two minutes or 140 degrees for at least 10 seconds).
- Dry watercraft and equipment for at least five days before using in another water body.

Contact our DNR aquatic invasive species specialist if you think you have found invasive species that has not already been confirmed in a lake or river. Brian Roulet | Aitkin County SWCD AIS Project Coordinator | (218) 927-7298 | Roulet.aitkinswcd@Gmail.com

More information is available on the Aquatic Invasive Species page of the DNR website (mndnr.gov/AIS).



FILIA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FarmIslandLake.org

BECOME A MEMBER AND HELP PRESERVE AND ENHANCE FARM ISLAND LAKE

Dues are **\$25.00** each year per property owner, payable from January to December.

You can pay online on 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 \$ _____

FILIA membership lists are on the website at FarmIslandLake.org

Althoff Chad and Tresa
Barnes, Stan and Karla
Bohn, James
Burnison, Russ and Trish
Chemlik, Marvin and Joanne
Cowan, Rob and Pam
Danielson, Stephen and Roxanne
Diedrich, Bill and Karen
Engh, Jim and Julie
Feldstein, Thomas and Mary Ellen
Fjerstad, Mark and Kim Curless
Fragodt, Brian and Joy
Furth, John and Allison
Garner, Jim and Pam
Hasbrouck, Chris and Meg
Hausauer, Jim
Holter, Steve and Lynn
Johnson, Brad and Angela
MacMillian Mike and Carol
McDonough, Kevin and Cheryl
Norgren, Jim and Judy
Oare, Scott and Robbin
Olinger, Tom and Dru
Poser, Richard and Sue
Rasmussen, Roma
Reisetter, Tom, Doreen, Dan & Ann
Schifsky, Steve and Dawn
Trick, Carol
Utterberg, Tom and Carol
Vollmer, Steve and Cindy
Zelixon, Alex and Lily