

Vol. 36, Issue 2 ▪ Fall 2026

THE LAKE LINK

BKKLMM Association Newsletter

Photo by Diane Wendt

President's Message

By Mike Schmitt

It's hard to believe fall is already here. The trees are beginning to turn, the mornings have that familiar crispness, and our lakes are settling into the calm that follows a full and lively summer.

What an amazing season it was. From early morning fishing to sunset pontoon rides, it was wonderful to see so much activity, enjoyment, and appreciation for the place we all share. One of the highlights this summer was an outdoor wedding on Baby Lake. It was a picture, perfect afternoon in July, and what stood out most was how naturally the community responded. Boat traffic paused, the water quieted, and it felt as though everyone instinctively understood the moment. It was a beautiful reflection of the respect and care that define our lakes. Congratulations to the bride and groom!

This season also brings a transition in several long-serving volunteer roles. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to **Sue Ready**, **Charley Ready**, and **Joni Kumpula** for their many years of dedicated service. Sue's colorful and educational newsletters have kept our community informed; Charley's work as webmaster and his coordination of the annual Loon Count have strengthened both our communication and helped us track one of the most iconic parts of our lake environment; and Joni's warm greetings and leadership as membership chair have made every event feel welcoming. Their contributions have shaped the association in meaningful ways, and we are deeply grateful.

We also welcome **Dave Elenkiwich**, **Jennifer Gander**, **Laura Palmer-Turnacliff**, and **Andy Gander** as they step into several of our open volunteer positions. Dave will serve as our newsletter editor, Jennifer is taking on webmaster responsibilities, Laura will lead membership as our new chair, and Andy has stepped into the vice president's role and AIS team leader. We're grateful for their commitment and look forward to the energy and ideas they'll bring to the association.





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Our 6 Lakes Association MN

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If you have questions or concerns about your lake, please contact your lake representative listed within this newsletter.

Our 6 Lakes Mission Statement

To preserve and improve water quality, fish habitat, and the well-being of wildlife in our lakes and the watershed of which our lakes are a part.

To encourage and participate in activities intended to prevent the emergence of aquatic invasive species in our lakes and the watershed and, if such emergence occurs, to control the growth and expansion of such species.

To educate our members and other members of the public on proper conservation practices relating to the above purposes.

P.O. Box 86
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Association News



Our New Vice President/AIS Lead & Webmaster

By Dave Elenkiwich

Meet Andy and Jennifer Gander—Andy and Jennifer have been married for 14 years and made their dream of Northwoods living a reality when they relocated from Winona, MN to Baby Lake in August 2024. They now call the northwest corner of Baby Lake home year-round where they enjoy the peaceful lifestyle they have long envisioned amongst the pines and birch trees.

Along with their dog, Drake, Andy and Jennifer appreciate the simple things in life—spending time with family, quiet mornings, being on the water, hiking, enjoying the outdoors, and observing the abundant wildlife that makes the area so special. While they enjoy every season, winter is their favorite. They especially appreciate the natural beauty, stillness, and coziness that define the Northwoods during the colder months.

Andy's connection to the area began in his youth, spending countless days on Kabekona Bay of Leech Lake, where he developed a lifelong appreciation for the quiet, outdoor lifestyle of north-central Minnesota. Throughout their relationship, Andy and Jennifer vacationed at Little Boy Lake Resort, and as their careers evolved to provide greater flexibility, they were grateful for the opportunity to make the region their permanent home.

Professionally, Andy works in wholesale distribution, and Jennifer works in medical education. Andy has recently been nominated to serve as Vice President of the association and has also volunteered as the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Lead. Jennifer has stepped into the volunteer role of Webmaster, succeeding Charley Ready.

Andy and Jennifer look forward to getting to know fellow residents, volunteers, and association members. They are excited to serve the association and are committed to helping preserve the beauty, value, and enjoyment of the Our 6 Lakes watershed for future generations.

2026 Board Members & Lake Representatives

Executive Board

Mike Schmitt—President
Andy Gander—Vice President
Lynn Graham—Secretary
Gary Reuter—Treasurer
Joni Kumpula—Membership

Lake Representatives

Rob Chapman—Baby Lake
Greg Olund—Baby Lake
Open Position—Kerr Lake
Brian & Monica Laudenbach—Kid Lake
Gary Reuter—Lost Lake
Gary Guttormson—Man Lake
Lois Anderson—Man Lake
Laura Palmer-Turnacliff—McKeown Lake
Doug Dyer—McKeown Lake

Standing Committees

Andy Gander—AIS Team Leader
Stan Kumpula—Lakes Mgmt. Plan Leader
Mike Schmitt—Water Quality Team Coordinator & Co-Webmaster
Jennifer Gander—Co-Webmaster
Open Position—Historian
Dave Elenkiwich—Newsletter Editor
Doug Dyar—Fisheries Team Lead

Connie Schmitt—Past President, Advisory
Sue Ready–Newsletter Advisor
Judy Leeds–Graphic Designer

Email Questions To:

our6lakespresident@outlook.com



2027 Annual Meeting

Saturday July 24, at 9AM - 11AM at the UCC Church in Hackensack.

Registration and networking starts at 8:30AM.

Please join us for the Baby, Kerr, Kid, Lost, Man & McKeown Lakes Association Annual Meeting!

We would love to see you!

We will continue to host general board meetings using Zoom. Members of the public are invited to attend. Please use the "Contact Us" option, in the upper right corner of our website, to ask questions or request a Zoom meeting link and connection instructions.

2027 Board Meetings

April 13, 2027 at 7:00PM (Zoom)
June 8, 2027 at 7:00PM (Zoom)
July 6, 2027 at 7:00PM (Zoom)
Aug. 17, 2027 at 7 :00PM (Zoom)

Please provide agenda items to the President a few days prior to a board meeting

Greetings from Kid Lake!

By Brian Laudenback, Kid Lake Representative

Below is an article about the effects of overfishing crappies in small bodies of water. As the Kid Lake representative, I've heard several concerns this year about the amount of crappie being harvested from our lake. I'm sharing this information to help explain how overfishing can affect a smaller lake like ours.

Within MN fishing regulations, each of us decides how many fish to harvest. We ask everyone to use good judgment, consider the impact of their harvest on the entire community, and help protect this valuable resource so our grandchildren and future generations can enjoy the same great fishing we do today.



Protecting the Future of Our Panfish on Smaller Lakes

Our 6 Lakes chain is a wonderful fishing resource, and the best way of preserving it is by practicing selective harvest. Fishery biologists encourage keeping a few medium-sized fish for a meal and releasing the largest fish to spawn again.

The smaller lake's, under 300 acres, fish populations are much more vulnerable to heavy fishing compared to larger lakes. This especially applies to Kid Lake (163 acres), McKeown Lake (157 acres), Kerr Lake (80 acres), and Lost Lake (70 acres). Crappies and bluegills don't migrate long distances, so when large amounts of fish are removed from a small lake, it will take years for the population to recover.

Large crappies play an important role in the health of small lakes. Local conservation efforts by the Lakes Association heavily encourage voluntary selective harvest (releasing larger crappies) to preserve the chain's size structure. Larger female crappies produce more eggs compared to smaller crappies and those eggs are often of a higher quality.

By practicing these simple rules of pan fishing, Our 6 Lakes will remain healthy and provide outstanding fishing for years to come.

Become A Member

And help protect the lakes we love. **(See page 8)**

BECOME A MEMBER!

Our 6 Lakes Loon Fun Facts and Numbers

By Dave Elenkiwich

- MN has more loons (12,000) than any other state except Alaska
- Loons have solid bones that help them dive 250 feet in search of food
- Because of their heavy bodies they need a 100-600 foot runway
- Loons can stay underwater for 5 minutes
- Loons can fly more than 75 miles per hour
- Scientists think loons can live +30 years
- The National Loon Center, set to open in 2027, Crosslake, MN, will welcome visitors into its 20,000 sq/ft new building. Designed as family friendly, educational, interactive and supported by the United States and Canada



LAKE	2026			2025			2024			2023		2022	
	Adults	Juvenile	Chicks	Adults	Juvenile	Chicks	Adults	Juvenile	Chicks	Adults	Chicks	Adults	Chicks
Baby	19	4	2	18	3	3	19	1	4	14	3	11	2
Kerr													
Kid	4			3			3		1	3		4	3
Lost				2		1	2		1	3		2	1
Man	9	3	2	6		2	5	1		10	1	11	2
McKeown	3		1	5			3		1	4		2	1
TOTAL	**35**	**7**	**5**	**34**	**3**	**6**	**32**	**2**	**7**	**34**	**4**	**32**	**9**

Aquatic Invasive Species 2026 Fall Update

By Andy Gander, BKKLMM VP and AIS Lead

Nine percent (9%) of Minnesota's 11,842 lakes are now on the MN-DNR's infested waters list. That is 1,066 lakes with 1 known aquatic invasive species present. 5% of Minnesota's lakes are listed as infested with zebra mussels. What can you do?

You can help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species by taking these three steps every time you leave a lake or river—whether or not it's infested:

- Clean all aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other invasive species from boats, trailers, and water-related equipment.
- Drain water from your boat, ballast tanks, motor, live well and bait container.
- Remove drain plugs and keep them out while transporting equipment.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash. To keep live bait, drain the water and refill the bait container with bottled or tap water.

Why should you be concerned about AIS? Do you enjoy fishing? Do you enjoy water recreation activities? Do you enjoy natural wildlife that occurs within our watershed?

- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native organisms living in water that cause economic and environmental harm
- AIS out-competes and displaces natural native species
- AIS degrades water quality, negatively impacts our aquatic resources (such as game fish), makes recreation additionally challenging, and affects the aesthetic of being on or near the water.
- Research has found that AIS has economic effects of reduced property values, less tourism, and lower employment.

> "...several lakes immediately surrounding Our 6 Lakes watershed do have known AIS in their waters."

Jody Derks, Assistant Area Manager from the MN DNR Walker Fisheries office has communicated that Our 6 Lakes have no AIS updates or notifications. **This means there is currently no known aquatic invasive species in the Our 6 Lakes watershed.** Jody stated we should continue to help spread awareness about AIS Prevention. Jody also noted that several lakes immediately surrounding Our 6 Lakes watershed do have known AIS in their waters.

Most notably, Little Boy, Wabedo, and Rice Lakes were announced by DNR with confirmed Zebra Mussels this summer. Upon initial discovery, this was not isolated and had already spread lake wide. Treatments for Zebra mussels are only issued to very small, and isolated populations—and once spread there is no known treatment. Once zebra mussels are established, their populations grow quickly, reaching maturity in about 1 to 2 years, and can produce up to 700,000 offspring per square meter. Warm water temperatures, abundant food (phytoplankton), and stable substrates such as rocks, docks, and boat hulls support Zebra mussel growth.



Resources/References:

Minnesota DNR AIS Website: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/index.html

Walker Fisheries Office: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/walker/index.html

Association of Cass County Lakes: https://www.acclakes.org/



Preserve Our History

If you enjoy reading the newsletter feature articles about our association's history, considering trying on the historian role. A curious mind and love of collecting peoples' stories will make this position a joy.

All lake associations positions are volunteer. Contact the President at our6lakespresident@outlook.com if you are available.

Thank You Annual Meeting Donors

Thank you Donors for your generous gifts at the July 2026 Annual Our 6 Lakes Meeting

Lois Anderson: 3 "Life at the Cabin" Signs and Magnets

Diane Hughes: 12 Bottles of Wine

Rob Chapman: 4 Bottles of Wine

Brian Laudenback: 4 dozen Donuts

Greg Olund: 3 Microfiber Fishing Towels, 4-20 oz Glass Tumblers

Gary Guttormson: 2 Bottles of Wine

Laura Palmer-Turnacliff: Party Napkins, Popcorn Cups, Popcorn, Tumblers and Trays

Connie Schmitt: 8 Big Dipper Gift Cards and Bags

Gary Rueter: 8 Gift Certificates to Blue Ox Coffeehouse

Joni Kumpula: 8 Handmade Knit Caps



Farewell to Sue and Charley Ready

By Dave Elenkiwich

After 25 years, Sue and Charley Ready have turned the page from life at Baby Lake to their next chapter, relocating to AZ. Over the years they have immersed themselves in the Up North Lake community and became familiar, trusted faces across Hackensack and Longville.

Charley has been an active member of both the Hackensack and Longville Pickleball Clubs. He has been co-webmaster with Mike Schmitt for the lakes association as well as managing their summer lake loon count—work that helped deepen our understanding of the health and activity of our lakes.

Sue has been the past editor of the Lake Link newsletter, working alongside Kim Hruba. Sue has been a supporter and promoter of the literary arts in the Hackensack community through her 15 years with the Northwoods Arts Council which included 12 years as chair of their annual book festival in August. Her love of cooking led to a twice monthly food column for the Pilot Independent, where since 2013 she shared dishes inspired by the changing seasons. Sue will continue to post recipes on her blog at sockfairies.blogspot.com and on Facebook.

The Readys have made many lasting lake memories with neighbors and friends in the Hackensack/Longville area, as well as family members who trekked from the cities to enjoy a little “slice of heaven” at Baby Lake. The Ready’s will miss their lake life—and we will deeply miss them.

Our 6 Lakes July 4th 2026 Boat Parade



Lake Link Lifestyle



Dave Elenkiwich Joins as Newsletter Editor

About a month ago, I reached out to the association's president, Mike Schmitt, and Laura Palmer Turnacliff, asking how I could help our association. Mike's response was simple: "What can you do?"

Before retirement, I spent 30 years in marketing and promotions at KARE11-TV and another 12 years at KSTP-TV. Based on that background, Mike asked me to help with communications and our newsletter. Soon afterwards, I had the pleasure of meeting Sue Ready to discuss the Lake Link newsletter. All I can say is, I wish I had known Sue years ago when we bought our cabin. Sue is incredibly talented, organized, and personable. After talking with her, I gladly agreed to become the newsletter editor, provided Sue would work alongside me during the transition. Our lake community, and I personally, will sincerely miss Sue and Charley.

Helping our Deer Through Winter

Why feeding deer can create unintended problems. As winter approaches, it is natural to feel concerned when we see deer moving through our yards, along the lake, and in the woods. Many of us enjoy watching these animals and want to help them through MN long winters. However feeding deer, despite good intentions, can create unintended consequences. **Deer Adapt to MN Winters–**White tailed deer are well adapted to survive harsh MN winters. As temps drop, their metabolism slows and their energy needs decrease. They seek shelter and find areas with natural food sources. In winter, deer rely mainly on twigs, buds, leaves of shrubs and trees. The MN DNR does not recommend supplemental feeding of deer, even in severe winters. Instead, it encourages maintaining habitat that provides natural food and winter cover. **Why Corn Can Be Dangerous–**While a pile of corn may seem helpful, deer are not adapted to sudden access to large amounts of grains. Rapid dietary changes can cause serious digestive issues, including acidosis and enterotoxemia, which can be fatal in severe cases, per the DNR. Plus, concentrating deer can increase disease risk. Feeding sites draw deer into unnaturally high concentrations. Instead of spreading out across the landscape, deer gather at feeding sites, increasing direct contact and exposure to contaminated soil and materials. This is especially concerning for chronic wasting disease (CWD) , a fatal neurological disease in deer and related species.



Feeding Deer Can Also:

- Increase vehicle collisions by drawing deer to roads
- Habituate deer to people and residential areas
- Increase browsing damage to trees and shrubs
- Concentrate deer where predator can more easily find them
- Disrupt natural movement and winter behavior, per the DNR

A Final Thought–Wanting to help deer in winter comes from a good place. We all enjoy seeing wildlife around our lake homes. But often, the best help is allowing nature to function as it has for thousands of years. By protecting habitat and following MN DNR guidance, we can support healthy deer populations, and a healthy lake environment, for years to come.



The Best Tarter Sauce

By Kathryn Kasner, Registered Dietitian at University of Minnesota

Prep 10 minutes
Chill 30 minutes
Makes 1 cup

¾ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ cup dill pickle relish
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
1 tablespoon snipped fresh dill
2 teaspoons capers, drained and chopped

Stir together mayonnaise, lemon juice, pickle relish, onion, dill, and capers in a small bowl.

Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes, (2 hours best) before serving.

Cover and chill any leftovers for up to 1 week Serve with your favorite walleye recipe.

How Your $35 Membership Works for You

If you are already an annual BKKLMM Lakes Association member, thank you for your support! Not yet a member? Please consider joining. Your $35 annual membership supports programs and projects that protect and improve our lakes for everyone to enjoy. Every membership makes a difference. Together, we can do more to protect our lakes for future generations. A membership form is included on the back of this newsletter. Your membership helps fund:

- **Water quality testing and monitoring**
- **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) education and prevention**
- **Maintenance of I-LIDS to monitor the public access**
- **Placement and maintenance of lake buoys**
- **Beaver population control to keep the channels open**
- **Grant applications for lake improvement projects**
- **Communication and education for the lake community and visitors**

Man Lake Cabin Celebrates 100 Years

By Dave Elenkiwich & Gary Norgaard



Some cabins are more than buildings. They become part of the family and part of lake history. For Gary and Rita Norgaard and their daughter Shelby and her husband Adam, their Man Lake cabin has been doing exactly that for 100 years. The Norgaards celebrated this remarkable milestone in August with a large neighborhood gathering. Sharing a century of memories and changing times.

The original cabin was built in 1926, and remarkably, it has retained much of its original character. Over the years, the Norgaard family added several outbuildings, but the original log cabin remains largely unchanged. Gary's father, Del Norgaard, purchased the property in 1962 for $5,500. The property included 7.5 acres and 3,300 feet of lakeshore, between Man and McKeown Lakes.



Getting to the cabin in those days was an adventure. Buxton Road ended at Wildwood Beach Resort. During the winter months, the Norgaards would leave their car at the resort and pull their supplies the rest of the way to the cabin by sled. By the mid 1960s, the road had been completed, making access to the cabin much easier. The Norgaards eventually sold the McKeown lake side to Joe Johnson and his daughter, who still owns it today.

One of the most unforgettable chapters in the cabin's history came during the powerful storm of 2016. Gary woke up an hour before the storm hit and discovered the cabin lost power. As the storm raged outside, he couldn't see what was happening, but he could hear the unmistakable sound of large trees and limbs crashing down around the property. With the storm intensifying, Gary grabbed his father's ashes and, in a moment he will never forget, told him, "we're going down with the ship". When morning finally came, the damage was extensive. Several large trees had fallen on the outbuildings and Gary's truck. Yet, incredibly, not a single branch had struck the cabin. Gary's conclusion? "The Man upstairs likes old log cabins."



Happy 100th birthday to the Norgaard cabin. May it stand for another hundred years.

A Memory Gary Would Relive: Gary's parents remained an integral part of the cabin. His dad passed away in 2013, followed by his mom in 2017. Of all the memories Gary has of his parents and the cabin, one stands out. He remembers returning to the cabin after a day of fishing on Our 6 Lakes. His dad, sitting beside a fire, enjoying a cold beer and listening to a MN Twins game on the radio. When Gary walked up, his dad would look over and ask the simple question: "How did you do, son?" It was an ordinary moment at the time. Decades later, it has become one of Gary's most treasured memories. Perhaps that is what makes this old Man lake cabin so special. It isn't just the logs, the porch, the woodshed or boathouse. It is the laughter, the storms, the fishing trips, the neighbors, family, and a century of memories that have been created within its walls.



Sunset Bay Resort

thank you!

By Dave Elenkiwich

A few weeks ago, I turned onto Hwy 5 and saw the roadway filled with yellow garbage bags. I found out that Penny and Arne Regier and Family (owners of Sunset Bay Resort) have been volunteering since 1998 to keep our roads' environment beautiful.

Thank you Sunset Bay Resort and the Regier family for caring about our lakes, roadsides and the community we call home.

Share the Best of Lake Life!

Thank you to Gary Norgaard for your story of "Man Lake's 100-Year-Old Cabin". The winning story and photos receives a $25.00 gift card. Submit your photo and/or story submission for the Spring 2027 Lake Link's newsletter. Email your submission to delenkiwich@gmail.com.



Remember to renew your membership!

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Membership remain $35.00 again this year. We invite you to make an additional contribution to our Special Projects and/or General Funds.
(See Page 6 to learn how your membership funds are used)

In addition, please consider a Memorial Donation to honor someone special in your lives.

Name	_____	Email	_____	Cell	_____
Name	_____	Email	_____	Cell	_____
Lake Address	_____			Lake	_____
City/State/Zip	_____			Phone	_____
Check Box	☐ Full Time		☐ Seasonal		
Check Box	☐ Property Owner		☐ Family of Owner		☐ Visitor
Alt. Mail Addr.	_____			When	_____
City/State/Zip	_____			Phone	_____

Preferred Communication ☐ **Email** ☐ **Paper**

Please mail completed form and make checks payable to:	**Annual Basic Membership Dues ($35.00/year)**	$
	Please consider a Special Projects Donation	$
BKKLMM Lakes Association **P.O. Box 86** **Hackensack, MN 56432**	Please consider a General Fund Donation	$
	Donation in Memory of: _____	$
	TOTAL ENCLOSED	$

Your donations to the BKKLMM Lakes Association are tax deductible to the extend provided by law (Tax I.D. #20-3293635).
We recommend that you consult your tax professional for specifics before claiming a deduction.