

VEGAS LONG LAKE ASSOCIATION FALL 2003 NEWSLETTER

At the August County Lakes Association (COLA) meeting, two items of interest were discussed:

1. Arsenic in wells – this is a carcinogen that has been showing up in some wells throughout the several-county area. I had our well tested and it came back over the allowable level. I am now testing our water from our Reverse Osmosis system to see if that reduces the arsenic level to below 10 parts per billion. The Lab:

RMB Environmental Labs, Inc.
22796 County Hwy. 6
Detroit Lakes, MN 568501
218-846-1465

The lab actually sends your sample away to be tested, so it takes about 7 – 10 days. You need to run your water for about 5 minutes and then take your sample; about one cup in a zip-lock bag. Water softeners don't matter. It will cost \$25, but worth the price to know.

2. Water testing data on the Internet – many people have asked how our lake is doing. MPCA is attempting to design a model that will give us trends and interpret what is happening to the lake. This will cost big bucks, but they are confident grant money would be available as it would benefit the entire state. When and if this happens, all our past data would be used and makes our continued testing more important.

Several lakeshore owners have observed Forest Tent Caterpillar evidence. The South West Beach along Freedom Flyer Road is set up to spray in the spring. The cost is \$20.00 per lot, which has already been collected. This is the only section on the lake that still has a Beach Captain to make the contacts with the property owners.

We need property owner involvement or the lake association will totally fall apart. Lori Skillings was elected Secretary/Treasurer three years ago and desperately wants out, but we cannot find anyone willing to take her place. She has 95% of the data necessary to publish a new directory, but hasn't had the time to do it. Without Beach Captains to keep her informed about changes, that data will soon be too outdated to publish.

Water testing has continued. Lack of spring runoff gave us water clarity double what is normal, except for August when we had the hot weather bloom. That enhanced clarity drove our index number down, but the phosphorus and chlorophyll numbers remain about the same, so was sort of a false improvement. It just goes to show how sensitive our lake is outside influence.

I hope that all of you took the time to read the articles in the Fargo Forum ("A Lake Awakening"), August 24 - 26, and the one in the Minnesota Volunteer magazine (July-August issue) called "State of the Lakes". They talked about old time residents and all the development and deterioration of water quality they have seen in just their lifetime, most happened in the last 25 years. One quote from the Forum article said "construction of a year-around home with a well-trimmed lawn to the water's edge, increases phosphorus runoff sevenfold, and sediment runoff by nearly 20 times." We know that the entire watershed of our lake is important, but the last 150' next to the water is most critical. That is "us" and we can and need to do better.

The MN Center for Demographics projects Ottertail County population to grow 37% by 2030, so the spiral will likely increase. That brings me to another item that normally would be voted on at a membership meeting. Since we no longer have those meetings, I surveyed a number of members around the lake and have had no objection. Dead Lake, a neighboring lake, is involved with a lawsuit to alter/prevent a developer from building single-family homes, multiunit lodges and cabins on a 250-acre development in Blue Heron Bay. This is 138 units and would be the first development that utilizes back lots or second-tier development in the county. I plan to authorize a \$500 donation to their association to help with their lawsuit. Their results will set the tone for all county development in the future and is vitally important to shoreline owners.

Loon Lake Association has taken the lead to form a task force from all lakes in our common watershed, to develop Lake Management Plans. Those lakes are Spirit, Loon, Sybil, Long, and Rose. I thought by this fall I could mail you a draft copy of what I propose, but there have been no meetings this summer so this will be on our agenda for 2004. A Lake Management Plan is basically a long-range plan that would strive to enhance and preserve the quality of our properties. Jerry Bennett has been our lead representative to this Interlake Watershed task force as the meetings have all been during the winter season.

Last spring we were scheduled for a septic system survey. That got delayed and will now happen in 2004.

This will be the last update until spring of 2004. Have a great winter and be ready for our spring picnic. Please make contact with Lori Skillings (342-2642) or me if you are willing to be Sec/Treas. or Beach Captains. We need your help.

Wally Hegg
218-342-2897

P.S. If you have received this letter in error or have sold your property, please send a note with the new owner's name to P.O. Box 43, Vergas MN 56587 for updating the directory. Thank you.