

# What's in your Water?

Cade Roberts-LAPOA Board

If you are reading this newsletter, it is likely you own a cabin or home using well water. Whether it is 30 feet or 300 feet deep, knowing what is in your water is critical to ensuring the health and safety of you, your family, and friends. Regular testing is your best method to understand the quality of the water from your well. Unlike city supplied water, well water is not frequently tested as it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain the frequency of testing.

According to the state of Minnesota, well owners in the state should be concerned mainly about five contaminants: coliform bacteria, nitrate, Arsenic, Lead, and Manganese. The state recommends testing for coliform bacteria once per year and nitrate every two years. Arsenic levels do not historically fluctuate and can usually be tested for at time of the initial well drilling. Lead usually enters the water system through your house's pipes; therefore, testing is normally required only once and is most common in older homes, or homes where water is stagnate for long periods of time. Manganese is particularly dangerous to infants and babies, so testing should be done to if you have small children present on a regular basis. Testing should be performed by accredited laboratories, several which can be found in the Brainerd/Baxter area and can cost between \$30 and \$125 depending on the number of tests ordered. Morrison County typically performs no charge testing for nitrate every six months. Check the county website for the next testing window.

Minnesota law requires testing, by an accredited laboratory, for all newly drilled wells; while the state does not require testing at the time of property transfer (you buying the property); however, many lending institutions require testing for coliform bacteria, and nitrates, before they will approve a loan for the purchase. If you recently purchased your home or cabin, and the initial well testing information was not provided, it is recommended you test for Arsenic. For example, the well at my home was drilled in the 1970's. We tested the well for Arsenic, using a lab in Brainerd. Testing showed Arsenic levels above the EPA's recommended 10 µg/L (determined to be the maximum level for human consumption), forcing my family and I to either purchase bottled water, or find means of mitigation.

If your water tests for levels higher than the EPA recommended levels for contaminants or metals, there are several mitigation options. For example: disinfection with a chlorine-based solution usually eliminates bacteria and virus from a well repair or new pump installation. This will not solve these issues if an external water source such as, failing septic system or surface water contamination is introducing the pathogens, which may require well repair or contaminant source removal. Metals such as Arsenic, Lead, and Manganese typically can be mitigated via a water softener and reverse osmosis drinking water

*(What's in your Water? cont)*

system installation. It is critical to remember that while boiling water to kill bacteria is a means of disinfection, it can concentrate nitrate, arsenic and other metals making the water more dangerous. For more information the Minnesota Department of Health's website ([www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)) has resources including contact information for local accredited labs.

## Algae— The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

Jim McGonigle –LAPOA Board

Algae is a complex subject with literally thousands of species, most of which are beneficial to lakes, rivers and oceans. Algae is generally present mid to late summer when outdoor and water temps are high and wind minimal. Only a few produce harmful toxins which can be very harmful to swimmers and pets. In this article I hope to give you a high-altitude view of the main types, their description, and what to watch out for.

There are three main groups of algae, Brown, Green and Red and you've probably seen all three. Within these 3 groups there are 7 different "types" of algae:

1. **Green: Chlorophyta found in fresh water**
2. **Euglenophyta: Uglenoids**
3. **Golden brown & Diatoms:Chrysophyta-the most common algae**
4. **Fire Algae: Pyrophyta**
5. **Red: Rhodophyta**
6. **Yellow-green: Xantahophya**
7. **Brown: Paeophyta**

**The Bad:** Toxic (cyno) algae can be green, brown or red. A subdivision of #1 above Green, is blue-green algae. I'm guessing you've probably seen green, blue-green, or brown matted algae here on Lake Alex. All can produce cyanobacteria, which as its name describes can be quite **serious** to **swimmers** and especially **pets** if it is **touched, swallowed or inhaled**. The difficult thing is, that just by looking at these varieties you cannot tell if it is the cyno (toxic) variety. When in doubt, stay out!

Treatment is possible. Copper based compounds, copper sulfate or copper chelate can minimize or eliminate algae, however these chemicals can be harmful to fish and the lake environment. A DNR permit is required for the use of these chemicals. If you elect treatment, it is important to use these chemicals sparingly and according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

**The Good:** Bottom line-Algae is important for a good lake environment. It is the foundational food source for many species in a body of water. However, knowing the difficulty of identifying these toxic algae, it is recommended that you NOT swim or allow pets to swim when any algae is present. I personally know of dog that has died after swimming in algae in this lake. Do be careful and enjoy our lake safely.

# LAKE ALEXANDER PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

Hello again LAPOA Members,

June 2022

It's the last day of May as I again pen this latest President's letter to all of you – I hope you somehow all managed to have a good Memorial Day weekend and managed the wind and storms of late. If it isn't the Pandemic then it's the weather, I'm sure you'd all agree, and I'm hopeful all are managing any damages and high water that likely has and will affect many of you, as it has our household. And considering the lack of spring, and now we creep into summer (dare I say?!), let's hope things improve as we move into June... and I wish you all a good beginning to this 2022 Lake Alexander summer season! The ice off season (I can't call it spring really) was cold and wet, and lake levels I would argue are as high as they were back in fall 2019, even after the drought of 2021! It was a snow-rich winter, but I didn't see or hear of much if any heaving damage, so I guess that is a blessing, and we had ice out on Thursday, May 5... MN DNR has done more fish surveys to begin the ice free season, and updates on these results will be in the newsletter and our Fisheries Supervisor Eric Altena will be attending our annual meeting this summer to give us a full report. We also had our first LAPOA Board meeting in late April, and have decided on another in person Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 13 at 9 am, look for further details in the newsletter. There have not been any new developments of the Pine Bluff LLC (former Weyerhaeuser property) and the Board will continue to follow any and all activities as they relate to this issue. Other than that, by now you'll all know about the substantial storm damage that occurred in May in the SE corner of the Lake going south from the east end landing down to Bear Cabins, and much tree damage scattered all around Lake Alexander. We wish all of you well in getting things cleaned up and repaired, understanding that construction of any sort is a major issue at the present time. Due to the high water there have been a few smaller bogs floating around the lake, but none have presented any major issues at this writing (please remember if you have a bog issue to contact the LALID for assistance, thanks). Lastly, don't hesitate to reach out to an LAPOA Board member with any other questions or comments, and we'll continue to do our best to keep you informed and respond to your contact. Again, we hope to see you at our Annual Meeting at the Scandia Valley Town Hall on Saturday morning, August 13. In the meantime, please get out on the lake and enjoy another summer season in the Lincoln Lakes area. As always I sincerely hope this finds you all healthy and look forward to seeing you around the lake, and many thanks for your continued support of the LAPOA!

Keep well, Dr. Bill, President

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*Mission Statement: To act as stewards of Lake Alexander in regards to water quality, fish management, and shore line conservation.*

More info on our website: [www.minnesotawaters.org/lakealexanderpropertyowners/](http://www.minnesotawaters.org/lakealexanderpropertyowners/)



## Dues Notice

by Alice Sunde—LAPOA Board Treasurer

Well, it's that time of year again. The dues for the Property Owners Association are due again. The dues are \$15 again this year. Please pay only the dues for this year. We do not have a very sophisticated accounting program and with up to 450 members, keeping track of people who pay for more than one year at a time is very difficult. Properties are bought and sold around the lake all the time, these sales are not reported to the LAPOA, so we rely on the County Property Tax Role for our potential membership, and get our mailing labels from the county. Dues notices are sent to all property tax payers as they appear on the official tax list. If your property is a part of a trust, the notice is sent to the address of the trust, who may or may not be the person who pays the dues. We try to keep an updated list of those who should get the dues notice in the event that it is not the taxpayer. Because of the constant changes in ownership around the lake, it is nearly impossible to keep an up to date database of property owners. We are currently using an index card system, which we would like to computerize. The best way to make sure we do not have duplicate owners, would be to make sure the street address on the lake is correct for each owner, then if a property is sold we would simply change name at that address when dues forms are sent back. Please fill out the dues form as completely as possible, we do not give your info to any other entity. Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

### Lake Alexander

#### Lake Improvement District Board Members

- Dr. Bill Faber, Chairman .....575-2328
- Ron Wieber, Treasurer .....575-3326
- Mike Faust.....612-802-5715
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## Shoreline Restoration & Preservation Lake Steward Program

Doug Cook—LAPOA Board

Our property owners association is a member of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR), an organization working to protect the heritage of lake and riverfront property. One of the missions of MLR is to protect and improve the water quality of our lakes and rivers. As shoreline health continues to deteriorate, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates takes initiative to protect the environment from further degradation. Our property owners association is taking advantage of a new MLR program called "Become a Lake Steward". Many lakeshore homeowners are unaware of the devastating effects an unnatural shoreline can have on lake health and water quality. Becoming a Lake Steward with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates recognizes an individual's personal responsibility for their environment, and the care they are taking to preserve natural resources in Minnesota. The MLR Lake Steward Program provides the resources necessary to educate lakeshore homeowners on environmental sustainability through proper shoreline maintenance, and facilitates shoreline restoration projects with materials personalized for each region. After a shoreline has been restored to a healthy and native landscape, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates awards a "Lake Steward" sign to the property owner. The Lake Steward sign is a badge of honor for lakeshore property owners, shows their personal appreciation of the environment, and awards efforts to preserve Minnesota's lakes. The Lake Alexander Property Owners Association shoreline restoration program was started 3 years ago to encourage and reward our members who restore and preserve natural shorelines. This program will be folded into the MLR Lake Steward Program. The \$500 matching grant will remain as part of the program, and property owners will remain eligible to receive matching grants from the Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation District. It is our hope that by joining the MLR Lake Steward Program we can obtain more resources to promote shoreline preservation among our membership. More information on this program will be forthcoming in future newsletters and at the annual meeting. To obtain further information, visit the MLR website at: <https://mnlakesandrivers.org/lake-associations/lake-association-programs/lake-steward/>

# Wake Awareness



Almost every motorboat can create a wake, which is why boaters must be aware of the danger wakes present and the damage they can do. While common courtesy dictates boaters should control their wakes, there are consequences beyond how wakes may affect people. So, what do boaters really need to know when it comes to owning their wake?

Under Minnesota law, the damage your wake causes is treated the same as damage caused by an actual collision. Personal watercraft (PWC) must stay at least 150 feet from shore. There is no required distance for boats, but by staying at least 200 feet from shore or other structures boaters can reduce the likelihood their wakes will cause damage. Boats that create an artificial wake may require more distance to lower the impact.

**Be aware of your environment** and what's going on around you – this applies to everyone on and around the water.

- Have a designated lookout to keep an eye out for other boats, objects, and swimmers.
- If crossing a wake, cross at low speeds and keep a close lookout for skiers and towables.
- Comply with all signs and respect barriers. This includes speed limits, no-wake zones, and underwater obstructions.

**Stay away from shorelines, docks, or other structures.** Backing a boat up to a riverbank or lakeshore can damage the area and lead to erosion. Travel slowly in shallow waters.

- Travel slowly in shallow waters and avoid boating in water less than 2½ feet deep. High speeds near shorelines lead to large wakes that cause shoreline erosion.
- Check local ordinances, restrictions, closures, and permit requirements for the body of water you are on.
- Ask permission from the landowner(s) before crossing private property.

**Minimize repetitive passes.** Once you've run a line, move on to another area. Comply with all signs and respect barriers.

**Respect the rights of others** so everyone can enjoy their time on the water – keep the noise down, be courteous to other boaters, and show consideration to all recreationists on and around the water.

### Environmental impacts of wakes

Large wakes produced by watercraft can result in a variety of negative environmental consequences, including:

- Shoreline erosion;
- Impaired water quality resulting from increased sediment in the water;
- Loss of shoreline vegetation, which helps stabilize the shore and provides important habitat for fish and wildlife.

These impacts are greater when water levels are high and shorelines are saturated.

Boaters must be aware that their actions directly impact the environment. They should take steps to reduce their wake when operating near shore or when water levels are high. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/own-your-wake.html>