

Spring 2023

Providing Leadership and Assistance
to Protect Our Valuable Resource

Prior Lake

ASSOCIATION

Established 1946

Lake association efforts keep boat launches open

The drought dropping Prior Lake to an unusually low level has resulted in new islands emerging and unexpected underwater obstacles causing damage.

Boaters were reporting bottoming-out while at the same time many lakeshore owners were constantly relocating and adjusting their docks and boat lifts. As evaporation continued throughout the hot summer months, dock and lift companies that service the lake eventually raised the alarm that Prior Lake's only two summer boat accesses were becoming dangerously unuseable. The problem at the launches was exasperated because of boaters power launching their boats unto trailers. The prop-wash holes excavated by naive or arrogant boaters who were "hammering the throttle" as they loaded created underwater conditions that resulted in expensive damage to many boats and trailers.

"We exist to serve those who use the lake throughout the year and that's why the PLA committed at least 50% of the funding for this urgently needed project."

PLA President Adam Proehl

The MN DNR was contacted in the hopes of garnering help to alleviate the problem at both the Sand Point and Dewitt accesses as water levels continued to drop and serious concerns for fall boat removal increased.

The state division responsible for boat launches, while wanting to resolve the issue, explained that no funds currently existed for such urgently needed repairs. Furthermore, bureaucratic red tape requiring permits from several governmental levels, seemed to doom any quick fix solutions.

Nonetheless, with PLA board members sensing the urgency of the problem, they began a concerted effort to "get something done...now!" said PLA President Adam Proehl. Board members Jan Alswager and Woody Spitzmueller worked with Dave Calucci of Donkey Docks to spearhead the

effort to navigate the complex permitting process and government bureaucracy. While Ms. Alswager worked with local State Senator Eric Pratt and the DNR to expedite the government-required permitting process, Mr. Spitzmueller, Mr. Proehl and others launched a \$6500 fund-raising effort resulting in contributions from the City of Prior Lake, the Prior Lake Sportsmen's Club, Prior Lake Rotary and, of course, Prior Lake Association.

That financial support and the expediting of governmental permits, along with the efforts of local dock and lift companies, including Great Outdoors Services and Donkey Docks enabled at least a short-term, "band-aid fix" to the Sand Point access.

"We exist to serve those who use the lake throughout the year and that's why the PLA committed at least 50% of the needed funding for this urgently needed project," explained Mr. Proehl.

(Continued inside)



Excavation work repairing the Sand Point boat launch was completed early fall of 2022. PLA.

2023 CALENDAR

February 4
Charlie's Winter Beer and BBQ Fest

February 18
Fish House Contest

February 8-20
Ice Out Guessing Contest

April 1
Membership Drive Deadline

April 30
Sixth Annual Ice Out Celebration

June 17
Dive The Lake Cleanup

June 24
On-The-Water Ice Cream Social

July 4
Boat Parade

July 4
57th Annual PLA Fireworks

August 6
Family Fishing Tournament

September 1
Photo Contest Deadline

September 2
MN Mermaid Paddle Board Dash

September 14
Fall Party

October 26
PLA Annual Meeting
(All above dates are tentative.)

AVOID DESTRUCTIVE POWER LOADING

AVOID unnecessary power loading of your boat onto trailer. DO NOT slam the throttle down when loading your craft. Propeller wash from power loading erodes sediment just beyond the boat ramp. To prevent this launch damage, approach trailer slowly.



Prior Lake Association President Adam Proehl

Because of you we finished 2022 with an all-time high of 508 members! The Prior Lake Association is alive, well and contributing to our lake community thanks to your membership and participation.

Not only would we like to repeat this success in 2023, but we'd like to see 600 members join the PLA. Why you ask?

- Last year, because of membership dues, donations and financial help from our sponsors, we were able to:
- Step in to repair the Sand Point launch when no one else could
- Have another successful Dive The Lake Clean-up effort
- Put on another epic 4th of July Boat Parade with prize levels attracting numerous quality entrants
- Sponsored a fantastic fireworks show many called the best ever
- Promoted numerous fun contests and events throughout the year
- Hosted multiple membership gatherings

By reaching 600 members, we can do even more great things for the lake community we all love. If you or your neighbors haven't joined yet, or are "sitting on the fence," please know that your family's annual \$30 membership fee donation helps to improve our waters and overall lake-life all 12 months of the year.

If you're already a member and planning to renew, we thank you! Equally important, we're asking you to encourage your neighbors and friends to join the PLA. Only as dues-paying members, will they be able to participate in our many activities, contests and celebrations like our highly-anticipated Ice Out Celebration. Please share this newsletter and contact us for extra copies.

Sign-up or renew your membership at priorlakeassociation.org today. See you on the water! *Adam Proehl*

Lucrative prize money draws many entrants

Boat Parade Flies High in '22

In spite of threatening weather the 2022 PLA boat parade was another success thanks in part to co-sponsor Knotty Oar Marina. The creative and exciting entries were numerous as parade participants were applauded by spectators in their boats and on land.

The past summer's first place winner was the Top Gun float produced by a group of friends calling themselves the Surf Club who earned the \$500 cash prize and their name engraved on the highly-prized trophy.

Second place was also a Top Gun theme earning the C.C. crew a \$250 prize. Candyland Cove, sponsored by Karen Lorinser claimed the third place prize of \$100.

Again this summer the PLA will be judging 2023 boat parade entrants with based on crew energy, creativity, and overall execution of their entry.

Registration forms will be available at the Knotty Oar Marina prior to the event which is slated to begin at 1 p.m., Tuesday, July 4th.



Mayor Kirt Briggs presenting the Spirit award to PLA board member Woody Spitzmueller.

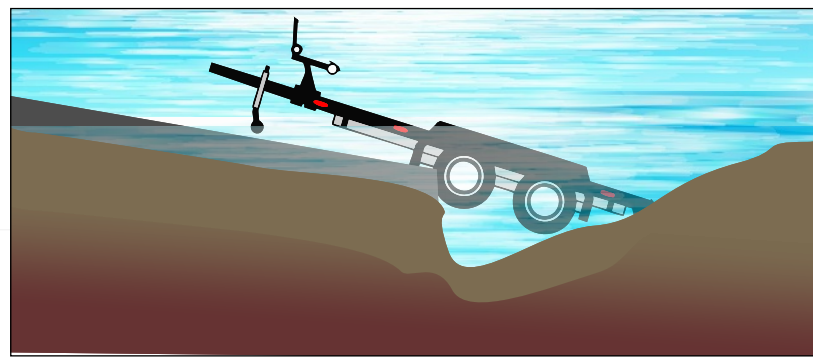
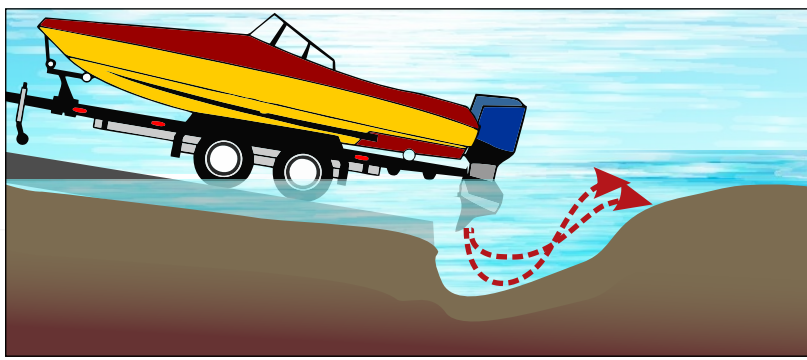
PLA Treasurer awarded for volunteerism Spitzmueller is "Spirit" recipient

When some people retire, they call it a career and ride off into the sunset, but for Woody Spitzmueller retirement just gave him more time to volunteer wherever there was a need.

Retired from Lockheed Martin after 38 years, Mr. Spitzmueller, current PLA Treasurer and former Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed board member, moved to Prior Lake and quickly involved himself in the community.

Woody's volunteer work was recently recognized when he was awarded the 2022 Cora McQuestion Spirit of Prior Lake Award. The annual award is named after Prior Lake's first female mayor (and the second in Minnesota) and is presented to an individual whose actions have made a significant, positive impact on our community.





Watershed District Improves Prior Lake Water Quality

It wasn't long ago that Upper Prior Lake residents would boat to Lower Prior Lake to swim in its clear water. The difference in water clarity between the two lakes could be attributed to Upper Prior's high levels of Chlorophyll-a and suspended sediments in the water, both of which are made worse by common carp.

Chlorophyll-a is responsible for the green color of the lake during times of high algae content. Ten years ago, Upper Prior Lake had three times the MPCA-set chlorophyll-a standard for that lake. Algal blooms are fueled by excess nutrients in the water, primarily phosphorus. In 2012 the Upper Prior Lake seasonal total phosphorus average also measured above the standard.

To address these issues the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District launched an alum treatment to remove phosphorus thus reducing algae and increasing water clarity. Effective on its own, alum is made more productive when paired with phosphorus-reduction efforts such as the removal of common carp.

Also in 2012, carp were a significant problem in Upper Prior. Carp uprooting native plants and stirring up sediment releases phosphorus which fuels algal blooms and decreases the water oxygen content. When carp stir up lake sediment, water becomes murky and is difficult for aquatic plants to receive the sunlight they need to thrive and uptake excess nutrients like phosphorus.

The carp population in Upper Prior Lake has seen a general decline over time due to the district's removal efforts. In 2018 it was estimated to be approximately 453 kg/ha. As of 2022, that population was reduced to 190 kg/ha. This reduction was achieved through a holistic approach to carp management, including not just removal of carp from the lake itself (shown at right), but also strategically placing barriers to cut carp off from their spawning locations. Carp removal in Upper Prior Lake continues to be a priority for the district heading into 2023 according to district administrator Joni Giese.

Upper Prior also benefits from the improved water quality in

Spring and Arctic Lake, as they flow into Upper Prior. Spring Lake has also experienced reductions in chlorophyll-a and phosphorus due to water quality projects and carp removals by the PLSLWD. Water quality on Arctic Lake has also seen drastic improvements in the past 20 years. Thanks to the Shakopee Mdewkanton Sioux Community, a variety of restoration and remediation efforts have helped Arctic Lake meet water quality standards.

Alum treatments, carp management, and improved water quality of inflowing waters has led to a substantial improvement in Upper Prior Lake's water clarity. Clear water, allowing sunlight to reach deeper into the water column has improved aquatic plants growth. Although aquatic plants are often seen as a nuisance, they play a critical role in helping maintain good water quality and clarity by absorbing phosphorus, providing food and shelter for fish and wildlife, infusing oxygen into the water and stabilizing shorelines.



Photo by Kathy Dawson

Heavy-on-the-throttle power boat loading causes damage at launches

Low water levels contributed greatly to the boat launch dilemma this past year but the problem is exacerbated by lake users who "power load" their boat when loading their crafts onto their trailers. Hammering down on the throttle when loading, instead of using the trailer winch, creates a damaging propeller wash that erodes the sediment just beyond the boat ramp," explained PLA Vice President and Great Outdoors Services owner Trevor Pope.

"The bigger, more powerful, deep hulled boats, especially, need to take a slower and more conservative approach when loading their boats. So we're encouraging all boaters to approach your trailer at a slower loading speed and then use the winch as much as possible to pull your boat onto the trailer," continued Mr. Pope. "Trailers and towing vehicles were getting stuck and seriously damaged this year

because of the prop-wash holes at the end of the ramps. We've had to use our launch cranes numerous times to rescue boaters who's trailers fell into those holes this past summer."

While signs cautioning against power loading have been posted at the launch sites, Prior Lake Association board member Dr. Steve Reinders said that experienced boaters need to take it upon themselves to assist, if necessary, boaters who are struggling in the sometimes stressful ordeal of loading a boat. "Unless we get a ton of snow and rain in the next few months, we're going to again be facing problems caused by low water levels," said Dr. Reinders. "Underwater obstructions are going to be closer to the lake's surface so boaters are going to have to be especially cautious on some parts of the lake next summer."

BE AWARE OF BOAT PROP-WASH HOLE

After your boat is partially on the trailer, use the winch cable to pull your boat the rest of the way onto the trailer. **USE CAUTION** when loading as excessive power creates prop-wash holes that can damage trailers or cause trailer tires to get stuck. Your conservative approach to loading your craft will keep our boat launches available for use during low water conditions.

Family fishing promoted by PLA

Kids reel in the big ones

The Prior Lake Association, with co-sponsor the Prior Lake-Savage Optimists Club, staged another successful Family Fishing Contest during the summer of 2022. This was the 22nd year of the friendly tournament according to project director Tom Stephenson.

"We set a new record for participation as more and more families are realizing how much fun the kids have at this yearly event," explained the PLA board member.

He noted that there is a just a \$5 entry fee per family and kids have only to bring a fishing rod and bait to join in the fun.

This upcoming summer's family fishing event will again be held at Charlies on Prior starting at 10 a.m., Sunday, August 6. Kids can register at the PLA website.

Along with the Optimists Club other sponsors include Prior Lake Bait & Tackle, Mills Fleet Farm and Charlies on Prior.



2022 Family Fishing winners included Jarett Anderson and his impressive northern pike at left. Above right are the angling Arechigo sisters, Ruby and younger sister Mila while the lower photo shows other angling winners.

PLA repairs access *(Continued from page 1)*

"Thanks to intense, behind-the-scenes efforts of Senator Pratt and board member Jan Alswager, as well as the encouraging and helpful people at the DNR, such as Assistant Commissioner Bob Meier, we were able to make this all come together just in time for the fall pull-out of boats," President Proehl added.

Board member Spitzmueller said the group was disappointed they could not also obtain funds to repair the Dewitt launch. The state's budget surplus, however, may help address that ramp and other needy DNR infrastructure. That agency's Commissioner Shannon Lotthammer recently said she can't imagine any lawmaker standing up and saying Minnesota doesn't need to upgrade its angling boat launches.

Thanks!

Thank You to Our 2022 Fireworks Sponsors

PLATINUM (\$1,000 AND ABOVE)

Chris Rooney Home Experts

City of Prior Lake

Prior Lake Rotary

Knotty Oar Marina

Lund's & Byerly's

Busse Student Transportation

Chas. Schwab/Bank of America

GOLD (\$500-\$999)

Charlie's On Prior

Morgan Family Dental

MGM Wine & Spirits

Complete Family Eye Care

Nuvera

Viking Liquor Barrel

SILVER (\$250-\$499)

Karen Stiles & Paul Bothof RE/Max Advantage

Lakers Tavern & Pizza

Lakeside Family Eye Care

NOREX

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Paulson Brothers Custom Remodeling

Prior Lake-Savage Rental Center

E2 Solutions

BRONZE (\$100-\$249)

SpeedPro Imaging

Prior Lake Optimist Club

Allen Iverson, American Family Insurance

Lakeside Recreation

Tractor Supply Company

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Rod Dehmlow Auto Sales

Jen Longhenry Prandium Group Real Estate

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Johnson Spinal Care Associates

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Prior Lake Association Board of Officers

Officers:

President: Adam Proehl

Vice President: Trevor Pope

Treasurer: Woody Spitzmueller

Secretary: Amy Card

Commodore: Steve Reinders

Director: Jen Longhenry

Director: John Teilborg

Director: Amy Marcus

Director: Tom Stephenson

Director: Ron Hoffmeyer

Director: Jan Alswager

Honorable Mention photo by Hanne Haas Hanratty



The PLA will once again offer free ice cream on Saturday, June 24th from 1 -3 p.m. during its annual On-The-Water Ice Cream Social. Like the boaters above, simply boat up to the PLA floatilla anchored in the no-wake zone north of the Wagon Bridge.



Take the leap. Your pix can win valuable prizes!

PLA seeks photo entries

The Prior Lake Association will again sponsor its increasingly-popular annual photo contest. The competition is open only to current PLA members and images must feature unaltered Prior Lake scenery or lake-life activities. Entrants should email their photos by September 4, 2023 to: boardmember@priorlakeassociation.org.

Be sure to include your full name, address and phone number as well as a title of your submitted photograph. First prize is a \$150 gift card to Knotty Oar Marina. Second prize is a \$100 gift certificate to Charlie's On Prior and third prize is a \$75 gift card to the Pointe Grill & Bar.

The photo above was the 2022 second place winning entry submitted by Deb Schiesl. The rainbow image on the front page masthead is a photo taken by Becky Nowlin. Brian Thron's photograph of Rockin' On Reeds (below) was the first place winner.



Dive in. The water's fine.

Free Daptive Divers and other local volunteer divers again joined the Prior Lake Association for its annual Dive The Lake Clean-up event last August. The project, chaired by PLA board member Dr. Steve Reinders, is intended to remove polluting and dangerous materials from the lake bottom and, at the same time, remind lake users to never discard unwanted material in our Prior Lake waters.



As usual items recovered included anchors, bottles and cans, various tools, fishing equipment, sunglasses, concrete blocks and buckets and barrels. Divers and other volunteers received a lunch certificate for Charlie's on Prior as well as a commemorative tee shirt. Garbage removal, again this year, was provided at no charge by the Buckingham Companies.

Dr. Reinders is again inviting area divers and dive clubs to participate in the 2023 dive event, the date of which is tentatively set for Saturday, June 17.



Oh my gosh!

Your lakeside neighbors aren't PLA members?

Tell them to sign up today at our website and then they can join us at this spring's members-only Ice Out Celebration!

Scott County Sheriff says "Own Your Wake"

As the popularity of wake boarding and wake surfing increases, the Minnesota DNR has created a campaign focused on the effects of wakes and wake boats and creating public awareness.

The main points of this campaign are:

- 1) Be aware of your environment and what's going on around you.
- 2) Stay at least 200 feet away from shorelines, docks and other structures. Travel slowly in shallow waters.
- 3) Minimize repetitive passes. Once you've run a line, move on to another area.
- 4) Respect the rights of others so everyone enjoys their time on the water - keep the noise

down, be courteous to other boaters and show consideration to everyone.

Almost every motorboat can create a wake, which is why boaters must be aware of the danger they can do. While common courtesy dictates boaters should control their wakes, there are consequences beyond how wakes may affect people. Boaters must also be aware how their actions impact the environment.

If residents have questions about this topic or other public safety issues, they may contact the Scott County Recreational Safety Deputy Max Kes at 952-496-8330 or mkes@co.scott.mn.us.



Nate McLain is shown coordinating excavation work at the Sand Point access

Tell your friends
and neighbors
to sign-up and
join us!

Join Your Lake Friends and Neighbors at the Sixth Annual

PRIOR LAKE ASSOCIATION

ICE OUT CELEBRATION

Event is
open to
PLA
members
only!



It's a FREE PLA Spring Social at Charlie's On Prior

Join us in celebrating the arrival of the coming boating season! (Beach attire highly recommended!)

Sunday, April 30 from 2 to 5 p.m.

**No Admission - Light Appetizers - Cash Bar - Auction - Prize Drawings
and Ice Out Contest Award Presentation**

Join us and consider becoming a member. Win some great prizes!

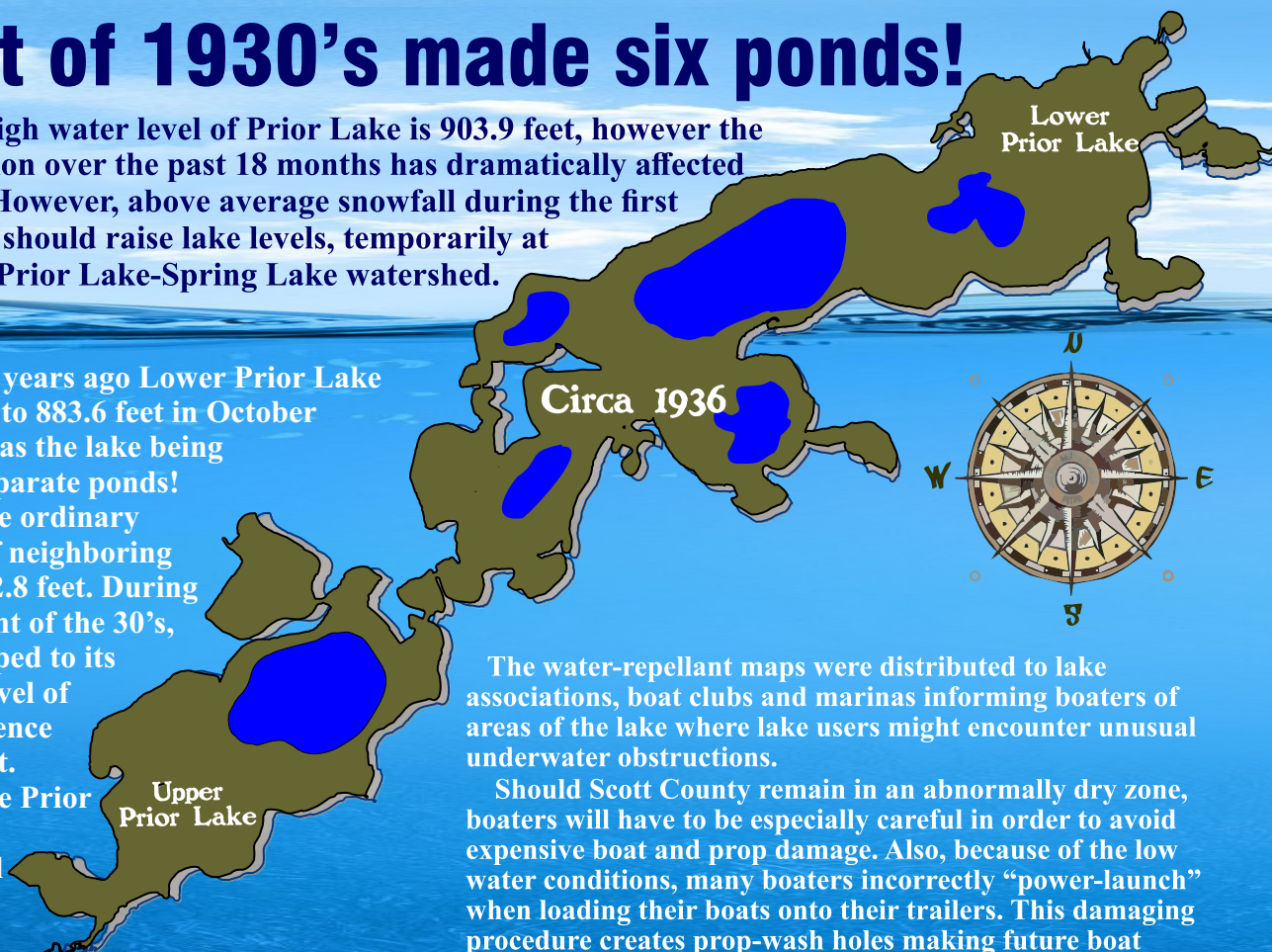
Drought of 1930's made six ponds!

The ordinary high water level of Prior Lake is 903.9 feet, however the lack of precipitation over the past 18 months has dramatically affected local lake levels. However, above average snowfall during the first half of the winter should raise lake levels, temporarily at least, in the local Prior Lake-Spring Lake watershed.

Approximately 90 years ago Lower Prior Lake dropped to a level to 883.6 feet in October 1936. The result was the lake being divided into six separate ponds!

Interestingly, the ordinary high water level of neighboring Spring Lake is 912.8 feet. During the historic drought of the 30's, Spring Lake dropped to its lowest recorded level of 904.9 feet, a difference of almost eight feet.

Last summer the Prior Lake Association produced a special map illustrating dangerously low water locations.



The water-repellant maps were distributed to lake associations, boat clubs and marinas informing boaters of areas of the lake where lake users might encounter unusual underwater obstructions.

Should Scott County remain in an abnormally dry zone, boaters will have to be especially careful in order to avoid expensive boat and prop damage. Also, because of the low water conditions, many boaters incorrectly "power-launch" when loading their boats onto their trailers. This damaging procedure creates prop-wash holes making future boat loading difficult and dangerous at the two lake launch ramps.