

ISLAND MUD LAKES PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION FALL 2026

GREETINGS FROM THE DOCK

IMLPOA

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Lora Strey-Shokes

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The cool morning air and shifting shoreline colors are a reminder that Fall has arrived in the lakes' community. As we settle into the season, it's a good time to reflect on a memorable summer and take a quick look at what's ahead.

First, a heartfelt thank-you to our outgoing board members and past leadership. Their time and care have made a lasting impact on our community. Please also join us in welcoming our new incoming leaders—President Morgan Buetow-Staples; Vice President Tom Stremski; and new Directors Mark Matzke, Alan Offerman, Mike Pearson, and Lora Strey-Shokes. Be sure to check out pages three and four to learn more about our new Directors!



Inside this edition, we revisit this summer's highlights—from the annual picnic and fishing contest to the always-popular ice cream social. You'll also find AIS survey results and important steps for inspecting docks, lifts, and boats to help minimize the spread of invasive species. Plus, learn how to use our online pontoon-trailer reservation system, check out upcoming events, and see our request for calendar photo submissions. Here's to a crisp, colorful Fall and a busy season ahead!

SUMMER REWIND

ANNUAL PICNIC AND MEETING

Neighbors gathered at Levi's Field on July 25, 2026, for food, games, and the annual business meeting. Our guest speaker was **Blair Mileski, Emily Fire Chief**. He **shared practical guidance** to help keep lake properties safe:

- **Emergency calls:** When reporting grass or brush fires, note how close the fire is to any structure.
- **Visibility & access:** Make sure cabin/house numbers are clearly visible from the driveway and keep driveways open for emergency vehicles.
- **Property maintenance:** Clear dry vegetation and trim lower branches to reduce fire spread.
- **Campfires:** Keep fires within a 3'x3' ring, keep a hose nearby, and fully extinguish with water before leaving.
- **Restrictions:** Check DNR burning restrictions before lighting any fire.

Jerry Finnerty gave the Treasurer's report and shared that our healthy financial

state is driven by membership dues and donations. The Association announced continued community programs, including a new memorial donation, the Food Shelf matching gift, and the August AIS baseline survey. The event ended with ten lucky members receiving gift certificates from door prize drawings or winning games. Plus, new this year, a raffle was held for a custom Island Mud Lakes cribbage board. [See full minutes.](#)

GOOD TIMES ON THE LAKES

- **July 3rd's fishing contest** delivered some impressive catches, including a 33" northern and a 19" bass in the adult division. Youth anglers reeled in everything from a 31.75" northern to big bass, crappie, and even a huge bowfin.
- The **July 4th Boat Parade** brought out a record 29 decorated boats, along with plenty of festive outfits and music.
- The sandbar was buzzing as at least 60 people enjoyed treats and sunshine during **Ice Cream Day on the Lake**.

It's great to see these simple, fun summer traditions continue to grow!

IN THE LOOP: AIS SURVEY RESULTS

IMLPOA commissioned Freshwater Scientific Services to do an aquatic invasive species (AIS) survey on Island and Mud Lakes. The survey was done August 11, 2026, and survey results received September 3, 2026.

WHAT DID THE SURVEY TEAM DO?

On **Island Lake**, the survey boat followed a winding, meandering path across the vegetated areas (see image on right), using **visual observations, sonar, and rake tosses** to check for any invasive plants.

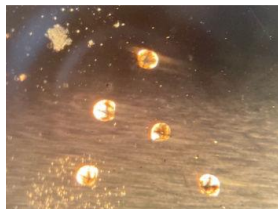


Mud Lake received a **nearshore search** to spot early signs of AIS which is an effective method to use on smaller water systems. **Water samples** were collected from **both lakes** to check for zebra mussel veligers, the microscopic larvae that indicate zebra mussels are present.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?

Freshwater Scientific Services reported that both lakes continue to support **healthy, diverse native plant communities, and no invasive plants were found**—a positive sign for long-term lake health.

It's **not all good news**, though. During veliger sampling, the lab identified **five zebra mussel veligers in the Mud Lake sample** (see image on right). **None were found in Island Lake.**



Shoreline and nearshore searches did not reveal any adult zebra mussels in either lake. However, as the report notes, *"The presence of veligers strongly suggests that there may be a small population of zebra mussels reproducing in Mud Lake."*

Five veligers is a small number, but it's still meaningful. Veligers only appear when adult zebra mussels are present and reproducing somewhere in the lake. This places Mud Lake in an early stage—exactly when property owner **awareness and monitoring matter** most.

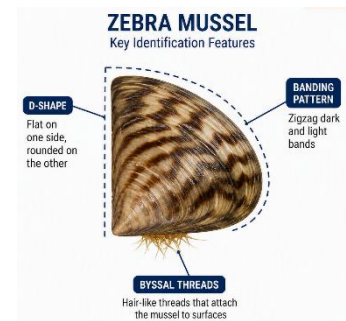
WHAT CAN PROPERTY OWNERS?

Follow **"Clean Drain Dry"** every time boats, trailers, equipment or gear move between lakes [Clean Drain Dry](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/preventspread_watercraft.html) (www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/preventspread_watercraft.html)—**this includes guests' items** too.

This Fall when you remove your docks and lifts, inspect them for signs of Zebra Mussels. If something suspicious is found, take pictures, gather a sample and contact **Camden Droppo**, Invasive Species Specialist, Minnesota DNR at camden.droppo@state.mn.us or (218) 350-5004. Also email the IMLPOA at islandmudlake@gmail.com.

WHAT IS IMLPOA DOING?

We've contacted the Minnesota DNR about next steps, and they will do additional testing in September to better understand impact on our lakes. In 2027, we'll do monthly veliger sampling/monitoring (June, July and August) and stay in close coordination with DNR AIS staff on any additional testing/action plans as needed. We'll maintain prevention signage at the boat landing, and update property owners on best practices and lakes' status changes.



ZEBRA MUSSEL INSPECTION TIPS

TOOLS: gloves, flashlight, scraper, sealable plastic bags, ruler, phone with camera, small hand net or rake.

PRO TIP—use a 10–20X magnifying glass when doing inspections.

DOCKS AND LIFTS:

- Inspect **dock legs, frames, bolts, and joints**—look along the waterline and submerged portions.
- Check **lift bunks, rollers, cables, and chains**; look under bunks and inside roller housings.

BOATS AND TRAILERS:

- Inspect **hull seams, trim tabs, prop, lower unit, bilge, and live wells**.
- Check **trailers** for trapped water in frames, wheel wells, and bunks.
- Do not move gear to another waterbody until cleaned and dried.

SHORELINES:

- Walk the shoreline and inspect **rocks, riprap, and boat ramps** in the splash zone and 1–3 feet below surface.
- Use polarized sunglasses and a hand net or rake toss to sample nearshore.

HOW TO REPORT FINDINGS:

- **Collect a small sample**—Scrape suspicious material into a sealable bag. Add lake water. Label with date/location.
- **Photograph** close-up next to a ruler or coin for scale.
- **Report** the information and give a sample to the MN DNR by contacting **Camden Droppo** at (218) 350-5004 or camden.droppo@state.mn.us. Also email islandmudlake@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: HELLO, NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

DEEP ROOTS, NEW ROLE— MEET ALAN OFFERMAN

If you've spent any time around Island or Mud Lakes over the years, you might already recognize a familiar face joining our board. Alan Offerman, along with his wife Amy, recently bought his uncle's place on Island Lake last year. But Alan's roots here go all the way back—he's been coming up to his family's cabin on Mud Lake since the day he was born.

Now living in Otsego, MN, Alan and Amy are excited to pass those same lake traditions down to their two kids, Lila (9) and Drew (7), along with their German Shorthaired Pointer, Penny.

When the Offermans aren't out on the pontoon fishing or swimming, you'll usually find them taking Jeep rides and exploring the surrounding woods. Having grown up on these waters, Alan brings both a deep appreciation for our lakes' history and a fresh perspective for the future. As a new board member, he's eager to dive into community events and help build strong connections across the lakes' community. Next time you see Alan and his family out on the water or around the neighborhood, be sure to say hello and give them a warm welcome!



LORA STREY-SHOKES—HOOKED ON LAKE LIFE



If you participated in this year's July 4th fishing contest, you probably already met Lora Strey Shokes. After enjoying the contest with her family over the past three years, Lora volunteered to help coordinate this past year's event!

While Lora and her family have owned their cabin on Mud Lake for five years, this year marks a huge milestone: they're taking the leap to live at the lake year-round! Full-time cabin life with three young children—Esri (3), Ember (2), and Eon (2)—is bound to bring plenty of adventures.



In fact, they've already logged a memorable one. After hearing that smaller pontoons could fit under the Mud Brook bridge, they decided to navigate the channel between Mud and Island Lakes. An hour, a few crying episodes, and some sore muscles later, they made it home! It was one of those "nobody had fun in the moment" family stories that Lora can already look back on and laugh about.

Lora is excited to serve on the IMLPOA board and is especially looking forward to helping plan next year's fishing contest. If you spot Lora and her family around the lakes, say hi and congratulate them on making the move to full-time lake life!

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: HELLO, NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

MIKE PEARSON—LAKE-RAISED, WIFFLEBALL-SAVVY, KELLY POINT THROUGH AND THROUGH

Mike Pearson's Island Lake story began in 1973, when his grandparents, Ek and Louise Eklof, bought property at the end of Kelly Point Road—starting a family legacy of lake life and decades of memories. Some of his earliest moments include running down to the old resort store as a kid to buy candy and soda, or playing wiffle ball at Big Pines Field, where a sign read: *"Dedicated to all those who just missed the majors."*



In 2018, Mike and his wife, Shelli, added their own chapter by purchasing the Halvorson cabin—just two doors down from his parents' place. Though their primary home is in Rochester, the lake remains the hub for family gatherings alongside grandma, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and long-time neighbors.

Mike joined Shelli in retirement in March 2025 after finally giving in to a chorus of "What are you waiting for?" These days, he enjoys being a grandpa, fishing, taking road trips, and catching the occasional Twins game—all while appreciating the friendships that make Kelly Point special.



Three generations of Pearsons

Looking ahead, Mike is excited to work with fellow board members to support community activities, lake projects, and the shared connections that make Island and Mud Lakes such a great place to be.

MEET MARK MATZKE—PART TRADITION KEEPER, PART STORYTELLER, ALL LAKE



While Mark and his wife, Lisa, live in Coon Rapids with their Chihuahua, Vincent, Island Lake has been in Mark's blood since childhood. His grandparents bought their lot on Ministers Point back in 1963, making the lake a family anchor long before Mark even understood what "owning property" meant.

Over the decades, the cabin was passed down through generations. In 1998, Mark and his three siblings bought out their aunts and uncles. In 2021, Mark and his sister Cathy became sole owners—the third generation to keep the cabin life tradition alive. Mark's lake memories run deep, from deer hunting with his dad and uncles to catching his first northern pike off the dock at age six.

Today, Mark and Lisa squeeze every drop of joy out of lake life, whether they're boating, fishing, riding ATVs, snowmobiling, taking nature walks, hosting game nights, or catching up with neighbors. Mark will also happily remind anyone that he's the reigning Minister's Point Carbles and Cribbage Champion—especially if Tom Stremski is within earshot.

They love the small-town warmth of our lake community, and one memory from a snowmobile ride about 12 years ago perfectly captures why. Stopping for Reubens and a couple of Rolling Rock drafts at the old Green Roof store (now Olson's Antiques), owner Charlie handed Mark a tab for just \$14. "That isn't right," Mark told him. Charlie looked confused. "What do you mean? You had all this stuff." "It isn't enough," Mark replied. Charlie paused, thought about it, and said, "Oh, that's right—you had potato chips," bumping the bill to \$15.50. Mark left \$50 on the bar anyway. To Mark, that moment says it all about our community: generous, quirky, and always looking out for one another.

Joining the Board gives Mark a great opportunity to meet more neighbors, lend a hand with events, and pitch in on lake projects. One idea he's especially excited to explore is building a walleye spawning bed to help boost natural reproduction in the lake.

Welcome to the board, Mark—keep those ideas coming!

AROUND THE LAKES: THIS AND THAT

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHY BUFFS!

We're gathering photos for consideration to include in the **2027-2028 IMLPOA calendar** (July–July).



Nature shots are preferred, no identifiable people. Think wildlife and natural beauty around our lakes— like eagles, hummingbirds, owls, deer, wildflowers, water lilies...

Deadline: May 9, 2027

Photo Specs:

- High-resolution (300 DPI at 11" x 8.5" or better)
- JPG or PDF format
- Landscape orientation, no zoom

Please email calendar photos to:
tdstephani@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATES!

Morgan and Cullum Buetow-Staples are once again sponsoring some Fall and Winter fun!

- **Hunter's Booyah: Friday, November 6, 2026.**
- **Winter Ice Fishing Contest: January 15-16, 2027.**

Check our [website](#) later this Fall/Winter for details.



NEW THIS FALL—CONVENIENT ONLINE PONTON TRAILER SCHEDULING!

What's new? To use the IMLPOA pontoon trailer reservations are made [online](#).

What's the same? Your IMLPOA membership provides free use of the association's pontoon trailer to help reduce AIS risk!

How to make a reservation:

- Visit <https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/IMLPOA/PONTON TRAILER>. No login or password is needed!
- **Scroll down to the calendar.**
- **Click an open time block** to start your reservation.
 - **Use the dropdown to select the time frame** (1 to 3 hours).
 - **Complete all data fields.**
- *If you use a mobile phone, click the + sign to start the reservation.*
- A **confirmation email** will be sent including the trailer's **lock code**.
- If you need to cancel your reservation, please email islandmudlake@gmail.com.

The trailer is in the lot across the road from the Banks on Island Lake Road.

[Click](#) for the trailer tips and guidelines.

If you have trailer maintenance issues, please **contact Tom Stremski at 651-334-1405.**

HAVE QUESTIONS?

We are all ears! Email us at islandmudlake@gmail.com with questions, ideas or comments. Or call a Board member directly. See our [website](#) for names/numbers.

On the website you'll also find:

About IMLPOA—Mission, newsletters, meeting minutes, road/fire updates, and annual dues information.

Association Activities—Details on upcoming events.

Lake Info & DNR—Water quality resources, DNR links, GIS maps, and permitting guidance.

Area Photos & Lake Living—Local photos, plus, practical advice on shoreline care, AIS, and more.

IN THE KNOW: USEFUL TIPS AND INFORMATION



MINUTES MATTER—SAVING A LIFE UP AT THE LAKE

When sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) strikes, every second counts. Up here in cabin country, longer travel distances, winding dirt roads, and hidden fire numbers mean emergency response takes a little extra time. Bystander action isn't just helpful—it's vital. Nearly 40% of Minnesota's fatal cardiac events happen before reaching a hospital. [1]

Here is how to step up while local first responders are enroute:

1. SPOT THE SIGNS FAST. [1] Don't wait for certainty. Look for two immediate indicators:

- **Unresponsiveness:** They don't move, blink, or react when you shake their shoulders and shout.
- **Abnormal Breathing:** They aren't breathing or are only gasping weakly.

2. CALL 911 & DIVIDE TASKS. [2] Call 911 immediately on speakerphone. If you have help, split up:

- **Person 1:** Stay on with 911 to give precise fire numbers, landmarks, or lake directions.
- **Person 2:** Fetch the nearest AED.
- **Person 3:** Run to the end of the cabin driveway or main road to flag down arriving emergency vehicles. Note in some cases, meeting the first responders may be appropriate—be sure to ask.

3. START HANDS-ONLY CPR. [1] Push hard and fast (100–120 bpm) in the center of the chest—think of the beat to "Stayin' Alive." Don't stop until help or an AED takes over.

4. USE AN AED IMMEDIATELY. [1] AEDs are foolproof and speak step-by-step instructions. They will **never** shock unless the person's heart requires it. Peel the pads, stick them to bare chest as pictured, and stand clear when prompted.

5. KNOW YOUR LOCAL LIFELINES. [3, 4, 5]

- **Emily:** Relies on volunteer first responders. Download the **PulsePoint AED App** to quickly map nearby residential, resort, or community AEDs.
- **Crosby:** 24/7 emergency care is located at Cuyuna Regional Medical Center (CRMC).
- **Crosslake:** Gear is stationed with the local Fire Dept. Public AEDs are available at the Chamber Welcome Center during business hours.
- **Aitkin:** 24/7 emergency care is available at Riverwood Healthcare Center (200 Bunker Hill Dr).

NON-EMERGENCY LOCAL CONTACTS. [4]

(Always call 911 for an emergency)

- **Emily Volunteer Fire & Rescue:** 218-763-0911
- **Aitkin Volunteer Fire Dept:** 218-927-3303
- **Crosby Fire Dept:** 218-546-5474
- **Crosslake Fire Dept:** 218-692-2688
- **Crow Wing Sheriff (Non-Emergency):** 218-829-4749

TRUSTED RESOURCES [6, 7, 8]:

- **Minnesota Department of Health:** Regional statistics and guidance on Heart Safe Communities.
- **Allina Health:** Cardiac care instructions and AED maintenance tips.
- **Cuyuna Regional Medical Center:** Local Heartsaver CPR & AED education classes

Sources & Links:

- [1] <https://www.house.mn.gov> | [2] <https://www.brainerddispatch.com> | [3] <https://www.pulsepoint.org> |
[4] <https://www.google.com> | [5] <https://www.facebook.com> | [6, 7] <https://www.health.state.mn.us> |
[8] <https://www.allinahealth.org>