



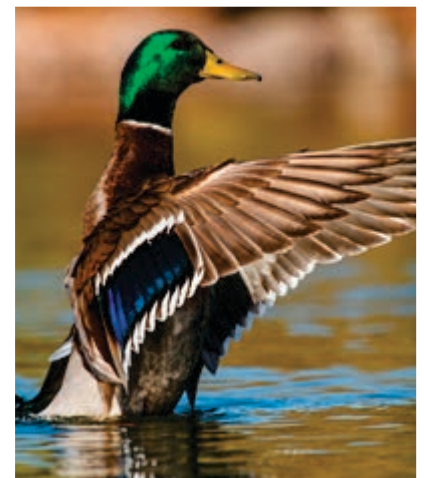
PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Big Sand Lake Association Members,

As we welcome the crisp air and beautiful colors of fall, we want to take a moment to reflect on the past summer season and look ahead to what's next for our lake community. This summer your Big Sand Lake Association Board worked hard to serve its members, and we are both proud and grateful for the dedication shown by our directors.

- In our continued valiant effort to fight the alarming march of aquatic invasive species infestation, we scheduled 1,100 hours of DNR inspection at the public boat launch and raised over \$15,000 to pay for the cost not covered by Hubbard County and Lake Emma Township grants.
- We hired Steve Henry, Aquatic Survey Professionals, to perform an AIS Priority Inspection Fall of 2025.
- We hosted a lively annual member meeting and luncheon at the newly renovated Pine Cone Lodge, and hosted Gina Kemper, DNR Invasive Species Specialist, to educate our members on identifying signs of AIS infestation.
- We placed and monitored AIS detectors at strategic locations around the lake.
- We attended Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Association meetings to stay current on lake protection issues.
- We monitored lake water depth and clarity and tested water samples.
- We installed new boat cleaning tools at the boat launch and are working on improving signage.
- We studied, purchased and installed larger and sturdier buoys to enhance visibility and safety for our boaters.
- We updated our BSLA bylaws, adding new Fisheries and Wildlife and Water Quality Committees.
- We organized trash cleanup along Highway 40.
- We successfully lobbied Hubbard County Engineers to reduce the brightness of the new lighting at the Highway 40 and Highway 7 roundabout.
- We organized a golf outing and several social events for lake ladies and are introducing social gatherings for lake men.
- Added to the docket for the upcoming year:
 - Our membership committee continues to work diligently to collect accurate contact data for all lake association members to provide a current member directory on the website and for a future printing.
 - We will modernize and optimize function on our bigsandlake.org website.
 - We will conduct a campaign to educate boaters and wake boarders on how to minimize shoreline erosion and habitat disruption on the lake.



Continued on Page 2

PRESIDENTS LETTER *continued*

Your participation and support of our work, through staying current with your membership dues, practicing safe boating, staying alert for signs of AIS infestation and following DNR healthy lake shoreline ordinances, is vital! If we can be a community of good stewards of our lake, we can enjoy the beauty and health of Big Sand for years to come!

With appreciation and wishes for a safe and happy winter for you and your families,
Catharine Williamson and Ann Hilger | Big Sand Lake Association Co-Presidents

BSLA | Annual Meeting

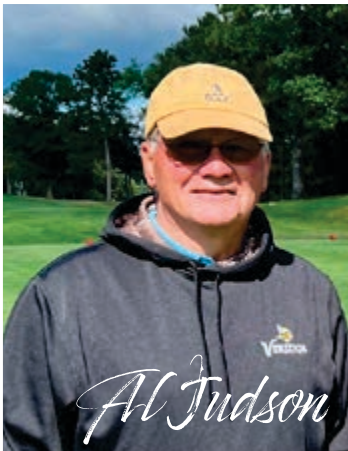
The Big Sand Lake Annual Meeting was well attended this spring, and we thank Pine Cone Lodge for hosting us in their newly renovated main building. This is our current slate of officers and board members.



BSLA GRATITUDE

The Board and Members of BSLA would like to take a moment to thank Al Judson for his many years of service in dedication to our beloved Big Sand Lake. Al served as our President from 2012 - 2013 and then moved to Treasurer from 2013 to 2025. In total, he served our association 13 years.

Thank You!



Al Judson

CURRENT OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS	
OFFICERS	Co-Presidents Ann Hilger Catharine Williamson Secretary Barbara Billing Vice President Steve Kimpton Treasurer Mark Kalvoda
DIRECTORS	Barbara Billing Colleen Carter Wick Corwin Bryce Craig Mike Cziok Mark Kalvoda Jo Kilander Steve Kimpton Linda Lee Richard Provinzino Justin Young Dan Dyre (ex-officio)
COMMITTEES	Membership Sue Fenton Jo Kilander Linda Lee Social Activities Jo Kilander Communication Catharine Williamson COLA Representative Steve Kimpton Website Coordinator Heather Wittman Facebook & Instagram Coordinator Heather Wittman
LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN FACILITATORS	Zebra Mussel Veliger Testing Steve Kimpton Dissolved Oxygen and Water Temperature Monitoring Gene Fladeboe Water Clarity Testing Richard Provinzino
BIG SAND LAKE CHARITABLE FUND	Co-Chairs Chris Hilger Ann Hilger Member Linda Daugherty

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

from the Charitable Fund

The members of the BSLA Charitable Fund Advisory Committee would like to thank everyone who made donations to the BSLA Charitable Fund of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation this past year. Thanks to your generosity, we fully funded the cost of 1100 hours of DNR watercraft inspection at the public access. Watercraft inspection is currently our best weapon in our fight against the spread of aquatic invasive species. Not only do your contributions pay for watercraft inspections, they help grow the Charitable Fund to prepare to address any potential AIS infestation emergency in the future!

We would also like to thank Linda Lee, a longtime Charitable Fund Advisory Committee Member, who is retiring from the committee. Over many years, Linda spent countless hours writing hundreds of thank you notes to contributors, and we are grateful for her service! In July, Linda Daugherty joined the committee as a new member, and we welcome her!

Donations to the Charitable Fund are welcome and appreciated all year and can be made by through a link on the bigsandlake.org website.

Virginia Anderson
Anonymous
Robert Armstrong
Linda K. Barnett
Russell L. Beernink
Mary C. Bergman
Chris Billing
Eric Billing
David H. Billion
Cathy Birkeland
Paul T. Birkeland
Debra Bowers
John C. Brainard
Robert S. Bray
William J. Brock
Gregory Bruggen
Julie Bruggen-Kempin
Kurt Carlson
Elaine N. Clark
Bryce and Carrie Craig
Tim S. Conely
Carolyn G. Corwin
Hollis Corwin
Michael G. Cziok
Linda Daugherty
Ivadell T. Douglas
Larry Durand
William H. Ellis
Evergreen Lodge Family Resort
Susan Fenton
Tim H. Fischbach
Steven J. Fuglestad
Gary Garner
Richard Gilbery

Stanislaus D. Goltz
Sarah Greene
Mark H. Gulbrandson
Jack of Hearts, Inc.
William Hanley
Tim Hestness
Hilger Compound, LLC
Chris and Ann Hilger
David and Joan Hilger
Tim Hilger and Kathy Ebert
Peter Hilger
Tracey Illies
Deane Johnson
Graham Johnson
Michael J. Johnson
Mark P. Kalvoda
Jo Kilander
Thomas Kimer
Kathryn H. Kimpton
Pamela Kobriger
Rhonda Lageson
Constance Larsen
Mark Larsen
Paul and Linda Lee
Jackie Lewis
Jeffrey Lewis
Peter Marrinan
Charles A. Mausbach
Thomas M. Mayerle
Butch McConn
Leila McGrath
Patrick McGrath
Carole M. Mears
John P. Nelson

Rolf Nelson
Kay Netteberg
James S. Nippert
Deanna J. Norman
David Paster
Brian F. Peterson
James Pierson
Paula Prah
Richard J. Provinzino
Steven J. Quaday
Susan B. Quinn
Kyle Rasmussen
John P. Ryan
Steven Schell
Scott Schmidt
Mary Schrock
John Scott
Thomas Scott
Randall Seaver
Jeffrey Shandorf
Pat and Carol Sokol
John Steffen
James P. Stephenson
Thomas N. Tharaldson
Mark Thibault
Thomas P. Van Bruggen
Alan Van Der Stad
Yvonne K. Waters
Christina Watson
Stan and Catharine Williamson
Jeffrey H. Woods
Donald and Mary Sue Zelle Reed Fund

Your Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund Advisory Committee
Chris Hilger, Ann Hilger and Linda Daugherty

Membership Committee Thanks You!

The Membership Committee thanks each of you for renewing your membership in the Big Sand Lake Association. If renewing your membership or becoming a member for the first time has slipped your mind, it is never too late! Simply go onto the BSLA website www.bigsandlake.org, click on the membership tab and follow the prompts. If you prefer using snail mail, the form can be mailed, or you can simply renew your dues online. Dues are \$50.00 per year, and first-time members are free of charge for the first year!

Please note that only one primary email address and password per membership is required for log-in to the "Member's Area" and to access information regarding your membership on the BSLA website.

A new membership directory is in the process of being compiled and will be distributed later this year. Jo Kilander has taken on this task and a big thank you to her for her efforts. It will be great to once again have information at your fingertips, but of course it will still be available online.

Have a good winter!

Linda Lee,
Membership Chair

*** IMPORTANT ***

If your member information changes, please update your information on the BIG SAND LAKE Website @ www.bigsandlake.org

Go to *the "Member's Area" tab*

Log in

Go to *Update My Information*

Easy!

This helps us keep BSLA Member Info up to date
Thank you!

AIS PRIORITY INSPECTION

FALL 2025 - BIG SAND LAKE

Steve Henry has advised us that due to degraded vegetation this fall, he will complete the primary inspection in early June of 2026.

The Big Sand Lake Board voted to hire Steve Henry, Aquatic Survey Professionals, MN DNR Certified Aquatic Plant Surveyor to do a Priority Inspection of Big Sand Lake this fall. You may remember Steve performed the Big Sand Lake Vegetative Study Fall of 2023. The Inspection will take place at the Public Access, Pine Cone, Evergreen, and the Emma Inlet. Please see Steve's description of how they will perform the AIS Priority Inspection. Areas where water and boats enter the lake are typically where AIS infestation is first located.

"We start at the shoreline checking what's growing onshore and along the beach looking for invasive plants growing or pieces that washed ashore. We are also looking for zebra mussels, invasive crayfish, or of other invasives. This works best from shore but can be done in the boat. We go back and forth looking from different angles. Then we wade or boat the shallow water, less than 5 feet observing over the side of the boat and throwing the rake as needed. Then we slide the boat out about 30 feet and track back across the area watching sonar, looking over the side of the boat, and throwing the sample rake every 50 feet or so. We repeat passes across the area about 30 feet apart until we have completed that area. We check each rake sample for any signs of invasive species."



HUBBARD COUNTY COLA Update

STEVE KIMPTON

The Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HCCOLA) continues to be active in their mission to keep our lakes healthy. One focus area has been wake boating. HCCOLA is working to raise awareness about its impact on shorelines and aquatic habitats. They're encouraging boaters to be more mindful of where and how they operate wake boats on our lakes, especially in water < 20' deep and within 500' of the shore.

As part of the on-going focus on AIS prevention at public landings, the Association approved money for new signage and tools for all 70 public landings in the county, to help boaters follow Clean.Drain.Dry. practices more effectively. Lake Associations will be encouraged to help defray the cost through donations. The cost per landing is expected to be ~ \$75.

On the science front, HCCOLA is assisting the DNR and U of M to develop new methods for detecting aquatic invasive species (AIS). One such method, environmental DNA, can pick up traces of invasive species like zebra mussels before they can be seen using traditional methods. The technique is being piloted at Fish Hook Lake and Long Lake.

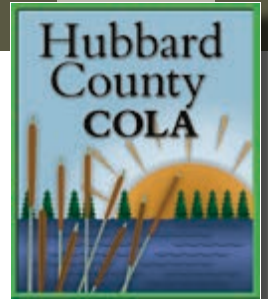
An update on new AIS findings in the area.... Starry stonewort, an invasive algae that forms dense mats, was discovered near the public landing on Garfield Lake in Hubbard County, during the annual Starry Trek volunteer event in August.

For the most up-to-date and complete list of infested waters, the Minnesota DNR maintains an Infested Waters List that includes all confirmed AIS cases statewide.

A REMINDER THAT SHORELINE PROJECTS REQUIRE COUNTY PERMITS

As stewards of our beautiful lake, it's essential that we follow local regulations designed to protect water quality, natural habitats, and shoreline stability. If you're planning any work near the shoreline—such as remodeling your cabin, changing landscaping, installing a dock, building a retaining wall, or modifying vegetation—you must first obtain a permit from the Hubbard County Environmental Services Division. These permits ensure that projects comply with Minnesota's shoreland management standards and help prevent erosion, runoff, and other environmental impacts.

Before starting any shoreline activity, please contact Hubbard County Environmental Services or visit their Permit and License Applications page at <https://www.co.hubbard.mn.us/permitandlicenseapplications>. Taking this step is required by regulation but, more importantly, helps preserve the beauty and health of Big Sand Lake.

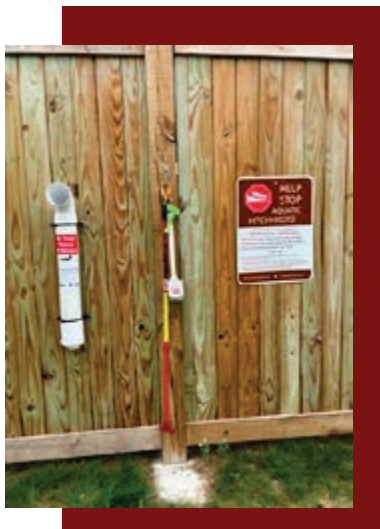


WATER QUALITY REPORT Big Sand

RICHARD PROVINZINO

Your lake association continues to follow our lake water quality trends closely, but do not currently have lake inspection data for this year. Our water quality Secchi Disc readings this year ranged from 13'-30'. The 13' reading came during early August when a significant algae bloom occurred. We have not been able to identify a specific reason for the greater than normal algae bloom as July and August water chemical analysis were well within three-decade standards including the phosphorus level which would relate to the increased algae bloom.

The committee has placed new signs at the public access to encourage AIS awareness and to make cleaning the boat and trailer accessible.



The 7 Year RMB Big Sand Lake Report is now available on our Big Sand Lake Website under the Water Quality Reports Tab (https://www.bigsandlake.org/documents/2024_BigSandLake_water_quality_report.pdf). Previously, we have done 5-year reports. You will see reports completed in 2012 and 2017. Due to Covid, we missed the 2022 5-year report and instead have a 7-year report that goes through 2024. I'd like to direct your attention to page 18 where the report states the Conclusions. Please see a quote from Overall Conclusions; "The improving water quality trend in Big Sand Lake is very significant since the year 2000.

The average transparency has nearly doubled since 1994. The dramatic improvement that occurred in 2000 has been maintained since then." A large amount of interesting information may be found in this extensive report!



BIG SUMMER NEWS ROUNDABOUT



The roundabout at the corner of Highway 7 and 40 is now complete. The roundabout prompted much controversy as to the need for this intersection change. This decision to construct goes way back to 2013 as it was identified as an unsafe priority in Hubbard County. Reasons given were obstructed site lines due to hills, trees, curves, and speed into the intersection. Although only one non-fatal accident had taken place at the intersection, the decision was based on being proactive for safety. An alternative of four stop signs was not appropriate as that may have resulted in a T-Bone crash which is considered a high-risk injury crash.

Hubbard County was awarded a "local" grant from MDOT and if not used would be transferred to another county. Thus, we have a roundabout on a quiet rural intersection.

A petition was begun to reduce lighting from 16 lights to 8 by a resident of Gilmore Lake. The petition took off and another 170 plus signatures were collected with The Big Sand Community contributing many. The petition made a difference, prompting County Engineer Andrea Weleski to take another look at the lighting plan! Andrea was able to reduce the lighting from 16 lights to 12. Not the eight the petition hoped for, but still a significant change! The permanent lights were not available due to a supply issue, and substitutes have been installed. The county hopes to acquire and install the specified lights around December. The specified lights will be Dark Sky compliant. If you would like to learn more about Dark Sky please go to <https://darksky.org/>.



BIG SAND LAKE Socials



The first BSLA Men's Get Together took place August 15th! The group gathered at the Headwater's County Club for lunch. Those in attendance agreed, let's continue this into the future! Very short notice was given for the event and approximately 10 attended.

June 19th will kick off the 2026 BSLA Men's Gathering, 11:30 Headwater's Country Club for lunch! Always welcome to bring a friend!



BSLA Chuck Fenton ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

We had another fun event and a good turnout for our annual golf tournament in September with some beautiful weather. Thanks to everyone for making it possible.



Thank You

Our family would like to sincerely thank the BSLA for the many ways your care and support has been shared with us over this past year.

We are honored and we know Chuck would be thrilled to know his name is now on the BSLA Golf Tourney.

With gratitude,
Sue Fenton & Family

In Memory

*Memories made of friends
forever in our hearts*



Edith (Mimi) Mary Sheldon Long passed away on August 25, 2025, at age 89.

Born in Sterling, IL, on February 18, 1936, she met her husband, Dick (Richard Gill Long), while waterskiing near Park Rapids, MN. She was a devoted mother of four, a grandmother of ten, and a great-grandmother of five.

Mimi was a passionate dog lover, a leader in the Briard Club of America, and taught dog training for decades. She loved the outdoors (walking, skiing, swimming, canoeing), family games (Blitz, Scrabble), and was a self-professed "Icecream-aholic."

A celebration of life is planned for the summer of 2026. Donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association in her honor.

To view the full obituary visit:

<https://www.ceasefuneralhome.com/obituaries/Edith-Mary-Long?obId=44689646>



Lou Ann Shirley Dierkhising passed away on May 19, 2025, at age 67.

A lifelong educator with multiple degrees, she was married to Paul Dierkhising and raised two children, Krista and Grant.

Lou Ann, known as Mrs. D., was the beloved High School Choir Director and Special Education teacher at Park Rapids Area Schools for 35 years. She was a powerhouse educator whose choirs won numerous state and national awards. Known for her energy and ability to inspire students, she was a top-ten finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

She loved music, playing piano, gardening, and spending time with her six grandchildren.

To view the full obituary visit:

<https://www.ceasefuneralhome.com/obituaries/Lou-Ann-S-Dierkhising?obId=42566840>

BSLA commemorates residents known to us who have passed away since our last communication or during the last year. We apologize for any omissions. Family members and friends are encouraged to notify us and submit an article about the individual's life and connection with Big Sand Lake for publication in the Big Sand newsletter. Please contact us at: admin@bigsandlake.org.

*If you wish, memorial donations may be made to the Big Sand Charitable Fund.
A link for donating is on our website, www.bigsandlake.org.*



P.O. Box 181, Park Rapids, MN 56470

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Park Rapids, MN
Permit No. 58

Forwarding Service Requested

BSL 2026 CALENDAR

ANNUAL MEETING / FAMILY PICNIC SATURDAY, JUNE 20, PINE CONE LODGE

10:30AM REGISTRATION

(Coffee/Treats/Socializing)

11:00AM ANNUAL MEETING

NOON FAMILY PICNIC

This annual event is a wonderful time to socialize with fellow Big Sand Lake residents and to learn of the current activities and plans for the lake association.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



SOCIAL MEDIA



Check out the Big Sand Lake Association Facebook page and Instagram for Big Sand current events, photos and area happenings. For easy access, click on the Facebook and Instagram icons located on the right hand column on the homepage at www.bigsandlake.org.