

Sauk River Chain of Lakes

Spring Newsletter



EST 1982

SAUK RIVER CHAIN OF LAKES

ASSOCIATION

*"We are pledged to improve the Water
Quality of the Sauk River Chain of Lakes"*

WEBSITE: WWW.SRCL.ORG

MAY 2021

President's Report by John Rocky, President

Welcome to Spring 2021 and the Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) Newsletter. Hopefully, the first thing that you noticed is our new SRCL logo. In conjunction with our new logo and efforts to get the word out about our association, we have contracted with a local company to offer apparel with the new logo. Information on how to order is included in this newsletter.

Our committee's and volunteers have been very busy this past year working on projects to make a positive impact to the chain of lakes. Detailed committee reports are included in this newsletter. Please enjoy reading them and if you have any questions, the committee chairs will be happy to respond. Thanks to everyone who has helped throughout the past year!

At our annual meeting a few years ago, I talked about how the SRCL Association would need a much larger budget to address the ongoing issues that face the chain of lakes. At that time, we had about 300 members that contributed approximately \$12,000 annually. I am happy to say that your SRCL board worked diligently over the past three years to address that issue and today we are in a much better financial position. We had identified two goals:

Increase membership and annual dues - by creating membership levels and better marketing, we increased our membership in 2020 to over 500 members and received \$30,000 in dues.

Create a second income source - we secured the gambling management of Shady's Long Shots in December 2019 and made a profit of \$40,000 in 2020.

These combined income sources have enabled the SRCL to have an operating budget of \$75,000 for 2021. Yes, we will be spraying and harvesting curly-leaf pondweed in 2021!

Once again, the SRCL will be managing the gambling operations at Shady's Long Shots Bar and Grill on Schneider Lake. Be sure to stop by this Summer and check out the major improvements they are doing including live music on the weekends! See the scheduled dates and times later in this newsletter.

The SRCL Board thanks you and our 500+ members that continue to support us and the Sauk River Chain of Lakes.

RACF Concert for a Cause Fundraiser

RACF PRESENTS: CONCERT FOR A CAUSE
AUGUST 12, 2021



ROCORI AREA
Community
Foundation



Concert to Benefit Sauk River Chain of Lakes and Community Builder Fund

After being postponed last year due to the pandemic, the ROCORI Area Community Foundation (RACF) is excited to announce the return of their annual fundraising event. Concert for a Cause is back for 2021

and we are eager to celebrate with the ROCORI community!

This year's beneficiary will be the Sauk River Chain of Lakes. The organization has pledged to improve the water quality of the Sauk River Chain of Lakes in Stearns County. RACF's Community Builder Fund will also benefit from the event. This fund provides grants for community projects and programs, some of which include the Alexander Park Splash Pad, Community Gardens and others. All proceeds will be equally divided.

The outdoor concert will kick off with the local country duo, Tim and Rick Backes and headlining will be the Tom Petty tribute band Free Fallin. Gates open at 4:00 p.m. on August 12 at the Richmond Lions Community Park, 22287 County Road 71, Richmond. Tickets will go on sale May 22 at the Cold Spring Community Showcase from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at ROCORI High School. Pre-sale tickets will be \$25, at the gate will be \$30. For more information call RACF Board Chair, Pat Donlin at 320-685-4004.

The ROCORI Area Community Foundation (RACF), a partner of the Central Minnesota Community Foundation and powered by CommunityGiving, is a public charity that attracts and administers charitable funds for the benefit of the local community. The RACF has grown to over \$1.2M in assets and awarded over \$450,000 in grants to the community.

Collectively, CommunityGiving administers over 880 funds totaling more than \$153 million. Learn more at CommunityGiving.org/ROCORI.

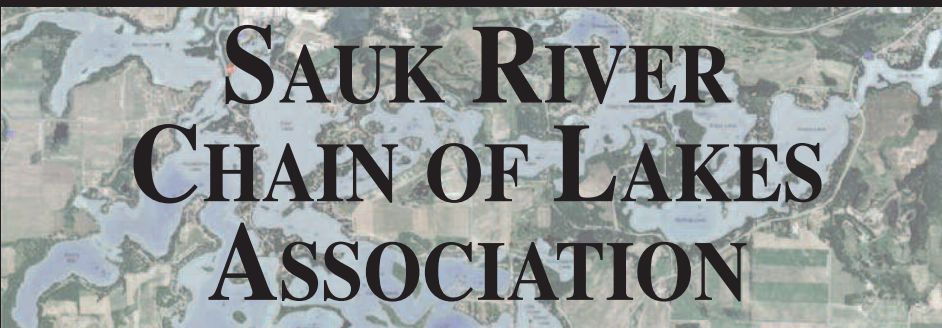
Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association Membership Level Decals



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We are pledged to improve the water quality of the Sauk River Chain of Lakes.

For information on becoming a member of the association, please visit our website srcl.org.

Membership dues fund projects and help us communicate with our members and the community. The more members we have, the stronger our voice and the more we can accomplish! Anyone who uses the lake is welcome to join.

Your **SAUK RIVER CHAIN OF LAKES (SRCL) ASSOCIATION** started managing the gambling operations at **Shady's Long Shots** (formerly Lakeview Bar and Grill at the Rich Spring Golf Course)



In addition to the great food and drinks at Shady's, you can now support the SRCL Association by participating in the gaming available.

GAMBLING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

Pulltabs, E-Tabs, Bar Bingo on Wednesdays, Meat Raffle on Fridays, and other specialty games.

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NEW MEMBERSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM



SAUK RIVER
CHAIN OF LAKES
ASSOCIATION

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WWW.SRCL.ORG

PO Box 369
Richmond, MN 56368

Name:

Business Name:

Current Address (street, city, state, zip):

Lake Property Address (street, city, state, zip):

Lake you live on:

Home Phone:

Email Address1:

Cell Phone1:

Email Address2:

Cell Phone2:

MEMBERSHIP DUES CONTRIBUTION

Individual/Family Membership Level:

___\$40 Sunfish ___\$60 Crappie ___\$80 Walleye ___\$100 Catfish ___\$150 Bass

*(All Individual/Family Memberships receive a **SRCL Association Membership Decal**. See www.srcl.org for more information.)*

Business Member: ___\$75 *(Business name included in Membership Listings in the SRCL.org, Spring and Fall Newsletters.)*

Business ELITE Member: ___\$150 *(Business Member benefits PLUS your logo linked to your website/Facebook in SRCL.org's Business Carousel.)*

Donate additional amount for a specific area?

(please identify additional amount into appropriate area below)

Walleye Stocking: \$_____

Weed Control: \$_____

General Fund: \$_____


ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DONATING YOUR TIME?

(please circle interested area below)

Invasive Species	Fisheries	Weed Control
Land Use	Water Quality	Road Cleanup
Gambling – Bingo night	Gambling – Meat Raffle night	Board Member

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Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor Update by Wendell Giese

The Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) is continuing to use its automated public launch monitoring devices called Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor (ILIDS). These devices have cameras that take pictures of the equipment being launched at three of our four public launches on the Chain and reminds people to check and clean their equipment to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. The pictures can be used by local law enforcement to track down offenders. A new ILIDS is planned to be installed at the Long Lake launch in late April 2021. In addition, a grant from the Stearns County Aquatic Invasive Species Committee was awarded in the amount of just over \$3,000 to help cover the expenses of operating the ILIDS. These are expensive and sensitive pieces of equipment, so please use caution around them and report any damage you see.

Please remember to Clean, Drain, and Dry all of your equipment when entering or exiting the water. If you purchase a dock or a lift that is coming from another body of water, remember that it is required to have that equipment sit on land for at least 30 days. Any aquatic invasive species (AIS) organisms on the equipment will die off in that time frame.

For any questions about ILIDS, please contact Wendell Giese at wndllgs@gmail.com.

2020 Water Quality Test Results by Aaron Schwartz

In 2020, the Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) again partnered with the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) on our water quality monitoring. We supplied the SRWD with water samples and clarity readings monthly, May through September. I would like to take a moment here to send a Thank You to Bert Johnson for taking those samples and coordinating this process this past summer.

Once a month 30 water samples are taken from various locations across our chain of lakes. These samples are tested for Total Phosphorus (TP) and Chlorophyll-a, the results are recorded in Parts Per Billion. While the water samples are collected a Secchi Disk reading is also taken and recorded. This is done by lowering an eight-inch white disk into the water until it is no longer visible, the depth of the disk is then recorded and submitted along with the water samples the SRWD. The SRWD then aggregates this data, charting it both by month

Water Quality contiued on page 5



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Water Quality contiued from page 4

and plotting it over a 10-year trend. This full report is available at srcl.org for your review.

Here are a few highlights from the 2020 report: since 2011 all of the sampled lakes have seen a decrease in Total Phosphorus levels, over that same time period most of the sampled lakes have seen a decrease in Chlorophyll-a levels as well. When reviewing this data is to important keep a few things in mind, most importantly as it pertains to data of this nature, even a 10 year data set is a small sample size. Also, there may be variance up and down year to year in the data points, however we are looking for larger trends. There are simply too many factors that go into the sampling results. Factors such as water levels, precipitation, boat traffic, temperature and upstream flowage all play a part in the results that we see each summer. Another factor that we are learning more about is the potential impact legacy sediments may play on our system. These sediments have built up for decades on our lake bottoms and may have an impact on Total Phosphorus level in our waters. With a system as complex as ours it isn't easy to pinpoint just one or two causes that impact our testing data. That being said, we as a board, remain committed to continuing our water monitoring program and are exploring new and different ways to continue to understand our water system.

Spring 2021 Road Clean-Up Scheduled

Here is a call to action for anyone willing to make an immediate impact on water quality. We will be doing our annual spring Adopt-a-Highway clean up on June 5th. We are responsible for the two mile stretch of Hwy 22 from the public access to the Cozy Corners Main entrance. We will meet at the Hwy 22 public access at 9 a.m. If you are interested in volunteering please email or text me and I will add your name to the list. This is definitely a project where many hands make for quick work. I look forward to hearing from you all. Thank you all.

Aaron Schwartz; aarschwartz@gmail.com; 320-309-1492



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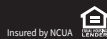
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Financial Report by Charlie Montreuil

It is my pleasure to give you the treasurers report as of the end of March 2021. As of that time we have assets totaling over \$97,000 made up of the following components:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| 1. Cash in checking | \$31,000 |
| 2. Savings | \$39,000 |
| 3. Certificates | \$27,000 |

And... the news will be even better as we move forward through this year. Our projection for revenue is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------|
| 1. Membership Renewals | \$24,000 |
| 2. Gambling Profit | \$50,000 |
| 3. AIS Grants | \$12,000 |

Our current assets and revenue projections have allowed us to aggressively invest in strategic projects designed to improve the Chain of Lakes. This includes investments as follows:

1. AIS. This includes weed harvesting chemical, chemical treatment, survey assessments and our aquatic plant survey.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| | \$60,000 |
| 2. Water quality monitoring | \$2,400 |
| 3. Ilid monitoring | \$17,000 |
| 4. Rock Buoys | \$3,500 |

I will leave it to each of the individual committee members to describe their strategic plans and status. However, I would be remiss if I did not let the membership know that this group of board members spend significant amounts of their time, energy and effort trying to improve the lakes in the quality of the water in which we share. The problems we face are unprecedented and it is through the hard work of this board that we do our best to be part of the solution.

We continue to need your help. This is fundamentally a membership driven organization. We need you to continue to support the gambling operations at Shady's Long Shots. And imagine if our current members each brought one non-member into the fold. We would double our membership income so that we can do even more to help. Non-members benefit as much as members, but they are not paying to help.

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SRCL Land Use Committee by Troy Atkinson

The Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) Land Use Committee's primary objective is to reduce or eliminate runoff into the lakes. The chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides that homeowners and farmers use can run into our lakes that affect and influence our water quality and clarity. By working with local and state departments (Soil and Water, Department of Natural Resources, etc) we can find a good balance to divert the runoff by changing up how the water flows over the property into the water. This is done by setting up natural vegetation barriers, restructuring water drainage and even with education to homeowners on ways to improve your shoreline to help the lakes.

There are funds available to help you with your shoreline projects through the State of MN and SRCL so reach out to us with any questions or to learn more about your options. Troy Atkinson 320-492-7041 or Troy@pierceinsurance.com. Or download the Land Use Assistance Contract/Application at srcl.org.

See example of form on page 8.

Aquatic Invasive Species Report by Brad Matuska

There are two aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the Sauk River Chain of Lakes – curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) and zebra mussels. The Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) has committed just over \$64,000 to chemically and mechanically treat CLP. The funds to support this effort came from the gambling proceeds at Shady's Long Shots, membership dues, and a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Limnopro of St. Cloud, MN will be doing the chemical treatments, and Weeds Up will be doing the mechanical harvesting of CLP using the Eco Harvester. The SRCL will monitor the results of these treatments and will continue to use best practices to manage CLP.

Unfortunately, there is no effective way to manage zebra mussels at this time. The SRCL is closely watching the low copper dosage research and other research being done by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota to control zebra mussels.

Please remember to Clean, Drain, and Dry all your equipment when entering or exiting the water. If you purchase a dock or a lift that is coming from another body of water, remember that it is required to have that equipment sit on land for at least 30 days. Any AIS organisms on the equipment will die off in that time frame.

For any questions about aquatic invasive species, please contact Brad Matuska at brad@mississippitopsoils.com.

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Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) Land Use Assistance Contract/Application

General Information

SRCL Organization Contract Number Yes No Other federal or other state funds? Amendment Cancelled (board meeting date(s))

Applicant

Land Occupier Name Address City/State Zip Phone #

Conservation Practice Location

Physical Address Lake Name

Contract Information

I (we), the undersigned, do hereby request cost-share assistance to help defray the cost of installing the following practice(s) listed as described on the second page of this contract. It is understood that:

- 1. In no case shall the SRCL provide cost-share assistance to a land occupier or landowner for the reapplication of a practice that was removed by the land occupier or landowner during its effective life without consent of the SRCL board or that failed due to improper maintenance. The specific operation and maintenance requirements for the conservation practice listed are described in the operation and maintenance plan prepared for this contract by the conservation district technical representative. If title to this land is transferred to another party before expiration of the aforementioned life, it shall be the responsibility of the land occupier or landowner who signed this contract to advise the new owner that this contract is in force.
2. Practice(s) must be planned and installed in accordance with technical standards and specifications of the USDA Field Office Technical Guide, and guidance from State of Minnesota and/or Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District.
3. Items of cost for which reimbursement is claimed are to be supported by invoices/receipts for payments and will be verified by the SRCL board as practical and reasonable. The SRCL board has the authority to make adjustments to the costs submitted for reimbursement.

Applicant Signatures

The land occupier's signature indicates agreement to:

- 1. Grant the organization's representative(s) access to the parcel where the conservation practice will be located.
2. Obtain all permits required in conjunction with the installation and establishment of the practice prior to starting construction of the practice.
3. As part of practice certification, the project site may be photographed. These photographs may be used by the SRCL for but are not limited to: reporting, documentation, and publications.

Date Landowner/Spokesperson

Date Land Occupier if different from applicant signature Address if different from applicant information

Conservation Practice

The land project for which cost-sharing is requested is

- 1. What is the primary objective of project?
2. How will this project help our lakes?
3. Effective life of project?

Technical Assessment and Cost Estimate

- 1. Total project cost estimate
2. Who has approved or engineered the project?
Entity Contact Name Phone Number
2. What percent is being paid by a government entity? What entity?
3. How much are you needing or looking for to make sure project gets completed?

Amount Authorized for Financial Assistance

The SRCL Organization Board has authorized the following for financial assistance, to be funded to applicant after project is completed.

\$ from Enter program name and fiscal year

Board Meeting Date Authorized Signature \$ Total Amount Authorized

Using Research in Minnesota's Fight Against AIS

by Meg Duhr, Research Outreach Specialist - Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

We all know that aquatic invasive species (AIS) are a huge problem here in Minnesota and despite increased innovations and investment from the local to the state level in prevention and management, they seem to be getting worse every year. Here at the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center, we are often asked, is any of this working? Is it worth it? What can we do to help stop AIS? Like you, every additional news article about a newly infested lake in Minnesota induces a moment of despair because I know that lake's ecosystem may never be the same again and that with one more infested lake, every other lake in Minnesota becomes a bit more vulnerable.

It can often feel like we are losing the battle against AIS but being part of the staff of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota means I get to work with some of the leading researchers in AIS prevention, management, and impacts and I can tell you that there are plenty of reasons for optimism. Since MAISRC was established in 2012, we have worked on a wide range of species and issues to develop solutions to stop the spread, manage existing populations, understand and predict the impacts of AIS, and work towards eradication tools. One of our most important strategies is to develop an in-depth understanding of the biology and ecology of AIS to find vulnerabilities and weaknesses that can be exploited for control. We also know that the spread of AIS and their resulting impacts are complex problems that are inseparable from social and environmental factors like human behavior and land use patterns. This means that in addition to our fisheries biologists and wildlife ecologists, we

Fight Against AIS from page 8

also have sociologists, economists, epidemiologists, engineers, and others on MAISRC teams. Being housed at a research powerhouse like University of Minnesota allows MAISRC to leverage university resources and brainpower and assemble the kinds of diverse, interdisciplinary teams necessary to tackle complex AIS problems.

MAISRC truly stands alone in terms of its singular focus on AIS issues in Minnesota and our commitment to solutions-oriented research. It would be impossible to cover all the highlights from nearly a decade of AIS research, but a few key success stories include: mapping the zebra mussel genome and making the data open-sourced, a critical first step in unlocking genetic control tools; spearheading a statewide, volunteer supported effort to map invasive Phragmites and developing a Minnesota-specific management plan that our partners are currently implementing, bringing us closer to statewide eradication; developing novel tools to attract, aggregate, and efficiently remove common carp safely and at large scales from watersheds; and creating a user-friendly online dashboard that visualizes millions of boater movements in Minnesota to help managers prioritize their watercraft inspection stations to get the biggest bang for their buck.

I had the opportunity to meet with the board of the Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association earlier this spring and hear about some of the most pressing concerns for residents and users of this beautiful chain of lakes. I'm glad to be able to share a few recent research highlights in zebra mussel control and curlyleaf pondweed management.

Zebra mussels: Copper sulfate has been a recognized chemical control method for a variety of aquatic nuisance species for many years. Formulations used for invasive mussel control in the past often yielded variable results, with sometimes unacceptable levels of non-target species being harmed by the treatment. In 2016 when this research began, our scientists hypothesized that with the proper water temperature and exposure time, a dramatically lower dose of chemical could suppress populations, offering a much safer and theoretically cheaper way to manage a zebra mussel population and limit their ecosystem impacts.

The first step was a series of laboratory studies where researchers honed in on the lowest effective dose and the right water conditions to effectively kill zebra mussel veligers (the free-floating larval stage of zebra mussels) and juveniles in a highly controlled setting. Once this was identified, a small-scale experiment was done in Lake Minnetonka, using side-by-side treatment and control (non-treated) areas within small sections of the lake. Floating containment booms ensured that the chemical remained within the study site throughout the necessary exposure time. They saw major reductions in zebra mussel survival in the treated zone with minor impacts to fish, native mussels, and plants. This research scaled up to a whole bay treatment on Lake Minnetonka in 2019 where researchers again observed major reductions in veliger, juvenile, and even adult mussels compared to the untreated bay. Some non-target impacts and mortality of adult mussels suggested that an even lower concentration of copper could be used to suppress population growth and the current phase of the study incorporates another variable—lake water chemistry—into the process for determining how much lower we can reduce the concentration of copper while still suppressing veligers and juvenile mussels. Though there is still more work to be done, this research is incredibly promising. We are optimistic that as other research into zebra mussel eradication tools progresses, managers will soon have an option for limiting the impacts of established zebra mussels in their lake.

Curlyleaf pondweed: This invader has been in Minnesota for over a hundred years and people have been

Fight Against AIS from page 9

trying to manage it since at least the 1980s, often with mixed success. A current MAISRC project seeks to find out why some management approaches fail while others seem successful. Rather than spend years doing experimental treatments and measuring the results, the team wanted to learn from existing data: all those point-intercept surveys that are required for a permit to do in-water herbicide treatments, as well as baseline aquatic plant surveys. Working with lake associations, the DNR, and contractors, the team gathered a massive trove of data: 3404 unique point-intercept surveys over 18 years from 1526 Minnesota lakes, yielding over 564,000 observations of native and invasive plant species. Prior to this study, all this data had simply been filed away in different offices around the state.

By gathering the surveys and putting them through a comprehensive analysis which also included weather data and treatment records, patterns started to emerge. One trend is that less snowpack in the winter leads to greater curly leaf pondweed growth in the spring. Because it overwinters under the ice, more winter light in the water column gives it an even greater leg up on native plants in milder winters. The second important trend they saw is that chemical control is effective but that lasting declines in pondweed abundance only came about after 3-4 years of consistent treatment. One-off or two-year projects had almost no effect of pondweed abundance in years following. Now we know that if you want to plan for effective curlyleaf pondweed treatments, budget for 3-5 years of treatment, treat early in the spring before native plants have started growing, and know that winters with less than average snowpack will lead to summers with greater pondweed growth.

None of this could have been learned by just looking at one lake's survey data in isolation, but taking a long-term, big picture approach and working with dozens of partner groups to coordinate data sharing, we now have significant insights that AIS managers and lake service providers are using to more effectively time their treatments and get better results with less chemical.

If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please visit our website at www.MAISRC.umn.edu. There are many ways you can support us in the fight against AIS: donating to MAISRC helps keep critical lines of research going; joining our statewide volunteer corps of AIS detectors arms you with the knowledge to find and identify new AIS in your community; and calling your legislator to let them know how much you value AIS research in Minnesota helps ensure that we'll still be here working to find research-based solutions to AIS years into the future.

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Marketing Report by Susan Antolak

We are excited to showcase our new Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) logo!

We will be selling SRCL T-Shirts, 1/4 Zips, and hats with our new logo. They will be available to purchase soon! We will email out a reminder as to when these will be available and will also post where to order from on our SRCL website (srcl.org).



River Lakes Day Sponsor

SRCL is a proud sponsor of River Lake Days which will be celebrated on July 15 – 17, 2021.

SRCL Website

Our website (srcl.org) is currently being refurbished also, so please check in for new information regarding any association updates for lake owners.

Have a great summer and stay safe!



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SRCL Purchases Buoys by Troy Atkinson

The Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association has bought buoys to help mark rocks in the Chain of Lakes. We are going to be working with the Stearns County Water Patrol to help us to put the buoys in and take them out each year since the Water Patrol has the proper equipment. If you are aware of any rocks that should be marked with a buoy, please let Troy Atkinson know at troy@pierceinsurance.com.

As our lakes continue to get busier with more boating traffic, we want to remind everyone to stay safe, and be respectful of other boaters, fishermen, docks, and rafts. The Stearns County Sheriff's Office has placed numerous no wake zones on the Chain of Lakes, but there are other areas that can be just as dangerous to go flying through. We have asked the sheriff's department to review some other potential tight or blind corners, but they are not going to be able to survey them this year. We want everyone to enjoy the Chain of Lakes and that takes all of us to practice safe boating and to be smart when you are on the water.



Update on the Cozy Corner Campground Conditional Use Permit

On January 5th, 2021, the Stearns County Commissioners approved the conditional use permit (CUP) for Cozy Corner Campground to expand and add 49 new sites and move 11 sites from the current campground area over to the new expansion area. After much discussion and debate it was approved with some additional conditions that Cozy Corner Campground must follow. The new sites and relocations need to be completed within five years, a 100-foot setback is required for new campers, add a 2nd access road in the campground and add a right turn lane on Hwy 22 South coming into the campground. They are allowed a new dock site to be added near this new section. They will also need to Preserve and Maintain the vegetation except for invasive species or poison ivy/oak and will plant some new trees on each campsite along with adding fence on the North side of the campground.

Some Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association (SRCL) Board Members did meet with Cozy Corner Campground on several occasions during this process and even after the permit was approved to truly understand what all these conditions would mean to the project. We also invited Stearns County Soil and Water to review the water management plan and storm water runoff, and overall, it is well set up and managed to reduce and eliminate almost all the water from running into the lake. Cozy Corners has done a good job over the years in following the guidelines from the county and state organizations', and SRCL will continue to monitor and work with them as they progress through this expansion.

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Gambling Committee Update — by Garrick Grace

To say our first year and a half of gambling operations was unique, is an understatement. There finally seems to be continuity! With all of the shutdowns through the pandemic, it has been a full-time job modifying what we do. Shady's Long Shots has been an amazing partner and they continue to work with us on pull tabs, e-tabs, bingo, and meat raffle. This winter we had great success with bingo on Wednesday nights and meat raffle on Friday. We will resume both in the Fall. Pull tabs and e-tabs are a year-round activity and Keely Frakes-Rau does an amazing job maintaining them. The revenue stream from these events goes directly back to supporting our lakes! I want to thank all of the volunteers for their dedication this winter. Without these people, we would not be able to host bingo and meat raffle- Coach and Ruth Athmann, Lisa Brinker, Lynn Feldhege, Rachel and Garrick Grace, Bonnie and Kurt Hemmesch, Terri and Kevin Larison, Nichole and Brad Matuska, John Rocky, Karla Smetana, Denae and Mike Stuber, and Ann and Bernhard Warling. If you want to volunteer for meat raffle or bingo during the 2021-2022 Winter, please contact Garrick Grace at Garrick.Grace@gmail.com. We can always use more volunteers! Thank you for supporting the lake association and our lakes!

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- 5/30 PAUL JENSEN (2-6PM)
- 6/5 TROY SPOONER (3-7PM)
- 6/6 JASON PLOOF (2-6PM)
- 6/11 ANI RAE (5-9PM)
- 6/12 CRUISE CONTROL (3-7PM)
- 6/13 PAUL JENSEN (2-6PM)
- 6/19 DEVON WORLEY BAND (3:30-7PM)
- 6/25 MIKE, MARYSUE, KILEY (5-9PM)
- 6/26 MADDY BRAUN & BRODY CORDES (2-5PM)
- 6/26 LFX1 (6-10PM)
- 6/27 DONNY BRANG (2-6PM)
- 7/1 KINZER CREEK (5-9PM)
- 7/2 MY FAMOUS FRIENDS (5-9PM)
- 7/3 SECOND FIDDLE (2-6PM)
- 7/10 TROY SPOONER (3-7PM)
- 7/11 JASON PLOOF (2-6PM)
- 7/18 AKSEL KRAFENICK (2-6PM)
- 7/25 PAUL JENSEN (2-6PM)
- 7/30 ANI RAE (5-9PM)
- 7/31 BRYCE HEGGE (3-7PM)
- 8/1 DONNY BRANG (2-6PM)
- 8/7 DRUNK UNCLE (2-5PM)
- 8/8 LFX1 (2-6PM)
- 8/13 TROY SPOONER (5-9PM)
- 8/14 THE MADDY BRAUN BAND (3-7PM)
- 8/15 JASON PLOOF (2-6PM)
- 8/20 ANI RAE (5-9PM)
- 8/21 MY FAMOUS FRIENDS (2-6PM)
- 8/22 PAUL JENSEN (2-6PM)
- 8/27 AKSEL KRAFENICK (5-9PM)
- 8/28 CRUISE CONTROL (3-7PM)
- 8/29 SECOND FIDDLE (1-4PM)
- 9/3 TROY SPOONER (5-9PM)
- 9/4 LFX1 (2-6PM)
- 9/5 PAUL JENSEN (2-6PM)
- 9/11 THE MADDY BRAUN BAND (3-7PM)
- 9/18 DAVE LUMLEY (2-6 PM)

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Fisheries Report by Matt Noska, SRCL Vice President

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has plenty of upcoming work being planned for the Sauk River Chain of Lakes (SRCL). The DNR is planning to do bluegill assessments on the SRCL this spring (May), summer gill net surveys throughout the chain in August and walleye natural reproduction check in October. As a reminder, the new 10-fish daily bag limit for sunfish went into effect March 1st 2021.

Our DNR Representative, Joe Stewig is also involved with an internal walleye/zebra mussel committee. The committee is proposing a 10-year study looking at what effects zebra mussels may or may not be having on walleye populations in lakes between 1,000 – 10,000 acres. So, the SRCL, Clearwater, and Buffalo lakes will be part of this study. Much of the sampling will stay the same, but they might be adding some additional sampling such as zooplankton sampling and placing temperature monitors in some of the lakes within the SRCL.

The DNR has documented excellent natural reproduction of walleye over the past seven years (dating back to 2014) in the SRCL. In an attempt to determine where these fish might be spawning up the Sauk River, the DNR took their shock boat upstream of the SRCL about three miles looking for potential walleye spawning areas. While they didn't see any habitat that you would typically consider prime walleye spawning habitat, they decided to shock anyway and low and behold they saw a number of walleye in the stronger current areas. They ended up sampling 155 walleye from 7 inches – 29 inches (see photos). The majority of the males were ripe (ready to fertilize eggs), while they didn't see any egg flowing females. Most females were green (not ready to spawn yet), but they also saw a fair number of spawned out females.

According to Joe Stewig, "I'm sure these fish were still staging and traveling further upstream, but it was starting to get unpredictable for us to read the river and figure out where the channel was, so we stopped. We could have probably gotten up another mile or two, but. . . The river temp Monday (4-5-21) was 54 – 57 F which is quite warm and so I would have expected to see some ripe/flowing females but since most of the females were still green makes me believe (just a



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hunch) that these fish might be migrating further upstream from the SRCL. We did not go out and take a lake temp, but I would suspect that the lakes were cooler (low to mid 40s). Now out of curiosity more than anything else, I would like to radio tag a few of these females and follow their spawning migration to find out where they are spawning.”

According to Joe, “It looks as though the proposed statewide 4 fish walleye bag limit reduction proposed by the legislature (currently the SRCL walleye bag limit is 6) has a good chance of getting passed, and the Section of Fisheries has voiced support for the legislation.” The SRCL Board of Directors will continue to keep our members informed as more information is shared throughout the year in relation to any limit changes.

Below is a summary of the spring walleye sampling as well as the figures from the MN DNR’s fall electrofishing

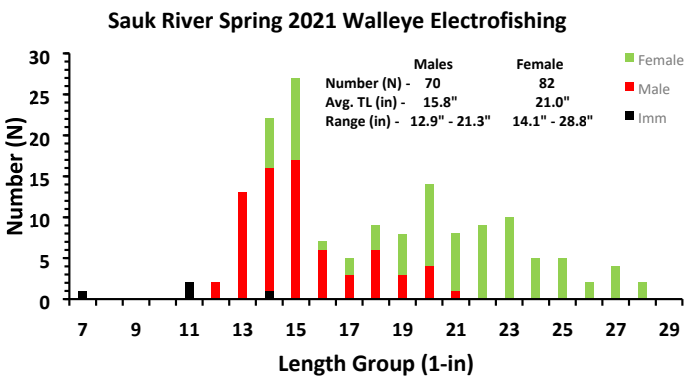


Figure 1. Length frequency of walleye sampled during April 2021 in the Sauk River upstream of the SRCL.

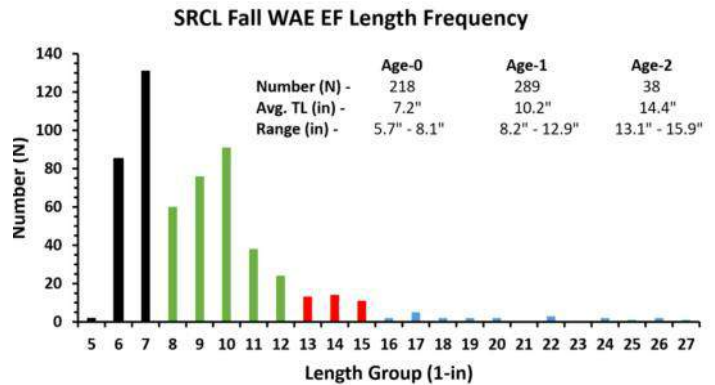


Figure 2. Length frequency of walleye sample during October 2020 fall walleye assessment. Black bars represent the 2020 year-class, green bars represent the 2019 year class (age-1), red bars represent the 2018 year class (age-2) and blue bars represent adult fish.



SAUK RIVER
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ASSOCIATION

SRCL Association’s Annual Spring Meeting

The SRCL Association’s Annual Spring meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 12th, 2021 at 9 a.m. Due to COVID-19 concerns the meeting will be a ZOOM MEETING!

Instructions for joining the meeting: Sauk River Chain of Lakes Association 2021 Annual Meeting, June 12, 2021 at 9 am Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting by computer:

<https://csbsju.zoom.us/j/91050273578>

Meeting ID: 910 5027 3578



Sauk River Chain of Lakes Fisheries by Matt Noska

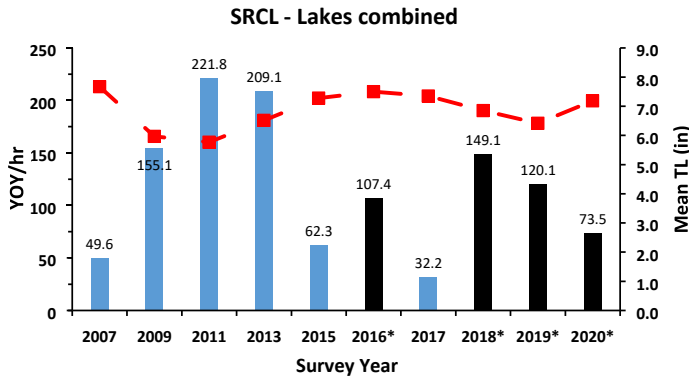


Figure 3. YOY catch rates from the SRCL (lakes combined) 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a nonstocked year and black bars indicate natural reproduction. The red line is the average length of the YOY walleye during a given survey.

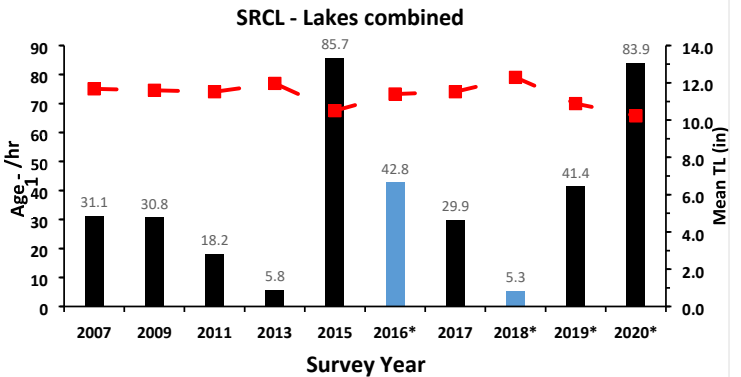


Figure 4. Estimated Age-1 catch rates from the SRCL (lakes combined) 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate naturally reproduced fish. Blue bars are related to stocked years and black bars are related to non-stocked years. For example, the 42.8/hr in 2016 are the YOY from the 2015 year class in Figure 3 as is the 83.9/hr in 2020 are the YOY from 2019 in Figure 3. The red line indicates the average length of the age-1 walleye during a given survey.

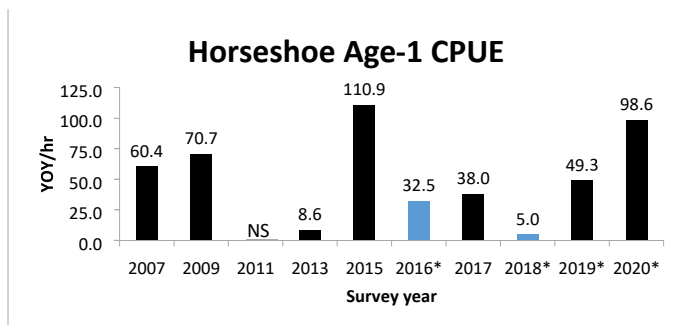


Figure 5. YOY catch rates from Cedar Island Lake 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate natural reproduction.

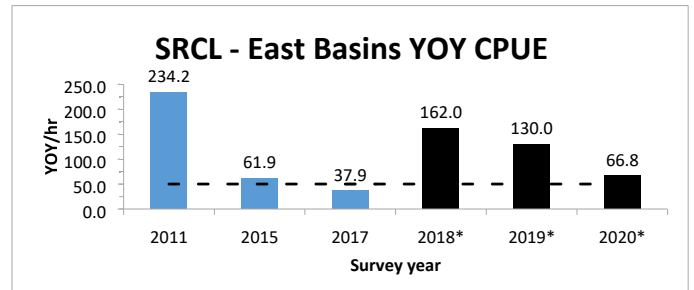


Figure 6. Estimated Age-1 catch rates from Cedar Island Lake 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate naturally reproduced fish. Blue bars are related to stocked years and black bars are related to non-stocked years. For example the 60/hr in 2016 are the YOY from the 2015 year class in Figure 2 as is the 85/hr in 2020 are the YOY from 2019 in Figure 2.



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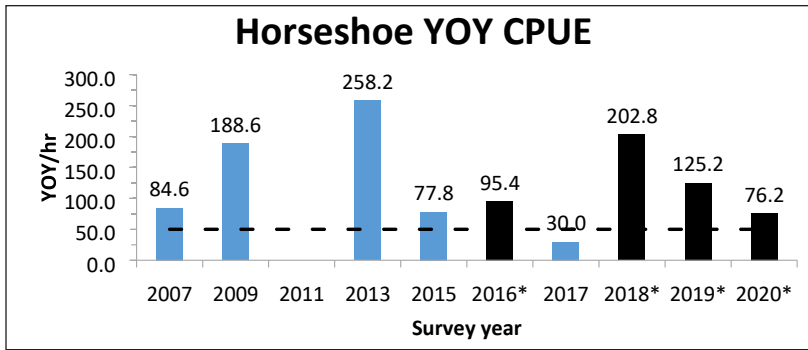


Figure 7. YOY catch rates from Horseshoe Lake 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate natural reproduction.

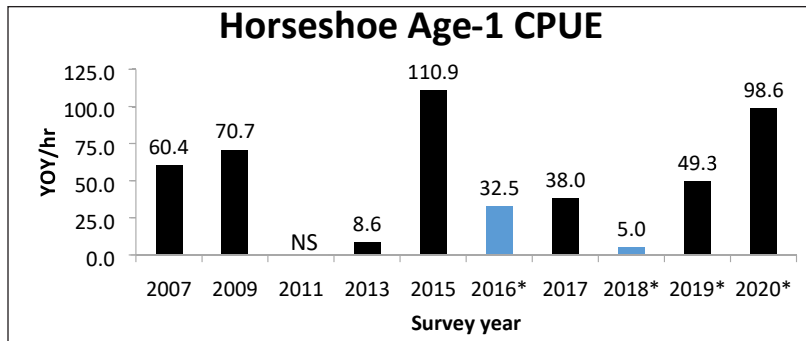


Figure 8. Estimated Age-1 catch rates from Horseshoe Lake 2007 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate naturally reproduced fish. Blue bars are related to stocked years and black bars are related to non-stocked years. See Figure 3 for explanation.

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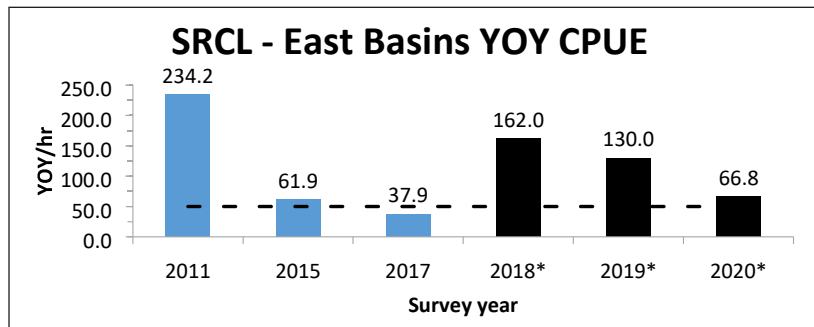


Figure 9. YOY catch rates from the East Basins 2011 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate natural reproduction.

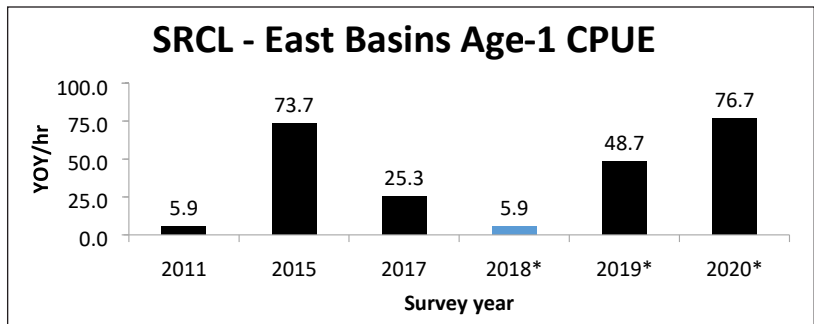


Figure 10. Estimated Age-1 catch rates from the East Basins 2011 – 2020. Years with an * indicates a non-stocked year and black bars indicate naturally reproduced fish. Blue bars are related to stocked years and black bars are related to non-stocked years. See Figure 3 for explanation.

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- Act as a catalyst for improving the overall water quality
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- Attend monthly Board meeting
- Contribute with our newsletters
- Actively lead a committee such as Marketing, Treasury, Community Outreach, Fisheries, Charitable Gambling, Aquatic Invasive Species, Land Use, Water Quality, Road Clean-up, or Local Business Partnerships etc.
- Represent the SRCL Board at occasional external events.
- Partner with peers such as the MN DNR, SR Watershed District, Stearns County Government Representatives etc.

If you believe you can add value to The Chain of Lakes and you would like to be an active participant with our group, we have an open board seat that you could fill.

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SRCL Board Member Contact Information

Board Member	Role/Committee	Phone	Email
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Matt Noska	Vice President/Fisheries	763-913-5654	noska76@aol.com
Charlie Montreuil	Treasurer	612-8819-1331	cfraven@aol.com
Matt Pelant		320-260-8995	mdpelant@icloud.com
Keely Frakes-Rau	Gambling Manager	320-290-5111	tkrau@meltel.net
Garrick Grace	Gambling Volunteers	843-685-4913	garrick.grace@gmail.com
Ann Warling	Administration	218-821-1031	ann.warling@gmail.com
Susan Antolak	Marketing/Public Relations	320-597-4864	susan.antolak@roberthalf.com
Troy Atkinson	Land Use	320-492-7041	troy@pierceinsurance.com
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