

The Shoreline

A Publication of the
Portage-Crooked Lakes Improvement Association

June/July 2026



Official Ice Out
April 16, 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

- Summer PCLIA Sponsored Events ...page 5
- Lake Legacy Initiative-Lake Steward Program...page 6
- Out & About at the Lake/Silent Auction...page 7
- Livin' & Lovin' The Crooked Life...page 8
- Why All the Concern About Eurasian Milfoil... page 9-10
- Beyond Our Shores- Project Manhigh...page 12-13

From the President...



Let's start this summer edition the right way—by thanking you for your membership and continued support. Simply put, none of this work happens without you. Because of that support, we are not only able to carry out important initiatives, but we are also in one of the strongest financial positions we've seen in many years. We are truly grateful.

While we have much to be proud of, we also continue to face the ongoing challenge of treating Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Since its discovery in our chain in 2018, we have committed significant resources to managing and containing this invasive species. Unfortunately, barring a scientific breakthrough, this is not a short-term effort—we will need to continue treating and controlling it as effectively as possible.

Even with the grants we are fortunate to receive, they do not cover the full cost of treatment. In fact, as shared last year, grant funding of \$16,500 still left us nearly \$22,000 short of total expenses. We will continue to pursue additional grant opportunities, but there is no guarantee of success, making careful planning and community support all the more important.

Looking ahead to the summer months, we will gain a clearer picture of what this year's EWM situation looks like. At this point, we do expect that additional treatment will be necessary.

Many of you have already generously supported this effort—thank you. For those who may be willing to contribute further, there is no need to wait until fall enrollment. You can visit our website and use the "Donate" option to direct contributions toward the "Healthy Lakes/Aquatic Invasive Species" fund. Every contribution helps sustain this important work.

Alongside these stewardship efforts, summer also brings the moments that make our lake community so special. I'm especially looking forward to the activities planned for the 4th of July. It promises to be a great celebration of our country's 250th birthday, highlighted by our annual Family Fun Event—now featuring a special addition this year. We're excited to welcome Gabe and Nolan Jukish, widely recognized as two of the best acrobatic jet skiers in the world. They'll be putting on a live demonstration for our lake community and sharing important messages about water safety. The day will wrap up with their incredible show.

I hope to have the opportunity to connect with many of you over the summer. On behalf of the board, we remain committed to strengthening the sense of community that makes this such a special place, while ensuring our lakes are enjoyed safely by all.

Hope to see you on the water,
Scott Maghan

PCLIA Board of Directors

<u>President</u>	<u>Term Expiration Date</u>
Scott Maghan	12/31/2027
<u>Vice President</u>	
Andy Larson	12/31/2027
<u>Treasurer</u>	
Diane Lund	12/31/2027
<u>Secretary</u>	
Joy Larson	12/31/2027
<u>Past President</u>	
Kris Picken	

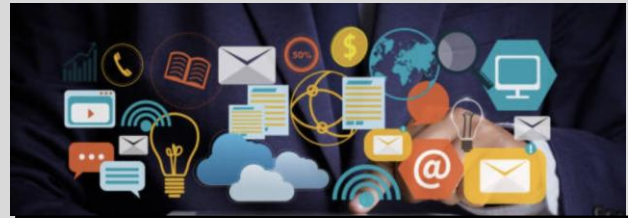
<u>Directors</u>	
Kari Bunkers	12/31/2027
Dean Forchas	12/31/2028
Tim Kensok	12/31/2028
Christine Lasley	12/31/2028
Chuck Lund	12/31/2028
Julie Maghan	12/31/2028
Jill Osborn	12/31/2027
Mike Stuber	12/31/2027
Sue Weber	12/31/2028



Board Meetings

Held at Bay Lake Town Hall at 8:30 a.m.
August 1, 2026
September 26, 2026

*Scheduled meetings are subject to change. Meetings are open to the public.



LAKE COMMUNICATION

PCLIA WEBSITE

This is a great resource for accessing information about our chain of lakes. It provides a wide range of topics including: facts about our lakes, water quality, AIS education, boating tips, photos, video lake cruises, social events and much more. You can find us at pclia.com. Check it out!

PCLIA FACEBOOK

The PCLIA has a Facebook page for members to join and receive information on the association and its activities. Search *PCLIA of MN* on your Facebook home page, and you should be directed to the page where you can join the group.

PCLIA EMAIL

Our board of directors welcomes all of your suggestions, comments and questions. Please contact us at info@pclia.com

EVENTS

Summer Picnic & Get Together

Saturday, June 13th 12:00 p.m.
Larson Residence 14265 Maghan Lane

6th Annual Family Fun Event

Saturday, July 4th 10:00 a.m.
Includes an added attraction you won't want to miss!

Fall Dinner & Business Meeting

Saturday, September 19th
Details in upcoming newsletter

*All scheduled events are subject to change

TREASURER'S REPORT

	Beginning Balance 1/1/2026	Income	Expense	Ending Balance 3/31/2026
Healthy Lakes/ AIS Fund*	\$0	\$3,683.52	\$300.00	\$3,383.52
Fish Stocking Fund*	\$3,207.21	\$1,264.82	\$0	\$4,472.03
General Fund*	\$87,790.80	\$6,900.74	\$123.52	\$94,568.02
PCLIA Lake Legacy Initiative	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0	\$20,000.00
Total Fund Balances	\$100,998.01	\$21,849.08	\$423.52	\$122,423.57

*The **Healthy Lakes/Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Fund** contains money specifically donated for monitoring and taking corrective steps to protect the quality of our lakes.

*The **Fish Stocking Fund** contains money specifically donated toward the stocking of fish according to DNR guidelines.

*The **General Fund** contains funds not specifically designated for Healthy Lakes, AIS, or Fish Stocking.

Livin' & Lovin' The Crooked Life

Membership

Thank you to everyone who has submitted their 2026 membership form and dues. We appreciate your commitment to the lake association.

Some Updated Interesting Membership Stats

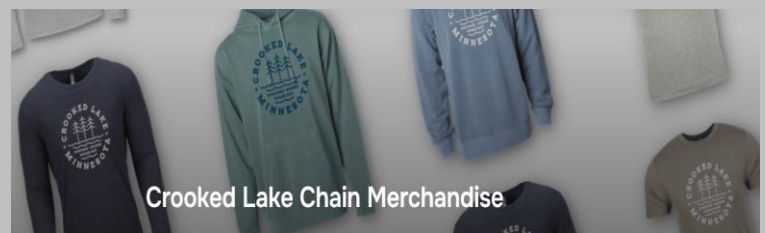
- Number of paid memberships in 2025: 207 or 70%
- Number of paid memberships in 2026 to date: 205 or 70%
- Number of people who are either new or have rejoined from 2024 or earlier: 17
- Number of members in 2025 who have not submitted their membership in 2026 to date: 19

** Numbers at the time of this publication*



MN Fishing Licenses Expire Sat. 2.28.2026

A friendly reminder to renew your fishing license!
Minnesota fishing licenses
expire each year at the end of February.



Crooked Lake Chain Merchandise

Interested in Some Lake Apparel?

Sota Clothing has an ongoing opportunity to purchase Crooked Lake merchandise. You can check it out by going to the "Crooked Lake Chain Merchandise" tab on the home page of the [PCLIA Website](#).

Jump in to Summer Fun by Attending PCLIA Sponsored Events



SUMMER PICNIC & GET TOGETHER



Summer Picnic & Get Together

Saturday, June 13 • Starts at 12:00 PM

Join us for our annual summer picnic at the Larson's on Sugar Bay (14265 Maghan Lane). We'll be serving brats & hot dogs, with yard games and plenty of time to relax and connect.

Extended family and summer visitors are welcome—we hope you can join us!



6th ANNUAL FAMILY FUN EVENT

July 4th Larson's on Sugar Bay (14265 Maghan Lane)

Celebrate the 4th with our 6th Annual Family Fun Event! The Triathlon (10:00 AM start) includes:

- 25-yard swim or walk
- 2.5-mile bike ride
- 1-mile walk or run

As participants finish, they're cheered on by neighbors lining the Maghan "Victory Lane." The event wraps up with an awards ceremony and treats.

New this year: As part of the *Lake Legacy Youth Engagement Program*, we're excited to welcome two professional jet ski world champions for a live demo and water safety talk—you won't want to miss it!



Gabe Jukish



Nolan Jukish



Lake Legacy Initiative

Last newsletter, we introduced the Lake Legacy Initiative—an exciting step toward protecting and enhancing the lake we all enjoy. This effort brings together two initial key areas of focus: the Lake Steward Program and Youth Engagement. In this issue, we’re diving a little deeper into the Lake Steward Program and how you, as a shoreline property owner, can play a hands-on role in keeping our lake clean, healthy, and thriving for years to come.

Exciting News - PCLIA has Launched the Lake Steward Program

What is it?

Through our membership in the Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Advocates we are leveraging program development work already completed to help our members protect and restore natural shorelines, improve water quality, and enhance habitats for fish and wildlife.

This program recognizes property owners who take steps to protect our lake through sustainable shoreline practices. Evaluations start June 1st, conducted by one of our trained Lake Association volunteers.

Why Become a Lake Steward?

By participating, you can earn a Lake Steward sign and contribute to a cleaner, healthier lake. It’s easy to do – and because of the abundance of natural shorelines – nearly all properties on our chain of lakes are likely to qualify.

I Might Be Interested – How Do I Learn More?

The best way to learn more is by taking the online Lake Steward Quiz <https://mnlakesandrivers.org/lake-steward/>. This will show you the elements that are evaluated. Even if you’re not sure you’re interested in pursuing Lake Steward recognition, the quiz will show you simple things you can do that can have a big impact on the water quality of our lake.

-Submitted by Tim Kensock



Out and About at the Lake



OFF – THE – WATER - FUN

Farmers Markets (Weekly)

- **Crosby** — Sat 9 AM–1 PM (Main St.)
- **Deerwood** — Thu 2–6 PM (Forest Rd & Hwy 6)

Events

- **Cuyuna Off-Road Triathlon** — June 14, 8 AM
(Cuyuna State Recreation Area • Cuyuna.com)
- **Art in the Park** — June 28, 10 AM–4 PM
(Gregory Park, Brainerd)
- **Loons & Lakes Festival** — June 26–27
(nationallooncenter.org)

Explore

- **Soo Line Depot Museum**
Filled with artifacts
(101 1st Street NE, Crosby)
- **Milford Mine Memorial Park**
Walk or bike this historic site honoring 41 miners
(26351 Milford Lake Dr., Crosby)

Heads Up

- **Hwy 169 (Garrison)** — Road construction mid-June–Sept.



Fall Dinner

4th Annual Silent Auction!

Seeking Donations

We are once again planning a Silent Auction to be held at the PCLIA Fall Dinner on **September 19th** to help fund our fight against aquatic invasive species. We are in the process of contacting local businesses for contributions.

If you, or a business you are associated with, would consider donating please contact us at info@pclia.com. Donations could include merchandise or services. We are looking for items with a minimum value of \$50. Donations could be tax deductible as a business expense or a personal charitable contribution.

The generosity of those who contributed last year helped us raise over \$6,500. We look forward to another successful event this year. Look for more information in the August Shoreline newsletter.

Thanks to Sue Weber for chairing the Silent Auction again this year.

Livin' & Lovin' The Crooked Life

Crooked Lake is a serene, mid-sized body of water located in Bay Lake Township, approximately five miles from the northern shore of Mille Lacs Lake near Deerwood, Minnesota. It is part of a connected chain of lakes that includes Portage, Hanks, and Sugar Bay. It spans across approximately 914 acres

Crooked Lake & Sugar Bay

Area: 462.68 acres

Littoral Area: 234 acres

Shore Length: 9.99 miles

Maximum Depth: 72 feet

Crooked

Crooked (Sugar Bay)

Hanks

Hanks Lake

Area: 164.72 acres

Littoral Area: 49 acres

Shore Length: 2.06 miles

Maximum Depth: 45 feet

Portage

Portage Lake

Area: 286.84 acres

Littoral Area: 110 acres

Shore Length: 2.59 miles

Maximum Depth: 37 feet

Why all the concern about Eurasian Watermilfoil?

Understanding Eurasian Watermilfoil

Eurasian watermilfoil is one of the most well-known invasive aquatic plants in Minnesota lakes—and for good reason. Its ability to spread quickly and form dense underwater growth can impact recreation, water quality, and native plant life. Understanding how to identify this species and how it behaves is the first step in managing its presence and protecting the health of our lake.



Overall Appearance

Eurasian watermilfoil is a rooted, submerged aquatic plant. The leaves appear green while the stems are white to reddish.

Leaves and Stems

Leaves are feather-like, arranged in whorls of four around the stem. Each leaf typically has 12 to 21 leaflet pairs, giving it a fuller appearance than native species.

How It Spreads: Seeds

Although a single plant can produce many seeds, Eurasian watermilfoil primarily spreads through fragmentation.

Root Structure

Roots are thin, white, and can form dense clusters beneath the plant.

How It Grows and Spreads

Eurasian watermilfoil is a perennial plant that typically flowers twice a year, in mid-June and again in late July. It can grow up to 20 feet tall, though most plants reach about nine feet, forming dense, canopy-like mats near the water's surface.

This species spreads mainly through fragmentation. Small pieces break off, settle into the sediment, take root, and grow into new plants. While the plant dies back in the fall, its root system survives the winter and resumes growth in the spring.

How to Tell It Apart from Native Plants

Eurasian watermilfoil closely resembles several native, beneficial species found in Minnesota lakes and rivers. One key difference is leaf structure: native species typically have fewer than 10 leaflet pairs per leaf, while Eurasian watermilfoil usually has 12 or more.

Native milfoils also tend to grow more sparsely and do not form dense surface mats. In contrast, Eurasian watermilfoil often creates thick growth that can crowd out native plants.

It's also worth noting that Eurasian and northern watermilfoil can hybridize. These hybrids share similar characteristics and may require genetic testing to distinguish.

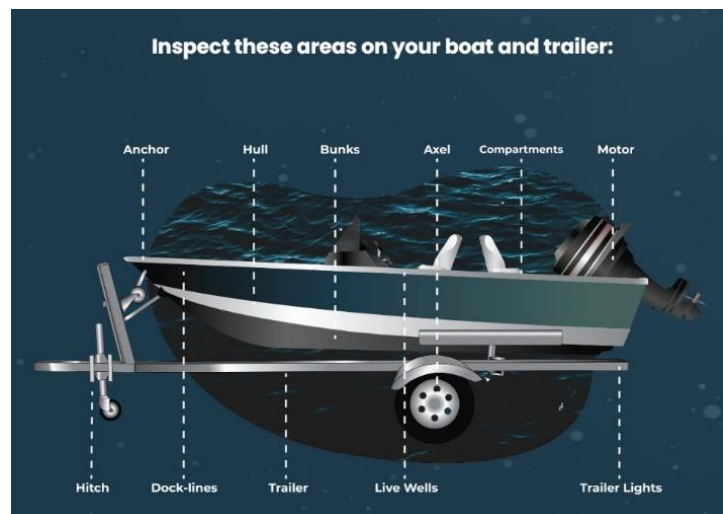
Protecting Our Lake Starts with Awareness

One way that Eurasian Water Milfoil spreads between lakes is by “hitchhiking” on boats and trailers. For example, a plant fragment caught on a prop in one lake can come off the prop in another lake and re-root, beginning a new infestation. All it takes is one plant to cause concern.

Once in a lake, if left unmanaged Eurasian Milfoil can quickly spread throughout. When plant fragments are broken off by a boat or other contact, they drift, re-root and form more plants. This can happen naturally too.

It doesn't take long for Eurasian Milfoil plants to form thick mats that displace native plant and animal communities and negatively impact lake water quality. These dense mats also obstruct boating, fishing, swimming and other lake activities and ultimately reduce the value of shoreline properties.

While Eurasian watermilfoil presents real challenges, awareness and early action make a meaningful difference. By learning to identify this invasive species and supporting responsible lake stewardship, we can help limit its spread and protect the natural balance of our waters. Working together, we can preserve the quality, beauty, and enjoyment of our lake for years to come.



The Portage-Crooked Lakes Improvement Association

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Portage-Crooked Lakes Improvement Association (PCLIA) may contract to treat Eurasian Water Milfoil, an Aquatic Invasive Species in the Crooked, Sugar Bay, Hanks and Portage chain of lakes in 2026. This is dependent on an evaluation of the need.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has granted the PCLIA a waiver requiring that the association obtain the signatures for approval of lake-shore property owners. Instead, the PCLIA will notify property owners of the treatment through alternate forms. This newsletter notice is one form that the PCLIA is using to notify property owners. Other forms include, but not limited to, notification through the association's web page, member newsletter and annual meeting.

The proposed dates for treatment are June 1, 2026 through October 31, 2026. Eurasian Water Milfoil is the target species for the treatment.

The method of control or product being used: EPA and MDA registered aquatic herbicides. Such as but not limited to Liquid 2,4-D, Granular 2,4-D, Granular Tri Clopyr, Florpyrauxifen-Benzyl.

Landowners may request that control not occur adjacent to the landowner's property. If you desire that the treatment of Eurasian Water Milfoil not occur adjacent to your property, please notify the Portage-Crooked Lakes Improvement Association immediately at the following address and email address below:

PO Box 564
Deerwood, MN 56444
info@pclia.com

Welcome Back to the Lakes – A Great Success



More than 70 members joined us in early May for a fun and relaxed afternoon of handmade pizza, socializing, and reconnecting with friends—both familiar and new. It was a great way to kick off the season.

During the event, board members Tim Kensok and Dean Forchas shared updates on the new Lake Legacy Initiative focusing on the Lake Steward and Youth Engagement Programs. Vice President Andy Larson provided insight into the challenges surrounding progress on the Hanks/Portage channel, and President Scott Maghan reviewed ongoing efforts to manage Eurasian Water Milfoil, along with the associated costs.

A special thank you to the Deerwood American Legion for hosting us and providing such a welcoming space. Along with their popular handmade pizza, they offer a full menu of great food throughout the week. Be sure to check them out—they support us, and we're proud to support them in return.

Corporate Sponsor

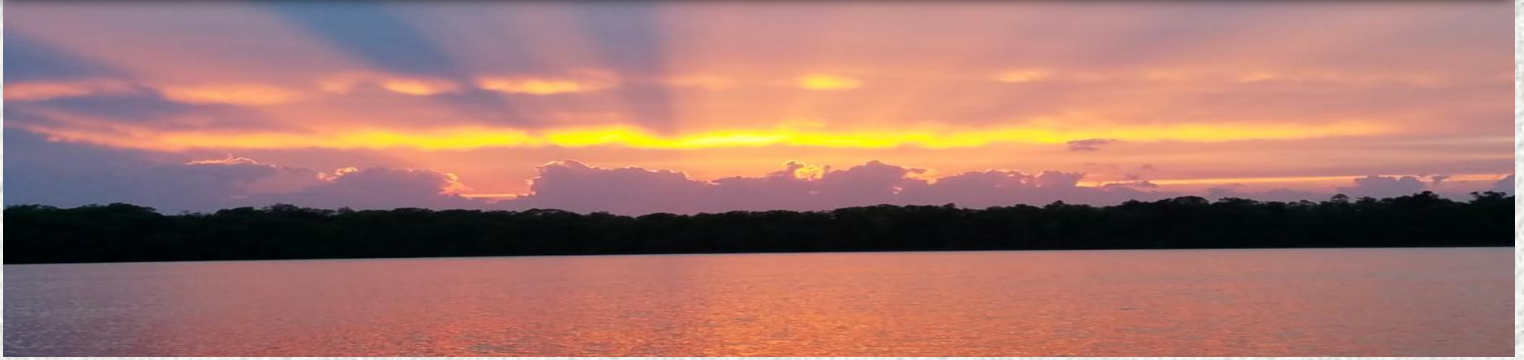
We would be happy to entertain other sponsorship opportunities. If interested, please reach out to us at info@pclia.com with your interest and contact information.

JIM CHRISTENSEN
LAKESHORE MARKETING GROUP

LakeshoreBroker.com
218-820-2147



**CALL FOR A COMPLIMENTARY
MARKET APPRASIAL OF YOUR PROPERTY**

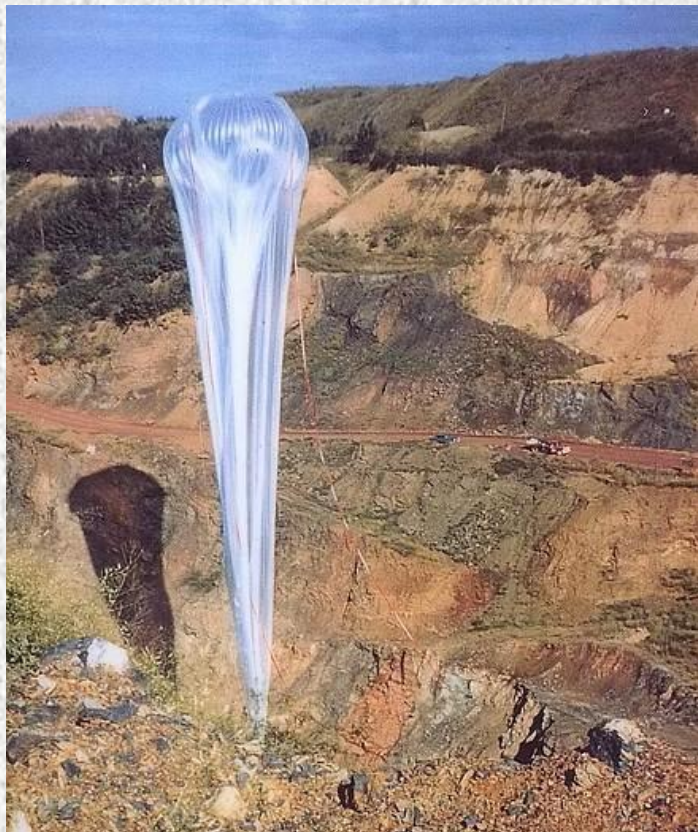


Beyond Our Shores – Project Manhigh

In this edition of *Shore Lore*, we step beyond our lakes to explore a surprising chapter of local history—one that connects the Cuyuna Range to the earliest days of space exploration.

From Iron Range to Launch Site

In 1957, the United States Air Force launched Project Manhigh, a groundbreaking biomedical research program designed to study how humans could survive in the near space environment. Far from the typical launch sites we associate with modern space exploration, one of these pioneering missions took place right here—over the abandoned mine pits of the Cuyuna Range.



Portsmouth Mine Pit

Located on the north side of Crosby on west side of Hwy 6

From Mine Pits to Near Space

These pits provided ideal launch conditions. Remote and expansive, they offered a wide berth free from commercial air traffic, making them perfectly suited for high-altitude balloon launches.

Testing the Limits of Human Flight

Project Manhigh was a series of missions designed to better understand how the human body responds to extreme altitude. At the time, spaceflight was still a distant goal, but scientists recognized the importance of studying the effects of low pressure, cosmic radiation, and isolation. The data collected during these missions would later help inform NASA's manned spaceflight programs.

A Record-Breaking Ascent

In Manhigh II, Air Force Captain David Simons ascended to an altitude of 101,516 feet in a sealed gondola attached to a massive helium balloon. Suspended in near-space for more than 32 hours, he experienced conditions similar to those future astronauts would face—marking a significant milestone in the path toward human space exploration.

Shore Lore Shore Lore Shore Lore

Preserving Our Lake's Legacy

A Hidden Chapter of Local History

Although many visitors come to the Cuyuna Range today for its vibrant outdoor recreation opportunities, few realize the role this landscape once played in advancing the boundaries of human flight. Project Manhigh serves as a reminder that this quiet region contributed to some of the earliest steps toward space.

Experience the Story Today

You can explore this fascinating story firsthand at the Soo Line Depot Museum in Crosby. There, visitors can even climb into a life-sized replica of the capsule used during Simons' historic flight, built by Jeff Kreitz of Breezy Point, Minnesota.



Have you spotted this mural on the side of the Spalding House in Crosby? This artwork recreates the iconic *Life Magazine* cover from September 1957 which documented Major Simons' high altitude balloon journey, completed on August 10, 1957.

Do you have old lake photos or family stories tucked away in a shoebox? Consider sharing them so we can continue preserving our lake's history together. Reach out to us at info@pclia.com

Sources: True North Basecamp; Mississippi Valley Traveler Cuyuna Iron Range Soo Line Depot Museum.

PCLIA

Portage-Crooked Lakes
Improvement Association
Po Box 564
Deerwood, MN 56444

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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