

Lake Miltona



FALL News

November 2023

lake-miltona.org

Volume 1, No. 17

Directors and Officers are listed below. Please thank them for volunteering their time for the Lake Miltona Community.

OFFICERS:

President:	Steve DeSutter
Vice President:	Pat Ferguson
Treasurer:	Chad Koebnick
Secretary:	Janet Guinn

DIRECTORS:

Mark Niedenfuer	Area 1
John Fair	Area 2A
Open	Area 2B
John Fay	Area 2C
Jeff Anderson	Area 3A
Vern Suhr	Area 3B
Gene Rose	Area 3C

DIRECTORS continued:

Steve Herth	Area 4
Emily Yonke	Area 5
Shannon Burgad	Area 6
Bob Streasick	Area 7
Janet Guinn, Gary Fuchs	Area 8
Jay Sieling	Area 9
Jay Sieling	Area 10
Pat Ferguson	Area 11
Mike Wrobel, Warren Davis	Area 12
Ted Boehne, Tom & Cheryl Brauer	Area 13
Mark Stenglein	Area 14
Brad Roberts	Area 15
Steve Labatt	Area 16
Steve DeSutter, Chad Koebnick, Tim Kaatz	Area 17
Randy Hansen	Area 18
Don Henning	Area 19



A Message from the President

Lake Miltona has again endured a summer with very little rain. One of the largest complaints we receive is that the lake level seems to be too low for a lot of the newer boats/lifts / docks. As an association we are going to investigate the process of possibly setting the damn height higher. This is a long process, with the involvement of the DNR and the Corps of Engineers, so we will keep you posted.

The Lake Association membership has remained strong this year. We are at

a very healthy level of members but can always use your help to remind new people moving in about the many things the Miltona Lake Association does for the lake. Pass the word to join.

We are very excited to report that we have stocked walleye's this fall. We put in 1500 lbs of walleye fingerlings in October. This amounts to approximately 45,000 fingerlings. Fingerling's average 4-7" in length, so pretty decent sized fish to get a good start on the fishery. This is an increase of 500 lbs, thanks in part to your increased donation to the fish stocking fund. So, please remember that as you receive your dues letters, that donating to the fish stocking fund goes directly into fish that go into our lake. We have heard many reports of improved fishing on our

lake the past summer and winter. We are convinced, that to continue good fishing, we need to restock regularly. We continue to receive wonderful support from the local sportsman's clubs to assist us with our stocking budgets. Please support them in any way you can.

The LMA has been undergoing a lot of board membership changes, due to people leaving the lake or retiring from the board. We have many new board members, so please take the time to thank them for their commitment to the board and as always, pass on any ideas to them.

Keep warm this winter and see you on this ice.

Steve DeSutter
President

2023 Independence Day Parade Winners

Enthusiasm for this year's parade was high, so start planning for the parade next year. A plaque with the winner's names is located at Leaf Valley Mercantile. The awards were as follows:

Pontoon 1st Place - Kyle Tengesdal
 2nd Place - Alex Jenkins
 3rd Place - Lindsay Moin

Jet Ski

1st Place - Jake & Jordan Fier
 2nd Place - Ava Scheiber

Boats

1st Place - Ostendorf Family
 2nd Place - Jason Fier

Draining Nelson Lake

An ongoing concern for both Lake Miltona and the rest of the Long Prairie watershed is the potential project to partially drain Nelson Lake and to prevent flooding of farmland and Otter Tail CO-6. Unfortunately, Nelson Lake is impaired. Therefore, this potential drainage would send impaired water through Fish Lake then Twin Lakes then via Dittberners Creek into Lake Miltona. Also, although Nelson Lake is currently landlocked drainage of the lake in this manner makes it part of the Long Prairie River watershed so this proposed drainage also affects all the Long Prairie River watershed. A history of concerns raised about this potential project can be found at the following link: <https://ottertailcounty.gov/project/nelson-lake-outlet/>

At the time of our LMA Spring Newsletter information gathered on this project seemed to indicate that there was little interest in pursuing it. However, a delegation from Otter Tail County attended the July 20th Long Prairie River Watershed Collaborative Policy Committee meeting in Long Prairie to have a discussion of the Nelson Lake project.

Jeff Langan with Houston Engineering presented on the scope of the project and updates. A delegation of interested parties also attended this meeting and raised their concerns about the project. Steve DeSutter and Mike Wrobel represented the Lake Miltona Association at this meeting and participated in the discussion. Also participating in the discussion was a member of the Leaf Valley Township of Douglas County, of the Effington Township of Otter Tail County, and a Nelson Lake property owner. The final action of this discussion was consideration of Otter Tail County's request for support of this Committee for their proposed project. A motion was made and passed to not send any letter of support. The minutes of this meeting and a recording of this discussion is available by request.

No further action on this project was seen in the October minutes from this Committee, so one might think that this could be the end of this project. But, at the present time the level of Nelson Lake is considerably lower so the need to lower the lake level does not seem to be necessary. However, we believe it will be necessary to continue to monitor the possibility of this unwanted project happening.

Financial Review

The financial position of the association remains strong thanks to dues-paying members, walleye fund contributors, and the annual fundraiser.

The Association thanks all who attended the great buffet dinner provided by the Clarissa Ballroom and all attendees who stayed for Don Henning's calling of drawings and raffles.

We wish to send a special thank you to the 67 merchants and individuals who contributed prizes. The contributions add great fun and anticipation to the event.

Further, the board expresses gratitude to all directors, volunteers, and those called into service who gave their time. Selling tickets, contacting local businesses, and working during the evening to produce such a successful and enjoyable event.

Dues-paying members remain strong at 455 compared to the 2022 total of 488.

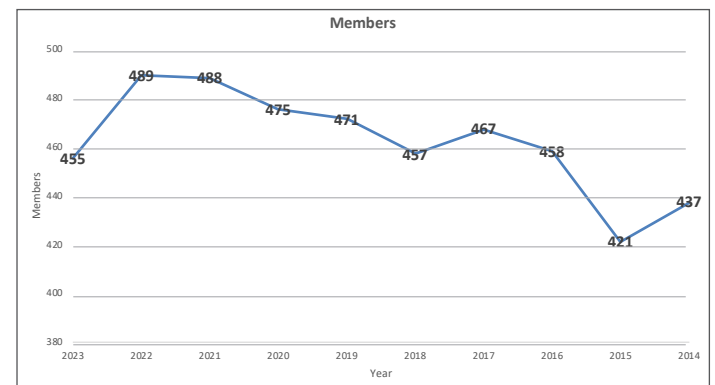
Thanks to the hard work and efforts of the association directors and friends of the association in securing sponsors and donations, we have also been able to produce a new Lake Miltona Association directory for distribution later this year.

Contributions to the walleye fund and allocations from the general fund allowed the association to continue the Walleye stocking program we have maintained for several years.

The following charts provide a summary of our fundraiser event and 10-year membership trend.

Fundraiser Results

	2023	2022	Increase/ (Decrease)
<i>Dinner Ticket Sales</i>	422	402	20
Dinner Ticket Revenue	\$ 8,440	\$ 8,040	400
Raffles and Other	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,506	\$ (306)
Total Revenue	\$ 13,640	\$ 13,546	94
Total Expense (Primarily Catering)	\$ (6,983)	\$ (6,744)	\$ (239)
Net	\$ 6,657	\$ 6,802	\$ (145)



Lake Miltona Association is a volunteer not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to water quality and ecological balance. DONATIONS AND DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. See IRS Publication 526.

Lake Miltona Outlet Dam

Concerns about our Lake Miltona outlet dam have been repeatedly raised. One issue is the state of repair of the dam and second is the height of the dam that determines the water level in our lake.

Due to the lack of rainfall during the late summer and early fall our lake level dropped so low that it was difficult for many lake residents to get their boats out of the water. A picture of the dam taken on September 21, 2023 included with this article shows that the water level is at the top of the board that makes up the dam. Also, water is still leaking out of the boards and at the corner of the wall. So, the level of the lake would continue to drop, albeit very slowly.

In the spring more water is typically available in Lake Miltona so the flow over the dam is much greater. The second picture included with this report shows the water flow out of Lake Miltona in the May 10, 2022. Note that while the water is very high it is not washing around the dam. Perhaps we need a dam that lets out water faster in the spring and slower as the lake levels drop.

At the time of both pictures some damage of the concrete structures of the dam was observed, but the dam was intact and functioning properly. Gene Rose called Emily Siira, our DNR Hydrologist, to discuss the status of the dam. She said the dam is inspected on a regular basis. According to her report nothing major has changed on the dam and nothing currently was amiss that needs immediate attention. This is consistent with the observations at the time of the pictures of the dam.

The status of our outlet dam was a topic of discussion at our October 14, 2023 LMA Board meeting. Clearly our members would like the DNR to put our dam at a higher priority to determine how to regulate a steadier level that would be acceptable to most folks. Questions arose about what factors influence the DNR's decision to: (1) Raise/lower dam height? (2) Set the priority of fixing the current dam structure (which seems to be leaking some)? (3) How often does the DNR refresh the input data for these determining factors and reevaluate and reprioritize dam maintenance projects? (4) What data can the LMA provide to help address these concerns? To help address these questions Steve Labatt volunteered to file an official request for public documents related to the Dam's specific inlet/outlet. Steve and Gene will review this information after which they will seek a meeting with the appropriate DNR folks to see what can be done to address our Association's concerns.

Lake Miltona Outlet Dam Photos



September 21, 2023



May 10, 2022

Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 8th, 2024

9:00am

Miltona Community Center

Our annual meeting will be held Saturday, June 8th, 2024 at the Miltona Community Center. We will update you in the Spring newsletter as to which topics and speakers that will be attending.

Fundraiser Donor List 2023

Alexandria Golf Club	Iverson Insurance	Pike and Pint
Alexandria Movie Theater	Jim and Judy's	Pine Ridge Golf
American Heritage Hunting Club	Juettner Motors	Prairie Archery
American Solutions for Business	Klinder's Processing	Qdoba
Atikwa Golf	Lake Country Meats	Ron's Warehouse Sales
Borch's	Lake Life Fitness	Rose City Bar and Grill
Bremer Bank	Lakes Gas	RPM Training
Bullet Lawn Care	Leaf Valley Mercantile	Sammy's One Stop
Carlos Creek Winery/22 Northmen	Leaf Valley Sportsman Club	Scherer Printing
Chet's Lakeside Inn	L*etoile du Nord Winery	Spruce Center Bait
Coldwell Banker Crown Realtors	Living Tree Massage/Michelle Lehn	State Farm
Country Consignments	LJ's Restaurant	Streamlight
Dakota Magic Casino	Lake Miltona Association	Stubs Marine
Dick's Standard/Gappa Oil	Lund Boats	Tastefully Simple
Don Henning Excavating	Lure Lake Bar	Wade's Miltona Automotive and Repair
Elden's Food Fair	Mall of America	Wendie VanKirk/Edina Realty
First Western Bank	Miltona Greenhouse	Woodland Resort
Fortwengler Electric	Miltona Liquor	Zorbaz
Gate City Bank	Miltona Meats	
Geneva Golf Course	Miscellaneous	
Great Hunan	Napa Auto	
Greystone Golf	Nordic Trails Golf	
Henry's Foods/Brothers Market	Old Mill Bar and Grill	
Herby's Bar and Grill	Ollies Service	
Hilltop Lumber	Paul's Small Engine	

Thank You to these Merchants who provided over **\$9700.00** in prizes to our 2023 fundraiser.
Please support them!

Lake Miltona Ice-on, Ice-off for the past 19 Years.



ICE ON

Dec 13, 2004
Nov 30, 2005
Dec 1, 2006
Nov 29, 2007
Nov 27, 2008
Dec 5, 2009
Nov 27, 2010
Dec 5, 2011
Dec 8, 2012
Nov 26, 2013
Nov 25, 2014
Dec 19, 2015
Dec 10, 2016
Dec 8, 2017
Nov 13, 2018
Dec 3, 2019
Nov 30, 2020
Dec 7, 2021
Dec 1, 2022

ICE OUT

Apr 14, 2005
Apr 10, 2006
Apr 20, 2007
May 4, 2008
Apr 23, 2009
Apr 1, 2010
Apr 26, 2011
Mar 25, 2012
May 14, 2013
Apr 27, 2014
Apr 12, 2015
Mar 31, 2016
May 6, 2017
May 6, 2018
April 24, 2019
April 20, 2020
April 6, 2021
May 4, 2022
May 5, 2023

Smoke Signals from the Camp

The Smokey Timbers Camp wrapped up its 2023 season with the Halloween festivities held on the weekend of October 28th. The year was a success due to the many terrific guests this past year as well as the volunteers that donated their time and resources.

Our mission is to provide camping, outdoor experiences, fellowship and learning experiences for youth, families and neighbors. The mission was accomplished. There were approximately 1257 guests at the camp this season of which about 67% were kids. The season started the weekend of March 4TH with the Frozen Trails event. The season wrapped up with the Trail of Treats and Spooky Trails event held the weekend of October 28th.

There were activities other than camping that kept the activity level at the camp very high. On each summer Wednesday morning a Fika (Swedish for morning coffee break and treats) get together was sponsored to provide fellowship for neighbors and friends of the camp. Various presentations were provided at Fika. These included the history of The Minnesota Club as well as the function of the Douglas County Sheriffs lake patrol. Mini camps were also held that provided learning and enrichment activities. Examples included; first aid for kids, woodcarving a spoon, needle felting, crocheting a rag rug and others.

In August, the annual fish fry was held . It was a success. We would like to thank all who participated and made good will donations to the camp.

The season wrapped up with the Halloween "Trail of Treats" and "Spooky Hike" which were held on October 28th. Both were a huge success even though the temperatures were cool. The Trail of Treats is for the younger kids and was held in the afternoon. Approximately 300 youngsters, along with their families and friends, participated. The Spooky Hike was in the evening for the older kids who were looking for a "SCARY" experience. There were approximately 260 participants and their expectations were met! Both were a success! The Smokey Timbers board would like to sincerely thank all the sponsors and volunteers who provided time, funding and supplies that helped make this a success!! There are too many to name all of them.

In addition to the normal camping activities, a number of projects were completed. The biggest of was the replacement of the stairs to the lake. This project became possible because of generous support from the Bernick Family Foundation, Brick Yard Supplies and Creative Environments Landscaping, Inc.

The new stair handrail was installed by camp volunteers to complete the project. The existing staircase was damaged in last year's storms and was also reaching the end of its lifetime.

Looking ahead, the first event planned for 2024 is a

Winter Fun Day. At this event, kids and families can enjoy winter activities including hiking, skating, snow shoeing and kick sledding. This outing is being planned for February 24, 2024. Check the smokeytimbers.org web site or Facebook page the beginning of 2024 for specifics.

Smokey Timbers Camp is a year around facility and is available for winter use (think cross country skiing, snow shoeing and other winter activities)! The campgrounds include four units that have heating capabilities as well as a heated restroom/shower facility. The grounds include many trails along with lake access on over 20 acres.

Once again, Smokey Timbers Camp would like to sincerely thank the Lake Miltona Association, the many lake residents, and friends of the camp who have provided support to the camp. The financial donations not only help offset the operating costs but provide support for capital projects and unplanned maintenance. Much appreciated labor was also provided to open and clean up the camp in the spring and winterization in the fall as well as many summer projects.

One example of volunteer labor was the assistance provided by the Law Enforcement Club from the Alex Technical & Community College. They helped with the spring opening (dock installation) and winterization process. A HUGE thank you!!



Assistance of any sort is gratefully appreciated. Contributions are documented and qualify as tax deductible per IRS code, Section 170. Individuals who are interested in how they can help are encouraged to contact us at 15567 Smokey Timbers RD NW, Miltona, MN 56354 or smokeytimbers@gmail.com. Additional info is available at smokeytimbers.org.



ATCC LAW ENFORCEMENT CLUB

DCLA AIS Education

To help mitigate the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species such as Eurasian Watermilfoil, Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Flowering Rush and Zebra Mussels, the Douglas County Lakes Association will be launching an AIS education project in the spring of 2024.

The goal of this project is to educate lakeshore property owners on how to identify AIS. By being proactive, if AIS are found, mitigation efforts can begin sooner thus reducing spread and lowering management costs.

More information will be forthcoming but if you have questions, please reach out to Janet Jensen Zastrow, VP DCLA and Lake Miltona property owner.

Signal Crayfish Confirmed in Minnesota Invasive Non-Native Species

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of signal crayfish, an invasive non-native species, in Lake Winona, adjacent to Alexandria in Douglas County. This is the first confirmation of signal crayfish in Minnesota waters.

A commercial harvester contacted the DNR after trapping two signal crayfish in Lake Winona. Since the first catch, the harvester has found eight additional signal crayfish in Lake Winona. The DNR followed up with trapping in Lake Winona and in two adjacent connected lakes but did not capture additional signal crayfish.

One female was among the 10 adult signal crayfish captured and removed from Lake Winona. At this time, there is no evidence of reproduction; no eggs or juveniles have been found.

Signal crayfish are larger and more aggressive than Minnesota crayfish and the invasive rusty crayfish. They eat aquatic plants, detritus, fish eggs, smaller crayfish species and other beneficial native invertebrates. Signal crayfish might outcompete native species for food and habitat. Signal crayfish can spread between connected waterways or be transported by people. They can also crawl over land at night and during wet weather.

"Importing live, non-native crayfish to Minnesota is illegal without a permit," DNR Aquatic Invertebrate Biologist Don Eaton said. "Regardless of species, it is illegal to release non-native plants or animals into the environment. We deeply appreciate that people harvesting crayfish are keeping a close watch on their catch and that, in this case, the harvester quickly

2023 Fundraiser Winners

The Association thanks all who attended the fundraiser. A great buffet was provided by Clarissa Ballroom in Clarrisa, MN Catering. Prizes were donated by 67 area merchants, worth \$9700.00.

Without the financial and human support of our members and friends, the Association would be unable to carry out its mission. We are especially grateful for all attendees and the great show of support leading up to and during the fundraiser.

As part of the ticket price, each ticket is part of a drawing. The following are winners for 2023. We look forward to the excitement of the 2024 fundraiser.

2023 Dinner ticket drawing winners:

Colleen Woulet - \$100,
Dan Shay - \$50
Dave Werpy - \$50

reported this unusual-looking crayfish to the DNR."

Signal crayfish are bluish-brown to reddish-brown in color, with large, smooth claws and a smooth carapace – the protective covering over their head and mid-section. They have a white or pale blue-green patch near their claw hinge, which looks like a signal flag.

People who think they might have observed signal crayfish or other invasive species should note the exact location, take photos, keep the specimen, and submit their observations to EDDMapS or their local invasive species specialist. To help confirm sightings of signal crayfish, photos of the blue-green patches on claws, the bright red coloring on the underside of the claws and full-body views from above and below are ideal. Placing the crayfish next to a ruler or other size reference is also helpful.

The DNR website has information about signal crayfish and about pathways by which non-native, prohibited and invasive species are typically introduced.



Lake Miliona Association Web Page

Our Board found that our current Lake Miliona web page could no longer be updated. To address this issue the Board decided to proceed on a plan to develop a new web page rather than proceed with any other option, e.g., having no web page or a Facebook option. Two goals were defined for this web site updating: (1) to find a host for our updating our web page and (2) to find a web master to maintain the web page. A motion was passed at our April 15th Board meeting to research local vender options to host our web page and to find a "web master" to maintain our LMA web page. A committee to accomplish our two goals was formed. The members of this committee are Steve DeSutter, Matt Eastrom, Gwen Leapaldt, Gene Rose, and Jay Sieling.

At our October 14th Board meeting our web committee reported that they collected quotes from 3 different vendors. These quotes provided three different options for the Committee. One option would do a total redesign and development of a new web page with ongoing hosting and maintenance costs. A second option would convert our current web page to a new platform with some updating along with a fixed cost for a continuing maintenance program plus domain hosting. A third option was somewhat a combination of option one and two that would consolidate/redesign our webpages and convert our current website to a new platform with ongoing hosting and with additional changes and/or advanced maintenance support, as needed, with a cost to be quoted based on need. The Committee also noted that the provider of option 2 was a local business that could provide personal support.

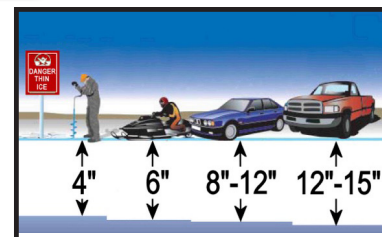
A motion was passed at this October 14th Board meeting to commit to pursue option 2. The committee is now in the process of this conversion process. The 1-year maintenance service provides us a chance to make some changes to the website as it is being converted to the new platform. The Board recommended that the website subcommittee review and prioritize all suggestions for changes/additions to determine which should be included in the initial conversion project.

Dittberners Creek Culvert Project Update

The objective of this culvert project is to improve the fish spawning opportunities for Dittberners Creek by allowing fish to navigate more easily upstream and to reduce sediment wash out from the bank downstream that ultimately flows into Lake Miliona. Our Spring 2023 Newsletter update on this Dittberners Creek culvert project recorded that the original engineering plan for this project needed to be updated due to concerns of a possible increase in creek flow rate.

Ross Reifenburger, the Engineer for this project, just completed a new engineering plan. It will be reviewed by the Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District and the MN DNR personnel. Gene Rose will represent the Lake Miliona Association at this review. Assuming that the new plan is acceptable a grant will be written to support its completion. Some amount of matching funds for this grant will be needed. After the completion of the grant proposal our Lake Miliona Association Board will discuss options of how to provide the required matching funds. Sources for the funding of the both the grant and the matching fund seem to be available.

Ice Safety



General ice thickness guidelines For New, Clear Ice Only

- 2" or less - STAY OFF
- 4" - Ice fishing or other activities on foot
- 5" - Snowmobile or ATV
- 8" - 12" - Car or small pickup
- 12" - 15" - Medium truck

Remember that these thicknesses are merely guidelines for new, clear, solid ice. Many factors other than thickness can cause ice to be unsafe.

LAKE MILTONA

ASSOCIATION

790 East Sandy Beach Drive NE

Miltona, MN 56354



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Lake Miltona News

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2024 Calendar of Events

January 13	Directors Meeting	9:00 am
April 13	Directors Meeting	9:00 am
June 8	Annual Meeting	9:00 am
July 13	Directors Meeting	9:00 am
August 10	Annual Fundraiser	5-10:00 pm
October 12	Directors Meeting	9:00 am