

Le Sueur County Environmental Services

NEWSLETTER

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Ice Fishing and Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species laws still apply to those anglers who brave the cold and go out on the ice. The good news is because of the frigid temperatures; most aquatic invasive species have a pretty difficult time surviving under these conditions. Despite this, please make sure you are cleaning off all of your equipment of any plants, animals, and debris.

Additionally, please do not dump your live bait into the water! Live bait should be disposed of into the garbage. Furthermore do not dump your bait water into the lake or bring lake water (to keep your bait alive) from one lake to another. If you would like to keep your bait, bring an extra bait bag with fresh water.



Figure 1. Ice on Lake Gorman

Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

Ice Fishing and Garbage

As a friendly reminder, please pick up your garbage and trash before you leave the ice! It is against the law to improperly dispose of garbage, sewage, or wastewater on the ice.



Summary of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Efforts in 2022

Le Sueur County's Aquatic Invasive Species program for 2022 grew in many ways; especially when it comes to watercraft inspections. Additionally, we tried something new in education and outreach and partnered with a nonprofit, Mississippi Headwaters Board, to assist us with social media efforts for AIS Prevention and Awareness. Partnerships with other organizations continues to be an extremely important part of Le Sueur County's AIS prevention and management efforts. In total, Le Sueur County was actively engaged or conducted AIS work with a total of 17 different organizations consisting of nonprofits, businesses, and local government units. Funds spent in 2022 were used for watercraft inspections, education, outreach, printing, publishing, advertising, administration, equipment, and Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Efforts.

Sneak Peek into the 2022 Aquatic Invasive Species Aid Accomplishments

- Le Sueur County partnered with 17 organizations in 2022 to support AIS related work such as watercraft inspections, education/outreach efforts, and invasive aquatic plant management efforts.
- A total of \$58,795.00 of additional funds were leveraged from numerous organizations to help support AIS prevention work.
- A majority of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid funds within Le Sueur County were spent on watercraft inspections; 72.9%.
- There was a total of 3,923.5 hours of inspections performed in 2022. That is 410.05 more inspection hours than 2021!
- 26 accesses and 25 waterbodies were covered by inspectors throughout the inspection season.

To review the entire report, please visit the following website:
<https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/301/Aquatic-Invasive-Species>.

If you have any questions about Le Sueur County's Aquatic Invasive Species program, please contact Holly Bushman at hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us.

Volney, Gorman, and Cordova Septic Inventory Project in the Cannon River Watershed

Le Sueur County received Watershed Based Implementation Funding from the Cannon River One Watershed One Plan in order to conduct a septic system compliance inventory around Volney and Gorman Lakes as well as the Village of Cordova. The intent of the Septic Inventory is to determine how many systems are compliant and noncompliant. Those systems that are noncompliant would be required to update their septic systems. Failing septic systems negatively impact surface water resources, groundwater resources, and public health. Le Sueur County hired Stantec Consulting Services Inc to assist the County with completing the inventory.

There were multiple phases of this project. The first phase was to raise public awareness about the project through public meetings as well as adopt a local County Ordinance to launch the Septic Inventory Project. The second phase of the project was to determine the project area for the inventory, send out letters to property owners who needed a compliance inspection, and lastly complete the compliance inspections. The final phase of the septic inventory project was to send out letters to each property owner to notify them if their system was considered noncompliant or compliant and host a public meeting about the final findings of the project.

Any property owners whose system was deemed noncompliant, would be required to update their septic system. Timelines to update will differ for property owners depending on their system's noncompliance status (Imminent Public Health Threat or Failing to Protect Groundwater).

There was a total of 70 systems that were required to have a compliance inspection. Out of the 70 systems, 39 systems or 56%, were deemed noncompliant.

To find out more information about the SSTS Inventory Project, including the final report and recording of the final presentation, please visit the following website: <https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/640/Lake-Volney-Lake-Gorman-the-Village-of-C>.

Any questions related to your septic system would be for Le Sueur County's septic inspector, Patty Lynard. Her contact information is as follows: 507-357-8539 or plynard@co.le-sueur.mn.us.

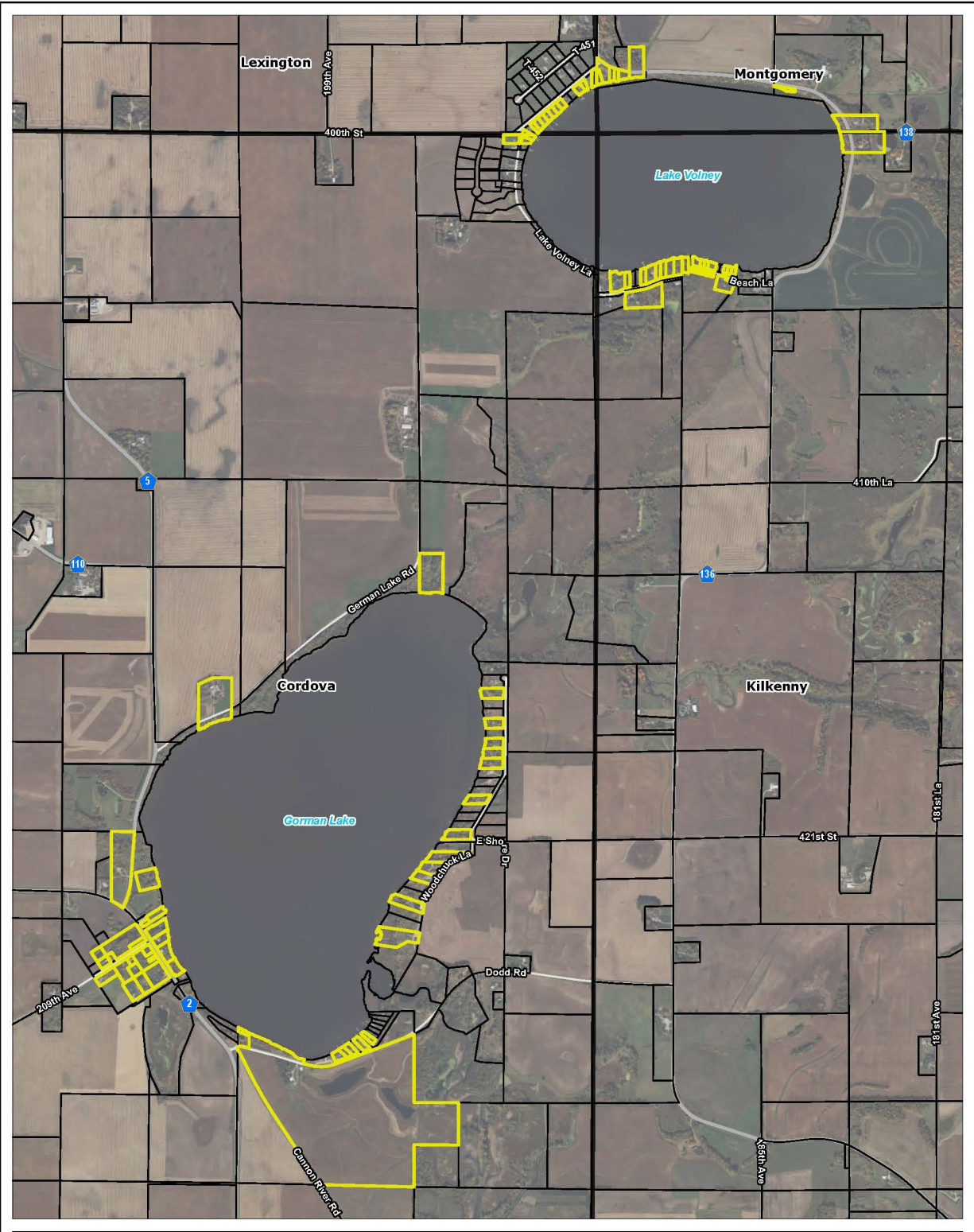
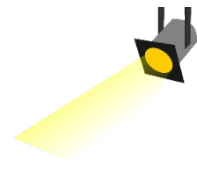


Figure 2. Volney, Gorman, and Cordova Septic Inventory Project Area

Photo Credit: Stantec Consulting Inc.



Water Resource Spotlight

This issue we are spotlighting Lake Emily!

Lake Emily is located roughly 3 miles southeast of the City of Saint Peter. The lake has a surface area of roughly 300 acres. Lake Emily’s maximum depth is approximately 37 feet. The landscape around the lake is predominately wetlands, woods, and agriculture. There is also development consisting of residential areas, a golf course, and a restaurant. Most of the development is concentrated on the north and west sides of the lake. There is a DNR access that is located on the south side of the lake as well as a County Park with a fishing pier located on the west side of the lake.

Lake Emily is located within the Middle Minnesota River (Mankato) Watershed. According to the Middle Minnesota River WRAPS, Lake Emily is meeting state water quality standards and appears to be improving in water quality. Since Lake Emily has good water quality,

the main management goal should be protection, and continue to maintain/improve water quality standards. Practices that can help protect and maintain good water quality within Lake Emily include sustaining existing best management practices, sustaining perennial vegetation, and mitigating new agricultural drainage projects by adding storage areas such as basins or wetlands.



Figure 3. Fishing Pier at Lake Emily County Park

Photo Credit: Le Sueur County Parks Department



Figure 4. View of Lake Emily from the North Side of the Lake

Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

Minnesota Native Plant

Northern Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)

Northern Blue Flag Iris, is a perennial that is a part of the Iridaceae (Iris) family. It grows 1 to 3 feet tall. The root structure is comprised of rhizomes. The leaves are narrow, pointed, and mostly basal. The inflorescence (flower head) is typical of an iris, and ranges in color from pale blue to a deep blue-violet. Furthermore, the petals contain a yellow/green spot with purple veins. The flower blooms from May to August. Northern Blue Flag Iris a hardy plant that prefers soils rich in organic matter and soils that are moist or wet. This species also does well in full or partial sunny areas. You'll find this plant thriving in wet meadows, marshes, raingardens, along shorelines, and other wet low laying areas. Northern Blue Flag Iris attracts hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators. While this species is beautiful, the roots of Northern Blue Flag Iris are extremely toxic to humans, livestock, and pets.



Figure 5. Northern Blue Flag Iris Basal Leaf Arrangement

Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

**Figure 6. Northern
Blue Flag Flower Head**

*Photo Credit: Le Sueur
County*



**Figure 7. Northern
Blue Flag Iris Petal
Detail**

*Photo Credit: Le Sueur
County*

Non-Native Plant

Nonnative Phragmites or Common Reed (*Phragmites australis subsp. australis*)

Nonnative Phragmites also referred to Common Reed is a perennial warm season grass that is a part of the Poaceae (Grass) family. Common Reed is native to Europe and Asia, and was accidentally introduced into the Great Lakes region either through contaminated ballasts or packing material from ships.

Nonnative Phragmites can grow up to 15 feet tall! The leaves of Non-native Phragmites are blue-green in color, narrow, and can be anywhere from 15-20 inches long. Stems of Common Reed are hollow and coarse in texture and lack fungal spots and red internodes. The inflorescence (flower head) starts to form in early August into a feathery cluster and are typically purple early in the growing season and golden late into the growing season. The root structure of Nonnative Phragmites is very robust and contain rhizomes that can spread several feet deep and several feet laterally. Additionally, new stalks can sprout off of the growing roots/rhizomes.

Common Reed is found in aquatic habitats such as wetlands and shorelines. This species is also utilized in wastewater treatment plants. Nonnative Phragmites is extremely aggressive and can outcompete native species creating monoculture plant communities.

Common Reed can alter ecosystem processes such as hydrology, food webs, and reduce diversity. Lastly, Nonnative Phragmites negatively impacts recreational opportunities for the public.

In Minnesota, Nonnative Phragmites is relatively new and is not considered well established. The Minnesota DNR and the University of Minnesota have partnered together to monitor and



Figure 8. Nonnative Phragmites Flower Head

Photo Credit: Minnesota Department of Agriculture

treat any existing and new populations of Nonnative Phragmites throughout the State of Minnesota. So far, treatment efforts have been successful.

We need Le Sueur County residents to be on the lookout for Nonnative Phragmites! If you think you may have spotted Nonnative Phragmites, please document the location and if you can take pictures. Then let our Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, Carli Wagner, or the County's Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator, Holly Bushman, know as soon as possible! Our contact information can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Please note there is a Native Species of Phragmites in Minnesota, and it is easy to confuse the Native and Nonnative Species. It is better to report a potential Nonnative Phragmites population, than not to!



Figure 9. Stand of Nonnative Phragmites

Photo Credit: Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

If you would like to learn more about Minnesota's efforts to manage Nonnative Phragmites and see where the species is distributed throughout the State, please visit the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) website: <https://maisrc.umn.edu/phragmites>.

Contact Information

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To see which DNR staff is the Area Hydrologist for your region, please click on the following link:
https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/area_hydros.pdf