

JESSIE LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



JESSIE JABBER

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SPRING 2023

GREETINGS FROM PAST PRESIDENT HOLLISTER MADSEN

It's been a long winter this past year, lots of snow and cold weather, but it looks like spring is finally arriving! The ice on Jessie Lake is very dark and I expect it to disappear well before the fishing opener on 5/13. A new year always brings us opportunities to make changes and there are several I wanted to announce regarding JLWA.

We have a new President! Paul Christl has accepted the President's position, moving from his position as Director. Paul brings a wealth of experience and support to the association and we all offer him our full support (Paul also agreed to be our new webmaster, more details in a follow-up article).

Don Ojanen has decided to step down as Vice President after many years in that position and I wanted to thank Don for all his support over the years. Joe Durbak has accepted the Vice President position, moving from his previous position as a director and will also help strengthen our association in that spot. That leaves us with 2 Director and a Secretary position still open that we are actively looking to fill, if anyone of our members is interested, please let Paul, Joe or myself know and we will get in contact with you.

Our summer calendar events schedule is set and posted on our website (also in Board minutes below) and I want to encourage all our members to attend whenever they can, in order to meet their neighbors, share experiences and enjoy the natural beauty of the lakes. The Association plays a key role in providing resources to ensure issues in the Watershed are addressed. Contact us if you have any concerns or questions regarding your lake and surrounding area.

Again, I want to thank all who have supported JLWA this past year and looking forward to seeing everyone at the various events we have scheduled for this year.

JLWA WEBSITE UPDATE

We have our new website up and running, big thanks to Paul Christl, our new webmaster. Paul has extensive web experience and was instrumental in obtaining all our website records and images from Minnesota Waters, our previous web hosting service that went dark and our records were lost. Paul was able to find the data and transitioning it to our new hosting service, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers.

Our new website address is: <https://jessielake.mnlakesandrivers.org/> and if you have any input on the website content or suggestions for improvements, please contact Paul.

JLWA BOARD MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 17, 2023

Gin Anderson; Secretary

Attendees: Hollister Madsen, Craig Johnson, Will Layland, Joe Durbak, Don Ojanen, Paul Christl, Dave Anderson, Gin Anderson

Business Items:

Hollister opened the meeting.

Budget/Finance Update: Dave noted we have over \$9000 in our account. 2023 dues notices haven't been sent due to Gin and Dave being out of town. The Board agreed that dues will again be \$15 for members for this year. Dues will be sent out as soon as possible. Dave will draft the 2023 dues notice and send the draft to Board members for approval and/or suggested changes. Included on the dues

notice will be a notification that there are openings on the Board for the President, Vice President and Secretary positions.

JLWA Open Positions: In addition to including a blurb on the dues notice for soliciting volunteers for the open positions (President, Vice President, and Secretary), we agreed to send out a JLWA wide email requesting interest/volunteers, and also include it in the next Jabber. Hollister also will send out a copy of the JLWA Bylaws to the Board members so we all have an understanding of the process of appointing officers, etc. Hollister will also follow up with an individual who had expressed some interest in the Secretary position previously.

JLWA Website: Hollister and Paul worked together to get the new website up and going. The URL for the website is now: <http://jessielake.mnlakesanddrivers.org/> Paul agreed to continue to make updates and additions to the website going forward.

2023 JLWA Calendar or Activities:

- **Spring Road Side Clean up** – May 4th, at 5:00PM. As in the past, meet at Hollister's to get trash bags and section assignment. Following the cleanup, we will go to Rileys for burger night for those who care to join us. Don Ojanen will coordinate the event.
- **Fishing Contest** – June 26th. Will and Craig will work out the details. Where check in will be (Layland or Johnson dock). They will send details to Harold so he can include the information in he Spring Jabber.
- **Boat Parades – Jessie Lake** - July 1st^{at} 1 PM, Little Jessie – July 4. More details to come later.
- **Summer Picnic/Meeting** – July 22rd. Additional details to be published later.
- **Fall Meeting** – August 26th. Coffee 8:30 to 9:00. Meeting from 9:00 – 10:00. Additional details to follow.
- **Fall Roadside Clean Up** – Date to be determined.

Meeting was adjourned.

UPDATE ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

By Harold Goetzman

BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR DOCK AND LIFT FOR ZEBRA MUSSELS BEFORE INSTALLING IN OUR LAKES – USE A CERTIFIED FIVESTAR LAKE SERVICE PROVIDER. ALSO CHECK YOUR BOAT AND TRAILER. REMEMBER NO ONE ELSE IS GOING TO PROTECT YOUR LAKE FOR YOU. IT IS UP TO EACH OF US AND TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THERE IS NO CURE FOR AIS.

MN law requires keeping docks and lifts out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them into a different body of water. Make sure anyone you hire to put in a dock or lift has not been to an AIS infested lake (Sand Lake, Bowstring, North Star, Winnie) prior to a JLW lake unless the equipment has been properly cleaned. Please hire Five Star Service providers to keep AIS out.

For the 16 types of AIS, they are now found in over 8% of our Minnesota lakes and streams so you can see the magnitude of the invasive threat to our precious resources. A list of the MN infested waters for all types of AIS is given on the DNR website so you can check on a lake if you are fishing other lakes. As of April 8th this year, the DNR has listed confirmed Zebra Mussels in 237 lakes, rivers and wetlands. Another 194 bodies of water are listed because they are closely connected to confirmed lakes. There were 35 new cases of zebra mussels in MN lakes and streams for 2022. There were no new confirmed lakes with Zebra Mussels for Itasca County. There are 8 types of AIS found in Itasca County on 84 lakes with 25 of those having Zebra Mussels.

Zebra Mussels are now found in four of our big lakes including Red Lake, Mille Lacs, Leech and Winnie. Adult zebra mussels were found in Winnie in 2016 and now they are found everywhere in the

lake. The mussels filter algae out of the lake and that makes the water clarity increase. For Big Winnie, the water clarity increase has been rapid and astounding—more than doubling. Each of those little mussels can filter one to four liters of water per day. What effect the mussels will have on Winnie's great walleye fishing is unknown, but the ecosystem has definitely changed.

The first sighting of Starry Stonewort in MN was in 2015 and now there are 22 lakes infested. Four new lakes were infested in 2022 (not Itasca Co). Upper Red Lake and Winnie are already on the list for starry stonewort, which since the 2016 discovery in Winnie, the starry stonewort has been spreading fast and a big worry is the frequent travel between Winnie and nearby lakes. No successful treatment to stop the spread has been found. For 2022 there were no new lakes with Eurasian Watermilfoil, faucet snails or flowering rush in Itasca Co.

General

One of the best preventative measures for our lakes is to recommend that our residents try to avoid going to AIS infested lakes like Sand, Winnie, Red Lake and Bowstring. With the number of lakes available we can find good fishing other places. A list of AIS infested lakes is on the DNR website.

Also, we established an early detection program for zebra mussels in our JLWA lakes. I have made some simple pipe detectors to give to members to place under their dock during the summer season. Monitoring the pipe occasionally to check for small mussels that have attached to the surface is all that is required. So far no one having a detector reported anything, which is good. If you are interested in helping with early detection let me know by email (hgoetzman@yahoo.com) or call 832-3139.

SWCD AIS PROGRAM

The Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a local agency in Grand Rapids, which provides access to conservation and resource management services. In cooperation with federal, state and local agencies, the SWCD provides technical assistance, cost-sharing and natural resource management information and education. The SWCD AIS Coordinator, Bill Grantges, manages the Itasca County AIS program of about \$679,000. He can be contacted at 218 328 3095 if you have AIS questions. A report by Bill on AIS activities for 2022 can be found on the SWCD website.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have become a very real threat to our way of life in the northland. The Itasca County AIS Program was created to meet these threats. We all must do our part to help stop the spread of AIS. Everyone needs to take personal responsibility for not spreading AIS.

Prevention Program

By Bill Grantges, AIS Program Coordinator, SWCD

The AIS prevention program includes the watercraft inspection and decontamination at public water accesses. During the 2023 summer months there will be 28 inspectors and many volunteers (113 in 2022) carrying out boat inspections. This activity in 2022 totaled over 27,000 boat inspections and 504 decontaminations completed at 34 landings on 18 lakes. About 1.3% of the boats inspected had drain plug violations (plugs not removed). The County now has 5 decontamination units (4 mobile and 1 stationary) that were used during the summer by the County to travel to various landings for use during inspections. Contaminated boats are washed with heated water that will kill the Zebra Mussels. Also, there are decontamination units located at Deer Lake and Wabana landings that have been purchased by their Lake Associations. AIS inspectors were also present at major fishing tournaments in Itasca County. The County AIS crew inspected boats at the Jessie Lake landing last summer and no infested boats or trailers were discovered. Watercraft decontamination is a free service provided by the Itasca County AIS Program. Anyone who is concerned about the potential of carrying an invasive species on or in their watercraft or any other piece of equipment like a used dock, boat lift or swim platform can request decontamination. It is now known that pontoons, docks and lifts that are purchased from people on infested waters and transported to non-infested lakes are one of the highest causes of Zebra

Mussel spread. Adult Zebra Mussels attached inside the pipes or hidden areas are far more likely to get established in new waters than the veligers in residual water of boats and trailers. The main thing is allowing used docks and lifts to dry for 21 days before installing in a new body of water following Minnesota state law.

Control and Monitoring Program

By Chris Evans, AIS Specialist, SWCD

The Itasca SWCD will, again in 2023, have a four-person AIS Control & Monitoring crew that will be focusing on invasive species early detection surveys and rapid response management projects on over 75 lakes and rivers in Itasca County. This crew will be continuing to implement biological, mechanical, and chemical (herbicide) control measures for Purple Loosestrife, Flowering Rush, and Curly Leaf Pondweed on approximately 61 waterbodies where management projects are already established. Four new lakes with Purple Loosestrife were treated and will be checked this summer. As time allows, many of the higher profile / high risk lakes in the area will be surveyed twice during the season; once in the summer and once in the fall

The Itasca SWCD AIS Control & Monitoring program will continue to perform early detection surveys in search of all invasive plants and animals on the lakes and rivers of Itasca County (including Jessie and Little Jessie) that have been classified as the highest risk for an AIS introduction. Also, Zebra Mussel Veliger Settlement Samplers (Zebra Mussel Traps or early detection samplers) will again be placed near the public accesses of Jessie and Little Jessie in 2023. During removal in the fall, they will be inspected for Zebra Mussels.

There was one new discovery of Zebra Mussels in the Canisteo Mine Pit near Coleraine this year. As Zebra Mussels have been recently discovered in Little Jessie Lake (2021), we will be paying special attention and closely monitoring that population for any spread or signs of reproduction within that system as well continuing to intensively survey surrounding bodies of water for any pioneer introductions of the invasive mussels. It was found that the Zebra Mussel population in Bowstring Lake has really grown as almost every vegetation sample taken was covered with juvenile mussels.

Zebra Mussel Veliger settlement plates will also be placed in inconspicuous areas near the public accesses of approximately 35 lakes in the county that are not yet infested. There are also plans to collect plankton samples from upwards of 20 of those lakes in an attempt to detect the presence of Veligers suspended in the water column.

Many of the waterbodies that are high on our priority list for early detection surveys are in within, or in close proximity to, the Jessie Lake watershed area. For any specific information on the 2023 Operating Plan for the AIS Control & Monitoring Crew, please contact Chris Evans at chris.evans@itascaswcd.org or (218)328-4701.

JESSIE LAKE WATER QUALITY 2022

By Matt Gutzmann, Itasca SWCD

This was the 25th consecutive year that water quality samples have been taken for Jessie Lake! This is a great milestone that only a few lakes in the entire state have accomplished; and it is thanks to amazing volunteers that have a deep love and aspiration for ensuring excellent water for generations to come. Looking at the water quality data, there are three main things that we look at to get an idea of the water quality of a lake: phosphorus, chlorophyll-a (algae), and Secchi disc readings (water clarity). Basically, algae use phosphorus as food to grow, and more algae usually means less water clarity. It's all related to each other. Compared to the last 20 years, 2022 had average phosphorus, but more algae (particularly in August). Water clarity was also on par with the 20-year average, though the numbers suggest a decline in water clarity.

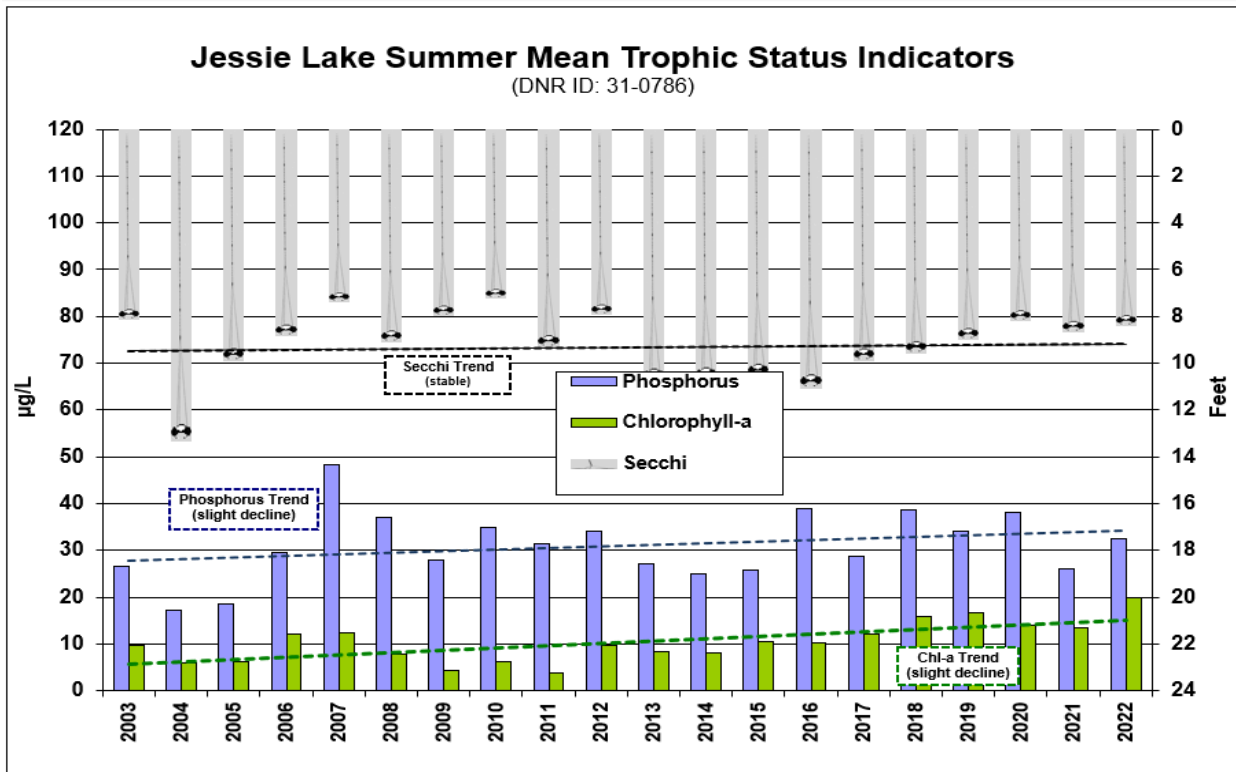


Figure 1 - 20-year trends in Jessie Lake 2002-2022

When comparing the history of water sampling on Jessie Lake from its first sample in 1986 through 2022, the trends of phosphorus, algae and water clarity are relatively stable. However, focusing on the last 10 years, all three of these markers show some decline in water quality. It’s important to note that there are many factors that can affect these levels like snowfall, rain, temperatures and even wind. While people can’t change the weather, they can have a large impact to reduce runoff from their yard into the lake- a big reason how phosphorus gets into the lake. One reason why having this collection of data year after year is so helpful- it keeps track of the trend. Any single sample, or single year, won’t give that full picture of changes in the lake. The Jessie Lake Watershed Association has an amazing group of members that care about these waters. A lot of small changes can have a great impact on water quality, and starting small with less mowing and planting some plants and grasses by the lake shore can be a great start! Thank you JLWA and keep up the great work!

**5th ANNUAL JLWA NORTHERN FISHING CONTEST
NOTHING BUT NORTHERNS” FISHING TOURNAMENT**

(Nothing counts except Northerns)

WHEN: JUNE 24, 2023

WHERE: JESSIE LAKE

TIME: 10am – 3pm (Rain or shine). Weigh-in at Will Layland’s dock located at the north end of Jessie Lake two docks south of Rising Eagle Resort. Tournament Host(s) will not be held liable for any death or injuries incurred. This is a casual tournament. Follow Minnesota DNR fishing regulations for slot size and limit. Rules also say no wanton waste so all game fish must be cleaned or given away and besides the Northern is a delicious eating game fish.

WHO: Open to all JLWA members and their families. No entry fees! No registration! Just go fish!

PRIZES: Largest Northern by weight, Smallest Northern by weight, Heaviest stringer (10 fish limit) of Northern, first Northern registered and last Northern registered. A digital scale that measures in

ounces will be used for weighing. **All Northerns count** – even dead ones – as long as they resemble a Northern at one time. Any Northern registered qualifies for door prizes. Also, there will be prizes for kids. The Judges decisions are final!

RSVP: craig.johnson11@arvig.net if you plan on attending.

MAINTAINING DESIRABLE PANFISH

By Dave Weitzel, DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor

Walleye may be the state fish, but sunfish, crappie and perch are the most common fish harvested by anglers. Panfish are often easy to catch and can be taken with a variety of tactics. These fish are found throughout the area and provide great year-round action and harvest opportunities.

Panfish angling can be a very simple activity, but for many anglers, improved technologies and access to fast moving information have changed their approach to angling. In the old days, it was common to learn of a hot bite only after fishing had slowed down. “You should have been here last week,” was often the response from the clerk at the bait store. Today, anglers often read of a hot bite on a social media site at the very moment it’s occurring. Anglers also have better boats, gear, and electronics. Ice anglers often have more reliable transportation, better fish houses for extended trips, improved augers, improved electronics, and better tackle options. The possibilities seem endless, but the fisheries resource is still subject to the same natural limitations. Today, the resource is under more pressure than ever, especially when fishing is good.

The good news is that panfish are resilient and populations can support relatively high harvest. However, a population shift from producing moderate numbers of large fish to higher numbers of smaller fish often occurs with high harvest. In fact, participants in a University of Minnesota survey agreed that the quality of panfish in Minnesota has declined. A lake can only support so many pounds of fish and that could be a lot of small fish, a few large fish, or some combination. Populations tend to produce as many pounds as possible. This is called carrying capacity.

Many anglers believe small fish should be released to “grow up”, while large fish should be harvested. Unfortunately, this is the wrong line of thinking. Fish grow slowly in Minnesota, so large fish are often removed faster than they can be replaced. Often, the void that is created by the removal of large fish is filled with young fish. While this is a great way to ensure high fish numbers, the size declines as these small fish compete for food and space. Often, these fish will spawn at an earlier age and smaller size to maximize their reproductive potential. Unfortunately, the energy needed for spawning is diverted from growth, resulting in the population having poorer size structure. Once a size structure shift has occurred, it can be difficult to improve it. A better approach is to reduce harvest on lakes that currently support quality panfish.

Catch and release of panfish is often beneficial and a released fish may be caught and shared several times. Survival rates for fish are often high so long as the fish are captured from relatively shallow water. The exception may be when fishing in deep water. When fish are caught from deeper water, they undergo a pressure change that causes gases in their bodies to expand and cause harm. When fish are caught from depth over 25 feet, barotrauma can lead to higher mortality of released fish. Crappie have a tendency of concentrating in deep basins during the fall and winter. When fishing at these depths, it is a good practice to keep what you catch and stop fishing once you have a desirable number for a meal or reach your legal limit.

On some lakes, the DNR has implemented special regulations to reduce panfish harvest so size structure can be maintained or enhanced. These regulations go through public input processes prior to implementation and require angler support. Anglers can help maintain quality panfish, even in lakes without a special regulation by voluntarily limiting their harvest of larger panfish. Anglers are encouraged to only take what they need for a meal or two. If keeping a lot of panfish is desired, harvest smaller ones as they are easier to replace. For example, a good rule of thumb for sunfish

would be to keep no more than 5 fish over 8 inches. Anglers may also consider harvesting some alternative species when a fish fry is desired. Small bass, pike, and even rock bass are good eating and very renewable, but less commonly harvested. Anglers should distribute their take over more lakes instead of making multiple trips to the same lake. Minnesota can still produce high quality panfish, but only if anglers consider the impacts of their actions.

HOW TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY!

By Matt Gutzmann, Itasca SWCD, Water Resources Specialist

Have you ever wondered what causes the water to turn green-colored, especially as it gets later in the summer? It's algae, which are like little, tiny specs of plants without a structure as found in other plants and aquatic vegetation. If you've been to Jessie Lake in July or August, you're probably familiar with this situation.

People often ask if it's bad to have algae in lakes. Well, it can be. It's normal to have some algae in lakes. There are tons of small water critters that rely on algae as their food source including tadpoles, fish, crayfish, and other little bugs and insects- these are food for the bigger fish that many folks enjoy catching every year! Too much algae, however, can cause issues. As algae levels grow, and the water gets greener, it prevents sunlight from getting into the water. The vegetation in the lake (aka "weeds") are just like plants on land: they need sunlight to grow and they give off oxygen, which is used by fish and other lake bugs and insects. Less sunlight causes less lake vegetation, which leaves less oxygen for things that live in the lake.

So, what causes algae to grow? Phosphorus is a chemical that causes algae to grow. One pound of phosphorus can grow 500 pounds of algae! While some amounts of phosphorus can be natural, a lot of the phosphorus that gets to the lake is due to runoff from lawns. If too much phosphorus gets into the water, things like blue-green algae blooms can happen and these can be toxic, especially to pets. These algae blooms often have a foul smell and there's not really a cure for the bloom besides waiting for the wind to get stronger or change directions. Prevention is the key.

There are some basic things property owners can do to reduce the amount of phosphorus that gets into the lake (and a lot more if you're willing to put in some time and effort!). First, avoid using fertilizer on your lawn. If you feel you must use something, look at percentages of fertilizer and use one that has "0/0/0" on the label, which means it will have no phosphorus, nitrogen, or potassium. Second, cut down on your mowing. Leaving your grass longer helps "catch" water runoff while it rains, which prevents phosphorus (often attached to dirt and soil particles) from entering the lake. This also helps the water soak into the ground better. Long vegetation is even more important closer to shore, so avoiding cutting plants and grasses 10 to 25 or even 50ft from the shoreline will have a great benefit to the water quality. Third, planting shrubs and other plants or a rain garden can further reduce the water runoff into the lake. Certain plants can also have an added benefit of being a pollinator to improve the bee community!

If you are interested in a project on your property that might reduce erosion or improve water quality, our SWCD office might be able to help pay for part of your project. Call our office for more information at **218-326-5573**. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns about water quality!

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR). Membership support of MLR is necessary to help meet its water quality goals and provide a statewide association that is the largest and most effective water group in the state. Lake associations are part of the largest, most generous and most committed conservation/angling group in Minnesota, contributing about \$6.25 million towards lake work collectively, about 1.2 million volunteer hours to protect the public waters and almost \$400K for

annual fish stocking. There are over 300,000 lake home and cabin properties in Minnesota, but less than half of one percent join MLR. The impact of MLR in fulfilling the mission to protect Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations could be much larger with more members and you can join as an individual in addition to the JLWA member. Look into it.

DNR Webinar Series. The second DNR webinar was held on April 26 on fish hatcheries. The Minnesota DNR has a large system of cold-water hatcheries that provide 1.7 million trout each year for stocking into 200 lakes and 100 streams throughout the state. Meredith Warmuth, DNR fish hatchery specialist, shared information on the components of the hatchery system, how the hatcheries benefit trout fishing in Minnesota and how you can tour these facilities.

The webinars are part of the DNR's Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series. The webinars are free, but registration is required. More information is available on the outdoor skills and stewardship page of the [DNR website \(mndnr.gov/discover\)](http://mndnr.gov/discover).

Global Warming. In 2022, the world's oceans hit the warmest temperature on record for the fourth year in a row. This is a striking indication of the long-term pattern of human caused climate change. Ocean surface temperatures have a major impact on the world's weather, Warmer oceans are linked to more extreme hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, heavy rains and flooding.

ATV Safety. In the past 6 years, an average of 22 people have died each year in off-road vehicles. During that time, the number of ATV's registered in MN has risen from 428,060 to 510,383 a 19% increase. The majority of the drivers that died have not completed the state ATV safety training. Also, many did not have helmets and the law says those under 18 need to wear helmets.

Water Monitoring Program. The Volunteer Water Monitoring Program has been active for 50 years since it was first started by the University of Minnesota in 1973. The program was transferred to the MPCA in 1978 and primarily involves taking Secchi disk readings ten times during the summer months. I have been doing it for the past 25 years on Jessie Lake.

Lake Tahoe. Researchers now report that Lake Tahoe is the clearest it's been in 40 years—and it's thanks to tiny zooplankton that gobble up the particles that make the water cloudy. Secchi reading was 80 feet at the end of last year.

Youth Water Summit. The popular Youth Water Summit for Itasca County fifth grade students is back for the second year after a two-year absence. The summit will take place at the County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids on May 23rd for kids from Bigfork, Deer River, Coleraine and Grand Rapids. Volunteers are needed that day for various tasks such as helping to direct the groups of ten to the various educational exhibits. For more information, or to help out, contact the sponsor Itasca Waters at info@itascawaters.org.

Quotable. "Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late." Benjamin Franklin

DID YOU KNOW?

By Harold Goetzman

- Jessie Lake is the 18th largest lake in Itasca County.
- Birds are facing an unprecedented crisis as there are 3 billion fewer birds in North America now than in 1970.
- A recent study estimated 365 million birds are killed annually by building collisions and glass surfaces. Birds need clues on or around glass to warn them that it's there.
- Hummingbirds can fly a thousand miles without food or rest.
- Global warming is making flowers bloom out of sync with the hummingbird's arrival from migration putting them at risk for starvation. They rely on flowers along their migration route.

- Earth's 9 warmest years have occurred during the past 9 years. Europe had the hottest summer on record in 2022.
- This year (2022-2023) the snowfall in Grand Rapids was the third highest on record going back to 1904. We had 109.2 inches of snow compared to the 78-inch average. The most was in 1951-52 at 132 inches and 2013-14 was the second most. Duluth set a new snowfall record.
- The ice went out on Jessie Lake on May 6th, which is 13 days later than the average of 4/23. Last year the ice went out May 9th, about 5 days before fishing opener.
- Our JLWA website (<http://jessielake.mnlakesanddrivers.org/>) is updated regularly by our Webmaster Paul Crystl with meeting notices and the latest issue of the Jabber. Please note that this is a **new** website.

MEMBERSHIP

If you have not paid your 2023 dues, please send your \$15 to David Anderson, 19710 Hunters Ridge, Rogers, MN 55374.

CLIP AND SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Our JLWA website is --- www.minnesotawaters.org/Jessielakewatershed		
<u>JLWA OFFICERS</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>
President – Paul Crystl	701 729 2351	paulrrhg@gmail.com
Vice President – Joe Durback	256 337 6828	joedurback@yahoo.com
Treasurer – David Anderson	218 832 3351	theandersons7@comcast.net
Acting Secretary – Virginia Anderson	763 227 6345	theandersons7@comcast.net
Past President – Hollister Madsen	218 832 3551	hollistermadsen@gmail.com
<u>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</u>		
Craig Johnson	218 832 2711	craig.johnson11@arvig.net
Will Layland	763 438 5816	antlers333111@yahoo.com
Open-Two Positions		
<u>JABBER EDITOR</u>		
Harold Goetzman	218 326 3908	hgoetzman@yahoo.com
<u>WEBMASTER</u>		
Paul Crystl	701 729 2351	Paulrrhg@Gmail.com