

From Shore to Shore

For Minnesota citizens promoting the health of our rivers & lakes

July 2004

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

#59

Calendar of Events

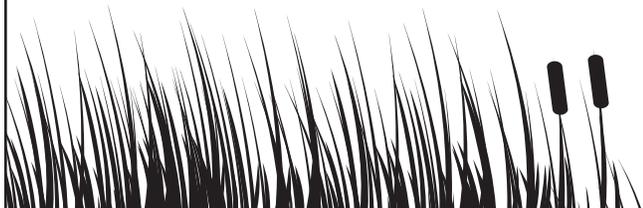
→ Maintenance for Shoreland Reveg. Workshops
July 9, 2004 – Ideal Township Hall (burke004@umn.edu), \$25
July 23, 2004 – Grand Rapids (218-326-1130), \$25

→ Aquatic Plant Identification Workshops
July 15-16, 2004 – Eden Prairie Environmental Learning Center and Bush Lake (651-480-7700), \$35
July 19-20, 2004 – Alexandria, Douglas County Extension Office (320-589-1711), \$35

→ Wetland Plant Identification Workshops
July 30-31, 2004 – Eagan, Lebanon Hills Visitor Center (651-480-7700), \$35
August 5-6, 2004 – Nisswa Community Center (burke004@umn.edu), \$35

→ Stormwater Wetlands: A Better Approach to Stormwater Treatment
July 13, 2004 – 6:30 pm – Osakis Community Center
Presenter Peter MacDonagh from Kestral Design Group (320-352-223, for more information), No cost

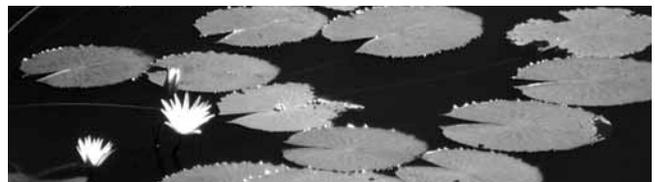
For more details of these and other shoreland workshops, including registration options and fees, visit www.extension.umn.edu/water/shore/.



You Can Help Stop the Threat of Aquatic Invasive Species

There has been a lot of media attention lately on the spread of invasive plants and animals in Minnesota and the threats posed to our landscapes, lakes and way of life. Governor Tim Pawlenty proclaimed June Invasive Species Awareness Month to highlight the importance of fighting invasive pests. The University of Minnesota, Minnesota Sea Grant, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other agencies, organizations, and citizens are working to control the numerous invasive species already established here, and slow or stop new invasives from entering our state.

Awareness is key in helping fight the invasive species battle. A new project coordinated by the Minnesota Sea Grant Program focuses on awareness of aquatic invasive plant species and how shoreland owners, water gardeners, landscape contractors and garden centers can help stop their introduction and spread across the state. As part of this effort, a survey has been developed to assess current awareness of aquatic invasive species and aid in development of practical and effect educational materials. If you are a shoreland owner, water gardener, Master Gardener, or are simply interested in shoreland restoration or water gardening, you are invited to participate in this project by completing the short survey, which can be easily accessed at www.shorelandmanagment.org/survey. If you prefer, hard copies are available from Eleanor Burkett (888) 241-0720 or Barb Liukkonen (612) 625-9256. A stamped, return envelope will be included for your convenience. ■



A Conservation Easement May Be the Option for You

Submitted by: John Steward, Leech Lake Watershed Project & Foundation, Coordinator, (218) 547-1770, john.steward@dnr.state.mn.us

So, you are a shoreland owner in the Land of 10,000 Lakes. We do love our Minnesota lake property don't we? This only makes sense, as great times happen here. Experiences like catching your first largemouth bass, bagging a brace of mallards on the perfect foggy morning, or watching your granddaughter discover nature's wonders along the same shoreline you did when you were young, turn into powerful memories and form Minnesota's lake heritage. Our lake heritage may be under threat. Minnesota is being discovered as a high-amenity resource state and is undergoing tremendous development pressure. Many landowners are concerned with maintaining their property in a relatively undeveloped state. How does a landowner protect his or her cherished land for the long term?

One answer is placement of a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legal document in which a landowner retains title to a given property, while voluntarily restricting uses of the property. A conservation organization is designated to monitor and enforce the use restrictions for a given term or in perpetuity. As a result, present owners of a parcel can better assure cherished lands may be passed onto future generations to enjoy as they did.

There are many kinds of land easements commonly used for purposes like private and public roadways and forest roads, water flowage ditches, gas pipelines, electrical power and telecommunication lines, recreational trails, railroads, and hunting or fishing use easements. Land ownership comes with a bundle of rights, an easement; such as mentioned above may represent one stick in the bundle for a property. So for example, if a road easement is sold or conveyed to a township, the township holds the right to use that parcel for roadway purposes via its ownership of the easement. So too, if a lakeshore or woodlot owner is concerned about conserving their property, they may donate and/or sell an easement to a conservation-minded private non-profit organization such as the Minnesota Land Trust or the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation. Also, conservation easements may be donated to public agencies, such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, for management.

Conservation easements are a relatively new tool for Minnesota, but are growing in use by private landowners to meet their conservation goals. Each easement is different and is driven by the landowner who controls the direction of the project. For instance, a person with natural shoreline may choose to reserve one cabin site for future needs, placing a no build easement restriction on the balance of the area, as they never plan to build on it. Other



benefits may include: development of a property management plan, aid in estate planning, and potential tax deductions (consult your tax adviser). Timing is important in an easement project. There may be an advantage to when you complete your action in regard to taxes, estate planning, property taxes, health, residency, funding its sale, and more.

Such projects make excellent partnerships with lake association conservation committees, County Soil and Water Districts (SWCD), or the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation (LLAWF). Completed easement projects may be found in lake-rich counties of Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Hubbard and beyond. Some landowners can afford to donate a no-build easement on an undeveloped portion of property while others would like to but cannot afford it. This is where a purchase/donation option may be of interest. Also, more information about recently-completed easement projects by the Leech Lake Watershed Project & Foundation is available to those considering an easement project (by client permission).

Conservation easements are an emerging and powerful lake management tool and are a great option for land-owners to consider in their plans for the future of their property. All decisions are the landowners' to make. And if you move forward, chances are you are conserving the same place you or one of the kids landed that first bucketmouth bass by the brush tangle near the white cedar clump!

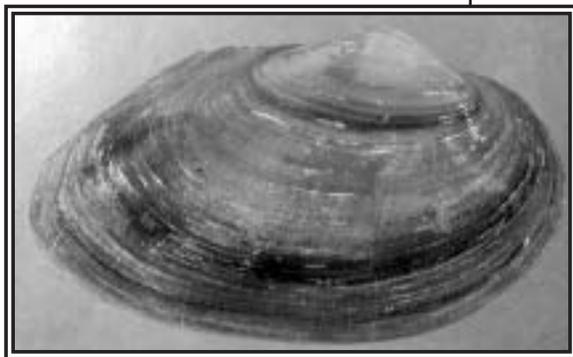
For more information about conservation easements, contact your county or state conservation office. Technical assistance and information may be available from different sources depending upon what county your property is located, including sources like: County SWCD, LLAWF, lake associations, MN DNR, Minnesota Land Trust, etc., or the Leech Lake Watershed Project & Foundation. Also, *Land Protection Options - A Handbook for Minnesota Landowners*, is available online at the Minnesota Land Trust Web site: www.mnland.org. ■

Nice Mussels!

Submitted by: Sharon Moen, Minnesota Sea Grant Program

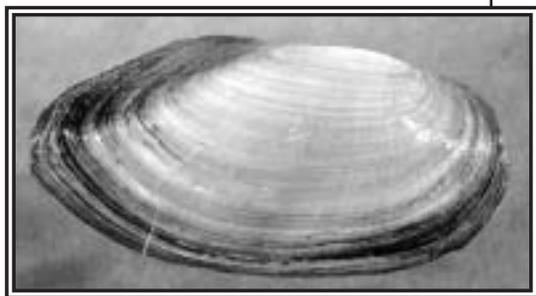
Unlike zebra mussels, most mussels make quiet, interesting, lovely neighbors. Mussels are found on every continent except Antarctica. Freshwater mussels are most diverse in eastern North America, where there are about 300 species (Europe only has 12 species). But they are one of the most endangered groups of animals in North America; about 71 percent of known species and subspecies are listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern. Common native mussels that you might encounter in your lake include:

Giant Floater (*Pyganodon grandis*)



Fatmucket (*Lampsilis siliquoidea*)

Paper Pondshell (*Utterbackia imbecillis*)



Eastern Elliptio (*Elliptio complanata*)

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Why Are Lakes So Variable?

Excerpted From: MN Shoreland Management Resource Guide

Some of the most important causes of differences among lakes include the lake's size and shape, what activities occur in the lands that drain into it, what *ecoregion* the lake is located in, and when and how the lake basin was formed. These factors, acting in various combinations, have created the multitude of lake types found in Minnesota today.

Minnesota lies at a crossroads of ecological land types, with widespread differences in soils, underlying geology, and plant and animal communities. These differences are classified into *ecoregions*, or broad areas that share similar land uses, soils, topography, and vegetation. Minnesota is classified into seven ecoregions. Ninety-eight percent of Minnesota's lakes occur in just four of them: Northern Lakes and Forests, North Central Hardwood Forests, Western Corn Belt Plains, and Northern Glaciated Plains.

Lakes within ecoregions often have similar physical characteristics, water chemistry, and biological communities. The number, appearance, and condition of lakes vary among ecoregions because of glacial history, geology, soil type, land use, and climate. You can learn more about this subject at the MN Shoreland Management Resource Guide Web site (www.shorelandmanagement.org) or from the MN Pollution Control Agency at www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/reports/lqr-analysisregionalpatterns.pdf.



Excerpted from MN Shoreland Management Resource Guide Web Site – Quick and Easy Answers – Ecoregion Influences on Lakes (www.shorelandmanagement.org/quick/). ■

The Outdoor Corps

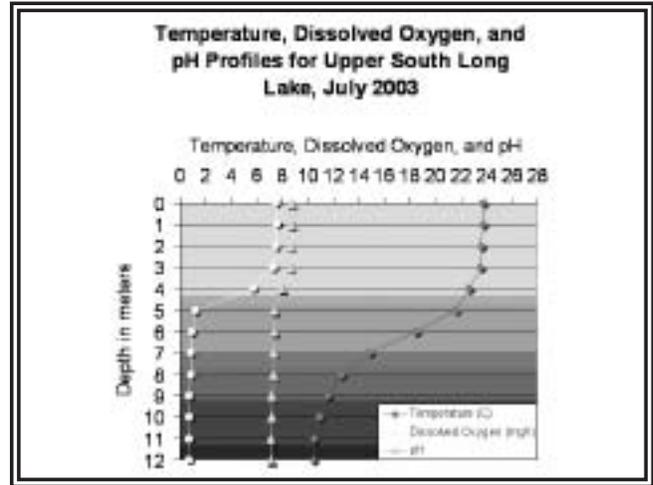
Submitted by: Kent Montgomery, University of Minnesota Extension Service, (888) 241-0720

Why does our lake get murky during the fall? Has curly leaf pondweed made it into our lake? How do we get more young people involved in our lake association? If you have asked yourself any of these questions, you may find the answer in the Outdoor Corps program.

The Outdoor Corps, a University of Minnesota Extension Service program, assists high school students in providing environmental stewardship services for their communities. Students participating in the program are trained in limnology and water sampling protocol and armed with industry-standard equipment. These students then contract with lake associations to monitor water quality within their lake. Typical services include sampling a variety of water quality parameters throughout the summer, such as lake profiles and measures of total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a concentrations, which are processed at a certified laboratory. Sampling results are shared with lake associations through oral presentations, written reports, and a program Web site.



Through the Outdoor Corps, local students provide important sampling services for lake associations.



This is an example of the kind of lake information gathered by Outdoor Corps students.

Outdoor Corps students also manage the program budget and make financial decisions throughout the summer. Their budget typically includes salary (students are paid for their participation), mileage, and laboratory analysis fees. Through their participation in the program, students are able to explore careers in natural resources, apply their math and science to real-world settings, learn the basics of operating a small business, work with a variety of community members, and become more-informed consumers of natural resources.

This program not only addresses youth development issues (safe and healthy opportunities to explore careers and experience personal growth), but also provides invaluable services to shoreline property owners in Minnesota. Sampling results, interpretation, and recommendations provided to area lake associations by the students lead lake members to a better understanding of how their lake functions and its overall health, and presumably greater stewardship of their common resource.

The Outdoor Corps is currently operating in Benton, Cass, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, and Stearns County. For more information about the Outdoor Corps program contact, Kent Montgomery at (888) 241-0720. ■

wrc.coafes.umn.edu

www.seagrants.umn.edu

www.extension.umn.edu

www.shorelandmanagement.org



Shore to Shore is made possible by Minnesota Sea Grant, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center.

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