



SYBIL LAKE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024 Issue

Mostly mild temps and little snow this winter gave way to beautiful early spring weather. And before you know it it's mid-May. The loons are back, most docks and lifts in the water, great weather for the fishing opener, and Memorial Day weekend a few weeks away. Lake season is upon us! Whatever your idea of a perfect lake day is, here's wishing you many of them filled with sunshine, calm water, cool breezes, friends and family! Enjoy!

EARLY ICE OUT

Official ice out on Sybil this year was April 4th. The winner of this year's "Guess the Ice out Day" competition was John Reike, now officially the 2024 Ice King. Seen here receiving the crown from 2023 Queen Chris Kruger. Heavy is the head that wears the crown John, we're sure you're up to the title!



4TH OF JULY BOAT PARADE

Decorate your watercraft and join your friends and lake neighbors for the 4th of July boat parade! We'll start at **12:00 pm at the point at Bylanders** and make our way around Sybil. Gather whoever is at your place and join the parade or enjoy from shore.

OTTERTAIL COUNTY COLA

The Sybil Lake Association is a long time member of the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations. The purpose of OTC COLA is to "facilitate cooperation among member lake and river associations and to assist in fostering wise use of the lake and river areas in Ottertail County." By joining together with other Otter Tail County lake associations we have access to information and resources to protect and preserve Sybil. OTC COLA has monthly meetings and publishes a monthly newsletter that contains valuable information on lake health. Engaged and informed lake property owners are key to lake stewardship. OTC COLA upcoming meetings are June 20th, July 18th and August 15th at the Otter Tail Community Center at 7:00 pm. OTC COLA newsletters are available by scanning the QR code.

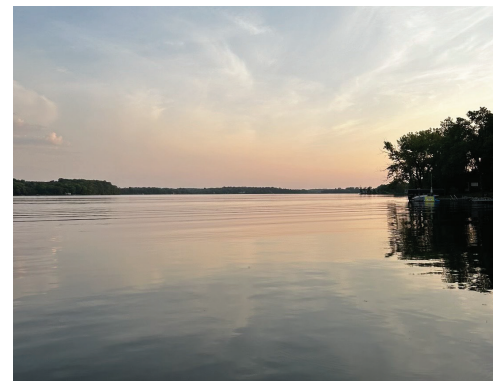
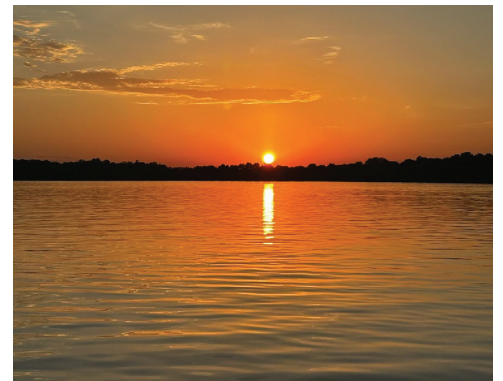


LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

An engaged and informed lake association benefits everyone. One of the best ways to keep up with all things Sybil is by attending the Sybil Lake Association Annual Meeting. The 2024 lake association annual meeting will be:

June 22, 9:00 am at the Vergas Community Center.

It's a great opportunity to connect with lake neighbors, engage in conversation, and learn how we can work together to keep Sybil the wonderful place we all love and enjoy.



POWER LOADING

Power loading damages boat ramps!

What is power loading?

Power loading is what it's called when you use the boat motor to load and unload a boat onto and off a trailer. Power loading can damage your boat, motor and trailer, as well as the launch ramp and lakebed.

Why is power loading a problem?

Trying to load or unload your boat using engine power can erode sediment and dig large and hazardous holes at the base of the ramp. The eroded sediment creates a mound behind the propeller. Trailer tires can get stuck in these holes, and boats can run aground on the mound. It results in a barrier for both launching and loading. Boats and equipment can incur costly damage when boaters unknowingly back trailer wheels into the hole, damaging their trailer frames on the submerged ramps or getting the trailer stuck in the hole. When this happens, a tow truck may be the only option to retrieve the trailer and the vehicle attached to it. The boat or lower unit can run aground on the mound. In extreme cases, the end of the launch ramp can collapse, leaving it unusable and causing the access to be closed. Most of Minnesota's public launch ramps were not designed to sustain the forces of power loading generated by today's larger and more powerful boats. Repairs by DNR crews are costly and time consuming.

What you can do.

Always check the end of the ramp for power loading holes and mounds before launching, especially in low water level conditions. You may not be able to see holes from the surface of the water.

Don't race your boat motor while on the ramp. Slightly more than idle speed should be all that is necessary to load or unload the boat.

Instead of power loading, use the trailer winch to load and unload your boat.

Back in just far enough that your boat starts to float - you don't need to back in so far that the boat floats entirely off the trailer.

Consider using smaller watercraft or going to a different launch ramp if the water is too shallow.



SYBIL LAKE

A beautiful lake, a beautiful woman.

Legend has it that when Civil war veteran George Adelbert Parker brought his wife Sybil to the shore of the lake, she said to him, "it's beautiful." "As you are he replied, I want it to be named Lake Sybil." No one can be certain that it happened just like that but it's a nice story and there's no good reason not to believe it. What is documented is an article written by Mrs. Peter Pfeiffer, daughter of one of the first to settle on the lake. The following is a direct quote from the Fergus Falls Daily Journal June 4, 1931. "In that same year, 1877, a Civil war veteran came and took a homestead on the shore of the beautiful body of water to which he gave the name of Sybil, after his wife; thus Lake Sybil received its name; also the trading post and post office. This man is still living and resides at Detroit Lakes, being none other than Geo. A. Parker one of two remaining Civil war veterans in Becker County." George joined the Union army at age 16 and fought in major battles of the war including Gettysburg. He came to Minnesota in the early 1870's. He settled first in Carver County. It was not clear where or when he married Sybil. He died at age 89 and is buried at Detroit Lakes. Sybil's life was short. After arriving at the lake in 1877, she did not live to make the 1880 census. It is not clear how she died, but there was a deadly strain of diphtheria in the late 1800's. Another influential family on the lake was the Etzell family. Edna township was named for their second child. Diphtheria hit their family hard. The following is a direct quote from the Norwood times May 3, 1894. "At Young America last Friday night Edna Etzell, of Dora, Otter Tail County, aged 14 years, died after a few hours illness, with what Dr. Grivelly terms black diphtheria. Her sister, Mrs. George Croft, aged but

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BALD EAGLES AN AMERICAN COMEBACK STORY

This spring I witnessed a bald eagle land on a tree near our shore and I was in awe of its size and beauty. It reminded me how fortunate we are to have these iconic symbols of America nesting and soaring over the Sybil Lakes. I don't think there's been a day in the last 5 to 10 years where I haven't seen these magnificent birds on Sybil. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota has the third largest bald eagle breeding population, following Alaska and Florida.

It's hard to believe, but eagle sightings in Minnesota and North America were very rare 50 years ago. I remember seeing my first bald eagle soar over the lake in the mid 1980's. It seemed almost spiritual at that time. Luckily, I was with someone else who also saw it floating overhead otherwise my family and friends would have thought I was seeing things.

According to the Minnesota DNR, prior to the settling of lakes country, there was an abundance of bald eagles in and around the area. As pioneers settled in and around Minnesota, birds of prey were generally considered "varmints" because they competed with people for use of fish and game species. Therefore, eagles and other raptors were poisoned, trapped, and hunted. In addition, somewhere in the 1940's, shortly after the introduction of the synthetic insecticide Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane, commonly known as DDT, the bald eagle population declined significantly throughout the lower 48 states.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, DDT was developed as the first of the modern synthetic insecticides in the 1940s. It was initially used very effectively to combat malaria, typhus, and the other insect-borne human diseases among military and civilian populations. It was also used for insect control in crop and livestock production, institutions, homes, and gardens. It was a widely used product back in the day.

However, the popular insecticide had unintended consequences. Residues from DDT found their way into streams, rivers, and lakes where it eventually contaminated fish and other organisms. When eagles ingested fish with DDT, the chemicals interfered with the ability of the birds to produce strong eggshells. As a result, their eggs had shells so thin that they often broke during incubation or failed to hatch. In time, fewer eaglets were being born. Many animals and other bird species also suffered declining populations from the effects of the insecticide.

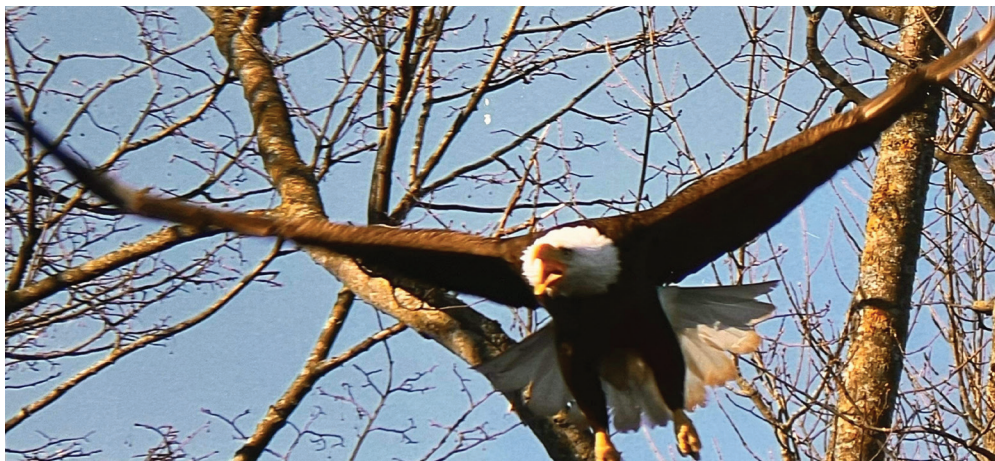
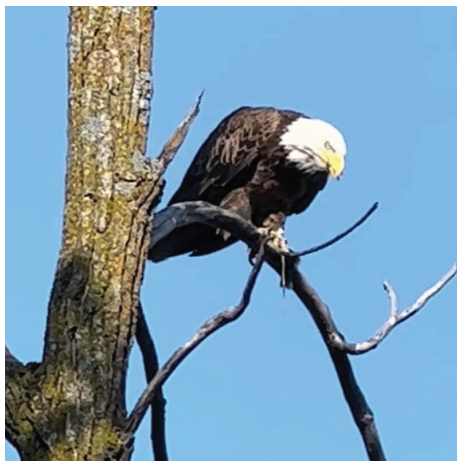
In the 1950's-60's, because of mounting evidence of the pesticide's declining benefits and environmental and toxicological effects, the U.S. Department of Agriculture started regulatory actions to prohibit many uses of DDT. In 1972 the United States banned DDT altogether.

In 1978 the U.S. added the bald eagle to the list of threatened and endangered species. Since the ban, bald eagle populations have started increasing nationwide. Thirty years after being listed as threatened, U.S. Fish and Wildlife surveys showed the raptors were making a strong comeback and the bald eagle was removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species. Although no longer considered endangered, bald eagles and their nests are still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

I often think back to the time nearly 40 years ago when I saw that first "spiritual" eagle soaring overhead. It reminds me of how fortunate we are that bald eagles, with the help of state and federal intervention and protection, were able to make a remarkable comeback.

See you on the lake.

-Marv Leier



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about 16 years and married a year ago, was taken down with the malady and followed her sister to the grave. The remains were buried without a public funeral, no person being allowed to go near the house or place of affliction, to even prepare the corpses in the usual way for last rites." "To make matters more serious the girls' mother Mrs, Geo. Ezzell at Dora, is lying at the point of death, and a telegram to that effect came for her daughters when they were being put in the grave."

The mother survived and had a long life and is buried at the Vergas cemetery. Another daughter, Jennie May Ezzell died at 2 years old in 1887 and is buried at the Sybil Lake cemetery.

Her cause of death is unknown. It seems likely that Sybil suffered a similar fate to Edna. Died suddenly and was buried promptly. That brings up another legend. When we bought our lot almost 30 years ago, we were approached by the previous owner of the land. We were starting to clear weeds and brush, and he wanted to inform us that a grave site existed on our lot, and he wanted to make sure that it was not disturbed. He was able to find the site near the edge of a wooded area. Over the course of more than 100 years it was partially covered by grass and other weeds, but there was clearly an unnatural pile of rocks. We were told that Sybil is buried there. I have taken the role of grounds keeper ever since keeping the wooded area from encroaching while adding flowers and a bench with RIP Sybil on it. I owe a debt of gratitude to the late Larry Modrow for his determination to make sure the site was not disturbed. If he hadn't it may have been lost and forgotten. I think he would be pleased to see how it is maintained now. This legend cannot be proven with certainty either although the Otter Tail County history library does have a record of more than one private grave site in the area. No names are given for them though. I choose to believe that Sybil is buried there. It gives closure to what must have been a tragic end to Sybil's life. She lies in peace overlooking the beautiful lake named for her. Neither lost or forgotten.

-John Einhorn



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LAKE STEWARD PROGRAM



The **Lake Steward Program** with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates works with lake associations to award property owners that protect lake health through land management. Improving water quality is a community goal that can be achieved when each individual recognizes the need to protect water quality and acts to align their property management with practices that sustain a healthy environment.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates protects Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates, and policy makers.



Allow Native Plants and Vegetation to Flourish - Provide a 25 Foot Buffer Zone

The "buffer zone" of a property, the area from the waterline up towards the home or cabin, is crucial to the health and protection of a lake. The more native plants, grasses, trees and shrubs that grow in the buffer zone, the greater the filtration of runoff pollution and the greater the stabilization of the shoreline. Mowed lawn from the upland zone to the waterline causes seven to nine times the amount of runoff to reach the lake. A shoreline buffer of 25 feet or more creates an effective natural barrier to pollution carried in rainwater runoff. Taller vegetation allows for a stronger root system to develop and creates a sustainable, natural filter for rainwater runoff. A great way to protect lake health is to simply stop mowing a lawn 25 feet or more up from the waterline. "Don't Mow, Let it Grow" is a great first step to protecting lake health and water quality in Minnesota.



Maintain Septic Systems According to Best Management Practices

It is recommended that septic system maintenance occurs every one to three years. If a septic system malfunctions and leaks, lakes and rivers can become severely contaminated by the waste. Be sure to inspect a septic system every one to three years and contact your local septic system professional immediately in the case of a septic emergency.



Reduce the Amount of Impervious Surfaces

Hard surfaces like concrete, roofs, patios, and walking paths prevent rainwater from soaking into the land before entering a lake or river. As rainwater flows over hard surfaces it can pick up a variety of harmful chemicals on its way to a lake. Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces on your property to allow rainwater to infiltrate into the earth and prevent harm to the lake. Consider installing pervious stones or pavers if planning a sidewalk, patio, driveway or walking path on a lakeshore property.



Pick Up Pet Waste, and Keep Fire Pits Away from the Waterline

Pet waste carries harmful nutrients and pathogens. Be sure to pick up pet waste and dispose of it in a trash container. The ash from fire pits contains a lot of phosphorus. Keep fire pits at least 25 feet from the shoreline.



Allow Fallen Trees and Branches to Remain in the Water

When trees fall into a lake they create a favored habitat for a variety of fish, birds, and aquatic animals. Turtles, frogs, and other animals and insects thrive in these natural environments. Allow fallen trees and branches to remain in the water so long as they do not interfere with navigation or recreation.





Store Docks and Other Equipment Away from the Shoreline

When removing your dock, swim rafts, boat lifts and other water related equipment for winter try to protect the shoreline vegetation. If possible, store equipment at least 25 feet from the waterline and minimize the amount of space it takes up by stacking equipment or elevating on blocks.



Avoid the Use of Riprap, and Allow Native Plants to Emerge

Some property owners choose to cover their shoreline in large rocks or boulders in an effort to prevent erosion. These rock installations are known as riprap, but often fail to prevent erosion and can be damaged by ice, wave or wake action. In addition, riprap does not provide a buffer for runoff pollution. Try to avoid the installation of new riprap on a shoreline.

If riprap is already present, plant native plants, shrubs and trees between the stones. This will strengthen the integrity of the riprap and the roots will filter and absorb excess nutrients, reducing the amount of phosphorus and other pollutants that reach the lake.



Allow Aquatic Plants to Flourish on the Shoreline

Aquatic and floating plants provide a critical habitat for fish and wildlife and oxygenate the water. Allow aquatic plants to grow where they are not impacting the use of your property, such as the sides of beaches or other unused spaces. Avoid pulling or smothering aquatic plants with barriers, or using mechanical devices or chemicals for removal. Aquatic plants benefit a lake and its inhabitants; allow aquatic plants to grow where they do not impact recreation or navigation.



Avoid the Use of Broadcast Fertilizers and Pesticides

Fertilizers and pesticides are a major pollutant of Minnesota's lakes and rivers. Near shore fertilizers and pesticides are easily washed into the lake by snowmelt or rain where they drive algae blooms and kill aquatic insects which small fish feed upon. To protect lake health and water quality avoid the use of fertilizers and pesticides on lakeshore properties.



Allow Natural Vegetation to Grow - Anywhere!

The Lake Steward Program challenges the common perception of beauty. Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates promotes seeing the beauty of the natural environment, in healthy aquatic habitats, tall grasses, native flowers, fallen trees and native trees and shrubs. After restoring a shoreline, many property owners enjoy the return of animals and wildlife. Beauty can be seen in the cooperation of people, plants, and animals to promote a healthy aquatic environment.

