

2026 November LLAA Newsletter

As your family gathers and stories of Long Lake vacations are told, have someone write them down (or record them) office@longlakeliving.org and we will include them on the history page.



Learn about your LLAA Board of Directors on this website page:

www.longlakeliving.org/p/board-member.html

Who We Are, and Why It Matters to You

Who are we? The Long Lake Area Association (LLAA) is a volunteer organization of property owners and neighbors who share one goal: keeping Long Lake healthy, clear, and true to its Northwoods character for future generations. For more than 50 years, the LLAA has worked "to be an advocate for the quality of life within our lake community through education and communication." Our volunteer Board of Directors is elected by the members, with a Director and an Alternate from each of the lake's six neighborhoods plus two at-large directors.

Why do we exist? Because Long Lake does not protect itself from watercraft traffic, runoff, shoreline loss, and aquatic invasive species (AIS). Three AIS have been confirmed: zebra mussels, faucet snails, and starry stonewort. In 2025 inspectors at the north and south public accesses checked 1,089 boats; of them, 243 came from infested waters. Inspecting watercraft as they launch at our public accesses is the best way to avoid the introduction of additional AIS into Long Lake.

The LLAA answers those threats with steady, practical work. We have measured water clarity since 1984. We partnered with Hubbard Township to install a CD3 boat-cleaning station and stock every access with weed sticks, plug wrenches, and brushes. We funded treatment of

starry stonewort at the south access, helped fund DNR-approved walleye stocking, and worked with Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District to offer free Lake Steward shoreline consultation.

Two organizations, one mission. Your membership dues support LLAA's advocacy, education, and communication, and give you a voice with the DNR, the County, and the Townships (Henrietta and Hubbard). Your tax-deductible gifts to the LLAA Foundation (LLAAF), a 501(c)(3), pay for the hands-on work: AIS prevention, identification, and mitigation; water quality monitoring; and fisheries. Today the LLAAF pays about 60% of the cost of watercraft inspectors at our public accesses every year, and the state pays the other 40%. In 2027, the state's share will drop by half, so keeping the same level of inspection will cost the LLAAF more.

Why is supporting the LLAAF in your best interest? Your lakeshore property is likely your biggest investment, and its value greatly depends on the lake it touches. Clear water, a healthy fishery, and a natural, healthy shoreline make a Long Lake home worth owning. Keeping AIS out costs far less than managing them once they are introduced and spread. Inspections are critical. Please help share the load! That way each share is smaller and the protection is greater.

Join us. If you are not yet an LLAA member, please join or renew at longlakeliving.org/join-us. Also, please consider a gift to the LLAAF at donate here. Many employers match charitable gifts, which can double your impact. Long Lake has been cared for by neighbors for over half a century. Let's do our part!

A Critical Reminder: Ice is Never 100% Safe!



Ice-in dates are tracked purely for historical and environmental record-keeping and should **never** be used to judge ice thickness for recreational use. Ice conditions can change rapidly and unpredictably. Always check ice thickness frequently before venturing out, and take time to review the MN DNR Ice Safety Tips.

When Does Long Lake Freeze? A Tradition of Tracking Ice-In

As temperatures drop and winter approaches, many Long Lake residents begin wondering: When will the lake freeze over? Determining Long Lake's official "ice-in" date isn't as simple as spotting ice along the shoreline. Ice-in occurs when the entire lake is covered with ice. Because Long Lake is large and has deep-water areas that can remain open after shallower sections freeze, determining the exact date can be challenging.

Each year, volunteers around the lake monitor conditions and compare observations to establish the official ice-in date. Sharon Natzel currently coordinates this effort with help from observers around the lake.

A Record Built by Generations of Volunteers
Long Lake residents have been documenting ice-in and ice-out dates for decades. Bella and John Sanders originally maintained the record, with observations from Bill Anderson near the lake's deeper north end. Vern Campbell later turned the observations into statistical records and charts, and Katie Hoffman now updates the graphs with the latest data. These records do more than mark the changing seasons. They help us understand how lake conditions vary from year to year and provide a valuable historical perspective on long-term patterns.

What Does History Tell Us?
According to data compiled by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) covering a 33-year observation period from 1987 to 2025:

- **Median Ice-In Date:** December 14th
- **Earliest Recorded Ice-In:** November 24, 1995
- **Latest Recorded Ice-In:** January 12, 2024

Although the actual date varies considerably, recent years show a tendency toward later freezing, but the variation remains within the range that could occur naturally based on historical observations. Be sure to explore the charts and historical dates on our Ice-In and Ice-Out Data page, or check Is Long Lake Frozen? for seasonal updates.

LLAA Works with the MN DNR on Fisheries Management



The DNR is responsible for managing the lake's fishery and determining stocking plans. LLAA advocates for the Long Lake fishery based on their fish population surveys. When appropriate and approved by the DNR, supplemental walleye stocking is funded through the LLAA Foundation.
In that way, we support a diverse fishery that includes walleye, northern pike, panfish, largemouth bass, and other species.

More information is posted on the LongLakeLiving website Fish page**.** Be sure to check out these additional resources:

- Current Long Lake Fish Stocking Records – Minnesota DNR
- New to Fishing on Long – Guidance by Fish Species

Riprap Essentials

by Keith Manlove, Master Gardener
(Photo credit: DNR)

It is natural to view a lake as starting and stopping at the water's edge, but it is a complex ecosystem. A healthy shoreline features native plants (forbs, grasses, sedges, trees) that provide wildlife habitat, reduce erosion, and filter pollutants before they enter the water.

Covering a natural shoreline with riprap protects against erosion, but it impairs these other crucial environmental functions. If you already have riprap, you do not necessarily have to remove it to restore diversity and function. Adding native plants around and among the rocks helps hold soil, provides habitat, traps sediment, and creates a more natural look. Learn more about lake-friendly approaches on the Minnesota DNR Shoreline Management page.

Other steps you can take:

- **Create a natural buffer:** Allow native plants to grow landward of the rocks instead of mowing to the edge.
- **Avoid unnecessary rock:** If your shoreline is stable, preserve existing vegetation rather than expanding riprap.
- **Get professional advice:** Contact the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District or a DNR area hydrologist to evaluate your shoreline.

A healthy shoreline does more than stop erosion—it supports wildlife and protects water quality. Restoring native vegetation around existing riprap creates a shoreline that protects property while allowing nature to thrive. Below are the before and after pictures of a riprap project.





Extending AIS Protection at Long Lake Public Accesses Using I-LIDS

By the LLAA Environmental Stewardship I-LIDS Task Force (iLidstaskforce@longlakeliving.org)

Protecting Long Lake from Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) like zebra mussels, starry stonewort, and Eurasian water milfoil remains one of the LLAA's top priorities. To this end, the installation of an innovative tool to reduce AIS in Long Lake is being considered by the LLAA Board of Directors November 19th meeting.

While the DNR's in-person watercraft inspectors do fantastic work, they are at the north and south accesses only a modest portion of the daylight hours between May and September due to the high cost of providing that service. In an effort to supplement LLAA's in-person investment in protecting Long Lake from AIS, the LLAA Environmental Stewardship Committee Task Force was established in spring 2026 by the Board. It was charged to investigate a new technology that relies on a sensor system to help protect our waters even when human inspectors are not present. The proposed system is better known as I-LIDS (Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor).

What is I-LIDS?



I-LIDS is an automated, self-contained system that would be installed at public boat accesses to help deter the introduction and spread of AIS. Completely solar-powered and connected via cellular data, I-LIDS units require no hardwiring or site trenching. I-LIDS are now manufactured and supported by a Minnesota-based company, Lake Shield, LLC.

Here's how it works: when a vehicle with a boat trailer approaches the launch, the system automatically detects it and accomplishes three important actions:

- Boater Education: It plays a custom, lake-specific recorded audio reminder prompting boaters to inspect, clean, drain, and dry their watercraft and dispose of bait properly both when entering and exiting the lake.
- Video Footage Collection: It records high-definition video of the boat hull and trailer to document compliance/non-compliance.
- Traffic Data Analysis: It gathers time-stamped, launch statistics (numbers of watercraft based on date/time).

These statistics assist the LLAA in knowing exactly when traffic is highest, which helps determine the best time and location of assignments for paid DNR inspectors and volunteers, providing a more strategic and effective way to deploy our LLAAF funds.

Why Consider I-LIDS for Long Lake?

I-LIDS help identify DNR in-person staffing needs and it operates around the clock when inspectors are not at the accesses.

Importantly, field evidence shows that when I-LIDS monitoring units are visible, boaters' behaviors improve significantly with regard to checking their gear and watercraft for vegetation before putting in or leaving a given lake.

Moreover, the system has a highly proven track record at more than 100 boat access locations across MN, WI, and ND. Collectively, the I-LIDS technology has monitored and recorded more

than 900,000 boat launches. Nearby I-LIDS implementation includes the Sauk River Chain of Lakes, Lake Kabekona, and Otter Tail County.

What's Next?
This educational overview is the first step in introducing our Long Lake community to the concept. The I-LIDS Task Force is currently preparing a final, updated proposal for the Board of Directors that will outline specific site assessments, costs, implementation timelines, and potential grant funding opportunities through county and state AIS programs. The I-LIDS was preliminarily discussed at the LLAA's Board meeting in September.

We encourage all members to stay tuned as we explore this technology to keep Long Lake healthy for the future. For more information or to share your thoughts with the task force, feel free to contact us at iLidstaskforce@longlakeliving.org.

Volunteers Needed

Give Back to Long Lake—On Your Own Time! 🌲⛵
You don't need a huge time commitment to make a big impact. We're looking for volunteers to help protect our waters and keep our community connected!

- **On the Water:** monitor for AIS or keep an eye on our loons.
- **Behind the Scenes:** help with website tweaks, spreadsheets, or organization.
- **In the Community:** snap photos at events or contribute to our Facebook group.

Your help keeps Long Lake's community vibrant and healthy. Please go to these links and fill out the form: **Immediate Volunteer Needs** or **Learn more about committees**

Another Way to Help
During the winter months we will include links to articles, webinars, and videos that help educate our community about native plants, AIS, and ways to improve the health of Long Lake for the future.



Our Long Lake Community is Growing Online!

More lake neighbors are connecting through the Long Lake Living Facebook page, Long Lake Leisure group, and http://longlakeliving.org. Thanks for following, sharing photos, joining conversations, and keeping our Long Lake community connected year-round.

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