MKLPA 2025 Membership - Paid

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Message from the President - Steve Beckwith

As we begin to transition into winter activities on our lakes, I want to take a moment to look back on 2025 and share some of our plans for 2026.

First and foremost, a huge THANK YOU to all our members and business supporters for your generous donations to the MKLPA. Your ongoing support is what keeps our mission alive – to maintain and improve the quality of our lakes for everyone to enjoy now and in the future.

In June, we celebrated the retirement of our long-time President, Sally Murwin, who dedicated nearly 30 years to the MKLPA. We are incredibly grateful for her passion and leadership of this organization!

As the new president, I am fortunate to be joining an amazing group of individuals that make up our Board of Directors. This team dedicates countless hours to our mission, and were essential in bringing me up to speed quickly. I've also had the pleasure of connecting with many of you, our members, to hear your thoughts and concerns about our lakes.

Based on your input, we've chosen four key initiatives to focus on in 2026:

- 1. Continue our aggressive efforts to control Eurasian Water Milfoil.
- 2. Increase our focus on promoting Safe Watercraft Operation as lake traffic grows.
- 3. Launch a voluntary Natural Shorelines effort to help reduce pollutant runoff.
- 4. Boost Membership to increase engagement and involvement in the MKLPA. You'll find more details on each of these initiatives in the sections below.

To support these efforts, we've strengthened our Board with three new members and are collaborating closely with the Town of Minocqua Police Department, WDNR, and our neighboring lake associations. We'll also be ramping up communication with you to ensure we continue meeting your needs. Membership input is what drives our efforts, so please don't hesitate to reach out to me at stevebeckwith28@gmail.com with your feedback or suggestions.

Again, thank you to all our members and donors for stepping up to help preserve our lakes - together we succeed!



EWM Management – Peter Meyer



https://minocquakawaga.org/eurasian-watermilfoil/

This fall concludes one of our best years regarding overall EWM (Eurasian Water Milfoil) on Minocqua and Kawaga. MKLPA has continued to aggressively manage the invasive species, and the lakes have clearly shown it this summer. In partnership with Onterra (our consultant), WDNR, and APM (Aquatic Plant Management) we deployed a variety of management techniques this summer including chemical, mechanical, and hand/DASH removal. In late August an updated survey was conducted, and the results show a significant reduction in EWM. For the first time in years, we are debating the option to not use chemical treatment in 2026 due to no areas showing a high density of EWM. While this is a great sign for our lakes, we will continue to aggressively manage EWM next summer with our other techniques as we put together a plan of attack this winter. One challenge we are facing is a significant reduction in grant money available to us to help pay for these activities. Budget cuts at State and Local entities are creating an environment where we expect the need to become almost entirely self-funded going forward.

While EWM will never be eliminated from our lakes, with the support of our members and partners, the MKLPA Board is committed to continued management of these invasive species so that everyone can enjoy Minocqua and Kawaga Lakes for years to come.

Clean Boats Clean Waters - Sally Murwin



https://minocquakawaga.org/clean-boats-clean-waters

The Clean Boats Clean Waters program mission is to educate boaters on preventing the spread of invasive species via their boats. Inspections were made on 1,315 boats this season as they entered or exited our lakes at the Schoolhouse Bay, Thirsty Whale, and Dam Road boat landings.

Fisheries Restoration – Al Luke



https://minocquakawaga.org/fishing/

While fisheries restoration is not explicitly included in the mission of MKLPA, nor funded by MKPLA, it is a tangential effort that benefits from the lake improvement work we do. This fisheries update was provided by Al Luke, who is the President of Headwaters Fisheries, a nonprofit organization focused on restoring native fish populations in area lakes. Al is also a board member of the MKLPA.

"Fisheries restoration in MKLPA waters continued with the annual spring Torpy Park hatching and releases, totaling up to 10 million walleye fry released in recent years. The effort includes WDNR, Native Americans and Walleyes For Tomorrow. Surveys this spring and fall in our lakes may have indicated the return of young fish (10" and under), a most important sign of sustainability for the future. Muskie surveys were also conducted with significant numbers of 40+ inchers captured in many locations. Volunteers and supporters have launched the new Headwaters Fisheries nonprofit in order to locally return native species to former world class levels. Goals include partnering with MKLPA in shepherding the quality of our lakes for all forever."

Water Safety - Mark Clarke



https://minocquakawaga.org/safety/

As the popularity of our two lakes continues to increase, and the number, size, and speed of the watercraft on our lakes also grows, we need to adjust our approach to ensure that our waters remain SAFE for all users. To that end, we have several Water Safety initiatives for 2026:

- 1- Collaborate with the Minocqua Police Department to help fund a full-time boat patrol officer for the 2026 season. Goal is to have improved education and enforcement on the water by dedicating and training this resource on concerns specific to our lakes.
- 2- Assist the Minocqua Police Department with replacement of their old patrol boat by donating \$5,000 toward the purchase of a replacement boat.
- 3- Clearly identify and post recommended areas on our lakes for wake boat use that are in line with the current guidelines: Operate only in greater than 20 feet of water and greater than 500 feet from shore. Post maps identifying these areas at boat landings and in MKLPA Watercraft Safety tri-fold handouts.
- 4- Continue distribution of MKLPA Watercraft Safety tri-fold handouts to over 50 locations around our chain of lakes including boat landings, boat rental businesses and resorts.
- 5- Increase education and awareness for rental boat and rental jet ski users via collaboration with local boat rental companies to provide onboard water-safety information. Water safety is the responsibility of EVERYONE on our lakes. Leading by example is one way you can support this effort every time you go out on the water.

Natural Shorelines - John Tedstrom

We are fortunate to have two of the most beautiful lakes in Wisconsin where we fish, swim, boat, relax, and enjoy the beautiful views. However, increased shoreland development and the landscaping decisions made by property owners (e.g. neatly manicured lawns to the water's edge) have a negative impact on water quality and wildlife habitat.

Individual homeowners may see their yards as small and insignificant, however, the combined effect around an entire lake leads to measurable declines in water quality and habitat availability. Two things you can do right away:

- 1. Just don't mow all the way to the water's edge Natural shorelands contain a lush mixture of native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees that help to reduce and filter polluted water runoff and provide essential wildlife habitat. Simply not mowing 10-30 feet from the edge creates a natural buffer zone that protects the lake. Also, a buffer zone repels geese from your yard because they won't go past what they can't see over.
- 2. Reduce or stop using chemicals on your lake property Fertilizers and herbicides used in your yard enter our lakes through runoff, impacting water quality. Fertilizers can provide nutrients for algae blooms and lake weeds, and herbicides can impact wildlife health both on shore and in the water like bees, butterflies, birds and fish.

Taking just these two simple steps can make a significant impact on the health of our lakes! MKLPA will be providing more information on creating Natural Shorelines as we get closer to spring - stay tuned.

Membership – Ran Hoth, Nathan Westphal, Al Luke



https://minocquakawaga.org/membership/

The key to any nonprofit organization is a strong membership base. To that end, we have added significant horsepower to our Board this year, focused on getting our message out to riparian owners, visitors, and businesses that benefit from our lakes.

We have created a Membership Committee made up of three new Board members. This team is in the process of recruiting Shore Captains on both lakes to assist in neighborhood campaigns to explain the importance of becoming a member and expanding our voice on all lake matters. You will hear more about this activity in early 2026 in conjunction with our annual membership drive.