

# LAKE ALEXANDER PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

## From President Dr. Bill's Desk

Fall, 2017

Dear Lake Association Members,

It's already the first week of October, and the autumn colors are finally coming into their own. We haven't had a single night of frost at this writing October 6, so what that may indicate as far as what the rest of the Fall and Winter holds is by no means clear?! So, I hope you get to take advantage of some great Fall color viewing around Lake Alexander and surroundings. As I've said before, it's the best time of year for many of us! Water levels are higher this Fall than in many years, especially after the wet season that never seems to end, so I'm sure many of you, like me, are anxious as to what that may lead to this Winter and into thaw next Spring...We have already had our final Board meeting for the year in late September, but even with high water levels, at least on Alex, haven't caused any major issues or challenges, as least as far as I'm aware. Kindly remember to check out the latest news and Board meeting minutes as posted on our newly revised website found at [www.minnesotawaters.org](http://www.minnesotawaters.org); click on the link on the left for *Lakes and River Groups*, and then click on "L" for Lake Alexander Property Owners Association. One interesting article of note on a study about the value Lake Property Owner Associations make to water bodies all over MN can be found at <http://www.mnlakesanddrivers.org/sites/mnlakesanddrivers.org/files/files/mn-lake-association-survey-2017-report.pdf>; I would warmly recommend taking a look at the report, it is good, informational reading related to what the LAPOA does to benefit you and Lake Alexander.

There really isn't a whole lot new to report on. The LAPOA has adopted and now implemented an Incentivized Lakeshore Restoration Program, as discussed and approved at our annual Board meeting this past July. Thanks to Doug Cook, newly elected to the Board in the Summer of 2016, for his great efforts on putting this together on our behalf. Be sure to read more details about the program, and how to access it and the application form (found on our website) in this newsletter, and please, let us know what you think about it. Ron Wieber, our LA LID Treasurer, has included an update on the LID's financial health and info. Regarding this Summer's Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) treatments, so please be sure to gander at that. Finally, as I always do, I will remind you to contact us with your questions and concerns, and we'll do our best to address them in a timely fashion, as we're your representatives for Lake Alexander, and we appreciate your continued support.

In closing this Fall President's Letter, let me remind you that this will be the last correspondence for the season. However, feel free to contact one of our Board members with any inquiries, we'll still be around the lake! And, I'm certain I'll be seeing some of you around the lake this Fall, but in the interim, my best wishes to all for an enjoyable Fall and Winter. See you in the Spring!

Lake Wishes, Dr. Bill Faber, President

## LAKE ALEXANDER PROPERTY OWNERS BOARD MEMBERS

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*Mission Statement: To act as stewards of Lake Alexander in regards to water quality, fish management, and shore line conservation.*

# LALID TREASURER'S UPDATE Fall 2017

The heat & humidity are off and the falling leaves are upon us as we wrap up another great MN Summer! As your LA LID Treasurer I take stock of where we are at financially, and we are again in a favorable position as the year draws to a close. And that is what the Morrison County Board of Commissioners heard at their recent monthly meeting when the 2018 LA LID annual levy was again approved at the current \$200 level per riparian owner.

Our biggest expenses for 2017 have once more been for the two aquatic invasive species of weeds - Curly Leaf Pondweed (91.3 acres treated at an expense of \$45.5k) and Eurasian Water Milfoil (28.35 acres treated at an expense of \$18k). In recent years, bog removal expense came in 3rd place but so far it has been negligible. When all 460 riparian owners pay their annual \$200 real estate LA LID levy we should take in just over \$90k. Having spent only about 2/3 of that so far in 2017 has put us in a more sustainable future as we had been spending about \$6k to \$8k more than our revenues in past years. So, let us hope for a lower water level and less wind, the opposite of which typically causes floating bogs to break loose and cause damage resulting in increased expenses.

## Fall Walleye Electrofishing Survey

In early September, I followed behind while the DNR conducted their electrofishing survey. This particular survey is done every year, at the same time of year, same time of day, same areas of the lake and for the same amount of time. By keeping these variables relatively constant, a more accurate comparison can be made against the historical numbers. The objective of the survey is to determine trends for Walleye fry survival, so they are looking for small Walleye. The boat is a 20' Tiller, with two "net men" in the front and one driver/netter in the rear. Dangling off the front are two probes that look like oversized bird cages. These probes are lowered into the water, then electric current is delivered by a generator on board. The probes will not function below 3-4' of water so the process is taking place close to shore. The current temporarily stuns any fish within range. The Walleyes are netted and placed into a large live well in the boat. There are three electrofishing runs, each lasting exactly 20 minutes after which time the netted fish are measured, recorded and returned to the lake unharmed. The three areas covered were the "Gold Coast", Anderson Point, and the East Landing shoreline. A total of 181 Walleyes were recorded. 128 Walleyes were 5-6" long while 53 exceeded 6". DNR fisheries manager Eric Altena reported that these were good results indicating successful fry stocking survival. In addition the surveyors reported seeing many Perch which is a good sign for the forage base. All of us marveled at the tremendous numbers of midge insects in the air as we experienced what had to be the peak of the hatch. In the Spring, there will be a trap net survey, a Bass electrofishing survey and in the Summer a gill net survey. These surveys in the Spring and Summer are only done once every four years. I plan to attend and report on these surveys. With the electrofishing, trap net, and gill net surveys completed, we will have the best data on the health of the fishery in 4 years. Eric will present the data to us at the annual meeting in July.

Additionally, we have been spared the expense of dealing with Zebra Mussels which have been found in neighboring Fish Trap Lake - which Lake Alexander drains downstream into (remember Prof. Dr. Faber's lecture on water not flowing up-hill?). To further enhance our Lake Alexander water quality is the absence of Purple Loosestrife, another invasive wetland plant found growing on four infestation areas along the northerly shore of neighboring Lake Shamineau. Fortunately, none of the Lincoln Area Lakes have invasive Starry Stonewort, grass-like algae that are not native to North America. Since found in 2015, it has spread from one MN county lake into three others.

This November, MN's new buffer law takes effect which requires landowners along public waters and public drainage ditches to establish and maintain buffers of perennial vegetation. Conservation MN reports that now 40% of our MN lakes are polluted - based on swimming, fishing or drinking water restrictions. Let us be ever vigilant as we pull in our docks and lifts and grateful for the good health of our Lake Alexander this Thanksgiving season.

Ron Wieber  
LID Treasurer

## Morrison County AIS Funding

Doug Cook  
LAPOA Board Member  
Morrison County receives funding for Aquatic Invasive Species, (AIS) programs yearly from the State of Minnesota. Morrison County expects to receive a total of \$128,680 for 2017, one payment came in July and another will be coming in December.

How the funds are used  
Local lake associations and LID's submit grant requests to the county for these funds, which may include AIS surveys and educational programs. The signage and brochures you see at our local lakes, Crookneck, Fish Trap, Shamineau, and Lake Alexander were all paid for through these programs. A total of \$19,450 for 2017 went out to Morrison County LID's and Property Owners Associations. All applications for funding were awarded a grant.

- In addition,
- Funding for regional media campaigns, partnering with the Mississippi Headwaters Board counties.
  - A business outreach program with coasters and table top tents with educational information concerning AIS control, you may have seen these at our local restaurants/bars, a total of 1,050 of each where sent out.
  - The Morrison County AIS web page was revamped.
  - Training for volunteers from nine lakes in Morrison County and testing for the presence of Veliger's (Zebra Mussels). Morrison County paying for the equipment, as well as lab testing of samples taken. On Lake Alexander three areas were targeted for testing, at the time of testing, no Veligers were detected.
  - Little Falls Days festival, education for 6th graders.
  - Hiring of a Shore Land Specialist for Morrison County who will begin working on September 28th.

Chuck Schiemo  
LAPOA Board Member

## LAKE ALEXANDER PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION 2017 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

The Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, July 8, 2017, at the Scandia Valley Town Hall with approximately 87 members and 8 guests in attendance. Chairman Dr. Bill Faber called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M, and asked for a moment of silence for deceased association members including Zera Johnson, Rick Lindmeier, Sedona Hough and others named in our hearts.

An expression of thanks was given to Little Falls Coborns for their generous donation of rolls and doughnuts.

Board Members present were Dr. Bill Faber, Darline Molde, Chuck Schiemo, Alice Sunde, Dave Schleichert, Tom Trutwin, and Doug Cook. Guests that were introduced included Morrison County Deputy Sheriff Jason Worlie; Morrison County Assessor, Jean Popp; and Morrison County District 1 Commissioner Mike LeMeur.

### Secretary's Report:

A motion was made by Jay Lowry, seconded by Pete Hanson, to approve the minutes of the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 annual meeting as printed and mailed to all littoral property owners. Motion carried.

### Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer, Alice Sunde, handed out a printout of transactions from July 10, 2016 to July 8, 2017. Receipts, including dues monies totaled \$4,650.00, and expenses totaled \$2,328.26, giving the checking account a balance of \$9,727.65. Investments, which include Certificates of Deposits, total \$19,244.37, giving our association a grand total of \$28,972.02. A motion was made by Diane Johnson, seconded by Mark Johnson, to approve the Treasurer's Report as printed. Motion carried.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Water Level and Bogs:

In the thoroughfare bay, there is a measuring device to monitor the lake level. Matt Skjonsby checked past records, and determined that the average deviation of water levels in the past 50 years has been less than two inches.

To date, only one very small bog was reported.

### Water Quality:

Secchi disc readings, a means monitoring water clarity, are taken several times a year in the east, west, and central areas of the lake. One recent reading in the west end reported 17.5 feet clarity in 34 feet of water. An earlier reading in the east end of Lake Alex reported 24 feet of clarity.

Water samples for chemical monitoring are taken by Steve Sunde and are sent to RMB Laboratories for analysis of chlorophyll A, nitrates, and phosphate. The MPCA website has full reports of both studies.

### Fisheries:

Walleye stocking of 1.5 million to 3 million fry is done every year. Studies show there is two to three percent survival rate for the fry. Last fall, 106 muskie fingerlings were stocked. Electrofishing will take place this fall. The DNR does extensive fish surveys every four years, the last one being in 2014. Therefore, in the spring of 2018, the DNR will implement the use of trap nets and gill nets for a current survey.

Reports of the 2014 survey showed that all fish species were of the normal size and numbers. Large and small mouth bass were over the average size, tulibee population was high, and the walleye average weight was 2.3 pounds. Fishermen are encouraged to catch and release the larger sunfish and blue gills.

### Membership:

Membership dues received before July 8<sup>th</sup> numbered 226 with 33 additional membership being paid at registration. Total paid membership to date is now 259. Association membership reached 325 last year.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Morrison County Grant Monies:

Morrison County received \$131,000 from the state to be used for Aquatic Invasive Species. Education was the focus last year with pamphlets, posters, and signage distributed at county lakes. Chuck Schiemo reported that this summer four volunteers from Lake Alex attended a training session on procedures to collect water samples in three areas of the lake for the detection of Veligers, the earliest stage of Zebra Mussels. Water samples are sent to Morrison County which is covering the cost of testing equipment and analysis by RMB Laboratories.

Veligers attach to lake weeds; therefore it is important to clear your boat of all weeds, hand dry the boat, and/or dry dock it for 24 hours.

**Web Site:**

Lake Alexander's web site is minnesotawaters.org—click on Lake and Rivers Groups; click on page 10 for Lake Alexander Property Owners Association.

**Testing for Pollution of Lake Water:**

Potato fields, north of County Road #3, are ditched and the drainage from the fields run through the Bernhart Ponds and ultimately into Lake Alex. It was learned that potatoes are planted every four years, with corn, wheat and soybeans alternating. However, water samples from the drainage ditch will continue to be taken each year when there is a run-off into the lake.

**Report of Quad Lakes Meetings:**

Chuck Schiemo reported that representatives from Fish Trap, Shamineau, Crookneck, and Alexander meet several times during the year and discuss concerns. A \$25,000 grant was received to install signs that marked locations of AIS at all public boat landings. Thanks to a \$5,000 grant, a pilot project was initiated this year on Fish Trap to conduct AIS inspections at their landings using volunteers from local civic groups.

A big thank you was extended to the Sheriff's department for their prompt response to our request for installing a buoy to mark a large rock on the east end, warning boaters to beware of potential damage to boats and motors.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Shoreline Restoration:**

Doug Cook conducted a slide show presentation on shoreline restoration, the purpose of which is to create a program to restore shorelines to their natural state in order to protect property values, water quality and fisheries issues. The goal is to have property owners establish a buffer zone with a minimum width of 10 feet from the water line and a minimum length of 75% of the shoreline. If a lot is less than 100 feet, 20 feet of cleared shoreline is acceptable. Project may include removal of structures within 50 feet of the high water mark, removal of sod, establishing a buffer zone, planting native plants and installing a rain garden. The proposal includes an application filled out by the property owner, after which the LAPOA Board and a Soil and Water Conservation representative visits and approves the project. The LAPOA then approves reimbursement to the property owner, and will match 50% of the cost up to a maximum of \$500.00 per project application.

A motion was made by Buford Johnson, seconded by Jim Lilienthal, to approve this project. Motion carried. More information can be obtained on the association's web site or by contacting Doug Cook or Dr. Faber.

**Election of Board Members:**

Chuck Schiemo, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, put the following names in nomination for Board Positions: Eugene Chapeau, Darline Molde, and Dave Schleichert, each to serve a three year term. There were no further nominations from the floor. A motion was made by Brian Yetter, seconded by Cindy Sobiech, to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for the nominees. Motion carried.


A huge "Thank You" was extended to Tom Trutwin for his 15 years of service as a LAPOA Board Member!!

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by Pete Hanson, seconded by Mary Lindmeier, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10: 45 A.M.

The Annual Meeting of the Lake Alexander Lake Improvement District immediately followed the adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Darline Molde, Secretary

**LAKE ALEXANDER LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2017**

**Chairman Dr. Bill Faber, Ron Wieber, Chuck Schiemo, John Piper, Tom Bjorge**

Chairman Dr. Bill Faber called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M. with approximately 40 members in attendance.

**Secretary's Report:**

A motion was made by Bob Burfeind, seconded by Cindy Sobiech to approve the minutes of the 2016 Annual LALID Meeting as printed and mailed to all property owners. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Ron Wieber reported that the starting checking account balance as of Jan 1, 2017, was \$158,838.22. Actual revenue totaled \$1,761.73, and actual expenses were \$48,367.43 (\$45,465.60 was paid for treatment of CurlyLeaf Pondweed), giving a current balance of \$112,232.52. Projected revenue for the remaining fiscal year is \$92,140, and tentative obligations total \$52,100. Treasurer Wieber has projected an ending fiscal year balance of \$152,272.52 on December 31, 2017.

It was stated that typically the yearly expenditure for bogs and treatment of EWM and CPL has averaged \$100,000. Due to the focus on educational programs such as signage and pamphlets, the LID is no longer receiving DNR grant monies. With the \$200.00 assessment per littoral property owner, the bank balance has dropped \$6,000-\$8,000 a year; therefore, Treasurer Wieber feels the assessment might have to be raised in five to eight years if the expenditures remain constant.

**Projected Budget for 2018:**

Estimated Ending Balance 12/31/17	\$152,272.52
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Projected Revenue:

460 Property Owners Assessment @ \$200—\$92,000	
DNR Grant	00
Randall Bank Interest	\$ 200

<b>2018 PROJECTED INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 92,200.00</b>
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Projected Disbursements:

Bogs, Insurance, Miscellaneous	\$23,500
Weed Control:	
EWM Aquathol K 56 acres @\$625	\$35,000
CPL 2.4D 90 acres@\$500	\$45,000

<b>2018 PROJECTED EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>\$103,500.00</u></b>
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Anticipated Bank Balance on December 31, 2018	<b>\$140,972.52</b>
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**Budget Proposal for 2018 Assessment:**

Treasurer Wieber recommended to the membership that an assessment in 2018 of \$200.00 per littoral property owner be voted upon in order to maintain a healthy treasury balance for one more year.

A motion was made by Brian Yetter, seconded by John Lindmeier, to approve the 2018 assessment of \$200.00 per littoral property owner for the treatment of invasive aquatic vegetation. Motion carried.

A LID Board member will present the \$200.00 assessment for 2018 to the Morrison County Commissioners Board for their approval in September.

**Aquatic Invasive Vegetation Treatment for 2017:**

The DNR mapped 137.3 acres of Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CPL) for treatment. On May 15<sup>th</sup> Lake Restoration was on the lake and treated 91.3 acres of CPL with excellent results reported.

In April, the DNR mapped and approved treatment of 28.4 acres of Eurasian Watermilfoil ( EWM), which will be treated in August when the water temperature is optimum. In the past years, treatment of EWM with Aquathol K has proven to be very effective in reducing the growth and spread of EWM.

Notices were posted in the Morrison County Record and at the Town Hall stating that if a property owner does not wish have either CPL or EWM treatment adjacent to their property within 150 feet of shoreline, a response must be submitted.

It was emphasized that Northern Watermilfoil, found near Greens Island, is a native plant and is beneficial to fish habitat.

**Election of Board Members:**

A tally of the ballots received for the election of Board Members was completed, and the following were elected to each serve a two-year term, expiring in 2019:

Ron Wieber  
Chuck Schiemo

A motion was made by Mary Lindmeier, seconded by Jim Lilienthal, to accept the ballot results. Motion carried.

**Comments:**

Dr. Faber asked for a moment of silence in memory of Rick Lindmeier who passed away suddenly on November 27. Rick was a dedicated member of the LALID Board for 10 years.

**ADJOURN**

A motion was made by Brian Yetter, seconded by Cindy Sobiech, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Darline Molde  
Appointed Secretary

# Restoring Shorelines Project

At the annual meeting of the Property Owners Lake Association in July, a proposal was presented and a motion was approved to develop a plan to promote and incentivize property owners to restore developed shorelines to their natural state and encourage those with natural shorelines to maintain them. The previous newsletter outlined the benefits of such a program.

The goals of the program are:

- To improve and maintain a healthy lake and a sustainable fishery
- To protect property values
- To increase awareness of sustainable lakeshore practices
- To communicate with current and new residents

In order to progress toward the goals, the lake association will provide financial incentives, educational materials, and communications. The program is structured to include an application to be completed by the landowner, development of a shoreline plan including the current situation and landowner goals, and rewards for achieving the goals including financial cost sharing and personal recognition.

The Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has agreed to provide support and resources for the program including on site visits to initially survey property and goals, consultation with landowners to provide technical assistance, and assessment of completed projects.

The goal will be to establish a vegetation buffer zone with a minimum width of 10 feet from the waterline and a minimum length of 75% of the parcel, with 25% as a swimming beach. For parcels less than 100 feet in width, 20 feet of shoreline will be allowed as a swimming beach.

Projects will be restricted to the following:

- Removal of sod
- Removal of structures such as rip rap, retaining walls and foundations
- Preparation of a buffer bed
- Purchase and planting of native plants, both water and land based
- Installation of a rain garden to capture storm run off

The steps to participate in this program are:

- Completion of a project application
- Lake Association board reviews application for approval
- Lake Association and SWCD representation visit the landowner to review the proposed project and agree on the final project scope
- Landowner completes the project
- Lake Association and SWCD representatives visit the site to assess the progress
- Landowner provides expense receipts for the project work performed
- Lake Association approves reimbursement of landowner expense matching 50% of the project cost up to the maximum of \$500 per application

You will find the complete project proposal along with an application form on the association website at <https://minnesotawaters.org/lakealexanderpropertyowners> or just search for "lake alexander property owners".

Or you can contact me for an application or more information at

Doug Cook  
douglascook@yahoo.com  
507-276-5214 (cell)

Finally, we would like to thank those property owners who have restored their shorelines and to those who have maintained natural shorelines. As you cruise around the lake looking at properties, pay attention to the properties with natural or buffered shorelines as there are many people setting a good example for us to follow. We can have recreational shorelines alongside buffered shorelines while sustaining a healthy future for Lake Alexander.

Douglas Cook  
LAPOA Board Member

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## UPCOMING BOND REFERENDUM

### Pillager School District #116 Referendum November 7, 2017

Poll location: Pillager Public School  
7am to 8pm  
For tax calculator and absentee voter information, visit:  
[www.isd116.org/referendum](http://www.isd116.org/referendum).

Absentee ballot application deadline is October 26.  
Many Lake Alexander residents are impacted.

Estimated Market Value*	1 year tax increase*	Total tax increase over 20 year life of referendum*
\$200,000	\$140	\$2,800
\$300,000	\$224	\$4,480
\$400,000	\$308	\$6,160
\$500,000	\$387	\$7,740
\$700,000	\$580	\$11,600

\* Source Pillager School District #116 website

## Lake Alexander Lake Improvement District Board Members

Dr. Bill Faber, Chairman .....575-2338  
Ron Wieber, Treasurer .....575-3326  
Tom Bjorge .....575-2553  
Chuck Schiemo .....575-3169  
John Piper .....575-3384

# Shoreline Wildflower Restoration Project on Lowry Circle

It has been two years since we joined the Lake Alexander community and what a pleasant experience it has been so far. We have great neighbors, easy access to the lake front, a lake property we love and a new facet to our quality of life that is beyond measure. When we acquired our property on Lowry Circle in September 2015, the dwelling was in very good condition since it had been built in 1997 with the intention of being a permanent residence. Apparently after a couple Lake Alexander Winters, the original owners decided to relocate and sold the property to the party we ultimately purchased the property from.

There was one element of the property we were not particularly fond of and that was the extensive collection of statues in the yard facing the lakefront. Neighbors and friends in the area said the property had become known as "Disneyland" due to the variety of gnomes, wildlife, artistic, religious and fantasy figurines and statues in the yard. It was an extensive collection encompassing at least a hundred statues all illuminated by a series of spotlights which shone on each figure. I'm sure the view of the property from the lake at night was a marvel to see and we're told pontoon rides past the property were a must for everyone on the lake. Unfortunately, this was a case of "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" and we decided it wasn't a good fit for our vision of the property. Right after we moved in, we began to dismantle the festive panorama with the services of Steve Hines from Detail Landscaping out of Cushing, MN.

As a person with a background in science and biology, I wanted to restore the lakeshore to a more natural condition so we began removing hundreds of feet of wiring buried in the yard for the lighting systems, put the statues out on Craigslist as available to those who wanted them and began restoring the soil with high quality fill that didn't contain thistle or other noxious weed seeds. You can only imagine the faces of those folks who came to pick up a concrete statue of a whitetail deer only to find out it weighed 2500 lbs. Detail Landscaping used their skid loader to help load things and eventually all the statues found a new home. Several statues went to my brother's place on Fish Trap so at least I have visitation rights to some loon, bald eagle and mushroom statues.

Once everything was cleared away, the restoration of the yard and shoreline could begin. We decided that we wanted most of our yard facing the lake to be an extensive buffer zone with a small patch of grass for lawn games, but 70% of the yard would become a wildflower garden. Detail prepped the yard surface and acquired a high quality wildflower seed mix from Native Landscapes. The seed mix was quite expensive with a small 16 oz bag being about \$300, but Native Landscapes assured us that the mix was pure native Minnesota plants.

Once the seed was distributed, a biodegradable mesh fabric that allows light penetration into the soil was placed over the area and the process was ready to begin. We were told by the seed supplier that wildflowers can take over three years to germinate so not to expect much in the first two years of the project. In fact, the wildflower seed mix is combined with a wheat cover crop to protect the seeds in the first year of growth. The first Summer after planting, we had amber waves of grain growing in our yard. It was quite beautiful, but the local goose population decided to graze on the wheat so we were constantly sending our dogs out to chase them away. The second year of the project yielded some amazing results. The wheat had long disappeared and a variety of clovers and small purple flowers began to emerge (I'm not a botanist, but I'm researching the species coming up). Later in the Summer, there was an explosion of Black-Eyed Susans and a lesser variety of other flowers. A listing provided by Native Landscapes had 32 different wildflower seeds in the mix. Finding the emergence of various species over the Summer has become a voyage of discovery as new flowers pop up at various times.

The wildflower buffer zone is by no means mature and we expect it to take at least another 2-3 years before we see all the flowers in the seed mix. I have a nice little wildflower pocket manual that I keep nearby so we can identify the new floral residents. Each wildflower discovery is like waking up on Christmas morning to a new little gift from Mother Nature...we have truly enjoyed our shoreline restoration project and I think Lake Alexander is enjoying it too!

Gene Champeau  
LAPOA Board Member

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## Preventing Septic System Freeze-up

Here are a few things to consider when getting ready for Winter...

1. If there is no protective cover from snow as an insulator then you may want to consider an insulation cover or blanket. Your tank and drain field, mound, or trench should all have this cover to trap heat inside the system. As you know, there are resident anaerobic bacteria in the septic tank that break down the solid waste materials that treat the raw wastewater that your household produces. The heat maintains a high level of metabolism among the bacteria. If you don't provide a good snow cover and the frost will go deep into the septic components, eventually freezing the entire system.
2. Soil compaction is caused by placing heavy vehicles and structures on the septic system. When this occurs, the septic below freezes more easily resulting in damage to the septic parts and eventually results in a failed system.
3. Snow compaction will work in the same manner. You want to avoid compaction of the snow as it will drive the frost deeper allowing your system to freeze easier.
4. Long intervals of not using your septic system will also encourage freeze-ups. This will occur with infrequent use in the Winter months, i.e. weekenders, and also with low water usages entering the septic systems allowing the systems to freeze. You are encouraged to use more water if up on the weekends to create running wastewater to help keep the system open.
5. Not enough plant cover can also cause lack of insulation. If these concerns are present, straw is a great inexpensive insulator. It also will hold any snow we get which will add to your insulation.
6. Systems that are water-logged are also targets for freeze-ups. These systems fail to disperse the wastewater effectively and cause slow drainage thus allowing waste/septic water to improperly drain and will allow freeze-ups to occur.
7. Make sure your septic system is capped so that cold air is not able to enter your septic system and freeze it over.
8. It is recommended to pump your septic system on a regular basis. Every 2 years is recommended.

Dave Schleichert  
LAPOA Board Member