



July, 2003

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Dear Lakeshore Property Owner:

No one word says Minnesota more than LAKES. They are part of our heritage, our recreational enjoyment, and our quality of life. As a lakeshore property owner, we know you care deeply about the future of Minnesota's lakes, and particularly the specific lake you and your family cherish—perhaps for multiple generations. **But our lakes are changing—have you noticed?**

Pollution, exotics, overuse, and recreational conflicts have already damaged some of our lakes and others are threatened. Mercury contamination limits the amount of fish we can consume in many lakes. Deformed frogs found throughout Minnesota provide vivid evidence that something is wrong with our water and our environment. Our heritage is slowly slipping away.

**If we are going to pass on a legacy of clean lakes to our children and grandchildren,
we must act now to protect the lakes we love.**

The Minnesota Lakes Association (MLA) is the only statewide organization dedicated to protecting and preserving Minnesota's lakes for the assured enjoyment of future generations. **Protecting Minnesota's lakes is tough work—please join us** as a member (\$25/year individual or \$40 family) or provide a generous donation to support our work to protect your lake and others throughout Minnesota.

Your support helps MLA provide programs and services to equip lakeshore property owners such as yourself with the tools and knowledge needed to be a good lake steward. It is also important that you support your lake association and the collective work they do to protect your lake. If you don't have a lake association, start one—MLA can help!

In addition to the individual stewardship decisions you and others around your lake make, there are also land use decisions and practices that impact your lake's water quality that must be addressed at the broader regional and state level. These include surface water use rules, feedlot regulations, wastewater treatment, exotics management, pollution controls, state environmental protection policies, shoreland buffers and more.

The Minnesota Lakes Association is your statewide partner in lake protection.

When you join MLA, you become part of our statewide voice of over 50,000 people interested in legislation and state policies that impact the present and future quality of Minnesota's lakes. The louder and stronger our voice, the more effective we can be on your behalf. Just a few of MLA's past lobbying successes include: the first laws that prohibited the transport of exotic species; statewide regulations for septic system compliance; funding for the Citizen Lake Monitoring Program; reductions in the market cap on seasonal property evaluations; restrictions on the use of phosphorus lawn fertilizers; and restored funding for local water planning by counties.

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Your Voice to Protect and Enhance Minnesota's Lakes and Rivers

Other legislative issues we are addressing include: septic system compliance for property transfers; financial incentives for keeping lakeshore undeveloped; increased funding for exotic plant management; cost-share programs for establishing shoreland buffers; statewide funding mechanisms for local lake protection projects; and more. And, we represent lakeshore property owners' concerns on many state government committees where lake policies are established.

In addition to legislative influence, MLA has education programs to encourage individual stewardship for Minnesota's waters and outreach services to help lake associations be more effective in local water management. In 2002, MLA

- Sponsored over 1,000 students in 5th and 6th grades in six counties to study lake ecology and prepare to be tomorrow's lake stewards.
- Held a statewide education conferences attended by over 500 participants.
- Assisted in the formation of 15 new lake associations and responded to requests from six counties wanting to establish a county coalition of lake associations.
- MLA's publications—the quarterly *Reporter* newsletter, monthly *Lake Bulletin*, and email legislative alerts—reached over 50,000 people with up-to-date information on citizen stewardship for Minnesota's lakes. Plus, 45 lake associations received free web sites.
- MLA's *Sustainable Lakes Planning Workbook* has been the model for the development of over 100 lake management plans by local lake associations.

In 2003, MLA will establish a statewide Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Network, in partnership with the Rivers Council of Minnesota, to use citizen data to assess the condition of our state's lakes and rivers.

We Need Your Help—Minnesota's Lakes Need Your Help! Your tax-deductible membership or donation will help MLA focus on education, projects and legislation statewide to protect and preserve Minnesota's lake resources ... today and for tomorrow.

**Working together—locally and statewide—we can make a difference
in the quality of the lakes we call home!**

Please take a few minutes to learn more about the Minnesota Lakes Association and your membership benefits from our enclosed brochure. Then, fill out the membership form in the brochure and send your support in the envelope provided. We need your help to support our Minnesota heritage, our recreational resources, and the continued quality of life that clean lakes provide to you and hundreds of thousands of fellow Minnesotans. Thank you for caring about the future of Minnesota's lakes.

Sincerely,



Paula West
Executive Director

P.S. Please visit our web site at www.mnlakes.org for legislative reports, featured articles on best management practices for lake protection and a bibliography of over 600 resources on lake management.