



# AREA NEWS

P.O. Box 407 - Waskish MN 56685  
[www.urlaa.org](http://www.urlaa.org)

Hello Members, Lake Friends and Visitors,

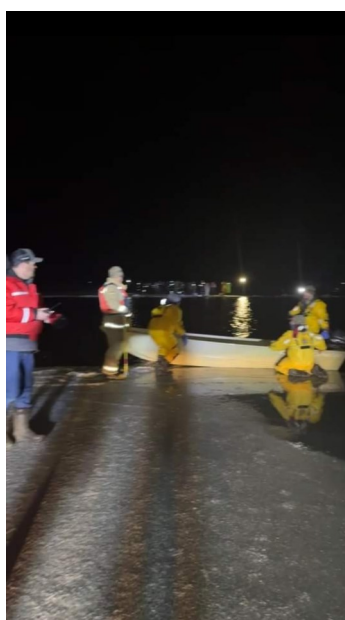
**WOW!!!** Is all there is to say about this past winter's ice fishing season and weather! Reports from those on the lake say fishing was fantastic all season long but the ice conditions not so much!

Some who ventured out early in the season had to be rescued. After a few rescues and reports of vehicles going thru the ice, the Beltrami County Sheriff's office implemented restrictions that barred vehicles from traversing on the lake. The heavy rains and winds kept the bigger houses off the ice for several weeks. Needless to say, it was a busy season for the emergency responders. We are so **grateful** to so many of the men and women in the area who volunteer their time to jump into action when someone is in need of help. **Thank you!**

Have you renewed your membership for 2024? Your membership helps in the efforts to keep the lake clean, the fish population healthy and the area thriving. Your membership also helps us to be able to distribute thousands of dollars to area fire department and first responder equipment needs, area activities and events, special school sports events and other community needs. **Thank you** so much to those of you who have already renewed your membership! You'll find the form in this newsletter or you can now renew your membership online on our website [urlaa.org](http://urlaa.org) **We hope you'll also invite your lake friends and neighbors to join in our efforts and become members as well. Thank you!**

As always, we welcome your input. If you have stories, pictures or suggestions of what you would like to see included in future issues, email them to [jdenoyer918@gmail.com](mailto:jdenoyer918@gmail.com).

Be Safe, keep the lake clean and enjoy the beauty this area has to offer.



Early ice rescues! Thank you to our local first responders for all they do .

Those are some nice Fish!!  
Big fish caught and released.

## DNR Fisheries Update from Tony Kennedy & Edie Evarts

What a difference a year makes! A year ago we had just wrapped up a slow winter fishing season, that saw a shifting ice sheet, deep snow, and poor catch rates. This past winter, while we still had a shifting ice sheet, we had almost no snow on the ice and unbelievable fishing – particularly in February. Winter harvest was a record-high 166,000 pounds! I'd speculate this was due to being some of the only drivable ice in the state and a strong late-season bite. Even with access restricted to walking and shuttles for much of December, there was more fishing pressure that month than the entire summer of 2023! Fishing pressure in February was double the average for that month and harvest was triple the average! This made for some very memorable fishing.

In early March, as we do each year, we met with the Red Lake Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). This group is made up of individuals that represent a variety of interests connected to Upper Red Lake – including the Upper Red Lake Area Association. During our meetings, we review the status of the walleye population and discuss regulation options for the upcoming summer and winter seasons.

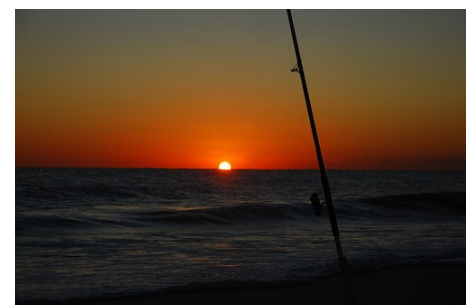
As I wrote in the fall newsletter, spawning stock biomass (SSB) is currently in the optimal condition, which gave us a target harvest range of 120,000 to 240,000 pounds for Dec 1, 2023 through November 30, 2024. With winter harvest coming in at 166,000 lbs, we have a little less harvest opportunity for the upcoming summer that we wished – darn you February! Although we can exceed the top of the target range (240,000 pounds) in a given year, we would have to go to catch-and-release only for the remainder of the harvest year if walleye harvest reached the 288,000-pound cap. This made the decision about summer regulations a little trickier than usual. Ultimately, it was decided that the safest option was to start with a **three fish bag limit with one fish allowed over 17 inches from Fishing Opener through June 14 and a four fish limit with the same size restriction beginning June 15<sup>th</sup>**. Being more restrictive during the early season when fishing pressure and catch rates are highest and relaxing to the four fish bag limit all but eliminates the risk of reaching the harvest cap.

The walleye population is in great shape and full of young fish, some of which will be reaching sexual maturity by next year. I expect that spawning stock biomass measured in our gill nets this fall will increase such that we will be in the “surplus” condition for the 2025 harvest year that starts on Dec 1<sup>st</sup> which will give us more harvest opportunity at that time (target harvest for the surplus condition is 240,000 to 336,000 pounds). At this point we are anticipating a four fish bag limit with one fish allowed over 17 inches for the winter season, but winter regulations will not be finalized until after our fall netting results are available in October and meeting with the CAC.

If history means anything, catch rates this spring following an earlier-than-usual ice out may be a bit slower than some of our recent late-ice-out years, but hopefully the sheer numbers of fish out there will still result in a strong bite and lots of happy anglers. I certainly plan to be among them!

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Edie or myself.

Tony Kennedy and Edie Evarts  
Bemidji Area Fisheries  
218-308-2339




# We Said NO. This Bill Must Go!

TOWN HALL  
**MEETING**  
APRIL 20, 2024  
KELLIHER SCHOOL

# POSTPONED


**WE SAID NO. THIS BILL MUST GO!**



- BUT OUR WORK CONTINUES

THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS & DONORS  
WE ARE JOINED BY POWERFUL PARTNERS

TOGETHER WE WILL DEFEAT ACTIONS  
THAT THREATEN OUR COMMUNITY

 FOR UPDATES LOGIN TO  
[URLAA.ORG](http://URLAA.ORG)

**KEEP OUR PUBLIC LAND  
AND WATERS PUBLIC**



[UpperRedLakeAssn.com](http://UpperRedLakeAssn.com)

Notice from the Upper Red Lake Area Association  
April 15, 2024

With no new relevant information regarding HF4780 and SF5080, The URLAA has decided to postpone the Town Hall Meeting scheduled for Saturday, April 20th, 2024.

The decision to originally host a town hall meeting was made to provide new information to residents regarding HF4780 and SF5080. Due to the number of phone calls, letters, and e-mails letting legislators know our concerns and opposition, our voices are being heard clearly at the legislature.

At this point hosting a town hall meeting will not bring forth any new information to the public. When/if new information becomes available it will be posted on the URLAA website. If a town hall meeting is needed we will revisit the event.

The URLAA has retained a lobbying firm to track bills and provide updated information to us. We are prepared to continue to oppose the legislation if it moves forward this session.

Rest assured we are not stopping this fight against restricting access to public lands. The URLAA will continue to work with our elected officials, lawyers, and local organizations to prevent this from happening.

Thank you for your continued support and please reach out if you have any questions:

[www.URLAA.org](http://www.URLAA.org)

Email: [contact@urlaa.org](mailto:contact@urlaa.org)



*Thank you to everyone who came out to the meeting at the Waskish Townhall on March 19. It was a full house!!*



*Thank you to those who came to the Capitol in support of Public Lands and Waters!*

***Thank you to all of you who have written, e-mailed or called the Legislators to let them know you oppose these bills. You are being heard!***

# Help prevent aquatic invasive species on Upper Red Lake

We encourage property owners and visitors to Upper Red Lake to learn how zebra mussels, stary stonewort, spiny waterflea, and other aquatic invasive species are transported from one body of water to another. Here is how you can help prevent AIS on Upper Red Lake.



**1. CLEAN** all visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other prohibited invasive species from watercraft, trailers, and water-related equipment before leaving any water access or shoreland.



**2. DRAIN** water-related equipment (boat ballast tanks, motor, portable bait containers,) and drain bilge, livewell and baitwell by removing drain plugs before leaving a water access or shoreline property. **Keep drain plugs out** and water-draining devices open while transporting watercraft.



**3. DISPOSE** of unwanted bait, including minnows, leeches, and worms, in the trash. It is illegal to release bait into a waterbody or release aquatic animals from one waterbody to another. If you want to keep your bait, you must refill the bait container with bottled or tap water.

## KNOW THE LAW: You may NOT...

- Transport watercraft without removing the drain plug.
- Arrive at lake access with drain plug in place.
- Transport aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or other prohibited species on any roadway.
- Launch a watercraft with prohibited species attached.
- Transport water from Minnesota lakes or rivers.
- Release bait into the water.

*Boat cleaning stations in the area are here to help boaters prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.*

*Each station includes tools to help you clean off your boats, including a vacuum and air hose.*

*The stations are also equipped with lights so late-night anglers can clean off their boats with ease.*

*Please do your part to help stop the spread!*



## ATV and OHV Trails

**This area has several public lands that allow for off highway riding. Get out this summer and explore the area on your ATV or OHV. Do a little hunting, berry picking or just explore the great outdoors. Respect is the key to keeping your privilege to ride on public land. Follow these guidelines for a safe and enjoyable ride.**

- ◆ Stay on established trails
- ◆ Minimize erosion—avoid excessive wheelspin in sensitive areas
- ◆ Remove your trash and litter
- ◆ Be courteous to all trail users—slow down or stop when meeting others
- ◆ Keep your machine quiet—noise is the biggest irritant
- ◆ Be kind to animals—don't harass or chase them
- ◆ Ride within your limits—safety and under control
- ◆ Wear proper protective gear—helmet, boots, gloves etc.
- ◆ Alcohol and riding do not mix—riding after consuming alcohol is illegal and dangerous
- ◆ Obey all posted closed and no trespassing signs
- ◆ Know your riding area and its property boundaries



### ***Join the Tri County Dirt Devils ATV-UTV Club based in Beltrami, Kooch and Itasca Counties***

Tri County Dirt Devil rides are on the 3rd Saturday every month from May thru October. They leave at 9:00 a.m. from the Kelliher Liquor Store. Membership is \$25 a year and can be mailed to TCDD ATV Club PO Box 194 Kelliher MN 56650. For text reminders on upcoming rides you can call or text your cell number to 218-553-0373.

## Big Bog State Recreation Area Web Cam

The Webcam at Big Bog State Park gives you a live view of Upper Red Lake from the top of the 100 foot high fire tower located in the south unit of the Big Bog State Recreation Area in Waskish. Red Lake is the largest freshwater lake fully contained within the boundaries of a single state in the entire United States, and is known for its Red Lake walleye and trophy Northern pike.

Waskish was one of the first district ranger locations developed in the 1920s. This site was chosen because of its accessibility to a state highway, its elevated land and its unrestricted view in all directions.

Built in 1937, this fire tower was originally located at the Pine Island forestry station in Koochiching County, and was built to be identical to a previous tower located on the same site.

Many things have changed over the last 100 years, but not the view from the top of the tower! It still offers an unrestricted, amazing view of Upper Red Lake and a portion of the 500 square mile Big Bog.

Just go to the web and search for Big Bog Web Cam to look at the live view of the lake anytime of day.

# Keep It Clean Updates

## Spring Shoreline Cleanup

Bag it and bring it!

Waskish Transfer Station – Memorial Weekend, May 25–27

Please – only trash gathered from the shoreline.

Yellow lake trash bags available at: Waskish MyStore

Thank you for protecting & preserving our public waters!

Contact@URLAA.org  
**URLAA.ORG**



Join your friends and neighbors for the Spring Shoreline Cleanup!! Bag it and Bring It!

Waskish Transfer station

Memorial Weekend May 25—27. You can pick up yellow lake trash bags at Waskish MyStore.

Please — only trash gathered from the shoreline.

Thank you for protecting & preserving our public waters!

A new billboard was put up on Hwy 72 near Shooks. We have two more going up soon. One on Artesian Springs Road/ County Hwy. 23 and the other one will be placed in Waskish.

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped in keeping the lake and surrounding area's clean.



### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Keep It Clean Coalition

is calling for a state-wide program and funding

for local “Clean Ice” efforts with the passage of our bill this session.

Please call your legislators and let them know IT MATTERS!!

Contact [Keepitcleanmn.org](http://Keepitcleanmn.org) or call 218-556-5844 to find out how you can help.

Thank you!



Scan the QR code to find out more about the bill or google Minnesota House File 3662 for more information.



## Check out the new updates on the URLAA.ORG Website

We hope you've had a chance to check out the updates and information available to you. We will continue to add information and do updates as needed. If you have any issues or problems with any of the links or if you have any suggestions on what you would like to see on the website let us know. Email us at [contact@urlaa.org](mailto:contact@urlaa.org).

We hope we've made it easier for you! We now have an online form for you to renew your URLAA membership. If you still prefer to mail in your URLAA membership I've included a form below and you can still find a printable form online as well. **Check your address mailing label on this newsletter for your expiration date.** If it's time to renew, please try out the online form or use the form below to mail it in. Also if there is anything that needs to be changed with your name and or address please let us know so that we can update it. E-mail changes to [jdenoyer918@gmail.com](mailto:jdenoyer918@gmail.com)

You can find information on HF4780 and SF5080 and track where it is. There is also a list of State Representatives and Senators along with their email addresses so that you can continue to let them know that you oppose these files. This session of the Minnesota State Legislature is scheduled to adjourn on May 20 so you only have a little more time this session to let them know how you feel. There's also a link online so that you can find your legislators contact information depending on where you live. Thank you to those of you who have already called them or sent emails. We ARE being heard and with your help these bills seem to be stalled for now but remember it's not over until they adjourn on May 20 so keep emailing, calling and sending letters.

Here is another way you can continue to help us **Stop the Transfer of Public Lands and Waters**. Along with your membership you can also help us with legal expenses by making a donation to the URLAA Legal Fund. This can also be done on our website or if you prefer you can mail it to the address listed at the bottom of this page. Address it to Legal Fund—URLAA. Any amount will help in our efforts to **STOP THE TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS**.

**Thank you Jeffrey Sprick for all you have done to update our website!!**

## Renew your membership online at [www.urlaa.org](http://www.urlaa.org) or use the form below

**Membership Fees:**  Individual: \$25.00 per year or  Business: \$50.00 per year

Enclosed is an additional donation to the URLAA Legal Fund to help Stop the Transfer of Public Lands & Waters. \$

Individual Names or Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Business Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail your membership to: URLAA— PO Box 407— Waskish MN 56685**

## What's Cooking — Cheese Dip

16 oz. cream cheese  
1 3/4 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
1 oz. pkg. dry ranch dressing mix (or a little less)  
3 T. sour cream  
2 to 3 T. onion, chopped  
5 pieces bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

Combine all ingredients into a bowl. Stir until the ingredients are fully incorporated.

Chill at least 4 hours, or overnight.

If you want to make it into a cheese ball, place a piece of plastic wrap into a bowl. Transfer the mixture into the wrap in the bowl, using the wrap to help form mixture into a ball.

Serve with a variety of crackers.

## Activities and Events in the Area

### Third Tuesday Every Month -

Upper Red Lake Area Association meetings 6 p.m. at West Wind Resort

### ATV Tri County Dirt Devil Rides -

Third Saturday in May, June, July, August, Sept & Oct  
Leave at 9 a.m. from Kelliher Liquor Store

### Kelliher Days Festival

Activities in Kelliher July 12, 13 and 14

### Billy Hillman Memorial Softball in Waskish

July 26, 27 & 28

### Woodcarvers Festival in Blackduck

July 27

### Koochiching County Fair Northome

August 9, 10 & 11

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