



# AREA NEWS

P.O. Box 407 - Waskish MN 56685

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

Hello Members, Lake Friends and Visitors,

**W**e hope you had a great summer and were able to spend some time on the lake with family and friends!

The summer fishing reports have been mixed, some say it was great all summer long and others had some good days and some not so good days. Being on the lake, enjoying the beauty of the area and spending time with family and friends is what it's all about. The fish are always a bonus!

The resorts and outfitters are gearing up for the Winter Ice Fishing Season. Technological improvements have made ice fishing increasingly popular during the last several years. Still, ice fishing can be mystifying for those who haven't yet ventured out. There are inherent dangers—ice conditions, traveling safely on the ice and propane heater carbon monoxide concerns—**so it's best to learn from a local resort, guide, outfitter or an experienced ice angler.** We all know that ice is never 100% safe!! **Always check with local resorts before heading out.** A smart move is to learn from someone you trust who knows ice fishing and the lake you're on. Ice fishing is a fun way to spend the cold, winter months. So if you have never tried it, get out this winter and give it a try, contact a local resort or local outfitter, we're sure you'll be back year after year.

The Lake Association and **Keep it Clean** continue to partner with Beltrami SWCD and will provide the funds, through our partners grant, for waste management in the 2024-2025 ice fishing season. Human waste does not belong on the ice, under the ice or along our shorelines. Thank you for doing your part to help in these efforts to keep the area we all love clean.

Keep an eye on the upcoming Legislative Session and stay updated by going to the URLAA.org website. We will need you to contact your legislators by phone, email or if needed, send them a letter. Let them know that you oppose any land back legislation. Let them know that public waters and public lands should remain public for everyone to use.

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).

As always, Be Safe, Catch Fish, Keep the Lake Clean and enjoy the beauty this area has to offer.

## Upper Red Lake Area Association President Robyn Dwight Receives Well Deserved Award!

Robyn was nominated and received an award for Community Conservation from the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. She will travel to Bloomington to attend the **Keep It Clean** display and accept her award in December. Robyn works tirelessly everyday for **Keep it Clean** and the **Upper Red Lake Area Association** and actively puts in a significant amount of time and effort to improve the Upper Red Lake area. She makes it a better place for visitors to the area and for those of us who call this area home. **Thank you Robyn!**



## DNR Fisheries Update from Tony Kennedy & Edie Evarts

I hope this finds you enjoying fall and looking forward to safe ice. We recently wrapped up our sampling season on Upper Red Lake and, similar to my report last year, I'm pleased to say that the Red Lakes remain loaded with young walleye. This was reflected in the gill net sample and the catch rate was good.

After an unbelievably calm summer season with a good bite in summer 2023, we saw the other extreme this year – wind and rain after an early ice out that made for tough early season fishing. The walleye catch rate in May was similar to May 2021 (another early ice out year) and among the lowest since the fishery reopened. We harvested 70,000 pounds of walleye this summer – about half of what we saw in 2023. Although the fishing was tough early, the three-fish bag limit to start the year also served to moderate harvest which was necessary after a record winter harvest of 166,000 pounds. We finished the 2024 harvest year at 236,000 pounds which was just below the top of the target harvest range of 120,000 to 240,000 pounds (and similar to the previous year, 224,000 pounds).

The adjustment to a **four-fish walleye bag limit with one fish allowed over 17 inches** that went into effect on June 15<sup>th</sup> will continue for the upcoming winter season. This regulation was selected because the target harvest range for the 2025 harvest year (which begins on December 1<sup>st</sup>) increased. The target harvest range is based on the number of mature females, or spawning stock, in the population which increased into the “surplus” condition as the strong 2019 year class began to reach sexual maturity. As a result, the target harvest range for the 2025 harvest year is 240,000 to 336,000 pounds.

Over the past few years, the spawning stock condition has bounced back and forth between the optimal and surplus condition. Because the target harvest ranges for each condition are considerably different, walleye regulations have varied quite a bit. In addition to the status of the walleye population, the conditions (e.g., poor or good winter ice, early or late ice out, and windy or calm) have a lot to do with how successful anglers are which makes determining how much harvest will be realized under a given regulation tricky. Hopefully we will have a better balance of harvest between the winter and summer seasons this year – but that will all depend on the ice conditions and how well the fish bite.

We will meet with our Citizen Advisory Committee in early March once we finalize the winter harvest estimate and know how much harvest opportunity remains for the summer season. Given the increased target harvest I'm optimistic that it will be more than last year so summer anglers will likely see less restrictive regulations than this past summer. Now let's all hope for good winter ice and a late ice out so we can all get out there and catch some fish!

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Edie or myself at 218-308-2339.

Tony Kennedy (Large Lake Specialist) and Edie Evarts (Bemidji Area Fisheries Supervisor)



Look what popped up in Waskish! Thanks to Ross Lewis Sign Company and the Waskish Township. Funding is from the Minnesota Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment.



New addition to Artesian Springs Road. Thank you to Brent Poxleitner for providing the space to help spread the word on Keeping it Clean!

## Keep it Clean Update

*“Every winter, hundreds of thousands of anglers head for the frozen water to fish. Most ice anglers clean up after themselves, but some don’t—and it’s their behavior that was the impetus for a new litter-on-ice-law the Minnesota Legislature passed earlier this year.”*

The **KEEP IT CLEAN** Coalition is the driving force behind “Clean Ice” legislation, prohibiting the placement of garbage and human waste on or under the ice of state waters, with a \$100 fine for offenders, as the critical first part of protecting Minnesota’s ice covered waters from the leftovers of human activity. But more must be done.

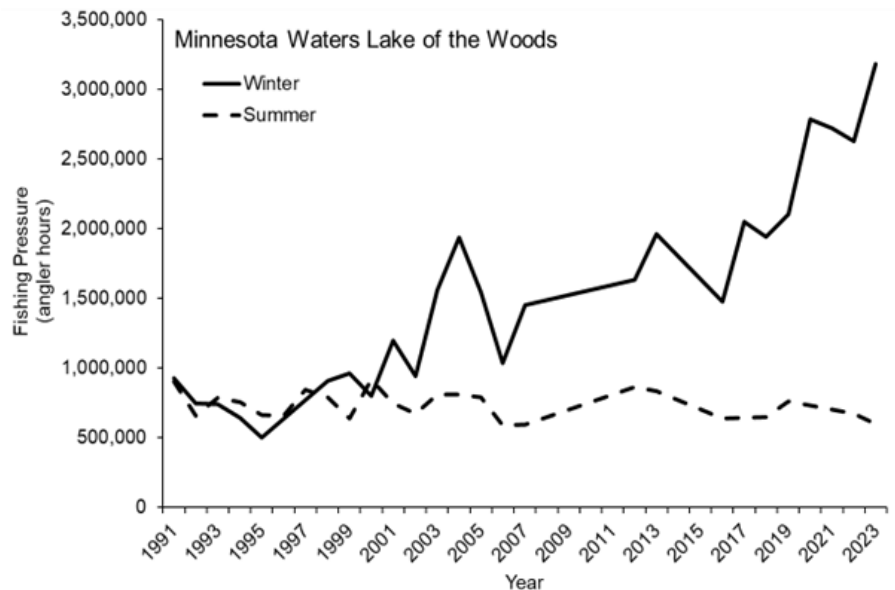
Through the hard work of volunteers and with amazing partnerships, our coalition has attracted members representing thousands of lakes around the state, eager to take on the **KEEP IT CLEAN** Challenge. We have developed education campaigns, participated in media events, shared free resources, and, through grant funding and donations, provided signage and waste-removal support at private lake accesses to public waters. We have shown that our efforts are necessary, but our resources are limited.

Minnesotans tell us they need infrastructure to handle the waste products of a growing “ice camping” and winter angling phenomenon. Although people and their pets can now camp and recreate for extended amounts of time on frozen waters, there are very few options for safe and legal waste removal onshore.

The DNR Fisheries graph shows the growing disparity between winter and summer anglers over time at Lake of the Woods. We presume the data is similar for other large walleye destinations across the state. As you can see, the popularity of winter angling is increasing steadily.

According to DNR Creel Survey data, there were about 65,000 trips to Upper Red Lake in 3 months in 2022-2023. There were over 80,000 trips in 2021-2022. Mille Lacs Lake and Lake of the Woods experienced similar numbers. That translated to over six million angler hours from December to February on these three lakes alone.

In 2024, Representative Andrew Myers—Minnetonka, chief authored our **KEEP IT CLEAN PROGRAM/GRANTS BILL** in the house (HF3662), and Senator Aric Putnam chief authored it in the Senate (SF3957). Although the bill did not pass last session, we are grateful to be working with Rep. Myers and many others on both sides of the aisle to reintroduce important **KEEP IT CLEAN** legislation this session that will serve all Minnesotans and protect our state waters.



<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF3662&ssn=0&y=2024>

We believe a Shelter and Ice Recreation Program, like the existing DNR Boat and Water Safety Program, is the best way to teach the public the importance of caring for the environment and being safe during winter angling and recreation. We also recognize that small communities need incentives and opportunities to build, and upgrade winterized human waste removal infrastructure, so visitors, by the tens of thousands, are not overwhelming local services.

To that end, we are prepared to work with legislators and organizations who share our concerns and support our efforts to get the **Keep it Clean Program and Funding Bill** passed this session.



*Clean ice means clean water. We pledge to help protect and preserve this valuable resource now, and for generations to come.*



# Upper/Lower Red Lake Comprehensive Watershed Plan

After nearly two years of collaborative planning, the comprehensive watershed management plan is nearly complete. This watershed plan aligns water planning along watershed boundaries and enhances existing county water plans. It sets goals and actions for the next 10 years to help prioritize and fund projects with the purpose of improving water quality and to manage resources across the Red Lake watershed. It is part of One Watershed One Plan, a statewide effort to coordinate water management.

Facts about the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed:

- The Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed spans 1,940 square miles.
- Upper and Lower Red Lake combined is the largest lake (288,800 acres) in Minnesota.
- Primary communities include Red Lake Nation Reservation, Kelliher, Blackduck, and Funkley.
- Parts of Beltrami, Koochiching, Itasca, and Clearwater Counties.

This voluntary program is administered through the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Red Lake Nation, Beltrami SWCD and the Red Lake Watershed District teamed up to develop this plan. A voluntary technical advisory committee helped develop the Plan. Partners will complete plan action items that are measurable and trackable to improve and protect soil and water in this area.

For more information on the plan and map of the watershed, visit <https://www.beltramiswcd.org/about-5>

Contact Beltrami SWCD at (218) 333-4157 or [katelyn.bergstrom@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto:katelyn.bergstrom@co.beltrami.mn.us).



## THANK YOU Frank Duresky!

Thank you to everyone who voted! The Upper Red Lake Area Association was proud to support Frank.

Unfortunately, the outcome isn't what we had hoped for, but Frank will continue to represent this area on important issues through his commitment and service on the Waskish Town Board, the URLAA Board and so many other organizations he is committed to.

We are so proud of the way you represented the 4<sup>th</sup> District throughout your campaign. We know you were the right person to represent this area.

*Thank you!*

## Help Support the Kelliher Fire & Rescue!

*The Kelliher Fire & Rescue annual raffle has started. The drawing is at 8:00 pm on Saturday, December 14, 2024. Need not be present to win.*

*Get your tickets at most local businesses or from any of the volunteer Firefighters!*

*They appreciate your support!*

**\$10  
each**

### KELLIHER FIRE & RESCUE ANNUAL RAFFLE

- 1st Prize:** Banks Blind The Stump 4 Ice
- 2nd Prize:** Remington Model 700 BDL .30-06 Rifle
- 3rd Prize:** Otter XT Pro Cabin X-Over Shelter
- 4th Prize:** \$500 Cash
- 5th Prize:** StrikeMaster 40V Lite Electric Ice Auger
- 6th Prize:** Tristar 12 Gauge Semi-Auto Shotgun
- 7th Prize:** Savage Minimalist .17 HMR Rifle
- 8th Prize:** \$100 Cash

Drawing held at Kelliher Liquor Store in Kelliher, MN 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 14, 2024  
Need not be present to win. • Winner Responsible for Tax & Registration • Must be 18 to purchase a ticket.

Sponsored by Kelliher Firefighters Relief Association  
Lawful Gambling Exempt #X-02246 • Permit applied for

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# THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE WASKISH DAYS POSSIBLE!

**WOW!** We can't thank you enough for all the support you showed the Upper Red Lake Area Association during the 1st Annual Waskish Days Celebration. To all the businesses and individuals who donated prizes, to those who went out and solicited those donations, to everyone who sold and or purchased raffle tickets, to everyone who helped set up the different events and activities and those who participated in the events, to those who did the cooking and donated food and to everyone who helped with set up, clean up and take down **we thank you!** *Special thank you to West Wind Resort and Hillman's Resort for providing space for all the activities and events. See you next year!*



Mark your calendars for the  
2nd Annual Waskish Days  
August 29 - September 1,  
2025





## Grant Recipients in 2024

- Kelliher Fire & Rescue Genesis Extraction Tools
- Blackduck Ambulance Generator
- North Beltrami Sportsmen's Club
- Northome High School MCA's
- Kelliher Library and Information Center Kids Programs
- Kelliher School Scholarship Fund
- City of Mizpah Community Activities
- Kelliher School Mustang Football & Baseball
- Kelliher Public Schools Robotics Team
- Kelliher School Senior Class Trip
- Kelliher Waskish First Responders Cot System
- Kelliher Day's Festival
- Blackduck Trap Team
- Beltrami Container Gardening Program
- North Beltrami Heritage Center
- Kelliher Northome Girls Basketball Summer Program
- Kelliher School Golf Simulator
- Take A Kid Fishing Event
- Koochiching County Fair
- Kelliher Area Giving Tree
- Kelliher Fire & Rescue Fire Prevention Week
- Kelliher School Yearbook
- Kelliher School Girls Basketball

## Your support helps to do so much for the Upper Red Lake Area

Money obtained through Pull-Tab gambling can **only** be used for grant requests. These grants allow students to participate in many after school sports and activities and also provides additional support for school sponsored events, community celebrations, many different events for children at the Library and activities at the Heritage Center, support also goes to the local Fire Department and First Responders for new equipment upgrades and other needs, it also helps to promote Human Waste prevention on Upper Red Lake, as well as, to provide individual needs grants in the area and so much more.

Without members the URLAA would cease to exist and so would the thousands of dollars in grants given out annually. Thank you to ALL our existing members and future members for continuing to aid and support our communities.

Pull Tabs can be found at these locations:

- West Wind Resort - Waskish
- Mort's on Upper Red Lake South Shore
- Kelliher Liquor Store
- Road Runner Drive - Kelliher

### Conditions of Grant Requests:

- Applications must be printed off the URLAA website and filled out or submitted via the online form.
- Applications that are sent in blank and say "See Attached" will not be accepted.
- Grants from Schools must also be signed by the Superintendent.
- Representatives must be present to speak to the grant request. If no one is present, the grant will automatically be denied.
- Grants received less than 7 days before the meeting (3rd Tuesday of each month) will automatically be held until the next meeting a month later.
- Attach a copy of your IRS Tax Exempt Non-Profit 501C3 number if applicable.
- All grants must have a LG555 form on file with the URLAA or submit a LG555 during the grant presentation. Get the form at the link below.

[https://mn.gov/gcb/assets/lg555\\_tcm1192-550265.pdf](https://mn.gov/gcb/assets/lg555_tcm1192-550265.pdf)

***Thank you for supporting the  
Upper Red Lake Area!***

## Are Your Lake Neighbors and Friends Members of the Upper Red Lake Area Association?

We find only a small portion of area property owners and visitors to this area are actual members of the URLAA.

We'd like to encourage more of your neighbors and friends to become members of the URLAA and join in our efforts to protect and improve this wonderful resource we all cherish.

If you belong to a "road association" or similar entity for your property, or if you have a neighborhood gathering or annual meeting.....we'd like to provide some membership materials for those who may not be aware of the Upper Red Lake Area Association.

We're always surprised to hear of folks who have lived here for several years, own property in the area or just come up to fish, camp and explore the area who don't know about the URLAA. Let us know when your meeting or gathering occurs and if you prefer we'll provide you with membership forms. Just send us an email a few weeks prior to your gathering to [Contact@urlaa.org](mailto:Contact@urlaa.org). You can also encourage people to join on the [URLAA.ORG](http://URLAA.ORG) website.

You don't need to own property in the area to become members. If you love the area, then join us. As an Association, we have more clout when approaching government agencies such as the Legislature, Department of Natural Resources and others. The chances of having an impact and getting desired action increases when we go in as a group. The greater the number of members we have, the greater our voices will be heard.

**Thank you for helping to spread the word  
about the Upper Red Lake Area Association!**



**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 — Easy Salsa

1 can (28 ounce) whole tomatoes with juice  
2 cans (10 ounce) Rotel diced tomatoes/green chilies  
1/4 c. chopped onions  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 whole jalapeno pepper, diced small  
1/4 tsp. sugar  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. ground cumin  
1/2 whole lime juice  
1/2 c. cilantro (optional)

Combine the whole tomatoes with juice, Rotel with juice, onions, garlic, jalapeno, sugar, salt, cumin, lime juice and cilantro in a blender or food processor. Pulse until you get the salsa to the consistency you'd like. About 10 to 15 pulses. If you like it thicker you can always strain it when done blending.

Test seasonings with a tortilla chip and adjust as needed to your liking. Makes 2 pint size jars.

Refrigerate salsa for at least an hour.

## Activities and Events in the Area

**Note:** All vehicles entering the Big Bog Park require a valid Minnesota State Parks vehicle permit \$7 for day or \$35 year.

**November 23—Saturday 10 am \$50 ea.**

**Crafting Around the Christmas Tree**—includes all crafting materials, lunch, dessert & beverages—Up North Gallery Kelliher Sign up online or in store, space is limited 218-508-7866

**November 24 - December 15, Sundays 1-4 pm \$35 ea.**

**Harvest Moon Greenhouse Winter Workshops**  
Winter Gnome Tree, Winter Kissing Balls, Winter Porch Pots, Winter Hanging Baskets, Grinch Tree and Christmas Center-piece— Northome RSVP by texting to 507-456-7611

**December 8—Sunday 1-3 pm \$8.50**

**Wreath Making Workshop.** Registration required by calling the Big Bog Visitor Center at 218-888-7310. Meet at the Big Bog Visitor Center—Waskish

**December 14—Saturday 3-6 pm Mizpah Community Center**

**Hometown Christmas** - all are welcome, meet Santa & Mrs. Clause, crafts, cookie decorating, sleigh rides & more. free will donation soup supper. questions call 218-244-9716

**February 22—Saturday 6-8 pm**

**Candlelight Snowshoeing.** Snowshoes in children and adult sizes available for free check-out. Big Bog North Unit

**Anytime day and night all year long—Live View Web Cam** from top of Fire Tower at [bigbog.statepark@state.mn.us](mailto:bigbog.statepark@state.mn.us)

P.O. Box 407 - Waskish MN 56685  
Email: [Contact@URLAA.org](mailto:Contact@URLAA.org)

