

2025 Annual Report of Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID)

The OLID was formed on July 23, 2019

2025 Annual Report Prepared by the [Orono Lake Improvement District Board of Directors](#).

1. Financial Conditions

- a. All items included in the proposed budget for 2025 were approved by members on August 27, 2024 at the OLID Annual Meeting.

- **Goal 1-8: OLID Annual Services and Activities Fee (100% approval)**

The Orono Lake Improvement District Board of Directors proposed that the OLID request the City of Elk River to impose a service charge within the OLID in the amount of \$100 per full unit for 2025 OLID Annual Services and Activities. This service charge is to support the services and activities itemized in the proposed budget at a total cost of no more than the \$17,250 budgeted expenses.

The Goals for 2025 include Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Control of Curly-leaf Pondweed, Sedimentation Monitoring and Management, Undesirable Aquatic Vegetation and Organisms Public Waters Control, Fisheries Survey, Preservation and/or Stocking, Website Licensing and Maintenance, County Special Assessment Fees, Office Supplies and Organizational Expenses and OLID Board Liability Insurance. These charges will be collected by Sherburne County in 2025.

- **2025 Budget and Financial Conditions**

The OLID financial report for 2025 as of December 06, 2025 showed expenses of \$25,505.20, deposits of \$21,204.70, a checking balance of \$13,260.79 and savings balance of \$2,927.65. As of December 06, 2025 the OLID has received \$17,145.49 (including the 2024 last installment of \$316.22) from Sherburne County in annual property services and activities charges. It is estimated that the OLID will receive the 2025 outstanding balance of \$411.00 in January 2026 as the final payment of the tax reconciliation process for a total of \$17,250. Further, it will receive \$166.00 from the City of Elk River as its match of our Sherburne SWCD CLP Delineation and Point-Intercept Survey grant and \$1,000.00 from SWCD (the maximum grant amount).

Further, in 2025 Eurasian watermilfoil rapid response grants of \$1950.14 from Sherburne SWCD and 975.07 the City of Elk River were received. Related, the OLID applied for an AIS control grant of Curly-leaf pondweed from the MN DNR in 2025. However, it was not received due to a reduced chance caused by grants being awarded in 2022 and 2023.

2. Business transacted by the district

- a. The OLID has incurred the following business expenses transacted by the Orono Lake Improvement District as of December 06, 2025.

● AIS Control Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP)	\$12,152.00
● Point-Intercept Surveys and CLP Delineation	\$3,243.00
● Lake Vegetation Management Planning	\$866.09
● Fisheries Survey Preservation and/or Stocking	\$2,000.00
● Web Licensing and Maintenance	\$151.12
● County Special Assessment Fee	\$920.00
● Office Supplies and Organizational Expenses	\$602.30
● OLID Liability Insurance coverage	\$987.00

Status of all projects

3. Sedimentation Management

a. Lake Orono Restoration and Enhancement (LORE)

- In total, dredging removed just over 140,000 cubic yards of material from various locations within both the upper and lower portions of the lake. Shoreline restoration was completed along the point off Simonet Drive and along the west shoreline of Orono Cemetery. The project was completed in April 2021.
- Part of the LORE project included the creation of a sedimentation catch basin. The catch basin is intended to capture non suspended sedimentation. Maintaining the catch basin will require sedimentation removal. Future sedimentation removal may consist of hydraulic or mechanical dredging.

b. The Sedimentation Management Plan

- The plan aims to address the issue of sediment accumulation within the lake. Sedimentation is a natural process where soil, organic matter, and other particles are deposited in bodies of water over time, resulting in reduced water quality and habitat degradation. The plan outlines strategies and actions to mitigate sedimentation and restore the lake's health.

c. BioBase Use Strategies – surveys generated using [BioBase](#), which uses sonar to create detailed depth (bathymetry), vegetation and hardness maps of the lake bottom. These surveys provide valuable data on three key aspects: bathymetry, vegetation, and bottom hardness. Here's a brief overview of each component:

- **Bathymetry:** Bathymetry refers to the measurement of water depth in a body of water. BioBase uses sonar technology to create detailed bathymetric maps of Lake Orono. These maps show the contours and variations in water depth, providing important information about the lake's topography.
- **Vegetation:** The surveys help to identify the distribution and extent of different types of aquatic plants and algae present in the lake. Understanding the vegetation patterns is crucial for assessing the ecological health of the lake and determining any potential impacts on water quality, navigation, or recreational activities.
- **Bottom Hardness:** BioBase surveys additionally provide data on the hardness of the lake bottom. By measuring the substrate composition, including sediment types and bottom consistency, the management plan can gain insights into the sedimentation processes occurring in the lake. This information aids in understanding sediment dynamics, deposition areas, and potential erosion concerns.

By integrating the data from these surveys, the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) can develop a comprehensive sedimentation management plan. This plan may include strategies for mitigating sedimentation issues, such as implementing erosion control measures, managing vegetation, and conducting periodic dredging activities. The data generated by BioBase surveys helps inform decision-making processes and allows for a more effective and targeted approach to managing sedimentation in Lake Orono.

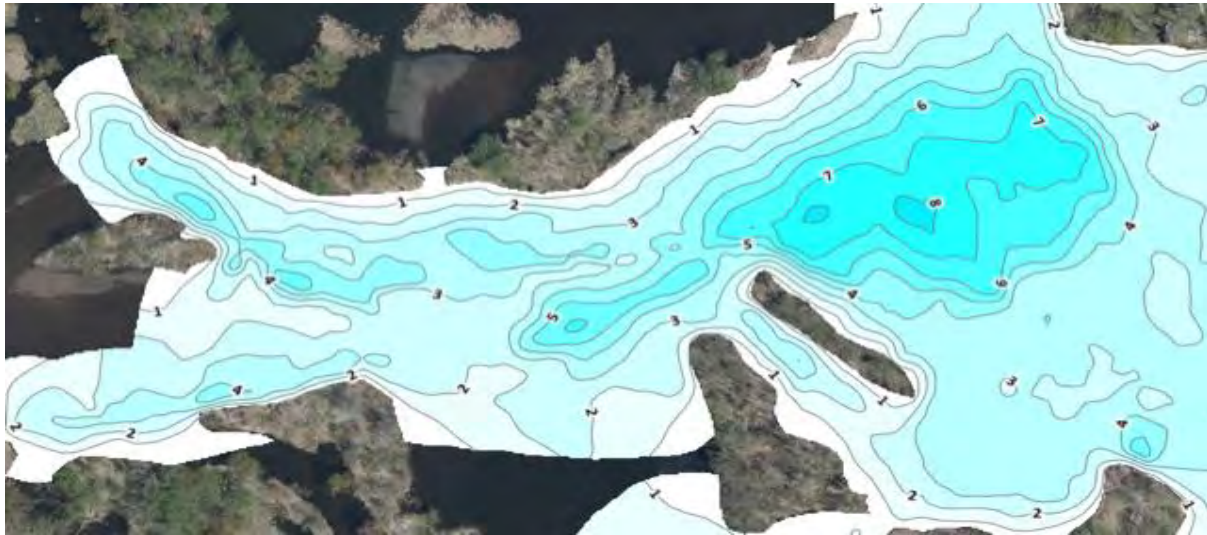
d. 2025 Sedimentation assessment and monitoring report.

BioBase surveys were conducted in 2022, 2023, 2024 and in 2025 by the OLID sedimentation assessment and monitoring committee. The surveys conducted in 2022 provided valuable baseline data on sedimentation in the catch basin. Some key findings when comparing the data from the 2022 through 2025 surveys include:

- **Sediment Accumulation Rate:** The rate at which sediment was accumulating in the catch basin was determined based on the data collected in 2022 through 2025.
1. Survey indicates a 2023-2025 year over year accumulation of sedimentation in the catch basin of 1,481 cubic yards of material.
 2. Total combined 2022-2025 accumulation of sedimentation in the catch basin of 12,879 cubic yards of material.

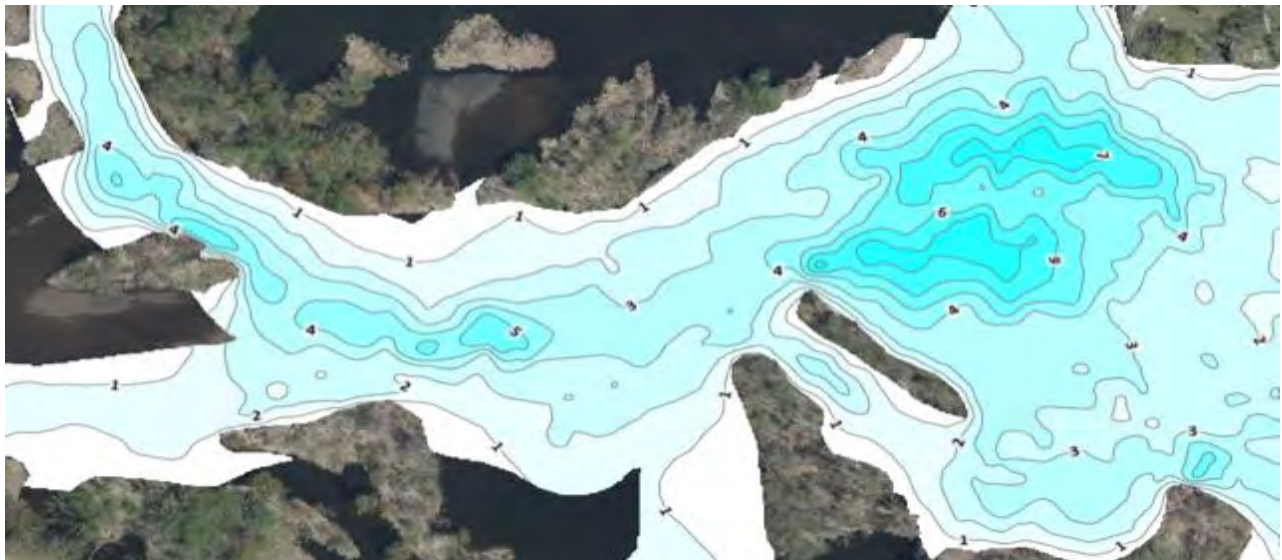
2022 Catch Basin (depth measurements)

Water Volume (acre ft)	35.004
Water Depth Avg (ft)	4.16
Water Depth Max (ft)	8.33
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.19



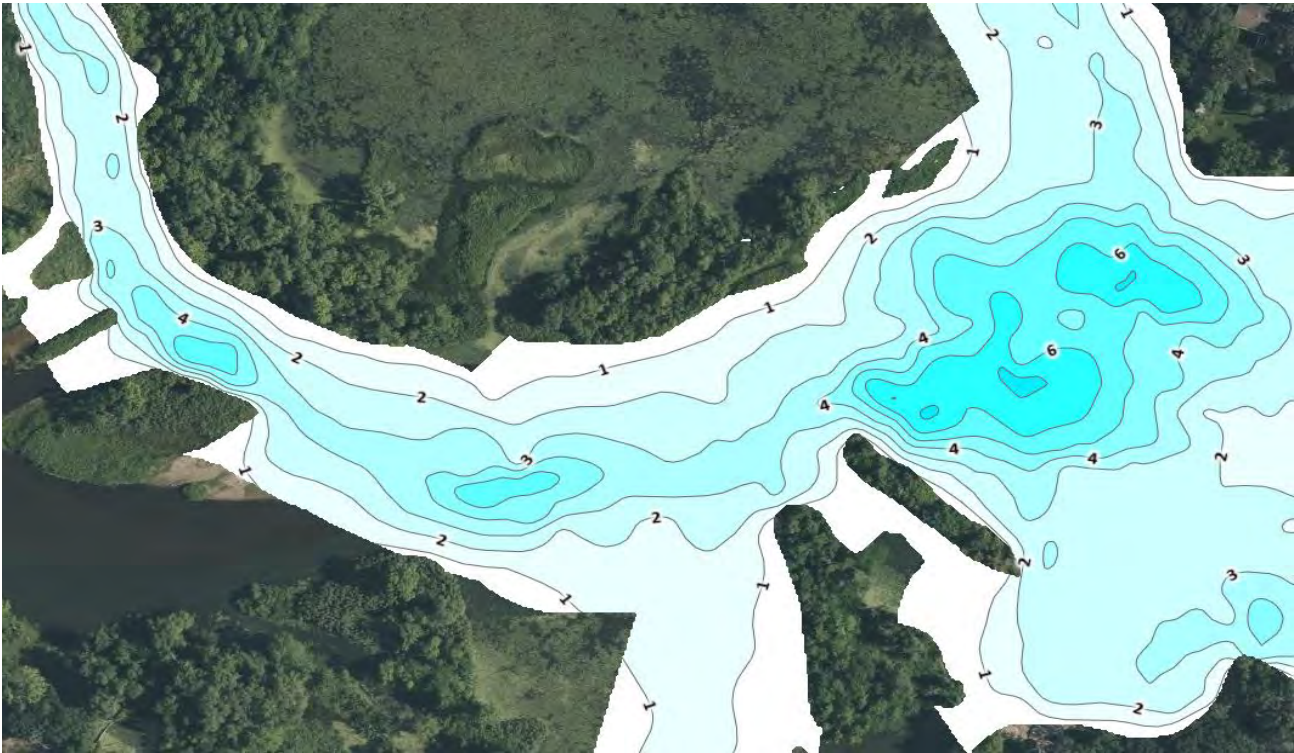
2023 Catch Basin (depth measurements)

Water Volume (acre ft)	30.204
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.59
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.61
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.14



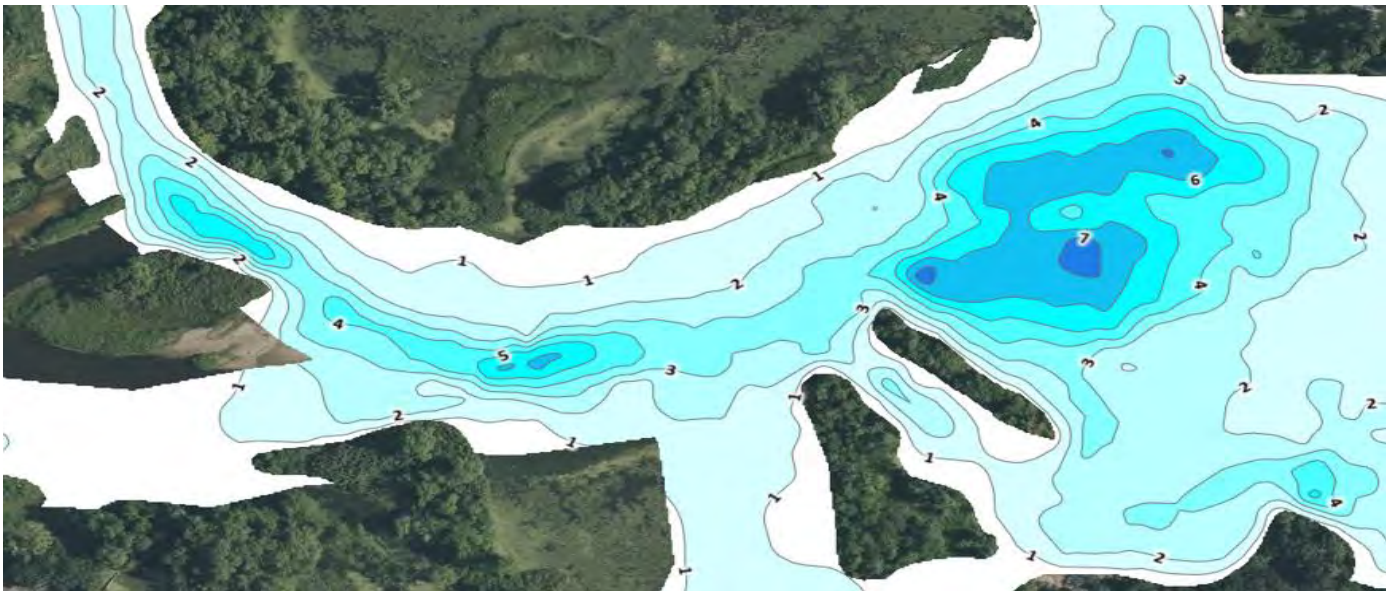
2024 Catch Basin (depth measurements)

Water Volume (acre ft)	27.975
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.38
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.11
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.22



2025 Catch Basin (depth measurements)

Water Volume (acre ft)	27.057
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.27
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.47
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.10



- **Potential Sources:** Sediment could be from nearby scouring and/or shoreline erosion identified in red below and from upstream locations within the watershed.

2023 aerial view near catch basin



Further strategies to quantify resedimentation and its remediation will be addressed in the 2021 – 2026 Lake Orono Management Plan. Sediment Management is now an additional subcategory on the OLID website.

4. **Communications**

- In 2025 OLID Communications Committee resurrected an OLID newsletter to help assure OLID members are fully informed and connected to the community of Lake Orono (see Appendices 15 for an example). Ed Bury chaired the 2025 effort, and will continue to lend his help with communications. New OLID board member Katie Ganfield is chairing the committee into 2026, to keep OLID members aware, informed, and invited to get involved in the important ongoing work of caring for and about Lake Orono. The newsletter will provide readers with the latest info on the work of the OLID Board and its committees so they can be well informed advocates for lake issues and feel more a part of the community of Lake Orono residents.
- OLID Website: In 2020 the development and release of the <https://oronolid.org/> website was achieved with considerable savings obtained from the group licensing of its web platform. The go-live date of the website was July 31, 2020. Besides being the official bulletin board for the OLID, it provides a document repository, project updates, a member contact form and links to key partner organizations and educational resources.

In 2021 the new category of Lake Management Plan was added to the main menu with Aquatic Invasive Species, Fisheries and Water Quality as subcategories and updates have been made since to each of the pages annually. Further, in 2022 the purchasing of a Lowrance HDS-7 sonar system and licensing BioBase software to track sediment build-up for future dredging projects and to map aquatic vegetation was added to the Lake

Management Plan page. In 2025 additional updates were added to each of those sections as well. The OLID is currently adding new communications elements and Aquatic Vegetation (both Native and Invasive Species) as an additional separate subcategory to its staging website. We plan to make those public on the production website in 2026.

5. **Funding**

- a. In 2025, a Funding Committee was created by the OLID Board. Its purpose is to build relationships and partnerships to help secure funds necessary to assure and sustain long-term quality recreational use and navigation of Orono Lake.

The committee's annual or short-term work is to track past OLID budget trends to predict future financial conditions in a planful way. The OLID's revenues have been stable but limited, but have been supplemented by successful DNR grant applications which have been used to offset treatment costs of invasive aquatic species. The addition of the grants expands OLID revenues, allowing a small fund balance to be created. That fund balance allowed OLID to OK a rapid response and prompt treatment of the late-summer discovery of Eurasian Watermilfoil at four locations in upper Lake Orono. These grants are neither guaranteed nor predictable, but OLID will continue to pursue appropriate grants as they become known and will 'keep our oar in the water'.

The long-term work of the funding committee is to secure funding for the next sediment removal. Lake Orono was dredged in 1998 and again in 2021, and the Elk River continues to bring sediment from its 391,000-acre watershed. Sediment removal is expensive and challenging but vital to the long-term use and health of the lake. Removal efforts will have to occur again, and will be on-going well into the future. OLID will need partners and collaborators to work together to address this ongoing need.

6. **Vegetation and Organism Management**

• **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention and Control**

1. Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP): as an alternative to Endothall the MN DNR again this year supported using Flumioxazin over Diquat for CLP treatment. Though Flumioxazin is less expensive than Endothall it is slightly more expensive than Diquat, but considered to be more friendly to the environment. Flumioxazin is also considered by our service provider Lake Management Inc. (LMI) to be the most effective of the three herbicides in control.

The CLP treatment was again conducted earlier in the year than past years on May 14, 2025. This was due to a change in treatment deadline by the MN DNR from June 1 to May 15. In making the change the MN DNR allowed for the Lake Orono 2024 CLP delineation to be used for the permit. In the end result, the treatment was considered to be largely effective by lake property owners and lake users. A formal Curly-leaf pondweed delineation was done pretreatment at 100 on May 12, 2025. Due to time of year the number was scaled back from a standard 150 point-intercept survey, but all vegetation at the 100 points was documented as usual. If time had allowed the findings from the pretreatment CLP that was conducted on May 12, 2025 to be used, the OLID would have submitted a revised permit request.

2. Unfortunately, on July 14, 2025 our aquatic plant contractor conducted a vegetation survey on Lake Orono and discovered a new infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). The EWM appears to have washed in from upstream. This is the only time it has been found since it was first detected in July 2020 and a rapid response herbicide treatment was successfully done in August 2020. The EWM was discovered in the four areas in the upper portion of Lake Orono (see delineation map, slide 3 of appendices 11).

The MN DNR issued a rapid response treatment permit and the Eurasian watermilfoil was treated by Lake Management, Inc (LMI). on August 11, 2025 using ProcettaCOR EC. The treatment was very targeted and had a low aquatic toxicity rating.

The OLID would like to thank Sherburne SWCD and the City of Elk River for their grant support that helped make the rapid response treatment possible this year.

3. Zebra Mussels: On Friday, September 11, 2020 after the LORE dredging project drawdown was halfway to completion Zebra Mussels were found. The finding was made by a lake property owner who also happens to be an Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist for Carver County. The individual reported the finding that day to the DNR and Sherburne SWCD. It was reported the following day to the OLID.

Two zebra mussel “hot spots” were found by the Carver County AIS Specialist (and later inspected by Sherburne SWCD) in areas along northern Main Street NW. In addition, single zebra mussels were found on an anchor on the sandbar off the cemetery point by another lake property owner and by SWCD near the public boat landing attached to a native mussel. The DNR received both photos and specimens to verify the infestation.

It was hoped that the freeze associated with the LORE dredging project drawdown would result in freezing all exposed zebra mussels. In 2021 the zebra mussel veliger tests that were collected were all again negative. However, one of the last of the five new eDNA tests from June / August came back with a positive response for zebra mussels.

Further, in 2021 zebra mussel monitoring platforms were doubled from 3 to 6 locations and property owners were encouraged to thoroughly inspect their docks and lifts (see the now annual flyer as Appendices 12). Unfortunately, one new platform zebra mussel finding was reported in 2022 on Main Street NW.

In addition, in 2023 and 2024 there were continued findings on Main Street NW and Simonet Drive NW (on monitoring platforms, shoreline boulders and equipment). New area discoveries were made on 5th Street NW on a lift, dock and a monitoring platform. The 2023 and 2024 findings were made during the annual water equipment and shoreline inspections that are encouraged of all lake property owners.

In 2025 new Zebra mussel findings were reported on Orono Parkway, Upland and attached to the lake dam itself. Notice of zebra mussels is still posted by the DNR at the public boat landing.

The trailering and passage of boats from one body of water to another has significantly contributed to the spread of zebra mussels. Recreational boaters, anglers, and commercial barges all need to take great care to avoid the transfer of zebra mussel “stowaways.” Unfortunately, once a colony of zebra mussels is established in a waterbody, it is nearly impossible to prevent them from spreading elsewhere. The best protection is to keep them from entering Orono Lake altogether.

The OLID is working on a number of strategies and educational opportunities in efforts to prohibit the further spread of the zebra mussels (see Appendices 13 for further details).

- **Native Plant and Algae Management**

Due to a variety of conditions associated with the LORE project and significant drought in 2021 and 2022 Water star-grass and persistent nuisance Filamentous algae were big concerns for property owners and lake users. However, in 2023 the most significant differences from the previous year were a decrease in Water star-grass and Filamentous algae. The most notable native plant increase was in Coontail. A variety of factors appear to be involved, including very abnormal winter and spring weather condition in 2023. In

2024 Water star-grass levels were trending back up, but not terribly. In 2025 the point counts were actually lower than in 2024 and still well below 2022 levels.

Some of differences from last year were caused by the shifts the last two years in spring survey timing caused by MN DNR changes in CLP treatment deadlines. The most notable native plant increase was in Filamentous algae and Common waterweed and a decrease in Coontail. Further, of note this spring Filamentous algae covered much of the lake bottom, potentially suppressing other plant growth (see Appendices 14 for additional detail). In 2026, the OLID intends to continue contracting CLP delineations and point-intercept surveys to monitor aquatic vegetation changes.

In 2022, we also resumed public waters AIS treatments and continued to enhanced them by promoting Lake Management Inc. (LMI) use by private lake property owners and in 2023 participation increased. From 2017 to 2022 over 20+ individual lake property owners (over 30+ in 2023, 2024 and 2025) contracted with Lake Management, Inc. per year for aquatic plant management herbicide treatments in early June and in later July. The goal is to recruit even more participation in 2026.

Further, we continue to communicate to property owners MN DNR regulations regarding private shoreline treatment and CLP hand-pulling via our email lists and website.

7. Water Quality

- **Water Quality Testing and Improvement**

An ongoing goal of our lake management plan is to monitor and improve water clarity and quality in both Upper and Lower Lake Orono by further pinpointing harm sources and implementing a reduction plan. The Secchi disk readings, total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a testing has been collected monthly by volunteers and paid for by the City of Elk River since 2003.

In 2019 volunteer bi-weekly collection of dissolved oxygen and water temperature data was completed. Analysis by the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) determined that these were not factors causing reduced water clarity in Lower Lake Orono. The recommendation was to consider adding True Color, Total Suspended Solids and/or Zooplankton testing ([link to report](#)).

In 2020 additional chemical water sample collection and analysis was conducted. True Color and Total Suspended Solids have been added. The additional \$735 cost of the testing was paid for by the OLID. Potential future Zooplankton testing has been costed, but it is unclear as to if it would yield data that would resolve the clarity discrepancy. SWCD reported the results and conclusions from the testing to the Lake Orono Water Quality Committee (LOWQC) at its meeting held on January 13, 2020.

In 2025 monthly Secchi disk readings, total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a testing was done as usual, with results being inconclusive as to the water quality discrepancy cause.

- **Leveraging Real-Time Water Quality Data for Sustainable Lake Improvement**

In recent years, technological advancements have revolutionized the field of environmental monitoring, providing efficient and accurate solutions for continuously assessing key parameters in lakes. Monitoring water bodies is crucial for understanding and managing ecosystems, and various technologies now offer real-time data on essential factors such as water level, temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and nitrogen levels.

The Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) plays a crucial role in preserving and enhancing the ecological health of lakes. This summary explains how the OLID may

harness real-time data to make informed decisions, foster community engagement, and drive long-term water quality enhancement.

Key Benefits of Real-Time Water Quality Data:

1. **Timely Decision-Making:** Real-time data allows the OLID to monitor water quality parameters continuously, enabling timely responses to emerging issues such as algal blooms, pollution events, or changes in nutrient levels. This agility is essential for mitigating potential environmental impacts promptly.
2. **Data-Driven Planning:** By collecting and analyzing real-time data, the OLID gains a comprehensive understanding of the lake's dynamic ecosystem. This insight facilitates evidence-based planning and targeted interventions, optimizing resource allocation for maximum impact.
3. **Early Warning Systems:** Establishing early warning systems based on real-time data empowers the OLID to predict and prevent adverse water quality events. This proactive approach minimizes the impact of potential threats and enhances the overall resilience of the lake ecosystem.

Utilizing Real-Time Data for Decision-Making:

1. **Identifying Pollution Sources:** Real-time data aids in pinpointing the sources of pollution, allowing the OLID to collaborate with multiple relevant stakeholders within the county and watershed to implement corrective measures. Whether from agricultural runoff, urban discharges, or other contributors, targeted actions can be taken to reduce pollutants.
2. **Adaptive Management:** Continuous monitoring supports an adaptive management approach, allowing the OLID to adjust strategies based on real-time feedback. This iterative process ensures that the lake improvement initiatives remain effective and responsive to evolving environmental conditions.
3. **Community Engagement:** Real-time data can be shared with the community through accessible platforms, fostering awareness and engagement. Informed communities are more likely to participate in conservation efforts, support regulations, and contribute to the overall success of lake improvement projects.

Long-Term Strategies for Water Quality Enhancement:

1. **Baseline Assessment:** Real-time data serves as a confirmation data set of the existing data that has been collected for the lake to enhance the foundation for establishing baseline conditions, enabling the OLID to measure the effectiveness of interventions over time. Long-term trends and patterns guide the development of sustainable management practices.
2. **Educational Programs:** Leveraging real-time data for educational initiatives enhances public understanding of the lake's ecosystem and the importance of water quality. Informed citizens are more likely to adopt environmentally friendly practices, further contributing to the lake's long-term health.
3. **Policy Advocacy:** Real-time data empowers the OLID to advocate for evidence-based policies at local and regional levels. Collaborating with policymakers ensures that regulations align with the latest scientific understanding, supporting the sustainable development of the lake and its surrounding areas.

In conclusion, the integration of real-time water quality data into the decision-making processes of the Lake Improvement District is a transformative step toward achieving sustained water quality improvement. By embracing technology and engaging the

community, the OLID can create a dynamic and adaptive framework that safeguards the ecological integrity of the lake for future generations.

8. **Fisheries Management**

● **Fisheries Stocking and Preservation**

The OLID has continued to take an active approach to improving the fisheries of Lake Orono. In May, 2025 there were 600 Adult Blue Gill, 1,000 3-5” perch and 230 Adult Crappie that have been stocked into Lake Orono for the season. The majority of these fish were large enough to have the ability to spawn and were introduced into the lake prior to spawning for the spring season.

There have been several reports from all areas of the lake that fishing has improved year over year. In 2022 the DNR had stocked Walleye fry and fingerling into the lake. Many fisherman have had success this summer catching Walleye with reports of 13-15”.

Bass, Crappie Northern and Blue Gill fishing has been successful this year and this is likely due to the health of the lake and fish stocked from previous years. To date there have been 300,477 fish stocked through the OLID fisheries program and DNR.

The plan for 2026 is that the OLID will again budget \$2,000 to continue stocking for next season.

The OLID also plans to continue the volunteer catch and release program until for the next few years as necessary to support the success of the fish stocking. This is a volunteer program that is promoted through education to the lake users online, through meetings and by signs posted around the lake. The Elk River Parks and Recreation department added a sign in 2024 to the boat landing and the fishing dock.

9. **Other matters of interest for the district**

- a. In 2025 the OLID Board had twelve regular monthly meetings. The standard regular meeting date, time and location continues to be the fourth Tuesday of the month, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Elk River City Hall (except for the December meeting that is held on the third Tuesday). The OLID Annual Meeting on August 26, 2025 was held again this year in the Emergency Operations Center at the Elk River Fire Department. The OLID very much appreciated the City of Elk River making the facility available for the event as it is an ideal location.
- b. 2025 Elections – the OLID conducted its sixth board of directors’ election in 2025. The result was that Katie Ganfield and Kirk Erickson were elected to a three-year term on the OLID Board.
- c. The OLID presented an annual activities summary update to the Elk River City Council and requested 2025 budget approval at the council’s regular meeting on September 15, 2025 (the presentation is included as Appendices 11).

10. **The intentions of the directors for the succeeding year/years**

- a. 2026 Budget and Goals were provided to the membership at the August 26, 2025 annual meeting for vote and approval (full detail provided in appendices 5).

Project/Activity	Budget
1. AIS Control Curly-leaf Pondweed	\$10,578
2. Sedimentation Monitoring and Management	\$2,000
3. Undesirable Aquatic Vegetation and Organisms Public Waters Control	\$4,000
4. Fisheries Survey, Preservation and/or Stocking	\$2,000
5. Web licensing and maintenance	\$200
6. County Special Assessment Fee	\$920
7. Office Supplies and Organizational Expenses	\$675
8. OLID Board Liability Insurance	\$1,017
Total cost of goals 1 – 8	\$21,390*

*OLID property owner annual cost for 2026 of \$124.00 per unit.

- a. Lake Orono Water Quality Committee work continues on a “living” 2021 – 2026 Lake Orono Management Plan. The Lake Orono Water Quality Committee (LOWQC) is a joint effort with the City of Elk River and the Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The OLID Board intends to request a work session with the Elk River City Council to review the draft plan current findings and recommendations in fall 2025.
- b. Continue to work with the LOWQC to evaluate the results of the LORE dredging project and discuss any follow-up actions. Particular focus will be placed on the development of an ongoing sediment management plan, Curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian Milfoil and Zebra Mussel AIS infestation monitoring and management and the potential to seek funding for undesirable native plant overgrowth and algae control through [Minn. Statute 103G.625](#).

Appendices

1. 2025 OLID Notice of Annual Meeting (mailing)
2. PLANT-13-1484929-1 (newspaper public notice)
3. OLID Annual Meeting Agenda 2025
4. OLID Annual Meeting Minutes 8-26-25
5. OLID Proposed Projects & Budget 2026
6. OLID Service Charge & Voting Criteria
7. OLID Board Application 2025
8. OLID Absentee Ballot for Director Election 2025
9. 2025 Director Election & Proposed Budget Ballot
10. OLID Resolution 25-01.pdf (requesting the City of Elk River approve the 2026 OLID Service Charge)
11. OLID City Council Meeting presentation September 15, 2025
12. Sherburne County Water Equipment Cleaning Handout
13. MAISRC - Living with Zebra Mussels Handout
14. 2025 Lake Orono AIS Grant Project Summary
15. WaterWays November 2025



Orono Lake Improvement District
NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 6:30 PM
Emergency Operations Center
Elk River Fire Department

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID), a Lake Improvement District established by Order of the Elk River City Council, pursuant to Minn. Statute 103B.501 et seq., will be held at **6:30 PM on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at the Elk River Fire Department, 13073 Orono Parkway, Elk River, MN 55330**. All Lake Orono property owners as OLID members are invited to attend. Registration to vote starts at 6:00 PM.

The meeting agenda will include:

- Review the purpose of the Orono Lake Improvement District
- Provide a Treasurer's Report and status reports on 2025 projects
- Review and discuss the proposed 2026 projects and budget
- Approve the proposed 2026 Orono Lake Improvement District budget; approve projects having a cost to the district in excess of \$5000
- Election of two directors
- Take up and consider any other business that may come before the OLID

The annual meeting is also an opportunity to meet other lake property owners, get updates on tracking sediment build-up for future dredging projects, water quality, fish stocking, aquatic invasive species, undesirable native plant overgrowth and algae management efforts.

All meeting materials will be posted as soon as they are available on our website: <https://oronolid.org/> (e.g. agenda, minutes, financial and other reports, proposed 2026 projects, budget and an absentee ballot for the director election that must be received at the OLID address below by August 25, 2025). Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting. All nominees made from the floor at the annual meeting must be present and nominees must state their interest/qualifications. Although desirable to have balanced representation from all four sections of Lake Orono, the OLID bylaws approved on August 27, 2020 do not require it. There are no "slots" to fill for each lake section.

Those eligible to vote on the proposed budget and director election are Lake Orono riparian or deeded access property owners whose name appears on the latest Sherburne County tax statement.

Terms of Directors are as follows:

Current term	Current Director	Status of Term [following this annual meeting]	
3-year term	Tom Binsfeld	1 year remaining	<i>No election until 2026</i>
3-year term	Charlie Blesener	2 years remaining	<i>No election until 2027</i>
3-year term	Ed Bury	(Term Limit) To be filled by member election on 8/26/25	
3-year term	Ben Carlson	2 years remaining	<i>No election until 2027</i>
3-year term	Chris Rock	(Term Limit) To be filled by member election on 8/26/25	

All five board members must be property owners within the OLID, and a majority [three] must reside within the district.

If you have questions regarding the Orono Lake Improvement District or the annual meeting please contact Chris Rock, OLID Chair at oronolid@gmail.com.



Ad Proof

Not Actual Size

**ORONO LAKE
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
(OLID)
NOTICE OF
ANNUAL MEETING**

The Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) will hold its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at the Elk River Fire Department, 13073 Orono Parkway, Elk River, MN 55330. All Lake Orono property owners as OLID members are invited to attend. The meeting agenda will include the discussion and approval of proposed 2026 projects and budget, election of two directors and any other business that may come before the OLID.

Published in the
Star News
August 9, 2025
1484929

-Public Notice Ad Proof-

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run on the dates indicated below. Please proof read carefully. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at Cambridge (763) 691-6000 or email at publicnotice@apgecm.com

Date: 08/04/25

Account #: 493268

Customer: ORONO LAKE IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT

Address: PO BOX 851
ELK RIVER

Telephone: (763) 441-6339
Fax:

Publications:
Star News

Ad ID: 1484929
Copy Line: Aug 26 PH OLID

PO Number:

Start: 08/09/25

Stop: 08/09/2025

Total Cost: \$51.60

of Lines: 25

Total Depth: 2.806

of Inserts: 1

Ad Class: 155

Phone # (763) 691-6000

Email: publicnotice@apgecm.com

Rep No: CA700

Contract-Gross

AGENDA

1. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

- Adoption of Agenda
- Introduction of Board of Directors, New Lake Residents and Review [Mission](#)
- Treasurer's Report

2. Old Business Updates

- Report on 2025 OLID Projects
 - [Communications Committee](#) (plans for this 2025 – 2026)
 - Education, Feedback and Communications ([Website](#), [Facebook](#), Newsletters, Email, Surveys)
 - [Fisheries Management Committee](#) (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Stocking Report for 2025 and plans for next year
 - [Funding Committee](#) (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Build relationships, partnerships and funds to assure and sustain long-term quality recreational use and navigation of Orono Lake.
 - [Sedimentation Committee](#) (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - [BioBase Habitat+®](#) use for Monitoring, Management and Additional Deposit Removal
 - [Vegetation Management Committee](#) (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Grant Applications, PI Surveys, Shoreline Treatments and Vegetation Management [roadmap](#)
 - [Water Quality Committee](#) (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Water Quality Testing and Improvement / Watershed Conditions and Plan ([1W1P](#))

3. New Business

- Review Proposed OLID Projects and Budget for 2026 (full lake plan [draft budget](#) available)
- Director Elections
- Ballot Review, Voting, Reporting Results and Board Resolution Approval

4. Adjourn

Next Annual Meeting Tuesday, August 25, 2026 – 6:30 p.m. at Elk River Fire Department

OLID Regular Board Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of month at Elk River City Hall

MAKE SURE TO SIGN IN AT REGISTRATION TO RECEIVE YOUR VOTER BALLOT (STARTS 6 PM)
ONLY PROPERTY OWNERS WHO MEET THE OLID VOTER ELIGIBILITY ARE ALLOWED TO VOTE

1. Opening & Considering Agenda. Motion to call the meeting to order and approve the agenda as emailed was made by Charlie B and seconded by T. Binsfeld at 6:30 pm. - approved unanimously.

2. Attendees (*Alphabetically by first name*)

- Ben Carlson
- Chris Rock
- Charlie Blesener
- Ed Bury (Absent)
- Tom Binsfeld
- Patrick Plant – Guest, Vegetation Management Committee

● Approve 7/22/2025 Meeting Minutes

Secretary's Report

- Approve 7/22/2025 Meeting Minutes. Motioned by B Carlson. And seconded by C. Rock. – approved unanimously.

● Treasurer's Monthly Financial Report and 2025 Draft Budget Reviewed by B Carlson.
Treasurer's Report

- A status update and report of financials were provided by B. Carlson before the time of the meeting. The 2025 spreadsheet, recent transactions are described below.
 - There was one new transaction to report since last month.
 - Payment for EWM Treatment was paid in August 2025
 - The fish stocking fee of \$2,000 was paid in August 2025.

Balances (as seen in the attached handout)

- Checking balance: \$3,092.85
- Saving balance: \$2,926.91
- Total Current Funds = \$6,019.76

- The motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by T. Binsfeld and seconded by C. Blesener – Motion was approved.

3. Old Business Updates (30 min.)

- Report on 2025 OLID Projects
 - Communications Committee (plans for this 2025 – 2026)
 - In 2025, the OLID Board conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) as part of a strategic planning process. An outcome of that process was a board commitment to increase efforts at communication and information sharing.
 - In addition to using Facebook, email and the OLID website, the Board decided to resurrect a newsletter to provide timely, informative updates to OLID members. Under the leadership of Ed Bury, the newsletter became a reality in 2025 and will be

continuing into 2026, chaired by newly elected OLID member Katie Ganfield.

- In addition to the newsletter, OLID tipped off the Elk River Star News on a neat story about the OLID's on-going fish stocking program. The Star News also ran a story this fall on the annual dam inspection and reported on OLID's annual report to the City.
- o Fisheries Management Committee (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Stocking Report for 2025 and plans for next year presented by B. Carlson.
 - A successful year of fishing again on Lake Orono thanks to Chris Bickman and his help coordinating the stocking of 1000 Perch, 1000 Sunfish and 50 adult Crappie. OLID is continuing to work with the DNR to acquire additional walleye and other species of fish deemed appropriate. Look for another stocking in 2026 to continue to expand the thriving fish population.
- o Funding Committee (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Charlie discussed the SWOT Analysis of the OLID and explained the need for a funding committee.
 - Committee continues to build relationships, partnerships, and funds to assure and sustain long-term quality recreational use and navigation of Orono Lake.
 - The Cemetery Project was also discussed by C. Blesener.
- o Sedimentation Committee (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - C. Rock provided a brief background to the membership about the sedimentation committee.
 - BioBase Habitat+® Use for Monitoring, Management, and Additional Sedimentation Removal
- o Vegetation Management Committee (plans for 2025 – 2026)
 - Vegetation Management Roadmap was explained by P. Plant which included an update on committee activities this year.
 - Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Treatment
 - A spring herbicide treatment targeting CLP was completed on May 14, 2025, using Flumioxazin, a selective herbicide considered effective and environmentally responsible. Feedback from lake users and follow-up surveys indicate the treatment was largely successful in reducing CLP growth and improving navigability.
 - Aquatic Plant Surveys
 - Two vegetation surveys were conducted on May 12 and July 14 by Endangered Resource Services (ERS), LLC. Key findings: Common waterweed increased and Coontail declined this season. Water stargrass, a native but tends to overgrow to nuisance levels in our lake, continues to be in held in check.

- Filamentous algae was widespread on the lake bottom in the spring, which likely influenced early plant growth patterns.
- These surveys continue to guide treatment planning and track long-term trends in the lake's plant community.
- New Detection of Eurasian Watermilfoil
 - EWM was detected again in July 2025 in four small areas in the upper portion of the lake—its first reappearance since the successful rapid response treatment in 2020. A rapid response herbicide treatment using ProcellaCOR EC was completed on August 11, 2025. The treatment was very targeted and had a low aquatic toxicity rating.
- Lake Drawdown & Zebra Mussel Monitoring Opportunity
 - Notice was given that Elk River Municipal Utilities will lower water levels by ~30 inches on Wednesday, October 1 for the annual Elk River Dam inspection. The drawdown will provide an important chance for shoreline property owners to check for zebra mussels. Homeowners are encouraged to submit photos which will help OLID evaluate whether a longer drawdown at this same depth could help reduce zebra mussel populations.
- Funding for Treatment of Vegetation
 - Since 2021 we have maintained a positive balance because of accessing grants from the SWCD and MN DNR, matching monies from the City and using strategic, more reasonably costed alternative chemicals to treat certain species. However, because of grant limitations and reduced funding being available from the Sherburne County AIS Prevention Plan treatment funds are anticipated to dwindle, making it difficult to act if we experience more instances of unexpected invasive or nuisance plant proliferation.
- Water Quality Committee (plans for 2025 – 2026) –

During the discussion of the Water Quality Committee's plans for 2025–2026, T. Binsfeld summarized several key initiatives aimed at strengthening the long-term health of the lake.

 - Continued focus on comprehensive water quality testing and targeted improvement efforts to maintain and enhance lake health.
 - Alignment of local efforts with the watershed-wide strategies outlined in the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) framework to guide management decisions and coordinated restoration actions.
 - Expansion of monitoring capabilities through enhanced remote water-quality sensors.

- Implementation of remote monitoring made possible by equipment generously donated by lake property owners, enabling more frequent data collection and quicker detection of changing lake conditions.

4. New Business (35 min.)

- Review Proposed OLID Projects and Budget for 2026 (full lake plan draft budget available)
 - Ben Carlson presented the proposed 2026 budget to the OLID members attending. It contained 8 goal areas with a total cost of \$21,390 and included a proposed OLID property owner annual service charge for 2026 of \$124.00 per unit.
- Director Elections
- Ballot Review, Voting, Reporting Results, and Board Resolution Approval
 - New Board Members – Katie Ganfield & Kirk Erickson were introduced.
 - Budget Passed.

5. Recap “to-dos” and Adjourn (5 min.) – see above action items within minutes.

Motion to adjourn made by B. Carlson, seconded by T. Binsfeld at 8:15 pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by T. Binsfeld (secretary).

Upcoming Regular Meeting Dates: 9/23, 10/28, 11/25, 12/16, 1/27/2026 & 2/24, 3/24*

*OLID Regular Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday in the Upper Town Conference Room, @ the city hall.

Next Annual Meeting Tuesday, August 25, 2026 – 6:30 p.m. at Elk River Fire Department
OLID Regular Board Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Elk River City Hall

MAKE SURE TO SIGN IN AT REGISTRATION TO RECEIVE YOUR VOTER BALLOT (STARTS 6 PM)
ONLY PROPERTY OWNERS WHO MEET THE OLID VOTER ELIGIBILITY ARE ALLOWED TO VOTE

Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) Proposed Budget 2026

	Project/Activity	Description: OLID Annual Services and Activities Fee	Budget
1	AIS Control Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP)	Continue surveying and treatment where needed of this invasive species until CLP seed banks are eliminated. For 2026 the estimated acres requested to be treated is 32 to fit within the MN DNR maximum allowable without a variance (15% of the littoral area). Herbicide, mechanical and/or hand removal will all be considered. If MN DNR Grant funds remain available and are approved, costs to OLID could be reduced or funds carried over for following year use. Also, a Sherburne SWCD AIS grant will be applied for to help cover required independent contractor CLP delineation costs.	\$10,578
2	Sedimentation Monitoring and Management	Continue lake sonar surveys and baseline studies to monitor existing conditions, sediment sources and baseline sediment levels. Includes software licensing, monitoring equipment and data processing. Conduct or contract for feasibility studies and develop proposals for future dredging projects.	\$2,000
3	Undesirable Aquatic Vegetation and Organisms Public Waters Control/LVMP Support	Support contracted surveys and services necessary to maintain updates to our Lake Vegetation Management Plan (LVMP). MN DNR staff have stated that Water star-grass, and the distribution and density of any submerged aquatic plant, can vary significantly from season to season, particularly in a reservoir system like Lake Orono. Set-aside funds are needed to be prepared to act. Also, work with the City of Elk River to secure existing funds or seek additional funds through Minn. Statute 103G.625 for the control of CLP, harmful or undesirable aquatic vegetation and organisms in public waters.	\$4,000
4	Fisheries Survey, Preservation and/or Stocking	Continue to work with the DNR to determine fish stocking needs and the most appropriate species to select to stock as available and deemed appropriate. Also, assist with current awareness campaign for the need to continue encouraging catch and release.	\$2,000
5	Web Licensing and Maintenance	OLID membership communication, official document repository, director nomination forms, absentee election ballots, etc.	\$200
6	County Special Assessment Fee	Fee for Cities, Townships and LIDS to certify special assessment on the Sherburne County tax system (\$5.00/parcel/year).	\$920
7	Office Supplies and Organizational Expenses	Annual meeting notice mailing, location rental or refundable deposit, building staff supervision, P.O. Box, membership dues or other meeting-related or general supplies.	\$675
8	OLID Board Liability Insurance	Secure standard Liability Insurance for the OLID Board of Directors.	\$1,017
Total cost of goals 1 – 8			\$21,390*
*OLID property owner annual cost for 2026 of \$124.00 per unit.			

Note: A carryover of funds from year-to-year may be allowed to accommodate cash flow.



Orono Lake Improvement District CRITERIA FOR LID SERVICE CHARGE AND VOTING ELIGIBILITY AND PROCEDURES

Criteria for OLID Service Charge

- Service charge is based on PID (parcel identification) numbers.
- Property must be riparian (waterfront property) or deeded access.
- OLID boundaries must be in accordance with the criteria of Minn. R. 6115.0970, subp. 5, Minn. R. 6115.0920, subp. 5. and Minn. R. 6115.0960, subp. 3. as determined by the MN DNR. The ruling on OLID boundaries was provided in the findings of the DNR's advisory report to the City of Elk River dated May 23, 2019.
- Single residences/households with property less than 10 acres will be charged 1 unit. Attached same-owner parcels that form the residence will not be charged.
- Lake access property that is owned by the City of Elk River, State of Minnesota, Orono Cemetery and the Central Minnesota Boy Scout Council are not part of the OLID and will not be charged.
- All service charges to property are proposed by the OLID directors, voted on by members then sent to the City of Elk River for review, approval and final transfer to Sherburne County.
- The Elk River City Council has final approval for all property charges.

200 OLID parcels for unit service charge broken down:

- 149 residential or non-homestead households @ 1 unit each
- 30 HOA limited lake and dock access properties @ .5 unit each
- 3 HOA owned properties @ 1 unit each
- 1 residential property more than 10 acres @ 2 units
- 1 apartment rental property with seven apartments @ 3.5 units

Total 172.5 units to charge (to 184 individual property owner parcels)

OLID Voting Eligibility and Procedures

- Property owner must own Lake Orono riparian property or have deeded access and be listed in the County tax system as property owner.
- Up to two tax system listed property owners are eligible to vote unless the property is owned under a trust, common ownership, HOA or other legal entity which is eligible to one vote.
- At the OLID Annual Meeting each eligible property owner must sign in to receive their anonymous, but uniquely numbered budget approval and election ballot.



Orono Lake Improvement District BOARD MEMBER APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Employer: _____ Year-round Lake Resident: Yes No

Statement of Interest: Please state briefly why you are interested in serving on the Orono Lake Improvement District Board.

Relevant Experience: Please describe your educational, professional, civic, or community participation, which may be relevant in serving on this board/commission.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Applications must be received at the official postal address of the OLID (below) OR emailed to oronolid@gmail.com by **Monday, 8/4/25** to be included on the published ballot. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting. All nominees made from the floor at the Annual Meeting must be present.

Mail to: Orono Lake Improvement District • P.O. Box 851 • Elk River, MN 55330



Orono Lake Improvement District
**2025 ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR
DIRECTOR ELECTION**

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: 

2025 DIRECTOR ELECTION

Vote for two candidates:

Three-Year Term: ☐ Kirk Erickson

Three-Year Term: ☐ Katie Ganfield

Three-Year Term: ☐ Write In Name: _____

Absentee ballots must be received at the official address of the OLID (below) no later than the business day prior to the Annual Meeting which is August 25, 2025.
Absentee ballots received after that date will be void.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail to:

**Orono Lake Improvement District
P.O. Box 851
Elk River, MN 55330**



Orono Lake Improvement District
2025 BALLOT
August 26, 2025

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ☒

To vote for a question, fill in the oval next to the word "YES" for that question.
To vote against a question, fill in the oval next to the word "NO" for that question.

2025 DIRECTOR ELECTION

Vote for two candidates:

Three-Year Term: ☐ Kirk Erickson

Three-Year Term: ☐ Katie Ganfield

Three-Year Term: ☐ Write In Name: _____

OLID BALLOT BUDGET GOALS 1-8
2026 OLID ANNUAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES
CHARGE REQUEST

The Orono Lake Improvement District board of directors has proposed that the OLID request the City of Elk River to impose a service charge within the OLID in the amount of \$124.00 per full unit for 2026 OLID Annual Services and Activities. This service charge is to support the services and activities itemized in the proposed budget at a total cost of no more than the \$21,390 budgeted expenses.

- ☐ **YES** Shall the OLID request the City of Elk River to impose the service charge
☐ **NO** proposed by the OLID board of directors?
-

RESOLUTION 25 - 01

**RESOLUTION CERTIFYING
2026 OLID ANNUAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES
CHARGE REQUEST**

WHEREAS, pursuant to proper notice duly given as required by law, the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) has met and certified the assessment roll for the 2026 OLID services and activities charge;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Directors of the Orono Lake Improvement District, that the City of Elk River is requested, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 103B.555, to impose a service charge on all eligible parcels as per the 2026 OLID Service Charge List attached as Exhibit A in the per full unit amount of \$124.00 for OLID services and activities provided in 2026;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Orono Lake Improvement District Board of Directors requests that the City of Elk River authorize the Sherburne County Auditor/Treasurer's Office to place the service charge in the total amount of \$21,390 on the 2026 Sherburne County Tax rolls, as shown on Exhibit A.

Said Exhibit A is attached and shall be called the 2026 OLID Service Charge List.

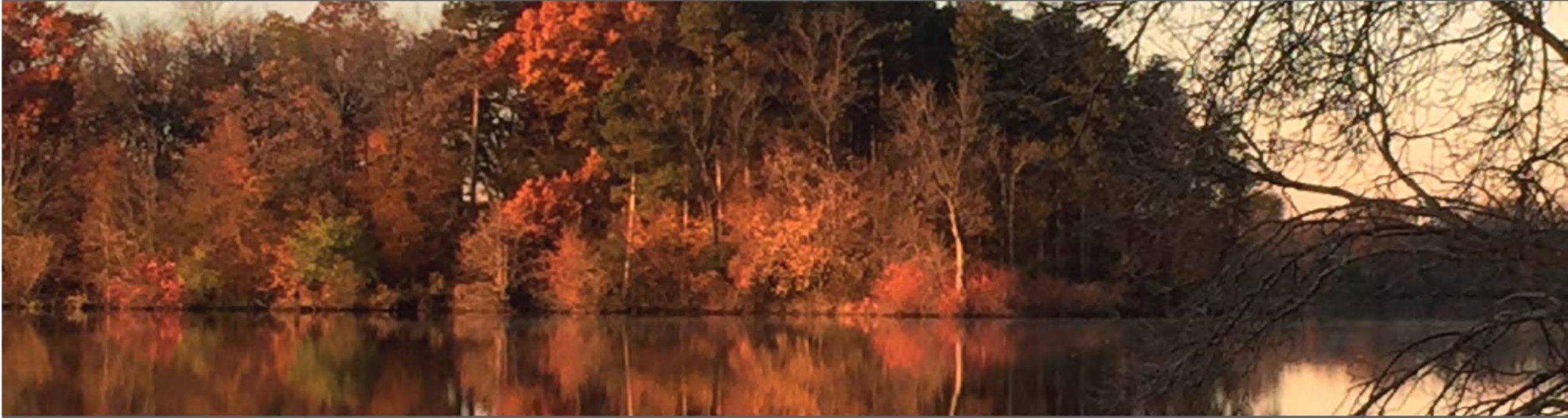
Adopted by the OLID Board of Directors August 26, 2025.

ATTEST: Orono Lake Improvement District

Thomas Binsfeld, Secretary

Chris Rock, Chair

Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) 2025 Projects Recap and 2026 Budget Proposal



"Lakes cannot manage themselves."

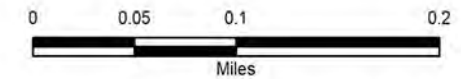
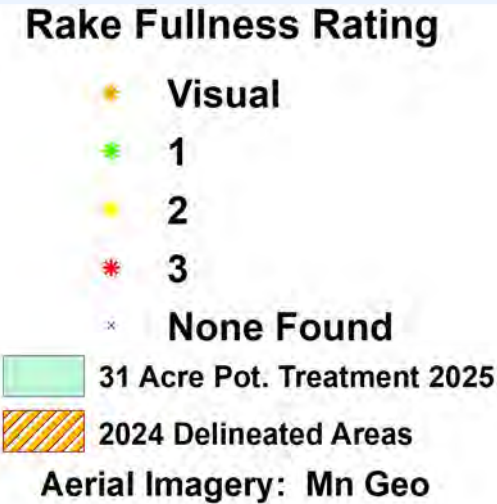
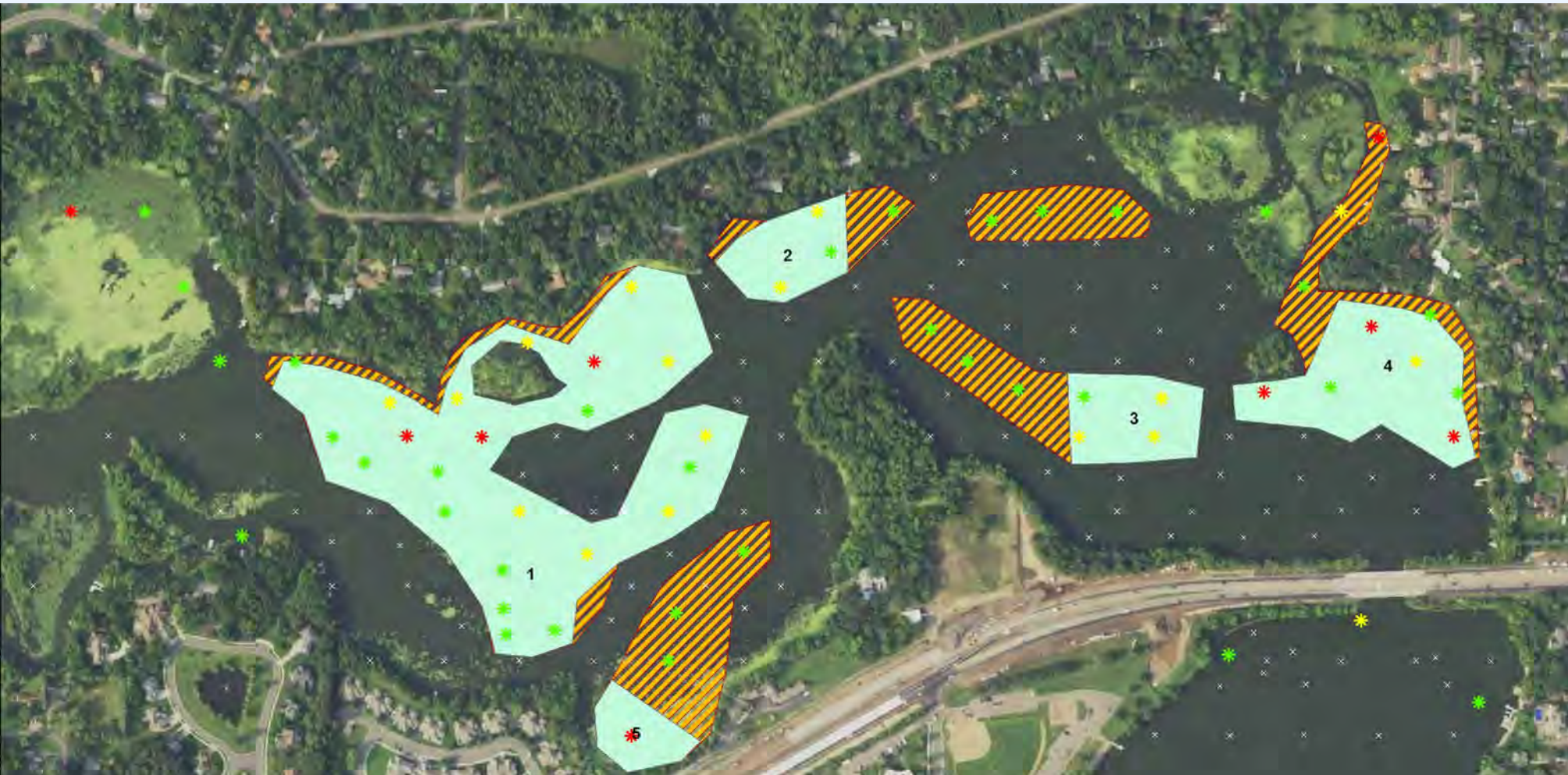
Elk River City Council
September 15, 2025

Local Partners:

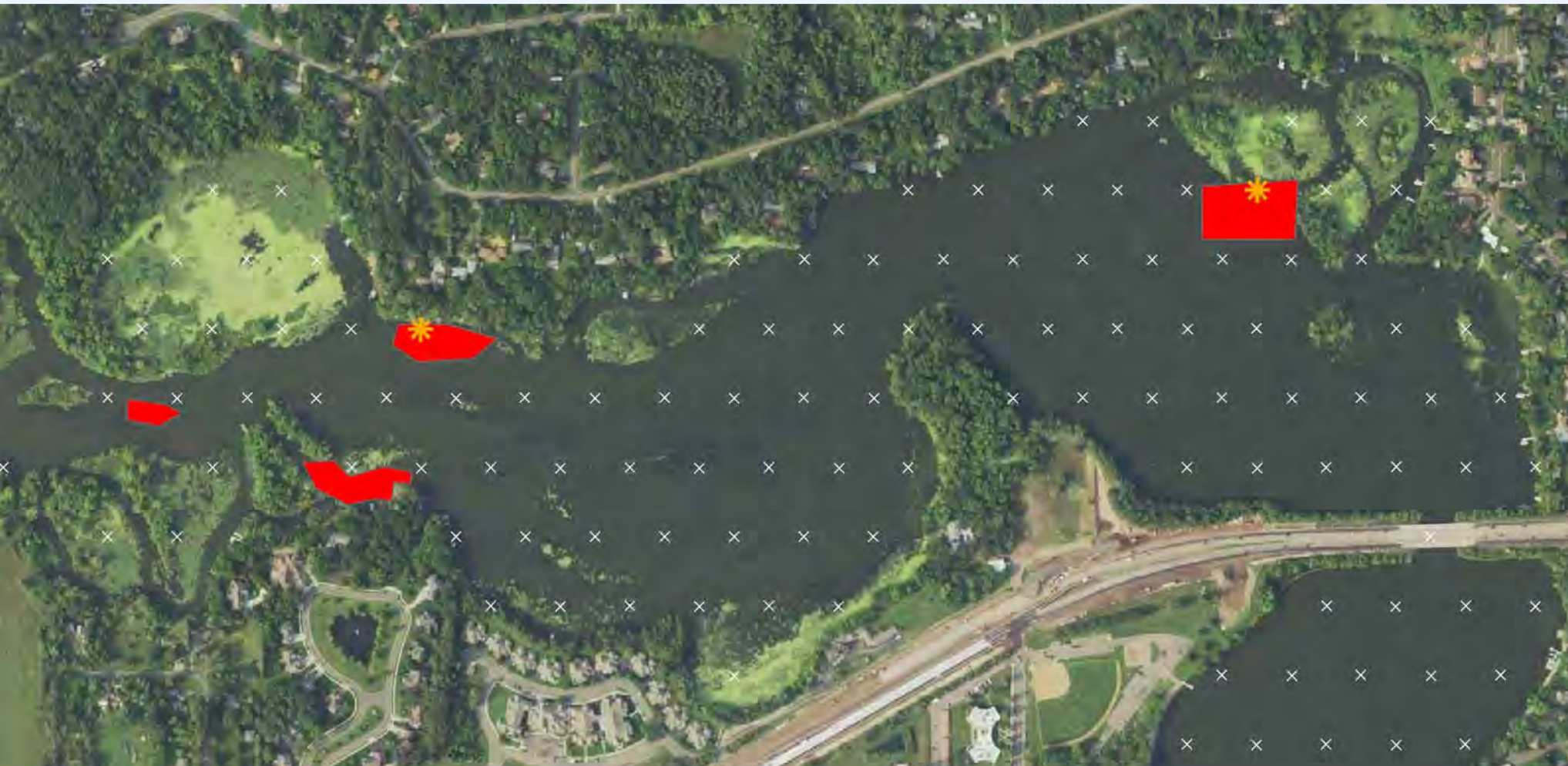


Lake Orono Water Quality Committee

2025 Recap: Curly-leaf Pondweed Treatment Areas



2025 Recap: Eurasian Watermilfoil Treatment Areas



Rake Fullness Rating

★ Visual

★ 1

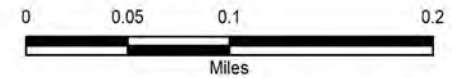
★ 2

★ 3

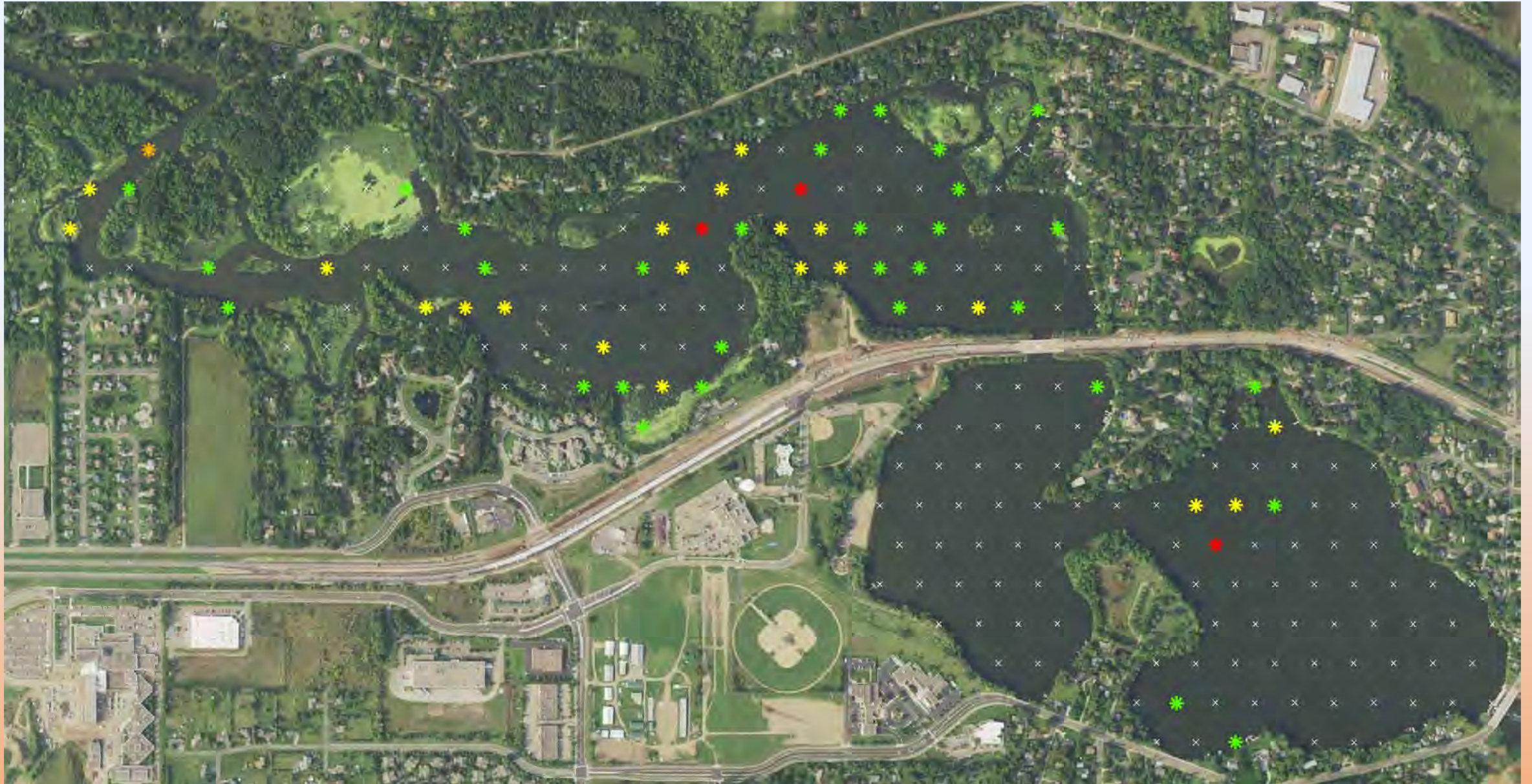
× None Found

■ Approx. 2025 EWM Areas

Aerial Imagery: Mn Geo



2025 Recap: Water Stargrass (July 14, 2025)

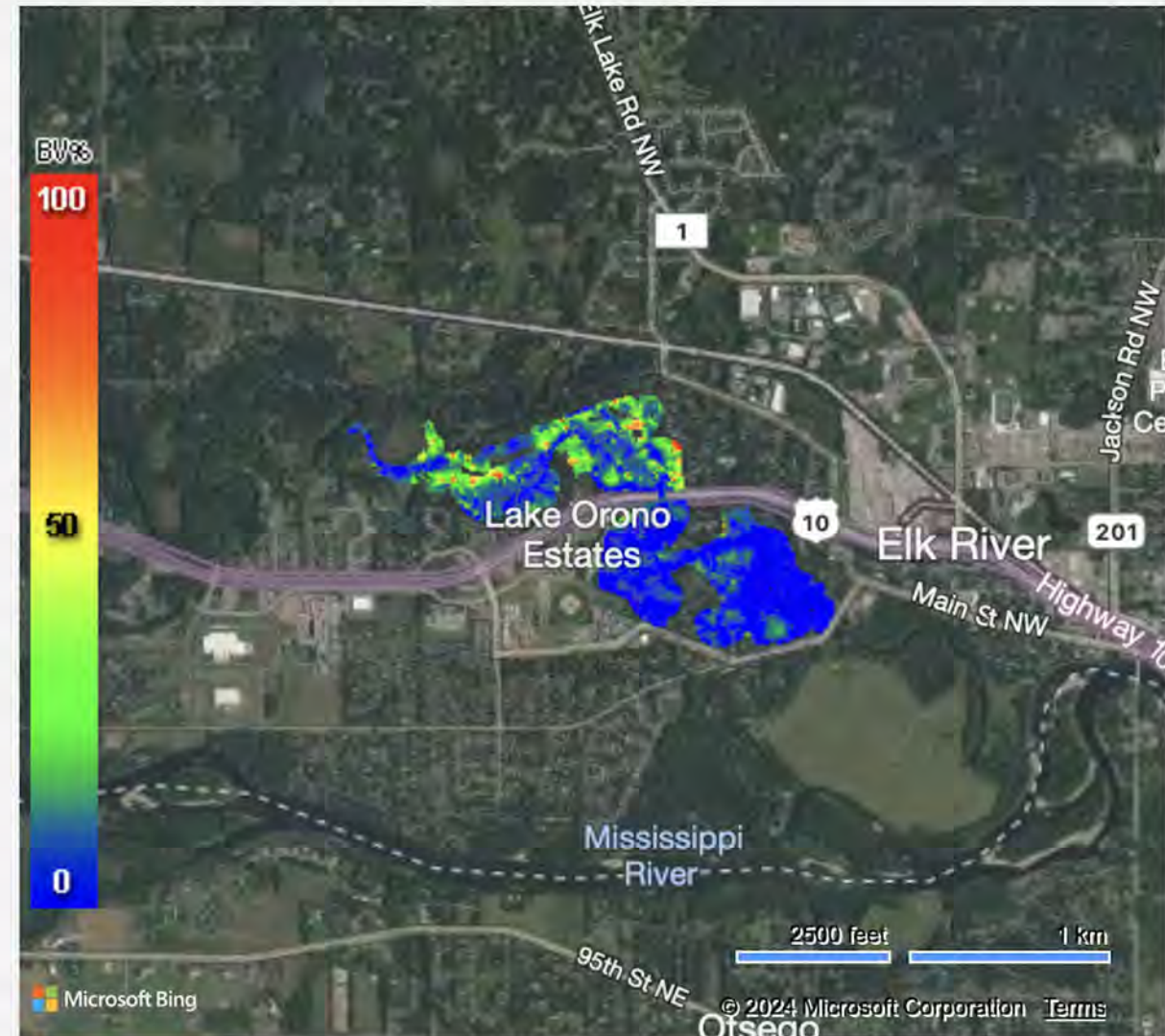
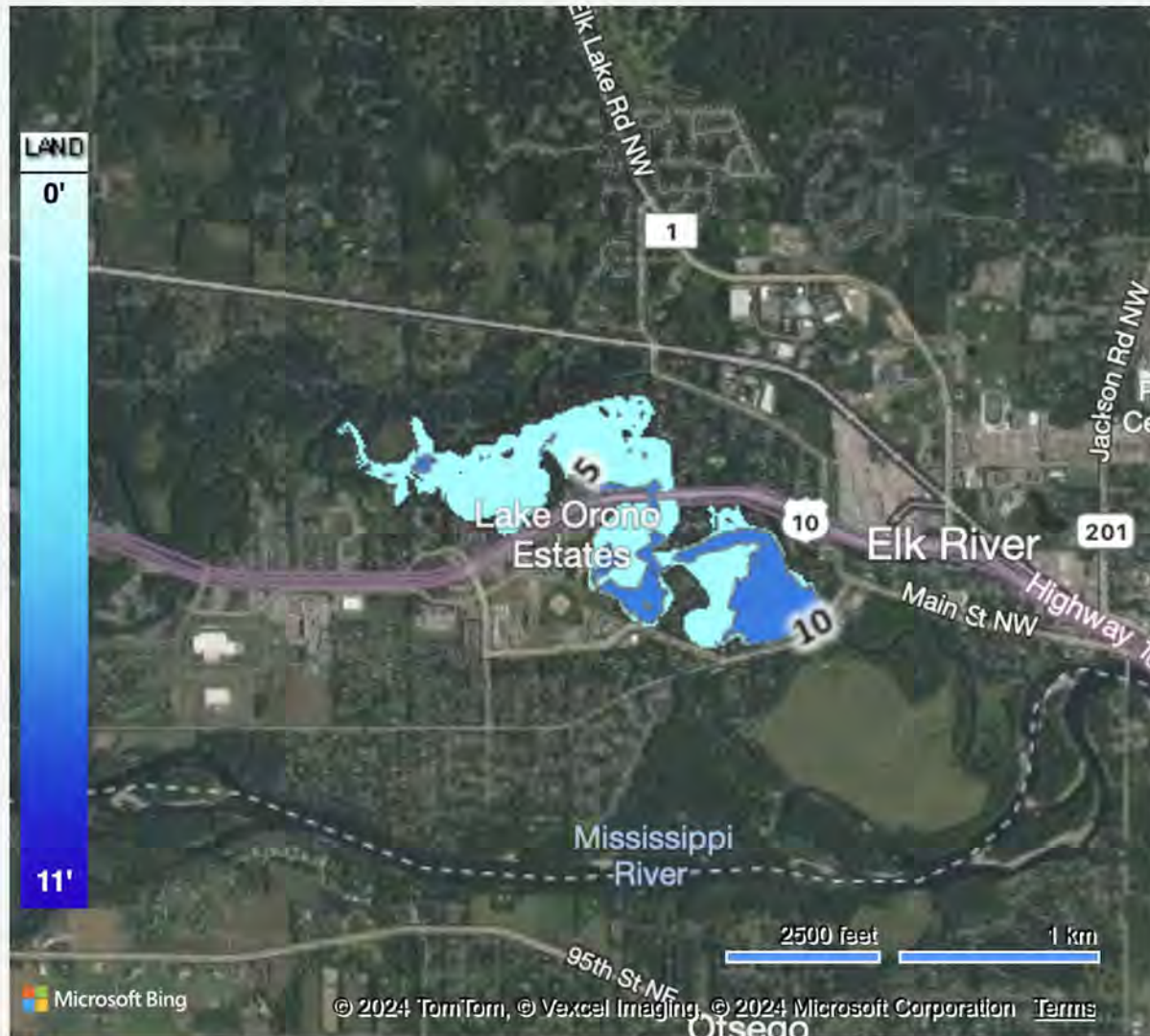


Orono Lake, Sherburne Minnesota

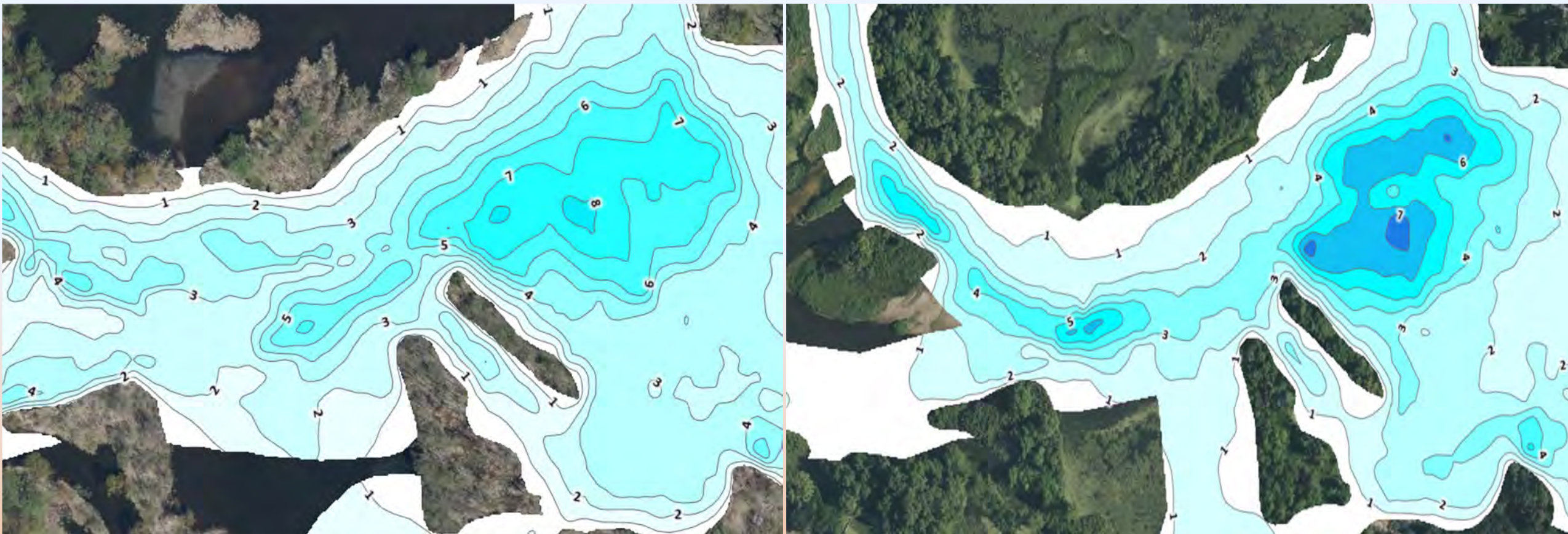
[REPORT LINK](#)

Bathymetric Contour Map

Vegetation Biovolume Heat Map



2025 Recap: Depth of Catch Basin (2022 vs. 2025)



	2022	2023	2024	2025
Water Volume (acre ft)	35.004	30.204	27.975	27.059
Water Depth Avg (ft)	4.16	3.59	3.38	3.27
Water Depth Max (ft)	8.33	7.61	7.11	7.47
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.19	0.14	0.22	0.10



Life history and impacts

- Small, filter-feeding, bivalve mussels
- Few to no predators in MN lakes
- Filter massive amounts of phytoplankton and other plankton, with often major impacts to food webs and water quality/clarity
- Early maturation and explosive growth
- Highly resilient, can thrive in wide variety of water chemistries and temperatures
- Easily spread through recreational boating pathway, movement of in-water equipment

551 MN waterbodies currently infested. Control methods minimally effective and/or not permitted by DNR

OLID Proposed Budget 2026 – Projects 1 to 8

	Project/Activity	Description: OLID Annual Services and Activities Fee	Budget
1	AIS Control Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP)	Continue surveying and treatment where needed of this invasive species until CLP seed banks are eliminated. For 2026 the estimated acres requested to be treated is 32 to fit within the MN DNR maximum allowable without a variance (15% of the littoral area). Herbicide, mechanical and/or hand removal will all be considered. If MN DNR Grant funds remain available and are approved, costs to OLID could be reduced or funds carried over for following year use. Also, a Sherburne SWCD AIS grant will be applied for to help cover required independent contractor CLP delineation costs.	\$10,578
2	Sedimentation Monitoring and Management	Continue lake sonar surveys and baseline studies to monitor existing conditions, sediment sources and baseline sediment levels. Includes software licensing, monitoring equipment and data processing. Conduct or contract for feasibility studies and develop proposals for future dredging projects.	\$2,000
3	Undesirable Aquatic Vegetation and Organisms Public Waters Control and LVMP Support	Support contracted surveys and services necessary to maintain updates to our Lake Vegetation Management Plan (LVMP). MN DNR staff have stated that Water star-grass, and the distribution and density of any submerged aquatic plant, can vary significantly from season to season, particularly in a reservoir system like Lake Orono. Set-aside funds are needed to be prepared to act. Also, work with the City of Elk River to secure existing funds or seek additional funds through Minn. Statute 103G.625 for the control of CLP, harmful or undesirable aquatic vegetation and organisms in public waters.	\$4,000
4	Fisheries Survey, Preservation and/or Stocking	Continue to work with the DNR to determine fish stocking needs and the most appropriate species to select to stock as available and deemed appropriate. Also, assist with current awareness campaign for the need to continue encouraging catch and release.	\$2,000
5	Web Licensing and Maintenance	OLID membership communication, official document repository, director nomination forms, absentee election ballots, etc.	\$200
6	County Special Assessment Fee	Fee for Cities, Townships and LIDS to certify special assessment on the Sherburne County tax system (\$5.00/parcel/year).	\$920
6	Office Supplies and Organizational Expenses	Annual meeting notice mailing, location rental or refundable deposit, building staff supervision, P.O. Box, membership dues or other meeting-related or general supplies.	\$675
8	Liability Insurance	Secure standard Liability Insurance for the OLID Board of Directors.	\$1,017
Total cost of goals 1 – 8			\$21,390*
*OLID property owner annual cost for 2026 of \$124.00 per unit.			

Note: A carryover of funds from year-to-year may be allowed to accommodate cash flow.

Annual Services Charge Request – 100% approval

RESOLUTION 25 - 01

RESOLUTION CERTIFYING 2026 OLID ANNUAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES CHARGE REQUEST

WHEREAS, pursuant to proper notice duly given as required by law, the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) has met and certified the assessment roll for the 2026 OLID services and activities charge;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Directors of the Orono Lake Improvement District, that the City of Elk River is requested, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 103B.555, to impose a service charge on all eligible parcels as per the 2026 OLID Service Charge List attached as Exhibit A in the per full unit amount of \$124.00 for OLID services and activities provided in 2026;

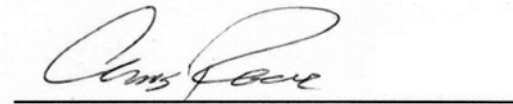
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Orono Lake Improvement District Board of Directors requests that the City of Elk River authorize the Sherburne County Auditor/Treasurer's Office to place the service charge in the total amount of \$21,390 on the 2026 Sherburne County Tax rolls, as shown on Exhibit A.

Said Exhibit A is attached and shall be called the 2026 OLID Service Charge List.

Adopted by the OLID Board of Directors August 26, 2025.

ATTEST: Orono Lake Improvement District


Thomas Binsfeld, Secretary


Chris Rock, Chair

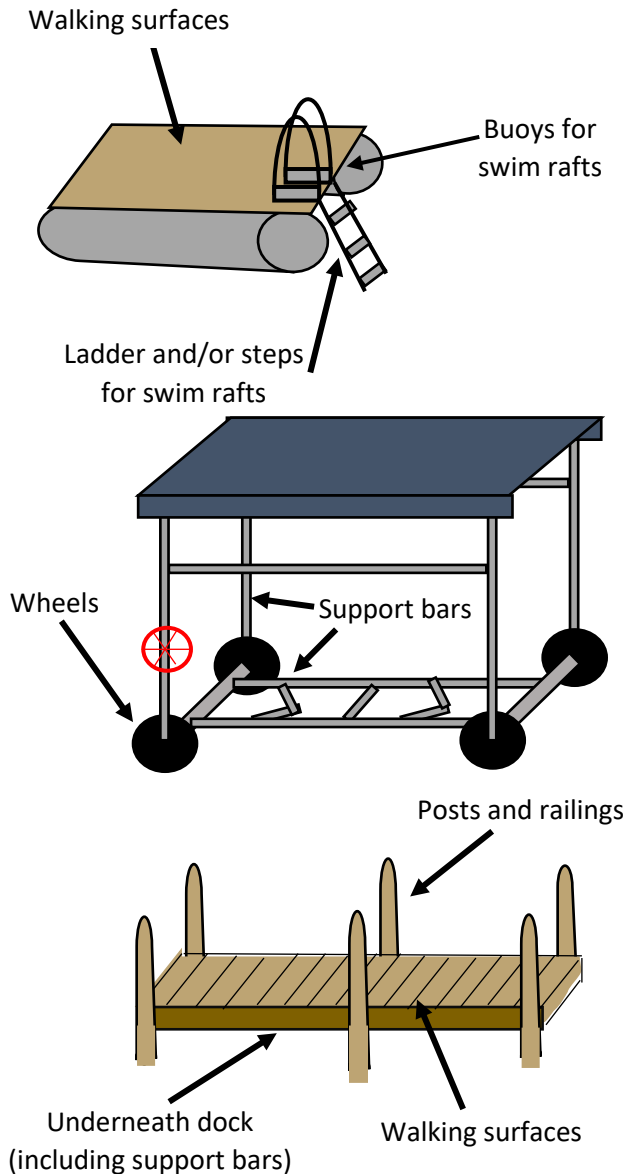
Question & Answer

Protect Our Lakes!

How to Clean Docks, Lifts, Swim Rafts, and Other Associated Equipment

View a video of these procedures here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vabkGxzT9U>

Clean and Rinse these pieces of your equipment:



Minnesota law requires a dry time of at least 21 days for any used docks, lifts, swim rafts, or other associated equipment before moving and installing the equipment to a different body of water.



CLEAN

Thoroughly inspect all surfaces of your dock, boat lift, swim rafts, and other associated equipment. This includes any railings, posts, wheels, buoys, support bars, ladders, and steps. All of this equipment has been sitting in the water for a long period of time, which provides an opportunity for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to attach themselves. Remove and dispose of any aquatic plants, small animals (e.g. snails, mussels, eggs), mud, and other debris. If you find an invasive plant or animal you think is new to your lake: take a picture, keep a sample, and report it to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources immediately.

RINSE

All of your equipment should be rinsed off. Pressure washers work great for getting off any AIS that maybe stuck or attached onto your equipment that are not easily removed by hand or a cleaning tool. If possible, rinse your equipment off with hot water (at least 120°F). Hot water will be able to kill off any AIS that is present that you may not be able to see with the naked eye.

DRY

If you buy or sell a dock, lift, swim raft, or other associated equipment, it must dry for at least 21 days before moving to a different body of water.

PLAN AHEAD

Cleaning, rinsing, and drying your docks, lifts, rafts, and other associated equipment will take time. If you need help with any of these tasks, there are some cleaning tools available for purchase through different vendors. Or if you are physically unable to clean, drain, or dry your equipment, ask a family member, friend, neighbor, or hire a permitted Lake Service Provider. It is important to take all of these steps to help prevent and limit the spread of AIS!



Got zebra mussels? Now what?

An overview of what to expect and what you can (and can't) do about zebra mussels in your lake.

Ecosystem impacts

Zebra mussels are rapidly-reproducing filter feeders. Established populations siphon huge volumes of lake water every day and remove a significant amount of plankton from it, shunting nutrients from the water column to the bottom of lakes. This can have large scale impacts to water quality and lake food webs that include:

- **Increased water clarity**—this may seem like a good thing at first, but this generally means less food for small fish and other aquatic organisms and more light penetration in the water column.
- **More light**—which generally leads to more vigorous aquatic plant growth across a wider area of the lake. Both native and invasive plant species respond positively to this, but if invasive plants such as curlyleaf pondweed or Eurasian watermilfoil are already present, they will typically outcompete native species, potentially leading to nuisance growth levels.
- **Increased risk of harmful algal blooms**—During filter feeding, mussels reject toxic cyanobacteria while consuming non-toxic plankton, increasing a lake's overall proportion of blue-green algae. Blooms of filamentous algae (*Cladophora* spp.) may also increase in severity because this species benefits from more light in the water column, increased nutrients at the lake bottom, and more attachment substrate on zebra mussel shells.

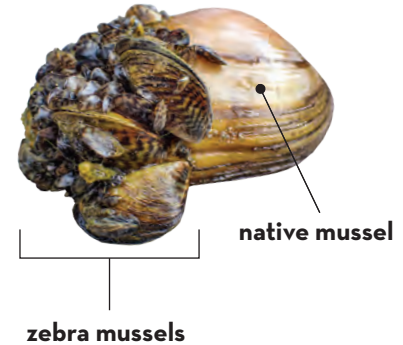
Zebra mussels and lake enjoyment

Swimming

- The sharp shells of zebra mussels can cut bare feet. Most lakeshore residents adapt to zebra mussels in their swimming areas by wearing water shoes and scraping encrusted mussels off of swim ladders with a putty knife or similar tool.
- Accumulations of empty zebra mussel shells on swimming beaches can also become a nuisance. A rake and shovel can be used to scrape zebra mussels into a pile and, if necessary, the sand can be conserved and shells filtered out using a mesh screen.
- There are several Minnesota companies that remove zebra mussels for homeowners. Depending on the situation, a team of divers uses a hot water pressure hose or manual removal methods to remove zebra mussels from riprap, piers, and larger rocks in the swimming area. Depending on the severity of the infestation, these services are typically needed 2-3 times per season.

Fishing

- Because increased water clarity directly impacts plant growth, abundance, and species composition, habitat conditions for fish survival, growth, and reproduction are impacted. This also changes predator prey interactions in fish, favoring some species over others. It is generally believed that these conditions favor species like northern pike, muskellunge, and bass, while disfavoring species like walleye that require darker, colder water.
- Research has shown that first year walleye in zebra mussel infested lakes grow more slowly and are 12-14% smaller at the end of their first summer than walleye in uninfested lakes. Slower growth during the first year is associated with higher mortality due to increased predation, lower energy reserves to help them survive through the winter, and delayed access to a wider range of prey.



Keys to identification

- Stripes are generally in zigzag pattern
- Pattern is variable; some may lack striping altogether and can be solid tan or brown
- Have a flat edge and won't topple over when set on it
- Shells form straight line when closed
- Range from 1/5 of an inch to 2 inches



Boats, docks, and lifts

- Zebra mussels can damage boats and engine systems if they are left in the water for prolonged periods. Storing boats on a lift prevents mussel establishment on or in motors, but it is important that the engine is trimmed or the boat is raised high enough to ensure that the lower unit stays out of the water between uses.
- If docks and lifts are removed from the water at the end of each boating season, zebra mussels are rarely able to reach densities that would pose a nuisance because attached mussels eventually die and fall off over the fall and winter. Remember that under Minnesota state law, if you must move a dock, lift or other water equipment to a different waterbody, all organisms must be removed whether they are dead or alive. Furthermore, the equipment must be out of the water for at least 21 days before it can be placed in another lake or river.

Irrigation systems

- Zebra mussels can clog intake screens and restrict flow inside the pipes of lake water irrigation systems. This may necessitate filtration system upgrades or result in higher maintenance expenses.

Reasons to maintain vigilance and optimism

A new invasion of zebra mussels could make it seem like the battle against AIS is lost at your lake. In truth, the opposite is the case: this is the time to double down on outreach and future prevention efforts. Why? Every effort should be taken to ensure that your lake does not become the source population for the next new infestation of zebra mussels. Two, there is growing awareness about the effects of multiple introduced species within a water body. Zebra mussel populations in Minnesota lakes tend to become severe and then stabilize at more tolerable levels, but if additional AIS such as spiny water flea or starry stonewort are present, impacts could be far more severe than any of these species on their own.

Who should you call?

- If you're looking for a zebra mussel removal company or a dock installer, find an operator who is a MNDNR-certified Lake Service Provider. The MNDNR maintains a searchable, location-specific database of certified providers on its website.
- Some zebra mussel mitigation activities require permits from the MNDNR. Before undertaking any projects, contact your local MNDNR AIS Specialist.
- The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center is working toward solutions for all aspects of the zebra mussel problem, from reducing the risk of spread to improving population management methods to finding eradication tools. Visit the MAISRC website or contact Center staff for more information.

Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) is a nationally acclaimed research facility based at the University of Minnesota that focuses specifically on aquatic invasive species threatening the beloved waters of Minnesota. We work to develop an in-depth understanding of the biology and ecology of AIS—and the complex systems in which they live—to find vulnerabilities and weaknesses in their life cycles that can be targeted for control. We work with partners across the University, state, and country to maximize our impact and use the most technologically advanced and cost-effective methods available. You can learn more about our research on our website: www.MAISRC.umn.edu



Zebra mussels will attach to virtually any solid structure, including plants, rocks, native mussels, or man-made structures such as docks, pipes, and boats.



Juvenile zebra mussels and larvae can survive in water contained in bait buckets, livewells, ballast tanks, and motors. Always be sure to drain all water when leaving the lake and never pass up an opportunity for a hot water decontamination to prevent their spread.

Clean, drain, dispose information:
MNDNR.gov/ais

November 10, 2025

Mr. Daniel Cibulka
Senior Water Resource Specialist
Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District
425 Jackson Ave NW
Elk River, MN 55330

RE: 2025 Lake Orono CLP Delineation and Point-Intercept Survey Grant Summary

Dear Mr. Cibulka,

I am following up on the AIS planning grant requirement to submit a single report summarizing project expenses, activities and the results of activities. This report is intended to augment the MPARS permit system application, associated communications, maps, data and analysis spreadsheets, photos, contracts and invoices that you have previously received or that are now included with this summary (as an enclosure, hyperlink or email attachment).

As you know, the primary herbicide treatment goals the last nine years were to: 1) continue to validate that a selective control approach of Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) or rapid response treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) would be successful in Lake Orono, 2) protect existing treatment investments, 3) prevent further spread of CLP or EWM and 4) serve as rationale and a strategy in our lake management plan for proposed future AIS control in additional public and private waters.

Regarding the CLP treatment, as an alternative to Endothall the MN DNR again this year supported using Flumioxazin over Diquat. Though Flumioxazin is less expensive than Endothall it is slightly more expensive than Diquat, but considered to be more friendly to the environment. Flumioxazin is also considered by our service provider Lake Management Inc. (LMI) to be the most effective of the three herbicides in control. Further, for the EWM rapid response treatment ProcettaCOR EC was used, as it is the most effective aquatic herbicide for partial lake treatments. Also, ProcettaCOR has a more rapid uptake, when compared to Triclopyr or 2,4-D and the lowest toxicity rating for aquatic herbicides, deeming it practically non-toxic.

The CLP treatment was again conducted earlier in the year than usual on May 14, 2025. This was due to a change in the treatment deadline by the MN DNR to May 15, 2025. Related, the MN DNR allowed for the Lake Orono 2024 CLP delineation to be used for the permit. In the end result, the treatment was considered to be largely effective by lake property owners and lake users. However, if time and permitting regulations had allowed the findings from a pretreatment CLP assessment conducted on May 12, 2025 to be used, the OLID would have submitted a revised permit request.

Formal point-intercept surveys were conducted in all likely CLP delineation areas on May 12, 2025 (new this year at 100 points due to MN DNR CLP permitting deadline changes) and lakewide on July 14, 2025 by Endangered Resource Services (ERS), LLC at the same 150 survey points that were established in 2017. The intent of these studies was to: 1) identify the extent of continued Curly-leaf pondweed growth, 2) use additional Curly-leaf pondweed survey points and GIS to delineate proposed treatment areas for permitting, 3) determine if Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) is present after our August 5, 2020 rapid response treatment and 4) document both the early and late season (peak growth) abundance and species richness of native aquatic plant species.

As you know, on July 14, 2025 our aquatic plant contractor conducted a vegetation survey on Lake Orono and discovered a new infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). The EWM appears to have washed in from upstream. This is the only time it has been found since it was first detected in July 2020 and a rapid response herbicide treatment was successfully done in August 2020. The EWM was discovered in the four areas in the upper portion of Lake Orono (see delineation map on page 3). The MN DNR issued a rapid response treatment permit and the Eurasian watermilfoil was treated by Lake Management, Inc. on August 11, 2025.

The cost proposal from ERS for services this year was included on pages 10 and 11 of our 2025 grant application. The final invoice from ERS has also been included as an email attachment when submitting this report. As the survey files are very large, this is a hyperlink to all [2025 Lake Orono Point-Intercept Survey](#) data files, maps and photos. Further, included from the hyperlink documents as enclosures are: the May 12, 2025 CLP Post Treatment Delineation on page 3 (for potential use in 2026 MPARS permitting); the July 14, 2025 EWM delineation on page 3; CLP rake fullness results (summer only, spring points may be added back next year) on page 4; and the differences for all species on page 4. Water star-grass maps from the surveys conducted on July 19, 2022 and July 14, 2025 are also included on page 5. They show that levels are trending back up, but not terribly. The point counts were actually lower than in 2024 and still well below 2022 levels.

Some of differences from last year were caused by the shifts the last two years in spring survey timing caused by MN DNR changes in CLP treatment deadlines. The most notable native plant increase was in Filamentous algae and Common waterweed (see 2024 and 2025 Point-Intercept Survey points comparison table below) and a decrease in Coontail. Further, of note this spring Filamentous algae covered much of the lake bottom, potentially suppressing other plant growth.

	April 28, 2024*	May 12, 2025**
Curly-leaf Pondweed (<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>)	31 points	25 points
Common waterweed (<i>Elodea canadensis</i>)	16 points	41 points
Coontail (<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>)	24 points	14 points
Filamentous algae	8 points	78 points
	July 19, 2024*	July 14, 2025*
Water star-grass (<i>Heteranthera dubia</i>)	54 points	43 points
Coontail (<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>)	32 points	16 points
Filamentous algae	36 points	47 points

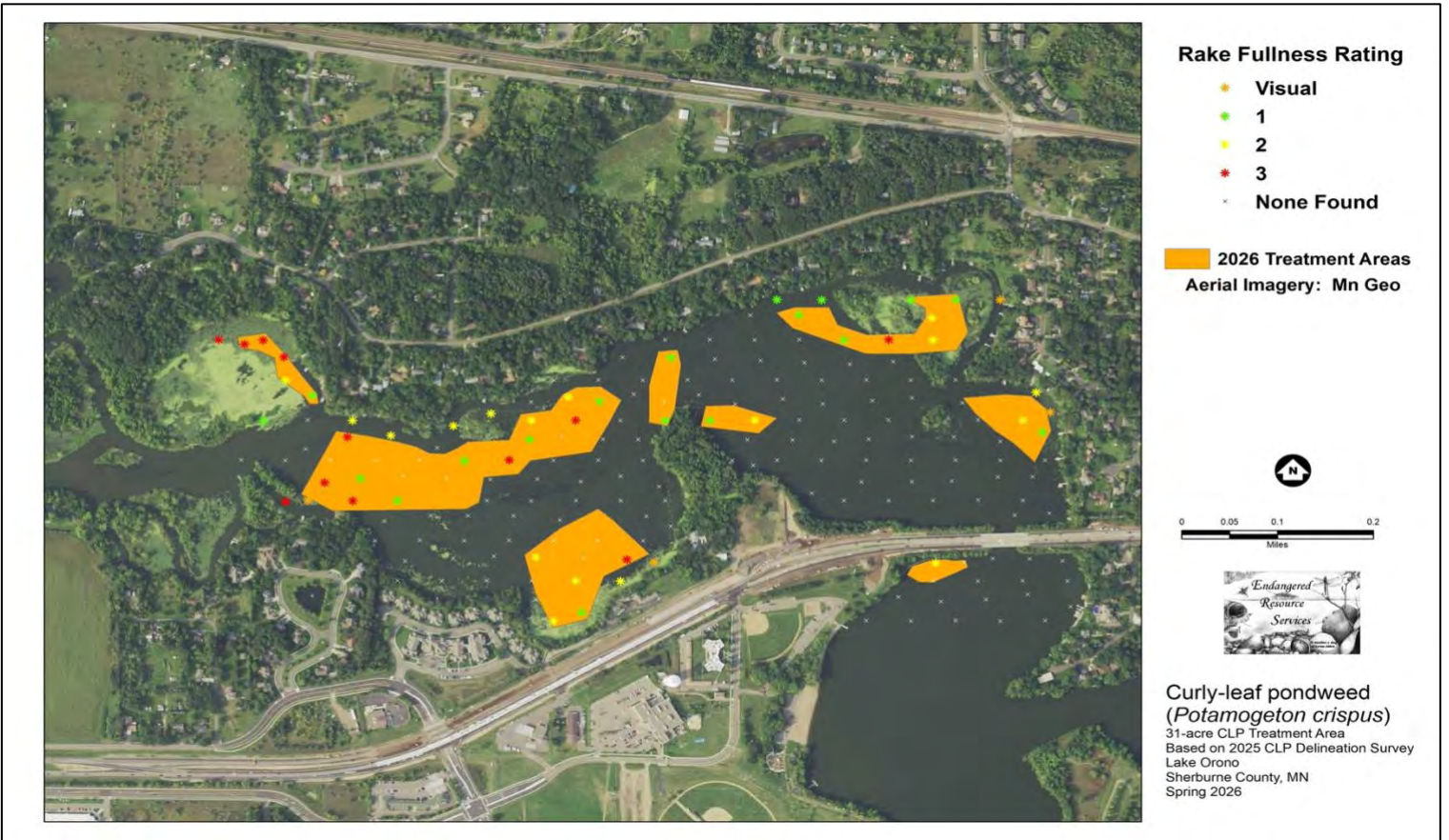
*150 points **100 points (count change in spring due to earlier MN DNR CLP treatment deadline)

We would like to thank Sherburne SWCD and the County for this grant assistance and also for the EWM rapid response contingency funding award his year. If we did not have the grant funds, these AIS treatment preparedness and delineation capabilities, point-intercept surveys, species mapping and annual macrophyte comparison analysis results would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

Patrick Plant, Aquatic Vegetation Committee Chair
Orono Lake Improvement District
Lake Orono Water Quality Committee

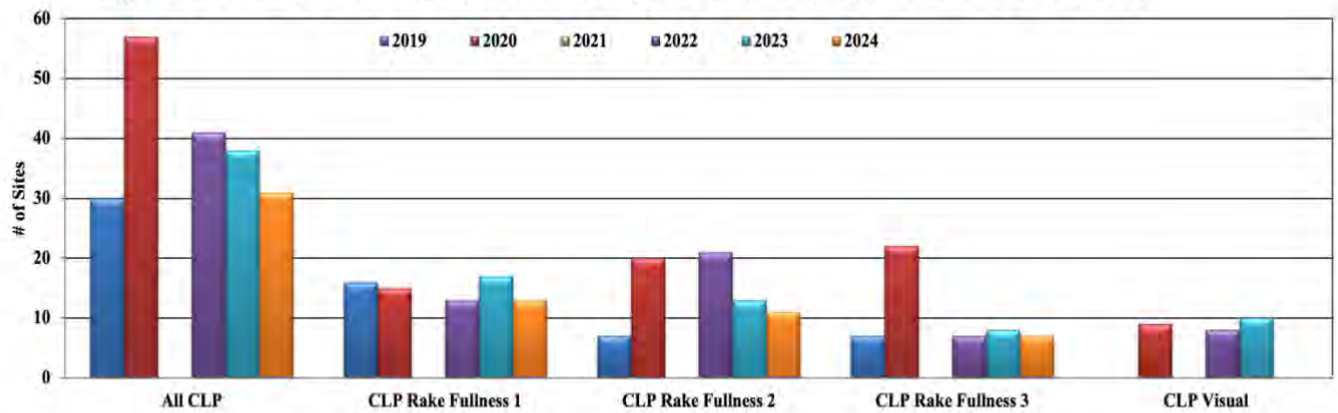
2025 CLP Delineation for Potential 2026 Treatment Areas (31 acres) – May 12, 2025



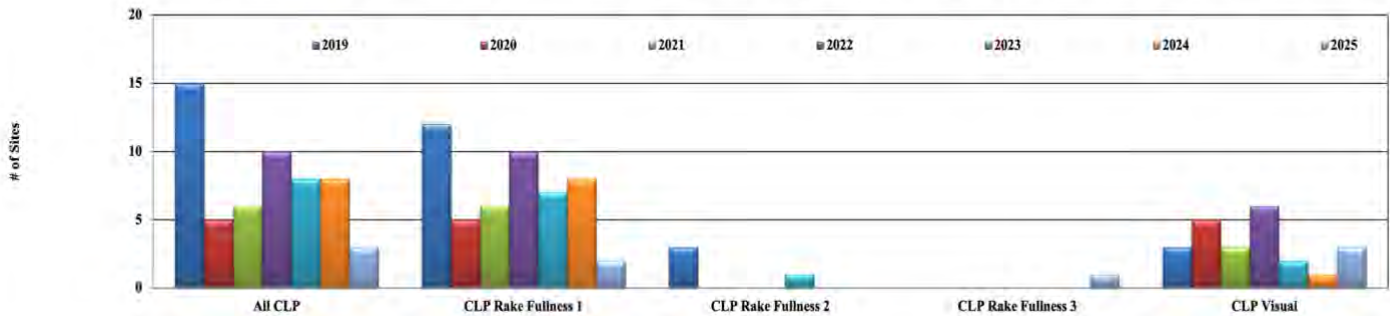
2025 EWM Delineation for August 11, 2025 Rapid Response Treatment Areas (3.47 acres) – July 14, 2025



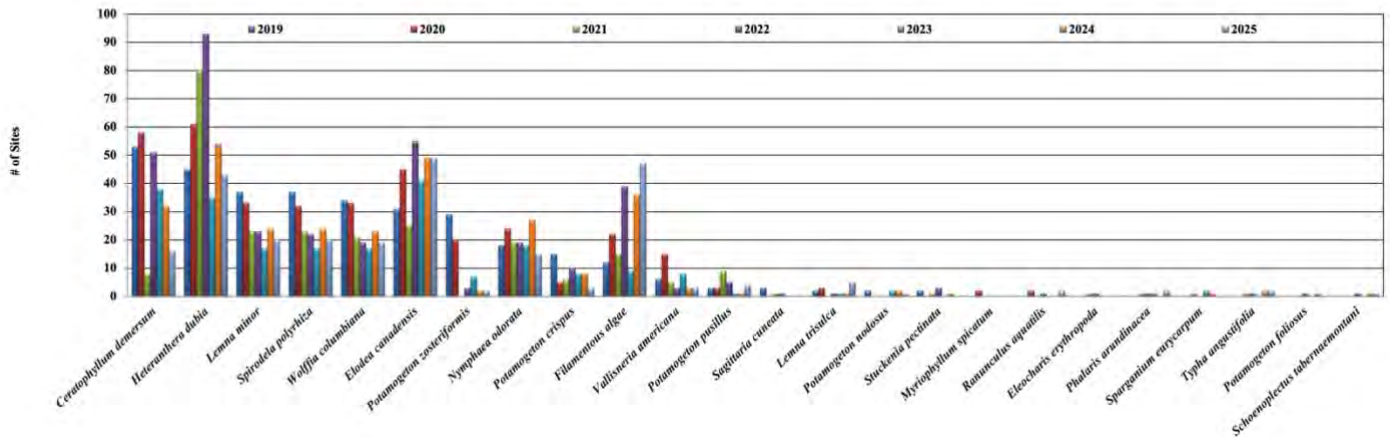
Curly-leaf Pondweed Rake Fullness Differences
Lake Orono - Sherburne County, Minnesota
May 18, 2019, May 20, 2020, May 15, 2021, May 21, 2022, May 20, 2023, and April 28, 2024

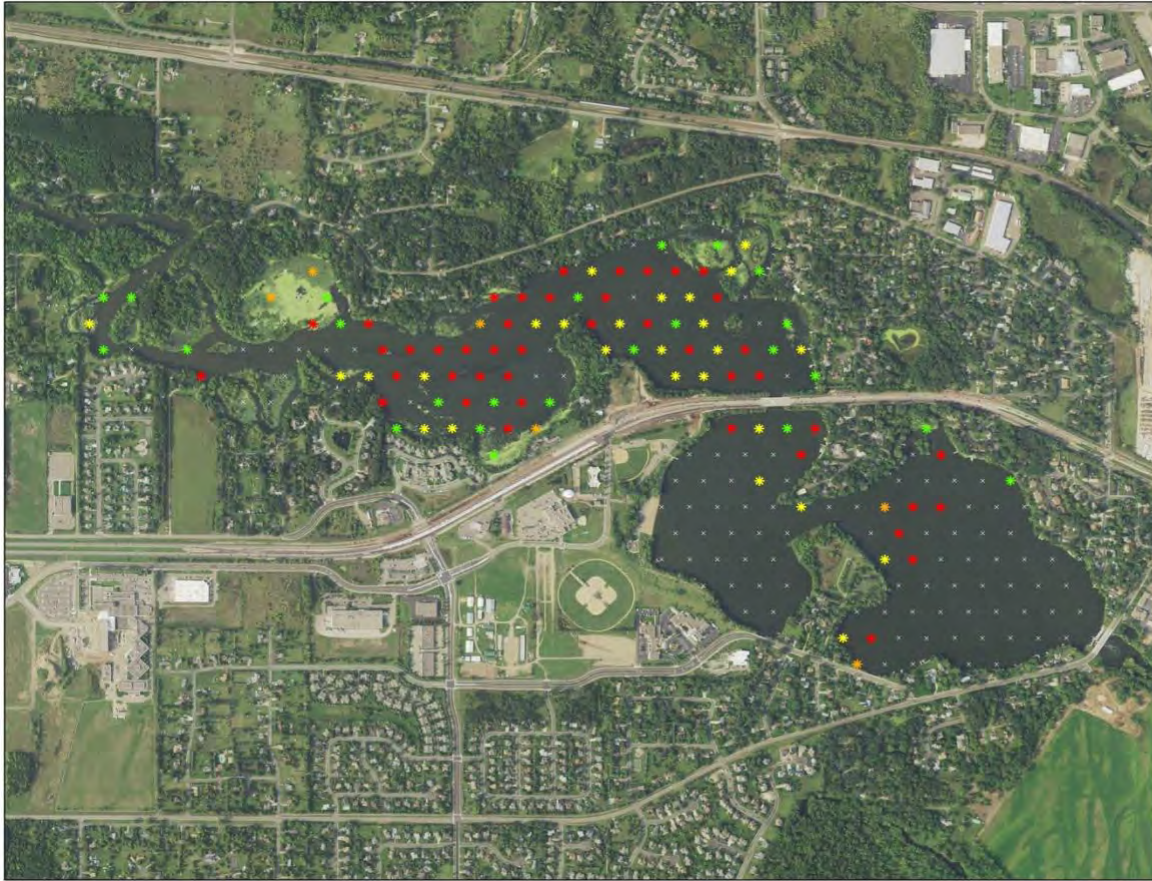


Curly-leaf Pondweed Rake Fullness Results
Lake Orono - Sherburne County, MN
July 25, 2019, July 21, 2020, July 22, 2021, July 19, 2022, July 21, 2023, July 19, 2024 and July 14, 2025



Differences for All Species
Lake Orono - Sherburne County, MN
July 25, 2019, July 21, 2020, July 22, 2021, July 19, 2022, July 21, 2023, July 19, 2024, and July 14, 2025

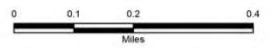




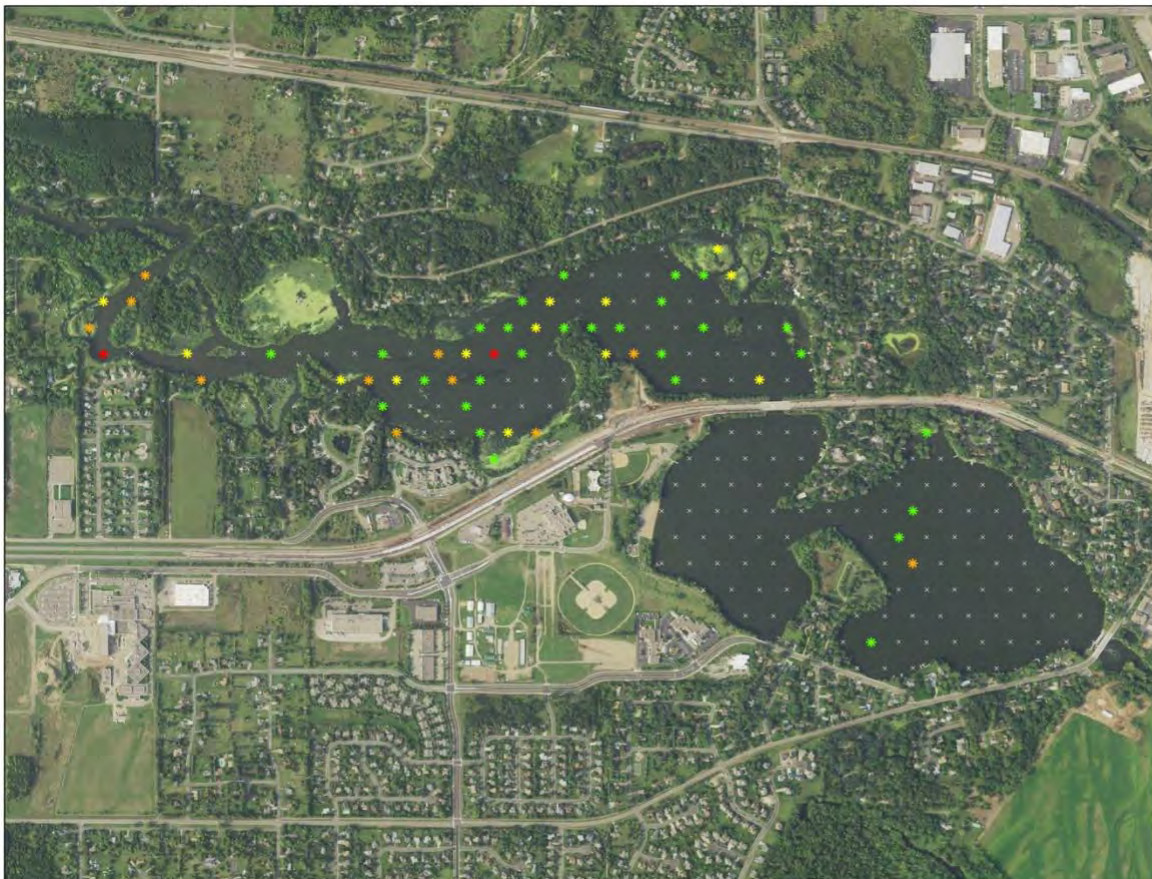
Rake Fullness Rating

- Visual
- 1
- 2
- 3
- None Found

Aerial Imagery: Mn Geo



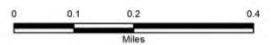
Water star-grass
(Heteranthera dubia)
 Point-intercept Macrophyte Survey
 Lake Orono
 Sherburne County, MN
 July 19, 2022



Rake Fullness Rating

- Visual
- 1
- 2
- 3
- None Found

Aerial Imagery: Mn Geo



Water star-grass
(Heteranthera dubia)
 Point-intercept Macrophyte Survey
 Lake Orono
 Sherburne County, MN
 July 14, 2025



November 2025

www.oronolid.org

CHAIR'S CORNER

Once again our fall is lingering and lots of leaves are still hanging in there... on the trees, not the ground! Folks on the lake enjoyed a long boating season and there's still lots of fishing going on even though the docks and lifts are (mostly) out of the lake.

The OLID (Orono Lake Improvement District) Board welcomed two new members who were elected at the August 26 annual meeting. **Kirk Erickson** and **Katie Ganfield** were elected to fill the expiring terms of long-time OLID Board members Ed Bury and Chris Rock. We welcome Kirk and Katie and the experience and representation they bring to the board, and thank Ed and Chris for their significant contributions of their time and talent. Ed chaired and oversaw the resurrection of this newsletter in 2025, and will continue to lend his help with communications, while Chris will continue to shepherd the Sedimentation committee and its monitoring of lake depth throughout all four lobes of Orono.

Katie Ganfield is chairing our communications committee and is leading the OLID Board's redoubled efforts to keep ALL OLID members aware, informed, and yes, **invited to get involved** in the important ongoing work of caring for and about Lake Orono. Our hope is that this newsletter will provide readers with the latest info on the work of the OLID Board and its committees so you can be well informed and feel more a part of the community of Orono residents. With your knowledge of Orono and your (and our) on-going annual investment in it, you may become an advocate for beautiful Lake Orono to all the people you know near and far who may know very little about Lake Orono, and don't know what they're missing!

This issue includes a recap of each OLID committee's reports presented at the annual meeting. If you have ideas for topics to address in future newsletters, a question about any of OLID's work, or would like to get involved with this newsletter or contribute as a committee member, let us know at oronolid@gmail.com!

—Charlie Blesener, OLID Chair

OLID Annual Meeting Reports 8/26/25

Funding Committee

The Funding Committee was created by the OLID Board this year. Its purpose is to build relationships and partnerships to help secure funds necessary to assure and sustain long-term *quality recreational use and navigation of Orono Lake*.

The committee's annual or shorter term work is to track past OLID budget trends to predict future financial conditions in a planful way. The OLID's revenues have been stable but limited, but have been supplemented by successful DNR grant applications which have been used to offset treatment costs of invasive aquatic species. The addition of the grants expands OLID revenues, allowing a small fund balance to be created. That fund balance allowed OLID to OK a rapid response and prompt treatment of the late-summer discovery of Eurasian Watermilfoil at four locations in upper Lake Orono. These grants are neither guaranteed nor predictable, but OLID will continue to pursue appropriate grants as they become known and will 'keep our oar in the water'.

The long term work of the funding committee is to secure funding for the next sediment removal. Lake Orono was dredged in 1998 and again in 2021, and the Elk River continues to bring sediment from its 391,000 acre watershed. Sediment removal is expensive and challenging but vital to the long term use and health of the lake. Removal efforts will have to occur again, and will be on-going well into the future. We'll need partners and collaborators to work together with OLID to address this ongoing need and welcome OLID members to help us with this important work. You can reach out to any of the OLID Board members.

—Charlie Blesener, Funding Committee Chair (763)238-7495

Vegetation Management Committee

The OLID continued its work in 2025 to monitor and manage aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Lake Orono, with a focus on **Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP)** and **Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM)**. Our goals remain to protect native vegetation, prevent invasive spread, and maintain enjoyable lake use.

Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Treatment

A spring herbicide treatment targeting CLP was completed on **May 14, 2025**, using **Flumioxazin**, a selective herbicide considered effective and environmentally responsible. The earlier treatment timing was due to updated MN DNR permitting deadlines. Feedback from lake users and follow-up surveys indicate the treatment was **largely successful** in reducing CLP growth and improving navigability.

Aquatic Plant Surveys

Two vegetation surveys were conducted on **May 12** and **July 14** by Endangered Resource Services (ERS), LLC. Key findings:

Common waterweed increased, indicating strong native plant recovery.

Coontail (a favorable native plant) **declined** this season. **Water stargrass**, a native but tends to overgrow to nuisance levels in our lake, continues to be in held in check.

Filamentous algae was widespread on the lake bottom in the spring, which likely influenced early plant growth patterns. *(continued)*

Vegetation *(continued from pg. 2)*

These surveys continue to guide treatment planning and track long-term trends in the lake's plant community.

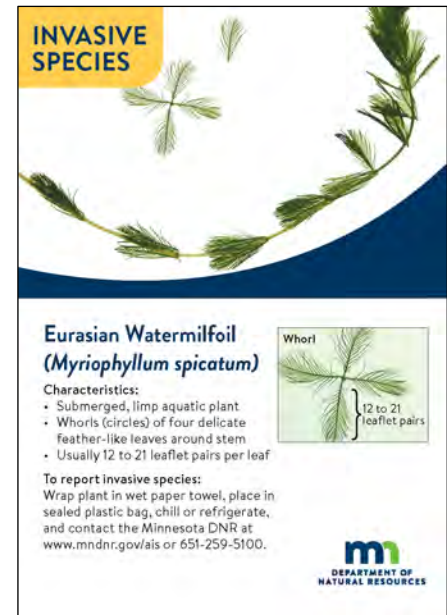
New Detection of Eurasian Watermilfoil

EWM was detected again in July 2025 in four small areas in the upper portion of the lake—its first reappearance since the successful rapid response treatment in 2020. A **rapid response herbicide treatment using ProcettaCOR EC** was completed on **August 11, 2025**, with MN DNR support. The treatment was very targeted and had a low aquatic toxicity rating.

Lake Drawdown & Zebra Mussel Monitoring Opportunity

Notice was given that Elk River Municipal Utilities will lower water levels by ~30 inches on Wednesday, October 1 for the annual Elk River Dam inspection. The drawdown will provide an important chance for shoreline property owners to check for zebra mussels.

Homeowners are encouraged to submit photos (*see related article on page 4*) which will help OLID evaluate whether a longer drawdown at this same depth could help reduce zebra mussel populations.



Funding for Treatment of Vegetation

We have so far maintained a positive balance because of using matched monies from the City, grants from the SWCD and MN DNR and by using strategic, reasonably costed alternative chemicals in the eradication of certain species. However, because of grant limitations and reduced overall state funding of the SWCD, those funds are anticipated to dwindle if we experience further instances of unexpected invasive or nuisance plant proliferation.

A Thank You

OLID would like to thank **Sherburne SWCD**, the **City of Elk River** and county partners for grant support that helped make vegetation surveys and the rapid response treatment possible this year. Community involvement and support continues to play a critical role in protecting Lake Orono's ecological health and recreational value.

—Patrick Plant, Vegetation Management Committee Chair



Fisheries Committee

On June 19th, Ron Rademacher stocked Orono Lake with 1,000 Sunfish (3–4"), 1,000 Perch (3–4"), and 50 adult Crappie, and also submitted the stocking permit on behalf of the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID). Ron has been a valued partner for several years, consistently providing high-quality fish and prioritizing pre-spawn stocking to support population growth. Reports from local anglers have been overwhelmingly positive, and many fishermen are regularly seen enjoying the improved fishing opportunities on Lake Orono.

(continued)

Fisheries *(continued from pg. 3)*

To raise public awareness, an article was published in the August 31st, 2025 edition of *Star News*, highlighting the stocking efforts and encouraging voluntary catch-and-release practices to improve fish survival and spawning success. The OLID Fisheries Committee remains committed to enhancing the lake’s fish population for the enjoyment of current and future generations to come.

—Chris Bickman, Fisheries Committee Chair

2025 Sedimentation assessment and monitoring report

Surveys of the lake were conducted in 2022, 2023 2024 and in 2025 by the sedimentation assessment and monitoring committee. The surveys conducted in 2022 provided valuable baseline data on sedimentation in the catch basin.

Catch basin monitoring: key findings from the 2022 to 2025 survey include:

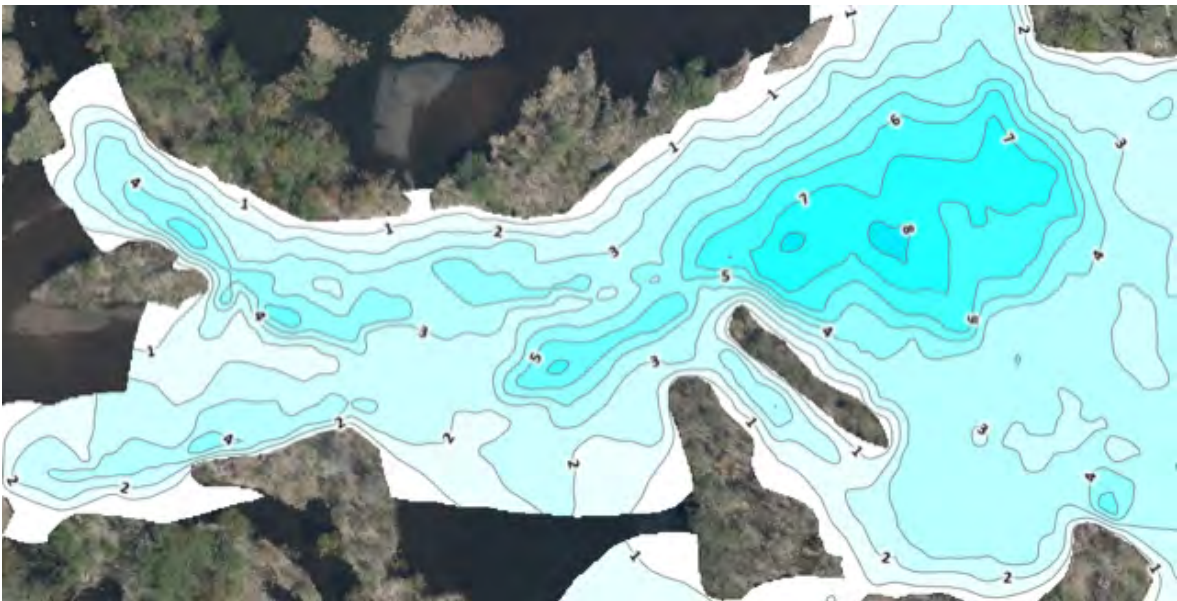
Sediment Accumulation Rate: The rate at which sediment was accumulating in the catch basin.

The survey indicates a year over year accumulation of sedimentation in the catch basin of 1,481 cubic yards of material.

Total combined accumulation of sedimentation in the catch basin of 12,879 cubic yards of material.

Based on sediment accumulation and the need to maintain a 4-foot navigational depth, we project dredging of the catch basin will be required around 2030.

2022

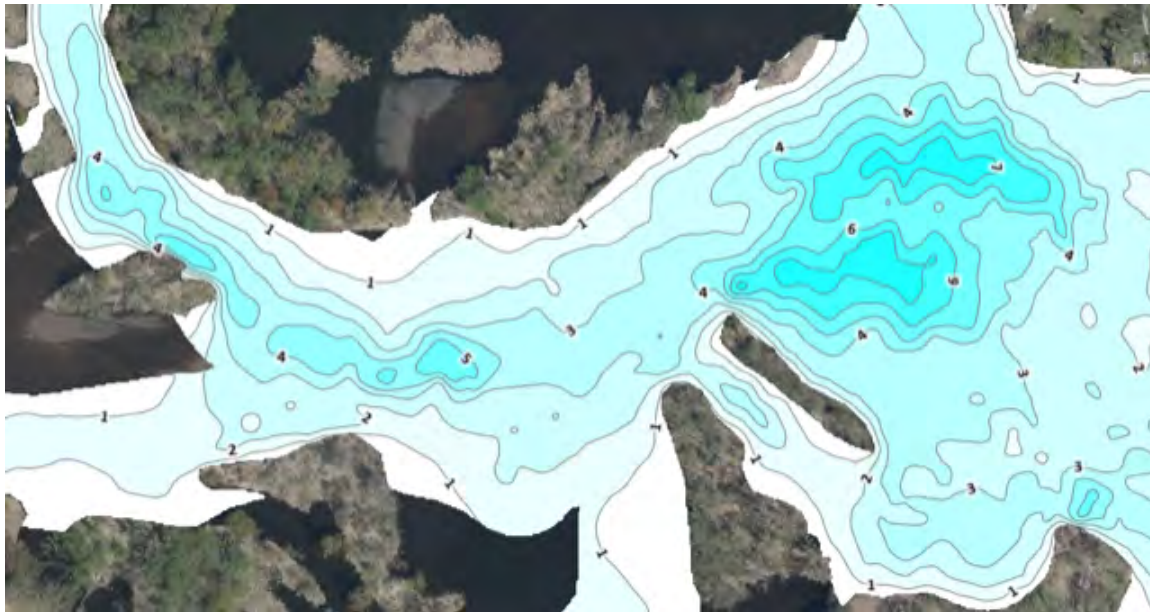


Water Volume (acre ft)	35.004
Water Depth Avg (ft)	4.16
Water Depth Max (ft)	8.33
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.19

(continued)

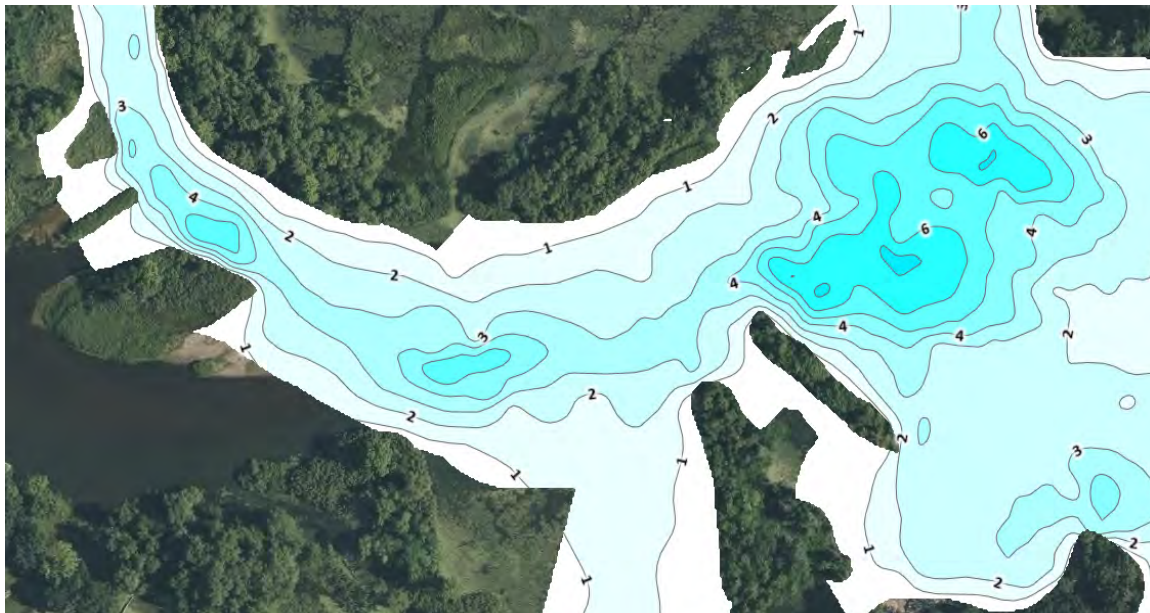
Sedimentation *(continued from pg. 4)*

2023



Water Volume (acre ft)	30.204
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.59
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.61
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.14

2024

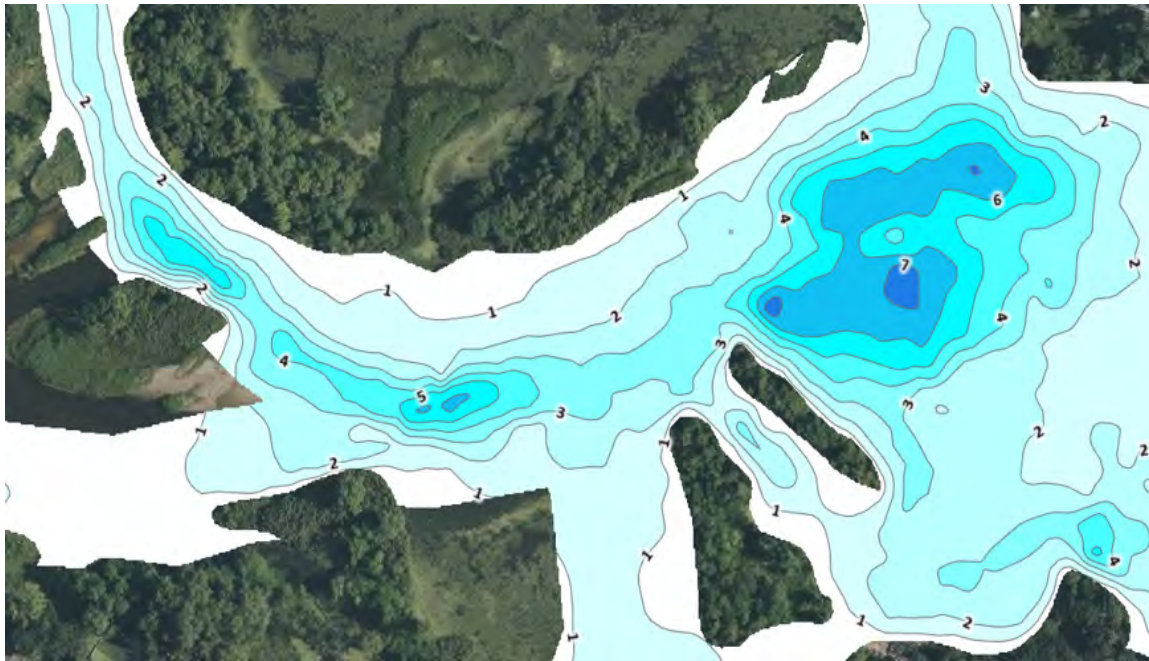


Water Volume (acre ft)	27.975
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.38
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.11
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.22

(continued)

Sedimentation *(continued from pg. 5)*

2025



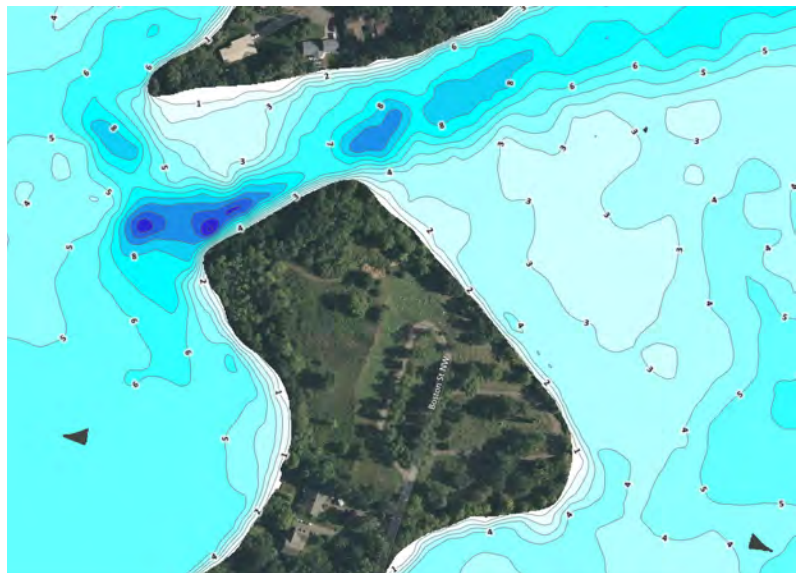
Water Volume (acre ft)	27.057
Water Depth Avg (ft)	3.27
Water Depth Max (ft)	7.47
Water Depth Min (ft)	0.10

Cemetery shoreline stabilization

Orono Lake Improvement District expresses our full support for the Cemetery Shoreline Stabilization Project. This initiative represents a critical investment in the protection and preservation of Orono Lake's shoreline.

The proposed stabilization efforts will mitigate ongoing erosion, protect adjacent cemetery lands of historical and cultural significance, and provide essential benefits to aquatic and shoreline habitats.

The Orono Lake Improvement District views this project as aligned with our mission to protect, improve, and maintain the lake as a vital natural resource. We support the advancement of this project and stand ready to collaborate with project partners to ensure its success.



—Chris Rock, Sedimentation Committee Chair

Water Quality Committee

During the discussion of the Water Quality Committee's plans for 2025–2026, Tom Binsfeld summarized several key initiatives aimed at strengthening the long-term health of the lake. The committee will continue to prioritize comprehensive water quality testing and look to identify targeted improvement efforts, aligning this work with the broader watershed strategies identified through the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) framework. These activities will help guide management decisions, identify emerging issues, and support coordinated restoration actions across the watershed. In addition, the committee discussed some additional monitoring capabilities through enhanced remote water-quality sensors, generously donated by local lake property owners. This new equipment has allowed for more frequent data collection, improved detection of changing conditions, and a more responsive approach to protecting water resources throughout the upcoming planning period.

Communications Committee

In 2025, the OLID Board conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) as part of a strategic planning process. An outcome of that process was a board commitment to increase efforts at communication and information sharing with all OLID members. In addition to using Facebook, email and the OLID website, the Board decided to resurrect a newsletter to provide timely, informative updates to OLID members. Under the leadership of **Ed Bury**, the newsletter became a reality

in 2025 and will be continuing into 2026, chaired by newly elected OLID member **Katie Ganfield**. In addition to the newsletter, OLID tipped off the *Elk River Star News* on a neat story about the OLID's on-going fish stocking program, and fisheries chair **Chris Bickman** and his boys did a great job representing the best of Lake Orono. The *Star News* also ran a story this fall on the annual dam inspection, and reported on OLID's annual report to the City Council. Both stories were complimentary about OLID's organized volunteer approach to sustaining and enhancing Lake Orono.



Zebra Mussels in Orono Lake: A Possible Path Forward

Zebra mussels have become an increasing challenge in Orono Lake. These small, sharp-shelled invasive mussels attach to docks, rocks, native mussels, boats, irrigation system intakes and almost any hard surface. While they may be tiny, their impacts on lake ecosystems, recreation, and shoreline management are anything but small.

Why They're a Problem

Zebra mussels **filter large volumes of water**, removing the plankton that fish and other native species rely on. This makes the water look clearer, but clearer water means **more sunlight reaches the bottom**, leading to **heavier aquatic plant growth and filamentous algae**. They also tend to **consume beneficial algae while rejecting blue-green algae**, the type associated with harmful algal blooms. This can worsen water quality challenges over time.

On shore, their shells build up, creating **sharp, hazardous conditions for swimmers**. They also accumulate on docks, lifts, and boat motors, causing maintenance problems.



Five of the numerous photos taken by OLID members during the October 1, 2025 Dam Inspection drawdown.

(continued)

Zebra Mussels *(continued from pg. 7)*

A Potential Management Tool: Drawdown

Scientists and lake managers across the country are exploring many ways to manage zebra mussels (e.g. scuba removal, smothering with tarps, chemical treatments). However, one low-cost approach that has shown success in certain lakes is a **water-level drawdown** associated with an erosion control/sediment removal project or lowering the lake during winter to expose zebra mussels to freezing air. Particularly without water to protect them, zebra mussels **cannot survive freezing conditions**.

This method was used on **Lake Zorinsky in Nebraska**, where a winter drawdown successfully eliminated zebra mussels and allowed the lake to be reopened after refilling. While mussels eventually returned due to re-introduction, the drawdown provided several years of relief.

Could This Work on Orono Lake?

The Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) is **evaluating whether a drawdown could be feasible here**, taking into account:

- Water level control capability (unique to having a dam)
- Habitat, shoreline and fisheries impacts
- Permitting requirements
- Coordination with upstream/downstream systems
- Preventing re-introduction once the lake refills

If pursued, a drawdown would require planning, public discussion, and state approval. It would be a **strategic management action**, not a quick fix—and would likely be considered only occasionally, not yearly.

What You Can Do Now

To help prevent further spread and reduce reinfestation risk:

- Clean, drain, and dry boats and gear after every use
- Use decontamination stations when moving boats between lakes
- Remove docks/lifts for winter when possible
- Avoid transporting aquatic plants or water between lakes

OLID will continue to study and discuss this approach, share updates, and invite community input.

Addressing zebra mussels is a long-term effort, but together we can take steps that support a healthier lake.

Dam Inspection Drawdown Raises Concerns

Lake Orono was drawn down on Wednesday, October 1st, to allow for a scheduled dam inspection. However, the rapid drop in water levels caused significant concern among OLID board members and local residents due to the speed of the drawdown and the resulting fish kill. The OLID board is actively communicating with city and state officials to address these concerns and to work toward a more carefully managed, less impactful inspection process in the future.



Update on Graffiti Under Hwy 10 Bridge

In recent months there has been a noticeable increase in graffiti under the Hwy 10 bridge. Thanks to the OLID Board efforts, the graffiti has now been painted over.

Board member **Kirk Erickson** has been in contact with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), which owns and maintains the bridge. This bridge falls under MnDOT's District 3 office in Baxter, MN, rather than the metro district.

Kirk was able to successfully work with MnDOT to repaint the bridge and will coordinate directly with MnDOT for any future graffiti issues.

The board is also exploring additional options that might allow us to address similar situations more quickly on our own in the future as well.