



July 2026

<https://oronolid.org>

## CHAIR'S CORNER

Summer lake life in Minnesota conjures lots of scenes, sounds and scents that accumulate into lifelong memories. A gorgeous sunrise or sunset; the joyous sounds of family or friend gatherings in back yards and public spaces; a loon diving for food or a great blue heron elegant in flight; the scent of foods grilling; a lone fisherman on the lake in early morning. I hope you take the time each day to 'be present' and appreciative for all that Lake Orono and its environs provide your senses every day.

As a Lake Orono resident for the past nine years, and as a member of the OLID Board for the past two, I'm especially thankful and appreciative of the many, many volunteers who spend hours of their personal time in support of the work of the Orono Lake Improvement District. That on-going work includes managing aquatic vegetation & treating aquatic invasive species, spring stocking of fish, efforts to monitor and improve water quality, annual lake surveys to track sedimentation data for use in timing the next sedimentation removal project, seeking and securing grants to support OLID beyond the annual homeowner fee, working in partnership with the City of Elk River and with the Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation District to help maintain a strong and healthy Lake Orono, and finally to engage and communicate regularly with YOU the folks who live on and enjoy Lake Orono most directly, and who help fund the work of your OLID.

The most significant engagement you can have with your OLID Board is to **attend OLID's annual meeting**. You'll be able to personally meet the five-member board, hear reports on the work of OLID over the past year, and ask any questions you may have. An annual budget for 2027 and the annual property owner assessment for 2027 will also be presented and voted upon by those in attendance. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, August 25 from 6:30-8 p.m.** (check-in anytime after 6 p.m.) City of Elk River Emergency Operations Center, located in the lower level of the Elk River Police/Fire Station. I hope to see you there!

—Charlie Blesener, OLID Chair



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## Updated Orono Beach Water Testing

The procedure for testing Orono Beach for E. coli has been updated, and visitors will soon notice new signs. The changes were made to make it easier to access water quality results, better understand what those results mean, and streamline the testing process.

Testing will continue every Tuesday and Thursday, with results posted online the following day. The new signs include a QR code that links directly to the OLID website, where the latest test results and additional information are available.

### ***Water quality results are now categorized into two levels:***

- **Advisory Level:** E. coli levels about 235 organisms per 100 milliliters of water.
- **Caution Level:** E. coli levels above 1,260 organisms per 100 milliliters of water, indicating a higher level of risk.

These numbers and categories are based on recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and protocols from nearby municipalities.

When Advisory or Caution levels are reached, the information will be posted online, and additional signs will be placed at the beach as needed. If a Caution level is recorded, notifications will be sent to Orono Lake property owners and City of Elk River officials.

Under the updated protocol, a single test result above either threshold can trigger an Advisory or Caution. Previously, two consecutive high readings were required. This change eliminates the need for additional tests outside of the regular Tuesday and Thursday schedule.

Beach water testing is intended to help visitors make informed decisions about recreating in the lake. Keep in mind that E. coli levels can change quickly and may vary throughout the lake. Conditions at the beach may not reflect water quality in other areas, and factors such as recent rainfall can cause bacteria levels to increase rapidly.



—Joe Hale, Environmental Services and  
Projects Specialist, City of Elk River  
[Jhale@elkrivernm.gov](mailto:Jhale@elkrivernm.gov)  
763-635-1030

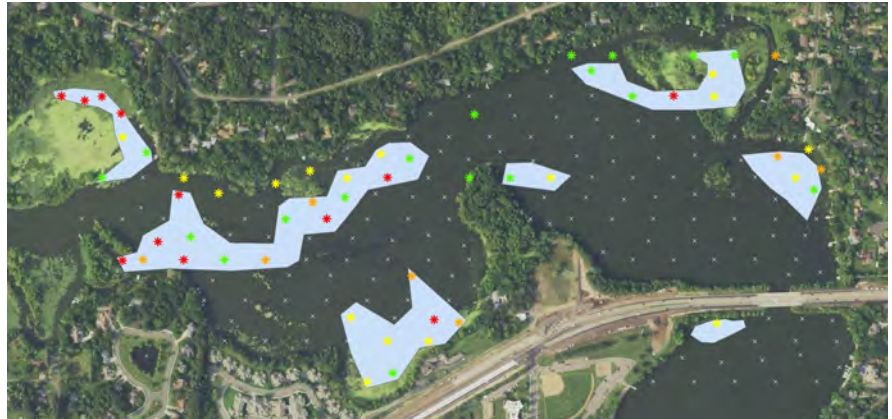
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## Lake Orono Aquatic Vegetation Treatments – Spring/Summer 2026

This season, the Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) has been active on two fronts in managing aquatic vegetation on Lake Orono: a lake-wide treatment for Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) in public waters, and helping organize a private shoreline treatment program for participating lakeshore property owners.

### ***Curly-leaf Pondweed Treatment – Public Waters***

On Wednesday, May 13, 2026, OLID's service provider, Lake Management, Inc. (LMI), applied herbicide to 26.9 acres of public waters on Lake Orono under a MN DNR-approved permit. The map above shows the specific CLP areas that were permitted and treated. The colored survey points on the map reflect "rake fullness ratings" from a delineation survey conducted in May 2025, which helped identify where CLP was most concentrated and guided the 2026 treatment areas.



The two photos show LMI staff conducting the treatment. The first photo shows the treatment application and the lines going underwater, with an orange floating marker visible in the background — these markers remain in the lake to indicate approximately where treatments were completed. The second photo gives a closer look at staff using GPS to track their exact path across the lake and perform real-time dosage calculations to ensure precise herbicide application.



Following treatment, maintaining a no-wake in treated areas for 24 to ideally 48 hours is recommended to help maximize herbicide contact time with the vegetation. There are no restrictions on water use as a result of the treatment — swimming and lawn watering are fine.



### ***Private Shoreline Treatment Program***

Following the lake-wide CLP effort, 27 lakeshore property owners also participated in OLID's annual facilitated private shoreline treatment program, also administered by Lake Management, Inc.

*(continued)*

## Curly-Leaf Pondweed *(continued from pg. 3)*

The first round of treatments was completed on June 19, covering nearly 1,964 feet of shoreline around Lake Orono. A second application is anticipated later this summer depending on vegetation growth and site conditions. Note: We expect to reach 28 participating properties soon, pending a first-year mandatory inspection for one new property owner.

Participation is voluntary and funded individually by property owners. Treatments were conducted under a DNR-approved permit and targeted nuisance aquatic vegetation in designated shoreline areas and navigation channels — including coontail, common waterweed, filamentous algae, and other excessive plant growth that can limit access to docks, boat lifts, swimming areas, and open water.

The goal is not to eliminate all aquatic plants, but to improve access and recreational use while maintaining the healthy plant communities that support water quality, fish habitat, and the overall lake ecosystem.



You may have noticed bright orange signs posted near some shorelines following treatment (see photo). These signs are required by the DNR and provide information about treatment activities and any temporary water-use restrictions that may apply.

### ***Get Involved***

Private shoreline treatments are one of many tools being used to maintain and improve Lake Orono, alongside water quality monitoring, invasive species management, and other lake improvement initiatives. Property owners interested in participating in future treatment programs are encouraged to contact Lake Management, Inc. or an OLID board member. Planning for next year begins in fall and winter — a great time to learn more and determine whether the program is a good fit for your shoreline.

*— Patrick Plant, Aquatic Vegetation Committee Chair*

**Our Summer Kick-Off Party** in May was a fantastic success! It was great to see so many neighbors come together to enjoy good food, yard games, root beer floats and plenty of laughter. Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered and helped make the evening such a fun way to celebrate the start of summer!



## 2026 Fish Stocking Continues to Build a Stronger Lake

One of OLID's long-term priorities is restoring and enhancing the fishery in Lake Orono, and we're excited to share that our annual fish stocking efforts continued again in 2026.

### This spring, the lake welcomed:

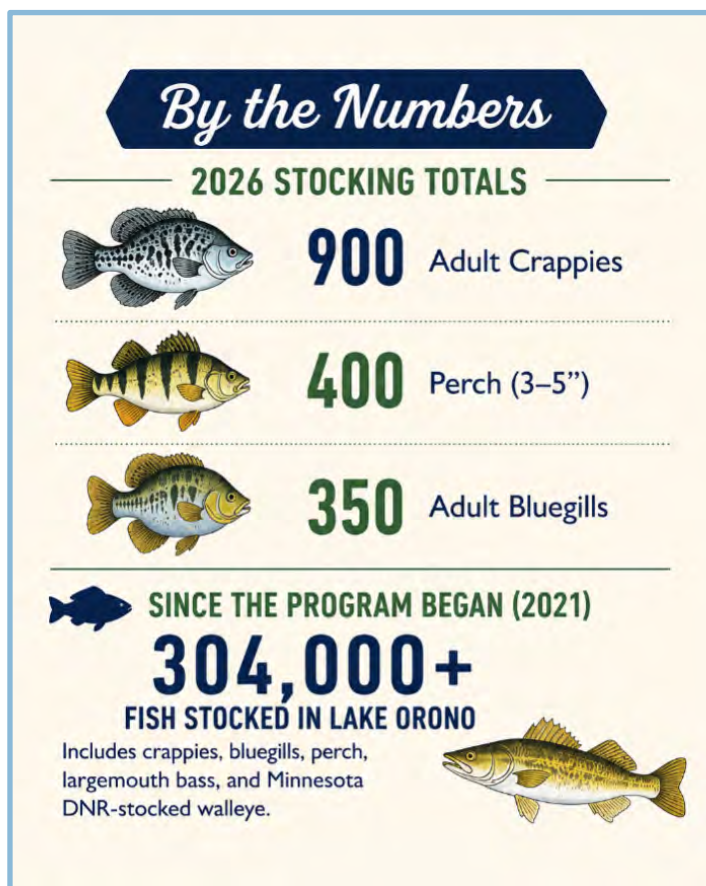
- 900 adult crappies
- 400 perch (3–5 inches)
- 350 adult bluegills



These stockings are part of a multi-year fisheries restoration plan developed in partnership with the Minnesota DNR following the 2021 electrofishing survey. Since the program began, more than 304,000 fish have been introduced to Lake Orono, including panfish, bass, perch and DNR-stocked walleye. The goal is to rebuild a healthy, self-sustaining fish population while improving fishing opportunities for years to come.

The OLID plans to continue annual stocking through 2029, when the Minnesota DNR will conduct another survey to evaluate the lake's fish population and the success of the restoration efforts.

As these fish continue to grow and reproduce, we encourage anglers to practice voluntary catch-and-release, especially for recently stocked fish. Giving these fish the opportunity to mature and spawn will help ensure the long-term success of the program and benefit everyone who enjoys fishing on Lake Orono.



## Mark Your Calendar: OLID Annual Meeting & Board Opportunity

The Orono Lake Improvement District (OLID) Annual Meeting is just around the corner, and we encourage all Lake Orono property owners to attend.

**Tuesday, August 25, 2026**

**Registration:** 6:00 p.m.

**Meeting:** 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** Elk River Fire Department  
Emergency Operations Center  
13073 Orono Parkway  
Elk River

During the meeting, the Board will provide updates on 2026 projects, review the proposed 2027 budget and project plans, and hold the election for one Board Director position.

### ***Interested in Serving on the OLID Board?***

OLID is currently accepting applications for one open Board Director position. Serving on the Board is a great opportunity to help guide the future of Lake Orono by overseeing improvement projects, setting priorities, and representing the interests of our lake community.

Applications must be received by **Friday, July 31** to be included on the published ballot. The application and additional meeting information are available on the OLID website: <https://oronolid.org>

We hope you'll join us for this important meeting and consider getting involved. Your participation helps keep our lake community strong!

Curious as to what the OLID Board has been up to recently? Visit the website to see the monthly meeting minutes at <https://oronolid.org/documents-maps/> and select **Archived Agendas & Minutes** at the bottom left.

### ***Share Your Perspective on Lake Orono***

The University of Minnesota is conducting a study to better understand how lakeshore property owners perceive water quality and overall lake health. We encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the survey. Your feedback will help researchers and local lake organizations better understand community perspectives and support future lake management efforts. Simply text your rating (0-10) to **763-335-1926** to participate.

