Letter From the President

What a difference a year makes. The dry spring of a year ago which led to low water levels on Leech Lake has evolved into a spring where the snow couldn't seem to stop falling. That is good news for Leech Lake water levels and for those who had difficulty getting their boats off their boat lifts last summer. The recent drought seems to have ended, at least for a time.

I am pleased to report that the Leech Lake Association Board was able to meet in person throughout last year, which wasn't possible in 2020 before widespread vaccinations became available. Still, during the shutdown and since, we have been able to continue our work uninterrupted, thanks to our volunteers and the financial support of our loyal membership.

During the summer of 2021 we continued to collect monthly water samples from four locations on Leech Lake for the fourth year in a row. This work will continue yearly going forward to allow us to track potential changes in water chemistry and phytoplankton populations over time due to the presence of zebra mussels and other invasive species.

I am also pleased to report that the Northern Water Land Trust closed last December on sensitive lakeshore on Miller Bay which we have long sought to protect. The total property involves some six acres and 13 hundred feet of shoreline adjacent to offshore spawning beds where muskies and other fish are known to spawn. As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the property is being acquired in stages through various grants. The Leech Lake Association contributed significant financial support to this acquisition, as we have in the past to protect other sensitive shoreline on Leech Lake (e.g., Five Mile Point).

A newer challenge to all of us was the discovery last summer of starry stonewort in and adjacent to a harbor on Steamboat Bay. Starry stonewort is a particularly nasty Invasive in that it forms a scum on the surface which makes boat passage difficult. It also infiltrates the wild rice, which is another concern.

We began directing our resources at this new invasive last fall and are developing a plan of action with Cass County, the DNR, and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to halt or mitigate this latest threat, as well as those on the horizon like spiny water fleas. This spring, we will continue to monitor the Roosevelt Canal for navigation issues and take appropriate action. We are also working with the Sheriff's Department to acquire additional buoys, some lighted, for Agency Bay and Walker Narrows.

For those of you who would like to volunteer or assist in these efforts, we invite you to attend one of our monthly meetings which are held the third Monday of each month at 9:30 AM in the Cass County Courthouse.

Here's wishing all of you a safe and enjoyable summer,

Robert Gisvold, President

Leech Lake Association.