

**Dedicated to  
Clean Waters**



**April 2021  
Vol. 35, No. 1**

# UPDATE

## **A Message from your President**

*by Tom Rice*

Welcome everyone to spring on Lake Pokegama. I wish there were better news to share; unfortunately, we are at a critical time for our organization. The Minnesota Legislature has a bill on the floor which, if passed, would severely restrict how we operate as a 501(c)3 organization primarily funded by charitable gambling. The bill is unlikely to provide a solution that would enable us to continue. See Al Johnson and Becky Gardner's article in this newsletter for more information and an action plan!

The pandemic has greatly impacted the involvement and commitment of our members. Annual membership is down 50%, we have three open Board of Director positions, no one has volunteered to head up the Social Committee or Annual Holiday Party, and we are still desperately in need of a volunteer mechanic with hydraulic experience to service our weed harvesters. Furthermore, while our Zoom meetings have allowed us to conduct business during the past year, we have lost a lot of the personal interactions needed to keep members interested and involved.

We will hold our General Membership Meeting at the PLA building on Saturday April 17th at 9:00 am. All Covid protocols, as directed by Governor Walz, will be followed including masks, social distancing and capacity limits. I encourage everyone to attend and follow these guidelines. If you are not comfortable in a group setting, or will not comply with the guidelines, a Zoom meeting option is available for you. The Zoom meeting code information is provided below under "Upcoming PLA Events" or you can contact Luranne McLean at [lmclean111@gmail.com](mailto:lmclean111@gmail.com) and have her send you the link. As always, we have a full agenda planned, and we welcome and need your participation.

I want to extend a thank you to Laura Hollingsworth, our Gambling Manager, for the work she has done for us. Laura is leaving our organization and will be missed. We are actively looking for her replacement, and Laura will help us with the hiring and training (if the Minnesota Legislature allows us to continue with our gambling operations).

If you are willing to join us as a member of our Board of Directors, or take on the Social Committee leadership role, please contact me at [mandtrice@gmail.com](mailto:mandtrice@gmail.com) or (612) 781-3101. If you can help with our weed harvester repairs or know of someone that would be willing to volunteer their services, please contact Bruce Phelps at (507) 649-0474 or [bruceaphelps@gmail.com](mailto:bruceaphelps@gmail.com). Thank you for your support of our organization.

## **Greetings from Your Editor**

*by Becky Gardner*

Hello PLAers and welcome to the first edition of the 2021 newsletter season! As you may have noticed, I am trying a new newsletter format that I hope will make for easier reading.

### **UPCOMING PLA EVENTS**

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Friday, April 16   | Board of Director's Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the PLA Building (Zoom option available)  |
| Saturday, April 17 | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the PLA Building<br>(Zoom option available. Meeting ID: 873 5942 0916/Passcode: 768405. Call Luranne at 612-716-9022 if you have difficulties signing in.) |
| Saturday, May 1    | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |

While we had hoped that our community would be able to resume some of our social activities this spring, we remain limited in capacity for indoor gatherings due to State Covid guidelines, so it seems that we may be on hold a bit longer until we can gather indoors in larger groups. In fact, the decision has already been made to cancel our annual “Welcome Back” potluck that typically happens on the Saturday of our May Membership Meeting.

Speaking of social activities, while we may be temporarily “on hold”, the PLA really needs someone (or somebodies) to step forward and chair our social committee. While there are several members willing to help with social events, we need someone to take the lead in coordinating our annual gatherings that typically include the welcome back potluck, annual membership picnic in August and the Jingle and Mingle Holiday party in December. In the past, we have had a different person coordinate the holiday party with the Social Committee Chair offering support as needed. PLEASE consider volunteering for either the social committee or holiday party organizer position. If no one volunteers, these events may not be held.

Last fall a new PLA committee was created called “Membership Outreach.” This committee covers the gambit of membership recruitment and renewals, newsletter publishing and website management. We believe that combining these three areas will allow a more cohesive way to coordinate communication and membership recruitment to both current and prospective members. Current members include Mary Holmgren our Membership Chair, and me, serving as the *Update* Editor and as the PLA’s new webmaster following Dennis Cheesebrow’s departure. Please bear with me as I learn the ropes on managing the website site! I hope to utilize the website frequently to post news updates and other relevant PLA and lake-related information. To access current posts, go to our website at [www.pokegamalakeassociation.com](http://www.pokegamalakeassociation.com) and then click on the “news” tab.

Finally, this newsletter is only engaging if I receive interesting/amusing submissions to publish, not only from our regular contributors (such as our President, Tom Rice and our resident Lake Expert, Al Johnson) but from our members as well. So, please drop me some fun photos from your lake adventures, a tasty recipe, a joke, or any other lake-related news, history, short stories, or upcoming activities that you think members might enjoy. Submissions can be sent to me at [beckyfgardner@gmail.com](mailto:beckyfgardner@gmail.com).

## Lake Improvement Report

*by Al Johnson*

On March 29 (the 88<sup>th</sup> day of the year), the ice went out on Pokegama Lake. Looking back over previous ice-out records, it is interesting to note that in 1990 the median ice out date, for the previous 10 years, occurred on the 104<sup>th</sup> day of the year (April 14). Please note that I use median versus average as my formula because it provides a better representation of central tendency than the average. With our most recent ice-out included the median over the past ten years is on the 95<sup>th</sup> day of the year (April 5) --nine days earlier than 30 years ago. The past ten years include two extreme years when the ice went out quite late (122<sup>nd</sup> day in 2013 and 126<sup>th</sup> day in 2018). Those two late ice outs represent our only two May ice-outs since 1980. Excluding those two late events, the median ice-out date would be on the 91<sup>st</sup> day of the year (13 days earlier than the ten years ending in 1990). These earlier ice-outs trends are most likely related to climate change.

In 2020, Leslie George, the DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor introduced us to the Quality Bluegill Initiative (QBI). Signs will be posted soon at all Pokegama and Cross Lake boat landings to inform people of the **proposed** new limits that are designed to improve the quality of bluegills in our lakes. This fall the DNR will hold a public meeting for people to voice their concerns (both pros and cons) on the proposed limits. The QBI has been approved for a number of lakes in the state, some with a limit of five and others with a limit of ten. The following link shows lakes (notated with a red asterisk) that have imposed the new limits.

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/fishing/fishing\\_regs.pdf#page=38&20210301&view=fit](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/fishing/fishing_regs.pdf#page=38&20210301&view=fit)

We had planned to host a shoreland buffer workshop this spring, but Pine County Soil and Water will not have grant money available to support the installation of buffer strips this year. Pine Soil and Water now has a new manager, Paul Swanson, who is working to hire a new technician to help support projects like this. We hope to hold the workshop next March.

Finally, Pine County Zoning recently released updated guidelines regarding lakeshore development and the negative impact that stormwater runoff has on our lake and its resources. These guidelines highlight the importance of controlling runoff into the lakes and streams and provides recommendations on preventing runoff via the use of rain gardens, vegetated swales, shoreline buffers, and rain barrels. (FYI—the County has rain barrels available for purchase via its website [www.co.pine.mn.us](http://www.co.pine.mn.us).) Remember, this is our lake, and our actions can help to improve water quality.

Doing something as simple as not mowing the five to ten feet of lawn adjacent to your shoreline will help reduce runoff. The guidelines can be viewed at: <https://pokegamalakeassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pine-County-Stormwater-Grading-Vegetation-Fact-Sheet.pdf> or accessed via the PLA website under the “news” tab.

## 2021 Virtual PLA Fresh Water Fair

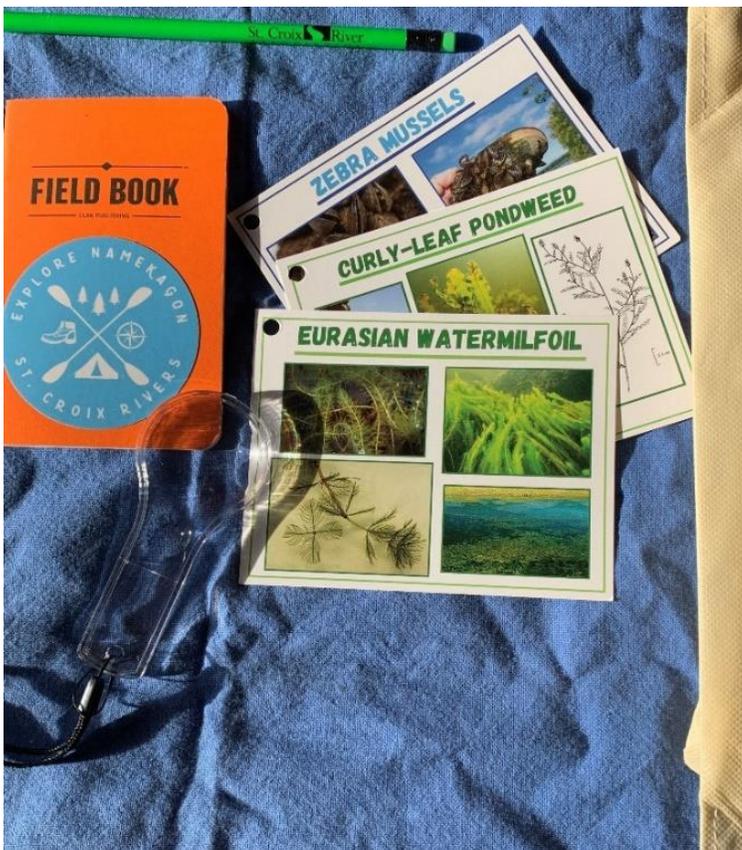
by Lyn Johnson

This year the PLA Fresh Water Fair will once again be a virtual event due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these obstacles, we remain determined to continue our educational programming for local 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Last year, Katie Sickmann, the Invasive Species Coordinator for the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) partnered with us to create an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Activity Packet for the 2020 Virtual Fresh Water Fair. This year, Katie agreed to partner with us once again and, with her help, we provided free AIS Packets (in a tan backpack that includes an ID book, hand lens, pencil, field notebook—to write down observations—plus other materials) to 326 fifth graders, 25 fourth graders and 12 teachers. This year’s focus is on Eurasian Watermilfoil, Curly-leaf pondweed and Zebra mussels. Additionally, students will have access to an online AIS video. If you are interested in this video, the link is <https://www.stcroixriverassociation.org/rivers-are-alive-online-into-the-weeds>. We are grateful that the schools are using these weed kits to focus on and encourage people to keep our waters clean.

Katie and I delivered the kits to schools last week to extremely thankful teachers and principals. It was an excellent opportunity to meet some principals, teachers, and office staff who had not attended our fair before. I am sure if they had attended, there would have been smiles underneath those masks. They also commented on the unfortunate cancellation of last year’s Water Fair due to Covid, but also expressed optimism for an in-person fair in 2022.

There was no cost to the schools or the PLA for these kits thanks to the SCRA. Our relationship was solidified with the SCRA several years ago when they nominated the PLA’s Fresh Water Fair as an outstanding example of an educational module to use at the National Parks. It is a privilege to work with Katie Sickmann and her staff--our partnership with the St. Croix River Association is a win-win relationship that benefits students, educators, the SCRA, the PLA, and our lakes, rivers, and waterways.

Editor’s Note: Thank you Lyn, for your long-time commitment to the PLA Freshwater Fair, particularly during these difficult times!



**Contents of Freshwater Fair Student Materials**

## Challenge to Gambling Star Ratings for 501(C) Charities

by *Becky Gardner and Al Johnson*

As you know, the PLA has supported its mission for many years through the proceeds it receives from our gambling operations. Unfortunately, our gambling operations are now in jeopardy and your support, as a PLA member, is urgently needed!

The Minnesota Gambling Control Board (GCB) has put forth a bill (SF746) that would change the current “star rating” system for 501(c)3 non-profit organizations, like the PLA, that run gambling operations as a means of funding their mission. If enacted, SF746 would no longer take into account the PLA's largest single gambling expense (taxes and fees) when computing our rating. The current system takes all lawful purpose expenditures (donations, taxes and fees) as a percentage of Net Receipts (sales minus prizes) to determine our rating. The proposed system would count donations only as a percentage of allowable expenses.

What this means is that instead of the PLA saving the majority of our gambling proceeds for use on large water quality projects, we would have to give away more gambling money to outside charities. (Please note that currently gambling profits can **only** be spent on lawful purposes and cannot be used by the PLA for non-lake improvement purposes.) We might also have to use our saved monies to make sure our star rating stays high. It is important to note that the new rating system would mean that the average star rating for all non-profit gambling operations would be 1 Star versus 4 Stars, thus actions would have to be taken to improve our Star Rating. In short, if this bill passes, the PLA will be severely limited in its gambling operations, resulting in significantly reduced gambling income and tighter restrictions on the amount of gambling proceeds we could use for lake improvements—our primary mission!

**Please promptly write your State Senator and ask them to vote against the SF746 bill.** A list of state senators and their districts can be found at <https://www.gis.leg.mn/php/senate.php?Report=SenateCTY>. For those of you living in District 11 (that includes Pine County), you can reach our State Senator, Jason Rarick, via mail at 3411 Minnesota Senate Building, St Paul, MN 55155 or email at [sen.jason.rarick@senate.mn](mailto:sen.jason.rarick@senate.mn). A sample letter, provided by Al is available by clicking on this link: [Sample Letter to State Senator Regarding SF746 Bill](#). Please be sure to modify this letter so that it is in your own words and thus does not appear to be a “form” letter. Please feel free to contact Al Johnson with questions at [lynquilt@msn.com](mailto:lynquilt@msn.com). Thank you!

## Slow No-Wake Ordinance Adopted

by *Becky Gardner*

Last year, Al Johnson shared details about a no-wake ordinance that had been submitted for consideration to the Pine County Board of Commissioners. On April 6, 2021, the Board adopted the Slow No-Wake Ordinance 2020-63, which creates restrictions at certain times on Cross Lake, Pokegama Lake, and the segment of the Snake River connecting both lakes. The Ordinance requires slow-no wake speeds on all three water bodies when any of the following conditions are met:

- A.) When Pokegama Lake's water elevation is at or above 935.5' (NGVD29); or
- B.) When Cross Lake's water elevation is at or above 935.0'; or
- C.) When the United State Geological Stream Gauge Station 05338500, located near the Cross Lake Outlet, is at or above 6'.

The no-wake zones will be lifted promptly once water levels have subsided and have remained below the elevations stated above for three consecutive days.

Please watch for signage and notifications when the no-wake zone is in effect and notify other lake users of this important guidance aimed at the protection of our lake and shoreline. You can view the full ordinance by clicking on the following link: [No-Wake Zone Ordinance Document](#).

## Environmental Camp Scholarship Status

by *Becky Gardner*

This year we will not be awarding scholarships for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to attend the Long Lake Environmental Camp, as it has been cancelled this year due to the ongoing pandemic. We hope that we can resume this program next year.

## **New Officer Announcement**

*by Becky Gardner*

Carole Pederson, the PLA Treasurer for many years, recently resigned from her position. We would like to thank Carole for her dedication and thoroughness in performing the important duties required of this job. You will be missed!

We are pleased to announce that PLA member Bobbi Eich has agreed to be our new Treasurer. Bobbi's contact information is included under the list of officers. Welcome Bobbi!

## **Gambling Manager Needed!**

*by Becky Gardner*

Laura Hollingsworth, our PLA Gambling Manger, recently tenured her resignation. Laura has done an outstanding job of managing and promoting our gambling efforts. Thank you, Laura, for your great work!

As you know, our gambling proceeds provide the financial resources we need to fulfill our clean water, environmental and educational initiatives. Thus, the Gambling Manager is an integral part of our ongoing funding needs.

The PLA is soliciting interest from current members in this position. Some previous experience in a related field is a plus. Financial accountability and self-motivation are required. This is a part-time position with flexible hours, that includes some expected evening and weekend work. Strong interpersonal skills and computer experience are a necessity. If you are interested, please reply to [GamblingManager@yahoo.com](mailto:GamblingManager@yahoo.com) as soon as possible or you may also contact PLA President Tom Rice at (612) 781-3101 or [mandtrice@gmail.com](mailto:mandtrice@gmail.com). If you would like a copy of the job description, please contact PLA Secretary Luranne McLean at [lmclean111@gmail.com](mailto:lmclean111@gmail.com). Thank you for your consideration.

## **Membership Update**

*by Becky Gardner and Mary Holmgren*

We would like to thank all our returning members and welcome several new members to our PLA community. Following this article is a list of all current members as of April 9, 2021. If you are not on this list, please contact Mary Holmgren to arrange your renewal or renew online via the PLA website. Next month all non-renewed members will be removed from the news email list and may be removed from the PLA lake-level notifications email as well.

As Tom Rice mentioned in his article, our membership is significantly lower than last year. Please consider contacting your neighbors and friends on the lake that are not members and ask them to join the PLA and support its ongoing mission to keeping our lake environment healthy and clean. Our modest annual fee of \$40 per household helps support this mission!

Prospective members can join online at the PLA website by completing the membership form and then paying via PayPal or sending a check to Mary Holmgren, 12243 Flanders St NE, Blaine, MN 55449. You can also contact Mary at (612) 481-2223 or email [mlsholmgren@gmail.com](mailto:mlsholmgren@gmail.com) to request that a membership form be mailed to you or a prospective member. Thank you.

## **2021 PLA Members**

Katie Adolphson  
Mitch & Kim Ammerman  
Lee & Karen Anderson  
Theresa Behrens  
Chet & Kathy Bierbrauer  
Craig & Stacey Bolton  
Charles Brambilla  
Tom & Heather Broneak  
David & Allison Brooks  
Bruce & Mary Browsers  
Ray Byrne  
Dennis & Bonnie Cheesebrow  
Dennis & Darlene Collins

Diane Conlin  
Dean & Kim Daninger  
Joe & Judy Deeb  
Patrick & Kay Devaney  
Joe & Claudia DuBord  
Dean & Beverly Dwinell  
Larry & Bobbi Eich  
Brenda & Bernie Elliot  
Jeff & Diane Emslander  
Henry & Barb Fischer  
Sean & Nancy Fitzgerald  
Mike and Melody Fraser  
Carol Gaare

Ron & Becky Gardner  
Steven & Kathy Gennow  
Tom & Sharon Gohman  
Vincent & Darlene Glidden  
Floyd & Kathleen Gray  
Carrie Greicar  
Gustave Gutz  
Stephen & Deborah Hacken  
Ashley Halvorson  
Jason & Nicole Heim  
Lyle & Mary Henderson  
Scott & Dawn Henkel  
Scott & Lisa Hess  
Neil & Kathy Hill  
Thomas & Laura Hollingsworth  
Mike & Mary Holmgren  
John & Cindy Hoyny  
Jeff & Sue Hughes  
Pat & Marti Huiras  
Jake & Marietta Jacobson  
Bill and Connie Jackson  
John Jansen  
Al & Lyn Johnson  
Bev Johnson  
Joanne Johnson  
Virgil & Tami Johnson  
Mary Jungers & Mark Peterson  
George & Marlys Kufner  
Krista Larson  
Joann Laumeyer  
Mark & Traci LeBrun  
Ken & Connie Lewis  
Lin & Louann Lindbeck  
Delmar & Donna Lofstrom  
Michael & Edna Lymer  
Bruce & Carla Mann  
Mike & Sue Manther  
John & Barbara Martin  
Brian & Tammy Martinson  
Casey & Misty McCormick  
Mike & Joann McEachran  
Luranne McLean/Brian & Erin Kruesi  
Steve Moeller  
Christine Morrell  
Allen & Laurie Moss  
Shaun & Cindy Nelson

Shaun & Cindy Nelson  
James Nielson  
Bill & Charlotte Olein  
Gene & Marge Olson  
Carole Pederson  
Bridget Peterson  
Ron & Ginny Peterson  
Corey & Lorie Petrik  
Bruce & Lori Phelps  
Pine City Area Chamber of Commerce  
Pine City Country Club  
Ron & Donna Pingree  
Terry Pittman & Krystal Modine  
Paul & Susan Pogones  
Carolyn Puttin & Kerry Charlet  
Milt & Adeline Rache  
Ken & Beth Reed  
Richard Remter  
Tom & Marge Ries  
Mark Roubinek & Sue Stefanich  
Deborah Romero  
Jeff & Amy Rowe  
Chuck & Pauline Royce  
Gordon & Barbara Royce  
Ardythe Ryan  
Tim & Nancy Ryan  
Bob & Connie Schreier  
Steve Scott  
Jerry & Arlene Seeman  
Larry & Linda Setterlund  
Donald Shetka  
Dave & Connie Stone  
Alex Sundly  
Ray & Kelly Sundstrom  
Bruce & Patty Thompson  
Mel & Aileene Vanderbilt  
Rodney & Bonnie Vink  
Scott & Jackie Waste  
Rick Watson  
Jeff & Tammy Weinzeti  
Robert & Sharry Wiegand  
Seth & Leah Wigley  
Dean & Judy Yorston  
Tom & Nancy Zimpfer

## 2021 Calendar of Events

(In-person meetings are commencing at the PLA building in April with a Zoom option available for members who prefer to participate remotely. All in-person attendees must adhere to the State mandated Covid guidelines, including wearing a mask.)

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| January 15          | Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00 p.m.   |
| January 16          | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| February 20         | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| March 20            | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| April 16            | Board of Directors Meeting at 7:00 p.m.   |
| April 17            | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| May 13              | Fresh Water Fair at Fairgrounds and VFW from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.-- <b>Cancelled</b>  |
| May 15              | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.<br>Welcome Back Potluck at 5:30 p.m.<br><b>--Cancelled</b>                              |
| June 19             | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| June 22             | Food Booth Cleanup at 9:00 a.m. at the Fairgrounds  |
| June 26             | Freedom Fest, Fundraiser at PLA Food Booth  |
| July 16             | Board of Directors Meeting at 7:00 p.m.   |
| July 17             | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| July 28 to August 1 | Pine County Fair Corn Booth   |
| August 14           | General Membership Meeting and Election of Board of Directors at 9:00 a.m.<br>PLA Member Picnic and Silent Auction at 1:30 p.m. |
| September 17        | Board of Directors Meeting at 7:00 p.m.<br>Election of Officers   |
| September 18        | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| October 16          | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| November 20         | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |
| December 11         | Holiday Party   |
| December 18         | General Membership Meeting at 9:00 a.m.   |

### Please Remember To Visit Our Gambling Sites

Bear Creek Tavern, Cloverdale  
Brass Rail, Grandy  
Floppy Crappie, Pine City  
Northwood's Steakhouse, Knife Lake, Mora  
Off the Road, Brook Park  
Side Tracked Bar and Grill, Brook Park

**The article submission deadline for the  
May 2021 Update is Monday, May 3.  
Thank you.**

### Officers and Directors

Tom Rice, President (612) 781-3101  
Chuck Royce, Vice President (320) 629-280  
Bobbi Eich, Treasurer (612) 202-1723  
Luranne McLean, Secretary (612) 716-9022  
Larry Eich (612) 868-1243  
Tom Hollingsworth (651) 248-0569  
John Hoyny (612) 644-4297  
Bruce Phelps (507) 649-0474  
Laurie Simonsen (952) 892-0425  
Steve Simonsen (952) 334-4678  
Connie Stone (612) 799-2955

### GAMBLING (Position Open—now hiring)

Laura Hollingsworth, Manager (651) 248-0819

### COMMITTEES

#### Audit

Bruce Phelps, Chair (507) 649-0474  
John Hoyny (612) 644-4297  
Jake Jacobson (320) 629-2430  
Luranne McLean (612) 716-9022  
Gene Olson (320) 629-3842

#### Building Management

Chuck & Pauline Royce (320) 629-2805  
Tom Hollingsworth (651) 248-0569

#### Clothing

Melody Fraser (612) 599-4326

#### Corn Booth

Scott & Sandy Jeanson (651) 341-2103

#### Donations

Chuck Royce (320) 629-2805  
Tom Hollingsworth (651) 248-0569

#### Education

Marietta Jacobson (320) 629-2430

#### Freedom Fest

Tom Rice (612) 781-3101

#### Freshwater Fair

Lyn Johnson (320) 629-7744

#### Lake Improvement

Al Johnson (320) 629-7744

#### Membership Outreach

Becky Gardner, Newsletter and Website, (507) 271-4237 or  
beckyfgardner@gmail.com  
<https://www.pokegamalakeassociation.com>  
Mary Holmgren, Membership (612) 481-2223

#### Silent Auction

Marta Malone-Rice (612) 781-3101  
Connie Stone (612) 799-2955

#### Social and Holiday Party (New chairpersons needed!)

Social -- OPEN  
Holiday Party -- OPEN

#### SRWMB & DNR

Henry Fischer (651) 253-9377

#### Weed Harvesting

Bruce Phelps (507) 649-0474