

# From Shore to Shore

“For Minnesota citizens promoting the health of our rivers and lakes”

Newsletter 45  
February/March 2003

We are pleased to present to you the new “look” of From Shore to Shore. We have changed the logo to a three-panel logo representing the Shoreland Volunteer Program, the Shoreland Revegetation Workshops and Shoreland Plant Identification Workshops. We plan to use these logos to represent the University of Minnesota Extension Service Shoreland Education Programs.

The Shoreland Education Program is designed to educate Minnesota citizens about shoreland management to improve water quality and aesthetics of our lakes and rivers. The program is based at the University of Minnesota Extension Service with cooperation from the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center and Sea Grant programs. The program includes workshops throughout Minnesota and a variety of educational products, such as the Minnesota Shoreland Resource Guide ([www.shorelandmanagement.org](http://www.shorelandmanagement.org)).



## Calendar of Events

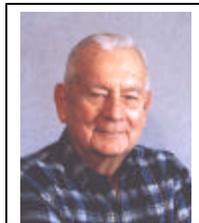
**April 11 - Cass/Crow Wing Shoreland Volunteer meeting, 1-3pm.**

Feature Presentation - “Minnesota Loons” Pam Perry, MN DNR Regional Nongame Specialists, coordinator of the Volunteer Loon Watcher Program.

To register, please call the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Cass County at 218-587-8280 or email [britt018@umn.edu](mailto:britt018@umn.edu)

**See enclosed brochure for more workshops!**

## Out and About ~ Getting To Know Miles Rychman



Miles has a residence on Big Watab Lake in Stearns County and has been a Shoreland Volunteer for 5 years.

Miles’ key interest is in water quality, preserving more natural shoreline, maintaining good water quality and restoring shorelines. He has been getting

to know local watersheds and monitoring water quality for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

### **What is your most favorite memory or experience with the Shoreland Volunteer program?**

Volunteering in planting restoring lake shore on Big Fish Lake, Warner Lake and Rush Lake.

### **What have you done that you are most proud of or feel was the most important thing you have done with the program?**

Worked on water quality and keeping transparency of Big Watab in top 78% of all Minnesota lakes in water quality.

### **What one person do you most admire in life and why?**

Sigurd Olson in starting the preservation ideas and planting trends in protecting our natural resources.

### **What is the best book you have ever read?**

*The Greatest Generation* by Tom Brokaw; *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankis.

### **What is one thing you would like others to know about you?**

Willing to do anything if I can be of some help in creating a more natural shoreline and water quality.

### **What question would you like to have asked of you?**

What can we do to stop loss of lakeshore? Get help to plan restoration.

What can be done to attract loons and wood ducks? Plan loon platforms and wood duck houses.

## Congratulations to Recipients of the Shoreland Volunteer of the Year Awards!

The Shoreland Volunteer Excellence Award for 2002 was given to a group from the Briggs Lake Chain Association. Many of these individuals participated in the pilot Unsewered Community Education Program (UCEP) during the summer of 2000 with Ken Olson and Doug Malchow of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Mark Basiletti of the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District acted as the group's local facilitator. The training involved many sessions and considerable individual and team effort between meetings. At the conclusion of the program, some of these UCEP participants and a few additional active members of the Briggs Lake Chain Association formed a team to survey lakeshore property owners about their septic systems. They also researched and compared septic options. This Briggs Lakes Association Alternate Septic Systems (BLASS) team completed their initial goals in April of 2002. If the Briggs Chain Lake Association decides to pursue septic issues, the BLASS team completed groundwork that will permit the process to move forward quickly and with better information. This group is recognized not only for their hard work, but also the teamwork they demonstrated and the impact they have had on their community. UCEP team members include: Don Gilbert, Gayle Gilbert, Joanne Soyett, George Kydd, Suzanne Chmielewski, Walt Munsterman, Carolyn Carringer. BLASS: Terry Polfuss, Bob Soyett, Joanne Soyett, Suzanne Chmielewski, George Kydd, Gayle Gilbert, Don Gilbert.

Tom Hammer, Shoreland Volunteer on Ann Lake in Wright County, received the 2002 Shoreland Volunteer Leadership Award. Tom has led efforts to restore shoreland, improve septic compliance, place wood duck houses, and to secure technical assistance and cooperation in improving Ann Lake's water quality. He has also formed a loose coalition of southern Wright County lake associations, stressing goal-oriented programs and building good communication within the entire watershed community. Tom has been an avid booster of the Shoreland Volunteer Program; his encouragement and enthusiasm has prompted several other Wright County citizens to become Shoreland Volunteers. He is highly regarded by his neighbors and co-volunteers for his dedication, kindness, leadership, and perseverance.

Submitted by: Karen Sherper Rohs,  
Regional Extension Educator



Left to Right: George Kydd, Bob Soyett, Joanne Soyett, Suzanne Chmielewski, Walt Munsterman, Terry Polfuss, Karen Sherper Rohs.  
Not pictured: Don Gilbert, Gayle Gilbert, Carolyn Carringer.



## “I love loons!”



Pam Perry, a Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Biologist and manager of the Minnesota Volunteer Loon Monitoring Program, presented at the Shoreland Volunteer Kickoff Event on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The common loon is a very appropriate state bird for Minnesota –



Minnesota has more loons than any other state! Pam shared beautiful pictures of loons, including ones taken from under water, as she shared their life cycle and fascinating behaviors. This included the “penguin pose” when the loons stand up in the water and churn it with their feet. Pam said this behavior is a great indication that something in the area is disturbing the loons. The common loon weighs from eight to twelve pounds, has a wingspan of almost five feet, and has a broad, torpedo-shaped body. Its bill is shaped like a dagger. The loon isn’t adapted for walking on land because its legs are so near the rear of the body. The males and females are identical in appearance, but the males tend to be slightly larger.

Loons’ distinctive red eyes filter light under water and permit better vision when the loons are diving. A salt gland located under the skin above each eye makes it possible for loons to change their body physiology when they move from freshwater in the summer to saltwater in the winter. Loons are amazing divers and are well equipped to catch fish under water. The loons are able to expel air from their bodies, force air from between their feathers, and to sink or dive to depths of more than 100 feet. Dives as long as five minutes have been recorded!

Loons build their nests within several feet of the shore, on floating weed mats, islands or platforms provided by loon watchers. One or two olive-brown, spotted eggs are laid. Both the male and female loons incubate the eggs. The period of nesting and first two weeks of the chicks’ lives are the most critical times to protect the loons from any disturbance. If the parents are unable to distract intruders, the loons may abandon their nest. Each pair of loons defends a territory of 60 to 100 acres, depending on the lake, from other loons. As civilization encroaches, loons are retreating to more isolated lakes for the undisturbed habitat they require for reproduction. Loons are not an endangered species in Minnesota, but they need to be carefully watched to ensure their survival. One of the threats facing loons is the use of lead fishing sinkers and shot. Loons actually swallow small stones to help grind their food. Loons pick up the lead sinkers or ingest lead by eating fish which have themselves swallowed sinkers. Loss of balance, tremors, gasping, and impaired flying ability are all characteristics of birds poisoned with lead. Loons often die within two weeks of eating the lead.

The Nongame Wildlife Check-off on state income and property tax forms helps protect loons and provides critical support to the DNR Nongame Wildlife Program. For more information about this program, loons, or the volunteer loon monitoring program, check out [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us) or call the Minnesota DNR at 1-800-766-6000.

Submitted by: Karen Sherper Rohs,  
Regional Extension Educator

## Cass/Crow Wing Shoreland Volunteer Kick Off

The Cass and Crow Wing Counties of Shoreland Volunteers met on February 1, 2003. The guest presenter was Pat Rivers, Large Lake Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fisheries. Pat gave an excellent presentation on the Leech Lake Vegetation Study which was initiated by Donna Perleberg, DNR Aquatic Plant Specialist during the summer of 2002. It was fascinating to see the density of plants and the relationship of the vegetation to fish and wildlife habitat. The study included intense inventories of Sucker Bay and Agency Bay, with hundreds of plant samples taken using GIS coordinates. Significance of this study was in finding a way to quickly quantify the number of species and gaining an understanding of plant distribution. Research of this sort is planned to be continued in the coming years.



## Plant Topic of the Issue: Minnesota Native Plants – Part 1

Orders for native flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs are pouring into my local Soil and Water Conservation District for their spring plant sale...local shoreland property owners want to know how to collect seed and grow plants for their shoreland revegetation projects... schoolteachers are calling with questions on how to create native plant gardens for outdoor classrooms...several local business are attending the Lakescaping for Nursery and Landscape workshops coordinated by the Minnesota DNR... These recent events are evidence of the overwhelming interest in landscaping with native plants – especially for shoreland revegetation projects and water features – and the urgent need for information on how to use native plants successfully in the landscape.

Starting with this issue, Plant Topics will answer questions on why and how to use native seed and plants from local sources in shoreland landscaping. In this issue we will discuss what is a “native plant,” and when and why we should use them. Upcoming issues will discuss native seed and plant sources, collection techniques and issues, amazing adaptations of native seeds and plants, cleaning and storing seed, propagating native plants from seed and cuttings, special propagation techniques for aquatic plants, and how to use and manage native plants in the landscape. Readers are encouraged to contact me with their native plant questions for inclusion in upcoming issues (Mary: 218-327-4616 or blick002@umn.edu).



**First of all, what is a “native plant?”** Using the broadest definition, every plant is native to the world! However, some plants are only found in very unique, local climate or soil conditions. Our working definition will fall somewhere in between. Nearly every native plant nursery and native plant restoration practitioner has their own working definition of what is native, usually measured in miles from a plant source. Agencies tend to use political (often state) boundaries. However, recent research indicates that the ecological classification system that divides Minnesota into three regions (see map) provides the best working definition. That is, native plant materials should be collected, propagated, and planted within a single ecological region.

**Why shouldn't we use plants from outside our ecological region?** The reasons are many. First, non-native plants may have no local “checks and balances,” in the form of insects and diseases, to control their population and may aggressively out-compete the native vegetation (Need I remind you of our constant battle with purple loosestrife, Eurasian water milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, European buckthorn and honeysuckles – to name just a few?). Even plant cultivars bred from sources native to the Midwest may exhibit similar aggressive behavior (“Blackwell” switchgrass is one to avoid.). As many know, non-native plants may not survive our harsh northern climate (How many dollars are wasted on water plants ordered from southern sources or “meadow-in-a-can” mixes from California sold in local department stores?). Alternatively, plants from outside an ecological region may survive within a region but not be able to reproduce under local climate or soil conditions. Finally, there is a growing body of research indicating that non-native plants provide inadequate habitat for the local wildlife, in many cases threatening their survival.

**When are non-native plants appropriate in the landscape?** Non-native plants and cultivars provide welcome additions of color, texture, and form to a landscaper's pallet. They can be used most effectively in plantings close to dwellings, offices, or other public areas where they can be readily viewed, enjoyed, and maintained. Use of non-natives in water features (man-made ponds or water gardens) or in close proximity to public waters is discouraged in an attempt to prevent another “purple loosestrife event.” It is important to note that planting non-natives in public waters (below the Ordinary High Water Level) is prohibited for the same reason.

Submitted by: Mary Blickenderfer,  
Regional Extension Educator

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