

# Nebagamon Lake Association Newsletter

## Fall 2025



### President's Message

Greetings, friends and neighbors of the Nebagamon Lake Association! As we share this Fall 2025 newsletter, the seasons are shifting quickly toward winter. The last colors of autumn have faded, and the lake has settled into its quiet, reflective calm. After spending Thanksgiving Day serving patients in the ER, I was grateful to unwind with my family at the lake for a few days—enjoying the solitude of the off-season and the warmth of a wood-fired sauna. Moments like these remind me why this place is so special.

This newsletter highlights the important work your association carried out this year, including invasive species management, water quality monitoring, and ongoing Fisheries and Healthy Lakes initiatives. Our volunteers and partners continue to play a vital role in protecting the lake we all care about. You'll also find information about recent Village work on the public boat launch. While not an NLA project, we're sharing the update to keep members informed about changes that could impact lake use and water quality.

We also pause to honor two longtime board members who passed away this year. Their service and commitment helped shape the NLA and strengthened our community of stewardship. Thank you to all our members for your continued support. Your participation and generosity make our work possible, and we welcome anyone interested in getting more involved in the year ahead. Challenges such as invasive species, nutrient loading, wave-action impacts, and shoreline health remain priorities, but our community is strong and deeply connected to this lake. Together, we will continue to protect Lake Nebagamon for generations to come.

Wishing you warmth, peace, and a wonderful start to the holiday season.



*Ice-in date of December 4, photo courtesy of Sara Kroeplin.*

*- Adam Riutta*

## Invasive Species

The dangers of invasive species around Lake Nebagamon including water aquatics and shore terrestrials persist. NLA has a year-round project to identify and remove various invasive species that threaten our ecology. Working with Douglas County Aquatic Invasive Species, Lake Nebagamon Garden Club, and the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area (NCWMA), we are offering our abilities to identify and remove invasive species to our community.

*Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLPW)*. For the sixth time in the past two years, we spent a day removing CLPW from Minnesuing Creek near the Homestead Lane bridge, which is about 0.5 mile from Lake Minnesuing and about 1.5 miles Lake Nebagamon. With assistance from a local Boy Scout Troop #212, Nebagamon Camp for Boys and Zack Stewart (Douglas County Invasive Species Coordinator), we removed all the CLPW we could find. Zack scouted the creek between Homestead Lane and Lake Nebagamon and did not find any more CLPW. Our ongoing efforts are crucial in keeping this damaging invasive species out of Lake Nebagamon.

*Yellow Flag Iris*. We handed out flyers about yellow flag iris and gave away native blue flag iris for people to plant on their shoreline.

*Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Water Milfoil, and Curly-leaf Pondweed*. We continue to monitor boats to prevent these from entering our waters. And our efforts may prevent other species, like Spiny Waterfleas from entering our lake.

*Common Buckthorn*. Envisioning a Buckthorn Free Nebagamon, we are highlighting the importance of identifying and removing buckthorn to local landowners. In November, we partnered with Northwestern High School students to remove buckthorn on lakeshore land. If you are interested in our help, contact us.

What can NLA members do?

- Join NLA efforts to identify and remove invasive species
- Talk with your neighbors
- Send them our information
- Call us
- Contact us for handouts, read past NLA Newsletters, or visit

[www.northwoodscwma.org](http://www.northwoodscwma.org) for more information

Thank you.

Kathie Culhane-Pera [kathiecp@yahoo.com](mailto:kathiecp@yahoo.com), *Wisconsin Master Naturalist*

David Sprowls [dmsprowl@hotmail.com](mailto:dmsprowl@hotmail.com)

Diane Bick [dianeebick@gmail.com](mailto:dianeebick@gmail.com)

Eileen Mershart [edmershart@gmail.com](mailto:edmershart@gmail.com)

*-Kathie Culhane-Pera*



**NLA Board of Directors**

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Focused Teams:

Fisheries –	Ken Lundberg (Co-Lead) John Woodbury (Co-Lead) Denny Raas Dave Sprowls Phil Takkunen
AIS -	Kathie Culhane-Pera
Water Quality -	Sarah Norman (Lead) Sara Kroeplin
Healthy Lakes -	Diane Bick (Co-Lead) Eileen Mershart (Co-Lead) Alan Yoshimoto Greg Neve
Social -	Adam Riutta
Communications -	Erik Takkunen
Membership -	Erik Takkunen (Lead) Dan Takkunen
Hazard Buoy Mgmt -	Nathan & Hannah Peterson



**In Memoriam**



The NLA and the Village of Lake Nebagamon, lost two former NLA board members this spring. While we don't keep great records of time served on the NLA Board of Directors, both served for over a decade.

Luanne was instrumental in the preparation for the annual meeting, conducting room setup and refreshments every year. She was a very active participant in our group discussions.

Mark focused his time by serving on the fisheries committee as well as the water quality team. Mark single-handedly conducted water samples of lake water for many years, as well as provided the official "call" of ice-in and ice-out, something that we have been tracking back to the 1940's.

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**Reminder—Important Dates in 2026**

June 27	Annual meeting, Auditorium
July 4	Boat Parade
August 8	Summer Social



*Thanks to all who attended the Summer Social at Camp Tall Pines in August! Look forward to seeing you next year.*

## 2025 Lake Nebagamon Clean Water Update

This summer we continued our efforts to monitor water quality at Lake Nebagamon. A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated lake monitoring volunteer Sara Kroeplin for her invaluable contributions!

### Water Clarity Trends

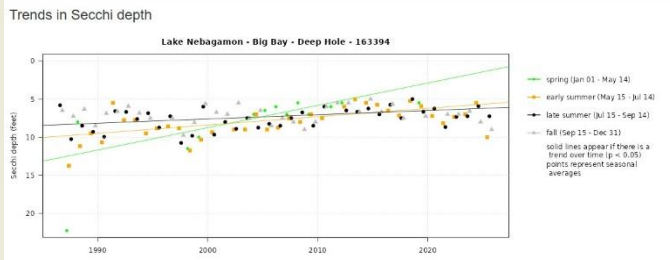
Secchi disc depth is a standard measure of water clarity. It's



determined by lowering a black-and-white disc into the water and recording the depth at which it just disappears from view. Over the long

term, Secchi depth readings have shown a seasonal decline during spring, early summer, and late early summer, while fall readings have remained stable.

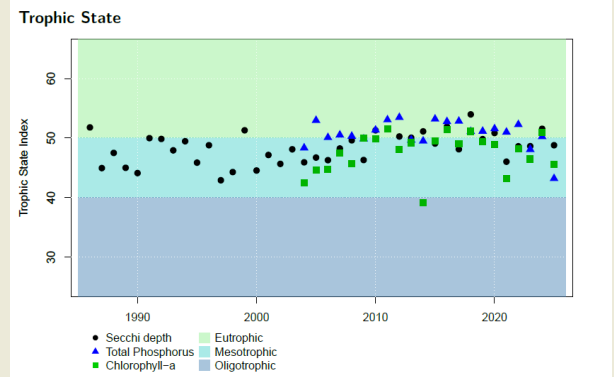
In 2025, Secchi depth readings increased compared to recent years, with July and August measurements ranging from 6 to 11 feet (see graph below).



### Trophic State and Nutrient Levels:

Trophic State index (TSI) values indicate the amount of nutrients in the lake. The TSI is calculated using late summer (July 15 - September 15) averages of Secchi depth, total phosphorus, and chlorophyll- $\alpha$ . TSI values Lake Nebagamon in the mesotrophic to eutrophic range. This indicates moderate to high nutrient levels, which can promote algae growth.

- Phosphorus and chlorophyll- $\alpha$  levels show no significant long-term trends.
- In 2025, phosphorus concentrations were lower than in previous years during June and July—and possibly August, pending lab confirmation.
- The long term phosphorus upward trend observed in spring and early summer of 2023 is no longer evident, as samples since then have showed reduced phosphorus levels.



Please keep in mind that each sample event represents just a single moment in time—taken from one 6-foot column of lake water during June, July, and August. These snapshots provide valuable insight, but they don't capture the full variability of lake conditions. Continued vigilance is essential to reduce nutrient loading, especially in light of the increased algae growth observed this spring and early summer.

### Temperature & Oxygen

Temperature profiles showed strong thermal layering in summer months. In late July, surface temperatures reached nearly 80°F and dropped to the mid-50s at 30 feet. By October 5th, the lake had undergone turnover, a seasonal mixing event, resulting in a uniform temperature of 63.3°F from the surface to 30 feet.

### What You Can Do

- Manage nutrient inputs: Maintain septic systems and outhouses, properly handle gray water, use eco-friendly lawn and garden practices, and clean up after pets.
- Protect shorelines: Maintain or restore natural vegetation to stabilize soil, filter pollutants, and support wildlife. Buffer zones are vital for erosion control and water quality.
- Report unusual algae blooms or water discoloration.
- If you're interested in learning more about how to reduce runoff from your property, contact Diane Bick, our Healthy Lakes Lead.

Our lake is a shared treasure. Let's keep it clean and safe for generations to come!

-Sarah Norman

## Boat Ramp Developments

The boat launch was shut down for multiple weeks late this fall to complete a project that was planned many years ago. At that time, Jason Willett was leading the Healthy Lakes Committee and they planned an ambitious project – one that combined the efforts of the NLA, the Village of Lake Nebagamon, the State of Wisconsin DNR, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. For many years, the public boat launch, owned by the Village of Lake Nebagamon, was unofficially the largest run-off producer into Lake Nebagamon. While it is natural for rain storms to end up in Lake Nebagamon, it is problematic when these rains bring other pollutants into the lake with them. Oils, garbage, and lawn and landscaping chemicals are good examples of unhealthy run-off. For example, chemical tests of ramp rainwater found the phosphorus contamination level to be over 5 times that of the lake water.

After years of waiting on final reviews, environmental studies, and permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, the project was able to proceed in 2025. Weyandt Engineering (Iron River) did the planning, and Wren Works (Poplar) did the construction. In all, the project cost was about \$150,000. The Army Corps of Engineers paid 75% of this cost, and a state grant paid 75% of the remaining amount. The village cost portion is expected to be less than \$10,000.

The design works like this: rainwater from as far east as the auditorium and as far north as the campground all flow towards the boat launch. With a curbing system in place along Waterfront Drive, water will flow towards the boat launch and be diverted by a raised concrete ramp to the west side of the boat ramp. On the west side of the boat ramp is a “settling basin” on the top level and a second “absorption basin” on the lower level. Water will absorb into the ground in these basins. Both basins have overflows for major storms, which will send the water to a rock trench on the west side of the basins. Even though the basins will have their limits for major storms, excess water will still overflow into this trench and have some amount of filtration before reaching the lake. The goal of the overall system is for the majority of rain storms to deposit problematic runoff into the settling basin before being moved further. The Village will periodically maintain this basin by cleaning out the sediment from the bottom.

Special thanks to Jim Jonasen, Howard Levo, Alan Yoshimoto, Jason Willett, and Phil Takkunen for their

leadership efforts to get this project planned, approved, and completed, and the Village of Lake Nebagamon for execution of the project.





## Financial and Membership Update

As of November 2025, our bank balance was approximately \$36,400. This amount fluctuates up and down throughout the year. Our annual expenses are budgeted to not exceed our income. We are ending our first calendar fiscal year in 2025. Our fiscal years are now January to December. See below for our 2026 budget.

### Fall Roundup

At our September Board meeting we summarized the history of the Healthy Lakes Grant Program sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. We have been one of the more active participants. Over nine years we have submitted 8 applications. About 15% of homeowners have completed 1 or more projects. The most frequent grants have included fish sticks, shoreline restoration and water management projects to prevent runoff into the lake. Some have also used grants to help with native plantings. This program remains as a valuable tool in protecting our lake.

The good news is that there are other tools available to help protect our lake. Thanks go to Elijah Hofman, our Douglas County Land and Water Conservationist who has shared the following information with us. The first is The Environmental Reserve Fund. Through this program Douglas County can make available modest amounts of money to small Douglas County entities working on environmental issues. It's a very simple application process.

In addition, Douglas County has a cost share program. The County's cost share program offers cost sharing on a variety of shoreland best practices including stream bank, shoreline stabilization & filter strips of native vegetation. The county can reimburse up to 50% of eligible costs. We hope to have Elijah at our annual meeting to discuss these and more in 2026 so please stay tuned.

And, last but not least, at our 2025 Annual Meeting our members expressed concerns about threats to our lake quality including wake boats and the tension arising throughout Wisconsin around their use; how septic systems are monitored for compliance; and runoff issues in our village. In response to the concerns expressed, Adam asked that a committee be formed to talk/work through these issues and asked that I chair it. We are putting together a working group so if you are interested please let me know at [edmershart@gmail.com](mailto:edmershart@gmail.com).

*-Eileen Mershart*

#### The Nebagamom Lake Association, Inc. Budget - 2026

<b>Income:</b>	
Member Dues	7,000
Member Donations	3,000
Boat Launch Monitoring Grants	6,500
Bank Interest	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,500</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>	
Boat Launch Monitors Payroll, Taxes, and Insurance	11,000
Water Quality Testing	400
Boat Parade Prizes	160
Hazard Markers Install, Repair & Replacement	500
Website/IT Expenses	350
Printing and postage	300
Miscellaneous admin expenses	500
New Project	1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,710</b>

Note: This is an annualized budget intended to represent one full year of income and expenses. Timing of actual income and expenses varies

For 2025, at press time we have 177 paid members, with many paying in advance. We will be using this newsletter communication to let members know if they have a payment due. In any given year we typically are only able to collect from between 190 and 230 of our members, despite having a membership list of 268 if counting those who have paid in the past four years.

We will continue to reach out on an annual basis to non-members who live on the lake. A reminder has been attached to this newsletter for those who have not yet paid for the current fiscal year (either in an email message or along with your paper copy in the mail). As always, if you have a neighbor who is new to the lake, please let them know about the NLA!

We do everything we can to provide reminders about dues owed, and try to make it as convenient as possible, by including copies of the forms with the newsletter or providing an online payment portal at [www.nebagamonlakeassociation.com](http://www.nebagamonlakeassociation.com). We have about 75% of lake shore owners as members, along with other members who are interested in the lake.

*-Erik Takkunen*



### 4<sup>th</sup> of July Boat Parade

The boat parade got off to a staggered start as there was some inconsistency in the posted start times between the NLA and the Village, but we managed to get the groups together and have a successful parade. Although we didn't have Dilly Bars available, we passed out ice cream novelties to the winning boats nonetheless. We look forward to another great year next year. All of our pictures can be found on our Facebook page.



## 2025 AIS Boat Launch Monitoring



This year boat monitoring for Aquatic Invasive Species started with the fishing opener as it always has on May 3, 2025. We monitor on Saturdays and Sundays only in the month of May at 11 hours per day. Then we monitor from Memorial Day to Labor Day every day of the week. This is 11 hours on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and 6 hours on Monday-Thursday for a total of 57 hours per week.

Our main monitor is Jeff Giansanti, who started his 12th year and covered the 11 hours per week shifts Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. We hired two new monitors, Abigale Anderson, a senior at Northwestern High School this fall, and Davis Nolan, a freshman at Northwestern this fall. These two each worked two of the 6 hours per week shifts and backed each other up. The three things we monitor closely for are Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Water Milfoil, and Curly-Leaf Pondweed. All the monitors focused on whether a boat had been in another water body in the last 5 days, the most important question. If it had, we zero in on those lakes we know have one of the three Aquatic Invasives we screen for in them. We also check boaters' drain plugs and that they had them out while traveling, as is the law. We also check fisherman's live wells and ballast from wake boats to make sure they were not full of water from another lake.

We monitored 1,547 boats, and the total number of people reached was 3,032. There were 1,017 boats entering Lake Nebagamon and 530 boats leaving the lake. There were 37 boats that had been in another lake within the last 5 days. 25 of these had been in a lake/river identified as our targeted invasive species. We made sure to screen these boats and trailers very carefully.

The boat launch, which is owned by the Village, was rebuilt in October of 2024. A number of people have had trouble launching their boats since that time. From

May 3 until July 6, we had 16 boats that we documented could not launch due to problems with low water. These boats all ended up leaving without being able to access our lake. After July 6 the lake water level came up and we did not observe any problems with people launching their boats. We have passed along this data to the village. If you had problems with the new boat launch, be sure to contact the village to let them know.

We also tallied the fish caught by species for the 6th year. There were 249 Walleyes caught and 33 were keepers (13.2%). There were 555 Bass caught and only one kept (.18%). There were 49 Northern caught and none kept (0%). There were 135 Crappies caught and 41 kept (30.3%). There were 280 Blue Gills/ Sunfish caught and 114 kept (40.1%).

The following table summarizes our data for the last 10 years.

Year	Total Boats	Incoming	In Another Lake in Last 5 Days	In Invasive Lake last 5 Days
2015	2006	1269	147	47
2016	1905	1230	87	26
2017	1940	1225	119	37
2018	1591	1042	82	35
2019	1925	1234	131	53
2020	2055	1277	159	63
2021	1887	1203	78	31
2022	1633	1102	41	19
2023	1714	1177	34	21
2024	1517	1019	33	23
2025	1547	1017	37	25

We also tallied the fish caught by species. Of course, this is only for boats coming and going from our lake, and only the information boaters are willing to share. But we still think this information is valuable.

2025	Caught	Kept	Kept %
Walleye	249	33	13%
Smallmouth	555	1	0%
Northern	49	0	0%
Crappie	135	41	30%
Bluegill/sunfish	280	114	40%
2024	Caught	Kept	Kept %
Walleye	269	51	19%
Smallmouth	282	0	0%
Northern	198	6	3%
Crappie	161	86	53%
Bluegill/sunfish	196	85	43%
2023	Caught	Kept	Kept %
Walleye	353	32	9%

Smallmouth	223	0	0%
Northern	105	4	4%
Crappie	32	24	75%
Bluegill/sunfish	154	68	40%
<b>2022</b>	<b>Caught</b>	<b>Kept</b>	<b>Kept %</b>
Walleye	566	64	11%
Smallmouth	396	3	1%
Northern	137	4	3%
Crappie	141	65	46%
Bluegill/sunfish	192	29	15%
<b>2021</b>	<b>Caught</b>	<b>Kept</b>	<b>Kept %</b>
Walleye	241	4	2%
Smallmouth	300	6	2%
Northern	160	7	4%
Crappie	213	114	54%
Bluegill/sunfish	230	59	26%
<b>2020</b>	<b>Caught</b>	<b>Kept</b>	<b>Kept %</b>
Walleye	178	8	5%
Smallmouth	111	6	5%
Northern	62	7	11%
Crappie	97	86	89%
Bluegill/sunfish	173	149	86%

-Dave Sprowls

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### NLA Fisheries Committee Update

The Fisheries committee is recommending going from a 25 total pan fish regulation of which any pan fish species could make up the total. That allows the harvest of 25 sun fish or 25 crappie as long as the total does not exceed 25. We propose limiting the total of any one species to 10. One could harvest 10 crappie, 10 sunfish, and 10 perch under the proposed rule changes. Public support strongly favors this approach.

We are placing this recommendation on the Wisconsin Congress Spring Hearing questionnaire for general public voting. There were a number of such proposals on last year’s questionnaire. All but one passed. The failed proposal was confusing to most, and therefore most did not vote in favor.

We are in our second year of no walleye stocking. In order for stocking to occur again the young of the year age class must average less than 8 per mile in the fall surveys. In 2024 there were 8 per mile and this year only 4.8. That means the earliest stocking could occur would be 2029. The committee continues to push for a slot size limit that would protect more spawning class fish. Most states around us, as well as the Canadian province of Ontario manage their lakes in this manner.

Last winter we finally got on the lake to complete the 11 habitat improvement (fish sticks) projects. We have no projects planned for this winter.

-Ken Lundberg

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### LNVD Fire and Medical Volunteers Needed

The Lake Nebagamon Volunteer Fire Department (LNVD) is currently in critical need of Fire and Medical volunteers. This staffing shortage directly affects emergency response times and outcomes for local fires and medical emergencies, such as heart attacks, strokes, vehicle accidents, or other incidents.

We are calling on community members to step up and make a difference. If you are able and willing, consider becoming a Volunteer Medical First Responder and/or Firefighter. These roles offer not only invaluable training and experience, but also the chance to serve and protect - including your own family, friends, and community.

This is a meaningful and rewarding opportunity to learn truly life-saving skills. Take the time to join a dedicated team where you can make a real and lasting impact on your community—and on the people you care about most.

Compensation is available for volunteers. And, as an added incentive, the Village Board has approved a \$2,000 bonus upon successful completion of certification and two years of active service. In addition, a fully funded retirement program is planned to be offered, which can amount to thousands of dollars once vested upon retirement. Call today to learn more about this exceptional opportunity!

For more information or to get involved, contact Daisha Nolan at 715-374-3101 or [dnolan@villagelakenebagamon.com](mailto:dnolan@villagelakenebagamon.com)

The Lake Nebagamon Volunteer Fire Department is also excited to announce that the annual 5-Mile Dragin’ Tail Race will again take place on Saturday, July 4, 2026 at 8:00 am! Open to all ages and abilities — runners, walkers, and kids alike — this beloved event is a great way to kick off Independence Day with energy, fun, and community spirit. They are currently seeking volunteers to help staff the event. Please email Katy at [Katy.johnson91213@gmail.com](mailto:Katy.johnson91213@gmail.com) or call 715-817-0404.

## Thanks for All of Your Extra Contributions This Year!

We would like to extend a big thank you to the following members who generously made additional contributions in the last year! These contributions were directed towards either aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention, fisheries, or other general projects.



### Prominent Gifts (\$100 or more):

- Wendy Corry, owner of Computing Done Right, LLC, for providing website development
- John Salmela
- Camp Nebagamon
- Rachel Cummins
- Phil & Gretchen Takkunen
- Eileen Mershart
- Martha & Scott Weicht
- Ken Lundberg
- Jane Stein Kerr & Euan Kerr
- Sally Lorber Stein
- George Fryklund

### Other Generous Gifts

- Richard & Alyssa Reder
- Paul & Kiett Takkunen
- David & Nancy Neusteter
- Edward Schwarz
- Don Jacobson
- Jack & Dorothy Lundberg
- Robert & Toni Peterson
- Amy Norris
- Brenda Meyer
- Scott Varland
- John & Catherine Davidson
- George & Teresa Boyer
- Rick Erickson
- Jim Koretz & Elissa Polan
- Jack Sellwood
- Steven & Susan Wood
- Greg & Susan Amys
- George & Lynn Lehman
- John & Marilyn McGill
- Alan & Mary Yoshimoto
- Catherine Skamarycz
- Jason Willett
- Fred & Ginger Strom
- Cynthia Grothe
- Dennis & Deb Battuello
- John Hall & Kristina Sampson
- Tim Pera & Kathleen Culhane Pera
- Walt & Kay Gower
- Linda Heisel & Len Burtzel
- Susan Johnson
- Jon & Kristi Von Behren
- Rick & Debbie Gilbertson
- Kevin & Cindy Donley
- Julie & Steve Piggott
- Gary & Bonnie Fritch
- Ben & Rachel Nelson

## Need Gift Ideas? Company Offers Custom Lake Nebagamon Apparel and Gives Back to the NLA

We recently partnered with Barefoot Bay ([barefootbay.net](http://barefootbay.net)) to create a customized line of apparel for Lake Nebagamon. What makes Barefoot Bay different is that they donate 15% of their sales to lake associations that they partner with. If you are looking to represent your favorite lake wherever you go or if you are looking for gifting ideas, take a look at what they have to offer. Multiple sizes are available, and they have men's, women's, and kid's specific items. Below are a few samples. When browsing their site, any item that says "w/ Your Favorite Lake" can be customized to have our lake outline and in the case of shirts, a Lake Nebagamon specific logo on the front, seen here >>>>>



2025 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL  
NEBAGAMON LAKE ASSOCIATION  
<http://nebagamonlakeassociation.com>



**\*Save time and postage! You now have the option of paying online with a credit card at <http://nebagamonlakeassociation.com/pay-online/>. When paying online you can also provide the below information.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Nebagamon address (fire number & road only) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (where you wish newsletters to be mailed) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the spring and fall newsletters by email. I want to help save printing and postage expense.

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$35 per year—a small amount that has a big impact!

Payment for 2024, if needed

Payment for 2025

If you wish to pay dues in advance (more than one year), indicate amount here:

We are involved in many projects and would gladly accept additional contributions, if you wish to contribute additionally, indicate amount here:

- Tim McGillis Memorial Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Reserve Fund
- Fishery Enhancement Initiative
- General Fund (Projects Determined by Membership)

Total paid

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Please make your check payable to NLA and send it along with this information sheet to:

NLA  
PO Box 216  
Lake Nebagamon, WI 54849