

# PELICAN GROUP OF LAKES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (PGOLID) 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## **Introduction:**

Minnesota Statutes section 103 B.571 (4) require Lake Improvement Districts to file an Annual Report to the County Board, the Commissioner of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This direction has been and will be interpreted to be the Otter Tail County Commissioners, Land and Resource Management, Bill Kalar, the DNR Director, and Tim James at the MPCA office in Detroit Lakes.

The functions of the PGOLID are overseen by a nine member board of directors that are elected by property owners to 3 year terms with 2 term limits. Following is a list of the directors for 2019 and the year in which their term expires:

Jay Elshaug, Chairman, 2019  
Bert McDonough, Vice Chairman, 2021  
Dave Haarstad, Secretary, 2021  
Arlan Swenson, Treasurer, 2020  
Dave Gordon, 2020  
Erika Gilsdorf, 2021  
Paul Horstmann, 2020  
Larry Kohler, 2019  
John Kruse, 2019

## **Current Program Status:**

### **1. Monitoring of Water Quality:**

PGOLID, through RMB Labs and the PGOLID Lake Resource Coordinator continue to monitor lake and stream water quality. This information continues to be incorporated into a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan. All monitoring results and the Lake Management Plan are available on the PGOLID website: [www.pgolid.org](http://www.pgolid.org).

- a. The PGOLID Water Resource Coordinator does monthly evaluation of the streams surrounding the PGOLID lakes. She collects the water quality parameters: *E. coli* Bacteria, Total Suspended Solids, Chlorophyll a (algal concentration), two kinds of Phosphorus (Ortho and Total), Total Dissolved Solids, and Temperature which are taken at 4 sites including at several inlets. The sites include the inflow at Strom's inlet, the Spring Creek inlet, the Bob Creek inlet and at other locations. These are the sites in which the data show the majority of the nutrient loading into Pelican Lake.
- b. The PGOLID Water Resource Coordinator also monitors 6 sites total in Pelican, Little Pelican, Bass and Fish Lakes. These sites are tested for total phosphorus, chlorophyll a (algal concentration), clarity, water temperature and oxygen, and zebra mussels.

## 2. Mosquito Control and other environmental issues

The board of PGOLID continues to oversee the management of pests that influence the lake environment. These pests destroy trees, carry diseases and generally have a negative impact on the quality of the lakes experience for residents as well as guests. In recent years the primary concern has been the impact from mosquitoes which have the potential to carry diseases such as West Nile Virus. Each year spraying for mosquitoes occurs generally on Thursday evenings during the summer months. In addition the monitoring effort for Tent Caterpillars which have been present in this area continues. No spraying has occurred for the Tent Caterpillar.

## 3. Invasive Species

Since 2004, PGOLID has been very vigilant in working to prevent invasive species in their lakes and educating lake residents. These activities have included chemical treatment of invasive plants, the DNR Watercraft Inspection Program, and Educational Seminars conducted by the PGOLID Water Resource Coordinator. Three invasive species have been confirmed in the PGOLID lakes – Zebra mussels, Curly-leaf pondweed, and Eurasian flowering rush.

- a. Zebra mussels were found in Pelican Lake in 2009. They can attach to hard surfaces such as boat lifts and docks and clog water intake pipes. Unfortunately, currently there is no known treatment for zebra mussels. PGOLID is keeping up on the latest developments in this area.
- b. The PGOLID Lake Coordinator monitors the PGOLID lakes for Zebra mussel veliger density, and Zebra mussel adult distribution and density. The Lake Coordinator intends to apply for funding to identify how zebra mussels have changed the nutrient cycle in the lake and how lakes age.
- c. Curly-leaf pondweed can form large mats early in the summer and interfere with recreational activities. PGOLID has been treating Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) in the lakes for the past 10 years. This treatment costs up to \$26,000 per year. The treatment process usually starts with a plant survey in early May to detect the locations of the CLP for treatment that year. Treatment needs to occur before the water is 60 degrees, so it usually occurs in late May. CLP areas and thickness has decreased drastically since 2005. In 2019 DNR denied the permit to treat CLP because there were no large dense stands suitable for treatment. See the map from the 2018 survey, past treatment reports and before and after photos on the PGOLID website here: <http://pgolid.org/programs/ais/>.
- d. Eurasian flowering rush is a nuisance plant in the lakes upstream, in the Pelican River, and in Bass Lake. Each summer, the PGOLID Water Resource Coordinator canoes down the Pelican River and into Bass Lake hand-removing any established Eurasian flowering rush. In future years herbicide applications will be necessary to control the spread of flowering rush in the Pelican Group of Lakes.
- e. PGOLID participates in the DNR Watercraft Inspection program in the summer. DNR interns inspect boats entering and leaving Pelican Lake for invasive species, and educate boaters about invasive species prevention.

## 4. Navigation Aids

The LID now owns and maintains a number of buoys that are marked as PGOLID property and they are strategically placed in the LID to mark channels, rocks, no wake zones, and other navigation needs. The locations of the buoys can be found on our website: <http://pgolid.org/programs/safety-bouys/>. This year, lights were added to the tops of the buoys for added safety at night. In addition, decals were refurbished for increased visibility.

## **5. Fish Lake Dam Rapids**

Since the early 1930's, the water levels in the lakes in the LID have been controlled by a concrete structure of three weir levels, which is located in the Pelican River below Fish Lake. This dam was aging and not functioning properly anymore.

In 2016, PGOLID was awarded a [DNR Conservation Partners Legacy](#) grant to replace the current Dam with natural rock rapids. The old dam was not removed, but just cut down and rocks placed around it. Since construction has completed it has held water levels very well. Detailed updates and photos are available on the PGOLID website here: <http://pgolid.org/dam>.

## **6. Septic Systems Inspections**

PGOLID has completed many septic system survey reports in the past decade. To read about the different studies and their reports, please visit: <http://pgolid.org/programs/septic-systems/>.

## **7. Plant Surveys**

PGOLID has completed numerous plant surveys in the past decade. The full reports can be found on the PGOLID website: <http://pgolid.org/programs/plant-surveys>.

## **8. Shoreland Projects**

Starting in 2009 PGOLID was awarded grants from the DNR for Shoreline Restoration. This grant money paid for native plants, shrubs and trees to be planted along shorelines. Plants, shrubs and trees prevent shoreline erosion and act as a buffer to filter runoff from yards into the lake. A total of \$66,500 was awarded through three separate grants which assisted 19 homeowner projects.

The last DNR grant expired in 2015 and this program is not being offered by the DNR anymore.

## **9. Tree Program**

PGOLID's tree planting program has the goal of planting young trees within the shore impact zone (0-15 feet from the lake). Many of the trees in this area are mature and when they die there would be no trees left on the shoreline if they aren't replaced. This project hopes to promote tree planting on the shorelines of the Pelican Group of Lakes providing shoreline stabilization, fish, and wildlife habitat.

Since 2016 there have been 159 trees planted through this program.

## **9. Information and Education**

PGOLID puts a high value on the dissemination of information and education to its constituents. The PGOLID Water Resource Coordinator is the main conveyer of this education along with the PGOLID Board Members. These educational programs have included: educational seminars for lake residents in the summer educational presentations at PGOLID and PLPOA meetings, maintenance of the PGOLID website, act as a contact and resource for community education and outreach and availability to PGOLID residents, keep abreast of new state/county/local government lake regulations and disseminate the information in an understandable way to PGOLID residents, work with upstream landowners, farmers, ranchers, and other lake associations to act in a proactive manner in the protection of the water quality that flows into the PGOLID. Education has focused on the following topics: water quality, invasive species, shoreline restoration, septic system and holding tank maintenance, aquatic plants and algae, the importance of maintaining native aquatic plants such as bulrush, boater stewardship and DNR regulations.

PGOLID has a website that is simple, easy to use, and works on mobile devices. Information about PGOLID, the annual meeting, and programs can be found on the website: <http://pgolid.org>.

## **10. Cormorant Watershed Agreement**

The Cormorant Lakes Watershed District (CLWD) manipulates the water levels in the Cormorant Chain of Lakes through a controlled outlet where Spring Creek exits Big Cormorant Lake (NE of Cormorant Village). PGOLID maintains an agreement with the CLWD that regulates how much water can be discharged from Big Cormorant Lake into Spring Creek because this discharge can affect Pelican Lake's water levels. In 2013, PGOLID signed an agreement with CLWD. This agreement is especially important when the lake levels are at or exceed the Ordinary High Water Mark.

## **11. Water Surface Use Ordinances**

The Otter Tail Board has delegated to PGOLID authority to establish water surface use ordinances, all of which are subject to final approval of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). During 2012 and 2013 a delegation of property owners approached PGOLID to explore a remedy involving a high density of watercraft crowding a relatively small area of Pelican Lake causing noise, ingress and egress problems, and potential safety issues. Through discussions with the DNR and the Otter Tail Sheriff it has been determined that in order for the DNR to approve any water surface use restrictions there first must be a commitment by Otter Tail law enforcement to enforce any ordinances, there must be documented safety issues, there must be a concern for the protection of natural resources or any proposed ordinances need to demonstrate an enhancement of the recreational use and enjoyment of a majority of lake users.

The PGOLID Board and the Pelican Lake Property Owners Association Board (PLPOA) have jointly chosen to publicize the property owners issues and have asked for voluntary assistance of lake users not to overcrowd the target areas of Pelican Lake and it is PGOLID's desire that this issue would be resolved through voluntary means. At the present time there are no plans to seek approval for water surface use restrictions from the DNR.

Respectfully submitted,

PGOLID Board of Directors