



Mouth of Lake Sarah

Lake Sarah Survey

Cool days and cooler nights are signs of the arrival of autumn and LSIA is already making plans for the coming year. Our main purpose is to improve the quality of Lake Sarah. With many new DNR proposals being made and the big problem of lake weeds, we need your help and input as to what LSIA should be doing.

October will mark my 37th year as a resident on the shores of Lake Sarah and I have seen many changes. When you are out boating, look for the wood statue of a Viking on the north side of the east lake and you may see me working in the yard. Over the years, I have seen the lake flood my back yard, but also go down so low that we could play volleyball on the beach. The goal of LSIA is to try regulating the water level, under DNR rules, to keep a balance. The weed problem is so much worse than when I first moved here and it needs to be addressed and reduced.

Please let us know any suggestions you may have. There is a list of questions which would help LSIA decide on activities we are doing or might consider. Please take time to review them and give us your suggestions.

1. We have an annual LSIA picnic in July. This year LSIA spent \$800.00 on the event with about 100 attending. Some have suggested that money should be spent on lake improvement projects instead. The picnic could either a "bring your own food" or a small fee for attending.
 - a. LSIA continues to fund
 - b. Bring your own food
 - c. Charge a low admission with children free
2. The annual July 4th Boat Parade awards cash prizes from LSIA funds. Alternatives are to solicit prize donations or certificates from local businesses.
 - a. Continue giving LSIA funds to parade winners
 - b. Solicit gifts from local businesses
 - c. Solicit certificates from local businesses
3. Our first LSIA garage sale was held this summer. If we have another fund raising garage sale, would you help or contribute items?
 - a. Will contribute items
 - b. Will help at sale
4. Do you have any fund raising or money saving ideas?

Thanks for your time,
Len Nadasdy
LSIA President

Please send your survey responses to Jerry Wise, Membership Director, at jerrywise@frontiernet.net.

LSIA Continues To Make Progress

Annual projects

- Cleaned up debris on the ice following the removal of ice houses
- Surveyed the lake for milfoil; LSIA treated several areas and encouraged lake owners to treat their own shorelines
- Monitored water clarity and lake level, and provided data to Hennepin Conservation District
- Conducted 3 LSIA meetings per year and published minutes, as well as 2-3 newsletters to keep area residents informed and educated
- Provided a Lake Sarah Area Directory for area residents
- Represented LSIA at meetings of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Commission and Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Developed a Best Practices placemat to educate residents, used by several local restaurants
- Sponsored the LSIA picnic & July 4th boat parade

1998

- Completed installation of vegetative buffer strips along the lake for demonstration purposes, using an \$8000 DNR Conservation Partners matching grant
- Maintained the culvert under the railroad bridge, which is the only outlet from the lake
- Conducted the Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop to encourage best practices around the lake
- Developed flyers to educate lake residents on lakeshore management and jet ski regulations
- Used education grant funds to reprint Best Practices flyer and provide to city offices for distribution.

1999

- Obtained approvals and funding for a Loretto Creek detention basin to trap phosphorus
- Conducted the Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop in spring and fall to encourage best practices

2000

- Completed the first Loretto Creek detention basin to trap phosphorus
- Conducted the Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop to encourage best practices around the lake

2001

- Constructed the second detention basin on Loretto Creek to trap incoming phosphorus
- Coordinated passage of "No Wake Zone" legislation with Independence and Greenfield
- Worked with Water Patrol to enforce speeds in channel and on the entire lake during very high water
- Formed a Water Level Control Project to analyze problems with lake outflow and to develop alternative solutions
- Conducted the Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop to encourage best practices around the lake
- Reprinted our popular Best Practices flyer and sent it to the LSIA mailing list

2002

- Completed the land survey on the Lake Sarah Outlet Project to determine where to dredge the outflow
- Pursued steps toward a permanent resolution to the constrained outflow from Lake Sarah
- Conducted the final Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop program
- Launched the Lake Sarah web site at www.lakesarah.com to keep area residents informed on lake information

2003

- Public hearings held at the cities of Greenfield and Independence on the Sarah Creek Channel Restoration project
- Obtained the permit for the Sarah Creek Channel Restoration project
- Formed the Bog Emergency call list
- Supported state legislation on non-phosphorus fertilizer usage, replacing the LSIA Non-Phosphorus Fertilizer Drop program

2004

- Completed the dredge work on the Sarah Creek Channel Restoration project
- Removed the large bog that was causing damage to resident's property
- Greenfield obtained the permit and installed the DNR designed cable-concrete mat system, a permanent structure to help maintain a normal lake level
- Effective in 2004, Minnesota legislation requires the use of 0% phosphate lawn fertilizer in the seven county metro area and 3% phosphate or less lawn fertilizer in Greater Minnesota

2005

- The LSIA Clean Water committee and the Lake Sarah TDML Stakeholders Committee are established
- Three Rivers Parks expressed their interest in assisting the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission with the development of a Lake Sarah TMDL study.

LSIA Continues To Make Progress

2006

- Updated the LSIA bylaws to bring the bylaws up-to-date and to make them less cumbersome.
- The Clean Water Committee teamed up with the Three Rivers Park District and the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission to begin completion of a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for Lake Sarah. The TMDL study determines the amount of phosphorus that must be reduced from Lake Sarah and the percentage of phosphorus that each city must work to reduce. The Watershed earmarked \$9,000 for the Lake Sarah Study and designated the Lake Sarah TMDL Task Force Committee.
- The Lake Sarah Walleye Program was started which introduced 90,000 walleye fry into Lake Sarah

2007

- A letter was sent to the cities of Media, Loretto, Corcoran, Independence, and Greenfield which explained the purpose of the Lake Sarah TMDL Task Force Committee.
- Three Rivers Park District completed the TMDL Study,
- The Lake Sarah Stakeholders Committee completed an Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan which documents how we plan to replace exotic species, such as curly leaf pondweed with native species. This AVM Plan is required by the DNR before they will give a permit for whole lake treatment.
- Several lakeshore owners funded a dual treatment to control Curley Leaf Pondweed (CLP) and Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) as a part of a test program, obtaining a permit from the DNR.
- Lake Sarah area and membership database was completed.
- The Lake Sarah Walleye Program secured a permit from the DNR to stock walleye fry for the second consecutive year. 200,000 walleye fry and approx. 1,000 fingerlings were introduced into Lake Sarah.

2008

- For the second year, several lakeshore owners funded a dual treatment to control Curley Leaf Pondweed (CLP) and Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) as a part of a test program, obtaining a permit from the DNR.

Volunteer for Lake Sarah's Future

The Lake Sarah Improvement Association needs volunteers. After all, the success of LSIA is directly tied to the involvement of the surrounding lake area homeowners.

There are many ways to volunteer:

- Help with the Ice Clean-up in March and remove debris left on the ice.
 - Join the Lake Sarah Stakeholders Committee, Funding & Grants Committee, Water Level Committee, or Safety & Navigation Committee.
 - Write an educational article concerning the lake or write a history article about Lake Sarah for the newsletter,
 - Volunteer for a fund-raising event, like the garage sale held last spring.
 - Help complete the various applications for grant money.
 - Chair the LSIA picnic event or Fourth of July Boat Parade...or volunteer to help out with one of the tasks. (The chair person can always use your help.)
- Work with businesses in the area to offer significant discounts to LSIA members, like the Veolia trash removal discount.
 - Serve a 2-year term on the LSIA Board (elections are held in July at the picnic).
 - Get your neighbors to join the Lake Sarah Improvement Association.

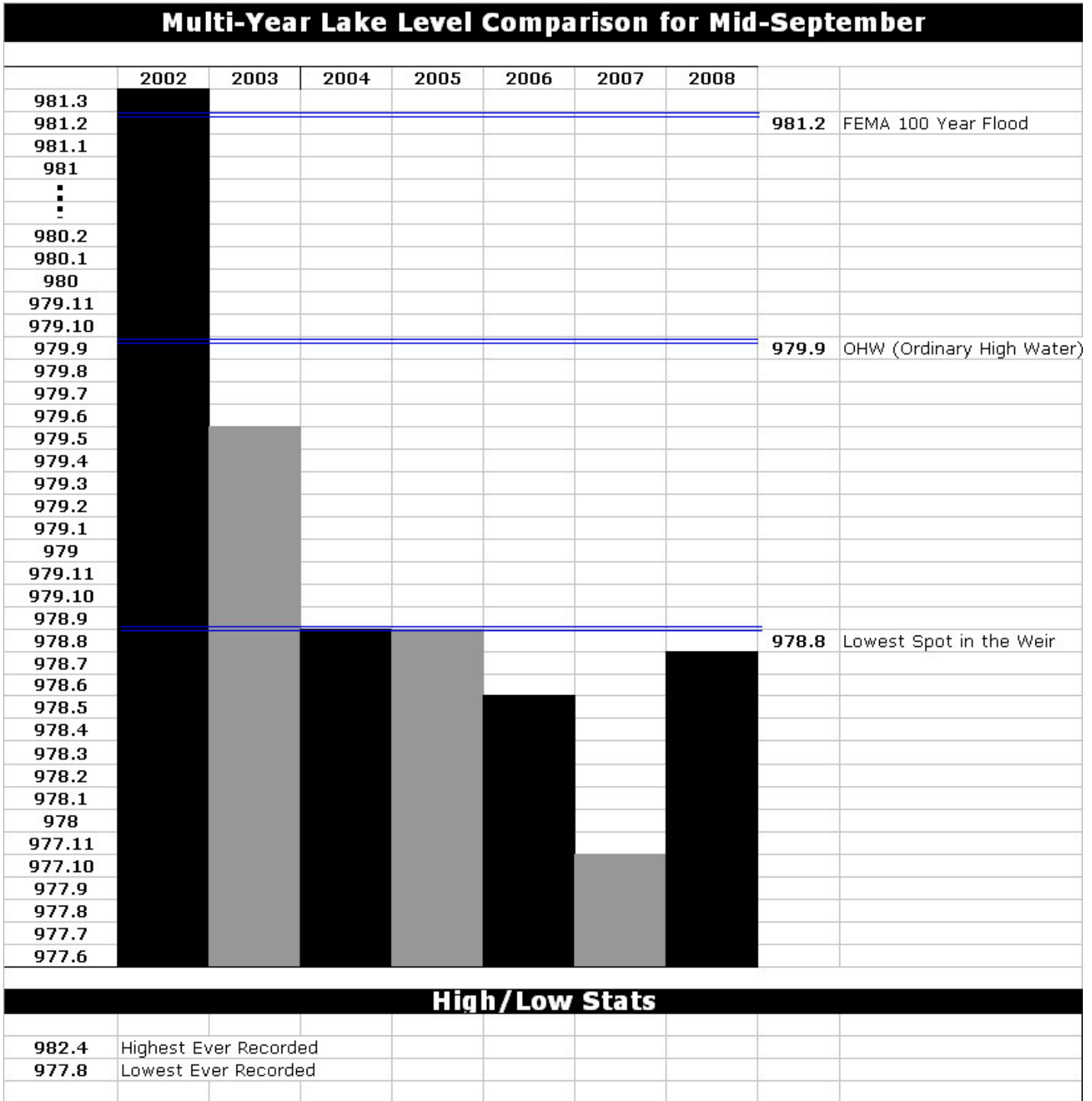
If you can't volunteer, then participate by becoming a member and coming to the 3 general meetings in April, July, and October. (See the Calendar for meeting dates on the last page.)

Lake Sarah Water Levels

Mike Peterson, Director

The chart below shows the water levels for mid-September for the last 7 years.

A special thank you to **Cindy Keating** and **Fred Lang** for providing the water level readings for the MN DNR, the Lake Association. Cindy monitors the primary gauge in the west bay, Fred monitors the backup gauge in the east bay.



LSIA Membership Committee

LSIA Membership Dues due in January, 2009

Jerry Wise, Director

You read a lot about CHANGE in the news these days. Often you hear the word 'change'. Actually, each day brings change, so it should be no surprise that there are some changes in the Lake Sarah Improvement Association. Some of the changes from the Membership Committee are related to the dues and trash program.

First, the Treasurer's Report has always been based on the calendar year, yet we collect dues and did other business based on a fiscal year. On June 4th, 2008, the LSIA Board changed (there's that word again) the membership dues to a calendar year and, at the July 27th General Meeting, it was announced that **LSIA membership dues statements would be mailed around November 1st and be due by January, 2009**, in lieu of a dues increase. We haven't had an increase in dues for a number of years.

Second, the trash removal program ran from yet another date - July of the current year to June of the next year. The cost of trash removal has been increasing lately due to gas prices. We have requested bids from four (4) trash removal businesses for proposals based on the calendar year, January 1st through December 31st. These are due shortly, and will be sent to you around November 1st so you can sign up for the 2009 calendar year.

So, what does this all mean to you, the member? For you 'snow birds', hopefully you will be able to take care of all this business before you head out to warmer climates. Obviously, if you send in your dues payment

by December 31st, it gives you the opportunity to add a tax deductible contribution for 2008 taxes. And for most, it is simpler to have things by the calendar year.

IMPORTANT:

Look for your 2009 dues statement around November 1st of this year. We are combining the dues and trash removal information, along with other info, on one form. Filling out that form *in full* is going to be very important because that data will be put in to the LSIA database. One of the questions, for example, will be whether you would like to receive the LSIA Newsletter electronically in stead of by mail, thus saving LSIA copying & mailing costs. Another example, is that we are going to track, in the case of couples, both husband and wife so that either or both may be volunteers.

One last thing. Some have wondered about the 2008 LSIA Directory. Because of the change to a calendar year, the directory will be updated and sent in January 2009. For those of you who need the information before January, you may email me at jerrywise@frontiernet.net and I will send you the info for you to print out or save on your computer.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we could improve the LSIA database, or if you would like to be on the Membership Committee, please email me.

Thanks for reading this.
Jerry Wise, Membership Director

LSIA Board and Committee Chairs

<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Active Committees</u>	<u>Committee Chairperson</u>
President	2010	Len Nadasdy	Safety & Navigation	Mike Peterson
Vice President	2009	Dan Cady	Water Level	Mike Peterson
Secretary	2010	Ann Slavec	Water Quality / TMDL	Harold Burrows
Treasurer	2009	Greg Hani	DNR / Conservation	Joe Slavec
Director	2009	Rick Pratt	Grants and Funding	Dan Cady
Director	2009	Joe Slavec	LSIA Membership	Jerry Wise
Director	2009	Harold Burrows	LSIA Group Residential Trash Program	Jerry Wise
Director	2010	Mike Peterson	LSIA Directory	Jerry Wise
Director	2009	Jerry Wise	LSIA Database	Jerry Wise
Director	2010		Newsletter	Cheryl Wise
			Lake Sarah Ice Clean Up Event	volunteer needed
			LSIA Picnic	volunteer needed
			July 4th Boat Parade/Decorating Contest	volunteer needed

Please refer to your LSIA membership directory for contact addresses and phone numbers.

The Railroad at Lake Sarah

By Alton Chermak and Brad Spencer

Much of the advertising ephemera from Lake Sarah's resort heydays in the early 1900's makes note of the convenience of travel to the area's accommodations via the Soo Line Railway.

The railroad played an important role in the early development of this area, enough interest to warrant a station at Lake Sarah for a short time. Lake Sarah is located at mile post 24 on the Soo Line as measured from downtown Minneapolis. Mile post 24 can be seen on a small sign along the tracks just west of the intersection of Lake Sarah Heights Drive and Lake Sarah Lane near the property currently owned by Mark and Terry Holten, just east of Bob Beadle's farm.

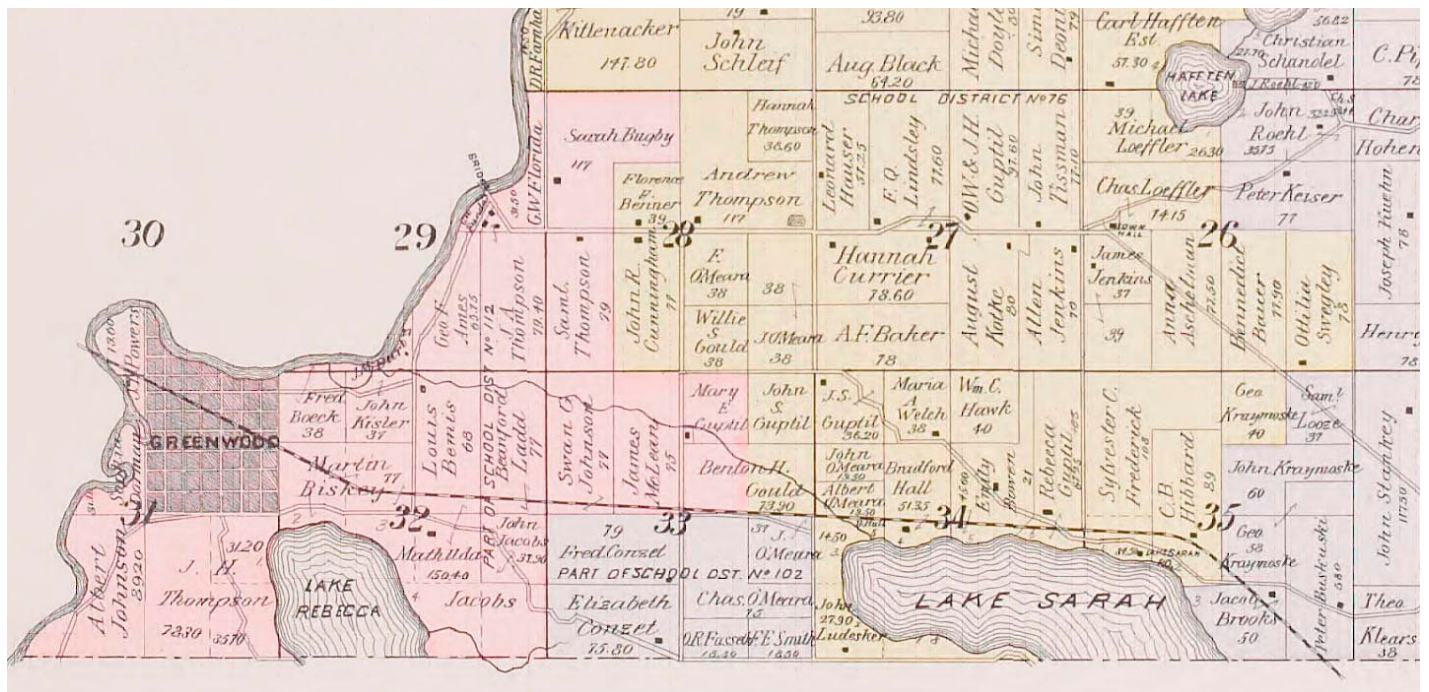
In 1886, the Minneapolis & Pacific Railway was constructed through the area, with the roadway skirting the north side of Lake Sarah between Loretto and Rockford. On June 11, 1888 the Minneapolis & Pacific Railway and three other affiliated lines were consolidated into one single corporation, the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company, better known as the Soo Line from the phonetic pronunciation of Sault.

A low level crossing of the Crow River was made about a half-mile south of the present high bridge at Rockford to keep construction costs at a minimum and for other



reasons. Rockford's citizens were disappointed when the Minneapolis & Pacific Railway did not locate through their community and placed the train depot and other facilities at or near the old townsite of Greenwood. There was a fairly quick succession of names for this station progressing from Marmion to Goodwin, before finally renaming the station to Rockford in 1889. This old alignment began near the northwest corner of Lake Sarah and continued on a fairly straight heading west for a short distance before curving down the hill towards Greenwood and the low-level crossing of the Crow River.

The woodlands were a source for cordwood and in 1887 a loading spur was put in on land that was owned by Charles O'Meara (land later acquired by Benton Gould). This location was known as Spur 2, or O'Meara's Spur, and was a little over a mile west of Lake Sarah.



1896 Atlas which shows the Soo Line track between Lake Sarah and Greenwood – courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society



Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie & Atlantic engine No. 6 was built by Baldwin in 1886 - photo by Joseph Lavelle.

The above photo of the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie & Atlantic engine No. 6 with a passenger train is from 1886-1887. The coach cars are identical with the equipment that was purchased for the Minneapolis & Pacific. Sister road to the M&P, some of the MSSM&A locomotives were set up to burn wood, as evidenced by the style of the smoke stack and wood piled on the tender. Most of the M&P locomotives were similar in appearance to the No. 6, except they had a straight smoke stack and burned coal. Photos of Soo Line locomotives taken during 1885-1890 are rare, and notes on the back of the photo claim this to be the first passenger train on the Soo Line.

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The location of the station on the old Greenwood town site continued to be a challenge to Rockford residents as they had to surmount a fairly steep hill and endure poor roads on the east side of the Crow River in order to gain access to the depot. There was some clamor to have the railroad put in a depot at the O'Meara Spur but this never materialized.

In April, 1887, the Rockford reporter for the *Delano Eagle* indicated that the railroad had decided to establish a station at Lake Sarah and that it would be named Farnham, speculating that this would become a popular lake resort stop. It was reported late in the year that a side track was being put in at this location and there is some indication that it had become a passenger stop, although the passenger train schedules that were published for the summer of 1888

do not show Lake Sarah (or Farnham) as a station and there was no agent assigned.

The Minneapolis & Pacific Railway construction records do not show any expenditure for Lake Sarah. The newspaper reported that tickets could be purchased at Minneapolis for Farnham, but those boarding at this location likely had to purchase the tickets on the train. This may have changed shortly thereafter as the newspaper reported that Mr. Levi Bowen was the station agent at Lake Sarah and that he was prepared to sell tickets to the Minneapolis Exposition and the State Fair in late summer.

It was further reported, at the end of 1888, that milk was being shipped from both O'Meara's Spur and Lake Sarah, so some manner of accommodation was being made for railroad patrons.

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TIMELINE

1884	Minneapolis & Pacific Railway was organized. This entity was to provide for westward expansion into the wheat fields of Minnesota and the Dakotas, allowing grain to be moved to the mills.
1886	Construction of Minneapolis & Pacific Railway begins.
1888	On June 11, 1888, the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie & Atlantic Railway, the Minneapolis & Pacific Railway, the Minneapolis & St. Croix Railway and the Aberdeen, Bismarck & North Western Railway were consolidated into one single corporation, the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company .
1950	The Corporate name was dropped except for legal matters, and the trade name " Soo Line Railroad " was adopted. The initials MSTP&SSMRR, in small type, were used under the Trade Mark.
1992	The Canadian Pacific Railway which had owned a controlling interest in the Soo Line Railroad for many years, finished buying up all remaining stock and operated it as a wholly owned subsidiary.



Levi Bowen home ca. 1900 - photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Soo Line continued to improve its right-of-way and in 1907 completed the high bridge over the Crow River near Rockford and began running trains over the new grade, which tied into the original line near the northwest corner of Lake Sarah (on the property currently owned by Perry and Kimberly Buffie). The old line through Greenwood was abandoned but is still clearly visible and the old grade remains as part of Lake Sarah's outlet structure (locally referred to as the weir).

In 1905, the Soo Line put in a new 400 foot spur track at Lake Sarah and in 1909 constructed the 12 foot by 24 foot long hipped roof depot (pictured below

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In September, 1889, station agent Levi Bowen reported that he had sold \$600 worth of railroad tickets in the preceding year and he continued to promote the Lake Sarah location over the old Greenwood (Goodwin) station, suggesting that Lake Sarah should get a regular station depot and be named East Rockford. Perhaps the renaming of Goodwin to Rockford in late 1889 toned down the advocacy of using the Lake Sarah location on the part of Rockford residents.

In early 1892, the *Delano Eagle* reported that Levi Bowen was still engaged in the wood business, shipping carloads of cordwood. It may be that the side track (mentioned previously) was built for this purpose. There was a small spur east of the side track that was later put in closer to the west end of Lake Sarah, but no additional information has become available. In January, the *Delano Eagle* reported that a new station was being built at Lake Sarah, but its existence has not been confirmed. If this building existed, perhaps it was used for other purposes. Lake Sarah was not shown as a station in the December, 1892 timetable published in the 1893 *Official Guide*.

Nonetheless, Lake Sarah had gained importance and, by 1899, a local passenger train was making a westbound stop at 7:41 p.m., and an eastbound train scheduled to make a stop at 6:58 a.m. for an early morning arrival in Minneapolis. The local way freight was also stopping when there was cargo to handle.

right). This small structure had an 8 foot wide by 208 foot long wood platform facing the tracks for the convenience of passengers. The depot, not including the long platform, had an estimated cost of \$345 when it was built in 1909.

A page from the February 15, 1914 Soo Line employees timetable #102 gives the times of regularly scheduled eastbound trains. It indicates that two local passenger trains in each direction were authorized to make what is called a 'flag stop', e.g., they would stop only if it was known there were passengers to pick up or let off. Although the schedules changed over the years, these two trains were still providing this service to Lake Sarah in 1921 as follows:

- Westbound trains No. 111 at 10:20 a.m. and No. 105 at 8:58 p.m.
- Eastbound trains No. 106 at 5:26 a.m. and No. 112 at 4:16 p.m. made flag stops.

The other passenger trains were long distance limited runs that sailed through Lake Sarah at various times throughout the day and night.

The rail line and stops are shown in the segment of map (top of next page) that was included in the 25th annual report of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1913. The Lake Sarah station is in between Loretto & Rockford stations in the right center just under "SAULT".

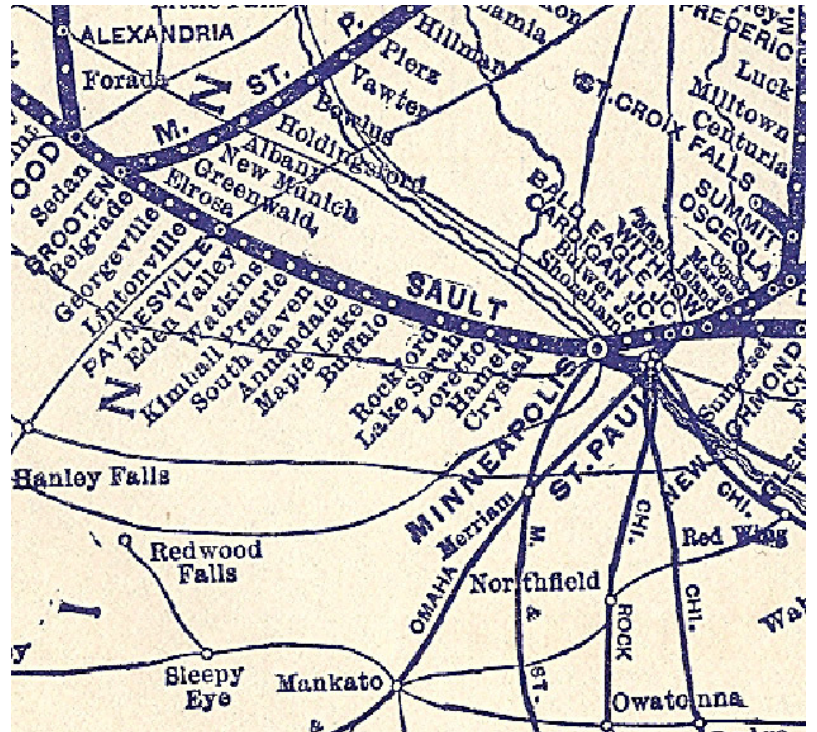
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The gaining popularity of the auto and improved roads led to a diminishing of travel by rail, and with the stock market crash in 1929 and the onset of the depression, businesses were forced to cut expenses. The Soo Line retired and sold the Lake Sarah depot to J. H. Eschman, for \$100 in 1930 and removed the spur track, ending the brief era that Lake Sarah enjoyed as a station on the Soo Line.

Today, the trains of successor Canadian Pacific Railway continue their passage, skirting the north side of Lake Sarah. Perhaps they are thought of as being out of place, interrupting the bucolic setting of the lake, but are a reminder when the railroad was integral to the daily lives of everyone living nearby.

*Alton Chermak, September 21, 2008
notes and photos added by Brad Spencer*



About the author: Alton Chermak, has been researching and documenting the history of the Minneapolis & Pacific Railway, which in 1888 was consolidated into the St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company which became known as the Soo Line, and hopes to publish his work in about five years. In doing so, some of the historical aspects of about 50 communities and non-incorporated geographical places are being woven into his research and writings. He welcomes any corrections, comments and additional information. His assistance and wealth of knowledge have been invaluable in reconstructing this little piece of our lake's vibrant history.



Lake Sarah Train Station (Soo Line) 1909-1930 - photo used with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society.

Looking for a Winter Project to do with Your Kids? Build a Bluebird House!



Among the most readily watched and easily recognized of North American birds, Eastern Bluebirds are loved for their brilliant plumage, their tameness, and their predilection for nesting boxes.

During the days of frontier settlement, the bluebird was among the wildlife species that benefited from the conversion of forest into pasture, orchards, and home sites - open areas that supported the nesting

and foraging activities of the species. Farmers unintentionally assisted bluebirds by bordering their fields with wooden fence posts, thus supplying additional nesting sites. Combined, these factors led to a proliferation of bluebird numbers throughout the eastern United States through the mid-1800s.

However, in the late nineteenth century, this situation changed with the introduction of the European starling and the English house sparrow. It is said that the sparrow and the starling were brought here from Europe to help control the insect population. As the numbers of these birds increased, the numbers of Eastern Bluebirds decreased.

This shift in numbers was found to be caused by the aggressiveness of the sparrow and the starling which will readily nest in any cavity suitable to the Eastern Bluebird. The bluebird being more gentle and reserved would lose most battles for nesting sites. If a pair of Eastern Bluebirds was fortunate enough to find a nesting cavity, the sparrow had the tendency to either peck open the unhatched eggs, kill the hatchlings, or run the parents away from the nest.

In addition, in the twentieth century, increased use of harmful pesticides, clearing of field borders and fence rows to increase cropland acreage, and a growing human population also contributed to population reductions of the Eastern Bluebird.

Fortunately, the favored status of the bluebird and its acceptance of artificial nesting structures led to increased efforts to boost its populations. Placement of thousands of nest boxes by enthusiasts has contributed significantly

to ensuring a future for the Eastern Bluebird.

Feeding Preferences

These birds are an important predator on destructive insects such as grasshoppers, caterpillars, crickets, katydids, and beetles, making it a most welcome visitor to gardens in summer. Their diet also consists of various berries, spiders, sow bugs, earthworms and snails. Primarily ground feeders, they prefer feeding in areas with short, sparse vegetation, which affords a clear view of ground-dwelling insects.

Nesting Behavior

Eastern Bluebirds are monogamous. Pairs generally stay together throughout the breeding season, and pairs may breed together for more than one season. Some birds, however, may switch mates during a breeding season to raise a second brood. Both sexes defend territories; however, the males tend to defend territory edges while the females primarily defend the nest site. The breeding season begins anytime from mid-March to early April. Usually Eastern Bluebirds raise two broods in a season.

The male initiates selecting the nest site by "showing" the female several possible sites. The female may begin to build nests in several sites, but eventually she decides on a site and concentrates her efforts there. It usually takes four to six days to build the nest, but this varies with the time of season, weather, and the age and experience of the breeding pair. The nests, which are built in woodpecker holes, dead or rotting trees, and in nest boxes, are composed mainly of dry grasses, rootlets, and weed stems. Some nests are built entirely of pine needles. The cup is usually lined with fine grasses, rarely with hair and fur. Males may carry nest material to the nest, but they do not participate in the actual building of the nest. Rather, they spend much time guarding their mates during this time to prevent them from mating with other males.

Females may begin to lay eggs one or two days after the nest is completed, but some females wait a week or more. One egg is laid each day, in the morning. The average clutch has three to five eggs but as many as seven have been reported. Clutch sizes tend to be smaller for younger females and for second broods of the breeding season.



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The eggs are smooth and glossy and are sky blue or white in color. Because all eggs laid by a single female are the same color, the presence of an odd-colored egg in a clutch may indicate that another female has laid her egg in the nest, a practice known as egg dumping. Females generally begin to incubate the day the last egg is laid. The incubation period is 12 to 14 days but can be longer in the case of extreme or prolonged cold weather.

When the young are ready to fledge (15-20 days after hatching) the parents cease feeding them, sit nearby with an insect in their beak and call incessantly for the young to leave their nest. After the young fledge, the parents will continue their care for a few more days before beginning a second brood.

Families flock together until fall, when they merge with other family flocks. Some, but not all, bluebirds residing in the northern portions of the range migrate to southern latitudes. Adults tend to return to the same breeding territory year after year, but only a small percentage (three to five percent) of young birds return to their natal area to breed.

These small birds have many competitors that include the house sparrows, starlings, wrens, chickadees, and swallows. The chickadees, swallows and martins are not harmful and tree swallows are even believed to protect the bluebirds from predators when they are nesting nearby. House sparrows and starlings, however, are known to harm and kill eastern bluebirds.

Nest Box Design

To promote the conservation of Eastern Bluebirds, create suitable habitat by building or purchasing a nesting box! There are many sites that provide plans to build a bluebird house; here's website that has a plan that's easy to follow: <http://www.birdsandblooms.com/Bluebird-House/detail.aspx>

- Nest boxes should be constructed of a weather-resistant wood; cedar is often recommended.
- The wood can be painted or stained, but only on the outside surface.
- The entrance hole should be 1.5 inches in diameter.
- A good method of assisting fledglings in their climb from the nest to the entrance hole is to roughen up the inside wood surface under the hole with a chisel.
- The lid or one side of the box should open to facilitate monitoring and cleaning.
- Three or four 1/4 inch drain holes should be drilled into the box bottom.

Nest Box Installation

Place eastern bluebird nest boxes in open grassy areas that are accompanied by widely scattered trees and shrubs. Open areas are preferred, as placement of

boxes in or near areas thick with brush and woody vegetation likely will result in habitation of many boxes by house wrens. Boxes should be placed 50-100 yards apart to accommodate individual territories established by nesting pairs during the breeding season.

Boxes should be placed well away from buildings because of the high concentration of house sparrows generally found near human habitations. Mount nest boxes 4 to 6 feet above the ground on a **metal** post (such as a 3/4-inch electrical conduit) equipped with a predator guard. Fence posts and trees offer little to no protection from predators such as raccoons, cats, and snakes.

Boxes should face away from prevailing winds and rain and be placed in a location that will enable the box to receive a fair amount of sunlight. Ideally, a tree or shrub should be located 25 to 100 feet away in front of a box entrance. This will provide a perch for foraging adults and fledglings will use this cover on their first flight out of the box.

Nest Box Monitoring

When the bluebirds have established a nest in your box, you can easily train them to tolerate your presence. Bluebirds take well to us observing their nesting habits. **However, boxes should not be opened when the babies are 12 days old or older as this could cause the babies to fledge too soon.** Fledging too soon will most certainly cause the demise of these baby bluebirds.

Since bluebird pairs often raise more than one clutch each season, old nests should be removed from boxes after each clutch fledges. This helps eliminate any parasites that may be in the nest. The female will build a new nest each time for the next brood.

Boxes should be left out at the end of the nesting season, as they sometimes provide winter shelter for various species of birds and other wildlife. Clean nesting materials may be beneficial to wildlife using boxes in the winter and can be left in boxes at season's end. Boxes should be cleaned of all nesting materials in the spring, however, before the start of the nesting season.

So enjoy the time building a bluebird house with your kids and, at the same time, doing something to help increase the number of bluebirds!



Lake Sarah Improvements Association
P.O. Box 25, Loretto, MN 55357-0025

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
LORETTO, MN
PERMIT NO 6

Place label here

House Checks—If you are planning an out-of-town trip, you can call West Hennepin Public Safety and put your house on their house check list. They will check your house while you are gone, and if there are any problems, they will contact you. To sign up for this, just call West Hennepin Public Safety at 763-479-0500.

2009 LSIA Calendar

Mark your calendars for these upcoming 2009 LSIA events!

Ice Clean-up

LSIA Spring General Meeting

LSIA Fourth of July Boat Parade

LSIA Picnic & Annual Meeting/Board Elections

LSIA Fall General Meeting

Saturday, March 7th

Thursday, April 23rd

Saturday, July 4th

Sunday, July 26th

Thursday, October 22nd