

LIDA LAKES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (LLID) ANNUAL REPORT 2025

DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2025

TO: Wayne Johnson, Chair Otter Tail County Commissioners; Chris LeClair of Otter Tail County Land and Resources; Mike McNabb, Lida Township Chair; Sarah Strommen, MN Department of Natural Resources Commissioner; and Jim Courneya, MPCA Northwest Watershed Unit Supervisor Detroit Lakes.

FROM: LIDA LAKES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AUTHORITY: Minnesota Statutes section 103 B.571 (4)

HISTORY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lida Lakes Improvement District, by order of Otter Tail County Commission, was established in 2021. In 2025, former Chair David Hilber and Director Sheldon Poss completed two consecutive terms. Two new board members were elected at the August 16, 2025, Annual Meeting: Roger Sundby and Marshall Johnson. Officers of LLID were elected by the Board during the October 25, 2025, Board Meeting.

Board Members and positions for 2025-2026 Fiscal Year:

Brian Graftass, Chair (Second Term Expires 2026)

Dee Dee Stephenson, Vice Chair (First Term Expires 2027)

Zach Herrmann, Treasurer (Second Term Expires 2027)

David Braton, Secretary (Second Term Expires 2026)

Mike Spangler, (First Term Expires 2027)

Marshall Johnson (First Term Expires 2028)

Roger Sundby (First Term Expires 2028)

The Lida Lakes Improvement District continues to contract Moriya Rufer as Lake Coordinator.

FINANCIALS

The 2026 budget is attached. Over the past three years LLID has been aggressive in treatment of curly-leaf pondweed and walleye stocking. These are the two primary expenditures and account for 68% of the 2026 LLID budget. LLID has seen positive results in both initiatives along with growing partnerships with West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District, Keep It Clean-MN, and the MN Department of Natural Resources.

As per our agreement with the County upon organization, LLID held the tax levy to property owners at \$50/parcel for the first three years. Now entering our fifth year, the Board of Directors brought forth a recommendation to members at the Annual Meeting an increase to \$65/parcel starting in 2026. Membership overwhelmingly approved of the increase. Otter Tail County has been informed of the 2026 tax levy for inclusion on 2026 property tax statements.

LLID is in good financial standings with a proven history of compliance.

LAKE MANAGEMENT

The purposes of LLID are to preserve and protect the lakes and to enhance the use and enjoyment of the lakes. It is in the public interest that a lake improvement program is established to preserve natural characteristics of the lakes, improve water quality, and protect lakes from detrimental effects of activity.

West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District Partnership

In 2025 LLID assisted West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District on a drainage project in Moonlight Bay on South Lida. The project improved agricultural drainage into the lake by constructing a natural filtration system. The Board is grateful to Aaron Larsen of WOSW Conservation District for taking the lead on this \$37,000 project. The Conservation District accounted for 90% of the funding with remaining funds paid by LLID, Maplewood Township, and landowner.

Comprehensive Lakeshed Assessment Grant

Through the efforts of Lake Coordinator Moyia Rufer, LLID was awarded a \$57,000 grant from MN Board of Water and Soil Resources to develop a Comprehensive Lakeshed Assessment. This grant will be the cornerstone of developing a Lida Lakes Management Plan that will provide data to assist the Board to improve lake quality. Data is currently being acquired and assessment is underway. Rufer will provide a board update in January and results of the study will be presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting.

Invasive Aquatic Survey and Treatment

Curly-leaf pondweed continues to be a problem in Minnesota lakes including Lida Lakes. Treatment for Curly-leaf must be timed after it has bloomed and before healthy natural plant growth begins. Treatment was completed mid-May. On June 5, 2025, Rufer and members of the board surveyed the effectiveness of the treated areas and tracked curly-leaf pondweed sightings along with areas of historical concern for treatment in 2026.

RECREATION

The mission statement for LLID includes this purpose: “To increase and enhance the use and enjoyment of the lakes.” LLID wants to provide a safe, welcoming Minnesota lake environment for property owners and visitors. A major factor in enjoying Lida Lakes has been fishing. Since zebra mussels were found in Lida, walleye reproduction has been challenging and walleye fishing weak. Over the past four years LLID members have strongly supported increased funds for walleye stocking. The DNR is also more aggressive in improving the walleye numbers by increasing walleye stocking on a yearly basis for 2025-2027. In addition, the DNR has categorized Lida Lakes as “Carry-Over” lake, where adult walleye 8”-20” in size are stocked. In 2025 the DNR stocked North Lida with 1000/fry/littoral acre and placed 1200 pounds of Carry-Over walleye. The DNR also stocked 500 pounds of Carry-Over walleye in South Lida. In addition to the DNR stocking, Lida Lakes and LLPOA stocked more than \$32,000 of adult walleye through a private walleye fish farm permitted by the DNR. North Lida received 1200 pounds and South Lida an additional 500 pounds of walleye.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

LLID maintains an active website(www.lakelidalid.com), Facebook page and distributes two newsletters during the year. Board meetings are held at Lida Townhall where members and guests are always welcome. The LLID makes all meetings live through Teams on computers or phones. The LLID is also a regular contributor to the Pelican Press and other news outlets.

Lida Lakes has been a partner with “Keep It Clean MN” for the past two years. This campaign is an effort to keep trash off the lakes during ice fishing season. LLID has erected large signage at the public access on North Lida and the common access, Erv’s Landing, on South Lida. Posters are also placed at key locations where ice fishing enthusiasts acquire bait and use facilities.

Throughout the year, LLID has worked collaboratively with the County, DNR, MPCA, Township, and other partner agencies. We trust that these entities have observed the measurable effectiveness of our initiatives, which are designed to enhance public use and enjoyment of the lakes while ensuring the continued protection of this vital natural resource.