

EAGLES NEST TOWNSHIP LAKES ASSOCIATION Fall 2025 Newsletter



Garden on the Water



Moonrise on Lake 3



Looking for lunch



Sunrise on Robinson

In This Issue

- * A skilled craftsman right here in our township - Tony Wood shows us the art of canoe making.
- * Time to sleep - Judy Thon explains the bear hibernation process.
- * Minimizing fire risk - Gloria Erickson provides tips for wildfire resiliency.
- * So what does 1,600 cubic yards of brush look like? Another great brush drop.
- * Helping our local Heroes - How we can all help.
- * Dump it and clean it on Lake 2 - Progress on the AIS front.
- * Survey Says - Get the latest fisheries survey of Lake 3.

From Your President

Ryan Bajan

Happy Fall! I am excited to serve in the role of president for the lake association this year. Our family was welcomed into the township in 2019, living on Robinson Lake. It has been a wonderful place to call home, with great neighbors and an excellent township board. Many thanks for those who made it to our community picnic and annual meeting this summer. We had a fantastic turnout and enjoyed good food and fellowship once again. As we move into the winter, please reach out if there is anything I or the ENT LA board can do for you. In addition, if you have any ideas or would like to serve in any way, please reach out as well.

From Your Past President: June of this year completed my term as president of our association. I thank Ryan Bajan for taking over as president. Ryan has been a board member for six years and will do a great job as president. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as your president and for your support during my term. Let's continue that support for Ryan. I will continue to serve on the board with responsibilities for water clarity and water quality. - Tim Decker

A Skilled Craftsman Right Here in Our Township

While visiting Tony Wood when working in his garage, I noticed various piles of wood pieces, and power tools and so I asked what he was doing. "Just making a canoe" he said and then proceeded to explain the process to me. What a great story to share! Thank you, Tony, for taking the time to write and share this. You are a true craftsman!

BOAT BUILDING IN EAGLES NEST

Tony Wood

I have history with small boats and canoes. Growing up in Big Rapids, Michigan, our home was located near an oxbow of the Muskegon River. River access was within easy walking distance in three directions. I have many boyhood memories of weekend float trips on the river and of fishing with family and friends on the many lakes nearby, often in homemade boats and canoes.



My Dad, Jim, with his work assistant (me).

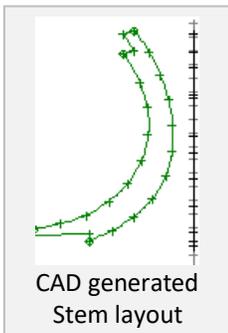
I also have history with woodworking. My father grew up on a farm, built three of our homes in his spare time and involved me in his projects at an early age to pass on his knowledge about and his passion for building things.

Given my history with small watercraft and with woodworking, it was inevitable that I would someday combine the two. I built my first boat, a cedar strip canoe, in 1985. Over the last 40 years it has seen use in the back waters of the Mississippi, inland lakes up the Northshore, lakes in the Ely area, and the waterways of the BWCA.

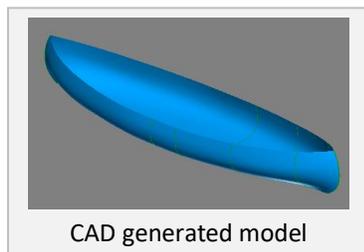


My first boat

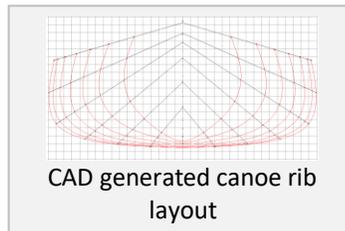
In the 1990's I needed to acquire knowledge and skill in Computer Aided Design (CAD) for my work as a Design Engineer. I chose to develop that skill by converting several classical small boats and canoe plans into CAD models. One advantage of CAD is that a computer model of an object can be built quickly and can be modified and refined many times before actually constructing the physical object.



CAD generated Stem layout



CAD generated model



CAD generated canoe rib layout



Scale models to verify design

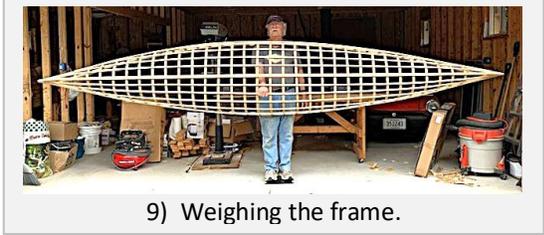
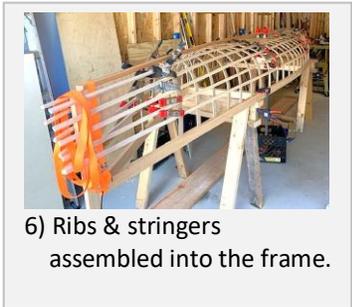
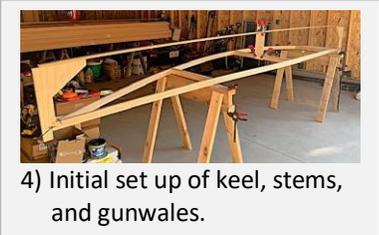
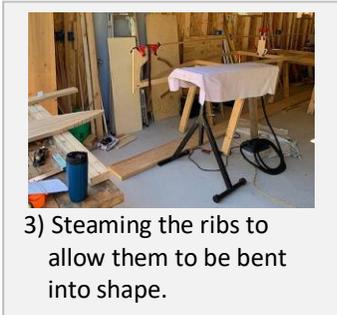
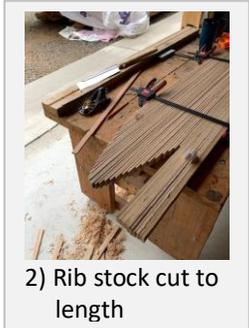
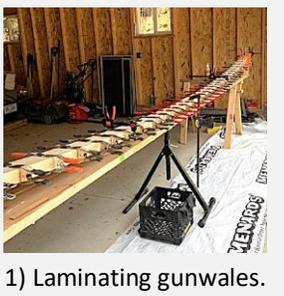
In the early 2000's I researched the boats and canoes of the Adirondack region of New York. Much like the BWCA, travel in this area was limited to the use of canoes and boats over lakes and rivers with portages between waterways. From the 1890's to 1920's, several designs of light and ultra-light canoes and rowboats were conceived and perfected by J. Henry Rushton and other commercial builders. Representative samples of these watercrafts have been restored and carefully documented at the Adirondack Museum and Mystic Seaport Museum. After obtaining copies of the documentation, I converted several of the Adirondack style canoe and boat designs into CAD models, refining them and planning to build them s-o-m-e-d-a-y!

After retiring and relocating to Eagles Nest Township, I began to experiment with a new (to me) construction technique called the "skin-on-frame" method. While today's examples of skin-on-frame watercraft use some modern materials like rip-stop nylon fabric, polyurethane and carbon fiber, the basic construction method was developed by the indigenous peoples of North America and Greenland. Early examples of skin-on-frame craft are the North American birch bark canoe and the Greenland kayak.

Traditional birch bark canoes use cedar frame members, lashed together with spruce roots and wooden pegs, and skinned with sewn birchbark. Kayaks use salvaged driftwood frame members, lashed together with sinew and wooden pegs, and covered with sewn seal skin

Over the last two and a half years, I have built two skin-on-frame canoes and two skin-on-frame row boats. I have developed new skin-on-frame CAD models of Adirondack style pack boat, canoe, and guide boat, built 1/4 scale prototypes of each, and begun construction of the pack boat. A description of the whole design and build process is too long for this article, but I have included photos of some of the steps below.

I really enjoy all the elements of this hobby. My wife wonders what I am going to do with all these boats, since the canoe rack and the garage are nearly full, but I remind her that this is a great way to keep my mind and body active with tasks I can enjoy all year around. Maybe I will have to sell or donate a few to family and friends!





Time to Hibernate

Judy Thon

For many the Labor Day weekend brings an end to having fun at the cabin. For black bears it means continuing to eat to gain weight, and some begin to head towards a den for a long winters nap. Black bears are moving from one of the five stages, hyperphagia, that they go through in a year to fall transition. What does that mean? Hyperphagia usually begins in early August and continues until early September in our area. Hyperphagia is a time when black



bears just want to eat to gain weight before they den. Fall transition is a 2–3-week period when the bears metabolism begins to slow down and their interest in food begins to decline. Generally, pregnant black bears are the first to den and mothers with cubs' den later. Black bear cubs will den with their mother in the year they were born. For example, a mother who had cubs in January 2025 will den with those cubs. That same mother will not den with those cubs in the fall/winter of 2026. Those same cubs are now yearlings and are on their own. A healthy female black bear can reproduce every 24 months. Black bear cubs are born in January,

and the mother is attentive to the cubs every need. At birth the cub is about the size of a stick of butter, hairless, eyes closed and completely dependent on its mother to keep it warm, and fed. The job of the cub is to eat, sleep and grow. By late April or early May the cub has to be able to follow the mother out of the den.

The life of a black bear mother, with cubs in the den, is a fascinating time. You can see videos of this hidden world on BEARTEAM.INFO. Here is the link: <https://www.bearteam.info/den-cam-observations>. This link dispels many black bear myths about what really happens in the den.



PSA: Our usual fall season reminder. If you are walking in the woods remember to wear blaze orange/pink. A few fall hunting seasons are in full swing during the months of September and October. Stay safe, and we will see you next summer.



Website: BEARTEAM.INFO Email: Contact@BearTeam.Info Phone: 218-341-5085



2025 ENT Fall Tips for Wildfire Resiliency

Gloria Erickson

Eagle's Nest township has once again risen to the top with your continued wildfire resiliency efforts. Events, fund raisers, fuels reduction projects, neighbors helping neighbors . All volunteer efforts. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work. Your community continues to be a shining example of a Firewise Community.

Fall has definitely arrived in the North Country. It is harvest time, hunting time, and household chore time in preparation for winter. Even though it's been a wet fall, so far, there are many projects you can do with little investment to continue to lower your wildfire risk as we approach the winter months.

- 1) Check and clear around address and street signs. Ensure sign is perpendicular to the road and reflective on both sides and will be out of the path of snowplows.
- 2) Remove leaves and pine needles off roofs and out of gutters. Remove any branches that are within 10 feet of any roof or siding.
- 3) Remove lumber and all other flammable debris from under and around decks/porches. Screen in with 1/8" or less metal wire mesh to stop debris from accumulating underneath.
- 4) Make sure your firewood is at least 30 feet away from all structures.
- 5) Clear your driveway of trees and overhanging branches at least 14 feet wide and 14 feet high for easier access for emergency vehicles.
- 6) The 0 to 5 feet around all of your structures should be free of ALL flammable materials. Trim grass and clear all dead vegetation away from structures.
- 7) Fill propane tank and clear all vegetation at least 10 feet around and ABOVE your tank.
- 8) Inspect your furnace to make sure it is in proper working condition.
- 9) Have fireplace/wood stove chimneys cleaned and inspected. Remove any branches that are within 10 feet of the chimney. Install spark arresters.
- 10) Prune all conifer trees within 30 feet of your structures up to at least 10 feet from the ground.
- 11) Remove and dispose of all "ladder fuels" from beneath trees that are within 30 feet of all structures (ladder fuels are tall grass, small shrubs, trees, tree limbs and other materials that allow fire to climb into the tree crown).

Visit Minnesota Arrowhead Fire Adapted Communities website to learn more <https://minnesotafac.org>. If you are interested in taking an active role in your community's wildfire resiliency efforts contact your township Firewise manager Keely Drange at Clerk@eaglesnestmn.com . Volunteers are much appreciated.

Be safe and enjoy this beautiful time of year!

Content provided by Gloria Erickson, contracted St. Louis County Firewise Coordinator.

Contact Gloria at: gloria@dovetailinc.org or 218-365-0878.

Speaking of Wildfire Resiliency...

Due to the success of last year's brush drop, we added another weekend to drop and the results, estimated at over 1,600 cubic yards, were great! To put this in perspective, just two years ago when filling dumpsters we had only 110 cubic yards. Special thanks to all those that volunteered, and to DeAnn Schatz for allowing us to use her property for this and other township services.



1,600 + cubic yards

Eagles Nest Fire/EMS Auxiliary Helping our Local Heroes



Have you ever thought how long it would take for help to arrive if you had a fire or medical emergency and we did not have a Township Fire Department? Due to the brave and dedicated volunteers of the Eagles Nest Fire Department, help could arrive within minutes, potentially making the difference between life and death.

The Eagles Nest Fire/EMS Auxiliary (ENFEA), a non-profit 501(c)(3), has fundraising events during the summer months to help support the critical needs of the Fire Department. This year's fundraisers included an all-you-can-eat Pancake Breakfast, an Open House Touch-A-Truck and Bake Sale event, and a lunch followed by an afternoon of Bingo. We thank the community for attending and supporting these fun events.

The Auxiliary would also like to thank our founding President and former Fire Chief, Larry McCray and interim President Judy Thon for all their hard work and leadership in making the Auxiliary a success. Our new President, Bernice Gehrls, has been a ENFEA member since 2022 and is excited to take over the leadership role in serving our Fire Department.

In September, the ENFEA presented a \$10,000 check to the Eagles Nest Board of Supervisors. This donation is designated for use by the Fire Department toward its critical operating needs to support fire protection, emergency medical services, to aid financially during times of emergency and to provide a safe environment for the whole Township. The Fire Department is considering using the funds to purchase a used ATV from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. An ATV will allow rapid access to off-road emergencies that current Department vehicles are not able to navigate.



The Auxiliary presenting a \$10,000 check to the Township Board of Supervisors. Auxiliary members from left to right: Todd Jackson, Lynne Halverson, Terry Mattson, Ria Leonard, Lisa Kappenman, John Kappenman, Bernice Gehrls, Monica Curtis, Mary Beth Monte and Eagles Nest Board of Supervisor, David Chiabotti.

So far this year, calls to the EN Fire Department are up 44% compared to all the calls received in 2024. The addition of the Mesabi Bike Trail and the ATV trail that go through our Township add an additional load to the Departments' staff and its resources. The Fire Department needs more firefighters and emergency medical personnel to adequately protect the community. If you are interested in joining the Department and serving the community, contact Eagles Nest Fire Chief, Ted Krueger at FireChief@eaglesnestmn.com. Seasonal residents are also welcome and encouraged to join. The Department will train and pay for the training needed once you join.

The ENFEA would like to thank the community of Eagles Nest for all their generous donations and for their participation in our fund-raising events. The support of the community really does make a difference. Dollar donations, large or small, all help in purchasing required and updated equipment like Oxygen packs, medical and safety equipment, outfitting vehicles, batteries and chargers, masks, gloves, and a myriad of other items.

Every day the Eagles Nest Fire Department stands ready to protect our families, homes, and personal property. When danger strikes, our firefighters are the ones who answer the call, often putting their own lives on the line.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today to support our Fire Department. You can give safely online throughout the year at: www.ENFEA.org or by check. Please make check payable to **Eagles Nest Fire/EMS Auxiliary** and mail to:

ENFEA
1552 Bear Head State Park Road, Ely, MN 55731

You can also help by volunteering with the Auxiliary. Visit our website at www.ENFEA.org to join and see how you can help. Whatever time you can spare would be greatly appreciated. We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month from April to September.

We are grateful for your consideration and your continued support. Together we can ensure our Fire Department has the resources it needs to keep our community safe. Thank you for standing with your Fire Department.

Pancake Breakfast



Lynne Halvorsen
baking home fries



Mary Beth Monte
making pancakes



Breakfast is served



Enjoyed by all

Touch-A-Truck



Fire Department volunteers



Fire extinguisher training



Putting out a
simulated house fire



Future firefighter
learning how to use a
hose

Bingo



Auxiliary President
Bernice Gehrls and
firefighter Terry Mattson
selling Bingo cards and
raffle tickets.



Denise Balbach wins at Bingo.



Firefighter Mike Ostland
raffles off a fire blanket.



Fun for all.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Update

The North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District installed a bait disposal station and a cleaning station on Lake 2 in July. More on this in our Spring 2026 newsletter.



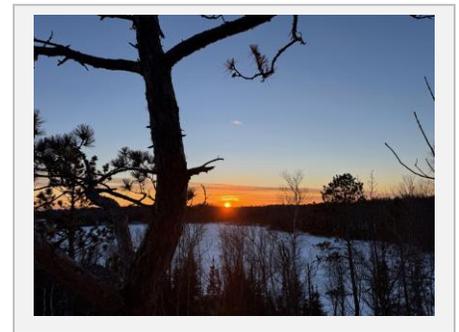
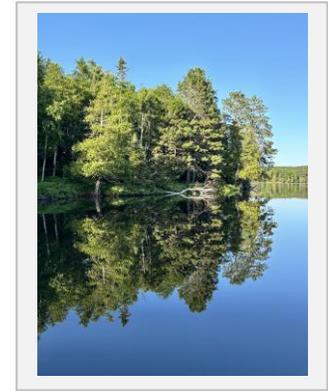
How's the Fishing on Lake 3?

This Summer, the DNR completed a fisheries survey on Lake 3. The full report will not be out until April, but I was able to obtain the following summary from the DNR.

"For now, I will say the fish community looks good for fishing. Walleye catches were really good, and the fish averaged about 0.8 pound each. Smallmouth bass catches increased substantially from the previous survey in 2000, and the fish were almost 2 pounds each. Northern pike catches were low, as were panfish catches. Yellow perch catches were low in the standard gill nets and fairly high in the fine mesh gill nets, which indicates that yellow perch are pulling off some good year classes and the predators are knocking down their abundance enough so that few keeper perch survive. The small mesh gill nets catch no rainbow smelt, which is a good thing and hopefully stays that way. In the electrofishing sample, we also caught a high number of smallmouth bass, and they were quite large too, over 1 ¾ pounds each on average. We caught a lot of rusty crayfish too and some really big one. The rusty crayfish results will be included in the final report. Smallmouth bass eat mostly crayfish"

Photo Gallery

Courtesy of Ryan Bajan, Bev Decker, Tim Decker, Lucas Evans, and Jason Schwartz



Membership Dues

ENTLA annual dues are \$25.00. To pay dues you may send a check made out to ENTLA to this address:

ENTLA
1552 Bear Head State Park Rd.
Ely, MN 55731

You may also pay dues at our annual picnic and meeting planned for June 27, 2026

ENTLA Board Members 2025- 2026

Officers

Ryan Bajan, 2029

President: Ryan Bajan

Tim Decker, 2026

Vice President: Open

Mark Kawell, 2025

Treasurer: Tony Wood

Julie Kemp, 2027

Secretary: Julie Kemp

Cliff Koski, 2028

Water Clarity: Tim Decker

Reed Rosandich, 2027

Water Quality: Tim Decker

Tony Wood, 2028

Membership: Tony Wood

Adopt a Highway: Tim Decker

Board members may be contacted at: entlakesassn@gmail.com

Questions or comments regarding this newsletter? Please contact Tim Decker at timdecker54@gmail.com or 612-875-5855.

**Membership Form and Directory Information
Eagles Nest Township Lakes Association**

**It is necessary to complete this form ONLY IF you are a
new member or there are changes from 2024-2025.**

Only your name, township address and lake/cell phone number will be listed in the biennial directory

Name: _____

Alternate/Additional Name: _____

Circle One: Armstrong Camp Clear EN Lake 1 EN Lake 2 EN Lake 3
EN Lake 4 Pickerel Robinson Five Mile Six Mile Back-lot

Lake/Township Address: _____

Lake Contact Phone Number: _____

Home Address: (To receive newsletters by mail when you are not at the lake.)

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Alternate Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Additional Email Address: _____

Annual Dues: \$25.00 per household, July 1st – June 30th

Make checks payable to “ENTLA” or Eagles Nest Township Lakes Association

Mail to: ENTLA
1552 Bear Head State Park Rd.
Ely, MN 55731

ENTLA e-mail: entlakesassn@gmail.com

Please circle those functions for which you would be willing to volunteer:

Board Member Roadside Cleanup Water Clarity Reader Mailing Preparation Picnic Preparation
Zebra samplers Boat Launch Ambassadors Water Samplers Miscellaneous – one-time help.

To volunteer as a Firefighter or First Responder contact our Chief at 218-365-4573 or
eaglesnestfirechief@citlink.net.