



# Partnering for AIS Prevention: Vermilion Lake Association and North St. Louis SWCD

March 2017 Snapshots

In 2010, approximately 3,000 acres and five miles of Lake Vermilion shoreline in northern Minnesota were added to the Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park to create the current 4,048 acre state park located on a rugged ridge on the south shore. The park offers a unique combination of recreational opportunities including picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, snowmobiling, and tours of a former iron ore mine.

Lake Vermilion is also part of the statewide Large Lake Program, an intensive fisheries management program on the 10 largest lakes in Minnesota. The Large Lake Program includes annual population assessments, annual water quality monitoring, and regularly scheduled creel surveys. There are a number of invasive species known to be present in Lake Vermilion. Spiny waterfleas were discovered in 2015 and the lake is now on the infested waters list. Rusty crayfish are very abundant in East Vermilion and are expanding into West Vermilion. Curly-leaf pondweed is present in Everett's Bay and Stuntz Bay in East Vermilion. Chinese mystery snails were discovered in 2011 in Spring Bay at the far west end of the lake. Purple loosestrife has been found at several sites on the lake, usually in wetland areas adjacent to lake.

The partnership between the 2,400 member Vermilion Lake Association (formerly Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion) and the North St. Louis SWCD continues a commitment to protecting the lake's fishery and business community by preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. The SWCD was granted St. Louis County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention funds to purchase watercraft decontamination units for use in conjunction with the Vermilion Lake Association Watercraft Inspection Program. Over 12,500 watercraft inspections and 240 decontaminations were conducted at 11 public accesses and 4 private accesses and two self-contained decontamination units were stationed at stores in Tower and Cook.



According to Anita Provinzino, North St. Louis SWCD Administrator "We were thrilled that the inaugural year not only exceeded expectations, but also allowed us to start a pilot with 4 resorts! We look forward partnering with Vermillion Lake Association and the Burntside Lake Association to operate watercraft inspection and decontamination stations on both lakes. We are already working to expand the number of resorts that will conduct inspections on Lake Vermilion in 2017 and have tentative commitments from 11 resorts. By involving all categories of stakeholders in the effort to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers we hope to bring about changes in habit and reduce risk."