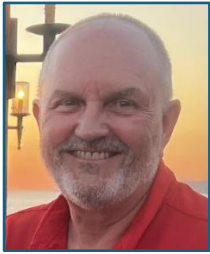




## President's Letter by Gary Smith



Welcome to Spring/Summer 2024 of the Fish Hook Lake and River Association. As the new President thought I should share a bit about my background. I am a retired faculty member and administrator from the College of Engineering at North Dakota State University. My wife and I are co-owners with my sister-in-law of a river front property where we enjoy watching wildlife, having access to the Heartland trail, and boating/kayaking on the water.

The Fish Hook Lake and River Association (FHL&RA) has an important task this year. As advocates for the environment of our lake/river system, we are always focused on better water quality. The Association has always been a strong supporter of efforts to inspect watercraft entering and leaving Fish Hook Lake and River (FHL&R) access points. However, to further support that activity, the Board is developing a more structured and comprehensive management plan for the overall AIS management of our lake environment. What do we mean by water quality? Water quality can be viewed from a user perspective (is it suitable for a particular use) rather than quantified data. Currently the FHL&R is good for fishing, swimming, boating, jet skis, sail boats, and related water sports activities. In addition, our water quality supports a wide variety of fish, birds, animals, and vegetation. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) can have a major impact on water quality. Zebra mussels are a good example of an invasive species that has detrimental impacts. They are filter feeders reducing food available to other animals. Water clarity improves and allows for greater vegetation growth. Reduced growth rates for walleye have been noted as well. We do not know of any Zebra mussels in our water. We do have numerical data on our water quality from the Hubbard County water sampling program. Generally, the data supports the concept of good water quality. What we are less knowledgeable about is what Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are present in our waters, their locations, and if they might be spreading. The management plan, once completed, will help us address these important questions and will include opportunities for volunteers in a variety of data gathering activities that would require an hour or two yearly. You will hear details about these opportunities at the annual meeting and in future communications.

What can you do now? Join the Fish Hook Lake and River Association. Also consider becoming a member of the Association's Board of Directors. We are always looking for people enthusiastic about keeping our beautiful lake and river clean. Contact us through our website: [www.fishhooklakeandrivers.org](http://www.fishhooklakeandrivers.org) or email us at [fishhooklakeandrivers@gmail.com](mailto:fishhooklakeandrivers@gmail.com).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 4<sup>th</sup> 11:00 am Downtown Parade

July 4<sup>th</sup> FHL&RA Boat Parade 2:00 PM starting at Red Bridge Park

Hold the Dates for:

July 13 FHL&RA 5:00 PM Annual Meeting (location and time TBD)

September 14 FHL&RA Annual Dinner (location and time TBD)

We need your current email address to communicate final arrangements for the Annual Meeting and Dinner or other changes that might occur.

## HCCOLA News

Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HCCOLA) meets monthly from April through September. FHL&RA is a member of HCCOLA and benefits from the shared knowledge and resources provided through HCCOLA. Don Rumpza continues to volunteer on behalf of FHL&RA in the HCCOLA Water Quality Monitoring Program. The data from this sampling program is our best knowledge about the health of our water system. Recent meetings provided opportunities for lake associations to share their experiences and how they worked to develop their management plans. We benefit greatly from their experience.

**MEMBERSHIP**

In conversation with some of my neighbors and friends I will often ask if they are members. They often say something like, ‘well I know it was due, but I keep forgetting to send it in.’ Membership is an important part of our ability to support water quality and have funds for AIS remediation should it be necessary. Where you can help now is making sure your membership is up to date. AND the next time you visit with one of your neighbors encourage them to join.

Fish Hook Lake and River Association Board of Directors  
President – Gary Smith  
Vice President – Jim Harmon  
Secretary – Gwen Zent  
Treasurer – Scott Gingerich (also webmaster)  
At Large – Jim Knox, Paul Thompson, Tom Harmon  
Newsletter Editor - Neil Jordheim (not a Board Member)



Photo by Kathy Anderson



Photo: Fish Hook River Muskrat Having Shore Lunch  
Muskrats, like beavers, are important to our waters and environment. They feed on plants like cattails and bulrushes. Without animals like the muskrat, these plants become densely populated and widespread. When this happens, excess vegetation can reduce waterflow in wetlands. Wetlands are an important element of ecosystem that provides water filtration and air purification. Muskrats were once thought of as likely to outlive us along with cockroaches. However, in parts of the country their population is in decline. One theory points to invasive plant species replacing cattails and bulrushes and depleting their natural food sources.

JOIN THE FISH HOOK LAKE AND RIVER ASSOCIATION FOR 2024 (January 1 – December 31)

(Please Print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check here, if you are a current member and all your information is current

Telephone (Lake): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide your email address. We do not share your information.**

Send this registration and \$35.00 for your annual membership. \*Please include a separate check for \$20.00 or more payable to City Treasurer, City of Park Rapids to support our AIS efforts. Put “For FHL&R AIS Fund” in the Memo Line and include with your membership check. Fill out the form and mail both checks to FHLRA, PO Box 225, Park Rapids, MN 56470 or for electronic payment, scan this QR code with your cell phone camera.

