

Winter 2026–27: Notes from the Ice

News for members and neighbors of Pine Shadow Lake, Brainerd lakes area · Sample newsletter, fictional association

A note from the president

Friends and neighbors,

The docks are stacked, the loons have headed south, and Pine Shadow is settling in for its long winter rest. Thank you for another good season on the lake. This year **186 households** paid dues, our volunteers took clarity readings every other week from May through September, and our access greeters chatted with boaters at hundreds of launches (example data).

This winter the board is planning next summer's aquatic plant survey, replacing the faded signs at the public access, and cleaning up our mailing list so fewer of you get two copies of this newsletter. You know who you are.

Enjoy the quiet season, keep an eye on the ice, and we'll see you at the annual meeting in June.

Marge Halvorson, President (fictional)

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 19, 2027

9:00 a.m. coffee and caramel rolls

9:30 a.m. meeting begins

Pine Shadow Town Hall (fictional location)

On the agenda

- Election of three board seats
- Water clarity and AIS updates
- Vote on the 2027–28 budget
- Door prizes from lake businesses

Bring a neighbor, especially a new one.

Ice safety: check it, don't trust it

Every winter brings a close call somewhere in lake country. Ice is never uniform, and Pine Shadow has a few spots that stay weak all season.

- **Check thickness yourself** with an auger or spud bar, about every 150 feet as you go out.
- **Steer clear of known weak spots:** the Birch Creek inlet, the narrows off Heron Point, and the pressure ridges that form off the east shore.
- **Carry ice picks and a throw rope,** wear a float coat or life jacket, and tell someone where you're headed.
- **Fish house owners:** watch the state's shelter removal deadlines and pack out every scrap of trash before spring.

Commonly cited guidelines for new, clear ice

4" on foot

5–7" snowmobile or ATV

8–12" car or small pickup

12–15" medium truck

White or snow-covered ice is roughly half as strong. No ice is ever "safe" ice.

AIS prevention: winter edition

Zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species don't take the winter off. Our fall shoreline check found **no zebra mussels or starry stonewort**; curly-leaf pondweed is still present in the north bay (example data).

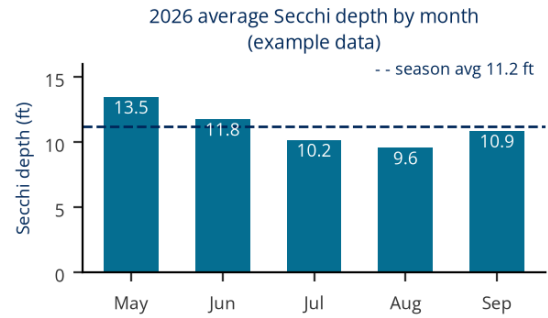
- **Clean, drain, dispose.** Minnesota law requires boaters to remove aquatic plants and animals, drain all water, and keep drain plugs out during transport. The same habits are smart for ice-fishing gear.
- **Bait goes in the trash,** never into the lake or down a hole in the ice.
- **Moving a fish house or dock between lakes?** Let it dry completely and look it over first.
- **Spot something odd?** Snap a photo, note the spot, and contact our AIS chair, Gary Nyberg (contacts on page 2).

Water clarity recap: 2026 season (example data)

Our Secchi disk volunteers lowered the disk at the deep-hole site **10 times** between May 12 and September 22. The season average was **11.2 feet**, a bit clearer than 2025 (10.8 ft) but still under our 10-year average of about 11.7 ft.

Clarity dipped in August, as it does most years, when warm water and algae peak. It bounced back after the September cool-down.

What it means: Pine Shadow is still a clear, healthy lake. The slow slide over ten years is worth watching, and it's why the board wants to test phosphorus every summer instead of every other year.



Dues and membership

2027 dues notices go out by mail in February. Dues are **\$50 per household**, or **\$100 at the Lake Steward level**. Pay by check or online.

186 of 244 lakeshore properties are members this year (76%). Our goal for 2027 is 80% (example data).

Where your \$50 goes (example budget)

- \$20** Boat access inspections and AIS signs
- \$10** Water monitoring and lab fees
- \$8** Newsletter, website, and mailing
- \$7** Insurance and administration
- \$5** Loon, shoreline, and habitat projects

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Many hands, light work

A couple hours a season makes a real difference. We're looking for:

- **Two backup Secchi readers** for weeks when our regulars are away
- **Weekend access greeters**, June through August, training provided
- **Road captains** to hand-deliver newsletters on each road
- **Someone handy with spreadsheets** to help tidy the membership list
- **Set-up crew** for the June annual meeting

Interested? Contact Pete Lundeen, Membership Chair.

Your board (fictional names and contact details)

Role	Name	Email	Phone
President	Marge Halvorson	president@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0142
Vice President	Dale Ostrom	vp@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0117
Secretary	Linda Bergquist	secretary@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0163
Treasurer	Tom Raatz	treasurer@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0128
AIS Chair	Gary Nyberg	ais@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0185
Water Quality Chair	Sue Kowalski	water@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0134
Membership Chair	Pete Lundeen	members@pineshadowlake.example	218-555-0199