

Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association
P.O. Box 52
Orr, MN 55771

January 5, 2009

By Email (countysheriff@co.st-louis.mn.us)
and Regular U.S. Mail

Sheriff Ross Litman
100 N. 5th Ave. W.
Duluth, MN 55802

Re: Marking of Navigational Hazards
Pelican Lake, Orr, Minnesota
Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association

Dear Sheriff Litman:

The Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association was formed in late May 2008. A well attended organizational meeting was held in early June. The owners of over one hundred lakeshore and island properties have become members of the Association. A short "mission statement" covering the Association is enclosed with this letter. We have felt for some time now that we needed to have an organized structure to facilitate communications on issues relating to Pelican Lake.

A very important focus of the Association relates to the marking of navigational hazards on the lake. Pelican Lake is one of the largest bodies of water in St. Louis County and we feel it deserves to be marked, as is the case with other lakes in the county. We understand that St. Louis County (in particular, the Sheriff's Department) has authority over marking navigational hazards.

Sgt. Dirk Davis kindly met with representatives of the Pelican Lake Resort Association in May of 2008. (Many of the Resort Association representatives also participate in our Lakeshore Association.) In response to the Resort Association and others' requests, he explained the role played by the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department in marking a handful of other lakes in St. Louis County. At that time, he was informed as to the conditions on Pelican Lake and the dangers presented by navigational hazards on the lake. The issue has only been exacerbated in recent years due to unfavorable low water levels.

Pelican Lake is a relatively shallow lake. It is one of the largest inland lakes in the County. The lake is approximately 12,000 acres in size, with 50 islands and glacier – created irregular bottom structure and hidden reefs. There are numerous resulting navigational hazards. The hazards present significant potential for bodily injury as well as economic damage. Both lakeshore owners and other users incur high boat and motor repair costs due to the lake's hazards. In addition, after striking a reef with their own or a rented boat, users (including resort guests or non-lakeshore owners/users) become fearful to use the lake and may not return to visit in the future. This can create a negative perception of the lake. First and foremost, however, is the safety issue.

Given the size of Pelican Lake compared to other lakes in the County, the number of navigational hazards present, the serious safety issue, and the resulting costs, Pelican Lake appears to fit the criteria for marking navigational hazards on an annual, ongoing basis. It is our understanding that

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the City of Orr, Leiding Township, the Visitors and Convention Bureau, as well as the Pelican Lake Resort Association and the Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association strongly support marking the lake. Therefore, we kindly request that the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department consider marking the navigational hazards on Pelican Lake on such a basis. We welcome your response, thoughts and/or suggestions about the lake's navigational hazards, the process to make this become a reality, and any related concerns. If there is a different, formal process we must follow to initiate marking the lake, please let us know that, too. You can reach the Association in writing at the address above or contact me at (651) 688 - 6774. Thank you very much for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Donovan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dan Donovan, President
Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association

Enclosure

cc: Sgt. Dirk Davis, St. Louis County Sheriff's Department (w/o enc) (email only)
davisd@co.st.louis.mn.us
Commissioner and Board Chair Mike Forsman (w/o enc) (regular mail only)

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The Pelican Lakeshore Owners Association (PLOA) is a non-profit corporation that was organized in the State of Minnesota in 2008. The members of PLOA are owners or lessees of property on Pelican Lake in St. Louis County, Minnesota.

MISSION STATEMENT

The PLOA is formed for the following purposes:

- To serve as an organized voice for its members with governmental agencies and the public;
- To address issues that may adversely impact the lake, its use and enjoyment, its ecological integrity, and its condition as a natural resource;
- To monitor the condition of the lake and the impact on the lake from any development of the lakeshore or other nearby property;
- To provide a source of volunteers to assist with lake or watershed projects; and
- To monitor and improve water quality, water clarity, and fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife habitat.

Pelican Lake is a large (12,000+ acres) recreational body of water providing year round activities for local residents and tourists, as well as supporting numerous businesses on the lake. We are dedicated to maintaining the overall quality of the lake and its environs to ensure its preservation now and for future generations.