

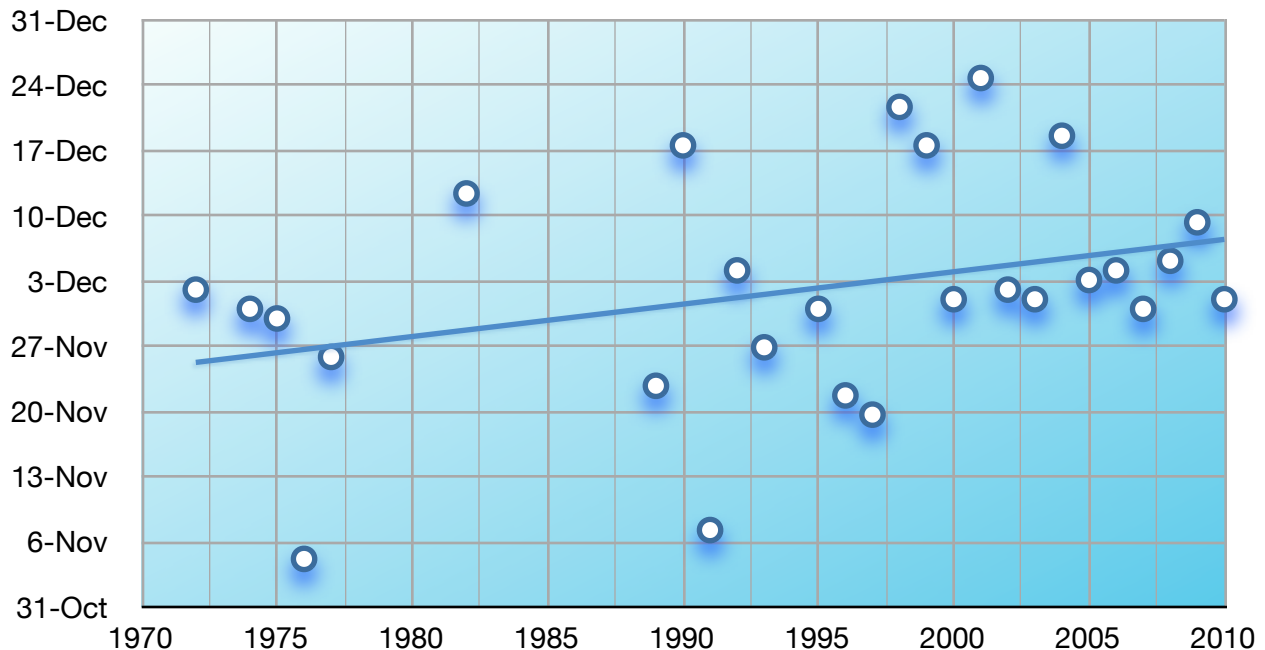
# The Lake Riley Launch

December 2011

*An email newsletter for  
Lake Riley Improvement Association Members*

**Lake Dates.** Last year our lake froze over on December 2, just about on our average ice-in date of December 3. Whenever our lake freezes, remember that four people died in Minnesota falling through the ice last year. Please refresh your "ice knowledge" by revisiting the Minnesota DNR information on [Ice Safety](#).

## Lake Riley Ice Over Dates



**Evening with the Watershed.** On **Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 7 pm** you have the chance to see your neighbors and learn more about the issues affecting our lakes and watershed. **The Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed invites everyone to the Chanhassen American Legion (290 Lake Drive East, Chanhassen)** for this event. It has been VERY well attended in the past and it is always informative. You can support the Chanhassen Legion by coming early for dinner.

**The Fight Against Zebra Mussels.** There has been a lot of passion and energy going to efforts to stop the spread of zebra mussels into our lakes. Joe Shneider of the Christmas Lake Homeowners Association, Steve Gunther of the Lake Minnewashta Preservation Association and Steve Jenks of the Lotus Lake Association have formed the Lake Action Alliance to find workable solutions that can be implemented statewide to prevent the spread of this invasive species. You can read more about their efforts in the Tonka Times article, "[Going Above and Beyond for Clean Water](#)" (page 11) by Telly Mamayek. There was also an article in the Star Tribune, "[Parks Panel OKs Zebra Mussel Plan](#)" by Tom Meersman, and then a follow-up, "[Carver County Zebra Mussel Plan is Put On Hold.](#)"

This leads to questions about what steps you, as Lake Riley Improvement Association members, want the LRIA board to take concerning this issue. Do you want to join forces with the Lake Action Alliance? How active a role would you take volunteering to try to prevent the spread of zebra mussels into Lake Riley? How much money do you want to see the LRIA spend on prevention efforts against this and other invasive species? These are important questions that will be taken up by our association in the future.

**Count Your Birdies.** Two great opportunities are coming soon to count the birds in your area. First is the [Christmas Bird Count](#) from December 14 to January 5. *"Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition - a "Christmas Bird Census"- that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them. Tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas now take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature."* You can participate in Bloomington (call Randy Hills: 952-953-3613 or send him an email at [rhills@frontiernet.net](mailto:rhills@frontiernet.net)), Excelsior (centered on the intersection of Hwys 5 and 101 in Eden Prairie, call Howard Towle at 763-545-5458) or at Carver Park (contact Judy Voigt Englund, Naturalist, Lowry Nature Center at 763-694-7658 or [jvenglund@threeriversparkdistrict.org](mailto:jvenglund@threeriversparkdistrict.org).)

Second, the 15th annual [Great Backyard Bird Count \(GBBC\)](#) will be held February 17-20, 2012. It is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across the U.S. and Canada. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

Want to participate but don't know anything about counting birds? You can learn at [Bird Counting 101](#) and [Bird Counting 201!](#) Located at the [ebird.org](http://ebird.org) website by Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology, it will give you a comprehensive look at what is involved in counting birds.

**After December 21.** *The shortest day has passed, and whatever nastiness of weather we may look forward to in January and February, at least we notice that the days are getting longer. Minute by minute they lengthen out. It takes some weeks before we become aware of the change. It is imperceptible even as the growth of a child, as you watch it day by day, until the moment comes when with a start of delighted surprise we realize that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour.* - Vita Sackville-West



Riley Creek, December 4, 2010. Photo by A. Florenzano

*This e-newsletter is published in March, June, September and December.  
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