



There are exotic fish at the bottom of Spring and Prior Lakes that are stirring up trouble. Intentionally introduced into Minnesota's lakes from Europe and Asia in the 1880s as a game fish, common carp have quickly outcompeted the native fish in our lakes. Muddying up our waters with their bottom feeding habits, carp fish uproot the native plants that game fish depend upon. By stirring up the bottom of our lakes, the carp also are releasing phosphorus back into the water which in turn feeds the algae, increasing the potential for algae blooms throughout the summer.

Solving the Carp Problem:

In order to solve this problem, the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District has recently been awarded a grant funded by the State's Clean Water Partnership Grant Fund through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to use an innovative method to locate and remove a significant portion of the carp in Spring and Prior Lakes. In 2015/2016, the District will surgically implant 30 common carp with radio tags before releasing them back into Spring and Prior Lakes for study. The radio tags will send signals out to a receiver device, allowing us to track the movement of the fish throughout the three lakes and connecting channels. Once the fish begin to congregate during certain times of the year, the District will move quickly to catch and remove the groups of carp from the lakes. The radio telemetry information will also help the District locate the areas the carp are using to spawn in the spring. Fish barriers will then be installed to block the carp from entering these spawning areas, ultimately reducing their overall population growth.



Public Engagement:

This project will provide a unique opportunity for residents to be part of the effort. Interested volunteers will be invited to help mark, count, and sort fish during the removal efforts. The District has also engaged local schools, doing presentations to 5th and 7th grade classrooms and asking them to name the fish to provide an opportunity to engage the youth and families in the communities.

Contribution to Overall Lake Health Efforts:

Although controlling the carp on the lakes will substantially improve the water quality, it is only one of the many tools that the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District is using to keep our lakes as clean and healthy as possible. There is no silver bullet to improving water quality. This project will deal with phosphorous already in the lakes, while ongoing District projects are helping to reduce the phosphorus entering the lakes each year through runoff. All these efforts combined work together to improve the water quality of Spring Lake and Prior Lakes.



If you have any questions about the Carp Management Project, please contact Maggie Karschnia at mskarschnia@plslwd.org or 952-447-9808.

