



Sunfish Lake Quarterly

Summer 2025 Volume 25 Issue 3

Greetings, Neighbors,

I hope this message finds you well and that you are enjoying the summer weather between the rain showers.

I'd like to begin by recognizing **Jim Nayes, our SFL Forester**, for leading another successful Arbor Day event at Musser Park. Thank you, Jim, and thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to planting new trees in our community.

Community Input on Security

Thank you to all who participated in our recent security survey. We received an impressive **72% response rate**, a testament to your strong community engagement. For comparison, the recent Dakota County Survey achieved only a 12% response rate, highlighting how involved our residents are. If you haven't yet seen the survey results, they are posted at the top of our website's homepage.

The Council will review and discuss next steps based on survey feedback at our upcoming meeting on **Tuesday, August 12th, starting at 7:00 p.m.** All interested residents are welcome to attend. One notable result—only 45 residents supported the implementation of a license plate reader system (such as Flock), which means it does not have majority support. Police Chief Brian Sturgeon has noted that West St. Paul is beginning a two-year trial with this system, and we look forward to learning from their experience.

Airport Navigation Update

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has delayed installation of the new GPS RNAV navigation system originally scheduled for this summer due to staff reductions. The project is now expected no sooner than next March, possibly later. The FAA has assured us the planned RNAV configuration remains unchanged from the one developed collaboratively over the past two years, ensuring equitable distribution of aircraft traffic. No further community action is needed at this time. Thank you to everyone who advocated throughout this process for fair solutions.

Emergency Preparedness and Debris Removal

Chief Sturgeon and I recently participated in Dakota County Emergency Management training sessions. One issue discussed was large debris removal from private property after severe weather or emergencies. While FEMA assistance may be available in limited cases, many residents may not qualify, and the city does not have the tax base to fund public debris removal centers. The County recommended that residents make arrangements in advance with a tree removal service to ensure priority assistance should a major storm occur.

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City Council Dan O’Leary, Mayor Steven Bulach Tom Hendrickson Mike Hovey Shannon Nelson	Planning Commission Ginny Beckett Jeannine Naves Claire Noble John Oakman Kevin Wu	City Clerk/Administrator Christy Wilcox cwilcoxclerk@gmail.com	In this Issue • Message from the Mayor • Budget Schedule • Food Scraps Drop-Off • Fire Department Update: Keeping SFL Safe • Peddlers and Solicitors in Sunfish Lake • Neighborhood Watch: Partnering for a Safer Community • Create a Safer Property with CPTED Evaluation • Protecting Sunfish Lake’s Natural Beauty – Lake Access Permission Required • Septic Pumping Reminder • How Pet Waste Affects More Than Just You and Your Neighbor
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 18281 West St. Paul, MN 55118	Free Confidential Paper Shred Event September 13, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wakota Federal Credit Union 1151 Southview Blvd, South St. Paul 2 box/bag limit per person		

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Lake Access Reminder

We have received reports of unauthorized use of Sunfish Lake, including fishing and canoeing, and one incident of an inebriated couple loudly arguing and tipping over in their canoe. Please remember: the water in all lakes in Minnesota are held in public trust by the State for public use, but Sunfish Lake has no public access points, making shoreline access only from private property. As such, access to the lake is restricted to those with explicit permission. If you wish to grant a guest access, please use the "**Lake Access Permission slip**" available on our website (located under "Permits and Forms" in the "Connect" section of the homepage footer. On the resulting screen, the permission slip is under the right column "Permits."). If you become aware of unauthorized use, contact the West St. Paul police for assistance.

Let's all ensure that permission is granted only to responsible individuals so we can continue to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Wishing you a fun summer in SFL!

Warm regards,
Mayor Dan

BUDGET SCHEDULE

The 2026 budget process is beginning to wind up. A preliminary walkthrough of the 2026 budget was conducted on June 18.

- Emails to the various departments were sent out the week of June 23
- An update to the full council will take place at the August 12th council meeting
- The adoption of the preliminary budget will take place at the September 9th council meeting
- Review and updates of the final budget will be ongoing from September-November 30th
- A budget presentation to Council and members of the community will take place at the December 9th meeting
- The final adoption of the budget will be presented at the same December 9th meeting

FOOD SCRAPS DROP-OFF



The No. 1 item in our trash is food. Keeping food scraps out of landfills is good for the environment. That's why over 11,500 households like yours are giving food scraps a new life by participating in Dakota County's food scraps drop-off program (formerly organics drop-off program).

In 2024, participants delivered 2.2 million pounds of food scraps across all locations. The food scraps go to an industrial compost facility and are turned into compost for gardening and landscaping.

There are 11 food scraps drop off sites located throughout the county — in Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount (two) and West St. Paul.

To sign up for the free program, visit www.dakotacounty.us and search *food scraps*, email foodscraps@co.dakota.mn.us or call 952-891-7557. When you sign up, you will receive more information and free compostable bags in the mail.

Partially funded by Dakota County and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE: KEEPING SUNFISH LAKE SAFE

The Mendota Heights Fire Department is proud to serve the residents of Sunfish Lake. As your fire service provider, we respond to calls for fire suppression, emergency medical assistance, and hazard mitigation throughout the city.

In 2024, our department responded to 22 calls for service within Sunfish Lake. These included medical calls, alarm activations, and small outdoor incidents—with no significant fires reported. As of mid-2025, we've responded to six (6) calls in the city. These numbers remain consistent with Sunfish Lake's low incident volume, reflecting the community's strong focus on safety and preparedness.

Sunfish Lake's residential character, mature population, and wooded landscapes make it both a beautiful and unique part of the area we serve. Our firefighters are familiar with your neighborhoods and private drives, and we remain committed to delivering fast, effective service whenever you call.

Summer Fire Safety Tip

Grills and fire pits are great—but never leave them unattended. Keep them at least 25 feet from structures or dry vegetation, and make sure fires are fully out before heading in for the night.

If you'd like more information about the Mendota Heights Fire Department or have questions about fire safety, please don't hesitate to reach out.

— Dan Johnson, Fire Chief, Mendota Heights Fire Department



PEDDLERS AND SOLICITORS IN SUNFISH LAKE



Peddlers and solicitors are regulated by City ordinance in Sunfish Lake. While the City cannot completely ban these activities due to constitutional protections, we do have rules in place to manage them.

Peddlers are individuals who carry goods with them and offer them for immediate sale and delivery. They are required to have a City-issued Peddler License in their possession while conducting business.

Solicitors are individuals who seek to obtain orders for goods, products, or services that will be delivered at a later date. Solicitors must be registered with the City.

If a peddler or solicitor comes to your door, you have several options:

1. Engage with them — You may choose to speak with them directly.
2. Request proof of license or registration — You may ask to see their license or check the City of Sunfish Lake website homepage for a list of currently licensed or registered individuals.
3. Choose not to answer the door — If you prefer not to engage, you may ignore the doorbell or report the activity to the West St. Paul Police Department. To do so, contact Dakota 911's non-emergency number at 651-322-2323.
4. Post a "No Solicitation" sign — This is often an effective deterrent to prevent unwanted visitors.

If you have any questions regarding the City's Peddler and Solicitor Ordinance, please contact:

- **Sgt. Matt Muellner** at 651-552-4207 or mmuellner@wspmn.gov

- **Police Chief Brian Sturgeon** at 651-552-4201 or bsturgeon@wspmn.gov

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: PARTNERING FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY

Neighborhood Watch programs are once again growing in popularity, and the West St. Paul Police Department continues to support this proactive crime prevention initiative. These programs encourage residents to partner with law enforcement to reduce crime and enhance safety within their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Watch involves neighbors looking out for one another, reporting suspicious activity, and working collaboratively to build a safer, more connected community. Through informal meetings and educational efforts, the primary goal remains the same: reduce crime through active community involvement, increased engagement, and a strengthened sense of safety and security.

If you're interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch program in your area, please contact:

- Sgt. Matt Muellner at 651-552-4207 or email mmuellner@wspmn.gov
- Officer Joe Gobel at 651-206-0023 or email jgobely@wspmn.gov



CREATE A SAFER PROPERTY WITH CPTED EVALUATION

Are you curious about how to make your home or property less attractive to criminals? The West St. Paul Police Department offers evaluations using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, conducted by a certified CPTED officer.

This service includes a thorough assessment of your property, whether residential, commercial, new construction, or green space, and provides practical recommendations to improve safety through thoughtful environmental design. CPTED strategies have been proven effective in deterring crime and enhancing overall security.

For more information or to schedule an evaluation, contact **Officer Joe Gobel** at 651-206-0023 or email jgobely@wspmn.gov.

PROTECTING SUNFISH LAKE'S NATURAL BEAUTY – LAKE ACCESS PERMISSION REQUIRED

To help preserve the natural environment of the lakes in Sunfish Lake, the City requires that any visitors accessing the waterways without the property owner present must carry a completed Lake Access Permission Slip. This form must be filled out by the property owner granting access.

Permission slips can be easily downloaded from the City of Sunfish Lake website at:

👉 <https://www.sunfishlake.org/permits-and-forms>

Thank you for helping us protect our beautiful lakes!

	SUNFISH LAKE		
	Lake Access Permission Slip		
	I, _____, hereby grant permission to _____ to		
	(Print Property Owner's Full Name) (Print Full Name)		
use my property to access _____		(Lake or Property)	
This property access is effective from _____ to _____		(Date) (Date)	
Property Address: _____		Signature: _____	
Property Owner's Street Address		(Property Owner)	
THIS PERMISSION SLIP MUST BE CARRIED ALONG WITH A VALID ID WHEN UTILIZING GIVEN ACCESS.			

SEPTIC PUMPING REMINDER

Residential septic systems must be pumped every three (3) years to remain in compliance with City ordinance requirements. Please remind the Septic Pumper to send a copy of the report to Dakota County Environmental Services that your septic system has been pumped.

Dakota County will send a reminder postcard to residents who are not in compliance with the three-year pumping requirement. If your septic tank has not been pumped within the last three (3) years, please schedule a pumping of your system within the next 60 days.

Contact information for Dakota County septic pumping records:

Environmental Resources

952-891-7000

environ@co.dakota.mn.us

HOW PET WASTE AFFECTS MORE THAN JUST YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBOR

Minnesota has over 10,000 lakes, over 6,000 rivers and streams, 81 major surface water watersheds, and 8 major river basins. How we use and misuse the land directly affects the quality of water of those downstream of us. Water is not polluted from the end of the pipe, but from streets, parking lots, parks, and our own backyards. Pet waste is a leading source of nutrient and bacteria pollution in urban streams and waterways. With over half of all Minnesota residents owning a pet, misuse and improper disposal of their waste not only affects you and your neighbor, but those around us and downstream of us.

Rain, snowmelt, and stormwater runoff can pick up pet waste that is not properly disposed of and deposit it directly to a storm sewer system and into nearby lakes, rivers, and streams. This can negatively affect our over 10,000 lakes, our over 6,000 rivers and streams, our 81 major surface water watersheds, and our 8 major river basins by polluting the water, promoting weed and algae growth, damage the health of the local flora and fauna, and harm the health of those around us. That means less swimming, less fishing, less boating, and less enjoyment of our precious waters.

So when nature calls, remind yourself to:

- Pick up the poop, every time, everywhere.
- Scoop the Poop.
- Bag it and toss it.
- Check my local pet waste ordinance.
- Protect myself, my neighbor, and those downstream of us.

