

Excerpt from "Lakes, Loons and Lunacy" - Park Rapids Enterprise, April 12,2014

"Consider the effects of a major oil spill near Hay Creek that flowed into and contaminated the 4,700 acre lake chain that includes Island, Eagle, Potato, Fish Hook lakes. A conservative estimate of the annual tax capacity of these four lakes is \$2.5 million. Since these lake-shore owners can no longer enjoy the water-based activities they once could, due to their now polluted lakes it would not take long for their property's values to plummet. How would you like to buy property on an oil-fouled lake that is now off-limits to fishing, swimming, water-skiing, etc.? Even worse how would you like to try to sell it? Assuming a 10-40% reduction in property values (as a 2013 study completed by CRED – Conversations for a Responsible Economic Development found) this would represent a loss of anywhere from \$250,000 up to \$1 million dollars each year in property taxes paid to Hubbard County. Consider also the business revenue brought into Hubbard County each year by tourists alone which is estimated to be \$30 million dollars. This tourist revenue is easily impacted by natural occurrences such as a late ice-out or lack of snow for winter activities. Imagine the impact of a major oil spill contaminating some of our popular rivers or lakes. Government officials need to understand that this result is not a loss of tax revenue for one year but loss of that revenue every year for many years. And if the contamination got into our highly susceptible groundwater, the economic costs to our community's residents and agriculture would be permanent."