



LAKES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association

Spring, 1999

Your President Reports

~ by Brian Robley

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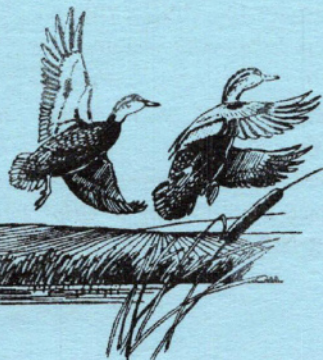
Chris Zigmunt
683-3792

Our annual meeting is coming up on June 10th. I strongly recommend all members and anyone interested in joining to attend.

Al Meyer will be giving an update on his boating proposal. Also, Hans Pearson of Silver Lake College will be giving a presentation on the invasion of exotic plant species.

Positions of treasurer, secretary, and two directors on the Board of Directors are up for election this year.

Again, I encourage interested individuals to attend the June 10th meeting at the County Office Complex.



Lakes Association to Hold Annual Membership Meeting

The Manitowoc County Lakes Association has scheduled **Thursday, June 10th**, as the date of their Annual Membership Meeting. The meeting will begin at **7:00 p.m. in Room 300** of the Manitowoc County Office Complex, 4319 Expo Drive.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order - *Brian Robley*
2. Guest Presentations:
 - A. Exotic Species Invaders - *Hans Pearson, Biology Professor Silver Lake College*
 - B. Update on Boating Laws - *Mike Green, DNR Warden*
 - C. Report on Lakes Classification Findings on Town Regulations Controlling Motorized Boating - *Dan Niquette, Aquatic Solutions, LLC*
3. Committee Reports:
 - A. Treasurer's Report
 - B. Secretary's Report
 - C. Membership Report
 - D. Ad Hoc Committee on Aeration for Carstens and Weyers Lakes
 - E. Fishing and Water Quality: Proposal on 200 ft. setback for jet skis and useable acreage with input from area Lake Associations. - *Al Meyer & Don Glaeser*
 - F. Report on Shoreline Protection Advisory Committee - *Tom Ward, Soil & Water Cons. Dept.*
 - G. Lake Association Reports
4. By-Law Changes
5. Elections: Treasurer, Secretary and Two Directors
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Adjourn

Wisconsin's Shorelines: A Desirable, Disappearing Commodity (A Continued Discussion)

Last month, information about the Wisconsin Shoreland Management Program was presented. We navigated through the shoreland rules of lot size, buffer strips, setbacks, and "grandfathering" allowances and discovered that some rough waters lie ahead of us due to difficult interpretations of these rules, resulting in an inability to enforce them. Water quality and the loss of shoreland vegetation, of critical shallow water habitat, and of aquatic plants were some of the concerns we waded through. We briefly tiptoed into the wave of development trends, and that is where we find ourselves in this edition.

Tucked away amid the gently rolling hills of hardwoods or evergreens, many of any county's lakes are hardly noticed by the local residents. But in the current rush for lakeshore property, many of these water bodies are being noticed by developers.



Although many of the best sites have already sprouted seasonal and permanent homes, developers are now going to work on the "marginal" lands – sites with steep slopes, adjacent to large bogs or wetlands, shallow weedy bays, poor access, or terrain that blocks a view or access to water.

In a report examining the northern region's lakes and shorelines, the Department of Natural Resources found that since 1960 about two-thirds of undeveloped lakes 10 acres or larger have been developed. The average number of shoreland dwellings on all lakes has more than doubled in that time. The report estimates if this trend continues, all undeveloped lakes not in public ownership could be developed within the next twenty years. Riverfront properties are becoming more popular as good home sites on lakes are taken.

As more marginal properties are developed, buyers are seeking new ways of getting to the water. More requests to fill and alter wetlands are now coming into the zoning administrators' offices. Requests for permits to construct boardwalks or elevated piers over wetlands have never been higher.

Since even marginal lands are selling at a premium, property values have skyrocketed. In 1994, seven of 10 counties with the largest rise in property taxes were in southern Wisconsin. Two years later, all top 10 counties

with fastest rising rates were north of an east-west line through Green Bay.

A Problem Acknowledged– Concern over the loss of upland green areas, loss of scenic beauty, damage to shore habitat for fish and wildlife, and degradation of water quality have prompted action from the local citizens to state government.

A special Northern Initiatives Team suggested four courses of action in its report, *Northern Wisconsin's Lakes and Shorelands*:

1. Expand public information and education efforts about the environmental, social and economic importance of lakes;
2. Target assistance to owners who are interested in voluntary conservation measures;
3. Develop and adopt enhanced shoreland zoning ordinances;
4. Assist local governments and private conservation organizations in acquiring ecologically-important lakes and shorelands.

Education is vital. In surveying realtors and contractors, it was found these people who handle property every day were unfamiliar with their county's Shoreland Protection Ordinance. And a high percentage of lake property owners had never previously owned lake frontage. People who have lived most of their lives in cities often try to reestablish park-like settings in wild areas. Cleaning up a lake by removing shoreline vegetation or fallen logs is altering both physical and biological characteristics of the waterway. This and planted lawns have a detrimental effect on the water and wildlife that attracted urbanites to the lake or river in the first place.

Responsibility lies at the shore. In the end, it comes down to the owners of lake or river property to determine the environmental health of the system. As John Haack, a long-time water regulation and zoning specialist for the DNR explains: "*The price of restoring damaged lakes and watersheds far exceeds the cost of protecting resources. Wise development choices and responsible land stewardship make a difference.*"



Adapted from: *Coming to Grips with Growth* by Jim Bishop, Wisconsin Natural Resources, October, 1998

Minutes on the Lakes ~

An Overview of the 2/10/99 Lakes Assn. Meeting

Mark Walters, Bay Lake Regional Planning of Green Bay presented a program that dealt with the Environmental Corridor of our area. His maps show the wetlands, 12% slopes, County setback to streams, and the 100-year flood plains and are used by developers, industries, etc. for future planning.

Sheriff Tom Kocourek was there to enlighten us as to his department's role in patrolling lakes. Of note is the fact that County patrol can only stop a jet ski or a boat after a complaint has been filed, unlike the Coast Guard. He also explained how little of the lake patrol funding actually comes from the county, but more from the state, and it is a service we should urge our County representatives to continue.

Tom Ward, SWCD, stated that the County-wide ordinance regarding no manure application to fields within 1000 feet of waterways or lakes was passed. If there is a situation like this, contact his office at 683-4183.

Dan Niquette, Lakes Classification Project, will be heading a committee to study local ordinance changes.

An Overview of the 5/5/99 Lakes Assn. Meeting

Al Meyer and Don Glaeser reported on the Wisconsin Lakes Convention held recently in Stevens Point. People were impressed by the 200' no-wake maps used in their presentation.

After some discussion it was decided to change our dues schedule as well revise the wording regarding voting. Both of these changes will require a by-law change which will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on June 10th. Look for the *By-Law Changes ...* article to see how the revised wording reads. Speakers and agenda for the annual meeting were also discussed.

Tom Ward showed us some handouts that he was ordering for our *Earth Day* display. Those, along with the Membership handout, were approved. Tom

and **Chris Zigmunt** are also working on a supplement for the *Herald-Times Reporter*. ☺

**Celebrate
Earth Day
All Year!**

Fishing & Water Quality Committee Update

~ by Al Meyer

Maps detailing the impact of the 200-foot zone legislation concerning jet skis have been circulated and discussed with Lake Association Chairmen of affected lakes. The impact of individual lakes will be a topic at your association meetings.

Specifically, we need to know how your membership feels about the present law and whether they can comfortably live with it. Do they feel further legislation is required, and if so, what would they like to see? Consider safety, noise and environmental issues in your discussion.

The County Lakes Association is in need of your organization's representation and input at the Annual Meeting on June 10th. We cannot make intelligent decisions on recreational use of our lakes without your help. Hope to see you there.

By-Law Changes to be Decided at Annual Meeting

The Board of Directors voted to recommend a change of the membership dues for: 1) youth under the age of 16 - free, to encourage their involvement; and 2) create a membership for individuals whose organization is already a member. This option should encourage more individual involvement.

The new by-laws shall read as follows:

Article II - Membership, Section 2 - Dues:
Dues shall be: \$25 for an Organization; \$15 for adults 16 years and older; and \$5 for an individual already enrolled in a member Organization; to be paid annually on a calendar year basis.

Article III - Voting, Section 1, Multiple Voting:
Any individual member may cast only one vote on any question called to a vote. Only one individual may represent an organization; and each individual paid unit may cast one vote on any question called to a vote. ☺

Lawns Prove Perilous to Lakeshores

For people living along relatively undisturbed shorelines, enjoying the native plants and wildlife of a lake with clean water is a daily reward for good land stewardship. Unfortunately, decades of traditional lawn management have led to conventional ideas about what the “perfect lakeshore lot” should look like: expansive



lawn mowed all the way to the water's edge—and no aquatic vegetation. Landscaping lakeshore lots to achieve this ideal has led to a serious loss of natural lakeshore habitat.

Lawns in themselves are not particularly harmful, and they provide wonderful benefits to homeowners, but too often lawns are improperly maintained and overfertilized, and are established in areas of important wildlife habitat. **New lakeshore owners often eliminate native vegetation and plant a labor-intensive, chemical-dependent bluegrass lawn just like the one they left behind in town.** Fertilizers and lawn chemicals then wash into lakes, causing excessive growth of algae and polluting the lake ecosystem with toxins that disrupt the development and survival of aquatic organisms. Homeowners cut trees near the water to have a clear view of the lake and to remove “unsightly” dead trees. Many owners illegally remove aquatic vegetation that they perceive as weeds.



Many lakeshore owners realize something is amiss on their lake. They see fewer purple martins, frogs, and wading birds along the shore. They no longer are hearing the morning wake-up call of the waterfront birds or a full frog chorus in the evening. They see more bank erosion and spend more time mowing the lawn than fishing. They have created a lakeshore environment that is ecologically dysfunctional.

There is a solution to these problems: **lakescaping for wildlife and water quality.** At the heart of the lakescaping concept is the creation of a **buffer zone** along the shoreline. This natural strip of vegetation should cover at least 75% of the property's frontage. It should extend both onto the land and into the water to a distance at least 25 to 50 feet, where possible.



The goal of creating a buffer zone is to restore the shoreline—both on shore and in the water—with the vegetation that occurred there in the first place.



Plants at the water's edge provide beauty and color to the lake environment. Cool, moist shoreline soils provide habitat for many wetland wildflowers. Broad-leaved cattail, bulrush, arrowhead, and duckweed create underwater habitat important for spawning fish.

Wildlife depends on both live and dead plants for habitat. Dead trees on the shore and logs lying in the water provide perches for eastern kingbirds, belted kingfishers, and eastern phoebes. Floating logs are loafing sites for painted. The tangle of dead tree branches underwater protects newly spawned fish from predators. Lakeshore plants, both alive and dead, help protect the shoreline by absorbing the energy of waves that might otherwise erode the soil.

Lakescaping for wildlife and water quality will allow you to live at peace with a more natural lakeshore—instead of trying to make it conform to traditional landscape ideals that throw the lake ecosystem out of balance. Try it. You will enjoy this new dimension in lakeshore living! 🌿

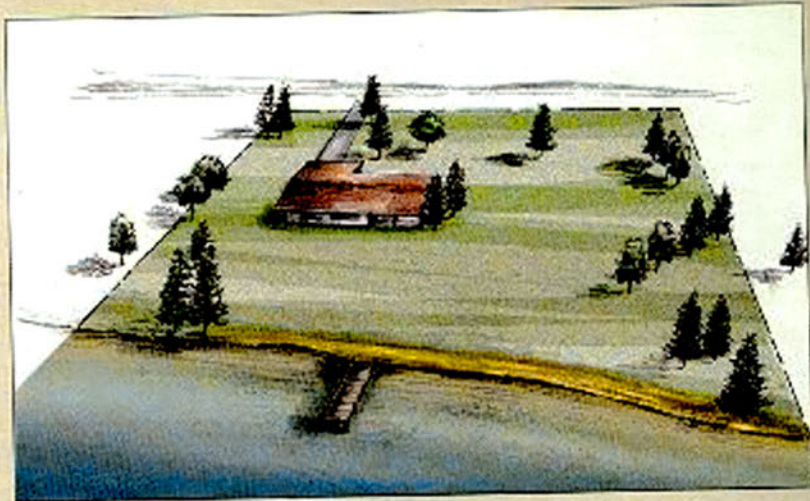


GETTING STARTED THIS SPRING!

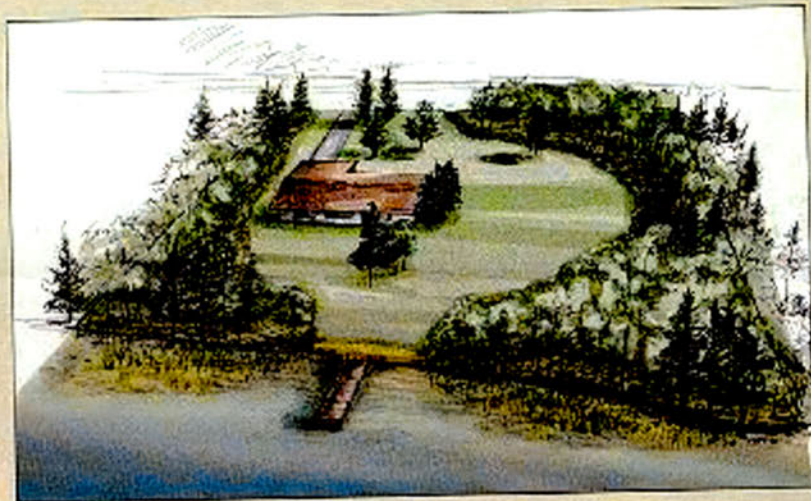
1. Design a smaller lawn. Determine the amount of actively-used lawn and eliminate the rest.
2. Replace unnecessary lawn areas with shrub borders or native plantings. You will save work and provide habitat.
3. If you are interested in serving as a demonstration lake lot to restore the native shoreline, call the Soil & Water Conservation Dept. at 683-4183. We are currently developing ideas and materials. Let us learn together.
4. Reduce phosphorus fertilizer application by leaving grass clippings on the lawn. Use a mulching mower.
5. Mow high. Grasses should be cut to a height of 3 inches. This height allows for a deeper, healthier root system and allows for grass to become more stress tolerant from disease and dry weather.
6. Do not pull plants growing in the water. They protect the shoreline from wave damage and provide valuable habitat for fish and aquatic insects.
7. Leave the shoreland trees and shrubs alone, even though it's tempting in the spring to trim, prune and remove woody vegetation to “clean up the shoreline”. Maintain a small vista and access to the lakefront.

**TYPICAL LAKESHORE SITES
TRANSFORMED BY LAKESCAPING**

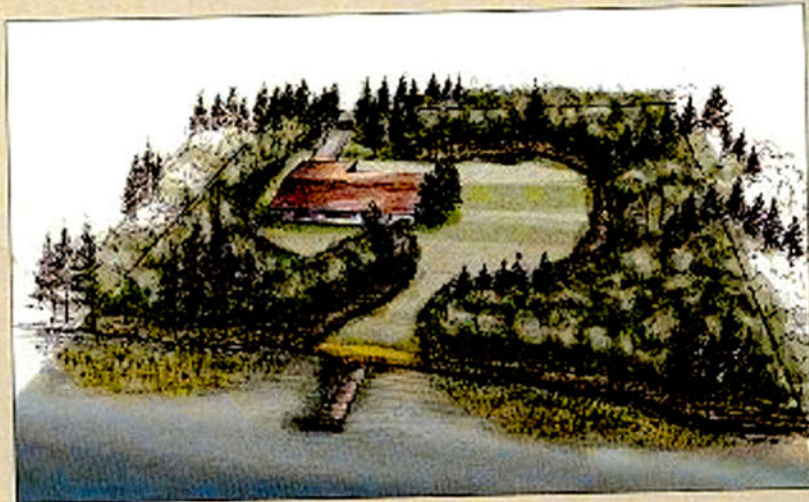
1) Occasionally people re-create the landscape they leave behind at their permanent residence. In this northern mixed forest landscape, mowing the large lawn is one of the prime weekend activities.



2) Reducing lawn size reduces landscape maintenance needs and allows more leisure time. A greater diversity of plants will provide food and shelter for a great variety of wildlife species. Emergent lake vegetation planted in the water absorbs wave energy, thereby reducing beach erosion.



3) Adding trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses builds the vertical structure of habitat, which increases the lot's usefulness for wildlife. This vegetation also helps to prevent soil erosion by breaking the energy of raindrops hitting the ground and by holding soil in extensive root systems. Water clarity is not compromised by soil washing from the lot.



Landscape design by Fred Finkbeiner

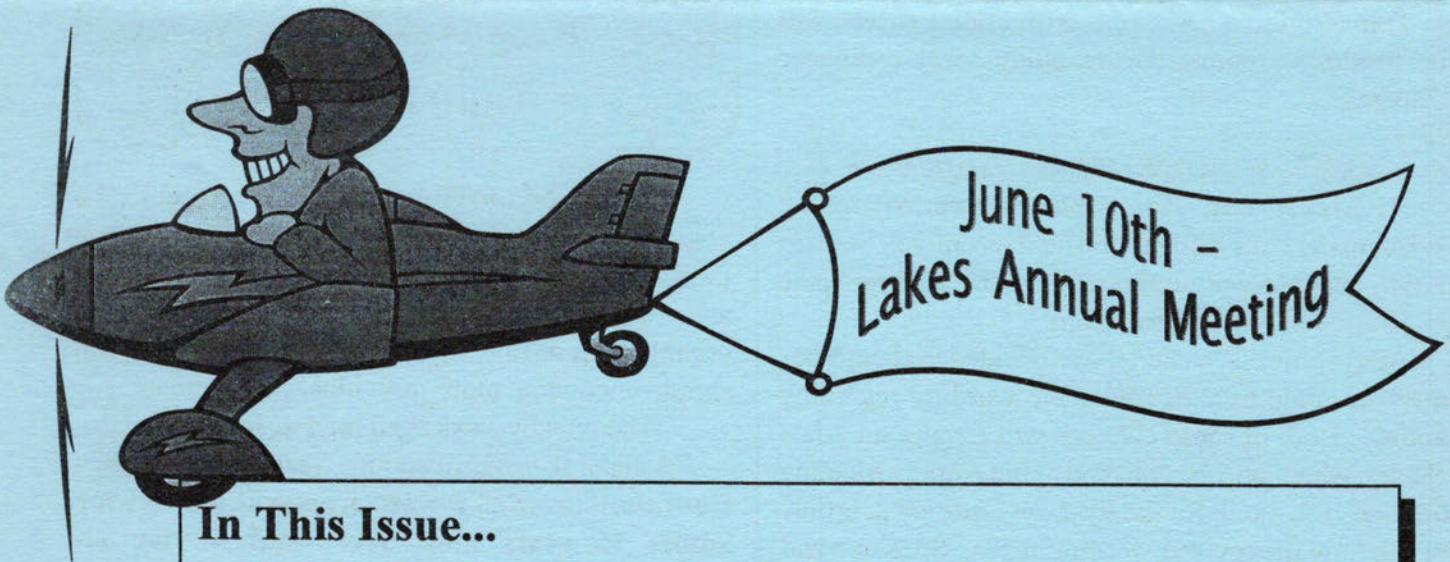




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