



LAKES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association

Winter, 1999

Your President Reports

~ by Brian Robley

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I would like to take this time to wish you all Happy Holidays.

As Tom Ward and Tim Rasman work to secure grant money, we as a group should be thinking of projects to be worked on in the year to come. Let's consider a few nominations for an appreciation award, such as landowners who use outstanding practices to keep our waters clean. Without them, we cannot achieve our goals.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next Lakes Association meeting. ☼

Boating Patrol Funds Threatened

At the November 10th budget hearings of the Manitowoc County Board, a motion was made to eliminate the Boat Patrol cost of \$11,638. The actual tax levy savings would have been only \$3,638 since a grant provides \$8,000 which would then be forfeited.

The motion failed with 11 ayes and 14 noes - a close vote. If you feel that this patrol provides important enforcement of lake regulations and helps reduce lake-user conflict, contact your county supervisor and say so. ☼

Manitowoc County
Lakes Association, INC.



Lakes Association Officers pictured, left to right: David Pozorski, Chris Zigmunt, Don Glaeser, Al Meyer, and Brian Robley. (Photo courtesy of Tim Swoboda and Herald-Times Reporter.)

Wisconsin's Shorelines: A Desirable, Disappearing Commodity

Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program is a partnership between state and local government that requires development near navigable lakes and streams to meet statewide minimum standards. The rules for lot width minimums, restrictions on vegetative cutting, and the building setback distances create a buffer intended to minimize disturbances to water resources and preserve the natural beauty of our lakes, rivers, and streams. Manitowoc County adopted a "Shoreland Management Ordinance" in July, 1998. With the exception of the wetland protection provisions added in the early 1980's, the rules have essentially remained unchanged.

Current development trends pose major challenges to the shoreland management program. Waterfront development is booming in northern Wisconsin, with property values increasing up to 400% in the early 1990's for some counties in the region. In southeastern Wisconsin, most lakes larger than 10 acres have developed shorelines, with much of the development taking place before shoreland zoning rules went into effect. The scarcity of prime waterfront lands means that areas once passed over for residential development, because they were too steep, too wet, or too rocky, are now being developed. More and more seasonal cottages are being expanded to year-round homes. Increasing development places pressure on water quality, habitat, and natural shore cover.

What are the shoreland rules? Four major aspects of the rules aim to control density of development and aim to create a protective buffer of vegetation along public waterways. **Lot Size:** Sewered lots must have a minimum average width of 65 feet and a minimum area of 10,000 square feet. Lots not served by a public sanitary sewer must have a minimum average width of 100 feet and a minimum area of 20,000 square feet. **Buffer Strip:** Clear-cutting of trees and shrubs is not allowed in the strip of land from the shore to a point 35 feet inland, except for a 30 foot wide path down to the water. **Setbacks:** All buildings and structures, except piers, boat-hoists, and boathouses must be set back 75 feet from shore. When an existing pattern of setbacks exists, counties may allow new homes to be built closer than 75 feet from shore. **"Grandfathering" homes** allows the continued use of homes that were built before shoreland rules were enacted, even if they are too close to the water.

In many cases, however, the present rules are not effectively protecting Wisconsin's public waters. Biologists believe there are now opportunities to revise

the shoreland protection rules so that these valuable resources may be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

What are the problems with the current rules?

The greatest weaknesses identified in the rules are clauses that are difficult to interpret and enforce, forming loopholes that frustrate the intent of the law.

What's at stake? Water Quality: Recent trends in shoreland development have had measurable impacts on waters, particularly due to increased runoff and poor vegetation management practices. Phosphorus and sediment entering our lakes has greatly increased with recent suburban-style developments occurring around lakes.

Loss of Shoreland Vegetation – Clearing trees and shrubs eliminates protective buffer strips along waterways.

Studies show that understory trees and shrubs are reduced to very low levels along developed shorelines.

Loss of Critical Shallow Water Habitat –

Studies show that increased development can reduce critical shallow water habitat. For example, clearing live, dying, and dead shoreline trees and shrubs eliminates a source of habitat that would otherwise fall into the water. Many of these "treefalls" can provide habitat for many years to come.

Loss of Aquatic Plants – Removing plants eliminates valuable habitat for a whole host of critters, like fish and frogs. Recent information shows that green frogs and their habitat would be essentially eliminated from lakes developed to their maximum under the current rule (52 homes/mile of shoreline).

Songbird surveys show that development has altered species composition of birds. The common suburban-style birds like bluejays, crows, goldfinches and grackles were more abundant on developed lakes. The less common songbirds that migrate to the tropics are at greater risk and are showing a population decline.

We will be continuing this discussion of "Wisconsin's Shorelines: A Desirable, Disappearing Commodity" in the next issue with some surprising state statistics, facts and personal experiences. ☉



How's Your Lakeshore Looking?

Thoreau called a lake "the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature." While piers, decks and cabins may help you enjoy your lake, shoreline development can obscure its natural beauty, masking the landscape's expression. Be aware of state and local shoreland zoning regulations designed to help keep the landscape in harmony with the natural lakeshore, and keep Wisconsin's most expressive feature beautiful:

- ▶ Maintain and restore natural vegetation strips along the shoreline, not only to enhance the lake's beauty, but to provide cover and shade for fish, wildlife and people—also increasing privacy reducing runoff and noise.
- ▶ Contact your zoning office before you begin any construction activity on or near your shoreline.
- ▶ All structures, including decks, must be set back 75 feet from the shoreline.
- ▶ Follow standards for shoreline cutting, lot size, sanitation, and construction.
- ▶ Design structures to complement the landscape. Use natural colors and build only what you need.
- ▶ Try natural-looking rock or boulder rip-rap, instead of sea walls and sheet piles, to prevent shoreline erosion.
- ▶ Learn who your local zoning officials are and participate in Board of Adjustment hearings: **You can make a difference!**



Lake User Conflicts and Lake Use Plans

As the population of Wisconsin increases, so do the pressures on all of our natural resources, including lakes. Lakes provide habitat for plants, animals, and birds while offering us recreational opportunities among which is the personal water craft, or jet skis, which are a current point of controversy in many areas.

Conflicts in multi-use recreational lakes often stem from incompatible social and aesthetic values. They escalate when one or both sides of an issue fail to understand the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the other.

Although conflict is not pleasant, appropriately channeled, it can result in innovative solutions. Two key steps for resolving conflict are to analyze the nature of a conflict and find common ground between opposing sides.

By developing a lake use plan, you can often avoid conflicts that naturally arise from incompatible lake uses. Such a plan focuses on how a particular lake can meet the needs of multiple users. The plan considers all potential lake interactions—recreational, ecological, agricultural, economic, social and political. The goal is to protect and improve the usefulness of the lake for all interests.

As you may imagine, developing a lake use plan is no easy task. Key to making such a plan work is to involve all interested parties. While the plan could be initiated by an organized lake association, it is important interested individuals and groups are invited to work toward an environmentally and economically balanced lake that benefits all. It is important that the lake use plan be flexible and dynamic—able to respond to changing needs in the lake user community.

One of the most difficult aspects of resolving lake use conflicts is altering the behavior of lake users. When this is the fundamental cause of the conflict, education is very important. Short of banning a particular type of recreation, educating individuals can make a difference.

The Manitowoc County Lakes Classification system will be analyzing current individual Lake regulations and identifying Lakes that will be most likely to receive increasing public pressure in the future. For more information on lake use planning, contact a member of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association or the Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Department at 683-4183. ☉

Minutes on the Lakes ~

An Overview of the 10/26/98 Lakes Assn. Meeting

Al Meyer, Membership Committee, suggested that a questionnaire, similar to the one the lake groups filled out, be sent to county lakefront landowners. Another idea to increase Lakes Association membership and support would be to offer a discount membership rate to members who join both their local lake group and also the County Lakes Association. They would like to hear some input on these items.

Brian Robley, Lakes President, recommended that some type of award or plaque be presented to farmers, landowners, or other community members who do things in the best interest of our lakes.

It was reported that the new aerator and pump have been installed in Carstens Lake and are ready for winter. **Steve Hogler, DNR Fisheries**, gave us the "green light" to purchase \$500 worth of flathead minnows to be dumped into the lake.

Dan Niquette, Consultant for the Lakes Classification Project, introduced himself and gave us a rundown on his work with lake classification, shoreline preservation, and land use pressure in the future. **Tom Ward, SWCD Director**, expanded on the increased land use pressure due to the surge in housing developments in rural areas.

A water quality slide show was presented by **Tim Rasman, Water Quality Biologist**.

Chris Zigmunt is comprising information for a publication listing the lakes, rivers and creeks in the County. It will include descriptions of each lake, fish present, and picnicking and walking path areas.

Carol Entringer from English Lake reported that sometime last June or July, the County Parks and Planning Dept. cut down the cattails from around the English Lake boat landing, dumped in topsoil and seeded grass, much to the disappointment of the landowners involved in the shoreline restoration projects. She asked if a letter could be written to them explaining what the Association is trying to accomplish as described in the film, *The Living Shore*.

LAKE REPORTS

(as presented at the October Lakes Assn. meeting.)

Bullhead Lake reported that their low oxygen reading taken last Spring had leveled out as the year progressed. The fish which they've purchased over the past several years are growing at a very nice rate according to a DNR Comprehensive Study and Test.



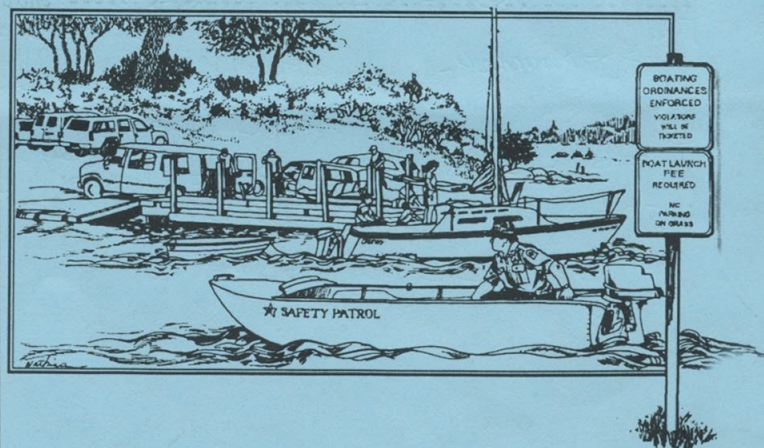
Carstens Lake reports that their last oxygen reading was good. Thousands of small minnows were seen in the shallows during the Summer.

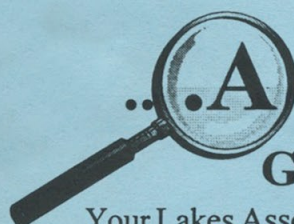
English Lake reported that the detention basin has been completed. It filled up during the heavy rains, and seems to be working fine. They're anxious to see how well it will work this Spring.

Hartlaub Lake is again seeing some weed growth. Water clarity is now two to three feet.

Long Lake reported that the boat traffic had slowed down and was staying away from the shorelines since the new law went into effect. The algae seemed to have cleared up with clear visibility to four feet.

Pigeon Lake stated that the new boating law is successful so far with traffic problems seeming to clear themselves up.





...And The Search Goes On!

Your Lakes Association is still looking for some willing individuals to become involved with the group, and possibly a committee. So, here's the list of committees and their functions once again.

Membership Committee: Attract and encourage a diversity of involvement and membership to the Association i.e. farmers, riparian owners, business, and businesses associated with water recreation.

Land Use Committee: Work with lake groups and individuals to clean up/reduce runoff. Includes functions such as inventory mapping, water sampling, and reviewing lake management options.

Fishing and Water Quality Committee: Look at the possible effects of boating, jet skis, and other things affecting fish spawning success.

Ad Hoc on Lake Aeration for Carstens and Weyers Lakes: Will monitor oxygen levels, help maintain aerators, monitor barriers during aeration and advise Board.

If you'd like to get involved, just fill out the enrollment form below or attend our next Lakes Association meeting coming up this February 11th, 6:30 p.m., at the Manitowoc County Office Complex, 4319 Expo Drive. Many of the committees meet following the regular meeting.

Together we can accomplish much!

Lakes Association Sets February Meeting Date and Anniversary Celebration

The Manitowoc County Lakes Association will be recognizing the second year of their organization with a social hour and sandwich buffet preceding the **regular meeting on Thursday, February 11th, at 6:30 p.m.** It will be held in Room 110 at the Manitowoc County Office Complex. To help us plan for food, please call the Soil and Water Office at 683-4183 by February 5th if you plan to attend.

Following is the meeting agenda for the evening:

- 6:30 Social and Sandwiches
- 7:00 Guest Speaker, Mark Walters
Bay Lakes Regional Planning

Mark will demonstrate the environmental corridor mapping project for the County. This project will help identify environmentally sensitive areas around lakes and watersheds for inclusion in Town Land Use Plans.

- 7:50 County Sheriff Tom Kocourek
Boat Patrol Representative

In light of the County Board attempt to eliminate the Boat Patrol Program, Sheriff Kocourek will be available to explain the patrolling services and answer your questions and concerns regarding Boating issues.

- 8:15 Old Business
- 8:20 New Business
- 8:25 Lake and Committee Reports
- 8:45 Committee Breakouts -
Work Plan for 1999
- 9:30 Next Meeting Date - Adjourn

----- clip and return -----

Lake Association 1999 Membership Enrollment

Dues: *Individual:* \$15 *Youth (under 18)* \$10 *Organizations/Lake Groups:* \$25

Name _____

Address _____

Committee Choice (see descriptions above): Your participation means improved lakes in Manitowoc County!

_____ Membership _____ Land Use _____ Fishing/Water Quality _____ Aeration for Carstens/Weyers Lakes

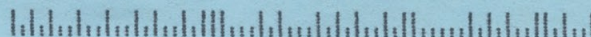
Mail To: **Todd Brotski, P.O. Box 267, Francis Creek WI 54214**
(Make checks payable to: Manitowoc County Lakes Association.)



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