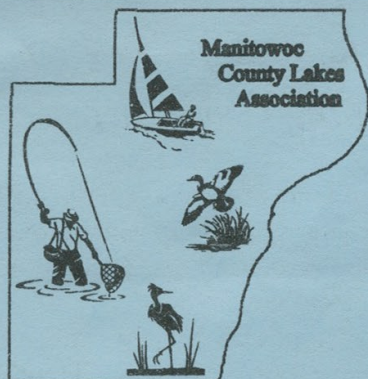




LAKES

ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association

Winter, 1999

Your President Reports

~ by Brian Robley

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The success of our membership drive proved very promising as many new members have joined our organization sharing in our goals for improving our area lakes. As our membership drive continues, we encourage all previous members and any interested persons to join the Lakes Association.

We welcome you to participate in group activities. The group brings different lake associations from all over the county together to discuss new ideas and solutions to problems that are occurring on your lake at this time. We also try to bring in an educational speaker to each meeting.

This summer we hope to start constructing a few demonstration plots. These plots are designed to show lake front owners the beauty of a natural shoreline. A natural shoreline provides habitat for fish and other

aquatic animals that are needed to maintain a healthy lake. These plots still allow you access to the lake for swimming and plenty of room for a pier. At the

same time, it improves the quality of the lake for you and future users.

In closing, I would like to wish all the Lake Associations a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ☺

Lake Questionnaire Nets Excellent Response



This past October a survey was mailed to lake property owners and users to gain a better understanding about your concerns on water safety and the enforcement of existing lake regulations. We also learned about your feelings on proposed legislation. The study also identified that education on water issues has become a major need as the pressure on inland lake use continues to grow.

Some 178 questionnaires were returned for a very high sampling. Initial results were shared at the October 25th meeting and the final data includes another two dozen that arrived later. Lake Association Directors Don Glaeser and Al Meyer did an outstanding job chairing this effort, with additional thanks to Carol Entringer, Dan Niquette and Tom Ward. A special "THANKS" to all who responded.

The Fish and Water Quality Committee will be presenting their summary to the Board of Directors of the Lakes Association at their January 10th meeting. **The resulting Board recommendations are on the January 18th agenda for the general membership meeting.** All members are encouraged to attend.

Look for the "Nitty Gritty Details" on page 5 which summarizes the data accumulated from the survey. For additional information, contact the Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Dept. at 920/683-4183. ☺

Citizen Advisory Committee Develops Recommendations to Protect County Public Waters and to Amend the County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

A 26-member Citizen Advisory Committee has been meeting since last March to develop a plan for protecting our County Lakes and Streams from over-development which impacts the water quality and wildlife habitat. The Committee members include representatives of all the County Lakes Associations, farmers adjacent to Lakes, realtors, Sportsman Clubs, river riparian landowners, Town and City Government officials, and two committee members of the County Board.

The Committee identified concerns or threats to our County Lakes and Streams. The primary concerns identified by the group that were to be addressed in the recommendations included:

1. Diminished water quality from poorly planned development and nonpoint source pollution in the watershed;
2. Need for improved zoning criteria around lakes and streams;
3. Need for adequate enforcement of the zoning ordinances;
4. Loss of fish and wildlife habitat;
5. Increase of noise and light pollution;
6. Lack of education about the environmental impacts associated with development along lakes and streams; and
7. Resistance of waterfront property owners to modify their actions in order to protect the public waters.

Committee Classifies Lakes into Three Groups

The Manitowoc County Soil & Water Conservation Dept. and The Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association received a Lakes Protection Grant from the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources to classify the County lakes and streams into like management categories in order to better develop criteria for protecting these water bodies.

Many of our County's lakes were developed in the 1950's with small lake lots designed for seasonal cottages. Many of these seasonal cottages are being replaced by much larger full-use homes, which have significantly greater impacts on our Lakes' water quality. However, some of our smaller lakes and river systems still do have remaining shorelines with natural habitats which have not been altered by development.

A County Waters Team of agency experts concluded that remaining undeveloped shorelines which are suitable for building sites would soon be developed if actions were not taken to protect these areas.

With the assistance of Dan Niquette, a consultant from Aquatic Solutions LLC., a Lakes Classification System was designed that identified three Lake Classes:

1. Lakes that are undeveloped, but had a high potential for development;
2. Lakes that have some development, but also have remaining shoreline which would need protection; and
3. Lakes that are already heavily developed, with little remaining habitat.

The Committee developed a vision and Water Class Standards for each of the three lake classes, for inclusion in the County Zoning Ordinance amendments.

The first class of lakes is called "**Natural Lakes**", which are generally characterized as lakes that are less than 25 percent developed with low home density. These lakes are usually smaller and many are protected by wetlands surrounding their shoreline; but they do have a risk of having the watershed developed behind the wetland. Others have the potential to be developed directly along the shoreline in the future. The goal on these waters is to protect the habitat, the aesthetics, and tranquility of these waters through the use of protective standards for new shoreland development. Many of the upper reaches of the undeveloped streams and rivers, as well as the Lake Michigan Shoreline, will also be protected with this category.

The second class of lakes is called "**Semi-Developed Lakes**", which have portions of their shoreline developed -- or are developed, but have a low home density on the shoreline. The goal on these lakes will be to protect the remaining natural shoreline area and restore the habitat on the developed shoreline. The zoning standards will allow for a moderate home density that will control runoff and encourage initiatives to restore habitat on the developed shoreline. Portions of the County's river reaches that are semi-developed will also be placed in this category.

The third class of lakes is called "**Developed Waters**". These lakes have been heavily developed since the early 1950's, and they generally have smaller lots that may not meet current zoning standards. (cont. on next page)

Citizen Advisory Committee (continued)

Most of the shoreline is already developed. The goal on these lakes will be to protect the sensitive areas of the lake and its watershed from further development or deteriorating factors. Zoning will protect the watershed area and efforts will be made to restore the functional aspects of the shoreline habitat and aesthetics.

Shoreland Zoning Recommendations

The final proposal of the criteria and standards for the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance changes will be submitted to the Planning and Parks Commission and to the County Board. These proposals should provide the needed flexibility for nonconforming lots. Under the current ordinance, property owners with nonconforming lots have not been able to make improvements to their property; and there are no measures to allow for protection of the remaining undeveloped shorelines.

The new proposal will provide:

- ▶ Exemptions for road setback standards. This enables people to obtain enough room within their lot area to achieve the needed setback distance of their structures from the shoreline.
- ▶ Prevention of keyhole development. Keyhole development is the method whereby any number of people with back lots, not at all on the lakefront, could obtain lake access through a single, small right-of-way to the lake and then create any number of docks or mini-marinas.
- ▶ Many allowances for property improvements that would not require a permit for a variance or a fee.
- ▶ Opportunity for mitigation on nonconforming lots. This will allow property owners to select from among options involving restoration of their shoreline habitat or runoff reduction, in exchange for adding on to their existing nonconforming structures.
- ▶ Language to address abusive lighting issues on adjoining properties. Exterior lights would need to have a shield which downcasts the light onto the area in need of illumination only.
- ▶ Elimination of the loopholes in our current ordinance.
- ▶ Clarification of vegetation management in the buffer zone between the shoreline and the structures.
- ▶ Allowance for structures near the lake for storage of fishing or boating equipment, with provisions to

ensure protection of the lake's buffer zone and aesthetic values.

- ▶ Improved administration of our County's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Setback averaging of structures in the shoreland zone will be eliminated, permit tracking will be computerized, and the permit application process will be greatly improved with the addition of informative criteria to better apply the zoning standards.

Other Lake Protection Recommendations

The Committee also called for a strong educational initiative and incentives to develop an understanding among property owners of how to restore and protect the shoreline zone. Additionally, there is a need to foster an appreciation of the valuable role their property plays in restoring and protecting our Lakes' water quality and habitat.

The Master Gardeners and Lake Associations are currently planning workshops on how to restore Shoreland areas. They are also working to establish demonstration sites on various lakes in the County. Fiscal and educational incentives are being recommended in addition to the zoning standards. Lake Associations will be encouraged to assist with the education and enforcement of the Committee recommendations.

Public Information Meetings

These proposals will be presented at the Manitowoc County Lakes Association Membership meeting on January 18. Future meetings during February and March will also be held in the County Lake Association areas in an effort to reach as many landowners as possible. Following the public information meetings, the final recommendations will be submitted to be drafted into the Ordinance changes. The Draft Shoreland Ordinance changes will then go through a public hearing process prior to being submitted to the Manitowoc County Board for final approval. ☉

**Mark Your Calendars ~
You Won't Want to Miss
the January 18th
Lakes Association Meeting.**

LAKE REPORTS

(In this issue, the Lake reporters were asked to summarize their lake activities, conditions and so forth, and give a brief glimpse of where their group is headed.)

Over the past three years, **Carstens Lake's** water quality appears to be improving. The fish population is rebounding from the winter kill of 1997. With the improved farming practices, we hope that in the near future there will no longer be a need to run the aerator over the winter months.

English Lake reports that the lake was much cleaner this year than it has been in the past. Credit was given to the construction of the detention basin which is helping to stop runoff from directly entering the lake. They are continually investigating ways to help clean up their lake. However, a few muskrats from the lake have moved up to the basin where they are burrowing into the dike. The concern is the rush of water down to the pond if they dig through the dike. Trapping is being done in season to help reduce the muskrat population.

The lawn at the boat landing continues to get mowed right to the water's edge even though we have requested that the grass be allowed to grow to provide a valuable buffer along the lake. We will continue to debate this issue as well as educate lakefront property owners on the benefits of natural shorelines.

Hartlaub Lake had a fine 1999 and is moving toward improvements in 2000! There were a few light algae blooms which lasted only a few days, and clarity averaged six feet. Bass are becoming a dominant species replacing northern in just the past year. The 22-inch northens of last winter have almost disappeared even though the lake association posted a size limit sign and most fishermen returned fish.

Plans for 2000 include a cleanup day, moving towards a sediment pond, a comprehensive plan to reduce carp population, and hopefully, an additional fish weir.

The pond is critical to eliminate 40 tons of sediment dumping into the lake annually. Verbal approval to proceed was given by one landowner. The next step is for Tom Ward of the SWCD to determine if the pond could extend onto the adjacent landowners' property. Grant dollars are being requested to help make this project a reality.

Hartlaub Lake Association thanked all the government agencies and departments who have helped over the past years and look for great things in the future.

Pigeon Lake outlined their ongoing projects as follows:

- A. Boat Landing Cleanup – The public access shore area is cleaned up and weeds are cut and removed twice yearly.
- B. Adopt-a-Road – County "F" from Lange to Markham roads and Pigeon Lake Road from County "C" to "F" are picked up three times per year.
- C. Purple Loosestrife – Through a DNR permit, chemicals are sprayed on this plant which grows extensively on the shores of Little Pigeon, as well as being pulled and dug from the shoreline. On unreachable areas of plant infestation, beetle stock have been released.
- D. Camp Sinawa – Because the camp plays such a major role on Pigeon Lake, members volunteer services at the Camp's Family Day, the Corn Roast Stand at the County Fair, and other events.
- E. Christmas at Sinawa – Members provide a hot dog, popcorn and soda stand with total profits returned to Camp Sinawa.
- F. Partnership with the Pigeon Lake Sportsman group working together to protect the lake.

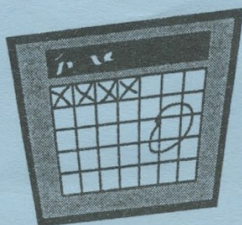
Ever mindful of lake user concerns, lake/water quality, etc., the following has been adopted: *"The purpose of this association shall be to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural beauty of the Pigeon Lake area and to promote sound lake use and development practices. The Association shall support state, county, and local zoning ordinances and administrative codes which are consistent with accomplishing its purposes, and shall cooperate with other groups with similar interests. The Association will seek and utilize resources and aids which may be available at federal, state, county, or private levels to assist it in accomplishing its objectives."*

As of mid-December, the **West Twin River** is a disturbing sight. One mile down river from Shoto, the usually full-flowing, vibrant river lies torpid. At this point, the water's edge is almost 30 feet from the grassy bank. A little to the west lay a half-acre of huge and smaller rocks which have never before been visible in a lifetime. Earlier in the fall, a sturdy crop of purple loosestrife bloomed out of the mud. One or two sunken saw logs now protrude, reminiscent of an 1800's sawmill. Deer and 'coon tracks make an overall pattern in the mud. Not even once a day does a small boat appear with a hunter or fisherman. One trapper in the cattail marsh bagged one muskrat.

We hope for an increase in rainfall in the New Year to help restore Lake Michigan water levels.

Agenda Set for Lakes Association Meeting

Date: January 18, 2000
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Manitowoc County
 Office Complex, Room 100



1. Report on survey results and Board actions.
2. Shoreland zoning change recommendations - Report from Advisory Committee.
3. Announcement and finalization of plans for the "Shoreland Landscaping Workshop for County Residents".
4. Membership Report
5. Nominations for vacant seat on the Board of Directors.
6. Ideas for future projects of the Association.

Shoreland Landscaping Workshop for County Residents

Plans are being finalized for the "*Shoreland Landscaping Workshop*" to be held in March, 2000.

Discover how to build a link between the worlds of water and land. (Does your property provide a healthy transition between the two?)

Master Gardeners and your County Lakes Association are inviting experts who will help you. Learn about:

- ▶ Guidelines for living on shorelines, such as:
 - rules of ownership;
 - shoreland zoning;
 - permits;
 - erosion control.
- ▶ Benefits of shoreland restoration.
- ▶ How to landscape your own property (will include private and public plantings).

Watch for a special February mailing with more details and registration information.

The "Nitty Gritty Details" – *A Summarization of the Lake Association's Survey*

Sixty-three percent of respondents felt that **there were too many watercraft on their lakes**; and 56% agreed that **there are safety problems as a result**. Almost all of the excessive traffic is on **weekends and holidays**.

In 62% of responses, **public access users** were listed as **the major problem**. This would indicate that some public relations work/education might be in order in this area.

The **safety enforcement** issue was split down the middle, with half of the respondents indicating the weekend and holiday enforcement was inadequate. By far, **jet ski** activity was voted as the most dangerous in the **safety hazard category**. It was the only activity with a significant number of (81%) of 'most dangerous' ratings.

The bottom line on **amending State law** was 48% against and 52% in favor. It is significant to note that residents of lakes greater than 50 acres were opposed 54% to 46% to new legislation in this area.

In generalizing, it is worth repeating that current law requires a 50 or more acre lake for fast boating and jet skiing. Lakes with less than 50 acres allow boating with slow or no wake. Recent law requires a distance of 100 feet from the shoreline for boating and 200 feet for jet skiing, thus effectively reducing the acreage of "useable water" for those activities.

Things to consider:

- ☛ *In Wisconsin, the lakes belong to everyone and the public has free access.*
- ☛ *Lakes are under increasing pressure from both residential and non-resident users.*
- ☛ *Lake user conflicts can be reduced if there is more educational information.*
- ☛ *Some types of boating activities require lakes with larger acreages.*
- ☛ *The effect of the current law change has reduced the useable water on many small lakes to half or little more than half the full lake size.*

When many of the boating regulations were written, we did not have the boats and boating activities that we now have. Changes may need to be considered. ☉



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Manitowoc County Lakes Association Newsletter



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