

MANITOWOC COUNTY LAKES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

2026 EDITION

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Letter from our President

Greetings to all that are reading this 2026 Manitowoc County Lakes Association (MCLA) newsletter,

As always, should you have an appropriate article you would like to submit for our next newsletter, please feel free to contact us about it through our website (manitowoccountylakesassociation.org).

In our 2025 MCLA newsletter, I mentioned that that my wife and I had become partial snowbirds and we go south for some portion (usually 6 to 8 weeks) of the upper mid-western winter to escape what we now consider the worst part of the winter months. Our travels take us through many parts of our wonderful United States and as much as I enjoy northeast Wisconsin, there are many other gorgeous areas of this country that I hope everyone has the opportunity to see. While we spend a significant amount of time in Arizona where dust is about as abundant as snow is in Wisconsin, we have also seen much of the gulf coast coastline in FL, AL, MS, LA, and TX. They all share the same body of water but they each have their own identities. One thing that does stand out to me is the cleanliness in and around our Wisconsin highway and road system as compared to some of these other states. I would attribute this to all of the various adopt a highway volunteer organizations and individuals in Wisconsin as compared to the other states. That statement is based merely on the number of adopt a highway signs that I see here versus other states. Thank you to anyone that contributes to the success of keeping our Wisconsin roadways clean. If you have a roadway area in Manitowoc County that you would like to adopt, please contact:

Mark Janke

Wisconsin Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

DOTAdoptAHighwayNE@dot.wi.gov

920-362-6029

A few days after arriving in Arizona I was informed by Brett Hubbart on Silver Lake of the possible winter fish kill that was happening in Silver Lake. Kudos to Brett for reporting something as quickly as he did and then for all of the individuals that met with DNR personnel Jason Breeggemann and Claire Hetzel to investigate the issue. While a root cause has not yet been determined, results of water testing immediately following the report determined that an E.coli outbreak due to an acute spill or discharge event is not the cause. More to come as the DNR finishes their investigation.

This year our return trip from Arizona to Wisconsin took us to Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon National Park in southwestern Utah as well as a couple days in Steamboat Springs Colorado. All have wonderful things to see and do. The effects of water throughout history carving out magnificent landscapes are evident and our National Park system does a fantastic job in documenting and preserving this history for future generations. One highlight that I did not think of when we made our plans to go to Bryce Canyon was an unencumbered view of the night sky. This was actually suggested to us by the check in staff at our hotel. I feel we still have a fairly good view of the night sky at Wilke Lake even though light pollution has caused it to diminish since I first viewed it in about 1975. However, the comparison from Bryce Canyon to Wilke Lake is astounding. With an average pair of binoculars I could see comets and constellations that I had never seen before. I hope that this area in western Utah is preserved from light pollution for many years to come.

So going forward, keep America beautiful from all types of pollution and do your part in keeping it that way.

Respectfully,

Jerry Corfman

President – MCLA

2025 MCLA Banquet Held at Viking Bow & Gun Club



From left are: Jerry Corfman, Mike Strebe Mary Ann Waldbauer.

As a graduate of the Lake Leaders Program and President of the Schleswig Sanitary District No. 1, Mike was instrumental in advancing a local ordinance to ban phosphorus fertilizers-precending the statewide ban. He was overseen the weed harvesting program at Cedar Lake, serving both as a mechanic and operator. His commitment to addressing complex and often contentious lake management issues through diligent research a deep dedication to environmental stewardship.

Meeting Scheduled for 2027

In 2027, The Manitowoc County Lakes Association will host five meetings in Room 300 of the Manitowoc County Office Complex located at 4319 Expo Drive. The tentative dates are listed below. Any changes in these dates will be communicated on our website <http://manitowoccountylakesassociation.org/>. These 5 dates are Thursdays, and all meetings will start promptly at 6:30 PM.

February 25
April 22
June 24
August 26
November 18



From left is Brett Hubbartt and Vince Miller.

Without being asked, for the last 19 years from the time the ice goes out until it freezes the next winter, on a daily basis Vince has been clearing various impediments from the Silver Lake overflow discharge gates. His ongoing passion and dedication exemplify what a volunteer should aspire to be!

Raffle item for 2026 MCLA Banquet. An 11 Foot Acrylic Canoe / kayak, donated by John Durbrow.



Phil DeCastro, Fox 11 Severe Weather Center,

This past October, I had the opportunity to join the Manitowoc County Lakes Association at your annual banquet and speak about our ever-evolving climate and its impact on our lakes, both large and small.

There might not seem like there is much in common between the inland lakes of Manitowoc County and our great neighbor to the east, Lake Michigan. Despite their massive differences in scale, though, they are both deeply connected to our weather year in and year out as well as the changes and swings of our seasons. Both your lakes and the Great Lakes depend primarily (though not exclusively, as some inland lakes are fed by streams) on precipitation and runoff to maintain their levels. And in just the last few years, we saw a dramatic example of the swings that a shifting climate can have on our environment.

Going back to the late 1990s and into the 2010s, water levels on the basin ran below average for the better part of 20 years. The concerns became whether this was a new normal, and whether we would ever see levels rise back to their historical averages.

Then, the winters of 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 happened. These two winters, back to back, were brutally cold. In particular, the winter of 2013/14 was the second-coldest on record in Green Bay. These two winters left a lasting impact on the waters of Lake Michigan. For four straight years following those two winters, the average temperature of Lake Michigan decreased. Lower water temperatures mean less evaporation; less evaporation means less water



leaving the system. And right as temperatures were bottoming out, we saw two remarkably wet years back-to-back. 2018 was the wettest year on record in Green Bay, a mark that was broken literally the very next year in 2019.

Cool water. Low evaporation. Record precipitation. Put it together, and Lake Michigan rose rapidly. It set records in 2020 and lake levels remained high into 2021.

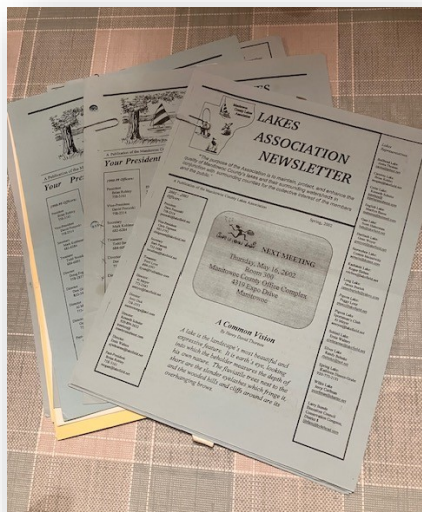
But it would be short-lived. Precipitation returned to more normal amounts. 8 out of 10 winters following 2014/15 were warmer than average, and 7 out of 10 falls were warmer than average including 4 of the warmest 6 on record. Warmer water results in more evaporation, and warmer falls and winters mean less ice to curb that evaporation. Now, water levels on Lake Michigan are once again below their long-term average after just a few short years.

These swings in weather impact inland lakes too, even if the levels aren't as dramatically affected. Less ice and ice of lower quality means fewer days to enjoy ice fishing or ice skating. On the flip side, longer periods of open water could mean longer recreation seasons in the warmer months.

Our lakes and our fresh water are one of our most precious resources, and we are immensely lucky to have such incredible access to so many of these little slices of paradise. Humans are unique in the animal kingdom in our adaptability, and it will be up to us to ensure our environment can continue to thrive for the generations that will follow us.

Past newsletters now being posted on our Website

Believe it or not, throughout the years, I have never kept a copy of a newsletter for myself. Realizing this, I went through boxes and folders of paperwork and found as many copies of past newsletters as I could find, and sent them to Amy Pace (our Webmaster). Amy is now scanning them page by page, and them entering them onto our website. So in your leisure, please check out our website, and take a look. There will be a lot of history entered here, as some years we had as many as three newsletters. This is a huge job for Amy, and we thank her for it.



Local Conservation Organization of the Year: Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association



Terri Roerig (left), president of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, helps Dan Dufek, president of the Manitowoc County Fish & Game Protective Association, with the Local Conservation Organization of the Year Award, with Cody Kamrowski, executive director of the WWF, at right.

For more than a century, the **Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association** has been a pillar of conversation, advocacy, and community engagement in Wisconsin. Founded in 1907, it is among the oldest conservation organization organizations in the United States, grounded in its mission: “Conservation and Education Today for Tomorrow’s Sportsman.”

Comprised of 23 affiliated clubs, the organization brings a strong, unified voice to conservation and sporting traditions in the region, whether advocacy for sound policy, protecting access, or investing in habitat and education, the Manitowoc County Fish and Game consistently delivers results. Their impact is both broad and tangible. The organization has helped and maintain public access to 19 county lakes and Lake Michigan, improve piers and accessibility, and supported habitat and lake improvement projects. Their commitment is further demonstrated through the purchase of nearly 450 acres of land for conservation and outdoor recreation.

Equally important is their investment in the next generation, through youth programming-including hunting education, scholarships, shooting sports, archery, and fishing mentorship-they ensure Wisconsin outdoor heritage continues to thrive. Their support also extends to local schools, colleges, and statewide initiatives, alongside significant funding for public conservation projects.

For their enduring leadership and commitment to conservation over 100 years the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation proudly recognizes them as the Local Conservation Organization of the Year.

Summery of our Banquet

The 2025 Manitowoc County Lakes Association (MCLA) annual banquet and meeting was held on October 11th, 2025 at the Viking Bow and Gun Club outside of Valders, WI. It was attended by roughly 60 people and the attendees were treated to an excellent meal catered by the Altona Supper Club. The speaker for the event was Meteorologist Phil DeCastro from WLUK TV 11 in Green Bay. Phil provided us with an explanation of the effect that Lake Michigan has on our local weather in Manitowoc County. He then answered other weather related questions from the audience. Lake Stewardship awards were announced for Mike Strebe of Cedar Lake and Vince Miller of Silver Lake for their many years of service to each of their local communities. A 50/50 raffle raised a total of \$292 for MCLA with winner Dave Pozorski graciously donating his entire winning share back to MCLA. In addition, a combine raffle drawing consisting of various donations from MCLA members and/or community organizations and businesses was won by Pam Corfman and that raffle raised an additional \$350 for the organization. Thank you to the English Lake Association and Kim Braun for volunteering as host and then helping with the planning of the 2025 event. Plans for the 2026 event are already underway with our co-host associations of the Cedar Lake Improvement Association and the Town of Schleswig Sanitary District #1. The 2026 annual banquet/meeting will take place at Autumn Ridge Golf Course on October 17th, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Corfman

Conservation Leader George Meyer Passes

by
Tom Ward, MCLA past President & Life Member



George Meyer,
former
Dept. of Natural Resources
secretary and past executive
director of the Wisconsin
Wildlife Federation (WWF),
passed away last December
10, 2025. Meyer 78, waged a
long battle with cancer.
Meyer was fiercely proud of
the DNR and

Wisconsin's legacy of pro-
tecting its natural Resources.

He was tenacious, aggressively combating actions that could pollute surface and groundwater. I personally new George during his time as DNR Secretary while I was director of Manitowoc County's Soil & Water Conservation Department.

In October of 2019 George was our guest speaker for the fall MCLA banquet. At that time, he was executive director of the WWF. He highlighted growing problems with lake water quality. He stated while Federal and State programs reduced pollution from industry and sewer treatment plants, runoff from farms and streets continue to contaminate ground and surface water. At the time he felt it was technically and physically impossible to reach water quality Standards and that state needed stricter requirements to reduce phosphorus and nitrate runoff from farms. At the time farmers were being required to develop nutrient management plans which identified how much they can apply to the land and how and when they are applied. At the time of his presentation only 37% of farmers had a nutrient plan and many were not following them.

Have we made progress since 2019? I think we have, Manitowoc County passed one of the States strictest Manure Management Ordinances and started licensing all expanding livestock operations, helping to bring them in compliance with nutrient management standards. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) have been established for many of our watersheds which helps to quantify what needs to be done to meet water quality standards for a given water body. I am impressed and hopeful the newly formed Farmer led watershed groups that are being formed in Manitowoc County will offer a opportunity to identify creative ways to reduce runoff. I was a believer that if a farmer understands how runoff occurs and its risks from large storms or events, their ingenuity will come up with

better and more inclusive means to solve the runoff problem.

However, as I write this article the Manitowoc County Manitowoc County Land Conservation committee had proposed doing away with a requirement for Licensed livestock operations to sign a Land Verification form that identifies the number of fields to adequately apply their total waste disposal for a 5 year period. This written agreement is crucial for establishing mutual understanding and commitment between both parties, and it also assures the public of accountability, especially when monitoring compliance is very challenging.

George spent 30 years with DNR as an attorney and later Secretary to help clean up the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers when the river contained carp and no game fish. Mercury and sulfur rendered no fish fit to eat. After retiring from DNR in 2002 he served as Director of Wildlife Federation from 2003 until 2021.

He was a strong advocate of the citizen Natural Resource Board which advised DNR, giving power to individual citizens to have input on water and resource decisions. To alert citizens of legislative shenanigans in Madison he built the membership of WWF from 79 clubs to 200 conservation clubs in Wisconsin. The Manitowoc County Fish & Game Protective Association has been a strong member of the federation. MCLA was also formed under this model to give all lakes in the County regardless of size to have voice in protecting our resources. Meyer disliked Wisconsin's political landscape stating "Our legislature answers to only one thing and that's economic interests represented by multiple special interest lobbyists.

George Meyer with many more achievements than I have space to contribute, certainly earned him a pedestal in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame.

Photo Contest

Members only

For the front page of our newsletter

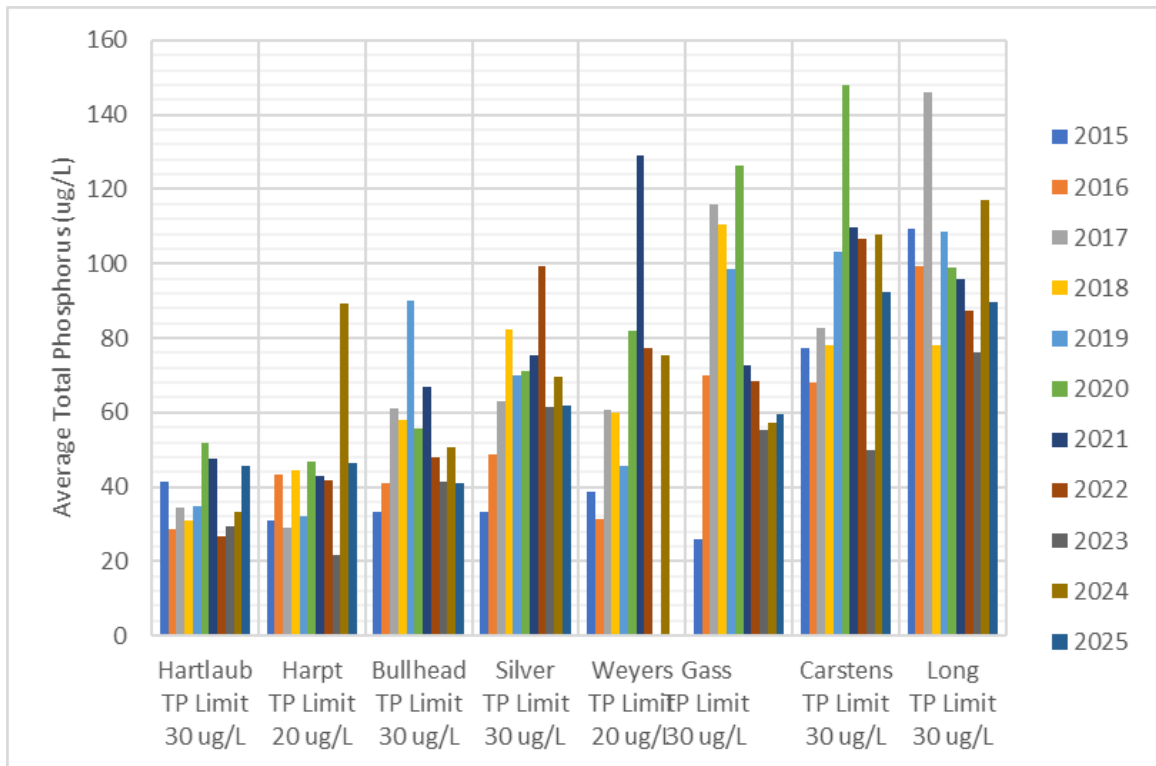
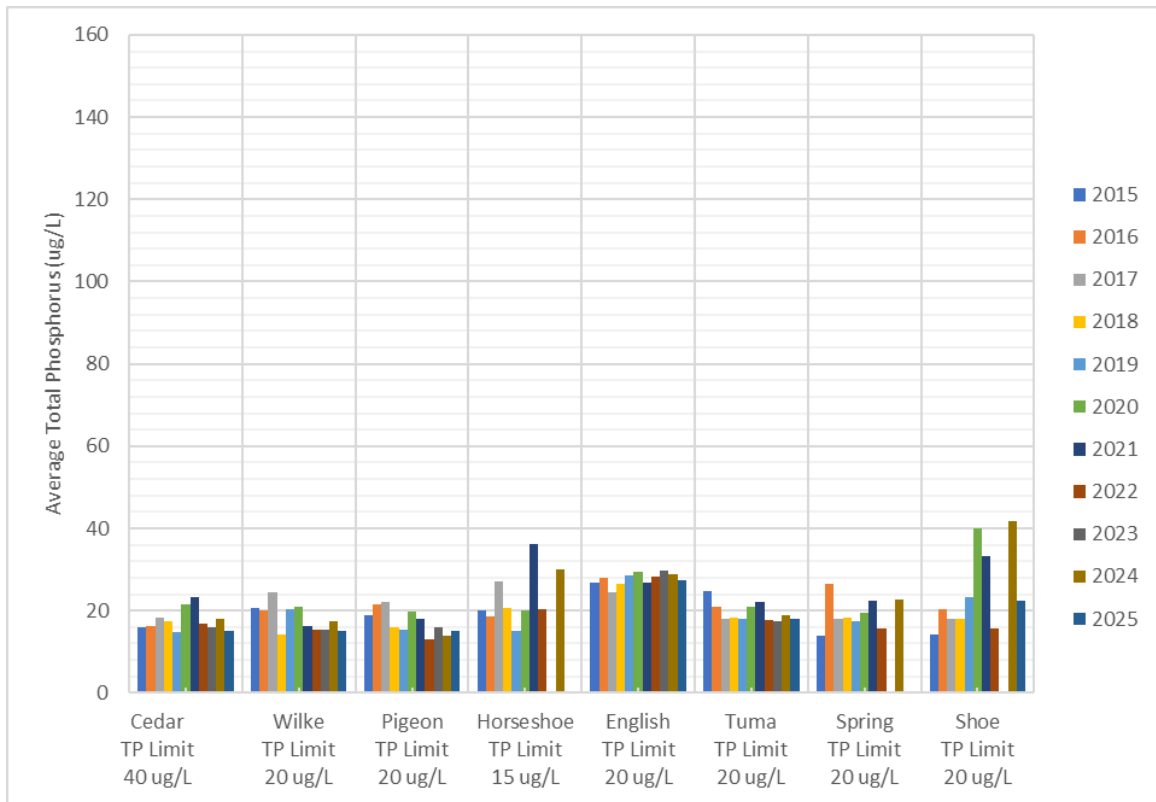
Winner will be chosen by the board

Will win

One year membership

\$20 gift certificate to Kwik Trip

2025, 10 Year Phosphorus Data on our Counties Lakes



We would like to thank our water testing volunteers listed below for a job well done:

Robert Sengbusch, Pat Kohlman, Brian Robley, Scott Otterson, Fred Van Serke, John Lambert, Marlene Rezek, Gene Weyer, Jake Devine, Chad Wendt, Dave Koplin, Fred Ruszkjiewicz and Jaret Paltzer.

Phosphorous graphs provided by Eric Oppermann of the Soil and Water department.

Guest Editorial by past MCLA President Tom Ward

Let me introduce myself; in 1997 I helped found the County Lakes Association with the help of a small group of conservationists. A crisis pushed us into action when DNR refused to operate the aerators on Carstens and Weyers Lake. We turned to the County Fish & Game Protective Association to take on the responsibility, but because they owned significant amount of property, they did not want to assume the liability. Rather than see these lakes die we quickly organized the non-profit MCLA and purchased liability insurance. We later realized the value of being able to represent smaller lakes with out associations, to provide project grants and a platform to encourage idea sharing between all the lake residents and include sportsman and lake recreation users.

For 24 years I served as an advisor to MCLA, implemented grants and later became the aquatic invasive species specialist for MCLA. Eventually assumed the role of MCLA President until 2021 when I sold my home in the County to retire and move to my home farm near Amherst Junction. At that time, I handed the ball to your current President Jerry Corfman. Jerry had been with MCLA for many years in various roles but was busy with his job. The timing was right as he had recently retired and was able to carry the ball and is currently doing a great job.

This fall when I received the beautiful color newsletter filled with comprehensive articles, discussion of controversial topics, important guest speakers, and continuation of many past activities I was extremely gratified to see that MCLA is alive and well. The newsletter takes a lot of effort from folks to contribute, photography and expense to produce hard copy. I know it's cheaper to produce electronic versions but due to the public's attention span on a computer or phone and failure to return and finish reading I doubt electronics' effectiveness. The hard copy can be shared with guests, family members, neighbors and referenced at a later date. Dave Pozorski editor over the years and Fricke printing for supporting the newsletter effort deserve to be recognized.

Jerry's letter from the President was very well written and thought provoking (NIMBY principle) at a time when there is so much political division and solutions can be had with cooperation and discussion. The Banquet is always a job to get a sponsor and put together but it offers a chance to recognize conservation heroes and bring people together in a social atmosphere (take beautiful pictures).

Comprehensive presentations are so important to elevate our understanding of watershed and lake issues. The

Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative story of farmers and corporate sponsors organizing to solve watershed runoff impacts by problem solving measures to reduce or mitigate the negative effects of climate change. I was a believer that if a farmer understands how runoff occurs and its risks from large storms or events, their ingenuity will come up with better and more inclusive means to solve the runoff problem.

It's always been difficult for a diverse organization of membership like MCLA to take positions that get political in nature. Like the country song lyrics say, "You've Got to Stand Up for Something", the position on Hazardous Wake Size Resolution and educational efforts on the subject is to be commended.

Gene Weyers leadership to establish a comprehensive phosphorus lake monitoring system was the first of a kind. The long-term monitoring data provides a significant trend analysis of individual lake health. Data has shown significant spikes of phosphorus runoff from sever rain events common in wet years. The data was important on Carstens lake to demonstrate that just applying best management practices was not enough and more drastic measures were needed. We also need to thank the many volunteers needed to collect the data.

I am pleased to see the Lake representative system is working to report to the Association and take back information to their respective lake. This can only work with active dedicated volunteers willing to pull themselves away from the TV and become involved. The viable Lake reports in the newsletter demonstrate that commitment.

If you haven't read your fall newsletter please do and support MCLAs efforts. I am proud to have left the organization in good hands. I currently live on my private lake and it's nice to have no controversy with myself. I am working with neighboring Lake Emily Association here in Portage County. I was able to get their officers to attend Lakes Conference, which is only ten miles away, incorporate as a legal lake association, and helping them conduct invasive species survey. Maybe this year I will get time to fish.

Reflections

"When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

— Wendell Berry The Peace of Wild Thin

The Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute

Sara Windjue, Extension Lakes, UW-Stevens Point



The Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute is a leadership program that enhances the skills and broadens the capabilities of people in our lake communities to champion effective and communicative collaboration with the goal of protecting and managing our lakes. The core curriculum is delivered every other year and held during even numbered years. There are three focused seminars that are used as the backdrop of the training.

Seminar 1 – Society and Environment: During this first seminar held in May, the participants begin to meet the program facilitators and start to identify people for their future lake network. They are also exposed to grass-root level lake projects and activities used as case studies to illustrate the types of future lake stewardship they may want to participate in for their own lake communities.

Seminar 2 – Aquatic Ecology and Watershed Management – The second seminar is typically held in mid-September and provides an opportunity for crew members to enhance their knowledge of aquatic ecosystems, lake ecology, and human impacts to lakes. The session includes on-the-water stations designed to illustrate elements of lake management and aquatic ecology. Lakeshore development is discussed within a watershed framework and according to assorted lake types and characteristics.

Seminar 3 – Organizations, People, Politics – The

final two-day seminar of the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute is typically held in mid-October and pulls together how organizations and people can work together on a political front. Strategies for effective citizen advocacy are reviewed, as are basic civic ideas related to advocacy at the local, county, and state levels. A historical perspective and case study storyline is presented of the foundational concept to Wisconsin water law known as the Public Trust Doctrine.

Each session lasts for two days and are typically held at retreat type centers in lake-rich areas around the state. During each session, participants take field trips, enjoy lake and aquatic environments, exchange ideas and network with each other and presenters, and develop friendships with go-to colleagues for future lake work. The Institute seminars are designed to stretch the minds of people. We explore new ideas about lakes and the management of human use of lakes. Along the way we have fun too.

The community of Wisconsin Lake Leaders is now nearing 400 individuals. Interested in joining us? Consider nominating yourself or someone else for Crew 17 in 2028. The nomination period will open in the fall of 2027.

Visit www.uwsp.edu/lakes and click on Lake Leaders for more information.

Q&A

Our lake district's board of commissioners needs to hold a meeting in between our normal board meetings. Can we do that?

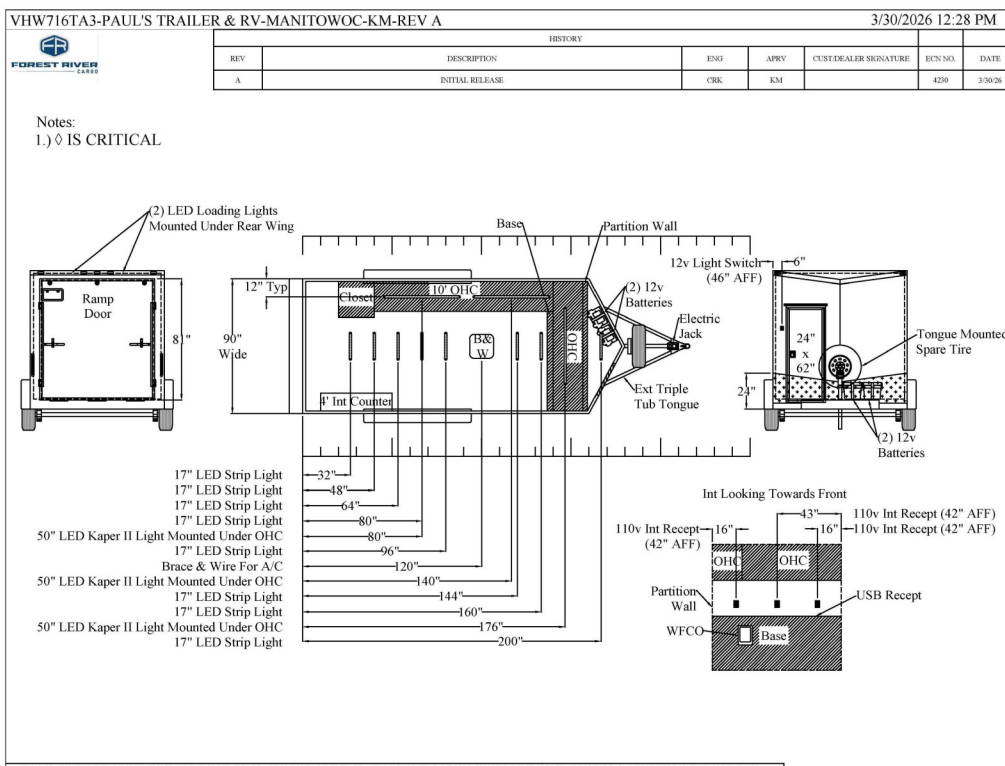
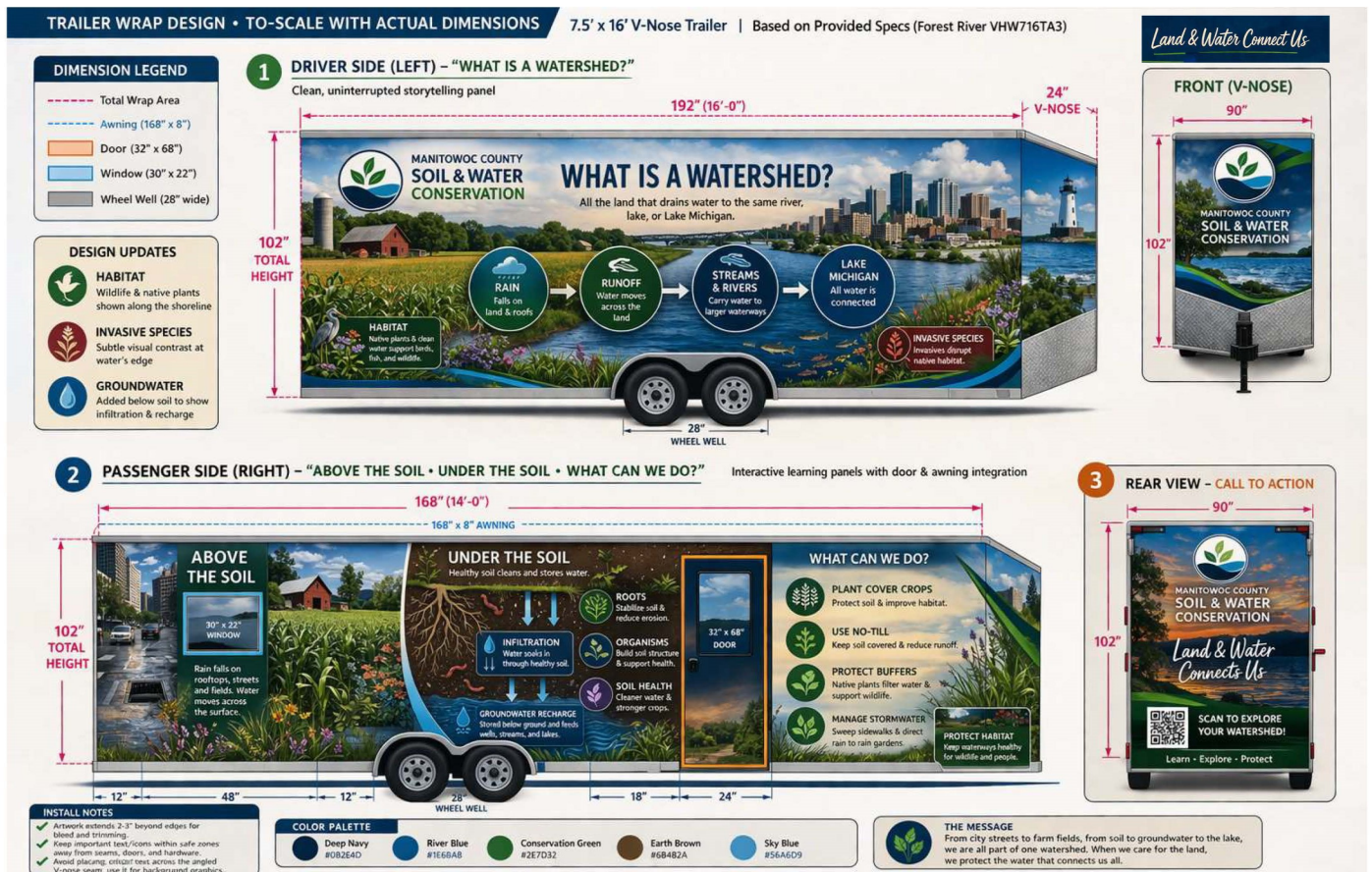
A. The board of commissioners is the governing body for the lake district's day-to-day affairs.

It's understandable that unexpected decision items may arise in between regularly scheduled meetings. The board can meet additional times if needed. Chapter 33.28 (6) states: "The board shall meet at least quarterly, and at other times on the call of the chairperson or the petition of 3 of the members." So, either the chair would call for an additional board meeting, or three other members of the board would request a meeting to the chair. In practical terms, this means that one or two members of the board can't make a meeting happen unless they have the agreement of the chairperson. Any meeting of a lake district board is a public meeting and

Wisconsin's Open Meeting Laws must be followed. This includes a notice requirement: someone needs to physically post a printed notice of the meeting and its agenda in three locations likely to be seen by the general public 24 hours or more before the meeting begins. The meeting also must be held in a location accessible to the public. This past April, Philip Forsberg and Daniel Foth from the UW Madison Division of Extension's Local Government Center gave a presentation on Wisconsin Open Meetings Law as part of our online Lakes and Rivers Convention. You can find a video of their presentation, a copy of their slides, and a link to the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Factsheet in the 2020 Convention Archives located in the EVENTS box on the Extension Lakes website at uwsp.edu/uwexlakes.

For more information on lake districts, see People of the Lakes: A Guide for Wisconsin Lake Organizations, at <https://>

"Land & Water Connect Us" Mobile Learning Lab



Land & Water Connect Us

Equipment List:

- (10) Tabletop Rainfall Simulators
- (10) Slake Test Tubes
- (1) Watershed Model
- (10) Shovels
- (10) Soil Health Field Kits
- (1) Microscope
- (3) Rakes
- (4) Soil Probes
- (1) Soil Compaction Probes
- (1) Net
- Secchi Disks
- (2) Groundwater Models
- (3-5) VR Headsets (by summer)
- Ready-Made Lesson Plans (by summer)



Jerry Corfman presenting Dave Wetenkamp with MCLA's donation check for \$1000.

Thank you again to everyone associated with the Manitowoc County Lakes Association for the generous \$1,000 donation—we truly appreciate your support and enthusiasm for this project.

The **“Land & Water Connect Us” Mobile Learning Lab** is designed as a traveling, hands-on education experience that connects people to the relationship between land, water, and agriculture in Manitowoc County. The trailer will be used at schools, community events, the County Fair,

Breakfast on the Farm, and all conservation-focused outreach efforts to engage residents of all ages.

In addition to the large-scale educational trailer wrap, the lab will include interactive equipment such as soil health kits, water quality monitoring tools, watershed models, and eventually a virtual reality farm experience that allows participants to see conservation practices in action.

Your donation will directly support both the completion of the trailer wrap and the purchase of hands-on field equipment, including waders, nets, and water quality monitoring tools for education and AIS. These resources will allow participants to actively explore local waterways and better understand aquatic ecosystems, habitat, and conservation practices.

We're excited to incorporate these tools into programming and appreciate MCLA's role in helping make this a more interactive and impactful experience for our community.

Thank you again for your support.
Tara Wachowski
Education & Grants Manager
Manitowoc County Soil & Water Conservation Department

Manitowoc County launch tube donation came to a total grand of **\$19,133.55** for the 2025 season. The money collected is used for maintenance of all Manitowoc County launch facilities and helps offset costs for new piers, restrooms, paving and signage. We would like to thank Pete Tarnowski and the Manitowoc Planning and Zoning for keeping these numbers for us. Department keeps track of these totals for us.

2025	Day Pass		Seasonal Pass		General Donation	
	Count #	Amount	Count #	Amount	Count #	Amount
Bullhead Lake	127	\$630.00	22	\$440.00	14	\$104.25
Carsten's Lake	32	\$160.00	20	\$400.00	5	\$19.00
Cedar Lake	395	\$1,977.10	106	\$2,100.00	26	\$257.93
English Lake	111	\$629.00	21	\$420.00	10	\$56.81
Harpt's Lake	103	\$515.00	22	\$380.00	9	\$57.80
Horseshoe Lake	55	\$275.00	36	\$720.00	8	\$56.00
Long Lake	584	\$2,915.25	130	\$2,565.00	40	\$231.53
Pigeon Lake	98	\$490.00	31	\$620.00	8	\$28.95
Silver Lake	38	\$190.00	10	\$200.00	4	\$19.00
West Twin	63	\$315.00	12	\$224.00	8	\$71.15
Wilke Lake	50	\$250.00	24	\$480.00	5	\$35.78
Walk In	0	\$0.00	65	\$1,300.00	0	\$0.00
Total	1656	\$8,346.35	499	\$9,849.00	137	\$938.20

Gass Lake Sediment Study of 2024 by Pete Puleo



Left: Aidan Burdick, Center: Pete Puleo, Top-Middle: David Drinko, Top-Right: Wes Scott

One part of the sediment coring project at Gass Lake that began in 2024 has been completed and is about to be submitted to an academic journal for publication. The research team consists of Pete Puleo (assistant professor at UW-Whitewater), David Drinko (graduate student at The Ohio State University), Aidan Burdick (graduate student at Northwestern University), Yarrow Axford (professor at Northwestern University), and Wes Scott (former research assistant professor at Northwestern University). The goals of this project were to 1) identify the sources of sediments entering Gass Lake in Newton, WI and how they relate to changes in the area during and after European settlement and 2) determine how and why the aquatic productivity of Gass Lake changed over the past ~200 years.

To accomplish these goals, the research team collected a short (~3 foot) sediment core from the deepest part of Gass Lake (~23 feet) in June 2024. They then used two different methods, ^{210}Pb and radiocarbon dating, to determine the age of the sediments. This age determination enabled comparing changes to sediment characteristics to historical events in the area associated with European settlement. Some important sediment characteristics that were measured for the study included X-ray fluorescence and magnetic susceptibility, which helped distinguish organic vs. rock/mineral inputs to the lake (Research Goal 1). To reconstruct productivity and shifts to terrestrial vs. aquatic organic matter sources (Research Goal 2), the team measured total organic carbon, total nitrogen, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values of sediments.

The team found that the sediment core could be broken into three distinct units based on sediment characteristics like color, X-ray fluorescence, and magnetic susceptibility. Unit C (~1840-1874 CE), the lowermost and oldest unit, was composed of uniformly brown/black sediments with a fine-grained texture. It had low values of titanium and magnetic susceptibility, indicating there was a small amount of mineral matter in the sediment of this unit.

Unit B (~1874-1937 CE) just above, however, had mix of brown/black sediments and episodic layers of tan sediments with high titanium and magnetic susceptibility values, indicating they were rich in mineral matter. The rate of sediments entering Gass Lake at this time (late 1800s and early 1900s) was also much higher than before or after. Finally, Unit A (~1937-2024 CE) returned to consistent brown/black sediments with low values of titanium and magnetic susceptibility.

Based on these findings, the team concluded that from ~1873-1937 CE, large and rapid inputs of soil eroding from the surrounding landscape entered Gass Lake. They suspect the driver of soil erosion was from a combination of deforestation and agriculture in the area during European settlement from a mix of winds and runoff. This timing is roughly consistent with historical records, which suggested agriculture became dominant over the logging industry for Manitowoc County in 1865 CE and that the town of Newton was established in 1850 CE. Additionally, a particularly thick layer of tan sediments in the sediment core corresponds to the timing of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. The team ruled out the nearby gravel pit as a potential source of the tan sediments since it began operation after the tan sediments stopped entering the lake. The team thinks the end of episodic severe soil erosion into the lake after 1937 CE was caused by a reduction of agricultural land and/or enhanced soil conservation practices in the area following the establishment of the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1935 CE.

The team believes that rates of aquatic primary production in Gass Lake were likely lowest in the earliest part of the record before major European settlement (~1840-1874 CE) and highest in the middle of the record during the period of episodic tan sediment deposition from regional soil erosion which also brought nutrients to the lake (~1874-1937 CE). The most recent part of the record (1937-2024 CE) saw intermediate aquatic productivity, elevated relative to the pre-European settlement period but reduced compared with the initial European settlement period. Since water quality monitoring of Gass Lake began in 1976 CE, the lake has been classified as eutrophic (quite productive). The research team thinks that Gass Lake may have been mesotrophic (moderately productive) in its pre-European state until 1874 CE and hypereutrophic (extremely productive) at some times between ~1874-1937 CE. These inferences are based on changes to organic sediment geochemistry, including C/N ratios indicating relative inputs of aquatic vs. terrestrial sources of organic matter, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values primarily reflecting rates of aquatic primary productivity at this site, and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values potentially reflecting changes to input sources including fertilizers.

Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography,
Geology, and Environmental Science, UW-Whitewater,

County Lake Reports

Bullhead Lake Report

The Bullhead Lake District continues to work with Onterra, LLC to monitor phosphorus levels to try to determine the share of internal loading vs. external loading. To this end, the lake district submitted a surface water grant seeking funding for sample collections and analysis. Unfortunately, that study was not funded.

The question of adopting a 10 panfish aggregate limit on Bullhead Lake was generally supported by the questionnaires and individuals responding to the spring Conservation Congress surveys and those attending the meetings. It is anticipated that the new limits would go into effect in spring 2026.

An early spring fyke netting was performed but the report has not been released yet. We were told the capture was mostly northern pike.

The county put in a new, very nice fishing pier. It is receiving considerable use.

Cedar Lake

Two out of three Wisconsin citizens report using lakes each year. This means four to five million plus, use Wisconsin lakes each year. The state's lake resource has remained the same, about 970,000 acres of inland lakes. In the meantime, the number of lake users and the numbers of different types of activities continually increase.

From 1970 to 1990, the average horsepower of motors of Wisconsin residents increased from 10 hp to 55hp. The national average was about 100hp for this same time frame. Technology has changed dramatically since then and has become much more invasive on other users. In addition, the "me first" attitude of the last 30+ years has made all types of users more selfish and less tolerant of other users.

For every reported boating accident, there are probably thousands of cases of conflict that do not get reported. While the DNR (Department of Natural Resources), the NRB (Natural Resources Board), and the State Legislation have recognized that there are problems, they have failed to recognize that interpretation of laws must change to meet current social needs to preserve our lakes. The DNR has put the burden on local municipalities and said they should enact their own ordinances to deal with it. Education is important, but not sufficient by itself. Regulation will be necessary when the number of users increase, and technologies expand.

All lake water users should be safe, courteous and let

your legislators know your opinions on water activities.

As for Cedar Lake, we are feeling the effects of the above-mentioned advancement in water activities, having about 14 ballast type boats owned by riparian owners. Cedar Lake is the largest lake in Manitowoc County at just 136 acres with an average depth of only 9 feet. This is nowhere near the size and depth needed to use this type of boat that makes the 3-4' wave to surf on when fully loaded with up to 6000lbs of lake water. They then travel in a bow up manner at 12mph, which studies have shown to churn up the bottom down to 27'. Nutrients are stirred up and plant life uprooted damaging vegetation, releasing phosphorus, which causes algae blooms, and damaging the lake eco system.

Currently the Schleswig Town Board has sent an ordinance to regulate wake surfing and condition report to the DNR for their determination to make sure it doesn't violate any state laws. It has been ok'd by the DNR, so the next step is for the Town Board to vote at their September meeting whether to enact or decline the ordinance. This is the same situation the Village of Elkhart Lake is at now with their ordinance and condition report where they will soon decide whether to pass or decline the wake surfing regulation.

Crystal Lake, in the Town of Rhine, has had such an ordinance in place for 4 years with no tickets having been issued, only 1 warning given out. Long Lake in Manitowoc County has also had such an ordinance in place for some years. Lake Ellen in Sheboygan County also has such an ordinance in place for a few years. Fifty-Nine municipalities in the state covering over 300+ lakes also have such an ordinance, most of them with the help of the Last Wilderness Alliance. The LWA group said they plan on having an additional 50 municipalities on board by next summer.

To slow down the success of these statewide ordinances, the first lawsuit was filed in Burnett County in northwest Wis by wake surfers who own property on the Wis lake but reside in Texas and Florida. They want the price of their wake boats awarded to them because they can't use them for the purpose they bought them for. I believe they have less than a 1% chance of winning their lawsuit because the average depth of the almost 800-acre lake is only 6'!! Wake boat owners' manuals say to operate these boats in at least 20' of water for the best

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results. This is an effort to stop and intimidate municipalities from proceeding with passing wake surfing ordinances! LWA has already said this. A recent study by St. Anthon Falls research shows in a video how a surf boat destroys the bottom with every pass when in 9' and 14' of water. They say the boats should be in at least 20'.

A recent vote at the MCLA showed a 19 to 0 vote favoring a resolution to regulate boating. The Cedar Lake Improvement Assoc. did not vote because the president said it was too controversial. The lake Sanitary District, which is the only entity that can get grants for the lake, voted with the majority.

The Town of Schleswig Sanitary District (Cedar Lake) was one of only 6 grants in the state, awarded a whole lake grant of \$53,000 to treat the invasive Eurasian Water Milfoil. The early season application after a pretreatment survey was a huge success! No EWM has been found to date. This treatment should last 3-5 years with annual surveys and spot treatments if necessary. The harvester is running great and ready for the soon to be celery weed bogs which usually start popping up late summer.

Thank you,
Mike Strebe

Chairman, Town of Schleswig Sanitary District #1

English Lake

This past year has been a journey for our English Lake Association. We have partnered with Onterra to address the weed issue in our lake. Through surveys of the lake, we have a large problem with the hybrid milfoil as well as a limited diversity of our native plants. The surveys found there was a large population of primarily only four species of plants and three of them are invasive. A meeting with a volunteer stakeholder meeting on March 31 consisted of a presentation by Onterra and was attended by our local DNR representative. We reviewed the vegetation, ways to control them, properties of chemicals used for treatments, and probable timelines for addressing our vegetation issues. We were informed that English Lake has a unique substrate muck bottom that greatly reduces the effectiveness of chemicals used in the past. There is a concern by the committee of the health impact of various chemical treatments and its impact on the animals inhabiting our lake. It was determined by the stakeholder committee to not request a chemical treatment this year at the suggestion of the DNR and Onterra. We will

continue to monitor our lake to determine the course of action in the future. An issue for English Lake will be to address wave boats and their impact on our lake. Other lake associations in the county have already created ordinances to protect their lakes and they may be heading to our lake as a result.

Hartlaub Lake

Each year, Hartlaub Lake always provides something new and interesting. This past spring almost 100 White Pelicans visited the lake on a regular basis. White Pelicans were extremely rare in this part of the country just 5 years ago. The pelicans from Lake Michigan ride the early morning thermals, circle Hartlaub gracefully and then settle in shallow water for a breakfast of small fish. The full flock herds those small fish [panfish?] into a circle and then scoops them up with their big bills. They don't dive, they dip their bills. These are really big beautiful birds with snowy white wings tipped with black. Their wingspans are 8 – 9 feet. While it is entertaining to watch them it's impossible to know the damage they are causing to the fish population. After two weeks they fortunately moved on. We are looking forward to seeing them again next year. The entertainment is worth it.

Hartlaub has a group of kayakers that regularly fish the lake for "catch and release" bass. They say they love the quiet of the lake. As one guy told me, "Most folks go fishing all their lives without realizing it's not the fish they're after".

Long Lake

The Wisconsin DNR finalized a 2025 fishing study resulting in positive outcomes for Long lake. Most species were determined to be self-perpetuating, and the lake maintains an overall, favorable fishing habitat. Fishermen, kayakers, and paddle boarders have been enjoying the lake this spring.

We have had issues with Milfoil recently and continue to explore opportunities to lessen the impact. Water quality remains a high priority for lake residents.

The 4.5-acre county park located just off the northeast shore has been utilized for more outings recently. Hope to see more continued activity.

***“WATER IS LIFE’S MOST
ESSENTIAL ELEMENT.”***

Pigeon Lake

Maintaining the clean water of Pigeon Lake and promoting a vibrant lake community continues to be the focus of residents who live on or near Pigeon Lake.

Regular readings for water quality are done by a dedicated committee, and results continue to be very positive. The Pigeon Lake Association hired Onterra, LLC to do the Eurasian Water Milfoil mapping survey twice this summer to keep ahead of any infestations. In early summer, a small amount of EWM was found in its usual places. It was decided at that time to keep a close watch on it through the summer and hire a diver to remove any plants and roots as necessary. Another survey in August was scheduled. Since the whole lake treatment in the spring of 2017 to eradicate EWM, Onterra has been very pleased with the limited EWM found in Pigeon Lake.

In the fall, the PLA will participate in a Walleye Stocking Program, releasing about 2000 walleyes into the lake to promote good fishing in the future. In the spring, an unusually large number of napping turtles were spotted laying eggs along and near Pigeon Lake Road. We're hoping to see many little hatchlings near the end of summer.

In an effort to continue to support a healthy lake, the PLA worked closely with the DNR and the Town of Liberty Board to pass a Wake Boat Ordinance which prohibits the use of any artificial wake enhancement features on boats on Pigeon Lake. The Town Board voted to formally adopt the ordinance at their June meeting and the ordinance went into effect in time for the July 4th weekend.

Speaking of July 4th, this year was the 38th annual July 4 Boat Parade, held in the evening of the 4th, followed by an amazing Fireworks show. These two events are the highlight of summer activity on the lake. Other fun events during the year include the Spring Golf Outing held at Autumn Ridge, the Ladies of the Lake dinner also held at Autumn Ridge in August, a monthly Book Club group, daily morning walkers, and an ebike summer riding group.

Volunteers from the Pigeon Lake area help maintain our area and lend a hand wherever needed. In the spring, one crew cleaned the debris from the creek that runs between Little Pigeon and big Pigeon Lake. Another group pulled and dug weeds, then added mulch and flowers to the public area at the Boat Landing. Many volunteers work at Camp Sinawa during the year, helping in the kitchen for Fall Family Day and the Christmas at Sinawa events, collecting and cooking maple syrup in the

early spring, and many other events at camp.

Pigeon Lake residents are dedicated to keeping our lake and surrounding area healthy and a great place to live.

Silver Lake

As a recap, back in February, it was determined that there was a fish die-off. The DNR fish biologist and Water Resources Management Specialist were contacted, and they drilled several holes to check oxygen levels. At that time, it was determined that the levels were extremely low. Hence, since the die-off, fishing has been almost nonexistent. The DNR specialists will be attending our next district meeting to share their expertise on how to move forward.

Spring Lake

A small lake surrounded in woods, Spring Lake does not offer access to powerboats. The advantage may be the peace and serenity offered to anglers and kayakers.

As the summer progresses the invasive weeds will begin to top out making casting into old familiar areas challenging. But the lake will still have clear routes around those areas.

Whether fishing for the day or paddling for an hour or two you are sure to find your time on Spring Lake relaxing.

Wilke Lake

Lake Activities (Occurred and Planned) for 2026
WLAA (Wilke Lake Association) Bags Tournament held in April (Fun had by all who attended).

WLAA Memorial Day Picnic Association mtg,

Discuss lake events, raffle and door prizes.

WLAA Fishing Contest. Held May-Sept all

WLAA members and families.

Focused on kids getting prizes for largest fish etc.

WLAA Rummage Sale at Pavilion in June 25-27th

Lake Member (Private) Live Band Party in June.

WLAA Boat Parade in July.

Private Lake Member sponsored Fireworks on lake July 4th

WLAA Golf Outing at Autumn Ridge in August.

WLAA Bond Fire and Labor Day Meeting in

September. Association mtg, Discuss Lake events, raffle and door prizes

Other Lake Related Topics:

- Our Public Boat Landing was badly in need of improvement in the loading/unloading zone of

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water by the dock. Improvements were made to level

underwater surface to allow easier launch and removal activities.

- Monitoring results from our 2025 chemical treatment of Milfoil.
- So far results are encouraging but will be continuing monitoring.
- Weed Cutter will continue to operate in summer 2026.
 - Mechanical improvements worked on during winter 2026.
 - Scheduled Weed pickups with Volunteers in Summer on Saturdays.
 - Received one year extension for weed cutting permit
- Applying for new permit and grant for continuing DNR Water Testing, Sampling and analysis for chemical makeup of lake water. Note Results
 - weed cutting.
- Applying for Grant for continued Lake studies. continue to be good and encouraging trends).
- Fish Sticks (located with DNR assistance in 2025) are in good shape and serving their purpose to help fish and wildlife habitat. (pictured below)
- Wilke Lake residents continue to grow and expand. Trend of last several years of Homeowner Remodel/rebuild projects continues.

Save the date

The **2026 MCLA Annual meeting/banquet** will be held on **October 17th, 2026 at Autumn Ridge Golf Course. The host associations are the Cedar Lake Improvement Association and the Town of Schleswig Sanitary District #1. Registration and social hour at 5:00 PM, dinner at 6:00 PM. The following guest speakers will present immediately following dinner. Valerie O'Connor, Invasive Species Coordinator, Glacierland RC&D and Jason Miller, coordinator of the Door County Invasive Species Team will do a joint presentation on the Spiny Water flea and Starry Stonewort, two new aquatic invasive species (AIS) that are entering our region.**

Our annual meeting, election of officers, stewardship awards, raffles and door prizes will follow the speaker. **RSVPs and door prize commitments are due no later than Friday, October 9th 2026 to Mary Ann Waldbauer at marryanncedar-lake@outlook.com or phone/text (920) 946-5165.**

Letter from the Editor

As I often say at a meeting, "Why do I Care? Why do I work so hard for MCLA". I really don't know. To this day I really can't answer that. I was the last one in the door the first meeting, and I have been here ever since. I don't live on a lake and haven't fished on one for many years.

Much like the majority of the people in attendance at that meeting, other than a few residences of Carstens Lake, the rest of us just cared about what happened to it at the time. This lake was in a crisis mode. The aerator needed to be turned on, and an organization needed to be formed. It's interesting to look over our membership list and see that of our charter members, Dale Barnes, Brian Robley, Ron Sebo, Tom Ward and myself, Brian and Dale are the only people who ever lived on a lake. Of our four Life Time members, Al Meyer (deceased), Gene Weyer, Tom Ward, and myself, Gene is the only person who ever lived on a lake.

At first our organization thrived, with membership, fundraising, nomination and numerous other committees, and representation from all of our county's lakes. Our monthly meeting rooms were full to capacity. Represented at the state level and giving presentations at the Wisconsin Association of Lakes Conventions wasn't unusual. Our award banquets were huge, with people going to local businesses for door prizes, along with personal gifts, as they do today. Through the years we have applied for close to 25 DNR grants to help our counties lakes, and are there when ever any are in need of our references or approval if they apply for a grant themselves.

Have we done such a good job that we aren't needed anymore? Attendance is down to the usual dozen people. I know that there are times when we have a presentation that we still draw a fairly good crowd. Is this newsletter being read? We are still sending it out to close to 1200 residents in our county. How many copies are being covered up on end tables and not read. I try my best to give you the most and best information possible each year, covering our meetings, banquets, speakers and special friends from the past.

This is your organization, so help us out. Make sure your representative is present at the meeting and if there's a subject that you would like us to discuss, please let us know.

We need your input.
Dave Pozorski

Writing History Through the Eyes of a Potato

By Zach Loken, UW-Stevens Point Graduate



Historically, this plant was used by Native Americans and early European settlers as an excellent source of nutrition, and furthermore provided medicinal benefits for various ailments.

The duck potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), otherwise known as broad-leaf arrowhead or wapato, is an emergent plant found in the shallow waters and mucky soils of wetlands throughout most of North America, stretching from northern Canada to the southwestern United States. Duck potato acquired its name due to observations of diving ducks readily consuming the flattened seeds and potato-like tubers of this plant, but other wildlife such as songbirds, wading birds, muskrats, and beavers seem to enjoy this tasty tuber as well. A single plant can yield up to 40 tubers per year.



The leaves of duck potato are commonly observed in two different forms: arrow-shaped and ribbon-like. The arrow-shaped leaves are by far the most common and can be consistently found emerging above the water's surface. Duck potato's stiff, ribbon-like leaves, on the other hand, are found mostly submerged within the water. Its flowers are borne on smooth stems in rings (whorls) of three at a time. There may be up to 15 of these rings of flowers on a single flowering stalk. Each flower has three green sepals and three white petals. The plants hold both male and female flowers, with female flowers found nearer to the base of the plant, and they bloom in mid-late summer. When fruiting, a single plant can produce upwards of 20,000 seeds, which provide a rich food source for wildlife.

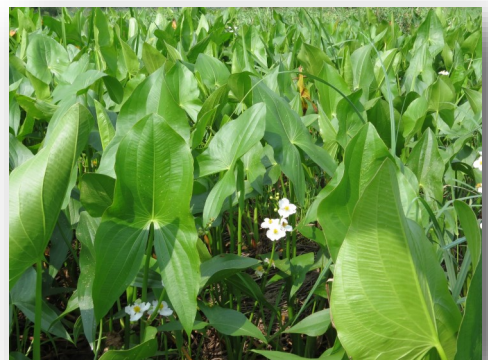
Historical and Environmental Significance

Historically, this plant was used by Native Americans and early European settlers as food and for medicinal purposes. The tubers were commonly boiled until the skin was soft enough to peel away,

which also improved the taste. Boiled tubers were also sliced, hung up to air-dry, and then pounded into a flour-like meal that was used for making bread. This floury powder was used as an herbal poultice and applied to the skin to relieve the soreness and inflammation commonly associated with animal bites and stings. Similarly, the leaves of duck potato were also consumed in the form of a tea to relieve symptoms of indigestion and rheumatism. Due to duck potato's tendency to absorb harmful toxins into its tuber, modern foragers must err on the side of caution when searching for these tubers in the wild. Nevertheless, this tendency to absorb harmful pollutants from the water makes duck potato a strong candidate for naturally restoring aquatic environments.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark repeatedly mention duck potato as an important food source in their expedition journals. Arguably so, this humble tuber is what saved Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery from starvation during the cold, wet winter of 1805-1806 at Fort Clatsop—otherwise known as modern-day Oregon. Without the flour-like duck potato meal to hold the Corps over until springtime salmon-runs began, some of the most noteworthy explorers in the 19th century could have perhaps become nothing more than a footnote in history. Lewis noted that Native American women used their toes to separate the tuber from its root while holding onto a shallow canoe for increased buoyancy.

Once the tubers had separated from their roots, they would rise from the bottom of the lake to the surface, where they were



then tossed into shallow canoes for storage. This technique is still used by modern foragers and is often known as "stomping tubers." For more information, check out *North American Cornucopia: Top 100 Indigenous Food Plants* by Ernest Small.

Writing History Through the Eyes of a Potato
By Zach Loken, UW-Stevens Point Graduate

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***The Manitowoc County Lakes Association will protect and
enhance the quality of area lakes and watersheds for the benefit of all."***

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