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Photo by Dave Balestri



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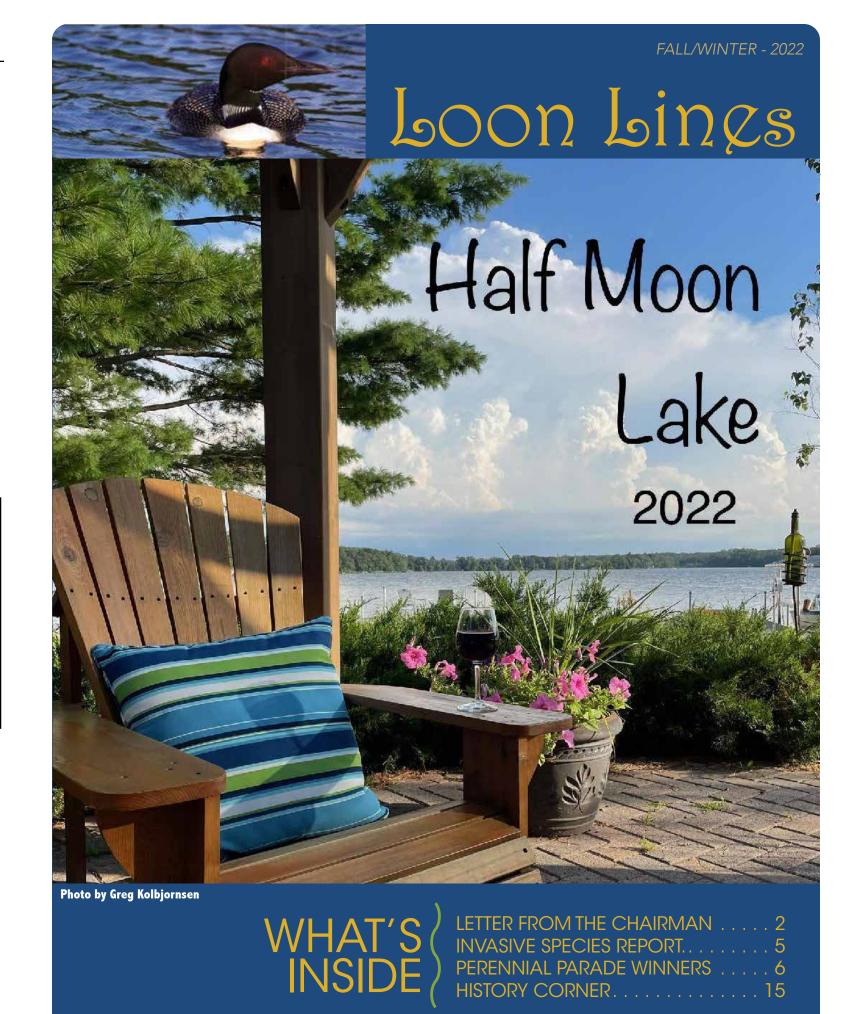
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# Letter from the Chair



It was a busy summer on Half Moon Lake. The Board has been focused on the completion of the boat cleaning station, the initial treatment on the Eurasian Water Milfoil, and the start of construction on the new boat landing. Following is the status of these three items.

The boat cleaning station has been up and running since early spring and I hope you had an opportunity to use the station when you removed your boats from the lake. I did and was impressed by how easy it was to use and the power of the suction to drain the boat wells. According to the boys monitoring the boat landing, the cleaning station did get a lot of use this summer. The boys encouraged the boaters coming into the lake to vacuum prior to launching, which would minimize any polluted water from entering Half Moon Lake. Thanks to Doug Ebeling, the boat cleaning station has been a great success.

The boat landing has had a long and troubled road to completion. We expected approval of our DNR submittal in January, but it wasn't approved until April 12th. The new dock was bid and the low bid was \$21,000,00 over budget. The amount of our share would then be \$30,255.21 - in excess of our maximum of \$30,000.00. The higher bid has been submitted to the DNR to see if they will participate in the overage. While the DNR has a great track record in participating in the higher bids, we have found two options in reducing the bid. However, the DNR wants us to wait until the bid is reviewed before we eliminate any original bid items. In the meantime the City of Milltown, the Milltown Township, and our Board has decided to begin construction and hold two items (the blacktopping and the handicapped dock) until next spring. Thus the revised construction schedule starting on October 24th and completing in mid-November is underway. We are waiting to see if DNR will help with the overage or allow us to rebid the two items of blacktopping and the handicapped dock. But we saw activity this fall which is important, and with the new landing having a fifty-year life we will not have to revisit the landing ramp for quite some time.

The Eurasian Milfoil Rapid Response has seen extensive activity this summer. Starting this spring when the water temperature reached 60 degrees, Jim Benike has been involved almost daily in coordinating activities between the DNR, Barr Engineering, and chemical applicators and divers removing isolated milfoil beds. Our goal is to totally eradicate the milfoil from the lake: the efforts to date have been successful with the area of milfoil infestation reduced from 13.8 acres to one acre. Therefore, our efforts will extend into next spring and summer. We will have to develop and get approval from the DNR on a long-term plan. We have been funded by the DNR Rapid Response program with \$25,000 for 2022 and 2023 which is a great help but we have already expended \$33,000. Thankfully we have a reserve fund established by the Board of 1990 that established a reserve fund to protect our lake in the event of unforeseen problems affecting our water clarity. This initial funding gives us the confidence to continue to our goal of total eradication.

My final thought on this year is to thank the homeowners of Half Moon Lake for the patience you have shown allowing the Board to generate solutions and support our efforts. With a little work on the boat landing and milfoil continuing into 2023, we will have more inconvenience next summer. Hopefully the time impact will be short, and that all areas of activity will be completed soon.

Thank you, Bud Ericksen, Chairman Half Moon Lake Protection & Rehabilitation District Board HALF MOON LAKE **PROTECTION** & REHABILITATION DISTRICT

COMMISSIONERS & OTHER RESOURCES

> Bud Ericksen, Chair Cell: 612-812-7838 bsericksen@comcast.net

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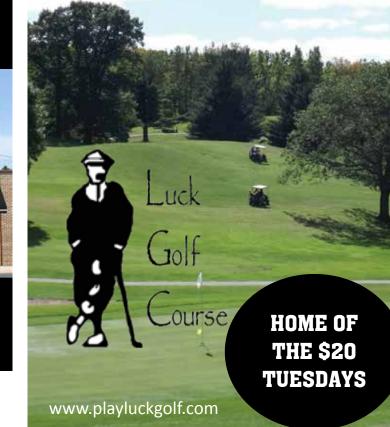
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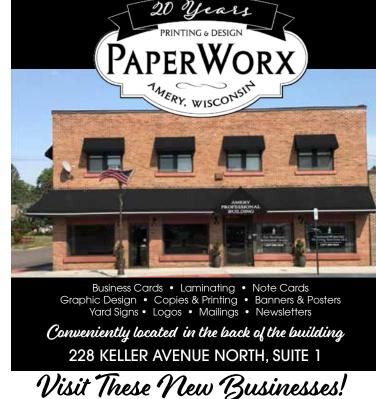












## The Sun Sets on Another Year at Half Moon Lake

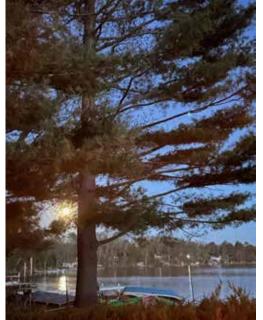






Photo by Greg Kolbjornsen

Photo by Sarah Balestri

Photo by Steve Schatz



Photo by Ellen Butler



Photo by Sarah Balestri



Photo by Paul Anderson



Photo by Ellen Butler

## Editor's Column



The docks and boatlifts are on shore, the water toys are put away, the Adirondack chairs are stored, and many of us have said "goodbye" to our cabins and lake homes for the season. Another summer and fall on Half Moon Lake have passed. This issue is largely dedicated to memories of those recent seasons, from the beautiful cover photo taken by Greg Kolbjornsen to the many other photos throughout this issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed photos and wrote content for this issue — I received more submissions from more people for this issue than I have for any other! As always, you can send photos, questions, articles, and suggestions to me at halfmoonlakeloonlines@gmail.com.

I am sad to say that one of this issue's pieces is a farewell letter from Keanna Kerrigan. Keanna has contributed great pictures and stories to every issue that I've edited. Alas, Keanna's grandparents sold their cabin this summer, so for now Keanna is stepping away for a bit. Thank you, Keanna, for your help. And best wishes as you continue your career in prairie restoration.

The Vierow cabin wasn't the only one to change hands this year. It seems there were more new people at the annual meeting in July than I ever remember. Hopefully, we've been able to accurately update our address list and all of the new folks are receiving this newsletter. For those of you who are new, Welcome to Half Moon Lake!

Speaking of the address list, keeping everyone informed of the latest developments around the boat launch and other activities has been a challenge this year. As Bud mentions in his Letter from the Chair, dates were constantly changing throughout the process, sometimes at the very last minute. In an effort to keep everyone apprised of the dates that the landing would be closed, the Board purchased and posted signs all around the lake of the dates – only to have the work delayed just days before it was set to begin. I know that this disappointed at least a few people, but please be assured that we're doing everything we can to spread the word. To that end, we began collecting email addresses at the annual meeting this year. Email lists are hard to maintain as people change jobs and such, but if you'd like to be included in email notifications, please send your email address to me at halfmoonlakeloonlines@gmail.com.

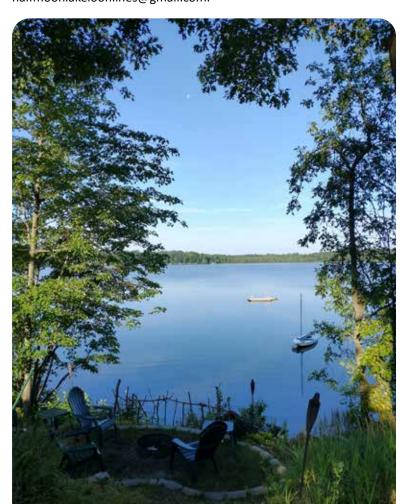


Photo by Dave Balestri

One more note: producing the Loon Lines is a team effort. As noted above, several writers and photographers contribute to the content of the newsletter, which I try to keep fresh, interesting, and educational. You'll also notice that there are several ads. Revenue from these ads pays for the annual fireworks fund. Our publisher, Sally at PaperWorx, has been great about soliciting companies to advertise. Sally also collects payment for the ads, which can be a bit more challenging than it should be. District Treasurer Ellen Butler and I are looking for someone to take over those tasks from Sally, as they really shouldn't be part of her job. This would be an ideal opportunity for a young person interested in Business, Marketing, or Design. It would be an unpaid internship-type position where the person would get mentoring from Sally. The tasks would take place just a couple times per year – before and after publication of the Spring/Summer and Fall/ Winter editions of the Loon Lines. Since our advertiser base is already established, there wouldn't be much "cold calling". If you know of a high school or college student who might be interested in getting some good experience (and a nice item on their resume), please send them my way. Of course, I'll also appreciate any full-fledged adult who wants to take this on too!

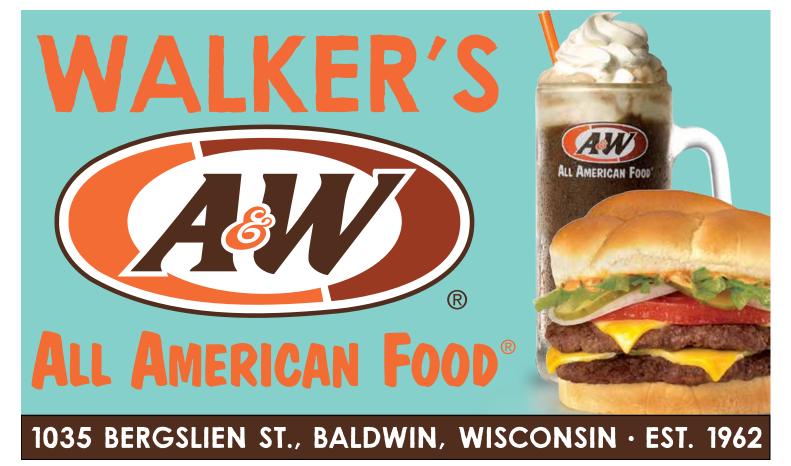
I hope you have a great winter, wherever you may spend it. See you next spring!

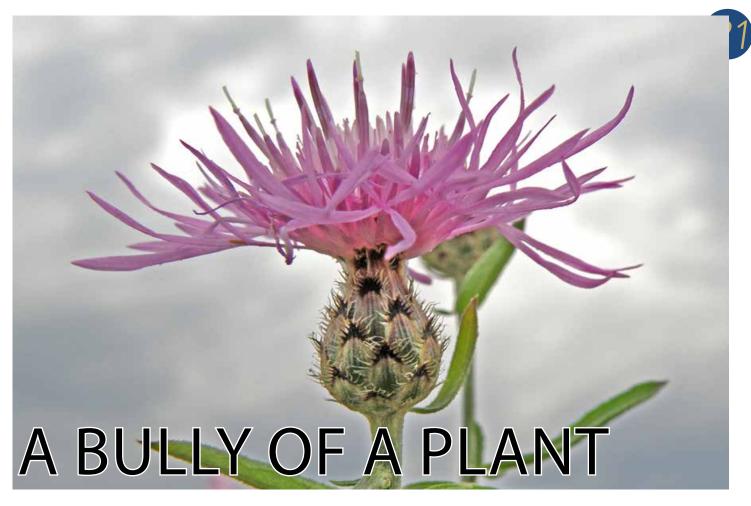
Dave Balestri, Editor

Where in the World?

Ellen Butler and her daughter Emma Knightly hiking in the Cascade Mountains near Seattle







By Dave Balestri

As if we didn't have enough invasive plants in and around our lake, there is a plant further inland that can also be troublesome. Spotted Knapweed is an attractive plant that looks like a native wildflower but that is actually a bully of sorts. It thrives in dry, sandy soils – like the soil around much of Half Moon Lake and Polk County. It typically invades pastures and fields, and is commonly found along roads, railways, and trails. This summer, a person walking on 199th Street on the east side of the lake identified multiple stands of Spotted Knapweed along the road and in some yards.

The main problem with Spotted Knapweed is that it produces a chemical that is toxic to other plants, allowing it to spread quickly and take over entire areas, pushing out natives and degrading wildlife habitats. Removing it is difficult; it has a long, thick root, making hand-pulling a challenge. Herbicides like Roundup can be effective. The key to control is to eradicate the plant before it goes to seed. You can cut the flower heads off while in bloom (dispose of them in a sealed bag in the trash) or you can repeatedly mow the area to prevent seed production and the spread of seeds to new areas. Biological control is also an option; there are natural enemies, such as Seedhead weevils, that feed specifically on this plant. Goats and sheep will also gladly munch away on them

(Ellen Butler utilized goats this summer to reduce the buckthorn on her property). The Minnesota Department of Agriculture provides more information on control and elimination at:

https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/ weedcontrol/noxiouslist/spottedknapweed/knapweed



### "Slow Man Contest"

The winner was "Ski Man" with his new ski fence.

Congratulations to Julie Wold!













### Invasive Species Report:

By Jim Benike

#### **EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL**

Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) was found on HML on October 11, 2021 by Polk County water specialists. During the winter we worked with Meg Rattei of Barr Engineering. Meg has over 40 years' experience dealing with invasive species in Minnesota and Wisconsin waters.

There were several areas of EWM covering 13.8 acres. The initial plan was to treat with ProcellaCOR but in order to get our permit we were required to use Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) in ten small areas. A small patch of wild rice also added several weeks to the permitting process. The treatment began August 1 and was completed August 12.

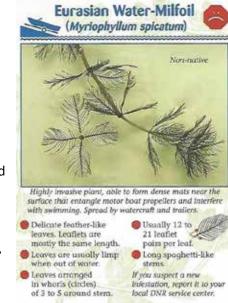
We had the areas resurveyed which showed EWM in 16 locations including two single plants for a total of one acre. Most of the areas were in the south end of the lake 7'-9' deep. We rescheduled divers for September but they canceled. I tried another firm. They had already closed for the season but were interested in spring work.

We also had the lake surveyed for various native and non-native plants mid-October as we have done every three years.

Our plan for 2023 is to get a permit using ProcellaCOR and DASH beginning when the lake temperature is 60 degrees. 2022 was disappointing but we went from 13.8 acres to 1 acre. My marching orders are to eradicate EWM from HML and will continue to that goal.

Working with ProcellaCOR is almost rocket science but I do believe that someone who can tell the difference between Eurasian milfoil and the native Northern milfoil with a GPS, snorkel gear and maybe a wetsuit could remove some EWM. It's only 7'-9' deep. It might be fun as a group project. If interested contact me.

After the 2023 treatment we will begin our Lake Management Plan with Barr Engineering's assistance as we can't get any more DNR grants without a plan. We did receive a maximum grant of \$25,000 for 2022 and 2023 with multiple steps to receive the funds.







#### YELLOW IRIS

Yellow Iris was our first invasive species and we have made real progress by individual property owners removing the Yellow Iris. It's far more effective and cost efficient. It can be dug up or sprayed with Roundup.

Judy Proell has volunteered to help identify and mark Yellow Iris next spring. She will be marking Yellow Iris with a yellow tag from the water for the north half of the lake and I will mark the south half. We will begin Memorial Day weekend if it's blooming thru mid-June. Please feel free to contact us if you have a question or need help. Last year I got to help several people, which was fun. In September I did a pontoon boat survey and all the Yellow Iris was gone in the treated areas. Please contact us as we cannot treat without your permission.

Yellow Iris is a perennial, aquatic, herbaceous plant which grows 2 to 3 feet tall along shores in shallow water. Rhizomes spread and form large clumps. It will sicken livestock if ingested and is generally avoided by herbivores. Contact with its resins can cause skin irritation in humans.



## 19

## The Family That Parades Together, Plays Together

By Dave Balestri

The first text message comes in March or April. With that message, the brainstorming begins, and the ideas start flowing. Everyone participates. Concepts emerge, get bandied about, and start to take shape. Sometimes the concepts are topical; sometimes they're whimsical. They need to involve multiple characters and include a theme that lends itself to decorating a pontoon boat. The Johnson/Gislason family is already planning ahead for the annual Half Moon Lake 4th of July boat parade.

Eventually, the final choice bubbles to the top. The theme for this year's entry has been determined. Now it's time to develop characters, create costumes, and get to making signs and other decorations. It's an annual ritual for the whole family, one that ultimately provides entertainment and enjoyment to everyone who watches or participates in the boat parade. Perennial winners of the "Best Boat" contest, the family and their pontoon have been delivering a show for upwards of 20 years.

Bill and Millie Johnson bought a cabin on the south end of Half Moon Lake 20 years ago. Millie came from an acting background; Bill founded Johnson Security Inc., providing security for the Minnesota Vikings and for the National Hockey League. Their son Billy and their daughter Angie took after their mother, pursuing the artistic path. Angie took to theater, while Billy took to music. Both perform on Twin Cities stages and around the region.

By the time that Millie and Bill bought their first cabin, their family was already growing. Billy married Lisa and Angie married Eric Gislason, a sports reporter and anchor for KSTP TV in Minneapolis. Angie and Eric had three daughters: Natalie, Emma, and Olivia ("Livi") and a son Neo. All three daughters carried on the maternal performance tradition, this time as dancers. Since his time as sports reporter, Eric has developed into an entertainer in his own right, as an Emmynominated producer for the documentary "Town Ball – Uniquely Minnesota".

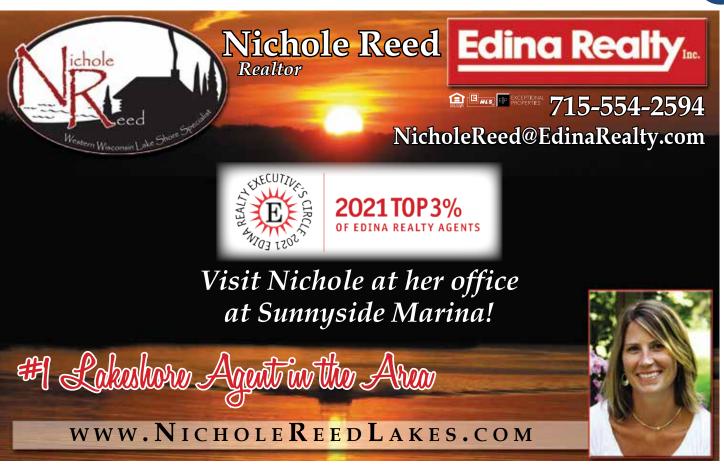
In 1996, Bill and Millie (also known as "Mor Mor – Swedish for Mother's Mother) bought another cabin next door to their original one. They added a sauna and built a fire pit that spans the two properties. They installed a volleyball net in the shallow water. They and their family were committed to the lake life and to big family gatherings. The family continued to grow. Natalie married Ben and Emma married Brett Shepley.

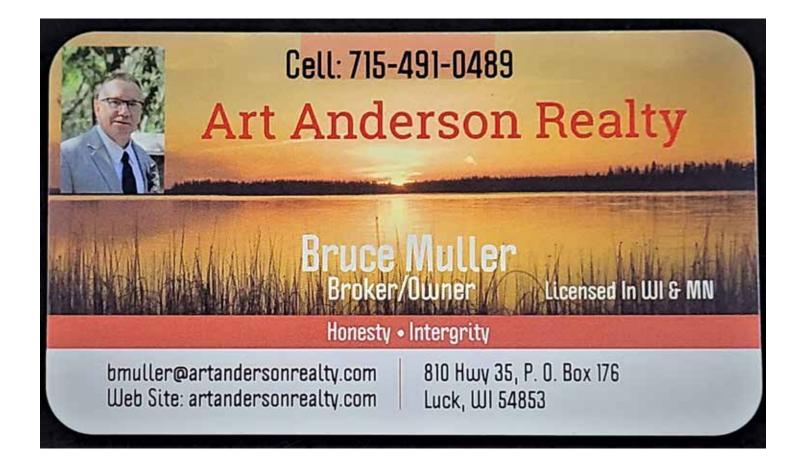
















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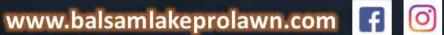


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It's the day of the parade, and preparations start early. By noon, Ben is in costume and in character. Eric too. It's already a warm day, but he's Wyatt Earp, and he's wearing leather chaps, a leather vest, and a leather hat - but not a bead of sweat dots his brow. Completely looking the part, he pulls the toothpick from his mouth to thank Sarah and me for coming to document the festivities. Emma and Allie Demnestedt, a friend who has been participating in the parade for years, are in swimsuits, attaching signs and decorations to the pontoon. "Where is the tape? Does anyone have a staple gun?" Bill, the patriarch, watches from the couch inside. His work is done. He and Millie will stay on shore, cheering on all the parade entrants.

By 2:00, the decorations are done. Everyone is in costume. It's time to shove off from the dock and join the parade. The mood is festive and the weather – again – is gorgeous. This year's theme for the Johnson/Gislason pontoon is "Wild Wild Westconsin". The boat and the family tour the lake with the rest of the parade entrants, giving those on shore yet another great display of creativity and family fun. Perennial winners of the "Best Boat" award have done it again.

I think I speak for many on the lake when I say "Thank You" to the Johnson/Gislason family for providing years of entertainment for the rest of us. Heads up, though – there are ideas already brewing between a couple families on the eastern shore to give you a little friendly competition next summer!





#### Johnson/Gislason Boats Through the Years

2010: Celebrating America

2011: Pirates of the Caribbean **2012: Justice League of America** 

2013 or 2014: Neverland

2015: Star Wars

2016: Under the Sea

2017: Rock the Boat

2018: SKOL

**2019: Saturday Afternoon Fever** 

2020: Medieval Moon

**2021: The Half Moon Speakeasy** 

2022: Wild Wild Westconsin



Reflections Photo by Brian Hartman



Pair of Eagles Photo by Steve Schatz



Beautiful Half Moon Lake Photo by Sarah Balestri



Northern Lights Photo by Evin Kolbjornsen



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## A Surprising Assist in Keeping Half Moon Lake Water Clean

Reprinted with permission from Wisconsin Lake Tides issue 46(3) by Patrick Goggin, Lakes Specialist (HML-specific content by Dave Balestri)

Wisconsin is home to 11 species of turtles. Of these, Half Moon Lake is home to three: painted turtles, spiny softshell turtles, and yes – common snapping turtles. Active primarily from April to October, a turtle's daily activities include sleeping, basking in the sun, and foraging for food. Depending on the species, turtles can be omnivores, herbivores, or carnivores. Algae, fruit, stems, leaves, and insects are all common food sources. For mobile prey like tadpoles and fish, turtles use hunting methods such as ambushing or stalking.

Turtles help maintain water quality! They do so by removing sources of harmful bacteria when they eat carcasses of fish and other animals that die in and around the lake. As turtles get older, they eat progressively more seeds and vegetable matter, rather than protein.

Turtles have slow maturation rates; sexual maturation in some species takes as long as 20 years. Mating primarily occurs in late spring and involves males courting females. Once fertilization takes place, females will usually travel to upland nesting sites to excavate a nest, lay their eggs, and cover the nest with loose soil. They often move across roads to lay their eggs on higher ground, like along roadsides. Nests along Highway G are a regular sight for those of us that walk that road. The females typically lay the eggs in May through June. Sometimes, a well-meaning person will find a turtle walking away from the lake and try to redirect them back to it; most likely that turtle knows exactly where it's going! If you spot a turtle in your yard from mid-May to early June, it is likely looking for a place to lay eggs; the best thing to do is leave it alone.

From August to September, hatchlings will emerge and head for water and cover. Prior to the onset of winter, turtles begin to hibernate beneath soil and plant debris of woodlands and prairies or in the mucky bottoms of the lake and waterways.

Predators such as raccoons, fox, skunks, and coyotes are a threat to the eggs. Research shows that turtle nest predation rates have skyrocketed in recent decades because of increased mammal populations. The Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program gives some

nest protection instructions that you can use to improve turtle nesting success. To find out more, or to contribute to the DNR study on turtle sightings and crossings, see the Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program at https://wiatri.net/inventory/witurtles.



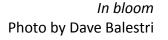








Fall
Photo by Ellen Butler









Vanessa Knapp and Francis
Photo by Chuck Knapp



#### LOON REPORT

By Pat Mechelke, Half Moon Lake Loon Ranger

Fortunately, both territorial pairs of loons and their chicks survived predators and boaters this summer. The adult pair on the north end of the lake migrated to Lake Michigan by the 18th of September to fatten up before their long flight to the Gulf of Mexico. The pair on the south end of the lake left sometime the last week of September. Normally, all four adults take off together; however, the south end pair was still visibly in the molten stage in mid-September. Several weeks during this period, they are unable to fly as they lose their flight feathers when molting. As of the 19th of September, two juvenile loons were seen swimming together on the north end of the lake. This is not unusual as when parents leave, young loons often fly to another lake for companionship. The three juveniles will remain on the lake perhaps even into November gaining strength and weight before migrating to the gulf coast. They remain in those waters or the Chesapeake Bay area for three years before returning to the area of their birth.

As the loons leave our lakes in the fall, many of us miss hearing their various calls which the Ojibwa Native Americans thought were an "omen of death". Loons emit four main vocalizations: the yodel, tremolo, wail, and hoot. Only males are able to yodel - a high pitched, loud, repetitive call beginning with three notes that slowly rise in pitch followed by several undulating phrases. The yodel is usually given when the loons are threatened by eagles or other predators or when humans get too close to chicks. They may even rise out of the lake, extend their necks forward, and arch and flap their wings toward the aggressor when yodeling. Some equate the sound of the tremolo to that of a crazy

laugh. Loons usually vocalize this call when frightened

or disturbed. It is not uncommon to hear this call in the evening hours when loons may fly over lakes occupied by other loons.

The wail is heard often throughout the day and night when mates call to one another. If you listen closely, it resembles "where are you?" That phrase is exactly what they are communicating.

The hoot is a soft one-note, short call used to communicate with chicks, mates or even floater loons that land on the lake for socialization purposes. It basically says "hi".

Some feel that there are actually five vocalizations. Often when a pair of loons are courting, nesting, or swimming with their young, they emit a cooing sound to one another. I have heard this call quite often.

If you're interested in hearing and learning more about the various calls of our loons, you can go online to "loon.org/the-call-of-the-loon".

Enjoy the fall and winter months as we look forward to spring and the return of our territorial loons. If you have any questions pertaining to loons and their behavior, feel free to e-mail me at tmechelke@gmail.com





Photos by Sarah Balestri

#### HISTORY CORNER

By Dave Balestri

Ever wonder about the history of Half Moon Lake? Who the early landowners were? How big the lots were? In doing a little research at the Amery Library, I came across the 1914 "Standard Atlas of Polk County Wisconsin". Now, as my family knows: I like maps. And I like local history. So for me, this was quite a find! A lot has changed over the last 108 years.

If you look closely at these maps, you'll notice that back in 1914 there were a fewer lots on the lake. The list of "small tract owners" shows by map section the number of acres that each landowner had. People owned large lots back then; for comparison, there are now about 195 parcels on the lake.

The maps also show that back in 1914 there was "Pine View Beach" on the north shore, "Sandy Bay" on the south shore, and "Half Moon Bay" on the east shore. Harder Creek was apparently named after Robert Harder, who owned 95 acres on the southwest corner. At least a few other names from 1914 are still on the plat map of today: Voss, Ameter, Nelson... there may be others that I missed.

If you have old photos or historical stories of Half Moon Lake and its denizens that you'd like to share, please send them to me at halfmoonlakeloonlines@gmail.com.











## Out With the Old...







The Walker cabin at the south end of the lake was demolished this fall. Photos by Cheryl Crofoot Knapp.

## And in With the New



The new boat launch was finally built this fall!

Photos by Ellen Butler & Dennis Blau of Cedar Corporation.











### The Minnesotan Goodbye

by Keanna Kerrigan

I step outside and breathe in the crisp morning breeze. As I look up and stare, the leaves seemingly change right before my eyes. Greens to lemon, amber, and scarlet, as if a painter suddenly felt inspiration strike. I smile as the yard comes to life. Songbirds devouring seed from our feeders. Hummingbirds guzzling their syrup for their trek south. Squirrels and chipmunks running to and fro hoarding acorns in anticipation of winter. Everyone and everything seems prepared for winter to come, except for me. I just want to bask in the summer sun over Half Moon Lake, but I sigh as I'm snapped back to reality. I grudgingly help as everyone rushes around, taking the boat to storage, pulling the dock out of the lake, and tidying the cabin before we bid farewell. I close my eyes and take in one last deep breath attempting my best to soak in every last detail. I chuckle to myself, 'see you later in my photographs and memories.'



#### **ABOUT KEANNA**



I hope you've enjoyed my articles and photos! I grew up coming to Half Moon every summer. My grandparents had a little cabin near the southern tip of the lake (they sold this year). I loved watching the hummingbirds and loons; I truly believe this place shaped my passion for nature. I'm an amateur birder, naturalist, and photographer. I just graduated from UW River Falls in May with my bachelor's degree in Field Biology. Currently, I work for Prairie Restorations planting prairies, managing invasive species, restoring native ecosystems, and more.

I frequently see fascinating native plants and many different animals- fawns, rabbits, salamanders, birds and their nests, insects, etc. My favorite part is seeing how the prairies progress over time. We typically complete two or three management visits per year, so I am able to see many prairies improve.



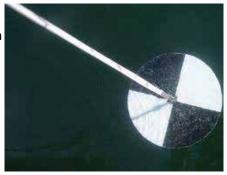
#### WATER CLARITY UPDATE: By David Loeffler

On April 23rd the lake finally became ice-free and open to the soft water season of boating, fishing, kayaking, swimming and more. During the first Secchi disk reading in early June, the water clarity depth was an amazing 21 feet in the deepest part of our lake near the south end. Throughout the summer it remained very clear and not until August during our first algae bloom did we drop down to 17' due to the green nature of the water during that month. All-in-all, it was a very good water quality year for 2022.

Reminder: there are always a few contributors to the cause of these algae blooms, but they all come back to the amount of phosphorus coming into the lake. In our area it is either farming run-off (which we had very little

of this year due to how dry our summer was) or fertilized lawns from our residents. If you do fertilize your lawn, try to use a low or no phosphorus product, preferably where

the middle number is 0. Also, please don't mow all the way down to the water's edge - short grass gives fertilizer a smooth runway into the lake. Finally, keep your septic system in good order.



## In Memory of...



#### TOM LENNARTSON

Tom Lennartson, a long-time resident of Half Moon Lake passed away this summer at the age of 76. Kim Weber remembers Tom for hosting "get-aways for the guys" at the family cabin. "He had a big heart and will be forever remembered as an example of service and his smile." Tom is survived by his wife Sue, his sons Eric and Ryan, his daughter-in-law Amy Jo, and his grandchildren Gus, Lukas, Svea, and Saga.



#### WILLIAM WINN

In 2021, we lost William Winn, another long-time resident of Half Moon Lake. William passed away at the age of 91, leaving his wife of 68 years, Katie. William and Katie met while William was serving at Chanute Air Force Base near Katie's home in Westville, Illinois. They went on to have five children (Mary, Donna, Geri, Mark, and Sue), five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

