



# Loon Lines

HALF MOON LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT



## Winter Fun on Half Moon Lake

Snow Angel on Half Moon Lake  
Photo by Ellen Butler

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# Letter from the Chair

by BUD ERICKSEN

Hello Everyone,

We all will have different but specific memories of the calendar year of 2020. It all started in July as we were scheduled for the Annual Meeting when the tornado hit us all. Since that time, we all have found new medical knowledge with Covid-19, and its required isolation, face masks and self- distancing. While the impact of the disease hits everyone, we as families lose Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other gatherings for birthdays, weddings etc. I hope we can all recreate these events shortly after we all have received our vaccinations. Now that Half Moon has frozen over, and the Trumpeter Swans have headed South perhaps we can focus on 2021 and the required activities of HML.

The Board of Directors has continued to work on our major projects for next year. The new boat landing has had resolution to hire a Civil Engineering firm from Menomonie, Wisconsin. They have experience in the design and permitting required to complete the new boat landings. They are contracted with the Village of Milltown and have done several projects for the Village.

We also found out that the dock to make our landing meet handicapped requirements was previously built by Sunnyside Marine so we have obtained a quote to complete that item. We hope to apply for the DNR grant in February, which will allow us to build the new landing next year, either in the Spring or in the Fall. We could write a book to describe all that has been part of the replacement process. Many thanks to Bob Cutshall, Ellen Butler and Mike Dau for their efforts to date.

The second major project is the boat cleaning station to be located at the boat landing. Doug Ebeling, with the help of the CD3 Cleaning Station salesman, applied to the DNR for the Grant Money to help with the cost of the project. We can expect to hear from the DNR in March about the projects they will support.

The next item is that Kim Butler has retired from the Board as the Loon Line Editor. The value she has provided to us all has been fantastic. To coordinate and develop the newsletter is a major effort and we all appreciate her work on our behalf. If you or if you know of anyone willing to become the Editor please contact me at 612-812-7838.

Thank you,  
Bud Ericksen, Chairman



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Hello Half Moon Neighbors,

I hope this issue finds your family happy and healthy. So far, we've had a mild winter on Half Moon Lake, but the ice is thickening and folks are out ice fishing around the area.

I am hunkered down until spring, and content with memories of past trips, past summers, and past winters in Mexico. Although Half Moon Lake is my "happy place," a close second is the small town on the Yucatan peninsula where I have spent the majority of the last 25 Januarys... but not this one. I'll be following CDC guidelines and dreaming of my 2022 trip.

It's been a busy fall, and I have not been able to watch all the Polk County Environmental Services Committee meetings which I try to virtually attend as part of my role on the board of the Polk County Association of Lakes and Rivers. These meetings deal with lots of zoning issues that pertain to our lakes, whether it's the Tourist/Rooming House (AirBNB/VRBO) regulations or zoning for Large Scale Factory Farms. I've written about both, but it's the factory farm issue that continues to threaten our lakes.

Over 100 people rallied outside at the Polk County Government Center this summer before several County Board meetings, in an attempt to get the Board to realize the danger these types of industrial farms pose to our lakes, rivers, air, small farms, and property values. Polk County has a couple family-owned Dairy CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations). These locally owned & operated dairy farms have not been a problem, and are not the issue. Many residents on both sides of the St. Croix River are worried about a potential out-of-state owned 26,000 hog farm in Burnett County to the north, that would raise pigs largely for the Chinese. In addition to being an unpleasant neighbor for the surrounding landowners, this enormous hog farm poses a threat to our water due in part to the nine million gallons of manure they would produce each year (that's 14 Olympic sized swimming pools.) A pig produces 10 times the amount of waste of a human, yet this 26,000 hog farm isn't required to have the waste treatment facilities that a city of 26,000 or 260,000 would have. This manure could be buried, spread on neighboring fields, or, in heavy rains, or an accident, leak into our surface, and possibly even our groundwater. Everything runs down stream, and this one farm would be part of a network of other support sites including farrowing sites, etc. While we around Half Moon Lake are protected by zoning laws prohibiting a CAFO next door to us, that doesn't mean we wouldn't feel the effects of polluted water, polluted air, an increase of flies and disease, and a decrease in property values. We all want a clean lake to swim in and enjoy, but our lake homes are also worth more because they are on a clean lake. Bayfield County has successfully passed legislation to protect their county and Lake Superior, but the Polk County Board has been unwilling to pass any meaningful legislation or moratoriums. While the County cannot ban CAFOs outright due to state law, there are protections they could enact, and it's up to us to encourage them to do so.

This will be my last issue as Editor of Loon Lines. I've enjoyed it, but after several years, I need a break. Please continue to submit photos, articles, news, and story ideas to the new editor at [halfmoonlakeloonlines@gmail.com](mailto:halfmoonlakeloonlines@gmail.com) Issues are published each year in late June and November/December. Please always be supportive and kind to the Editor, and all of our Board members who do a great deal of work that benefits us all. Thank you

*Kim Butler*

Editor



## Editor's Column

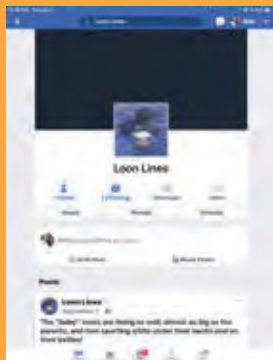
### On the Web

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**Stay in Touch** Keep up with the latest news, ice out dates, neighborhood concerns and more. Also share articles, ideas for articles, new neighbor info, and photos of Life On The Lake!

**Nextdoor App & Website** Go to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com). Enter your HML street address and email address & click "Find My Neighborhood." Add a few more details and you are done. You can also download the app to your smartphone or tablet. If you already use NextDoor at your permanent home, you'll need to make a new email address at Google/gmail or Yahoo.

This is an online neighborhood bulletin board that could include topics like storm damage, free stuff, recommendations for plumbers or caterers, suspicious activity, buy and sell, etc.





## Where In The World

Emma Knighton, daughter of Ellen Butler, on ferry to Orcas Island in the San Juan Islands near Seattle.

# internet



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# LOON REPORT

BY PAT MECHELKE  
Loon Ranger

Photo by Pat Mechelke

## Fall 2020 Loon Report

Half Moon Lake was very fortunate this year to have two territorial pairs of loons produce two chicks each and all four chicks appeared to survive. Appeared is due to the fact that when our adult loons left the lake early in September to fly to Lake Michigan to fatten up before migrating to the Gulf of Mexico, the four immature loons also disappeared from the lake within a few days. They are capable of flying so perhaps flew to join other juveniles on nearby lakes forming groups called rafts. Normally, the chicks have stayed on the lake until the end of October or into November before they too migrate south. They are hard wired from birth to know when and where to migrate. They stay in the Gulf of Mexico for two to three years before returning to lakes similar to and nearby the ones in which they were born. On average, young loons are six years old before they begin breeding, and although a loon's lifespan varies, some have lived past thirty years.

A study conducted by Dr. Walter Piper banded chicks on northern Wisconsin lakes and learned that as adults, male loons return within seven miles of their birth lake and female loons return to within fifteen miles indicating that something occurred in their first few months of life impacting the selection of the lake to which they return.

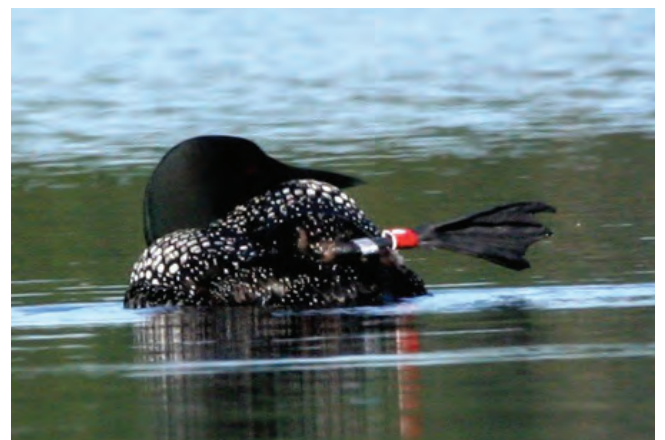
A question was raised by a cabin owner this summer as to why a loon was wagging its foot up in the air. They were afraid it had fish line wrapped around it. Wagging their feet is a common behavior for a loon; scientists have observed loons perform this more often on warm sunny days and it is probably a means of cooling off.

The loons on the south end of the lake did not use the artificial loon platform this spring even though vegetation has taken hold on the platform making it conducive to nesting. The loons legs are located far back on their bodies allowing for them to be great swimmers but very awkward moving on land. Over the last winter, the rubber mats on two sides of the loon platform broke off making it very difficult for loons to get onto the platform possibly causing them to look for an alternate nesting site. The mats have been replaced this fall so hopefully, the loons will use it to nest next spring.

Pat Mechelke – Half Moon Lake Loon Ranger



Mealtime for one of the 2020 HML Loon Families.  
Photo by Leo Balestri



Banded loon wagging its foot to cool down.  
Photo courtesy of Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation





Photo by Pat Mechelke

# DRAGONFLIES: NATURE'S BEST FLIER AND AN INDICATOR OF A HEALTHY LAKE

By Pat Mechelke

We have a couple of grandchildren who are literally scared to death of bugs. I vividly remember a campsite in Glacier National Park where we were all yelling “Ugg, it’s a bug” as huge black bugs flew in our hair while sitting around the campfire. When sitting on our dock this June, literally hundreds of dragonflies flew over our heads and lit on our hands. I assured the grandchildren that these bugs were totally harmless to humans. They protect us by consuming insects, especially mosquitoes. In many countries and civilizations they symbolize good luck, swiftness, purity, and signify the beginning of summer and autumn.

Dragonflies and damselflies both belong to the order, Odonata, and exist on every continent except Antarctica. Both have long bodies with two narrow pairs of intricately veined, membranous wings which may be transparent but may also have colored markings. The winged adults of both are diversely colored in a variety of shades ranging from metallic to pastel colors. There are about 5,000 species of true dragonflies living in the world today. Dragonflies are more powerfully built and unlike damselflies the front and rear wings are shaped differently. Dragonflies also rest with their wings spread horizontally rather than vertically against each other as with damselflies. All are agile fliers capable of flying straight up and down, sideways and backwards, and hovering and even mating in mid-air. They are amongst the fastest flying of insects capable of speeds up to 30 MPH. This speed, agility, along with the amazing vision of their huge compound eyes all contribute to them being one of the most effective aerial predators of primarily mosquitoes but also moths, flies, and other flying insects. Dragonflies catch their

prey by scooping it up with their feet as they fly. They can have a great impact on controlling the mosquito population as a single dragonfly can eat hundreds of mosquitoes per day.

Dragonflies begin their lives in water. Female dragonflies hover over bodies of fresh water, dipping their abdomens into the water and laying eggs that hatch in 7-8 days. Called naiads or nymphs, the larvae live in the water for up to three years searching for aquatic insects, mosquito larvae and even small minnows for survival. Undergoing between 6-15 molts before emerging as adult dragonflies, they crawl out of the water onto a rock or plant and molt one final time. Until their bodies harden fully, they are weak fliers; birds and other predators consume a large number of young dragonflies the first few days after they emerge. Some species of adult dragonflies live only about a month while others may live up to a year.

Dragonflies are important to our environment both as predators and as prey to birds and fish and are also an indication of the health of wetlands. In order to survive, they require clean, well-oxygenated water. Pollutants from pesticides, farming and industry, non-native vegetation, and an increase in development of land decreases their habitat. Conservation of wetlands is vital for their continued existence. A study conducted in 2009 found that 10 percent of dragonfly species are threatened with extinction. Next summer take time to enjoy watching our many species of colorful dragonflies, appreciate their importance to our environment, and remember they are harmless to humans.

# 6 COMMON DRAGONFLIES IN WESTERN WISCONSIN



## Autumn meadowhawk

Commonly found at a variety of habitats including forested wetlands. They are a small, pretty dragonfly with a red thorax and abdomen, yellowish legs, and clear wings. They are usually the last dragonfly seen each year with a flight season that begins in July and which can extend to mid-November if there aren't heavy frosts.



## Elfin skimmer

This bog specialist is North America's smallest dragonfly. Individuals are only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch long and are easily overlooked. They are so tiny that they can be harassed and forced to flee by even small damselflies. They fly from mid-June to the early August.



## Kennedy's emerald

Found in alder and shrub thickets adjacent to slow streams through bogs and marshes. The Kennedy's emerald is one of the striped emeralds of the genus *Somatochlora*. This genus is made up of some of the rarest dragonflies found in Wisconsin. Like other members of the genus, Kennedy's emerald dragonflies are a dark chocolate brown and mature males have beautiful, emerald-green eyes.



## Ringed boghaunter

Found in fens with abundant submerged sphagnum. Until 1998, they were only known from a few wetlands in New England. Then they were discovered in fens in central Wisconsin and later in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. They are amongst the earliest of Wisconsin resident dragonflies to emerge and typically start flying in mid-May.



## Sedge sprite

Found in sedge meadows and other wetlands. The sedge sprite is one of Wisconsin's smallest damselflies and is a beautiful metallic, emerald green. The male has distinctive blue markings on the tip of the abdomen. They often fly low in vegetation.



## Twelve-spotted skimmer

Commonly found at ponds, lakes, and marshes. This is one of the most distinctive dragonflies found in Wisconsin with three black spots on each wing (mature males have white spots on the wings as well). When not patrolling, the males land on conspicuous perches near open water and will often return to the same perch if flushed.



# HALF MOON LAKE FROM THE AIR

Stan Murzyn of Half Moon Lake took some beautiful shots of the lake with his new drone. Inspired by Stan, Greg Kolbjornsen sent his new drone up in the sky.

Thanks for sharing Stan and Greg!



The homes on 124th St.  
Photo by Greg Kolbjornsen



Rosie's Point looking northeast, Bone Lake is visible.  
Photo by Greg Kolbjornsen





Looking west towards the sunset. Lost Lake is visible to the right..  
Photo by Stan Murzyn.”



Facing south, with Breezy Bay on the upper right  
— Photo by Stan Murzyn



# *Autumn's Beauty on Half Moon Lake*



Fire-red leaves on a young maple  
by Ellen Butler



Fall sunrise on Half Moon Lake by Ellen Butler



Red Maple by Ellen Butler



Misty Morning by Ellen Butler



DECEMBER 2020

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# Half Moon Lake Conservancy Report

The Half Moon Lake Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that was created by David J. Butler in 2003 for the purpose of protecting the water quality of Half Moon Lake. It acquired wetlands along Harder Creek and Tamarack Bay that filter out phosphorus and trap sediments before they can enter into the lake. David has led the Conservancy for many years and we are all indebted to him for his commitment to preserving the lake.

The mission of the Half Moon Lake Conservancy is to preserve the water quality and natural beauty of Half Moon Lake. Because of its legal structure, the Conservancy can act more quickly than the Lake District to take action to protect critical wetlands and other property in our watershed that affect the lake.



## THE HALF MOON LAKE WATERSHED IS A TOOL TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE LAND AND WATER CONNECTION.

- While Half Moon Lake is 580 acres, the watershed (or surface area from which water flows to the lake) is over 5,000 acres.
- How the land is used in the Half Moon Lake watershed affects the quality of our lake water.
- Forests, wetlands, and grasslands absorb rainwater and pollutants and protect the soil from erosion.
- Houses, fertilized yards, row-cropped fields, roads, and parking lots create runoff water that may carry pollutants into the lake.
- Anything we can do to protect natural areas, enhance natural vegetation, and promote absorption of the runoff water will help to protect the lake.

## THE GOAL OF THE CONSERVANCY IS TO PROTECT AND MAINTAIN HALF MOON LAKE WATER QUALITY. HOW CAN WE DO THIS?

- Promote preservation and restoration of natural vegetation along the lake shoreline. Leave a few feet of wild vegetation along the shoreline, rather than mowing down to the shore. This is also helpful for the amphibians that live by moving back and forth between the water and the land.
- Work effectively to influence local and state decisions that impact Half Moon Lake water quality.
- Protect critical parcels of land in the Half Moon Lake watershed.

## HISTORY:

The Half Moon Lake Conservancy was formed in 2003 with a donation of a 35 acre parcel along Harder Creek north of the lake. This creek provides most of the water that flows into Half Moon Lake. (Tamarack Creek and Bay also provide water into the lake, which is north of the public beach.) The forests, grasslands and wetlands on this 35 acre property serve to filter the surface water flowing into the lake. The Conservancy sold the conservation rights for this property to Polk County who purchased them with funds from the WI DNR. The Harder Creek property has walking trails that are open to the public. The trails may be accessed from Dau Drive (east off of County Road G about ½ mile north of the lake) just before Dau Drive turns to the north. The trail starts just below and to the south of the driveway off of Dau Drive. There is room to park along the road. Please contact the Board members with any questions.

## THE CONSERVANCY BOARD IS CURRENTLY MADE UP OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS.

Board members at large - Sheila Waldoch, Dr. Eric Johnson and Bud Ericksen

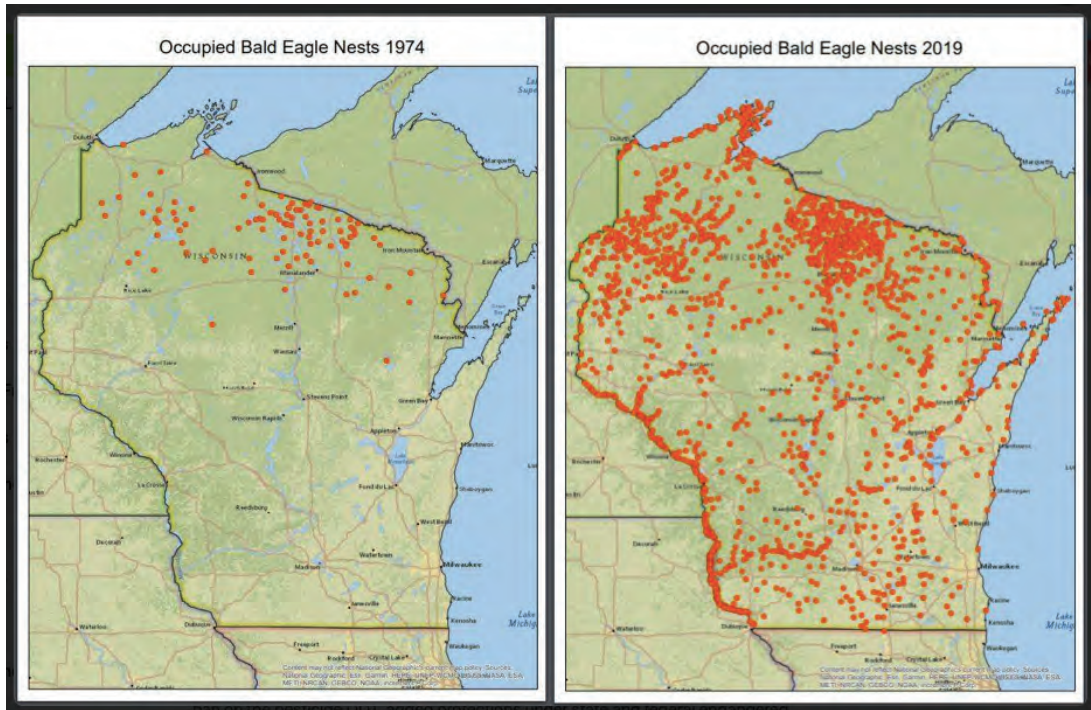
Advisory committee members - David J. Butler, Gordon Mommsen, Herb Baldwin and Florian Lauer.

Treasurer - Ellen Butler

Secretary - David W. Butler

Vice President - John Weber

President - Bob Cutshall



Maps from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## *Bald Eagles Have Made a Comeback*

Half Moon Lake is always a prime spot eagle watching. Many of us have eagles perching or even nesting on our properties, and we've all watched eagles fishing on the lake. This map and article was posted by Katie Grant at the WI Department of Natural Resources.

These two maps show the number of active bald eagle nests (not to be mistaken for the total number of eagles) documented during aerial surveys in 1974 versus the DNR's most recent results in 2019. Of course, there are many more eagles on the landscape, including unpaired or non-breeding adults and juveniles.

The success of bald eagles in Wisconsin is a comeback story fueled by the national ban on the pesticide DDT, added

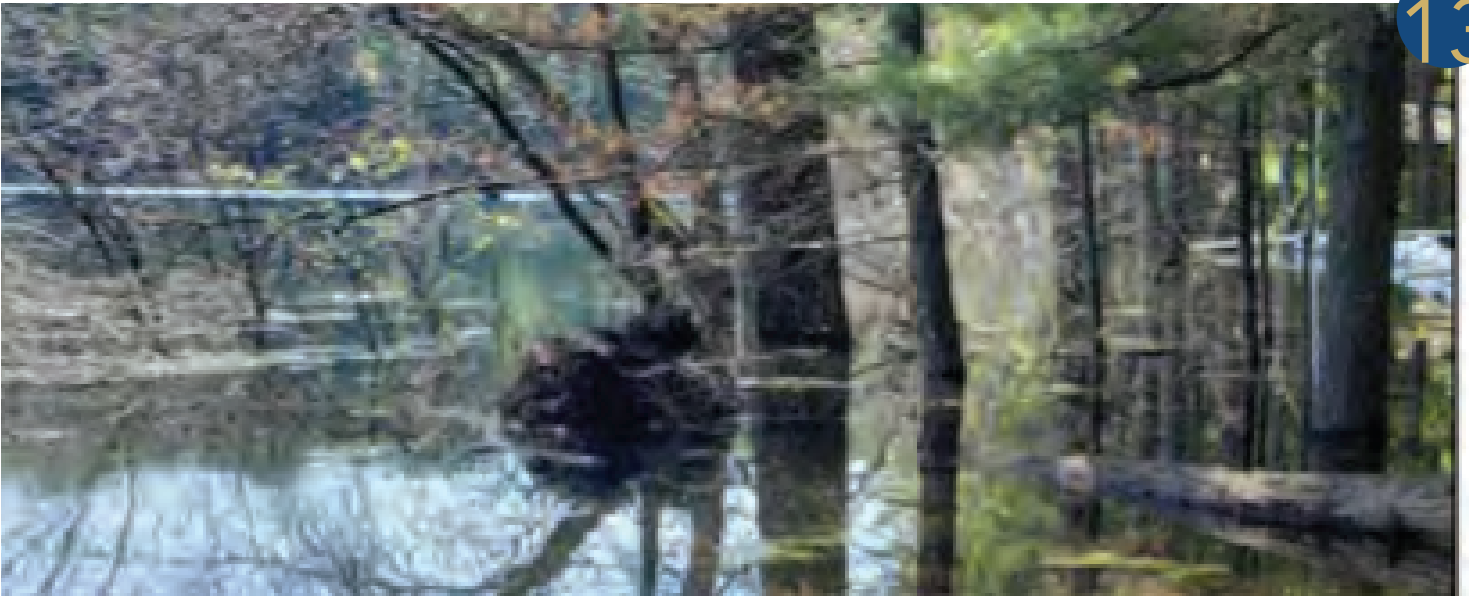
protections under state and federal endangered species laws, river cleanups under the Clean Water Act and public support of nest monitoring and protection efforts. Part of that public support includes donations to the Endangered Resources Fund via Wisconsin state income tax forms, purchases of an Endangered Resources license plate and citizen reports of bald eagle nests or nest-building activity.

If you spot new bald eagle nests or nest-building activity in remote areas, please help us keep track by submitting your sightings to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



Photos by  
Leo Balestri





# *Rising Concern Over High Water*

## **MAKING A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

By Patrick Goggin, Lake Specialist, Extension Lakes, and Kathy Bartilson, Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association.  
Reprinted from Lake Tides Newsletter, from Wisconsin Lakes Partners.

Residents and communities around Wisconsin were facing consequences of high water this past summer. In fact, some Wisconsin waterbodies, including both inland lakes and the Great Lakes, reached record levels this year. Many are concerned about how these higher water levels create challenges in maintaining clean water, controlling erosion, and sustaining wildlife.

While we are very thankful for plentiful rain for our gardens and crops, higher water influences our lakes and rivers, and the people living and recreating on them. Water quality can change in high water, but whether it makes it better or worse can depend on each lake or river itself, and how high the water gets.

### **BE AWARE OF HIGH WATER CONDITIONS**

Higher water levels increase the reach of waves from wind, boat wakes, and personal watercraft. When the waves hit the shore, the damage to riverbanks and lakeshores poses a real threat to water quality through soil loss and nutrient pollution. Unchecked erosion over time can even threaten bank integrity and lead to property damage. Further, rocky lake bottom areas where fish spawn can be covered with sediment from water running off hard structures like rooftops and driveways. Unless this water is filtered through native vegetation areas or other zones where the water is infiltrated and cleansed, it will bring soil and nutrients to the lake. Excess amounts of nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus, found in water running off our shoreland properties can fuel harmful algal blooms and cause additional problems with oxygen availability to fish and other critters.

Fluctuating water levels also bring about shifts in plant communities found at the water's edge. With higher water, plants that can withstand inundation for a longer period do better and expand their way out into the lakebed. Dry-footed plants creep back up the shoreline away from the higher water by spreading root systems and dispersing seeds. In extreme cases, high water levels can also threaten public health. Private well systems, buried water and wastewater lines, and septic systems (especially drain fields), can become flooded, causing concern for safe drinking water and proper filtering and absorption in septic systems. The shoreline away from the higher water by spreading root systems and dispersing seeds.

### **PLANNING NOW FOR CHANGING WATER CONDITIONS**

There are several things we can start doing now to help us better address these challenges that come with fluctuating water level conditions. Add a chapter on water levels to your lake or river management plan the next time you update it. Fill the new chapter with a few actions your community can take to better deal with changing water conditions. For example, pay attention to when public roads around your waterbody are scheduled to be repaved. This is the time to change drainage patterns of these roads that may be conduits for excess water and nutrients to the lake. Instead, these roads can be recontoured and reshaped to shed water away from the waterway. Areas of infiltration can be added along roads if current conditions don't allow for good stormwater absorption. Recreational use ideas like a courtesy code sign

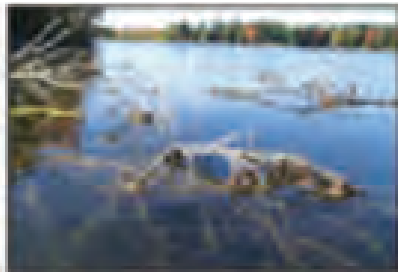
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**1 FISH STICKS**

**FISH STICKS**

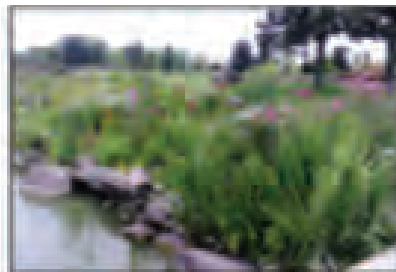
Create Fish & Wildlife Habitat  
 Fish Sticks are feeding, breeding, and nesting areas for all sorts of critters - from fish to songbirds. They can also prevent bank erosion - protecting lakeshore properties and your lake (not eligible on river properties.)



**2 NATIVE PLANTINGS**

**NATIVE PLANTINGS**

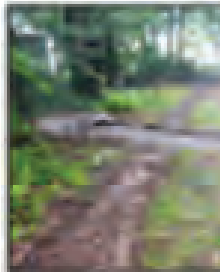
Improve wildlife habitat, natural beauty and privacy, and slow runoff.  
 Native plantings include grasses and wildflowers with shrubs and trees.  
 Choose a template based on your property and interests - from bird/butterfly habitat to a low-growing garden showcasing your water view.



**3 DIVERSION**

**DIVERSION**

Prevent runoff from getting into your water.  
 Diversion practices divert runoff to areas where it can soak in instead. Depending on your property, multiple practices may be needed.



**IMPROVE HABITAT AND NATURAL BEAUTY**

\*Eligible for shoreland properties within 100 feet of water





ILLUSTRATION: KARIEN ENGELBRETTSON

**ION\***

ION

off from  
lake or river.  
es move water  
oak into the ground  
ending on  
multiple diversions  
necessary

**4 ROCK INFILTRATION\***

ROCK INFILTRATION

Capture and clean runoff.  
Rock infiltration practices fit in nicely along roof drip lines and driveways and provide space for run off to filter itself. They work best if your soil is sandy or loamy.

**5 RAIN GARDEN\***

RAIN GARDEN

Create wildlife habitat and natural beauty while capturing and cleaning runoff.  
Rain gardens multitask - they improve habitat and filter runoff while providing a naturally beautiful view.

**SLOW, DIVERT, CLEAN AND FILTER RUNOFF**

1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a river.



When it rained, water poured down this stairway to the lake from the paved driveway above. This rock infiltration pit, installed along the driveway and above the stairs, allows stormwater to be captured and slowly filtered into the soil.

and reminders to follow any Slow/No Wake guidance would also be beneficial additions to a management plan chapter on water levels.

Another topic worth considering is the quality of your roadside ditches that drain to your lake, river, or stream. Consult the “Field Guide for Maintaining Rural Roadside Ditches: Protecting Lakes and Streams through Proper Ditch Maintenance” for tips and guidance on effective maintenance.

Champion your community residents toward embracing and allowing unmowed areas of native vegetation to grow along the shoreline. This protects the property from wave and ice action and other erosive forces. The native species along the shore evolve with the changing water levels, and they provide significant habitat to water birds, aquatic insects, young fish, amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife. For ideas on simple best practices to keep your lake or river healthy, check out the graphic in this article. To get more in-depth guidance, including funding options, go to the Wisconsin Healthy Lakes and Rivers website at [healthylakeswi.com](http://healthylakeswi.com).



## Best Practices for Boating in High Water

Recreation during high water calls for special caution and courtesy. Boat wakes reach farther up onto the shoreline causing erosion and property damage in areas not normally reached by the water. The U.S. Boat Owners Association advises allowing extra time for your fishing trip and driving watercraft slowly and farther from shore. In addition, avoid repetitive routes, which can send wakes slamming into the same sections of shore. Avoid close passes to other boats and allow extra space when following another watercraft. High water also hides obstacles like rocks and logs that are visible in more “normal” water conditions. Using care to watch for these hazards can prevent serious mishaps on both lakes and rivers, making water sports safer for everyone.

Being aware of challenges we currently face from higher water helps us manage our shoreland properties for cleaner water and healthier wildlife habitat. The next time you update the management plan for your lake or river, make sure a chapter on water levels is included. This information will better prepare you and your community for the changing water conditions we will face in the years ahead.





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LEARN MORE ABOUT WISCONSIN LAKES BY ATTENDING THE VIRTUAL WISCONSIN LAKES AND RIVERS ANNUAL CONVENTION.

Begin planning now for Wisconsin Water Week March 8-12, 2021.

We are usually sending out information about the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention this time of year. The public health situation makes it untenable to hold a large conference in spring, so we are taking the Convention online and for 2021 we are expanding it into Wisconsin Water Week! This will be unlike any other convention, though there will still be informative presentations and engaging, interactive sessions. The bulk of the event will take place Monday through Thursday.

# Wisconsin Water Week

A week of inspiring content and connections among water lovers.



**Monday**

March 8, 2021


The first three days of Wisconsin Water Week will focus on major aspects of Wisconsin's water system. Monday will emphasize "Water Cycles," including groundwater and climate, the two largest but mostly invisible pieces of our shared water inheritance.



**Tuesday**

March 9, 2021

Day two will explore "Water Bodies," delving into the science of monitoring and managing lakes, rivers, wetlands, and watersheds, and evaluating their health. This includes the flora and fauna in and around these water bodies and how they interact.



**Wednesday**

March 10, 2021

Wednesday will focus on "Water Actions," featuring examples and stories from the field that demonstrate how people and communities are tackling water challenges - even during these turbulent times.



**Thursday**

March 11, 2021

Thursday's programming will be built around the major watersheds in Wisconsin with dozens of simultaneous, place-based, one-day conferences. Drawing on the Red Cedar Watershed Conference's past success, numerous additional watersheds will address issues and concerns most relevant to their specific region.



**Friday**

March 12, 2021

The week concludes on Friday with a menu of smaller local events and meetings that draw upon the week's content to outline action plans for spring and summer 2021. Depending on the public health circumstances and the size of local gatherings, some of these may be held in person.



**2021 Wisconsin Water Week**  
March 8-12

[uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexplakes)

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A Glimpse of Summer Color

David J. Butler kept busy creating a colorful new garden on his daughter Ellen Butler's farm property.

Photo by Ellen Butler

## SLO MAN CONTEST

Oscar Lane held their annual Labor Day Weekend SLO MAN decorating contest. "COVID Man" was the winner. We are all hoping he's not the winner next year. He was decorated by Sara Krebsbach Sturgis and Cal Sturgis. They received a gift certificate to the Balsam Lake ice cream shop. Runner up was "Oscar the Gnome" decorated by Judy and Julia Wold. Photos by Jim Benike.



THE WINNER:  
Covid Man

2nd PLACE  
Oscar the Gnome



# Covid Safety in Polk County

If you plan to come to the lake from another area during the holidays, please practice Covid safety. Positive cases have risen from 6 before Memorial Day to almost 3,000 by mid December. Current information is available at the Polk County Health Department website <http://www.polkcountyhealthdept.org/home/covid-19-information/>

The Polk County Sheriff was one of several Wisconsin sheriffs who announced he would not enforce the WI Governor's mask mandate, so many local businesses do not adhere to it. The Polk County Board has argued against the Governor's guidance and orders, and the County Health Department Director was apparently one of many pushed out across Wisconsin for trying to promote public safety guidelines.

## HERE'S A REMINDER OF BASIC SAFETY PRACTICES:

COVID-19 cases are rapidly rising in Wisconsin. Stay home, gather virtually, or outdoors in small groups.

As cold weather moves in and we begin to spend more time indoors closer together, the virus can spread more easily. It's more important than ever that we remain vigilant and take steps to protect ourselves and our loved ones:

- Stay home when possible.
- If you go out of the house, be sure to wear a mask over your mouth AND nose.
- Stay at least 6 feet apart from people who do not live in your household and avoid crowds.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Learn more about how you can slow the spread of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

A real estate advertisement for Art Anderson Realty. The background is a scenic sunset over a lake with reeds in the foreground. In the top left corner, there is a small portrait of a man in a suit and glasses. The text is as follows:  
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**Bruce Muller**  
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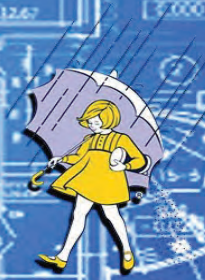


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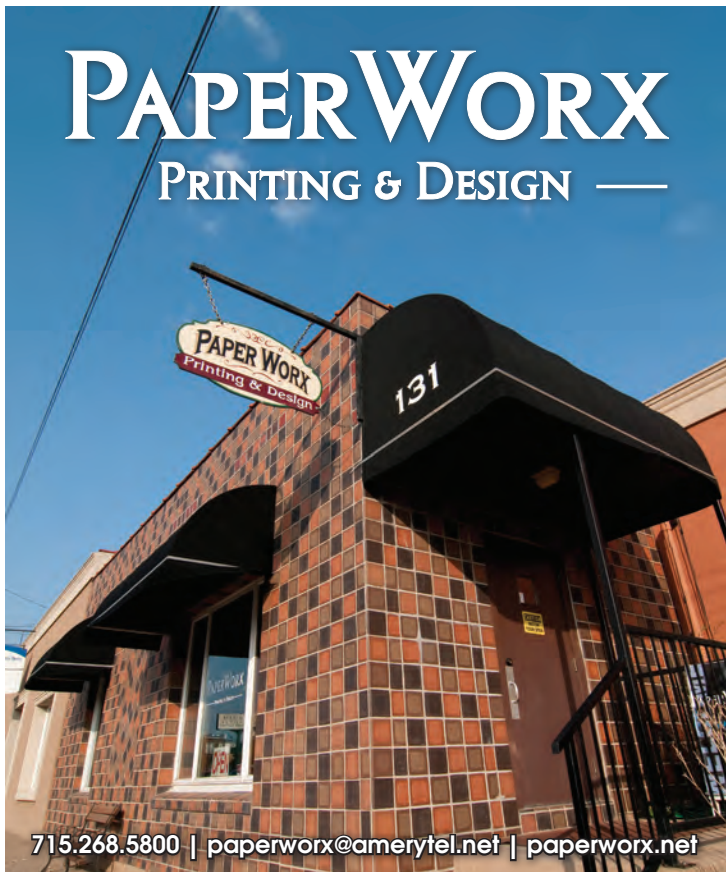
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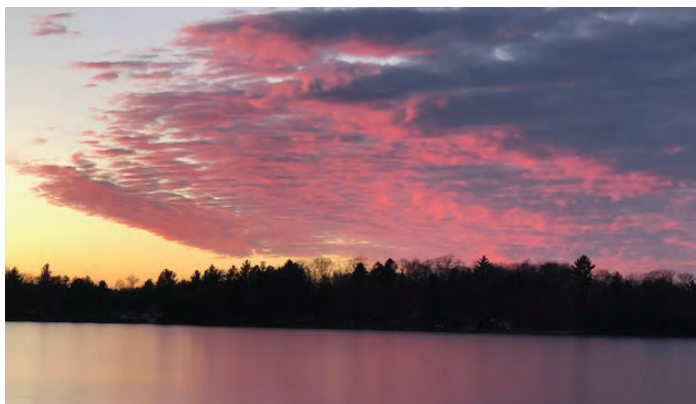


Photo by Ellen Butler



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