# LAKE TIDES

A newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin's lakes

Fall/Winter 2025
Volume 50 No. 3


# Restoration Works

## A Summer of Shoreline Science

*By Madeline Hetland, Littoral Zones Fellow at Trout Lake Station and Extension Lakes Student Assistant, UW-Stevens Point*

This summer, I had the opportunity to spend a few months at UW-Madison's Center for Limnology-Trout Lake Station. My work was part of an undergraduate research fellowship through the North Temperate Lakes Long-Term Ecological Research program. Under the guidance of Dr. Katie Hein, my project focused on a topic that's close to home for many lake residents: shoreline restoration, and how changes we make on land ripple into the lake itself.

In particular, I looked at how shoreline condition affects aquatic insects and other tiny creatures that live in the shallow, nearshore area of the lake known as the littoral zone. These insects, like mayflies and caddisflies, are often overlooked, but they play an essential role in lake ecosystems. They break down organic material, cycle nutrients, and provide food for fish, amphibians, and birds. In short, if you care about lake health, you should care about bugs.

### A Living Laboratory on Crystal Lake

Our main site was Crystal Lake, entirely surrounded by Wisconsin DNR state campground and forest land. A major shoreline restoration project began here back in 2011 led by researchers at Michigan Technological University and Wisconsin DNR. Prior to the restoration, this portion of shoreline was mostly mowed lawn beneath a few scattered red pines. As part of the project, over 300 meters of shoreline were planted with thousands of native trees, shrubs, and grasses. The transformation was impressive, but until this summer no one had taken a close look at how the shoreline changes had affected the ecosystem over time.

That's where our team came in. We surveyed the vegetation along the shore, documenting the types and amounts of trees and shrubs that had taken hold. In the water, we looked at aquatic plants, fallen logs, and woody debris. Then, my favorite part: collecting aquatic insects.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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**"If you care about lake health, you should care about bugs."**

*Provided by Madeline Hetland*

*Madeline loves water bugs — especially this dragonfly larva that she found along the shores of Crystal Lake in Vilas County. Find out more about this specific aquatic insect on page 8.*

# Helping Restoration Work for You

## Ten Years of Healthy Lakes & Rivers

*From Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources news release*

healthylakeswi.com

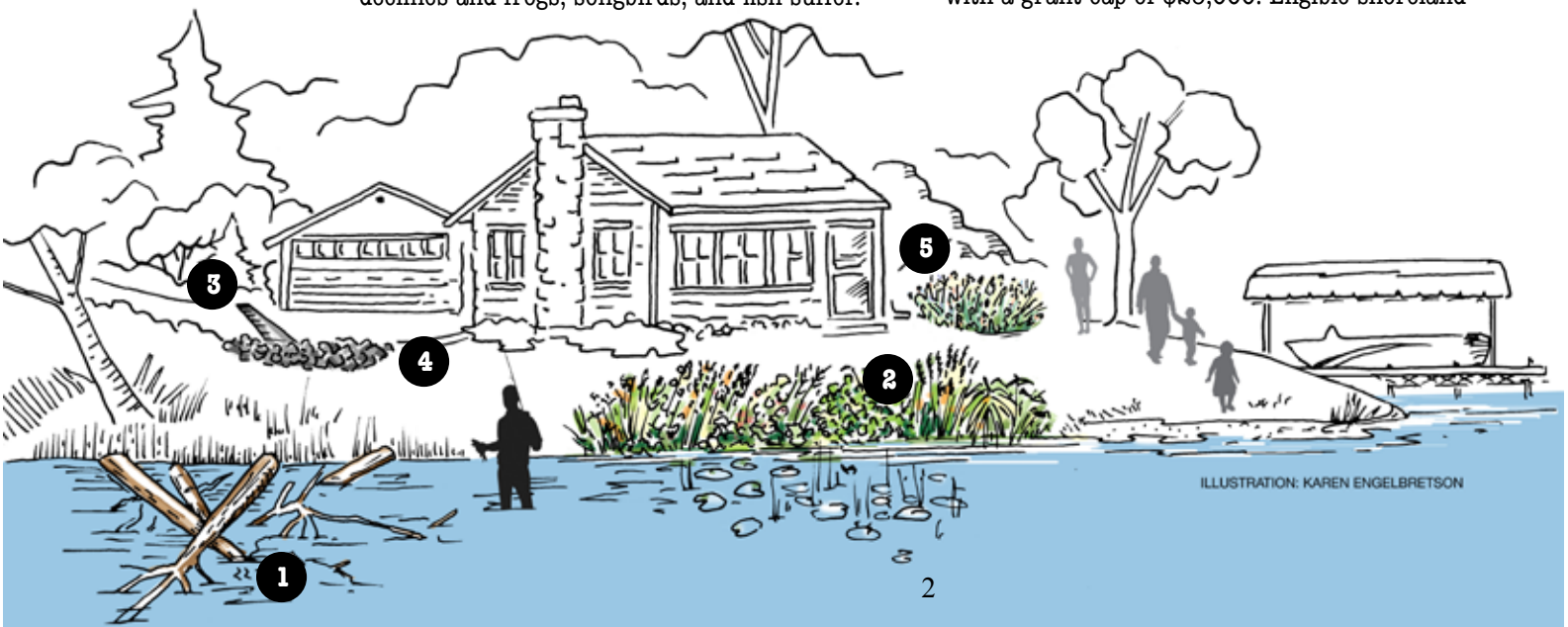
Launched in 2015, Healthy Lakes & Rivers (HLR) was designed to make it easier for property owners to take simple, affordable steps to protect and restore water quality and habitat. The program focuses on five best practices, depending on what goals you have for your shoreland property.

| | GOAL | | BEST PRACTICE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Create fish and wildlife habitat. | > | FISH STICKS (lakes only) |
| 2 | Improve wildlife habitat, natural beauty and privacy, and decrease runoff. | > | 350 FT² NATIVE SHORELINE PLANTING |
| 3 | Prevent runoff from getting into your lake or river or direct water to an infiltration practice. | > | DIVERSION |
| 4 | Capture and clean runoff. | > | ROCK INFILTRATION |
| 5 | Create wildlife habitat and natural beauty while capturing and cleaning runoff. | > | RAIN GARDEN |

**Get updates on the HLR program by signing up for Gov Delivery.** https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDNR_1598

When combined, these small practices make a big difference. Natural shorelines hold soil in place, intercept and filter stormwater runoff, and provide food and shelter for wildlife. In fact, 90% of aquatic species and 70% of land-based species depend on this nearshore area for part of their life cycle. When native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges, and wildflowers disappear, water quality declines and frogs, songbirds, and fish suffer.

Since its start, more than 1,100 waterfront property owners on over 200 lakes and rivers have participated in HLR, supported by local organizations, municipalities, counties, and tribes who can apply for cost-share grants on their behalf. These grants are available year-round from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for up to $1,000 per practice installed, with a grant cap of $25,000. Eligible shoreland



properties include those within 1,000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a river or floodplain.

"Wisconsin is unique in having a statewide shoreline health initiative with funding to help property owners create habitat and improve water quality," said DNR Secretary Karen Hyun. "You can apply simple best practices on your shoreland property, and together we can protect our waters for generations to come."

After installing HLR practices, many landowners say they've noticed less erosion on their property, clearer water, and more wildlife along the shoreline, like butterflies and turtles where they hadn't before! An early participant in the program, Bill Foley of Dane County, installed a 350 ft$^2$ Native Shoreline Planting to replace mowed lawn along their Beaver Dam Lake property. Bill shares, "Our native plant garden has doubled in size and we now spend our time on the nearby bench observing the wildlife attracted to the natural setting."

If you recently purchased land near a lake or river, have been meaning to restore your shoreline, or want to slow runoff from your property, there is no better time to start planning than today! Visit healthylakeswi.com where you'll find how-to guides, funding information, and the "Score My Shore" self-evaluation tool. Take the "quiz," see how your shoreline measures up, and get personalized tips to boost its health.

Together, Wisconsinites are proving that when it comes to caring for our waters, even small actions can ripple into something truly great.

*Photos by Bill Foley*


*Taking first place in the HLR photo contest in the "Healthy Transformations" category are these two shots of Bill and Lyn Foley's property on Beaver Dam Lake before installing a Healthy Lakes & Rivers 350 ft2 Native Shoreline Planting, and 10 years later.*

*Photo by Karen Reynolds*

*Photo by Barbara Barrickman*

*"Ready for a Rain Day" (left) won first place in the HLR photo contest category "People Making Healthy Lakes & Rivers Together" and "Five Swallowtails Flew Into a Raingarden" (above) won first place in the category "Wildlife Enjoying Habitat."*

Photos provided by Madeline Hetland

*Taken about 100 feet from the lakeshore, the boundary is evident between the restored and developed areas.*

**Macroinvertebrates are insects, snails, worms, and other small animals that live in the water. They are small enough to lack a backbone yet still big enough to see without a microscope.**

## The Bug Work

As someone especially interested in aquatic macroinvertebrates, I carried out an independent project to compare these communities at different types of shorelines. Insects especially respond to changes in habitat quality and shoreline structure – exactly what we were trying to quantify. I wanted to know:

1. How do shoreline development and restoration efforts influence aquatic macroinvertebrate communities?

And, as a follow up:

2. Can disturbed sites recover enough to support the same kinds of bugs and critters as a natural shoreline?

To find out, I sampled macroinvertebrates at three different types of shoreline:

- A developed swimming beach area with a manicured lawn,
- The Crystal Lake restoration site, and
- A natural shoreline with minimal human disturbance.

Using a dip net, I collected samples from each site and then spent hours in the lab sorting, identifying, and counting the insects under a microscope. I used a statistical program called R to analyze the data and compare the communities at each site.

## The Results: Nature Bounces Back

What I found was both exciting and encouraging:

- The restored shoreline supported much more diverse insect communities than the developed shoreline. The restored communities were even comparable to those present in the sites with minimal human disturbance.

*Madeline gets ready to collect aquatic insects with her bucket and dip net.*

- Certain groups of insects, like mayflies, caddisflies, and some dragonflies, were found only at the restored and natural sites, and were completely absent from the developed shoreline.
- In terms of the number of different insect types (what we call "taxon richness"), the restored shoreline matched or even exceeded the natural sites in some cases!

This tells us something important: restoration works! Even years later, and even on land that used to be lawn, native vegetation and shoreline improvements can create conditions that support complex aquatic communities. Healthier insect populations mean better food for fish, more stable ecosystems, and improved water quality.

## Why This Matters for Waterfront Property Owners

If you own lakefront property or are part of a lake organization, these findings are good news. They show that thoughtful shoreline restoration, like planting native species, reducing mowing near the water, and allowing natural processes to take place, can lead to meaningful ecological improvements. Restored shorelines benefit more than just bugs! Healthy littoral zones support better water quality, improved fish habitat, and long-term lake sustainability. This is not just a win for nature; it's a win for everyone who values lakes.

So, if you've been wondering whether it's worth letting your shoreline go a little wild or starting a restoration project of your own, the answer is a resounding yes! The lake will thank you, and so will the insects, fish, and future generations who get to enjoy a healthier lake.

*Photo by WAMSCO*

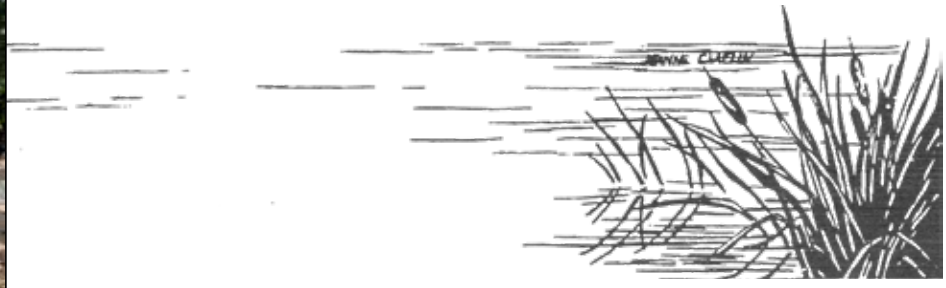
*Shannon Kearney*

## Science, Stewardship, and Gratitude

This fellowship was a defining experience for me. I got to ask real questions, do hands-on fieldwork, and contribute to a bigger picture of how we care for our lakes. Looking ahead, I plan to pursue graduate school after gaining a few more years of experience, with continued interests in aquatic ecology and watershed health (and bugs!). I left the Northwoods with a deeper appreciation for the connections between shorelines, science, and stewardship.

I'd like to give a special thank you to Dr. Katie Hein, research scientist at Trout Lake Station, for providing mentorship and guidance throughout this project. My research was funded by the National Science Foundation, specifically the North Temperate Lakes Long-Term Ecological Research (NTL LTER) Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU). I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to have been part of the work at Trout Lake Station and research that will support healthy lakes for generations to come.

**Restoration works! Native vegetation and shoreline improvements can create conditions that support complex aquatic communities.**



# Preserving Local Control

## A Key to Managing Wake Sports in Wisconsin

*Compiled from Wisconsin Lakes blog post*

WISCONSIN LAKES

Wisconsin has not yet passed statewide legislation to manage wake sports, which Wisconsin Lakes believes will protect lakes from environmental harm and safety risks.

In the absence of state action, 70 towns and municipalities have adopted local ordinances to regulate wake sports. These communities are concerned about invasive species in ballast water, shoreline erosion, lakebed damage, and the safety of other lake users. Only one ordinance — in the Town of Scott, Burnett County — is currently facing a legal challenge, with a decision expected in fall 2026.

More towns are considering similar ordinances, and the Coalition to Protect Wisconsin's Lakes is advocating for any future state law to preserve local authority. The Coalition currently consists of 80 member groups including Wisconsin Lakes, Last Wilderness Alliance, Wisconsin Lakes at Stake, Wisconsin's Green Fire, Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, with many county and local lake organizations joining in support.

Local governments have the constitutional right to regulate boating under Wisconsin's Home Rule provision (Wis. Const. Art. XI, Sec. 3). Ordinances follow a structured process: assessment, drafting, public hearing, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources review, and local board adoption. This ensures that residents and regular lake users — those most familiar with local conditions — have a voice in shaping rules.

Critics argue that local ordinances create a confusing "patchwork" and are hard to enforce. However, Wisconsin Lakes counters that:

- Boaters are responsible for knowing lake-specific rules, which are posted at landings.
- Voluntary compliance is high once ordinances are enacted.
- Enforcement is possible through local officials, constables, boat patrols, or sheriffs.
- The goal is education and compliance, not punishment.

Local control is essential to address the diverse conditions across Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes and thousands of river miles. What works for large, open lakes may not suit small, residential ones. Town boards are best positioned to respond to shoreline erosion, safety hazards, user conflicts, and environmental concerns in ways that reflect community priorities.

For more details, visit the full blog post by Wisconsin Lakes at wisconsinlakes.org/preservation-of-local-control

**Formed more than 20 years ago following the merger of the Wisconsin Federation of Lakes (the statewide association of lake associations) and the Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts, Wisconsin Lakes works to develop statewide solutions for the challenges faced by our lakes while supporting strong local protection efforts.**

# Your Opinion Matters

## Tell us what you think about *Lake Tides*

As 2025 comes to a close, we bring you this final retro version of *Lake Tides* to commemorate 50 years of "the newsletter for people who are interested in Wisconsin's lakes." What a great time to ask for your feedback! This winter, our intern Shannon is helping to gather and analyze your input and will share findings at the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention April 15-17, 2026 in Stevens Point. An article in your next edition of *Lake Tides* will also share these results. **Please take our anonymous survey, which takes just 8-10 minutes.** Your input will help guide future articles and the best ways for us to connect with you. Use the QR code or survey link to add your voice.

https://tinyurl.com/58jdn9wz


### Two Ways You Can Help Keep *Lake Tides* Afloat

1. **Endowment Fund - For lasting impact**
   Our endowment fund was created to provide long-term support for *Lake Tides*, including undergraduate fellowships, graduate assistantships, newsletter production, and other essential needs.
   If you'd like to make a lasting contribution, please visit:
   https://give.uwsp.edu/g/wisconsin-lakes

2. **Gift Account - For immediate support**
   The *Lake Tides* gift account helps cover current expenses, such as rising postage and printing costs, so we can continue to publish and distribute the newsletter without interruption. If you'd like to help with immediate newsletter expenses, please send a check made out to **Extension Lakes** with "Lake Tides gift" in the memo line to:

   Extension Lakes
   College of Natural Resources, UWSP
   800 Reserve Street
   Stevens Point, WI 54481

### Want to Keep Receiving Lake Tides? Contact Us!

We're still cleaning up our mailing list. If you haven't already, please let us know if and how you would like to continue receiving your free *Lake Tides* newsletter in any of these three ways:

> Fill out the super-quick form using this QR code or this URL: https://forms.gle/3hhAtCBb2BN7dwqS6

> Email us at lakes@uwsp.edu with your **ID#, name**, and **address** as they appear on the back of this paper copy with needed changes

> Call and leave a message at 715-346-2116 with updates or questions

Your support helps ensure your *Lake Tides* newsletter remains a trusted source for lake and watershed news. Thank you for helping keep this resource strong!

# A Hunter of Dragons

*By Paul Skawinski, Citizen Lake Monitoring Network Statewide Educator, Extension Lakes*

Dragonhunter of September by Vicki DeLoach, Flickr CC 4.0 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en

*This male dragonhunter, an impressively large yellow-and-black dragonfly, takes a break on an ironwood tree. His curved abdomen and long, spiny arms are trademarks of the species, perfect for grabbing any unlucky insect that happens to fly by.*

After reading our cover article about some of the research taking place this summer at Trout Lake Station, we thought you might want to learn more about the dragonfly larva Madeline is holding on the front page – a dragonhunter (*Hagenius brevistylus*). Measuring almost three and a half inches long as an adult, the dragonhunter is the largest of the clubtails (family Gomphidae), so large and fierce that it catches and eats other dragonflies! This aggressive and curious insect also feeds on deer flies, damselflies, butterflies, and other large insects. Dragonhunters are common in northern Wisconsin, and their range includes most of eastern North America.

## The Larval (Nymph) Stage

Like other dragonflies, dragonhunters spend their "childhood" at the bottom of aquatic environments, especially in flowing waters with forested shorelines. Even in their youth, they are aggressive predators of other insects and small animals. The dragonhunter's flat, round, dark body allows it to blend in with leaves that accumulate along the water's edge. It has strikingly large back legs compared to its other legs, making it look somewhat like a spider or a very large tick. This dragonfly spends multiple years in its larval stage before transforming into a flying adult.

## The Final Countdown

After growing and molting several times as an aquatic nymph, the dragonhunter will crawl out of the water onto a sturdy plant or other object, dry in the sun, and break out of its larval case into an adult dragonfly for its final few months of

life. After pumping its wings full of hemolymph (insect "blood"), it will take flight as one of the most feared insects of the aquatic world (if you're another insect). The dragonhunter's head and body is black with bright yellow stripes and its massive wings allow it to chase fast-flying prey (up to 25 mph!) and hold onto its catch with leg spines.

As adults, dragonhunters focus their attention on eating, mating, and laying eggs. Females will dip the tip of their abdomen into the water to drop a small group of eggs, which fall to the bottom. Eggs laid in early summer will hatch within a month and begin feeding, while eggs laid at the end of the summer may lie dormant until the following spring when conditions will be more favorable for the young nymph.

Paul Skawinski

*This ebony jewelwing damselfly, a common insect along the banks of flowing waters, is one of the dragonhunter's favorite foods. Observing the discarded wings of an ebony jewelwing floating on the water is a clue that a dragonhunter may be lurking just upstream.*

## A Recent Threat

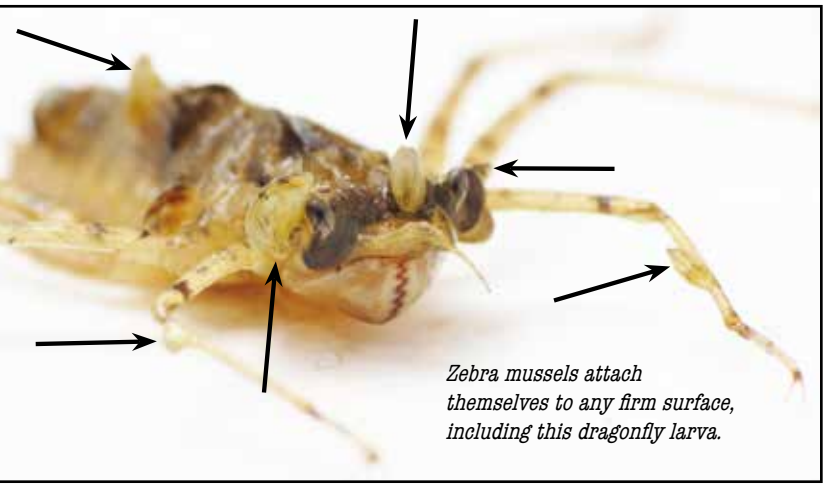
A recent and maybe unexpected threat to dragonhunters is the invasive zebra mussel that arrived in the Great Lakes in ballast water from the Black and Caspian Seas. Zebra mussels will attach themselves to any firm surface, including the bodies of aquatic animals like dragonfly larvae. While the more slender dragonfly nymphs tend to burrow into the sediments, dragonhunter larvae have wide bodies and spend their time walking along the bottom. This leaves them more exposed to zebra mussels looking for a surface to colonize.

Although some of our lakes are frozen now, dragonhunters are still busy at the bottom, slowly crawling through autumn's leaves and stalking their next meal.

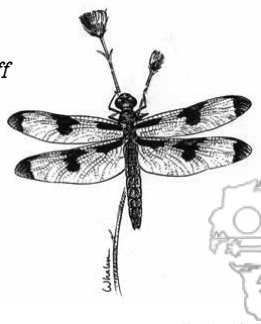
Paul Skawinski

Paul Skawinski

*Emerging from its larval case, this dragonfly will pump its wings full of hemolymph (insect "blood") and take off looking for a meal.*



*Zebra mussels attach themselves to any firm surface, including this dragonfly larva.*



# Capacity Corner

## Which Lake Organization is Best for Your Community?

*By Sara Windjue, Leadership and Capacity Development Specialist, Extension Lakes*

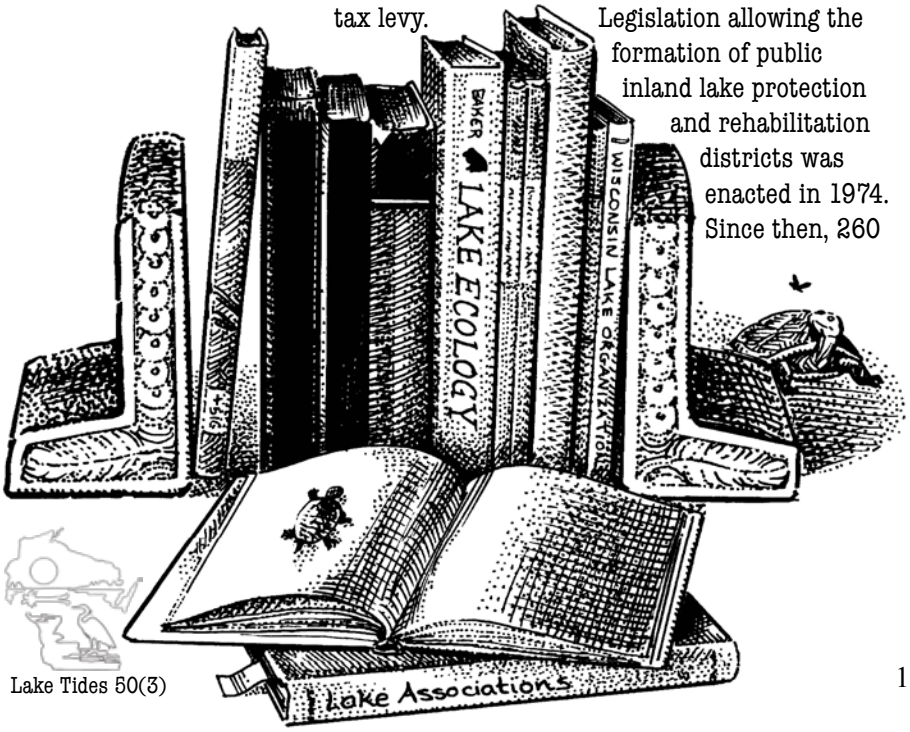
Capacity Corner December 2025


In each issue of *Lake Tides*, we introduce you to different ideas and resources to help you increase your organization's capacity to care for lakes. We close out each year of the Capacity Corner by looking at programmatic capacity: the ability of a lake organization to get things done.

We're going to explore the differences between lake associations and lake districts and help you decide which is right for your lake. We'll also describe the changes you will go through if your group transitions from an association to a district or if your district decides to dissolve.

### Lake Associations vs. Lake Districts

Lake associations are non-profit groups that rely on dues, donations, fundraisers, and grants. A lake district is a special purpose unit of government that manages a lake or group of lakes. One of the major differences between lake districts and lake associations is that lake districts have the power to raise money through compulsory fees and the property tax levy. Legislation allowing the formation of public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts was enacted in 1974. Since then, 260 lake communities have formed lake districts and four to five new districts form each year.




Lake districts commonly take on the same programmatic challenges as lake associations, but since they can use taxes and fees to raise revenue they spend far less time and energy on fundraisers, membership drives, or chasing down donations. For this reason, we think of lake districts as having a greater ability to focus their time, effort, and resources on executing programs and projects that benefit the lake compared to lake associations.

There are some tradeoffs, however. Lake districts need to closely follow Wisconsin statutes that specify how they operate. They also must follow a specific process to come into existence, which typically entails petitioning landowners to demonstrate that the majority of people around the lake want to see a lake district formed. This process alone consumes time and energy and can be a source of conflict in a community if a faction of people are opposed to forming a lake district.

### Is it Time to Transition from an Association to a District?

Before you transition your organization from a lake association to a lake district, clarify the goals you want to accomplish can only be met by becoming a district.

The main reason you might want to become a district is because you are not raising enough in dues and donations to meet your goals; however, becoming a district isn't always a quick solution. There are multiple lake associations in Wisconsin who have larger budgets than districts due to their fundraising strategies. If it's a question of fairness (i.e. ensuring that everyone has "skin in the game"), it is important that the issues your lake is facing justifies the time and effort needed to establish and operate a district and that everyone will benefit from the district.

Several lake districts have formed in recent years to tackle challenges around dam maintenance and replacement. These can be expensive projects with large up-front costs that involve loans, and lake districts have an easier time borrowing money compared to lake associations. Lake districts and other local governments are eligible to borrow money from the State of Wisconsin through the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. Caring for dams is also an example where most people on the lake will receive some benefit and therefore should be helping to cover the cost.

## Is Legal Assistance Necessary?

Forming a lake district is a complex and extensive process which often requires a certain understanding of a variety of laws and legal concepts. Some lake districts have formed with little or no legal assistance. Others have opted to retain some level of professional help. You should consider whether you feel comfortable trying the process alone or if you should obtain some level of professional or legal advice and assistance. There may be someone within your proposed district who has the needed skills and willingness to assist.

## Is it Time for the Organization to Dissolve?

It is also possible for a community to find that there is insufficient interest to maintain an organization that focuses on their lake issues. The institutional work can be overwhelming for volunteers to maintain.

A lake association should follow its bylaws regarding the steps for dissolving. For most associations, this would involve a two-thirds majority vote by the board followed by a two-thirds majority vote of members in favor of a resolution of dissolution. Such a resolution directs the Board of Directors to prepare a dissolution plan for subsequent approval by the members as provided under Wisconsin law. Dissolution is not final until the members, by majority vote, have approved the dissolution plan, either at a meeting or by a binding mail referendum. The dissolution plan should ensure that any outstanding liabilities are accounted for and that assets are legally distributed. If the association is an IRS-recognized 501(c)(3), any assets must be distributed either to another tax-exempt nonprofit or a government entity.

Only one Wisconsin lake district has completely dissolved to our knowledge. Others still exist but are currently in a non-active status, meaning they are not collecting taxes or special charges, so they most likely do not have a budget to operate. Most non-active districts are ones created by a resolution of a village and whoever is elected to the village board becomes the lake district board. They can call an annual meeting at any time to revive the group if needed.

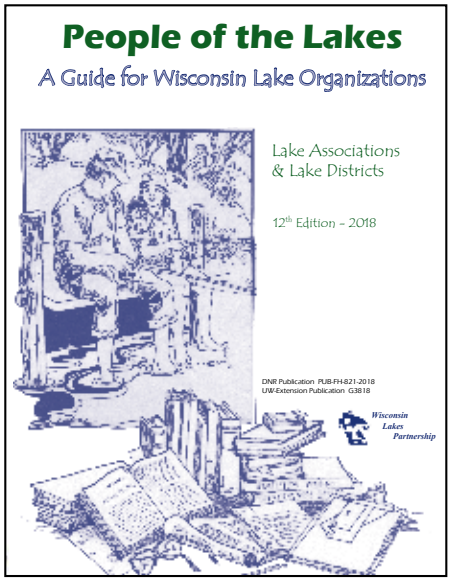
To completely dissolve a district, you must be sure that the district is truly not needed as it will require a two-thirds majority vote at an annual meeting. The issue must first be placed on the annual meeting agenda by one of the following:

- A majority vote of the members present at the previous annual meeting.
- Unanimous vote of the commissioners.
- Notification of the commissioners by an individual voter at least 90 days prior to the annual meeting.

The notice of the annual meeting must include a statement that a petition to dissolve the district will be considered. If the voters at the annual meeting choose to dissolve, the district must then work with the county to wind down its financial operations.

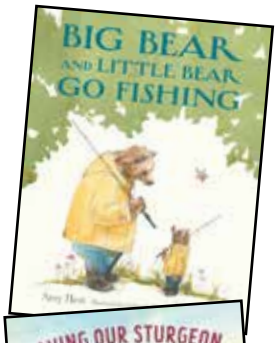
**Lake districts and other local governments are eligible to borrow money from the State of Wisconsin through the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands.**

*Please refer to Chapter 4 of People of the Lakes: A Guide for WIsconsin Lake Organizations for more detail. Just go to uwsp.edu/uwexlakes and find it listed under "Lake Organizations" in the navigation bar.*



# Keeping Lakes in the Family

## Sharing the Magic Through Stories







*Book reviews adapted from Cooperative Children's Book Center at UW-Madison, Wisconsin Historical Society, and Robin Wall Kimmerer.*

*Compiled by Lynn Markham, Center for Land Use Education, UW-Stevens Point*
*Descriptions used or adapted from online reviews*

This year's book recommendations focus on fishing as a beloved activity with family and friends. Plus, new books about the Great Lakes, freshwater fish, and how fallen trees in lakes and on the shore provide a home, safe-haven, nursery, and buffet for fish and wildlife.

### Big Bear and Little Bear Go Fishing

Ages 3-6

Written by Amy Hest; Illustrated by Erin Stead

With gentle humor, pleasing repetition, and carefully chosen words, this quiet, lovely tale feels like a classic. Little Bear's imitation and obvious admiration of Big Bear are endearing, and careful readers will realize that quality time together (not catching fish) was always the goal.

### Saving Our Sturgeon: Protecting Wisconsin's Ancient Fish

Ages 10+

Written by Rebecca Hogue Wojahn with Anne Moser as consultant

This is a story of a fascinating fish and the forward-thinking people who saved them in Wisconsin. For millennia, sturgeon swam the waterways of Wisconsin. Before the 1800s, an estimated eleven million sturgeon lived in Lake Michigan alone. But by the early 1900s, everything changed when the sturgeon was threatened with extinction.

Saving Our Sturgeon details not only the fascinating facts of the fish, but the efforts made by conservationists to save the species in Wisconsin including a chapter about the Menominee Nation's work to revitalize cultural traditions focused on the sturgeon and restore access to the fish on their reservation. This inspiring book shares a conservation success story about one remarkable (and plenty peculiar) species of fish and shows young readers how they, too, can help protect these incredible creatures.

### One Frozen Lake

Ages 3-7

Written by Deborah Jo Larson; illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher

After walking across a frozen lake one morning, a boy and his grandfather make holes in the ice, drop their fishing lines into the water, and wait. After five hours, they move into a heated canvas shack and try again. They share hot cocoa with friends, but "Seven hours pass. Not one fish." Packing up at nine o'clock, they reel in a line and catch a fish. The artwork transports readers to the unusual setting – underwater – which children might find difficult to imagine on their own. An inviting introduction to fishing above and below the ice.

### Bud Finds Her Gift

Ages 4+

Written by Robin Wall Kimmerer; Illustrated by Naoko Stoop

A beautiful and lushly illustrated tale celebrating gratitude, reciprocity, and finding our place in the natural world, ideal for sharing with the youngest readers.

When young Bud sees people bustling around, intent on their chores and their screens, she is certain they must be doing important things—and she wants to be included. But wise Nokomis, her grandmother, shows her that there is a different way to find belonging, one that relies on stillness and observing the natural world. As Bud discovers the freely given gifts of the Earth, she wonders if she has something important to give back: What is her gift?

## The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure

Ages 7-12

Written by Barb Rosenstock; illustrated by Jamey Christoph

Beloved in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest, and critical to the nation, the Great Lakes are only 3,000 years old in their current, widely recognized shapes, the "youngest major geological feature on the planet." This informational picture book begins by detailing how the Great Lakes formed. Then it features some of the 139 species of native fish living in the lakes. It then follows a drop of water as it moves from Lake Superior to Huron, to Michigan, to Erie, then over Niagara Falls, into Lake Ontario, down the St. Lawrence River and finally into the Atlantic Ocean. A final section looks at how humans have used the Great Lakes — first Native peoples, and then European settlers, who contributed vast amounts of pollution, before Indigenous activists led efforts to clean up the Great Lakes.

## Log Life

Ages 5-10

By Amy Hevron

What happens when a giant tree is felled by a storm? It becomes a nurse log, a home to countless creatures on the forest floor. Almost immediately, new life and activities spring up on and around the fallen tree. Fungi arrive, followed by lichen and chicken mushrooms. Creatures including beetles, ants, snails, and birds are next. The nurse log offers shelter, shade, and warmth to salamanders, frogs, and voles. Eventually, a new fir tree sprouts. Readers are likely to delight in the cheerful, adorable illustrations and the conversational, accessible text.

## A Second Life for Trees in Lakes: As Useful in Water as They Were on Land

Ages 12+

Written by Michael A. Bozek

Remarkably, after a tree falls in the lake it might last another 300 to 600 years in the water! Large submerged trees can host entire fish communities, which is why anglers often fish near trees that have fallen in the water. This short, nonfiction booklet shares scientific data showing what fish species use submerged trees, as well as simple steps we can take to increase fish habitat. View an online copy or order 10 booklets for the price of shipping from the Extension Lakes bookstore: uwsp.edu/uwexlakes

## Freshwater Fish Series (Volumes 1 & 2)

Ages 8+

These books will help you better understand these native Wisconsin fishes and give you some ideas on where and how to find them in their natural habitat! Available from the Extension Lakes bookstore: uwsp.edu/uwexlakes

### Bluegills and Iowa Darter

Written by Elie Hart, Lynn Markham, Justin Sipiorski and Jonathan Stoffregren

Illustrated by Justin Sipiorski

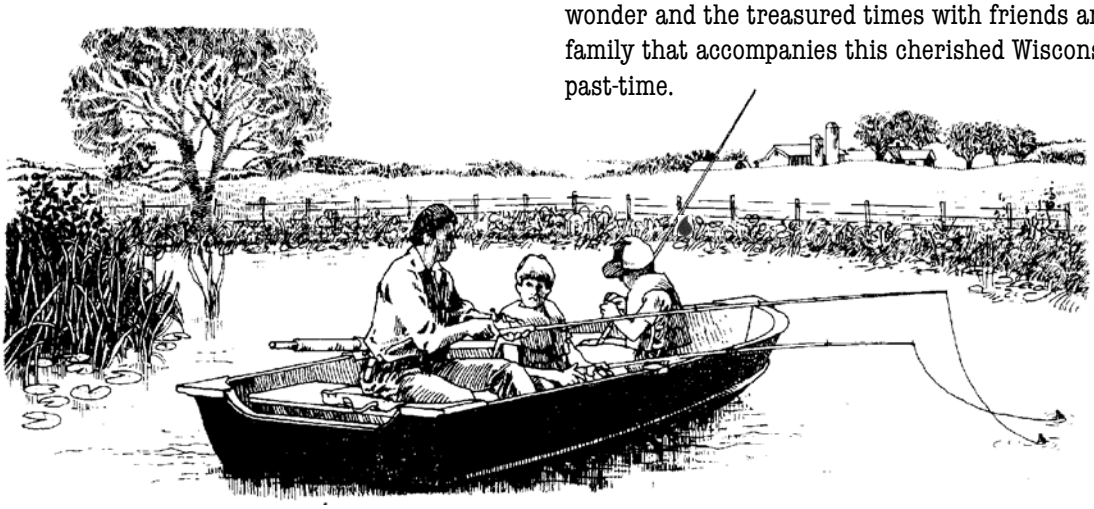
Photos from Engbretson Underwater Photography (in Bluegills)

## You Shoulda Been Here Last Week: Stories from an Angling Life

Ages 12+

Written by Ted Rulseh

This collection of fishing-related stories and essays guides you through a lifetime of angling joys, thrills, and failures. It covers moments of wonder and the treasured times with friends and family that accompanies this cherished Wisconsin past-time.

# Decades of Dedication

## Registration is Open for the 2026 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention

The 2026 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention will be taking a look back at the "decades of dedication" devoted to solving Wisconsin's wicked water problems and protecting our amazing lakes and rivers. Join scientists, water management specialists, educators, students, waterfront property owners, and other water-forward thinkers this spring, at the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point, to share insights, connections, and inspiration!

One of last year's attendees said, "As a first time attendee, I commend everyone involved with making this event happen. It's a very well-oiled machine that has something of interest for everyone. I enjoyed the keynote speakers and felt that the room moderators were excellent."

### What to Expect

Add-on

**Wednesday, April 15 - Pre-convention Workshops**
These engaging and interactive sessions help participants explore topics in a way that allows them to leave feeling like they are more capable or inspired for their next project.
*Pre-registration required - register early to secure your spot (many of these fill up quickly)*

Main Convention Schedule

**Wednesday, April 15 - Evening Welcome Reception**
This informal gathering of water lovers is a great way for newcomers to "get their feet wet," and for seasoned Convention attendees to reconnect.

- Flow Project art exhibit
- Appetizers and cash bar
- Fun networking opportunities

**Thursday, April 16**
Enjoy a full day of learning, engaging, and networking.

- Full-group welcome session
- Over 35 concurrent sessions
- Over 50 educational and business exhibits
- Lightning talks and poster presentations
- Awards ceremony and banquet (add-on ticketed event)

**Friday, April 17**

- Over 35 concurrent sessions
- Over 50 educational and business exhibits
- Convention Confluence (includes lunch)
  - Featuring Luke Zahm


We're excited to welcome Luke Zahm, host of the PBS Emmy® Award-winning TV series, *Wisconsin Foodie*, and co-owner and chef at Viroqua's Driftless Cafe, on Friday for our Convention Confluence. Just like a home-cooked meal, this session is a time to slow down, share experiences, and find commonality.

Add-on

**Friday, April 17 - Post-convention Workshops**
Join in-depth discussions on specific topics and head home ready to dedicate your knowledge to protecting and preserving our treasured water resources.
*Pre-registration required - register early to secure your spot (many of these fill up quickly)*

## Virtual Option

**Can't join us in person?**
Virtual attendance (via Zoom) is available for select sessions as well as full-group sessions on Thursday and Friday.

## Add-ons

**Want to get more in-depth?**
Be sure to select the optional Pre- and Post-Convention Workshops as add-ons during your registration!

## Lodging

**Staying overnight?**
Make your reservation soon at the Holiday Inn Convention Center (rooms fill quickly).

Find reservation information at wisconsinwaterweek.org

## 20% Discount

**Want to save money?**
Register by February 1, 2026 to receive early-bird pricing.

## Students 50% off

**Are you a student?**
Students enrolled in a K-12 school or institute of higher education can receive 50% off their registration costs. Please email wiwaterweek@wisconsinlakes.org for the discount code before registering.

# wisconsinwaterweek.org

## Scholarships

We want to be sure everyone is able to attend this premier learning and networking event, regardless of cost. Our goal is to bring people together from communities across Wisconsin to strengthen our partnership and protect our waters.

**GIVE**
If you're able to donate to the scholarship fund to support those who may otherwise be unable to attend, there are two ways to donate:

Not attending the Convention?

- Donate now to the Scholarship Fund through the Extension Lakes online store (uwsp.edu/uwexlakes). Scroll past the t-shirts to find the scholarship amounts.

Attending the Convention?

- If you plan to register for the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention, you can add a scholarship gift to your registration.

**APPLY**
You can apply for a scholarship to attend the Convention and we will connect with you when funds are available. Please contact us at wiwaterweek@wisconsinlakes.org if you have any questions. Find details at wisconsinwaterweek.org.

## CALENDAR

**Check out our Online Calendar at uwsp.edu/uwexlakes**

Stay up-to-date with water-related events across the state, region, and beyond with our online calendar. Don't see your event listed? Let us know by clicking "Add an Event" at the top of the page and fill out the short form!

*April Lehman*

**Lake Tides**
Extension Lakes - College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
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Stevens Point, WI 54481
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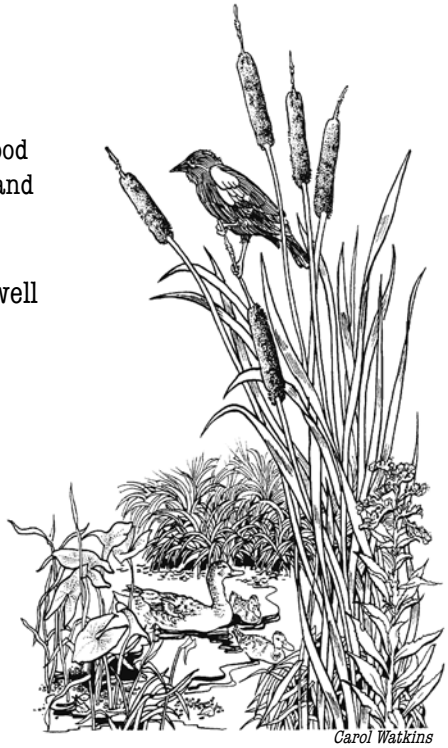
# Reflections

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home."

— Edith Sitwell



*Carol Watkins*