

## NEWS

# Residents recognized as lake leaders

Seven Vilas and Oneida county residents recently graduated from the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute, a statewide leadership program aimed to help lake stewards gain a better understanding of lake ecology and how to work with state and local governments to assure lakes get the attention they need.

Through a combination of reading, classroom activities and field experiences, participants learned about lake management, local and state government and leadership skills.

The Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute draws participants from across the state to take part in a series of three two-day seminars. Participants demonstrate a commitment to protecting the integrity of the lakes in Wisconsin with an investment of their time and a \$300 tuition fee.

Carol Warden, one of the recent graduates, reflected on her passion, "I've found nothing on earth more calming, life-giving, satisfying and exhilarating than time spent on a lake. And therefore, I can find nothing more on earth that I want to work harder to protect and keep than our lakes."

Local members participating as part of "Crew 9" Lake Leaders include Dave Blunk of Squaw Lake in Vilas and Oneida counties; Steven Budnik of Turtle Lakes Chain in Winchester; Dennis Burg of Eagle River Chain of Lakes; Laura Herman, statewide citizen lake monitoring network coordinator with UW-Extension; Katherine Noel from Indian Lake in Oneida County; Quita Sheehan, Vilas County conservation specialist; and Carol Warden, aquatic invasive species specialist



Vilas and Oneida county graduates of "Crew 9" of the Lake Leaders Institute at Aldo Leopold's Shack in Baraboo include, from left, Quita Sheehan, Dave Blunk, Kathy Noel, Laura Herman, Dennis Burg, Carol Warden and Steve Budnik. —Contributed Photo

with the UW Center for Limnology at Trout Lake Station.

The graduation ceremony took place at the Aldo Leopold Shack near Baraboo.

"This is the most complete lake ecology course I've ever been involved in," said Blunk.

Professional lake workers such as Herman agreed. "I have worked with lake issues for years and I still learned so much from the Lake Leaders Institute," said Herman. "The sessions covered topics ranging from leadership, values, and environmental ethics to lake ecology and human impacts to lake advocacy and citizen involvement. It was an A-to-Z lake learning experience."

All this passion and commitment benefits Wisconsin

taxpayers and lake users.

"With over 15,000 lakes statewide and a modest number of state staff in service to protect them, it is clear that no one state agency or unit of government can independently provide the attention that each lake deserves" said Patrick Goggin, UW-Extension lake specialist. "This leadership program provides local lake leaders with effective tools and resources to assist them as they volunteer their skills and talents to the stewardship of our lakes."

The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership is a team made up of the UW-Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the citizen advocacy organization for Wisconsin lakes. Together they recognized the need for new and ongoing

leadership in the management of lakes and created the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute in 1996.

The mission of the Institute is to assist citizen lake leaders or "crew members" in developing and enhancing both their technical and people skills, ultimately enriching their communities and the waters within them.

Since its inception, more than 200 participants have graduated from the Institute and have made significant contributions in addressing diverse water management challenges. The program has received national attention as an effective strategy to enhance lake stewardship and protection.

For more information about the Lakes Leadership program, contact Sheehan at (715) 479-3646.