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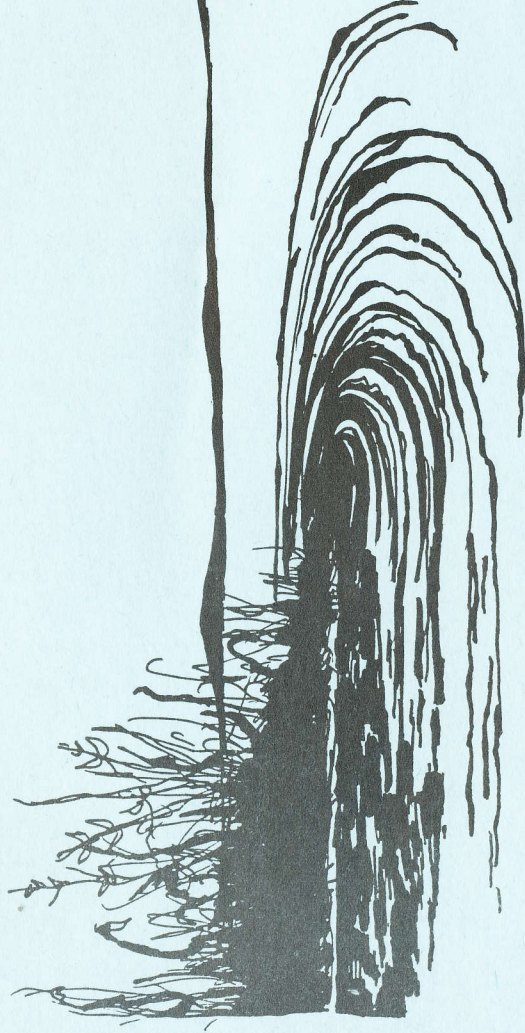
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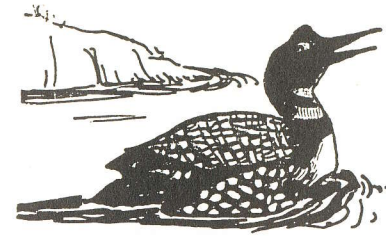
A Newsletter for People
Interested in Wisconsin
Lakes

Lake Tides

SEPT. 1983

VOL. 8 NO. 2

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IN THE WAKE OF A LOON:
AN EDITORIAL

Lakes are important--to the economy of our state, to the natural heritage of all citizens, and especially to the people who live on their shorelines. Many communities are engaging in aeration, weed harvesting, water level control and protection projects using local financial resources. Other communities are actively planning management efforts.

These efforts by committed lake district commissioners and lake property owners are especially noteworthy following the recent reductions in state assistance to lake districts and the frustrations of the past two years. Lake districts, the Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts (which worked hard to maintain state funds and staff), and the now disbanded staff in DNR and UW-Extension will remember the past two years as a roller coaster ride which didn't end at the right platform.

Even though all funds for grants and staff were removed from the program, the following elements remain as a legal base for lake districts and as sources of technical assistance:

- Chapter 33 was not changed. Lake districts retain all powers they previously held.
- DNR field staff in district and area offices will continue to respond to inquiries regarding fish management, aquatic nuisance control, permits, and related matters. Primary contacts are the following DNR District Lake Management Coordinators:

Northwest District--Ted Smith, Box 309, Spooner, WI 54801
(715) 635-2101

North Central District--Larry Maltbey, Box 818, Rhineland, WI 54501 (715) 362-7616

West Central District--Terry A. Moe, 1300 West Clairemont Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54701 (715) 836-2951

Lake Michigan District--Dennis Weisensel, Box 3600, Green Bay, WI 54303 (414) 497-4048

Southeast District--Jeffrey Bode, Box 13248, Milwaukee, WI 53213 (414) 257-6537

Southern District--Thomas Bainbridge, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Madison, WI 53711 (608) 266-0752

- At the state level, DNR reallocated funds for one position as a contact person in Madison--Richard Wedepohl, WRM/2, Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 (608) 267-7513.
- University Extension agents will continue to be available. Degree of involvement will vary from county to county. Other personnel in the courthouse will also continue to be available: U.S. Soil Conservation Service, County Land Conservation Committee, and Planning and Zoning Office.
- University Extension reallocated funds to maintain 1/2 of a lake management position at the statewide specialist level--Lowell Klessig, College of Natural Resources, UW-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481 (715) 346-3783.
- Other DNR and University personnel can be accessed on an ad hoc basis.
- U.S. Geological Survey will cost-share monitoring on a 50% basis. DNR involvement in study design and data interpretation is limited by current staff resources.
- Efforts are being made to reconstitute other services for lake districts and other lake communities.

However, onsite local care and concern remains the key to the management of most lakes. It is essential that you sustain such involvement and commitment, even if you feel a little like a single parent.

Sincerely,



Lowell L. Klessig
Professor

1983 IN A NUTSHELL

- January 1983 -- Governor Earl, in his budget message, proposes to cut all grants to lake districts and all six staff in DNR and two in University Extension, as well as the language in Chapter 33 regarding the state's responsibility for lakes.
- January 1983 -- DNR Secretary Besadny writes to lake districts to inform them that no grants would be made from current appropriations, that future funding is unlikely, and that the "inland lakes" staff would be reassigned.
- January-June 1983 -- Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts and numerous individuals lobby for a restoration of various levels of state resources for lake districts.
- Spring 1983 -- DNR seeks three positions for lake management and University Extension asks for continuation of two positions. Both requests are denied by Joint Finance Committee of the Legislature. Language on state responsibility for lakes is restored, however.
- June 1983 -- Under Rep. Calvin Potter's leadership, the Legislature restores the two University Extension positions, and provides \$70,000 in grants for organizing and conducting studies.
- June 1983 -- Governor Earl vetoes the positions in Extension and the \$70,000 grant package.
- July-August 1983 -- Earl meets with key legislators (Holperin, Potter, Stower) to discuss new directions for lake management. The legislators meet with DNR and University Extension officials to begin drafting a plan for the future.
- Summer 1983 -- DNR maintains one position (Dick Wedepohl) as a lake district contact in the Madison office. Other DNR staff have taken reassignments. George Gibson leaves the University of Wisconsin Extension for University of Maryland. Lowell Klessig will split his time between assistance to lake districts, acid rain, rural property management, and District Program leadership.

COMMISSIONERS CONVENTION

Facilities have been reserved for April 13th and 14th at UW-Stevens Point for the 1984 Commissioners Convention.

Please mark your calendar. If you desire accommodations at the Holiday Inn, we suggest you make them early (715/341-1340). A block of rooms is being held at the Holiday Inn. More modestly priced rooms are available at Best Western (344-8312) and Road Star Inn (344-9090).

Also, your suggestions regarding the program are welcomed.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

If you missed the World's Fair last year, you can visit Knoxville this fall (October 18th-20th) for a major gathering of people interested in lakes--perhaps the largest ever. Most of the 30 sessions and 150 presentations will be oriented to professional lake managers. However, at least one of the concurrent sessions should be of interest to commissioners or lake property owners.

For more information, contact:

Wayne Poppe, Conference Chairman
Tennessee Valley Authority
248 - 401 Bld.
Chattanooga, TN 37401

OR

Lowell Klessig, Program Chairman
College of Natural Resources
UW-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481

MAILING LISTS

Please send names and addresses of new commissioners to
Lowell Klessig and Dick Wedepohl.

An article from the St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press (May 16, 1982)
entitled: SAWYER COUNTY TESTS ITS SEWERS TO PRESERVE ITS LAKES

By Larry Van Goethem

WARD, Wis. — Robert Kinney believes Sawyer County's tourism industry is only as good as the quality of water in its lakes and rivers.

Consequently, the county maintains an aggressive program of inspection and condemnation of residential sewage systems.

Kinney, the county's extension resource agent, said the program, begun in 1969, has resulted in less pollution, vastly improved septic systems, and cleaner water.

But Sawyer County remains the only county in Wisconsin to undertake the program — despite the fact that it costs the county only several hundred dollars a year, is enforced by existing state statutes and requires no additional county personnel.

The program has, Kinney said, had remarkable success in finding and eliminating pollution from 15 percent of the sewage systems among thousands of summer homes, cottages and resorts.

Kinney launched the program using University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point science students under work-study summer job programs.

Its first objective was to determine pollution sources in, and near, Lake Hayward.

Cottage and resort owners had been debating the source of high bacteria levels, excessive weeds and other pollutants that forced the county to close a public swimming beach on the lake every August when water levels were low.

The study found that many summer homes had improperly functioning systems, ranging from outright drains leading to the lake to seepage of wastes from overtaxed septic tanks.

But, a major recreation enterprise whose sewage drain led directly into the lake also was pinpointed. The owner spent \$12,000 fixing the system and now, Kinney said, it has one of the best systems in the area.

Within four years, the public swimming beach no longer had to be closed.

The key to the system, Kinney said, is that anonymity is maintained and owners aren't embarrassed. "We weren't out to crucify anyone," he said.

The county follows up all inspections with orders by Zoning Administrator David Heath to bring lax systems up to code. If that fails, the district attorney follows up with a warning.

In a dozen years, no order has been tested in court. The closest the county came to a fight was when the county checked sewage systems on Round Lake.

"A group of attorneys purchased a resort on the lake," said Kinney. "They said it was illegal, that we were infringing on their rights. We said, 'Fine, what we're going to do is put in a report to the Round Lake Property Owners' Association saying you refused permission to let our inspectors come onto your property because you think you may have a problem.'"

"They said, 'That's blackmail!' We said, 'Call it what you want.' And they asked, 'Who do you think is the best plumber in the county.'"

"They fixed that up," said Kinney. "And you can't believe the quality of the installation they put in. But they had to bluff us."

Over the years the number of participating stu-

dents has fluctuated depending upon the availability of work-study funds.

The program is in some jeopardy this summer because federal funding has been cut. But Kinney said it appears UW-Stevens Point will supply some researchers.

What has come across clearly through the many inspections, said Kinney, is that clean water is becoming an issue that divides neighbors. "The kids at school won't rat on each other, but the property owners will because their tax dollars are so high on the lakeshore that they want to keep what they've got," he said.

Because of the program, Kinney has noticed that cottage owners on other lakes are voluntarily upgrading their systems without waiting for the county to call attention to them.

"I think just about any system put in years ago... is an illegal system," he said. "But they're grandfathered (deferred under state law). There's an old barrel out there and as long as it isn't polluting there's not much you can do about it."

Pollution is checked by putting a dye in toilets. "On this one recreation spot up here, it was out in the lake before we got out there," Kinney said.

If the dye doesn't show up during the day, the researchers often return in a boat at night and check it with a black light. The reason? Some homeowners, Kinney said, will avoid flushing their toilets until evening, hoping to avoid detection.

Overall, said Kinney, "The cooperation has been tremendous."

This year, inspections are set for several lakes, with a re-check of Round Lake and a complete inspection of Lake Chetac, where some problems are suspected.

Before the county can inspect, petitions signed by 51 per cent of the property owners must be obtained. In some cases, lake associations have requested the inspections.

Kinney is proud of the program, saying that it's given him more satisfaction and concrete results than anything he's done in 30 years as a resource agent. He wishes more counties would join the effort, adding that neighboring counties have been urged to develop their own programs.

"Water is so important to our economy," he said. "Recreation is our most important business. If we don't protect that, we're in trouble."

Three years ago, the county also began testing some water wells and discovered the presence of high levels of nitrogen, phosphate and potash — all products of fertilizer. But the substances were showing up in recently developed lakes in the Chequamegon National Forest.

At a meeting of property owners last fall, people demanded to know where the pollution was coming from. "Would you believe it? — it's you," Kinney told them.

He asked how many had lawns on their lakeshore land. Most raised their hands. Then he asked how many fertilized the lawns. Virtually all of them raised their hands.

"They didn't realize what they were doing," Kinney said. "What we're finding is that people like a beautiful lawn. They come up there to get this nice environment and they fertilize right to the shore. They destroy the thing they purchased the lot for."

PHOSPHATE BAN

Limnologists generally agree that phosphorus is the limiting element in most lake ecosystems. In other words, plants have plenty of the other nutrients they need to grow and multiply. When phosphorus enters the lake from fertilizers, manure, septic systems, or organic matter, the weeds and algae grow in proportion to the amount of phosphorus added.

On July 1, 1982, Wisconsin's ban on high phosphate cleaning agents expired. Because the law contains an expiration date (sunset), it had to be re-enacted to remain in effect.

Opponents of re-enacting the ban claimed that the ban had not resulted in less algae in Wisconsin lakes, and that clothes were not washing as clean or white with phosphate substitutes. Proponents argued that (1) three years was too short a period to observe results in lake systems, (2) algae problems on some lakes might have gotten worse without the ban, and (3) local sewage treatment plants would have to spend \$2,000,000 more per year to remove phosphorus from municipal sewage.

The soap and detergent industry opposed the ban and actively solicited support for its position among homemakers and the Legislature. There was little organized effort in favor of re-enactment. After several close votes, the Assembly failed to re-enact the ban.

Early in 1983, 63 legislators co-sponsored Assembly Bill 138-- new legislation to ban cleaning agents which contain more than 0.5% phosphorus by weight except machine dishwashing and medical equipment which can use cleaners up to 8.7% phosphorus. Chemical water conditioners are limited to 20% phosphorus. Dairy equipment cleaning agents and industrial processes are exempt.

The bill passed the Assembly and is now before the Senate. If passed and signed by Governor Earl, it becomes effective January 1, 1984. In contrast to the first law, this bill contains no sunset provision.

MONTELLO LAKE DISTRICT Dick DeSoto Commission Chairman

Our project is not particularly unique, however, the speed with which we accomplished the project may be noteworthy. In August of 1981, Montello Lake, a 300-acre lake located in Marquette County in southern Wisconsin, had a voluntary association with limited resources and attendance of less than 20 property owners at its annual meetings. The formation of the lake district had been talked about for at least 8 years and an earlier attempt to create a district was rejected by the County Board. After one year of organizing, by September of 1982, we had a lake district established with an equalized valuation in excess of \$8,250,000. Only nine months later, by July of 1983, we owned \$76,000 worth of weed harvesting equipment.

In September, 1981, the association was reorganized and a new Board of Directors was elected. Looking back, one of the most important decisions we made was to choose the board members for their willingness to work and their location around the lake. Each cove or lakefront section had at least one representative. As we progressed, we found that this geographic representation was most helpful. Rumors were eliminated before they had a damaging effect on our progress, because everyone had a neighbor who was involved in every decision and knew all the facts.

Montello Lake is a very shallow lake with a serious aquatic weed problem. The lake was slowly deteriorating into a swamp. By July each year the lake was impassable. We realized that we needed money to begin a rehabilitation program. The 110 attendees at our special September, 1981 meeting pledged \$200 per property owner. The winter months were spent collecting \$25,000 in voluntary contributions from the property and business owners. These funds were spent during the summer of 1982 to fund contract weed harvesting and chemical treatment of 13,000 feet of shoreline.

During the winter of 1981-82, we realized that collecting voluntary contributions would not be possible year after year, so we began exploring the possibility of forming a lake district. We determined that the earlier attempt failed for a number of reasons, so it was important not to let those same reasons cause our failure again.

The City Council and the County Board had a history of not being enthusiastic about any lake projects, and the city merchants gave even less support. Therefore, it became important to gain the support of these three important groups. After the association board chose tentative lake district boundaries, we presented the concept to the City Council and the County Board. Based on their input, we changed the boundaries. It would be honest to say that we did not agree with some of the changes, but we realized that a compromise would put us one step closer to our lake district.

We realized that it was necessary to keep everyone informed of the progress of our program. Therefore, we developed a newsletter that was mailed to all property owners, merchants, members of local government, and news media explaining the progress of our program.

In June, 1982, we began signing Lake District petitions. Now we realized the importance of having the association board of directors scattered around the lake. With relative ease, we obtained the signatures of 67% of the property owners within the boundary of the lake district.

The public hearing was held in August, 1982, with only one person opposing the formation of the lake district. Within a month, the full County Board formally approved the lake district formation.

With remarkable timing, we formed our lake district at the time the State of Wisconsin rescinded funding to lake districts. It was up to us to pay for any projects that we felt would improve our lake.

We determined that a weed harvester would allow us to remove 2-3 million pounds of weeds from the lake each summer. Even though this was a cosmetic treatment, it would make the lake usable and would reduce the silt build-up caused from the decaying weeds.

Our harvester committee looked at several companies and compared various size harvesters. We finally decided that the Aquamarine H650, with a nine foot cutting bar and a 10,000 pound capacity was the best machine for us.

A cost study was presented to the attendees of our 1st annual lake district meeting, and the membership approved a \$25,000 per year budget to purchase the H650, a 42 foot shore conveyor, and a dump truck.

On July 12, 1983 the "Montello Queen" was launched for its maiden voyage.

As I look back on all the hard work and frustrations of the past 18 months, I would have to say that our success was possible because of some carefully calculated decisions that we made at the beginning of the project. They can be summed up as follows:

1. Choose your association board or organizing committee carefully.
 - (a) Have a blend of summer and year around residents.
 - (b) Choose hard working, intelligent people; some with a financial background. Don't just pick the "nice guy."
 - (c) Make sure that all sections of your lake have a representative.
2. Don't get involved in gossip or town politics. Stick to the issue of forming the lake district.

3. Keep everyone informed of your progress, including the local governing bodies, news media, and your membership.
4. Ask for input from your local governing bodies, and accept that input.
5. Get professional help during the entire process. Lowell Klessig was a tremendous help to us during every step of the lake district formation.
6. Be patient with people who don't understand what you are trying to do. Be a walking encyclopedia and try to have the answers to all their questions or arguments.
7. Don't argue internally. Agree as a group how you are going to proceed.
8. Look for ways of saving money. Negotiate the price for all equipment and services. Shop around until you find the best for least. Almost all bids decreased 25% after negotiating.
9. Support your local merchants and let them know that you are doing so. Spend as much money locally as possible for all your projects.

Time will tell if we made the correct decision, but it is sure an exciting experience to see that large harvester moving around our lake; this July we are able to move our boats from our docks and fishing has been possible this year.



ECO-NOTE:

Experimental Acidification of Little Rock Lake

William Swenson
UW-Extension
UW-Superior

Although considerable information is already available on the impacts of lake acidification, most of the existing work has been based in the laboratory or on cold water systems. Little information is presently available on warm-water systems and fish species complexes which dominate Wisconsin. Information is also needed to determine if laboratory results are characteristic of natural systems and to define the mechanisms through which acidification modifies systems. Knowledge of the mechanisms through which impacts occur is extremely important to designing predictive models which could be used to arrive at estimates of the advantages derived by various control actions.

A study of Little Rock Lake, Vilas County, Wisconsin, recently funded by the U.S. EPA, should provide much of the information needed to answer many of the questions remaining. The work will be conducted by University of Wisconsin System staff from Madison and the Superior campuses. University of Wisconsin investigators will cooperate with the DNR and University of Minnesota scientists who will also be involved with the project.

The study involves systematic additions of acid to half the lake while a barrier prevents mixing with the untreated water. Under these controlled conditions, the impact of acidification can be more easily documented.

Work on this important project was initiated August 1, 1983. More information on the work will be provided in future issues of Lake Tides.