



LAKE TIDES

Winter 1989
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Community Focus

Butternut-Franklin Lakes Small, But Significant

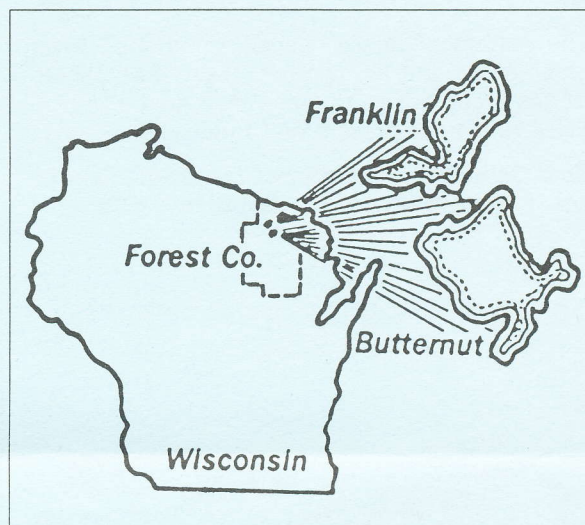
by Tom Babcock

The Butternut-Franklin Lake Improvement Association may be small, but its members are proud of the work that has been done over the years. Founded in 1971, it is a voluntary organization consisting of 72 of the 102 families that live around the two lakes.

The Butternut-Franklin Lakes are in Forest County, near the border of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, approximately 15 miles east of Eagle River and Three Lakes. Clear-cutting of adjacent areas in the Nicolet National Forest was one of the factors prompting formation of the group. There is still a Forestry Committee in the association that works with the USDA Forest Service, helping to plan and monitor the multiple use of the forest.

The association has worked on a number of problems, from beaver control to establishing fire numbers for residences. Early on, its founders began having lake water quality monitored. There are now 25 years of continuous data on water clarity, pH, dissolved minerals, and microorganisms. In June 1987, the association worked with the Forest Service to sponsor the rededication of Franklin Lake Campground on the 50th anniversary of its completion. Over 200 people attended the ceremony, including 8 of the CCC crew that built the campground. Larry Henson, second in command in the Forest Service, was also there.

A drive to form a local fire department was led by the association. Fourteen members recently completed the Firemanship course at Nicolet Col-



lege. The Town of Hiles has made one of its fire trucks available, and the Town Board approved building a new firehouse. It is expected the new department will provide faster response to emergencies than the Town of Hiles, which is 23 miles away through twisting forest roads. The association also worked with town officials to obtain garbage dumpsters for the area, saving its members the drive to the Hiles dump.

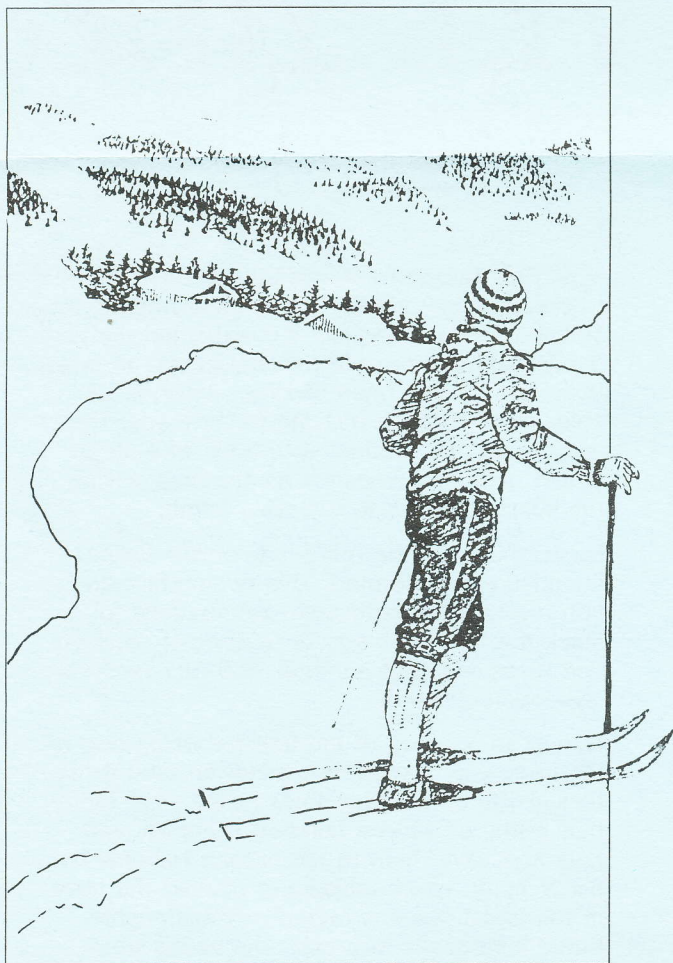
Earlier this year, the Butternut-Franklin Lakes Foundation was formed. This non-profit organization receives tax-deductible contributions to stock the two lakes and to fund other conservation measures. This summer, 600 four-inch walleyes were planted.

Noting an absence of the tree for which one of the lakes was named, the group decided to try reestablishing butternut trees in the area. Members gathered several hundred seedlings and nuts and gave them to the Nicolet National Forest Nursery, which raised and planted the trees in the forest. Several retired members contributed wire cages to protect the young trees. The association distributed 50 small trees to its members and sold 50 larger ones to other owners.

The most recent project is an effort to save the cross-country ski trails in the area. When Eagle River Nordic Ski Center abandoned its special use permit, several association members volunteered to maintain and connect the existing trails to the Anvil Lake system. The Forest Service and Nordmarka Ski Club of Eagle River assisted with the development of this project. The resulting 50 kilometers of trails will be an asset not only to members of the association, but to all cross-country ski enthusiasts who frequent the area.

The Butternut-Franklin Association is not a large organization, but its members seem determined to use group action to make their area a better place to live for present and future generations.

Tom Babcock is President of Butternut-Franklin Lakes Improvement Association, Inc.



Jargon Busters

Ecology: The study of relationships between organisms and their environment.

Ecosystem: A self-regulating natural community of plants and animals interacting with one another and their environment.

Environment: All of the external conditions that affect an organism or other specified system during its lifetime.

Effluent: Liquid waste from sewage treatment, septic systems, or industrial sources that are released to the environment.

Epilimnion: Uppermost, warmest, well-mixed layer of a lake during summer time. The epilimnion extends from the surface to the thermocline—the zone with the most rapid vertical change in temperature and density in a stratified lake.

Erosion: Removal of soil by wind or water, which is often intensified by human disturbance.

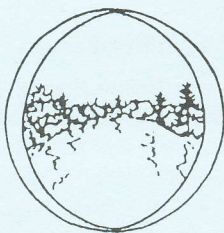
Eutrophic: From the Greek for "well-nourished." It describes a lake with a large or excessive supply of nutrients (mostly nitrates and phosphates).

Eutrophication: Natural process in which lakes receive inputs of plant nutrients as a result of erosion and runoff from the surrounding land basin. If the process is accelerated by man-made influences, it is called "cultural eutrophication."

Convention Caller

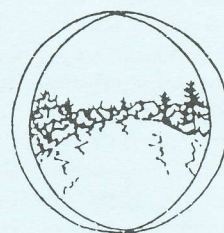
Happy New Year! Make sure your new 1989 calendar has April 7-8 reserved for the Wisconsin Lakes Convention at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point. A detailed program and registration form will be sent soon. However, we suggest making room reservations immediately. Call 715/341-1340 and ask for the Wisconsin Lakes Convention block at \$48 single, \$55 double, \$59 triple, and \$63 quad.

Highlights of the program include an address and a movie by Professor Goldman on the management of Lake Tahoe, detailed discussion of aquatic vegetation and the new rules for chemical application, a workshop on fish stocking, discussion of new funding initiatives, luncheon entertainment, three community reports, and ten more workshops.



Eco-Note

Protecting our Wetlands



Regulation and Policy



This is the first of a three-part series on wetlands.

by Eric Macbeth and Mary Ellen Vollbrecht

Wetlands are areas where water is at or near the surface long enough to support water-loving plants and which have soils that form under wet conditions. They are called swamps, bogs, marshes, or sloughs in various parts of the country. Wetlands also have different meanings to each of us. A hunter sees an opportunity for success, a naturalist looks for an uncommon bird, while a developer imagines a new subdivision. Whatever they're called, wetlands are a complex resource that provides many benefits for animals, plants, and people. Because of these different views, management of our wetland resources is difficult.

Values of Wetlands

Up to 15 different wetland functions have been identified by researchers. Fish and wildlife habitat and attractive open space are the more obvious of these values. In addition, wetland soils hold rainwater for long periods, and deep-rooted wetland plants slow water flow. This suppresses downstream flooding and decreases erosion along waterways. In some areas, the water is slowly released to lakes and streams. In other places, it seeps into the groundwater, recharging drinking wells.

Wetlands Conversions

Of the 215 million acres of wetlands that existed at the time of the settlers, less than one half is left. Conversions began with European immigration and has continued ever since. Today, annual loss in the US is about 300,000 acres. A few of the reasons are: filling for construction projects, draining for agricultural expansion, contamination from irrigation return waters, and alteration by diversion of water supplies. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, 80 percent of US wetland loss has been related to agricultural conversion.

Wisconsin has lost about 75% of its original wetlands and maybe as high as 90% in the southern part of the state. Highway construction, cranberry bed development, and residential and commercial development are the leading causes today.

Protection of Wetlands

We have four types of tools for protecting wetlands: purchase and management; regulations; incentives; and education.

—Purchase and management programs include both public and private efforts. The US Fish and Wildlife Service buys and manages migratory bird habitat. In Wisconsin, the DNR buys and manages wetlands in state parks and forests, hunting and fishing areas, and natural and scientific areas. Local governments purchase wetlands for parks of open space.

—Federal, state, and local governments have wetland regulation programs. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act is the principal federal wetland protection mechanism. Under this law, no wetland filling is allowed without a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. EPA sets the permit guidelines. In Wisconsin, local governments are required to adopt zoning for wetlands 5 acres or larger along lakes and streams. The DNR regulates activities affecting wetlands that are on the beds of lakes or streams under Chapter 30, Wisconsin Statutes.

Eco-Note continued

—Incentives work in two ways. They **encourage** conservation and **discourage** the conversion of wetlands to croplands. The US Department of Agriculture's Water Bank Program pays landowners for conserving waterfowl habitat. Farmers can no longer deduct the cost of draining and filling wetlands from their income taxes under the 1986 Tax Reform Act. The Swampbuster Program removes crop insurance and price supports for farmers who drain or fill wetlands.

—State and federal agencies and many private organizations have education programs. Some examples: Aquatic Project WILD and *Lake Tides* help people understand wetlands and other aquatic systems. The Trust for Public Lands informs property owners of tax and other financial advantages of protecting wetlands.

What is the future of our wetlands?

Acquisition efforts are limited by tight budgets. Today \$500 million is needed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to protect its goal of 1.9 million acres for migratory bird habitat. But the federal Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 only allocates \$40 million yearly to buy wetlands.

Despite Congress' intentions to establish a permit program combining Corps regulation with EPA's supervision, interagency conflicts have taken their toll on Section 404's operation. Basic policy differences are at the heart of the matter.

The problems that plague the federal regulatory programs are getting some attention, however. To help resolve some of these conflicts, EPA is encouraging states to consider administering the 404 program. Under an EPA grant, Wisconsin DNR is conducting a study to examine the feasibility of a state 404 program and to look into other ways to improve wetland protection in Wisconsin.

Local adoption of wetland zoning ordinances continues. All counties have amended their shoreland zoning ordinances to include wetland districts. One-third of the cities and villages with wetlands have adopted zoning for wetlands along lakes and streams. The effectiveness of these ordinances is unknown. Once adoption is complete, DNR staff provide training and enforcement assistance to improve program effectiveness.

On the federal level, several recent initiatives have potential for improving wetland protection.

Office of Wetlands

In October 1986, EPA Administrator Lee Thomas created an Office of Wetland Protection. Its goals are to save existing wetlands and retrieve degraded ones. EPA's wetlands activities are

being expanded by the Office of Wetlands Protection.

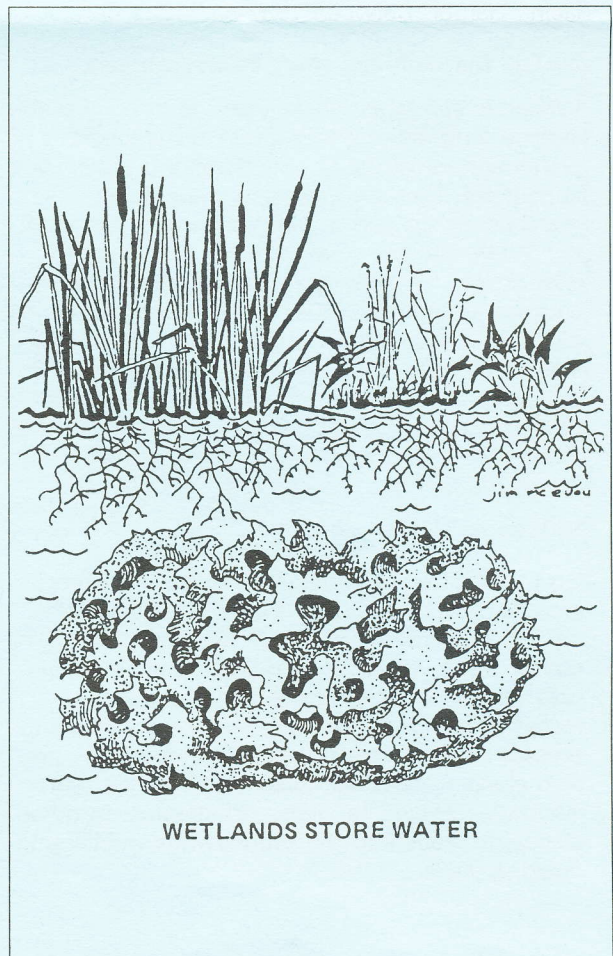
National Wetlands Policy Forum

The National Wetlands Policy Forum is a collection of state and local leaders, heads of environmental organizations, industry representatives, and scholars. It was formed to advise policymakers, owners, and users of wetlands. They hope to answer questions of governmental roles in wetlands protection, create incentives for private wetland preservation, and solve conflicts between conservation of wetlands and other public goals.

It will be a long time before we can tell whether our tools are protecting wetlands. One thing is certain: effective wetland protection—local, state, or federal—will always depend on concerned citizen involvement.

Next issue: Protecting wetlands around your lake.

Eric Macbeth is a graduate student in Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point. Mary Ellen Vollbrecht is Shoreland Management Specialist with DNR.





Capitol Report

Wanted: A Fair Shake for Inland Lakes

by Lisa Conley

A USER TAX ON WISCONSIN WATERS? Over \$4,000,000 have been generated annually since 1985 by the Wisconsin motorboat fuel tax. Over 80% of this money is generated by motorboat use on inland lakes and streams. It is allocated to a "water resource account" which subsidizes the DNR Lake Management Program, river management, state boating enforcement aids, and the Wisconsin Waterways Commission. The Waterways Commission provides for development of local public access facilities.

BUT WHERE IS IT REALLY GOING? During the first three years, the lion's share of grants (over \$2.5 million) went to develop the now- beautiful Racine Harbor. Between 1987 and 1989, a total of \$5 million will be spent on a new Summer-fest parking lot in Milwaukee. Only meager sums of money are actually returned to the inland lakes that generated them.

Last summer, a group was formed to identify the needs of inland lakes and to hammer out a consensus proposal. The Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts, the Wisconsin Federation of Lakes, the DNR, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and members of the state legislature were represented. The resulting document was the \$2.5 million DNR FY 89 Lake Protection Budget Initiative, a summary of which follows.

THE BUDGET INITIATIVE: A FIRST STEP

1. Technical Assistance - \$354,000

This is the salary required for six DNR local lake specialists, one in each district, and two at-large UWEX professors. There is tremendous need for the technical advice and educational support of these people. They would attend local meetings, help design and explain the results of lake monitoring programs, design lake studies, and help identify the causes of problems on individual lakes. The part-time employee now assigned in each district cannot effectively respond to the growing number of requests from citizens wanting to improve their lakes.

2. Lake Monitoring - \$107,640

This includes funds for expansion of the DNR self-help monitoring program (Secchi disc volunteers) and continuation of the long-term lakes monitoring program. Demand for the self-help program is growing geometrically, and is a valuable illustration of how a state-local partnership can work to the benefit of our lakes.

3. Information and Education - \$358,000

These funds include the development of a statewide K-12 curriculum regarding Wisconsin lakes—their ecology, management, and uses. Other uses for these funds include expansion of Lake Tides, developing educational materials, setting up a speakers bureau, training programs for local officials, demonstration projects, and educational materials for special lakes.

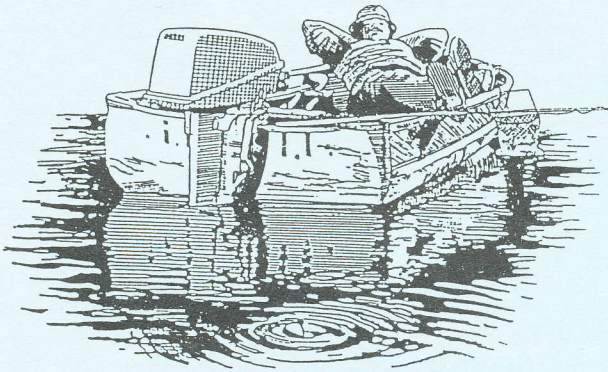
4. Research and Demonstration - \$100,000

The intent here was to focus this research money on motorboat use of lakes. This includes the physical impacts and user conflicts, with an eye for maximizing the recreational value of lakes while recognizing the need to protect them from degradation due to overuse.

5. Co-Management Support - \$1,600,000

The intent here is to ensure that the lion's share of this gas tax fund is returned to local communities to support local lake management activities. Our group felt that smaller amounts given to many communities was a more valuable and equitable distribution of the funds than large grants to a few. We also believe the fund application process should be simple enough so as to encourage, not intimidate, the local officials it is meant to support.

continued next page



These amounts are intended to be in addition to the \$346,000 already used to support the existing DNR Lake Management Program.

WHAT GOT INTO THE DNR BUDGET REQUEST

By the time our proposal got through the internal DNR budget process, here's what was left:

1. Technical assistance - Funds mostly intact, but number of full-time DNR employees hired was cut to three.
2. Monitoring - Raised to \$148,200.
3. Information and Education - Eliminated.
4. Research - \$100,000 remains to support lake-related research.
5. Co-Management Support - Cut to \$1 million.

Total = \$1,587,000.

The other \$1 million went to increase Waterways Commission funds, to boating enforcement aids, to state-owned dam repair, and to water areas development.

WHERE TO GO NEXT. The proposal must go through the Legislature and be signed by the Governor, either as a budget item or as a separate piece of legislation. (The budget item is a much simpler process and will be tried first.)

YOU GET WHAT YOU WORK FOR. This budget item as it stands still represents most of the basic intent of our committee. It is a giant step forward in building an effective state-local lake management partnership. Yes, there are some problems: the Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts and Wisconsin Federation of Lakes both feel the Information and Education component was essential, and should be restored. Also a full-time lake specialist is badly needed in each of the six DNR Districts. The \$600,000 taken

from co-management support went to the Waterways Commission, which already receives \$1,385,000. Unless grant criteria are changed, the majority of this will again go to the Great Lakes Harbors.

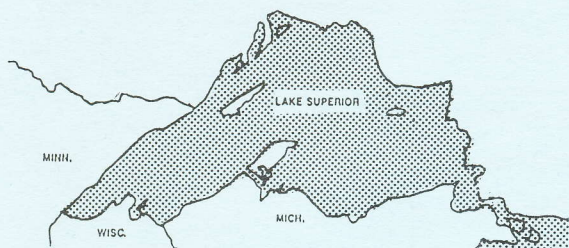
If you have an opinion on the use of these motorboat fuel tax funds to strengthen our DNR Lake Management Program and return seed money to local lake communities, talk to your local legislators. It is unusual if they get ten letters on one issue. So imagine how effective all of us together could be.

If you would like a copy of the current proposal, contact Ted Smith of the DNR Lake Management Program, 608/266-2879, PO Box 7921, Madison WI 53707.

Lisa Conley is Chair of Lac LaBelle Management District.

One-Dollar Checkoff Will Benefit Lakes

This year, there is a new opportunity for boaters and anglers to contribute directly to improving Wisconsin lake resources. On boat registrations and fishing license applications, a box now appears. Checking the box increases your fee by one dollar, and the money goes to support DNR lake research and improvement projects. The checkoff was introduced in the Legislature by Rep. James Holperin of Eagle River.



The Superior Experience

"The greatest show ever produced on Lake Superior, a natural for all tours of the north country, a unique and powerful interpretation of Minnesota's great lake," read the brochures about a multimedia, computer-controlled production, "The Lake Superior Experience."

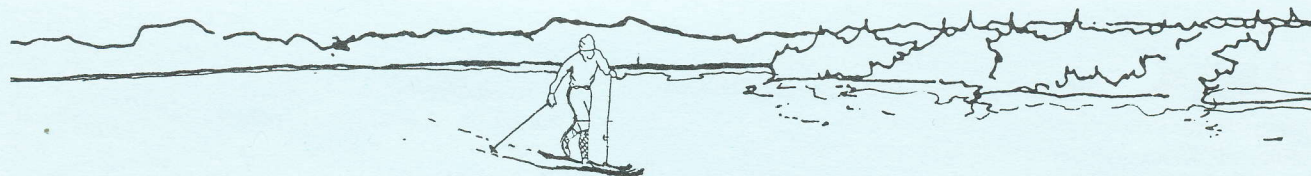
Slide and movie film, projected on a big screen, create a unique and powerful interpretation of Lake Superior. Original music and narration provide smooth transitions from scene to scene. Ojibwa tales are interwoven with interviews of commercial fishermen, wreck divers, residents of remote islands, and National Park employees.

Viewers can imagine being on Lake Superior during raging storms that have caused ships like the Edmund Fitzgerald to make the bottom their "final port of call." Footage of the sunken vessel provides a rare underwater perspective.

The 43-minute show runs daily at the 160-seat Spirit of the North Theater at Fitger's Mall, 600 E. Superior St., Duluth MN (218/727-0600). Admission is \$3.75 for adults and \$3.25 for seniors and children.

Stewardship Time

Each year a group and an individual are honored with the Lake Stewardship Award. All nominees are recognized with a certificate signed by representatives of the Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts, Wisconsin Federation of Lakes, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and University of Wisconsin Extension. A letter of nomination and supporting materials should be sent to Lois Klingele at 5752 Restal St., Madison WI 53711-5762 by March 20. Questions can be addressed to Elmer Goetsch at 715/546-2340. PLEASE HELP US RECOGNIZE THOSE SPECIAL PEOPLE AND SUCCESSFUL GROUPS.



Reflections

My skis leave only brief tracks upon the whitened cushion. Icy wind, sharp against my face, wipes clean the past a few strides behind me. Tucked within the howl, the present is but the dull crunch of my weight on fresh powder. Its sound also is short, for the raw wind mutes it quickly. The future stretches ahead in many directions; each new step guides the way. Beneath me lie the memories of a warmer season and a different ski. But now all that shows of the lake is a white desert, a sealed capsule at rest.

by Eric Macbeth

★★MAY YOU PROSPER AND YOUR HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR BE BRIGHT★★

The Staff of Lake Tides



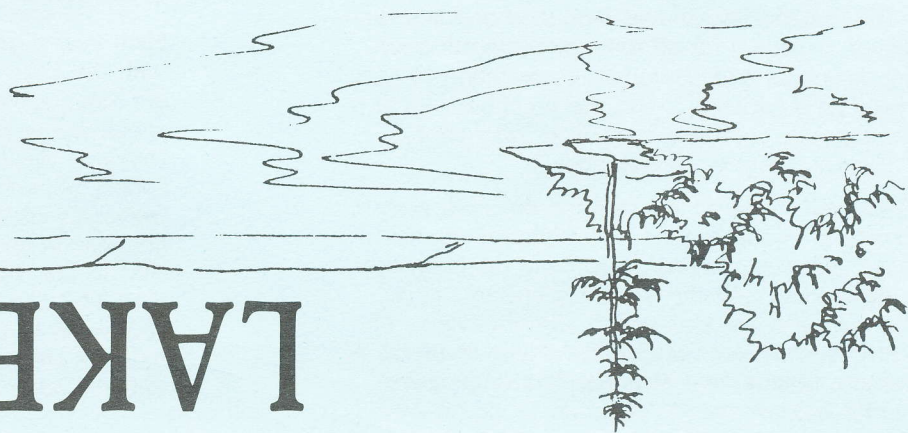
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A newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin lakes



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