



# LAKETIDES

*The newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin lakes*

## Uncelebrated Heroes

### Citizens Make the Difference in Wisconsin Lake Management— Building the Partnership

**Volume 22, No. 3**  
**Summer 1997**

The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership is looked on as a national model of effective community-based lake management. Some would say that many of the lake management efforts in place in Wisconsin today are a result of the efforts of the dedicated women and men who live near and enjoy the lakes—unpaid volunteers with the wisdom, vision and tenacity to struggle with the tough issues that impact our state's lakes.

Who are the women and men responsible for these accomplishments? Why, they are you and I! They are citizens who have seen the need to go beyond the bounds of the home lake to deal with issues that concern us all: water quality, boating, development on shorelines... the list is long. These are people who know that solutions are found when all the players sit down together to talk and listen. Folks like you and I have made a huge contribution to lake stewardship in Wisconsin. Much of what we take for granted would not exist without the ongoing efforts and vigilance of the many people who give their time and dollars to preserve and protect our public resources.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) and the organizations that preceded it provided the mechanisms that made possible much that is admirable about our state's lake landscapes. The unpaid volunteers who support and serve this organization realized that our lakes face many issues that cannot be solved at a local level. Doing the job calls for learning the ins and outs of the political process, rolling up sleeves and going to Madison, and sometimes to Washington, D.C.

Much has been done over the past 30 years by a long list of uncelebrated heroes, folks who did what they felt was important and right. Without the energy and time of dedicated citizen volunteers, there would probably be no DNR Lakes Program, or Lakes Partnership in Wisconsin. Without this citizen effort, there would be no UW-Extension lake specialists to assist lake organizations, no volunteer monitoring program, no Adopt-A-Lake, no lake planning or protection grants, no Waterways Commission grants, no Priority Lake projects, no DNR regional lake coordinators, and no lake management districts.

Our Lakes Program is small compared to other programs like wastewater, non-point pollution or wildlife management. It is an unusual program, not totally reliant on DNR decision-making, but entrusting citizens to monitor the resources, define their needs, and apply for grants to implement them. This was not the normal way of doing business for a state agency; the Lakes Program tended to stick out and wind up on the chopping block when budget time rolled around. Times do change. One of the underpinning philoso-



*Wisconsin Lakes  
Partnership*



phies of the reorganized DNR is modeled on the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. The idea is to develop partnerships and teams to assist the Department with natural resource management in each of the 23 watersheds, called Geographic Management Units (GMU).

We've done very well. It would be easy to pat ourselves on the back for a job well done and let these programs coast. This would be foolhardy. Through this series of articles we hope to recognize our accomplishments and acknowledge the hard work that lies ahead. We should be proud of what we have done, but we should also remember what we could lose if we, the citizens, don't stay vigilant and involved.

*Lisa Conley, Past-President of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and the North American Lake Management Society.*

## Wisconsin's Statewide Lakes Organizations—A History

Lake organizations have been a part of Wisconsin's lake scene since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lake Geneva reported an organization in 1898 and Lauderdale Lakes formed an association on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1902 to deal with too many aquatic plants. By the end of World War II, several lakes in southern Wisconsin had some level of organization. Issues started to surface, however, that could not be solved at the local level and lake organizations began talking to one another. The first attempts to organize lake associations to act together on state issues occurred in the booming post-war era. America was finally able to put the war behind and have some fun, and we celebrated by going to the water. A strong economy allowed many of us to buy a boat or even a cottage on our favorite lake. The first lake shore development boom was underway.

Back in the 1950s, the State Legislature established an interim study committee to

advise the Legislature on the need for water safety legislation and regulations. Of the many recommendations coming from this study committee was one that would allow the flushing of boat toilet waste into waters of the inland lakes. On Lake Winnebago, boats could have flushed waste into the water 100 feet from shore and on all other lakes 300 feet from shore.

Mrs. Fran Anderson, of Lake Beulah in East Troy, was appalled when she heard about the recommendation and reported the information to her local lake association and the town board. She got a group of property owners together and went to Madison to attend the hearing of the Joint Committee. Fran, who was never at a loss for words, got to her feet and with much indignation testified to that body on how she felt about the proposed legislation. Mr. Dick Zirbell was a member of that Joint Committee and after the hearing complimented Fran on her presentation. He suggested that it was time that the lakeshore property owners get together, form an organization and work for the preservation of the lakes of Wisconsin.

At that time, Dick Zirbell was the president of the Blue Springs Lake Association and Fran Anderson was secretary of the Lake Beulah Protective and Improvement Association. They decided to try to get other lake organizations to join in the fight against the flush toilet recommendation of the study group. They knew there would be strong opposition. The thought of having raw sewage flushed into their lakes gave them the passion to challenge the recommendation with every weapon available. They knew their most effective weapon would be the property owners of Wisconsin lakeshores.

Fran was the Legislative Chairperson of the First District of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs and knew many influential people in Madison, as well as many in the newspaper industry. She threw all her talents and influence into the fight she knew had to be won. She and





Dick Zirbell traveled to all the lakes in their area asking for help in setting up a statewide organization. Finally in 1959, at the town hall in East Troy, the Federation was born. It started with only seven lake associations. The group adopted the name "Federation of Wisconsin Lake Property Owners' Associations, Inc."

The first president of the Federation was Dr. C. R. Rumsey of Big Cedar Lake, and the secretary was Russell Dell, also of Big Cedar Lake. Senator Trinky and Assemblyman Harold Clemens were at the first meeting and complimented those attending on having organized to protect Wisconsin's lakes. Both Mr. Trinky (sic) and Mr. Clemens assisted the Federation in its first legislative battle. It took much

time, energy and some money, but the Federation of Wisconsin Lake Property Owners met their first challenge.

*Contributed by Robert B. Schrameyer, Past President, Wisconsin Federation of Lakes.*

*In the next issue of Lake Tides we will explore the challenges and landmark accomplishments of the statewide lake organizations, the birth of Lake Districts, the formation of The Wisconsin Association of Lake Districts (WALD), and the merger of the WFL and WALD to form today's statewide organization, The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL).*



## WAL Provides Tools for Lake Leaders

**If boating and land use issues impact your lake, this workshop is a must!**

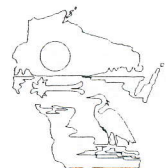
A series of regional workshops for lake leaders will be presented by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes with local DNR, UW-Extension and County officials available to answer your lake questions. Topics will include: Local Boating Regulations, Regulating Private Sewerage Systems, Shoreland Zoning, and Piers and Moorings. Cost of the workshop is \$25 for WAL members, \$35 for non-members.

**Thursday, September 11: Rice Lake** (WITC Conference Center, College Drive)

**Friday, September 12: Eagle River** (Eagle River Inn & Resort, Hwy 70 West)

**Saturday, September 13: Oshkosh** (Pioneer Inn, downtown on the river)

**Please register immediately by calling 1-800-542-5253.**





# Keeping the North 'the North'

*Northern Wisconsin, the land of lakes and forests... loosely defined by Highway 29 at the south, bordered on the east by Lake Michigan, on the west by the mighty Mississippi, and to the north by the mother of all lakes, Superior, and the best of neighbors, the Upper Peninsula. Natural resources are a daily part of life in the north. You know about the north, but have you heard about the Northern Initiative?*

***The Northern Initiative... some say it's a program, others a vision. Still others say it's a way of life.***

In September 1995, the Natural Resources Board approved a strategic plan for DNR Management in Northern Wisconsin. This was the beginning of one ambition and the end of another. For many years, residents and visitors to the north were aware of special issues unique to the region. In the early 1990s, groups of individuals from the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership and others across the north started meeting to discuss issues they felt were critical to maintaining the character of Northern Wisconsin. In 1994 the public participated through town meetings and questionnaires. Some of the ideas drawn from those meetings would mirror the concepts to be used later in planning the DNR reorganization of 1997.

Those core ideas included: involving the public in DNR decision making; developing a stronger partnership and understanding between the public and the DNR; stronger use of long range planning; and reshaping how the DNR makes decisions that impact northern Wisconsin.

The distinctive characteristics of the north are seen as a benefit by some and a drawback by others. The abundant public lands, forests and waters make the region a playground for those from the south, a boon for tourism. Those in favor of promoting tourism, however, believe additional economic opportunities are lost to those who want to keep the region for themselves and close it to future development. Many are attracted by the sparse population of the north, others feel the small population limits political clout. When it comes to funneling tax dollars, some individuals claim jobs and state programs tend to go to southeastern Wisconsin, Madison or the Fox Valley—not to the north.

The recommendations which resulted from these discussions shaped what is now known as the Northern Initiative. Everyone involved agreed that the north should continue to be recognized for its unique and distinctive natural resources and ambience. Four vision statements set the course for this journey into the future:

***A Northern Alliance*** The north will be recognized as a region where a strong private, public and non-profit network will work to protect the character of the north based on long range land use planning to balance lake and shoreland protection and development.

***The Northern Economy*** The north will continue to develop a strong, balanced and diverse economy that is compatible with its ecological and social values.

***Northern Recreation*** Northern Wisconsin will be recognized as the premier destination for planned, quality, outdoor land and water-based recreation.

***Northern Education*** Northern Wisconsin residents will have educational opportunities to foster responsible attitudes toward the natural environment.

Many projects and programs that address these issues are currently underway and some components have already been completed. Folks from all walks of life are joining together to find solutions. It is believed that a combination of sound science, communities working together and long range planning is the best way to shape environmental policy and guide sustainable resource management.

*In future issues, Lake Tides will examine some of the projects undertaken by the Northern Initiative.*





## *The Lakes of Washburn County*

*Of the 15,000 lakes in Wisconsin, almost 13,000 are located north of Highway 29. With all these lakes in the Packer state, less than 650 have some sort of organization. In the north, less than 340 have a group dedicated to the preservation and protection of their lake ecosystems. What about the other 14,350 lakes?*

**The Project:** The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) represents many of the state's lake organizations when it comes to dealing with statewide issues. WAL was interested in finding out more about lakes in the north with no formal organization. Washburn County was chosen by WAL for a pilot lake organization project for a number of reasons, the principal one being that it has one of the lowest ratios of lake organizations to lakes. Only 24 of its 968 lakes have an organization that plays an active role in lake management.

**The Plan:** Lakes sought for the project were more than ten acres in size, surrounded largely by private owners, and without a formal lake organization. A unique initiative of the study was to include lakes where one or a few property owners owned all the property surrounding a lake. In most cases, these folks have been good stewards of the land and lakes, with little or no public assistance.

Two hundred and nine lakes fit the criteria. Now came the hard part. How do you find a contact person on 209 lakes? A multiple step approach was used. In the spring of 1996, project staff attended board meetings in the five towns containing the bulk of the study lakes. The boards proved to be a gold mine of information and many contacts were established. The remaining contacts were selected from county land records, and others came from referrals or because they contacted project staff in response to seeing news articles.

**The Survey:** The survey was sent to 252 people; a total of 170 surveys representing 137 Washburn County lakes came back. One unique reason for purchasing property was the absence of development on the lakeshore. Not surprisingly, single owners of total lakeshores were signifi-

cantly more likely than owners on lakes with multiple property owners to indicate "absence of development" as a primary motivation to purchase their property.

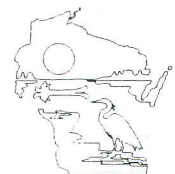
Another interesting survey fact tells us something about recent development trends. Fifty-nine percent of the property owners surveyed have owned their land since 1980. Thirty-two percent purchased their property after 1990.

**The Follow Up:** According to Beverly Stencil, UW-Extension Community Resource Educator in Washburn County and project director, the multiple purpose of the survey was to assess level of knowledge and interest in available resources, assess interest in forming an organization on lakes with enough people to make it work, and to direct the expansion of lake educational efforts in Washburn County. Interest was very high and educational packets were mailed to 129 respondents.

Folks from 48 Washburn County lakes expressed interest in forming a lake organization. Many people who owned all the property around their lakes were interested in land trusts. They came together at a high energy, one-day stewardship and focus group workshop. The workshop encouraged people to network and form lake groups encompassing several lakes.

**What Did We Learn?** This was the first time a study looked at lakes with no organization and lakes with one or a few people owning the entire lakefront property. These lakes receive little public assistance in preserving and protecting the lake's ecosystem and the folks living there may be unaware of the services available. We may have come a long way with lake management in Wisconsin, but we still have a way to go.

*Only four percent of Wisconsin's lakes have management organizations.*





# Taming the Monster

## Septic Systems, Drinking Water and the Health of Your Lake

Most of you no longer worry about monsters under the bed... but what about that 'monster' septic system buried in your back yard? You feed it expensive additives, try not to feed it household chemicals, get its "stomach" pumped periodically, and hope that it doesn't back up into the basement. But could that septic system affect your home's drinking water supply, or the health of the lake you live on and love?

Your septic system most likely consists of a tank, with capacity of perhaps 1000 gallons, and a drainfield. In the tank, solid materials are separated from the water. Since the average person uses about 50 gallons of water per day, a drainfield is needed to dispose of the excess water. Septic systems are generally groundwater recharge systems—they replenish the underground water supply we use for drinking water. But is the water that leaves the drainfield completely pure?

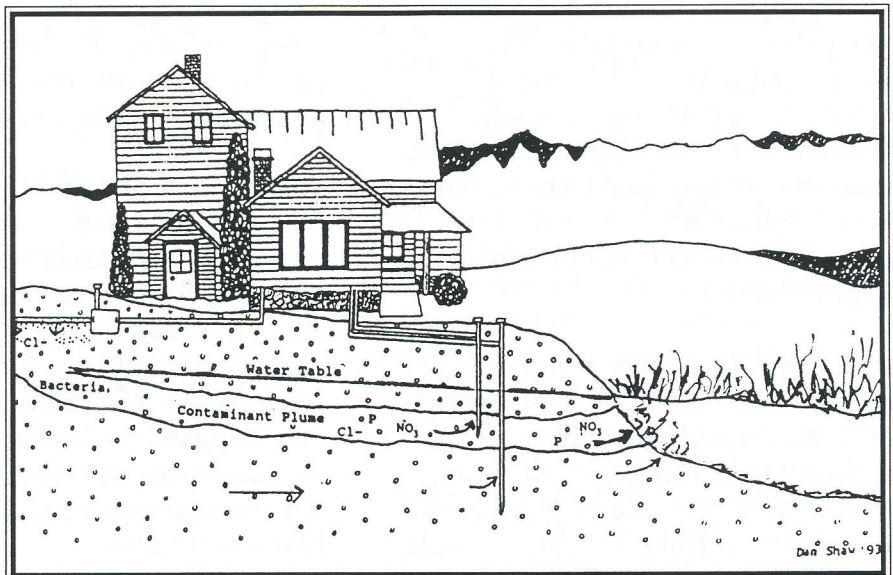
Septic systems were designed about a hundred years ago to deal with water quality problems as they were understood at that time. They do a reasonably good job of filtering large particles from wastewater and of removing bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing organisms. However, they generally do a poor job of removing chemicals. That's a job they were never designed to do.

Groundwater downgradient from septic systems—and that's generally moving toward your lake—often has a high

concentration of nitrate, chloride, phosphorus, and other household chemicals. The figure shows how these contaminants move in a narrow underground band called a plume. The plume might contribute to excess plant growth in your lake, or it might enter the well you use for drinking water. Just when you think everything is going just fine with the 'monster,' it could invisibly reach out to affect your health, or the beauty of your lakeshore home.

Surprisingly, pumping the tank is not much help with this problem. Pumping the tank periodically (every two years for the average home) is essential to prevent the drainfield from failing and ponding water in the back yard or basement. But it's not the ponded, "failed" system that affects groundwater and drinking water quality—it's the one that works just fine, letting water easily drain away every day. Also, just following the septic system code won't solve the problem. The code deals with preventing human exposure to bacteria and viruses. Septic systems are exempted by law from meeting standards for nitrate in groundwater.

**So, how can the monster be tamed?**





***To avoid septic system contamination of your well:***

- Avoid installing it into the contaminant plume. That means installing the well upgradient (higher in the groundwater flow system) than the septic system. Most often that means not installing the well between the septic system and the lake, or at least on the opposite side of the house from the drainfield.
- In addition, install your well at a location and depth which avoids septic system plumes created by your neighbors.
- Test your water annually for nitrate and chloride. If you have high levels, and there is little agriculture in your watershed, septic systems are probably to blame.

***To avoid septic system contamination of groundwater:***

- Minimize the use of household cleaning products and chemicals that may pass through the septic system.
- Consider the use of alternative septic systems that better remove nitrogen and other chemicals. Some are currently

under development, such as recirculating sand filters.

***To keep the 'monster' from contaminating your lake:***

- Place your drainfield as far as feasible from the lake shore.
- Keep in mind that some lakes receive most of their water from rain and snowmelt, or from streams. Those lakes that receive the majority of their water from groundwater are most susceptible to septic system contamination.
- Read labels to minimize the use of dish detergents and laundry conditioners which contain phosphorus. The ban on phosphorus in laundry detergent does not affect these products.
- Most importantly, support local efforts to limit the density of homes using septic systems on lakes. If high density development is considered desirable, a community sewer, or a group of homes on an alternate system, may be a better option.

*Byron Shaw and Chris Mechenich, Extension Specialists, UW-Stevens Point*

Laura Jester, of UWSP's Wisconsin Cooperative Fishery Research Unit, and her crew have collected over 4,200 adult weevils from Fish Lake in Dane County. These lucky weevils spent their vacation in Vermont where 200,000 eggs and larvae were cultured. On their arrival home, the travelling weevils were stocked in one of the twelve study lakes (Lorraine, Whitewater, Lower Spring, Eagle, Mukwonago, Gilbert, Kusel, Pearl, Beaver Dam, Nancy, Big Sand and Kangaroo). Laura will continue checking the density of weevils on plants and total milfoil biomass. Other research around the country has shown declines in Eurasian water milfoil where the weevil is known to exist. A total of 41 Wisconsin lakes are now known to harbor the weevil naturally.

***Milfoil Weevil Update!***

## *Love* OF THE LAND

Walk with us through time and meet the people who have written their signatures upon Wisconsin's landscape. As we approach 150 years of statehood, Wisconsin Public Television is looking back at the land we call our own and finding out how our attitude toward stewardship of the land has changed over time.

This one-hour documentary introduces viewers to the people—past and present—whose foresight, determination and hard work have preserved and restored Wisconsin's environmental heritage. Tune in to your local Public Television station at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 16 or 10:00 pm on Wednesday, September 17.

***"The great challenge we face is to do right by the land we have made our own."***

***Aldo Leopold***







## Welcome to the Wisconsin Self-Help Lake Monitoring Column!

*Lakes Tides* is adding a few new pages. One of them will be permanently dedicated to the flagship of the Lakes Partnership, the Self-Help Monitoring Program. Over 700 volunteers are dipping black and white disks into the water all summer long, taking the pulse of our state's precious lakes.

The program embodies the principles of our Lakes Partnership Motto: *Protecting in Partnership—Our Legacy of Lakes*. A network of highly motivated citizen stewards collects valuable data on lakes across the Badger State. Working in coordination with DNR lake managers, they collect information which is used to protect and manage our fragile water resources. The program is led by these citizens and their lake organizations, DNR lake coordinators, local government, and Extension lake education specialists.

Consequential and costly lake management decisions cannot be made based on intuition alone. Information collected over long periods of time and in large enough quantities can reveal trends and is essential for sound decision-making. Long term data can also benefit many lakes by providing a first indication of new pollution, and even validate observers' reports of declining or improving trends in water quality. Self-Help data are used for these and other purposes.

The limited staff and budget of the DNR section of the Lakes Partnership defines the amount of lake data that DNR lake coordinators can assemble. Only 50 lakes in Wisconsin are monitored on a long term basis by the DNR. Don't despair, over 700 volunteers have come to the rescue. They now monitor 600 lakes in Wisconsin. The store of knowledge collected by these diligent stewards is far larger than the DNR could hope to collect alone. Measured both by the sheer num-

ber of lakes monitored, and by the frequency and breadth of data collected on each lake, it's a huge undertaking.

In 1996, the water clarity and chemistry volunteers alone spent 5,700 hours collecting and processing lake water samples for analysis! If one were to calculate a modest value of seven dollars per hour, these stewards donated \$40,000 toward the protection and management of our lakes! Uncounted hours were also spent by people identifying and mapping aquatic plants, and watching for the first appearance of Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels, two well-known exotic species.

### Many Look, But Few See

Self-Help lake monitoring isn't just about collecting data. It's about volunteers learning or informing others about natural and subtle variations in the lake ecosystem and the water's quality. Keeping written records and looking closely helps folks become more in-tune to the inseparable elements of a complex ecosystem. Understanding more about the habits of the plants and animals inhabiting the lake and the changes that occur through the seasons adds to the joy of living near a lake.

We live in a world where we are often asked to give money for good causes, but rarely asked for our time and talents. Volunteer monitoring is about people knowing they are actively doing something tangible to better their lakes.

*Future Self-Help Lake Monitoring columns will try to unravel some of the secrets of our lakes that monitoring can reveal. Look for profiles of volunteers and current news about this effective grassroots stewardship program.*

**Contributed by**

**Susan Graham, Self-Help Coordinator  
Wisconsin DNR  
608/266-8117**



**Adopt-A-Lake projects are springing up all over Wisconsin!** A myriad of 4-H and other youth clubs, as well as classrooms from elementary through high school, have taken to our lakes for educational opportunities. This new page in *LT* will feature your Adopt-A-Lake projects, so send us updates and photos! One upcoming project is the co-sponsored ***Leap Into Lakes and Get WET!*** workshop at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River on September 26-27 (see below). Contact **Libby McCann** for information on how to join other teachers, youth leaders, and students interested in lake education at this hands-on workshop. We're sure it will be fun and educational!

A new wave will soon be rippling into Wisconsin Project WET (Water Education for Teachers). The ***Wisconsin Supplement to National Project WET: A Water Resources Guide for Educators*** will be available to Project WET workshop participants beginning in October

1997. Educators can use this source of water resources information to "Wisconsinize" activities found in the national *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide*. In addition, the *Supplement* will help teachers identify water-related state and local educational materials, organizations, field trip ideas, and guest speakers to complement their water education efforts.

Project WET-Wisconsin is happy to welcome a new group of 21 facilitators to our aquatic family. The most recent facilitator training workshop was held this spring at the Lions Camp in Rosholt. We now have a total of 79 Project WET-Wisconsin facilitators who can offer workshops to educators around the state. Call the WET office if you would like to organize a workshop in your area. Both the *Supplement* and Spring 1997 facilitator training were funded in part through a grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB).

## Project WET Upcoming Workshops

Come to a Project WET workshop to learn more about the wonders of water through fun, hands-on activities from the *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide* (K-12)! Meet other educators and resource specialists interested in water! Gain new teaching ideas for use in science, math, social studies, language arts, physical education, music and art! Project WET will help you promote greater awareness, knowledge and stewardship of water resources with your students or youth groups. DPI credits have been approved for all Project WET workshops.

**Sept. 26-27** ***Leap Into Lakes and Get WET***, Trees for Tomorrow (Vilas County), Libby McCann, 715/346-3366

This workshop will help you develop the monitoring skills and understanding of lake ecosystems to plan your own lake project. You will take part in Self-Help Lake Monitoring Program training and learn more about water resources through a variety of hands-on Project WET activities. All participants will receive the *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide*, *Wisconsin Supplement to National Project WET: A Water Resources Guide for Educators*, plus an *Adopt-A-Lake Workshop Handbook*.

**October 16** **Midwest Environmental Education Conference**, Madison WI (Dane Co.). For registration call Meta Reigel at 715/346-2796 or Libby McCann.

**Dec. 2-3** **Trees for Tomorrow** (Vilas County), Gail Gilson-Pierce (800/838-9472).

*Call the contact person listed to find out how to register for a workshop near you! Additions and changes to these dates may occur; please call the Project WET Office at 715/346-3366 for up-do-date information.*





## Of Motorboats and Macrophytes

A study of the effects of motorboats on submerged aquatic vegetation was recently published in the April, 1997 issue of the North American Lake Management Society journal, *Lake and Reservoir Management*. The study took place on Lake Ripley, a 418 acre, relatively eutrophic or nutrient-rich lake in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. The lake is perhaps representative of a growing number of lakes in Wisconsin as it is heavily used for a variety of recreational uses such as fishing, waterskiing and powerboating.

To conduct the study, specific areas of the lake used by waterskiers and motorboats were marked off and enclosed, effectively eliminating all use by motorized watercraft. Other plots within this high-use area, functioning as control plots, continued to be open to motorboat traffic. After approximately three months, the plots were assessed for plant growth.

The enclosed plots where boating had been prohibited had three times the plant biomass of the plots which had remained open to motorboat activity. Although authors Tim Asplund and Chad Cook considered the possibility that the abundant plant growth found within the restricted areas was due to other factors such as higher temperatures or richer soils, there was ultimately little evidence of this. Physical parameters such as substrate type, water depth and temperature were found to be largely uniform throughout the entire experimental area.

Asplund and Cook believe the primary reason for the absence of plant growth in the control plots or exposed areas was due to the presence of motorboat activity. Scouring of the bottom sediments and boat induced turbulence was thought to uproot plant beds and disturb entire communities. Low growing species such as *Chara* or spiny naiad, which were the dominant species within Lake Ripley, would be the most susceptible to this form

of disturbance. Disturbed bottom sediments were also thought to prevent the growth of new plants by burying emerging shoots and rhizomes. Reduced plant height in the areas where boating was permitted, coupled with floating plant fragments, suggested that plants were regularly cut by boat propellers. Results of the study indicated that impacts of propellers could extend as far as 90 cm (~3 ft) below the surface of the water. Sago pondweed, abundant in Lake Ripley, was found to be the most susceptible to propeller damage; other plants with shoots extending to the surface would also be vulnerable.

While turbidity or sediment resuspension was not considered the primary reason for reduced plant growth in this study of Lake Ripley, Asplund and Cook believe that long-term sediment resuspension may be affecting plant composition within an area by preventing native and turbidity-sensitive species from recolonizing a heavily used area.

The authors conclude by suggesting a number of ways in which recreational boating can be managed in conjunction with the protection of sensitive plant communities. Imposing a slow-no wake zone in areas known to have particularly vulnerable species may be a means of forestalling further disturbance. Temporary restrictions on boating at the beginning of the season when plants are young and most vulnerable is another option. New language in chapter 30 of the Wisconsin statutes permits local government to impose restrictions on boating in environmentally sensitive areas through the use of surface use ordinances. Individuals interested in protecting lakes are encouraged to understand the function of aquatic vegetation within the lake system and its role in providing habitat, protection and food for a number of aquatic organisms within the lake community.

Asplund, Timothy R., and Cook, Chad M. 1997. Effects of Motor Boats on Submerged Aquatic Macrophytes. *Lake and Reservoir Management*. 13(1): 1-12.

**Asplund & Cook believe the primary reason for the absence of plant growth was due to motorboat activity.**





## *Is land owned by a public inland lake management district exempt from property taxes?*

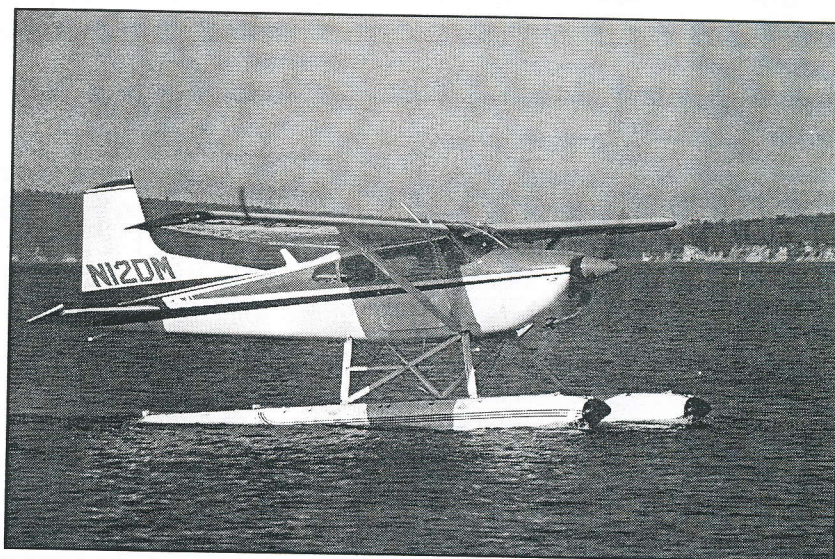
**Yes.** Property of certain districts is exempt from property taxes according to **section 70.11(2)** of the Wisconsin statutes. This includes property of certain special purpose units of government such as public inland lake management and rehabilitation districts, organized under Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin statutes, and town sanitary districts. What justifies this lost tax revenue to the state and local tax system?

The rationale for the tax exemption is based on the premise that special units of government are created to fulfill a public need. Lake management districts, particularly, are intended to fulfill a specific public purpose, namely the protection of the state's inland lakes. The exemption from property taxes is designed to ensure that the unit of government's ability to carry out its public function is not threatened or diminished. If one level of government is permitted to tax the property holdings of another level of government, the theory holds, the taxed government's ability to fulfill its charge may be jeopardized.

## *What laws regulate the conduct of seaplanes on Wisconsin waters?*

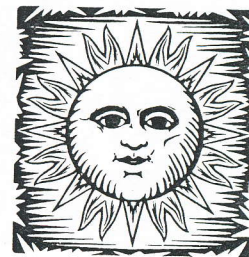
Absent specific regulations, seaplanes, like motorboats, are free to use the state's surface waters. According to **section 30.78** of the Wisconsin statutes, the use of navigable waterways by seaplanes **may be regulated by local government**. Presently, 67 lakes in Wisconsin specifically regulate seaplanes. (Seaplanes are not considered "watercraft" under chapter 30 of the Wisconsin statutes and are thus not subject to state boating laws or local boating ordinances.)

Section 30.78 of the Wisconsin statutes states that "(a)ny city, village or town adjoining or surrounding any waters" may adopt an ordinance which controls specified seaplane operations on surface waters. It appears that most lakes regulating seaplanes to date have fallen within the jurisdiction of just one town or municipality; thus the issue of competing regulations and jurisdictions has not been directly addressed. A public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district with authority from all towns, villages or cities having jurisdiction over the lake may also draft an ordinance controlling seaplanes. The provisions of such an ordinance would **supersede conflicting municipal regulations**.



Seaplane ordinances may designate areas where landings and take-offs occur and may prohibit the use of the water entirely by seaplanes. Regulated and restricted areas should be marked by buoys and other standard marking devices, the placement of which is authorized by the **Department of Natural Resources**. Seaplane ordinance adoption **requires a public hearing and notice to the Department of Transportation**.

Address your questions to Lake Tides,  
Query of the Season, UWEX-CNR, 1900  
Franklin St., Stevens Point WI 54481



## **QUERY OF THE SEASON**





**Lake Tides - 8580**  
 College of Natural Resources  
 University of Wisconsin  
 1900 Franklin St.  
 Stevens Point, WI 54481  
 715/346-2116

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## Wisconsin Lakes Partnership



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## C A L E N D A R

- 9/6: Upper Peninsula Regional Seminar, MI Lakes & Streams Assn. at Iron River MI (Call 616/273-8200 or 517/257-3583)
- 9/11: Tools for Lake Leaders, Rice Lake WI (WAL 1/800-542-5253)
- 9/12: Tools for Lake Leaders, Eagle River WI (WAL 1/800-542-5253)
- 9/13: Tools for Lake Leaders, Oshkosh, WI (WAL 1/800-542-5253)
- 9/16 Love of the Land, Wisconsin Public Television, 8:00 pm and repeated on 9/17 at 10:00 pm (check your local TV listings)
- 9/22 Land Use & Stream Protection in the Great Lakes Basin,
- & 23: Radisson Inn in Green Bay (call Doreen at the Oneida Nation Planning Department at 1/800-236-2868 or 920/869-1600)
- 10/16 Building a Sense of Place, Midwest Environmental Education
- 19: Conference, Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison (Meta Reigel, WAEE, 715/346-2796)
- 10/24: Sharing Our Waters, A Youth Lake Issues Conference, Lakewoods Resort, Cable WI (Jim Brakken 715/798-3163)
- 12/3 Managing for Healthy Aquatic Systems, 17th Intl. Symposium of
- 6: the North American Lake Mgmt. Soc., Houston (608/233-2836)
- 3/12- Wisconsin Lakes Conference, Stevens Point WI (715/346-2116
- 14/97: or 1/800-542-5253)