



# LAKE TIDES

*The newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin lakes*

*"The truth has less to do with what we see and more to do with how we see it."*

## Water's it Worth?

### The economic value of our waters

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*We have been planning an article on the economic value of water for over a year. Placing a value on our lakes and rivers is tough, some say disgusting. How do we determine value? Economists tell us that it is based on the supply and demand of a resource.*

Have you been keeping up on the soaring cost of property on Wisconsin lakes? Each month brings "can you top this" stories about folks paying astronomical prices to own a "little place" near the water. Water is one of the most vital of all natural resources. It is a basic necessity for virtually all forms of life on earth and it is used in numerous ways. World wide, fresh usable water is at a premium. Many of the world's trouble spots (like the Middle East) are skirmishing over water rights.

The word "Wisconsin" means "gathering of waters"... From "Big Lake Winnebago" to the Great Lakes to the Mighty Mississippi, Wisconsin is rich with water resources. The state has 15,057 inland lakes, 5.3 million acres of wetlands and over 43,000 miles of rivers and streams, not to mention the fact that over 6.4 million acres of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior lie within our state's boundaries. We are also fortunate to have a vast quantity of groundwater—estimates range as high as  $350 \times 10^{14}$  gallons (imagine that all the groundwater were transferred to the surface. The state would be covered to a depth of 30 feet). With all of our state's "water wealth," it would certainly appear that we have enough water to go around.

Unlike the western United States, Wisconsinites rarely think of water as scarce. However, the latest attempts to ship water from Lake Superior to Asia and recent concern over the Perrier Corporation's interest in using high capacity wells to supply a bottling plant near the headwaters of the Mecedon River in Waushara County has brought the water "quantity" issue to the forefront. We are starting to understand that there is simply not enough water (or any other natural resource, for that matter) to allow all individuals to use the water as they wish. Both population and industry are growing, and as they do the number of conflicts among the various interests with a stake in our state's water resources will continue to increase. As a result, we may be forced to make some difficult choices relative to how and who will use our state's water.

### A Free Resource?

But how much is water worth? What is a lake worth? And if water does have an economic value, what is it? \$5 a gallon?... twenty dollars? From an economic perspective, the term "value" has a very precise definition—it is the maximum price individuals are willing to



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*It is ironic that we treat our most valuable resource as if it were worthless.*

pay in order to obtain a good or service or the maximum amount a person is willing to accept in payment to forego obtaining a particular good or service. These two economic concepts are known as an individual's *willingness-to-pay* and *willingness-to-accept*, respectively. Willingness-to-pay and willingness-to-accept plays out when there is no observable market price for a certain good, as in the case of water.

In Wisconsin, water is treated as a free resource. Natural resources are unique from an economic perspective because much of the value we place on them is not directly paid for in the marketplace. This is particularly true of water resources. In Wisconsin, there is no charge for withdrawing water from a lake or stream and we do not have to pay for the use of groundwater. Permission to use or divert water is required, but payment is not. The only costs associated with water are for its transport from one site to another or for its treatment and disposal, e.g. water and sewage bills paid by urban residents.

The fact that we do not pay for the use of water in Wisconsin is quite deceiving, for it would then seem that water has no economic value. While we all know this is not the case, water is treated as such in our state. Former Colorado Governor, Richard D. Lamm, explained this situation quite clearly when he stated:

*"It is ironic that we treat our most valuable resource as if it were worthless. We are quick to understand the value of gold or oil or beef. Yet we take for granted the water to mine and mill the gold or to feed and process the beef"* (Freshwater Foundation, 1986).

### **All Bottled Up**

Dr. Charles Goldman, noted limnologist at the University of California-Davis, has studied Lake Tahoe for much of his

career. Lake Tahoe is still one of the clearest lakes in North America with Secchi disk readings of 75 feet or more. At a speech in Reno, Nevada, Dr. Goldman asked what Lake Tahoe would be worth if it were sold by the bottle. He noted that a liter (about a quart) of bottled water costs between \$1.00-1.50. Lake Tahoe holds 39 trillion gallons of water; there are four quarts in a gallon... four times 39 trillion... Hmmm... It turns out that water does indeed have an economic value or price, but that value varies tremendously depending on how the water is used and who uses it. The cost of bottled water is often over \$5 per gallon, much more than gasoline.

### **Want to Buy a Lake?**

It may be hard to place a dollar value on your lake but we can get some idea of the cost of building a lake from scratch. Lee Kernen, retired WDNR fisheries director, visited some of Iowa's new lakes. The typical way to build a lake in Iowa is with a dam or dike (but that's another issue). The state had purchased a suitable piece of land lying in a 7500 acre parcel of hunting land. Brushy Lake is a 600-acre beauty. Before the dams were closed, bulldozers built fish habitat. Clean gravel was laid in for spawning grounds. The shoreland of the lake remains natural, except for boat ramps, fishing piers and a campground. The 7500 acres cost \$1300 per acre or \$9.75 million. The dam cost another \$11 million, add in another \$1.5 million for the fish habitat...

Would you believe the day would come when folks would build lakes on speculation? If you're driving between Stevens Point and Portage on Interstate 39 near Hancock, you may have noticed a lake being built for water skiing. The 10-acre lake was built on speculation in October 1999 and the three lots have received offers to purchase. Two 15-acre lots will sell for around \$175,000 each and one 5-acre lot with structures for about





\$235,000. According to the builders, the high cost of waterfront property has made the time ripe and the price attractive for building private lakes. These lakes are large enough for recreational activities like water-skiing. Slalom water-skiing requires a lake 1800 feet long and about 200 feet wide (approximately 10 acres). The cost of digging can range from \$175,000 to \$750,000 or more. In some cases water may need to be pumped into the lake to maintain enough water for motor boating. The lake in this picture currently has a high capacity well pumping one million gallons per day into the lake. Engineers believe that after it has been filled and stabilized the requirement will drop to around 100,000 gallons per week. The homeowners will pay the cost of pumping. We are not sure how many private water-skiing lakes have been built in Wisconsin, but the numbers may grow if the price of waterfront property continues to increase or if folks think their ability to recreate is being restricted.



*Our lakes and rivers are valued by all of us in many different ways. They represent opportunities for today and an investment in our future. It may be prudent to treat them with the respect and care that is deserved. The overall quality of life of all our state's residents—human, plant or animal—is inherently connected to the quality and quantity of our state's water resources. In future issues of Lake Tides we will explore the value of waterfront property and delve into some new research that looks at the connection between property values and lot size.*

A series of five fact sheets written by Dave Marcouiller and Scott Coggins (paraphrased in this article) is available through Extension publications (Water Issues in Wisconsin, G3698-1 through 5). The authors discuss some of the concepts used to determine the economic value of our water. You can order them from your County Extension office or Extension Publications at 608-262-3346.

## Did you know...

... that 2 percent of Wisconsin's lakes (those over 400 acres) contain 67% of the total surface area and 88% of our lakes (those under 50 acres) possess 10% of our surface area?

There are 15,057 lakes in Wisconsin and they cover a total surface area of 982,155 acres. There are 333 lakes over 400 acres in size (not including the Great Lakes) which represents 67% of the surface area or 657,161 acres. There are 13,066 lakes under fifty acres in size which contain 100,258 acres, or about 11% of Wisconsin's total surface area.



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## Blue Water is the Best

One of the largest problems caused by boaters visiting different bodies of water is that foreign plants may be spread to new waters. Such is the case with Eurasian watermilfoil. The state of Wisconsin has recently approved of another tool to help in the fight against this unwanted plant.

Eurasian watermilfoil is a foreign plant species that was introduced to North American waters approximately fifty years ago. Since that time it has spread to bodies of water in 39 states, including Wisconsin. It is now present in 48 of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

The problem with Eurasian watermilfoil is that it grows more rapidly and aggressively than native species and may damage fish habitat and indigenous plant communities. Mechanical harvesting may make the situation worse by breaking the stalks of the plant and allowing pieces to float to other parts of the water body. While removing milfoil by hand is effective, it is impractical if the plant beds are widespread.

However, there is another way to deal with Eurasian watermilfoil. When particular herbicides are properly applied, the plant may be controlled. To help fight this foreign plant, the State has approved a proposal that would allow funds already available to be used for application of these herbicides. No additional state funds will have to be used. Fighting an exotic plant with a safe method and without additional expense makes sense.

Submitted by State Representative Cloyd Porter, 66<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

### Editors Note:

The cost share program Rep. Porter refers to is applicable statewide under the Recreational Boating Fund (RBF) administered by the Wisconsin Waterways Commission. Up to \$75,000 statewide total can be used for a 50% cost share for herbicide control of Eurasian watermilfoil. The Waterways Commission reviews these projects similar to other RBF projects and can award grant money to projects that provide public benefits to navigation and meet the funding guidelines.

To apply, a project applicant must have an approved Aquatic Plant Management Permit (NR 107, Wis. Adm. Code) issued to them by the Department of Natural Resources prior to submitting the grant application to the Commission. Organizations interested in a grant should first contact their local DNR Aquatic Plant Management Specialist for permit requirements. When an NR 107 permit is secured, an RBF grant application should then be made through the local DNR Community Services Specialist.

The Waterways Commission can fund up to 50% of the cost of chemicals and application on the water. Costs for education, preparation of an Aquatic Plant Management Plan, or project monitoring are not eligible under this program, but may be eligible under other programs. Project applications will need to be supported with detailed information on the chemical treatment plan, and the anticipated public benefit. More specifically, the supporting information will explain how long Eurasian watermilfoil has been present, how it is distributed throughout the water body, the kinds of problems it poses; what methods have been considered for control, why chemical control is desirable, how the project may be monitored for effectiveness, and what public benefits will come from the project.

The RBF money that can be used for herbicide control is very limited. Projects that are prevention or restoration oriented, or those that are part of an aquatic plant management plan with a carefully considered plant management strategy are most likely to compete favorably with other RBF projects. Lake organizations considering a Waterways Commission grant should first talk to their local DNR Plant Management Specialist to determine if and what kind of chemical treatment or other control method is appropriate for their Eurasian Water Milfoil problem. Your DNR Plant Management Specialist can help steer your organization towards developing a sound aquatic plant management program.





## Introducing Wisconsin DNR's River Protection Grant Program

With passage of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, nonprofit organizations, units of government and other organizations are eligible for river management and planning grants. The **river planning grants** program provides up to \$10,000 per grant with 75% maximum state cost share. Some eligible activities include organizational development, information and education, water quality, habitat and fish and aquatic life assessments and nonpoint source analysis.

**River management grants** provide up to \$50,000 per grant with a possibility for 75% state cost share. Eligible activities under the river management grant program include: restoration of in-stream or shoreland habitat, acquisition of land or conservation easements, and local ordinance development.

Eligible sponsors consist of local units of government, nonprofit conservation organizations (organized under § 23.0955 Wis. Stats.) and qualified river management organizations. Qualified river management organizations must be incorporated, have open membership and have a past history related to river protection.

## New Grant Program for Rivers

Continued

### New Fisheries and Habitat Expert Announced:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Southeast Region Water Program is pleased to announce their new Fisheries and Habitat Expert, **Bob Wakeman**. Bob began his new duties on March 27, 2000. Many of you know Bob from his role as the Southeast Region Lakes Coordinator where he worked on a number of grants and assisted with monitoring and community assistance projects. Bob has been involved in water resource management issues for over 20 years and is looking forward to the challenges of his new position as Fisheries and Habitat Expert. We'll all miss our day-to-day contact with Bob, but we can all rest assured that he'll maintain contact with his many partners in the Lakes Program. Good luck in your new appointment, Bob!

## An Update on Education for Waterfront Real Estate Agents

*In a past issue of LT we discussed a cooperative program to develop a training program for realtors selling waterfront property.... Here is an update.*

In 1998, the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) contracted with White Water Associates from Amasa MI to sponsor a pilot program in northern Wisconsin designed to educate real estate agents on the basics of riparian and aquatic ecology. The goal consisted of preparing these professionals to convey to their customers the benefits of an ecologically sensitive approach to living on the water. About thirty agents enjoyed the day-long seminar and declared it a very practical and educational experience. This spring, White Water scientist/educators Dean Premo and Elizabeth Rogers will deliver the program in the states of New Hampshire and Michigan. They learned early on that the program needed to be developed so that the benefits of attending were clear to the real estate agents. One realtor who helped in early planning stages put it this way: "it needs to be in a transactional-based context." In other words, what we teach about waterfront ecology should help real estate agents be better at what they do for a living. The goal is to provide another way for waterfront property owners to learn more about the ecosystem they inhabit and to encourage them to be good stewards of these ecosystems.

*The real estate agents dealing in waterfront property are among the first to meet people moving to the margins of our lakes and rivers and they will play a key role in defining the future. Working together is vital. This program can be an important tool in preserving our water heritage. For more information contact: White Water Associates, Inc. Amasa, Michigan 49903 <http://www.white-water-associates.com>*

## Waterfront Realtors Program Update



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## The Spirit of Lakes— 2000 Lakes Convention

The 22nd Wisconsin Lakes Convention started off the new century in spectacular fashion; rousing speakers, magic potions, wood ducks and tons of great information treated those who gathered at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point. If you have never attended this largest-in-the-nation, one-of-a-kind convention, consider making it next year. The convention will be held in March, 2001. The convention committee is considering a possible move to the new Convention Center at the Regency Suites in Green Bay for next year's Convention. The dates and location will be announced in the next issue of *Lake Tides*.

### Is there Magic in your Message?

At the convention, six hundred people watched an interpretation of the angst and philosophical judgment that surround the sale and development of waterfront property play out on the stage of the Sentry Theater. There was magic, mystery, song and dance and a lively cast of characters from Theatre in the Woods of Shell Lake. We were treated to a new way of disseminating an educational message through "*Balance and Swing*," a

fresh musical about shoreland development with lyrics and music by Kevin McMullin. A concern we often hear is, "we've been preaching to the choir," or "the people that really need this information aren't coming." Attending educational sessions on shore line buffer zones or other lake issues is not a high priority for folks who are out to relax or recreate. But people generally do enjoy attending local cultural events like concerts and plays.

This project comes at a time when lake shore issues are looming large both locally and on a national scale. People are concerned about the effect of rapid development on all of these beautiful, pristine lakes. "*Balance and Swing*" helps make people aware of the issues and keeps them informed. Presenting the message through community theater offers a way for neighbors to work together to protect the lakes in their area. The lesson becomes that much more powerful.

Lake organizations can play a role in bringing the right people together to present this message. We are hoping the people who saw *Balance and Swing* at the conference will try similar community theater/environmental education partnerships when they get home. If you are interested in bringing "*Balance and Swing*" to your community or working with your local theater groups or schools to present an environmental message that is fun, entertaining and educational, contact Kevin McMullen, N2538 Winselman Road, Sarona WI 54870, 715-635-7641.

### Salute to the 2000 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Award Recipients!

Many outstanding individuals, groups and youth projects were nominated for this year's Lake Stewardship Awards. To choose only one in each category is a formidable task; there are so many talented and dedicated folks who deserve recognition. As with the Academy Awards, we cannot say "The Winner is..." because you are all winners in our eyes. However, the Lake Stewardship Awards were presented to the following nominees—**Individual - Robert and Fran Dauffenbach** of Rock Lake in Lake Mills; **Group - Green Lake Sanitary District**; **Youth - Montello School District**; and **Public Service - Bryan Pierce**, Vilas County Community Resource Development Educator. If you would like to nominate someone from your lake, nomination forms are available from the UWEX-Lakes Office, 1900 Franklin St., CNR-UWSP, Stevens Point WI 54481.



Fran & Robert Dauffenbach



Green Lake San. District



Bryan Pierce, Vilas Co.





## Wisconsin Lakes... Lifetime Achievement Awards

The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership celebrated the achievements of two distinguished individuals at the recent Lakes Convention. **Lowell Klessig** and **Sandy Engel** were honored for their devoted professionalism and dedication to Wisconsin's lakes.

Lowell has left a tradition of partnership and teamwork within the Wisconsin lake community. Lowell understood that wise stewardship of our lakes starts with those who use our lakes and live near them. This award is an attempt to say, "Thanks for everything!" from the lake users and riparians of Wisconsin.

Lowell will be retiring from his Lakes Life this fall. He has successfully integrated a mission to support lakes and lake communities into his professional and personal life. In a thirty-year period, he has practiced the art of leaving Wisconsin's lakes a legacy of which we can all be proud. From late night meetings in the kitchen of a lake-front property owner, to working with government officials to pass important legislation, Lowell has lived Lake Management for his entire career.

We admire Lowell Klessig's hard work, leadership and wisdom. He has inspired us and set a wonderful example for others to follow.

**Sandy Engel** has dedicated his professional career to understanding the ecology of lakes and sharing his passion for that world with all of us. He will always be remembered for his willingness to lend a hand and to help selflessly. From planting loosestrife beetles, to assisting with plant training sessions and mercury research, to providing insight on the life history of freshwater jellyfish, Sandy has always given more than was expected. The list of Sandy's accomplishments is long, the list of friends is even longer. We wish Sandy well in his next career—writing children's books about environmental topics. Good Luck!



*A smiling Lowell and Chris Klessig with the Wisconsin Lakes Lifetime Achievement Award.*

15 March 2000

Dear Partners:

Knee-deep in Lake Tomahawk last September—among burreeds, pondweeds, and other friends—I never imagined myself a recipient of the Wisconsin Lakes... Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award has filled me with a flood of memories. About Rice and palette and Halverson Lakes. About sowing wild rice and harvesting water milfoil. About sampling cisco and jellyfish and midge larvae. About APM meetings and lake fairs. About writing articles for *Lake Tides* and *The Lake Connection*. About... so much more.

Above all, the award has filled me with admiration for the many persons, of diverse talent, who care a great deal about Wisconsin lakes.

This award is really a tribute to the success of this collective talent, this biodiversity of mind. And, so, it is "the lakes people"—heart and soul of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership—whom I owe for my receiving this lifetime award. Thanks, partners!

Sincerely,

Sandy Engel



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# Self-Help Lake Monitoring



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**C**an we brag for just a bit? The Self-Help Lake Monitoring Program is Movin' and Shakin'! We are 644 volunteers strong and growing every day! Without volunteer dedication, Wisconsin would lack the strong action and advocacy that helps protect some of the most beautiful lakes in the world. With the Self-Help program's newly implemented technology and equipment, we just keep getting better!

For 2000, Self-Help has a new state-of-the-art data phone-in system. The "Secchi Line" as we refer to it, is now faster and more accurate than ever. Our new system allows us to communicate in person with volunteers as well as collect data. By providing options to answer questionnaires and by giving callers the opportunity to speak directly with a staff member, this system has a more personal edge than our older one. Plus it's a lot faster! We're pleased to use this new technology as a transfer of information rather than a one-way impersonal method of data documentation.

This year Self-Help volunteers will also test some new water sampling equipment. For a cross-section of our volunteers, a simple integrated water sampler will replace the cumbersome vertical messenger release sampler. Along with the new sampler, a digital thermometer will be given a trial run. These more accurate thermometers are also less breakable and will not risk contributing to mercury in our waters. With the results of testing this new equipment, we hope to find the easiest and most accurate methods for collecting data.

Self-Help's future looks extremely bright too. With the help of lake planning grants, we are slowly but surely able to welcome new volunteers into our chemistry program. Data entry on the Web will soon be a reality. And a move to Oracle as our database will ensure high quality data, allow more flexibility to provide Internet capabilities, and protect data from glitches that have come up in the past.

Yes, these technological advancements are important and easy to quantify. But the real thing to brag about here is the loyalty of volunteers—over 600 in Wisconsin's Self-Help program alone, and many more in the world, quietly going about their business to make the world better. Measuring their quantitative success in terms of the health of local waters overlooks the larger impact of volunteer monitoring.

Steven Hubbell, coordinator of the Colorado River Watch Network, sums up this idea:

*"It is the unsung successes that really make the difference—the environmental ethic infiltrating the lives of new generations, the sense of ownership and personal responsibility that accompanies the monitoring experience, the stewardship model being played out in cities and towns where citizens from every walk of life join the common purpose of safeguarding precious resources for future enjoyment."*

**It's hard not to brag about this kind of success!!!**

**Susan Graham takes on a new role:** Many of you know Susan from her years of dedicated service in the Self-Help Volunteer Monitoring program. Susan recently moved from the Self-Help program to become the Lakes Coordinator for the South Central Region, replacing Jim Leverance. We know that Susan will use that same dedication to provide assistance to all lake lovers in her new home. Susan's email address remains the same (grahas@mail01.dnr.state.wi.us); her address is now: DNR-South Central Region Headquarters, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg WI 53711. Make sure to welcome Sue and seek her out for your South Central Region lake questions.



## Make a Splash with Project WET!

Join with teachers and students in grades 4-6 from across the nation on September 22, 2000 for "National Project WET Water Education Day!" Kick off your school year with a water education theme and join together simultaneously with thousands of students across the country as they learn about the water cycle, groundwater and freshwater springs. Plans are under way for Wisconsin's version of this Water Festival. Up to 50 teachers and their students will receive curriculum and educational materials for use at the festival and later in their classrooms. For those not able to attend, a web site will be established that will link together all the other states' festivals and include activities and interactive games.

If you would like to get involved in planning or bringing your students to this day-long water festival, contact the Wisconsin Project WET office at 715/346-4978 or email [dsnyder@uwsp.edu](mailto:dsnyder@uwsp.edu). Let's all make a splash and get WET on September 22!

### Montello School District Receives Adopt-A-Lake Award!

Montello Lake is lucky to have enthusiastic teachers and students willing to make lake awareness a priority for their community. Through a community service grant, 5th and 8th grade students helped to purchase a school aquarium, developed welcome baskets for new lake property owners and designed a "How to be Lake Friendly" brochure. *Congratulations for a job well done!*



### Adopt-A-Lake...Youth in Action! Student Summit on Invasive Species

Pewaukee High School, under the guidance of Ruth Le Poidevin and the Waukesha County Land Resource Division, hosted a student summit on invasive species. Four Waukesha school districts attended the full day workshop addressing invasive aquatic species that are seriously impacting the ecology and economy of Wisconsin.

Break out sessions included activities from Project WET, helpful tips on teaching methods and the new educational tool, "Zebra Mussel-Pack Attack". Guest speakers from Wisconsin DNR, Wisconsin Sea Grant advisory Services, UW-Extension and Senator Margaret Farrell gave the youth participants the tools, incentives and resources to become active in protecting Wisconsin's water resources. These students will then take this information and design their own educational program for elementary and middle school students within their school districts.

**Look out invasive species, here come the future protectors!**



# Adopt-A-Lake/Project WET



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## **Frog School — Learning about Reptiles and Amphibians**

If you're interested in expanding your appreciation of the diversity of reptiles and amphibians through an introductory survey, this program is for you. The survey will run from **21-28 May, 2000 at the Pigeon Lake Field Station** near Clam Lake, Wisconsin. The class will involve lectures, specimen labs, and discussions of readings. You will examine aspects of anatomy, behavior, and ecology in an evolutionary context while you gain practical experience in the techniques and methods used to study reptiles and amphibians in the field. This is your chance to become proficient at using dichotomous keys and hone your skills on identifying local reptiles and amphibians. Students will learn to make and record natural history observations by keeping a detailed field journal. For more information contact: Dr. Erik R. Wild, Department of Biology, UW-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481, Phone: (715)346-4269; FAX: (715) 346-3624 or Email: [ewild@uwsp.edu](mailto:ewild@uwsp.edu)

## **C A L E N D A R**

**April 27**—Shoreland Restoration Workshop sponsored by Phantom Lake Management District at Mukwonago Town Hall, 7-9 pm. For more information call 262-363-7017.

**April 28**—Taking Action for Water Quality: The Lakes Conservancy Model, Dresser, WI. For more information call Cheryl at 715-268-4666 or John at 715-635-7406.

**May-All month**—Wisconsin Rivers Cleanup Month! For information and ideas on how to celebrate our rivers, contact Water Action Volunteers at 608-264-8948.

**May 3**—2000 Wisconsin Water Law and Policy Conference, UW-Stevens Point University Center. For more information call 1-800-355-5573 or 608-262-3833.

**May 7-13**—Loon Appreciation Week! Celebrating organizations who support loons. For more information on how you can get involved, contact LoonWatch, Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at 715-682-1220.

**May 13**—Yellow River Shoreline Restoration Project at the Tommy G. Thompson Fish Hatchery, Spooner. For more information contact Sheri Snowbank at 715-635-2101.

**June 29**—Lake Fair 2000 at Lakewoods Resort near Cable. For more information phone 715-798-3163.

**July 1-8**—Lake Awareness/Appreciation Week! For information on how you can get involved in lake protection through the Adopt-A-Lake program, contact Laura Felda at 715-346-3366. For information on the Self-Help Monitoring Program call 608-266-8117. To find out about lake planning and protection grants, call 608-261-6423.

**August 16-17**—Project WET/PLT Workshop, Watertown. For information, contact Suzanne Wade at 920-674-8972.

## **Where on the Web? Check out these sites!**

Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund—[www.glahabitat.org](http://www.glahabitat.org)

Shoreland Restoration Home Page—[www.uwex.edu/ces/shoreland](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/shoreland)

Northern Shoreways—[www.northernshoreways.com](http://www.northernshoreways.com)

Wisconsin Lake Book—<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/lakes/wilkbook.htm>

Understanding Lake Data—<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org>

EPA site for water quality ordinances—<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/ordinance/>

"Pond Life" game—<http://www.nalms.org/educate/pondgame/plgame.htm>

Ice Age Trail Map Buffet—<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/at/et/geo/iceage/>

EPA Watershed Outreach Homepage—<http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/outreach/outreachnonjs.html>

The Biodiversity Project—<http://www.biodiversityproject.org/>

National Environmental Education Foundation—<http://www.neetf.org>

Lake Mallalieu Association—<http://www.lakemallalieu.org/> (This website was produced with funds from a Lake Planning Grant. Check it out to see what your group could do!)



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# The Wisconsin Open Meetings Law...

## Some Questions and Answers

The purpose of the Wisconsin Open Meetings law is to promote a certain level of transparency relative to government decision-making and to ensure that members of the public are fully informed with respect to government affairs. The following represent some common questions on the Open Meetings law:

### *When Does the Open Meetings Law Apply?*

The law applies whenever there is a meeting of a governmental body.

### *What is a "governmental body"?*

A governmental body is generally a state or local agency, board, commission, council, committee, department or corporate entity that is created by state constitution, statute, ordinance, rule or order. A governmental or quasi-governmental corporation is also a governmental body for purposes of the law as well as any subunit of such an entity. A governmental or quasi-governmental corporation usually refers to corporations that resemble governmental units in terms of function and overall purpose and that have been created by the state Legislature or some other government unit in accordance with state authority. The Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation is an example of a "quasi-governmental" entity. In most cases, incorporated lake associations are not covered under the law. The law does not cover committees or other bodies formed for the purpose of collective bargaining. *Some examples* of governmental bodies covered under the law include: county, village, town board or city councils, public inland lake and rehabilitation districts, county board of adjustments, and advisory committees created by a county executive.

### *What is the definition of a "meeting"?*

A meeting takes place whenever members of a governmental body convene for the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities, powers and duties of that body. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has held that two requirements must be satisfied in order for the open meetings law to apply: 1) there is an intent to address governmental business. (This includes discussion, information gathering and decision-making); and 2) the number of individuals present is enough to determine the governmental unit's course of action (*State ex rel. Newspapers v. Showers* (1987)). If one half or more of the members of a governmental body are present, the law presumes that the meeting is for the purpose of conducting governmental business. Social gatherings or other chance meetings not intended to avoid the law are not included in the definition of "meeting."

### *What does the Open Meetings Law require?*

The open meetings law requires that every meeting be preceded by public notice and that the meeting be held in open session. Notice must be given to the public, to representatives of the news media who have requested notice, and to either an officially designated newspaper or other newspaper likely to give notice to the public. The notice shall give the time, date, place and general purpose of the meeting and should be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Under no circumstances may the notice be given less than 2 hours in advance of a meeting. All meetings must be held in open session unless a statutory exception applies. The open session requirement mandates that all meetings are held in a place that is reasonably accessible to all people. Municipal buildings or schools would generally qualify. Private rooms in halls or clubs are typically not acceptable.

Prepared by Tamara Dudiak, J.D., M.S., UW-Extension Lakes Specialist. For another resource, see *Wisconsin Open Meetings Law*, Wisconsin Department of Justice (1993).

*"In recognition of the fact that a representative government of the American type is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the policy of this state that the public is entitled to the fullest and most complete information regarding the affairs of government as is compatible with the conduct of governmental business (§ 19.81(1) Wis. Stats.)."*



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## Reflections

Don't stop to ask whether the animal or plant that you meet deserves your sympathy, or how much it feels, or even whether it can feel at all...

Respect it and consider all life sacred.

-Albert Schweitzer

