



Wisconsin Land Trusts Conserving Pristine Pieces of Wisconsin's Natural Shorelines for Future Generations

By Joshua Knackert, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Willa Schmidt and her parents have owned their own special piece of Snipe Lake for decades. She recalls how much her father loved to be immersed in the natural beauty of the lake:

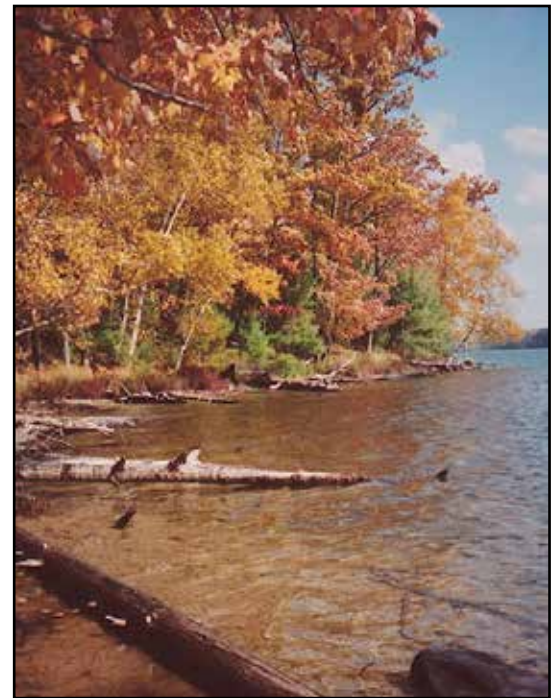
“He was a factory worker in Chicago who only got two weeks of vacation, most of which he spent there [at Snipe Lake].”

Located just west of Eagle River in Vilas County, Snipe Lake, like many in Wisconsin, has become increasingly developed over the last fifty years. After watching the lake's natural shoreline convert to recreational lake front, Schmidt realized her untouched frontage was an important example of the true ecosystem and history, and one of the last of its kind on the lake.

She began looking for ways to keep her land in this pristine state even after she was no longer around to protect it. After doing some research, she was drawn to the conservation and permanence a land trust could provide. Land trusts are nonprofit organizations established to offer landowners a legal option for keeping their land conserved and undeveloped even after their passing. “There’s a sense of relief and happiness knowing that someone will be looking after it once you’re gone,” Schmidt said.

As she began searching for local options for land trusts, she encountered the early stages of the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL). At the time, NWLTL was being formed by a group of local lake organization leaders who wanted to provide landowners the possibility for permanent, effective preservation. Schmidt was one of the first landowners to partner with NWLTL.

(Continued on page 2)



Provided by Willa Schmidt

Part of the natural shoreline on Willa Schmidt's property along Snipe Lake in Vilas County

Provided by Willa Schmidt



“There’s a sense of relief and happiness knowing that someone will be looking after it once you’re gone.”

~ Willa Schmidt

Landowner Motivation

“Often, landowners have grown up on these properties for generations and are worried it won’t look the same for their grandkids,” said Bryan Pierce, Executive Director of NWLT. “They have often watched the growing

development surrounding their properties, and while development includes benefits, they are keenly aware of the losses when compared to the natural beauty and integrity of their undeveloped land.”

“Once something is carved up and broken down, it’s really hard to get it back,” warned Schmidt.

After donating a conservation easement to a land trust, property owners can claim it as a charitable contribution on their taxes for up to sixteen years depending on its value, an enhanced deduction made permanent by the government in 2015. However, most participants only see this as a secondary benefit to knowing their land will stay the way they remember it.

Easements Ensure a Conservation Legacy

Protecting something in perpetuity, or forever, requires a strong legal shield to guarantee that the wishes of the original landowner are honored even after their passing. This legal protection can be established through a conservation easement - a legally binding contract between a conservation organization and private landowner which limits the uses and development on a defined area of land and shoreline.

Easements offer some flexibility, allowing them to be tailored to each property, but conservation is at the core of every agreement signed with a land trust. Emphasis is placed

on limiting future development or division of the property, including any future construction of buildings, disruption of trees or other key native vegetation, or other changes that may destroy habitat or promote erosion.

Easements are also unique in that the landowner retains ownership of the property, allowing it to be sold or inherited with the easement intact. Land trusts take on a perpetual stewardship commitment with the easement, promising to monitor the land annually and ensure that there are no unforeseen forces disrupting the natural state of the property.

Public Benefit

While land trusts offer landowners the ability to make a strong, personal investment towards conservation, it is the general public who actually reaps the most reward.

Besides offering natural beauty and recreational resources, the protected lands serve as essential blueprints for current and future restoration projects. Kevin Gauthier, a Lakes Biologist with the WI DNR, sees immense potential. “This kind of conservation can be used as a demonstration area and knowledge base for restorations in the region, especially for observing rare or threatened species in an undisturbed habitat.”

Land trusts will consult with additional experts, like wetland and wildlife specialists, when they suspect there may be key habitat for threatened or endangered species present in a potential easement. This ensures that the conditions of the easement are drafted with preservation of these species as a priority.

Northwoods Land Trust

Founded in 2001, the NWLT oversees the protection of property in northern Wisconsin counties including Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron, and Price. With just three of these counties (Vilas, Oneida, and Forest) boasting 3,000 lakes among them, the region is one of the most concentrated areas of freshwater lakes in the world.



NWLT holds eighty private easements, owns five donated properties, and has established these as conservation areas and nature preserves which are open to the public. These areas include some of Wisconsin's best land for hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting.

NWLT focuses on preservation of natural shorelines, woodlands, wetlands, and habitats important to native Wisconsin species; land under their protection includes almost twenty-five miles of lakefront, thirty-three miles of river front, and over 11,000 total acres.

[Grants and Volunteers Key to Continued Success](#)

Grants and donations received from organizations like WI DNR, lake management groups, and private foundations have been essential for the growing scope and success of NWLT. From the WI DNR alone, NWLT has received six surface water grants and one Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant for a total of \$886,498 which has leveraged 50 conservation easements donations, five conservation land donations, and one land purchase for a total donated appraisal value of \$18.7 million.

Gauthier has worked with the NWLT on a number of projects and grants and sees the collaboration as a good investment, "Habitat restoration is lengthy, difficult, and expensive, the DNR would rather preserve natural areas now to lessen the load for the future." He praised the hard work by the NWLT staff to maximize grant dollars and communicate their impact, "NWLT translates these grants into impressive, visible results in terms of miles and acres preserved."

NWLT depends on a pool of volunteers, a number of which are participating landowners. Annual surveys of each property managed by NWLT include walking the property perimeter and checking on other key areas, a daunting task for 11,000 acres. A dedicated team of over 40 volunteers is essential for NWLT to accomplish its mission and to assure landowners their property will be actively protected.

[One Piece of the Larger Land Trust Puzzle](#)

NWLT is one of nearly 50 land trusts in Wisconsin, a network of local, regional, and statewide organizations that offer landowners the ability to preserve their property's beauty and natural state. These land trusts are assisted by Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, which acts as a statewide service center, providing public policy advocacy, training, and technical assistance.



"Wisconsin's land trust community has grown significantly in the last 25 years. When Gathering Waters was founded in 1994, there were 12 land trusts operating in the state and today there are close to 50," said Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters. "Land trusts in Wisconsin range in scale from groups like the River Revitalization Foundation protecting a few acres at a time in urban Milwaukee, to organizations like The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy that have projects encompassing tens of thousands of acres of working forests."

Conservation success stories, like Schmidt's, also go a long way in helping Gathering Waters make the case about the importance of public policies and funding that support the work of land trusts and their partnerships with local communities and state and federal agencies. Carlson sees NWLT as a great example of how land trusts often make strong connections with their communities, using their local networks to make a lasting impact for conservation. Landowners partner with land trusts to preserve not only their land, but also the many fond memories they have made there. Willa Schmidt remembers her father fishing on their property and sitting with him listening to the frogs along the shoreline. She thinks the fish and frogs have gotten even more impressive in the last few years, but maybe she just appreciates them even more knowing they will have a protected place at Snipe Lake forever.

Find your local Wisconsin land trust at gatheringwaters.org. 💧

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Water Is Special

By Jesse Haney, Environmental Educator, Photographer, Videographer, Blogger, Star B Imaging

Water is Special. That's what I tell my kids. At ages 3 and 5, it's the best answer to many of their incessant "why" questions these days. Water is special. And since water is so special, we each have to do our part to take care of it. It's why we don't run our faucets too long, why we pick up trash along the river, and why we collect rain for our garden. We also know water is fun, water is wet, water is great when you (or your mom's plants) are thirsty, and lots of other great things. There really is no end to its specialness.

But why? Why is it so special? Why do we love water so much? Thankfully, the kids haven't thought to ask that one yet. This is the question scientist and author, Wallace J. Nichols, explores in his bestselling book, [Blue Mind: The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Make You Happier, Healthier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do](#). Nichols synthesizes research from a variety of disciplines, ranging from neuroscience, psychology, education, and economics, to healthcare, spirituality, and the arts. He makes the case for learning more about WHY we love water so much. Ultimately, he suggests that by understanding why we love water, we will all be better able and more likely to do our part to care for it.

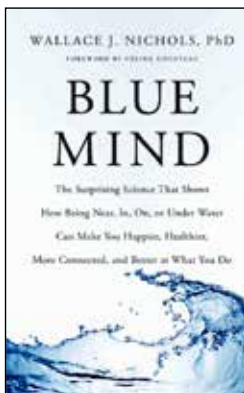
In the book's foreword, Céline Cousteau points out that "Because our love of water is so pervasive, so consistent, it can seem that asking why is a question that needs no answer. But once you begin to go deeper (no pun intended!), things are not as simple as we might initially think." Water is so ubiquitous, so fundamental to life and everything we

humans love about life, we sometimes ignore its importance. Wallace argues that "education should be based on simple awareness: Awareness of what is so real and essential, so hidden in plain sight all around us, all the time, that we have to keep reminding ourselves over and over: 'This is water.'"

Last month, I was invited to participate in the seventh annual Blue Mind Summit, organized by Nichols and his team. The event was billed as "an annual conversation with thought leaders to look at life through a water lens." Summit 7 explored seven ages of water based on Shakespeare's seven ages of man: birth, play, lover, fighter, justice, ebb, and death. Each presenter spoke about their life's work with water in relation to one of these ages. We heard from a global leader and advocate for water birth, a couple that traversed wilderness for a year to help save it, and a woman who used water to help ease her son's suffering and now helps other kids facing death. Their stories were intense, compelling, and diverse; and all inextricably linked to love and water. In fact, when I got home, my candid assessment to my husband went something like: "yeah, there were lots of smart people there talking about research, education, and activism, and I learned some cool things, but it wasn't your typical conference. It was more like a festival of love for water; a gushing, overflowing, unapologetic, pure expression of love for

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~ Céline Cousteau



Amy Kowalski

water.” Don’t get me wrong, that is a huge compliment coming from me. I dread normal conferences. In fact, the more I’ve reflected on the experience over the last few weeks, the more I think that the best and highest value of the Blue Mind Summit is providing space and time for professionals and so-called “thought leaders” to gather and remind themselves why they do this work. Why we love water.

Over and over again throughout the day, Nichols brought us all back to the question, “What is your water?” We paused between speakers to share our personal stories about why we loved water. What specific water delights us? Where were we when we first fell in love with it? Totally weird and different questions in a professional setting, right? But should they be? That is just the point Nichols is making. There is untapped power in what he calls our Blue Mind.

Nichols admits his “goal is less about providing absolute answers and more about asking new questions.” He taps into the science of emotion to make his reader, or a room full of scientists and educators, comfortable enough to explore their own. From there, new questions emerge as we explore ways to incorporate this universal love into whatever we do in work or life. That’s big stuff. A little weird. But in the very best way.

A Blue Mind idea that has caught on around the world is the Blue Marbles Project. Nichols gifts his audiences a small blue marble that represents his message of love and care for water. He calls it “a simple gesture of gratitude for taking care of our little blue planet” and he’s aiming to have a little blue mind marble pass through the hands of every person on the planet. Yes, everyone. He gives it freely, and also with a personal challenge: when you get one, give it away to someone as a token of gratitude, and then share your story with the world.

After hearing Nichols’ evening keynote, my husband and I drove home and gave our blue marbles to our kids. Now don’t freak out. The marbles are just big enough to pose no choking threat for my littles. And no one loves water more than them. There is no puddle, lake, or river they would not splash into given the



Ardea with her blue marble. She is named after the Great Blue Heron; a water bird.

opportunity. And they’re doing a pretty great job doing their parts to take care of it. We thanked them for reminding us how to be so carefree with water; how to dive in and appreciate every drop.

Without even really meaning to, I’ve started to teach my kids about water and stewardship. Really, it doesn’t take much explaining. My kids know water is special. We all do! It’s why we humans love to live by water, camp by lakes and rivers, swim, bathe, and play with water in any way we can think of.

After more than a decade of working in the field of environmental education, and specifically on behalf of water education and educators, I’m pretty sure these are still the most important messages we can teach and learn about the relationship between water and humans. Without understanding why we care so much, we can’t really get to any higher level learning.

Nichols reminds us all that people only fight for what they love. And people love water. His Blue Mind initiative is diving deeper into questions about why we love water and how, by understanding our intrinsic love and affinity for water, we might do a better job as water stewards in our daily life and work. 💧

See more of Jesse Haney’s work on her blog www.starbimaging.wordpress.com

Nichols reminds us all that people only fight for what they love. And people love water.



Can We Fly this Balloon... Forever?

By Eric Olson, Director and Lakes Specialist, UW-Extension Lakes

In 1975, Lowell Klessig and Bob Sterrett mailed out the very first issue of Lake Tides, their “trial balloon”. They were uncertain if this newsletter would soar or sink, as the state’s lakes partnership effort was in its infancy and there were few ways to gauge citizen interest in lake management issues. Forty-two years later and the Lake Tides balloon is still flying high! But, the winds are always changing, and we feel that this is a good time to think deeply about a long-term future for this publication, as well as our overall effort to engage and communicate with thousands of lake lovers around Wisconsin.

Endowments with the UWSP Foundation are a relatively simple way to create a permanent, forever funding source for lake educational efforts.

Lake Tides’ outreach mission has not changed much in over four decades. We still find that there is interest across the state in understanding and caring for lake health. This interest motivates people to start or maintain hundreds of lake associations and districts. The number of lake districts increases

with each passing year. The audience for this effort is growing and dynamic: lake properties change hands, lake association leadership turns over, new people are elected to local office. The work of educating people about the basics of lake management is never really “done” and the need for this newsletter (and the other work of UW-Extension Lakes) appears to carry forward beyond the visible time horizon. How, then, do we keep this balloon afloat, forever?

In the 1970s and 80s, the specific source of funding for UW Extension’s lake outreach efforts shifted between different accounts within the UW System. Since the early 1990s, *Lake Tides* and the UW Extension Lakes staff have been funded almost exclusively through a portion of the Water Resources Account of the Wisconsin DNR’s Conservation Fund, with money collected from motorboat users through the state gasoline tax. It is an organizational truism that to survive in the very long term, one must have a diverse revenue stream. This we do not have.

Our office has been challenged in a positive sense by one of the Lakes Partnership’s longtime supporters, Roger Dreher. Roger has been active in the Partnership for decades, and he has also been working to recognize some of the key people who have made Wisconsin a model for other states seeking to better care for water resources. This past year, Roger met with Steve Menzel, the UW-Stevens Point (UWSP) College of Natural Resources’ development director, and myself to discuss ways to help sustain the Partnership and UW Extension Lakes. For several years, Roger has funded an annual scholarship for two UWSP College of Natural Resources students to recognize Lowell Klessig’s educational legacy, and he wants to engage more people who benefit from the Lakes Partnership and encourage them to similarly give back and recognize the people who have inspired their concern for lakes. Steve pointed out that endowments with the UWSP Foundation are a relatively simple way

University Endowments

Endowments have become increasingly important funding strategies for public and private universities. Endowments are made up of tax-deductible donations to a non-profit campus affiliate that are then invested in relatively conservative portfolios. Universities can use the investment earnings to fund scholarships, research or other needs. Over a ten-year period, the typical university endowment has yielded about 4% earnings. Most of the earnings are commonly made available for campus use, and the remainder is reinvested in the endowment to maintain an inflation-adjust balance over the very long run.

Endowments help answer the question, “How can we keep providing this educational service, forever?” But, they can also be challenging to use as a financial strategy because they require significant amounts of donations and gifts that are accumulated over years, even decades. For *Lake Tides* and the Lakes Partnership, the timing appears ideal to begin building such a stable financial base. We know that our audience appreciates this newsletter because we hear it in our reader surveys and emails you send us. We hope this fundraising effort provides you with a way to say “thank you” and enable this service to continue for future generations.



Lake lover donates money to the “Wisconsin Lakes Partnership” specific fund at the UWSP Foundation...



...this money, along with other donations to the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership fund gets conservatively invested. Because this is a long-term investment, the average available capital is about 4%.



The UW-Stevens Point Foundation’s endowment is managed in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Foundation in Madison. The partnership gives our campus access to exceptional investment managers and allows our local foundation to focus on strategic investments and fundraising campaigns. Learn more about the UW-Foundation at <https://www.supportuw.org/about-us/>.

A \$10,000 endowment would fund two \$200 scholarships each year FOREVER.

A \$250,000 endowment would fund a *Lake Tides* student fellowship at \$10,000 each year FOREVER.

A \$500,000 endowment would fund a *Lake Tides* graduate student at \$20,000 each year FOREVER.

to create a permanent, forever funding source for lake educational efforts. We concluded that *Lake Tides* would be an excellent starting point for a fundraising effort.

One reason to focus on *Lake Tides* is that we can efficiently reach thousands of people about this long-term need and vision. As with many lake groups, our newsletter represents the most tangible connection that an individual lakeshore property owner has with our organization. *Lake Tides* is also one of the most long-running productions of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. Finally, we can share a funding vision with potential supporters that starts small but eventually builds up to create something with a major impact. Through the UWSP Foundation, we can begin building an endowment that can provide increasing levels of support for producing and distributing

Lake Tides and communicating with tens of thousands of lake lovers like yourself.

We envision getting started by endowing an undergraduate student fellowship at UWSP. UW-Extension Lakes staff would mentor this student, who would assist in the ongoing production of *Lake Tides*. Through this fellowship, students would be exposed to a range of lake management concepts and challenged to help us communicate with a

Example Endowment at Northland College

Earnings from a \$10 million endowment, bequeathed by Mary Griggs Burke, provides the stable and permanent funding for a core of students and staff at the Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation at Northland College. The Center leverages this base of funding through grants and partnerships to carry out research and outreach on Lake Superior and inland lakes. This base funding at the Center provides a sense of security that allows for long-term planning and research endeavors. Learn more about this in *Lake Tides*, Vol. 40, No. 3.

(Continued on page 9)



Would You Know a Woodchuck?

By Paul Skawinski, Statewide Coordinator, Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, UW-Extension Lakes

The woodchuck, or groundhog, is a large rodent that commonly weighs 10-12 lbs as an adult. They can be nearly three feet long including their tail. Many people understandably associate the groundhog with the 1993 Hollywood film *Groundhog Day*, where weatherman Phil (played by Bill Murray) is assigned to report on the meteorological predictions of the famous groundhog Punxsutawney Phil. Groundhogs are common throughout Wisconsin and most of the eastern and central United States, although we aren't aware of any in our region that can forecast upcoming weather events.

Natural predators have a small impact on groundhog populations; humans and domestic dogs are their greatest threat.

Amy Kowalski



This woodchuck was hanging out along the shore of Green Lake.

Groundhogs prefer *edge habitat* – places where two habitats meet, such as lawn and forest. They dig complex burrows with their long, curved claws and often choose burrow sites near hedges, fencerows, or other types of

cover. These burrows average about 14 feet in length and even contain a side “bathroom” tunnel, where the groundhog can relieve itself without messing up the main areas of the burrow. A groundhog needs to eat about 1/3 of its body weight each day, which may include wild vegetation, cultivated garden plants and flowers, or even tree bark. They tend to be fond of common lawn weeds such as dandelions and clover, although they also cherish apples and other fruits they can find on the ground.

October. The large amount of vegetation they consume throughout the warm season builds up fat reserves and supplies them with energy to last through the winter. Its body temperature will plummet from 99°F to 40°F to conserve energy, and its heartbeat will slow to a measly five beats per minute. When they wake in the spring, mating season begins, and mothers will soon have two to four babies, called kits.

Another common name, the land beaver, refers to the groundhog's swimming skills and similar facial features. Both species have continuously growing front teeth, which wear down as the animals chew on wood.

Photo by Robbie, Flickr creative commons



The life span of the groundhog is typically only 2-3 years in the wild, although captive animals have been reported to live up to 14 years. Young groundhogs are often killed by snakes that enter the burrow, and a wide variety of other animals prey upon all groundhogs, including foxes, coyotes, wolves, bobcats and eagles. Interestingly, foxes may make their home in the burrow after killing the groundhog. However, these natural predators have a small impact on groundhog populations; humans and domestic dogs are their greatest threat.

Groundhogs are used in medical research related to hepatitis-B. They cannot transmit hepatitis to humans, but the woodchuck hepatitis virus is similar to the human hepatitis-B virus and therefore can provide useful information in studies of hepatitis in humans. Friend or foe, this interesting animal is an occasional visitor along lakeshores.

Like many northern mammals, the groundhog hibernates for the winter, typically beginning in

Is anyone else feeling an urge to rent *Groundhog Day*? 🐿



(Can We Fly this Balloon...Forever; continued)

broad, statewide audience. The benchmark endowment required to fund an undergraduate fellowship is about \$250,000, which would yield, on average, about \$10,000 annually to support a talented student, forever. Once we reached that goal, we would seek to increase the endowment to \$500,000, enough to fund a graduate student assistantship to take on most of the production responsibilities of creating *Lake Tides*. The assistantship would help honor the legacy of Bob Korth, the longtime UW-Extension Lakes Director who first became involved in the Partnership as a UWSP graduate student tasked with producing *Lake Tides* under Lowell's guidance. Eventually, we would like to build toward an even larger endowment that would completely fund the production, printing and distribution of *Lake Tides*. This would be a major step towards ensuring the perpetual provision of statewide lakes education in Wisconsin.

I am asking you, our readers, to consider contributing towards this effort. While the dollar amount may seem large, we can make it much more manageable if everyone pitches in. If about half the readers of *Lake Tides* gave \$10 per year for two years, we would nearly reach our first goal!

Using the UWSP Foundation website, <https://give.uwsp.edu>, you can easily make a secure donation (click "Give Now," then select the designation "Other Specific Fund" and type in "Wisconsin Lakes Partnership"). If you would like to give a more substantial gift, or have additional ideas for sustaining the Partnership for the very long term, I encourage you to reach out to Steve Menzel here at UWSP by phone (715-346-2032) or email (steve.menzel@uwsp.edu). Thank you for considering how you can keep this *Lake Tides* balloon floating high, forever. 💧

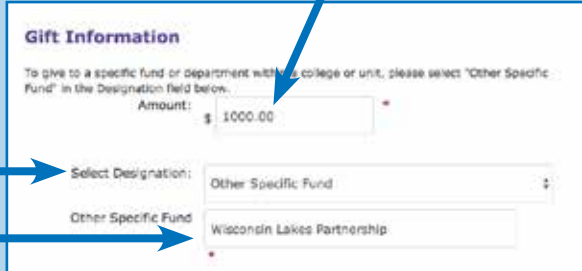
If about half the readers of Lake Tides gave \$10 per year for two years, we would nearly reach our first goal!

Keep the Lake Tides Balloon Flying High, Forever!

Step 1: go to <https://give.uwsp.edu>

Step 2: click → 

Step 3: enter an amount



choose type →

Step 4: fill out the rest of the form

Free Trainings to Help Our Lakes

2017 Spring/Summer CLMN & CBCW Trainings

Want to help slow the spread of aquatic invasive species while enjoying time on your local lake? Attend a free training in your neighborhood to become a Clean Boats, Clean Waters watercraft inspector or a Citizen Lake Monitoring Network volunteer! You can find out more about these programs on our website at www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes. Just click on one of these icons. Spring and summer workshops are already in full swing. It's not too late to get involved - check out our Lake Event Calendar to find a training near you!

www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes



What is Your Water?



As lake lovers, we can describe with all of our senses “our water” when asked this question. “It’s the smell of a spring rain dripping from the leaves.” “It’s that mesmerizing pattern of the lake lapping our sandy shore near the cottage.” “It is the “Ker-plunk” of the lure on the water.” “It’s the bubbles as we dive deep into a new world under the surface of the water.” “It’s the dip of the paddle into the glass-smooth lake.” “It’s the crashing waves of the dark blue ocean.”

What is your water? That was the question we were challenged to ponder at the 39th annual Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention. Our kick-off keynote speaker Wallace J. Nichols, a marine biologist and author of the book Blue Mind, encouraged us to continue asking ourselves this question and motivate our friends and neighbors to do the same.

We all have a watery gem or memory that is our own. How could we not? Water covers 71% of this amazing, big blue marble that we live on. The color blue itself, the color of our waters reflecting the sky, is calming, as is the feeling when we are near water. We’ve felt the restorative, peaceful, nurturing effects of water.

Our final keynote speaker, Andrew Fusek Peters, a British author, photographer, and poet, is living proof of water’s healing properties. Through his exquisite poetry, nature photography and personal stories, Andrew made it clear that swimming in wild lakes and rivers was crucial to his recovery from depression. His water is the wild lakes and rivers of the English countryside.

My water is the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention. It is the chance to rejuvenate. In a sense, this is my water: having the opportunity to bring together all of the amazing folks who work on lake science, management and preservation to share accomplishments and ideas with the people of our little blue planet AND become rejuvenated by all of you. Andrew reminds us, “Share the waters, to work and leap together, despite the storms and brutal weather.” Might I add, while in sunshine and fair skies as well.

Water is healing to our minds and bodies, and we are reminded to embrace the importance of being good water stewards to ensure our mental and physical well-being. Thank you to my colleagues on the planning team, the presenters and all of you that attended the convention in body, mind and spirit. Dates for the 2018 Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention are April 18-20. In the meantime, I wish you water!



*Kim Becker
Lakes Convention Coordinator*



2017 Lakes Convention Recap

This year’s Lakes Convention brought over 600 people to Stevens Point, which included a pre-event Summit called *Blue Mind 7* (read more about one attendee’s feedback from this gathering on page 4 in the article *Water Is Special*). Attendees also chose to participate in some of the 18 hands-on workshops covering topics from Aquatic Plant Identification to Story-telling as Science Communication. There were over 70 concurrent sessions packed with interesting lake and animal research, aquatic invasive species management techniques, citizen

projects, and more. Visit the convention archive at uwsp.edu/uwexplakes for presentations, photos, videos and more from the 2017 Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention.

Wallace J. Nichols



J. Nichols and Andrew Peters engage in conversation during a carpool book club. To view, go to Facebook and type #bluemind #carpool bookclub in the search bar.



2017 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Award Winners

The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership presents these Lake Stewardship Awards at the Lakes Convention each year in celebration of the extraordinary volunteer and professional efforts made to protect and improve lakes in Wisconsin. The Lake Stewardship Awards represent our best collective effort to honor and celebrate all the incredible work that goes into ensuring the future of our state's legacy of lakes. To view videos of some of the amazing accomplishments of these lake stewards, check out the convention archives at www.uwsp.edu/uwexlakes.



Citizen
Ray Zuelke



Business
Onterra, LLC
(Eddie Heath and Tim Hoyman)



Public Service
Jennifer Filbert



Lifetime Achievement
Dr. Robert Freckmann

All photos on this page by Doug Moore



Group
Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards (PACRS)
Pictured here (L to R): Barb Baker, Scott Bordeau, Beth Bordeau, Rick Georgeson, Jim Murphy, Janie Raab, Linda Frost, Curt Frost, Rick Potter

2018 Lakes Convention

SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 18-20, 2018

Holiday Inn and
Convention Center
Stevens Point, WI

Next year's convention, *Heading the Call*, will be held in conjunction with the Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration Annual Meeting and the Water Action Volunteers Symposium.





CLMN Superstar



Wisconsin is fortunate to have many talented and knowledgeable people acting as citizen water quality scientists on their lakes. We would like to highlight some of the accomplishments of the volunteers in the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN). Want to see a CLMN volunteer acknowledged in Lake Tides? Please send information to Amy Kowalski, Lake Tides Editor, at akowalsk@uwsp.edu.

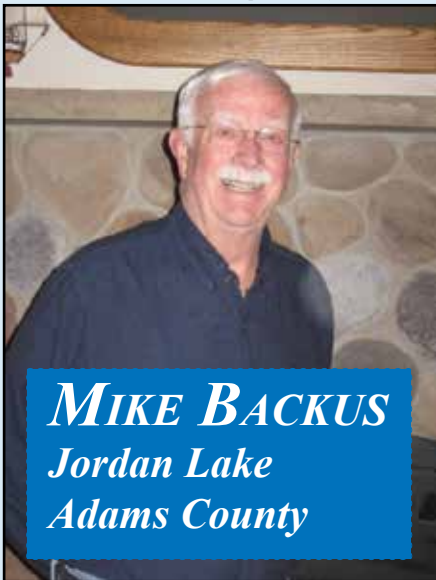
By Reesa Evans, Certified Lake Manager and Lake Specialist, Adams County Land and Water Conservation Dept.

Mike Backus is no stranger to water; he grew up in the Milwaukee area sailing on Lake Michigan. When he met his wife Marlene, he had the privilege to vacation at her family’s cabin on Jordan Lake in Adams County. They married in 1967, bought their own small piece of lake property in 1982 and spent as much time on the lake as possible. To this day, his kids are closer to their lake friends than their school friends.

They found others on the lake welcoming and loved being on the water so much that they moved to Jordan Lake full-time after retirement. Their four children, seven grandchildren (ages 5 to 16), and two granddogs continue to come to the lake whenever they can.

Mike got involved in the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network in 2007 when another volunteer on Jordan Lake asked him to take the monitoring over. He had no idea what he was getting into, but went to a training and has taken over 307 Secchi disc readings since May 2007! He also takes Jordan Lake’s water temperature and collects samples for total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a testing. He was an enormous help when the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) was sampling to determine how quickly and how far 2,4-D spread when used to control Eurasian watermilfoil.

Photo provided by Mike Backus



Mike also regularly monitors for aquatic invasive species and participates annually on pre-and-post treatment surveys of the lake to determine the need for chemical treatment on Jordan Lake. Since 2013, he has been monitoring lake levels every two weeks as

part of the Central Sands Groundwater Project. He also recruited a number of volunteers to start the Clean Boats, Clean Waters Watercraft Inspection Program on Jordan Lake.

What does Mike do with all of these data he’s collecting? He tracks all the monitoring results and graphs to keep track of any changes, so that he has the information if corrective action is needed. Mike serves as the Adams County Board Representative to the Jordan Lake District and regularly provides reports to the District Board about conditions on the lake and recommendations from various county and state agencies. Mike also participates in the review of the lake management plan and enjoys being the Jordan Lake historian and go-to-guy for answers about the lake.

I asked Mike why he continued to be so heavily involved in these lake monitoring programs. He said, “This is my piece of heaven on earth with a lot of good memories. If I don’t pay attention, who does?”

Scott Provost, the WDNR State Aquatic Plant Management Coordinator, wrote of Mike: “He is always eager to learn and be a willing partner. Mike has always been there to help the residents and his beloved Jordan Lake. His volunteerism is contagious as well. Others have joined in, and now, because of their involvement, have become educated lake owners.”

Lest someone think that lake stuff is all Mike does, let me tell you otherwise. Once he retired, he and his wife volunteered at the Ronald McDonald house in Milwaukee and were part of the group that established Joshua’s Camp near Eau Claire for families of kids with cancer. To honor his father, who was an Army Ranger in WWII, Mike got involved in 2009 with the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, and has been involved in 27 flights.

I work with volunteers from more than 20 lakes, and they are all great to give so much, but Mike Backus stands out. He truly deserves the title “Volunteer Superstar.”



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Protect the Places Where you Play: Keep Invasives Out!

That's the theme this June for Wisconsin's 13th Annual Invasive Species Awareness Month. Join your fellow lake lovers and enthusiastic staff by helping to protect the places we all play. June will be filled with workshops, field trips and other events to help educate about the negative impacts of invasive species. To find out more, go to <http://invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness>.



Landing Blitz

Thousands of Wisconsinites celebrate the 4th of July weekend on boats. They also take action to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species by cleaning and draining their boats and equipment. Join the action and share what lake or river you protect!

There will be watercraft inspectors at many landings across the state to help you inspect and clean your boat and equipment so no unwanted invasives hitch a ride - they're even handing out free, microfiber towels! We hope you enjoy your time on the lake this summer and that you remember these simple prevention steps:

- INSPECT** boats, trailers and equipment.
- REMOVE** all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- DRAIN** all water from boats, vehicles and equipment.
- NEVER MOVE** plants or live fish away from a waterbody.



Drain Campaign

Did you know you might be moving aquatic invasive species (AIS) from one waterbody to another through your livewell and bait bucket? That is actually against the law! "Drain all water from your boat, vehicle and equipment," is the message, along with other helpful AIS prevention steps that are being shared by Clean Boats, Clean Waters volunteers at boat landings in Wisconsin during this year's Drain Campaign, slated for June 9-11. These folks will offer useful outreach materials including a [free ice pack](#) to help you keep your catch fresh.



Drain your livewells and other equipment before you leave the landing!





MY FAVORITE THING ABOUT HEALTHY LAKES...

Once again, the Healthy Lakes team had the opportunity to visit many lakeshore properties and hear from property owners, landscapers and lake group leaders about the projects folks have put on their land or – in the case of fish sticks – in the water to protect and improve lakeshore habitat and decrease runoff. We asked these enthusiastic Healthy Lakes 2016 participants to tell us their favorite thing about Healthy Lakes.

“I just love plants and really like to watch the flowers bloom. And I love that I don’t have to get out the weed-whipper anymore.”

~ Vicki & Roger Breault, Long Trade Lake

“The native planting guide was easy to follow, and the results have been good. I enjoy the critters – ducks, softshell turtles, chipmunks. I have a bench back here, and I can have a glass of wine and enjoy the view.”

~ Bill Foley, Beaver Dam Lake

“My favorite thing about Healthy Lakes is feeling like I am on recess again – surrounded by smiles, laughter, and people so excited and passionate to play outside in their yards and chatter about their rain garden, native planting or other Healthy Lakes best practice they recently installed. Who knew we’d get to experience adult recess decades later?!”

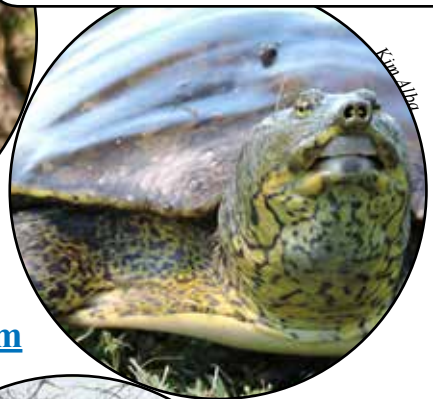
~ Pamela Toshner
Lakes Biologist
Wisconsin DNR



Amy Kowalski



Pamela Toshner



Kim Allen

healthylakeswi.com



Robert Korzh



Amy Kowalski

“I went to a (Healthy Lakes) seminar, and it really made sense to me. It helps if I don’t have to cut so much grass! My wife and I sat down, and talked about it and said, “Ya know, that sounds like a good idea!” The extra bonus is, I had a great blue heron land here after I planted this, and he was here every day for a couple weeks. I had never seen a heron here before.”

~ Bob Becker, Beaver Dam Lake

“This is my favorite place on earth, and we installed 15 fish sticks bundles restoring it to what it was like 100 years ago. We couldn’t have done it without the Healthy Lakes funding. I love to come out here on my free time, not just my work time.”

~ Charlie Mark, Green Lake

We thought of rock riprap, but it was cost prohibitive. Fish sticks are natural and foster aquatic plants, reptiles, amphibians, songbirds and more. Everything is tied together.

~ Lisa Reas, Consultant

CALLENDER

June 5 or 6, 2017 – Aquatic Plant ID Workshops, Amherst, WI

Learn how to identify aquatic plants from the experts! Offered at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station on these dates or in the northern part of the state in late June.

For more information: <http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes> then click *Plant ID Workshops* under the *Events* tab in the left navigation column

June 5-10, 2017 – Isle Royale Plant ID Workshop, Eagle Harbor Township, MI

For more information: <http://irkpa.org/get-involved/workshops>

June 9, 2017 – Do the Right Thing Conference, Nicolet College, Rhinelander, WI

Annual morning gathering of lake and river advocates from Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties. Speakers will address water quality, stewardship, community and government through the lens of the northwoods economy. County groups will break out at noon for their Annual Meetings. For more information: <http://www.ocla.org/>

June 9-11, 2017 – Drain Campaign, Statewide (see page 13)

June 12-17, 2017 – Vegetation of Wisconsin, Saukville, WI

Offered by UW-Milwaukee College of Letters & Science Field Station

For more information: <http://uwm.edu/field-station/workshops/summer-workshops/>

June 16, 2017 – Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference, Hayward, WI

Keynote address: Watershed Management – Integrating Social Science into Lake Planning by Aaron Thompson UW-Stevens Point and Nels Paulson UW-Stout

For more information: <https://www.northland.edu/sustain/soei/lakesconference/>

June 23, 2017 – Healthy Lakes Conference, Oconomowoc, WI

The Clean Water Association is holding a one-day event on Lac La Belle at the Oconomowoc Community Center.

For more information: <http://www.cleanwaterassociation.com/healthy-lakes-conference/>

June 25-28 – AWRA Summer Specialty Conference, Vienna, VA

The conference will provide a unique opportunity for water resources professionals working in research, management, policy and education to gather, discuss and collaborate as they shape the future of sustainable water management.

For more information: <http://www.awra.org/meetings/Tysons2017/>

June 27, 28 or 29, 2017 – Aquatic Plant ID Workshops, Woodruff, WI

Learn how to identify aquatic plants from the experts! Offered at the Kemp Natural Resources Station Boathouse on these dates or in the central part of the state in early June.

For more information: <http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes> then click *Plant ID Workshops* under the *Events* tab in the left navigation column

July 1, 2017 – Secchi Dip-In

For more information: <http://www.secchidipin.org/>

July 25-27, 2017 – Keweenaw Peninsula Plant ID Workshop, Copper Harbor, MI

For more information: <http://irkpa.org/get-involved/workshops>

July 28-29, 2017 – Aquatic Invertebrates Workshop, Saukville, WI

Offered by UW-Milwaukee College of Letters & Science Field Station

For more information: <http://uwm.edu/field-station/workshops/summer-workshops/>



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Reflections

We need to tell a story that helps people explore and understand the profound and ancient emotional and sensual connections that lead to a deeper relationship with water.

~ Dr. Wallace J. Nichols
from the book Blue Mind

