



Extension Lakes  
College of Natural Resources  
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

# Annual Impact Report

## EXTENSION LAKES

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING  
OUR WISCONSIN LEGACY OF  
LAKES THROUGH **EDUCATION,**  
**COMMUNICATION, AND**  
**COLLABORATION.**

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

Our lakes, our responsibility.

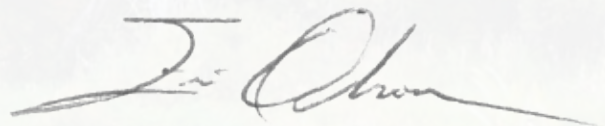
### THE WORK WE DO

*We work with thousands of people interested in lakes, including waterfront property owners and over 750 lake organizations in Wisconsin, and coordinate a number of programs and projects to assist those concerned with the future of our lakes.*



# Message from our Director

For decades, the educators and specialists at Extension Lakes at UW-Stevens Point have offered training, guidance, and support to hundreds of lake organizations across Wisconsin. This work is a core component of the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership, a role model for collaboration that brings together landowners, non-profits, local governments, the Wisconsin DNR, and the Universities of Wisconsin to protect and restore our shared water legacy. In 2024, we continued to innovate and experiment with new ways to reach our audiences, while maintaining our long-running ability to foster leadership on lake issues and work closely with partners to address water challenges. This report summarizes much of that work, but cannot capture the one-on-one interactions that are also central to how we operate. Feel free to reach out to us with your comments, suggestions and ideas as we continually strive to build on our accomplishments.



**ERIC OLSON**

*Director, Extension Lakes*

**AS A RESULT OF EXTENSION  
LAKES STAFF OUTREACH  
AND EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS  
THROUGHOUT THE STATE,**

**73,800  
individuals**

**RECEIVED EDUCATION, SUPPORT,  
AND GUIDANCE THIS YEAR,  
HELPING TO BOLSTER THE  
HEALTH OF WISCONSIN'S  
LAKES.**

# Lake Organization Support, Training, and Capacity Building

**3,700+**  
individuals from  
**HUNDREDS**  
of lake groups were **directly supported** to positively impact Wisconsin's lake communities.



## TRAINING

Supported and trained Wisconsin's lake districts and associations to be more efficient and effective in their lake management duties

- Presented at various local meetings, regional workshops, and statewide events
- Provided guidance, training, and assistance to lake communities seeking to form new lake districts under Chapter 33 Wisconsin Statutes – **three new lake districts** were formed, bringing the statewide total to 260
- Maintained an organizational capacity playlist on YouTube featuring **23 videos**
- Recorded six presentations, **viewed over 400 times**, focused on
  - » Developing Organizational Capacity for Lake Groups
  - » Communicating Effectively Using Email
  - » Planning for the Annual Meeting
  - » Aligning Budgets with Purpose
  - » Handling Finances
  - » Using Committees Appropriately and Effectively
- Launched online courses for district and association board members focused on how to effectively function as an organization

*“Valuable information for anyone serving on a Wisconsin lake association or lake protection district organization. I’m looking forward to enrolling in the next module of this series.”*

~ Online Course Participant

## RESOURCES, NETWORKING, AND PARTNER BUILDING

- Maintained an on-line database (Lake List) that includes a current directory of over 1,200 lake districts, associations, and other conservation organizations, as well as lake-related businesses, which includes 7,800 contacts
- Sent bi-monthly communications to all lake organizations to share news, upcoming opportunities, and resources reaching **over 2,300 individuals**
- Administered a private Facebook group to promote conversation and sharing

# Statewide aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention

**146,733**

boats were inspected across Wisconsin.

**546**

CBCW inspectors were celebrated at the statewide Convention.

**282,405**

hours were logged by inspectors.

**277,018**

people were contacted at landings.

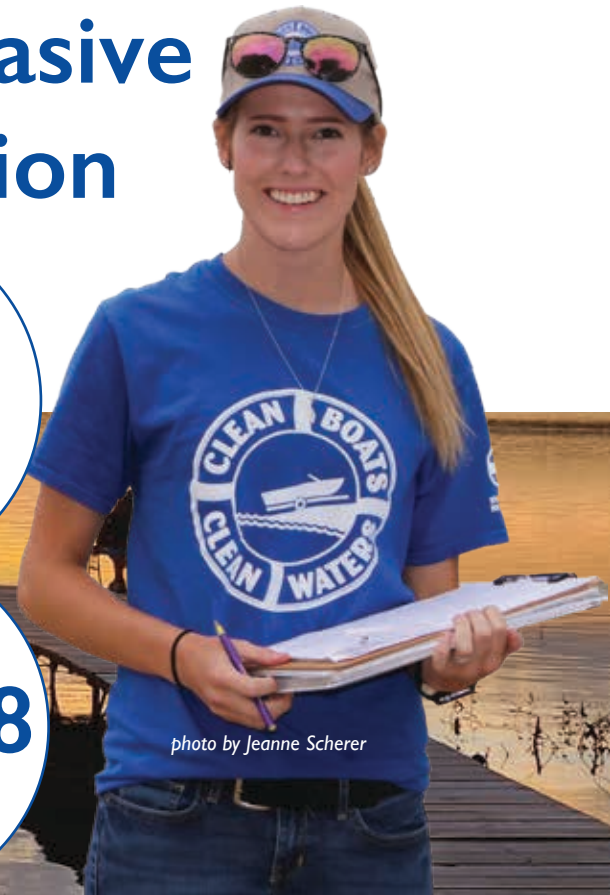


photo by Jeanne Scherer

photo by Julie Kelly



## AIS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Successfully coordinated Wisconsin's Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz campaign, thanks to statewide participants at almost **330** sites!
- Developed and promoted AIS communications with UW-Madison Division of Extension and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Ensured availability and distribution of free AIS publications statewide
- Nine CBCW training videos were viewed over **1,300** times this year

## INTEGRAL AIS PARTNERSHIPS

- Worked with Lake Monitoring Protection Network (LMPN) partners in **69** counties to promote and engage people statewide in AIS prevention
  - » Trained partners on how to conduct workshops to ensure consistency and uniform protocols statewide
  - » Provided training and resources for Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) inspections and coordinated distribution of CBCW materials
  - » Coordinated Boater Behavior project data collection with partners
- Collaborated with CBCW grant program coordinator to support over **150** grantees and provide resources to ensure successful projects

*"All four of my children worked as CBCW interns as their summer job. Not only did it influence them to want to protect our beautiful lake, it taught them to communicate that passion to others."*

~ CBCW Inspector

## REPORTING AND SHARING CBCW DATA

- Managed CBCW data entry into statewide SWIMS database
  - » Transitioned CBCW participants to new SWIMS user IDs
  - » Provided data entry and SWIMS support to CBCW participants
  - » Coordinated with DNR to ensure accurate CBCW data summaries available online

# Lake Monitoring, Data Collection, and Volunteer Engagement

~1,000

individuals monitored

700+

lakes for chemistry, clarity,  
aquatic invasive species, ice,  
and water level.



## RESOURCES

- Developed Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) report generator for volunteers, to eventually transition from the DNR Water Explorer (WEx) reports
- Developed a new video and document detailing how to register for a new MyWisconsin ID and connect it to a SWIMS account. Provided one-on-one support to hundreds of volunteers via email and phone to guide them through the transition process
- Developed a new video demonstrating a new sample packing procedure for CLMN water chemistry samples
- Updated videos and training manuals for Ice Cover Monitoring, Water Chemistry Monitoring, Water Clarity Monitoring, Quality Assurance Sampling, and Data Entry demonstrations, contributing to over 3,600 CLMN training video views over the year
- Developing several API/Web Services to help with bulk data loading, mobile app development, and report writing (CLMN reports, Ice On/Off reports, and volunteer analytic reports associated with CLMN)

814

active CLMN  
volunteers were  
celebrated at  
the statewide  
Convention.

500+

individuals were  
directly assisted in  
transitioning to My  
Wisconsin ID.

## TRAINING

- Led and assisted trainings for 270 professional staff, as well as 60 volunteers, regarding aquatic plants, water quality, and sampling/shipping protocols
- Coordinated the Winter Water Talks webinar series engaging 332 people, on these topics:
  - » Healthy Watersheds, High Quality Waters
  - » Aquatic Parasites
  - » Aquatic Bioindicators
  - » Crayfishes of Wisconsin

# Statewide Lakes Education and Outreach

**62,500**

individuals were directly engaged through programs, events, and publications.



## EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Facilitated, presented, hosted, exhibited and participated in lake, river, and watershed events across the state reaching over **800 individuals**
- Produced and distributed three editions of the *Lake Tides* newsletter to over **25,000 individuals**
- Launched a bi-monthly e-newsletter, *Lake Ripples*, reaching **5,000 lake groups/individuals**
- Expanded our social networking audience on Facebook, adding Instagram and LinkedIn, to reach **25,000**
- Provided daily support to **hundreds of volunteers and lake organizations** by answering questions, providing resources, and connecting them to each other
- Assisted DNR with aquatic plant management sessions across Wisconsin

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Continued communication, outreach, and educational support for the Healthy Lakes & Rivers (HLR) Initiative, engaging **200+ individuals**
  - » Planned 10-year celebration activities, wrote articles, and maintained the website
  - » Supported dozens of individuals and partner organizations with the “Score My Shore” self-evaluation tool for waterfront property owners
  - » Presented at national and state-wide events to bring attention to HLR
- Coordinated a second shoreland planting at the Executive Residence on the shores of Lake Mendota
- Helped connect **100+ water partners** by coordinating and facilitating 10 online and one in-person Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership events
- Assisted DNR in ranking surface water grants

*“This opportunity is fantastic, the education that is provided is invaluable, the group interactions are amazing, the speakers and demonstrations were so knowledgeable. Highly recommended!”*

~ Crew 15 Lake Leader

*“We got to see wood turtles nesting for the first time in our native shoreline planting!”*

~ HLR Participant



The formation of the Waterways Association of Menomonee and Shawano Counties (WAMSCO) would have never happened without like-minded professionals and volunteers who connected through the Lake Leader Institute.

# Statewide Lakes Education and Outreach, cont.



## EVENTS

- Planned, managed, and provided administrative support for the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute, which includes over **300 individuals**
  - » Conducted sessions on lake science/water policy to **30 individuals** in Crew 15
  - » Coordinated and presented an Advanced Lake Leaders session for **26 past graduates** representing **9 crews**
  - » Connected with all graduates through Facebook groups and email
  - » Collected and shared Lake Leader Success stories through our social media channels and electronic newsletters
- Planned, marketed, and managed the annual Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention with assistance from DNR, Wisconsin Lakes, and others
  - » Extension Lakes staff presented five workshops and a concurrent session at this event attracting **127 participants**

**30**

Wisconsin Lake Leaders graduated from Crew 15 in Fall 2024.

**556**

individuals participated in the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention.



## EXPANDING OUR REACH

**138**

students and community members were directly reached.

- Engaged K-12 and college students in field days, classroom water education activities, service-learning projects, and cross-discipline science/art collaboration.
- Led shoreline garden tour for Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin
- For the past 37 years, we've celebrated Wisconsin's outstanding lake stewards in categories that recognize outstanding contributions of individuals, organized groups, educators, youth, and businesses. The awards celebrate lake stewards who are strengthening their community capacity with the goal of protecting and improving lake health. Four Lake Stewardship awards were honored in 2025.

Extension Lakes collaborates with many local, county, state, regional, and national water groups by developing and distributing resources, conducting and facilitating trainings, joining pertinent discussions, participating in working groups, asking and answering individual questions, celebrating successes, and carrying out hands-on service work. Listed here are direct partnerships from fiscal year 2025.

## **LOCAL PARTNERS**

City of Stevens Point  
Farmshed's Growing Collective  
Mead Wildlife Area  
Various lake groups in cities across Wisconsin  
Various counties across Wisconsin  
Wild Ones Central Wisconsin Chapter

## **STATE PARTNERS**

Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin  
River Alliance of Wisconsin  
UW Madison Division of Extension  
Water@UW - The Flow Project  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Lakes  
Wisconsin Land+Water  
Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene  
Wisconsin Wetlands Association

## **REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

Environmental Protection Agency  
Lake Monitoring and Protection Network  
Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association  
North American Lake Management Society  
United States Geological Society

The Extension Lakes Program is an outreach and education program within the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point. Extension Lakes is also part of the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership, which joins science, education, and citizens to empower people to work together to care for our waters. Since its genesis in the early 1970s, the Partnership has been recognized as a national model of collaboration. The Partnership has three core partners: the Department of Natural Resources (which supplies scientific research, technical expertise and regulatory authority), the Extension Lakes Program (which provides supporting educational materials and programs), and Wisconsin Lakes (which mobilizes citizens to be advocates for lakes). This partnership is a statewide, multi-faceted effort that reaches far beyond the core groups to include regional, county, tribal, non-profit, and federal partners. Our goal is to continue to protect and preserve our shared water legacy and support those meeting the challenges that come with the management and stewardship of Wisconsin's lakes.

*This report summarizes the fiscal year 2025 accomplishments per the Description of Work/Contract through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.*