

# Fish Mythbusters

## Three Common Walleye Myths Your Lake Group Should Know About

By Max Wolter, Wisconsin DNR Senior Fisheries Biologist and Walleye Team Co-lead

*Walleye aren't just a premiere sportfish in Wisconsin, they are the premiere sportfish. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimates 1.8 million angler hours are spent pursuing walleye in the state annually, more than any other individual species. Some value walleye for catch-and-release, trophy, or tournament fishing, but most are going for that famed walleye fish fry. With strong appeal and lots of interest, everyone wants a great walleye population in their lake. But how realistic is that?*

**W**e at the DNR are in the process of updating the state's walleye management plan, which dates back to 1998. An extensive public input process was conducted as a part of that plan. Through this process, we gained valuable insight into current attitudes about walleye and preferences for walleye management. We also found a lot of interesting myths and misconceptions about this species and how we manage them. Let's look at some of those myths with the hopes of creating a more informed public that can help us manage for great walleye populations in Wisconsin.

**Myth: Any lake can become a good walleye lake.**

**BUSTED**

This myth is pervasive because it's born out of the hope that anyone can have great walleye fishing right off their own dock. In reality, it takes a fairly specific combination of habitat factors to create a great walleye population. The best walleye lakes (those that support natural reproduction and higher densities of adults) tend to be larger, deeper, and cooler. This is unsurprising when you consider that walleye are a coolwater species, and Wisconsin is actually on the southern edge of its range. The size of a waterbody is important not just because

*(Continued on page 2)*

Wisconsin DNR, Illustration by Virgil Beck

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**Wisconsin Lakes Partnership**



**LakeTides**  
The newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin lakes

those lakes tend to be deeper, but large lakes also provide habitat diversity. Walleye need suitable habitat at all life stages, including windswept rock to spawn on, open water areas with abundant food for fry, and nursery areas for juveniles.

Deeper, and oftentimes dark-stained, water supports walleye in another key way. Walleye are low-light hunters. In fact, that's how they got their name! Walleye excel in lakes, or parts of lakes, with low light penetration. Fish biologists have termed this important area "optical habitat," and we're finding it to be an important determinant of where walleye succeed. When paired with the temperature needs of the species, we developed the term "thermal-optical habitat." Many small, shallow, clear lakes simply have insufficient thermal-optical habitat to support walleye.

Examples of successful efforts to manipulate lakes to become walleye lakes are relatively rare. One of the most popular ideas is to add rock spawning reefs. When we consulted with DNR biologists around the state, we found many examples of this being attempted, but few instances where it was deemed a success. That may be because many of the other key habitat characteristics for walleye, such as

depth and water clarity, are relatively fixed characteristics of a lake.

**Myth: Stocking is just as good (or better) than natural reproduction.**

**BUSTED**

Stocking is one of the most popular fish management activities. The appeal is simple and powerful: add more walleye and we'll have great fishing! Oftentimes there is interest in stocking even when walleye are naturally reproducing. Some casual anglers believe that all walleye they catch are stocked fish.

The reality is that stocking is just one of many tools to manage a fishery. Like all tools, it is useful in certain circumstances, but not others. The DNR stocks walleye in three kinds of scenarios: research, rehabilitation, and maintenance. Research stocking is done as part of a larger study, often where we are trying to learn more about how to stock effectively or efficiently. Rehabilitation stocking is done in lakes that used to support natural reproduction. In this case, the stocking is intended to be temporary until natural reproduction resumes. Maintenance stocking is done in lakes that don't support natural reproduction, but habitat

conditions are suitable for stocked walleye to survive and provide a fishery.

It is lakes with natural reproduction of walleye that generally support the highest densities of adults. There are exceptions, of course, but on average a stocked walleye population has about one third as many adults as a naturally reproducing population. If

*The walleye is named for its opaque, cloudy-looking eye, which is caused by a layer of pigment, which helps it see in low light.*

~National Wildlife Federation

*"We held three meetings specific to tribal communities as a part of our input gathering process and we have GLIFWC representation on our planning team."*

~ Max Wolter

© Eric Engbretson's Underwater Photography (with permission)



This is a screenshot taken from Eric Engbretson's Underwater Photography YouTube Channel showing walleye in their natural habitat. You can view a full playlist of walleye and other underwater fish videos on his channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Underwaterfishphotosandvideo> as well as check out some amazing underwater photography from our freshwater lakes at [underwaterfishphotos.com](http://underwaterfishphotos.com).

you take a moment to think about some of the great walleye fisheries in Wisconsin (Winnebago, Wisconsin River, Green Bay/Fox River, Turtle Flambeau Flowage, etc.) and across North America, virtually all are supported by natural reproduction and stocking does not occur or is minor.

In summary, we stock when we need to, and it can work to provide good fisheries. But where it is feasible, preserving or restoring natural reproduction by protecting and restoring habitat can be much more fruitful.

**Myth: The [insert species] are eating all the walleye.**

**BUSTED**

If we're not catching (and eating) walleye, then something else must be. At least, that's where our minds go as anglers when we're having a bad day of fishing. Competition between walleye and other species or predation on walleye by other species are frequent concerns. Certainly, these kinds of fish community interactions are important to the management of a lake. But people's beliefs about who's eating who often venture into the "myth" level of misunderstanding.

Let's start with the big bad muskellunge. As North America's largest predatory freshwater fish, it's easy to picture a "musky" gobbling up all the little walleye in a lake. But research has shown something very different. While walleye do show up in musky diets on occasion, great musky lakes in Wisconsin are often some of the best walleye lakes as well. This doesn't mean that the two species are best buddies or that they have a symbiotic relationship. More likely, it is evidence that both species do well in the same general habitats. In most big, deep, cool lakes you'll find both species doing pretty well. It is certainly not a "one or the other" scenario.

There is a somewhat different story with largemouth bass, but even this interaction is more complicated than it may seem on the surface. Largemouth bass abundance has been increasing in many Wisconsin lakes, while at



Photo by Max Moller

*DNR Fisheries Technician Evan Sniadajewski and Conservation Warden Aaron Koshatka hold two large female walleye from a fyke netting survey on the Chippewa Flowage. DNR crews survey lakes across the state to determine the health of walleye populations.*

the same time walleye have decreased. There are a number of likely factors driving this relationship. Climate change is making lakes warmer, sometimes weedier, and often clearer. If you read closely above, you know that's the opposite set of conditions for walleye to succeed. Largemouth bass, on the other hand, thrive in warm, weedy lakes. While the two species may have some direct interactions, we are really seeing entire lakes shifting towards more of a home field advantage for largemouth bass. This is especially true on lakes that were already on the smaller/clearer/shallower end of the spectrum for walleye lakes.

If you are a little disheartened after reading these myths, I wouldn't blame you. But, managing expectations and setting a baseline level of understanding about the species is an important first step before the real work can begin. We'll be working hard this year to update Wisconsin's Walleye Management Plan to provide the best strategies to meet these and other challenges walleye face today. We'll also be identifying key areas where partner groups, like lake associations, can help us in our mission of making and maintaining great walleye fishing opportunities across the state. Stay tuned for more! 💧

*Climate change is making lakes warmer, sometimes weedier, and often clearer. That's the opposite set of conditions for walleye to succeed.*



# DNR Launches Lake Protection Network

By Alex Delvoe, Surface Water Grants Program Assistant, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

*We worked with the legislature to allow a consistent base of funding for local partner programs. That was the only way we could have a stable, effective statewide program.*

~ Carroll Schaal  
DNR Lakes and Rivers  
Section Chief

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently awarded over \$509,000 in funding for the new Lake Monitoring and Protection Network (LMPN).

This statewide network of natural resources professionals will work to assist local communities to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and protect the health of their local waters. Funds from the Surface Water Grant program will be used to set up “core” services in each participating county to support AIS and water quality monitoring, train watercraft inspectors, participate in outreach campaigns and provide technical assistance to local water protection efforts.

Up to \$1 million dollars per year will be distributed to network coordinators located around the state. An annual funding allocation is distributed by county based on multiple factors, including AIS presence, the amount of

surface water, and public access availability. Counties can form partnerships and merge their allocations and add their own resources to scale up their services on a regional basis.

Unlike other surface water grants, LMPN funding is noncompetitive. “We worked with the legislature to allow a consistent base of funding for local partner programs. That was the only way we could have a stable, effective statewide program,” said Carroll Schaal, the DNR Lakes and Rivers Section Chief.

“The LMPN program is helping to provide funding for AIS coordinators for the first time in counties like Dodge, Richland, and Columbia, where there was little coverage previously,” said Shelby Adler, AIS and Lake Management Specialist. “Now we will have more boots on the ground.” To learn more about the grant program, visit the Surface Water Grant Program website at

[DNR.Wisconsin.gov/aid/SurfaceWater.html](https://DNR.Wisconsin.gov/aid/SurfaceWater.html).

This new effort supports familiar statewide programs such as Clean Boats, Clean Waters, Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol, Water Action Volunteers, AIS Snapshot Day, and the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network while allowing the flexibility to tailor efforts to meet local needs and conditions. A little over half the counties in the state signed on this year with more expected to be added when the next funding cycle begins in fall.

To find an AIS Coordinator in your area, head to [DNR.Wisconsin.gov](https://DNR.Wisconsin.gov) and search for “AIS contacts” in the search bar in the upper right corner. 💧

Photo by Scott Caven



Photo by Chris Hamerla



# Collaborative AIS Detection Prevails in a Time of Crisis

By Maureen Ferry, Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Lead, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin's aquatic invasive species partners stood the challenge of the pandemic, donned facemasks, rakes, nets, and waders and monitored more than 1,000 locations documenting over 150 new AIS populations in 2020. About half of these monitoring efforts were by citizens. The importance of citizen detectors has become especially apparent during the pandemic!

Fortunately, most discoveries were commonly managed species like curly-leaf pondweed and purple loosestrife. The three new detections of zebra mussels were all by citizens who are considering joining the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network to assess the zebra mussel population changes over time. The six new discoveries of less common NR40-prohibited species were all confined to private ponds and small localized areas. These prohibited species included water lettuce, floating marsh pennywort, graceful cattail, butterbur, common reed grass, and Japanese stiltgrass.

You can become familiar with AIS by using the Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detector Handbook, available through the Extension Lakes online bookstore ([uwsp.edu/uwexlakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexlakes)) in hard copy or as a free PDF. If you find something suspicious in a lake or river near you, let your regional DNR biologist know about it.

Interested in joining our early detection team? Check out these statewide programs.

## AIS Snapshot Day

One Saturday in August, hundreds of volunteers and professionals team up across the state to search for and document aquatic invasive species in lakes and rivers.

## Citizen Lake Monitoring Network

Join over 1,000 citizen volunteers to learn more about AIS, collect high-quality lake monitoring data, and share those data to inform lake management.

## Water Action Volunteers

Join hundreds of volunteers around Wisconsin who monitor the health of their local streams.

[wisconsinrivers.org/  
statewide-snapshot-day/](http://wisconsinrivers.org/statewide-snapshot-day/)

**SNAPSHOT DAY**



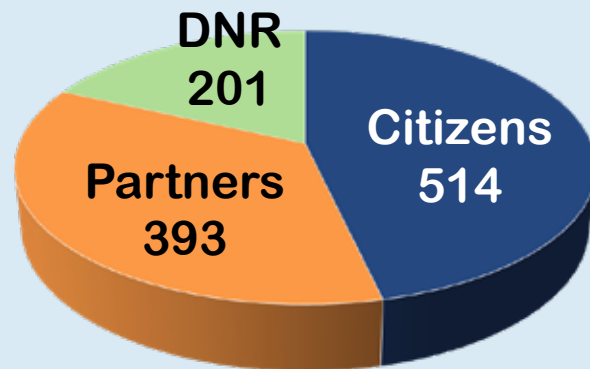
[uwsp.edu/uwexlakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexlakes)



[wateractionvolunteers.org/](http://wateractionvolunteers.org/)



## Monitoring Fieldwork Events - 2019 AIS Network



Citizen programs include the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, Water Action Volunteers, and AIS Snapshot Day. Partner and DNR efforts include early detection monitoring and water quality monitoring.

## Wisconsin's Free Fishing Weekend!

Free Fishing Weekends are always held the third full weekend in January and the first full weekend in June. For 2021 and 2022, the dates will be June 5-6, 2021; January 15-16, 2022 and June 4-5, 2022.

Check the Wisconsin DNR website by typing "free fishing" into the search bar on [dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov) for specific details and restrictions.



Photo by Steven Lepak

# Grow Beautiful, Low Maintenance Gardens

## Keeping Our Lakes and Waterways Healthy

Photo provided by Melinda Myers



By Melinda Myers, Gardening Expert, TV/Radio Host, Author, Columnist

**O**ur lakes and waterways make Wisconsin a special place to live. If you are lucky enough to live on or near one of these bodies of water, it is easy to appreciate your role in protecting them. But even if you don't live close, you still have an impact on our waterways' health and beauty.

### Avoid Invasive Plants

Avoid aggressive and invasive plants whether gardening along a shoreline, managing a water feature, growing a rain garden, or tending a more traditional landscape space. You not only help the environment, you also reduce your workload trying to manage plants that can take over the landscape and those that invade and damage our natural spaces.

### Order Native Plants

Look first to natives when ordering plants for new or existing gardens. More nurseries are providing native and suitable water plants for Wisconsin gardens and waterways. Avoid online sources that are selling invasive plants that are harmful and not permitted to grow in Wisconsin. The University of Minnesota Sea Grant Extension

Program published a helpful Water Garden Plants brochure, featuring invasive plants to avoid in the Great Lakes region as well as attractive and hardy native alternatives.

Assess what is already growing in your water feature, shoreline plantings, rain gardens, and landscape. Some plants, known for their ornamental value, have been found to be invasive; remove and dispose of these by

placing them in a clear plastic bag marked "invasive" and throw in the trash.

This is also a good time to eliminate those aggressive plants that take over your garden, water feature, or shoreline planting. They require too much of your time to keep them in check and crowd out other plants that provide diversity of color, form, and texture as well as food for pollinators and birds.

Avoid invasive aquatic plants that upset the natural balance in our waterways and lakes. These invaders crowd out native plants, compromise wildlife habitat, and reduce water quality.

*Here are some fact sheets that can help you determine which plants to avoid and excellent native choices.*



[https://eos.ucs.uri.edu/sea-grant\\_Linked\\_Documents/minnu/x103.pdf](https://eos.ucs.uri.edu/sea-grant_Linked_Documents/minnu/x103.pdf)



Photo by Robert Korfh

Purple loosestrife was a popular garden plant selected for its beautiful blooms and adaptability. It spreads by seeds and roots that readily grow in moist soil. This feature has helped it escape gardens and invade our wetlands.



Japanese knotweed is a large plant that can quickly take over gardens and shorelines. Once established, plants can grow roots nine feet deep and spread 60 feet. These aggressive rhizomes (underground stems) can travel under roads to find sunlight on the other side. They even push through pavement, causing damage to walkways and roads.



Yellow flag iris' beauty masks its invasive nature. It tolerates wet and dry soils, wetlands, and floating aquatic mats. This adaptability gives it an



Photo by Peter Friedman

unfair advantage to native plants in those areas. Its seeds or pieces of the rhizome can spread, establishing plantings in wetlands, forests, bogs, swamps, marshes, streams, and ponds. Its presence not only crowds out native plants but traps sediment, disrupting the flow of water.

Remove and properly dispose of any of these and other invasive plants from your landscape and water features. Report any invasive plant infestations to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. And spread the word, enlisting the help of fellow gardeners and landowners to do the same.

Together we can make a difference growing beautiful gardens, creating shoreline plantings, and maintaining water features while protecting our lakes and waterways. 💧

*Together we can make a difference... while protecting our lakes and waterways.*



### Clean Boats = Clean Waters Make Sure You are Ready for Summer

With many Wisconsinites already vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, and CDC's new outdoor guidelines, we feel much more comfortable getting out to the boat landings and talking with folks about how to slow the spread of aquatic invasive species. CBCW watercraft inspectors will be out at the landings this summer having conversations with boaters about the best way to do just that!

#### **June 4-5, 2021: The Drain Campaign**

This is Wisconsin's free fishing weekend, and we are taking the opportunity to chat with new anglers.

#### **July 1-4: The Landing Blitz**

This weekend is often one of the busiest on our Wisconsin Waters. Thanks to all of the staff and volunteers who will be out reminding folks to follow these four simple steps!

- ✓ **Inspect**
- ✓ **Remove**
- ✓ **Drain**
- ✓ **Never Move!**



Photo by Nicholas Foss

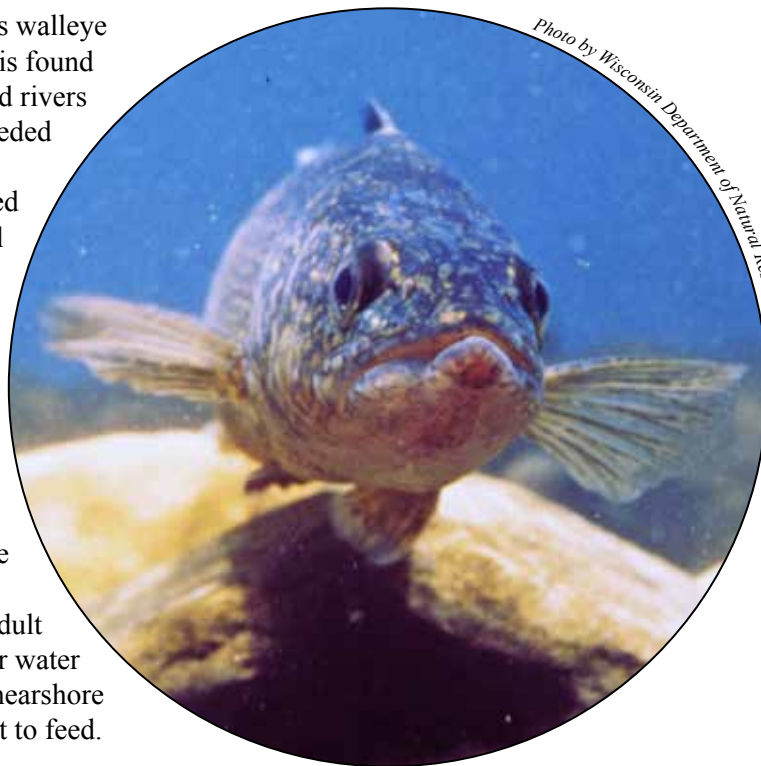
# Ogaa (Walleye)

Reprinted with permission from Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment: Integrating Scientific and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Ogaa, also known as walleye (*Sander vitreus*), is found in many lakes and rivers throughout the Ceded Territories and is commonly harvested

by tribal members and recreational anglers. Ogaa gains a competitive advantage over other species in turbid or stained, low-light waterbodies with limited plant growth. It typically spawns at night in early spring, shortly after ice-out over shallow (<6 feet) gravel and/or cobble bars. Young ogaawag commonly move offshore into the pelagic zone after gaining the ability to swim. Juvenile and adult ogaawag tend to use deeper, darker water during the day and move into the nearshore environment (littoral zone) at night to feed.

*Pelagic zone: region of a body of water that is not associated with the bottom (benthic zone) or shore (littoral zone).*



## Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Like many of the swimmers, ogaa is highly respected in Ojibwe culture. Ogaa features prominently in many traditional stories and personal memories illustrating how Ojibwe people have depended on fishing as a means of survival. In a historical interview from 1992, Mille Lacs tribal member Doug Sam emphasized how his people have relied on ogaa and other swimmers for their subsistence needs:

*"We used to go out here [Mille Lacs] ... used to have big barrels full of salted fish to last all winter... and early spring there you go put a little tepee out there and get a golden northern or a walleye. That was your meal. You didn't get a whole bunch. You just got what you needed... it was a good life."*

Traditional stories of ogaa depict its interconnectedness

with other beings/species. A tribal member from Red Cliff remembered her mother from the Bad River Tribe describing how the frogs would make noise to indicate the start of the ogaa season.

In interviews with tribal members, ogaa was frequently mentioned. Tribal members are seeing a decrease in the population in a majority of the lakes where ogaa are present. Current contamination and the potential for future contamination have been consistently mentioned as a concern. One tribal member from Mille Lacs voiced concern about the change in color of some ogaa, noting that some are darker grey and, during processing, the meat won't separate from the skin and tends to shrink to one-third of the size. Another consistent observation and concern noted during interviews is that cooler, ogaa-dominated lakes are getting warmer.

## Declining Populations

The ogaa population has declined in many waterbodies throughout the Ceded Territories

## Historical Unrest

Ogaa was a main focus of protests by non-Indians during the "Walleye Wars" of the late 1980s. Sports fishermen and others opposed to tribal members spearing ogaa led protests at boat landings on Ceded Territory lakes. These protests, which sometimes turned violent, came after the landmark court case of Lac Courte Oreilles v. Wisconsin, which recognized the Ojibwe people's treaty-reserved rights to hunt, fish, and gather off-reservation in Wisconsin's Ceded Territories.

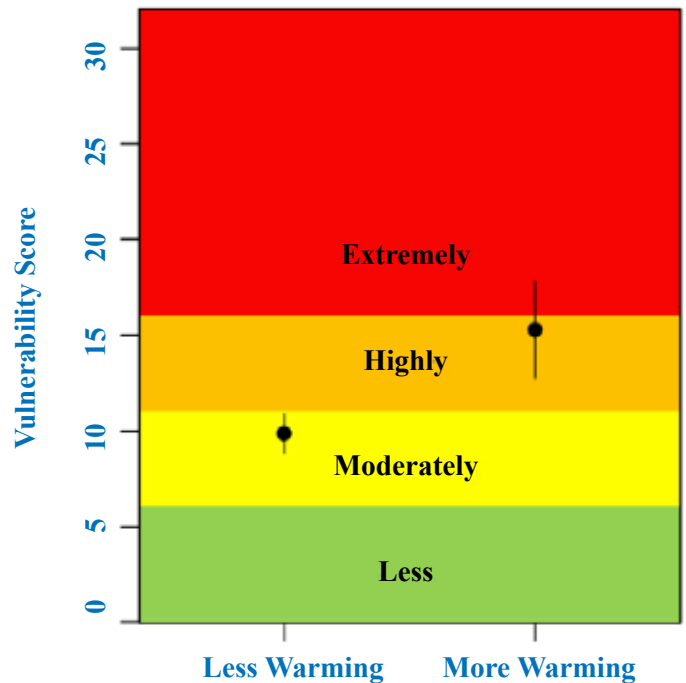


**Moderately-Extremely Vulnerable**  
**(Confidence Level: High)**

in recent years. For example, oga in Lac Vieux Desert Lake has declined from a high of ~3 adult fish/acre in 1998 to approximately 0.5 fish/acre in 2016, an amount quite low relative to other Ceded Territory lakes (average 2.5 fish/acre). Similarly, oga in Mille Lacs Lake declined by approximately 90,000 pounds per year between 1998 (biomass ~2.5 million pounds) and 2016 (biomass ~0.89 million pounds). Oga stocks are predicted to decline in many other lakes throughout the Ceded Territories.

**Summary of Climate Threats**

Oga was in the 78th percentile relative to other fish in the assessment. Relative to other beings/species, oga was in the 90th percentile. Factors that increased oga’s vulnerability to climate change include: natural and anthropogenic barriers (e.g., connectivity of inland lakes, dams), thermal niche (loss of coolwater habitat), hydrological niche (e.g., droughts), disturbance regime (more intense floods), dietary versatility (availability of specific prey items), sensitivity to competition (oga competes with bass species), sensitivity to pathogens (i.e., more susceptible to infections and parasites) and documented (e.g., decline in abundance) and predicted response (e.g., range contraction) to climate change. 💧



*Climate change vulnerability scores for oga on a scale of 0 (lowest vulnerability) to 32 (highest vulnerability). Dots indicate average score; lines indicate possible range of scores for each warming scenario.*

**Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)**

- Misi-zaaga’iganiing (Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians)
- Bikoganoogan (St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin)
- Mashkiigong-ziiibiing (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians)
- Waaswaaganing (Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)
- Zaka’aaganing (Sokaogon Chippewa Community (Mole Lake Band))
- Odaawaa-zaaga’iganiing (Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)
- Nagaajiwanaang (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)
- Gaa-miskwaabikaang (Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)
- Ginoozhekaaning (Bay Mills Indian Community)
- Gete-gitigaaning (Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)
- Gakiwe ‘onaning (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community)

The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) is an intertribal natural resource agency that assists its 11 member Ojibwe (also known as Chippewa, or Anishinaabe) tribes in the implementation and protection of off-reservation treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather in territories ceded (or sold) to the United States. In the treaties of 1836, 1837, 1842, and 1854, courts have found that GLIFWC’s member tribes reserved the right to continue to practice their ways of life on these lands, which are now in parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. GLIFWC’s member tribes depend on treaty resources to meet spiritual, ceremonial, medicinal, subsistence, and economic needs. GLIFWC provides natural resource management expertise, conservation enforcement, legal and policy analysis, and public information services to its member tribes. More information about GLIFWC can be found at [www.glifwc.org](http://www.glifwc.org).



# Capacity Corner May 2021

## Enhancing Board Member Participation

By Sara Windjue, Leadership and Capacity Development Specialist, Extension Lakes



*The Lakes Partnership is working to help lake organizations maximize their roles in protecting lake health. Our model of lake organization capacity is built around four related parts: membership, organization, relationships, and programs. This issue of the Capacity Corner is focused on Organizational Capacity: specifically, the expectations of board members and how each member is prepared for their role.*

To have an effective board, each member must know what they are expected to contribute. Too many times board members attend meetings but may not contribute much beyond that. One issue many board members face is not having enough time to contribute in ways that they would like. Another reason they may not contribute is because they are not sure of the organization's expectations for its board members. We would like to focus this article on the latter.

### Preparing Your Board Members

How do you prepare your board members for their service? Here are a few questions you may want to review with your board to make sure that you're preparing your new board members for success:

1. Do you have position descriptions for each board member?
2. Does each board member have a unique role with specific responsibilities?
3. Have you conducted a gap analysis to determine where skills gaps might be on your board?

4. Is there an evaluation component for each board member? How will each board member receive feedback so they know how they're performing?
5. Do you have a Board Service Agreement?

### Recruiting the Right Board Members

Providing a position description for each board member ensures that expectations have been communicated.

Think about your needs as an organization and what skills would be beneficial from your board members. Some examples are:

- Marketing and Communication
- Fundraising and Grant Writing
- Accounting
- Education/Conducting Programming
- Strategic Planning
- Volunteer Management

Make sure you don't have a board full of people with all the same skill sets. You may want to develop position descriptions that focus on the skills you need. Note: If your organization doesn't have an annual work plan or annual goals, you may need to develop that first; however, if you're currently looking to fill a seat on your board, you may need to identify the skills you need now so you can fill that seat before developing your work plan.

According to the 2020 Wisconsin Lake Group Capacity Survey, 68% of responses indicated that their lake group agrees or strongly agrees that they clearly define board members' roles and responsibilities; however, only 45% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their

### Resources from BoardSource

Board Service Overview: [boardsource.org/board-service-infographic/](https://boardsource.org/board-service-infographic/)

Board Member Orientation Checklist: [boardsource.org/nonprofit-board-orientation-checklist/](https://boardsource.org/nonprofit-board-orientation-checklist/)

Board Position Description: [boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Board-Member-Job-Description.pdf](https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Board-Member-Job-Description.pdf)

Board Service Agreement: [https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/](https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/M4H11-Policy-Sampler_Board-Member-Agreements.doc)

[M4H11-Policy-Sampler\\_Board-Member-Agreements.doc](https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/M4H11-Policy-Sampler_Board-Member-Agreements.doc)



lake group intentionally recruits board members who enhance their ability to take action. Overall, we hope to see more lake groups across Wisconsin taking a more proactive approach to developing the makeup of their boards. This is a key step for any group looking to build and improve on their organizational capacity.

### Performing A Skills Gap Analysis

If you know what skills are needed for your board to be effective, you will invite the right people to join your board. A simple gap analysis helps pinpoint the best candidate for each position. To start, consult your annual work plan or organizational strategy to identify specific skills needed to complete the plan. Then, ask your current board members to identify their unique skills. Once you know your current board member's skills, fit them into a table and see where there are gaps.

### Retaining Valuable Board Members

As a board member, it is useful to get feedback about how you're doing, as well as have the

opportunity to share impact and ask questions. Because most board positions are for two years, it may be helpful for the Chair or a designated committee member to have a quick (15-minute), informal check-in within the first six months to ensure understanding and provide specific feedback.

A Board Service Agreement is meant to be signed by incoming board members as a commitment to the organization and an understanding of general board responsibilities (not a binding legal document). 💧

*Examples of both the skills gap analysis matrix and evaluation questions are available in the Capacity Corner on our website at [uwsp.edu/uwexlakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexlakes).*

### Send Us Your Board Documents

To get a better sense of what organizations are currently using for board member recruitment, retention, and evaluation, we invite you to share your board documents with us. We will not share your documents with anyone; this is purely for our education and to help us develop better ways to help you. Email [uwexlakes@uwsp.edu](mailto:uwexlakes@uwsp.edu) with the subject, "Board Docs." Just let us know if you'd like us to provide any feedback.

## Let's Make Healthy Lakes & Rivers Together!



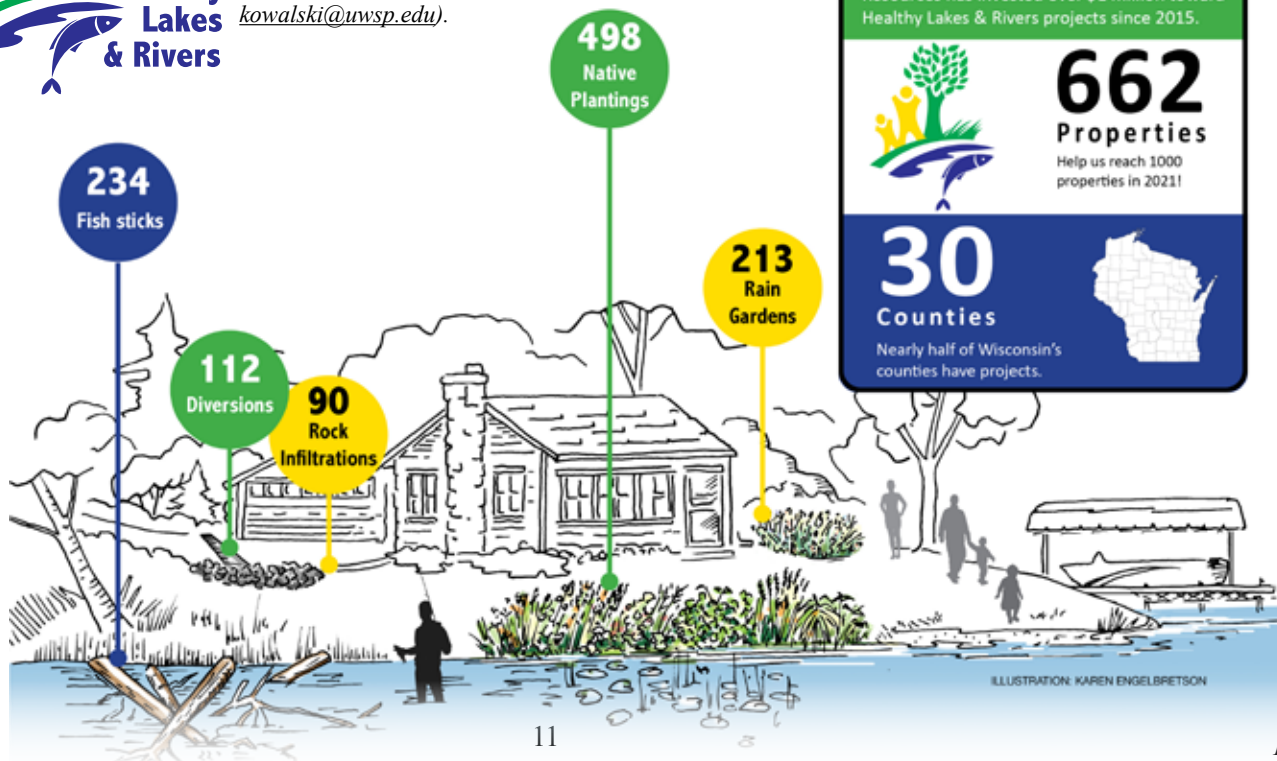
The Healthy Lakes & Rivers initiative is a statewide effort providing outreach, technical assistance, and funding for five simple and inexpensive best practices that are appropriate for most lakeshore properties. Pitch your Healthy Lakes & Rivers feature story to Pamela Toshner ([pamela.toshner@wi.gov](mailto:pamela.toshner@wi.gov)) or Amy Kowalski ([amy.kowalski@uwsp.edu](mailto:amy.kowalski@uwsp.edu)).

**\$1.08M** STATE investment

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has invested over \$1 million toward Healthy Lakes & Rivers projects since 2015.

**662** Properties  
Help us reach 1000 properties in 2021!

**30** Counties  
Nearly half of Wisconsin's counties have projects.



# My Lakeshore Field Journal

## Extension Publication is Inspiration for Washburn County Virtual Nature Camp

By Anna DeMers, Washburn County Extension Positive Youth Development and 4-H Educator

Last year, as the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect Wisconsin and summer neared, many in the 4-H world were wondering if summer camps were going to happen. With the progression of the pandemic, Anna DeMers, Positive Youth Development Educator with Washburn County Extension, wanted to provide an opportunity for the youth in Washburn County to have a summer camp-like experience, so decided to take on learning how to hold a virtual camp. She searched around her (home) office to gather some resources she had on hand. A box of *My Lakeshore Field Journals* from Extension had been gifted to her by retired Natural Resources Educator, John Haack, a few years ago. They became a wonderful resource and inspiration for the camp that 31 youth in grades K-8 from around the state attended in August 2020!

### Hands-on Materials

Campers were sent a box in the mail that included all of the supplies needed for the week's activities, to do on their own or with their families. In addition to the field journals, there were nets (for both insects and mucking), stamps for postcards in the journal, t-shirts, and tree cookie name tags. Supplementary materials, including crafts, videos, mindfulness activities, and daily reflections were created to enhance the *My Lakeshore Field Journal*. Families were also able to access the materials online at [tinyurl.com/naturecamp2020](https://tinyurl.com/naturecamp2020).



You can purchase the *My Lakeshore Field Journal* from the Extension Lakes' bookstore for only \$1 each! [www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes)



### Attention Youth Educators!

If you know or are a youth educator with Extension, the YMCA, or similar camp, and could use multiple copies of this publication, you can buy a case (140 journals) for only \$30!

Using the topics in the journal as a guide, DeMers reached out to county and statewide partners to create the camp. Each day of the camp included activities done together and on their own. In the morning there was a talk by a nature expert, and in the afternoon, there was a virtual field trip to a local organization. In addition, making the virtual space feel more like camp, cabin time (breakout rooms) to connect with other youth and counselors added a more intimate and relational aspect. Each evening, campers could come back to camp and listen to a nature story, have a campfire, and socialize.

### Essential Volunteers

Integral to 4-H summer camps are volunteers; this camp was no different! One teen camp counselor/volunteer, five adult volunteers, and two Extension staff assisted with the camp – both before and during the event. The volunteers created daily quizzes, helped with content for the supplementary materials, and created a native plant scavenger hunt (both on paper and as a Kahoot online game). We even had an in-person (within the UW-Madison COVID-19 guidelines and approval) archery afternoon for campers that wanted to attend! One volunteer had very little Zoom experience and put much time and effort into learning the



technology. By the end of the camp, she was very good at sharing slides and even ran her cabin group's virtual escape room!

## Camper Evaluations

After-camp evaluations from both campers and parents reported that these objectives were met:

1. Youth connect to peers and adults during the pandemic.
2. Youth gain confidence in exploring the outdoors on their own.
3. Youth are better able to cope with their emotions through a connection with nature.

The youth rated the connection with others at camp almost equal to an in-person camp! One of the older campers reflected, "I had been

wanting to explore nature more and this camp gave me the tools to do that on my own." Campers reported that the biggest difference between an in-person and virtual camp experience was "finding opportunities to discover nature where they are." The Washburn County Virtual Nature Camp provided an opportunity that a sleep-away or day camp has not provided in the past - a chance to connect with nature right where the camper lives, not somewhere else (even nearby) that they may not regularly go without assistance from an adult. This summer camp provided the tools for youth to explore their environment at home, on their own or with their family, and gain confidence in exploring nature. 💧

*I had been wanting to explore nature more and this camp gave me the tools to do that on my own.*

~ Camper,  
Washburn County  
Virtual Nature Camp

**Welcome to the Wisconsin LMPN Partnership!**

**Scott McComb** is the new Southeastern Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Coordinator for Wisconsin Sea Grant. He'll be working half-time with Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties to implement the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network (see page 4). He had spent the last 7 years in northern Utah working in conservation and planning while earning a master's degree in Bioregional Planning from Utah State. He has worked on everything from pulling phragmites to designing trails to helping communities plan for natural hazards. He's excited to apply his background in GIS, invasive species, and community engagement to empower environmental stewardship in residents and build on the great AIS work taking place throughout the state. Aside from work, he's an avid backpacker and canoer and is always looking for new areas to explore!

[McComb@aqua.wisc.edu](mailto:McComb@aqua.wisc.edu)

**New Sustainability and Development Coordinator with WI Salt Wise**

**Allison Madison** started in Summer 2020 as the first-ever staff person for the Wisconsin Salt Wise Partnership. In the last several months, Allison has dedicated herself to taking the mission of this Dane County-based coalition – to reduce salt pollution in our lakes, streams, and drinking water – statewide. Allison is a former classroom and environmental educator and loves celebrating the successes of individuals and communities who are working hard to keep our freshwater fresh. She's thrilled to begin in-person outreach and hopes to partner this summer with watershed groups who would like to host a salt awareness outreach event/chloride monitoring paddle. You can stay abreast of WI Salt Wise happenings on their website: [www.wisaltwise.com](http://www.wisaltwise.com).

[wisaltwise@gmail.com](mailto:wisaltwise@gmail.com)

**WELCOME ABOARD!**

# Increased Recreational Use

## A Top Priority for Wisconsin Lakes



**WISCONSIN  
LAKES**

By Wisconsin Lakes' Cathie Erickson (Board President) and Mike Engleson (Executive Director)

*In Wisconsin, no one can doubt that we love our lakes. But our love to recreate on lakes is beginning to have a negative impact.*

**F**rom powerboats to pontoons to stand up paddleboards, Wisconsin is seeing more watercraft of all sizes on the water. Coupled with a cycle of high water levels exacerbated by climate change and more powerful boats throwing off (often intentionally) larger wakes, we have a real issue on our hands that impacts safety, property, enjoyment, habitat, and even the introduction of invasive species.

That's why Wisconsin Lakes is making the impact of increased recreational use of our lakes one of our top priorities for 2021. And we're doing so by focusing on four main areas of need:

### Research and Understanding

We're supporting efforts to scientifically understand the impacts of increased recreational use. We need a better understanding of how enhanced wakes impact shorelines and lakebottoms. We need ways

*Wake boats are weighted heavily on one side (usually with a bladder full of water) to create a larger wave for wake surfing.*



Photo by Amy Kowalski

to measure just how many boats a waterbody can carry at one time before personal safety and the lake environment are impacted. And we need to use social science to understand how different lake users respond to efforts like decontamination stations to control and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. In many instances, efforts to understand

such questions are underway, and we'll be supporting and participating in those efforts.

### Boater Education

With greater power comes greater responsibility. We'll be focused on working with the DNR and other governmental partners, as well as the boating industry itself, to provide strong educational programs on how to operate bigger boats safely and to limit their impact. We'll also work to do our part to make sure boaters understand their responsibilities of how to be safe on highly-trafficked waterways and how to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species.

### Local Management and Enforcement

It's unlikely that a one-size-fits-all solution to these problems is coming anytime soon, so it falls to local entities to do what's best for their own lakes. Wisconsin Lakes will be there to help local governments and lake organizations understand what they can and cannot do, and share what other localities around Wisconsin are doing. And we'll be working to help maximize the efficiency of enforcement of local rules, in part by advocating for better funding for local enforcement.

### Strong Statewide Policies

Wisconsin Lakes will continue our efforts to promote sound, effective statewide policies, including those involving aquatic invasive species.

We all want, and literally have, a constitutional right to recreate on our lakes. But we must resolve to do so responsibly, safely, and in ways that limit the negative impacts such recreation can bring. The problems increased recreation is causing are challenging and none of them come with a single, easy solution. They are solvable, though. Let's work together to make that happen. 💧

# Wisconsin Water Week Re-cap

If you were able to join us for Wisconsin Water Week, March 8-12, we hope you enjoyed the experience and learned something new! This was the second year we had to move the in-person Lakes and Rivers Convention to a virtual format, and although we'd rather come together in person to learn and network, we are glad we were still able to provide all of the great presentations, exhibits, Water Week Challenges, and more for a unique experience. We appreciate your input and invite you to complete this survey to provide your feedback: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eh192831kl15jz52/start>.

## Access the Archives

Visit [uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexplakes) to find the 2021 archives under *Events*. You can access all of the recorded sessions (also on Extension Lakes' YouTube channel) and photo contest entries and winners.



## Virtual Event Space

The Wisconsin Water Week virtual event space will remain open for one year. If you registered for

the event, you are welcome to visit the event space at any time to find and connect with attendees and speakers, as well as access any notes you took during the event. Go to [eventmobi.com/wisconsinwaterweek/](http://eventmobi.com/wisconsinwaterweek/) to log in.

 **1180**  
REGISTERED

## Commitments to Action

Because of Wisconsin Water Week and the breadth of people brought together virtually, countless commitments for the good of water were made. Examples include:

- ◆ Winnebago Waterways group connected with indigenous partners.
- ◆ Water Week Challenges allowed participants to leave with tangible resources that they wouldn't have sought on their own (and there were great prizes)!
- ◆ Wisconsin Lakes increased membership.

**>300**  
SPEAKERS 

**68**  
COUNTIES 

## Stewardship Award Winners

These incredible folks earned the title of 2020\* Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Award Winners:

- ◆ Rollie Alger (*Citizen*)
- ◆ Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society (*Group*)
- ◆ Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department (*Public Service*)
- ◆ Friends of Hunt Hill Audubon Society (*Educator*)

**19**  
STATES 

\*There were no awards given in 2021.

## Student Water Week Essay Contest Winners

To increase the reach and impact of Wisconsin Water Week, the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST) organized an essay contest for students focused on water. Here are the winners:  
 Grades PK-2: Emily D. from Gordon L. Wilson Elementary, Baraboo  
 Grades 3-5: Jaylyn N. from Washington Island Elementary  
 Grades 6-8: There was a tie! London B. from Lake Shore Middle School and Connor E. from Monroe Middle School  
 Grades 9-12: Micayla S. from Seymour Community High School, Oneida  
 Congratulations to all and thanks for writing about Wisconsin's Waters!



**141**  
zoom  
MEETINGS 

CALENDAR

**June 4, 2021 – Healthy Lakes & Rivers Conference, Oconomowoc**

For more information: <https://www.lakecountrycleanwaters.org/>

**June 18, 2021 – NW Wisconsin Lakes Conference, Online**

For more information: <https://nwwislakesconference.org/>

**July 16, 2021 – 6 County Lakes and Rivers Conference, Online - Save the Date!**

For more calendar events, go to [uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://uwsp.edu/uwexplakes) and find the calendar!



# Lake Tides -- PRJ85HZ

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## Reflections

**“W**hiny William Walleye Was Witnessed  
Wandering Westwardly While Wailing Wildly. We  
Were Warily Watching Will Wobbly Walk When We  
Winned Worriedly.  
Why, We Wondered, Would Will Wear What  
Was Winter Ware When Warm Weather Was  
Weldingly Wounding.  
Will Was Washed-out, Worse, We Watched Will  
Wither; Wide-eyed, Without Whispering Warning.  
Why Were We Waiting When We Wished Will Well?  
Waving, We Went Were Will Was With Water. Will  
Wouldn't Willingly Waste Well-Willed Welcoming  
Water, Would Will? Will Weakly Wheezed While  
Wolfing What Will Wanted, Which Was Wonderful  
Well Water.”

— Edward Schmitz

*We Weave Webbed Words While Welcoming Wisdom.*

