



County-Wide Lake Planning

An Efficient Model for Reaching Low-Capacity Lakes

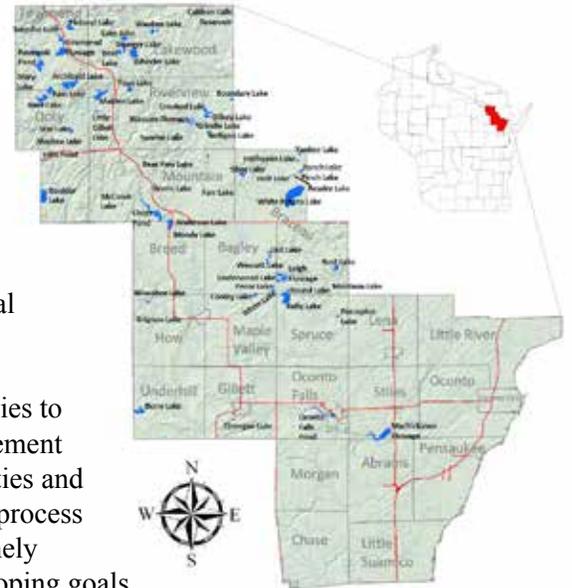
By Ryan Haney, Water Resource Scientist, Center for Watershed Science and Education, UW-Stevens Point and Dale Mohr, Resource Development Educator, Community Development Institute, UW-Madison

The Setting

Northeastern Wisconsin's Oconto County (with 300+ lakes and over 1,000 miles of streams totaling over 24,000 acres of surface water) is an iconic Northwoods tourist destination. Its vast water resource has remained a cornerstone of the economy, and its management – through proper assessment and planning – is essential to the way of life for people in this area.

In 1997, Wisconsin Act 27 required individual counties to develop a County Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) plan. Optimistic intentions were that counties and their public stakeholders would follow a prescribed process to become ever more efficient and effective in routinely assessing their resource conditions and needs, developing goals based on this assessment for improvement and protection of the resource, and measuring progress towards meeting identified goals. Oconto County, in 2015, modified their previous public involvement methodology within their LWRM planning process by additionally focusing on developing four key takeaways needing immediate action. They also developed an overarching “Big Hairy Audacious Goal” (BHAG) that was designed to act as a guiding message to help focus the county’s activities, while additionally becoming a rallying call to those wishing to participate in water protection efforts.

Oconto County Lakes Project



“Having the Healthiest Waters within Wisconsin” – BHAG
Citizen Advisory Committee, Oconto County Land & Water Conservation Department, 2015.

(Continued on page 2)

Committee Concerns

Within the LWRM planning process, the Citizen Advisory Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with not knowing what overall conditions the waterways (primarily lakes) were in. Unanswered questions included whether or not the past efforts of shoreline protections, runoff mitigation projects, and distribution of informational materials were having the intended positive impacts. No one could say for sure. Additionally, participants were very disappointed to realize that the waterways were not the focus of many County Departments because they were some 15 to 80 miles away from the courthouse, while other departmental priorities around health and human services, highways, and law enforcement garnered the greater attention. Building leadership capacity and financial capacity to accomplish much larger projects than completed in the past were the remaining concerns needing immediate attention.

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Team Developed and Mobilized

To address these immediate concerns, a number of activities were undertaken. A team was put together which included individuals with expertise in their fields. The team is comprised of County Land & Water Conservation staff, the UW-Extension Agent, Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Association (OCLAWA) leadership, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists, and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point scientists. The team asked themselves what they could do together, what they should do together, and what they will do together, with a focus towards promoting Oconto’s goal of “Having the healthiest waters within Wisconsin.”

Developing, implementing, and presenting the results of a scientific countywide survey of residents and water users kicked the process off. The survey’s results were the basis for many county presentations highlighting the need for water leadership along with needed funding for the team’s efforts. An Operational



Provided by the Center for Watershed Science and Education

The team is comprised of County Land & Water Conservation staff, the UW-Extension Agent, Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Association (OCLAWA) leadership, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists, and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point scientists.



Strategy Guide for Surface Water Management and Protection was soon prepared, which involved each of the county's departments focusing on water usages and protection goals, aiming to improve the integration of lake management into the county structure, develop community capacity to efficiently address issues, and target resources where they were most needed. This official document received unanimous approval by the County Board of Supervisors in 2018 and exists as a guide to protecting and preserving county water resources.

The umbrella lakes organization, OCLAWA, accomplished a strategic plan, assisted by the other team members, which strengthened its leadership and gave a greater focus to its functions. This, in turn, led to the creation of a standing committee for lake issues within the County Conservation Department. OCLAWA membership more than doubled in the last five years, and the group successfully lobbied the county for \$231,000, providing seed money toward local water-related grants.

Getting a Handle on the State of the Lakes within the County

With more than 300 lakes to concern the team, they decided that the surface waters with public access should be their initial focus. These were the likeliest waterbodies to receive the greatest number of threats and working with these waters allowed the team access to apply for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Surface Water Grants. Researching the 60 plus lakes with public access would be a big task. The team realized it would need to approach the study differently than other county approaches. Instead of a one- or a two-year study of all the lakes in the county, it was determined to strategically focus on a handful each year while giving greater effort into meeting with, educating, and listening to shoreland property owners and lake users, while building upon their local capacity and leadership.

The Oconto County Lakes Project, as it has become known, systematically cycles up to nine lakes a year into the planning process. Each lake undergoes a two-year

study, followed by a third year of discussion and planning, resulting in a comprehensive lake management plan for each of 60+ lakes with public access.

Furthermore, the data, issues, and conclusions are all assimilated into an umbrella document (the *Oconto County State of the Lakes Report*) that sorts and ranks the lakes on various parameters such as erosion/runoff problems, shoreland habitat conditions, invasive species, etc. This allows resource managers a quick reference without having to sift through dozens of individual management plans.

Now in its sixth year, the lakes project has connected with hundreds of individuals and sparked a common conversation in communities throughout the county. This has revealed several benefits to a county-wide lake study/planning model:

It brings lake science and planning to lakes with no perceived current problems.

As we all know, too often, lake groups begin to organize once there is a perceived direct threat to their lake, such as nuisance algal blooms that had never occurred before or the discovery of an invasive species. The county-wide approach studies and plans with each lake regardless of history. Holding what we call a "Meet your Scientists" event at the start of the process allows for the team to introduce themselves, the planning process, and the communication network to the lake users, while showcasing the information library on county lakes and resources. This early meet and greet is well received and allows for the early building of trust among the lake groups and our team.

Many of the lakes received their first-ever baseline data on water quality, plant community, etc., and were considered to be "in good shape." This information paves the way towards a proactive planning process focused on preservation that is less frustrating for participants and prevents problems before they occur, saving time and money. The baseline data collected also achieves the stated goal of



The lakes project has connected with hundreds of individuals and sparked a common conversation in communities throughout the county.

(Continued on page 5)



The Importance of Communication

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

Capacity
Corner
June
2023



In each issue of Lake Tides, we introduce you to different ideas and resources to help you increase your organization's capacity to care for lakes. In this issue, we're focusing on internal functions of a lake group.



According to the Wisconsin Lake List, only about 33% of lake organizations have a general email address, which means 67% of lake groups either list personal email addresses or don't have an email address at all.

We all know how important communication is in our daily lives. Being clear in our expectations and being able to express ourselves is one piece of the communication challenge, but the ability for people to reach out to us easily is also an important part of our communications. Have you ever tried to find the person you should be talking to but can't find an email address or phone number for them; frustrating, isn't it?

As new families move to the lake, or visitors have questions, there are bound to be more and more people wanting to reach out. Consider setting up a general email address for your lake group as an easy way to build community and provide education. If you have a tip or suggestion for managing a general lake organization email, we'd love to hear from you! 💧

Consider setting up a general email address for your lake group as an easy way to build community and provide education.

How can people contact you?

Do you have a general lake organization email? Is it posted clearly on your website and/or social media pages? Do people contact you personally with questions?

Having one general lake organization email address that can be checked by multiple people from your lake group is an easy way to streamline communications and make sure that people are reaching someone who can help them. You can set up a free email account with Google, Outlook, Yahoo, etc.

Tips for Managing a Shared Email:

If multiple people can access a shared email inbox, you must have a system in place to keep things from getting out of hand. Consider these tips:

- Use 'tags' to color-code emails by topic or person. You can usually customize tags so that at a quick glance, you know what they are about or who should respond. Example tags could be Invasive Species, Annual Meeting, Community Events, Membership, Website, etc.
- Once an email has been responded to, it can either be deleted, marked as completed, and/or saved in a designated folder if it's worth keeping.
- Use folders to save correspondences that are important. These folders can easily be accessed by others in the future should they need to know how you responded to an inquiry.



(County-Wide Lake Planning, continued)

knowing whether future activities are yielding positive results down the road.

It brings lake science and planning to lakes with little capacity or will.

Many lakes have little capacity with no lake organization and oftentimes unfamiliar neighbors. This may be due to a sparse population on the lake, or like above, a lake that hasn't been forced to organize in the face of an eminent threat. These lakes usually don't have funding or enough people to initiate lake studies or planning, which prevents them from taking proactive action in restoring or preserving their lake. The county-wide model brings this process to them at no cost, which provides a minimum baseline set of data for the lake and introduces local residents to current issues and available resources/staff. Grants, educational teachings, local lake surveys, and a quarterly update are all designed to involve, learn from, and motivate people, thus building individual lake capacity to help manage the waterbody.

It creates a county-wide momentum and buzz throughout the lake community.

One of the things that has been observed by the team's efforts, including during the Oconto County Lakes Project, is that folks in various roles from around the county are now familiar with the projects. Instead of a lake here or there hiring a consultant for a specific task, a more general discussion on basic lake science and management is taking place in cafes, at boat landings, and during public gatherings. Moreover, because there is a centralized structure and source of information (all meeting videos, lake reports, draft plans,

and project status updates are co-located on the County's website), stakeholders get a consistent message from a common source, which dismantles hearsay and rumor. This focused effort has also gained broad attention within county government, state agencies, and the university setting. Awareness of the county resources and their needs is now well known and not to be forgotten soon.

With so many of Oconto County's lakes undergoing this process at similar times, there have been more opportunities for collaboration

Because there is a centralized structure and source of information, stakeholders get a consistent message from a common source, which dismantles hearsay and rumor.



*"A Painter Passing Through"
by Steven Lepak
Crooked Lake, Oconto County
2021 Wisconsin Lakes and
Rivers Photo Contest*

between lake groups, empowering their mission of stewardship and bending the ear of local government. Getting in front of funding organizations while highlighting our successes breeds more success. Some eight years have passed since the LWRM identified immediate actions. Much has been accomplished that is tangible to address those concerns. Basing our strategy and efforts upon other Wisconsin counties' efforts has helped guide the team while we implement new techniques, which may help others in the same boat. 💧

Get Your Voice Heard

Lakes in Action Program from Wisconsin Lakes

By Mike Engleson, Executive Director, Wisconsin Lakes



WISCONSIN LAKES

To get your voice heard, learn to speak together as your lake organization.

Lawmakers need to hear the strong voice of the lakes community.

Wisconsin Lakes (your statewide organization of lake associations) both advocates for sound, science-based lake policy in the state and provides education and technical assistance to lake organizations. These two concepts come together in our *Lakes in Action* program, set to re-launch late this summer with a series of monthly webinars.

Every citizen of Wisconsin holds the right to advocate to their lawmakers for policies and decisions that they would like to see enacted. But many lake property owners and users don't live in the governmental districts where their lakes are located. Many don't even live in the same state. Do they get a voice to shape Wisconsin's water policy?

Yes, they do! But while non-voters have every right to speak to legislators that don't represent them directly, it's true that many of those legislators are going to listen more closely to their own constituents. To get your voice heard, learn to speak together as your lake organization.

Lakes in Action

Lakes in Action is a program of Wisconsin Lakes that aims to teach not just individuals how to be effective citizen advocates, but also how lake organizations themselves can

advocate and how powerful a voice that can be! We'll seek to clear up misconceptions about what a lake district or 501(c)3 nonprofit lake association can do as far as advocacy and "lobbying." We'll provide tools and resources that help you magnify your message in the most impactful way, be it to your county conservation committee or to the Legislature.

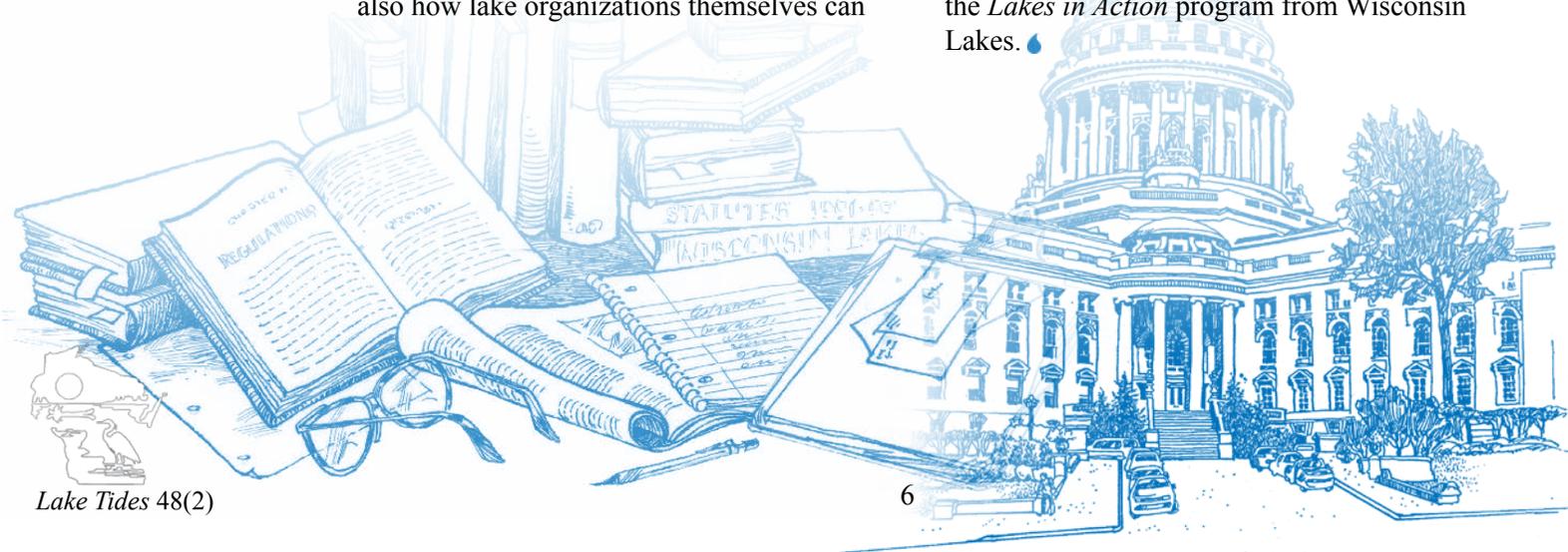
With a planned start in August, Wisconsin Lakes is launching a low-cost, six-session series of webinars with presentations from organization advocacy professionals, former legislators and regulators, other nonprofit conservation professionals, and more.

In addition, we'll be scheduling half or full day workshops in various locations across the state to dig deeper into this important skill.

Interested?

Go to wisconsinlakes.org and click on the *Lakes In Action* link to indicate your interest and offer some input into what exactly you'd like to see the program cover. It's your chance to advocate for your advocacy learning!

Together, our voices are so much more powerful when delivered on the individual, organization, regional, and statewide level. Lawmakers need to hear the strong voice of the lakes community. Learn how to do so with the *Lakes in Action* program from Wisconsin Lakes. 💧



WELCOME ABOARD!

Jennifer Jefferson is the new Surface Water Grant Team Leader for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Jen is originally from Iowa but has lived in Wisconsin for nearly a decade - both in the Milwaukee area and in northern Wisconsin (Eagle River). She completed her undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering at Iowa State University in 2007 and has been working in construction and/or water resources ever since. Between 2016 and 2021 Jen worked at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a Water Management Engineer and as a Facilities and Lands Engineer.

In her free time, she enjoys exploring with her son (Jack, 6 years old), her husband (Jesse), and their dog (Molly). This usually includes a hike or walk and finding a nearby coffee or donut shop. Jen also likes puzzles, quilting, reading, and traveling.

Jen is looking forward to returning to DNR and being a resource for the Surface Water Grant Program!



Jennifer.Jefferson@wisconsin.gov

Q&A Lake Districts

We often get phone calls and emails from Lake Tides readers with a variety of questions about lake districts. Do you have a question about lake districts that you would like to see answered in Lake Tides? Send it to uwexlakes@uwsp.edu so we can include it in a future issue.

Q: Does the county appointee on a lake district board of commissioners have to be a member of the county board?

A. No. A lake district board is most commonly made up of three or five elected members and two appointed members: one appointed by a town, city, or village, and another appointed by a county. Chapter 33 of Wisconsin Statutes requires that the lake district board include, "One person appointed by the county board who is a member of the county land conservation committee or who is nominated by the county land conservation committee and appointed by the county board." The county conservation committee may either propose one of its own members or nominate someone else to serve as the county appointee. In both cases, the statute requires that the county board approve the appointment. If the county has a county executive form of government, the executive makes the appointment, subject to confirmation by the county board. If the lake district has land in two or more counties, the county with the largest valuation in the district has the power of appointment. A county should consider carefully who it appoints to serve on lake district boards. In many cases, it may make sense to appoint someone who is not an elected county board member. For example, a county with a small governing board and numerous lake districts might find that their own members simply cannot make all the meetings work on their calendar. The appointed members of lake district boards are full voting members, so their absence counts against quorum. An ideal county appointee is someone who has knowledge of lake and conservation issues and is willing to serve as a liaison back to the county's conservation committee and staff. We recommend that lake districts develop and share lists of possible candidates that the county could consider when making their decisions.

For more information on lake districts, see *People of the Lakes: A Guide for Wisconsin Lake Organizations*, at <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/organizations/guide.aspx>.

Happy Trees for the Shore

10 Native Trees that Can Handle Fluctuating Water Levels Along the Shoreline

Compiled by Patrick Goggin and Amy Kowalski, Extension Lakes

Those of us living along the shore may have noticed changing precipitation patterns impacting Wisconsin's water resources over the last decade. Experts from the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Water Resources Working Group found in a 2021 report that, "Rising air temperatures, more precipitation from fall to spring, and more frequent and larger extreme precipitation events are climate impacts affecting Wisconsin's lakes, streams, groundwater, and wetlands."



Water levels and flooding

More storms with more average precipitation mean flooding problems in areas with permeable soils like lake shorelines, wetlands, or wherever the water table is near the surface. So, if you have waterfront property, especially on a seepage lake, you might be looking for some trees that can tolerate these shifting water levels.

Since 1950

- ↑ 3°F daily temp. increase
- ↑ 17% precipitation increase
- ↑ Warmest last two decades
- ↑ Wettest last decade

WICCI 2021 Report

10 trees for fluctuating water levels

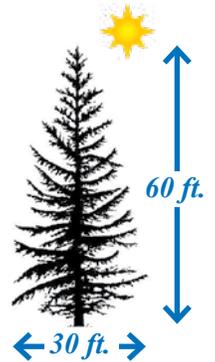
Trees contribute a great deal to any home landscape: shade, structure, a canopy "ceiling," filter for clean water, carbon absorption, and wildlife habitat. The following 10 trees can handle the fluctuating water level conditions currently found along

Wisconsin's lakes and most grow well in medium to wet, well-drained soils. If you're thinking about planting a tree, or need to replace some that have been damaged by storms or fluctuating water levels, give one of these a try on your shoreline.

Tamarack (or American larch)

Larix laricina

Tamaracks are deciduous conifers that have clusters of short, bright green needles that turn golden yellow and drop off in late autumn revealing an attractive flaking bark.

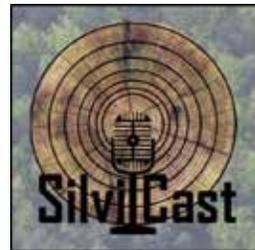


Red Maple

Acer rubrum

Red maples are very cold hardy and tolerant of a wide range of soils. They grow quickly and their foliage turns from green to a beautiful bright red in autumn.

Toxic to horses and ponies (not humans, dogs, or cats).



Google "SilviCast" to find the UW-Stevens Point podcast that is "devoted to silviculture: the science, the practice, and the art of forestry."

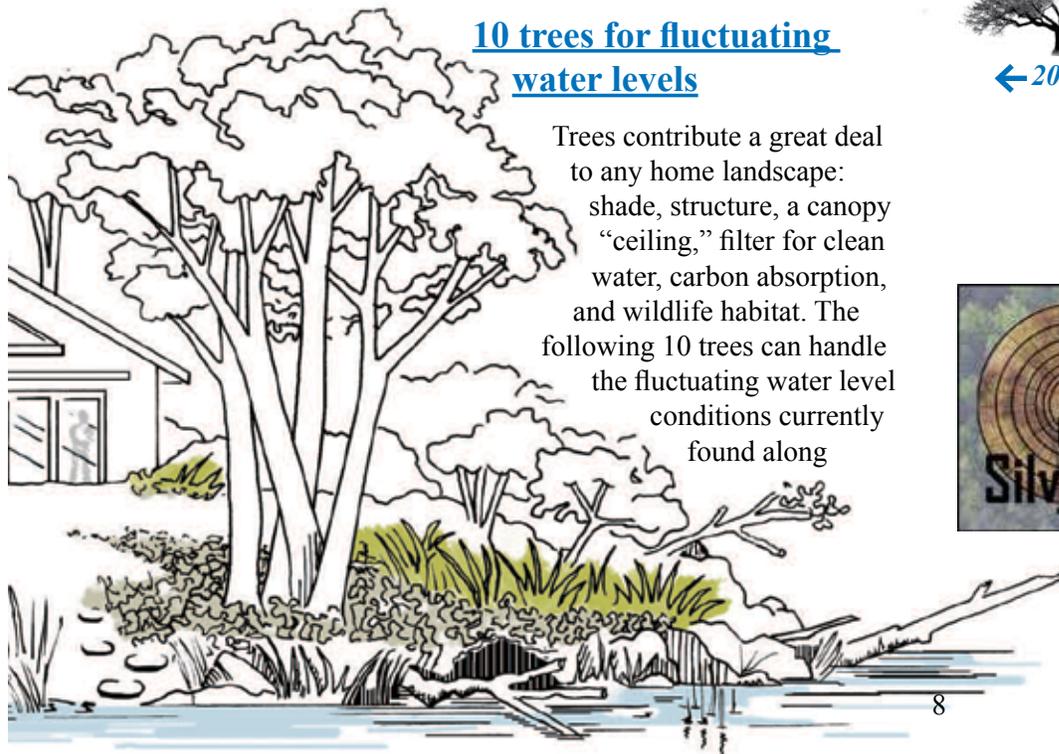
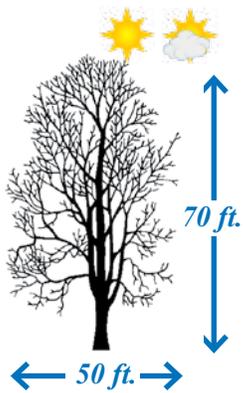


Illustration by Karen Englebretson



Silver Maple

Acer saccharinum

These fast-growing trees get their name from the silvery color on the bottom of their light green leaves. Their native habitat is floodplains, so they do great in moist soils, with no need for fertilizer, and are tolerant of poor, dry soils

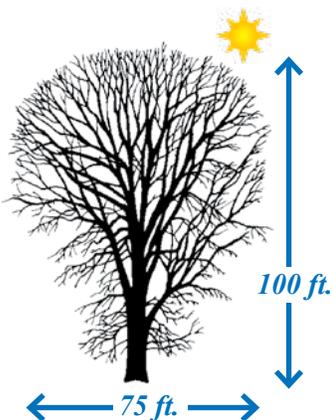
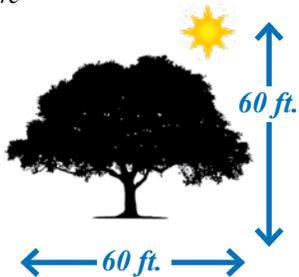
once they are established.

Weak limbs can mean more clean-up after storms.

Swamp White Oak

Quercus bicolor

Tolerant of hot weather and sub-zero winters (sound familiar?), Swamp white oaks are full trees that need their space. These oaks have a long life span and can hold up to high winds. The best regular fertilization you can give an established oak tree is to keep its leaves on the ground in the fall, as they add nutrients to the soil when they decompose.



Eastern Cottonwood

Populus deltoides

Cottonwoods are very large, dramatic trees with shiny, delta-shaped leaves and deeply ridged bark. Female trees produce sticky seed buds and

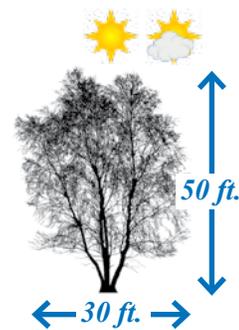
masses of downy white “cotton” that clings to window screens, gathers in gutters and seems to be everywhere. The male cottonwood is an under-used, large, quality tree that does not have the cottony seed. It is a favorite for nesting eagles.

Newly planted trees should be watered regularly (as much as weekly) in the absence of rain for the first two summers until established.

River Birch

Betula nigra

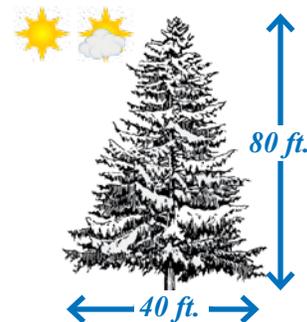
This easy-to-grow tree has beautiful exfoliating white bark that reveals a salmon-red inner layer. It’s a great grower at 36 inches per year, but that also means its life-span is a bit shorter at 30-50 years. River birch prefers semi-aquatic conditions, but also tolerates drier soils.



White Pine

Pinus strobus

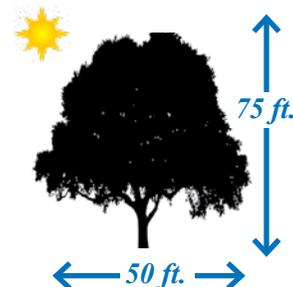
The fine, feathery needles of the white pine make it a great windbreak and shade tree. It attracts many kinds of wildlife and needs plenty of space to stretch its branches. This tall evergreen prefers acidic soil that is moist and well-drained, but is moderately tolerant of soils with a slightly higher pH.



Northern Red Oak

Quercus rubra

Give this tree a good start and it could live hundreds of years! It prefers fertile, sandy, finely-textured soils with good drainage. Northern red oaks are ecologically invaluable, hosting dozens of important pollinators.

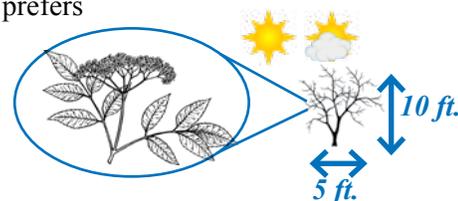


Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis

On the smaller side, this deciduous tree/shrub has bright white flowers and clusters of black berries that can be harvested in September. It tolerates a wide range of soils, but prefers moist, humus ones, and spreads by root suckers to form colonies.

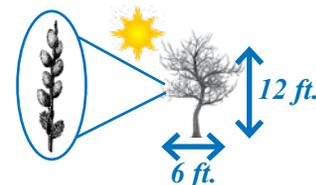
Toxic to people and pets; fruit is non-toxic to people once cooked.



Pussy Willow

Salix discolor

Another smaller option is the pussy willow, which is found in meadows, swamps and along lakes and streams with moist to wet soils, but can also grow in drier conditions. You can stick a branch into the soil, and it will produce a fully developed adult in a matter of months! Male pussy willows are noted for producing ornamentally attractive silky pearl gray catkins on leafless stems in late winter to early spring.



The Flow Project

Art Inspired by Water

By Amy Kowalski, Communications Specialist, Extension Lakes

Doug Moore



Convention participants interact with artists from The Flow Project at the 2023 Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention in Stevens Point.

“Flow highlights the many ways water shapes our lives and connects us to one another, inspiring us to bridge disciplines, identities, and geographies.”

– Julia Buskirk, Flow Director

The Flow Project pairs undergraduate student artists in the University of Wisconsin system with water professionals from across the state to create art inspired by water. The Flow Project began in 2021 at the UW-Madison campus, with support from Water@UW-Madison, and was created by Julia Buskirk, a recent graduate of UW-Madison, and Dr. Alexandra Lakind. For Buskirk, being an artist and working in the environmental field was part of the impetus to create a bridge between science and art. She says, “My work and interests sit at the intersection of art, water, and humans.”

The Flow Project Funding 2023

The success of this project and continued support from Water@UW-Madison, along with UW-Madison’s Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education and

the Division of Extension Natural Resources Initiative Center for Humanities allowed at least one representative from each UW campus to participate in 2023. Funding to include additional UW-Stevens Point (UWSP) and UW-Green Bay (UWGB) undergraduate artists was provided by Extension Lakes, the Center for Land Use Education, and the Center for Watershed Science and Education (three of the many outreach programs within the College of Natural Resources at UWSP), as well as the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at UWGB. The 2023 Flow Project grew to include 31 undergraduate artists from across the state! Funding for 2024 is unclear.

Competitive Process

Funding was only available for less than one third of the artists who were interested this year, so it was a competitive process. Project coordinators selected undergraduate artists through a simple application process and then paired them with interested water professionals based on each artist’s top choices. This year’s chosen artists each received a \$300 stipend in addition to exhibition opportunities and real-world experience.

Artist Diversity

The 2023 cohort included undergraduate artists working in mediums from two-dimensional painting, drawing, and photography, to three-dimensional ceramics, glass, fiber arts, textile,



Provided by Lauren Muth

Community at the Hands of Water - Oil paint on Canvas

Artist: Lauren Muth, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, in collaboration with Guolong Liang, Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin Madison-Extension



Check out this video on YouTube titled, “Flowing Between Art and Science,” by Elise Mahon, reporter with UW-Communications in Madison, that follows 2023 Flow Project artist Aakriti Bagchi, UW-Madison.

and beading, to performance art including music, spoken word, and dance. Wow, that's a lot of talent! Not all of these undergraduate artists are majoring in art, but they all had their own personal connection to water.

Sharing Across Disciplines

Both artists and water professionals were tasked with sharing their respective work with someone who has a different background/training – an important skillset to develop! It's a great opportunity for both artists and water partners to practice communicating their work with others. Buskirk adds, "Learning from different practices and skillsets allows us to constantly expand our perspectives and our ways of understanding our work and our world!"

Samantha Martinez, UW-Whitewater artist, collaborated with Anne Moser, Senior Special Librarian and Education Coordinator at UW-Sea Grant. Samantha remarked, "Learning about Anne's work was really inspiring. The resources that she provides to both formal and non-formal educators are invaluable, and her philosophies about the value of young people and their empowerment through Great Lakes literacy gives me hope for the future."

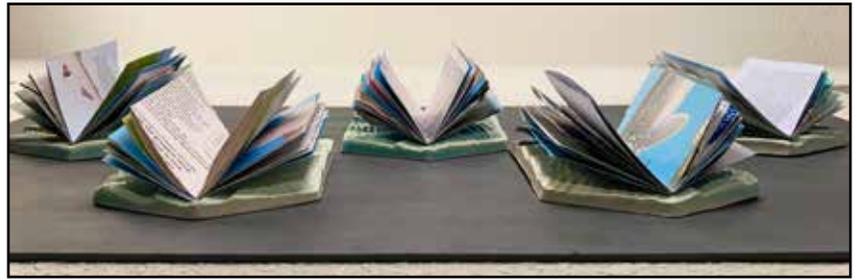
Anne said, "Working with Samantha has been a gift. She and I share many passions, from education to watershed science to social justice, but we have completely different backgrounds, training, and experiences. Exploring our common ground has been the most rewarding part of this collaboration."

Supporting the UW Mission

The Flow Project not only helps water partners communicate in a new way, but it supports the development of young artists using water as a source of inspiration for their practice. Student artists are given the opportunity to engage with the statewide water community using their passion and education fostered at their respective UW school. This student-centered project helps prepare young artists to succeed in a diverse and sustainable world.

Exhibition Opportunities

This year the Flow Project administrators created several exhibition opportunities for the



Open Water - Ceramic, paper, hemp cord, beeswax, board, plant-based acrylic
Artist: Samantha Martinez, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, in collaboration with Anne Moser, Senior Special Librarian and Education Coordinator, UW-Sea Grant

final art pieces to be shown to potentially thousands of people with a traveling exhibit. The exhibit debuted at the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point, April 19-21, 2023, giving over 600

Convention participants a chance to meet many of the artists during the Wednesday evening "Welcome Reception." Select pieces were displayed in the Portage County Public Library in May. The exhibit is now in De Pere through mid-July and will travel to Madison and back to Stevens Point through the summer and into next fall. In addition, there is an online gallery as part of Water@UW-Madison (<https://water.wisc.edu/the-flow-project/>). 💧

Upcoming exhibitions:

June 2-July 15: newARTspace, De Pere

July 21-September 29: School of Education Gallery, UW-Madison

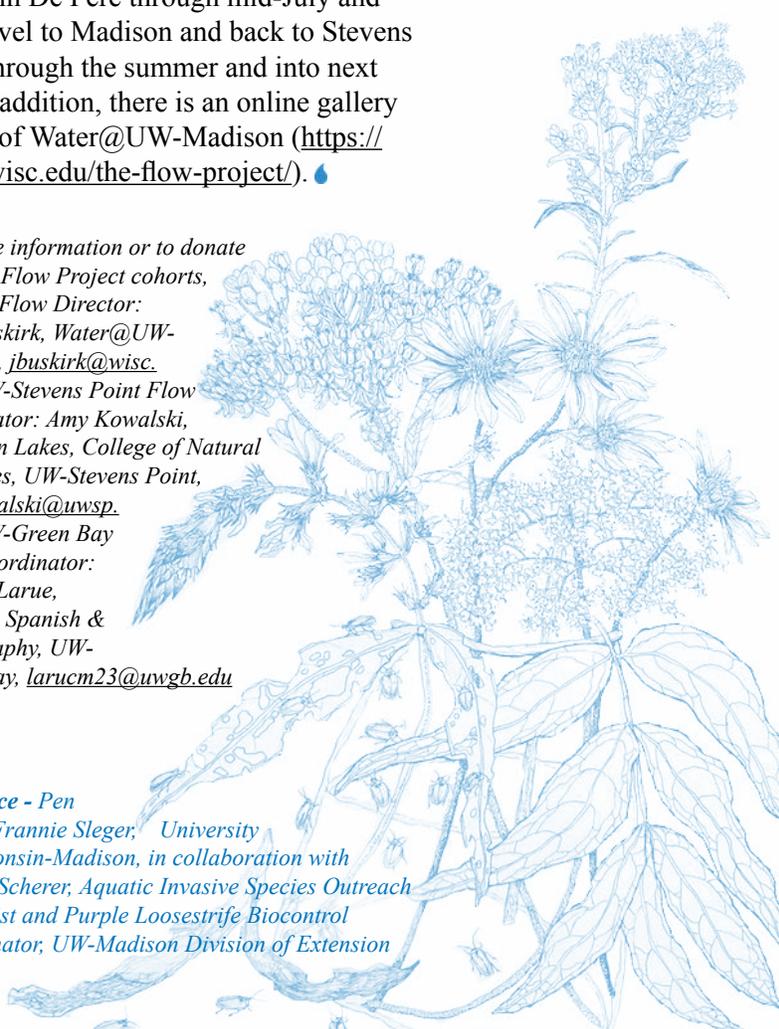
October 12-31: Carlsten Art Gallery, UW-Stevens Point

For more information or to donate to future Flow Project cohorts, contact: Flow Director:

Julia Buskirk, Water@UW-Madison, jbuskirk@wisc.edu | UW-Stevens Point Flow Coordinator: Amy Kowalski, Extension Lakes, College of Natural Resources, UW-Stevens Point, amy.kowalski@uwsp.edu | UW-Green Bay Flow Coordinator: Collette Larue, Student - Spanish & Photography, UW-Green Bay, larucm23@uwgb.edu

Play Nice - Pen

Artist: Frannie Slegler, University of Wisconsin-Madison, in collaboration with Jeanne Scherer, Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach Specialist and Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Coordinator, UW-Madison Division of Extension



Summer Tech Fashion 2023

SWIMS Database Gets a New Look

By Jake Dickmann, SWIMS Data Manager, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

New SWIMS interface link:
<https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/swims/>

Wisconsin's official repository for surface water data and information, the Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) database, has undergone a user interface (UI) redesign. SWIMS serves a wide audience for data and information storage and retrieval. This includes members of the Clean Boats, Clean Waters, Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, Water Action Volunteers, and other participatory science programs, as well as Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff and external partners and stakeholders.

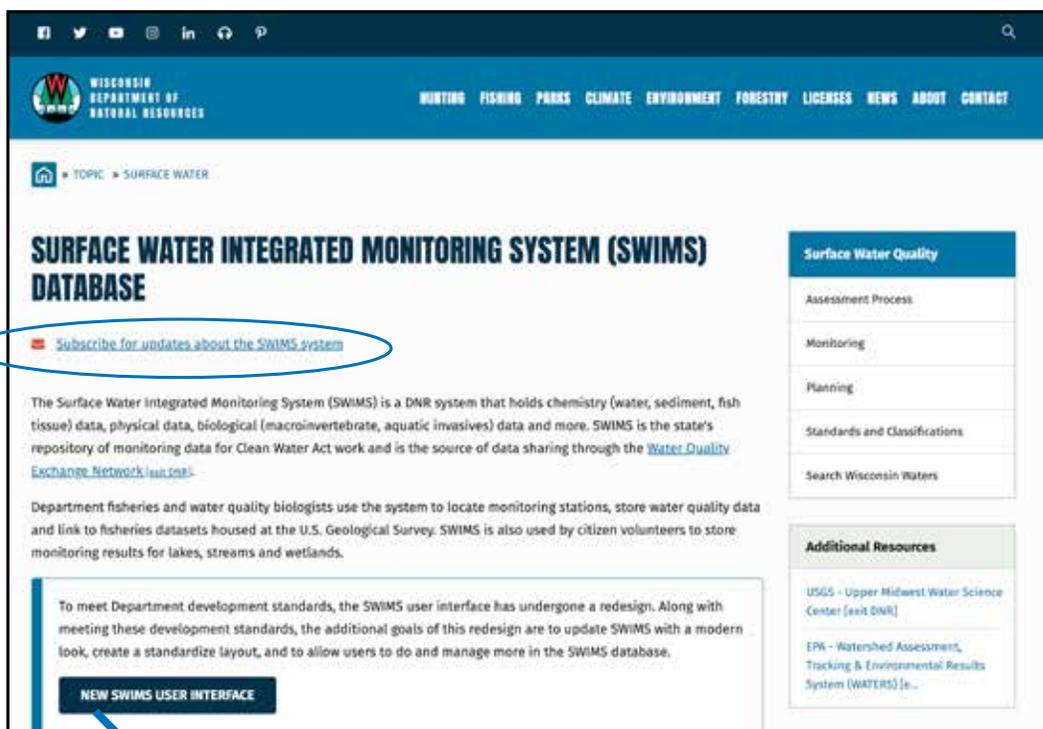
Why Update?

The main goal of this UI redesign was to meet new DNR development standards. Along with meeting these new standards, additional goals of this redesign were to update SWIMS:

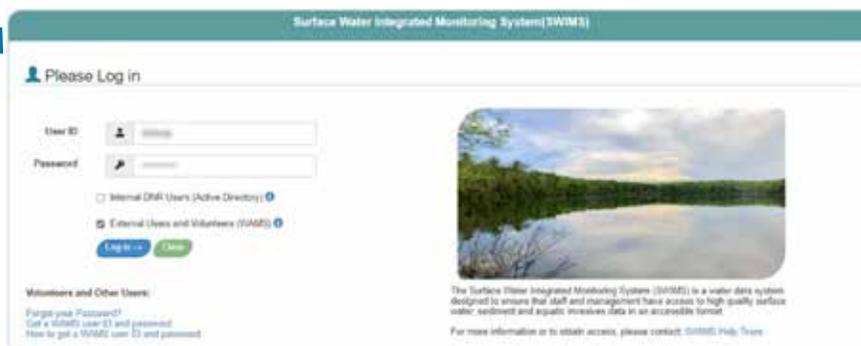
- With a modern look.
- To create a standardized layout.
- To allow users to manage and find data more easily within SWIMS.

While the look and feel of this new UI can be different, the functionality and steps to entering and editing data, finding data, or performing similar tasks is very much the same as the old

Sign up to receive SWIMS-related updates through GovDelivery.



This button will take you to the new SWIMS user interface login page.



UI. The data and information found within this new interface is the exact same as in the old interface.

[How to Access SWIMS & Tips](#)

The old interface will be retired in June 2023. Users with a valid WAMS username and password can access the new SWIMS interface here: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/swims/>. You do not need any new WAMS credentials to access this new UI.

DNR, UW-Madison Division of Extension, and Extension Lakes staff have been working very closely to provide training and resources on this new interface to a range of users. While more trainings and additional resources will be made available soon, users can find a complete user guide and more on the DNR “Help and Tips for SWIMS” webpage here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/SWIMS/help.html>.

[Stay Up-to-date](#)

Future communication to external users on this UI transition or anything SWIMS related (substantial updates, SWIMS outages, etc.) will happen through the GovDelivery system. You can sign up to receive these updates using the GovDelivery link found on the SWIMS webpage (see web address above). DNR SWIMS staff will reach out directly to users in the event of a specific data-related issue, but all general communication will be done through GovDelivery.

[Need Help?](#)

If you have any questions on this new UI or the transition from the old interface to the new interface, please reach out to your program coordinator or the DNR SWIMS staff. 💧



[Statewide Program Coordinators:](#)

Clean Boats, Clean Waters – Erin McFarlane erin.mcfarlane@uwsp.edu
Citizen Lake Monitoring Network – Paul Skawinski paul.skawinski@uwsp.edu
Water Action Volunteers – Katy Bradford wav@extension.wisc.edu
DNR SWIMS staff: DNRSWIMS@wisconsin.gov

[Get Involved in AIS Prevention!](#)

Interested in a hands-on way you can help protect Wisconsin's waters? Save the date for this year's Snapshot Day: August 19, 2023! Snapshot Day is a one-day hunt for aquatic invasive species (AIS). Volunteers gather at a training site in their area, receive free training by a local AIS professional, and then head out to local monitoring sites to search for AIS. Learn more and stay tuned for registration: www.wateractionvolunteers.org/events



Snapshot Day August 19, 2023



2023 Convention Wrap-up

Building Trust Around Water Together



When asked about their favorite parts of the 2023 Convention, participants said:

“[The] Water and Art Exhibit was a great addition to the Convention!”

“Keynote speakers - they are often excellent speakers with an uplifting message and energy that leave me feeling inspired. It’s always the highlight for me.”

With 645 registrations this year (60 virtual attendees), the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention was teeming with idea-sharing! Thank you to all the individuals who shared their knowledge, passion, and stories with us! Over 160 presenters shared their projects and research; here are some of the highly attended topics throughout the three days:

- Wisconsin’s Public Trust Doctrine
- Healthy Lakes & Rivers
- Working with farmers
- Aquatic plant management
- Recreational boat wakes and carrying capacity of lakes
- Water policy
- Wildlife and natural history

Through our partnership with Recycling Connections, we were able to compost food waste (food we didn’t eat) and officially diverted 152.1 lbs. of food from going to the landfill. Instead, it went to a local farm and will be turned into valuable compost. This is one way we’re decreasing our carbon footprint while bringing hundreds of people together.

Convention Presentations

You can access videos of recorded sessions at uwsp.edu/uwexplakes by clicking on “2023 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention Archives” under *Events* in the navigation menu. Presentations in portable document format (PDF) will be available for most of the other talks soon, so visit the archive page often. If you are looking for something in the meantime, please contact us at uwexplakes@uwsp.edu or call 715-346-2116 and we would be glad to help you.

2024 Lakes and Rivers Convention

Mark your calendars for April 10-12, 2024, when we will again gather for the statewide Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point. Next year’s theme is *Chapter 33 Golden Jubilee: 50 Years of Partnering for Our Waters*. We will be accepting presentation proposals soon; just go to wisconsinwaterweek.org and click on *Lakes and Rivers Convention* for more information. 💧

This year’s photo contest asked photographers to use their lens to answer the question, “Why do we need healthy lakes and rivers?” You can view all the submissions in the album labeled, “2023 Convention Photo Contest” on the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Facebook page.



First place

“Double Rainbow Circle” by Nathan Carlsen, taken on Fish Lake, Burnett County
Healthy lakes and rivers are part of the circle of life.



Second place

“Out for a Swim” by Karen Gersonde, taken on Lake Michigan, Ozaukee County
Our lakes and rivers need to stay clean and healthy so waterfowl, fish, plants and various animals that depend on these water ecosystems can not only live, but thrive and be abundant in our Wisconsin waters.



Third place

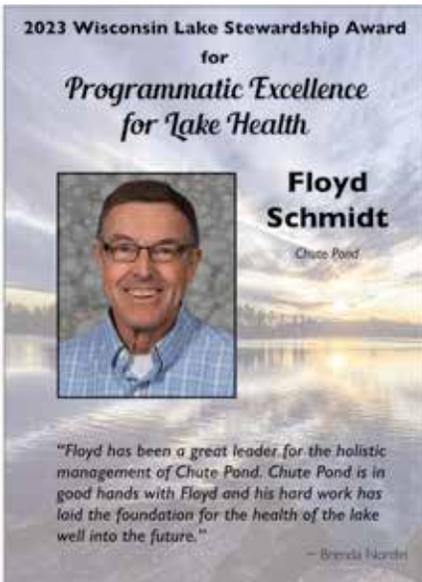
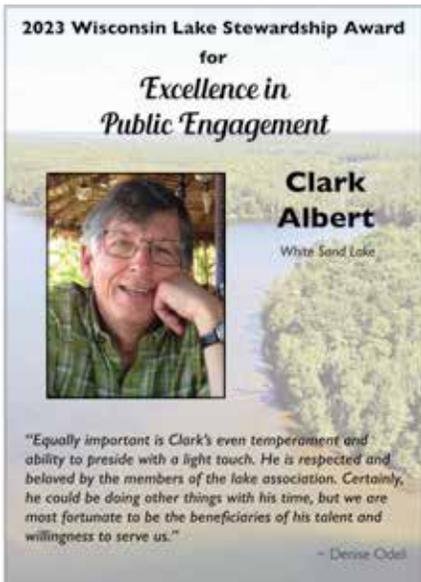
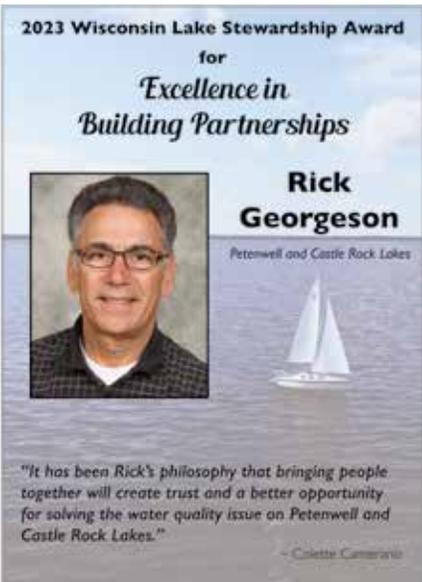
“Worry Ends Where Faith Begins” by Renee Krause, taken on Lake Michigan, Kewaunee County
Without healthy lakes and rivers, we are fragile and broken.





▲ Celebrating Wisconsin Volunteer Stream Monitors (L to R) Katy Bradford, Water Action Volunteers Program Coordinator; Addie Schluskel, Rock River Coalition, recipients: Barb Bauer and Paula Brandmeier; Token Creek, Dane County, and Emily Heald, Rivers Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension are all smiles at the Wisconsin Lake Stewardship and Volunteer Stream Monitoring Awards Ceremony.

▼ Celebrating Lake Stewardship Award Winners Rick Georgeson, Clark Albert, and Floyd Schmidt all accepted the prestigious Lake Stewardship Award at this year's Convention. Clark and Floyd are eligible to be considered for international recognition through the North American Lake Management Society – stay tuned.



CALENDAR

June 17, 2023 – Loop the Lake, Madison, WI

For more information: <https://www.cleanlakesalliance.org/loop-the-lake/>

June 17, 2023 – State of the Lakes Breakfast, Green Lake, WI

For more information: <https://www.greenlakeassociation.org/events>

June 23, 2023 – Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference, Spooner, WI

For more information: <https://wclra.org/event/2023-northwest-wisconsin-lakes-conference/>

June 24, 2023 – Lake Country Clean Waters Festival, Oconomowoc, WI

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

June 26, 2023 – Shoreland Owner Workshop, Vilas County, WI

For more information email carrie@northwoodslandtrust.org or call 715-479-2490.

July 8, 2023 – Watershed Paddle Event and River Clean-up, Oconomowoc, WI

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

July 14, 2023 – 6-County Lakes & Rivers Conference, Rhinelander, WI

For more information: <https://vclra.org/2023/06/01/2023-6-county-lakes-rivers-conference/>

August 10, 2023 – Surface Water Grant Applicant Webinar, online

Learn about funding opportunities, and applying for/managing grant projects! Register at:

<https://wisconsin-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsduqrqjouEtaPxUAMdrrGHwgq-cZDfZ8S>

For more calendar events, go to uwsp.edu/uwexplakes and find the calendar!



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| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|----|
| IN THIS ISSUE | County-Wide Lake Planning..... | 1 |
| | Capacity Corner: Communication.... | 4 |
| | Wisconsin Lakes Association..... | 6 |
| | Welcome Aboard Jen Jefferson..... | 7 |
| | Lake District Q&A..... | 7 |
| | Best Trees for the Shoreline..... | 8 |
| | The Flow Project..... | 10 |
| | SWIMS Database Update..... | 12 |
| | Snapshot Day..... | 13 |
| | Convention Wrap-up..... | 14 |
| | Calendar..... | 15 |

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Reflections

“You know me, I think there ought to be a big old tree right there. And let’s give him a friend. Everybody needs a friend.”

— Bob Ross

