

Attendance and Roll Call

Kevin Becker	Leo Bosselaar	Kyle Guillette	
Janet Balza	Dale Schraut	Bob Desotelle	
Hope Dalebroux	Sue Schraut	Laurie Bobillot	
Erika Balza	Todd Schuelke	Randy Cayemberg	
Rob Balza	Bob Pfaffl	Doug Belunes	
Dan Kamps	Bob Pfaffl Jr.	Jack Guillette	
Scott Lamers	Sissie Sullivan	Kelly Guillette	
Schuett Family	Sue Schallenberg	Jim Wallen	
Melinda Bosselaar	Annette Rhodes		
Arjan Bosselaar	Tim Thomson		

LAKE ASSOCIATION OF LONG LAKE

FALL 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, September 5, 2026 • 9:00 a.m. • Beach Pavilion

MEETING TYPE

Fall Membership Meeting

PREPARED BY

Erika Balza, Secretary

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, May 29, 2027 • 9:00 a.m.

1. Welcome

President Jim Wallen welcomed members and guests. Wayne Lindsley's son was recognized as a guest.

2. New Members

- Mike and Kat of Newald Junction
- Dennis and James Reineking of Sheboygan

3. Secretary's Report

Secretary Erika Balza presented the Summer 2026 meeting minutes, which are also posted on the [Association website](#).

Members were introduced to the **Lake Tides**, the free newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin's lakes and **Lake Ripples**, another newsletter produced three times a year. These newsletters are offered through **UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources Extension Lakes**. If you are interested in learning more about Wisconsin's lakes, you can sign up for the Lakes Tides and/or the Lake Ripples newsletters on the [UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources Extension Lakes website](#).

✓ **MOTION:** Joe made a motion to approve the Secretary's Report and Summer 2026 meeting minutes. Seconded by Swede.

4. Treasurer's Report

Erika and Jim presented the financial report and fishing derby results in Kristy's absence. Appreciation was extended to everyone who assisted with the derby, with special recognition given to **Clete** for the organization and coordination of the entire event.

Discussion followed about how this years' low water levels and how heavy weeds affected the 2026 summer derby.

The 2027 Summer Fishing Derby will return to the second Saturday in August next year, the date is **August 14, 2027**. **Mark your calendars now!** Also mark your calendars for the week prior to that, **August 7, 2027**, to assist Scott in getting all donations ready for the raffles and punch board, etc.

Members discussed possibly moving a future summer fishing derby to June. The members felt additional time for a notice in advance would be necessary before making that decision. The topic will be placed on the **May 2027** agenda.

✓ **MOTION:** Swede made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Dan.

5. Old Business

Month of Money Raffle

Joe reminded members to return all sold and unsold tickets. Linda Lamers is documenting ticket status. At the time of the meeting, 228 of 400 tickets had been returned and \$4,560 had been collected, covering the \$4,000 prize payout. No additional tickets remain for distribution. Outstanding tickets and funds must be delivered to Joe no later than **October 31, 2026**.

Kiosk Refresh

Jim reported that the kiosk refresh is nearly complete, pending a few pieces of literature. Improvements include stain, a new solar light, refreshed parking stripes and sign tree, and stain on the exterior of the outhouse. The Town contributed \$500 toward the project.

Artwork by Brandy's daughter will be displayed on the left panel and offered for sale. Loaner life jackets marked "Long Lake" are available as a one-year trial. A deck box will be considered so wet jackets can dry properly.

Invasive Species Identification

Jim discussed invasive species identification posters and noted that milfoil can enter the lake through the boat landing, boaters not cleaning off their boats.

Fish Stocking

Jim, reporting for Clete, summarized discussions with Greg Matzke. Stocking is not permitted for fish populations that are already reproducing well, including the current crappie population. Perch numbers have declined, and an every-other-year walleye stocking program would allow the Association to better evaluate results. The Association previously allocated \$5,000 for fish stocking.

Potential sources include Mole Lake walleye at approximately \$2.81 per eight-inch fish and Silver Moon Hatchery in Elton, Wisconsin, which has Upper Wisconsin-strain fish and perch. Final quantities and pricing depend on availability and volume. Volunteers will be needed to release fish at multiple locations around the lake. Jim will investigate fish species that may consume vegetation and report findings at the Spring 2027 meeting.

✔ **MOTION:** Proceed with stocking walleye and perch, subject to permitting, availability, and the previously allocated funding. Moved by **Swede**; seconded by **Bob**.

Fish Sticks and Crib Placement

Clete is working with a local logger to explore shoreline fish-stick habitat. Current guidance favors live hardwood trees, with maple preferred, placed along spawning shorelines in accordance with program guidelines. Traditional fish cribs are generally not recommended, although members discussed alternative cover for newly stocked fish.

The project could begin on a small scale as a winter volunteer effort, using a flatbed trailer and snowmobiles for distribution.

The topic will return for discussion in summer.

Summer Fishing Derby Recap

Jim reported for Clete. The Association again thanked the many volunteers and donors who made the event possible. Future timing and weed conditions will be reviewed at the May 2027 meeting.

Boat Landing Ramp

Jim reported on discussions with the Town Board. Projects exceeding \$5,000 require three bids. One proposal from Coleman Engineering totals \$24,500 for engineering, surveying, grant writing, and permitting. The overall project is estimated at approximately \$75,000, with completion unlikely before late 2027.

The ramp continues to degrade; five yards of rock placed two years ago have washed away, and pier removal is increasingly difficult.

Joe reported that no DNR grant is currently available. If grant funding returns, it is expected to cover only 50% of eligible costs.

Members discussed interim protection measures, cost sharing, signage, and a possible Town ordinance prohibiting power loading.

Lake Water-Depth Monitoring and Core Sampling

Joe reported that seasonal water-depth monitoring is a component of the Lake Management Plan. Measuring poles are expected to be installed during winter at the outlet and at the south end of the lake.

A separate sediment core-sampling effort is also being explored to determine whether south-end sediment is natural or human-caused and whether future dredging assistance may be available. The DNR would oversee proper analysis. Bill James, a UW-Stout

contact with specialized lake-management experience, may assist. Pricing has not yet been determined, and the work requires very cold conditions.

Bullhead Reduction and Aquatic Plant Management

Members reported limited bullhead sightings. Joe and a resort guest removed a small pod of juvenile bullheads near Marie's property in mid-July. Heavy weeds may make capture more difficult.

Lake Grant Completion

Joe reported that the Lake Management Plan information has been submitted and that an additional \$5,500 reimbursement is expected within two weeks. A digital copy will be posted on the Association website; members may contact Erika for a copy. The Association will continue acting on the plan's recommendations to support future cooperation with the DNR.



6. New Business

Winter Fishing Derby - February 6, 2027

Scott will chair the Winter Fishing Derby. Members were encouraged to direct donations and planning questions to him. New donation ideas include camping, hunting, fishing, household, and novelty items, generally in the \$25-\$40 range for punch-board prizes.

Members expressed resistance to increasing registration fees; no fee change was approved.

Scott will organize a work session during the weekend before the derby.

Additional dated coozies and other promotional items will be considered.

✓ **MOTION:** Authorize up to \$500 for Winter Fishing Derby promotional items. Moved by **Joe**; seconded by **Scott**.

A nearby loon offered its own enthusiastic approval. 🐦

Adopt a Classroom

The Association plans to again support one classroom in the Laona School District and one in the Florence School District. In 2025, each selected classroom received a plaque and a \$250 check. Sissie and Sue agreed to make the presentations again this October. Swede previously ordered the plaques at approximately \$35 each; Swede will obtain the plaques.

Florence contact: Richelle Jochem, Principal • jochemr@myflorence.org • (906) 367-8945

Jim will obtain the Laona school principal contact information. Each principal will be invited to select the recipient classroom.

Membership and Volunteer Outreach

The Association continues to seek new volunteers. Dan suggested mailing information to all lakefront property owners to encourage Association membership. Erika suggested door hangers for the same purpose.

Pontoon Boat

The Association is now the owner of a 20-foot pontoon boat purchased from Joe for lake-related work, including installing and removing buoys, installation and removal of the fishing pier and swimming raft, and fishing derby activities. The boat does not include a trailer. With a trailer, the boat and trailer would not fit inside the forestry building. Jim is working on insurance and use policies. Town liability coverage applies, but the Association will need to obtain their own workers' compensation coverage.

Annette offered storage space for a trailer.

The pontoon will remain in the water near Joe's property until the buoys are removed.

Jim suggested decorating the pontoon for the summer fishing derby.

Dan suggested using the pontoon in a future parade.

The Guillette family has retired from managing the float for the annual 4th of July parade. The banners were handed over, Rob will put the banners in the storage unit.

Weed Management and South-End Access

The Association continues working with the DNR and Scott V. on south-end weed management, core sampling, and possible channel access for shoreline residents who currently lack navigable-water access. Members discussed building a weed catcher and noted a used weed cutter listed for approximately \$12,000 on Facebook marketplace. No purchase was authorized.

2027 Surface Water Grant Program

The Association reported that preparations for the 2027 Surface Water Grant Program are in place.

Lake Association Apparel

Members discussed maintaining a rolling inventory and adding zip-up hoodies, non-hooded sweatshirts, and tank tops. Erika will work with Kyle Guillette of KSO Custom Creations for the new items.

Easter Egg Hunt

Members discussed again supporting the community-sponsored Big 4+ Easter Egg Hunt with items such as coloring books, crayons, contest prizes, baskets, candy, and/or decorations.

✓ **MOTION:** Donate \$100 to Big 4+ for the 2027 Easter Egg Hunt, consistent with the prior year's support. Moved by **Swede**; seconded by **Rob**.

7. Other Items

Dates were discussed for pier and recreation equipment removal from the lake for the season: Volunteers are requested for **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, at **9:00 a.m.** A volunteer notice will be posted.

Scott will remove the smaller boat dock on his own.

Mike was thanked for his work with Steve on the picnic area.

Members briefly discussed the light around the picnic-area and the posted angler notice regarding minnows.

8. Next Meeting

Saturday, May 29, 2027, at **9:00 a.m.** Location to be determined.

9. Adjournment

 **MOTION:** Adjourn the meeting. Moved by **Scott**; seconded by **Hope**.

Respectfully submitted,

Erika Balza, Secretary



	Jul 2026	Aug 2026	Sep 2026	Total
Cash on hand (beginning of month)	\$ 61,365.07	\$ 64,724.01	\$ 74,991.29	

Cash Receipts

Kiosk	\$ 150.00			\$ 816.00
Donations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 700.00
Membership Dues	\$ 387.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000.50
Popple River Centennial	\$ 675.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 675.00
Whitewater Associates	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
2024 Winter Fishing Derby				\$ 9,115.00
2024 Summer Fishing Derby	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,170.00
2025 Winter Fishing Derby	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,538.00
2025 Summer Fishing Derby	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,809.00
2026 Winter Fishing Derby	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,975.00
2026 Summer Fishing Derby	\$ -	\$ 9,830.00	\$ -	\$ 9,830.00
Apparel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,220.00
Month Of Money	\$ 2,840.00	\$ 1,910.00	\$ -	\$ 4,750.00
Total Cash Receipts	\$ 4,052.00	\$ 11,740.00	\$ -	\$ 76,598.50
Total Cash Available	\$ 65,417.07	\$ 76,464.01	\$ 74,991.29	

Cash Paid Out

Check 1479 - Sandy Lindsly - Funeral	\$ 100.00			\$ 100.00
Check 1528 - We Energies	\$ 90.00			\$ 90.00
Check 1531 - USPS PO Box Renewal	\$ 78.00			\$ 78.00
Check 1532 - USPS Stamps	\$ 15.60			\$ 15.60
Check 1529 - We Energies	\$ 19.91			\$ 19.91



	Jul 2026	Aug 2026	Sep 2026	Total
Cash on hand (beginning of month)	\$ 61,365.07	\$ 64,724.01	\$ 74,991.29	
Check 1530 - WE Energies	\$ 164.49			\$ 164.49
Check 1480 - Jim Wallen - Big Four	\$ 225.06			\$ 225.06
Check 1481 & 1482 - We Energies		\$ 30.46		\$ 30.46
Check 1483 - Doug Belunes - Aug 26 Derby Prizes		\$ 596.50		\$ 596.50
Check 1484 - Clete Cayemberg - Aug 26 Derby Prizes		\$ 186.69		\$ 186.69
Online Payment - Storage Unit		\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00
Check 1488 - Jim Wallen - Kiosk Refresh			\$ 146.55	\$ 146.55
Amazon - Tickets for Fishing Derby		\$ 59.07		\$ 59.07
Online Payment - Invoice 30051595			\$ 71.00	\$ 71.00
Check				\$ -
Check				\$ -
				\$ -
Subtotal	\$ 693.06	\$ 1,472.72	\$ 217.55	\$ 39,078.53
Total Cash Paid Out	\$ 693.06	\$ 1,472.72	\$ 217.55	\$ 39,078.53
Cash on hand (end of month)	\$ 64,724.01	\$ 74,991.29	\$ 74,773.74	

AUGUST 2026 FISHING DERBY

79 REGISTERED FOR DERBY

10 LINERS	\$	300.00
PLINKO	\$	1,485.00
MONEY TREE	\$	770.00
BASKETS	\$	1,875.00
50/50	\$	700.00
PUNCH BOARD	\$	3,970.00
DONATIONS	\$	200.00
APPAREL	\$	<u>530.00</u>
PROFIT	\$	9,830.00
LESS EXPENSES	\$	<u>(970.19)</u>
NET PROFIT	\$	8,859.81
MONTH OF MONEY	\$	1,300.00



LAKETIDES

The newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin's lakes



WATER CONNECTS US ALL

Volume 51, Number 2

Fall 2026

By Extension Lakes Staff

Humans have interacted with water for thousands of years. Since the retreat of the glaciers, the seasonal rituals of native tribes have been guided by water. The oral histories of the Anishinaabe migration tell of a journey from the east along what we now call the Great Lakes to a place where “food grows on the water.” That food is wild rice, known as manoomin in Ojibwe, and is both sustenance and a powerful reminder of our connection to water.

In more recent years, European explorers used the waterways to access the region’s fur and forests, and by the 1800s, Wisconsin’s lakes and rivers became popular destinations for vacations.

Today, we still depend on clean water for drinking and growing food, but also for recreation, livelihoods, and the places we call home. Now there are many more of us sharing these waters. That is why it is so important for us to work together to protect and preserve our shared lakes and rivers.

One way to do this is through the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership. This collaboration of statewide, regional, and local groups, as well as individuals, is working together to care for our shared waters.

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“Over half a billion people owe their livelihoods directly to water, and two-thirds of the global economy is derived from activities that involve water in some form.”

**~ Wallace J. Nichols,
Blue Mind**

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GRINDSTONE LAKE FOUNDATION
SAVES NATURAL TREASURE

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AMY PELOW

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(Water Connects Us All, cont. from pg. 1)

Are you part of the Partnership?

Absolutely! Just by reading this newsletter, we know that you think protecting Wisconsin's watery gems is important. Whether you live on a lake, fish a river, volunteer with a local organization, work in water resources, or simply care about the places that make Wisconsin special, you are part of this effort.

We may have diverse family histories, experiences, educations, and perspectives, but water connects us. It connects communities, economies, wildlife, recreation, and our sense of place. It also connects our individual efforts. What happens in one lake, river, or watershed can teach, inspire, and affect people working in another.

Partnership History

The Partnership began taking shape in the early 1970s, when university researchers and state resource managers worked together to find new ways to protect lake health. The Inland Lakes Demonstration Project showed that science and state resources were important, but so was the involvement of local people who knew and cared deeply about their lakes.

Learn about the Partnership's history on the Extension Lakes website at uwsp.edu/lakes.



In 1974, a formal partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin, and local lake groups formed as the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. That same year, the legislature passed a law enabling lakes to form lake districts, giving communities a new way to organize, plan, and take action for their lakes.

Since then, the Partnership has grown to include lake associations, river organizations, water professionals, volunteers, researchers, and others who share a common goal: healthy waters for generations to come. Connect all these groups sharing knowledge, challenges, successes, and solutions, and you get the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership.

(Continued on page 14)

AMY KOWALSKI



The Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership gathered in person to meet and then tour this site in Wrightstown where they used dead ash trees as streambank stabilization.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

SCORE MY SHORE: WHAT YOUR PROPERTY CAN TELL YOU ABOUT LAKE HEALTH



By Amy Kowalski, Communications Specialist, Extension Lakes



**What's your shoreline telling you?
Take a few minutes to find out!**

MARK BUGNASKI PHOTOGRAPHY

Owning property along a Wisconsin lake or river comes with incredible rewards: peaceful views, wildlife sightings, and time well spent on (and in) the water. It also comes with a sense of responsibility to steward the land that borders these waters to make sure future generations can also enjoy them.

We all know what we do on the land affects our shared waters. You probably follow shoreland zoning laws and think, "I'm doing my part." But these standards were a compromise, like many Wisconsin laws, and don't measure up to what the science is telling us.

How healthy is your shoreland property?
Head over to the Healthy Lakes & Rivers

website (healthylakeswi.com) and click on "Score My Shore" to find out! Or simply scan the QR code above and get started.

Wisconsin Score My Shore - Shoreland Evaluation Survey

This easy-to-use online survey helps you take a fresh look at your property. Think of it as a friendly check-in rather than a test. Answer simple questions about what you see and do as you walk from your driveway and house (Upland Zone), through the nearshore area (Transition Zone) and look into the water (In-Water Zone).

One of the most helpful features is that the survey is dynamic. Your answers guide what comes next, so you get information tailored to your property. At the end, you receive a

score (like a credit score), ranging from “Entry” to “Protection” level, along with practical suggestions for improvements.

Even better, the survey directs you to simple, often low-cost actions. Planting native vegetation, redirecting runoff, or leaving natural features in place can help support fish, wildlife, and water quality.

Neighbors Make a Difference

Research consistently shows that land use and shoreland management on adjacent properties strongly influence water quality and habitat. When several neighboring properties add native plants or reduce mowing near the water, the benefits multiply. Together, those connected shorelines create habitat corridors for fish, frogs, turtles, and birds – something a single property can’t do alone.

Strive for Progress, Not Perfection

It’s also important to recognize that no developed shore is perfect, which makes it difficult to score in the “Protection” category of the survey. Many properties already have homes, driveways, or other hard surfaces close to the water. Strive for progress, not perfection. Taking small steps toward more natural conditions can make a meaningful difference.

Attention lake groups!

Use this survey to:

- Build awareness across membership.
- Encourage voluntary action without pressure.
- Create a shared starting point for conversation.
- Support lake-wide improvements over time.
- Strive for progress and track it.

Find lessons on how to build a successful Healthy Lakes & Rivers program in your area. healthylakeswi.com/partner-organizations



A Private, Flexible Way to Learn

Score My Shore also offers a private way to learn. If you’ve ever wondered what a site visit might involve but weren’t ready to invite someone out, this tool lets you explore at your own pace. You can even preview the survey, pause and return later, or update your answers before submitting.

So, what’s your shoreline telling you? Taking a few minutes to find out could lead to healthier water, more diverse wildlife, and a shoreline you can feel even better about sharing with family, friends, and neighbors. And when those neighbors get curious, you’ll have something valuable to pass along, because it takes all of us to make healthy lakes and rivers together! 💧

Five free ways to give back to your lake/river:

1. Leave fallen trees in the water – they protect shorelines and provide habitat for fish, turtles, songbirds, and more.
2. Don’t mow – let the water’s edge grow and see what pops up (remove invasives).
3. Skip the fertilizer – most soil does not need a boost.
4. Protect existing natural areas.
5. Redirect gutters/downspouts away from the waterbody.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

TURN EDUCATION INTO ACTION WITH A SURFACE WATER GRANT FROM THE WDNR

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

Want to inspire, engage, and activate people in your community to take action for our waters? Include environmental education (EE) in your WDNR Surface Water Education Grant application to help raise awareness and create positive change! In our last issue, we introduced the five tenets of EE and how they can spark community interest in your local waterways. Let's use those ideas to strengthen your grant application, and more importantly, create lasting change in your community.

Did you know?

The Surface Water Education Grant ranking sheets can help you understand the criteria and improve your application (found in the appendices of the Surface Water Grant guidance document that is published each year at dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/SurfaceWater.html).

Think Holistically

A thoughtful, layered approach that is clearly explained in your proposal (not just a list of activities) takes time but will help strengthen your proposal and ensure the education you provide really makes a difference. Remember to consult the Five Tenets of Environmental Education.

- 1. RAISE AWARENESS** – All education starts here. Be sure to describe how you will raise awareness of an issue. Consider showing examples or comparisons.
- 2. INCREASE KNOWLEDGE** – Build on the awareness gained and begin to introduce new concepts. Brainstorm fun activities that get people learning while they're with you, but also while they're at home with their families or friends.



SARA WINDJUE

Pick a specific focus area and show how you'll measure success.

3. **IDENTIFY VALUES** – Describe how you will help people understand what they value and why. This will require you to research how values can be identified through educational programming.
4. **DEVELOP SKILLS** – If your project includes skill building, explain what skills you want the participants to develop and why they are important. How will this help change behavior?
5. **TAKE ACTION** – Explain what you want your audience to ultimately do with their new knowledge, values, and skills.

Now you are ready to write a strong grant application using the following tips.

Make Your Project Impact Clear (Grant section: Project Impact)

Fully explain why this topic is important to the environment, to people, and to the economy. Assume that those reviewing the grant do not understand why the topic is important. Research what others have done and what has worked. Reference these projects and why you intend to replicate a past project or do something different.

Partner with a local school, nature center, or college program. This can help strengthen your proposal AND bring new energy and expertise to your project.



Design with People in Mind (Grant section: Project Design)

How will your project provide engaging, in-person education or outreach? Not all audiences learn the same way and your proposal should reflect that.

Think through these questions and include the answers in your proposal:

- 💧 Are you trying to reach children, families, adults, or all three? Each audience may need a different engagement method.
- 💧 How many people will you realistically engage? Why did you choose this number and how will you reach it?
- 💧 Will you be providing the education or partnering with an experienced educator? Consider working with your local school district or college;

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Getting into the water with Dickey Fish

By John Lyons, University of Wisconsin-Madison Zoological Museum
Dave Marshall, Underwater Habitat Investigations, LLC

Little fish, those under a few inches in length, garner little attention or appreciation. But they play an outsized role in the health of Wisconsin's lakes.

There are two types of small fish, the juveniles of the panfish and gamefish, who grow quickly and are only small for their first few months, and the inherently small species, which we affectionately term "dickey fish". These species never exceed a few inches in length. Wisconsin's lakes collectively support about 30 dickey fish species. Some are quite beautiful and others nondescript, but all are important.

Although easy to miss, dickey fish are essential players in the food web. They eat

algae, tiny invertebrates, and the detritus from decayed plants and animals. In turn, they are eaten by larger fish, especially carnivorous species like crappie, bass, catfish, pike, musky, perch, and walleye. Dickey fish are the link between aquatic plants and the gamefish that so many of us love to catch. A healthy sport fishery requires a healthy dickey fish community.

Most dickey fish are found among aquatic plants where they hide from predators, eat the algae and invertebrates the plants support, and lay their eggs on the leaves and stems. Unsurprisingly, when native aquatic plants decline, so do dickey fish. And when native plants are displaced by non-native species such as Eurasian watermilfoil or curly leaf pondweed, dickey fish suffer. The native plants provide much better habitat.

Over 150 years ago, Wisconsin's lakes were full of small, plant-loving fish living among native underwater plants. Today, those fish are much harder to find. In

Found mainly among sparse plants and on the edge of thicker plant beds is the western banded killifish, uncommon in medium to large lakes across the state.



KONRAD SCHMIDT

Weeds

KONRAD SCHMIDT

Where did the name “dickey fish” originate? Biologists sometimes use the slang term “dicky” to refer to small, visually non-descript species, most commonly among birds and non-game fish. This dates back to 18th century English when the nickname Dicky was often used as a pet name for small animals, and a nursery rhyme popularized calling small, common yard birds “dicky birds”.

One of the most colorful dickey fish, the Iowa darter, is common in lakes throughout Wisconsin.

Many lakes probably still have a few dickey fish, and gamefish should still have a species or two to eat. So, why should we worry?

The issue is what’s called “redundancy” in ecological terms and “having a backup plan” in everyday life. Basically, the more species you have, the less likely you’ll have a year when all dickey fish are scarce and gamefish go hungry. The abundance of each dickey fish species fluctuates dramatically from year to year. Often these fluctuations are in synch, good or bad, but when you have lots

(Continued on page 10)

Lake Mendota in Madison, for example, there were once 10 dickey fish species, but now only two remain and neither is common. While we don’t have as much long-term data for every lake, similar declines are happening across the state.

Much of this change can be directly linked to human impacts. The introduction of common carp, runoff from soil erosion and fertilizers, and harmful blue-green algae blooms have all taken a toll. Shoreline development has also reduced important plant habitat, and invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil have spread. Even some well-intended efforts to control invasive plants can sometimes remove too much of the good habitat these fish depend on. Together, these changes have made it harder for these once-common fish to thrive.

The blacknose shiner is a widespread plant-associated minnow found in all sizes of lakes throughout the state.



KONRAD SCHMIDT

(Dickey Fish, cont. from pg. 9)

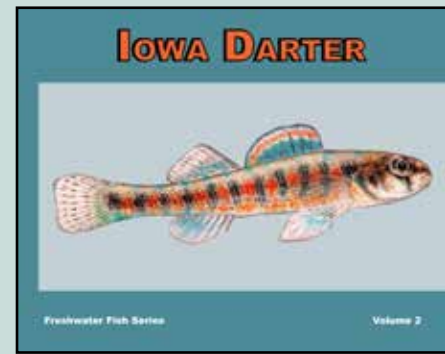
of species, there will be one or two that will do well when the others do poorly, and consequently there will always be enough food for gamefish. But when the variety of dickey fish is low, the chances rise that all species will have a bad year together and gamefish won't have enough to eat.

It's like having a balanced investment portfolio; diversity makes it more resilient when things don't go as planned. Similarly, if there are only one or two dickey fish species, the food base is at risk of collapse when conditions aren't favorable. With many dickey fish species, the lake ecosystem can better ride out the occasional tough times.

Do you know what kind of dickey fish are in your lake? Most lakes don't have adequate data even though it only takes a couple of days to conduct a survey. And as fish biologists, we strongly recommend it. Find your local fisheries biologist on the WDNR website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/people/fisheriesbiologists>.



The Tadpole Madtom is a plant-associated catfish found in medium to large lakes throughout the state.



Iowa Darter (age 8+)
Freshwater Fish Series, Volume 2

Learn how these native Wisconsin fish grow, where they like to hang out, and what you can do to keep their waters healthy.

Find this and other print publications under "Educational Resources" on the Extension Lakes website at uwsp.edu/lakes.

If you know there are a good variety of dickey fish in your lake, conservation is key. Protect the water quality and habitat, especially the aquatic plants that are essential for dickey fish to thrive. If a fish survey reveals no or just a few species, your lake community could explore restoration. Helping these fish make a comeback often starts with improving water quality and habitat, especially aquatic plants. But this alone may not be enough. Dickey fish can't easily move from one lake to another, so even if conditions improve, they may not re-establish on their own. The good news is that restoration is still possible. Although the process is complex, projects throughout the Midwest, including Wisconsin, show that dickey fish can be successfully re-introduced through stocking.

While dickey fish are small and inconspicuous, these fish are key to a healthy lake ecosystem, and losing them could have perilous consequences! 💧

LAKE ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

In each issue, we share ideas and resources to help your organization build its capacity to care for Wisconsin's lakes. This time, we're digging into a tool used to enhance the internal functions of your organization.

USING A SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS

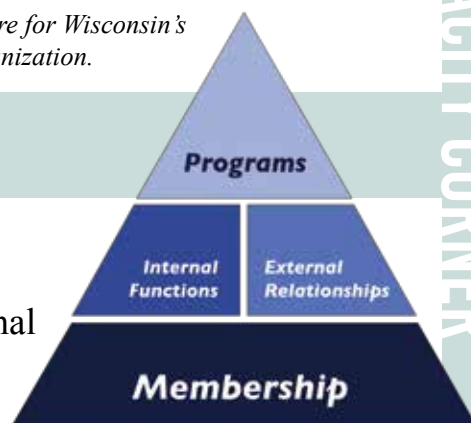
By Dave Quady, Sand Lake Association

What does the makeup of your community look like? Let's talk about how your organization can benefit from better knowing its membership (associations) or property owners and electors (districts). A simple survey of your lake community can uncover hidden talent, strengthen your organization, and help you reach your goals.

Have you ever wondered who in your community knows how to raise funds, understands accounting applications, or is involved with the county, town, or DNR? Lake groups should spend time getting to know their community's skills and experiences to create a more robust organization, and invite those folks to join your board.

The Organizational Capacity section of the Extension Lakes website explores Internal Functions, including how using a **Skills Gap Analysis will help to better understand your board's talents and help fill gaps**. The tool provided is customizable, but should not be overused. (<https://www.uwsp.edu/extension-lakes/lake-organizations/internal-functions/>)

This is just one more tool in your capacity toolbox that can help you build stronger relationships and do more to protect our shared waters. 💧



Dave's

HOT TIPS for a Successful Skills Gap Analysis

1 Keep it short, simple, and clear.

Ask 6-10 concise questions that take under 10 minutes to complete. Simple and inclusive will get you more responses, but allow for open-ended feedback!

2 Test, review, and make updates.

Before sending it out broadly, ask a small group to test the survey and tweak it as needed.

3 Provide a timeline and reminders.

Ask for responses in 1-2 weeks, with reminders after 4-5 days and a final reminder a few days before the deadline. Stick to your deadline.

4 Use free online survey tools.

Survey tools make it easy to take and compile results. Examples include Google, Microsoft, SurveyMonkey, and Typeform.

5 30-40% response rate is a win.

That's great! If you're under 20%, review the survey length, questions, audience, and approach.

6 Use the results and say thank you.

Organize, review, and discuss the results, then put them to work. Make sure to thank those who took the time to respond.

Grindstone Lake Foundation Saves Natural Treasure

By Cindy Parker, Grindstone Lake Foundation

In 2018, members of the Grindstone Lake Association gathered for their annual picnic and shared a common concern: what would happen if the 57-acre former cranberry bog on the lake's southwest shore was developed?

Rather than leave its future to chance, they took action! Early talks led to the creation of the Grindstone Lake Foundation, with a clear vision to protect more than a quarter mile (1,537 feet!) of natural shoreline, safeguard water quality, and create a community-supported nature area for everyone to enjoy.

Turning that vision into reality took an entire community. A generous benefactor provided the loan to purchase the property, while neighbors, lake residents, and supporters raised more than \$850,000 to repay it. The Foundation also secured a \$200,000 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Surface Water Land Acquisition Grant that permanently protects the land through a conservation easement, ensuring it will remain undeveloped.

What started as a discussion at a summer picnic became a conservation success story!

Snowshoeing along the lakefront trail is a great way to enjoy the Grindstone Lake Nature Reserve in the winter!

Nature Is Making a Comeback

Years of cranberry farming changed how water flowed across the property. As old agricultural infrastructure is removed, the land's natural hydrology will be restored, allowing native wetlands to return. Healthy wetlands naturally filter water, reduce runoff, provide wildlife habitat, and help keep Grindstone Lake healthy.

A True Community Effort

This project has been powered by volunteers at every step. Local fire departments safely burned deteriorating buildings, volunteers established trails, and the Foundation secured another Wisconsin DNR grant to begin planning the next phase of wetland restoration.

Today, the Grindstone Lake Nature Reserve is open to everyone. Whether you're walking the trails, watching birds along the shoreline, or simply enjoying the quiet beauty of Wisconsin's Northwoods, you're experiencing what can happen when a community comes together to protect a place it loves.

Now that's a legacy worth sharing! 🌱



CINDY PARKER

Did you know?

Those grassy trails weren't always trails! They were once berms separating cranberry beds. Today, they're becoming scenic walking paths where visitors can experience the beauty of the restored landscape.



Learn more about Grindstone Lake Association at grindstonelake.org

MIKE WARDEN

(Water Connects Us All, cont. from pg. 3)

You Make the Partnership work!

The Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership is not mandated by the legislature, nor is it a single organization with a dedicated funding source. It is a committed network of people who understand that we can accomplish more together than we can alone.

Being part of the Partnership can be as simple as sharing an article with your neighbor, attending a local lake or river group meeting, learning something new about a waterbody near you, volunteering locally, or helping someone else find the resources they need. It can mean joining a lake or river organization, participating in regional efforts, attending the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention, or lending your voice to statewide conversations about water. There is a place for everyone.

Wisconsin's waters connect us all. How will you help ensure they remain healthy, vibrant, and treasured for future generations? 💧

Get updates about the topics that interest you with GovDelivery.

Wisconsin DNR's GovDelivery service is a free digital notification platform that allows you to sign up for automated email or text message updates on specific topics, news releases, public hearings, and outdoor recreation notices. <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new>

Join a statewide nonprofit.



**WISCONSIN
LAKES**

wisconsinlakes.org



wisconsinrivers.org

Attend the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention April 14-16, 2027

2027 Theme: Water Connects Us All

Water weaves us together. It nourishes all life and creates places where communities gather, unite, and find common purpose. Protecting our waters is a shared responsibility that connects us to past and future generations. Keeping these waters healthy is the foundation of healthy communities. Save the date and join us at the Lakes and Rivers Convention next April.

wisconsinwaterweek.org

Friday Keynote

James Edward Mills

Mills is a freelance journalist and independent media producer who has worked in the outdoor industry for over 30 years. Learn more about his projects and perspective to help make sure our natural resources are available to everyone and conserved into the future.



NICK BEFARD



DEREK THORN

(Turn Education into Action cont. from pg. 7)

students training to become teachers are great partners.

- ◆ Will the education be online, in-person, or both? Details matter; describe how long each event will last, where it will take place, and how often.
- ◆ If your project includes an electronic component, how will you engage people with your content?

Build More Than a Project, Build Capacity

(Grant section: Capacity Focus)

Describe how your organization will develop or enhance partnerships while getting things done. Since capacity is a big area, decide how your activities will focus on strengthening membership, internal functions, external relationships, or programs. Explain how your activities

One event raises awareness. A series of experiences changes behaviors.

will improve the capacity area you choose to focus on and show how you will measure success. Pre- and post-surveys, participation numbers, or new partnerships can all help show your growth.

To learn more about specific tools to help strengthen capacity, visit the Extension Lakes website (uwsp.edu/lakes) where you can find a whole section focused on organizational capacity.

Turn Funding into Lasting Change

A strong grant proposal does more than check boxes. It shows how your project will move people from awareness to action. ◆



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

Lake Tides

800 Reserve Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Volume 51, No. 2
Fall 2026

Reflections

“Preserving, protecting, and restoring our waters are tasks for many lifetimes, and sometimes the effort can seem overwhelming. But as long as we stay connected with all of the many, many blessings that water provides, and continue to keep that love in the forefront of our minds and hearts, as long as we remind ourselves to hope, then our stories will help connect others to water and encourage them to do what they can to help care for this beautiful Blue Marble world.”

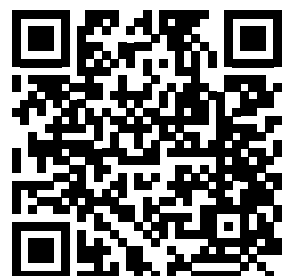
~ Wallace J. Nichols
Blue Mind

MAGGIE SANDERS



CAROL WATKINS

SUPPORT LAKE TIDES





Volume 2, Number 4

July 2026

In this issue...

[Surface Water Grant App for FY27](#) | [Celebrate WI Lake Stewards](#) | [Snapshot Day](#) | [Phenology Fun Fact](#) | [Healthy Lakes & Rivers - Native Plantings](#) | [Shoreline Living Magazine](#) | [Upcoming Events](#)

Surface Water Grants



"Dock on Spirit Lake" was taken by Joe Pyzyk on North Spirit Lake in Taylor County

Funding Available for Lake and River Projects

Looking to improve your lake through planning, education, restoration, or management? The Wisconsin DNR Surface Water Grants can help turn your ideas into action with cost-share funding for projects of all sizes. The [FY27 Applicant Guide and Program Guidance](#) is now available, along with a [recorded webinar for new and returning applicants](#).

If you're considering a management plan implementation grant, don't wait! Requests to determine eligibility must be submitted to [your local DNR lake, stream or AIS biologist](#) by Sept. 15 (preferably by email). [Download this example memo template](#) and use the provided text to streamline your eligibility request.

Key deadlines:

Sept. 15, 2026: Pre-applications due (11:59 PM)

Nov. 16, 2026: Final applications due (deadline extended because Nov. 15 falls on a Sunday)

Within the past season, the DNR has hired a new Surface Water Grant program manager, a new Lake and River program coordinator and has reassigned environmental grant specialist duties for some areas of the state. Please be sure to note the new contact information linked from the [Surface Water Grants webpage](#) and these [downloadable statewide maps](#).

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Celebrating Wisconsin Lake Stewards



2026 Lake Stewardship Award winners (L to R): James Brancel, Larry Bresina, Steve Johnson, Tom VanDenBogart, and Tim Asplund

The 2026 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Awards were presented this past spring at the annual Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point. These prestigious awards honor the extraordinary volunteer and professional efforts made to protect and improve lakes in Wisconsin. These awards represent our best collective effort to recognize and celebrate all the incredible work that goes into ensuring the future of our state's legacy of lakes.

For over three decades, we've been celebrating Wisconsin's outstanding lake stewards. In 2021, we updated the categories to reflect the important organizational work and projects of lake organizations and individuals. We want to recognize volunteers who are strengthening their community capacity with the goal of protecting and improving lake health. In addition, we include a category which allows us to recognize professionals who go above and beyond to increase organizational capacity for lake associations, districts, and lake communities in general.

This year's categories and winners are:

Programmatic Excellence for Lake Health

James Brancel, Spider Lake Association, Iron County

Excellence in Building Partnerships*

Steve Johnson, Fish Lake Property Owners Association, Burnett County

Excellence in Public Engagement*

Tom VanDenBogart, Protect Lake Beulah, Walworth County

Excellence in Professional Service

Tim Asplund, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Lifetime Achievement

Larry Bresina, Lakekit

** The winners of the starred awards are nominated to the North American Lake Management Society's corresponding award for national recognition.*

[Read about this year's winners on the Wisconsin Water Week website.](#)

[View a playlist of short videos celebrating each of the 2026 winners.](#)

Do you have local awards that honor groups or individuals making a difference for our lakes? Consider forwarding their nomination to the state level for the Lake Stewardship Awards!

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Join the 2026 Statewide Search for AIS



Save the date. Save our waters.

SNAPSHOT DAY

A statewide search for aquatic invasive species

Join the search on **August 8, 2026**

Registration opens June 1: wateractionvolunteers.org/events

Join the statewide search for aquatic invasive species!

Snapshot Day - August 8, 2026

Snapshot Day is a statewide, one-day event connecting volunteers, water lovers, and local conservation groups in a search for aquatic invasive species (AIS). You can help protect Wisconsin's rivers, lakes, and wetlands from these invasive plants and animals that may negatively impact habitat, wildlife, recreation and health. This event is coordinated in partnership with UW-Madison Division of Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, local partners, and YOU!

What You'll Do

You will meet at a local training site of your choosing, hosted by one of our local partners. After a short training on how to identify target aquatic invasive species and how to follow search protocols, volunteers will look for invasive species at critical monitoring sites, and potential invasive species will be verified and cataloged with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to guide species control and conservation management plans. This is a free event and no experience or special equipment is required.

This event is recommended for ages 8 and up; minors must be accompanied by an adult.

[Get more details and register for this free event on the Water Action Volunteers website.](https://wateractionvolunteers.org/events)

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Phenology Fun Fact



Click the image above to view an underwater video of bryozoans in the Wisconsin River near Stevens Point. Video by Paul Skawinski

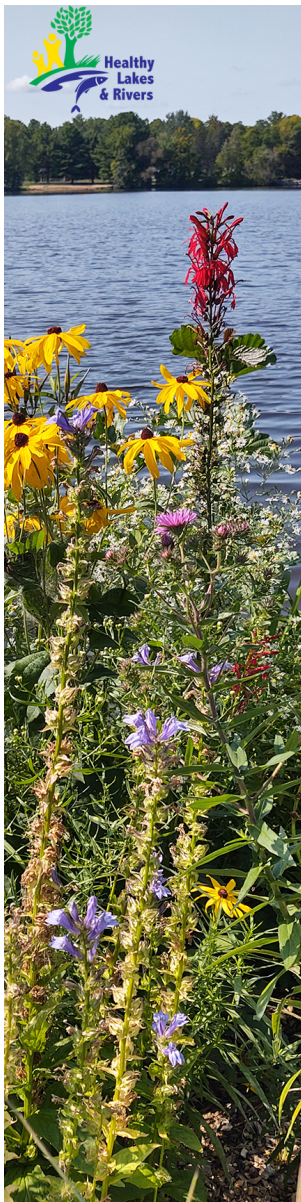
Dinosaur Eggs? Aliens? Nope, just Bryozoans!

In mid-summer, many people start to notice large, jelly-like masses attached to branches, dock legs, or vegetation in the water. These are no cause for concern - they're colonies of small animals called bryozoans. The most common type seen in Wisconsin is *Pectinatella magnifica*, also called the magnificent bryozoan due to its impressive size. The "jelly balls" are mostly composed of a watery gel, with tiny, filter-feeding animals attached around the outside of the ball. Each ball can grow as big as a basketball, but each individual, called a zooid, is only a fraction of an inch! The zooids reach out with a tiny comb-like structure to grab plankton traveling with the current. Bryozoan colonies look strange, but pose no threat to humans, pets, or lakes.

[View a cool underwater video of bryozoans in the Wisconsin River.](#)

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Healthy Lakes & Rivers - Native Shoreline Plantings



Take a Shoreline Stroll: Nature Has Some Tips

What do you see when you walk along your shoreline? This summer, take a stroll and picture the possibilities! Imagine a haven for butterflies, songbirds, and frogs - a swath of hard-working native plants that add beauty and privacy, and help protect your lake or river from polluted runoff.

The [Healthy Lakes & Rivers 350 ft² Shoreline Native Plantings best practice](#) is a simple way to improve wildlife habitat, natural beauty, and privacy, while decreasing runoff. Native plantings include grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees. There are six ready-made planting templates to best fit your property's sun exposure, soil type, and goals: from a vibrant bird/butterfly option to a shade loving woodland design. You can also have some fun and design your own native planting!

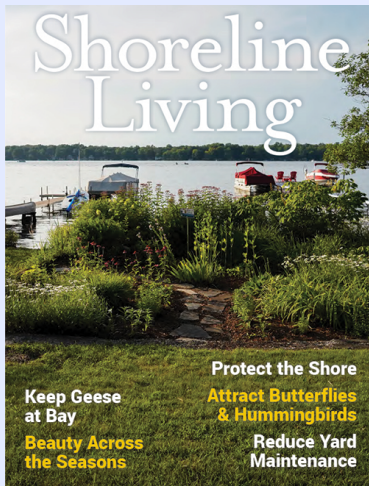
Not ready for a full planting? Start small and leave a patch of shoreline unmowed, skip the fertilizer, or create a cozy corner with native plants and natural habitat. [Check out this article with 10 free and simple ways to keep your shoreland property natural.](#)

There is even grant funding to help cover the cost of installing a Healthy Lakes & Rivers native planting project. Find out more about grants on the [Healthy Lakes & Rivers website](#), then invite your neighbors to join you.

Let's make Healthy Lakes & Rivers together!

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Get inspired with resources from our bookstore.



Shoreline Living Magazine

(Issue 1)

There's something magical about spending time at a lake, whether you're swimming, boating, fishing, or just sitting and listening to the lapping waves. There are simple steps property owners can take to keep their lakes clean and healthy for generations to come. *Shoreline Living* shares the examples of five property owners who have taken steps in their own way to do their part to care for the lake. From small steps on a relatively manicured property to an almost fully forested and natural landscape, the articles within feature the efforts of people just like you.

[Order now >>](#)



(Issue 2)

Seeing is believing! Help your neighbors see what their waterfront property can look like with beautiful shoreline plantings, raingardens, and more! Some folks may think planting native gardens will look like a bunch of weeds and make their property look unkempt, but sharing publications like the *Shoreline Living* magazine is one step we can take to easily present images and stories of how folks are taking action to make their waterfront properties more eye-appealing and a benefit to the lake and all its inhabitants. [Order now >>](#)

Upcoming Events

Shoreland Workshop for Landowners

July 23, 2026 | Boulder Junction

Designed primarily for landowners, this free workshop will look at best practices and restoration options, resources for new property owners and lake associations, and land protection options including conservation easements.

[Find all the details and register.](#)

Annual Open House - Center for Limnology Trout Lake Station

July 31, 2026 | UW-Trout Lake Station, Boulder Junction

Get a first-hand look at what research is going on at the station this summer, as well as meet the scientists and students conducting it.

[Get more details.](#)

Hearing for Invasive Species Rule (NR 40)

August 5, 2026 | Virtual

Wisconsin's invasive species rule, Wis. Admin. Code NR 40, makes it illegal to possess, transport, transfer or introduce certain invasive species in Wisconsin without a permit. This rule is being updated and **you have an opportunity to provide comments through**

August 7, 2026. There will be a hearing on August 5 at 5:00 PM. For more details go to the [DNR Invasive Species Rule - NR 40 webpage](#).

AIS Snapshot Day

August 8, 2026 | Statewide

[Get more details and register for this free event on the Water Action Volunteers website.](#)

Surface Water Grant Pre-application Deadline

September 15, 2026 | Statewide

[Get details in our main story.](#)

SAVE THE DATE - Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention

April 14-16, 2027 | Stevens Point

Save the date for next year's Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention. The 2027 theme is "Water Connects Us All."

[Keep an eye on the website for updates.](#)

View more events on the [Lakes & Rivers Partnership Event Calendar](#).

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[View past issues of Lake Ripples on the Extension Lakes website.](#)



Did this come to you from a friend? Subscribe [HERE](#).

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