



Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) News

P.O. Box 494 Eagle River, WI 54521-0494

Winter 2013

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Presidential Pebbles and Pearls

While our lakes rest under inches of ice and feet of snow, we recall our memories of a past summer of fun and pleasure—all brought to us compliments of Mother Nature. However, our lakes need us to be ever vigilant to ensure that we enjoy many more fun and pleasurable days on our county waters. As I mentioned in my fall letter to all VCLRA members, over the last year and a half, there were five more waterbodies identified with aquatic invasive species(AIS). None were discovered by lake residents. This is of great concern to VCLRA. Our best prevention plan to keep AIS out of our lakes is US—we who live on and use our lakes. We need to become knowledgeable about three or four species of plants and create a local plan to monitor our section of our lake. This, combined with other lake residents, will create a monitoring plan that will protect against invasive species getting a foothold. Early detection is easier and much cheaper to treat and control. There was never a time when our lakes were more vulnerable. We cannot become complacent and think that it is someone else's responsibility to take care of the lake. If you dip your toe or line in the water, it's your responsibility.

Contained in this newsletter is information on how to organize for AIS monitoring. An article by Ted Ritter, Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator will provide a place to start. In June, VCLRA will be holding our "Celebrating Lakes Day" and we will also be providing resources for how local lake residents can protect their lakes. USE US AND USE THE VILAS COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION OFFICE AS A RESOURCE!!! We can provide programs to educate lake residents on AIS and other lake-related issues. We can provide information on how to form a lake association or lake district.

The 35th Annual Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention is April 9-13 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. For information contact: www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/conventions.

Also, in this newsletter is a reminder that membership dues and information for 2013 are due. We work very hard to keep our database up-to-date. We know this is a struggle because lake associations and lake districts meet at different times and make changes in their officers and directors. Help us to keep you current with the latest updates from the county and Madison by forwarding any changes to us ASAP. Also, make your organization changes on the University of Wisconsin Extension Lake List (www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/lakelist/admincontact.asp).

Rollie Alger

VCLRA President



The UW Extension Lakes Webpage: An online resource for lake groups

By Quita Sheehan, Vilas County Conservation Specialist

People who work with lake groups have a treasure trove of information available to them all in one place. Whether you are putting together a newsletter or trying to contact another lake group, you can find help on the UW Extension – Lakes Program webpage. Check it out at <http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/>.

This website is the home of the Wisconsin Lake List, which is a directory of over 1,000 lake groups and businesses. If you are trying to connect with lake group officers and volunteers who have “been there, done that” this is where you will find their contact information. You can search for groups by name, by county, or even by management activity. If the information about your lake group is accurate and up to date, others can learn about projects you have been involved with or find lake-related businesses in your area. Check it out at <http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/lakelist/> to see if your lake group is on the list and the information is correct.

“People who work with lake groups have a treasure trove of information available to them all in one place.”

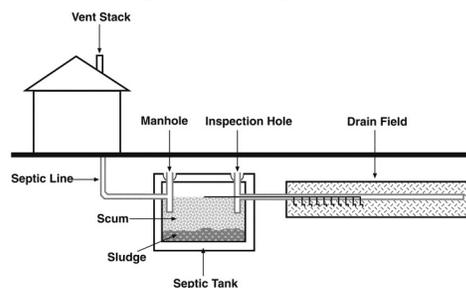
For those groups starting or maintaining a website the UW Extension-Lakes folks have created a great place to find technical information for webmasters. There are tutorials on designing and creating websites. There are links to search engines, downloads, and plug-ins. Once you have created a website there are resources for content. Check it out at <http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/editorscorner/web>

If you are a newsletter editor searching for useful and up to date content for your lake group’s newsletters, this site is your best friend. There are articles and photos that you can reprint on a range of topics from Lake Ecology to the Economics of Water. You can also find handouts and booklets from a variety of sources on topics as varied as septic system care to preparing Lake Grants. If you can’t find what you need on the webpage, you will find contact information for the wonderfully helpful UW Extension – Lakes staff. Check it out!

Vilas County Zoning Department Septic System Maintenance Program Update

On a recent visit to the Vilas County Zoning Department I was informed that the county has completed its inventory of all septic systems. There are approximately nine thousand systems in the county. The zoning department has been very proactive in completion of its septic system inventory, finishing it before the state required date in 2014. Also, the county has placed all county systems on a 3-year cycle. Approximately 3000 system owners will receive a postcard each year to

have their systems inspected and pumped if necessary. 2012 was the first year of the cycle. In 2014 the last 3000 systems will be inspected and pumped. This will complete the first septic system inspection cycle. Kudos to Dawn Schmidt and her staff in Vilas County Zoning for being proactive and completing the inventory and maintenance plan before mandated by the state.



Is early detection monitoring for invasive aquatic plants working in Vilas County?

Ted Ritter, Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator

It's been said that monitoring lakes for the early detection of invasive species, especially plants, is comparable in importance to early detection cancer screening. As a two time cancer survivor myself and a witness to both early and advanced stage Eurasian watermilfoil detections in Vilas County lakes, I can attest to the validity of the analogy. Better outcomes at lower costs can be achieved only if the invader is detected at an early stage, whether in humans or lakes.

Healthy living choices may reduce human chances of cancer, but they don't entirely eliminate the risk. Early detection screening is still important. The same is true with our lakes. Since AIS prevention efforts will never be 100 per cent effective, in-lake monitoring to achieve early detection in the event an invader sneaks in is absolutely critical.

The audience at the 2012 Vilas County AIS Partnership meeting in October learned that five area water bodies were added to the list of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) and Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) lakes during 2011 and 2012. None of those new invasive plant populations was found by volunteer citizen lake monitors. All were detected by "professional" invasive species monitors who happened to have chosen those waters for random "wellness checks". Such high quality inspections are always welcome, but come along too infrequently to be relied on as primary early detection monitoring sources.

The new AIS plant findings of the past two summers include:

2011/12 Vilas Co. Lakes with New Invasive Aquatic Plant Findings		
Water body	Species	Found by
Rice Creek & Island Lake of the Manitowish Waters Chain of lakes	CLP (25+ acres)	North Lakeland Discovery Center & subsequent volunteers
Kentuck Lake	EWM (17 acres)	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission & WDNR Early Detection Team
Anvil Lake	EWM (Scattered)	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
Big (Cisco Chain)	EWM (1+ acre)	Northland College & Invasive Species Control Coalition of Watersmeet, MI
Lac Vieux Desert	EWM (2+ acres)	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Comm. & Invasive Species Control Coalition of Watersmeet, MI

Continued on page 4

Is early detection monitoring for invasive aquatic plants working in Vilas County? Continued from page 3

Some of the questions raised by these findings:

- In how many more lakes are there invasive plant populations waiting to be discovered?
- Is effective citizen AIS monitoring unrealistic?
- Is citizen AIS monitoring ineffective?
- Are we comfortable with occasional monitoring by “professionals”?
- Have we become complacent?
- What can we do to improve early detection?

Subsequent discussion at the meeting revealed the follow early detection monitoring methods used by some lakes. None are the perfect solution for all, but perhaps one or more of the suggestions will prompt your lake organization to improve its chances of early detection:

- Assign specific shoreline areas to willing lake residents such that all of the shoreline is the responsibility of someone to monitor at least twice yearly. Monitoring needs to include from the water’s edge outward to a depth where no plants grow.
- Encourage all waterfront property owners to watch for new plant colonies and to pay attention to plant fragments that wash up on shorelines.
- Identify frequent visitors to the lake (i.e. anglers or other boaters) and solicit their help in monitoring. Floating invasive plant fragments can be an indication of a rooted population.

Conduct annual refresher workshops to help identify EWM and CLP. On water pontoon boat events are more effective and more appealing than classroom training.

Place artificial EWM or CLP plants in the lake and offer prizes for anyone who finds them or can accurately report their locations.

The risk of spread to uninfected lakes increases with each additional lake added to the list of local source waters. Not all lakes are equally susceptible to invasive plant explosive growth, but few are entirely immune. Knowing the degree of susceptibility of any given lake is far from an exact science. Wise lake management includes reasonable AIS prevention efforts including public education and watercraft inspections at boat landings.

Occasional “professional” monitoring by various environmental services or consultants will hopefully continue well into the future. So, I’ll repeat my challenge offered to the attendees of the AIS Partners meeting. In the event one of these monitoring services finds invasive plants in your lake, I hope you can respond by saying, “We know and we’re already dealing with it!” I urge all area lake organizations to evaluate their lake monitoring methods and consider implementing more stringent procedures in 2013 and beyond.

Vilas County water bodies known to contain EWM or CLP are listed below. Most populations are being actively managed while a few are presently regarded as benign or dormant (not considered eradicated) and being watched for expansive growth. **The cost to date of invasive plant management in these lakes is approaching \$2 million.**

Is early detection monitoring for invasive aquatic plants working in Vilas County? Continued from page 4

Vilas County water bodies known to contain EWM or CLP are listed below. Most populations are being actively managed while a few are presently regarded as benign or dormant (not considered eradicated) and being watched for expansive growth. **The cost to date of invasive plant management in these lakes is approaching \$2 million.**

Water body	Municipality	Plant
Anvil Lake	Washington	EWM
Arrowhead Lake	Arbor Vitae	EWM
Big Arbor Vitae Lake	Arbor Vitae	CLP
Big Lake (Cisco Chain)	Land O' Lakes	EWM
Big Sand Lake	Phelps	EWM
Boot Lake	Cloverland	EWM
Forest Lake	Land O' Lakes	EWM
Harris Lake	Winchester	CLP
Island Lake	Manitowish Waters	CLP
Johnson Lake	Arbor Vitae	CLP
Kentuck Lake	Phelps	CLP & EWM
Lac Vieux Desert	Phelps	CLP & EWM
Little Saint Germain Lake	Saint Germain	CLP & EWM
Long Lake	Phelps	EWM
Lower Eagle River Chain	Multiple	EWM
Mamie Lake (Cisco Chain)	Land O' Lakes	CLP
North & South Twin Lakes	Phelps	EWM
Rice Creek	Boulder Junction	CLP
Silver Lake	City of Eagle River	EWM
Upper Gresham Lake	Boulder Junction	EWM

Please contact me if I can be of assistance to your lake organization with invasive plant identification training or evaluation of your present or proposed early detection monitoring program.

Ted Ritter
 Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator
 330 Court Street
 Eagle River, WI 54521
 Office: 715-479-3738
 E-mail: teritt@co.vilas.wi.us

Spiny Water Flea By: Grace Ribbe 2012 5th grade Three Lakes Elementary School

The article below is the text of a speech written by Grace Ribbe, a 5th grader in the Three Lakes Elementary School. Grace entered the State Conservation speaking contest with the help of Oneida County Land and Water Conservation/UW Extension. Grace's speech won 1st place in Regional competition in Rhinelander, 1st place in Sectional competition in Wausau and Grace placed 2nd at State in Wisconsin Rapids. VCLRA would like to encourage Grace and other children to take an interest in lake health by printing Grace's speech. ———

When people hear the word flea they almost immediately envision a dog wildly scratching. I have had lots of dogs throughout my life and have experienced this plenty of times. What I never imagined was that my lake can get fleas, too. The flea that I am referring to is the spiny water flea. It is a small invasive species that is causing big damage to our lakes! The spiny water fleas are spiny little fleas. They are very bad to the aquatic environment.

The spiny water flea is a type of microscopic plankton. They are about four to six millimeters long when they are an adult. The spiny water flea is what the DNR call a pelagic creature. This means that it floats freely in the entire lake and don't necessarily stay just by the shore like a lot of other life on a lake do.

The flea is native to Europe and Asia. The spiny water flea came by ongoing ships to the U.S. The fleas started appearing in Wisconsin around 2003. They were first found in the Gile Flowage Lake in Iron County in 2003. They first started appearing in our great lakes then moved to lakes all over Wisconsin.

You may be wondering what these tiny creatures are doing to harm our precious lakes. Let me tell you, they may be small but they are capable of causing gigantic problems! The spiny water flea feeds on native zooplankton. Most of Northern Wisconsin's small fish also enjoy consuming native zooplankton. This may not seem like a huge problem, however there is not enough food for both.

The spiny water flea reproduce quickly causing its high population to disrupt the lake's food web. For one, small fish are starving due to a lack of food. Small fish (up to 10 centimeters long) try to ingest the spiny water flea to make up for the zooplankton. However, they can not probably digest the spine which causes them to die out. As the small fish population decreases due to lack of food so does the large fish population. Large fish no longer have the little fish to munch on.

As you can see eventually the entire aquatic food web is enormously disrupted by this tiny flea. Not to mention the impact that the decrease in the fish population has on our land and sky animals. When a lake has a healthy native zooplankton population, your algae population will more likely stay in check because those zooplankton are eating the algae. But if spiny water flea eat those zooplankton, there are fewer of them to eat the algae and water clarity is affected.

If the spiny water flea is not controlled it will continue to spread throughout our lakes. In Wisconsin, the spiny water fleas are becoming more threatening. Just a few weeks ago, the flea was reported in lake Escanaba in Vilas County! They are also in Lake Gogebic in Michigan's upper peninsula.

If this outbreak is not controlled soon our Northwoods will not be known as a great fishing retreat. If our fish population diminishes so will our tourist income. Also, if the spiny flea continues to pollute our water clarity no one will come to fish or swim! So I am asking you to help take care our beautiful lakes and aquatic creatures. Here is how...

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Spiny Water Flea Continued from pg. 6

By: Grace Ribbe 2012 5th grade Three Lakes Elementary School

I contacted Carol Warden from the Department of Natural Resources and asked for her suggestions to help remove this pest! The first solution is to inform people that the spiny water flea exists and has detrimental effects. The flea hitchhikes on boats, fishing equipment, and scuba gear. If it is not removed prior exiting the lake it will spread like mad! Our city can hold a class informing residents about its dangers. It could also hang information signs at boat landings to inform boaters like they done for other aquatic hitchhikers. The signs could explain the problem and solutions. These signs would include directions for how to create a fish saving mixture. The mixture is two tablespoons of bleach into one gallon of water. All equipment including the boat should be sprayed down to prevent spread. Also, draining the boat and all the containers holding fish or water from that certain lake will stop the spread. This includes the bilge and any other live wells. It is impossible to capture every spiny water flea says expert Carol Warden of the DNR, but we can help control the spread. Currently, The DNR uses nets to capture them so they can assess their population and the impacts they might have on other species in a lake.

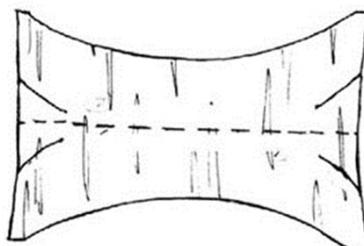
The last solution is if you care so much about your aquatic environment go yourself and tell your congressman to put up bans to help stop the spread. The problematic spiny water flea is destroying our aquatic environment and if it is not controlled, soon our lakes will be forever devastated. Spread the word about how to stop this invasive creature.

[correction: At the time Grace Ribbe gave her speech, Spiny Water Fleas were thought to be in Lake Escanaba. Later investigation found NO Spiny Water Fleas in Lake Escanaba]



Make a Miniature Birch bark Canoe

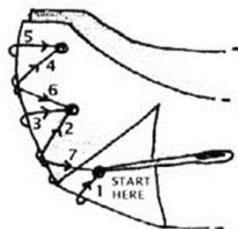
www.nativetech.org/



1. Cut out pattern in soaked bark with woody side intact.
2. Carefully cut slits as shown.
3. Bend [do not crease] in half (length wise) so woody side faces out.

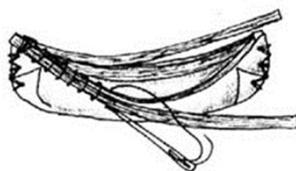


4. Pinch one end and fold up the small tab; repeat with other end.
5. Whip-stitch up and then down the seam on each end.



[make sure one stitch goes through the small tab].

6. Whip-stitch a small basket splint around the canoe rim (gunwale).



7. Spread center of canoe to a 1" diameter (so it will float).

Fill holes and cracks with waterproof glue or pitch so the canoe will float.

Current AIS Research Available Online

There is now a new tool available to see what is currently being researched in the world of AIS! We've created a catalogue where anyone can learn about research that is going on right now. You can search by location, agency, individual or species. Or you can browse through all the current research. Find this new tool at

http://cfllibrary.uwcfll.org/ais_projects

If you have any projects you would like added to the list or you need to update an existing project, contact AIS specialist Carol Warden of UW-Trout Lake at warden@wisc.edu or (715) 356-9494.

VILAS COUNTY LAKES and RIVERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 494 Eagle River,
WI 54521-0494



January 2013,

Dear Members of the Vilas County Lakes Association (VCLRA),

Since the VCLRA has January and May newsletters, I felt there are a few issues that we need to communicate to you to keep you up-to-date about lake issues in Vilas County.

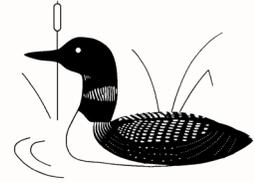
VCLRA sent a letter of support to Wisconsin Lakes for their partnership efforts with the WDNR to increase the funding for lake management planning and AIS treatment and control. Past state biennial budgets have contained \$4 million and the recommendation is to increase this to \$10 million. Suggested sources for generating revenues are also included. Some are increasing boat registration fees (resident and nonresident), boat trailer license fees, non-motorized boat registration, plus others.

The Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department held an evening workshop for lake district commissioners. It was well accepted and more than 40 individuals participated. There has been some discussion about hosting a similar workshop for town board members who also serve on lake district commissions within their township. VCLRA will co-host these workshops in the future with the Land and Water Conservation Department.

At the Vilas County AIS Coordinators annual meeting on October 16th, it was learned that in the last year and a half **five additional lakes have confirmed the presence of AIS**. These are Rice Creek (curly leaf pondweed), Kentuck Lake (eurasian water milfoil), Lac Vieux Desert (eurasian water milfoil & curly leaf pondweed), Big Lake on the Cisco Chain (eurasian water milfoil) and Anvil Lake (eurasian water milfoil). The disturbing thing about these new outbreaks is that none of them were identified by local lake organizations or lake residents. All of the above lake have either lake associations or are lake districts.

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VILAS COUNTY LAKES and RIVERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 494 Eagle River,
WI 54521-0494



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Three of the outbreaks were discovered by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) which inspects lakes within the ceded territory every 5-10 years. One of the outbreaks was discovered by the ISCCW and Northland College and the other outbreak was discovered by North Lakeland Discovery Center and volunteers. This is troubling because all but one of the discoveries were accidental. While many lakes (some with and some without AIS infestations) have implemented early AIS detection and monitoring teams, most have not. We must become more vigilant to prevent the spread of AIS and subsequent degradation of our lakes. For more information about these teams, contact Ted Ritter (Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator (715-479-3738) or VCLRA (715-545-2711).

While there are many challenges to maintaining our lakes, there are also many great things happening on our lakes. VCLRA would like to share these success stories with all our members in Vilas County. If you have such a story, please mail or email a summary of the information to me (Rollie Alger, 3055 Kentuck Lake Rd., Phelps, WI 54554; alger427@yahoo.com) and I will see that it gets in one of our future newsletters. I would also invite representatives from your lake to one of our VCLRA board meetings to share your story.

Do you need a speaker for an upcoming lake association or lake district meeting? Let me know. VCLRA has many contacts at the local and state level to provide you with a lake-related presentation.

Did you know that Vilas County, with its 1400+ lakes, is only one of three places in the world with such a concentration of glacial freshwater lakes? We are unique and it behooves us to work together to protect our lakes.

Regards,

Rollie Alger

Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association

Preserving, protecting and enhancing our Vilas County lakes
and waterways for present and future generations

VCLRA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL - 2013

To apply for membership in **Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association**, please submit **annual dues payment before June 1st**. Every individual, family, supporting, or lake organization board member will receive the VCLRA newsletter. Please make checks payable to **VILAS COUNTY LAKES and RIVERS ASSOCIATION (VCLRA)** and return, with completed form, to **VCLRA; P. O. Box 494; Eagle River, WI 54521-0494**.

Please check which type of membership you are applying or renewing:

Individual/Family \$25 **Lake Organization \$50** **Associate/Supporting \$75**

Provide permanent mailing address of Individual, Family or Supporting Memberships. Individual members will automatically be Key Contacts, if they have email. Lake associations and districts please indicate the name/address of a **Key Contact person, an officer or board member with email**. **Key Contacts are used for quickly transmitting pertinent or time sensitive information such as legislative updates or call-to-actions.** For **Individual, Family and Associate/Supporting Memberships**, please complete Section A only and note your lake of residence and indicate if a lake association is established and its number of members. If you do not have email or do not wish to receive occasional Key Contact information, check here [].

For **Lake Organization Memberships**, complete Sections A & B below.

Section A: PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY—Thank you. * If you wish to receive our newsletter via email, Check (x) in the box after email address.

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ fax _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ e-mail* _____ ()

Name of Lake Organization: _____

Number of individuals represented by your lake organization: _____

If you are applying or renewing a Lake Organization Membership, please submit the names and addresses of your organization officers and board of directors/commissioners. Each officer, director/commissioner will receive the newsletter. **If an officer/director/commissioner is the same as last year, and has no information changes, please enter "NC" for no change after their name. Please return by June 1st.**

Section B: PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY—Thank you.

President/Chairman
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
e-mail _____ ()

Vice-President
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
e-mail _____ ()

Secretary
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
e-mail _____ ()

Treasurer
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
e-mail _____ ()

Director/Commissioner
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____
e-mail _____ ()

Director/Commissioner
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
e-mail _____ ()

Place the names of additional Directors/Commissioners on a separate sheet. Thank you.

Vilas County Lake Level Monitoring Program

**Anne Kretschmann, Water Specialist,
North Lakeland Discovery Center**

Historical data indicate that surface water levels in northern Wisconsin are fluctuating more now than they did in the recent past. In the northern highland lake district of Vilas County, concern about record low lake levels in 2008 spurred local citizens and lake associations to form a lake level monitoring network comprised of citizen scientists. The network is administered by the North Lakeland Discovery Center (NLDC). With technical guidance from limnologists at UW-Madison Trout Lake Research Station and NLDC, citizen scientists installed geographic benchmarks and staff gauges on area lakes. This program is the first of its kind in Wisconsin to utilize citizen scientists to collect lake level data.

Each spring, staff gauges are installed and referenced to fixed benchmarks after ice off by NLDC and dedicated volunteers. Volunteers read and record staff gauges on a weekly basis during the ice-free season; and maintain log books recording lake levels to the nearest 0.5 cm. At the end of the season, before ice on, gauges are removed and log books are collected by the NLDC coordinator. Data is compiled and submitted to a

statewide information database management system, Wisconsin Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) through data entry screens developed through collaboration with the NLDC and based on records collected by this project.

The retention rate for lake volunteers has been 100% over the five years since inception, and the program has expanded from

four lakes in 2008 to thirty-three lakes in 2012.

The NLDC stresses the importance of long-term monitoring and the

commitment that such monitoring takes. The volunteers recognize this importance and have fulfilled their monitoring commitments on an annual basis. All participating volunteers receive a summary report at the end of the year, and, if requested, a graph that is updated monthly. Local interest and participation are high, perhaps due to the value that citizens place on lakes and the concern that they have about declining water levels and long-term trends.

For more information:
anne@discoverycenter.net



Mark your Calendar

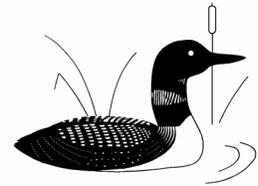
April 9-11, 2013; Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Green Bay

June 14, 2013; VCLRA Celebrating Lakes Day at Conserve School, Land O Lakes WI
Keynote Speaker Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation management Challenges; Deerskin River Study; Black Oak Lake Monitoring; Exchange ideas with other lake leaders; Educational exhibits; Recognition of lake conservation;

And more....

More information will be provided in the spring newsletter. Contact Clyde (715 479 7032 or owensacres@gmail.com or Rollie (715 545 2711 or alger427@yahoo.com) with any questions or requests.

JOIN VCLRA TODAY! See membership form inside this issue or
Please go to our website and download the membership form
<http://www.vcla.us/home/membership>



Lake County Journal

Volume 19 Issue 1 Winter 2013

Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association, Inc.

PO Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521

Website: www.vcla.us

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