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Visit us at: [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) SPRING 2019



## President's Welcome CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

As we finally see signs that summer is returning to the Northwoods and look forward to a new season of recreation and enjoyment of our lakes, rivers and streams, it's worth remembering that the beauty and vitality of our natural waters is a truly special blessing of nature. We take for granted the pristine quality and recreational value of our more than 1300 lakes, more lakes than in any other county in Wisconsin, but our situation is more the exception than the rule.

According to US government studies, nearly half of our nation's rivers and streams and more than one-third of our lakes are polluted and unfit for swimming, fishing, and drinking. That is the reality elsewhere, and why the efforts of VCLRA and our partner lake organizations to sustainably preserve, protect and enhance our natural waters is so vital.

In fact, this year marks our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization. We are very proud of our history of active involvement in protecting and preserving the magnificence of our many lakes and waterways. We firmly believe the natural beauty and vitality of our natural waters are closely linked to not only healthy environments, but also healthy economies as well. In fact, our lakes and rivers are the backbone of our tourist economy, which according to state estimates is worth nearly \$300 million in total economic impact annually to Vilas County. Statewide, our 15000 lakes are the centerpiece of tourism worth \$21 billion of economic impact annually.

Part of our effort to preserve our natural waters for future generations is to encourage youth to discover and protect our natural world. We are thus excited to award a competitive scholarship each year to a local high school senior meeting our scholarship program requirements. This year we are pleased to recognize Northland Pines High School senior Noah Miller as our 2019 VCLRA scholarship award recipient.

We are also happy to announce we have been awarded a grant to help acquire a dissolved oxygen meter, a key piece of lake and river monitoring equipment, which will be available for use by lake organizations in our county. We also will be providing support to Vilas Land & Water Conservation for their river planning grant to perform an inventory of roadway culverts in Vilas and investigate their function. Poorly functioning culverts may cause water level problems on lakes and streams, exacerbate flooding issue, impede fish passage/disrupt naturally reproducing populations, or create soil erosion and sedimentation into nearby streams, decreasing water quality, hence this is an important effort to protect our natural waters.

At the North Central Counties Lake Associations Conference to be held on July 12, 2019, VCLRA will present its annual Blue Heron Stewardship Awards to recognize lake property owners who champion strong lake stewardship principles in the development and use of their waterfront property to minimize environmental impacts. We will also be holding our annual meeting at the workshop. I invite each of you to attend this valuable annual event, which highlights legislative developments, research, lake initiatives and best practices for protecting our lakes. There will be a number of exhibitors plus great opportunities to network and share experiences with other lake enthusiasts, which last year represented 6 different counties in the state.

Finally, as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we have rolled out a new website ([vclra.org](http://vclra.org)) to help us improve member, partner, and public engagement and information sharing.

Read more about these and other stories inside. And don't forget to join or renew your VCLRA membership. All of our work is funded by generous donations, public grants and support from our member families and lake organizations. Get involved and be part of a dynamic community working to preserve our beautiful lake and river heritage. Together, we're making a difference!



**Tom Ewing**  
VCLRA president

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VCLRA is a 501c3 non-profit lake conservation and education organization. Our mission is to sustainably preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and rivers for the benefit of all. We accomplish our mission by working with partner and supporting member families and lake organizations to foster informed and engaged communities committed to the welfare of our lake and river heritage.

## Blue Heron Stewardship Award Nominations Now Open

### BLUE HERON



#### Shoreland Stewardship Award Program

Do you know someone who makes a conscious effort to preserve an outstanding natural shoreline?

We want to recognize them for their effort! The Blue Heron Award was created for exactly this reason.

It also creates awareness, educate lake property owners on the importance of shoreland stewardship, and showcases good examples of lake-friendly water-front development.

Deadline for submissions is June 21, 2019.

To nominate someone, please visit our website: <https://vclra.org/blue-heron-shoreline-stewardship-award-program/>

## Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department is the proud new owner of a DNR River Grant!

By Carolyn Scholl, Director

In recent years', the Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department has been working on prioritizing our workload and identifying areas around the county that we could focus our conservation efforts. As part of this larger project, we decided that taking a closer look at our road crossings and culverts for their overall "health" status wouldn't be such a bad idea because the functions of stream crossings are so vital to water quality!

Stream crossings, when properly constructed and working as they should, will allow stormwater runoff to flow freely and allow sediment, debris, fish, and wildlife to pass unencumbered beneath our travel infrastructure. If the crossings in Vilas County are in disrepair or have been improperly placed or sized, constrictions of these areas may ensue and multiple problems could result. Some of the issues could become dire for the health of lakes and rivers.

The first phase of the project will begin during the summer of 2019 in only a few areas of the county. We want to inventory stream crossings and identify those that may need some attention or repair. A few examples of the data we will collect include: soil stability (erosion) around the crossing, identify barriers to water flow, placement / size of a culvert, condition of the culvert. Once we have collected some of this information, the plan is to then hold a technical training workshop for interested citizens, municipalities, and tribal government to learn more about proper design of road crossings.

We want to thank the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association for their support of this very important water quality project!

## VCLRA Membership Benefits

VCLRA is an informational education network that helps lake associations and individual citizens make wise decisions in their effort to preserve and protect the unique waterways of Vilas County, now and well into the future. From its inception, VCLRA has established and maintained strong cooperative relationships with the Wisconsin DNR, UW Extension, and Vilas County government. With the help of these partnerships, VCLRA is able to provide benefits to lake association members and individuals who do not have lake associations.

VCLRA provides the following to its member associations and individuals:

- Providing information and assistance on lake related problems and issues,
- Sponsoring and participating in educational programs,
- Providing yearly Blue Heron Awards for recognition of individual property owners' shoreline stewardship,
- Publishing newsletters for our membership,
- Developing Shoreline Covenant Program for property owners,
- Organize a yearly Lakes Day symposium for our members and partners to strengthen their partnerships and gain new knowledge,
- Helping in the formation of new lake associations,
- Assisting with direction to or interaction with partner agencies,
- Assisting with grant applications when an association may not qualify,
- And monitoring state and county government activities.

VCLRA is a constructive citizen group that has earned the respect of the local and state community. We encourage you to contact us with questions, concerns, or ideas. We will answer them to the best of our ability, or direct you to someone who can.

The purpose of the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association is to educate, communicate, and promote cooperation among organizations, individuals, governmental bodies and the general public of Vilas county; and to preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and waterways for present and future generations

*Anne Kretschmann*

Treasurer





# Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

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

## Type of Membership:

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

## Section A: Individual/Family or Associate/Supporting Membership

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wish to receive newsletter via email? Yes No  
 Wish to receive occasional email alerts on lake issues? Yes No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Lake Organization (if established): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other affiliation (i.e. town chairman, county commissioner, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B: Lake Organization (Lake Associations and Districts) Membership

Please submit the names and contact information of organization officers/ board of directors/commissioners, each will receive the VCLRA newsletter. If person and contact information is the same as prior year write "NC" after name. Please indicate a **Key Contact Person**, ideally with email, this is used occasionally when legislative updates or call-to-actions occur.

Lake organization name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approximate number of individuals represented by lake organization \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach additional  
board members, directors,  
or commissioners, if needed.

### President/Chairman

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email? Yes No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues? Yes No  
 Key Contact Person? Yes No

### Secretary

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email? Yes No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues? Yes No  
 Key Contact Person? Yes No

### Vice-President

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email? Yes No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues? Yes No  
 Key Contact Person? Yes No

### Treasurer

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email? Yes No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues? Yes No  
 Key Contact Person? Yes No

Please make checks payable to: Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA)  
 Return completed form with annual dues before **June 1st** to: VCLRA; PO Box 494; Eagle River, WI 54521

# Local Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association Scholarship



Noah Miller of Northland Pines High School in Eagle River is awarded the 2019 VCLRA Scholarship. The award was made by VCLRA president Tom Ewing at the Northland Pines High School Scholarship and Awards Night on May 6, 2019.

The Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) was excited to award its annual senior scholarship to Northland Pines High School student, Noah Miller. The purpose of VCLRA is to educate, communicate, and promote cooperation among organizations, individuals, governmental bodies and the general public of Vilas County; and to preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and waterways for present and future generations. The annual VCLRA scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior and Vilas County resident aspiring to make a positive difference in the world by choosing to further their education in natural resources or a related field.

The 2019 scholarship winner stated that “my goal for the future is to use my leadership skills and my powerful voice to inspire others, fight for the protection of earth’s natural resources and public lands, and to do whatever it takes to implant the true importance of environmental sustainability into the minds of the American people so that future generations will get to experience the life-changing beauty that this earth truly does have to offer. My passion for the environment started on the water... I cannot thank our waters of Northern Wisconsin enough for shaping my world and allowing me to realize that something as simple as water can leave the biggest mark on one’s self and their community.”

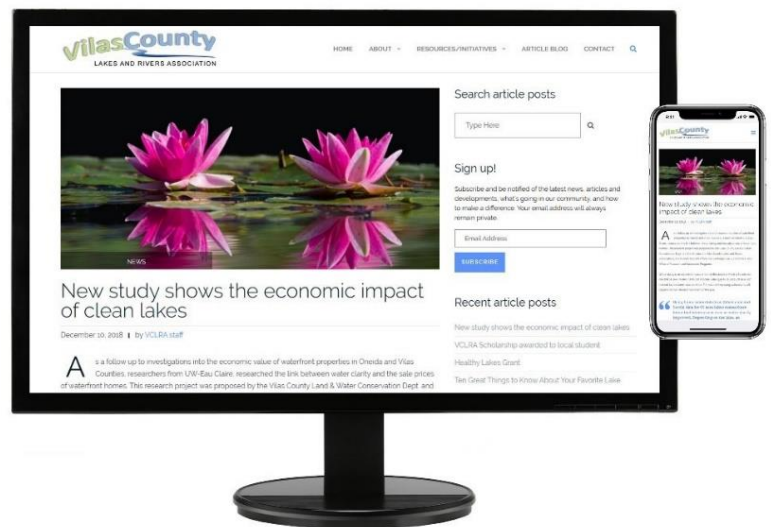
VCLRA is excited to contribute to Noah Miller’s journey to discover and protect our natural world. Scholarship applications for the 2020 VCLRA grant cycle must be postmarked by March 15, 2020. For scholarship application or to learn more about VCLRA please visit our website: [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org).

## New VCLRA Website

VCLRA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with a focus on advocacy, education, and conservation to foster engaged and informed communities committed to the welfare of our lakes and rivers. Communications plays a central role in achieving these goals, and web technology has advanced considerably in recent years to support this function in a very cost-effective manner. Growth in smartphone and social media usage is driving how people increasingly seek and act on information, and web technology has adapted accordingly. Mobile phone now accounts for approximately half of web traffic worldwide, which makes it important for websites to accommodate the wide range of possible display types. Website integration with social media is another key requirement for modern websites. At the same time, information security is of growing importance to provide a safe online experience.

As part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, VCLRA has rolled out a new website with advanced features to help us improve member, partner, and public engagement and information sharing. It uses SSL certificate security to establish an encrypted connection between a browser or user's computer and our website, such as used for online shopping and banking. This will allow us to safely and securely add online membership in the future. The responsive architecture works with all modern browsers and content dynamically adapts to any size device, to display optimally on large desktop displays to smaller smartphones (see figure below).

The new VCLRA website also has a built-in database for article content management (blog-based system) and integrates effectively with social media, allowing visitors to our site to subscribe to articles (be notified of new articles) and share content on our site with their friends on social media, which in turn drives additional traffic to our site. This will help us better share useful information and engage the widest community possible. We also hope our member and partner organizations will contribute articles to share their best practices and experiences with others as guest bloggers.



Since we have become a 501c3 nonprofit organization, we have acquired the [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) domain, but our old web address [www.vclra.us](http://www.vclra.us) will still work and automatically redirect to our new web address. Give our new site a try and let us know what you think!



## DID YOU KNOW? Dissolved Oxygen Meter



**Did you know there are meters that measure temperature and dissolved oxygen (DO) stationed around Vilas County for the public to use and learn more about their lakes?**

VCLRA was awarded a WDNR grant to purchase a new YSI Model 626650 ProSolo Optical Dissolved Oxygen and Conductivity Meter. This is YSI's most advanced optical dissolved oxygen field meter. It is paired with the ProDIGITAL ODO/CT (Optical Dissolved Oxygen, Conductivity, and Temperature) probe. These devices are an important piece of lake and river monitoring equipment. The device will be available for use by lake organizations in our county.

According to Sandy Wickman, WDNR is working to have good quality data in the SWIMS database that can be used to make management decisions, be used in research and be trusted.

Unfortunately, there are meters in use that are not being maintained properly. In such cases, the data may be suspect.

Al Wirt will calibrate and maintain the new meter acquired by VCLRA. There will be a one page "how-to" guide for users of the new meter so volunteers will know how to use the meter to get useful results. According to Sandy, these new handhelds are very easy to use and the one page guide should be sufficient. Al Wirt will get the meter ready for use and house it at the DNR office in Woodruff. Al will also be responsible for checking the meter out and for calibration and maintenance of the new meter. We are also fortunate to have the expertise of Jim Klosiewski at the DNR to help with prepping the new device.

Vilas County resident Bob Barofsky had this to say about what a wonderful resource this is.

"Throughout the many years as Citizens Lake Monitoring Network volunteers on Presque Isle Lake we have not measured dissolved oxygen. The Presque Isle Lake Association purchased an electronic DO meter many years ago. Our meter was meant to facilitate a quick and easy method to measure dissolved oxygen. Unfortunately, this was not so. This meter was found to be difficult to calibrate, unreliable and fragile. Lake associations now have available on loan from the DNR Woodruff Station a new piece of modern technology that easily measures temperature and dissolved oxygen. We are looking forward to using the new meter. There is an additional benefit to fisherman when they understand the analysis of the lake's DO levels. Fish habitat and movement have a direct relationship to this data."

Locations and contacts for meters around Vilas County include:

**Woodruff DNR Station:** Al Wirt  
715-365-8905 [alan.wirt@wisconsin.gov](mailto:alan.wirt@wisconsin.gov)

**Vilas County Land and Water Dept. in Eagle River Courthouse:** Carolyn Scholl  
715-479-3682 [cascho@vilascountywi.gov](mailto:cascho@vilascountywi.gov)

**Phelps Library:** Rollie Alger  
715-367-1347 [alger427@yahoo.com](mailto:alger427@yahoo.com)



## North Central Counties Lake Associations Conference -- Clean Waters: Our Mission/Our Legacy

### A workshop for Northern Wisconsin Lake Group Leaders and Members

**Friday July 12, 2019      -    9:00 a.m. to Noon**  
Lakeside Center - Nicolet College, Rhinelander

### ***AGENDA***

9:00	Welcome	<i>Steve Budnik, Workshop Planning Committee and past president of VCLRA</i>
9:05	Updates	<i>Mike Engleson, Executive Director - Wisconsin Lakes Dave Noel, County Economic Studies Bob Martini, Board of Directors - WI Green Fire</i>
9:40	Shoreland Buffers	<i>Patrick Goggin, Lakes Specialist - UW-EX Lakes</i>
10:15	<u>Break</u>	
10:30	Announcements	
10:35	Northwoods Fishery Study	<i>Dane Whittaker, Graduate Assistant - ASU</i>
10:50	Comment Session Introduction Discussion/Feedback	<i>Patrick Goggin, UW-EX Lakes, Moderator Attendees</i>
11:30	County-wide meetings	<i>VCLRA and OCLRA (Break-out rooms will be provided.)</i>
12:30	Adjourn	

### **A joint initiative of:**

Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association - [www.oclra.org](http://www.oclra.org)  
Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association - [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org)

# Mark your Calendar

**June 24, 2019** VCLRA Board Meeting. @ Trout Lake Station @ 9am.

**July 12, 2019** (other details TBD) North Central Counties Lake Associations Conference  
@ Nicolet College Rhinelander, WI. Check our website, or contact TomEwing, [president@vclra.us](mailto:president@vclra.us), for more information.

**June 15, 2019** Lakes Fest in Lac du Flambeau, WI. Contact Celeste Hockings @ 715-588-4163/Chockings@ldftribe.com for more information.

## Join VCLRA Today! Forget to Renew?

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) and print the membership form.

**Your support helps protect our lakes and rivers!**



A membership renewal form  
Benefits of Membership Summary  
Blue Heron Stewardship Award Information  
NEW VCLRA Website Rollout  
VCLRA Scholarship Information  
Other Lakes Related Information

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Website: [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org)

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