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SPRING 2020

## President's Welcome

The coronavirus (Covid-19) has created an unprecedented global health and economic crisis. In this moment in time, we have in common with all other people on our planet the same fear, anxiety and stress over its impacts on the health of our family and friends, as well as its consequences for our society and economy.

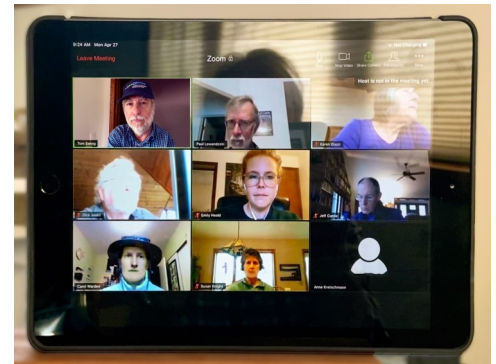
Yet I look out the window and see an entirely peaceful and calming scene, seemingly detached from the human toll worldwide. It is amazing to look at our lakes and their natural surroundings and see that the natural world does not appear to have noticed our crisis or been impacted at all. Well, the skies are maybe a little clearer.

Nature is the essential healer — a source of beauty, wonder, and inspiration. As nature remains there for us, our advocacy for nature is more important than ever.

Our board continues to work remotely on the issues that are so important to our lake community. We, like many others, are holding our meetings by video conferencing to stay safe while pressing on. We are following na-

tional, state and county guidelines to postpone gatherings and are looking for ways to create digital learning experiences for our programs (like our July multi-county annual meeting). We are also working with our collaborators and partners to ensure that our region's natural waters continue to be protected, preserved, and when possible, enjoyed.

As we collectively work our way through this worldwide pandemic, it is easy to forget how important our lakes and rivers are to our lives. But as advocates for our lake and river heritage, we understand that this is a crucial time to share that the health of our environment and our economy is closely linked to the natural beauty and vitality of our lakes and rivers.



VCLRA holds a board meeting by Zoom.

Please note that we depend on membership dues and contributions to support our work, and hope that you will continue your support by joining, renewing or making a (tax-deductible) contribution. This can all be done via our website now (vclra.org) by credit card, with an option to pay by check.

Stay well and safe – take care of yourself and each other. And enjoy our lakes and rivers responsibly!



Tom Ewing  
VCLRA president

# Our Vision and Mission

**We believe that the health of our environment and economy is closely linked to the natural beauty and vitality of our lakes and rivers.**

That’s what drives our vision of a future where our natural waters are protected and cherished for the high quality of life they provide.

Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) is a 501c3 non-profit lake conservation and education organization. For 25 years our mission has been to sustainably preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and rivers for the benefit of all.

Working with partner and supporting member families and lake organizations, we focus on advocacy, education, and conservation to foster engaged and informed communities committed to the welfare of our lake and river heritage.

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## Blue Heron Stewardship Award



Bob and Pat Barafsky accepting the Blue Heron Award on behalf of the Town of Presque Isle

The Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) has awarded our BLUE HERON Shoreland Stewardship Award to The Town of Presque Isle for restoration completed at Wilderness Park on Presque Isle Lake. This award was presented at our “Celebrate the Lakes Day” on July 12, 2019 at Nicolet College in Rhinelander. Congratulations to The Town of Presque Isle!

Do you know someone who makes a conscious effort to preserve an outstanding natural shoreline? The Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) want to recognize them for their effort! The Blue Heron Award was created for exactly this reason. This award creates awareness, educates lake property owners on the importance of shoreland stewardship, and showcases good examples of lake-friendly waterfront development.

This award was established for a threefold purpose; first to provide lake associations with the opportunity to nominate and recognize property owners on their lakes who have worked hard to maintain their shoreline property in a more natural state with minimal environmental impacts. Second, to inform lake property owners about the many ways that adverse impacts of shoreline property development can be minimized. And third, to educate lake property owners about how important shoreline health is to the overall health of their lake.

To nominate someone and to find more information about the Blue Heron Shoreline Stewardship Award, visit the VCLRA website at [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org) and click on the “Blue Heron Shoreline Stewardship Award Program” tab or contact us at VCLRA, P.O. Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521.



## Join VCLRA or renew your membership today

and help keep our lakes clean and beautiful. VCLRA is a 501c3 non-profit lake conservation and education organization. All of our work is funded by generous donations, public grants and support from our member families and lake organizations.

**We can't accomplish our mission without you!**

Be part of a dynamic community working to preserve our beautiful lake and river heritage — working together, we're making a difference.



**Now Join, renew, or donate online at**

**[vclra.org](https://vclra.org)**

## 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

# NOW Join or Renew Online by Credit Card



## 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

#### 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

#### 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

#### 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

## Nathan Krause awarded 2020 VCLRA scholarship

By Susan Knight, VCLRA Board

Congratulations to Nathan Krause, the 2020 winner of the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers (VCLRA) 2020 Scholarship Award! VCLRA awards a scholarship each year to a local high schooler who plans to continue their education in natural resources.

Upon graduating from Northland Pines High School, Nathan will start at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in fall 2020 to begin his studies in fisheries and aquatic sciences. The award committee was impressed with Nathan's dedication to northern Wisconsin's natural resources, and especially our lakes. He is a passionate angler, on ice and open water, and is especially fond of fishing his home lake, Sugar Maple Lake in Phelps.



Nathan has dedicated many hours to volunteer activities, including working with the Three Bears Sled Dogs races in Land O' Lakes, working with his school to help with yard work for their Eagle River neighbors in honor of Earth Day, and helping clean up at the Boulder Junction Shooting Range. He works hard helping boaters at the Cisco Chain Marina and works as a mechanic for his family's business, Brian's Snowmobile Rentals.


One of Nathan's goals in studying fisheries and aquatic sciences is to try to solve the problem of Eurasian water milfoil in Wisconsin lakes. He recognizes this issue can affect property values and is a nuisance to recreation. He plans to work to reduce its spread and find new methods to eliminate it without harming native plants.



## This year's six-county lakes annual meeting goes virtual

Lake advocates and lake lovers from six northern Wisconsin counties are invited to an online discussion of issues related to lake quality and best lake property management practices on Friday, July 10. The live discussion, from 9 a.m. to noon, will explore ways to encourage lake property owners to follow lake-friendly and environmentally responsible practices. Speakers will emphasize outreach to property owners as a way to advance natural shorelines and water-quality protection. Participants are expected from Oneida, Vilas, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Iron counties, and from outside the area.

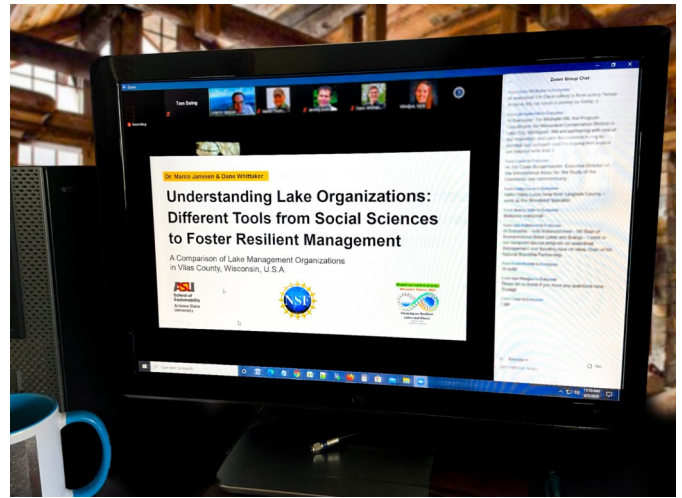
These annual meetings held jointly by Vilas and Oneida County Lake Associations have been held as in-person events for many years. However, this year as a safety measure due to Corvid-19, we plan to host the event as a live video-conference meeting using the same format as recently deployed successfully for the Wisconsin Lakes. We hope the online format will open the discussion to a larger audience than usual, since people can easily participate without the need to travel.

The event is jointly sponsored by Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association (OCLRA) ([ocla.org](http://ocla.org)) and the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association ([vclra.org](http://vclra.org)). The agenda and speaker program are under development. Further updates on this event will be posted on the [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) website, or contact Bob Martini, (OCLRA), [bobmartini@charter.net](mailto:bobmartini@charter.net) or Steve Budnik (VCLRA), [skbudnik@centurytel.net](mailto:skbudnik@centurytel.net) . 

## 2020 Wisconsin Lakes Convention

By Emily Heald, VCLRA Board

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year's Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention was moved to an entirely online format. Despite the inability to network and have face-to-face contact with other water-loving individuals, the planning committee did an excellent job at providing bountiful learning opportunities that did manage to have interactive components. The convention utilized the online platform Zoom to livestream presentations, which allowed attendees to ask questions in real-time via the chat box.



The theme of the convention was “Focusing on Resilient Lakes and Rivers.” The two keynote speakers, Dr. Douglas Bears and Lauren Salvato, both focused on resiliency. Dr. Beard discussed the topic more broadly, and Ms. Salvato used specific examples of resiliency in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. Many of the presenters within the specific stream topics also focused on resiliency as it related to their presentation topics. In the digital production showcased prior to the first keynote speaker, attendees were informed of the definition of resiliency – the ability of a system to deal with changes and continue to thrive. There are seven principles of resiliency, including: maintenance of diversity, connectivity, managing slow variables and feedback (reducing nutrient pollution), fostering complex adaptive systems thinking (accepting unpredictability, increasing capacity in groups), encouragement of learning, broadening of participation, and promotion of polycentric governance. The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership is truly an example of resiliency in action, as it brings together many governing bodies to interact and achieve collective action. The partnership is robust because many groups are operating at different scales simultaneously.

The stream topics included: Basic of Lakes and Rivers, Year of Clean Drinking Water and Water Quality, People and Policy: Actions and Updates, Ecology: Life In and Around Our Waters, Lake and River Science, Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Lakes and Rivers, and Monitoring to Action: Stories from the Field. Each stream was filled with inspiring and informative content on research, management, and group action to promote healthy waters in our unique state. The convention also still managed to maintain the photo contest, which had 72 awe-inspiring submissions.

One of the very beneficial aspects of the hosting the convention in an online format was the ability to record and publish all the presentations. All of the presentations are now currently available online on the Lakes and Rivers Convention website: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/convention/2020/default.aspx> or simply type “Wisconsin Lakes Convention” into Google, and it should be the first search result. You can go back to view presentations that you weren't able to see due to participation in other sessions. Or, if you were unable to participate during the live viewings all together, they are all online for you to view at your convenience, for free, any time.





## VCLRA New Shoreland Owners Initiative *Greet Your Neighbor* Program

VCLRA Board, Richard Jenks, Initiative Lead

Improper shoreline development is the major threat to lake health and water quality in Northern Wisconsin. The 19,000 Vilas County lakeshore properties turn over on average every 5 years, and many of the damaging shoreline developments happen soon after a change in ownership.

Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) has launched an initiative to facilitate interpersonal communications with new shoreland property owners. Our objective is to facilitate these communications and provide helpful tools and practices that help protect our lakes. We want to ensure our lakes remain as healthy as the day the new owner moved there.

### Lake associations have a vital role to play

VCLRA is enlisting the participation of lake associations to help personally greet new lake neighbors. We provide materials such as welcome letters, business cards, brochures, and talking points for responsible lake shore living. One-on-one, neighbor-to-neighbor connections are the most effective way to have a positive influence on a new lake property owner. We encourage Lake Associations to create a “Greet Your Neighbor” program of your own! A welcome wagon approach is a friendly, encouraging way to share your lake community’s vision of waterfront living, build a good relationship with newcomers, and invite them to join your lake organization.

Our initiative is composed of three elements (with all materials available from VCLRA):

- Business cards to connect new owners with VCLRA and valuable information,
- A new webpage on the VCLRA website outlining the New Shoreland Owners Initiative, which includes an offer for a free annual membership in both VCLRA and Wisconsin Lakes, and
- Other useful materials to “Greet Your Neighbor” and facilitate a positive face-to-face interaction with new neighbor lake property owners.

Over 7,500 copies of our business cards have already been distributed in an effort to connect with new owners and encourage them to protect their property and their lake. These cards are shared with new owners through realtors, Lake Associations, title companies, chambers of commerce, libraries, County Land and Water office, County Zoning, and landscapers.

The VCLRA website maintains information resources as a means to broaden the exposure of the lake community to lake stewardship principles and make new owners aware of our valuable resources, including Vilas County Land and Water, UW Extension Lakes, Wisconsin Lakes, and the WI Lakes Partnership. You can find all this at <https://vclra.org/new-owner/>

Lake Associations are encouraged to identify properties that have recently changed hands (we have tools that help with this) and engage new lake property neighbors with a tailored welcome to help them get off to a good start. After all, they acquired the property because they love their lake. Our goal is to simply help them: *Protect the lake you love.*

VCLRA is available for assistance with any portion of this initiative. As part of our initiative, VCLRA will be reaching out to Vilas lake associations by email with further details. Feel free to contact us at <https://vclra.org/contact-us/> for more information. 🐟

## Mark your Calendar

**July 10, 2020** Online Multi-county Workshop/VCLRA Annual meeting via video conferencing. Visit [vclra.org](http://vclra.org), or contact Tom Ewing, [president@vclra.org](mailto:president@vclra.org), for more information.

**\*July 25, 2020** Forest Fest, Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River, WI. See <http://www.treesfortomorrow.com/Forest-Fest/> for more information.

**\*October 3, 2020** Cran-a-rama Festival, Manitowish Waters, WI. See <https://manitowishwaters.org/events/> for more information.

**\*The current COVID-19 situation is very fluid and may affect events and travel. Many upcoming events have been postponed or canceled. Please contact event organizers to verify information about specific events. Thank you!**

### **Join VCLRA Today! Forget to Renew?**

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org) to join or renew your membership online.

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



**Lake County Journal**  
Volume 26 Issue 2 Spring 2020  
Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association, Inc.  
PO Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521  
Website: [www.vclra.org](http://www.vclra.org)

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