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Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) News

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

SPRING 2018

Presidential Pebbles and Pearls

The winter without end still lingers as I write these words the first week of May. Soft water will be that much more appreciated this year. The annual lakes convention is over. For those who missed it, the various sessions will be archived at www.uwsp.edu/uwexlakes, by the end of May.

Vary little accomplished legislatively by the end of the session. A watered down wetlands bill passed which still resulted in more acres open to development. With nothing happening legislatively this year, education is the best tool we all have as we proceed through the summer. The economics of good healthy lakes must be stressed wherever possible.

The six county lakes workshop will take place this year on Friday, July 13th at Nicolet College in Rhinelander. The agenda is not complete as I write this, but will feature the same morning/early afternoon agenda jam packed with good and timely information. The annual VCLRA meeting will follow the morning workshop. **Make plans to attend!**

I'm excited to announce that we are actively involved in a project with out OCLRA counterparts. We hope to jointly produce and pay for, a document which will be used by both the Vilas and Oneida Zoning departments. It will feature a best practices/do's and don'ts type of information, and we hope will be part of the package received when someone comes in for a permit.

For those of you involved in the Clean Boats/Clean Waters program, please see both the Vilas County Land & Water Dept. and Discovery center websites for certification classes scheduled for this year.

Please take the time to renew your VCLRA membership at earliest opportunity. Form included in this newsletter. VCLRA will continue to provide pertinent information as it becomes available.

CONTAINED IN THIS ISSUE:

A membership renewal form
Benefits of Membership Summary
Blue Heron Stewardship Award Information
Wisconsin Frog & Toad Survey
Other Lakes Related Information

Steve Budnik
President VCLRA



Wisconsin Frog & Toad Survey

By Andrew Badje
Submitted by Debby Soberg

As we turn the corner away from long and cold winter days, many Wisconsin residents can confidently tell when spring is here to stay. These are the wildlife enthusiasts that rely on audio versus visual cues, listening for the anticipated choruses of wood frogs, boreal chorus frogs, and spring peepers of which emphatically announce that spring is here. As another spring is on Wisconsin's doorstep, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is looking for volunteers that are eager to lend their ears for the Wisconsin Frog & Toad Survey, a citizen-based monitoring project.

The Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey (WFTS) was initiated in 1981 as a response to known and suspected declines in the 1960s and 1970s in numerous Wisconsin frog species, including the northern leopard frog, American bullfrog, pickerel frog, and Blanchard's cricket frog. Project goals of the WFTS were to determine the status, distribution, and long-term trends of Wisconsin's twelve frog and toad species. Since its inception (1984), the WFTS is known as the longest running citizen science amphibian calling survey in North America. In a typical year, over 130 Wisconsin citizens take to the streets at night to record frog calling activity throughout the state's mosaic of rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Volunteers survey three nights a year, during early spring, late spring, and early summer; visiting 10 stops per night (five minutes a site), in which they document species calling and the relative abundance of each species. For further survey protocol, readers may refer to the WFTS Overview Video. Volunteer data submitted to the WDNR is used to monitor regional and statewide population trends of all 12 species of frog and toad in the state. Since 1984, volunteers have contributed over 8,400 survey nights and 84,000 site visits. During this time, citizen scientists have helped

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WDNR conservation biologists define the distribution of all twelve frog and toad species in the state. Data has additionally been utilized to document long-term declines in northern leopard frogs, mink frogs, and American toads, as well as observed increases in American bullfrogs and spring peepers.

More recently, phenology surveys have been added by the WDNR to help monitor frog and toad emergence and breeding seasons throughout the state to better document fluctuating spring weather conditions. Instead of visiting ten stops (as done in the WFTS), phenology volunteers choose one wetland to monitor throughout the frog calling season and record data as often as possible (e.g., one five minute survey per night). Phenology surveys are open to an unlimited number of volunteers statewide and can be performed comfortably from a three season porch, if the situation presents itself.

How to Volunteer:

Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey routes available to interested volunteers (open status indicated by a green icon) can be found on the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey's website. If desired routes are occupied for 2018, interested volunteers can request to be placed on a waiting list for future years, as requested routes/counties become available.

Volunteers wishing to sign up for an open WFTS route or for phenology surveys in 2018 can contact the WDNR's Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey Coordinator for further information.

CONTACT: Andrew Badje 608-785-9472; Andrew.Badje@wisconsin.gov or WFTS@wisconsin.gov

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

Healthy Lakes! Funds for Shoreland Property Owners

FOR RELEASE:

CONTACT: Catherine Higley, Lake Conservation Specialist, 715-479-3738 or ca-higl@vilascountywi.gov

Do you want to attract more fish to your shoreline? What about keeping your shoreline from eroding away? Or maybe you're interested in doing good for the water quality on your lake? Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department is seeking lakeshore property landowners wanting funds to improve lake water quality or shoreline habitat.



Practices would be installed primarily by private contractors. If landowners are willing to assist with labor, costs can be kept low. The Vilas County Land & Water Dept. helps waterfront property owners coordinate appropriate plans and use of contractors.

Vilas County Land & Water Conservation will be applying for grant funds from the DNR on behalf of interested landowners. The funding is available through a Healthy Lakes Grant, which is part of the WI DNR's Surface Water Grant Program. While Healthy Lakes are competitive grants, to date no project has been turned down

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for lack of funding.

There are some projects that will not be appropriate for Healthy Lakes. If you have a steep shoreline or excessive runoff, that may be outside the scope of Healthy Lakes. However, there may be other funding options available. Contact Vilas County Land & Water at 715-479-3721 if you would like to address critical erosion issues on your lakefront.

If you are interested in Healthy Lakes or would like more information, contact the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept. at 715-479-3738. They can assist with getting these projects “shovel-ready” for 2019.

Blue Heron Stewardship Award Nominations Now Open

BLUE HERON



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 waterfront development.

Shoreland Stewardship

Award Program

To nominate someone, please visit our website:

<http://www.vclra.us/home/blue-heron-shoreline-stewardship-award-program>

What effect might changes in water clarity have on property values for water front properties in Vilas and Oneida Counties?

By Mariguita Sheehan

The Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department (VCL&W), and Oneida and Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Associations (OCLRA & VCLRA) have teamed up with Dr. Thomas Kemp of the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire to figure out the effect on property values from different levels of water clarity for Vilas and Oneida County lakes.

Thanks to a grant of \$7250 from Lumberjack RC&D we will be able to support Dr. Kemp's work to apply a previously developed hedonic model to our lake rich area. Vilas and Oneida Counties are located on a unique land form that is the 3rd most lake dense area in the world. Due to this abundance, lakes are the most economically significant natural resource in these two counties. In 2016, water-front properties in each county accounted for 75% (Vilas) and 76% (Oneida) of assessed property values and corresponding values of local tax revenues. For many years the lakes in these counties have been touted as being valuable to the local economy.

Over the last year VCL&W and the OCLRA & VCLRA have been generating and sharing data about the economic value of area lakes. While we can perform the simple calculations to identify percent values, we do not have the education to apply more sophisticated economic analyses to our unique local region with its high concentration of lakes and limited influence of agriculture, compared to other counties in Wisconsin. For example, in a study performed on Lake Chetek by Dr. Kemp and his students, it was estimated that an increase in water clarity of 3 additional feet of Secchi depth would bring a 10-11% increase in the property value of the average waterfront parcel on that lake. This translates to an increased market value from \$243,477 to \$269,400 on an average property, and an additional \$10.4 million in total property valuation around the lake.

The study by Dr. Kemp and his students will quantify the effects that changes in water clarity will have on property values on over 100 lakes in Vilas and Oneida Counties greater than 100 acres in size. They will be looking at lakes that have long term Secchi data and a significant number of properties changing hands.

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As a result, those interested in the ecologic condition of area lakes will have a tool to show the economic effects of management decisions that affect local lakes. Having data about the relationship between water clarity and property values for Vilas and Oneida lakes would give lake champions another tool to explain the effect that changes in land management might have on the economic contributions from our area lakes.

The results of this study will be shared through presentations, publications, and news releases developed by VCL&W and OCLRA & VCLRA. Our target audiences are waterfront property owners, local governments, lake organizations, and local business organizations, amongst others. We will share the results through all available venues and outlets. With this we hope to present an effective economic rationale for the improvement or protection of the water clarity of area lakes.

Lakes & Wetlands and the Economy of Vilas County

Mariquita Sheehan of the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept. updated her study of how the lakes and wetlands of Vilas County affect our economy. The full study is still available at the Land & Water Conservation Dept. website. As this is always an important argument individuals and individual lake associations can make to their local town governments, a brief summary of the study is offered here.

Vilas County has some 1,300 plus lakes with 1,743 miles of shoreline comprising 13 HUC watersheds. Lakes and streams equal 102,276 acres or 15.6% of the surface area. Wetlands equal 121,258 acres or 18.5% of land area. **Thus, Vilas County is about 34% wet!**

Sources of economic value in Vilas County include property values, tourism spending, and recreational use value. In 2011, Vilas County had the 3rd highest per capita tourism spending in WI behind only Door & Sauk counties. The 2010 census indicated that 61.5% of the homes in Vilas Cty (highest in Wisconsin) are seasonal and that owners of these homes spent an average of \$74.18 per day when occupied. This equals some \$1,146,674.00 dollars per day.

A review of assessed parcels indicates that 75% of Vilas County's property tax revenue comes from waterfront property (2016).

Conclusions of the study, are that water is the primary reason: tourists visit here; families purchase second homes here; locals stay here; people retire here; and businesses locate here.

From the study it is quite clear that: **healthy lakes equal a healthy economy!** We need to continually make sure our local, county, and state leaders heed this message.

Mark your Calendar

July 13, 2018 North Central Counties Lake Associations Workshop and VCLRA Annual Meeting at Nicolet College in Rhinelander. Contact Steve Budnik at 715-686-7852 and skbudnik@centurytel.net.

June 16, 2018 Lake Fest in Lac du Flambeau from 10am to 3pm. Contact Celeste Hockings at 715-588-4163 for more information.

August, 2018 VCLRA summer board meeting. Date and meeting site TBD.

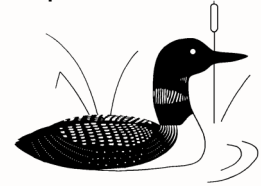
October 6, 2018 Cran-a-rama, Manitowish Waters from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

October-November, 2018 Fall VCLRA Board Meeting. Date TBD.

Join VCLRA Today! Forget to Renew?

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at www.vclra.us and print the membership form.

Your support helps protect the lakes!



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