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VCLRA.ORG

SPRING 2021

THE President's message

It's shaping up to be a busy year!

As we begin to resume some "normal" activities in our personal lives, people are naturally inclined to make up for lost time. For our Northwoods, this means we might expect to see busier, more

crowded lakes this year.

That no doubt will be good news for local businesses recovering from the prolonged effects of the Covid pandemic. However, as expressed in a recent email to me from (former VCLRA president) Sandy Gillum, with many area lakes experiencing a rebound in water level, shorelines will be experiencing erosion damage by boats that create high wakes. I have heard from several of you about concerns with wake boats in particular on their lakes. By Wisconsin State Statute, the operator/owner of the boat is responsible for all damages in these instances. The impacts of increased recreational lake use is an area we expect to highlight at the next Multi-County Lakes Workshop.

I am pleased to report that, despite the challenging year due to the pandemic, VCLRA was still able to award 2 youth scholarships this spring to local high school students; continue our tradition of recognizing exemplary lake stewards with our *Blue Heron Shoreland Stewardship Award*; roll out (with Vilas County Land and Water Conservation) a new initiative: *Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters* – a partnership with the area business community to protect lakes; continue hosting a multi-county lakes workshop with our partner Oneida County Lakes & Rivers Associations; publish and distribute our two annual print newsletters; and post a number of articles and videos on our website, among other accomplishments.

The pandemic forced us to adapt our methods to stay engaged, through the use of zoom meetings, virtual events, and expanded online approaches. Although we are beginning to resume in-person activities, we will likely continue to use some of these new techniques that provide effective alternate ways to engage one another. You can learn more about some of VCLRA's online offerings in our *Website Primer* found in this newsletter.

Please stay connected with us through membership, subscribing to our online blog, and sharing what's on your mind through email or our website contact form. Also, be sure to participate in our online, multi-county lake workshop this year on July 16th. We very much want to hear your ideas and concerns, and share some of our thoughts and plans.

Finally, please remember to join or renew your VCLRA membership! All of our work is funded by generous support from our member families and lake organizations, as well as donations and public grants. With your help, we can make a difference.

Stay safe, and enjoy our lakes and rivers responsibly!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Ewing".

VCLRA president

MULTI-COUNTY LAKES WORKSHOP DRAFT AGENDA

July 16th 2021 ~ 09:00 AM to 1:00 PM



CHECK [VCLRA.ORG](https://www.vclra.org) FOR UPDATES AND ZOOM LOGIN DETAILS

9:00 am to 9:10 am - “Welcome & Zoom etiquette review” - Patrick Goggin, Extension Lakes (Host)

9:10 am to 9:30 am - “Legislative update” - Mike Engleson, Wisconsin Lakes (Executive Director)

9:30 am to 9:50 am - “Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources updates” - Scott Van Egeren, WDNR (Water Resources Management Specialist & Lakes and Rivers Biologist)

9:50 am to 10:10 am - “Lake Steward Program” - Dorothy Whitmer, Gull Chain of Lakes Association, Nisswa, MN

10:10 am to 10:30 am - BREAK

10:30 am to 10:50 am - “Wisconsin Shoreland Evaluation Tool” - Alex Delvoye, WDNR (Surface Water Grants Program Assistant)

10:50 am to 11:10 am - “Clearcutting to water: incompatibility with local shoreland rules” - Bob Thome, Jr., District 11 Oneida County Board (County Supervisor)

11:10 am to 11:30 am - “Wisconsin’s Green Fire partners for Healthy Lakes” - Mike Meyer, NOVA Ecological Services (Research Scientist)

11:30 am to 11:50 pm - “Fish hatcheries & fish habitat support by Wisconsin Tribal Nations” - Tom Melnarik, Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC), (Civil Engineering Technician)

11:50 am to 12:00 pm - “Shoreline stabilization: a guide for homeowners” booklet - Quita Sheehan (or other Northwoods county rep), Land and Water Conservation Departments

12:00 am to 12:20 pm - “Current trends and challenges related to recreational water use in Wisconsin” - Mike Engleson, Wisconsin Lakes (Executive Director)

12:20 am to 1:00 pm – Lake Organizations Annual Meetings in breakout rooms

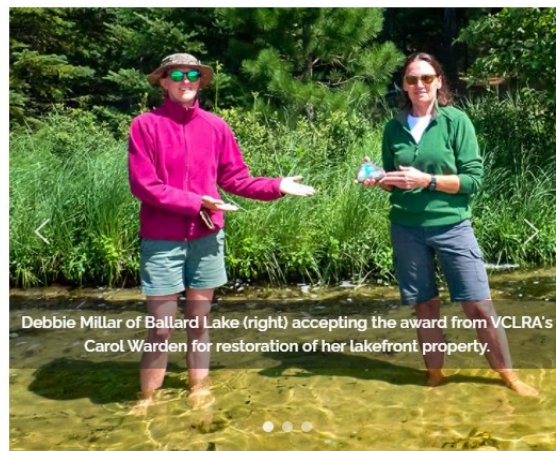
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2020 Blue Heron Shoreland Stewardship Award Winner

Photo by T Ewing

Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) last awarded its Blue Heron Shoreland Stewardship Award to Debbie Millar of Ballard Lake for the completed restoration of her lakefront property. The award was presented at our “*Celebrate the Lakes Day*” on July 10, 2020 via a Zoom Conference Call.

Congratulations to Debbie Millar!



Nominations Now Open for the 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 Shoreland Stewardship Award Program recognizes lake property owners who champion strong lake stewardship principles in the development and use of their waterfront property to minimize environmental impacts. VCLRA makes these annual awards to generate awareness and educate lake property owners on the importance of shoreland stewardship by showcasing good examples of lake-friendly waterfront development.

To obtain more information about the Blue Heron Shoreline Stewardship Award program or download an application, visit <https://vclra.org/blue-heron-program/> or contact us at VCLRA, P.O. Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521.

BLUE HERON



Shoreland Stewardship
Award Program

Support VCLRA through Membership



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

VCLRA 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 working relationships with the Wisconsin DNR, UW Extension, Wisconsin Lakes, Vilas County government and others. This allows VCLRA to provide benefits to lake association members as well as individuals who do not have a lake association.

VCLRA offers the following to its member associations and individuals:

- Provide information and assistance on lake related problems and issues,
- Sponsor and participate in educational programs, including awarding a scholarship annually to a local high school student,
- Provide yearly Blue Heron Awards in recognition of individual property owners' shoreline stewardship,
- Publish and distribute print newsletters for our membership plus blog articles year-round on our website,
- Organize a yearly workshop for our members and partners to strengthen their partnerships and gain new knowledge,
- Help with the formation of new lake associations,
- Assistance with direction to or interaction with partner agencies,
- Assistance 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

VCLRA 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

**NOW YOU CAN ALSO JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE
USING A CREDIT CARD AT VCLRA.ORG**

Wisconsin Water Week Recap

ARTICLE BY

Susan Knight, VCLRA and UW-Madison

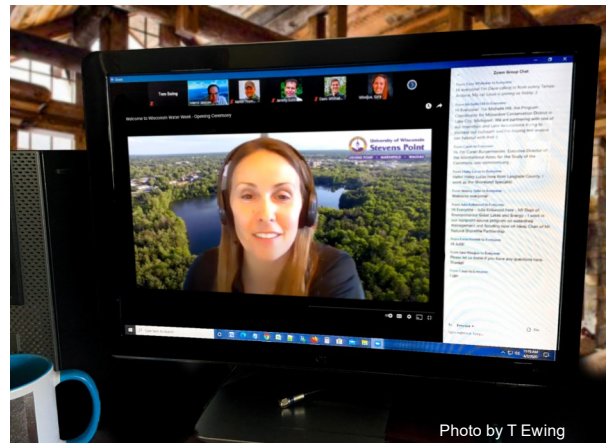
Wisconsin Water Week was a virtual convention of freshwater news and information and substituted for the usually live annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention. The lineup for 2021 was impressive to overwhelming, with as many as 6 simultaneous talks going on for three days, and regional “meetings” held on the final day. There was a talk for every interest, but impossible to watch them all. Luckily, the conference presentations are archived, and the presentations can be viewed now and into the future, on the UW Stevens Point:

Extension Lakes website under the Events tab as “*Wisconsin Water Week 2021 Archives.*”

URL: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/convention/2021/default.aspx>

Here are just a few highlights:

1. John Bates previewed his upcoming book on wild lakes, with photos and evocative descriptions. John’s charming content and delivery was the highlight of the conference for me, with a virtual tour of some of the most beautiful and untouched Northwoods lakes. The target date for his forthcoming book, *Wisconsin’s Wild Lakes: A Guide to Our Last Undeveloped, Natural Lakes*, is October 1, 2021.
2. Following up on her amazing “Ancestral Women” project, fiber artist and weaver Mary Burns described her current project, a tribute to women who have dedicated their lives to water in all its guises: drinking water, freshwater, and marine ecosystems. Her presentation gave a closeup view of her woven renderings of water walker Grandmother Josephine Mandamin, Rachel Carson and many other acclaimed, but seldom recognized, women.
3. Carly Lapin discussed an ongoing project to resurrect the wild rice population on Spur Lake in Oneida County. While a former go-to lake for wild rice, in recent years, possibly because of high water, the lake has been taken over by perennial vegetation. Along with a diverse team, Carly hopes to restore Spur Lake to its historic importance as a wild rice lake.
4. The Lakes Convention likes to add in some unexpected gems, and this year there was a great talk on star-gazing by Sebastian Zamfir, professor of Astronomy and Physics at UW Stevens Point. Using the free program, Stellarium, he walked the audience through a number of constellations in



Continued on next page

view in Wisconsin in mid March, though the program can simulate the night sky at any location and any time of year.

5. Amber White of UW-Madison summarized her research project on how 2,4-D, a common herbicide used to treat Eurasian water-milfoil, degrades in lakes. This chemical breaks down by bacterial action, and is largely accomplished by sediment microbes, rather than those in the water.
6. A panel of four researchers, including Walter Piper, Mike Myer, Terry Daulton and Erica Lamoine discussed the state of loons in Wisconsin. The presentation included a recap of loon research over many decades. New research reveals worrisome trends of fewer loon chicks surviving to adulthood.
7. Two talks compared wake boats to other motorized craft and their impacts on sediments and shorelines. While most boats do not have much effect once they achieve a planning position on the water, wake boats are designed to keep the stern down and the bow up, creating the maximum downward force on the lake bottom. These craft stir up sediments in deeper water than most boats, and research is underway to determine how far out they must be for the wake to dissipate before hitting the shore.
8. Sumner Matteson gave a fascinating review of 40 years of the hugely successful Trumpeter swan recovery program. The presentation was full of engaging and daring stories of collecting eggs and different strategies they used to raise chicks to return them to the wild.

VCLRA Website Primer

Here is a sample of what you can do on our website, vclra.org



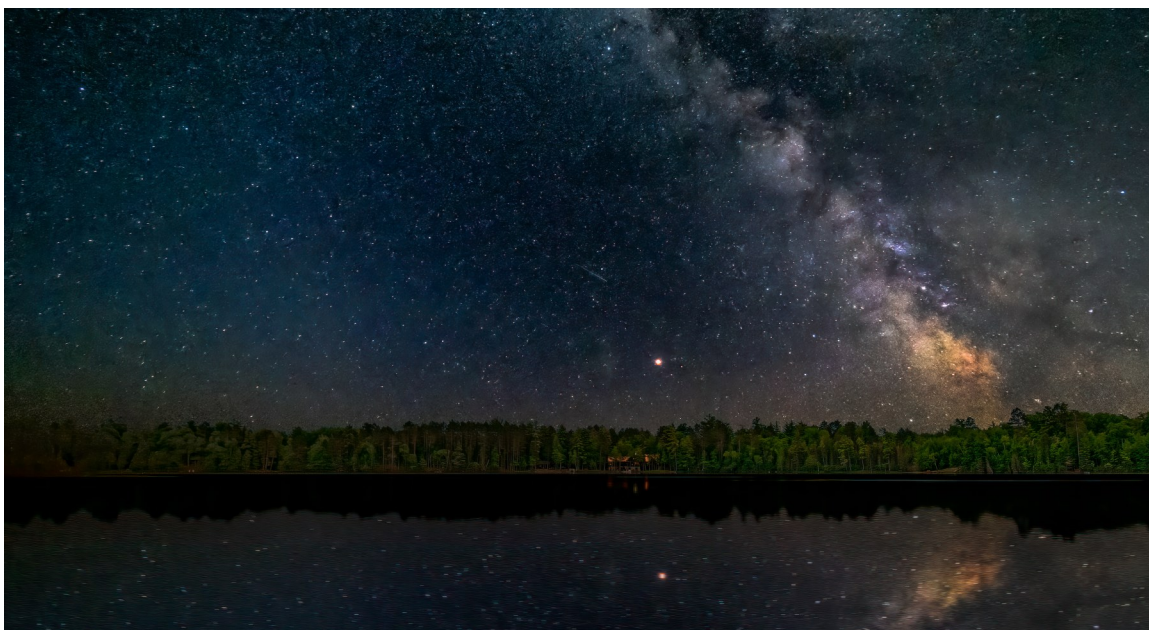
Browse our initiatives and other useful resources at <https://vclra.org/initiatives/>. For example, you can learn about and apply for a youth scholarship; nominate someone for a Blue Heron Award; learn about the *Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters* initiative, locate information helpful to first-time lake property owners, find tools to equip lake associations to greet new lake neighbors and build positive, lake-friendly relationships; check out the AIS map database developed by Vilas County Land and Water Conservation; look up contact information of other Vilas lake organizations; and much more.

We also have a news and article blog that you can view at <https://vclra.org/newsarticles/>. It supports multimedia, including educational videos and event presentations. You can subscribe from our VCLRA homepage or at <http://vclra.org/#gotosubscribe> to be automatically notified of new articles by email. You can always unsubscribe later.

Recent newsletters (which are mailed to members as a benefit) can be found at <https://vclra.org/newsletter-archive/>.

Finally, join VCLRA or renew your membership online at <https://vclra.org/join-or-renew/> using a credit card or check. Of course, you can still use the mail-in form, located at <https://vclra.org/mail-in/>.

Northwoods Astrophotography



ARTICLE BY

Tom Ewing, VCLRA president

One of the many delights of the Northwoods experience are the amazing starry nights. As an avid fisherman, who has spent many a quiet night out on the lake (a great way to catch walleyes in the shallows in the summertime), there is something very magical about sitting under a canopy of stars with a reflective lake. You literally feel like you are fully immersed in outer space. It's quiet and peaceful, and you see numerous meteors and satellites racing above, and sometimes a few wisps of an aurora. It's so fascinating that sometimes I forget to fish!

As someone who also enjoys photography, I have naturally tried my hand now and then at astrophotography. Comets are always interesting, but the most fascinating night time object to me is the milky way, which appears as a faint hazy band to the naked eye on dark, clear, moonless nights. The milky way is a spiral galaxy that our sun belongs to, and it is shaped like a flat disk of stars swirling about a dense core. The familiar faint band of light in the sky is the result of sighting along the plane of the galaxy where the stars are densest – especially when viewing toward the dense center of the galaxy. The fact that it is not a uniform band of light is due to the many regions of dust that also make up our galaxy, and give a mottled appearance to the milky way.

The photo above was taken a couple years ago on my pier overlooking my lake in Eagle River, Wisconsin. I had just gotten a new wide-angle zoom lens with a fairly large aperture (f2.8) well suited to astrophotography. This was shot with an Olympus mirrorless DSLR camera mounted on a tripod, using an exposure of 20 seconds at f2.8 and ISO 3200.

Continued on next page

If you have a wide-angle lens with a large aperture, this is a fairly useful exposure setting to use for starscapes. The 20 second exposure is a compromise to minimize both image-degrading sensor noise (that causes a grainy look) from the high ISO setting and the streaking of stars caused by the earth's rotation during the long exposure. If you have a lens that only goes to f3.5 or f4 (a typical kit lens), then I suggest going to a 25 second exposure and setting the ISO to 5000. If you have an f1.8 lens, use 18 seconds and ISO 1600. These are useful starting points, but you may find other settings suit your equipment and night sky conditions better. Also, if you are reading this article in a paper version with black & white photos, be sure to go on our vclra.org website to view the digital version of the newsletter and see the photo in full color.

Note that the straight-out-of-the-camera image resulting from the indicated time exposure is rather faint and bland looking, and requires some post-processing to bring out the details and subtle coloring apparent in my photo above. I suggest you search the internet for recommended post-processing adjustments. Generally, this will involve boosting highlights, white and clarity settings and reducing the shadow setting. If you have dehaze, try boosting that as well to reduce the background scattering of light (which adds a haziness to the night sky). Noise reduction and sharpening also are helpful. Truly, this is a subject for another discussion, but there is a lot of good information available online. If you really want to get deep into the subject, you'll want to check out the topic of stacking images. This allows achieving high quality images by superimposing numerous exposures using appropriate software to accentuate detail while eliminating the random noise. My biggest piece of advice, though, is to have fun and enjoy the amazing night sky of the Northwoods!

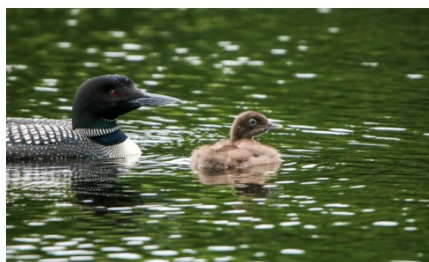
Have a good example of Northwoods astrophotography you are willing to share? Get in touch with us through our website contact page on vclra.org.

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Living with Loons

01 Mar, 2021

In Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota, loons typically begin to arrive on their nest lakes around mid-to-late April. The first order of business is to establish a territory then attract a mate. This is done during the last weeks of April and early in May – then nesting begins.



Izabella Mitchell of AV-W Wins Vilas County Poster Contest

25 Jan, 2021

The Vilas County Youth Conservation Poster Contest is held annually to promote youth awareness of local land and water conservation issues. This year's theme was "Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities," and the winning poster was created by Izabella Mitchell. Her entry will next compete with nine other county winners in WI.



Our January 2021 newsletter is out!

02 Jan, 2021

Happy New Year! Our January/winter 2021 newsletter is available. Read about *Lakes in the Time of Covid*, the *Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters Program*, and more.

Mark your Calendar

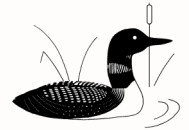
July 16, 2021 at 9 am (other details TBD) Multi-County Lakes Workshop and Annual Meeting via Zoom. Check our website: vclra.org or contact Tom Ewing, president@vclra.org, for more information.

October 2, 2021: Cran-a-Rama, Manitowish Waters, 9:00am to 3:00pm

April 6-8, 2022 — Save the Date: Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention

Renew your membership or join VCLRA Today!

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at vclra.org and register online. Working together we can keep our lakes clean and beautiful!



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