

## VCLRA Board

### Officers:

**Tom Ewing, President**  
630-985-8472  
president@vclra.org

**Debby Soberg, Vice President**  
715-479-9316  
sunwarmedsand@gmail.com

**Anne Kretschmann, Treasurer**  
724-462-0068  
kretschmann.anne@gmail.com

**Emily Heald, Secretary**  
715-543-2085  
water@discoverycenter.net

### Directors:

**Steve Budnik**  
715-686-7852  
skbudnik@centurytel.net

**Jeff Currie**  
715-617-0080  
curriefam@gmail.com

**Karen Dixon**  
715-543-8141  
ked28bean@yahoo.com

**Celeste Hockings**  
715-588-4163  
chockings@ldftribe.com

**Susan Knight**  
608-890-4722  
seknight@wisc.edu

**Paul Lewandoski**  
715-686-7880  
pllewand4@centurylink.net

**Carol Warden**  
715-356-9494  
warden@wisc.edu

### Advisors:

**Carolyn Scholl**  
715-479-3747  
cascho@vilascountrywi.gov

**Mariguita "Quita" Sheehan**  
715-479-3721  
mashee@vilascountrywi.gov

**Cathy Higley**  
715-479-3738  
cahigl@vilascountrywi.gov



PO BOX 494 EAGLE RIVER, WI 54521-0494

VCLRA.ORG

WINTER 2021 — 2022

## President's Message

I grew up in a lake town called Point Place in Ohio, a small town surrounded by multiple rivers and Lake Erie. I remember spectacular perch fishing off a dike in the Maumee Bay of Lake Erie while I was in grade school. Unfortunately, through human neglect, Lake Erie began dying. Before long, nearby Toledo Beach closed and only carp could occasionally be caught by the time I started high school. Who could imagine that a lake as large as Erie could suffer such a calamity in such a short time.

We take for granted the natural beauty and the ecological and recreational value of our more than 1300 lakes and rivers in Vilas, but our situation is more the exception than the rule. According to U.S. government statistics, nearly half of America'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 in our nation, and why efforts to protect and preserve our natural waters is so vital.

Without a doubt, water is the most valuable natural resource in Vilas County. It not only supplies clean drinking water – it powers our economy! In fact, waterfront property provides 75% of Vilas County's property tax revenue – the highest of any state county, and tourism fueled by lake property owners and lake users contributed \$300M of economic impact to Vilas in 2018. Only Door and Sauk County had higher per capita tourist impacts.

Our lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater are components of a coupled ecosystem – what impacts the health of one affects the others. Sandy soils and a shallow groundwater table naturally make Vilas waters highly susceptible to contamination and pollution. Increased development, the spread of invasive species, the erosion of regulatory protections, and even climate change are some of the factors challenging our efforts to preserve our beautiful lake and river heritage. However, keeping Vilas waters healthy is an environmental and economic imperative. As noted, the health of our environment and our economy is linked closely to the natural beauty and vitality of our lakes and rivers.

There was a happy ending to my hometown water issues. Through strong regulatory intervention, Lake Erie made an incredible comeback, and now sustains a vibrant recreational economy along much of Ohio's shoreline on Lake Erie, especially near Sandusky, Ohio. However, the remedy required a costly effort that was waged for decades.

An important lesson for us is that conserving what we have remains the most powerful and efficient approach to keeping the natural beauty and vitality of our lakes and rivers, and all the benefits that it brings.

Enjoy our lakes and rivers responsibly.

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

Tom Ewing  
VCLRA president, president@vclra.org

# VCLRA Awards Two Scholarships in 2021

By Carol Warden, VCLRA Board

One of our joys is to encourage youth to discover and protect our natural world. Each year we are excited to award one or more \$500 scholarships to area high school students. For 2021, we are pleased to recognize two of our local seniors with awards.

Madeline Indermuehle (left in photo) of Northland Pines High School and Olivia Wise (right) of Lakeland Union High School were each awarded a \$500 scholarship. Congratulations to Madeline and Olivia!



Applications are being accepted for 2022. The \$500 competitive awards are presented to graduating High School Seniors who reside in Vilas County and are continuing their education at a 2-year or 4-year college, university, or vocational/technical school in pursuit of a career in the area of natural resources (may have priority) or a related field. Awardees are selected by the VCLRA Scholarship Committee and are awarded at a school or home-school celebration in the spring.

Applications must be submitted by mail to Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association, PO Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521 and postmarked no later than March 15, 2022.

## GREET Initiative for Lake Associations



Photo by Tom Ewing

The Northwoods has experienced an influx of new lake property owners in the past two years. Improper shoreline development is the major threat to lakes. Unfortunately, much of this happens soon after a change in lake property ownership. Lake Associations can play a major role: by sharing their lake community’s vision of waterfront living, building a good relationship with newcomers, and inviting them to join their lake organization BEFORE these impacts occur.

VCLRA has developed the GREET initiative to equip lake associations with the tools they need to support a constructive role. Visit the GREET webpage at [vclra.org/GREET/](https://vclra.org/GREET/) to learn more.

### CONTAINED IN THIS ISSUE

Presidents Message	1	Membership Renewal Form	5
2021 Scholarship Awards	2	Wake Boats — a special report	6-7
2021 Blue Heron Award	3	VCLRA Support of Vilas Youth Conservation Education	8
Blue Heron Nomination Notice	3	Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters: a trial year	9
Benefits of Membership	4	Calendar of Events	10

# 2021 Blue Heron Shoreland Stewardship Award Winner

Story and photos by Susan Knight, VCLRA Board

Photo by C Hockings

The Vilas County Lakes and River Association is pleased to announce that the Sandman family of Star Lake Association has been awarded the Association's Blue Heron Award for outstanding stewardship of their property on Ballard Lake.

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 negative impacts of shoreline property development can be minimized. And third, to educate lake property owners about how important shoreline biodiversity is to the overall health of their lake.

The award criteria are divided into five sections: driveway and parking areas, structures and septic areas, yard and recreation areas, shoreline area and an overview of the entire lot area.

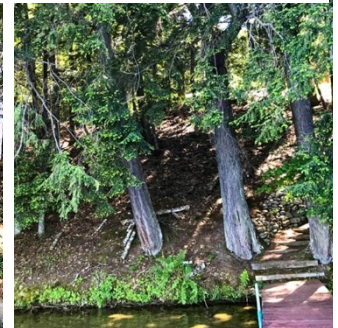
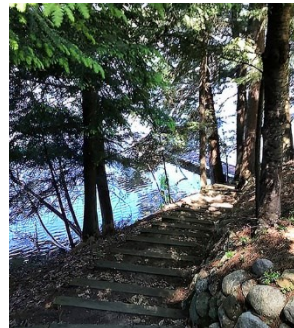
Dwight and Fay Sandman have lived on Ballard Lake since the late 1960s. Unfortunately, Dwight Sandman passed away in late 2020, but Fay continues to live on Ballard Lake where she maintains the natural beauty of their property. Ballard Lake is an exceptionally beautiful lake, and the Sandman's property is especially noteworthy for its natural shoreline, inviting the native flora and fauna to flourish.

Congratulations and thanks to the Sandman Family for their excellent stewardship on this magnificent lake. We hope they are an inspiration to other property owners in Vilas County.



Back L to R: daughter Sue Morrison, Susan Knight, (VCLRA), great-granddaughter Caroline Morrison, son-in law Doug Morrison. Front L to R: granddaughter Kristin Morrison and Fay Sandman (holding award)

Views of the natural shoreline of the Sandman property on Ballard Lake.



## 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!**

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 Susan Knight at [seknight@wisc.edu](mailto:seknight@wisc.edu) or 608-890-4722.



## 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 protect our beautiful lakes and rivers.

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 one or more scholarships annually to local high school students,
- 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,
- Assist with direction to or interaction with partner agencies,
- Assist with grant applications when an association may not qualify,
- And monitor 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 address them to the best of our ability, or direct you to someone who can help.

Finally, you can now 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 on the next page or print the form out at <https://vclra.org/mail-in/>.

*Anne Kretschmann*

VCLRA Treasurer



## It's better when we work together.

The natural beauty and recreational value of our lakes and rivers are the foundation of our Northwoods economy. Our vision of the Northwoods as a place where both people and nature thrive can only be realized by working together to protect our beautiful lakes and rivers.

**Join VCLRA or renew your membership today!**



## 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

**YOU CAN ALSO JOIN OR RENEW  
ONLINE AT VCLRA.ORG**

# Wake Boats

## A Special Report from Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association

By Tom Ewing, VCLRA Board

While most boats are designed to move through water efficiently, wake boats take a different tack – they are designed to generate large wakes that permit people to surf behind the boat without being tethered.



Photo by Liz Caldwell on Unsplash

According to the Boat Owners Association, wake boats work on the principle that the larger the amount of water a boat displaces, the larger the wake it creates. Wake boats have large ballast tanks in the rear of the boat that can fill with thousands of pounds of lake water to increase their displacement and maximize the wake they generate. These boats can fill or empty the ballast tank in less than three minutes.

The growing popularity of wake boats presents challenges on state lakes. On the one hand, water sports and recreational boating generates tourist dollars. On the other hand, there is the potential for enhanced shoreline erosion due to their energetic waves. The enhanced wakes can also

endanger other swimmers and boaters, as well as disturb water fowl nesting sites. Loons may be particularly vulnerable because they nest on the water's edge. Another concern is the spread of invasive species due to hold up in the ballast tanks. Because wake boats are weighted in the rear so that the propwash has a downward angle, they may stir up bottom sediments, uproot aquatic plants, disturb fish habitat and potentially release toxins that have settled to the bottom.

### *What's Being Done?*

Local ordinances may include provisions for no wake areas, no wake lakes, a limitation on hours for high-speed boating and water skiing and similar restrictions. However, states do not generally allow the adoption of a special watercraft rule to ban or regulate certain types of boats, such as wake boats. Furthermore, state DNRs will not likely adopt a special watercraft rule unless there is a demonstrated safety problem involved. Here are the WDNR data entries for Vilas County where local ordinances have been established:

<https://dnrx.wisconsin.gov/swims//public/reporting.do?report=32&format=html&action=run&county=64&officialName=&category=Slow-No-Wake%20Hours>

At the 2021 Six County Lakes & Rivers Conference, Mike Engleson of Wisconsin Lakes discussed the problem of recreational lake activity impacts, including wake boats. The challenges caused by recreational lake usage is currently the top priority of Wisconsin Lakes. The link to the conference video presentations is:

<https://vclra.org/2021/09/20/2021-six-county-lakes-rivers-conference-video/> See last presentation.

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter (Minnesota) has weighed in on the discussion and is advocating for legislators to fund independent scientific peer-reviewed studies on wake boat impacts. They recommend that until we have better data, wake boats maintain at least 1,000' from shore and at least 16' water depth based on evidence from studies conducted by the University of Quebec, Montreal.

In New Hampshire, which has a significant outdoor recreation economy, the New Hampshire Commission was tasked to study wake boats impacts. However, the Commission ended divided over the need for special legislation directed at wake boats, citing that efforts to educate boaters towards stronger awareness coupled with enforcement of safety laws is a more effective way to address conflicts on waterways than singling out a particular vessel for restrictions.

Here are a number of useful references for further reading:

1. Wake Boats in The Land of 10,000 Lakes (Minnesota), Wake Boat Subcommittee of the Waters and Wetlands Stewards, NorthStar Chapter of the Sierra Club, March 17, 2021  
<https://www.sierraclub.org/minnesota/blog/2021/03/wake-boats-land-10000-lakes>
2. Town of Presque Isle (Wisconsin) Report on a Wake Ordinance, December 2020  
[https://piwi.us/CMS/files/2021/Condition%20Report\\_%20Presque%20Isle%20Hazardous%20%20Wake%20Ordinance.pdf](https://piwi.us/CMS/files/2021/Condition%20Report_%20Presque%20Isle%20Hazardous%20%20Wake%20Ordinance.pdf)
3. The Killer Bees Appear to be Winning – An Update on Wake Boats (Michigan), Clifford H. Bloom, Oct 9, 2017  
<https://mymlsa.org/the-killer-bees-appear-to-be-winning-an-update-on-wake-boats/>
4. Wake boats draw ire of property owners (Washington), Thomas Clouse, July 27, 2016  
<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2016/jul/27/wake-boats-draw-ire-of-property-owners/>
5. New Hampshire Commission to Study Wake Boats, June 2020  
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1434/default.html>
6. Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and their Potential Impact on Shorelines (study commissioned by boating industry), Nov 2015  
[https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA\\_draft\\_report\\_Rev\\_II.pdf](https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf)
7. Environmental Impacts of Wake Boats on Deep Creek Lake with Consideration of Recreational and Social Benefits, Mariah Allen et al., University of Maryland University College, Nov 2019  
<https://www.garrettcountry.org/resources/watershed/pdf/Publications/Deep%20Creek/Environmental-Impacts-of-Wake-Boats-on-Deep-Creek-Lake.pdf>

## Six-County Lakes & Rivers Conference Video Presentations Online

If you missed the six-county lake conference hosted by Vilas and Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Associations in July, no problem! The presentations were recorded and are available for viewing on our website. Some of the topics addressed include updates on water legislation, I-LIDS information, realtors as front liners with new shoreland property owners, and more!

Visit <https://vclra.org/2021/09/20/2021-six-county-lakes-rivers-conference-video/>



# VCLRA Support of Vilas County Youth Conservation Education

Story and photos by Cathy Higley, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation

VCLRA is a strong advocate of the idea that teaching children the value of water conservation helps them to become responsible adults who support conserving our beautiful natural waters. This is why VCLRA began partnering in the Fall of 2020 with Vilas County Land & Water Conservation to support their youth education efforts with local students in grades K-12. VCLRA provides financial support and helps both challenge and recognize student efforts through its outreach and promotion activities.

Since this partnership started, staff from Vilas County Land & Water have worked with over 1,000 local students on topics like stream ecology, pond ecology, the importance of shoreline buffers, healthy forests, and healthy soils. VCLRA proudly sponsored the costs for prizes for students to compete in the Vilas County Land & Water Youth Conservation Poster Contest and has also helped with judging posters in the past.

VCLRA is pleased to support youth conservation education in Vilas County through our partnership with Vilas County Land & Water Conservation. We look forward to continued opportunities to engage youth in ways that have a positive impact on our lakes and river heritage.



**2021 youth education efforts accomplished by Vilas County Land & Water, many in partnership with VCLRA (from top left, clockwise):**

- Teachers and volunteers help 4<sup>th</sup> grade Eagle River Elementary students learn what critters live in Kentuck Creek;
- Students find critters living in Kentuck Creek;
- Winner from the 2021 "Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities" Vilas County Youth Education Poster Contest Abigail Mitchell's poster (6<sup>th</sup> grade, Arbor Vitae Woodruff Elementary);
- Middle schoolers at the Northland Pines School forest simulate plants, trees, and roots in a shoreline buffer slowing down and absorbing nutrients like phosphorus by playing red rover.



# Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters: a trial year

By Cathy Higley, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation

In 2021, Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association assumed a lead role in the new Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters (NBCW) initiative. This initiative is an effort to better include our diverse local businesses who rely on our lakes and rivers in local water conservation opportunities. VCLRA and Oneida County Lakes & Rivers Association are program sponsors, while Oneida and Vilas County Land & Water Departments, the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, and the North Lakeland Discovery Center carry out the work of partnering with businesses and helping them create plans to reach their conservation goals. VCLRA hosts business partner information on their website, and has plans to do public outreach as businesses implement their desired conservation plans. Even though 2021 was considered a trial year for NBCW, there was impressive forward movement in Vilas County from a few enthusiastic business partners.

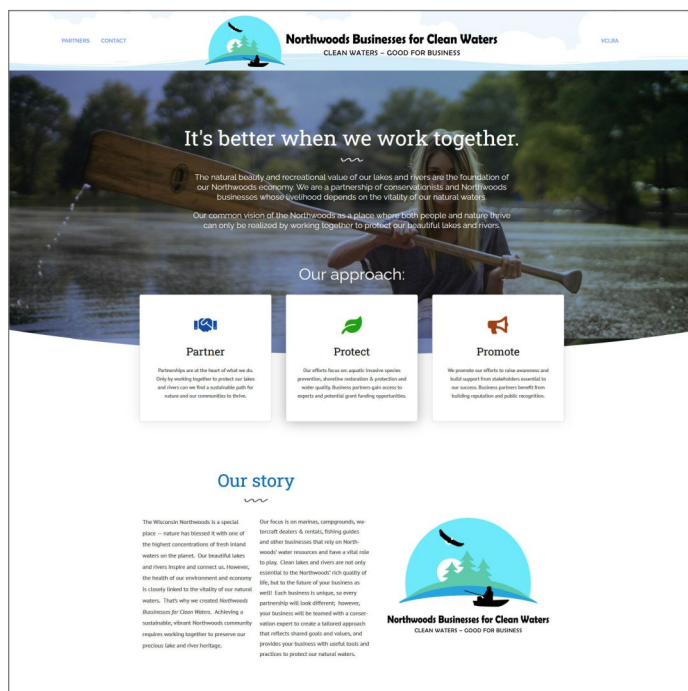
Fishing guide and dock installer Ryan Wahlgren worked with staff to make his operations less likely to spread aquatic invasives by implementing decontamination of his boat and gear as appropriate. River's Edge (non-motorized watercraft rentals) received training on AIS spread and now hosts AIS prevention materials for guests, plus performs decontamination of their rental watercraft. River's Edge even installed a boot brush station. The Lac du Flambeau Campground Bait Shop now offers more AIS prevention materials to customers. Bach's Wildwood Campground located on Mud Creek on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes has worked with Vilas County Land & Water Staff to create plans to install three rain gardens to manage stormwater that could otherwise create eroded areas near the water.

Of course, DNR grant funds as well as other public sources of funding are considered to help businesses with these costs, but sometimes the projects do not match up well with available funds. This happened with the rain gardens at Bach's Wildwood Campground. VCLRA stepped in and is offering partial funding of construction costs as an incentive for the business to follow through with the rain garden installations.

These business owner-conservation staff partnerships are intended to be long term. All involved businesses work with program staff to create mini-conservation plans to guide them in implementing their conservation goals. These plans are created for the next 10 years of stewardship. In addition, whenever the business has a lake or river conservation concern, they have a familiar face and a name to contact for assistance with problem solving.

An official report on the progress of NBCW in Vilas and Oneida Counties will be made available to VCLRA in spring 2022. For more information about the program, and to see a list of involved businesses and organizations, visit the NBCW webpage at <https://vclra.org/NBCW/>. This and other VCLRA initiatives may be found on our website under the "Initiatives" tab on the VCLRA.org menu bar.

Do you know a business interested in moving to the next level of lake or river stewardship in their business practices? Contact Tom Ewing at [president@vclra.org](mailto:president@vclra.org) to get a brochure or learn more about partnering with Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters.



Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters website: <https://vclra.org/NBCW/>



## Much more online

You can find more articles plus earlier issues of our newsletter online under the "About" dropdown in the [vclra.org](https://vclra.org) menu bar.

# Calendar of Events



**April 6-8, 2022:** Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention, "Protecting What We Love For the Future," Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point, WI. For more info, visit <https://wisconsinwaterweek.org/home/lakes-and-rivers-convention/>

*The following list of events are VCLRA booth exhibit venues. None of these have firm dates as of this publication, but typical timeframes are indicated.*

**June 2022:** Lakes Fest in Lac du Flambeau, WI. Contact Celeste Hockings at 715-588-4163 or [Chockings@ldftribe.com](mailto:Chockings@ldftribe.com) for more information.

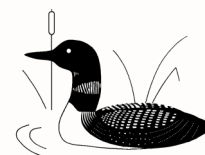
**July 2022:** Multi-County Lakes & Rivers Conference/VCLRA Annual meeting. Visit [vclra.org](http://vclra.org), or contact Tom Ewing, [president@vclra.org](mailto:president@vclra.org), for more information.

**July 2022:** Forest Fest, Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River, WI. See [treesfortomorrow.com](http://treesfortomorrow.com) for more information.

**October 2022:** Cran-a-rama in Manitowish Waters, WI. See [manitowishwaters.org](http://manitowishwaters.org) for more information.

**Renew your membership or join VCLRA today!**

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) and register online. Working together we can keep our lakes clean and beautiful!



LAKES & RIVERS ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 494, Eagle River, WI 54521

## *In This Issue*

2021 Scholarship Awards  
2021 Blue Heron Award  
Wake Boats — A Special Report  
VCLRA Support of Vilas County Youth Education  
Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters update  
And much more...

**Lake County Journal**

**Volume 27 Issue 1 Winter 2021-2022**