

Northwoods business “We Tie It” partners with NBCW for clean waters

ARTICLE BY

Lori Brown, VCLRA Board

The Northwoods is a beautiful wonderland of lakes, rivers, forest, and other treasures from nature. This offers many options for recreational activities as well as enjoyable opportunities for tranquility and peaceful reflection. The natural beauty of our lakes and rivers also are the foundation of our Northwoods economy. It is not surprising then to find many in the broad Northwoods community who are invested in promoting, preserving, and maintaining the unique features found only in this environment. In support to the health of this special place and thriving economy, the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) expanded their mission into the advancement of the Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters (NBCW).

Providing a platform for the Northwoods community connection, the NBCW engages Northwoods businesses to form partnerships with expert conservationists, thereby forming a bond toward a common vision of working together to protect our beautiful lakes and rivers. “Partnerships are at the heart of what we do,” said Tom Ewing, President of VCLRA. “Achieving a

sustainable, vibrant Northwoods community requires working together to preserve our precious lake and river heritage.”

Bill Sherer’s “We Tie It” Fly Shop was one of the first Northwoods Businesses to join the NBCW. Bringing the wisdom that comes from years of living in the Northwoods, Bill brings incredible knowledge of

the current waterways of lakes, rivers, and streams. In addition, he serves as a fountain of historical information and background as to what has formed today’s natural waters environment.

Always aware and thinking about his surroundings, Bill suggests that everyone using the water of our lakes, rivers and streams in any way to fully enjoy it but engage as if they “live at the top of the hill.” “Remember that everything you do or put into the water will flow via the waterways, such as the Wisconsin River and Manitowish River, into major populations. For this reason, everyone should take care to not send anything downhill,” said Bill. He noted that this simple point is important to put into practice for both individuals and businesses alike.

Bill shared examples of his own routine business practices. He puts a great deal of thought into the quality of the fly fishing supplies and equipment he carries in his shop. He further encourages people to do their homework as to what they buy



Bill Sherer, “We Tie It” owner and NBCW partner




Photos Lori Brown

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and use as to how these might affect the water ecosystem such as waders and dry suits containing PFAS or checking the lead content in fishing lures and sinkers that are not safe for fish or waterfowl as like loons. One added idea he offered was to check out the options for recycling. For example, not many people know that Nylon that is used for fishing line can be recycled.

As an experienced fly fisherman and guide, it is natural that Bill spends a lot of time in and around the water. Of utmost concern to him is how we protect our shoreline from erosion and support the habitat of fish and wildlife. This includes matter-of-fact recommendations around the cutting of trees that have fallen in the water or the support of thriving trees at the water's edge. Very seriously, he speaks to concerns about being vigilant in the spread of invasive species. To this end, he guides others to be attentive to wader and boot washing as well as watercraft decontamination and to boldly act in helping others to do the same.


As proud owner of the oldest, single-owned fly-fishing shop in the state, Bill Sherer has earned the title of "Godfather." Offering mentoring advice to those who love the waterways like he does, he emphasizes the need to "keep talking" to anyone and everyone about what is important in protecting and promoting clean water. Bill concluded that "It's better when we take action together to secure the natural beauty and recreational value of our lakes, rivers and streams. We will all benefit and be able to enjoy it into the future." 

Cathy Higley honored with an *Invasive Species Action Award*

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Invasive Species council presented winners of the 2025 Invasive Species Action Awards, during Invasive Species Action Month.

The governor-appointed Council advises the DNR and the state legislature on invasive species issues.

The council awards individuals and groups in professional and volunteer settings that positively impact the fight against the spread of invasive species. The winners represent all regions of Wisconsin. They used many different approaches in their efforts, but each winner is united in putting in long hours in the ongoing work against the spread of invasive species.

We wish to congratulate Cathy Higley as one of the award winners. Cathy was cited for assisting over 100 lake associations and for her leadership role and technical contributions in the Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters initiative. Congratulations Cathy for this well-deserved recognition, and thank you for all your contributions to VCLRA! 



Recipients of the 2025 Invasive Species Action Awards stand with their plaques during the recognition ceremony held at the Wisconsin Cranberry Research Station on June 4.

Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR

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