

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023

DAZZLING DAYS OF FALL!

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"It's the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!"
~ Pooh's Grand Adventure ~

AHH...THE SHORELINE!

by Greg Holt, MWLA President

As we view the beauty of our lakes and rivers from land, it is possible to just look past our shorelines. Returning from some time on the water we might simply walk from the dock inland and not think of the shore. But this is an area that deserves our attention. It plays an extremely critical role in maintaining the clarity of our water and the health of our fisheries, lakes and rivers. It is no surprise that in a questionnaire looking at how well we care for our waters, 7 of 10 questions relate to practices regarding shorelines.

When you spend some time at the water's edge, you can see that a whole lot of the folks fishing are casting in toward the shore. Standing on the dock is probably where you see the majority of the mosquito-gobbling dragonflies you encounter. If your kids or grandkids are chasing frogs, it is down by the water's edge. Most of the swimming done in our waters is near our shorelines.

Later in this newsletter, there are three articles related to shorelines. One details the relationship of shoreline practices to land values. Another explores the need for vegetative buffers at the water's edge. And a third touches on the relationship

of the near shore environment to our fisheries. We cannot hope to pass on healthy waters to the next generation of residents and visitors to the Manitowish Waters area without taking care of our shorelines.

The MWLA promotes healthy shorelines through our educational outreach, our encouragement of folks to use Healthy Lakes and Healthy Rivers grants, our support of woody habitat along the shore, and our planting of native plants for erosion control on our own property.

Creating and maintaining shoreline buffers, limiting or eliminating the use of phosphorus fertilizers, correcting shoreline erosion, verifying your septic field is working, and promoting aquatic plants and woody debris are some of the ways that you can promote healthy shorelines. The next time you walk down to the shore, take a minute to think of all that the shoreline does for you, and what you can do for it.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU!

Everyone living on the MW Chain and surrounding area shares the responsibility of protecting it, so please tell your friends and neighbors of our accomplishments and encourage them to become MWLA members. Your ongoing support and involvement is essential if we are to continue to be a meaningful and thriving organization. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our efforts to "maintain, protect and enhance the quality of the Manitowish Waters Chain of Lakes and other Township waters."

WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER AND FACEBOOK UPDATE

The MWLA Board of Directors has agreed upon the following changes to the way the MWLA newsletters are provided and the way we can best communicate with our membership:

- Newsletters will be sent to MWLA members primarily electronically starting in 2024.
- Members who do not have email or wish to continue to receive the newsletter in a hard copy may indicate this when they sign up or renew. Members will be encouraged to receive the newsletter electronically.
- Members will only be able to indicate a single physical address that they want a hard copy of their newsletter to be mailed to.

The continuing steps to implement these communication change are:

- The 2023 fall edition of our newsletter will be the last to go to all our members through the USPS but will continue to go out electronically.
- An email will be sent to the Membership over the winter reminding folks that this change is coming. An announcement was made at the Annual Meeting that this change is coming.
- All of the above steps will communicate that this is to decrease costs, streamline the ability of the MWLA to
 disseminate the newsletters, to save paper and trees, and to integrate our ability to use our website, emails,
 newsletters and Facebook to provide information for the MWLA membership and community.
- By next spring, people will be able to pay for new memberships or renewals online. Those who do not have internet access will be asked to call the MWLA office to request that a hard copy of the newsletter and renewal form be mailed to them.
- AND, we are looking for assistance with keeping our Facebook page up to date. If you are interested in helping maintain our Facebook page, please contact us at mwlamailbox@yahoo.com

We strongly encourage our member email recipients to add the MailChimp email address to their contacts to ensure that they receive our newsletters and email alerts sent by MailChimp and that they do not end up in spam. Please add this email address to your contacts list: info@mwlakes.com

MWLA ELECTS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS AT 31st ANNUAL MEETING

Excerpts from Draft Annual Minutes

<u>Motion to Increase Annual MWLA Dues from \$25.00 to \$30.00:</u> Discussion included question of when the increase would take place (2024-25) and suggestion that the increase be higher i.e. \$35 or \$40. Motion made by Tom Young, seconded by Kim Cagney, to increase the 2024-25 MWLA dues to \$30.00. Motion approved.



<u>President's Report:</u> President Greg Holt reported that the MWLA board is working on improving our website so that memberships and renewals can be paid online. Starting next spring, newsletters will be sent electronically only and if a member does not have access to a computer, they can request that their newsletter be mailed by calling the MLWA office. The MWLA board also approved guidelines for wake boats that are intended to be educational and are not enforceable. Greg thanked all the members for their involvement in protecting the waters of the MW Township.

Nomination and Election of Officers and Directors:

John Hanson nominated the following officers and directors for 2023-2024: Officers (1-year term ending July 2024)

- Greg Holt, President; Angela Dombrowicki, Vice President; Eleanor Butler, Treasurer Directors (2-year terms ending July 2025)
- Sue Austin; Tom Berhhardt; Carla Biwan Hameister; Tom Kramer; Mike McKeon; Jody Miller

Nominations were closed after the membership was asked three times for other nominations from the floor. John Hanson moved to elect the slate of nominations for directors and officers. Jon Sevey seconded. Motion approved.

<u>Recognition of Departing Board Member:</u> Greg thanked Karen Dixon for her years of service to the MWLA. She is moving to Madison in September but will stay involved as a board member.

Educational Program Presentations:

- Mike McKeon, Rest Lake Property
- Dan Perry, Water Safety Patrol
- Tom Kramer, Headwaters Basin Chapter Chairman; Walleyes for Tomorrow
- Rylee Alden, Discovery Center Woods and Waters Technician; AIS
- Ron Eckstein and Cathy Techtmann; Northwoods Land Trust

<u>Comments/Questions/Concerns from the Membership:</u> Each of the presenters addressed comments, questions, and concerns from the membership.

Door Prize Drawing: Charlie Ray won a \$100 gift certificate to Manny's Parkside Restaurant.

<u>Acknowledgements and Words of Appreciation:</u> Greg thanked everyone for attending and acknowledged all the volunteers and board members who helped to make the meeting a success.

The weather was perfect; breakfast of egg casserole, crullers, fruit, and beverage was delicious; and approximately 70 members were in attendance.

and approximately 70 members were in attendance.

Mark your calendar for next year's MWLA Annual Meeting which will be held on Saturday, July 29, 2023.



Sue Austin: I have been coming to Manitowish Waters with my husband, Bob, since 1969. Bob's grandparents bought property and built a cabin on the river between Rest Lake and Stone Lake in 1925. Our boys will be fourth generation on the chain. I have always advocated for environmental protection and the importance of managing our beautiful area with care. Now that I'm retired I'm grateful to have the opportunity to become more involved in our MWLA. Bob and I spend our time between Milwaukee, MW and traveling.

Tom Bernhardt: My wife, Laura, and I have been vacationing in Vilas County since our honeymoon in 1982. We built a cabin on Island Lake in 2016, and now spend summers in Manitowish Waters and winters on Sanibel Island, Florida. I retired in 2021 after 38 years with Northern Trust in Chicago; Laura works part-time as a leadership development consultant. We enjoy all that Manitowish Waters has to offer - especially hiking, biking, kayaking, boating, fishing and swimming – and strive to be worthy stewards of the amazing resource that has been entrusted to us all.



FALL DRAW DOWN REMINDER

Beginning on October 1st, the water level of the MW Chain will begin to be drawn down from 8'0" to reach the final winter level on or before October 31st. This operation of the dam allows the owners of the dam to accomplish a difficult task, to drop 3.5 feet of water over 4000+ acres of lakes and channels by October 31st.



MANITOWISH WATERS BOAT PATROL FALL 2023 REPORT

by Dan Perry, Water Safety Officer

As Fall is upon us, the Manitowish Waters Boat Patrol Team is looking back on the summer and evaluating how the season went. Throughout the summer the Boat Patrol put in over 800 patrol hours during which they made over 6800 contacts, gave 595 verbal warnings, wrote 177 written warnings, and issued 18 citations. These numbers have increased significantly from the past few seasons due to a planned effort to provide an increase in law enforcement presence on the Manitowish Chain. During this past off-season, the decision was made to increase the patrol efforts of our Boat Patrol team. This decision was based in no small part to the results of the water safety survey that is sent out every year by the Water Safety Committee. This committee made the recommendation to increase both our patrol vessels and our personnel. With the addition this past spring of a second patrol boat and an additional patrol officer, we were able to meet our patrol goals for this season.

Throughout the season, some of the most common violations observed by our team included slow-no-wake violations, distance violations and/or dangerous operation by PWC operators, allowing passengers to ride on front decks or gunwales while under power, boats creating a hazardous wake, and operators of both PWC's and boats operating without a valid safety certification.

These violations are similar to the kind of violations we have observed over the last few seasons, with an increase in the number of towing/skiing and PWC hours of operation violations. The town of Manitowish Waters established town ordinances restricting the operation of PWC's as well as towing/water skiing hours. These activities are permitted from 9 am to 7 pm, which is slightly more restrictive than the State of Wisconsin regulations. Several individuals were contacted regarding these ordinances this season.

But watching for navigational violations is not our only responsibility. During the season, we provided aid to several vessels in need of assistance. This ranged from towing disabled vessels to a safe location, to helping canoeing campers get to a safe location under severe wind and storm conditions, to assisting vessels who lost their required navigational lights and needed to get home safely. And although we did not respond to any boat accidents this season, we did have an aircraft crash land on Island lake. Patrol Officer Tony Justice responded to the crash site and assisted with crowd control, coordinating with the NTSB and the FAA, as well as assist with photo documentation of the accident scene.

Once again this season, Boat Patrol Officers provided safety overwatch duties for the Water Ski shows held on Rest Lake near the boat landing. Our primary focus was to provide a safe environment for both the Water Ski performers as well as the boaters observing. We monitor the boat landing access as much as possible during the Ski shows to prevent vessels from inadvertently getting in the path of the ski boats. It was often necessary to stop vessels headed to the boat landing and have them wait for a safe opportunity to access the boat landing. We greatly appreciated everyone's patience during the shows, as it creates a much safer environment for everybody.

As always, the Boat Patrol Teams primary goal is to keep everyone who uses our beautiful chain of lakes as safe as possible. We do not intend to inhibit or prevent anyone's enjoyment of the water, but we do ask that everyone show respect and maturity toward all the user groups that utilize our waters. Everyone, resident or visitor, has an equal right to enjoy the water. The more respect, maturity, and patience we exhibit, the better everyone's time on the water will be, and as importantly, the better role models we will be for our families and community.

BOAT COURTEOUSLY AND LEGALLY - PLEASE WATCH YOUR WAKES

Wisconsin state law prohibits using a motorboat that creates hazardous wave or wake conditions and states that the operator of a motorboat is liable for any damage caused to the person or property of another by wash or wake. Please boat courteously and be aware of the property of others, fishermen, and those swimming, canoeing, paddle boarding and

kayaking. And remember to observe slow no wake rules within 100' of all shorelines and other boaters, in channels and anywhere buoys indicate a slow no wake area. Our Township waters are patrolled. Thank you for your cooperation.

NLDC WOODS & WATER PROGRAM

by Jamie VandenLangenberg, Water Program Director, NLDC

Eurasian Watermilfoil Detected on Manitowish Lake and Channel to Alder

On July 15 an AIS Volunteer discovered floating fragments of Eurasian Watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) on Alder Lake and rooted plants in the channel towards Manitowish Lake. The MWLA board was immediately in contact with our county conservation specialist to discuss further plans for surveying and monitoring. Following the discovery, an incident report was filed with the WDNR and the WDNR, Vilas County Land and Water, and the North Lakeland Discovery Center conducted surveys on August 9. The surveys included visually searching from the boat, snorkeling, and rake-throws on Alder Lake and the channel from Alder to Manitowish Lakes. The survey on Alder Lake did not discover any rooted plants or floating fragments, however the survey on the channel discovered three medium colonies and 27 other locations of rooted plants.

During the surveys, samples were collected and pressed to be submitted as vouchers to the state herbarium. While surveying, the colonies and rooted plants were explored to determine if any hand-pulling could be done this year, but the plants were brittle and breaking up, a common sign that their season is ending. At the end of summer Eurasian watermilfoil begins to die back as the waters cool off. Pulling efforts with brittle plants can cause more harm than good because many pieces and filaments of the plant break apart, becoming suspended in the water and drifting off to spread new populations of plants throughout the waterbody.

Each year, the Woods and Water team at NLDC survey 3 to 4 lakes of the chain on a rotating basis with the WDNR lakes protocol for Early Detection Rapid Response program. This rotation covers all lakes every 3 years. The protocol looks for early detection of many different AIS (aquatic invasive species) and is a snapshot of the waterbody. The lakes are surveyed at the end of summer and this year included Manitowish, Clear, and Little Star. Unfortunately, Eurasian watermilfoil was also discovered at 4 of the 5 sample sites on Manitowish Lake.

The WDNR and MWLA have been working closely with the North Lakeland Discovery Center to determine a plan of action for next year. There is a WDNR Early Detection Rapid Response grant program that this project will be eligible for, and the grant will be submitted this fall. Eurasian watermilfoil is a very invasive submerged plant that can be extremely aggressive and spreads quickly. Manitowish Lake was last surveyed with the EDRR protocol in 2020 and no Eurasian watermilfoil was found. This species had not ever been detected as growing on the chain and this is the first discovery of it, however it has been identified in 42 other lakes in Vilas County.

What can you do about AIS?

AIS Monitoring Volunteer Forms: Available online at the NLDC website under Programs > Woods and Water (https://discoverycenter.net/programs-events/woods-and-water/). You may also email jamie@discoverycenter.net for a copy. If you don't have your form with you, just record the date, time, location, and means of searching (boat, wading, shoreline walk, etc.) and you will be able to fill out the form when you get one.

With hundreds of lakefront property owners on our chain, we have had only eight volunteers who have turned in hours from our 2023 season. Maybe some of you have spent time looking for AIS but simply forgot to record your hours. Time is hard to come by and most of us don't have extra time to get out and look for AIS, I get it. But did you know you don't have to make a separate trip to do this?

Every time you are down by the lake you can walk your shoreline and look for AIS. You can look for AIS when you are fishing, just take note of what weeds you are pulling up on your line and what plants are showing up in your favorite fishing beds. If you enjoy a sunset pontoon ride, look down in the water when you're in the shallows to look for AIS. You can easily add some volunteer time looking for AIS during any of these activities. Helping us and reporting this time is extremely important to helping us protect our lakes. The time you spend looking for AIS is valued monetarily in our grants, therefore your effort is providing more funding and support for protecting and managing our Manitowish Chain of Lakes. Our Woods and Water team is only a handful of individuals dedicated to this work and the Manitowish Chain of Lakes is over 1,500 acres, the more eyes we have the more successful we will be.

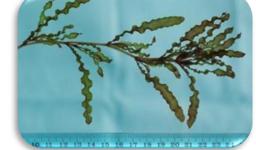
While there are many AIS to learn and lookout for, on our chain we are looking for two important ones- Curly-leaf Pondweed (https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/CurlyLeafPondweed) and Eurasian Watermilfoil (https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/EurasianWatermilfoil).

Both of these, pictured here, are present in our lakes and it is important that we have as many eyes on them as possible because we hand-pull and remove them every year. You can learn more about their features on the WDNR webpage. Our Woods and Water team at NLDC is always available to identify plants, just collect a piece in a Ziplock bag with water and drop it off at NLDC with your name, number, and lake it was found on.



Residents on Manitowish Lake and the channel to Alder: Eurasian watermilfoil has recently been discovered on your lakes and it is extremely helpful if you can learn to identify this plant and help our Woods and Water team locate new populations.

Residents on Rest, channel to Stone, Stone, Fawn, and Island lakes: Curly-leaf Pondweed is most abundant in your lakes and your help with new plants is very important to the successful control of this species.



Volunteer Forms: These are available online at the NLDC website AIS page. You may also email jamie@discoverycenter.net for a copy. If you don't have your

form with you, just record the date, time, location, and means of searching (boat, wading, shoreline walk, etc.) and you will be able to fill out the form when you get one.

❖ The digital version of this newsletter contains the AIS Volunteer form for easy printing.

MWLA sincerely thanks Jamie Van, NLDC Water Program Director, and the Summer Woods and Water Program Staff for all their efforts this summer in monitoring and removing AIS from our lakes and rivers plus helping with shoreline restoration projects – Richie Dollhopf, Aidan Witthoff, Zach Ryan, Alexis McDonald, and Rylee Alden.

WATER CLARITY CAN HAVE AN EFFECT ON WATERFRONT HOME SALE PRICES IN VILAS AND ONEIDA COUNTIES

by Quita Sheehan, Conservation Specialist, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept.

As a follow up to investigations into the economic value of waterfront properties in Oneida and Vilas Counties, researchers from UW-Eau Claire researched the link between water clarity and the sale prices of waterfront homes. This research project was proposed by the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept. and the Oneida and Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Associations and funded by grants from the Lumberjack RC&D and the UWEC Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Using home sales data from Zillow.com and Secchi data for 60 area lakes researchers found that home prices rose as water clarity improved. Depending on the lake, an improvement of water clarity by about 3 feet would increase average home sales prices by \$8,000 to \$32,000 dollars. Water clarity is an objective measurement of the depth at which a Secchi disk can still be seen. Water clarity can indicate water quality issues such as a high nutrient load or tannin stained water. The value of improving water clarity will depend on the natural environment of the lake.

On extremely clear lakes, an increase in water clarity would not add much more value. However, on a lake of limited clarity, improving Secchi results from 3 to 6 feet, has a significant impact on sales price. One follow up questions is whether the reverse holds true for monetary values: if water clarity diminishes does the sales price decline by the same amount? According to Dr. Thomas Kemp, this is a log relationship – so the values are similar but change more dramatically for a 6 foot change in Secchi depth than for a 3 foot change.

Past analysis of tax data shows that 75% of Vilas County's property tax revenue and 61% of Oneida County's property tax revenue comes from waterfront property. If property values can be affected by changes in water clarity, those changes can

affect local government and school spending. More reasons to ensure that we play our parts in protecting and improving the water clarity of our lakes.

Copies of the water clarity study are available from the Vilas and Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Departments, the Oneida and Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Associations, the Walter E Olson Memorial Library in Eagle River, the Rhinelander District Library, Lumberjack RC&D and the Lac du Flambeau Natural Resources.

SHORELINES AND OUR FISHERY

In the Wisconsin DNR pamphlet, *The Water's Edge*, Mike Staggs, a previous DNR Fisheries Director stated, "If you destroy the natural shoreline habitat, then fishing will get worse—and we cannot fix that situation by simply stocking or changing the fishing regulations. If you want great fishing—then you have to protect the fishing habitat."

The pamphlet points out that bass, bluegills, northern pike and other fish spawn near the shoreline in shallow waters. Walleyes use clean gravel near the shoreline swept by waves to spawn. Possibly you have seen muskies spawn along some of the healthy and suitable shorelines of our Manitowish Waters lakes.



<u>The Waters Edge</u> indicates that many species of fish "do best within the tangles of aquatic plants" and the brush found by healthy shorelines. Yellow perch and northern pike lay their eggs on aquatic plants. We should allow native growing aquatic plants to populate our near shore environment and limit any removal.

Research indicates that overdeveloped shorelines can result in bodies of water with less fish, and lakes and rivers with less developed shorelines typically can have both more fish and more species of fish. Along with removing plants and woody debris, another way of stressing a fishery with development is trying to change natural shores into beaches for swimming. Bringing in sand not only covers burrows used by mayflies and the habitat frogs use for laying eggs, but the sand can also cover the natural silt and gravel that fish use for spawning.

Maintaining healthy shorelines promote fish habitat in other ways. Panfish and bass hide out in the shallows, under the shade of down trees and in the plants growing near the water's edge. Not just the fish, but many of the small aquatic organisms that feed bluegills and other fish do best in the fallen wood along shorelines.

Many of us like to fish. If we want to continue to enjoy fishing and to encourage others who enjoy fishing to come to our lakes and rivers we need a healthy habitat for the fish. Woody debris, down trees, near shore aquatic plants and appropriate shoreline buffers are essential for that healthy habitat. If we want a healthy fishery, we need healthy shorelines—and that is up to us.

(Much of the above information taken from the DNR pamphlet *The Water's Edge*. To read the complete pamphlet, please check out the following link:) https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ShorelandZoning/documents/watersedge.pdf

DOING THE RIGHT THING FOR OUR LAKES AND RIVERS

Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association

Shoreline Buffers: Good for Your Lake. Good for You.

What can you do to help keep your lake healthy? Actually, quite a lot. One of_the best things you can do is create (or keep) a strip of natural vegetation – a shoreline buffer – along the length of your frontage. Shoreline buffers can help limit the effects of development on our lakes. If everybody had one, our lakes would be cleaner and more beautiful. You might be surprised at all the good shoreline buffer can do.



- Protects the water by filtering runoff containing silt, salt, chemicals, fertilizer and other pollutants.
- Slows runoff, letting water soak into the ground instead of flushing straight into the lake.
- Helps keep waves and runoff from eroding the shoreline.
- Improves near-shore habitat for fish and other water creatures.
- Provides a haven for mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects – a sanctuary for wildlife. Good for you and your property.
- Saves time you would otherwise spend mowing and trimming more lawn.
- Gives you extra privacy and helps muffle the noise of boats and personal watercraft.
- Discourages messy pests like geese and non-native plants like purple loosestrife.
- Helps make the lake more attractive to home buyers, and so makes your property more valuable.
- It's far easier and cheaper to protect your lake from harm than to clean it after it's been damaged. Plan your shoreline buffer this year.

Upland Buffer Zone

Buffer Zone

• Did you know...A shoreline buffer as little as 30 to 35 feet wide can make a big difference in protecting your lake from pollution.



• **Dumping of yard waste into Wisconsin waters is prohibited**. Please dispose of your yard waste appropriately; it should not be dumped into our rivers and lakes! If you see someone raking yard waste into the water, please inform them of the Natural Resources rule below. Contact DNR Warden Rich Thole at 715-605-2130 to report shoreland violations.

NR 30.12 rule: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/30/II/12

Unless an individual or a general permit has been issued under this section or authorization has been granted by the legislature, no person may do any of the following unless a permit has been acquired:

- (a) Deposit any material or place any structure upon the bed of any navigable water where no bulkhead line has been established.
- (b) Deposit any material or place any structure upon the bed of any navigable water beyond a lawfully established bulkhead line.
- Shoreland lighting Think of your neighbors!

MWLA receives occasional complaints regarding shoreland lighting issues. Currently, language from the State concerning shoreland lighting prohibits the regulation of such. Education appears to be the best solution to this issue. Most complaints are about security lights that are left on from dusk to dawn, or even 24/7 all year long. Solving shoreland lighting problems involves working with your neighbors and talking individually with them about the lighting problem, keeping in mind their concerns about safety and security. We should all strive to be considerate of how our lighting affects our neighbors next door and our neighbors across the water. No one should miss the beauty and benefits of moonlight, starlight, and the northern lights due to mercury-vapor lighting. Simply shielding and properly aiming your lights and using lower wattage can achieve the same degree of illumination. Click the link to access the informational pamphlet from the UW-Extension titled **Sensible Shoreland Lighting**. http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/GWQ031.pdf

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MWLA Board of Directors appreciates your continued support.

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