



The Winnebago Lakes Council promotes the long-term sustainability of lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan and their connecting rivers.

The Council's mission is to protect and improve the ecological health and scenic beauty of the Winnebago lakes through citizen involvement in research, education, communication and cooperation.

Website

www.winnebago-lakes.org

Email

info@winnebago-lakes.org

Winnebago Lakes Council

P.O. Box 100
Winnebago, WI 54985

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Aquatic plants, lack of sewer, and motorboat speed and noise cited as waterway concerns

Each year at its Annual Meeting the Winnebago Lakes Council asks members to identify issues of concern on the Winnebago lakes. This year three were named:

- Excessive aquatic plants on the south end of lake, especially with low water levels. This hampers boating and fishing.
- Sewer on the northern end of Lake Winnebago in the Town of Harrison. What is the present status?
- Noise and speed on the Wolf River. Multiple jurisdictions make it difficult to determine who would address this.

While various suggestions were forthcoming about how to deal with these issues, the Lakes Council also urged members to bring them up again at the Winnebago Lakes Conference scheduled for March, 2010. This conference will focus on lakes planning for the next 20 years. The public is welcome.

In other business, Mike Lizotte presented the 2009 Annual Report (p. 3), conducted board elections and introduced new staff.

Board Elections. Elected for three year terms through 2012 were Gene Dryzcimski, Tom Nedland, Andrew Sabai, Jan Scalpone, Diane Schauer and Dick Snyder. Continuing through 2011 are Greg Keil, Wayne Mueller, Wayne Risvold and Peggy Davidson. Dr. Lizotte thanked departing board members Marc Blum, Jerry Lopas and Ken Friedman for their service.

New Staff. Mike Lizotte will be moving from President to the organization's first Executive Director, a part time position to assist with completing several aquatic invasive species and community education grants. Dr. Lizotte is also the Interim Sustainability Director at UW Oshkosh. Not present was Barb Benish, new staff contracted to coordinate the Winnebago Lakes Conference in March. Barb is adjunct faculty at UWO and has extensive non-profit experience managing conferences.

Following the business meeting, Ron Bruch showed the film "Mysteries of the Great Lakes" and answered questions.

Don't miss "Mysteries of the Great Lakes"

The Winnebago Lakes Council is partnering with several groups for three public showings of this award winning film. First shown in IMAX theaters nationwide, the film documents the challenges the Great Lakes face, changing from pristine to polluted to recovering. Featured is the life cycle of the Winnebago sturgeon as they complete their run up the Wolf River. Local DNR fish biologist Ron Bruch also plays a central role. The small-screen version of the film is about 40 minutes long. A short program about the Winnebago lakes will also be presented.

Tuesday, January 12, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.

Ledge View Nature Center
W2348 Short Road, Chilton (920-849-7094)
Diane Schauer, Presenter

Wednesday, January 13, 2010 - 6:00 p.m.

Bubolz Nature Preserve
4815 Lynndale Drive, Appleton (920-731-6041)
Wayne Mueller, Presenter

Thursday, January 14, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.

Sierra Club, Bubolz Nature Preserve
4815 Lynndale Drive, Appleton (920-731-6041)
Mike Lizotte, Presenter



Ron Bruch talks about filming "Mysteries of the Great Lakes" at the Lakes Council's Annual Meeting on October 13. (Photo by Diane Schauer)

Around the Lakes

Wisconsin Lakes Convention

March 30, April 1. KI Convention Center, Green Bay. This year's convention will focus on shoreland and shallow areas around lakes. National, state and local experts will address a broad range of topics aimed to help participants tap into an array of opportunities to protect their lakes. The Winnebago lakes are usually underrepresented at this conference. Register at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/conventions/

Annual Sportsmen's Day

January 9, 8:00-4:15 p.m., Chilton High School, 530 W. Main Street, Chilton. Eleven seminars will be presented, including "Working the Winnebago Reefs" by Scott "Axl" Ehricke and "Winnebago Ice Fishing" by Dean Arnolaussen. Displays. Church hosted. Free, but registration is required. Call 920-989-2745.

Help repair Winneconne boat launch

A fund drive to repair the boat launch at the end of Indian Shores Road in the Town of Winneconne is underway. The launch has deteriorated to the point of hazardous use. Boats have trouble launching because of large spaces between the concrete slabs. Ice fisherman and sturgeon spearers have trouble getting trucks and shacks onto the lake because lower lake levels in winter expose rocks and gaps. The launch is important because it is the only public access to Lake Winneconne with safe ice. With repair costs of \$18,000, a pledge for \$4500 from the Upper Lakes Sturgeon for Tomorrow, and expectation the town will contribute \$9,000 once private funding is secured, \$4500 is still needed to move ahead. The hope is that local conservation or civic groups will pledge a share of this cost. Contact Matt Woods 920-582-0113.

People of the Sturgeon now available

This new book by Kathleen Schmitt Kline, Ron Bruch, and Fred Biniski is a history of the cultures surrounding lake sturgeon in the Winnebago area. Four years in the making, the story is told through a fascinating collection of photos, articles and a few good fish tales. Many of the people and places in the book may be familiar to local readers. Purchase the book at the Oshkosh Public Museum or from Amazon.com.

Eagles on the rise on Fox River

If you're interested in viewing eagles, the lower Fox River from Neenah's Riverside Park to Wrightstown Bridge boasts one of the highest populations in the Midwest. Last February the DNR estimated over 190 eagles made their home in this area. Their comeback is remarkable. In 1981 only one eagle was sighted on the Fox. Citizen monitors will count at various sites. If interested some sites may still need monitors. Contact Cheryl at croot@newalliance.org

New state laws protect our lakes

Aquatic invasive species policy improved

This law offers some technical changes to improve upon the "illegal to transport" language passed in the supplemental budget bill in May, 2008. All aquatic plants and animals are required to be removed from boats and other equipment before transported on public highways. Enforcement is also expanded.

Mercury regulated in certain products

This law regulates the sale of non-essential household products to which mercury has been added during formulation and manufacture including fever thermometers, manometers, thermostats, instruments and measuring devices, switches and relays, and household items. Every lake in Wisconsin is currently under a mercury advisory.

Phosphorus banned in dishwasher detergent

This law prohibits the use of phosphorus in household dishwashing products. Studies show that 19% of the phosphorus entering wastewater treatment plants from non-ingested sources comes from dishwasher detergents. More than one-third of Wisconsin treatment plants do not remove phosphorus. Phosphorus causes excessive algae growth in lakes.

Learn more about these new state laws and pending legislation from the Wisconsin Association of Lakes at www.wisconsinlakes.org

Sharing a harvester may be both cost-effective and environmentally sound

Andrew Sabai, Winnebago Lakes Council board member and currently a DNR limited term employee, poses a cooperative solution to a pressing lake problem.

Aquatic plants are an essential component of a healthy lake. However, there are times when they become a problem for recreational activities. When these plants become a nuisance they can be controlled by water level management, manual or mechanical removal, biological control or chemical treatment.

The most commonly used controls on a large scale are mechanical removal and chemical control. Each of these has its benefits and drawbacks. Herbicides are the most controversial because of their nature as toxins—toxins directly released into the water we drink, swim and fish. Mechanical harvest is the most environmentally friendly, but has a reputation for being costly because sometimes, like a lawn, the plants require frequent cuttings.

Each year about 10 local permits are taken out for aquatic plant removal on our lake system

The cost of purchasing, leasing, or contracting a harvester can seem cost prohibitive, but cost sharing among the ten municipalities, businesses, individuals and communities in the Winnebago system that apply for chemical and mechanical harvest of aquatic plants would reduce the cost per cutting. It could be possible for a municipality like the City of Oshkosh to purchase a harvester and contract the cutting and removal of plants. The city already has dump trucks and maintenance crews to handle any needed repairs. The income generated from contracting aquatic plant harvesting could offset the cost of the purchase and the maintenance of the Miller's Bay boat landing and mooring plugs. If these groups work together they can have an economical and environmentally friendly solution to their nuisance plant problems.

Winnebago Lakes Council 2009 Annual Report

The Winnebago Lakes Council continues to chip away at the challenges such a large geographic area presents. In 2009 we added a board member from Calumet County, expanding our representation to the east side of Lake Winnebago. Events were held in venues to the north, south and west, attracting a broader audience than ever before. Our system wide approach has gained us larger grants, allowing us to contract for two staff positions in 2009 and, in 2010, our first Executive Director. Now in our fourth year, we aim to broaden our educational opportunities, involve more members in our work, and focus in on a variety of projects to protect and improve our lakes.

Community Education

Speakers Series. This year the Speakers Series moved around the lakes to Menasha, Fond du Lac and Winneconne. Topics included lake sturgeon, the Fox River Locks, the status of our fishery, lake ecology and Winnebago's safety patrol. Total audience more than doubled in response to increased media exposure.

Fishing Workshops. Three workshops were presented this year, a follow up to a successful first year of workshops. Focus this year was on fly fishing and seasonal movements of walleyes. Arranged by Jack Brauer, presenters were Ryan Standke and Rob Teske.

Winnebago Conservation Expo. The Lakes Council participated in the Winnebago County 2009 Conservation Expo in May. The next Conservation Expo is scheduled for 2012.

Lakes Education Center. Difficult economic times have tabled pursuit of a Lakes Education Center in downtown Oshkosh. We continue to address the concept in community talks

Community Talks. Talks of various lengths about the Winnebago Pool lakes were given to numerous community groups, with several more scheduled later this year. Talks are tailored to address a wide variety of interests.

Web site and Newsletter. The Lakes Council's Web site (www.winnebagolakes.org) and quarterly newsletter *WaterWays* continued to keep residents informed of lake projects and activities.

Programs and Projects

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Regional Plan. Work began on phase 2 of the Regional AIS plan with funds from a \$63,000 state grant. Inventories are being completed and public input is being sought to firm up recommendations aimed at developing partnerships for plan implementation. Focus this year is on local decision makers in the region, with an AIS conference planned for spring 2010 followed by discussions with city councils and county and town boards. These activities follow 18 months of previous work during which Phase 1 of the plan was completed with assistance from AIS Coordinator Candace Mortara, a 15 member Advisory Group, and staff from UWEX and DNR.

Clean Boats, Clean Waters. For the *fourth* year in a row, the Lakes Council cooperated with UWO on an AIS boat inspection and education project funded by a state grant to the Lakes Council and local matching dollars. UWO hired seven summer interns to check boats and distribute AIS literature at busy boat landings on the Winnebago system. An additional five inspectors worked on the system under the Waterforce program, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Information gathered through this process helps evaluate the success of the program.

2010 Winnebago Lakes Conference. Plans are underway to hold our first annual lakes conference on March 13. A coordinator was hired to work with a conference committee of WLC board members and advisors. Theme for the conference is celebrating the accomplishments of the 1989 Winnebago Comprehensive Management Plan, and planning for the system's next 20 years. We hope to attract a broad range of people interested in our lakes.

Lake Butte des Morts Shoreland Management Survey.

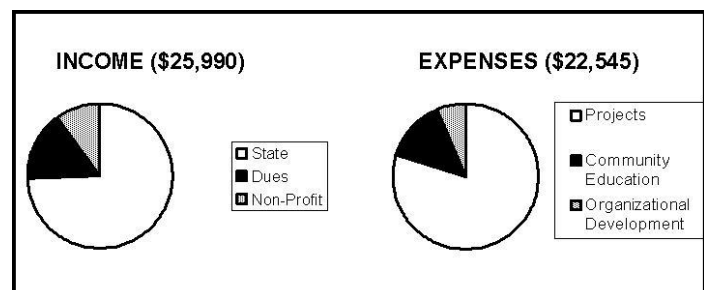
Preparatory work has been completed to inform the more than 400 participants in the 2007 survey about recent state and local programs addressing some of their concerns. Survey findings indicated property owners could benefit from more education about phosphorus reduction and shoreline management.

Fox-Wolf Partners Network. The pursuit of a formal network has evolved into an informal network of agencies and groups working together on specific projects. An evaluation of the Council's partnership efforts for its first three years indicated more than 30 partners worked together on projects to help sustain our lakes, attracting more than \$214,000 in new money for the system.

Board of Directors, 2008-2009

Jack Brauer, T. Vinland, *Consultant, retired publisher*
Marc Blum, T. Vinland, *Developer, retired dentist*
Peggy Davidson, T. Oshkosh, *Writer, retired professor*
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Michael Lizotte, C. Oshkosh, *Interim Sustainability Dir. UWO*
Jerry Lopas, T. Menasha, *Retired Ashwaubonan Village Engineer*
Wayne Mueller, C. Oshkosh, *Corporate operations manager*
Nedland, Tom, C. Appleton, *Ecologist, NRC*
Sabai, Andrew, C. Oshkosh, *Limited term employee WDNR*
Diane Schauer, Calumet Co. *Invasive Species Coordinator*
Jan Scalpone, C. Oshkosh, *Retired, East Central Reg. Planning*
Dick Snyder, T. Black Wolf, *Consultant, Mercury Marine*

Financial Statement - August 2008 to September 2009



The Winnebago Lakes Council is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization funded by dues, donations and grants. Thanks to the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW Extension, CNRA, Oshkosh Southwest Rotary and UW Oshkosh for their assistance.

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Your membership renewal notice is included with this newsletter. WLC membership extends for one year from January through December. Please respond to this notice to help save additional mailing costs. Thank you..

Habitat “schmabitat”

Maybe that’s what you’re thinking if you’re on the lake alongside a mess of aquatic plants. After all, those darn “weeds” foul your shoreline, mess with your motor, and look awful choking up the view with their green tentacles. But, like all things, there are two sides to the story.

Side # 1: The ugly side

Yes, aquatic plants in their glory seem to exist to irritate. They harass users and residents as they multiply, grow, and die, leaving a stinking mess like the liquefying lettuce forgotten in the bottom drawer of the fridge. They consume oxygen at night through respiration, and in extreme densities can drive nighttime oxygen levels *too* low.

Navigation. A crop of impenetrable green extends outward on the horizon for hundreds of miles—or so it seems. Fried outboards unsuccessfully traversing across this vast expanse lay strewn about in backyard garages waiting for the motor fairy to bring them back to life. It’s a long wait.

Invasive plants. We’ve all heard about them. These green meanies take over space like relatives staying too long. These you can kill with a permit from the DNR (not the relatives, the plants!). Eurasian water milfoil is one, a nasty domineering battleaxe of a plant that likes to push the “natives” around.

I’ve been slimed! Like saltwater in a wound, you go fishing and pull your rig out at the landing. Surprise! 800 pounds of “seaweed” are randomly distributed on frame, rollers, bolts, axle, and wire. Complicating this, new laws mandating the complete removal of plants from your boat and trailer. Geez!

Lake plants get in your face. They violate our view of how the world should be, orderly and neat.

Side # 2: Every thorn has its rose

Water clarity. Ever notice how clear water is around lake plant beds? It’s easily *twice* as clear when compared to the middle of the lake. Their roots anchor sediment and compete with algae for space. They filter the water, great news for skiers, tubers, anglers, and the party boat gang.

Habitat = house. Every fish in the lake depends on its “house,” from the T rex of fish, the sturgeon, to the most miniscule minnow. Lake plants are critical houses for perch, bluegill, crappie, northern, bass and all their offspring. Take away the rooted aquatic plants and you will have homeless fish sleeping in the streets of Oshkosh.

Mark Sesing, DNR Lakes Biologist, responds light-heartily to a serious lake issue.

Resiliency. A fertile lake with diverse plants is a lake that holds up to stress. Floods, drought, pollution, invasive species, and water level tomfoolery are all cuts into the “fabric”. Enough cuts and the fabric tears. The buffering of lake plants holds the fabric together. Without these stress absorbers the stability of the lake would tilt like the tower of Pisa, or worse.

Algae. In balance, algae is a marvelous rootless plant providing a nutritious buffet for all things aquatic. Out of balance, they wreak havoc by growing out of control. What keeps them in check? Rooted lake plants. Murky lakes are typically short on rooted lake plants. These lakes play host to blue-green algae blooms, a sometimes toxic mix moving to leanings of the wind. These algae are bright green or blue. In the worst cases, rainbow mats of purple, green, blue and white form a thick scum. We’ve seen this on the Winnebago lakes, usually in late summer. You’ll know it when you see it.

Side # 3. There is no side 3

We just wanted to make sure you read this. Despite the ugly side, there is an undeniable beauty to lake plant functions. They are there to filter, fight, stabilize, house, and yes, to irritate. It can be a love/ hate relationship, but it’s always a relationship of necessity for the Winnebago lakes and the people who use them.