



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.winnebagolakes.org](http://www.winnebagolakes.org)

#### Email

[info@winnebagolakes.org](mailto:info@winnebagolakes.org)

#### Winnebago Lakes Council

P.O. Box 100  
Winnebago, WI 54985

#### Board of Directors

**Michael Lizotte**, *President*  
**Jan Scalpone**, *Secretary*  
**Wayne Mueller**, *Treasurer*  
**Marc Blum**, *Town of Vinland*  
**Jack Brauer**, *Town of Vinland*  
**Paul Fowler**, *Town of Black Wolf*  
**Greg Keil**, *City of Menasha*  
**Jerry Lopas**, *Town of Harrison*  
**Dick Snyder**, *Town of Black Wolf*  
**Bob Wojcik**, *Village of Malone*

Jan Scalpone, *Editor*

## Inside This Issue

- 2 .... AIS progress
- 3 .... Diving for Lion fish
- 4 .... Lakes Education Center

## Walleye fishing workshops scheduled for 2008

Board member and avid fisherman Jack Brauer has teamed up with fishing guide Ryan Standke to present a series of four fishing workshops for the Winnebago Lakes Council. All workshops are scheduled for 7 - 9 p.m. at the Coughlin Center, Cty. Rd. Y, Oshkosh.

The first workshop will be held on Tuesday, February 19 and present practical and comprehensive information on river fishing for walleyes as they make their annual spawning run. Material will be provided both for the angler who is frustrated with lack of success when fishing walleyes in the Fox and Wolf rivers and for novice anglers looking to learn the basics of this method of fishing.

This workshop will cover many details of river fishing--location, equipment, baits and proper presentation of baits. Because of limited space, advance reservations are recommended. Call Jack at 920-233-3536 for your reservation.

Three more workshops are scheduled for 2008, all on walleye fishing. Participants may

attend all four workshops or just those that interest them. There is no charge for Winnebago Lakes Council members, but non-members will be asked for a \$10 tax deductible donation at each workshop. Non-members may join the Lakes Council at the workshops.

The purpose of the workshops is to help anglers hone their skills, increase awareness of the extraordinary water resources in this area, and attract new members to the Winnebago Lakes Council.



Fishing guide  
Ryan Standke

### Walleye Fishing Workshops

Feb. 19 - River Fishing

Mar. 31 - Weed Fishing

Apr. 29 - Reef Fishing

May 19 - Trolling for Walleyes  
7:00—9:00 p.m.

Coughlin Center, Cty. Rd. Y, Oshkosh

## Interested in learning more about our lakes?

The Winnebago Lakes Council is gearing up for various outreach programs in 2008. We are challenged by the huge size of our lakes and would like your help.

**Speakers Bureau.** Conservation and civic clubs scheduling programs for summer and fall can now call on us for a short program on a wide variety of issues related to the Winnebago lakes. Sessions include a short PowerPoint presentation and a question and answer period.

**Special Events.** These events will showcase a speaker with a special message about the lakes. Topics will range from water level and fishery management to algae blooms and shoreland management. We plan to have at least six of these events in different locations on the lakes. We will be contacting various groups to partner with us.

**Annual Forum.** This is another collaborative event, modeled after similar lake events in other parts of the state. We anticipate this forum to be in the fall. We plan to bring together local organizations, businesses and governments for exhibits and seminars that showcase our lakes. The forum will be designed to interest the multiple users of our lakes and reflect the broad range of water-related interests we have here.

Funding for the Lakes Council's educational programs comes from grants, dues and donations. The Lakes Council was recently awarded a state Small Scale Lake Management grant for \$3000 and is currently seeking several other grants from area Foundations and agencies.

If any of these projects interest your group contact us at [info@winnebagolakes.org](mailto:info@winnebagolakes.org)

## Around the Lakes

**February 16, AIS Workshop** 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Milwaukee with nationally renowned experts in the field of aquatic invasive species management. The event will be the first in the state to address hydrilla, a fast spreading exotic plant found and controlled in one private artificial pond in Wisconsin. Learn how to help strengthen overall AIS prevention and response strategies for lakes in Wisconsin and Illinois. [www.wisconsinlakes.org/](http://www.wisconsinlakes.org/)

**February 19, Walleye River Fishing Workshop** 7-9 p.m. Coughlin Center, Oshkosh. The first of four workshops sponsored by the Winnebago Lakes Council featuring Ryan Standke, area fishing guide. No fee for Lakes Council members; \$10 for others. Space limited. For reservations call Jack at 920-231-3536

**February 20, Phragmites Control and Management Workshop** 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at UW-Green Bay. Invasive *Phragmites australis* is already evident on the south end of Winnebago in Supple's Marsh and a real threat to wetlands there. This workshop is designed for individuals and organizations interested in learning about best available control technologies and opportunities to collaborate. No fee. Contact Kendra Axness at 920-438-7531 or [kendra.axness@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:kendra.axness@ces.uwex.edu).

**March 31, Weed Fishing For Walleye Workshop** 7-9 p.m. Coughlin Center, Oshkosh. Second of the Lakes Council's walleye fishing workshops. Contact Jack at 920-231-3536

**April 17- 19, Wisconsin Lakes Convention**, KI Convention Center, Green Bay, WI. Annual lakes convention, a statewide event featuring state and national experts on all aspects of lake management. The Winnebago lakes are usually underrepresented at this convention. Mark your calendars now to get our issues on a statewide agenda. Contact [www.wisconsinlakes.org](http://www.wisconsinlakes.org)

**April 29, Reef Fishing for Walleye Workshop** 7-9 p.m. Coughlin Center, Oshkosh. Third of the Lakes Council's walleye fishing workshops. Contact Jack at 920-231-3536.

**May 31, Second Annual Natural Shoreline Expo**, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Sunnyview Expo Center, 500 Cty. Rd. Y, Oshkosh, presented by the Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department featuring exhibits, seminars and products to help Winnebago area residents design environmentally friendly shorelines. Exhibitors: reserve your space. Contact Keith at 920-232-1950.

## Aquatic invasive species A major issue for the Winnebago lakes *More groups are looking for solutions*

### Regional AIS plan expected by spring

The AIS planning process for the Winnebago Pool is beginning to wrap up. Five public sessions designed to gather local input were held in September and October. Approximately 80 citizens attended and participated in discussions that resulted in suggestions and reaction to preliminary strategies. The results of these sessions are being combined with the work of a 15 member advisory committee to draft the prevention plan scheduled for completion in March.

The plan will identify broad strategies and programs focused on preventing the movement of invasive species into or out of the Winnebago System and list potential implementation actions. While the process of creating a prevention plan has been long and involved, the real work begins with implementation. We'll be looking for help from multiple partnerships with local government, agencies and civic, conservation and other area groups. Funding for this plan came from a state grant, with UWEX and Winnebago Lakes Council staff coordinating the work

### Statewide funding increases for AIS projects

The total amount for Aquatic Invasive Species grants available in the 2007-2009 state budget is \$7.6 million, compared to \$3 million in the previous budget, an increase of 250%. Eligible projects funded by these grants include AIS education, watercraft inspection activities at boat landings, pioneer AIS population control, established AIS population control and restoration of native aquatic plants. Consistent with other DNR lake grants, up to 75% of the costs of eligible projects are now reimbursable, instead of 50%.

### Oshkosh seeks AIS grant for Millers Bay

The City of Oshkosh is seeking approximately \$75,000 in DNR AIS grants to help control Eurasian water milfoil, an invasive species in Miller's Bay on Lake Winnebago. For the past few summers the harbor and boat launch in Menominee Park were nearly impassible because of the thick weedy growth.. Last year the city Parks Department spent \$8000 (including a \$1000 donation from the Oshkosh Yacht Club) to spray chemicals to temporarily kill the milfoil. This year, State Rep. Gordon Hintz was able to get \$25,000 funding for weed control in the state budget. The Parks Department is developing a long-term plan for these and additional funds to address the issue.

### Rapide Croche Boat Transfer Plan addresses AIS

Public meetings during December helped the public understand how boats will move over the Rapide Croche dam when all of the Fox River Locks are open for through navigation. The Rapide Croche dam is permanently closed to prevent migration of sea lampreys into the Lake Winnebago system. Proposed is a boat lift and transfer station to move boats overland. To prevent spread of invasive species from the Great Lakes, all upstream boats heading toward the Winnebago system will go through various steps that includes being floated in 110 degree water for 10 minutes. Monitoring for invasives in the navigation pools upstream and downstream from the lock will also occur.

The public meetings also stressed boater responsibility for removing invasives before launching in any of the 60 boat access points on the lakes and upper and lower Fox River. Speakers pointed out that law enforcement, education, outreach and cooperation with upstream anglers and boaters are essential for overall success of AIS prevention efforts. The DNR is currently reviewing the plan. Contact [lock269735@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lock269735@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

## Meet Bob Wojcik: board member, scuba diver, activist

Bob Wojcik is now in his second year of a two year term on the Winnebago Lakes Council board, having served a year previously on the Interim Board. Bob owns ProMotorsports in Fond du Lac. He lives on the east shore of Lake Winnebago in the town of Malone with his wife Diane.

Bob loves living on the water, is interested in marine biology and enjoys scuba diving. This year he'll try ice diving on Lake Winnebago, but for the past few winters he has chosen to travel to the tropics to do his diving. His diving trips are not the ordinary type—they are combined with working trips geared toward making a difference. He has spent time building houses

for Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua and doing repairs for Clinica Esperanza, a charitable hospital in Honduras.

The trip to the Bahamas last winter collecting samples of Lion fish, however, is one of his favorites. Bob represents the Lakes Council on the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Advisory Committee, so to travel to another part of the world to help with research on an exotic species really caught his interest. Bob said "After diving for awhile you can't help but be concerned about what's happening to our underwater environment. People just don't see it. For them, the beauty of surface water is still there and nothing has changed."

### AIS research: diving for Lion fish in the Bahamas

*Winter seems a good time for Bob to share his underwater experience in Florida and Bermuda. There's a lesson to be learned here, too.*

After some on line investigation into possible trips last winter, I came across a trip that really caught my interest. Blackbeards, a live aboard diving operation based in the Bahamas, was working with the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), a grass roots organization that seeks to conserve marine ecosystems by educating, enlisting and enabling divers and other marine enthusiasts to become active ocean stewards and citizen scientists. The project was to investigate and collect samples of the Red Lion fish (*Pterois volitans*), an exotic species which is endemic to the south Pacific, but now has been spotted from New York to Bermuda, the Bahamas and Florida.

The trip started in Georgetown, The Bahamas, where I boarded the Morning Star, one of three of Blackbeards' 64 foot sailboats specifically designed for diving. Blackbeards' cruises have been described by many as camping on a sail boat and that was fine with me. The accommodations were basic, the food was good and my fellow divers and crew were outstanding. Live aboard trips consist of three to four dives a day designed around breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week. You normally move from dive sites at night much like a cruise ship would.

Upon boarding, Laddie Akins, Project leader for REEF, explained what we would be accomplishing during the next week. We would be sailing from

Georgetown in the Great Exuma, northeast to Cat Island, then to Little San Salvador heading north to The Eleutherias, west to Providence, north to The Berries and ending our trip in Grand Bahama.

Laddie explained that many of the sites had been dived for Lion fish about six months before, giving us a baseline to determine population changes. The goal of the trip was to safely collect as many Lion fish as possible. Once collected the specimens were dissected by a marine biologist on board from the University of The Bahamas. The fish were measured, opened to check stomach content, checked for spawn, and gonad samples taken. All this was logged, labeled, bagged and placed in a freezer for further testing at the University of North Carolina.

This study was being conducted with joint partnership of the Bahamian government the University of The Bahamas, NOAA, and the University of North Carolina.



Catching Lion fish is difficult. They hide under coral outcroppings with venomous spines extended to catch prey. They're extremely fast. Here a diver uses a small net and protective glove to place one in a plastic bag. Though not lethal, the venom can be hazardous if injected under water.



Lion fish are an exotic species in the Bahama reef. They mature earlier and grow faster than native species, depleting the food source for native fish important to the economy. They have no known predators in the region.

REEF and Blackbeards Cruises provided concerned divers who help fund the fish collection process through trip fees and volunteering to collect the samples.

During the week of our dives we were able to catch a total of 71 Lion fish. They ranged in size from just over 2 inches to just under 10 inches, indicating they have been sexually active and reproducing at a rate which could be a real problem in the future for the native reef fish located here.

The final question, where did they come from? No one knows for sure. First thoughts are that innocent aquarium owners released them in the Atlantic when they got too big. Another theory is that several Lion fish were lost from an aquarium in a Florida zoo when a hurricane destroyed the marine exhibit. The fact that they multiplied so quickly shows how vulnerable water resources are and why we need to be diligent in protecting them. Whether it is the Winnebago Pool, the Great Lakes or our major oceans, they can all be changed by an innocent act. - Bob Wojcik



## Join Us

Member.....\$25  
 Family.....\$40  
 Guardian .....\$70  
 Protector .....\$100  
 Provider.....\$250  
 Sustainer.....\$500  
 Benefactor.....\$1000 (Life)  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send check to:

*Contributions  
are tax deductible*



P.O. Box 100  
Winnebago, WI 54985

WINNEBAGO  
LAKES  
COUNCIL  
P.O. Box 100  
Winnebago, WI 54985

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
OSHKOSH WI  
PERMIT NO 90

## Group pursues concept of Lakes Education Center

About 30 people contributed ideas to the concept of a Lakes Education Center for the Winnebago Pool lakes at a meeting on December 12 at Fox Valley Technical College in Oshkosh. Mike Lizotte, Director of UW Oshkosh Aquatic Research Lab and president of the Winnebago Lakes Council presented background information and led the discussion.

Attending the meeting were representatives from city planning, state agencies, the tourism sector, conservation, civic and bicycle clubs, developers, educators, anglers, boaters, lake property owners and other interested citizens.

The favorable response resulted in formation of a Steering Committee and three committees to move the concept forward. On the table are two ideas: a central facility on the waterfront in downtown Oshkosh linked to other cultural and natural centers along the proposed Riverwalk and WIOWASH trail; or a

### GET INVOLVED

Committees and Co-Chairs  
 For the Lakes Education Center  
**Site Exploration:** *Mary Hiles, Mark Blum*  
**Facilities/Activities:** *Peggy Davison, Marilyn Dahl*  
**Needs Analysis:** *Britani Von Ruden, Arlene Schmuel*  
**Contact:** [info@winnebagolakes.org](mailto:info@winnebagolakes.org)

simpler version: a string of educational and recreational centers linked by the Riverwalk and trail. Common to both concepts is the need for a public/private partnership and a phased in approach. The Winnebago Lakes Council will serve as interim coordinator for the working committees.

### On the Water magazine article

Almost 10,000 residents living on or near the water in this area received the January issue of On the Water magazine containing an article about the Lakes Council and the Winnebago system. This is the first of several articles we will publish there. The article will be posted on our Web site. The current article is called "View of the Water" and written by Jack Brauer.

## Good news for our lakes

The State Senate passed SB 197 in mid January. The bill, modeled after Dane County's successful ordinance, would ban the use and sale of phosphorus lawn fertilizer (with a few reasonable exceptions). It won strong bipartisan support in the Senate. With the legislative session closing in less than two months, we hope by publication of this newsletter the Assembly will have passed the bill and forwarded it to the governor to sign.

This bill would make phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer readily available to consumers. The vast majority of Wisconsin's lawns are saturated with too much phosphorus. Phosphorus runoff from lawns goes directly into surface waters, fueling smelly algae blooms and nuisance plant growth, suffocating fish, and making summertime unpleasant for property owners and recreational users on our lakes.

Using phosphorus free lawn fertilizer is one easy step everyone can take to improve water quality.