

Red Cedar Lakes Association Spring 2019 Newsletter

RCLA Board 2018–2019

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President's Letter

After almost 80" of snow this winter, spring has finally arrived. I'm already looking forward to getting the boat out, listening to our loons, catching a few fish and most importantly leading the RCLA Board on what will be another active summer of important activities. The new mission of the Red Cedar Lakes Association is ***"To preserve, Protect and Improve Red Cedar, Balsam, Hemlock, Bass and Mud lakes, their watershed and ecosystem"*** and our nine outstanding committees are dedicated to ensuring we proactively protect and improve our watershed!! Please take the time to read each committee report in the newsletter ... you will be thoroughly impressed on what these committees are doing in order to keep our lakes some of the best in Wisconsin.

A year ago, I was writing to inform you that our membership has gradually gone down for the past 12 years ... I'm happy to report that through the hard work of the Membership Committee, we are now trending in the other direction and have added a significant number of new members. Given the increase in membership, it's clear people are interested in joining when they understand the good work the RCLA is undertaking. Please help spread the word about the RCLA and encourage your neighbors and others to join. We are also excited to welcome ***Birchwood Café*** and ***Pines at the Lake*** as our first "Business Sponsors" of RCLA.



VISIT US AT redcedarlakes.com

There are a couple of important topics that need immediate attention and I'm hoping our membership can help.

1. We have three open RCLA Board positions that need to be filled. Rich Hokanson (Shoreline & Island Restoration Committee), Becky Garthofner (Newsletter and Website Committee), and Jeff and Penny Iverson (Coupon Committee) have all elected not to renew their board positions. ***If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in being a part of this passionate, committed and collaborative board focused on preserving, protecting and improving our great watershed, please reach out to me at vbausc@yahoo.com.*** I would love the opportunity to discuss more about our board and answer any questions you might have on the committees.

2. We have been blessed again this year with receiving a number of grants from the WI DNR thanks to the dedicated work of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and Water Quality (WQ) Committee Chairs partnering closely with our consulting partner LEAPS. This was actually a huge achievement given only 58 WI DNR grants were awarded statewide and RCLA received two of them. Just as impressive were the total amount of the grants ... ~\$230,000 between AIS and WQ over the next three years, something not many Lake Associations in Wisconsin can say! It is through these grants that the RCLA will be able to expand the work we are doing in the area of Water Quality, AIS Control and Member Education (see details on the grants in the WQ and AIS articles). It is important to understand that our members continued support contributes to the RCLA's success in receiving these grant awards. If you are interested in being a volunteer on any of our committees, you can reach directly out to the Chair of the Committee as all current contact information is available on the front page of the newsletter or you can send an email directly to me at vbausc@yahoo.com and I will ensure your contact information is shared with the committee chairs. As an example of the difference you can make, if every member were to volunteer just two hours of their time directly

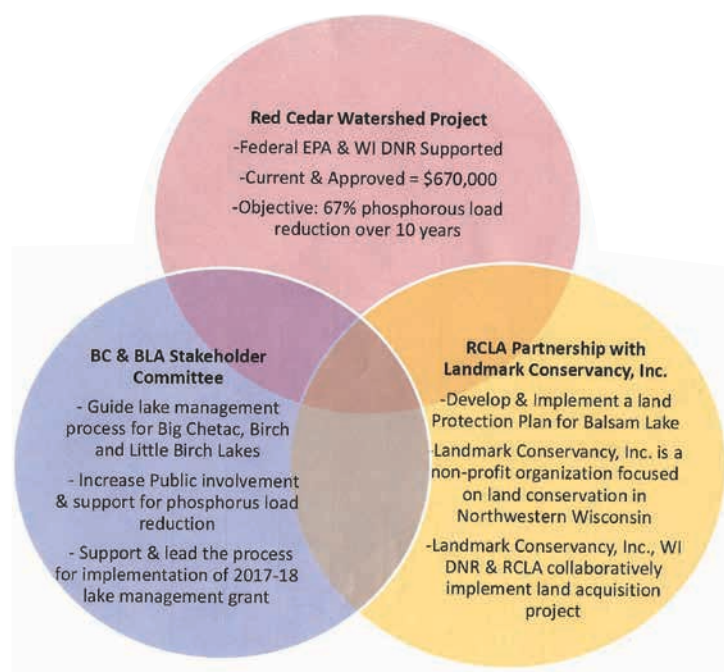
associated to tasks under our grant(s), it would save the RCLA over \$12,000 of out of pocket expenses and allow us to use our funds for when we are faced with a critical issue like Eurasian watermilfoil or Zebra mussels. **Volunteering is easy, Volunteering is fun, Volunteering is rewarding and *ALL SKILLS ARE WELCOME!* A special THANK YOU to those that have volunteered throughout the years ... your time and dedication is greatly appreciated!**

As a reminder, the RCLA Annual Meeting will be held on July 13 at the Mikana Townhall. I encourage all members to attend as this is an excellent place to learn about each committee and the critical activities to help maintain our mission.

Valerie Bausch
President

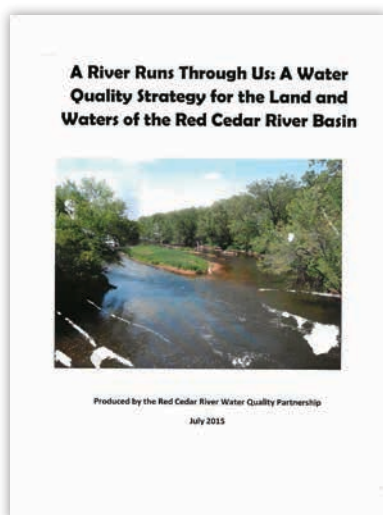
Vice President's Letter

The role of the Vice President changed in mid-2017 from what was historically an operational role to one focused on longer term strategies aimed at maintaining and improving the water quality of our lakes. Specifically, three initiatives were outlined and agreed to by the Board as having long term positive impacts, not only on our lakes, but the entire Red Cedar Watershed. Below is an update on the current status of these three initiatives.



RED CEDAR WATERSHED WATER QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

I represent RCLA on this Committee, which is made up of individuals from the Wisconsin DNR, UW-Extension, municipalities, Barron, Sawyer and Dunn County land and soil conservation coordinators, UW-Stout, lake associations and more. In 2015, the members developed, submitted and gained EPA and DNR approval and funding on a comprehensive ten-year plan entitled “A River Runs Through Us: A Water Quality Strategy for the Land and Waters of the Red Cedar River Basin”.



A key strategy of the plan is to improve the water quality in the entire watershed by reducing the phosphorous loading or Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) by 65% over the next ten years. In terms of progress on the plan, there are two main sources of phosphorous loading entering the watershed – point and non-point.

So far, phosphorous entering the Red Cedar River system from point sources (in this case, waste water treatment plants) has been well controlled and regulated under state and federal rules. Point sources were estimated to be contributing over 42,000 lbs. of phosphorus per year into the river system when baseline data was collected in the 1990's. The TMDL goal in the plan was set at 20,100 lbs. per year. The most recent data available shows that in 2018, the amount of phosphorous that entered the system from point sources was approximately 9,300 lbs. This represents a significant improvement in phosphorous loading reduction, just under half of the goal set in the plan.

Non-point sources are mainly comprised of surface runoff improvements, reduction of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and improvements in farm-related best management practices such as increasing cover crop acreage, no-till, reducing manure spreading, reduction of crops with the highest delivery rates, etc. There are 13 identified

non-point strategies in the plan that add up to a 306,000 lb. reduction of phosphorous over 10 years. Although figures are not available yet from 2018 we are seeing improvements in all 13 areas from the 2016 and 2017 numbers. As an example, the goal of cover crop acreage increase and its impact on phosphorous reduction is 18,000 pounds. In 2016 and 2017, phosphorous reduction attributed to increased cover crop acreage resulted in nearly 8,000 lbs. Further, we are fairly confident cover crop acreage will continue to increase as farmer-led councils share success stories and increase educational efforts. Non-farm sources, such as AIS, are also being addressed by several lake associations in the watershed, including RCLA with its management of Curly Leaf Pondweed.

BIG CHETAC AND BIRCH LAKES ASSOCIATION (BCABLA) STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

The objective of this committee is to provide input and guidance to the BCABLA Board on the development of a five-year Comprehensive Management Plan. The committee was made up of individuals representing various key constituents such as local government boards, local resorts, Red Cedar Watershed Committee, RCLA and lakeshore property owners.

The key portion of the plan deals with eight diverse goals and subsequent action items which cover multiple areas such as fisheries, shoreline habitat, AIS management, water quality and more. Numerous public meetings were held in 2017 and 2018 to gain further input into the plan development.

The plan was submitted to the WI DNR for review earlier this year. Following DNR comments, request for clarifications and potential changes, the final version of the plan will be assembled and presented to the public during the summer. Look for meeting notices this spring.

RCLA PARTNERSHIP WITH LANDMARK CONSERVANCY

This initiative involves partnering with Landmark Conservancy to explore potential opportunities to implement land conservation trusts on undeveloped lots for the purpose of reducing residential and commercial development. This project has many potential benefits,

including reduction of phosphorous loading and improved water quality. Landmark Conservancy is a non-profit organization and is supported by numerous national, regional and state conservation organizations.

Landmark partners with lake associations, WI DNR, communities and individuals who are interested in preserving land for conservation reasons. Land trusts use a variety of tools, such as conservation easements, mutual covenants, purchases and donations to permanently protect land.

Jointly, we have identified 19 lots representing approximately 4,500 total acres and 12,000 lake frontage feet on Balsam Lake and the channel leading into Balsam Lake that are undeveloped at this time. Landmark Conservancy sent out introduction letters and packets containing information on land conservation trusts and the benefits of implementing a trust to these lot owners in February. According the Landmark personnel, it can take up to six months before any communication comes back from land owners, or a second round of contact is initiated by Landmark to the owners. More to come.

Gerry Johnson
Vice President

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Committee

Greetings from your AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Committee! The fishing opener is upon us and spring has emerged to bring on fishing and great times at the lake.

Let me start by recapping the work that was done by the AIS Committee in 2018 as this work lays the foundation for what will be happening for the next few years. During 2018, volunteers contributed their personal time at the lake to assist us in boat and landing monitoring, purple loosestrife control, AIS plant and animal monitoring on the lake, and ongoing AIS education efforts. In exchange for these volunteer hours our Wisconsin DNR grant provided funding for the expenses associated with these tasks equal to \$13,666. **Thank you to all volunteers who put in hours during 2018!**

Last summer we completed several very important studies of our lakes. These included a dye flow study on Balsam Lake, a Native Aquatic Plant Study and a Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) bed mapping study. The Plant Study and CLP bed mapping were performed by Freshwater Scientific Services and included Balsam, Mud, Red Cedar and Hemlock Lakes. These studies are important as they provided required baseline information for our 2019 - 2021 Wisconsin DNR grant request. If you have an interest in looking through the Native Aquatic Plant Study results and the Curly Leaf Pondweed bed mapping results, these have been posted to the Red Cedar Lake Association website (redcedarlakes.com). **All of the hard work done in 2018 really paid off for the RCLA!**

2019 CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS (CBCW) GRANT

RCLA received a new grant award in the amount of \$6,500 to facilitate the ongoing monitoring of our four busiest landings through the upcoming summer. These landings include Waldo Carlson Park, Hwy 48 & V landing, Loch Lomond Beach Club, and the Hemlock Lake landing. This coming summer we will be partnering with the Rice Lake Boy Scouts, several local individuals and our lake consultant (LEAPS). This program starts on the fishing opener weekend and runs through September 15th. It is designed to educate boaters on aquatic plants/animals (both native and invasive); proper bait handling; proper bilge, live well and bait tank water handling; power loading of boats; etc. Through our grant we are able to provide \$1,923 in funding to the Scouts and other volunteers for their efforts.

NEW – 2019 – 2021 AIS CONTROL GRANT

RCLA received approval from the Wisconsin DNR for a new grant of \$241,181 that will provide funding for a variety of projects over the next three years. Of this amount the State of Wisconsin has committed to providing funding of \$180,886; the remaining \$60,294 will be the responsibility of the RCLA through donated volunteer hours and funding from its budget. This is the largest grant that the RCLA has ever received from the WI DNR and we are very fortunate to have received this grant as only 14 AIS Control Grants were approved state wide! This grant will fund the projects listed below.

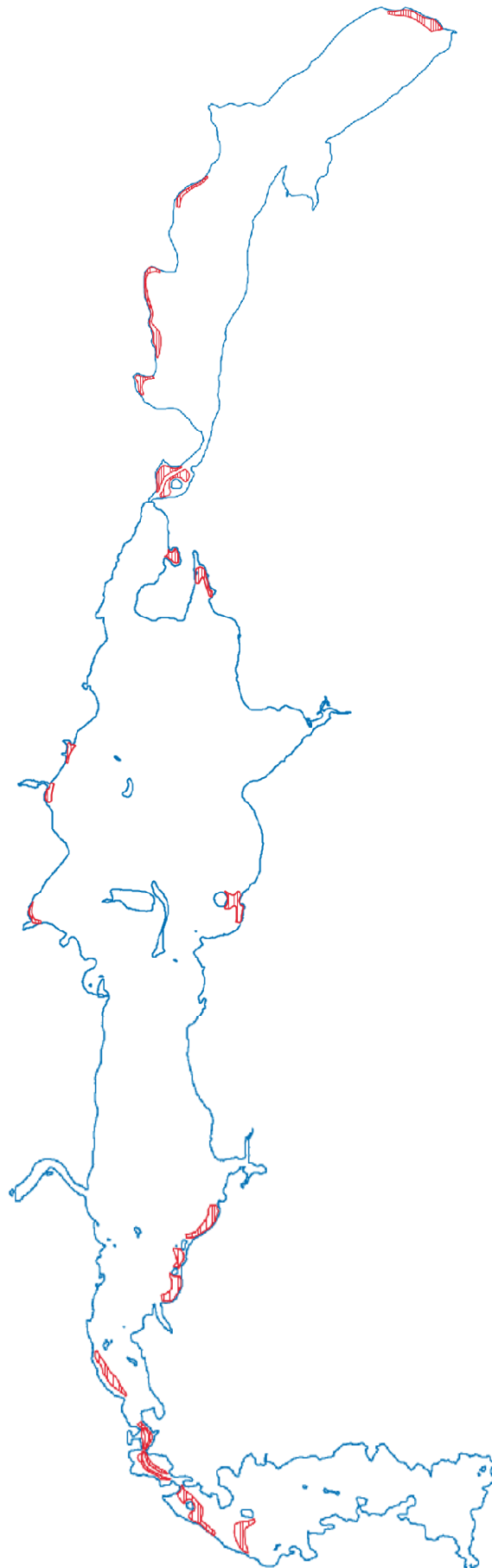
1. Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Herbicide Treatment

The 2018 CLP bed mapping study identified approximately 91 acres of CLP within Balsam, Hemlock and Red Cedar lakes. The new grant allows for expanded herbicide treatment to up to 58 acres of CLP to be targeted at CLP beds of medium to high density. The new grant allows RCLA to treat CLP in Balsam Lake for the first time. The treatment plan is very dynamic. Each year a pre-treatment on-lake study will be conducted to determine where CLP should be treated. Depending on spring conditions, a decision will be made as to which areas will be treated. For example, the spring of 2018 provided very poor conditions for CLP growth. For this reason RCLA scaled back the intended treatment areas to focus on only those areas that showed considerable CLP growth.

CLP herbicide treatment is done as early in the spring (after ice out) as possible as CLP is the first aquatic plant to emerge. It is treated early to ensure as little harm as possible to the native lake plants as possible. Typically, most of the native plants have not emerged when the herbicide treatment is applied. The herbicide that is being used is very safe. This is the same herbicide that has been used in past years on the lake. You can find more information on this herbicide under the "Lake Treatment Docs" tab within the RCLA website.

A post-treatment study will also be performed to determine the effectiveness of the treatment and to ensure there were no unintended effects. Both the pre- and post-treatment studies will be done by Fresh Water Scientific Services. This is the organization that performed the CLP mapping and Native Aquatic Plant studies in 2018. (See map of intended CLP treatment areas identified in red. Note that actual treatment will be dependent on spring conditions and could include areas outside of what is shown.)

The areas to be treated on the Balsam Lake map are a direct result of the Balsam Lake dye study performed in 2018. Because there is wild rice at the channel entrance to Mud Lake and it is protected, it cannot be treated.



2. CLP Bed Mapping

Each year, a survey of Curly Leaf Pondweed beds is conducted to create an annual record of the CLP present in our lakes. It provides consistent data and an understanding of whether CLP is expanding or contracting over time. Every fifth year this is done by a professional service. For the upcoming year this will be done by RCLA volunteers with the assistance of our lake consultant, LEAPS. If you are interested in helping out with this project, please let me know. It's actually very fun. We go out over about 2 1/2 days and use GPS to cruise the lake looking for and mapping the various CLP beds – including location and approximate bed density. There are typically four of us on my pontoon boat and it can make for a great couple days.

3. Shoreline Habitat Study

Over the course of the next three years, a parcel level study of lake shorelines will be conducted to understand the health of the 30 miles of shorelines of all of the RCLA lakes - Balsam, Mud, Hemlock, Red Cedar and Little Bass. The results of this study will provide insight as to what degree of water quality improvement could be achieved through better shoreline management. Once a particular lake study is completed, a shoreline owner may request the analysis for their particular property; this will provide valuable information as to what steps can be taken to improve the health of their own shore line. Please note that only the shoreline property owner will have access to their specific property information. The RCLA is undertaking this project to provide a key resource to its members and to allow RCLA to better understand factors that impact the quality of our lakes.

During 2019 RCLA will be working with LEAPS to complete this study for Red Cedar Lake. This is a large project that is expected to take a good deal of the summer, with results available sometime in the fall. In 2020 and 2021, the study will be completed on other RCLA lakes. Volunteers are needed to help with this project and it's a great way to get out on the water and help out the Association by donating your time.

4. Purple Loosestrife Monitoring

RCLA will again partner with the Birchwood Charter School whose students raise the beetles and release them on the lake in late June/early July. During July and August, volunteers are out on the lake locating and eliminating purple loosestrife where it is found. These efforts go a long way in helping to ensure infested areas remain under control and do not spread. The Nature Committee is taking the lead on this project; they are looking for volunteers to join their Committee and to help with this and other projects.

5. Ongoing Monitoring of AIS

Throughout the summer there is ongoing monitoring for AIS within the RCLA lakes. With the discovery of zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil in nearby lakes, it is important to monitor and protect our lakes. This includes placing Zebra Mussel plates on all of our lakes and throwing rakes to check for potential new AIS that may have invaded our lakes. This work is very important as the earlier we detect a new AIS in our lakes, the faster we can respond.

6. Bass Lake Studies

Last year, Native Aquatic Plant studies were completed on all lakes except Bass Lake. This summer, this study will be completed on Bass Lake by RCLA's consultant (LEAPS).

In addition, water quality monitoring will begin on this lake as well. Bass Lake has a consistently high success rate for producing new loon chicks; nearly every year this lake sees one to two loon chicks survive to migrate at the end of the summer. This is a very high production rate and it is important to understand and monitor the health of this lake.

As you can see there are a multitude of projects that will be completed over the next three years. These projects are being undertaken to gain a better understanding of the various influences on our lakes. RCLA was extremely fortunate to receive approval for the new WI DNR grant – the largest grant that the RCLA has received to date. This larger grant, however, requires a commitment from the

RCLA to fund 25% of the grant amount; this amounts to roughly \$20,000 per year. To some degree, RCLA can meet this obligation through the volunteer hours that are worked. The DNR gives us a credit equal to \$12 for each volunteer hour worked. However with this increased grant obligation, it is very likely that a good portion of this will need to be funded through the RCLA budget.

I ask that you contribute to the RCLA AIS fund to help us meet this financial obligation. You can make a

contribution by simply sending a check to: Red Cedar Lake Association, PO Box 2148, Mikana, WI, 54857. Or you can increase the amount you send in with your annual membership at renewal time in November/December. **Any amount you can provide will be greatly appreciated and help us continue this important work.**

Be safe and enjoy the lake this boating and fishing season!

Tom Goodwin
AIS Committee Chairperson

Fish Habitat Committee

First, some important news: As of the 2019 fishing opener (May 4), the walleye regulation on the Red Cedar Chain is changing to a 15" minimum length limit, where 20-24" is protected, and one fish over 24" may be harvested; three fish bag limit.

The Fish Habitat Committee has ambitious plans for 2019/2020! The goal is to install 10 to 12 new fish stick sites next winter, focused primarily on Hemlock and Balsam lakes.

During May and June, identification of potential fish stick sites will occur; this includes seeking permission from property owners to host fish stick projects. Ideal sites are those not exposed to heavy waves from wind and/or boats, nor significant ice heave during the spring ice-out. July and August will be centered on submitting site permit applications and gaining approval from the Wisconsin DNR. During the Fall, sources for live hardwood trees with trunk diameters of 8"-12" will be secured. Hopefully, these trees will come from the vicinity of the installations, but they may not be from shoreline areas. The fish stick installations will occur in January/February of 2020. Property owners interested in contributing potential shoreline locations or live hardwood trees are encouraged to contact Dan Ellefson via email: dmellefson@gmail.com.

Early this year, Fish Habitat Committee member John Bolles, briefly surveyed 27 anglers while they were ice fishing on Red Cedar lake. The results of this informal survey may interest you:

- About 75% of those surveyed were men, with women and children comprising the balance.

- Approximately half reported fishing on the lake only in the winter.
- Two-thirds of the anglers travelled more than 20 miles to reach the lake.
- Walleyes were targeted 56% of the time, Northern Pike 35%, and Perch 9%.
- Most reported catching between some and many fish and on average rated Red Cedar lake an 8.5 (on a scale of 10).

And lastly, **many thanks to Aaron Cole**, Senior Fisheries Biologist, Wisconsin DNR, for his diligent and constructive work managing the Red Cedar lake fishery.

Dan Ellefson
AIS Committee Chairperson



Lake Information & Safety Committee

It is great to be back on the lake! May you enjoy fishing and boating as we greet another year of open waters.

The kiosk on the east side of Red Cedar is back up and repaired. New information has been posted to match the new fishing regulations.

We continue to struggle to find a boating safety instructor. Work continues to find an instructor and/

or to get someone certified for this role. For now, there continues to be an online method for youth boater safety. Please contact me if you are interested in pursuing this option, or if you can help identify/provide an instructor option.

Len Christianson

Lake Information & Safety Committee

Coupon Book Committee

Wow!! Spring has finally arrived and are we excited! The 2019-2020 Coupon Book has been mailed. Penny and I want to thank the many businesses that have agreed to being represented in the RCLA coupon book. Without their support, we could not raise the needed dollars each year to carry on the important projects of RCLA. Furthermore, we want to thank the membership for their support by purchasing the coupon books.

Clearly, RCLA has demonstrated the need to protect the lakes and in turn your investment. The lakes are the cleanest in years. Please use the book to support the local businesses and to contribute to the important work of RCLA. Coupon books make great gifts and we encourage you to purchase a second book for a welcome gift to a new neighbor or visiting friends and guests.

Jeff Iverson

Coupon Book Committee Chair

Membership Committee

I hope you are enjoying the joys of springtime – as I am!

Our membership numbers at the end of 2018 were 529 members and \$6,165 in donations. I am happy to report that we now have 611 members and \$7,692 in donations. If you know of someone who would like to join RCLA, please provide me with their name and mailing address. We also are now offering Business Sponsorships; please contact me or any board member about becoming a Business Sponsor.

Since Business Sponsorship is a new concept for RCLA, I'd like to highlight our first two:

1. Birchwood Cafe 2. Pines at the Lake

We appreciate their support and encourage you to visit their establishments and thank them for their support of our lakes.

Have fun out on the lakes

Sue Sleik

Membership Committee Chairperson

Newsletter / Website Committee

Spring and the fishing opener are here. New fishing rules improve the hopes of catching walleye for breakfast – as well as the walleye lunker I long for!

I hope you are enjoying the Newsletter. As I prepared it, I was ever-impressed with how effective the RCLA is. While it might seem lengthy, it is jam-packed with information about the amazing work of our RCLA leadership. I cannot wait to enjoy the lakes and the fruits of our water quality sheriffs.

A new website is under construction as I write this. A contractor is helping to create a more visual site with

meaningful content that can be easily maintained. The plan includes adding functionality to allow sign-up for volunteer activities. The new site will hopefully be operational in late May or June....watch for it at redcedarlakes.com.

As always, I appreciate any feedback you might have on our communications. Feel free to email me with your feedback.

Becky Garthofner

Newsletter/Website Committee Chairperson

Nature Committee

The Nature Committee is not letting Mother Nature get in the way of planning activities for this summer, starting with sponsoring our annual educational nature program that you will be sure to enjoy. This is the 7th year for our Nature Programs! On June 1 at 10:00 a.m. at Loch Lomond Beach Club, Chris Cold, Wildlife Technician for the Wisconsin Department of Nature Resources, will be presenting a fantastic program on **“BEARS”**. Chris will provide an overview on the evolution, adaptations, distribution and natural history of bears. The current status of the Wisconsin black bear and its management is emphasized. Special attention will be given to our perception of it as a trophy, harvestable resource, watchable wildlife species, and nuisance. There will be plenty of visual artifacts displayed including pelts, skulls, tracks and scat. And as a special bonus, Chris will be bringing live animals (not a bear!) for you to enjoy up close and personal. **This program is free and, perfect for the whole family!** (see attached flyer at the end of this section)

The Nature Committee's top priority will remain the continued participation in the Wisconsin's LoonWatch Program, which helps protect common loons and their aquatic habitats through education, monitoring, and research. Other key activities for the Nature Committee will include expanding our “dark skies” program to educate residents on reducing bright lights on our lakes, promoting the value and importance of using lead-free tackle, monitoring the bald eagle nests and our continued leadership in the Tree Planting Program. Unfortunately, there were not enough tree orders to allow for bulk ordering for the 2019 spring distribution, so a focus will be on getting more residents to order and plant trees ... a great way to give back to nature.

One new activity the Nature Committee will be leading is the monitoring of the Purple Loosestrife, one of our Aquatic Invasive Species RCLA continues to manage on our lakes.

Nature Committee Spring Fun Facts: Everyone loves to have Orioles in their backyard. Here are a few fun facts about Orioles:

1. Baltimore and Bullock's orioles are very similar and even hybridize where their ranges overlap. For many years, scientists believed they were one species (Northern Orioles) until genetic testing revealed they were in fact separate.

2. The oldest banded Baltimore Oriole in the wild lived for 11 years and 7 months, but they can live up to 14 years in captivity.

3. According to Cornell's [All About Birds](#), orioles sometimes feed in an unusual, but clever, way. They stick their closed beak into a soft fruit and then open their mouths, which creates a cup of fruit juice that they drink with their tongues.

4. Baltimore Orioles are very sensitive to insecticides. Insecticides have the adverse effect of killing insects that orioles eat, and the poison can also directly kill orioles if they're exposed to it.

5. The nest of a Baltimore Oriole looks like a stuffed sock that hangs at the very edge of a tree branch high in the air to keep predators away. It can take a female as long as 15 days to construct the nest, which is woven out of various fibers like animal fur, twine, wool, bark and other materials.

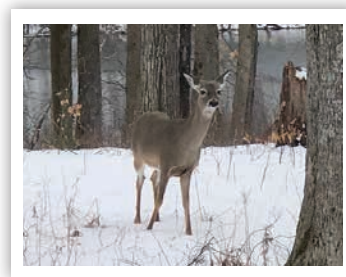
6. Baltimore Orioles are generally solitary birds, except during mating season. However, a group of orioles is called a “split” or “pitch,” according to [WhatBird](#).

7. One of the Baltimore Orioles favorite things to eat is caterpillars. This is important because their appetite for caterpillars and other pests can help protect forests. Grape jelly and oranges are a fantastic way to lure Orioles into your backyard.

8. Baltimore Orioles are attracted to the color orange, which is why getting an [orange oriole feeder](#) will increase your chances of attracting these beautiful birds to your yard.

The Nature Committee currently has eight active members, but we are always looking for more volunteers to help

promote our vision and make the Red Cedar Lakes a safe refuge for wildlife. If you are interested in joining this great committee or attending our next meeting to learn more about our 2019 activities, please contact chair



Valerie Bausch at vbausc@yahoo.com

Valerie Bausch
Nature Committee Chairperson

FREE NATURE PROGRAM



"Bears"



Presented by: RCLA Nature Committee

Date: Sat., June 1, 2019

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Where: Loch Lomond Beach Club (on Red Cedar Lake)

Speaker: Chris Cold, WI DNR Wildlife Specialist

**FREE ADMISSION AND
REFRESHMENTS**

**COME SEE LIVE ANIMALS UP
CLOSE AND PERSONAL**



GREAT FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY TO ENJOY!!

Shoreline & Island Restoration Committee

RED CEDAR WATERSHED CONFERENCE – MARCH 2019

This was the ninth annual Red Cedar Watershed Conference held at UW Stout, Menomonie in March of each year. It is a one-day conference dedicated to the water quality issues that exist in the RCLA watershed and is well attended.

I attended this conference as the representative for our Lake Association. The topics and speakers continue to be of high quality. The efforts of many people is starting to make a difference and the future for water quality in the watershed is looking better. Here is a summary of my "take away" information.

1. It was encouraging to see all the good, positive work being done by farmer-led projects. As was stated last year, 70% of the nutrients in our watersheds come from field runoff. This year speakers from the Fox River area near Green Bay talked about their efforts to reduce water runoff while maintaining profitable farm operations. They accomplished runoff reduction by improving soil health.

To improve soil health, they adopted farm practices that kept the land covered throughout the year, used low soil disturbing manure application, low or no till farming and maintaining buffer zones along waterways. They created "demo" farms and implemented an outreach plan for their neighboring farms.

2. From UW-Stout LAKES Student Research Projects: Results from five years of projects can be found at www.uwstout.edu/lakes; then tab first to Research Projects and then second to Other Publications and Reports. They generated a list of questions from which shoreland owners could create their own "Protect the Water" action plan.

3. Professor David Montgomery from the University of Washington explained the connection between healthy soils and water quality. Some interesting if not troubling facts: globally, we have used up 50% of our soil, some countries like Syria have almost no usable soil left. It takes 1,000 years to make 1" of soil; on average, earth is losing 1" per 20 years. Adoption of three transformational farming practices – low or no tillage, planting cover crops,

and growing diverse crop rotations – can profitably rebuild soil fertility. Fertile soils use less water, less fertilizer and experience significantly less soil erosion and run off.

4. Blue-Green Algae. Cyanobacterial harmful algae blooms are a growing concern worldwide and especially here in Wisconsin. Gina LaLiberte from the WI DNR and Amanda Koch from WI Division of Public Health explained that fifty species of cyanobacteria are able to produce toxins which mostly affect the liver and nerves of animals and people. Dogs are especially vulnerable. It is important to note that the cyanobacteria do not always produce a toxin. Blooms can be blue, green, brown, white or a combination. The green-blue color indicates algae

decomposition. A simple jar test can be used to determine if you suspect a cyanobacteria bloom. The “cyano” will float to the top. Their collective advice is to stay out lake water that looks like “pea soup” as a precaution. More information can be found at the WI public health web site including information on how to report a harmful algae bloom. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov and www.dnr.wisconsin.gov

I would encourage your attendance at a future conference. Next year's conference will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2020 at UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI.

Rich Hokanson

Shoreline & Island Restoration Committee Chairperson

Water Quality Committee

What does hockey have to do with stream quality on the Red Cedar chain of lakes? Turns out, quite a bit.

Water quality monitoring for the summer begins in the preceding summer. I am a professional biologist on our RCLA Board. The Board works closely with David Blumer of Lake Education And Planning Services out of Chetek, Wisconsin. He has helped us get state grants and manage the reporting process as well as some logistical support for field work. Together we submitted two Wisconsin DNR lakes planning grants this winter. Our goal is to monitor phosphorus in our lakes, measuring where it comes from and how much effect it has on the lakes. Because some aquatic invasive plants are significant contributors of phosphorus in our lakes, we collaborate with RCLA Board member Tom Goodwin and his Aquatic Invasive Species grant.

Dave Blumer and I met several times starting last summer sorting out goals and writing the grants. We met with biologists at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to make sure our data could help them. We were quite fortunate to have both of our planning grants funded this year, meaning we will put about \$75,000 worth of time and materials into water quality monitoring shoreline evaluation, and analyzing data over the next two years to better manage our lakes.

Once awarded, we needed an implementation meeting. Because of busy schedules, the only place we could meet one very cold snowy February day was the hockey arena in Rice Lake. There were over a dozen grade school aged teams there for league play, with dads and moms all over. Anytime a child yelled “mom!” a dozen heads would turn to see if they were the needed parent. Seeing all of the

kids there reminded me why we do all of this stream work. The lakes are theirs and the future is a lot longer than the present. We need to give them the lakes in the same or better condition than we found them.

This summer we will again measure water inputs to the lakes by sampling streams, measuring flow volume, and getting phosphorus measurements. We will sample the lakes monthly, getting vertical profiles of temperature and dissolved oxygen. This year we also need to monitor precipitation so that we can model local water flow. In the end, we will update the water quality management plan for the area.

None of this can be done alone, and we need your help. If you live on the lakes year round, consider volunteering to monitor daily precipitation. The grant will cover the purchase of about half a dozen monitoring stations. We need someone on each of the lakes to go out monthly and use our very cool water probe to record lake water conditions. We can teach you how. Maybe you'd like to join the stream sampling team once a month? Your help is needed, not just appreciated. At the very least, you can help reduce phosphorus in the water by minimizing or eliminating spring lawn fertilizing, add shoreline cover or a rain garden to reduce surface runoff, carefully observe no-wake zones so you don't erode the shoreline, and make sure your septic tank is functioning well.

Please e-mail me if you would like to get involved monitoring lake or stream quality, measuring precipitation, or if you want more information on reducing your phosphorus impacts on lake quality.

Tim Lewis

Water Quality Committee Chairperson

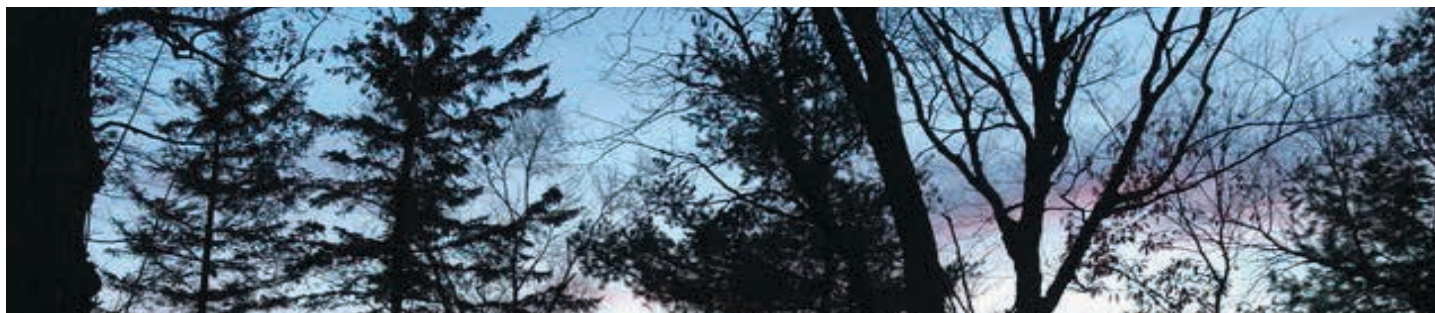


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