

ON THE WATERFRONT is published by:
 WASHBURN COUNTY LAKES & RIVERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
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Contacts to help protect lakes, rivers & shorelands

Private citizens, especially shoreland property owners, are the first line of defense in preventing irreparable damage to our waters and shorelands. But **do not trespass** to investigate a suspected violation! Please contact the following authorities:

DNR Water Regulation Violations:

Ed Slaminski (Water Management Specialist, Spooner Office).....635-4097
Brian Knepper (Conservation Warden for Southern Washburn County).....635-4099
Dave Swanson (Conservation Warden for Northern Washburn County).....466-5428
 If wardens are in the field, call them through the Washburn County Sheriff's Dept.....468-4720
 or through the **DNR's toll-free 24-hour tip line**.....1-800-TIP-WDNR (847-9367)

County Shoreland Zoning Questions or Violations:

Web Macomber (Zoning Administrator).....468-4690

County Planning, Land/Water Resource Management:

Brad Robole (Director).....468-4654

Aquatic Invasives:

Kris Larsen, DNR.....635-4072



ON THE WATERFRONT

The newsletter of the
WASHBURN COUNTY LAKES & RIVERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
 PROMOTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF
 WASHBURN COUNTY WATERS, SHORELAND AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Spring 2007
 WCLRA #15

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President's Comments

WCLRA doesn't hibernate over the winter

Another spring is upon us and the ice will have left the lakes and rivers as this newsletter reaches you. The folks that we refer to as "snowbirds" have returned from southern climes and bears have emerged from hibernation.

Unlike the bears, however, our group did not sleep away the winter. The winter months are an excellent time to take stock of the functioning of the organization and give it a "tune-up". This winter was busier than most for our members.

Considerable time has been devoted since last October to a strategic planning or "refocus" process to assure that our energies will continue to be well directed. Last fall, a decision was made to update and redesign our WCLRA website (www.wclra.org). That is a work in progress. Even though not everyone has Internet access, an informative and easy-to-use website is essential to an organization like the WCLRA. Much of the data on the site has already been updated and a significant change in the appearance of the site should occur by midsummer. Our committee would greatly appreciate your suggestions as to features that you would find useful on the redesigned site. Please pass on your comments or ideas to me or any member of the board.

Also in progress is the refinement our comprehensive database which is used primarily for communication with our members and other individuals and agencies important to our efforts. It is the central information base for our membership records, any member communications, newsletter mailing lists and the like. It is essential to have our contact information in one organized central location.

I hasten to state that we do not pass on our database to others; it stays within WCLRA for our use only.

These internal activities are not readily visible, but the results are important to the overall functioning of WCLRA. Our activities need to be supported by a solid organizational structure.

It has always struck me as somewhat unfortunate that some of the important things we do are not readily visible. We are Washburn County's only citizen-based non-regulatory organization advocating preservation of our lakes and rivers. We actively interact with other agencies, including WDNR, UW-Extension, Washburn County Zoning and Land and Water Conservation departments. We attempt to do, at the county level, what the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) does at the state level and their activities are also often not readily visible.

One of our goals for the coming year will be to make our behind-the-scenes activities more visible to our members and others. I would strongly suggest that our members also join WAL to support their statewide efforts along with our efforts within the county.

All in all, although you may not see evidence of our presence every day, we are out there representing you in our efforts to make certain that northern Wisconsin's image as a land of clean and clear lakes does not become just a memory.

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

Northwest Lakes Conference is changing, growing

The 9th Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference will be at Telemark Resort and Conference Center in Cable on June 21 and 22.

This regional conference is an outstanding example of how volunteers from lake groups, UWEX, and WAL can work together to present a major educational event. NWLC was the first regional conference sponsored by WAL. In 2007, there will be four such events in the southeast, northeast, northwest and north central areas.

NWLC began in 1999 as the Bayfield County Lake Fair. It was the brain child of Jim Brakken, former president of WAL and Lake Stewardship Award winner, and Tim Kane, Bayfield County UWEX educator. It was presented with assistance from local volunteers and the Cable Natural History Museum. About 90 people attended the event. The Lake Fair was held at Lakewoods Resort, on Lake Namakagon near Cable, in 1999, 2000 and 2001. Attendance grew to nearly 140 in 2001.

In 2002 and 2003, the conference was held at the Schwan Center (now Heartwood) Retreat and Conference Center near Minong, in order to accommodate greater attendance and provide space for exhibitors. The scope of the conference was expanded to encompass the interests of lake groups in Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Washburn and Sawyer counties. In 2002, the planning committee expanded to include representatives of the county-wide lake groups from these counties. Attendance was nearly 200 in both 2002 and 2003. WAL became a co-sponsor of the conference in 2003.

Since 2004, NWLC has been held at Telemark Resort and Conference Center. Attendance grew to over 250 and over 20 business and nonprofit exhibitors participated. In 2006, the format was expanded to include workshops held on Thursday prior to the conference and a BBQ social for the speakers and exhibitors on Thursday evening. The Friday conference program includes two plenary sessions, 12 breakout sessions, time for viewing exhibits and networking, as well as a buffet breakfast and lunch.

The composition and responsibilities of the sponsor organizations have evolved over time and with experience. Since 2004, the planning committee chair has been John Haack, UW-Extension St. Croix Basin Educator. WAL is responsible for registration, assists in promoting the conference and advises on various program elements. The planning committee consists of volunteers from all five counties and UWEX and Land and Water Conservation Department representatives from several counties.

The planning committee defines the program, selects speakers, develops program materials, recruits exhibitors and business partners, does promotional work, coordinates facilities and provides moderators for the sessions. The success of NWLC is due to the dedicated efforts of all who worked on the planning committees, but most of all to the volunteers from lake groups in NW WI.

Go to wisconsinlakes.org for program details and registration information.

Registration Information

Conference registration fees are \$40 per person, including meals and materials but not lodging. An additional fee of \$10 is charged for June 21 workshops on Aquatic Invasive Species & Clean Water/Clean Boat inspections or Fundraising for Nonprofits, and \$15 for a preconference BBQ and Social Hour. Registration deadline is June 16.

For more information, or to register, contact the Wisconsin Association of Lakes at 1-800-542-5253 or www.wisconsinlakes.org.

For information or reservations at Telemark Resort and Convention Center, call 1-877-798-4718 or send an email to roomres@cheqnet.net.

Keynote to highlight 'First Stewards'

Wisconsin's rich Native American tradition is both a passion and a profession for the Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference keynote presenter, Dr. Patty Loew, producer for WHA-TV (PBS) and co-host of In Wisconsin, a weekly news and public affairs program that airs statewide on Wisconsin Public Television.

The natural resources of northwestern Wisconsin provided sustenance for generations of tribal nations living across the water-rich regions. Today, these resources continue to play a vital role in the lives of our tribal neighbors. Dr. Loew will provide an insightful and historical perspective of Wisconsin's treaty rights and the important role of natural resources for tribal nations in her address, "First Stewards, First Nations of Wisconsin."

Dr. Loew is an associate professor of Life Sciences Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she focuses on environmental reporting and video documentary production. Her academic and professional careers cover a range of topics, with a focus on issues related to Native culture and its relation to mass media and popular culture. She is a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and is author of numerous articles and award winning documentaries including, *No Word for Goodbye*, *Color Blind Justice?*, *Spring of Discontent*, *Throwaway Future*, and *Nation Within a Nation*. She also is the author of several books, including *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* and *Native People of Wisconsin*. Her newest documentary, *Way of the Warrior*, will air nationally this fall on PBS.

Her work has received numerous professional awards, including a Media Excellence Award, Best Continuing Coverage Award, Outstanding Service Award of the Great Lakes Intertribal Council and the Writer's Cup Award.

The Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference is co-sponsored by the lakes and rivers associations of Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Sawyer and Washburn counties, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and University of Wisconsin-Extension.

What to consider before removing aquatic plants

Each spring, we see advertisements for new products and devices intended to improve the aesthetics of our shoreline and riparian beach areas. Usually, these products are designed to remove vegetation -- either from the shoreline buffer area or in the near-shore water.

Before trying any of these, consider the role of native plants in and near the lake and how protecting and managing these plants is more important to the ecosystem than a manicured lawn and beach.

Another very important point to be aware of is that removal of aquatic plants is regulated by law. In order to protect diverse and stable communities of native aquatic plants and prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species, many aquatic plant management and nuisance control activities require review and permitting by the Department of Natural Resources.

The role that trees and understory plants play in a forest is much like the role of aquatic plants in a lake. We have become aware of the consequences of poor logging practices on the inhabitants of the forest ecosystem. We need to recognize that poor or irresponsible activities designed to control aquatic plants may have unanticipated and adverse effects on all the creatures that need and use the lake ecosystem... including us.

Aquatic plants form the foundation of healthy and flourishing aquatic ecosystems -- both within lakes and rivers and on the shores around them. They not only protect water quality, but also produce life-giving oxygen. Aquatic plants are a lake's own filtering system, helping to clarify the water by absorbing nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen that could stimulate algal blooms. Plant beds stabilize soft lake and river bottoms and reduce shoreline erosion by reducing the effect of waves and currents. Healthy native aquatic plant communities help prevent the establishment of invasive non-native plants like Eurasian water milfoil.

It makes sense that the best fishing spots are typically near aquatic plant beds. Aquatic plants provide important reproductive, food and cover habitat for fish, invertebrates and wildlife. Aquatic plants fashion a nursery for all sorts of creatures, ranging from birds to beaver to bass to bugs. In order to maintain healthy lakes and rivers, we must maintain healthy native aquatic plant communities.

DNR protects native aquatic plants and regulates their removal if they become a nuisance. In most instances, control of native aquatic plants is discouraged or is limited to high-use recreational areas next to piers or within navigational channels.

There are many techniques for controlling aquatic plants and new products and devices are reaching the marketplace all the time. In most cases, a permit from the Department of Natural Resources is required before any aquatic plant removal activity may take place.

Generally, anytime chemicals, biological controls or physical techniques are used, a DNR permit is required.

"Generally, anytime chemicals, biological controls or physical techniques are used, a DNR permit is required."

When plants are removed mechanically or manually from an area greater than 30 feet in width along the shore, or when wild rice is involved, a permit is also required. Mechanical removal includes the use of any device moved or operated by a motorized mechanism. However, some manually operated devices are designed to disrupt (till) the lake bottom and dislodge plants along with lake sediments. These types of devices also require an aquatic plant removal permit, and in some cases, a water regulation permit as well.

The only time a permit is not required to control aquatic plants is when a riparian manually removes (i.e. pulls by hand or uses hand-held plant cutters or rakes), or gives permission to someone to manually remove, plants (except wild rice) from his/her shoreline in an area that is 30 feet or less in width along the shore. On some lakes, DNR staff have surveyed the lake and designated "sensitive areas" where even manual plant removal is not allowed. These are areas with features (including valuable plant beds) that are essential to the overall health of the lake for plant diversity, wildlife habitat, fish spawning or cover, etc.

Non-native invasive plants (Eurasian water milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and purple loosestrife) may be manually removed beyond 30 feet without a permit, as long as native plants are not harmed. Cut and dislodged plants and plant fragments must be collected and removed from the water to prevent their spread. Wild rice is a valuable resource with many agencies concerned with its protection and restoration. DNR does not allow the removal of rice except in unique situations or special circumstances, and any removal would always require a permit.

Aquatic plant protection begins with us! We need to work to maintain good water quality and healthy native aquatic plant communities. How can we do it? The first step is to limit the amount of nutrients and sediment that enter the lake.

There are other important ways to safeguard a lake's native aquatic plant community. They may include developing boating ordinances that prevent the destruction of native plant beds, limiting aquatic plant removal activities, and preventing the spread of invasive plants, such as Eurasian water milfoil.

If plant management is needed, it is usually in lakes that humans have significantly altered. Our goal is to discover how to live on lakes in harmony with the natural environment and use aquatic plant management techniques that blend with natural processes rather than resist them. For more information, check this DNR Web link: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/lakes/aquaplan.htm>

Update on aquatic invasives in Washburn County

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have been a topic of increasing concern for several years now and rightfully so. We all know the damage they can do. Even the Legislature is now considering providing additional funding for fighting AIS encroachment. An update on the current status and on what we are and should be doing here Washburn County is in order.

Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM): Washburn County currently has three water bodies infested with EWM (Minong Flowage, Lake Nancy and Shallow Lake). At a recent WCLRA board meeting, DNR Upper St. Croix Basin Watershed Supervisor Kathy Bartilson reported that the department identified no new Eurasian water milfoil infestations within the county in 2006, but there were new infestations reported in adjoining counties. That's a bit too close for comfort!

The City of Shell Lake is ahead of the curve in its attempts to block milfoil infestation. Incoming boats have been inspected for several years -- a permit requirement for operating the water diversion system. Invasives must be kept out of Shell Lake if the City is to have the diversion. We cannot risk the transport of aquatic invasive species from the lake to the Yellow River, a tributary of the Wild and Scenic St. Croix River.

Boat inspections since 2003 have turned up EWM in 19 separate instances. Were it not for the inspections, Shell Lake could already be infested. There is a bright spot, however. The numbers of boats carrying aquatic vegetation are declining and Dave Vold, Lake Coordinator for the City of Shell Lake, believes that the inspections may have served to heighten public awareness of the AIS threat.

This year, Gilmore Lake has applied for an AIS grant to support its own boat inspections.

The threat to Gilmore Lake is very real in that its boat landing is less than 5 miles from the boat landings on Minong Flowage and Lake Nancy, both heavily infested.

Curly leaf pond weed: This can pose a threat similar to EWM, but it usually dies off by late June and, therefore, poses a shorter-term threat. With both of these invaders, avoiding lake-to-lake transportation is critical.

On a positive note, the Legislature will be considering a package of improvements to the state's aquatic invasive species management program. A series of fifteen legislative proposals was drafted and the package was approved by the Natural Resources Board earlier this year. Those proposals will go to the Legislature for consideration. Under current state law (s. 30.715, Wis. Stats.), placing a boat into a navigable waterway with aquatic plants attached is prohibited. One of the proposals would now make it illegal to transport aquatic plants or animals by seaplane or on public roads.

Purple Loosestrife: Washburn County has an active program to deal with critical aquatic invasive species. Last year, an initial DNR Invasive Species grant was funded to deal with the heavy purple loosestrife infestation within the

County receives \$75,000 AIS grant

The Washburn County Land and Water Conservation Department has received a \$75,000 state grant to fund a limited-term Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator within the department and step up public awareness of aquatic invasive species, particularly Eurasian water milfoil and purple loosestrife.

county. Some 93 infested sites were inventoried, all in the lower half of the county and especially along the Yellow River.

Last year, initial small crops of beetles that feed only on purple loosestrife were raised under the county project. This year, a second and more ambitious grant application has been approved (see above) to raise beetles in larger numbers and to treat the infested areas identified last year.

Also part of this year's proposal is the hiring of a Washburn County Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator. The position would be temporary during the two-year period of the grant, but would cover AIS in general and not be limited to purple loosestrife.

WCLRA will be partnering with Washburn County, as we did last year. There will be areas where help from our members would be very welcome. One of these is collecting beetles in the wild to stock the large-scale rearing stations. Volunteer time can be included as an in-kind contribution by the county and reduces the cash expenditure required as the county's portion of the project cost.

Zebra Mussel and Spiny Water Flea: DNR reports that neither of these two invaders has appeared in Washburn County ... YET! If it ever happens, these two will enter either from the Great Lakes region or from the Mississippi drainage.

These two species pose a different and more difficult problem. Their immature "veliger" forms are essentially invisible to the naked eye. The threat is in the water in bait buckets and live wells that may be dumped in lakes. If they find their ways into our Washburn County lakes, they will probably not be noticed until they are well on their way to becoming established.

What can we do?

1. Remove aquatic plants from our boats and trailers as we go from one waterbody to another. If we find what looks like it could be milfoil, take a sample to DNR for identification.

2. Avoid emptying bait buckets and live wells in lakes and rivers to avoid transmitting zebra mussels and spiny water fleas from one waterbody to another.

3. Become a volunteer lake monitor, through your lake association or DNR, or by contacting UW-Extension's Laura Herman of the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, at (715) 346-3989 or laura.herman@uwsp.edu

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

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Web Macomber

People like YOU make it happen!

Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association has been in existence for a little less than eight years. In that time, roughly half of our original directors have gone on to other areas of interest or have relocated. We owe them a big debt of gratitude for the energy and commitment that they have given to our efforts to protect our waters.

We have been fortunate to be able to add a number of capable people to replace them. Turnover is normal and healthy for an organization like ours, but it is a factor that we must be aware of if WCLRA is to remain an effective organization.

We have a marvelous asset in the retirees that come to our area to live on the lakes and bring with them a very diverse range of talents. Our job is to find ways to make them aware of WCLRA. The hope is that common interests will lead them to join our effort.

Within the organization, we are all well aware of the broad scope of our activities, but it is easy to forget that we have to make an effort to make the general public aware of WCLRA. Our current members can be a big help in this arena by directing new residents around their lakes to us. The rest is up to us. You will likely see more articles in the local newspapers carrying the WCLRA name ... not hard sell items, but informative ones that will make new people aware of what we do and how we go about it.

We always have a need for people to help with projects and/or serve on committees. As a result of turnover, we may replace one or two directors in a given year. Although our committee structure may change as a result of our ongoing "refocus" process (which is discussed below), our major committees will probably remain much the same. They are the Government/Environment Committee (which deals with regulatory matters and interfaces heavily with agencies such as Zoning and the DNR), the Education Committee (charged with assembling or identifying educational material that our members receive) and the Communications Committee (responsible for such things as the "On the Waterfront" newsletter, the WCLRA website {www.wclra.org}, keeping our brochure current and maintaining our comprehensive database).

If any of you can spare a little time to support our countywide efforts, please let us know. We will try to find something that fits both your interests and your available time. All of us who care about Washburn County's lakes and rivers will thank you!

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

WCLRA is 'refocusing' on its methods & mission

To move a boat from one point to another on the water, there are only two necessities: propulsion and steering. Without the forward motion that propulsion creates, a rudder cannot function. Without steering, the boat would simply wander randomly over the water.

Organizations like WCLRA operate on the same principle. Our "propulsion" lies in the energy and commitment of our members. Without that, nothing would ever get done. "Steering" requires significant effort and careful thought on the organization's part. Our direction is achieved by a conscious decision-making process carried out by our directors to focus our efforts in the most useful and productive areas.

(Continued on Page 4)

2007 WCLRA Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

9 a.m., Oscar Johnson Center, Fairgrounds, Spooner

April 20, 2007
May 18, 2007
June 15, 2007
July 20, 2007 (at Blake home)
August 17, 2007
WCLRA Annual General Meeting: Sept. 8, 8:30 a.m., Spooner Ag Station

September 21, 2007
October 19, 2007
November 16, 2007
(No December board meeting)
(Check for updates at www.wclra.org)

It's time to get the phosphorus out of lawn fertilizers!

It is well known that phosphorus in lawn fertilizers is a significant factor in the pollution of our Wisconsin surface waters. This is not news. And yet, the use of phosphorus containing fertilizers continues in spite of the fact that our Wisconsin soils, in general, do not need them.

The science substantiating the role of phosphorus in the eutrophication of our lakes is not in question. There is a simple and practical solution to at least part of the problem: The Wisconsin Legislature needs to enact legislation prohibiting the use of phosphorus containing fertilizers on our lawns and turf. Phosphorus-free products already exist and are readily available.

Phosphorus in fertilizers is not a problem peculiar to Wisconsin. Minnesota has also recognized this problem and has had in place a prohibition on phosphorus in lawn and turf fertilizers for several years. The prohibition does not impact agriculture and individual property owners who can show, by soil test, that their lawns are deficient in phosphorus can still use it. This seems to be an eminently practical approach.

Here in Wisconsin, Dane County adopted an ordinance requiring phosphorus-free lawn fertilizers in 2004. Unfortunately, there is a special situation and other counties are not empowered to do the same. In any case, the necessary regulation needs to be enacted on a statewide basis.

It is surprising that the prohibition of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers has not already been made law. A part of the problem may be that people don't generally understand how little phosphorus it takes to cause an algae bloom on a lake. **It doesn't take much!** Generally speaking, when the phosphorus concentration in a lake gets beyond about 20 parts per billion (that's billion ... a one with nine zeros after it), a lake can begin experiencing algae blooms. Other factors can affect the threshold concentration, but this is a good general rule of thumb.

To put it in perspective, that concentration would be roughly equivalent to one pound of phosphorus in six mill-



ion gallons of water. To repeat...it doesn't take much. Even small amounts of phosphorus are significant.

There are very solid reasons for getting the phosphorus out of our lawn and turf fertilizers and there is no downside -- except possibly for the fertilizer manufacturers. Even for them, the phosphorus-free products already exist.

WCLRA will strongly support the effort to remove phosphorus from lawn fertilizers. We will encourage the Washburn County Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution indicating its support and will do whatever else we can to move the Legislature in the right direction.

For every year that we fail to act, the problem increases and the nutrient load continues to accumulate. It is well beyond the time when this should have been accomplished. No legislator who cares at all about preserving our Wisconsin lakes and rivers should vote against a measure like this. It should be a "no brainer."

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

WCLRA board working on 'refocusing' the organization's goals and objectives

(Continued from Page 3)

Starting last October, the WCLRA board of directors undertook a process that I refer to as a "refocus." The directors have held two retreats for the sole purpose of redefining specific goals and directions for WCLRA. The process will continue for the next few months, but we have already begun to identify areas where our efforts can do the most good.

Early on, we identified two criteria that seem to help define legitimate projects for WCLRA. We have agreed that they should be either projects "that only we are qualified to do" or projects "that we can do better than anyone else." This will hopefully identify projects that are particularly suited to our organization.

Some of what we do is not readily visible. We have a very significant constructive role at the county level, but the ordinary person will not be aware of this without attending Zoning Committee or Board of Adjustment hearings on shoreland protection issues. We believe we need to communicate this to our members and others more effectively.

We always welcome suggestions as to what you would like to see us undertake. Please pass your thoughts and ideas to me or any other member of the board. Our goal is to be the most effective organization possible for our members and for the health of the treasured 963 lakes and miles of rivers and streams in our county.

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

Environment may benefit from shifts in state politics

Last November's elections brought changes to Wisconsin's politics that, for the most part, bode well for the environment. The strong property-rights orientation of the last Legislature has been diluted and opens the door for a number of environment-friendly initiatives to move forward.

But all might not be rosy. The new Attorney General, J.B. Van Hollen, campaigned on an anti-environmental position and indicated he would not bring suit against those accused of compromising or violating environment regulations. However, since the election, the AG may have relaxed his anti-environmental position; we'll have to wait and see.

The more environmentally-friendly Legislature may encourage the DNR to bring forward some new and revised administrative rules that were stymied by the last Legislature. In particular, the revision of the Shoreland Management Program, NR115, that has been in process for the last four or so years may once again be brought to public hearings with subsequent action by the Natural Resources Board.

Similarly, the piers administrative rule will see the light of day again. Both of these rules could have a significant impact on riparians and the way shoreland properties are regulated. Another controversial item from last year -- tournament fishing -- will probably be brought to the fore. A recodification of Chapter NR 30 -- the statutory chapter that regulates activities in the water -- has been in the works for a number of years. Perhaps the new Legislature will address the necessary modernization of this important law.

The aquatic invasive species program may receive increased support by the Legislature. Manure runoff control programs and other non-point source control measures are most likely to be reconsidered.

Several new issues will be introduced this year. One with a significant potential benefit to the water resources is a statewide ban on phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. Minnesota has had such a ban for a couple of years. Dane County also introduced a phosphorus ban several years ago. A statewide ban for Wisconsin is gathering support and may well have reached the point of assuring passage by the Legislature. Another initiative is the slow-no-wake ban within 100 feet -- some are pushing for 200 feet -- of the shoreline on all lakes in the state.

In his recently announced budget, the Governor has asked the Legislature to reauthorize the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and increase its bonding level. The Stewardship Fund allows the DNR to purchase and set aside for future generations parcels of land that are environmentally special. There are a number of such Stewardship lands in our region.

A recent action taken by the Governor may be indicative of a new enforcement orientation. The Sawyer County cranberry case that has been in the works for the last few years has taken a new turn. The initial lawsuit claimed William Zawistowski's cranberry farm was dumping so much phos-

'Pier Protection Act' reintroduced

Republican State Rep. Scott Gunderson and Sen. Roger Breske have reintroduced pier legislation this spring (LRB 1320/2) which would, among other things, exempt from permits any pier under 300 square feet in place before the 2003 "Jobs Creation Act" and piers of any size already permitted by DNR, and would double the current limit on multifamily/commercial slips to 4 slips for the first 50 feet of shoreline and two for each additional 50 feet of shoreline. Developers could apply for an individual permit if they wanted to exceed the doubled limit.

phorus into Musky Bay on the Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa reservation that it created a public nuisance. It sought damages to clean up the lake and an order to stop the discharges. A Sawyer County judge agreed the farm was polluting the lake, causing excessive growth of plants and algae and disrupting the public's ability to participate in recreational activities by Musky Bay riparians and others. The judge warned Zawistowski to stop the pollution. Nonetheless, he dismissed the suit because he said what defines a public nuisance is unclear under state law and the pollution probably hadn't reached that level.

Former Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager decided to appeal the case to a state appeals court. During his campaign last year for Attorney General, J.B. Van Hollen promised to end the lawsuit, which he repeatedly derided as frivolous and a poor use of the state's resources. But Governor Doyle rejected the Department of Justice's request to end the politically charged pollution case and said the state would instead hire outside counsel to continue its appeal. So the case will be heard in the Appeals Court. Hopefully, the decision of the Appeals Court will eventually produce some sort of remedial action to restore Musky Bay to its natural state and impose some measures on Zawistowski to prohibit future pollution by his cranberry operation.

Finally, it is worth noting that Conservation Day, where conservation organizations and advocates meet face-to-face with the legislators in Madison, is achieving a level of maturity and significant importance in the legislative process.

This year, more than 400 conservationists attended and presented their views to the legislators. The principal themes were 1) The Stewardship Fund; 2) Hunter, Angler, Trapper Bill of Rights; 3) Protecting the Great Lakes; and 4) Creating a Clean Energy Future. This is yet another great way to be an active and effective participant in the protection of Wisconsin's water resources.

Keep your eye on the Legislature and the Governor. Hopefully, it will be a good biennium for the environment!

--Earl Cook,

WCLRA Government/Environment Committee