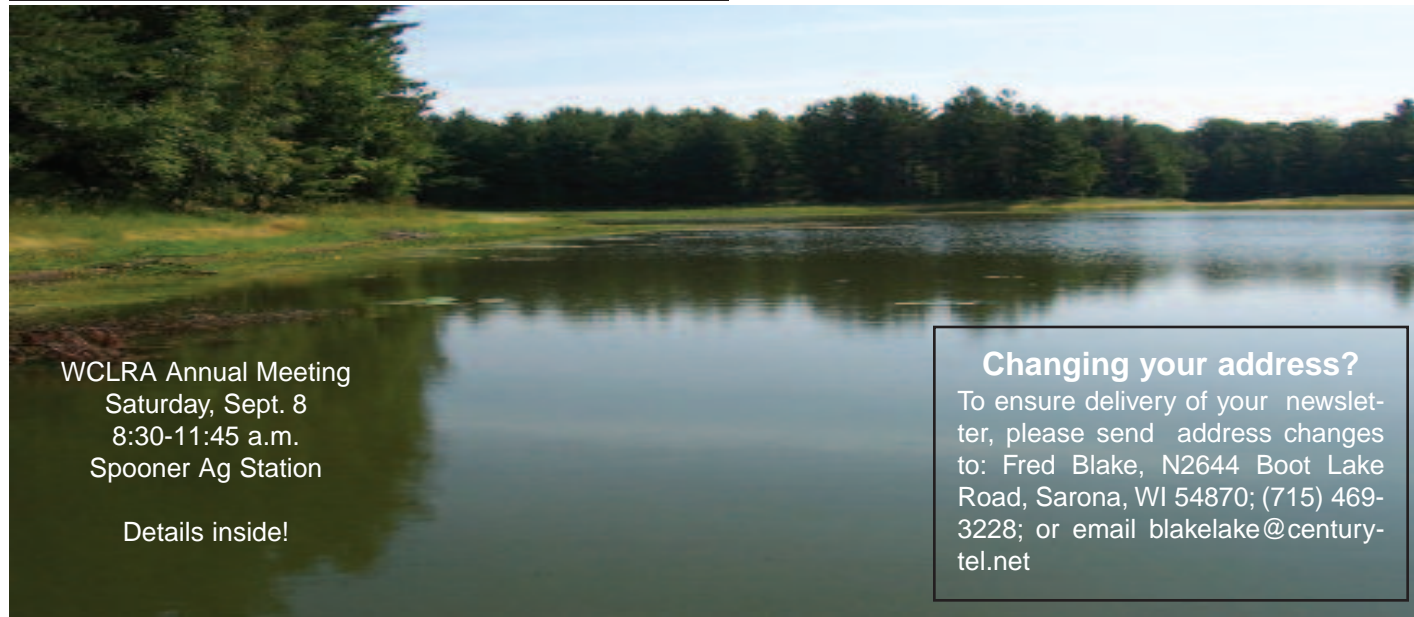


ON THE WATERFRONT is published by:
 WASHBURN COUNTY LAKES & RIVERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
 850 West Beaverbrook Avenue, Suite 1
 Spooner, WI 54801
 715-635-4444
 Editor: Kevin Hagen E-mail: khagen@centurytel.net

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 20
Spooner, WI



WCLRA Annual Meeting
 Saturday, Sept. 8
 8:30-11:45 a.m.
 Spooner Ag Station

Details inside!

Changing your address?

To ensure delivery of your newsletter, please send address changes to: Fred Blake, N2644 Boot Lake Road, Sarona, WI 54870; (715) 469-3228; or email blakelake@centurytel.net

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 Dept:

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

Aquatic Invasives:

Kris Larsen, DNR.....635-4072
 Lisa Gabriel, Washburn County PLRMD.....468-4654



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

Summer 2007
 WCLRA #16

IN THIS ISSUE:	PAGE
President's Comments	1
Annual Meeting	2
Slowing VHS	3
Totogatic Paddle	4
NR115 Comments	5
Making Progress?	6
Aquatic Invasives	7
Key Contacts	8

President's Comments

WCLRA's 8th annual meeting is Sept. 8

Mark your calendars! The Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association Annual Meeting will be Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Agricultural Research Station east of Spooner on Hwy. 70.

This year, we will have Peter Murray, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) to provide a statewide perspective on where we stand with our efforts to preserve our water resources. WAL has its home office in Madison and Peter is intimately aware of the activities in the Legislature.

At the September 8th meeting, WCLRA will reach its eighth birthday and it seems appropriate to take stock of what progress we are making with our efforts to protect and preserve the waters here in Washburn County. We need to learn from both our past successes and our failures and be ready to deal with new issues and concerns as they arise. For a county with almost a thousand lakes, and dozens of rivers and streams, this is a big job.

We hear a lot about the threats facing our waters, but the picture is by no means, totally bleak. We do certainly have some hard work ahead of us (and that will likely not change), but we also have a better scientific understanding of the problems facing us than we have ever had before. In addition, we have more good people becoming involved. We have the scientific and human tools to succeed. All we need now is the collective will to use those tools.

As this will be my last message as president, I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of this organization for the time and effort that they have given both to WCLRA and to their own lakes directly. A good number of our full time resident members have been actively involved at some level. Those who are "weekenders" or seasonal residents have little or no time to become actively involved, but they have supported our efforts with their dues. Thank you all for whatever you have been able to do. All of us who value our lakes and rivers salute you!

As an organization, WCLRA has pursued as many important issues as its time and resources allowed. We have developed into a constructive and (I think) trusted partner with the agencies such as Washburn County Land and Water Conservation, the Zoning Committee and the Board of Adjustment, Wisconsin DNR and UW-Extension. We have tried to take a reasonable and balanced approach to all that we do. We knew, at the outset, that few would listen to a "radical fringe group" and we decided early that WCLRA would not be such a group. We think that we have achieved our goal -- to be viewed as a sensible, balanced and constructively involved citizen advocacy group. Knowing the members of this organization, I have no reason to expect that this will change.

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

Update on state legislation set for annual meeting

The WCLRA Annual Meeting is just a month away. It will take place, as it always does, on the first Saturday after Labor Day. This year, that is September 8. Set that morning aside for what should be a great program.

Registration will begin at 8:30 am (with refreshments) and the meeting itself will begin at 9:00 am.

Our speaker this year will be Peter Murray, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL). This has been an active year in the Legislature and WAL is in a particularly good position to know what is happening there. Peter has titled his presentation "Mad Town Disease: What happens in Madison spreads throughout the state." He will provide an update on legislation, administrative rules and conservation activities that affect all lakes.

Peter's perspective is one we need to hear if we are to understand how happenings at the state level tie in with our WCLRA efforts at the county level and with activities on our own individual lakes. All of us will leave with a better understanding of the role we play in the overall effort to preserve our water resources.

After Peter's talk, he will be available for a few minutes during the refreshment break (and perhaps longer) to answer questions before we get into what will be a (mercifully) short business meeting. As part of the business meeting, we will have a "Round Table" session allowing members and guests to express their ideas and concerns.

Other parts of the business meeting will follow the agenda (elsewhere on this page). During the year, the board of directors transacts business, but, at the Annual Meeting, individual members and representatives from our member associations vote on all the issues presented for a decision. Among those issues is the election of officers. We have a full slate of candidates, but nominations from the floor are always welcome. We expect the business meeting will last roughly an hour.


I hope that all of you who can be here will take the opportunity to join us and provide us with your input. WCLRA is, after all, our members' organizations and we attempt to represent your interests in all that we do.

We hope to see you there!

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

Peter Murray has been Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes since 2003. Prior to joining WAL, he directed all administrative services at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo. He has been a board member of several non-profit organizations, including the Metropolitan Minneapolis YMCA and Oakland Family Services of Pontiac, Mich.

In 2004, he was appointed by Gov. James Doyle to the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species, where he serves as chairman. He also serves on the Governor's Forestry Council Invasive Species Leadership Team, the DNR Citizen-based Monitoring Advisory Team, and the Excelsior Township (Sauk County) Comprehensive Plan Committee. In 2004 and 2005 he was a member of the NR 326 (piers and wharves) stakeholder advisory group and the Wisconsin Comprehensive Conservation Plan Advisory Team.



WCLRA Annual Meeting Agenda

Sept. 8, 2007

Spooner Agricultural Research Station

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Registration and Refreshments
9:00 a.m.	Greetings, Introductions
9:20 a.m.	Guest Speaker: Peter Murray
10:20 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m.	Business Meeting Round table Discussion Committee & Liaison Reports Review of 2006 AGM Minutes Financial Report Proposed Budget for 2008 Election of Officers: (Additional nominations may be made from the floor.) President: Cathie Erickson Vice President: Craig Walkey Directors at Large: Ron Brown, Patricia Shifferd, Tony Tubbs
	Appointments to fill unexpired terms made necessary by the election of new officers and directors
	Other business
11:45 a.m.	Adjournment

Village of Stone Lake dedicates Wetland Park

A dedication ceremony for Stone Lake's new 17.5-acre Wetland Park took place on Saturday, June 16, with Natural Resource's Board member John "Duke" Welter as the keynote speaker.

Joining Mr. Welter were State Senator Robert Jauch, State Representatives Frank Boyle and Gary Sherman, Robert Lester, Stone Lake Town Chairman, and many citizens from the surrounding area.

Cathie Erickson, a WCLRA Board member, is president of Stone Lake's park committee which developed the park.

Work on the park began about four years ago when local citizens saw a need to preserve the wetland that adjoins the west side of the village. The 17.5-acre park will moderate storm runoff from the Village of Stone Lake, improve surface and groundwater quality and acts as a pollution filter between the village and 523-acre Stone Lake. Besides that, it will serve as a scenic and educational resource for visitors and residents.

Financial help came from a \$43,000 state Lake Protection grant in 2004 and a \$22,500 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant in 2005. With grant funding, private donations and volunteers, a boardwalk, educational trail, covered footbridge, and gazebo were constructed.

"This community has added an exclamation point to the word 'wetland,' said Mr. Welter, in commending the village for creating the wetland park. "You have taken one of the state's most valued resources and elevated its status for all to see and enjoy."

Also at the dedication ceremony, Peter Whiteneck, a Louisiana-Pacific representative, presented the park committee with a \$65,500 check to be used for new



restroom facilities.

Since statehood, Mr. Welter said, Wisconsin has lost more than half of its wetlands from filling, draining and grading.

"The values this resource provides cannot be overstated," he said, "and I am proud your community has taken it upon itself to not only preserve but showcase the wonders our wetlands have to offer."

The park entrance is in Stone Lake on the west side of Highway 70 at Coddington Road, where parking and restrooms are provided. A boardwalk gives visitor access to the center of the wetland, giving them a unique glimpse of the plants, flowers and wildlife in the park. On the upland areas are rest benches, information posts, a covered footbridge and trails, including one leading to a gazebo overlooking Stone Lake.

Lisa Gabriel named Washburn County AIS coordinator

As of July 1, 2007, Lisa Gabriel became the Washburn County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) coordinator. She was hired to fill a two-year position under a current Washburn County AIS grant.

Many of us already know her from her previous work with Shell Lake residents on shoreland restoration projects.

Lisa attended the University of Stevens Point, obtaining a degree in Natural Resource Management in 2005, and joined Washburn County shortly thereafter.

Her primary focus will be on purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil, although she will be responsible for other invasives on a secondary basis, as time permits.

She will be working out of the Land Conservation office with Brad Robole and Brent Edlin.

Lisa can be reached by phone at (715) 468-4654, by fax at (715) 468-4640 or by email at lgabriel@co.washburn.wi.us



Are we making any progress in protecting waters?

Members of WCLRA and local lake associations expend a lot of energy and effort in attempting to preserve the lakes and rivers of Washburn County. For most of us, our waters are a big part of why we live here.

But, is all of our work having any effect? Are we collectively making any progress? These are valid questions. Although it is not always easy to see, I personally think the answer is an emphatic YES!

Much of the progress is in a better-informed citizenry. The general public is much more aware of the threats our waters are being exposed to than they were just a few years ago. In the last year or two, more than one real estate agent has told me that people now ask "Does this lake have Eurasian milfoil?" or "Does this lake turn green during the hot summer months?" When WCLRA was formed eight years ago, very few were aware that these threats existed and fewer yet knew much about them.

Many of us have now heard of Eurasian water milfoil, zebra mussels, curly leaf pond weed, spiny water flea and lately viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), a fatal disease of fish. The term "aquatic invasive species (AIS)" is familiar to many of us. We are definitely a better informed population than we were eight to ten years ago.

More lake associations are forming and joining with WCLRA to preserve the lakes and rivers (Island Lake Association formed last year and there are others are considering taking that step). We have 963 lakes in Washburn County and only 26 of these have lake associations. It is true that many of the remaining lakes are small and are not heavily enough populated to support a lake association, but there are certainly many lakes within the county that could sustain lake associations to look after their lakes and to deal with problems when they occur.

Lake associations are taking more active roles in protecting their resources. Two years ago, Potato Lake was experiencing heavy weed growth and algae blooms and needed to address the problem. Since theirs was not a qualified lake association, WCLRA was asked to sponsor their grant application. The grant was awarded and they carried through an initial program which generated a great deal of information about the potential sources of nutrient pollution in their lake.

When the City of Shell Lake requested a permit to install and operate a system for diverting excess water to the Yellow River, WDNR made it plain that the introduction of AIS into the lake could well result in shutting down the system to avoid transporting that invasive specie to the downstream river course. Shell Lake took aggressive steps by closing all but one of its boat landings and instituting inspections for aquatic vegetation on incoming boats.

In the first two years, a number of boats or their trailers were confirmed to be carrying Eurasian water milfoil (4 in 2003, 9 in 2004, 6 in 2005 and 0 in 2006). Were it not for the measures taken, Shell Lake could already be infested with Eurasian milfoil.

This year, Gilmore Lake has a grant to provide for inspection at its boat landings. That landing is only roughly 5 miles from the boat landings on Lake Nancy and Minong flowage. Both of these have Eurasian milfoil and this constitutes a significant threat to Gilmore Lake as boats move from one lake to another.

Minong Flowage Association has just made application for a WDNR Aquatic Invasive Species grant to help in dealing with the recent rapid expansion of its Eurasian milfoil infested areas.

We all react to a catastrophic event. A plane crash, a chemical plant explosion or a tsunami killing thousands will certainly grab our attention. With our lake preservation efforts, we have to look behind the scenes to see that we are slowly succeeding. I think it can be safely stated that the condition of our lakes is better than it would have been without the efforts made by all of us.

Perhaps this is one of those situations where "no news is good news". We are not seeing crisis situations in the local newspaper headlines. As I noted above, Shell Lake could already have had a milfoil crisis were it not for the efforts made there. The absence of crisis is not obvious, but it is real and may indeed be the best measuring stick for our efforts.

Our successes will likely come quietly and slowly, but if we look around, we can see that increased public awareness and an increasing number of volunteers are beginning to make a difference. Our lakes and rivers will have a brighter future if we continue to make that difference one small step at a time.

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

THE WCLRA BOARD

Fred Blake, President
715-469-3228
blakelake@centurytel.net

Earl Cook, Vice President
715-766-3702
elcook@interserv.com

Charlotte Shover, Secretary
715-469-3569
cshover@lightblast.net

Cathie Erickson, Treasurer
715-865-4406
CathieErickson@aol.com

Ron Brown, Director
715-466-4025
ronjeannebrown@centurytel.net

Ed Fischer, Director
715-635-7704
efischer@spacestar.net

Wayne Sabatke, Director
715-354-7003
wls3542@yahoo.com

Pat Shifferd, Director
715-466-5867
shifferd@centurytel.net

Tony Tubbs, Director
715-466-2557
feetinsurf@centurytel.net

Craig Walkey, Director
715-354-7386
cwalkey@centurytel.net

Chip Wood, Past President
715-469-3519
wwood987@centurytel.net

WEB SITE
www.wclra.org

ADVISORS

UWEX
Beverly Stencil
John Haack

PLANNING, LAND/WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Brad Robole

DNR
Kathy Bartilson

CONSERVATION WARDENS
Dave Swanson
Brian Knepper

ZONING ADMINISTRATION
Web Macomber

What we can do to slow spread of VHS

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has been making most of us very nervous here in the northern lake country. The disease affects upwards of forty game species and has been detected in fish from the Lake Winnebago system, Lake Michigan and Green Bay. As of 7/19/07, WDNR reports that the disease has not yet spread beyond those areas into inland waters, as was feared.

In April and May, the Natural Resources Board passed emergency rules prohibiting movement of live fish and water from lakes and rivers where the virus has been found or is likely present. It was also required that people who harvest and sell bait from the wild obtain a bait dealer's permit. The emergency rules covered Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, the Mississippi River, Lake Winnebago and the Fox River downstream to Green Bay, including its tributaries up to the first barrier impassable to fish.

If the virus is detected outside the covered areas, the emergency rules will automatically expand to all waters of the state.

DNR suggests a number of steps that we can all take to help prevent the spread of VHS and most of them are common sense:

1. Drain all water from your boat and trailer, bilge, live wells, and fishing equipment, including bait buckets, containers and coolers.
2. Take no live fish or fish eggs, including unused bait minnows, from one water to another. All fish must be dead before leaving the landing or shoreline. Ice your catch and discard your minnows in a covered waste barrel.
3. Do not use minnows unless they were purchased from a licensed Wisconsin bait dealer or you harvested them from the waters you are fishing.
4. Remove all visible plants, animals and mud from your boat, trailer and equipment before leaving the landing.
5. Report large numbers of dead or dying fish to the DNR Tipline, 1-800-TIP-WDNR (847-9367).

WDNR is necessarily taking a very protective stance. In mid-July, DNR staff were forced to euthanize young lake sturgeon because stocking them would have represented too great a risk of spreading VHS. Sample fish were tested and came up clean, but they were raised at the state's Wild Rose fish hatchery, which had received northern pike eggs from the Lake Winnebago system where VHS has been detected. Roughly 22,000 fingerlings and 1,000 yearlings were euthanized and buried using approved procedures.

If we all take the warnings and precautions seriously, we will definitely increase our chances of avoiding the bad news that VHS has begun advancing into our inland lakes and streams. DNR has told us what we need to do. It is now up to us.

--Fred Blake, WCLRA President

2007 WCLRA Board of Directors Meeting Schedule 9 a.m., Oscar Johnson Center, Fairgrounds, Spooner

August 17
October 19

September 21
November 16

(No December board meeting)

**WCLRA Annual General Meeting: Sept. 8, 8:30 a.m., Spooner Ag Station
(Check for updates at www.wclra.org)**

A float down the Totogatic River -- a genuine jewel

WCLRA and other groups in the northwest part of the state have put a great deal of effort and energy into attempting to obtain the Wisconsin wild river designation for the Totogatic (or Totagatic depending on what map you consult) River. It is one of the few northern rivers left that so richly deserves this designation.

That proved again to be true when a group of people undertook a paddling venture on the Totogatic on June 15, under the auspices of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. The group comprised roughly 15 people plus experts to educate the participants along the way. WCLRA members Ron and Jeanne Brown, Fred Blake, Kevin Hagen and Kathy Bartilson took part.

The group negotiated some eight miles of water above Thompson Landing and found it to be as close to pristine as one can find anywhere in the state. I saw one cabin partially hidden on a bluff high above the river and two small docks. Aside from that, there was very little evidence of development. The development that has taken place has generally been well done and has had little visible impact on the river. The river probably looks much as it did 100 years ago and is definitely worth preserving in this condition.

The river channel in this stretch provides a great deal of variety. It varies from generally broad and tranquil with relatively low, heavily overgrown shorelines to narrower, slightly faster moving with steeper, more canyon-like walls. Fish were frequently spotted and, at one point, we paddled almost directly under two bald eagles roosting in a massive old white pine. Low water due to the current moderate drought con-



WCLRA Director Ron Brown was among the contingent paddling down the wild Totogatic River June 15, in a trip co-sponsored by the River Alliance of Wisconsin and WCLRA.

ditions made it necessary to step out and walk the canoes and kayaks in a few places, but that was welcome relief on a day that reached 90-plus degrees in the area.

All in all, it was a day very well spent with both enjoyment and learning. (We had the expertise of retired UW-Eau Claire geologist Adam Cahow; his son Jim, a DNR water biologist and aquatic insect expert; and DNR Upper St. Croix Basin Leader Kathy Bartilson on the trip.)

A very glorious day on an upspoiled stretch of water. How much better can it get?

--Fred Blake

WCLRA booth helps 'get the word out'

With WCLRA coming upon its eighth birthday, we believe that we have achieved our goal of developing a solid relationship with regulatory and educational agencies such as the Washburn County Land and Water Conservation Department, Zoning Committee, Board of Adjustment, Wisconsin DNR and UW-Extension.

To make certain that we are representing you, the membership, properly, on June 30 we set up a booth and display at the entry into the Spooner Economart. During the day, our Board of Directors took shifts at the booth to introduce ourselves and listen to the people interested in our activities.

We certainly learned of your concerns and areas we need to continue to focus on such as aquatic invasive species, limiting phosphorus entering our lakes and rivers, and general public education for stewardship.

Your kind advice and interest has encouraged us to consider similar events during the busy Memorial Day or Fourth of July holiday weekends.

--Craig Walkey, WCLRA Education Committee

WCLRA joins WAL in suggesting NR115 changes

After a period of relative quiet, a new proposed revision of Wisconsin's shoreland zoning rules (NR 115) has been submitted for consideration.

Just recently, July 24 through Aug. 8, public hearings were held across the state, the closest being in Hayward and Rice Lake on July 26.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) has considered the proposal as has WCLRA. We agree that the proposal is generally an improvement, but that there are some areas where further changes would provide additional needed protection for our waters.

WAL has assembled an excellent summary of the important points of the proposal and several suggested amendments in a communication titled "Shoreland zoning rules go to public hearing: tell DNR what you think." (July 19, 2007). Included below is that summary (with permission).

WCLRA adds its support to the further amendments suggested by WAL.

WAL generally supports the proposed amendments to NR-115, the Wisconsin Administrative Code setting standards for Shoreland Zoning.

WAL considers the following provisions of the draft rule to be particularly important:

- The draft rule retains three key shoreland zoning standards:

1. The 75-foot setback for buildings and most structures.

2. The 20,000-square-foot minimum lot area requirement.

3. The 100-foot minimum lot width requirement.

- The draft establishes four new provisions that will improve lake water quality and the shoreland environment:

1. A 35-foot primary buffer to protect habitat.

2. A 35-foot vertical height limit for shoreland structures.

3. A 20% limit on lot coverage by hard ("impervious" surfaces, with exceptions to accommodate existing development.

4. Require counties to regulate land disturbing activities to protect water quality.

- The draft rule replaces the "50% rule" with new provisions that permit repair, maintenance and some expansion of legal nonconforming structures

WAL urges DNR to amend the proposed rules to include the following:

1. Allow unlimited expenditures to maintain, repair and improve legal nonconforming structures

Comments can still be submitted

Even though the public hearings on the latest revision of NR115 are completed, written comments will be accepted until Sept. 7, 2007.

Public comments do carry weight in the policy-making process. Your WCLRA directors ask that you take a few minutes and send your comments to:

Toni Herkert, Bureau of Watershed Management, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

but prohibit their expansion (vertically or horizontally) within the 75-foot setback.

2. "Grandfather" pre-existing substandard shoreland lots from the 20,000-square-foot minimum lot area and 100-foot width requirements, but treat contiguous substandard lots held in common ownership as single lots for shoreland zoning purposes.

3. Establish minimum area, slope, or other standards for land-disturbing activities that require county permits and establish a standard for determining compliance.

'Primary buffer' is critical habitat

Shoreland birds, fish, turtles and frogs are some of Wisconsin's most popular waterfront residents. They also suffer the most when improper development eliminates the native plants, trees and shrubs at the water's edge.

This area, called "the primary buffer," extends 35 feet landward and it's critical for clean water, good habitat, and natural scenic beauty. The primary buffer provides nesting and transition areas for waterfowl, songbirds and turtles; downed trees that provide habitat for feeding and spawning fish and insects; and native plants that help filter polluted runoff, preserving water quality for all.

Proposed changes to statewide minimum shoreland protection standards seek to maintain the primary buffer in a natural state and to restore it when property owners pursue a major change.

With few exceptions (such as are proposed in NR115 revisions), buildings should not be located in this area.

--Wisconsin DNR