

FALL/WINTER 2012

VOLUME 17, ISSUE TWO



Wild Rice Restoration Efforts Yielding Results

*By Anthony Havranek, Land & Water Resources Manager
St. Croix Tribal Environmental Department*

Production was down this year on most wild rice waters in the northwestern portion of Wisconsin. This may be due to the abnormally warm and early spring combined with the return of colder temperatures for a prolonged period after many aquatic and terrestrial plants germinated. Heavy rains in late May/early June may also have disrupted growth during floating leaf stage and hot and humid weather in July could have influenced pollination and seed production. These factors combined with annual variation in the wild rice crop will probably make for lower than average harvest this year, as only 5 of the date regulated wild rice waters in this part of the state were opened for harvest (Mud, Long, and Briggs in Burnett County, Big Round in Polk County, and Little Mud in Washburn.)

Upper Clam Lake in Burnett County did produce a dense bed in an area that is currently being protected from destructive habits of common carp. The St. Croix Tribe installed 950 feet of nylon mesh nets to protect nearly 84 acres of wild rice on the south side of Upper Clam Lake. Survey efforts also show that native submersed aquatic vegetation may be rebounding after nearly 177,000 pounds of common carp were removed from the lake last winter. This is nearly 30% of the estimated total of 600,000 pounds that were in Clam Lake at the beginning of January 2012.

The St. Croix Tribe, WI DNR, the Clam Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Department, University of MN, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to work together to restore the nearly 300 acres of wild rice that once grew on Clam Lake; as well as the fishery, waterfowl populations, and other aquatic plants that provide countless benefits to the lake.

Specific efforts include monitoring the carp population and fishery of Clam Lake and other connected waterbodies on the Clam River System (Long, Clam Flowage, Spencer, and Bashaw Lakes), protection of the existing rice bed as a seed source for Clam Lake seeding efforts, continued tracking of common carp through the system using radio telemetry, and assessment of the aquatic plant community on Clam Lake to gauge the effect of restoration efforts.





Message from the President

by Roger Noe

Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association

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Maybe we should label it a summer of recovery as downed timber continues to exit Burnett County. As fall arrives, it appears that most fallen timber has been cleared and rebuilding and regeneration is underway. What a strong reminder to all that we really are not in charge !!

As some of you close cabins and prepare to move into winter, mark your calendars for next summer events not to miss. Burnett County Lakes & Rivers Association Inc. will hold its annual meeting at Fort Folle Avoine on **Saturday, June 29, 2013** at 9:00am. This will feature a presentation dealing with natural resources. This past year 70 citizens attended a wonderful presentation by DNR falconer Chris Cold. On **Friday, June 21** the NW Wisconsin Lakes Association will hold its annual conference. Last year this was held at Spooner High School which is a likely sight again in 2013. This conference is exceptional if you are a lake enthusiast. The **Learn About Your Lakes Series** will return to Burnett County in 2013. Many of you attended these sessions in 2012. More information will come in the spring. Clearly, lots of folks are working hard to keep Burnett County the jewel it is. Have a safe, enjoyable winter and get involved next spring.

BURNETT COUNTY WATER PATROL

In case you have not heard, Burnett County now possesses its own patrol boat. The 14' boat was purchased last spring and visited many of Burnett County's lakes this summer. The boat was purchased using state grant funds under the guidance of recreational officer and Burnett County deputy, Ryan Bybee. With over 500 lakes in Burnett County, the boat will be a huge asset for water safety and law enforcement. If your lake is similar to most, timely law enforcement will do much to maintain a safe and enjoyable summer recreational environment. As with all watercraft there are numerous "accessories" necessary to put the boat on the water. The grant money received by the Burnett County Sheriff Department covered only the cost of the boat, trailer and motor. Necessary items to outfit the boat were marine radio, lights, fire extinguisher, lettering, etc.

Thanks to numerous lake associations and the Burnett County Lakes & Rivers Association, the boat is now fully equipped and on the job. A sincere thank you to the following lake associations for their generous contributions to Burnett's County's water patrol initiative: North Sand Lake, Big Doctor, Big Wood, Deer, Green, Minnow, Loon, Long, Love, Mud Hen, Point and Rooney. The total amount donated to Burnett County through lake associations and BCLRA was \$3625.00. With the help of caring county property owners, Burnett County now has the capability to patrol county water and react to county water emergencies in a safe, reliable watercraft. If you have a water related emergency, CALL 911.

Again, thanks to all who helped with this project and especially those in the Burnett County Sheriffs Department. If you have questions, suggestions, or water related safety issues, call the sheriff's department and advise them.

Score Your Shore

Burnett County Land and Water
Conservation Department and UWEX




FREE SHORELINE VISITS AVAILABLE

Protecting Lakes With Natural Shorelands

Natural shorelands provide property owners with many benefits:

- Protect shorelines from wave erosion
- Hold soils in place and prevent erosion during heavy rains
- Safeguard lake water quality by keeping soil and nutrients out of the lake
- Attract song birds and other wildlife
- Provide more privacy
- Reduce maintenance

This assessment will help you determine if there is more you can do to protect your lake. For each question, circle the number of points that match the condition of your shoreland. The shoreland area extends from the lake edge to 35 feet upland.

Is there natural ground cover* within the shoreland area?			
circle one	2	1	0
	 <p>Heavy to very heavy Unmowed plants cover about 3/4 of this area.</p>	 <p>Moderate Unmowed plants cover at least 1/4 but less than 3/4 of this area.</p>	 <p>Absent to sparse 3/4 or more of this area is mowed or bare soil.</p>
Are there shrubs** on your shoreland area?			
circle one	2	1	0
	<p>Heavy to very heavy Shrubs cover about 3/4 of this area.</p>	<p>Moderate Shrubs cover at least 1/4 but less than 3/4 of this area.</p>	<p>Absent to sparse Few to no shrubs present in this area.</p>
Are there trees on your shoreland area?			
circle one	2	1	0
	<p>Heavy to very heavy Trees cover about 3/4 of this area.</p>	<p>Moderate Trees cover at least 1/4 but less than 3/4 of this area.</p>	<p>Absent to sparse Few to no trees present in this area.</p>
Does your shoreline show erosion?			
circle one	2	1	0
	<p>Light to none Little to no erosion visible.</p>	<p>Moderate Erosion and soil loss is noticeable, sediment may be visible in the water.</p>	<p>Heavy to very heavy Active erosion is occurring - gullies, incutting of the shoreline, and visible sediment in the water.</p>
Add the total points circled			

If your total points are:

0 - 3 points: Call today to schedule an appointment. Your lot is a great candidate for a site visit!

4 - 5 points: Consider a site visit. There are likely some minor changes to think about to improve lake quality.

6 - 8 points: You are doing a great job managing your property and likely have little impact on the lake. If you are interested in learning more to attract wildlife to your property go to www.burnettcounty.com/shoreline.

* Natural ground cover includes unmowed vegetation, like grasses and wildflowers that grow beneath trees and shrubs.

** Shrub cover includes woody plants that don't have a main trunk, but have several stems coming from a clump.



Score Your Shore

*Burnett County Land and Water
Conservation Department and UWEX*

REQUEST A FREE VISIT



LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS:

Meet with a shoreland landscaping specialist and learn about a variety of options including:

- Low or no cost options for a more natural shoreland
- Tips for controlling erosion on your land and along the shore
- Sources for native trees and shrubs to jump start a more natural landscape along your shore
- Contact information for area landscapers
- Tax incentives and cost sharing options



Photo by A&T Cusick Photography

TO ARRANGE A FREE SITE VISIT, MAIL THIS FORM TO:

Ann Lane
Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Department
7410 Co. Road K, #109
Siren, WI 54872

OR call Ann Lane at 715-349-2186
OR e-mail at alane@burnettcounty.org

YES! I am interested in learning more. Please contact me to arrange a site visit.

Name(s) _____

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Email _____

Comments or questions _____

Wisconsin State Budget Proposal for the Control of Aquatic Invasive Species in Inland Waters - 2013-2015 Budget

From WisconsinLakes.org formerly Wisconsin Association of Lakes

Wisconsin is at a critical juncture in the fight against aquatic invasive species (AIS). Many of our lakes and waterways are already choked with Eurasian Watermillfoil and other aquatic invaders, and new threats are appearing from several directions. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) already has some elements of a comprehensive AIS strategy in place, but funding for these efforts is woefully inadequate. The impact of this shortfall is felt by a wide range of parties, from lakefront property owners and others who enjoy our waterways, to the many local businesses supported by fishing and tourism. We can and must do more to prevent new aquatic invasive species from arriving, to contain those that are present, and to reduce the impact of those that are already established. Total annual cost of proposal: \$4.2-5.2 Million.

Specific Proposal Elements

- 1. Develop a Rapid Response Team.** Quick containment of new infestations of aquatic invasives is crucial - we propose the creation of a rapid response team committed to the containment, eradication and continued suppression of newly pioneering invasives.
- 2. Improve Containment in Key Water Bodies.** Any AIS strategy needs to keep invasive species from spreading out of the most critical source waters in the state. We propose funding for equipment and staff for decontamination units at boat landings on "super spreader water bodies" throughout Wisconsin.
- 3. Instill a Watershed Approach.** The most effective strategy for Wisconsin deals with AIS on a regional, watershed level rather than on a water body by water body basis. We propose two, two-year pilot projects to bring all stakeholders in a region together to work in partnership to prevent, contain, and reduce AIS in their watershed and region.
- 4. Reinforce Enforcement.** As strong as Wisconsin's laws are for governing the transportation, possession, transfer, and introduction of AIS, they are only as strong, efficient and effective as enforcement capacity. We propose supplementing the current level of funding for AIS-related law enforcement to increase the number of wardens and the time they can spend working on AIS.
- 5. Maintain What Is Gained.** Continued vigilance and resources are needed to prevent existing AIS from rebounding at nuisance levels and migrating to other water bodies. Too often, the volunteer base at this point begins to fatigue and long term control projects begin to compete less favorably for limited grant funds.
- 6. Create Permanent Partnerships.** A watershed approach to the AIS battle will only work with strong regional partnerships. We propose existing regional entities such as Resource, Conservation and Development Councils, Regional Planning Commissions or other qualified watershed groups be adequately funded to incorporate AIS prevention, containment, and control techniques into their menu of regional assistance.

New Funding Options

A number of options exist as new funding sources to create a Wisconsin Invasive Species Account. These options include one or a combination of the following:

- Increasing boater registration fees in Wisconsin,
- Adding an invasive species surcharge to boat registrations,
- Requiring out-of-state boats to pay a surcharge to launch boats within the state,
- Requiring an out-of-state boat registration (this could be handed out with out-of-state fishing licenses),
- Implementing a utility trailer registration with a sticker (not a license plate) similar to boats,
- Implementing registrations for non-motorized boats

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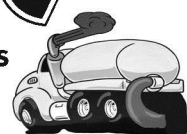
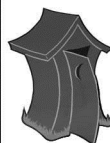
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Qualified Lake Associations Can Access State Grants

*From People of the Lakes, 11th Edition -
UWEX-Lyden, Korth, O'Connor, Klessig*

Until the late 1980s only units of government and lake districts were eligible for state lake grants. Since 1989, certain voluntary lake associations have been eligible to receive funds through various state grant programs. Because tax funds are used to support these programs, private lake associations are required to meet specific standards in order to be eligible. Generally, these standards aim to ensure that associations are organized and operated for public benefit and do not unreasonably exclude participation. Associations that meet these standards are considered qualified lake associations. If the requirements for becoming a qualified lake association are not acceptable by the organization, it may still be worthwhile to incorporate under Chapter 181. If you think you may be applying for a state grant in the future, it may be worthwhile to review your articles of incorporation and bylaws.

Qualifications: In order to be recognized as a state qualified lake association in Wisconsin, an organization must:

- Be incorporated under Chapter 181 Wisconsin Statutes for a least one year. (This is a good idea for other reasons, including the liability of the association and its officers)
- Declare in its Articles of Incorporation or bylaws that the main purpose of the organization is to support the protection or improvement of one or more inland lakes for the benefit of the general public (see Appendix A for model bylaws)
- Demonstrate that a substantial purpose of its past actions was to support the protection or improvement of one or more inland lakes for the benefit of the general public
- Allow any individual to be a member if they reside within one mile of the lake for at least one month each year
- Not have articles of incorporation or bylaws which limit or deny the right of any member or class of members to vote. Have at least 25 members. Require annual membership fees of not less than \$5 nor more than \$50



Qualified Lake Associations Abilities:

- Require dues/raise funds
- Be eligible for state lake grants
- Borrow money (loans will need to be secured by assets)
- Make contracts
- Acquire and sell property
- Sue and be sued
- Have educational programs
- Communicate with units of government & others
- Conduct lake management activities such as:
- Monitor water quality
- Inventory/monitor aquatic plants
- Manage invasive/nuisance aquatic plants
- Purchase lands to protect sensitive areas
- Restore wetlands
- Develop erosion control programs
- Develop long-range lake management plans

Wetland Critters for Kids

By Christian W. Cold - WDNR Ladysmith



Muskrat

Ondatra zibethicus

(Iroquois for muskrat) (Latin for musky-odored)

What is a muskrat? A muskrat is not a “true rat”. In a way, it is like a rabbit-sized, meadow mouse that lives in water! It has short, thick, dark brown fur and a long, black, scaly tail. Its hind feet are (partially) webbed for swimming.

Where do muskrats live? Muskrats prefer shallow, weedy marshes, lakes and slow-moving rivers and streams.

What does a muskrat eat? Muskrats prefer the roots and young shoots of certain wetland plants – especially cattails, arrowhead and bulrush. Sometimes they add a little meat to their diet – such as mussels, crayfish, insects, little turtles, frogs and fish.

What eats a muskrat? Many animals consider muskrats “good-eating”. Mink probably top the list; however fox, otter, fishers, bobcats, eagles, great- horned owls, snapping turtles, and some fish (pike, musky and occasionally catfish) will dine on them also. You can eat a muskrat too! Fresh and properly prepared, muskrat flesh is delicious and a good source of nutritious protein.

Are muskrats good or bad? This often depends on where the muskrat is living....and what it is doing at the time. Muskrats like to dig. When they burrow into dikes or levees (which hold back water), the result can be a “blow-out” where the lake is drained and the surrounding area is flooded. Muskrats can (sometimes) be so numerous that they chew too much vegetation in a wetland. This makes it difficult for other wetland animals to survive.

On the brighter side, the chewing behavior of muskrats keeps wetland plant growth at a proper level, which in turn provides other wetland animals with enough food and shelter to live healthy and productive lives. In many ways, a muskrat is just as important to the wetland...as a duck is.

How do I know if muskrats live on my wetland? Look for small bits and pieces of floating root tubers and tender plant shoots that wash ashore. Or notice the especially soft and spongy places as you walk along the shorelines. – where muskrats tunnel into the bank. Watch for muskrats on calm, lazy, late afternoons – as they busily cruise along the banks.....occasionally dipping below the water surface.....or haul ashore to nibble on something.

Did you know? The muskrat is one of the most important of American furbearers (animals with a valuable fur or pelt). Many thousands of muskrats are harvested every year by licensed trappers who sell the fur and (sometimes) eat the meat.

One last word..... Never harm or destroy any animal unless you are protecting yourself or your property.....or if you intend to harvest and use it for a good purpose. It is important that we respect all life (including ourselves and each other). Muskrats (like all animals) have a special purpose and rightful place in the great Circle of Life.



Frac Sand Mining in Burnett County

*By Dave Ferris, Burnett County Land and Water
Conservation Department*

There's been much in the media around the Midwest on the topic of frac sand mining in Wisconsin and Minnesota. So what's it all about?

Frac sand is silica sand or silicon dioxide (SiO_2), also referred to as quartz. Silica sand has been mined for thousands of years as it has many uses, from paving roads to filtering drinking water. It is also used in the hydrofracking process: fluid pressure fractures the rock and opens natural fractures and pores that would normally be closed due to the weight of the overlying rock. The sand grains are then carried into these fractures and prop them open after the fluid pressure is released. Hence the name *proppant*; a term commonly applied to frac sand.

To meet the hydrofracking industry specifications, frac sand needs to be nearly pure quartz, very well rounded, and must meet tight size gradation standards. The sand must also have a high compressive strength, generally between 6,000 psi and 14,000 psi. Sands that meet these specifications are mined from sandstones and from unconsolidated alluvial sands derived from these sandstones. Most sand in WI and MN including most beach and riverbank sands are too impure and too angular to be used as frac sand.

Sand has been mined in WI and MN since the arrival of the first permanent settlers. The oldest continuing use has been as fine aggregate for mortar and concrete. Sand has also been mined for filter beds for drinking water and wastewater treatment, well screen packing, glass manufacture, and bedding sand for dairy operations.

Frac sand for use in the petroleum industry has been produced in Wisconsin for over 40 years. The demand for frac sand has increased exponentially in the past two to three years. Current mining operations are primarily located in West Central Wisconsin but there are also facilities in Burnett, Green Lake and Waupaca Counties and across the river in MN. Some mining sites can be somewhat limited in scope as they may have only extraction and limited separation on site. Other sites may have additional processing, and/or loading/unloading of trucks and rail cars. Some of the issues that both have in common are: truck traffic and road issues; dust and air quality issues, noise sometimes including blasting.

At this time there's one mine producing sand products in Burnett County. There is always potential for additional mines/plants to open but the long distance from rail lines and the depth of overburden (soil on top of desired formation) make Burnett County less attractive to mine operations.

The existing sand mine in Burnett County is west of Grantsburg north of Highway 70, very close to the St. Croix River. This operation is extraction and wet processing only with the sand going to North Branch, MN for final drying and processing.

The mine had a berm around a settling pond fail in April 2012 which released sediment to a tributary of the St. Croix River. Once notified the company stopped using the washing line where the problem occurred and has built a berm to hold any sediment laden water on site. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the US National Park Service are investigating any ramifications to aquatic life. The effects of the release are not completely known, however, it doesn't appear to have caused any long term damage to the St. Croix River. The WDNR has required additional inspections as well as referring this case to the Wisconsin Department of Justice for adjudication. Burnett County and WDNR are continuing to monitor the site.

Odds and Ends



BCLRA Donates Money To County Boat Patrol

This summer BCLRA provided financial support through the BCLRA budget and contributions from individual lake associations to provide a radio for the Burnett County boat patrol. The new boat and radio will assist Recreation Officer Bybee and others providing safety, educational, and law enforcement on our county's lakes and rivers.

Shown in Photo from left to right: Susan Wallin, Ryan Bybee, Buck Gooding, Roger Noe, Hud Gelein, Barb and Arne Enslin, Marilyn Lemieux, Fred Kruger and Nate Hoftender.

Northwest Lakes Conference.

Approximately 250 people attended the 2012 Northwest Lakes Conference at the Spooner High School this past June. Participants attended sessions on aquatic invasive species, shoreland conservation, wild rice, and many others. Also participating in the workshop were approximately 24 private businesses and agencies related to lakes and conservation. They each had booths which gave participants the opportunities to discuss how they can help our lakes. The featured speaker was David Zetner, two time conservationist of the year and former president of the Izaak Walton League. You can view a YouTube video on the conference at <http://burnettcounty.com/2012NWLakesConference>

Wisconsin Lakes Trivia Games Available.

When was Wisconsin's first dam built? What does pH measure? What is a baby goose called? These questions and others can be found in a new game developed by UWEX educators. Wisconsin Lakes Trivia is a fun way to learn and is perfect for a rainy day at the lake or around the campfire. The games are available at the Burnett County LWCD office for \$15. They can be shipped for an additional \$3.50. Contact Ann at 715-349-2186.



Lake Lines Newsletter Now available Via E-Newsletter.

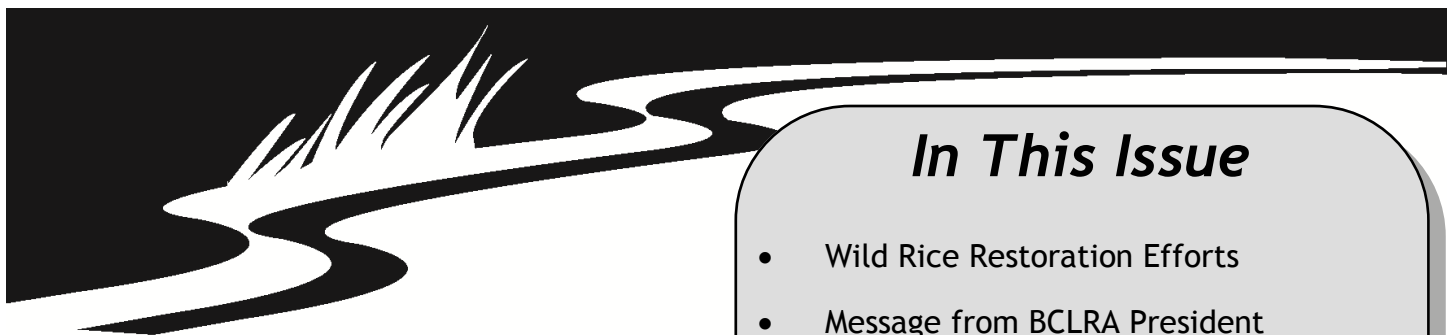
A new digital version of Lake Lines is now available via an email newsletter. The UWEX-Burnett County office is developing e-mail newsletters based on the following education themes: Natural Resources, Agriculture/Horticulture, Youth and Families, Local Government, and Community and Economic Development. Each e-newsletter theme will be published between 2-6 times per year. You can sign up for the ones you are interested in by going to <http://burnettcounty.com/UWEX-eNewsletters>. The first to be published will be the natural resources edition that will feature **Lake Lines**. We encourage you to sign up and forward it to a friend. You can subscribe or unsubscribe at any time.



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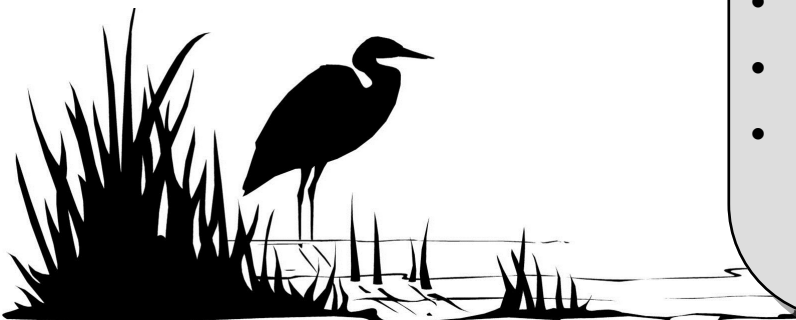
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LAKELINES

FALL/WINTER 2012

VOLUME 17, ISSUE TWO



LakeLines is now featured online at <http://burnett.uwex.edu>