



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.

FALL #31 2012

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Comments.....	1
Short-term Rentals.....	2
AIS Update.....	2
Totagatic Property Update....	3
MTLC Report.....	4
Frac Sand Mining.....	4
WCLRA Annual Meeting.....	5
Lakes & Rivers Contacts.....	6

President's Message

We have published several articles in past newsletters describing the success of the Youth Environmental Stewardship Program (YES) for the Washburn County Elementary Schools. 2013 will begin the fifth year that Birchwood, Shell Lake, Northwood, Spooner and St. Francis de Sales will attend the one day event at Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary to learn basic limnology, hands on chemistry and biology, and water resources stewardship. The goal of the program is to cultivate environmental awareness and the value of good stewardship in the future generation to protect and preserve our Washburn County lakes, rivers, wetlands, and associated water resources.

Start-up funding for the program included a one-time \$6,000 DNR Lake Management Grant and other local funding. Now we must seek funding from each school's community organizations, commercial, industrial, and individual contributions to keep the program going.

The Birchwood Education Foundation and Chamber of Commerce has supported Birchwood Elementary School's continued participation. Hunt Hill needs local financial support for the other four schools.

Your donations to the WCLRA education fund have allowed us to contribute \$500 annually to the program. Long Lake Preservation Association (LLPA) has generously contributed \$1500 annually. However, the annual YES budget is \$4500 which will leave Hunt Hill \$2500 short for 2013 and beyond.

We are asking for your help to encourage your community to support your local school in this program. We can direct the funding from each community to a separate account at Hunt Hill for their school.

We believe that this is a very worth while program for our youth and Washburn county. For more information you can contact me at 715-354-7386 or cwalkey@centurytel.net..

Craig Walkey, President

its *On The Waterfront* newsletter to individual members and to the officers of member associations. If your association has recently had elections, please make us aware of the address changes. Contact Fred Blake at 715-469-3228 or by email at blakelake@centurytel.net

Short Term Rentals

By Fred Blake

In recent years, there have been few issues that have generated as much interest and emotion at Washburn County Board meetings as short term rentals (STRs). STRs are defined as rentals of private residential properties for periods of 30 days or less. Beginning in the early spring of 2011, a pitched battle has been waged between those who believe the county should regulate STRs and those who do not. WCLRA has been following and reporting on the debate because of potential impact of STRs on water resources.

Since our last issue, the extent of public concern has continued to be evident. At the regularly scheduled August 21 County Board meeting, more than two hours of public comment was received. Some believed that owners of single family homes should be allowed to rent their properties as they please. Others viewed STRs as a way to encourage tourism. On the other side of the debate were those who wanted STRs controlled under Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) because they were concerned about the impacts on neighboring properties and on the environment. They pointed to the potential spread of AIS by renters unfamiliar with the safeguards and the overtaxing of lakeshore septic systems as potentially negative impacts on the County's waters. There are also safety concerns with unregulated rentals. Another objection to unregulated rentals was the failure of the owners to pay sales taxes as conventional resorts do. After listening to the lengthy discussion, the County Board voted to hold a "Committee of the Whole" meeting on Wednesday, August 29 to further discuss the issue.

The agenda for that August 29 meeting included discussion of only two proposals. The first proposal was to leave the current zoning in place based on the earlier failure of the Zoning Committee to approve the ordinance changes recommended by the Zoning Administrator. The second proposal was to direct the Zoning Committee to pass amendment changes which would require subsequent approval of the full County Board of Supervisors. Zoning Administrator Macomber proposed a third option which was simply to not regulate short-term rentals. Corporation Counsel advised the Board that this could not be discussed because it was not specifically included on the meeting agenda. No formal action was taken by the Board.

At the next regularly scheduled County Board meeting on September 18, the Board was instructed to consider two resolutions. The first was a resolution regarding whether or not the county should regulate STRs or leave it entirely up to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The second resolution stipulated that, if the board decided to continue regulating STRs, a vote to "reconsider" adopting two previously proposed amendments would take place. The County Board decided by a 16-5 vote not to regulate short-term rentals in Washburn County. Officially stated,

"Washburn County will not regulate rentals of single family dwellings and the Washburn County Zoning Department will refer any occurrences of rentals to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services".

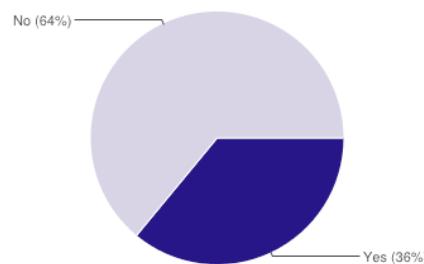
2012 Watercraft Inspection Efforts

Lisa Burns, Washburn County AIS Coordinator

The 2012 Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) inspection results are out for Washburn County. The overall goal of the program is to take a front-line stand against the spread of invasive species by educating boaters with prevention steps to take before entering and leaving a boat landing. Eleven lakes were known to have been inspected by volunteers and paid monitors in 2012. With help from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Northland College, the numbers are likely higher. Overall, since 2011, results show more hours were worked which led to more boats inspected. Kudos to everyone on their extended efforts to make this happen! Results also showed that most boaters do no move lake to lake as much as was thought. In Washburn County 64% of boaters contacted said they had not been in another body of water in the previous 5 days.

Each spring and summer, training sessions are held to get interested folks involved in an inspection program and to teach them more about invasive species. If you would like more info regarding the CBCW program or aquatic invasive species, please contact Lisa Burns at 715-468-4654 or lburns@co.washburn.wi.us.

Boat Used During Past 5 Days On Different Waterbody? (2010-2012)



Waterbodies Visited (2012)



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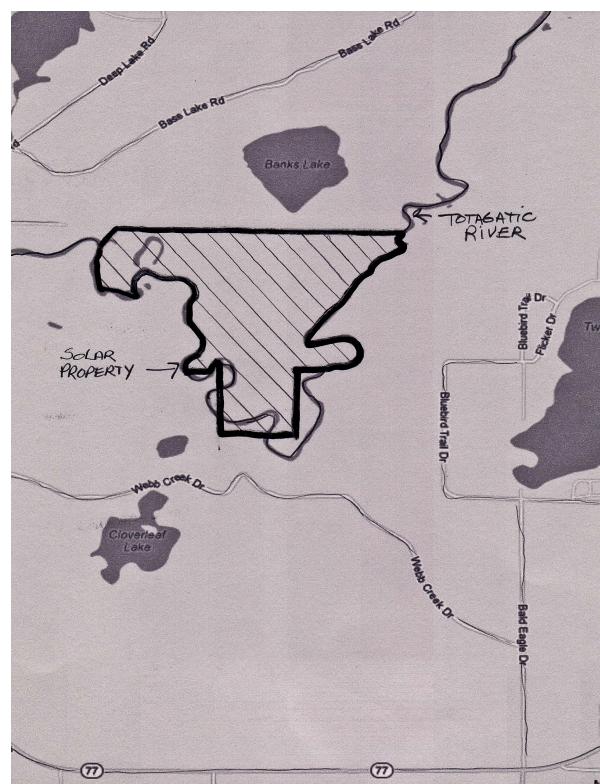
Totogatic Land Preservation Project Succeeds!

The work of the Washburn County Lakes & Rivers Association (WCLRA) in partnership with The Conservation Fund (TCF) to purchase and preserve 260 acres of land along the Totogatic Wild River in the Town of Chicog, has been successful. The funding necessary to purchase the land and meet all the closing costs was raised and the formal closing took place on December 13, 2012.

Many have contributed to this project; approximately \$105,000 of private, local money was contributed by more than seventy individuals, area lake associations – Long Lake Preservation Association and Twin Lakes Preservation Association, local foundations – St. Croix River Valley Foundation and Four Cedars Foundation, and local governments – Town of Chicog and Town of Minong Lakes Committee to save this land and the 2.5 miles of river on which it fronts. These funds, along with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Funds from the state, will make it possible to assure the preservation of these lands fronting on the Totogatic for future generations.

The final phase of this project will be to donate the land to the State to be managed for protection of the Property's conservation values including water quality of the Totogatic River, scenic value, wildlife habitat, and nature-based recreational activities. WCLRA and TCF are currently working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to accomplish this final phase. The professional expertise of TCF in matters of this sort has been absolutely indispensable to WCLRA as the project has progressed from an idea to a reality.

WCLRA is planning a formal dedication next spring or summer. We'll keep you posted.



Minong Town Lakes Committee

By Russ Robinson, MTLC

The Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC) is chaired by Laurie Johnson of Horseshoe Lake. Under Laurie's direction the committee has been making progress on a proposal to establish a town wide Clean Boats/Clean Water (CBCW) inspection program. The proposal would nearly triple the number of inspections on area lakes and coordinate inspections on lakes that currently have no inspection activities. Minong Town Lakes included in this grant application: Big Bass, Gilmore , Kimball, Nancy, Pokegama, Horseshoe, Big Sand, Scovil and Bear Track lakes. The cost of the proposed program is approximately \$44,000 per year with 75% of the money coming from a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) grant. The remaining costs would need to be covered by area lake associations and volunteer hours.

The proposal has been presented to the Town of Minong board and so far they have been favorable in their support of the project. The Town is needed as legal sponsor of the project and will also need to loan money to the project until the MTLC receives reimbursement from the WDNR grant. This support from the town is indicative of improving cooperative efforts to achieve common objectives between the town's board and area lake residents.

The grant application has been submitted to the WDNR and will be reviewed in February 2013. We should know by late Spring if we have been successful with our grant application. With the planned draw down of the Minong Flowage, other town lakes are expected to see an increase in boat traffic, underscoring the need for an expanded boat inspection program in 2013.

Also in 2012, the MTLC held a seminar at the Town Hall. This seminar focused on the results of aquatic plant studies conducted in 2011 by Matt Berg. In summary, the area lakes studied exhibited significant diversity and quality when compared to other lakes in northern Wisconsin. The seminar also focused on the cost advantage of quick and decisive actions when dealing with Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).

Please note: If you have an interesting story or activity regarding your body of water that you would like to share, please contact Barb Robinson at ribald@centurytel.net, 715-466-4152 or Fred Blake at blakelake@centurytel.net 715-469-3228.

“Frac” Sand Mining

By Barb Robinson

To better understand “frac” sand mining in Wisconsin and its potential impact on groundwater, the WCLRA board invited Thomas Woletz, P.E., Special Projects Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

(WDNR) to speak at our November Board meeting. Tom is the “frac” sand mining point of contact for the WDNR.

Tom first explained that the type of sand mined for “frac” sand was formed in the Cambrian period and was not the result of glacial activity. The particles are spherical in shape and very hard. They are used in the gas and oil recovery process called “hydrofracking” where sand particles along with chemicals are pumped into fractured strata to hold the fractures open so that petroleum or gas can flow through them and be recovered. The sand occurs in generally larger and smaller size ranges used for petroleum and gas recovery, respectively. However, as there are no significant recoverable petroleum or gas reserves in Wisconsin, our interests relate only to the mining, processing and shipping of the sand.

Sand and sandstone are a significant part of the Wisconsin groundwater system and disruption of the groundwater system is a realistic concern. Tom noted that, although we like to think that mining in Wisconsin does not impact groundwater, roughly 2/3 of Wisconsin mines actually operate below ground water level. Washburn County has a non-metallic mining ordinance administered under the Zoning Department and originally structured to deal with gravel pits. Permitting, oversight and site reclamation are all part of these regulations. David Haessig, the current Washburn County Zoning Committee Chair and guest at the meeting, indicated that the funding required to be set aside for site reclamation has recently been increased to compensate for increased reclamation costs.

“Frac” sand washing is a part of the necessary pre-shipment processing. This can require large volumes of ground water provided by high-capacity wells. The cumulative effect of numerous high-capacity wells on an aquifer can be significant, but, except in specific cases, state law prohibits the consideration of “cumulative effects” when siting high-capacity wells. Wash water can, however, be recycled and reused after settling out removed debris and dust. This reduces the overall volume of water drawn from the groundwater. The recycling process often involves the use of chemical flocculating agents to clarify the wash water and prepare it for reuse. Flocculating agents are chemicals that cause materials in the recycled water to collect and thus drop to the bottom of the holding pond. These agents need to be contained within the processing facility and not released into the environment. Proper holding pond construction and maintenance are required.

Yes, there is “frac” sand in Washburn County: There are deposits under roughly the southern 2/3 of the County. At this point, there have been no mining permit requests. This may relate to the deposit depths, the quality of the deposits identified and/or the projected costs of recovery.

Frac Sand Miningcontinued from page 4

Yes, there is "frac" sand in Washburn County: There are deposits under roughly the southern 2/3 of the County. At this point, there have been no mining permit requests. This may relate to the deposit depths, the properties of the deposits identified and/or the projected costs of recovery.

"Frac" sand mining has potentially significant implications for both the quality and quantity of groundwater. The large sandstone aquifers that are prevalent in Wisconsin constitute an important part of the filtration system for our groundwater and disruption of this filtration mechanism could lead to groundwater contamination.

There are still important questions regarding this industry and how it could affect Wisconsin and Washburn County in particular. WCLRA is not opposed to frac sand mining as long as it is done responsibly so that our water resources are protected and preserved.

For more information on "frac" sand mining go to:
<http://pepin.uwex.edu/files/2012/05/Frac-Sand-Mining-Planning-and-Zoning-For-120401.pdf>.

WCLRA Annual Meeting

This year's Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association (WCLRA) Annual Meeting was held at the new Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) building in Spooner. With the close working relationship WCLRA has with the WDNR, we felt it would be a good opportunity for members to meet staff, get a tour of the new facility and also have a more central location. WDNR staff members gave tours of the building and the grounds, showing the "green" part of the construction.

Our speaker was Bill Smith who was the Northern District Land Program Manager before recently retiring. Bill's credentials are extensive including graduate of US Air Force Academy and a Master of Science – Environmental Engineering degree from the University of Illinois before joining the WDNR and serving in many positions within that organization for 34 years.

One of Bill's passions is the Totagatic River. His topic, "Preserving the Waters by Preserving the Land", mirrors the efforts of WCLRA in our work to achieve the "Wild River" status for the river as well as the purchase of land to preserve areas along the shoreline of the river. Bill congratulated WCLRA on its efforts as a small group with a determination that was successful in this endeavor.

The Business portion of the Annual meeting included acceptance of the minutes from last year's Annual Meeting and the acceptance of the Budget for 2013 as submitted by Ed Fischer, Treasurer.

Also on the agenda were two amendments to the Bylaws of WCLRA. The members voted in favor of the following changes to the Bylaws:

ARTICLE II: Membership. Change "INDIVIDUAL" to "INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY"

ARTICLE III: Voting at Annual and Special Meetings. Change "INDIVIDUAL" to "INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY".

ARTICLE IV: Dues. Change to read "Membership dues shall be payable on an annual basis as adopted by the Board of Directors".

Next on the Agenda was the election of Directors: The following directors were re-elected to the board – Patricia Shifford, Edwin Fischer, Earl Cook, Wayne Sabatke. Joan Quenan was nominated from the floor and elected to the Board as well. The contact information on these directors and for all directors can be found on page three of this newsletter.

During the Round Table discussion, Short Term Rentals (STR) were discussed as well as why WCLRA is taking an interest in this topic. Both Earl Cook and David Haessig pointed out that the issue for WCLRA is the affect of large numbers of people using a property (See Fred Blake's article in this newsletter).

IN MEMORY

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Eileen-Marie Moore Sunday, December 9, 2012. Even though you may not have known Eileen-Marie personally, many of you have seen the results of her work. She was the founding Secretary of Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association (WCLRA) as well as the first editor of the *On The Waterfront* newsletter. She was the wife of Tony Tubbs who serves on the current WCLRA board of directors.

She is remembered as smart, organized, gentle, kind and compassionate as well as an inspiration to many of us involved with WCLRA. Her superb organizational skills were instrumental in building the WCLRA association.

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Early Fall storm in Washburn County
By Russ Robinson

Contacts to protect lakes and rivers

"We need more than ever to provide what help we can to protect our lakes and rivers from environmentally damaging activities. Keep your eyes open! We are the last line of defense! But **do not trespass** to obtain further information. Let those in authority check it out."

DNR Water Regulation Violations and Information:

Dan Harrington (Water Management Specialist, Spooner Office).....	715-635-4097
Jon Hagen (Conservation Warden for Southern Washburn County).....	715-635-4099
Dave Swanson (Conservation Warden for Northern Washburn County).....	715-466-5428
If wardens are in the field, messages can be related to them through the Washburn County Sheriff's Department at 715-468-4720 or at the DNR's toll-free tip line.....	1-800-TIP-WDNR (847-9367)

County Shoreland Zoning Questions or Violations:

Web Macomber (Zoning Administrator).....	715-468-4690
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County Planning, Land/Water Resource Management: