

WASHBURN COUNTY LAKES AND RIVERS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT
 AUGUST 2021 - AUGUST 2022



Mission and Focus

The Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association is a not-for-profit association of people dedicated to being good stewards of County water resources. This group of passionate people protect the 964 lakes and 700 miles of rivers and streams as well as shorelands and wetlands vital for continued preservation of wildlife habitats and enjoyment by everyone.

Membership

- 374 current paid memberships (individual, family, and groups).
- Invited 302 new shoreland property owners to join WCLRA, sent them free newsletters for one year, and together with UW Extension, mailed them New Shoreland Owner information packets.
- Maintained a mailing list with more than 1250 people, including members, local lake and river association board members, county and town officials, and resource agency partners.

Ongoing Education and Advocacy Outreach

- Concerned about the outdated, inadequate campground ordinance to address threats to the County's surface and groundwater from development of large permanent/semi-permanent RV campgrounds. Wrote and approved a position statement, developed conditional use permit conditions, and recommended ordinance changes to the County Zoning Committee. An updated campground ordinance is in process.
- Discussed need for a new Zoning enforcement position with County Personnel Committee, resulting in full County Board approval and hiring for the role.

- Maintained strong relationship with the Farmer Led Yellow River Watershed Council as they advocate land management practices which focus on healthy soils and help protect watersheds of lakes and rivers.
- Partnered with real estate agencies to continue distributing information packets for prospective buyers of shoreline property and building sites. Information helped interested buyers better understand landowner rights and responsibilities before buying.
- Contributed to NW Wisconsin Lakes Conference planning and sponsorship; presented about prospective shoreline buyer packet project.
- Shared information about protecting our waters at the Fishing Opener with the Governor and Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Festival.
- Posted timely information and events on WCLRA's website, wclra.org, and published two member newsletters and several timely articles in local newspapers.
- Designed new Earth Day and Memorial Day print advertisements for the Spooner Advocate which highlighted the importance of keeping our waters healthy.
- Together with the County Land and Water Conservation Office, promoted educational invasive species workshops and Clean Boats, Clean Waters training.



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New Projects

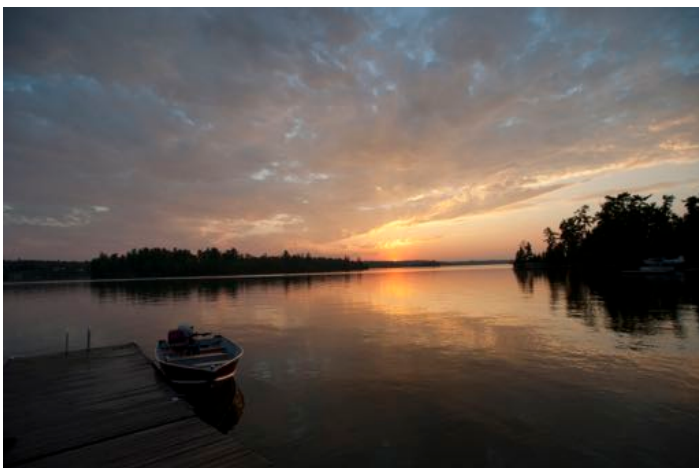
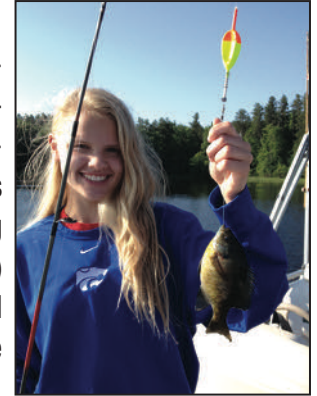
- Collaborated with UW-Madison Extension to send members educational emails on zoning and healthy shorelines.
- Provided timely email updates to members and contacts about useful resources and training opportunities.
- Sent postcards about benefits of shoreland buffers to new shoreland property owners.
- Led a discussion about Manoomin/Wild Rice, ricing on the Yellow River, and Ojibwe rice culture. Organized by Yellow River Protection Conservancy at the Spooner Library in July.
- Five teams trained by Water Action Volunteers (UW Extension, DNR) monitored the Yellow River on a monthly basis (since May). These teams measured water temperature, dissolved oxygen content, water clarity, macroinvertebrate populations that indicate levels of pollution, volume of the river, and status of the river shore.
- Board member volunteers served as “Rain Rangers” working with the City of Spooner on a stormwater planning study. Three teams of volunteers monitored stormwater outfalls during rain events in 2021 and spring 2022 to identify problem areas with discharge volumes and turbidity. The project and related reports from an engineering firm are



expected to be completed by December 2022. Funded by a DNR Surface Water Grant, WCLRA volunteer work provided a grant match.

Legislative Priorities

- Conservation Congress Resolutions introduced in 2022 in Washburn County (local control of shoreline zoning, buffers on streams and ditches, campground zoning concerns and climate change) were approved at the County level and will be voted on at the State level in 2023.
- Interviewed legislative candidates for the November election and provided them information about County, State, and regional conservation issues of interest to WCLRA members. Issues discussed include residential campgrounds, lakeshore zoning rules, sustainable energy, CAFOs, pipelines, and aquatic invasive species. Interviews to-date include Laura Gapske (D) candidate for 73 Assembly District (northern Washburn County), Kelly Westlund (D) candidate for 25th State Senate District, and Romaine Quinn (R) candidate for 25th Senate District. Other candidate interviews will continue.
- Continued to support the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund, which focuses on preserving natural areas, water quality, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Monitoring proposed legislation which may affect the grant program.



A PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION
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www.wclra.org