



# ANNUAL REPORT

## AUGUST 2019 - AUGUST 2020

### 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 water enthusiasts.

### Membership

The number of current individual members increased to 398 over last year's membership of 365. There are 24 lake association members, down from 26 last year.

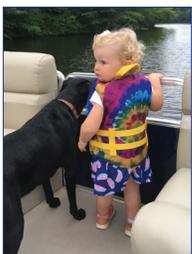


### New Projects

- Investigated several properties along the Yellow River with an eye toward protection. WCLRA works with Landmark Conservancy, an organization that protects lands in NW Wisconsin needed for climate resilience and "connectivity" for wildlife.
- Developed a promising cooperative agreement between Shell Lake-Yellow River Farmer-Led Watershed Council and WCLRA. The mission is to improve soil health and water quality through outreach, education, and conservation practices for sustainable agriculture.
- Updated our website, wclra.org, for launch later this fall to allow members to easily find timely resources and protect Washburn County waters.
- Application for a Spooner municipal storm water management planning grant will be submitted by the December deadline.

### Ongoing Education and Advocacy

- To incentivize and reward "water-friendly" properties is the goal of a Blue Ribbon committee of WCLRA, realtors, and state and county resource managers. This work establishes wide shoreland buffers, deep setbacks and other practices no longer ensured by current shoreland zoning laws.



- We made 2020 Project Loon Watch more successful. This Northland College program protects loons and their habitats. Several of the 17 Washburn County lakes monitored since 1985 had no monitor. Our email to WCLRA members resulted in a loon census on most lakes.

- The Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference,

originally scheduled as an in-person Spooner event in June 2020, was reinvented as a successful online event.

- Publication of two newsletters and increased articles published in three area newspapers.
- Wake boat shoreline damage, water turbidity, and high boat traffic caused by campground development are "hot button" issues on several county lakes. Aquatic invasive species are a continuing concern, especially zebra mussels present in Big McKenzie and Middle McKenzie lakes.

### Legislative Priorities

- Legislative priorities include: minimize climate change, restore local control of shoreline zoning, fully fund the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and state parks, regulate high-capacity wells, increase DNR scientists, mandate buffers along streams and ditches and lead-free fishing tackle.
- Supported the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change and urged action to counter climate change impact in NW Wisconsin such as proliferating ticks and tick diseases; changing fisheries; increasing algae blooms and degraded water quality; advancing invasive species; and damaging rain events.
- Presented five resolutions related to legislative priorities at the Washburn County Conservation Congress meeting in April.
- Met with state legislators Senator Janet Bewley, Representative Nick Milroy, Representative Romaine Quinn and candidates on proposed clean water legislation.
- Attended CLEAN WATER DAY in Madison, sharing ideas generated at statewide citizen meetings with State Assembly Speaker Voss' Task Force on Water Quality.



### 2019-2020 Financial Statement

As of July 31, 2020, Washburn County Lakes & Rivers Association has the following financial resources:

• Current Operations Fund .....	\$14,687.46
• Education, Conservation, and Discretionary Fund .....	\$9,256.26
• Long-term Savings .....	\$20,234.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$44,178.12</b>

Long-term Savings are designated for a future large-scale preservation project.