

Recent Happenings Around Lake Ripley

For the second year in a row, carp are harvested from the outlet of Lake Ripley during the spring spawning run by industrious volunteers. Special thanks to the Baker Family and friends for leading the effort. Photo by T. Baker (2006).



Over 120 volunteers clean up litter around Lake Ripley as part of an annual Earth Day project. Special thanks to Ed Grunden, Pete Degen, Janice Redford, the Cambridge Aquatic Environmental Club, and the Cambridge High School Biology students for all their help.

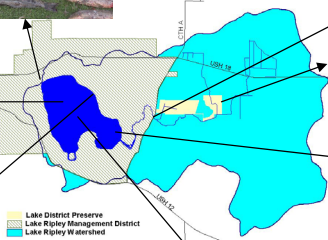


A citizen-advisory committee is appointed by the Board to assist with long-range visioning and priority setting for the Lake District Preserve.



Weed harvesting of Eurasian water-milfoil resumes. The harvesting crew is commended for skillfully cutting in accordance with our management plan and DNR permit requirements.

Dennis McCarthy (left) checks a zebra mussel "trap" used as part of a water quality and invasive species monitoring program. (Above left) Special tow nets are used to check for microscopic zebra mussel larvae and spiny water fleas.



Lake Watch volunteers take to the water, promoting safe lake use by patrolling the lake and reporting reckless boating behavior to law enforcement officials.

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage PAID
Cambridge, WI
Permit No. 5

Ripples

Lake Ripley Management District
N4450 CTH A
Cambridge, WI 53523

Ripples



Vol. 15, No. 2

Summer 2007

FROM THE HELM

Every August, since the inception of the Lake Ripley Management District, we have held an Annual Meeting. This may be the most important meeting of the year. It is the time when eligible property owners in the Lake District vote on the annual budget, dictating the services we will provide and the work to be undertaken in the coming year. On Saturday, August 18th, we will hold the Budget Hearing starting at 9:00 a.m., followed immediately by the Annual Meeting at 10:00 a.m.



Prior to this year, and for the last 14 years, a large portion of our budget has come from a grant from the Department of Natural Resources. That grant ended last year. Although we continue to pursue other grants, the bulk of our budget now comes from the tax levy. In the past, we have strived to remain fiscally conservative while operating programs that protect and benefit Lake Ripley. I promise you we will continue to respect the fact that we not only have an obligation to protect the lake, but that we also operate from your tax dollars.

This year, more than any year since the creation of the Lake District, it is important that you make every effort to attend our Budget Hearing and Annual Meeting. This is the pivotal year! Enclosed you will find a copy of the budget for 2008. We have reviewed every line item and management standpoint, but also in terms of maintaining our property values.

Please join us on August 18th and become an active partner with the Lake District in our important work.

John Molinaro

Chair, Lake Ripley Management District

Conservation Farming = Healthy Lakes

"Top soil is the most precious resource on our farm, so we plant our crops without working up the fields in order to build soil, not deplete it." This is according to Tom Burlingham, a life-long Jefferson County farmer. Tom and his wife, Margaret, farm about 500 acres near Palmyra using conservation-farming techniques.

Burlingham grows about 150 acres of hay that produces four crops annually, and 100 acres each of corn, soybeans, and wheat. A typical crop rotation is four to five years of alfalfa or alfalfa/grass-mixed hay, one year of corn, one year of soybeans, one year of wheat, and back to alfalfa. Each crop provides benefits for the subsequent crop, and the rotation breaks pest and disease cycles. For example, alfalfa and soybeans are legumes that fix nitrogen in their roots. The nitrogen is then used by the corn and wheat, which are grasses and heavy nitrogen users.



(Continued on next page)

LAKE DISTRICT OFFICE

Oakland Town Hall
N4450 CTH A
Cambridge, WI 53523

Phone:
(608) 423-4537

E-mail:
rpley@charterinternet.com

Website:
WWW.LAKERIPLEY.ORG

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Molinaro
Chair
(608) 423-4743

Mike Sabella
Treasurer
(608) 423-4603

Jane Jacobsen-Brown
Secretary
(608) 423-3319

Derek Hoffman
Commissioner
(608) 423-9412

Dennis McCarthy
Commissioner
(608) 665-3455

Gene Kapsner
Town of Oakland Rep.
(608) 423-4723

Mike Buraw
Jefferson County Rep.
(920) 674-5171

STAFF

Paul Dearlove
Lake Manager
(608) 423-4537

Conservation Farming (cont.)

"Hay is a perennial crop so it is very good for conserving soil. It is often our most profitable crop", says Tom. Hay is direct marketed to feed dairy and beef cattle, horses, llamas, goats, and even rare black rhinos at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

The corn is sold to a large family-owned egg farm five miles away. The chicken farm spreads manure, a free local source of fertilizer, on the Burlingham Farm according to a DNR-approved plan.

To build soil rather than deplete it, Burlingham plants the new crop directly into the residue of the previous crop in most fields. No-till planters and grain drills have special discs that cut through the stalks of the previous crop, place the seed at the proper depth in the ground, and press the soil back on top of it. An annual crop can be planted and harvested with only three trips across the field (planting, spraying, and combining), rather than three or more tillage trips needed just to get a plowed field smooth enough for planting.



Burlingham uses a no-till corn planter on his farm in Palmyra, WI.

When Tom first tried no-till corn in 1982, his father stated "No-till is no crop!" The Burlinghams, however, think they have better yields with no-till than they would have had by working up the soil and leaving the surface exposed to drying winds and erosion. Though crop prices have not increased much since 1980 when they bought the family farm, yields have almost doubled on grain crops due to improved crop resistance to pests and stress, timely recommendations from their crop consultant who scouts all the fields weekly, and no-till planting.

"With no-till we are leaving crop residue on the field as a mulch" Tom says. "The residue helps conserve moisture on our light sandy soils, reduces run-off and erosion, builds organic matter that limits the need for fertilizer inputs, reduces chemical applications,



Conservation tillage limits the amount of soil disturbance and leaves a protective cover of crop residue on the field, controlling erosion and preserving topsoil.

increases microbial activity, prevents the loss of carbon (which is volatilized each time a field is worked up), and reduces labor and trips across the field, wear on equipment, and

fuel consumption."

Multiple tillage trips can destroy soil structure, and Burlingham has noticed a change from less tillage. "The soil is higher in organic matter, it's softer, water infiltrates much faster, it has a higher water holding capacity, and there is more worm activity,"



Alternating rows of corn with alfalfa along the contour of a slope—an example of "contour strip cropping"—is another effective technique used to conserve topsoil and protect local waterways. Photo courtesy of NRCS.

The Burlinghams take stewardship of the land seriously. "We put our most erosive fields into the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and planted trees. The program expired but we kept the trees" says Tom. Bobolinks and meadowlarks nest in the CRP fields. Red headed woodpeckers, raptors, song birds, waterfowl, turkeys, coyotes, and deer are commonly seen on the farm.

Over 11 acres were planted to a 150-foot-wide prairie streambank buffer through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement program (CREP), and are in a permanent easement. The Burlinghams are now working on improving the habitat associated with two of the farm's woodlots.



Leaving a vegetated "buffer" along waterways can help control bank erosion, trap pollutants, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Photo courtesy of NRCS.

When you take a country drive this spring, Burlingham says "look for no-till fields with rows of young crops coming up through the previous year's brown stubble". It may not be easy to see from the road, but farmers throughout Wisconsin are growing crops for food, fiber, and fuel in sustainable ways, building soil for future generations, infiltrating rain water to replenish the aquifers that provide our drinking water, maintaining and improving natural areas, and installing conservation practices to improve our waterways."

"We all want clean lakes and streams, safe drinking water, and prosperous, sustainable farms. With conservation farming, all these things are possible."

- Adapted from an article titled **No Till Makes the Crop** by Margaret Burlingham

Notices and News Briefs

LAKE RIPLEY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

2008 BUDGET

	2006 ACTUAL	2007 JAN-JUNE ACTUAL	2007 JAN-DEC ESTIMATED	2008 PROPOSED
Revenues:				
Real Estate Tax Levy	\$ 43,400	\$ 44,014	\$ 67,570	\$ 109,675
Grants	78,185	-	15,000	-
Interest Income	4,979	717	4,127	-
Carry-over	41,150	39,000	39,000	2,700
Other	1,170	-	-	-
Total Revenues	168,884	83,731	125,697	112,375
Projects:				
Staff Payroll Fringes Taxes	54,734	28,670	57,340	59,700
Landowner Cost Sharing	32,077	5,163	27,713	10,000
Weed Harvesting	6,597	363	4,975	5,000
Lake District Preserve	2,783	-	2,000	2,000
Special Programs	-	112	500	500
Conservation Easements	-	-	-	500
No Wake Regulation	215	-	-	-
Insurance:				
General Liability	1,449	1,879	1,879	1,900
Marine & Truck	1,475	1,053	1,053	1,400
Worker's Compensation	921	921	921	925
Operations:				
Legal Counsel	1,451	2,010	2,510	3,000
Dues & Conferences	1,372	903	1,503	1,500
Office & Community Outreach	3,830	1,817	4,753	7,750
Contingency	28	53	1,500	1,500
Commissioner Stipends	4,600	2,100	4,550	4,900
Rent	1,800	1,050	1,800	1,800
Capital Reserve, Land & Equipment Acquisition	8,000	-	10,000	10,000
Total	121,332	46,094	122,997	112,375
Balance	\$ 47,552	\$ 37,637	\$ 2,700	\$ -
Non-Lapsible Fund:				
		CAPITAL RESERVE, LAND & EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION	F.KELSON MEMORIAL	FRIENDS OF THE PRESERVE
Balance at 12/31/06	\$ 89,815		\$ 634	\$ -
2007 Estimated Additions	10,000		130	1,600
2007 Estimated Interest	4,500		10	40
2007 Estimated Expenditures				
Tree Drop	-		(577)	-
Estimated Balance at 12/31/07	\$ 104,315		\$ 197	\$ 1,640

Public Gains New Fishing Pier

The fishing and swimming pier, owned by the Town of Oakland, is located at the Ripley Rd.-Beach Ln. intersection. Limited parking will soon be available off of Beach Ln. The Lake District is currently working with the Town to plant a variety of native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers along the adjoining shoreline. The plantings are intended to enhance the natural beauty of the shoreline while absorbing road runoff.



Budget Hearing
August 18, 2007
9:00-10:00 a.m.
Oakland Town Hall

Annual Meeting
August 18, 2007

10:00 a.m. at Oakland Town Hall

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of 2006 Annual Meeting Minutes
- III. Nomination of Board Candidates (Mike Sabella and Jane Jacobsen-Brown, incumbents)
- IV. Chairman's Report
- V. Treasurer's Report
- VI. Budget & Tax Levy
- VII. Tabulation of Vote & Election of Board Members
- VIII. Action on By-laws
- IX. Adjournment

\$20,000 Grant is Awarded!

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grant will aid in the development of updated lake and watershed management plans for Lake Ripley. Stay tuned for further announcements, including how you can get involved in this important planning process.



The Lake District recently partnered with a team of UW-Madison advisors and graduate students (pictured above) as part of the larger grant-funded effort to protect and improve Lake Ripley. As a result, strategies were devised that will hopefully lead to more rain gardens and a greater use of zero-phosphorus lawn fertilizers within the watershed. Copies of the student reports can be found at www.lakeripley.org.