

From the Desk of Chief Gonder:

On behalf of the Oakland Police Department, welcome to Lake Ripley and the greater Cambridge area. As summer approaches, I want to take this time to remind lake users of some of the local and state boating regulations that apply to Lake Ripley.

Common State boating code violations (Chapter 30):

- Failure to provide proper number and size of approved personal floatation devices (PFDs)
- Riding on top of gunnels and seat backs while the watercraft is in operation
- Failure to display proper navigational lights at night
- Creating a hazardous wake
- Operating within 100 feet of another vessel at greater than slow-no-wake (SNW) speed
- Failure to yield the right of way upon approaching another moving vessel
- Failure to have a Certificate of Number on board
- Improperly displayed or missing boat-registration numbers
- Failure to have a fire extinguisher on board closed-construction vessels
- Failure to cover and secure the vessel's battery
- Failure to have a throwable device on vessels 16' or larger
- Overloading the vessel beyond its stated weight capacity

Ripples
Lake Ripley Management District
N4450 CTH A
Cambridge, WI 53523

-Operating while intoxicated (0.08% blood alcohol content)

Common Town of Oakland ordinance violations:

- Operating greater than slow-no-wake (SNW) speed between 7:30 p.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- Operating greater than SNW in buoyed restricted areas
- Operating motors of any kind in Vasby's Channel
- Operating any vessel greater than SNW within 200' of the shoreline (and 100' of any pier)
- Power loading at the public boat launch on Island Lane
- Failure to wear an approved personal floatation device (PFD) while waterskiing/boarding (barefoot skiers may use approved floatation suit as a PFD)



Also, boaters are asked to do their part to prevent the spread of invasive plants and animals. Please clean and inspect boating and fishing equipment before and immediately after each launching.

As I close, I want to wish all of you a safe summer on the water and offer our service should you want your boat inspected for safety compliance. I can be reached at 423-7415 if you have questions or would like to arrange for an inspection.

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Ripples



Vol. 16, No. 2

Spring-Summer 2008

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FROM THE HELM



Usually at this time of year our focus is on restoring eroding shorelines, weed harvesting, dealing with invasive species, or conducting any number of different management projects. But this year we are faced with two new challenges that the Lake District feels are of high priority, and for which we need your help.

#1 - Land Acquisition: Since purchasing the Lake District Preserve in 1997, we knew its eventual expansion would allow us to better maintain the wetlands that are so important to filtering the water that enters Lake Ripley. To that end, we set aside funds every year waiting for specific property to become available. I am pleased to report that we now have an option to buy an additional 64 acres that will enlarge the Preserve and connect it to about 40 acres of publicly-owned wetlands at the lake's inlet. We have applied for two different grants to help raise the funds necessary to complete the sale, and several local groups have stepped forward so far to pledge assistance. We have not yet reached our funding goal, but continue to search for other sources of income.

#2 - Floodplain Mapping: FEMA has mandated that DNR review and update Wisconsin's 100-year floodplain maps, including those affecting Lake Ripley-area property owners. Although neither agency has the funds to do the proper engineering studies to accurately set the floodplain elevation, DNR is calling for a two-foot increase. The Lake District, Jefferson County, and the Town of Oakland agree that this is a likely mistake that will extend the floodplain boundary and have potential financial implications for many of our residents. While Jefferson County has agreed to provide any necessary survey work, a full engineering study will still cost several thousand dollars. To complete the study, the Lake District is pursuing additional funds since it can only spend money approved in its yearly budget.

The following articles explain why we feel both projects are so important. Later this summer and on behalf of the Board, I will issue a direct appeal asking for your help. The Lake District has always stepped up to face difficult challenges and capitalize on important opportunities, and I am confident we will do the same once again with your support.

John Molinaro, Chair

"Think Like a Mountain"

Aldo Leopold, one of Wisconsin's most influential conservationists and author of A Sand County Almanac, challenged us to "think like a mountain." It was his way of saying that a long-term, big-picture perspective is essential when choosing how we will use and preserve the land. He wanted us to see ourselves as part of a larger and interdependent community of life, and to substitute vision for the short-sighted indifference that leads to lost opportunity.

Today, we have a chance to heed Leopold's advice by rallying around a common objective that will leave a lasting mark. Remember that old Cambridge umbrella icon? That umbrella logo might seem old-fashioned, but it continues to stand for something that never goes out of style around here: community. Just as Leopold understood the interdependence and linkages of >>



(Source: Cambridge Area Chamber of Commerce)

biotic communities, the same can be said of our relationships with each other and our sense of place.

We have a proud tradition of community here. Our all-volunteer fire department. Community Hope. Cambridge-Deerfield Community Theater. The Cambridge school system (look at how we support our music and sports programs). We pull together for the people and places we value. We make room for each other under the community umbrella.

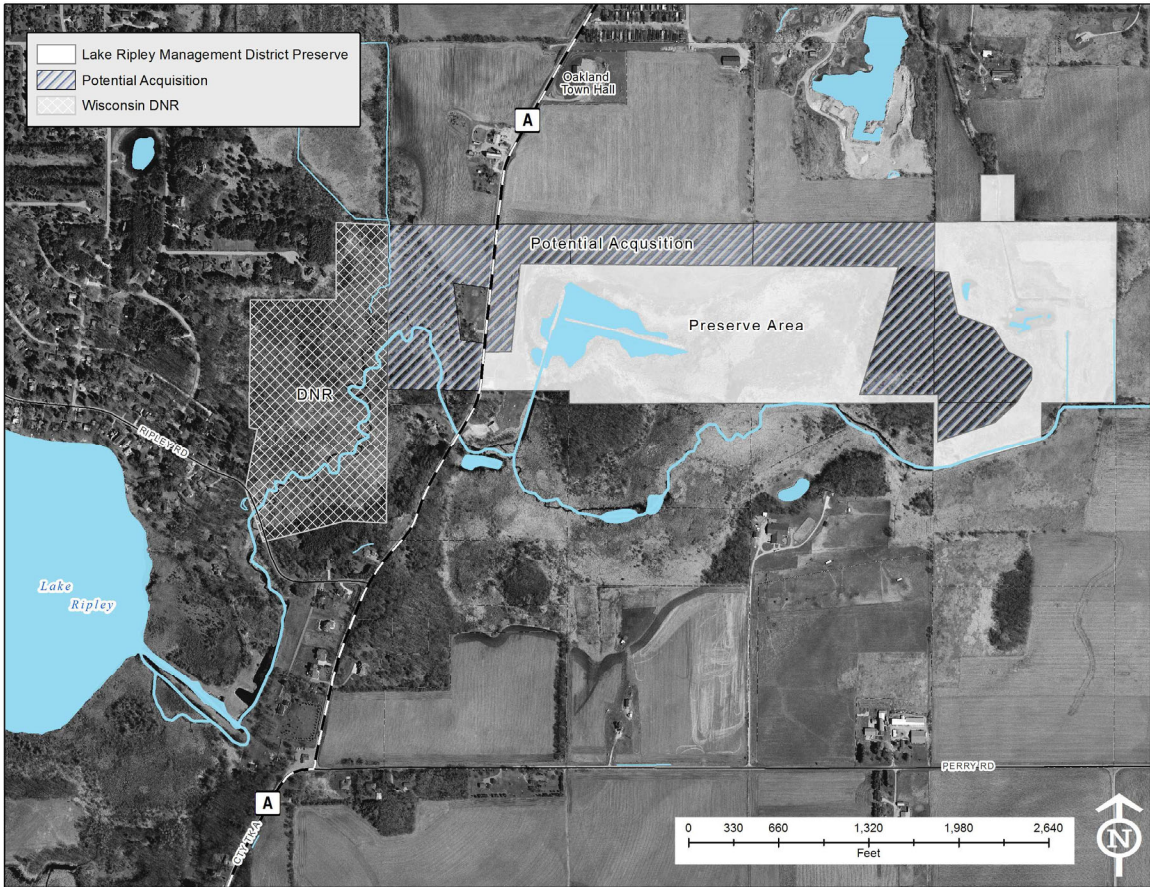
Did you know that the umbrella logo was originally created to symbolize our own Lake Ripley? Indeed, there is a deep and enduring connection between the Village and the Lake. The population swells every year with the arrival of summer vacationers. Sales at local businesses soar as homes are provisioned and repaired. Visitors come from afar to fish, swim and boat. The lake remains precious to everyone in this community.

Lake Ripley's place in our hearts and lives was made very clear back in the late '80s and early '90s. At that time, it became evident that our lake was suffering. We had, by then, destroyed most of our wetlands that had once absorbed floodwaters and cleansed dirty runoff. This had led to more flooding, more extreme lake-level fluctuations, eroding shorelines, creek bottoms buried in sediment, vanishing fish and wildlife habitat, and a propensity for nuisance algae and invasive weed growth.

To our collective credit, the whole community rallied in response. We held educational fairs out at Ripley Park. "Watershed" and "wetlands" became part of the common vocabulary. Science strengthened by heart eventually

won 'Priority Lake Project' status for Lake Ripley, attracting state grants that for 14 years funded work to diagnose and correct lake problems. A coalition of concerned organizations bought the 100-acre Lake District Preserve. Vital wetlands and native prairie were subsequently restored, creating a giant, natural water-filtration system that continues to maintain water quality in Lake Ripley to this day.

The time has come to rally once again! The Lake District is poised to purchase another 64 acres of public land next to the Preserve—but we need your help to make it happen. If successful, the acquisition would further protect Lake Ripley's only stream inlet and associated wetlands from development impacts. (The inlet drains most of the watershed and is the main source of water for the lake.) It would also allow for the preservation and restoration of unique natural areas that provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat. It would mean expanding public access to the types of outdoor recreation that are becoming harder and harder to find. And, it would represent a lasting investment and legacy for which our community can benefit from for many years to come. >>



(Source: Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department)

Top 10 reasons to consider a rain garden

#10: Wow factor – Impress your friends and neighbors with an attractive and functional space. Improve the look of your house and yard with a lush mix of blooming wildflowers.

#9: Pride in helping your community – Be part of the solution! Every time you look out at your yard you can get that little swell of pride knowing you're helping protect the lake.

#8: Less Pooling – A well designed rain garden absorbs water quickly (often in as little as an hour), reducing the amount of standing water in your yard.

#7: Dynamic Colors – Depending on the mix of plants, colorful blooms can be sustained from late April until October. Choose a mix of flowers that will bloom throughout the year or pick a color scheme that will peak at different points.

#6: Birds and Butterflies – Recapture the simple joy of watching a Monarch butterfly from your window sill. Enjoy a variety of birds that will nest and feed in your garden. Birds and insects can also help to keep mosquito populations just a little bit lower.

#5: Protect your well – If water is absorbed by the ground rather than running over it, there will be more water to replenish groundwater levels. Getting water into the ground saves us the expense of having to drill deeper wells due to a falling groundwater table.

#4: Less Mowing – Have a challenging spot to mow? With a rain garden you only need to "mow it" once a year. Spend less time mowing and a little less on lawnmower gas (save it for your car!). You will also have less area to fertilize and water.

#3: Keep a lid on taxes – Less stormwater runoff means less wear and tear on the town's drainage systems, and cleaner water entering Lake Ripley. This means less taxing revenue needed to maintain drainage ditches and pay for lake-restoration programs.

#2: Decrease the risk of flooding – By collecting and infiltrating excess runoff where it's generated, you lessen the degree of problems in lower, flood-prone areas. Less runoff also means less dramatic swings in lake-level fluctuations.

#1: Property Value – Market your home with unique landscaping and add a beneficial selling point to your property.



A backyard rain garden with butterfly house. (Source: UW-Extension)



A front yard rain garden next to roof downspout. (Source: UW-Extension)



Tiny lots can be good candidates for rain gardens. (Source: UW-Extension)

Spring is finally here, which means the loud whir of the lawn mower is echoing through our neighborhoods. Regular mowing, watering, fertilizing and herbicide use can reward you with a green lawn... but how "green" is it? Lawn chemicals and loose grass clippings can wash into the lake, contributing to thick algae blooms and killing the fish we angle for; and water not absorbed by the lawn can lead to flooding and erosion "downstream." Fortunately, the simple act of creating a rain garden can keep these potential issues at bay, while adding value to your home and giving that lawnmower a welcome rest.

Typical grass lawns have very shallow root systems, which cannot absorb much water. The soil quickly becomes saturated, creating surface runoff which carries fertilizers and sediment into our local waterways. During a rain storm, turf grass can be little better than cement at absorbing water. Rain gardens, on the other hand, use plants with very deep roots that can absorb large amounts of water. By planting native, deep-rooted flowers and grasses in a slight depression (3-6 inches) next to your roof downspouts, water is more easily infiltrated into the soil. Water from driveways and patios can also be directed into the rain garden. Even a small rain garden can help turn stormwater runoff from a management challenge into a community wide benefit.

Converting just a portion of your lawn into a rain garden will beautify your home and save you money. Many of the plant species appropriate for rain gardens have lasting and colorful flowers that bloom from May until October, which can attract butterflies and song birds. Aside from occasional weeding and late-season trimming, rain gardens are fairly low maintenance, so you'll spend less time and money mowing, watering and fertilizing your lawn this year.

Because rain gardens benefit our local waterways, the Lake Ripley Management District is encouraging people to install rain gardens on their properties. The Lake District offers limited cost sharing and technical assistance for eligible projects. In addition, a two-part workshop series and native plant sale are being offered this summer (see details below), giving property owners the tools necessary to design and build their own gardens. You will learn the why's and how's of rain gardens with plenty of time to interact with knowledgeable professionals from UW-Extension and local consulting groups. ♦

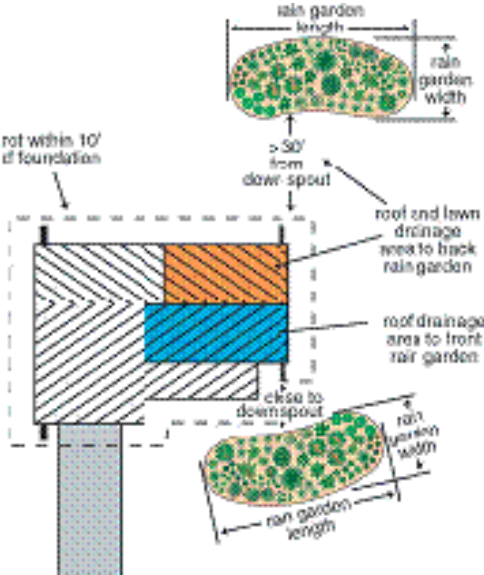
RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOP (Session 1 of 2)
Tuesday, June 17th
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Amundson Community Center
Lead instructors: Suzanne Wade (U.W.-Extension) and Margaret Burlingham (LanDesign, LLC)

RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOP (Session 2 of 2)
Saturday, June 21st
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Oakland Town Hall
Lead instructor: Lisa Reas (LJ Reas Environmental Consulting)

Interested in learning more about rain gardens, including what plants to choose and how to design and build your own? During this two-part workshop series, participants will learn from the experts and walk away with a good understanding of how they might benefit from a rain garden. There is a nominal fee of \$15/participant which covers both workshops. Fee includes one-on-one consultation time with rain garden experts, instruction guides, plant lists, and even a few starter plants. Space is limited so sign up early to reserve your spot.

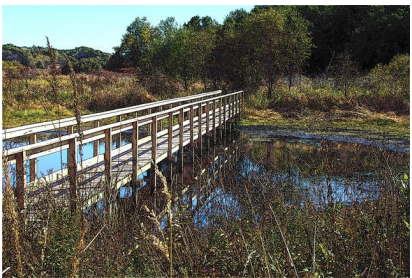
NATIVE PLANT SALE
Saturday, June 21st
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Oakland Town Hall

A limited number of native rain garden plants will be sold at discounted prices because of an exclusive partnership between the Lake District and LJ Reas Environmental Consulting Corporation. All are welcome to come find affordably-priced plants and to chat with on-hand experts.



Our lakes, streams, wetlands and woodlands shape our local identity and add value to our community. When in good health, they enhance scenic beauty, provide outdoor recreation, attract wildlife, strengthen surrounding property values, and generate tourism and economic activity. Yet the value of these special places can be greatly underappreciated. Only when they are gone or seriously degraded are we inclined to take notice. Complacency then becomes our enemy as change unfolds around us and opportunity is lost due to a lack of urgency.

The time has come to "think like a mountain" and stand together once again under the community umbrella. Please consider donating to help turn this vision into a long-term reality. Whether it's \$5 or \$500, your donation will contribute to permanent protections and lasting benefits we can all enjoy. ♦



Why Donate?

1. All donations are tax-deductible, and can help the Lake District leverage additional funding from other sources. (Please make your checks payable to the Lake Ripley Management District, and mail to N4450 County Road A, Cambridge, WI 53523.)
2. The acquisition will allow existing holes in the Lake District Preserve to be filled that currently inhibit public access and enjoyment of unique natural areas.
3. The acquisition will permanently protect a portion Lake Ripley's only inlet, including associated wetland and floodplain areas important for maintaining downstream water quality.
4. The acquisition will serve to connect the existing 100-acre Preserve to 40 acres of publicly-owned wetlands for which there is limited public access.

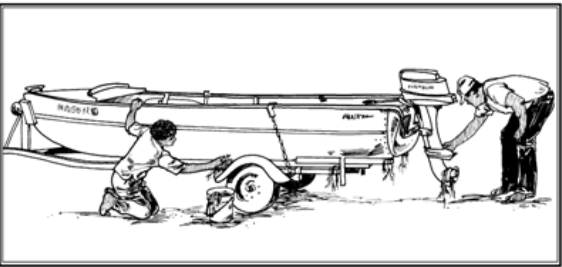
5. Gaining access to the adjoining uplands will facilitate management of difficult-to-reach wetlands and stream banks for future restoration purposes.
6. Seasonally wet cropland that can be subject to erosion will be converted to native prairie for the purpose of establishing wildlife cover and providing a protective buffer around restored wetland areas.
7. The acquisition will allow additional improvement and more effective maintenance of existing conservation practices, including ditch plugs, settlement ponds, wetland scrapes, and ditch bank repairs.
8. Expanding the Preserve will increase the availability of public outdoor recreational areas and opportunities right in our own backyard.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

- When you leave a body of water:**
- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
 - Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
 - Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
 - Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.



The 100-year floodplain is an elevation on the land surface (measured in feet above mean sea level) that is subject to flooding, on average, once every 100 years. An accurate determination of this elevation is important because whether or not property is in the floodplain determines how it is regulated and insured. It also can affect its value and future marketability based on what kind of development projects may be permitted.

For at least the last 50 years, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Jefferson County Zoning Department have used 838 feet as the official floodplain elevation around Lake Ripley. This long-standing precedent may be about to change as the DNR prepares floodplain mapping updates as recently mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The current DNR proposal is to increase the floodplain elevation to 840 feet—two feet above the current elevation.

If you happen to own property near a waterway, wetland or other low-lying area, it is possible you may suddenly find yourself within a new floodplain boundary. This, in turn, can have implications on securing loans, and can affect your ability to make and insure certain property improvements. In many cases, property values drop when related structures fall within the floodplain. Falling property assessments means shifting tax burdens to other local properties to maintain schools, infrastructure and similar services maintained by property taxes.

Unfortunately, neither FEMA nor the DNR has the funding to complete the engineering studies needed to precisely determine the 100-year floodplain. As a result, the DNR had to make a best estimate of the floodplain elevation using available but incomplete data. The Lake Ripley Management District and Jefferson County Zoning Department believe a two-foot increase in flood stage may not only be ill-advised based on our knowledge of local conditions, but could negatively impact many properties around the lake.

We want to make property owners aware of the situation, and of the Lake District's commitment to challenging the accuracy of the new floodplain determination. However, commissioning the requisite engineering study is estimated to cost at least \$6,000. Since the need for this money was not anticipated or budgeted for the current fiscal year, we will be pursuing donations over the next couple months so this important work can proceed. Completion of the study does not guarantee a lower floodplain elevation, but

it will eliminate any uncertainty which could prove detrimental to property owners.

We do not face this problem alone. Other communities throughout Wisconsin, including the Village of Cambridge, are finding themselves in similar positions. Fortunately, Jefferson County has offered the services of its surveyor to help with the study. In addition, pledges of financial support have been received (as of this writing) by the Cambridge Foundation and other local interests. We will next be requesting assistance from the Town of Oakland, and will continue to work hard raising the money needed to complete this important study. ♦



Channel overflow and flooding this spring around the Park Rd. outlet (above) and Ripley Rd. inlet (below). Wetland and floodplain areas shown in both photographs temporarily store and then slowly release flood waters destined for Lake Ripley.

2007 Opinion Survey Results

Results of the 2007 Property Owner Opinion Survey are now available on our website (www.lakeripley.org). About one in every four of you who own property in the Lake District or Lake Ripley Watershed participated. We are pleased by the response rate, which seems to show a high level of interest and concern for Lake Ripley. To get to the survey results, click on the "Links & Downloads" tab on our homepage. Hard copy versions can also be made available for pick up at the Lake District office.



These types of surveys are regularly conducted to help us assess public opinions regarding lake use, lake quality, management effectiveness, and how we can best allocate limited resources. We are grateful for the feedback, and plan to use this input to help update our existing lake-management plans.

Summary

The average age of our survey respondents was 57. Years of property ownership were highly variable, with most owning property near the lake for over 10 years. Slightly more than half of our respondents owned permanent (as opposed to part-time/seasonal) residences.

In general, you felt the presence of the lake, natural scenic beauty, safe water quality, clear water, and peace and tranquility were the driving factors contributing to your "quality of life" as local property owners. This was followed closely by a healthy aquatic plant community and abundant fish and wildlife habitat. Most popular lake activities included enjoying peace and tranquility, swimming, and walking or biking along the shoreline.

Biggest perceived threats included the overuse of lawn and farm chemicals, invasive plant and animal species, overdevelopment, polluted runoff and overcrowding. Of the 20 Lake District programs listed, all received moderate to strong support. The Ripples newsletter remains the most favored method for receiving lake-related news and information.

Volunteers Make It Happen

We are grateful to those of you who participated in our May 10th litter cleanup, especially: *The Andersen Family; Kent Brown; Jane Jacobsen-Brown; James Daly; Chris Gottsacker; Janice Redford and the Friends of Cam-Rock Park; and Dennis McCarthy.* With little fanfare and no arm-twisting, these volunteers led by example to clearly demonstrate how a few caring individuals can make a positive difference. Their commitment to litter-free parks, roadsides and waterways in our area is appreciated.



We also wish to thank *Mike Burow* for serving on the Lake District Board as our Jefferson County representative over the past year. Mike is replaced by *Walt Christensen* who we welcome as our newest county appointee to the Board.

Important Dates

Lake District Meeting Schedule

(Meetings held at Oakland Town Hall)



- June 21, 2008 (8:00 a.m.)
- July 19, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
- August 16, 2008 - budget hearing (9:00 a.m.) followed by Annual Meeting (10:00 a.m.)
- September 20, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
- October 18, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
- November 15, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)

Rain Garden Workshops (see article on pg. 6)

- Session 1: Tuesday, June 17, 2008 (7:00-9:00 p.m.) Amundson Center, Cambridge
- Session 2: Saturday, June 21, 2008 (10:30-12:30) Oakland Town Hall

[\$15/participant covers both workshop sessions. Send your check made payable to the Lake Ripley Management District to reserve a spot in this special workshop series.]

Rain Garden and Shoreline Plant Sale

Native Plant Sale
Saturday, June 21, 2008 (1:00-3:00 p.m.)
Oakland Town Hall