

Pontoon Classroom Updates

Last year we hosted the first pontoon classroom which allowed students from the Cambridge High School to participate in hands on learning activities that focused on watershed monitoring and management. Students found it a great learning experience and a peek into a world not often thought of when on the water.

Last year efforts included activities in lake monitoring, sediment analysis, lake ecology, aquatic plant identification, and watershed impacts during this half day event.

We would like to provide this opportunity to students again this year. We are looking to form a pontoon fleet of 4-5 boats who would be willing to volunteer their time and use of their boat. If interested, please email or call our office. We hope you can be a part of this fun event!



Sediment sampling



Sampling for small aquatic insects and algae



Identifying plant species

Photo Credit:
Pam Leverson

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Ripples
Lake Ripley Management District
N4450 County Rd. A
Cambridge, WI 53523

Ripples



Vol. 23, No. 2

Summer 2016

FROM THE HELM

Even a casual observer should have noticed the almost daily newspaper articles about the lack of enforcement by the Department of Natural Resources of their own water regulations. To be fair, the DNR has faced many challenges imposed by the Wisconsin Legislature. Open positions are at an all time high and the DNR Secretary is refusing to hire replacements, until the long, long awaited reorganization is completed. The Legislature has passed a record number of Bills weakening the protection of the lakes and rivers in our State. Knowing that a "one size fits all" approach to resource protection would not sit well with local government, they also removed the ability for Counties to strengthen the rules, when needed. So what has historically been the ability of local government to protect local resources has been derailed, so that the minimum standards allowed are now also the maximum standards.



This has resulted in the attitude that "it is easier to ask forgiveness than ask permission." Jefferson County had more shoreland zoning violations in one month, than it had all last year. Lake Ripley is not much different. Not all the violations on our lake are intentional disregard for the health of the lake. Some have been honest mistakes and have been fixed when pointed out. But, the result of these violations are the same, damage to the lake.

I have heard people say that their little project can't affect a big lake. Well, death by a thousand cuts kills as effectively as one big event. Lakeshore owners have always been our first defense in protecting the lake. I am proud to say that many of you have been good stewards and have worked with the Lake District, the County and the DNR to do the right thing. Sometimes the right thing was not what you had hoped, but you looked at the big picture, and did what was best for the lake. Lakeshore owners have the most to gain by a healthy lake and the most to lose by a dying lake.

We now face an even greater challenge. The Wisconsin Legislature has ordered the DNR to sell 10,000 acres of land owned by the State. The 40.17 acres of wetlands protecting the inlet to Lake Ripley is on the list of possible sales. If this happens the Lake District is determined to acquire this most important filter of the water entering the lake. We have a plan and we will discuss it at the Annual Meeting on August 20th at 9 A.M. at the Oakland Town Hall. Please attend to hear about our plan and to add your input.

John Molinaro, Chair

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Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Project

This spring, LRMD partnered with the DNR, Friends of the Glacial Heritage Area, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Severson Learning Center, and the Cambridge School District to help control populations of purple loosestrife throughout Jefferson County.

Purple loosestrife is an invasive plant that can take over wetland areas. To help maintain wetland plant diversity and wildlife habitat, efforts to control purple loosestrife were developed by the DNR and are implemented statewide. One way to manage purple loosestrife populations is through the introduction of purple loosestrife beetles to wetlands with plant invasions.

These beetles, which only eat purple loosestrife leaves, can defoliate and eventually kill the plants. This allows native plants an opportunity to out-compete the purple loosestrife.

Early this spring 30 purple loosestrife plants were dug from wetland areas around Red Cedar Lake with the help from the Cambridge High School horticulture class. Plants were potted, placed in pools to mimic wetland conditions, netted, and allowed to grow big and tall at the Severson Learning Center. This allowed visitors and students to learn about purple loosestrife and the control efforts underway.

Volunteers cared for these plants as they grew big and lush enough to support our purple loosestrife attack force– the purple loosestrife beetles.

When our potted plants were ready, the DNR sent 300 beetles!- and we placed 10 beetles on each plant. There the beetles ate and reproduced. Over a period of four weeks, the beetle populations grew to possibly 100 – 500 beetles per plant! By early July the plants were eaten up enough that they were no longer able to provide adequate food to the beetles.

We then loaded the plants into canoes for placement in the wetlands of Red Cedar Lake where there were purple loosestrife infestations. Potted plants were placed next to stands of purple loosestrife and their nets removed. This allowed the beetles to move freely from their host plant to existing plants nearby. Remaining plants were placed in a small wetland on Lake Ripley and distributed to other areas in Jefferson County. Over time, beetles will inhibit the growth of purple loosestrife and allow for native plants to re-establish in those areas.

This collaborative effort allowed for plants to be placed on Lake Ripley, Red Cedar Lake, Rome Pond, with extra plants and beetles returned to the DNR for other areas of the state. (cont. to pg. 7)



Students help to collect plants from Red Cedar Lake.



Plants are potted and reared in pools to simulate wetland conditions. Nets are put on before plants grow tall to keep other insect predators out and purple loosestrife beetles in!

(Cont from pg. 2)



Beetles are separated into groups of 10 and placed on each plant.



Information is shared with visitors and students at Severson Learning Center.



Partners to help deploy the beetles to local areas.



Beetles placed in wetlands with purple loosestrife. Happy Munching!

If you know of purple loosestrife in wetland areas around Lake Ripley, please let us know. We can include those areas in future control efforts. This is a great project for youth groups to consider. The DNR has numerous educational activities to enhance the project.

This collaborative effort brought several entities together to help improve area wetlands. We graciously thank all those involved for their time, efforts and promotion of this project.

Stories shared about Lake Ripley

Nancy C. Hook stopped by the district office responding to an earlier request for Lake Ripley stories. One of her fondest memories dating back to 1946, starts on a gray and drizzly day when she and Sandra Johnston Anderson were trying diligently to catch a carp which stayed under Sandra's parents (Ray Johnston) pier.

Nancy and Sandra thought it would be easy to catch large carp in the rain. They tried for what seemed like a long time to lure him away, but they never succeeded.

On rainy days when Nancy is back in the area, she is reminded of the illusive carp and the hopes that she and Sandy had in catching it. She remembers how persistent they were and the fun they had in their pursuit.

Lake Ripley is a past and future treasure for local property owners and visitors alike. We thank all those who have worked to protect and enhance our lake through various ways. Those efforts preserve the memories that were formed here, as well as protect the lake for future memory-making.

If you have a Lake Ripley story you would like to share, please let us know. Pictures are always helpful and welcome when telling the story.

Photo Credits:
Clare Carlson,
Jeanne Scherer

Summer Highlights

The Lake District preserve is putting on a beautiful summer display! Now is a great time to see what is blooming and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.

Earlier this spring, a prescribed fire was conducted in our main prairie area. This helps to remove unwanted weeds and mimic the type of environment prairie plants are accustomed to.



Spring prescribed fire in main prairie area and summer growth. Lots of beautiful plants are flowering!

We have installed a new fence with a gate that provides vehicular access for restoration work. The gate will remain locked except for instances when vehicles are needed for our management and outreach needs. We ask patrons to continue entering the preserve by walking between the two fences.

Invasive species work continues in our woodland areas. Eco-Resource Consulting, Inc., has been hired to assist us for the next three years in controlling invasive buckthorn, honey suckle, garlic mustard and dames rocket.

The LRMD has partnered with US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association to restore water holding capacity in wetland areas on the east side of the preserve. This project will provide additional habitat by increasing water pooling areas. This will also increase the capacity for the wetland to filter and clean water entering the inlet stream.

Both partners are providing \$1000.00 in cost-share support along with technical expertise towards the project. We are grateful to our partners and their support!

At a recent Board meeting, the LRMD adopted rules for the placement of tree stands, blinds and trail cameras within the preserve boundary. Those rules are similar to those listed by the DNR for lands that are managed or owned by the State. Please refer to the DNR's current year hunting regulations for information on placement of those structures within the preserve.

Fall will be here before we know it. With it comes cooler temperatures, bird migration, and additional opportunities for a variety of uses. We remind dog owners to keep their pets on-leash to avoid conflicts with hunters or trappers and to pick up pet waste. We hope all patrons of the preserve have a wonderful time in their activities.

Water quality (cont. from pg. 4)

We are fortunate this year to continue total phosphorus monitoring at this site as part of efforts through the Water Action Volunteers Program, which is a joint UW-Extension and DNR program. This will allow us to better understand total phosphorus concentrations both after rain events and throughout the summer.

Data for lake and stream monitoring is compiled and uploaded to a DNR database. This information is easily available for you to review. For current and historical water quality data for Lake Ripley, visit dnr.wi.gov and type Lake Ripley into the search function. Our website also holds valuable information on past studies conducted.

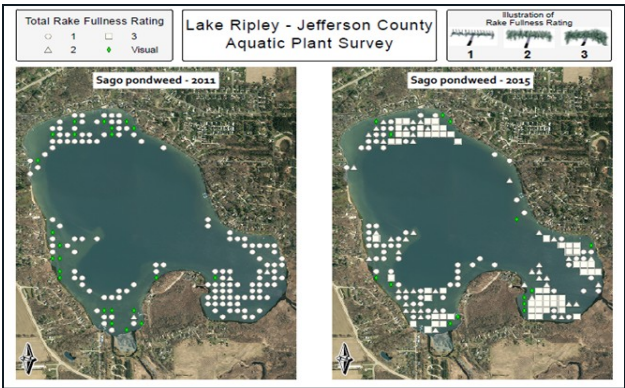


A pretty stretch of ripples in our inlet stream just east of Hwy A.

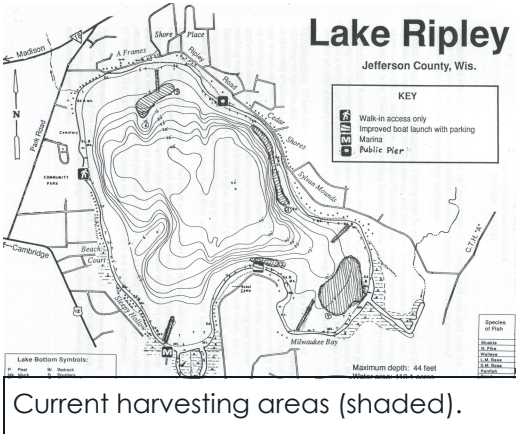
Harvesting Updates

This year we launched our aquatic plant harvester and shore conveyor on June 21st to prepare for another full season of harvesting. Though our harvesting season started slow, pulling in an average of one load per day for June cutting days, warm weather provided for quick growing conditions in July. Average loads the first few weeks in July were two loads per day, but increased to three towards the end of the month.

Comparing results from the 2011 and 2015 plant surveys, Sago pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*), a valuable native plant for wildlife, has increased in both presence and density around the lake. Sago tends to wrap around boat props and also forms floating mats that impede navigation. A comparison of sago populations from the 2011 survey to 2015 is found below.



We remind lake users that our mechanical harvesting program is governed by a DNR permit as to where and what species of plants can be harvested. Please contact our office for any questions pertaining to our program.



Current harvesting areas (shaded).

Healthy Lakes Project Complete

The Sylvan Mounds 1st Addition Homeowners Association completed a lakeshore planting to help increase habitat and slow runoff.



This project was funded in part by the new Healthy Lakes Implementation Plan which provides financial and technical assistance to property owners looking to install simple lake-friendly practices.

These lake stewards have an existing native planting on their property, but removed lawn and incorporated grasses, flowers, bushes, and trees for a more natural effect. These small steps make a big difference in the health of Lake Ripley. Contact our office if you are interested in how you can become a part of this program!



Lawn removed and native plants added for a more natural shoreline.

Clean Boats, Clean Waters

This year we welcome Breanna Crane as our Clean Boats, Clean Waters intern. She is a biology student at UW-Whitewater and is interested in invasive species impacts.



Breanna speaks with users of the Town of Oakland public launch on steps that should be taken to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species to Lake Ripley and other waters. We are grateful to the DNR for their grant support of this program on Lake Ripley!



Water quality monitoring

Water quality monitoring of our lake and perennial inlet and outlet streams continues through the help of interns, volunteers, partnerships and with assistance from the DNR.

Lake Ripley participates in the DNR's Long Term Trend Monitoring Program where data is collected by DNR staff during certain times of the year. This year, a sediment sample was obtained to check for invasive spiny water fleas. Unfortunately, spiny water fleas are found in the Madison, lakes increasing Lake Ripley's risk for this invader.

Volunteer lake monitoring continues on at least a monthly basis. Measurements taken by secchi disc help determine the clarity of the water. The greater the depth you can see the disc, the more clear the water. Secchi values vary throughout the summer as algal populations increase or decrease as found in the table below. The color of the water is also determined when taking a secchi reading.

During June, July and August chlorophyll (the pigment that makes algae green) is measured to gauge how much algae is present in the lake. Samples are collected by volunteers and then analyzed at the State Lab of Hygiene. By combining the information of both the secchi reading and chlorophyll analysis, it can identify if water clarity is influenced by algae or another factor such as tannins.

Total phosphorus is also measured on the lake. Results for 2016 are found in the table below. This table shows the 2016 averages along with

	Lake Monitoring Data		
	Secchi	Total Phosphorus	Chlorophyll
	(ft.)	(µg/L)	(µg/L)
March-16	8.6	26.1	N/A
May-16	13	20.0	N/A
June-16	4.5	22.1	10.7
2016 Average	8.7	22.7	10.7
Ripley Overall Average	6.5	28.1	12.74

Budget Hearing
August 20, 2016
9 a.m. at Oakland Town Hall

Annual Meeting
Immediately following budget hearing

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

III. Nomination of Board candidates-Two open positions
(Names on Ballot: Michael Sabella, incumbent; Mike Doman)

IV. Chairman's report

V. Treasurer's report

VI. Authorization to use unrestricted funds, capital reserves, or other financial strategies to purchase land available from the DNR that abuts the Lake District Preserve

VII. Discussion and possible action on other Business that can be legally considered by the District

VIII. Approval of budget and tax levy

IX. Tabulation of vote and election of board members

X. Adjournment

the overall average of all samples taken over the years (Ripley Overall Average). Lakes with total phosphorus amounts above 20 µg/L (micrograms per liter) may experience algal blooms. As the summer continues, additional data will be collected for a more comprehensive analysis of the season.

Matthew Long is our Conservation and Watershed Intern this season. A recent graduate from UW-Whitewater, his research included algae and diatom identification. Matt monitors three sites on our inlet stream and assists with other projects. The outlet is being monitored through a partnership with the Rock River Coalition by two UW-Whitewater students.

In a 2014-2015 analysis of our inlet stream, total phosphorus levels exceeded the state standard in the three samples taken at the Hwy18 location. Two of those samples were taken after heavy rain events, which carry phosphorus rich material into the stream.

(cont. to pg. 6)

LAKE RIPLEY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT 2017 PROPOSED BUDGET					
	2015 ACTUAL	2016 BUDGET	2016 JAN-JUNE ACTUAL	2016 JAN-DEC ESTIMATED	2017 BUDGET
Revenues:					
Real Estate Tax Levy	\$ 118,270	\$ 117,665	\$ 82,716	\$ 117,665	\$ 120,055
Grants	3,811		2,550	2,550	
Interest Income	664		321	642	
Carryover	24,135	27,820	27,820	27,820	23,597
Restricted Funds, Net	<20,911>			<1,620>	
Other	81				
Total Revenues	126,050	145,485	113,407	147,057	143,652
Projects:					
Various	718	3,000	104	1,000	1,500
Operations:					
Landowner Cost Sharing	0	30,000	6,877	9,828	20,000
Weed Harvesting	6,714	10,700	2,391	11,691	10,900
Preserve Restoration/Management	3,772	11,500	1,080	11,500	12,175
Staff Payroll/ Fringes/Taxes	50,811	51,735	25,869	51,735	53,122
Insurance	6,592	7,200	7,100	7,100	7,900
Legal Counsel	1,508	1,500	56	1,500	2,500
Dues & Conferences	2,230	3,050	1,183	2,115	2,855
Office & Community Outreach	6,928	7,200	2,685	7,391	7,500
Commissioner Stipends	4,000	4,400	2,150	4,400	4,400
Rent	1,800	1,800	1,050	1,800	1,800
Capital Reserve, Land/Equip Acquisition	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	15,000
Miscellaneous	3,157	3,400	403	3,400	4,000
Total Disbursements	98,230	145,485	50,948	123,460	143,652
Balance	\$ 27,820	\$ 0	\$ 62,459	\$ 23,597	\$ 0

THE LRMD HAS NO INDEBTEDNESS

	LAKE RIPLEY PROTECTION FUND
Restricted Funds:	
Estimated Balance (12/31/15)	\$ 24,201
Additional 2015 Activity	
Increase	15,911
Decrease	<6,355>
Final Balance (12/31/15)	33,757
2016 Estimated Activity	
Interest Earned	111
Increase	2,849
Decrease	<21,616>
Estimated Balance (12/31/16)	\$ 15,101

Please find the agenda for the Budget Hearing and Annual Meeting on Page 4.