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We would like to thank the numerous partners that helped make this program a success. Great thanks to our boat captains: Mike Sabella, Craig Kempel, Dave DeGidio and Dave and Rae Martin. Special thanks to Paul Garrison for his time and expertise and Georgia Gomez-Ibanez for additional content. We also appreciate the Cambridge School District and teacher Pam Levenson for allowing us the opportunity to speak with students.

We plan to offer a summer pontoon classroom for our Lake Ripley community in late July. More information will be posted in the Spring 2017 newsletter. However, if you are interested in being a part of the program, please contact our office.



Photo Credit:
Pam Levenson

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Vol. 23, No. 3

Winter 2016

FROM THE HELM

Back in November of 1999, I was excited to find an article in the *Tempo* section of the *Chicago Tribune*. The article celebrated the 50th anniversary of *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. I had been invited to participate in the second session of Wisconsin Lake Leaders and *A Sand County Almanac* was on the reading list. Little did I know, that this little book would become seminal to my life for the next 18 years.



I'm a city boy, who moved to the country by choice and because we found a little lake in southern Wisconsin. When Ann and I first came to Lake Ripley and to Shore Place, the subdivision was in total disrepair, but there was this beautiful little lake and we fell in love. I got involved in the creation of the Lake District and then, the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Program.

The program was great, but the book was life changing. I read a lot, but there are only a few books I go back to on a regular basis. All my nephews and nieces get copies when they graduate from high school. I honestly don't know if they have read every word, but I feel good that I can introduce them to this important book.

We are facing challenging times in the protection and preservation of Lake Ripley and all the natural resources in Wisconsin. There may not be as many guidelines to help us do the right things to protect the lake. Aldo Leopold introduced us to the land ethic. I suggest you read the whole book but, here is a quote that the *Tribune* thought worth repeating:

"All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise; the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts.....The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively: the land....In short, a land ethic changes the role of homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such."

So all I ask is do what is right for our community. In some cases this may mean doing what may not be in your best interest, but is in the best interest of our lake.

John Molinaro, Chair

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Lake Science for Area Students

On a blustery morning this fall, students from the Cambridge High School embarked on the second annual pontoon classroom. This educational event offers students a hands-on learning opportunity and ability to partake in water quality monitoring, lake management activities and learn about our watershed.

This season, students worked on lake monitoring techniques and how we use the data. From lowering a secchi disc to gauge water clarity, to taking dissolved oxygen readings for the entire depth of the lake, students worked through tough weather conditions to get the data we needed.

The classroom started with a drive around the lake with a stop on Ripley Road where our inlet stream crosses underneath. Students took measurements with a transparency tube to see if the water entering the lake was clear. Due to recent rains, reduced clarity was noted.



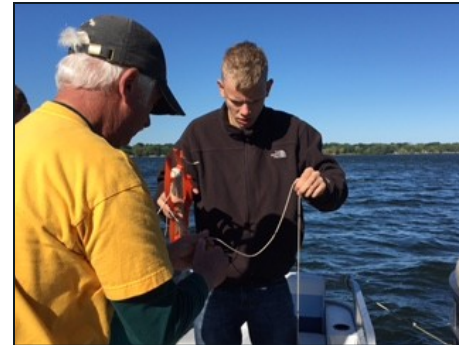
Students using a transparency tube

Paul Garrison (WDNR, retired) showed students how to collect a sediment core and the types of information gathered. Paul discussed the previous core sediments analyzed and how this gave us information about our lake's historic timeline. For example, by examining the types and quantity of sediment found, a shift in water quality was observed around the mid 1800's due to European settlement.



The sun felt good on that windy day. Students took dissolved oxygen readings while others wrote them down.

Paul also discussed how the shells of diatoms (algae with siliceous shells) are analyzed to see how algae populations have changed over time. Paul finished his discussion with blue-green algal blooms, their causes, and rules for when to avoid the water. Thankfully, Lake Ripley has few of these occurrences.



Our volunteer Lake Monitor showing a student how to use a secchi disc

Once back on land, students completed tasks for water quality monitoring and looked at various plant species found in the lake. At that time of the year, water celery easily detaches from lake sediments and floats about the lake looking for new locations. This allowed for students to see the entire plant structure such as their nutritious rhizomes, and learn why this plant is so valuable as wildlife food and habitat.

Richard Trailer was also at the Town launch helping with our Clean Boats, Clean Waters outreach efforts. He spoke with students about the program, invasive species impacts on our lake, which invasive species are present, how to prevent their spread, and volunteer opportunities with the program. *Continued on page 8...*

Photo credit: Pam Leverson



Student filtering algae for chlorophyll analysis.

Winter is Coming-be Salt Savvy

With snow on the way, many are concerned with road and sidewalk safety. It's also important to consider how salt can impact the lake. Once salt is put down, it doesn't go away. It washes from surfaces onto lawns, ditches, and finally to the lake harming soil and plants, weakening brick and stone, corroding vehicles, and could contaminate groundwater.

There are a few tips that can help reduce the use of salt that not only helps the lake, but saves time and money. Using the right amount of salt maximizes your family safety.

Similar to pre-weather road conditioning, consider applying a liquid deicer or brine before the weather hits. Pre-treating walkways can prevent snow and ice from building up.

Clear walkways and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow and ice removed by hand means less salt usage.

Allow space between the salt granules. One pound of salt fits into a 10 ounce coffee cup and can cover 20 feet of your driveway. Hand spreaders are helpful in evenly distributing salt.

Knowing the temperature will also help save time and money. At 15° Fahrenheit, salt is ineffective. Consider using inexpensive sand for traction. Carefully checking product labels for effective temperature ranges can also make sure you're not throwing money away.

These simple steps can help keep your family safe and keep our lake healthy. More information can be found at www.wisaltwise.com

Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Board meetings for 2017 are scheduled for **March 18** and **April 15th**. Meetings start at 9:00 a.m. and are located at the Oakland Town Hall.

Purple Loosestrife Project

Last summer, the LRMD and partners worked to control invasive purple loosestrife around Lake Ripley and Jefferson County. In our first season we reared and released approximately 12,500 purple loosestrife beetles to eat and stress area plants. This form of biocontrol has proven to reduce purple loosestrife populations and allow for native plants to re-establish in impacted areas.

The LRMD and partners again hope to continue efforts to control this nuisance plant as more populations of purple loosestrife were found around Lake Ripley during this project.

If you spot purple loosestrife on your property or within public access areas please let us know. We need local plants to collect for beetle rearing. We then release beetles to areas impacted with purple loosestrife.

Reducing purple loosestrife is important for healthy wetlands which support area wildlife. This program helps restore valuable areas for a clean Lake Ripley.

Email Addresses Needed

These days one of the best ways to get important information to people is through the use of electronic media. We use email as a way of informing you of lake conditions, issues, volunteer opportunities and more.

If you're interested in joining our email distribution list, please send an email to:

ripley@oaklantown.com

If you've changed your email or have multiple addresses and prefer to receive information at a certain one, please let us know.



Welcome Mike Doman to the Board!

At the 2016 Annual Meeting, Mike Doman joined our Board of Directors. Mike has lived in the Lake Ripley watershed since October of 1994 when he purchased a cottage on east Shore Place from a childhood friend. The move not only allowed him to appreciate beautiful Lake Ripley, but is where he met his wife, who owned a cottage across the street.

Mike thoroughly enjoys the outdoors and is privileged to be able to fish so close to home. He also enjoys boating and hiking in both winter and summer.

Mike looks forward to working with members of the Board and the greater community to become a good steward of the lake. He hopes to increase awareness on ways to preserve the beauty of Lake Ripley and the watershed for current and future generations.

"I see the balancing of enjoying the lake and keeping the sensitive areas from encroachment as the most problematic. Educating our neighbors is of utmost importance in this matter."



Our newest Board Member, Mike

If interested in becoming a board member or serving on one of our committees, please contact the district office. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting!

Jacobsen-Brown Retirement

Jane (Bilderback) Jacobsen-Brown began a long association with Lake Ripley when her parents purchased a small cabin on Sleepy Hollow Road in the early 1950s. Empowered by her fond Lake Ripley memories and her desire to protect the lake, Jane participated as a lake volunteer.



Jane talking about plants during the pontoon classroom last year

She joined the Lake District Board in 2004 and has served as Board Secretary since 2006. Upon her retirement as a teacher and foreign language author, Jane and her husband Kent spent an increasing amount of time in woodland and marsh restoration on their property and assisted with numerous Lake District Projects.

As a 2006 graduate of the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute Crew 6, Jane used her lake knowledge and leadership to promote lake friendly practices not only for Lake Ripley, but for lakes statewide.

She and her husband have been generous in providing financial support for District projects that enhance storm water control, wetland restoration, and erosion control projects. We are grateful for their continued support again this year with a generous donation to our programs.

They both have participated in numerous learning events, served on various committees to include the Ripley Rewards committee, Weed harvesting committee, Friends of the Preserve Committee, and have shared their knowledge with area youth.

Jane has been an integral component to the Lake District Board and her passion for Lake Ripley remains strong. We are grateful to her 12 years of dedication and service to the Board and her continued resolve to protect Lake Ripley. We thank Jane for all her work and dedication and wish both Jane and Kent all the best.

Plan Your Spring Landscaping

What better time to plan for warm spring weather than right now! If you've thought of water diversions to a rain garden, incorporating native plants into your landscape, or are looking for ideas on dealing with yard waste that can leach phosphorus into our lake, there are upcoming events in the surrounding area that can assist in your landscape and garden endeavors:

Madison Home Expo
Madison: Monona Terrace
January 6-8, 2017
www.homeshowcenter.com/Visitors/homeshow.aspx?show=Madison

Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo
Madison: Alliant Energy Center
February 10-12, 2017
www.wigardenexpo.com

Learn from the experts at an educational session or speak with vendors who specialize in native plants and sustainable landscaping. Each lake-friendly landscape helps to keep Lake Ripley beautiful!

LRMD Native Plant Sale

This spring we are coordinating an order for native plants from a local native plant nursery. By ordering early, participants can purchase plants at a discount and save time and money by picking up locally.



Low growing butterfly weed provides a blast of color. Photo credit: Agrecol

There is a variety of plants available to suit various site conditions. Plants are purchased in flats, but you can coordinate with friends and neighbors to mix and match multiple plant varieties.

This is a great opportunity to fill in any bare spots in your current landscape, or expand upon areas you already have. Native plants add natural beauty, and their deep roots help to slow water and allow it to seep into the ground and not run directly into the lake.

Native plants are an excellent way to entice beautiful butterflies and bird species to your property, and also provide food and habitat for pollinator species that are in decline.

If you're interested in placing an order, please contact the office. Your project may also be eligible for financial support: see below

Grant Opportunity

The LRMD will seek financial assistance to assist lakefront property owners looking to install lake friendly practices. The Wisconsin DNR contributes 75% or up to \$1000 for projects that enhance habitat, infiltration, and water quality. Qualifying projects include:

- ☼ 350 sq. ft. native planting
- ☼ Rain Gardens
- ☼ Rock infiltration
- ☼ Diversion practices
- ☼ Fish sticks (trees placed next to shore in water)



Debbie, who recently expanded a native planting on the shoreline of her lake association stated, "expanding our shoreline garden means improved and additional wildlife habitat, a beautiful and vibrant shoreline, and we know it helps keep our lake clean. Additional funding meant we could do more with limited funds."

To learn more about this program please contact the office before January 15th.

Local Wetlands for Sale by DNR

Wisconsin Act 20, which is the 2013-2015 state biennial budget bill signed by Gov. Scott Walker, required the DNR to make at least 10,000 acres of DNR owned land available for sale by June 30, 2017. Net proceeds of the land sale will be used to repay outstanding public debt related to the DNR's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program.

As a part of the process, a 40 acre parcel of wetlands located within the Lake Ripley watershed was selected for consideration. This parcel is located off Ripley Road and adjacent to the western edge of the Lake District Preserve. It has approximately 2,200 feet of two-bank frontage along the lake's only perennial inlet.

The DNR acquired this parcel by donation in 1969 with the donor's intent for the property to remain as wetlands for better conservation and reproduction of fish and wildlife as a part of the DNR's Scattered Wildlife project.

As a part of the review required by the DNR in proposing lands for sale, they assessed the parcel's recreation value, wildlife and habitat value, management opportunities and other criteria in their final determination in whether they should offer the land for sale. Land proposed for sale had to meet certain criteria and could be offered for sale to local government entities, neighboring land owners, or via public sale to the general public.

Once the review was complete, the DNR reviewers recommended this land be sold to a local government entity during the Natural Resources Board (NRB) meeting in October. Conditions of the sale would include deed restrictions requiring the land be managed for conservation and open to the general public. During the October meeting the NRB Board approved the sale of this property.

The Lake District was made aware of the potential sale earlier in the summer. At the Lake District annual meeting, the potential of this land

sale, the importance for preserving wetland areas, and financial considerations were discussed by District land owners. Many voiced their desire to protect this wetland from potential development pressures or loss of important wetland functions such as flood control and wildlife habitat. A vote of property owners present unanimously approved the purchase of these wetlands through various financial strategies.

Why Protect Wetlands

Historically, wetlands composed 1,500 acres or 32% of our 4,688 acre watershed. Currently, 543 acres remain, just 11.58% of our watershed. This decrease in wetland areas, along with land development and changes in land use have changed the water quality of our lake over time.

Preservation and conservation of wetland areas is necessary to maintain the health of our lake, Without wetland areas, water quality, fish, wildlife, recreation, flood control and property values are all impacted negatively.

As these wetlands abut the Lake District Preserve, purchasing this parcel would allow for inclusion in our preserve management goals and maintain open access to natural areas for the public.

A comparison of water quality from 1993 to 2015 show an increase in water quality of the inlet located by Hwy A. This is likely due in-part by the establishment of the Lake District Preserve and the various wetland and upland management efforts established. Preservation of existing natural areas is essential to the health of the lake.



Wetlands at the Lake District Preserve during the 2008 flood show increased water levels, holding water that would run into the lake if the wetland had not been restored.

Next Steps

The next step in this process is for the DNR's Bureau of Facilities & Lands to establish a selling price for the parcel. Once established, the LRMD Board, with authorization provided at the Annual meeting, will consider all financial options available to purchase the parcel. While we await the parcel price, numerous contacts have been made with partners on grant funding opportunities, donations, and future restoration needs of the wetland.

If you would like more information, please visit the DNR's website and search under land sales or contact our office.

To reflect John's opening to this newsletter, Aldo Leopold also said:

"Wilderness is a resource which can shrink but not grow... creation of new wilderness in the full sense of the word is impossible."

The LRMD Board is grateful for the past support of area landowners, businesses, organizations and other partners who have seen the value in preserving natural areas.

We have already received generous donations toward the purchase of this land. Thank you for your support!



Maps showing DNR parcel for sale and proximity to the Lake District Preserve. Photo credit (above): WDNR

