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Snapshot Wisconsin

Somewhere hiding in the Lake District Preserve is a camera that is spying on the daily movements of the Preserve's wildlife as part of the DNR's Snapshot Wisconsin program. Not too surprisingly the most common animals captured on the camera are squirrels (gray and fox) Second on the list are white-tailed deer followed by raccoons and cottontail rabbits. A few interesting creatures captured on the camera were a beaver, a tailless raccoon, and just below the camera a small animal was killed by a hawk!

The photos of the Lake District Preserve are not only interesting to us, they help the DNR by mapping the range and activities of animals. In areas where elk are being reintroduced, they keep tabs on tagged animals. Throughout the state there are elusive animals like bobcats, fishers, and pine martens that are difficult and time consuming to monitor in other ways.



Coyote in a snowstorm.

KELOKA SEKAICE KEGOESLED

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





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FROM THE HELM

've had the pleasure over the last few months of getting to know and working with Andrew Sabai, the new Lake Manager. His background in natural resources management is already allowing us to collect important data in the inlet stream and the newly purchased 40 acres the stream runs through. Andrew worked for the DNR for 2 ½ years identifying critical habit areas on lakes in NE Wisconsin. His work included surveying aquatic plant, woody and walleye spawning habitat. Andrew also



Jimmy DeGidio checks water levels on Lake Riplev's inlet stream. New equipment seen here is being deployed to help determine phosphorus inputs into the lake, so we can take steps to reduce that phosphorus.

worked as a contractor (lake and wetland Ecosystems). He spent 4 years with Lake Puckaway Protection and Rehabilitation District implementing their management plan. Most of that work involved developing and conducting extensive water quality monitoring and improving fish and wildlife habitat by planting bulrush beds. One of Andrew's biggest accomplishments was to create the habitat that lead to the largest colony of state endangered common tern in Wisconsin. While studying at UW Oshkosh, Andrew surveyed sedge meadow wetlands in Wisconsin and Michigan for the USGS and did research into invasive cattails in those wetlands.

The Lake Ripley Management District Board has authorized Andrew to purchase stream monitoring equipment that allows us to collect data on water quality, phosphorus levels and stream heights. With this data we are already starting to see the impact of large rain events on the lake. This data will allow us to better determine the goals of the district and speed up the corrective action which is now data driven.

We are very excited about the new ideas Andrew brings to the district and I'm confident we are moving in the right direction for improving the quality of lake Ripley. Please stop in the office or give Andrew a call. I'm sure you will be impressed with his knowledge and desire to make Lake Ripley the best it can be. Thank you,

Jimmy DeGidio, Chair

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New Lake Manager

I'm Andrew Sabai, the new Lake Manager.
Chairman DeGidio gave me a nice introduction. I am looking forward to getting to work. Over the next two years my major tasks will be studying nutrient inputs into Lake Ripley and devel-



oping ways to significantly reduce that pollution (see phosphorus reduction article in this newsletter), and updating the 2009 Lake Ripley Improvement Plan. The updated plan will look towards the next ten years of improving Lake Ripley water quality and protecting what has already been accomplished.

One of my other challenges will be updating the Lake District Preserve Management plan. The Lake District Preserve helps protect water quality, and provides great public space and a home to many different plants and animals. However, there are many challenges in balancing all the needs of preserve. Last year the LRMD, with the help of many organizations and individuals, purchased an additional 40 acres of land from the Department of Natural Resources. This property adds to the diversity of the Preserve, but also introduces new management questions and options under a limited budget. In the fall we will be forming a committee to work on these plans.

Tree Replacement Program

The LRMD is introducing a new cost share program to replace trees lost to disease, storms, or construction. The tree replacement program was created to help replant a number of the trees lost during the Ripley Road construction project, but the LRMD would like to encourage the replacement of all trees in the District that were not removed for cosmetic or other non-necessary reasons.

Trees provide a number of benefits to both the nature and the community. Trees provide shelter and food for a wide variety of wildlife, and when they fall into the water they provide cover for fish as well. In the yard they add beauty and value to property and their shade reduces air conditioning costs.

The LRMD will pay 50% for the cost of tree up to \$100 per tree and provide up to \$100 for professional planting of the tree. The total project cap will be \$500 per land owner. Only native tree plantings are eligible for this cost share program. Please contact Andrew Sabai – Lake District Manager for more details, some restrictions apply.



Planting an oak is a long-term investment

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One of the things the district does to reduce phosphorus pollution is maintain the Lake District Preserve. The grasslands, and wetlands at the preserve are managed to intercept soil as it is being washed out of the surrounding fields. The grasses and other plants act like a huge natural filter. Unfortunately, there is still too much phosphorus going down the creek. Fortunately, there may be a solution.



According to models, most of the phosphorus that enters the lake comes from farm runoff into the inlet creek.

Phosphorus Solution

Wetlands are not only good at filtering runoff, they are good at filtering surface water. In fact, they are so good that many water treatment plants incorporate wetlands as a step in their wastewater treatment process. Wetlands in our landscape can serve the same purpose, but have to be healthy and well managed to be effective. The creek and the wetlands in the Preserve are in a relatively unhealthy state in this regard, but could be manipulated in a way that would again remove nutrients entering the stream and therefore the lake.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves we will need to gain more data about the nutrient content of the creek than has already been gathered. It is crucial to know how phosphorus levels change as the water makes its way through the landscape, before we can begin to make major changes to reduce those nutrients. In order the address the number one and two concerns of District's residents, the LRMD authorized the purchase monitoring equipment and phosphorus lab tests at the March district meeting. The new equipment is now being used to gather information on water depth, flow, and water clarity.

There has already been a lot of work done by the District, Jefferson County, the State of Wisconsin and federal agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Service to reducing nutrient inputs, but there are still more nutrients entering the system than would be under natural conditions. This project will help us find a solution to the main concerns Lake Ripley users have. Data collection has now entered its third month and together with some past data is already yielding some interesting results. Stay tuned this winter for a full report!



A tiny stream in the Lake District Preserve that feeds the inlet creek.

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The unnamed inlet creek to Lake Ripley has its headwaters just north of Hwy 18. From there it flows southwest through farm fields, wetlands and the Lake District Preserve. Since the creek provides so much for Lake Ripley it deserves a name!

Name the Creek

Lake Ripley gets the majority of its water from a small stream that enters the lake in Milwaukee Bay. This stream and its surrounding wetlands were historically used by walleye, northern pike, and pickerel for spawning. Most of the nutrients enter the lake from the stream. The little creek is crucially important to the lake, but it doesn't have an official name. It is often referred to as the "Lake Ripley's only inlet stream"

Something so important to Lake Ripley deserves a proper name, not just a number. There is a procedure to get an official name to a lake or stream, so it appears on maps and in the DNR databases. Unfortunately, the stream is not long enough to meet the guidelines for naming, but if a case can be made that it is important enough, it can still be given an official name. Even if we can't give it an official name, it would still be nice to call it something other than "the stream that flows into the lake".

I think we can make a good case for an official name, but what should we name it?

At the LRMD annual meeting in August, the District members will be given a chance to vote on a name for the creek. Below are a few suggestions. Also you can contact me, or bring your own to the August 18th meeting.

Inlet Creek Ripley Creek Marsh Creek Sedge Creek Oakland Creek



Pickerel caught in the inlet creek.

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Lake Ripley Phosphorus Reduction

When the Lake Ripley Management District surveyed residents in the District in 2009 their biggest concerns about the lake were water clarity and algal blooms. Algae blooms are fueled by excessive nutrients, primarily phosphorus, that enter the lake. Water clarity is affected mostly by algae, soil particles from runoff and sediment

that is resuspended from waves and motor boat traffic. Some of the phosphorus the lake receives is from natural sources, but we get an excessive amount from human sources, like lawn fertilizer, and construction runoff. But the single largest source of phosphorus is agricultural runoff. The majority of the agriculture runoff flows into the inlet stream before entering the lake, which poses both problems and solutions.

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The inlet creek provides most of the water to Lake Ripley, but during flooding events it also delivers excessive nutrients that fuel algae blooms.