

Ripples

Lake Ripley Management District

Vol. 31, No. 3

Summer 2024



FROM THE HELM – SAVING OUR SANDHILL CRANES

LAKE DISTRICT OFFICE

Oakland Town Hall
N4450 County Rd. A
Cambridge, WI 53523
(608) 423-4537
Lake.manager@tn.oakland.
jefferson.wi.gov.

 www.lakeripley.org
@LRMDLS2020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jimmy DeGidio
Chair
(608) 921-1340

Debbie Kutz
Treasurer
(920) 650-9122

Georgia Gómez-Ibáñez
Secretary
(608) 628-7212

Steve Bieschke
Commissioner
(847) 420-5330

Doug Maurer
Commissioner
(608) 515-3976

Meg Turville-Heitz
Jefferson County Rep.
(608) 695-0313

Vacant
Town of Oakland Rep.

LAKE MANAGER

Lianna Spencer
Lake.manager@tn.oakland.
jefferson.wi.gov
(608) 423-4537

WEED HARVEST CREW

Leo Allen
Ed Grunden
Jim Jermain
Richard Moen

Have you seen the sandhill cranes around Lake Ripley? In the spring I could hear their calls, like a pandemonium of trumpets from the wetland, and this summer we have spotted a mated pair visiting our property with one chick. The birds have a stork-like look with a wingspan of 6-7 feet and can weigh up to eleven pounds. The most recognizable feature is the red patch on their head. If you are lucky enough to get close to one, you might be able to catch a glimpse of their brilliant yellow eyes!

Sandhill cranes breed in wetlands and other habitats where there is standing water. They build a nest mound out of vegetation on the ground or in the shallow water. The female will lay one to two eggs which typically hatch in 30 days. Colts remain under the care of their parents for about 10 months, including the fall migration south and will separate from their parents come spring. In their fourth year they will find a mate, stay together for life, and can live 30 years or more!



When the cranes arrive in Wisconsin from Florida in the spring they begin a courtship. They dance with a series of moves like puppets in a show, bowing and stretching their wings while leaping into the air. You will hear the male trumpet once with a quick response of two trumpets from the female that can be heard from miles away.

Cranes were nearly extinct in the 1800s due to habitat destruction, but in 1916 the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act was signed, protecting the remaining birds in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Ontario,

SANDHILL CRANES CONTINUED

Canada, and the crane population has largely recovered.

The International Crane Foundation, headquartered in Baraboo, Wisconsin, states that their mission is to work worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend. They provide knowledge, leadership, and inspiration to engage people in resolving threats to cranes and their diverse landscapes.

Every year since 1976, the International Crane Foundation holds a Midwest Crane Count in April. The annual Midwest Crane Count has grown over the four decades to include portions of

seven states in the mid-west including Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. As of 2023, the total count in Wisconsin is 12,225 with Jefferson County having 490 birds! The steady increase in numbers is a direct result of the restoration of habitat of the wetlands over the decades.

If you're interested in participating in the Midwest Crane Count in Jefferson County, please contact our county coordinators Bob and Sue Volenec, at svolenec@gmail.com or visit the International Crane Foundation website, Annual Midwest Crane Count - International Crane Foundation (savingcranes.org).

Chair Jimmy DeGidio



LAKE RIPLEY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

	<u>2023 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2024 BUDGET</u>	<u>2024 JAN-JUNE ACTUAL</u>	<u>2024 JAN-DEC ESTIMATED</u>	<u>2025 BUDGET</u>
Revenues:					
Real Estate Tax Levy	175,117	191,709	135,857	191,709	214,356
Interest Income	3,000	2,500	1,420	3,200	3,200
Carryover	10,824	5,366	5,366	4,666	
Total Revenues	<u>188,941</u>	<u>199,575</u>	<u>142,643</u>	<u>199,575</u>	<u>217,556</u>
Operations:					
Landowner Cost Sharing	15,000	15,000	270	15,000	15,000
Weed Harvesting	15,275	15,000	3,832	15,000	17,850
Preserve Restoration/Management	12,868	19,000	10,644	19,000	27,250
Staff Payroll/Fringes/Taxes	85,276	88,600	40,378	88,214	95,528
Insurance	9,121	8,650	6,996	9,578	9,678
Legal & Accounting	2,840	3,500	738	4,808	6,000
Dues & Conferences	1,137	1,775	1,498	1,775	1,850
Office & Community Outreach	7,835	10,150	4,747	11,150	11,650
Commissioner Stipends	2,400	5,400	1,350	2,700	3,200
Rent	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,900
Capital Reserve, Land/Equip Acquisition	25,200	25,000	15,930	25,000	20,000
Miscellaneous & General Lake Mgmt.	4,623	5,500	996	5,500	7,600
Special Programs	200	200	-	50	50
Total Disbursements	<u>183,575</u>	<u>199,575</u>	<u>89,180</u>	<u>199,575</u>	<u>217,556</u>
Balance	<u>5,366</u>		<u>53,463</u>		

**LAKE RIPLEY
PROTECTION
FUND**

Restricted Fund:

Estimated Balance (12/31/23) \$100,081

Additional 2023 Activity
Increase 3,000
Final Balance 12/31/23 103,081

2024 Estimated Activity
Interest Earned 3,000
Moved from checking to restricted funds 25,000

Estimated Balance 12/31/24 \$131,081

Anyone wishing to see a detailed budget may come to the District office at the Oakland Town Hall, N4450 Cty Hwy A, Cambridge, during normal business hours. Phone ahead to make sure office is open at 608-423-4537.

SAVING THE LAKE ONE BASIN AT A TIME

Ron and Sue DeJonge bought their quaint log cabin in 2010. It sits just north of Lake Ripley with a charming view out of the east facing windows where you can see a sliver of the lake. During the first decade of owning the cabin, Ron and Sue focused on restoring the inside to make it a cozy place for their friends and family to enjoy. As time went on, they began to pay more attention to their yard and noticed that the roots of the maple trees in the front of their yard were becoming more prominent, and every time it rained more than half an inch a small portion of their front yard seemed to wash away. Grass struggled to grow in these areas that experienced a large flow of water, and over time it became a concern.

One afternoon a few years back, Ron and Sue were chatting with their neighbors about the stormwater runoff that travels down their shared road, that has a significant slope towards the lake. Ron mentioned how he would notice trash and other pollutants collecting in the stormwater runoff and was worried about the effect this runoff is having on the lake. They wondered if there was anything they could do on their property to help slow the rush of water and help protect Lake Ripley's water quality. Their neighbor casually mentioned the District's Cost-share Program, and suggested Ron and Sue look into it. They knew that they wanted to help protect the lake from any runoff, but also wanted to make sure that whatever solution they came up with would fit into the neighborhood nicely. They really love the community they've formed in their neighborhood and didn't want something that would seem out of place.

Neither Ron nor Sue knew where to start with designing a native rain garden. "Ron is a great lawn mower, and I crunch numbers. We aren't horticulturalists", Sue joked. So, she took her neighbor's advice and went to the Lake District's website and began looking into our Cost-share Program. She remembered seeing the Town's

native rain garden outside of the Oakland Town Hall and figured that the rain garden had been installed there to serve a purpose besides looking pretty and providing pollinator habitat. She was right – the rain garden also helps infiltrate runoff from the buildings and parking lot and reduces the amount of pooling water in those areas. This sparked her curiosity even more and she began brainstorming some ideas of her own.

Sue downloaded the Cost-share Program packet, reviewed the steps, and reached out to the District. Upon reviewing the thirteen steps of the program, she initially felt intimidated. It seemed like a long process with a lot of hoops to jump through. However, both Ron and Sue were pleasantly surprised at how easy the process was. "None of it was as hard as my mind had made it seem", Sue commented as we sat chatting about their experience. One of the first steps was having the Cost-share Committee come out to the property and evaluate their proposed project. The DeJonge's wanted a project that would fit nicely in their landscape while maintaining a natural look but that would also be effective at slowing down and infiltrating stormwater runoff. Their proposed project was preliminarily approved by the Committee, and the DeJonge's got to work on securing three different bids for the proposed work that included the construction of a rain garden. They made a point to mention how they felt supported through each step by the Lake District staff, the Cost-share Committee and the contractors they chose to work with.

After a few short months of working through the Cost-share program and securing their bids, the DeJonge's were ready to come to a regularly scheduled board meeting to present their project, hoping for board approval. For the board it was easy to see the value in this project as it would effectively slow down stormwater runoff and reduce the amount of runoff coming off the DeJonge's property. The board approved them to

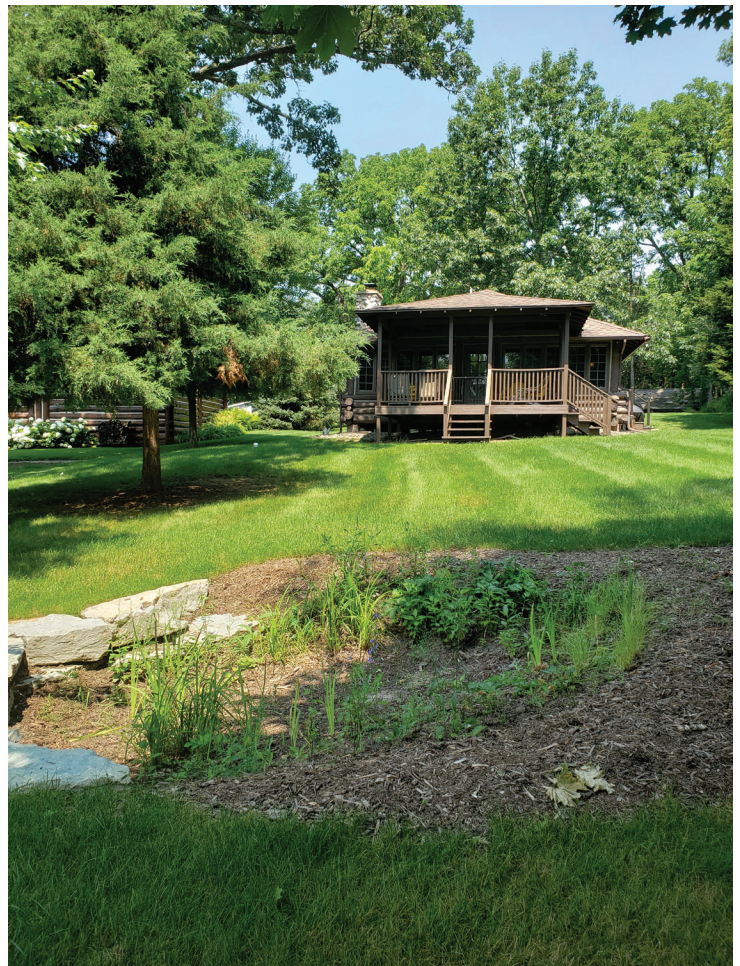
SAVING THE LAKE ONE BASIN AT A TIME CONTINUED

continue with a three-basin rain garden design in their front yard to collect and infiltrate stormwater runoff. "I was so amazed that the board was so open to these types of projects. We felt so good about how invested the board seemed in our goal", Sue commented, with admiration in her voice. "Everyone on the board seemed to genuinely care about the health of our greatest asset, Lake Ripley, and that was special to see. It's incredibly important not to take our lake for granted", they both stressed.

Ron and Sue worked with the District and a local contractor to complete their cost-share project. Three stormwater retention basins were installed in October 2023 and are flourishing! These beautiful 'stonescapes', as Sue likes to call them, have been put to the test this year with all of the rain we've had so far. They're incredibly effective, provide

habitat for pollinators, and make for a beautiful landscape feature. "I love how it looks like it could be next to a creek out in the country. It looks like it has always been there", Sue said looking out of the windows at the basins. Some of their neighbors have been over to check out the project and have commented on how much they liked it! They were fascinated with the way it worked and how it effectively slowed down water. "We would encourage anyone to do this, and we would definitely do it again", Ron said. The DeJonge's are very pleased with the way their project has turned out and are now able to watch their basins fill with water every time it rains instead of watching it rush down their road towards the lake.

For more information on our Cost-share Program, please visit www.lakeripley.org/programs, or call the Lake Manager at 608-423-4537.



HELP STOP THE SPREAD

Article by the Wisconsin DNR

You wash your dishes after you use them, but do you clean your fishing gear after you use it?

Just like you don't eat food off a dirty plate to avoid getting sick, washing your fishing gear can help prevent fish diseases and the spread of aquatic invasive species between water bodies.

Before leaving your fishing location, remove all water, aquatic vegetation and/or mud from your fishing equipment. All gear, including boats, trailers, boots, waders, nets and float tubes, should be thoroughly cleaned and dried completely before being used again.

To prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, make sure to:

- Remove plants and animals from your boat/kayak/canoe before and after use.
- Drain all water from compartments.
- Never move live fish away from any waterbody.

Learn more about how you can help prevent the spread of invasive species in Wisconsin on the DNR's Invasive Species Prevention webpage.

SUMMERTIME PADDLES

Article by the Wisconsin DNR

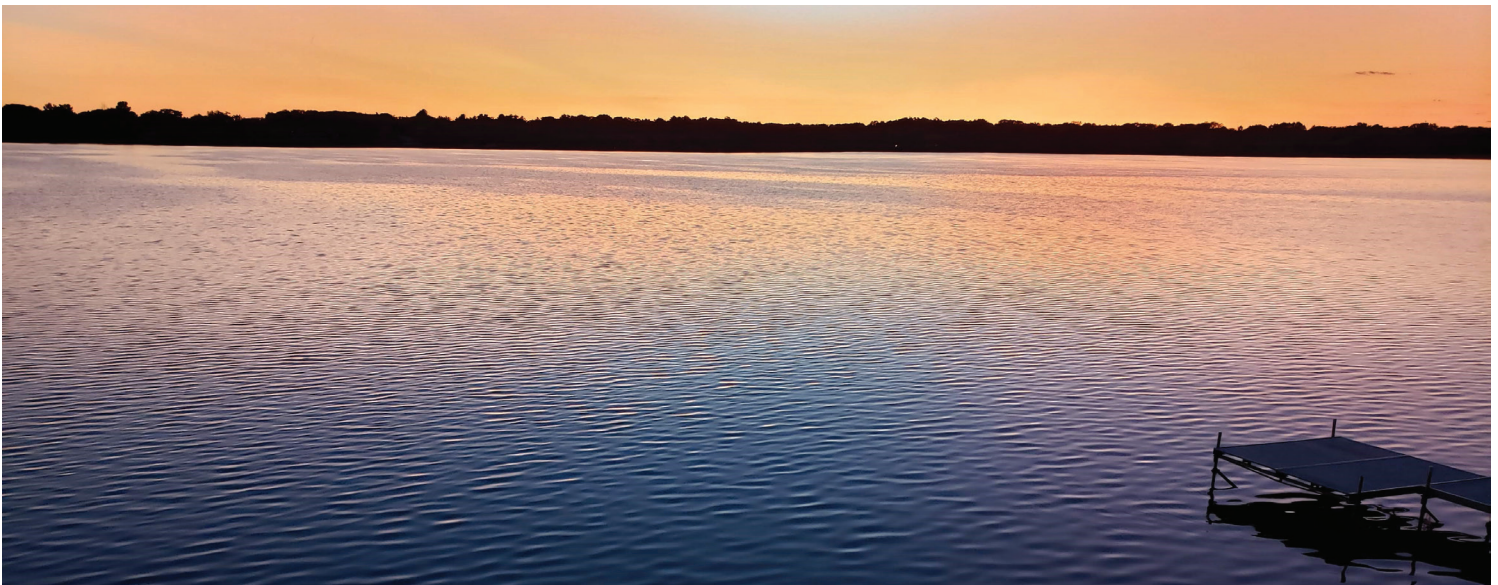
Planning to canoe, kayak or stand-up paddleboard this summer? Don't forget your life jacket – it's the law.

Wisconsin law requires everyone on board to have a wearable life jacket that fits and is readily accessible. What does that mean? Well, basically a life jacket shouldn't be stowed in a compartment but immediately ready to use to save your life. Life jackets don't work unless they are on you.

Think about it. Where would you store your life jacket on a stand-up paddleboard? If you tip in your canoe or kayak, do you think you would be calm enough to find your life jacket and put it on while struggling in the water? Just put it on and have fun.

Plus, life jackets these days come in more versatile styles. Those big old orange ones still work – but treat yourself to a new modern one. Give yourself the gift of a lifesaver you can wear. You deserve it.

Find more boating safety tips on the DNR website.



SEASON OF THE TICKS

Article by the Wisconsin DNR

Don't let ticks ruin your outdoor fun this year! Enjoying the outdoors is a big part of life in Wisconsin, but unwelcome companions can create challenges.

It only takes a few preventative measures to help you enjoy your time outdoors without constantly stressing about a tick bite. When heading out for your next adventure, consider the following to help prevent tick bites:

- Wear long sleeves, pants and tall socks to prevent ticks from getting on you. Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks for extra protection.
- Use insect repellent on exposed skin and clothes. Repellents should contain either DEET (20-30%), Picaridin (10-20%), IR3535 (15-20%) or oil of lemon eucalyptus (30-40%). Permethrin can also be used to treat clothes, shoes and gear.
- Stay on marked trails and designated recreation areas. Veering off the trail and traveling through tall grass or brush can increase your chances of tick exposure.
- Do regular tick checks. Perform full-body tick checks after being outdoors in areas where ticks may be present. Remember to look over clothing and pets, too.

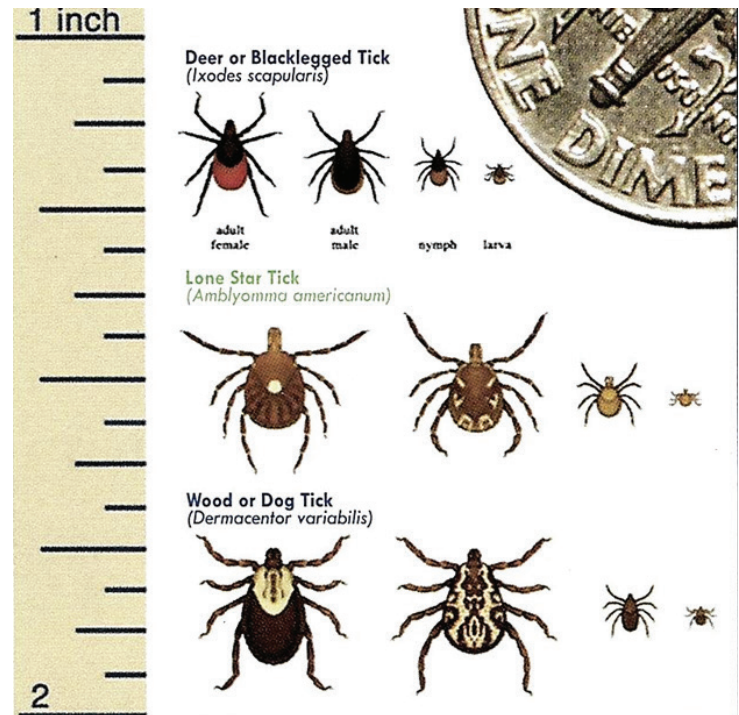


Photo credit: UW-Extension

- When removing a tick, don't squeeze, crush or puncture its body, which may contain infectious fluids.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and clean the bite site with rubbing alcohol after removing a tick.

Learn even more about these pesky little parasites and how you can take precautions when recreating outdoors on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Fight the Bite! website.

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES

Seventeen proposed Bylaw changes are on the agenda for District electors to vote on at the annual meeting. The majority of these changes consist of updating outdated statutory citations, correcting small grammatical errors, and adding language to be more consistent with the current state statutes. All proposed bylaw changes will be read in their entirety at the upcoming annual board meeting.

Anyone wishing to see a detailed copy of the bylaw changes may visit www.lakeripley.org/, or come to the District office at the Oakland Town Hall, N4450 County Hwy A, Cambridge, during normal business hours. Phone ahead to make sure the office is open at 608-423-4537.

Budget Hearing

August 17, 2024
9 a.m. at Oakland Town Hall
N4450 County Road A
Cambridge

Annual Meeting

Immediately following budget hearing
Oakland Town Hall

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
- III. Nomination of Board candidates, Statements of candidates, and Election - one open positions (Names on Ballot: Georgia Gomez-Ibanez)
- IV. Chairman's report
- V. Treasurer's report
- VI. Approval of the budget and tax levy

- VII. Approval of changes to the District's Bylaws
- VIII. Discussion and possible action on other business that can be legally considered by the District
- IX. Tabulation of vote and election of board members
- X. Adjournment

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Immediately following Annual Meeting
Oakland Town Hall

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
 - II. Election of Board Officers
 - III. Adjournment
- Note: Public Comment will be taken at discretion of District Chair

Be sure to visit, to LIKE and FOLLOW our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/LRMDLS2020

