

## LAKE DISTRICT OFFICE

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www.lakeripley.org  
@LRMDLS2020



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## WEED HARVEST CREW

**Ed Grunden**  
**Richard Moen**  
**Bruce Crump**  
**Dennis Zick**

## FROM THE HELM

### Ripley on Ice

On a beautiful January afternoon, with the temperature almost hitting 40 degrees, I was driving by Lake Ripley and saw over 30 ice fishermen in Milwaukee Bay sitting on their buckets or standing over their ice fishing holes.

I spoke with Lianna about going for a walk out to the fishermen to see if they were having any luck. We decided to take advantage of the nice weather and walked out to Milwaukee Bay to meet our first fisherman, Michael. He had been fishing all day and said the fish were biting better during the morning. It had been slow going for the past few hours and he was ready to head home. He is a local guy and has fished Lake Ripley for many years. He began to tell us stories about his father after the war and how he would take him fishing as a young boy. He even told us how he once caught a 12" bluegill with his dad on a lake in Madison! He said he loves Lake Ripley, commented on how clear the water was and thanked us for all the work we do around the lake. I asked him how much ice we had, and he said it looks like 8 inches. That's enough for an ATV, but certainly not a car or truck! We thanked Michael for his time and moved on to another fisherman nearby.

We shuffled our way across the ice and introduced ourselves to the next fisherman; he is originally from Peru but now lives in Fort Atkinson. He told me he was a metal fabricator, so we hit it off right away! I told him that I work at Madison College in Fort Atkinson and the school has just completed a large expansion for welding and fabrication. He mentioned that he saw it going up and commented on the large crane that we had installed and said he would stop in for a tour.



Joann, Jimmy and Andy

## RIPLEY ON ICE CONTINUED

As we were making our way into the heart of the bay, we passed a fisherman who was pulling up a beautiful yellow-green sunfish, but the slippery fish managed to escape.

Our next stop was at a small, blue fishing shack with the owner out front jigging on his chair. As we walked up, he pulled a bluegill from the water and threw it onto the ice. I asked him what he was fishing with, and he replied, "spikes". I asked if he used wax worms, and he told me that the spikes were working better. We introduced ourselves and as we stood there getting to know Bruce, he told us how he has been involved with the group "Friends of Red Cedar Lake". He told us how he had worked with the DNR to stock yellow perch in Lake Ripley in 2018 and 2019. Bruce had really interesting stories about Lake Ripley and Red Cedar Lake, and it was refreshing to chat with someone who has been coming to this lake for many years and clearly respected the sport.



*Jimmy, Bruce and Andy chatting outside ice shack*

As the sun began to lower on the tree line, we noticed more activity around us, and the fish were starting to bite once more. The next fisherman told us that he caught a northern pike on his jig pole with a 2-pound line test! I told him that takes some skill not to break your line. We then met Andy and Joann, a couple who had been fishing most of the day with little luck, so we joked about catching some food for their cats at home. They both thanked us for all the work we do as a Lake District, and they were excited to check out our website. Andy shared several stories about his father taking him fishing up the inlet and catching northern pike and bass. He recognized my last name and asked

if my dad fished on Lake Ripley during the summer. When I replied "yes", Andy mentioned that he chats with my dad over by the buoy line during the summertime.



*A fisherman fishing for panfish on Lake Ripley*

As we started walking back to shore, I told Lianna how I remember when my father taught me how to ice fish when I was just three years old. Dad would tell me how other fisherman couldn't believe how I could pull a northern pike up through the ice with a Beaver Dam tip-up! I still have them all and after today I just might put them back into the water!

I love hearing all of the stories fishermen tell of learning how to fish with their dads. Everyone has a story to share; just ask and you'll see how passionate fishermen are, and how willing they are to share their story! I invite you to take advantage of the next sunny day and take a walk out onto the ice to go visit these folks. Share your story with them, talk about your memories of Lake Ripley, and you might just be shocked by how much you learn. Enjoy the rest of your winter!



*Jimmy DeGidio, Chairperson*

## THE STATE OF SALT

By: Allison Madison, Sustainability and Development Coordinator, Wisconsin Salt Wise

We rely on salt to keep our roads safe in the winter and to soften water in our homes year-round, but using more salt than is needed comes with a heavy price. In Wisconsin, chloride from salt is infiltrating into our lakes, streams, and groundwater and our waterways are becoming increasingly salty. We are salting our freshwater. Over 525,000 tons of salt (sodium chloride) are applied to Wisconsin roadways annually.

Salt is a permanent pollutant in lakes, streams, and wetlands. Elevated salt levels stress plants and animals that have adapted to freshwater environments. Before reaching lethal levels, chloride has a variety of direct and indirect impacts on the health of organisms in aquatic ecosystems. As salt levels go up, the one winner is algae. Expect greener, murkier waters as water gets saltier because the zooplankton that eat algae are highly sensitive to salt. (*A review of the species,*

*community, and ecosystem impacts of road salt salinization in fresh waters, 2019*).

As individuals, we can support our municipal public works staff by staying off roads during winter storms, as pressure from constituents often drives the over-use of salt. We can also improve personal practices around our homes and places of work by using winter salt wisely and making sure our water softener is not a salt hog. Get tips on how you can be Salt Wise at <https://wisaltwise.com/TakeAction>. A quality ice scraper could preempt your need for deicing salt. A salt-free water treatment device may solve hardwater scale issues equally as well as a salt-based softener. Whatever steps you take, your local freshwater lake or stream, and the freshwater species that call it home, will appreciate it!



## WHAT THE WAKE?

On a summer afternoon in 2021, I was enjoying a boat ride on Lake Ripley in my pontoon. It was a beautiful, sunny day with very little breeze, and I decided to drift across the lake. I was having lunch with some friends when all at once several three-foot waves smashed into the side of the pontoon, and before any of us could react our lunch was knocked onto the floor! We were all shocked when we saw the rolling waves hit the boat. As we looked around the lake to see what was happening, we witnessed a wake boat with a surfboard riding its waves over in Milwaukee Bay. The wake that this boat was creating was so large that the surfer could stay behind the boat without a tow rope. Since that day, I've seen at least five wake boats on our lake creating these large-wave events.

Wake boats are designed to create a large and specifically shaped wake through the use of ballast

tanks and hull design. The larger waves from the wake boats result in accelerated erosion of the shorelines, creating a major negative impact on lakes. Erosion does occur naturally, but it is a slow process; wake boats accelerate erosion, affecting the natural erosion that accrues in all lakes. Just like in 1988 when Eurasian watermilfoil threatened Lake Ripley and led to the successful weed harvesting program, I truly hope that the Oakland Town Board and the Lake District can come up with a balanced ordinance for this type of boat.

We must keep reminding ourselves that we're all in this together – we all want to protect our beautiful and serene Lake Ripley! I hope you can enjoy the beautiful sunsets on the water this summer as I do and take a few minutes to reflect and listen to the lake and what it tells us. The lake has so many voices to share.



## DISTRICT OFFERS COST-SHARE PROGRAM AND NATIVE PLANT SALE

While the snow blows, take some time to consider making your yard as lake-friendly as possible! Achieving our common goals of "safe, clean water:" and lake health requires a community-wide effort! Each yard near the lake has the potential to support the water quality we all want.

The Lake District budgets cost share funds for projects designed to benefit lake health and good water quality. Eligible projects range from major shoreline erosion-control installations to modest raingardens. We currently have funding for both new projects and old ones in need of repair or refurbishing. For more information, read about our cost share program on our website, or call the District Office at 608-423-4537 to ask for a paper copy of our Cost-Share packet. Professional advice is part of the cost share package.

The Lake District also supports your lake-friendly landscaping by sponsoring the Native Plant Sale. By pooling orders, we obtain substantial cost reduction for each gardener! You can view the

plants available this year online at [www.agrecol.com](http://www.agrecol.com). Native plants come in every size, color and bloom time. The District can offer expert advice about your yard's specific sun and soil conditions.



The District promotes native plants because they help achieve the water quality goals for our lake. Their deep fibrous roots absorb rain and prevent run-off. They help recharge the groundwater essential to lake health. They absorb and sequester CO2. They restore native habitat for native bees, butterflies, birds, and more! Once established, these hardy perennials won't need water or replanting. They will provide long-term benefits to Lake Ripley. All plant orders are due by March 25th, 2022.

## ALL HANDS ON DECK!

The Lake District Preserve was created to benefit Lake Ripley, but it has also become a pleasant place for people to enjoy being outdoors. Walking the trail through the blooming prairie, you might not be wondering whose hands are taking care of this place! We want you to know – we welcome volunteers! Tasks range from "heavy duty" (like chain-sawing) to "medium duty" (like lopping) to "light duty" (like collecting seeds). Most tasks are seasonal and weather dependent. It's not that we aren't doing tasks already, it's that many hands would make light work! For example, when 8 students and their teacher from Koshkonong Trails helped us lop willow saplings that were encroaching on our prairie trail, in two hours they accomplished what would have taken two of us more than a day.



Do you have time to give to our beautiful Preserve? We would greatly appreciate your help! Bring your best friend, too! It is pleasant and fun to work with others in a place we all cherish. If this sounds like the opportunity you've been waiting for, please call the Lake Manager (608-423-4537) and let her know what sorts of tasks you would most enjoy!

## WE ALL WANT A HEALTHY LAKE

We all want a healthy lake with good water quality. A healthy lake depends on a lake-friendly watershed. Before 1840, Lake Ripley's watershed was all natural ecosystems that absorbed rainfall and recharged the groundwater: wetlands, prairies, savannas, and woodlands. At that time water quality in the lake was excellent.

Since then, this watershed has filled up with roofs and other impermeable surfaces that create run-off every time it rains. That run-off has resulted in water quality problems in the lake. The good news is, being part of the problem also means we can be part of the solution! Here are a few things to consider:

- The run-off connection: When it rains, does run-off stay in your yard, or does it flow unhindered to the lake? It is best if no run-off reaches the lake. Landscaping intentionally to protect the lake is possible. Raingardens, appropriately placed and designed, are effective run-off absorbers, as are buffer gardens between lawn and lake. Prevent soil erosion by mulching gardens and/or by protecting temporarily bare soil during a project. Something as simple as re-directing a downspout so it waters a garden rather than sending run-off down the driveway is a lake-friendly action! Preventing run-off from leaving your yard is a very effective solution to this problem. The District can help with professional advice, our cost-share program, and our native plant sale.
- The native aquatic plant connection: Did you know that our native aquatic plant community contributes greatly to good water quality? They are actually our best teammates to achieve the goal of a healthy lake with good water quality. They reduce excess nutrients in the water. They stabilize the lake bottom. They create essential habitat. They protect shorelines from erosion. To support and protect these natural helpers, always obey the slow-no-wake out to 200' ordinance. Speeding near shore uproots aquatic plants and stirs up the lake bottom, sending nutrients and sediment up into the water column. Where possible, always use the new community navigational lanes to open water, created by our new weed harvesting permit. Driving through plant beds creates nuisance prop-chop, which becomes a water quality problem when it decomposes. Rake prop-chop out of the lake and use it as compost or mulch, where its nutrients are helpful. Support the full hours of slow-no wake. You have the chance to extend your slow-no-wake hours by enjoying the lake by paddle power!

## A DECADE'S WORTH OF WORK

The management plans have finally been published!! The 10-Year Lake Management Plan and the 10-Year Preserve Management Plan are both complete; hard copies of both plans are available at the District. The District has been working diligently on completing these two plans since 2019.

The 10-year Lake Management Plan details the goals that the District has created for the next 10-years to continue protecting Lake Ripley and its watershed. The plan is filled with information about the lake's history, water quality, lake-use, aquatic plants, and fishery. The Preserve Management Plan focuses on our 207-acre Preserve, the restoration efforts over the years, and the management goals we have set for each work zone.

Within both of these plans are specific actions that elaborate how we intend to accomplish each of the goals. This amount of work will take dedication from our employees, board members, and our residents. Volunteers will be critical to getting all of our goals accomplished over the next 10-years! We are excited for these plans to be available to our residents – so stop out to the office and pick one up today!



Are you or someone you know the president of your Homeowners Association? If yes, please send your contact information to our Lake Manager at [Ripley@oaklandtown.com](mailto:Ripley@oaklandtown.com). The District is working on updating our contact list for all of the Homeowners Associations around Lake Ripley so we can send you new and updated information!

Be sure to visit, to LIKE and FOLLOW our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/LRMDLS2020](https://www.facebook.com/LRMDLS2020)

Go check out our website [www.lakeripley.org](http://www.lakeripley.org) for more information on the Lake District!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

