

The Newsletter of the Lawrence Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District

Larry Lake

Issue No. 4, July 2024



CONTENTS

Welcome

Future Dates to Remember

Lawrence Lake - A History: Until 1933

Meteorite Craters in Wisconsin

WELCOME

This is the fourth issue of *Larry Lake*, the Newsletter of the Lawrence Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District. The purpose of this Newsletter is to bring information to Lawrence Lake district members on the activities of the District and its mission to improve and protect the quality of Lawrence Lake.

Please help send this newsletter to all property owners at Lawrence Lake.

Forward this newsletter to your neighbors!

If you have a photo from around or on the lake that you would like published in this Newsletter, please email them to mhelmi@astound.net. Each Newsletter will feature a new photo at the beginning of the Newsletter and recognize the photographer. Please note that there cannot be any identifiable faces in the photos to be published.

This issue's opening photograph was taken by Michael Helminski.

FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

Next Lake District Board Meetings

Save the Date -- Annual Meeting
July 13, 2024 at 9 am.
Westfield Town Hall
W7703 Ember Ave, Westfield

All District owners are invited to attend.
Followed immediately by the Annual
Picnic
Pioneer Park
316 E. Pioneer Road, Westfield

Lawrence Lake: A History (until 1933)

Lawrence Lake Basics

Location: Marquette County, Westfield Township, Wisconsin.

220 acres with a maximum depth of 14 feet, mean depth of 8 feet¹ and 6.87 miles of shoreline.²

Length of 1.78 miles and maximum width of 0.42 miles³

Flowage lake created by a dam which is fed by Lawrence Creek, several small unnamed creeks and a large but unknown number of springs along its shoreline and in the lakebed.

Early Wisconsin and Marquette County History

The area known as Wisconsin was first inhabited by various Native American tribes. The Chippewa, Menominee, Oneida, Potawatomi and Ho Chunk (Winnebago) tribes lived in the area until the late 1800s. The first European explorer to reach Wisconsin was Jean Nicolet (a prominent French explorer) who was searching for the Northwest Passage to China, he arrived in the Green Bay region in 1634.⁴

France laid claim to Wisconsin as part of its territory in the New World in 1672.⁵

Father Jacques Marquette, the French Jesuit explorer who, along with his companion Sieur Joliet, passed through this region in 1673. That year, Father Marquette wrote, "The river on which we embarked is called Meskousing. It's very wide, it has a sandy bottom." This name was used to describe the region surrounding the river and over time the spelling changed to become "Wisconsin".⁶

In 1763, Wisconsin was part of the territory ceded by France to Great Britain in the Treaty of Paris which ended the French and Indian War with Great Britain. Twenty years later, again at Paris, after the Revolutionary War, the British relinquished their claims with the new United States of America which included the area called Wisconsin. In 1787, under the Northwest Ordinance, Wisconsin became part of the great territory north and west of the Ohio River out of which Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were created.⁷

The first settler in what will eventually become Marquette County was Luther Gleason who established a Native American trading post near the southeast end of Lake Puckaway in 1829.⁸

In 1836, the Wisconsin territory was organized, which included what are now the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and parts of the Dakotas.⁹

Marquette County was created in 1836 when it was set off from Brown County. Marquette County was named in honor of Father Jacques Marquette who first explored the area 163 years earlier. The county

¹ WDNR Lake Survey Map, Lawrence Lake, Marquette County, May 1966.

² WDNR website.

³ As measured on Marquette County GIS Hub.

⁴ Wisconsin: A Very Brief History, Wisconsin Historical Society, www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2909.

⁵ Wisconsin: A Very Brief History.

⁶ Wisconsin: A Very Brief History.

⁷ Wisconsin: A Very Brief History.

⁸ Historical Essay, Marquette County, Wisconsin Historical Society website: wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS10272#

⁹ Wisconsin: A Very Brief History.

was celebrated for its good lands, deep lakes, fine water powers, and its industrious and thrifty inhabitants¹⁰. The County's population was 18 in 1840, 59 in 1842, 986 in 1846, and 2,264 in 1847.¹¹

In 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state to be accepted into the Union.

In 1852 a portion of Marquette County was divided off to form Waushara County and in 1858 the County was again reduced in size when a portion of it was used to form Green Lake County.

The first settlement within the limits of the present county was in the town of Buffalo, by H. F. Owen and J. I. O'Blanis, in the spring of 1848. The first schoolhouse in the county was built soon afterward. The coming of the first steamboat up the Fox river in 1851 was hailed with enthusiasm as the pioneer of progress and civilization. By 1878, the county had greatly benefitted by the improvement of navigation upon the Fox River. Further progress is demonstrated by the industries being formed within the county. Neenah creek runs through Oxford, Douglas Center and Briggsville, with improved mill privileges in each town. The Montello River furnishes power for mills and factories at Lawrence¹², Westfield, Harrisville and Montello. The Mecan drives one mill at Germania, and White creek supplies a mill and foundry at Neshkoro. At that time, the chief exports of the county were wheat, corn, rye, pork, butter and cranberries, together with the products of the various factories. The southern division of the Wisconsin Central railroad, which extends from Stevens Point to Portage, passes through the western townships of this county (including Westfield). It was completed in 1876, and revived industries and quickened activity within the county.¹³

The Marquette County area was surveyed in 1851 by the federal government and settlers in the area around what would become Lawrence Lake began receiving land patents¹⁴ in the 1850s. These individuals included: Solomon Bowen (buried in the Oak Hill cemetery on Hwy A toward Oxford), Michael Fritz (buried in Riverside Cemetery), George Bowen (Solomon's son)¹⁵, George Wood, Henry Wood, Joshua Guppy, and Julian Worden.

The first Lawrence dam

In a 1951 Application and Hearing before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin a brief history of the dams forming Lawrence Lake was provided. This history included: "That the dam was first constructed as a mill dam in about 1845 and was operated as such until 1926 when it was acquired by Gust Dahlke for the production of electric power."¹⁶

¹⁰ Historical Essay, CS10272#

¹¹ Historical Essay, CS10272#.

¹² Originally, Lawrence and Westfield Creeks were all named as a part of the Montello River.

¹³ Marquette County, Wisconsin Maps and Written History (as of 1878), From: Illustrated historical Atlas of Wisconsin compiled and published by Synder, Van Veechten & Co., Milwaukee 1878.
<http://www.formycousins.com/1878atlas-Marquette.html#history>.

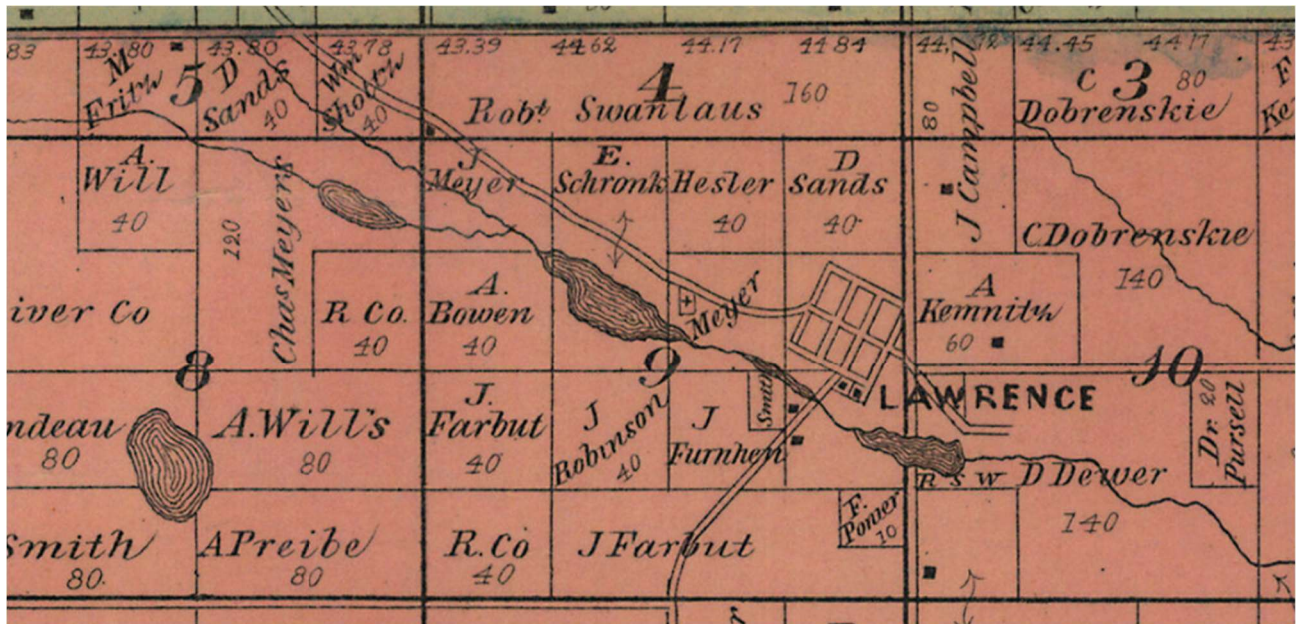
¹⁴ A Land Patent is a form whereby official ownership of a particular tract of land which has gone through various legally proscribed processes – such as surveying and documentation, followed by the letters signing, sealing, and publishing in public records – made by the government, and in these instances signed by the then President of the United States.

¹⁵ Biographical Sketch of Cyrus B. Thomas, Portrait and Biographical Album of Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara Counties, Wisconsin, published in 1890 by Acme Publishing Co., Chicago Pages 544-545

¹⁶ Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Investigation on Motion of the Commission to Determine the Maximum Level of the Pond behind the Lawrence Dam in Duck Creek, Marquette County, 2-WP-820, March 21, 1951.

In 1856, Aaron Chesbro built a flour mill on the creek at Lawrence.¹⁷ It is Mr. Chesbro and Joseph Bell who requested a survey for the Town of Lawrence which was platted in 1857.¹⁸

The 1876 map of Marquette County, a portion of which is shown below, shows mill ponds, the Riverside cemetery (box with a cross in it), early landowners and the plat of the town of Lawrence.¹⁹



In 1893, C. E. Pierce built a new flour mill in Lawrence.²⁰ The adjoining photo from 1908 shows the mill.

¹⁷ Volume I, Places and Faces in Marquette County, Fran Sprain, page 56.

¹⁸ Volume I, Places and Faces in Marquette County, Fran Sprain, page 41 and 56.

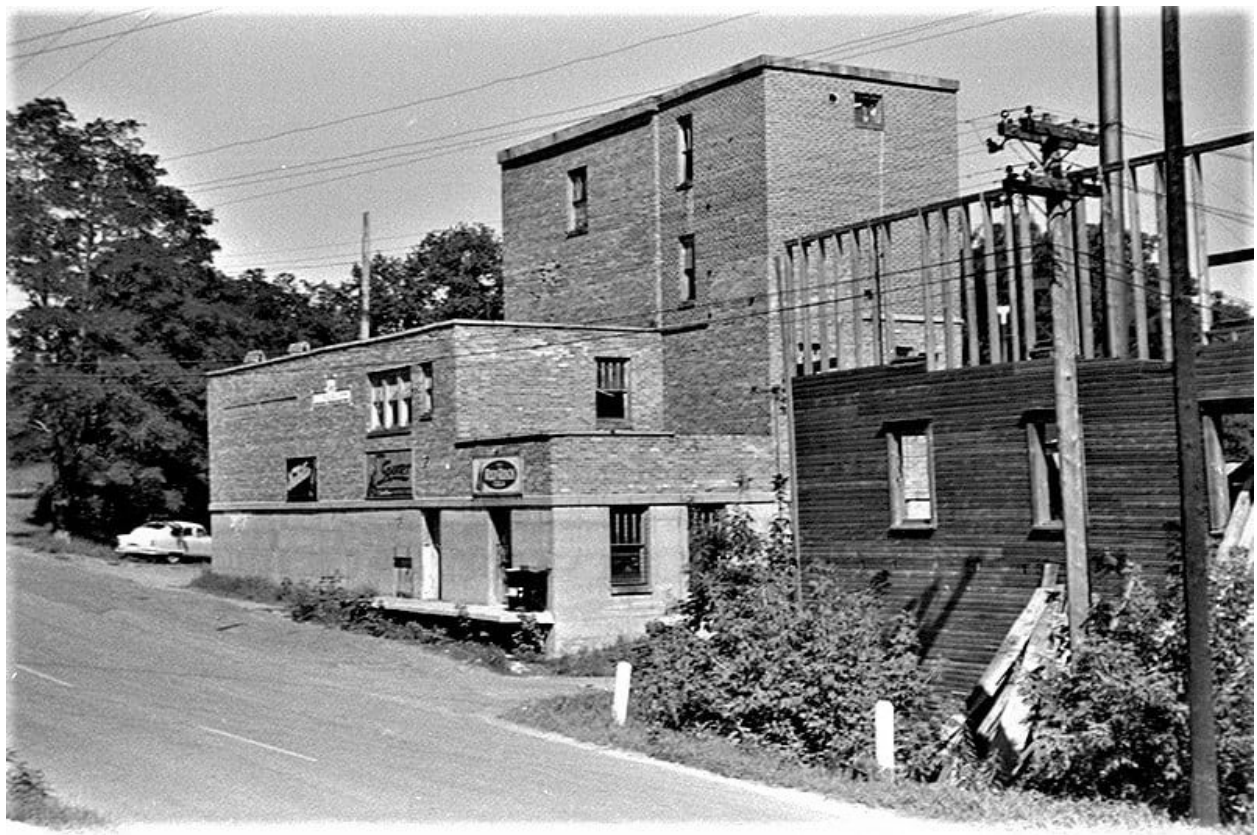
¹⁹ Marquette County Map, 1876.

²⁰ Volume I, Places and Faces in Marquette County, Fran Sprain, page 57.

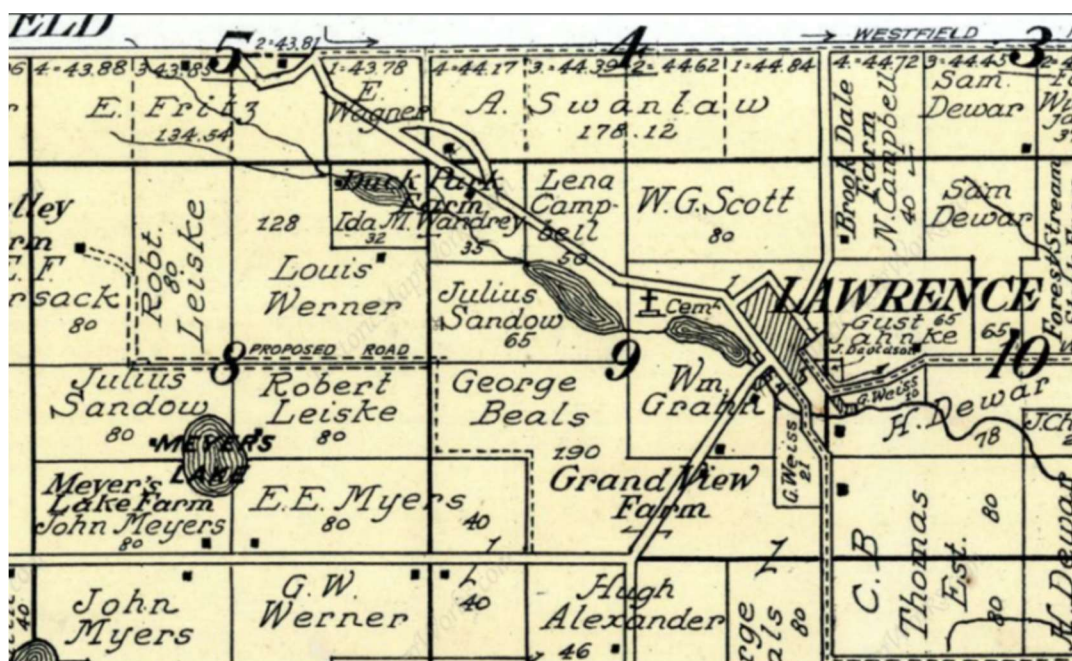
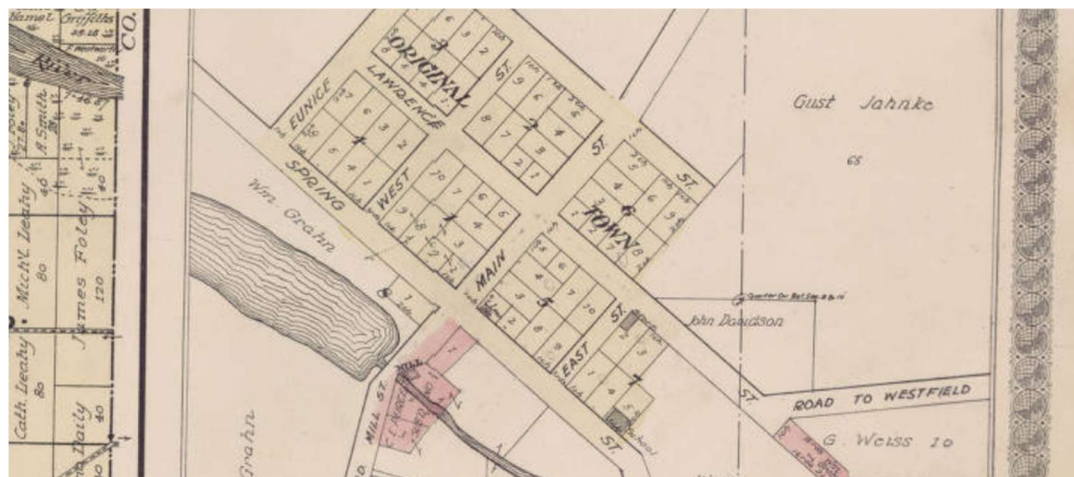
The photo below shows the mill, dam and spillway also in 1908



I have included the following photo since it shows where the mill was in relation to the brewery.



The Marquette County plat book of 1909, a portion of which is shown below, shows the town of Lawrence, the lake, dam and mill. As you can tell from the map, most of the platted town of Lawrence was never developed



This portion of a 1919 map shows a farm owned by Ida M. Wandrey's farm (upper center) spanning the creek and a pond. Ida's son Sam and his wife Evelyn inherited the farm from Ida. Interesting that it shows "Duck Park Farm" in the same area of the map. Could this be the impetus for the change in name from Montello River to Duck Creek? (See previous Newsletter for the article on the History of Lawrence Creek).

Another interesting thing to note is Meyer's Lake in the lower left quadrant. In this 1919 map the lake is surrounded by John Myers, E.E. Myers, Robert Leiske and Julius Sandow. In the 1965²¹ and 1975²² Marquette County plat books the name of this lake had changed to Leiske Lake. This name change occurred even though a "Meyers" still owned land bordering it. I remember it being Leiske Lake when I

²¹ Atlas & Plat Book Marquette County Wisconsin 1965, Rockford Map Publishers.

²² Atlas & Plat Book Marquette County Wisconsin 1975, Rockford Map Publishers.

started coming up in the mid-1980s. Currently this lake is now Sandow Lake (even though no Sandow name is shown on plat books going back to 70 years)!

In 1919 based upon the above map, Lawrence Lake still looked nothing like it does now. This was all about to change.

In a 1951 Application and Hearing before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin the following summarized the history of Gust Dahlke and Pioneer Power related to the Lawrence Lake Dam²³:

“[The dam] was first constructed in about 1845 as a mill dam. In 1926 the property was purchased by Gust Dahlke for \$15,000 . . . The Pioneer Power and Light Company was organized in 1928 and . . . improved the Lawrence dam by constructing a new dam, powerhouse, and facilities . . . in 1930.”

The new dam was constructed to allow the level of the water behind it to be raised up from its previous level for hydroelectric power, this caused flooding of marsh and cropland bordering the creek, creating Lawrence Lake. The lake was stocked with northern pike, largemouth bass and panfish.²⁴

Sam and Evelyn Wandry owned a 67 acre farm along Duck Creek (as Lawrence Creek was known before the 1950s). Sam’s family had owned the land since 1886. Before the dam could be rebuilt in 1930 to allow more water to be held to produce more power, the Dahlke’s had to purchase the land that would be flooded after the lake level rose. The Wandry’s sold all but 15 acres of their land to the Dahlke’s so that the rest of the farm could be flooded. Ida’s son Sam and his wife Evelyn founded the predecessor of Tall Pines Resort on this remaining part of the farm in 1945.²⁵

Although the dam was finished in 1930 it wasn’t until 1933 that the actual flooding began once all the land was purchased and cleared. As a result of the Dahlke’s needing to purchase the land to create the lake, the Dahlke family also owned most of the land surrounding the lake.

By Michael E. Helminski © 2024

Next Larry Lake Newsletter: Lawrence Lake truly takes shape in “**Lawrence Lake: A History (1934 - 1986)**”

²³ Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Investigation on Motion of the Commission to Determine the Maximum Level of the Pond behind the Lawrence Dam in Duck Creek, Marquette County, 2-WP-820, March 21, 1951.

²⁴ Lake Tides, Vol. 13, No. 4, Autumn 1988.

²⁵ Best of Times Remembered on Lawrence Lake, Sara Kuhl, Daily Register, 1987 (interview of Evelyn Wandry).

Meteorite Craters in Wisconsin

This spring, while I was reading about Wisconsin's unique geologic sites, I discovered that Wisconsin has large meteor impact craters. One is in Pierce County and is called the Rock Elm Disturbance.

The Rock Elm Disturbance was created around 465 to 475 million years ago, when a shallow ocean covered much of what is now Wisconsin. The Rock Elm meteorite plowed through the shallow ocean and slammed into the earth at a speed of close to 70,000 miles/hour.

The force of the impact created a 4-mile-wide crater. The impact blew water, sediment, and rock high into the sky. The center of the crater rebounded from the initial impact, sucking up rock from 1000 feet below the surface. Disrupted rock, sediment, and water slopped back in, depositing broken material around the edges of the new hole.

In the millions of years following the impact, as much as 800 feet of sediment was deposited and subsequently eroded. Much of the original evidence from the impact has been stripped away. Still, the jumble of rocks points to a violent moment in their history.

To a geologist, the site in east-central Pierce County forms a striking circle that is 4 miles across. (To the casual observer, the features are much less apparent.) Rocks immediately outside the impact area consist of an undisturbed, flat layer of dolomite. These rocks are estimated to be around 472 to 488 million years old. The area inside the circle can best be described as a mess. There are two distinct zones: the upraised center and the basin ring surrounding it.

The upraised center is an oval shape that's 0.5 miles wide by 1.5 miles long and 180 to 200 feet above the lowest level of the feature's floor. The center is composed of breccia (rocks containing fragments of other rocks) along with scattered blocks of sandstone. The sandstone was sucked up from deep below the surface immediately following the impact and dates back to 500 million years old, making it about 25 million years older than the other material in the area. Outside the upraised central area lies the basin ring. The ring is also filled with a layer of shale and sandstone sediment that's 150-feet deep and dates back to 461 to 472 million years old.

How did scientists determine when the meteorite struck? They can tell a lot by looking at the rocks. The age of the rocks gives geologists clues to when the meteorite strike could have occurred. In this case, because blocks of dolomite were scattered along the edge of the basin, we know they were present when the meteorite struck. Thus, the meteorite can't be any older than 472 to 488 million years old.

The next clue was the age of the sediment filling the bottom of the basin. The oldest undisturbed sediment in the basin marks the youngest possible age of the impact. The oldest shale and sandstone sediment dates back to between 461 and 472 million years old.

The meteorite, then, would likely have struck between 465 and 475 million years ago.

Glover Bluff Impact Structure

Now that we have some background on meteor craters and how we identify and age them, there is another meteorite impact structure in Wisconsin and this one is very close to Lawrence Lake.

Glover Bluff, nicknamed Mystery Hill by generations of UW geology students, is located in northern Marquette County, 4 miles south of Coloma. As with Rock Elm, no meteorite was ever found. Instead, we have evidence of a circular impact area that's approximately 5 miles across with steeply tilted faulting and complexly jumbled rock layers. Additionally, rare specimens of dolomite displaying shatter cones have been found on the site. Shatter cones are attributed to very high-velocity impacts.

The Glover Bluff impact is estimated to be between about 485 and 260 million years ago.

The impact site was first observed in 1918. The Glover Bluff impact site is among the least studied in the



world, in part because for over a century the uplifted central area has been actively quarried for dolomite, limiting access and removing portions of the central uplift zone. However, the quarry provides a view of the structures within the center uplift. As such, this location provides an untapped research opportunity, and the quarries provide a potentially significant advantage to researchers

In this aerial view of the crater impact site you can see the light color due to the active quarry at the center. The crater edge is shown by the red circle and Lawrence lake is just below and slightly to the left under the

bottom edge of the crater. By Michael E. Helminski © 2023.

References:

1. <https://wgnhs.wisc.edu/wisconsin-geology/meteorites/>
2. <http://craterexplorer.ca/glover-bluff-impact-structure/>
3. [https://impactcraters.us/glover bluff wisconsin](https://impactcraters.us/glover_bluff_wisconsin)