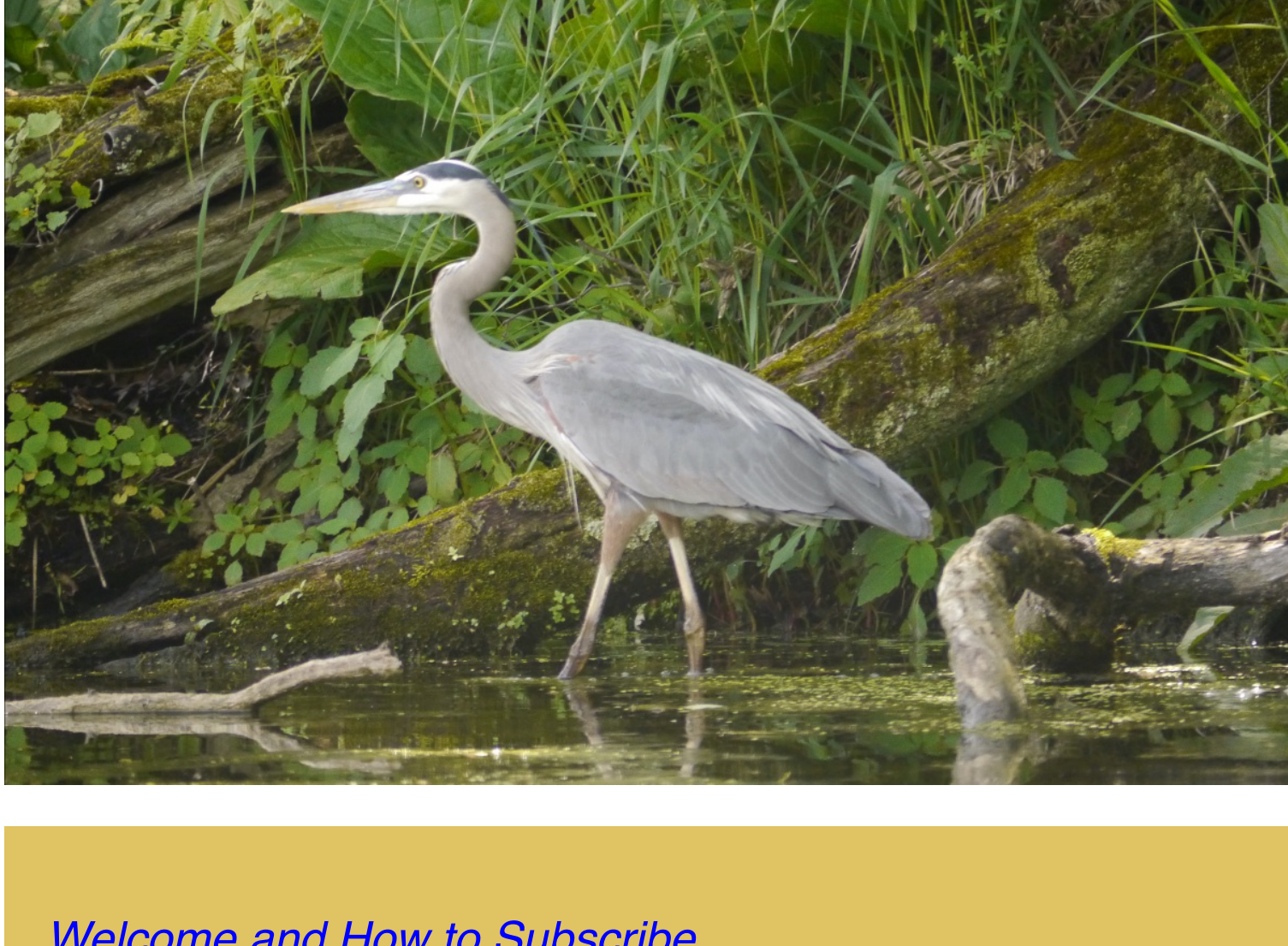


Larry Lake



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[Welcome and How to Subscribe](#)

Welcome to the first issue of *Larry Lake*, the free Newsletter of the Lawrence Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District. The purpose of this Newsletter is to bring information to Lawrence Lake owners on the activities of the District and its mission to improve and protect the quality of Lawrence Lake.

Please help us send this newsletter to all property owners at Lawrence Lake. Forward this newsletter to your neighbors, and ask them to subscribe using the following link:

[I would like to subscribe to Larry Lake, the free Newsletter of the Lawrence Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District](http://eepurl.com/huzU9P)

If the link is inoperable, then copy the following URL and paste it into your browser

<http://eepurl.com/huzU9P>

[What is The Lawrence Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District?](#)

Not everyone knows what the District is. Does it own the dam or the public landings? Is it a not-for-profit organization like a Scout Troop? Is it part of the Lawrence Lake Sportsman Club?

The District is actually an autonomous unit of local government, like a city or school district. In 1973, at the beginning of the modern environmental movement, the Wisconsin State Legislature authorized the creation of Lake Protection and Rehabilitation Lake Districts by State statute (20 Wis. Stat. Chap. 33.21-33.37). The Wisconsin DNR and University of Wisconsin Extension did a joint study which recognized that local governments did not pay sufficient attention to lakes -- no single lake is important enough to be considered by a county board, and most voters do not live on lakes. At the time, there were voluntary associations of lakefront owners (such as the Lawrence Lake Sportsman Club) who were trying to address problems on their lakes, but they lacked the necessary legal structure and resources to do the job.

So the Lake Protection and Rehabilitation Lake Districts came about, and ours was created in 1987, when the earthen dam was replaced with a concrete dam. There are about 350 land parcels in the District, owned by about 268 land owners.

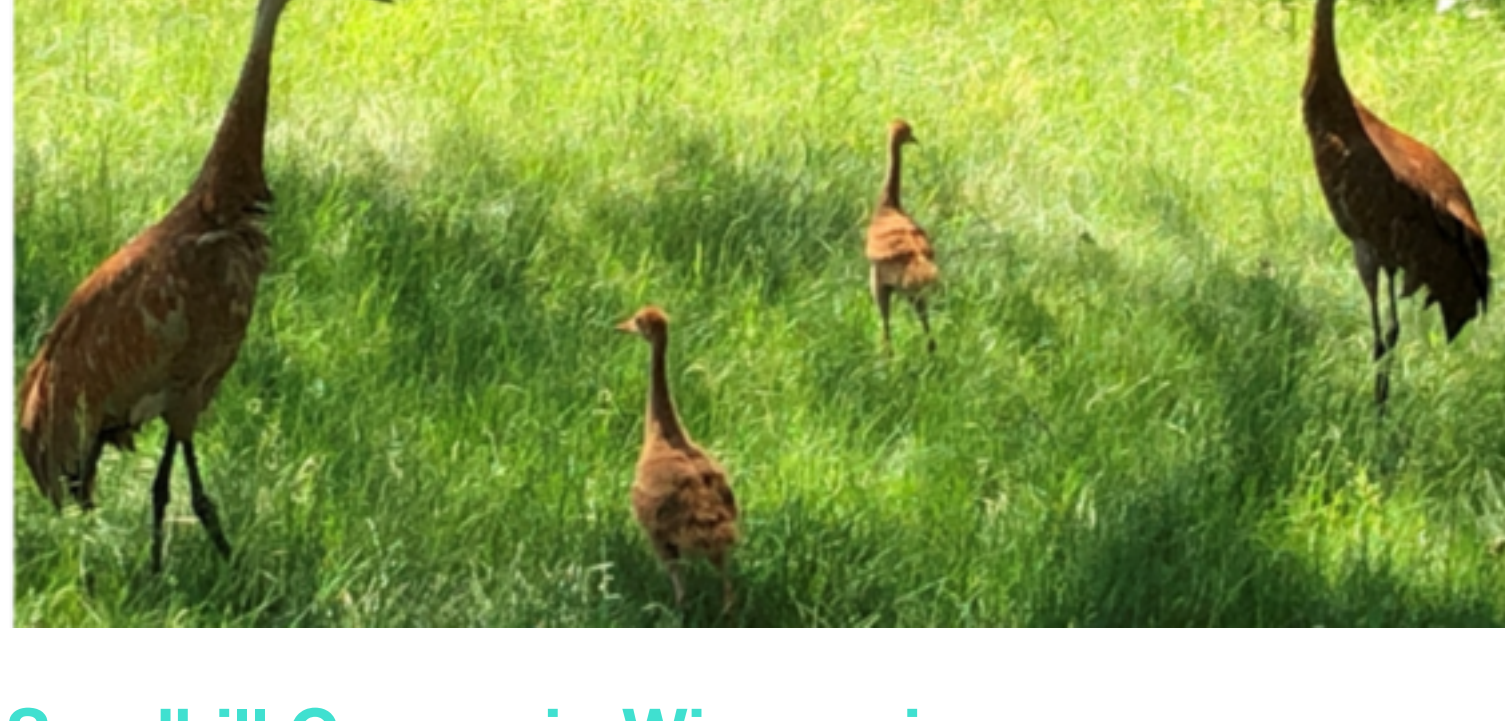
The District is governed by a Board of Commissioners of five persons. By State statute, one is selected by Marquette County (he is John Bennett, Marquette County Board Supervisor), and one is selected by the Town of Westfield (he is Alex Slowey, Westfield Township Supervisor). The other three Commissioners are elected by District landowners at the Annual Meeting of the District. They are Ray Kolak, Chair (elected by the Board after the Annual Meeting to serve a one-year term); Sharon Galonski, Secretary; and Jim Brossman, Treasurer.

The District has the authority to perform research and surveys regarding the Lake; plan protection and rehabilitation projects; ask for local governments to adopt ordinances to protect the Lake; maintain liaison with local governments; hold the Annual Meeting; and prepare the annual budget for the District. The District can enter into contracts, sue and be sued, accept gifts and transfers of property, disburse money, and borrow money for an authorized project. The District owns the dam.

The District also has the power to levy property taxes against District land owners. By State statute, taxes can be imposed by a millage rate against the equalized value of real estate in the District, not to exceed 2.5 mills (equivalent to 0.25%), or by flat rate special assessments. The District uses flat rate special assessments, and for 2020, lake front owners paid \$135.00 per year, off the lake owners \$67.50 per year, business owners \$237.50 per year, and parcels owned by governmental bodies (like the Town of Westfield and the DNR) paid nothing. The north and south boat docks are owned by the Town of Westfield, not by the District.

The District's annual budget is about \$25,000. In recent years, the District's main activities have been to perform safety studies and maintenance on the dam, contract for weed control on the Lake, study the silt problem, and hold the annual picnic. For more information on the District, visit the District's useful website which can be found [here](#).

— Ray Kolak



[Sandhill Cranes in Wisconsin](#)

Lawrence Lake is home to at least one pair of sandhill cranes a year and they typically have two colts each season.

Sandhill cranes are tall tan or gray with wingspans up to seven feet. Males and females look alike. They eat plant tubers, grains, small mammals, amphibians (e.g., frogs), reptiles (e.g., snakes), and insects.

While flying it is easy to distinguish a crane from a heron because cranes fly with their neck outstretched. In addition, the sandhill crane's bugling call can be heard echoing across the lake.

Sandhill cranes migrate in fall and spring to and from Florida where they spend the winter months. They return from Florida in March. Cranes select a mate when they are 4-years old and live as many as 25 to 30 years with the same mate. They build a nest near open water in a grassy area. The nest is made with piles of grasses and can be up to 5 feet wide. Females will lay one or two eggs in the nest and both birds will incubate them. Colts are born in mid-May and can fly by mid-July.

Historically, the sandhill crane bred throughout North America. However, over hunting and habitat changes in the 18th and 19th centuries led to near elimination of these cranes from many parts of its breeding range. The sandhill crane disappeared from Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, Ohio and Indiana (all before 1930). In Wisconsin, the sandhill crane was reduced to an estimated 25 breeding pairs in the 1930's. Since that time hunting regulations and habitat protection efforts have helped the sandhill crane populations recover. It is estimated that Wisconsin had 100,000 sandhill cranes in 2020.

-- Mike Helminski



[Why You Should Plant a Prairie Garden](#)

When my wife Dayle and I bought land on the Lake and had a log cabin built in 2010, I told her that I wanted the place to be as maintenance-free as possible. In particular, I did not want to have to spend the first hour or two after arriving at the cabin mowing acres of lawn. I wanted to spend that time on the Lake!

Most of our property is wooded, but the area around the cabin was cleared. What to plant there? We settled on prairie plantings, consisting of native wildflowers and grasses once common to central Wisconsin. Our seed package had 18 different wildflowers, including Lavender Hyssop, Columbine, Blue False Indigo, Purple Coneflower, Sweet Joe Pye Weed, Bergamot, Black Eyed Susan, Jack in the Pulpit, Milkweed, and many others.

Progress was slow for the first two or three years. The plants, all perennials, grew at a gradual pace, and some seeds took two or even three years in the soil before sprouting. But after three years, the garden was well developed and in a healthy state. We love it. Why?

- Very low maintenance, as advertised. With prairie plantings, you mow only once during the year, in the Spring, when the buds open on sugar maples. Mowing is done down to the ground, which kills weeds then growing, but allows the wildflowers (yet to emerge at that time) access to light and air. No need to use fertilizers or other weed control. No other maintenance of any kind.
- Beauty. A prairie garden is not like a lawn, all uniform and one shade of green. It takes a while to learn to appreciate prairie plantings, which are of various heights, colors, and textures. The wildflowers are tiny and delicate. The blooms change over the spring, summer, and fall, giving a variety to our landscape.
- Helps the environment. Our prairie plants all have deep roots, which hold the soil tight. Since we do not use fertilizer or weed control, there is no run-off of fertilizer or herbicide to the Lake. We are helping to preserve a diverse gene pool of plants.
- Butterflies! We have a lot of Milkweed in our garden, which attracts Monarch butterflies. I have seen more Monarchs in the past few years than I have seen in my lifetime. The garden also attracts birds and bees in large numbers.

We have one of the pioneering nursery houses for prairie plants right in Westfield in Prairie Nursery. We bought our seed there. For more information, visit [Prairie Nursery](#).

— Ray Kolak

