

WAUPACA CHAIN O'LAKES ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 169, King, WI 54946

www.waupacachainolakesassociation.com

chainolakesassociation@gmail.com



Dedicated to preserving these unique spring-fed lakes and their surrounding environment for present and for future generations of residents and visitors.



SPRING 2020

MONEY WELL SPENT

Each year the Association awards a small scholarship to a graduating senior selected by the Waupaca High School Scholarship Foundation who plans to attend a two year technical college or four year university to pursue a degree in the field of Natural Resources/Environmental Studies. The Association checked in with two recent recipients who prove the Association's \$1,000 contribution to each of their studies was a great investment in the future.

Ian Vierck (2016 recipient) thanked the Association for reaching out and reported that he is in his last semester at UW-Stevens Point and will graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in Urban Forestry and a minor in Biology (emphasis in botany).



Ian has received an extensive education in natural resources, getting experiences with wildlife management, soil and water conservation, and forest management. He will soon be a certified forester and is working on a paper he hopes will be published by the Torrey Botanical Society. Ian is currently in the process of applying to graduate schools for Landscape Architecture, hoping to focus on bioremediation. Ian stated that the generosity of the members from the Chain O' Lakes Association has really gone a long way.



Ian has received an extensive education in natural resources, getting experiences with wildlife management, soil and water conservation, and forest management. He will soon be a certified forester and is working on a paper he hopes will be published by the Torrey Botanical Society. Ian is currently in the process of applying to graduate schools for Landscape Architecture, hoping to focus on bioremediation. Ian stated that the generosity of the members from the Chain O' Lakes Association has really gone a long way.

Violet Thielke (2017 recipient) thanked the Association for what it did for her and what it does for many others' futures and reported that she is continuing to pursue her bachelor's degree in Forestry Management at UW-Stevens Point and expects to graduate in spring of 2021. She is currently taking extra forestry classes on weekends and is enrolled in a weeklong training course over spring break that together will qualify her to receive a Timber Marketing Certificate. Violet also plans to add courses to her schedule next year to add a Business minor to her degree. This coming summer she will be doing an internship as a forestry intern, leaning towards an opportunity in a seedling and sapling nursery setting. Violet expressed her hopes that all of these experiences will assist her in standing out when she applies for permanent positions in the next few years. While Violet was too humble to tell us, the Association also learned that during her sophomore year at UWSP, Violet was awarded a \$5,000 Forestry Leader Scholarship from the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association. Violet relayed that she continues to be extremely grateful for the Chain O'Lakes Association's generosity in contributing to her education, which is something she holds very dear.



Best wishes to these two outstanding young people! If you know a Waupaca High senior planning to pursue environmental studies, encourage them to contact the Waupaca High School Scholarship Foundation.

A MESSAGE FROM SHARON

Greetings!

Sometimes one needs to step back or experience other places to fully appreciate where we live. I enjoy traveling yet usually return feeling like there's no place like home. However, the question "what if?" has crept in. For instance, this morning's paper contained issues regarding setback, environmentally critical zones, parking, branding, fertilizing, etc. Was this the Waupaca County Post? No, it's the local paper for Fort Myers Beach.

All around the country there are people trying to do the right thing sharing concerns regarding water quality, zoning, local government, and economic stability. Have you ever considered what would happen if something went awry at the Chain? A community that depends on its natural resources struggles to survive if that resource is compromised. Vacationers cancel resulting in a negative effect on local restaurants, shops and real estate values. Appearances can be deceiving. Water looks clean until the moment it isn't.

As property owners we've made an emotional and financial commitment in the Waupaca area. As stakeholders we should be proprietors of those investments. Our financial advisors aren't anonymous; neither should be our local government officials. If an organization were to ask you for a \$10,000 plus donation you would raise questions. Do you feel you are benefiting from your taxes or merely a source of county income? We are where we are, but where are we going? Have a friendly conversation with your Town chairperson and two town supervisors, possibly attend a meeting. Reach out to the supervisors on the County Board, they are the overseers and decision makers.

A wise person once said, "Identify your problems but give your power and energy to solutions." Let's make a pact this year to be alert and nurture this gem with parental protection. It's the Association's mission to uphold "In all the world there are no lakes like these."

Sharon Peterson
President

MEMBERSHIP FORMS

For your convenience, the enclosed membership forms have been personalized to include your membership information and directory information for publication in the Who's Hoo. Kindly review the information for accuracy and indicate any changes on the form and return in the envelope provided. The form also lets you know whether your membership is up for renewal this year or in a future year. If your membership form says "Your dues are paid in full" any checks sent to the Association will be considered a charitable contribution for the year in which they are given and the amount will not be applied to extend the length of the membership. Please circle any information, other than mailing addresses, you do not wish to be included in the Who's Hoo directory.

NAME/ADDRESS ARROW SIGNS

Over the last few years, the Sign Committee has replaced and updated all of the name/address sign boards. A special thanks to John Hebring for all his efforts on this project. If you are a new member who needs a sign, kindly complete the bottom of the membership form. There is one sign listing per Chain property. Sign listings can be either: 1) last name only; 2) one initial and a last name (this is the way most signs are currently); or 3) two last names separated by a /.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

Become active in the Association! There are many ways you can get involved: join a Committee in your area of interest; or put your name in the pool for folks who might want to serve on the Board of Directors. Send an email to chainolakesassociation@gmail.com or contact Sharon Peterson. There's lots that can be done.

The Association is a 501(c)(3) exempt organization so dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Financial statements are available upon request.

ASSOCIATION EMAIL BLASTS

The Association uses occasional email blasts (one every few months) to communicate with members on a more timely and cost-effective basis. They are meant to be informative and sometimes raise a cautionary flag, alerting you to potential issues. Subjects of the past year's email blasts included: a reminder of the rise in tick-borne illnesses in Waupaca and a link to more information and tips for prevention; a review of Boater Safety Certification requirements and a link to find courses; a report of high water conditions on the Chain and steps to minimize damage; an update on power outages after the July storms and where to get help; communication from the Chairs of Dayton & Farmington on how to handle clean up after the July storms; information on the meeting between the Association's Safety Committee and the Sheriff's Department regarding patrols on the Chain; news on a recent branding and wayfinding initiative being undertaken by the Waupaca Chamber of Commerce that highlights the Chain O'Lakes; and an alert in support of a zoning proposal being put forth by Dayton that would restore the setback from the road for Chain properties to 30 feet rather than the 63 foot from the centerline setback imposed in 2016 that made many properties non-conforming; and notice of an informational meeting and a call to action regarding proposed changes to the Waupaca County zoning ordinances that will allow stand-alone parking lots in certain zoning districts, including around the Chain.

If you have not been receiving these messages, please be sure your email address is included on your membership form or email the Association at chainolakesassociation@gmail.com. You can unsubscribe at any time. If you do not wish your email address to be printed in the Who's Hoo directory, simply circle it on your membership form.

UPDATE ON THE LAKE DISTRICT

The Lake District continues to work with Onterra, LLC to finalize the Comprehensive Management Plan, which will then go to the DNR for review and approval. During the summer of 2019, the District hired a contractor to improve the navigation in the channel between Youngs and Bass Lakes. Vegetation was removed according to DNR regulations.

2019 REAL ESTATE UPDATE

By Dave Shambeau

Per the Multiple Listing Service, there were a total of 25 sales of Chain properties in 2019, which is an increase from 17 sales in 2018. The sale prices ranged from a low of \$329,900 for a house on Otter Lake to a high sale price of \$880,000 on Round Lake. It was the first time in several years that an individual sale price did not exceed \$1 million. There were two sales over \$1 million in 2018, five in 2017 and one in 2016.

During the year, there were 24 homes sold, one condo, and no sales of vacant land on the Chain. A breakdown of sales by lake is as follows:

Columbia Lake	4
Long Lake	4
Sunset Lake	3
Otter Lake	3
Round Lake	3
Miner Lake	2
Taylor Lake	2
Youngs Lake	1
Nessling Lake	1
Beasley Lake	1
Lake Orlando	1
TOTAL	25

The average selling price dropped to \$527K in 2019 from \$660K in 2018 and \$588K in 2017. In my opinion, this is not a cause for concern, just a small sample size of sales with a different mix of lesser priced properties that became available and sold during the year.

There is currently a real shortage of "affordable" Chain properties available for sale. At this time, the lowest asking price of any of the 12 Chain homes that are for sale is \$580,000 for a home on Columbia Lake in Camp Cleghorn. Four of the twelve properties have asking prices that exceed \$1 million. Several of these properties have been on the market for an extended time period.

There are also currently six vacant land parcels that are available for sale. They have asking prices from \$270,000 to \$1,350,000. At this time last year there were 19 homes available for sale and five lots.

In my opinion, the Chain real estate market is strong with demand (especially for "affordable" properties) exceeding supply. The Chain mirrors national real estate trends with a shortage of inventory for sale at this time.

THE STATE OF THE LAKES

Water, Water Everywhere

By the Association's Water Quality & Safety Committees

According to the National Weather Service, 2019 goes down in the books as the wettest year on record for Wisconsin and the 2nd wettest year on record for Waupaca, with 42.69 inches of rain vs. 33.49 in an average year. The Waupaca record for wettest year was set back in 1936 with 43.26 inches. Since the entire surrounding area has experienced the same wet conditions, the water level on the Chain is the highest in recent history. In fact, readings at the two tributaries to the Chain, Hartman and Emmons Creeks, recorded the largest flow since monitoring began ten years ago. With groundwater and downstream water levels so high, the Chain levels will not naturally subside as quickly as they have in years past.

What does all this water mean? The Chain will likely see considerable shoreline erosion and the risk of flooding is high for the Waupaca area. The National Weather Service in Green Bay announced at the end of January that "Wet Conditions Set the Stage for Elevated Spring Flood Risk."

What can you do to help protect the Chain and minimize erosion?

- Follow existing **SLOW NO WAKE** Laws:
 - All motorboats and personal watercraft (PWC) must go slow no wake within **100 feet** of any swimmer, dock, raft or pier.
 - All motorboats must go **slow no wake within 100 feet of any lake shoreline.**
 - All PWCs must go **slow no wake within 200 feet of any lake shoreline.**
- Voluntarily **limit activities that create large wakes** like wake boarding, wake surfing, water skiing, and tubing.
- Leave and return to your pier at required slow no wake speed and by going straight in and out (perpendicular to the shore), thereby sending less wave action to your shoreline and your neighbor's.
- Go slow no wake whenever possible. If you do go fast, take steps to minimize your wake by reaching plane as quickly and safely as possible.
- The increased erosion and runoff from wave action coming on to the land make it more important than ever to **avoid using any fertilizer** and to **keep a natural buffer of plants** between the water and the land to act as a filter.



Photo courtesy of Bob Dixon

Wisconsin law prohibits passing another boat in a way that creates a hazardous wake or wash and the law states that boat operators are liable for any damage caused to the person or property of another from the wake or wash of a motorboat. With water levels so high, operators must take special care to make sure the boat's wake is not causing damage. Many communities put temporary slow no wake rules in place last summer to address the safety, environmental, and property concerns related to high water levels. Let's hope voluntary actions and drier weather will make such actions unnecessary on the Chain.



THE STATE OF THE LAKES

AND THE SURVEY SAYS...

The DNR periodically surveys fish populations of many Wisconsin lakes, the Chain more often than most as it is considered a high profile body of water. Every four years they target walleyes, northern pike, and panfish with fyke nets, a type of fish trap that consists of a long cylindrical netting bag fixed to the lake bottom that makes entry easy and exit difficult. They also target largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and panfish with electrofishing, a technique that uses electrical stimulus to immobilize fish without harming them, allowing them to be netted. The fish caught are measured then released. The DNR conducted their last survey of the Chain in 2019, shortly after the ice went out. The full survey will not be available until later this year, but a brief summary is below.

Largemouth/smallmouth bass: 338 largemouth bass were captured, a good catch rate indicating a healthy population. Size was also good. The average largemouth bass was 13.5 inches and the biggest was 19 inches. 37 smallmouth bass were captured with an average size of 12.4 inches; the biggest was 18 inches. The DNR has concluded that anglers should be able to catch good numbers of bass in a nice variety of sizes.

Walleye: 72 walleyes were captured, indicating a low-density walleye population. Despite the low-density population, however, walleyes grow large in the Chain! The average size was just over 23 inches, and the biggest over 29 inches. The DNR plans to stock an additional 3,500 large fingerling (approximately 8 inches long) walleyes in fall 2020.

Northern pike: 52 northern pike were captured, a low to moderate catch rate. Size was good as the average northern pike was 22.6 inches, and the biggest was over 34 inches.

Panfish: 274 black crappies and 1,594 bluegills were captured, indicating a healthy panfish population. The sizes of bluegill and black crappie have improved compared to previous surveys, indicating a higher percentage of harvestable size fish. Few, mostly small, yellow perch were captured. The Chain supports a healthy rock bass population, including some very large specimens up to 12 inches.

Additionally, the Chain supports brown trout and cisco because of the deep, cool waters in most of the lakes. The survey did not target these species because special gear and techniques are needed to assess the deeper waters.

Data from fish surveys courtesy of the DNR.

MARVELOUS MARL

By Jim Koeper

The Chain has plenty of hard sand lake bottom, but in parts there's another type of lake bottom. You've probably walked on it at some time or another. It's soft, and it squishes between your toes. It's called marl, and most people are not overly fond of it. But they should be.

Marl is a mixture of sand, limestone, and clay. It is the reason that Chain waters have a high concentration of calcium. And what does the calcium do? Two wonderful things. First, it gives the lakes their beautiful turquoise color. Second...well second is a bit more complicated, but the calcium helps keep the lakes clear and healthy, and the reason has to do with chemistry.

A healthy lake is in balance. Too few nutrients and it is dead, like a backyard pool. Too many, and plant growth may be excessive, leading to algae blooms and low oxygen levels. There are two elements that are primarily responsible for excessive nutrients in a lake: nitrogen and phosphorus. In many Wisconsin Lakes, including the Chain, nitrogen is not as problematic as it could be because phosphorus is the limiting nutrient. In other words, both are essential to plant growth but, luckily for the Chain, phosphorus is not as abundant. And the calcium from the marl is one of the reasons why. The calcium joins with phosphorus, and coprecipitates down to the lake bottom. The marl therefore, acts as a type of buffer, reducing phosphorus concentrations in the lakes and helping to keep the waters healthy.

Marl, of course, can only do so much. As lake stewards we must remain vigilant and battle against introducing excess nutrients into the waters, including nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers and runoff. But, in our efforts to keep the Chain O'Lakes healthy, we have a mostly unheralded ally: marvelous marl!

SAFETY ON THE CHAIN

PATROLLING ON THE CHAIN

The Waupaca County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol reported spending 644.25 on-water hours on the Chain during 2019 (vs. 859.5 in 2018), using 282.5 gallons of fuel at a cost of \$1,108. The decline in patrol hours was attributed to an officer shortage. In addition to the contacts listed below, officers assisted 14 disabled vessels and a total of 62 persons, including someone who had passed out from heat stroke. Officers made 4 arrests for intoxicated operation, resulting in three convictions for Boating Under the Influence and one conviction for refusal to submit to an intoxicated operation test. There was also an arrest made for underage alcohol violations. There were no accidents reported to the Sheriff's Office on the water this past season.

	2019	2018
# of Contacts/Inspections	616	850
Total Citations Issued	31	36
Total Written Warnings	109	80
Total Verbal Warnings	507	550

Citations and warnings were issued most frequently for navigation violations, such as speed, violation of water ski hours, creating unsafe wakes, and careless, negligent and/or reckless operation, as well as for registration violations and for failure to comply with personal flotation device (PFD) requirements.

Reminders from the Water Patrol & DNR Warden:

- All vessels, including canoes, kayaks and paddleboards must have at least 1 wearable life jacket for each person on board. Officers continue to encounter kayakers and paddleboarders without required PFDs.
- Watercraft may not display any blue colored lights as blue lighting is designated for law enforcement use only.

If you have concerns about any Chain activities, contact the **Water Patrol at 715-258-4466**, **DNR Warden Jonathan Kaiser at 715-281-9465** or jonathan.kaiser@wisconsin.gov, or the DNR anonymous tip line, **1-800-TIP-WDNR**. Being able to report registration numbers or having a picture or video of a violating boat is helpful.

Thank you to the Water Patrol Officers and DNR Wardens for their continued efforts to keep the Chain O'Lakes safe!

DRONES: Even the Sky Has Limits

By the Association's Safety Committee

Flying drones (or unmanned aircraft systems as the FAA refers to them) can be a fun and exciting activity. And it is certainly a growing one. It's important that "recreational pilots" know the FAA's rules of the sky that apply to them:

- All drones over 8.8 ounces (250g) - which most are - must be **registered** with the FAA and marked on the outside with the registration number.
- Keep your drone within your **line of sight** and fly at or below 400 feet and only in uncontrolled airspace.
- **Never fly over groups of people, public events, or stadiums.**
- Fly your drone only in **daylight** - between the hours of sunrise and sunset.
- **Never fly near emergencies**, such as any type of accident response, law enforcement activities, firefighting, etc.
- **Never fly under the influence** of drugs or alcohol.

More information, including an upcoming testing requirement for recreational pilots can be found at https://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational_fliers/. More stringent requirements are already in place if the drone is operated for commercial use.

In addition to the FAA, Wisconsin also has state statutes in place relating to drones, including: a presumption of liability on the drone's owner or pilot for damages caused to persons or property on the land or water beneath (WI 114.05); criminal penalties for reckless flying or operating under the influence of drugs or alcohol (WI 114.09); and a provision that it is a Class A misdemeanor to use a drone to observe another individual where the individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy (WI 942.10). The DNR also prohibits drone use interfering with hunting and fishing and drone use is also restricted in state parks.

Also please apply the rules of common sense and respect for your neighbors – the person you're buzzing does not necessarily know who is operating the drone or what the plans are for the video that just captured them on film, which may not feel quite right to them. Be courteous!

JUST SAY NO

There are many reasons to think twice before allowing others to park their boats at your Chain O'Lakes pier. We are all concerned about the safety and environmental consequences of congestion on the beautiful Chain O'Lakes and allowing more boats at your pier only contributes to that congestion. There are also DNR limits as to the number of boat slips allowed on your property, zoning questions, and legal liability issues you might not have considered. Are you liable if someone slips and falls getting in their boat? What if there is damage to the boat from storms or wave action, etc. while it's at your pier? What if your pier is damaged by their boat? What if their boat is not properly insured? If you accept payment for someone to park their boat at your pier, there is a good chance your homeowner's policy will exclude the slip. Then what? Maybe the best idea is just say no.

UPPER CHAIN FISH HABITAT PROJECT

By Jason Breeggemann, DNR

Later this winter, the DNR is hoping to complete a fish and wildlife habitat project along the shore of Marl, Manomin, and Knight lakes within the boundaries of Hartman Creek State Park. The project will consist of dropping trees that are leaning over the water into the lakes as well as repositioning any newly fallen trees along the shore into the water. All trees that are dropped or repositioned along the shore will be anchored in place. All work will be completed by the DNR Wild Rose fisheries habitat crew, led by Shawn Sullivan. The DNR is excited to complete this project as coarse woody habitat is vital for fish and wildlife and is often something that is lacking in a lot of our lakes in this area. Woody habitat provides an additional surface for algae to grow on which attracts small organisms that feed on the algae. Fish then eat these small organisms so it can increase overall fish growth rates. Also, many fish species will spawn on or next to the coarse woody habitat, small fish will hide in the trees to escape predation from larger fish, and larger predatory fish will hide in the trees and use them as cover to ambush food from. Furthermore, coarse woody habitat is also used by a variety of wildlife species including turtles and birds and can help stabilize shorelines, thus increasing overall water quality and lake health.

REMINDERS FROM THE DNR

- You may hand pull or rake only a 30 foot wide area of aquatic plants; however, non-native invasives (like Eurasian Water Milfoil) can be pulled wherever they are found. **BUT all pulled plants must be removed from the water.** The DNR has received complaints that vegetation has been pulled but then left in the water to form clumps and mats on neighboring shorelines. This has been an ongoing concern around the Chain but especially on Dake Lake. Leaving the vegetation in the water can lead to spreading invasive species and conflict with neighbors. So, kindly clean up after yourself.
- If you use an aerator system, the open water created by the aerator must be kept to your riparian zone. It cannot impact the ice on your neighbor's property or create unsafe ice conditions for snowmobilers, fishermen, skaters, etc. If your aerator cannot meet these requirements, you will be required to obtain a miscellaneous structure permit from the DNR. If ice holes are not properly marked, the Sheriff's Office should be contacted.
- There is a new contact list for the DNR:
 - General Intake: general questions and questions on needed permits, etc. DNRWMSPublicInquiry@wisconsin.gov or call 608-267-3125.
 - Enforcement & Compliance Specialist Scott Koehnke: scott.koehnke@wisconsin.gov or 715-526-4232.
 - Waterway Management Specialist: (for waterway permitting, shoreline protection, boathouses, etc): Crystal von Holdt 920-410-3181.



WE'VE GOT MUSSELS

Volunteers from the Association, in cooperation with the Citizens Lake Monitoring Network of the UW Extension, and Golden Sands began a long-term study last summer to monitor the Chain's zebra mussel population. In late spring of 2019, volunteers hung a set of thin plates off the end of their piers at various spots throughout the Chain and then counted and removed the zebra mussels that attached to the plates once a month and reported their findings. With only one season of data, it is too early to draw clear conclusions; however, it does appear that zebra mussels are now present to varying degrees in both the Lower and Upper Chain and the population seems to increase as the summer progresses. The hope is to learn more about this population as monitoring continues in the coming years. A big thank you to Janina Behnke, Marilyn Dixon, Kim Drost, Sue Eiler, Betsy Elgin, Mark Feucht, Bonnie Krenke, Nicole Peterson, Phil Peterson, and Steve Rawson for their work on this project.



2020 ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The Association's Annual Meeting of Members will be held at **9 am on Saturday, June 20th, in Marden Memorial Center at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in King**. All members are encouraged to attend. The meeting will include presentation of the proposed budget, recognition of the scholarship recipient, elections, an opportunity to hear concerns of the members and, if possible, an educational program. The agenda will be posted 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting on the Association's website. Other matters not on the agenda may be considered at this meeting on an advisory basis.

BOARD NOMINATIONS

Association By-Laws state that election of Directors shall take place at the Annual Meeting and that the Board shall nominate candidates to fill Board vacancies. As of this printing, nominees for the 2020-2023 term are: Dick Conover and Carl Nelson. Any five Association members may nominate an additional candidate by submitting a written nomination to the Executive Secretary before May 6th. If nominations are contested, candidate names will appear on ballots provided at the Annual Meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING DATES

Dayton Township	Tuesday, April	21, 6:00 pm	Dayton Town Hall
Farmington Township	Tuesday, April	21, 7:00 pm	Farmington Town Hall
Neighborhood Chairpersons			
Appreciation Breakfast	Saturday, May	16, 8:30 am	Chain O'Lakes Bar & Grill
Association	Saturday, June	20, 9:00 am	Marden Center, Veterans Home
Lake District	Saturday, August	8, 9:00 am	Marden Center, Veterans Home

Thank you to the following newsletter contributors, editors and proofreaders: Jason Breeggemann, Ted Johnson, Jonathan Kaiser, and Scott Koehnke, DNR; Daniel Lewinski and Bryan Stelzner, Waupaca County Sheriff's Office; Ann Stern, State Farm Insurance Waupaca; and members Sue Eiler, Bob Ellis, Jim Koeper, Lorraine Koeper, Carl Nelson, Phil Peterson, Sharon Peterson, and Dave Shambeau.

ASSOCIATION BOARD: Dick Conover, Susan Gaastra (Treasurer), John Hebbring, Lorraine Koeper (Executive Secretary), John Miller, Carl Nelson, Sharon Peterson (President), Phil Peterson, and Bob Underberg (Vice President).

MEMBERS ARE "IN THE KNOW"

As an Association member, you are eligible to join any Board committee. Through involvement, Association members can have a voice and stay "in the know" about the goings on around the Chain