



The NORTH STAR

Alma Lake – Moon Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District

Date: January 2016

Corliss Tischer, Newsletter Editor

Chairman's Chat

By Tony Waisbrot

Man masters nature not by force, but by understanding —Jacob Bronowski

As usual in this column, I would like to acknowledge the time and effort our lake residents provide to continue to maintain and improve the quality of experience we all enjoy on our lakes. Clyde Owens and Ken Beier continue to monitor water clarity on the lakes with the equipment your lake district has purchased.

As a special project this year, Clyde's family, along with Whitey Harris replaced the deteriorated chains and anchors for the buoys that mark the channel over the sandbar in Moon Lake so the sandbar has the best navigation route, especially in years that the water level is lower.

Thanks to Mary Platner for continuing to monitor our lake level and thanks to Commissioner Dean Marquardt for designing, purchasing and installing a new no wake sign at the entrance of the channel from Moon to Alma Lake.

Our lake residents have also been available to remind day users and other people on the lakes about the no wake law on Alma Lake and the No wake hours law on Moon Lake.

Although we all continue to have positive experiences in our lake district, a dark cloud has been approaching from the horizon as a result of recent legislative changes at the state level. Act 55 inserted into the budget bill and passed, will not increase our understanding of nature.



The act cut and eliminated many DNR science positions, reduced funding for county conservationists which was part of millions of dollars in cuts to programs designed to control polluted runoff, cut environmental education grants and programs, including the Natural Resource Educator program through the UW-Extension and along with the WI Lakes contract and eliminated twelve other partnership grants or contracts with non-profit organizations.

Perhaps the most serious concern is that the Act eliminates more than 40 years of local zoning control in shoreline areas and the fear that the NR 115 state minimum standard of 100 foot frontage for lake lots will lead to overdevelopment on lake shores and increasing environmental and social problems.

As if that isn't bad enough, two bills are being introduced as the so-called Property Rights Package which includes prohibiting a local government from enacting a development moratorium and would prohibit a city, village, town or county from prohibiting or unreasonably restricting a real property owner from selling or transferring title to any interest in the real property.

Finally, one of the bills would require a court to resolve any ambiguity in a matter involving a zoning ordinance or shoreline zoning ordinance in favor of the free use of private property—in other words the property owner.

These bills won't get a hearing until early next year so it will be important to be watchful of their progress and for lake residents and lake organizations to expand their activities from conservation stewardship and education to political action.

Wisconsin Changes Shoreland Zoning

In July of this year changes were made in Wisconsin Shoreland Zoning Laws through the budget process. Basically it states that Counties cannot have zoning ordinances that are more restrictive than State law NR 115. Wisconsin Lakes, which is the only statewide organization working exclusively to protect and enhance the quality of Wisconsin's 15,000 inland lakes, says the new restrictions "stripped counties of the ability to enact or enforce Shoreland Zoning provision stricter than the state minimums" (<http://wisconsinlakes.org/index.php/state-budget-act-55-rollback-of-shoreland-zoning>). The changes in NR 115 also weakened regulation and standards in regards to items such as maintenance, repair and expansion of non-conforming structures, surface run off entering the water rather than seeping into the ground (impervious surfaces), lighting restrictions, and ability to require natural plantings at the water's edge to help control runoff. For further information go to Wisconsin Lakes web site at: (<http://wisconsinlakes.org/index.php/state-budget-act-55-rollback-of-shoreland-zoning>).

Lake Stewardship

As lake property owners we are fortunate to enjoy lake life along with the beautiful environment that our lakes provide. When we became lake property owners we also became Stewards as each of us needs or wants to protect the quality of our lakes and the beauty of our environment, which means we need to take careful and responsible management of our lakes to ensure our lakes and environment stays healthy. The question is how can accomplish the careful and responsible management of our lakes.

One way is to educate new and existing property owners on responsible property management that will preserve lake quality and property values. A good example of this is that at last year's annual meeting DNR research scientist Mike Meyer Ph.D. spoke to our group about the successful progress and results of the Moon Beach Camp lakeshore improvements project. This project started in 2009 and encompassed planting native trees, shrubs and other vegetation to restore 1,300 linear feet of eroding shoreline. This project is truly a success as it improved the water quality of Moon and Alma Lake and improved the natural habitat for area wildlife. You can read more about Moon Beach Camp lakeshore improvements project on our website: www.almamoonlake.org/.

Secondly is by having socials like we have at the New Twilight Bar and Grill and the 3 C's each year. These socials give us an opportunity to meet and get to know our neighbors as well as augmenting our sense of community. Socials also provides us a fun and entertaining environment to learn about what's happening on our lakes and if there are any concerns and/or issues pertaining to our lakes health and management.

Thirdly is by informing lake property owners of current and changing laws and regulations effecting their properties. We do this by creating and issuing a yearly newsletter. It is important to know the local, county, state or federal laws that regulate our uses and development of our properties. An example is the information that the Town of St. Germain and Vilas County restricts property rentals on residentially zoned properties and the "No Wake" restrictions.

As property owners we have become stewards and it is up to each of us to ensure and preserve the health of our lakes, protect our beautiful environment, and continue to enjoy a strong lake community.

The Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative organization is founded

Your Lake District commissioners have voted to join a new corporation that was formed in October, 2015. The Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative was created as a 501©4 organization to allow it to fulfill its primary mission, advocating for issues of critical importance for our lakes on behalf of all Wisconsin lake groups.

It will begin operation with the guidance of the legislative team from the Plum Lake Association and other associations as they are added to the steering committee This "umbrella" group will carry on the work that has been started to defend our lakes against those who would attack regulations designed to protect the quality and to advocate for intelligent regulation that will preserve our lake environment. The mission of the organization will be tightly focused on that activity.

All donor lake groups will be founding members of The Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative (WSI) and the president or one designated person from each association or Lake District will be welcomed to the board of directors.

It is felt that maintaining this organization to represent all the lake groups is critical for the protection of our lakes

DNR to prohibit all deer feeding and baiting in Vilas, Oneida and Forest Counties starting in Jan. 2016

The ban will take effect in late January 2016 because a penned ranch deer in Three Lakes tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). According to Wisconsin law, the DNR must enact a ban on both baiting and feeding deer inside any county that is within a 10-mile radius of where the infected deer was located.

The Three Lakes Trophy Ranch in Oneida County is approximately seven miles from the Vilas County line and five miles from the forest County line. From the perspective of science and common sense, questions are arising such as, how is that infected, penned deer threatening in any way to the overall northwoods wild deer herd? Why does the law fail to treat penned deer differently than those in the wild that have CWD?

We know the economy, wildlife observation around our lakes, hunting and tourism will be impacted by the ban as well as wild turkeys who are thriving in the northwoods winters because they feed at those same baits and there are doubts many could survive northern winters without this type of artificial food supply.

It is too early to tell whether our northern counties will get a break from legislators. Baiting and feeding bans have not been applied equally to Wisconsin counties in recent years. Several years back when a penned deer in Portage County tested positive for CWD, baiting and feeding was banned in every adjacent county regardless of distance. The 10-mile radius rule was adopted just two years ago.

It has appeared for a long time that the DNR wants all deer feeding and baiting banned, not just because of CWD. There have been concerns over domesticating wildlife, hunter conflicts on public land and other health issues. The current rules became a legislative matter when the administrative rules oversight committee, struck its own compromise, allowing backyard feeding in residential areas all year round and limiting baiting to hunting seasons only.

Wisconsin legislators have not heard much from the backyard feeding crowd, many of whom are senior citizens, in central and southern counties because the culture is different in agricultural counties where you don't need artificial feeding to see deer, turkeys etc...

It's expected that the public outcry over this feeding ban around our lakes in the northwoods will be louder and longer than anything our legislators have seen to date because it will take legislative action to overrule the state agency rule.

DNR Establishes New Walleye Regulations as of May 2015

Alma and Moon Lake lie in the Ceded territory of Wisconsin and as of May 2015 inland lakes within the ceded territory now have a daily bag limit of 3 walleye. However, the total statewide bag limit is 5 walleye.

So, in the ceded territory, where our lakes lie, no more than 3 walleye can be taken from an individual water, but other waters can be fished to fill the total statewide bag limit of 5.

The standard length regulations for walleye now state that only walleye or sauger may be kept between 15 and 20 inches with one walleye over 24 inches, thus no walleye between 20 and 24 inches may be kept to encourage future propagation.

In addition to the walleye regulation changes, largemouth bass season has been made more liberal. Largemouth bass may be kept from opening weekend in May to the end of the season. Smallmouth bass season continues to start on the third Saturday in June and both species retain a 14 inch minimum size limit for harvest



Photo by Ann Waisbrot

St. Germain and Vilas County Residential Zoning Restricts Property Rentals.

Zoning Codes and Zoning Districts created by the Town of St. Germain and Vilas County help maintain Alma and Moon Lakes as a community of families by creating zoning districts zoning codes that restricts using a single family residence as

short term rental properties. Zoning and Zoning Ordinances are local laws that specifies how and for what purpose each parcel of private property may be used, such as, residential, multi-use, commercial, industrial, etc.

Both the Town of St. Germain and Vilas County have Zoning Codes restricting the use of Single Family Residential Districts to the use of single family only and restricts rentals of less than 30 days. If you are renting your property legally for the 30 days minimum, you must collect and pay the room tax to the town in which your property is located. So before you decide to rent out your property make sure you know what our local Zoning Codes allow.

For further information contact Town of St. Germain Zoning Administrator Tim Ebert at 715-542-3155 or visit their web site at <http://townofstgermain.org/> or contact Vilas County Zoning and Planning at Phone: 715-479-3620 or visit their web sites at <http://co.vilas.wi.us/> or <http://www.co.vilas.wi.us/dept/Zoning%20Forms/generalzoningordinance.pdf>.

2016 Lake Updates

Walleye Stocking: WDNR stocked 1.7 inch Walleye in Alma and Moon Lakes On June 15th, 2015. 2021 were placed Alma Lake and 4500 in Moon Lake.

Moon Lake iced over on November 29th and re-opened in mid-December. It re-iced over at Christmas, but the ice is still thin and a snowmobile fell thru the ice 15 feet out from Moon Beach Camp the first week in January. We are advising to use extreme caution on all the lakes in the area due to the mild weather.

Loons and Eagles: Our Loons had one hatching this year. No information of Eagles nesting.



Nesting Loons.
Photo by Ann Waisbrot

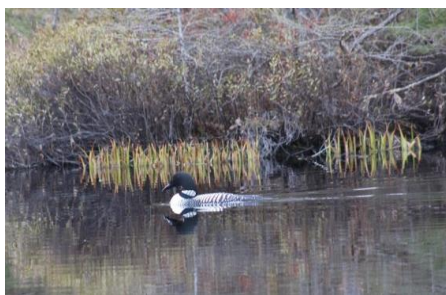


Photo by Ann Waisbrot



White Buck. Photo by Ron Tischer

Alma Lake – Moon Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District Socials

Audrey Lehner and Terri Beier did a wonderful job coordinating several socials this year that were well attended by our members. The socials always are a great time for meeting new neighbors, getting caught up on what's happening on the lakes, and of course enjoying great food. Socials this year were at the 3 C's in July and Chicken BBQ was at the New Twilight Bar & Grill on August 22, 2015.

A big thank you goes to Audrey Lehner, Terri Beier, the 3 C's and the New Twilight Bar & Grill for making our socials a great time.



BBQ at the New Twilight Bar and Grill
Photo taken by Ann Waisbrot



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Town of St. Germain and Area Information

St. Germain Recycling and Garbage Disposal Hours:

Summer: Memorial Day thru Labor Day open:

Wed/Sat 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Winter: Wednesday after Labor Day thru Sunday prior to Memorial Day open:

Wed 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Sat 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Town of St. Germain Web Site: www.townofstgermain.org

Vilas County Web Site: www.co.vilas.wi.us/

Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club Web Site: www.boboen.com

Save the date: Upcoming 2016 Socials and Meeting

Social Dates

Knocker's on January 23, 2016 at noon

3 C's May 7, 2016 at 9 am

The New Twilight Bar & Grill BBQ on August 20, 2016

Meeting Dates

March 4, 2016 at 2pm

May 14, 2016 at 9am

Annual Meeting June 18, 2016

District Commissioners

Tony Waisbrot (term of 2018) – Chairman, twaisbrot@frontier.com

Dean Marquardt (term of 2016) –Secretary, deanm599@att.net

Dave Zielinski (term of 2016) –Treasurer, davezee1@frontier.com

Milt Klingsporn (term of 2018)-Commissioner,
mklings@frontier.com

Corliss Tischer (term of 2017)-Commissioner,
corliss.tischer@gmail.com

John Vojta -Town of St Germain Representative,
john_vojta@hotmail.com

Kim Simac-Vilas Co Representative, kisima@co.vilas.wi.us

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lake District is the preservation of Alma/Moon lakes natural beauty and quiet environment for the future generations. The focus will be to maintain the highest water quality and protect the natural shoreline through proactive participation in the protection of aquatic contamination and watershed erosion supporting both fish and wildlife habitat. Communication of the activities to all Lake District members and the solicitation of their involvement and cooperation will be primary in the conducting of this mission. All Lake District sponsored activities will always be performed under the direction of current federal, state, and local regulations.

Future Newsletters

In order to cut down on costs and save on postage, we would like to start sending our newsletters electronically to your email. If you would like to receive future newsletters via email, please send a message to Commissioner Corliss Tischer at corliss.tischer@gmail.com. We will also have the newsletters posted on our website for everyone to view.

Have a Safe, Healthy and Happy New Year!

Meet your Commissioners



From left to right: Dean Marquardt, Corliss Tischer, Dave Zielinski, Milt Klingsporn, and Tony Waisbrot

Alma Lake – Moon Lake Protection and
Rehabilitation District
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District

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