

**VVLA Annual Meeting
July 3, 2008**

Call to order by President Jeff Burke at 10:10am.

Attendees: Bill & Diane Schroeder, Mike Czarny, Ronie Jacobsen, Ken Alix, Grace Alix, Doug & Jane Schwanz, George & Pat Kupfer, Frank Bradley, Dick & Carol Novak, Paul Specht, Sharon Specht, Jill Wilm, Steve Frank, Linda Smithson, Steve Smithson, John Fagan, Dona Fagan, Robert Stewart, Esther S., Tom Olson, Barbara Olson, Ed Brodsky, Jeff Burke, Jorja Burke. **Guests:** Carolyn Scholl, Vilas County Conservationist and Brandon Feasel, U. of Notre Dame, Ph.D. Candidate.

Motion to approve agenda by Jane S., 2nd by George K. Carried.

Motion to approve 08.18.07 minutes as corrected by Mike C., 2nd by Jill W. (Correction: Add Paul & Sharon Specht to attendee list)

Elections: President: Jeff Burke; Secretary: Jorja Burke; 2 Board Members @ Large: George Kupfer & Mike Czarny.

George and Mike introduced themselves. Motion by Tom Olson, 2nd by Linda Smithson for unanimous ballot - motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Paul distributed account activity information, reminding attendees to fill out forms for 2008 membership if they have not already done so. Final grant installment of \$225.00 received from DNR. 25 households have paid 2008 membership dues. Expenses included dues for Association membership in the WI Association of Lakes and Vilas County Lakes Association and mailing expenses for absentee ballot/candidate nomination information per bylaws. Copy of report is on file. Motion to accept Treasurer's report by Steve Smithson, 2nd by Ed Brodsky.

Jill would like to hear from folks w/changes of addresses for mailing information.

An overview of the following issues presented by Jeff:

Old Business:

Weed & water levels/survey results: The destruction of beaver dams and trapping and the impact on area lakes. An ordinance preventing setting traps within a specified number of feet from the road to Annabelle Lake was recently approved by the Town Board. Pertinent to the removal of beaver habitat on the PI River, permission was given to post information referring to the WI State statute governing destruction of wildlife habitat by DNR representative in Woodruff.

Weed removal: Each lakefront property owner may clear 30 feet around dock, by hand, without permit. Mechanical removal of vegetation requires a permit. Applying for a permit requires a DNR approved Aquatic Plant Management Plan. Next step: Putting in place an APMP.

Survey Results: 28 members and 2 nonmembers responded to request for input. An e-mail to members whose addresses are available and posting on the website invited members to respond. Roni reported that a 25 to 5 ratio responded that "yes, there's a problem" & "yes, we need plant management." Some comments from responders were read and a copy of all responses was available for attendees to peruse.

New Business:

PITLC Grant: The PI Town Lakes Committee has applied for and received grant funding on behalf of 17 lakes in PI. Van Vliet is one of the lakes receiving grant monies. Northern Environmental will conduct the survey this summer. Steve Frank asks if plan addresses excess weeds. Mike clarified the process of setting the stage for discussions with DNR re excess native plant management with an APMP as the first step.

The APMP process & what it can do for Van Vliet Lake: Since 2005 when VVLA completed their plant study with Blue Water Environmental, the DNR's requirements for an APMP has expanded to include GPS locators. The new plant survey, incorporating the required GPS info, will begin this summer. The preliminary may be available in October for review by PITLC and designated VVLA Board members. By Jan/Feb 2009, hardcopy may be available. Discussion ensued:

Steve F. asked if NE would tailor the report to highlight issues specific to VVL. Jeff responded, "Yes, after discussion with NE & DNR representatives at a PITLC presentation and because we already have the part of the work completed with our 2005 plan, Van Vliet's concerns re excessive native plants may be incorporated into the APMP." George reminded us that plant study should be ongoing - a work in process. Paul reiterated that individuals looking for weed permits would require that a lake's APMP must be in place and that we should be aware that the DNR is generally opposed to weed cutting but won't necessarily prevent cutting. Mike agrees and cites past conversations w/DNR personnel. Sharon feels that in addition to dealing with invasives and excessive

native plant growth, the survey allows for cooperation between Lake Associations. Jeff talks about importance of teamwork between Lake Associations. Tom requests that Roni post PITLC meetings to website. Ed Brodsky asked if a water quality survey has been considered? Jeff said that Vilas County has septic records and the VVLA website shows if individuals are on the county list. He noted that if your name is not on the list & you want to get on the county system there is some cost involved for testing. Steve F. spoke to conductivity tests of in years past - Steve S. said those tests were not necessarily inclusive and other factors must also be considered. Nutrient loading from shoreline development and fertilizing was discussed. Mike said it's been proven that septic systems add to the nutrification of lakes.

VVLA Cost Share: 10% of 25%, which equals \$187.83 for, approved APMP. Jorja requested the VVLA send a letter to PITLC for their efforts on our behalf. Motion by George, 2nd by Ronie to compose the letter. Carried. Jill will write the letter.

Carolyn Scholl, Vilas County Conservationist, presented a program featuring shoreland stewardship and included information about water levels, maintaining buffer zones and the impact of nutrients on our lake. Carolyn may be reached at 715-479-3747 and invites your questions re shoreland stewardship.

Website Info: Check with Ronie

PI Rearing Ponds Survey: Jorja presented information re the rearing ponds, which were returned to PI by the DNR in 2008. The PI Park and Recreation Committee is conducting hearings July 14 @ 7pm and July 19 @ 11:00am as a forum for public input. Residents and visitors may also respond to the question "What are your ideas for development of the rearing pond area?" by accessing the PI town website @ www.pi.us .

Northwest Lakes Conference: Roni attended. In addition to the keynote speaker's address, Impacts of Climate Change on Lakes and Streams, she attended sessions on Beautiful Shoreline Buffers, Communication That Works and Aquatic Plant Management Planning; a Primer. Her notes are on file and will be posted to the website.

Other: Jill commented about ordinances, which had been but are no longer posted. People recreating on Van Vliet Lake have been observed abusing it by several residents. The constable will become involved as necessary. Motion by Ed Brodsky, 2nd by Paul Specht for the board to pursue permanent posting of water ordinances. The installation of a metal information sign, in addition to posted kiosk information, was suggested. Linda S. amended the motion to include a \$300 cap to purchase and install such a sign, 2nd by Steve S. Motion carried. In the meantime, Jill will post boat, wave runner and 200" no wake ordinances at the VVLA boat landing.

Steve F. addressed occurrences at the VVLA boat landing including downed & dead trees and aggressive pruning and removal by DNR within a buffer zone. Recently, Paul Bruggink gave permission to cut two large hemlocks. Negotiations for cooperation between the DNR and adjacent landowner did take place prior to the construction of this boat landing and Steve is concerned about the destruction of this "buffer zone" between his property and the DNR boat landing. In the spirit of "Dead tree - leave it be" he would like to see someone on the VVLA board contacted by the DNR for discussion before trees are removed within "buffer zone" at the landing site. Several lake residents stop by frequently to pick up refuse and keep an eye on the site. It was also noted that some of the pines the DNR planted along the drive to create a shield for the adjacent property have died and that several small pines were pushed down during winter when winter plowing occurred to created access to the lake.

Barbara Olson advised that Mr. Jim Rottman passed away several days ago. She has Marge's address. It was also noted that Rita Andrew recently passed away. Jill will send cards for VVLA.

A board member delivered a letter from a member unable to attend. It was available for attendees to peruse. Copy on file.

VVLA Annual Meeting 2009: The majority of members present thought early July is a suitable time for our meeting.

It was announced that a picnic would be held at the pavilion following the meeting. Members and guests were invited to attend.

Adjournment: Motion by George, 2nd by Roni @ 12:15pm. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jorja Burke, Secretary

Notes from the Lake Conference

Ronie Jacobsen, Van Vliet Lake Association Board Member

I attended the Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Cable on June 20, 2008. The event was well organized and the talks were very informative. Close to 200 people were in attendance from various parts of the state.

There were lake related exhibits on display in the lobby. Representatives from the DNR, National Park Service, lake monitoring organizations, private companies offering aquatic plant control services, and several conservation groups were available to exchange ideas. Information on lake management, aquatic invasive species, aquatic plant management, shoreline restoration, and loon monitoring programs were included in the displays.

Keynote Speaker

Impacts of Climate Change on Lakes and Streams

John Magnuson, UW Madison Center for Limnology professor emeritus

Dr. Magnuson presented data on the days of ice cover on Lake Mendota over 150 years showing a gradual decline over time. From 1850 to 1900 the average number of days of ice cover was between 90 and 120. From 1950 to 2000 the average number of days of ice cover was between 60 and 90. He emphasized that the data goes up and down over a short time period and that data from one or two individual years is less important than evaluation of long term trends.

He also discussed that for climate change to be global, there must be evidence from diverse locations as well as long time periods. Sometimes the data can be extrapolated from records that were compiled for reasons other than climate studies.

A high school student did a project gathering data on the dates the Apostle Island ferries were running. His research showed that over the time period the ferries have been in business, the last ferry of the season is running later in the year and the first ferry is earlier. Therefore, since open water days are increasing, ice cover days are decreasing.

There is a lake in Japan where records exist since 1440 for the ice cover on the lake because there is a Shinto shrine on the lake and a religious festival associated with the annual formation of an ice dam across the lake. From 1440 to 1875, the number of days of ice cover on the lake decreased by about 1 day per 100 years. From 1800 to 1993, ice cover days decreased by 19 days per 100 years.

Finally, a North America map of where the ice breakup line is on April 15 has moved steadily northward from 1975 to 2004.

Dr. Magnuson believes that global warming will lead to more extreme weather events in Wisconsin including periods of heavy rain as well as droughts. River flow volumes will increase over time. Some species of fish will thrive in warmer waters and others will struggle. Wisconsin winters and summers will both change along with the recreational activities and businesses that depend on certain weather conditions.

What can be done with this information? Mitigation efforts attempt to lower greenhouse gas emissions and slow the anticipated rise in average temperature. Adaptation efforts include planning by resource managers and policy makers based on climate change as a future reality.

Topic Sessions

There were four topic streams with three sessions offered for each. The general topics were Lake, Fish, and Wildlife, Legal and Policy, Lake Science, and Lakeshore and Shoreline Health. Conference attendees could attend sessions from different streams or stay within one. All twelve sessions were unique so one person could only hear 25% of the talks offered. I stayed with the Lakeshore and Shoreline Health topics and a synopsis of those presentations follows.

Beautiful Shoreline Buffers

Sarah Boles, owner of Northern Native Plantscapes in Cable

Implementation of a native shoreline buffer begins with a site analysis including soil, existing vegetation, light, moisture, adjacent land use, and type of vegetation zone. Some properties only require natural restoration because the desired elements are already there. Other sites need enhancement with some pruning out and the addition of composting materials to improve conditions for native plants. Full restoration is required for sites that no longer have any native vegetation.

Design plans need to consider how many of the different types of native plants are desired, scale of the desired plants so that a pleasing contrast in heights is achieved, and definition of areas within the buffer including walkways, sitting areas, and areas that will be left relatively undisturbed.

Site preparation is an essential part of a full restoration project and not an area to try to skimp on. Cost and maintenance requirements must be considered. It is less expensive to use seeds but a quicker result will be obtained using plant plugs. Watering is essential for the first year and weed control for three years.

A native shoreline buffer will not look like a garden and native plants have more variability in size from year to year than cultivated plants. A native buffer is not maintenance free or necessarily less expensive to implement than a garden or lawn. A native buffer is an ecologically healthy landscape that provides animal and fish habitats and contributes to the quality of a lake environment.

Communication That Works

Dorothy Lagerroos, retired Environmental Policy professor at Northland College

To implement any kind of change, it is important for a group to use words and approaches that build bridges and find the common ground with the people they want to convince. Time spent listening to diverse opinions can help define the values that are shared. The message of a group should start with the shared values, describe the threat, provide a solution, and suggest actions.

Promotion of any plan should include visuals. People respond to pictures of children, pictures that tell a story, and pictures of people enjoying the type of setting the group is trying to promote. In general, people understand and respond to maps; they may be confused by charts or graphs. Stories work better than lists of facts. Stories about who and why are better than stories about what and how. Multiple formats, different types of events, and descriptive signs help to repeat a message.

Mistakes to avoid include doom and gloom, abstractions, guilt, complexity, exaggeration, anti-people messages, and you-can't-win messages. Use words and phrases carefully – “protect our clean water” is better than “clean up our water”; “for our children” is more effective than “to promote economic development”.

There is no magic bullet to accomplish a goal. A positive message and a willingness to negotiate are important. People respond to fairness, balance, and freedom of choice.

Aquatic Plant Management Planning: a Primer

Cheryl Clemens, Owner of Harmony Environmental located in Amery

Aquatic plant management plans are important to prevent and eliminate aquatic invasive species, to promote fish and wildlife habitat, to address plant concerns in a lake, to identify management methods, to coordinate actions, and to resolve differences of opinion. A plan is required for any whole lake harvesting or herbicide permit.

The aquatic plant management planning process can take approximately two years from initiation to implementation. After identifying the need for a plan, a plant survey is the first step. An advisory committee must be formed to gather input, work with the results of the plant survey, and compile a draft APM plan. Public involvement is required for plan approval and can include opinion surveys, educational forums, open houses, opportunities to comment on the draft plan, and public meetings.

Applications for DNR grants are due on Feb 1 or Aug 1. Application for a grant including control strategies must be submitted 45 days ahead of the grant due date for DNR review and approval of the control plan. The state share of the payment has been increased from 50% to 75% of the grant. State payments are available for plant control

as well as plant surveys. Most but not all of the lakes receiving grants to date have AIS issues.

A specific lake's APM advisory committee usually has about eight members who should represent various interests. A committee might include year round lake residents, nonresident owners, nearby residents who use the lake, township or county staff, a DNR representative, and a representative from a conservation or fishing group with specific interest in the lake. The number of meetings required depends on factors such as the amount of controversy and knowledge level of the participants. A meeting facilitator is needed and a game plan should be in place before the meetings begin. The facilitator should have a good knowledge of DNR rules and guidelines to keep discussion focused on ideas that are feasible. Ground rules on how meetings will be run need to be set up and agreed upon at the start of the process.

There is currently no defined standard of a severe navigation impediment. Alleviation of navigation nuisances is an acceptable APM goal but the burden of proof is on the group submitting the plan that such a nuisance exists. There is a working draft document titled "Aquatic Plant Management Strategy, Northern Region WDNR" which is available on the DNR website. Treatment for invasive species is recognized as a priority; treatment of native plants is a more contentious issue.

Aquatic plant management plans are new and the rules and guidelines are still being written. The ultimate goal of any APM plan must be the protection and development of diverse and stable communities of native aquatic plants.