

OCLRA April Topics

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Six-County Lakes Meeting: "We're All Connected"

"Protecting Our Waters: We're All Connected" is the theme for the annual Northwoods Six-County Lakes Meeting, set for Friday, July 12, at Nicolet College. Lake association leaders and members along with the general public will convene to learn about and discuss our interconnected water resources and our human connections to each other and to our lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater. The program will include a five-member panel discussion on the connections among water resources and the people who use them. There will also be

presentations on the impacts of climate change and drought on our water resources and fisheries, and the problem of PFAS in the environment. The meeting will run from 8:30 a.m. to noon. There is no charge and no need to register. Please save the date and plan to attend!

Oneida County goes on record supporting 500/20 wake regulation

The Oneida County Board on March 19 voted 13-6 (two supervisors absent) in support of a resolution that among other provisions recommends that enhanced wakes be limited to at least 500 feet from shore and water at least 20 feet deep. The resolution also addresses the need for measures to prevent the transfer of invasive species from one lake to others in boat ballast. Ted Rulseh, OCLRA president, observed, "This resolution, while not enforceable, sends a message to the Wisconsin legislature that one of the state's most lake-rich counties supports policies aligned with current science on the impact of enhanced wakes. The 500/20 provision also aligns with the trend of wake-related legislation in other states, including Vermont and Michigan."

Representatives from OCLRA, Oneida County Clean Waters Action, and local lake associations gave testimony in favor of the resolution, which was spearheaded by Michele Sadauskas, county conservationist.

Town of Winchester adopts enhanced wake ordinance

The Vilas County Town of Winchester recently became the 17th

Wisconsin town to pass an enhanced wake ordinance. It forbids the operation of ballasted boats so as to create enhanced wakes. The ordinance extends to all lakes within Winchester. It originally exempted two lakes within the township, but that "carve-out" was later removed. This would leave Winchester with enhanced wakes from ballasted boats prohibited on all lakes within its borders. The town has shared the proposed amendment with the DNR for review before a vote for official adoption is taken.

Town of Newbold sets public hearing on enhanced wake ordinance

The town board in the Oneida County Town of Newbold has scheduled a public hearing on Saturday, April 6. At 10 a.m. on an ordinance that would prohibit creation of enhanced wakes on lakes smaller than 1,500 acres. The hearing will be held at the town hall at 4590 Highway 47, north of Rhinelander.

Lakes and Rivers Convention theme: "Partnering for Our Waters"

The 2024 [Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention](#) will be held Wednesday through Friday, April 10-12, at the Holiday Inn, Stevens Point, on the theme of "Partnering for Our Waters." You can save money by opting for early bird registration, available until February 29. This convention is an ideal place to learn about our state's waters, explore

current issues and concerns, and network with other lake enthusiasts and advocates. Check out the [conference agenda](#).

Minnesota sounds an alarm over litter on lake ice

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR) reports that the invention of "wheel houses" has changed the nature of ice fishing. These houses make it possible for people to camp for many days and nights on the ice, where there are no garbage cans or waste facilities. Litter on the ice has become a major problem on waters like Lake of the Woods and Mille Lacs Lake that attract thousands of ice anglers. The state legislature late last year passed a law to prohibit the placement of garbage and human waste on or under the ice; violations are punishable by a \$100 plus administrative costs. To bolster the legislation, MLR and partners launched a [Keep It Clean](#) campaign that has drawn members representing numerous lakes to develop education campaigns, media events, lake signage and other resources. Is this ice camping and the related waste problem also an issue in Wisconsin? Please send any observations to oclr100@gmail.com.

Boat wake legislation introduced in Michigan

HB 5532, legislation regulating enhanced wakes on Michigan lakes, was introduced on February 28 with bipartisan support, according to the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association. It would require watercraft in

wake sport mode to be 500 feet or more from a shore or dock and at a depth of at least 20 feet. “MLSA applauds Rep. Julie Rogers and the bipartisan co-sponsors who recognize the impact that wakes from such vessels have on shoreline erosion, damage to shoreline structures, bottomland/vegetation degradation, and destruction of fisheries,” the association said in a statement.

Waupaca county town wake ordinance threatened with legal action

The Waupaca County Town of Farmington is facing a legal challenge of its ordinance that would preclude ballasted wake surfing on Round Lake (80 acres) and Rainbow Lake (115 acres) on the Waupaca Chain. The town board passed the ordinance back in January. Wake sports advocates responded by threatening to sue the town unless board either revoked the ordinance or amended it to allow wake surfing 200 feet from shore. The threatened lawsuit alleges an open meetings law violation. A public hearing on the matter was held at the town hall on March 18. News reports on the hearing can be found [here](#) and [here](#). The meeting drew a large crowd with speakers on both sides of the issue. The town board deferred action until a later date to be determined. The Last Wilderness Alliance based in Presque Isle has vowed to support the town in fighting the potential lawsuit.

Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference set for June 21

The 2024 Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference will be held on Friday, June 21, at Spooner High School. This event is a great opportunity to learn about issues facing the lake-rich counties in the state's northwest corner. Conference registration costs \$45 and covers presentations, morning refreshments, lunch, and program materials. Registration opens May 1. For more information, contact planning committee member Lisa Burns, Lburns@co.washburn.wi.us.

A Minnesota company turns away from lead fishing tackle

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates reports that equipment manufacturer [Clam Pro Tackle](#) is making a transition from lead-based fishing lures toward loon-friendly, non-toxic alternatives like tungsten and bismuth. MLR says the change reflects growing awareness of the harm lead can do to wildlife and the environment and sets an example for others to follow.

Program set for North Lakeland Woods and Water Conference

Presenters have been announced for the North Lakeland Woods and Water Conference set for Friday, May 3, at the North Lakeland Discovery Center near Manitowish Waters. A sampling includes:

- Where Land and Water Meet: Shoreland Habitat is Critical Fish Habitat
- Keeping High Quality Waters High Quality in Oneida County
- Wake Boat Effects on Lakes

- Using Weevils to Control Eurasian Watermilfoil
- Northwoods Land Trust: Leaving a Legacy
- Preserving our Woods and Waters

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration costs \$60 and is open until April 15 – space is limited. [Visit here](#) for more information and to register.

Wisconsin's Green Fire seeks photos, artwork, poems and more

Wisconsin's Green Fire is seeking photos, illustrations, poems and other creative works in recognition of how art can explore issues, reach our hearts, and celebrate human relationships to the natural world. The intent is to use the creative works in the organization's newsletters, social media, website, and elsewhere. See the submission guidelines [here](#).

A love story about a Minnesota river

The late Darby Nelson's book, *For Love of Lakes*, is arguably one of the best books about lakes ever written. He followed it up some years later with *For Love of a River: The Minnesota*, which describes how he and his wife, Geri, paddled the river all the way from its source near the Minnesota border with South Dakota to its confluence with the Mississippi in the Twin Cities.

The book covers topics as diverse as geology, water-quality challenges and solutions, early and modern agriculture, river-based recreation, dams and dam removal, prairie pothole lakes, and the river's rich plants and wildlife. It was published by Beaver's Pond Press.