



# Dedicated to Preserving and Protecting the Eagle River Chain of Lakes, its Watershed and its Ecosystems

## ERCLA OFFICERS:

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Jody Voight

### VP-Finance

Scott Peterson

### VP-Operations

Michael Queoff

### Treasurer

Dave Cyrtmus

### Secretary

Teri Stecker

### AIS Coordinator

Dave Mueller

### Shoreline Restoration

Marc Groth

## President's Message

Hello to our ERCLA members, my name is Jody Voight and I am both humbled and excited to accept the role as your President, after spending the last several years as your VP of Operations. As a well-established organization, ERCLA has benefited from sound leadership and incredibly active volunteers and has maintained a successful track record in preserving and protecting our Chain. This fact is not taken lightly and it is reassuring that two prior leaders, Chuck Berg and Bill Lochte, will continue their involvement on the Board as "Directors at Large" to ensure we do not lose sight of our past and provide their insight as we venture into new challenges and opportunities in the future.



Another enjoyable and busy Summer on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes is winding down and hopefully everyone is prepared for the slightly slower and quieter time on our waters. However, for ERCLA's Board and volunteers, there are many ongoing projects and activities as you will see throughout this newsletter.

One of ERCLA's primary objectives has been the ongoing work with the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission for the reduction and management of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM). Starting this Fall, Marc Groth will lead a two-year effort to update our Aquatic Plant Management Plan. This is a critical step in assuring access to monetary grants that allow us to implement activities to control EWM. Mother Nature has challenged us over the last couple years with mild Winters and early growing seasons for aquatic vegetation. We appreciate and are very aware of all the discussion on this topic. Please be assured that when you look across the waterways throughout the state, our Chain continues to be very successful in this regard.

As you read through this newsletter, please note the number of other programs that ERCLA's Board and volunteers are involved with that support our charter to preserve and protect the health, beauty and safety of our Chain. These efforts include funding and resources and monetary contributions to the Sheriff Patrol, Town of Washington Buoy program, shoreline restoration, water chemistry testing, high school scholarships for students in pursuit of environmental science, pink buckets initiative and Clean Boats/Clean Waters at boat landings.

As you read, if you have questions or see areas where you would like to get involved, we would love to have you join us. As a volunteer organization, if we each do a little, we can accomplish a lot. Contact us at [erclaonline@gmail.com](mailto:erclaonline@gmail.com).

We wish you all an enjoyable and safe Fall and Winter on our Chain and look forward to another great year.

## Fall 2025

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The Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association Inc., is a non-profit, voluntary lake organization whose purpose is to maintain, protect and improve the quality of the lakes and connecting waterways from the Burnt Rollways Dam to Otter Rapids Dam on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes.

Formed in 2001, it is incorporated as a Non-Stock Corporation under Wisconsin law.

It is recognized as a tax exempt public charity under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## Membership Report

By Michael Queoff, VP-Operations

Year after year we ask 1,800 waterfront property owners to share in our mission and common goal to maintain, protect and improve the quality of the Eagle River Chain of Lakes, its watershed and shoreland now and for future generations.

Our retention rate among our members is incredible and routinely runs well over 90%. In addition, our new members easily make up the loss of membership each year through attrition. Hopefully you are getting the message of our sincere appreciation of you, your family and friends as we grow each year, expand our reach and share our news with all of you.

Two years ago we upgraded the benefits of membership, and we feel this has stabilized our returning member numbers and assisted in recruiting new members and volunteers. We reach out to new waterfront property owners to share our message and encourage their participation. By August 2025, 80 new property owners were added to our database, 30 have become new members and yes we are working on the other 50.

To recap, through the third quarter of 2025, we have **955** members and are very close to our stated goal of 1,000. You are our best recruiters, so please brag about your lake sign and get your neighbors to join. All they need to do is reach out to us and we will take care of them.

Lastly, we can't forget to specifically thank all of our business partners. Thank you!



## Cranberry Lake Report

By: Michael Queoff, Cranberry Lake Captain

As many of you are aware from the 2025 Annual Meeting and Picnic, I was elected as Vice President-Operations for ERCLA. One of my main responsibilities is to be a liaison between the Lake Captains and the Executive Committee for the organization. That being said, I will continue as your Lake Captain.

If you have any questions about Cranberry Lake or ERCLA, please feel to reach out to me. I am always here to help you enjoy our Chain of Lakes.

## Scattering Rice Lake Captain Bio

By Howard Van Dyke, Scattering Rice Lake Captain

I am honored to be the new Lake Captain for Scattering Rice Lake. Nancy and I have been part-time residents for 31 years and have vacationed in the area for 39 years. We are both retired now, and spend our entire Summers on the lake.

Our permanent home is in Downers Grove, Illinois. We have three children and five grandchildren who come visit us in the Northwoods multiple times a year. We enjoy boating, waterskiing, fishing and just generally cruising around our beautiful Chain of 28 lakes.

Our home is the third on the left up on the hill as you enter from Eagle Lake. If you are in the area please stop by to introduce yourself as it would be great to get to know each person who owns a home on Scattering Rice Lake and the Deerskin River.

My goals for our lake are to preserve its natural beauty and make it accessible for each person no matter what activities they enjoy – fishing, cruising, birding, silent sports, waterskiing or swimming. I look forward to meeting each of our lake owners.



## Our Four-Page Insert Highlights the WI Boating Safety Certification Program and Boating Rules, Regulations and Responsibilities



The insert found in this newsletter has been created for your use – don't just set it aside! Pull it out, regularly refer to it and most importantly share it with family members, friends, neighbors, renters, acquaintances and anyone else who enjoys the lakes.

**If you were born on or after January 1, 1989** and haven't completed the WDNR Boating Safety education classes, take the time this Winter to do so. WDNR instruction is online or in classrooms throughout the state.

Learn more here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/safetyEducation>

(Disclaimer: The insert is an excerpt and not intended to be used as a study guide for the exam)

## Scattering Rice Lake Report

*By Howard Van Dyke, Scattering Rice Lake Captain*

Hello to my fellow Scattering Rice Lake and Deerskin River Riparians.

I am honored to be the new Lake Captain for Scattering Rice Lake. I look forward to helping preserve the natural beauty of our lake so we and future generations can enjoy it for years to come.

The Summers go by so quickly and this one was no different. Although the Summer months are my favorite, I do enjoy every season in the Northwoods.

This Summer was another great season for ERCLA, as we worked hard to preserve our Chain of Lakes. Our efforts included installing and maintaining buoys, DASH harvesting of Eurasian Watermilfoil, applying for WDNR grants for the preservation of our lakes and educating boaters on safe boating practices.

It would be great to meet and hear from each of you on how we can all enjoy our lakes together. Our home is on the left, up on the hill as you enter from Eagle Lake. If you are in the area, please stop by to introduce yourself, it would be great to get to know each person who owns a home on the lake and/or Deerskin River.

My interests and goals for our lake are to preserve the natural beauty of the lake and make it accessible for each person no matter what activities they enjoy – fishing, cruising, birding, silent sports, waterskiing or swimming.

I look forward to meeting each of you and working hard to maintain Scattering Rice as a great place for everyone to enjoy.

## Yellow Birch Lake Report

*By George Katich, Yellow Birch Lake Captain*

Yellow Birch Lake includes all property owners on Yellow Birch Lake and along the Eagle River from the T-Docks west to the Highway 45 Bridge.

The 21st Yellow Birch Lake Picnic and Social event will be held on **Saturday, July 11, 2026, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm**. This is a great opportunity to meet individuals who may have the same interests and hobbies as you. More information will be sent via email or postal mail during early Summer 2026.

This was the first Summer since 2017 that Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) was not hand harvested from the northeast bay of Yellow Birch Lake. Upon completion of the early July survey, Onterra, LLC did not find enough EWM to warrant hand harvesting. They found only some scattered areas.

Throughout the Summer I continued to check Yellow Birch Lake and the Eagle River up to the bridge for EWM, but also found only scattered areas. I found a lot of native weeds, especially in the northeast bay and the river. There were tall, grass-like weeds in some areas of our lake, primarily in the river. With less natural shorelines on our lakes and rivers, more nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen can enter our waters which aid in weed growth.

There have been several great articles in our past newsletters that explain to homeowners what they can do and what ERCLA is doing to try to control EWM and improve our shorelines and waters. These articles can be found on ERCLA's website - [www.ercla.org](http://www.ercla.org).

Whether you are a full-time or part-time resident, renting, or selling your home, we need every property owner to be a member. It's up to all of us to continue to protect our water and shorelines to maintain our property values on the Chain.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 847-309-4008. As always, thank you to all the members for your continued support of ERCLA.

## Eagle Lake Report

*By Tom Batterman, Eagle Lake Captain*

Eagle Lake Boat Landing on our northern shore provides a popular launching place for boating activities on the Chain and sees all types of watercraft activity. Residents on Eagle Lake have reported damage to the decking on their permanent piers caused by excessive wave action. Let's all be mindful of boating laws, follow best practices and act responsibly.

With Slow-No-Wake (SNW) areas marked in all three channels between Eagle Lake and our neighboring lakes of Otter, Scattering Rice and Voyageur; we regularly see proper and improper execution of the SNW rule. Remember, "No Wake" means your motorboat should be going "slow" enough to reduce noticeable waves but maintain steerage control. Our channels are marked SNW to prevent erosion to vulnerable shorelines and they are marked for safety, since these narrow areas can become congested with boat traffic. Violations may result in a ticket issued directly by law enforcement or receiving a personal visit from law enforcement after officers review video provided by a concerned citizen.

Lastly, please be aware that there are recent reports of unmarked, underwater navigational hazards in the shallows of the southerly and southwesterly areas of the lake. If you are operating a motorboat, these areas pose a greater risk of damage to your motor or lower unit. For your safety, if towing skiers, surfers, knee or wakeboarders or others in this area, please maintain extra distance from those shallow waters and shorelines. Additionally, there is an important ecosystem in the marshy area that can be particularly susceptible to damage.

Thank you to our property owners for their recent reports on this hazard and please be mindful of all the information in this article so all users can enjoy their experiences on Eagle Lake!





## July Membership Meeting Recap

By Teri Stecker, Secretary

On a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon, at the Braywood on the shores of Catfish Lake, ERCLA members gathered with food, beverage and a bevy of speakers for networking with family, friends and neighbors. After the President's message and introductions, the business meeting consisted of the election of six directors to two-year terms, a review of the financials and the approval of the 2024 meeting minutes. Several vendors were available throughout the afternoon to speak with the membership, including Kim Feller with Trees for Tomorrow, Tom Ewing with Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association, Dennis Schultz with US Power Squadron, Riley Brooks, Warden with Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, and Tom Hipp and Julie Voight, ERCLA social media and merchandising volunteers.



The subject matter from all six speakers was timely, informative and relevant to our membership. Dave Mueller, AIS Coordinator, Otter Lake Captain and Commission Treasurer shared an update and answered questions about the status of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) throughout the Chain. The management and funding for EWM removal is a partnership between Towns of Cloverland, Lincoln, Washington, the City of Eagle River and the public sector, represented by ERCLA. Visit [ercla.org](http://ercla.org) and [eagleriverchaincommission.org](http://eagleriverchaincommission.org) websites for 2025 individual lake reports. Refer to Dave's articles on page 8.

Marc Groth, Duck Lake Captain and Shoreland Restoration Chair, explained the upcoming 2026-27 update to ERCLA's Aquatic Plant Management Plan, which is required by the WDNR to secure future grant money. Refer to pages 6 and 7 for detailed information about this project.

Alan Wirt, County Conservationist with the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department, took us on a tour of the Chain of Lakes' ecology and held a questions-and-answer session. Lawrence Eslinger, Senior Treaty Fisheries Biologist with the WDNR's Bureau of Fisheries Management, provided an overview of the recent Chain Fisheries Population Assessment Survey and Angler Creel Survey. Lastly, Jason Molle, Vilas County Sheriff's Deputy & Recreation Officer, and Tim Price, local WDNR Conservation Warden, offered a tag-team approach to safety on the Chain engaging members in conversation and questions.

A sincere thank you to Braywood as host, Judy Barr as beverage sponsor, all our speakers, vendors, volunteers and our members who make this annual event successful. The 2026 meeting details will be released in the Spring.

## Member Questions from our July Membership Meeting

By Executive Committee

### Can you attach the following to the tops of Slow No Wake Buoys: No Wake 100' from Boats, Docks, Rafts?

The WDNR controls the buoy system on all Wisconsin waterways. The messaging on buoys is standardized to promote clear understanding for waterway users. Educational PDFs and repetitive messaging of boating rules are found on our website and on our Facebook page. The Vilas County Sheriff's Boat Patrol is responsible for boating law enforcement and citations and regularly patrols the Chain.

### What can be done about rafts that hinder boat traffic?

ERCLA is here to educate members and the public but has no enforcement powers.

Per the WDNR website noted below: No WDNR permit is required to place a raft on the lakes if the swimming raft does not exceed 200 square feet in surface area, not exceed 38 inches in height above the water level and is placed within 200 feet of the shoreline. The raft must not interfere with public rights in navigable waters nor interfere with the rights of other waterfront landowners.

For enforcement of this exemption or if you have concerns about specific rafts on the lakes, contact Tim Price, WDNR Warden for Vilas County, at [Timothy.Price@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Timothy.Price@wisconsin.gov) or WDNR Ranger Station at 1861 US Hwy 45 N, Eagle River.

[dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Waterways/checklist/ExemptionChecklist-SwimmingRaft.pdf](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Waterways/checklist/ExemptionChecklist-SwimmingRaft.pdf)

### The bathroom on Cranberry Lake Island is unusable; what is the County Board doing?

This is still an open item with the Vilas County Board of Supervisors. A separate subcommittee may be created to develop a plan for signage, stairs and pier repair work, picnic upgrade, etc. We will continue to monitor this issue and suggest members contact the Town of Washington Supervisor with their concerns.

*Continued on Page 5*

## ERCLA Apparel & Merchandise

Support the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association by proudly wearing our apparel or rocking our merchandise! Our new and improved online store is now live with fresh items to choose from – perfect for yourself or as gifts.



We now ship orders directly to you! Start your holiday shopping today at [www.ercla.org/apparel](http://www.ercla.org/apparel).

## Summer of 2025 on Catfish Lake and a Visit with History

By Steve Wagner, Catfish Lake Captain

Many local residents and vacationers are familiar with the visual landmarks of the Everett Resort that have been a constant for generations. I recently had the opportunity to sit down with Jim Constine at The Everett Resort and Marina Bar at 1269 Everett Road to learn more about this historic resort on Catfish Lake.



Prior to 1951, The Everett Resort occupied much of the Everett peninsula, between Catfish and Cranberry Lakes and was considered one of the largest and grandest American Plan Resorts east of the Mississippi River. Fred Morey established the resort and constructed the main building, The Lodge, in 1896, using local contractor Louis Zimpelmann. In 1897, Morey sold the property to Edward A. and Helen Everett. The resort quickly became one of the region's most beloved Summer destinations, popular for people from Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Kansas City and Florida. Zimpelmann continued building more structures over the years and followed the American Plan design featuring a main building with dining, lodging, and social spaces, surrounded by over 30 detached cottages offering idyllic lakeside views.

By the 1920-1930s, the resort provided dining for up to three hundred guests each day and employed hundreds on the resort grounds and dozens more as fishing guides. The resort also included the former Lake Forest Golf Course.

In 1951, the Everett Resort was divided and sold. The main resort buildings and a few cottages remained, while a majority of the guest cottages were sold to private owners. The Everett Resort no longer operates as an American Plan resort, but it does carry historic status in both the National Register and the State of Wisconsin Register.

After sitting unused for 29 years, Jim, Julie and their family purchased the six-acre original parcel in 2018. Over the next 18 to 20 months they carefully revived and transformed the property into a modern wedding venue and vacation rental retreat, preserving its unique craftsman charm. Today, The Lodge, once a dining room, is now converted to a 13-bedroom cabin for large groups and The Sunroom, originally an office, is converted into a unique wedding venue.

As a "Crown Jewel" of Eagle River, The Everett Resort and Marina Bar remains a treasured part of the community's history and continues to be one of the premier vacation rental destinations in the area. The Constine family has exciting future events planned including live entertainment, so stay tuned and do not miss the fun! [Excerpts from UW-Madison Historical Society and [theeverett.net](http://theeverett.net)]

## Member Questions from our July Membership Meeting Continued

**How can we address the floating, choking weed problem, specifically on the Eagle River portion of Yellow Birch and other Chain areas?**

See Yellow Birch Lake Report on page 3. Homeowners can control the weed areas along their shoreline without a WDNR permit, if they stay within a lateral 30' length of shoreline around their dock area to clear a navigational path.



**But hold on...**clear cutting the entire area around your dock may not be such a good idea! Healthy native aquatic plant communities (Native Northern Watermilfoil pictured left) help prevent the establishment of invasive non-native plants like Eurasian Watermilfoil (pictured right). They provide essential habitat for fish, invertebrates, and wildlife, offering areas for reproduction, feeding and shelter. In order to maintain healthy lakes and rivers, we must maintain healthy native aquatic plant communities.



Aquatic plants form the foundation of healthy and flourishing lake ecosystems - both within lakes and rivers and on the shores around them. They not only protect water quality but produce life-giving oxygen. Aquatic plants are a lake's own filtering system, helping to clarify the water by absorbing nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen that could stimulate algae blooms. Plant beds stabilize soft lake and river bottoms and reduce shoreline erosion by reducing the effect of waves and current.

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025,  
AT 7:00 PM AT THE TOWN OF  
WASHINGTON TOWN HALL**



On behalf of the Commission, Onterra LLC representatives present the Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) 2025 Results and the EWM 2026 Plan for the entire Eagle River Chain.

*This meeting is open to the public, no RSVPs needed.*

Watch [ercla.org](http://ercla.org) and [Facebook.com/EagleRiverChain](https://www.facebook.com/EagleRiverChain) for updates and details on the Commission Fall meeting(s)

## Update on Eagle River Chain's Aquatic Plant Management Plan

By Marc Groth, APM Administrator, Duck Lake Captain and Commission Secretary

As promised in ERCLA's Spring 2025 newsletter, we are committed to keeping you informed on our Aquatic Plant Management Plan (APM). For those of you who joined us at the Annual Membership Meeting in July, this may be redundant, but it's important to update as many members as possible.

ERCLA is required to renew our Aquatic Plant Management Plan every five years in order to apply for future WDNR control grants. WDNR grant money is an important step as we fight the Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) population in the Chain. In 2025, WDNR grants saved us 67%.

ERCLA is working closely with Onterra LLC, a Wisconsin lake management planning service, with grant paperwork and the execution of the APM plan updates for 2026 and 2027. Our WDNR pre-application grant paperwork was submitted by the September 15th deadline and the WDNR is reviewing the proposal. The final grant application, due November 15th, is in process.

The APM project scope is as follows:

- A. Trophic Water Quality Assessment:** This includes a summary of the Secchi Disk data for all 10 lakes along with the chemistry testing data for Cranberry, Scattering Rice, Otter and Watersmeet. This data is an important piece of the plan update, so we have asked our Citizens Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) volunteers to continue to consistently execute their testing process.
- B. Aquatic Plant Surveys:** In 2026 Onterra's point intercept aquatic plant survey and early and late Summer EWM mappings will occur with data analysis.
- C. General Use Stakeholder Survey:** A stakeholder survey will be executed to gain perceptions and preference from Eagle River Chain users. A planning committee has been formed to work with Onterra to help develop and review the stakeholder survey. In the first meeting, we will learn about the study results and assist in creating a framework for the implementation plan. At the second meeting, we will review and provide comments on the draft of the plan. The planning committee represents all 10 lakes.
- D. Project deliverables:** In Fall of 2027, a first draft will be released for a required 21-day public comment period and a 45-day WDNR review. Lastly, a wrap-up meeting for final review and comments will be incorporated and the project finalized by November 2027.

Also refer to Marc's companion article on page 7 for committee and timeline information.

## Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Stewardship Award Winner

By Executive Committee

ERCLA Duck Lake Captain and Shoreland Restoration Chair, Marc Groth, was awarded the 2025 Land & Water Conservation Stewardship Award-Volunteer category by the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Committee.



*Pictured: Holly Tomlanovich, Vilas County Board Supervisor, Marc Groth, and Quita Sheehan, Vilas County Conservation Specialist.*

Our 2025 Spring Newsletter ran a series of articles about our Healthy Lakes & Shoreland Restoration program headed by Marc. Please refer to the News tab on [ercla.org](http://ercla.org) website to read or revisit the articles about our shoreland program.

The Stewardship Award was presented to Marc at the Vilas County Board meeting on Tuesday, May 27th at the County Courthouse. Marc was celebrated for his involvement with the Land & Water Conservation Department's shoreline restoration and management program, as well as creating ERCLA's shoreland program, a task with a steep learning curve.

"We so appreciate the commitment Marc made to learn all the ins and outs of shoreline management," said Cathy Higley, Lake Conservation Specialist. "By creating an ERCLA Healthy Lakes program, he freed up our resources for implementing Healthy Lakes on other waterbodies. And his enthusiasm spread these good ideas to many riparians on the Chain."

"In a nutshell, Marc multiplies the accomplishments of our small department, and we appreciate him as a partner!" said Quita Sheehan, Conservation Specialist.

By spreading the concept of native shoreline buy ins through his work, he aided in rehabilitating the native vegetation at the T-Docks and inspiring other volunteers to help with the weeding and planting. As a side note, Marc is a volunteer Acoustic Bat monitor on Duck Lake for Land & Water. He recruited several Acoustic Bat monitors for the Chain which supported Vilas County recording the most Acoustic Bat surveys in the state.

Many of Marc's family, friends and ERCLA members were in attendance for this presentation. We all congratulate Marc for his unique strategies, viewpoints and enthusiasm on protecting the environment, waters and shoreland of our Eagle River Chain of Lakes.



# ERCLA's Aquatic Plant Management Plan Updates Part Two

By Marc Groth, APM Administrator, Duck Lake Captain and Commission Secretary

Aquatic Plant Management (APM) Plan updates will be a recurring theme with ERCLA for the next two years. Below is the scheduling worksheet with tasks and their estimated completion dates. Watch for periodic news releases via our website, bi-annual newsletters and Facebook page. Also read my other APM article on page 6.

## The members of the APM Planning Committee are:

Marc Groth - ERCLA APM Administrator and Duck Lake Captain

Bill Krostue - Lynx Lake Captain

Jody Voight - ERCLA President and Otter Lake Co-Captain

Tom Batterman - Eagle Lake Captain

Tom Hipp - ERCLA Communications Co-Chair

Steve Skora - Catfish Lake Co-Captain

Dave Mueller - ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain

Skip McCann - Watersmeet Lake Captain

Michael Queoff - ERCLA VP-Operations and Cranberry Lake Captain

Mark Slonski - Voyageur Lake Captain

Jim Logan - ERCLA member on Yellow Birch Lake

Howard Van Dyke - Scattering Rice Captain

This graph provides guidance and the approximate timeline for activities that fall within the APM project's scope:

TASKS for first 9 months of 2026:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Waterfront Property Owners (Riparian) Stakeholders Survey									
Early Season EWM Mapping Survey with ERCLA Volunteers									
Whole Lake Point Intercept Survey with Onterra									
Late Season EWM Mapping Survey with Onterra									
<b>TASKS and Timeline for Fall 2026 and into 2027 will be in our Spring Newsletter</b>									
Aquatic Plant Data Analysis & Results Writing									
Citizens Lake Monitoring Network									
Water Quality Results Workup									
Planning Committee (2) In-Person Meetings with Onterra LLC									
Implementation Plan Development by Planning Committee									
Release of Official First Draft of Citizen Lake Monitoring Plan									
21 Day Public Comment Period & 45 day WDNR Agency Review									
Incorporate Review Comments & Finalize APM Plan									
Wrap-up Meeting During Fall AIS Info Meeting (w/Commission)									

## S3" Winter Salt Tips For Residents Throughout Wisconsin

Reducing salt use is critical to decreasing chloride loads. Follow these steps to right-size your salt use:



**Scatter:** When using salt, scatter it so there is space between the grains. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. If you see oversalting, Wisconsin Salt Wise website [wisaltwise.com](http://wisaltwise.com) offers some simple steps to help educate others about salt.



**Shovel:** Clear walkways and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow removed manually, the less salt you will need and the more effective it will be.



**Switch:** Salt is much less effective when pavement temperatures drop below 15 degrees. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works at lower temperatures.

(Excerpt from WDNR website and 2025 press release)

## Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission 2025 Eurasian Watermilfoil Program (ULERCLC)

By Dave Mueller, Commission Treasurer, ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain

2026 will mark the 20th year of the fight against Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) in the Eagle River Chain of Lakes. Our program is in maintenance mode and the goal is to keep EWM at a low level.

Part One of the program is to quantitatively measure the presence of EWM. We use the professional services of Onterra LLC to survey and report on how much EWM is in the Chain. Part Two is to selectively remove EWM through diver assisted suction harvesting. Areas in Catfish Lake, Cranberry Lake, Voyageur Lake, Yellow Birch Lake and Watersmeet Lake are dense enough to qualify for hand harvesting. A professional diving company, DASH, LLC provides this service.

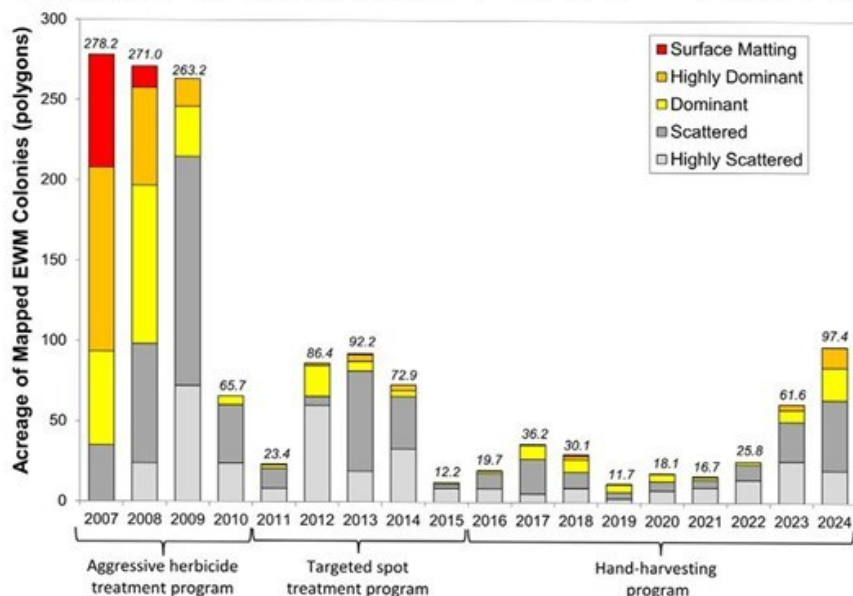
The Commission website noted below has significant resources available including July 2025 survey results for your specific Lake.

Onterra LLC releases individual lake reports in July and in September of each year. Read the DASH Preliminary Maps on the website link below to see the 2025 sites.

The chart below reflects Chainwide results of EWM as of 2024. Onterra's 2025 Chainwide EWM Monitoring and Control Final Report will be available in the Spring of 2026.

**Find your Lake's July 2025 EWM Survey at**  
[eagleriverchaincommission.org/reports/](http://eagleriverchaincommission.org/reports/)

## EWM Colonies 2007 - 2024



## Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission's 2026 Budget and Plan (ULERCLC)

By Dave Mueller, Commission Treasurer, ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain

In addition to the Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) survey and plan administration, the Commission's 2026 project list will include a detailed point-intercept survey of all aquatic plants in the Eagle River Chain. This detailed survey, conducted by Onterra LLC, is a required component of the Aquatic Plant Management Plan Update ERCLA will undertake in 2026-2027.

### 2026 Project Cash Expense Summary Estimate

Hand Pull	\$37,860
Onterra	\$47,413.33
CB/CW	\$900
Total	\$86,173.33

This program is administered by the United Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission (ULERCLC). Formed under a Wisconsin joint powers agreement, it consists of one elected member each from the City of Eagle River and the Towns of Cloverland, Lincoln and Washington. The private sector is well represented by volunteers from ERCLA.

Grant funds from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) were secured this year through an Aquatic Invasive Species Established Population Control Grant. This grant of \$150,000 will be used to cover up to 65% of the project costs for each of the next three years.

**These costs are shared by the four municipalities, WDNR grant funds, ULERCLC treasury funds and ERCLA.** The ULERCLC determines the funding breakdown for each of the entity's sharing costs.

**Annually, the Commission holds informational meetings with current year EWM results and next year's plan. A representative with Onterra, LLC will present the 2025-2026 slideshow at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at the Town of Washington's Town Hall.**

**The public and ERCLA members are encouraged to attend.** For more information about the Commission (ULERCLC), visit their website:  
[www.eagleriverchaincommission.org](http://www.eagleriverchaincommission.org)



## Meet an Exceptional ERCLA Volunteer Dave Mueller 2025 WDNR Award Recipient

*By Executive Committee*

In the Spring of 2025, Dave Mueller was named a recipient of the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council's 2025 Invasive Species Action Awards. In the Volunteer Individual Category, Dave has led the efforts to control invasive species, especially Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM), on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes since 2007. What started as a 300-acre EWM problem has turned into annual manual removal of 33 acres. Dave's efforts include educating almost 2,000 waterfront landowners, getting them involved in managing their shoreline waters and spearheading the bi-annual EWM surveys of the entire Chain with other ERCLA volunteers. In addition, Dave is very involved in the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission (ULERCLC) as ERCLA's representative and currently serves as Treasurer.

The council awards individuals and groups in professional and volunteer settings that positively impact the fight against the spread of invasive species. The winners represent all regions of Wisconsin. They used many different approaches in their efforts, but each winner is united in putting in long hours in the ongoing work against the spread of invasive species. More information about invasive species and resources for helping to prevent their spread can be found on page 8 and also on ERCLA's website [ercla.org](http://ercla.org).

The Board of Directors and our membership applaud and congratulate Dave on his WDNR award. As a leader of ERCLA's work to control Eurasian Watermilfoil, he has been instrumental in helping secure grants that allow us to maintain our level of activity while moderating the economic impact to ERCLA and its members. We appreciate all his years of service, knowledge and leadership with ERCLA, Otter Lake and the Commission.



*June 6th WDNR Award Ceremony in Black River Falls.*

*Pictured: Greg Long, WDNR Invasive Species Council-Green Industry, Dave Mueller, Otter Lake Captain and ERCLA's Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Mark Renz, WDNR Invasive Species Council-Academia Sector and Research Professor at UW-Madison*

## ERCLA's 2025 Northland Pines Scholarship Award

*By Executive Committee*

On May 6th at the Northland Pines Award Night, Jody Voight, ERCLA's Vice President-Operations (pictured left), and Marc Groth, Duck Lake Captain (pictured right), presented a \$1,500 scholarship to Derek Buckton (pictured center). The Board of Directors and our members congratulate Derek on this award and his achievements.

Derek sent us a thank you letter this Summer and expressed his appreciation for the scholarship funds.



"Growing up in Northern Wisconsin, I have been fortunate to have countless bodies of water and acres of land to explore. This allowed me plenty of time to develop a passion for the outdoors. I love all types of hunting, fishing and many other outdoor pursuits. From tagging along on short hunts as soon as I could walk to fishing with my Snoopy pole, I have always loved being outside. I am fortunate to have had a broad range of outdoor experiences and understand their value.

I have seen firsthand that people don't appreciate and they take advantage of our natural resources. I have chosen a career in Conservation Law Enforcement and have been accepted at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point beginning this Fall. I have put a lot of effort into learning about this career by talking with our local law enforcement, my family and the local Conservation Warden. They have been very helpful in answering my many questions about this career path.

My dedication to upholding the law and strong ethical standards made a career in Conservation Law Enforcement an easy decision. A career that serves the public and helps protect the resources I care about is my hope and goal, so my plan is to become a Conservation Warden. I look forward to working in a career field where my day will never be the same, will challenge me physically and mentally, allow me to help keep those around me safe and protected and save the natural resources for future generations to enjoy like I have."

This scholarship fund was created for any Northland Pines High School senior who will continue their education at a university or technical college in the environmental field, to include but not be limited to water ecosystems, biology and/or conservation. The scholarship is awarded in one payment to the educational institution upon verification of the student's acceptance and enrollment.

## Buoy Report

By Michael Queoff, VP-Operations

As we are enjoying the beautiful Fall season, it is also time to reflect on another enjoyable and safe boating Summer on the Eagle River Chain. There are currently no new additions or changes to buoy placement for the Chain that we are aware of for next year. Hopefully there is a balance between navigation and safety for the near future.

Please remember ERCLA assists with the placement and removal of buoys on our Chain, maintenance of buoys during the Summer and contributes monetarily to this program. However, please note that the decision to add or remove buoys on the Chain and the location of individual buoys is managed between the City of Eagle River, the three local townships and the WDNR.

The maintenance of buoys, lights and physical placement has been challenging this Summer. Our buoys appear to have become much more mobile than in prior years, with several requiring continual relocation. We have also needed to replace a number of lights and protective cages on buoys this season. ERCLA helps fund the Washington Township Buoy Program to enhance and promote safe navigation around our Chain. We would hope to see those funds used to maintain and replace buoys due to age and necessity. It is unfortunate that some of it is required to repair and replace what may be intentional damage from boaters.

Please help us monitor buoys and reach out to an ERCLA Board member if you notice missing or damaged buoys or if you see someone intentionally vandalizing a buoy. A simple picture from a distance with no interaction or confrontation would be very helpful. We want to keep our Chain safe for our visitors and for everyone that lives along our shores.

As our lakes get busier and individuals come North to enjoy our beautiful Chain, we rely on every one of you to help keep our waterways safe and enjoyable.

Please keep the emails and phone calls coming, we want to hear from you.



## Bryozoans in the Chain of Lakes

By Tom Hipp, Social Media Chair/Communications Co-Chair

If you've spent time on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes, you might have noticed unusual, gelatinous masses attached to docks, submerged branches or rocks. These intriguing formations are colonies of freshwater bryozoans, an ancient and fascinating group of aquatic organisms that play an important role in freshwater ecosystems.

**What Are Bryozoans?** Bryozoans, also known as "moss animals," are microscopic aquatic invertebrates that live together in colonies. Each colony is made up of tiny individual organisms called zooids, which are encased in a protective gelatinous matrix. These colonies can grow to be quite large, sometimes reaching over a foot in diameter. Freshwater bryozoans are commonly found in clean, nutrient-rich waters and their presence in the Eagle River Chain of Lakes suggests that the water quality in the area is relatively healthy. These organisms filter microscopic algae, bacteria and organic particles from the water, helping to maintain the ecosystem's balance. Their filter-feeding habits can even improve water clarity in localized areas.

**Are Bryozoans Harmful?** No, bryozoans are not harmful to humans, animals, or the ecosystem. In fact, their presence can indicate good water quality. They are not invasive and are considered native to many freshwater systems in North America, including Wisconsin. Unlike some aquatic species that cause ecological or economic harm, bryozoans are benign and even beneficial in some ways. However, their gelatinous colonies can be startling to lake users who are unfamiliar to them. The slimy texture and appearance might be mistaken for something harmful, but they are completely harmless.

**Should We Be Concerned?** They are a natural and non-invasive part of the freshwater ecosystem, however, their colonies can sometimes clog water intake pipes or attach to structures like docks, which might be an inconvenience for property owners. So, if you encounter bryozoan colonies, there's no need to remove them unless they're causing a direct issue. Removal is straightforward, simply scoop them out and dispose of them away from the water.

**The Bigger Picture:** While bryozoans themselves are not a threat, their presence reminds us of the importance of maintaining healthy lakes and rivers. Protecting water quality is essential for sustaining the diverse aquatic life that calls the Eagle River Chain of Lakes home. Avoiding the introduction of invasive species, minimizing nutrient runoff, and practicing good stewardship will help preserve this beautiful ecosystem for future generations. Visit the [ercla.org](http://ercla.org) website page featuring Shoreland Restoration-Healthy Lakes strategies you should consider to keep your shoreland healthy.

Next time you see a bryozoan colony, take a moment to appreciate its role in the intricate web of life beneath the water's surface. It's yet another example of the natural wonders found only in Wisconsin's healthy freshwater systems.



Otter Lake - Bryozoan mass attached to pier ladder.

Courtesy of Greg Schuenke

## What's New on ERCLA's Website? [www.ercla.org](http://www.ercla.org)

By Communication Committee

In 2020 ERCLA revamped the website, added online payment options and expanded and updated our pages. If you haven't visited it lately, we encourage you to browse the website during these upcoming Winter months.

Here are a few items of interest from our Resource Page:

- **Link to the WDNR "Piers and Docks"** to see if a permit is required before you start your project.
- **Link to a Eurasian Watermilfoil Removal (EWM) brochure.**
  - ◇ How to clean out the invasive plants around your dock and leave the native plant species.
  - ◇ If you prefer a video explanation, on page 2 bottom right of the brochure is an active link to a YouTube video showing proper removal techniques.
  - ◇ This brochure was created with the WDNR, UW-WI Lakes Extension and a non-profit group, Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
- Link to WDNR's two (2) Boating Safety courses:
  - ◇ **Temporary Rental of Boats.** A WI Boat Rental Course certificate is required to rent a watercraft in WI if you are at least 16 years old or born on or after January 1, 1989.
  - ◇ **Or a Lifetime Certificate** from the WDNR by completing the online Boating Safety course.
- **Under Commission Links**, find Eagle River Chain Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) reports specific to each lake on the Chain:
  - ◇ **Compare reports** to see the changes in EWM on your lake.
- ◇ Final EWM surveys are done in September and those results are added to the website in Spring 2026.
- Link to the Vilas County Healthy Lakes to access several important programs including:
  - ◇ **Shoreline Stabilization brochure** with detailed erosion protection techniques; some may need permits from the WDNR.
  - ◇ **Healthy Lakes 5 Best Practices:** fish sticks, diversion, native plantings, rain garden and rock infiltration. These practices will improve habitat and natural beauty and will slow, divert, clean and filter runoff into our lakes and rivers.
  - ◇ **For new lake property owners**, a guide to preserving your shoreline and things you'll want to know about the waters we need to protect.
- ERCLA links:
  - ◇ **Map of the Chain** with member business locations identified.
  - ◇ Copy of our **Bylaws** and **Privacy Statement**.
  - ◇ **Shareable Boat Safety flyers** from prior newsletters.
    - \* Members can print and use handouts to inform family members, friends, neighbors, renters, etc. about rules, regulations and responsibilities when on or by the water.

## Board of Directors and Lake Captains Contact List

Officers	Name	Phone
President	Jody Voight	262-287-4521
Vice President-Finance	Scott Peterson	847-848-4142
Vice President-Operations	Michael Queoff	262-707-4214
Treasurer	Dave Cyrtmus	715-218-2956

Officers	Name	Phone
Secretary	Teri Stecker	920-428-6743
AIS Coordinator	Dave Mueller	715-297-6636
Shoreline Restoration	Marc Groth	847-951-1761

Lake Captains	Name	Phone
Catfish	Steve Wagner	262-444-8882
Cranberry	Michael Queoff	262-707-4214
Duck	Marc Groth	847-951-1761
Eagle	Tom Batterman	715-409-6768
Lynx	Bill Krostue	920-470-3522
Otter	Dave Mueller	715-297-6636
Scattering Rice	Howard Van Dyke	708-557-1613
Voyageur	Mark Slonski	708-738-5925
Yellow Birch	George Katich	847-309-4008
Watersmeet	Skip (Hugh) McCann	847-274-9792
Director at Large	Bill Lochte	715-477-1999
Director at Large	Chuck Berg	312-927-3365
Social Media Chair	Tom Hipp	414-403-1372
Merchandising Chair	Julie Voight	262-308-6566

Co-Captains	Name	Phone
Catfish	Steve Skora	847-293-4393
Cranberry	John Haunfelder	262-442-4016
Cranberry	Heidi Dunn	952-270-6997
Duck	Stephen Burr	715-891-6100
Eagle	Christine D'hondt	773-551-8721
Otter	Jody Voight	262-287-4521
Voyageur	Lynn Kenning	715-891-2560
Yellow Birch	Bill Morgan	847-254-9623
Scattering Rice	Liz Roskopf	715-216-3838
Scattering Rice	Alan Queoff	715-617-2476
Scattering Rice	Mark Brenner	815-298-8582
Watersmeet	Dan Newitt	715-891-0549
Watersmeet	Roger Rosenthal	847-812-4903
Watersmeet	Steve Dalbec	847-409-1500





**ERCLA**  
**PO Box 1821**  
**Eagle River, WI 54521**

## A Brief Discussion on Year-End Donations

*By Finance Committee*

As we enter the last months of the year, if you or a family member are looking for a nonprofit organization to send a tax deductible-donation to, you will be pleased to know ERCLA accepts these donations. We will provide any filings or reports needed that confirm our status as a Wisconsin registered charitable non-profit and tax-exempt corporation.

We regularly receive donations illustrated below. Please consider an option that works for you:

**Employer's Matching Funds program** - Your Employer may match personal donations to nonprofit groups, ask your Employer to add ERCLA to their list of eligible charities.

**401/ 403/ etc. Accounts** - Automatic or Manual Distributions to nonprofit organizations from a 401 and 403 type account can be arranged through your Administrator. Direct distributions may help to meet your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) requirement.

**Foundations** - Local Foundations may use Donor-Advised Funds (DAF) administered by a third party that allows donors to receive immediate tax benefits with the flexibility to support their favorite charities. We already work with some administrators for these DAFs.

**Legacy Gifts** - Make a current or future gift with a charitable bequest or donation of cash, stocks or bonds or a contribution from Donor Advised Funds (DAF).

**Tribute and Memorial Gifts** - Make a gift in honor of or in memory of a loved one.

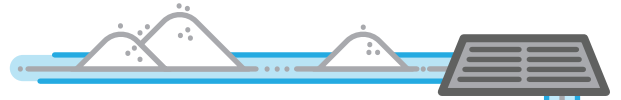
**Estate Planning** - Lawyers, financial planners & tax professionals may have a process that will work for you and your family.

*Thank you for your continued generosity and support of ERCLA. Be assured, we will protect your dues and donations for years to come; as we promote the health and safety of our Chain. Please contact us at [erclaonline@gmail.com](mailto:erclaonline@gmail.com) for more information.*



# Reduce Salt Use - The Impact of Too Much Salt

*By Dave Mueller, Otter Lake Captain*



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is urging us to "Protect Wisconsin Waters By Reducing Your Salt Use". Please note that water softeners and fertilizers add chloride to the environment. This issue impacts the entire state, which is why we are sharing this important information in our newsletter.

Although salt may keep Wisconsin roads, parking lots, driveways and sidewalks safe during Winter, using more salt than needed comes at a cost. Across the state, chloride from salt is infiltrating lakes, streams and groundwater. According to Wisconsin Salt Wise, a coalition of organizations across WI, just one teaspoon of salt is enough to make five gallons of water toxic for freshwater organisms.

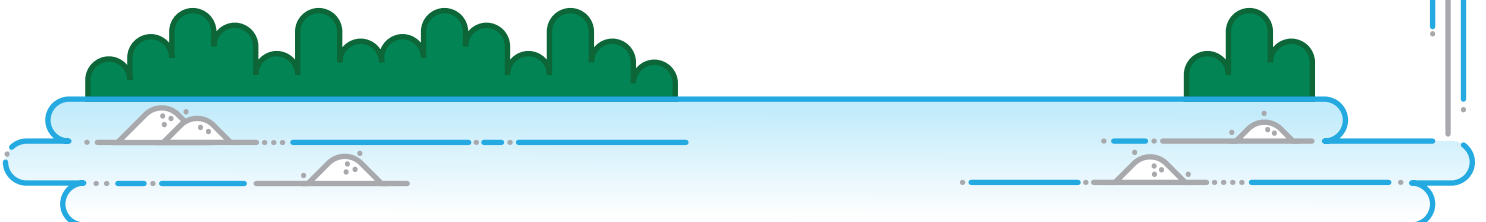
The WDNR measures chloride levels in Wisconsin rivers over time. Recent studies have shown a steep increase in chloride loads. In the early 2000s, the WDNR measured about 600,000 tons of chloride annually. By 2018, that number increased to nearly 800,000 tons per year. Fifty rivers and streams and one lake in Wisconsin have been designated as impaired by high chloride concentrations, primarily from salt used during Winter.

"All 43 of the long-term trend water quality monitoring sites across Wisconsin are showing increases in chlorides," said Shannon Haydin, WDNR Storm Water Section Manager. "Chlorides persist in the environment forever and cause significant impacts to fish, aquatic life and human health. In Wisconsin, we are seeing evidence of Fresh Water Salinization Syndrome which is a condition where our freshwater becomes more like ocean water in terms of its saltiness. Now is the time to make a change and reduce salt use when we can."

These increased chloride loads are partly due to road salting, but chloride also enter Wisconsin waters because of water softeners and fertilizers. Find out if your softener is salt wise with this diagnostic tool: [www.wisaltwise.com/Take-Action/Home-Water-Softeners](http://www.wisaltwise.com/Take-Action/Home-Water-Softeners). Increased chloride levels have significant impacts on our daily lives, including environmental and economic effects. Nationwide, Winter salt accrues \$5 billion in damage each year, contributing to the corrosion of bridges, roads and other infrastructure. Road salt can also impact pets by leading to irritated paws or other health concerns if ingested.

In Wisconsin, 39% of community wells exceeded the WI Department of Health Services' recommended sodium level for individuals on a low-salt diet of 20 mg/L at least once since 2004. This means that individuals managing certain diseases by limiting their salt intake may be consuming more sodium than they realize.

Statewide Reduction Efforts: The WDNR works to reduce chlorides at the source through permitting programs for municipalities and industries. These efforts include tuning or replacing water softeners, identifying significant sources of chloride and implementing reductions, process efficiencies or improvements by instituting sewer use ordinances. Additionally, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation works with counties to reduce road salt application by using brine and pre-wetting road surfaces, significantly reducing salt use.





## **Responsible, Respectful Boating and Recreational use on our Chain**

Prepared by ERCLA Communication Committee

The Public Trust Doctrine is one of the bedrock tenets of Wisconsin water law. This doctrine requires that navigable waters of the state be held in trust for all state residents and US citizens. The public trust requires that navigable waters of our state be held for the benefit of the public and ensures the public's rights in navigable waters include hunting, fishing and other recreational uses. In simple terms it ensures that we all continue to have access and to share our waterways.

The Eagle River Chain of Lakes continues to be one of Wisconsin's more popular destinations for boating and water related recreation. Each summer we see a diverse array of watercraft of all types sharing our waterways. As our lakes get busier with each passing season, we are each reminded of the increasing need to be respectful, follow established boating regulations and accept best practices when sharing our waterway with other forms of recreation.

When operating a motorboat please maintain a safe distance from shore. While current law requires a motorboat minimum distance of 100' from shore, recent studies are suggesting a potential need for greater minimum distances. The current laws were made well before the advent of the powerful engines we see everyday, such as outboards exceeding 350 HP and V-Drive performance inboards, etc.

As you travel throughout our chain you will note a significant increase in the use of shoreline riprap by residents protecting shorelines with some owners reporting damage to their permanent piers. Although various state and local initiatives are underway, to identify safe minimum distances, they have yet to agree upon scientific data to support legislative changes. In the interim, please be courteous to those residing on the lake and co-exist with other recreational users, as we all enjoy the benefits of our Chain.

*During the cold winter days ahead, when our lakes are frozen,  
study the enclosed boating requirements and obtain a WI boating safety education and certification.  
Prepare your family members now, for the upcoming year.*

### **Navigation Rules - Know the Rules of the Road before you launch**

There are two terms that help explain these rules:

**Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed

**Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down or changing course

#### **Meeting Head-On**

Power vs. Power: Neither vessel is the stand-on vessel.  
Both vessels should keep to the starboard (right).

#### **Crossing Situations**

Power vs. Power: The vessel on the operator's port (left) side is the give-way vessel.  
The vessel on the operator's starboard (right) side is the stand-on vessel.

#### **Overtaking**

Power vs. Power: The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel.  
The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.

**Personal Watercraft is give-way vessel to boats, due to quicker maneuverability and size**  
**Powered vessels and sailing vessels are give-way vessels to unpowered vessels**





## **Boating Safety Certificate is required for everyone born on or after January 1, 1989**

Persons born on or after January 1, 1989 are required to successfully complete a boater education course.

Sign-up for Online classes at WI DNR: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/safetyEducation>

A person born before January 1, 1989 is exempt from the safety course requirement.

## **Know the Law - Excerpts from DNR Handbook of WI Boating Laws and Responsibilities**

### **Unlawful Operation identifies the following as dangerous practices and are illegal:**

- **Negligent or Reckless Operation of a vessel:**
  - chasing, disturbing wildlife;
  - weaving a vessel through congested waterway traffic;
  - swerving at the last minute to avoid collision;
  - creating hazardous wave or wake conditions while approaching or passing vessels
  - jumping a wake of vessel towing skier, inner tube, surf, wake or knee boarder or similar device
  - operating boat with person(s) riding on bow, deck, gunwale or tops of seat backs while underway
- **It's Illegal to operate at a speed greater than slow, no wake when:**
  - operating vessel repeatedly in circuitous manner within 200' of another vessel or person in water
  - operate a vessel within 100' of swimmer if not assisting them
  - operate a vessel or motorboat within 100' of shoreline, any dock, raft or pier
  - operating at a distance from other vessels or at a speed that exceeds safe and reasonable limits given the waterway traffic, weather and boating conditions;
- **Overloading:**
  - loading the vessel beyond recommended capacity. Limit boat to capacity or weight load.

### **Who May Operate and Age Restrictions**

- A person born before January 1, 1989, is exempt from the safety course requirement.
- It is illegal for a parent or guardian to allow child to operate a vessel in violation of laws

### **Motorboats (Other Than a Personal Watercraft)**

- A person younger than 10 years may **not** operate a motorboat.
- A person 10 or 11 years old may operate a motorboat only if:  
accompanied by parent, guardian, or person at least 18 years old who is designated by parent or guardian **and** the parent, guardian, or designated adult holds valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989.
- A person 12–15 years old may operate a motorboat only if:  
completed a boating safety course that is accepted by the Wisconsin DNR or  
accompanied by parent, guardian or designated adult **and** the parent, guardian or designated adult holds valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989,
- A person who was ***born on or after January 1, 1989 and who is 16 years of age or older may operate a motorboat only if:*** has completed a boating safety course accepted by Wisconsin DNR or is accompanied by another person in the motorboat who is at least 18 years of age **and** that person holds a valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989.

### **Slow-No-Wake (SNW) is a legally defined term:**

- “The speed at which a boat moves as slowly as possible while still maintaining steerage control”
- This means slowing a boat to a speed that creates minimal white water behind the vessel

**Required Equipment:** The *operator* must check that the legally required equipment is on board

- **Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)**

- All vessels (including canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards) must have at least one USCG–approved wearable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device (PFD) for each person on board
- In addition to the requirement for PFDs, one USCG–approved throwable Type IV device must be on board vessels 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks) and be immediately available.
- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and readily accessible. ***The PFDs must be of the proper size for the intended wearer.*** Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size
- Federal law requires children under the age of 13 to wear a USCG–approved PFD while underway in an open vessel on federally controlled waters. It is strongly recommended that children also wear PFDs while on state waters.
- If a person chooses to wear a PFD that is not USCG approved (when not specifically required), a properly fitting USCG–approved PFD must be carried on board the vessel to meet the state and federal carriage requirements.
- Sailboarders and windsurfers are exempt from PFD requirements but are encouraged to wear PFD

- **Navigation Lights**

- The required navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility.
- All Vessels When Not Underway - All vessels are required to display a white light visible from all directions whenever they are moored, anchored, or drifting outside a designated mooring area or more than 200 feet from shore between sunset and sunrise.

- **Requirements for Towing Skiers** - Vessel operators towing a person(s) on water skis, knee or wake board, surfboard or any other device have additional laws:

- A person may not be towed behind a vessel between sunset and sunrise.
- When a vessel is towing a person on water skis, surfboard, or other device the operator must have another competent person on board to act as an observer or have wide-angle rearview mirror
- Those towing skiers on water skis, surfboard or similar devices and those being towed, must act in a safe and prudent manner:
  - Vessels towing persons may not come within 100' of any occupied anchored boat, any PWC, or any marked swimming area or public boat landing.
  - Persons being towed behind a vessel on water skis, surfboard or other device, or their towing rope, may not come within 100 feet of a PWC or another vessel

- **Avoid Propeller Strike Injuries:** Most propeller strike accidents result from operator error.

- Victims include swimmers, scuba divers, fallen water-skiers, boat operators or passengers.
- Most propeller accidents can be prevented by following basic safe boating practices.
- Maintain a proper lookout. The primary cause of propeller strike accidents is operator inattention.
- The engine is off so the propeller is not rotating when passengers are boarding or leaving a boat.
- Never start a boat with the engine in gear.
- Slow down when approaching congested areas and anchorages.
- Always be alert for swimmers and divers.

- **Obstructing Navigation** *It is illegal to:*

- Operate vessel in such a way that it will interfere with the safe navigation of other vessels.
- Anchor an unoccupied vessel in the traveled portion of a river, channel, or traffic lane in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (other than a mooring buoy), beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
- Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.
- **Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid**

**Personal Watercraft - Rules that apply to PWC:**

*A person born before January 1, 1989, is exempt from the safety course requirement.*

***Parental supervision is not a substitute for a boating safety class and certification***

- A person younger than 12 years may not operate a personal watercraft (PWC).
- A person 12–15 years old may operate a PWC only if:  
completed a boating safety course that is accepted by the Wisconsin DNR
- **A person at least 16 years old or born on or after 1-1-1989 may operate a PWC only if:  
completed a boating safety course that is accepted by the Wisconsin DNR**
- A person younger than 16 years may not rent or lease a PWC
- Every person on board a PWC must wear a USCG–approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD that is in good and serviceable condition and fits each person properly
- An operator of a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type Engine Cut-Off Switch (ECOS) must attach the lanyard to person, clothing, or PFD of operator.
- A PWC operator may not tow a person on water skis or other devices unless:  
The PWC is designed and recommended by the manufacturer to accommodate at least three people and a competent observer is on board and in a position to observe the person being towed or the PWC is equipped with a wide-angle rearview mirror.
- A PWC operator must always face forward.
- A PWC may not be operated between sunset and sunrise
- A PWC may not be operated at faster than “slow, no wake speed” within  
100 feet of any other vessel on any waterbody  
100 feet of a dock, pier, raft, or restricted area on any lake  
200 feet of shore on any lake

**PWC must be operated responsibly; maneuvers that endanger people or property are prohibited, such as:**

- Operating vessel repeatedly in circuitous manner within 200’ of another vessel or person in water
- Jumping a wake with a PWC within 100 feet of another vessel
- Weaving a PWC through congested waterway traffic
- Steering toward another object or person in the water and swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
- Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife
- Operating within 100’ of a vessel that is towing a person on water skis, inner tube, wakeboard or similar device and within 100’ of the tow rope or person being towed

**To help prevent spreading (AIS) Aquatic Invasive Species, WI law requires that you:**

- Inspect your vessel, trailer, and equipment, and remove any attached plants and animals before launching and before leaving the area and traveling on a public highway.
- Drain all water from all boats, motors, trailers, boat equipment, and fishing equipment before you transport the boat, trailer, or equipment away from that body of water or its shore.
- Drain all water from any boat being transported over land before the boat enters WI from another state.
- When you leave a body of water that contains aquatic invasive species, you also should disinfect by:
  - Rinsing your vessel, propeller, trailer, and equipment with hot water (at least 104° Fahrenheit)
  - Air-drying your vessel and equipment for at least five days.

**Unsafe Conditions require you to return to launch location or take corrective action *immediately*:**

- If vessel is overloaded or if insufficient Personal Flotation Devices, fire extinguishers or navigation lights

The insert is an excerpt and not intended to be used as study guide for an exam.

Use this link to the current WI DNR Handbook of Wisconsin Boating Laws and Responsibilities for detailed information: <https://widnr.widen.net/s/0vw8hwrae3>