



April, 2025

**Friends of Lake Eau Claire
Lake Eau Claire Association, Inc.**

P.O. Box 229

Augusta, WI 54722

www.lakeeauclaire.org

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Lori Bechtel

Spring is finally here—and wow, doesn't it feel good? The lake is starting to come back to life. The ice has melted, the birds are back with their morning songs, and there's that familiar sparkle on the water when the sun hits just right. It's the kind of magic you can only find this time of year.

The docks are going in, neighbors are reappearing and there's the unmistakable smell of campfires in the air again. Whether you're opening your cabin up for the season, getting your boat ready, having your first bonfire of the season, or just sipping coffee on the porch wrapped in a hoodie, there's something special about these early spring days at the lake. This is the time of year when everything starts to feel alive again so let's shake off the last of that winter dust and ease into the season—slow mornings, muddy boots, chilly dips, and all.

I'm happy to report that our board and volunteers have been busy preparing for the 2025 fundraising season. We have a lot going on so please read through the newsletter for all the important information. A few dates to keep in mind:

- Our annual business sponsorship program just kicked off with renewals happening now.
- Our 7th annual calendar raffle is now available!
- Our annual meeting and picnic will be August 16th.
- Our 11th annual golf fundraiser will be held on August 23rd.
- Our 2025 membership drive will begin soon. When you see our solicitation, please don't hesitate to renew or help us recruit others on the lake that might not be members. It is only \$25!
- Our 2025 fireworks fundraiser is still in progress. See details later but donations can be made at:
www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2025

Thank you again for your support! I look forward to seeing you on the lake and at our events!



SAVE THE DATE!

2025 Lake District Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars now to attend the Lake Eau Claire Protection and Rehabilitation District Annual Meeting

WHERE: Large Pavilion at Lake Eau Claire County Park on County Highway SD, Augusta, WI

WHEN: Saturday, August 15, 2025, at 2:00PM

DETAILS: Eligible voters will approve the budget and mill rate, elect board members(s), discuss lake business, and act on any agenda items.

2025 Annual Friends of Lake Eau Claire Picnic

The Friends of Lake Eau Claire Annual Meeting and Picnic will coincide with the Lake Eau Claire Protection and Rehabilitation District Meeting again this year. We hope to see you there!

WHERE: The Large Pavilion at Lake Eau Claire County Park on County Highway SD

WHEN: Saturday, August 16, 2025

Friends Social – Immediately following district meeting (**approximately 3:00PM**)

Picnic Dinner – **5:00 pm**

The Lake Association Annual Meeting immediately follows the meal.

COST: FREE but be sure to bring some cash to renew memberships, get in on great raffles, and donate to a great community fund!

RESERVATIONS: Not needed, but feel free to email lakeeccassociation@gmail.com to let us know you are coming.

MENU: Summer Picnic Taco Bar catered by Tugger's Brian's & Trisha's Café & Catering



Have you heard?

Have you heard about the Fairchild Sportsmen's Club's annual "Kids Fishing Contest"? It is their biggest community event of the year, and it takes place on the first Saturday in June. The date corresponds with Wisconsin's free fishing weekend. Nobody needs a fishing license. It's all about the kids! Approximately 300 kids from the surrounding communities attend. Their goal this year is that every kid will get a fishing pole, and they are hoping to increase other prizes as well. The Friends of Lake Eau Claire board believes teaching a kid to fish is a worthy cause. These days, anything we can do to get kids outside and off devices is a good thing! Because of this, we recently approved a \$250 donation to their event.

If you feel this is a worthy cause and want to send a personal donation, you can do so to the Fairchild Sportsmen's Club, PO Box 134, Fairchild, WI 54741. They are a non-profit organization to donations are deductible.

Thank you to this Club for such an outstanding event and Good Luck to all the kids!

Mardi Gras Celebration Beats the Winter Blahs

The air was crisp, and the temperature was low, but the spirits were high for those who celebrated Mardi Gras at the Friends of Lake Eau Claire Social on Saturday, March 1. It was a party atmosphere complete with beads and colorful clothing. The Harvest Moon Pub & Eatery was hopping all afternoon, and lake supporters gathered to enjoy generous raffles, great conversation, delicious food, and cold drinks. The event featured the ever-popular 50/50 and basket raffles, and one lucky winner became the proud new owner of a paddleboard!

It was a welcome winter respite to meet new friends and lake enthusiasts, and to get reacquainted after the long winter months. The party gave everyone the opportunity to also sign up as new members, contribute to the fireworks fund, and to reload the lake rehabilitation funds.

A big thank you to the volunteers (Cheryl and Dave Claude, Al and Jill Weisenbeck, Vicki and Mark Reed, Kim LaLonde, Heidi Conner, Cathy, Mike, and Lauren Lea). These volunteers worked tirelessly to sell tickets and recruit new members. Also, many thanks to the people who donated baskets for the raffles, including the Harvest Moon, Jill Benzchawel, Heidi Conner, and Cheryl Claude.



Esser Insurance & Dickens Insurance



Lake District Update

Winter Dredging Successes and Challenges

Mike Lea - District Chairman

This winter marked another successful season of dredging, with some significant progress and a few projects still to finish.

Eagle's Nest Trap

The long-awaited Eagle's Nest Trap was finally completed. This trap will provide protection for both the Rookery and the Skid Row Boat Landing. The contractor, Krueger Steinfest, encountered challenging conditions, but managed to remove the planned 10,000 cubic yards of sediment to complete the trap.



Muskrat Creek

Another bucket-list project came together this winter as well. We opened the mouth of Muskrat Creek, which will allow boating access for the first time in many years. The Skid Steer Guy removed 3,500 cubic yards of sand from the mouth of the creek. This project was funded by The Friends of Lake Eau Claire.



Skid Row Trap

The Skid Steer Guy also cleaned out the trap above the Skid Row Boat Landing for the second time, removing 15,000 cubic yards of sediment. This will help maintain and improve navigation below the trap. We're exploring options for a new route to access the Skid Row Trap without using the boat landing in the future.



Hay Creek

The west side delta of Hay Creek remains unfinished due to permit time constraints. Despite this, the project is slated for completion next winter to improve lake access for the homes in this area.

Results

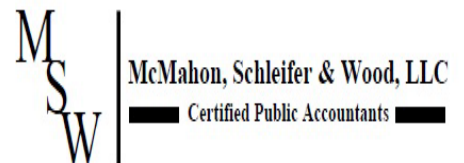
The dredging efforts are showing big improvements in the lake and river. Bathymetric mapping shows deeper channels with rocky bottoms upstream, which helps with navigation and fish spawning. If you want to see the work, drive around to our deposit sites and imagine those piles of sand in our lake!

The Skidsteer Guy

Park Ridge Distributing, Inc.
Locally Owned & Operated Since 1946

Friends of Lake Eau Claire **2025 Calendar Raffle Sales**

The Lake Eau Claire 2025 August Calendar Raffle sales have started! Thank you to everyone who has already purchased tickets and/or sold calendars! If you haven't heard, during the month of August, we draw a winner(s) daily. Every weekday we draw one \$100 winner and on Saturdays and Sundays, we draw 2 - \$100 winners. If you win, your name goes back into the barrel for a continued chance to win.



4th of July Celebration

The fireworks show is 100% funded by donations specifically tagged for the event.

We are accepting donations for the 2025 & 2026 fireworks show! You can mail a donation to PO Box 229, Augusta, WI 54722 or donate here:

www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2025

Please consider making a donation to the Lake Eau Claire Association Fireworks Fund & then join us for a great show in 2025. Please encourage Friends and Family who attend our annual fireworks show to consider a donation as well! A small amount can go a long way!



Boat Parade Reminder!



Come join the 37th Annual Lake Eau Claire Boat Parade (yes it started in 1988)

When: Friday, July 4th, 4 pm

Where: Lake Eau Claire.

The fun starts at Pirates Island, the one closest to the south shore boat landing. It ends there too! There are 2 divisions: Schooners (boats) and Frigates (pontoons). There will be 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in both divisions. Make your LEC neighbors green with envy when you win a handsome first place plaque – there's one for each division – and it'll give you bragging rights for years to come. After all, it's more fun to win than watch. For more information, call Chris Nelson @ 715.497.9939 or email him at dnprop9@gmail.com

Chris contacted the Friends of Lake Eau Claire recently to let us know that he is looking for a volunteer to takeover for organization of the annual 4th of July boat parade so that the tradition continues. When The Pirates started this fun tradition in 1988, there 16 volunteers that led the effort. Over the years, all have retired from the job and Chris is going to be ready to do the same soon. If this is of interest to you, reach out to Chris. It would be great to help him with a couple of years of parade fun before he full retires from doing it. His contact info is listed above.





Bean & Bacon Days

Celebrate authentic Midwest culture at the Augusta Lions Club Bean & Bacon Days! Immerse yourself in our heartwarming traditions and genuine hospitality of Augusta, Wisconsin! This isn't just a festival; it's a deep dive into the rich cultural fabric of small-town America, where family, community, and time-honored customs take center stage. Bean and Bacon Days in Augusta, WI is bringing you 2 nights of fireworks you absolutely don't want to miss! Plus, witness the hilarious Bean Wrestling competition and lace up your running shoes for the exciting 5k Run for Bacon! This is just a taste of the incredible events waiting for you. Warning: May cause extreme happiness and a sudden craving for more beans and bacon.

See all the activities and entertainment schedule at: <https://beanandbacondays.com/>





Lake Eau Claire Panfish Regulation Change

Joseph Gerbyshak
Senior Fisheries Biologist
DNR, Eau Claire
Joseph.Gerbyshak@Wisconsin.Gov

The experimental panfish regulation on Lake Eau Claire is set to expire in 2026, and a new regulation will take its place. The experimental panfish regulation currently on Lake Eau Claire is a 25 aggregate bag limit, but only 10 can be of one species. This regulation was put in place in 2016 as part of a larger statewide study to determine a more effective panfish regulation to be used as an option on a statewide scale. There were over 100 lakes in the study, and some had the same regulation as Lake Eau Claire, while others had a 15 fish bag limit with only 5 of one species, and other lakes had reduced bag limits during May and June. The goal of study was to move forward with only one of these three experimental regulations based on improvements in panfish populations. The experimental regulation that showed the most promise was the 5 of one species and 15 panfish aggregate limit, so continuing on with the current regulation on Lake Eau Claire is not an option.

The current experimental panfish regulation on Lake Eau Claire showed promise with modest increases in yellow perch and black crappie size structure, but it will no longer be an option after 2025. If nothing is done, the panfish regulation on Lake Eau Claire will revert back to a 25 fish aggregate limit, which was the bag limit prior to 2016. However, there is another regulation in our panfish management 'toolbox' of a bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate. This option is the closest option to the current experimental regulation on Lake Eau Claire although a bit more conservative and the same regulation that is on Lake Altoona. The 10 panfish in aggregate regulation is proposed to move forward on Lake Eau Claire for the 2026 fishing season and beyond depending on the statewide Spring Hearings voting results. Last year, I reached out to the Lake District to gauge local support for this new regulation, and it received a lot of positive feedback. You can vote on whether you want this proposed regulation to move forward at this year's Spring Hearings which are on April 14th in each county around the state. You can attend in person or vote online from April 14th-16th. The Lake Eau Claire panfish regulation question is number 40, and it is nested in with other waterbodies proposed to go to the same regulation. Here is a link with more information on the 2025 Spring Hearing locations, online voting, and a questionnaire:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>



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Phone: 847-782-0044 Fax: 847-782-0055
www.airdiffusion.com

2025 Fish Crib Installation

Attention anyone who wants to join in the fun of improving Lake Eau Claire's fish population by building fish cribs. The first round of shallow and deep-water crib installations is set for the last Saturday in June...June 28th. The second round is scheduled for September 13th. We will gather at the North Boat Landing at 8:30am and if you are a new volunteer, be sure to see Fred Poss and sign a waiver. Volunteers should wear thick boots, a pair of work gloves, a hat for the sun, and a life jacket if it is your intention to go out on the pontoon to lift and drop the cribs in place. Cold drinks and sandwiches will be provided by The Friends of Eau Claire. Contact Fred Poss if you are someone who would make some sandwiches or help serve beginning around 10:30am.

For those who have some leafy brush/branches that we can use inside the cribs, and for those of you who would like to help transport the branches to the landing, please contact Dave Claude at 715.533.9698 or Fred Poss at 715.514.7365 by June 15th.

If you are simply interested in spending a Saturday morning building and installing cribs, please contact Fred Poss by phone or email at fredposs@gmail.com. Catch you later!



JULIE BROWN
REAL ESTATE AGENT

715.579.2746
ECHomeFinder@gmail.com
ECHomeFinder.com



Every year on April 22, millions of people around the world come together to celebrate Earth Day, a global event dedicated to environmental protection and raising awareness about the challenges our planet faces. What started in 1970 as a grassroots movement in the United States has grown into the largest environmental event on Earth, with over 190 countries participating.

Why Earth Day Matters

Earth Day is more than just a date on the calendar—it's a call to action. Our planet is facing serious environmental issues, including climate change, deforestation, pollution, plastic waste.

These challenges affect not only nature but also human health, economies, and future generations. Earth Day serves as a reminder that we all share responsibility for protecting the planet.

Maybe you are wondering what you can do to protect our environment and our beautiful lake. One way is by practicing shoreline protection practices. Below are some ideas and links that might be helpful as you begin your spring cleanup:

1. Maintain a buffer of at least 35 to 50 feet of native grasses, wildflowers shrubs, and trees.
2. Keep at least 70% of your shoreline in its natural condition.
3. Leave fallen trees in the water to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.
4. Leave aquatic plants along your shoreline.
5. Don't fill in wetlands.
6. Minimize impervious surfaces.

The Future Is in Our Hands

Earth Day is a time to reflect, take action, and imagine a better future. It's about inspiring change and showing that a healthier planet is possible when we work together. Whether you're picking up trash in your neighborhood or advocating for clean energy policies, your voice and actions matter.

Let Earth Day be a spark—not just for one day, but for lasting change all year long.

Fishing Opener

by Duane Ives

First off, let's acknowledge what the fishing opener really is: the one day of the year when half of Wisconsin's population willingly chooses to wake up at 4 AM without complaining. It's also the only time you'll see grown adults more excited about worms than children. As Wisconsin's annual fishing opener approaches, we wanted to share some thoughts on this sacred tradition that ranks somewhere between Christmas and the Packers making the playoffs in our state's holiday hierarchy. We know that some of you are already practicing your "it was THIS big" hand gestures for the upcoming fishing season!

As we prepare for this momentous occasion, it's time to get your gear ready. This includes untangling fishing line that somehow formed knots while sitting untouched in storage, and explaining to your significant other why you absolutely need that new lure that looks like a disco ball attached to a miniature rubber chicken. "The fish are really into retro this year," (at least that's what Facebook said).

Wisconsin's fishing opener is truly a special time. It's when our lakes transform from peaceful bodies of water into floating parking lots of boats so close together you could walk across the lake without getting wet. Nothing says "communing with nature" quite like being able to hear your neighbor's ringtone from their boat 10 feet away. And let's not forget the weather! The fishing gods have a special sense of humor, ensuring that no matter what the forecast says, opening day will feature either: a) surprise snow, b) rain that falls sideways, or c) that one perfect day of sunshine that makes everyone sunburned into lobsters by noon because no one remembered sunscreen after seven months of winter. Of course, there's also the traditional "Opening Day Fish Tale Enhancement Protocol." This is where a 10-inch perch becomes a "monster" by lunchtime and grows an additional inch with each retelling. By evening, you'll hear stories of fish so large they nearly capsized boats and fought battles worthy of Hemingway novels. So as we prepare to honor this cherished tradition, we hope you've stocked up on coffee, hand warmers, and creative excuses for why the fish weren't biting. Remember, it's not about how many fish you catch—it's about how creatively you can blame the barometric pressure for catching nothing!

As we head into the opener, a refresher on the regulations -- and don't forget to renew your license!

Fish	Season	Regulation
Bullheads	Open All Year	No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is unlimited.
Catfish	Open All Year	No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is 10.
Largemouth Bass & Smallmouth Bass	May 3, 2025 to March 1, 2026	The minimum length limit is 14" and the daily bag limit is 5.
Muskellunge	May 24, 2025 to December 31, 2025	The minimum length limit is 40" and the daily bag limit is 1.
Northern Pike	May 3, 2025 to March 1, 2026	No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is 5.
Panfish	Open All Year	No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is 25, 25 panfish may be kept, but only 10 of any one species.
Walleye	May 3, 2025 to March 1, 2026	The minimum length is 15", but walleye, sauger, and hybrids from 20" to 24" may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 24" is allowed. The daily bag limit is 3.



Save the date for our 11th Annual Golf Event!

The 11th Annual Lake Eau Claire Golf Fundraiser will be held on Saturday, August 23rd at the Hickory Hills Golf Course in Eau Claire. The tournament is an 18-hole scramble. Signup information will be coming soon but plan to attend. This is always a fun day, whether you golf or not!



Did you know - our CLOTHING STORE is always available?

- New online store
- New logo options
- New clothing options
- Order any time

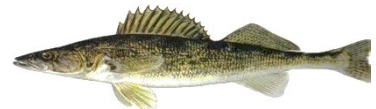
<https://teamlocker.squadlocker.com/#/lockers/leca-feb-2024>



Note: The options are limited to what you see (color, style, logo), but we can add in the future if the demand is high enough. Also, you'll see we've included new logos, which offer people a choice of their clothing!

BECOME A SPONSOR

Sponsor Recruiting is happening! Do you know someone that might be interested this year?



Drop us an email at lakeecassociation@gmail.com and we will reach out to the potential sponsor.

Sponsorship will run from June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026, so please consider becoming a 2025 sponsor.

Current sponsors can be found throughout this newsletter and at: <https://www.lakeeauclaire.org/sponsors>

Membership

By Lori Bechtel

One of the biggest challenges most lake organizations have is attracting and keeping membership numbers high. Studies show that reaching all potential members can be a large feat. Please note that membership renewal mailings and emails will be going out soon. If you have not renewed your 2025 dues yet, please do so! The low cost of membership goes a long way!

EAU CLAIRE RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION (ECRWA) 2025 SPRING ACTIVITIES

By Joe Kirst and Rod Zika



Greetings from ECRWA (ECRWA.org)! For those of you who are unfamiliar with our association, we operate as a 501c3 with the mission of helping the Lake districts and other organizations throughout the 900 square mile Eau Claire River watershed. We work in concert with the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition (eauclaireriverwatershed.org). We consider ourselves the “technical” arm of the watershed.

RECENT ECRWA ACTIVITIES

- Mike Lea and Joe Kirst flew our drone over the five sand spoil sites both pre and post dredging activities. The five sites are:
 - Lake Altoona:
 - Peaceful Canoe Landing
 - Lake Eau Claire:
 - Skid Row
 - Gravel Pit
 - Hwy G
 - Muskrat Creek
- The drone flights help determine the volume of sand dredged. The districts use these values to render payment to the contractors.
- Mike and Joe Kirst spent the afternoon of March 12th bathymetrically surveying Skid row up to the new Eagle’s nest dredge sites. Drone photos were also taken of the areas to record the changes now and into the future.
- Rod Zika is working with Larry Koschak and Phil Strand from Mead Lake on their plans to improve the lake’s water quality by adding an aeration system similar to Lake Eau Claire’s. This could provide a significant improvement in water quality in downstream Lakes Eau Claire and Altoona.
- Fred Poss and Joe Kirst spent last Saturday morning at the Stanley Youth Expo. Fred showed the kids pictures of LECs fish habitat drops. They then practiced their underhand toss with rod and reel. Joe chatted with them about Storm Water and strategies to lessen pollution in storm water. Check out Rain to River (raintorivers.org). The Stanley Sportsman Club, who is a voting member of ECRWA, sponsors this annual event.
- Another part of ECRWA is involved in fish stocking and habitat efforts throughout the watershed. A general meeting is planned for early this summer to address issues like fish crib design, location and evaluation of performance over time. This will concentrate on Lake Eau Claire where we have the most data, but the information should be relevant to all water bodies in the watershed.
- ECRWA is working with numerous organizations to develop a comprehensive plan to measure water amounts and pollutant quantities transported from the various regions of the watershed. Six regions are identified in the plan. When fully operational they will report real-time water flows, temperatures, and various properties like sediment, chlorophyll, nutrients, etc.

The remainder of the spring and early summer will prove busy for ECRWA and its numerous partner organizations and volunteers, without whom we would accomplish little. So, if you would like to become part of the ECRWA effort through a contribution of your time or financial support please contact us through our website ECRWA.org.

Thank you to the businesses below that were sponsors this past year!
We appreciate you.

Muskie Sponsors (\$300+)

Bush's Bean, Augusta	Zimmerman Justice, River Falls
Air Diffusion Systems, Illinois	Sandy Hill Campground, Augusta
Al Berry & Sons Trucking, Augusta	JJ Premium Sealers, Augusta
The Woodland, Augusta	Shilka Flooring, Augusta
Ries Custom Homes, Augusta	Senn Blacktop, Chippewa
Lake Eau Claire Fisheree, Augusta	Clubs Choice, Eau Claire
Park Ridge Distributing, Eau Claire	Eau Claire Design Co, Eau Claire
J&T's Soil Services	American Peak, Augusta
Signart, Eau Claire	McMahon, Schleifer & Wood, Eau Claire
Mike's Buckhorn, Augusta	VFW Post 8752, Cottage Grove, MN
Alternative Resource Management, Eau Claire	Midwest Select, Eau Claire
Kinderman Plumbing, Fall Creek	Lake Eau Claire Construction Co.
K&M Landscaping, Eau Claire	Remax - Julie Brown, Eau Claire
Augusta Lions Club, Augusta	Allegra/Image 360, Eau Claire
Maug Cleaning Service, Eau Claire	Badger Basement Systems
HomeCarePlus, FL	2nd Amendment Properties, Augusta
WHTL Radio, Whitehall	Luxe Realty, Courtney Kneifl, Eau Claire
Apex Insurance, Augusta	The Skid Steer Guy, Mondovi
Lance's Fresh Market, Augusta	Phil's Septic, Augusta
MRS Machining, Augusta	Thorp Home Improvement, Thorp
Donkey Docks Barge Service	
Augusta Feed Mill, Augusta	

Northern Sponsors (\$200)

Unity Bank
Travis Electric
A. Schneider Construction

Walleye Sponsors (\$100)

A & D Docks
Co-Op Credit Union
Harvest Moon Pub & Eatery
Eau Claire Electric
Jennifer Ann Creations

Many of these businesses have already committed or renewed their sponsorship for the 2025-2026 sponsorship year, thank you!



Did you know Membership for the Friends of Lake Eau Claire is only \$25 per year?

As you can imagine, the Lake Association has many expenses during the year. Your membership fee helps pay for things like equipment repairs, website hosting and maintenance, postage and other mailing expenses, newsletter printing, and a host of other things. The dues received are put to good use and spent very wisely.

You can renew your membership or join today by going to the following link,

<https://www.memberplanet.com/lakeeauclaireassociation>, click the “Join our group” button and fill out the form to “Create an account”. You can also join by mailing your payment to: Lake Eau Claire Association, PO Box 229, Augusta, WI 54722.

Lake Eau Claire Membership Dues Renewal/Application			
Name:			
Street Address:			
City, State, Zip:			
Email:			
Phone:			
Annual Membership Dues: circle one			
One Year	\$ 25.00	Three Years	\$ 75.00
Two Years	\$ 50.00	Four Years	\$100.00
Additional Donation:			
Fireworks	\$		
Lake Rehab	\$		
Other Donation	\$		
Total	\$		

Note: Donations to the LECA are tax deductible.

Mail completed form with check made out to Lake Eau Claire Association to the following address:

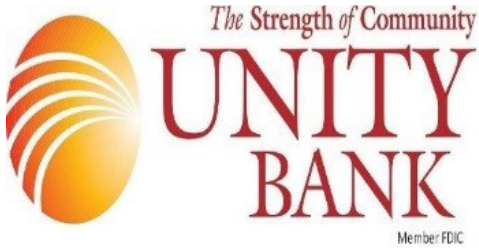
Lake Eau Claire Association

Attn: Jill Weisenbeck

PO Box 229

Augusta, Wisconsin 54722 – 0229

Thank You Northern Level (\$200) Sponsors!



Thank You Walleye Level (\$100) Sponsors!



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