



August, 2024

**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

I hope everyone is enjoying another beautiful Wisconsin summer and having fun on Lake Eau Claire! I know I sure am but summer seems to be slipping by so quickly.

The Friends of Lake Eau Claire have been busy with our fundraisers and raising money for future needed projects. Our fundraisers would not be possible without all of the board members and the many, many volunteers and all of the folks that donate money. To all of you, I say THANK YOU!

Thus far in 2024, we have completed:

- Our annual business sponsorship program and I'm happy to report that this year, we have the most sponsors we've ever had. I hope you have been watching our social media posts about each business and patronizing them.
- Our 6th annual calendar raffle just wrapped up sales and we are now drawing name every day throughout August.
- Our 10th annual golf fundraiser took place in July, and it was another great event even though we got rained out halfway through.
- Membership drive is in full swing. If you haven't renewed or paid your \$25 membership dues, we really hope you do. We put this money to good use. There is a form at the end of this newsletter.
- Our 2025 fireworks fundraiser is now in progress and we have collected only 50% of what we need for next year's show. Donations can be made at:

www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2025

Coming up:

- Our annual meeting and picnic will be held this Saturday, August 17th at the County Park on South Shore Drive. Our meeting coincides with Annual Lake District meeting held right before ours. Please see all the information later in this newsletter and we hope to see you there!

As summer starts wrapping up and kids head back to school soon, I hope you all have a wonderful end to your summer. I also hope that we get a chance to talk in person at our upcoming picnic. As always, we truly appreciate the support you give to us. We couldn't do all of this without you!



4th of July Parade Recap

By Chris Nelson

Aye Mates. The weather threatened, but the torrents paused just long enough for the 36th annual Pirate Regatta to set sail. Nineteen brave captains and their crews took a chance on the weather and set sail. Among those craft were 18 frigates (pontoons) and one brave schooner (boats), causing a dilemma for the judges.

Even though, “Jaws” the tugboat was the only schooner, it was truly unique and would have won in a flotilla of competition. Isabella and Michael Nyseth piloted her in their first foray into the competition. Leading the frigate division was “Lake Eau Claire Outlaws” piloted by Mary Johannis and Karl Wolf. Given the small schooner division, the judges awarded 2 first runner up awards to the frigates and those awards went to LEC Pirates, piloted by Claire Andries. After dominating the Schooner division for the last decade, the “Camp Feller” pontoon took the other second piloted by Chris and Kerry Lea Fellers and crew. Second runner up places went to “Paris Olympics”, piloted by Vicki Reed and crew and “Baby on Board” captained by Tim and Rachel Nelson and Erin Walton. The last but not least awards – honorable mentions – went to “Flags” captained by John Lalonde and the LEC Eagles, piloted by the Kalscheur crew.

We want to thank our sponsors: the Lake Eau Claire Association, Woodland Store, Mikes Buckhorn Bar and Doyle and Nelson Properties.

Having survived the last two years of stormy seas, the Pirates (IASSHBHEP) predict clear sailing next year. Plan for it!



4th of July Celebration – That's a wrap!

We had another great display of fireworks over Lake Eau Claire even though they had to be postponed by one day. The heavy air made for a beautiful display high in the sky!



- Thank you to Joe Vydrzal for getting the island ready for the shooters and putting the LECA pontoon in the water for hauling.
- Thank you to Joe Bechtel for transporting the shooters, the equipment, and the materials to and from the island on July 5th.

Remember, the fireworks show is 100% funded by donations specifically tagged for the event. We are now accepting donations for the 2025 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!

What projects would you like to see done on Lake Eau Claire?

A new survey is being compiled to help give Friends of Lake Eau Claire some ideas on how you'd like to see us spend our time and money. It might be something small or something big. Please watch your email inbox for this survey and please participate in answering the questions.



Fish Crib Installations Resume

Recently, David Claude and Fred Poss organized the restart of fish crib installations. The most recent crib building and installation date was held Saturday, June 22nd at the north side boat landing. We had 12 total volunteers that helped make it a successful event:

- Thanks to Joe Vydrzal for his efforts to connect two pontoons together and pilot the craft around the lake.
- Big thanks to Al Hendricks for allowing us to use a skid steer free of charge.
- Thanks to Joe Bechtel for running the skid steer to load the cribs onto the pontoon.
- Thanks to Rod Zika and Joe Kirst for their GPS work to identify the crib locations.
- Thank you to Matt Solie, Duane Ives, and Nate Smith for their muscle and assistance on and off the water.
- Thank you to Cathy Lea and Cheryl Claude for preparing lunch and drinks for the work crew!

Eight deep water cribs and six shallow water cribs were installed. The deep-water cribs went in the deep west end of the lake. The shallow cribs were installed around mid-lake islands.

Another installation event is planned for Saturday, September 14th at the North boat landing at 8:30 am. Planned to install are four deep water cribs and eight shallow water cribs. Needed are men or women or teens who are strong enough to help push cribs off the pontoon barge. Bring a hammer, work boots, gloves and a life jacket. You will be asked to sign a volunteer waiver that morning. If you are interested in having one or two shallow water fish cribs dropped out in front of your lake property,

To receive an electronic application to receive one or two fish cribs or tree drops, or to volunteer to help work, please comcast.net one week before the next installation date.

Why do we do this, you might ask. *Our lake lacks natural weeds, rock, and wood that create spawning and protection areas for fish. The cribs that we installed beginning in 2012 are now deteriorating and need replacement.*



The Skidsteer Guy

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Lake District Update

Healthier Alternatives to Shoreline Rip Rap and Hardscapes

Mike Lea, Lake Eau Claire District Chair

Increased boat traffic on Lake Eau Claire can lead to more issues with shoreline erosion. It can be alarming to see shoreline being washed away and is understandable that a homeowner would want to stop the damage as quickly as possible. One common method is adding a layer of rocks to the shoreline, called rip rap. If done properly, it may help protect the shoreline from the pounding of waves. However, this technique has definite drawbacks to Lake Eau Claire.

Less Than Ideal Rip Rap

Rocks placed in the area where shoreline meets the water do not filter runoff coming from the landscape the way natural vegetation does. Removing native plants to install rip rap can lead to more erosion. Sand and soil, fertilizers, or other contaminants are washed directly into the lake through rocks. This runoff contributes to sedimentation and algae blooms. Rip rap also does not provide habitat for fish that natural vegetation does. Plants hanging over the water give fish the shady, protected cover that is needed, and keeps the water cooler. Rocks transfer the sun's heat to the water, forcing fish out of these areas. Taller native grasses and shrubs also have the added benefit of deterring geese from coming onto shore.



A better option to preserve Lake Eau Claire shoreline is utilizing natural plantings. Leaving natural vegetation is optimal. If a low-hanging tree is getting too close to the water, you can reach out and we will cable it in as a tree- drop in the fall. Avoid mowing or cutting vegetation from steep banks or down to the water and leave as large of a buffer as possible. Even a 10-foot-wide strip is helpful. Minimize the width of your access point. Open grate stairs and docks help vegetation continue to thrive and keeps shorelines in place, even in high water and under extreme conditions.

The Healthy Lakes Program offers a grant to landowners who need help replacing, repairing, or restoring shorelines. They offer a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that helps cover the costs for landowners to establish natural plantings along their shorelines. Up to \$1000 is available to develop and implement a plan for stabilizing the bank. Grant applications are due November 15 of each year and are managed through the Eau Claire DNR office. For more information go to <https://healthylakeswi.com/>.



Buffer Zones



Natural Vegetation

If you have already installed rip rap on your shoreline, there are suggestions for making the most of this option. These include ensuring that proper geotextile (landscaping fabric) is installed prior to adding rock (if more is planned). Allow vegetation to grow between the rocks and do not trim back or harm plants naturally growing from the rocky areas. Avoid using fertilizers and pesticides in this area. Minimize direct runoff from your yard.



Nature Notes

Common Water Snake

By Mike Harden

Had an interesting encounter a couple of weeks ago while fishing off my pontoon on a nice July evening. I went to the back of the boat to cast a different area when I noticed a large, muscular snake lying on the deck of the boat, just behind the back door. It was a common water snake; *Nerodia sipedon*. They are fairly common in the Eau Claire River system and its lakes, often seen swimming, sunning on a log or dock, even sometimes up on a tree branch. This specimen was about 30 inches, dark brownish gray with black crossbands and some red showing on the underside. I took a paddle and gently nudged him off the deck and he promptly swam to shore. This snake has been hanging around my dock and shoreline, and my new neighbor has seen him (or her) sunning on his dock a couple of times. Like me, he is okay with snakes, and actually tossed a small perch to the snake, which the snake quickly snapped up and swallowed whole.

Unfortunately, these snakes are often killed when encountered, as people sometimes think they've encountered a water moccasin. There are no water moccasins in Wisconsin; they are restricted to states further south. Of the 21 species of snakes found in Wisconsin, only two are venomous; those both being rattlesnakes; the timber rattler and the massasauga rattlesnake. I have handled water snakes but generally give them their distance. They do bite when agitated and have teeth which can cause a painful bite. They also may excrete a powerful, foul musk as a way of discouraging predators, which include large fish, birds, skunks, raccoons, foxes, otters, and others. People exhibiting Ophidiophobia (fear of snakes), often needlessly kill them as well.

Water snakes feed primarily on fish, crayfish, and amphibians. They play a role in helping maintain a balance in lake and river ecosystems. They breed in April or May and give birth to live young between August and October. Each female may give birth to anywhere from 5 - 60 young, depending on her size. Mortality is high for the young, but a few individuals have been found to live over 10 years. A large adult may reach over 40 inches in length. Being cold blooded, these critters find a spot on land like a crevice or animal burrow to spend the winter. They brumate, which is a condition similar to but not as physiologically profound as hibernation. This is often done communally with other members of their own kind or reptiles of other species.

About a week or so after my first encounter, I had my daughter and grandkids out for a trip up the river. As we prepared to stop for a little swim, my daughter went to the back of the boat and suddenly yelled SNAKE!! Sure enough, there was Ed. (I had named him in an attempt to make him less threatening to the girls). He looked like the same snake I had seen before, laying in exactly the same spot he had the first time. He apparently liked that spot and had just hitched a ride. After making sure everyone had a good look at him, I again nudged him off the boat and into the water and he calmly swam away. I am curious to see whether he can navigate his way back down the lake and come back home. Happy wildlife watching!!

Friends of Lake Eau Claire

2024 Calendar Raffle Sales!

The Lake Eau Claire 2024 August Calendar Raffle sales wrapped up on July 31st and we want to thank everyone who purchased tickets and/or sold calendars on our behalf! 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.



2024 ANNUAL PICNIC

Our annual picnic will coincide with the annual Lake District meeting this Saturday!

WHAT: Lake Eau Claire District Meeting starting at 2:00pm followed by the Lake Association Social, Picnic & Annual Meeting

WHERE: The Pavilion at the County Park on SD (clubhouse is under renovations)

WHEN: Saturday, August 17th –

- 2:00PM Lake District Annual Meeting
- Social time – Immediately following district meeting (approx. 3pm)
- Picnic Dinner – 5:00 pm with Lake Association Annual Meeting immediately following dinner.



COST: Free

RESERVATIONS: Not required but if you know you are coming, please email us at lakeeccassociation@gmail.com or text Lori at 612-991-8331. This ensures we have enough food.

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



Esser Insurance & Dickensen Insurance



Lake Eau Claire
Ice Fisheree



Community Support for the Augusta Area Senior Center

The Friends of Lake Eau Claire have selected the Augusta Area Senior Center, Inc. as the recipient of this year's Annual Meeting & Picnic Community Fundraiser. Past recipients of this fund include the Augusta School District Backpack Program, the Community Cupboard Food Pantry, and the Good Neighbor Fund to wipe out school lunch debt. We will be collecting donations on Saturday, August 17, 2024, at the Annual Meeting and Picnic.

The Augusta Area Senior Center is a nonprofit, multipurpose organization that provides services, programs and activities including cultural, civic and family events, health clinics, and much more. Some of their many services include congregate dining, live music, arts programs, games, Bingo, Pickle Ball, diverse options for exercise, programming from local organizations such as the American Legion and Historical Society, massage, and various programs and services from the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). They have a great group of employees and volunteers that serve area residents.

The Center is working to upgrade their portable sound system to improve the accessibility for hosting regular programs and special events. Currently, \$2500 has been secured to fund an upgrade to the sound system, which is estimated to cost around \$4700. We hope you will consider joining us in support of this fundraising event and look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting & Picnic. If you are unable to attend and would like to show your support, please contact Cathy Lea or any of the Friends of Lake Eau Claire Board Members to donate before the end of August.

10th Annual Golf Event!

The 10th Annual Lake Eau Claire Golf Fundraiser was held on July 13th at Hickory Hills Golf Course in Eau Claire. The tournament is an 18-hole scramble. We had 25 4-person teams participate in the event. It was a fantastic day even though the tournament had to be called off after approximately 9 holes of golf but no worries, the owner at Hickory Hills graciously gave each golfer a certificate to return and play 9 holes some other time.

Some notable Thanks go out to:

- Hickory Hills Golf Course for the prestine course and beautiful venue
- Foster Bar for the excellent meal
- Bonafide Band for the fun music
- The countless volunteers not only this year but the past 10 years!
- All that participated in the event or came to support us by buying raffle tickets.
- All who donated baskets & prizes, they are always awesome
- The biggest THANK YOU goes out to Leann Balliett for organizing and running this event for the past 10 years! She has helped us raise over \$60,000 over the years and we literally can't thank her enough! She is passing the torch onto someone new to run and we know those are big shoes to fill! Thank you Leann!



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Lake District Annual Meeting – 2:00 pm Saturday, August 17, 2024

Friends of Lake Eau Claire Annual Meeting & Picnic – Immediately following Lake District meeting Saturday, August 17, 2024

Fish Crib building and installation – Saturday, September 15th 8:30 am at North side boat landing.

CLOTHING STORE HAS LAUNCHED!

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

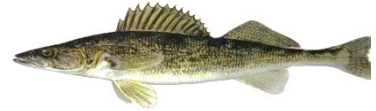
<https://teamlocker.squadlocker.com/#/lockers/leca-feb-2024>



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 for 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, 2024 – May 31, 2025, so please consider becoming a 2024 sponsor.

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



Membership

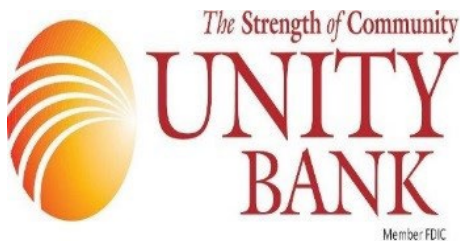
By Lori Bechtel

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. We are thinking about what might work well and are considering having different people take ownership of tasks in the membership recruiting process. Some ideas that might work well:

1. Divide into neighborhoods – divide our lake and local community into segments and recruit a volunteer to lead each area's membership separately. This would allow multiple people to be involved and lessen the load on each person.
2. Welcome committee – introduce new lake property or community owners to our organization by sending a Welcome Kit.
3. Surveys – This would be a way for members to provide feedback anonymously if they choose.
4. Recruit an overall membership coordinator.

We are always open to suggestions and looking for help. If this is an area that might interest you, please reach out to us. We could use your help & suggestions!

Thank You Northern Level (\$200) Sponsors!





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 Walleye Level (\$100) Sponsors!



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