



January 2025

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

**P.O. Box 229**

**Augusta, WI 54722**

**[www.lakeeauclaire.org](http://www.lakeeauclaire.org)**

## **PRESIDENT'S NOTE**

By Lori Bechtel

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all of our Lake Eau Claire lovers!

I can't believe the end of 2024 slipped away so quickly, the holidays are over, and we are now in a new year. Time sure flies by. It has been a while since we published our last newsletter so I will provide a few old updates:

Our annual meeting took place in late August, and we had an excellent turnout. Our board members are back up to a board of 15 people. I am so appreciative to those that willingly volunteer to serve on the board. The work and fundraising that the LECA does annually takes a lot of help, and we couldn't do it without the time they volunteer and also all of the others around the lake that help us fundraise and participate in our activities.

Since the last newsletter, we installed fish cribs, we dredged the small creeks on the north side of the lake, and we approved another \$36k to donate to the Lake District to dredge out the Muskrat Creek delta. We are working on a plan to do the same at the Hay Creek entrance. We can only do these things because of all the fundraising and generous donations we receive from our supporters.

Coming soon in 2025 (look for the article further down):

- The annual Lake Eau Claire Ice Fisheree will take place on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Our annual business sponsorship program will kick off in April.
- Our 7<sup>th</sup> annual calendar raffle just went to print so calendars will be available for sale soon.
- We are hoping to hold our 11<sup>th</sup> annual golf fundraiser in July. More to come on that.
- A 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](http://www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2025)

Thank you again for all of your support this past year and always! I look forward to seeing you on the lake and at our events!

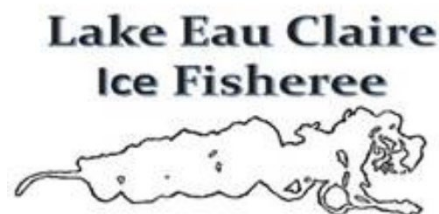


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The **Lake Eau Claire Ice Fisheree** is a family fun event where entrants participate in a 3 hour catch and release fishing tournament. Fish registration will be among game fish (must be legal length) and panfish, both based on length.

The 11th annual Lake Eau Claire Ice Fisheree will be held Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, at the North boat ramp on County Road ND Circle from 9am to 12pm. Line sales have already sold out! Even if you don't fish, you can still come out and be a part of the action either by volunteering to help or to support Friends of Lake Eau Claire by buying some raffle tickets!

Each year the Ice Fisheree donates an excellent prize to the Lake Eau Claire Association which we raffle off to help support, protect, and improve the water quality and fishery on the lake. This benefits all that enjoy the recreational use of Lake Eau Claire! We will once again be raffling an exciting prize and doing a 50/50 raffle. Please come support us and Thank You to all the volunteers!



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## THUMP AND BUMP SPOONS FOR ICE FISHING BY FISHERMAN FRED POSS

Northland fishing tackle has just introduced a new spoon that has some unique and effective features for ice fishermen this season. The new bait is named a Thumper Spoon. It comes in a dozen bright colors and sizes from 1/16 to 1/4 ounces. One special feature of the new ice spoons is that they are made from brass. This is a good quality in my opinion because jigging spoons are notoriously thin and therefore susceptible to bending out of shape after catching a few fish. Brass is just not going to bend even when reduced to a thin surface. Another nice feature of the Thumper Spoons is that they are effective in both shallow as well as the traditional deep-water applications. I particularly enjoy the wide swinging action of these spoons as the flutter and dart down to the bottom. Just a little jigging action will create considerable motion as the spoon slips side-to-side. A third advantage is the new colors are made from refracting colors, and that is a real bonus because typically the bottom of lakes is a very dark place in winter. The final plus to these spoons is that they come with a small flicker blade attached in the middle of the bait. I really like this not only because the blade adds action to the spoon, but also because the blade is up in the middle of the spoon and away from interfering with hook sets when fish bite. Of course, tipping the treble hooks with a few Euro larvae or a couple waxworms or a minnow head is always a good idea, depending on if you are after perch or walleyes. One little suggestion based on my experience is to use fluorocarbon line because it is invisible. And the fluorocarbon can be entirely wound on the spool of your reel, or you can get by with a cheaper monofilament line with a twelve-to-fifteen-inch fluorocarbon leader connected to the mono with a small swivel that keeps the twist out of the line. Line strength? Well, I have found using ten-pound test line for the mono as well as the fluoro is a good choice...not too heavy but strong enough to survive a few little nicks that inevitably come with fishing through the ice.

Catch you later!



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**The Skidsteer Guy**

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## 4<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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!**

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### Lake District Update **Sediment Battles: A Year of Progress**

Mike Lea - District Chairman

Santa's workshop is not the only busy place during this time of year. The battle against sediment in Lake Eau Claire continues as well. Stout Construction will clean Troubled Waters Bridge and Hay Creek Traps this winter. Skid Steer Guy will clean Skid Row Landing Trap and complete additional dredging at the mouth of Muskrat Creek. Gravel Pit and Muskrat Creek Traps will not be cleaned out this year due to lack of rain and low water flow which resulted in the traps not filling up.

The Eau Claire County budget approved \$125,000 for the Lake Eau Claire Protection and Rehabilitation District. This funding for Lake Rehabilitation is annual but not guaranteed. Thanks for speaking up at the Annual Meeting, contacting county board members, and attending the budget hearings. **Your support is crucial.**

On the horizon are the final stages in building the Eagle's Nest Trap. This is the last big step in the sediment control plan for Lake Eau Claire, and one of the most difficult trap areas to access. This trap will help protect the Skid Row boat landing and the Rookery from sediment deposits. It will also reduce cleanouts at Skid Row. The project is out for bids and should be built this winter. A new 1700-foot road was built to access the Eagle's Nest Trap. Haas Sons Inc. won the bid for about \$6200, and the road was finished in October.



New Eagle's Nest Trap Road - October 2024



Located behind Gravel Pit Deposit site near the river

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## ***Northside Creek Dredging Completion***

***By Joe Bechtel***

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, with the help and volunteerism of the City of Augusta, Eau Claire Parks & Forest, Bridge Creek township, Stensen Trucking, and J&J Excavating, we were able to clear the sand on the Beach Creek and Bedpost Creek, both on the north side of the lake. The traps are relatively small, but we remove a considerable amount of sediment each year. We had four trucks that were donated to help our lake district and lake association handle this effort and its cost.

2024 didn't produce too many high-water events therefore the small North Shore sediment traps were not 100% full. We always want to make sure to remove what has been deposited in these small traps each year as the following year could be opposite and cause backward progress in these areas regarding sediment entering the main lake body. Estimated sediment amounts removed: Bed Post trap - 96 cubic yards; Beach trap - 138 cubic yards, for a total of 234 cubic yards of sediment not entering the lake. A special thank you to Scott Williamson (City of Augusta), Kenny Bohl (EC County), Dusty Bergman & Scott Kirchoff (Town of Bridge Creek), Jay & Joel Kaeding (J&J Excavating) and Brandon Stensen (Stensen Excavating) who were the drivers of the trucks. Also, Doug Tollefson who is the owner of Doug's Trucking and Excavating. Doug has been a consistent contractor that has managed this project for several years and does an amazing job emptying the traps. Everything went as planned!

The pictures shown below show the care being taken to avoid spillage and to respect the natural edges of the traps. Thank you to all that participated in this task and thank you to the organizations for the volunteering time of your teams.



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# 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.**

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## *Fish Crib Installation*

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, David Claude and Fred Poss organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> fish crib installation of 2024. We had about a dozen volunteers that helped make it a successful event. Their hard work really paid off!

Eight deep water cribs and four shallow water cribs were installed. More installations will be planned for 2025. If you are interested in having one or two shallow water fish cribs dropped out in front of your lake property, send us an email to receive an electronic application.

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



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## Friends Support Augusta Area Senior Center, Inc. with Generous Gift

At the Friends of Lake Eau Claire Annual Picnic and Meeting in August, donors raised \$500 for the Augusta Area Senior Center, Inc. This donation, part of the Community Fundraiser, is one way the organization gives back to the community.

The gift was matched by the Augusta Lions Club and private donors to purchase and install a new public address system.

Director Kasandra Thompson was very touched by the donation and expressed gratitude for the generous support.



## 2025 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention March 26-28 ~ Stevens Point

### Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention March 26-28, 2025 Holiday Inn Convention Center, Stevens Point

**"The Power of Words: Working for Our Waters"**

The power of words is immense, especially when advocating for our waters. By raising awareness, promoting conservation efforts, and crafting compelling messages, words can inspire action and drive positive change to protect our water resources for future generations.

**LEARN** from respected experts, grassroots organizers, and passionate water advocates.

**ENGAGE** in the workshops and interactive discussion sessions.

**ENHANCE** your network of water-focused professionals.



Esser Insurance & Dickens Insurance



## ***Friends of Lake Eau Claire***

### **2025 Calendar Raffle Sales – Coming Soon!**

The Lake Eau Claire 2025 August Calendar Raffle sales will start soon! Thank you to 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.

Watch for our sales announcement



***Augusta Feed Company***



## Save the Date - 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Event!

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Lake Eau Claire Golf Fundraiser will be held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at Hickory Hills Golf Course in Eau Claire. The tournament is an 18-hole scramble. Watch for more details coming soon!



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### When the Open Water becomes Hard Water

In the depths of winter, when Lake Eau Claire transforms into a vast white sheet and the air crystallizes with each breath, a unique form of fishing comes alive. Ice fishing, a practice that dates back to Native American tribes and Nordic settlers, represents far more than just another way to catch fish—it's a distinct cultural phenomenon that challenges conventional angling methods and creates its own special community.

Unlike traditional fishing from a boat or shoreline, ice fishing offers an extraordinary perspective: standing directly above your prey. Through a small hole in the ice, anglers gain access to a hidden underwater world, all while surrounded by a landscape that closely resembles an Arctic tundra than a typical fishing spot. The experience is immersive and intimate—there's something profound about being able to walk on water, even if it's frozen. What truly sets ice fishing apart is its distinctive infrastructure. The iconic ice fishing shelter, whether a portable flip-over or a more elaborate "icehouse," becomes a home away from home. Some dedicated ice anglers outfit their shelters with amenities that would make summer fishermen envious: heaters, cooking equipment, comfortable seating, and even entertainment systems. These shelters transform what could be a brutally cold experience into a cozy retreat on the ice.

Modern ice fishing beautifully blends ancient techniques with cutting-edge technology. While the basic concept remains unchanged, cutting a hole through the ice to access fish below—today's ice anglers employ sophisticated tools like flashers and underwater cameras to locate fish. These devices provide real-time information about depth, water temperature, and fish movement, making the practice more efficient while maintaining its fundamental challenge. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of ice fishing is its unique social dynamic. While summer fishing often emphasizes solitude, ice fishing frequently becomes a community event. Ice fishing villages spring up on popular lakes, creating temporary communities of anglers who share stories, meals, and fishing tips. This camaraderie isn't just about socializing—it's also about safety, as having others nearby provides security in the potentially dangerous winter conditions. While ice fishing maintains strong ties to its traditional roots, it continues to evolve. New materials make shelters lighter and more portable, advanced electronics make finding fish more efficient, and social media allows anglers to share their experiences and techniques instantly. Yet despite these modernizations, the essential appeal remains unchanged: the challenge of outwitting fish in extreme conditions, the peace of a winter landscape, and the satisfaction of bringing home a fresh catch.

Ice fishing represents more than just a winter variant of traditional fishing—it's a distinct pursuit that combines specific skills, specialized equipment, and a unique approach to the sport. For those willing to brave the cold, it offers rewards that can't be found in any other form of fishing: the serene beauty of a frozen lake, the thrill of pulling a fish through the ice, and the warm camaraderie of fellow anglers sharing in this distinctive winter tradition.



# Website getting a new look!

We are excited that our website is in the process of moving to a new web platform and getting a new look. We are hoping the new site will allow us to connect our website with our social media platform to help us reach even more people. Be on the lookout for an announcement soon!

## Eau Claire River Watershed Association Update

- **Aerator system conduit openings sealed up-** Mike Lea and Joe Kirst completed this in November.
- **Rod Zika submitted a Surface Water Grant application:** this grant proposes to add new river stage monitoring gauges at Mead Lake and Chaney Road. The addition of these sensors would provide online information on river inputs from the south fork subwatershed (HUC 12) and the Wolf River subwatershed. Ultimately, continuous stage monitoring coupled with nutrient monitoring will help us better understand how high-water events contribute to degraded water quality. The lake districts and Eau Claire County Land Conservation provided letters of support for this project. We should hear sometime in March as to whether this project is funded.
- **We continue to work with Lake Altoona and Lake Eau Claire Districts** to survey dredge site sand piles prior to and after dredging is completed. The use of the drone, GPS RTK control points, Carlson software, and EC Land Conservation CAD work (thanks Zach Mohr!). This effort saves the districts money as we have the equipment, and it is completed with volunteer efforts.
- **Rod Zika is actively working with Mead Lake's Larry Koschak.** Larry and his crew are dedicated to improving water quality within the lake. This ultimately helps the entire remainder of the watershed. They are really investing a lot of time and energy in this effort- way to go Mead Lake.





## Kinderman Plumbing

### 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!

Come join us, Northern Wisconsin Ice Racing Club, for the 2025 ice racing season!! NWIRC races every Saturday in January and February. We are open to competitor of all ages and race capabilities. We have classes studded quads, rubber quads, dirt bikes, and UTVs.

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO ALL SPECTATORS.

Sign up - 7:30-9:00

Tech - 9:00-9:45

Practice - 9:00-10:15

Rider's Meeting - 10:30

Racing - immediately after the drivers meeting

For rules, forms, contact information, and more go to [nwircracing.com](http://nwircracing.com). Sign up and awards at Mike's Buckhorn.

### The NWIRC is coming to Lake Eau Claire on Saturday!!

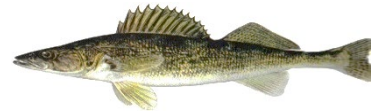
FREE entertainment and some great racing!! Races will take place near the north boat landing.

Check it out!

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## 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](mailto: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>**

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## 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:

- 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.
- Welcome committee – introduce new lake property or community owners to our organization by sending a Welcome Kit.
- Surveys – This would be a way for members to provide feedback anonymously if they choose.
- 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!

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**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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