Marathon County & UW-Stevens Point

Eastern Lakes Times

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Eastern Lakes Project
Where do we go from here?

Shawn Esser; Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning

Lake Classification Study: This is the final year of the lake classification study. Last fall, we rolled out social and scientific results of some of the parameters being studied. If you missed those meetings, that information can be viewed on the Marathon County website. The final reports for all lakes in the study will be complete by December 31 of this year.

In the meantime, to keep the project moving forward, we are applying for Lake Management Grants to provide educational opportunities and develop management plans for all the lakes.

Lake Management Planning: This is where the rubber hits the road!

By understanding research data and identifying what the potential, or real, issues are for our lakes, we will be able to select management strategies to help protect or improve the quality of our lakes.

Identifying lake management strategies in the plan will increase the potential of being awarded implementation grants for management strategies. Activities such as shoreland restoration, aquatic invasive species control, and other lake protection projects are examples of lake management strategies.

Planning Process: Initially, the lakes will be grouped into one of five groups for the planning process. Those lakes with active lake organizations will eventually have an individual lake management plan for their lake. The lake management process will begin in the fall of 2013 and take place through a series of 5 meetings per lake grouping.

Watch your mail for notifications of these meetings. Your input is needed!

To view the preliminary study results visit www.co.marathon.wi.us

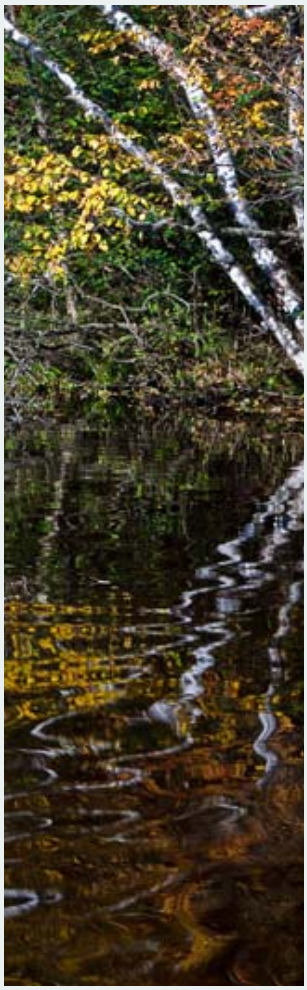


Photo by Roger Zimmermann

Barrels of Benefits

Kristen Miller, UWSP Student

Have you ever wondered about ways to be GREEN yet still keep your plants alive? Have you ever tried a rain barrel?

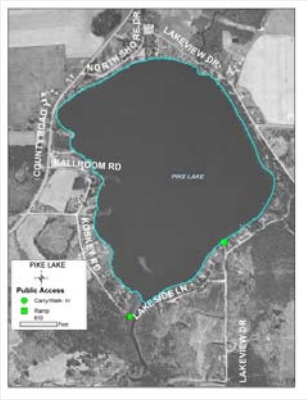
A rain barrel is a container that is connected to your gutter down spouts to collect the water running off your roof. Rain barrels come in various sizes and have ranging capacities from 30-100 gallons.

Rain barrels provide benefits aside from supplying water for watering plants. Rain barrels reduce the volume of water that flows in to the water treatment facilities, help keep our creeks, lakes, and beaches clean. They also provide chlorine free, naturally softened water which is great for delicate house plants, auto cleaning, and window washing.

Aside from these benefits rain barrels also save homeowners money by lowering your water bill and reducing the demand on precious groundwater.

Rain barrels are sold as pre-made barrels or as build-your-own kits. More information and instructions can be found at your local hardware store or on the internet.

www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/ConservationPlanningZoning/ConservationDivision/LakePrograms.aspx



Shoring up the Plover River

Land Conservation in the Plover River Watershed

Alan Haney, North Central Conservancy Trust

Plover River is a natural resource gem. Flowing 42 miles from its headwaters in southern Langlade County, it drains the entire eastern side of Marathon County, then continues into Portage County, joining the Wisconsin River at Stevens Point. Through Marathon County, the Plover is a beautiful, high quality trout stream. By the time it enters Portage County, it is large enough to be a popular canoeing stream.

Protection of the Plover River watershed is a priority for North Central Conservancy Trust (NCCT), a non-profit organization working with landowners to permanently protect land from inappropriate development or exploitive use that would diminish the scenic qualities or environment in central Wisconsin.

Started in Marathon County in 1995, NCCT was organized under the auspices of the national Land Trust Alliance and the Wisconsin Gathering Waters Conservancy to assist landowners whose land was threatened by development or disturbance that would reduce the conservation values the landowners wished to protect.

With federal-and state-approved conservation easements, land can be permanently protected without diminishing ownership rights. Often there are substantial tax benefits for conservation easements.

NCCT was expanded in 1999 to include Portage County, then Lincoln, Adams, Price, Taylor, Waushara, and Wood Counties were included. The largely volunteer organization has a full-time executive director, and a central office in Stevens Point, with dozens of volunteers throughout the region who provide assistance to landowners wanting to secure their land against future abuse.

Not all land is equally important to protect the beauty and ecological vitality of central Wisconsin. NCCT has worked with land-use planning classes at UW-Stevens Point, and with the county planners to identify high priority areas where the natural resources and land use especially contribute to the quality of the region.

These areas have excellent natural qualities and scenic value that nearly everyone agrees should be protected. It is a rich mix of forests, wetlands, lakes, streams, and farmland that provides the picturesque contrast with villages, roads, and urban development that collectively make central Wisconsin such a beautiful and healthy place to live, work, and play. The Plover River watershed is one of the high priority areas for protection.

NCCT is eager to work with any landowner in the watershed, but especially those with land fronting lakes or streams, or with wetlands or high quality forest acreage.

In nearly every instance, the cost of doing a conservation easement can be recovered through tax savings, and usually landowners come out well ahead. NCCT also has some limited funds to assist with conservation easements on land that is especially important for protection of the Plover River.

Landowners who are interested in conservation easements should contact: North Central Conservancy Trust at www.ncctwi.org

Healthy Lakes = Higher Property Values

Shoreland Zoning as a Tool to Protect Your Investment

Lane Loveland & Becky Frisch, Marathon County

Research has shown that properties around lakes with good water quality and clarity, with minimal algae present, are considered more desirable and have higher value.

Vegetative buffers protect and improve these attributes by increasing infiltration, reducing nutrient runoff, stabilizing soils, reducing shoreline erosion, and improving near shore wildlife habitat and fish habitat.

Shoreland zoning establishes standards that are set by the state to improve and protect water quality by maintaining vegetative buffers.

Strategies such as establishing minimum building and other structure setback distances, limiting vegetation removal along the shoreline, and monitoring and limiting land disturbance near the shoreline, all help to protect the buffer.

The Marathon County shoreline standards make it possible for landowners to develop their property while protecting the water quality of the lake and their investment.

Shoreland Zoning Facts

Shoreland zoning applies:

- 300' of streams/rivers
- 1000' of lakes
- landward side of the floodplain.

Marathon County shoreland zoning does **NOT** regulate the **USE** of property (residential, commercial, etc.).

Minimum setback for buildings and other structure: 75' from Ordinary High Water Mark (OWHM)

Minimum vegetative buffer: 35' from OHWM

Eurasian Watermilfoil in Wadley Lake

Kaycie Stushek, Golden Sands Research, Conservation, and Development Council (RC&D), Inc

Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) is an aquatic invasive plant that can form floating mats that prevent light penetration to native species. These mats can also hamper water traffic and recreation.

EWM was found in Wadley Lake in 2010. Chemical spot treatments to rid the lake of EWM was conducted in 2011 and 2012, and was followed up by hand removal of the plants. These efforts have not been as successful as hoped.

Marathon County, Golden Sands RC&D, and Wadley Lake residents have been awarded a Rapid Response grant from DNR to further treatment for the next 3 years.

So far, EWM has not spread to other area lakes and efforts such as those listed below can minimize the threat of spread.

Getting Rid of Eurasian Watermilfoil

Kaycie Stushek, Golden Sands Research, Conservation, and Development Council, Inc

Clean Boats Clean Waters
Volunteer programs give lake groups and concerned citizens the tools and training needed to monitor for and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Removing plants from boats before & after entering lakes help reduce the spread of EWM. These programs have been very successful, and are provided at no cost.

Identification & Monitoring
You can join in on a workshop and learn how to identify aquatic invasive species. Monitoring is vital to find new areas, or re-establishment of Eurasian watermilfoil after a chemical treatment.

Hand Removal
Hand removal of this invasive species is done after chemical treatments. The purpose is to monitor and remove any new regrowth. It ensures that smaller patches of Eurasian watermilfoil do not spread.

For more information, to participate in workshops, or volunteer , contact:
Kaycie.stushek@goldensandsrcd.org

The next Clean Boats Clean Waters workshop is May 17 at 5:30 pm at Corky's Bar across from Wadley Lake

EASTERN LAKES TIMES

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Voice Your Opinion on Farmland Preservation!

If you received a survey in the mail from UW-River Falls about preserving farmland, please complete and return the survey. The information collected from the survey will help to guide Marathon County policy in the future.

This newsletter is sponsored by:
Big Bass Lake District
Mayflower Lake District
Pike Lake Sportsmans Club
Pike Lake Fishing Club
Wadley Lake Sportsmans Club

The Hard Facts on Impervious Surfaces

Shawn Esser, Marathon County

Impervious surfaces are man-made surfaces, such as rooftops, driveways and patios, that prevent precipitation from soaking into the ground and being filtered.

Runoff from these surfaces washes pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and chemicals into lakes and streams.

Virtually any form of shoreland development leads to more impervious surfaces.

Compared to an undeveloped lot of the same size, a lot with a fifth of the area covered by impervious surface has 5 times the runoff volume, 6 times the phosphorus input, and 18 times the amount of sediment input.

All this adds up to reduced water quality, property values, and quality fish and wildlife habitat.

What you can do to minimize the effects of impervious surfaces:

- Minimize hard surfaces like rooftops & driveways
- Use pervious materials where possible (alternatives such as porous pavement)
- Capture and infiltrate runoff (rain barrels, rain gardens, divert downspouts to grassy areas)
- Minimize fertilizer use
- Control erosion at all times
- Maintain a shoreline buffer of native vegetation