

# Proactive policy



Over the past year the Wisconsin Association of Lakes has made progress on statewide lake policy issues including polluted runoff, aquatic invasive species, and shoreland management.

To help address polluted runoff, WAL spearheaded a successful legislative initiative to ban phosphorus in lawn fertilizer. We secured \$6 million to help farmers write nutrient management plans in the state budget and an additional \$22 million for polluted runoff grant programs. We are currently serving on the DNR's phosphorus criteria committee, which will establish the maximum allowable levels of phosphorus for different types of lakes.

WAL has been participating in the development of Wisconsin's forthcoming Invasive Species Classification Rules for several years. We anticipate public hearings and approval of these rules in 2008. WAL advocated for more Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) money in the state budget, which resulted in a 250% increase in AIS grant monies. We were pleased to support a bill that would have made it illegal to transport AIS on highways; we will continue to work with the legislature to pass a similar bill next session.

WAL has been heavily involved in ongoing shoreland zoning rule revision discussions. We anticipate a final rule draft in the coming year. We were also pleased to support a bill that would have set a statewide 100 foot slow no wake zone (with a local opt out provision) to protect sensitive lake shorelines.

WAL has responded to concerns about low lake levels across the state with articles that explore different reasons for water level declines, groundwater planning resources, and factsheets. We are looking into future policy initiatives to protect our groundwater sensitive lakes.

# Ongoing education

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes provides assistance to local lake groups to help them best address the needs of their lake. Over the past year WAL has worked with groups across the state to answer questions, provide examples, and connect lake people with resources and others who have common experience with similar lake challenges.

Some of the topics we have helped our lake group members with include boating ordinances, pier regulations, shoreland zoning, water access rights, conservation easements, lake restoration and management, choosing a consultant, shoreland restoration and erosion control, aquatic invasive species prevention strategies, forming new lake groups and countywide groups, using lake classification as a tool for protecting and managing lakes, and lake management success stories.

WAL also organizes workshops that explore current issues of concern and interest to our lake members. These events provide attendees with the opportunity to ask questions of invited lake experts and network with other lake people from the regional area. Our 2007 events featured presentations on such issues as: low lake levels, shallow lakes management, implementing lake management plans, engaging community members to work for lake protection goals, working effectively with local governments, county-wide lake planning initiatives, and watershed management strategies.

Our quarterly print publication, *The Lake Connection*, covers lake research, policy developments and success stories. Our monthly e-lake letter focuses on lake-related current events.



## 2007 March

- Governor includes \$12 Million to reduce polluted runoff in his proposed budget. WAL worked with nonpoint coalition on this budget initiative
- WAL publishes articles on phosphorus-free fertilizer, anticipated changes to AIS laws, shoreline development, lakes' response to fluctuating water levels, AIS research, and regional success and human interest stories

## April

- Manure management rules (NR 243) adopted. WAL fought hard to pass these rules to protect lakes from manure runoff
- Wisconsin Lakes Convention held in Green Bay
- WAL recognizes outstanding contributions to Wisconsin's lakes with Wisconsin Lakes Stewardship Awards
- WAL presents lake-friendly waterfront living tips at the annual Lake Home and Cabin show
- Analysis of Conservation Congress Resolutions related to lakes

## May

- Bill to ban phosphorus in lawn fertilizer (SB 197) introduced
- WAL developed a lake organization's guide for designing shoreland stewardship packets
- WAL developed a Shoreland Friends toolkit
- WAL publishes articles on using phosphorus free fertilizer, shoreland development density, managing stormwater runoff, economic values of water, aquatic plant studies, boating impacts on lakes, using drawdowns, and human interest stories

## June

- Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference held in Cable
- Polluted runoff funding proposal clears state Joint Finance Committee
- Legislature's Joint Finance Committee approves state budget increases for polluted runoff programs
- WAL produced an assessment and report on the status of county lake classification initiatives in Wisconsin
- WAL advocated for lake member interests as a member of the Fishing Tournament Rules Advisory Committee.

## July

- DNR holds public hearings on shoreland zoning rule revisions; WAL analyzed the draft rules and prepares talking points for members
- WAL advocated for maintaining proposed increases in funding for AIS within the state budget
- WAL advocated for maintaining proposed in funding for polluted runoff programs

## August

- *Lakes Workshop: Reflections of a Landscape* held in Eau Claire
- WAL testifies in favor of SB 197 at Senate Committee public hearing
- WAL participates in Dane County focus group on waterbody classification proposal

## September

- WAL submits public comments to DNR on shoreland zoning rule revisions
- Bill to restore appointment of DNR Secretary to NRB introduced (AB 504)
- WAL a team partner on the Citizen-based Monitoring Conference
- WAL serves on the aquatic plant and algae Species Assessment Group, an advisory committee for the groups developing the Invasive Species Classification Rules (NR 40).

## October

- WAL testified in favor of AB 504 at Assembly Committee Public hearing
- WAL pushed for passage of state budget
- WAL pushed for introduction of bill to ratify Great Lakes Compact
- WAL presented on using lake classification grants at the Wisconsin Counties Association
- WAL presented on funding local shoreland management innovations at the Wisconsin County Code Administrators conference
- WAL co-sponsored Lake Leaders Institute



# Partners for lake protection

Lakes are beautiful natural resources. They are also places where we gather to watch sunsets off piers, tell fish stories, and enjoy fun in the sun and tranquil moments.

Our collective memories “at the lake” are an important part of why so many of us are interested in lake protection. If we wish lake visitors to share similar experiences in the years to come, the actions we take now to preserve or restore good water quality, beautiful views of lake shores, and a healthy fishery are important investments.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes is the citizen arm of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. Good science and good education will lead to good decisions when citizens are engaged in determining the future of their lakes.

In 2008, WAL is committed to strengthening relationships with our members. We are interested in your opinions and concerns about your lake, and Wisconsin’s lakes in general. Guided by responses to our membership survey this spring, we will strive to represent your interests on the most important issues facing our lakes today.

With the support of our members, WAL will continue to be a respected voice for lakes in our state. We are optimistic that 2008 will hold success in the legislature and approval of important administrative rules. WAL remains dedicated to helping our members to be informed participants in the state policy-making process.

We will continue to be a lake education partner with the UW-Extension Lakes Program and Department of Natural Resources.

## Wisconsin Lakes Partnership



## November

- State budget passes. Funding increases for polluted runoff, AIS, and Stewardship
- WAL invited to meet with key stakeholders and agency staff to resolve differences on NR 115 draft
- WAL publishes articles on shoreland management and water quality, watersheds and water quality, factors influencing lake levels (high capacity wells), DNR groundwater rules, AIS research, agriculture and water quality

## December

- Senate Natural Resources Committee votes to send SB 197 to full Senate
- Assembly Natural Resources Committee votes to send AB 504 to full Assembly
- WAL signs on to petition to DNR to regulate ballast water discharges from international ships
- WAL presents examples of local innovation in water resource management at the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association annual conference
- WAL asked to serve on DNR Phosphorus Criteria Advisory Committee

## 2008 January

- Public listening sessions on AIS classification rules (NR 40); WAL prepares analysis of rule draft
- New fishing tournament rules approved by NRB. WAL provided public comments and served on stakeholder committee.
- SB 197 passes the full Senate
- Slow no wake bill (SB 385) introduced
- WAL publishes detailed articles on groundwater planning, factors influencing low lake levels, climate change and its affect on lakes series, AIS research, affects of polluted runoff on lakes, and regional success and human interest stories

## February

- WAL testifies in favor of SB 197 at Assembly Committee Public hearing
- WAL testifies in favor of SB 385 at Senate Committee Public hearing; bill passes full Senate
- AIS illegal to transport bill introduced (SB 454)
- WAL testifies in favor of SB 454 at Senate Committee public hearing; bill passes full Senate
- Great Lakes Compact bill (SB 523) introduced, public hearing held; bill passes full Senate
- *Knocking at the Gates: An Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop*, held in Milwaukee



2007  
A year in lakes

Photo: Angela Komarek

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