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## President's Welcome

Happy New Year!

As you read this, we have wrapped up our first 25 years as an organization. There were a number of noteworthy accomplishments for our association in the past year. These include:

- **We wrote a successful grant for a new dissolved oxygen meter**  
This instrument is available to all county lake associations/districts. In this newsletter issue, we have an article that explores why measuring dissolved oxygen in a lake is so valuable (short answer: dissolved oxygen level is an important indicator of overall lake health).
- **We partnered with Oneida Lakes & Rivers Association to host a multi-county lake workshop**  
About a hundred lake group leaders and members from six northern Wisconsin counties attended our workshop focused on natural shorelines and water resource protection.
- **We presented a Blue Heron Shoreland Stewardship Award**  
As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, this year's award recognizes a town's effort in the county to conduct lake shore restoration work. *VCLRA presents these annual awards to raise awareness of the importance of shoreland stewardship by showcasing excellence in lake-friendly waterfront development and restoration.*
- **We rolled out a new initiative for new shoreland owners**  
This effort targets new lake property owners to get them off to a good start in developing strong lake stewardship values and practices. An article describing the program and efforts to date to engage other key stakeholder groups appears in this newsletter.
- **We awarded a scholarship to a local high school student**  
As part of our work to preserve our natural waters for future generations, one of our joys is to encourage youth to experience and connect with the natural world and actively support its conservation. This spring we presented our 2019 award to Northland Pines High School senior Noah Miller.
- **We contributed a letter of support to Vilas Land & Water for a grant proposal, had a presence at several town and county government meetings that shape policy that impact our lakes, and developed two position letters to policy makers:**

- We took a position *against* proposed amendment to Article VII Section 7.1 of the Vilas Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to add an exception for larger boathouses up to 24’ x 30’.
- We took a position *against* issuing a conditional use permit for the creation of a large RV park and campground along Mud Creek.
- **We published and distributed two print newsletters, supplied VCLRA brochures to two member lake associations conducting mailings to lake residents and exhibited at four local events:**
  - 2019 Multi-county Lake Workshop (Nicolet College),
  - Lake Fest (Lac du Flambeau),
  - Forest Fest (Trees for Tomorrow) and
  - Cran-a-rama (Manitowish Waters).
- **We developed a new website from the ground up**  
 The new site features design elements to facilitate user engagement and information sharing, including mobile-friendly design to display well on all devices, social media integration (subscribe to be notified by email of new content, plus share favorite content with others on social media), and secure (encrypted) communications to support online membership/donation transactions. Please check us out at [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) and let us know what you think.
- **We acquired the vclra.org domain**  
 The new domain fits well with our recent 501c3 nonprofit designation, but our old web address [www.vclra.us](http://www.vclra.us) still works and automatically redirects to our new web site.

As we move into a new year, we look forward to continuing to work with partner and supporting member families and lake organizations for the protection of our Vilas County lake and river heritage. Please consider inviting us to your annual lake association meetings – we’d love to have a chance to get to know you better, hear about your concerns, and share some of our ideas and plans.

**Finally, remember to join or renew your VCLRA membership!** All of our work is funded by generous donations, public grants and support from our member families and lake organizations. Together, we're making a difference!

Have a great 2020 and enjoy our lakes and rivers responsibly.



Tom Ewing  
VCLRA president

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**ABOUT VCLRA**

VCLRA is a 501c3 non-profit lake conservation and education organization. Our mission is to sustainably preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and rivers for the benefit of all. We accomplish our mission by working with partner and supporting member families and lake organizations to foster informed and engaged communities committed to the welfare of our lake and river heritage.

## Blue Heron Stewardship Award Nominations Now Open

### BLUE HERON



Shoreland Stewardship  
Award Program

Do you know someone who makes a conscious effort to preserve an outstanding natural shoreline?

We want to recognize them for their effort! The Blue Heron Award was created for exactly this reason.

It also creates awareness, educate lake property owners on the importance of shoreland stewardship, and showcases good examples of lake-friendly waterfront development.

To nominate someone, please visit our website: [www.VCLRA.org](http://www.VCLRA.org) or call Carol Warden at 608-890-4721

## Applications Sought for Local Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association Scholarship

The Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) is excited to announce that they are currently accepting applications for the VCLRA Senior Scholarship. This annual \$500 competitive scholarship is awarded to a graduating *High School Senior* who *resides in Vilas County* who is continuing their education at a 2-year or 4-year college, university, or vocational/technical school in pursuit of a career in the *area of natural resources* (may have priority) or a related field.

At the discretion of the scholarship committee, this \$500 scholarship may be divided between two applicants or a second scholarship may be awarded. Awardees will be selected by the VCLRA Scholarship Committee. Scholarship(s) will be awarded at a school or homeschool celebration in spring 2020. Completed applications due to VCLRA; PO Box 494; Eagle River, WI 54521 **postmarked by March 15, 2020**. For scholarship application or to learn more about VCLRA please visit our website: <https://vclra.org>.

## Catch the WAVE—Water Action Volunteers Webinar Series:

**January 8, 2020: (75min)** What am I Looking at? Identifying Macroinvertebrates of the WAV Biotic Index

**January 22, 2020:** PFAS — “Forever Chemicals” in Wisconsin Waters

**February 5, 2020:** Microplastics in the Mississippi River

All webinars are from 12:00 to 1:00 PM unless noted.

**For more information regarding these webinars, please go to:**  
<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav/events.html>

## VCLRA Membership Benefits

VCLRA is an informational education network that helps lake associations and individual citizens make wise decisions in their effort to preserve and protect the unique waterways of Vilas County, now and well into the future. From its inception, VCLRA has established and maintained strong cooperative relationships with the Wisconsin DNR, UW Extension, and Vilas County government. With the help of these partnerships, VCLRA is able to provide benefits to lake association members and individuals who do not have lake associations.

VCLRA provides the following to its member associations and individuals:

- Providing information and assistance on lake related problems and issues,
- Sponsoring and participating in educational programs,
- Providing yearly Blue Heron Awards for recognition of individual property owners' shoreline stewardship,
- Publishing newsletters for our membership,
- Developing Shoreline Covenant Program for property owners,
- Organize a yearly Lakes Day symposium for our members and partners to strengthen their partnerships and gain new knowledge,
- Helping in the formation of new lake associations,
- Assisting with direction to or interaction with partner agencies,
- Assisting with grant applications when an association may not qualify,
- And monitoring state and county government activities.

VCLRA is a constructive citizen group that has earned the respect of the local and state community. We encourage you to contact us with questions, concerns, or ideas. We will answer them to the best of our ability, or direct you to someone who can.

The purpose of the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association is to educate, communicate, and promote cooperation among organizations, individuals, governmental bodies and the general public of Vilas county; and to preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and waterways for present and future generations

*Anne Kretschmann*

Treasurer



# Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Preserving, protecting and enhancing our Vilas County lakes and waterways for present and future generations

### Type of Membership:

Individual/Family \$25    Lake Organization \$50    Associate/Supporting \$75

### Section A: Individual/Family or Associate/Supporting Membership

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wish to receive newsletter via email?      Yes      No  
 Wish to receive occasional email alerts on lake issues?      Yes      No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Lake Organization (if established): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other affiliation (i.e. town chairman, county commissioner, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Section B: Lake Organization (Lake Associations and Districts) Membership

Please submit the names and contact information of organization officers/ board of directors/commissioners, each will receive the VCLRA newsletter. If person and contact information is the same as prior year write "NC" after name. Please indicate a **Key Contact Person**, ideally with email, this is used occasionally when legislative updates or call-to-actions occur.

Lake organization name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approximate number of individuals represented by lake organization \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach additional board members, directors, or commissioners, if needed.

#### President/Chairman

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email?    Yes      No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues?    Yes      No  
 Key Contact Person?    Yes      No

#### Vice-President

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email?    Yes      No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues?    Yes      No  
 Key Contact Person?    Yes      No

#### Secretary

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email?    Yes      No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues?    Yes      No  
 Key Contact Person?    Yes      No

#### Treasurer

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permanent Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wish to receive newsletter via email?    Yes      No  
 Name of Lake of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Receive occasional email alerts on lake issues?    Yes      No  
 Key Contact Person?    Yes      No

Please make checks payable to: Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA)  
Return completed form with annual dues before **June 1st** to: VCLRA; PO Box 494; Eagle River, WI 54521



## New Shoreland Owners Initiative

Protect the lake you love

By: Richard Jenks

VCLRA has launched an initiative to connect with new shoreland property owners. This is an effort to provide resources and contacts to encourage shoreland property owners to become exceptional stewards of their property by providing guidance in doing the right thing for themselves, their lake, and their neighbors.

Shoreline development is the #1 threat to lake health and water quality in Northern Wisconsin. The 19,000 Vilas County lakeshore properties turn over on average every 5 years. The goal of this initiative is to connect neighbors and provide helpful tools and practices to best protect lakes and keep them as healthy as the day you moved there.

Our initiative is composed of three components all provided for you:

- Business cards to connect new owners with VCLRA and valuable information.
- A new website outlining the New Shoreland Owners Initiative which includes a [free memberships in VCLRA and Wisconsin Lakes](#)
- Materials to “Greet Your Neighbor”; to encourage face to face interaction with your new neighbors and shoreland owners.

Over 7,500 copies of our business cards have been distributed in an effort to connect with new owners, encouraging ways on how to protect their property and their lake. These cards are shared with new owners through realtors, Lake Associations, title companies, chambers of commerce, libraries, County Land and Water office, County Zoning, and landscapers.

Our website houses all this valuable information as an opportunity to expose more of the lake community to support resources such as County Land and Water, UW Extension Lakes, Wisconsin Lakes, and the WI Lakes Partnership. You can find all this at <https://vclra.org/new-owner/>

VCLRA wants to enlist participation of the lake associations to help personally greet new neighbors and provide materials such as welcome letters, business cards, brochures, and talking points for responsible lake shore living. One on one, neighbor to neighbor connections are most effective. We encourage Lake Associations to create a “Greet Your Neighbor” program of your own! The welcome wagon approach is a friendly way to share your lake community’s vision of waterfront living, build a good relationship with newcomers, and invite them to join your lake organization.

VCLRA is available for assistance with any portion of this initiative.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Why Measure Dissolved Oxygen (DO)?

By: Celeste Hockings

Countless professional and citizen scientists have measured a parameter called “Dissolved Oxygen” or shortened down to the minimal two letter abbreviation “DO”, but what is “DO” and why do we measure the water for “DO” levels?

Let us have a conversation with a local scientist:

**Question:** What is dissolved oxygen?

**Scientist:** Dissolved Oxygen is the level of free-floating oxygen that is not combined with other elements, such as Hydrogen (Dihydrogen monoxide [H<sub>2</sub>O], a.k.a. water) or Carbon (Carbon dioxide)

**Question:** Why should we care about dissolved oxygen?

**Scientist:** In simple terms, all organisms need oxygen to breathe. Furthermore all nutrient availability changes are governed by shifts in levels of oxygen in lakes, rivers, etc.

**Question:** What influences the levels of oxygen in water?

**Scientist:** The two main sources of oxygen input into water are from the atmosphere and photosynthesis. Oxygen is added by the exchange between water surface and atmosphere by the continuous mixing, which turbulent mixing is needed to get a balance of oxygen throughout the water column. As for photosynthesis, simple sugars and oxygen are produced when plants use carbon dioxide and water.

When oxygen is being depleted or decreasing, it is either a chemical or a biotic reason for it. So let us take for an example, a shallow lake that has 5 inches of snow covering that lake, as you know, plants need sun to go through photosynthesis, so when we have that snow cover, it effectively blocks out the sun. So when the plants are not producing any oxygen, they start to die and decompose. The microorganisms use oxygen to decompose the dead organic material, so if there is no input of oxygen from plants and oxygen is being used by the microorganisms, we start to see the levels of oxygen decrease, which may lead to a winter fish kill.

**Question:** What happens to this information once we collect it?

**Scientist:** DO data can be used to help experts determine if a lake is suffering from low DO levels and could therefore implement management to improve habitat for all the things that reside in the lake.

**Question:** Remind me where I can find a dissolved oxygen meter in Vilas County?

**Scientist:** You can find them at the following locations:

**Woodruff DNR Station:** Al Wirt

715-365-8905 [alan.wirt@wisconsin.gov](mailto:alan.wirt@wisconsin.gov)

**Vilas County Land and Water Dept. in Eagle River Courthouse:** Carolyn Scholl

715-479-3682 [cascho@vilascountywi.gov](mailto:cascho@vilascountywi.gov)

**Phelps Library:** Rollie Alger

715-367-1347 [alger427@yahoo.com](mailto:alger427@yahoo.com)

# Building Community in Support of Lake Goals

By: Tom Ewing, VCLRA President

We note on our website and brochures that VCLRA accomplishes its mission to sustainably preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and rivers by working to foster informed and engaged communities committed to the welfare of our lake and river heritage. This statement underscores the reality that we cannot succeed in protecting our natural waters without the support of the broader community – not just the save-our-lake enthusiasts or even lake property owners, but the broader community whose voting action can significantly impact the future of our lakes. Research shows that the beauty and vitality of our natural waters is closely linked to healthy environments and vibrant economies, but how do we get the broader community to cherish and protect our natural waters?

Eric Olson from UW-Extension Lakes has written a series of Lake Tides newsletter articles about *Capacity Building* – the notion that lake organizations must build capacity to achieve their goals. He identifies four elements that support capacity: membership, organization, programs, and relationships. *Membership* focuses on the individuals that provide financial and volunteer support that fuels the efforts of a lake organization. *Organization* is the structure and processes that govern how lake organizations conduct their affairs. *Programs* are the activities conducted by lake organization to achieve their goals. *Relationships* is perhaps the most challenging yet vital piece: organizations develop relational capacity by collaborating and networking with external people and groups. In the process, two partnering groups gain more visibility in the community and begin building trust to serve as a foundation for future interactions.

Building relationships provides several benefits important to the success of lake organizations. Eric Olson writes in the Summer/Fall 2018 (2018, Vol. 43, No. 3) issue of Lake Tides:

*“Formal and informal networking and collaboration is one way to bring new resources and ideas into your lake management challenges. Meaningful relationships with people and groups are usually two-way affairs: they provide an avenue for a lake organization to learn more about their surrounding community and discover issues that they may be able to help address. Many people who get involved in lake organizations are, by their nature, drawn to all sorts of groups. Some are just social, and others may be involved in community problem solving. By institutionalizing these networks and relationships, a lake group can better embed its efforts in a larger-scale community. The interactions can also help foster a broader consensus on lake and watershed issues.”*

Drawing on the research of Mae Davenport and Erin Seekamp, Aaron Thompson at the UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources identified five facets of relational capacity that lake organizations would ideally employ to better carry out their efforts:

1. **Identify Allied Organizations:** Communicate with other groups whose work overlaps with the mission of your organization.
2. **Partner:** Co-host events with other groups that are intended to generate dialogue about the common purpose of the organizations, complete a specific task, or raise funds to support a shared goal.
3. **Share Networks:** Encourage opportunities for volunteering with other organizations, such as the recruitment of a shared board member.
4. **Identify Community Consensus:** Conduct a gap analysis, such as a community survey, to identify how your organization’s mission meets a broadly shared community need.
5. **Approach Decision-makers:** Solicit input from local, state, or other elected officials about their

priorities and what governmental resources may exist to support your organization's mission.

Mae Davenport notes that as individuals develop relationships with one another through repeated positive interactions; they exchange information about important experiences, about problems they face, and maybe even about broader community issues. This exchange of values, beliefs, and attitudes leads to increased member awareness, access to community assets and can even serve to establish social norms by maintaining social pressures on member behavior.

Let us know how your lake organization has developed partnerships to build community for protecting our natural waters! Go to our website at [vclra.org](http://vclra.org) and use the contact form – we'll share ideas and best practices in a future newsletter or blog article.

## ***Results from River chloride trends in snow-affected urban watersheds: increasing concentrations outpace urban growth rate and are common among all seasons***

USGS: Steven R. Corsi, Laura A. De Cicco, Michelle A. Lutz, Robert M. Hirsch

- *“In 84 percent of urban streams analyzed, chloride levels increased substantially during the study period.*
- *Twenty-nine percent of the sites exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's chronic water-quality criteria (230 milligrams per liter) by an average of more than 100 days per year from 2006 through 2010, which was almost double the amount of days from 1990 through 1994.*
- *The lowest chloride concentrations were in watersheds that had little urban land use or cities without much snowfall, such as Dallas, Texas.*
- *In 16 of the streams, winter chloride concentrations increased over the study period.*
- *The greatest chloride concentrations occurred during winter periods.*
- *In 13 of the streams, chloride concentrations increased over the study period during non-deicing periods such as summer. This finding suggests that chloride infiltrates the groundwater system during the winter and is slowly released to the streams throughout the year.*
- *Chloride concentrations increased more rapidly than development of urban land near the study sites.”*

To see more on the news release & article:

[https://www.usgs.gov/centers/umid-water/science/evaluating-chloride-trends-due-road-salt-use-and-its?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=1#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/umid-water/science/evaluating-chloride-trends-due-road-salt-use-and-its?qt-science_center_objects=1#qt-science_center_objects)

### **Citation of Article in the Journal of Science of the Total Environment:**

Steven R. Corsi, Laura A. De Cicco, Michelle A. Lutz, Robert M. Hirsch, River chloride trends in snow-affected urban watersheds: increasing concentrations outpace urban growth rate and are common among all seasons, *Science of The Total Environment*, Volume 508, 1 March 2015, Pages 488-497, ISSN 0048-9697, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2014.12.012>. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969714017148>) Keywords: Chloride; Road salt; Urbanization; Water quality trends; Aquatic toxicity

## Mark your Calendar

**April 1-3, 2020** Wisconsin Waters 2020 Lakes Conference at Stevens Point, WI, [www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes). Registration generally opens in February.

**April 6, 2020** VCLRA Board Meeting at Trout Lake Station at 9am.

**\*July 2020** (other details TBD) Multi-county Workshop/VCLRA Annual meeting  
Visit [vclra.org](http://vclra.org), or contact Tom Ewing, [president@vclra.org](mailto:president@vclra.org), for more information.

**\*June 13, 2020** Lakes Fest in Lac du Flambeau, WI. Contact Celeste Hockings at 715-588-4163 or [Chockings@ldftribe.com](mailto:Chockings@ldftribe.com) for more information.

**\*July 25, 2020** Forest Fest, Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River, WI. See [treesfortomorrow.com](http://treesfortomorrow.com) for more information.

**\*October 23, 2020** Cran-a-rama in Manitowish Waters, WI. See [manitowishwaters.org](http://manitowishwaters.org) for more information.  
\*VCLRA exhibit venues

### **Join VCLRA Today! Forget to Renew?**

See membership form inside this issue or go to our website at [www.vclra.us](http://www.vclra.us) and print the membership form.

**Your support helps protect our lakes and rivers!**



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