

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Vicki Vogts

It was another great summer on Swan Lake! The SLA Board is always listening to our members and trying to make our time on Swan Lake enjoyable for ALL.

From time to time, residents along Swan Lake may need to repair their shoreland from erosion - natural or man-made - which can be expensive. The SLA Board has contacted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Columbia County Land & Water Conservation Department to find out what funding is available to our shoreland owners. Columbia County recommends shoreland owners review the Wisconsin DNR Waterway website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Waterways>, the Columbia County Shoreline Wetland Protection Ordinance at <https://www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/planningzoning/ShorelandWetland/>, and your local township ordinances (Town of Pacific <https://www.tn.pacific.wi.gov/> and Town of Wyocena <https://townofwyocena.com/> depending upon where the property is located).

Columbia County does, in some years, have grant money available to help cover the cost of a barrier project, but this only applies to owners who contact the Columbia County Land & Water Conservation Department PRIOR to beginning any shoreland work. Unfortunately, no grant money is available for this year, but next year may be applicable if the Land & Water Department is involved from the beginning and they determine that there is a real erosion problem.

The Wisconsin DNR offers programs through "Surface Water Management Grants" (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/surfacewater.html>). The Association already has a Lake Management Plan which is the first step in obtaining other grants for shoreland owners. Unfortunately, there are no grant monies currently available for owners who did not apply prior to starting their barrier project. For the most part, the DNR does allow "maintaining" (adding to) existing barriers when a permit had previously been approved for this piece of property, but it is still best to verify a permit was approved the first time.

I do want to end this article with good news for all people who want to fish and enjoy Swan Lake. We are working with the Wisconsin DNR and local townships to build a handicap-accessible fishing pier, possibly located at the south shore boat landing. More information to come!

The SLA Board wishes an enjoyable holiday season with friends and family!

SLA WEBSITE

Check out our website at <https://swanlakeassnportage.com/>. Our website has information about the Swan Lake Association, our mission, how to apply for membership, and other resources. If you have information you feel should be included on our website, please contact swanlakeassnportage@gmail.com.

THIS 'N THAT

By Kory McCarthy

In September, I took over as the editor of the Swan Lake News, the official newsletter of the Swan Lake Association. Dorothy Rebholz was the long-time editor of the Newsletter and it seemed prudent to honor her 25+ years of service to the Association with one final This 'N That. Over the past few weeks, I've enjoyed reading historical newsletters, and developing context on what Dorothy liked to write about. Several themes emerged, including an obvious passion for birding and ice skating. She spoke of species from martins to mallards, wrens to woodpeckers, and how the eagles and ospreys soared over the shoreline of Swan Lake. She described how a frozen lake without snow provided the perfect conditions for skating. Conditions that reminded her of a day in January, 1980 when her family skated all over Swan Lake on ice frozen like glass. We can only hope we get the same opportunity this winter.

Over time, the title and content of "This 'N That" will change, but we will always strive to keep our readers informed and entertained. Doing our best to describe the natural beauty, history, and recreational activities this place has to offer - just as Dorothy has always done.

PORTAGE COUNTRY CLUB

Mark Braska - PGA Professional

The Portage Country Club experienced another very good year in 2022. New golf memberships and outside play contributed to a profitable year, and improvements were made across the facility. The North-Shore Restaurant is closed for the season and will open in the Spring. If you would like more information and/or are interested in becoming a new member, please contact Mark Braska at 608-335-2142. Hope everyone has an enjoyable and safe winter, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

WATSON WATCH

By Jim Watson

The beginning of the boating season may have been fairly cool but, here it is, November and still warm and sunny as mid-summer. There have been many "bonus days" the last couple months. Every time it cooled off a bit, we'd think that's it for the year, then, more warm sunny days. I'm thinking, if this is global warming or climate change, I'm all for it! It can stay like this until Thanksgiving, but then, I do like ice and snow season too, so let's have some snow by Christmas, please!

The lake level is again on the low side like it was in early spring - more like a traditional dry August level. Understandable after two years of very dry weather, empty ponds and marshlands dried up. Even with no rain and no extra water flow from the Pardeeville dam, our lake level will rise as water plants downstream grow to the surface. We only had to run down and up the Fox River to knock down the weeds starting in the second week of June and quit in early August as weeds began to die. The cooler water temps early kept the plants from growing much. Once the water is over 70 degrees, they grow 5 inches per day. A few days later they reach the surface and continue growing into long clumps like "dreadlocks". Soon the channel is choked shore to shore and water slows to a crawl. Running our boat through the mess daily keeps a path open for the water to move. We can never prevent Slow No Wake high water if there are heavy rainfall events, but at least it won't linger for weeks on end if we keep it moving.

One mystery this year is, why was the lake so murky green all season? After many years of improving water clarity with less and less of the nasty milfoil weeds, it seems we are back to the 1960s and '70s when there were huge inputs of nutrients causing green algae blooms and even blue-green gunk on the surface and weeds so thick kids didn't want to jump off the piers.

We had no big rainfall events early that would have washed freshly spread farm field fertilizer into the river and lake before the crops had time to grow - that often triggers a bloom in June - but that didn't happen, so I am left wondering what triggered the green that lingered throughout the entire summer.

Regular water sampling may have shown something. After collecting water samples five times per season for the DNR and UWSP labs for 38 years, I stopped 2 years ago. If anyone would like to resume that chore, please contact me or the SLA Board directly. They would like to keep collecting the data to detect trends and many lakes throughout the state are participating in the program.

I am regularly asked how the fish are biting. I can't say much, as I don't get out fishing nearly as much as I used to, and I am not hearing much from other fishermen either. Even the online fishing reports for Swan Lake have no postings since May. Nobody is bragging and that says a lot. What I do know is, panfishing for bluegills and nice perch has been successful at times - if you can get live bait past the small yellow bass (stripers) that are EVERYWHERE. Of course they are fun to catch too and good to eat, if kept cool after catching.

I still see many people jigging and trolling for walleye and casting and trolling for musky. The success rate is so low that very few of the regular locals spend much time after those gamefish. Only the largemouth bass and channel catfish are plentiful and willing to bite, it seems. The SLA Board is looking into possibly stocking some musky and/or northern pike since the DNR will not. The DNR does plant some walleye fingerlings every 2 years but few of legal size are ever caught. The Portage Musky Club (no longer operating) continued to purchase musky to put in Lake Wisconsin even after we quit raising them at the club. The musky fishing in Lake Wisconsin and up the Wisconsin River has become famous in recent years.

Many people are still targeting them in Swan too, as there remain some large fish and it would be nice to keep that going here. More large predator fish are always welcome in a lake like Swan that is super fertile, with huge populations of rough fish.

THANK YOU FOR THE CONTRIBUTION

By Don Sabey

On behalf of the Swan Lake Association Board of Directors, we would like to extend a heartfelt **Thank You** to Nate & Mary Anderson. In February of this year, the Association received a generous donation from the Andersons in remembrance of their very special friend, Bill Tierney. Their exact words were, "We request this donation go in Bill's honor to support the work to keep the Fox River flowing." Many of you know that Bill and Shirley lived on 2nd Lane just before Skunk Island, and they have been Association members since its inception. What a beautiful way to remember our friends & family and support the lake they loved so dearly. Thank you, Nate, and Mary.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Paula Greco

Hello again, Swan Lakers! My name is Paula Greco, and along with my husband, Dan, I have moved back to the area after 36 years away. GRECO is not a Portage name, Dan comes from the Wauwatosa and Kenosha areas of the state, but my maiden name was Hoffmann and my grandparents owned Lauson's Office Supply in downtown Portage. I grew up here, spending weekends and summers at the Lauson cottage. I learned to swim, water ski, and fish on this lake. My parents built their retirement home on the Lauson property 30 years ago. Now Dan and I are enjoying the beauty of Swan Lake full-time in our retirement. Dan's career was in construction, building management, and energy conservation. I taught in Wisconsin, Illinois and Kentucky, as we moved for Dan's career. We raised 3 boys who are now living in Oregon and South Carolina. I look forward to working on the SLA Board to give back to the lake, and helping to maintain and improve it for all to enjoy as much as our family has. You may see us in the area hiking, biking, camping or kayaking. There is no place better than Wisconsin for these activities. We are glad to be back.

PORTAGE BOAT CLUB

Mike Proebstle

Once again, there was plenty of Boat Club activity during the summer of 2022. Members may have noticed the newly completed firepit/east retaining walls, and we already have a few eager members ready to replant flower beds, come spring of 2023. With your continued membership dues, several other amenities have been updated including both lakeside shelter pads, and gazebo #1. Gazebo #2 is onsite, being stored in the clubhouse over the winter months, and awaiting a crew for spring construction.

The Steak Fry dates are scheduled for Saturday, July 15th and Saturday, August 19th. If anyone is interested in attending the steak fry, they should contact me at 847-404-8949.

The Pancake Breakfast is scheduled from 7:00 am to noon on Saturday, August 6th. Adults are \$7.00 and children under 11 are \$3.00. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The SLA Board of Directors is performing an initiative to confirm email addresses and preferred method of communication for all Swan Lake Association members. Upon receipt of this Newsletter, we are requesting that you text (608-234-2957) or email (mccarthy.kory@gmail.com) the following information to Kory McCarthy:

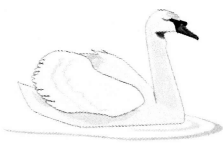
- Full Name
- Email Address
- Preferred Newsletter Communication Method:
Email or Mail

Receipt of this detail will not only allow the Board to send important announcements in a timely manner, but potentially save the organization money. During our last fiscal year, we spent almost \$800.00 on postage directly related Newsletter mailings. Opting for email communication could save hundreds of dollars on an annual basis and allow us to invest in special projects around the lake. As always, we appreciate your cooperation with this request and continued support of the mission of the Swan Lake Association.

DUES/MEMBERSHIP FOR SLA, INC.

Swan Lake Association, Inc. dues are \$10.00 for the fiscal year, July through June. The date on your mailing label indicates the year in which dues have last been paid. Please note that you are welcome to prepay multiple years in advance. We do perform routine maintenance of our membership roles to ensure members are credited for years paid. Checks are payable to "Swan Lake Association, Inc." may be mailed to SLA, Inc., PO Box 182, Portage, WI 53901.

The newsletter is periodically sent to property owners in the Swan Lake area and to people who rent boat slips at Saddle Ridge and the Portage Country Club who are currently non-members. There are two classes of membership: (1) Individual, consisting of either an individual or entity; and (2) Joint, consisting of a husband and wife, family, or joint owners of a single parcel of real estate. Each individual or joint membership shall have one vote. Members shall designate affiliation with either the north or south side of Swan Lake.



SWAN LAKE NEWS

Swan Lake Association, Inc. Newsletter

June, 2023

Annual Meeting of Members of Swan Lake Association, Inc.

The Annual Meeting of the members of Swan Lake Association, Inc. will be held: Wednesday, September 13th, 2023 - 5:30 pm
Portage Public Library, Bidwell Meeting Room, 253 W. Edgewater St., Portage Wisconsin

For the following purposes:

1. To read and approve the minutes of the last Annual Meeting;
2. To present reports of officers and committees;
3. To elect three directors of the Board of Directors – two with affiliation to the North and one with affiliation to the South. The terms of Vicki Vogts (N), Don Sabey (N), and Robert Barth (S) are expiring. A nominating chairperson has been named to search for and present names of persons interested in running for the three positions open in 2023 for the Board of Directors. Anyone interested in one of these three-year terms, please contact Kory McCarthy at mccarthy.kory@gmail.com or 608-234-2957.
4. To transact unfinished business and new business as may properly come before the meeting.

THOUGHTS FROM PRESIDENT VICKI VOGTS

The weather is finally making a turn, and we can start to venture out on Swan Lake!

We want to update everyone on several projects ongoing including the repairs to the South Shore boat ramp and loaner vest station. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources did not receive any quotes on replacing the current public boat landing ramp, likely because the project is being underfunded, and due to the time constraints put on the project (e.g., not on weekends, 4th of July, etc.). Our DNR contact person recommends submitting a new project and getting it adequately funded to perform temporary repairs to the current boat launch and re-paving the parking lot. He also shared engineering blueprints and will continue to utilize stop-gap measures in the interim. Finally, the loaner vest station and aquatic invasive species station is currently in process and should be in-place later this summer.

There are so many residents around Swan Lake who enjoy it - fishing, boating, kayaking, etc. Unfortunately, there are some residents who want to enjoy the lake, but can't, due to mobility issues. We want ALL residents to enjoy Swan Lake! The board is working with the DNR to install an ADA-certified accessible fishing pier at the South Shore boat landing. The process starts with creating a project in the DNR system, obtaining quotes and consulting with county officials. If we want the state to fund most if not all the project, it could take 5 years to complete. We will increase our chances of moving

the project forward by self-funding it, and we are asking for your help. The estimated cost of the pier is \$35,000. Based on current cash-on-hand, the SLA board can commit \$10,000 as seed money to fund the accessible pier. We would then solicit donations from area residents through the SLA newsletter, Deer Tails (Saddle Ridge) newsletter, the Portage Boat Club, local campgrounds, Portage Golf Club and Saddle Ridge Golf Course members, and social media. Additional funds could come from the Dingle-Johnson Fund, the Land & Water Conservation fund, state grants, and county funds. Your donations would be segregated from operating funds and would be considered restricted for accessible fishing pier use only. The SLA's goal is to install the pier in 2024. If you are interested in contributing to the accessible fishing pier at the South Shore boat landing, you may send a check to the "Swan Lake Association", write in memo "fishing pier", and mail to Swan Lake Association, PO Box 182, Portage, WI 53901.

Liability and ongoing maintenance need to be considered. Essentially, the SLA would pay for and donate the pier, but it would be the burden of the state to own and maintain it. Finally, the DNR urged the SLA to consider a holistic approach to space needs surrounding parking lots, boat launch, and accessible fishing pier. We want to ensure we have the proper number of parking stalls without negatively impacting the volume of the lake.

Be safe, be respectful, and be responsible on Swan Lake this summer so we all can enjoy it.

WATSON WATCH

by Jim Watson

I'm still cleaning up the storm damaged trees from the June 15th, 2022, spinning winds. Didn't we just have a cyclonic windstorm 2 or 3 years before that followed a similar route? It took all winter and into April at my pace. I hate chainsaws, especially in the nice, warm season. Not so bad when cold and snow covers the ground. With heavy ropes and pulleys, winching and tugging, the tilted, snagged, and hung-up trees were all on the ground without any injury or further damage. Cut and split piles of oak and hickory firewood are ready for anyone who wants it. I don't have a need, and I am not dragging it up that steep hill from the lakefront. I will leave a wheelbarrow by the pile or just let me know how much you want, and I'll pull cartloads with the riding lawn mower to whoever wants it, to burn in your lakefront fire rings. With the chainsaw and wood splitter shut down, it was pleasant sitting by the burning piles of branches watching the ice dissolve and the lake open. With the shade trees gone, the spring sun, on the south facing slope triggered an eruption of spring wildflowers, just in time for May Day.

Last winter was another one of extreme temperature swings. It took a long time to feel safe venturing out beyond the shallows. Once safe to travel, the snow weighed down the ice, causing water to ooze up into snow, making slush. Many times, after plowing areas for ice skating, it would drift or fresh snowfall would turn slushy again, creating a mess.

Fishing was spotty again. Perch and yellow bass were the best action with some decent catches at times - decent sizes and a few "jumbos". Bluegills in the Saddle Ridge Marina Bay were good at times, but the frequent thawing and muskrat activity made it dangerous for that area. Lucky for the one fella that took a quick bath only lost some expensive gear and not his life. Please, if you leave or uncover a hole big

enough to fall into, mark it with some stakes in case snow cover hides the thin spot.

I would like to give a friendly reminder that boat operators are responsible for any damage or injury their wake causes. Current state law requires motorboats to stay 100 feet from shore, piers, rafts, anchored fishing boats, etc. or operate at Slow No Wake speed. We know that specialty "Wake Boats" that take on water ballast to add up to 5,000 extra pounds and/or use drop fins to drag the back of the boat deeper into the water, are being studied. Because these boats create surf wakes 6 to 12 times more powerful than typical ski boats, legal action could be coming. The downforce of the huge wakes may penetrate 16 to 22-foot depths, scouring the bottom, disrupting fish spawning and other aquatic life. In addition, the ripping of aquatic vegetation and sediments laden with phosphorus can trigger algal blooms. Finally, bigger wakes pose bigger hazards to shorelines, other watercraft, etc. at distances 4 to 6 times greater than typical boat wakes.

Several Citizen Resolutions are being brought up to restrict the use of "ballasted wake boats" to lakes over 1,500 acres, deep enough to avoid scouring the bottom, and keeping 400 to 600 feet from shore. These restricted areas would allow other users to avoid the huge waves. Townships, municipalities, and state agencies are being petitioned to enact local ordinances and state laws to restrict big wakes. Swan Lake is only 406 acres and could face restrictions soon. I would hate to see forced restrictions since the shape and depth allow for many activities if everyone is aware of the effects their boat has on others. Wake boats are slow, if they stay in the middle of the widest part of the lake, avoid the narrow west end and not swamp smaller crafts, maybe local ordinance restrictions can be avoided.

SLA WEBSITE – UPDATES COMING SOON!

As a friendly reminder, we welcome you to check out the SLA website: <https://swanlakeassnportage.com/>. The website has information about the Swan Lake Association, our mission, how to apply for membership, and other resources. In addition, keep an eye out for updates coming to the website later this summer. Finally, if you have information you feel should be included in the website, please contact mccarthy.kory@gmail.com or 608-234-2957.

KIDS CORNER

From Kory McCarthy: Recently I received a suggestion from one of our members to contemplate the idea of a "Kids Corner" in our bi-annual newsletter. I love this idea. Some of my first memories as a child included fishing on local waterways with my dad and brother. Learning how to swim and make castles in the shifting sands of the Wisconsin River. Our mission as an association is to not only maintain the quality and beauty of the Swan Lake area, but to promote safe recreation for all people, young and old. The purpose of Kids Corner is to give future generations a platform to tell us something that interests them or could be interesting to other kids their age reading the newsletter. Driving affinity for Swan Lake and our long-term mission as an organization. Our first submission comes to us from local resident Willow. Take it away Willow!

"My name is Willow. I'm in 4th grade and I have a cabin on Swan Lake. We go to our cabin a LOT in the summer. One of my favorite things to do is go to the sandbar with my family and friends. When we get to the sandbar we jump out and float to the river with our floaties. And then after we sunbathe on the boat while eating our freezie pops. And then we head out. What do you like to do?"

Thank you, Willow! If you have a school-aged child that may be interested in contributing to Kids Corner, please contact me directly at mccarthy.kory@gmail.com or 608-234-2957. We will make sure to include them in future newsletters.

SADDLE RIDGE GOLF COURSE

By Rusty Grimm

The weather is beautiful, and our golf course is busy! Please don't let a full parking lot deter you! Come in and try the amazing menu at Rendezvous. Tee times are available from 8:00AM to 5:50PM during the spring. Food will be served at the restaurant from 11:00AM to 8:00PM Wednesday – Saturday, and 11:00AM to 6:00PM Sunday – Tuesday. Tee times will start earlier, and food will be served later once summer hours commence. Thank you all for your support!

PORTAGE BOAT CLUB

By Mike Proebstle

The Portage Boat Club is putting together a second Gazebo that will be placed between the volleyball court and the club house sometime this spring. The Steak Fry dates are scheduled for Saturday, July 15th and Saturday, August 19th. If anyone is interested in attending the steak fry, they should contact me at 847-404-8949 one week prior to the event. The Pancake Breakfast is scheduled from 7:00AM to noon on Sunday, August 6th. Adults are \$7.00 and children under 11 are \$3.00. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

We hope everyone has a great year in 2023! If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the Portage Boat Club, they can receive an application by submitting a letter to: Portage Boat Club, P.O. Box 5, Portage, WI 53901

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR SLA, INC.

There are two classes of membership: (1) Individual, consisting of either an individual or entity; and (2) Joint, consisting of a husband and wife, family, or joint owners of a single parcel of real estate. Each individual or joint membership shall have one vote. Members shall designate affiliation with either the north or south side of Swan Lake.

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All checks are payable to: "Swan Lake Association, Inc."

and may be mailed to SLA, Inc.,

PO Box 182

Portage, WI 53901

CABIN CHRONICLES

By Kory McCarthy

Scotch Point, on Big Lake, in Vilas County is quintessential Northwoods Wisconsin. It's a place where flannels are common attire, it's fish fry for dinner, campfires are regular and so is the call of the loon. Several years back, my wife and I visited Scotch Point with good friends. Scotch Point is the name of an old lake cabin, situated on a small peninsula, dotted by scotch pine. It was late one evening when we heard two loons, on opposite sides of the peninsula, in a wail duet. We listened for a half hour while the hair on the back of our neck spiked. It was a really cool experience, and not one that will be easily forgotten.

Recently, I celebrated a birthday, and received a surprising gift from our Northwoods friends. It was a record called Voices of the Loon, narrated by Robert J. Lurtsema and recorded by William E. Barklow. The record was published in 1980 by the North American

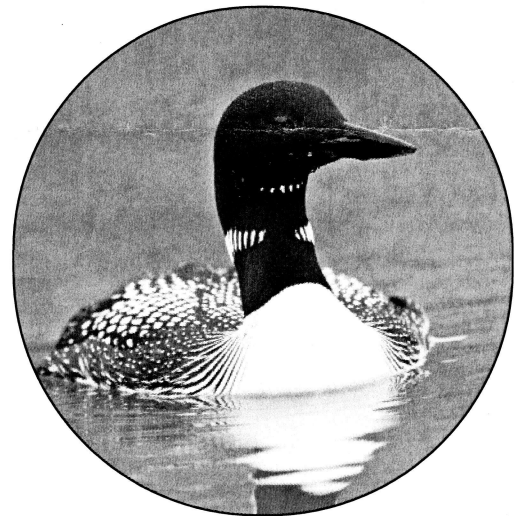
Loon Fund and the National Audubon Society, with the purpose of helping identify specific loon calls and their meaning. The loon has four calls. First is the "Wail" for when a loon wants to interact with another loon (e.g., locate its mate). This most commonly happens at night and is the call that most individuals associate with the loon. There is the "Tremolo" which is the sound a loon will give when frightened or disturbed (e.g., an approaching boat). The "Yodel" is the most complex and typically occurs when there are border confrontations between males. Finally, the "Hoot" is a simple sound used to maintain contact within family groups.

As you might imagine, it is nearly impossible to describe loon calls with printed words. However, if anyone wants a toast with an Old Fashioned and listen to 19 minutes of lovely loon noises, you know how to contact me. Until next time!

PORTAGE COUNTRY CLUB

By Mark Braska - PGA Professional

The 2023 golf season is now in full swing. It has been a slow start due to the weather, however, things have started to change, and the golf course is in great playing condition. The big project for this summer is replacing the ash trees between holes 4 and 5 by planting 24 new maple trees. If you would like more information and/or are interested in becoming a new member, please contact Mark Braska at 608-742-5121.



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

As I noted in the November edition, the SLA Board of Directors is performing an initiative to confirm email addresses and preferred method of communication for all Swan Lake Association members. I received communication from almost 80 members with most electing to receive the newsletter electronically. Please let me offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to all that responded to my inquiry. If you did not respond to my initial request, please text (608-234-2957) or email (mccarthy.kory@gmail.com) the following

information:

- Full Name
- Email Address
- Preferred Newsletter Communication Method: Email or Mail

As always, we appreciate your cooperation with this request and continued support of the mission of the Swan Lake Association.