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SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, JULY 16TH

April 18, 2022

LOON HOOTS

The Newsletter of the Plum Lake Association

A MISSION FOR SUMMER



MEET SUMMER! She is an 18-month-old English Lab and my new partner in the field and on the lake. She has been a quick study. I have come to interpret the tilt of her head in this photo very likely means she did not understand perhaps just one of the words in my sentence - but I know she knew the rest. Summer is all about fun and games and soaks up expressions, directions and words every day, but put her in a field with a pheasant..... step aside quickly. She is on a mission. Fun, games, food - all disappear from her mind. Alert, cautious and laser focused, she tracks back and forth behind the scent ahead until it's hot - generally 4 to 8 feet away - and she locks up - unusual for a lab. Getting that bird is the mission and she is determined to not blow it, so she taught herself how to point. In the field, our partnership has matured quickly. We both know our parts and rely on each-other, and I am happy to report that she forgives me when my aim does not quite measure up to the task.

I have great appreciation and respect for dogs. There are no bad dogs - just careless owners. Dogs don't lie. Dogs are ultimately forgiving and selfless. Dogs on a mission have a single-minded focus. Dogs are intuitive - I have always felt that one of the reliable measures of a person is whether dogs like you. I determined long ago that there is a lot I can learn from my partnership with dogs, and I have done my best to apply the lessons.

I have been working in the Plum Lake Association since 2008 or 9 and have served as president since 2014. This current term that ends in 2024 will be my last and it is my hope to spend the remainder of it working together with current and future members of the Board and Association to continue to organize and expand our capacity to continue OUR mission - to preserve and protect Plum Lake and its watershed. Like Summer and me, our Association knows both challenge and partnership. Along with the 'dogged' determination (sorry, couldn't resist) and shared mission that have brought us this far, we can develop goals and strategies to meet those challenges and strengthen our partnership for continued success.

I would like to talk about our mission, past and future, in this issue of Loon Hoots and I hope it will encourage you to take a more active role in our partnership, where we work together, rely on each other, forgive our 'misses' and celebrate our 'retrieves'. Our lake...our place...will be so much better for it. Our reward will be a shared sense of accomplishment and community.

This can be our "Mission for Summer."

AJR

Remembering Chris Wise



Setting out loon platforms in spring. Chris and Ivory. I teased Chris constantly about this photo. He is dressed like Nanuck of the North—it was 50 degrees.

We bought our cottage on Plum in late December of the very snowy winter of 1992. When we arrived the next spring to take a better measure of what we owned, the first people we met were Chris and Jan Wise. Turned out they lived two houses over and had just completed their retirement home. We became good friends, and as I learned more about his legal background and work at First Wisconsin I realized we had many shared acquaintances and experiences from our business lives. I also learned that we had a shared interest in lake ecology. Chris, with Bill Sloey from Star Lake and others from Star and Ballard took on the gargantuan task of surveying every lake in the township and cataloguing the aquatic plants for future reference. I missed that era, but

Chris insisted that I get broken in quickly and join the town lakes committee that he chaired. From trapping, sexing and dissecting rusty crayfish to grants for AIS, protecting our boat landing and learning about collecting water chemistry and clarity data, it was a thorough introduction to the work of being a riparian.

Chris had a serious sense of responsibility for our lake that he shared with Jan, who organized our first Clean Boats Clean Waters effort with volunteers to man the landing. It was Jan and Chris who just quietly stepped up to that frustrating task and provided the leadership for the first real protection for Statehouse Point landing.

Chris passed away last fall and I will miss our dinners and flotillas together, and his dry sense of humor that always lurked hidden behind his serious expression, ready to pounce. It made our time together rich and challenging and always fun. Chris and Jan together are in the fabric of our lake work and Chris's contributions quietly benefited our home waters. We are all in his debt for his dedication to Plum and our watershed.

SHORT CASTS

Wake Boats

Wisconsin Lakes has formed a working group entitled "Recreational Impacts" to study and offer potential solutions on a variety of lake use issues. There are currently five Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute members who have been recruited to serve on this group including Ted Rulseh, author and former speaker to our association from Birch Lake, Bob Schell who leads the Found Lake Association and is a Wisconsin Lakes Board of Directors member and John Richter, who leads Plum Lake Association, as well as two Lake Leaders from southern Wisconsin. One of the larger issues that this group is studying is the impact of Wake boats on our Wisconsin lakes. Two research studies, one from Minnesota and one from Wisconsin, are in the final stages of publishing and review. The University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory has completed the first phase of their study, primarily on wave height, wave energy and wave power and that study is now published. The Wisconsin study was conducted on North

Lake in Waukesha County by Carroll University, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the private engineering firm, Terra Vigilis. This study not only measured and studied the effects of large waves created by wake boats but also the damaging impact of prop wash at substantial depth which they learned had significant impact on aquatic plants and water chemistry and clarity degradation. It is this impact, in addition to large wave-generated shoreline damage which is of particular concern on lakes like Plum, where our aquatic plant beds have been decimated by rusty crayfish, affecting our water quality and fishery.

Phase 3 of this study is now complete and Carroll University will present their study including informative aerial and subsurface lake videos at our annual meeting on July 16th. More to follow on these meetings and studies.

Town of Plum Lake Fish Sticks/Spawning Habitat Projects

Plum Lake will kick off its Fish Sticks project this winter. The Lions Club (thanks to Jim Thomas for connecting us) has generously volunteered labor to help construct the structures and we have identified sites with DNR and Vilas County. One of the big problems facing us has been the need for heavy equipment to haul trees to the sites over the ice in the face of our warming winters and much thinner ice conditions. John Richter visited a fish stick construction project last winter with Greg Sass and observed an Argo amphibious tracked vehicle (see photos) that was used to haul trees in place of heavier vehicles. The ice on Jones Lake was marginal in January and they had already had a bobcat drop through the ice that morning. The Argo is substantially lighter and it handled the hauling and the ice without incident. Since the Argo is an amphibious vehicle, there is less concern for ice thickness. We are looking for a vehicle like this to use for these and future projects. We will move over to Laura and Star Lake after completing Phase one of our project in succeeding winters. Although a small grant has been approved for Plum by Vilas County, as we did in the lake management plan, this responsibility has been shifted from Plum Lake Association to the Town of Plum Lakes Lakes Committee for implementation and grant application, for later phases.



OAK BLIGHT

Simply put, it has arrived on Plum. A number of trees have been killed on one of our riparian neighbors' property and removal has begun. This disease is easily spread to other trees so keep an eye on your oaks and inform DNR if you notice wilting crowns in your oak trees.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH \$35. PER YEAR?

Well, it turns out, quite a bit. While our dues have stayed the same for years, we have had some generous additional donations from many members. The work we have all completed and the funds we have leveraged deserve being remembered. A quick recap is something we need to do more often. Part of the following was presented at the last annual meeting but during covid, many could not attend. The list deserves a wider distribution. First, our thanks to all members, our larger donors and our volunteers for their dedication to the work of our association. This is what **YOU** have done with your contributions.

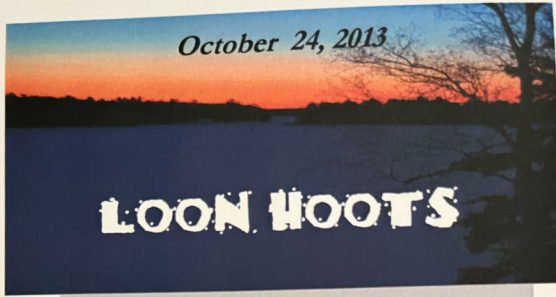
1. Leadership in township wide Lakes Management Plans.
2. Major grants awarded for CBCW - largest in state.
3. Regional leadership in launch protection with I-LIDS, funded by grants. All major lake launches in our township are now covered by full daylight hour I-LIDS security protection, as are a growing number of area lakes.
4. Purchase and permanent preservation of 10 acres of critical watershed, now named **The Plum Lake Preserve**, which has 680 feet of lake frontage on Plum Lake.
5. Tree drops for habitat now number 18.
6. Smallmouth Bass spawning logs (15) installed.
7. Advisory role in simplifying and shortening the grant process for tree drops and other habitat projects with DNR.
8. Role in healthy lakes grant for PLGC lake frontage demonstration project.
9. CLMN (water chemistry and clarity) data collection for State
10. Semiannual AIS sweeps
11. Forming WSI, raising nearly \$100,000 for legal and lobbying, testifying in the legislature, speaking to 80 associations and groups on Shoreland zoning.
12. Invited to join in Amicus brief to the Wisconsin Supreme Court on Town of Newbold's subdivision ordinance that allowed for greater lake frontage requirement than State law. This was the result of WSI legal research.
13. Participation in Loon Watch and a very successful platform breeding program.
And, currently on our docket.....
14. Exploration of storm water french drain/catch basin for town landing to prevent dirty, hot storm water runoff from directly entering the lake.
15. Planning and initial grant application and approval for major fish stick projects.
16. Work with Wisconsin Lakes and UW committees on Recreational Impacts on our lakes and developing organizational capacity in our State Lake Associations.
17. **TOTAL GRANT MONEY LEVERAGED FOR PLUM AND OUR NEIGHBORING TOWN LAKES EXCEEDS \$350,000.**

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GETTIN READY

Our lake sleeps. I ski softly over the powder covered other sound. Shanties have been off the lake for two weeks. It is that very quiet time in Sayner - April - when no one comes here and anyone who can leave, does. The only thing that moves is blowing snow as far as we can see.



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It's early fall and a young loon has surfaced 20 feet off the boat. At the sight of this approaching white meteor, it turns away and

white boat house with the matching white dog. Around the lake, the population with nearly 60% over 40 inches. Stocking muskies on the lake, and the population began to shrink, growing smaller in size. Natural reproduction was not keeping up and hatchery musky stockings were bringing there was a new crop of 20 inch fish to chase for fun,



SHORT CASTS

GLAD IT'S NOT US REDUX...
Vilas County News-Review article last week.... "Over 100 acres of water milfoil treated on the lake. In a conservative year the commis-

If you have been a reader of Loon Hoots, you know Ivory.

Ivory was often a supporting actor and sometimes a star in many of our Loon Hoot stories for the last decade. She was my hunting partner and constant companion for 14 years, almost making her 15th birthday last winter. She now joins Brandy, Buff, Bess, Toby, Cody, Trapper and Powder in that corner of my heart reserved for good dogs.

As I say every night as I put them to bed, Good night dog. Good dog.



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FISH TALES

The 2012 lake survey by DNR is complete and I thought you all might be interested in the findings. But reporting on reports is pretty dull. If you will indulge me, lets have another lake resident tell the story....

She glides silently through the weedbed on bluegills. She sits comfortably at the top of her perch as she waits for the next meal. She is one of the largest of her cohort on bluegills. She likes teasing the dog, but moves on - perch are on her mind. She is harder to find. There are a lot of them here to feed on now, but she

she will spend more time in the water where cisco will provide her with a meal - the rusty crayfish eat-ers are really too big for a meal. She will catch them in the lake - a big lake, but they make a good meal. She sees more large-ones, eating frogs and just about anything that moves.

a couple of careless males still intent on spawning even though she is old, chasing the spawned-out females into deeper water. Her own intention was to put the weight back on. The boat was intended to be used for fishing. She has no

DARK SKIES

One of the joys of living in the Northwoods is the opportunity to enjoy our dark sky. On a clear night, the Milky Way is so distinct, it doesn't seem real - probably because we seldom see it at the other places we live. It is one of the privileges of living in this special place, but that is starting to change as more residents add outdoor lighting to their places on the lake.

My first year on Plum, I learned quickly how shoreline lighting can affect lots of people when my neighbor turned on his yard light near his pier. The reflected light off the rippled water of the lake shined on my bedroom window like a strobe light. On the other side of us, our neighbor had a sodium vapor light on a pole that automatically went on and stayed on all night. That light served no purpose and when I spoke to my neighbor, she quickly decided to turn it off and save the money she spent to power it. It has been off since and we are grateful. I was equally lucky with my neighbor to the south, who made certain that disturbing lakeside light stayed off. It was a good lesson for me because I have a pier light on my boat-house. When I built the new house, I put a switch in the house to make sure it was always off unless we were unloading the boat at night.

Reflected light is not just light times 2. It's light cubed. It carries across the water like sound carries on a still night over the lake. I have had a chance to hear from many of our members about lights that shine in their eyes at night from across the lake. It is time for all of us to become aware of how disruptive this can be for our neighbors. Our yard lights not only disturb other lake residents, but they disturb wildlife as well. It has become so serious in Florida that beachfront condos are required by law to close their drapes at night to prevent light from confusing the three species of nesting sea turtles. Beach lights have become a real threat to nesting success for these threatened species.

Tranquil evenings in the Northwoods are enhanced by our dark sky which is a gift to all of us. Let's all do our part to keep our evening sky dark and our yard lights off. Your friends across the lake will be grateful.

PLUM LAKE ASSOCIATION

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