



THE RAG

AUTUMN/WINTER 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this, the Autumn colors outside my window are blazing, just past peak, though the Tamaracks across the lake are in full glow. I greet the tamaracks' change from green to gold with a mixture of joy and sadness — their display makes for a great show, but it's the last show of the season, before the colors dim and we slip into the muted tones of winter.

But there's something to be said for winter, at least here on the chain. Things get quiet, slow down. It's a season of rest. And whether we live here full-time or only come for a visit, we find it's a great time to relax, without as many guests to welcome or chores to do. Those neighbors who we only get a glimpse of in the summer? We actually have time to wander over (if the snow isn't too deep) and say hello.

It's those neighbors we'd like to talk to you about. About half the total population along our shores are TLCA members. On one hand, that's a great thing, and together we've accomplished some wonderful work. On the other hand, imagine how much more we could accomplish for the cleanliness of our lakes and the good health of our fish and wildlife populations if we were able to recruit some of the non-TLCA half of the chain population to our good cause(s).

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TLCA MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE

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About five years ago, the board embarked on a new membership campaign. We created a TLCA brochure that explained exactly who we are, what we care about, and what we strive to do. We mailed it out to a list of lake residents who weren't TLCA members. And we recruited quite a few new people with that effort.

But we haven't done much since. In fairness, we're a volunteer board and all of us are actively engaged in TLCA-related efforts throughout the year, so worthy causes can get back-burnered because there just aren't enough hands to help and / or time to spare. To this last point, I've heard from quite a few members who 1) know how vital having a strong, active membership is, but 2) understand that more help is needed. These people have proposed a different approach to member recruitment; call it a grassroots effort (or if you prefer, a Claspings Leaf Pondweed effort): Instead of mailing out brochures again, have people deliver them door-to-door.

We liked this idea — the personal approach is always a better way to go. We considered making this an official, organized effort, and we may still do that. But per the old adage that many hands make light work, the board thought a good first step was to ask EVERYONE to help. The thinking goes like this: If half the population around the chain are TLCA members, then statistically, odds are good that at least one of your next-door neighbors (or next-to-next-door neighbors) aren't. So if all you do between now and spring is 1) wander over to those couple adjacent households on either side of you, 2) say hello, 3) give them 30 seconds or so about the TLCA over coffee or a beer, and 4) encourage them to join (by visiting **thetlca.org**), well, mission accomplished.




What if nobody's home? What if you aren't comfortable being a TLCA spokesperson? Never fear; we got you — because we've got a fair amount of TLCA brochures left over from our efforts five years ago. Just give one to your neighbors and let it do all the talking. And if they're not home, you have something to leave in the door.


If you want to use the brochure, our membership director **Janell Kellett** is now living full-time on the chain at 14080 Solitude Lane; just text (**608.658.0154**) or email her at **tlcamembership@gmail.com** to arrange a pick-up (**before December 5th, please**). Also, we only have a limited number, so take only what you know you'll deliver. And remember, if you can't get over to Janell's or the brochures run out, just refer your neighbors to **thetlca.org** — all the info is there, including handy links for signing up.

If you've never seen the brochure, see the next page for a preview. And THANK YOU, for making the effort to help grow our membership and continue to do good work.



WHILE SUPPLIES LAST - THE TLCA BROCHURE




Who is the TLCA?




The Turtle Lake Chain Association is an enthusiastic and engaged group of people who share a love for our three-lake chain, a passion for preserving its beauty and cleanliness, and a keen interest in promoting a vibrant community spirit among our friends and neighbors on the lakes. Together, we play an active role in keeping our chain safe and welcoming for all, monitor against threats to water quality and invasive species, and put a high priority on getting together, getting to know each other, and having fun. Join us!

Visit us at theTLCA.org

Help us grow!

If you're a member and know of any friends or neighbors on the Chain who aren't, we invite you to invite them to join. A larger TLCA benefits everyone, whether by providing more help to keep our lakes beautiful and clean, or by providing more chances to meet new people and forge new friendships. As an added bonus, if you refer someone and they join, you'll receive a quality-made TLCA blanket — very handy for those cold, snowy months between August and July. Just have them mention your name when they sign up. Thank you for your efforts!








United by a love for our lakes

Winchester, Wisconsin

PROTECTING OUR LAKES

Whether you like to fish, waterski, wildlife-watch, swim, paddle or all of the above, the Turtle Chain is one of the cleanest and healthiest in Wisconsin — and our members' volunteer efforts and association dues help keep it that way, through **lake studies, boat inspections, invasive species monitoring** — and fast corrective action, if and when necessary.



The Purpose




ENCOURAGING INVOLVEMENT


From placing **hazard buoys, navigation lights and boat landing signs**, to volunteering for **roadside clean-up, lake monitoring and flower-watering**, to pitching in at our annual **Fun Day and Picnic**, the TLCA offers many ways to help keep our Chain safe, healthy and beautiful — while having a lot of fun and making a lot of friends in the process.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

We're big on connecting with our lake neighbors, via our **annual meeting, e-newsletter, membership directory, musky tourney** and an annual **Fun Day**, featuring a **canoe/kayak paddle, golf outing and annual picnic**. Our website, theTLCA.org, is a one-stop resource for TLCA news, events, volunteer opportunities, forums, and slices of life on the Chain.



of the TLCA



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

The Turtle Chain and town of Winchester have a rich and colorful past, and we strive to honor it, preserve it, and add to the story. This means documenting the **Chain's history** on theTLCA.org, supporting area **businesses, organizations and events**, and working to keep the Chain **clean, beautiful and safe**, now and for generations to come.

Visit theTLCA.org to:

- Sign up for TLCA membership, volunteer opportunities and special offers
- Find helpful resources and the latest TLCA news
- Discover fascinating history
- Get times, dates and info for meetings and events
- View and contribute to our photo galleries
- Communicate with fellow members (questions, lost and found, etc.) in our member forum

TLCA EVENTS — LOOKING BACK AT THIS SUMMER . . .



2024 TLCA MUSKY CLASSIC: BIG FISH EARNS A BIG PRIZE!

2025 TLCA Musky tourney honors went to angler **Sam Desantos**, who landed a 39" Tiger Musky and earned the \$500 first place prize. Can your fishing skills can boat the big (bigger?) one? The tourney is on for Father's Day weekend Saturday in 2025, and you can **register right now!** See page 4 for more information on who to call and how to sign up. Thanks to Tom Rued and Archie Clark for making this TLCA tradition happen!

FUN DAY EVENTS, PART 1: A FINE DAY FORE(!) GOLF!

44 golfers enjoyed a beautiful day at the Annual TLCA Golf Tournament. The Lake Gogebic Course was in beautiful shape. Course pro Brian and his staff provided us with another great event! The competition was fierce, but one team took a slim lead and hung on, winning by 1 stroke: **Team NELSON!** Congratulations to all the winners and mark your calendar for **next year's event (see page 4)**. Special thanks to Gary Engstrom, Jim Hochstetter, Jan Osikowicz, Stinky Gibson and Family, Brian and Nate Fons, Mike and Rose Martin for their help at the event!



Winning Team: Jim Nelson, Dave Andrews, Ryan Rinsinger, "Lil" Leo Tschida



Wildcat Winners: Karla Fry, Bill Fry, Phil Williams

Individual Awards: Sue Stemper, Barb Engstrom, Karla Fry Phil Williams, Ryan Rinsinger, Mike Bantz

TLCA EVENTS — LOOKING BACK AT THIS SUMMER . . .



FUN DAY EVENTS, PART 2: PADDLERS TAKE TO THE LAKE!

A windy, overcast morning couldn't cloud the spirits of enthusiastic TLCA paddlers who plunged into the waves on Saturday morning. Meeting at the Divide, the group enjoyed a fun exploration of the Turtle River and the northern area of South Turtle Lake. **Thanks to Laura Giffin** for arranging the event and leading the way. Next year, Rock Lake is the rumored destination; stay tuned for more 2025 info.



2024 FUN DAY PICNIC: THANKS TO EVERYONE!

Another successful Fun Day picnic, featuring music, libations, prizes, grilled pork tenderloins and a whole lot of delicious dishes to pass — is in the books. Thanks to Marjean Schultke and Mike Judge for the usual stellar job at food, beverage and supply-wrangling, and everyone who pitched in, bartending, grilling, running registration and raffle, making food and treats. A very special thanks to all who donated their time, money and/or talents to furnish a truly impressive array of quality prizes that we had the pleasure of awarding. See you all in 2025!

... AND AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR. PLAN TO JOIN US!

2025 ROAD CLEAN-UP **FRIDAY, MAY 23, 4 PM - 6 PM**

Volunteers are needed to help keep our beautiful area looking that way, and many hands make quick work! . High visibility vests and bags are provided. Call Laura Giffin with any questions, (920) 279-0182.

KUTZ SIGN DEDICATION **SATURDAY, MAY 24, 10:30 AM**

Working with the Town of Winchester, the TLCA named the Rock Lake boat landing for Gerald "Jerry" Kutz, a long-time fisherman, TLCA member and supporter. A brief ceremony will be held to dedicate the landing. Everyone is welcome to attend.

2025 TLCA MUSKY CONTEST **SATURDAY, JUNE 14**

Always the Saturday of Father's Day weekend. Register is \$25 per person; guests are welcome but there must be at least one TLCA member fishing in each boat. The tourney runs Sat, June 14 from 7 am to 4 pm, with a \$500 cash prize for the largest musky (34" or bigger) and a \$250 cash prize for the second place musky (34" or bigger). **You can sign up now so don't delay — call or text Tom Rued at (920) 585-5867 or Archie Clark at (920) 851-2066.**

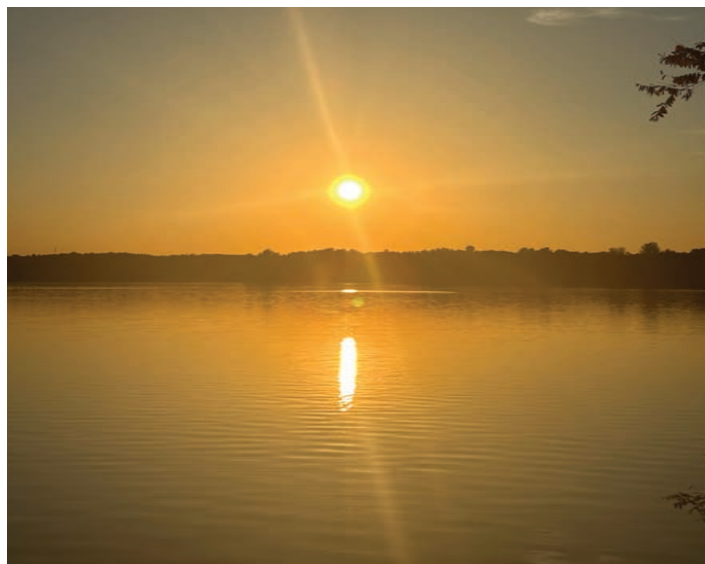
2025 ANNUAL MEETING **SATURDAY, JULY 5**

Meet your neighbors, load up on TLCA merch and learn the very latest on what's happening with your friendly neighborhood lakes association! The meeting begins at **9 am, Winchester Town Hall, on County Highway W.**

2025 FUN DAY **SATURDAY, JULY 26**

Always the fourth Saturday in July! A perfect excuse to get out, meet folks, and have a great time. Choose from a relaxed paddle or fun golf tourney in the morning, then join us for our annual picnic at 5 pm that afternoon!

Watch for more information on times, sign-ups, etc., coming this spring!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT - TLCA TO INVEST IN "FISH STICKS"

MAKING THE MOST OF JERRY KUTZ'S GENEROSITY

Many if not all of you knew — or have heard of — Gerald "Jerry" Kutz. Jerry was a passionate fisherman and TLCA member for decades, and his last wishes reflected those passions; he stipulated that whenever he passed, he wanted any contributions received to go to the TLCA, to help maintain the quality of our lakes and fishery.

Unfortunately for all of us, Jerry recently passed away (after a great day of fishing; Jerry certainly knew how to live life to its ultimate fullness). His last wishes were honored, and the TLCA received many donations via Jerry's memorial. To honor him, the TLCA board and the Town of Winchester agreed to name the Rock Lake landing for him, and commissioned a sign for the landing.

But the Kutz family, in an additional act of generosity, paid for the sign, so that ALL of Jerry's memorial funds would be used for a TLCA initiative. The only question for the board was what that initiative would be.

After a lot of study and discussion, the TLCA board intends to put the memorial money into the lakes — literally.

Since he was such an avid fisherman, the board believes that Jerry would approve of anything that enhances the quality of our fishery here on the chain. One of our board members, Gary Engstrom, brought what everyone agreed was a great idea to the table: Fish sticks. No, not the kind you ate as a kid, and there's no tartar sauce required. These are essentially specially-designated dead trees that are securely cabled and affixed to the lake bottom to serve as prime fish cover and habitat.

To have it better explained, the next few pages contain a reprint of an informational pamphlet that provides more detail. We encourage you to learn all about it — and if you'd like to participate by making a contribution that will bolster our funding for this project, let us know by **emailing any member of the board**. The board will likely finalize our specific plans by this time next year, with "fish stick" installation(s) happening in 2026. So there's time to donate to the cause; simply let any board member know of your interest, and we'll follow up with you as this initiative takes shape. Stay tuned for more news in the Spring RAG and/or the 2025 Annual Meeting!





MAINTENANCE



COSTS

- Range: \$50 – \$1300 per cluster of 3-5 trees, installed (average = \$890)
- Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant funding available: \$1000 per Fish Sticks Cluster



MATERIALS

- Whole, live trees from outside shoreland vegetation protection area
- Cables/cabling gear
- Heavy equipment including snowplow and chainsaw
- Safety gear



REQUIRED

FACT SHEET SERIES: FISH STICKS



Bony Lake, Bayfield County - Pamela Toshner

FISH STICKS, an in-lake best practice (not eligible for rivers), are large woody habitat structures that utilize whole trees grouped together, resulting in the placement of more than 1 tree per 50 feet of shoreline. Fish Sticks are anchored to the shore and are partially or fully submerged. Fish sticks are not tree drops since the trees utilized for the projects come from further than 35 feet from shore, thus they don't "rob from the bank" of trees that may otherwise grow and fall in naturally.

PURPOSE

This fish and wildlife habitat best practice creates food, shelter, and breeding areas for all sorts of creatures from small aquatic insects, to fish, to turtles, ducks, and songbirds. Fish Sticks can also help prevent bank erosion – protecting lakeshore properties and your lake.

HOW TO BUILD

It may be necessary to work with your local DNR fisheries biologist, county land and water conservation department, or landscaper to design and/or construct this practice. Logging companies may assist with tree supply, cutting, and transportation. Check with your local zoning department to determine if any permits are necessary.

Detailed guidance is found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/fishsticks.html>.

1. Find a location

Ideal Fish Sticks sites have low ice energy – places like protected bays and shorelines leading to and from bays. High ice energy areas on lakes greater than 250 acres require alternate methods that ensure they remain in place.

Typically a single Fish Sticks cluster occupies 50 linear feet of shoreline, so it should be placed on an area of your lakeshore that is not used for pier(s) or swimming. If you have a lot of frontage, you may choose to add more than a single Fish Sticks cluster.

PROJECT TIMELINE

SITE PREP
2 MONTHS
winter ice road

INSTALLATION
< 1 DAY

MAINTENANCE
Spring safety
check

PROJECT END
3 YEARS
cable removal



FACT SHEET SERIES: FISH STICKS

2. Create a design

Fish Sticks structures are commonly made up of three to five whole trees. The butt ends of the trees, at the water's edge, are cabled to live trees on shore.

Sketch the design and dimensions to be sure you understand what area it will cover and how it may function or fit into your landscape. Consider the following:

- Is the water deep or shallow?
Trees sink and settle with branches breaking off soon after installation, but more trees can be placed in a deepwater cluster.
- Is your lakeshore mowed adjacent to the proposed Fish Sticks site? If so, and if you would like DNR Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant funding, you must commit to not mowing a 350 ft² area at the base of the cluster or installing a 350 ft² native planting.

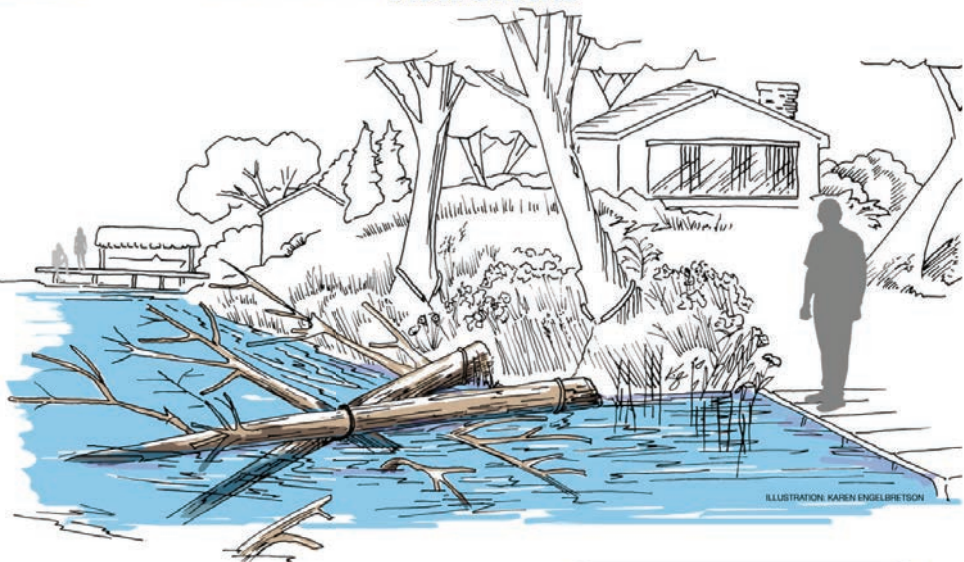


ILLUSTRATION: KAREN ENGELBRETTSON

3. Apply for a permit

The DNR recently streamlined the water regulation permits to make it easier for you to install Fish Sticks. There is a \$303 fee unless this practice is funded through the Wisconsin DNR. Eligibility standards and application materials are on the DNR website <http://dnr.wi.gov/Permits/Water/>.

\$ FUNDING NOTE

In order to be eligible for Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant funding, properties must comply with local shoreland zoning vegetation protection area (i.e. buffer) standards. If not, the property owner must commit to a 350 ft² no-mow zone at the base of the Fish Sticks cluster(s) or to installing a 350 ft² native planting.

Scott Toshner



4. Lay out the best practice

Flag the area(s) along your waterfront property where Fish Sticks will be installed. This is important because most projects take place in the winter, making it more difficult to identify landscape features and location preferences.

5. Construct the practice

Installing Fish Sticks on ice is the most practical and inexpensive method. Identify an ice road and maintain with snow plowing until ice is adequate thickness for installation (18 inches). Cut live trees from outside the shoreline vegetation protection area, which is usually at least 35 feet from the water's edge. Transport and place the trees in criss-cross clusters or stacks and then cable and anchor them to a live tree on shore.

MAINTENANCE

- Check on the site soon after spring ice out to be certain all the trees remain in place.
- The cables should be removed approximately three years after installation so they don't damage the live trees or litter the shore.
- Trees should remain in place for ten years if funded through a DNR Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant.

LINKS

Healthy Lakes & Rivers Website — <http://healthylakeswi.com>

Fish Sticks Guidance — <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/fishsticks.html>

DNR Surface Water Grants — <http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/surfacewater.html>

For more information contact Pamela Toshner at 715-635-4073 or pamela.toshner@wi.gov.



Design and layout by Amy Kowalski, Extension Lakes



BAT SURVEY REPORTS PROMISING RESULTS!

This summer, Gary and Barb Engstrom ventured out to see what the bat population on Rock Lake looked like. Bats are frequently used as gauges to the health of a natural ecosystem, with bigger populations being an indicator of good conditions. This particular survey (conducted on August 18) was very promising, revealing no fewer than 150 bats representing six different species, including almost 100 Little Browns! The details are below; if you have an interest in assisting with bat monitoring for the chain, feel free to contact Barb and Gary for information on getting started.

Wisconsin DNR Acoustic Bat Monitoring Program

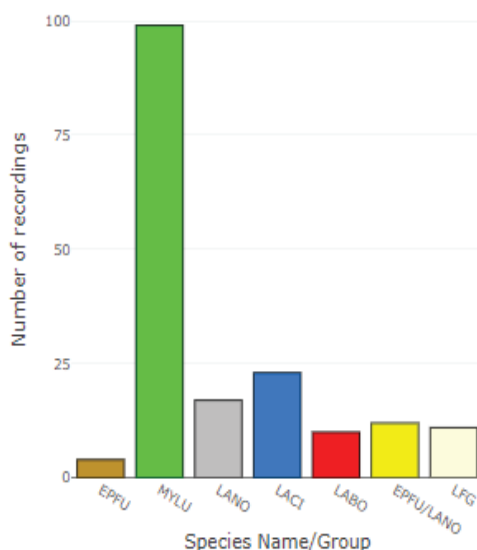
Survey Route Information

Route ID: 6987
 Survey Date: 18 August 2024
 Start Time: 8:34 PM
 End Time: 10:14 PM
 County: Vilas County
 Location: Rock Lake
 Survey Duration: 1.67 hour(s)
 Habitat: lake with wooded shoreline with cottages
 Surveyor: Gary & Barbara Engstrom
 Notes: seemed like a lot of activity, beautiful night
 Bat Calls/km: 29.73
 Route Length: 5.9 km

Weather Information

Start Temperature: 60.0 F
 End Temperature: 53.0 F
 Start Rel. Humidity: 87.0%
 End Rel. Humidity: 89.0%
 Start Wind Speed: 1.3 m/s
 End Wind Speed: 1.3 m/s
 Sunset Time: 8:02 PM

Species Recorded



Legend

Acoustic Bat Encounters

Species/Group

- High frequency ≥ 35 kHz (HFG)
 - Little brown/Northern long-eared (MYLU/MYSE)
 - Little brown (MYLU)
 - Northern long-eared (MYSE)
- Eastern red/Evening/Tricolored (LABO/NYHU/PESU)
 - Eastern red (LABO)
 - Evening (NYHU)
 - Tricolored (PESU)
- Low frequency ≤ 35 kHz (LFG)
 - Hoary (LACI)
 - Big brown/Silver-haired (EPPU/LANO)
 - Big brown (EPPU)
 - Silver-haired (LANO)



Route types

- Water route
- Driving route
- Walking route
- Hybrid route





BAT SURVEY REPORTS PROMISING RESULTS!

