

The pot of gold, courtesy of Penny and Bernie Klotz, Rock Lake



THE RAG
SPRING / SUMMER 2025

NOTE FROM THE PRES

I've come to the conclusion that the saying "time flies" is a vast understatement.

I've become more aware of this lately, realizing things that happened a year or two ago actually happened MANY years ago. When ground was broken for my place on South Turtle Lake, that was, let's see, seven or eight years ago? Nope, almost 20. My rug rat kids who watched it being built are in grad school now. My parents, who played with them at the lake and who were gonna' live forever have both passed, my dad this last winter. Hard to believe, him being so young — oh wait, he was 92? When did *that* happen?

You get the point. Time speeds on. When I took on the presidency, I said I'd serve for three years. At the time, that felt like forever, and yet, here we are. And while it's been an honor, I'm gonna' stick to my guns and pass the torch at the annual meeting. Because I've also learned that time doesn't just run fast, it can also run out — and my job and family have demanded more and more of it. Spreading myself too thin doesn't do anyone — including the TLCA — any good.

Besides, the TLCA has many great people, and when some take a step back, it's an opportunity for others to take a step forward. If you've been thinking about it but hesitating, thinking you might do it next year, or the year after that, or the one after that one, great people. I think me taking a step back is a great time for others to take a step forward. We have so many fun and constructive ways to strengthen and enhance our lakes, our organization, and our community, and all it takes is taking that step up. Maybe you've been delaying it, figuring next year would be a better time. and Our membership is engaged, dedicated, always willing to pitch in. I trust that people will continue to step up to volunteer, for invasive species monitoring, or Fun Day activities, or a lake representative / board position. And I'll still hang around to help with the RAG and the website until I find someone to take those on. (Any volunteers? Operators are standing by.)

The one thing that won't change for me is the same thing I doubt will change for any of us — being a proud and active member of the TLCA. This organization is great for doing good works and becoming friends with good people, and there will always be time for that.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

2025 TLCA MUSKY CONTEST SATURDAY, JUNE 14 • 7:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

Always the Saturday of Father's Day weekend! Join us for a day on the water seeking the winning fish! Registration is \$25 per person, payable at the pre-tourney meeting on Friday, June 13 at 6 pm at the Winchester Park Pavilion. At least one fisherman from each boat has to attend this meeting for rules and information. Cash prizes for the two biggest muskies taken! For complete rules and the latest information, visit thetlca.org/events

2025 TLCA ANNUAL MEETING SATURDAY, JULY 5 • 9:00 AM TO 10:00 AM-ish

The TLCA Annual Meeting. Meet your neighbors and learn the latest about what's happening on the chain, from membership updates and lake studies to initiatives and special events. 9:00 am at the Winchester Town Hall on County Highway W. Always informative and almost always under an hour!

2025 TLCA FUN DAY & PICNIC SATURDAY, JULY 26

Golf or paddle in the morning, then join your fellow TLCA members at the Winchester town park later in the afternoon for a picnic featuring delicious food, music, raffle prizes and a lot of laughs with your TLCA friends, family and neighbors. For more information on all the fun, **look on page XX** of this issue or visit thetlca.org/events

For more details, sign-up information and contact names and numbers for these TLCA events
(as well as some fun Town of Winchester happenings) visit our website at
thetlca.org/events

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

The reason the TLCA has accomplished so many wonderful things through the years is due to one simple factor: The willingness of our members to donate their time, talents and effort and pitch in when and where help is needed. While there are always ways to help out (just ask!), here are a few we'd like to elevate in this issue. Please consider them and (even better) sign up today!

CBCW Certification and/or Recertification Inspector Training

Thursday June 19, 2025

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

South Turtle Boat Landing



Keeping our lakes free of invasive species is a key component of the TLCA's mission, and one that requires constant vigilance.

By checking boats and trailers at our landings, you're on the "front lines" of this effort, and can make a real difference. If you'd like to be join our ranks, please contact Gary Engstrom at ggengstrom@aol.com or **715.686.2582** and make plans to join everyone at this certification event.

About the training: The State of Wisconsin requests re-certification every two or three years, so this is an opportunity for folks to get certified or re-certified. The session will be taught by Jamie VandenLangenberg from the North Lakeland Discovery Center (NLDC). (She'll also be training the seasonal interns who will be performing CBCW inspections as well as other projects on the Lakes, so it'll be a chance to give these new recruits a warm Wisconsin Northwoods welcome.)

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Flower Box Watering

Memorial Day thru mid-October
The Divide

If you've ever watched the Boat Parade or taken a walk or drive across the bridge that separates North Turtle and South Turtle Lakes, you've been on "The Divide." And if you've done this in the summer months, you've seen the amazing floral display that lines both sides of the road. This beautiful icon of our community is thanks to the TLCA volunteers who plant, water and maintain the flower boxes throughout the summer.

Each year we look for volunteers to donate time between Memorial Day and mid-October. Signing up is easy; just visit **thetlca.org/tlca** scroll down to Flower Box Watering, and hit the sign up button. You'll be able to reserve your volunteer time in just a few clicks!



Website Maintenance

For eight years now, **thetlca.org** has served as the information hub for the TLCA, a helpful resource for both current and prospective members. The guy who created it (yours truly) has maintained it ever since its launch, and while the job doesn't take a whole lot of time (it's mostly bi-annual date updates and occasional swapping out of new content for old) he'd appreciate someone willing to take over. **NO PROGRAMMING KNOWLEDGE** required; it's built on wix.com so while there is a slight learning curve, it's nothing too daunting. Email **turtlelakechainassociation@gmail.com**

AIS PREVENTION EFFORTS

The Winchester / NLDC Partnership

By Steve Budnik

The town of Winchester and the North Lakeland Discovery Center have an agreement in place to provide the town lakes with various AIS prevention efforts. The broad objectives are to 1) prevent AIS infestations, 2) manage infestations, and 3) administer the AIS program efficiently and effectively.

The following specific programs carried out on the Turtle Chain lakes support those broad objectives. A lakeside aquatic plants workshop will be held at the Discovery Center. Registration info and date can be found on the Center website. The AIS database and accompanying maps for Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Iris, and Curly Leaf Pondweed will be updated.

Early season (June-early July) and late season (August) surveys will be conducted by boat on the Turtle chain looking for Curly Leaf Pondweed in the early season and Eurasian Watermilfoil in the late season. Regarding Yellow Iris efforts, a full shoreline survey of all three chain lakes will be conducted during the early June bloom period to document the current status of all populations.

Possible Purple Loosestrife and other shoreline invasives such as Japanese Knotweed and Phragmites will be surveyed by boat in the early August timeframe on all lakes. An Early Detection, Rapid Response (EDRR) survey and Spiny Waterflea sampling will be done on a rotation basis with Rock and North Turtle being sampled in 2024.

Not directly connected to the above partnership but vitally important to lake health will be these ongoing efforts: 1) lake chemistry/water sampling to test for phosphorus and chlorophyll will be conducted by Steve Budnik, Gary Engstrom, and Mike Martin during the June-August timeframe; 2) dissolved oxygen data will be collected by these same individuals during the May-October timeframe; and lastly 3) water clarity data will also be collected during the open water season.

In summary, every effort is being made, and will continue to be made, to keep the Turtle Chain healthy for generations to come.

CLEAN WATER EFFORTS

TURTLE CHAIN WATER QUALITY

by Gary Engstrom & Steve Budnik

The water quality of our lakes is important to all of us who are members of the TLCA. We are fortunate that previous residents took an active role in monitoring the Chain's water quality through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Citizen Lakes Monitoring Network (CLMN) program. We have water quality data (Secchi Disk Clarity, Chlorophyll A, Total Phosphorous) going back for several decades on North and South Turtle. We added Rock Lake to the CLMN program in 2020 and are now collecting water quality data on Rock Lake in addition to historical water clarity (Secchi Disk) information.

Many residents and TLCA members are interested in how the Lake water quality on the Chain has changed over the past few years. This article will address that question by looking at three (3) key water quality parameters that are measured by the State, Secchi Disk (Water Clarity), Total Phosphorus (Critical Nutrient) and Chlorophyll A (Algae Component) over the past three (3) years on Rock and North Turtle Lakes.

Water clarity is measured by lowering a Secchi Disk (to right) into the water until the disk can't be seen (black and white zone contrast). The depth in feet is recorded as the "Secchi Disk" reading.



Table 1	2020	2021	2022
June	6.0	6.5	6.25
July	5.5	6.75	5.75
August	5.5	6.0	5.5

Table 1 shows the Secchi Disk (SD) readings for Rock Lake over the past three years. The readings are taken at the deep hole in June, July and August at a minimum.

Table 2	2020	2021	2022
June	-	8.0	7.5
July	7.25	8.5	7.0
August	8.25	9.0	8.0

Table 2 shows the corresponding data for North Turtle, also taken at the deep hole.

All of these readings are in feet.

There are a number of variables that can affect these annual clarity readings including sampling date during the month, water level, rainfall, temperatures and wind conditions. The Turtle chain also has natural tannin staining from the watershed which colors the water to a tea color. Although this has no impact on the water quality, it does reduce the SD values.

Looking at the SD data, it is apparent that Rock Lake is consistently between 5.5 and 6.75 feet with no significant trend. North Turtle appears to stay relatively consistent in the 7.0 - 9.0 range.

CLEAN WATER EFFORTS

Total Phosphorus (TP) is the limiting nutrient in our lakes which controls bacterial and algae growth. Bacteria consume oxygen which can impact other aquatic species and high levels of green or blue-green algae can cause aesthetic problems. Blue-green algae can also be toxic to some aquatic species and animals.

Table 3	2020	2021	2022
June	24.5	24.0	19.7
July	28.6	23.8	26.4
August	27.3	23.2	30.4

Table 3 shows TP in parts per billion (ppb) for Rock Lake over the past three years. The TP levels appear to be fairly consistent in the mid to high 20s. Rock being the smallest and shallowest of the lakes, it sees a significant contribution of P caused by annual organic loading such as falling leaves in the fall.

Table 4	2020	2021	2022
June	16.7	18.0	11.9
July	17.4	14.9	14.4
August	15.7	13.0	

Table 4 shows the corresponding Total P levels for North Turtle Lake, in parts per billion. The Phosphorus levels for North Turtle are stable and consistently below 20 ppb which is considered excellent.

The last major water quality parameter that we monitor is Chlorophyll A which is an indication of the algae suspended in the water column. The analysis is performed on the filtered residue. Algae contains chlorophyll while other suspended material and microorganisms do not.

Table 5	2020	2021	2022
June	4.76	10.1	6.97
July	10.7	10.9	8.8
August	15.8	15.4	18.8

Table 5 shows the Chlorophyll A in Rock Lake in parts per billion (ppb). The results show the increasing levels that would be expected as summer progresses and the water warms with more sunlight entering the water (longer days). The Chlorophyll A levels are still very consistent from year to year and relatively low. Even though

Rock Lake is relatively shallow, the tannin staining prevents sunlight from penetrating much below 6 feet. Algae requires sunlight to grow so this helps regulate algae growth.

Table 6 shows the corresponding Chlorophyll A results for North Turtle Lake, again, in parts per billion (ppb).

Table 6	2020	2021	2022
June	2.56	5.35	4.84
July	3.76	2.92	6.06
August	5.07	4.02	

The Chlorophyll A levels in North Turtle are again very stable and low as would be expected in the cooler and deeper waters of the lake. The tannin staining helps to limit the penetration of the sunlight beyond depths of about 8 feet.

Overall, the water qualities for Rock and North Turtle have been stable and are in the good to excellent classification for comparable lakes in Wisconsin. We did not have access to complete data for South Turtle at this time, but we would expect similar results based on the numbers generated for 2020 and 2021.

CLEAN WATER EFFORTS

WATCH OUT FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE PLANTS THIS SUMMER!

by Melinda Myers

In February, I asked for your help spreading the word about the impact aquatic invasive plants have on Wisconsin lakes and waterways. Now that summer has arrived and we are spending more time outdoors, you may encounter gardens and natural spaces where these plants are growing. So once again, I am asking for your help.

Start by familiarizing yourself with the more common aquatic invasive plants — you may be surprised to discover some beautiful plants are actually problem plants that need to be removed.

- See [Regulated Aquatic Invasive Plants in WI](#) and [Common Wetland Invasive Plants in WI](#) for pictures of restricted and prohibited species.

- [The Wisconsin Invasive Species Calendar](#) from the University of Wisconsin - Madison First Detector Network provides a timely reminder of invasive plants to watch for throughout the season based on their life stage and visibility.

- A new video “Identifying Eight Aquatic Invasive Species in Wisconsin” provides images and identification clues you may find helpful as you enjoy the outdoors and tour gardens.

- For more detailed information and images of native and invasive aquatic plants, see Paul M. Skawinski’s book ***Aquatic Plants of the Upper Midwest – Fourth Edition***. It is available from the [Extension Lakes Online Bookstore](#) where you can also find the updated Wisconsin AIS Early Detector Handbook.

- To learn more about the control methods for invasive plants, contact your regional WI DNR AIS Coordinator [here](#).

If you discover aquatic invasive plant populations in public spaces and waterways, report them to the Wisconsin DNR so they can contain and manage the problem. You’ll find the details for documenting and reporting aquatic invasive species on the [WI DNR’s Invasive Species Reporting page](#).

Also, watch for invasive plants as you visit and consult with gardeners this summer. When invasive plants are found be sure to make it into a learning opportunity. Assure the gardener that many people have purchased plants, unaware they’d eventually become a problem for native plants, wildlife, and beneficial insects. More gardeners are purchasing plants online, increasing the risk of prohibited and restricted plants finding their way into Wisconsin.

CLEAN WATER EFFORTS



Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) is an aquatic invasive species that can grow quickly, forming dense mats that restrict light to the underwater environment. Photo by Paul Skawinski

And there are many new gardeners that may not be aware this problem exists. Help them understand that how we plant and manage our gardens has an impact on Wisconsin's natural spaces. Growing even one or two invasive plants in your garden, shoreline planting or pond can have an impact.

Invasive plants tend to be vigorous growers, reproducing faster than our native plants, and are more tolerant of adverse conditions. This allows them to quickly spread, take over and cause harm. Advise gardeners on how to dispose of invasive plants properly. Composting is usually not the best option. Most of us do not create compost piles that reach high enough temperatures to kill these weeds, insects, and diseases. To prevent them from invading natural areas it is best to bag and dispose of invasive plants in the trash.

The more people you reach with this important message, the more gardeners there will be helping in the containment and management of these plants. My AIS partners at UW Madison Extension and the WI DNR AIS remind us that "maintaining and restoring our waters and landscapes can reduce the impacts even when we don't have other management options for an invasive species. Reporting invasive species is a first step in containing their spread."

OUR COMMUNITY

JOIN US FOR ROAD CLEAN-UP, MAY 27!

by Laura Giffin

Come join the fun!!! Our association has adopted a section of County O from Old O to Star Lake Road. Let's meet at the intersection of Old O and County O at 10:30 AM. Wear boots if you have them, and gloves. Mosquito protection recommended. Safety vests and bags are provided. Many hands make for quick work and more fun! Please put it on your calendar and email me if you're planning to help out, but come even if you don't RSVP if it works out for you!

Sign up online [HERE](#), email Laura, or just show up! Laura's email is ml.giffin.1984@gmail.com

COMING SOON TO THE DIVIDE: COLOR, JOY, SMILES!

by Laura Giffin

Bridge flower watering signup is available on our website. Please consider helping out for a week or more this season! There is now a pump at the bridge, so no more carting jugs from home or hauling a pail from the water's edge! If you can only do a partial week, feel free to contact me and we'll work it out! Can't wait to see what blooms will be in the boxes this year! Find me at ml.giffin.1984@gmail.com

Sign up online [RIGHT HERE!](#) Any questions?

Laura's email is ml.giffin.1984@gmail.com



SHOOTING FIREWORKS — PLEASE CONSIDER THE IMPACT.

By Laura Giffin

For many of us, celebration of the 4th of July just isn't complete without a grand fireworks display! But if you live on a lake and fire your display over and into the lake, please consider if, when and how many:

Quiet hours: Fireworks beyond 10 pm can be stressful and irritating to those who want to turn in. If you do fire them, please be considerate of your neighbors and the time.

Water quality: Fireworks debris can litter the local lakes, and ammonium perchlorate (a chemical released in fireworks) is known to contaminate ground and surface waters and threaten aquatic creatures.

Pets and wildlife: Many pets are afraid of loud noises, particularly fireworks. And the weeks surrounding the 4th are critical times for our nesting loons. Loud explosions can frighten them away from their chicks and nests.

So, a few suggestions: As an alternative, try taking in one of the fantastic shows done by the surrounding communities. Or limit when, where and how many you shoot, in consideration of your neighbors and our lakes. Thank you!

OUR COMMUNITY

WINCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY UPCOMING PROGRAMS

JUNE

- 1 Rose Page at 4 from WHIP-Invasive Species
- 2 Dick Logan, Vilas County Supervisor, answers questions
- 8 History Walk with Blaze
- 16 ADRC Elder Specialist Susan Corrieri 10 - 12
- 21 Scott Spoolman author of Wisconsin Books at 2
- 27 Discovery Center program for kids and adults 10:30 - 12
- 29 Bill Jamerson 90th Anniversary of the CCC at 4

JULY

- 6 Ted Ruhseh author of Ripple Effect at 4
- 7 Dick Logan, Vilas County Supervisor, answers questions
- 11 Discovery Center program 10:30 - 12
Blood Drive 12:30 - 4
- 13 Bob Kovar, photographer and author at 4
- 18 Blaze's program for kids 10:30 - 11:30; Set up Batik
- 19 Batik Class with Jeannie Schaffer
- 20 History Walk with Blaze
- 25 Discovery Center program 10:30 - 12
- 27 Jim Bokern, History of Area at 4.

AUGUST

- 1 Blaze kid's program 10:30-11:30
- 3 Lenelle Scholl Community Impact Group leader 4
- 4 Dick Logan, Vilas County Supervisor, answers questions
- 8 Diane Mockler Block Cube Bracelet class 12 - 4
- 10 Darrell Smith Pairing Beer and Wine with Cheese

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Dick Logan, Vilas County Supervisor, answers questions
- 15 ADRC Elder Specialist Susan Corrieri 10 - 12

OCTOBER

15 - 21 Wisconsin Science Week

NOVEMBER

- 17 ADRC elder Specialist Susan Corrieri 10 - 12

BOOK CLUB

June 19 — The Book Woman's Daughter
by Kim Michelle Richardson

July 19 — The Life and Times of Grandpa Charlie
by Leslie Allenspach

Aug. 21 — Miss Benson's Beetle
by Rachelle Joyce

Sep. 18 — The Thursday Murder Club
by Richard Osman

OUR COMMUNITY

THANK YOU to TLCA members for taking these amazing photos when the Aurora showed up late this winter.



OUR COMMUNITY



Top photo on this page courtesy of Bernie and Penny Klotz (Rock Lake).