

Spring 2009

Volume 1, Issue 1

OUR LAKES

TOWN OF PLUM LAKE

*Published by the
Lakes Committee
for the Town of
Plum Lake*

715-542-3108

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*The Town of Plum Lake
Plum Lake Riparians
Plum Lake Library
Sayner/Star Lake Lions
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BIWBLA
Star Lake/Little Star
Lakes Association
Vilas County Lakes
Association
Vilas County Land and
Water Conservation
Department*

Lakes Committee for the Town of Plum Lake

PROTECTS OUR LAKES

Founded in the fall of 2005, the Lakes Committee for the Town of Plum Lake works to stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) into our town waters. To do this we have partnered with our founder, the Plum Lake Town Board, as well as with county and state government, town residents, property owners and visitors. The Committee members, all volunteers, are a diverse group. Some are seasonal residents while others live here year around and have for years. Some own property on Town lakes while others do not. All share a concern for our waters and a desire to protect them. We have representatives from our high usage lakes, except we need one from Razorback.

Every lake in our Town is important. The article on page 3 describes the in-lake and lakeshore monitoring that we have done and plan to do on the 37 lakes in the Town of Plum Lake. Monitoring is done to establish a baseline identifying what plants are in our lakes and to learn if invasive plants and animals are present. New volunteers who want to help with this work receive training on how to sample before they begin their efforts.

Two additional ways in which volunteers help protect our lakes include helping with our Public Awareness and Education efforts and the *Clean Boats, Clean Waters*

watercraft inspection program.

Public Awareness and Education is designed to let the public know the dangers of invasives and what can be done to stop their spread. You may have noticed our Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers™ awareness stickers, posters and signs on town roads and at town businesses and boat landings. They are designed to get the message to lake users about what they can do to protect our lakes by stopping the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

Page 2 has an article on our *Clean Boats, Clean Waters* watercraft inspections done at Town boat landings. Volunteers inspect boats and trailers for invasives and talk with fishermen/women and other boaters about what they can do to keep from spreading invasives from lake to lake. This program is well received by lake users and is a good way to spread the word because people whose boats are inspected share what they have learned with others. In 2008, Jan Wise of our Committee, taught all of the middle school students at Northland Pines about AIS identification and how to do a thorough *Clean Boats, Clean Waters* boat inspection.

Since our Committee was founded, our philosophy has been that committed volunteers are the best people to help with our many

"...volunteers are the lifeblood of the work of our Committee. While we have a solid group of dedicated volunteers, MORE ARE NEEDED."

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projects. We want to do all we can for as little cost as possible. This is even more true during tough economic times. We believe that volunteers best demonstrate our commitment to protecting and conserving our lakes.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the work of our Committee. While we

have a solid group of dedicated volunteers, **MORE ARE NEEDED.** Please, after reading the rest of this Newsletter, decide how you would like to help and either fill out and mail the VOLUNTEER FORM on page 3 or call us at 715-542-3108. **Training for Lake Monitoring and Clean Boats, Clean Waters will be provided at times convenient to you.**

Clean Boats/Clean Waters

Jan Wise, *Clean Boats/Clean Waters* Committee Chairperson



Since the beginning in the summer of 2006, *Clean Boats, Clean Waters* (CBCW) volunteers have been working at boat landings on Plum Lake and Ballard/Irving/White Birch Lakes, with a group getting started last summer (2008) on Star Lake. In the Town of Plum Lake, we have 37 lakes that we are trying to keep pristine. Boaters, who come to the lakes these days, travel from one lake to another, often in one day's time. Although we have had boaters from AIS infested lakes launch in Plum, we have been lucky so far. We need to continue these public education efforts. Right now we have a few volunteers who educate boaters about the threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS). But we need more! The most pressing threats include Purple Loosestrife, Eurasian Water Milfoil, Curly-leafed Pondweed, Zebra Mussels, Spiny Water flea, and Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia. These all have been found in Wisconsin Lakes and some are right "next door."

We desperately need volunteers to monitor boat landings at our high usage lakes including Plum, Ballard/Irving/White Birch, Star, Razorback and Laura. Volunteers can inspect at anytime, but more are needed at particularly busy times such as weekends, Fishing Opening weekend, Memorial Day, Fourth of

July, and Labor Day, as well as fishing tournament days.

What do we, volunteer inspectors, do?

Before I start my two-hour shift on Friday evenings, I pick up the CBCW box and sign at the Mobil Station in Sayner, where it is housed. As I drive into the boat landing, I put up our CBCW sign at the entrance and park the car out of the way. Equipped with a chair, something to drink, and dressed already in my CBCW shirt, from the box I grab the CBCW apron and a clipboard with the form of questions that the DNR provides us. As a vehicle and trailer drives in, I stop the vehicles far enough from the boat landing so as not to be a nuisance if boats are coming into the landing from the water. I introduce myself as a volunteer, welcome the people in the vehicle to the lake, then ask if they would like to answer some questions and would they mind if I inspected their boat. Many times I have invited the boat's owner to inspect with me. If we see any plants or other life on the boat or trailer, we pull them off and discard them away from the lake. Everyone I have ever talked to has been most cooperative and many already know about AIS issues. I give information to them about AIS, and they continue on to launch their boat. I also stop the boats exiting from the lake as they

The first 2009 meeting of the Lakes Committee is May 27, 2009 at 6:30 PM at the Town Hall in Sayner.

For more information on activities related to Aquatic Invasive Species Control in Vilas County, visit www.vilaslandandwater.org

Clean Boats/Clean Waters, continued

pull their dripping boats up onto the parking lot to inspect their equipment after having been on the lake. Again, using the same protocol, I ask the questions on the DNR sheet and give these boaters information, as well. If there are trailers parked at the landing before I arrive there for inspection, I walk over to the parking area, inspect the trailers, and put an inspection sheet and pamphlet on their windshield to alert them if we found any plant or animal life on their trailer.

The typical amount of time that people work is two hours in a shift. Some have worked longer. Training is provided before a volunteer goes out on his/her own. More than one person can work during

a shift. This is very advantageous, since sometimes it gets pretty busy at the landings, and it makes the inspections go faster (making for happy boaters!) Children can help, but must be accompanied by an adult.

We need you! If everyone in our town took just one 2 hour shift, we could cover all the lakes, most of the time. It's not just an issue for the people who have lake property....it's a town issue. Visitors come to our town to use our lakes. We want everyone who uses our lakes to have a great time at our businesses as well. Healthy Lakes make for a healthy economy! Please help us to protect our greatest resource!

"We need you! ... It's not just an issue for the people who have lake property....it's a town issue...healthy lakes make for a healthy economy."

In-Lake and Shoreline Monitoring

By Bill Sloey, Lake Monitoring Coordinator for the Town of Plum Lake

Monitoring our lakes for the presence of invasive aquatic species is an important component of any lake protection and management program. This involves two tasks: getting an inventory on the plants, crayfish and invasives currently in our lakes; and, watching for changes on our most vulnerable lakes with as many eyes as we can muster. The Town of Plum Lake encompasses some 37 lakes and 99 square miles of township. With our small population of concerned citizens, the task is great and new helpers are always welcome. Over the past

three years, we have focused on the inventory component. We established sampling protocols in cooperation with the DNR, assembled a collection of crayfish traps, plant-sampling equipment, plant presses for voucher specimens and acquired several GPS units to keep track of exactly where the samples were taken. Many members of the Lakes Committee and some of their family members have helped me trap crayfish, collect plant samples and look for jellyfish, mystery snails, and several other creatures that do not belong in our beautiful Northwoods lakes. To date, we have

VOLUNTEER FORM

We need your help. Please return this form to: **Chris Wise, 3185 Hanson Road, Sayner, WI 54560**
or call **715-542-3108**

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Summer mailing address: _____

I can help with:

- _____ *Clean Boats/Clean Waters* activities
- _____ Shoreline Monitoring
- _____ In-lake Monitoring
- _____ Scheduling/Coordinating volunteers
- _____ Social Outings
- _____ Other: _____



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

ProtectYourWaters.net, Township of Plum Lake, Vilas County, Wisconsin

Lakes Committee for the Town of Plum Lake

3185 Hanson Road
Sayner, WI 54560
715-542-3108

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

MAY 24

1:00

CLEAN BOATS,
CLEAN WATERS

TRAINING

SAYNER TOWN HALL

About Our Organization...

The Lakes Committee for the Town of Plum Lake is composed of volunteers committed to protecting our lakes from aquatic invasive species through public awareness education and monitoring.

Watch for our next Newsletter this summer. Please let us know if your summer mailing address will be different than the one on this Newsletter. Thanks.

In-Lake and Shoreline Monitoring, continued

sampled all of the lakes with public access (33) and hope to finish this preliminary job in the summer of 2009, providing that we can gain access to the lakes surrounded by private land. These data will be invaluable in helping us to detect sudden or major changes in the biota of the lakes, which could signal the invasion of an exotic (foreign) species. I am happy to report that, depending on species identification confirmation, we have found no major invasions other than the commonly known massive populations of rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rustica*) in the Plum, Star, Little Star chain of lakes. We are trying to address that complex problem. We have found no Eurasian milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) or curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), but we have found a few new exotics whose impact we do not yet understand. We found purple loosestrife along several shorelines, Jellyfish in Salsich and Razorback lakes and mystery snails in several lakes. I will detail our lake monitoring results and explain potential impacts in our next newsletter.

Meanwhile, we are entering phase two of lake monitoring. **This is where we really need your help. Training in what to look for will be offered.** All of our lakes are exposed to invasion at some level and it is a matter of “when” not “if” we get an invasion of one of the bad guys! Like any disease, early detection is everything. **We need volunteers to periodically walk or boat along one or more specific sections of shoreline.** If you spot something new that you suspect is a problem plant or animal, call 715-542-3108 to set the remedial action into operation. The sooner we know, the more likely we can avoid a nasty and expensive cleanup effort!

If you can help protect our lakes, call 715-542-3108.
Together we can make a difference!

LAKES COMMITTEE FOR THE TOWN OF PLUM LAKE

3185 Hanson Road
Sayner, WI 54560