

Crawling Stone Lakes Association News



Protecting our Lakes

Winter, 2025

Board of Directors:

Colleen Akerley

507-269-6072

Pete Mucks

608-628-5274

Jean Rutkowski - Newsletter

editor/President

414-425-8615

B.J. McMahon

608-206-4844

Debbie Mursch - Treasurer

414-828-9640

Andy Coopman

608-445-8828

Scott Beck

715-439-9327

Matt Lindborg

To report violations:

Ryan Gauthier - Tribal Warden

715-892-3195

Andrew Snow - Tribal Warden

715-588-4173

Marie Tuchscherer - DNR Warden

800-847-9367 - Confidential hotline

To contact the Board:

crawlingstonelakes@gmail.com

On Facebook at

Crawling Stone Lakes
Association

On the Internet

Crawlingstonelakes.org



What's happening with the channel?

The main questions members direct to board members these days is "What's happening with the channel?" Here is a summary of where we are.

We started the process a year ago when one of the board volunteered to get necessary permits. The report at our spring board meeting was that we could not get permits until we had a contractor. Members will recall that Bob Schneider had to go all the way to Illinois to find someone willing to work on our channel in 2009. Unfortunately, that company is no longer in business.

Board members found a local contractor willing to do the dredging and get necessary permits, but he was not returning phone calls. At the spring meeting, one of the board members called the contractor who indicated he was interested and would get back to us in late summer. We tried all summer to meet with him to get a cost estimate.

When the contractor did meet with a board member, he recommended that we do a "permanent" job--dredging followed by installing steel sidewalls to keep erosion from filling in the channel. The cost was \$125,000. The Board put the information on Facebook. Few members actually responded, but the ones that did, hated the look and the price. Even the dredging price was \$80,000. The Board looked at possible fund-raising activities including a bank loan.

In early September, a small group of board members sat down with the file from Bob Schneider to study the steps he took to get the dredging done. A strong feeling of unease arose, and the group decided that the missing factor was a meeting with someone from the tribal DNR.

President Rutkowski went to the tribal office and was able to meet with Richard Rising-Sun, the new tribal person handling permits. He listened to an explanation of the problem and agreed that it was "reasonable" to look for a more permanent way to keep the channel open rather than dredging every 10 - 15 years, but he indicated he would not issue a permit for the metal walls the contractor recommended.

A further meeting with Mr. Rising-Sun has happened. He is willing to discuss hand digging the channel because he feels that it would be less disruptive to the lakes' ecology than mechanical dredging.

We are planning on meeting again in January. We hope to have some plan in place by spring. If hand digging happens, we will be looking for volunteers to help. The last time it was done, the channel was navigable for several seasons.

Landing Volunteers for 2025

The Board wants to thank the members who donated time monitoring the landing this summer. The following people donated 100 hours to supplement our paid staff's time. If you see any of them, be sure to extend your thanks as well.

Matt Lindborg
George Tanner
John and Lynnea Suter
Tom Dwyer
Pam Fashingbauer
Tom and Diane Sullivan
Steve Eager
Jef Radtke
Ron and Karen Chilcote
Patti Koran
B.J. McMahon
Jean Rutkowski
Mark and Gail Bennett
Mike Stoklosa
Andrew Coopman
Pete Mucks
Tonna Appलगren
Mary Rodman
Frank and Deb Keogh
Phil and Jean Weinberg

A special "Thanks" goes to Roberta Gast who enters all of our landing contacts onto the DNR "SWIMS" database. This is a requirement for us to keep getting the DNR landing grant.



From the President:

Greetings,

It was a busy summer at the landing. We seem to be getting more boats since the tribal landings charge a fee. The monitors stopped several boats when they located invasive weeds on them. This is a reminder of what could happen if we stopped the monitoring process.

Last summer, if you recall, Mary Rodman discovered a trailer loaded with Eurasian water milfoil. Unfortunately, the boat had launched several days earlier when there was no monitor present. I indicated that we would have to wait and see if any of the weeds had invaded our landing.



Chris Wahman, owner of Aquatic Plants Management, the company that treats the weeds on Lake Minocqua, is a diver. His family also owns property on Little Crawling Stone. He did a dive in July at our landing and saw no sign of any invasive weeds. We were really lucky! P.S. And thank you, Chris.

We all missed Mary this summer, but our new team of Todd, Bob and Ben did a great job. They all indicated that they would be back next summer. Todd took over the recruitment of volunteers for early mornings or late afternoons and did an outstanding job. He was able to fill almost 80% of all the available times. Again, a big "Thank you" goes to the members who responded to his requests and filled in those times.

A major concern remains the channel. We are aware that boats and landing company barges had trouble navigating the channel this fall due to low water and shore erosion. We are working on the problem, but quick answers elude us. In the meantime, we are being as frugal as possible to build our financial assets. Dredging will not be cheap.

The cost of redredging is the reason we considered the more industrial channel look last summer, using iron sheeting to hold back the sand. Many said they did not like the look. The cost was high, but the contractor felt that the approach would give us fifty years or more of service. We may not be able to afford to continue the dredging every 10 to 12 years. The town and the tribe are not able to help us, and DNR funds are scarce. We need to consider other possibilities. However, the tribal representative indicated that he would not approve a permit for the industrial approach, so that point is moot.

Speaking of funds, the Lac du Flambeau town board did not approve the \$1000 contribution to our monitoring fund this year. The town is facing many new expenses and did not contribute to any local group. We have already been awarded the DNR grant for 2026.

Happy 2026. See you all in spring.

Jean

What's happening on the North Woods? Bits and pieces

Here is a summary of some of the activities and information that emerged in the summer of 2025.

Spiny waterflea

Cathy Higley, Vilas County Land Conservation Specialist, sent out an email in late September warning fishermen that Spiny waterflea had been detected in the Manitowish chain, specifically Spider Lake. This invasive species had previously been found in Ike Walton and Trout Lakes.

For those of you not familiar with this AIS, Spiny waterflea is a small aquatic animal. It has a small barb on its back which makes it unpalatable for fish. It makes the water slimy and adheres to fishing lines and equipment. There is no known remedy for the problem, so prevention is important.

If you fish in one of these lakes during the season, be sure to clean your boat, anchor and fishing gear before you use them on our chain. Even the eggs or larva form of the animal can transplant them into the next lake that the boat or fishing gear enters.

Website security

Since the website was launched last summer, board members have had a consistent problem with hacking. Since it is only happening to board members whose email addresses are on the website, we are fairly sure where the problem originates.

The hacking raises a number of questions. We had originally intended to use the website to make paying dues easier. We do not feel we should move forward with that plan until we solve the security issues.

Secondly, the association has never published any of our financial records for the public to see. The only way to get an up-to-date report is to attend the annual meeting each June. Deb Mursch, our treasurer, does an excellent job of pulling together all of our income and expenses. She also includes a five year summary to allow for comparisons and trends. We had hoped to include some of this information on the website. As things stand now, we will not. If you cannot attend the annual meeting and want a copy of the financial report, contact a board member.

New personnel

There is a new DNR warden in the area. Her name is Marie Tuchscherer. She came to the landing this summer to introduce herself. She is a recent graduate from UW-Madison and lives in nearby Boulder Junction. She replaces Tim Evert who transferred to Park Falls.

The tribal DNR has also had a large infusion of talent. Only Jamie Verden and Kirsten Hansen, ironically the two people who came to our meeting last year, remain.

The new hires have a big job in front of them--establishing teamwork and fighting the EWM in White Sand Lake. We wish them "welcome" and best of luck.

Plans to update the landing

Dan Peters is our maintenance person for the DNR. He is the one we call when the landing suffers damage.

He stopped by the landing last summer and talked about changes he would like to see--a new ramp and an enlarged parking area. He stated that he has put in requests for these upgrades several times, but our landing keeps getting pushed to the end of the list because determinations for work are based on the size of the water body the landing serves. Little Crawling Stone has only 250 acres. He stated that he argues that the landing serves a chain of over 9000 acres.

The monitors talked about the increased boat traffic, the problem with parking on Silver Beach Road, and neighbors' complaints about property damage and trespassing using their driveways to turn around. Peters thanked them for the information and felt that these facts would add weight to his request for landing upgrades.

CSLA Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 27, 2026

Sheri's Pub and Grub

11:00 A.M.

See you there.

University of Minnesota study adds information to wake boat concerns

A recent article in the Wisconsin Lakes bulletin reports on the findings from the University of Minnesota, Saint Anthony Falls laboratory regarding wake boats and their impact on lakes.

The report added fuel to the demands from some groups for legislation to control wake boat usage on Wisconsin lakes. The article can be seen on-line at conservancy.umn.edu. It includes a video that demonstrates that these boats destroy lake bottoms in 14 feet of water when in wakeboating mode. The article includes a video.

As a result of the article, the Wisconsin Lakes Coalition is recommending statewide legislation. The group recommends four major points:

1. Preservation of local control--allowing local municipalities to set their own standards as long as they were MORE restrictive than state regulations.

2. 700 feet from shore--wake enhancing boating activities must be done 700 feet or more from shore.

3. 30-foot depth for all wake boating activities.

4. Proof of decontaminated ballast tanks before entering a lake--a major safeguard against spreading AIS between lakes.

Obviously, a coalition of wake boating enthusiasts and marine dealers is fighting all of these recommendations.

Wisconsin Lakes has tried for several years to get the Wisconsin legislature to enact laws regulating wake boat usage. Lawmakers have so far refused to take a stand. Recalling the anger that tribal regulations inspired on the reservation, boaters can probably understand their hesitancy. Clearly, feelings on both sides are strong, and the proposed regulations would make most in-land Wisconsin lakes off-limits to wake boat users.

Clearly, the wake boat debate is nowhere near a conclusion.