



Winter 2018

At this time of year, we are enjoying the winter, skiing, ice fishing, walking along our lanes, evening fires and the gentleness that comes with this season. We are also looking forward to the coming spring and summer.

Now is also the time we share the activities **Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area (FOECLA)** has been involved with during the past year and ask for your continuing support both in terms of renewing your membership and volunteering time towards our efforts.

During 2017 our focus was on:

- Educational programs and activities conducted in collaboration with other community organizations.
- Providing financial support and carrying out programs and activities that maintain and enhance the quality of our lakes, waterways and shorelands.
- Being an active voice in public policy as it affects the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the Eau Claire Lakes area.

Local collaborations that support our community:

The Lake Ecology Education Program (LEEP) curriculum continues to be a vital environmental education program. This is a collaborative endeavor with the Drummond Area School District that we organize and carry out for the future stewards of our lakes and watershed. Each year the curriculum includes ten classroom hours of preparation and two lake field trips for 30-36 students with a faculty of over 30 professional and volunteer community educators.

To ensure we can continue to support LEEP, the board is in the process of hiring a Program Coordinator who will work with the volunteers to assure implementation of the many components and activities of this program.

We collaborated this past winter with the Barnes Area Historical Association in sponsoring an evening lecture on the history of logging in our region. This past summer we collaborated with the Barnes Book Club in sponsoring a lecture and book signing by Emily Stone of the Cable Natural History Museum, which provided insight into the abundance of nature that surrounds us on a daily basis.

This coming summer we intend to support the Vatten Paddlar, the canoe and kayak event that highlights our lakes and waterways. FOECLA will again provide 20-30 volunteers and be responsible for course setting and marking and for providing safety monitoring over the entire course. The Coordinator for this coming year and previous years will be and has been a member of FOECLA.

As a board, we feel that collaboration with organizations within our community allows us to find common interests and combine resources to provide enhanced programs and activities consistent with our mission.

Maintaining and enhancing the quality of our lakes, waterways and shorelands:

The following table documents our community's significant work in the fight against invasive species, much of it by volunteers who were members of the Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area. This demonstrates the importance and success of volunteer activities to maintain and enhance the quality of our lakes.

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Clean Boats Clean Waters Program	Boats Inspected	People Educated	Hours Invested
Barnes Area Lakes	3,146	8,000	2,022
Cable Area Lakes	299	576	432
Lake Namakagon & Northland College	172 +381	339 + 792	110 + 222
Lake Superior	2,336	5,185	1, 511
Pike Chain, Delta Lake & Long Lake	1,991	4,618	1,392

We as an organization continue to financially support the work of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Committee of the Town of Barnes. In 2017, the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council awarded an Invader Crusader Award to FOECLA and the Town of Barnes AIS Committee. The award is given for “exemplary efforts” at collaboratively addressing issues surrounding the recognition, control and prevention of aquatic invasive species.

A main reason for the award was the construction, funding and operation of the Barnes AIS Committee’s innovative Barnes Area Invasive Species Suction (BAISS) boat. Constructed with 450 hours of volunteer time and financially supported by FOECLA, the Town of Barnes AIS Committee began use of their unique BAISS boat in 2017 initially for removing growing patches of curly-leaf pondweed from Middle Eau Claire Lake. During June it operated 5 days a week from 7:30-11:30AM, staffed by a paid diver and three volunteer deckhands. Over 15 individual volunteers provided approximately 150 volunteer deck hand hours of work to operate the BAISS boat in June.

Active voice in public policy as it affects the environmental and aesthetic quality of the Eau Claire Lakes area:

This past year we have seen activity interpreted as seeking to alter or repeal Town of Barnes Ordinance Chapter 8. The purpose of Chapter 8 is to “*provide safe and healthful conditions for the enjoyment of aquatic recreation consistent with public rights and interest and the capability of the water resource*”, and the ordinance states “*no person shall water ski, operate a motorboat or other power propelled device pulling an object and/or a person, or use a jet ski on the waters herein described after the hour of 5:00 p.m. and before the hour of 10:00 a.m.*”

Repealing this ordinance would be inconsistent with our mission and contrary to our interests, which are to:

- Support activities that preserve the quality of our lakes and shorelands.
- Support actions that enable everyone to enjoy our lakes safely.

There are published, peer-reviewed papers that demonstrate reduced water quality leads to reduced property values.

Our position continues to be that the ordinance should remain unchanged. We adopted this position at the direction of a majority of our membership who responded to our April 2016 survey.

We, with other members of the community, have requested that the Barnes Town Board consider appointing an *ad hoc* water safety committee that would provide a neutral forum for public input and dialogue so that varying interests and perspectives could be shared, considered and discussed in a constructive and productive manner. This *ad hoc* committee could be charged with the following:

- Research options for establishing a Water Safety Initiative and enforcement plan to ensure the safety of all who enjoy spending time on our lakes.
- Provide the Town Board and taxpayers with well-researched enforcement options, including information on costs, personnel, and equipment needs. Include possible implementation strategies, with concrete "examples of programs" (such as a Town Water Safety Patrol), and a description of potential funding sources.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a standing Water Safety Committee to make recommendations as needed to the Town Board on issues related to the safe and responsible use of the lakes. This committee would function in a manner similar to the Town of Barnes AIS Committee.
- Explore the feasibility and utility of a professionally-developed, administered and compiled survey of taxpayers to obtain feedback on: activities people enjoy; what people "value" most about their lake experiences; and ways to ensure safety on our lakes. The survey should also include a question about the desirability of rescinding, modifying or retaining Town of Barnes Chapter 8, Section 4 ("Ski Jet and Water Skiing Restrictions").

It is currently our understanding the Town of Barnes is proceeding with a thorough and deliberative review of all town ordinances. It appears they plan to commission an independent survey of property owners to guide them in their decision-making process for Chapter 8. We applaud and support this approach.

As of today, Chapter 8 remains unchanged. There is, however, a growing discussion of the lack of enforcement in contrast to other town ordinances. To provide a little historical context, in 2007, the Town Constable patrolled the Eau Claire Lakes up to 30 hours/month, providing enforcement as appropriate. At the 2017 Town of Barnes Annual Meeting, there was discussion concerning the continuation of the Constable position. This position now appears to have an uncertain future. Town Supervisors have talked with the Bayfield County Sheriff about enforcing town ordinances, and he has been open to further discussions. Other successful means to help ensure safety on our lakes have not been publicly discussed at Town Board meetings.

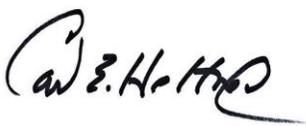
We await further action by the Town Board and look forward to additional dialogue with them. Because this is a complex issue from a Wisconsin statute and regulation perspective, we have engaged the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney to assist us on a *pro bono* basis.

We also continue to monitor the Bayfield County Board and its Health Department committee as it implements ordinances to reduce or prevent the water pollution and public health risks associated with the proposed establishment of a large swine farrowing facility for 26,000 pigs. The facility will produce 6.8 million gallons of untreated liquid manure annually that is to be spread on nearby cropland.

The exceptional quality and beauty of our lakes and lakeshores is not an accident. Over the years, they have benefited from the careful consideration and actions of local governments, taxpayers, and lake users. We are most appreciative of their efforts, and we hope all stakeholders will continue to work together for the betterment of our natural resources so they can be enjoyed by future generations.

One operational issue, this is the last year we'll be mailing a letter acknowledging your membership and contributions for tax purposes. Going forward everyone will receive a receipt at the time they pay dues/make a contribution. You will also be able to request that we re-send your receipt at a future time if needed.

We seek your continued membership, volunteer activity and financial support. As always, we value your input and feedback on issues of importance to you.



Carl Heltne
President