Potter Lake News

Fall, 2026 **11/21/2026**

A Word from the Chair

Hello Neighbors!

It was a fun and busy summer here on Potter Lake! Though we had some dry stretches mid-summer, our lake level stayed almost constant. Our Operations & Maintenance staff checked the dam regularly after rain and adjusted it as needed to keep the 8.8 level required by the Town of East Troy between May 1st and October 1st. At the Annual Meeting in September, the riparian owners elected me to a second 3-year term. I appreciate your confidence! As I did when I started my first term three years ago, I plan to survey our riparian owners in the spring to get a sense of priorities moving forward. Though these next couple of months are traditionally quiet, the PLPRD will be busy preparing for next year.

In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- PLPRD Committees
- Starry Stonewort
- Clean Boats, Clean Waters
- Healthy Lake Practices:
    - Fertilizers and soil testing
    - Shoreline plantings/rain gardens

Happy Reading,
Cathy Schulz, PLPRD Chairperson
cathyschulzplprdchair@gmail.com



Every summer, Potter Lake residents enjoy a fireworks display over the Fourth of July weekend, thanks to the efforts of the Froehlich family. Donations are being collected for the 2027 show. Please send your contribution via Venmo to Gary Froehlich (Gary@gkfroehlich), or place it in the locked collection box located at the mailbox at W920 Shorewood Drive.

PLPRD Updates

The Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District held its Annual Budget and Regular Meetings on September 12, 2026. All five commissioners were present, as well as 29 Potter Lake homeowners. Those in attendance voted, 28-4, to abolish the weed control tax based on shoreline frontage and adopt a 100% ad valorem tax levy based on total assessed property value within the Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District, with a special assessment for Miramar Property Owners Assoc. parks. You will see this change on your 2026 tax bill. The PLPRD 2027 budget was also approved at $122,740.



We also celebrated the PLPRD's 50th anniversary at this meeting. Former board members were recognized for their contributions in improving Potter Lake for everyone. The PLPRD has continued to work to maintain our lake for all. Our weed-harvesters enjoyed the new and improved harvester as they removed 116 loads of weeds from the lake, quite a jump over last year's 47 loads for the year.

The dam was put to the test this year! Our Operations and Maintenance staff closely monitored conditions and opened the dam to let excess water flow out whenever the lake level rose above 8.8. Despite record rainfall, we did not need to institute slow-no-wake between May 1st and the first of October, while the water level fluctuated between 8.52 and 8.89.

In Spring, members of the Town board questioned the PLPRD's long-standing use of Lake Lane for harvester storage. The PLPRD produced a signed agreement with the Town of East Troy documenting the lease of the land to the PLPRD. Moving forward, the District and the Town signed a new agreement, effective in 2028, that will automatically renew every five years thereafter. For complete information on the Lake Lane agreement and more, go to the Meetings page of the PLPRD website. There you will find agendas, handouts, and minutes for the September 12th meeting and all meetings from 2026.

Committee Reports



Fishing Committee

The PLPRD Fishing Committee and Keystone Hatcheries successfully stocked 1,245 yellow perch and 1664 Black Crappies on May 11, utilizing the budgeted amount of $5000. On October 14, 400 additional black crappies were stocked via private funding. The Fishing Committee has requested the same budget for 2027 Spring stocking for the same two species, but with larger stock to speed up spawning. A DNR-conducted electroshock survey is scheduled for May of 2027 to help determine the success of our stocking program. This type of survey stuns the fish, who quickly return to normal mobility after being counted.

To help our panfish population prosper, the fishing committee will submit a Citizen Resolution form to the WI Conservation Congress, meeting in mid-April 2027. This request proposes dropping the per-person daily panfish limit from the state standard of 25 to 10. There is precedent for this request, and our regional DNR fish biologist is on the committee that reviews and approves these proposals. Note that this is a 2–3-year process.

Finally, there was some discussion of seeing fewer carp and zebra mussels in some areas of the lake. As zebra mussels are a feast-or-famine species, their populations are cyclical, and therefore this is not a concern. We reported this to the DNR; they said no one else has reported any drops in carp populations.

PLPRD Commissioners

Elected Commissioners
- Chairperson: Cathy Schulz
- Secretary: Chuck DeWall
- Treasurer: Matt Wessels

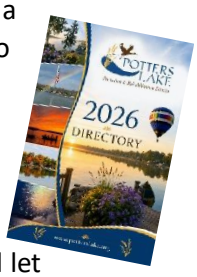
Appointed Commissioners:
- Town of East Troy Representative: Thad Seymour
- Walworth County Representative: Chris Boziel

See the Contact page on the website for contact information.

Water Quality Committee

Exciting News. Potter Lake is rejoining the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network. Our lake water monitoring was discontinued in 2020, but we are reforming a water testing committee. Volunteers will obtain samples and test our lake water four times each year (April, June, July, and August). They will record depth, clarity, temperature, pH levels, and conductivity (dissolved minerals). Samples are frozen and sent to the Network. Results are posted on their website. You do not need to be a scientist to volunteer, and training is provided. We would like to have a few teams of at least two people for easy scheduling. We anticipate the volunteer work will take just a few hours over the course of the year. If you are interested in helping to track our water quality, please contact Cathy Schulz at chairperson@potterslake.org.

Welcome and Directory Committee



The 2026 Directory is complete! This was a full committee effort, and we are pleased to share that, with our advertising sales, the directory paid for itself.

Riparian Owners are encouraged to utilize the local businesses that purchased advertising in our directory and let them know that we appreciate their support.

Additional copies of the Directory may be purchased for a nominal fee of $5.00. Please email the Welcome Committee at welcome@potterslake.org if you'd like to purchase an additional copy.

Thank you to the committee members: Johanna Cairns, Katie Seymour, Liz Sanders, MaryJo Jones, and Cathy Schulz. The next directory is planned for 2030.

Please email the Welcome Committee at welcome@potterslake.org if you have a new neighbor. This helps ensure we welcome new riparian owners to the Potter Lake community and provide new residents with the Lake Rules and Contact information in a timely manner.

Healthy Lake Practices

PLPRD Coordinated Efforts

Aquatic Management Plan

Every five years, the district works with Lake and Pond Solutions LLC and the DNR to create an Aquatic Plant Management Plan (APM). This plan is required for chemical treatment permits. The first step in developing the APM is a comprehensive point intercept survey of the plants in the lake. This survey identifies the relative density and variety of both desirable and invasive species. The PLPRD will receive the full plan in Spring 2027.

After the point intercept survey, we received notification that a new invasive species, Starry Stonewort (SSW), was found in the lake. SSW is actually an alga, but differs from other algae because it has a root. SSW in our lake is found only at a few points, at sparse densities, and mixed in with our native "carpet" of naiad. This is encouraging, as native plants will compete for nutrients, potentially reducing it as a nuisance. No SSW was found near the boat launch. Because it is not impacting navigation, the DNR recommends a monitoring approach. For more DNR information on SSW, click here.

Boaters can help prevent the spread of SSW by:

- Being aware that most of the SSW is found inside the slow-no-wake buoys; keeping your speed at slow-no-wake will prevent chopping and spreading.
- Anchor management: If you anchor your boat somewhere on the lake, dunk it in the water there to clean it off and prevent the spread.

Upcoming Events/ Dates to Remember

PLPRD Healthy Lakes and Rivers Meeting
Early Spring; exact date and time TBD

PLPRD Spring Meeting:
Saturday, May 15, 2027

PLPRD Budget and Annual Meetings:
Saturday, September 11, 2027

Clean Boats, Clean Waters

We wrapped up another successful season with Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) over Labor Day weekend!

Some of you may wonder exactly what we are doing down at the boat launch. Our goal is to help prevent the spread of invasive species from one lake to another.

When someone arrives to launch their boat, our CBCW staff checks the boat and trailer for any visible weeds or other aquatic plants and removes anything they find. We also ask a few questions, such as:

- Have you been on any other lakes in the past week?
- Have you had your boat checked by CBCW this year?
- What lakes, if any, have you visited in the past week?
- How many people are on the boat?

We record this information along with the launch activity. At the end of the season, all forms are scanned, and each one is manually entered into the Wisconsin DNR's SWIMS database. This information helps the DNR track how busy individual boat launches are and better understand boat movement between lakes.

Our staff also goes well beyond simply checking boats for weeds. They help boaters launch, assist trailers that are having trouble backing up, help with parking, keep the launch area clean, and remind visitors about the lake rules.

We staff the launch every weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day, along with several additional evenings throughout the season. This year, we logged 435.5 hours at the launch!

Our CBCW staff are compensated, with a portion of the cost covered by a grant program we've received for the past several years. This year, the grant provided $4,000 toward the program.

Before the season begins, each employee completes an online training session where the DNR reviews the program and discusses any changes or updates for the upcoming year.

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped make another successful CBCW season possible, and to all of the boaters who took the time to work with us and help protect our lake. Every inspection and every conversation helps!

Healthy Lake Practices

What Riparian Owners Can Do

This time of year can feel a little sad after a long summer of recreating on the water. But this is a great time to start planning for the fall. Healthy lawn practices and shoreline plantings have been frequent topics in past newsletters, but I have found a few new resources. Read on and dream of warmer days!

Lawn Maintenance Tips

Every year there is more conversation about how to maintain one's lawn while minimizing impacts to the lake. This past summer's algae blooms intensified concerns about run-off of excess nutrients and chemicals. Fertilizers containing phosphorus or phosphates are particularly troublesome. There are also laws that restrict the use of these plant nutrients on turf because of the concerns about excess amounts running into watersheds.

Before purchasing any fertilizers, it is recommended that you test the soil to see what nutrients are already present. For more information on soil sampling, click Soil Analysis. Click here for the UW Soil and Forage Lab for directions.

Other practices recommended by experts:

- Mow grass to a height of 3-4 inches
- Leave grass clippings to return nutrients to the soil
- Water efficiently
- Core

Take this Natural Lawn Care Quiz to start thinking and planning for spring and summer. Early in Spring, I will share more resources related to soil sampling and options for your lawn.



Best Practices for Healthy Lakes

There are a number of things riparian owners can do to help keep the lake healthy while beautifying their property, including:

- Shoreline restoration
- Improved drainage, including rain gardens
- Shoreline plantings to improve the habitat and slow runoff
- Creation of fish and wildlife habitats

Earlier this year, we began thinking about what to plant along our shoreline. I located this incredibly comprehensive document on the Walworth County Website. This guide takes you through the entire process from determining what to plant to planting and maintenance. It includes sections on many types of plants we are interested in, such as low-growing plants that won't block our views of the water, and native plants that will attract butterflies and birds. There are even some site plans to give a better idea of how it could come together! Click to see this extraordinary guide and resource.

At a recent Walworth County Lakes Association meeting, I learned about the Healthy Lakes and Rivers program, which is part of the WDNR Surface Water Grants Program. The PLPRD would oversee the program, which can reimburse individual homeowners up to $1,000 for implementing an approved practice. To start, you would use the provided tool to assess your shoreline and choose a project. The PLPRD can provide resources to help you design, implement, and maintain your project. We would include information from committed homeowners when applying for the grant.

This brochure gives a great summary overview of the program: Healthy Lakes & Rivers-Get Started. Early in 2027, we will share more information through the website and hold an in-person meeting for interested participants. I can also arrange for us to meet with people on other WCLA lakes to see what we can do. This is very exciting, to say the least. To take a deeper dive into the program, head to their website: https://healthylakeswi.com/