

NORTH LAKELAND WOODS & WATER CONFERENCE



April 24th
2026



14006 DISCOVERY LANE
MANITOWISH WATERS, WI




**POPULATION MANAGEMENT
ECOSYSTEM RESPONSE
INVASIVE SPECIES
WISCONSIN FORESTS
CONSERVATION ACTIONS**

Schedule, details, and register online at:
discoverycenter.net/special-events/



NORTH LAKELAND DISCOVERY CENTER

(715) 543-2085 - www.discoverycenter.net - Manitowish Waters, WI



100% of your donation will be used for AIS Monitoring, Lakeshore Protection, Habitat Conservation, and Community Outreach and Education.

Enjoying your visit? Even a small gift can make a big impact. Donate today:



7:15 - 8:15 AM Registration

7:15 - 8:45 AM Refreshments and Light Breakfast

7:30 - 8:15 AM Naturalist-Led Bog Hike

Join Naturalist Jenna Richardson through one of the most unique landscapes in Wisconsin. The northern bog is home to intriguing plants, some of which are carnivorous. Learn about their amazing adaptations as we hike and experience this incredible wetland. This will be quite the sensory experience. Taste, touch, smell, see and hear all that the bog has to offer.

8:30 - 8:45 AM Opening Comments

8:45 - 9:10 AM The Land has a Story to Tell - But are We Listening?

Zach Wilson, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission: Explore the importance of understanding the relationship between humans and the natural world. By advocating for a land ethic that weaves together Western science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, this work encourages participants to listen more closely to the land, reconsider their role within it, and embrace reciprocal relationships as essential to meaningful and lasting environmental stewardship.

9:10 - 9:35 AM Forest Insects and Diseases in the Northwoods

Linda Williams, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Forest insects and diseases can cause issues with trees, from minor defoliation to branch dieback to whole-tree mortality. Learn what insect and disease issues we saw in 2025 in the Northwoods, and what we might expect in 2026.

9:35 - 10:00 AM Clearcut: Friend or Foe

Matt Carothers, Superior Woodlands Company, LLC: When it comes to forests, one word is more maligned than any other: clearcut. To many observers, any time too many trees are cut, it is equated as a clearcut. To trained forest professionals, a clearcut is a valuable tool in regenerating a forest. Learn a few quick tips to help your eyes discern deforestation from healthy forestry.

10:00 - 10:15 AM Break

10:15 - 10:40 AM Northwoods Land Trust: An Overview of Conservation Options

Frank Schroyer, Northwoods Land Trust: The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) permanently conserves natural shorelands, woodlands and other natural resources to benefit present and future generations in northern Wisconsin. Learn about unique conservation tools landowners can utilize to protect their property forever, hear about success stories from the past 25 years, and discover how impactful land conservation can be for families.

10:40 - 11:05 AM Data Centers: An Overview of the Issue for Communities Large and Small

Meleesa Johnson, Wisconsin's Green Fire: Many Wisconsin communities are racing to deal with new resource-hungry data centers proposed around the state. Common concerns include their massive energy consumption needs, water usage, land use, and their impact on the cost of utilities for ratepayers. We can all benefit from understanding the information and options available to our communities. This presentation will provide an overview of what hyper-scale data centers are, their potential impacts, and ways to mitigate the worst impacts.

11:05 - 11:30 AM Lessons and Stories from Long-Term Lake Research

Carol Warden, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station: Lakes across Wisconsin are facing a mix of challenges such as warming temperatures, changing land use, invasive species, and shifting patterns of how people use and value the water. For more than four decades, the North Temperate Lakes Long-Term Ecological Research (NTL-LTER) program has been building one of the most complete freshwater records anywhere. Those studies, and the people behind them, show how and why our lakes have changed, and how the choices we make today will shape their future.

11:30 - 11:55 AM 30 Feet of Prevention: New Science on Wake Boats and Wisconsin Lake Health

Fred Silloway, The Last Wilderness Alliance: With the release of groundbreaking 2025 research, the invisible mechanics of how wake boats impact our lakebeds are finally coming to light. This presentation moves beyond the surface to examine the high-energy 'pressure spikes' that occur and the damage they cause to aquatic canopies. Through compelling underwater video, scientific analysis, and clear depth recommendations, we will explore how we can protect Wisconsin's glacial lakes for future generations.

11:55 AM - 12:40 PM Lunch

12:40 - 1:05 PM From Science to Stewardship: Preventing the Spread of Invasive Spiny Waterfleas in Northwoods Lakes

Zach Stewart, Douglas County Land Conservation: Invasive spiny waterfleas threaten Northwoods lakes by disrupting food webs, reducing water clarity, and harming sport fisheries. We will discuss the fascinating facts of spiny waterflea biology and invasion pathways, explains why prevention is critical in northern Wisconsin, and share lessons from the Stop Spiny prevention campaign. Attendees will learn practical, science-based strategies to reduce spread and strengthen lake stewardship.

1:05 - 1:30 PM Managing for Resilient Walleye Populations: Avoiding an Ecological Tipping Point

Greg Sass, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Many walleye populations have declined due to inconsistent or failed natural recruitment, with stocking often failing to rehabilitate natural recruitment or sustain quality fisheries for tribal subsistence and angler harvest opportunity. Recognizing walleye fisheries as social-ecological systems, ecosystem-based fisheries management approaches, and challenging traditional fisheries management paradigms will be paramount to ensure the sustainability of walleye populations.

1:30 - 1:55 PM Revelations & Mysteries from Benthic Samples from Five Vilas County Lakes

Warren Mueller, Retired Limnologist: Benthic samples were collected from five Vilas County Lakes during the summer of 2025. The samples were from three dominant plant communities found in Loon Lake where benthic studies have been on-going since 2013. This presentation will look at how the plants and animals from the lakes compare. The importance of proper sampling techniques. The population dynamics and eating habits of the invasive Chinese Mystery Snail (CMS). The relationship of CMS densities to native snails and much more.

1:55 - 2:20 PM Emerging Technologies in Recreational Angling and Fisheries Management: Recent Advances and Current Directions

Robert Godfrey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Emerging digital technologies are reshaping recreational fishing and management. This review examines sonar, underwater cameras, drones, apps, and AI through literature and expert interviews. While angler efficiency has increased, studies show mixed effects on actual catch rates. Technologies raise equity and ethical concerns about "fair chase" and fish refuges, but also offer opportunities for cost-effective, high-resolution monitoring.

2:20 - 2:30 PM Fairy Rings at the Huron Mountain Club, UP MI

Susan Knight, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station: We were intrigued by the reported growth of doughnut-shaped rings of floating aquatic plants in the middle of Howe Lake in the Upper Peninsula's Huron Mountain Club. We determined that the ring formation of Watershield was not due to cold spring upwellings but more likely due to sediment nutrient depletion. The diameter of the rings has been expanding for about 7-8 years, and the plants are now less clearly in rings.

2:30 - 2:40 PM Break

2:40 - 3:05 PM Caring for Lakes in a Warmer and Wetter Wisconsin

Katie Hein, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station: The 2020's are shaping up to be Wisconsin's warmest and wettest decade on record. In the future, Wisconsin will be warmer and wetter with more extreme rainfall. What do these changes mean for Wisconsin lakes and what can we do as lake stewards to adapt? A key message is to recognize that the past is no longer a good guide for what to expect in the future. From ice skating to angling, the way we interact with lakes is changing. Adaptation strategies will help us prepare for those changes.

3:05 - 3:30 PM Oneida County Lakes have Class!

JoAnne Lund, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation: Oneida County has experienced a recent surge in lake development, creating new pressures on its waters. To address these challenges, the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department developed a Lake Classification System to guide protection efforts. We analyzed each lake's physical features and current condition of the water and surrounding land. Lakes with similar qualities were grouped into classes, enabling protection efforts to be customized.

Wisconsin has over 33,000 miles of rivers and streams,
13,500 of those miles are navigable.

3:30 - 3:40 PM Students and Water in Wisconsin's Peatland Plant Communities: A Project Funded by UW's Freshwater Collaborative

Mary Ann Feist, Wisconsin State Herbarium, University of Wisconsin-Madison: We believe Wisconsin's peatlands have been underappreciated and understudied and we are hoping to change that. Our goal is to train the next generation of wetland scientists to fill the gaps in our knowledge of Wisconsin's peatlands and to find solutions for their restoration and conservation. We also want these young scientists to be able to inform others about the importance of peatlands and to help them to develop an appreciation for peatlands and the plants and animals that reside there.

3:40 - 3:50 PM Lake Level Monitoring Across the Northwoods

Lydia Dobberstein, North Lakeland Discovery Center: Lake levels naturally fluctuate, but recent monitoring shows how climate, precipitation, and hydrology are influencing these changes in the Northwoods. This talk highlights local lake level monitoring efforts, including volunteer-collected data, and explores what these trends mean for long-term lake ecology. Attendees will learn why consistent monitoring matters, how citizen scientists contribute, and how observed changes inform lake stewardship.

3:50 - 4:00PM Connecting with Our Night Sky: How to Preserve and Protect Dark Skies

Michele Sadauskas, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation: Without the natural night sky, we could not have walked on the moon, navigated the globe, or discovered that humans are made of stardust. Sadly, we are losing our dark skies light by light. Join Michele Sadauskas on a photographic journey to gain a greater appreciation of the night sky, understand how light pollution effects life on Earth, and most importantly how each of us can make a positive change for a natural resource many people take for granted.

4:00PM Closing Comments

4:00 - 5:00 PM Social

Join the conversation in the Historic YCC Lodge to converse about all that we have unfolded today. Indulge in appetizers and sweets. Beer and wine will be served at the bar for donations. NLDC's brand new Watercraft Decontamination System will be available to view and spark conversation around watercraft decontamination.

Copepods have the largest daily migration in the world, often traveling 500 meters during diel vertical migration.

Partnerships are the heart of this event and we extend our deepest gratitude to our generous sponsors whose support enables us to bring this conference to our community.

LEAF SPONSORS



Debby
Wilson



LAST WILDERNESS
ALLIANCE

SPROUT SPONSORS

Onterra, LLC
Lake Management Planning

wxpr
LOCAL • PUBLIC • RADIO



SEED SPONSORS



Judy and
Bob Schell



Carol and
Richard Phillips



Sue and
Bob Austin

WOODS AND WATER

It's our world, and it's our job to protect it, together.

- Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring and Management
- Shoreline Restoration
- Habitat Assessments
- Conservation Plans
- Point-Intercept and Vegetation Surveys
- Citizen Science Training
- Community Outreach
- Lake Level Monitoring

For more information contact us at Woodsandwater@discoverycenter.net

 **NORTH LAKELAND
DISCOVERY CENTER**

inspire - discover - connect

(715) 543-2085
14006 Discovery Lane, Manitowish Waters, WI
www.DiscoveryCenter.net