



Friday, April 24, 2026 - Agenda

Time	Event	Presentation	About the Presenter	
7:15 AM - 8:15 AM	Registration			
7:15 AM - 8:45 AM	Refreshments and Light Breakfast			
7:30 AM - 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 the bog has to offer.	Jenna Richardson is a Naturalist at the North Lakeland Discovery since 2023. Prior to moving to the Northwoods of Wisconsin, she worked as a Naturalist in Northern Minnesota and as a ski/snowshoe guide in Yellowstone National Park. Jenna spends a lot of her free time exploring the woods, bogs, and waters by foot or with a paddle and notebook in hand.	
8:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Opening Comments	Jenna Richardson		
SESSION 1 8:45 AM - 9:10 AM	The Land has a Story to Tell-but are We Listening?	<i>Zach Wilson, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission</i> 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.	Zach Wilson, Forest Ecologist for the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission. Raised in the forests of northern Wisconsin, Wilson has over 25 years of experience in forest ecology and wildlife conservation and holds a B.S. in Outdoor Education and Natural History from Northland College.	
	9:10 AM - 9:35 AM	Forest Insects and Diseases in the Northwoods	<i>Linda Williams, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</i> 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.	Linda has been a Forest Health Specialist with the Wisconsin DNR for 26 years. She has a Bachelors degree in Forestry and a Masters degree in Entomology, both from Michigan State University.
	9:35 AM - 10:00 PM	Clearcut: Friend or Foe	<i>Matt Carothers, Superior Woodlands Company, LLC</i> 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.	Matt Carothers is a husband, father, & consulting forester from Hazelhurst. He owns and operates Superior Woodlands Company, LLC. With help from his wife & kids, he brings his expertise as a practicing forester & landowner to helping other families, small businesses, & conservation organizations.
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Break			
10:15 AM - 10:40 AM	Northwoods Land Trust: An Overview of Conservation Options	<i>Frank Schroyer, Northwoods Land Trust</i> 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.	Frank joined the NWLT staff as Land Conservation Associate in 2021 to support the stewardship of conserved lands, lead educational programs, and work with landowners to protect their property.	

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SESSION 2	10:40 AM - 11:05 AM	<b>Data Centers: An Overview of the Issue for Communities Large and Small</b>	<i>Meleesa Johnson, Wisconsin's Green Fire</i> 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.	Meleesa Johnson is executive director for Wisconsin's Green Fire. She spent most of her career in the recycling and waste management industry focusing on reducing the impact of waste. Meleesa is the co-author of "Big Tech Unchecked", a resource for communities facing data center developments.
	11:05 AM - 11:30 AM	<b>Lessons and Stories from Long-Term Lake Research</b>	<i>Carol Warden, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station</i> 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.	Carol is a research scientist with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Trout Lake Station, located in Vilas County. She maintains long term data for seven lakes. Carol received her master's degree in Water Resources Management at UW-Madison's Nelson Institute for Environmental Study.
	11:30 AM - 11:55 AM	<b>30 Feet of Prevention: New Science on Wake Boats and Wisconsin Lake Health.</b>	<i>Fred Silloway, The Last Wilderness Alliance</i> 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.	Fred Silloway is a conservation advocate focused on the intersection of recreational boating and lake health. He specializes in translating complex issues into actionable protections for Wisconsin's glacial lakes.
	11:55 AM - 12:40 PM	<b>Lunch</b>		
SESSION 3	12:40 PM - 1:05 PM	<b>From Science to Stewardship: Preventing the Spread of Invasive Spiny Waterfleas in Northwoods Lakes</b>	<i>Zach Stewart, Douglas County Land Conservation</i> 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.	Zach leads the Douglas County Surface Waters Program and has a background in limnology, oceanography, AIS management, fisheries biology, geology, and outdoor education. As an avid angler and paddler, he is dedicated to keeping county waters clean, healthy, and accessible for all.
	1:05 PM - 1:30 PM	<b>Managing for Resilient Walleye Populations: Avoiding an Ecological Tipping Point</b>	<i>Greg Sass, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</i> 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.	Greg Sass currently serves as Fisheries Research Team Leader and Director of the Northern Highland Fishery Research Area for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

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<b>SESSIO</b>	1:30 PM - 1:55 PM	<b>Revelations &amp; Mysteries from Benthic Samples from Five Vilas County Lakes</b>	<i>Warren Mueller, Retired Limnologist</i> 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.	Warren has two MS degrees from UW Madison Limnology Department and UW Milwaukee. He worked as an aquatic ecologist for seven years for a consulting firm and one year as a wetland ecologist. After this, he worked as a scientist responsible for environmental assessments for a midwestern utility.
	1:55 PM - 2:20 PM	<b>Emerging Technologies in Recreational Angling and Fisheries Management: Recent Advances and Current Directions</b>	<i>Robert Godfrey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</i> 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.	Robert is a Natural Resource Research Scientist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
	2:20 PM - 2:30 PM	<b>Fairy Rings at the Huron Mountain Club, UP MI</b>	<i>Susan Knight, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station</i> 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.	Susan Knight is a retired scientist, having worked at Trout Lake Station, a field station for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Limnology in Boulder Junction, WI. Her work involved research on wild rice and aquatic plants.
	2:30 PM - 2:40 PM	<b>Break</b>		
	2:40 PM - 3:05 PM	<b>Caring for Lakes in a Warmer and Wetter Wisconsin</b>	<i>Katie Hein, UW-Madison Trout Lake Station</i> 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.	Katie Hein is a research scientist at UW-Madison Trout Lake Station. As a graduate student, assistant professor, and lake monitoring lead at DNR, she has worked on water from the tropics to the Arctic. Katie loves lakes - she plays on them in her free time and studies them when she is at work.
	3:05 PM - 3:30 PM	<b>Oneida County Lakes have Class!</b>	<i>JoAnne Lund, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation</i> 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.	JoAnne began her work with the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department in 2020, conducting stream surveys and other efforts to protect the high quality waters in the County. With degrees in Zoology and Ecology, she enjoys kayaking, backcountry skiing, hiking and nature photography.

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3:30 PM - 3:40 PM	<b>Students and water in Wisconsin's Peatland Plant Communities: A Project Funded by UW's Freshwater Collaborative.</b>	<i>Mary Ann Feist, Wisconsin State Herbarium, University of Wisconsin-Madison</i> 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.	Mary Ann Feist is the Research Curator at the Wisconsin State Herbarium. She manages a collection of over 1.4 million plant and fungal specimens, as well as the Online Flora of Wisconsin website. Her research is currently focused on the peatlands and peat mosses of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.
3:40 PM - 3:50 PM	<b>Lake Level Monitoring Across the Northwoods</b>	<i>Lydia Dobberstein, North Lakeland Discovery Center</i> 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.	Lydia Dobberstein joined North Lakeland Discovery Center in 2025 as Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator on the Woods and Water Team. As an emerging professional with the Center, she supports the community through lake and AIS monitoring and management, land restorations, and education.
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	<b>Connecting with Our Night Sky: How to Preserve and Protect Dark Skies</b>	<i>Michele Sadauskas, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation</i> 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.	Michele Sadauskas has over 15 years of experience in protecting the shorelands and waters of Oneida County. Being both a night photographer and a conservation professional, she is uniquely attuned to the importance of dark skies to life on Earth and advocates for their protection.
4:00 PM	<b>Closing Comments</b>		
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	<b>Social and Appetizers</b>	Join the conversation in the Historic YCC Lodge to converse about all the new opportunities we have unfolded today. Indulge in appetizers and sweets. Beer and wine will be served at the bar for donations.	