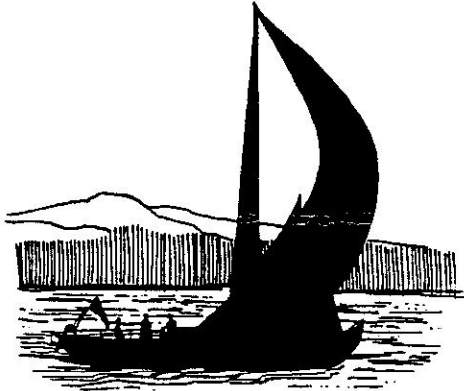


**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We encourage all of the District's Property Owners to attend the monthly meetings of the Lake District's Board of Commissioners. To make it possible for our non-resident property owners to attend, these meetings will be held on Saturday afternoons in June, July, and August. Scheduled dates are as follows:

- June 9 at 1:00 p.m. -- Whitewater Town Hall
- June 14 at 1:00 p.m. -- Whitewater Town Hall
- August 11 at 2:00 p.m. -- Fourth Annual Meeting of the District -- Gymnasium of Lakeview School



**ON THE STATE OF THE LAKES**

The Spring of 1990 has been quite different from what we have experienced during the past two years, and the condition of our lakes has varied accordingly. After a winter that produced little snow, we have had a cold, wet spring. As this is written on May 21, the water levels of both Whitewater and Rice Lakes have risen about 6 inches during the past month. Whitewater Lake remains at 11 inches below its dam spillway, and Rice Lake at 24 inches below its dam. Let's hope the water levels continue to rise.

The Rice Lake dam appears to be leaking a fair amount of water. Through the metal grill atop the dam, one can easily hear the noise of flowing

water, and there is a substantial flow of water through the culvert below Kettle Moraine Drive. This dam belongs to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and this Department is responsible for its maintenance. We intend to report this problem to the DNR, and we trust that the DNR will make appropriate repairs at an early date.

The cold weather has retarded the growth of weeds and algae on both of our lakes, and the water--especially on Rice Lake--remains quite clear. The curly-leaf pondweed that is prominent on Rice Lake has now grown to the point where it is about ready to be harvested. Fishing on Rice Lake has been remarkably good this spring. Fishermen are enjoying large catches of trophy-sized blue gills. We wish we knew what caused such an improvement.

It's been a pleasure to see so many geese nesting on our lakes. They are especially numerous on Rice Lake. At this point, the goslings have hatched, and the goose families can be seen swimming on the water. Their numbers seem clearly related to the fact that much of the shoreline remains undeveloped, due to the presence of the State Forest.

Your Lake District Commissioners propose to explore what can be done to improve the habitat for wildlife on Whitewater Lake. Relatively few ducks use this lake, and the loons which formerly summered here have almost disappeared. This is probably related to the fact that so much of this shoreline has been developed. We will need to make the most of the little that is left.

**WHITEWATER-RICE**  
Lakes Management District Newsletter  
**EDITOR:** Gareth Betts  
Community Development Agent  
Walworth County UW-Extension

We would like for large numbers of our property owners to become involved in a program to improve wildlife habitat on our lakes. It seems probable that each of us is most familiar with his or her local area, rather than the lake as a whole. How about sending your suggestions for improved wildlife habitat to the Lake District Board, and how about volunteering to serve with groups in your area for specific projects? This could be a lot of fun and quite rewarding! Let us hear from you!

### **ON WEED CONTROL -- HARVESTING vs. HERBICIDES**

In our most recent Newsletter, dated April, 1990, your Lake District presented its plans for extensive mechanical weed harvesting this coming summer. We also presented reasons for keeping herbicidal treatment of aquatic weeds to a minimum. This subject arises again in this Newsletter because of more recent developments.

Very recently, your Lake District Commissioners have become aware that at least two separate groups of riparian property owners, totaling nearly 100 properties, have arranged for two separate commercial weed spraying concerns to treat substantial areas of Whitewater Lake. Perhaps still other groups of property owners have yet to present their applications for spraying permits to the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources. The May 3, 1990, issue of the Whitewater Register contained a notice that Biological Services of Burlington, WI will spray approximately 25 acres of Whitewater Lake for control of weeds and algae between June 1 and September 1. This group represents more than 80 property owners. Through the DNR, we have learned that Marine Biochemist Inc. of Mequon, WI has been engaged for similar work by another group of 15, or so, property owners.

The most objectionable feature of these applications for spraying permits is that they propose to treat the area as far as 100 feet from

the shoreline in one case, and, we understand, as far as 150 feet from the shoreline in the other. These represent substantial areas and, we estimate, will affect approximately one-third of the shoreline of Whitewater Lake. Herbicidal treatment of large areas of the lake can be expected to produce major blooms of algae, which can be just as unpleasant as an over-abundance of aquatic weeds. As implied in the Whitewater Register notice, are we then to expect Biological Services to return to kill algae by spraying with copper sulfate? This would be the sort of effort that helped to spoil Delavan Lake.

Your Lake District Commissioners could not legitimately object if property owners were to treat the areas within the pier-line with herbicides. We define this area as being within 30 feet of the shore, and is an area that a weed harvester cannot reach. However, as the water depth exceeds 3 feet, a mechanical harvester is easily the more effective system for removing aquatic weeds. In point of fact, by spraying too far from shore, a property owner is paying twice because your tax money has already paid for the mechanical harvesting program that is shortly scheduled to begin. Please be aware that this is the very first year that our Lake District has had enough money to mount what we believe will be an effective weed control effort. We must believe that many property owners who supported weed spraying were either poorly informed or badly misled.

The Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 107 allows for a public informational meeting when large-scale spraying of weeds exceeding 10 acres is proposed. Your Lake District arranged for such a meeting to be held on May 26. At this meeting your Lake District pressed the DNR to approve spraying no more than 30 feet from shore, and to withhold approval for algae treatment altogether.

Both Whitewater and Rice Lakes are impoundments that contain quantities of the fertilizers--mainly phosphorus and nitrogen compounds--that provide for the growth of weeds

and algae. These fertilizers must be removed from the lakes if the lakes are to be improved. Because aquatic weeds contain significant amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen, weed harvesting is the most direct method of effecting such removal. In this sense, we are perhaps fortunate that weeds have dominated algae during the past two summers. Let's try to give weed harvesting a chance!

In previous Newsletters, we have tried to emphasize that aquatic weeds and algae compete for the fertilizers in a lake. They also compete for sunlight. During the summers of 1988 and 1989, we saw unusually clear water, but lots of weeds. In earlier summers, we had murky water with lots of algae that retarded weed growth by shielding the light from the weeds. But you can be sure, in lakes like ours, that we will have either weeds, or algae, or both. It will make no sense at all to alternate between spraying weeds and then the resulting algae. If carried too far, such treatment could destroy the ecology of the entire lake. Aquatic weeds are essential to a lake because they are a major source of oxygen to lake water, and provide shelter to fish. Enough of them must remain. Our weed control program should strive to maintain a proper balance between aquatic weeds and algae.

As stated previously, your Lake District is inclined to believe that floating weeds are a greater problem to shoreline cleanup efforts than are weeds actually growing along the shore. This belief was supported, following moderately heavy boating activity this past Memorial Day weekend, by phone calls from property owners who complained that floating weeds were clogging their shore lines. Our own observations on Memorial Day were that floating weeds, cut by boat propellers, littered the entire surface of Whitewater Lake. Obviously, these will float ashore.

We had planned to use the weed harvester in such a manner as to leave a weed fence off-shore to catch floating weeds and hold them until they could be retrieved by the harvester. This plan may well be defeated by spraying.

As things stand, we anticipate that some amount of weed spraying will begin on Whitewater Lake sometime in June. This has been vigorously opposed by some Property Owners. The Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources is expected to have a representative on the spray boat who will see that the following areas are not sprayed:

- a) undeveloped shorelines,
- b) "sensitive" areas important to wildlife, and
- c) areas where the water approaches 6 feet in depth.

For the future, your Lake District Commissioners suggest that property owners, who feel that their shoreline requires special treatment (such as spraying), consult with the District prior to making unilateral arrangements with commercial concerns. All areas of this lake cannot be managed in an identical manner. And the lake cannot be managed at all if everyone, independently, does whatever seems most reasonable to himself, at the time. By working together, we feel we could effect better, and more economical, solutions that could better benefit our lakes.



## ON GRASS CARP (GOD FORBID)

Because a few of our Property Owners have asked whether we should consider planting grass carp in Whitewater and Rice Lakes, we thought it appropriate to include the following article taken from the May 13, 1990, issue of the Janesville Gazette. Let us hope this doesn't happen to us!

### LOUD ALARM SOUNDS ON GRASS CARP

Associated Press

**OSHKOSH** - People who want to remove weeds from their ponds or lakes are being warned that stocking grass carp will not only create other problems in the water, but will also bring heavy fines. Grass carp, or white amur, are native to China. They are often sold by fish farms in Louisiana and Arkansas as a cure-all for weed problems. Grass carp consume weeds with a vengeance, eating their own body weight each day.

The problem is they often reproduce and eventually remove all vegetation, destroying every bit of habitat for native fish. Once that's gone, they eat fish eggs from native populations.

The Department of Natural Resources says if grass carp get into public waterways, they will create an ecological disaster. Unfortunately, individual grass carp have already been found in Tichigan Lake and the Milwaukee harbor in southeastern Wisconsin. Also, they're likely already in Geneva Lake.

Not only can they destroy lake and river habitat, but wetlands habitat, as well. This would mean few places for fish, ducks and furbearers to live and reproduce. People who import grass carp for private ponds or lakes can expect prosecution from the state and federal government. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will likely cite them for violations of the Lacey Act, which prohibits the transfer of forbidden fish and game across state lines.

Grass carp first appeared in private ponds and lakes in Wisconsin during the late 1970's. During the past five years, however, their presence has increased.

"They're being advertised as a way to clean up lakes and ponds," said Gordon Priegel, a DNR fisheries supervisor in Madison.

Priegel said Lake Emery in Marquette County had to be chemically treated two years ago after two property owners defied the lake association and stocked grass carp.

"That's the only lake we know of that was stocked that way, but we have treated many ponds at ski resorts and golf courses," Priegel said. "In some cases the people involved knew it was illegal and still did it. In fact, their supplier advised them to drive to Chicago and pick up the fish because it's illegal to bring them into Wisconsin. He got them to break the federal law."

Priegel said grass carp are often advertised at conventions for mayors, golf course operators and anyone else who takes care of public or private ponds.

"Grass carp are being marketed very aggressively," he said. "They're telling people they're safe because they will sell only sterile grass carp, but that's almost impossible to enforce. When the demand gets high enough, they'll start selling any grass carp they have, not just the sterile ones."

Ron Piening, fisheries biologist in Milwaukee for the DNR's Southeastern District, had to chemically treat 47 ponds in 1987. Piening said if the grass carp aren't killed, they can escape the ponds during high waters and get into public lakes or rivers.

The people who stocked them were fined for stocking fish illegally. They also were assessed the costs of the chemical treatments.



I wouldn't doubt that the fines in Wisconsin in recent years total in the hundreds of thousands for this," Piening said. "The federal government is especially stiff. They'll go after them for each incidence of stocking."

Richard Dickinson, a special agent with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Madison, said a case is now pending in Louisiana against two grass carp dealers. They have been charged on a nine-count federal indictment for conspiracy and violations of the Lacey Act.

"These fish are just horrendous," Dickinson said. "They pose the threat of an ecological disaster for Wisconsin water. It's just absolutely incredible what they're capable of doing."

Dickinson cited a case in Texas where grass carp were put into a lake. Everything looked fine for two to four years, but then the lake deteriorated rapidly. All game fish disappeared because there were no weeds to supply cover or oxygen. The lake's oxygen level plummeted, making it unsuitable for fish other than grass carp.

Priegel said once vegetation is removed from the water, grass carp "graze" on tree leaves and grass around the water's edge.

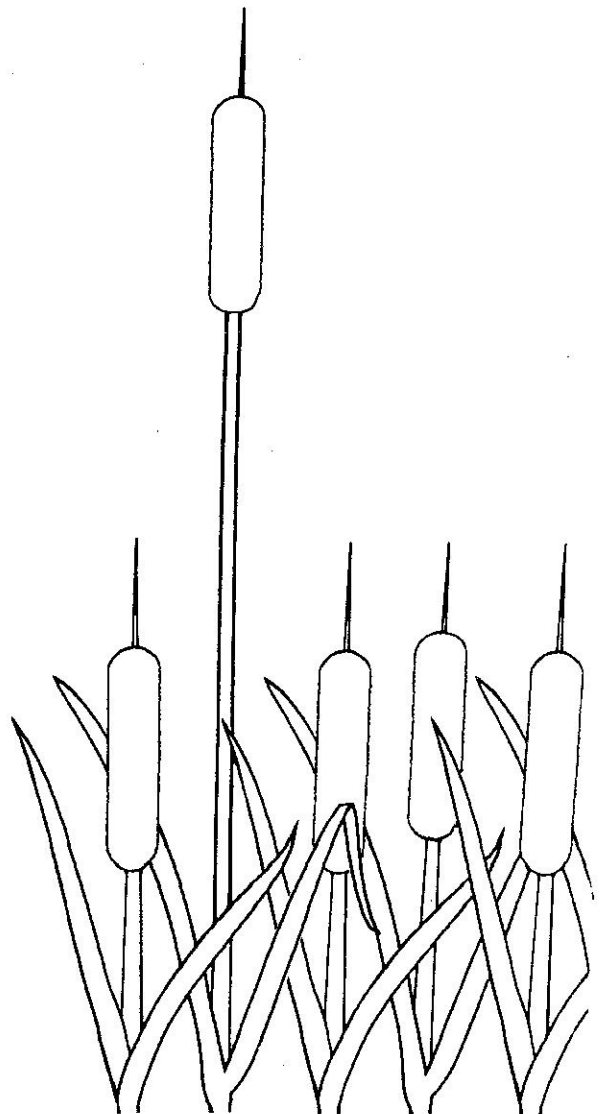
"They clip tree branches off and create a browse line, just like you see with deer in northern Wisconsin during a harsh winter," he said. "And when the people cut their lawns or fairways, grass carp follow the lawnmower right around the pond to eat the grass clippings. In some cases, the owners even feed them grass clippings when all the water vegetation was gone."

Dickinson estimates 30 percent to 50 percent of a grass carp's food goes through undigested. This fertilizes the water, creating worse algae blooms than ever.

"They're just like a swimming, poorly run sewerage system," Priegel said. "They do not do a good job handling the stuff they eat."

Priegel said a federal law banning grass carp isn't likely to be passed. Some states, such as Iowa, allow grass carp to be imported. Also, Illinois allows "triploids," grass carp with a third chromosome, which makes them incapable of reproducing.

"Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin are vigorously fighting grass carp," Priegel said. "Maybe they'll be all right in Illinois and Iowa, but those states don't have the great water resources we do. They could really cause terrible problems here."



**WHITEWATER-RICE**  
Lakes Management District  
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