



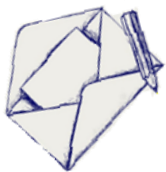
BLACK OAK LAKE NEWS SPRING 2026



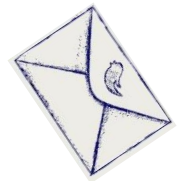
-- BOLFP ANNUAL MEETING --



>> 10:00am, Friday, July 3, at the LoL Town Hall <<



-- A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT -- Keith Montgomery



As spring emerges out of winter, I always find myself looking forward to getting back to the lake. It doesn't take much to feel that way. The water surface, the woods, the wildlife; walking in the woods, bicycling, boating; the change of the seasons; the people of the lake -- the lake community. I wonder how Michele and I lived without it before we bought our cabin. Before buying our cabin on BOL, we did dip our toes into the lake experience for two or three years by renting cabins on Little Crooked Lake, just west of Boulder Junction. But nothing can compare to BOL. We are very fortunate, and we do not take it for granted.

We should never take it for granted.

The lake is what it is through the stewardship of those who came before: Those who conserved its shores and those who used its waters lightly and thereby conserved the quality of the water we all enjoy. When we look at water as a substance or as a commodity, something to be used but not conserved, it will cease to live and to sustain its community – the lake life, and us.

How well we have done this in the past can be measured.

Each year, Walt measures the clarity of the water with a Secchi Disk and takes water samples for analysis. A lake like BOL is naturally "Oligotrophic". Such lakes are typically clear, deep and cold.

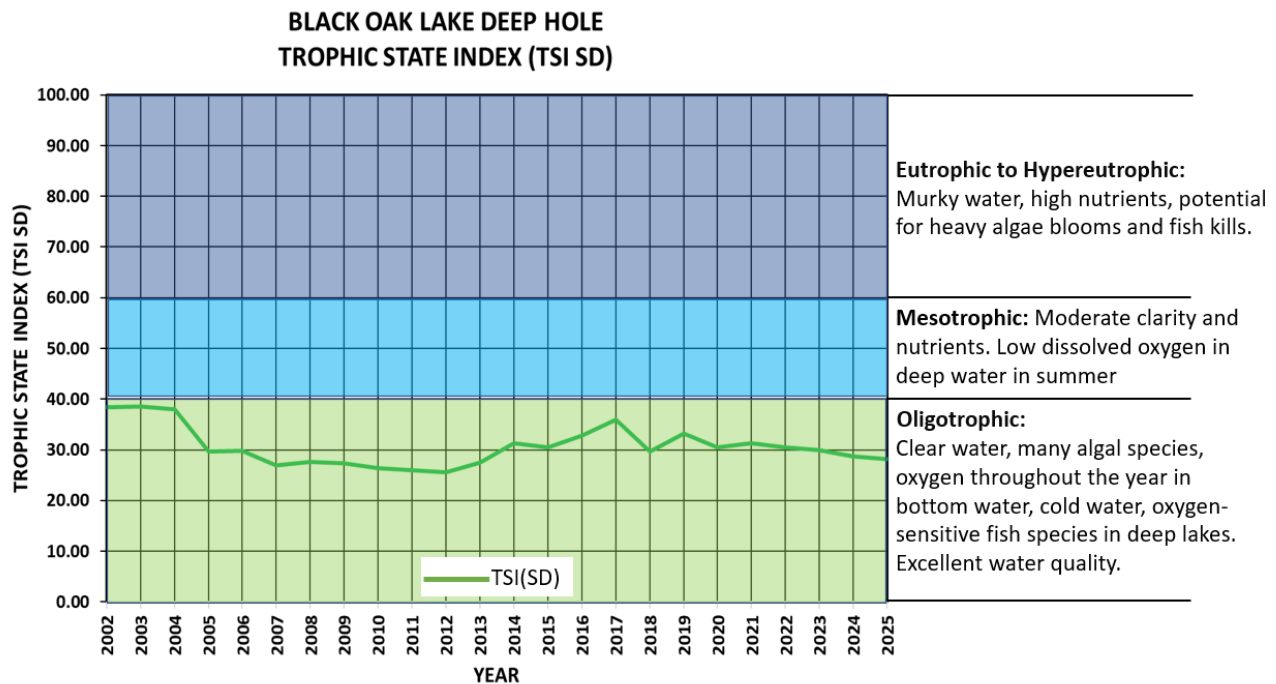
How clear? Well, in 2025 BOL was once again the clearest lake in the state, according to Walt's Secchi Depth measurements (more on that later).

Limnologists can use Secchi Depth to calculate an index of overall health of a lake. The "Trophic State Index" (TSI) is a calculated, numerical value used to classify lakes based on their biological productivity (the amount of algae, plants, and nutrients). You can use clarity – Secchi Depth (SD) – as an indicator of how much nutrient pollution (especially phosphorus) is present to fuel algal growth. The TSI(SD)

index uses water transparency – Secchi Depth in metres -- as a quick way to gauge the productivity of a lake based on water clarity: $TSI(SD) = 60 - (14.4 \times \ln(SD))$

There is a comparable Trophic Status Index for both chlorophyll and phosphorus, but the TSI(SD) is a “quick and dirty” evaluation of BOL’s water quality.

Over the years, Secchi values vary as our lake levels rise and fall – changing lake levels bring into play shoreline sediments, nutrients, and organic matter, but the data since 2002 show the great quality of BOL:



BOL is naturally “Oligotrophic” -- typically clear, deep and cold. While “Oligotrophic” means “having few nutrients”, that’s not a bad thing. Mostly, the lakebed is firm and sandy and nutrient levels are low, so the lake generally does not support large populations of aquatic plants, animals, or algae. The fish that occur in oligotrophic lakes are often low in abundance, but large in size. Panfish are abundant and, along with crayfish, insects, and larvae, are sufficient to support Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Trout, and Walleye.

Lakes that have excessive shoreline disturbance or poor residential sanitation, or that have agricultural runoff, or have their lakebed sediments disturbed by boat traffic (and so releasing phosphorous locked within them), suffer from excessive nutrient loading and algal growth, and thus have poor clarity

On the whole, as the chart above shows, over the years, we have done a good job of maintaining the character of our lake.

Maintaining the character of our lake requires us to limit lakebed disturbance and take care to limit inputs from our shorelines and septic sources. It’s been done the past ... and it’s up to us to make that our legacy for future generations of Black Oak residents. (You can “score your shore here”:

<https://survey.healthylakeswi.com/>)

-- NOTES OF THANKS --

OUR DONORS:

First and foremost, we thank members and those who go beyond in making additional donations – “dollars of hours”, “\$500 for 5”, auction and clothing purchases, legacy donations – you are the financial engine of our Clean Boats-Clean Waters program which maintains the health of our lake.



The Foundation:

Board: Jack Barnum (Finance/Investment Cte), Bonnie Clark (Past President), Morgan Fleming (Secretary), Mark Hoffman (vice-President), Keith Montgomery (President), Dave Paton (Treasurer), Mary Thomas, Nancy Hill Travis, Galia Vineyard, Richard Woodrow, Dan Zane.

Finance/Investment: Fred Aikins, Jack Barnum, Bob Beedie, Dave Paton.

Nominating: Kathy Gelb, Cathy Hesselman, Sue Woltman.

Membership: Sharon Basten.

The Lake:

Citizens Lake Monitor: Walt Bates.

Shoreline monitoring program coordinator: Cindy Stewart.

CBCW: Keith Montgomery.

Events and Fundraising, 2025:

Annual picnic: Sharon Basten.

Annual Silent Auction: Kathy Kelly, Bonnie Clarke, Jeany Cuttell, Darlene Erickson, Kay Fleming, Diane Foreman, Cathy Hesselman, Celia Kistler, Debbie Porsche, Galia Vineyard, Susie Whipp and Mary Jo Zane.

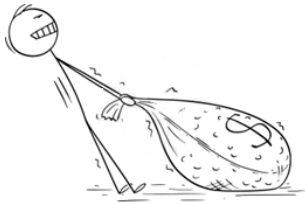
Pontoon parties: Sara Beedie.

BOL clothing and items: Elizabeth Eaton, Sara Beedie.

Progressive dinner organizers: Cathy Hesselman, Sandy Seymour, Galia Vineyard and Elizabeth Eaton.
Dessert hosts Dan and Mary Jo Zane.

Walk around the lake lunch host: Nancy Travis, Dirk Meyer

Survivors' dinner: Bonnie Clark, Keith Montgomery



-- REPORT FROM THE TREASURER --

Dave Paton



BOL Friends,

The Black Oak Lake Preservation Foundation enjoyed a good year financially as supported by the figures below. Our boat inspectors good work will cost us a little bit more this year but the benefits of their diligence are "clear" to see.

Dr. Susan Knight, Walt Bates, our President Keith Montgomery, Dirk, Bill, Cindy and others lead with their commitment to the program as well and, needless, to say, your dues and "Dollars for Hours" contributions make all the difference.

A special thanks to a couple of particularly generous donors for giving BOLPF a sorely needed shot in the arm! The nature of our fundraising can change over time as our dues went up a little this year and other efforts are being considered.

The personal initiative of Jack Barnum and the "\$500 for 5" drive has revealed even further the energy our members have, and the passion, for Black Oak Lake.

Thanks so much for your ongoing generosity!

Our account balances are as follows:

	12/31/2024	12/31/2025
Headwaters State Bank	63,268	93,182
Fidelity	103,717	107,305
Total	166,985	200,487

David Paton
BOLPF Treasurer



Walt and Sandi Bates

-- LOWENWOOD TRAIL USE --

2026

Walt Bates

*** PRIVATE LAND ***
RESIDENTS OF BLACK OAK LAKE
MAY USE THIS TRAIL
TRAIL CLOSED TO ALL
May 12 • May 27-29 • June 22-25
June 29-July 2 • July 19-23 • July 28-30
Sept 29-Oct 1 • Oct 6-8

Lowenwood continues to permit our use of a designated trail on their property connecting West and North Black Oak Lake Roads so we can walk/bike around the lake.

Here are the rules, and we ask for your strict observance of them:

- The Lowenwood trail system is extensive, but the permitted, "designated route" we can use is described on the lake website under "Members" and has many little pink and blue flags along it. Don't get lost!

- This permission is for Black Oak Lake residents and their guests only. *A Black Oak resident must be part of any group that goes through.* Be sure your children know these rules as it is usually they or friends who are violators.
- Dogs and bikes are permitted, but gas engines are not allowed.
- There are times during the summer when Lowenwood has groups visiting and requests that we keep out. Keith will erect signs (as shown above) at both ends of the trail with the dates – please check before entering. I will email reminders of the dates as they come up.
- There could be other dates that come up when Lowenwood has additional groups visiting. I will email you with notice of these times, which will be in addition to those posted.

This permission is a huge benefit to us. *Please don't spread this to non-Black Oak friends.*

If you're a frequent user, put these (currently known) dates on your calendar.

Closures (as of May 1):

- May 12 • May 27-29
- June 22-25 • June 29-July 2
- July 19-23 • July 28-30
- Sept 29-Oct 1 • Oct 6-8

Please respect these dates.



-- CLEAN BOATS – CLEAN WATERS --

Keith Montgomery, Coordinator



Unlike last year, this year landing inspections began on “Opening Day”, May 2. We have a very loyal team of inspectors: Mike Barber, Donna Barber, Garry Buss, Ron Francis, Chris Phelps, Scott Topp, and Dennis Friske. Chris Phelps does the scheduling.

Please say “Hello” and “Thank you” to them if you are passing at the landing. And please, when you are putting your boat in (and taking out), accept and answer their questions politely – they are required to ask them of all boaters, including residents.

There are several residents who stand ready to fill in on inspections, if needed: Adams (x2), Arpke, Beedie, Bina, Clarke, Hoffman, Paton, Surpless- Kelly, Rao. !Thank you!

-- SHORELINE MONITORING PROGRAM --

Cindy Stewart, Coordinator



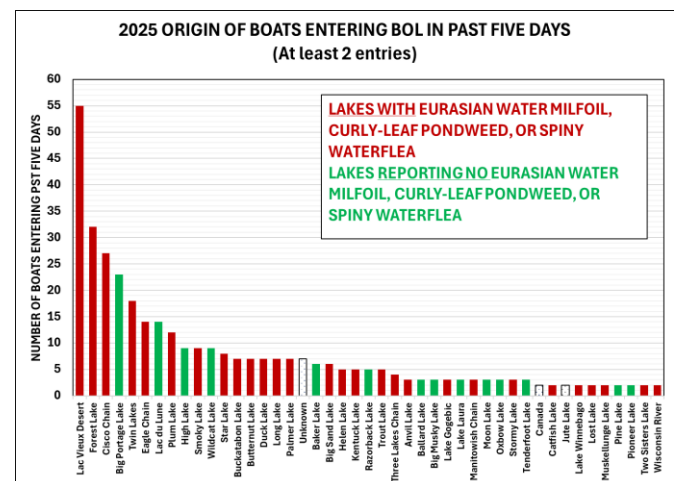
Because we can't cover everything at the landing – as we discovered last year when a weed-laden rig entered before 7:00am -- our Shoreline Monitoring Program is important.

Lake volunteers monitor the shallow waters around our shoreline for invasive aquatic species. Each monitor is assigned a section of the lake to inspect from a boat, kayak, or even paddle board.

We ask that you monitor your section at least once monthly (preferably twice monthly), from June through August. Most volunteers sign up for the entire summer, but if you are only able to commit to one or two months, we

welcome your help. This is a great option for family members who visit during the summer. If you can help, please contact Cindy Stewart, 815-861-1707.

A chart from 2025 landing inspections shows the kind of pressure our lake is under from visiting boaters (→). While boaters are required by law to inspect their own boats upon leaving a prior lake, this is far from perfect. Our inspectors and monitors are our lake's line of defense.



-- BLACK OAK'S WATER --

Walt Bates



WATER CLARITY:

The DNR just released the lake monitoring reports for 2025 and, once again, Black Oak Lake ranks #1 in the state in water clarity. See all the relevant EXCEL spreadsheets on our website under "Water Quality".

Here's the top 14 lakes in the state in 2025:

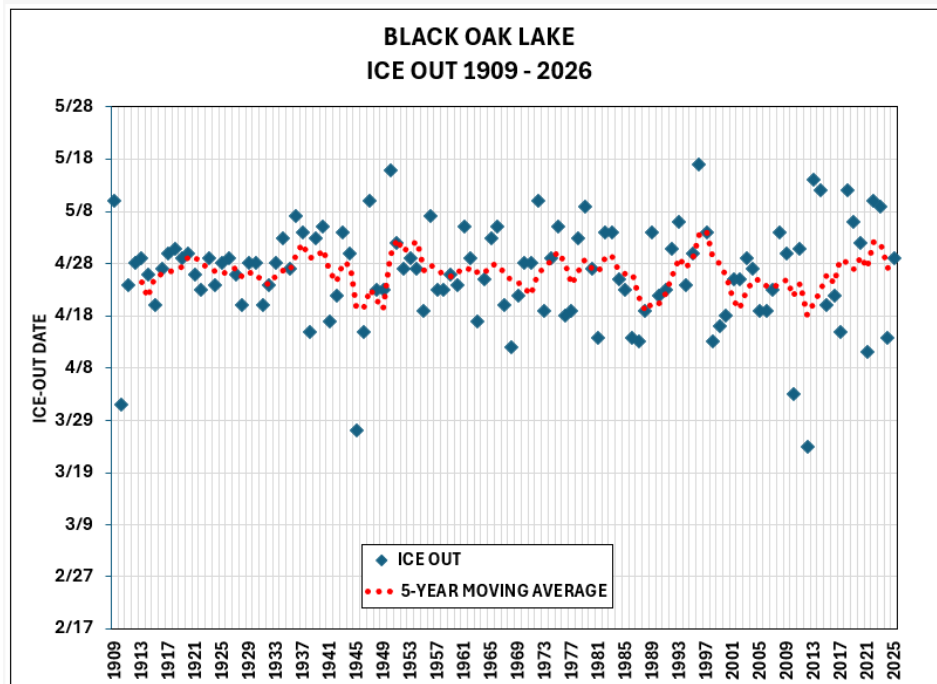
LAKE	COUNTY	SECCHI AV. FT.
Black Oak Lake	Vilas	30.0
Maiden Lake	Oconto	28.0
Pine Lake	Waukesha	26.5
Blue Lake	Oneida	25.5
Fountain Lake	Portage	24.8
Loveless Lake	Polk	24.4
Stone Lake	Washburn	24.0
Round Lake	Sawyer	23.7
Whitefish Lake	Douglas	23.0
Big Portage Lake	Vilas	23.0
Smoky Lake	Vilas	22.8
Round Lake	Sawyer	22.6
White Sand Lake	Vilas	22.4
Forest Lake	Vilas	22.0

Five lakes from Vilas County!

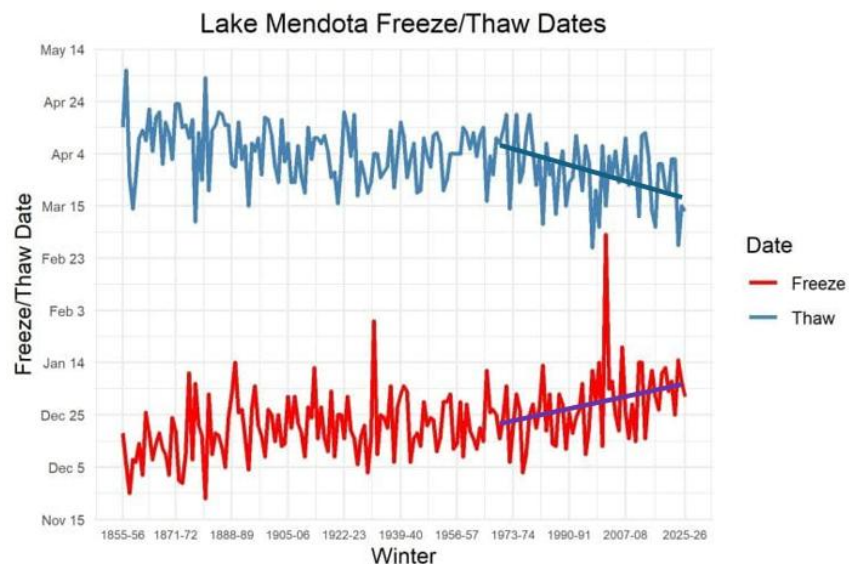
ICE-OUT, 2026:

Ice-out this year was April 27.

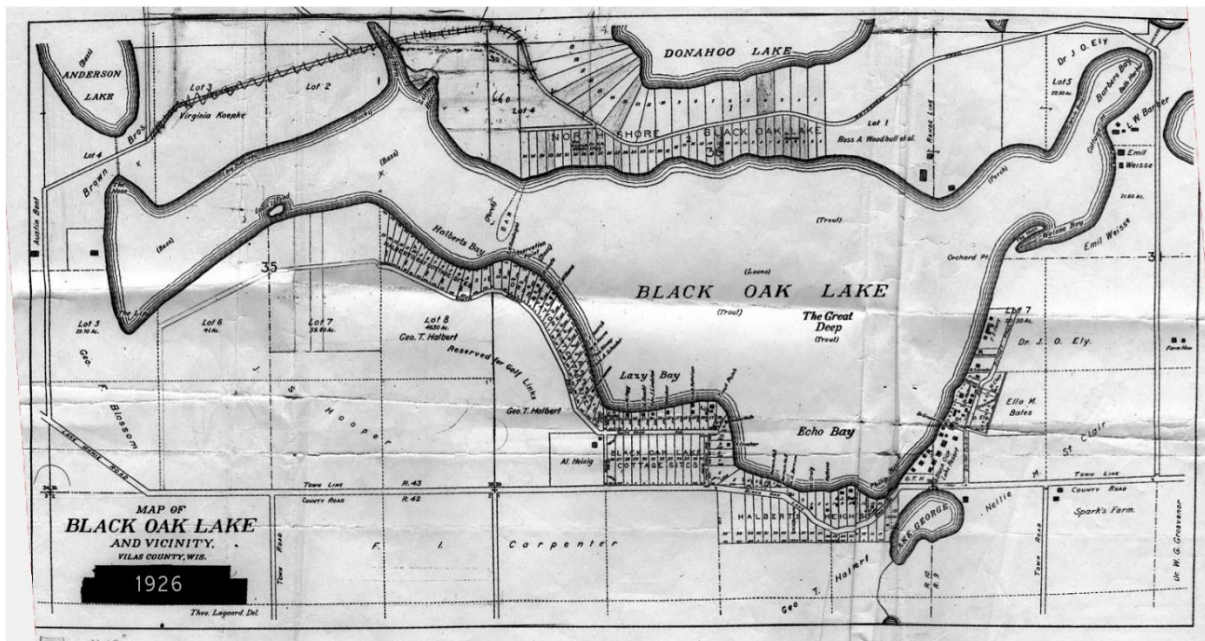
The DNR's definition of "Ice-Out" is simply "all ice gone". The south shore of Barbers Bay from about Erickson's to Basten's faces straight north and has a high ridge and tall trees behind it to shade it all. It is always the last ice on the lake. Luckily, the early observers and recorders of Ice-Out dates (Weisse, Handlos, and Lowenstine caretakers) all lived in Barbers Bay and were recording dates that the last ice went out as far back as 1909. Go to the website under "Ice Out Reporting" to see all the math involved in averaging these dates. If you want to know just how incredible our ice record is, check out lakes across the state: https://www.aos.wisc.edu/oldsco/lakes/WI-lake_ice-1.html



KEITH: There appears to be no shift in ice-out date on Black Oak. The shaded nature of Barbers Bay might make our values a tad conservative in contrast to a similar date range from Lakes Mendota and Monona (Madison) which show ice-on is clearly getting later and ice-out earlier – resulting in a very much shortened winter season, most evident in the last 50 years: There are 26 fewer ice days since 1971.



Dr. Hilary Dugan at UW Madison states: ".....given that the heat balance of ice formation/melt is mainly driven by radiation (shortwave and longwave) and other factors (wind, river inputs), I doubt the city's heat island effect has any noticeable impacts. MGE releases hot water into Monona, and that does have a localized impact on ice formation. Monona also has more storm water inputs too, which would deliver a little bit of heat. "

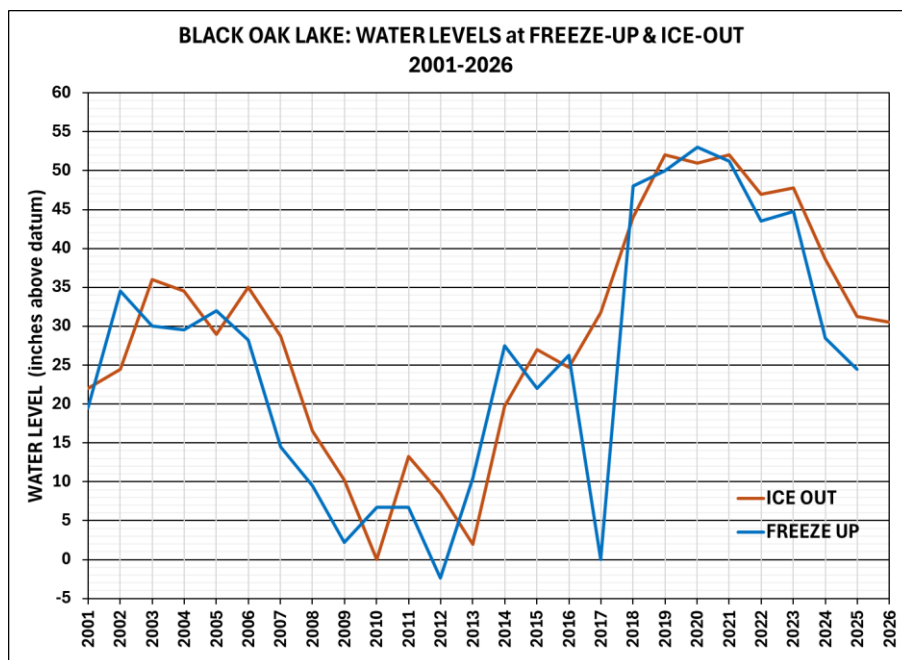


Black Oak Lake 1926, 17 years after ice-out observations were first made in Barber's Bay.
Note "Reserved for Golf Links" west of Lazy Bay.

WATER LEVELS:

The ice-out water level in 2026 was 30.5". This is up 5.5" from the freeze-up level last fall and puts the level just about midway between its highest (53" in 2020) and lowest (-2" in 2012).

Our water level is highly variable. Notice that the highest level (in 2020) and the lowest level (in 2012) at Freeze-up are 55" apart. As a seepage lake, we are at the mercy of precipitation and evaporation. Our level in late October 2025 was 25", very near the middle of the levels in this chart. The actual average of all these measurements is 28.3".



-- MEMBERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING --



Thanks to the generosity of our residents in funding inspectors at the boat landing and the diligence of the lake monitors (coordinated by Cindy) – as well as some luck -- we have been successful year-over-year in preventing Eurasian Water-Milfoil (EWM) from entering our lake. Keeping EWM out helps maintain the health of our lake – something we all benefit from in boating and other lake activities (kayaking, swimming). Lake health, in turn, boosts our property values. Several studies suggest the impact on values is in the order of 12%. And dealing with EWM once it has established itself is very expensive (and complicated) and will be an additional and on-going cost, beyond that of inspections.

Memberships are now \$50 per year (the website is being updated to reflect this) and can be paid by check sent to BOLPF, PO Box 151, Land O' Lakes WI 54540. Memberships may also be paid by credit card – go to <https://blackoaklake.com/> and select "My Account" in the top right corner.

You can always make an additional donation at any time. And this past year we instituted the "\$500 for 5" campaign. That's a commitment to donate \$500 for each of 5 years. ***A HUGE "Thank you" to the families who have already committed: We have 37 individuals and families who have made this commitment.*** This has exceed our goal of 30! The goal remains to strengthen our general fund over the next five years and help protect Black Oak Lake for years to come. You can embark on this commitment at any time. You can contact Jack Barnum directly with any questions or how to start the first year: jbarnumk@gmail.com .



-- 2026 PICNIC and AUCTION -- Saturday, July 25



Mark your calendars! Details on the picnic will be sent out in June. For now, Wild Turkey (Conover) will be catering – *and we are still looking for volunteers to assist with the picnic and auction.* Last year's auction raised over \$10,000 to fund our CBCW work. It is a critical part of our funding. Please contact Keith (montgomeryBOL@outlook; 715 212 8008) if you are willing to help out with the auction and/or with the picnic.

This tradition will not continue without your help please don't wait for someone else to volunteer.

What can you help with? No experience necessary! We provide training! We need volunteers to solicit or provide items for the auction, or help store items, or print up bid sheets, or help on the day with tracking purchases and collecting payments for the picnic and for items purchased etc.



-- PONTOON PARTIES --

Sara Beedie



Mark your calendar for this summer's Pontoon Parties:

Saturday, May 23 • Friday, July 3 • Saturday, August 1 • Saturday, September 5

Grab your favorite beverage and an appetizer to share and join us in the fun as we enjoy the evening on Black Oak. Festivities begin in Barber's Bay at 5 pm. Stay for an hour or for the evening, it's up to you! Rain date is the following evening.

Remember your friends and family who might not have a pontoon boat and offer to pick them up on your way.

Please bring plastic glassware.



-- PROGRESSIVE DINNER --

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Elizabeth Eaton



We are pleased to announce the return of the Black Oak Lake Progressive Dinner! What a great way to meet new people and celebrate old friends. Sandy Seymour, Cathy Hesselman, Galia Vineyard and Elizabeth Eaton are organizing the evening. This is a fundraiser for the Black Oak Lake Preservation Foundation. There will be a \$25.00 charge per person ... payable at the dessert course. We will also have a 50/50 drawing at dessert -- bring cash!

You will be scheduled at a different house for each course, but this year we are going to dispense with the main course. The three courses will be: appetizers, salad and soup. The dessert course will be

graciously hosted by Galia Vineyard. Appetizers will be from 5:00-6:00, salad from 6:15-7:00, soup from 7:15-8:00 and dessert from 8:15-???

If you choose not to host, please sign up to contribute by bringing an appetizer or dessert. If you have houseguests, you are welcome to include them, and we will keep them with you for the evening ...sorry, no young children at this event. A reminder that hosts will provide some sort of beverage, but otherwise this is a BYOB event ... so please bring your favorite adult beverage with you to each course.

This is a great chance to raise money and spend a fun evening with fellow Black Oakers. **The deadline for registering is June 4:** Please text, call, or email one of the organizers. Your personal schedule for the evening (with guest list if you are hosting) will be delivered to you by June 13.

We are looking forward to an evening of great food and great neighbors! Please call if you have any questions ... Sandy Seymour 602-828-2145, Cathy Hesselman 330-509-902, Galia Vineyard 715-617-4259, and Elizabeth Eaton 612-718-7057.

INFORMATION NEEDED WHEN REGISTERING:

Names: _____

Black Oak address: _____

Email address: _____

Cell Phone: _____

☐ I would like to host a course (indicate your first, second and third choice)

_____ Appetizer _____ Salad _____ Soup

I can accommodate _____ (8-20) people, including hosts

☐ I would like to attend but cannot host a course, but I will bring an appetizer or

dessert for our gathering (please indicate which): Appetizer Dessert Either

Please note if there are any special accommodations needed, such as physical abilities, allergies, and dietary restrictions:

-- DARI MAID NEWS --

Walt Bates



They're back! The Motowski family that bought Dari Maid last year will be reopening on the weekend of May 15th. Their need is local labor. It used to be a "Rite of Passage" that our children worked there for a few summers in their teens. I was just told that their summer open/closed times and hours will depend heavily on getting local employees. If you're interested write to darimaiddicecream@gmail.com.

-- SIX-COUNTY LAKES AND RIVERS MEETING --

Friday, July 17, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

James Williams Middle School in Rhinelander

The theme of this year's Northwoods Six-County Lakes and Rivers Meeting will be, "What's Your Lake's Report Card?"

The agenda includes:

- A look at Oneida County's new lake classification system
- An update on enhanced wakes and other state water policy matters
- A Lake Steward program to recognize good shoreline practices
- Wild rice (manoomin) and how it relates to lake health
- A Northwoods and Wisconsin fisheries report card
- Light pollution and its effects on life on and around our waters

There will be an exhibit area. Coffee and tea, and light snacks will be available.

Entrance is free. Pre-registration is not required.

-- VCLRA --

<https://vclra.org/>

Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association

"The health of our environment and economy depends on the vitality of our natural waters. That's why we all share responsibility to protect our precious lake and river heritage. It's what drives our vision of a future where our natural waters are protected and cherished for the high value and quality of life they provide."

"Since its founding 32 years ago, Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association has pursued the mission to sustainably preserve, protect, and enhance our lakes and rivers for the benefit of all. We accomplish our mission by working with partner and supporting member families, businesses and lake organizations to foster informed and engaged communities committed to the welfare of our lakes and rivers of Vilas County in Wisconsin."

You can read the latest VCLRA newsletter here:

<https://vclra.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Winter-26-newsletter.pdf>

-- See you all at the lake in Summer 2026! --



Sharon Basten

Black Oak Lake

SPRING 2026