

2016 Lakes Partnership Convention by Mike Backus

March 30 thru April 2, 2016 in Stevens Point Wisconsin

This annual convention is based on a partnership between Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin Extension Lakes and the Wisconsin Lakes organization. It has been around for 38 years. This year the Convention celebrated the thirty-year anniversary of the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN). For 30 years, citizens like myself have been involved with collecting critical information about our lakes.

For the first time this convention blended the agenda from CLMN with that of those involved with Water Action Volunteers Stream Monitoring and Citizen-based Monitoring Network who monitor birds, reptiles, fish, mammals, native plants, etc.

Some 500 people attended this year. I did not register nor take part in the sessions concerned with streams and wildlife.

What follows is the information I gained by attending the sessions during the dates of March 31 and April 1, 2016. Thanks to our District for paying for me to attend this convention.

Session 1 Thursday March 31

Fish Production Responses to Long-term Additions of Coarse Woody Habitat by Greg Sass

*This study is only in its first year

*Most of the first year was setting up the lake for the study which is trying to show that as development around a lake increases the natural wood in a lake decreases. Not many of us like big dead trees in the water along our beach area.

*The study will attempt to prove that without significant natural wood in the lake shore area, the size and growth rate of bass and many other fish will decrease.

*Fish are attracted to the wood in the lake for protection, reproduction and eating the food source that grows on a tree in the water.

*The study is on an undeveloped lake in upper Wisconsin where they divided the lake and removed the natural wood in one section and added more wood in the other.

Working Towards Increased Sustainability of Pan Fish by Andrew Rypel

*Pan fish are the most angled type of fish in Wisconsin

*Trend statewide is smaller size of pan fish in last 40 years

*A survey of anglers shows they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with this fact

*At a low key level, studies are being conducted on size and limit rules to help turn around this trend

*Early results show reduced bag limit increased the size by 1”

*Lakes (100) that have been identified as being very low in pan fish have new restrictions in place for this season

Kick off Speaker Thursday March 31

Does Volunteer Monitoring Really Make a Difference? By Kris Stepenuck

*CHANGE depends on facts - then observation - then action

*Monitoring provides the facts

*Nationwide, as well as in Wisconsin, facts have given scientists the push to start many programs that have then resulted in action

*The facts that I obtain and report about Jordan Lake and others report about their lakes are used to make various changes

Session 2 Thursday March 31

A volunteer Perspective: The How, What, and Why Behind Citizen Lake Monitoring by a Panel of 8 volunteers including Mike Backus

*Mike Backus was impressive at sharing what he does on Jordan Lake 😊

Session 3 Thursday March 31

Citizen Scientists Help Identify Long-term Trends in Water Clarity Across the US by Noah Lottig

*Speaker was looking at a very broad level in his study not at specific lake levels

*He looked data from 17 states

*Only with the data collected by citizen monitors was he able to look at trends

*Over the years he did not see a significant increase or decrease in clarity

*Only about 7% of the water bodies he reviewed saw an increase in clarity and only 4% showed a decrease.

*Only because we had data available was someone like him able to look for significant changes.

Statewide Aquatic Remote Sensing Program in WI by Stephen Greb

*DNR continues to use satellite images to determine water quality

*As a monitor, at the start of the season, I am given a chart as to when the satellite will go over Jordan Lake. It goes over on two back to back days every 7 days. I make every attempt to monitor our water clarity on those

dates. At the end of the monitoring year, the DNR scientists view the reading the satellite gets from our lake and then compares to my readings and makes changes in the program for the satellite computer.

*The satellite used is 400 miles above the earth and a much better one will begin to be used later this year.

Session 4 Thursday March 31

All eyes on Lake Water Quality by Katie Nicholas

*Madison Lakes with all their water quality issues are doing more monitoring and have a phone app to tell beachgoers where problems (beach closures) are or are not

*In 2015 Bacteria monitoring became necessary beyond pure clarity monitoring

*They know for a fact heavy rain is tied directly to E-coli issues along with blue-green algae blooms. This is due to the run-off from the land directly into a lake during the heavy rain. Pray we never have this issue!

Temperature and Fish Populations by Gretchen Hansen

*Studies show that walleye population is falling in WI

*Largemouth bass population is increasing

*Again the studies show that water temp is key factor

* Citizen monitoring of temp data has not been recorded long enough to make any conclusions at this time but trends hint that lake water temps are going up since 1979.

*Bass do better in warmer water but walleye like cooler water!

*In 2015 Lake Jordan was one of 48 lakes in the State to be issued a pier water monitor device that took a reading every hour from the time I put it in until I took it out to be mailed back for review.

Session 1 Friday April 1

Fish Sticks Success by Brenda Nordin

*Project is being done on Cloverleaf Lake

*Project was a partnership between non-profit sportsman club, Township and DNR

*Grant Funds were obtained from Healthy Lakes program (new)

*Significant permits and planning are needed for this type of project.

*The concept goes back to an earlier session that proves that natural wood is needed for a healthy lake. This project adds the wood to a lake in a very special way.

*Some trees 60 foot in length and 6-8" round are needed to make a Fish Stick. These hardwood trees are then wired together during the winter months and secured to the shoreline. The mass starts from the shore and extends out into the shallow water.

*Once the trees are in the water for a time, they attract algae which attracts little fish then bigger fish.

*These fish sticks, if done right, are so large they also help control erosion for they slow wave action on the shoreline.

*If the right wood is used, they last a very long time. Stop and think how long the dead tree on our SW shore has been in our lake.

*This is a major effort to install fish sticks and one needs to plan and place them in the right location.

Session 2 Friday April 1

The Past, Present and Future of the Secchi Dip-In by Lauren Salvato

*The Dip-In is a North American program above what we have in place in Wisconsin to monitor water quality.

*It started in 1994 and for the past 4 years I have provided Jordan Lake data to the program. Some 800 volunteers from North America participate.

*All monitoring now takes place only during July (used to be just one day in July)

*The WI data base folks now take all our July data from all WI lakes and send it to them as an automatic feed.

Citizen Monitoring Stream Flow and Lake Level in the WI Central Sands by Jessica Haucke

*This Adams Co and Stevens Point U project started in 2013 to collect data on what might be happening to our water based on the large number of high capacity wells in the Central Sands area

*Jordan Lake is a part of this study and I have a sand point driven in my beach area so I can measure the level of the water table.

*Stream flow measuring is done by volunteers (80) and is much more complicated but necessary to record the facts for possible study and court action.