What you can do to protect Deer Lake

- Maintain a healthy population of native aquatic plants near your shore.
- Learn to identify Eurasian watermilfoil and monitor your waterfront for its presence.
- Avoid disturbing aquatic plants by maintaining no-wake speed when boating within 200 feet of the shoreline.
- Reduce phosphorus runoff from your property by not using phosphorus in fertilizer, installing buffer zones, reducing areas of erosion, and infiltrating water from hard surfaces.
- Upgrade old septic systems and properly maintain up-to-date systems.
- Support the Deer Lake Conservancy with a financial contribution.

2005 Conservancy Officers and Directors

Rob Ilstrup, *President*
Jim Miller, *Vice President*
Don Hill, *Treasurer*
Roger Foussard, *Chair-Fundraising*
Dick Weber, *Chair-Water Quality Committee*
Sandy Bodeau, *Chair-Finance*
John Marinovich, *Chair-Marketing*
Dennis Raedeke
Joanna Victor
Millie Keys
John Wright

Dedicated to the preservation of Deer Lake

The Deer Lake conservancy is a tax exempt organization incorporated in the state of Wisconsin and also registered in Polk County. The purpose of the organization is the preservation of Deer Lake and the surrounding land that contributes to the natural, scenic, recreational and productive value of the lake. As a 501C (3) corporation, any contributions are fully deductible from Federal and State income tax. Contributions may be in the form of cash, securities, property and land easements.

Contributions should be sent to

Deer Lake Conservancy
P.O. Box 1139
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024

Interested individuals may also contact Jim Miller by phone at 715-483-3338.

Deer Lake Conservancy Report

Special Annual Meeting Edition **July 2005**

Flagstad Farm Grant Success!!

After overcoming many obstacles and delays, the Deer Lake Conservancy has a $200,000 Department of Natural Resources Lake Protection Grant in hand for the Flagstad Farm property. The money will be used to partially pay the debt owed on the land contract.

The Flagstad Farm was a critical acquisition for the Conservancy because it allowed for the conversion of farm fields to native prairie grasses and flowers. Runoff from farm fields previously carried significant loads of phosphorus under Highway 8 directly to Deer Lake. The acquisition also prevented the property from being developed for high-density residential and commercial use.

More good news related to the grant! A deed restriction required by the Department of Natural Resources grant now stipulates that the front 50 acres remain in protected status. This protection will help to prevent selection of the on-alignment alternative that would have created four additional lanes of pavement frighteningly close to Deer Lake.

The Flagstad Farm property viewed from Deer Lake

Flagstad Farm Fundraising Status

Contributions from Deer Lake Conservancy members and friends are needed to bridge the gap between grant dollars and current contributions, and the remaining debt. The Conservancy purchased the 70-acre Flagstad Farm for $500,000 in August of 2002. The grant dollars will lower the current debt to $227,000.

With cash on hand, we still need to raise $125,000 to $150,000 to pay off the Flagstad Farm. Let's work to get the debt off our books, so that we can move on to other critical projects. As described above, only the front 50 acres are permanently protected. We need your support to ensure that the remaining 20 acres, escape the bulldozer's blade!

Highway 8 Corridor News

Release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the U.S. Highway 8 corridor is now projected for the fall of 2005. The Wisconsin DOT will select a preferred alternative for the highway corridor location by the end of 2005 (if all goes according to plan), and a final EIS is expected in the first quarter of 2006.

The southern realignment alternative places the highway at the back of the Flagstad Farm property and the far southern realignment begins 1000 feet south of the south property border.

In-Lake Committee Takes on Aquatic Plant Management

A 2002 survey of Deer Lake residents identified "weeds" as the top concern for the lake. A committee made up of representatives from the Deer Lake Improvement Association and the Deer Lake Conservancy is finding that addressing this concern is far from simple.

The group commissioned a study supported by a DNR lakes planning grant to address this complicated problem. A major effort of the study was to focus on aquatic plants – the "weeds" that lake residents identified as their top concern.

In-Lake Committee Members
Dick Weber, Chair
Mark Thayer, DLIA Environmental Committee Chair
Roger Foussard (DLC)
James Miller (DLC)
Chris Krueger (DLIA)

The Study

The first step was to complete a comprehensive survey of aquatic plants in Deer Lake. The littoral, or plant supporting, zone of the lake provides critical habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife. While in some lakes, the plant supporting area is found nearly throughout the lake, plants are found in a narrow band around Deer Lake at depths up to about 20 feet. *While this band of vegetation is critical for wildlife, it is also where we place our docks in the water and swim near the shore.*

The plant survey found that Deer Lake has a healthy, diverse native plant community. One invasive aquatic species, curly leaf pondweed *(Potamogeton crispus)* was found. Eurasian watermilfoil, an invasive, nonnative species of concern, was not located in this survey or any previous surveys of Deer Lake.

Management Recommendations

1. ***Protect and restore healthy native aquatic plant communities.*** Wholesale removal of native plant populations is clearly not good for the lake water quality and fishery. Native aquatic plants also prevent the introduction of invasive, non-native species like Eurasian watermilfoil.

2. ***Prevent the introduction of Eurasian watermilfoil and other invasive, exotic aquatic species.*** Eurasian watermilfoil is an aggressively growing, non-native aquatic plant found in many lakes in the Twin Cities metro area. The threat of introduction of this plant is great. Lake residents and users must be made aware of prevention methods such as washing plant fragments from boats before using them in Deer Lake.

3. ***Reduce filamentous algae density.*** The Deer Lake Association has increased their spraying program in 2005 to reduce this stringy green algae that attaches to aquatic plants, docks, and boat props. Filamentous algae density may be reduced over the long term through Conservancy efforts to reduce in-lake phosphorus concentrations.

4. ***Treat nuisance curly leaf pondweed populations with herbicide in May when water temperatures reach about 50 degrees.*** Curly leaf pondweed reaches nuisance levels in some areas of Deer Lake in June and dies back in early July. Nuisance populations were identified at the boat landing and along the north shore of Deer Lake. Treating early in the season would allow control of curly leaf pondweed without significant impacts on native plants that are not growing much yet.

Status Report

The Deer Lake Improvement Association applied for permits for early season treatment of curly leaf pondweed in 2004 and 2005. The permit applications have so far been denied. The Department of Natural Resources seems unconvinced that this management method is a good approach for Wisconsin lakes.

The Deer Lake Improvement Association is seeking grant support for educational efforts related to Eurasian watermilfoil prevention and ongoing aquatic plant surveys.

The Deer Lake Conservancy continues to work to reduce phosphorus input into the lake. - a long-term approach to reducing filamentous algae growth.

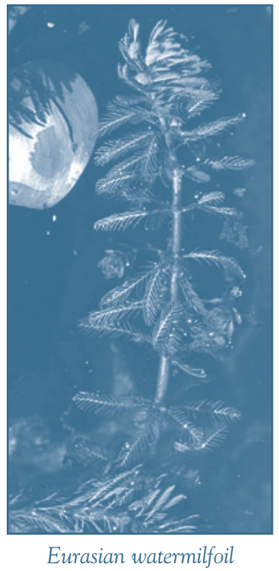
Enhance your Real Estate Value - Invest in Water Quality

Studies show that waterfront property on lakes with clear water yields significantly higher values per front foot, and Deer Lake is no exception. Deer Lake has among the best water clarity and highest real estate values in the state. Deer Lake Conservancy projects help to ensure that your investment is protected into the future.

Conservancy projects aim to reduce or prevent the runoff of phosphorus – the limiting ingredient for algae growth. Our projects have successfully reduced phosphorus content in watershed runoff by over 50 percent since 1995. You can learn more about conservation practices by touring the conservation properties on one of our nature walking paths. Brochures are available to guide you.

Conservation practices are installed on all of the major watersheds that flow to Deer Lake. We have received almost $400,000 in grants from the Department of Natural Resources and Polk County and own 140 acres of land in critical watershed areas. Grant dollars are matched by contributions from Conservancy members.

Eurasian watermilfoil



Eurasian watermilfoil

When is an aquatic plant a weed?

It is, of course, a matter of perspective.

Weeds may interfere with boating, tangling in propellers and making navigating from docks difficult.

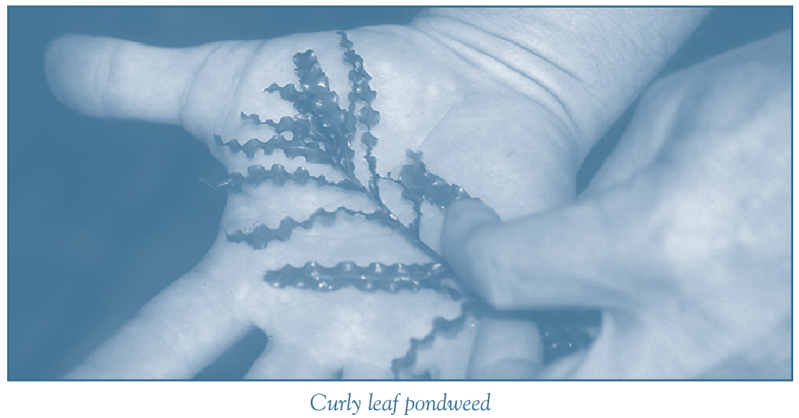
Weeds tangle around swimmer's arms and legs, making them feel trapped in the grasp of a nasty vegetative sea monster.

But keep in mind: THE WEEDS DESCRIBED ABOVE AND THE AQUATIC PLANTS DESCRIBED BELOW MAY BE ONE AND THE SAME

Aquatic plants play an essential role in protecting the lake's water quality by anchoring lake sediments in place preventing suspension of nutrient-rich sediments.

Aquatic plants provide food and shelter for fish and other lake creatures that depend on them for survival.

Native aquatic plants prevent the spread of invasive, aggressively growing, non-native plants like Eurasian watermilfoil.



Curly leaf pondweed