



Big Wood Lake Association
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Fun Facts About Acorns

By Cris Peterson

I find acorns fascinating. This time of year, the squirrels are running around like they're crazy with cheeks bulging. The little varmints sit on our porch at the lake like they own the place and munch on acorns...then leave a mess.



There are nine native species of oak trees in Wisconsin that produce acorns, including Northern red oak, black oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, white oak, and others. The acorns of these trees fall into two main groups: red oaks, which have pointed leaf lobes and acorns that mature in two years, and white oaks, which have rounded leaf lobes and acorns that mature in one year.

Only one in 10,000 acorns will mature into a new tree. The rest are fodder for more than just squirrels. 25% of a deer's fall diet is acorns. Mice, woodpeckers, blue jays, and ducks like to snack on them, too.

Acorns are a very nutritious nut. They contain up to 18% fat, 6% protein, and 68% carbohydrate, equivalent to corn or wheat. Raw acorns can be toxic to humans due to high levels of tannins, which must be leached out through processing, like boiling or soaking.

Once processed, acorns can be roasted as a snack, ground into flour for baking, or even used to make a caffeine-free coffee substitute. Acorn flour can be substituted for up to 50% of the wheat flour in many recipes.



Big Wood Lake Association
Fall 2025

Wood Chips

President's Corner

By Mike Strub

My dear Wood Lake friends and family,

Yes, I know the lake is actually named Wood Lake, not Big Wood Lake, but we continue to embrace the name in order to differentiate our lake from Little Wood Lake, plus we've just always called our lake Big Wood.

I'm glad that you're taking the time to read this bi-annual newsletter, which will be the final edition in which I write to you as president of the Association. More about that in a moment.

Here are the BWLA highlights from 2025. We were saddened in April with the passing of Mike Nettles, who was serving on the board at the time. Mike was instrumental in coordinating the annual July picnic in the park. We will continue to honor Mike's memory at the picnic each year.

All of the annual July Summer social activities were well attended, and the weather was perfect! For a change this year, Independence Day weekend brought hot, sunny days with showers at night, including no rain during the day on the 4th of July! What ended up being a five-day weekend for many of us started with Light up the Lake on July 3rd, when we set off nearly 800 safety flares. On July 4th, our annual flotilla was a crowd pleaser, and the Giddings family won best overall entry with their Pirate-themed entry—"Aye Aye Happy 4th of July" on the side of the pontoon boat got lots of smiles! Start planning for next year's flotilla!

The annual picnic in the park was well attended, with over 60 people enjoying the BBQ smoked meats done by Tom Sparrow, who was recruited by Mike Nettles. We're already looking forward to the 2026 picnic, which is traditionally held on the third Saturday in July.

Those who drove on County Y had a bumpy gravel road for a few months, and all five miles of the County Trunk Highway were completed by early October.

We continue to contract with Matt Berg from Endangered Resource Services, LLC to monitor Wood Lake for aquatic invasive species, including purple loosestrife. After a few years of reduced patches of Loosestrife, he will release beetles next summer in areas that are impossible to reach. These beetles eat purple loosestrife, which is a good thing!

Next year, we will be compiling our latest edition of the BWLA Directory. Thanks in advance for your assistance as we gather info, including home and lake addresses and contact information.

The BWLA is in good financial shape, and volunteers are always welcome to help out with any of our projects or suggest new ideas, whether it's a social activity or a general beautification project. For instance, be on the lookout for changes to our annual photo contest.

I mentioned that this is my final newsletter. After close to a decade on the board, including several years as the president, it's time for me to step back and let someone take over. The BWLA is run by an all-volunteer board, and I'm excited about the future. Our fall membership meeting saw three new people step forward to serve on the board (for two vacant positions!), and the mission of the Association will be in good hands with the current and future board members. It has been an honor to represent the lake as not only the president of the Association, but as the "imaginary mayor" since 2015. I plan to continue living at the lake on North Shore Drive, where you're always welcome to stop in for a visit. I hope to see you at the Spring Membership Meeting at Luther Point and at the Fall (Annual) Meeting at Wood Lake Camp and Retreat. Dates and details will follow.

My sincere thanks to all the board members who have been on and continue to serve the BWLA. You've been a blessing. May God bless you and all those you love.

See you at the lake!
Mike Strub



No Ice is Safe: Seasonal Swinging Temps Make Ice Unpredictable

By DNR Conservation Warden Matt Weseli

DNR Warden Says Practice Ice Safety on All Waterbodies This Winter

Winter arrives with its plunging temperatures to form ice covers on Burnett County's popular waterbodies.

Our county's Wood Lake attracts outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy cross-country skiing on the lake, ice fishing, and a jog or an invigorating walk punctuated by the winter terrain. These activities are all part of what makes winter in our county fun for all ages.

DNR Conservation Warden, Matt Weseli

With that fun just waiting for all of us comes a dedication to following ice safety tips. These are easy to do and do not take a lot of time. Adopt these valuable habits in this late year, then make them your New Year's resolution. Why? Because **no ice is safe ice**.

Avoid Early Ice Covers

Those early season frigid overnight temperatures often leave a thin layer of ice across smaller bodies of water. It looks inviting, but it is far from strong enough to support the weight of any person or machine. This includes the popular off-highway vehicles.

Temperature swings, strong winds, currents, and underground springs can all create weak spots in the ice that are invisible from above. Ice conditions can vary widely across Wisconsin, and even across a given lake or river. These factors and more are why no ice is ever considered safe, especially not this early in the season.

Get Ice Status From Local Sources

The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Your best source for current ice conditions are local clubs and associations, like this one! Bait shops or outfitters also may be good information hubs.

Safety Check List

Here are my favorite basic ice safety tips:

- Carry a cell phone, and let people know where you are going and when you'll return home.
- Wear proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or a float coat, to help you stay afloat and to help maintain body heat.
- Wear ice creepers attached to boots to prevent slipping on clear ice.
- Carry a spud bar to check the ice while walking to new areas.
- Carry a few spikes and a length of light rope in an easily accessible pocket to help pull yourself – or others – out of the water.
- If you fall in, remain as calm as possible. While attempting to get out of the water, call for help. Anyone who attempts to rescue you should use a rope or something similar to avoid falling through themselves.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas or at night.

Have a plan in place, noting where you will be and when you plan to return. Along with leaving a written note of your plans, keeping a charged cell phone is also recommended. Check out [the DNR's Ice Safety webpage](#) for more information on staying safe on the ice, including tips for creating ice claws and what to do if you fall through ice.



Winter sunset on Wood Lake by Matt Weseli

Did You Know?

By Cris Peterson

The 32nd Annual American Legion Ice Fishing Contest on Wood Lake will be held on Saturday, February 14, 2026 from 9AM – 2PM. Lunch will be served at the Landing Pavilion. There are prizes for Northern, Bass, Crappies and Sunfish. Come join the fun! It is quite the day.



Matt Weseli and his son ice fishing on Wood Lake

Wood Lake's Common Water Snake

By Cris Peterson

For the past few years, there have been reports of water snakes on the west shore of Wood Lake. Yuck, I hate snakes. I didn't think much about the reports until one Sunday in the summer of 2024, when our entire lot was a construction zone. Our son-in-law discovered a huge snake (not a cute little green garter snake) in what had been our fire pit before our house burned.

It was the biggest snake we'd ever seen anywhere near the lake. We discovered it was a common water snake, and I guess there isn't much that's scary about them. Wisconsin's common water snake is a non-venomous, medium-to-large, heavy-bodied snake that is common throughout the state. It can be identified by its gray, brown, or tan background color with darker reddish-brown or black bands or blotches, and a belly with red or orange half-moons against a light background. They are often seen near clean rivers and lakes, where they hunt for food like fish, crayfish, and amphibians.



Common water snake

The common water snake is non-venomous and not dangerous to humans, though it can deliver a painful bite if handled. They are active both day and night, often seen basking on rocks, stumps, or tree limbs over the water. They also swim, usually near shore.

Northern water snakes have several natural predators in Wisconsin. While their large size and defensive behavior can deter some threats, many animals, particularly birds and mammals, prey on them and their young. Blue herons, bald eagles, raccoons, foxes, otters, and opossums will hunt the snakes, as will snapping turtles.

Northern water snakes pose virtually no threat to swimmers and will not attack humans. Their first instinct when approached is always to flee and dive underwater.



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