



Big Wood Lake Association
Fall 2026

Wood Chips

President's Corner

By Kevin Lysdahl

Change is happening! We finally received some welcome rain after a long, dry summer, and I think the whole area breathed a collective sigh of relief. While I am not sure if it was the dry spell or the recent rainfall that did the trick, the fall colors arrived in a beautiful flash this year.

There are plenty of other changes taking place around the lake right now. Docks, lifts, and boats are being pulled out, and many owners are busy winterizing their cabins for the season. We also had some major transitions during our fall membership meeting, where we elected several new board members. I was elected President (it was a close election!), replacing Mike Strub, who served our community wonderfully for many years. Brent Sabin has stepped up as our new Vice President, taking over for Bruce Hanson. Our current board roster includes **Kevin Lysdahl** (President), **Brent Sabin** (Vice President), **Keith Anderson** (Treasurer), **Lisa Carver** (Secretary), **Travis Smith**, **Brad Peterson**, and **Connie Scheer**. Thank you to all board members for your commitment to the Big Wood Lake Association (BWLA).

This year, we also successfully updated the resident directory. This project is tackled every three years and involves an immense amount of work. Advertising dollars directly fund this directory. Your annual dues help fund summer activities and environmental protections the BWLA coordinates each summer. This includes our annual flares, the July 4th flotilla, the annual picnic, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspections, and purple loosestrife monitoring. If you haven't paid your dues yet, please take a moment to do so online by visiting Bigwoodlake.com and clicking on the membership tab.

Finally, we want to express our deep appreciation for the volunteers who help us year-round with the picnic, flotilla, merchandise sales, water quality monitoring, and resetting dislodged lake buoys. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to any board member. Any amount of help is appreciated, whether you can spare an hour or three. We always welcome fresh faces and new ideas!

Enjoy the upcoming holiday season and have a safe winter. We look forward to seeing everyone back at the lake next spring!

Wood Lake Waters and Farming

By Cris Peterson

Burnett County, like much of Wisconsin, is a beautiful collage of lakes, rivers, forests and farmland. The agriculture of the Dairy State along with the diversity of our outdoor recreation makes our area unique. Driving through our county visitors will often see a farm next to a deep woodlot next to a river leading to an inhabited lake. Land use has a significant effect on our water resources.

As the owner of a large farm very near Wood Lake, I hope to help lake residents understand how farmers today manage the nutrients that are applied to the fields as fertilizer for our crops. Nutrient planning requires taking a large variety of information such as soil tests, manure tests, climate, crop requisites and timing, and running it through a computer plan that is specific to the last pound of fertilizer or gallon of manure on every single farmed acre.

We have an employee with a degree in agronomy whose sole job is to work on this process. The equipment that injects our manure each spring and fall has an on-board computerized monitor that records every gallon of manure and the pressure at which it is injected into the soil.

Copious daily records are submitted annually to the State of Wisconsin on fertilizer, manure, field oversight, and water resources. Developing a nutrient management plan involves months of working with state regulations and is very costly...but required.

If you have questions or want more information about farming and nutrient management and its relationship to our lake, don't hesitate to reach out.



We inject manure in the spring before crops are planted and in the fall after harvest.

Did You Know?

By Cris Peterson



The Snapping Turtle is the largest and heaviest turtle in Wisconsin. The slow moving and slow growing species take 7 to 8 years to reach breeding age. Its aggressive looks are deceiving. Snapping Turtles are typically shy and solitary scavengers that are highly beneficial to the health and diversity of our lake. The female will travel up to 10 miles on land to find a suitable spot to lay her eggs. Once she chooses a location, she will dig a shallow hole and deposit 10 to 80 eggs and then bury them.

Snapping turtles survive the winter by entering a state of brumation (a reptile form of hibernation), sinking to the muddy bottom of lakes, ponds, or rivers, where water temperatures remain stable and above freezing. The average lifespan of a snapping turtle is around 30-50 years in the wild.

The Favorite Lake Cabin Game

By Cris Peterson

There's nothing like a blustery fall day at the cabin with the fire crackling nearby and a nice big puzzle dumped out on the dining room table. When I was a cabin-kid here at Wood Lake in the fifties and early sixties, my dad often had a puzzle going on a card table in the middle of our living room.

You might argue that the card game "500" is a favorite at the cabin, or "Up and Down the River" a game imported from Iowa by our daughter-in-law, Nicki. Super fun. Every kid in our family has learned "Crazy Eights" and most have mastered "Gin Rummy," but nothing takes the place of a good puzzle.

Our family leans toward 300–500-piece puzzles because we're wimps, and I have the patience of a two-year-old. Did you know that a 1000-piece puzzle takes four times as long as a 500-piece puzzle? Every time the number of pieces doubles the difficulty is quadrupled.

The first puzzle was developed in 1760 by a cartographer named John Spilsbury to teach students geography. He had the brilliant idea of attaching a map to a piece of wood and cutting out sections of the map that would fit together perfectly. This became such a valuable learning tool that the puzzle subjects expanded to include alphabets, botany, history and zoology. Annually, Americans enjoy jigsaws more than any other table game. Nearly two billion jigsaw puzzles are sold every year.

Puzzles are not only fun, but they are good for your brain. They improve mental reasoning and mood, spatial awareness, enhance short-term memory and help with problem solving. Working on puzzles can lower stress levels, provide your brain with a mental workout and can potentially increase your IQ score...by 4 points.

If you think you're not enough of an old geezer to start puzzling, just try it. Your 7-year-old grandson will gladly join in. It's a unique family activity.



A very fuzzy photo of my dad, Bill Hoepfner, my friend and I puzzling at our cabin in 1962.

Drought? Why Low Water Periods Can Be Beneficial

By Cris Peterson

This past summer was the driest most of us can remember. It was no fun on the farm, but it is also a big concern at the lake.

According to LakeLines, the newsletter for the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association, low water years may be inconvenient for people, but they are critical for the long-term health of the lake and the wildlife that depend on it.

Low water exposes new areas to sunlight, allowing native plants like bulrush, arrowhead, and sedges to take root. These plants stabilize the shoreline, filter runoff, and later serve as essential fish and wildlife habitat when water levels rise again.

Shallow zones warm quickly, boosting insects and invertebrate production which are food for young fish. As the water returns, these areas become spawning and nursery grounds for northern pike, largemouth bass and panfish.

Low water periods allow sediments to settle and vegetation to be reestablished, naturally filtering nutrients and reducing the potential for algae blooms in future high-water years.

Fluctuating levels also prevent a single plant or algae species from taking over which helps maintain the lake's biological balance.



The larger boulders on this shoreline are where the waterline stays most of the time. This year the water was at least a foot below normal.



Board of Directors

Kevin Lysdahl, *President*
Brent Sabin, *Vice President*
Lisa Carver, *Secretary*
Keith Anderson, *Treasurer*
Travis Smith, *Director*
Brad Peterson, *Director*
Connie Scheer, *Director*

Association Email

info@bigwoodlake.com

Wood Chips Editor

Cris Peterson



Big Wood Lake Association

PO Box 495

Grantsburg, WI 54840

bigwoodlake.com



Find us on Facebook at
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Save the Date

The American Legion Ice Fishing Contest at Wood Lake will be held on Saturday, February 13, 2027, from 9AM to 2PM. Last year a huge crowd enjoyed a day of fishing, prizes and food at the Thoreson Legion Park on North Shore Drive. Mark your calendar!

Thank You, Mayor Mike!

By Cris Peterson

Mike Strub has just completed his fifth year as president of the Big Wood Lake Association. At the Association meeting this fall, he handed the reins to our newly elected president, Kevin Lysdahl.

Mike's parents were friends with Micky Eckenberg on the North Shore, and when her neighbor's cabin came up for sale in 1963, Earl and Sally Stub bought it. Mike and his siblings spent countless wonderful summers here, and his dad, Earl, was a founding member of the Lake Association. After a long career in radio and other media, in August of 2015 Mike returned to Wood Lake to care for his mother, Sally.

Mike's gregarious personality and complete dedication to our wonderful lake have earned him the unofficial title Mayor Mike. Thanks so much for all you have done for the Lake Association and for your many appreciative neighbors.

Oh...almost forgot. Mike told me he will provide pontoon tours of the lake for a nominal fee. Just kidding. He wanted me to add a joke!

