



Winter 2019

**Purpose:** *Protect, preserve & improve the environmental & esthetic quality of the Eau Claire Lakes Area Watershed including the lakes, rivers, shore lands, wetlands, forests, & attendant wildlife resources.*

The FOECLA board you have elected takes this mission very seriously and we did our very best in 2018 to hold true to the above statement. We believe we have a noble purpose. “A noble purpose inspires sacrifice, stimulates innovation and encourages perseverance.” Gary Hamel

Our board encourages support for each other and we encourage our members to help our mission persevere.

I personally want to thank Carl Heltne for his outstanding service and leadership as President of the board these last 4 years. We are glad he is staying on the board and will continue to share his knowledge and energy.

#### **2018 HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:**

- Membership growth to 261, a 17% increase from 2017.
- We increased our budget amount for the Clean Boats/Clean Waters, Aquatic Invasive Species Remediation, Adult Education and LEEP programs by 74%, to \$13,492.
- The board made a commitment to the Town of Barnes to help cover 2019 wage increases for boat landing monitors and BAISS boat divers, continuing our efforts to help limit the spread of aquatic invasive species.
- Establishment of a committee to explore creating a scholarship fund for an area high school student who is interested in fields that support our mission.
- The Lake Ecology Education Program (LEEP) took a big step forward this year by hiring Melissa Kjelvik as program coordinator. The Fall Program focused on critical habitat, water quality, aquatic plants/invasive plants, plankton and canoe skills. The Spring Program focused on aquatic macroinvertebrates, shoreline restoration, trees and the woodland energy chain. Sixty-one 7th grade students, 8 high school assistants, 10 professional conservationists and 21 community volunteers participated.



*LEEP Spring Program students, staff and volunteers (May 2018).*

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- We invited Scott Toshner, a Wisconsin DNR fisheries biologist to discuss “What’s Up with Walleye and Largemouth Bass” at our July Annual Meeting.
- We had strong attendance at the August education event. John Olson, a retired Wisconsin DNR furbearer ecologist, led a lively discussion on “Furbearing Critters Who Inhabit Our Land and Water.”
- Our board members continued to invest their personal time and energy to directly support the Town of Barnes. FOECLA board members currently serve on the Town of Barnes AIS Committee and Town of Barnes Lakes Committee (a new committee exploring next steps after the Waterski ordinance was rescinded on December 31, 2018). They also volunteer their time for Clean Boats/Clean Water and coordination of the Vatten Paddlar canoe race.
- We will continue to retain the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney LLP in a Pro Bono agreement to represent us. This partnership helps us navigate various legal matters related to our purpose of “Protecting, preserving and improving the environmental & esthetic quality of the Eau Claire Area...”

#### **WATER SKI/JET SKI ORDINANCE UPDATE:**

The Town of Barnes Ordinance, Chapter 8, Section 4 states: *“No person shall water ski, operate a motorboat or other power propelled device pulling an object and/or a person or use a jet ski on the waters herein described after the hour of 5:00 pm and before the hour of 10:00 am.”*

The Eau Claire Lakes Area has witnessed a significant increase in passion and emotion surrounding this ordinance. Last year the Town of Barnes conducted a survey of all town residents and property owners seeking input on the ordinance. 67% of those responding indicated a desire to retain the ordinance. Following presentation of the survey results, the Town Board voted to rescind the ordinance. An ad hoc “Lakes Committee” was created and is currently reviewing/recommending options to replace the Eau Claire Lakes area 47-year-old ordinance. One of our board members is chairing this committee, which is comprised of individuals with a variety of perspectives. The deadline for a new ordinance is March 2019.

#### **IN SUMMARY:**

Our lakes remain in the top 10% of water quality in the State of Wisconsin. We need everyone’s continued engagement to maintain this standard. We sincerely thank everyone in the community who has volunteered time and money toward our noble purpose.

As we embark on a new year please keep the following in mind:

- Your willingness to volunteer on committees and efforts is critical, now more than ever. Please consider adding a few more hours and engaging a friend/neighbor to help.
- Your creativity and energy to implement ideas are crucial. Good ideas are everywhere.
- Your tax deductible membership and donation to Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area are necessary to sustain our efforts. Consider giving a little more if possible.
- Community engagement, civic involvement and keeping yourself factually informed are critical.

Thank you for reading this letter. If you have questions or ideas, please send an email to [eauclairefriends@gmail.com](mailto:eauclairefriends@gmail.com).

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