

Winchester Town Lakes Committee

Library Community Room and Zoom

April 22nd, 2026 at 9:00 am

Meeting chaired by Steve Budnik due to Gary Engstrom being unable to attend in person.

Attending; Steve Budnik, Gary Engstrom (Zoom) , Joe Discianno, Town Liaison, Katie Hein (Zoom), Paul Lewandoski, Nancy Russell, Darrell Smith, Tim Douglas, Brian Schumaker, Glen Wildenberg, Bill Schein, Arlene Kellett and Deb Silvis.

1. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion to approve made by Brian Schumaker, seconded by Gary Engstrom.

3. **Presentation by Gina Laliberte of the Wisconsin DNR:** Cyanobacteria (aka Blue-green Algae) and Other Algae: An Introduction to the Basics for Winchester Town Lakes.

Gina leads response and communication on cyanobacterial bloom issues as the Statewide Harmful Algal Bloom Coordinator for the WDNR. She has a BS in Biology and a MS in Resource Ecology Management from the University of Michigan. She has studied algae for over 30 years.

- Gina shared the information from her presentation and included numerous additional resources on this topic.
- Cyanobacteria (CB) is also known as blue green algae. There are a variety of types of CB and they grow everywhere although usually are present in low levels.
- Term algae bloom is used when the level of bacteria is at a nuisance level, often looking like spilled paint or pea soup.
- There are 2 kinds; planktonic (which floats) and benthic (which is bottom dwelling) and these can be a variety of colors.
- There are look alikes, but one can do a jar test or a stick test to differentiate CB.
- CB can occur in large lakes with high nutrient levels, shallow areas and areas of low wind. Fall turnover can also cause CB blooms.
- Climate change is contributing to more blooms because of more frequent intense rain events. Wisconsin is getting wetter overall and warmer. With

warmer winters, the growing season for CB is extended with shorter ice duration.

- CB produces toxins which can be ingested, inhaled or affect skin. Treat any bloom with caution, common sense and protect kids and pets.
- People should also practice keeping nutrients (**N**itrogen & **P**hosphorous) out of waterways. This can be done by runoff prevention, lawn care practices, landscaping and presence of functional septic systems. Use of fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides and salt should be reduced or stopped.

- 4. Approval of the Minutes of the January 28th, 2026 meeting.** Motion to approve made by Gary Engstrom, seconded by Tim Douglas.
- 5. Financial Report:** no change. Gary will review aspects with John Grimmer and staff of NLDC.
- 6. Report from Town Board:** Joe Discianno, Town Chairman shared information and answered questions regarding VRBO's, the power project along W, the town electors meeting last night, the town brush site being open increased hours in May to assist residents with spring yard cleanup, road projects for this year, internet improvements and the pursuit of disaster relief funds related to the big storms this winter.
- 7. North Lakeland Discovery Center (NLDC) 2026 Projects Update:** Steve Budnik reported on the NLDC Projects as summarized by Abby Vogt in a written summary.
 - The NLDC Woods and Waters Conference is April 24th and people can still sign up to attend.
 - One year remaining on the Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) control grant for Harris Lake.
 - Grant awarded for Circle Lily Lake to complete a Point-Intercept (PI) survey, community mapping survey, AIS surveys and education/outreach.
 - Grant awarded for Helen/Adelaide to complete PI surveys, community mapping surveys, purple loosestrife surveys and education/outreach.
 - Grant awarded for Pardee Lake to complete PI survey, community mapping survey, yellow iris monitoring and purple loosestrife monitoring.
 - Reports on the North Turtle and South Turtle PI studies and mapping have been issued, Rock Lake to follow shortly. These have been distributed to the committee and are available on the Town Website.
- 8. Old Business:** Lake User Guides. Are in finalized form. Gary will have the 11X 14 versions printed and laminated for the Boat Landings. They will be available in May or June.

9. New Business:

The Boating and Water Regulation Ordinance (2018-09) is being updated by Nick Newton and the Planning Committee. Signs will be made for boat landings regarding appropriate use of lakes and landings. The WTLC was asked for input in an email sent to members earlier in the month.

The WDNR is conducting an extensive fisheries survey in the Manitowish Waters (MW) chain. The survey will include Population Surveys (Spring Netting & Electrofishing), Creel Survey (Angler Use & Harvest), and Fall Juvenile Walleye Recruitment Surveys. A fisheries survey was last done in Winchester about 15 years ago on the Turtle chain. Gary will reach out to Lawrence Eslinger, Eric Wegleitner and Mark Love (All WDNR) who are coordinating the MW Survey to see where Winchester is in their current Survey plan.

Proposed speakers for 2026 were reviewed with a few vacancies remaining. Jamie VandenLangenberg (WDNR) will update us on Spiney Water Fleas at the May WTLC Meeting.

An update was given regarding Hiawatha Lake by Nancy Russell, which is a 36 acre lake having 33 property owners with 15 full-time residents. The lake association has an annual meeting in June and a newsletter. Fishery is predominately panfish/bass.

Let Gary and Steve know if there are any potential changes to committee representatives or contact information.

10. Items from the floor: None

11. Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Darrell Smith and seconded by Brian Schumaker .

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Silvis

Acting Secretary