

WAUPACA CHAIN O'LAKES ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 169, King, WI 54946

www.waupacachainolakesassociation.com

chainolakesassociation@gmail.com



Dedicated to preserving these unique spring-fed lakes and their surrounding environment for present and for future generations of residents and visitors.



SPRING 2024

RAISING RICE

by Friends of Hartman Creek State Park

The Upper Chain O'Lakes used to be abundant with wild rice along the shoreline, especially in the lakes of Manomin, Pope and Knight. Over thousands of years, these glacial lakes built up a thick layer of mud along shorelines, just the right base for wild rice. The Menomonee people developed a trusted and honored tradition of gathering this vital food source, calling themselves the good grain people or Manomin.



Wild rice is an ecologically critical annual grain; it isn't a rice, but an aquatic grass with a very nutritious edible grain seed. It grows in gently moving, shallow (0.5 to 3 feet) water. Because it is an annual plant, it needs to reseed itself from previous years' growth. *If there are no seeds, there will be no wild rice.*

Wild rice in our area is considered an essential keystone species, supporting biodiversity in the lakes. In the fall of 2022, Friends of Hartman Creek State Park and a few adjoining property owners purchased native wild rice seeds. Following the advice received from University of Wisconsin biologists, they scattered seeds around 32 vital locations on the Upper Chain O'Lakes. Prep work included removing non-native cattails from the proposed bed spots by cutting them a few inches below water level, eliminating their source of oxygen. In the fall of 2023, the Waupaca Chain O'Lakes Association donated additional funds, and seeds were again scattered along the shorelines.

Time will not be turned back. Indeed not, but a gentle hand can restore a plant that plays a special role. These newly sown seeds will rest a good three months under ice cover. As the stronger sun warms the waters, tentative green shoots will appear, just in time for fish spawning and frog romance. Greens will be eaten by muskrats, ducks, and geese. Seed heads will be harvested by native birds and migrants alike. As the plants surrender to the cycle of cold waters and dim sunlight, seeds rest in their muddy nursery, ready to sprout upon the warmth of spring; a little bit of balance will have been restored.



Association Board Member Julie Mazzoleni and Lake District Chair Fred Silloway scatter wild rice seed in fall 2023.

CHAIN O'LAKES ASSOCIATION NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM SHARON

Greetings!

In last year's Spring 2023 newsletter, we were excited to introduce the Association's newly restructured committees along with their proposed ideas. Enthusiasm was high but over time anxious moments crept in as we wondered if our volunteers had taken on too much. From boater safety classes, native plantings, youth fishing derby, providing rentals with lake map information, to a life jacket loaner board the phrase "stronger together" would definitely describe the past year.

With the support of our community partners, we worked together to involve youth, promote safety, and become better stewards of the lakes. Through our email blasts and within this newsletter you'll see examples of a concerted community effort to promote healthy lakes and opportunities for everyone to enjoy safe recreational activities. Enthusiasm is still high and it is also catching. We appreciate everyone's support and there's always the open invitation to join in. The current talk is let's expand on what we've got going and what's next!

Best-

Sharon Peterson

President

"Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites."

William Ruckelshaus

ASSOCIATION EMAIL BLASTS

Submitting your email on the annual membership form (if you haven't done so in the past) assures you of getting electronic notifications of news around the Chain. These periodic email alerts will give you quick updates on the Lake District activities, educational opportunities, township and DNR news. Association committees use this form of communication to make you aware of fishing activities, native gardening, projects with the DNR and other governmental partnerships we are involved in.

MEMBERSHIP FORMS

For your convenience, the enclosed membership forms have been personalized to include your membership information and directory information for publication in the Who's Hoo. Kindly review the information for accuracy and indicate any changes on the form and return in the envelope provided. The form also lets you know whether your membership is up for renewal this year or in a future year. If your membership form says "Your dues are paid in full" any checks sent to the Association will be considered a charitable contribution for the year in which they are given and the amount will not be applied to extend the length of the membership.

Please circle any information, other than mailing addresses, you do not wish to have included in the Who's Hoo.

REMINDER – INCIDENT REPORTING. Members are getting used to using the incident reporting feature on the Association website when they witness an unlawful or unsafe activity on the Chain. Get as much information as you can in terms of registration numbers, boat brand, color or other identifying features and write it down. Go to <https://www.waupacachainolakesassociation.com> and click on the box on the top right of the home page. Record your situation on the form. The purpose is to provide law enforcement with a record of what occurs when water patrol may not be in the area at the time of the incident.

LAKES DISTRICT UPDATE

by Chair, Fred Silloway

The Waupaca Chain O' Lake District (WCOLD) is an independent governmental body that can levy taxes, accept grants, and state aid to monitor water quality and treat aquatic plants, among other powers. A Lake District works cooperatively with other governmental bodies and private organizations on boating law enforcement, safety, personal property protection, erosion control, managing invasive species, and other programs critical to the lake or watershed.

Our partners include several units of the WI DNR, the Waupaca Sheriff's Office, Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Waupaca County Land and Water Conservation, Waupaca County Parks and Recreation, The Citizens Advisory Committee, The Towns of Dayton and Farmington, and the Chain O' Lakes Association. We also work closely with the Stratton, Spencer, Shadow, and Mirror Lakes organizations.

The Lake District represents 803 properties, of which 312 are in Dayton and 491 in Farmington. Our annual tax budget is \$30,000, approximately \$40 per \$500k assessed value.

In 2022, the WCOLD conducted a Lake Load Capacity/Recreational Impacts Study to measure how lakes on the Waupaca Chain O' Lakes are used for recreational purposes. Study observations included the number, type, and activity of watercraft, access points, availability of parking, and identifying environmental damage and threats to safety, personal property, and lake bottom and shoreline erosion. Recreational carrying capacity is "the amount of development and activity a body of water can handle before it starts to deteriorate." Lakes have Ecological, Safety, and Social carrying capacity limits.

What is the number of watercraft that can simultaneously operate on the lake without:

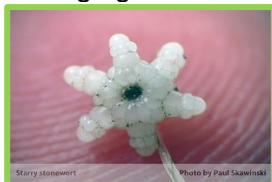
- Causing environmental harm to the resource
- Compromising user safety
- Causing significant user displacement or dissatisfaction

Such understanding may lead to recommending/establishing parameters to guide future decisions regarding the District's support for expanded access, potential regulations, and resource allocation.

The Lake District plans on updating the Study in 2024.

Additional plans for 2024 include conducting aquatic plant surveys to document populations on the Upper Chain and the possible hand removal of larger clusters of Curly Pondweed on Pope and Knight Lakes. Based on the results of the District's treatment of Hybrid Eurasian Milfoil on Dake and Long Lakes in June of 2023, we expect minimal chemical treatments to be required in 2024, which is excellent news. The Lake District aims to control HWM without unintended collateral damage to desirable adjacent native vegetation. Healthy native vegetation competes with the invasives and offers a (natural) level of control against further spread.

In 2023, we continued monitoring new invasive algae detected at four locations in Miner Lake. "Starry Stonewort" is a dense macro-alga that can out-compete desirable vegetation. August surveys indicated that one bed died, and another in the southern corner appeared to have grown. In addition to using a point-intercept rake fullness methodology, a drone was used to video the size and density from above. This was particularly helpful in educating the nearby property owners. Working with the WI DNR, we continue developing a strategy for managing SSW. The photo below depicts the "star" shaped part of the algae.

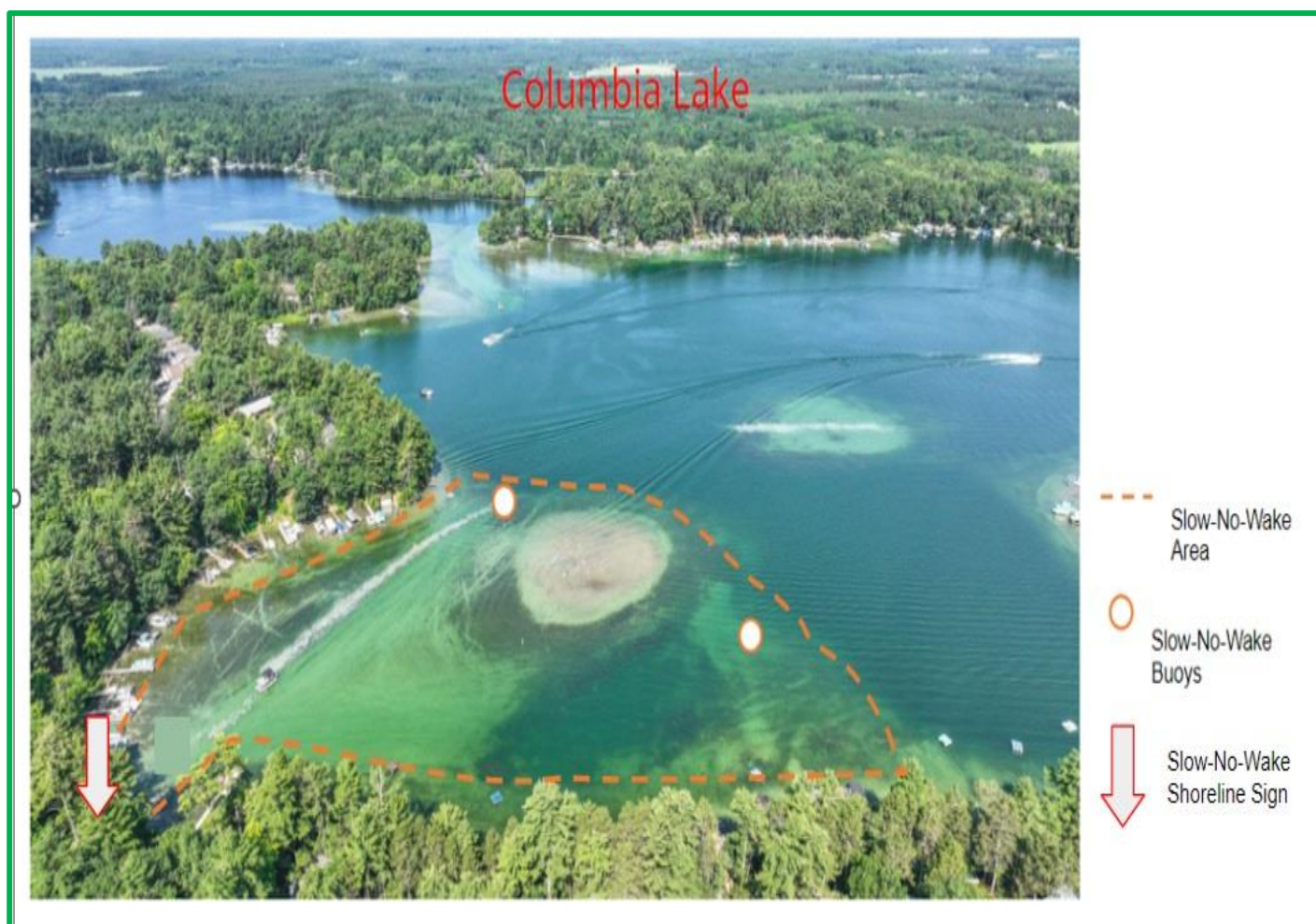


Both starry stonewort photos by Paul Skawinski

2024 will bring another summer promoting Clean Boats / Clean Waters. CB CW boat inspectors perform boat and trailer checks, hand out informational brochures, and educate boaters on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.

In 2023, our inspector at Taylor Lake contacted nearly 1,100 watercraft, a significant increase over 2022. Funding for this program comes from a collaboration with the Jim and Mary Grist Fund, the Waupaca Chain O'Lakes Association, and the Lake District. Last year, our inspector was 17-year-old Brady R. He'll be heading off to college to become a professional pilot, so we'll soon be taking applications for this summer. You can watch Facebook and future Association email blasts for more details.

Lastly, the Lake District appreciates all our community partners who came together to establish a new Slow-No-Wake zone in the southeast corner of Columbia Lake.



<http://www.waupacachainolakesdistrict.com>

ARTIFICIAL WAKE ENHANCED ACTIVITY

After following the processes required by the DNR, as well as holding public input meetings, The Town of Farmington Board voted 2-1 to approve an ordinance to restrict artificial wake enhancement. Please note that this newsletter went to print in mid-February. The Town had not yet posted the official ordinance on their website. You can check www.farmingtonwi.com for updates.

SAFETY ON THE CHAIN

BE IN THE KNOW WHEN IT COMES TO BOATING RULES

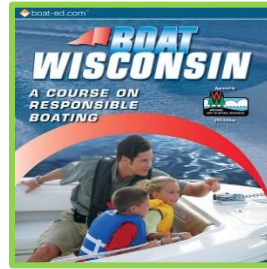
by Carl Nelson

Many of us grew up on the Chain enjoying water skiing and tubing and had little or no issues obeying all the rules and regulations that are current now but originate way back into the 1970's. Over the years, increased weekend and holiday congestion now make for increased challenges for safe and legal boating, especially for water skiing. Here's a short list of negligent or reckless operations and other common violations:

- * Operating in a manner that causes danger to life, limb, or property; weaving through congested waterway traffic; and creating dangerous wake or wave conditions. Boat operators can and have been held liable for injury, damage, and loss of property. Failure to assist a swamped boat is also a serious offense.
- * Exceeding safe and reasonable speeds and distances given waterway traffic, weather, and other boating conditions.
- * Operating REPEATEDLY in a circuitous manner within 200 ft. of another vessel or person in the water. Also, vessels towing skiers & tubers must stay 100ft. or more from any occupied anchored boat, any PWC, any marked swimming area. Ski boats also must obey the distance requirements for all motorized boats that must be at "slow no wake speed" within 100 ft. on any lake, of shoreline, any dock, raft, or pier and must reduce to SNW 100ft. OUT FROM any buoyed restricted area. Note that there's also a special requirement for PWC's to stay 200 ft. from shore or be at SNW speed.

There are also requirements for both PWC's and ski boats towing skiers/tubers to keep 100ft. distance between the other boat, tow rope, and the person being towed.

The water navigation "rules of the road" must be obeyed even when towing skiers. The rules have you skiing counter clockwise but you are also required to YIELD to oncoming traffic coming at you from straight ahead or from your right (starboard) side. If possible, you might be able to slow some and loop to the right around behind that boat. In some situations, the only option is to



slow down and drop your skier, and then when safe, get your skier up and skiing again. As always, courtesy on the water is the first and most important rule.

Learn more at:

<https://www.boat-ed.com/wisconsin/handbook>

KIDS DON'T FLOAT

The Association teamed up with the DNR and the Town of Farmington to provide a Kid's Don't Float loaner life jacket station, located at the Taylor Lake Landing on Otter Lake.



The state Department of Natural Resources, town of Farmington and Waupaca Chain O' Lakes Association have teamed up to provide day-use of life jackets for children and adults. The jackets are located at the Chain's Taylor Lake public boat landing. From left are DNR conservation warden Jonathan Kaiser; town of Farmington chairperson Caroline Murphy; and Rose Spaar and Dan Johnson with the Waupaca Chain O' Lakes Association. Greg Seubert Photos

The DNR provided plans, signage and about 30 red and blue lifejackets ranging in size from infant to XXL. The Association funded the building materials and volunteers built, installed, and will maintain the station.

The program provides free day-use of lifejackets. Boaters need to have the correct number and correct size life jackets for each person. Lots of folks do not have the infant size jacket as kids grow so quickly, but now they can grab one from the station and return it after they are finished boating for the day.

Through an agreement with the Town of Dayton, the Association will be installing another station this summer at the popular landing on Knights Lane which provides access to the Upper Chain.

HEALTHY LAKES GRANTS

by Julie Mazzoleni

Five Association members have been granted 2023/2024 HEALTHY LAKES grants. These grants pay 75% of total project expenses up to \$1,000.00. Here is what has been added to the Chain thus far:

Two rain gardens – helping to absorb water run-off, filtering it before it goes into our lakes keeping lakes clean of pollution.

One diversion project – diverting water run-off from a new driveway so rainwater and snowmelt do not run directly into the lake, instead diverted to an area where it can be safely absorbed into the ground.

Four homeowners were each granted two 350 sq. ft. projects to add native plants which included flowers, shrubs, and trees along their lakeshore properties. Look for these projects on Columbia Lake, Dake Lake, Sunset Lake, Youngs Lake and Miner Lake.

These changes to our land and lakeshore will play key roles in improving our lakes water quality. They provide erosion control and reduce overall maintenance. And let's not forget, they provide

food and habitat for a diverse group of pollinators, birds and other land and aquatic species.

Grants to help you go native

[Let's make Healthy Lakes & Rivers together! - Wisconsin's Healthy Lakes](#)

Waupaca County contact for HEALTHY LAKES GRANT assistance and administration

Dan McFarlane - 715-258-6246

/ daniel.mcfarlane@co.waupaca.wi.us

Taylor Hasz - 715-281-4423

/ taylor.hasz@co.waupaca.wi.us



If you prefer, contact Association Stewardship Committee members (Julie Mazzoleni or Fawn Johnson) who will be happy to answer any questions or help you get started.

IMPROVING FISH HABITAT

by Mark Kunstman

Optimal fish habitat is very limited in certain parts of the Waupaca Chain O' Lakes. For some time now the DNR has been trying to promote a diverse mix of native emergent, floating, and submergent vegetation as well as complex woody habitat known as (Fish Sticks) along the shorelines of lakeshore owners. In 2016 they were able to install fish sticks off state-owned land on the upper chain. They have noted there has been an improvement in fish habitat, along with turtles, frogs, and birds. The board members of the Association and the DNR have been working on such a project on the lower chain.

In the summer of 2023, the DNR shocked around Beasley and Long Lake Peninsula to assess the habitat and found decent numbers of bluegills, bass, and crappies in Beasley but not much on the Long Lake side. Other than weed cover, depth, and a little bit of overhead cover from woody vegetation there wasn't that much habitat on either side of the peninsula. Later in the summer the DNR fisheries biologist snorkeled along the peninsula to look at the underwater habitat and determined what areas needed woody habitat (fish sticks). The project is in the approval stages and was slated for this winter if enough ice formed for vehicle traffic. The DNR will be responsible for permitting as well as coordinating with the landowners.

The Waupaca Chain O' Lakes supports a moderate – high density largemouth bass population. Catch rates of large-mouth bass have been consistent through time, indicating a stable population. Growth rates of walleyes in the Waupaca Chain are some of the fastest in the state of Wisconsin, with walleyes reaching 18 inches in approximately 3 years and 20+ inches in 4 – 5 years. Despite intense stocking efforts over the last 20 years, densities of walleyes in the Waupaca Chain O' Lakes remain low due to water clarity as walleyes prefer darker stained water.

SHERIFF'S REPORT

Sergeant Dan Lewinski of the Waupaca County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity for the summer of 2023

The water patrol unit worked a total of 666 hours of patrol for the boating season during the summer of 2023. We issued 38 citations and 62 written warnings, including 3 operating while intoxicated incidents. During patrol we completed 78 Compliance and Safety Checks and assisted 21 vessel(s) or person(s). Once again, this past summer proved to be a safe boating season as there were no reportable accidents. We look forward to the warm weather and another boating season upcoming in 2024. As always, we encourage safe boating by following regulations so everyone can enjoy what a wonderful natural resource we have in the Waupaca Area.

Waupaca County Sheriff non-emergency (715) 258-4466

WI DNR Tips/Violations (800) 847-9367

2023 REAL ESTATE UPDATE

By Joe Udoni, Udoni & Salan Realty Group, Waupaca

The Real Estate market on the Chain O' Lakes continues to demonstrate steady and solid growth in value even though the overall number of transactions has been lower than in previous years. The 2023 sales number totaled 13 sales with a price range between \$460,000 and \$2.2 million.

The average sales price for 2023 was \$1.164 million. The average cost per square foot, including the land has increased to \$557 per square foot, while the days on market dropped to 42. Total sales volume was \$15,133,553 million.

By comparison, the averages for the 2022 sales season totaled 8 homes sold, price ranged from \$450,000 to \$980,000 with an average value per square foot of \$473 per square foot, including the land, and average days on market was 111. Total sales volume was \$5,620,000 million.

All these market averages indicate a strong market while managing lower than normal available listings to choose from. When there are more property options for buyers to consider, the total sale numbers should increase as many buyers are ready to purchase but have become more patient to find the right fit for their lifestyle needs before purchasing this type of investment. As we begin the 2024 season on the Chain O' Lakes, there are currently 6 properties available with 2 currently under contract. There have also been 2 sales so far in 2024. So we are off to a great start.

The attraction for the Chain O' Lakes lifestyle continues to draw demand from the surrounding metropolitan areas of Wisconsin, along with the Chicagoland and Minnesota markets, in addition to other areas of the country. The natural beauty of Waupaca and the Chain O'Lakes remains a unique experience for many visitors and continues to draw interest from buyers each year. Our efforts to protect our treasured resource and increase the attractions in the surrounding areas of Waupaca should help to preserve this unique lifestyle option for families to enjoy for years to come.

Do you know the history of the "Candy Cottages" on Long Lake? They have historical significance and vacationers can recall their families renting them when they were kids. If YOU have a cottage/home or property with historical background or significance, large or small, we'd love to hear from you. The Association along with the Waupaca Historical Society is working to preserve our Chain O'Lakes cultural and historical heritage. We need your help! Sharing historical information ensures that the knowledge about our Chain is not lost over time. Historical information can be fragile and easily lost if not documented and shared. Please feel free to reach out to Association member Julie Mazzoleni or the Waupaca Historical Society.

2024 ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Association By-Laws state that election of Directors shall take place at the Annual Meeting and that the Board shall nominate candidates to fill Board vacancies. As of this printing, nominees for the 2024-2027 term are: Jan Behnke, Peggy Jesion, Sharon Peterson and Rose Spaar. Any five Association members may nominate an additional candidate by submitting a written nomination to the Executive Secretary before May 8th. If nominations are contested, candidate names will appear on ballots provided at the Annual Meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING DATES 2024

Dayton Township	Tuesday, April 16, 6:00 pm	Dayton Town Hall
Farmington Township	Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 pm	Farmington Town Hall
Chairperson's Appreciation Breakfast	Saturday, May 18, 8:30 am	Par 4 Resort Dining Room
Association	Saturday, June 22, 9:00 am	Camp Cleghorn Chapel, Camp Road
Lake District	Saturday, August 10, 9:00 am	Town of Farmington

ASSOCIATION BOARD: Jan Behnke, Barry Gill, Peggy Jesion (Vice President and Executive Secretary), Fawn Johnson, Mark Kunstman, Julie Mazzoleni, Carl Nelson, Sharon Peterson (President), Rose Spaar (Secretary), and Susan G. Walla (Treasurer).

CONSIDER A CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ASSOCIATION

The Association has a tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization; you may want to consider making a tax-deductible charitable contribution in addition to your continued tax-deductible membership support.

Thank you to our newsletter contributors: Peggy Jesion, Mark Kunstman, Dan Lewinski, Julie Mazzoleni, , Carl Nelson, Sharon Peterson, Fred Silloway, Joe Udoni and Friends of Hartman Creek.

Reminder about the green road signs managed by the Association: Your membership form includes an area at the bottom for notifying us of changes to your green arrow. Sign listings can be either: 1) last name only; 2) one initial and a last name; or 3) two last names separated by a /. No nicknames please. For cost efficiencies, we place an early spring order, a mid- summer order and the final order of the year in late fall.



WE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO HONOR THE LATE JOHN HEBBRING, ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBER AND BUILDER OF THE GREEN ROAD SIGNS. AS WE DID LAST YEAR, WE ASK THAT YOU BRING A CAN OR TWO OF A NON-PERISHABLE ITEM, OR A MONETARY DONATION TO THE ANNUAL MEETING. WE WILL GATHER AND TAKE THEM TO THE FOOD PANTRY



Photo courtesy of Mark Burns, who scuba dives on Marl Lake