

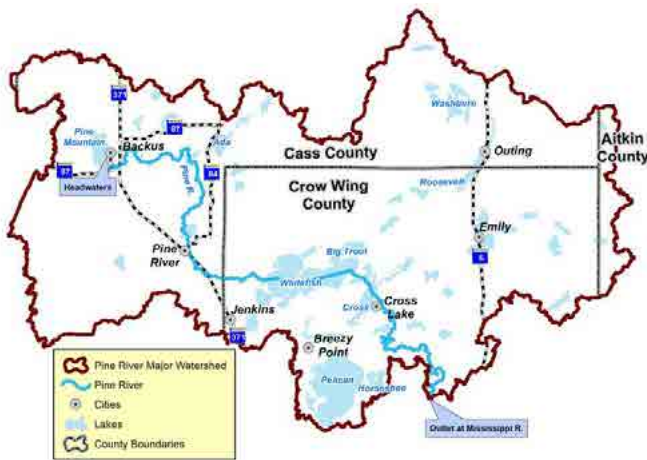


# NEWSLETTER

## COMMENTS FROM **The Chair** October, 2021

A communication process is happening even with COVID that is allowing us to move forward on Pine River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. As we are working with Lake Associations on their Lake Improvement Projects, we have noted one critical item. Present improvement projects contribute to reduction of phosphorus, but we need other steps in reducing larger amounts of phosphorus from coming into our lakes. Although the work on lake shore protection, stormwater and sustainable land management have benefits and need to be continued, most lakes have a larger impact from nutrient loading coming from their watershed.

Nutrient loading comes both from new sources and residual, which has been deposited in the watershed over hundreds of years. This residual resides in the wetlands and water that end up in our lakes. As we work the 1W1P (One Watershed One Plan) efforts it has become clear that we need to have bigger wins in the reduction of pounds of phosphorus from the system rather than just focusing on new sources.



The Pine River Watershed is approximately 783 square miles, 500,855 acres & 523 lakes, with a total acreage of 69,831 acres!

Over the years I have learned about two methods for the removal of phosphorus. One is filtering water with a medium which captures the phosphorus and the other is the removal of sediment containing phosphorus from a wetland. Both have been used in Minnesota. The technology of filtering is new, and removal of sediment is very expensive. Bone Lake close to the Cities had one wetland that was causing their lake to turn green. Comfort Watershed District Forest Lake completed a feasibility on Bone Lake. The feasibility study determined that the wetlands adjacent to the lake contained Phosphorus-rich sediment from the northern portion of a wetland directly adjacent to Bone Lake. The history indicated the wetland had received direct runoff from an old Dairy Farm.



Project efforts in 2018.

Link to the feasibility study: [http://www.clfldw.org/documents/CLFLWDWMPVolI\\_AmendedApr2018.pdf](http://www.clfldw.org/documents/CLFLWDWMPVolI_AmendedApr2018.pdf) or search on Google: "Volume 1 Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District"

They cleaned up the wetland and replanted it and did an alum treatment of the Lake with a price tag of \$1.6 Million. It worked to reduce the Lake to below impaired status.

Even though removal is expensive, and filtering is not yet a main stream technique, we believe we need to investigate the options we may have and get some proposals. Partner organizations to The PRWA will pursue price quotes from consultants regarding this type of work. The Crow Wing SWCD Board and the 1W1P Policy committee will review these options. Once quotes are received partners will discuss possible funding options. We simply need larger projects with significant reductions in phosphorus to get ahead of the nutrient loading curve and meet our 1W1P goals. These efforts will create some very interesting times.

Even when you are fighting the good fight to protect our beautiful area it does cost money. We will see what making significant removal of phosphorus will potentially cost. It is no different with the operating expenses of PRWA. Our administrative expenses have climbed. The need for Administrative, Website and Financial services have driven this up.

PRWA has been blessed with tremendous financial support from a rather small membership when you consider the watershed has 17,000 residents. Also, the inability I have had to add Board members has had the effect that we need to contract for services.

I hope our membership will continue its support of us and I ask for help in two areas. First, please help us find new Board members. Working at a watershed level is a difficult concept to picture. Protecting your lake, which you can see out your window, is easier to grasp. But the reason we have a watershed organization is we realized it is the greatest impactor to maintaining healthy lakes. Second, please help build our general membership by talking to your friends and neighbors.

Ron Meyer  
Board Chair  
Pine River Watershed Alliance



# The National Loon Center Begins Loon Banding Project

Natasha Bartolotta | Communications and Outreach Coordinator National Loon Center

Photo courtesy of The Loon Banding Project.

For most, summer is about leisurely days on the lake. But for National Loon Center Scientist Dr. Walter Piper and his team of researchers, it's all business. The National Loon Center engaged Dr. Piper to initiate a scientific study of loons in Minnesota starting in May 2021. Dr. Piper's team began by surveying the Whitefish Chain of Lakes near Crosslake, Minnesota for breeding loon pairs. They found 48 on the Chain alone! Their surveying efforts continued with smaller lakes adjacent to Whitefish, including Ossawinamakee, Roosevelt, Eagle, Emily, Big Pine, East and West Fox, and Sibley. By late July, Piper and his team already established a study area of 106 loon territories and had banded 78 loons, including adults and chicks.



Fundamental to Piper's work is placing unique colored band combinations on the loons. The color bands, which the loons themselves ignore, allow researchers to identify the birds as individuals, since loons look virtually identical. Piper's team can get a great deal of information from these marked birds. Careful tracking of banded individuals tells us scientific stories about where loons wander locally, where they return to year after year, and where they spend the winter. Most critically, resighting of marked birds over several years allows Piper to estimate the annual survival rate of adult loons.

By joining forces with the National Loon Center, Piper will continue a study of marked loons that he initially began in Wisconsin in 1993. Studying the loon population throughout the Upper Midwest is essential because Piper discovered a year ago that Wisconsin's adult loon population is declining and producing fewer and smaller chicks. Minnesota is proud to be home to the largest population of loons in the lower 48 states. However, scientists have

insufficient data to determine whether this population is decreasing like Wisconsin's or holding steady. Our commitment to intensive scientific field research now will help us better understand the lives of our state bird and, we hope, ensure a bright future for this iconic national symbol.

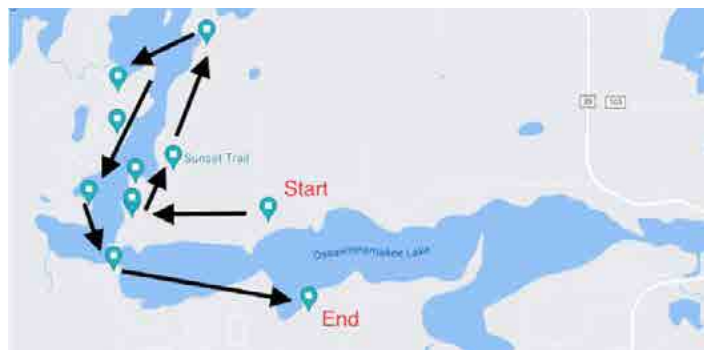
By partnering with the National Loon Center and chairing its Scientific Loon Council, Dr. Piper will be able to share cutting edge loon science in real time to the Crosslake community and beyond. The National Loon Center is making progress on an interactive and family-friendly educational destination opening in 2024 where visitors will transform into champions for loons and freshwater everywhere. Before then, remember to keep an eye out next spring and summer for banded loons out on the lakes. With some practice, one can see the leg bands while loons are swimming or cleaning their feathers. As with all wildlife, keep a respectful and safe distance. It's best to look for banded loons with binoculars or a high-quality zoom camera. Share your loon sightings with the National Loon Center and stay informed on our loon research by visiting [www.nationallooncenter.org](http://www.nationallooncenter.org).

## Recognizing Area Lake Associations *Creatively Showcasing Shoreline Projects*

Gull Chain of Lakes Association created a Lake Steward program to engage property owners with a survey, tips on protecting the lakes, and awarding yard signs to the properties that serve as great examples. The program was started by Dorothy Whitmer and continues to recognize more lakeshore owners each year. Learn more about it at [www.gcola.org/lake-stewards-program](http://www.gcola.org/lake-stewards-program).

In 2021, Dorothy partnered with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers ([www.mlr.org](http://www.mlr.org)) to launch the program statewide. They have shared the survey and the concept with associations all over the state. The first recipient of the MLR lake steward award was Llyod and Ingrid Thyen on Lawrence Lake in Case County.

Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association (RALALA at [www.ralalalakes.org](http://www.ralalalakes.org)) hosted a shoreline tour. The parade of properties showed how to filter rainwater, manage runoff, stabilize slopes and shorelines, prevent erosion, and create a buffer zone to manage stormwater. Anne Bonnerup curated information about each property and a folder was provided to everyone that registered for the tour. An on-line version of the tour was created for those that were unable to attend in person.



Lake Ossawinamakee hosted a "Love Your Lake" shoreline survey and tour. The self-guided tour featured eleven properties that demonstrated landscaping that contributes to lake health. A Google map was created to guide the boats around the lake. A photo and description of each property was created and hosted in a website [www.lakeossie.blogspot.com](http://www.lakeossie.blogspot.com). Jodi Eberhardt created the survey, website, and organized the tour.

The watershed highlighted stories about each of these programs in local newspapers and on our new blog site. Read more about these great examples of stewardship and tips on protecting water quality at [www.loveyourlake.info](http://www.loveyourlake.info). The site is a partnership with Land and Waters Foundation.

Visit <https://www.landandwaters.org/post/lake-ossie-hosts-love-your-lake-landscape-tour>

# The Pine River One Watershed One Plan Update

Sheila Boldt | Crow Wing SWCD Technician

Although in-person social interaction was put on hold in 2020, project progress behind-the-scenes has continued in 2021. Within the forestry goal, eight forest stewardship plans totaling 732 acres are complete. Permanently protected conservation easements are also being implemented, with four applications submitted, totaling 281 acres or 9,102 feet of shoreline. Shoreline restoration site visits & projects were plentiful within the watershed. Two were completely installed (see images) and there is a waiting list of 18 landowners who would like project cost-share in 2022. There are also agricultural projects such as cover crop, fencing, a water system and a waste pit closure. In 2021, our staff attended meetings with Lower Hay & Pelican Lake Association to discuss their lake plan implementation, as well as additional coordination with other lakes in the watershed for future project planning and coordination. We appreciate the effort led by local organizations, individual landowners and superb contractors assisting with implementation of our universal goals.



Funds for these projects are provided in part by the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment through the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

For more information visit: [crowwing.us/1476/Pine-River-1W1P](http://crowwing.us/1476/Pine-River-1W1P)



**1 Watershed 1 Plan — Before & After** on a private landowner's shoreline on Lower Hay Lake in Pine River, MN. Site visit conducted by CW SWCD & Prairie Restoration installed the coir logs & plants.



**Pine River Watershed Comprehensive Plan – Before & After** on Roosevelt Lake in Outing, MN. RALALA chose site, coordinated partners & helped with watering during the summer drought of 2021. A general site visit and summary was conducted by CW SWCD. Prairie Restoration prepped, installed, and maintains the project.



**SMALL GRANTS!**



**SHORELINE EROSION? • PLANTING NATIVE FLOWERS? • REQUIRE A STORMWATER PLAN? • APPLY: [www.prwa.us](http://www.prwa.us)**

Up to **\$15,000 of grants** to be awarded for proposals that fit one or more of the following priorities:

- Enhance and protect surface and aquifer water quality in the Pine River Watershed.

- Support sustainable riparian land management practices.
- Protect habitat for native plants and animals.

**Application period is Dec 1, 2021–Mar 1, 2022**

**Questions?** Contact Barb at [barbqt@aol.com](mailto:barbqt@aol.com)

## Hollister Family Farm Awarded, Area VIII Outstanding Conservationist



Abe Hollister and family members in their sustainably grazed pasture.

The Hollister Family will be recognized on Tuesday December 14th, 2021, in Bloomington, MN at The Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Annual Convention. They have been a soil health and sustainable farming advocate for over a decade in Crow Wing County. More recently, they are sharing their experience to individual farmers in the Pine River Watershed. The program was developed to ensure best management practices are being utilized and understood by fellow farm operators. Farmer-farmer style outreach has been a successful tool and The

Hollister Family has been an inspiration to dozens of other landowners within The Pine River and surrounding Watersheds. Their dedication and enthusiasm to our region are recognized and appreciated. For more information about this event please visit:

[https://www.maswcd.org/Annual\\_Convention/annual\\_convention.htm](https://www.maswcd.org/Annual_Convention/annual_convention.htm)

### UPCOMING 2022 EVENTS:

**Back to Basics:** Classes January 22–February 25th

**Vendor Fair:** Saturday, May 21 at The Lakes Music & Events Park in Pine River

**Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council:** January 20th at CLC, Staples Campus

**Grassland 2.0 Kickoff:** January 28th, location TBD

For updates on these & other local events visit, [www.prwa.us](http://www.prwa.us) or [www.facebook.com/theprwa](http://www.facebook.com/theprwa)

## Current Lake Association Members of PRWA:

- Clamshell-Bertha
- Friends of Lower Hay
- Kimble Lake Homeowners Association
- Lake Hattie Association
- Lake Washburn Association
- Pelican Lakes Association (PLA)
- Portage Chain of Lakes Association
- Roosevelt & Lawrence Area Lake Association (RALALA)
- Upper Hay Lake Association
- Whitefish Area Property Owners Association (WAPOA)

*Please reference The PRWA website or Facebook Page to view The 2021 PRWA Accomplishments.*

Find & Like Us on

**facebook**

@theprwa

## Why We Love It Here!

Years ago, a survey was done to ask local residents what is important to them. The largest response was the aesthetics of the area, it is beautiful. The quality of the environment is also dependent on a vibrant healthy community.

There are a lot of volunteer organizations who work to keep this place beautiful. PRWA, WAPOA, Lake Associations, Northern Waters Land Trust and many more work to protect the environment. Besides these organizations keeping this area beautiful there are organizations who build the fabric of the community.

There is a ton of activity in the city of Crosslake both on protecting the lakes and building a more vibrant community. There is a small group called the Ideal Community Service Organization (ICSO) which I only know about because my wife is involved in it. Over the last year they have donated nearly \$25,000, \$16,500 to local food shelves, and the rest to support local schools and organizations on their projects. Also, through their Foundation they provide college scholarships for local High School students. These small organizations are the fabric of a healthy community.

Loving it here is great. Keeping it great and a place we love requires you to learn about your community and organizations. Support them or even better join them and contribute your expertise. We know things will change. The direction of the change is up to us.



Redosier Dogwood Shrub & Honeybee near local lake, by Stacey Paulbeck (2019 CW SWCD Photo Contest Entry).

## Agricultural Project Updates

Jim Chamberlin | PRWA Board Member



Photo courtesy of Sustainable Farming Association (SFA) [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org).

Over the last year through the combined efforts of Pine River Watershed Alliance (PRWA), Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Happy Dancing Turtle (HDT), we've supported farmers in planting 200 acres of cover crops, converting 25 acres of row crop to perennial cover, and installing infrastructure to allow cattle to winter further from water resources. Looking forward, these partners will be supported by the University

of Wisconsin as a learning hub through the Grassland 2.0 project. Learning Hubs are place-based focal points of activity that support two-way communication and co-learning between the Grassland 2.0 project and the local region and people. Local Learning Hubs will gain access to the expertise and resources of Grassland 2.0 to support local agriculture and food systems that support farm profitability, community vitality and environmental quality. Please join us in support of local farmers, and clean water.



Photo by Jim Chamberlin, PRWA Board Member.



### Become a member. Donate. It all helps.

The Pine River Watershed Alliance is supported by grants, memberships, and contributions from residents and friends of the watershed, not by tax money. Your membership and gifts will help protect area land, lakes, rivers and streams for future generations. *Thank you!*

**NEW!!! Online Membership is now available!** [prwa.us/shop](http://prwa.us/shop).  
Find membership and donation information at: [prwa.us](http://prwa.us)