Chetek Lakes Protection Association

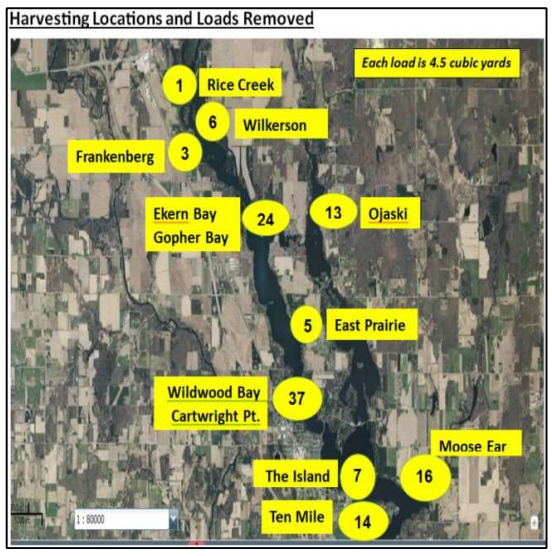
Fall Newsletter 2025

PO Box 916, Chetek, WI 54728
715-256-7650
info@cheteklakespa.org

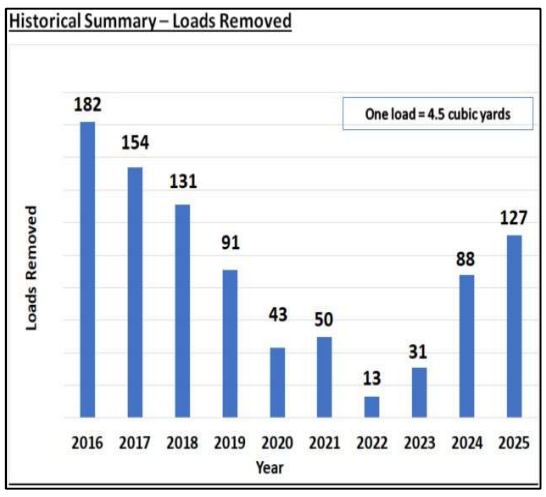
2025 Skimmer Operations Update

Lake weeds were unusually heavy again this year throughout the chain. Many believe it was the result of last winter's minimal snow cover which allowed more light to reach the lake bottom starting growth earlier in the spring. We began harvesting in early June and ran a three day per week schedule through mid-August.

As shown on the map, along with the traditionally weedy areas, there was a slight decrease in growth in the northern and southern areas with increases in the mid sections of the lakes. With more widespread weed coverage, we needed to strictly adhere to our primary mission of clearing navigation channels to allow property-owners and visitors to get their boats out to the main lakes.



During our 11-week season, 570 cubic yards of weeds were harvested, the equivalent of about 48 dump truck loads. As shown in the graph, from 2016 through 2019 we saw a year-over-year reduction in the amount of material removed, leveling out from 2020 to 2023. 2024 and 2025 are again indicating an increase. All material removed is composted and recycled to be used as fertile planting mix.



Equipment operating, maintenance costs, labor and permitting for this program is totally funded through donations and volunteers. No tax or grant money is used. This year we had 2, 3 or 4 man volunteer teams on the water 23 days logging 337 man-hours of labor. A big "thank you" to everyone who donated their time and support for this program. Our single largest limiting factor is manpower. Anyone interested in making a donation, volunteering some time or just learning more about the process can contact us at info@cheteklakespa.org. If curious there are videos of the process at our website: cheteklakespa.org.

Lake Monitoring

We expanded our monitoring coverage of the Chetek Chain this year by adding two more monitoring teams. Six monitoring teams now monitor 7 sites on the chain. As part of the Wisconsin Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, CLPA volunteers measure water clarity and collect temperature and dissolved oxygen data. We purchased 5 new dissolved oxygen measurement devices this year to facilitate the expansion of our monitoring efforts.



An example of data collected at Ten Mile Lake over the last 2 years show a Dissolved Oxygen level of 13.25 in 2025 vs 11.82 in 2024. This is a slight improvement from 2024; however, there are many variables including wind conditions, rainfall or drought, and overall weather patterns. Monitoring over a longer period will reveal more meaningful trends.

FY2025 Board Members:

President…..Jamey Lideen
Vice President…..Gary Luepke
Governance Officer...Sue Schmitz
Treasurer…..Greg Steele
Membership…..Nancy Nix

Directors

Mark Spliethoff
John Flor
Greg Gray

Weed Skimmer Operations:
skimmer@cheteklakespa.org
Membership/Treasurer:
treasurer@cheteklakespa.org
General Inquiries:
info@cheteklakespa.org

Education and Outreach

Signage: This summer, our volunteers installed a new Welcome sign on Hwy SS, just north of Chetek. Partnered with our Chetek Welcome Center sign and all our boat landing signs, it proudly shares our theme: "Protek Chetek – Protect & Enjoy Our Lakes."



Also, this past year we updated the popular "Chetek Chain of Lakes Map" by providing QR codes at all public boat ramps for easy digital access. This high-resolution map is designed to be especially useful when viewing on your mobile device.



Healthy Lakes and Rivers Grant Projects

The CLPA did not start any new projects in 2025 but we'd like to reach out to anyone who might want to apply for a project grant for next year. The projects are designed to reduce runoff and improve shoreline health. This runoff is a leading cause of the green waters we enjoy each summer.

The Wisconsin DNR covers 75% of the cost of 5 approved project types (Fish Sticks, Native Plantings, Diversions of Stormwater runoff, Rock Filtration, and Rain Gardens) for up to $1,000 per project. The property owner is responsible for at least 25% of the cost; however, volunteer work by the CLPA and the property owners can offset the cost. Multiple projects can result in multiple grants. For example, if you have two 350 square foot native planting projects, you may qualify for two $1,000 grants.

If you are interested in learning more about Healthy Lakes and Rivers Projects, contact the CLPA if you are interested in discussing a project.

Thank You to our Annual Sponsors

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Helping to Fund Our Efforts

Friends of the Lakes (FOL): In addition to our annual memberships, becoming a FOL is a wonderful way for you or your organization to be recognized for your generous donation. We proudly feature close to 100 FOL contributors on our website.

Memorial Tributes: Memorial Tributes offer a heartfelt way for family and friends to donate in memory of a loved one who cherished our Six Lakes community. These tributes are updated throughout the year and remain on our website indefinitely.

Sponsorship and Commercial Grants Since launching our Sponsorship Program in 2022, we have received over $25,000 from more than fifteen sponsors to support our lake preservation initiatives. We also appreciate the Premier Level support from Lake County Marina, Wolf Pack Charities, and the Parker Hannifin Foundations.

We're also pleased to welcome Wieckowicz Law Firm as a new sponsor this year. Please join us in thanking and supporting all of our sponsors — their commitment makes a real difference for our lakes.

Working Together Across the Red Cedar Watershed

The Red Cedar River Watershed
Division of Extension

Phosphorus levels in the Red Cedar River are declining, in large part due to farming practices aimed at decreasing runoff from farmland. This includes over 11,000 lbs. of phosphorus kept out of water bodies in 2024 due to the cost-share programs that help farmers pay for new soil health practices that also improve water quality. Additionally, lake groups are working hard to address local issues at their lakes, and counties and agencies are helping others to address runoff/water quality issues on farms and other managed lands. According to the 2024 Annual Report from the Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership, these and other activities are all helping to successfully address water quality issues in the Red Cedar Basin, and reduce algae levels within the entire watershed.

The Red Cedar Watershed Partnership includes representatives from local, state and federal agencies, private business, lake associations, UW-Stout, UW-Extension, and others. The CLPA works directly with these groups to assist in meeting watershed goals, sharing information, and synchronizing with the other Red Cedar groups to improve the water-quality of the Red Cedar Watershed.

Recent Accomplishments Include:

- Phosphorus effluent goals continuing to be met by wastewater treatment plants in the watershed.
- UW-Stout providing research and assistance through their LAKES-REU program, as well as other research and data collection done by University faculty and students.
- Lake Associations and Districts organizing and implementing efforts to address local issues such as invasive species, and providing educational materials for lake users and residents.
- Numerous grants awarded through DNR to address runoff and pollution issues in many parts of the watershed.
- Testing for phosphorus in farm fields to determine how best management practices affect how much phosphorus stays close to the surface or how much it infiltrates into the soil.
- Other activities and partners are listed in the Annual Report which can be found at the Red Cedar River Watershed website, under the "Maps and Publications" page.

Membership Update

We welcomed 22 new memberships this past year, for a total of 550 property owners with family or business memberships. If we can continue to expand our membership, we will also expand our voice with local resources and agencies!

Getting CLPA Emails?

If you haven't received any CLPA emails this year, please update your email with us! We have about 50 email addresses in our system that are no longer valid. We don't want you to miss a thing in 2026, so please let us know if you're not getting our emails!

2025-2026 Member Renewal

Reminder: It's not too late to pay your 2025-2026 member dues or make a donation. We are setup to receive electronic payments from your credit/debit card, PayPal, or Venmo! Secure payments can be made by going to the CLPA website, or scanning one of these QR codes from your smart phone's camera:

PayPal or Credit/Debit Cards:

venmo

You can also pay member dues with this form and mail a check to the CLPA:

******Chetek Lakes Protection Association MEMBERSHIP FORM******

CLPA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your tax deductible dues help to fund projects for our lakes.

Name:

Mailing Address:

City/State/Zip Code:

Phone: Email:

Membership Level: ☐ Individual $15 ☐ Family $20 ☐ Business $30 ☐ Friends of the Lake $125

Additional Target Donations:

☐ Skimmer $_____ ☐ Fish Sticks $_____ ☐ Landing Signage $_____ ☐ General Fund $_____

Interest in Volunteering: ☐ Skimmer ☐ Clean Boat Inspection ☐ Lake Water Sampling ☐ Board of Directors

Please mail form to: CLPA Treasurer, PO Box 916, Chetek, WI 54728

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