

Presentation to Town of Barnes “Adapting to High Water Trends to Protect our Lakes”  
Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area  
December 15, 2020

The Eau Claire Lakes are designated an “Outstanding Resource Waters” by the WDNR. Less than 1% of Wisconsin lakes have this designation. This outstanding water quality is what draws us to live and recreate here and support the local economy. We all desire to keep our lakes pristine for generations to come.

FOECLA’s mission is: “To protect, preserve and improve the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the Eau Claire Lakes Area watershed, including the lakes, rivers, shorelands, wetlands, forests and attendant wildlife resources.”

FOECLA and the Town have worked well together in the past to protect our lakes. We collaborated to establish the Town’s AIS Committee and our volunteers were a driving force behind the construction of the BAISS boat. FOECLA has pledged \$2,500 towards the Town’s recent DNR AIS grant application. We would like to expand our efforts to work with you to protect our valuable lakes and lake properties.

In recent years, the Eau Claire Lakes Area has experienced powerful storms that produced a lot of rain in short periods of time. As a result, our lake levels have risen quickly before receding slowly. Some landlocked lakes have remained high. High water levels make our shorelines more vulnerable to erosion, either from normal wave action or manmade turbulence. Erosion in turn can negatively impact shoreline habitats and overall lake water quality; this in turn impacts the fishery and recreational use.

High water in our lakes is a state-wide issue. The publication “Lake Tides” Fall/Winter (UW Stevens Point College of Natural Resources) contains two articles discussing high water and what some are doing to address it. You may access the article on the worldwide web at: [www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/resources/newsletter/default.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/resources/newsletter/default.aspx)

FOECLA in the past year solicited responses from area lakeshore owners in regard to high water and erosion. We received many responses, including photographs of shoreline erosion that has been exacerbated by high water (many of those photos are attached to this document.) In response to the concerns expressed by our members, we decided to look into what can be done. At our 2020 annual meeting, the educational component was a presentation by Andy Teal, Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Department. Andy made a fine presentation on what can be done to protect our shorelines. FOECLA has applied for a Healthy Lakes Grant from the state of Wisconsin; we are hopeful that through this grant we can help property owners install shoreline protection measures.

When water is high in our lakes, shorelines are subject to greater erosion. The amount of rain is out of our control. One of the things we can control is how we operate watercraft during these high water periods. With the Town’s support, we would propose a plan to minimize watercraft erosion when water is high. This plan would consist of two parts: 1) education and 2) voluntary slow-no-wake during periods of high water. This plan would include:

1. Distribute educational information to the public about shoreline erosion and the need to protect our shorelines.
2. Establish staff gauges in specific lakes so we can generate a history of lake levels.

Presentation to Town of Barnes "Adapting to High Water Trends to Protect our Lakes"  
Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area  
December 15, 2020

3. Develop a no-wake trigger level via consensus building. Similarly develop a lake level trigger when the no-wake condition should be removed.
4. In the event of a large rainfall event and a particular lake level reaches the trigger point, FOECLA would post the condition at public access points and on FOECLA's website, FOECLA would send out an email blast via Constant Contact to our more than 500 subscribers. Hopefully, the Town would agree to post something on its website and area businesses would post as well. Boater compliance with the temporary slow-no-wake condition would be voluntary. Many governmental units in the state have adopted no-wake ordinances to temporarily control watercraft wakes, but we feel education and voluntary compliance will be better received here.

We are asking for the Town's support as noted below:

1. Agreement with and support of the concept and plan for temporary voluntary high water slow-no-wake.
2. Participation in establishing the lake "trigger" levels.
3. Support in the notification of high water temporary slow-no-wake on the Town website.
4. Permission to install staff gauges on Township lake structures/bridges so the lake levels can be monitored.



