

*Eau Claire Lakes Conservation Club
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Eau Claire Lakes Conservation Club Newsletter 2016

The Eau Claire Lakes Conservation Club would like to inform you of last year's accomplishments and some of our plans for the upcoming year. Formed over 60 years ago, the **Eau Claire Lakes Conservation Club (ECLCC) organizes and completes projects to preserve, protect, and promote the land and water of the Eau Claire Lakes area.** The club encourages participation and suggestions for new projects by offering suggestions when you return the membership/donation form or by contacting any of our officers or members. Interested area residents and seasonal visitors are invited to attend our monthly meetings held the third Monday of each month April through October at the VFW.

Once again, we start our 2016 newsletter by thanking all the active members for their effort on projects and all the people who support us financially through their memberships/donations. We could not do what we do without all of your support.

2015 Projects

- A permanent sign for watercraft inspections was installed at the Lower Eau Claire landing to replace the portable sign.
- The "Kids Don't Float" project on the Middle Eau Claire Lake seems to be a great success so we plan to build another for the Lower Eau Claire Lake this year. This life-jacket storage station will feature a few modifications on the roof design. The Upper Eau Claire Lake will get a life-jacket storage station in 2017.
- Firearms/Archery Shooter Fair was cancelled for lack of interest and, at this time, we're not sure another will be scheduled for 2016.
- Because we have received a number of requests for bat houses from those who missed out on the first two building projects, we built more bat houses this past fall. If you requested a bat house, you can pick it up at the Norma J. Stone Conservation Club Building next to the Town Hall on Saturday, May 28, between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. We built extra bat houses, so even if you did not request one and have not gotten one from our previous builds, you can stop by for one at that time. If you cannot pick up your bat house on May 28, contact Ron Jansen to make other arrangements.
- We continue to look into the declining walleye population in our area lakes. Even though we have tried stocking, that does not seem to be a viable solution as it is very expensive with minimal success. We have learned that the mortality rate of stocked extended length walleye is 80% while that of naturally hatched walleye is much lower, meaning more natural-hatched walleye survive. Because of the higher survival rate of natural-hatched walleye, we are exploring ways to improve spawning habitat for natural reproduction. One possibility is bringing back gravel spawning areas on the Eau Claire River between the Upper Eau Claire Lake and the Middle Eau Claire Lake, which can be done by placing log wing dams along the river to help wash the sand off gravel areas. For a better understanding of how this works, please see our article in the November 2015 Barnes Blog. As we continue to research the options for habitat improvement, we welcome your ideas and encourage you to join our club.

Ongoing Projects supported by ECLCC

- ECLCC plans to continue to fund and provide club member labor for the “sticks in the water” projects, as winter ice conditions permit and trees become available. A number of locations have been identified on the Upper Eau Claire Lake as suitable sites, and new shoreline locations are needed for future “sticks” projects on other area lakes. Contact Scott Toshner at the DNR office in Brule if you have a shoreline site that could be used for a “sticks in the water” habitat.
- Maintain and fund the Barnes rifle and archery range located off County Road N. The heavily used range requires regular clean up and target repairs, work done by ECLCC members throughout the year. The ECLCC provides financing for the materials needed for range upkeep.
- Maintain loon-nesting platforms on area lakes. This year we had a successful hatch on the Upper Eau Claire Lake platform.
- Place and remove the shallow water warning buoys on the Middle Eau Claire Lake.
- Donate to events and organizations in line with the club’s mission. Visit the Drummond library to check out some of the nature/conservation related books and materials purchased with ECLCC donations. This year, 2 trail cameras were purchased for patrons’ use. Check out one of these cameras to see what wildlife visits you at night.
- Assist with the cost of swimming lessons when classes are offered.
- Support students seeking post-secondary education in conservation-related fields by providing a \$500 scholarship.
- Maintain and monitor Smokey Bear Safety / Fire Danger signs located on town roads. Please remember that burning permits are required. NOTE: It is important to have your written and signed **annual burning permit** available while burning and follow all restrictions listed on both sides of the permit. You can also call **1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876) for Daily Restrictions or visit this DNR Web site for all burning permit information.** <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/>

If you utilize the pontoon trailer rental, please note that we have raised the rental rate:

\$25 for 4 hours and \$50 for 8 hours. These fees cover the costs of parts and the person hired to maintain the trailers. The trailers are stored at the Webb Realty Office on Hwy N in Barnes, across from the Trading Post. If you have any questions relative to trailer rental, call Ron Jansen, 795-2389. Rental fees can be paid by placing the money in the slot provided at the Webb Realty Office or at the Trading Post. If you damage a trailer, we ask that you estimate what the repairs might cost and make an additional donation to cover those repairs. Also, please let Ron Jansen know of repairs that need to be made. With your help we can keep the fees for pontoon trailers as low as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual newsletter. This club continues to thrive because of the involvement of community members and property owners, the membership dues and donations received from them.

To become more involved, please contact club members or attend the regular monthly meetings of the club. The meetings are held on the third Monday of the month, April thru October, at the Barnes VFW starting at 7:00 p.m. New members are needed and welcome.

