NEWSLETTER

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14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

2026 State of Our Lakes -Recap

State of Our Lakes Recap – 2026

Another successful State of Our Lakes was held at the Rome Town Hall on Saturday, June 6th. The seventh annual event was co-sponsored by the Town of Rome, Tri-Lakes Management District, LCPOA, LSPOA, Visit Rome and, of course, our organization – 14 Mile Watershed Alliance. If you joined us, **thank you** for taking time

out of your weekend and for your **attentiveness** throughout the educational presentations! We hope you also took the opportunity to visit the exhibitors' booths, enjoy lunch and try for a chance at a door prize, raffle basket or bid at the silent auction. Our goal each year is to share knowledge and updates of the lakes we all love so much and want to preserve and improve water quality for future generations. **All of us can help to achieve lasting changes!**

Here's a Recap of the Presentations:

Anne Wilkinson, a water resources engineer and limnologist at EOR, Inc – Anne first discussed the difference between good algae and the cyanobacteria which under the right conditions leads to blue-green algae. Then, she provided an update on the ongoing water testing of the three lakes which began in 2024. That first year established base test information prior to the 2025 implementation of nanobubblers. Tests included vegetation surveys, sediment surveys, grab samples and monitoring buoys. The rollout of the nanobubblers last year was limited by the number of units approved by DNR as well as other factors that resulted in an incomplete summer's worth of employed units. The testing confirmed that there were no adverse effects to the lakes from this technology. Expectations for 2026 are that with more units implemented earlier in the season, more data will be available to provide a better picture of the overall effect of nanobubblers. View the presentation HERE.

Jennifer Bergman, Senior Fisheries Biologist with WDNR – Jennifer gave us an overview of fish surveys and the sampling techniques that have now been completed on each of our three lakes. The surveys document the population of fish by size and abundance as well as age, weight and sex. Game fish are marked with a clip. Results included:

- **Walleyes** – the population is 1.5 per acre. There is no natural reproduction so their continued presence depends on stocking.
- **Bass** – they are very abundant, but she would like to see an increase in the population that is over 14".
- **Bluegills** – in an effort to increase numbers of the 8"+ population, there has been reduced harvest restrictions on the lakes.

The next survey period is scheduled for 2032 – 2033. She also reviewed fishing regulation changes for 2026. Jennifer thanked all the volunteers from each lake who helped with the survey process as well as the ongoing commitment by each lake to stock fish and implement habitat improvements such as fish sticks that have been added to Sherwood over the years and more recently to Arrowhead. View the presentation HERE.

The published DNR reports for Camelot and Arrowhead can be found HERE. The Sherwood report will be published soon and then posted.

Jeremie Pavelski, President of Heartland Farms, Inc – Farming for the Future - As a 5th generation farmer of potatoes and vegetables covering 27,000 acres in the Central Sands, Jeremie shared how Precision Technology is changing agricultural practices. Because information leads to better decisions, 24/7 monitoring of the fields has been implemented so that they can Collect – Analyze – Act and Learn. Weekly tissue samples are taken so that variable rate applications are made. So, instead of broadcasting to an entire field, they can precisely adjust to what the crop actually needs, where it is needed. The remotely-monitored irrigation systems' nozzles can be programmed individually depending on the data collected for that field. Weather is also monitored so that irrigation is not being applied during natural rain events. Aiding in the monitoring process, three drones have been added vs the traditional airplanes used. Cover crops are planted right after harvest to reduce wind erosion, add nutrients to the soil, produce cover and food for animals, and add organic matter to the soil. With these practices, it's very apparent that agriculture is changing and is dedicated to sustainability and best management practices for the long term.

New this year . . . Quick Hit Topics:
Members of the 14 Mile Watershed Alliance shared 3-minutes presentations on the following:

- The **Healthy Lakes Program** provides funding to property owners for shoreline restoration projects. Contact Dave Trudeau (dtrudeau@wctc.net) for more information and assistance in designing a project for your property (he also takes care of the grant paperwork for you!)

- **Biochar 'Socks for Docks' Update** by Pat Rogers – Up to 400 bags will be distributed by 14 Mile Watershed Alliance and by Tri-Lakes. Each bag is installed under a dock and will pull nitrogen and phosphorus from the lake into the bag.

- **14 Mile Recruiting & Donations** – come join us! We're especially looking for skills in graphics, social media, grant writing and education (any retired teachers?) Find more information HERE.

- **Watershed Education** – Programs include this e-newsletter, Rome Farmers Market booth, Programs with Nekoosa High School and a soon-to-be-implemented information packet for recent shoreline owners.

- **2026 Projects in the Watershed** – ongoing water testing, Socks for Docks, a denitrifying bioreactor, field trials of using biochar as a soil amendment, serving

as a collaborator and fiscal agent for the new producer-led Farmers of 14 Mile Creek and several Healthy Lakes projects.

View the Quick Hits presentations HERE.

After the presentations, lunch provided by Lake Sherwood Lodge, Kwik Trip and Party Time Cakes was promptly and efficiently served by the Shermalot Ski Team!

We thank everyone who participated in this year's event!

DONATE

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin.
***See us at** 14milewatershed.org **or** https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed*

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