Lake Redstone Protection Connection

Lake Redstone Protection District • Fall 2008

DNR Habitat Designation Raises Concerns, Questions

Possible classification of portions of Lake Redstone as "Critical Habitat" by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources generated considerable concern throughout 2008, resulting in possible legal action by the LRPD Board.

After two years of study on Lake Redstone, the DNR released a draft report in March, with a tentative determination that 20 near-shore and shallow water areas at Redstone deserved Critical Habitat Designation. The designation is intended to:

- Protect areas within the lake that are most important for preserving the character and qualities of the lake; and
- Preserve the places of special aesthetic beauty for the enjoyment of lake residents and visitors.

Designation of these Critical Habitat features may affect permitting decisions on grading banks, dredging, sand blankets, boat ramps, new or replacement piers, recreational devices such as rafts or trampolines, or shoreline erosion control such as rip rap.

The DNR draft report states that this does not necessarily mean these activities will be prohibited, but they will "…undergo more careful review to ensure that the activity does not adversely affect the critical habitat in the area." The authors add that permit decisions in these designated areas are not expected to change substantially from present reviews.

Nonetheless, many Lake Redstone residents voiced strong concerns over the Critical Habitat Designations at public meetings in LaValle (May 3) and Baraboo (July 24).

Protestations continued at the August 2 LRPD Annual Meeting, where the Board was directed by a 29-12 vote of present electors to seek an injunction to stop the DNR's designation of the 20 Critical Habitat sites in the lake. By a subsequent vote, the District was directed to spend up to $25,000 for legal fees to do so.

Objections to the designation included

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What is "Critical Habitat"?

According to the DNR website, Critical Habitat Designation is a program that recognizes those areas most important to the overall health of aquatic plants and animals, and most vulnerable to impacts from human activity.

Under legislation passed in 2004, the DNR is directed to assess the state's public trust waters to identify "Public Rights Features." Public Rights Features include:

- ***Fish and wildlife habitat;***
- ***Aquatic plants and other physical features that help protect water quality;***
- ***Reaches of bank, shore, or bed which are natural in appearance or that screen man-made or artificial features;***
- ***Navigation thoroughfares or areas traditionally used for navigation; and***
- ***"Sensitive Areas," of aquatic vegetation offering critical or unique fish and wildlife habitat to the body of water.***

An area which includes any Public Rights Features is designated as "Critical Habitat," and is potentially subjected to a more thorough permit review process in order to ensure that projects do not harm these resources.

While Lake Redstone is among the first in Wisconsin to be evaluated under the broader 2004 standards, the DNR website lists 139 lakes with the earlier "Sensitive Areas" designation. "Critical Habitat" areas are currently proposed for another 71 lakes, including Redstone.

For more information on the program, including the draft report on Lake Redstone, visit http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/criticalhabitat/.

Unsung Heroes of the '08 Flood

by Dave Starin, LRPD Vice-Chair

FIVE MONTHS HAVE ELAPSED since the great Redstone flood of 2008, but it still seems fresh in my mind. My personal story is not dissimilar to many of yours, but let me share it, since many heroes were nominated by fate…not the least of which was my wife, Dottie, and several unsung neighbors.

As is my annual duty, on June 6, I left for northern Minnesota to search Lake Vermilion for the biggest smallmouth bass I could find. Mother Nature, "sensing my absence," according to Dottie, decided to bring forth the biggest flood on Lake Redstone that even the oldest pioneers could remember.

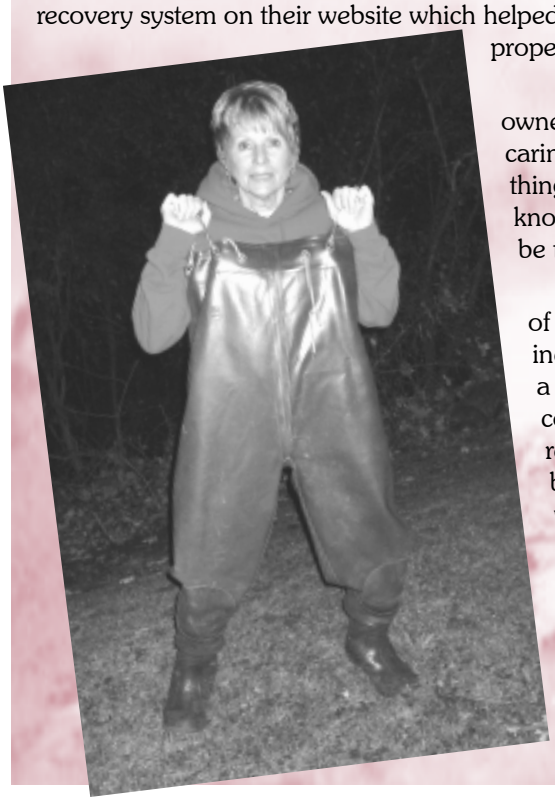
On June 7, under torrential rains, the lake began its 5-½ foot rise. Our pier on Oriole Bay, which had not been under water for more than three years, began to float away as the night-time thunder, lightning, and rain exploded. Dottie, my new Lake Hero, donned my chest waders—which are at least twice her size—and set out to recapture as many of the 28 sections as she could. Soon, neighbors Tom and Dee Happ awakened and, in spite of the awful conditions, waded in to help. In flashes of lightning, they saw ghost pontoons and rafts drifting by, which only made the scene more surreal. Slogging through the shoreline, the team pulled sections ashore and secured boats before retreating to safety for the night.

Not relenting, the rain continued, and by morning the rising waters had swept away the "secured" pier sections a second time. Dottie set off to retrieve them again, mumbling a few pleasantries about my absence, I'm sure! To her relief, neighbor Don Johnson and a friend appeared on a jet ski to save the day and recover everything once again.

Then came her phone call to Minnesota to make me aware of her experience. Noting that the Lake was still rising, she added stories of other volunteers across the Lake helping neighbors with errant piers, boats, rafts, and things nautical that had escaped their shores. Also, word that the dam was being watched for any possible damage and that the roar of water over the spillway could be heard far away.

As I write this, Dottie is at the podiatrist still trying to recover from a torn Achilles heel, pulled loose in my waders that fateful night. I tell her that she is my hero, and she says she still loves me…but I'm sometimes skeptical as she recounts her adventure to new ears.

Weeks after I returned to Wisconsin, I continued to hear of more heroes who helped neighbors and strangers get through the flood. Speaking of which, the Lake Redstone Property Owners Association deserves kudos for the wonderful equipment recovery system on their website which helped many folks recover their missing property.



Looking back on it, we property owners are blessed to be surrounded by caring neighbors who jump in to help when things go wrong. Thanks to all of you, I know that when the next flood comes, we'll be taken care of, whether I'm there or not!

One footnote about the lasting effect of the flood on Lake Redstone: The increased turbidity of the water (on top of a winter where 100 inches of snow covered the ice) prevented sunlight from reaching emerging plant life on the lake bottom. As a result, even after the water quality later recovered, the District did not need to treat for nuisance aquatic plants at all this year. I'm not sure Dottie and her leg fully appreciate it, though.

Best regards and safe holidays to all,

Dave

Lake Redstone
Protection District

Protecting and rehabilitating the water quality of Lake Redstone for its residents and the public.

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Japanese Knotweed a New Threat to Redstone

by Jen Stewart, Sauk County Land Conservation Department

While aquatic invasive species garner a lot of attention, terrestrial invasives can also degrade lake ecosystems, and Lake Redstone residents are encouraged to be on the lookout for the latest invasive plant species found in the area.

Japanese knotweed *(Polygonum cuspidatum)* is a shrub-like perennial that grows in dense thickets from 3 feet to over 10 feet tall. The arching stems are hollow and bamboo-like, reddish-brown to tan in color. Mature leaves are egg- or spade-shaped, 3-5 inches wide and 4-9 inches long, and lighter on the lower surface. Lacy 2-inch long clusters of tiny greenish-white flowers appear in late summer and are held upright at the leaf base.

Sometimes called *Japanese bamboo*, *Japanese fleece-flower*, or *Mexican bamboo*, knotweed spreads primarily via an extensive network of rhizomes (roots that can sprout) which can reach as far as 65 feet from the parent plant and penetrate at least 7 feet into the soil. Especially in wetlands and along shorelines, knotweed can form an impenetrable wall of stems, crowding out native vegetation and leaving banks vulnerable to erosion when it dies after the first hard frost. The dense stands can also limit waterfront access and impact hunting, fishing, birdwatching, and other recreational activities.

In Sauk County, Japanese knotweed has been found escaping from yards when lawn mowing ceased. Mirror Lake State Park is working to control such a site on Fern Dell Road. It is also commonly found along streams and rivers, around unoccupied home sites, and near road ditches.

Introduced into North America in the late 1800s, Japanese knotweed can spread very rapidly, and is extremely difficult to eradicate once it is established. Therefore, it is critical to begin control efforts as soon as a new plant has been spotted. Late fall is a great time to monitor for new colonies by looking for the deep red stems.

Because plants will re-sprout from pieces of stem or root not removed from the site, simply ***cutting or digging the plants is not recommended.***

Instead, chemical control is the most effective method. Plants will be more susceptible to herbicides if they are cut in early summer and then the re-growth is sprayed in late summer with glyphosate (Roundup®) or triclopyr (Garlon® 3A). Cut stems should be burned, or bagged and placed in the garbage. Plan to repeat the treatment for several years—land managers report that multiple treatments are necessary for complete eradication.

If you are not ready to tackle this plant on your own, many land management companies offer services to control invasives species. The Sauk County Land Conservation Department can connect you with these and other resources. Feel free to contact me at (608) 355-3245 or *jstewart@co.sauk.wi.us.*

More detailed information is also available at ***www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives.***

The longer you wait to control Japanese Knotweed, the more expensive it will be to eliminate it in the future. Eradicating a small, localized population is possible and will pay dividends toward maintaining stable, accessible shorelines.

Tom Heutte, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Randy Westbrooks, U.S.G.S, Bugwood.org

These images show the flowering and leaf structure of Japanese knotweed, and its capacity to form dense thickets along shorelines or roadsides.

Where's the Latest Dirt?

runoff and erosion remain two of the biggest challenges for waterfront landowners

Erosion *is caused when soil particles are dislodged by water falling on or running across bare soil or vegetated areas that are unable to handle the force of the flowing water. Erosion problems can be made worse by the increased volumes of stormwater runoff generated by the impervious (non-porous) surfaces we create, such as rooftops, decks, driveways, and paved walkways.*

Eroded soil particles (sediments) can also cause problems when they run off into lakes and streams. For instance, these sediments can clog fish spawning beds, hurting reproduction, and they can bury mussels or wetland plants, eventually killing them. Additionally, eroded soil particles often contain nutrients from fertilizers, and they can contain toxic chemicals, such as pesticides we have applied to the land and oil and anti-freeze from our cars. Erosion can thus lead to property damage, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and reduced water quality and clarity in our lakes and streams.

Runoff *is water from precipitation, rain or melting snow, that flows across the surface of the land. It composes a fraction of the total volume of precipitation that lands on the ground; the remainder seeps into the ground through the soil or evaporates back into the atmosphere with the help of the sun and vegetation.*

Infiltration is the process by which water from precipitation percolates into the ground through the soil, eventually entering the groundwater aquifer and in some cases our lakes and streams. Runoff, often called stormwater runoff when used to refer to the unnaturally large volumes of runoff we create by paving roads and driveways and building structures such as our homes and other buildings, can cause flooding, erosion, water pollution, and property damage, and it can ultimately cause the loss of fish and wildlife habitat and reduced water quality in our lakes and streams.

What can waterfront property owners do?

Enjoying your waterfront property in an environmentally-friendly way does not require you to leave it entirely undeveloped. Rather, by considering the best way to design the development on your property given the special characteristics of the site, by limiting as much as possible the area covered by impervious surfaces, by managing stormwater runoff to minimize its impacts, and by relying on Mother Nature's ability to mitigate some of the potential impacts of runoff and erosion naturally, you can develop your waterfront property in a way that won't harm the lake or stream that brought you there in the first place. All of these things can be considered both in the context of new development on a previously undeveloped waterfront lot and in cases where waterfront property has already been developed or even redeveloped.

Waterfront properties, due to their close proximity and direct connection to surface water bodies, can play an especially important role in both the creation of runoff and erosion and in the control and reduction of both.

Finding Solutions to Control Runoff and Erosion

Site Design: ***Whether you are designing a new home or just a new gazebo or walkway, there are many important things to think about in your project's planning and design stages:***

✔Position your driveway, home, and other structures so they blend into their surroundings and conform to the existing topography to minimize both environmental and aesthetic impacts.

✔Keep structures and other impervious surfaces away from steep slopes, wetlands, natural drainageways, and shorelines as much as possible to minimize potential impacts on surface waters from runoff and erosion.

✔Think about ways to reduce impervious surface areas in the design phase of your project.

✔Consider ways to control runoff and erosion problems during your project's construction.

✔What stormwater management techniques might be incorporated into the design at this early stage so they won't have to be retrofitted later?

✔Are there areas on your property that ought to be buffered from development impacts? Make sure to retain significant naturally vegetated buffers around those areas.

Limiting Impervious Surfaces: ***Since almost all runoff originates on an impervious surface of one kind or another, minimizing the area covered by these surfaces is an important early step in minimizing runoff, erosion, and the host of problems they can cause.***

✔Wherever possible, replace impervious surfaces with permeable designs aimed at achieving the same purposes.

✔To maintain or enhance infiltration and prevent or reduce runoff, minimize the areas to be compacted by heavy equipment during construction on your property or restore with native vegetation any areas on your property that were compacted by past activities.

✔Because of lawns' relatively poor ability to foster infiltration, minimize mowed areas of your property as much as possible and maintain or restore native vegetation in those areas (this is especially important in close proximity to a lake or stream shoreline, on steep slopes, or near wetlands and natural drainageways).

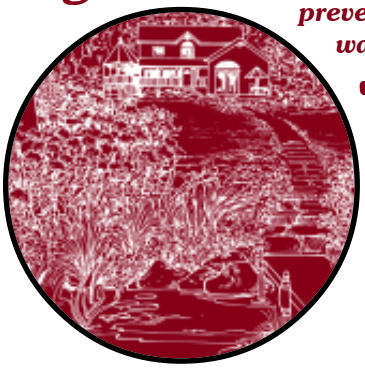
Stormwater Management: ***Consider how to go about managing the stormwater runoff that will (or already does) result from the development on your property.***

✔Attempt to infiltrate stormwater runoff as much as possible so that the groundwater continues to be recharged as it was prior to development. Rain gardens and infiltration wells and trenches are effective infiltration techniques around the home. In some cases, one may need to construct diversionary structures to move runoff from where it is created to where it can be managed.

✔If infiltration is not feasible due to soil characteristics or other constraints, implement practices to store and treat stormwater and release it slowly over time (to reduce flooding, excessive runoff, and erosion problems while minimizing potential water quality impacts). Rain barrels and detention basins are two good techniques suited for these purposes.

✔Direct rooftop and other runoff to more pervious areas such as yards, grass swales, or other vegetated areas and avoid routing rooftop runoff to the roadway or the storm sewer system.

Vegetated Buffers: ***Among their many other benefits, buffers can serve as a last line of defense to prevent runoff, sediments, and pollutants from reaching our water bodies and diminishing water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.***



✔Maintain or restore vegetated buffers along shoreline areas, wetlands, natural drainageways, and steep slopes on your property.

✔Make sure that your buffers are not compromised by runoff or erosion from your property or adjacent properties. If necessary, take corrective actions to both stem existing problems and restore the benefits of your buffer.

Adapted from Controlling Runoff and Erosion, *by Ezra Meyer and Susan Tesarik, Wisconsin Association of Lakes, August 2003. Available through University of Wisconsin-Extension at* ***www.uwex.edu/ces/shoreland/modules.htm.***

History of Lake Redstone--Part II

...and the Rains Came

The following account of the development of Lake Redstone is reprinted from the July, 1978 edition of Redstone Views, *published by the Lake Redstone Property Owners Association. Part I, "Cobleigh Valley Revisited," appeared in the spring* Protection Connection.

WHILE RESEARCHING THIS BIT OF HISTORY at the Reedsburg Library, I discovered most of the actual construction work was done by Reuben Heidrich, a life-long resident of LaValle Township. The Reedsburg Times Press files were pretty dusty and sparse, so I asked Mr. Heidrich about a little of the "before and after."

When I questioned the existence of a school in the area, he grinned and said he was a student there. Maple Grove was a pretty spartan school; water was trucked in, and on cold, winter mornings the teacher had to walk over early to get the fire started in the old stove. She was given quarters in a nearby farmhouse.

Mr. Heidrich vividly recalled the new teacher when he was a second grader. She marched in with a hand full of 3 foot rulers the first morning. He was curious about them, but said it didn't take long before he found out what they were for! Some of his second-grade days were spent watching the new, deep well being drilled for the school. Then the older kids took turns pumping the water and carrying it in to the water jug in the corner. When the LaValle-Ironton School was completed, Maple Grove School closed its doors, and the property was sold at auction...it is now Lakeview Lounge.

The dam was nearing completion when a real "gully-washer" hit on March 4th, 1965. The frost was still deep and the sudden run-off took 5000 yards of dirt from the dam with it. Mr. Isaacson was not one to watch his dream go down the Baraboo River, so he went to work refinancing the project through a new corporation. May 20th, Branigar Corp. of Ill., completed the transaction and it was now Lake Redstone Development Corp., with Mr. "Ike" as Vice President and General Manager. Being second in command meant some of his ideas were nullified.

The dam was repaired and, as the take began filling, County Trunk F went under water. It was relocated in August. Then came still more rain, and after a "shower" of 5.85 inches, Mr. Ike came out on Sept. 23rd to check on the dam at 3:30 a.m. . . .the first lesson had been learned and the dam held! Now Mr. Heidrich's work was dozing out and grading roads around the lake while the corporation laid out property lines for 1,571 lots.

In March, '66, the Times Press contained an article about a proposed ski chalet on Ski Hill. It was to be tri-level with the top floor for skiers, mid-section a supper club and the lower level a club room for golfers and boaters. A 9-hole golf course was planned, with another 9 to be added later. A riding stable and bridle path was included in the lay-out. A hearing was to be held on the application for a liquor license, but no more was heard in later editions and Mount Redstone has since become private land.

In early spring, the first 2 cottages were built on what was once the August Diece farm near the old bed of County Trunk F. The first residents here were Richard Stevenson and family.

After a year of record rainfall…over 40 inches!…the lake was advertised as full, and the first water went over the spill-way June 13th, 1966. Gov. Knowles was to officiate at the dedication of the county park, but the event was postponed so many times, it was apparently dropped. A log cabin donated by R. C. Cushman was carefully removed from the threat of rising water, and rebuilt on the Reedsburg Historical Society's farm 3 miles east of the city.

Mr. Isaacson finished his work here and moved on to build a smaller lake in Adams County, and Mr. Heidrich stayed on another year dredging bays and completing roads.

In July of '69, Branigar Corp. prepared to leave their office and conclude the promotion of Redstone property. The future of the lake would be in the hands of the lot owners, and to ensure that future, Branigar filed articles of incorporation for the Property Owner's Assoc. in Madison, Wis. on July 7th. Glenn W. Atkinson, a property holder and employee of Branigar Corp., was the initial registered agent. He and 2 Branigar executives made up the first board of directors. Lot owners were canvassed for 5 more board members to serve till the first annual meeting in April, '70. The "First Five" were John Gerber-pres., Richard Stevenson-vice pres., Donald Marklein-treas., Bernard Marecki-secy., and Glenn Atkinson-member. An organizational meeting

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The view from Oriole lot #44 in May, 1966.
Image courtesy of Sauk County Historical Society (Bayna).

Renewed Hope for Lake Redstone Study

Tom Wagner

The June view from Tuffy's Bay shows the dramatic effect that heavy rains had on Lake Redstone this summer.

by Tom Wagner

The colors and scents of fall are here with winter quickly approaching. Hopefully, everyone enjoyed the beautiful summer at Lake Redstone. It truly was a great summer, once the water receded from yet another 500-year flood the weekend of June 9. Measurements from the bay in which I reside indicated a lake rise of six feet! That's a tremendous amount of water that went over the spillway, and hopefully not taking too many of our fish with it.

In my report last fall, I disappointingly indicated that the annual fish census shocking on Lake Redstone has been curtailed and rescheduled for every eight years due to DNR budget restrictions. The next shocking would therefore be in 2012. I am pleased to report that there is a ray of hope that this revised schedule may be changed.

Tim Larson, our DNR fisheries biologist, wrote me that he is planning to write a project this winter for the DNR two-year work plan. This project would fund a shocking program for Lake Redstone in the fall of both 2009 and 2010 for the purpose of evaluating survival density as fall fingerlings of the spring walleye stocking. Currently, walleye are stocked in Lake Redstone at a rate of 18 fish/acre. Tim has survival rates from previous years comparing 100 fish/acre and 50 fish/acre rates. Those data indicate the same level of fall fingerling survival at either stocking rate, and it will be interesting to learn if this holds true at 18 fish/acre. While shocking for walleye, he will also get a peek at other aspects of the lake fishery.

Let's all hope that Tim's project is approved by the DNR so we can gather information that is so necessary for the future health of the Lake Redstone fishery.

As a sidelight, I wanted to report that I have confirmation from the DNR that the lake did receive the annual allotment of walleye in June, 2008. They also indicated that we have received the biannual stocking of musky in late summer for this year.

The best wishes to all of you for a joyous holiday season and safe winter in our great outdoors. Tight lines!

***History**...continued from page 7*

open to all was held in the Branigar office an the north end of the lake on Aug. 23rd, 1969.

The meeting was well attended, and Fred Willey, a Branigar man, announced a gift of $6000.00 to get the project going. He added they would take over the cost of spraying for algae, work on docks and beaches to run to Sept. '69.

The necessity for lake patrol became evident in short order, and the decision was made to buy a boat, motor, and pump for patrol and spray work. Robert McWilliams became the first patrolman with part of the cost then paid by D.N.R. His authority was sanctioned by the Sauk County Sheriff's Dept., and Dean Oetzman was hired to assist. McWilliams has attended classes and spent many hours studying changing laws and police methods. He is the LaValle Town Constable.

These first board members, like those that followed, gave precious time, effort and interest in coping with present problems and those foreseeable ones likely to crop up in the future. They have had a herculean task always ahead of them, and deserve the support of every property owner.

Now that the scars of construction have healed, the lake has become one of the most beautiful in the county. Each of us bought property here because of that natural beauty. Aye!…but there's the rub!…nature is never constant. There is growth and decay, life and death, and it's up to each of us to maintain that delicate, necessary balance of nature. Work has begun and will require the co-operation of all concerned to preserve the lake.

Take a Stake in Your Lake!

Here are a few simple ways you can help enhance Lake Redstone and protect your property investment:

- ***Establish a rain garden;***
- ***Use low- or no-phosphate detergents;***
- ***Ensure proper maintenance of your septic system;***
- ***Keep hard surface on your property to a minimum;***
- ***Choose zero phosphorus fertilizer or use no fertilizer at all;***
- ***Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes and medicines;***
- ***Protect your property from soil erosion by maintaining shoreline buffers;***
- ***Keep garden refuse, grass clippings, leaves, pet waste, and campfire ashes out of the water;*** *and*
- ***Don't feed the geese.***

You can learn more at:

- ***www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/lakes/***
- ***www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/***
- ***www.wisconsinlakes.org/***

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Mercier Takes Helm as Chair of LRPD Board

The LRPD Board elected Jim Mercier to the position of Chairperson during their monthly meeting in September.

A native of Racine, Mercier and his wife, Marcia, have had a home on Warbler Court since 1987. A member of the LRPD Board since 2004, Jim and his family previously lived in Spring Green for over 30 years, where he served as a firefighter and EMT.

Mercier welcomes concerns and/or comments from other Redstone residents, and also encourages people to help promote wise lake stewardship by serving as a volunteer.

"Living at Redstone is a great privilege, but it's also a large responsibility that we all share to make sure our resource remains healthy for future generations," he said.

Other officers of the Board remained unchanged.

***Critical Habitat**...continued from page 1*

fears that property rights would be compromised, reasonable use of the land would be denied in the permitting process, and that permits would become more costly. Others stated that they have had trouble in the past getting permits and the Critical Habitat Designation would only exacerbate the matter. It was also noted that during its 40-year history, the lake has been successful, and no new rules were needed.

While the 29 electors requesting an injunction represent a small portion of the 1,150 District property owners, the Annual Meeting is the legal Lake District meeting required under Wisconsin statutes. Electors present at the meeting give direction to the LRPD Board and approve the District's budget. Consequently, the District is legally obliged to take action on issues which are properly introduced and approved.

The electors' decision was communicated to the DNR in writing, and meetings with legal counsel were initiated. Assembly Rep. Sheryl Albers, who is retiring from the Legislature in January, supported these actions.

Meanwhile, some Redstone residents, including several members of the Board, oppose pursuing the injunction. Aside from the financial costs involved, they are wary of jeopardizing what has been a good working relationship with the DNR up to this point. The Critical Habitat report, they feel, complements the District's objectives to maintain water quality, enhance the lake's fishery, and preserve its natural beauty.

The DNR indicates that they are in the process of preparing written answers to the comments received from property owners and others during the public meetings. The Critical Habitat designation will not become official until it is published on the DNR website.

Members of the LRPD Board will continue to follow the situation closely, and welcome your questions and comments.