



March 2021

**Friends of Lake Eau Claire  
Lake Eau Claire Association, Inc.**

P.O. Box 229

Augusta, WI 54722

[www.lakeeauclaire.org](http://www.lakeeauclaire.org)

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Lori Bechtel

*What a mild winter Wisconsin has had this year with only one stretch of extreme cold temperatures. I know those that love snowmobiling were sure disappointed with the 2021 season. Now that we've sprung the clocks forward and the days seem longer already, spring is surely right around the corner. Let's all keep our fingers crossed that spring flooding will be kept to a minimum and we have no high-water events on Lake Eau Claire.*

*Now that 2020 is behind us and the hope for things to return to normal, the Friends of Lake Eau Claire is busy planning our 2021 activities. As previously mentioned in past newsletters and meetings, our fundraising efforts declined last year because of things we saw in our every day lives. A lot of our business sponsors were directly impacted by COVID and we sure hope their business returns to normal this year.*

*We have a lot going on including working directly with the Lake District in securing funds/grants to work on projects both on our lake and in the lake watershed areas. We are considering new fundraising ideas all the time because all of the money raised by the "Friends of Lake Eau Claire" (the Lake Association) is put back into the lake on projects that are determined at our board meetings. We take our members suggestions and vote on them to ensure that the most important projects are completed. Our meetings are always open to the public so don't hesitate to attend and offer suggestions and opinions.*

*My request for all of you reading this newsletter is that you join the Friends of Lake Eau Claire membership, if you haven't already. The cost is only \$25 but that small amount helps in so many ways! Please find the membership information later in this newsletter.*

*I'm looking forward to getting out on Lake Eau Claire and seeing you all out enjoying our beautiful lake!*



### Save the date!

Calendar Raffle – In progress now!

Fireworks over Lake Eau Claire – Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>

Golf Outing – Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup>

Annual Picnic & Meeting – Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup>

Gun Raffle – COMING SOON!





## Fireworks Donations

Thank you to everyone that donated to the 2021 fireworks show last year. We are now accepting donations for next year's show. Remember, the fireworks show is 100% funded by donations our members make.

Please consider making a donation to the Lake Eau Claire Association Fireworks Fund & then join us for a great show. Also encourage Friends and Family who attend our annual fireworks show to consider a donation as well!

Donate today at: [www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2022](http://www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/fireworks2022)

## FISHING WISCONSIN 2021-2022 FISHING SEASON DATES

(Effective Date: April 1, 2021; Dates Inclusive)

**Early inland trout** (catch and release)

January 2 (5 a.m.) to April 30

**General inland trout**

May 1 (5 a.m.) to Oct. 15

**General inland fishing**

May 1 to March 6, 2022

**Largemouth bass northern zone harvest**

May 1 to March 6, 2022

**Smallmouth bass northern zone harvest**

June 19 to March 6, 2022

**Large and smallmouth bass southern zone harvest**

May 1 to March 6, 2022

**Large and smallmouth bass catch and release**

At all other times of the year.

**Musky - northern zone**

May 29 to Dec. 31

**Musky - southern zone**

May 1 to Dec. 31

**Northern pike**

May 1 to March 6, 2022

**Walleye**

May 1 to March 6, 2022

**Lake sturgeon**

Sept. 4 to Sept. 30 (hook-and-line)

**Free fishing weekends**

June 5-6, 2021 (summer)

January 15-16, 2022 (winter)

Opening day for Wisconsin fishing is traditionally the first Saturday in May. Hook and line fishing for many fish species on many Wisconsin waters begins on that day. However, to better manage Wisconsin fisheries, season dates are often specific to the species of fish as well as the water body. Check the DNR website for more specifics.



## Are you up for a Challenge?!?!

As a non-profit organization, we are membership driven and rely on those who love Lake Eau Claire to make our lake better! We know there are many who use Lake Eau Claire for various reasons and we believe they would benefit from becoming members! So, our challenge to you... recruit at least **one** new member to join the Friends of Lake Eau Claire.

Think of family, friends, fishing buddy, hunting partner or a anyone who's interested in helping join our efforts to continually improve Lake Eau Claire! Everyone is welcome, you don't need to own a property on the lake to be a member!! Join today: <https://www.memberplanet.com/lakeeauclaireassociation>



**THE ANNUAL LAKE EAU CLAIRE ICE FISHEREE** was held on Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. Organizer Dan Marcheske and team organized another fun, successful event! Unfortunately, the weather did not want to cooperate this year by delivering an extremely cold day. Despite the weather challenges, all 500 holes were sold out which is fantastic.

Friends of Lake Eau Claire would like to thank Dan Marcheske for donating a Vexilar fish finder to the Association to raffle off at the event. Dan also allowed us to sell our calendars and 50/50 tickets. The winner of the 50/50 ticket went home with \$1,600!



Thank you to all of the volunteers that helped the Association raise over \$3,600 that day between the Vexilar fish finder and 50/50 sales. Next year's event is already planned for Saturday, February 5, 2022 so mark your calendar now!



## Lake District Update - Planning for the future

*Mike Lea – District Chairman*

We have made amazing progress on improving our lake over the past few years, but we still have an enthusiastic list of planned projects. The first step to completing most of these projects is applying for grants to help cover our costs, and we have several grant applications in the works.

Last fall, we applied for a DNR Surface Water grant to address the issue of a sand bank in Lost Lake which is eroding and washing into the rookery, forming a large delta. The good news is we were awarded the grant. The bad news is, that due to high competition for funds in this grant cycle, we were only awarded about 60% of the money we requested. We decided to accept the grant and are in the process of applying for another grant as well as looking for other funding options to make up the difference. With luck we will be able to complete this project next fall or the following year.

The big issue on everyone's mind is the sediment problem at the Skid Row boat landing. We have learned through experience that just dredging out the landing is a temporary solution, and the area will fill back in within a couple years. The district, with the help of Rod Zika, has applied for the first of two large grants that would allow us to dredge not only the landing, but also up the river to a point above the eagle's nest, where a permanent trap would be installed. The goal is that by maintaining this upper trap, the landing will stay open, and the channel above will have a chance to scour itself to a navigable depth. We will find out if we are awarded this first grant, which is federal money, this spring, and if we are successful, we will apply for a matching DNR grant in the fall. It sounds like these grants are also extremely competitive, so we are keeping our fingers crossed!

The last grant we are currently working on is related to opening some of the channels in the backwater areas at the east end of the lake. Sediment and downed trees have blocked many of these areas so that they are separated from the main waterway except in periods of high water. The DNR is applying for a lake district sponsored grant which will study the feasibility of removing enough of these blockages to allow water to flow into some of these stagnant areas,

which has the potential to increase fish habitat and to provide access to boating. We are enthusiastic about this project because it could open some areas of the watershed that have not been accessible for years.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped out with these projects. If we are successful in acquiring these grants, we will need some volunteer help to get the projects done so we will keep you updated!

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## Are you interested in being a 2021 Sponsor?



### Muskies and Northerns and Walleyes...Oh My!

Ok, it may not be as catchy (no pun intended) as Lions and Tigers and Bears...Oh My, but it did get you to continue reading the article! Each year, the Friends of Lake Eau Claire is fortunate to have sponsorship from local and regional businesses. In 2020, we had over 30 sponsors (a complete list can be found here: <http://www.lakeeauclaire.org/sponsors>) who donated money or goods in exchange for their sponsorship. Our 2021 sponsors can choose to be a Muskie, Northern, or Walleye sponsor; with each level offering different advertising opportunities. As an example, Muskie Sponsorship includes:

- Annual Golf Outing sponsor recognition on 1 hole
- Newsletter ads equal to ¼ page (our 2021 sponsors will be featured in our next newsletter for the following 12 months)
- Recognition on our website as a Muskie sponsor with a link to your website for one full year
- Logo displayed on large sponsor banner at The Woodland Store which is located next to Lake Eau Claire
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- Annual picnic (August) – 2 entries

Along with the benefits listed, we also work with our sponsors to help cross promote events through our Facebook page, which is great way to grow Facebook followers and generate interest in events!

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The Lake Eau Claire Association thanks you for your support and for your consideration in supporting the water quality improvement projects that affect us all.

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# Muskrat Project COMPLETE!

Back in November, 2020, the Lake Association wanted to donate additional funds to have a dredging company clean out additional sand in front of some of the cottages closest to the Muskrat trap that had lost quite a bit of water access. By removing the sediment in front of those cottages closest to the new trap, we believed it would help to keep clearing out the sand further down the creek. At that time, we believed approximately 2500 to 4000 yards of sand could be removed.

To fund this project, we needed to find donors that were willing to donate money to this much needed project. The Lake Association board had also voted to match donations up to \$14,000. We are so excited to report that we had 33 donors that donated over \$17,500! This is just fantastic! We have such great supporters!

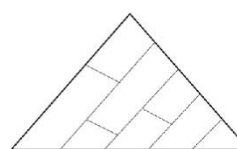
We are also happy to report that the project did recently complete and over 3700 yards of sand were removed.

***THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT DONATED TO THIS PROJECT! We appreciate your generosity and support!***

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## CLEAN CREEKS – by Fred Poss

On November 24 of 2020, the Lake Eau Claire Association (LECA) brought in Doug Tollefson's Dredging service to clean out both of the small creeks on the north side of our lake. The two creeks are known as Beach Creek and Bed Post Creek (the latter being near the north boat landing on ND). The LECA has been providing this work for the improvement of the lake for many years, and while it may seem like an insignificant effort, there is a surprising amount of sediment that is removed. My records, since I started supervising the work, reveal that Beach Creek has yielded about 100 cubic yards of sand each time it is cleaned out, and Bed Post Creek has yielded about 130 cubic yards. Up until two years ago, the LECA also dredged out the old sand trap at the mouth of Hay Creek; however, because of a new method of shaping the bank which Doug Tollefson employed, we have not had to dredge out that trap. This year's cost for the two small creeks amounted to \$1,175 for excavator. We are extremely fortunate to have local governments contribute a day of free trucking to load the sediment and take it to appropriate locations. Special thanks go out to **J & J Excavating Service** operated by **Jason Kaeding** and **Brady Barka**. Both trucking operators provided us with a free truck for our dredging day.



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## Wildlands High School Project – by Kennedy Schroeder

My name is Kennedy Schroeder, and I am a senior at Wildlands High School. Wildlands is a project-based charter school on Beaver Creek Reserve and if you are unfamiliar, this is a 400-acre wilderness reserve located along the Eau Claire River in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. At Wildlands, we have a project-based focus on environmental science, and as a part of this programming, seniors are required to complete some kind of senior project before graduating. These projects are large undertakings and are an accumulation of the senior's experiences throughout high school and are a way for us to give back to the community and leave a lasting legacy. Some examples of these projects include creating a bathymetric pressure map of the bottom of Lake Eau Claire, fundraising and installing a severe weather siren, and launching a weather balloon into low earth orbit.



As an outdoor-focused, project-based school, Wildlands has a complete fleet of canoes, which we use nearly year-round on both front and backcountry trips to teach students how to paddle, fish, and collect aquatic biology samples. One of our favorite stretches to paddle happens to be right in our backyard along the Eau Claire River on the section from the Highway D bridge to the Highway K bridge.

If you are familiar with the current Highway D landing, you know the very steep, eroding concrete that leads to the water is pretty hazardous not only for our students but for anyone who has an interest in launching their own watercraft, as well as just reaching the beautiful beach area. As a result of the danger of using the current landing at the Highway D Bridge, I wanted to resurrect a project started last year to create a new, safer landing for not only our school to enjoy, but for everyone in the community as well.



I have been in contact with Josh Pedersen from the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department regarding the revival of the project and we have a group of students who are very excited about taking on an improvement project at this location because of the benefit for everyone in the community. We are planning to improve an access point across the road from the current landing by adding some durable gravel material and creating a turn-around area large enough for vehicles with trailers.

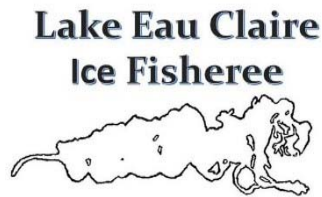
We have received some financial support from both the Lake Eau Claire Association and the Augusta Sportsman Club, and we are still taking donations of any kind! If you are interested in learning more about the project or how you could support it, please contact me at [21kennedyschroeder@wildlandschool.net](mailto:21kennedyschroeder@wildlandschool.net) or at 715-533-3802.

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## Friends of Lake Eau Claire

### 2021 Calendar Raffle –Now Available!

Can you help us sell calendars? We need 200 people that are willing to sell only 10 calendars! If you are able to help, please stop by The Woodland to pick up some calendars or contact Lori at (612) 991-8331 or [lbechtel@comcast.net](mailto:lbechtel@comcast.net) to arrange a drop off. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year!

If you are interested in purchasing a few, many local businesses are selling them. They make great gifts!



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## Annual Golf Event!

Make plans to join us at the 2021 Friends of Lake Eau Claire 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing on Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at Hickory Hills Golf Course in Eau Claire. The tournament is an 18-hole scramble. More details to come soon but mark your calendars now!





## HIGH WATER REMINDER

*It is almost Spring and unfortunately, we've had a number of high-water events on Lake Eau Claire over the past several years. This is a reminder that when the water is high, there is a NO WAKE policy! Please slow down! There are always a number of people not obeying this rule and it is tearing up the shorelines and equipment.*

**PLEASE PASS THIS ALONG TO OTHERS!**

## AGENCY PROVIDES GUIDELINES FOR PROPER DISPOSAL OF "MOSS BALLS"

By Wisconsin Lakes staff

The [WI Department of Natural Resources](#) is urging Wisconsinites to immediately remove and properly dispose of commercially purchased "moss balls" for aquariums after invasive zebra mussels were discovered in balls sold in Wisconsin and across the United States, according to a [March 11, 2021 press release](#).

According to WDNR, the moss balls are sold under names including "**Betta Buddy Marimo Balls**" and "**Marimo Moss Ball Plant Grab N Go.**"

"We are asking all pet stores and related retailers to please inspect and remove all these products from shelves," said **Amy Kretlow, DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Specialist**. "We are also asking any consumers who may have bought any moss ball products in the past month to please inspect and dispose of them properly; do not flush moss balls or contaminated water down toilets or drains."



Zebra mussels are a non-native species that can cause environmental harm. Long established in Lake Michigan and some inland lakes in the Badger state, these tiny critters multiply in the thousands, clogging pipelines used for water infiltration, render beaches unusable, damage boats, and can cause huge negative impacts to aquatic ecosystems.

If moss balls were used in your aquarium, WDNR recommends a three-step disposal process: **Destroy, Dispose, and Drain**:

- **Destroy** the moss ball by freezing, boiling, or submerging it in bleach or undiluted white vinegar
- **Dispose** of the destroyed moss and any of its packaging in a sealed plastic bag in the trash
- **Drain** and clean the aquarium

[Read the DNR press release for more information and specific instructions on destruction and disposal.](#)

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## Lake Eau Claire Association Officers

**President** - Lori Bechtel, E19885 County Road ND, Augusta, WI 54722 612.991.8331 [lbechtel@comcast.net](mailto:lbechtel@comcast.net)

**Vice-President** - Duane Ives, 1505 Centennial Pkwy, Waunakee, WI 53597 608.444.0380 [dewey.ives@gmail.com](mailto:dewey.ives@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** – Joe Vydral, [vydrzalj@gmail.com](mailto:vydrzalj@gmail.com)

**Secretary** – Nate Smith, 715.579.0961 [helpermonkey.smith@gmail.com](mailto:helpermonkey.smith@gmail.com)

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## Lake District Officers

**Chairperson**- Mike Lea 715-286-5423 or 715-225- 8768 [armlea@centurytel.net](mailto:armlea@centurytel.net)

**Secretary**- Joe Bechtel 612-812-0451 [jbechtel8043@gmail.com](mailto:jbechtel8043@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** - Dean Boehne 715-695-3131 [dcbost@tcc.coop](mailto:dcbost@tcc.coop)

**Vice Chair & Commissioner** - Gary Gibson 715-877-2730 or cell:715-210-0401

[gary.gibson@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:gary.gibson@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

**Commissioner** – Bruce Logterman

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# TRASH!

It is a shame to report that we've been seeing an increase in the amount of trash dumped along our beautiful lake roads and in the County Forest and backroads. If you recognize trash dumped, please call the WI DNR tip line (715-839-9367) or the Sheriff (715-839-4972) so they can contact the owner and have it cleaned up. If you are out for a walk and are passionate to keep our area clean, please take a trash bag with you and help us keep our natural resources cleaned up!



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## Nature Notes

### Swans

*By Mike Harden*

Took a ride yesterday down to Rieck's Lake, just North of Alma along highway 35. It was a beautiful early March day at 65 degrees and sunny. Rieck's Lake is a premier birdwatching site near where the Buffalo River meets then Mississippi. I was a little overanxious, I guess, because when we got there, the lake was still frozen over. The main river was open, but there were some diehard ice fishermen fishing on the frozen backwaters of the mighty river. The ice was getting pretty dark and close to being unsafe.

My wife and I were hoping to see some trumpeter swans, or maybe some early-arriving tundra swans, but there were none to be found. We did, however, see eagles, geese, and a couple of pairs of sandhill cranes doing their mating dance in the marsh.

There are three species of swans to be seen in Wisconsin. The first is the mute swan; a species native to Europe and Asia. Brought here by immigrants, this is the species of swan to be seen in parks throughout much of the US. As their name suggests, they are not a very vocal species. In some areas, they are considered invasive and have to be controlled. They are a large bird, reaching up to 26 lbs. They can be identified from the other species by their orange beak.

Most familiar to us here in Eau Claire Co. is the tundra swan. These magnificent birds migrate to their nesting areas on the tundra of northern Canada in the spring. They winter along the east coast in the vicinity of Chesapeake Bay. It so happens that our county lies smack in the middle of the main migration route for these birds. In the spring, their passage through here peaks at about the first week in April, and in the Fall, they come through in November. These birds often stop to rest at our lake in the spring. There is also good viewing to be had at the "wayside pond" along Hwy. 12 between Augusta and Fall Creek (in yrs. when there is enough runoff water.) These birds are magnificent fliers. They can, with a tailwind, reach 50-60 mph, flying at as high as 6000 feet or more, and can cover several hundred miles a day. In flight, they sound like a pack of dogs in the distance, a kind of high-pitched barking. A large bird weighing up to 26 lbs., they can be distinguished from the other species by their black bill, having a small, sometimes hard-to-see yellow spot where the beak meets the eye.

The largest swan, and the largest flying bird in the Americas, is the trumpeter swan. Weighing up to 30 lbs., with a wing span of 6-8 ft, they can be distinguished from the other swans by their call, which is trumpet-like, and their long, flat bill which lacks the yellow spot found on the tundra. Hunted almost to extinction, they were extirpated from Wisconsin by 1880, and by 1930 there were less than 70 known to exist. Through intensive conservation measures, they were saved from the brink, reintroduced to our state in 1989, and now number over 5000 in Wis. alone. They were removed from the Wis. endangered species list in 2009. These birds may hang around all winter, if there is open water. My friend Rick and I have seen them when we were ice fishing on the Red cedar river. They can also be seen along the Mississippi and St. Croix. I am hoping they show up on our lake sometime soon. Good Birding!!



# Are you interested in being a 2021 Sponsor?



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## AN HISTORICAL SIGN FOR LAKE EAU CLAIRE COUNTY PARK

Hello! Did you know our county park on the southwest corner of Lake Eau Claire presents some unique history? It turns out that in the 1930's the federal government created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to help move America out of the depths of the Great Depression. Public works projects like building dams created jobs for the unemployed all over our country, and such was the case for Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire River.

The first dam on the river at the park site was called "The Main River Dam." It was built in 1878 by the Eau Claire Lumber Company to assemble logs for paper milling in Eau Claire. On September 17, 1936, the *Augusta Union* newspaper recorded the completion of a new WPA dam on the site. The dedication ceremonies for the dam were held the following year on August 12, 1937, and commemorated the largest public works project to be completed in Wisconsin. Since then, people both on and off the lake have enjoyed its many benefits.

We happen to think this local piece of history is worthy of some attention. And, like other historical sites, deserves a sign which explains its historical background and significance. With

this in mind, we are forming the Augusta Historical Society. Furthermore, our first goal is to raise enough funds in order to place a sign about the dam west of the park's clubhouse and south of the dam. Our project has received approval by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Questions to Dale Zank (715) 797-4562, Fred Poss at (715) 286-9413 or Randy Stutzman (715) 210-4097



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Good news! AmazonSmile is now available in the Amazon Shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones. You can use the copy and assets below to share the news with your supporters.

*AmazonSmile customers can now support **Lake Eau Claire Association Inc** in the Amazon shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.*

1. *Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device*
2. *Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'*
3. *Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process*

*If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app, update your app. Copy and paste the below link instructions. [smile.amazon.com/ch/39-1775333](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-1775333)*

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**Membership for the Friends of Lake Eau Claire is only \$25 per year.** As you can imagine, the Lake Association has many expenses during the year. Your membership fee helps pay for things like equipment repairs, website hosting and maintenance, postage and other mailing expenses, newsletter printing, and a host of other things. The dues received are put to good use and spent very wisely. In addition to all that the Lake Association provides today, Friends of Lake Eau Claire members will now have the opportunity to be enrolled in a texting service that we can utilize during emergency situations. Given the flooding that occurs often, we believe we need multiple options for notifying people of emergency

situations and important announcements. This service will **ONLY** be available to members who are up-to-date on their membership dues. You can renew your membership or join today by going to the following link, <https://www.memberplanet.com/lakeeauclaireassociation>, click the “Join our group” button and fill out the form to “Create an account”. You can also join by mailing your payment to: Lake Eau Claire Association, PO Box 229, Augusta, WI 54722.

### Lake Eau Claire Membership Dues Renewal/Application

Name:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Email:

Phone:

Annual Membership Dues: circle one

One Year	\$ 25.00	Three Years	\$ 75.00
Two Years	\$ 50.00	Four Years	\$ 100.00

Additional Donation:

Fireworks \$

Lake Rehab \$

Other Donation \$

Total \$

*Note: Donations to the LECA are tax deductible.*

Payment options:

**Member Planet Online Payment Options:**

**Memberships:** You can renew your membership or join today by going to the following link,

<https://www.memberplanet.com/lakeeauclaireassociation>, click the “Join our group” button and fill out the form to “Create an account”.

**Donations:** <https://www.memberplanet.com/campaign/lakeeauclaireassociation/donations>

Mail completed form with check made out to Lake Eau Claire Association to the following address:

Lake Eau Claire Association

Attn: Joe Vydral

PO Box 229

Augusta, Wisconsin 54722 – 0229

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