

Welcome

Hi new neighbor! Welcome to Cochran Lake! We, the residents of Cochran Lake, are happy you have joined us in sharing this wonderful resource. We hope you will enjoy it as much as we do. This handout is designed to provide information which will hopefully, make your life here more enjoyable.

RECENT HISTORY

Cochran Lake is a seepage lake approximately 117 acres in size. Its deepest point is 20 feet with about half the lake being less than 10 feet deep. It has 4 state-owned islands totaling less than 3 acres. It is located in the Northeast corner of Price County, approximately 20 miles east of Park Falls, WI.

Before 1994, the lake residents consisted of 2 homes - a home for the lake owner and a second home for a caretaker (We think his name was Cyrus, thus Cy's Drive). Outside access to the lake was limited by a carry-in boat landing. In 1993 an initial development project of approximately 3/8 of the lake's shoreline resulted in 17 lots being developed and sold. A second development in 1994 around the remaining perimeter of the lake resulted in an additional 47 lots. Today, after consolidation, 60 lots remain ranging in size from 105 feet to 700 feet of shoreline. On the 60 lots are 42 residences. Of the 42 residences, approximately 10 are occupied year round. Most of the residents are seasonal and visit on weekends and typically spend a week or two during the summertime.

The development of Cochran Lake included a special covenant which was created by the Land Developer and attached to each deeded property. The covenant remains in effect and includes details about home building and temporary housing like trailers. We are providing you a copy of the Cochran Lake management District by-laws, it is also on the cochranlake.org website. The overall purpose of the covenant was to maintain the natural beauty of the lake and thus keep property values high.

The rightful name of the lake is Cochran Lake with an "N". At some point a mistake was made by the local government that resulted in the name being changed to Cochram Lake with an "M". If you look closely at your property tax bill, you will see the Cochram Lake name being used. Despite our government's best efforts, residents still call it Cochran Lake.

Like most lakes in northern Wisconsin, Cochran Lake freezes each winter. The average date of ice over is 11/27. The depth of ice ranges from 24-36 inches. The average date of ice out is 4/17. In 2012 an unusually warm and short winter resulted in an ice out date of 3/19.

The lake temperature varies by the time of year. A typical high temperature of 80 degrees is reached in July. The summer of 2012 was also unusually warm. This resulted in the lake reaching a temperature of 88 degrees. The clarity of the lake is very good. It varies inversely to the temperature of the water. Thus the higher the lake temperature the lower the clarity.

During very high temperature periods, it is not unusual for the lake to experience at least one bloom of Blue-green Algae. The blooms are temporary and last about two weeks. It is advised to avoid swimming in the lake during this bloom. The district will send an email with a notice about that if it happens.

LAKE DISTRICT & COMMUNICATIONS

In 1998, a Lake District was formed by the residents. This organization differs from a Lake Association since it is an official governmental body that can impose laws and taxes. Existence of the District, along with the covenants, strengthens our ability to protect the lake and the quality of life we enjoy here. All lake residents are automatically included in the Lake District. The Lake District Board consists of five board members, traditionally a president, secretary, treasurer, Town Representative, and County Representative. The three board members are lake property owners who are elected for 3 year terms by the lake residents. One new representative is elected each year. Officers may be male, female, permanent residents or part-time residents.

The Lake District Board meets quarterly with all meetings open to residents. The Annual Lake District Meeting is usually scheduled for Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. This meeting is both informational and direction setting since residents approve/reject proposals, the annual tax, and the annual budget. The annual meeting is held at the Pike Lake firehouse, quarterly meetings are usually conference calls. All owners are highly encouraged to attend.

In addition to the Board, there have been committees for Water Quality, Fishery, Lake Plant Life, Road Cleanup, Boat Landing, and Lake History. Other committees are formed as needed. Don Schmidt, a resident, maintains the Cochran Lake website – www.cochranlake.org. Lake residents are encouraged to participate on the Board or one of the committees. Involvement is encouraged, and necessary to maintain our organization.

Don also maintains our **Google Group**. You must email Don to request to be added and join the discussion group. His email is schmitz.don@gmail.com. It's a friendly discussion group, the board is for posting anything of interest to lake owners, sharing photos, etc. Once added to the group, you can view the board online, or just email cochran-lake-district@google.com.

You will also receive **emails from the board**. Our email address is cochran.lake.district@gmail.com. You will receive notices and agenda for the meetings, and any other district business. You can reach the board by writing to this address. Only the board sees these emails. If you want to write to the lake residents, use the Google group address.

We strive to maintain a list of current emails of Cochran Lake owners. Your welcome person will ask for your contact info for this purpose only. We need current contact info of all residents. Please tell the board of any email address changes, so that we can keep in contact with you.

BOATING

For the safety of residents, a 10 mph speed limit was adopted by the Lake District. This speed limit prevents boaters from hitting the many hidden logs, of which there are many, and pier pilings located in the lake. The pier pilings are primarily between the islands and the island nearest the boat landing and shore. The speed limit also protects the loons as well as the shoreline. It further guards against water skiing and jet skis; activities inconsistent with the size and use of the lake.

PRIVATE BOAT LANDING

All lake residents own a portion of the lake access lot which includes the private boat landing. The Lake District voted to install cement ramps to ease launching and removing boats. The District also voted to install a locked gate to prevent nonresidents from accessing the lake. The lock combination is shared by all lake residents. It is 37-22-33. Please do not give out the combination to non-residents.

The boat landing is locked from May 1 to November 1. The landing also serves as the access point to lake water for the Pike Lake fire department pumper trucks in case of a fire at Cochran Lake. Therefore, it is important to remove your car/truck after launching or removing your boat. Parking is not permitted at the boat ramp.

The purpose of restricting lake access to residents is to minimize the chance of invasive species entering the lake. If you plan to remove and relaunch your boat, please wash your boat before relaunching. If you want your pier installed and removed professionally, please have the professionals remove it manually without the use of a boat that may have recently been in other lakes. Many of the lakes around us are experiencing invasive species. Following a few simple suggestions about cleaning your boat will insure our lake stays clean.

FISHERY

The Cochran Lake fishery consists of large mouth bass, crappies, blue gills, northern pike, and other miscellaneous panfish. In 2013 the Lake District, with approval of the DNR, started a Walleye Stocking Program. The Lake District voted to continue the Stocking Program in 2014 and 2015. To date, the results have been inconclusive. Legal size for walleyes is 15in. Please be careful releasing undersized walleyes. At the 2021 annual meeting, walleye stocking was again voted for, and will happen in the next coming year.

The Lake Fishery follows the State Fishing regulations. However, one exception exists for large mouth bass. The **State imposed** limit of 5 Large mouth Bass of any size. This special size limit was instituted years ago to solve a short term problem with an over abundance of bass, which does not exist and longer. Many residents practice catch-and-release for bass.

Our lake is small but still provides great fishing. Practicing catch-and-release will protect bass and any other species not wanted for an occasional meal.

BIRDING

Bird life around the lake is quite varied. The lake usually has two loons that reside from ice out to early September. Their calls can be heard night and day. In 2008, a successful loon hatch resulted in 2 baby chicks. Due to weather, predators, and other factors, there was no other successful hatch until 2014. In 2014 and 2018 a single chick was hatched. To aid the loons in reproduction, a man-made floating loon nest was added by the Lake District with approval of the DNR. You can see the nest platform floating on the lake. In addition to the loons, the lake attracts eagles, ospreys, Great Blue Herons, and other species.

CURRENT WATER CONCERNS

In 2012, the lake developed an unusual bloom of algae that resulted in columns of algae forming from the bottom of the lake. Eventually the columns broke off and began floating around the lake aided by the wind. In 2013, the algae columns spread to other parts of the lake and in 2014, the algae columns spread further. In 2014 a committee was formed to address the Lake Algae problem. The findings of the committee were consolidated into a report presented to the District. The report identified the species/type of algae and its suspected sources. No simple solutions are available. In 2015 the situation seemed to improve. In 2016 a solution was identified with the assistance of UW-Stevens Point. In 2017 and 2018 bags of barley straw were installed in the lake from May to September. The impact seems to have been very positive. The barley straw program will be evaluated on an annual basis to determine its need. Regardless of the algae issues, please refrain from adding “stuff” to the lake like soaps, shampoo, or fireworks.

SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT

Cochran Lake Residents are subject to Wisconsin and Price County Shoreland Zoning Ordinances. A copy of the complete ordinances is available on line. In addition to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinances, Cochran Lake residents are also subject to the covenants (mentioned earlier) particular to Cochran Lake and any actions of the Cochran Lake Management District. A copy of the covenants will be provided if your Realtor did not share them with you. They are also available to be viewed on our website.

Since Cochran Lake is a seepage lake, it is extremely important that we observe good shoreline management practices. In addition to observing setback regulations for buildings and sheds, cutting of trees and natural shrubbery within 35 ft. of the shoreline is limited to an area no more than 30 ft. wide per lot. Residents with large open shorelines have suffered from unwanted visits by geese and messy goose droppings. During construction activity, erosion fences are required to prevent runoff in to the lake. If your lot has grass, please limit your use of fertilizers and pesticides. Rain runoff will deposit them in the lake.

BURNING RESTRICTIONS

In 2013, a grass fire was started by residents when they did not fully extinguish a campfire before leaving. Fortunately, the fire was spotted and limited to destroying only one utility building and damaging one home. However, the incident only emphasized the importance of observing all burning restriction rules. Remember, we are serviced by a volunteer fire department located approximately 8 miles away.

Camp fires are enjoyed by all. However, please observe a few safety tips including using a metal burn ring with a 3 foot buffer of stone or gravel and having water and a shovel on hand. And please, please do not leave the fire unattended.

Burning small amounts of clean, household paper products; wood brush; leaves; needles and grass requires a burning permit. The permit is free and issued on an annual basis. The permit can be obtained online from the Wisconsin DNR website, dnr.wi.gov, or calling 1-888-WIS- BURN to have a permit mailed or e-mailed to you.

Once you have a permit, you must call 1-888-947-2876 after 11 AM on the day you plan to burn. You will hear a recording that will ask you in what county you want to burn. Based on the county's moisture conditions, weather conditions and day of the week, you will be told whether or not burning is allowed that day. In order to help you plan ahead, the following factors will determine if burning is allowed:

- The wind must be less than 8 mph.
- The predicted wind must be less than 12 mph.
- Due to being serviced by a volunteer fire department, burning is **not** allowed on Sunday or holidays unless there is snow on the ground.

Assuming burning is permitted, the Price County Sheriff's department has requested that you call them at 715-339-3011. This is to prevent the reporting of false fire alarms.

In case of an emergency like a fire or injury, it is faster to call Price County sheriff's department, 715-339-3011 than 911 since 911 calls are routed to Rhinelander before being transferred to the Price County Sheriff's department.

FISHING CONTEST

The Lake District has in the past, sponsored numerous fishing contests for lake residents and their families. During covid, these gatherings were cancelled. Any further contest plans could be finalized at the Annual District Meeting in May.

PIKE LAKE TRANSFER STATION (a.k.a. the dump)

There is no garbage pick-up for lake owners. Residents must bring their recyclables and refuse to the Pike Lake Transfer Station. The Transfer Station is maintained next to the Pike Lake Fire House. The Transfer Station is open on Saturdays from 7:00 AM to 3 PM. Year round. From May 1 to October 15, the Transfer Station is also open on Wednesdays from 7:00 AM to 3 PM. The Transfer Station accepts garbage, some electronics, and large metal items like appliances. The Transfer Station also recycles glass, paper, plastic, and aluminum cans. A resident ID will be required to use the facility for dumping. Resident ID's are issued by the Town of Fifield.

We hope you find this welcome letter helpful. Hopefully, you will appreciate this escape from the noise and lights of the city, and come to appreciate the stars at night and the natural sounds of the Northwoods.

For more information about our lake community, just email any of our Lake District officers, included with this letter. We are happy to answer any questions, and looking forward to getting to know you!

Lastly, please plan to attend the Cochran Lake Management District annual meeting, scheduled for the Memorial Day weekend, or call in to one of the quarterly meetings.

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To contact the board, email: cochran.lake.district@gmail.com
(Emails from the board only, you can reply)

To contact your neighbors, join the lake's Google Group by emailing Don Schmitz at schmitz.don@gmail.com. Don will add you to the listserve.
The email address is cochran-lake-district@googlegroups.com
(Emails from anyone, forwarded to everyone)

Cochran Lake Management District is not a lake association, it is a management district.

Difference between lake associations ↓

and a lake district. ↓

	Incorporated Lake Association	Qualified (incorp.) Lake Association	Public Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District
Statutory Authority	Ch. 181, Wis Stats	Ch. 281,181 Wis Stats.	Ch. 33 Wis Stats.
Formation	1. File Articles of Incorporation. 2. Draft bylaws	1. File Articles of Incorporation. 2. Draft bylaws with specific statutory criteria set forth.	1. Landowner petition to county or town board. 2. Resolution of city council or village board. 3. Conversion of a town sanitary district.
Principal Means of Financing Activities	-membership dues	-membership dues -state grants/other grants	-property tax levy -state grants/other grants
Boundaries	Assoc. should designate one or more lakes. Specific boundaries are not required.	Assoc. should designate one or more lakes. Specific boundaries are not required	Boundaries may include part of lake, entire lake, more than one lake. Boundaries are strictly defined.
Powers			
General Management Powers (pursuant to statutory guidelines)	An incorporated lake association has power to: acquire property, borrow money, invest money, contract for aquatic plant removal, purchase sensitive areas, improve fish habitat*, stock fish*, and maintain lake access. Powers are same as qualified lake assoc. (s. 181.04 Stats.)	A qualified lake assoc. has power to: acquire property, borrow money, invest money, apply for and receive grants, contract for aquatic plant removal, purchase sensitive areas, improve fish habitat*, stock fish*, and maintain lake access. Powers are same as incorporated lake assoc. (s. 181.04 Stats.).	A lake district has power to: sue and be sued, make contracts, take out loans, levy taxes, special charges, accept grants, state aid, monitor water quality, survey lake users, harvest or treat aquatic plants and dredge, adopt boating ordinances (s. 30.22 Stats.)
Not an exhaustive list of powers *with permit from DNR			
Additional Powers Public inland lake districts have authority to assume powers of sanitary districts. *Districts may not exercise these powers within territory of existing sanitary district (s. 33.22(2m), s. 60.77 Stats.)			-authority to require the inspection of private sewage systems, fix and collect charges for solid waste collection, disposal, sewage service and water service. -authority to enact ordinances to implement powers. -authority to provide chemical or mechanical treatment of waters to treat swimmers' ½ itch, algae.
Governance	Board of directors and association membership	Board of directors and association membership	Board of commissioners and electors at annual meeting.