

# Trade River Inland Lakes District

## WHAT IS A LAKE DISTRICT?

In 1974 the Wisconsin state legislature passed a law (chapter 33) that provides for the formation of inland lake districts as special units of government to protect and improve inland lakes. As a school district is committed to educating children, a lake district is established to protect our lakes. Since 1974, more than 300 lake districts have been established in Wisconsin, including Polk County's Bone Lake Management District.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A LAKE DISTRICT?

To protect and improve public inland lakes, the Wisconsin law gives the district the legal authority to manage weed control projects, monitor incoming watercraft for invasive species, improve the lakes, their fish habitat, water quality and recreational value.

## WHY IS A LAKE DISTRICT NEEDED?

Wisconsin has identified sixteen different invasive species. Currently our main concern is Eurasian Milfoil and Curly-leaf Pond weed in Little, Big Trade and Round Lake. These weeds form large floating masses of vegetation that are spreading. Our shoreline too has the invasive plants such as Purple Loosestrife and Yellow Iris. The next big threat is Zebra Mussels already in other Burnett County lakes and expected here soon. Controlling these threats is not cheap.

Further, an inland lake district can deal with other issues such as sustainability, water quality and recreational value. Recently the Bone Lake District in Polk County decided they: "may develop positions on public issues, e.g. factory hog farms (CAFOs), ordinance changes, local government elections, which may negatively affect air quality, water quality, and safety, to protect the best interests of the Bone Lake community of property owners and users of the lake." (August 31, 2021)

Further, it would be nice to consider stocking fish, better management of our islands, installing user friendly public docks and offer well water testing to monitor water quality. These lakes are our shared public parks and recreation areas. How can we improve, guide and monitor their development?

## HOW IS A LAKE DISTRICT ESTABLISHED?

Lake districts are established by local town or county boards, usually upon the presentation of a formal petition signed by a majority of lakeshore property owners. The signers NEED NOT be full time residents, only property owners. At least 51% of the landowners, or the owners of 51% of the land in the proposed district, must sign the petition to the town or county board. So an inland Lake district is formed with democratic consent of the majority of landowners and ratified by the Town or County Government.

The proposed district of Big Trade, Little Trade and Round lakes include about 313 lakeshore parcels. Each property within the district has one vote, whether or not the owners are resident! So any lakeshore owner can both elect and serve on the board.

## HOW WILL THE LAKE DISTRICT OPERATE?

If established, the Trade River Inland Lake district would be subject to state laws regarding ethics, open meetings and public records. The business of the district would be managed by a board of 5 members, one appointed by the Town of Trade Lake, one appointed by the County and the other three initially appointed and then elected by lakeshore property owners regardless of legal residency.

The board of the lake district would undertake critical lake management issues under state law and other grants. The Board would offer a budget which can be amended and adopted by an annual

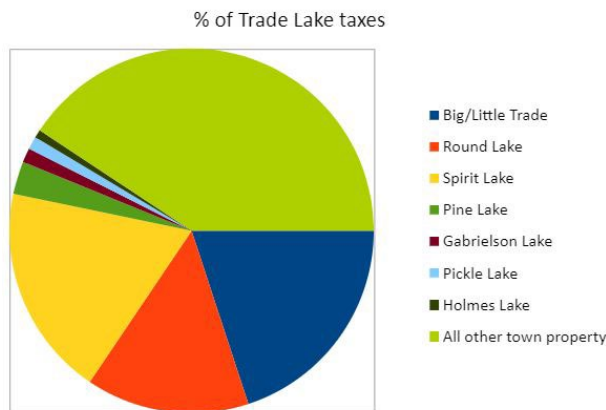
meeting of the membership. if authorized by an Annual meeting, the Board can then manage and control the Aquatic invasive species and fund any expenses needed to maintain our lake quality and assist in protecting lake property for present and future generations.

**HOW WILL THE LAKE DISTRICT BE FUNDED?**

The funding method to be decided by the membership at their annual meeting. A lake district can be funded either by a tax assessment on real estate valuation not to exceed 2.5% per thousand or special flat fees per parcel. So, the maximum tax on a cabin valued at \$150,000 is \$37.50. The maximum tax on \$300,000 cabin would be \$75. Several districts prefer a flat fee which can be higher to pay for member approved projects. By contrast, the Lakes Association membership is currently \$40, but only about half of all lakeshore owners join.

**LAKESHORE PROPERTY IS THE MAJOR TAX REVENUE SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF TRADE LAKE!**

In 2017 the University Extension service found that the seven lakes with public access in the Town of Trade Lake paid 59.4% of the town revenue. The three largest lakes are spirit, Big and Little Trade and Round Lake.



Currently, your tax dollars are spent on maintain the roads and services such as ambulance services, not on the lakes. Yet, the lakes are

critically important part of our community, it's character and economy.

**WHAT MIGHT A TRADE LAKE DISTRICT BUDGET LOOK LIKE?**

RTLIA's consultant, David Blumer of Lakes Education and Planning Services (LEAPS), estimates Big, Little and Round Lakes will need a budget of \$30,000 to \$50,000 to control invasive species in 2023. Even with state grants paying 75% of herbicide application costs weed management alone will require \$12,000 per year.

PRO FORMA	COSTS
Planning & administration	5,000
D & O insurance	1,000.
4 newsletters	2,500.
Herbicide applications (25% of \$50K)	12,000.
Clean boats clean waters at 3 landings	6,500.
Pre & post herbicide testing	3,500.
Well Water Testing	<u>3,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,500</b>

As a flat fee on each property within the proposed District the charge would be \$107. Or the same budget of \$33,500 could be raise by charging .06% on the lake shore valuation of \$568,536 (2017). That tax would amount to \$21 on a cabin worth \$350,000.

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MAPS OF THE PROPOSED TRADE RIVER INLAND LAKE DISTRICT**

For complete information on lake Districts please see [People of the Lakes: A Guide for Wisconsin Lake Organizations](#)

**IF YOU SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LAKE DISTRICT, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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