

The Fish and Game Club

75th Anniversary

1948-2023



Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an American to
Save and faithfully to defend from
Waste the natural resources of my
Country – its soil and minerals, its
Forestry, waters, and wildlife.

The beginnings...

At its first meeting in 1948, little could the founders of the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club envision that they were establishing the beginning of what was to become a 75-year tradition. The times were stressed by the numerous deer in the area. Various individuals and groups were debating the issue. It was this controversy that brought seventeen people together at this first meeting. Those in attendance believed that the best way to tackle the problem was to form an organization that could present a unified voice regarding the deer controversy. Thus, the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club was formed that evening. Officers were elected including Curt Sparks as President; Tony Hrbacek, First Vice-President; Harry Wilde, Second Vice-President; Charles Johnson, Secretary; and Larry Bent, Treasurer.

As Charlie Johnson recorded in the minutes: "Drove at night to Land O'Lakes Town Hall and, with seventeen present, we founded the club." He also recalled that during the meeting, when they were pondering a name for the club, he remarked, "We actually are a fish and game club." Gene Knuth responded, "Well then, what's wrong with calling the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club?" There were no objections and no other suggestions. Thus, the club was christened and began its 75-year history.

In 1948 the formation of a fish and game club was unprecedented in Wisconsin. This proved to be an innovative step on the part of the founders. It also provided a very desirable and effective vehicle for addressing a wide variety of problems, programs, and educational opportunities for club members and neighboring communities. While some programs have ended, such as feeding deer (inappropriate by today's CWD standards), the club continues to address issues of environmental conservation, education, and recreation. Today the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club still enjoys the distinction of being the oldest club of this type in the State of Wisconsin. The Club is happy to be celebrating its 75-year heritage!

75 Years of Conservation Projects...

It has been cited that the deer population controversy brought residents of Land O'Lakes together to form the Fish and Game Club in 1948. The records, though incomplete at times, included dozens of service projects that addressed not only deer problems, but countless other wildlife populations and projects that relate to our environment.

Some of those early projects included the construction and placement of wood duck nests, the building of blue bird houses, and fish cribs on our lakes. For many years, in the depth of winter, club members distributed corn, alfalfa and birdseed each week to assist in the survival of our wildlife in the area. At one point in time according to the records, club members constructed pan-fishing piers and worked to analyze and prevent pollution in sport fishing waters. The club members were also involved in landscaping the land around the airport. This project included preparing the soil for seeding. Even today the fruits of their efforts survive. Another notation indicates a project of improving the spawning grounds in Helen Creek, west of town. The club has participated in the "Adopt a Highway" clean-up project picking up refuse along the assigned roadway. In 2009 the club constructed a handicap access pier by the Forest Lake Country Store.

In addition to direct working projects, the Fish and Game Club has contributed to various conservation and wildlife organizations. Among these groups are the Eagles Nest Project, Loon Watch, Feed the Deer, Adopt a Wolf Pack, Northwoods Wildlife Center, and Trees for Tomorrow. The Club also donated \$1000.00 to the new Land O'Lakes Library for purchasing trees and plants as well as funds for area high school libraries for environment materials.

75 Years of Educational Projects...

Teaching about the environment has always been a major focus for the club from its very beginning. Those efforts have been aimed at raising the awareness of club members, students and teachers about our environment, its natural resources and wildlife. Programs about fishing, hunting, and boating safety have been presented. The learning programs for club members include speakers, films, and/or demonstrations which address a wide variety of topics relating to the environment. There have been presentations about wolves, fish, birds, and deer, as well as wildlife biology, national parks, and legislation as it relates to the environment, to name a few examples. There have been tours of fish hatcheries and a paper mill. One record indicates that members took a fall color bus tour through the UP.

The F&G Club sponsors scholarships for graduating seniors from Northland Pines, Phelps, and Watersmeet High Schools. The club also established a grant program for teachers in these three districts to assist them in developing programs of study that relate to environmental studies. These grant awards began as early as 1994. Over time, 173 teachers have benefited from the educational grants. The grants are far reaching in their impact since many of the grants provide teaching materials and equipment that can be used for years. In total, over \$64,000 has supported education around conservation and the environment. Grants also provide tuition costs for teachers who are interested in attending teacher-training programs at Trees for Tomorrow. An endowment fund has been established to ensure the continuance of these programs. There is also continued support for the education fund by tax-deductible contributions from individuals and businesses.

In addition to working with schools, the Club has also provided funds to school libraries and the Land O'Lakes Public Library for environmental materials. Education continues to be a very important aspect of the Fish and Game Club.

50 Years of Community Service Projects...

A community is indeed blessed if it has a catalyst to bring its residents together. This has been one of the roles the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club has played throughout these past 75 years. While that was not originally a function of the chartered organization, the reality is that it has become a very important adjunct to the Club's mission. The Fish and Game Club provides a social gathering place. The Club has provided a wonderful vehicle for the newcomer to get acquainted with the surrounding community. Even though Land O'Lakes is a relatively small town, it would be difficult to meet many of the residents because of geographic barriers – the woods, the lakes, and the distances between neighbors. The monthly meetings and activities have provided a welcoming environment for people new to the area. The club also maintains over seven miles of cross-country trails on E. Duck Lake Road for skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking outings. Everyone is welcome to participate.

The Club has sponsored a Family Fun Day and a fun day raffle. (The raffle was a major source of funding for the scholarship, grant, and other service programs). The Club has also assisted other community groups with donations. In 1995 the Club's Christmas party was opened to the community.

It is hoped that the Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club will continue to flourish and celebrate its 100th anniversary. Many thanks are extended to all of the members and other local residents who have contributed to the success of the Fish and Game Club.

Year-Round Activities

Summer

- ★ Monthly club meetings with speakers April through October
- ★ Biking outings
- ★ Bird watching
- ★ Hiking and trail maintenance. Projects include maintaining a section of the North Country Trail
- ★ Projects that assist the Ottawa National Forest Service in the Sylvania Wilderness Area.
- ★ Kayak and canoe adventures to observe wildlife and ecology of waterways.
- ★ Foraging

Winter

- ★ Cross Country ski adventures
- ★ Snowshoe adventures
- ★ Three Bear Sled Dog Race assistance
- ★ Christmas and Valentine's Day Parties
- ★ Community outreach for environmental and conservation learning

Club activities are not limited to these activities. If you have an outdoor adventure you'd like to participate in, there is a good chance you'll find others willing to join in the fun! Families are always welcome.

Awards and Recognition

Recognized as oldest Fish and Game Club in WI

Honorable Mention at the Governor's Awards Dinner

President's Award of the National Wildlife Federation

2006 USDA recognized the club with a plaque in appreciation of the many hours of volunteer work in the forests.

Letters of Commendation from grant recipients

Fund Raising Programs of 75 Years

Annual Membership Dues

Boat Regattas

Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinners

Spaghetti Dinners for Fishermen

Fish Fries

Cookouts

Hunters' Breakfasts

Fun Day Raffles

Recycled Sporting Goods Auction

Donations

Address Inquiries to:

Land O'Lakes Fish and Game Club

P.O. Box 516

Land O'Lakes, WI 54540

lolfishandgame@gmail.com

Visit us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/LOLFGC/>

Visit our Website

<https://lolfishandgame.wixsite.com/lolfg>

This booklet is available on the website as a digital download.

Please refer to the Calendar of events to see what is happening this year!

The Calendar is available on Facebook and at our Website.

LAND O' LAKES FISH & GAME CLUB

PAST PRESIDENTS: 1948-2023

1948-1949	Curt Sparks	1988-89	Tug Juday
1950-1951	Larry Bent	1990-1991	Jack Brandt
1951-1952	Tony Hrbacek	1992-1993	Bob Page
1952	Bill Stewart	1994	Jim Reiels
1953-1956	Richard Strut	1995	Tom Jennings
1957	Herb Dickman	1996-1997	Ed Stover
1958-1959	Ed Nagel	1998-1999	Dean Paulson
1960-1965	Robert Simon	2000-2001	Chuck Battin
1966-1973	Gus Gerhard	2002-2004	Darlene Wasielewski
1974 -1975	William Ceskowski	2005-2008	Jim Thomas
1975	Curt Sparks	2009-2010	Wes Kiley
1976-1977	H. Carlton Smith	2011-2013	Duties shared
1978-1979	Jerry Olk	2013-2016	Mike Brennand
1980-1984	Walt Hausman	2018	Stefan Anderson
1985	George Christi	2019-2023	Sudi Ferry-Wattson
1986-1987	Kathy Hamann		

In 1968, an album was created by members of the Land O' Lakes Fish and Game Club that gave an historical accounting of "the early years". Apparently, the minutes of the early meetings had been lost or misplaced. The album, which includes copies of programs, newspaper articles, posters, photos, and history of the F&G Club, can be found in the archives of the Land O' Lakes Historical Society. This first page of the album contains this artwork. The actual size is 11.5" x 13.5". The initials B. F. appear at the bottom of the page.

