



# GENEVA WATERS

Spring/Summer 2026 Newsletter

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we move into another active season on Geneva Lake, GLEA has been hard at work behind the scenes, preparing for what matters most; protecting the health, usability, and long-term vitality of the lake. Winter is a critical time for planning, coordination, and improving our methods, and this year has been no exception. We've focused on strengthening our ability to respond quickly, communicate clearly, and make data-driven decisions that benefit the entire lake community. This behind-the-scenes work is essential to preserving not only ecological health, but also the experience, beauty, and long-term value of Geneva Lake.

This year, GLEA is placing a strong emphasis on prevention, monitoring, and public communication. Enhancements to our E. coli monitoring and beach signage will help residents and visitors better understand water conditions, while expanded aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention efforts at launches and marinas (such as visible signage and practical tools) aim to stop problems before they spread.

While traveling in Guatemala this spring, I was reminded in a very real way how deeply water quality impacts daily life as I watched families washing clothes and children swimming in the same water that village runoff flowed into. It underscored something we can easily take for granted: the importance of clean water. I also heard a House Wren while there, and it reminded me that this tiny bird winters in places like Guatemala before migrating all the way to Wisconsin each spring in search of insects, and a healthy ecological balanced habitat to raise its young. It was a simple reminder, from a tiny bird, that protecting the balance of ecosystems like Geneva Lake matters.

As Geneva Lake faces going on the DNR's impaired list for Aquatic Plants, it is a reminder that we must protect the balance in our lake. The work that GLEA does is not abstract. Everything GLEA is working on, from enhanced monitoring and invasive species prevention to education and coordination, is part of a broader effort to serve as Geneva Lake's first line of defense. We have the responsibility to balance health, recreation, and quality of life in, on, and around the lake. I invite you to explore the following pages to learn more about these efforts and how you can help protect the lake we all value. ~Holly



Lake Atitlan, Guatemala



House Wren



White River, Lake Geneva



Geneva Lake



Holly

# Healthy Plants. Healthy Lake.

*Our Future.*



Geneva Lake is being placed on the DNR's impaired waters list for aquatic plants. Over the last few years Geneva Lake has seen a decrease in our sensitive native plants in the lake.

The DNR feels that two major causes of the decline are:



Wake (wave-enhanced) boat use



Shading from piers and other structures

Aquatic plants help remove phosphorus from the water. We have been losing healthy native plants in recent years, resulting in more phosphorus staying in the lake and available for algae to use. This can and has led to increased algae growth, making it harder to keep the lake healthy.

We may also see a loss of habitat for fish and other important lake life if this continues. Aquatic plants help protect young fish, provide food and shelter for wildlife, and help keep lake sediments stable. Without enough healthy plants, sediments can become stirred up more easily, making the water murkier and the lake bottom muddier.

Over time, a decline in the right kinds of plants can affect the entire lake system, decreasing habitat, water quality, recreation, and even property values if shallow areas of the lake lose their plants.

## What You Can Do



### MANAGE NUTRIENT RUNOFF

Keep pollutants out of our lake.



### BE MINDFUL OF WAKE-ENHANCED ACTIVITIES

Reduce wave impacts on shorelines and plants.



### PROTECT AND RESTORE SHORELINE HABITATS

Native plants and natural buffers make a difference.

*Protecting our plants. Preserving our lake. Ensuring our future.*



# WAKE & WAVE SMART

## LET'S PROTECT GENEVA LAKE

Geneva Lake is experiencing growing concern over the loss of aquatic plants and increasing pressure on sensitive nearshore habitat.

This season, GLEA and the municipalities surrounding the lake are asking wake and wave-enhanced boaters to help protect the lake by **staying in deeper water and farther from shore.**

### WHY IT MATTERS



Aquatic plants provide essential fish habitat and support a healthy lake ecosystem.



Plants help stabilize sediment.



Enhanced wake activity in shallow areas can impact shorelines and lakebeds approximately **425** feet from shore.



### STAY IN THE BLUE

#### WAKE & WAVE SMART



30 FT DEEP • 500 FT FROM SHORE



### LOOK FOR THESE SIGNS!

These educational signs will be posted at public launches around Geneva Lake to help boaters quickly identify recommended wake & wave-enhanced recreation areas.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP



#### OPERATE

- **30 feet** depth or greater
- **500 feet** from shore



#### SHARE

the information with friends, family, & other boaters.



#### PRACTICE

responsible recreation and help protect our beautiful lake.

The goal is not to stop recreation, it's to preserve Geneva Lake's

*beauty, habitat, and enjoyment*

for future generations.



# Help The Lake: Fish Cribs & Phosphorus



Many factors around Geneva Lake have reduced the natural habitat young fish rely on to survive and grow. To help restore these important nearshore areas, GLEA is continuing its fish crib project this summer and is looking for additional shoreline property owners **interested in hosting a fish crib** at no cost. These submerged wooden structures provide shelter, spawning habitat, and long-term ecosystem benefits for fish and other aquatic life. Interested in helping? **Contact GLEA at 262-683-2067 or [director@gleawi.org](mailto:director@gleawi.org).**

Lake health also starts on land. Homeowners and landscaping companies can help protect Geneva Lake by **eliminating fertilizer that contains phosphorus**, which can fuel algae growth and harm water quality. Consider phosphorus-free fertilizers, native plantings, reduced lawn areas, soil testing before applying nutrients, and shoreline buffers that help absorb runoff naturally. Small actions around the lake can make a big difference for Geneva Lake's future.



## CLEAN BOATS. CLEAN WATERS.



All Geneva Lake boat launches completed their Clean Boats, Clean Waters inspection hours last season and we hope to exceed our hours this season!

These inspections serve as the frontline protection for keeping invaders like the Spiny Stone Flea from entering Geneva Lake and Quagga Mussels from heading somewhere else.



*Before entering and after exiting the lake, stop by a CD3 Roadside Stand to Clean. Drain. Dry!*

### WHAT GLEA IS DOING IN 2026

- Overseeing the Clean Boats, Clean Waters Program
- Upgrading AIS (aquatic invasive species signage) at several launches
- Working on helping boaters better understand how to protect the lake

### ANYTIME YOU ARE EXITING OR ENTERING THE LAKE:



**INSPECT/REMOVE**  
plants, animals, and mud



**DRAIN**  
all water from boat, equipment, and ballast



**DISPOSE**  
of unwanted bait in the trash



**DRY**  
really well or wait 5 days



*Clean in, clean out, everytime!*

# ALL ABOUT E. COLI

GLEA monitors E. coli bacteria levels at public beaches around Geneva Lake every summer. Testing takes place on Monday's and results are shared with municipalities and posted within 24-36 hours on GLEA's Facebook, Instagram, and website ([www.gleawi.org](http://www.gleawi.org)). Signs are updated at each public beach on Tuesday afternoons or Wednesday mornings.



## PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

E. coli is an indicator of potential harmful bacteria that may cause illness.



## CONDITIONS CHANGE

Conditions can change quickly due to rainfall, wind, waves, & other environmental factors.



## CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Signs at beaches use visuals to make conditions easier to understand at a glance.

## UPDATED SIGNAGE COMING IN JUNE

New bilingual beach advisory signs use fewer words and stronger visuals to make water conditions easier to understand at a quick glance.

**Green (0-234)**  
No advisory in place



**Yellow (235-999)**  
Advisory in effect; swim with caution



**Red (1,000+)**  
Beach closed due to unsafe bacteria levels



## RECOMMENDED SWIMMING SAFETY TIPS

- Avoid swallowing lake water
- Shower after swimming
- Do not swim with open wounds or recent illness
- Wash hands before eating after contact with lake water



**CHECK BEFORE YOU GO!**  
latest results



## See Something Unusual On Geneva Lake? Call!



GLEA serves as a year-round “watchdog” for Geneva Lake, helping investigate unusual algae growth, suspicious water discoloration, potential blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), invasive species concerns, fish habitat issues, and other changing lake conditions. We are the lake sleuths for nutrient runoff!



GLEA will use its new AlgaeTorch to quickly assess algae levels directly in the field when concerns arise. The handheld instrument provides immediate information that helps staff respond faster and better understand potential lake conditions before problems grow.



If you notice unusual algae, unknown aquatic plants, cloudy water, fish concerns, or other unusual lake conditions, contact GLEA. Early reporting helps us respond quickly and continue protecting Geneva Lake through science-based monitoring and stewardship. **Office Number: 262-245-4532**

# GLEA SUMMER TASKS

GLEA is continuing lake health efforts as well as expanding our science-based monitoring and education efforts across Geneva Lake. We'll be doing nearshore fish surveys, starry stonewort monitoring, stream bacteria testing, increasing AIS warning buoys, enhancing invasive species signage at launches and marinas, and much more. Our goal is to better understand and protect the lake's ecosystem before problems grow larger. GLEA is also expanding hands-on education efforts with groups like Holiday Home Camp to help inspire the next generation of lake stewards and build greater community awareness about protecting the waters we all enjoy. Read below to meet the main crew and friendly faces you'll see around the lake this summer helping get these efforts done.



## MEET GLEA'S 2026 SUMMER INTERNS



### Logan Madison

Logan is returning to GLEA for his second summer and will be a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is studying Conservation & Environmental Science and aims to become an environmental lawyer. He enjoys all things nature and conservation as well as playing guitar and listening to music. Logan is a huge asset to GLEA with his outgoing nature and get things done attitude.



### Moira Gerard

Moira is our returning college intern who will be continuing work on some of GLEA's important research studies. These studies show changes taking place in the lake such as macroinvertebrates, aquatic plants, and more. Moira is attending Michigan Tech in the U.P. of Michigan, majoring in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Before she gets to GLEA this summer, she's illustrating a mammal tracking field guide for the Track Center as part of her 5-week internship there.



### Kaden Kayser

Kaden is a junior at Ripon College. He is majoring in Environmental Studies for his bachelors degree and plans on looking into Environmental work or community service after graduation. Kaden plays college football at Ripon and loves being active outdoors. Some of his hobbies include fishing, playing video games, and being active. He'll be working with Logan a lot this summer and learning everything GLEA to come back and lead next summer.



### Brilie Esser

Brilie Esser is majoring in Fisheries and Water Resources at UW-Stevens Point. She helped out at GLEA for a few weeks last summer and is super excited to continue to work for Geneva Lake. Brilie spends most of her time fishing or taking pictures of wildlife. She is on the left side of the photo helping to take measurements of sturgeon during the sturgeon spawn with the WI DNR. Brilie said, "this was a really rewarding project to work on, and I love working on aquatic ecosystem restoration as well."

# We Need YOUR HELP!

INVEST IN OUR LAKE.  
INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.



## GLEA WISH LIST 2026



E. coli beach water quality signage ..... \$3,500



Fund a 2026 Nearshore Fisheries Survey ..... \$6,000



Stream Bacteria Testing ..... \$4,000



Starry Stonewort Mapping ..... \$1,000



Aquatic Invasive buoys and signage ..... \$2,500



Interns 2026 ..... \$3,000



Disperse informational wake enhancement brochures and install signage around the lake ..... \$3,000

*Your support today creates a cleaner, healthier Geneva Lake tomorrow.*



**TOGETHER, WE CAN KEEP GENEVA LAKE CLEAN, CLEAR, AND BEAUTIFUL!**

*Thank you for supporting a healthy lake!*



## HELP US SAVE PAPER...

Email us at [info@gleawi.org](mailto:info@gleawi.org), or call (262) 245-4532, to sign up for an email version for the future!

## Contribution Form

Yes, I want to help Geneva Lake Environmental Agency in their efforts to protect and preserve Geneva Lake for generations to come.



**Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for 2026.**

*\*Donations can be made at [www.gleawi.org/donate](http://www.gleawi.org/donate) or mail checks to GLEA, PO BOX 914, Williams Bay, WI 53191*



NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS : \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE : \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPORT IS FOR (as needed, wish list item, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Donations to the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency are tax-exempt under section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Service.

If replying on the above form, and you would like an emailed newsletter, check this box!

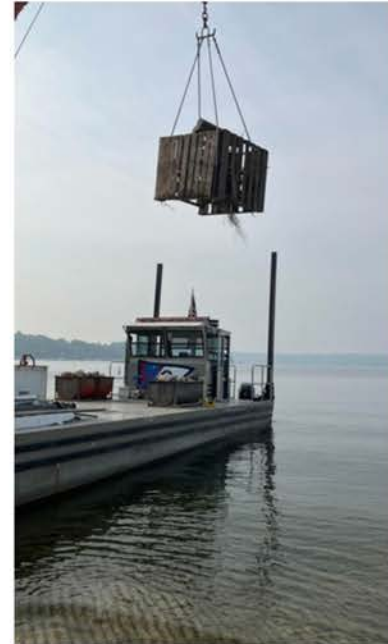


## Geneva Lake Environmental Agency

Village of Fontana - Town of Linn - City of Lake Geneva  
Town of Walworth - Village of Williams Bay

PO Box 914  
Williams Bay, WI 53191

## GLEA SPRING/SUMMER 2026 NEWS!!!



**THE GENEVA LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY IS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN GENEVA LAKE'S RESOURCES BY PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND ENHANCING A DESIRABLE LAKE AND WATERSHED QUALITY.**