

## ***Apple River Protection and Rehabilitation District (ARPRD)*** ***NEWSLETTER Summer 2025***

Greetings from the ARPRD! Each year we want to inform you about the activities of our district. ARPRD is very active all summer long on the Apple River Flowage. We are the ones who manage our 640 acre section of the Apple River, which you may hear called the lake, river or flowage, as is common to this type of body of water in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, similar to last year, 2025 has started off as a demanding year. Weed growth began early and was already challenging when harvesting began. The harvesting team has logged hundreds of hours trying to beat the weed growth. We hope that due to their hard work you are experiencing good navigation for your fishing, boating and recreation on the flowage.

We also want to welcome new residents along the shores. You should know that managing this body of water is not like managing most lakes. We are fed water from a 111,000 acre watershed. The Apple River begins north of Turtle Lake and gets water from numerous creeks and tributaries along the way prior reaching us. Runoff from farms, residences, wooded areas etc. flows into the Apple River. The nutrients in this runoff can cause excessive weed growth, and impact water quality.

See below for information regarding 2025 meetings, harvesting and other activities. Additional updates will be provided at the August annual meeting, which we hope many of you will attend.

### **ARPRD Meetings**

1. We held our Spring Board of Commissioners meeting on April 26, 2025. The meeting focused on getting ready for our summer work.
2. We held a special meeting on June 11, 2025 to discuss what we may consider doing to improve the nutrient level in the flowage. Jeremy Williamson, an ecologist with 20 years experience working on water quality issues, is assisting the Board with this possible action.
3. The Board of Commissioners will hold our summer meeting on Saturday July 19, 2025 to approve the proposed ARPRD Budget for 2026 and set the agenda for the Annual meeting.
4. **The Annual Meeting of ARPRD will be held on Saturday August 23, 2025. All ARPRD residents are invited to attend. The meeting will be held in the Amery City Hall Council Room. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. Several key issues will be considered, including a vote for the ARPRD Board Chair, the 2026 budget, and the possibility of a project to improve water nutrient quality. A full report on harvesting operations will also be given.**

### **What are the ARPRD activities?**

We are a very active organization, and most of you have likely seen the weed harvesters at work on the river.

1. Dave Schleusner manages the Harvesting Operation and begins his day about 5:00 a.m. and often works late into the afternoon. We own and operate two machines. The older harvester is a seven foot cutting head Aquarius machine, which we use primarily on the north end, or area

above the highway 46 bridge. This machine has been operating every year since 2012. Most machines have a life expectancy of 10 years but thanks to Dave's exceptional maintenance this machine still is functioning. Our newer machine is a ten foot cutting head Inland which we purchased in the spring of 2020. This machine is used solely in the south portion of the flowage, from the Highway 46 bridge to the City of Amery. We also own a dump truck and a conveyor for the Aquarius harvester, a trailer with a conveyor track for the Inland machine, and a truck to haul the trailer for this machine. All this equipment requires repairs and maintenance throughout the summer, as well as being prepared for storage and then spring usage. Dave can maintain and repair pretty much everything, so he has kept our costs very low. Most lake districts around us with equipment pay a very high fee for maintenance and repair. We owe Dave much thanks for his commitment to the ARPRD.

2. We also have a trained team working on a Clean Boats Clean Water Project. They inspect boats coming and leaving the Lincoln Landing on days they expect heavy traffic. This is a DNR supported project so we must do these inspections for at least 200 hours. You may have seen this crew in action.

3. We maintain two Decontamination Stations, one at the Lincoln Landing and the other at the Birch Street Landing in Amery. All boaters are expected to use the cleaning solution and clean their boats before going into the river. It appears this is being done as Dave must replace the solutions every day. We hope this practice will help us avoid invasive aquatic plants and animal incursions. We are fearful of Zebra Mussels and other invasive species as they are in many lakes around us. The primary invasive plant we have been dealing with is Curly Leaf Pondweed weed which usually begins growth early in May and then dies back about July first. This year saw early and heavy growth due to the hot weather in April and it has caused the harvesting team much work.

4. Derrick Carlson is our Aquatic Invasive Species expert. He looks for invasive plants and animals.

5. Tom Scheffel is our water quality and clarity checker. He takes a water sample every week throughout the summer months and sends those to the DNR for analysis.

6. Carlson SV continues to manage our payroll.

All these items support the effort to keep the flowage a useful and enjoyable body of water.

### **What legal documents must we maintain?**

The Wisconsin DNR requires we have an approved Aquatic Plant Management Plan which MUST be updated every five years. Without an approved plan we could not receive permits for harvesting or any grants from the DNR.

In 2013, we cooperated with the Polk County Land and Water Department and had a Lake Management Plan approved. This plan, separate from the Aquatic Management plan, has eight goals. It focuses largely on improving the water quality of the flowage. We have addressed these goals in multiple ways, including the installation of 28 buffer strips by residents on the shorelines. We also, by harvesting tons of weeds each year, have not allowed all that vegetation to decay and release its nutrient content back into the flowage. With help from Jeremy Williamson, we are looking at how we may continue to work on this matter.

### **What are the results from harvesting weeds since 2012?**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Began</b>	<b>Ended</b>	<b>Weight in pounds</b>
2012	Aug. 10	Sept. 14	501,750
2013	May 28	Aug. 29	2,535,680
2014	May 28	Sept. 5	2,302,857
2015	May 8	Sept 9	2,244,500
2016	May 11	Sept. 9	2,531,796
2017	May 15	Sept 20	1,656,000
2018	May 11	Sept 25	1,579,500
2019	May 17	Sept 21	1,557,000
2020	May 28	Sept 18	1,746,000
2021	May 6	Sept 24	6,919,086
2022	May 20	Sept. 20	3,792,000
2023	May 20	Sept 8	3,821,281
2024	May 14	Sept 10	3,888,980
2025	May 12		2,730,000*

\*as of June 20<sup>th</sup> - starting with Curly Leaf Pondweed and now the Coontail is coming strong

Since we added the second machine in 2020 the amount of weed vegetation being removed has greatly increased. We hope you are pleased with this enormous effort. It is clear at this printing that due to winter and spring weather 2025 will be another year with an increase in plant vegetation being removed. What would the flowage be like today if these weeds had not been harvested? ARPRD was started when the river was becoming difficult to use for boating and recreational activities due to the heavy weed growth. We know that harvesting is costly (although less than for most other surrounding lake districts!) and labor-intensive and we hope you appreciate the results.

### **CBCW Boat Inspection Project**

Being infested with Eurasian Milfoil and Zebra Mussels is a scary thought. Many popular lakes close to us have both! We began this effort to educate and encourage boaters to follow Wisconsin Clean Boats Clean Waters rules in 2013 and here are the DNR trained inspectors hours worked to date:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Water Craft Inspected</b>	<b>Hours Spent</b>
2013	65	64
2014	62	92
2015	66	144
2016	143	227 * Began getting a DNR Grant
2017	145	204
2018	144	206
2019	167	205
2020	173	214
2021	158	202
2022	137	242
2023	153	205

2024	91 (311 people talked to)	204
2025	39 (76 people talked to)	

We hope this informs you of our activities. We would welcome your participation, including any feedback or questions, at the annual meeting.

**The ARPRD BOARD of Commissioners:**

**Roland Peterson Chair**

**Billie Jo Schleusner Treasurer**

**Kitty Miller Secretary**

**Fran Duncanson Polk County Representative**

**Sharon Marks City of Amery Representative**