

*Have you ever wondered what your Big Sand Lake Association does? If so, this is the email for you. In addition to listing our recent activities and accomplishments, rest assured that we're not slowing down. We continue to do everything we can to help ensure we can all enjoy "our" lake for generations to come. Please continue to share any feedback you may have about how we are doing and what you would like us to focus on for 2026. – Paul Hassing, BSLA President*

## About the Big Sand Lake Association (BSLA)

The Big Sand Lake Association (BSLA) was created many decades ago to represent property owners near Big Sand Lake in Burnett County, WI. BSLA's mission is to **understand, protect, and preserve the shoreline, environment, water quality, and integrity of Big Sand Lake today and for future generations. In addition, BSLA is a communication forum for topics of interest to the lake stakeholders.** We have approximately 60 yearly dues paying members representing 50+ properties on the lake. Our information is distributed electronically to over 140 property owners on the lake. The BSLA Board consists of 7 people, 3 are permanent lake residents. We are a tax-exempt Organization with 501(c) (3) designation.

## The BSLA Board completed many key projects in 2025 which include:

- **Lake Maps with AIS prevention info on back.** Printed and made available during the summer (via our mailbox at the BSL DNR Landing) 150 laminated lake maps which have key Aquatic Invasive Species prevention information on the back
- **County 2024 Well Water Testing** – delivered update on final results to our members
- **Wake Boats** - Delivered to our members various articles and information on the vast negative impact wake boats, in wake-enhancing mode, have on lakes. Partnered with Town of Sand Lake and Town of LaFollette in exploration of town ordinances limiting wake enhancement activities
- **New Campgrounds near BSL** – Provided timely updates to our members on status of Bocan Conditional Use Permit (Feb) and new CUP (Sept). Submitted letter to Burnett County on the new Sept CUP opposing the proposed 2x size increase
- Hosted a key **Roundtable on Water Flow In/Out of Big Sand Lake** in June. This group discussed water flow issues focused on the lake Inlet under Hwy 70, and the lake Outlet under Sand Lake Road. The 17 Participants from 9 Organizations included BSLA board, Burnet County Lakes and Rivers Association, BC Land & Water Conservation Dept, Yellow River Protection Conservancy (YRPC), Chairs of Town of Sand and Town of LaFollette, WI Dept of Transportation, WI DNR, and the St. Croix Tribe. Two key outcomes of this meeting were:
  - Closure via information from DOT that the culvert under highway 70 was set at the correct height. This closed out our investigation into topic
  - Consensus to focus on hybrid cattail removal around the Sand Lake Road culvert and clearing the culvert from beaver blockage to restore BSL flowage into the creek

- **Held Yearly Member Annual Meeting** in July which included speakers: Paul Thompson on Invasive Hybrid Cattails, Amy Thiex on the County's new 911 call center, and Travis Thiex on property crimes and how homeowners can prevent. ~30 attendees
- **Held Yearly Member Picnic** which had ~56 attendees. BSLA provided burgers, brats and soft drinks. Members brought other food to share
- Met with **Town of Sand Lake on limiting the amount of winter road salt used on Sand Lake Road near the marsh area** due to the environmental damage impact of road salt
- Coordinated and Funded an **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Point Intercept Survey** and **Shoreline Plant Survey of Big Sand Lake**. These were completed this summer by the Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Dept. See link to final report below.
- **Removal of Invasive Purple Loosestrife** that was found via the AIS Shore Plant Survey at seven shore locations on the north side of Big Sand Lake. This was completed in August by BSLA board members
- **Clearing of Invasive Hybrid Cattails** around the culvert on Sand Lake Road. This project was completed in August by BSLA volunteers via drowning of the cattail stalks by cutting below the water line. The Town of Sand Lake also assisted with clearing the culverts that had been clogged up by the beavers. These actions restored normal flow into the creek and the Improved water flow through the culvert is apparent, even this winter
- In November, applied for DNR Surface Water Grants to fund a **2026 Paleolimnological Study of Big Sand Lake**. We will hear if the grant was awarded on Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- **Partnership with Tribe**. Held a key meeting with the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of WI Tribe in October. Put a framework in place for a deeper collaboration including a yearly 1Q interlock meeting with the four key Big Sand Lake stakeholders: BSLA, Tribe, DNR, Burnett County Land & Water Conservation Dept

### Big Sand Lake Water Clarity - Secchi disk measurements

Kudos to **Tom Selbin** who has a cabin on Spencer Lane. Tom has been on the lake for 26 years and for the last ~15 years he has diligently taken Secchi disk measurements to measure the clarity of Big Sand Lake. Tom does 4-8 measurement days a year in a methodical, repeatable manner and submits the data to the DNR via a program called Citizen Lake Monitoring. He said each measurement day he takes multiple measurements from the exact same deep hole spot and averages the data for consistency. Measurement days are usually in May/June, July, Aug & Sept. You can see from this report (pg 3) that BSL lake clarity has been very consistent for the last two decades with measurements coming in an amazing 10-13 feet! Tom said the readings for 2025 are not yet submitted but were 9-11 feet. This data shows us that Big Sand Lake

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continues to be one of the clearest lakes in the county. Click here for the report: [https://www.bigsandlakewi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/BSL-CLMN\\_report\\_073061-11Dec2025.pdf](https://www.bigsandlakewi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/BSL-CLMN_report_073061-11Dec2025.pdf)

### **Generous Donation to BSLA from Boone Docks Marine**

The BSLA board had a nice surprise in December when we received the letter below and a \$150 check from Boone Docks Marine at 25208 State Rd 35, Siren! Next time you are at Boone Docks for your boating needs, please thank Chris & Mary

*Dear Local Lake Association,*

*Enclosed is a check that we are donating to your lake organization. You may be wondering about the reason for this donation. We are committed to supporting local environmental non-profits, especially local Lake Associations. As the owners of Boone Docks Marine in Siren, we have partnered with Suzuki Marine to participate in their 4-4-2 Program (4-stroke for your 2-stroke). This initiative is designed to encourage boaters to transition from older 2-stroke outboard engines to newer, cleaner, and more fuel-efficient 4-stroke outboards. It also promotes responsible recycling of old engines.*

*Through our efforts, we have been actively removing and recycling polluting 2-stroke outboards from boats and pontoons, replacing them with quiet, clean-running, and fuel-efficient Suzuki outboards. Suzuki Marine has supported this program by offering special trade-in allowances to both dealers and customers. The proceeds from recycling these old motors enable us to make donations to local Lake Associations. Ultimately, the true beneficiaries of this program are the lakes and rivers in our area.*

*We appreciate what you are doing to protect, conserve and maintain your lake. Please let us know if there's anything we can help you and your lake association with. We are happy to help in any way.*

*Sincerely,*

*Chris Kuehn & Mary Smoliak  
Owners - Boone Docks Marine*

### **Final Report from summer 2025 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Study**

As noted in the 2025 accomplishments section, BSLA funded the Burnett County Land & Water Department (Emily Moore's AIS team) to complete a point-intercept survey of Big Sand Lake looking for evidence of any Aquatic Invasive Species. They also did a shoreline visual Invasive Plant survey for us. The great news is, other than the state-wide known infestation of nuisance Chinese Mystery Snails, there were no other nasty aquatic invasive species found. They also sampled for zebra mussels and spiny waterfleas and thankfully this analysis also came up negative! The shoreline Plant survey found a few pockets of purple loosestrife which our lake association removed. Emily told us that thankfully there were no zebra mussel detections in Burnett County again this year. She said they will do a follow-up visual check for AIS shoreline

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plants for us in 2026. Click here to read the full report: <https://www.bigsandlakewi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Big-Sand-Lake-AIS-Survey-Report-2025.pdf>

## **BSLA Board Members and contact info**

*Note: Emails and phone numbers were in original email to members but removed for posting to public website*

**President:** Paul Hassing

**Vice President:** Jane Jensen

**Treasurer:** Steve Farnham

**Secretary:** Chip Applegath

**At-large Directors:**

Don Button

Dennis Loots

Karen Pavlicek

Website: <https://www.bigsandlakewi.org/>

Facebook Public Page: <https://www.facebook.com/BigSandLakeWI>

Facebook Private Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2038553056430782>

BSLA External Public email contact: [bigsandlakewi@gmail.com](mailto:bigsandlakewi@gmail.com)

### **\$40 yearly BSLA dues for 2026 can be paid by:**

- Mail check Payable to: Big Sand Lake Association to:  
Big Sand Lake Association  
PO Box 145 Siren WI 54872
- Or give check, or cash, to any board member
- Or pay via Venmo: [https://account.venmo.com/u/Big\\_Sand\\_Lake\\_WI\\_Association](https://account.venmo.com/u/Big_Sand_Lake_WI_Association)

Information compiled by Chip Applegath - BSLA Secretary