

Town of Washington Messenger

December 2024

Greetings from the Town of Washington

I am honored to serve our residents in the Town of Washington as we continue to work together to move our town forward.

Listed in our annual newsletter are the 2024 accomplishments.

Everyone talks about the apathy (the lack of interest) by citizens in the democratic process. That does not apply in our town. Citizen involvement in issues concerning our town's future has been overwhelming this past year.

- Showing up for meetings
- Offering opinions and suggestions
- Expressing your concerns to the Town Board, County officials and other agencies such as the DNR and State Legislators
- 94% voter turnout in the November election

All these initiatives and the participation of the citizens in the town have been very helpful to the town board as we write ordinances and make policy recommendations.

Things may not always work out the way we want them to, but the

board values your passion, concern, and input.

We welcomed Doug Valeria to the Town Crew.

Please remember to check on your neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled, during storms and during winter. Remember to also make sure your pets are safe.

Your input is valued, and we look forward to hearing from you. Please try and attend our town board meetings or let us know if you would like something to be added to our meeting agenda. You can reach out to any board member. Their contact information can be found on our website at town-of-washington.org.

On behalf your town board, Carole, Art, Nancy, Tiffany and myself along with your town crew, Paul, Doug, Terry, Mike and Rich, we hope you embrace 2025 with an open heart and go forward with faith, hope and courage.

Jim Egan, Town Chairperson

STAY INFORMED

We send a monthly electronic newsletter.

Sign up on our website.

town-of-washington.org

AGENDA

Board meetings are the first Monday of the month.

If there are items you'd like placed on the agenda, please let any board member know.

PLACING SNOW ON TOWN ROADS

Snow blowing or shoveling snow back into the road is not legal per WI Stats 346.95(5).

You may not plow snow onto roads, right of way, or your neighbor's property!

DRIVEWAY AND FIRE NUMBERS

Prior to construction of any new driveway you MUST complete a driveway permit application which can be found on the Forms & Permits page of our website.

To obtain a fire number (address), complete the address application on the Vilas County website.

For more information contact Nancy Sobraliski, Town Clerk, at 715-479-8886

ADOPT A ROAD

We still have lots of roads needing to be adopted. This is a such a great program for our town. Why not adopt a segment of town road? Help keep it looking clean and beautiful.

The Town provides all the materials and support.

All that is required is for you, or your group, to pick up litter twice a year (spring and fall) on your desired segment of town road. Please consider volunteering!

To volunteer or for more information, please email Jill at Jill.adoptaroad@gmail.com or reach her by phone at 630-750-6563.

Adopt-A-Road applications can be found on our website.

HOW YOUR TAX DOLLARS WERE SPENT IN 2024

Roads	\$740,000
Fire Commission	\$141,380
Ambulance Service	\$116,466
Transfer Station	\$83,000
Olson Memorial Library	\$37,300
Airport Commission	\$30,000
Chain O'Lakes Safety & AIS	\$6,800
General Government	\$200,000

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Our grant application for 2025 has been written and submitted. Projects included in the 2025 grant are:

- Home Ignition Zone assessments offered free of charge to Bass Lake residents
- Roadside chipping offered free of charge to Carpenter and Bass Lake residents
- Brush site maintenance

The WDNR has fully funded all our CWPP projects. We've been awarded \$88,969 in funding since 2017. There has been no cost to the town!

Grant funding has tightened for 2025, but we're hopeful we'll be awarded funding for

the upcoming year.

This summer, 94 homeowners on Carpenter Lake took advantage of the Home Ignition Assessments and learned what they could do to lessen the risk of wildfire at their home. The assessments are performed by specially trained firefighters. Many volunteer their service to the town, and we're grateful for their generosity.

The brush site is the cornerstone of the CWPP and is loved by our residents. Usage continues to increase each year. This year we averaged 400 visits per month.

Wood chips and compost are available to take at no charge. You are also free to take any firewood you would like.

The brush site shares the same parcel as the town gravel pit. Sand is present at the gravel pit. Please DO NOT take any sand. Our road crew needs the sand for our roads!

The brush site opening date is weather dependent and will be posted on our website and through the town electronic newsletter. The closing date in 2025 is October 27th. Open hours are every Friday at 4PM until Monday at 6AM.

The brush site will be OPEN on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day.

The brush site regulations are found within this newsletter. It is your responsibility to know and follow the regulations.

TROUBLE ON THE DEERSKIN

In 1948 an earthen dam was constructed on the Deerskin River approximately three miles upstream from Rangeline Road. The dam was declared unsafe and removed in 2001 despite public opposition.

Since the dam removal more than twenty years ago, there has been a steadily increasing build-up of silt along the river bottom and shoreline primarily downstream of Rangeline Road. In some areas, the silt has reached a depth of three feet.

Larry Springer, a resident along the affected portion of the Deerskin River, has spearheaded an effort to raise awareness of the situation and explore remediation options. He has networked with the WDNR, the Town of Washington, Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department, the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association, Trout Unlimited, the Wisconsin River Alliance, and state legislators to chart a path forward.

The first step was to conduct a survey of the river. Inter-Fluve, a highly reputed engineering firm specializing in stream restoration, conducted the survey on July 26, 2024, at a cost of \$5,600. The Town of Washington and the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association funded the survey.

Per Inter-Fluve, sediment accumulation is dependent on channel depth and slope. The slope is fixed by the lake outlet, so the only way to remove accumulated

sediment is through dredging. This can be done through mechanical dredging using excavating equipment mounted on barges, or suction dredging.

The next steps recommended by Inter-Fluve are 1) Meet with the DNR to discuss permitting requirements for any proposed dredge project; 2) Estimate sediment volume via bathymetric and sediment depth survey; 3) Contaminant testing to determine the appropriate method of dredge disposal.

Remediation costs are great. The Vilas County Board and the Town of Washington have each signed a resolution of support for commitment of state funds to complete the dredging on the Deerskin River.

State Senator Mary Felzkowski visited the site and will submit a funding request in collaboration with State Representative Rob Swearingen to the 2025 state budget.

For more information contact Larry Springer by email at larrandar@gmail.com or by phone at 715-572-0881



ROAD WORK

The Town of Washington works hard to keep our roads in great shape.

This year, we completely rebuilt North Military Rd from Hwy 70 to Maple Rd; overlaid Rangeline Rd from Hwy 70 to the intersection with Eagle Waters Rd; and overlaid Shangri La Rd including stabilization of 100 feet of road, reshouldering, and replacing all cautionary signs.

In 2025, we will finish the one-mile total reconstruction of East Anvil Lk Rd.

Please note that the sand and gravel present at the brush site is not available for residential use. It is for use on town roads.

Special thanks to our road crew, Paul, Terry and Doug, for clearing our roads and keeping them in great shape throughout the year. It's a never-ending job!

HAVE A DOG?

Licensing your dog is the LAW. Wisconsin State Law requires dogs five (5) months of age or older to be licensed annually. The license year is January 1 through December 31. The license fee is \$5.00 for a neutered or spayed dog, and \$10 for an unneutered or unspayed dog. A late fee of \$10.00 is due after April 1.

A copy of your dog's current rabies vaccination MUST be included with a separate check made payable to the Town of Washington for the Dog License fee. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is required for receipt and tags. Mail to Tiffany Bolte, PO Box 1373, Eagle River, WI 54521.

For questions please contact Tiffany Bolte, Town of Washington Treasurer, at 715-891-1271.

Please note per Ch 6 Animal Control Ordinance section 6.06, dogs are allowed out of doors on town property provided they are leashed at all times and under control of their owners.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE DEFENSE GRANT

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program helps communities plan for and mitigate wildfire risks. The USFS administers this grant.

We applied for, and were awarded, a grant in the amount of \$246,938 in 2023.

The grant focuses on fuels reduction projects which will augment, enhance and expand our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to protect lives, property, and resources from wildfire and provide for public safety.

One component of the program is to increase safety through vegetation management in town's 72 miles of rights-of-way.

This summer we mowed and cut vegetation with our new leased John

Deere tractor, boom mower, and swing flail. The tractor came with a hefty price tag of \$212,938. Grant funding pays the lease fees, and at the end of the lease period, we will own the tractor.

Another feature of the program is the reduction of hazardous fuels to mitigate fire danger through annual chipping of the town's brush site. Foley Tree Service will chip the brush site and remove the chips at a cost of \$6,800 per year for 5 years for a total cost of \$34,000.

We are grateful for our partnership with the WDNR. Through their support of our CWPP, we were able to take advantage of this federal funding opportunity.



NEW PIER FOR DEERSKIN LAKE

Deerskin Lake has a new pier courtesy of the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) and Deerskin Lake Association.

The Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) offers grant funding for public recreational access sites on its reservoirs. Deerskin Lake is one of those reservoirs.

With the help of Deerskin Lake

Association, the Town applied for and received grant funding for a new pier in the amount of \$9,500. The 50/50 cost share was covered by Deerskin Lake Association.

The new roll-in ADA accessible aluminum pier is 6 feet wide, has a 6'X8' ramp, and heavy-duty anti-skid surface.

The access is also ADA compliant with a crushed granite surface. Volunteers from Deerskin Lake completed all the necessary work for ADA access.

We are grateful to WVIC for this grant award and their partnership with the Town of Washington.



TRANSFER STATION NOTES

- Thanks to Rich and Mike, our transfer station is running smoother than ever. We thank Davey for being so willing to help during Rich's absence. Kudos to all for a job well done!
- Rich & Mike say the year has been good at the transfer station and they thank all of you for your patience. They appreciate you asking questions when you're unsure.
- We continue to participate in the NexTrex Challenge, and earned another Trex bench this year. Since beginning the program in 2023, we've recycled 2,861 pounds of plastic. We'll continue in the program next year, so keep bringing your plastic bags to recycle!
- In order to ensure only town residents are using the facility, we will continue to check permits EACH TIME you visit. Photos of your permit are not acceptable. You will be turned away without your permit.
- Take care not to lose or damage your permit. Replacement permits are subject to a \$40 replacement fee. Contact Tiffany Bolte, Town Treasurer, at tbolte.townofwashington@gmail.com for a replacement.
- The metal dumpster, located outside the drive-thru, is for metal only. NO water heaters, lawn mowers, lawn tractors, appliances etc. All items must be placed inside the metal dumpster, not left beside or behind the dumpster.
- No carcasses of any kind are allowed at the transfer station. You may bring carcasses to the Highway G Landfill located at 7001 Hwy G, Eagle River. Please stop in the landfill office before proceeding, as carcasses must be buried.
- Oils of any kind may NOT be deposited at the transfer station. This includes cooking oil! Highway G Landfill accepts cooking oil for a fee. O'Reilly Auto Parts accepts car oil at no charge.
- Cardboard boxes must be flattened and no larger than 2'X2'.
- If you're not sure if an item can be brought to the transfer station, please check with Rich or Mike before bringing the item.

PROTECT YOUR OAKS

HELPFUL TAX INFORMATION

- When paying taxes by mail indicate your telephone number on the check. This will ensure payment is properly applied. It also ensures we have a way to contact you if necessary.
- Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your payment if you would like a receipt. Receipts cannot be mailed without the self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Postmark governs the payment date.
- Mail payments to PO Box 1373, Eagle River, WI 54521
- Payment by credit card is available (for a fee) for the 2024-2025 tax season. Details are available on our town website Taxes page.
- Tax payments for the exact amount only may be made in person at the Peoples State Bank located at 1011 E Wall St.
- Visit the Vilas County website at <https://ascent.vilascountywi.gov/LandRecords/> for payment amount, tax receipt, or copy of your tax bill.
- 2024 tax payments are posted on the Vilas County Treasurer's website.
- Pay taxes with a personal check, cashier's check or money order payable to the Town of Washington.
- Personal property taxes are due in full by January 31, 2025.
- Real estate taxes are due as follows:
 - Full payment or first installment by January 31, 2025 to the Town of Washington Treasurer.
 - Second installment due by July 31, 2025 to the Vilas County Treasurer
- Each year we receive escrow checks in excess of tax due. The town policy regarding these payments is we will refund checks at our next regularly scheduled meeting. The Treasurer cannot endorse an escrow check and return it to the taxpayer. Escrow checks must be used for the payment of taxes only.
- If your mailing address is incorrect, send a signed address change request along with your tax payment.

Oak wilt, a lethal disease of oak trees, is spreading in our town.

The Town of Washington now has nine confirmed cases of oak wilt - a devastating disease, killing trees rapidly in a single season. The ninth case was identified in August and is located on Bass Lake. According to Ted Foley, a certified arborist with Foley Tree Service, there are certainly more than the nine trees, and it will continue to spread and get worse. He stated oak wilt is becoming very prevalent.

Oak wilt is a fatal fungal disease that causes wilting and eventually death of oak trees. There is no known treatment for oak wilt.

Trees are initially infected by sap feeding beetles. Wounds created by storms or pruning serve as a feeding site for these beetles and as an entry point for the fungus. The beetles pick up fungal spores from infected trees, then fly to healthy oaks to feed on sap flowing from fresh wounds, thus infecting new trees.

Once the tree has been infected, the fungus moves through grafted roots to healthy trees nearby. In this way the disease will kill more and more oaks each year if it is not stopped. As the tree dies, the fungus reproduces. The fruity smell of fungal mats attracts beetles, which carry fungal spores to fresh wounds.

Any injury or wounding to an oak tree can leave it vulnerable to oak wilt whether it be storm damage, pruning, or trimming. Wounding includes not only areas where bark is scraped/scuffed off, but also broken branches, root damage, and even injury caused by your lawn mower can be an entry point for oak wilt.

Initially, single branches on infected trees wilt and die. Leaves on these branches often turn tan or dull green, starting at the tips or outer margins. Leaves may also droop, curl, or fall from the tree. Infected trees die. **OAK WILT CAN KILL OAKS IN LESS THAN ONE MONTH.**

To prevent infection, avoid wounding trees from April 15 through July 15 when beetles are active. However, it is best to prune when trees are dormant.



If trees are wounded during these months prevent beetles from interacting with fresh wounds by applying water-based wound sealer immediately.

Fungicides have been developed that may be effective in preventing oak wilt when injected into living oak trees without active symptoms. A single treatment can protect red oaks from developing symptoms for 2 years following injection. Treatment is less expensive than removing a dead

tree! If you suspect oak wilt, contact a certified arborist or Linda Williams, WDNR Forest Health Specialist, at Linda.Williams@wisconsin.gov

TOWN CONTACT INFO

Jim Egan	Town Chairperson	715-479-2074
Art Granat	Town Supervisor	715-891-2683
Carole Linn	Town Supervisor	715-479-6873
Tiffany Bolte	Town Treasurer	715-891-1271
Nancy Sobraliski	Town Clerk	715-479-8886

Town Shop		715-477-2024
Paul Chlapecka	Town Foreman	715-891-4833
Hoffman Appraisal	Town Assessor	715-536-6236
Melissa McDonald	Animal Control	715-617-1979
RC Inspection	Building Inspector	715-439-4222