

Working Document



***The Water Way* charts a course for the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership for the first decade of the twenty-first century.**

This strategy, developed by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, will guide cooperative efforts and set priorities for working together for the lakes and the people of Wisconsin.

*Please send comments by **June 1, 2001**, to:
Jeff Bode, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 101 S. Webster St., Box 7921,
Madison, WI, 53707-7921, via FAX at 608-266-2244 or email bodej@dnr.state.wi.us*

March 2001



March 1, 2001

Dear friend of Wisconsin lakes:

In the summer of 1990, a group of people gathered together in Rhinelander to discuss the future of Wisconsin lakes. They developed a plan to guide lake management for the next decade. Once again, last spring, people from around the state convened to continue that task. Citizens, UW-Extension and DNR representatives met for two days to develop a plan that would serve to protect our valuable water resources. This time spent together was also a time of reflection about the work of the group that had met at the same location ten years prior. The group recognized many accomplishments over the past decade while realizing the challenges that lay ahead.

The following pages contain a draft of the vision, "The Water Way." Wisconsin lakes cannot be protected and managed without help from our partners and Wisconsin citizens. We want to hear from you about this draft strategy, which seeks to chart a course for all current and future Wisconsin Lakes Partnership policies and programs involved in lake education, protection, restoration, enhancement and management.

Specifically, we'd like to know whether the three themes address what you want the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership's vision to be for Wisconsin lakes. Do you agree or disagree with the vision, goals and strategies? Do you have any comments or suggestions on the rest of the document?

Please send your comments by June 1, 2001, to Jeff Bode, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 101 S. Webster St., Box 7921, Madison, WI, 53707-7921, via FAX at 608-266-2244, or email bodej@dnr.state.wi.us.

Thank you for your interest in preserving, protecting and restoring Wisconsin lakes.

Judy Jooss
WAL



Wisconsin Association of Lakes

Robert Korth
UW-Extension



Jeff Bode
DNR



Introduction

In the spring of 2000, a group of people concerned with the future of Wisconsin lakes gathered in Rhinelander to chart a course for working together. The following Visions, with associated Goals (A through H), Strategies (numbered items) and Performance Measures (bulleted items), were compiled from an exercise where the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership (Partnership) took information brainstormed on current program infrastructure and social, economic and environmental trends and created a strategy around key issues facing Wisconsin lakes.

This strategy will guide the direction of the Partnership over the next decade (2001 – 2010) and set priorities for undertaking lake protection activities. Each biennium, the Partnership will review and modify it, as appropriate, and will use it to measure and report on the Partnership's performance. We invite you to join the Partnership and get involved with us as we chart the course for current and future policies and programs for Wisconsin lakes and those who use them.

This strategy and other Wisconsin Lakes Partnership documents and information is available from the Wisconsin Association of Lakes at www.wisconsinlakes.org or by contacting the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership at UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Lakes and Wetlands.



A special thanks to the citizens from the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, the United Wisconsin Anglers, and the Conservation Congress for volunteering their time and ideas to the synthesis of this strategy. We also want to thank Mark McDermid and Suzan Acre of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources who took time from their very busy schedules to facilitate the development of *The Water Way*.

Photos: Robert Korth and Gerard Feuhrer.

Lakes are among the most expressive natural features on Wisconsin's landscape. These watery jewels add much to both the state's ecological treasury and the state's economy. Our 15,000 lakes provide crucial habitat supporting a wide variety of wildlife, fish and other aquatic life and are a destination for many people, providing unique opportunities for outdoor recreation and quality living. Wisconsin lakes provide the base that many local economies build upon in Wisconsin. For example, fishing, boating, tourism, ownership of waterfront property and associated property taxes, are key to local economies around the state.



Like all natural resource features, lakes are subject to change. Some changes are natural; many are not. Previous plans have guided the Partnership in our mission of protecting Wisconsin lakes. As we move into the twenty-first century we realize that change is occurring faster now than at any time in our history. Today's complex social, economic and natural resource issues demand innovation and diverse experience to provide answers. These challenges require the involvement of those affected as well as the organizations and agencies appointed to deal with the issues in the continuing pursuit to safeguard lakes.

Today over 600 lake organizations and thousands of volunteers play a vital role in the stewardship of Wisconsin lakes. The Partnership is multi-faceted, involving many and welcoming all. Lake stewardship offers a terrific assortment of opportunities to aid those willing to join in the challenge. Components include: Adopt-A-Lake and youth and adult education; aquatic plant management and protection; lake leadership training; lake organizational and technical assistance; lake planning, lake protection and lake classification grants; recreational boating aids and boating safety; self-help citizen lake monitoring; shoreland and water regulation and zoning; and wetland and watershed protection and restoration.

While the Partnership is pleased with our progress and proud of these lake protection programs, we must continue to act on many fronts. Three strategic themes emerged as essential if we are to preserve the legacy of Wisconsin lakes. The following strategy provides the focus we will need as we work together toward a wonderful future for Wisconsin's lakes and citizens.

Protecting in Partnership: The Legacy of Wisconsin Lakes

I. Engaging People, Politics and Partnerships. In Wisconsin, “lake partnerships” provide the strategy to ensure a healthy and diverse aquatic environment while considering the needs of society. Three groups form the core of this partnership: the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supplies the technical expertise and regulatory authority; the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) builds linkages among stakeholders and provides supporting educational materials and programs; and local lake people, organizations, and the statewide Wisconsin Association of



Lakes (WAL) provide the political will and hard work to accomplish watershed restoration and lake protection goals. These three groups concerned with the future of our lakes have joined together in active cooperation and conscientious planning for lake protection. Reaching out to a broad audience of youth and adults with education and incentives, working in partnership with informed decision-makers and citizens at all levels, strengthening local and regional partnerships, and fostering coalitions on common ground among diverse interests will be necessary components to make this strategy work.

II. Managing for Healthy Lake Ecosystems and Quality Outdoor Recreation and Living. It is easy to fall in love with Wisconsin lakes. Enjoying the peaceful atmosphere, fishing, boating, swimming or just socializing are favorite pastimes. We appreciate the unique benefits and are learning to accept the challenges associated with “life near lakes.” We also recognize that our increasing use is changing the lakes. These changes may be detrimental to the creatures living in and near the water and some are disagreeable to those who value lakes. Wisconsin lakes are under stress on many fronts: shoreland development, watershed erosion and nutrient enrichment, loss of native plants and animals, invasion by exotic species, atmospheric contamination and acidic precipitation, overcrowding and consumptive lake use. Some of these concerns can be traced back to our growing love affair with our waters; others to land use practices. We want a strategy to ensure a healthy and diverse aquatic environment while considering the needs of society. Establishing science- and community-based resource goals to realize ecosystem potential; designing and promoting non-degrading, safe and enjoyable lake use; and promoting and enforcing a system of voluntary and regulatory approaches for lake use and shoreland development are key aspects of this strategy. We must also find a way to evaluate and refine the effectiveness of this strategic plan.

III. Investing Time and Money. “Today’s solutions cannot be relied upon to provide the answers needed for tomorrow’s problems.” Albert Einstein’s words have never rung truer than in today’s changing world. If we expect to maintain and improve Wisconsin lakes for future generations to enjoy, we need vigilance, openness and preparedness along with wise investment of human and financial resources to respond to escalating change. We will do this by establishing a “trends group” to monitor change and by using modern technology to communicate, document and share information. At a time when the value of lakes to society is rising faster than at any time in our history, a commensurate increase in investment of human and financial resources seems justified. Key to this strategy is the cooperative development and support of state legislation and budget items, increasing the scope and amount of dollars available for state and local lake management, and developing a “friends network” to support and protect Wisconsin lakes.

The journey to ensure the health of Wisconsin lakes has had much success but there is still much to be done. For example:

- *What is the economic value of the waters of Wisconsin?*
- *What kind of impact do our lakes have on our economy?*
- *Control exotic plants and animals*
- *Programs to deal with recreational use conflict*
- *Assistance for small lakes*
- *Assistance for large, shallow lakes*
- *Increase assistance with aquatic plant management*
- *Shoreland restoration*

Our Mission

Protecting in partnership our legacy of lakes

I. Engaging People, Politics and Partnerships

The Vision

Learning together making water education easy

Goal A

Educating for lake leadership and informed decision-making for all ages

The Strategies

1. Work to develop awareness, knowledge, communication and leadership skills.
2. Develop, provide and promote water education materials for lake organizations, state, regional, basin and county (UW-Extension and Land Conservation Department) personnel.
3. Improve our capacity to deliver water education by fostering collaborative educational efforts with other partners.
4. Improve our ability to recruit, train and support volunteers as the backbone of meaningful data collection, water education and informed advocacy for lake and watershed issues.



The Performance Measures

- We (UWEX, WAL) have promoted and increased the circulation of *Lake Tides* and *Lake Connection* by including visitor and service centers, local municipal officials, schools, teachers and youth leaders in its distribution. We have secured additional financial resources for increased distribution and electronic availability.
- We (WAL) have developed the www.wisconsinlakes.org web site as the entry pathway for those interested in obtaining Wisconsin Lakes Partnership information electronically from WAL, UWEX, DNR, Adopt-A-Lake, Project WET and lake organizations.
- We (UWEX) have developed focused educational programs and educational tools for teachers, youth leaders, lake organizations and agency personnel (i.e., UWEX, DNR, basin educators, county agents). We provided assistance in supplying materials to support their work and provided needed facilitation and leadership training.
- We (the Partnership) have developed an electronic structure for storage and exchange of all lake-related volunteer monitoring information in Wisconsin. This information is accessible in a user-friendly format to decision-makers, educators and

the general public through www.wisconsinlakes.org, the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership and Adopt-A-Lake.

- We (the Partnership) have facilitated partnerships with libraries, Chambers of Commerce, schools and local lake organizations for educational and informational support and exchange.
 - We (the Partnership) have worked to develop support for the expansion and integration of ecosystem management with youth organizations and citizen volunteer monitoring activities (e.g. Adopt-A-Lake, Project WET, Water Action Volunteers, Self-Help Lake Monitoring, LoonWatch). This includes making existing data available in an understandable format to all that are interested.
 - We (DNR) have promoted shoreland protection and restoration projects on public (state and municipal) land riparian to lakes as demonstrations to the public.
 - We (the Partnership) have continued to explore greater involvement in the Wisconsin Lakes Convention and sought broader attendance beyond riparian interests.
 - We (WAL) have continued to hold regional informational and educational workshops on specific lake issues and have increased attendance.
 - We (the Partnership) have provided training and mentoring for grant sponsors to improve lake grant administration and management.
 - We (DNR) have developed a lake grant category for school and youth projects that partner with lake organizations.
 - We (the Partnership) have designed and developed a recognition program for youth lake projects. We have also developed a Youth Leadership Program modeled after the Lake Leaders Institute.
 - We (UWEX) have brought water education curriculum to schools, convened a team of teachers and educators to work with the materials, such as WET provides, and have ensured that the materials meet state standards. We have brought the materials to the Department of Public Instruction for their support.
- *Over 700 people attend the Wisconsin Lakes Convention each year; this year the convention will celebrate its 23rd anniversary*
 - *“Lake Tides,” the Partnership’s newsletter, goes out to over 23,000 subscribers four times each year*
 - *Nearly 1,000 citizen volunteers participate in Wisconsin’s self-help lake monitoring*
 - *Since its establishment in 1999, 93 citizens have graduated from the Lake Leaders Institute, a program that ensures a supply of lake leadership at the local level*
 - *UW-Extension’s Adopt-A-Lake program has over 175 projects going on, involving a diversity of people in better understanding aquatic ecosystems through the promotion of hands-on activities*

The Vision

Working in partnership with decision-makers and citizens at all levels as a trusted and respected advocate of water resources, resulting in a process of public participation of informed decision-making that promotes a healthy ecosystem and the overall public good.

Goal B

Building political influence

The Strategies

1. Promote visible political involvement.
2. Build a credible base of information and use that information to give ongoing feedback to citizens and decision-makers about the effects of their decisions on the lake ecosystem.
3. Establish personal communications with decision-makers.
4. Empower individuals and groups to influence decision-makers.



The Performance Measures

- We (WAL) have created a public relations position to promote greater awareness of lake activities and events and have developed a more effective means of reaching out and engaging citizens and state and local elected officials in lake-related activities and events.
- We (WAL) have made annual contact with state legislative representatives, asking what WAL and member organizations can do for them, and made them aware of the Partnership's agenda for lake protection.
- We (WAL) have developed a guide to working more effectively with local officials (towns and counties) on shoreland and lake-related issues. We have sponsored a Thursday workshop at the Wisconsin Lakes Convention and fall workshops on working effectively with local and state officials.
- We (UWEX) have developed information for state and local use on the economic impact of lakes and the value of lake and shoreland protection and restoration.
- We (WAL) have sought to establish a liaison to the county board where county lake associations are organized.
- We have invited political leaders and decision-makers to participate in our conferences, workshops, and communication vehicles (e.g. newsletters, web page).
- We (WAL, DNR) have participated in county lake and watershed plan development and revision processes to ensure that lake issues are addressed as needed in each county.
- We (WAL) have tracked successful and unsuccessful lake-related legislative efforts, and informed decision-makers of their impacts.



The Vision

Sharing the "lakes vision" by mirroring the partnership at the local and regional level and catalyzing and expanding upon efforts to keep lake and watershed issues at the forefront

Goal C

Working through partnerships

The Strategies

1. Enhance communication by: a) encouraging internal integration and communication within participating organizations; b) facilitating interactive communication among peers; c) disseminating information on lake and watershed issues to empower partners and stakeholders and encourage informed decision-making at the local, county, basin, regional, state and federal levels.
2. Facilitate contact by: a) retaining a dedicated lakes coordinator position in each region; b) establishing a WAL outreach position in each region; c) supporting development of county water resource management positions in each county; d) creating county lake organizations in each county in collaboration with appropriate county government units (e.g. Land Conservation Departments); e) involving ourselves with non-traditional stakeholders in implementing the "lakes vision" within basins.
3. Build coalitions by: a) identifying common ground among diverse interests by including individuals, groups, and organizations with complimentary objectives; b) finding ways to leverage paid and volunteer resources by optimizing use of available people, funds, and skills; c) developing outreach and monitoring programs to partner with non-traditional stakeholders.

The Performance Measures

- We (the Partnership) have sought uniformity within the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership in the use of software for electronic communication.
- We (the Partnership) have continued to support and facilitate the formation and functionality of lake organizations at the local, county and watershed level.
- We (the Partnership) have developed orientation and new-employee training for staff, volunteers, and lake leaders and provided ongoing training and professional development opportunities.
- We (DNR) have re-established regional/basin contacts within DNR to provide technical assistance and to serve lake organizations in each region and basin.
- We (the Partnership) have met with basin partnership teams, basin educators and basin team leadership to identify common interests and opportunities for working more closely together.
- We (the Partnership) have met with the Conservation Congress, United Wisconsin Anglers, Resort and Innkeepers, Wisconsin County Code Administrators, and other statewide groups interested in lakes.
- We (WAL) have worked with the Wisconsin Stewardship Network and explored forming/joining coalitions with other groups and entities for protecting lakes and

beneficial lake uses. This includes lake and watershed monitoring to evaluate current conditions and document changes.

- We (the Partnership) have worked with lake grant recipients to help them better manage their grants and projects. We (UWEX, DNR) have provided workshops and have had routine contact with grant recipients. We (WAL) have established a mentoring program.

II. Managing Lakes and Watersheds for Healthy Ecosystems and Quality Outdoor Recreation and Living

The Vision

Using science- and community-based goal-setting processes to direct the protection and restoration of lake ecosystems and watershed health

Goal D

Managing lakes and watersheds to maximize ecosystem health

The Strategies

1. Develop and utilize a scientific process for evaluating and defining lake management goals and performance standards, based on ecosystem potential, for sustainable lake water quality, habitat, fisheries and watershed conditions.
2. Develop or revise scientific methods, regulations, policies and management strategies to direct technical, human and monetary resources toward implementing lake and watershed goals.
3. Develop educational and marketing strategies to foster social and political support for the establishment of lake and watershed goals.
4. Build coalitions with local government and management organizations to implement lake and watershed management strategies that will achieve goals for lake ecosystem health.

The Performance Measures

- We (DNR) have developed guidance explaining the philosophy of and strategy for managing lakes and watersheds as sustainable ecosystems.
- We (DNR) have developed lake standards for nutrients, habitat, fisheries and biological integrity for use in modeling for lake and watershed planning, protection and restoration projects.
- We (DNR) have completed development of sensitive areas designation guidance and initiated the process for evaluating lakes in each region.
- We (DNR) have developed a habitat assessment guide/tool (Habitat Quality Index) for indexing the quality and value of lake ecosystem features.
- We (DNR) have used information from the statewide baseline lake monitoring program as well as other data on lake water quality, habitat, fisheries and other aquatic organisms to set goals for lake ecosystem health.
- We (DNR) have made lake databases comprehensive and accessible to DNR staff, and decision-makers at the region, basin, county and local level.
- We (DNR) have used baseline monitoring and databases for water quality, habitat, fisheries and other biological information, for setting lake ecosystem goals. This

Volunteer monitoring is the state's largest single source of trophic state information. A study on the trophic status of Wisconsin lakes showed that 81% of the lakes in the sample (representing over half of Wisconsin's total inland lake surface acreage) exhibit good to excellent water quality.

information is readily accessible by staff and decision-makers at the region, basin, county and local level.

- We (DNR) have provided resources for staff and volunteer monitoring programs to conduct lake and watershed assessments on individual lakes in order to establish specific lake and watershed management goals.
- We (DNR) have developed and made staff training modules available for lake planning (assessments and goal-setting standards), protection and restoration. We have included private consultants, county Land Conservation Department staff, and other planning professionals in their development.
- We (DNR) have used the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process for individual lakes in need of restoration.
- We (DNR) have produced a “State of Wisconsin Lakes: Ecosystem Assessment Report” and made it widely available to educate federal, state, regional, basin, county, and local decision-makers and the public about lake diversity, ecosystem potential, nutrient relationships and the potential and limitations of management tools, as well as the status and trends in Wisconsin lakes.
- We (DNR) have reviewed and revised administrative codes (e.g. grant program, aquatic plant management) as needed to align with and support our strategy.



The Vision

Appreciating the natural sounds and sights of Wisconsin lakes; enjoying quality, environmentally sound recreational experiences in all seasons; and respecting the lake ecosystem and the safety and enjoyment of all lake users

Goal E

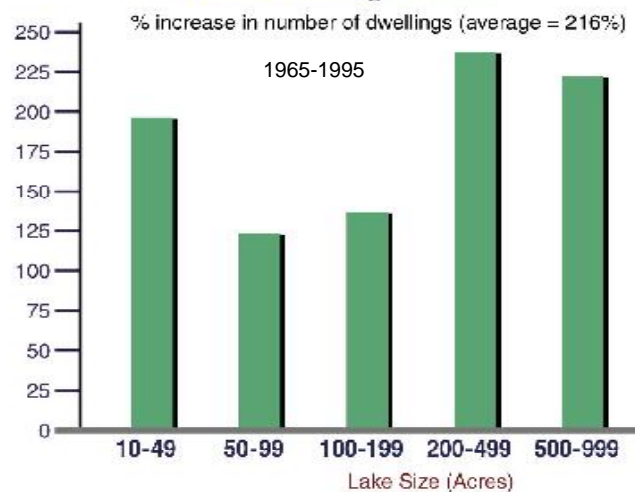
Managing lakes for quality outdoor recreation and living

The Strategies

1. Improve safety and responsible boating by supporting increased boater safety education, awareness and ethics. Boater education includes appreciation of natural values including fish and wildlife, awareness of the deleterious effects of sediment and vegetation disturbance and introduction of non-native exotic species, and environmental ethics.
2. Passage of legislation requiring boat operator's licensing and local ordinances (where necessary) under clear standards and criteria based on lake characteristics and local interest.
3. Work with partners to promote and enhance enjoyment and appreciation of lake ecological features and natural values by posting information on the web and at public access sites and trails.
4. Prevent spread of aquatic exotics via boat launching through education, legislation and facility design.
5. Enhance public understanding of fragile lake ecosystems and ensure access to lake recreational opportunities that do not degrade the resource.

The Performance Measures

- We (WAL) have helped to pass legislation requiring boat operator's licensing.
- We (WAL) have sought to include awareness of the natural lake ecosystem and disturbances such as the re-suspension of lake bottom sediment, disturbance of aquatic plants and wildlife, and introduction of non-native species in boating safety education.
- We (WAL) have formed a coalition for safe, environmentally responsible boating with the boating industry, resort owners, boat rental and boating advocacy groups.



- We (UWEX, WAL) have developed an instructional guide for local communities interested in sponsoring an interpretive lake trail to showcase the natural ecosystems of lakes.
- We (WAL) have helped to pass legislation to protect and promote diverse, stable, native aquatic plant communities including prohibition of launching watercraft with any aquatic plant attached to its exterior surface and requiring posting at publicly-owned boat access sites.
- We (the Partnership) have promoted classifying lakes for beneficial uses and resolution of use conflicts and the adoption of local ordinances under clear standards and criteria based upon lake characteristics.
- We (the Partnership) have sought an increase in the number of non-boating access sites and increased awareness of access site location and amenities. Non-boating access sites are recognized as public access sites (of equal standing to boating access sites) for purposes of management and provision of state services.
- We (the Partnership) have promoted awareness of the impacts of structures in near-shore areas and encouraged adoption of measures (e.g. pier, near-shore ordinances), and more voluntary practices to maintain the integrity of these areas.
- We (the Partnership) have promoted surface use classification for the protection of ecologically vulnerable areas and the management of diverse recreational uses.



The Vision

Promoting consistent implementation and public understanding of resource benefits through a system of regulations and voluntary programs based upon local-, county- and state-approved water and land resource management plans that affect lakes.

Goal F

Protecting lakes and shorelands through regulations and land use planning

The Strategies

1. Develop a menu of educational strategies, including methods of ongoing feedback, that target the regulated community and decision-makers, empowering them to both understand the rationale behind the plan and the means for navigating and expressing themselves effectively within the local and regional political framework.
2. Develop multi-media messages to illustrate the resource value lost through poor planning, implementation and enforcement patterns.
3. Empower and prepare individuals and local communities to actively participate in the local decision-making process through an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the community.
4. Develop a comprehensive set of incentives through the initiation of legislation to secure funds and provide models of successful incentive programs.
5. Develop natural resource inventory accessible to state and local decision-makers.
6. Encourage a system of intergovernmental enforcement that is cooperative and consistent.
7. Develop a "safety net" through state oversight to ensure thorough and consistent protection of public resources.
8. Develop and foster a cooperative integrated regulatory framework consisting of local, county, regional, and state authorities.
9. Promote a more thorough integration of lake classification into local comprehensive land use planning initiatives and the use of a broad range of voluntary land protection strategies such as tax incentives, conservation easements and deed restrictions in order to encourage more effective stewardship of waterfront property.
10. Encourage participation in comprehensive land use planning by integrating lake interests with local Smart Growth initiatives. Continue to train consultants and promote awareness of lake protection and citizen involvement.

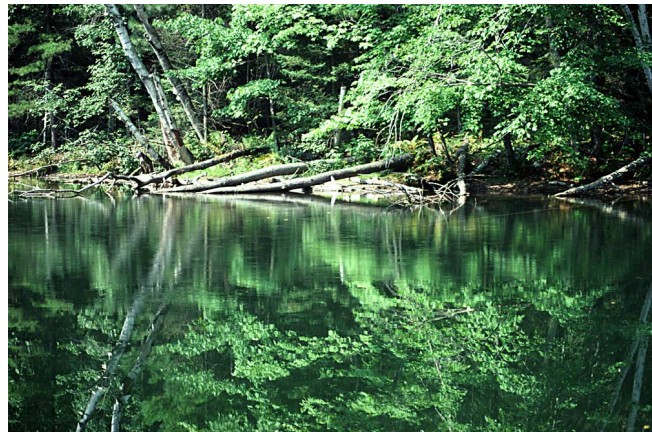
"A natural shoreline is a bridge between two worlds. Studies show that there can be as much as 500% more diversity of plant and animal species along a natural shoreline compared to upland areas."

- "A Fresh Look at Shoreland Restoration" fact sheet, UWEX, 1999

The Performance Measures

- We (WAL) have developed and provided informational materials for county zoning administrators to hand out to affected parties to make them more aware of local zoning decision-making processes, why it is important, and how to be effective as citizen participants.

- We (DNR, WAL) have worked with the Wisconsin County Code Administrators to establish a “hot-line” for lake and shoreline regulation and shoreland zoning questions.
- We (WAL) have established a mentoring program to guide citizens and lake organizations interested in working more effectively with local government.
- We (WAL) have worked with others to sponsor mandatory education for local land and water decision-makers (similar to state assessment training requirement) and we (UWEX) have designed and held training to meet this requirement.
- We (DNR) have provided informational materials and guides to the public that have provided consistent guidance on water regulation and zoning and lake use regulations.
- We (UWEX) have published a comprehensive manual on Wisconsin water law that may be used by citizens, local planners and consultants as well as local officials.
- We (DNR) have sought clarification on lake district and lake association standing as an “aggrieved party” in shoreland zoning and land and water use decisions.
- We (the Partnership) have made use of Burnett County and Big Green Lake shoreland protection and restoration incentive projects as demonstrations.
- We (DNR, WAL) have sought new revenue streams for Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to provide ongoing technical assistance to counties developing lake classification approaches and upgrading shoreland zoning.
- We (WAL) have sought legislation to more fairly assess lands in the “wasteland” category under the state’s land use value assessment system.
- We (WAL) have considered joining the coalition challenging the Department of Commerce’s authority in approving Comm 83 (septic system technology).
- We (DNR) have promoted and provided access and availability as well as a guide to the understanding and use of lake resource information and database for local land and water use plans and decision-making.
- We (DNR) have provided guidance, technical support and financial aid for the development of local land use plans under Smart Growth that supports lake ecosystem sustainability.



III. Investing Time and Money

The Vision

Embracing change and using it as an opportunity to guide the future of our lakes and involving diverse social and economic interests in decisions affecting our lakes

Goal G

Understanding and managing change

The Strategies

1. Use the opportunities that change provides to direct and focus our efforts.
2. Explore and use incentives to enable diverse economic and social interests to participate in decisions affecting our lakes.
3. Establish methods to monitor and report trends that are applicable to lake programs and issues.
4. Create change opportunities ourselves.
5. Identify and select the best available technology appropriate for a situation and use it to set priorities, make decisions and accomplish tasks.
6. Seek opportunities and incentives for compatible uses of lakes by a diverse public.

The Performance Measures

- We (the Partnership) have established a “trends group” to track and report on change. Periodic updates will be provided via the Internet, newsletters, and the Wisconsin Lakes Convention.
- We (DNR) have developed and maintained an up-to-date source of lake information that is accessible to decision-makers and the public and that can be easily combined with other environmental and geographical information. Types of information available include: locational and geographical data, monitoring data, lake maps, fisheries data (including stocking data), sensitive critical area designations, shoreline and boat access sites, locations of invasive species, applicable ordinances, contaminants information, and local lake association information.

Change provides us with the opportunity to step back, be creative and re-think how we do things. Wisconsin lake communities have effectively addressed change in a number of ways:

- *Vilas County’s Land Conservation Department created a Water Specialist position to provide educational and technical assistance to lakefront property owners*
- *A group of citizens, businesses, local and state government officials in Green Lake County have partnered to implement the Revitalization of Shoreland Vegetation Project (RSVP) to preserve and restore native vegetation along the shore of Big Green Lake*
- *Thirty-three counties (where over 80% of Wisconsin lakes are found) and several towns have undertaken land use-based, lake protection projects to protect our waters*
- *Shell Lake’s Theatre in the Woods Production Company brought us “Balance and Swing,” a musical production that looks at the issue of shoreland development*

- We (DNR) have updated the Lakes Book to include non-motorized access opportunities (e.g. swimming, hiking, picnic, public/handicap-accessible fishing piers, carry-in launch) and have made it available electronically to the public.
- We (the Partnership) have produced regional materials to help guide the public in their choice and use of Wisconsin lakes.
- We (UWEX, DNR) have worked with the television program *Into the Outdoors* to ensure that lakes are addressed as part of the series.
- We (WAL) have teamed with local angling groups to co-sponsor three to five community education programs that provide lake experiences, monitoring opportunities, and shoreline fishing opportunities for underserved groups.

The Vision

Using human and financial resources effectively to protect and enhance lake ecosystems, while creating new opportunities to capitalize on the relationships between people, water resources, lake values, social values, and the economy

Goal H

Capitalizing on human and financial investments and lake resource values

The Strategies

1. Quantify the economic value of lakes and other water resources in order to promote stewardship and justify human and financial resources devoted to lake issues and needs.
2. Develop an operational and marketing plan to advance an innovative, assertive approach toward generating new funding and positions, and track progress. Ask for funding and support more often and from many different sources.
3. Assertively pursue current and new (increased) local, county, state and federal funding and positions, including the lake grant program (e.g. lake specialists, shoreland specialists, county conservation positions devoted to water resources, educators, outreach).
4. Seek increased non-governmental funding and resources (e.g. foundations, bequests, land trusts, easements, corporations, memberships, and donations).
5. Develop, recognize and increase volunteer force for education, advocacy and management.
6. Develop financial incentives (e.g. cost share, tax breaks) to promote voluntary lake conservation strategies on private lands.
7. Recognize differing information and management needs regionally and statewide, so funding and positions are flexibly applied.

The lake management planning grants program has recently been revised to allow for small-scale (up to \$3,000) projects in addition to large-scale (up to \$10,000) projects. This will allow for more volunteer chemistry monitoring, lake organization and education efforts, in addition to a continued emphasis on comprehensive lake management plans.

The Performance Measures

- We (WAL) have worked cooperatively to develop and get passed biennial budget initiatives and statutory language issues for inclusion in the DNR's budget, governor's budget, and state budget.
- We (WAL) have helped to pass legislation with approved funding for a Wisconsin invasive aquatic species prevention and control program similar to the one in Minnesota.
- We (WAL) have helped to pass legislation to increase funding for lake planning, lake protection and lake classification grant programs to keep up with the increasing demand for existing and new eligible activities, including shoreland protection, restoration and youth education.

- We (DNR) have implemented a fully integrated community financial assistance grant program for planning, restoring and protecting lake ecosystems and watersheds that works for local communities.
- We (WAL) have developed and promoted a “Friends of Wisconsin Lakes” program to identify a network of at least 15,000 friends (at least one friend for every lake in Wisconsin) to support and protect Wisconsin lakes.
- We (UWEX) have produced and delivered information to the public and decision-makers throughout the state regarding the economic value of Wisconsin lakes.
- We (the Partnership) have provided ideas and support to graduates of the Lake Leadership Institute to strive for involvement in activities that benefit Wisconsin lakes. We have surveyed the graduates and distributed information on their activities and accomplishments.
- We (the Partnership) have teamed with angling and boating groups to ensure at least a 1% participation rate in the lake research check-off box program available on fishing license and boat registration forms.



Some of the best things on the landscape of Wisconsin are there because of the vision of a few good women and men.

