

# Operation LEAP





Wisconsin Association of Lakes
One Point Place, Suite 101
Madison, WI 53719

#### A Report on Operation LEAP, a Proposed Lake Education and Appreciation Program for Elementary Students in Wisconsin's Public Schools

Operation LEAP is a youth water education program designed to help youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and protect them at the same time. LEAP offers children, ages 9 through 11, the tools they need to understand why our lakes need their care and how they can safely enjoy our lakes without causing the lakes nor themselves any harm. Because it takes place in our schools, LEAP can reach all Wisconsin children, unlike other programs. Operation LEAP (for Lake Education and Appreciation Project) is 10 - 12 hours of lake education activities, water safety training and related lake protection information for youngsters. It is designed to be offered over the course of one week.

Operation LEAP was developed at the New Auburn School. It was a project initiated by our school environmental club, the Lakes Project, and was also part of our ongoing Youth Service Learning effort. The participating elementary students. assisting high school students, teachers, administrators and parents, regarded the event as highly successful. The format of LEAP is uncomplicated: Students earn tickets by completing lake-related learning activities. Older students are recruited to assist. Accumulated tickets are used at our LEAP Lake Fair, which is similar to a penny carnival. There, students engage in more learning activities and win prizes donated by local businesses and, when possible, local lake associations. (See attached LEAP Schedule and Checklist.)

Following two successful implementations of our LEAP pilot and after due reflection, we conclude that Operation LEAP can be easily incorporated into the elementary classroom schedule while offering the elementary teacher a unique, almost effortless infusion of environmental education focused on lakes.

We found ample boating safety and lake education information available from the WDNR, UWEX, WAL and a wide variety of sources (See LEAP kit). Our High School student Lake Leaders helped choose the materials, activities and games included in LEAP. We consulted the school administration and classroom teacher,

arranged the schedule and the 4th grade class was eager to begin. Most students completed all of the activities offered, indicating a potential for additional activities and projects. The students worked hard to complete the various learning activities, knowing that each completion would result in a ticket for the upcoming LEAP Lake Fair game or contests. Guest speakers enjoyed a good audience. Many good questions were offered to the speakers.

The LEAP Lake Fair carnival went very well, lasting about 90 minutes. Activities included the Secchi Disk Dip, where students checked the clarity of colored water in a large trash container, Frog Feed, a bean bag toss, a fish pond, Frog Jump, and a fishing board game created by one of our high school student 'lake leaders'. Children who ran short of tickets were able to earn more by answering lake or safety questions at the ticket booth. Everyone left with many prizes and gained more knowledge about lakes and lake safety. Our LEAP graduation also ran smoothly. The students were proud to receive their diplomas. They took a pledge to help others be safe and take care of our lakes.

We asked local media to cover the LEAP Lake Fair and got very good coverage. Thank you certificates were given to guest speakers and other helpers. (All instructions and sample materials are included in our LEAP Kit.)

The Operation LEAP pilots were very successful. All students learned and had fun. The fourth grade classroom teacher was not burdened and, in fact, gained extra planning time because of our LEAP activities. This should help foster interest in LEAP among classroom teachers in other schools.

Assisting high school students enjoyed the project and the rewards of being able to help the younger students.

LEAP is flexible. It can be adapted to fit local conditions and needs. Content can be easily modified. Although designed to offer 10 to 12 hours of student contact time, the schedule can also be modified to fit the needs of the school. LEAP could work hand-in-hand with Adopt-A-Lake, part of the UWEX Lakes Program or other youth programs.

I believe the LEAP concept would be welcomed in other schools. Further, I believe the ultimate goal of seeing such a program offered in all Wisconsin schools is possible. LEAP could have a long term positive effect on those who engage in the program. This effect could be not unlike the effect Drivers' Education has had on motorists. If we imagine what our highways and streets might be like without Drivers' Ed, we may begin to see the potential of such a lake education and appreciation program. LEAP's end result could benefit our lakes, lake organizations, communities, enforcement, and all those who work to protect our lakes as well as the four million Wisconsinites who use our lakes.

Jim Brakken
President, Wisconsin Association of Lakes
New Auburn High School Lakes Project Advisor December 11, 2004

Enclosed with this report is a sample LEAP kit. The kit includes all instructions, sample letters, schedules, checklists, sample certificates and material sources needed to implement LEAP. Additional LEAP kits are available from the Wisconsin Association of Lakes.

Also enclosed is our list of teachers who have shown interest in implementing LEAP in their respective school districts.

Recommendations to expand Operation LEAP include:

- delivering LEAP kits to potential trial schools,
- soliciting reports from those schools,
- evaluating those reports and modifying LEAP as needed.
- Information on Operation LEAP will be available via the WAL newsletter and at the Wisconsin Lakes Convention.
- Lake associations and districts will be encouraged to promote LEAP locally.
- All activities within LEAP should reflect appropriate curricular notation as established by the Wisconsin Department of Instruction.

#### **Enclosures with LEAP Final Report:**

**LEAP Highlights** 

**Draft Schedule** 

**LEAP Checklist** 

Sample letter to parents

Sample script, day 1

Marketing materials Sample press release

Printout of the LEAP slideshow

List of teachers & schools interested in conducting a LEAP week

CD with copies of the above files

Sample Operation LEAP Kit [shipped under separate cover]

#### Operation LEAP

#### Proposal for Phase II

Operation LEAP was designed for students near grade 4. Phase II would offer students near grade 7 additional information and learning activities appropriate to their age. Phase III would offer students near grade 11 additional information and learning activities appropriate to their age. Phase II might include on the safety water training and very basic limnology as well as some leadership training. Phase III could include career information in addition to age appropriate on the water limnology and leadership training.

Because the basic format of Operation LEAP is unique to the age of the students targeted, a new format would need to be developed for the older students. Cost for development would likely range near the costs of the present program or near \$4,000 for each phase.

If we are not willing to prepare young people to receive our lakes tomorrow then why are we working so hard to protect our lakes today?

#### **Operation LEAP:**



#### A Lake Education and Appreciation Program for all Wisconsin Students

Operation LEAP can

waters what Driver's

streets and highways.

Ed has done for our

do for Wisconsin

Many fine tools and materials have already been designed to help Wisconsin youngsters develop good water related outdoor skills, ethics, boating safety skills, interest in lakes and streams, environmental attitudes and more. However,

Wisconsin lacks a uniform approach to deliver this information to all youngsters in an efficient manner. LEAP is the vehicle to do just that.

Operation LEAP is a delivery system. It is very low in cost, flexible and user friendly. It is

likely that LEAP would be welcomed in every school and community, including those in neighboring states.

Operation LEAP can do for Wisconsin waters what Driver's Ed has done for our streets and highways. LEAP can provide a uniform, planned lake education program to all Wisconsinites by the time they finish their public school career. Our schools provide the opportunity to reach every citizen with our best water education tools in a controlled, efficient manner.

Leap will instill good water skills and attitudes in our youngsters before bad habits are learned from others. LEAP will save us from having to break bad habits in adults, then re-training them with good attitudes, skills and behaviors - a very expensive and time consuming task. Because of this, LEAP stands to save time and money.

Operation LEAP's first target group is grade four students in Wisconsin schools. This age level [9-10] demonstrates the best readiness, interest and enthusiasm for both the information we need to present and the fast paced delivery method LEAP provides.

All of our schools introduce Wisconsin history, geography and social studies in grade four. It

makes sense to include information on Wisconsin lakes and streams at this age. LEAP would help satisfy DPI requirements in these areas plus meet part of the DPI mandatory science requirement for grade

Operation LEAP's next target group is grade seven and then grade eleven.

Programs will be customized to fit these age groups. Delivery format will change. By the time they leave grade eleven, all students will have been briefly exposed to the proper attitudes, ethics, water safety info, career

vignettes, as well as information about lakes, streams, recreational opportunities and more. With LEAP, *all* Wisconsin students will receive information on how and why to protect and preserve lakes.

Anticipated 'stumbling block': No grade four teacher has time to assist with yet another program. The solution: LEAP's design actually results in less work for the classroom teacher. LEAP also meets other DPI requirements giving the classroom teacher even more flexibility. Teachers will welcome LEAP.

LEAP may inspire youngsters to pursue outdoor activities and careers as well as gain a love for our lakes, streams and woodlands. Although not a primary goal, LEAP could increase necessary license sales in future decades as well as provide more environmental stewards needed to protect Wisconsin's outdoors in the future.

LEAP content can include many disciplines including but not limited to art, music, science, literature, history, social studies, computer tech, business skills, math and others. Career information, water safety and very basic limnology are contained within LEAP, as are lake courtesy, ethics and responsibility.

LEAP is a great opportunity for schools and communities to gain visibility and good PR with community and parents.

**LEAP uses older students to 'teach' younger students.** Both age groups respond very well to this. High school or middle school environmental clubs [such as Adopt-A-Lake or FFA] can easily administer LEAP.

LEAP uses water education materials already developed and tested. LEAP content is flexible.

Local lake associations and similar groups can
have input. This will help address issues important
to the lakes in the students' community as well as all
lakes and lake users in
Wisconsin.

LEAP can provide a

uniform, planned lake

education program to

all Wisconsinites by the

time they finish their

public school career.

Schools will receive a 'LEAP Kit' containing sources for funding, prizes and materials plus a checklist that helps plan LEAP Week. Also included: a LEAP CD with

many ready to print learning activities, posters to color, a list of websites for 'technology day', skit materials, templates for carnival games, etc.

Because LEAP Week is promoted prior to the event, the students are eager to participate. They engage in LEAP activities for 1 to 3 hours each day.

- Monday: LAKE GAMES DAY. Students begin earning tickets by successfully completing fun learning tasks and activities.
- Tuesday: GUEST SPEAKER DAY.
- Wednesday: TECHNOLOGY DAY. Internet searches of lake related fun websites.
- Thursday: LAKE FAIR DAY. Students use tickets to play learning games and win prizes in a carnival hosted by high school students.
- Friday: LEAP GRADUATION. Diploma and treats, pride and recognition.

On Lake Fair Day, the students earn prizes as they learn more by participating in water-related skits, a secchi dip game, frog toss, fish feed, fish pond and other lake games. At the end of LEAP Week students receive a diploma and treats. They also take a pledge to help others to be safe and take care of our lakes.

**LEAP** can be implemented at no cost to the school, other than minor printing [less than 25¢ per student.] LEAP can be funded by contributions from

local lake associations, sporting clubs, community clubs, business firms or school fundraisers.

Cost per student: Varies by community desires and local needs. Carnival prizes can be ordered for approximately \$1 per student. [500 small prizes for \$25.] Prizes such as pencils, stickers and posters are available from the USFS, DNR, local businesses and community organizations. Diplomas and some worksheets can be printed by the school. Carnival games are easily made by high school volunteers using simple materials and LEAP instructions.

The pilot for Operation LEAP was successful. Two more LEAP Weeks were equally successful.

LEAP satisfies a component of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership ten year strategic plan as well as DPI required Environmental Ed requirements. The Wisconsin Association of Lakes has resolved to continue development of LEAP as a means to protect our lakes by educating our citizens at an early age. The DNR

has approved a Lakes Planning Grant to pursue further development of LEAP. Other funding is likely as LEAP progresses.

LEAP will receive great community support because of its enormous potential to protect individual lakes across Wisconsin. Many lake associations, sporting clubs, community clubs, towns, cities, chambers of commerce and other groups are likely to welcome and support LEAP.

**LEAP** is: Children involved in positive activities to help our environment. Because of this 'double-positive', government and business leaders are likely to show support.

Parents like the program, as do administrators, teachers and local lake association members.

Finally, LEAP is a hit with the kids because it is fun, rewarding, lets them help the environment as they learn and succeed.

Jim Brakken jbrakken@newauburn.k12.wi.us



LEAPfrog logos by New Auburn Fifth Grade Art Class Draft Schedule and Checklist

#### Wisconsin Association of Lakes'

#### OPERATION L.E.A.P.

Lake Education and Appreciation Project

Operation LEAP is a special program designed to help youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and protect them at the same time. Operation LEAP (for Lake Education and Appreciation Project) will be a full week of lake education activities, water safety training and related lake protection information for youngsters. LEAP will offer children, ages 9 through 11, the tools they need to understand why our lakes need their care and how they can safely enjoy and benefit from our lakes without causing the lakes nor themselves any harm. They will also gain a sense of pride, ownership and reward as they learn they can protect their lakes.

Monday Introduction and LAKE GAMES DAY Emphasis on boating safety, responsible lake use and lake protection. Student Leader and helpers will explain the reason for LEAP week and how the youngsters can earn rewards by participating. Next, pass out worksheets, puzzles, printed games, and coloring sheets, with instructions. Students will earn 'tickets' for the lake fair activities by completing various learning tasks. Also, class divides into 5 groups for skit practice. One Lake Leader assigned to each group. Be sure to take photos of the activities.

Tuesday SPECIAL GUEST DAY (Potential media event). Guest speaker[s] will offer information. Emphasis on limnology, biology. Brief mention of careers and rewards of working with lakes. In the Q & A time after speech[s], tickets will be offered to students with questions. Following the presentation[s], questions may be asked by the Lake Leaders about info presented by speakers. Tickets to those with the correct answer. Certificate of appreciation given to the speaker[s]. Take photos &/or videotape.

Wednesday TECHNOLOGY DAY (Potential media event.) Everyone meets in the computer lab where high school leader and helpers host a tour of the internet with emphasis on websites focused on lake protection. Scavenger hunt format. Students will earn tickets based on those web items they discover during the session. Photograph.

Thursday LAKE FAIR DAY (Definite media event.) High school Lake Leaders set up booths, contest items, games, etc., at a special location such as the gymnasium, commons or a classroom. Everyone meets at the lake fair where we spend our tickets at the fishpond, lily pad toss, frog jump, secchi dip, and other games. Also have some relay races, contests, and skits. Any students who did not earn enough tickets in previous days can go to the ticket booth where they can get a ticket for answering a random lake question correctly. Everyone "Pitches In" and helps clean up the area at end of Lake Fair in a contest reflective of a litter clean up contest. Photograph and/or videotape.

Friday Operation LEAP AWARDS DAY (Potential media event.) In our final meeting a high school Lake Leader will remind the students of the need to protect our lakes and to be safe when near the water, plus the benefits of being an environmentalist. LEAP Graduation Diplomas are given to each student along with remaining rewards, prizes. Guests, such as local lake association folks, school or community officials, parents, etc., can attend. Treats are provided. Take photos.

Pr	ior to LEAP Week: [Items with * indicate acknowledgement of sponsors and contributors.]			
	Invite 5 to 10 interested high school Lake Leaders to participate. Assign one Lake Leader as the			
	LEAP Photographer. This student will take pictures every day plus get some photos of the planning			
	and preparation. Assign a student leader to each day. All others will assist as needed.			
	Create a file and save everything for future reference.			
☐ Prepare a draft schedule for the 5-day event. Include lake courtesy, lake protection				
	other critters both in and near the lake, aquatic plants, development problems, pollution,			
	water/boating safety, rewards of stewardship and careers, using materials provided with			
	Operation LEAP kit.			
	Contact local businesses for contribution of prizes, treats, funds if necessary. Purchase prizes if			
	possible and needed.			
	teacher's schedule. [In our case, grade 4 in our elementary school.]			
	Reserve room[s] for mini-lake fair, computer activities, other activities, as needed.			
	Inform building supervisor[s] of the event.			
	Invite local lake association to provide volunteers for Lake Fair Day to share ownership with the			
	lake group. Also invite other teachers to participate with the planning.			
	Contact DNR, local lake association, others, for speakers. Fisheries Mgr, Warden, limnologist?			
	Contact DNR, UWEX, WAL and others for some of the materials, hand outs, etc.			
	Meet as needed with Lake Leaders to finalize schedule and prepare for the week.			
	Contact media to have coverage for at least one of the daily activities.			
	Send a note home to parents informing them of their student's participation in the event. Invite			
	them to attend one of the functions.*			
	Organize all handouts, materials, games, prizes, etc.			
	Create posters publicizing the event. Younger students can help to generate their interest in the			
	event. Post in school and community.*			
	Print certificate of appreciation for speakers, volunteers. Print LEAP Graduation Diplomas with			
	names of the target group students.			
	Take photos of students preparing for the event. [Making posters, planning meetings, etc.]			
	Call to confirm speakers and media.			
Ш	Meet with Lake Leaders to make final preparations for the week.			
Fol	low up:			
. J.	Send thank you letters to speakers, volunteers, supporting firms and agencies.			
	Create a photo display and a display of supporting firms and organizations.*			
	Get classroom teacher and student feedback on how to improve next year's event.			
	Contact [Wisconsin Lakes Partnership? Adopt-A-Lake? WALLS?] to report the event's.			
	Submit a post LEAP press release to WAL'S LAKE CONNECTION and UWEX'S LAKE TIDES			
	newsletters and other publications.*			
	Write up in school newsletter, yearbook, local lake association newsletter including list of			
_	supporting firms and organizations.*			
	Throw a pizza party for the Lake Leaders and appropriate volunteers. Local lake organization may			
_	want this assignment.			

#### [Your school name]'s

#### OPERATION L.E.A.P.



Lake Education and Appreciation Project

#### Grade 4 Parents:

Beginning [Enter start date], our [4<sup>th</sup>] graders will participate in our school's Operation LEAP. Operation LEAP (for Lake Education and Appreciation Program) will be a full week of lake education activities, water safety training and related lake protection information for youngsters. LEAP is a special program designed to help youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and protect them at the same time. LEAP will offer our 4th graders the tools they need to understand why our lakes need their care and how they can safely enjoy and benefit from our lakes without causing the lakes nor themselves any harm. They will also gain a sense of pride, ownership and reward as they learn they can protect their lakes. [The ???? Lake Protection Association will assist.] LEAP activities are all done at school. No swimming is involved.

Operation LEAP will be a fun, educational program for our 4<sup>th</sup> graders. You're welcome to join us on Thursday or Friday, if you wish to see, firsthand, the merits of this program. Thanks! [Teacher signature]

Monday, 10:50 - 11:30 Introduction and LAKE GAMES DAY Emphasis on boating safety, responsible lake use and lake protection. Student Leader and helpers will explain the reason for LEAP week and how the youngsters can earn rewards by participating. Next, we pass out worksheets, puzzles, printed games, and coloring sheets, with instructions. Students will earn 'tickets' for the lake fair activities by completing various learning tasks. Class divides into 4 groups for skit practice.

Tuesday, 9:15 - 10:30 SPECIAL GUEST DAY [List info about your guest speaker.] In the Q & A time after speech[s], tickets will be given to students with questions.

Wednesday, 9:15 - 10:00 TECHNOLOGY DAY Everyone meets in the computer lab where a high school leader and helpers host a tour of the internet with emphasis on websites focused on lake protection. Scavenger hunt format. Students will earn tickets based on those web items they discover during the session. [Option: Choose one of the recommended videos on Lakes and have a Q & A session with tickets for good responses.]

Thursday, 1:00 - 3 LAKE FAIR DAY High school Lake Leaders set up booths, contest items, games, etc., in the gymnasium. Everyone meets at the lake fair where we spend our tickets at the fishpond, lily pad toss, frog jump, secchi dip, and other games. Any students who did not earn enough tickets in previous days can go to the ticket booth where they can get a ticket for answering a random lake question correctly. Everyone "Pitches In" and helps clean up the area at end of Lake Fair.

Friday, 9:15 - 10:00 Operation LEAP AWARDS DAY Join us as LEAP Graduation Diplomas are given to each student. Treats will be provided.

#### Sample LEAP script for day 1, lead student.

Modify to fit your needs.

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and these are high school students working to help our lakes. We're here today to tell you about Operation LEAP.

LEAP stands for Lake Education and Appreciation Program

How many of you have a favorite lake you've been to? Have you been to the beach or park out on Round Lake? Everyone loves lakes. We like to swim and fish and play in lakes. We like to watch all the birds and animals who depend on our lakes. Everyone wants our lakes to stay clean and healthy so we can always enjoy them.

Our lakes are in trouble, though. They are becoming polluted and over crowded. The fishing on many lakes is really bad. In some lakes, you can't even eat the fish because of the chemicals in the lake. Swimming is not allowed in some lakes.

We want you to be safe when you're at the lake. We also need you to help us help our lakes by learning about them. That's what Operation LEAP is all about. So . . . lets dive in!

Today we will give you some fun projects and activities to help you learn about lakes. Each time you complete an activity you will receive a mark on this tally sheet for one ticket. You should try to collect as many tickets as you can because on Thursday, you will be able to use your tickets to win prizes at our Operation LEAP Lake Fair in the gym.

Our first activitity is from the National Safe Boating Council. Turn to the WRONGWAY LAKE page of the booklet BOATING SAFETY SIDEKICKS. Find things in the picture that are wrong. We have tickets for each correct answer.

If you complete all of the activities in the book, you can win 4 tickets. [10 minutes work time] Finish the book at home and put your completed projects in the blue box in your room.

Next we have a WDNR boating safety coloring sheet worth 2 tickets when done, and a WDNR fish coloring book worth 2.

Lakes Project mazes and word searches are worth 1 each.

The RIBBON OF LIFE Quiz from Living by Water is worth 2 tickets when done.

30 minutes of supervised work time. Then divide class into 5 groups: Black Crappies, Yellow Perch, Bluegills, Rainbow Trout and Pumpkinseeds. Each group gets copies of two Lakes Project Courtesy Posters for a coloring contest. Pass out other brochures, activities plus a zip loc baggie for the tickets and a plastic grocery bag for all the handouts.

Wrap up: Remember to put your name on your projects and put them into your blue box. Do your regular homework first, then work on your Operation Leap activities. See you tomorrow for our guest speaker! Thanks, everybody!

Your support of youth water education is an investment in the future of your lake and all of Wisconsin's children! Operation LEAP

If we aren't willing to prepare young people to become the caretakers of Wisconsin's waters tomorrow, then why are we working so hard to preserve our waters today?

Operation LEAP





## Operation LEAP



# Sign up here for a LEAP Kit for your local school!

Wisconsin Association of Lakes One Point Place, Suite 101 Madison, WI 53719

For more information, contact Jim Brakken Email jbrakken@newauburn.k12.wi.us

## Join us at the NWEA Convention on 2 for info on Thursday, Session 1 or 2 for info on Thursday, Session 1 ON OPERATION L.E.A.P



Appropriate for grades 4 – 6 and for middle school or high school environmental or science classes & clubs.

Operation LEAP (Lake Education and Appreciation Project), is a special program designed to help youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and streams and protect them at the same time. It is a full week of lake education activities, water safety and related lake protection information for youngsters. LEAP is a fun approach to teaching our students about Wisconsin's wonderful surface waters.

Operation LEAP is designed to be easily incorporated into the elementary classroom schedule. It offers the elementary teacher a unique, almost effortless infusion of environmental education. The students get a variety of fun activities ranging from activities and learning games to a simple but fun children's lake fair. The week ends with a lake awards day where every student is recognized for what he or she has learned. All students get prizes and a certificate of recognition. Parents are informed of their child's accomplishment and a write up goes in the local paper. Classroom teachers *gain* planning time!

The NWEA LEAP sessions will be hosted by Jim Brakken, New Auburn teacher and President of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes. Students from the New Auburn High School *Lakes Project* will assist. The Wisconsin Association of Lakes is developing LEAP with help from the WDNR and UW Extension.

Schedule conflict?
Stop in between sessions for an info packet or email jbrakken@neawauburn.k12.wi.us



#### Operation LEAP features:

- Target grades: 4, 5 or 6
- Middle or high school students from your district assist.
- Very flexible schedule and content. Actual average time: two hours per day for 5 days. Again, very flexible.
- Addresses DPI science requirements and Wisconsin studies.
- No lake needed, no 'on the water' exposure required.
- No cost to schools.
- Materials and content are available but can be modified to fit your needs.
- LEAP 'KIT' will contain plans, souces and materials.
- LEAP promises no additional work for teachers.
- LEAP program is in development stage. Ground floor opportunity for your school.
   Grants may be available for participating schools.
- Guest speaker and slide show about local lakes featured.
- Students earn tickets by completing fun learning activities.
- The tickets will be used at your school's Lake Fair, a simple but fun carnival of learning games pertaining to lakes.
- Each student will earn a LEAP diploma and many prizes.
- Best of all, our youngsters will be safer at the lake, smarter about water science and more sensitive to Wisconsin's wonderful lakes.



### OPERATION L.E.A.P. THE LAKE EDUCATION AND APPRECIATION PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR ALL YOUNGSTERS

Who will inherit our lakes? Will tomorrow's lake owners be prepared to become the caretakers of our surface waters? Where will youngsters learn important water safety information and about the need to protect our fragile lakes? These and other questions may be answered with *Operation LEAP*. The Wisconsin Association of Lakes would like you to participate!

What is LEAP? It is a special program intended to help all youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and protect them at the same time. Operation LEAP is designed as a full week of lake education activities, water safety training and related lake protection information for all fourth grade students coordinated by junior high and/or high school students. Using this very successful approach, we hope to offer all Wisconsin children, ages 9 through 11, the tools they need to understand why our lakes need their care and how they can safely enjoy our lakes without causing the lakes nor themselves any harm. Our 'LEAP kit' includes most, if not all, of the materials you will need. In our pilot programs we found that LEAP Week could be offered at no cost to the school. The participating classroom teachers actually had a decrease in workload during the week! Best of all, the kids had a great time, learned a lot about lakes, water safety, leadership and they received lots of prizes and other rewards.

Operation LEAP was conceived and designed by youth water education advocate, Jim Brakken. Brakken is President of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes where he helps coordinate WAL's youth education effort. Operation LEAP complies with the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership's Strategic Plan. WAL recently passed a resolution and received a Wisconsin Lake Planning Grant to continue study of Operation LEAP as a potential statewide program. The Wisconsin Association of Lakes feels it is possible that LEAP may be offered not only to Wisconsin students, but also to children in neighboring states. WAL, along with other organizations and agencies, regards LEAP and other youth water education efforts as a key to long term protection of our surface waters.

The basic premise is this: Either we train our youngsters at an early age about the safe and proper use of our lakes or we will be faced with the task of 'untraining' them of their bad habits at a later age and then re-educating them about responsible lake use. The latter is a very expensive, difficult task. We need to reach our youngsters at an early age and reinforce proper environmental and safety concepts as they develop.

In some respects, LEAP is like the very successful driver's ed programs in our schools. Driver's Ed is successful because it offers every citizen the same organized information and training. LEAP could do the same. Every student could receive the same information and training needed for a safe, environmentally sound approach to the use and care of our surface waters. Although the initial focus of Operation LEAP is grade four. The program will expand to include other grades in future years.

How can you help? Your school could be included as a charter participant of this important new program. If you work with fourth graders, middle or high school students you should explore this great opportunity for your program, students and school. Attend one of the special LEAP sessions at the October NWEA convention in Eau Claire. A complete overview will be offered, including some great 'perks' for your students and program. If you cannot attend, please phone or email your request information about participating in LEAP's development.

With your participation you may help LEAP become Wisconsin's answer to the safe, healthy future of our lakes and our youngsters. Thank you for your interest in Operation LEAP, our lakes and those who use them. We look forward to hearing from you!





### Contributions to Operation LEAP should be directed to:

### Wisconsin Association of Lakes One Point Place, Suite 101 Madison, WI 53719

Donations are tax deductible.

For more information, contact Jim Brakken Email jbrakken@newauburn.k12.wi.us

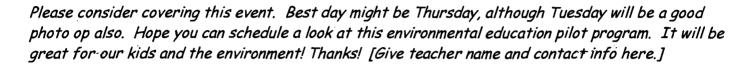


Sample News Release. [Fill in your own information.]

[your school name]'s

#### OPERATION L.E.A.P.

<u>Lake Education and Appreciation</u>
<u>Project</u>



Beginning [date] our [4<sup>th</sup>] graders will experience Operation LEAP. Operation LEAP (for Lake Education and Appreciation Program) will be a full week of lake education activities, water safety training and related lake protection information for youngsters. LEAP is a special program we've designed to help youngsters learn how they can safely enjoy our lakes and protect them at the same time. LEAP will offer children, grade[4,] the tools they need to understand why our lakes need their care and how they can safely enjoy and benefit from our lakes without causing the lakes nor themselves any harm. They will also gain a sense of pride, ownership and reward as they learn they can protect their lakes. Operation LEAP should be a fun, educational program for our [4<sup>th</sup>] graders. You're welcome to join us if you wish to see, firsthand, the merits of this great program.

Monday, [2-25-02, 9 - 10:30] Introduction and LAKE GAMES DAY Emphasis on boating safety, responsible lake use and lake protection. Student Leader and helpers will explain the reason for LEAP week and how the youngsters can earn rewards by participating. Next, we pass out worksheets, puzzles, printed games, and coloring sheets, with instructions.

Tuesday, [1:30 - 3:15] SPECIAL GUEST DAY [List speaker info here]

Wednesday, [8:30 - 9:30] TECHNOLOGY DAY Everyone meets in the computer lab where high school leader and helpers host a tour of the internet with emphasis on websites focused on lake protection. Scavenger hunt format.

Thursday, [1:30 - 3] LAKE FAIR DAY High school Lake Leaders set up booths, contest items, games, etc., in the gymnasium.] Everyone meets at the lake fair where we spend our tickets at the fishpond, lily pad toss, frog jump, secchi dip, and other games. Also relay races, contests, and skits.

Friday, 3-1-02, 8:30 - 9 Operation LEAP AWARDS DAY In our final meeting a high school Lake Leader will remind the students of the need to protect our lakes and to be safe when near the water, plus the benefits of being an environmentalist. LEAP Graduation Diplomas will be given to each student. Guests are welcome. Treats will be provided.

#### **LEAP Teacher List**

December 15, 2004

The following teachers have requested an Operation LEAP Kit. Those that implement LEAP will receive a follow-up interview to assist in further development of LEAP content.

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#### **School District or |City**

Pat Keela Menomonie

Paulette Klatt Prairie Farm

Dan Kevaw Shell Lake

Larry Flynn Spooner

Kayleen Slaughter Osseo-Fairchild

Jane Javer Cadott

Jeff Bowe Cadott

Dan Loomis Chippewa Falls

Shane Dupris New Richmond

Diane Slinden UWEC - Boyceville

Margie Winter Fon du Lac

Deb Weitzel Middleton