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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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JULY 2013



HEADWATERS *of the* ST. CROIX
ST. CROIX HEADWATERS STUDY

PRELIMINARY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

JULY 2013



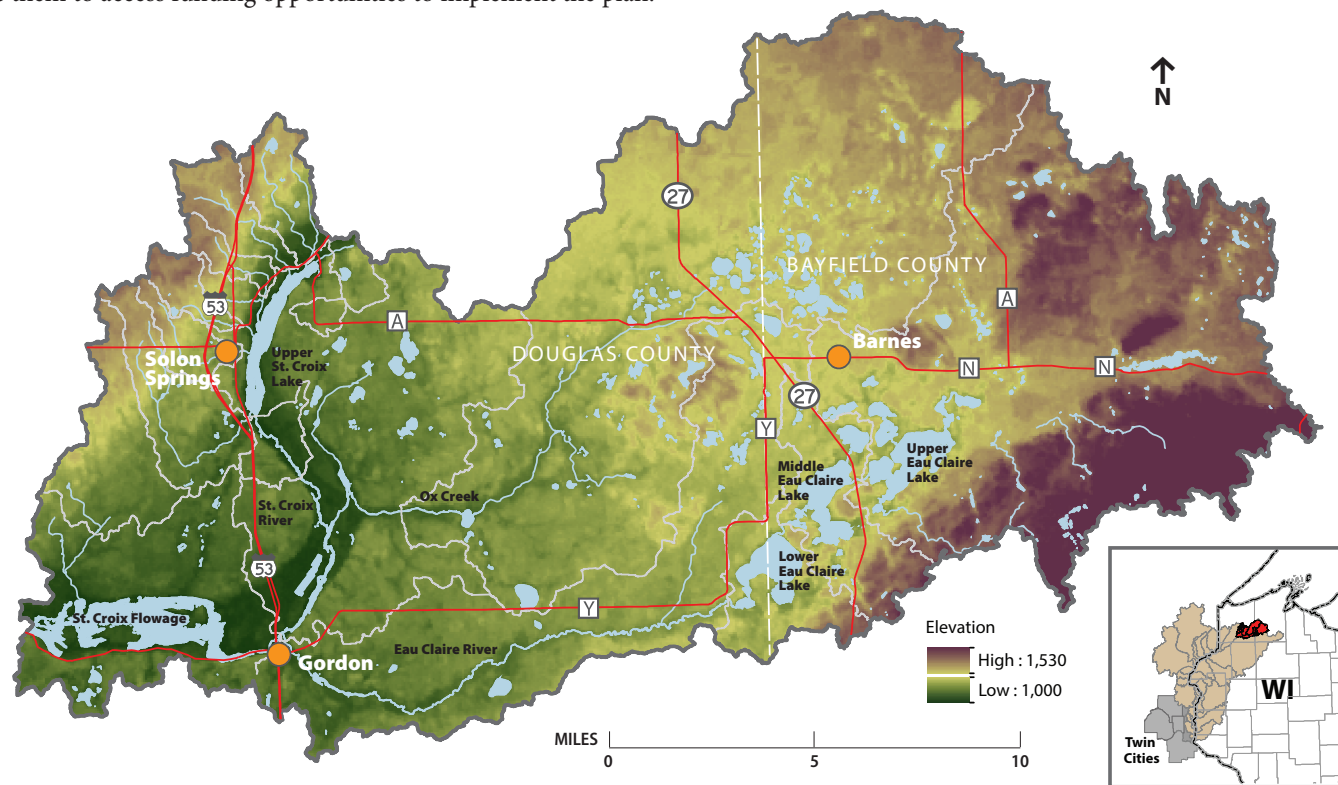
ST. CROIX HEADWATERS STRATEGIES

TWO GATHERINGS PROVIDED INPUT FOR THIS PRELIMINARY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

one with local government elected officials and staff and another with citizen organizations and the public.

The *Headwaters of the St. Croix Watershed Study Summary Results* provides an overview of an extensive six-year study completed by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and initiated by many partners including the Upper St. Croix Watershed Alliance. Both reports are found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/publications/stcroix/>.

The Preliminary Implementation Plan describes ideas and actions that can be broken down into more specific detail in future plan(s). We suggest partners adopt the Preliminary Implementation Plan in its entirety or specific goals and strategies within it to show support for the study and plan; take a cooperative watershed management approach; and/or enable them to access funding opportunities to implement the plan.



ST. CROIX HEADWATERS GOALS

Water Quality

Preserve the excellent water quality of the St. Croix Basin Headwaters.

Work to improve water quality for water bodies that approach or exceed water quality impairment thresholds.

Decrease watershed phosphorus load by five percent.

Wetlands

No Net Loss of Wetlands – by both acreage and function.

Restore areas of historic wetland loss.

Aquatic and Riparian Habitat

Protect and restore critical aquatic and riparian (shoreland) habitat.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Prevent aquatic invasive species spread into and within the Headwaters.

Project Coordination

Establish a Community Watershed Advisory Panel to guide watershed implementation efforts and ensure watershed health. Include towns, realtors, land trust, lake and river organizations, Douglas County Association of Lakes and Streams, Bayfield County Lakes Forum, County elected officials and staff, and DNR and UWEX staff.

Seek funding for watershed panel support and coordination. Funding could be available from DNR or EPA (Healthy Watersheds Initiative).

Employ a Watershed Coordinator to coordinate the panel, assist in the development of a more detailed action plan with priorities for implementation, identify partnerships, seek funding, implement action items, and provide technical assistance to property owners. Establish sub-watershed committees and/or action-focused task forces.

Education and Incentives

Develop an Education and Outreach Program

- Build upon existing education and outreach efforts of lake and river organizations. These organizations are well suited to share information. (See citizen meeting notes for examples.)
- Identify priority topics and desired behaviors using watershed study results as a guide.
- Property owners need to understand the impacts of development and ways to mitigate these impacts.
- Conduct market research to develop programming.

Numerous potential educational methods are included in the citizen meeting notes.

- Distribute information about land use restrictions and rationale through realtors, or perhaps even require through regulation.
- A handbook geared toward town officials would be very helpful. It should be concise, emphasize where to go for help, review available BMPs, and discuss boat landings and roads and culverts.
- Host a “Learn about your Lakes” series in Bayfield and/or Douglas County.
- Develop/update property owner guides to lake protection.

Consider tax incentive payments for shoreland buffers based upon the Burnett County model.

Training

Provide training for lake water quality monitoring – need to monitor small lakes e.g., those that feed to Upper and Middle Eau Claire Lakes.

Monitoring

Monitor to identify additional water quality impairment in the watershed. Identify lakes and streams that don't have enough historical monitoring data.

Identify sources of phosphorus and provide specific recommendations for phosphorus reduction.

Complete shoreline inventories to establish baseline conditions.

Implementing Best Management Practices

Identify landowners in the Tier 1 drainage area to mitigate impervious surfaces; for example, with rain barrel installation and promotion.

Provide technical assistance and cost sharing for priority practice installation.

Land Use and Regulations

Encourage communication between lake and river representatives and local government elected officials and staff. Meeting attendance could facilitate communication.

Assist with updates and enforcement of Village of Solon Springs Shoreland Ordinance.

Consider more resource-protective zoning within specific towns and prioritize Tier 1 drainage areas.

- Increase minimum lot sizes.
- Require mitigation for all development – new and old.
- Create forestry preservation zoning using Farmland Preservation model.

Use wetlands functional classifications to site wetland mitigation in the best places. (Mitigation may be required by Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, City of Superior, and/or private entities.)

Identify priority critical habitat areas and take steps to preserve them (land trust or lake organizations).

Support related to study information

Provide map layers generated through the Headwaters study to Counties. Also display these layers on DNR Surface Water Viewer.

Provide help understanding detailed study results.