

WAL Lake Management Planning Workshop

Lake Management Planning Shaping the Future of Your Lake

June 26, 2008

Rhineland, WI

Sponsored by Wisconsin Association of Lakes

The following report is a summary of the presentations at WAL's Lake Management Planning workshop, compiled by a member of the Lake Altoona Rehabilitation and Protection District (LARPD) board who attended the workshop. You'll find lots of useful information here that can apply to Lake Altoona and other Eau Claire County waterways.

Lake management information sources:

How's the Water? (UW-Stevens Point)

People of the Lakes (WDNR)

Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grants (NR 198)

Lake Protection & Lake Protection & Classification Grants (NR 191)

Aquatic Plant Guidance Document

<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/ecology/APM/APMguideFull07.pdf>

Acronyms:

WAL: Wisconsin Association of Lakes

AIS: Aquatic Invasive Species

EWM: Eurasian Water Millefoil

The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership

Since its genesis in the early 1970s, the unique approach of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership has become a national model of a true partnership. Three groups form the core of this team. The [Department of Natural Resources](#) supplies the technical expertise and regulatory authority. The [University of Wisconsin Extension](#) builds linkages between stakeholders and provides supporting educational materials and programs.

Local lake people and [Wisconsin Association of Lakes](#) (WAL) are the third member, playing an integral role in the success of the partnership. From around the state lake organizations, property owners, and local governments 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 with shorelands, wetlands and rivers.

Major Points

Why does your lake need a management plan?

- Planning helps a community to control its fate!
- Planning can help correct past problems, protect and improve conditions, and manage a lake for the future.
- A plan can be a tool for education and consensus building.
- A plan enables a rational, systematic approach to dealing with issues.

Factors to consider:

- Development
- Habitat
- Fish/Aquatic Plants
- Recreational/Human Use Conflicts
- Nutrients/Water Quality
- Aquatic Invasive Species

The planning process

1. Appraisal of existing information
2. Public education and involvement
3. Collecting new data
4. Analysis
5. Recommendations
6. Implementation

Who's involved in planning:

- WDNR
- Lake group (sponsor or other partners of a grant/project)
- Private sector

WDNR lake grants

- Lake Planning Grants
 - Small scale
 - Large Scale
- Lake Protection Grants
- Aquatic Invasive Species Grants
 - Education, Planning and Prevention
 - Rapid Response
 - Established Population
 - Research and Demonstration
 - Maintenance

(See also “Lessons Learned”)

Presentations

Introduction

What lakeshore residents can do to protect their environment:

- Protect and/or establish native vegetation within a minimum of 35' of our lakeshore.
- Maintain our septic systems.
- Use zero-phosphorous fertilizers on our lawns and gardens.
- Avoid use of coal-tar based blacktop sealers.
- Avoid use of lead sinkers.
- Become a lake volunteer.
- Hold your elected officials responsible as they vote on lake -related issues.

Long Lake/Big Sand Lake

Majority of landowners' mentality was: "It's no use in trying, besides it is the state (DNR) responsibility."

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Results of Long Lake/Big Sand Plan

- Meetings were held with volunteers from each lake association
- Discussions/decisions driven by the four principles of why you need a lake plan (above)
- Each association agreed to develop a lake each association agreed to develop a lake management plan
- Lakes jointly applied/received a DNR lake planning grant in 2006
- Three-year DNR AIS treatment grants received for both lakes

Public involvement & education through:

- Educational activities
 - Workshops / Trainings
 - Packets / Literature
 - Presentations / Articles
- Planning meetings
- User surveys

Lake Management Overview (WDNR)

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Watershed

- Delineate size & land uses
- Partition nutrient loading
- Identify / prioritize nutrient loading concerns
- Assess riparian /shoreland area

Water quality

- Citizen Lake Monitoring Network
 - Nitrogen, Calcium
 - Suspended Solids
 - Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen
- Other Parameters
 - Nitrogen, Calcium
 - Suspended Solids
 - Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen
- Trophic Trophic State Index (TSI)
- Limiting nutrients

(Also evaluated: aquatic plants, fisheries)

Management recommendations:

- Active management (often AIS / EWM)
- Monitoring activities (water quality, water quality, AIS, weevils)
- AIS prevention
- Nutrient management (shoreland restoration, fertilizer reduction/elimination)
- Lake protection options (conservation easements – land trusts)
- Education
- Others (ordinances, critical habitat, fisheries, lighting, noise, etc.)

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The Planning Process (WAL)

What should a lake management plan contain?

- Baseline information and data
- Conclusions based upon the information and data—Sometimes this is the easiest part
- Goals for lake (and lake group)—Enhance, preserve, protect
- Path to reach those goals
- Actions by people

Issues to overcome for an effective lake management plan

- There are many ways to create a plan
- Too much attention given to squeaky wheel
- Notion that we are twiddling our thumbs while Rome is burning
- Preconceived ideas must be shed
 - Problems
 - Causes of problems
 - Solutions to problems
- Limited stakeholder involvement
 - Limited ownership in management plan
 - Limited understanding of the plan's value

Education

- Bi-directional flow between stakeholders and professionals
- Involve as many people as possible--diversity is important in a lake and the development of its management plan

Keep the process transparent—develop the plan in the open with no hidden agendas

Lake Julia Stewardship Project

Residents always thought Lake Julia was in pretty good shape. But we didn't know for sure. By 2001, talk was escalating about AIS. Lake Association members decided on a proactive approach to try to secure the health of Lake Julia.

"It's a lot easier and cheaper to maintain a healthy ecosystem than it is to fix one that has been degraded."

Process

Phase 1 –Wetlands Study

Phase 2 –Aquatic Plant Study

- 41 different species of plants found in the lake
- High level of plant diversity
- No invasive plant species
- Near-shore plant communities serve as fish nurseries

Phase 3 –Invertebrate & Small Fish Study

Phase 4 –Plant Survey for Aquatic Plant Mgt. Plan

- Point-Intercept Aquatic Plant Survey
- Work to be completed in 2008-09.
- Point-intercept method necessary to complete Aquatic Plant Management Plan.
- The survey will sample plants from hundreds of DNR-determined GPS locations around the lake.
- Compare results to 2003 Aquatic Plant Survey.

Phase 5 -Watershed, Water Quality, Near-shore Habitat,and Final Aquatic Plant Management Plan

An Aquatic Plant Management Plan will allow the Lake Julia Lake Association to ...

- Immediately develop a strategy to deal with an aquatic invasive plant, if one ever does get established in the Lake Julia biotic community.
- Allows prompt to access DNR funds to help the Lake Association effectively deal with the invasion.

Benefits to date:

- Collected a significant amount of baseline science.
- Beneficial to see how the lake community will change over time.
- Greatest unanticipated benefit is the amount knowledge lake association members and others have gained about how a lake functions.

Cloverleaf Lakes (near Shawano)

3 connected lakes, 320 acres, 400 properties (50% full-time residents)

Cloverleaf Lakes Protective Association Planning Phases

1. Pre-Planning/Design Phase
2. Study Group Phase
3. Transition Planning Phase
4. Implementation Phase

2004 Management Decision

- Preserve the Lakes for Future Generations
- Decisions Based on Data/Information
- Prevention/Long-Term Planning
- Resident-Driven Management

Many-layered but efficient organization

Newsletter survey in 2004

December 2004-February 2005 Prepared to Plan

- Design team
- Resource consultants
- Facilitators

Formed study groups for:

- Aquatic plants
- Invasive and nuisance species
- Watershed
- Water quality and habitat
- Recreational use

Distributed resident survey June 2005 (return rate 59%)

Timeline for Phase Two

February 2005: Study Group Kick-Off Event

March 2005 –January 2006: Monthly Study Group Meetings

May 2005: Progress Report to Annual Meeting

February 2006: Study Group Finale

May 2006: Report of Plan to Annual Meeting

Temporary task forces:

- Bio-Chem Indicators
- Recreational Use Plan
- Fisheries Management
- Resident Stewardship
- Directory-Ordinances
- Shoreline Restoration
- Aquatic Plant Mgt. (boat monitoring)
- Communications/Marketing

Permanent action committees:

- Lake Quality Management
- Aquatic Plant Mgt. (boat monitoring)
- Communications/Marketing
- Shoreline Restoration

Communication methods

- Lake Association Newsletter (4 per year)
- Township Newsletter (2 per year)
- Website (current news, newsletters, minutes, planning documents, photos)
- E-mail Messages
- Direct Mailings
- Directory (every third year)
- Annual Meetings
- Welcoming Committee

Lessons learned

1. Invite involvement.
 - Don't underestimate people's concern, interest, and expertise.
 - People will volunteer if the mission is clear and they know what needs to be done.
2. People support what they help create.
 - Awareness of lake resources has increased.
3. Leadership matters
 - Nurture leaders, workers, & cheerleaders
 - Vision and passion inspire others
4. Good facilitation helps
 - Stay organized & work through conflict
 - Provides accountability
5. Communicate, communicate, communicate
 - Multiple times, multiple ways
 - Be persistent
6. Establish structures for success
 - Lake Association
 - Study Groups
 - Task Forces
 - Committees
 - Annual meetings
7. Network, network, network
 - Seek help
 - Lake Association, Town, DNR, WAL, UW-Extension, Residents
8. Resource management relies on both citizen and government resources.
 - Empower residents and seek grants and other resources to support citizen efforts
9. Get your feet wet in the grant world.
 - AIS grants good for specific projects that serve as building blocks
10. Without data, you're just a person with an opinion.
 - Information/science-based decision making is needed to manage your irreplaceable resource.