

Portage County Lake Planning Process

Lake Leaders
Kemp Field Station
September 2010

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Center for Watershed Science and Education
UW-Stevens Point

Types of Planning

- Emotional
- Crisis
- Quick action

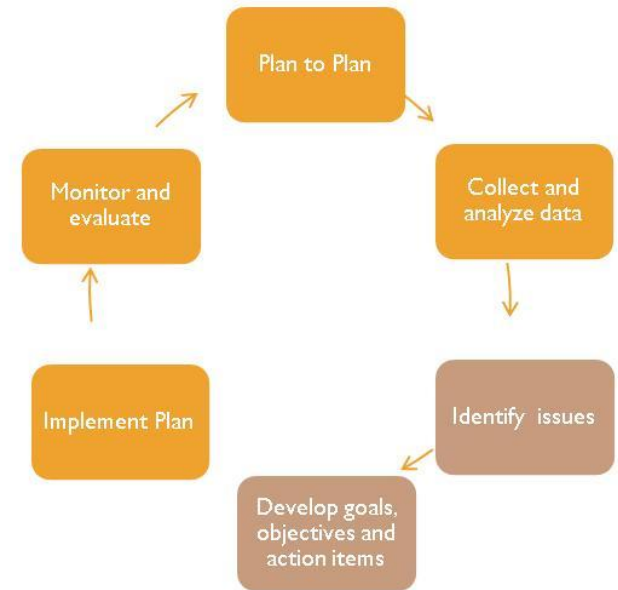


- Non-emotional
- Information based
- Discussion



Why Plan?

- Correct past problems, protect and improve current conditions, and provide for the future.
- Reduces conflicts
- Allows for proactive responses
- Opportunity for informed decision making
- Makes data actionable
- Sets a timeframe
- Makes someone responsible for actions



Overview

- 30 Lakes
 - 21 Completed or in the planning process
 - Beginning 3rd year
- Over 300 Participants
- Primary support team
 - Facilitator
 - 2 technical resources
 - County Land Conservation employee
- Secondary support team
 - WDNR specialists
 - UWEX Lakes
 - County Parks
 - UWSP/UWEX Faculty
 - Golden Sands RC&D
 - WAL
 - Other experts

Goals of Portage County Planning Process

- Build a network of citizens that are able to make informed decisions.
- Establish a structure for effective communication between citizens, local and statewide professionals that can be continued into the future.
- Enhance the ability of Portage County departments and local municipalities to protect and improve the condition of Portage County lakes for natural ecosystem functions and human uses.



Steps of the Portage County Planning Process

- Representatives from the municipalities invited and County Board Supervisor notified
- Citizens invited through survey letter, newspapers, e-mail listserv
- Series of 4-5 informational meetings addressing specific topics
- Public Meeting for review/adoption of plan
- Plan sent to DNR for approval
- Disseminate plan



Meeting 1

- Background information from the lake study and other studies
- Overview and description of the planning process
- Develop a vision for the lake
- Establish planning committee
- Determine decision making process
- Set meeting date, time, and topics
- Disseminate Binders



Meetings 2-5

- Information on identified issues
 - Input from topic specialists
 - Check lake (and other) study and survey results
- Discussion
- Develop goals, objectives and action strategies

Public Meeting

- Plan is presented to town/village/city boards and/or lake association/district and any interested member of the public
- Audience members may provide feedback, comments, suggestions and/or changes
- Committee requests that the board adopt the plan



Follow-Up

- Incorporate feedback from the public meeting
- Present plan to the WDNR
 - Incorporate feedback from Buzz
- Post finalized plan on the County website
- Distribute final version to the committee members, municipal board, county, WDNR, and any other entities adopting the plan

What Is In A Plan?

Each Plan Includes Chapters On:

- Background Information
- Water Quality/Quantity
- Shoreland and watershed management
- Aquatic Plants
 - In Lake
 - Near-Shore
 - Invasive Species/ Rapid Response Plan
- Fisheries and Recreation
- Communication
- Implementation of Plan

Each Topic Includes:

- Brief background/description of the topic
- Survey results
- Vision
- Goal
 - Objective
 - Actions
 - Lead Person/Group
 - Start/End Date
 - Resources

Water Quality and Watershed Scale Land Use

Spring Lake is host to a wide variety of plants, insects, fish, amphibians, and a variety of other animals that all depend on good water quality. Survey respondents indicated that water quality influenced their enjoyment of the lake and impacted their perceived value of Spring Lake. The majority of survey respondents felt that the water quality in Spring Lake was good. Citizens who were familiar with the lake felt that overall the water quality in Spring Lake has stayed the same over time. Data shows that water quality in Spring Lake is beginning to degrade and could use improvement. Spring Lake currently has high concentrations of both phosphorus and nitrogen which can fuel excess plant and algae growth in the lake. Groundwater is the major source of nitrogen entering the lake. The group recognizes that changes in land use practices in the surface and groundwater watershed are needed to improve the water quality in Spring Lake.

Vision: The Spring Lake Planning Committee envisions improving the water quality in Spring Lake.

Goal 6: Reduce phosphorus concentrations in Spring Lake to 36 ug/L with algae blooms (chlorophyll a concentrations 10 ug/L) occurring 39% of the summer. This will be accomplished by reducing nutrient inputs through the implementation of BMPs on 25% of the agriculture and developed land in the watershed. We will know that we have achieved this goal when monitoring indicates that median summer (5 samples/summer) total phosphorus levels are less than 35 ug/L for 3 consecutive years.

Objective 6.1: Reduce nutrients that are applied to the Spring Lake watershed (s) landscape by partnering with watershed landowners and agencies that can provide assistance/information to landowners in the implantation of water quality based best management practices.

Action	Lead person/group	Start/end dates	Resources
Encourage the county to assist landowners in the development of water quality based nutrient management plans in the watersheds. Utilize a watershed phosphorus index of what are the largest phosphorus contributors to Spring Lake.	Friends of Spring Lake	2010	Portage County Land Cons. Dept. NRCS
Encourage landowners to work with the county or NRCS on erosion control methods and vegetated waterways around Spring Lake and in the watershed.	Friends of Spring Lake	Ongoing	Portage County Land Cons. Dept. NRCS

Spring Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Plan 2009

2. To Positively I.D. the species send or bring specimen and additional information

- Collection date & county
- Your name, address, phone, email
- Exact location (Latitude/Longitude or UTM preferred, or Township/Range/Section)
- Plant name (common or scientific)
- Land ownership (if known)
- Population description (estimate number of plants, area covered)
- Habitat type(s) where found (forest, field, prairie, wetland, open water)

Send or bring specimen to:

Portage County AIS Coordinator

Golden Sands RC& D
1462 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-343-6214
E-Mail : skawinsp@co.portage.wi.us

UW-Stevens Point Herbarium

301 Daniel O. Trainer Natural Resources
Building
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-346-4248
E-Mail: ejudziejew@uwsp.edu

Wisconsin Dept. Natural Resources

Invasive Plant Education, Early Detection,
and Mapping Specialist
Brendon Panke
WI Dept. of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921
Phone: (608) 267-7438
E-Mail: invasiveplants@mailplus.wisc.edu

3. Once the specimen is dropped off or sent for confirmation, make sure to contact:

Portage County AIS Coordinator

Golden Sands RC& D
Contact: Paul Skawinski
Address: 1462 Strongs Ave. Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-343-6214
E-Mail : skawinsp@co.portage.wi.us

4. If an invasive species is confirmed, Paul Skawinski will contact the following people along with the contact list of citizens.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Water Resources Management Specialist
Scott Provost
473 Griffith Ave.
Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 54494
Phone: 715-421-7881
E-Mail: Scott.provost@wisconsin.gov
Who will contact them: Portage County AIS Coordinator

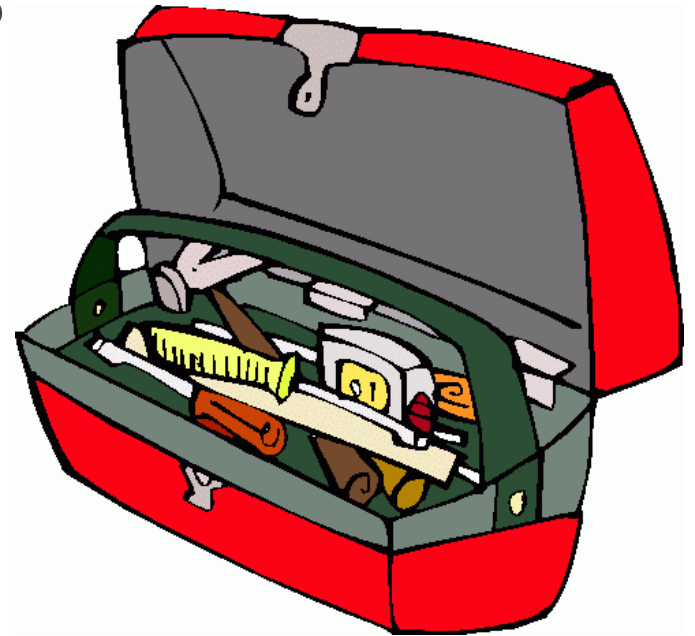
The town in which the waterbody is situated

Town of: Lanark
Contact: Theodore Marquardt - Chairperson
Phone: 715-366-2283
Who will contact them: Portage County AIS Coordinator

Town of: Buena Vista
Contact: Paul Cieslewicz - Chairperson
Phone: 715-366-4812 or 715-498-7551
Who will contact them: Portage County AIS Coordinator

Key Tools in Planning

- Informational Binder
- Lake Management Menu
- Survey Responses
- Recommendations from the Lake Study



Helpful Hints

- Meeting time limit of about 2 hours
- Meeting noticed in local papers, email listserv, and postcard meeting reminders sent a week ahead of time
- Shape of tables in meeting room should facilitate discussion
- Posters with questions on what needs to be covered that evening
- More than one facilitator and/or a technical resource
- County not take the lead

Challenges - Process and Implementation

- Conflicting goals by resource professionals
- Professional not comfortable presenting to lay audience
- Incorporation of plans into day to day actions
 - Highway Departments
 - Municipal land use decisions
 - Board of Adjusters
 - Policies and Plans
- Changes in (trained) personnel
- Long term communication
- Plan collecting dust

Common themes

- Build a sense of community
- Find ways to protect land long term
- Support change to County conservancy zoning
- Consider support or support WDNR CHDs
- Welcome packets
- Monitor, monitor, monitor!
 - Water levels, water quality, aquatic plants
- Invasive species

Lake Helen Planning 2009

- 4 Meetings – Informational and Planning
 - 144 Man hours
 - Helen Lake District
 - Watershed Residents and Non-riparian users
 - County Parks Department
 - County Land Conservation Department
 - Town of Alban
 - WDNR
 - Sporting Groups
- 1 Public Information Meeting

Information and Education

The Lake Helen planning committee is committed to providing information to the residents of Lake Helen in order to improve and protect Lake Helen.

Goal: Create informational and communication opportunities for Lake Helen landowners and users to develop interactions with others that are involved in decisions that affect Lake Helen.


Objective 1: Provide information about lake stewardship to new and existing landowners and residents on Lake Helen

- Welcome packet for new property owners *
- Informational Packet for property owners *

Informational Opportunities


Objective 2: Increase communications between all residents (part-time and full-time) on Lake Helen.

- Newsletters *
- Website *
- Wisconsin Lake Conference *



Home Activities Clean Boats - Clean Waters Aquatic Plants Fish General Info Contact Us Commissioners Meeting

Lake Management Plan




Lake Helen is a valuable resource. To maintain and improve the quality of this beautiful resource the Lake District, working with UWSP water scientist Nancy Turyk, developed a Lake Management Plan. This plan set goals dealing with the watershed and water quality, shorelands, aquatic plants, fisheries, recreation, informational opportunities, and updating and revising the plan. This plan was adopted at the annual meeting held in May, 2009, and will act as a guide for future activities and projects.

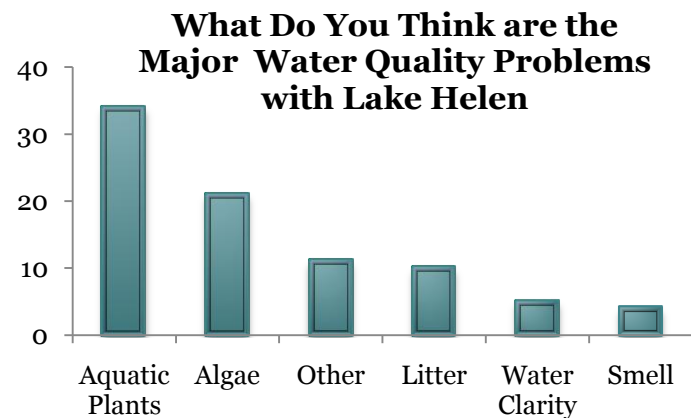
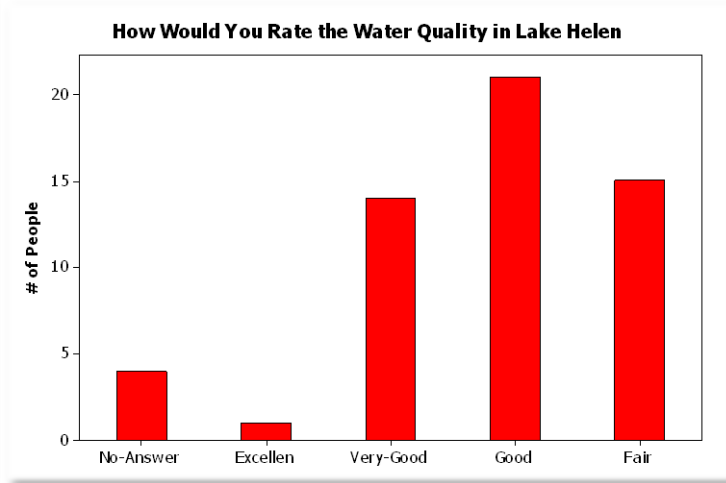
Many of the projects working toward these goals are highlighted on this website. Volunteers are needed to work on these projects. Please contact the Commissioners to help with these activities.

Read the Lake Management Plan (see download link below, file size is 1.2 mb)

A copy of the plan is available for each district member. Please contact one of the commissioners for your copy. You may download your own copy below. You may [read the plan now](#) on this site..

 lake-helen-lake-management-plan-final-draft.pdf
Download File

Water Quality Measures in Lake Helen



Trophic Scorecard 2002-2003

	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Total P (Spring Overturn)	On Average <30 ppb		During July 97 & 50 ppb
Inorganic N (spring overturn)			>0.3 ppm
Chlorophyll a (Summer)	<8 ppb		During July and Aug 7.1 to 12 ppb
Clarity		X	During July

Watershed and Water Quality

Goal: Reduce phosphorus loading from residential areas and the watershed to reduce the frequency of algae blooms

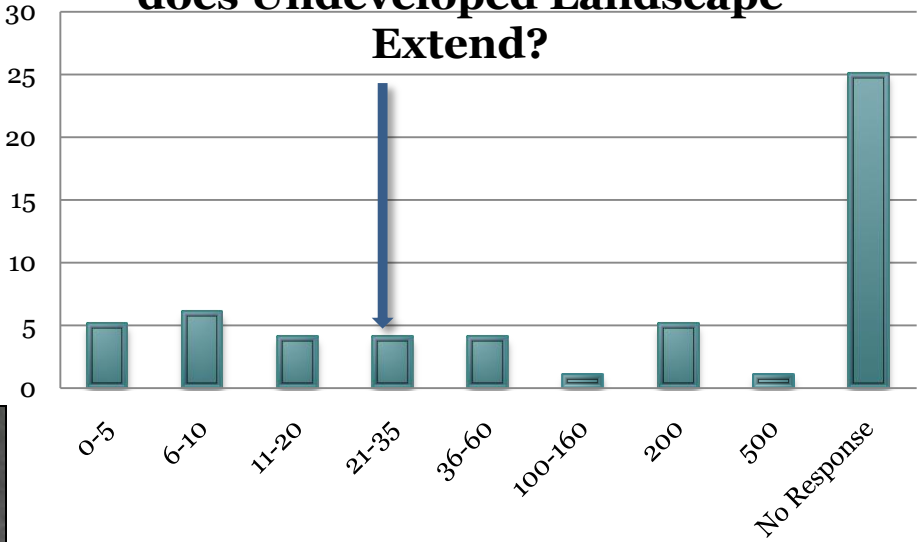
Objective 1: Reduce average summer total phosphorus to 17 ug/L.

- Septic systems and holding tanks
- Monitor water in culverts
- Install rain gardens *
- Native vegetation near the lake *
- Best management practices in watershed

Objective 2: Develop ownership/responsibility for management of runoff and the quality of Lake Helen for every landowner in the watersheds.

- Landowners are responsible for runoff from their property.
- List of green cleaning product
- Explore other sources of possible contamination to Lake Helen. *

How Far from the Lakeshore does Undeveloped Landscape Extend?



Shorelands

Goal: Create, restore, and protect healthy, stable shoreland habitats near and around Lake Helen.

Objective 1: All landowners are knowledgeable about the importance of shoreland habitat to Lake Helen's ecosystem.

- Understand current rules for shoreland zoning.
- Native vegetation near the lake *



Shorelands

Objective 2: Protect existing primary amphibian areas indentified in the Portage County Lake Study and identify other important habitat.

- Habitat in the county park and public boat landing.
- Lake walk – sensitive area and habitat areas*
- Critical habitat designation - DNR



Lake Helen District Welcomes You To Helena's Frog Walk



Hi, my name is Helena. Lake Helen has provided a great home to me and many of my friends and relatives for many generations. I was told that Lake Helen was born when glaciers that covered much of Wisconsin melted. That was around 10,000 years ago. Although Lake Helen claims to be only 5,000 years old, we all know better. Rumor is Lake Helen was named after the Huntington family's daughter Helen. Helen reportedly drowned while swimming in the lake. All of us in the animal kingdom think that's sad, but a nice way to honor her memory, and I am proud to share her name.



Join me for a hop around the lake and I'll show you some of the natural beauty Lake Helen provides and even some interesting historical points when you humans moved into the neighborhood. The entire hop is about 2 miles. You can walk or ride a bike if hopping is not your thing.

Look for my portrait painted on the road and the number on my back will match the story in the brochure. My body will point you in the direction of what to look at each stop. There is a small map on the back of each brochure to let you know where you are, along with some suggestions on how to make this journey safe and fun for everyone.



The first stop is right where you are standing. Just open the brochure and we'll get this adventure started.

1. The Park and Boat Landing is our 1st Stop. Portage County purchased the land in 1949. The gentleman that sold the land was said to be quite the entrepreneur. He sold many things, from ice and marl to rented homemade boats. He also managed to move an old school house across the Lake to expand his business.

The big blue sign you see is a reminder to all boaters of the plants and animals that threaten Lake Helen. It offers information on what boaters can do to protect Lake Helen and all her neighbors. There are even human volunteers that inform boaters about the problem and assist to make sure they have no foreign hitchhikers. My family and friends thank them for helping to protect my home from these invaders. You will find my next portrait just below the information sign at the end of the park. So if you are ready, let's get this show on the road (sorry- COL- croaking out loud)

2. The area across the road is a very special area to me. You call it a wetland, but I call it home. It's where I grew up with many of my relatives. It's also home to many other animals (many of whom are trying to eat me- yikes!) and insects (Yum!) These wetlands also act as filters removing nutrients and pollutants so Lake Helen receives only nice clean water for you and me to swim in. I'm a great swimmer, but I only know one stroke, the frog paddle, you call it the breast stroke. *Caution next stop- POISON IVY. Stay on the road.



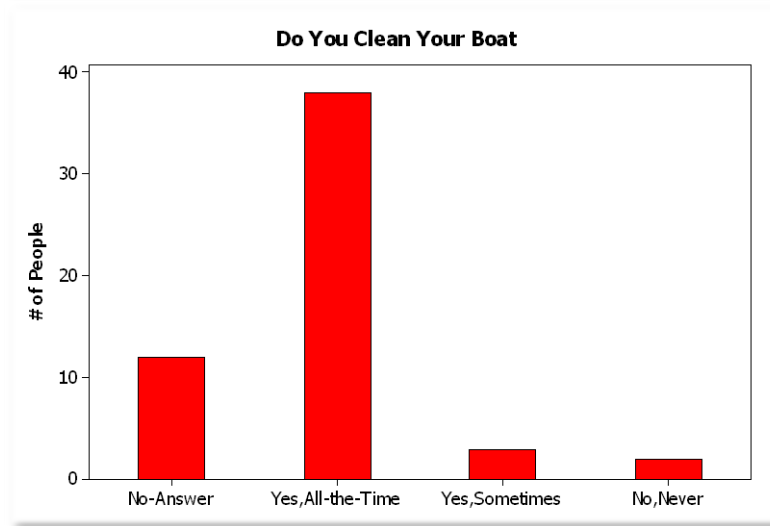
3. Those three leafed plants across the street are POISON IVY. Do not touch or even get too close. It can produce an itchy rash that will spread the more you scratch. Trust me; I will never hop in there again! Let's get out of here!

4. The 2-story house you can see through the trees is the original house of the Pliska/Gilmeister farmstead. It covered much of the east side of the Lake. One of the boys was an avid trapper of Muskrats and minks on the east and south end of the lake as well property to the north and south of the lake. I am sure glad my family doesn't have fur-whew!

5. This stop is one of my favorites. It's what I call my lake home. It is home to many plants, animals and insects. It can get very busy here but I don't mind sharing the land, except for those that want to eat me! Some of the residents are ducks, loons, geese, hawks, muskrats, salamanders, snakes (Yikes!), turtles and dragon flies (Yum!)



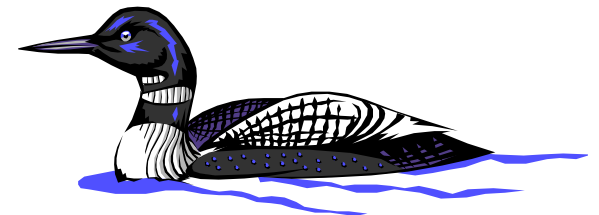
Invasive Species



Aquatic Plants

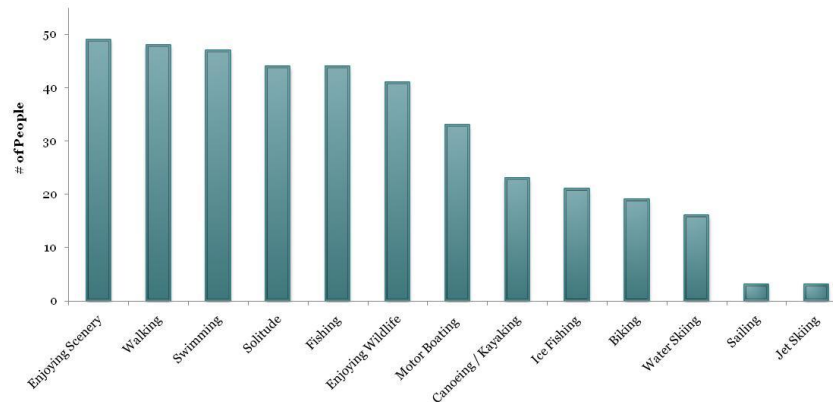
Objective 2: Prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into Lake Helen

- Clean Boat-Clean Waters Program *
- Monitor for invasive aquatic species *
- Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Plan *
- Promote prevention of Aquatic Invasive Species *



Recreation

What Recreational Activities do You Partake In



Goal: Maintain and enhance low-impact activities on lake Helen that promote a sense of community and allow all users to enjoy the lake.

Objective 1: Maintain and develop new activities on Lake Helen that promote a sense of community.

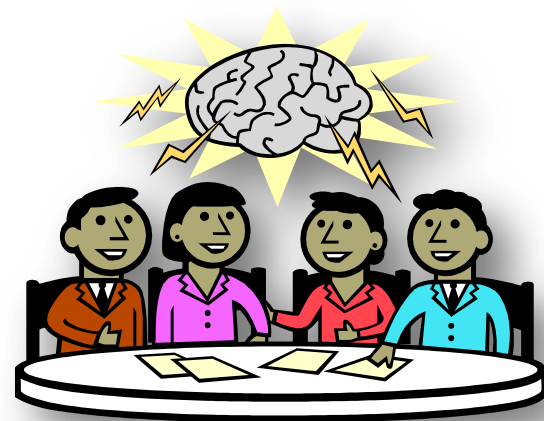
- Lake picnic *
- Lake walk *



Update and Revisions

Goal: Keep the information and resources within the Lake Helen Lake Management Plan current and up to date.

- Annually review the Lake Helen lake Management plan and update*





Implementation

Goal 8: Create communication strategies for citizens who are interested in Spring Lake

- Establish a Friends of Spring Lake Organization*
- Work with other lake/river citizen organizations that have similar goals
- Send representatives to Lake Leaders Institute and/or State Lake Convention

Implementation

Goal 9: Incorporate goals, objectives, and actions outlined in the Spring Lake Management Plan into local land management and comprehensive plans.

- Incorporate the Spring Lake Management Plan into the Portage County Comprehensive Plan and the Portage County Land Management Plan
- Incorporate the Spring Lake Management Plan in to the Town of Lanark and Town of Buena Vista Comprehensive Plans

Shorelines

Goal 3: Protect and restore healthy stable shoreland habitats for water quality, habitat, and privacy near and around Spring Lake

Objective 3.1: Protect the healthy stable shorelands around Spring Lake

- Disseminate information on vegetative buffers and setbacks*
- Protect steep shorelines through information and working with the county
- Explore conservation easements*
- Pursue future shoreline protection strategies



Critical Habitat

Goal 4: Protect the critical habitat areas on/near Spring Lake.

Objective 4.1: Protect the critical habitat areas near Spring Lake that were identified in the Wisconsin DNR Critical Habitat Report.

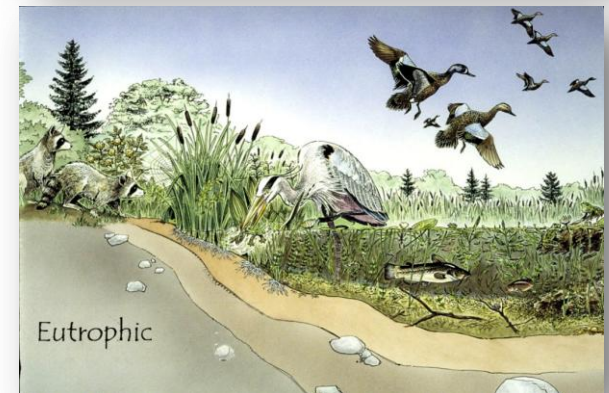
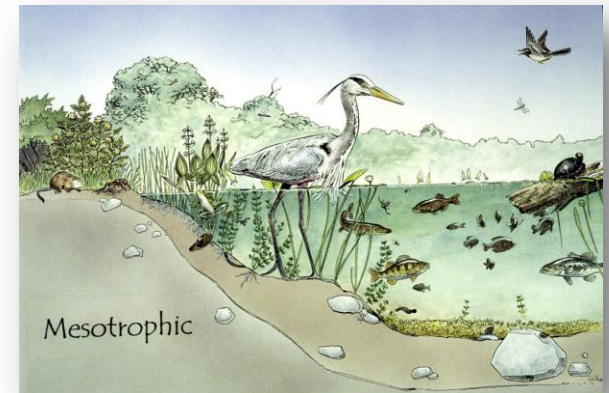
- Review and possibly endorse WDNR critical habitat designations
- Seek conservation easements/stewardship funds for agreeable landowners in critical habitat areas.
- Re-evaluate rules, ordinances, etc.



Water Quality

	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Total P (Spring overturn)			44.3 ppb
Inorganic N (spring overturn)			2.81 ppm
Chlorophyll a (Summer)			11.8 ppm
Clarity		Avg. 10 ft.	

Transitioning from mesotrophic to eutrophic

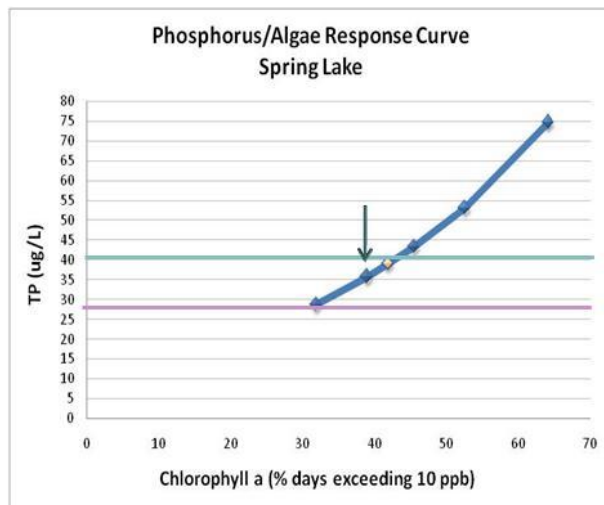


Water Quality and Watershed Scale Land Use

Goal 6: Reduce phosphorus concentrations in Spring Lake to 36 ug/L with algae blooms occurring 39% of the summer.

Accomplished by reducing nutrient inputs through the implementation of BMPs on 25% of the agriculture and developed land in the watershed.

We will know that we have achieved this goal when summer average total phosphorus concentrations are less than 36 ug/L for 3 consecutive years.



Water Quality and Watershed Scale Land Use

Objective 6.1: Reduce nutrients that are applied to the Spring Lake watershed(s) landscape by partnering with watershed landowners and agencies that can provide assistance/information to about water quality based BMPs.

- Ask county to assist with water quality based nutrient management plans*
- Encourage landowners to work with NRCS on erosion control and sodded waterways *
- Encourage limited use of fertilizers
- Work with UW Ag Extension to provide education about BMP's
- Support current restrictions on livestock grazing and manure spreading
- Discuss nitrate reduction options with T. of Buena Vista & T. of Lanark Groundwater Citizen Advisory Committee Reps.

Objective 6.4: Towns of Buena Vista and Lanark will make informed decisions about land use in Spring Lake watersheds.

- Presentation of build-out results and water quality to Town of Lanark and Buena Vista town boards and plan commissions.

Water Quality and Watershed Scale Land Use

Objective 6.5: Restore shorelands around Spring Lake that currently do not meet state/county shoreland zoning ordinances

- Information on native shoreline buffers
- Work to restore all shorelands to meet the county/state shoreland ordinance or better*

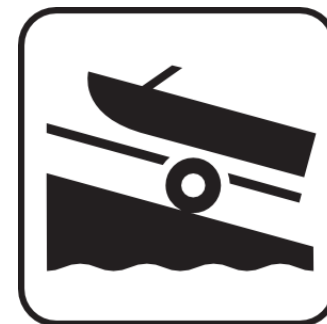


Recreation

Goal 7: Provide recreational opportunities on Spring Lake that do not conflict with the scenic nature and peacefulness of Spring Lake.

Objective 7.1: Provide recreational opportunities that provide opportunities to enjoy Spring Lake while minimizing conflicts between users and protecting lake water quality and habitat.

- No-wake sign at boat landing*
- Monitor no-wake rule*
- Work to make south side access carry-in only
- Explore an electric motor only rule



How Portage County is Using the Lake Study and Plans

- **Park Commission**
 - Management of 9 County Parks on lakes
 - Increased no mow zones
- **Board of Adjustment**
 - Considering variances and special exceptions to zoning ordinance



How Portage County is Using the Lake Study and Plans

- Land Preservation Fund Committee
 - Considering property to purchase
 - Sunset, Ministry and possibly Wolf Lakes
 - Contributed to purchase of Conservancy Easement
- Planning and Zoning Committee
 - Considering subdivision and re-zoning requests
 - Shoreland zoning compliance required for new permits



How Portage County is Using the Lake Study and Plans

- Planning and Zoning Department
 - County Comprehensive Plan
 - Providing planning assistance to municipalities
- Land Conservation Committee
 - Help target limited resources
 - Liaison with lake groups



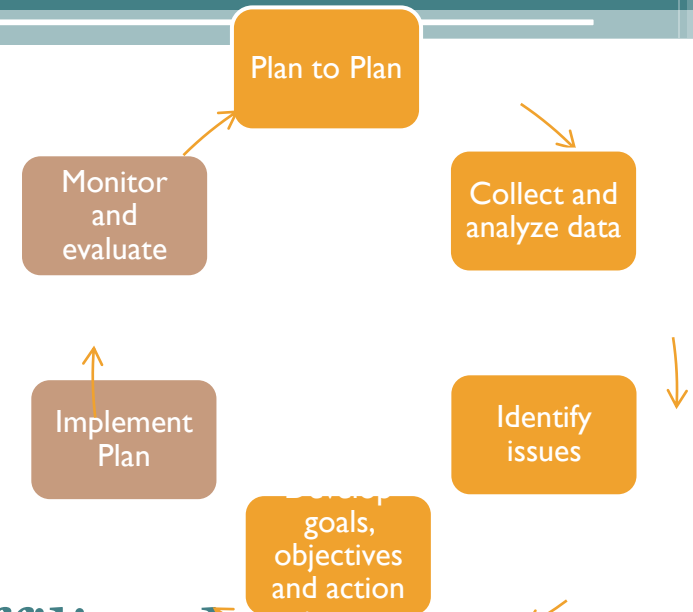
How Portage County is Using the Lake Study and Plans

- Land Conservation Department
 - Educate landowners on conservation BMP's
 - Subdivision and non-metallic mine review
 - Inform watershed residents about their connection to the lake via groundwater or surface
 - Assist with riparian erosion control
 - Answer citizen's questions
 - Control invasive aquatic species



Next Steps

- Complete Plans
- Implementation
 - Meet with Portage County & affiliated organizations
 - Parks, Highway, Planning, Zoning, Land Conservation, Public Health, County Executive, UW-Extension, NRCS, RC&D
 - Continue support of groups and conduct programs over the next year through recent DNR grant



Acknowledgements

Portage County Citizens

Staff at:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Portage County Planning and Zoning

Portage County Parks Department

Portage County Gazette

Stevens Point Journal

Community Spirit

Rosholt Record

UW-Extension

Wisconsin Association Lakes

UWSP Faculty, Staff, Students

Golden Sands RC&D