

Monthly Wisconsin Lake Org Chats

Monthly chats, 2025 topics included...

- Organizational Capacity (January)
- Communicating Effectively Using Email (February)
- Annual Meetings (March)
- Budgets & Priorities (April)
- Finances (May)
- Committees (June)
- Lake District Boundaries (July)
- Membership (August)
- Insurance (September)
- Grants (October)
- Countywide Orgs (November)
- Succession Planning (December)

Goal: Introduce important & timely topics to the lake organization community in Wisconsin in a fun and engaging way while pointing the way to additional resources.



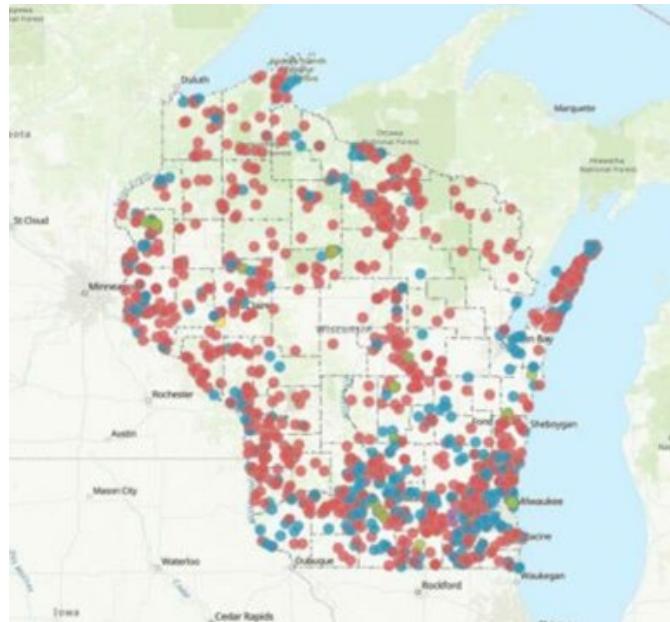
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Episode 13: Land Trusts and Lakes

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What the heck is a land trust?

A private non-profit organization whose primary objective is protecting land for the long term (forever).

Similar to a lake association:
incorporated, board members, bylaws

Many have staff, some smaller land trusts rely totally on volunteers



**NORTHWOODS
LAND TRUST**



**The Nature
Conservancy**



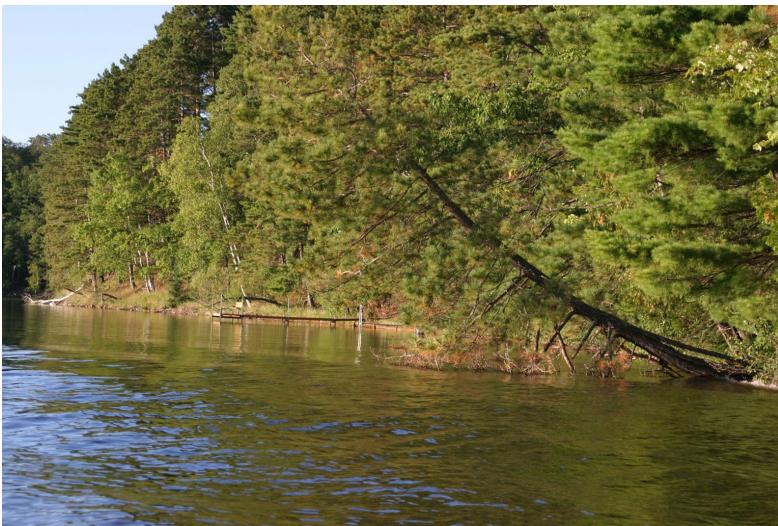
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Land Trusts and Lake Organizations

Lake Organizations often ask how they can protect undeveloped shoreland and/or important watershed areas

Land Trusts and Conservation Easements are one strategy for keeping land “as it is” in the face of development pressure

Easements are a less expensive method compared to buying land outright



How exactly does a land trust protect land?

Land ownership affords a person certain rights, things you can legally do with that land.

Examples: Hunt on it, keep others out, grow things on it, build houses on it, subdivide and sell parts of it

A conservation easement separates out the rights to divide and develop land and transfers them to a land trust. They hold and enforce the easement. Forever.



Are conservation easements sold or donated?

Easements can be sold, donated, or a combination (a discounted sale)

Appraisals determine what the land is worth with all of its rights, and what it is worth without the specific development rights

The value of a donated easement can be used by the owner for tax purposes

Value of the whole bundle: \$1 million



Value of ability to divide and develop: \$250,000

Value of land encumbered by easement: \$750,000



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Many land trusts also accept land donations

Some owners prefer to donate land or sell it at a steep discount, giving the land trust the entire bundle of rights

Land donations can also provide tax benefits to household making the donation

Land trusts can more easily allow public access for recreation and special events on land that they own



How do land trusts ensure conservation easements are honored?

The land trust has the right and obligation to inspect and verify the owner is not exercising the rights they sold or donated

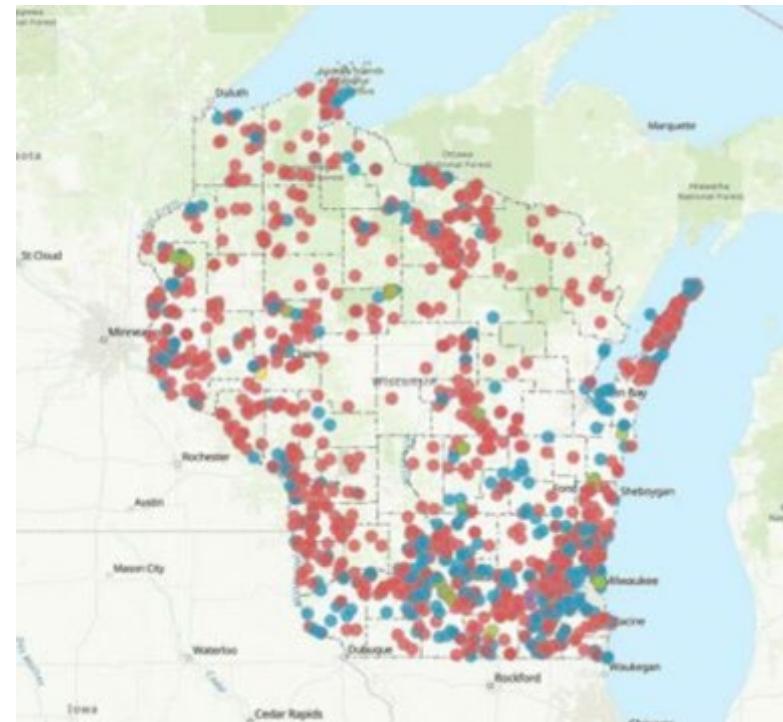
The donation (or sale) of the easement is between private parties, subject to contract law

The IRS will be interested if the donation or partial sale resulted in a tax deduction



How much land is protected in Wisconsin?

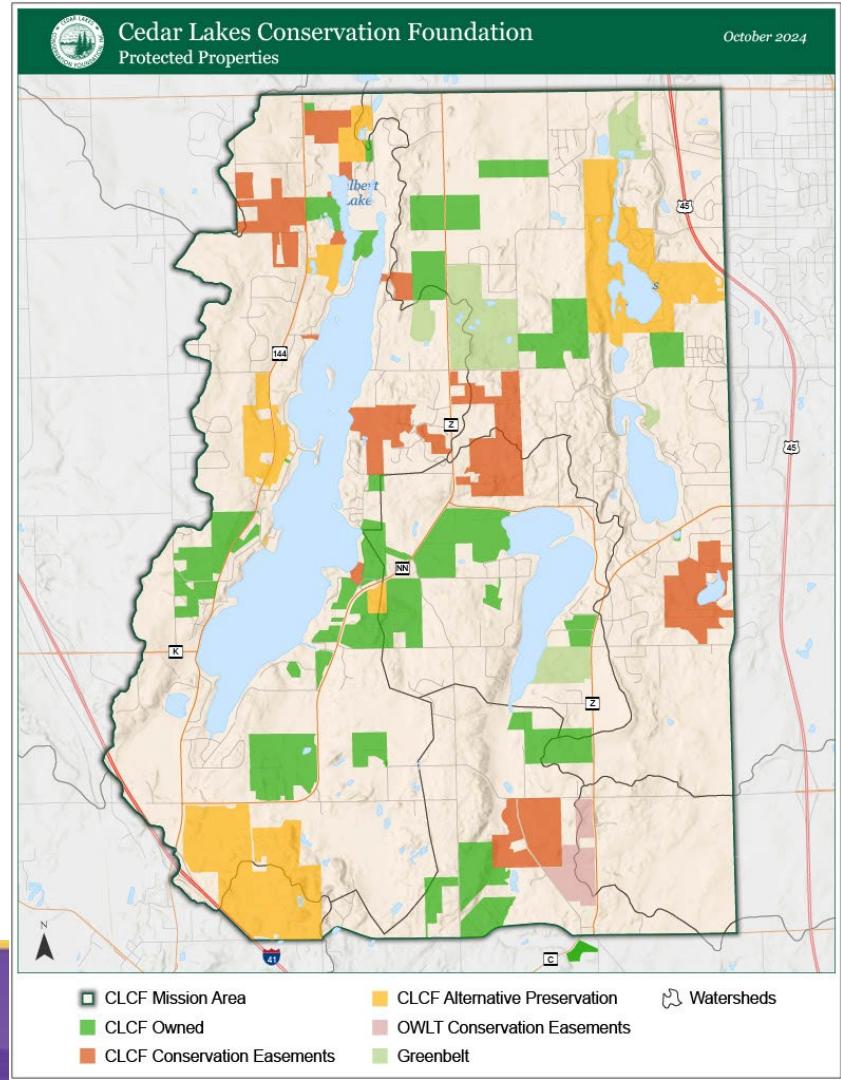
- Over 1,800 properties
- Over 544,000 acres



Why should lake organizations care?

- Shoreland property: scarce
- Watershed acreage: healthy
- Collaborate and cooperate

There are a limited number of ways to make an impact that lasts beyond a lifetime. Protecting land is one of those ways.



What can people do on lands protected by land trusts?

The most common easements do not allow for public access of private protected lands

Each land trust can work with owners to schedule educational or work days that permit access for a specific time and purpose

Lands owned by land trusts are more commonly open to responsible public use. What you can and cannot do on a property will vary from place to place.



Coming up next... More chats!

Potential Future Topics include:

- How to Start a Water Patrol
- Welcoming New Residents to the Lake
- Setting Up a Youth Education Program
- Partnering with Land Trusts
- Dealing with Dams
- Hiring Clean Boats, Clean Waters boat landing staff

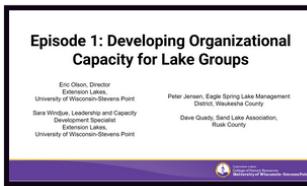
Please let us know what you think of these monthly lake org video chats. We appreciate your feedback and thank you for your time.

Monthly Lake Organization Video Chats

<https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/default.aspx>

Episode 1: Developing Organizational Capacity for Lake Groups

This very first episode is focused on Organizational Capacity for Lake Groups. We cover what we mean when we use the term organizational capacity, why we think it's important, and what organizations can do to increase their capacity to get things done.



Direct link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKQaI6bmr80&list=PL6aVQYpBMBW9uKvBV6HWgdBJRtZy5uzzR>

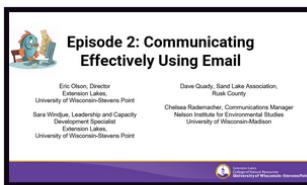
Length of recording: 35 minutes; 15 seconds

[PDF of slideshow](#)

Feedback form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeuSZM7tUPvQSmIZbsE8hSeLVX4cVQXFxUvN33diqQ-Sg_bHw/viewform

Episode 2: Communicating Effectively Using Email

In this episode, we discuss how to use electronic communications, mainly email, effectively.



Direct link: <https://youtu.be/vgAzsMizKFg?si=jH-RkdjMjrw7sse>

Length of recording: 49 minutes; 48 seconds

[PDF of slideshow](#)



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