

# LAKE CLASSIFICATION GRANTS FOR COUNTIES...

## a new opportunity!

*(fact sheet #3 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)*

### LAKE CLASSIFICATION LEGISLATION

The state of Wisconsin is rich in water resources, but is faced with an ever increasing demand for the use of its lakes and lake shores. Citizens of the state feel that the very qualities that attract them to Wisconsin lakes may be fast disappearing. The Legislature addressed this concern in the 1997 biennial budget bill by adding funds to the existing Lake Protection Grants program. A new type of eligible project focuses on county-wide lake classification. The new funding will allow counties to tailor local land and water management programs to classes of lakes in response to various development and recreational use pressures. This legislation provides a total of \$700,000 per year in additional funds for these lake classification efforts.

❖ The lake classification project grant is targeted towards counties and provides up to \$50,000 of state funding, up to 75% of total project costs.

The legislation directs the Department of Natural Resources to develop guidelines for lake classification projects. The guidelines will require that the county consider biological and physical characteristics, nonpoint source pollution potential, as well as the development and recreational use potential of the lakes within the county.

### WHY CLASSIFY LAKES

The lakes in Wisconsin are an essential part of life in Wisconsin. They play a fundamental role in our economy, our environment, our community, and in our spiritual well-being. The objective of lake classification is to protect and manage these valuable water resources. Minimum state standards often fail to account for variation in the biological and physical characteristics of lakes. With these grants counties will be able to develop lake specific management strategies which are sensitive to these differences. Towns may also engage in this classification process through other lake protection grants. While each lake in this great state is as individual as the people around them, *the overall goal of this initiative is to encourage the management of lakes and their watersheds on the basis of lakes with similar characteristics.*

### THE PROCESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

❖ **The Goal.** The goals of a particular lake classification project will depend on several factors. The numbers and types of lakes within the county, existing levels of development, existing shoreland and recreational use policies, and most importantly, the expectations and hopes of the people living nearby will all play a role in determining lake classification goals. The importance of using surveys and public meetings to generate discussion regarding needs and objectives for lake classification at the early stages of the planning process cannot be overemphasized. Citizen lake organizations can take the lead and express their concerns at this critical point in the process.

❖ **Classification of Lakes.** After the goals are identified, and with some consideration of the management tools available to the county, the county should develop a classification system to group lakes within the area into distinct classes. Some classification systems may be based on only a few physical criteria; other classification systems may be fairly complex schemes that use several criteria to more accurately estimate a waterbody's susceptibility to environmental problems from shoreland development and lake use. A county's decision may be based on several factors including lake characteristics, availability of data, and classification objectives.

❖ **The Right Tools.** Following the classification of lakes, the county and other participating units of government should determine what management and implementation tools would be most effective in meeting their goals. Strategies used in shoreland areas may be different than those used in more sensitive sites in the remainder of the watershed. Appropriate lake use plans may be implemented at the town, village or lake district level as well.

❖ **The People's role .** The public's role in the classification process is vital! The ultimate goal of lake classification is to meet the needs of the people of Wisconsin. Citizens should strive to educate themselves and others on the meaning of responsible shoreland and lake management. Encourage your neighbors to participate in the discussions and attend meetings. The end result is satisfaction in knowing that you and your community have had a role in protecting Wisconsin's legacy of lakes.

## SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

For assistance in applying for a lake classification grant, contact your regional DNR lakes coordinator and/or your county UW-Extension community resource development agent. A document designed to provide counties with an overview of the classification process, *A Guide for County Lake Classification*, is available from county UW-Extension offices, regional DNR offices, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Lakes Program office (715/346-2166), and the Wisconsin Association of Lakes office (800/542-5253). This guide recommends a course of action for a county beginning a classification project, provides examples of classification systems for shoreland and watercraft operation, as well as suggestions on management and policy options. This publication includes a list of counties with lake classification experience as well as a list of useful reference material.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS FOR COUNTIES**

*The next deadline to apply for a lake classification project grant is May 1, 1999. Applications may be made on the Lake Protection Grant Application forms (#8700-240) available at Department of Natural Resources and many County University Extension offices. Completed applications should be submitted by **May 1** to the regional DNR office for your county. However, check with the contacts listed below for available funding after that date. Grant recipients will be notified by **September** of that year. For more information regarding grant applications and sources of assistance, contact Carroll Schaal at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at (608) 261-6423, your DNR regional lakes coordinator at the locations listed below, or the Wisconsin Association of Lakes at 1-800-542-5253.*

*DNR Northern (Spooner) region (Dan Ryan): 715-635-2101*

*DNR Northern (Rhineland) region (Bob Young): 715-365-8937*

*DNR Westcentral region (Buzz Sorge): 715-839-3794*

*DNR Northeast region (Tim Rasman): 920-492-5903*

*DNR Southeast region (Bob Wakeman): 414-229-0819*

*DNR Southcentral region (Jim Leverance): 608-356-8301*

*DNR Northeast (Horicon) region (Mark Sesing): 920-387-7879*

Drafted by Tamara Dudiak, UWEX-Lake Specialist (715/346-4744); tdudiak@uwsp.edu.



For more information, contact your regional Department of Natural Resources lake coordinator, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes [800/542-5253] or UWEX/UW-Stevens Point [715/346-2116].