

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**For immediate release**

### **[YOU OR YOUR LAKE ORGANIZATION] joined over 350 lake enthusiasts at the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention**

For several decades, the Wisconsin Lakes Convention has provided an exceptional opportunity for people to come together and network with others on their joint lake and water interests. This year over 350 attendees united to celebrate and protect Wisconsin's legacy of lakes. [YOUR NAME] represented [YOUR ORGANIZATION] at this year's convention in Green Bay, and [HE/SHE] found the lake and watershed success stories, challenges, and solutions presented there were relevant to [HIS/HER] local lake.

The 2009 Wisconsin Lakes Convention was called *Back to Balance*, featuring an international symposium on aquatic invasive species (AIS). Experts from around North America gathered to discuss the research, management options, and educational ideas and needed policy changes to deal more effectively with this prevailing issue. The goal of the symposium was to share this knowledge with agency staff, lake citizens, businesses, elected officials, and others to help get our lakes "back to balance."

Lake enthusiasts statewide listened intently for ideas and approaches to help tilt the balance of lake ecosystem dynamics back in favor of the native aquatic plants and animals. Dr. Tony Ricciardi was the keynote speaker at a plenary session to kick off the convention. He highlighted a number of the reasons why certain species are highly invasive and why some ecosystems are more vulnerable to invasion than others.

Throughout the symposium, attendees examined the issue of aquatic invasive species (AIS) from a global perspective, to a state and local view, seeking out different techniques and new strategies for better controlling these aquatic hitchhikers. Some participants even identified effective elements of AIS prevention and control that they could bring back to their lake communities to bolster ongoing efforts [SHARE EXAMPLES OF THINGS YOU LEARNED THAT MAY BE APPLICABLE TO YOUR LAKE].

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While AIS is an important issue, it is not the only challenge facing Wisconsin lakes. Workshops offered hands-on training and discussion on many important lake topics including AIS, lake ecology, volunteer monitoring, lake district commissioner training, interpreting and using lake data, working with local partners for lake protection, and running a more effective lake group.

Other speakers presented shorter sessions on a range of themes including AIS smart prevention, water law, global environmental changes, regional partnerships to protect lakes, citizen involvement, and the economic value of water **[YOU CAN INCLUDE ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OR WORKSHOPS THAT YOU ATTENDED, WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THEM, OR WHY YOU LIKED THEM].**

This year's convention included a poster session as well, providing a chance for citizens, lake management professionals, and researchers to share their success stories on assorted lake matters. In an interactive setting, attendees asked pointed questions and received detailed information about what worked for these projects and what lessons were learned. Participants gained contacts and examples for achieving positive results on their own lake projects.

In addition to the various sessions, lake-related businesses and non-profit organizations offered displays about AIS and lake management services and water interests. On Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, the Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Awards were presented to individuals, groups, public servants, businesses and youth organizations doing outstanding work for Wisconsin's lakes. "These awards are the highest honor bestowed to anyone for lake protection in Wisconsin," remarked Earl Cook, President of WAL **[IF SOMEONE FROM YOUR LAKE COMMUNITY WAS AWARDED, MENTION THEM HERE].**

People from over 50 Wisconsin counties, 8 other US states and one Canadian province participated in this year's Wisconsin Lakes Convention. The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, a nationally recognized and successful collaboration of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL), UW-Extension Lakes and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), hosts the lakes convention each year. For more information on the Wisconsin Lakes Convention, contact WAL at (608)-661-4313.

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