

# Land Use Tracker

A quarterly publication of the  
Center for Land Use Education

Photo by John Haack

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## LAKES, LAWNS AND SHORELANDS: THE HUMAN EQUATION

*By John Haack and Bret Shaw, UW-Extension/Madison*

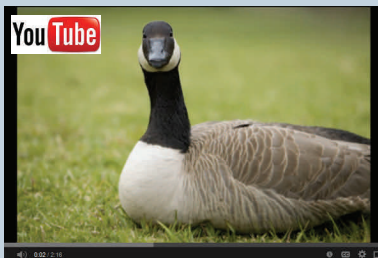
Shoreland areas are important for lake health, clean water and wildlife habitat, yet most shorelines don't have healthy shoreland vegetation. Can educational messages about the importance of shoreland vegetation improve this situation?

UW-Extension staff and local partners working with property owners from two lakes in northwest Wisconsin conducted surveys, interviews and focus groups to better understand property owners' attitudes and knowledge of shoreland buffers. Insight from the research was used to create various promotional and outreach materials to encourage more natural shorelines. Results from the project are presented below.

### A View from the Shore – The Property Owners' Perspective

Most lakefront property owners are aware of the importance of shoreland vegetation. They agree major benefits include maintaining good water quality, improving fish and wildlife habitat, and reducing water runoff and soil erosion from entering the lake. They also cite personal enjoyment (e.g. watching loons, eagles, songbirds and frogs) and practical benefits (e.g. fewer Canadian geese pooping on their lawns and beaches!).

Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between what people know and value about natural shorelines and what they are doing on their own property. For example, many property owners are choosing to maintain manicured shorelines despite being familiar with the benefits of natural shorelines. What explains this disconnect?



Did you know that a goose poops 28 times a day letting out a pound and a half of poop? Learn more about the benefits of natural shorelines from Sebastian the Goose: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhKIGxXgrLg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhKIGxXgrLg)

According to our research, barriers to allowing natural shorelines include:

- Obstructed views of the lake
- Reduced access to the lake
- Desire for a sandy beach
- More nuisance insects
- A messy appearance
- Increased habitat for snakes and other undesirable animals
- Difficulty playing games along the lake

**Strategy – How Our Audience Led the Way**

To encourage the adoption of more natural shorelines, we built on what we heard from property owners. We developed and piloted multiple communication and promotional techniques over a five-year period. Our messages emphasized the benefits of natural shorelines and techniques to reduce obstacles.

We incorporated some common themes identified from our focus groups and phone interviews. Among them, we emphasized the importance of family, leaving a legacy of memories, and passing on lake property experiences to grandchildren.

In crafting and distributing our messages, we were sensitive to the fact that many local landowners did not trust agencies. We placed numerous articles in the county-wide lake organization newsletter knowing that the county and local lake associations were trusted sources of information. To gain and keep the attention of property owners, we paired these articles with direct mailings emphasizing the benefits of natural shorelines.

To address the discrepancy between shoreland knowledge and behavior we developed and distributed a shoreland self-assessment tool. The tool allowed landowners to independently rate their own shoreline and determine for themselves if it should be more natural. We believe landowners were more receptive to discovering this knowledge on their own than receiving the message from an outside party.

**What Worked (And What Didn't!)**

At the end of the five-year project, we evaluated what worked and what didn't. Items that rated highly with lakefront property owners include:

*Promotional campaign promoting the “Top Ten” native shoreline plants*



- Coupon campaigns and booklets promoting the “Top Ten” wildlife shrubs and plants in partnership with local nurseries and retailers
- The Lakes Trivia Game and My Lakeshore Field Journal as a way to engage children and grandchildren in fun lake activities

Items that didn’t rate well with lakefront property owners include:

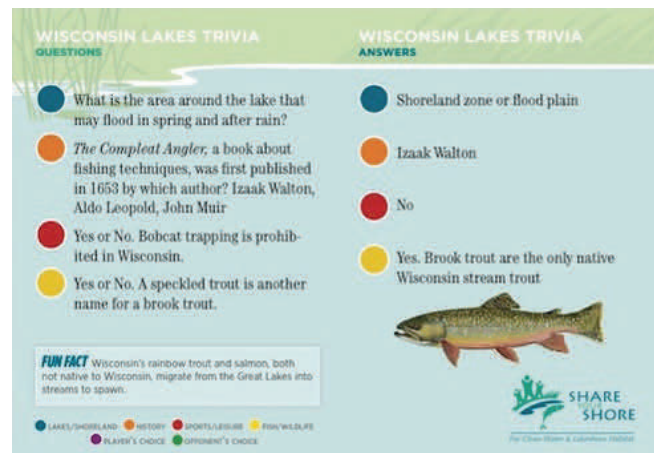
- Lake maps and bookmarks highlighting the habitat values of natural shorelines and contact information to seek additional information
- “No strings attached” shoreland visits to reduce concerns over regulatory obligations
- Re-design of the Burnett County LakeLines newsletter, including short focused articles highlighting the benefits and addressing barriers associated with natural shorelines

We looked for changes in attitudes and behaviors, as well as resulting changes in the landscape. At the end of the five-year period, landowners reported a stronger preference for natural shorelines and fewer perceived barriers. A number of landowners reported mowing their lawn less often. Looking at physical landscape changes, eighteen percent of properties included more natural shoreline features. Most were small additions averaging 660 square feet. These changes suggest that both attitudes and physical changes occur slowly and incrementally over time.

#### Conclusion – So What Does this all Mean?

The mix of information and social marketing strategies deployed over time contributed to a shift in preferences toward more natural shorelines, a reduction in perceived barriers, and adoption of more natural shoreline practices. The following strategies, while developed specifically for this audience, should be considered for use in other projects:

- Promote the use of low growing native plants and shrubs that don’t block the view of the lake.
- Promote native plants as a way to attract wildlife desired by property owners such as songbirds, loons and frogs.



*The Lakes Trivia Game provides a fun way to engage families in shoreland discussions*

- Promote mulched pathways and edges as a way to reduce tick exposure.
- Emphasize the benefits of natural shorelines as a way to prevent geese from congregating and leaving droppings on lawns and beaches.
- Provide landowners with a self-assessment tool to help them objectively rate the condition of their own property.
- Use a project logo to create a more unified and recognizable brand.
- Develop long-term relationships with lakeshore property owners.
- Deliver a variety of educational messages using multiple techniques over an extended period of time.
- Have patience. Long-term behavior change takes time and will likely occur incrementally.

#### For More Information

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View the full report and campaign materials at:  
<http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/haack/welcome-to-the-st-croix-basin/links/burnett-country-cbsm-project>

## COASTAL CITIES TRAIL INVENTORY COMPLETE

*By Angela Pierce, Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission*

Northeast Wisconsin cities contain numerous public off-road trails that provide residents and visitors with valuable recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, running, etc. However, public off-road trails in and adjacent to communities are not always identified by a single source. For example, there are prominent state trails profiled on the websites and brochures of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. However, county, community, university, organization and other public trails are usually not included in these sources.

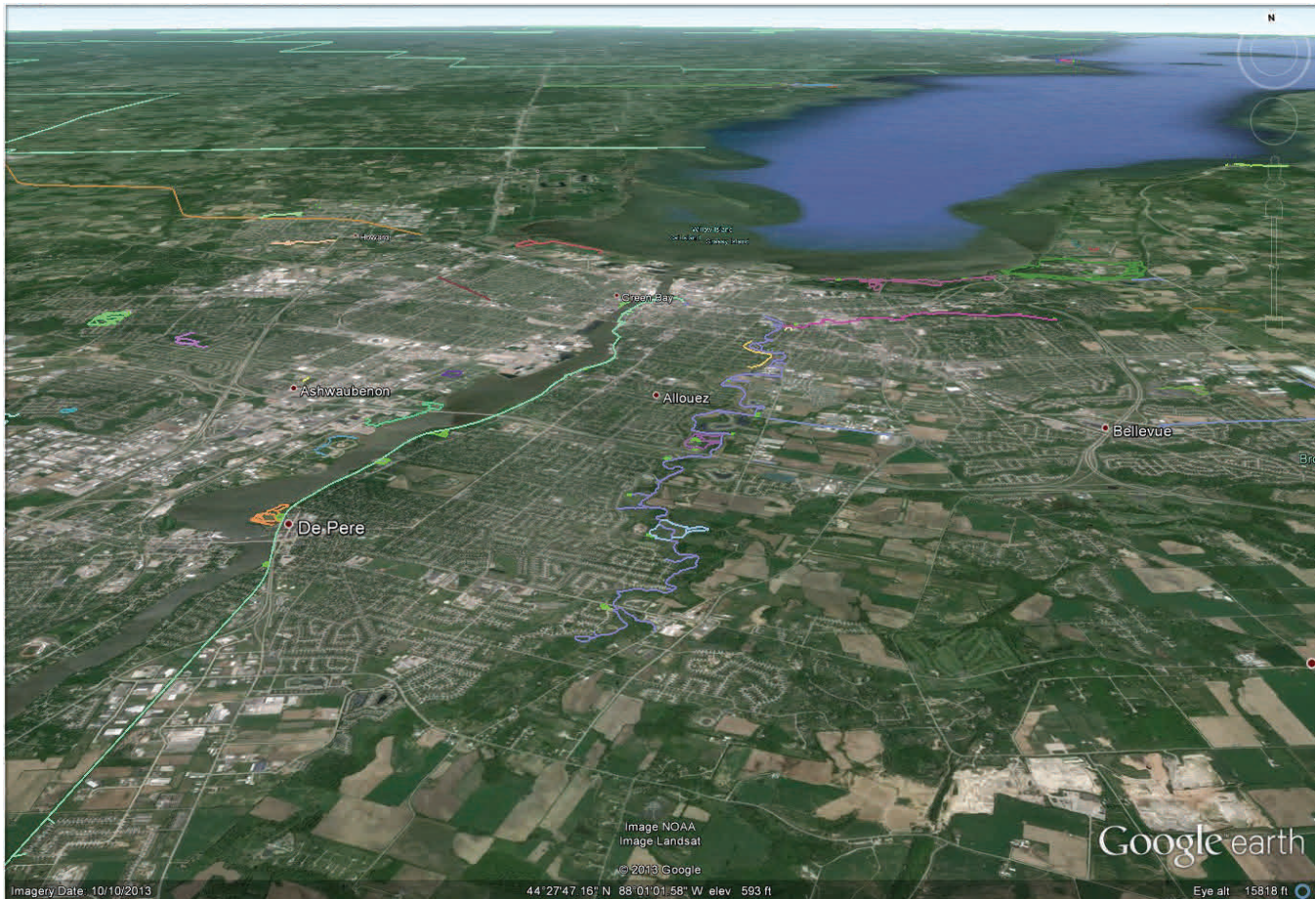
In an effort to remedy the difficulty of navigating multiple community and organization trail maps, the Bay-Lake Regional

Planning Commission conducted a thorough field inventory of all public off-road, non-motorized trails for the nine coastal cities along Lake Michigan in northeast Wisconsin. This includes the cities of Marinette, Oconto, Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, Algoma, Kewaunee, Two Rivers, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan.

The final project report provides a connectivity analysis and offers recommendations aimed at establishing an efficient coastal trail network that integrates beach access and the Lake Michigan Water Trail and provides public off-road trail connections linking coastal cities.

As part of this study, 60 trails were inventoried covering 211 miles within and extending outside the nine coastal cities in northeast Wisconsin. A

*Route planning between the coastal cities trails can be done using Google Earth*



webpage was created to provide public access to the inventory, maps, and report. The trail data is downloadable into Google Earth where route planning between trails is possible.

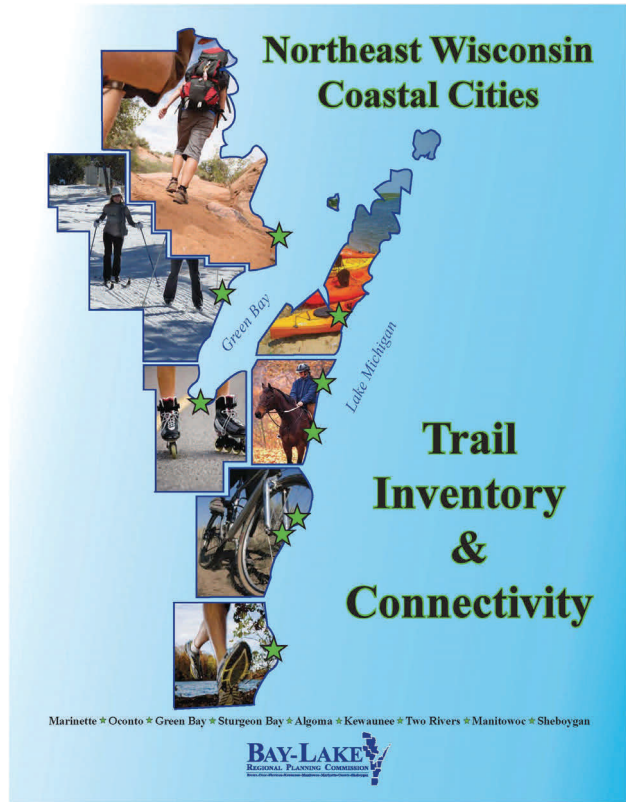
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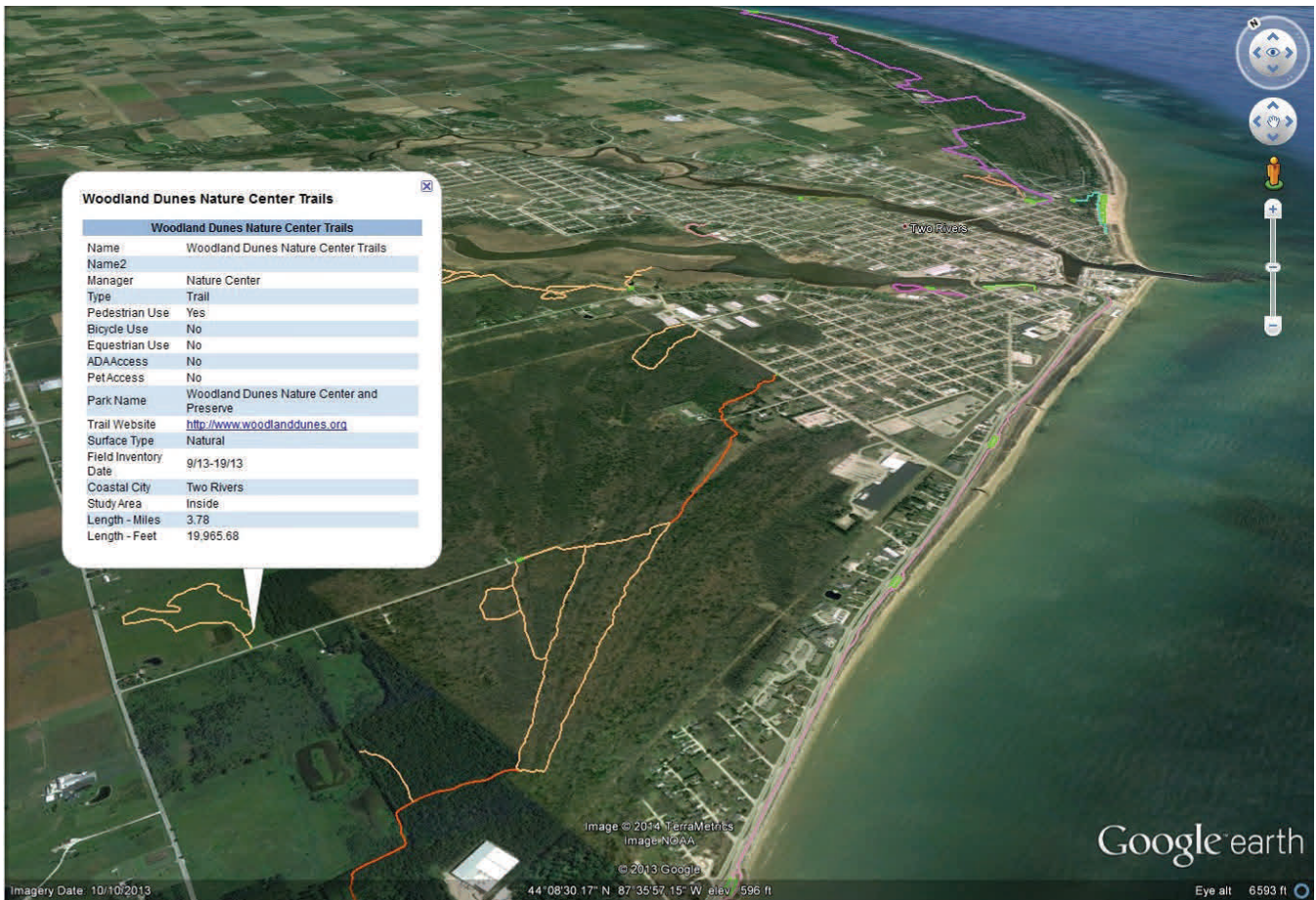
View the trail inventory data, maps and report:  
[www.baylakerpc.org/natural-resources/coastal-cities-trail-inventory](http://www.baylakerpc.org/natural-resources/coastal-cities-trail-inventory)

**Acknowledgments**

This project was funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Grant #NA12NOS4190091.



*Trail attributes including names, locations and trail websites are easily accessible*



## URBAN AGRICULTURE IN PRACTICE: RIVERVIEW GARDENS

By Kristy SeBlonka, Center for Land Use Education

The city of Appleton, Wisconsin recently joined the ranks of cities across the country that are experimenting with urban agriculture. With a population of just over 73,000, Appleton has numerous community assets. But it is also experiencing increased rates of homelessness, unemployment, and use of food share benefits.

When a private country club and golf course came up for sale in December 2011, Community Outreach Temporary Services (COTS) saw an opportunity. COTS is a nonprofit organization that provides transitional housing to people experiencing poverty. They bought the 72-acre golf course for \$2.6 million and established a socially innovative nonprofit organization called Riverview Gardens. Riverview Gardens is constructing a market garden, park, trails, community center, and job training program on the site. They hope to build as many as thirty greenhouses and obtain organic certification by 2015.

In order to put their dreams into action, Riverview Gardens worked with the city of Appleton to address planning and zoning issues related to urban farms. They met with the city's Community and Economic Development Department to discuss standards related to urban farms. The goal was to better meet the needs of urban farming while protecting surrounding properties. City staff researched the issue, then presented a report of their findings to the plan commission. This helped the plan commission make an informed recommendation to update the text of their zoning ordinance.

### Zoning Code Definitions

The zoning ordinance now includes precise definitions related to urban agriculture:

*Community garden* means land or roof tops that are managed and maintained by a group of individuals, an organization or business to grow and harvest fruits, vegetables, flowers, and

*Riverview Gardens' mission is "to engage Fox Valley residents in community stewardship and collaborate with local outreach organizations in ending poverty, homelessness, and unemployment in the greater community."*



other plant and herb products for education, for personal or group consumption or for donation. Community gardens may be divided into separate plots for cultivation by one or more individuals or may be farmed by members of the group and may include common areas maintained and used by group members.

*Urban farm* means the land or rooftops that are managed and maintained by an individual, group of individuals, organization or business for growing, harvesting, washing and packaging of fruits, vegetables, flowers and other plant and herb products with the primary purpose of growing food for sale and/or distribution.

### A Side Note—Bees and Chickens

Bees, chickens, and other micro-livestock are notably missing from the definition of urban farms. Due to health and enforcement concerns, the city of Appleton decided to pursue these issues separately. In August 2012, the Board of Health failed to approve an amendment to allow chickens. In March 2013, the City Council approved an amendment allowing bees by permit in areas designated as urban farms.

### Minimum Standards for Urban Farms

Urban farms are considered a permitted use in agricultural, industrial, central business, and commercial districts, and a special use requiring council approval in residential and public institutional districts.

As part of the zoning code update, the city created minimum requirements for urban farms that apply to both permitted and special uses (Sec. 23-66(h)(17)). Under these standards, urban farms are required to submit a farm management plan and comply with other requirements related to retail sale hours, mechanical operations, signage, chemical storage, waste management, etc.

Riverview Gardens was the first urban farm to be approved under the new requirements. They applied to construct an urban farm and recreation facility in an area zoned for single and multi-family housing. Of the 72 acres, Riverview Gardens proposed to use 25 acres for intensive food production and 45 acres for wildlife habitat and a community park.

In reviewing the project, the Community and Economic Development Department noted that it advanced several goals in Appleton's 2010-2013 Comprehensive Plan, including economic development, the viability of regional food production and processing, and leadership in sustainability. The proposed use was also consistent with the Future Land Use Map which designated the area for agriculture and private open space. In July 2012, the city issued Special Use Permit #5-12 with several conditions, including a stipulation that no fruits, vegetables, or flowers be grown within 25 feet of the property line.

### For More Information

Riverview Gardens  
riverviewgardens.org

City of Appleton Code of Ordinances  
Sec. 23-66(h)(17), page 1591  
Minimum Standards for Urban Farms  
[www.appleton.org/i/p/municode.pdf](http://www.appleton.org/i/p/municode.pdf)

## CLUE WORKSHOPS

### Plan Commission Workshop Series

March 5, 2014 – Avoiding Legal Challenges  
April 2, 2014 – Dealing with Tough Land Uses  
April 14, 2014 – Ordinance Development, Administration and Enforcement  
Dodge County, Juneau, WI

### Zoning Board Workshops

March 18, 2014 – Iowa County, WI  
April 14, 2014 – Lincoln County, WI  
May 13, 2014 – Grant County, WI

[www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/workshops](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/workshops)

## NEW PLANNING LAW PUBLICATION

*Wisconsin Land Use & Planning Law* by Brian Ohm is a new publication available from the University of Wisconsin Law School. The book builds off of Ohm's *Guide to Community Planning in Wisconsin*, which was published in 1999. The new publication includes several new and revised chapters as described below:

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of the community planning process.
- Chapter 2 describes the role of the plan commission and other local government bodies in planning.
- Chapter 3 summarizes types of community plans, including the comprehensive plan.
- Chapter 4 explores consistency between the plan and various plan implementation tools.
- Chapters 5-7 describe common plan implementation tools, including zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Chapter 8 provides an overview of the federal and state constitutional framework for land use regulation.

You may order a copy of the book for \$33 by visiting the Law School publications page:  
[www.law.wisc.edu/clew/publications](http://www.law.wisc.edu/clew/publications)

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**Submit an Article!**

If you would like to submit an article,  
please contact the managing editor,  
Rebecca Roberts. Your article should  
be 1,000 words or less, of statewide  
concern, and address a land use or  
community planning issue.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Progress & Perseverance: Energy Independent Communities Tell All**  
February 26, 2014 – Jefferson, WI  
<http://energyonwi.uwex.edu>

**Climate Change in Wisconsin: Where do we go from here?**  
February 27, 2014 – Madison, WI  
<http://sustainability.wisc.edu/news-and-events/sustainability-forum-2014/>

**American Planning Association Chapter Webcasts**  
February 28, 2014 – Keeping Your Plan Off the Shelf  
March 14, 2014 – Creating Plans for Mobile Devices  
March 21, 2014 – Connecting Public Lands Planning to Local Communities  
[www.utah-apa.org/webcasts](http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts)

**American Planning Association Audio/Web Conferences**  
March 12, 2014 – Using Subdivision Regulations in the 21st Century  
April 28, 2014 – Open Government and Engaging the Public  
May 14, 2014 – Jane Jacobs' Legacy and New Urbanism  
[www.planning.org/audioconference](http://www.planning.org/audioconference)

**UW-Extension Local Government Center WisLine Series**  
March 19, 2014 – Local Land Use Regulation and Mining  
April 9, 2014 – Public Trust Doctrine  
May 14, 2014 – Law and Legislative Update  
<http://lgc.uwex.edu/WisLines/index.html>

**Conference on the Small City and Regional Community:  
Planning and Design in Small Cities and Towns**  
April 15-16, 2014 – Stevens Point, WI  
[www.uwsp.edu/cols-ap/smallCity/Pages/conference.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/cols-ap/smallCity/Pages/conference.aspx)

**Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention**  
April 24-26, 2014 – Stevens Point, WI  
<http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/conventions>

**APA National Planning Conference**  
April 26-30, 2014 – Atlanta, GA  
[www.planning.org/conference](http://www.planning.org/conference)

**Open Government Webinars**  
Recorded webinars on the open meeting law and public records law  
[www.doj.state.wi.us/dls/open-government](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dls/open-government)

For additional dates and information visit our online calendar of events:  
[www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/Calendar.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/Calendar.aspx)



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