

Lake Planning Grants



The United States has a treasure house of natural resources and Wisconsin holds the "Crown Jewels"—its 15,000 lakes. But Wisconsin's lakes are in jeopardy on numerous fronts and many lakes need help. Much of the management of lakes in Wisconsin is limited by a lack of information about the lake, the watershed and the people who use it.

Under the Planning Grant Program, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides funding to local governments and lake management organizations for the collection and analysis of information needed to manage lakes. The program accomplishes this by encouraging local organizations to obtain information on

water quality, water use, land use, fish and aquatic life and other data that considers the broad range of factors that can affect the quality of inland lakes and their ecosystems. Another goal of the program is to develop stronger state/local partnerships, leading to more effective watershed protection and lake management.

ELIGIBLE ENDEAVORS:

There are two planning grant categories designed to address the varying size and complexity of the state's lakes and the corresponding planning project needs.

Small-scale projects are an ideal starting place for lake groups just getting started in management plan development or for enhancing existing planning efforts. There are four targeted sub-categories for small-scale planning grants:

- *Lake trend monitoring projects.* Projects that collect and report chemical, biological and physical data about lake ecosystems to provide long term base line information and monitor trends in lake ecosystem health.
- *Lake education projects.* Projects that will assist management units in collecting and disseminating existing information about lakes for the purpose of broadening the understanding of lake use, lake ecosystem conditions and lake management techniques.
- *Organization development projects.* Projects that will assist management units in the formation of goals and objectives and prepare for the management of a lake or lakes.
- *Other studies or assessments.* Activities as needed to implement or augment management goals or a plan for a lake or lakes or combinations of other activities listed above.

Large-scale projects are designed to address more detailed and comprehensive planning needs for lakes. The goal of these grants is to develop local lake management plans. Eligible activities include:

- Gathering and analysis of physical, chemical and biological information on lakes.
- Describing present and potential land uses within lake watersheds and on shorelands.
- Reviewing jurisdictional boundaries and evaluating ordinances that relate to zoning, sanitation or pollution control or surface use.
- Assessments of fish, aquatic life, wildlife and their habitats.
- Gathering and analyzing information from lake property owners, community residents and lake users.
- Developing, evaluating, publishing and distributing alternative courses of action and recommendations in a LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

Any general purpose unit of government (county, town, city or village), not-for-profit conservation organizations, town sanitary districts and all lake districts are eligible to apply. Lake associations that meet certain qualifications are also eligible [s. 281.68(1) Stats.]. (See the fact sheet, "What is a Qualified Lake Association?" at <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/faq/whatis-qla.htm>). School districts that collaborate with another eligible sponsor may also apply.

HOW MUCH MONEY IS AVAILABLE?:

The state will pay for 75% of the cost of a planning project with caps of \$3,000 for small-scale grants and \$10,000 for large scale. The remaining 25% must be provided by the local organization in the form of cash or time and services. Your lake is eligible for more than one planning grant with a lifetime maximum cap of \$100,000.

Grant requests have routinely exceeded the funds available, therefore, a ranking procedure has been necessary. The budget for this grant program is approximately \$625,000 per year.

APPLICATIONS:

Some of the information for your Planning Grants application can be gathered by your lake organization. Assistance is offered by agency professionals. The DNR will provide applications and technical guidance. Private consultants can assist you in gathering other information. A list of consultants, without endorsements, can be obtained from UW-Extension, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, WI 54481 (715/346-2116 or uwexplakes@uwsp.edu) or your DNR Region Lakes Coordinator.

Applications are due by February 1 and August 1 of each year. The initial review of the applications is conducted by each DNR Region Office. Decisions on eligibility are made and projects are ranked. A statewide priority list is compiled and grant agreements are processed. Decisions on each application are generally made within 60 days (April 1 and October 1). Grants are awarded twice annually.

Upon request, the state will provide an advance payment of 75% of its share based on estimated cost of the planning effort (75% of its 75% share) to help get you started. The remaining 25% is sent to the grantee after receipt of the final report. A final report is necessary at the conclusion of each grant. A summary of that document must be prepared for distribution to local property owners and interested citizens.

PRIORITIES:

The following are some of the criteria used to rank an application:

- Lakes which have not previously received a lake planning grant will receive a higher priority.
- How much the public uses the lake and the availability of public access.
- The degree to which the project assists local decision-making in the formation of a strategy to enhance or maintain a lake's quality.
- The degree to which the project will enhance knowledge of a lake's water quality, watershed or ecosystem.
- The extent and means by which information about the project will be distributed.
- The degree to which the project complements other lake management efforts and plans.
- The level of financial support and cooperation from other affected management units.



**Wisconsin
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For more information, assistance, or to obtain a copy of the Guidelines and Application booklet, see <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/ef/forms/lakeguidance.pdf> or call your:

- DNR Region Inland Lake Coordinator
- County Cooperative Extension Office
- UWEX-Lakes Partnership, UW-Stevens Point (715/346-2116)