



Lake Management Planning

Poygan, Winneconne, Butte des Morts, Winnebago

What is Lake Management Planning?

A lake management plan (LMP) is a dynamic document that serves as a guide for strategic and collaborative management of our lakes:

- Updated at least every five years
- Sets targets and goals for lake improvement
- Creates a framework for regional collaboration
- Leads to funding opportunities for improvement projects

A lake management plan is not regulatory nor will it create a new layer of government.

Why do we need a plan?

The lakes are vital to our local economies as well as long-held family traditions. The Winnebago Lakes are wonderful resources that provide:

- Clean drinking water to ~250,000 residents
- Revenue for local economies
 - ~\$234 million annually for 5 county region from angling (4,300 jobs!)
- A variety of recreational opportunities (boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, aesthetics, etc.) that are enjoyed by area residents and tourists

The lakes are currently in a degraded state with algal blooms, polluted runoff, and invasive species being top issues of concern for area residents and lake users (*Weigh-in on Winnebago project*).



Together, the lakes make up one of the largest freshwater systems in the U.S. Because of the size of the lake system, most management issues span multiple jurisdictions which can make efficient management difficult. The need for effective and cost-efficient ways to manage the lakes is what led five counties and other agencies to combine their

What is the goal of the project?

The goal of this project is to coordinate with stakeholders and project partners to develop a framework for cooperation throughout the region to improve upon existing programs and efforts that aim to restore or protect the health of the Winnebago Lakes.



What goes into a Lake Management Plan?

The lake management plan for the Winnebago Lakes will focus on in-lake concerns such as:

- Aquatic invasive species
- Aquatic plant management
- Recreational lake use, access, and navigation
- Water quality
- Watershed management
- Shoreline practices
- Habitat, Fish, and Wildlife
- Outreach and education
- Other topics as needed

How is the LMP project being funded?

Calumet, Fond du Lac, and Winnebago Counties contracted with Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance (FWWA) through the Winnebago Waterways Committee to help advance lake management planning efforts.

FWWA used the county money as match to leverage four, two-year Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Surface Water Grants (one for each of the four lakes). FWWA received the grants for Phase 3 in 2017.





Additional support for the project is being provided by several organizations through staff time: Fond du Lac County, Calumet County, Winnebago County, Waushara County, UW-Extension, East Central

Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance, and Wisconsin DNR. This list will continue to grow as more organizations get involved with the planning project.

Overview of the Project Structure:

The **Steering Committee** drives the project and is made up of nine voting members and several non-voting, advisory members. **Technical Teams** are small groups of experienced conservation professionals formed for each management topic. **Focus Groups** consist of 10-12 concerned members of the public (stakeholders) for each management topic. Technical teams serve as communication links between the Focus Groups and the Steering Committee. The **Winnebago Waterways Committee (WWC)** is made up of County Executives/Administrators, County Board Chairs and the Land Conservation Committee Chairs for each county (3 seats for each county) or their approved designee. County representatives on the Steering Committee serve as communication links between the Steering Committee and the WWC.

Technical Team Objectives:

- Assess, prioritize, and analyze key lake issues
- Develop and recommend project goals
- Collect relevant information
- Analyze/evaluate information
- Identify/address data gaps
- Develop and recommend management objectives
- Develop robust list of possible management actions
- With the help of Focus Groups, prioritize and recommend the best management actions

Focus Group Objectives:

- Help to ensure all relevant interests are represented
- Provide input to help finalize project goals
- Help develop evaluation criteria for reviewing management options
- Provide input to help prioritize and select best management action recommendations

Steering Committee Responsibilities:

- Recommend final project goals and management objectives to the Winnebago Waterways Committee

- Recommend consultants to fill gaps in information
- Provide final recommendations to the WWC based on Focus Group and Technical Team guidance
- Drive the project through to completion
- Initiate and plan for implementation of the LMP

Overview of the Planning Process:

Step 1: Secure project funding to initiate planning process

- Three counties invested in the project by hiring Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance.

Step 2: Define the project area

- The project area was determined by drawing an outline around the subwatersheds that touched one of the lakes.

Step 3: Secure additional project funding

- FWWA applied for and received four two-year DNR grants to supplement the county funding

Step 4: Conduct initial project outreach

- On April 24th, 2017, the Winnebago Waterways Kick-off Celebration introduced the project to the community
- In May 2017, three LMP Public Meetings were held to engage area stakeholders in the planning process

Step 5: Form Technical Teams

- Four Technical Teams were formed in 2017; three more Teams will be formed in 2018
- Focus Groups will be formed in 2018

Step 6: Develop goals for each management topic

Step 7: Collect/analyze information, assess data gaps

Step 8: Identify additional funding needs, secure funds, and hire consultant

Step 9: Develop management recommendations

Step 10: Form Focus Groups

- Focus Groups will help to select and prioritize management action recommendations

Step 11: Hold public meetings and comment period

- The final draft of the plan will be presented to the public through a series of town hall with a public comment period to follow.

Step 12: Finalize and submit the plan to the Winnebago Waterways Committee for approval

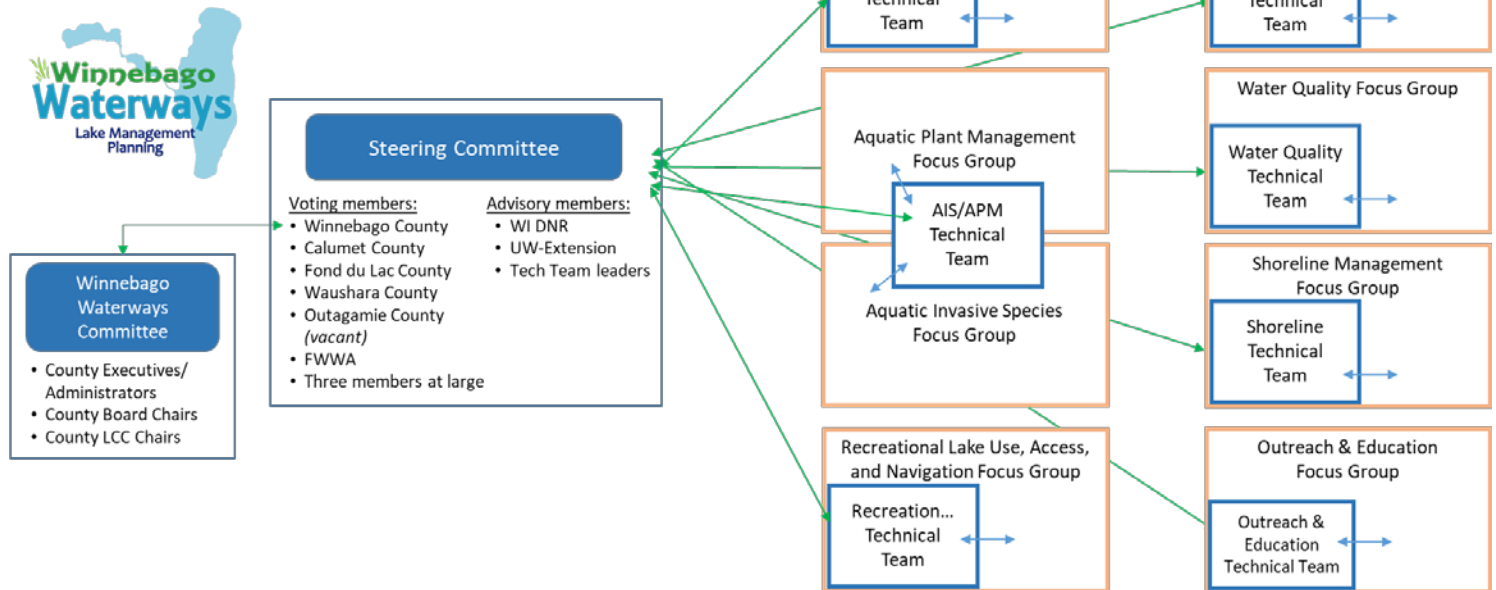
Step 13: Submit the plan to the WI DNR for approval

Steps 1 through 8 and part of 9 & 10 will be completed by the end of 2018. The remainder of Steps 9 through 13 will be completed in 2019.

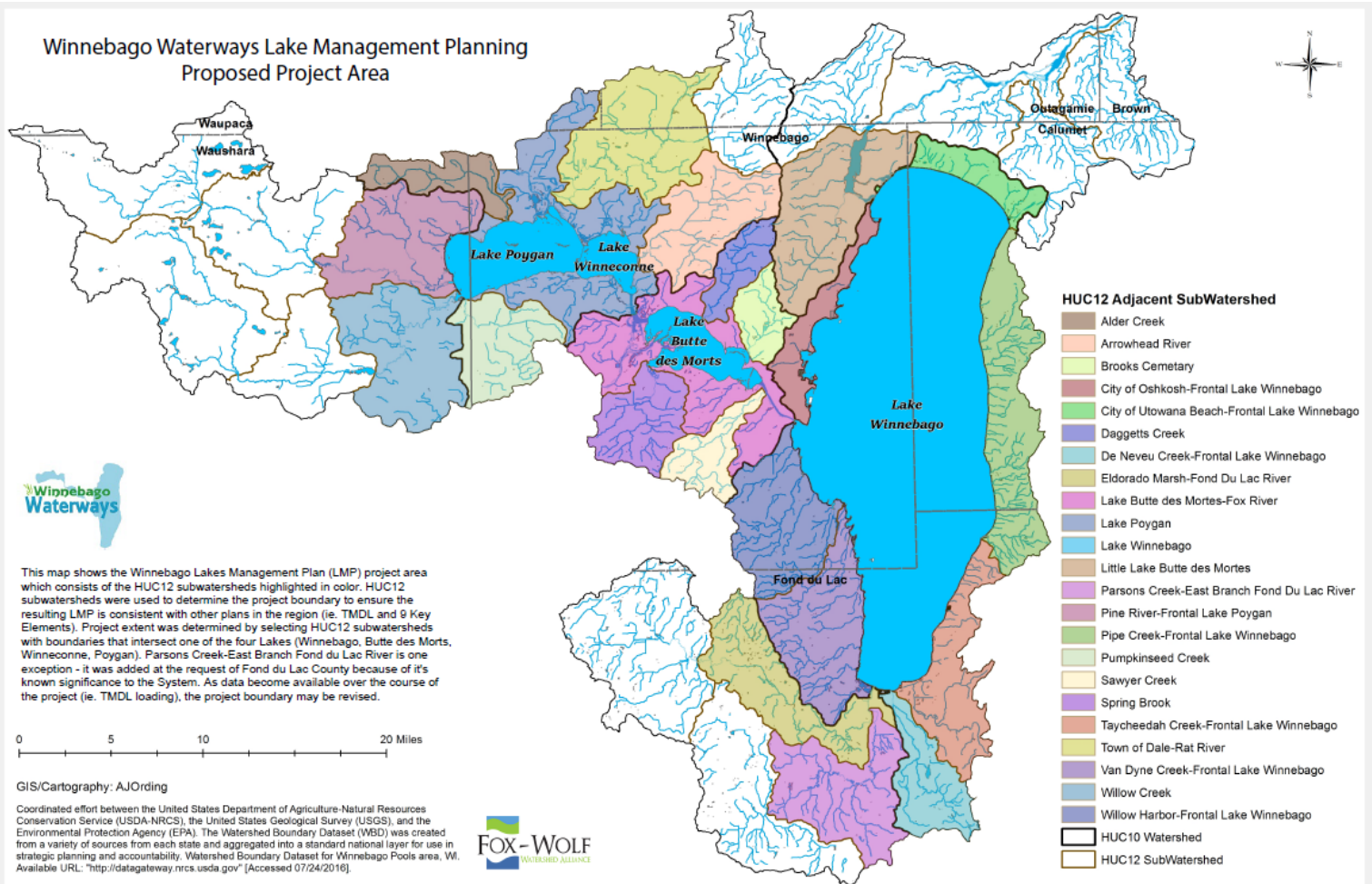
Once the LMP is finalized and approved by the WI DNR, the next phase of the project will be implementation.



2017-2018 Winnebago Waterways Lake Management Planning Project Framework



Winnebago Waterways Lake Management Planning Proposed Project Area



Lake Management Topics:

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

AIS are non-native plants, animals, or pathogens that cause harm to the economy, environment, or human health. As part of the planning process, an Aquatic Invasive Species Strategic Plan will be developed for the Winnebago Lakes. The strategic plan will identify and describe: where AIS have been identified in the Lakes; past and current prevention and control efforts; and goals and recommended strategies for preventing/controlling AIS including AIS education and outreach.

Aquatic Plant Management (APM)

A healthy, productive lake has a variety of aquatic plant species which provide habitat, improve water quality, help prevent invasive plants from establishing and make the plant community more resilient. However, overgrowth of aquatic plants can impede navigation and recreation. APM is a component of a lake management plan that balances stakeholders' interests and expectations while developing realistic aquatic plant goals for the lake. The plan will help to facilitate collaborative efforts for more effective aquatic plant management activities, help guide decision making, and outline methods for monitoring progress over time.

Habitat, Fish, & Wildlife

The goal of habitat management is to have in-lake, near shore, shoreland, and wetland habitats that are able to support and provide shelter for a variety of fish, invertebrate, waterfowl, shorebird, and mammal species. The LMP will identify habitat areas and practices that are critical for healthy, sustainable populations of wildlife and fish.

Water Quality

All four of the Winnebago Lakes are currently listed as impaired. Water quality describes the desired chemical, physical, and biological conditions of a waterbody. The goal of the LMP is to list management actions that would improve water quality within the lakes so that all four of the lakes are fishable, drinkable, swimmable, and aesthetically enjoyable.

Watershed Management

Land use, practices, and management within a lake's watershed can impact both its water quantity and quality. The land nearest the water generally has the largest impact on water quality in the lake. The LMP will describe current land use within the lakes' watershed and provide recommendations for practices that can reduce or prevent nutrients and other pollutants from reaching the water.

Shoreline Practices

Shoreland practices can impact both water quality and habitat. Shoreland areas near the water provide transitional habitat for many aquatic and terrestrial animals including birds, frogs, turtles, and small and large mammals. The most important and productive areas of a lake are in the near-shore zone where light reaches the lake bottom. Healthy, natural vegetation and other shoreland practices can help to reduce erosion and the water runoff from the landscape that reaches the lake. The LMP will examine current shoreland conditions around the lakes and provide recommendations for beneficial shoreland practices.

Recreational Lake Use, Access, & Navigation

Lake use for recreation increases the quality of life for area residents and has a tremendous impact on our regional economy. The goal of lake management is to ensure that the lake continues to provide the benefits that attract homeowners and lake users. This section of the LMP will cover lake access, use, recreation, navigation aids, and tourism. This includes topics such as: land and water trails, access for non-motorized vessels, navigation signage and buoys, boating access, and more.

Outreach and Education

The Winnebago Lakes are wonderful resources that provide drinking water to thousands, bring money to the region through tourism dollars, and offer numerous recreational opportunities. To increase the chances for success in efforts to improve and protect the lakes, it's important we help area residents get to know their lakes. This section of the LMP would recommend ways to increase the visibility of the lakes to the surrounding region, teach people about lake issues as well as potential solutions, and above all get more people out on the water to enjoy the lakes!

What are we missing? Contact us:

Did we forget something? Please let us know – we want to make sure we cover as many lake concerns as possible. You can submit your ideas through our online feedback form at www.winnebagoWaterways.org or by contacting the Winnebago Waterways Program Coordinator, Korin Doering at (920)851-0948 or korin@fwwa.org.

Sign-up for a Focus Group

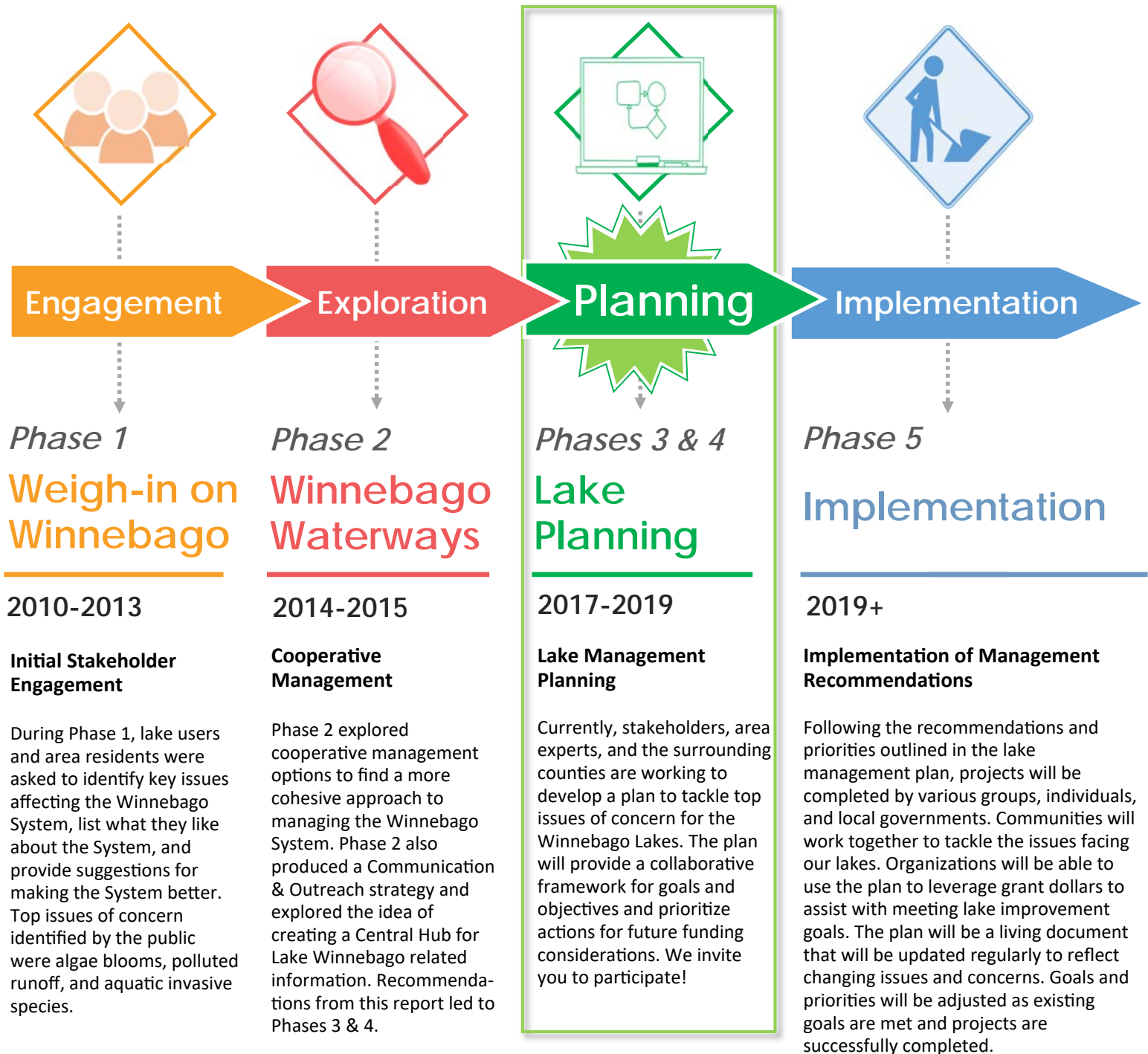
Interested in being part of the planning process? Visit www.WinnebagoWaterways.org to express your interest in participating on a project Focus. Focus Groups will assist Technical Teams with selecting and prioritizing management action recommendations.





Winnebago Waterways Lake Management Planning Project Progression Timeline

A collaborative, regional effort to improve the Winnebago Waterways was initiated in 2010. The timeline shown below provides an overview of progress that has been made since the beginning of Phase 1, where we currently are in the process, and where we plan to go in 2019 and beyond.



To learn more about current or past efforts, please visit: www.winnebagowaterways.org

Participating Organizations

Lake management planning for the Winnebago Lakes is a collaborative, regional effort. Many organizations are dedicating time to provide input on this project. Organizations that have been involved up to this point are listed on this page. We anticipate this list to grow and will update this page periodically to reflect those additions.

Calumet County

Winnebago County

Fond du Lac County

Waushara County

City of Appleton

City of Fond du Lac

University of Wisconsin-Extension

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Lawrence University

Lake Poygan Sportsmen's Club

Oshkosh Yacht Club

Walleyes for Tomorrow

Ducks Unlimited



Stantec

Future Neenah

Anchor Point Marina

Pheasants Forever

Lake & Pond Solutions Co.

Lake & Wetland Ecosystems, LLC

Wisconsin Lake & Pond Resources, LLC

East Central WI Regional Planning Commission

Fond du Lac Wastewater Treatment & Resource Recovery Facility

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Oshkosh Convention & Visitors Bureau

Winnebagoland Conservation Alliance

Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance

Fond du Lac Visitors Bureau

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Geologic Survey



Thank you to everyone who has and is currently contributing to the lake management planning effort!