

KEEPING THE CHAIN LAKES HEALTHY HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

The Goal - Wisconsin's Healthy Lakes initiatives goal is to protect and to improve the health of Wisconsin lakes by increasing projects for lakeshore habitat restoration and erosion control. The Department of Natural Resources Grant program is designed to boost waterfront property owners' interest by encouraging simple do-it-yourself projects to improve fish habitat, integrate native plantings, divert and clean runoff water and promote natural beauty. The benefits of these projects increase cumulatively as more property owners participate. Lakes with good shoreland habitat tend to have better water quality and sustainable property values.

The Sponsor - Waupaca County became a Healthy Lakes Grant sponsor when the Land and Water Conservation Department adopted the Healthy Lakes Implementation Plan by resolution, which was approved by the County Board in January 2016. A sponsor may apply for grants on behalf of multiple property owners who do not have to be on the same lake.

Grant Funding - \$200,000 in funding is available statewide, and Healthy Lakes Grant awards to sponsors will be capped at \$25,000, with up to \$1,000 in grant dollars for each planned "best practice" project. Because Healthy Lakes Grants are reimbursement grants, the State does not provide advance payment for project start-up expenses. The State grant award requires a 75/25 state/sponsor match including up to 10% of the state share available for technical assistance and project management. Sponsor match can include technical assistance and grant administration beyond the 10% state share. Healthy Lakes Grant funding is designed to encourage committed property owners with planned projects.

Grant funding is not available for compliance purposes such as shoreland mitigation projects or for complex sites with substantial runoff or erosion problems where an engineering design is more appropriate. Individual lakeshore owners may implement best practice projects without grant funding. However, before undertaking any shoreland project, consult the Waupaca County Planning and Zoning office, 715-258-6255 to make sure a proposed plan complies with local ordinances.

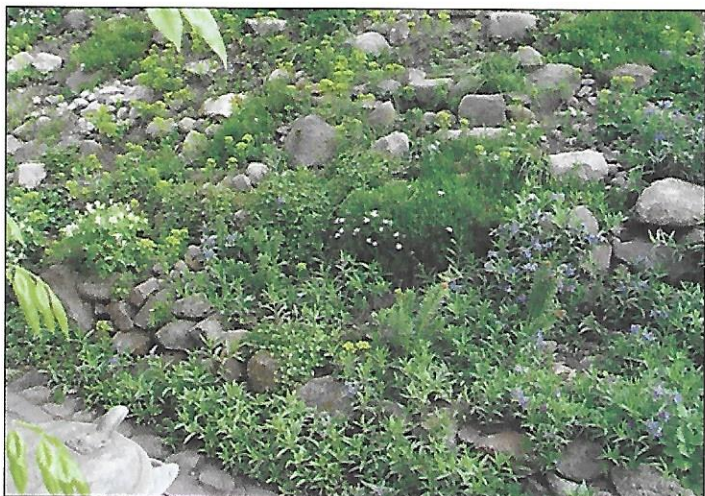
Best Practice Projects - Five examples of best practice projects included in the Healthy Lakes Plan follow.

Installation of native plantings. Native planting packages include plan designs and lists of suitable plants for areas at least 10 feet wide and covering a contiguous 350 square foot area along the lakeshore. Examples include packages for attracting birds and butterflies and those for woodland plantings. Property owner preferences and site features will determine which packages would be most appropriate. Final shape and orientation to the shoreline are flexible. For a 350 square foot area, installed costs total about \$1,000. Waupaca County shoreland zoning requires that this area of native plantings remain in place in perpetuity. When adopted by multiple homeowners, plantings improve habitat, slow runoff and promote natural beauty.



Native Plantings, courtesy of naturalshore.com

Diversion of runoff water. By building small berms or shallow dips, homeowners can capture runoff causing erosion and can divert water into an area where it can be absorbed. Diversion practices average about \$200 installed.



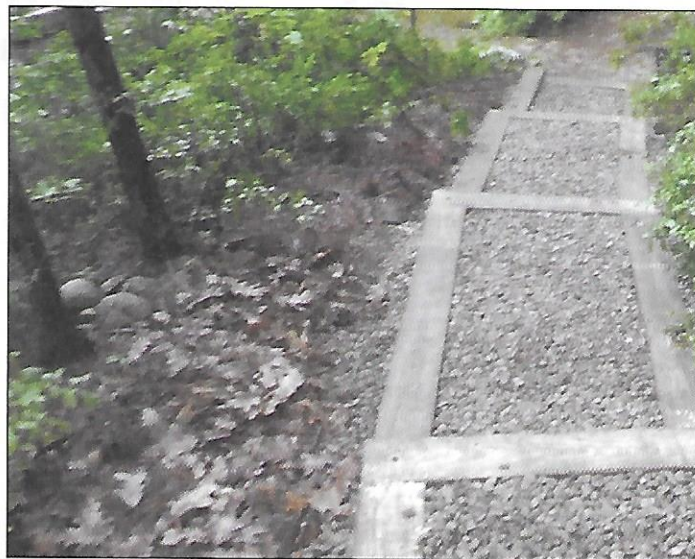
Diversion Berm, courtesy of landscapingnetwork.com

Installation of upland rain gardens. Rain gardens improve wildlife habitat while diverting and cleaning runoff water. When placed in upland areas near homes, rain gardens collect roof, road and driveway runoff and prevent it from reaching a lake. Rain garden costs vary greatly depending on size and plantings. Initial costs may be in the \$500-1000 range and average about \$2,300 installed. In addition to a potential \$1000 Healthy Lakes Grant, Waupaca County has a \$600 cost share grant available for rain gardens that may be used as part of the sponsor match.



Rain Garden, courtesy of Waupaca Land & Water Conservation Department

Placement of rock infiltration pits or trenches. Rock infiltration projects capture, store and allow runoff water to soak into the ground where it is filtered instead of streaming directly into a lake. Many infiltration projects can be accomplished in the \$1000 range.



Infiltration Steps, courtesy of awwatersheds.org

Deployment of fish sticks. Fish sticks include whole downed trees stacked in a cluster and anchored to the shore either fully or partially submerged. Use of fish sticks prevents shoreline erosion while improving fish and wildlife habitat. Property owners participating in fish stick projects must commit to leaving a 350 contiguous square foot no-mow or native planting zone if the property's shoreland buffer area does not comply with the local shoreland zoning ordinance. Fish stick projects average about \$500 for a cluster of three to five trees.



Fish Sticks, courtesy of Mallard Lake Association, Burnett County

Grant Application – Interested property owners should have a plan in mind and should contact the Land and Water Conservation Department, 715-258-6245, before December 1 to avoid planning on snow covered ground. After talking with an interested landowner, the Department will do a site visit. The deadline to apply for the DNR grant is February 1 each year. Each grant has a standard timeline with an April 15 start date and a June 30 end date two years later. Project funding requires that property owners sign a conservation contract, including operation and maintenance information and a ten-year requirement for retaining the project. The owner may sign a participation/commitment pledge to document a strong interest in following through with the project.

Grant Review - Healthy Lakes Grants are competitive. A review team, including DNR staff and County and UW-Extension partners, will consider the following aspects of a proposed project: water quality, habitat and natural beauty protection or improvement; public access and public use of the lake; diversity and appropriateness of best practices, costs, neighbors participating together, ability to measure improvements, level of commitment by property owners and likelihood of a successful project. Property owners will be notified if their applications are successful.

For additional information, go to healthylakeswi.org or contact Brian Haase, Waupaca County Land and Water Conservation Department, Brian.Haase@co.waupaca.wi.us or 715-258-6245.