

# LAKE PROTECTION & CLASSIFICATION GRANTS

---

We are poised at a turning point in the history of the management of Wisconsin's lakes and waterways. The past decade has seen an unprecedented increase in the demand for ownership of shore lands and use of our waters. What will life around our lakes look like in the future? The ecological health of our lakes and our lake communities will be determined by our degree of environmental responsibility and how well we manage the demand for waterfront property. The sheer number of lakes dictates that much of the management of lakes in Wisconsin must rely on citizen and local government action and cooperation. Lake Protection & Classification Grants were designed to assist lake users, lake communities and local governments as they undertake projects to protect and restore lakes and their ecosystems.

## **HOW MUCH MONEY IS AVAILABLE?**

This is a reimbursement grant program that, with one exception, provides up to 75% state cost sharing assistance up to \$200,000 to carry out lake protection, restoration, and improvement projects. A 25% local share is required. *This program is authorized by ch. 281.69, Wis. Stats., and administered under NR 191 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.*

## **WHERE DO THE FUNDS COME FROM?**

The source of funds for these grants is a portion of the state excise tax on gasoline consumed by motor boats.

## **APPLICATION DEADLINES & GRANT AWARD TIMELINES**

There is one application deadline annually, and that is May 1. However, because of the size, complexity and technical nature of many projects, a pre-application meeting with the DNR is highly recommended, especially if your project requires plan or permit approvals. This will ensure the application will be complete and can be evaluated and considered for funding. Grants are usually awarded in September.

## **WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?**

- The **purchase of property or a conservation easement** that will significantly contribute to the protection or improvement of the natural ecosystem and water quality of a lake.
- The **restoration of wetlands and shorelands** that will protect a lake's water quality or its natural ecosystem (these grants are limited to \$100,000). Special **wetland incentive grants** of up to \$10,000 are eligible for 100% state funding if the project is identified in the sponsor's comprehensive land use plan.
- The **development of local regulations or ordinances** to protect lakes and the educational activities necessary for them to be implemented (these grants are limited to \$50,000).
- **Lake classification projects** for counties to design and implement local land and water management programs that are targeted to specific classes of lakes in response to various development and recreational use pressures (these grants are limited to \$50,000).
- **Lake management plan implementation projects** are a "catch-all" for any other types of projects but must first be recommended in a plan and approved by the DNR. These projects may include watershed management projects, lake restoration, diagnostic feasibility studies, or any other projects that will protect or improve lakes. Sponsors should submit a copy of their lake management plan and the recommendation(s) it wants to fund for DNR approval at least two months in advance of the May 1 deadline. Plans must have been officially adopted by the sponsor and made available for public comment prior to submittal. The DNR will review the plan and advise the sponsor on the project's eligibility and development of a lake protection grant application for its implementation.

## WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE?

- Dam repair, operation or removal.
- Purchase of property on which a dam is located.
- Water safety patrols, as defined in s. 30.79(1)(b), Wis. Stats.
- Dredging.
- Design, installation, operation or maintenance of sanitary sewer systems.
- Routine maintenance and operation of equipment or facilities such as aeration systems, pumps, sedimentation basins and plant harvesters.

## WHO'S ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- Counties, towns, villages and cities.
- Qualified lake associations (see below).
- Town sanitary districts.
- Public Inland Lake Protection & Rehabilitation Districts.
- Tribal units of government.
- Other local governmental units as defined in Ch. 66.0131(1)(a), Wis. Stats. that are established for the purpose of lake management.
- Qualified nonprofit conservation organizations (see below).

**Qualified Lake Associations:** To be eligible, a lake association must meet certain qualifications explained on a form called 8700-226, the "Lake Association Organizational Application." The form must be submitted with a copy of the association's by-laws or articles of incorporation before or accompanying your grant application. For additional information on qualified lake associations you can look for the fact sheet called *What Is a Qualified Lake Association?* (WR-404-95) available at DNR or UWEX.

**Qualified Nonprofit Conservation Organizations (NCOs):** To be eligible, a nonprofit group must be certified under the Stewardship Program definition as a NCO. This means that the group must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code and show that one of its primary purposes is the acquisition of land for conservation purposes.

## HOW TO APPLY

Contact your regional DNR lake coordinator early on to discuss your project plans and eligibility questions. It is a good idea to work with your DNR environmental grant specialist and lake coordinator throughout the process and submit your application BEFORE the deadline. This will allow time for ironing out any last minute details. Thank you for helping. This partnership will help shape the future of Wisconsin lakes.

**Contact your DNR Regional Lake Coordinator or Environmental Grant Specialist at:**  
Central Office, 608-261-6423

West Central Region  
Eau Claire  
715-839-3700

South Central  
Fitchburg  
608-275-3266

North Region West  
Spooner  
715-635-2101

Northeast Region  
Green Bay  
920-492-5800

North Region East  
Rhineland  
715-365-8900

Southeast Region  
Milwaukee  
414-263-8500

**To obtain a copy of the Lake Grant Guidelines and Application go to:**  
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/EF/forms/forms.html>

**For more information or assistance, go to the WI Lake Partnership web site:**  
[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/lakes/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/lakes/index.htm) or contact any of the following:

- County Cooperative Extension Office
- UWEX-Lakes Partnership, UW-Stevens Point 715-346-2116; [uwexlakes@uwsp.edu](mailto:uwexlakes@uwsp.edu)
- WI Assoc of Lakes, Madison 608-662-0923, [wilakes@execpc.com](mailto:wilakes@execpc.com)



**Wisconsin  
Lakes  
Partnership**

FH-398  
Rev. 3/03  
Lake Protection