

Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Association, inc (OCLAWA)
2021 Position Paper

Our role: To provide support to local conservation minded organizations as they conduct projects to improve the health of the surface water resources throughout Oconto County.

Types of support we provide:

1 – Continuous interactions with Oconto County government to keep them aware of the issues and actions that are being undertaken, and to build their support. This includes participation in the monthly meetings of the Land and Water Conservation Committee (LWCC) as well as bi-annual presentations to the entire County Board.

2 – Provide for networking between organizations that are dealing with similar issues so that they can learn from each other to prevent common mistakes and achieve desired results more efficiently.

3 – Conduct broad reaching educational programs/communications to extend learning to as many groups as possible regarding important information.

4 – Search out and communicate available financial resources that can assist member groups in their project efforts.

5 – Represent the totality of the interests of all Oconto County conservation minded organizations in dealing with policies and programs at regional and state levels.

Current/past support examples:

1 – Through our efforts with the LWCC, Oconto County approved the allocation of \$231,000 to an Oconto County Healthy Waters Cost Share program. In the first three years of the program, 12 different organizations have shared in \$88,000 of grants.

2 – Member organizations make presentations at OCLAWA meetings to show others their projects and learnings. We also maintain and distribute a registry of member organizations and their contact information to facilitate communications.

3 – OCLAWA has sponsored the annual Snapshot Day since 2018, educating attendees on AIS identification and sampling techniques for early detection of AIS infestations.

4 – We assist organizations pursuing State or County grants with their applications and provide letters of support. We assisted one organization with a Lumberjack RC&D grant approval.

5 – Due to our interactions with DNR, Oconto/Forest/Langlade counties, and Lumberjack RC&D Council, a tri-county Lake Monitoring and Protection Network Coordinator will be hired and available as a resource to support surface water conservation efforts in 2021 and beyond.

6 – Build the capacity of groups to become more self-managing in their projects. Mentored Ucil Lake Homeowners Association in becoming a qualified Lake Association. Assisted Oconto Sportsmen's Club in receiving a CB/CW grant.

Future support objectives:

1 – Through a county-wide fund raising effort, generate enough financial resources to create an OCLAWA cost sharing program to support member organizations in projects and in support of their State and County grant applications. This may also extend the life of the Oconto County Healthy Waters Cost Share program which is expected to be exhausted with 2024 approvals.

2 – Establish a County-wide website/newsletter for member organizations to utilize for communicating their activities and for OCLAWA to communicate upcoming programs and information important to the member groups.

3 – Continue to build capacity of individual organizations to become increasingly more self managing while also building the strength of the OCLAWA network.

4 – Conduct county-wide educational programs and training sessions on important surface water programs to enable member groups to have increased capacity for managing the health of their local waters (ie. CB/CW and CLMN trainings).

5 – Build increased integration between OCLAWA, it's member groups, and local units of government throughout Oconto County.