



# THE WONDERFUL WATERS OF WISCONSIN

BUILDING AN INITIATIVE TO PROTECT WISCONSIN'S HEALTHY WATERSHEDS & HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

## PARTNER DISCUSSION GROUP SUMMARY (SPRING 2021)

Businesses, including  
Agriculture & Tourism



Fish, Wildlife & Habitat  
Conservation Organizations



Lake, River & Watershed  
Management Organizations  
and Lake Leaders



Local, State, Federal &  
Tribal Government  
(other than DNR)



Wisconsin  
Department of  
Natural Resources

**WDNR**

WHO WE HEARD FROM

### FOR MORE INFORMATION



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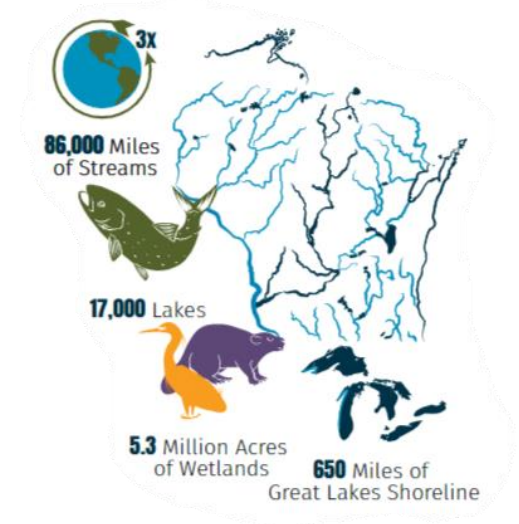
Visit the **HEALTHY WATERSHEDS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS WEBSITE**: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/HQW.html>

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to protect and enhance our natural resources, including our air, land and water; our wildlife, fish and forests; and the ecosystems that sustain all life for all people to enjoy.

The DNR’s Water Resource Program plays a lead role in fulfilling this mission when it comes to the state waters. Historically, much of the program’s emphasis has been to restore polluted waters as required by the federal Clean Water Act. Evidence is mounting, however, that actively protecting healthy water resources is a wise public investment, and the shift towards protection efforts is growing nationally.

Wisconsin’s current effort to create a comprehensive statewide program is unique in its broad scale and requires meaningful engagement of partners in planning and future implementation. These partnerships – federal, state, regional and local – will be keys to success. The rationale for cooperation is compelling – the better we can protect water resources now, the more likely it is that future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from them.



The [2021 Healthy Watersheds, High-Quality Waters \(HWHQW\) Kickoff Strategy](#) was a first step towards greater balance between restoration and protection, all the while emphasizing and celebrating the wonderful waters of Wisconsin. The next step was to bring partners together to identify actions to take over the next five years to achieve common goals. **A partner engagement process occurred in April – June 2021. The DNR’s Healthy Waters Team reviewed discussion session input. This summary pulls together participants’ responses to the questions asked during the sessions and highlights common ideas and themes to consider moving forward.**

**8 Virtual Discussion Groups**

**164 Participants\***

**93 Organizations**

**89 Pages of Notes**

- QUESTIONS →
1. What is your organization or group currently doing to protect water resources?
  2. How might the results of the HWHQW assessment be useful to you?  
*Collectively, what can we do to...*
  3. Increase capacity to provide technical assistance?
  4. Increase utilization of funding for protection?
  5. Leverage & adapt existing program tools to achieve results?
  6. Increase external awareness?

\*The time, effort, and candid conversations with participants were greatly appreciated and will serve as the foundation of the water resources protection action plan anticipated to be released in 2022. The full list of participants is [HERE \(click link\)](#). Note: the list includes all individuals who signed into a virtual discussion group via Zoom, regardless of how long they remained.



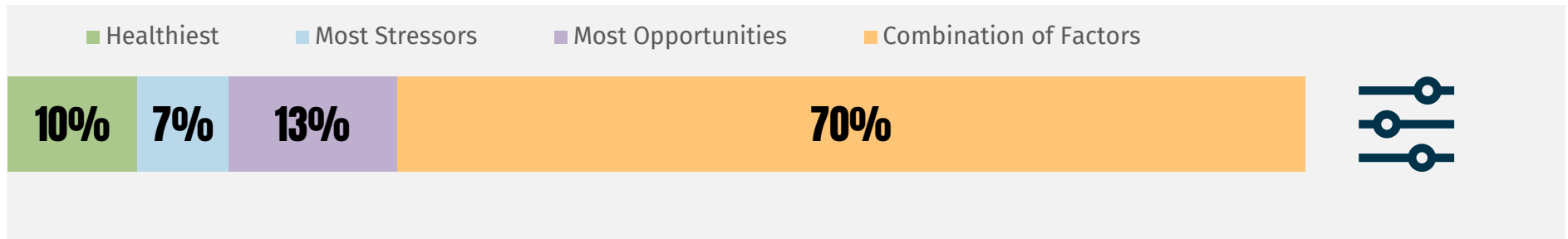
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- 6** **Voluntary, non-regulatory actions are preferred over regulations.** Many participants are discouraged over recent deregulations and a perceived lack of environmental enforcement, but recent community-based planning efforts are a silver lining.
- 7** **“Every inch of ground you stand on, is several inches deep in planning coverage.”** While participants believe in the value of planning, they want to see partners collaborate for measurable protection outcomes.
- 8** **There is no funding magic bullet.** While there are many funding options, none seems to be an ideal fit for HWHQW. The absence of grant flexibility and too-short timelines are the major barriers.
- 9** **“Don’t just put a fence around it and call it ‘good.’”** Real water resources protection requires long-term active management even if there are adequate regulations in place.
- 10** **The time is now!** Momentum is growing for protection efforts to be an equal partner to restoration work. We can – and should – do both!

## PRIORITIZING FOR PROTECTION

Each discussion group kicked off with an online poll asking participants **“what factor(s) should have the greatest influence on how we at DNR prioritize our watershed protection efforts.”** In other words, which kinds of watersheds should be prioritized for protection?



Three other noteworthy items surfaced from discussion about what other factors might be considered in prioritizing within already healthy watersheds:

1. Prioritize the healthiest watersheds first, and then apply stressors and opportunities.
2. Include upstream and headwater watersheds in the prioritization effort.
3. Include environmental justice indicators.

## Q1: What are you or your organization/group currently doing to protect water resources?

We asked this question to establish a picture of what is happening already to (a) avoid re-creating any wheels and (b) leverage and expand upon successes when planning for future actions. Answers also shine a light on the different roles that partners play in working towards the same broader outcomes. Action planning for HWHQW will leverage the niche strengths of public sector agencies, private organizations, and other stakeholders.

Many individuals and organizations within each partner group shared what they were doing to protect water resources. Based on what came up in discussion, you can see below what everyone is up to across the different partner groups and the broad types of actions that jumped out as themes (E.g., “Partner,” “Educate,” etc.).

Use the key at the bottom of the page to see which partner group is doing what.

### PARTNER to protect water resources

	<a href="#">Clear Waters Initiative Charter</a> between local governments and construction companies
	Wisconsin Wetland Association (WWA) Marengo River and Little Plover River projects
	Coordinate with tribal natural resources departments on monitoring and management; The Waters Alliance (formerly town lakes committee) consortium of lake groups, tribe, and individuals; <a href="#">14-Mile Watershed Alliance</a> 9-key element planning and implementation; working with farmers and farmer-led councils, Lake Mills stormwater and leaf campaigns, <a href="#">Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program</a> ; Lac La Belle Adaptive Watershed program and Farmer Led Watershed Coalition, Delevan Lakes Producers Group
	Farmer-led councils; Marinette County partnership with local land trust; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <a href="#">Healthy Watersheds Protection Program</a> and <a href="#">Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement</a>
	<a href="#">Wisconsin Lakes Partnership</a> ; <a href="#">Green Tier Legacy Communities</a> ; partnership with University of Wisconsin -Extension (Extension) to implement Water Action Volunteers ( <a href="#">WAV</a> ) and Citizen Lake Monitoring Network ( <a href="#">CLMN</a> ) volunteer monitoring programs

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



Fish, Wildlife & Habitat Conservation Organizations



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## EDUCATE partners and the public about water resources protection

	Responsible tourism promotion; Extension working with farmers to implement research-based best practices; EcoLatinos engages Spanish speaking on conservation topics like leaf cleanup; place-making in local communities
	Izaak Walton League (Ike) youth education; Northwoods Land Trust (NWL) landowner workshops; Wisconsin Wetlands Association place-based work and demonstration projects to showcase integrated watershed management
	Annual lake association meetings; newsletters; information packets to realtors and new property owners; work directly with landowners on seawall removal; educating large wake boaters about loon nesting sites to protect them; social media campaigns; community lunches with raffles; billboards and other local advertising; promotional booth at farmers' market; Northwest Lakes Conference; Washburn County Blue Ribbon Panel showcasing healthy shoreland properties; lake tours with elected officials; Waterways Association of Menomonee & Shawano Counties (WAMSCO) youth education programs; Marinette County Teaching Outdoor Awareness and Discovery ( <a href="#">T.O.A.D.</a> ); strive for behavior change rather than just education or awareness
	Focus groups to better understand community attitudes and behaviors related to water resources protection; Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) train the trainer and nutrient management farmer education workshops; Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) webinar series and Shoreline Living publication; public notices; news releases; Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) fish consumption advisories and sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge ( <a href="#">TEK</a> ).

## PLAN for water resources protection

	Land trust strategic plans
	Lake management plans; Lauderdale Lakes watershed plan with loading model
	Nutrient management plans; Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects; countywide lake and watershed classification and plans <a href="#">-Iowa County Lowery Creek Watershed Initiative</a> and Vilas County; U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land and resource planning; 9 Key Element plans; Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) 2-story fishery plans and regional plan and prioritization effort; aquatic plant management plans; Polk County Land & Water Plan watershed ranking/priorities; Marengo River Climate Adaptation Plan; EPA Non-Point Source Protection Report; municipal wastewater discharge planning & permits
<b>WDNR</b>	<a href="#">Healthy Lakes &amp; Rivers Action Plan</a> ; TMDL restoration; Managed Forest Lands (MFL) planning; Forestry Action Plan <a href="#">2020 Statewide Forest Action Plan</a> ; <a href="#">State Natural Area Strategy</a> (SNA); staff review of waterway projects and permits

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## FUND water resources management & protection

	NWLT land stewardship fund - endowment from donors; hire staff for local organizations
	Grindstone Lake dormant cranberry bog purchase funds loaned from local family; transmission line funding to counties or lake groups
	Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) funding for county cost-sharing of NR151 best practices; DNR targeted runoff management and surface water grants; counties funding more restoration work because that is the funder preference; county incentives for shoreland protection; U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding; EPA 319 Program funding to states – can be used for protection; MGLP lake conservation grant funding; EPA Healthy Watershed funding
<b>WDNR</b>	Fisheries management and land acquisition; <a href="#">Knowles-Nelson Stewardship funding</a> ; Surface Water Grants (SWG)

## PROTECT habitat and water quality

	The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Legacy Projects; Landmark Conservancy St. Croix River protection; Trout Unlimited (TU) <a href="#">Driftless Area Restoration Effort</a> and headwater stream land acquisition
	Healthy Lakes & Rivers; Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW), aquatic invasive species (AIS) decontamination stations; purchase shoreland for permanent protection; Cloverleaf Lakes Gibson Island Purchase now a nature preserve; land swaps; Green Lake Conservancy recently purchase last undeveloped parcel on the lake
	Countywide AIS prevention programs; well abandonment; landscape scale restoration; Fond du Lac County Parson’s Creek protection effort
<b>WDNR</b>	Fishery management areas; brook trout reserves; and streambank easement programs; Great Lakes coastal wetland acquisition; Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) State Natural Areas Program; <a href="#">forestry best management practices (BMPs) for water quality</a>

## RESTORE habitat and hydrologic functions

	Multi-partner wetland and streambank restoration projects, like invasive species control
	Wild rice restoration with tribal partners; payments or incentives to farmers to take land out of production – Delevan Lake example; Dane County conservation easements; Marathon countywide voluntarily 35-foot buffer effort; culvert replacement; Eurasian watermilfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed control with herbicides; Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting, manual removal

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	<p><a href="#">Burnett County Shoreline Incentives Program</a>; USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (<a href="#">CREP</a>); USFS culvert/stream crossing replacements and focus on restoring habitat connectivity; DNR forestry BMPs implemented by partners; beaver dam removal projects; impoundment removal projects; road reconditioning; fish passage projects; SEWRPC hydrological restoration effort; agricultural best practices; Army Corps large-scale shoreline protection projects; GLIFWC wild rice restoration</p>
<p><b>WDNR</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Mississippi River habitat restoration program</a></p>


## MONITOR, ASSESS, CLASSIFY & DESIGNATE water resources

	<p>TU and Ike volunteer monitoring; <a href="#">Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee</a>; <a href="#">Mississippi River Report Card</a></p>
	<p>Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (<a href="#">CLMN</a>); contract lake monitoring and assessment efforts or partner with DNR; AIS and other Snap Shot Days</p>
	<p>Lake Noquebay nutrient study; county and volunteer partnership monitoring projects – Portage and Ashland Counties; EPA monitoring standards and Healthy Watersheds program; GLIFWC and tribal natural resources water quality and fisheries monitoring in ceded territory and tribal lands</p>
<p><b>WDNR</b></p>	<p>Water resources surface water assessments, including long-term trends, directed lakes, and targeted watershed assessments; water quality standards assessment; fisheries surveys; Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters (<a href="#">O/ERW</a>); critical habitat designations &amp; sensitive areas; 2-story fishery lakes; trout waters; State Natural Areas</p>

## ADVOCATE for environmental protection policies

	<p>WWA &amp; Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) work with legislature; TU high-capacity well and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) positions; <a href="#">America the Beautiful 30x30</a> new federal campaign</p>
	<p>Fair maps working with legislature to reestablish county zoning local control; individual advocacy for protection from mining in the north; participate in county board and committee meetings; get lake org or other citizen rep on committee; Wisconsin Lakes advocacy</p>
	<p>GLIFWC review and advocacy of/against land use projects like pipelines and mining</p>

## REGULATE land use, shoreland, and in-water activities that could harm water resources


	<p>Municipal boating ordinances like slow-no-wake areas (Lake Districts); assist with county decontamination ordinance; on-call task force comprised of volunteers with technical expertise in watershed who provide feedback/alerts to organization and officials about land use changes</p>
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	Bayfield, Burnett, Washburn countywide decontamination ordinances <a href="#">Washburn County Decontamination Ordinance</a> ; Oneida County manure storage ordinance; county shoreland zoning ordinances; Buffalo County shoreland ordinance for agricultural activities; farmland preservation; <a href="#">multi-discharger variance for wastewater treatment</a> ; EPA 303(d), 401, 404, and 319 and antidegradation implications – build protection into Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits; Army Corps wetland regulations; impervious cover regulations; U.S. Clean Water Act includes protection; WPDES discharge regulations
<b>WDNR</b>	Chapter 30 water regulation; fisheries regulations; forestry BMPs; fisheries natural waterbody permits; WPDES point source discharges; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission <a href="#">(FERC)</a> relicensing; <a href="#">Wild Rivers</a>

## RESEARCH water resources

	University of Minnesota hydrologic budget on Pipe Lakes
	<a href="#">University of Wisconsin – La Crosse River Studies</a>
<b>WDNR</b>	Aquatic plant management efficacy; climate change resilient fisheries

## DEVELOP & MANAGE databases and conservation planning tools

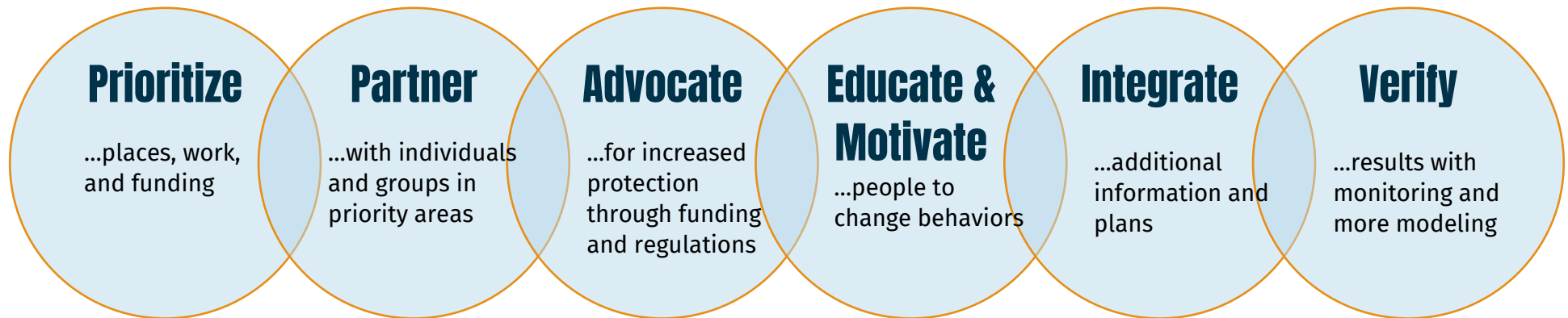
	TNC <a href="#">Wetlands by Design</a> and <a href="#">Conserving Nature's Stage</a> ; individual land trust databases
	MGLP <a href="#">Conservation Planner</a> ; EPA Preliminary Healthy Watershed Assessment and Recovery Potential Screening <a href="#">(RPS)</a> tools
<b>WDNR</b>	Surface Water Data Viewer <a href="#">(SWDV)</a> ; Surface Water Inventory & Monitoring System <a href="#">(SWIMS)</a>

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism 	Fish, Wildlife & Habitat Conservation Organizations 	Lake, River & Watershed Management Organizations and Lake Leaders 	Local, State, Federal & Tribal Government (other than DNR) 	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 
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## Question 2: How might the results of the HWHQW assessment be useful to you or your organization?

The HWHQW assessment shows where healthy watersheds and high-quality waters exist in the state. Participants suggested hundreds of ways in which they might use these results. Many of the answers to this question resurfaced during the action planning discussion about specific objectives and are shared in more detail in those sections of the summary document.

The broad action items listed below rose to the surface as common themes for how the results might be used:



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## Questions 3 - 6: Brainstorming for future action

The HWHQW Kickoff Strategy identified four objectives to focus on:

1. **Increase capacity to provide technical assistance to partners.**
2. **Increase utilization of funding for protection.**
3. **Leverage and adapt existing program tools to achieve results.**
4. **Increase external awareness of protection priority areas and activities.**

We used breakout rooms to collect ideas from participants about how each objective might be achieved. Feedback is summarized in the tables on pages 10-23 as described below:

- We consolidated the discussion group notes into actions and included examples, if shared. **Actions are listed in the left-hand column.**
- Participants often suggested the same action in multiple partner groups. **An X indicates the partner group in the given column suggested the action.**
- The actions are listed from most to least suggested, but level of concurrence is not meant to convey priority. Furthermore, the listed actions do not prescribe the work of a given partner, but rather identify which partner group(s) suggested it.





### Question 3: What would you do to increase capacity to provide technical assistance?

<b>FUTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIONS</b>					<b>WDNR</b>
Create a HWHQW toolkit with a menu of BMPs and include case studies and stories/testimonials. May need to customize depending on protection goal or geographic area. E.g., <a href="#">Healthy Lakes &amp; Rivers</a> , <a href="#">Forestry BMPs</a>	X	X	X	X	X
Break down silos within DNR and better integrate across programs to leverage other planning efforts and funding and improve external communications. I.e., Prevent “DNR Disease” – when other programs and partners aren’t aware of each other’s efforts	X	X	X	X	X





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FUTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIONS					WDNR
Form a partnership group with an information hub or library that crosses programs and agencies and consolidates information. Need a way to connect local champions and landowners to proper contact, organization, and funding source. E.g., <a href="#">Wisconsin Lakes Partnership</a> , AIS Partnership	X	X	X		X
Develop HWHQW website with database/tabular data, mapping tools, and contacts. Keep data, including shapefiles, open and available for public use. Link mapping and database tools to other pages. E.g., Local websites, SWDV, <a href="#">DNR Lakes Page</a> , <a href="#">Go Wild App</a> with “healthy waters” portal, <a href="#">The Wisconsin Lake List</a> , <a href="#">Ike's Clean Water Hub</a>		X	X	X	X
Prioritize training and technical assistance to counties, NRCS, land trusts, and other “boots on the ground” pros who work directly with landowners		X	X	X	X
Engage non-traditional partners like anglers, conservation clubs, boaters, businesses, and farmers. E.g., <a href="#">Fishers and Farmers Partnership</a>	X	X	X		
Connect HWHQW with Farmer Led Councils		X	X	X	
Host HWHQW workshops and webinars and consider train-the-trainer approach. Focus on multiple groups in geographic priority areas. E.g., <a href="#">AmeriCorps</a> , Healthy Lakes & Rivers, CBCW, private forestry landowners			X	X	X
Contract with the private sector for technical assistance, especially at local level	X		X		
Engage research partners who are locally connected. E.g. <a href="#">Natural Resources Research Institute</a> , tribes & GLIFWC	X		X		
Share model protection project/effort to showcase end game and help answer when enough is enough. Create a graphic showing continuum from restoration to protection with example BMPs.		X	X		
Advocate for DNR tech assistance to stakeholder groups to build case for more water resources protection – and funding. E.g., Coalition behind <a href="#">Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment</a>		X	X		
Advocate for DNR to fill vacant positions so staff can spend more time providing technical assistance		X	X		
Advocate for DNR to focus less on individual lakes and more on watershed scale groups and municipalities and shift funding accordingly		X		X	





# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE <u>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</u> ACTIONS					WDNR
Hire project-based staff to build capacity and implement program. E.g. <a href="#">TMDL</a> Team, County AIS Coordinator model, shoreland specialist position			X	X	
Reach out to conservancies and land trusts who have staff for partnerships			X	X	
Inventory and field verify modeling & assessment results. Some partners may be able to provide monitoring technical assistance and equipment. E.g., USFWS monitoring tech assistance			X	X	
Develop guidance how to use the HWHQW modeling & assessment information, website, and action plan			X		X
Develop one-page HWHQW frequently asked questions and contact fact sheets			X		X
Integrate HWHQW info into regulatory permit review. E.g, DNR <a href="#">Waterway</a> and <a href="#">Wastewater</a> permits, local land use permits				X	X
Research and communicate benefits of agricultural BMPs to protect water resources. E.g., <a href="#">Wisconsin Discovery Farms</a> , <a href="#">Minnesota Statewide Buffer Law</a> , research benefits of regenerative farming vs. row cropping		X			
Increase volunteering monitoring capacity with watershed field operations strategy and training. E.g., Vilas County Protection Project, Bio Blitz, <a href="#">AIS Snapshot Day</a>			X		
Determine incentives that would motivate people to implement BMPs			X		
Create water resources protection career development program			X		
Reach out directly to landowners in protection areas early on and offer future assistance			X		
Create short tech assistance tutorials on YouTube and Facebook. E.g, Home Depot tutorials, Sawyer County Public Health videos			X		
Use HWHQW info for drone flight verification of watershed condition and identifying conservation BMPs				X	
Partner with locals to prioritize funding and include HW team/partnership members in process. E.g., <a href="#">NRCS Local Working Groups</a> , County Land & Water Conservation Committees				X	
Analyze soil resources in healthy watersheds to understand soil types and properties				X	
Add social and environmental justice indicators to modeling & assessment				X	





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FUTURE <u>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</u> ACTIONS					WDNR
Pilot projects with prescribed actions for implementation in priority areas				X	
Boost organizational capacity of results display by integrating capacity indicators into watershed maps so groups can better connect with each other					X

## Question 4: What would you do to increase utilization of funding for protection?

FUTURE <u>FUNDING</u> ACTIONS					WDNR
Identify current funding opportunities in a “catalog”	X	X	X	X	
Lighten up the restrictions on grant funding and increase flexibility and timelines for protection. Consolidate categories so people can implement projects in education and planning categories, too. E.g. Surface Water Grants (SWG) too project/category specific, short timelines & long waiting period before funding available, forms too complicated		X	X	X	X
Shift/reallocate (some) restoration funding for protection. Partners advocate for the change.		X	X	X	X
Integrate business interests to leverage non-traditional funding sources. E.g. <a href="#">Brewers for Clean Water</a>	X		X	X	
Use DNR grants to fund positions to support/implement HWHQW. E.g. SWG Lake Classification, County AIS Coordinators		X	X	X	
Leverage existing federal and tribal funding opportunities, some of which land trusts already use, in specific watersheds. E.g. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative ( <a href="#">GLRI</a> ), Mississippi River Basin funding, NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program ( <a href="#">RCPP</a> ), <a href="#">Wisconsin Coastal Management Program</a> , National Fish Habitat Partnerships like MGLP and Fishers & Farmers, tribal organizations		X	X	X	
Invest in good ol’ fashioned fundraising at local level with toolbox of options. E.g. Green Lake on-line auction, estate planning workshops, Go Fund Me, automated receipts for tax write-off purposes, brokerage account to donate stock		X	X	X	

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FUTURE FUNDING ACTIONS					WDNR
Prioritize funding in headwater areas and healthiest watersheds		X	X		X
Evaluate federal funding options and determine if we are effectively using those resources. There may be national level special projects targeting resource areas based on current need. E.g. <a href="#">Recovering America's Wildlife Act</a> , indemnification programs and long-term agreements for large-scale environmental projects, new Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) program for counties, NRCS EQIP and <a href="#">Conservation Innovation Grants</a> , EPA <a href="#">Clean Water State Revolving Fund</a>		X		X	X
Fill vacant positions to manage project funding and enable staff to work with partners		X	X		
Grow public support for funding by articulating how/what funding is currently being used. Develop model projects.		X	X		
Understand, communicate, and leverage hunting and fishing values and funding sources as match. E.g. ATV & snowmobile groups, conservation clubs, <a href="#">Department of Tourism Office of Outdoor Recreation</a>		X	X		
Increase funding for permanent land protection		X	X		
Prepare for landowner contribution to land trust projects to be an obstacle and create funding options/sources to cover those costs		X		X	
Change/standardize incentive and reimbursement rates. E.g. Rental rates are different across counties/states			X	X	
Fund wetland buffers and develop wetland stewards program with incentives to landowners			X	X	
Provide tax break for HW protection, like ag and forestry tax breaks. E.g., <a href="#">MFL and Forest Crop Law tax rates</a>			X	X	
Create incentives for protection actions or in protection areas			X	X	
Provide grant writing assistance to partners to acquire protection funding			X	X	
Dedicate large-scale funding for the Wisconsin Lake Partnership to implement statewide program			X		X
Encourage/promote big-picture systems thinking to connect to other efforts and funding. E.g. <a href="#">Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Program</a>	X				


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FUTURE FUNDING ACTIONS					WDNR
Revisit farm bill funding because there are opportunities to utilize funding in a more impactful way. E.g., Regenerative vs. conventional farming, focus on upfront land management vs. after-the-fact waste disposal (manure digesters)		X			
Purchase healthy watershed easements similar working forests easements. E.g., Great Northern Conservation Easement and <a href="#">Brule-St. Croix Legacy Forest</a>		X			
Make polluters pay for the cost society currently covers. E.g., Conventional farming negative impacts		X			
Learn from other states who have implemented watershed protection for source water, including their funding sources. E.g., Eastern U.S.		X			
Diversify funding sources to reduce risk			X		
Grantees need to have more money in their accounts up front because they can only get reimbursed once per year with SWG. Consider providing more money up front			X		
Reduce required match for protection projects			X		
Partner with counties and local businesses for funding contributions			X		
Seize current programs to inspire protection actions elsewhere. E.g., Healthy Lakes & Rivers protects existing natural areas, fallen trees			X		
Work with legislators or fund legislative lobbying to support HWQW. E.g., <a href="#">Wisconsin Lakes</a> advocacy work			X		
Develop HWHQW-specific funding for partnership team and funding for easements and other BMPs. I.e. form a “Land Trust Collective”			X		
External partners need to learn how to leverage funding and efforts, independent of DNR			X		
Identify local champions to connect resources			X		
Revisit motorboat gas tax funding and impacts of electric vehicles to come up with future funding vision			X		
Expand funding for CBCW and expand program to high quality waters without active programs			X		
Locally/regionally partner with other organizations to pool resources and leverage funding. E.g., CBCW regional approaches			X		
Work with farmer led groups to include protection incentives/funding				X	

<p>Businesses, including Agriculture &amp; Tourism</p> 	<p>Fish, Wildlife &amp; Habitat Conservation Organizations</p> 	<p>Lake, River &amp; Watershed Management Organizations and Lake Leaders</p> 	<p>Local, State, Federal &amp; Tribal Government (other than DNR)</p> 	<p>Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</p> 
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## WHO WE HEARD FROM



# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE FUNDING ACTIONS					WDNR
Do not fund bad actors – grantees, property owners, consultants				X	
Use AIS funding to verify HW and identify HQW by collecting additional data				X	
Leverage NHI funding for watersheds with listed species				X	
Emphasize connectivity to leverage funding through environmental corridor protection				X	
Partner with land trusts who can access additional/outside funding				X	
Identify barriers in current programs and sub-categories that are under-subscribed or fund almost everything. E.g., SWG funds low-ranking projects and few land acquisition projects some years				X	
Develop collaborative agency partnerships with staffing				X	
Make HWHQW areas/actions eligible for counties receiving multiple discharge variance program payments. E.g., Counties implementing ag BMPs with multi-discharger variance payments				X	

## Question 5: What would you do to leverage and adapt existing program tools to achieve results?

FUTURE PROGRAM TOOL ACTIONS					WDNR
Plan for protection with clear strategies and actions that identify partner roles and responsibilities - at multiple scales (e.g. statewide and local). Integrate HWHQW action plan, priorities, and management recommendations into other planning efforts and strategies, especially in priority areas. E.g., Forestry Action Plan, Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, <a href="#">Marengo River Watershed Plan</a> , hazard mitigation planning, County Land & Water Plans, adaptive management plans, nutrient management plans, MFL plans, <a href="#">fisheries survey reports</a> , lake management plans, <a href="#">National Fish Habitat Action Plans</a> , <a href="#">National Wildlife Federation's Climate-Smart Conservation</a>	X	X	X	X	X

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



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**WDNR**

### WHO WE HEARD FROM





# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE PROGRAM TOOL ACTIONS					WDNR
Create cross-program and external partner team to implement HWHQW/action plan for landscape-scale ecological management with shared goals. E.g., Beaver management conflict between fisheries and wildlife, tech assistance for protection planning, TMDLs		X	X	X	X
Bring other protection planning efforts/examples, including alternative protection-based 9 Key Element Plan Template, into the fold in Wisconsin. E.g., <a href="#">Guidance for Maine Lake Watershed-Based Protection Plans</a>			X	X	X
Integrate climate change programs and tools into HWHQW – fresh perspective for local communities. E.g., Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts ( <a href="#">WICCI</a> ) Climate Adaptation Menu, <a href="#">The Carbon Reduction Potential Evaluation (CaRPE) Tool</a>	X			X	X
Change shoreland zoning law so maximums become minimums or alternative scenario wherein counties and towns have local control and own decision-making authority. Alternatively, Work with local governments on efforts to get property owners to voluntarily be more protective than statewide zoning by communicating protection benefits. E.g., NR 115 pre-2015, Washburn County outreach example		X	X	X	
Develop process to engage retiring farmers and other large landowners to better understand ownership changes, educate new buyers, and offer technical assistance	X		X		
Link HWHQW program to AIS program or use AIS campaign as model program and outreach strategy. E.g., AIS Network, Snap Shot Day		X	X		
Integrate other planning tools into HWHQW or explain how they can complement each other. E.g., TNC’s Conserving Nature’s Stage and Wetlands by Design, MGLP’s Conservation Planner		X			X
Determine where this effort fits across DNR resource designations and update outdated waterbody designations accordingly. E.g., O/ERWs, fisheries lake classification				X	X
Integrate results and actions/BMPs into DNR rule-making. E.g., Waterway General Permits, NR 151 best practices				X	X
Resurrect critical habitat designations on high quality waters				X	X
Use conservation tracking tools, like other programs, to measure/report results without taking too much time away from implementation. E.g., <a href="#">Best Management Practices Implementation Tracking System (BITS)</a>			X	X	
Model future scenarios for public/partner engagement and planning purposes				X	X

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## WHO WE HEARD FROM

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE PROGRAM TOOL ACTIONS					WDNR
Include/recognize historical natural resources protection legacy in program tools and plan. E.g., State Natural Areas, wildlife management planning since 1940s, <a href="#">Northern Initiatives Lakes &amp; Shorelands</a>	X				
Prioritize state HWHQW land acquisition. Simplify land transfer process from partners holding those lands to the state. E.g., Tylers Forks property could be transferred to Copper Falls State Park		X			
Expand grant timelines and funding to support long term property management. E.g., Minnesota model – appraisal, staffing, and long-term maintenance costs more comprehensively covered		X			
Consolidate land trusts to ensure professional service and reduce “orphan easements.” E.g., <a href="#">Minnesota Land Trust</a>		X			
Develop statewide water resources protection monitoring program with standardized protocols and data collection process with central clearinghouse for consistency. E.g., Erosion Soil Loss Index, <a href="#">Lake Shoreland &amp; Shallows Habitat Monitoring Field Protocol</a> , wetland monitoring			X		
Create healthy watershed monitoring partner groups, including farmers, to build community support			X		
Include site specific modeling in monitoring or HWHQW assessment and be sure statewide hydrological layers are updated. E.g., <a href="#">Erosion Vulnerability Assessment for Agricultural Lands (EVAAL)</a> and SNAP plus models			X		
Create model shoreline restoration program/toolkit for local implementation. E.g., Healthy Lakes & Rivers, county shoreline restoration programs			X		
Make the SWDV into an app			X		
Provide guidance and technical assistance on easements – not always land trusts doing this work			X		
Partner with youth organizations and schools to implement protection action			X		
Integrate results into DNR land acquisition plans and stewardship funding decision-making process. E.g., <a href="#">Property Planning</a> , <a href="#">Land Acquisition Strategy</a>			X		

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



Fish, Wildlife & Habitat Conservation Organizations



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**WDNR**

## WHO WE HEARD FROM

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE PROGRAM TOOL ACTIONS					WDNR
Create shoreland/property evaluation tool so people can understand if they are protecting habitat and water quality. Consider rewarding them. E.g., <a href="#">Michigan Shoreland Stewards Rate Your Shoreland</a>			X		
Adapt shoreland evaluation tool or other models to also identify stressors			X		
Expand volunteer monitoring programs to include monitoring stormwater practices, biological communities, and protection areas. E.g., CLMN, WAV			X		
Recruit volunteer monitors for watershed monitoring in areas beyond their lake or stream. E.g., CLMN, WAV			X		
Build local capacity training into volunteer training programs to maximize results			X		
Distinguish restoration from protection with definitions			X		
Build protection monitoring and technical assistance into LMPN			X		
Determine if existing programs in other agencies intersect HWHQW areas and partner with them through their program efforts. E.g., Wisconsin Department of Transportation <a href="#">Scenic Byways</a> and <a href="#">Rustic Roads</a> , Department of Tourism			X		
Increase enforcement of existing laws, including beefing up compliance inspections. Consider more enforcement or higher penalties in HWHQW areas.			X		
Utilize existing programs that can protect land in high development areas. E.g., <a href="#">Farmland Preservation Program</a>			X		
Adapt existing communication tools for HWHQW. E.g, SEWRPC's <a href="#">Managing the Waters' Edge</a>			X		
Include groundwater modeling, program, and protection actions			X		
Leverage all partnerships related to this effort. E.g., MGLP, Fishers & Farmers, Driftless Area Restoration Effort, Wisconsin Lakes Partnership			X		
Bring back the lake carrying capacity concept and consider wake boats as part of the process			X		
Develop ordinances prohibiting ag activities like row cropping and tilling in the shoreland zone and expand to statewide law. E.g., Portage County example and Minnesota buffer law				X	

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



Fish, Wildlife & Habitat Conservation Organizations



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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources





**WDNR**

## WHO WE HEARD FROM

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE PROGRAM TOOL ACTIONS					WDNR
Adapt farmland preservation zoning to allow unzoned towns to participate				X	
Partner with other agencies to restore areas within healthy watersheds. E.g., NRCS funding and tech assistance for ag BMPs				X	
Build wetland acquisition for protection purposes into grant programs that support counties. E.g., SWG, Knowles-Nelson stewardship funding, DATCP				X	
Counties and other partners commit to permanently protect wetlands and other land				X	
Improve communications within DNR and between partners				X	
Use existing touch points and interactions to share HWHQW information. E.g., Short video when getting boat registration				X	
Include environmental justice and diversity in program. E.g., <a href="#">Cream City Conservation</a>				X	
Emphasize healthy watersheds and the parameters that make them in communications					X
Identify existing authority to enact more protective permit regulations. E.g., Waterway General Permit elevated to an Individual Permit, subdivision law					X
Inform and prioritize program activities. E.g., Monitoring locations, SWG funding, <a href="#">critical habitat designations</a> , state-owned land conversion from row crop to grasslands					X

## Question 6: What would you do to increase awareness of protection priority areas and activities

FUTURE AWARENESS ACTIONS					WDNR
Use social science to better understand how to effectively implement program. Social science tools include economic analysis to better understand true value of a healthy watershed in terms of the services provided to people and Community Based Social Marketing. Economic development partners will need this information.	X	X	X		X

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



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### WHO WE HEARD FROM





# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE AWARENESS ACTIONS					WDNR
Empower, record and share water resources protection stories – monitoring & assessment results, programs, projects & people. Express data as a narrative. E.g., Central Sands video, story maps	X		X	X	X
Go where people are to make it happen - community-based management and place-making. E.g., Bibon Swamp example, family field day, <a href="#">Brunch on the Farm</a> , <a href="#">Hayward Area Placemaking</a>	X		X	X	
Place signs highlighting HWHQW areas, projects, and monitoring sites. Include link or QR code to program so people can learn more. Consider signs for cooperators. E.g., Ike Walton League and Knowles-Nelson Stewardship signs	X	X	X		
Include HWHQW in local newsletters. E.g., Lake associations, TU, counties		X	X	X	
Engage schools and youth groups. E.g., Wausau water-based events		X	X	X	
Develop a communication plan, including newsletters, events/conferences, and a social media strategy, with an emphasis on celebrating protection and pride for these places			X	X	X
Partner with media to share program, messaging, and stories. Draft news releases for specific audiences and templates for customization and celebrate HWHQW locations. E.g., <a href="#">Lake Tides</a> , <a href="#">Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine</a> , TV, radio			X	X	X
Develop outreach tools and templates to share with partners, including those we may not traditionally target (e.g. businesses, realtors, chambers of commerce)	X		X		
Kickoff with formal recognition of what’s already been done. E.g., Tribal resource protection, Northern Initiatives Lakes & Shorelands, Burnett County Shoreline Incentives Program, Forest Legacy Program	X			X	
Increase publicity and promotion to outdoor recreationists, including hunting, fishing, birding, hiking and other groups		X	X		
Engage outdoor recreation community by incorporating HWHQW into hunting/fishing web app and develop SWDV app for handheld devices. Overlay with DNR properties and all public access points, including platted accesses. E.g., MFL maps		X		X	
Integrate hypothetical future scenario planning into models and communication strategies		X			X
Taylor messaging to specific audiences/partners. Evaluate which messages (e.g. economic vs. biological) resonate most with whom. E.g., FireWise			X	X	

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## WHO WE HEARD FROM

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE AWARENESS ACTIONS					WDNR
Designate a specific day or weekend to promote HWHQW or add HWHQW to other designated water-related days and CBCW messaging. E.g., BioBlitz, AIS Snapshot Day			X	X	
Host quasi-social gatherings like breakfasts, pontoon tours, and site visits in HWHQW areas. E.g., farm breakfasts, pontoon classrooms, leadership tours, <a href="#">Science on Tap Minocqua</a>			X	X	
Create short videos on specific HWHQW topics for YouTube and Facebook			X	X	
Support alliances of multiple groups in HWHQW areas, provide technical assistance, and seek funding. E.g., The Water Alliance, Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program, Lake Erie Collaborative, <a href="#">Lake Superior Collaborative</a>			X	X	
Partner with realtors and communicate protection benefits to property values. Prioritize new property owners. This action could also be done independent of realtors. E.g., New property owner commitment pledge, welcome packet for new property owners			X	X	
Engage citizen scientists and volunteer monitors. E.g., CLMN, WAV			X	X	
Explain what makes a waterbody healthy			X	X	
Consider a billboard campaign in HWHQW areas, possibly customized for the given area. E.g., <a href="#">Clean Drain Dry</a> , salt watch, leaf litter			X	X	
Create one-page promotional publication or brochure – simple as possible. Make it pretty,			X		X
Consistently communicate HWHQW at meetings – agenda blurbs. E.g., DNR program statewide meetings, <a href="#">Land + Water</a> events				X	X
Piggyback on tourism messaging (and funding)	X				
Brand program and engage local partners to include branding/messaging in local efforts	X				
Learn from other watershed programs (e.g. timing, communication, partners) and apply as model elsewhere. E.g., Driftless Area Restoration Effort		X			
Acknowledge reality that few watersheds are not impacted by agriculture or logging, but they can be protected and even better in the future		X			
Engage local partners, including farmers and other large landowners, for community-based approach. E.g., <a href="#">Minnesota Clean Water Critical Habitat Program</a>		X			

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



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## WHO WE HEARD FROM

# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS





FUTURE AWARENESS ACTIONS					WDNR
Share statewide communication plan with partners and empower them to customize it for local needs			X		
Add HWHQW to lake kit website for integration into local website. E.g., Wisconsin Lakes <a href="#">LakeKit</a> website framework			X		
Make HWHQW an event fixture. E.g., Statewide conferences, outdoor expos, outdoor recreation events			X		
Sort actions by level of effort/time (e.g. one hour, one day, one month, one year)			X		
Start with pilot projects, including bringing groups together. Make them high visibility models for others.			X		
Toot your own horn if healthy			X		
Develop ambassador program and engage non-traditional groups like Ducks Unlimited			X		
Highlight and celebrate individuals and groups are doing the right thing			X		
Create a blog, facebook group, or similar online tool where people can share information			X		
Include HWHQW information in existing DNR resources and publications. E.g., DNR Fishing Regulations				X	
Provide maps and consider simplifying them for local audiences				X	
Create cross-program and external partner communication team				X	
Identify essential partners and focus awareness efforts towards them (i.e.. average person may not care). E.g., Watershed organizations, countywide lake & river groups				X	
Communicate effort to Natural Resources Board and other leadership boards. E.g., Natural Resources Board, Land + Water Board				X	
Identify local groups affiliated with HWHQW areas to empower people to connect and implement BMPs				X	
Bridge communication gap between counties and DNR				X	
Overlay healthy watersheds with diversity or other environmental justice indicator(s) and include in messaging				X	
Highlight public access and recreational use				X	

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## WHO WE HEARD FROM



# SUMMARY: PARTNER INPUT ON HEALTHY WATERS, HIGH-QUALITY WATERS

FUTURE AWARENESS ACTIONS					WDNR
Jump on climate change initiatives				X	
Partner with other programs who work with unique partner groups. E.g, Stewardship/land trusts, Forestry/MFL owners					X
Add HWHQW program information into other reporting to increase awareness and engage different partner groups. E.g., DNR Fishery Survey Reports					X
Reconsider/reword this objective to strive for behavior change over awareness alone					X

Businesses, including Agriculture & Tourism



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## WHO WE HEARD FROM

## WITH GRATITUDE

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