Recommendations for the Establishment of an Adopt-A-Lake Program in Wisconsin

Foremost among Wisconsin's water resources are roughly 15,000 inland lakes. These lakes are important to the quality of life and to the quality of the economy in the state. To protect these resources, Wisconsin has taken steps which established the state as a leader in lake protection. For example, the state's Lake Management Program serves as a resource management model for the nation. This program is comprised of a cooperative effort among the Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, which represents over 600 local lake management organizations. Unfortunately, the Lake Management Program does not include a youth participation component. To ensure the long-term protection of inland lakes, youth must have the opportunity to gain experience in the resolution of lake management issues.

The purpose of this study is to develop recommendations for the establishment of an Adopt-A-Lake Program for youth in Wisconsin. To accomplish the objectives of the study, a Program guide was prepared and recommendations for the structure of the Program were developed. The development of this guide, Adopt-A-Lake Project: A Resource Guide for Leaders, was based upon data collected through literature review, surveys, and case studies. The leader's guide was tested in four pilot Adopt-A-Lake Programs around Wisconsin. Recommendations for Program structure were based upon a review of related literature, surveys, and suggestions from the Advisory Board and pilot program leaders.

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