

# VILAS COUNTY LAKES AND RIVERS ASSOCIATION

## SHORELAND STEWARDSHIP COVENANT INITIATIVE

### FINAL REPORT

#### DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

##### Reasoning:

Through various partnerships in Vilas County and through local initiatives, Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (VCLRA) advocates for and promotes actions that seek to sustain healthy lakes and rivers, and shoreline habitats that include efforts to decrease the impact of shoreland development/alteration on the long term sustainability of these dynamic and diverse lake and river ecosystems. To accomplish this goal, VCLRA sought to make available to shoreland owners an opportunity to protect their natural or revegetated shoreland through a standardized shoreland stewardship covenant customized for Vilas County, and to recognize in public media and in property signage those owners (properties) who chose to take advantage of this option to protect their lake/river shoreland and thereby enhance the value of their property and guard the water quality and biosystem of their lake or stream for all the public to enjoy.

##### Concept:

To promote and provide support to individual shoreline owners wishing to include a provision in their property's deed that conserves to the extent of Wisconsin law (30 years) in 2014 a 35-foot or deeper shoreline habitat corridor for the width of their property, while reserving the right to create and sustain an access to the shore and a view corridor of the lake, each to the extent state and local shoreland zoning regulations permit. We recognize that Wisconsin law changed over the course of this project. Properties enrolled in the program conserves to the extent of current law.

Shoreland owners participating in this program were provided with:

- An introductory document describing the program (Appendix 1),
- Copy of the legally appropriate shoreland stewardship covenant,
- Cash reimbursement for the cost of re-registration of the property's deed,
- Permanent mountable sign for shore or roadside or placement on dwelling near entry, in recognition of the status of the property (if desired by owner),
- Recognition of the stewardship of the landowner through an article and photograph in local press and recognition at the annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention (Appendix 2.)

VCLRA commitment:

- Prepare and submit the initial grant to launch the program,
- Prepare a letter of introduction describing the initiative for shoreland owners,
- Secure initial goal of 15 properties in 12 months through distribution of the introductory letter and one-on-one meetings and/or a group meeting with interested landowners (contact list developed from personal friendships, shoreland restoration specialists,

county land and water conservation office list of restored shorelands and interested landowners, Realtor offices, members of VCLRA, DNR retired and active employees, members of Wisconsin Lakes, parties interested in Northwoods Land Trust that have shorelines too short for this land trust, and via individual lake associations in Vilas County). Actual enrolled in the program was 13 properties (Appendix 3),

- Committed VCLRA committee to do the initial assessment of the proposed shoreland and propose follow up with periodic assessments (approximately every 3 to 5 years.)
- Compile a database of the enrolled properties,
- Since current WI law allows for a 30 year sunset on deed covenants; in the future, notify and work with owners to re-new covenants 25 years into their current covenant,
- Enlist graphic designer and firm for development of the brand design and production of recognition signage,
- Prepare a plan for recognition of each enrolled property owner and subsequent local press release,
- Coordinate with Wisconsin Lakes and UW-Extension Lakes for an appropriate recognition of enrolled shoreland owners at the annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention.

### **Collaborators & Resources:**

Carroll Schaal - WI DNR Section Head - shoreland initiative

Patrick Goggin - U.W.Ext. Lakes - statewide shoreland initiative & restoration field guide

Bryan Pierce - Northwoods Land Trust – consultant

Steven P. Lipowski – Ruder Ware (Wausau) – Legal Council – Real Estate specialist

Dawn Schmitt - Vilas County Zoning Department - consultant for provisions required by Vilas zoning

Carolyn Scholl - Vilas County Conservationist

Quita Sheehan - Vilas County Lakes Specialist

Martha Milanowski - Vilas County Corporate Council - affirmation of properly worded covenant

Steve Birkelman – (Berkelman Metalworks, Inc.) - design and production of recognition signage

### **Financial Support:**

Through the support of a State of Wisconsin Lake Planning Grant the following was accomplished:

- Pay for the preparation of the stewardship covenant by a Wisconsin attorney;
- Pay the re-registration fee on each deed for the landowner; and
- Design and production of recognition signage, including the “branding” logo of this initiative.

### **Real Estate Value as tax base and re-sale:**

VCLRA promoted the covenant as a positive feature of a shoreland property, as it sustains the real estate value, and offers protection to the lake ecosystem.



Appendix 3. Vilas County properties enrolled in VCLRA Shoreland Stewardship Covenant Initiative.

<b>Property Owner Name</b>	<b>Shore Length (feet)</b>	<b>Vilas Lk/River</b>	<b>DATE of deed re-registration</b>	<b>STREET</b>	<b>TOWN</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>ZIP</b>
<i>Sandra S. and Donald C. Gillum</i>	100	Anvil	08/07/14	1875 Bald Eagle Lane	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Martha &amp; Kenneth VonKluck</i>	173	Big Bass	08/18/14	1746 W. Bass Lake Road	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Burt Miller</i>	100	Big Bass	08/22/14	1477 E. Bass Lake Road	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Susan Puncochar</i>	100	Deerskin	08/25/14	3517 Shangri La Road	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Elizabeth Simms (w/Pat Vine)</i>	207	Deerskin	08/26/14	2795 N. Star Road	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Jayne &amp; Roland Alger</i>	222.7	Imogene	10/3/14	1659 Sylvan Lane	Phelps	WI	54545
<i>Thomas Zuege</i>	100	Anvil	10/23/14	1881 Bald Eagle Lane	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Mary and John Platner</i>	1094	Moon	02/16/15	7290 Thunder Hill Ln.	St. Germain	WI	54558
<i>Ingrid Stephan &amp; Donna DePape</i>	100	Anvil	06/03/15	1850 Bald Eagle Lane	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Ingrid Stephan &amp; Donna DePape</i>	500	Deerskin River	06/03/15	off N. Carpenter Lk Rd.	Eagle River	WI	54521
<i>Chuck &amp; Pat Thier</i>	163	Found	06/17/15	7672 Eagle Lane	St. Germain	WI	54558
<i>Joe &amp; Jennifer Heitz</i>	340	Ballard	07/07/15	W4397 Eagle Ridge Lane	Merrill	WI	54452
<i>Mike &amp; Mary Schindler</i>	110	North Twin	8/2015	4065 Briggs Lane	Phelps	WI	54554