

Bayfield County Lakes Forum Communications Outreach

Final Report for SPL-237-11

In 2011, the Bayfield County Lakes Forum was awarded a \$4,000 small lake planning grant by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The grant was to be used to improve the education and communications efforts of this countywide lake association. Specifically, the grant allowed the BCLF to expand its newsletter, send many individuals to training events that centered on lake issues and improve the BCLF website, BayfieldCountyLakes.org. It also accommodated an effort to recognize young lake stewards for their efforts to protect and preserve Wisconsin's lakes.

Because this DNR small lake planning grant was awarded to the Bayfield County Lakes Forum, the organization succeeded in acknowledging the efforts of many young people in the county who are working on behalf of our lakes and streams. The Forum also greatly improved its ability to communicate with its member lake groups, non-member groups, individual shoreland property owners, general lake users, Consortium members, political leaders and the general public. The BCLF was also able to help educate and train many individuals by using these funds. The following is an excerpt from a news release that offers a profile of the success of this project:

. . . The WDNR Lake Planning Education Grant helped the BCLF offer a number of education and outreach projects, recognize the efforts of young people in our county who are working to preserve our rich legacy of lakes, improve its website and publish its 2011 newsletter.

“With the help from this grant, 8,000 BCLF newsletters were published and distributed. They contained articles that encourage responsible use of our water resources and help folks make sound decisions regarding their waterfront properties. The feedback we received was all great, especially the newsletter award from Northwest Waters,” Brakken said.

“The grants come from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources water resources account. They are funded by the marine fuel tax also known as the ‘motor boat gas tax’,” Brakken added. “It’s the tax we all pay when we buy gas for our boats. No additional taxes or public funds are used. These grants are wonderful opportunities for lake organizations who wish to educate folks about the sensitive nature of our waters. Best of all, they do not impact the budgets of Bayfield County or the State of Wisconsin,” he said.

The Bayfield County Lakes Forum is a citizen volunteer organization not linked with the Bayfield County government. It represents over 20 lake associations and one lake district as well as the many non-organized lakes and streams in the county. The BCLF works to preserve and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and economic values of Bayfield County lakes, streams and shorelands. All lakes are encouraged to participate and individual memberships are available for anyone who is interested in fostering clean, safe and healthy waters in our county.

The BCLF grant was matched by over \$1,800 invested in the project by the BCLF along with contributions from its Directors. In addition, over 300 hours of work were donated by over 50 individuals supporting the project. . .

An article about the BCLF Youth Lake Stewardship Recognition project appeared in the County Journal in September, 2011.