



2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan

Introduction

In the fall of 2018, WI Land+Water initiated a five-year strategic planning process, prompted by several factors that made it an ideal time for strategic thinking: an organizational leadership change had occurred in April, with not only the election of a new board of directors, but also a transition to a new executive director. Additionally, the organization recognized that such a planning process would also capitalize on the extensive stakeholder consultations conducted in 2017 as part of the Food, Land & Water Project, and serve to orient and engage new board members in the group's work.

The executive director engaged a consultant to help design and facilitate a day-long strategic planning retreat with the members of the WI Land+Water board. Staff was also afforded opportunities to provide input into the planning process, both before and during the board retreat, to enhance the probabilities of successful implementation of the final plan.

The planning process included additional data gathering in the form of board, membership, and partner surveys. It also included a half-day staff retreat in advance of the board retreat. The board retreat was convened on October 24, 2018 in Madison.

The strategic plan was approved by the WI Land+Water Board of Directors on July 18, 2019.

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Mission Statement

To protect, conserve, and enhance Wisconsin's natural resources by advocating for and supporting county conservation efforts for current and future generations.

Vision

We envision a future where our natural resources are valued and protected by informed, empowered communities advancing conservation at the local level.

Organizational Values

Local leadership - We develop, learn from, and celebrate on-the-ground leaders; we are strengthened by their geographic diversity and experience

Pragmatism - We promote practical solutions to complex conservation challenges based on sound science; we balance environmental protection with the economic realities of farming and other small businesses

Partnership - We seek collaboration with partners that amplify the impact of our work

Professionalism - We strive for exceptional public service, and maintain a high standard

Efficiency - We represent an economical yet effective investment in conservation

Education - We value a knowledgeable membership, and an informed public

Advocacy - We firmly believe a strong economy relies upon a clean environment

Strategic Goals

1. Expand and diversify financial support of WI Land+Water to ensure a sustainable organizational future
2. Advocate for financial support sufficient to achieve statewide resource protection goal
3. Improve statewide recognition of WI Land+Water conservation initiatives
4. Strengthen WI Land+Water programs and services that support local conservation leadership and enhance professional development
5. Facilitate development of effective conservation standards, programs, and policies, and promote implementation of all
6. Improve the structure and function of WI Land+Water internal governance processes

Strategic Goal 1

Expand and diversify financial support of WI Land+Water to ensure a sustainable organizational future

Strategy 1

Diversify funding sources for WI Land+Water as a nonprofit association serving to support county conservation efforts.

Objective 1

Explore private funding sources that share organizational vision and values by developing and prioritizing prospect list of foundations and grants.

Objective 2

Submit at least one successful grant proposal to a funding source identified in Objective 1.1.1.

Objective 3

Measurably increase annual conference sponsorship.

Strategic Goal 2

Advocate for financial support sufficient to achieve statewide resource protection goals

Strategy 1

Strategically pursue full funding of statutory goal (average of three positions funded at 100-70-50 percent) for county staffing and support grants in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection biennial budget.

Objective 1

In advocacy materials, incorporate information about the statutory staffing goal to highlight the need for sufficient funding.

Objective 2

Demonstrate to key policy-makers, via advocacy materials, the investment value of the grant by highlighting efficient and effective conservation successes from selected regions of the state.

Objective 3

Maintain existing and foster new legislative champions for conservation by developing relationships with legislators and staff.

Strategy 2

Explore new financial support models for conservation.

Objective 1

Assess potential alternative funding mechanisms for conservation by convening discussions with partners about funding models (existing, and potential).

Objective 2

Educate policy-makers on the need for new funding mechanisms, in a support role.

Objective 3

Promote funding opportunities that balance support of local approaches to conservation with our statewide mission.

Strategic Goal 3

Improve statewide recognition of WI Land+Water conservation initiatives

Strategy 1

Develop effective narratives that emphasize the value of locally-led conservation statewide.

Objective 1

Continue to write and distribute quarterly “success stories” highlighting the importance of multi-faceted conservation from a variety of angles; where landowners are featured, work with them to send stories directly to legislators to build support.

Objective 2

Build cohesive themes within annual report and newsletters.

Objective 3

Continue to develop tools like weekly conservation news clips, picture and a paragraph map, and social media.

Strategy 2

Expand outreach efforts to broader conservation community, building support for and expanding influence of WI Land+Water.

Objective 1

Target at least one communications piece (article, press release, etc.) per quarter to an audience beyond core membership.

Objective 2

Explore expansion and development of Associate Membership program potential.

Objective 3

Explore renovation/redesign of digital communication to improve interconnectivity of web platforms (website, social media, Flickr, etc.).

Objective 4

Pursue opportunities for WI Land+Water membership to advance our conservation mission on external boards, committees, and work groups, consistent with our bylaws.

Strategic Goal 3 (continued)

Strategy 3

Capitalize on public support for issues that resonate outside of “traditional” conservation initiatives, e.g. Youth Education.

Objective 1

Develop and secure funding sources that continue to promote the Youth Education Committee Wisconsin State Envirothon.

Objective 2

Promote Youth Education Committee core conservation programs throughout the state by participating in no less than two presentation opportunities.

Objective 3

Stimulate and regenerate progressive silent auction efforts at the annual WI Land+Water Conference to assist in the Youth Education Committee fund raising efforts.

Objective 4

Increase participation in Youth Education Committee core conservation programs throughout the state by promotion of core programs by Youth Education Area Representatives and Committee members to multiple audiences throughout the state.

Strategic Goal 4

Strengthen WI Land+Water programs and services that support local conservation leadership and enhance professional development

Strategy 1

Evaluate and modify, as necessary, existing programs, services, and resources targeted toward Land Conservation Committee member engagement.

Objective 1

Evaluate creation of LCC Committee as a standing WI Land+Water committee charged with engaging LCC membership, via a meeting with staff and board members.

Objective 2

Solicit recommendations and input from a select group of stakeholders to inform the LCC engagement evaluation process.

Objective 3

Explore collaborative efforts with partners offering training and services to LCCs, such as Wisconsin Counties Association.

Strategy 2

Ensure WI Land+Water programming represents the diversity of member priorities and broad geographical interests.

Objective 1

Via County Conservationist Meeting and Annual Conference programming, present variety of topics consistent with interests of statewide membership. Engage relevant committees on key training topics for the County Conservationist meetings to address member priorities; engage the Professional Improvement and Technical committees through Annual Conference planning meetings, conference evaluation results, and member surveys to provide timely topics, key sessions, training, and continuing education units (CEUs) on member priorities.

Objective 2

Via SITCOM work plan process and curriculum team meetings, identify resources and training opportunities that address regionally-specific resource concerns.

Strategic Goal 4 (continued)

Strategy 2 (continued)

Objective 3

On a quarterly basis, ensure Area Associations have an opportunity to communicate their unique geographic resource concerns to WI Land+Water, including how it can support them.

Objective 4

Continue to support growth of Area Associations and proficiency of their operations as measured by steady or increasing meeting attendance, engagement of regional partners, and online presence.

Strategy 3

Continue to enhance professionalism of LCDs and LCCs through WI Land+Water training, education, and professional development opportunities.

Objective 1

Ensure SITCOM and Annual Conference training and professional development opportunities are having desired effect, based on quantifiable and consistent survey questions and feedback.

Objective 2

Work with experienced WI Land+Water members and agency partners to mentor new staff and promote deeper involvement with WI Land+Water and regional groups.

Strategy 4

Increase the engagement of WI Land+Water membership.

Objective 1

Provide opportunities to maximize membership interaction at County Conservationist Meeting, Annual Conference, and other WI Land+Water events.

Objective 2

Increase attendance at LCC trainings by 15 percent.

Strategic Goal 5

Facilitate development of effective conservation standards, programs, and policies, and promote implementation of all

Strategy 1

Continue to facilitate the development of appropriate and sensible technical conservation standards.

Objective 1

Solicit and facilitate broad stakeholder input to develop timely, effective technical standards, via the Standards Oversight Council.

Objective 2

Work with Technical Committee to ensure counties are aware of and influencing technical standards and policies.

Strategy 2

Facilitate opportunities for conservation stakeholders to convene and develop solutions to challenging natural resource issues.

Objective 1

Leverage goodwill generated by Food, Land, and Water process to annually collaborate with “non-traditional” stakeholder partner groups on legislation, shared events, or strategic discussions.

Objective 2

Utilize opportunities via County Conservationist meeting and Annual Conference to actively engage on resource issues.

Strategy 3

Promote full implementation of state agricultural performance standards and Land and Water Resource Management Priorities in order to protect our natural resources and foster a positive agricultural future.

Objective 1

Create proactive opportunities to advocate for county conservation in collaborating with state and federal agencies, through no less than two meetings a year.

Strategic Goal 5 (continued)

Strategy 3 (continued)

Objective 2

Pursue opportunities to strategically evaluate and improve effectiveness of state water pollution control efforts to meet state water quality standards, including conservation programs, technical assistance, incentives and tax policy.

Objective 3

Collaborate with a wide range of affected state and federal agencies and boards to connect shared priorities.

Strategy 4

Develop strategies to respond to emerging resource issues.

Objective 1

Build the resilience of counties, by providing tools to plan for and respond to emerging resource issues.

Objective 2

Continue to facilitate effective coordination between local, state, and federal partners by creating opportunities for communication and training via workshops, meetings, and conference sessions. Review partners who are regularly engaged, as necessary.

Objective 3

Highlight issues of resource susceptibility to contamination, as well as the conservation practices that can remediate them, on a statewide basis.

Strategy 5

Seek opportunities to build relationships with new statewide partners to achieve success in areas of mutual interest.

Objective 1

Meet with Wisconsin Association for Local Health Departments and Boards to discuss shared opportunities around policy and other efforts.

Objective 2

Continue to promote coordination between local public health and conservation departments through Health & Conservation Workgroup; evaluate progress on annual workplan and identify additional opportunities for strengthened partnership.

Strategic Goal 6

Improve the structure and function of WI Land+Water internal governance processes

Strategy 1

Institutionalize planning and reporting processes between WI Land+Water board of directors, staff, committees, and membership.

Objective 1

Facilitated by a work group of the board of directors, and approved by the full board, conduct an annual review of and update to the strategic plan, evaluating progress against goals and evaluating strategies to achieve them.

Objective 2

Led by president and executive director, annually initiate board of directors work plan discussion, based on budget and strategic plan updates, at December board meeting.

Objective 3

Develop annual staff operational work plan from strategic plan.

Strategy 2

Assess and update, if necessary, guiding principles and policies of WI Land+Water committees.

Objective 1

Prioritize WI Land+Water committees reviewing their goals, guiding principles, and roles (including roles of WI Land+Water staff and committee members).

Strategy 3

Increase transparency of organizational legislative and policy-making processes.

Objective 1

With Executive and Legislative-Administrative committees, assess resolution process, exploring time-sensitive alternatives potentially employed by other associations.

Objective 2

Improve communications to membership about how WI Land+Water arrives at particular policy priorities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At the end of each calendar year, staff will produce a report detailing advances toward and obstacles faced in implementing the goals contained in the 2019-2023 strategic plan. The board of directors will review the report and make recommendations for changes to the coming years annual operating plan.

Financial Plan

Year 1 of the strategic plan will be addressed in the 2019 annual operating plan. The staff and board of directors will begin to project funding for Years 2-5 during as part of the evaluation of the Year 1 annual plan and the budget development process for fiscal year 2020.

Appendix A

WI Land+Water Board of Directors, 2020-2022

Monte Osterman, Chair and Vice-President, Racine County
LCC

Bob Micheel, President and Vice-Chair, Monroe County LCD

Alan Barrows, Treasurer, Waukesha County LRD, Executive
Committee

Carolyn Scholl, Secretary, Vilas County LWCD

Melissa Luck, Richland County LCC, Executive Committee

Bob Mott, Oneida County CUEC, Executive Committee

Craig Conroy, Burnett County NRC

Chase Cummings, Pepin County LCD

Ken Dolata, Oconto County LCD

Ben Dufford, Bayfield County LWCD

Brian Haase, Waupaca County LWCD

Mike Hofberger, Calumet County LWCC

Amy Piaget, Dane County LWRD

Russell Rindsig, Barron County LCC

Chuck Wagner, Kewaunee County LWCC

Kathy Zeglin, Trempealeau County ELUCC