

Lake Management Plan (Deer Lake: Itasca County, No. 37-0719)

The Lake Management Plan consists of three elements: policy statements, more specific objectives for each policy, and implementation tools and techniques. The format of the plan is similar to that of the Itasca County Land Use Plan. The content of the plan comes from the Itasca County Plan, DLA focus groups, a Deer Lake Assessment Report completed by the Soil and Water Conservation District, a survey of property owners, and draft lake plans developed by the other associations involved in the Sustainable Lakes Project.

- A. *Water Quality*** - Promote the balanced and sustainable use of Deer Lake to preserve the high quality of the lake.

Objective 1. Maintain the good water quality of Deer Lake.

- a. Educate property owners to encourage responsible stewardship activities on their property, for example, the impact of fertilizers and run off on water quality.
- b. Continue the measurement of the lake using the Secchi disc for water quality and the lake level gauge to determine lake level fluctuations.
- c. Work with appropriate agencies to help monitor the effectiveness of present septic systems to ensure that county zoning ordinances are being met.
- d. Every 5-7 years conduct a thorough phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, pH, and oxygen-temperature profile of the lake.
- e. Work with appropriate agencies to help monitor and enforce existing shore land management ordinances.
- f. Promote the development of performance standards that must be met before variances or conditional use permits are granted.
- g. Play an active role in the Board of Adjustment deliberations for variance requests in the Deer Lake watershed.
- h. Work with appropriate agencies to monitor parcels where variances are granted to ensure that restrictions and conditions are being met.
- j. Monitor lake vegetation and boats using the lake for the presence of exotic plants. If found, work with the appropriate agencies to help alleviate the problem.

Objective 2. Preserve existing shoreline (forests and buffer zones) and encourage restoration of altered areas.

- a. Work to develop tax incentives for the restoration of original landscaping along the lakeshore.
- b. Educate property owners on the value of proper landscaping of the shoreline and provide information and assistance on effective practices.
- c. Identify sensitive areas on the lake where the land could be irreparably altered, for example, wetlands, steep banks, high ground water, or soil type. Work to limit development in these areas.
- d. Help appropriate agencies monitor shore landscaping practices and publicize examples of good management plans.

B. *Natural Beauty* - Respect and maintain the natural beauty of the lake, its shoreline, and the surrounding watershed.

Objective 1. Maintain or increase current public ownership of shore land and forested areas.

- a. Encourage participation in programs designed to place land in the Deer Lake watershed into the public domain. (For example, land trust or conservancy programs or the RIM program used in the purchase of Bear Island.)
- b. Support the creation of tax incentives encouraging property owners not to develop, subdivide, or plat undeveloped lakeshore.

Objective 2. Limit back lot or second-tier development around the lake.

- a. Limit lakeshore development to single-family homes.
- b. Oppose investment in road development that would encourage back lot or second-tier development.

Objective 3. Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas in the Deer Lake watershed.

- a. Support the creation of tax incentives not to develop environmentally sensitive areas.

Objective 4. Seek ways to respond to the strong opposition of property owners to the operation of personal watercraft and high-speed boats.

- a. Inform manufacturers, owners, and other lake users of the strong opposition to personal watercraft.
- b. Seek to find ways to balance the competing interests and desires of boat owners and the majority of property owners.

- C. Wildlife** - The animals in and around Deer Lake are an important resource that must be monitored and maintained at reasonable numbers. Ways must be found to balance the competing needs of man and the animals.

Objective 1. Monitor desirable wildlife populations.

- a. Work with the Department of Fisheries to determine desired fish populations and establish appropriate stocking programs.
- b. Conduct yearly surveys of loon populations.
- c. Monitor the eagle population and nesting sites.
- d. Investigate the impact of fishing tournaments on lake, for example, fish population and the presence of many high-speed boats.

Objective 2. Find ways to reduce or eliminate the problems of nuisance animals and curb their growing populations.

- a. Educate property owners on the problems associated with the feeding of wild animals, especially ducks, geese, deer and bear. For example, ducks and geese can spread milfoil and swimmer's itch, deer and geese can be a nuisance on lawns, and over friendly deer destroy gardens.

- D. Cooperation** - The sustainable quality of Deer Lake is best achieved through the cooperative efforts of the Association, governmental agencies, and other organizations concerned with natural resources.

Objective 1. Work with existing planning efforts and agencies (DNR, Itasca County Zoning office, Soil and Water Conservation District, Sheriff's Department.)

- a. Continue the practice of inviting representatives of these groups and others to speak at the Association meetings.
- b. Urge property owners to contact these agencies when they have questions regarding the lake, their property, and the use of the lake and its watershed.

Objective 2. Promote the work of organizations devoted to the preservation of Minnesota lakes.

- a. Participate in the Itasca County Organization of Lake Associations (ICOLA)
- b. Support the work of the Minnesota Lake Association and other organizations working to preserve the lake to the extent their efforts are consistent with our policies.