

# DNR: Launches Healthy Watersheds Initiative To Spotlight Wisconsin's Water Resources

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced the department is launching its Healthy Watersheds, High-Quality Waters initiative to protect the state's waters.

Wisconsin is home to approximately 17,000 lakes, 650 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, 86,000 miles of streams and 5.3 million acres of additional wetlands. The DNR is committed to protecting these resources for future generations.

The DNR's Healthy Watersheds, High-Quality Waters statewide initiative provides a road map for how to strike an improved balance between restoration and protection, all while emphasizing and celebrating the wonderful waters of Wisconsin. This new focus on already healthy waterbodies and watersheds – or the healthy land areas that drain to them – celebrates these treasures and draws attention to the ecological, financial and societal benefits of protecting clean water.

This spring, the DNR is engaging key partners to help shape this protection effort.

“Restoration of Wisconsin's impaired waters is a major focus for the DNR's Water Quality Program, but there are significant advantages to protecting Wisconsin water resources that are already in good condition,” said Adrian Stocks, DNR Water Quality Program Director. “We are pleased to spotlight our healthy watersheds and the high-quality waters within them and encourage the public to take steps to

protect these wonderful waters for recreation now and into the future.”

The Healthy Watersheds, High-Quality Waters (HWHQW or Healthy Watersheds) workgroup studied protection measures taken both statewide and nationally over several years to kick off this project. While the group found examples of beneficial protection activities and projects in Wisconsin and other states, comprehensive statewide water resource protection programs are rare.

The Healthy Watersheds project aims to emphasize the protection and promotion of Wisconsin’s healthy watersheds and high-quality waters by establishing clear goals and success measures, beginning with a goal of keeping 100% of the priority healthy watersheds and high-quality waters at or better than their current conditions through 2025. The group is developing a five-year action plan focusing on providing technical assistance to partners, increasing funding utilization for protection and increasing external awareness of the protection priority areas and activities.

For more information, including opportunities for partners to participate in virtual action planning discussion groups, visit the [DNR’s Healthy Watersheds initiative webpage](#).