

Dept. of Natural Resources: Awards \$6.5 million in grants to help restore and protect Wisconsin's surface water

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (DNR)'s Surface Water Grant Program today announced it has awarded over \$6.5 million in grant funding to nonprofit organizations, lake associations and municipalities throughout Wisconsin. Funding will be used to help restore and protect our state's surface water resources in 2023 and beyond.

This year, the program received 446 applications from eligible applicants requesting over \$7.2 million. The projects are incredibly diverse, including work on outreach and education, management planning, habitat restoration, runoff and pollution reduction, and aquatic invasive species control. The projects selected for awards leverage a substantial amount of local funding and promise to make an important contribution to our natural resource legacy.

“Wisconsinites love their lakes and rivers, and our passionate, local stewards are uniquely equipped to lead efforts to protect and restore their local waterbodies with financial and technical support from the DNR,” says Laura MacFarland, DNR Surface Water Grant Program Manager. “I am inspired daily by their dedication and the good work they do.”

Each year the program supports many local and regional partnerships working to improve water quality. For example, Marathon County, in collaboration with the Big Eau Pleine Citizen Organization, the Eau Plaine Partnership for Integrated Conservation and others continue to improve water quality in Lake Wausau and the

Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. Funding from the Surface Water Grant will help them increase community engagement, promote and implement better land management practices on agricultural lands, and improve shoreland habitat.

Healthy Lakes and Rivers grants were awarded to 28 organizations to implement five simple and inexpensive practices that improve habitat and water quality. These organizations engage private shoreline owners and assist them with the installation of fish sticks, native shoreline plantings, water runoff diversions, storm water infiltration systems and rain gardens. To learn more about this subprogram, visit www.healthylakeswi.com.

Lastly, 163 groups will receive support to participate in the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program. Local advocates will focus on education and outreach to empower watercraft users to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species between waterbodies. This easy-to-understand grant is one of the most popular in the program.

These projects are just a few of the many receiving funding this year. While the grant projects from this year are just getting underway, next year's grant cycle will be here before you know it. If you or a local group you work with could benefit from a surface water grant, reach out now to determine your eligibility and begin developing your ideas in advance of the September deadline.

[For more information, or to find a Surface Water Grant project in your community, visit this DNR website.](#)