Introduction

Pine Lake is a 137 acre seepage lake with a maximum depth of 48 feet located in northern Waushara County, Wisconsin. It is a relatively developed, recreational lake, though surrounded by forested land and the less developed Twin Lake to the east. A large portion of the northern shore of the lake is home to the Pine Lake Lutheran Camp. Residents enjoy the lake’s sandy bottom and clean, clear water for swimming and boating. Most residents have a long history with the lake and value the traditions they have established at this central Wisconsin jewel.

The purpose of this plan is to learn about Pine Lake and identify features important to the Pine Lake community in order to provide a framework for the protection and improvement of the lake. This framework, or lake management plan, will enable citizens and other supporters to achieve the vision for Pine Lake now and in the years to come. The planning process included a series four public planning sessions which were held at the Wild Rose Community Center to assist area residents, members of the Pine Lake Property Owners Association, lake users, and representatives of local municipalities with the development of the lake management plan. These meetings took place between August and November 2014.

Participation in the planning process was open to everyone and was encouraged by letters sent directly to Pine Lake waterfront property owners and by press releases in local newspapers. In addition, members of the planning committee were provided with emails about upcoming meetings which could be forwarded to others. To involve and collect input from as many people as possible, topic-specific surveys related to the subject of each upcoming planning session were made available prior to each planning session. Property owners and interested lake users were notified about the surveys and how to access them (via postcards mailed to waterfront property owners and press releases in local newspapers). The surveys were filled out anonymously online or on paper upon request. Survey questions and responses were shared at the planning sessions and can be found in the Appendix.

Overarching Vision for Pine Lake

Pine Lake, with its sandy beaches, great fishing and clean, clear, abundant water, will be a place where generations of friends and family come to enjoy each other and the outdoors.
The purpose of this plan is to learn about Pine Lake, identify factors important to lake residents and users, and develop goals to protect and improve Pine Lake for future generations.

Guest experts and professionals were invited to attend the planning sessions. They presented information and participated in discussions with participants to provide context, insight and recommendations for the lake management plan, including environmental and regulatory considerations. Information provided by the professionals was organized with the survey results into discussion topics, which included: the fishery and recreation; the aquatic plant community; water quality and land use; shoreland health; and communication. After learning about the current conditions of each topic, participants identified goals, objectives, and actions for the lake management plan that were recorded by professionals from UW-Stevens Point. Planning session notes and presentations were posted to the Waushara County website.

The Pine Lake Planning Committee consisted of property owners, lake users and residents. Technical assistance during the planning process was provided by the Waushara County Conservationist, the Waushara County Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development Extension Agent, and professionals from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. (RC&D), University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX), and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE).

This lake management plan (LMP) and its planning process allow the community to guide the fate of its lake. The LMP is a dynamic document that identifies goals and action items for the purpose of maintaining, protecting and/or creating desired conditions in a lake for within given period of time. It can correct past problems, improve on current conditions, and provide guidance for future boards, lake users, and technical experts by identifying which issues have been addressed and how successful previous efforts were. Each plan is unique, dependent upon the conditions of the lake, its watershed, and the interests of the stakeholders involved. The actions identified in this LMP serve as a gateway for obtaining grant funding and other resources to help implement activities outlined in the plan. Because many entities are involved in lake and land management, it can be challenging to navigate the roles, partnerships, and resources that are available. The planning process and content of this plan have been designed to identify where some of the key assistance exists.

Who can use the Pine Lake Management Plan, and how can it be used?

- **Individuals:** Individuals can use this plan to learn about the lake they love and their connection to it. People living near Pine Lake can have the greatest influence on the lake by understanding and choosing lake-friendly options to manage their land and the lake.

- **Pine Lake Property Owners Association:** This plan provides the Association with a well thought out plan for the whole lake and lists options that can easily be prioritized. Annual review of the plan will also help the Association to realize its accomplishments. Resources
and funding opportunities for District management activities are made more available by placement of goals into the lake management plan, and the Association can identify partners to help achieve their goals for Pine Lake.

- **Neighboring lake groups, sporting and conservation clubs:** Neighboring groups with similar goals for lake stewardship can combine their efforts and provide each other with support, improve competitiveness for funding opportunities, and make efforts more fun.

- **The Township of Springwater:** The Town can utilize the visions, wishes, and goals documented in this lake management plan when considering town-level management planning or decisions within the watershed that may affect the lake.

- **Waushara County:** County professionals will better know how to identify needs, provide support, base decisions, and allocate resources to assist in lake-related efforts documented in this plan. This plan can also inform county board supervisors in decisions related to Waushara County lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater.

- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:** Professionals working with lakes in Waushara County can use this plan as guidance for management activities and decisions related to the management of the resource, including the fishery, and invasive species. Lake management plans help the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to identify and prioritize needs within Wisconsin’s lake community, and decide where to apply resources and funding. A well thought out lake management plan increases an application’s competitiveness for funding from the State – if multiple Waushara County lakes have similar goals in their lake management plans, they can join together when seeking grant support to increase competitiveness for statewide resources.

**Background**

One of the first steps in creating this plan was to gather and compile data about the lake and its ecosystem to understand past and current lake conditions. This was done alongside 32 other lakes as part of the Waushara County Lakes Project. The Waushara County Lakes Project was initiated by citizens in the Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council who encouraged the Waushara County to work in partnership with personnel from UW-Stevens Point to assess 33 lakes in the county. This effort received funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ Lake Protection Grant Program. Many of the lakes had insufficient data available to help evaluate current water quality, aquatic plant communities, invasive species, and shorelands, or had data obtained at differing frequencies or periods of time, making it difficult to compare lake conditions. Professionals and students from UW-Stevens Point and the Waushara County Land Conservation Department conducted the Waushara County Lakes Study and interpreted data for use in the development of lake management plans. Data collected by citizens, consultants, and professionals at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources were also incorporated into the planning process to provide a robust set of information from which informed decisions could be made. Sources of information used in the planning process are listed at the end of this document for future reference. The results of this project, including this plan, will assist citizens, municipalities, Waushara County,
and State staff to efficiently manage water resources and help make informed decisions and policies that will affect their lakes now and for future generations.

Several reports from the Pine Lake Study and the materials associated with the planning process and reports can be found on the Waushara County website: http://www.co.waushara.wi.us/. Hover over the Departments tab, then Zoning and Land Conservation, Land Conservation, and finally click on Lake Management Planning.