Turtle Lakes 5 Year Watershed Education and Best Management Practices Lake Protection Project

Subtitle: Planning is Easy, Implementation is Not!

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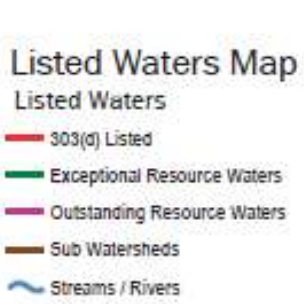
Presented by: Dave Blumer, SEH

With input from Ken Bonner, Corry Walbridge,

and Harland Becker, Turtle Lakes Stakeholders Board



For information on specific subwatersheds, 303(d) or Exceptional/Outstanding Resource Waters (ERW/ORW): http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/wqs/303d/faqs.html and http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/gpsp/gpbasin/

Why?

-2010 303(d) Impaired waters listing (total phosphorus) NPS

-Previous studies

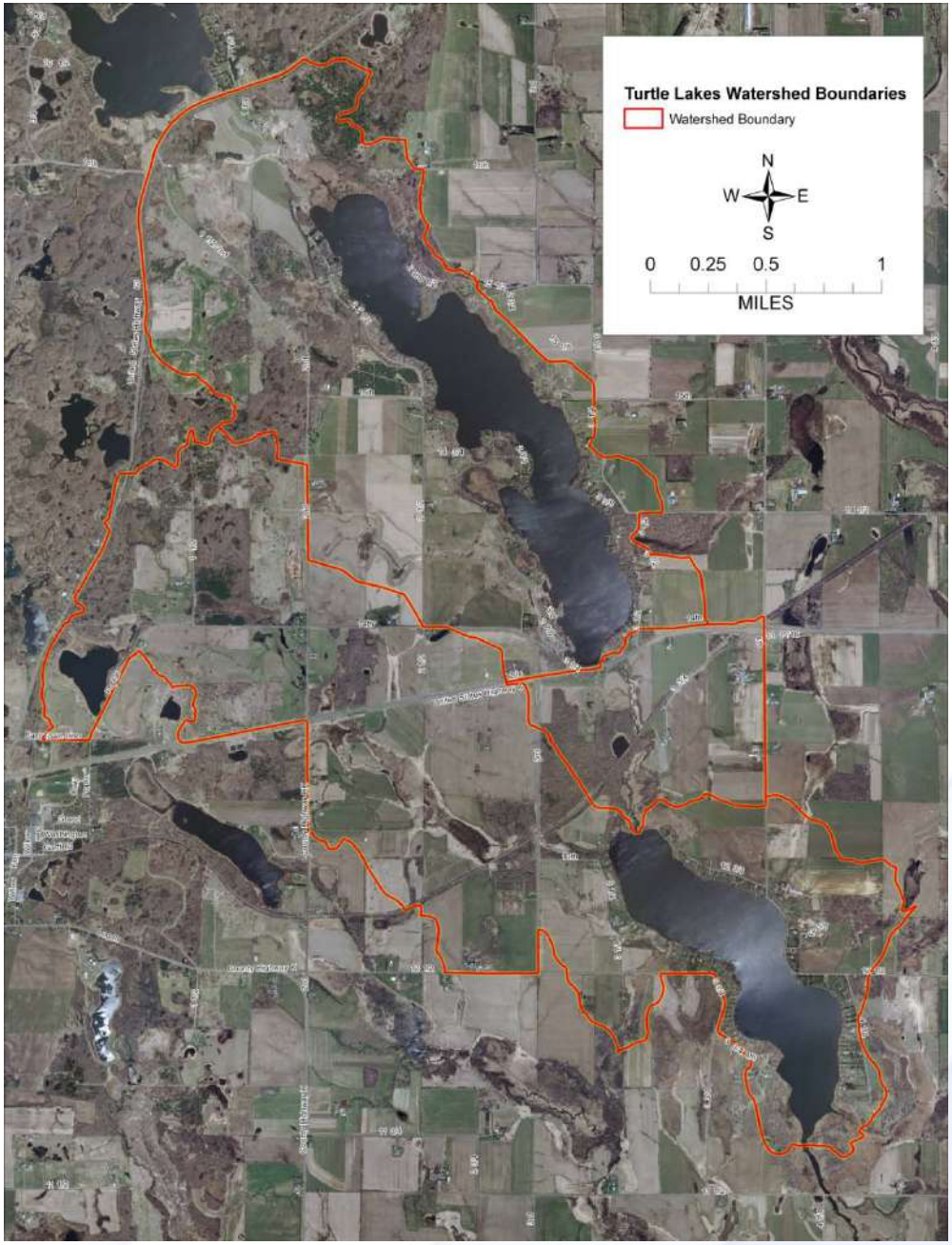
Turtle Lakes Watershed

-Approx. 5000 acres

-Approx 3000 in agricultural practices each year

-Approx 60% of that area in row crops

-6-10 active agricultural producers



Dairy farmers and crop farmers (owned and rented ground)

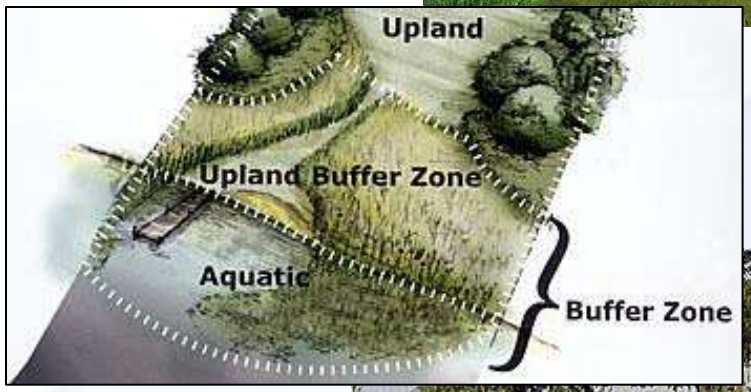
Well-developed shoreline on both lakes

Project Particulars

- $305,420 5-year project (2010-2014)
- $200,000 granted from the state from the Lake Management Planning and Protection Program
- $157,500 available for reimbursement of eligible project costs
- $42,500 to cover water sampling costs
- Donated Services = $39,860
- Volunteer Time ($12.00/hr) = $54,388

Project Components

- Farmer Education
- “No Till” Farmers Incentive Program
- Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-sharing
- Riparian Owner Education
- Shoreline Best Management Practices Project Cost-sharing



More Project Components

- Expanded Water Quality Monitoring in both lakes
- Tributary Monitoring
- Aquatic Plant Management Planning for both lakes
- Overall Project Management
- Best Management Practices Stakeholders Board

Partners/Participants

- Lower Turtle Lake Management District
- Upper Turtle Lake Association
- Lower Turtle Lake Association
- Turtle Lakes Watershed Farmers
- Barron County Soil and Water Conservation Department
- Town of Almena
- UW-Extension Agricultural Agent
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Green Frog Consulting
- Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc (SEH)

Nine Member Stakeholders Board

Lower Turtle Lake Management District (2 members)

Lower Turtle Lake Association/At large (1 member)

Upper Turtle Lake Association (2 members)

Local Farmers (2 members)

Barron County Soil and Water Conservation Department (1 member)

Project Consultant (1 member)

*WDNR Liaison

“If you build it, they will come!”

1989 film Field of Dreams, starring Kevin Kostner

They Didn’t!!

Let's Give Some Money Away!!
We Couldn't!!

- **No till just makes sense! Everyone should take advantage of it!**
  - High corn prices makes incentive payments less appealing
  - Tradition
  - Change means more work, new equipment
  - Negative stereotype that no till loses money
  - In person, one on one contact needed, letters just don’t cut it
  - Time is a valuable entity to farmers
- **Best Management Practices Projects**
  - Must identify and design projects
  - What is reasonable compensation?
  - Multiple levels of approval
  - Show me what others are doing, what are lake people doing
  - Requires legal contracts including deed restrictions, notary
  - Must meet all local, county, state, and federal guidelines in order to be reimbursable in the grant
  - Requires meticulous record keeping, follow-up

- **Shoreland Improvement Projects**
  - Identifying and classification of interested parties
  - Completing shoreland site evaluations
    - Must meet local, county, state, and federal guidelines in order to be reimbursable
    - These guidelines were identified to a greater extent in 2011
  - Implementing shoreland improvement projects with grant dollars requires perpetual property deed restrictions
    - Creation of these documents
  - No money to support implementation without grant dollars

No Till Incentives, Cover Crop, and BMP payments to date

- No Till Incentives Payments (2010-11)
  - Two farmers
  - $4,742.50
- Cover Crop Payments (2011)
  - Two farmers
  - $947.66

BMP Projects (2011-12)

- one farm

- included roof runoff diversion, grassed waterways, crowning of driveways, fencing out of livestock, and nutrient management planning

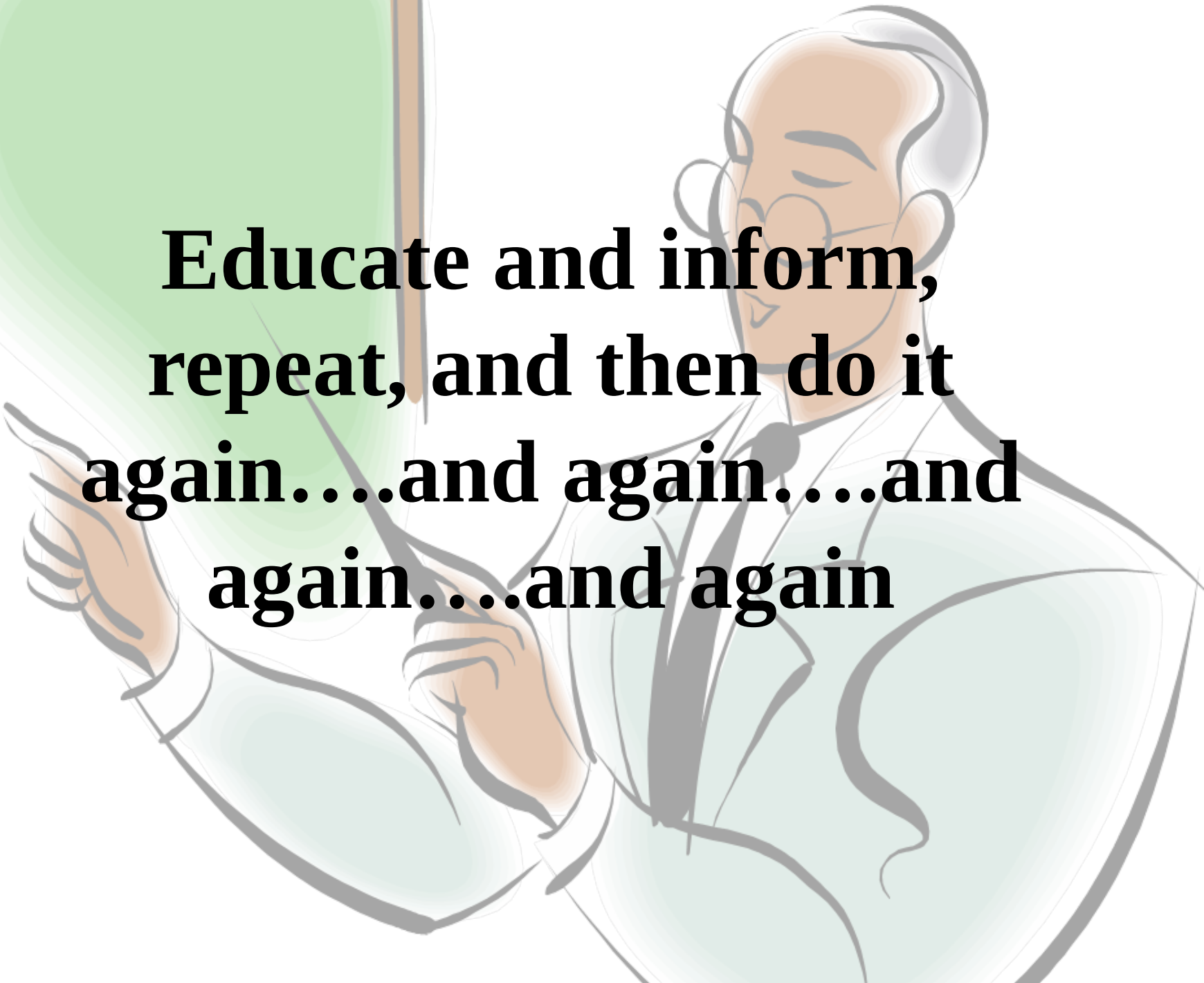
- 70% Project reimbursement

- 30% Landowner match

- $11, 224.00

Riparian projects to date

- Preliminary boat landing site visits
  - Not completed yet
- Seven private property site evaluations completed
  - None implemented yet
  - None planning to use grant dollars to help support implementation
- Shoreland Improvement Interest Survey
  - Distributed to property owners on both lakes



Educate and inform, repeat, and then do it again….and again….and again….and again

Education activities completed to date

- **Agricultural**
  - Farmers' Dinner
  - Farmer Letters
  - Farmer Meetings
  - Site Tours
  - In person visits

- **Riparian**
  - Kickoff Breakfast
  - Lake Fair
  - Site tours
  - Newsletters
  - AIS monitoring
  - Watercraft inspection
  - Water quality monitoring
  - Boat landing pre-evaluations

- **Stakeholders Board**
  - Individual project approvals
  - Tracking volunteer and donated services
  - Input and ideas
  - Working with sub-contractors
  - Reporting back to respective organizations
  - Tracking progress
- **Finances**
  - Tracking expenditures
  - Cutting checks
  - Making money available (spent first, then reimbursed)
  - Seeking project reimbursement
- **Volunteer and donated services**

How are we addressing these issues?

- More personal contact with farmers; farmer to farmer contact
- Shoreland Improvement Workshop with tree/shrub giveaway
- Arranging to provide no till planting services at no charge to the participant
- Setting up a side by side no till/conventional till comparison project
- Non-grant related pot of money set aside for riparian assistance
- Post riparian site evaluation surveys

Some Lessons Learned!!

- Don’t just assume that a project will work smoothly, regardless of how it looks on paper!
  - Less grandiose ideas, keep it close to home
- Do greater planning before entering into a project of this nature.
  - Get a better idea of the level of participation that can be expected
  - Thoroughly explore existing resources before entering into a project
- Triple the expected time to administer the project.
- Work closely with all the partners, they make a project like this happen.