

GreenStep Cities Best Practice # 19 **- final draft for comment through May 2010 –**

❖ **Surface Water Quality:** Improve local water bodies.

Optional for all cities

Category: Environmental Management

Summary

Whereas a city itself, working with another unit of government such as a watershed district, can take direct actions to improve the water quality of lakes, streams and wetlands within its boundaries, for some water bodies the actions of shoreland owners will be the most effective means toward water quality improvement. This best practice focuses on city support for actions taken by local lake or river associations and city residents and businesses.

Best Practice Actions

- Any city that has at least one state-designated public water body within its boundaries must, if it chooses to implement this best practice, complete Action (4) and at least one additional Action.
- All cities that have no state-designated public water bodies and that choose to implement this best practice must complete at least one of the following Actions.
 - (1) Assist at least one lake or river association to earn the Star Lake/River designation for their lake/river.
 - (2) Assist at least one lake or river association to become Star Lake/River-ready by achieving nearly all of the program requirements.
 - (3) Work with other organizations to support citizen education about and involvement with actions to attain measurable, publicly announced lake, stream and wetland health improvement targets adopted by the city council and reported on each year.
 - (4) Adopt a shoreland ordinance consistent with MN Dept. of Natural Resources rules as modified.

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Implementation Resources

(tied to the relevant Action by number)

- (1) Star Lake program: <http://www.starlakes.org>
- (2) For example, membership participation in the river/lake association may be between 25% and 50% of shoreland owners, as opposed to 50% or above.
 - (1) and (2)
 - *Sustainable Lakes Planning Workbook: A Lake Management Model* (Minnesota Waters, 2000): <http://www.minnesotawaters.org>
 - *Minnesota Shoreland Management Resource Guide* (University of MN Water Resources Center): <http://www.shorelandmanagement.org/>
 - *A Guide for Buying and Managing Shoreland* (MN Dept. of Natural Resources): <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/shorelandmgmt/guide>
 - (3) Organizations with which to work include a watershed district, a watershed management organization, a Soil and Water Conservation District, the county water planning office, a Resource Conservation and Development Council, Minnesota Extension, MN Dept. of Natural Resource, MN Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota Waters (<http://www.MinesotaWaters.org>).

- (3) Lake improvement targets include measures such as trophic state, pollutant levels, health measures, water levels, and recreational carrying capacity.
- (3) Recreational carrying capacity of lakes study (Wisconsin's Lake Ripley, 2003) : http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=2059
- (3) The Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program lists two dozen staff who are available to work with cities: <http://www.northlandNEMO.org>
- (4) Updates on the statewide minimum shoreland development standards: <http://mndnr.gov/waters/shoreland.html>

Benefits

- Successful implementation of a lake or river management plan will achieve, at a minimum:
 - Increased and managed native vegetation in shoreline and littoral areas.
 - Improved water quality.
 - Reduction of aquatic invasive species.
 - Increased or maintained healthy fish stocks.

Connection to State Policy

- The Minnesota State Legislature formally established the Star Lakes and Rivers program in 2008. Designation as a Star Lake/River requires that a lake/river association:
 - Maintain a membership or participation of at least 50% of the private shoreland owners.
 - Participate in a water quality monitoring program that meets MN Pollution Control Agency standards.
 - Meet at least annually to review the management plan and report on its implementation to appropriate state and local government agencies.
 - Prepare a lake/river management plan, which must:
 - Address how the association will work with state agencies and local government units to generate data and identify water pollution sources and impairments.
 - Promote compliance with shoreland zoning standards and shoreland best management practices.
 - Assure involvement in public input opportunities for various local comprehensive and project-specific planning and zoning processes.
 - Facilitate education and recognition opportunities for shoreland owners and others that work to improve the quality of the lake or river.
 - Perform other activities that will enhance state and local water management efforts.
- As TMDL (total maximum daily load) allocations for pollutants are established for specific water bodies in the state, implementation of this best practice is one means of implementing the TMDL plan to improve the water body.
- The 2007 Minnesota Legislature directed the MN Dept. of Natural Resources to update statewide minimum shoreland development standards. Local government units (counties, cities, and towns) are responsible for the implementation, administration, and enforcement of shoreland management standards through their planning and zoning controls.