



Financing Lake Management

Doing anything intentionally, like managing a lake, requires an investment – time, resources, and money. Furthermore, proper attention to lake management activities will be an ongoing activity, requiring ongoing expenditures. These expenditures will, most often, include significant monetary aspects.

It is unrealistic to expect that any investment in the ongoing management of a lake can be sustained from sources outside the lake community.

The *lake community* is the people, groups and organizations that use and value the lake, including public entities having facilities and property on the lake. Sometimes called stakeholders, these people should be called upon to develop and implement a management plan, then sustain the management actions called for in that plan. There is a strong geographic aspect to the lake community, which varies from lake to lake. At one extreme, say a small private lake surrounded by a homeowners association, the lake community is limited to the members of the homeowners association. At the other extreme, say the North American Great Lakes, the lake community includes international interests. Of course, most lakes fall somewhere in between.

Knowing the lake community is critical. The lake community includes the people and institutions having a direct and indirect stake in the resource. Not being inclusive enough means missing out on sources of assistance, while including too large a constituency means being unrealistic in identifying those who will sustain the lake management efforts. With respect to financing lake management, the simple test is to identify who is willing to pay on an ongoing basis. One of the challenges lake managers face includes identifying and motivating prospective funding partners.

Typically, the following categories of people and institutions – those with a vested interest – can be involved in financing lake management activities:

- **People.** Lakeshore owners, neighbors, residents and others.
- **Groups.** Lake-related businesses, chambers of commerce and lake user groups (for example, anglers, water skiers, swimmers, divers, wildlife observers).
- **Organizations.** Lake associations, governmental agencies, water utilities, tribal governments, municipalities, special units of government, religious organizations, and environmental and conservation organizations.

Lake management efforts often stall when there is an unrealistic expectation regarding who is willing or able to pay and the initial efforts cannot be sustained. This is particularly true because most lake management plans are not formulated to be long-term and adaptive in nature therefore the ongoing management and funding needs are not adequately identified or prioritized. Planning, diagnostic or implementation grants from outside sources (outside the lake community), when available, are helpful in

jump starting a lake management effort. However, when monies come from outside sources, they cannot normally be relied upon to sustain the ongoing management of the lake. Problems may arise if the lake community depends on outside money. This may also be true when a community is enticed into a quick fix and the long-term commitment is understated in the planning process.

Issues & Concerns

1. With few exceptions, lake and watershed management efforts are ongoing and, therefore must be sustained. The feasibility of identifying and acquiring adequate funding sources from within the lake community is an important consideration in developing and implementing a lake management plan. There may be some instances when an appropriate lake or watershed management technique may need to be eliminated from consideration because it cannot be afforded.
2. Funding programs or grants intended to provide start up or planning activities should include a provision to identify and secure the needed funds for the ongoing maintenance and management efforts.
3. Lake managers also bear the responsibility of educating and advising lake communities on their responsibilities and commitment to sustaining their lake and watershed management efforts.

NALMS Position

NALMS should advocate for federal, state and local funding programs that support start up, diagnostic and planning for lake and watershed management efforts and provide for the identification and securing of reliable financing for ongoing maintenance and management.

Adopted by the NALMS Board of Directors on [pending]