

## Section 6

### Resource Initiative D:

### Administration/Coordination/Finance

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#### A. Key Issues

- **Complex Governance/Resource Management Systems.** There are 64 local units of government with jurisdiction in the SRCL Lakeshed. In addition, there are county, regional, state and federal agencies that manage various land and water resources in the SRCL Lakeshed. The result is a confusing and complicated array of governmental jurisdictions and overlapping responsibilities.
- **Need for More Coordination.** There is a need to increase and expand the coordination mechanisms and procedures between the resource agencies, local units of government, landowners, and the SRCL. Efforts to coordinate the management of natural resources with governance actions by the local units are substantial and need ongoing involvement by the SRCL. Further, the SRCL itself needs to review how it will organize itself to more effectively and fully implement this Plan.
- **Strapped Local and State Budgets.** The state budget crisis over the past several years has affected the operations of resource agencies and local units of government working in the region. There is more competition for fewer public dollars.

#### B. Key Findings

- **Economic Base.** The market value of land immediately adjacent to the Chain of Lakes exceeds \$50 million. The estimated market value of the properties located in the SRCL Sublakeshed exceeds \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- **Unique Funding Opportunities.** The SRCL Sublakeshed is located in the Sauk River Watershed District, which has several unique authorities to fund and construct water quality projects, as do the county water planning programs.

#### C. Primary Roles of the SRCL

- **Expand Involvement.** Encourage the expanded involvement of citizens from all of the lakes in the Chain as well as throughout the SRCL Sublakeshed to become active in the SRCL organization and implementation of this Plan.
- **Increase Effectiveness.** Enhance the operations of the SRCL so that it can more effectively address water and land resource issues.
- **Get Connected.** Become more familiar with and politically active on topics and issues relating to the future of the SRCL Lakeshed including water quality, fisheries and aquatic vegetation and land use.

## D. Goals, Objectives and Action Items

**Goal 1: Increase Organizational Effectiveness.** Continually enhance the development of the SRCL as an active, broad-based lake association that can effectively carry out the goals and objectives in this Plan.

**Rationale:**

- Over the last twenty years, the SRCL has successfully completed several major projects, but more efforts are needed to improve lake water quality and to achieve the other goals listed in this Plan.
- The SRCL recognizes that “government” cannot do it all. The SRCL believes that it has a role in initiating and guiding efforts to improve water quality in the SRCL Lakeshed.
- This Plan intentionally lays out an ambitious list of projects and programs to address major issues facing the lakes and the people living in the SRCL Lakeshed.
- Effective lake associations require active participation and involvement from a large number of people on an ongoing basis.
- To help avoid the “burnout” of active members in the SRCL, the workload needs to be spread out to more people in ways that are fair and reasonable.

**Potential Monitoring Indicators:**

- Increase the general membership of the SRCL to a total of \_\_\_\_\_ members.
- Establish working subcommittees.
- Establish the 14 lake leaders.

**Objective A: Organizational Restructuring.** Review and refine the SRCL’s organizational structure to more fully and successfully implement this Plan.

**Actions:**

1. SRCL Board Restructure and Subcommittees. Consider alternative structures for the SRCL Board of Directors and the creation of subcommittees to support the Board on the implementation of this Plan.
2. Clarify Defined Roles. Define the role of the Board members (policy makers and/or project leaders) and members of the working subcommittees.
3. Update By-laws. Review and update by-laws after revisions to the organizational structure have been approved.
4. Board Recruitment. Develop an effective, ongoing Board recruitment process.
5. Board and Subcommittee Training. Make leadership training available to members of the Board and Subcommittee members.
6. Initiative Foundation HOP. Consider applying to the Initiative Foundation to participate in the Healthy Organization Partnership program (HOP) or a similar leadership training program (Blandin Foundation, etc.)

7. Volunteer Program. Develop an active and sustained volunteer program to enlist the ongoing support and involvement of people who live, work and recreate in the Chain of Lakes area.
8. SRCL Member Interests/Skills Inventory. Survey SRCL members and landowners in the SRCL Sublakeshed for development of a “skills” or “interests” inventory. Encourage all people to work on areas that they are interested in.

**Objective B: Lake Leaders.** Establish a system of leadership for each of the 14 lakes on the Sauk River Chain of Lakes.

**Actions:**

1. Lake Boundaries. Determine the boundary and name of each of the 14 lakes.
2. Lake Leaders. Identify one person on each lake to assume the role of Lake Leader.
3. Lake Leader Training. Make leadership training available to the Lake Leaders.

**Objective C: Increase Membership.** Investigate and implement ways to increase membership to SRCL.

**Actions:**

1. Membership Marketing Plan. The Administration/Finance Subcommittee will prepare a membership marketing plan that outlines a series of specific actions and tasks and corresponding timeframes to increase the SRCL membership. The plan should cover a multi-year timeframe (3 – 5 years) and should identify the benefits members of the SRCL receive.
2. Membership Types/Levels. Consider increasing the types and/or levels of membership and associated dues (students, businesses, levels of membership).
3. Lakeshed Wide. Investigate the potential of expanding membership to the lakeshed level.
4. Door-to-Door Campaign Drives. Support periodic door-to-door solicitation by Lake Leaders and their lake area members to join the SRCL.
5. New Residents/Realtors Association. Develop approaches to identify and solicit new residents and landowners for membership. Work with the realtors association to identify new residents and provide them with information about the SRCL as properties are sold or leased.
6. Annual Meetings and Fundraisers. Provide fast and easy ways for people to become members to the SRCL.

**Objective D: Communications Program.** Develop an overall communications program that builds on the existing methods of communicating with the members of the SRCL such as the newsletter and identify ways to expand and enhance awareness by the members of the projects and programs being implemented.

**Actions:**

1. Annual Lake Association Meetings. Continue to hold an annual SRCL meeting. Invite keynote speakers and presentations on topics of high interest.
2. Newsletter. Continue to publish the SRCL newsletter.
3. Website. Develop the SRCL website to make better use of the Internet.

4. E-Mail. Support ways to ensure that all Board and subcommittee members and Lake Leaders have email capabilities.
5. Publicist. Identify and appoint a person to serve as the SRCL Publicist who will plan and recommend a total communication strategy to support the goals and objectives of this Plan.
6. Communications Analysis. Analyze current communications and look for new methods of reaching SRCL members with short and concise information that is of interest to them. Consider other media such as direct mail to improve the Association's connection with its members.
7. Procedure Manual. Set up a procedure manual for a publicist to follow so that all communications, such as membership statement, solicitations for funds, newsletters and media notices are on specific time lines, accurate and error free.

**Objective E: Educational/Informational Products.** Develop and distribute information documents that help landowners, businesses, tourists and visitors in the SRCL Sublakeshed better maintain their properties and wisely use the lakes.

**Actions:**

1. Lake Owners Guide. Produce and distribute a Lake Owners Guide, including information on a wide range of topics, e.g. building requirements, boating rules, rules on fire pits, advantage of watering lawn with lake water.
2. Website Links. Develop a list of links for the SRCL website that users can go to for more information.

**Objective F: Benchmarking Program.** Establish benchmarks and timelines for goals and objectives listed in this Plan.

**Actions:**

1. Set Benchmarks. The subcommittees in conjunction with the appropriate Technical Committee members and Lake Leaders should set benchmarks for each of the four resource initiatives.
2. Subcommittee Annual Reports. Develop annual reports that document progress completed over the previous year for each of the four resource initiatives. Communicate the results with the SRCL membership through the Communications Program methods (newsletter, website, etc.).

**Objective G: Recognition of Successes.** Formalize a process so that completion of projects, volunteer efforts, and other successes are recognized.

**Actions:**

1. Awards Process. Assign one of the subcommittees or a small group to oversee the awards process each year.
2. Volunteer of the Year Award. At the annual meeting, award the top volunteer in the SRCL Sublakeshed.
3. Landowner of the Year Award. At the annual meeting, award the landowner who has most improved their property resulting in a positive impact on the lakes.

**Goal 2: Increase Agency Coordination.** Utilize the resources of public agencies working in the SRCL Lakeshed to more successfully implement this Plan.

**Rationale:**

- The SRCL has a long track record of working successfully with resource agencies. For example, the SRCL in conjunction with the Stearns SWCD, was successful in obtaining a Challenge Grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources to help prepare this Plan. Further, the SRCL was instrumental in the creation of the SRWD in 1985. The SRCL helped create watershed “thinking” or approaches to resource management twenty years ago.
- Rapid growth in the area is placing significant pressures on the resources in the SRCL Lakeshed. Coordination between the resource agencies and the local units of government is more important now than ever before.
- The SRCL believes that it has a role in helping its partnering resource agencies and local units of government set priorities for the investment of public dollars within the watershed.

**Potential Monitoring Indicators:**

- Number of local officials that are members of the SRCL.
- Number of joint meetings held with resource agencies and local units of government.
- Agency dollars spent in the SRCL Sublakeshed on priority projects as identified by the SRCL.

**Objective A: Resource Agencies.** Develop and sustain ongoing partnerships with resource agencies working in the SRCL Lakeshed including the SRWD, Stearns SWCD, Stearns ESD and others.

**Actions:**

1. Water Advisory Committees. Encourage members of the SRCL to serve on local water management task force (Stearns and Meeker counties) and the SRWD Board of Managers and the citizen advisory committee.
2. Sauk River Watershed District Involvement. Encourage involvement of the SRWD in the implementation of the SRCL Plan. Encourage the SRWD administrator to come to the SRCL meetings. Look for a better means of communication with SRWD, going both ways.
3. Stearns County SWCD Involvement. Encourage involvement of the Stearns SWCD in the implementation of the SRCL Plan. Encourage the SWCD staff to come to the SRCL meetings. Look for a better means of communication with SWCD, going both ways.
4. Coordination with Other Resource Agencies. Support and coordinate with governmental agencies that manage land and water resources in the SRCL Lakeshed.
5. SRCL Technical Committee. Convene the SRCL Technical Committee on an as needed basis to assist the SRCL Board, subcommittees, and Lake Leaders in implementing this Plan.

**Objective B: Local Land Use Planning and Implementation.** Build partnerships with the cities, townships and counties in the SRCL Lakeshed to support better land use planning and implementation. Participate and/or get involved with the local decision making process on areas that relate to concerns in the SRCL Lakeshed (i.e. land use planning, transportation projects, stormwater management, zoning and land division review, etc.)

**Actions:**

1. Contact with County and Township boards. Appoint one member of the Land Use Subcommittee to be a contact and receive notices for all township and county permits. This contact person will report to the Land Use Subcommittee and send the appropriate comments back to the townships and county boards.
2. County Planning Commissions. Support the appointment of an SRCL Board of Director or member to serve on the county planning commissions.
3. Township Supervisors. Encourage township supervisors to be members of the SRCL, serve on the SRCL Board of Directors, and/or participate on the Land Use Subcommittee.
4. Enforcement Contact for Violations. Develop and maintain a list of contact persons for land use enforcement matters from the appropriate agencies in the SRCL Lakeshed. Distribute the list to the Board of Directors, subcommittees and lake leaders.

**Goal 3: Fiscal Management.** Promote the implementation of this Plan in a fair and fiscally responsible manner. The SRCL will work to expand revenues from both within the organization, as well as finding additional funding from a mix of private and public sources.

**Rationale:**

- The projects and programs outlined in this Plan will require additional funding beyond the revenue generated by membership dues in previous years.
- The more that the SRCL can generate from within, the more it will be able to leverage funding from outside public and foundation sources.
- While the SRCL recognizes that “government” cannot do it all, there are a number of public funding programs that should be targeted to implement this Plan.

**Monitoring Indicators:**

- Increase the general membership dues to \$ \_\_\_\_ on a three-year sustained basis.
- Solicit two major cash donations (over \$25,000) and ten mid-level cash donations (\$5,000 - \$25,000) over a five-year period.
- Leverage membership dues by \_\_\_\_ times to obtain additional public and foundational three-year sustained basis.

**Objective A: Annual Budgets.** Improve the annual budgeting process to advance the fiscal capacity of the SRCL to implement projects and programs recommended in this Plan.

**Actions:**

1. Subcommittee Budgets. Each of the four Subcommittees will develop an annual budget for their respective resource initiatives. The budgets should include a list of projects and/or programs proposed for the upcoming year along with any administrative items, such as website, newsletter, training, equipment, etc.
2. The Administration/Finance Subcommittee will be responsible to compile the four subcommittee budgets into one annual budget.
3. Board Review. The Board will review and approve the annual budget.
4. Annual Meeting. The subcommittees will describe the upcoming year's projects at the annual meetings and provide opportunities for members to volunteer on projects of their choice.
5. Newsletter. Result from the budgetary process will be summarized in the newsletter after the annual meeting.

**Objective B: Long Range Budget.** Develop a long-range budget (brief one-page outline format) for the Board and each of four Subcommittees.

**Actions:**

1. Develop a long-range budget for a five-year timeframe for Board and each of four Subcommittees. The budget will include administrative items, such as website, newsletter, training, equipment, etc.

**Objective C: Funding Opportunities.** Develop and sustain new and increased funding sources (membership fees, contributors and gifts, private foundations, SRWD, Stearns SWCD, state and federal agencies, etc).

**Actions:**

1. New Sources Scout. Appoint a member of the Administration/Finance Subcommittee to contact funding sources on a regular basis for current information on funding opportunities.
2. Membership Dues. The SRCL Board of Directors will periodically review and update the cost of membership dues.
3. Non Profit Tax Exempt Status. Consider creating a non profit tax exempt status organization within the SRCL to accept charitable donations.

**Objective D: Fundraising.** Investigate and follow through on fundraising and grant writing.

**Actions:**

1. Initiative Foundation HLP Implementation Grant. Select a high priority project(s) identified in this Plan and apply for the \$5,000 implementation grant from the Initiative Foundation through the HLP program.

2. Initiative Foundation HOP. If accepted, apply to the Initiative Foundation Healthy Organization Partnership program for the funding made available through this program.
3. Watershed District and County Water Planning Funding Authorities. Meet with the SRWD and the county water plan officials to discuss statutory authorized funding sources for water quality projects outlined in this Plan or in their plans that occur within the SRCL Lakeshed. Some of the alternative financing tools include: a) funds generated through ad valorem taxes, b) assessment levies, c) the sale of bonds, and d) the collection of charges or fees.
4. 2007 Stearns County Water Plan Update. Contact the County early in the water plan update process and request that the appropriate SRCL goals and objectives be specifically incorporated into the County's plan. Integrating SRCL projects into the County's water plan can help in funding requests.
5. Other Foundation Sources. Continue to work with the Initiative Foundation and other non-profit foundations to fund the implementation of projects and programs as recommended in this Plan.
6. Conservation Programs. Explore and support the use of existing funding programs offered through the four soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), state agencies and federal agencies including the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Some of the water protection programs include CRP, RIM, EQIP, WRP, etc.
7. Banquets. Consider holding banquets on a periodic basis to raise funds for special projects and to celebrate the completion of projects and programs that have been completed in the Chain of Lakes area to protect and improve water quality in the lakes.
8. Support Letters. Provide appropriate letters of support and participate in planning water quality and land resource implementation grants.