



Strategic Plan

2008 - 2025

Connecting People, Land and Water...



Strategic Plan

Adopted January 2008

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Special thanks to the Environmental Support Center for funding
to support development of this Strategic Plan

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Bad River Watershed Association Strategic Plan 2025

A Watershed Connects Its People

A watershed describes a landscape where all water flows to a central point and joins together, regardless of its beginnings, on its journey towards a common place. A watershed is also a powerful symbol for the energetic connection that brings together people from a wide range of backgrounds and ideals toward a common purpose. This connection to the water and by the water brings about a powerful sense of ownership and responsibility to care for the watershed which provides so many services to us and unites us as a community.

Realizing this, a group of visionary individuals formed the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) in 2002 as a way to help connect people to the watershed that connects all of them. Today, the BRWA is a growing group of people who recognize the unique beauty of the Bad River watershed, the strength that it brings to the lives of those who live here and the need to make sure decisions on how to use the land within the watershed are made with the best available knowledge concerning how those decisions alter watershed resources. This knowledge is a critical component to achieving a balance between the livelihood of individuals and families and the quality of the resources that sustain that livelihood, both now and into the future.

Who is the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA)?

We are a community organization that works to involve all citizens in taking care of and enjoying their home watershed. We accomplish this by conducting educational programs and forums about how our watershed can be affected by the decisions we make. In addition, we assist citizens to gather information, identify problems and implement solutions to maintain the integrity of our watershed for future generations. If you live within the Bad River watershed, you are a member of the BRWA. People who live outside the watershed and support our goals may also request to be associate members.

Our Vision Statement

The Bad River Watershed Association envisions a future in which change and development within the watershed grow from a stewardship ethic that seeks to minimize ecological damage, while maximizing ecological and community health.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Bad River Watershed Association is to promote a healthy relationship between the people and natural communities of the Bad River watershed by involving all citizens in assessing, maintaining and improving watershed integrity for future generations.

Our Place – The Bad River Watershed

The Bad River Watershed drains over 1,000 square miles along Wisconsin's north shore. The headwaters are found in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The lower one-third of the watershed is land of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribes of Chippewa Indians Reservation. Small, rural communities including Mellen, Odanah, Gurney, Mason, Grand View, Delta and Marengo are scattered throughout the watershed. The Kakagon Slough/Bad River Slough, located at the mouth of the watershed on Lake Superior, is the largest and possibly most pristine freshwater estuary remaining on Lake Superior. As the only remaining extensive coastal wild rice wetland in the Great Lakes Basin, the Kakagon Slough provides abundant habitat for wild rice, which is highly important to the Tribe's culture, and also provides exceptional habitat for a variety of wildlife.

The Watershed is made up of seven sub watersheds - the Upper Bad River draining 137 square miles, the Lower Bad River draining 123 square miles, Tyler Forks draining 78 square miles, the Marengo River draining 217 square miles, the Potato River which drains 140 square miles and the White River sub watershed which drains 360 square miles. The smaller Beartrap Creek sub watershed is included in this watershed as it too drains into the Kakagon Sloughs.

The watershed contains one of the most diverse assemblages of fish in the Lake Superior Basin, many of which are listed as "species of management concern" by the Bad River Tribe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or Wisconsin DNR. Major land uses within the rural Bad River watershed include agriculture (10%), wetlands (16%) and forest (74%). Originally, large white pine forests covered the watershed. A large logging enterprise grew in the area. By the early 1900's the logging industry had completely depleted the forests. Forests are recovering but with aspen as the major forest component replacing the original conifers.

Though the water resources of the Watershed are currently in good condition, several impacts to water quality indicate they may no longer be termed "pristine". Prior to the formation of the BRWA, comparably little data on water chemistry existed. The need for data to responsibly make decisions affecting water resources in the basin was a major impetus for the formation of BRWA.

Water quality in the BRW is negatively impacted by point sources from municipal wastewater effluent and by non-point sources from road crossings, failing household septic systems, overland runoff from improperly managed agriculture and logging practices. Highly erodible soils on stream banks are easily affected by poorly planned practices of land users. Major environmental concerns in the watershed include non-point source sedimentation, rapid runoff and fish passage at road stream crossings. Destructive recreation uses and the threat of hydrological degradation from increased development are also concerns for the Bad River watershed.

What We Do

Since its formation in 2002, the BRWA has built a solid foundation on a series of programs and events that have focused around our mission. As we move forward, we will seek to enhance and build upon these programs. The following are brief descriptions of programs we offer on a continuing or annual basis.

1. *Water Quality Monitoring Program* – The overall objectives of the BRWA Water Quality Monitoring project are to:
 - a. Get local citizens involved with their watershed by monitoring water quality,
 - b. Establish at least a four-year base line of water quality in the Bad River Watershed by collecting water chemistry data (temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, phosphate, nitrate and turbidity) and biological assessment data using macroinvertebrates.

The baseline data will be used to determine the overall health of the watershed and to identify trouble spots. The BRWA and other data users can then make more informed decisions on supporting proposals concerning land use, conservation efforts and other projects to preserve the vital habitat and water quality of the watershed. Continual monitoring should then be able to detect changes to water quality in the future.

An important example of our water quality data in use occurred in October 2006, when the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) approved the designation of 44 northern stream segments as Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) or Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW). Originally, streams in the Bad River watershed were not considered for these designations due to a lack of information. Our macroinvertebrate sample data was submitted to WDNR to demonstrate that many of the waters we sample deserve this special designation. As a result, several rivers were added to the ORW list.

2. *Culvert Project* – Fish passage and sedimentation at road stream crossings have been identified as major concerns in the watershed. To address this concern, the BRWA initiated a culvert project to conduct a watershed wide, quantitative road-stream crossing inventory and identify specific sites that are priorities for remediation. BRWA's Culvert Project aims to:
 - a. Educate watershed citizens about the environmental and fiscal costs of improperly designed and/or installed culverts,
 - b. Identify and inventory all stream/road crossings in the Bad River Watershed,
 - c. Prioritize crossings in need of repair with respect to fish passage barriers and sedimentation, and
 - d. Search for funding to help pay for new installations.

Inventories have been designed to gather general information about the crossing and stream channel conditions. Inventories have been conducted by a combination of BRWA volunteers and Northland College student interns. Results were summarized into a Needs Assessment that provides local road and fish managers with information that can be used

as a planning tool for crossing replacements. The BRWA has already assisted in replacing crossings, and plans to find funding and support to remediate more.

3. *Informational Forums* – We sponsor many other events and informational forums throughout the year. Our events focus on locally relevant stewardship issues. In addition, we publish a quarterly newsletter that provides regular program updates, educational articles and basin specific news on topics relevant to watershed health.

**The Bad River Watershed Strategic Plan:
Long term goals (by the year 2025) towards achieving the BRWA vision
by adhering to our mission**

Achieving the goals set forth in this strategic plan will require building our capacity by providing a variety of volunteer involvement options, maintaining and expanding paid staff as is necessary to achieve both short and long term goals, evaluating our progress towards these goals on an annual basis and making appropriate changes. We will continue to build upon and enhance our current programs that form the foundation for our organization and the goals set forth here.

The format for our strategic plan includes a series of long term, overarching goals that the Bad River Watershed Association will seek to achieve by the year 2025. Each goal is tied to achieving our vision by adhering to our mission statement. The goals are all recognized as being important and are not arranged in any particular order.

We recognize that these goals must be achieved through an iterative process that will take much time and effort, both in building the capacity within our organization to achieve these goals and in building a knowledge base of information and how to communicate that into credible and attainable solutions that meet the needs of citizens living within the Bad River watershed. These are goals that will require the help, knowledge and energy of many people. We feel our organization has a strong base of support to build upon and will make achieving these goals possible. We will also seek to collaborate with other organizations, institutions and governments who share common goals with the BRWA. The priorities listed under each goal are the short term activities that will keep our work focused in the near term. A work plan for the next 3 years has been created based on these priorities.

Goal #1: Citizens of the Bad River watershed are active and engaged in maintaining the integrity of the watershed.

The BRWA understands that the foundation for maintaining the integrity of our waters lies in a stewardship ethic in all citizens that is put into action. Therefore, engaging and involving citizens in opportunities to learn about and take care of the watershed will be an ongoing process. We are committed to creating a variety of opportunities for involvement that resonate with the wide range in interests among our residents and to ensuring our work addresses the most pertinent local concerns and opportunities. We will continue to provide relevant information to promote responsible and effective decision-making on issues affecting the watershed and to facilitate community-wide programs and forums for public education about the watershed. We will continually evaluate our programs, projects and communication efforts to see that they support this goal. In addition, we will pay particular attention to building and maintaining the strong and dedicated membership that is critical to achieving our mission, and will offer opportunities for leadership development among our active members.

Goal #2 Watershed plans for all the major sub-basins within the Bad River watershed have been developed and are being implemented and utilized by landowners and governments within the watershed.

There are many similarities across the 7 sub-basins of the Bad River watershed, however past and potential future land uses as drivers of environmental change do vary among them. Sub basin specific watershed plans examine the hydrologic condition and identify focus areas to improve watershed quality. Watershed plans develop a deeper understanding of the watershed by evaluating how existing land use conditions are influencing our river systems, and identifying the primary drivers that impair watershed health. Successful watershed planning processes include involvement from landowners, other citizens and governments within the sub-basin, and work to coordinate and focus efforts on the most appropriate issues to maintain watershed integrity.

Implementation of these plans hinges on the accessibility and approachability of available information. The BRWA will rely on sound science, both for collecting and communicating information to achieve its vision. We recognize the disconnect that often occurs between scientific information and how it is communicated to the general public. We will specialize in communicating complex scientific information in an understandable format to citizens and decision-makers so effective solutions to improving watershed health while maintaining social and economic needs can be made.

Goal #3: Establish a suite of indicators of watershed quality that will allow BRWA to evaluate impacts from land use and climate change over time.

In order to measure change in the condition of our watershed, a baseline condition must be established and indicators that measure change at appropriate levels must be established. Our unique role as a bridge between hard data and community members requires that we examine both scientific and social parameters as potential indicators to changes in our basin.

A comprehensive analysis of the stressors will ensure that we are developing the appropriate indicators. This process will require involvement from all interests and partners throughout the basin, and will form the basis for specific programs. Our monitoring work to date has identified some threats to water quality, and indicators should consider those threats as well as others.

Three-year roadmap to guide short-term actions towards achieving our long-term goals.

We recognize that the natural world and the humans that live within it are a dynamic system and our strategic plan needs to be a fluid, working document that adapts to changes in management techniques, priorities and mindsets as we move forward. Therefore, we will update and evaluate our short term goals for achieving our long term vision every three years in a new workplan or road map for the BRWA.

The following road map has been developed as guidance for the BRWA over the next three years that will set us on a path to achieving our 2025 long term goals. It is a working list that identifies and provides timelines for specific objectives, tactics for achieving those objectives, and resource needs and availability to help get us there.

Bad River Watershed Association Strategic Road Map for 2008 - 2010

Long Term Goal: All citizens of the Bad River watershed are active and engaged in maintaining the integrity of the watershed

Priority #1: Enhance our organizational capacity by developing and expanding our active membership and volunteer base

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Recruit new members and one-time volunteers		
to contribute articles to newsletter	Newsletter Coordinator that can use the chart of topics to identify and recruit contributors	3 new volunteers
to attend quarterly events	Person to acquire and use targeted mailing lists as outreach for events; Partners for each event - tap into their membership	Expand newsletter mailing list by 10% (50 new members)
to work on indoor/administrative tasks	Create list of tasks and talk about them!	2 new volunteers
Develop steady volunteers		
Revive volunteers for culvert inventory	Outreach at winter meetings with towns; Call people that expressed interest in the past	15 new volunteers
New WQ monitoring volunteers	Call people that expressed interest in the past	8 new volunteers
Develop volunteer leaders		
Staff all committees	Publish list of committees with annual plan; Committee report at each meeting	Eight new non-board members are invited and accept jobs
Recruit coordinator of Spring for the Water	List of potential people	1 new person
Recruit coordinator of Annual Picnic	List of potential people	1 new person
Beef up the board		
Use matrix to identify board needs	Identify 6 potential new board members	Two new board members are seated
Contact new potential board members	Identify 1 contact person for each new potential board member	
Provide each board member with a Board Manual	Funding to produce Board manual	
Invite inactive or term expired board members to move down the pyramid	Identify other BRWA activities that people who are getting off the board can participate in	All previous board members are still active with BRWA in some way

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Priority #2: Enhance our organizational capacity by building our financial capacity to grow

1. Develop an annual fundraising goal that adequately covers overhead and program costs

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Develop true cost accounting for current projects and operations		
Develop an overhead rate	Staff time to do this	An established rate
Identify all costs associated with projects by specific activity	Staff time to do this	Readily available financial statement of all aspects of program costs
Develop reporting to board that enables board to take responsibility for finances	Staff time to do this	Each board member is able to describe the financial status of BRWA
Develop financial needs for future		
Identify target staffing levels	Description of potential future programs and staff	Board approval of future programs and staff
Make accounting audit ready		
Train staff and treasurer on appropriate financial procedures	Find a trainer and funding to pay them	Completed financial management procedures for existing and 2010 target staff level

2. Develop and implement a funding raising plan that diversifies our funding streams

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Local dollars from private individuals		
Continue with Spring for the Water	Training on special events	Increase attendance (10%) & revenue (\$3000)
End of year appeal to entire mailing list	Involve all board members in making calls to at least 10 BRWA members	All board members involved in this fundraising effort
Increase the # and contribution of major donors	Need training	5 donors contributing over \$200 annually
Create one additional fundraising event per year that targets watershed residents	Identify potential events	\$1,000 in revenue
Grant dollars		
Create database of grant funds	Research of funders	40 Funding sources that directly relate to existing and related program ideas with state, federal, and private foundations
Corporate sponsor		
Identify training on how to incorporate this funding stream into our funding base	Funding to pay for this training	1 corporate sponsor

Bad River Watershed Association Strategic Road Map for 2008 - 2010

Long Term Goal: All citizens of the Bad River watershed are active and engaged in maintaining the integrity of the watershed

Priority #3: Develop a communication plan aimed at promoting a basin-wide stewardship ethic

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Create a communications committee	Recruit a chair and 2 committee members	An active staffed committee
Learn about our audiences	Development of a survey to ask the right questions	Completed landowner survey
Develop a marketing plan	Decide on what we want people to know and think about us; Develop a publicity plan: Training on this is needed	Completed publicity plan
Develop a plan for the web page	Find a web master; Training on how to make better use of our web site and the internet	Quarterly updates to the web site, increased number of "hits" to the web page by 25%

Long Term Goal: Watershed plans for all the major sub-basins within the Bad River watershed have been developed and are being implemented and utilized by landowners and governments within the watershed.

Priority #4: Continue and expand culvert inventory and remediation project

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Prepare and present town-specific fact sheets from Needs Assessment	Volunteers to visit towns and present this information	3 new volunteers, and info presented to 10 towns
Recruit and train volunteers to complete inventory of all road stream crossings in the basin	Funding for volunteer coordinator and training materials	All sites inventoried
Identify target sites and willing partners on 5 sites	Funding for structures and staff time to oversee	Complete remediation on 5 sites
Provide training for town road crews on fish friendly installation techniques	Funding for training and attendance	10 towns with crews that have attended the training
Create displays on culvert project to inform	\$ for new display items	Update existing display

Bad River Watershed Association Strategic Road Map for 2008 - 2010

Long Term Goal: Establish a suite of indicators of watershed quality that will allow BRWA to evaluate impacts from land use and climate change over time.

Priority #5: Continue and expand water quality monitoring program.

Tactic	Resources Needed	Indicator of Success
Continue chemical monitoring at 16 sites throughout the basin	\$ for Volunteer coordinator	complete data set and paid part time staff
Continue macroinvertebrate monitoring throughout the basin	\$ for volunteer coordinator; Recruit an additional Macro's ID specialist	Biological Index completed for 10 sites twice annually
Provide annual review of data		Complete review in annual report
Public education on BRWA WQ monitoring effort	Establish relationship with schools	At least 1 annual visit with school group; Water quality monitoring specific display in that informs about BRWA WQ monitoring program