APPLICATION OF WISCONSIN LAKES CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM
THROUGH THE NEW HAMPSHIRE LMPP
DRAFT: For Discussion Purposes Only
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Wisconsin provides county/town governments with a lake classification system designed to help protect lakes from the impacts of development pressure. The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has developed criteria for county and town governments to use in designing a lakes classification system. These are the minimum criteria that can be used but the county and its towns may select more restrictive criteria.

Wisconsin has formed a formal partnership among the DNR, the University of Wisconsin research and extension service lakes programs and the Wisconsin Lakes Association to assist the counties with the formulation and implementation of lakes classification. The DNR sets the minimum standards for lakes classification and provides initial funding. The key to this process is that it is voluntary, that is, county/town governments may elect to participate. Many, but not all, counties now participate. When a county chooses to participate it makes a formal proposal to the DNR for a grant for up to $50,000 per year to fund the effort. The county then prepares a county wide lake classification plan with town, lake association and citizen input. The University provides educational materials and workshops, and Wisconsin Lakes works with towns and lake associations to gain their support.

New Hampshire differs from Wisconsin in that its counties do not have the potential of involvement in this process nor does the state provide the funding. The NH DES could provide support similar to the Wisconsin DNR. The NH Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) could fill part of the county roll. New Hampshire has the UNH Cooperative Extension and the UNH Center for Freshwater Biology (CFB), as well as the New Hampshire Lakes Association (NHLA) to provide for education and citizen involvement as in Wisconsin.

A similar formal partnership could be formed by DES among the DES LMPP, the UNH CFB and Cooperative Extension lakes programs and the NHLA. The LMPP could provide the legal foundation and technical guidance employed by the RPC’s and local towns. The University will provide education support and the NHLA will work to gain lake association and citizen input. All of the partners will provide technical assistance with the development of the regional lake classification system. The RPCs will work with the towns who would be responsible for enacting supporting zoning and land use practices as well as recreational guidelines. And again, selecting to participate would be voluntary.

As in Wisconsin, there will need to be a funding source. The partners, meaning DES LMAC/LMPP, UNH and NHLA, will need to prepare a proposal for potential funding sources. To initially reduce the funding request and provide evidence of the value of a lakes classification system, it may be most appropriate to develop and implement a pilot program of three years involving a single RPC/lakes community.

1 Should the partnership effort be spearheaded by the LMAC?
2 Recreational guidelines can be developed by several interested parties but in NH the recreational guidelines would have to be enacted and enforced by NH Dept. of Safety Marine Patrol.