



ITASCA WATERS

Team Up for Clean Waters

ANNUAL REPORT

ItascaWaters.org

2019

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Cover photo of Pokegama Lake, Nesbitt Island, courtesy of Bill Marshall.

MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The mission of Itasca Waters (formerly Itasca Water Legacy Partnership) is to “Team Up” with other organizations and concerned citizens to maintain abundant, clean water for our continued health, enjoyment and a strong economy.

Itasca Waters (IW) is pursuing its mission by:

- Promoting water stewardship through education and community outreach
- Engaging all Itasca County citizens to join in these efforts
- Continuing its efforts to fund science-based research focused on water quality

SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Our supporters and partners have included the Blandin Foundation – Bush Foundation – Minnesota Humanities Center – Itasca County – Itasca Soil & Water Conservation District – ISD #318 – U.S. Forest Service – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources – Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources – Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter of the Izaak Walton League – Grand Rapids Players – Minnesota Power – Itasca County Lake Associations – Itasca County Business Community – University of Minnesota/Morris – Itasca County Master Gardeners – Community Volunteers and Individual Members.

2019 EVENTS AND SUCCESSES

Itasca Waters continued to work with its many partners to look for new opportunities to be good stewards of our great water resources. You will find specific information on projects funded by grants later in this report, but here are just a few highlights:

- Given a \$114,040 grant from the Bush Foundation focused on using community driven solutions to protect water and Board development.
- Hosted the eighth Youth Water Summit in May that allowed about 425 fifth graders a chance to participate in scientific, hands-on activities and organized an activity at the Itasca County Fair.
- Successfully hosted at the Reif, the Minnesota Humanities Center exhibit We are Water, and related events.
- Rolled out the Shoreland Advisors program.
- Expanded community outreach and social media work including creating a series of videos available online.
- Worked with the University of Minnesota at Morris to survey Itasca County residents about attitudes and practices focused on water quality in the county.
- Implemented a plan to restructure the operations of Itasca Waters to better work through committees.

GRANTS

Itasca Waters has been fortunate to receive major funding from the Blandin Foundation and Bush Foundation.

Blandin Grants

In 2011, Blandin Foundation awarded the Itasca Water Legacy Partnership funds for its first Itasca Adult Water Summit (\$15,000). In the same year, we received a multi-year grant of \$155,000 for operations to build local capacity for water quality assessment and other activities to maintain Itasca County’s high-quality water. Some funds from this 2011 Blandin grant are still available for use for community events.

In March 2018, the Blandin Foundation awarded Itasca Waters a \$150,000 grant to fund a three-year program focused on protecting and restoring shoreland areas in Itasca County to reduce nutrient loading in area lakes and maintain high water quality. The application included a request for a part-time coordinator to help implement the program, a first for Itasca Waters. As discussed below, Itasca Waters worked with the University of Minnesota Morris, Center for Small Towns, to implement a survey of lakeshore owners.

This organization is important to me because my livelihood depends on maintaining the quality of our waters. People using the waters need to be aware of the actions that can negatively affect them.

Mike Holmstrom, Grand Rapids Marine

PROJECTS AND EVENTS

We are blessed with an abundance of clean water and need to do whatever we can to preserve it. This organization is on the front line of that effort.
Rick & Kathleen Blake

After kayaking all 1007 of Itasca County lake, I feel better knowing people care to make a difference to protect our waters.
Mary Shideler, *The Kayak Lady*

Bush Foundation Grant

With the generous support of Itasca County allowing grant writer John Connelly to assist in preparing a grant proposal, Itasca Waters was notified in February 2019 that Itasca Waters was awarded a \$107,040 grant to use community driven solutions to protect Itasca County's water. In addition, \$7,000 is available for Board development. Work during 2019 is described below.

Administration

In early-2019 IW hired a new part-time coordinator. The hiring of a coordinator has had a very positive impact, broadening IW's contacts in the community and providing needed support for IW projects. IW's office in Central Square Mall in Grand Rapids is now equipped with high-speed internet facilitating meetings that are now held in the Mall's Blandin meeting room. Having an office has increased the organization's community visibility and opportunities for IW to participate in downtown and local business committees and events.

With the new focus on committees and shared information, IW moved current meeting materials and resources to Google Drive, keeping Dropbox for historic storage. The goal is to encourage online collaboration.

Bush Grant Activities

Itasca Waters was awarded a Community Innovation Grant from the Bush Foundation in early 2019. The Bush grant funds are being used to support a two-year process to engage all stakeholders in designing a community-wide plan to protect the water quality in the lakes, rivers, and streams throughout Itasca County. Widespread community engagement is well underway. Consultants have engaged over 1,000 Itasca County residents in a variety of ways, including online surveys, one-on-one interviews, phone interviews, focus groups, and human-centered design sessions. The goal is to engage as many people as possible to better understand how we as a community can ensure high-quality water in perpetuity. The stakeholders reached include area lake associations; elected county, city, and township officials; business owners; fishing guides; resort owners; realtors; and the general public. During the second year of the grant consultants will use what we have learned from community stakeholders to develop and implement a public awareness campaign around the importance of clean water to our collective livelihoods, as well as an action plan so the community can coordinate its efforts to protect our water.

Blandin Grant Survey

The 2018 Blandin grant required Itasca Waters to develop a strategy to assess the water-related attitudes and practices of Itasca County property owners. Working with the University of Minnesota at Morris, we developed a survey that assessed opinions about and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) for managing water on property, information sources property owners used and the entities that they felt should ensure that water is protected.

Key findings showed that property owners are concerned about water and believe water issues are important, have implemented at least one BMP, recognize that they share responsibility for protecting water quality, and are interested in getting more information about BMPs. In addition, the survey results suggested several actions that Itasca Waters will pursue.

Shoreland Initiative

Launched by the Planning Committee in 2017 with funding from the 2018 Blandin Foundation grant, 2019 activities focused on expanding the Shoreland Advisor program which focuses on improving shoreland in Itasca County.

Deer Lake Septic Inspection Program

2018 was the first year that Blandin Foundation funds financed an incentive program for

septic system compliance. The Blandin grant offered \$10,000 toward septic system inspections of Deer Lake properties, where owners volunteered to have their systems inspected. The program continued through 2019 with an additional five properties tested. A more aggressive program is anticipated for 2020, including a substantial subsidy for system upgrades and access to a no-cost loan program through the County.

Shoreland Guide

Our popular 2018 Shoreland Guide has been well received in our community. Guides are available at all Itasca Waters’ events. Realtors have been distributing the guide to people interested in purchasing homes and the Downtown Council has been giving them to new residents. Guides have been distributed to people and groups in connection with work on the Bush Foundation grant. Participants in our Shoreland Advisors workshops received the guide and they in turn have distributed them to lakeshore property owners they visited. The Guide is available online at our website at <https://ItascaWaters.org/shoreland-guide-2018>.

Shoreland Advisor Program

Planning for the Shoreland Advisor program began in 2018 with the goal to reduce the impact of runoff from shoreland property and improve water quality. The program provides onsite information and assistance, at no cost, to lakeshore owners interested in curtailing sources of pollution from their property. Itasca Waters trains volunteers about shoreland buffers, erosion and runoff, septic, and aquatics. These advisors make onsite visits with lakeshore owners and discuss helpful practices the shoreland owner can implement that will positively impact a lake’s water quality.

In March, a group of twenty interested volunteers attended the first educational meeting conducted by University of Minnesota Extension staff at the Forest Lake restaurant. The purpose was to discuss logistics for an expanded program and possible training ideas.

Over the next few months, Itasca Waters finalized plans for a two-day spring workshop for the interested shoreland advisors. On May 31, 2019, more than 40 volunteers participated in advisor training. Karen Terry from University of Minnesota/Morris led the workshop which focused on “shoreland property management for water quality.” Topics included buffers, holding water on property, shoreline erosion, water quality basics, septic systems, and lawn care/landscaping. The workshop was filmed and aired on ICTV in Grand Rapids and is available on our website: ItascaWaters.org. Each participant received a Notebook for Shoreland Advisors, which was created by Karen Terry, and contained important information about issues covered in the workshop as well as local lake information and can be found in the Shoreland Advisor Resource Binder at <https://ItascaWaters.org/shoreland-advisors>. On June 1, 2019, there was a three-hour land workshop with visits to four shoreland properties on Wabana Lake.

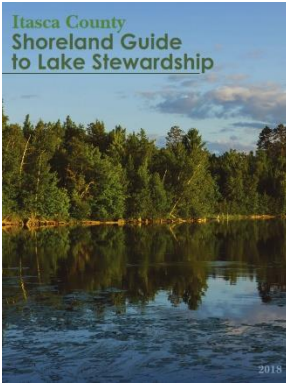
In mid-2019, working with the Pokegama Lake Association, the Shoreland Advisors Program targeted areas of Pokegama Lake with sensitive shoreline identified by Technical Advisory Board member Dan Steward. Shoreland owners were mailed an update and offer to provide shoreland advisor services.

We are Water

In partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and MN Humanities Center, work started in 2017 and culminated in a series of events in 2019.

Memory of Water

Itasca Waters worked with the Milligan Studio on a community engagement activity to create a “sea of paper boats” to capture participants water memories at three community events. The community events included the Klockow Brewing Water Bar on August 1, Tall Timber Days on August 3 and the North Central Research and Outreach Center (NCROC) Day on August 22. Miligan Studio erected a water memory sculpture in downtown Grand Rapids and are working on composing a poem from the paper boat remembrances of water.





Water Bar

People and dogs were invited to sample three different waters (municipal and well) from around Itasca County at Klockow Brewing on August 1. Patrons and volunteers shared water stories and enjoyed music and snacks. Everyone could create a wood-block art print and a water boat. Information and Shoreland Guides were available and many attendees said they were previously unaware of Itasca Waters.

Exhibit



Our partner, the Reif Center, hosted the information displays for the six-week exhibit from August 2 to September 16, 2019. The exhibit was about clean water and related environmental issues, including: septics, unused/unsealed wells, native shoreland plants to reduce runoff and erosion, raingardens, reducing summer landscaping watering, AIS, nontoxic cleaners, disposing medications, pet waste, disposing of household hazardous waste, fertilizer/pesticide usage, and participating in decisions about water in our community.

The opening event included a number of speakers and an inspirational speech by Sam Miltich, music and refreshments.

Chamber Lunch



Itasca Waters, in collaboration with the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, co-sponsored a Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce luncheon on September 9. The featured speaker, Paul Radomski, is the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources's (DNR) lead scientific expert on lakeshore habitat management issues and co-author of *Lakeshore Living*, a book focused on improving lakeshores in a sustainable and just manner. Paul discussed the cost effectiveness of protecting quality lakes vs. restoring impaired lakes and what this means for Itasca County. The 80 people who attended this luncheon also learned about Itasca Waters Shoreland Advisor program and other Itasca Waters' activities.

Nibi Walk



Around Pokegama Lake on August 9, about 60 people met for an orientation at the Blandin Foundation to learn about the Anishinaabe spiritual & cultural practice of water walking, the history of Pokegama Lake, and as preparation for the September 13 and 14 walk around Pokegama Lake.

Community Outreach

Frozen Fairways Golf Classic

In February, Itasca Waters sponsored a team and child-focused activities at the community event, teaming up with the Roger Clark and Search and Rescue with an underwater camera set up so kids and families could see what was happening under the ice. In addition, there were also educational coloring pages and other things for kids which were housed in the Search and Rescue RV.

Youth Water Summit



Itasca Waters, with the help of Independent School District (ISD) 318 Community Education, hosted the annual fifth grade Youth Water Summit (YWS) on Tuesday, May 21 at the Itasca County Fairgrounds. A rainfree day added to the celebration of the its eighth year for the event, which seeks to educate students in basic water science, a lesson that is often difficult to accomplish in the classroom.



This year about 425 students from Grand Rapids, Bigfork, Greenway and St. Joe's Catholic School attended. Throughout the day, students participated in several of the forty-six 30-minute sessions concerning water education. Topics included hydrology, aquatic vegetation, micro- and macro-invertebrate identification, water chemistry, water art, water physics, forest/water interaction, kayaking, camping, aquatic invasive species, and more. More than 70 adult volunteers took part in planning and coordinating the event. Justin Liles from WDIO in Duluth participated and the Uncommon Loons provided entertainment. The opening ceremony was water-focused, led by two Native American drummer/singers.

Mississippi Headwaters Watershed Management Plan Advisory Committee

During 2019, Perry Loegering represented Itasca Waters and the Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter of the Izaak Walton League at several meetings of the Advisory Committee. He distributed several copies of Itasca Waters shoreland Guide to members of the committee. The committee's job was to write the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Mississippi Headwaters Watershed. This plan is part of the State-wide "One Watershed, One Plan" created by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. If adopted by the County, this watershed plan will replace the current county Comprehensive Water Plan.

First Friday Earth Month

Itasca Waters manned a table in the Central School and gave away copies of the 2018 Shoreland Guide for Lake Stewardship, provided information on the new Shoreland Advisors program, and shared information on the upcoming We are Water exhibit at the Reif.



Tall Timber Days

Three Itasca Waters members staffed a booth in the education tent on Tall Timber Days, Saturday, August 3. Although traffic was light, Shoreland Guides were distributed and about six water memory boats completed. The large Tootsie Rolls that our Treasurer donated were a big hit.

North Central Research and Outreach Center's (NCROC) Visitor Day

Two members manned a booth on August 22, with an estimated 500 people in attendance. Bob Conzemius operated his a water hydraulics model and attracted the attention of ICTV. Water testing kits were popular—nearly 30 were given away and more could have been used. Shoreland Guides were distributed. A drawing for fishing poles and water bottles attracted interest and Itasca Waters' stickers, leaflets on 12 Ways to Protect Your Water, magnetic septic system record keeping cards and information about We Are Water events were distributed.



Dave Bily with the Itasca County GIS office was kind enough to print our large tri-fold display posters at no cost.

Speaking Opportunities

Board members spoke to a number of groups, including the Builders Group, Rotary, and Grand Rapids High School Future Farmers. In March, Brian Whittemore and Jan Best attended the Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Conference in International Falls. The workshop included a bi-national civic engagement workshop where Brian was among those who presented a program focused on the Itasca Waters' Shoreland Advisors Program.

Social Media and Communication

Facebook and Instagram

Facebook continues to expand its presence in the greater Grand Rapids community with 304 followers. Most of our new followers joined during the summer as we ramped up our events with the We Are Water exhibit at the Reif. The four top posts were: Waterbar at Klockow Brewing, Nibi water walk around Pokegama (the overwhelming favorite), We Are Water exhibit, and the Chamber Luncheon featuring Paul Rodomski. People particularly liked the article, "Ojibwe women have been doing water walks for generations." There was high

interest in Deer Lake’s new self cleaning station and the story about problems with flushable wipes. Our first Facebook Live event occurred at the opening ceremony for We Are Water. On Instagram, we have around 400 followers. The five ICTV programs about shoreland were popular as well.

Website

Itasca Waters launched its new website in April 2018: <http://www.ItascaWaters.org/>. During 2019, content was added to the website and some structural changes made. The website is designed to be a major source of online information about issues facing Itasca County property owners. Resources are organized into five areas: aquatic zone, shoreland, runoff and erosion, septic/excavation and private forest management. The website features information about the Shoreland Initiative, the new Itasca County Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship, AIS, links to our Facebook and Instagram accounts, a donation link, and general information about Itasca Waters.

Newsletter

In September, Itasca Waters published its first newsletter for members. The first issue described the shoreland advisor program, We are Water activities, display materials, a review of the Youth Water Summit and the ICTV programming.

Logo

Creative North Graphic Design provided us with updated logo vector files with a variety of formats and choices to allow flexibility in meeting various graphic needs: website, letterhead, Powerpoint, TV, business cards, billboards, and similar.

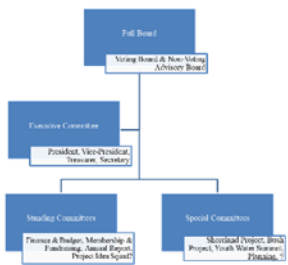
ICTV

We worked with ICTV to produce five videos during 2019 that could be accessed from YouTube or the Itasca Waters website. Topics included: (1) An introduction to Itasca Waters and the Shoreland Advisor Program; (2) DNR leading lake and lakeshore expert Paul Radomski on the aquatic zone of a lake; (3) DNR Shoreline Habitat specialist Heather Baird on shoreline management; (4) University of Minnesota/Morris Educator Karen Terry on our Shoreland Advisors Program and best practices for shorelands; and, (5) Septic Systems with host Jesse Davis and Mike Casey, co-owner of Bunes Septic Service.

Board of Directors and Committee Restructure Process

Since its inception in 2009, Itasca Waters has been governed by a Board of Directors numbering between 13 and 17, with an Executive Committee numbering between 6 and 9. The Executive Committee, consisting of the officers, committee chairs and other approved members, made interim decisions, as necessary, between quarterly Board meetings. Over time, more and more of the decision-making was done by the Executive Committee with little chance for other Board members to have input until items were brought before the full Board at its Quarterly meetings. New projects were handled in an unstructured format that was not always the most efficient. There were only a few active committees up until 2018, mainly for the Youth Water Summit and Membership. Beginning in 2018, the Shoreland Initiative and Technology Committees became active.

In early 2019, upon suggestions from a Blandin Foundation Board Development training session, the Board agreed to hire a consultant with Propel Nonprofits with the cost covered by the Blandin Foundation. Propel Nonprofits conducted a survey of Board members, held a six-hour retreat in May attended by all Board members, and suggested changes in the way the Board operated. In October, the Board approved an outline for a new organization structure to achieve the following: 1) spread the workload among redefined standing and special committees; 2) develop a protocol for approving new projects; 3) schedule bi-monthly, instead of quarterly, Board meetings; and 4) assign some tasks to the Coordinator’s position. The Board also established a planning committee to develop final details. The detailed plan was still a work in progress at the end of 2019 with the intention to present it at the January 2020 Board meeting for final approval.



COMMITTEES

The restructuring work started in late 2019 meant that moving forward Itasca Waters committees would change. Below is a brief review of the work of committees in 2019.

Education

Throughout the year, Itasca Waters volunteers help run a series of events including the Youth Water Summit designed to better inform the community about the importance of our water resources.

Membership and Fundraising

Itasca Waters' accomplishments for 2019 were made possible by generous support from its members and dedicated volunteers. Financial contributions enable Itasca Waters (IW) to carry out its mission by providing funds for educational outreach, special events, and operational costs not covered by grant monies. Individual, business and stock donations from 129 members (including 29 new members) raised \$9,641, making a powerful statement about how the people of Itasca County value our water resources and want to be part of a community who actively work to maintain those resources.

The commitment by volunteers who share IW's vision is invaluable and Itasca Waters thanks all who so generously shared their time, talent and financial support in 2019.

Planning

Work on a revised strategic plan was put on hold for 2019 to allow Itasca Waters to better focus on restructuring. It is anticipated that planning will restart in 2020.

Public Relations

Informing the public about the importance of one of our County's most valuable resources—our water—is one of the major goals for Itasca Waters. We accomplish this through our sponsored events, on our website at <http://www.ItascaWaters.org/> and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ItascaWaters/>.

Technology

Committee members oversee Itasca Waters Facebook page, Instagram, website, and update administrative information such as minutes and news items. The committee also coordinates a virtual filing cabinet at Dropbox, which gives Board members access to historical and current documents.

2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

Itasca Waters contracts with Kirk Gilbertson CPA accounting firm for compilation and general ledger services. This firm records all receipts and expenses, reconciles the bank statement, and provides financial statements each month. This is a valued service to strengthen our internal controls.

Itasca Waters received one grant during 2019 from the Bush Foundation for \$114,040.

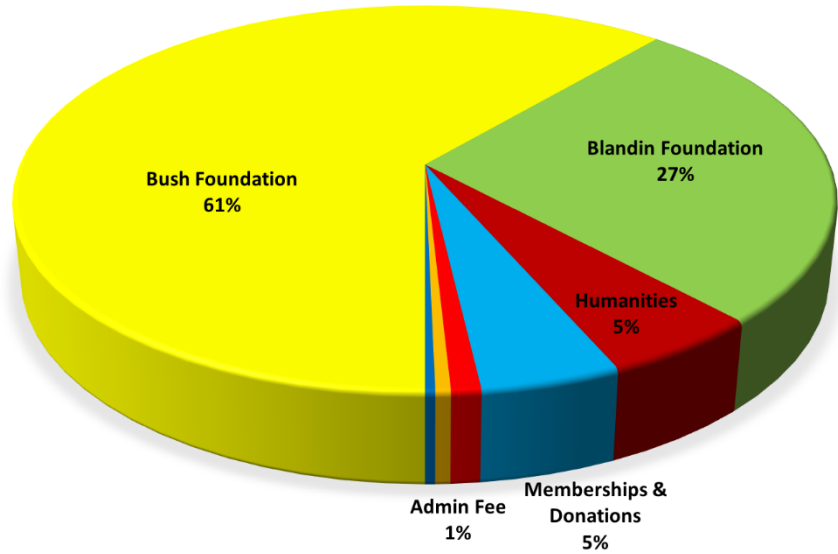
2019 was very busy and productive for the board and volunteers. Most efforts focused on (1) promoting shoreland practices with the Blandin grants and (2) community engagement activities funded with the Bush and We Are Water-Minnesota Humanities grants.

We used \$4,288 in funds from the Blandin Foundation 2011 grant to support educational activities for children through the Youth Water Summit. We are proud that we can provide this program at this low cost. The power of volunteers is our strength.

Itasca Waters general operating expenses of \$10,431 include contracted services, cell phone, office supplies, postage, promotion, accounting fees, and insurance, a decrease from 2018 of \$3,235. Contracted services also decreased. The cell phone security deposit was returned. Itasca Waters ended with a cash balance of \$223,401 that included Itasca Waters operating funds of \$61,857; Bush grant funds of \$95,833 and Blandin Foundation funds (from two grants) of \$65,711.

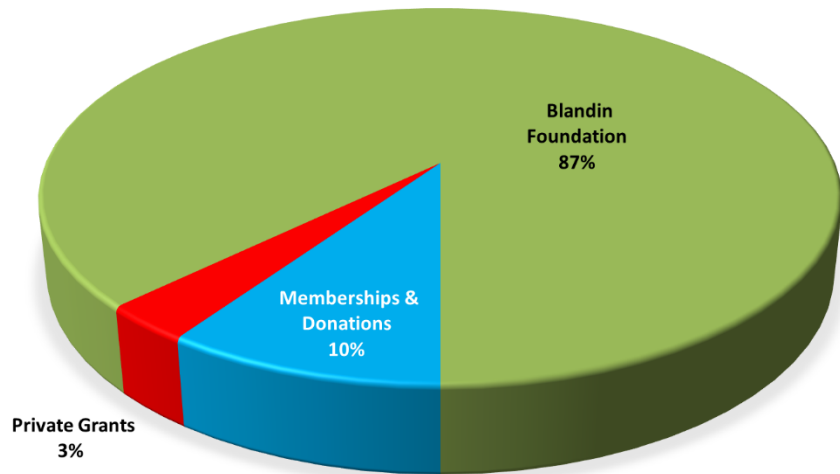
We are in the process of restructuring our board's daily and yearly activities using \$7,000 of Bush grant funds. Expenses for 2019 were \$691, but we are in the early stages of that work.

2019 SOURCE OF FUNDS



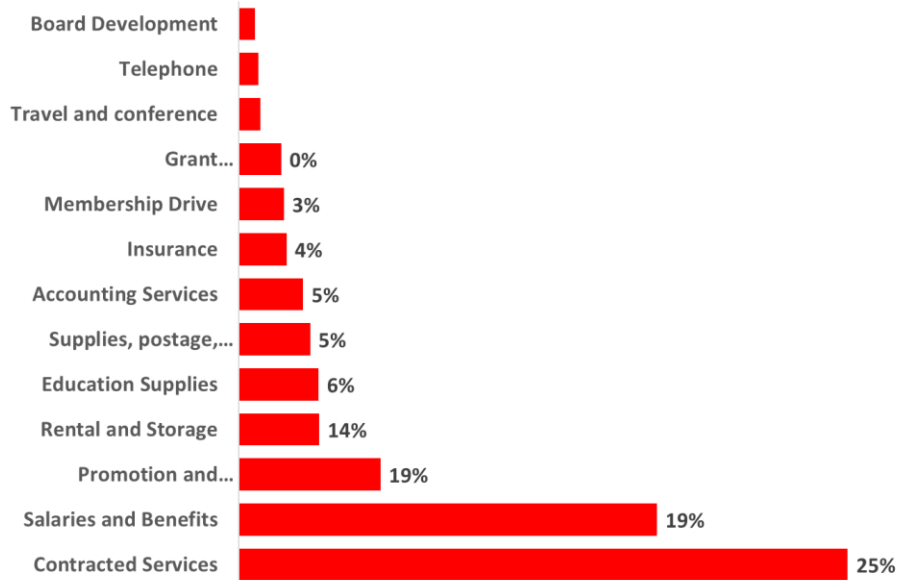
NOTE: 2019 funds received totaled \$186,245. Unlabeled categories include private grants (\$950) and interest (\$622).

2018 SOURCE OF FUNDS



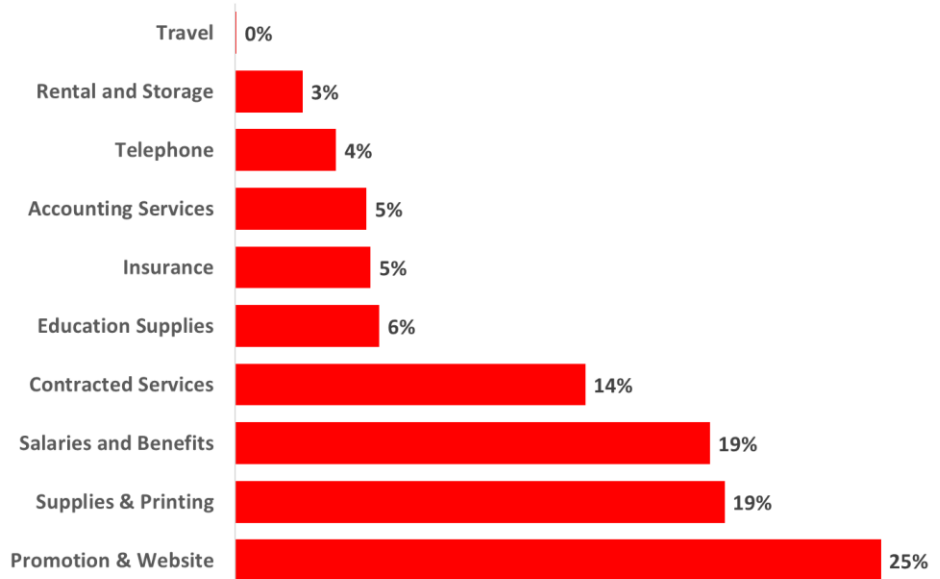
NOTE: 2018 funds received totaled \$58,576 with negative interest and dividends of \$238 not depicted in this chart.

2019 Spending by Activity



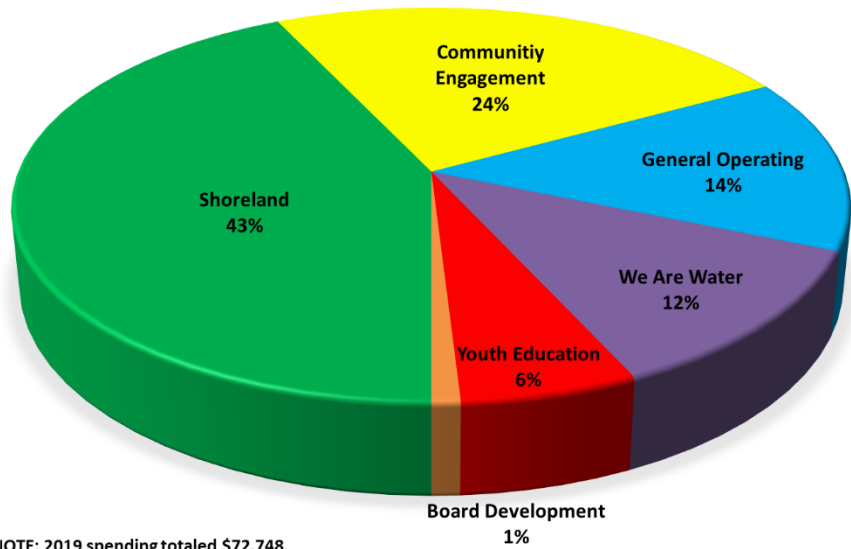
NOTE: 2019 spending totaled \$72,748.

2018 Spending by Activity



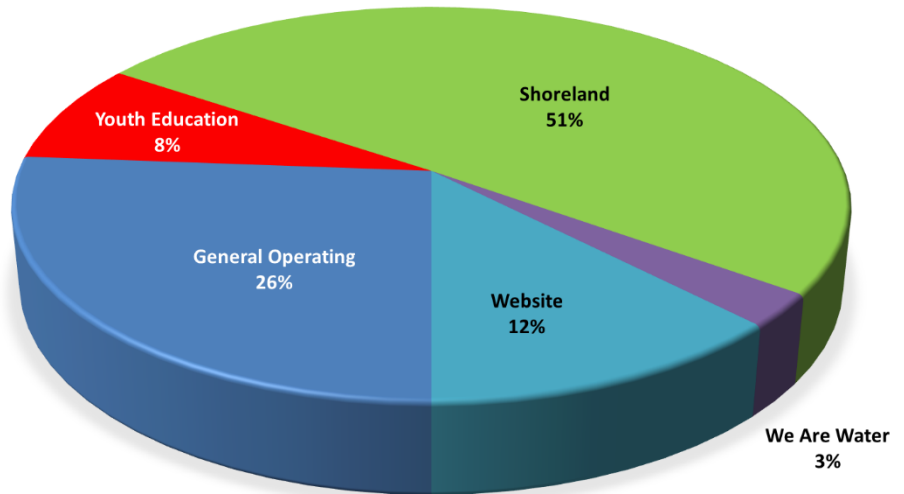
NOTE: 2018 spending totaled \$52,169.

2019 SPENDING BY PROGRAM



NOTE: 2019 spending totaled \$72,748.

2018 SPENDING BY PROGRAM



NOTE: 2018 spending totaled \$52,169.

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

Local water quality advocates came together in late 2006 to identify and implement a set of activities that would ensure clean water resources and quality habitat in the major watersheds of Itasca County. IWLP formalized its operations as a community coalition by establishing a board and executive committee to guide partnership activities. In 2009, IWLP completed its first surface water assessment grant to assess water quality for previously untested lakes in the county.

2010: IWLP's Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit organization were filed under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

2011: Qualified for 501(c)3 status with the IRS and organized a full-day adult water summit at Itasca Community College.

2012: Strengthened financial reporting and implemented an informal system for tracking the completion of Board and committee activities; hosted a series of evening meetings for adults; and organized the first Youth Water Summit for fifth graders.

2013: Released the Deer-Pokegama Study; hosted several educational events; completed a second surface water assessment grant assessing the Bigfork River Watershed; and, helped create a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) in collaboration with Leech Lake Band, Itasca County land department, MN Department of Transportation, USFS, DNR, University of Minnesota Extension and ICOLA.

2014: Cooperated with partners to develop a program for prevention and eradication of aquatic invasive species; released results on the economic value of water in Itasca County; hosted several educational events; and, was awarded the Itasca County Outstanding Conservationist Award.

2015: Continued work with the Itasca County Aquatic Invasive Species program; sponsored educational events for children and adults (including a second Adult Summit in partnership with the forestry community); shared in the Outstanding Conservationist Award given to the Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership of Itasca County; and, continued support for the water lab at ICC.

2016: Sponsored several educational events; continued work on the AIS Technical Advisory Committee; and negotiated the successful transfer of the AIS program to the Itasca County SWCD.

2017: Completed transfer of the AIS program to Itasca County SWCD; rebranded IWLP to Itasca Waters; hosted the 6th Youth Water Summit; began work on the Shoreland Initiative and Shoreland Guide; and, agreed to host a six-week 2019 event, We are Water.

2018: Won a \$150,000 grant from the Blandin Foundation focused on protecting shorelands; hosted the 7th Youth Water Summit; hired a part-time coordinator and opened an office; erected an billboard and updated the website; published the Shoreland Guide; hosted a Septic Secrets seminar; continued to work on We are Water 2019.

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sandy Anderson



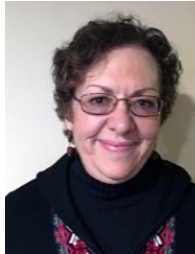
Sandy moved to Minnesota in the early 80's and to Grand Rapids in 2001. With a Masters in Geography and a GIS certification, Sandy worked as a site location analyst for Dayton-Hudson Corp. for years before starting Lakehomes.com Realty in 1999 with her husband, Dan. With a family cabin on Lake Ontario and Dan's experience growing up on Rainy Lake, they brought their love of lake property to the business. In 2013 Lake Homes Realty grew into the Move It Real Estate Group keeping a strong emphasis on waterfront sales. With a strong history of waterfront sales in Northern, Minnesota, she and Dan understand the importance of clean waters on the environment and a community's growth potential.

Ben Benoit



Born in Hartford Conn, Ben likes to jokingly tell people that he has lived the Ojibwe migration story. Starting on the East coast and ultimately making his way to Minnesota, Ben went to high school in Anoka, began college at St Cloud State and finished with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in Biochemistry. After college, Ben worked for a few years in industry, as a microbiologist and chemist and when he began looking for a house but decided that city life wasn't for him and it was time to rejoin his family in the North. The best parts of Minnesota are found in this area. Some of the most pristine lakes and watersheds in the county and he is committed to protecting them for future generations to rely on as his family does today. He was taught that if we care for the manoomin, land and waters, they will care for us. That is the mission Ben works towards as Leech Lake Environmental Director and as an Anishinaabe man. He hopes that through working with Itasca Waters he can further develop relationships between local governments, help push projects that benefit all parties and share the core values that bring people together to care about the water.

Jan Best



Jan joined IWLP in 2017, and serves on the Public Relations Committee with her husband, Brian Whittimore. With master's degrees in Education and Counseling, Jan has a special interest in children and their families, having taught and participated in the establishment of a landmark elementary counseling program in a New York State school district. In addition, Jan was an officer with the NY State Counseling Association.

An avid outdoors person, Jan has a lifelong interest and concern for the environment, particularly after seeing the effects of acid rain on lakes in the Adirondacks, where she grew up.

Meghan Christianson



Megan Christianson has been the Executive Director of Visit Grand Rapids since 2012. Christianson has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Concordia University, St. Paul Campus. She has 20 years of marketing, public relations, and trade industry membership/advocacy experience. Christianson currently serves as a Board Member of the Minnesota Arrowhead Association and is the NE Minnesota representative on the Explore Minnesota Tourism Council. She is also a Blandin Foundation Community Leadership Alumni. Megan lives in Cohasset Minnesota with her husband (Chad) and their two children (Madison – 17 and Caleb – 15). She enjoys being on the lake, scrapbooking, and spending time with family and friends.

Kathy Cone



Kathy has represented IWLP as Education Chair from 2012 to present, when she joined the Board. In addition, Kathy works full time as an accountant, has two children, and volunteers on the Community Cafe Board and completed a two-year training in "Leadership for the Century".

Kathy enjoys spending time raising meat birds, pork, beef, and laying hens for the farm fresh eggs as well as raising vegetables. She also likes to paint with watercolor and oil, hunting, fishing, crafts, and spending time with friends.

Jesse Davis



A native of Colorado, Jesse and his husband are 4th generation family farmers in Trout Lake Township. Active in local farmers' markets and the local food community and principal viola player in the Itasca Symphony. Jesse is presently a Realtor with the Move It Real Estate Group. Jesse feels that healthy lakes and waters are integral to the economic, cultural and social sustainability of the Greater Itasca area.

John A. Downing



John is currently the Director of the Minnesota Sea Grant College Program, a research scientist at the Large Lakes Observatory, and a tenured Professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Minnesota Duluth. His research and teaching dossiers concern many aspects of the aquatic sciences. His leadership experience has included positions in the US and Canada. He has founded and run several small businesses in the US and Canada. He has a long-standing record of success in securing research funding from federal, state, provincial, and local agencies. He maintains current international research collaborations with

Canada, Brazil, and Holland.

John's family has conserved and managed a shore-habitat and forest area in northern Minnesota for 108 years. He is a certified diver, a once-professional musician, and volunteers to help citizens across the US Midwest with local water quality concerns.

Bill Grantges



Bill Grantges is the Itasca County Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator. Bill is a board member of Itasca Waters, serves on the technical committee of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) and is Vice-President of ICOLA. He received his Master's in Business Administration from the University of Rhode Island and worked as a program manager for Siemens Medical Systems before coming to Minnesota in 1999. Bill has held certifications from the DNR as a Lake Service Provider and

as a Level 1 & Level 2 AIS Watercraft Inspector. He is also a certified University of Minnesota Extension AIS Detector. Bill is passionate about building partnerships to help preserve our strong outdoor traditions.

Patricia Leistikow, Treasurer



Pat was born and raised on a farm in SE Iowa, attending University of Northern Iowa and earning a degree in Accounting. She has worked in private and public business throughout Minnesota, retiring in October 2013. She also took off nine years from working outside the home to raise two young children but kept busy with consulting and volunteering.

Pat has been involved with IWLP since the beginning, first serving on the Advisory Group for the setup of the Itasca Community College Water Lab and joining the Board as Finance chair in July 2013. Pat also serves on her Church's Finance Council and the Board of Youth for Christ-Campus Life.

Pat and her husband, Rod, spend vacations enjoying the United States especially Colorado and the Caribbean. At her home on the lake, she loves to swim, fish, and kayak.

Dave Lick, President



Dave is retired as principal owner of Itasca Reliable Insurance Agency, Inc., has a B.S. degree in biology, a minor in chemistry, past president of ICOLA, responsible for septic compliance for Wabana Township Lakes, past board member for Advocates for Family Peace, lifetime member of Izaak Walton League, current member of Minnesota Power's Citizen Advisory Board, active organizer of Citizens Advocating Responsible Power Production (CARRP), public school science teacher for four years, and he directed Youth Conservation Corp camps for the USFS for two years.

Dave's additional Interests are extensive international travel, forest landowner, sustainable forest management from 1994 to present converting 70 acres back to white pine, beekeeper, gardener, woodworker, avid bike rider and cross-country skier, canoeist and scuba diver. He is married and has two children.

Shirley Loegering



Shirley served as Board Secretary from 2010 through 2016 and managed the membership roster, website and Facebook page and now serves as the Membership Chair. Shirley is a retired Administrator with a keen interest in preserving our water resources for future generations, including her four grandchildren. She is active with the Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Over the years, Shirley has helped to organize several environmental events for Itasca Waters, Izaak Walton League and others.

Shirley and husband, Perry, spend vacations enjoying the outdoors, i.e. camping, fishing and bird watching. She is an active member in the Northstar Herb Guild where they study traditional uses for native plants and she also enjoys working on her family genealogy and searching estate sales and auctions for unique antiques.

Bill Marshall



Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Bill completed a bachelor's degree in Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. He worked there for five years before returning to work in Grand Rapids, where he is now the Director of Enrollment at ICC. In 2012, Bill married Katelyn on the Mississippi River at the Showboat Landing.

Bill has always had a strong connection to our area's lakes and rivers. Having grown-up just a five-minute walk from his Grandpa's aunt's 1930's cabin on Pokegama, young Billy, his sisters, and friends spent most of the summer in the lake and at the cabin. In his free time, Bill enjoys relic hunting at old logging camp sites, metal detecting for silver coins and other artifacts, nature photography, snorkeling area lakes and rivers, deer and bird hunting, having fun with his niece and nephews, and spending time with his dogs, cat, and wife at home.

Lynn Moratzka



Lynn joined the IW Board in 2018 and serves on the Development Committee. Lynn retired as the director of the Office of Planning, Physical Development Division for Dakota County Minnesota in 2008. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Catherine and her Master's in Public Administration from Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Lynn has been an active volunteer throughout her career and since retirement. Currently, she is still involved in the Friends of the Mississippi, a non-profit Board supporting the Mississippi National River Recreation Area (MNRRA) and Regina Medical Center. In 2017, Lynn was appointed by the Itasca County Board of Commissioners to the County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Lynn, her husband, Tim, and two children have been coming to Trout Lake since 1976 purchasing their home in 2000. In 2017, they retired full time to the area. Lynn enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and family, especially at the lake. She also enjoys skiing, biking, reading and doing genealogy with her sisters.

Jan Sandberg, Secretary



Jan joined the IWLP Board in 2012 and helps ensure that the board’s work is kept on track. She compiles the annual report and assists with Google Drive and Dropbox. Jan and her husband, Richard, bought a cabin on Pokegama Lake in 1986.

Since retiring as a program evaluator with the Office of the Legislative Auditor in 2007, Jan and Richard spend much of the summer at the lake. In 2017, they welcomed their first grandchild and plan frequent visits to Vancouver, British Columbia to “help” as needed. Jan makes Minneapolis her urban home, serving on the Minneapolis Charter Commission as its vice-chair.

Tim Scherkenbach



Tim was raised on the east side of the Iron Range, graduating from Virginia HS in 1966. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1972 with a BS in Chemical Engineering and immediately started working at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). During his tenure as a senior manager he directed all the major environmental programs at the MPCA (Air Quality, Water Quality, Superfund, Hazardous Waste, and Solid Waste).

He served ten years as an Assistant Commissioner and as Deputy Commissioner his last two years at the Agency. During his career he spent considerable time working with, or testifying before, the Mn Legislature; and belonged to several national environmental organizations -- chairing several task forces.

Tim and his wife, Deena, raised their three children in south Minneapolis. They have 8 grandchildren. They now live on Shallow Lake during the summer and fall, and spend their winters in Prescott, AZ.

Davin Tinquist



Davin, an Itasca County Commissioner since 2011, joined the Board in 2011. Davin is a resident of Cohasset where he was born and raised. He has been married 31 years and has two children and two grandchildren. He is an active outdoor enthusiast concerned with preserving our natural resources for our future generations.

Davin is co-owner of Cohasset Mill and Lumber since 1998. He is also a member of Cohasset Fire Department for the past 24 years, currently starting his 10th year as Fire Chief. As a County Commissioner, he sits on many committees and boards, one of which is the Mississippi Headwaters Board. These positions all contribute to a broader understanding of the needs of Itasca County. There is a delicate balance between preservation and future growth, and it is important our leaders gain experience and understand what can be at times opposing viewpoints.

Brian Whittemore



Brian is the IWLP Public Relations Committee Chair. He is retired after a 40-year career in broadcasting as an executive, news anchor, and reporter. He was a Vice President/General Manager with CBS Radio and retired as General Manager of WCCO Radio in Minneapolis. Brian has been on national boards of the Radio and Television News Director Association and the consumer group Call for Action. He has served on the Minneapolis Downtown Council, the Twin Cities Communication Counsel, and the Prior Lake, MN, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He is a volunteer/member at KAXE/KBXE Radio and produced the documentary series “Teachings from Turtle Island, Stories of Anishanaabe People”. He also served as a volunteer at The Raptor

Center in St. Paul.

EMERITUS BOARD MEMBER

Harold E. Dziuk



As a young kid, Harold first learned to appreciate the wonders of nature on a small dairy farm in Benton County, MN. He left the farm to embark on undergraduate and graduate studies in Veterinary Medicine and a career in teaching and research. His graduate studies were delayed for two years while he was on active duty in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps at the Biological Warfare Laboratories, Fort Detrick, Maryland.

His employment included a wide range of public and private venues, including the Tuskegee, Minnesota and Iowa State universities, General Electric, and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

His primary role in IWLP over 8 years of service on the Executive Committee was to seek grants to support IWLP's many initiatives.

2019 TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

Andy Arens, District Manager, Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District



Andy Arens graduated in 2001 with a Forest Management Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Andy has been with the Itasca County SWCD since 2003, as Forestry and Shoreland Specialist initially, and District Manager and Water Plan Coordinator since October 2015.

Eric Raitanen, Fisheries Biologist, Chippewa National Forest

Dan Steward, Watershed/Private Forest Management Program Coordinator, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Dan Swenson, Environmental Services Administrator, Itasca County Environmental Services