Putting Wetlands to Work for Your Community

Kyle Magyera || Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Photo: Dick Lathrop

Wisconsin Wetlands ASSOCIATION

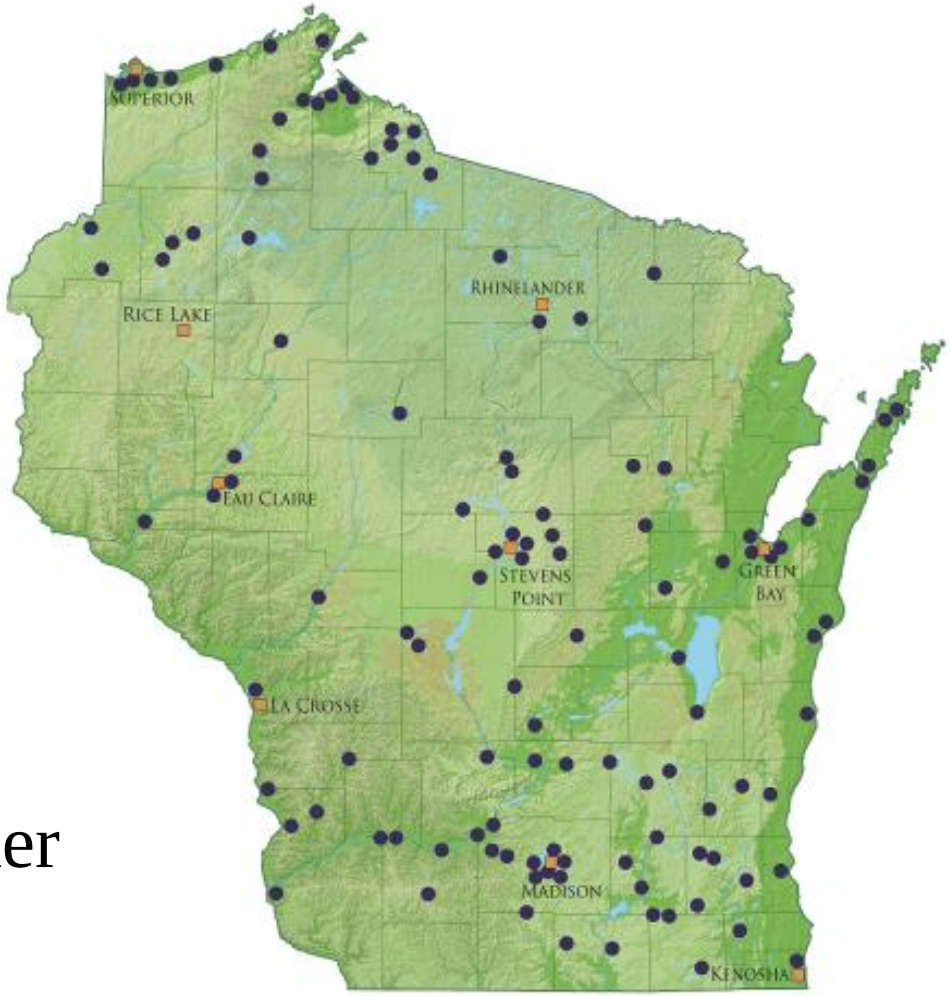
Helping People Care for Wetlands

Values

- Science-based
- Non-partisan
- Solution-oriented

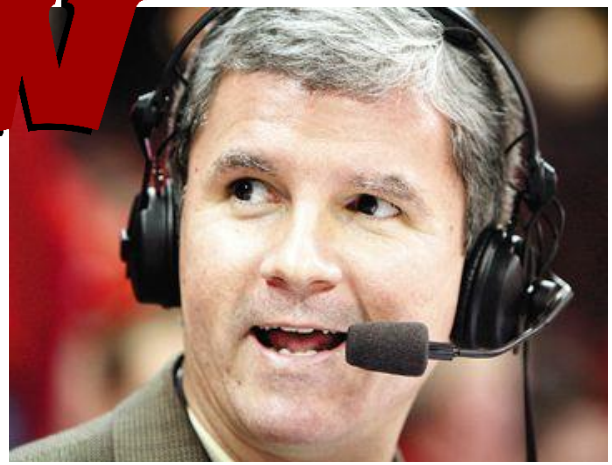
Niche

- Education/outreach
- Technical service provider



Communities served by WWA

Addressing a Legacy



The offense "bogged down" on that drive.

Others:
Brewers "mired" in a skid.
I'm so "swamped."

WWA likes to say:
"Paved Over"

Characterizations:
"Dismal" Swamp
"Wastelands"
"Mosquito havens"

Kyle Magyera

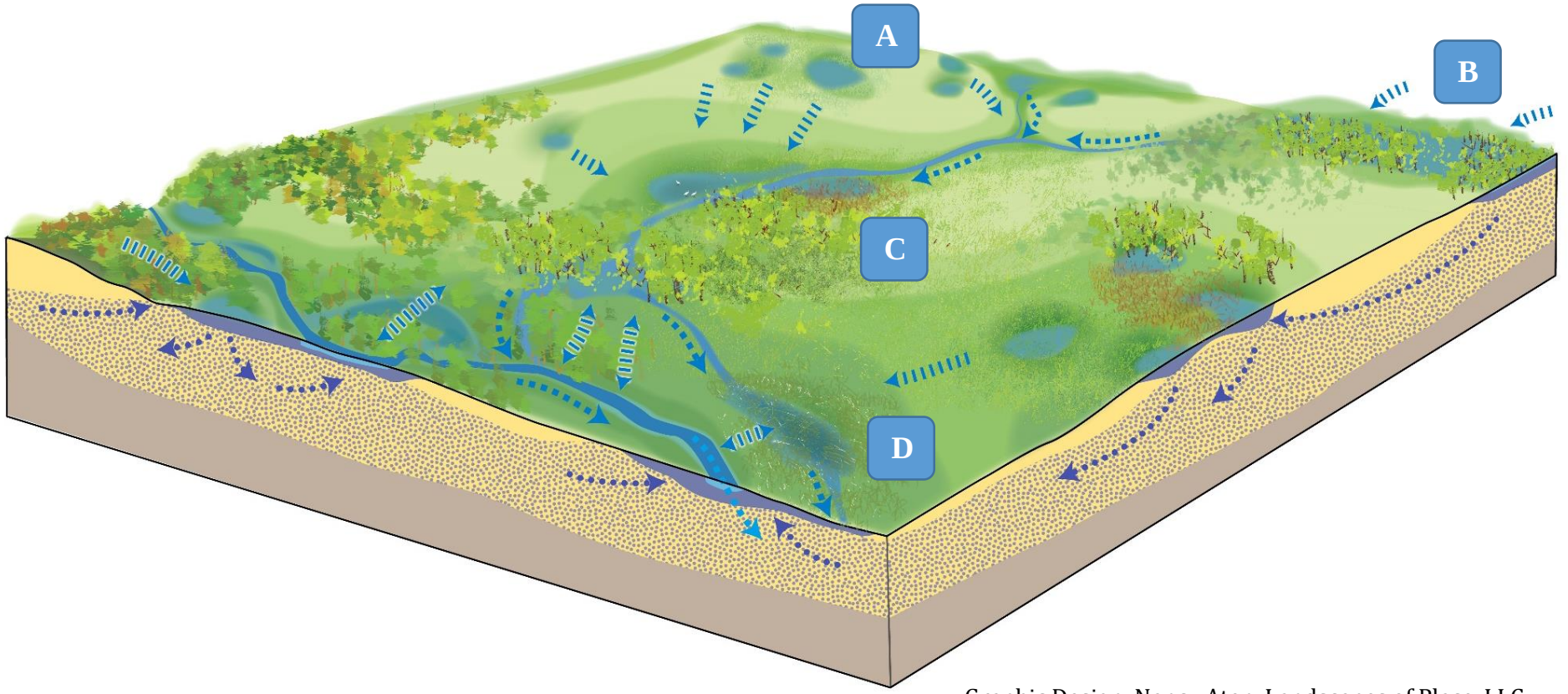
Drew Feldkirchner

Kyle Magyera

Kyle Magyera

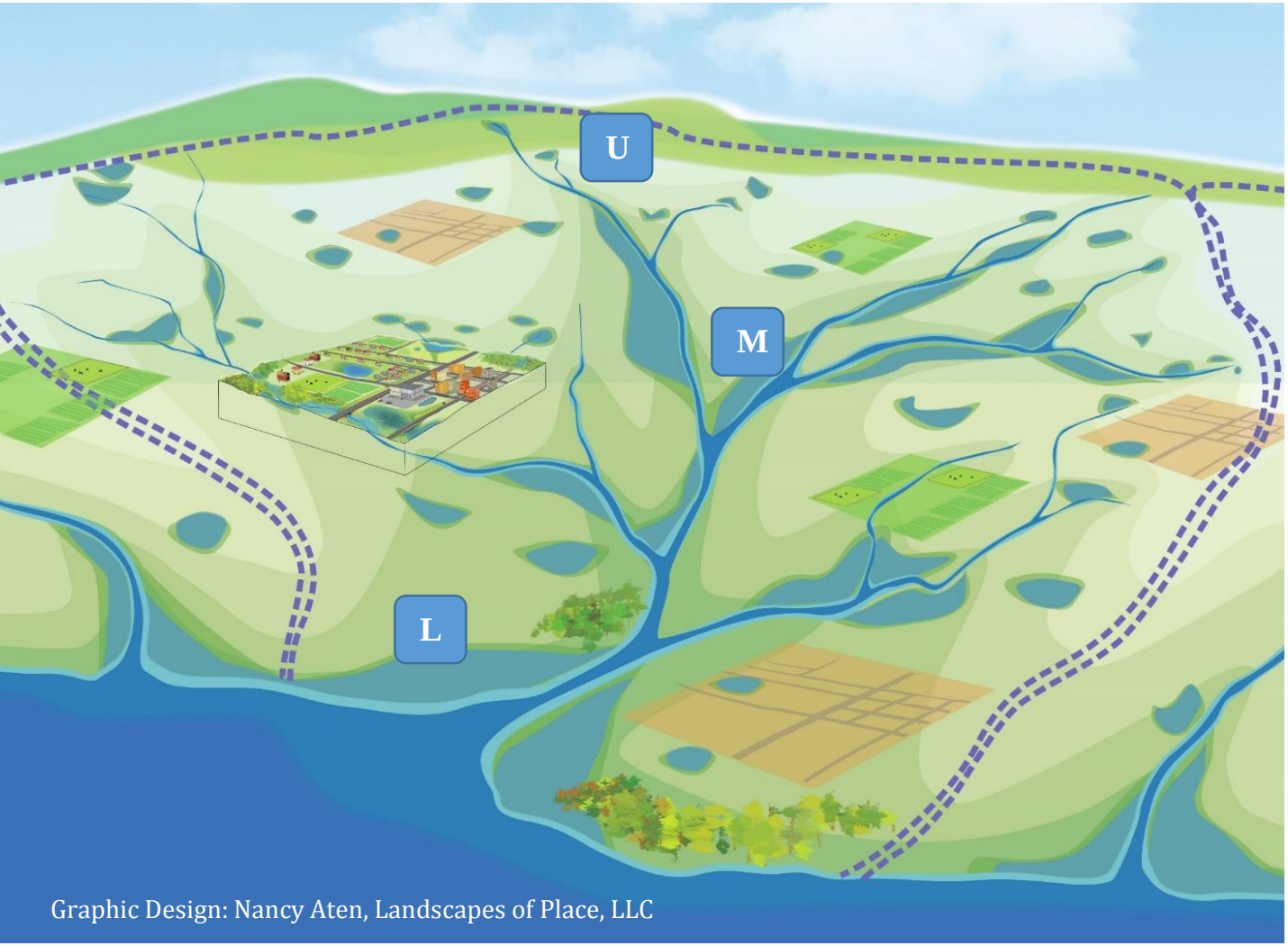
Wetlands form in response to water

Wetland Connections



Graphic Design: Nancy Aten, Landscapes of Place, LLC

Watershed Perspective



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Upper (U)

80% of Water

Ephemeral
Riparian/Riverine
Wet Meadows

Middle (M)

Floodplain
Sediment transport

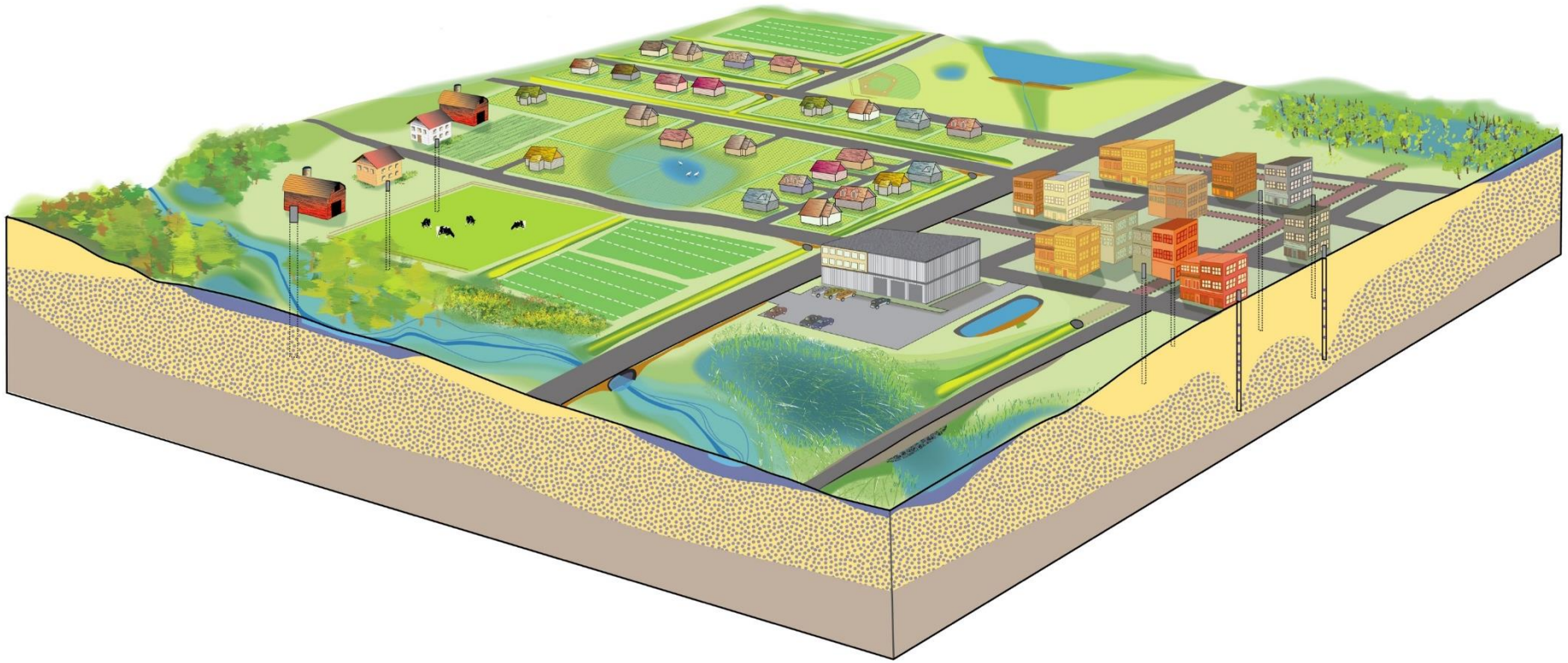
Riparian/Riverine
Alder/Shrub Carr

Lower (L)

Depositional

Estuaries
Lake-fringe/Marshes

Altered Wetland Hydrology



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Direct impacts = from activities inside wetland boundary

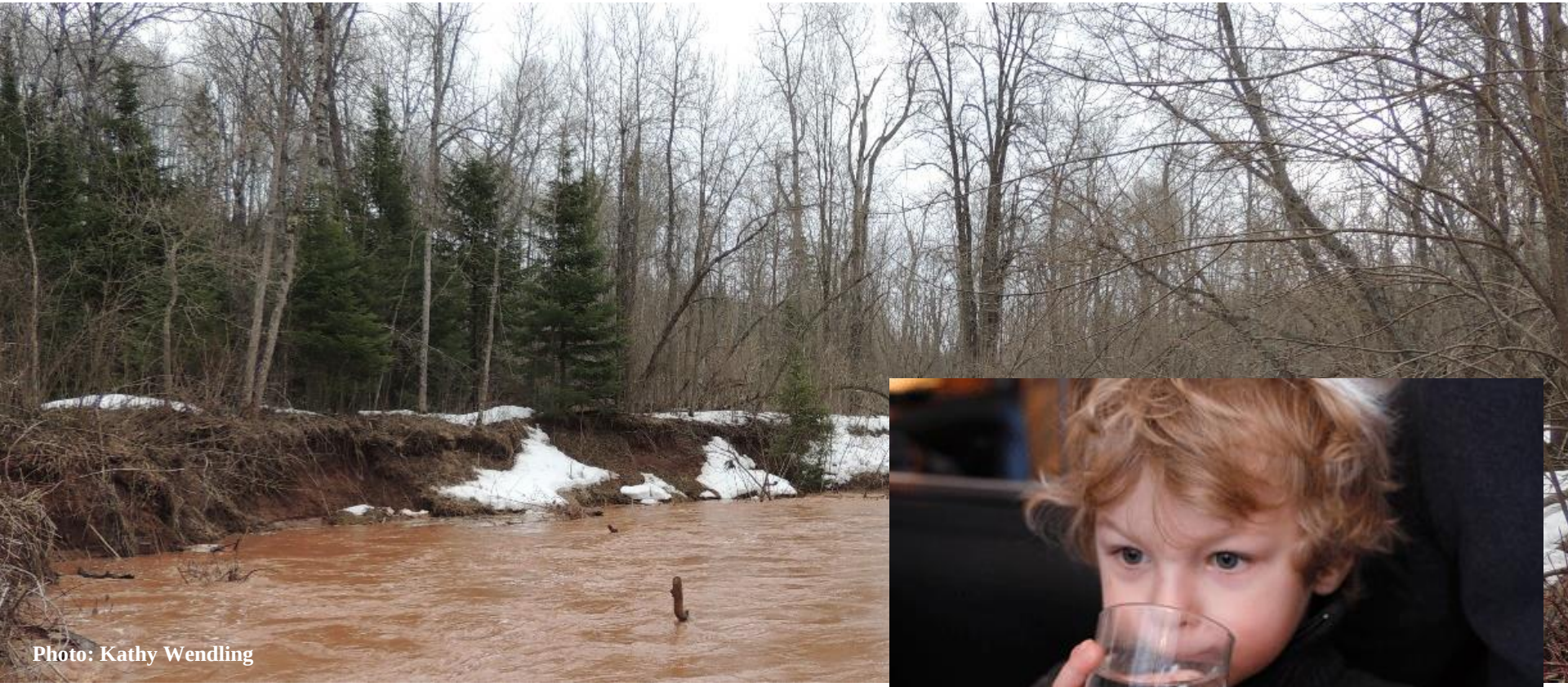
Indirect impacts = from activities outside wetland boundary

Achieve Community Goals

- *Quality of Life*
- *Resilient*
- *Healthy Waters*
- *Farmland Preservation*
- *Natural or Rural Heritage*
- *Outdoor Recreation*
- *Places of Interest*
- *Local / Regional Food Systems*
- *Economically Competitive*
- *Lean Government*
- *Clean Drinking Water*
- *Low-Maintenance Infrastructure*
- *Tourism*

Plan Element	How Wetlands Can Help Achieve Goal
Natural Resources	Healthy lands are preserved and restored.
Land Use	Co-exist/thrive with creative site design and development.
Transportation	Preserve integrity of road crossings (culverts, bridges).
Urban Design	Inspire placemaking, green infrastructure practices in City.
Recreation & Open Space	Provide habitat used for open space and recreation.
Neighborhoods & Housing	Attract and keep residents and businesses.
Public Utilities	Reduce costs for stormwater and flood risk management.
Community Facilities	Are “activity centers” within or in proximity to city.
Economic Development	Increase tax savings, property values, and outdoor recreation.
Heritage Preservation	Maintain and improve natural heritage.
Intergovernmental Coordination	Provide collaborative, upstream solutions.

Healthy Communities



Safe Communities

Livable Communities

Photo: Phyllis Olson

Photo: Tracy Hames

Photo: Patterson Leeth

Why Locally-Led Conservation?

- Maintain and improve your community's plumbing system
- Multi-objective conservation measure
- Right wetlands, in right locations, to solve specific problems

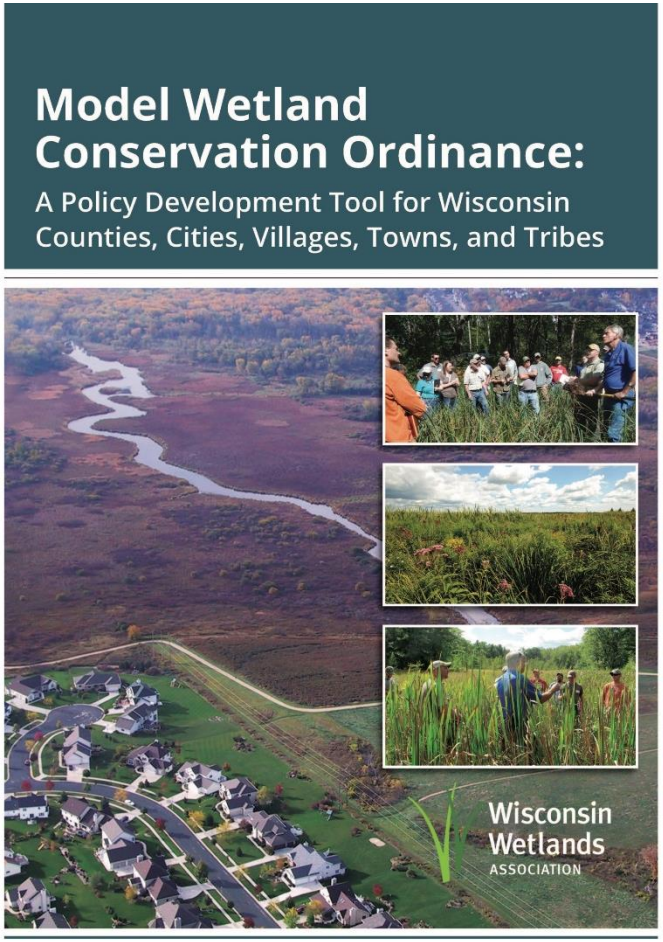
Photo: REI

Taking Action: a combination of non-regulatory & regulatory approaches

Model Wetland Conservation Ordinance (MWCO)

Stand-alone ordinance or can apply to:

- Zoning Ordinances
  - Conditional uses, variances, rezoning
- Land Division Ordinances
  - Plats and certified survey maps
- Stormwater Ordinances
  - Management plans, BMPs
  - Treatment train approach
- Unified Development Ordinances



Co-Author: Brian Ohm, UW-Madison Dept. of Urban and Regional Planning

Overall MWCO Goal: Preserve Hydrology

“Low-Hanging Fruit”

Policy Options

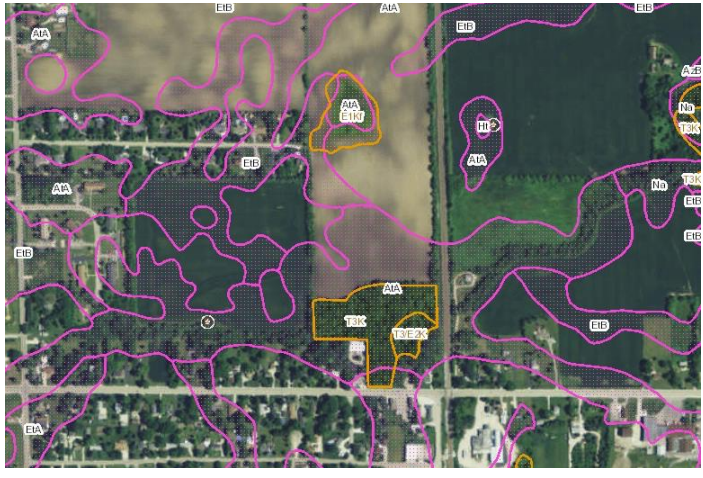
- Wetland goals (purpose statement)
- Site plan preparation and review
- Land suitability / buildable areas
- Protective areas (setbacks)

Photo: Gary Shackelford

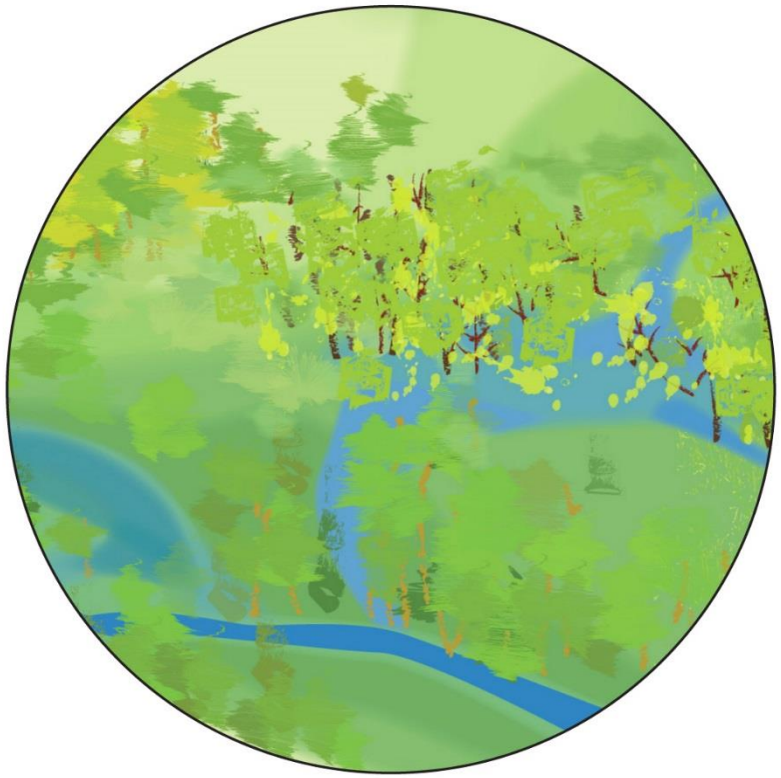
Site Plan Preparation and Review

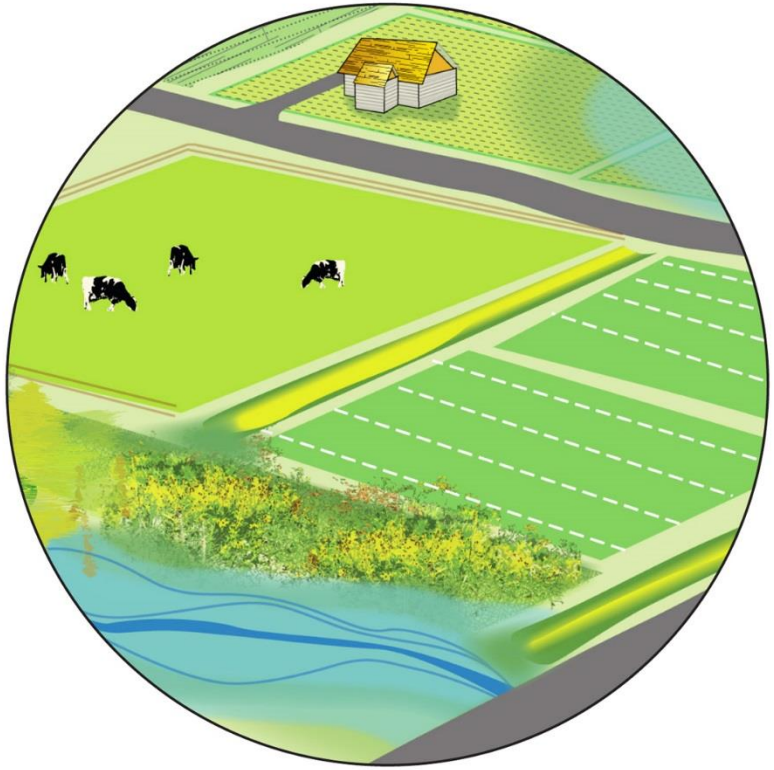
Give discretion to:

- ID wetlands by field conditions
  - Rec: Require delineations as needed, or in certain scenarios
  - Utilize best available info
    - e.g., to determine drainage patterns.
- ID associated hydrologic features
- Establish “buildable area”
- Utilize watershed perspective



Land Suitability and Buildable Areas





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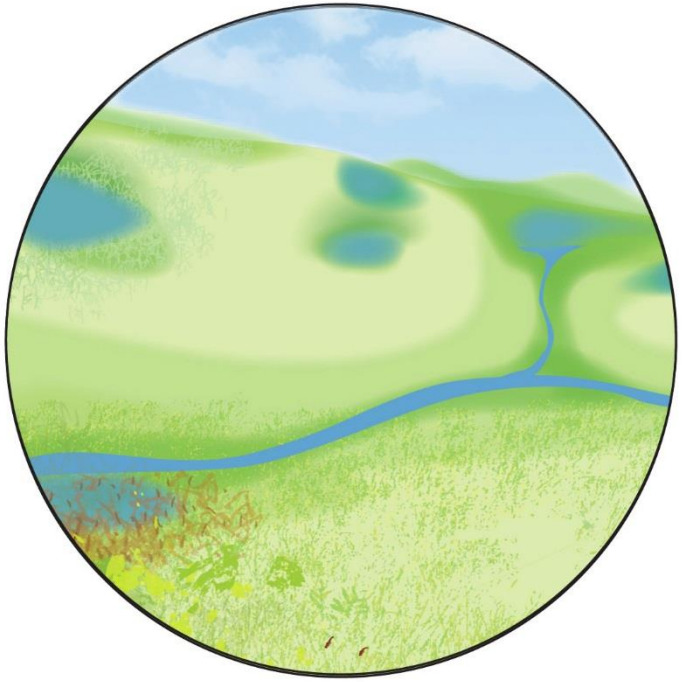
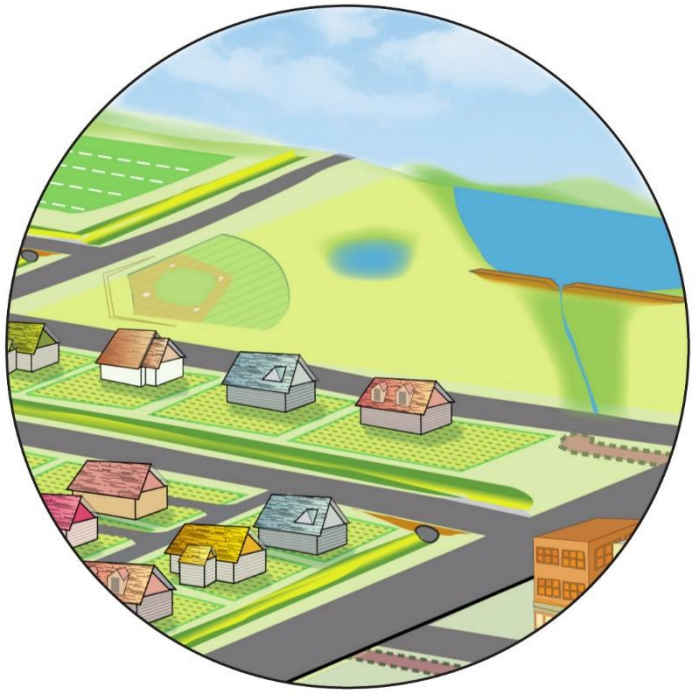
MWCO gives discretion/opportunity to review sites to accurately establish buildable areas, with no current/historic wetland hydrology.

Design with Wetland Hydrology

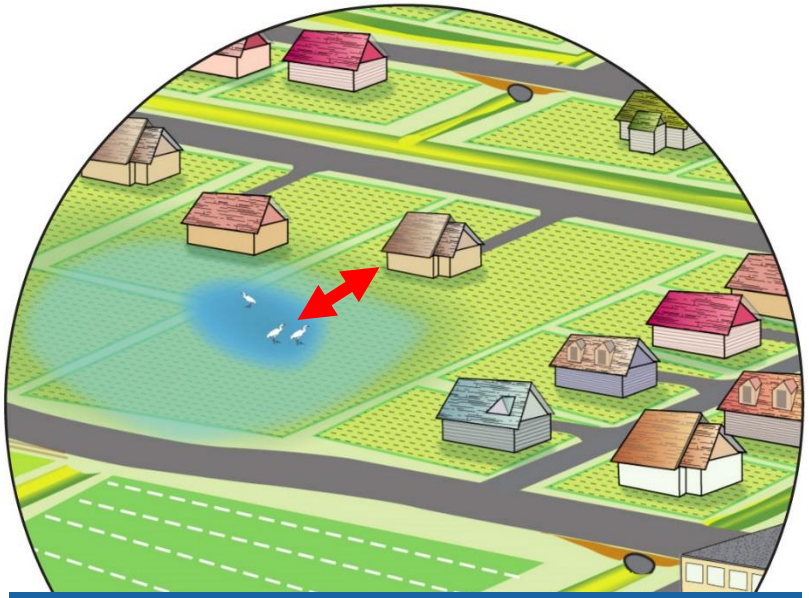
- Review/preserve/improve:
  - Drainage patterns (topography)
  - Vegetative cover
  - Associated hydrologic features
- Require/encourage:
  - Low-impact development on hydrologically-connected lands.
  - Green infrastructure BMPs
  - Treatment train approach





Protective Areas

- Purpose: preserve drainage patterns and vegetative cover
- Provides margin of error with wetland maps
- Distances advised to be based on site-specific and watershed conditions



Example Setback Distances:

- 75 feet (Waukesha, Dane)
- 40 feet (Sawyer)
- 25 feet (Bayfield)

These don't include vegetation management standards

See SEWRPC Guide for recs

Learn More

- **MWCO specifics**
  - Intro educational package
  - Approval standards
  - Other policy options
- **Our Tools**
  - Putting Wetlands to Work
  - County Wetland Fact Sheets
  - My Healthy Wetland Handbook
- **Our Services**
  - Project management/facilitation
  - Field-based training
  - Targeted outreach

Putting Wetlands to Work for Your Community

This publication is intended to help counties, cities, villages, towns, and tribes better understand the public benefits that wetlands provide and how to protect and restore wetlands to meet local needs.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Wetlands contribute to the public health, safety, and welfare of virtually every Wisconsin community. They do this by helping to control the quantity and quality of water that moves across the landscape.

Healthy wetland landscapes, where the right types and amounts of wetlands are in the right locations, provide the greatest benefits to Wisconsin's communities.

The capacity of wetlands to provide these benefits can be hindered by direct, physical disturbance, as well as by activities outside of a wetland that alter the course of water and sediments flowing into or through the system.

The protection and restoration of wetland hydrology, therefore, is a matter of public concern.

Locally elected and appointed officials can maximize the public benefits that healthy wetland landscapes provide by enacting standards and priorities for the review of direct and indirect impacts to wetlands from land disturbing activities.

HEALTHY WETLAND LANDSCAPES BENEFIT YOUR COMMUNITY BY:

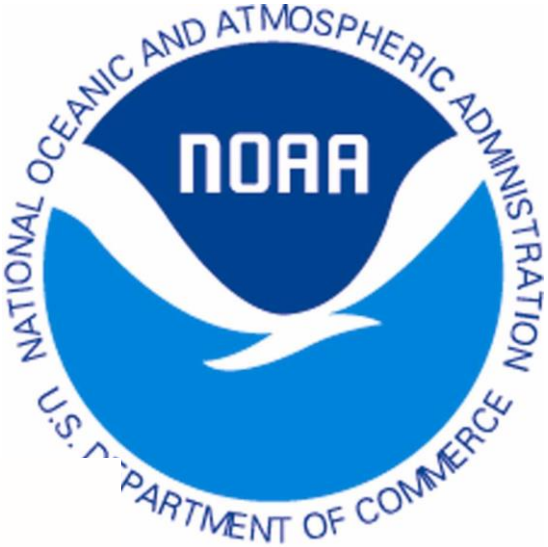
- **Reducing** flooding, flood hazards, damages, and expenditures.
- **Preventing** and controlling water pollution.
- **Preventing** soil loss and erosion of stream beds and banks.
- **Preserving** natural drainage features and minimizing the need to construct, repair, maintain, or replace structural water management systems.
- **Maintaining and supporting** stream base flow and temperature, lake levels, and shallow groundwater supplies.
- **Preserving and improving** fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and open space.

wisconsinwetlands.org/for-communities

Take Homes

- Wetlands make healthy, safe, and livable communities.
- Community goals are undermined when wetland hydrology is altered.
- Opportunities to exercise local control over a community asset.

Acknowledgments



Questions?

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