

Lake of the Woods
KENORA



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Common Ground Research Forum Final Report
Lake of the Woods Project (2012)

The Lake of the Woods Project (2012) had three main goals:

- i. Encourage the acceptance of the International Joint Commission (IJC) Task Force recommendations to create an international organization with a mandate to oversee the Lake of the Woods watershed and position Kenora as the location for the delivery of IJC activities
- ii. Establish a Water Resource Centre, focused on Lake of the Woods and based in Kenora
- iii. Develop partnerships and investigate funding opportunities

The Common Ground Research Forum funding for the Lake of the Woods Project enabled the Lake of the Woods Development Commission to hire a Lake of the Woods Project Coordinator to work on the three project goals above and, specifically, to work on the following seven projects:

1) Creation of a watershed website as a precursor to the WRC

A Lake of the Woods Watershed website template has been developed. There has been some debate about the watershed data and where it should be housed and accessed. Therefore, the Lake of the Woods Watershed website has not gone live. More recently, representatives from the State of Minnesota and the City of Kenora have met to re-vamp the website to create an information sharing site for citizen engagement projects from throughout the watershed.

Lake of the Woods Development Commission

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2) A Watershed stakeholders' meeting including a final report

On November 8, 2012, the Lake of the Woods Project hosted an international meeting of 39 people representing key stakeholders from throughout the watershed. (see list of attendees in the final report, attached)

The meeting resulted in an agreement that discussions regarding a Water Resources Centre should continue and a Working Group was formed to produce the final report and continue the discussions.

A final report from the meeting was produced and circulated to meeting attendees and funders. (see final report)

The Working Group was put on hold when the Lake of the Woods Project Coordinator position was terminated. However, discussions have been renewed again now that the IJC has hired Kelli Saunders as the Lake of the Woods Watershed Coordinator.

3) Announcement of bi-national support for the IJC Board

In August 2012, the Government of Canada announced its support for the formation of an IJC Watershed Governance board, including the addition of an aboriginal member from Treaty 3 as was recommended during the IJC consultations. (see Press Releases attached)

4) We Love Our Lake Awareness Campaign (Info packages)

During the summer of 2012, 1000 We Love Our Lake stickers were distributed to local residents, visitors and summer residents by the Lake of the Woods Project Coordinator, LakeSmart program staff, the OPP Marine Unit and the staff at Tourism Kenora. (sticker appears as

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the graphic on the cover of the Water Resources Centre meeting final report)

5) A new water-based special event developed in partnership with Tourism Kenora to promote education/awareness about LOW

This event did not occur

6) Fort Whyte style program delivered at the Discovery Centre to promote education and awareness of Lake of the Woods

A guided hiking series was implemented in 2012 and continued in 2013. Local guides take local residents, summer residents and visitors on a morning hike of local trails. Some hikes focused on birding and others on local knowledge. The concept behind these hikes is to promote environmental awareness, health and sustainability.

7) Model shoreline project

The Lake of the Woods project coordinator completed an application for funding to the Lake Winnipeg Water which was successful. \$24,636 has been provided through the federal Ministry of the Environment to develop a demonstration site at the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre.

The Model Shoreline project is under development at the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre and will be completed in 2014.

The funding from the Common Ground Research Forum was critical to the hiring of the Lake of the Woods Coordinator. Discussions are ongoing about the Lake of the Woods Project and its connection with the ELA, the IISD, the IJC and other interrelated initiatives within and outside of the Lake of the Woods Watershed.

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