

LAKES TEAM

CASE STUDY: Applying systems thinking to community capacity development

Community lake organizations, such as lake associations and lake districts, play an important role in protecting and restoring Wisconsin's lakes but may have limited capacity to do so. To think critically about how lake organizations can enhance their capacity, a team of people from the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources came together. Their first step was to develop a model for understanding the connections between lake organization capacity and lake health by using systems thinking. The map that the team developed included the physical components of watersheds and also the social components and relationships that directly and indirectly influence the scale and scope of management practices and restoration activities that happen in a watershed.

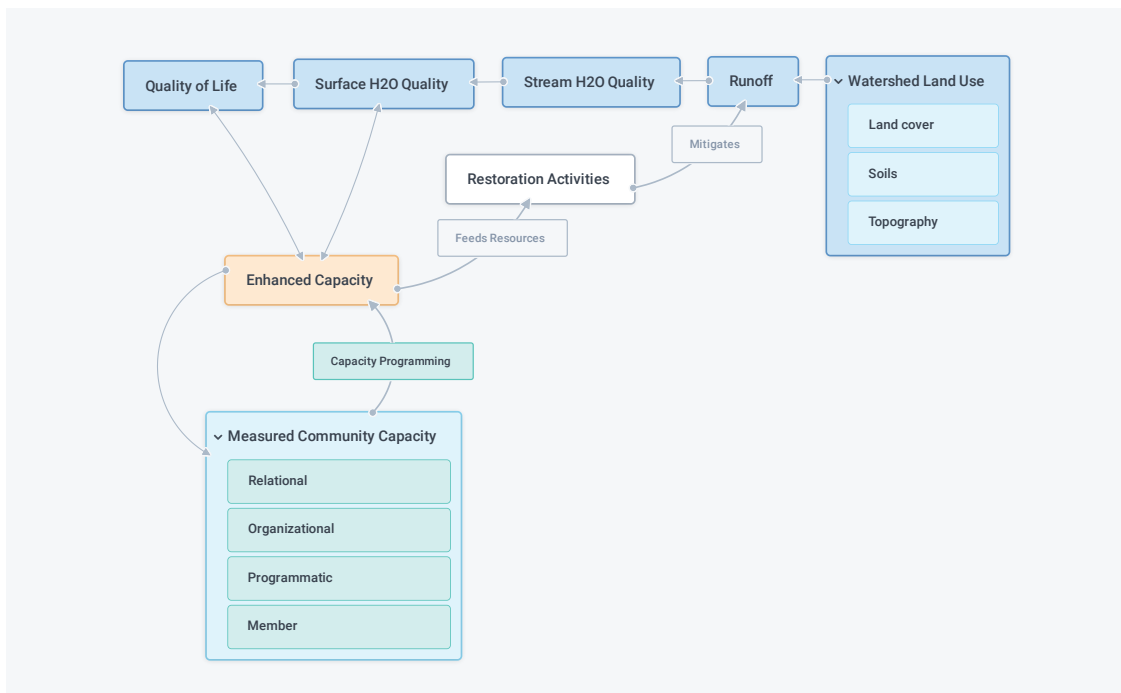


Fig 1: Map of shared mental model of watershed management in Wisconsin

The team's next step was to develop tools that will help lake organizations assess their capacity and enhance it. A capacity assessment tool was developed and piloted, and tools to enhance capacity are under development. (adapted from Mae Davenport's work)

Reference: UW-Extension Lakes: [view](#)

To learn more about this case: [view](#)