



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

An Analysis of Wisconsin's Freshwater Estuary Outreach, Applied Research, and Management Needs

This project develops a strategy for outreach, applied research, and management priorities associated with Wisconsin's Great Lakes freshwater estuaries. The estuarine priorities for the strategy were based on a comprehensive needs assessment, which is essential to ensuring effective and efficient estuarine protection efforts. Needs were assessed through a combination of coastal community working sessions and quantitative survey techniques. Participants in the needs assessment process included resource experts, community leaders, and knowledgeable individuals. At each working session a facilitated small group process was used to identify the priority needs for Wisconsin's Great Lakes freshwater estuaries. The data gathered from the three working sessions were analyzed and compiled to create a subset of top statewide needs. Those needs were then further refined through a quantitative survey. The needs assessment results were used as the basis for a strategy document for Wisconsin's Great Lakes freshwater estuaries. The strategy is designed to help inform and guide future freshwater estuary outreach, applied research, and management efforts. As such, the results of this project are essential to creating an integrated, efficient, and effective Wisconsin land-grant institution response to freshwater estuary needs. A Wisconsin Freshwater Estuary Issue Team is also being formed to help further explore the freshwater estuary priorities identified in the strategy. The project process and results are being shared regionally through the Great Lakes Regional Water Program and incorporated into relevant aspects of an ongoing effort to develop a National Estuarine Research Reserve on Wisconsin's Lake Superior shoreline. This project serves as a model that can be replicated regionally and used to increase the capacity of land grant institutions and others to improve regional responsiveness to freshwater estuary needs.

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