



# Plan 2020: *A Clear Path Forward*

2020 Update

Plan 2020 approval: May 16, 2017  
Update: November 28, 2017  
Update: November 30, 2018  
Update: December 4, 2019

Cover photo: Pheasant Branch Conservancy

## Why Did We Create Plan 2020?

We envision a future in which everyone realizes our lakes are the center of our community. To realize that vision, we are building a community of people, businesses, organizations, and government agencies dedicated to improving and protecting water quality in the Yahara River Watershed. Plan 2020 was created to focus our work and leverage our strengths in a four-year strategic operating plan (2017-2020).

Because of historic flooding and increased cyanobacteria blooms in our lakes, we need a “reset” to address climate change and other challenges. A new Yahara CLEAN Compact is driving action on this front, and efforts are underway to promote green infrastructure and resilient landscapes to improve water quality and decrease flood risk. For each of our eight focus areas, we outline action priorities, advocacy goals, and work plans to direct our efforts.

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## Our Approach

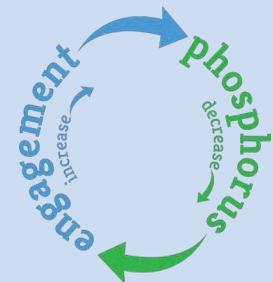
To further our vision and mission, Clean Lakes Alliance follows a reinforcing, seven-objective approach.

- » **Build Alliances** – Cultivate and strengthen partnerships to achieve shared goals
- » **Education** – Increase public awareness and understanding of our lakes and what it will take to protect them
- » **Advocate/Promote Awareness** – Push for community policies, investments, and actions that support our goals
- » **Focus Priorities** – Direct attention and resources toward the most cost-effective actions and approaches
- » **Secure Funding** – Procure the necessary financial support to help leverage needed project work
- » **Take Action** – Mobilize and empower stakeholders to donate, advocate, volunteer, and act on behalf of our lakes
- » **Report Progress** – Provide regular updates on how we are doing



## 2020 Vision

Our community is aware of the challenges facing the lakes and has avenues to act through volunteerism, citizen monitoring, learning opportunities, and donations. We are making significant progress toward our goals of reducing phosphorus runoff and building a strong and growing base of support. Finally, we are accountable both as an organization and as a community by measuring and reporting progress.



## Why We Need Accelerated Progress

The *Yahara CLEAN Strategic Action Plan for Phosphorus Reduction* aims to reduce phosphorus runoff into the lakes by 50% to double the number of days our lakes are clear and useable. The Yahara CLEAN roadmap – guided and endorsed by our watershed’s major government partners – will result in more days when our lakes are algal-bloom free and our beaches are open. Some opportunities for continued improvement:

- We are only part of the way towards our annual goal of decreasing the amount of soil erosion and phosphorus loss from farm fields. Better incentives and tools are needed to encourage farmers to improve cropping and tillage practices and use conservation practices that reduce runoff.
- 100% of the cropland acres in the watershed should have and use nutrient management plans and follow state agricultural performance standards.
- Timely removal of leaf litter from streets can reduce annual urban phosphorus loading by over 50%. In urban areas, we need improved leaf removal to address this number one source of urban phosphorus.
- Municipalities need to embrace more green infrastructure to address the increasing intensity and volume of rain we are experiencing due to climate change.
- We need more of the community taking an active role, whether it’s donating to support ongoing initiatives, volunteering, taking personal action on their properties, or advocating for needed policies. All of us impact and must take responsibility for the condition of our lakes, and each of us has the potential to lead by example.

### Focus Areas to Accelerate Yahara CLEAN Phosphorus Actions

1. **Yahara CLEAN Compact** – Lead partner effort to update, formally adopt, and set completion timelines for the *Yahara CLEAN Strategic Action Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (2012)*
2. **Innovative solutions** – Explore best practices, advocate for proven new technologies, fund research, and leverage action through Clean Lakes Grants
3. **Farmland management** – Build coalitions, provide funds, and advocate for best farming practices
4. **Urban Management** – Create tools and incentives for more green infrastructure that will lead to a more resilient and healthier watershed

### Focus Areas to Increase Community Engagement

1. **Education** – Increase awareness about the challenges and benefits of cleaning up our lakes, promoting science-based solutions, building alliances, and creating focus for action
2. **Volunteerism** – Create volunteer experiences that empower businesses, board and committee members, and residents to act on behalf of our lakes
3. **Monitoring** – Ensure monitoring coverage on all five Yahara lakes, enhance community awareness of lake conditions, and advocate for effective testing of our beaches
4. **Capacity Building** – Increase capacity for the organization to strengthen alliances with local groups and citizens, build our clean lakes brand, and increase community investments on behalf of our lakes

# Our Plan 2020 Process

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## Developing the Plan

Our Plan 2020 process started in May 2016. Every year we will present on our achievements and organizational workplans at our Clean Lakes Community Breakfast in May. The process to develop our strategic priorities includes multiple opportunities for input from our boards, committees, donors, and key partners through surveys, feedback sessions, and meetings.

## Updating the Plan

Each fall, we will work with key partners and our boards and committees to evaluate progress and plan for the upcoming year. At our winter Community Board meeting, we will present our updates for discussion and approval.

<b>Our Annual Schedule to Update Plan 2020</b>	
January - December	Workplan actions carried out
May	Progress reported at Clean Lakes Community Breakfast
August - October	Progress evaluated and new workplans developed
October - November	Partners and committees give feedback on new workplans
November	Community Board approves updated Plan 2020

Plan 2020 presents a strategic framework to create action for the Yahara lakes from 2017 to 2020.

Through this framework, Clean Lakes Alliance will accelerate action on reducing phosphorus runoff and ignite citizen action in support of our lakes. In the pages that follow, you will see:

- our philosophy outlined in community goals
- our action priorities that guide staff and committee workplans
- our advocacy goals that communicate priorities for pushing action in the watershed
- clear metrics that we use to communicate our progress.

### **Yahara CLEAN Implementation**

Phosphorus runoff comes from city streets, paved parking lots, sidewalks, farmland, and disturbed areas like construction sites. Approximately 70% of planned phosphorus reductions will come from farms and 30% from urban areas. The split between urban and rural reflects the proportionate representation of the land that drains into the lakes. Our Plan 2020 actions seek a balanced approach to address both sources of phosphorus.

#### **1. Yahara CLEAN Compact**

Our community goal is an adopted and fully funded action plan for cleaner lakes. Our Yahara CLEAN Plan (2012) will be updated to take into account progress, new information, and the ever-changing opportunities and challenges that confront us. We are reconvening and expanding our coalition of partners to update the plan with focused priorities and a timeline for completion. We are also exploring funding options to complete the job, and will continue to report progress through our *State of the Lakes Annual Report*.

#### **2. Innovative Solutions**

Our community goal is to support new, innovative, and effective approaches to reduce runoff and phosphorus pollution. Building on the work of our Committee on Strategic Implementation, a Yahara CLEAN Compact steering team was convened and will continue to meet regularly to consider new innovations that could benefit the lakes. We will also continue to provide funding to encourage innovative projects that reduce phosphorus and showcase new and effective approaches.

#### **3. Farmland Management**

Our community goal is for agricultural stakeholders to efficiently manage nutrients and soil erosion to protect our lakes. We will continue to build alliances to expand the network of engaged citizens and professionals promoting best farming practices. We will continue to put dollars raised through donations towards on-the-ground practices that reduce runoff and erosion from farm fields. And we will continue working with farmers and other partners on approaches to better manage manure and improve soil health.

#### **4. Urban Management**

Our community vision is for urban communities to lead in using green infrastructure, keeping construction sites clean, and maintaining leaf-free streets. We will enhance the efforts of groups already active in this area through proactive public outreach, funding, and advocacy.

## Community Engagement

The mission of Clean Lakes Alliance is to build a community dedicated to improving and protecting water quality in the Yahara River Watershed. Our Community Engagement focus areas are a key part of building that constituency for the lakes. As our citizens make the lakes a central part of their lives, resulting behavior changes will help us achieve our clean lakes goals.

### 1. Education

Our community goal is for the public to understand that lake challenges are solvable and there are ways to take meaningful action. We will continue our strong educational programming with Yahara Lakes 101, Lake-O-Grams, Yahara Watershed Academy, Lake Explorer Camp, Farm Tours, community talks, and annual events. We will evaluate gaps in public understanding and explore new opportunities to drive action in support of our lakes.

### 2. Volunteerism

Our community goal is to create a culture of volunteerism for our lakes. We will build on our customized *Renew the Blue* Volunteer Day experiences for area businesses by expanding

our circle of partners and types of projects. We will also look for opportunities to enhance the volunteer experience for board and committee members while advocating for resources and policies that benefit our lakes.

### 3. Monitoring

Our community goal is to enhance awareness and understanding of evolving lake and beach conditions. We will continue to recruit and mobilize a citizen monitoring network and make real-time lake conditions available through LakeForecast.org and weekly Lake Forecast Reports. LakeForecast.org will also be used as an early warning system for harmful cyanobacteria blooms as they develop. Finally, we will push for more effective government testing and warning signs at our beaches.

### 4. Capacity Building

Our community goal is to have sufficient resources available to improve and protect water quality in our lakes. We will continue to build a bigger base of support, and will work to improve organizational visibility, branding, and financial growth, allowing us to have a bigger voice and impact within the watershed.

## Our collaborative and transparent strategic planning approach involves the input of:

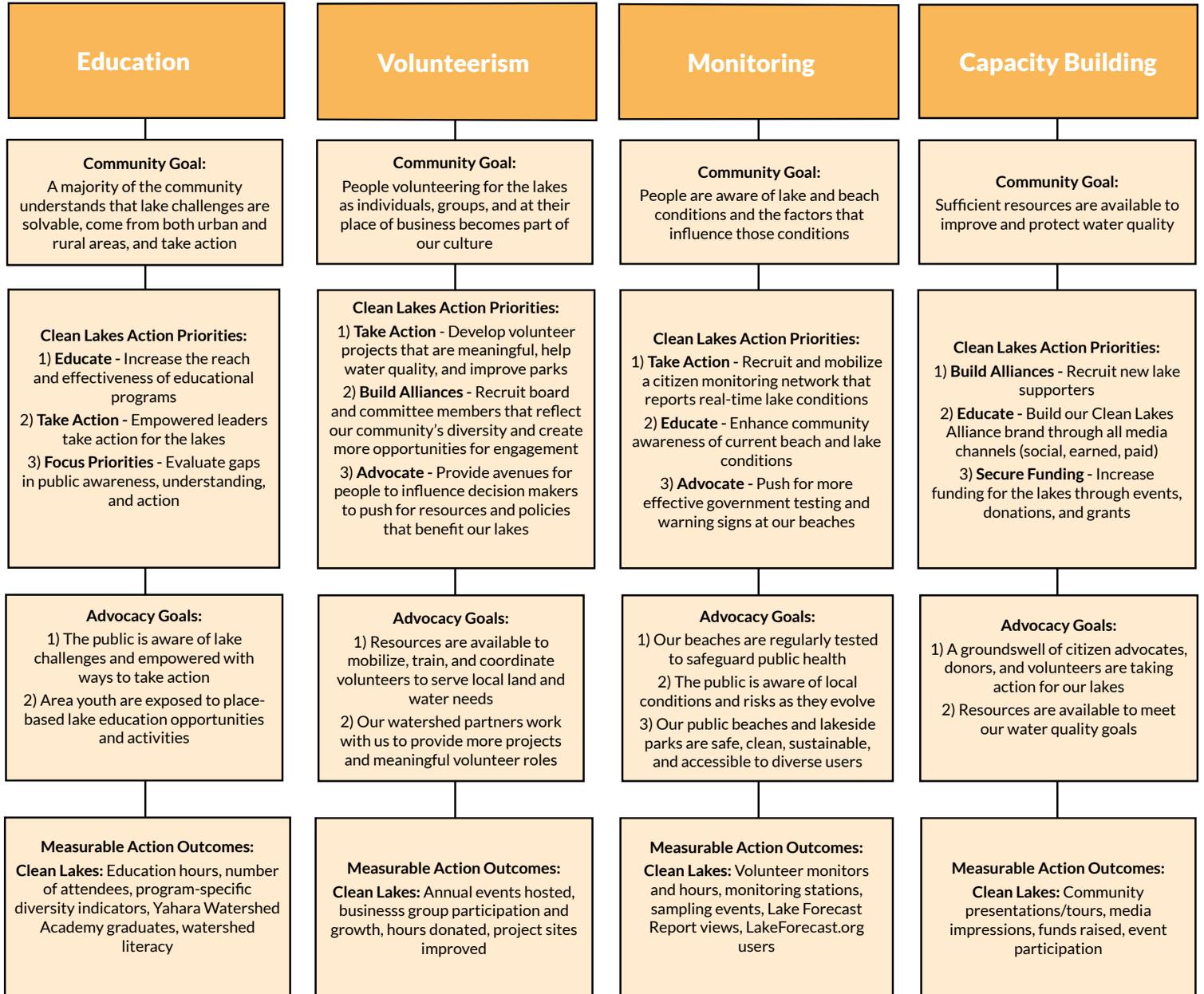
- More than 100 board and committee members
- More than 700 current donors
- One-on-one meetings with our major implementation partners

We are grateful to our partners, boards, donors, and committees for all the feedback they have given through surveys, participation in dialogue sessions, and one-on-one meetings. You have helped us design effective actions that will bring the community together so that we can all benefit from healthy lakes.

# Yahara CLEAN Implementation



# Community Engagement



# Yahara CLEAN Compact

**Objective:** Lead partner effort to update, formally adopt, and set completion timelines for the *Yahara CLEAN Strategic Action Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (2012)*.

## 2017 - 2020 Workplan

### Yahara CLEAN Compact

**Community Goal:**

Our community adopts and fully funds a community-endorsed action plan for cleaner lakes

**Clean Lakes Action Priorities:**

- 1) **Build Alliances** - Reconvene Yahara CLEAN partners to develop an action plan for updating phosphorus targets and strategies while continuing to make progress on phosphorus reduction practices
- 2) **Focus Priorities** - Revisit the actions of Yahara CLEAN to ensure we reach our water quality goals
- 3) **Report Progress** - Communicate progress in State of the Lakes Report

**Advocacy Goals:**

- 1) Yahara CLEAN Compact is updated, adopted, fully funded, and implemented within a set timeframe
- 2) We have policies that promote a resilient landscape and a sustainable watershed phosphorus balance
- 3) The community is fully informed about progress towards our water quality goals

**Measurable Action Outcomes:**

**Clean Lakes:** An updated Yahara CLEAN Plan and implementation strategy with firm deadlines  
**Community progress:** phosphorus reductions (practices, stream loading, and in-lake concentrations)

**Action 1. Build Alliances** – Reconvene Yahara CLEAN partners to develop an action plan for updating phosphorus targets and strategies while continuing to make progress on phosphorus-reduction practices.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Worked with partners to define an approach to update the Yahara CLEAN plan. Helped create and participated in Dane County’s Healthy Farms Healthy Lakes Task Force.
- **2019 Achievements:** Recruited 16 partners and collaborators to pool resources and sign on to a Yahara CLEAN Compact Letter of Intent. Drafted a scope-of-work and operational agreement in consultation with our committees and partners, and assembled a steering team of appointed designees. Developed a Yahara CLEAN Compact Statement of Support & Advocacy signed by local watershed groups and legislative delegates.
- **2020:** Host a Compact signing ceremony and convene regular steering team meetings. Organize community feedback sessions as part of the Yahara CLEAN Compact to raise awareness of planning efforts and gather public input.

**Action 2. Focus Priorities** – Revisit the actions of Yahara CLEAN to ensure we reach our water quality goals.

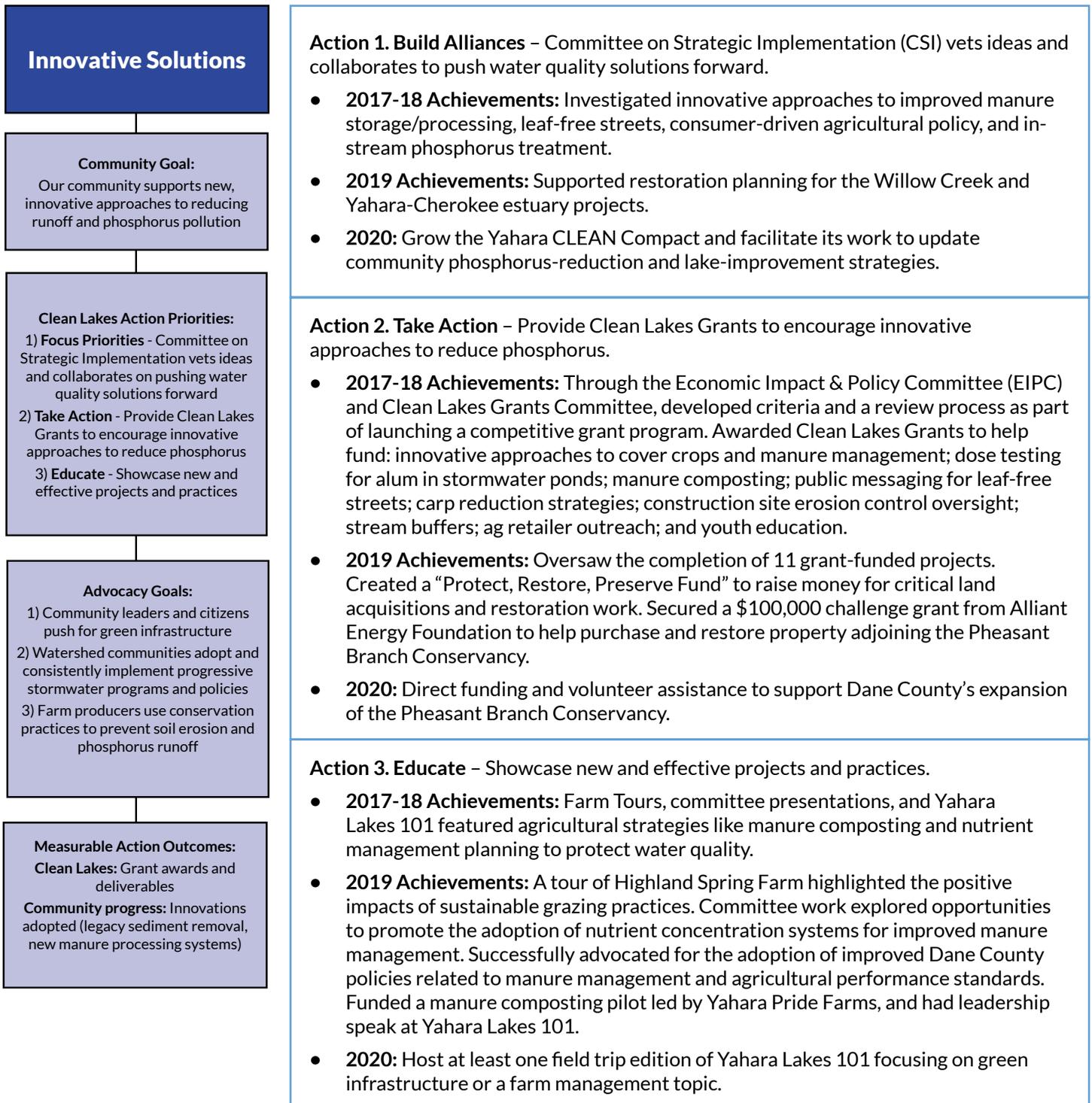
- **2017-18 Achievements:** Successfully advocated for local government budget items and policies to support Yahara CLEAN actions. Made the case for updating our shared roadmap for attaining cleaner lakes.
- **2019 Achievements:** Worked with Dane County to pass Healthy Farms Healthy Lakes Task Force recommendations. Launched the Yahara CLEAN Compact by promoting its need and recruiting key participants. Used the Community Breakfast to publicly announce early partner and collaborator commitments to the effort.
- **2020:** Create steering team subgroups and hire needed consultants to achieve Compact objectives. Advocate for funding, staff resources, incentives and policies to support Yahara CLEAN recommendations.

**Action 3. Report Progress** – Communicate progress through our *State of the Lakes Annual Report*.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Produced the *State of the Lakes Annual Report* to document community phosphorus reductions and lake conditions.
- **2019 Achievements:** Released the 2018 *State of the Lakes Annual Report*.
- **2020:** Produce the 2019 *State of the Lakes Annual Report*. Reassess phosphorus-load reduction targets and verify our progress documented to-date.

**Objective:** Explore best practices, advocate for proven new technologies, fund research, and leverage action through Clean Lakes Grants.

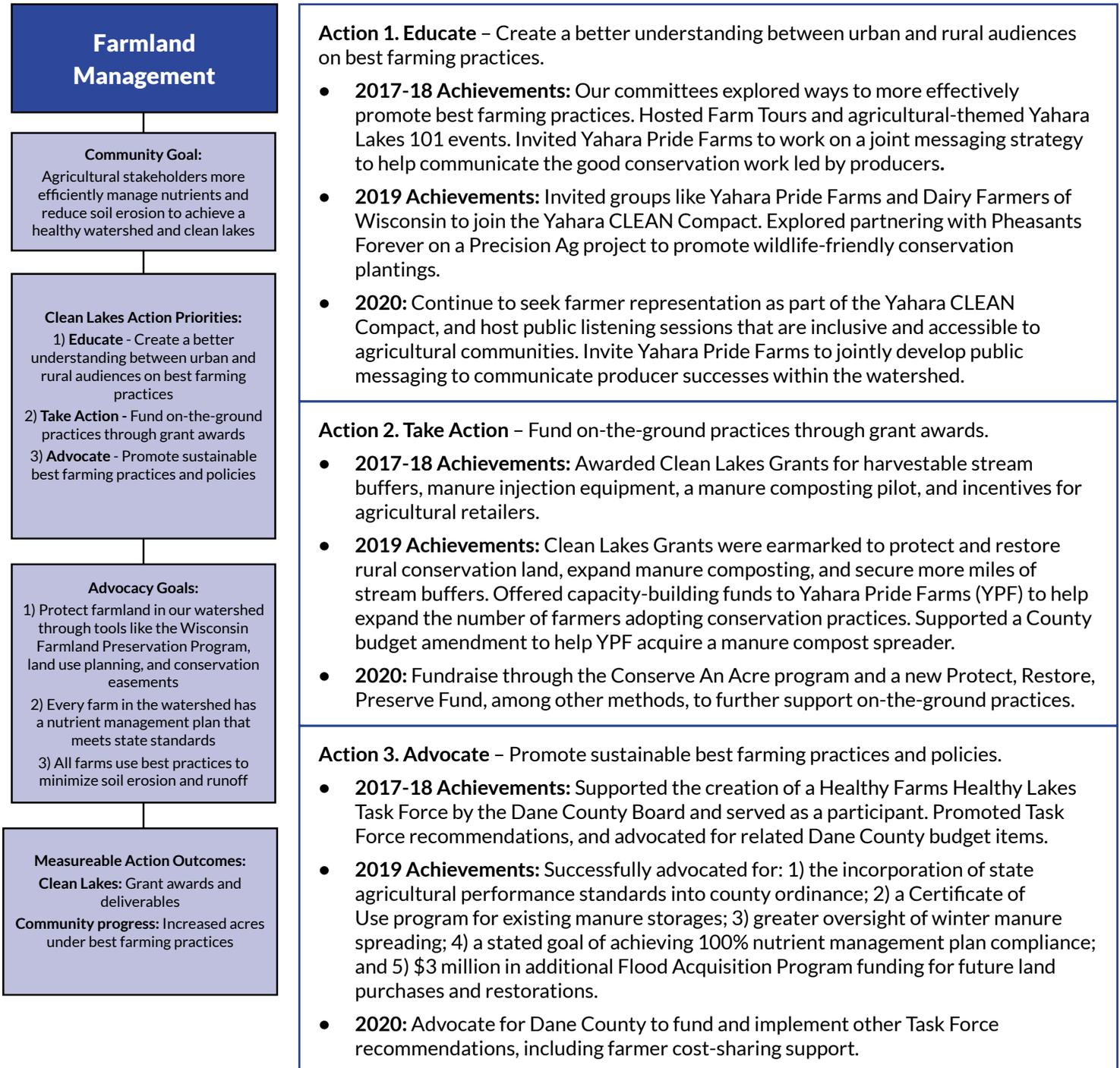
## 2017 - 2020 Workplan



# Farmland Management

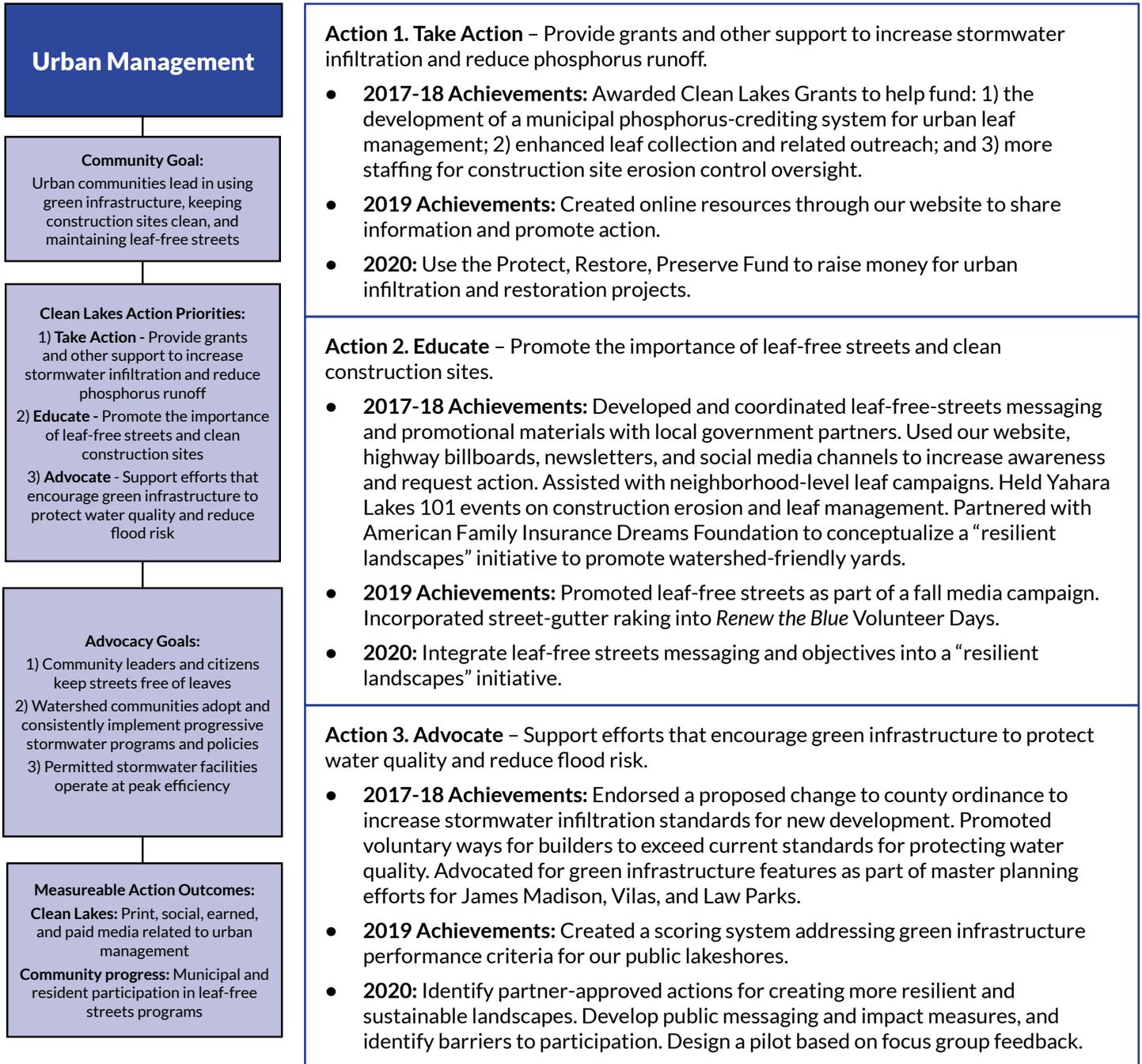
**Objective:** Build coalitions, provide funds, and advocate for best farming practices.

## 2017 - 2020 Workplan



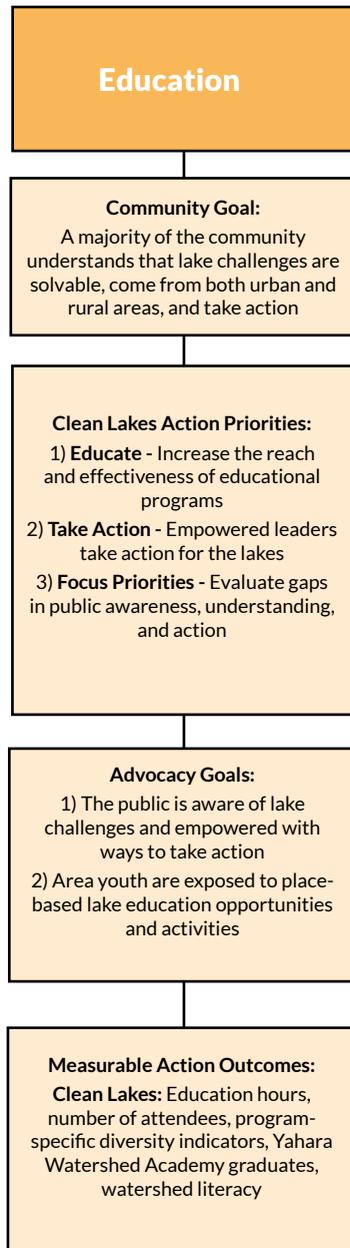
**Objective:** Create tools and incentives for actions that will lead to a more resilient and healthier watershed.

## 2017 - 2020 Workplan



**Objective:** Increase awareness about the challenges and benefits of cleaning up our lakes, promoting science-based solutions, building alliances, and focusing action.

## 2017 - 2020 Workplan



### Action 1. Educate – Increase the reach and effectiveness of educational programs.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Increased traffic to our website and added a resource page for leaf management and lake-friendly yard care. Hosted monthly Yahara Lakes 101 science cafes, and distributed monthly Lake-O-Gram email newsletters. Funded and helped administer a summer Lake Explorer Camp, serving youth from under-resourced communities. Gave lake talks to interested businesses and organizations and offered annual Farm Tours.
- **2019 Achievements:** Expanded Lake Explorer Camp to serve grades K-12 from Bayview Foundation and Community Center. Showcased community efforts as part of the State of the Lakes Annual Report, Greater Madison Lake Guide, and both printed and email Lake-O-Gram newsletters. Partnered with Wisconsin Union to offer free, family-friendly programming through the “Mornings on Mendota” educational series. Hosted a free Yahara Lakes 101 “Suck the Muck” field trip edition. Organized a free Highland Spring Farm Tour to showcase sustainable grazing practices.
- **2020:** Evaluate existing and future opportunities for youth education. Offer one or more free, field trip editions of Yahara Lakes 101. Retool our website to be a more effective resource. Continue to elevate our presence in the community through social media, Lake-O-Grams, and printed materials. Produce one or more videos showcasing best farming practices and/or homeowner actions that enhance landscape resiliency.

### Action 2. Take Action – Empower leaders to take action for the lakes.

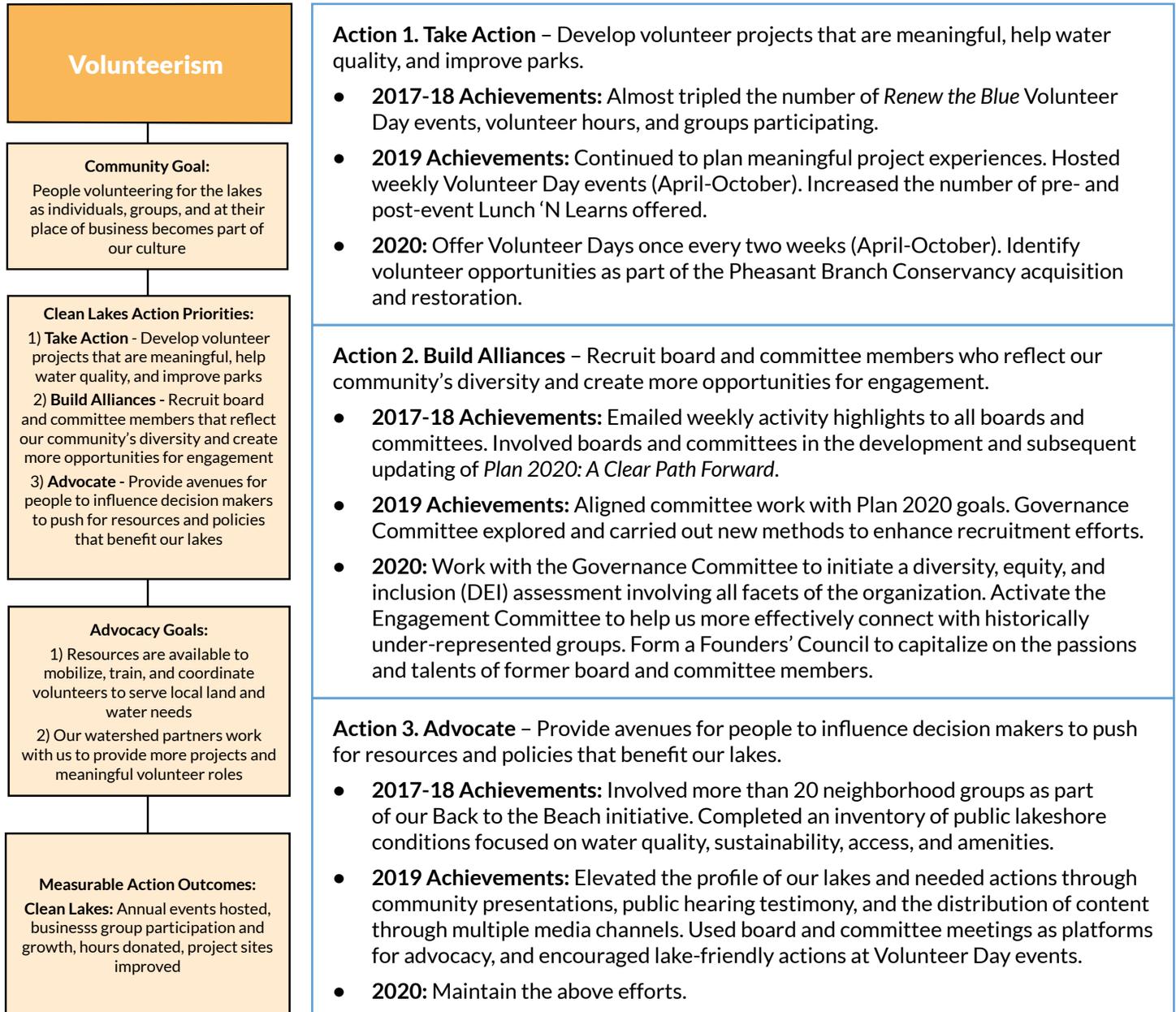
- **2017-18 Achievements:** Graduated a class of 23 Watershed Captains through the Yahara Watershed Academy.
- **2019 Achievements:** Graduated a second class of 23 Watershed Captains. Hosted a Leadership Luncheon for current and past Community Board members and their guests.
- **2020:** Organize a “Community of Practice” networking event for all Yahara Watershed Academy alumni. Fundraise and recruit in preparation for a 2021 Academy. Increase the number of local leaders and supporters signing on to the Yahara CLEAN Compact Statement of Support & Advocacy. Host a Leadership Luncheon in conjunction with the Community Awards.

### Action 3. Focus Priorities – Evaluate gaps in public awareness, understanding, and action.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Conducted annual survey of *Renew the Blue* Volunteer Day participants and Community Board members.
- **2019 Achievements:** Repeated the above surveys. Researched potential methods for measuring and tracking watershed literacy, public awareness about Clean Lakes Alliance, and behaviors that impact our lakes.
- **2020:** Survey Volunteer Day participants and board/committee members and compare to prior results.

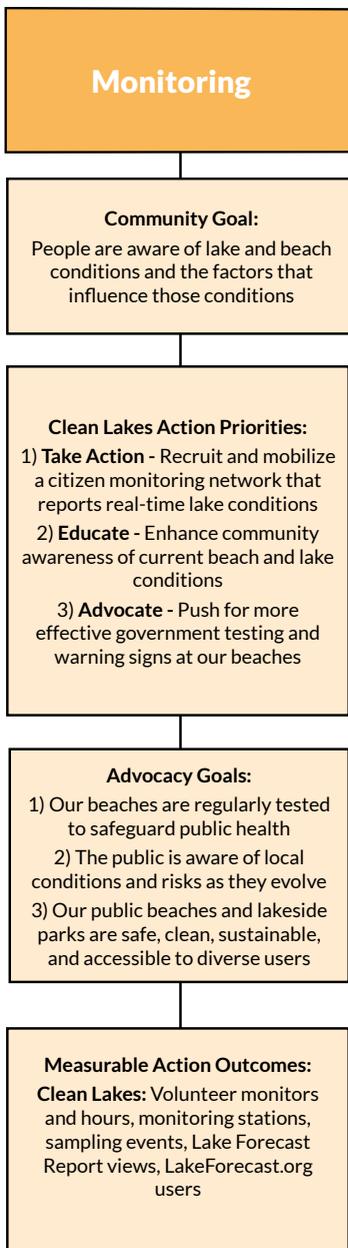
**Objective:** Create volunteer experiences that empower businesses, board and committee members, and residents to act on behalf of our lakes.

## 2017 -2020 Workplan



**Objective:** Ensure monitoring coverage on all five Yahara lakes, enhance community awareness of lake conditions, and advocate for effective testing of our beaches.

## 2017 - 2020 Workplan



**Action 1. Take Action** – Recruit and mobilize a citizen monitoring network that reports real-time lake conditions.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Expanded the number of monitoring stations, condition reports, and season length. Significantly increased the number of volunteers monitoring our lakes and the total number of sampling events. Received the 2018 Monitoring Program of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Citizen-Based Monitoring Network.
- **2019 Achievements:** Transitioned LakeForecast.org to a new service provider to improve site functionality. Organized a lake monitor appreciation event to kick-off the season. Assembled a focus group to identify ways to further improve the website and monitoring experience.
- **2020:** Maintain current level of citizen monitoring. Use focus group feedback to invest in additional user improvements to LakeForecast.org.

**Action 2. Educate** – Enhance community awareness of current beach and lake conditions.

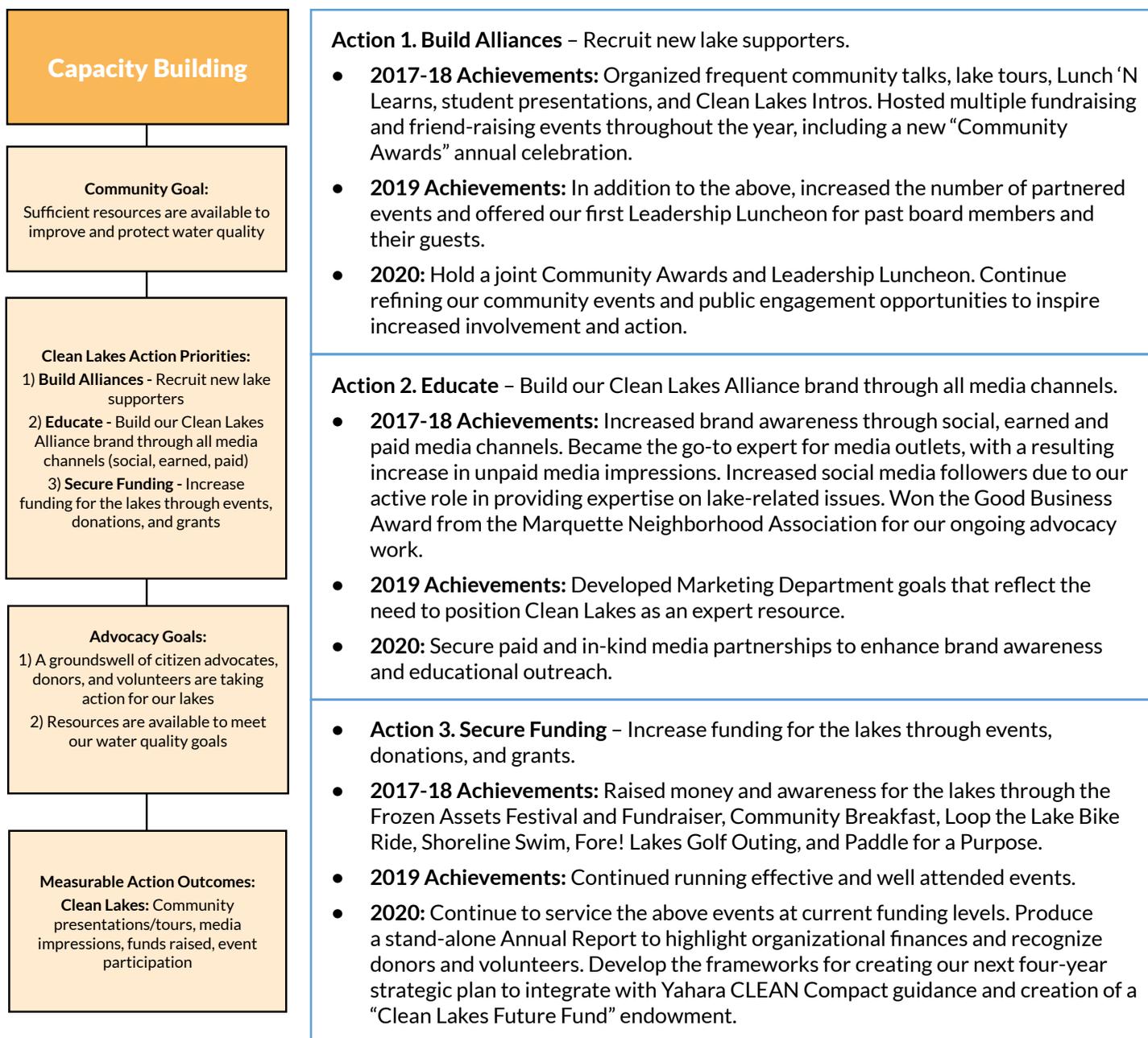
- **2017-18 Achievements:** Promoted and improved the production value of Lake Forecast Reports to drive increased traffic to LakeForecast.org. Held a Reimagining Warner Beach Design Contest and student art competition to focus renewed attention on our public lakeshores. Convened a Beach Inventory and Needs Assessment Committee. Audited our public lakeshores and created a criteria-based methodology for scoring current conditions.
- **2019 Achievements:** Continued to produce weekly Lake Forecast Reports while maintaining a robust and active citizen-monitoring network.
- **2020:** Retool the Lake Forecast Reports to further increase their popularity. Produce a 'State of the Beaches' report.

**Action 3: Advocate** – Push for more effective government testing and warning signs at our beaches.

- **2017-18 Achievements:** Leveraged relationships with City of Madison and Dane County to promote strategies for improved testing and public information sharing.
- **2019 Achievements:** Recommended new water quality testing protocols based on beach type and contamination risk. Proposed a Dane County budget amendment to fund increased monitoring. Successfully opposed a budget amendment calling for reduced or eliminated lifeguard hours.
- **2020:** Through the release of a first-ever 'State of the Beaches' report, highlight the status of our public lakeshores in terms of water quality, sustainability, access, and amenities.

**Objective:** Increase capacity for the organization by building alliances with local groups and community members, building our Clean Lakes Alliance brand, and increasing community financial support for the lakes.

## 2017 -2020 Workplan





## Current Boards & Committees

### Executive Board

**Matthew Frank, Chair**  
Murphy Desmond S.C.

**Nathan Fagre, Vice Chair**  
Faraday Grid Limited

**Sarah Slack, Secretary**  
Foley & Lardner LLP

**Jim West, Treasurer**  
Town Bank

**James Tye, Executive Director**  
Clean Lakes Alliance

**David Fahey**  
Monona Bank

**Joseph Ferreri**  
Lands' End

**James Gallegos**  
Alliant Energy Corporation

**Colleen Johnson**  
Johnson Financial Group

**Jenny Kuehn**  
Community Advocate

**Lloyd Eagan, Director Emeritus**  
Wisconsin DNR, Retired

**Jeff Endres, Director Emeritus**  
Endres Berryridge Farms LLC

**Randy Peterson, Director Emeritus**  
Russell James Investments

**Brian Potts, Director Emeritus**  
Perkins Coie LLP

### Community Board

**Roger Bannerman**  
USGS Wisconsin Water Science Center

**Paul Barbato**  
CUNA Mutual Group

**Sharon Corrigan**  
Dane County Board of Supervisors

**Mary Elvekrog**  
Compeer Financial

**Peter Foy**  
Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society

**Dr. Jana Gyurina**  
Oak Park Dental

**John Haeckel**  
Clean Fuel Partners

**Daniel Hutter**  
Spectrum Brands

**Robb Kahl**  
Construction Business Group

**Fred Klancnik**  
UW-Madison Engineering

**Woody Kneppreth**  
Lake Waubesa Conservation Association

**Steve Kraus**  
Village of Waunakee

**Courtney Kruger**  
Fiore Companies

**Andy Kurth**  
Weed Man Lawn Care

**Gregory Levesque**  
American Transmission Company

**Chasidey Martin**  
Sprinkman Real Estate

**Tina Noel**  
Community Advocate

**Pam Porter**  
Dane County Lakes & Watershed  
Commission

**Mark Riedel**  
Wisconsin DNR

**Paul Robbins**  
UW-Madison Nelson Institute

**Michael Rupiper**  
Capital Area Regional Planning  
Commission

**Eric Schmidt**  
CG Schmidt, Inc.

**Scott Smith**  
Madison Gas & Electric

**Trey Sprinkman**  
Sprinkman Real Estate

**Amy Supple**  
The Edgewater

**Russ Tieman**  
Mad-City Ski Team

**Sal Troia**  
Yahara Lakes Association

**Alex Vitanye**  
Badger Sports Properties

**Thomas Walker**  
Mid-West Family Broadcasting

**Robert Weber**  
First Weber, Inc

**Ryan Witt**  
State Bank of Cross Plains

**Christie Baumel, Ex Officio**  
City of Madison Deputy Mayor

**Dave Merritt, Ex Officio**  
Dane County Executive Designee

**D. Michael Mucha, Director Emeritus**  
Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

**Lyle Updike, Director Emeritus**  
Dane County Towns Association

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**Adam Sodersten**  
Marketing & Communications Director

**Laura Strickland**  
Development Director

**Karin Swanson**  
Marketing & Communications Associate Manager

**James Tye**  
Executive Director & Founder

**Miah Van Etten**  
Event & Marketing Coordinator

**Luke Wynn**  
Watershed Program Associate