

# FUTURE OF THE LAKES

## Scenarios for the Future of Wisconsin's Northern Highland Lake District

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### Introduction

The Northern Highlands Lake District of Wisconsin (NHLD) is in rapid transition. Such big transitions have happened before. Twelve thousand years ago as glaciers receded, lakes were formed. Archeological evidence suggests that humans began to inhabit the region soon thereafter. Huge animals, such as woolly mammoths, disappeared early in the era that we've labeled the Age of Discovery. Through the fur trade, Europeans entered the region about 500 years ago during the Age of Rediscovery. Following the arrival of Europeans, native populations decreased significantly, while newcomers took ownership of the land. Entering into the Age of Development, humans logged the forests to provide timber for the growing cities south of the NHLD.

Now we are entering a new age, in which woolly mammoths have been replaced by mammoth homes. Currently, the number and size of lakeshore buildings is expanding. At the same time, increasing numbers of recreational visitors are creating unprecedented pressures in the region. Property values are at an all-time high, with an increasing number of second homes, but few desirable areas left for new construction. Some people welcome the economic benefits of tourism, while others believe it interferes with their traditional Northwoods way of life. Tensions have risen over land use and shoreline management. Recreational activities continue to expand, ranging from quiet sports like fishing and canoeing to motor sports such as boating and ATV use. Warmer, shorter winters with less snow impact the tourism industry as well as the region's ecosystems. Invasive species and emergent diseases also threaten the quality of the environment in the region.

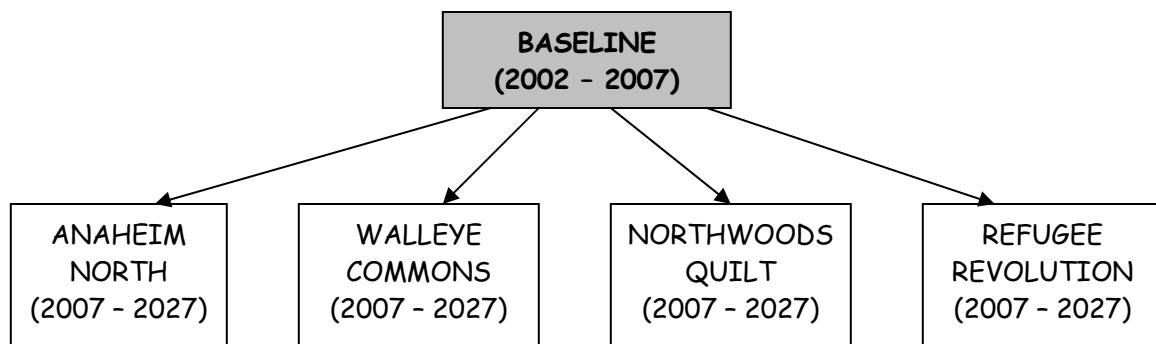
Many changes in the NHLD are happening simultaneously. This makes them more difficult to understand. With so many changes happening at once, it seems hard to think about the future in a cohesive way.

**In this last activity of the semester**, we will use different scenarios to think about the possible futures of the NHLD. Scenarios allow us to consider many possible futures instead of trying to predict a single result. These possible futures are not likely to come true exactly as described in the scenarios, but they let us think in broader terms about the impacts of the plans and choices we make.

### Scenarios

Four different scenarios were developed for the NHLD through a series of workshops involving people from the University of Wisconsin, and northern Wisconsin. Each scenario grows out of from a shared baseline story, which summarizes events from 2002 - 2007. Then, each scenario traces a different sequence of events until 2027. The storylines are described as if looking backward from the year 2030.

Scenarios start from a common baseline, 2002-2007. Four scenarios describe events from 2007-2027.



The baseline scenario as well as the four future scenarios are described in detail below (pdf format).

## Recitation

### **What is YOUR Vision for the Northern Highland Lake District in 2027?**

Your task will be to develop, as a group, the scenario you want to see happen in the NHLD. You should use the four scenarios as possible outcomes, but you do not have to stick to them. In fact, you should pick a new name for your final scenario.

As you have read in the scenarios, there is a mixed group of people with diverse interests in the future of the lakes. The task in the role game will be to play some imaginary key "stakeholders" (people who have a stake in this issue). You will have to pick ONE of the listed roles and stick to that role during the game.

- Student whose parents are part-time residents and own a second home on the lakes (you are up there every summer)
- Native American student from the Lac du Flambeau Nation (you have lived up on the lakes most of your life)
- Undergraduate student from Penn State (you love hiking, backpacking, and camping in that area; you've been there 3 times with friends)
- Business student whose parents own the Loonland Mall on the biggest lake (you have fabulous ideas to further develop the lakes)
- Local fishermen (fishing is your major source of income)
- Local school teachers
- Tribal residents and casino developers
- Tourist agents
- Small business owners (you have 2 star lodges, a grocery store, and one diner)
- Retirees
- Local government (mayor, county planning board)

In three consecutive recitation classes, you will:

- 1) prepare for the game
- 2) play the game
- 3) design an action/management plan for the NHLD.

### **Nov 10: Announcement in class**

I will ask for 10 volunteers per recitation group to give a short description of each of the five scenarios (incl. the baseline) during their recitation meeting in Week 12.

### **Week 12: Preparation for the Group Role Game**

You have read the introduction, the overview of the scenarios, and the detailed description of each scenario. We can NOT start this activity if you have not done your homework!

- 1) Draw a large map of the lakes as you see it under the baseline scenario. This map will help you to formulate your arguments during the entire activity. We will provide you with the necessary inputs.
- 2) Those who have volunteered in class on Nov 10 will give a short overview of each scenario (and obviously get some presentation points for it!). This is important so that we are all on the same page. The four future scenarios represent possible future realities.
- 3) Develop arguments that will help you support your role and your point of view during the role game after Thanks Giving. It will be important to identify well with the role you will play, to envision your character, and develop a personal vision for the lakes. It might be easier to work in pairs. Write down your vision and your arguments! Of course, you can modify or add to this list any time before the role game.

### **Week 13: Thanks Giving (no recitations!)**

### **Week 14: Group Role Game**

- 1) Each player tries to make a convincing argument about his/her vision for the lakes.
- 2) After several rounds of engaging but fair discussion, you will have to reach a consensus on how you want the NHLD to look like in 2027. This is your vision for the NHLD. Most likely, this vision will have several clearly defined goals. List them.
- 3) Add your vision to the baseline map and select an appropriate name for it.
- 4) Outline the main obstacles and challenges you envision to actually implement your vision (if helpful, follow the structure from Marten "Barataria-Terrebonne, p 206).

### **Week 15: Action/Management Plan**

- 1) Identify activities to overcome the challenges you listed in Week 14.
- 2) Design an action/management plan that includes the various activities that are necessary to achieve the goals of your vision.

Again, you can follow the structure in Marten (pp 207-210)

Remember, this is a **group project**. You will have to submit **ONE group report**. However, in order to prevent "free riders", you should **add your names** under the part you put in most of your efforts. It will be up to the entire group to approve the final product and contributions.

Group # .....: OUR VISION FOR THE LAKES: .....(Name)

TASKS	Text	Student names and % contribution to task
Describe your vision; provide details on the explicit goals		
Add your vision to the baseline map		

<p>Main obstacles and challenges</p>		
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<p>Activities to overcome the challenges</p>		
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<p>Activities in the action/management plan</p>		
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