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lake plan aims to make sense of it all by bringing the information about a particular lake together in one document. This can be a very difficult undertaking, and some lake associations are now finding it challenging to implement their lake plan's recommendations. Lake plans must also ensure that they are living documents, so that the action strategy will continue to evolve into the future and not just sit on a shelf. Lake planning efforts could be greatly benefited by having a set of evaluation criteria tailored specifically to lake plans and based on principles of good planning. This will help ensure that lake plan documents present information in the best way possible to inform an action plan to protect the integrity of the lake.

The objectives of my research are:

1. Develop a comprehensive evaluation (set of plan evaluation criteria tailored specifically to lake plans) that community groups involved in lake planning can use.
2. Identify key commonalities among lake plans, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Provide recommendations to lake planning organizations to improve the effectiveness of their lake plans.

### *Methods*

This report uses an evaluation method based on a general plan evaluation model proposed by William C. Baer (1997). The essence of Baer's method is the premise that the criteria to evaluate a plan should be developed based on the concept of the plan itself. First, I completed a literature review on the common lake planning problems, and common lake plan goals. I then developed an initial list of criteria based on Baer's sample criteria from the literature review. I used these initial criteria to evaluate three case study lake plans and compare their strengths and weaknesses. The three lake plans are: the Kahshe Lake Plan from the Muskoka region, the Clear, Ston(e)y, White Lake Plan from the Kawartha Lakes region, and the Bobs and Crow Lakes Stewardship Plan from eastern Ontario. The case study evaluations tested the evaluation criteria

and informed a few refinements to ensure that the evaluation criteria are useful for a wide variety of lake plans. The final criteria are presented in List 1 at the end of this summary.

*Results: Case Study Lake Plan Strengths and Weaknesses*

The literature review revealed that although there are numerous specific issues that have contributed to lake planning, four key areas form the common problems. These four areas are: declining water quality, jurisdictional gaps in lake management, cumulative impacts of development, and the loss of lake character. The three case study lake plans generally addressed aspects of each of these; however, jurisdictional gaps and lake character were the least well addressed. Specific roles of management agencies, and gaps in policy were not always identified within the plans. Lake character was often mentioned as a key value, but specific elements of lake character were not effectively described in order to understand how character was being lost. Other important plan areas that could use improvement are: guidance for implementation including an action plan, timeline, and provisions for monitoring success; the distinction between goals, objectives, and actions; and communication to decision makers. The case study plans generally excelled at communicating to the community about the importance of stewardship, or communicating to municipal governments on planning policies, but not both. The recommendations to improve lake plans based on these strengths and weaknesses, as well as additional observations from the case study evaluations, are listed below.

*Results: Recommendations for Lake Planning Organizations to Improve Lake Plans*

! Recommendation #1: Organizations involved in lake planning activities should use the lake plan evaluation criteria in List 1 below to help guide lake planning efforts, and to review and update existing plans.

- ! Recommendation #2: When consulting with lake residents about their values, whether in a survey or at a workshop, use open-ended questions rather than a pre-existing set. You will likely find out more about the lake's unique aspects this way.
- ! Recommendation #3: Make your lake plan a stand-alone document. Present only the detail necessary to support the reasoning behind the recommendations, and summarize less important details in supplementary studies and tell the reader where to find them. Include all important figures and maps in the plan.
- ! Recommendation #4: Describe in detail the planning process used to formulate the plan.
- ! Recommendation #5: Describe the roles of all agencies and levels of government deemed important in affecting the lake. These are not always obvious to the reader.
- ! Recommendation #6: A lake plan should have a clearly linked hierarchy of goals, objectives, and actions. This hierarchy should include: a general community vision, a list of prioritized issues identified by the community, general goals for each issue, measurable objectives for each issue, and actionable recommendations for each issue.
- ! Recommendation #7: Develop a work plan for the next few years of implementation. A plan should always be a guide for future action.
- ! Recommendation #8: Make a plan to review the plan. Set a date to review progress, and update the plan if necessary.
- ! Recommendation #9: Carefully consider the audience of the lake plan. If action by both community members and decision makers is important, the lake plan should clearly speak to both of these groups.
- ! Recommendation #10: A provincewide agency such as FOCA should assess the common issues identified in many lake plans and lobby the province to improve policy and legislation for lakes provincewide.





