



Exploring Whether a  
**Lake Management  
District (LMD)**  
Makes Sense for Rock Lake

# Rock Lake Management District Exploratory Group

## ► Members

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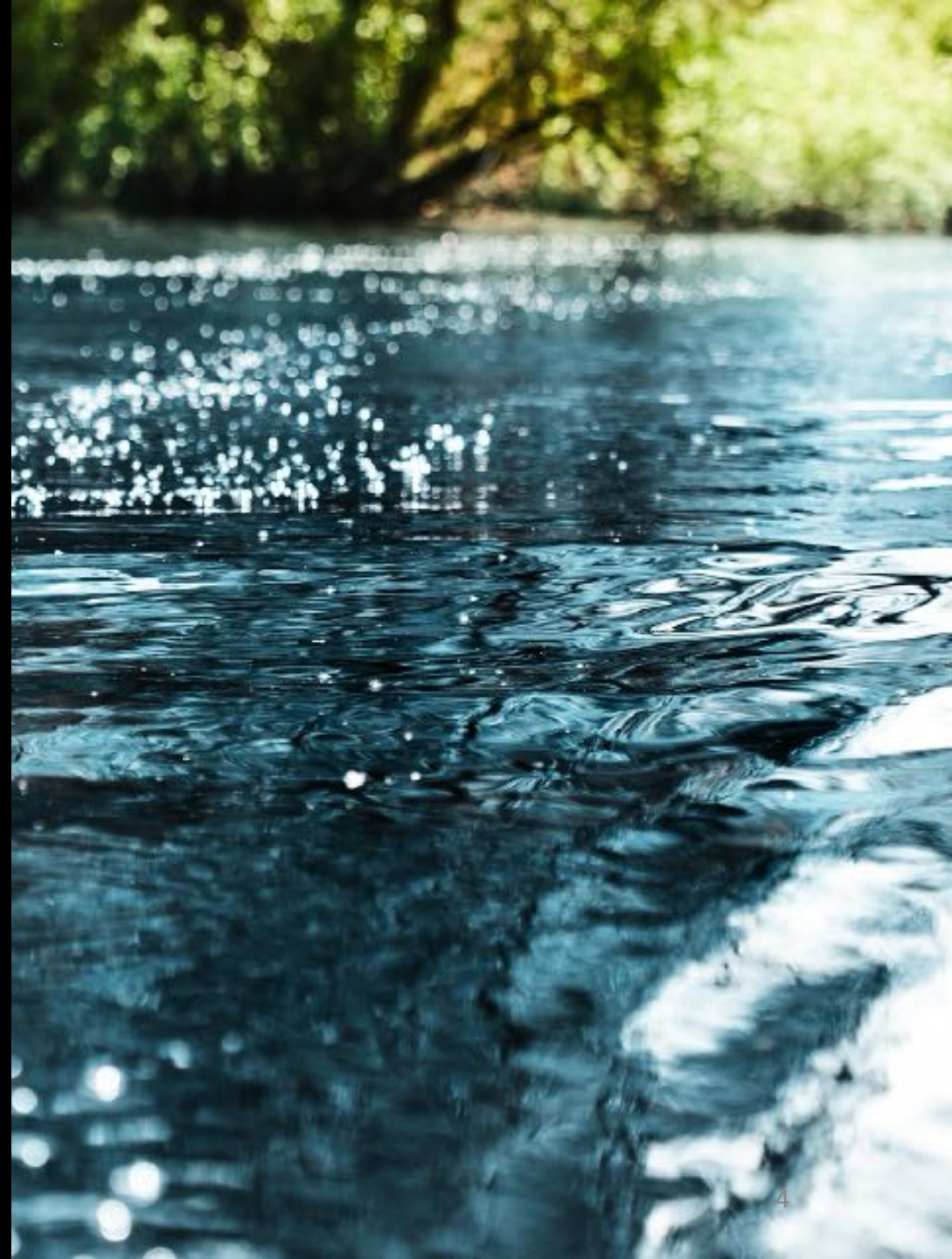
## ► Support

- Patricia Cicero
  - Director, Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department
- John Thode
  - Liaison, Rock Lake Improvement Association

# Presentation Content

- ▶ What is a Lake Management District (LMD) and how are they formed?
- ▶ Funding an LMD
- ▶ Why an LMD might make sense for Rock Lake

What is a  
Lake  
Management  
District  
(LMD)?



# Lake Management Districts Compared to Lake Associations

## ▶ LMD

- Specialized units of government
- Governance, powers, and operations are set by *Wis. Stat. § 33*
- Must abide by state and municipal laws
- Automatically tax exempt
- Ability to borrow money

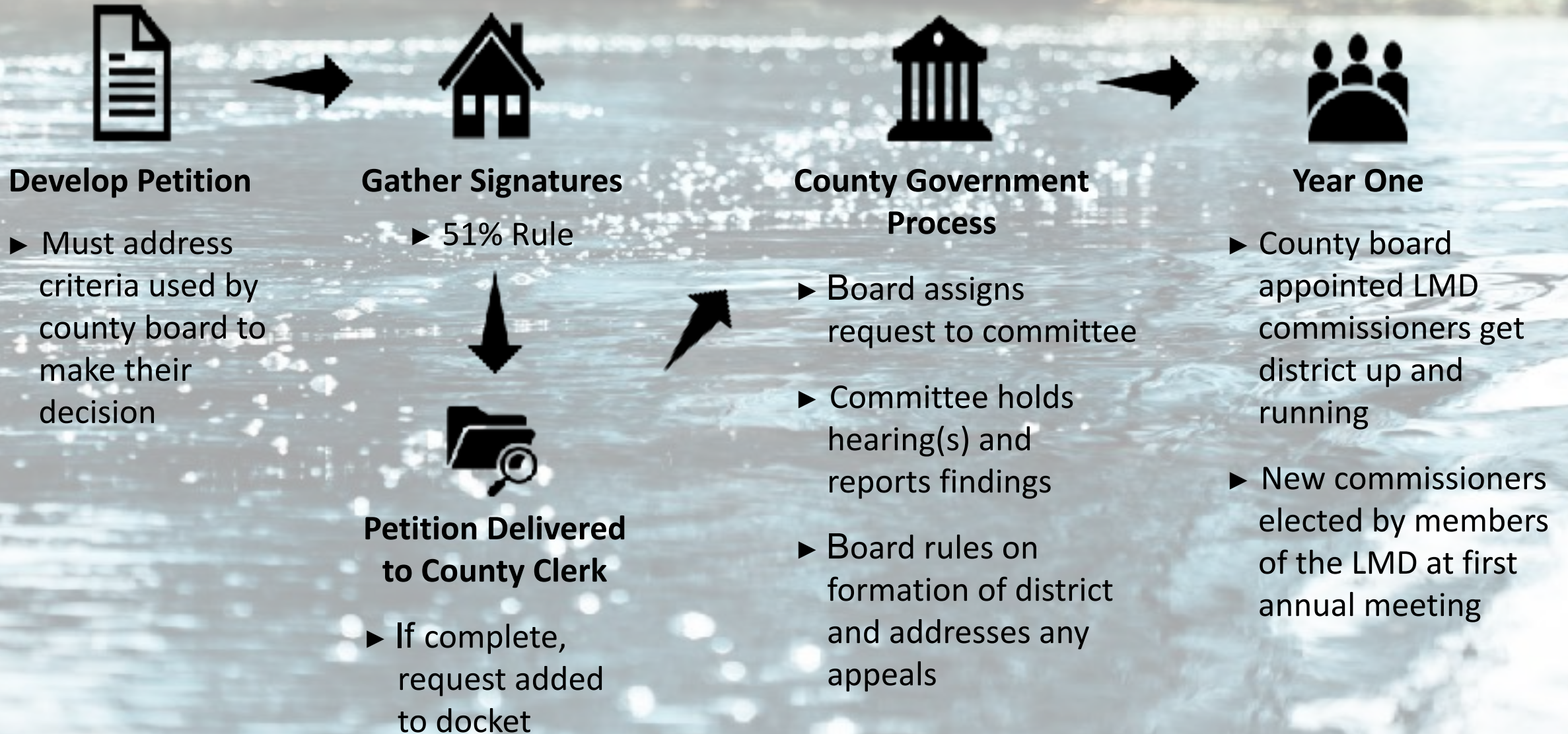
## ▶ Lake Associations

- Organizations similar to homeowners' groups
- Typically volunteer
- May be incorporated
- May be tax exempt via 501(c)(3)
- “Qualified” lake associations are WI DNR grant eligible

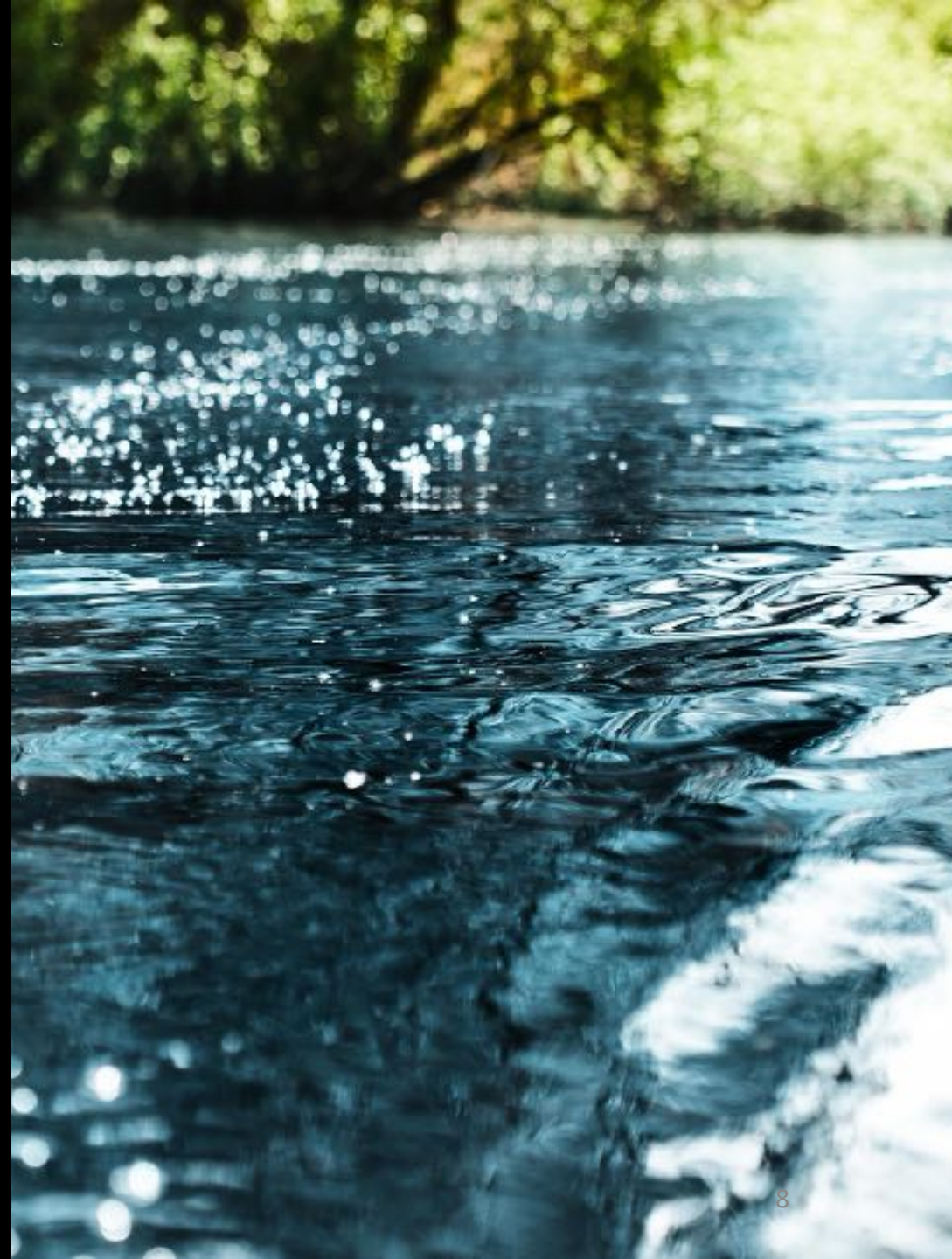
# Forming a Lake Management District for Rock Lake

- ▶ Landowners petition to the county board
  - When lake extends across several communities, the petition must be sent to the county board
    - City council approvals are required
    - State statute does not reference need for town board approvals

# County Petition is the Most Common Process for LMD Formation



# Funding a Lake Management District (LMD)





# Funding Opportunities

- ▶ Low to no-interest loans from the State
- ▶ Local contributions
- ▶ DNR grants
- ▶ Taxation

# Determining the Rate of Taxation

- ▶ In this example, we first set the operating budget to determine how much money is needed. This becomes the total tax levy.
  - Note: The total tax levy could be determined first, and the budget made to fit
- ▶ For our example we will use a budget of \$200,000
  - This number approximates the total approved for the Lake Ripley 2024 budget
  - The tax levy or budget number is the numerator in our fraction
- ▶ Total assessed value of lake lots and lake access becomes the denominator
  - For Rock Lake we estimated the total assessed value to be ~ \$270,000,000

# What Does This Mean for a Property Owner in the LMD?

## Rate Calculation

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Operating Budget} / \text{Total Assessed Property Values} &= \$200,000 / \$270,000,000 \\ &= 0.000740741 \end{aligned}$$

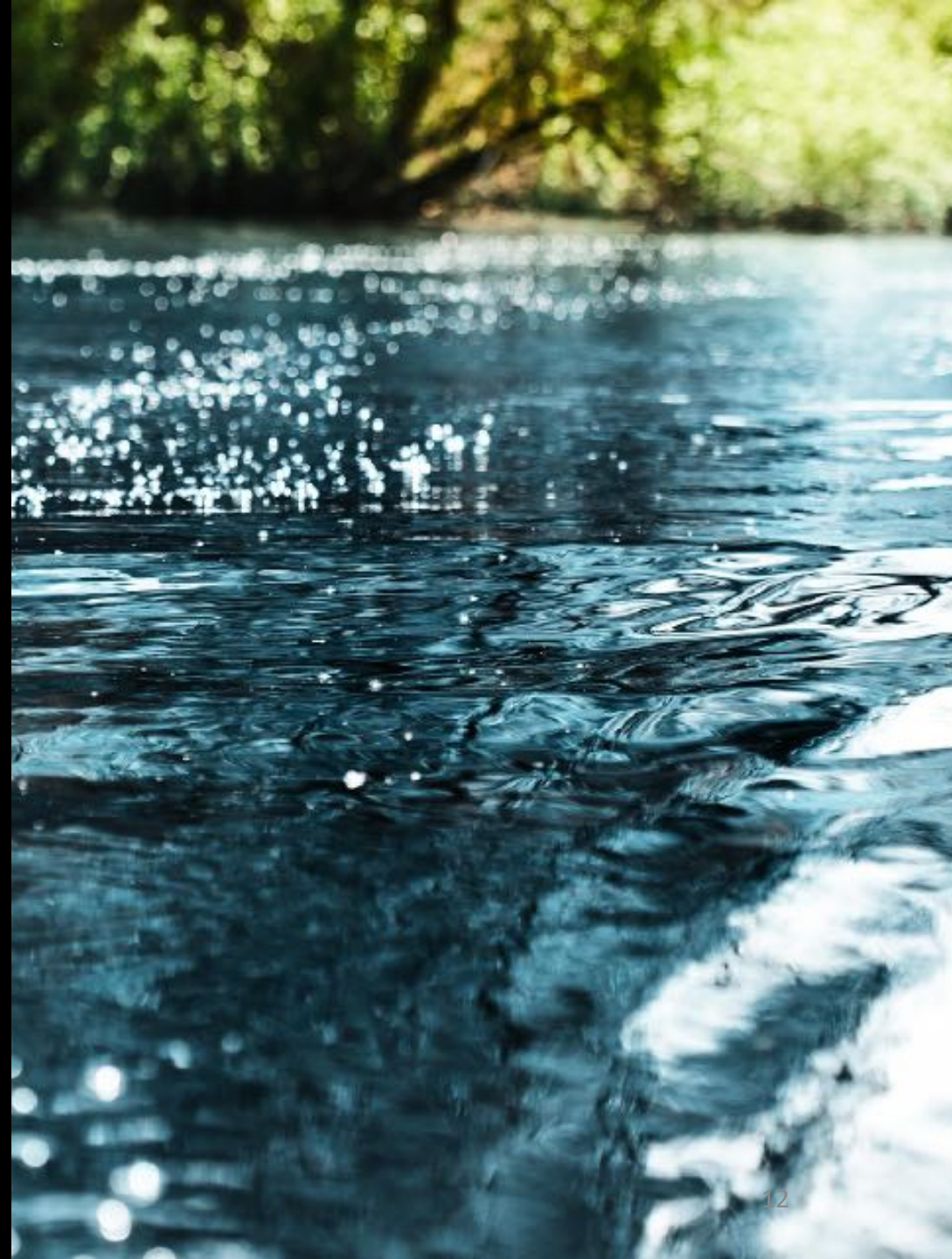
## Example

Property Value = \$500,000

Rate of Taxation = 0.000740741 (~ 74¢ per \$1,000)

Owner Tax Levy = (\$500,000) X (0.000740741) = \$370.37

# Why an LMD Might Make Sense for Rock Lake



# Is an LMD Worth \$370/year Compared to Our Current Lake Management Structure?

- ▶ Rock Lake management and care falls to many different governmental and voluntary organizations (See 2018 Lake Management Plan)

- Town of Lake Mills
- City of Lake Mills (Advisory)
- Lake Mills City Parks Board
- WI Dept of Natural Resources
- Jefferson County Soil Builders
- Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department
- Joint Rock Lake Committee
- Rock Lake Improvement Association

- ▶ No organization controls all facets of lake management, care, and protection for future generations

# A Chance to be Proactive

- ▶ Most LMD are formed because of serious lake issues
  - **We are not there, yet, but there are concerns:**
    - Average phosphorus concentrations are increasing
    - The average number of rare and intolerant fish species found at sampling sites declined from 2004 - 2017
    - The DNR has designated adjoining water bodies as impaired due to excess nutrients
      - Mud Lake (2018)
      - Rock Creek (2022)
    - Understanding and controlling sources of bacteria that lead to beach advisories and closures
    - Lake level
    - Negative impacts caused by wake boats

# Advantages of an LMD for Rock Lake

## ► An LMD can:

- Provide the structure needed to foster a working partnership between lake stakeholders and the multiple current management groups
- Concentrate on the long-term quality of Rock Lake by putting a forward-focused vision and mission statement in place
  - Protect, enhance, improve, rehabilitate, restore
- Be the organization responsible for monitoring and oversight of projects described in the Rock Lake Management Plan
- Access multiple funding sources such as State loans, grants from various organizations, and taxation, which can be used to fund projects and activities important to members of the district
- Represent the purest form of active democracy
  - All lake property owners have a voice in lake management and control the budget

# SUMMARY

## ▶ **The proposed LMD would:**

- Be a unified voice to provide long term care for Rock Lake and provide a means to accumulate the funds needed to protect it
- Work to protect and improve the quality and enjoyment of Rock Lake

## ▶ **To do this the LMD would:**

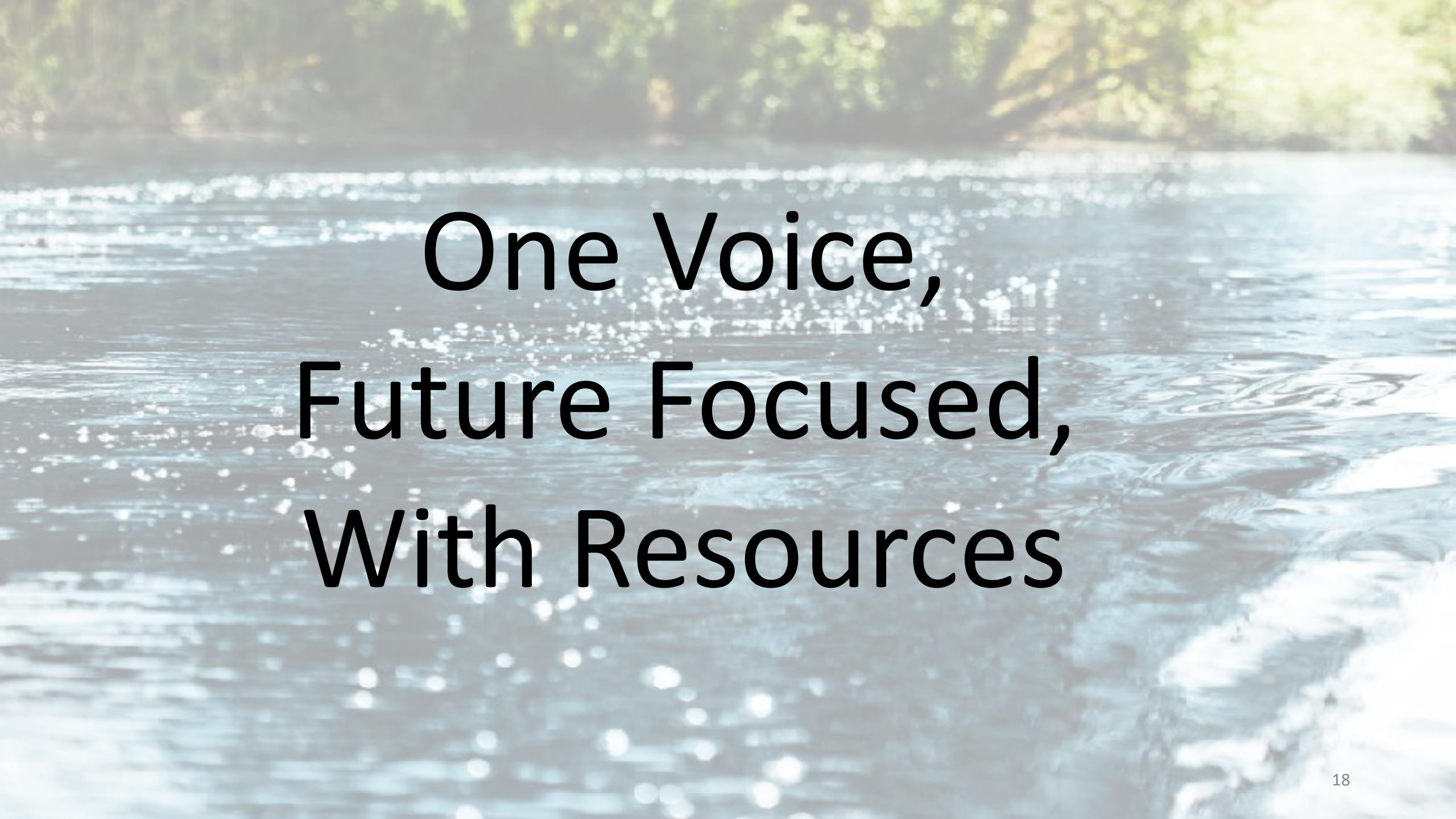
- Accumulate funding for programming to protect Rock Lake and collect data required to inform and support our decisions and positions
- Obtain grants, where possible, to help offset project and data collection costs
- Advocate to and partner with governing bodies and other entities using credible resources that support our positions and help achieve our goals



# Thank You

Questions, comments, need more information, want to get involved?

Contact us!



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With Resources