

Worksheet A

Focus Areas and Potential Projects

Purpose of Worksheet A

Worksheet A – “Focus Areas and Potential Projects”, was designed to help the visioning session participants identify which topics or focus areas that they thought the Friends of the Sauk River should address. Three questions were used to frame group discussions facilitated with this worksheet including:

- What are priority issues for the future of your watershed?
- What issues we can do something about, i.e., are something that the Friends of the Sauk River organization can have control over or otherwise influence?
- What can be readily initiated with some signs of success or measurable results in 2 – 3 years?

Six focus areas, as suggested by the FSR board members, were listed on Worksheet A. Additionally, an “other” category was provided on the worksheet to allow participants to state specific concerns they may have, but were not provided on the list. The six focus areas included the following:

1. Water Quality.
2. Shoreland/Rural Development.
3. Urban Development.
4. Feedlots and Cropland.
5. Ditches and Drainage.
6. Recreation and Public Access.

Individual Response and Small Group Discussions

In the small discussion groups, participants were first instructed to check off three focus areas that they individually felt were most important. The small groups next discussed and developed a consensus at their table and chose three focus areas. After all of the groups had completed their deliberations, a spokesperson from each group gave an overview to the viewpoints of the entire group the focus areas they came to a consensus on.

Full Group Consensus

As representatives from each small group presented their findings, it quickly became clear that the group of citizens had definite priorities for the FSR to consider. Water quality and shoreland/rural development were the two highest rated focus areas. The third and fourth highest rated focus areas were urban development and recreation and public access.

Potential Projects

In addition to the prioritizing of the focus areas, participants were asked to brainstorm potential projects for each of the focus areas. The following is a list of the suggested project ideas:

Water Quality

- Support Earth Day clean up projects and river and lake clean up projects.
- Volunteer water monitoring. Increase citizen involvement.
- Test specific sites and identify specific water quality problem areas or contributors.
- Send out mailings on water quality topics.
- Identify sources of e coli bacteria.
- Keep, establish and maintain natural buffers and corridors. Support efforts by other organizations and landowners.
- Support existing monitoring.
- Identify the appropriate use of water that doesn't damage it, i.e. what recreational use by people is appropriate.
- More broadly inform the public of the monitoring results. Educate the citizenry.
- Identify safe swimming areas.
- Where are heavy sedimentation areas in the watershed?

Shoreland/Rural Development

- Encourage low impact development.
- Support the development of a green space program by local units of government.
- Encourage proper setbacks for shoreland development to protect different types or kinds of lakes and rivers.
- Liaison to the SRWD.
- Promote sustainable development concepts.
- Preserve undeveloped shoreland areas, some places should not be developed at all. These special areas should be preserved, bought by ? and put into easements, etc.
- Maintenance and restoration of natural habitats along the river for diversity of plant and animal species.
- Help landowners better care for natural areas along lakes and rivers.
- Develop incentives for riparian landowners to leave natural areas alone.
- Support education efforts on shoreland and rural development issues.
- Keep abreast of local communities and development proposals.

Urban Development

- Facilitate information sharing and discussions with city council members, township and county officials, planning commissioners, and citizens on land use planning topics.
- Promote sustainable development concepts.
- Improve stormwater management.
- Educate homeowners on use of lawn fertilizers and runoff effects.

- Support existing groups working in this area.
- The Friends should work closely with local governments on development issues.
- Keep pressure on agencies and local governments to enforce regulations.
- Follow planning and zoning issues in the watershed.

Feedlots and Cropland

- Attend and monitor county meetings regarding the management and regulation of feedlots.
- Facilitate information sharing and discussions with city council members, township and county officials, planning commissioners, and citizens on feedlot management topics.
- Facilitate farmer forums, community discussions on managing feedlots.
- Identify the economics of feedlots and crops.
- Identify what amounts of nutrients, fertilizers and pesticides are being applied.
- Support the development of more riparian buffers.
- Isolate rural development from feedlots.
- Map and identify feedlots. Identify and categorize feedlots and cropland.

Ditches and Drainage

- Develop an inventory of the ditches.
- Work with landowners to inventory drainage systems.
- Distribute information on ditches.
- Where are all the culverts and flowage systems?

Recreation and Public Access

- Support the celebration of the Sauk River and its recreational opportunities.
- Pursue DNR and other grants.
- Improve and increase access to the river.
- Connect parks and trails with the river.
- Clean up projects by recreation groups.
- Increase the means for the public and local officials to see that problems really do exist in this area.
- Provide and distribute more information on our recreation opportunities throughout the watershed.
- Raise the profile of river events.
- Designate the canoe route.
- Distribute maps of the river and canoe facilities.
- Support the canoe race.
- “Talk Sauk!”