

# News Release



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## For Immediate Release

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## Wright County Lakes Get Boost from Xcel Energy Foundation

A \$10,000 gift from the Xcel Energy Foundation will help eight Wright County lake associations improve water quality through the Initiative Foundation's Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership program.

The program has helped more than 100 central Minnesota lake and river associations to identify opportunities and enact a plan for improving or preserving water quality.

Xcel's gift will allow members of the following lake associations to support water, shoreline and habitat preservation efforts:

- Ann Lake, near Howard Lake
- Bass Lake, near Annandale
- Big Waverly Lake, near Waverly
- Lake Francis, near Kingston
- Howard Lake, near Howard Lake
- Little Waverly Lake, near Waverly
- Lake Mary, near Howard Lake
- Maple Lake, near Maple Lake

All eight Wright County lakes share concerns about invasive species and excessive nutrients, said Don Hickman, senior program manager at the Initiative Foundation.

"As an environmental leader, we support initiatives that protect natural resources and foster an ethic of conservation and preservation," said Jim Garness, Xcel Energy Foundation senior representative. "The Initiative Foundation's lake and river improvement projects in Wright County will contribute to a healthy environment, benefiting both the water resources and the residents of that area."

Xcel also contributed a total of \$16,000 to the Healthy Lakes & Rivers Partnership in 2007 and 2008.

"We are honored to serve as a conduit for corporations like Xcel Energy to give back to their communities," said Kathy Gaalswyk, Initiative Foundation president. "Wright County is

experiencing rapid growth, which is good for the economy, but this company understands that it must not come at the expense of lakes and the environment.”

Each association will participate in two leadership training sessions and then host a community visioning meeting to develop a strategic management plan for their lake. After plans are complete, each association is eligible for up to \$7,000 in grant support.

*Serving central Minnesota's 14 counties, the Initiative Foundation offers loans to businesses, grants to nonprofits, and a variety of leadership programs that enable citizens to build stronger communities.*

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