

Sociological Survey Summary

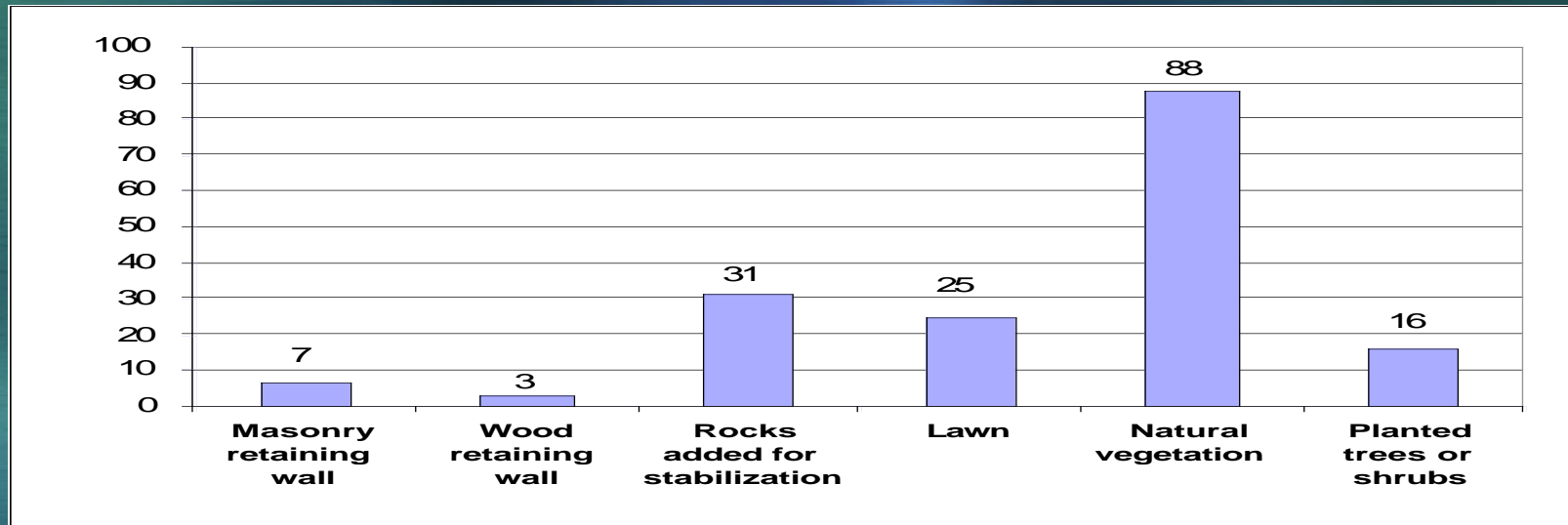
*Kirsten Cahow-Scholtes
Eau Claire County
Land Conservationist*

About You

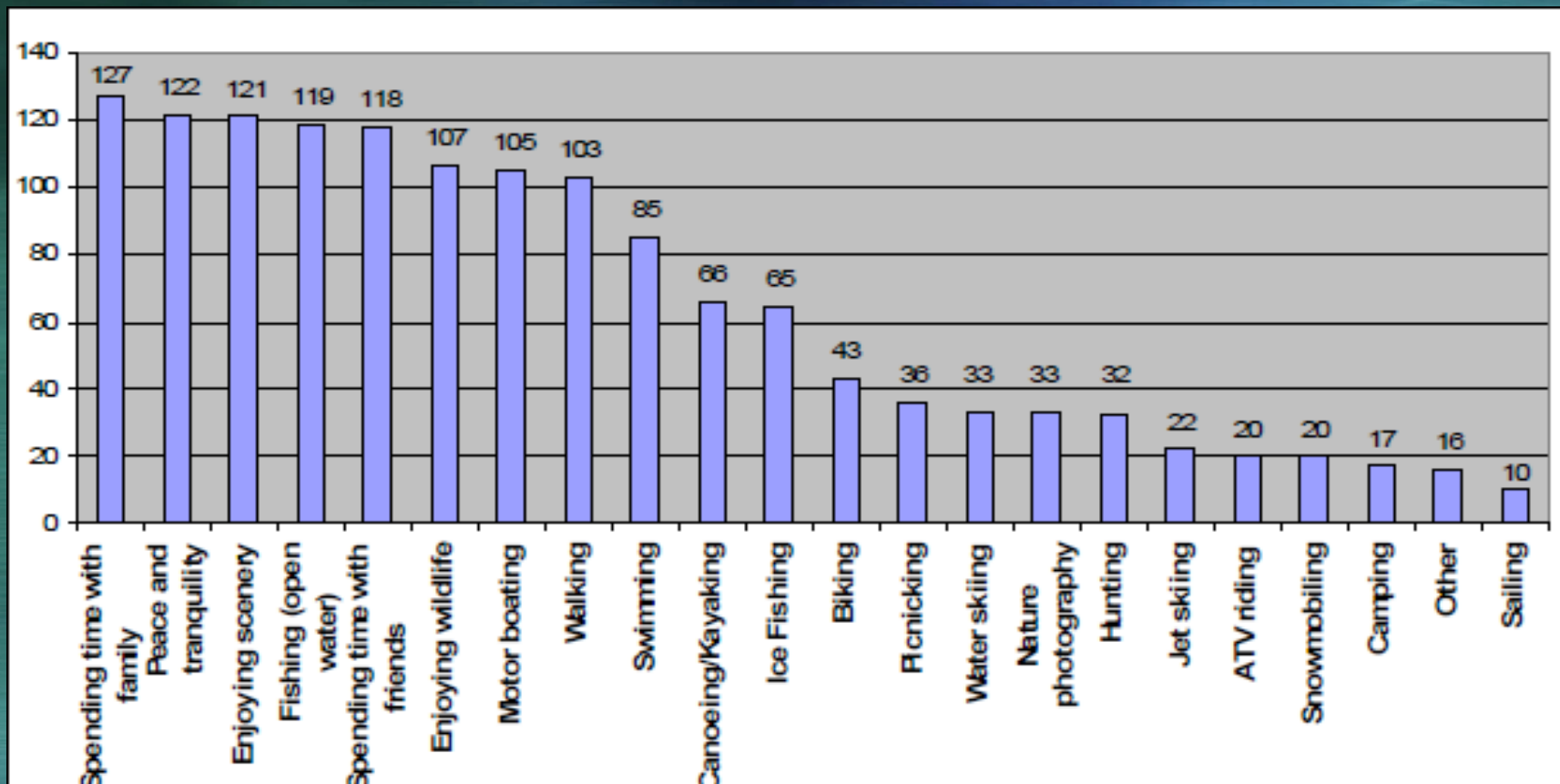
- *36% own or rent waterfront property (51% null)*
- *13% don't live on or own property on the lake*
- *39% part-time residents and 26% permanent*
- *47% who owned have lived there >11 years*

About Your Waterfront

- 46% of you felt you had an adequate riparian buffer
- 12% felt their buffer was inadequate
- 12% were unsure and 30% didn't answer



What Activities Do You Enjoy on the Lake?



- 21% of you said improving water quality would improve your recreational enjoyment

How's the Fishing?



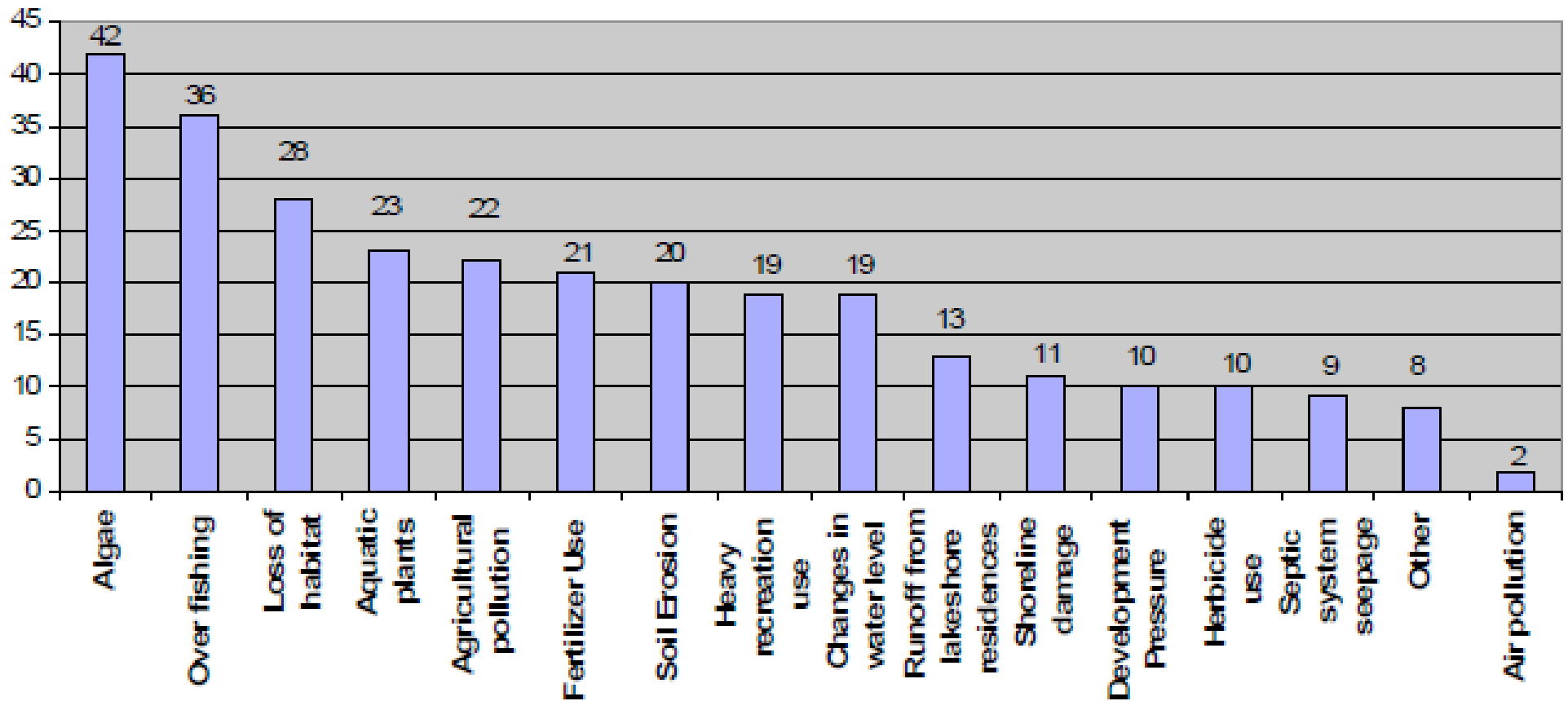
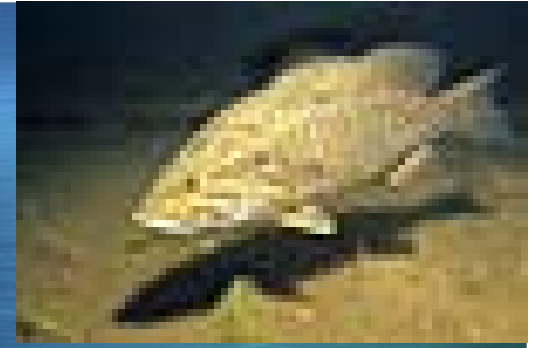
- *39% rated fishing average, 25% fair and 14% very good*
- *36% caught fish most of the time and another 36% caught fish some of the time*
- *59% said some of the fish are big enough to keep and 16% said most of the fish are big enough to keep*
- *30% thought fishing had stayed the same, 33% declined and 7% thought it had improved*



Who Are Doing the Fishing?

- *How long have you been fishing on Lake Eau Claire?*
 - *18% have 11-20 years of experience*
 - *46% have been fishing > 20 years*
 - *13% have 1-5 years of experience on the lake*
- *How often do you fish on Lake Eau Claire?*
 - *26% fished weekly*
 - *28% fished 1-2 times per month*

If You Feel the Fishing Has Declined... Why?



What are your opinions about coarse woody habitat (CWH)?



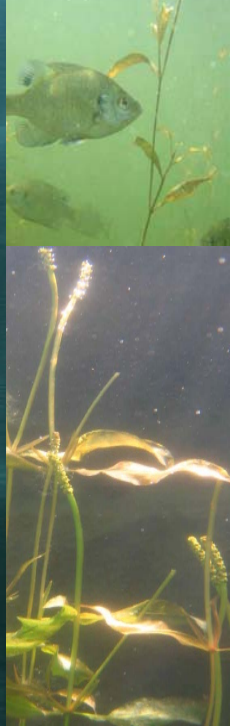
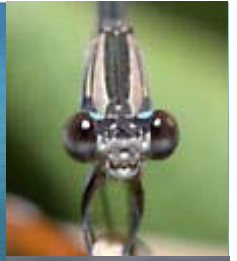
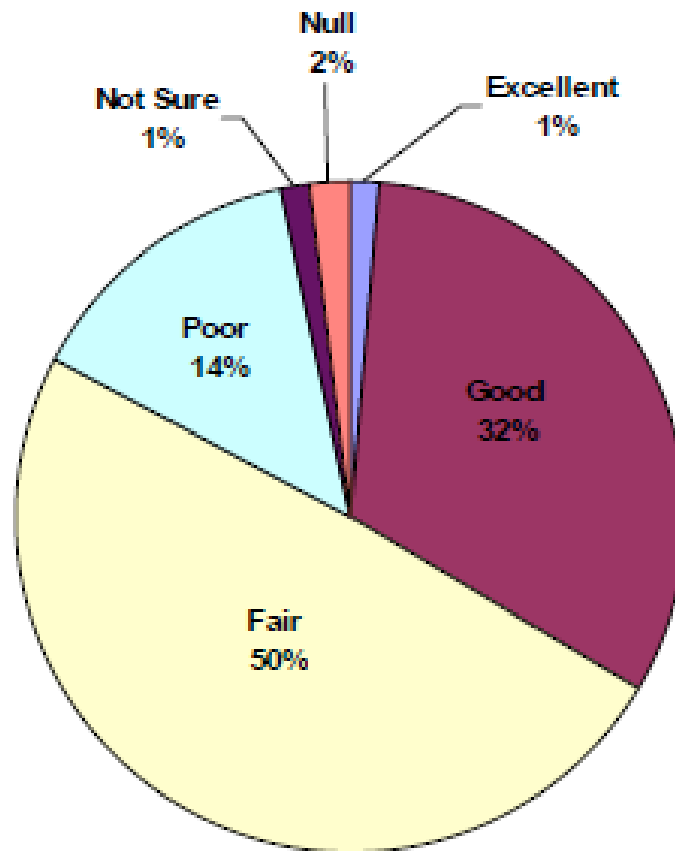
- *Is the current amount of CWH adequate?*
 - *32% thought yes*
 - *35% were unsure*
 - *30% thought it wasn't*
- *Would the fishery improve with more CWH?*
 - *44% thought yes*
 - *40% unsure*
 - *13% thought no it wouldn't*
- *29% said they would be willing to add CWH along their property!*

What are your opinions about wildlife and habitat?

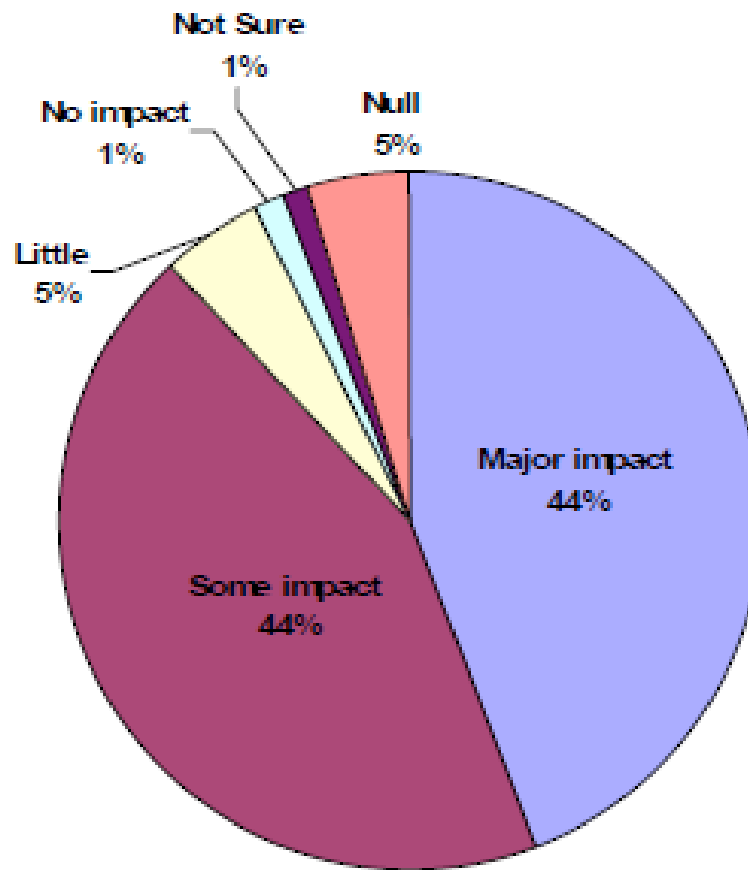


- *71% said wildlife is very important and 23% said it was somewhat important*
- *56% thought wildlife habitat had stayed the same, 14% thought it had declined and 14% thought it had improved*
- *What are your thoughts about how much aquatic plants are present?*
 - *42% thought there is dense growth of aquatic plants*
 - *30% weren't sure*
 - *15% thought the amount of aquatic plants were just right*

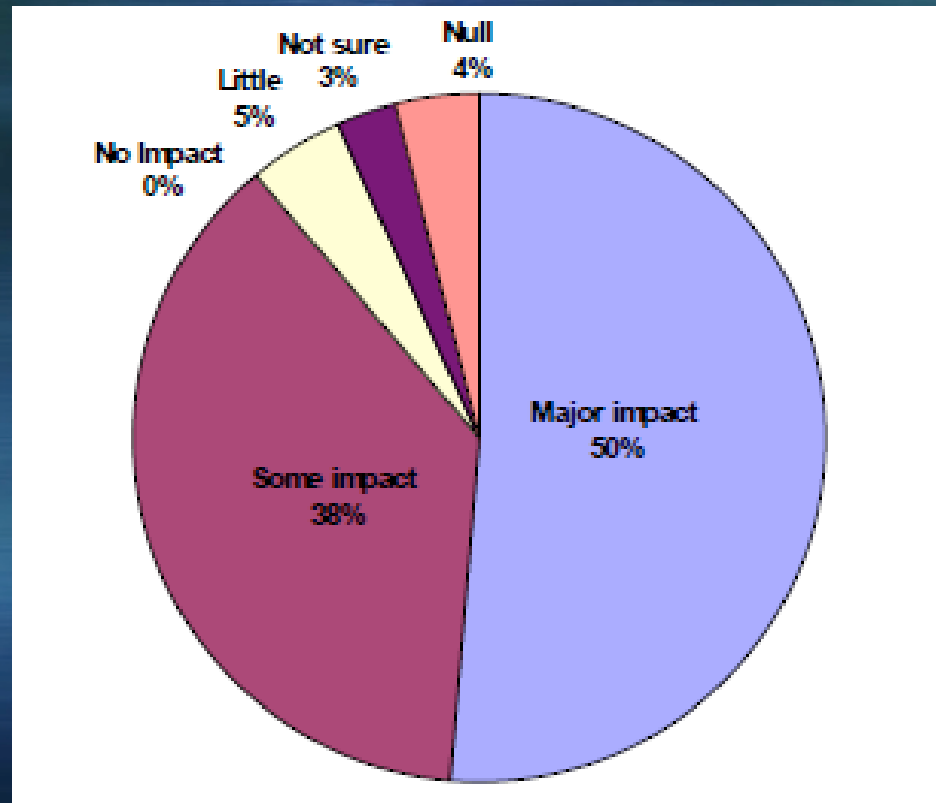
What is your current opinion of the water quality of Lake Eau Claire?



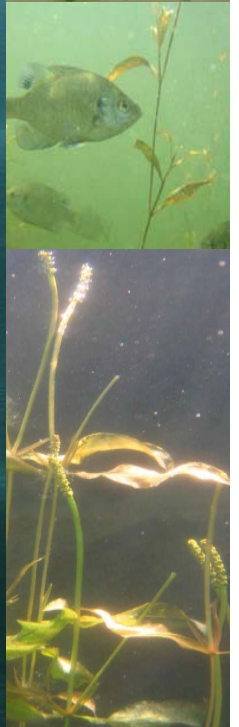
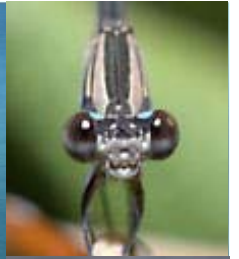
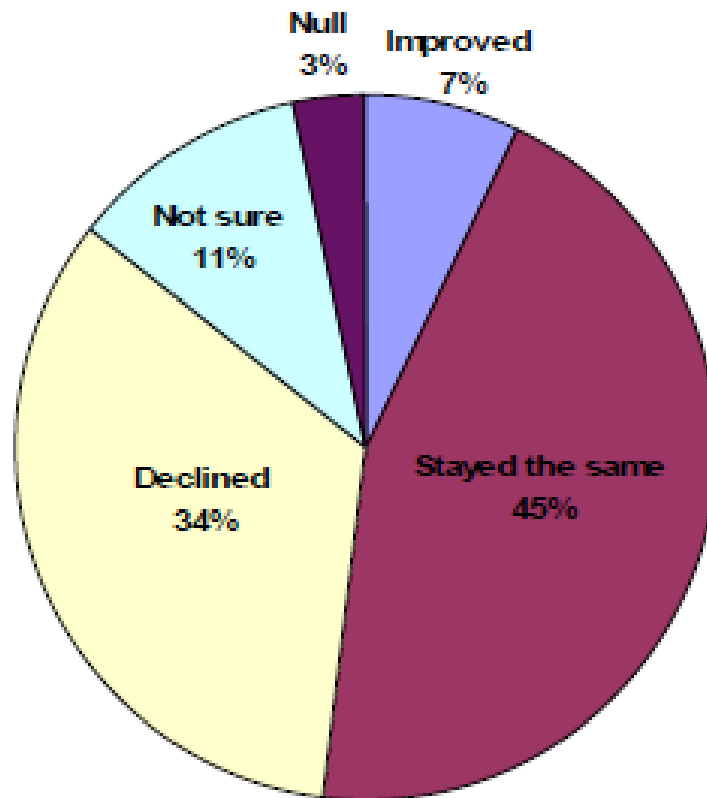
How much impact does the water quality have on your personal enjoyment?



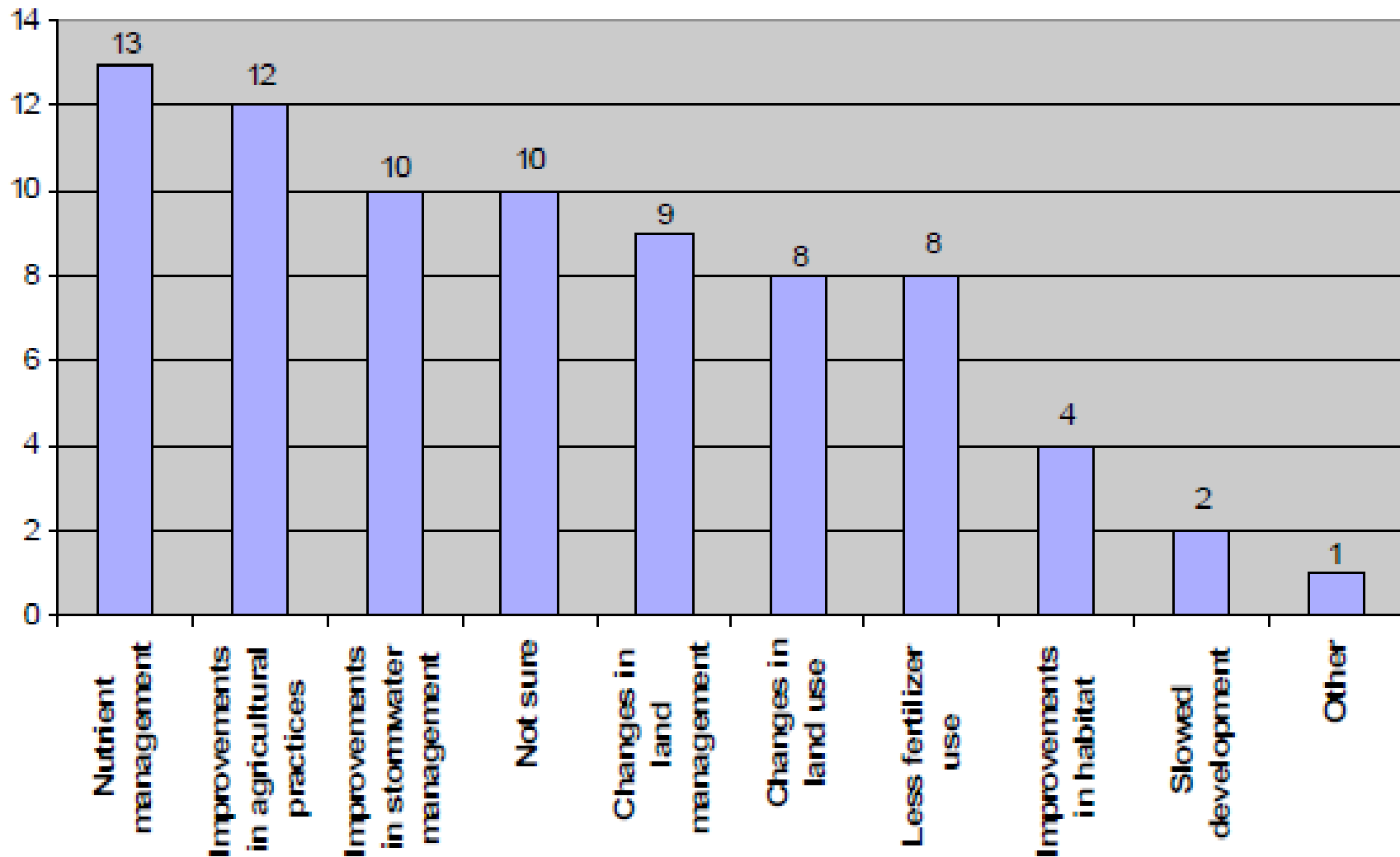
How much impact does the water quality have on your perceived economic value?



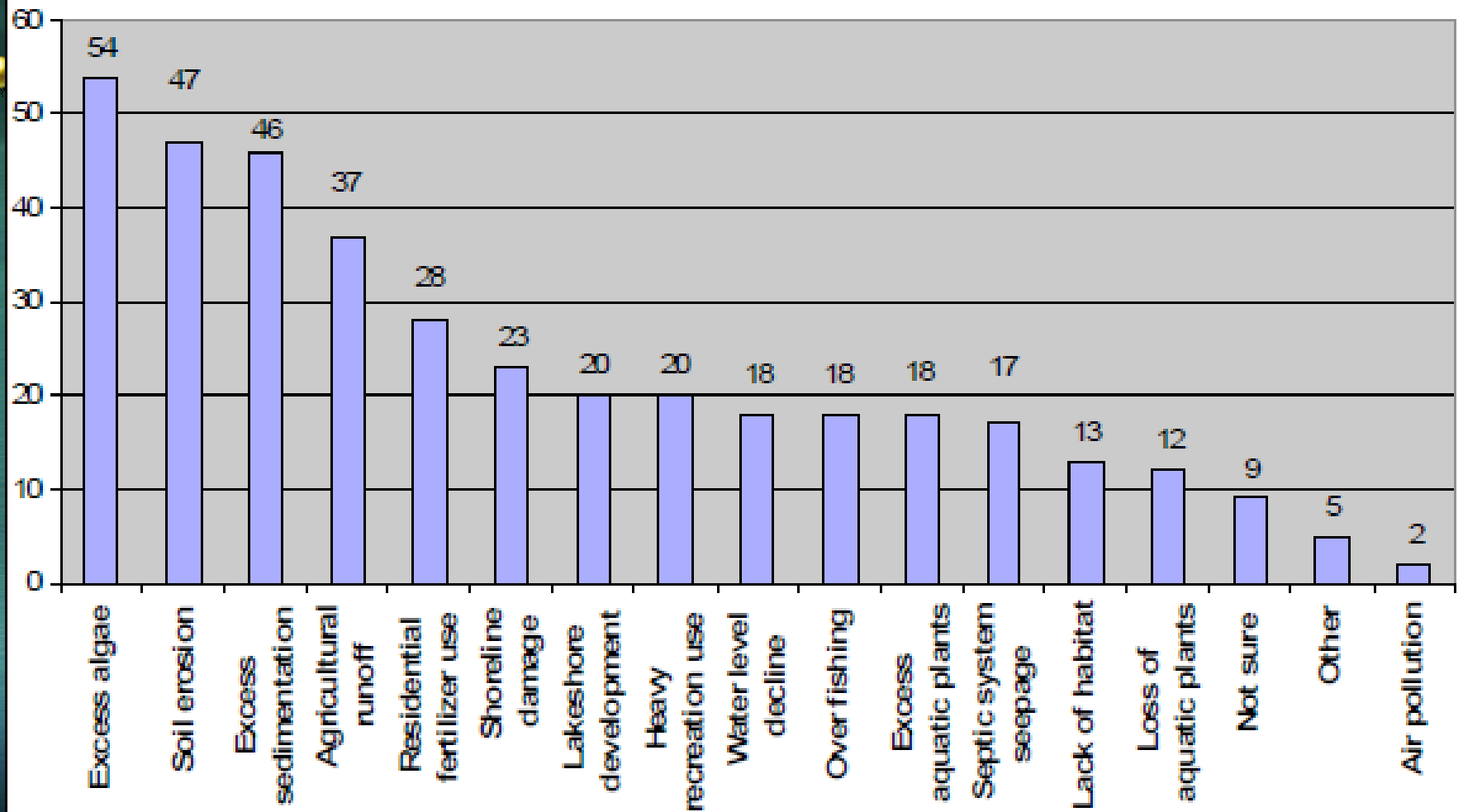
How do you feel the water quality has changed in the last five years?



If you feel the water quality has improved what has contributed to that?

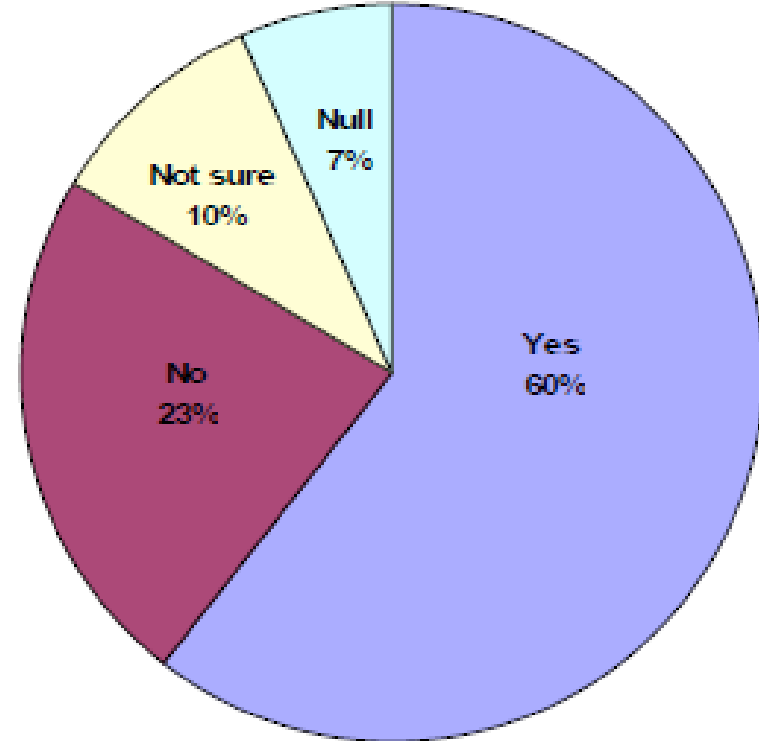
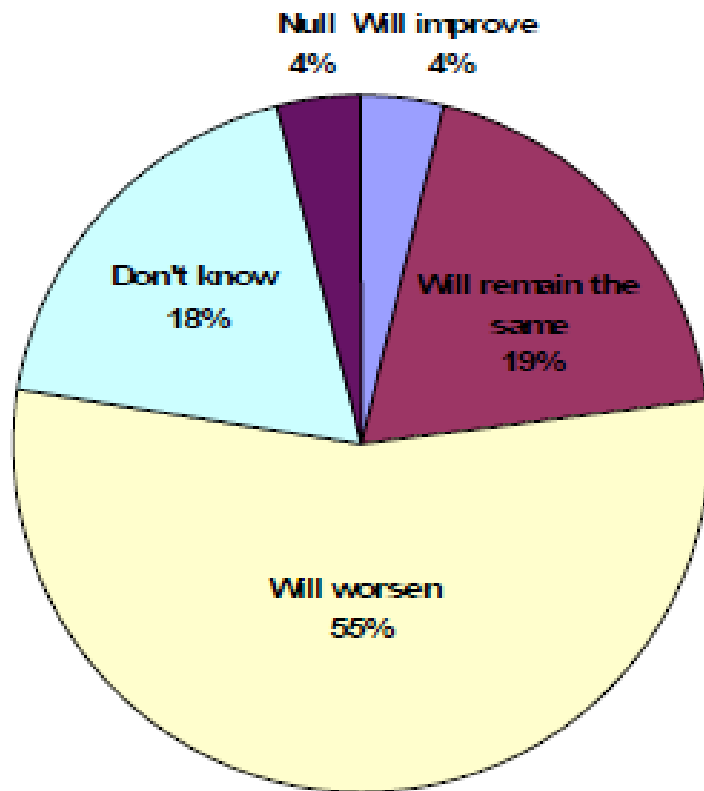


If you feel the water quality has declined, what are the primary causes?

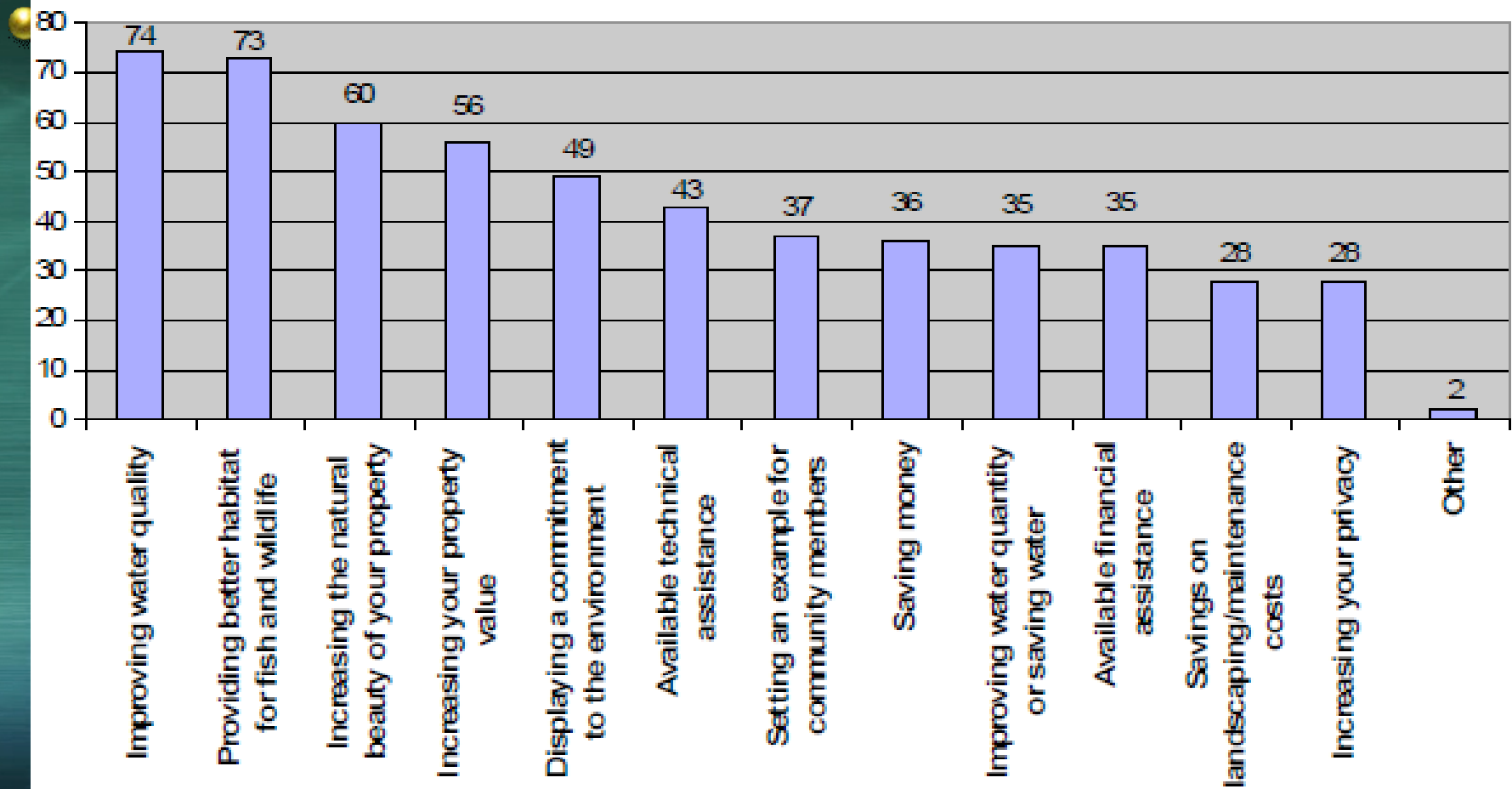


If current land used practices continue, what is the future outlook?

If the lake was restored to a healthier condition, would you use it more?



If changing how you manage your land would improve the quality of the lake, what might motivate you to change your land management?



Fisheries and Habitat Goal #1:

Protect and improve the aquatic life of Lake Eau Claire, including a self-sustaining fishery and diverse aquatic plant community.

Objectives for Goal #1:

- *Monitor the lake's fish population every four years to assess trends in the fish community. Under WDNR's lake monitoring program, the next scheduled survey would take place in 2012. However under WDNR's treaty assessment program, a fisheries survey is planned for 2013. In conjunction with this survey, an angler creel survey also will be conducted. Data from this fish survey will be compared to the 2008 survey, and information gathered from the creel survey will be used to evaluate the desires and perspectives of anglers on Lake Eau Claire as well as the angler's impact on the fish community. (WDNR)*
- *Adopt an annual voluntary creel survey program that will be combined with current invasive species surveillance program at the main boat landings. The creel survey will assist by providing more data on fishing experiences of angler's and may assist in overcoming some of the current negative public perception about the lake. (LECA and BCR oversight by WDNR)*

Objectives for Goal #1:

- *Explore the possibility of establishing slow-no-wake areas around mid-lake plant beds to protect them from boat and jet ski activity (LECA, Ludington and Bridge Creek Townships).*
- *Continue stocking muskellunge in Lake Eau Claire on a biennial basis (odd-numbered years) at a rate of one large fingerling per acre.*
- *Within the confines of natural variations, maintain fish populations at densities and size structure that are desirable for anglers. Using 2008 and 2013 survey data, evaluate population density, size structure, growth and mortality rates of the dominant gamefish and panfish species in Lake Eau Claire to determine whether or not regulation changes are needed to improve the quantity and/or quality of these populations.*

Fisheries and Habitat Goal #2:

Protect and improve in-lake and shoreline habitat to promote a healthy and diverse community of aquatic life in Lake Eau Claire. (Include objectives for shoreline habitat management, coarse woody habitat, aquatic plant management, etc.)

Objectives for Goal #2:

- *Educate riparian landowners of the importance of coarse woody habitat (CWH) and aquatic plants in the lake to the community health of fish and other aquatic life in the lake. (ECC-LCD, LECA)*
- *Develop a plan to increase CWH in the lake. LECA will send letters out to lakeshore property owners about the plan to improve CWH and solicit participation in a voluntary tree drop campaign. The Habitat Committee of LECA conducted a visual survey of the lakeshore and identified trees that are likely to fall into the lake within the next few years. To prevent shoreline erosion problems, these trees could be dropped into the lake to enhance littoral zone habitat. (LECA, WDNR, ECC-LCD)*

Objectives for Goal #2:

- *Conduct tree drops along the shoreline to increase the amount of CWH in the littoral zone. Along developed shorelines, it is desirable to have a minimum of 1-2 pieces of CWH per 100 ft. of shoreline. Along undeveloped shorelines, it is desirable to have a minimum of 3-6 pieces of CWH per 100 feet of shoreline. Tree drops should not be used in lake areas with moderate to high density aquatic plant populations. (LECA, WDNR)*
- *Install log fish cribs in deeper portions of the lake to increase the amount of deep water habitat available to fish. Fish cribs must have a minimum clearance of five feet of water over the top of the structure (LECA, WDNR).*

Objectives for Goal #2:

- *Install half-log structures in the littoral zone to increase spawning habitat for smallmouth bass. These structures must be placed in water less than five feet deep, and will provide spawning habitat along shorelines where tree drops may not be possible or desirable (LECA, WDNR).*
- *Conduct a critical habitat designation survey of Lake Eau Claire in 2010. WDNR will utilize aquatic plant surveys conducted in 2003 and 2009 and a team of biologists and regulatory staff to determine the type and amount of habitat in the lake that is critical for protecting water quality, wildlife, fish and other aquatic life as well as aesthetics. Once a critical habitat designation has been completed, it can be used as a tool by the lake association, Eau Claire County, WDNR and others to protect these important lake features. (WDNR, ECC, LECA)*

