

## Portage County Community Members Recognized for Graduating Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute

*Pictured below (left to right): Jim Zach, MD; Rep. Katrina Shankland; Tracy Arnold; Sarah Hull*



STEVENS POINT- On October 8, several Portage County residents were recognized as part of the Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute's 2021 graduation ceremony at the Aldo Leopold Shack near Baraboo. Participants Jim Zach, Tracy Arnold, Sarah Hull, and State Representative Katrina Shankland were recognized by DNR Assistant Secretary Todd Amb, UW-Madison Division of Extension Dean Karl Martin, and Wisconsin Lakes Board Vice President Derek Kavanaugh for completing their training and joining the institute's 13<sup>th</sup> graduating class.

The Institute's mission is to assist citizen lake leaders in developing both their technical and people skills, ultimately enriching their communities and the waters within them.

"The individuals that participate in this program are true leaders who have stepped forward to protect our lakes for future generations," explained Sara Windjue, **Leadership and Capacity Development Specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Extension Lakes Program**. "They are committed to developing partnerships and facilitating the learning of others in order to build capacity which will ensure the protection and restoration of thousands of lakes across Wisconsin."

"Lake Leaders has contributed limnological knowledge and skills to my medical and life science background to better advocate for our collective environmental welfare, and also meeting many people who share those environmental interests," said **Jim Zach, MD**.

**Sarah Hull, Water Resources Specialist at UW-Stevens Point's Center for Watershed Science**, shared, "Lake Leaders has inspired and empowered me to become a resource for lake groups seeking to solve water quality issues."

**Tracy Arnold, Conservation Technician for the Portage County Land and Water Conservation Division**, added, "The Lake Leaders Institute is extremely helpful in building a solid foundation with everything involving the water resources of Wisconsin. We gained a better understanding of limnology, watershed assessments, effective leadership, resource partnerships and civic engagement tools to make a beneficial difference for our waters. I'm excited to put what I have gained into motion when assisting lake and river residents working through the issues that can come with owning shoreland property."

**Rep. Katrina Shankland continued**, "It was inspiring and motivating to come together with people from across the state, including many wonderful leaders from Portage County, who all share a commitment to protecting our lakes. This was a meaningful opportunity to learn from each other. Our state is well-known for its incredible water resources, and we must do all we can to protect and preserve that legacy with thoughtful management of our lakes. I'm committed to continuing that work in the Legislature as a member of the Assembly Committee on Environment. I truly appreciate the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership's role in educating and empowering me and other Lake Leaders and look forward to working with them more."

*The Wisconsin Lake Leaders Institute, organized by the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, draws participants from across the state to take part in a series of in-person seminars and online meetings to gain a better understanding of lake ecology and how to work with state and local governments to ensure lakes receive the attention they need. The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership is made up of the Extension Lakes Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the citizen advocacy organization Wisconsin Lakes.*

*Since its inception, over 300 participants have graduated from the Institute and have made significant contributions in addressing a host of diverse water management challenges. The program has also received national attention as an effective strategy to enhance lake stewardship and protection. Recruitment for the 14th "crew" of Lake Leader Institute participants will begin this winter. For more information about the program, reach out to the Extension Lakes program staff at (715)-346-2116, uwexplakes@uwsp.edu, or online at the following link: <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/lakeleaders/default.aspx>*

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