

## **Where does the money go?!**

You've probably been asking yourself that during this downturn in the economy. Sorry, RLIA can't tell your teen to cut down on texting, but we can tell you about one phase of RLIA funds---the funds that are spent to enable us to attain three times that amount in grant money from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Now that's a good investment!

How does the grant process work?

The WDNR sponsors Lake Management Planning Large and Small Scale Grants for the study and protection of Wisconsin lakes. The grants can fund 75% of project costs up to \$10,000 and must include elements to help develop or support a Lake Management Plan. The remaining 25% must be provided by the applicant. A portion of that 25% can be donated labor. Multiple grants can be awarded for one lake, but lifetime funding is limited to \$100,000.

The grant process occurs biannually, with application deadlines of February 1st and August 1<sup>st</sup>. The applications must detail the work that will be performed and why it is necessary for the betterment of the lake.

Each of eleven WDNR regional personnel preliminarily scores each application in her/his area based on criteria detailing the need and potential gains. All of the regional personnel then meet and discuss the merits and final score of each application. A statewide priority list is created based on the final scores which, along with funding available, determines the approved grants. The official list of funded grants is published approximately three to four months after the application deadline.

Once a grant is awarded, the DNR may advance a portion of their share for immediate funding. The remaining money is released after a final report is submitted upon completion of the project. The final report outlines the completed work and findings, and it must be made available to the public.

Another type of grant is the DNR Lake Protection and Classification Grant, which can be applied for after planning grant projects have been completed, and which funds the implementation of planning grant recommendations up to 75% of the costs (similar to the planning grants) but covers up to \$200,000. The review process is also similar to the planning grants but is much more stringent and detailed. The nature of these projects typically dictates a pre-

application meeting with DNR personnel before the May 1st deadline.

RLIA has received several of the Planning Grants and has applied for two more. Hopefully, while the money GOES, it will also COME. That would be good economic news!