

**Upper Sugar River Watershed Association
2014-2019 Strategic Plan
Board Approved (2/10/2014)**

USRWA Mission

The mission of USRWA is to provide leadership for continuous resource improvement through strategic partnerships that benefit the watershed's land, water and people.

USRWA Vision

USRWA will serve as a steward of the river and its upland environments, and encourage projects and behaviors that enhance the quality of these resources and mitigate issues such as sedimentation and phosphorus runoff. The organization will facilitate community engagement and new partnership formation by implementing innovative approaches to solving watershed problems that are both pragmatic and cost-effective. Through these measures, USRWA will be known as a vital voice in the community that advocates for the river and bolsters awareness and watershed literacy.

Guiding Principles

- The future. We do this work to benefit future generations.
- Knowledge. We need to understand the watershed in order to improve.
- Partnerships. We cannot do this work alone.
- Healthy water. A high quality, healthy water resource is a benefit to all.
- Enjoyment. When people have positive experiences, they are more likely to become stewards.

Goals

1. Work collaboratively with the farming community to reduce agricultural runoff entering the river.
2. Strengthen the capacity of the USRWA to effectively fulfill its mission.
3. Gather essential data to foster improvements in the watershed.
4. Improve water quality through targeted restoration projects.
5. Engage and educate our members and the community to increase their awareness and appreciation of the Upper Sugar River.

Goals with Objectives

1. Work collaboratively with the farming community to reduce agricultural runoff entering the river
 - a. Connect with farmers that are good stewards of the land
 - b. Create a plan for what USRWA is prepared to provide to farmers considering both the needs of the watershed and farmers
 - c. Learn about what other groups have done to work with farmers in their watershed.
 - d. Learn more about and subsequently promote conservation practices and stewardship efforts that farmers are engaging in within our watershed
 - a) Plan small events, such as dinner, to build relationships with farmers and showcase BMPs implemented by other farmers
 - e. Look for restoration opportunities, especially those that promote a diverse array of strategic partnerships
 - f. Research adaptive management opportunities with Mt. Horeb and MMSD
 - g. Find two locations to install the cattle fences as a pilot project

2. Strengthen the capacity of the USRWA to effectively fulfill its mission
 - a. Improve the board recruitment and orientation process
 - a) Create a board manual
 - b) Conduct an annual board assessment
 - c) Increase board diversity
 - d) Improve board committees
 1. Job descriptions
 2. Committee chairs
 3. Clear delegation of responsibilities
 - b. Amend bylaws to include term limits for board members
 - c. Create a fund development plan to diversify and increase income
 - a) Find roles in fund development for all board members
 - d. Review and update the strategic and annual plans at least once a year
 - e. Ensure staff has adequate resources and direction
 - a) Review staff work plans and work load annually
 - b) Evaluate staff performance annually
 - f. Stay connected to LSRWA and look for opportunities to partner
 - a) Consider a Sugar River Summit biannually to bridge organizations
 - b) Participate in LSRWA board meetings by telephone and attend special events they sponsor

3. Gather essential data to foster improvements in the watershed
 - a. Use status of the watershed report to set priorities
 - a) Look for opportunities to partner with MMSD on Badger Mill Creek
 - b) Collect conductivity data as a surrogate for chloride
 - c) Consider collecting more phosphorus data if adaptive management projects are likely in the watershed
 - d) Consider proactive meetings with the DNR to learn how the data is being used

4. Improve water quality through targeted restoration projects

- a. Aquatic invasive species removal
 - a) Use new strategic plan to identify priorities
 - b. Identify projects, work with partners (such as TU, Badger Fly Fishers, Dane County), secure grants and contract work out to local ecological consulting firms
 - c. Consider Little Underwater Neighborhood Keepers Encompassing Rheotaxic Salmonoids (LUNKERS) and urban stormwater retrofits
 - d. Determine USRWA's role in Bruce Company/Dane County project
 - a) Regularly attend Dane County Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources committee meetings and other pertinent county meetings that influence the direction of the project
 - b) Develop a plan based on the county's goals to be a part of the project
 - e. Consider DNR stream bank improvement priorities
5. Engage and educate our members and the community to increase their awareness and appreciation of the Upper Sugar River watershed
- a. Enhance and promote recreational opportunities
 - a) Keep the river navigable while maintaining the stream's woody habitat
 - b) Install river etiquette signs, location markers and mailboxes with maps and other resources at access points
 - c) Provide updates on the river's paddling status using social media
 - d) Hold paddling and other outdoor events (i.e. Pedal & Paddle)
 - b. Plan field trips that connect to programs
 - a) Water quality monitoring
 - b) AIS
 - c) Farm tour
 - c. Look for partnership opportunities with Blue Mounds Area Project, Natural Resources Foundation, Dane County, LSRWA, UW, etc.
 - d. Hold events to educate our members
 - a) Annual Meeting & Open House
 - b) Paddle & Pig Out in Paoli
 - c) Pedal and Paddle