

B. Project Narrative

1. General Information

Brief History

The Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley was founded in 1995 as a grass roots environmental organization. Its mission is to preserve and promote the special qualities of life in the Lodi Valley. Land use, geographical features, environmental quality and historical heritage comprise issues of central concern. Membership grew quickly after the organization's founding, reflecting an unmet need for environmental advocacy in the area, and has stabilized at about 70 households each year. The number of households and individuals who have participated in activities organized by the Friends is about double that number.

Our organization has a unique structure that enables it to rapidly respond to emerging problems and opportunities. Most activities are carried out by teams organized by small groups of members. Teams may focus on a specific issue and dissolve when their goals are met, organize around a continuing community need, or serve as incubators for the development of a new organization. For example, the Sign Team worked to develop a sign ordinance for the City of Lodi and dissolved when the ordinance was adopted. The Tree Team helped the City of Lodi obtain an Urban Forestry Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, providing matching labor to complete a tree inventory, an educational pamphlet and planting of well over 200 trees on city and school property. As a result of these activities, the City of Lodi has received nine annual Tree City USA awards and seven annual Growth Awards for increased/new activities; the Friends were joint recipients with the City of the 2000 Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council's Project Partnership Award.

The Ice Age Trail Team brought the Ice Age Trail through Lodi and initiated its continuation to the Merrimac Ferry. Its Leader was recognized as Trail Builder of the Year for the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation. The team dissolved when a Lodi Valley chapter of the IAPTF was formed in 2002. An Office Team renovated a donated building that is now the Southwestern Field Office of the IAPTF. The Lodi Marsh & Prairie Team has partnered with the Wisconsin DNR and a private development firm to create a new segment of prairie as mitigation for wetlands filled to expand the Dane County Airport. The Lake Wisconsin Watershed Team obtained a grant (to the Friends) to improve and maintain water quality and trout habitat in Lodi's Spring Creek; more recently the team has worked with the City of Lodi and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to establish the first rain garden to handle run-off from a state highway.

The Lodi Reads Leopold Team continues this strong tradition. The Team was formed in January 2000 to organize a marathon reading of Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*. The first reading drew 36 community readers and approximately 50 listeners. The second annual event in 2001 spread the reading over two days and included crane-viewing in the Lodi Marsh, an excursion to the Leopold Shack on the Wisconsin River,

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and a workshop to build Leopold-designed benches. In 2002 it was further expanded by getting local businesses to contribute funds for advertising. In 2003 Lodi Reads Leopold was being recognized outside the state with listeners and participants coming from six states and over 150 people participating in one way or another. State Representative (and LRL reader) Mark Miller introduced legislation for the Governor to declare the first weekend in March as Aldo Leopold Weekend. Our goal in 2004 is to capitalize on this momentum and to increase sponsorship and visibility nation-wide for this unique community event.

Officers

President Elizabeth Thomson
Vice President Diane Godec
Treasurer Jody Thistle
Secretary Barbara Weber

Members of the Board: Team Leaders

Allison Seaton (Lake Wisconsin Watershed Team)
Kevin Hinkley (Tree Team)
Tom Heberlein (Lodi Reads Leopold Team)
Bill Pielsticker (Marsh and Prairie Team)
Fred Hofmann (Spring Creek Water Trail Team)
Beverly Nilles (Farmers Market Team)

Members of the Board: Elected At Large

Bette Hossman
Jeanne Hofmann
Jim Korlesky
Don Thistle

Relationship with Alliant Energy

Alliant Energy serves portions of the Scenic Lodi Valley in Wisconsin. A number of our members outside the city of Lodi are Alliant customers. Peter Berthold, one of our members who serves on the Lodi Reads Leopold Team is a former employee of Alliant Energy. It was Peter who suggested we seek funds from Alliant. Tom Heberlein, who heads the Lodi Reads Leopold Team, founded HBRS which did consulting on energy conservation for Wisconsin Power and Light and other utilities in the 1980's.

IRS Letter of Tax Exemption 501 (c)(3) attached

2. Purpose of the Grant

Description of the Program

March 6 and 7th 2004 marks the 5th annual community reading of *Sand County Almanac* sponsored by the Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley. This book, of which more than a million copies have been sold, was authored by Aldo Leopold, widely recognized as one of the foremost conservationists of the 20th century. During the time he wrote *Sand County Almanac* Leopold was based in Madison and had a cabin on the Wisconsin River west of Portage. The marshes, prairies, oak savannas, and southern Wisconsin native and cultural landscape played an important role in the development and articulation of Leopold's environmental perspective. Reading *Sand County Almanac* celebrates both the local landscape of the Lodi area as well as Leopold's important ideas in conservation.

Leopold was one of the founders of the discipline of wildlife ecology and the Wilderness Society. Trained as a forester at Yale, he evolved an environmental perception and understanding that was years ahead of its time. From 1935 until his death in 1948 Leopold was Professor of Game Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During the environmental crisis of the 1960's and 1970's, Leopold's small book of essays published in 1949 was "discovered" by the larger environmental community. Leopold's life and work and writing have become the subject of scores of articles and more than a dozen books

Sand County Almanac presents some of Leopold's basic ideas and is a very readable book. Leopold's daughter, Nina Leopold Bradley, commented at the first reading that she had not realized her father's writing was so humorous until she heard it read aloud. The community reading begins at 1:00 on Saturday at the library and involves more than 50 readers. The youngest are grade school children and the oldest last year was an 87 year old farmer who had taken a course from Leopold in the 1930's.

The reading continues all afternoon and into the evening for a dinner reading. It concludes on Sunday afternoon. Related activities include opportunities to be trained in building Leopold benches, trips to Leopold's shack, hikes on the Ice Age Trail near Lodi, and crane watching at the Lodi marsh.

Program Goals

Although Leopold is very well known and widely cited in scientific and professional circles he and his experiences and insights are not yet part of the vocabulary of average citizens. Leopold worked with farmers, wrote for the general public, and communicated on the radio. For his ideas to be implemented he needs to be heard and known. Leopold's own words are powerful, but the secret is to get people to listen and to care.

Our first goal is environmental education—to inform young and old about a land ethic and the importance of environmental stewardship.

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Our second goal is to develop an environmental community identity in Lodi. Small towns struggle for ways to look unique. Our goal in Lodi is to become known locally and nationally as the “Little Town that Reads Leopold.” In so doing, the community will begin to develop an environmental identity. Lodi’s state-wide identity as “The Home of Susie the Duck” gives wide recognition. But one must go beyond symbols and mascots to identities with significance for the community’s future. We hope that citizens and decision makers in “The Home of Lodi Reads Leopold” will ask “What would Leopold do?” when confronted with issues of land use, subdivision development, community growth, and water run-off management. Such an identity will enable the Scenic Lodi Valley to deal gracefully with pressures of suburban growth.

Our third goal is to create a community event that helps local businesses. As in many small towns, Lodi’s main street is struggling. Like other communities we have parades and summer festivals, but an off-season festival generates attention and brings new visitors to the community. Two years ago, the Capital Times listed Lodi Reads Leopold as its Festival of the Week. LRL also helps create environmental awareness when local business owners see that people outside the community think that the environment is important enough to come to Lodi and listen to a book. We believe that under the right conditions, Lodi Reads Leopold can grow into a large event, “owned” by the entire community.

Who and how many will be served?

In 2003 we had over 150 participants and listeners came from 6 states. Most readers and listeners were residents of the Scenic Lodi Valley. Sixteen young people were readers. Our goal in 2004 is to reach 250 people and to bring in listeners and participants from 10 states.

Geographic area targeted.

This is currently a local event serving southern Columbia and northern Dane County in Wisconsin. We are working to make this an event with national recognition and participation.

Time line of program

Planning for the fifth annual Lodi Reads Leopold has already begun with the first team meeting in early November 2003. The bulk of the planning and organization occurs in January and February. The 2004 reading will be held March 6th and 7th. The following month, thank-you notes are written, bills are paid and planning for the next LRL begins. Most of the funds have to be committed a month before the reading, but bills are not paid until after the event. If we receive funds from Alliant too late for the 2004 event they will be used to support the 2005 reading.

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3. Financial Information

Total operating budget for past and current year

In addition to hundreds of donated hours, Lodi Reads Leopold required about \$3600 last year. Our goal for 2004 is to raise at least \$7500 to support the event, attract more listeners and gain wider state and national recognition.

	2003 Budget	2004 Budget
Expenditures		
Travel and honoraria for speakers and press	\$ 443	\$ 700
Advertising	1,883	3,800
Supplies	370	1,500
Printing	160	500
Dinner	682	930
Postage	75	100
Total Expenditures	\$ 3,613	\$ 7,530
Income		
Donations from local organizations	\$ 800	\$ 900
Donations from local businesses	800	1,000
Discounts and in-kind donations	235	300
Silent auction proceeds	714	700
Dinner receipts	684	1,400
Grant from Alliant Energy	0	2,000
Grants from other organizations/agencies	0	1,500
Total Income	\$ 3,233	\$7,800
Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley Backup	\$ 380	

*Additional grant support is being sought from:

Aldo Leopold Foundation (\$500)

Pheasants Forever (\$500)

C. D Besadny Conservation Grants (\$500)

Plans for continued funding

We expect our local organizations and businesses to continue funding LRL, and we expect to expand our support from local and state and national wildlife and outdoor groups.

Time line of funding

Since most of our funds are committed during the first two months of the year an early notification from Alliant would be most helpful. Notification significantly after the event would allow us to apply the funds for next year.