



GREEN LAKE  
ASSOCIATION  
WE CARE FOR OUR LAKE

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## **NEW STUDY HIGHLIGHTS THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF GREEN LAKE ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

By: Kristen Rasmussen, Green Lake Association

**GREEN LAKE, WISCONSIN | MAY 15, 2026** — A new Economic Impact Study from the Green Lake Association (GLA) underscores the significant role Green Lake plays in supporting the local economy—and the risks the community could face if water quality declines.

The study estimates that Green Lake supports between \$88 million and \$123 million in annual economic activity across Green Lake County and the City of Ripon, along with 973 to 1,400 jobs—approximately 1 in 12 jobs in the region.

The findings also show that economic activity is highly concentrated around the lake. Within 1.5 miles of the shoreline, housing density is more than twice the county average, and 53% of economic activity in that area depends on the lake's presence.

“This study helps put numbers behind something many people already understand intuitively—that Green Lake is central to the economic life of this community,” said Stephanie Prellwitz, CEO of the Green Lake Association. “What it also shows is how closely that economic strength is tied to water quality.”

The study modeled how the regional economy could respond to changes in water quality.

- *If water quality improves:* the region could see up to \$7.9 million in additional annual economic output and up to an additional 80 jobs supported

- *If water quality declines* significantly: the region could face up to \$11.4 million in annual losses and up to 115 jobs at risk

**One key takeaway: the economic consequences of water quality decline are greater than the benefits of improvement, suggesting that protecting current conditions is the most cost-effective path forward.**

The study also highlights potential impacts to property values and the local tax base:

- Lakefront property values could decline by up to 12%
- Total property value losses could reach \$34 million to \$201 million
- Property tax revenue could decline by up to \$2.8 million annually

These changes could affect funding for schools, infrastructure, and public services across the community—not just along the shoreline.

The Green Lake Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee has recently agreed to incorporate the findings of this study into the County’s next Comprehensive Plan—ensuring that the connection between water quality and economic stability is reflected in future planning decisions.

“Green Lake is critical economically for the county,” said Gene Thom, Green Lake County Board Supervisor. “Including this report and its findings in the Comprehensive Plan helps ensure we’re making decisions that reflect how important the lake is to our economy and our community.”

The motion to include the study and its findings in the plan was made unanimously at the April 28th meeting by Thom and seconded by Sue McConnell.

The health of the lake and the health of the community go hand in hand.

“Protecting Green Lake isn’t just about the shoreline—it supports the entire community,” said Susan D’Arcy, owner of Johnson & Black in downtown Green Lake. “The health of the lake impacts local businesses, jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, and so much more. It’s clear we all have a shared responsibility to protect and preserve what makes this place special.”

When the lake is strong, it supports businesses, jobs, and the services we all rely on. When it declines, those impacts ripple outward.

The Green Lake Association extends its thanks to the Green Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for contributing to the development of this study.

Explore the complete Economic Impact Study, executive summary, and related resources at: <https://www.greenlakeassociation.org/study-economicimpact>