

2022 TOP RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AWARD WINNERS



Guardians of Lake Decorah

Wisconsin Rural Partners selected the Guardians of Lake Decorah, also known as GOLD, to receive the 2022 Top Rural Development Initiative award. As our award committee completed scoring of this year's seventeen nominations, the GOLD initiative was a standout. Their total score was more than ten percent greater than the score for the next highest submission.

Lake Decorah is formed by a dam in downtown Mauston. A combination of eutrophication, flooding, historic area agricultural practices and invasive species resulted in deteriorating water quality, aesthetics and navigability. A small grassroots group of citizens formed five years ago to address this community issue. GOLD's intervening development and recruitment of partners as it continues its work are notable. Rural Partners is a strong proponent of grassroots involvement in community initiatives and the use of a variety of partners to reach goals. GOLD's work includes an extensive number of partners and collaborators in the community.



WEDC Deputy Secretary Sam Ridders, Sandy Decker, WPR President, Randy Reeg, Mauston City Administrator, Mike Taake, and Jordan Wilke