

Alex Area Stewards have defined 13 key destiny drivers that will work to strengthen community vitality for the region. Over the coming weeks you will read about each destiny driver and its importance to the region. If you find a destiny driver that ignites your passion for the future, call the stewardship committee at 763-4545 and become a part of shaping the destiny of our region.

Destiny Driver - We will consistently stock up to 500,000 walleye fingerlings in the regional lakes on an annual basis.

The natural environment in this region is very important to those that live here. The Alexandria area is snuggled between the prairie region to the south and west and the forested area to the north and east. Glaciers shaped over 200 lakes in Douglas County. The community survey asked several insightful questions regarding the natural environment. Nearly 95% of the respondents say that natural resources are important to them in choosing a place to live. For 46% of young adults completing the survey, the natural environment was rated as very important. Survey questions asked about how we feel about the quality of the region's natural environment and whether it is changing for the better or worse. Over half the respondents rated the overall quality of the region's natural environment as a 4 based on a scale of 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. About half the respondents say the quality of the natural environment is about the same as it was five years ago. In a nut shell, the natural environment is important to the citizens in this area and we love the aesthetics of the lakes in this region and the recreational opportunities they provide.....boating, fishing, and water sports.

The goal to annually stock up to 500,000 walleye fingerlings is to enhance the good walleye fishing that currently exists in our lakes. The lakes in this region are capable of growing walleyes but not always conducive to their natural reproduction. The deep tradition of fishing in this region has played an important recreational and economic role. The love for fishing transcends across the entire area, appealing to a large number of the region's population regardless of age or level of income. Fishing is an outdoor activity that can be shared between grandparents and grandchildren. The economic impact fishing provides to this region is enormous. The walleye fingerling stocking program appealed to the Stewarts group for many reasons. The Stewards group felt it connected with our vision and tagline of "Working to unite our region for a vibrant future".

We are excited about this project's potential to unite our region around a common goal which is to enhance the quality of fishing in our region. Today, the area's lake associations and sportsman's clubs act fairly independent. Yet each organization has similar goals to preserve, improve, and promote the region's natural environment. We believe the walleye fingerling stocking program project will unite these independent organizations and provide an opportunity for each to work along side the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Managing fish populations is the responsibility of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Their responsibilities include monitoring local fish populations and advising on fish stocking programs. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has a walleye stocking program but due to limited resources their stocking quantities fall short of maximizing the fish carrying capacity in

many area lakes. The objective of this initiative is to supplement the DNR stocking program and enhance the area fisheries. To be successful, the walleye stocking program will require a coordinated effort to plan, organize and raise funds. The Alexandria Lodging Tax Association has made a multi year commitment to provide seed money that will be used as incentive for matching funds from lake associations or sportsman's clubs. The monies raised will be used to purchase walleye fingerlings that will be released into the lakes where financial support through lake associations or clubs has been provided. The Viking Sportsman Club will function as the hub for administering the walleye stocking program.

The Steward's group is eager to lend a hand in the walleye stocking program. If you are interested in learning more about this program, contact Chuck Bokinskie at 320-766-7034. Good fishin!

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