



April • 2010

News from the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission: New Structure, CLEAN Report Due Soon, and Promise for Lake Level Management Plan

By

Doug Bach, L&W Commission Member

A New Year is upon us and the big issues for the Yahara Lakes seem familiar, namely water level management and water quality improvement. Fortunately, there is progress to report on several fronts and some structural changes within the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission are meant to tackle these and other issues more effectively.

NEW CHAIR, NEW SUBCOMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Melissa Malott was voted Chair of the Lakes and Watershed Commission last August, and has brought a fresh perspective to the way in which the Commission approaches issues. Melissa is an attorney at Clean Wisconsin and an appointee of the County Executive. At our January retreat, the Commission restructured itself, defining fewer subcommittees, designed to focus on the highest priority issues. In addition to the Executive and Budget subcommittees, the new structure includes three current issue subcommittees:

CLEAN Implementation: Oversees progress and follow-up to the ongoing CLEAN Memorandum of Understanding (see below) to reduce nutrients and sediments entering the lakes.

Lake Levels and In-Lake Issues: Oversees and provides recommendations regarding County procedures and approaches to manage lake levels, prevent flooding, address beach and shoreline pollution, harvest aquatic plants and prevent invasive species.

Shoreland Zoning/NR 115: Reviews County initiatives related to shoreland zoning changes and their relationship to the NR115 state shoreland zoning regulations.

I'm proud to serve on all but the Shoreland Zoning subcommittee and as chair for the Lake Levels subcommittee.

YAHARA CLEAN REPORT DUE OUT IN JUNE

The Capital Lakes Evaluation and Needs (CLEAN) is a Memorandum of Understanding signed in the Fall of 2007 between Dane County; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; and the City of Madison to assess existing nutrient and sediment inputs to the Yahara lakes and determine actions required to improve water quality. Although not a signatory to the MOU, the University of Wisconsin has also provided significant technical support. The final CLEAN report with recommendations is due this coming June.

The L&W CLEAN Implementation subcommittee recently heard an update from the technical staff working on this report and I have to say that I was quite impressed by their presentation. It appears that this initiative is indeed achieving what it was intended to do!

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The study results that were presented identified and quantified the sources of phosphorus and sediment within the watershed, including tons of manure spread, almost down to a farm-by-farm level. The next step, which is still being completed by UW scientists, is an evaluation of the response of the lakes to different phosphorus and sediment reduction strategies. This level of detailed information has never before been available and will provide a solid basis to develop policy options.

Watching these findings being presented, I couldn't help but feel proud of the major role that YLA's advocacy played in prompting the Yahara CLEAN initiative. There's obviously a lot left to do, but this encouraging progress should provide us all with a little more motivation to see this job through to the end. While completion of this report is indeed a major milestone, the really tough work will come after the report is issued and the political world begins translating the recommended actions into public policy and law.

LAKE LEVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUESTED BY COUNTY BOARD

Those of us who have attempted to sort out all of the various factors and activities involved in managing lake levels have too often faced confusing explanations of what's happening when, where and how. Recognizing this frustration, the County Board passed a resolution this past December directing the Land and Water Resources Department to prepare a written Lake Level Management Plan by April 15th. On March 1st, the L&W Lake Level Subcommittee heard from County staff reporting on their progress toward completing the plan. Members of the subcommittee shared many ideas with staff on what needs to be included in this plan. While no one can expect one plan to solve the difficult challenge of lake level management, having something in writing is a start toward a more open and less ambiguous discussion of the issues affecting lake levels and flooding.

YLA members are urged to attend Lakes and Watershed Commission Meetings and subcommittee meetings and provide input on the important issues that affect all of us who use and love the lakes. Schedules and agendas for these meetings can be found at www.danewaters.com.

Doug Bach is a civil engineer with 25 years experience in pollution control and environmental restoration. He is in his second 3-year term representing the Yahara Lakes Association (YLA) on the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission. You can contact Doug at douglas.j.bach@gmail.com.



Know Your Lakeshore . . .

Just a Few Degrees of Separation

By Don Sanford

At first glance, you'd be hard pressed to see the connection between these two Lake Mendota structures. The white frame house, a summer cottage, has been a North Shore Bay landmark on Second Ward Beach (Reynolds Avenue) for decades. The prairie style home on Lake Mendota Drive near Spring Harbor appeared on Mendota Beach just a few years ago. While these structures were built in different styles and in different decades, their history separates them by just a few degrees.

Around 1919, Dr. William Lorenz, a psychiatrist at the Mendota State Hospital, began treating World War I veterans suffering from "Shell Shock." His work led to the creation of a specialized treatment facility, the Wisconsin Memorial Hospital, at Farwell's Point in 1921. Though it is adjacent to the State Hospital, the treatment methods and administration were entirely different. The new facility took advantage of the park-like setting and unobstructed views of Lake Mendota. Treatment was accomplished in small groups and emphasized occupational skills like woodworking and weaving. In the late 1920s, Dr. and Mrs. Lorenz purchased a lot on Second Ward Beach, (Reynolds Avenue for you landlubbers). During the next few years, patients at the hospital, "the boys," as they



were called, built the cottage as part of their treatment. After it was completed, some of them worked there as gardeners or housekeepers.

Meanwhile at Mendota Beach....

On Monday, July 5, 1937, Mrs. Georgia Phillips, director of the Dane County unit for the Disabled, Crippled Children's camp, watched as about 16 crippled children, most in wheelchairs, arrived for the first week of summer camp. Months earlier, Mrs. J. E. Usher and Mrs. P. W. Segerson decided that it was high time crippled children should enjoy the same summer fun, sunshine and outdoor activities as other children.

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Dr. F. F. Bowman of the Madison board of health joined her committee, a cook and counselors were recruited, and schedules were planned. All that remained was finding a lakeside location.

We don't yet know why, but the search ended at the summer cottage of Harriet D. (Mrs. George) Quinn located on Mendota Beach at 5412 Lake Mendota Drive. Mr. Quinn, a Madison grocer and one-time assistant chief of the volunteer fire department, must have been well known and successful. Though Mr. Quinn passed away in the early 1920s, Mrs. Quinn continued to use the cottage for entertaining and growing apples, judging by accounts in the society pages of the Capital Times in the late 1920s and early '30s.

During that first season on the lake, about 85 crippled children, followed by a troop of Girl Scouts, spent at least a week at the camp. The cottage had sleeping space for only 15 campers and a few counselors. Some of the boy campers slept in the boathouse with Frank Boy, the camp's recreation leader. That first season was declared a complete success. Physicians and parents reported great improvements in the children both physically and mentally. Plans were made to open the camp again in 1938.

In the spring of 1938, the camp needed more space and opted to rent the Lorenz Cottage on Reynolds Avenue. There would be room for more campers who could sleep on the broad screen porches that ringed the building. With a sand beach and close proximity to Camp Indianola, the location offered a wealth of possibilities for boating and entertainment.

In 1939, the camp accepted its first camper from outside of Madison and Dane County. In 1943, the camp took on a new name, Camp Ada Lorenz, in honor of Dr. Lorenz' late wife. Campers continued to spend summers at Camp Ada Lorenz through the 1940s.

We humans are separated by just 6 degrees. Occasionally, the same holds true for the shoreline of Lake Mendota.

- Don Sanford

Fast Facts About Boating In Wisconsin

- 635,000 boats registered in Wisconsin
 - Boats registered in IL, MN and Iowa add hundreds of thousands to this total
 - Fishing is the top activity enjoyed while in a boat
 - 20 people died in 2008 in boating accidents
 - 79 % of boat operators in accidents had not taken a safety course
-

Sources: *Recreational Boating in Wisconsin: The 2007 Survey; 2008 Wisconsin Boating Program Report*

Boating Safety Education

Mandatory Education Requirement

If you were born after 1988, you're required to complete a boating safety course to legally operate a motorized boat or personal watercraft (PWC). Anyone is eligible to take a boating safety class and receive a safety education completion certificate, although the certificate is not valid for a child until he or she is 12 years old.

In addition to it being the law, taking a boating safety class can save your life: 4 of 5 people who die in boating accidents on Wisconsin's waters every year haven't had such formal training. Gain the safe boating techniques and knowledge that can keep you safe on the water.

Visit the DNR website for Classroom instruction Dates & Online Instruction Information: <http://dnr.wi.gov>

Boating

Lake Access Sites and Fees

There are 25 boat launching sites and several marinas/boat storage sites on the Yahara River lakes. These range from large marinas and multi-ramp launching sites to street-end access with only on-street parking available. Lake Access Permits (formerly Boat Launch Permits) are required year-round at City of Madison and Dane County launching sites.

Permit Sales Locations

New in 2009 Daily and annual lock permits can be purchased online by visiting www.reservedane.com/permits/.

Navigational Aids

There are approximately 160 buoys in the Yahara lakes that mark no-wake zones, rock obstructions and the center of channels to assist boaters in navigation. Some points to remember include:

- From shore out to 200 feet, obstructions are not marked.
- Areas that are buoyed and signed “Slow No Wake” and other areas within 100 feet of restrictions (e.g., boat landings) require no-wake speed. (No-wake speed is the slowest speed a boat can go and still maintain steerage.)
- Boats should always pass between pairs of green and red buoys.

Mooring Buoys

The sheriff’s boat patrol monitors all mooring buoys that are privately owned. All mooring buoys within 150 feet of shore are no longer regulated by the DNR; however, they can be regulated by local government by ordinance. Thus, individuals should check with their local government before placing any new mooring buoy within 150 feet of shore. All mooring buoys beyond 150 feet from shore must be lighted, and a permit is required from the DNR.

Regulations and Safety

The Dane County Sheriff’s Department operates boat patrols on the Yahara lakes and enforces state and local boating laws. Deputies are on call for emergency response 24 hours per day. The department monitors Channel 16 on the VHF marine radio for emergency traffic. In addition, the City of Madison’s Fire Department has a lake rescue team that includes scuba divers and paramedic ambulance personnel. The University of Wisconsin Lifesaving Station on Lake Mendota also runs two rescue boats.

Boaters are strongly encouraged to participate in boat safety and training programs taught by the Red Cross, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, DNR, and volunteer instructors. Boaters should remember:

- Each person on a boat is required to have an approved personal flotation device.
- Operating a motorboat at a speed that is greater than reasonable and prudent is unlawful, as well as operating a boat while under the influence of an intoxicant or a controlled substance. Drinking while boating is a big problem in regard to safety on the lakes. Abusive behavior while drinking reduces the pleasure of other boaters and anglers. Always use the lakes in a manner considerate of others.
- Boats towing persons engaged in waterskiing, aquaplaning or a similar activity on any lake cannot do so within 100 feet of any occupied anchored boat, marked swimming area or public boat landing.

Information from Dane County Water Resources



Have You Visited Our Web Site?

www.yaharalakes.org

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Many of you are probably already involved, but I know Dane County Lakes & Watershed would love more volunteers to help with the events themselves and/or participate in the events. Please contact me at lenz@starhkomes.com if you are interested in helping or learning more about the events.

June 4-26, 2010

Take a Stake in the Lakes Days.

Looking for participants & volunteers with the planning of the event

June 12 & 19, 2010

Shoreline clean ups

Looking for participants & volunteers with the planning of the event

June 17, 2010

Annual Paddle to Work Day.

June 18, 2010

Annual Dane County Waters Champion Awards Ceremony.

June 26, 2010

Beach Party at Vilas Beach: raising awareness of the resources in the area, how people can enjoy them and how we can better take care of them. Food, music, prizes, contests, etc. Volunteers needed to help on that day.

August 14, 2010,

9 a.m -1 p.m. Better Lawns & Gutters Tour <http://www.danewaters.com/events/YLWGutters.aspx>
This year the tour will be in McFarland, Sat. Aug. 14, 2010, 9a-1p. Dane County Lakes & Watershed are working with McFarland municipal staff and have nine tentative sites picked out, one of them a shoreline restoration. Our Information Center will be in McDaniel Park, which is also on the waterfront. Ways in which we typically need help are distributing tour brochures prior to the event, publishing press releases in newsletters, etc.

**Looking for a "guest host" with a rain garden or native plant shoreline for the tour*

August 28, 2010

Clean Lakes Festival

Olin Park, Madison, WI

There are many activities being planned for Saturday, August 28th such as Betty Lou Cruises, Water Skiing Clinics, Canoe & Kayak Races, Sailboat Rides, a Run/Walk, Water Resources Education Exhibits, Local Entertainment Stage, Music Stage and Food and Beverages. Visit www.cleanlakefestival.com



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Yahara Lakes Association, Ltd. is a non-profit organization of over 700 members dedicated to representing Lake property owners and advocating for the vitality of the Yahara chain of lakes so that all citizens may enjoy them.

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COMMITTEES

Communications Committee
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Legislation and Legal Committee
Membership Committee
Water Safety Committee

Call 848-9008 if you would like to become involved in any of the above-listed committees, or if you have concerns you would like a committee to address.