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Clean Boats, Clean Waters / Yahara Clean Update

By

Sue Jones - Watershed Management Coordinator, Office of Lakes and Watersheds

The Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds is seeking volunteer support from the Yahara Lakes Association in implementing Dane County's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Plan. One of our greatest needs is in launching the statewide "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" (CBCW) watercraft inspection program at our area launches. Of particular concern to us are the Yahara chain of lakes since these lakes receive a lot more boating activity compared to other Dane County waters and therefore have a great threat of invasion from AIS.

We need volunteers to get trained in the watercraft inspection program at a CBCW workshop sponsored by UW Extension. The training would last about 3 hours and it could be in the evenings or on a Saturday. We need approximately 20 people in order to schedule a workshop in this area.

The workshop would cover the biology of AIS and hands on practice in speaking to citizens at boat landings. Volunteers share information with boaters and anglers on AIS and the way they are transported from one waterbody to another. They tell boaters to check their boats and equipment for AIS before leaving or entering the water. Through their contact with boaters and anglers, volunteer inspectors collect and report valuable data on boater behavior that is used to improve outreach efforts and support the watercraft inspection program.

Please contact Sue Jones (224-3764, jones.susan@co.dane.wi.us) with any questions, and to sign up for training. Thank you so much for considering this program to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasives!

The Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds and its partners have been actively engaged over the last two months in more than a dozen meetings with stakeholder groups, including the YLA Board, to update them on findings from the assessment phase of Yahara CLEAN, and general policy options for Yahara lakes improvement being considered by the YLLP Coordinating Committee and technical advisory committees.

There will be a public open house and input session on July 21, 2010 at the Warner Park Community Center in Madison to discuss specific plans to restore the Yahara lakes. City, county and state agency staff from the CLEAN (Capital Lakes Environmental Assessment and Needs) partnership will be available for informal discussions from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. At 6:30 p.m. team members will present a summary of priority actions designed to ratchet down phosphorus and sediment pollution throughout the lake system, and to protect beaches. The solutions range from new approaches for managing manure, to more neighborhood rain gardens, to creative goose management near public beaches.

The plan is the culmination of more than two years of deliberation and research from teams of agency personnel, leaders from many local organizations, and leading scientists from UW and Edgewood College.

Following the presentation, there will be an opportunity for small group discussions among participants, and the information generated from those discussions will contribute to decisions on how the action plan will move forward.

"Care for the Land" Includes The Yahara Lakes

Neal Smith, Executive Director
Holy Wisdom Monastery

Holy Wisdom Monastery, located on Highway M in the town of Westport, is part of the Lake Mendota Priority Watershed as well as the Yahara river and Rock river Basin watersheds. Over 400 acres of land surrounding the monastery drain into and through our 138 acres. This means that work done on this land greatly affects the amount and quality of water run-off into Lake Mendota. With its proximity to Governor Nelson State Park, Pheasant Branch Nature Preserve, Dorn's Creek Watershed, Six-Mile Creek and other natural and park areas, Holy Wisdom Monastery is a significant part of the protective green belt north of Madison.

As many know, development is rapidly replacing the farmlands that once surrounded Holy Wisdom Monastery. Rapid urbanization contiguous to monastery land has resulted in nonpoint source pollution that includes nutrients, pesticides, metals and sediment.

In 1996 in order to help mitigate the negative effects of this rapid development, the Sisters began partnering with environmental and civic groups, as well as thousands of individuals, to protect and restore monastery land to pre-settlement prairie. To date, about 100 acres have been restored. The Sisters also returned a silted-in 10,000-year-old glacial kettle lake to near its original size and created a major detention basin to filter sediment out of run-off headed toward Lake Mendota, further protecting the surrounding watershed.

When it became apparent that the large, inefficient conference facility at the monastery conflicted with their value of caring for the earth, the Sisters replaced it with a new building that is half the size of the old one. The new monastery building was recently designated the "greenest" LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum-certified building in the U.S. in the NC (New Construction) v 2.2 category.

Before construction could begin, a storm water control plan had to be approved by both Dane County and the Town of Westport. The design had to prove that a 100 year rain event would not result in any added runoff from the site. During construction, an earthen berm was built around the site to contain all rainfall and snow melt. Detention areas were designed with filtration weepers to filter the water before it left the work area. In addition, all disturbed areas outside the berm were mulched or seeded when the work in the area was completed. The design of the site also ensured no runoff from the site in a 100 year storm.

The following components were built into the plan to help make this possible:

- Two rain gardens were constructed to detain and infiltrate runoff to the south and west of the new building. All site runoff was directed to these two areas. The rain gardens were seeded and planted with native broadleaved plants and grasses.
- Rain barrels were strategically placed around the building to capture roof runoff so it can be used to water the plants around the buildings and on the green roofs.
- The green roofs themselves will capture and use rainwater thereby reducing runoff.
- The landscape around the buildings was planted and seeded with native prairie. Any runoff not captured using the previous strategies will be diverted to relatively flat prairie areas where it will be absorbed.
- Last, some parts of the parking area were made of pervious concrete, a type of concrete through which the water can drain and immediately infiltrate into the groundwater.

These and other design choices made by the Sisters have successfully controlled runoff from the site. They also significantly reduced the amount of runoff that was occurring prior to beginning the new construction. The engineers of Montgomery & Associates calculated that the runoff from a 100 year rain event will be reduced by over 13% **as compared to predevelopment**. Considering the fact that the building site is on top of a hill, this is a significant reduction.

"The goal in building Holy Wisdom Monastery was to create a smaller, energy-efficient building that would be in harmony with our surrounding acres of restored prairie," explained Sister Mary David Walgenbach, OSB, prioress at Holy Wisdom Monastery. "Our builder helped us design a simple, hospitable building to reflect our monastic values and complement the beauty of the land. With every design decision, we asked, does it express our mission, is it the greenest option, and is it cost effective?"

Not only is the new monastery building highly sustainable, but the Sisters take pride in the fact that the total project cost was \$241 per square foot, which includes all design, construction, furnishing, demolition, commissioning, and LEED certification costs.

Continued on next page



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In this issue:

**Holy Wisdom Monastery, Caring
 For the Land**

YLA Annual Meeting

Lake History

Yahara CLEAN Update

"Currents"

Lake Events



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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