

YAHARA CLEAN COMPACT

Creating a community-wide strategy
for cleaner lakes

PG. 2

CONNECT WITH CLEAN LAKES

Seven ways to get involved with our
work this spring and summer

PG. 4-5



ONE WATER, ONE FUTURE

LEARN ABOUT THE LAKES WITH BILLIE THE BLUEGILL

The lakes of Greater Madison have a distinctive history. They were created as ice melted and the glaciers retreated approximately 13,000 years ago. But protecting these five big gems is about more than just lake health – it's also about protecting OUR health. Our drinking water is pulled from groundwater aquifers, which are linked to surface water. So, what happens on the land not only determines the quality of our lakes, it also plays a role in the quality of our drinking water. It's a One Water message that's important for everyone to understand – especially our children.

Local Kids, Local Lakes

When children learn about lakes in elementary school, Clean Lakes Alliance wants to make sure they are learning about the large lakes right here in their own hometowns. To help, we've developed a series of online educational materials which includes math, science, reading, and writing focused on teaching students in third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Each grade level has a different focus – third grade: the water cycle; fourth grade: leaves and lakes; and fifth grade: agriculture and the lakes. All three grade levels feature the fictional character Billie the Bluegill (pictured above), and include books read by a University of Wisconsin athlete. The

goal is to expand educational materials beyond these three grades in the coming months.

How YOU Can Help

Last month on World Water Day – March 22 – we launched a GoFundMe Campaign to support the further development and expansion of youth education. Thanks to an anonymous donor, all donations will be matched, up to \$10,000. The campaign ends in a few days on Earth Day – April 22 – so if you want to help, please visit

charity.gofundme.com/clean-lakes.

Help us DOUBLE your donation!

For every dollar you donate to our GoFundMe Campaign, an anonymous donor will make a matching donation (up to \$10,000 raised).

gofundme

CHARITY.GOFUNDME.COM/CLEAN-LAKES

YAHARA CLEAN COMPACT

A SHARED VISION FOR CLEAN, SAFE, AND ACCESSIBLE LAKES

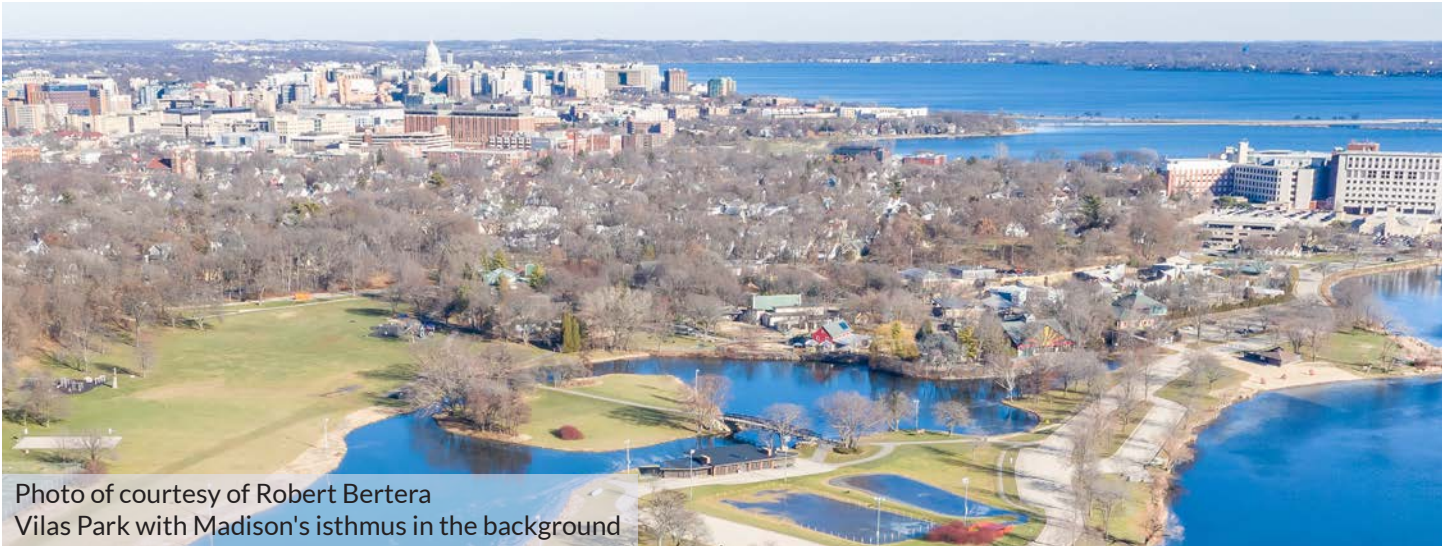


Photo of courtesy of Robert Bertera
Vilas Park with Madison's isthmus in the background

Where We've Been

What's wrong with our lakes? Ten years have passed since *A CLEAN Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today* was released. With spiking public dissatisfaction in the condition of our lakes and beaches, it was clear at the time of the publication that our community's desire for safe and healthy water quality was not being fulfilled. It was a wake-up call, prompting the identification of action opportunities to place Greater Madison's ailing lakes on a more effective path to recovery.

Led by Clean Lakes Alliance to turn those opportunities into a 14-point cleanup plan in 2012, we now find ourselves at another crossroads. This follows eight years of plan implementation tackling the perennial problem of too much algae-fueling phosphorus reaching our lakes. With beach closures still too common, and while more higher-intensity storms wash additional phosphorus off the landscape, the message has grown clear. We must recalibrate and double-down on our efforts if we ever hope to achieve cleaner, healthier, and more usable lakes.

Where We're Going

Today, a rebooted cleanup effort has an even broader and more diverse coalition of partners behind it, signaling a new

era of community cooperation and participation. Despite progress in getting recommended actions completed across

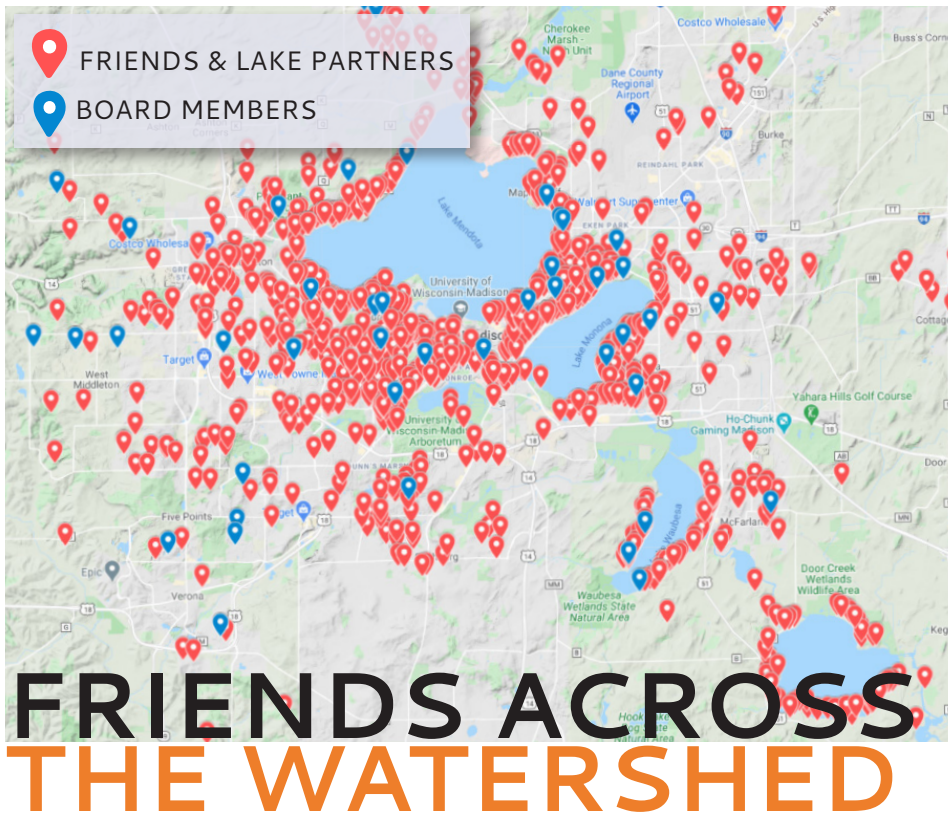
"Working with a group of 19 collaborators across government, business, and education, I can see the updated plan coming into focus. Clean and healthy lakes will not only be better for all of us who already live here, but they also become a huge selling point to families and individuals looking to relocate to the Greater Madison area."

-Ruth Hackney, CEO, Realtors Association of South Central Wisconsin

our watershed's urban and rural landscapes, we now know a wetter climate is more than offsetting those beneficial impacts. The good news is that we know our cleanup goals and most of our original action priorities are still valid. Also, new information is telling us we can better target our efforts, and updates to the roadmap will seek to leverage these refined understandings about timing and location opportunities. Ultimately, more will need to be done, and all of us are stakeholders with important roles to play.

To secure a more hopeful future for our lakes, the Yahara CLEAN Compact is asking for your participation. With a goal of having an updated action plan by the end of this year, your voices need to be heard and reflected in the final recommendations. Focus groups with several key stakeholder groups are now underway, and an online

public survey is planned for early this summer. Stay tuned for opportunities to learn more and provide feedback on next steps. You can also learn more about the Yahara CLEAN Compact and its progress by visiting cleanlakesalliance.org/yahara-clean.



Clean Lakes Alliance has a simple vision – we see a future in which our lakes are the center of the community. Here in Greater Madison, that “community” doesn’t just mean people who live downtown or on a lake. Our community is truly everyone. Donors who support Clean Lakes Alliance live throughout the area. That’s because not only are our lakes a public space, but they are accessible to people from all over who want to enjoy them. Of the 58 miles of shoreline, more than half includes publicly owned land, parks, and trails. So, whether a person lives downtown across from James Madison Park; or in Fitchburg, Verona, or Oregon, the lakes are there for everyone.



Donations HELP the Lakes

Clean Lakes Alliance recently received the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency for the 5th year in a row. The platinum seal, which is the organization's highest level of recognition, indicates that we exceed nonprofit industry standards and it provides donors with the information necessary to make smart decisions. With this 2021 Platinum “Seal of Transparency,” you can feel confident your donation is going toward important lake initiatives.

If you are already a Friend or Lake Partner – thank you! If you haven’t joined, we’d love for you to either use the envelope in this Lake-O-Gram, or visit cleanlakesalliance.org/donate to make a donation.

THE COLD, HARD FACTS

The Wisconsin State Climatology Office has been tracking the freezing and thawing of Lake Mendota since the winter of 1852-53. This collection of data is steeped in tradition. Although modern technology could allow climatologists to collect data in new ways, scientists follow the same techniques used 168 years ago to preserve the continuity of the data.

In addition to Lake Mendota, the Wisconsin State Climatology Office now collects data for lakes Monona and Wingra as well. “Ice on” and “ice off” determinations are made by the Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society for Lake Kegonsa, and by the Christenson family at Christy’s Landing for Lake Waubesa.

WINTER 2020-2021 FREEZE DATES

Lake Mendota: Jan 3, 2021
 Lake Monona: Dec. 29, 2020
 Lake Wingra: Dec. 6 & 13, 2020
 Lake Waubesa: Dec. 18 & 25, 2020
 Lake Kegonsa: Dec 25, 2020

WINTER 2020-2021 THAW DATES

Lake Mendota: March 20, 2021
 Lake Monona: March 22, 2021
 Lake Wingra: March 20, 2021
 Lake Waubesa: March 21, 2021
 Lake Kegonsa: March 21, 2021

7 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

PROTECT, IMPROVE, AND ENJOY OUR LAKES THIS SPRING AND SUMMER WITH CLEAN LAKES ALLIANCE

1 LOOP THE LAKE

Run, walk, bike, or paddle in support of our lakes! Whether you do the marked "Lake Loop" around Lake Monona, or a course of your choosing, your entry will support the lakes. Registration for the event, running Saturday, June 12th through Sunday, June 20th, includes a super-soft event tee to show everyone you support our lakes. As always, kids 10 & under receive a free shirt with a paid adult!

cleanlakesalliance.org/loop-the-lake



2 SURF 'N TURF

Tee it up, then reel it in at this unique event. Teams of three start off the day with 18 holes of scramble golf at The Legend at Bergamont on Thursday, July 8th. After a provided lunch, teams fish a catch-and-release tournament on Lake Waubesa. The more inches of legal game fish you catch, the more strokes you take off your golf score! The event ends at Christy's Landing with a steak dinner. cleanlakesalliance.org/surf-n-turf



3 BIG SWELL SWIM

Whether you're training for IronMan Wisconsin, or looking to challenge yourself with a distance swim, Big Swell Swim Madison is an event that caters to all swimmer levels. Offering a 1.2 or 2.4 mile swim in Lake Monona, a portion of all registration fees go directly back to Clean Lakes Alliance! cleanlakesalliance.org/big-swell-madison



4 HELP THE LAKES AT HOME

We've compiled a Top Ten list of actions YOU can take to help improve lake health. From rain gardens and rain barrels, to compost bins and food gardens, these simple actions will have a big impact in our watershed!

cleanlakesalliance.org/top10



5 REQUEST A VIRTUAL MEETING

We can't gather – yet – but that doesn't mean we can't meet you in your online gathering forums. Whether it's a library, church, neighborhood, or social group, we'll gladly join you for a presentation on problems and solutions for our lakes. EMAIL: info@cleanlakesalliance.org



6 PADDLE FOR THE LAKES

One of the best ways to enjoy the lakes is to get out on them! If you don't have a boat, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard – no worries! Our friends at Madison Boats have locations on lakes Wingra, Monona, and Mendota. Rent everything you'll need for a few hours or an entire day on the lakes.

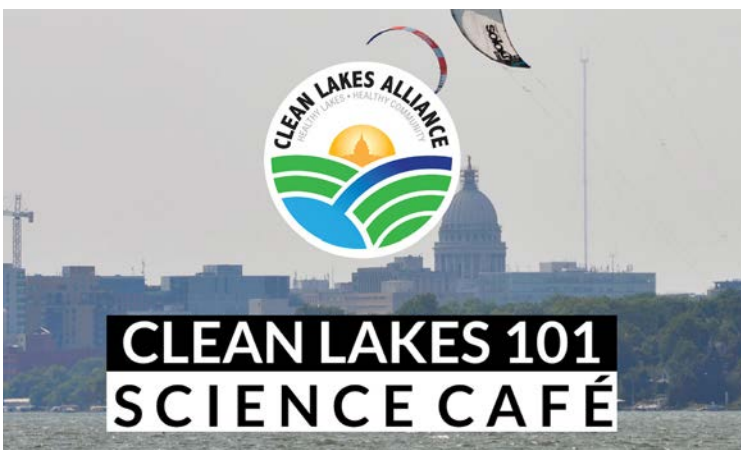
madisonboats.com



7 LEARN ABOUT THE LAKES

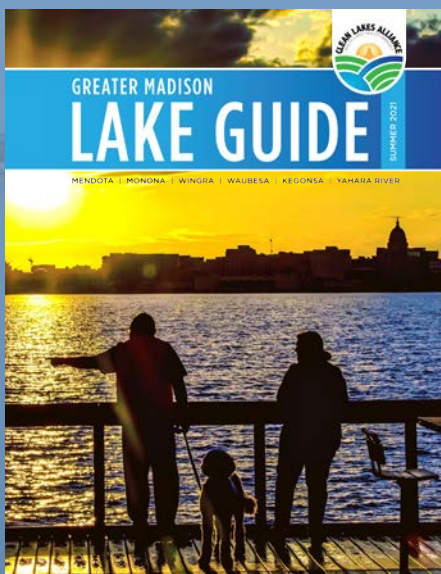
Join us virtually on the second Wednesday of the month in July and August for expert talks and presentations on the lakes. Free to 2021 Friend and Lake Partner donors, these talks dive into important topics and allow for questions from anyone attending.

cleanlakesalliance.org/clean-lakes-101/



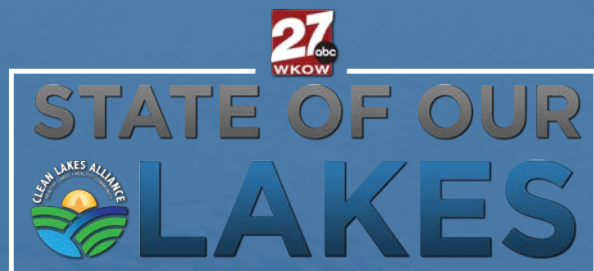
DISCOVER THE LAKES

NEXT MONTH, TWO GREAT RESOURCES WILL HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OUR LAKES FACE, CURRENT ON-THE-GROUND LAKE PROJECTS, AND HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN USE AND EMBRACE THE LAKES ALL SUMMER LONG.



Also, that week, Clean Lakes Alliance will publish its annual Greater Madison Lake Guide. Now in its sixth year, the Lake Guide includes in-depth science and feature articles, important lake use information, and a directory to all lake-related businesses. If you want to make sure you are on the mailing list for this community-wide resource, please email becky@cleanlakesalliance.org to have your address confirmed.

On Wednesday, May 26th, WKOW will air a half-hour special titled, “The State of our Lakes.” This 30-minute program will look at important issues like climate change, watershed practices, and future policies that aim to make Greater Madison’s lakes better for years to come. Be sure to tune in at 6:30 p.m., and watch social media for information on how to livestream this program from anywhere.





LAKEFORECAST

YOUR RESOURCE FOR UP-TO-DATE LAKE AND BEACH INFORMATION

- Data from 70+ points on all five Yahara lakes
- Beach closures and water quality updates
- Keep your family and pets safe – check for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms!

CHECK TO FIND THE BEST
WATER QUALITY ON OUR
LAKES

WATER QUALITY IN OUR WATERSHED

2020 REPORT FROM OUR VOLUNTEER WATER QUALITY MONITORS

In the summer of 2020, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, Clean Lakes Alliance volunteers submitted 2,294 observation reports (nearly 300 more reports than in 2019) about the water quality on all five Yahara lakes. The more than 80 volunteers took measurements at 71 near-shore monitoring stations at least once per week. All 25 public beaches were monitored at least twice a week.

The measurements help Clean Lakes Alliance keep track of water clarity and temperature, as well as beach conditions and any cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms. The observations collected are then released to the public through LakeForecast.org and on the LakeForecast app, which is available to download for free from the Apple and Android stores. By allowing the community to view the latest water quality reports, lake users will know which locations are most enjoyable on a particular day.

What We Saw in 2020:

- Marked improvement in water clarity in lakes Monona and Wingra, similar water clarity in lakes Mendota and Waubesa (compared to 2019), and a decline in water clarity in Lake Kegonsa.

- Compared to 2019, monitors documented more “strong evidence” of cyanobacteria blooms on Waubesa and Kegonsa. In contrast, lakes Mendota and Monona experienced notable declines in reports.
- Warmer lakes that froze for fewer days than average.



READ THE FULL REPORT
CLEANLAKESALLIANCE.ORG/2020-MONITORING



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SPRING & SUMMER 2021

MAKE MEMORIES WITH OUR LAKES THIS SPRING & SUMMER

