GREATER MADISON

LAKE GUIDE

FEATURING THE STATE OF THE LAKES

SUMMER 2024





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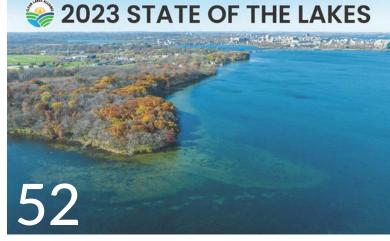
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COVER: VIEW OF LAKE MONONA AND THE AURORA BOREALIS (NORTHERN LIGHTS) IN 2023, COURTESY BRITTON REYNOLDS



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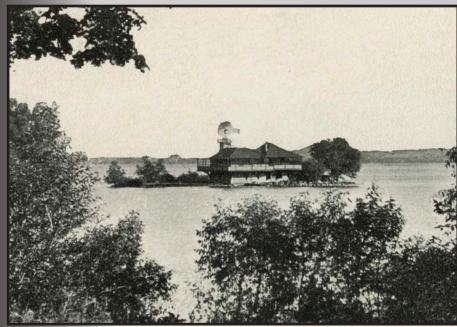
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Rocky Roost, built in 1893 – photo circa 1913 Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI 51321 - Rocky Roost, Lake Mendota



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MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

No, I'm not talking about the 1960s cult, sci-fi movie that took place on a strange Pacific island. I'm talking about an island in Lake Mendota. Known as Reynolds Island today, it's a spot in the northern part of the lake that most people don't even know exists.

Wind the clock back more than a century and this was a one-of-a-kind place on Lake Mendota. The Robert M. Lamp Cottage, also known as Rocky Roost, sat here, and was designed by the businessman's friend, who was none other than Frank Lloyd Wright. Fire destroyed the cabin in the mid-1930s, and a few years later, Lake Mendota reclaimed almost all the land. But believe it or not, it's still deeded private property with all but this horseshoeshaped piece of land sitting just below the surface of the water.

The point to be made here is the history of our lakes is vast and probably not widely known. What started as one lake over 15,000 year ago - Glacial Lake Yahara as named by geologists - broke up into the five lakes we know today. And even though we think we know every restaurant, beach, and park, chances are there are places like this island that a lot of people have never known about.

Take this summer to explore our lakes. Dive into not only its geological history, but also its human history, which started with ancestors of the Ho-Chunk who built more mounds around the Yahara lakes than any other area in North America. Visit parks and places along the shores you've never been to. Chat with people from different neighborhoods and backgrounds to find out what makes the lakes great to others.

Time has proven our lakes change. Now is the time for you to enjoy them for everything they have to offer our community. Don't miss out on seeing something new before it becomes the next Rocky Roost and slips out of sight.

In partnership,

James Tve

Clean Lakes Alliance Founder & Executive Director





Members of the Clean Lakes Alliance board at a January 2024 board meeting at The Edgewater on Lake Mendota



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The Clean Lakes Alliance board represents many government, business, nonprofit, and community members working to make healthy lakes a reality.

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUR LAKES

Two years ago, Clean Lakes Alliance started the process of finding out how much Greater Madison's lakes impact the area's economy and quality of life. Leading a group of local businesses and organizations, Clean Lakes Alliance put out a request for proposals to assess the economic impact of our local lakes. The engineering group SRF Consultants, which is working with the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Whitewater, has since been conducting the study and analyzing results. We expect to release the findings of this first-of-its-kind analysis later this year.

Clean Lakes Alliance reached out to community leaders who participated in the process and asked them a series of questions related to potential results. Below is who we spoke with and what they hope to learn from this effort.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Zach Brandon - Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. President

Ellie Westman Chin - Destination Madison, President Jason Ilstrup - Downtown Madison Inc., President Dan Lee - Wisconsin REALTORS Association, Past President Tyler Leeper - Madison Boats, CEO

Amy Supple - The Edgewater, Senior Vice President & **Chief Operating Officer**

QUESTION 1 - Why is it important to understand the economic impact of our lakes?

Zach Brandon – We all know the lakes are a defining asset for our region's livability. If we can better understand the economic impact, it can inform local decision-making priorities. That is why we invest in this work - to turn data into action.

Jason Ilstrup - The lakes are Madison and Madison is the lakes. Without our lakes, our city simply would not be there. Understanding the economic impact of the lakes is crucial to understanding the importance of the Isthmus. The economic impact data will assist in our planning work for years to come.

Dan Lee - Everyone recognizes the recreational value of the Greater Madison lakes, but little data is available on their effect on the overall Madison economy. That data includes all types of tax revenue, tourism, promotion of many businesses, real estate values, occupancy of lodging, and increased food and beverage consumption.

Tyler Leeper - Our lakes are the center of our community. They are the defining attraction for visitors and residents alike. Lake health directly relates to the quality of life for our residents.

Amy Supple – Historically, Madison has always had a fairly passive view of the lakes as an economic engine. In my opinion, there is huge opportunity to grow our lakes into a major economic generator, but we can't do that without them being clean, usable, and accessible! This report will help us educate people about the full potential of the lakes.

QUESTION 2 - How will the data help you within your organization?

Zach Brandon – The data and analysis from this comprehensive study can inform future advocacy, education, and economic development strategies for the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce.

Ellie Westman Chin – Our data shows that visitors want to be on or near the water on their visits here. We are hoping the Clean Lakes Alliance study data also reinforces this and shows how we can work together to provide more opportunities for visitors and residents alike.

Jason Ilstrup – As DMI and the City of Madison begin their strategic visioning work for downtown Madison, we will need all available economic impact data to make the most informed decisions for the future of our community.

Dan Lee – Real estate values largely hinge on the quality of life that the individual community or location provides – in addition to schools, business vitality, government services, utility rates, and recreation of all types. The lakes are beautiful to look at and offer almost unlimited recreational activities that improve the overall quality of life for long-time or perspective residents.

QUESTION 3 – What are you currently hearing about the lakes from people in your networks?

Zach Brandon – Continued public-private collaboration in strategies with the greatest impact to improve water quality is important. There is also enthusiasm for the community conversations taking shape to make bold investments in development opportunities that increase public access and commercial and entertainment offerings on or near the downtown waterfronts.

Ellie Westman Chin – The lakes serve as a community pride point, but there is still a perception that the lakes are not usable - both from limited access and also for not being clean. Our visitors still are not aware that Madison is home to five lakes, so we continue to promote the lakes in our marketing to showcase these great assets.

Jason Ilstrup – People are always discussing the lakes. One of the main subjects is access. Organizations like Clean Lakes Alliance, the Madison Lakeways Partnership, and

DMI are working to create much better access between downtown and Lake Monona.

QUESTION 4 – In your opinion, how important are the lakes toward shaping our economy?

Zach Brandon – The lakes are important to our collective talent recruitment and retention efforts. It is one of the things that makes our area unique, especially the landscape of our urban core.

Jason Ilstrup – The lakes are crucial to the economic strength and success of downtown Madison. We are a downtown built on the shores of Lake Mendota and Lake Monona. Without strong and healthy lakes, the downtown economy will not prosper and grow.

Dan Lee – The lakes are absolutely crucial, as they are one of our area's real gems - like UW-Madison and the Wisconsin State Capitol. Without the lakes, Madison would be just like a Des Moines, lowa; a Lansing, Michigan; or a Springfield, Illinois - nice capital cities, some with universities, but not especially bucket-list destinations.

Tyler Leeper – As publicly-managed resources, having a clear understanding of the lakes' economic impact will allow all of the cities and Dane County to realize it is not someone else's responsibility, but it is a shared resource that benefits us all.

QUESTION 5 - How does having a nonprofit like Clean Lakes Alliance help improve the quality of life and the economy?

Zach Brandon – Public-private partnerships are key to solving complex challenges. Clean Lakes Alliance helps bring different perspectives to the table with one shared objective in mind – to protect and enhance these cherished assets.

Jason Ilstrup – Clean Lakes Alliance is key to the health and vitality of both the lakes and our community.

Ellie Westman Chin – Clean Lakes Alliance's focus on keeping the lakes clean and pollution-free is important to the overall experience of Madison and the lakes.

Dan Lee - The overarching goal of Clean Lakes Alliance is to motivate our community to value the lakes, enjoy the recreation and beauty they afford us, and strive to make them cleaner through personal and government cooperation.

Tyler Leeper – It is so important to have groups like Clean Lakes Alliance continually bring attention to our lakes. Our lakes are often taken for granted and overlooked.

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ALL SKILLS WELCOME WHEN BUILDING A RAIN GARDEN

By Bob Armstrong

Bob Armstrong is a former stormwater quality engineer for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) who has lived in Madison's Midvale Heights neighborhood for 30 years. After attending a stormwater conference that included a presentation on rain gardens, Armstrong became very interested in the practice. He has since built multiple rain gardens to help filter stormwater runoff in our watershed.

When I was invited to write about rain gardens, one of my first thoughts was, "Why me? What do I know about rain gardens?" I'm definitely not an expert. My only qualification seemed to be that I had recently decided to "build" two rain gardens of my own.

Prior to having installed the first garden, all I had was an interest and the desire to help recharge the water table the best I could on my small property. What I quickly discovered is that you don't need to be an expert to start the project. The only requirement is the desire and willingness to have a rain garden that, most likely, won't be perfect. Take it from me, there is more than enough information on the internet to guide you through the planning and building of your own garden.

When I started thinking about the possibility of creating a rain garden, my first task was to decide on a good location. I knew that my back property line forms a valley that directs stormwater runoff from the west toward the east. Since water already moves through this area each time it rains, I felt it was a great location for my first garden.

I started by removing the turf grass and digging a small hole — probably about six inches deep — that I could fill with water to determine if it would infiltrate into the soil. As long as water infiltrates, it really doesn't matter how fast the process takes. The infiltration rate will help determine how deep you may want to dig or what plants will have a better chance of thriving due to soil type and moisture retention.

It is important to select plants that are known to grow in your moisture and sunlight conditions. If you are ambitious, you may want to dig an infiltration test hole that is as deep as you hope to construct your garden. This will provide a better idea for how well the bottom of your garden will accept water into the soil. Soils with higher clay

content at the bottom will impede the downward flow of water. Depending on clay content and how much runoff is directed toward your garden, you could get some standing water for a day or so. In this situation, be sure to select plants that do well in occasional wet conditions.

The garden may also overflow. Unless the garden is too close to a basement, utility pole, or tree, this shouldn't be an issue since runoff most likely was directed to this location previously. Now, the runoff is being held back until it infiltrates the soil. I have found the infiltration has improved in both of my gardens over time. This is due to the roots of native plants extending deep into the ground. As the roots grow, expand, and eventually decay, voids are left that allow the water to soak into the ground more easily.

Once I decided where I wanted my first rain garden, I had a friend with a skid steer excavate the area and shape the sides of the general layout. The excavated soil can be used to construct swales directing water flow toward the garden or can be piled along the down-slope side of the garden to retain more runoff. The final shaping was completed with

One of Bob Armstrong's recently constructed rain gardens before plants are fully established



a shovel and rake. Of course, if you are really determined, you can get in shape by doing all of the work with a shovel!

I wasn't concerned with how much water the garden was retaining since it was not located next to my basement foundation. I had a general idea of how much area I wanted to dedicate to the garden based on what I thought would look best aesthetically. I was hoping the rain garden would be at least 12 inches at the deepest section. Once the construction was finished, I worked a few inches of compost into the soil to improve its ability to absorb water and provide additional nutrients to the plants.

For me, the hardest part was deciding what I wanted to plant. I learned that even though there were certain plants I wanted, nature may not go along with my plan. Sunlight and moisture conditions, along with the feeding habits of rabbits and chipmunks, will determine what will grow and thrive. My neighbor has a few bee hives so I keep trying to grow native plants that blossom early in the spring and continue well into the fall. I have had good luck with hyssop, bergamot/bee balm, asters, and mist flower. Cup plant also does well but is fairly aggressive and can spread vigorously.

The purpose from the start was to have fun creating the rain garden while knowing it was going to be doing something good, and not letting myself get hung up on every decision-making detail. Remember, part of the fun is figuring out what works through a bit of trial and error. There are no exact rules for most of this. Don't be afraid of trying something. Any rain garden is better than nothing. Science and nature are amazing, and planting your own rain garden is a great way to immerse yourself in both.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the person responsible for most of the accepted methods and science regarding rain gardens in Wisconsin is the late Roger Bannerman. Roger was a respected Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources scientist and former Clean Lakes Alliance board member who lived in our watershed and had such a curiosity and ability to help people understand water quality issues. He didn't know all the answers, but his research and enthusiasm nurtured my own interest in learning more about rain gardens and eventually building my own!

GUIDE TO CREATING A RAIN GARDEN

dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/ Stormwater/RainGardenManualPrint.pdf

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Armstrong started developing his interest in water while playing in streams and ponds around Brooklyn, Wisconsin in his youth. There were also numerous outings on the Yahara lakes and Lake Wisconsin, with time spent on the family boat built by his grandfather, uncle, and dad. He obtained his BS in civil engineering from UW-Madison. Armstrong held a professional engineering license and was a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control until his retirement. During his time as the statewide stormwater quality engineer for WisDOT, he was a member of several committees that developed stormwater quality standards as well as a panel member for several national research projects related to highway stormwater runoff.

Creation of a rain garden in 2023 at Holy Wisdom Monastery in partnership with Clean Lakes Alliance



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NOT YOUR TYPICAL **HARVEST**

AN INTERVIEW WITH A DANE COUNTY AQUATIC PLANT HARVESTER OPERATOR

f you've spent time around any of Greater Madison's lakes, you've probably seen these large machines in action. Unofficially and incorrectly known as "weed cutters," the machines and their operators play a vital role in keeping our lakes open to everyone. The proper name for the machine is aquatic plant harvester, because they're not just cutting weeds, they're harvesting and removing vegetation from our lakes.

So how do they work? What are they doing? Who is out there driving them? Clean Lakes Alliance's Adam Sodersten visited Lake Monona on a beautiful August day to ride along on an aquatic plant harvester driven by Donn Kidd to get some answers.

Adam Sodersten: How long have you been doing this?

Donn Kidd: This is my sixth season.

AS: What got you into it?

DK: Well, it seemed like an interesting job, so I applied and I got it! And turns out I really liked it! I was doing an office job before - data management in epidemiology. It's just kind of a nice change. I'm outside. It's great!

AS: How long did it take you to learn how to drive this? It looks fairly sophisticated!

DK: I'd say by my second summer I was pretty proficient. It just always depends on the operator though. Some people

get on and it's like they've been doing it forever.

AS: Usually you're alone, right?

DK: Usually, you're on the boat alone. Sometimes you're cutting with other people on other boats. But, you know, there's a lot of alone time.

AS: Is it odd being out here all alone?

DK: We look like we're alone, but we're not. We have a big support staff. If I break down, somebody will be here within minutes.

AS: How often do you break down?

DK: At least once a summer. There's a lot of moving parts on this machine. Conveyors, hydraulics, there's a lot that can go wrong. These machines get worked really hard.

AS: How long each day are you out on the water?

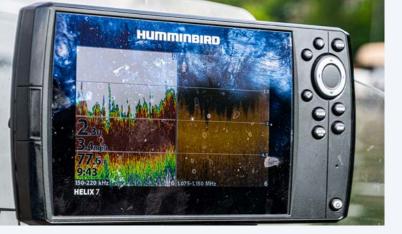
DK: We head out on the water at 6:30 a.m., and then we are back at the shop at 3:00 p.m. We're on the water as long as we can be. We stop for half an hour for lunch and occasional restroom breaks. But other than that, we're on the water a good six hours a day.

AS: How does this work?

DK: Pretty simple. Front goes up and down. You hit the gas







and there are cutting teeth on the front that remove the surface vegetation, bring it up the conveyer belt, and put it below.

AS: How do you know where and how to cut?

DK: I usually find the bottom and then bring it [the cutting mechanism] up a few inches. We don't want to dredge. The equipment can't handle the mud, so we just want to cut the plants a few inches off the bottom of the lake. When you feel it go up, that means we've hit a little rock. It's interesting that the longer you do this, you know the bottom of the lake as well as you know the top of it!

AS: The water looks pretty clear here.

DK: The whole lake is clear, I can see everything! I've seen rocks I've never seen before.

AS: How has this year [2023] been?

DK: I would say it feels a little different. Vegetation seems a little down. The lakes look to be in really good shape this year. The water clarity has been good. I haven't noticed a lot of blue-green algae [cyanobacteria] blooms. We had some blooms early in the season, but I haven't seen many since.

AS: From the untrained eye, the path the harvesters take seems random, but it isn't, right?

DK: Oh yeah, I'm coming in and out making the channel wider for where boats will come out. I kind of have a plan every day, but a lot of times that plan changes due to wind. After I cut this, I don't want it [aquatic plants] blowing into somebody's pier. I have to work with the wind, not against it. We get about 90% of what we cut up the conveyor. We try to do our best to get it all.

AS: Can you easily see your progress?

DK: I wear polarized glasses to see better. I can see really well in the morning. Sometimes I come back and see what I've missed. If the bottom is sandy too, it's easier. Otherwise, I just try to turn and stay straight.

AS: How close to the shore do you get?



DK: I can get in there, but we don't cut between the piers. We cut near them but focus more on the navigational channels.

AS: When you're harvesting, what specific plants come out of the water?

DK: If it's [a plant] and in the navigational area, it comes out. Number two priority is navigation and recreation. Number one priority is waterflow. We haven't cut the river in two years now because of the dredging.

AS: How fast does the harvester fill up causing you to need to come in and offload?

DK: It just really depends on where we are and what the situation is.

AS: How many dump trucks will you haul away today from this area? One or multiple?

DK: There'll be multiple - with luck.

AS: Where does it go? I'm assuming it's composted somewhere, right?

DK: Most of our harvested vegetation is taken to a Dane County property. We have a landowner who will take quite a bit of it as well. It's good compost.

AS: What happens with the bottle caps and the cups and everything else that comes up from the water? Is that just part of the process like, "Hey, farmer that's taking it, there's something in here and good luck to you?"

DK: If I know it's going to a farmer, I won't get a load like that. I can pick up better. A lot of farmers, if they have livestock, they won't take that, because they can't eat bottlecaps.

AS: What's the craziest thing you've pulled up into the harvester with the plants?

DK: I don't know if it's crazy, but you get big fish. If we get a big fish, we'll reverse the conveyer and put it back. I get a lot of garbage, too. Big logs, tires, a lot of dead animals, which is pretty weird.

AS: What is the reaction from anglers when you see them out on the water?

DK: We give them a wide berth. I mean, if they're fishing, we stay out of their way as much as we can. So, the reaction depends. A lot of times, I think the action of our wheels excites the fish and they'll bite right when we're going by, so the anglers are busy. But, you know, if the anglers don't get a bite when we go by, then it's our fault!

Pete Jopke of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, who was on the water with us, added this to the conversation: With respect to the fishing, we work closely with the DNR and look at the data about the fish population numbers over the years. We're cutting a 40-foot swath from the end of the docks out. But there's just exponentially more habitat for those fish to spawn in. We get a little pushback in the spring occasionally...why are we disturbing the bass and the bluegill beds, but overall, looking at the data, we have found no negative impact on any fishery group at all.

AS: Do people seem interested in the harvesters when they see them out on the water?

PHOTOS

Page 20 Top Left: The aquatic plant harvester operator uses a depth finder to monitor the bottom of the lake while harvesting aquatic plants Page 20 Top Right: Harvested plant debris rolls off of the aquatic plant harvester once it reaches the shore Page 21 Bottom: Aquatic plant

harvester offloads plant debris to be composted at a Dane County property (All photos on pages 20-21 courtesy Dane County) **DK:** I'm probably one of the most photographed people in Madison! Sometimes we see drones flying around taking pictures of us.

AS: Do you feel like you're providing a big public service? Snowplow drivers drive in the winter, and this is kind of like a snowplow driver on the lake.

DK: Yeah, for sure. I definitely think of myself as a public servant. I'm here for people and the lakes - to make the lakes better for them.

AS: Kind of a nice view for a day at the office!

DK: Yeah...ya know, I'm not a vice president, but I have a better office than a vice president would have. This is the best office there is!

AS: How lucky are we to have these big lakes in Greater Madison?

DK: Super lucky! I mean, that's why I moved here in the first place. We wanted a place to sail so we moved here. The lakes are great – they really make the whole area unique. And they're all beautiful lakes. People ask me which one is my favorite and really, they're all great.

There are 12 aquatic plant harvesters working on all five lakes and the Yahara River. They cut from mid-May through September. They stay on the lakes through rain and snow, only coming off if there is lightning or severe weather. Running at a maximum speed of four miles per hour, the aquatic plant harvesters move slightly faster than a brisk walking speed in order to safely complete their job.

To learn more about Dane County's Aquatic Plant Management Harvesting Program, visit: lwrd.countyofdane.com/what-we-do/lake-management/aquatic-plant-management

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FRIENDS OF THE YAHARA RIVER HEADWATERS

The health of the Yahara River is a critical cornerstone to the quality of Greater Madison's lakes and the entire watershed. The Friends of the Yahara River Headwaters work with the Village of DeForest to secure grants to improve stream bank management, including constructing quality paddler launches. These launches will allow safe and ecologically friendly access for paddlers on the upper stretches of the Yahara River. In June, the group hosts a "Paddle and Picnic" to introduce paddlers to the beauty of the Yahara River and culinary delights of a renowned local restaurant. The Friends also host spring and fall river cleanups each year.

LEARN MORE: yaharariver.org



FRIENDS OF STARKWEATHER CREEK

Friends of Starkweather Creek is a nonprofit group dedicated to improving the watershed's environmental quality and enhancing public appreciation and enjoyment of the Creek. The Friends work with government and community partners to restore important native habitats and advocate for sound watershed planning and management practices. Many paddling, cleanup, and nature events offer creek experience and appreciation to folks of all ages. For 20 years, the Friends have co-sponsored the Summer and Winter Solstice Bonfire community celebrations at Olbrich Park.

LEARN MORE: starkweatherfriends.org

PHOTOS

Top left: Friends of the Yahara River Headwaters, courtesy Justin Sargent **Top right:** Bike pulled out of Lake Monona by Friends of Monona Bay **Bottom left:** Friends of Starkweather Creek

Bottom right: Shoreline monitoring on Lake Waubesa, courtesy Carolyn Betz



FRIENDS OF MONONA BAY

Friends of Monona Bay (FOMB) is a watershed group that works to promote the health and enjoyment of Monona Bay through monitoring, education, stewardship, and advocacy. Monona Bay's central location makes it ideal for year-round recreation. The Friends monitor water quality and promote lake-friendly practices.

FOMB also coordinates monthly shoreline cleanups year-round on the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon. Volunteers for the cleanup meet at the Brittingham Beach House, also home to Brittingham Boats. From January 2006 through December 2023, FOMB has had 3,177 volunteers who have collected 2,680 bags of trash. In addition, volunteers have retrieved bicycles, grills, chairs, and other miscellaneous trash items from Monona Bay. LEARN MORE: FOMB Monthly Shoreline Cleanup (On Facebook)



LAKE WAUBESA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1989, Lake Waubesa Conservation Association (LWCA) is a nonprofit organization that is solely dedicated to advancing the well-being of the Lake Waubesa ecosystem. Members are primarily homeowners, lake users, and businesses located along the shoreline and surrounding areas of Lake Waubesa.

LWCA is focused on how Lake Waubesa and its watershed will be effectively managed for the next generation through the creation of a comprehensive lake management plan. The plan will identify and prioritize projects aimed at improving water quality, maintaining healthy shorelines and wetlands to reduce nutrients flowing into the lake, and managing aquatic plants and invasive species.

LEARN MORE: waubesa.org

FRIENDS OF CAPITAL SPRINGS RECREATION AREA

Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area (FOCSRA) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to support the Capital Springs Recreation Area (CSRA) through community education and stewardship. The CSRA is a 2,500-acre area located just minutes from downtown Madison. It stretches from the western shores of Lake Waubesa at William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park and the Capital Springs Centennial State Park west to Fish Hatchery Road. Other locations in the CSRA include Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District's Wildlife Observation Area, the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way, and Jenni and Kyle Preserve.

FOCSRA leads many public activities, including presentations, weekly stewardship workdays, nature and bird walks, community science projects, and shoreline cleanup days, as well as provides online trail guides.

New interpretive panels were designed and installed by the FOCSRA describing the area's glacial and cultural history, wetlands, and the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. Volunteers also participate in a bumble bee survey for pollinator conservation. LEARN MORE: friendsofcapitalsprings.org



FRIENDS OF OLIN TURVILLE

Since 2010, the Friends of Olin Turville (FOOT) have sought to enhance the landscape and enjoyment of the two historic parks so the community might discover their beauty and enjoy their unique offerings. To meet that goal, FOOT's efforts have taken two directions:

- Improving the parks' natural assets through volunteer efforts to reduce invasive species, prepare for controlled burns, clean shorelines, and spread native plant seeds.
- Expanding the parks' visitor appeal through programming free events that include guided nature walks, concerts, dances, yoga sessions, the occasional winter ski night, and spring fling.

The historic Olin Park Pavilion provides the setting for most events, bringing hundreds of participants into these two special parks. LEARN MORE: olin-turville.org





FRIENDS OF CHEROKEE MARSH

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh is an all-volunteer group that works to protect, restore, and foster appreciation and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh's lands, waters, and living beauty.

In cooperation with Madison Parks, Dane County Parks, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Friends host work parties and provide funding for land restoration. The Friends sponsor a family-friendly walk on the first Sunday of the month and additional seasonal events such as frog and moth walks. The group contributes funding for hands-on, outdoor environmental learning through local schools and summer camps.

Cherokee Marsh, Dane County's largest wetland, is located along the upper Yahara River and Token Creek, just upstream from Lake Mendota. LEARN MORE: cherokeemarsh.org

PHOTOS

Top Right: Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area take part in a bee survey Left: Friends of Olin-Turville host an event in the Olin Park Pavilion Lower Right: Friends of Cherokee Marsh participants on a butterfly walk at Cherokee Marsh, photo courtesy Wendy Murkve



FRIENDS OF LAKE WINGRA

2023 was a year of organizing and rebuilding for Friends of Lake Wingra, which means the group will hit the ground running in 2024! Stay tuned for several events they will be organizing and supporting throughout the year.

To support new programming and partnerships, the Friends are looking for volunteers! If you want to get involved, reach out to info@lakewingra.org.

LEARN MORE: lakewingra.org



FRIENDS OF LAKE KEGONSA SOCIETY

Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society (FOLKS) works to improve the ecology, water quality, fishing, and recreational use of Lake Kegonsa. In 2023, FOLKS was mainly focused on phosphorus reduction projects and public education. To reduce the in-lake phosphorus level, FOLKS continues to help municipalities around Lake Kegonsa with leaf removal and partners with Dane County to remove aquatic plants and other debris from the lake. FOLKS also maintains educational native plant gardens at Fish Camp County Park and provides native plant workshops for members. In addition, FOLKS works on identifying possible runoff areas and projects, and works with the Rock River Coalition and Clean Lakes Alliance to monitor water quality at piers, lake inlets and the outlet, middle of the lake, and runoff areas.

LEARN MORE: kegonsa.org



FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

The Friends inspire people to connect to and care for the UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Its members are committed to land stewardship, education, and advocacy in this living classroom stretching 4.3 miles on Lake Mendota's shoreline. The group hosts land restoration projects, promotes knowledge sharing with guided nature walks and outreach events, and hosts an annual poetry reading. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve is an outdoor laboratory, and the Friends are proud to engage in this mission through support for research and contributions to citizen science like Clean Lakes Alliance's LakeForecast water quality monitoring program.

LEARN MORE: friendslakeshorepreserve.com



FRIENDS OF PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy (FOPBC) sponsor education, land management, and monitoring work supporting its mission to restore, protect, and promote the Conservancy. Join them for restoration workdays in the spring and Conservancy Day talks and nature walks throughout the year.

FOPBC continues to highlight the importance of access to green space for all. In 2024, they will complete seeding of a "Platinum Prairie" on 160 acres of former farmland added to the Conservancy in 2019. Restoring the land to prairie and wetlands has dramatically reduced stormwater runoff and increased infiltration for groundwater recharge. Friends volunteers and partners will continue to monitor surface water flows into the Conservancy and at the Pheasant Branch Creek outlet near Lake Mendota.

LEARN MORE: pheasantbranch.org



FRIENDS OF THE ARBORETUM

The mission of Friends of the Arboretum is to build positive relationships between people and the land through support of the UW-Madison Arboretum.

Native Plant Sale - In 2024, the Friends continued their online preordering for native plants and their in-person tent sale.

Grass-to-Gardens Initiative – The Friends awarded two rain garden kits complete with donated plants to applicants in the watershed and continued to foster education to support native plant gardens.

Luncheon-Lectures Series – The Friends are continuing their popular, monthly Luncheon-Lectures Series at the Arboretum Visitor Center. LEARN MORE: arboretum.wisc.edu/get-involved/friends

PHOTOS

Page 26 Top left: Volunteers at a Friends of Lake Wingra cleanup event in partnership with Wingra Boats

Page 26 Top Right: Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve planting wildflowers at Picnic Point, photo courtesy Glenda Denniston

Page 26 Bottom Left: Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society help municipalities with leaf removal

Page 26 Bottom Right: Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, in collaboration with the City of Middleton (Parks and Recreation), sponsor a volunteer workday removing buckthorn and honeysuckle from the park Page 27 Top: Friends of the Arboretum native plant sale

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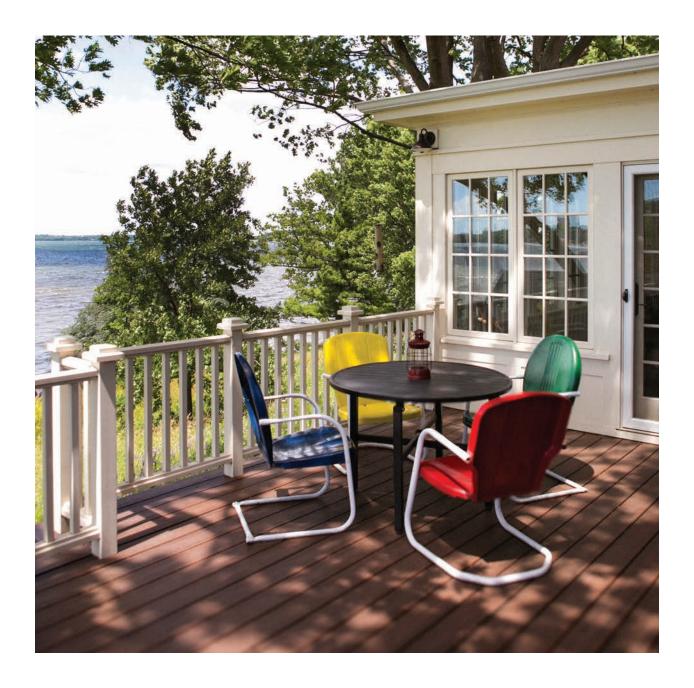
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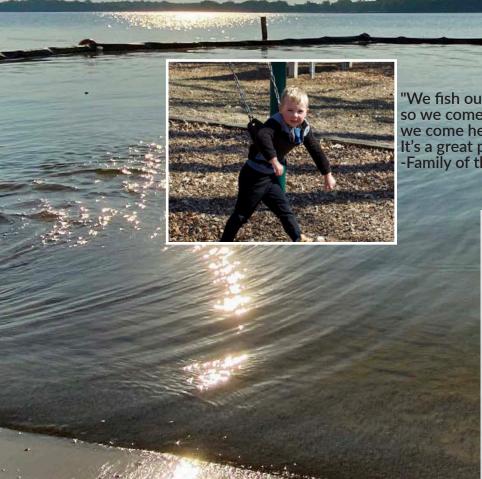
GOODLAND BEACH

& PARK



What do you enjoy most about visiting this beach and park on Lake Waubesa?

"I enjoy that this park connects us to lakes Monona and Mendota. It's always nice to be able to travel up and down the lakes in Dane County." -Joseph Place, Oregon, WI



"We fish out here sometimes. We have a boat, so we come and put our boat in. And obviously we come here every single day in the summer. It's a great park for the kids."
-Family of the neighborhood



"I love coming out here to enjoy the warm weather. I usually walk my dogs around here because it's such a big park." -Madelyn Malcook, Madison, WI



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It's a cool, gray day in early spring as we approach a large deadfall while paddling Sixmile Creek. The river is completely blocked by logs, branches, and piles of garbage that have collected over the years. We slide our canoe into the muddy creek edge, and I hop out with a chainsaw in hand to start cutting up the logs blocking the creek. "Hey, what are you doing?" I hear sharply called out from behind. I look back and see Steve paddling up in his solo boat, wearing his straw cowboy hat and green Capitol Water Trails shirt.

"I am going to get these logs out of the way," I respond.

"Not without a safety line," Steve sternly replies. With a safety line in place, I approach the location of the main blockage and see the incredible power of the water on this small stream. Confined by the complex deadfall, the streamflow is extremely fast and has scoured a deep hole. The danger involved is obvious to me now, and I am thankful for Steve's guidance and expertise on our crew.

If you are a paddler in Dane County, there's a good chance Capitol Water Trails has touched your life. Since its inception in 1998, the dedicated team behind Capitol Water Trails has opened more than 83 miles of waterways, with ongoing efforts to create more opportunities for recreation. Notable completed projects include work on

the Maunesha River, Wingra Creek, Sixmile Creek, Token Creek, Koshkonong Creek, and the Upper Sugar River.

Much of the success and impact of Capitol Water Trails can be attributed to the relentless efforts of Steve Falter. Growing up as one of nine children, Steve was never far from a canoe, earning him the affectionate title of a fellow "River Rat." Recognizing the potential to enhance recreation along the Maunesha River, Steve took the initiative to clear deadfalls and clean the streambed.

Anyone familiar with ecological restoration knows the physical and arduous nature of clearing brush and logs on land. Performing such tasks standing in moving water, on unpredictable and often unseen underwater terrain, adds an additional layer of physical challenge. The work is both physically challenging and rewarding in a way that is often forgotten in our digital world. Steve is one of the "old guard," so to speak, working not for his personal gain or recognition, but just because there is a job to be done. If we all wait around for someone else to do it, it will never be accomplished. So, like a superhero in waders, Steve just dives in and gets his hands dirty.

Capitol Water Trails acts as a force multiplier, allowing organizations across the county to leverage Steve and his team's experience and resources to complete their





Steve Falter cuts up tree remains that are blocking passage of a waterway

projects. Notably, Capitol Water Trails operates with commendably low overhead, ensuring that nearly all donations directly contribute to tools, equipment, safety items, and improvements to recreation and habitat.

I have really appreciated Steve's expertise regarding safety as well as his strategy for clearing debris to benefit paddling. He can easily eye up the path of a river and determine what needs to be cleared to ease navigation and prevent the collection of more debris, while leaving the portions that provide habitat for fish, invertebrates, and other creatures so that we can all share the creek. Steve truly is an expert in this field (or waterway) and shares his talents with the community through this organization.

Capitol Water Trails stands as a beacon of community-driven conservation efforts, tirelessly working to create and maintain water trails that benefit both people and the environment. With an impressive track record of completed projects, Capitol Water Trails continues to instill a sense of responsibility and appreciation for water resources in Dane County. Through education, collaboration, and a genuine passion for water stewardship, this nonprofit organization exemplifies the positive impact that community-driven initiatives can have on the preservation and enjoyment of natural landscapes.

To make a financial contribution, volunteer, or view upcoming events, please visit **capitolwatertrails.org**.





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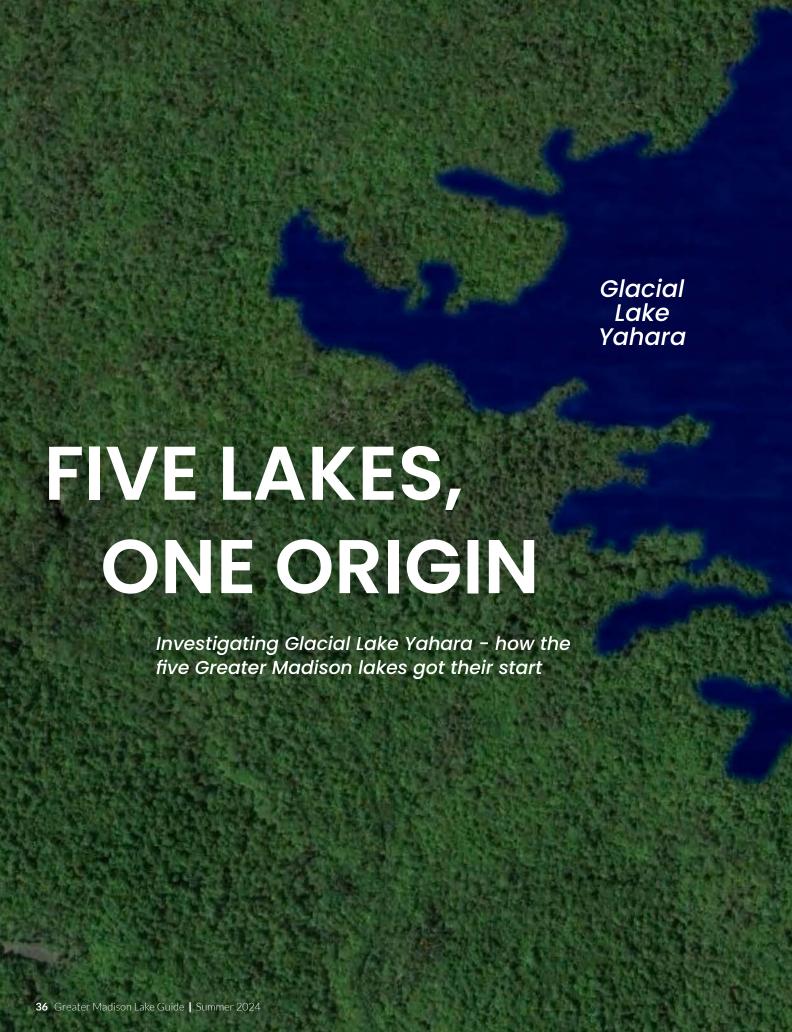
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Nearly 200 years ago, the city now known as Madison got its start. In 1829, a federal judge named James Doty (yes, the same person the street is named after) purchased the forest land sitting on an isthmus between two large lakes. He named the city "Madison" after President James Madison. Becoming the capital of the Wisconsin Territory in 1837, the city kept the designation when Wisconsin became a state in 1848. But the beauty that drew Doty and others to Greater Madison had been drawing people to the area for thousands of years before any Europeans made their way to the Midwest.

Go back 15,000 years and everything we know today in Greater Madison was covered with ice up to a mile thick. This was the "Wisconsin Glaciation" and it covered most of Canada, the Upper Midwest, and New England.

Over the next 2,000 years, the glacier started to melt and retreat. Left behind was one large lake stretching from present-day Middleton to Stoughton. This large, single body of water is now referred to as "Glacial Lake Yahara" by geologists.

As the glacier retreated, we began to see the first signs of human activity in the present-day Greater Madison area. These distant ancestors of the Ho-Chunk lived near this single waterbody roughly 13,000 years before James Doty arrived. For 3,000 years, this large lake dominated southern Wisconsin.

About 10,000 years ago, the water level of Glacial Lake Yahara began to fall. The lake separated into the four current lakes known as Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa. Additionally, a marsh formed which would later become Lake Wingra.

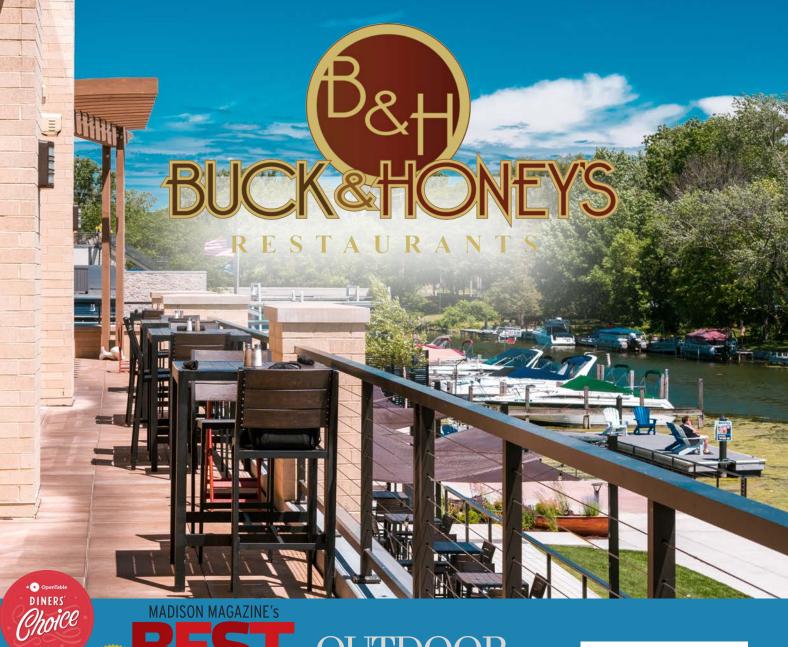
Around the area that the Ho-Chunk call Teejop, which translates to "Four Lakes," early surveyors documented the Ho-Chunk producing over 3,000 bushels of corn annually in Old Turtle, Four Lakes, and Broken Arm — now known as Middleton, Madison, and Monona.

At the center of Teejop, much like today, sat Lake Mendota. Now considered the most studied lake in the world, the lake was once called Waaksikhomikra, translating to "Where the Person Rests." Teejop was the cultural epicenter for native mound-building peoples — with evidence of over 1,200 effigy and burial mounds being documented in the area — a concentration that rivals any other place in North America.

The Ho-Chunk, with its massive ancestral land base throughout present-day Wisconsin and reaching areas of Canada, the Dakotas, and Indiana, knew that water has an identity, a life, a meaning, and a purpose — deserving of the utmost care and protection. They relied on water for fishing, wild rice harvesting, and transportation, but also treated it with spiritual reverence as a sacred, living entity that provided so much to the people of Teejop and beyond.

That important relationship with water has lasted centuries and has kept the Ho-Chunk Nation, from its traditional clan duties to its modern-day government, as protectors of one of our most important life sources.

It's been 13,000 years since humans first arrived and 10,000 years since Glacial Lake Yahara became the five lakes we know today. The more we understand our lakes' past, the more we will value our role in shaping their future.



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OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

This past year, Clean Lakes Alliance was happy to have University of Wisconsin-Madison students Maddie Gamble and Eden Larson work with our communications team. As part of their internship, they met with fellow UW student, Abbey Woldt, who is helping preserve Indigenous culture and heritage on campus. The following is an account of that interaction.

As you walk along the UW-Madison Campus taking in the beautiful views of Lake Mendota, have you ever wondered what the place we call home looked like thousands of years ago? Who lived here and what was their story?

The UW-Madison Campus has a rich history of Indigenous culture, a fact that is unknown to many people. Madison is home to several important Indigenous burial sites, referred to as mounds. Most of those mounds were destroyed during European settlement, but four remain visible on the UW-Madison Campus. All but one is located within the UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve. These mounds serve as a reminder of the cultures that existed before the university.

Abbey Woldt, a sophomore at UW-Madison, identifies as a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Woldt's father is Ho-Chunk but was adopted at a young age. Woldt and her father were not raised directly in the culture.

ter Madison Lake Guide | Summer 2024

When Woldt came to UW-Madison, she dove deeper into her culture and made meaningful connections to her Indigenous heritage. She is currently pursuing a certificate in American Indian and Indigenous Studies, where she is learning more about Indigenous traditions, specifically the sacred language of the Ho-Chunk, or "People of the Big Voice."

To continue her journey connecting with her culture, Woldt joined the Indigenous student organization, Wunk Sheek (name derived from a Ho-Chunk word meaning "Native people"). The group is dedicated to teaching students of Indigenous identity and other members of the community about Indigenous issues, culture, and history. Students are a vital part of the education and preservation of Indigenous culture on campus. Organizations such as Wunk Sheek rely on their community to advocate for improved tribal relations, increased education, and continued respect for their culture.

Another effort run by students on the UW-Madison Campus is an archaeological site tour of the burial mounds. Woldt decided to further her dedication to her culture by joining as a tour guide.

More than 1,000 years ago, Indigenous Peoples of the region built the mounds we see on the UW-Madison

"THE WAY THE MOUNDS ARE BUILT AND PLACED TELLS A BIGGER STORY. THEY COMMUNICATE A MESSAGE TO OUR CREATOR, BEST VIEWED FROM THE SKY."

-ABBEY WOLDT, UW-MADISON STUDENT & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE TOUR GUIDE





Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI 34547 - Turtle Mound on Observatory Hill (circa 1910)

"MOUNDS REPRESENT AND
CONNECT LIFE WITH WATER. THAT
IS WHY THE MOUNDS ARE BUILT
CLOSE TO THIS SOURCE OF LIFE FOR
OUR CULTURE - IT REPRESENTS THE
CYCLE OF LIFE."
-ABBEY WOLDT, UW-MADISON STUDENT &

-ABBEY WOLDT, UW-MADISON STUDENT & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE TOUR GUIDE

Campus today. The mound builders are believed to be direct ancestors of the Ho-Chunk people. The creation of these mounds served to honor tribal members who have passed.

"The way the mounds are built and placed tells a bigger story," said Woldt. "They communicate a message to our creator, best viewed from the sky."

There are various types of mounds, all distinguishable by their shape. Conical mounds are in the shape of a circle, geometric mounds are built in a line formation, and effigy mounds are built to represent symbols, such as animals or spirits. The shape and placement of the mound represents the story the mound builders were trying to convey and the people they were honoring within them.

Indigenous culture is closely connected to water. Mound builders relied on the Yahara River Watershed to provide for their community. This intimate connection with water is why many of the mounds are built close to the shores of Lake Mendota and other waterbodies. Today, Indigenous Peoples work to protect and nurture the ecosystem the way their ancestors did in the past.

"Mounds represent and connect life with water. That is

why the mounds are built close to this source of life for our culture – it represents the cycle of life," said Woldt.

Tour participants learn about the traditional practices of native people, their forced removal from the land and history of displacement, and how members of UW-Madison can work together to respect the native land we reside on. Every tour draws from the individual experiences, knowledge, and interests of each tour guide.

A new addition to the tour aids in the education of effigy mounds. Earlier this year, a sculpture by a previous UW-Madison art professor was installed on campus.

This sculpture incorporates the traditional Ho-Chunk language and serves as an example of further efforts toward Indigenous education.

We asked Woldt what we can do to improve our relationship and understanding of Indigenous culture on campus. Her response encompassed hope for the future with an emphasis on a need for greater community awareness and understanding of our historical roots.

"When we are trained for these tours, we are told that taking care of the mounds is really up to the people of Wisconsin – the people of Madison. We are called to work with these mounds and protect them because we're the ones who live close by and interact with them as a part of our landscape. It's up to us on how we preserve these mounds and take care of them as a community," said Woldt.

Information about mound tours on the UW-Madison Campus: info.wisc.edu/campus-tours

Abbey Woldt describes the relationship between the mounds and the water to Clean Lakes Alliance intern Eden Larson



WARNER BEACH

What do you enjoy most about visiting this beach on Lake Mendota?



"It's my first time here. It's clean, perfect for families and kids."
-Emily, Ecuador

"It's clean. We have a clean beach through filtration. We can stop and play in the sand and water and not have to worry. The North Side isn't very equitable, but this is nice to have as a swimming option. The shelter is nice and has a clean bathroom.

And it's never very crowded."

-Lindsey, Sabrina, and kids, Madison, WI



"It's very sunny. We like that it's secluded and sort of hidden away." -Kate and Damien, Madison and Lake Mills, WI





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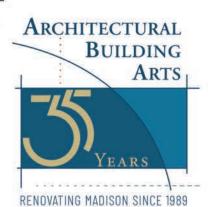
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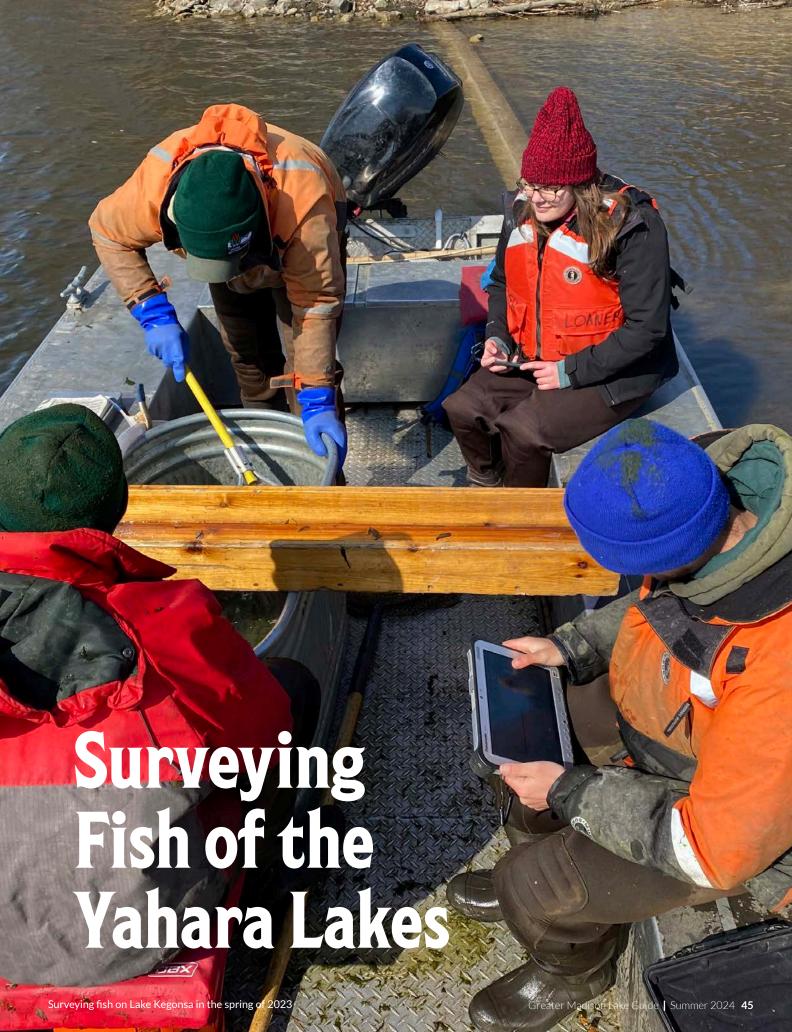


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Comprehensive fish surveys are an important part of maintaining healthy fisheries in any lake. In the spring of 2023, Clean Lakes Alliance Watershed Engagement Manager Caitlin McAleavey joined a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fisheries crew on Lake Kegonsa to learn more about what goes into assessing our lakes' fish populations. The following is her account of the trip.

On a sunny spring day, DNR Fisheries Biologist Dan Oele and fish technicians Mitch Trow and Josh Jonet set out on Lake Kegonsa's latest fish survey. The boat was packed with measuring tools, scales, a large holding tank for fish, electronic tablets, collection envelopes, lifejackets, and waterproof gloves.

All five of the Greater Madison lakes are on a five-year rotation for official surveys, meaning each year one of our Yahara lakes gets a comprehensive study. Fish assessments are typically conducted in the spring, preferably soon after ice-off. These thorough examinations determine population trends, ecosystem health, potential regulation adjustments, and how our fish are faring against threats such as invasive species or impaired water quality.

Survey preparation begins with DNR staff setting out long fyke nets in shallow areas of the lake a day or two before sampling that act as holding pens for captured fish. Fyke nets are particularly useful in the spring as they draw in walleye, northern pike, and muskellunge coming closer to shore in search of suitable spawning grounds. DNR staff then visit each net set out the previous day to count, measure, weigh, and sex (if possible) each fish before it is released. DNR staff measured walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass, bluegill, perch, northern pike, crappies, and more during the morning outing. These springtime surveys are followed up with electrofishing studies in the fall to assess spawning success and other lifecycle dynamics.

When asked about trends he's seen in the lakes over the last decade and beyond, Oele stated, "We're very fortunate

to have fisheries that have been stable and continue producing high-quality fish for anglers."

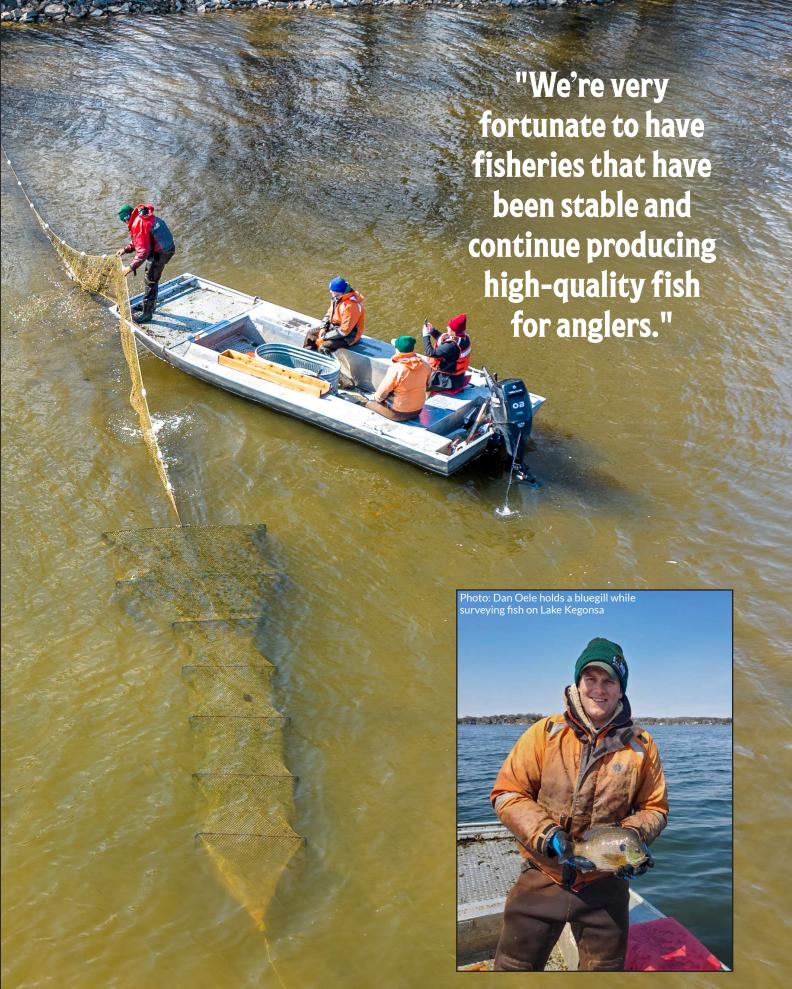
Stocking plays a key role in maintaining these healthy populations due to prominent angler pressure on our local lakes. Oele shared that not only does the survey identify stocking needs for each lake, but also evaluates stocking success due to genetic testing done in partnership with University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Nonintrusive fin clips collected from certain species can determine whether that specimen or its parents were released from a hatchery or were naturally produced. This information aids DNR and other fishery managers in deciphering what makes stocking successful in some lakes and not others. Genetic testing and tracking are done for walleye and muskellunge within our lakes because of their desirability among anglers, high trophic status, and often inability of muskellunge to naturally reproduce in our heavily fished waters.

Assessments on each lake can take a few weeks to complete, especially in unpredictable spring weather. Then comes the hard work of putting it all together to formulate the reports that can be found online about a year after sampling occurs. To learn more about Yahara lakes fish assessments, visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/reports.

Thank you to DNR staff for allowing Clean Lakes Alliance to participate in the 2023 Lake Kegonsa fish survey, and to Robert Bertera for his aerial photography.









I am happy to share that Madison continues to make progress toward a new vision for the Lake Monona Waterfront and a new John Nolen Drive bridge. This vision will improve access for walkers and bikers, shoreline habitat, and water quality.

In late 2023, the City of Madison reached a significant milestone in the Lake Monona Waterfront planning initiative when the Lake Monona Waterfront Ad Hoc Committee unanimously approved a draft master plan report for submission to the Madison Common Council.

The draft plan and report are the product of hundreds of hours of community engagement, outreach, analysis, and plan refinement. The committee worked closely with Sasaki Associates, which it selected to assist with plan development through the Lake Monona Waterfront Design Challenge.

This plan is centered on the community goals of creating a visionary, inclusive, and environmentally-focused waterfront. Central to the plan are the goals of creating a green shoreline edge and addressing urban stormwater runoff. The draft plan proposes reconnecting the lake's

shoreline with native plant communities to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat. It also includes measures to address urban runoff by using vegetated swales, rain gardens, and other sustainable practices to remove pollutants before they enter the lake.

The draft plan's focus on sustainability and stewardship, and on connecting our whole community to the lake, is critically important. The plan has the potential to transform the lakefront into something that connects the city, both physically and symbolically, while serving as an iconic gateway to the downtown.

Pending Council approval, implementing the vision set by the master plan will largely depend on securing funding beyond City resources. An adopted plan will provide the necessary agency for the City to pursue support through federal, state, and private pathways.

While many aspects of the plan will still require funding, we have been planning some pieces of the work alongside the master planning process. The City is finalizing plans for reconstructing the John Nolen Drive causeway and bridges. This will include new roadway bridges and





A Message from Dane County

BY JOE PARISI, DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

From the moment this community set out with shared priority and purpose to clean up the lakes we love, we knew the work would be hard. It was clear that perseverance and commitment would have to prevail to get the job done. Systemic change in anything takes not only time but also continued leadership. Change takes togetherness and tangible action. This community has a shared drive to see what we've started together straight through to the finish line.

As we look forward to the work that still lies ahead, we can all reflect proudly on how far we've come in just a few years. Projects are happening, progress is being made, and the roadmap to what's needed next is before us. With continued investment, the right resources, and sticking with our "can do" approach, we have the remedies to continue to make a difference not only for today, but for tomorrow's generations.

Since we started this work in earnest, the climb has gotten a bit steeper because of changing weather patterns. Extreme rains and flooding, early snowmelts, wintertime runoff, and droughts have all tested expectations and projections. With our ever-changing climate becoming harder to predict, and even more difficult to manage the effects of, it only exacerbates our need to not let up on the work we're doing.

Dane County's "Suck the Muck" has removed 56,000 tons of sludge that's been seeping algae-growing phosphorus into our waterways for decades. Since starting this innovative project many years ago in waterways that



loe Parisi

tie into our Yahara chain of lakes, we have removed an estimated 180,000 pounds of phosphorus and restored stream bottoms to, in some cases, what they looked like a century ago.

Our Continuous Cover Program has converted thousands of acres of highly erodible cropland into established prairies that stop runoff and trap phosphorus and climate change-causing carbon, while providing grazing and food for livestock. To date, we've converted more than 2,500 acres into grasslands and prairies that help improve our water quality. Continuous cover works — to date we have stopped the flow of more than 15-million gallons of rain runoff from racing toward our waterways and trapped over 800 tons of carbon dioxide.

Since launching these two innovative approaches to cleaning our lakes just a few years ago, Dane County has already invested a combined \$8.2 million on Suck the Muck and our Continuous Cover Program, with an additional \$15 million approved to continue these initiatives for many years to come. We are positioned to continue to make progress.

Dane County's two manure digesters that debuted over a decade ago are now converting manure into biogas for vehicle fuel, offering hope for what's possible if such treatment technology were made available in our most sensitive watersheds at an even greater scale. Treatment is the answer to large volumes of waste. That's why I've allocated \$3 million to do the homework necessary to develop a community manure management network in the north Mendota watershed. We know continued investment in innovation is the answer to not only improving water quality but helping our farmers continue their work for decades to come. Dane County values agriculture and we all benefit from a vibrant local farm economy.

Like our other efforts, Dane County is proud to lead innovative solutions to this challenge. We know a project of this magnitude will require incredible collaboration



Dane County staff measuring the amount of sediment collecting in local waterways $\,$

and investment. Success won't happen overnight, but the opportunity before us provides more than enough incentive to keep everyone working together to make it happen.

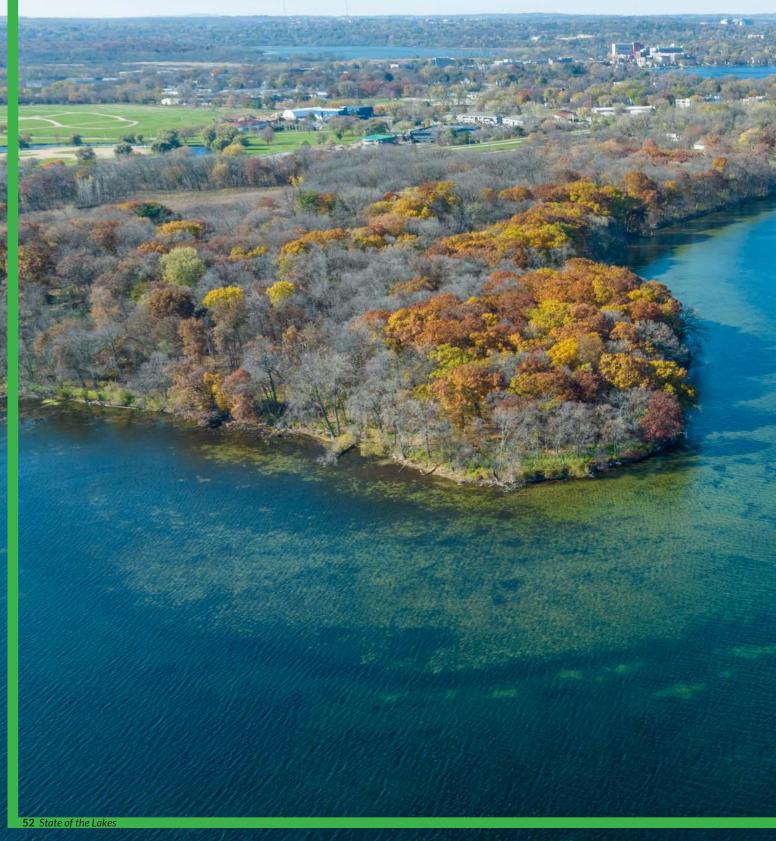
Our lakes remind us daily of the cumulative impacts of individual decision points. They're changing in real time. It's imperative we continue to adapt to help meet this moment and ensure future generations can enjoy all these waters have to offer.

It's been an honor to be a part of this work for the past 13 years, and I'm both enthusiastic and grateful for our next generation of leaders ready to build upon the progress we have all made possible.



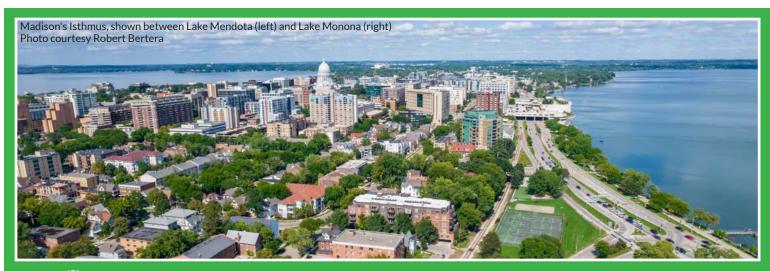


2023 STATE



OF THE LAKES







STATE OF THE LAKES

The State of the Lakes provides an annual health synopsis of Greater Madison's five Yahara lakes (Mendota, Monona, Wingra, Waubesa, and Kegonsa). The chain of lakes and the land areas that drain to them are shown in Figure 1. Focusing on major drivers and indicators of water quality collected over the prior year (2023), the analysis summarizes lake and watershed health factors, trends, and the likely causes of observed conditions. The report begins with lake-specific health dashboards (pages 55-59) before reviewing five areas of watershed impact and lake response.

Authored by Clean Lakes Alliance Deputy Director and Chief Science Officer Paul Dearlove, this report is a product of collaboration involving multiple government and scientific contributors. We are grateful to the following entities and information sources: U.S. Geological Survey, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Salt Wise, Public Health Madison & Dane County, Dane County Land & Water Resources, and Clean Lakes Alliance's volunteer LakeForecast monitors.

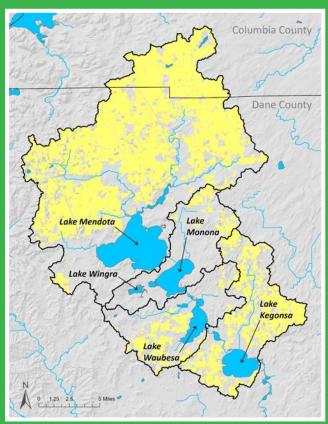


Figure 1: Yahara lakes watershed showing land areas that drain directly to each lake. Yellow denotes agricultural areas that comprise most of the 384-square-mile watershed.

2023 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Drought conditions limited runoff and phosphorus delivery to the lakes, helping all five lakes attain "good" to "excellent" rankings for phosphorus levels and "good" rankings for water clarity.
- LakeForecast monitors observed comparatively fewer nearshore cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms compared to prior years.
- Historically rising chloride concentrations caused by winter salting is an ongoing water quality concern, with the highest levels measured in Lake Wingra.
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are an emerging contaminant of concern, with lakes Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa recently listed as federally impaired for these forever chemicals.
- Progress continues around the adoption of phosphorus-reducing land conservation practices, but more action is needed to reach and sustain water quality goals, including getting 100% of agricultural acres covered by nutrient management plans and developing more manure management facilities.

LAKE MENDOTA

Health Dashboard



Lake Type: Drainage

Direct Drainage Area: 217 sq. miles **Total Drainage Area:** 232.4 sq. miles

Surface Area: 9,847 acres Shoreline Length: 22 miles Mean Depth: 42 feet Maximum Depth: 83 feet Volume: 133,407 million gallons Flushing Rate: 22% of volume/year

Lake Mendota sits at the top of the chain and is the largest of the five Yahara lakes by surface area, depth, and volume. Its direct drainage area consists predominantly of agricultural land uses. Inlet tributaries include Pheasant Branch Creek (west shore); and Sixmile Creek, Dorn Creek, Token Creek, and the Yahara River (north shore). The lake's outlet (southeast shore) directs overflow water through the Yahara River and into Lake Monona. It has been listed as federally impaired for phosphorus since 2011.

2023 Health Metric	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Status vs. Goal	Trend (2013-2023)	
PHOSPHORUS Criteria for deeper, thermally stratified lakes measured at the surface over the deepest point. Results were 0.024 mg/L, equaling the ≤0.024 mg/L "mesotrophy" goal. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√		Goal ≤ 0.024 mg/L 0 0.05 0.10 mg/L	Trend Actual	
OFFSHORE CLARITY Criteria for deeper, thermally stratified lakes measured with a Secchi disk over the deepest point. Results were 4.9 ft relative to the 6.6-ft or greater "mesotrophy" goal. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√		Goal ≥ 6.6 ft 0 5 10 feet		
NEARSHORE CLARITY Median of shallow, nearshore measurements tak Results were 77.5 cm relative to the 80-cm or gro Alliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.			Goal ≥ 80 cm 20 70 120 cm				
CYANOBACTERIA Percent of unique sampling days when strong evicyanobacteria bloom is observed within at least osites. Results were 1.5% relative to a goal of 5% of Alliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.	one of the	lake's near	Goal ≤ 5% 0 15 30				
BEACH CLOSURES Beach closure days are based on data aggregated Mendota (Governor Nelson, Warner, Mendota, J. Marshall, Tenney, Spring Harbor). If all 8 beaches equates to a total of 8 closure days. Results were (4 closure days per beach). Closures result from 1 Data from Public Health Madison & Dane Country	ames Mad are closed 31 closure nigh cyano	ison, Mem I on the sa e days rela	Goal ≤ 32 days 0 50 100 days				
CHLORIDES High chloride levels are toxic to sensitive aquatic concentrations below 10 mg/L and algae-grazing negatively impacted at around 50 mg/L. Results 50 mg/L or lower. Levels have been increasing sin Data from Public Health Madison & Dane Count	zooplank were 58.2 nce testing	ton are sh mg/L rela	Goal ≤ 50 mg/L 0 75 150 mg/L				
PLANT COMMUNITY The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) measures how close the aquatic plant community compares to an undisturbed ecosystem. Results were 19.1 relative to a goal of 20.9 (ecoregion average) or higher. Data from Dane County Land & Water Resources.					Goal ≥ 20.9 FQI 0 21 42 FQI	[Improving conditions when compared to first surveys in early 1990s, but lower than ecoregion average]	
PFAS Presence of "forever chemicals" in water or fish tissue at levels that might lead to an impairment listing by Wisconsin DNR.					[Not listed as impaired. More information available at dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/40561]		

LAKE MONONA

Health Dashboard



Lake Type: Drainage **Direct Drainage Area:** 40.5 sq. miles **Total Drainage Area:** 278 sq. miles

Surface Area: 3,277 acres **Shoreline Length:** 13 miles

Mean Depth: 27 feet Maximum Depth: 74 feet Volume: 29,059 million gallons Flushing Rate: 91% of volume/year

Lake Monona is the second largest of the five Yahara lakes by surface area, depth, and volume. It sits immediately downstream of Lake Mendota in the upper half of the chain. The lake's direct drainage area consists mostly of urban land uses. Inlet tributaries flowing into the lake include Murphy's (Wingra) Creek (west shore); the Yahara River (north shore); and Starkweather Creek (northeast shore). The lake's outlet (south shore) directs overflow water through the Yahara River and into Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa. It has been listed as federally impaired for PCBs since 1998, phosphorus since 2011, and PFAS since 2022.

2023 Health Metric	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	¦Status vs.	Goal	Trend (2013-2023)
PHOSPHORUS Criteria for deeper, thermally stratified lakes measured at the surface over the deepest point. Results were 0.019 mg/L, meeting the 0.024 mg/L or lower "mesotrophy" goal. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.				✓	Goal ≤ 0.024 mg/L 0 0.05 mg/L	0.10	Actual* Trend
OFFSHORE CLARITY Criteria for deeper, thermally stratified lakes measured with a Secchi disk over the deepest point. Results were 6.6 ft, equaling the 6.6-ft or greater "mesotrophy" goal. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√		0 5 feet	Goal ≥ 6.6 ft 10	
NEARSHORE CLARITY Median of shallow, nearshore measurements tak Results were 106.3 cm relative to the 80-cm or g Alliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.		20 70 cm	Goal ≥ 80 cm				
CYANOBACTERIA Percent of unique sampling days when strong evicyanobacteria bloom is observed within at least osites. Results were 0% relative to a goal of 5% or LakeForecast monitoring network.	lake's near	Goal ≤ 5% 0 15 %	30				
BEACH CLOSURES Beach closure days are based on data aggregated across 7 monitored beaches on Lake Monona (B.B. Clarke, Bernie's, Brittingham, Esther, Hudson, Olbrich, Olin). If all 7 beaches are closed on the same day, that equates to a total of 7 closure days. Results were 46 closure days relative to a goal of 28 (4 closure days per beach). Closures result from high cyanobacteria and/or E. coli levels. Data from Public Health Madison & Dane County.					Goal ≤ 32 days 0 50 days	100	
CHLORIDES High chloride levels are toxic to sensitive aquatic concentrations below 10 mg/L and algae-grazing negatively impacted at around 50 mg/L. Results 50 mg/L or lower. Levels have been increasing sir Data from Public Health Madison & Dane Count	ton are sh mg/L rela	Goal ≤ 50 mg/L 0 75 mg/L	150				
PLANT COMMUNITY The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) measures how close the aquatic plant community compares to an undisturbed ecosystem. Results were 20.7 for Lake Mendota relative to a goal of 20.9 (ecoregion average) or higher. Data from Dane County Land & Water Resources.					0 21 FQI	oal ≥ 20.9 FQI 42	[Improving conditions when compared to first survey in 2008]
PFAS Presence of "forever chemicals" in water or fish tissue at levels that might lead to an impairment listing by Wisconsin DNR.							More information available at sroom/release/40561]

 $^{{}^*\}mbox{\sf Gap}$ on some graphs due to data not collected during pandemic

LAKE WINGRA

Health Dashboard



Lake Type: Drainage

Direct Drainage Area: 5.4 sq. miles **Total Drainage Area:** 5.4 sq. miles

Surface Area: 321 acres **Shoreline Length:** 3.7 miles

Mean Depth: 9 feet Maximum Depth: 14 feet Volume: 1,585 million gallons Flushing Rate: 77% of volume/year

Lake Wingra is the smallest of the five major lakes by surface area, depth, and volume. Originally a deep-water marsh, this dredged waterbody now flows into Lake Monona via Murphy's (Wingra) Creek. The lake's direct drainage area is located entirely within the city of Madison and dominated by urban land uses. Three minor, unnamed inlet tributaries flow into the lake at points along its west and southwest shore. It has been listed as federally impaired for phosphorus since 2011 and PCBs since 2012.

2023 Health Metric	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Status vs. Goal	Trend (2013-2023)	
PHOSPHORUS Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured at the surface over the deepest point. Results were 0.031 mg/L, meeting the criteria goal of 0.052 mg/L or lower. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√		Goal ≤ 0.052 mg/L 0 0.08 0.16 mg/L	Actual* Trend	
OFFSHORE CLARITY Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured with a Secchi disk over the deepest point. Results were 3.6 ft, meeting the criteria goal of 3.1 ft or greater. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√		Goal ≥ 3.1 ft 0 5 10 feet		
NEARSHORE CLARITY Median of shallow, nearshore measurements taken Results were 101.3 cm relative to the 80-cm or gradiliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.			Goal ≥ 80 cm 20 70 120 cm				
CYANOBACTERIA Percent of unique sampling days when strong evi cyanobacteria bloom is observed within at least of sites. Results were 1.9% relative to a goal of 5% of Alliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.	ne of the l	ake's near	Goal ≤ 5% 0 15 30				
BEACH CLOSURES Beach closure days are based on data from one m (Vilas). Results were 5 closure days relative to the Closures result from high cyanobacteria and/or E Madison & Dane County.	goal of 4	(4 closure	Goal ≤ 4 days 0 25 50 days				
CHLORIDES High chloride levels are toxic to sensitive aquatic concentrations below 10 mg/L and algae-grazing negatively impacted at around 50 mg/L. Results v 50 mg/L or lower. Levels have been increasing sin Data from Public Health Madison & Dane County	zooplankt vere 136.0 ce testing	on are sho mg/L rela	Goal ≤ 50 mg/L 0 75 150 mg/L				
PLANT COMMUNITY The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) measures how compares to an undisturbed ecosystem. Results we (ecoregion average) or higher. Data from Dane Co	vere 24.8	relative to	Goal ≥ 20.9 FQI 0 21 42 FQI	[Improving conditions when compared to first FQI assessment in 2011]			
PFAS Presence of "forever chemicals" in water or fish tissue at levels that might lead to an impairment listing by Wisconsin DNR.					[Not listed as impaired. More information available at dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/40561]		

LAKE WAUBESA

Health Dashboard



Lake Type: Drainage

Direct Drainage Area: 43.6 sq. miles **Total Drainage Area:** 325 sq. miles

Surface Area: 2,083 acres **Shoreline Length:** 9.4 miles

Mean Depth: 15 feet Maximum Depth: 38 feet Volume: 10,567 million gallons Flushing Rate: 320% of volume/year

Lake Waubesa is the fourth largest of the Yahara lakes by surface area and volume. It sits immediately downstream of Upper Mud Lake and Lake Monona in the lower half of the chain. The lake's direct drainage area is represented by a mix of urban and rural/agricultural land uses. Inlet tributaries that drain into the lake include Nine Springs Creek and Penitto Creek (flowing into Upper Mud Lake to the north); the Yahara River (north shore); as well as Swan Creek and Murphy's Creek (southwest shore). The lake's outlet (east shore) directs overflow water through the Yahara River and into Lake Kegonsa. It has been listed as federally impaired for phosphorus since 2011 and PFAS since 2022.

2023 Health Metric	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	¦Status vs. Goal	Trend (2013-2023)
PHOSPHORUS Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured at the surface over the deepest point. Results were 0.028 mg/L, meeting the criteria goal of 0.052 mg/L or lower. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.				√	Goal ≤ 0.052 mg/L 0 0.08 0.16 mg/L	Actual* Trend
OFFSHORE CLARITY Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured with a Secchi disk over the deepest point. Results were 4.9 ft, meeting the criteria goal of 3.1 ft or greater. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√	,	Goal ≥ 3.1 ft 0 5 10 feet	
NEARSHORE CLARITY Median of shallow, nearshore measurements tak Results were 120.0 cm relative to the 80-cm or g Alliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.			Goal ≥ 80 cm 20 70 120 cm			
CYANOBACTERIA Percent of unique sampling days when strong evi cyanobacteria bloom is observed within at least o sites. Results were 0% relative to a goal of 5% or LakeForecast monitoring network.	one of the	ake's near	Goal ≤ 5% 0 15 30			
BEACH CLOSURES Beach closure days are based on data from one n (Goodland). Results were 0 closure days, meeting per beach). Closures result from high cyanobacte Public Health Madison & Dane County.	g the goal o	of 4 or less	Goal ≤ 4 days 0 25 50 days			
CHLORIDES High chloride levels are toxic to sensitive aquatic concentrations below 10 mg/L and algae-grazing negatively impacted at around 50 mg/L. Results 50 mg/L or lower. Levels have been increasing sir Data from Public Health Madison & Dane Country	zooplankt were 81.1 nce testing	on are sho	Goal ≤ 50 mg/L 0 75 150 mg/L			
PLANT COMMUNITY The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) measures how compares to an undisturbed ecosystem. Results w (ecoregion average) or higher. Data from Dane Co	were 18.6	relative to	Goal ≥ 20.9 FQI 0 21 42 FQI	[Improving conditions when compared to first FQI assessment in 2006]		
PFAS Presence of "forever chemicals" in water or fish tissue at levels that might lead to an impairment listing by Wisconsin DNR.					[Listed as impaired since 2022. More information available at dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/40561]	

^{*}Gap on some graphs due to data not collected during pandemic

LAKE KEGONSA

Health Dashboard



Lake Type: Drainage **Direct Drainage Area:** 54.4 sq. miles

Total Drainage Area: 34.4 sq. miles Surface Area: 3,210 acres

Shoreline Length: 9.6 miles

Mean Depth: 17 feet Maximum Depth: 32 feet Volume: 17,700 million gallons Flushing Rate: 220% of volume/year

Lake Kegonsa is the third largest of the Yahara lakes by surface area and volume. It sits immediately downstream of Lake Waubesa and Lower Mud Lake in the lower half of the chain. The lake's direct drainage area consists predominantly of rural/agricultural land uses. Inlet tributaries that drain into the lake include Door Creek (north shore) and two unnamed creeks (southwest and northeast shore). The lake's outlet (east shore) directs overflow water through the Yahara River toward the Rock and Mississippi Rivers. It has been listed as federally impaired for phosphorus since 2011 and PFAS since 2022.

2023 Health Metric	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Status vs. Goal	Trend (2013-2023)
PHOSPHORUS Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured at the surface over the deepest point. Results were 0.048 mg/L, meeting the criteria goal of 0.052 mg/L or lower. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√	,	Goal ≤ 0.052 mg/L 0 0.08 0.16 mg/L	Actual* Trend
OFFSHORE CLARITY Criteria for shallower lakes (lacking strong thermal stratification) measured with a Secchi disk over the deepest point. Results were 4.9 ft, meeting the criteria goal of 3.1 ft or greater. Data from UW-Madison Center for Limnology.			√	,	Goal ≥ 3.1 ft 0 5 10 feet	
NEARSHORE CLARITY Median of shallow, nearshore measurements taken Results were 85.6 cm relative to the 80-cm or greatliance's LakeForecast monitoring network.			Goal ≥ 80 cm 20 70 120 cm			
CYANOBACTERIA Percent of unique sampling days when strong evi cyanobacteria bloom is observed within at least o sites. Results were 0% relative to a goal of 5% or LakeForecast monitoring network.	ne of the l	ake's near	Goal ≤ 5% 0 15 30			
BEACH CLOSURES Closure days are based on data from monitored be monitored by Public Health Madison & Dane Cou			[No beaches monitored]	[No beaches monitored]		
CHLORIDES High chloride levels are toxic to sensitive aquatic concentrations below 10 mg/L and algae-grazing negatively impacted at around 50 mg/L. Results v 50 mg/L or lower. Levels have been increasing sin Data from Public Health Madison & Dane County	zooplankt vere 72.7 i ce testing	on are sho ng/L relat	Goal ≤ 50 mg/L 0 75 150 mg/L			
PLANT COMMUNITY The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) measures how compares to an undisturbed ecosystem. Results we (ecoregion average) or higher. Data from Dane Co	vere 13.8	relative to	Goal ≥ 20.9 FQI 0 21 42 FQI	[Stable conditions since the first FQI assessment in 2006]		
PFAS Presence of "forever chemicals" in water or fish tissue at levels that might lead to an impairment listing by Wisconsin DNR.					[Listed as impaired since 2022. More information available at dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/40561]	

WATERSHED HEALTH INDICATORS

The State of the Lakes assesses five areas of interest that represent vital, interconnected pieces of the larger water quality puzzle. These areas of analysis, illustrated in Figure 2, include both outputs (i.e., land-use actions taken) and outcomes (i.e., measured water quality responses). They were chosen to illustrate critical cause-and-effect principles that play out as water gets funneled through the watershed.

Phosphorus availability and transport are central themes in this analysis given the nutrient's dominant role in affecting overall lake conditions. Although a natural element essential for plant and animal growth, it can easily harm water quality due to overuse and poor management. Common sources of phosphorus pollution

AREAS OF ANALYSIS Weather and climate drivers Watershed phosphorus mass balance Land conservation practices Phosphorus delivery to the lakes In-lake water quality responses Fair or Mixed Story Poor Good

Figure 2: Cross-section illustration of an example watershed showing five areas of analysis. Example scoring dials represent condition status and trend for each area of analysis.

include eroded soil, fertilizer runoff, autumn leaf debris left in city streets, poorly managed livestock manure, sewage releases, and uncollected pet waste. It is estimated that one pound of phosphorus can generate up to 500 pounds of algae growth in our lakes.

1 WEATHER & CLIMATE DRIVERS





SUMMARY: Dry weather in 2023 produced less runoff and less phosphorus delivery that was favorable to the lakes. However, the longerterm trends and climate forecasts that point to warmer winters and increased rainfall intensity will act as ongoing headwinds to progress.

Regardless of whether it's changes in temperature, precipitation, ice cover, or some other factor, lakes dynamically respond to their environment. Regional heating and cooling patterns influence what types of aquatic organisms can thrive, how and when a lake mixes, and the timing and magnitude of annual freeze cycles. Meanwhile, the timing, intensity, and amount of rainfall falling over the watershed determine what can get moved from the land surface into our waters, including phosphoruscontaining materials that fuel algal growth and turn the lakes green.

Winter Season

Winter ice conditions and the timing of ice-off influence everything from water temperatures to the reproductive success of aquatic life. Ice quality and overlying snow depth affect how much sunlight can penetrate to warm the water column and facilitate dissolved oxygen production through photosynthesis. Research by Dr. Zachary Feiner at UW-Madison's Center for Limnology documents the impacts of early ice-off. As ice-off dates move earlier due to climate change, algae production gets an early start and then collapses right when the daphnia (a type of zooplankton) hatch and are looking for food. This means less zooplankton to eat by juvenile fish and less grazing of algae. Resulting impacts can range from poorer walleye recruitment to more intense algal blooms.

In 2023, Lake Mendota remained frozen for 98 days (12/25/22 – 4/2/23), or 13 days longer than in 2022. This is on par with its median ice-cover duration of 102 days as measured over the last 168 seasons. Historical evidence shows ice-cover durations in decline, with Mendota having lost about a month of ice cover on average since recordkeeping began.



Shorter and warmer winters lead to warmer lake temperatures earlier in the year, effectively creating a longer growing season for algae and aquatic plants. Warmer winters can also contribute to greater runoff and phosphorus delivery when wet precipitation falls on frozen soils. Rather than soak into the ground, rainfall more easily turns into runoff that can carry land-spread manure and other contaminants into the ditches and streams that drain to the lakes. It is estimated that, on average, nearly half of the total phosphorus loading through Lake Mendota's monitored stream tributaries occurs from January to March, making late winter and early spring a vulnerable time for our lakes.

Warmer Growing Season

The meteorological summer of 2023 (June 1-August 31) was Wisconsin's sixth driest on record. Less rainfall leads to less stormwater runoff, meaning less phosphorus washing into our lakes. Based on weather data collected at the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, the watershed transitioned from a three-year period of above-normal rainfall to a three-year period of below-normal rainfall.

INCHES OF CALENDAR-YEAR RAINFALL COMPARED TO 1991-2020 AVERAGE 2021: 2018: +13.53 -14.292022: + 0.29 2019: + 9.31 2020: + 1.82 2023: - 7.37 +24.66 -21.37

May and June's collective rainfall totaled only 2.01 inches, compared to the normal 9.38 inches, with only one day receiving 0.50-inch or greater rainfall. The second half of the summer remained dry with July and August collectively experiencing only three days of 0.50-inch or greater rainfall. While July's 6.21 inches surpassed the monthly normal (4.51 inches), drought conditions persisted with August receiving lower-than-normal rainfall (2.42 inches), further contributing to the already low lake levels. With 2023 capping a three-year period of below-normal rainfall, the impacts of reduced runoff were evident in lower phosphorus delivery (called "loading") and positive water-clarity responses in all five lakes.

2 WATERSHED PHOSPHORUS MASS BALANCE





Status

Trend

SUMMARY: The last mass-balance analysis—using data from 1992-2017—showed a net accumulation of phosphorus in the watershed. The good news is that it was trending closer to a zero balance, meaning the amount of available phosphorus in the watershed was growing at a slower pace.

Calculating the difference between the mass of phosphorus entering (imported into) and leaving (exported from) the watershed tells us whether the net balance is trending in the right direction. The movement and fate of livestock, feed, fertilizer, harvested crops, animal waste, and other phosphorus sources are factored into the analysis. The goal is to attain a negative balance, indicating more phosphorus is being exported than imported on an annual basis. This situation reduces the overall availability of phosphorus from being able to reach area waterways.

Conversely, a positive balance signals an annual net accumulation of phosphorus in the watershed, usually leading to its gradual buildup in area soils. Phosphorus-saturated soils that are subject to erosion and not protected by year-round plant cover can eventually end up at the bottom of nearby lakes and streams. Phosphorus is also more easily "leached" (or released in dissolved form) from these soils when they encounter rainwater and snowmelt.

Past improvements to the overall mass balance are attributed to multiple factors. They include decreases in imported commercial fertilizer, less phosphorus-containing feed supplements consumed by livestock, exported byproducts of manure treatment, and advanced phosphorus-management strategies implemented by Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (among others). Examples of mass balance detractors include increases in livestock numbers and milk production.



Yahara River downstream of Lake Kegonsa, courtesy Robert Bertera

3 LAND CONSERVATION PRACTICES





SUMMARY: Adopted best practices such as farmland nutrient management plans, cover crops, reduced tillage, construction site erosion controls, and leaf-free-street programs help keep phosphorus out of our lakes and streams. While effective, much more of these practices are needed to combat the effects of increased rainfall and runoff.

The adoption of land conservation practices helps minimize the amount of runoff and soil erosion that harms water quality. Examples include preserving and increasing perennial grasslands and natural vegetation, establishing permanent vegetation, maintaining protective cover crops on harvested farm fields, raising livestock on rotationally grazed pastures, and removing fall leaf litter from city streets. In addition, the use of nutrient management plans helps agricultural producers better understand how operational decisions can maximize soil health and productivity while limiting erosion and phosphorus runoff.

In accordance with state law, nutrient management plans are required on all farms to serve as nutrient-accounting tools, ensuring that manure and fertilizer applications meet crop needs while limiting runoff risks. Based on the latest landowner records filed with Dane County Land & Water Resources (Figure 3), 44,387 out of 84,321 total agricultural acres in the Yahara lakes watershed (53%) were mapped as having a nutrient management plan in 2023 – a 36% increase over just the last seven years. These numbers are believed to be an underrepresentation of the total amount of watershed acres under nutrient management planning since not every plan is recorded with Dane County. Achieving 100% compliance will be a big

step forward in attaining related phosphorus reductions that come with sound planning.

Currently, available soil-test information from farmland in the upper half of the watershed has a Rotational Average Phosphorus Index (PI) of 2.8, representing estimated pounds of phosphorus loss per acre per year. The Phosphorus Index is a tool used to assess the potential of phosphorus to move from agricultural fields to surface water, with higher numbers representing greater risk. According to modeling summarized in RENEW THE BLUE: A Community Guide for Cleaner Lakes & Beaches in the Yahara Watershed (2022), a Rotational Average PI of 2.1 or less is needed to reach phosphorus-loading targets and water quality goals in the Yahara lakes. Since 2016, values in the upper watershed north of Lake Mendota have averaged between 2.3 and 3.3. State standards require all fields covered by a Nutrient Management Plan to have a Rotational Average PI of 6 or less.

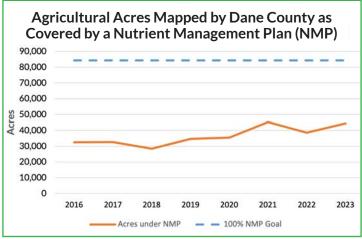


Figure 3: Farmland acres in the Yahara lakes watershed that have a nutrient management plan filed with Dane County. Data credit: Kyle Minks, Dane County Land & Water Resources.







SUMMARY: Aided by three years of drier weather and the implementation of watershed best practices, phosphorus loading into Lake Mendota remains near target levels. However, longer-term climate trends have generally been less favorable to the lakes due to wetter weather, warmer winters, and more runoff.

Most phosphorus is delivered to the Yahara chain of lakes through tributary streams that collect and channel upland-generated runoff as it moves downhill. How much is transported depends on the seasonal timing and intensity of runoff events, the location and availability of major phosphorus sources, and measures taken to contain those sources and manage runoff. Over the course of an average year within the past decade, approximately 40% of the total phosphorus load occurred during the months of January, February, and March.

Stream monitoring is used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation practices by tracking phosphorus loading. Loading describes the total mass of phosphorus delivered to a specific location in a stream over time. In our case, we characterize loading in pounds of phosphorus (calculated by multiplying in-stream concentrations by streamflow) delivered through Lake Mendota's monitored stream tributaries in a given "water year" (Oct. 1 - Sep. 30). Perched at the top of the chain and receiving most of the drainage from the Yahara lakes watershed, the condition of Lake Mendota offers a good indicator for how the downstream lakes will be impacted. Lake Mendota is also the largest lake with the greatest number of monitored streams and the most complete

long-term dataset. Most of the phosphorus received by the lower lakes in the chain is through the outlets of the upper lakes as it cascades through the system.

Figure 4 shows the change in stream-monitored phosphorus loading since 2013. Total precipitation is also plotted in orange to distinguish between wet and dry years. From 2021-2023, average annual phosphorus loading to Lake Mendota significantly declined and has even dipped slightly below target levels. This was largely due to drier weather after years of above-average precipitation, reducing the amount of runoff transporting phosphorus to the lakes. Scientists estimate a doubling of summer days when the lakes are clear and free of algal blooms if these lower levels can be maintained.

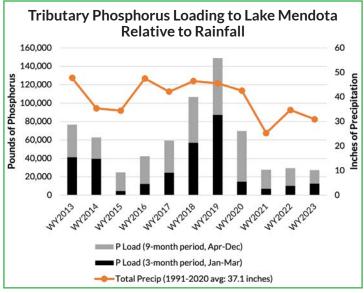


Figure 4: Phosphorus loading through Lake Mendota's monitored stream tributaries in relation to total precipitation. Phosphorus loading data credit: U.S. Geological Survey. Precipitation data credit: NOAA Regional Climate Center, Dane County Regional Airport.



Pheasant Branch Creek flowing into the west side of Lake Mendota, courtesy Robert Bertera

5 IN-LAKE WATER QUALITY RESPONSES





SUMMARY: All five lakes ranked either good or excellent for phosphorus concentrations and good for offshore water clarity. There were also fewer cyanobacteria bloom sightings. However, longer-term trends are more mixed for these and other health indicators.

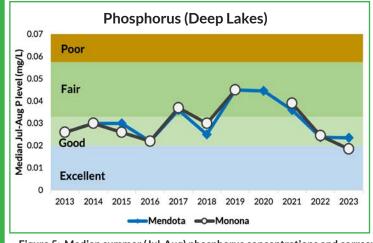
Several in-lake metrics are used to assess overall lake health and track changes over time (see pages 55-59 for health dashboards related to each lake). Those metrics include water clarity, phosphorus concentration, presence of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms, and beach closures. Each is summarized in the following figures. All five lakes fared relatively well in 2023 based on these specific health indicators, ranking good to excellent for phosphorus and good for clarity.

Phosphorus

In-lake phosphorus concentrations for all five lakes were comparatively low relative to the prior 10 years, but

without any obvious trends over this period (Figure 5). Even when looking at longer time horizons, trends are difficult to identify. When averaged across individual decades beginning in the 1980s, lakes Monona and Waubesa show slight downward trends while those for lakes Mendota and Kegonsa are not evident. This speaks to the reality that more work is needed to reduce phosphorus loading if we hope to improve upon prevailing trends.

Recent drought years that limit phosphorus delivery because of reduced runoff loadings entering the lakes continue to have a positive effect on in-lake phosphorus concentrations. Lake Mendota's concentrations after fall turnover hit a new record low in 2023 (Figure 6) following three years of relatively low external phosphorus loadings from the surrounding watershed. Turnover occurs when deeper lakes cool to the point where the water column can completely mix. Higher phosphorus concentrations that have built up throughout the summer in the bottom waters are then mixed throughout the lake. As less phosphorus enters the lake from the watershed, this bottom-water buildup of phosphorus is reduced, thereby reducing internal (in-lake) sources that can fuel algal growth the following year.



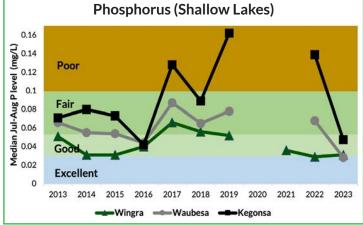


Figure 5: Median summer (Jul-Aug) phosphorus concentrations and corresponding water quality classifications by lake type.

Notes: Phosphorus sampling was not performed in lakes Kegonsa, Waubesa, and Wingra in 2020, and in lakes Kegonsa and Waubesa in 2021. Water quality classifications based on Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' criteria. Data credit: Richard Lathrop, UW-Madison Center for Limnology.



Boating on Lake Waubesa, courtesy Robert Bertera

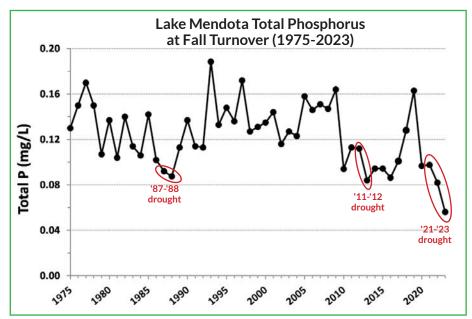


Figure 6: Lake Mendota total phosphorus concentrations at fall turnover measured at the lake surface. Credit: Richard Lathrop, UW-Madison Center for Limnology.

Fall turnover phosphorus concentrations were also low in 1988 and 2012 following those extended droughts. This shows that Lake Mendota's phosphorus levels decline when loading from the watershed is reduced. Similar responses occurred following the wet, high-loading years of 2008 and 2018-19 when fall turnover phosphorus concentrations were very high. Soon after these years, Lake Mendota's phosphorus status quickly dropped back to more average levels. This is another sign that reduced external loadings from the surrounding watershed can result in significant and relatively quick water quality improvements.

Water Clarity

Offshore water clarity for all five lakes was comparatively high relative to the prior 10 years, with median summer values generally trending higher over this period (Figure 7). However, when looking at longer time horizons, trends are more mixed. When averaged across individual decades

beginning in the 1980s, lakes Mendota and Waubesa show slight downward trends while those for lakes Monona and Kegonsa are not discernable.

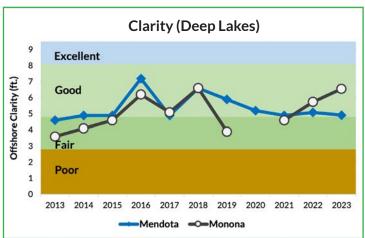
Because water clarity often varies across a given lake, Clean Lakes Alliance network uses trained volunteer monitors to additional collect data through LakeForecast program. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, monitors submit at least twiceweekly reports on water clarity, water temperature, and the severity of floating green algae and cyanobacteria blooms (among other variables). This information can be seen in near-realtime on LakeForecast.org and the free LakeForecast app, allowing the public to stay up to date on current lake conditions. These reports are

also used to raise awareness about changing water quality conditions, advocate for improvement projects, and inform this annual *State of the Lakes*.

To measure nearshore clarity, monitors use a sampling device called a turbidity tube to report conditions at nearly 90 sites spread around all five lakes (Figure 8). Figure 9 shows the median summer (Jul-Aug) clarity readings for each lake from 2014-2023. Values under 50 as measured on the 120-cm device are considered "murky," between 50-80 "fair," and between 80-120 "good." Consistent with offshore clarity readings using a Secchi disk, most values for 2023 fell within the good range, except for Lake Mendota which was at the upper range of fair.

Cyanobacteria Blooms

To determine cyanobacteria bloom frequency, the number of days on each lake with at least one report of a strong cyanobacteria bloom observed within the individual



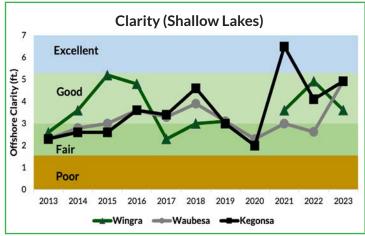


Figure 7: Median summer (Jul-Aug) offshore water clarity readings and corresponding water quality classifications by lake type.

Notes: Water clarity information was not available for lakes Monona and Wingra in 2020. Water quality classifications based on Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' criteria. Data credit: Richard Lathrop, UW-Madison Center for Limnology.



Clean Lakes Alliance volunteer removes aquatic plant debris from Spring Harbor Beach in September 2023

monitoring sites was counted. By dividing the number of "cyanobacteria bloom days" by the total number of sampling days for each lake, a percentage is generated representing how often the monitors observed at least one major bloom within their sampling area. This method lessens overreporting in situations when different monitors report the same cyanobacteria bloom.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of sampling days when strong evidence of a cyanobacteria bloom was observed on each lake (2014-2023). Overall, monitors reported comparatively low cyanobacteria blooms during the 2023 sampling period (Jun-Aug), with most of the significant blooms occurring early in the season. Monitors on lakes Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa did not report a single significant bloom. This is welcome news after 2022's record-high bloom count on Lake Kegonsa. Lake Wingra experienced similar bloom counts to 2022, and Lake Mendota had a handful of significant blooms reported in 2023 after not experiencing any in 2022.

Beach Closures

Beach closures are another useful indicator of general lake health. Clean Lakes Alliance looks at closure data provided by Public Health Madison & Dane County for 17 beaches (Figure 11). Covering four of the five Yahara lakes, these tested public beaches were selected due to the consistency of tracking data over the prior 10-year period. Results are reported as total closure days recorded for each season, roughly running from Memorial Day to Labor Day. For example, if two beaches on a given lake are closed for a total of five days each, 10 closure days would be reported for that lake.

Closures are most often the result of high cyanobacteria and/or *E. coli*

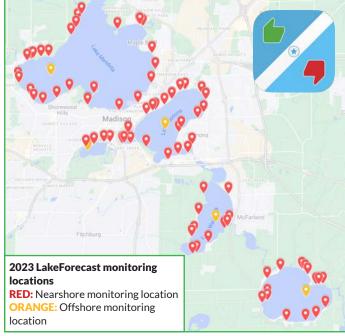


Figure 8: LakeForecast monitor locations

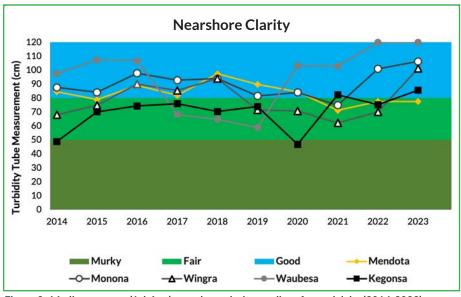


Figure 9: Median summer (Jul-Aug) nearshore clarity readings for each lake (2014-2023).

bacteria levels, with closure rates strongly influenced by timing and frequency of testing. Most beaches are tested once per week and then daily for beaches with a closure in effect. Cyanobacteria blooms, which are generally a product of high lake fertility, can be dangerous due to their potential to release toxins that can harm people, pets, and wildlife. High E. coli bacteria concentrations can also be harmful as they are an indicator of human or animal fecal matter in the water that may contain dangerous pathogens. In 2023, there were 82 beach-closure days reported, which is below both the long-term median and the 92 closures reported in 2022. Closures were relatively split between cyanobacteria and E. coli as the causes.

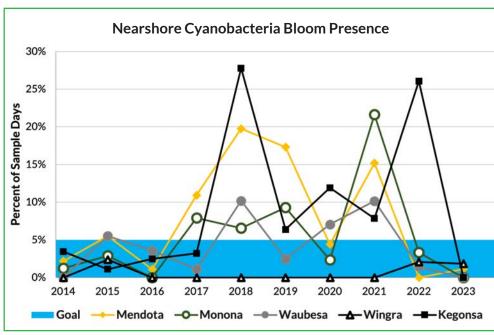


Figure 10: Percent of sampling days (Jun-Aug) when strong evidence of a cyanobacteria bloom was observed at one or more sites on each lake.

GROWING STEWARDSHIP

Clean Lakes Alliance remains committed to fulfilling its vision of making Greater Madison renowned for its healthy lakes, lands, and waters. We do this through our daily mission to champion the lakes and watershed stewardship for the benefit of all. We are also proud to have assembled and led the 19-member partnership coalition, called the Yahara CLEAN Compact, that signed off on an updated lake-cleanup plan. RENEW THE BLUE: A Community Guide for Cleaner Lakes & Beaches in the Yahara Watershed (2022)

reaffirmed goals and is now guiding action across multiple stakeholder groups.

Achieving and sustaining healthier local lakes is entirely possible. Increased awareness, involvement, and progress on needed project action are helping to move us in that direction. But more work and investment are clearly needed, and it will take all watershed stakeholders playing an active role to get us there. To learn more about the lakes and what you can do to help, visit cleanlakesalliance. org/renew-the-blue.

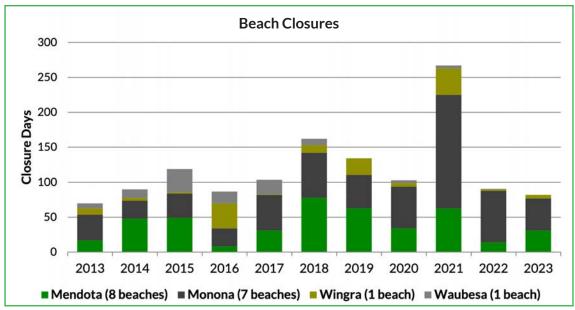


Figure 11: Beach closure days by lake. Includes beaches consistently monitored since 2013. Lake Mendota: Governor Nelson, Warner, Mendota County, James Madison, Memorial Union Pier, Marshall, Tenney, and Spring Harbor; Lake Monona: B.B. Clarke, Bernie's, Brittingham, Esther, Hudson, Olbrich, Olin; Lake Wingra: Vilas; Lake Waubesa: Goodland County; Lake Kegonsa: None. Data credit: Public Health Madison & Dane County.

THE GOOD WORK WE DO

When we say "we," it really means "us," as in the community. Together with government, business, community leaders, and individuals, Clean Lakes Alliance is working toward improved water quality and awareness in the watershed.

We envision a community renowned for its healthy lakes, lands, and waters because we know healthy waters lead to a thriving community. Here are just a few of the ways Clean Lakes Alliance is leading action that champions our lakes and watershed stewardship for the benefit of all:

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Entering our 11th year, this one-of-a-kind volunteer water quality monitoring network collects data from nearly 90 points around all five lakes. Uploaded twice weekly to LakeForecast, a free app in the Apple and Android stores, condition reports alert lake users to the clearest water locations as well as any beach closures and observed cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms.



Clean Lakes Alliance Executive Director James Tye speaks at manure management initiative announcement, September 2022

ADVOCACY

Protecting the lakes means advocating for needed action and making sure the community is on the right path for success. Leading Renew the Blue – a lake improvement "road map" signed by 19 cross-sector organizations, Clean Lakes Alliance and its partners pushed for more manure management, which is now moving forward thanks to a new Dane County initiative. We are also helping to push for rapid beach testing and remotely activated signage to enhance the safety of our public beaches.

WATERCRAFT INSPECTION & EDUCATION

Understanding the threat posed by aquatic invasive species (AIS) is why Clean Lakes Alliance helped expand the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Dane County. We coordinated boater education and watercraft inspections at four boat launches throughout the summer to help boaters better understand what they can do to prevent the further spread of AIS.





CLEAN LAKES GRANTS

Since 2010, we've given out more than \$1.4 million in grants to fund lake improvement projects. Projects include funding a low-disturbance manure injector, stormwater retention pond, a lake management plan, carp removal, and many more. The more Clean Lakes Alliance can fundraise to support the good work of our partners, the better our lakes will be in the future.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about these programs and the other good work of Clean Lakes Alliance, visit cleanlakesalliance.org.

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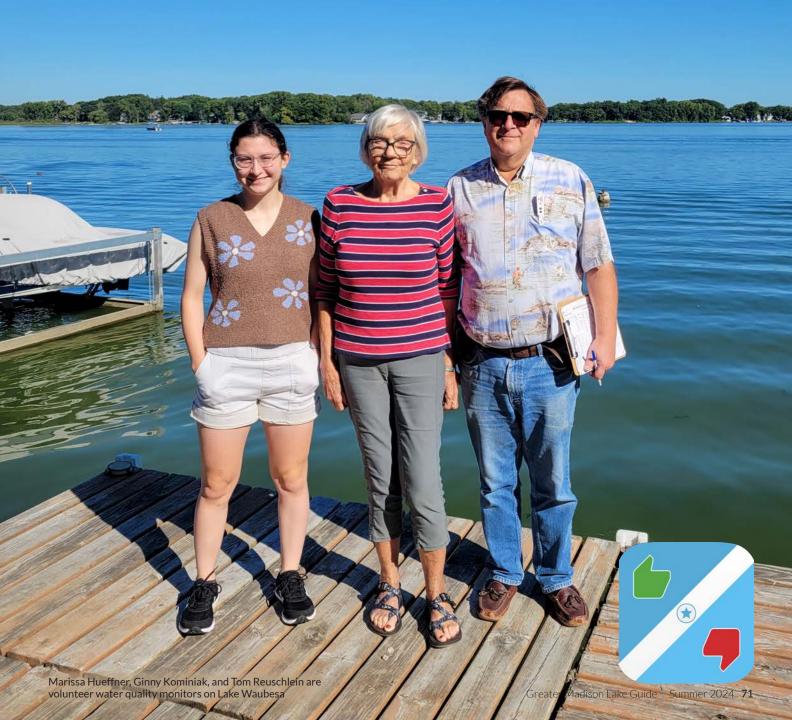
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WATCHING WAUBESA

NO MATTER THEIR AGE, LAKEFORECAST VOLUNTEER WATER QUALITY MONITORS HAVE A BIG IMPACT





Marissa Hueffner stands beside Lake Waubesa with testing gear in hand, 2023

Clean Lakes Alliance's LakeForecast nearshore monitoring program started in 2013. Prior to that, most monitoring took place every two to three weeks over the lakes' deepest points, resulting in limited data from only remote locations. This information was also not easily accessed by the public. The program started small with a dozen or so monitors and grew over the following years. Today, there are 90 volunteers monitoring 87 nearshore locations.

Some of the volunteers have been monitoring since the program started, while others are completely new. Two new monitors this past year were Ginny Kominiak and Marissa Hueffner. The two have nearby monitoring stations on Lake Waubesa, but distance between their sampling sites isn't what makes them interesting – it's the distance in their ages.

Living in her home on Lake Waubesa since 1967, volunteer LakeForecast monitor Ginny Kominiak says she's seen many changes to the lake and surrounding landscape over the last 57 years. For years, she says the lake changed for the worse, but now it seems to be changing for the better.

Encouraged to get involved, Ginny and her partner, Tom Reuschlein, joined Clean Lakes Alliance's LakeForecast water quality monitoring program to contribute valuable nearshore data and play a greater role in advocating for our local lakes. It was a job that, at first, Kominiak wasn't so sure about.

"You know, when I first heard about water quality monitoring, I thought it was probably some big, complicated thing, you know, that maybe you have to be an expert to do. But, then to find out you didn't have to be an expert and that made it more doable for me," said Kominiak.

At 89-years-old, Kominiak is the oldest monitor with the program, but she doesn't let that stop her from getting into the water to upload twice-weekly condition reports from her pier.

The LakeForecast program relies on the power and passion of trained volunteers, like Kominiak and Reuschlein, to collect insightful water quality data such as water clarity, air and water temperature, the presence of green algae or cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), and more. Results are

uploaded in near-real-time to the LakeForecast website and free app so lake-goers can be better informed about water quality conditions across all five Yahara lakes.

Another monitoring station near Ginny and Tom on Lake Waubesa is staffed by Marissa Hueffner. As an incoming high school senior at McFarland High School, she is the youngest monitor in the program. Marissa joined LakeForecast to be more connected to the lakes, have a steady volunteer position, and grow her skillset as she begins to think about her post-graduation plans.

"I found this organization [Clean Lakes Alliance] just by looking around for something to do. I wanted to really make this summer something special and something that I could do just for myself and for the things around me," said Hueffner.

Ginny, Tom, and Marissa agreed joining LakeForecast was a worthwhile endeavor to assist the lakes they care so deeply about, but also to grow their understanding of ever-evolving lake conditions. Since joining the program, Ginny shared she's much more aware of what's happening on the lake day to day and is impressed by how quickly lake dynamics can shift. "I like that [participating in the program] gets me out to the lakes. And it feels like you're helping each time you do it, even though it only takes 15 minutes," said Marissa, who lives off the lake.

Data collected from the monitored sites can be used to advocate for and implement watershed improvement projects, raise dollars to protect our waters, and prepare the annual *State of the Lakes* report outlining conditions, trends, and water quality drivers affecting the five Yahara lakes (pages 60-67).

Participating in the program is an engaging and effective way to make a difference in the Yahara Watershed. Whether just shy of a 90th birthday or still in high school, volunteers prove you're never too young or too old to get involved!

Ginny Kominiak and Tom Reuschlein use a turbidity tube to test the clarity of Lake Waubesa's water, 2023



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"We really like how there is a playground if you don't want to get sandy. The lake is like a pool." -Colin and Eli, Monona, WI

SCHLUTER BEACH

What do you enjoy most about visiting this beach on Lake Monona?



"This beach is very near to where my son and daughter-in-law live. The kids like to play in the sand and go to the water so they can make other things in the beach. And then they like to play on the playground. Their favorite thing is to get ice cream across the street."

-Don, Forsyth, IL

"We like swimming in the water, digging holes in the sand, and playing on the playground. We like to make sand holes by digging a cave and patting it so it looks like a wall."

-Juniper and Leo, Madison, WI



Foley highly values our ongoing partnership with Clean Lakes Alliance. We eagerly anticipate further enhancing and expanding upon decades of progressive efforts aimed at preserving and revitalizing the lakes, rivers, and wetlands within our region.

For more information about Foley, please contact: Paul Wrycha | Madison | pwrycha@foley.com

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EXPLORING THE LAKES FROM THE BOTTOM UP

STORIES FROM THE FOUR LAKES SCUBA CLUB



Four Lakes SCUBA Club is a nonprofit organization founded in 1980 to promote sport diving in Greater Madison. The club has members from beginner to technical and fosters safe diving through the support of the Divers Alert Network (DAN). As a supporter of DAN, the club is required to provide an oxygen-equipped first aid kit on club dives, have speakers on safety topics, and have a club safety officer.

Each year, the Four Lakes SCUBA Club hosts local fun dives and cleanup dives, as well as trips to worldwide dive locations. Monthly meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to become a member.

Below are accounts from three club divers who have interesting stories about diving in our area lakes.



UNEXPECTED FINDS IN THE YAHARA RIVER By: John Fafinski

The Four Lakes SCUBA Club performs cleanup dives in our local lakes every year, and occasionally we do one in the Yahara River. We plan this dive when the locks are closed to minimize any boat traffic. Due to the water current, we start at Tenney Locks and drift down the river toward Yahara Place Park.

There tends to be a lot of trash around the various bridges that cross the river. We find street signs, bikes, traffic cones, tires, cans, and bottles. Because we find a lot of garbage under the bridges, we tend to spend a little more time there digging in the sand and muck which greatly reduces the visibility to the point where you can't see anything. On one dive, I was digging in the sand and felt something solid and dug it out. Under water I couldn't tell what it was, so I surfaced and, to my surprise, it was a waterlogged and silt-laden, 9mm handgun! I handed the gun over to our shore support people to hang on to until the dive was done.

After we completed the dive, we called the Madison Police to see if they wanted to take possession of the gun. The officer told us that people usually don't throw a gun from a bridge if it was used in a lawful manner. We met the officer back at the locks where he took the gun. We never heard anything regarding the gun or if they linked it to any crime.

We always joked prior to this dive about finding a gun or evidence of a crime underwater and this dive turned it into an unexpected reality!



ALWAYS DISPLAY YOUR DIVE FLAG By: Rob Stroud

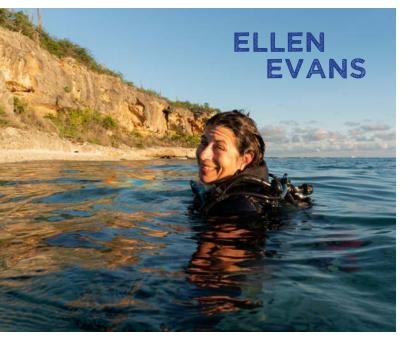
A number of years ago, my friend Lou suggested we try a dive off of Maple Bluff on the day after Christmas. The lake had not yet frozen over completely, but near the bluff, there was a very thin layer of ice. We took my sturdy, large, Sawyer canoe and loaded it up at my parents' house on Farwell Drive, near Maple Bluff Beach. I had a dive flag and some bungy cords to hold it up, and off we went. Needless to say, boat traffic was absent – just Lou, me, and our gear – easily paddling through a very thin layer of ice. We dropped anchor off of the highest point of the bluff, and seeing no one else on the lake, left the dive flag in the bottom of the canoe. I can't remember anything memorable about the dive, although I do recall very good visibility and plenty of sunshine.

The dive was uneventful until we surfaced. Along the top of the bluff was a fairly large crowd, looking like a cold weather lawn party. I remember Lou looking up and saying, "I hope they're not there for us!" Unfortunately, they were. The Dane County Lake Rescue Team had also gathered far above to rescue us. As I later found out, one of my parents' neighbors had spotted a canoe on the lake. She had originally seen three passengers, and a few minutes later, she saw the canoe empty. Naturally, she called for help, assuming the three passengers must have fallen in and were in grave danger of freezing or drowning.

The deputy in command of the rescue squad, with his megaphone at full volume, told us to come ashore where there was no pier and no way to climb up. We were able to communicate our inability to come ashore in that location. Lou and I said we could meet him at my parents' house where we could take out our canoe. The first thing the deputy wanted to know was where the third passenger was. We had no idea what he was talking about, and fortunately, we weren't under suspicion of foul play.



As I'm sure all of us who dive in the lakes know, it is illegal to scuba dive without a dive flag. A dive flag sitting in the bottom of the canoe doesn't cut it! Both of us were ticketed. Even more embarrassing, the day after Christmas is a slow news day, so in addition to the rescue squad, there was a television news crew to whom I was asked to give an account. Lou and I apologized for the inconvenience we caused to all concerned. In the weeks following the incident, I think I was given at least five dive flags, inevitably in front of a crowd with friendly teasing involved!



THREE UNIQUE DIVES By: Ellen Evans The Bottle

On a dive off James Madison Park, I spotted the edge of something smooth and tan in the sand. It caught my eye because it didn't look like the rest of the lake bottom. I dug it up, discovered it was a bottle, and put it in my goodie bag without much thought. There had been a lot of silt in the water, and I could not read the markings until I got to the surface. The bottle was completely intact. There was a stamp with markings on the bottom of the bottle. It was ceramic. It had a spout for pouring, but for pouring what?

There are many bottle collector sites online and bottle clubs. I was able to identify it as an ink bottle produced in London in the 1800s. "How did it end up in Lake Mendota," I wondered? I imagined some gentleman in his rowboat was writing love letters to his wife back home, thousands of miles away when he accidently dropped it!

The Madison Gas and Electric Outlet

Years ago, near the Madison Gas and Electric power plant on the Isthmus, divers would enter the plant's warm water outlet that emptied into Lake Monona. No ice formed in that location in the winter. Fish would pack in there to keep warm. They would be so thick we would have to push them out of the way to enter. There were mostly carp but also bass, pumpkinseeds, gar, and even muskie. Muskie and northern pike like to sit in your peripheral vision, which is

quite unnerving, especially in a crowded environment like the outlet. The current was often very strong. It was a lot of work going in, but a fun ride out. Think about it, there used to be divers under you when you walked around downtown.

Diving in an overhead environment is dangerous and requires special training. The opening to this outlet has since been gaited off and is now inaccessible.

Cleanup Dive Planning

I have planned the cleanup dives for Four Lakes SCUBA Club for years. The depth must get to at least eight feet or more and there must be a safe way to get in and out of the water, or we need to arrange to have a boat. In some areas, permits or special permission must be obtained.

We dive in the spring when the water clarity is still good. The water is cold then so a thick wet suit or dry suit must be worn. Each buddy team tows a dive flag so that boaters know divers are below. We carry mesh bags to put the trash in. Some of us have a special container for lures that keeps us from being stuck by the hooks. For larger items we use a tool called a lift bag. We find plenty of plastic bags, bottles, cans, fishing line, fishing poles, electronics, and Solo cups. Some of the stranger items found include a stove, kitchen sink, bowling balls, toys, an empty cash register drawer, office furniture, bikes, a green card, toilet tank, dice, street signs, anchors, wallets, sunglasses, clothing, and a gun.

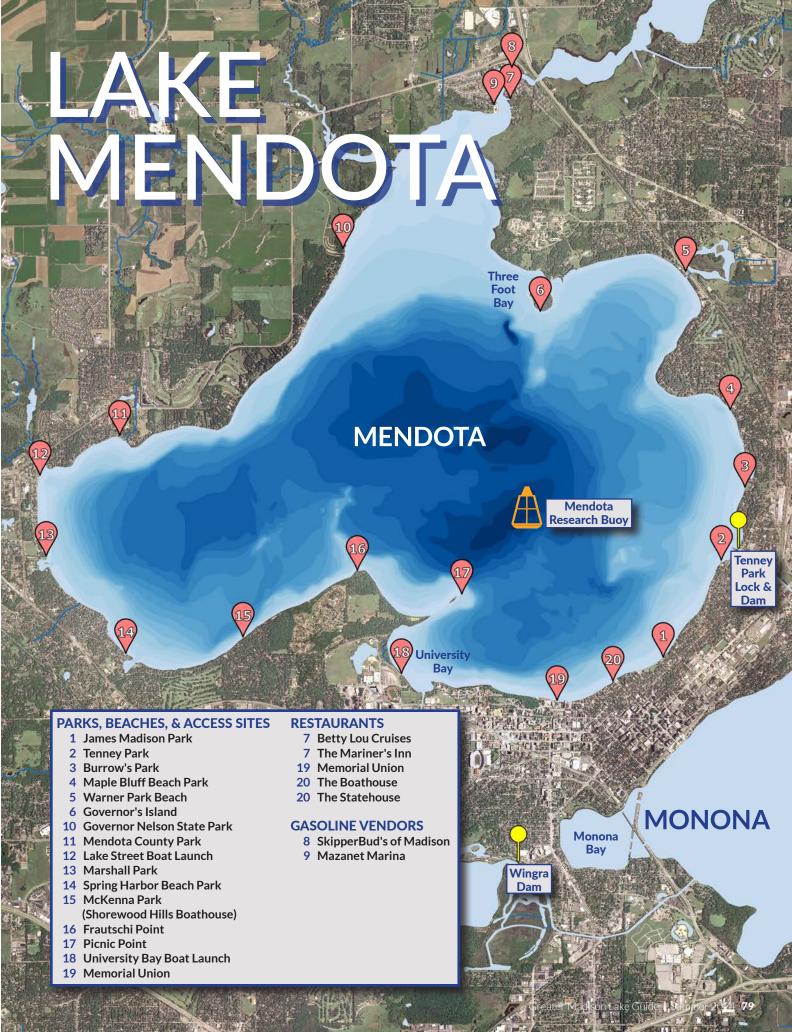
These cleanup dives are not for beginners. These are intermediate to advanced dives because there is often low visibility, a lot of boat traffic, and cold water. A diver must perform multiple tasks such as towing a flag, collecting trash, putting it in a bag, and using lift bags. With all the exertion, divers go through air faster. Divers must be constantly aware of their surroundings and other divers to avoid being underneath someone who is lifting a heavy item with a lift bag or handing a bag up to a boat driver, because they might accidentally drop something!

The good news is these dives have changed in recent years. Our club has noted that, except in a couple of locations, there has been less and less trash. People are getting the message that out of sight is not out of mind. It is important to keep our lakes clean.

The Four Lakes SCUBA Club meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. Visit **fourlakesscubaclub.org/calendar** for information on monthly locations.

Four Lakes SCUBA Club does not provide instruction, sell gear, have divemaster guided dives, or work as a diving travel agency. However, there are local resources for divers in Greater Madison.

Hoofers: hooferscuba.org
Breezeway Bubbles: breezewaybubbles.com
Diversions: diversions-scuba.com
Madison Scuba: madisonscuba.com





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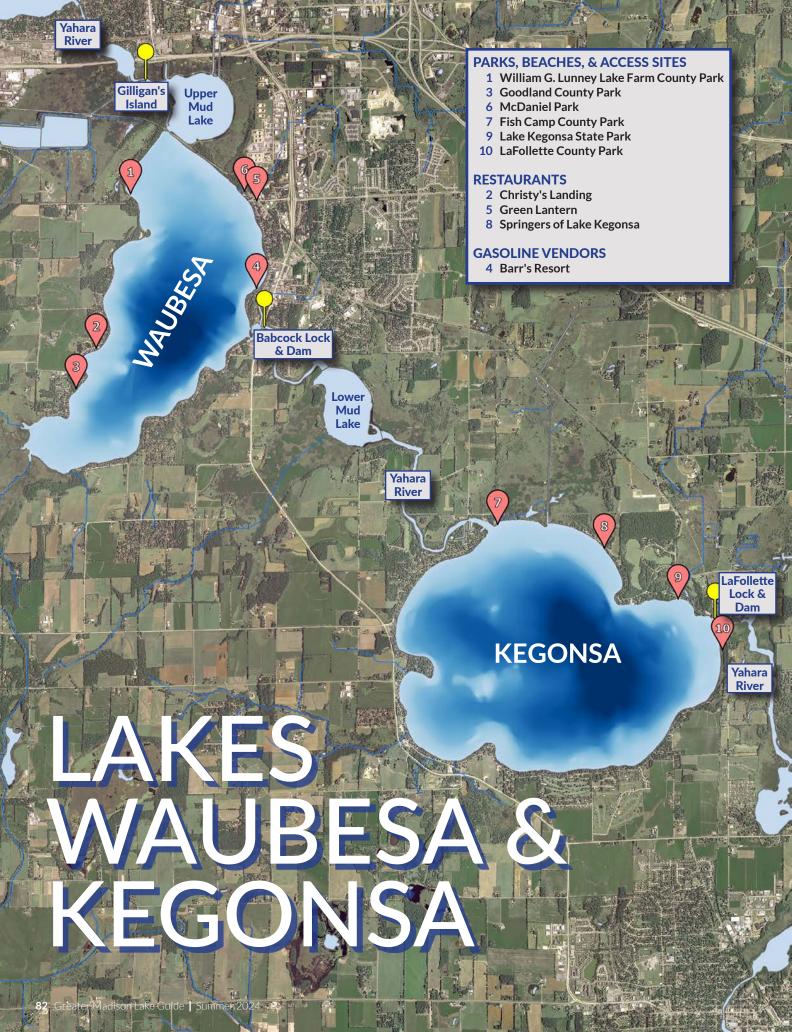


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alliantenergy.com/foundation





THE NAMES BEHIND OUR LOCAL LAKES

Whether you are new to southern Wisconsin, or have lived in the area your entire life, you may have wondered how Greater Madison's five large lakes got their names. You might have also questioned if those names were given before Europeans arrived in Wisconsin, or if they were named when the state was created.

A quick Google search finds that Wisconsin and Michigan are states with the most places (counties, towns, bodies of water, natural features, etc.) named after Native American words or tribes. The word "Wisconsin," while believed to be of French origin, is said to have been derived from a Native

American word. According to the Wisconsin Historical Society, "Wisconsin" comes from the Miami Indian word "Meskonsing," which means "it lies red," possibly referring to the Wisconsin River and the red sandstone cliffs along its banks.

As for its lakes, the history proves to be a bit more eclectic. The Ho-Chunk, a group of Siouan-speaking people whose presence in present-day Wisconsin was known to the French at Quebec as early as 1616, attributed appropriate names as they became familiar with all that surrounded them. The land surrounding the lakes was



called Taychopera, meaning "Land of the Four Lakes" – a name first recorded in print by George Featherstonhaugh, a geologist and geographer, after his visit to the site of Madison in 1837.

The Four Lakes were called Teejop – a name still recognized to this day. The lake now known as Mendota was originally Waaksikhomikra, meaning "Where the Person Rests." Lake Monona was known as Tcheehobekeelakaytela, translating to "Teepee Lake." Farther south, Lake Waubesa was called Sahoochatela, meaning "Rushes Lake." Lake Kegonsa was named Nasakoochatela or translating to "Hard

Maple Grove Lake." Finally, Lake Wingra was known as Kichunkochheperrah, meaning "Where the Turtle Comes Up." However, the lake was colloquially known as the Dead Lake because Ho-Chunk believed it had no outlet.

These lake names were ubiquitously used until the region was mapped by European land surveyors in the 18th and 19th centuries and renamed in the order they were discovered from first to fourth.

Simeon Mills, one of Madison's first settlers who arrived in 1849, became familiar with Native legends and suggested

the names Monona and Mendota be applied to Third and Fourth lakes respectively. Lake Kegonsa and Lake Waubesa, discovered in that order, were called First Lake and Second Lake.

But what do these names – Mendota, Monona, Wingra, Waubesa, and Kegonsa, actually mean?

Although commonly believed by Wisconsin locals to be gibberish bait names used to attract more people to the area, Mendota and Monona aren't altogether random letters of the alphabet matched together to sound Native. The name 'Mendota' as a rearranged form of the Chippewa word "Mdo-te" – meaning large or great. Monona on the other hand had no translation, but it's thought that the state's second governor, Leonard Farwell could have believed it meant "fairy" or "beautiful."

The southern lakes – Waubesa and Kegonsa, both derived from mistranslations of Native words for animals. Waubesa comes from the Chippewa word "wibisi" meaning swan or white bird. Kegonsa is close to the word for "Lake of Many Fishes."

These lakes (and the land that surrounds them) may no longer be referred to by their original names, but it doesn't mean Indigenous influence is lost. Today, these lakes, interconnected by the Yahara River, continue to remain a vibrant part of southern Wisconsin culture by providing waterways for people to swim, kayak, fish, paddleboard, and so much more. The more lake users understand their past, the more they hopefully will work to protect their future.





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invasives from Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park in the northern Yahara River Watershed

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'The Yahara lakes are the lifeblood of this

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Monona Lakeview Apartments

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The lakes are a valuable resource and an important part of who we are as a community. Supporting Clean Lakes Alliance is a natural partnership for us with our office located on Lake Mendota. It's an investment in our present and our future." - Kim Shaul, National Guardian Life Insurance Company



& ORGANIZATIONS, FOR YOUR SUPPORT

"When choosing our philanthropic partners, we take careful consideration that the organization will benefit our employees, clients, and customers now and into the future. The work of Clean Lakes Alliance impacts all of us that live, work, and play around Greater Madison's chain of lakes. In addition, their education and cleanup efforts will benefit the health and well-being of our local environment for generations to come. And for that, we are grateful!"



- Abby Bartlett, Wisconsin Distributors WISCONSIN Murphy Desmond S.C.*

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"Lake Waubesa Conservation Association is proud to be a Lake Partner with Clean Lakes Alliance. Both organizations have similar goals and the work we do is complimentary. The programs and volunteer work that Clean Lakes Alliance supports has a direct impact on all the lakes in the watershed, including Lake Waubesa.'



- Tamara Knickmeier, Lake Waubesa Conservation Association



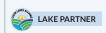
'Our commitment to improving the environment and supporting the communities we serve is unwavering. Partnering with Clean Lakes Alliance in their efforts will not only help ensure healthy lakes today, but will provide environmental benefits for generations to come.'

Julie Bauer, Alliant Energy Foundation





Volunteer Day with Lands' End at Pheasant Branch Conservancy



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While serving the finest food and drinks will forever be a priority, servicing our members and their guests is our way of life. And because of this, members come to dine, to meet their friends, to build their businesses, to celebrate... Our members understand the importance of being present for these real life moments and they know no one does it better than the Madison Club.

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(608) 257-1561 620 N Carroll St Madison, WI 53703 mendotalakeshore.com

Monona Lakeview **Apartments**



(608) 222-6911 3819 Monona Dr Monona, WI 53714

Mullins Apartments

(608) 257-2127 401 N Carroll St Madison, WI 53703 mullinsapartments.com

Riverwood Apartments

(608) 222-5571 6431 Bridge Rd Madison, WI 53713 accentapts.com/riverwood-apartments

The Current

(844) 932-1992 800 W Broadway Monona, WI 53713 currentmonona.com

The Lake House

LAKE PARTNER (608) 819-6500 640 N Henry St Madison, WI 53703 idmccormick.com

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The New Monona Shores Apartments

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The Surf

(608) 256-3013 661 Mendota Ct Madison, WI 53703 thesurfapartments.com

The Waterfront Apartments

(608) 455-8777 633 N Henry St Madison, WI 53703 waterfrontmadison.com

Yahara Terrace

(608) 949-3399 320 W Broadway Monona, WI 53716 yaharaterrace.com

ASSOCIATIONS

Association of State Floodplain Managers

(608) 828-3000 8301 Excelsior Dr Madison, WI 53717 floods.org

Black Earth Creek Watershed Association PO Rox 164

Cross Plains, WI 53528 becwa.org

Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin

PO Box 5274 Madison, WI 53705 ipaw.org

Lake Waubesa Conservation



Association (IWCA)

PO Box 6521 Monona, WI 53716 waubesa.org

LWCA is a volunteer group who value Lake Waubesa and its ecosystem. We strive to keep members and the community informed and involved in current issues, activities, and events affecting Lake Waubesa.

North American Stormwater & Frosion Control Association of WI

PO Box 70714 Madison, WI 53707 nasecawi.org

Token Creek Watershed Association

PO Box 366 Windsor, WI 53598 tokencreek.org

Upper Sugar River Watershed Association

(608) 437-7707 PO Box 314 Mount Horeb, WI 53572 uppersugar.org

Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA)



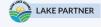
608-262-2551 650 N Lake St Madison, WI 53706 uwalumni.com

The WAA is your connection to UW-Madison and we work to advance the University's mission. WAA's Alumni Park is a place where alumni stories are shared and celebrated.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association

(608) 250-9971 214 N Hamilton St, Suite 201 Madison, WI 53703 wisconsinwetlands.org

Yahara Lakes Association (YLA)



(856) 298-0703 yaharalakes.org

The YLA represents the interests of waterfront property residents and advocates for the vitality of the Yahara chain of lakes for all to enjoy.



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BAIT & TACKLE

D&S Bait, Tackle & Archery (608) 241-4225 1411 Northport Dr Madison, WI 53704 dsbait.com

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(608) 222-1944 4516 Winnequah Rd Monona, WI 53716 mononabaiticecream.yolasite.com

Musky Fool Fly Fishing Co.

(608) 399-2809 105 E Main St Waunakee, WI 53597 muskyfool.com

BOAT LAUNCH SITES - KEGONSA

Amundson Landing & Park

Quam Dr Stoughton, WI 53589

Fish Camp Boat Launch

3383 County Rd McFarland, WI 53558

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2405 Door Creek Rd Stoughton, WI 53589

Town of Pleasant Springs Boat Launch

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BOAT LAUNCH SITES - MENDOTA

Governor Nelson State Park Boat Launch 5140 County Hwy M

Waunakee, WI 53597

Governors Island Boat Launch

Governors Island Pkwy Madison, WI 53704



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LAKE PARTNER

Lake Street Boat Launch

6000 Lake St Middleton, WI 53562

Marshall Park Boat Launch

2101 Allen Blvd Middleton, WI 53562

Mendota County Park Boat Launch

5133 County Hwy M Middleton, WI 53562

Spring Harbor Boat Launch

5218 Lake Mendota Dr Madison, WI 53705

Tenney Park Boat Launch

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Veith Avenue Boat Launch

4106 Veith Ave Madison, WI 53704

Warner Park Boat Launch

1201 Woodward Dr Madison, WI 53704

Willow Drive Boat Launch

Willow Dr (Howard Temin Lakeshore Path) Madison, WI 53705

BOAT LAUNCH SITES - MONONA

Law Park

410 S Blair St Madison, WI 53703

Olbrich Park Boat Launch

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Olin Park Boat Ramp

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Tonyawatha Park and Boat Launch

4609 Tonyawatha Tr Monona, WI 53716

Winnequah Trail Boat Launch

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Babcock County Park Boat Launch 2909 US-51

McFarland, WI 53558

Goodland Park Boat Launch

2862 Waubesa Ave Madison, WI 53711

Lake Farm Park Boat Launch

4286 Libby Rd Madison, WI 53711

McConnell Street Boat Launch

McConnell St Madison, WI 53711

BOAT LAUNCH SITES - WINGRA

Henry Vilas Park Boat Launch

1602 Vilas Park Dr Madison, WI 53715

Wingra Park & Boat Livery

824 Knickerbocker St Madison, WI 53711

BOAT LAUNCH SITES - YAHARA RIVER

Cherokee Marsh - South Boat Launch

5002 School Rd Madison, WI 53704

Lottes Park Boat Launch

400 W Broadway Monona, WI 53716

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Brightwork Boats

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Madison, WI 53704

piers-lifts.com

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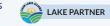
Endres Manufacturing Company

(608) 849-4143 802 S Century Ave Waunakee, WI 53597 endresmfg.com

Gervasi Trailer

(608) 271-4239 2295 S Syene Rd Madison, WI 53711 trailerrepairandpartsmadison.com

JD Hellenbrand Piers and Lifts



(608) 513-0690 N1792 Ryan Rd Lodi, WI 53555

idhellenbrand.com

We sell, install/remove, and adjust or repair new docks, piers, and boat lifts in central Wisconsin. We are currently focusing on servicing the following lakes: Monona, Kegonsa, Waubesa, and Wisconsin.

Mad City Marine/RV Sales

(608) 846-9329 N827 US-51 Arlington, WI 53911 madcitymarinervsales.com

Manke Enterprises

(608) 592-4022 N1558 Sunset Dr Lodi, WI 53555 manke.com

Marine Tops Unlimited

(608) 246-3979 4121 Terminal Dr McFarland, WI 53558 marinetops.com

Marshall Boats (608) 228-8333

2101 Allen Blvd
Madison, WI 53562
madisonboats.com
Paddle or pontoon? Enjoy a quiet paddle
into Pheasant Branch Conservancy or
bring everyone for a pontoon boat ride
— this is your destination for summer
memories. Located on Madison's west
side, this is the perfect place for your next
party!

Mazanet Marina

(608) 249-9316 5320 Blue Bill Park Dr S Madison, WI 53704

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LAKE PARTNER

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(608) 884-9415 520 E Richardson Springs Rd Edgerton, WI 53534 rockrivermarina.com

Rutabaga Rentals -Olbrich Park

(608) 513-1308 3527 Atwood Ave Madison, WI 53714 rutabagashop.com

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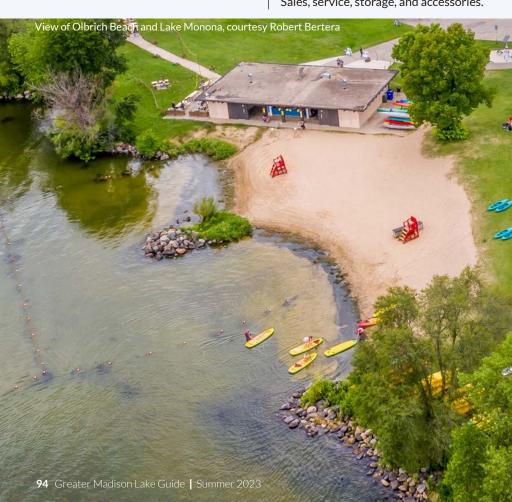
The Harbor at Newville

(608) 884-6007 807 Harbor Rd Milton, WI 53563 theharboratnewville.com

Wickcraft Boardwalks

(608) 244-9177 2317 Daniels St Madison, WI 53718 wickcrafftboardwalks.com







LAKE PARTNER

Wingra Boats (608) 233-5332 824 Knickerbocker St Madison, WI 53711 madisonboats.com Up-north beauty in downtown Madison. Surrounded by nature, this quiet lake is a mecca for paddling and the perfect place for the whole family to SUP, kayak, canoe, row, or paddle boat. Fish, paddle, and play.

BOAT TOURS, GROUP RENTAL

Badger Pontoon Rentals (608) 421-2355 badgerpontoon.com

Betty Lou Cruises



(608) 246-3138 Mariner's Inn on Lake Mendota 5339 Lighthouse Bay Dr Madison, WI 53704

bettyloucruises.com
Madison's premier cruise line, cruising
Lake Mendota since 1998. Enjoy a public
or private charter aboard one of our
two motor yachts while our experienced
crew and captain make your event one to
remember.

Capital Lake Pontoons

(608) 571-4889 capitallakepontoons.com

Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR)



LAKE PARTNER

(608) 204-3000 328 E Lakeside St Madison, WI 53715 mscr.org

MSCR is Madison's public recreation department providing a wide range of activities for all ages. Programs include afterschool, camps, arts, enrichment, outdoors, boating, paddling, fitness, and sports.

Midnight Splash



Houseboat charter on Lake Mendota.

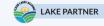
Pontoon Porch

(608) 284-8727 pontoonporch.com



COMMUNITY & CONVENTION CENTERS

Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center



(608) 261-4000 1 John Nolen Dr Madison, WI 53703 mononaterrace.com

With an obsession for critical details, topnotch technology, and concierge-caliber service, LEED Platinum certified Monona Terrace gives you the freedom to imagine your dream event, then bring it to life in an amazing lakeside location.

Pyle Center



(608) 262-0881 702 Langdon St Madison, WI 53706 pyle.wisc.edu

Overlooking the shores of Lake Mendota, Pyle Center offers visitors 135,000 square feet of comfortable meeting spaces, rooftop terraces, and more.

The East Side Club - Tiki Bar & Grill



(608) 222-9131 3735 Monona Dr Madison, WI 53714 escmadison.com

Wisconsin Memorial Union



(608) 265-3000 800 Langdon St Madison, WI 53703

union.wisc.edu/visit/memorial-union With event spaces for every occasion, ample seating, on-site dining, skilled event planners, free events, and a lakefront view, Memorial Union is the perfect place for your gathering, meeting, or conference.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION / ADVOCACY

Clean Lakes Alliance (608) 255-1000 150 E Gilman St, Suite 2600 Madison, WI 53703 cleanlakesalliance.org

cleanlakesalliance.org
We are a unique partnership of diverse
stakeholders who raise community
awareness of the issues facing the
watershed. We advocate for the welfare
of our lakes and help procure the
necessary funding to clean and protect
these waterways.

Clean Wisconsin (608) 251-7020 634 W Main St, Suite 300 Madison WI 52703

Madison, WI 53703 cleanwisconsin.org

Ripple-Effects Wisconsin ripple-effects.com

River Alliance of Wisconsin (608) 257-2424 612 W Main St, Suite 200 Madison, WI 53703

Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network

(608) 576-2446 PO Box 7921 - NH/6 Madison, WI 53707 wiatri.net/cbm/

wisconsinrivers.org

FISHING GUIDES

A Big Fish Guide Service (414) 779-0479 wibigfish.com

Big B's Guide Service bigbguideservice.com

Blue Ribbon Outdoors (608) 698-3332

blueribbonoutdoors.com

Finseekers Guide Service

(847) 707-1827 finseekers.com

Fishing Guide Service with Lee Tauchen

(608) 444-2180 leetauchen.com

Fishing Thrills Guide Service

(608) 921-8980 fishingthrills.com

Klus Fishing & Hunting Guide Service

(608) 469-1867 klusfishandhunt.com

Madison Angling Guide Service

(608) 210-9350 madisonangling.com

Madison Fly Fishing Co.

(608) 347-0444 madisonflyfishing.com

Madison Musky Guide Service

(608) 848-3906 madisonmuskyguide.com

Millenium Guide Service (608) 695-9703

Okada Outdoors

(608) 575-8597

Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service

(608) 290-3929 pikepolefishing.com

Spring Creek Specialties

(608) 206-5951

Wisco Outfitters

(608) 206-7938 wiscooutfitters.com

FRIENDS GROUPS

Capitol Water Trails

3806 Atwood Ave Madison, WI 53714

capitolwatertrails.org

Capitol Water Trails is a nonprofit improving Dane County's moving waters and lakes. We clear for navigation, recreational use, and flood control. We work to improve habitat, teach the public, and clean waters.

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed

rockrivercoalition.org/chapters/badfish

Friends of Capital Springs **Recreation Area**

(608) 224-3606 3101 Lake Farm Road Madison, WI 53711 friendsofcapitalsprings.org

Friends of Cherokee Marsh



We work to protect, preserve, and restore the beauty, value, and health of Cherokee Marsh, Dane County's largest wetland, located at the head of the Yahara chain of lakes.

Friends of Edna Taylor Conservation Park facebook.com/friendsofetcp

Friends of Hoyt Park

PO Box 5542 Madison, WI 53705 hoytpark.org

Friends of Lake Kegonsa # Society (FOLKS)

PO Box 173

Stoughton, WI 53589 kegonsa.org

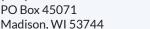
FOLKS is a nonprofit providing volunteers and financial resources to help improve the ecology, water quality, fishing, and recreational use of Lake Kegonsa. Our 450+ members proudly partner with Clean Lakes Alliance.

Friends of Lake View Hill Park

PO Box 8813 Madison, WI 53708 lakeviewhill.org

Friends of Lake Wingra

(608) 620-1906 PO Box 45071



lakewingra.org

Friends of Lake Wingra promotes a healthy Lake Wingra through collaborations with those who live, work, and play in the watershed. You'll find us doing outreach, research, and projects during every season!

Friends of Monona Bay

(608) 698-9708

friendsofmononabay.blogspot.com

Friends of Olin Turville (FOOT)

LAKE PARTNER (608) 239-4299

olin-turville.org FOOT was established in 2010 with the intent to preserve and improve the parks' facilities and landscapes, and encourage the community to rediscover the beauty

and unique offerings of the two parks.

Friends of Pheasant **Branch Conservancy**



LAKE PARTNER

PO Box 628242 Middleton, WI 53562 pheasantbranch.org

A nonprofit whose mission is to restore, preserve, and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and Watershed through education and collaborative restoration and management with the City of Middleton and Dane County.

Friends of Starkweather Creek



PO Box 8442 Madison, WI 53708 starkweatherfriends.org Friends of Starkweather Creek (est. 2002). Nonprofit group dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our creek and watershed through stewardship, education, advocacy, and fun!

Friends of the Kettle Ponds kettleponds.org



The Lake Partner program recognizes businesses and organizations that support Clean Lakes Alliance through annual donations (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31) made independent of events, sponsorships, or programs, directly benefiting our efforts to improve the lakes. Additionally, Lake Partners demonstrate their organizational commitment to clean lakes through one or all of the following avenues: making improvements on their properties, educating staff on watershed sustainability, and participating in volunteer opportunities.

Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve



PO Box 5534 Madison, WI 53705

friendslakeshorepreserve.com

The Friends inspire people to connect to, and care for, the UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Open to the public, this beautiful 300-acre natural area includes Picnic Point and the Lakeshore Path.

Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway

(608) 471-7955 PO Box 614 Spring Green, WI 53588 wisconsinriverfriends.org

Friends of the UW Arboretum

(608) 890-2555 1207 Seminole Hwy Madison, WI 53711 arboretum.wisc.edu/get-involved/friends

Friends of the Yahara River Headwaters

PO Box 139 DeForest, WI 53532 yaharariver.org

Friends of the Yahara River Parkway

facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Yahara-River-Parkway-284831311757

Friends of Wisconsin State Parks

608) 264-8994 23 S Main St, Suite O Hartford, WI 53027 newfwsp.blogspot.com

GASOLINE

Barr's Resort (608) 838-9917 6002 Lake Edge Rd McFarland, WI 53558 facebook.com/BarrsResort

Four Lakes Yacht Club

(608) 222-1401 6312 Inland Way Monona, WI 53713 madison4lyc.com

Located on the Yahara River, Four Lakes Yacht Club promotes boating safety for all. Members have access to our private clubhouse, unlimited use of our boat ramps, and a discount at our public gas pumps.

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

Mazanet Marina

(608) 249-9316 5320 Blue Bill Park Dr S Madison, WI 53704

Full-service marina on Lake Mendota for 60 years. Services include gas on the pier, wet boat slips, dry dock spaces, food concessions, boat accessories, service mechanics, and winter storage.

SkipperBud's

(608) 246-2628 5381 Westport Rd Madison, WI 53704 skipperbuds.com

SkipperBud's Boating Super Center offers boaters many options to fit any budget or lifestyle. New or used boats, service, storage, slips, and dry stack storage. Visit our showroom - or online at

LAKE SPORTS & RECREATION RETAIL

Bass Pro Shops

(608) 478-4100 1350 Cabela Dr Sun Prairie, WI 53590 cabelas.com

BumperMate USA

(608) 212-4609 129 E North Street DeForest, WI 53532 bumpermateusa.com

Dick's Sporting Goods - East

(608) 241-2764 350 E Towne Way Madison, WI 53704 dickssportinggoods.com

Dick's Sporting Goods - West

(608) 829-1313 237 W Towne Mall Madison, WI 53719 dickssportinggoods.com

Fontana Sports

(608) 257-5043 216 N Henry St Madison, WI 53703 fontanasports.com

LAKE PARTNER

Established on family values, a deep respect for nature, and a passion for outdoor pursuits, Fontana Sports has been providing Wisconsin with the best in outdoor apparel and equipment since 1949.



Isthmus Sailboards

(608) 849-4991 5495 Catfish Ct Waunakee, WI 53597 isthmussailboards.com

Machinery Row Bicycles

(608) 442-5974 601 Williamson St Madison, WI 53703 machineryrowbicycles.com

Madison Log Rolling

(608) 698-8171 madisonlogrolling.com

(608) 833-6680 7483 W Towne Way Madison, WI 53719 rei.com

Rich's Boardsports

(608) 244-6838 411 N Fair Oaks Ave Madison, WI 53714 facebook.com/richsboardsports/

Rutabaga Paddlesports

(608) 223-9300 2620 Rimrock Rd Madison, WI 53713 rutabagashop.com

West Marine

(608) 221-8708 2455 W Broadway Madison, WI 53713 westmarine.com

LODGING

Crown Point Resort

(608) 873-7833 2030 Barber Dr Stoughton, WI 53589 crownpointresort.com

Modern 1-3 BR Cedar Cottages on Lake Kegonsa, 15 minutes from Madison. Kitchens, decks, grills, wifi, cable, AC. Paddleboard, kayak, and pontoon rentals. 5-star rated VRBO and Tripadvisor.

Governor's Mansion Inn & Café

(608) 390-6463 130 E Gilman St Madison, WI 53703 governorsmansioninn.com

Hilton Madison Monona Terrace

(608) 255-5100 9 E Wilson St Madison, WI 53703 hilton.com/en/hotels/msnmhhf-hiltonmadison-monona-terrace

Mendota Lake House Inn

(608) 390-6463 704 E Gorham St Madison, WI 53703 mendotalakehouse.com

The Edgewater

(608) 535-8200 1001 Wisconsin Pl Madison, WI 53703 theedgewater.com



Located in the heart of downtown on beautiful Lake Mendota! Award-winning historic resort with 202 guest rooms, public pier, 40 boat slips, Grand Plaza with free community programming, dining, fullservice spa, and winter ice skating.

The Livingston Inn

LAKE PARTNER (608) 238-6317 752 E Gorham St Madison, WI 53703 livingstoninnmadison.com Experience the history of a 160-year old Gothic revival mansion at The Livingston Inn-a downtown Madison bed & breakfast featuring nine fireplaces, lake

access, and stunning architectural details.



The Lake Partner program recognizes businesses and organizations that support Clean Lakes Alliance through annual donations (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31) made independent of events, sponsorships, or programs, **directly benefiting our efforts to improve the lakes**. Additionally, Lake Partners demonstrate their organizational commitment to clean lakes through one or all of the following avenues: making improvements on their properties, educating staff on watershed sustainability, and participating in volunteer opportunities.

LAKE PARTNER



Wisconsin Union **Club Suites**

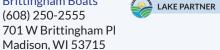


(608) 263-2600 800 Langdon St Madison, WI 53706 union.wisc.edu/hotel

Beautiful, elegant rooms await you at the historic Memorial Union, all with views of Lake Mendota. While staying, enjoy free and low-cost events and activities as well as on-site dining.

MOORING/SLIPS

Brittingham Boats (608) 250-2555



madisonboats.com

Downtown's premier paddle destination. Rentals of stand up paddle boards, kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, and fishing boats. Special events including excursions and Burgers on the Bay every Friday make it a Madison must.

Goodspeed Family Pier

888-947-2586 650 N Lake St Madison, WI 53706

Lake Monona Sailing Club



LAKE PARTNER

lakemononasailing.com The Lake Monona Sailing Club manages two piers for sailboats with 32 slips one at Olin Park in Madison and one at Stonebridge Park in Monona.

Maple Bluff Marina

(608) 244-3048 1321 Farwell Dr Madison, WI 53704 villageofmaplebluff.com/

Marshall Park

2101 Allen Blvd Middleton, WI 53562

Mazanet Marina



Full-service marina on Lake Mendota for 60 years. Services include gas on the pier, wet boat slips, dry dock spaces, food concessions, boat accessories, service mechanics, and winter storage.

McKenna Park Boathouse

(608) 267-2680 3400 Lake Mendota Dr Madison, WI 53705 shorewood-hills.org/marina

Monona Docks

(608) 251-8777 400 Interlake Dr Monona, WI 53716 madisonproperty.com/boatslips

Quam's Marine & Motor Sports



LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

(608) 873-3366 1896 Barber Dr Stoughton, WI 53589 quamsmotorsports.com

Full-service dealership on Lake Kegonsa for over 50 years. Services include wet slips, winter storage, service, sales, parts, and accessories.

Shorewood Hills Marina

(608) 267-2680 3700 Lake Mendota Dr Madison, WI 53705 shorewood-hills.org/marina

SkipperBud's

(608) 246-2628 5381 Westport Rd Madison, WI 53704 skipperbuds.com

SkipperBud's Boating Super Center offers boaters many options to fit any budget or lifestyle. New or used boats, service, storage, slips, and dry stack storage. Visit our showroom - or online at skipperbuds.com

TAC's ALEment

(608) 512-9442 2466 County Hwy AB McFarland, WI 53558 tacsalement.com

Westport Marine

(608) 850-4774 5339 Lighthouse Bay Dr Madison, WI 53704

Wingra Boats

(608) 233-5332 824 Knickerbocker St Madison, WI 53711 madisonboats.com

Up-north beauty in downtown Madison. Surrounded by nature, this quiet lake is a mecca for paddling and the perfect place for the whole family to SUP, kayak, canoe, row, or paddle boat. Fish, paddle, and play.

RESTAURANTS & BARS

Betty Lou Cruises (608) 246-3138



Mariner's Inn on Lake Mendota 5339 Lighthouse Bay Dr Madison, WI 53704 bettyloucruises.com

Madison's premier cruise line, cruising Lake Mendota since 1998. Enjoy a public or private charter aboard one of our two motor yachts while our experienced crew and captain make your event one to

Breakwater

(608) 416-5388 6308 Inland Way Monona, WI 53713 breakwatermonona.com

Buck & Honey's

(608) 478-2618



800 W Broadway, Suite 300 Monona, WI 53713 monona.buckandhoneys.com/ Our mission at Buck & Honey's is to consistently deliver creative, yet familiar food in a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere. We facilitate the fun to ensure each guest has a memorable experience at a great value.

Christy's Landing

LAKE PARTNER (608) 222-5391 2952 Waubesa Ave Madison, WI 53711

christyslanding.com Located on beautiful Lake Waubesa featuring lakeside dining, tiki bar, live music, banquet facilities, and volleyball.

Green Lantern

(608) 838-4730 4412 Siggelkow Rd McFarland, WI 53558 thegreenlanternrestaurant.com

Lake Vista Café

(608) 261-4000 1 John Nolen Dr Madison, WI 53703

mononaterrace.com/experience-mononaterrace/lake-vista-cafe

LAKE PARTNER

Enjoy casual gourmet fare, drinks, and sprawling views of Lake Monona and downtown Madison's cityscape at Lake Vista Café on the Monona Terrace rooftop. Open May through September, weather permitting.

Lakeside St. Coffee House

(608) 441-7599 402 W Lakeside St Madison, WI 53715 lakesidestcoffeehouse.com

Madison Elks Lodge

(608) 255-1644 711 Jenifer St Madison, WI 53703 madisonelkslodge.org

Monona Bait & Ice Cream Shop

(608) 222-1944 4516 Winnequah Rd Monona, WI 53716 mononabaiticecream.yolasite.com

Sardine

(608) 441-1600 617 Williamson St Madison, WI 53703 sardinemadison.com

Springers of Lake Kegonsa



LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

The Biergarten at Olbrich Park

(608) 237-3548 3527 Atwood Ave Madison, WI 53714 olbrichbiergarten.com View the downtown skyline over Lake Monona with friends and family all around and a cold drink in your hand. Bring your own picnic or enjoy our local soft pretzels, sausages, and more.

The Boathouse -The Edgewater

(608) 535-8232 1001 Wisconsin Pl Madison, WI 53703 boathousemadison.com A Madison favorite offering casual lakeside dining like burgers, brats, the best cheese curds in town, craft beer, and ice cold margaritas. Accessible by land or by water. Visit Boathouse Madison.com for hours and menus.

The East Side Club - Tiki Bar & Grill

(608) 222-9131 3735 Monona Dr Madison, WI 53714 escmadison.com

The Mariner's Inn

(608) 246-3120 5339 Lighthouse Bay Dr Madison, WI 53704 marinersmadison.com

Famous for Steaks and Seafood since 1966. Enjoy gorgeous sunsets as you look out over our marina from inside our cozy dining rooms or from our waterfront patio. Owned and operated by Madison's von Rutenberg family for six decades and still creating special memories.

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

The Statehouse -The Edgewater

(608) 535-8232 1001 Wisconsin Pl Madison, WI 53703 statehousemadison.com Madison's signature restaurant on Lake Mendota featuring Modern-American fare with thoughtfully sourced ingredients, sunset seating, and a casual atmosphere. For hours and menus, visit StatehouseMadison.com

The Tasting Room

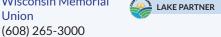
(608) 223-1641 800 W Broadway, Suite 100 Monona, WI 53713 tastingroomofmonona.com

Waypoint Public House

(608) 222-0224 320 W Broadway, Suite E Monona, WI 53716 waypointonthewater.com

Wisconsin Memorial Union

800 Langdon St



Madison, WI 53703 union.wisc.edu/ From made-to-order pub food and pizza to house-made grab-n-go food and beverages, the Memorial Union's lakefront dining is a year-round dining destination with first-come, first-served seating.

SHORELINE LANDSCAPING & ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Adaptive Restoration LLC

(608) 554-0411 8864 Offerdahl Rd Mount Horeb, WI 53572 adaptiverestoration.com

Dixon Shoreline / Landscaping

(608) 432-0078 N6780 County Hwy U Portage, WI 53901 dixonshoreline.com thelakesaver.com

EC3 Environmental Consulting Group Inc.

(608) 497-0955 PO Box 44281 Madison, WI 53744 ec3grp.com

Envirolok LLC

(608) 226-2565 10101 N Casey Rd Evansville, WI 53536 envirolok.com

(608) 839-4422 1334 Dewey Ct Madison, WI 53703 eorinc.com

Good Oak LLC

(608) 209-0607 4606 Pflaum Rd, Suite A Madison, WI 53718 goodoak.com

Meister's K&M Tree and Landscaping Inc.

(608) 592-5244 W 11924 County Rd V Lodi, WI 53555 meisterskandm.com

Meisters K & M Tree and Landscaping specializes in shoreline restoration, landscaping, retaining walls, and tree services. We offer free estimates and are fully insured.

LAKE PARTNER

Email: info@meisterskandm.com

Olson Toon Landscaping Inc.

(608) 827-9401 3570 Pioneer Rd Verona, WI 53593 olsontoon.com



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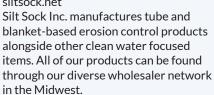


SCS Engineers

(608) 224-2830 2830 Dairy Dr Madison, WI 53718 scsengineers.com

Silt Sock Inc.

(608) 438-7625 N6100 Johnson Rd Portage, WI 53901 siltsock.net



LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

Strand Associates Inc.

(608) 251-4843 910 W Wingra Dr Madison, WI 53715 strand.com

Sweeney's Aquatic Weed Removal

(262) 501-0431

aquaticweedremovers.com Sweeney's Aquatic Weed Removal is your full-service lakefront care company. We specialize in lakeweed removal, shoreline restoration, leaf & debris removal, and algae & muck control. Contact us today!

Weed Man Lawn Care -E3 Group

(608) 268-2022 2211 Eagle Dr Middleton, WI 53562 madison.weedman.com

Weed Man Lawn Care has been a strong advocate of clean water and reducing sediment runoff since the inception of the company. In creating high quality turf, we are reducing urban sediment runoff while creating beneficial filtering to our lakes and the Yahara River Watershed.

SPORTING OUTLETS & CLUBS

Badger Flyfishers badgerflyfishers.org

Badger State Boating Society bsbs.org

Camp Randall **Rowing Club**

617 N Shore Dr Madison, WI 53703 camprandallrc.org

Camp Randall Rowing Club offers programs for youth and adults to explore and excel at the sport of rowing. Check out our Learn to Row summer camps, competitive junior rowing team, and more!

Muskies Inc.

LAKE PARTNER

LAKE PARTNER

PO Box 8862 Madison, WI 53708 capitalcitymuskiesinc.org A nonprofit specializing in youth outreach, improving fisheries, and promoting research. Over 350 all-volunteer members nurturing muskie in the Yahara River Watershed. Adopt-A-Muskie under the Fisheries tab on our website.

Fishing Has No Boundaries - Madison Chapter

(608) 417-3474 1618 Mayfield Ln Madison, WI 53716 fhnbmadison.com

Four Lakes Ice Yacht Club

(608) 347-3513 iceboat.org

Four Lakes Yacht Club

(608) 222-1401 6312 Inland Way Madison, WI 53713

madison4lvc.com Located on the Yahara River, Four Lakes

Yacht Club promotes boating safety for all. Members have access to our private clubhouse, unlimited use of our boat ramps, and a discount at our public gas pumps.







Lake Kegonsa Sailing Club



Iksc.org

The Lake Kegonsa Sailing Club promotes and hosts amateur sailing races, fun events, and socials on Lake Kegonsa, and provides support and mentorship to those new to the sport of sailing.

Lake Monona Sailing Club



lakemononasailing.com
The Lake Monona Sailing Club offers
recreational, small-boat sailing for
several types of boats. Races are held
Wednesdays and Saturdays in the
summer. Crew spots available.

Mad City Paddlers madcitypaddlers.org

Mad-City Ski Team 6516 Monona Dr,



LAKE PARTNER

Suite 193
Madison, WI 53716
madcityskiteam.com
Come visit us Sunday evenings at 6
p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor
Day at Law Park for FREE, on-water

Madison Area Antique & Classic Boat Society

& Classic Boat Society
- Glacier Lakes Chapter

glacbs.org

The Glacier Lakes Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society works to preserve, operate, and display antique and classic boats in celebration of Wisconsin's grand tradition of recreational boating.

LAKE PARTNER

Madison Bass Club madisonbassclub.org

Madison Fishing Expo (800) 975-3474 wifishingexpo.com

Madison Sailing Center madisonsailingcenter.com

Madison Youth Sailing Foundation madisonyouthsailing.com

Mendota Rowing Club 622 E Gorham St Madison, WI 53703 mendotarowingclub.com Mendota Yacht Club

PO Box 2062 Madison, WI 53701

mendotayc.org

Founded in 1903, our mission is to encourage the sport of sailing among young and old.

LAKE PARTNER

Stoughton Country Club

(608) 873-7861 3165 Shadyside Dr Stoughton, WI 53589 stoughtoncountryclub.com

Trout Unlimited - Southern Wisconsin Chapter

PO Box 45555 Madison, WI 53744 swtu.org

Waubesa Sailing Club waubesasailingclub.org

Wisconsin Bass Federation wisconsinbass.com

Wisconsin Bowfishing Association wibfa.com

Wisconsin Fishing Team wisconsin-fishing-team.web.app/



Wisconsin Hoofers: Sailing, Outing, and Scuba Clubs

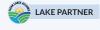
Scuba Clubs (608) 262-1630

800 Langdon St Madison, WI 53703

hoofers.org

The Hoofer Sailing, Outing, and Scuba Clubs are 3 of 6 outdoors clubs at Memorial Union on the shore of Lake Mendota. Open to all, 18 and over, the Hoofers Clubs make it easy to make friends and enjoy the lakes.

Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance Ltd.



LAKE PARTNER

wisconsinsmallmouth.com
Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance's
Mission is to preserve and protect the
smallmouth bass fishery, not only in
Greater Madison's chain of lakes, but
for the entire state.

Yahara Fishing Club

PO Box 259803 Madison, WI 53725 yaharafishingclub.org





STEP INTO BADGER SPIRIT AND UW PRIDE.

EXPERIENCE ALUMNI PARK AND ALL

THE NATURAL BEAUTY, INSPIRING STORIES,

AND UW TRADITIONS IT HOLDS.

724 Langdon Street, Madison



SCAN OR VISIT **Alumnipark.com** To learn more.



MAPLE BLUFF BEACH

What do you enjoy most about visiting this beach on Lake Mendota?



"The view around the lake. I went to school here and the beach means a lot." -Sue Wulff and Rachael Beckmann, Madison, WI



"It's beautiful, well maintained, and the view is gorgeous. We come here frequently." -Diane and Linda, Madison, WI "The view! You can see the Capitol and most of the downtown." -Roman, Madison, WI



Innovating for a low carbon future

As the world moves to lower carbon solutions, there will be a continued need for low carbon fuels and products in the global market.

Virent and Clean Lakes Alliance share a vision to raise awareness and advocate for our waterways and the environment for future generations.

Our BioForming® technology can help achieve this by producing renewable fuels and chemicals from plants. We're working alongside the agricultural industry to advance sustainable farming practices as we aim to provide low carbon solutions for a better world.















Shaping Our Future Through Design

BY "FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT"

Hey everyone! Frank here. Now I know what you're thinking. Haven't you been dead for 65 years? Well, that's just a minor detail you should probably overlook for the rest of this narrative. You see, I've been keeping an eye on the capital city while I've been...away...and I have to say, I'm impressed at what's going on!

In case you don't know about me, I'm kinda famous. I designed and built hundreds of buildings around the world - including the house on Reynolds Island in the opening piece of this magazine - not to mention influenced thousands more. But I got my start right here in the Badger State. I was born down the road in Richland Center and graduated...er...attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Fun fact - I was elected (yes, it was actually on a ballot) to design the Monona Terrace way back in 1938. I did, but for some reason, you all couldn't agree on how to build it until 1997. By then, well, let's just say I had been "away" for almost 40 years. Either way, I was excited to see this project connect the downtown to the lake!

Why am I writing the closing piece in the Greater Madison Lake Guide? Well, it probably has to do with a philosophy I started called "organic architecture." You can use your fancy phone and Google it - whatever that means - but it basically boils down to making sure a design harmoniously balances

humanity and the environment. My most famous design that practices this philosophy is a home simply called "Falling Water." You can Google that too. My guess is once you see a photo of it, you'll recognize it.

I'm excited to see that organic architecture is playing a stronger role in many projects in your area. The Lake Monona Waterfront project not only addresses transportation issues for both cars and bicycles, but it also addresses runoff, shore access, and aquatic health. Bravo!

It's also been rewarding to see that organic architecture is present in many of the new buildings and homes throughout the area. Whether it's green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavement, or just outdoor gathering spaces - you're doing it! All of these design elements look cool and they're helping the environment and reducing runoff to our lakes!

Well, it's about time I wrap things up here. Antoni Gaudí and I are in the middle of building intricate birdhouses...and that guy never finishes anything on his own! (In case you didn't catch it - that's a dig at his famous church in Barcelona that started in 1882 and still isn't finished.) Keep making this Wisconsin son proud in your lake-friendly design choices future generations will thank you when you're gone.



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