

Yahara Lake Level Advisory Group 2 (YLAG2)
Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2011, 3-5:30 pm

Location: Lyman F. Anderson Agriculture and Conservation Center

Participants in attendance:

Scott Reiersen – Quam Motorsports
Bill Mazanet – Mazanet Marina
Jack Von Rutenberg – Von Rutenberg Ventures (restaurants and cruises)
Chuck Rolfsmeyer – Madison Fishing Expo
Kevin Connors – Dane County Land and Water Resources
Melissa Sargent – Dane County Board
Mike Kakuska – Capital Area Regional Planning Commission
Melissa Malott – Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission
Rob Phillips – Madison
Paul Kachelmeier – Monona
Don Peterson – McFarland
Richard Gullickson - Stoughton
John Van Dinter – Town of Westport
Ed Minihan – Town of Dunn
Chin-Hsien Wu – UW – Madison, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Richard Lathrop – UW-Madison, Limnology
Bill Fitzpatrick – Yahara Lakes Association
Mike Amstadt – Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society
Dean Hein – Lake Wabesa Conservation Association
Kurt Welke - DNR
Sue Josheff - DNR
Mindy Habecker – Dane County UW – Extension

Participants absent:

Sue Jones – Dane County Lakes and Watershed staff
Kyle Richmond – Dane County Board
Ray Harmon - Madison's Mayor's Office
Richard Green – Town of Pleasant Springs
Ken Potter – UW – Madison, Civil and Environmental Engineering

Website - <http://www.countyofdane.com/lwr/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx>

- 1. Introduction including the charge to the group** – Lloyd Eagan, WDNR South Central Regional Director explained the need for this advisory group and gave the group charge. In recent years, there has been considerable discussion about the water levels on the Yahara Lakes. Higher than normal precipitation caused a wide variety of concerns including flooding, property damage and dam management. Many of those discussions haven't addressed the wide geographic area, the system's physical constraints or the diverse lake users, and have often put one lake's users or community's interest against another. The stakeholders need to understand the factors, learn from the different perspectives and provide input to the water level issues.

The charge is:

“Examine the operation, physical constraints, and changing hydrology of the Yahara chain of lakes and make water level recommendations that balance public and private interests.

Public interests include navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality and natural scenic beauty. Private and cultural interests include historic values, riparian and business access and economic development.”

1. Representative introductions and their interests – The participants represent the county, cities, villages and town touching the lakes as well as a variety of interest groups and agencies. They have expressed a wide range of interests including:

- Growing up in the area and wanting children and grandchildren enjoy the lakes
- Maintaining water levels on Lake Kegonsa and at Stoughton
- Improving water quality
- Educating the public on possible lake response
- Staying within the established water levels
- Fish and wildlife habitat and other environmental protection
- Minimize and eliminate flooding
- Public and private property protection
- Economics and tourism
- Needing higher water levels for navigation
- Emergency response
- Floating bogs and wetland protection
- Balance users and ecosystem

2. 2001 YLAG history, recommendations and status – Ken Johnson, WDNR explained that in 2000, DNR gathered representatives from different governments, organization and interests to talk about lake levels and other actions to reduce flooding. The group was called the Yahara Lakes Advisory Group, or YLAG. The group was established to gather, discuss and evaluate information and make recommendations to address the water level concerns. Mindy Habecker was the facilitator for the group as well. Ken explained that many recommendations were made and only those receiving 12 votes out of the possible 18 votes advanced. Ken highlighted a number of recommendations and their status.

The YLAG report including the recommendations and the vote results can be found at: <http://www.danewaters.com/management/ylag.aspx>

Ken Johnson’s PowerPoint will be available on the website.

3. Yahara system overview – Sue Josheff, WDNR and Jeremy Balousek, Dane County provided a quick fly-over of the basin from Cherokee Marsh to Stoughton pointing out the four dams, numerous bridges and other waterway features. Additionally, Sue provided schematics of the Yahara system and a chart of water level information. The schematics and chart are on the website.

4. Discuss potential future presenters and specific topics – The participants identified issues, concerns, data and other gaps that they felt they needed to make informed water level recommendations. The identified gaps were sorted into the following categories:

- Historical/Cultural/Natural Scenic Beauty
- Public Safety/ Health
- Economics
- Water Quality
- Precipitation/Surface water and Ground water flow/Climate change
- Flooding, Damages, and Mitigation
- Dams, Hydraulics and Constrictions
- Navigation and Recreation
- Fish and Wildlife
- Miscellaneous

Participants were asked to identify possible speakers on each of the gaps.

5. **Discuss proposed facilitated process and communication guidelines** – Mindy Habecker provided a handout on the facilitated process and told the participants that they would be designing the process with her help. More will be discuss in future meetings. The handout is on the website.
6. **Next steps, future meeting dates, locations and agenda items** – The group decided that they would like to meet the same time and day each month and the fourth Thursday at 3:00 pm was selected. The group also thought the Fen Oak Court location was good. A bigger room will be reserved for the next meetings. Much of the group wanted to set a maximum meeting limit yet there were comments on not knowing enough yet to know how many meetings were needed. The general thought was that 10 meetings may be enough.

Next steps include: condensing the gap analysis to remove duplication, group like items and find presenters for the next meeting to start filling in the gaps.

7. Public Comment

Five public members turned in sheets to speak. Two left before they had an opportunity to speak. The comments are summarized on a public comments spreadsheet on the website.