

**From:** Paul Hooper  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** Ritt, Michele; Erickson, Chuck; Ripp, David; Miles, Patrick; Stubbs, Shelia; Buckingham, Tanya; Chawla, Yogesh; "Connie Hagen"; "Bill Lamm"; "Eric Vieth"; Reimer, John; Hicklin, Laura  
**Subject:** Questions and observations  
**Date:** Thursday, March 07, 2019 9:11:02 AM  
**Attachments:**

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To the members of the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force and all concerned:

I have been living on Lake Kegonsa for over thirty years.

I appreciate the discussions that have been taking place among the members of the task force, and have found them to be very helpful in furthering my understanding of the challenges with respect to managing the lake levels. When the floods occurred this past summer, my initial reaction was to blame those responsible for controlling the dams. I was wrong, but I did not stop there. I proceeded to do a lot of research, attended many meetings focused on lake level management, including attending all of the task force meetings thus far. I have read through the Lake Level Management Guide several times. I have read through all of the letters sent to the task force, and much of the content presented in the meetings. There is a lot to absorb. I have learned a great deal. There is so much that I was not aware of. What follows are my observations and questions according to my current understanding.

### **1/ Increasing Flow**

I understand that increasing flow will have the greatest impact towards avoiding high lake levels. If we are able to increase flow, more water will go downstream. The question is where is "downstream"? My understanding is that we are not able to get water quickly enough past the bridge in Stoughton (circled in green below) where there is plenty of capacity to take more water.

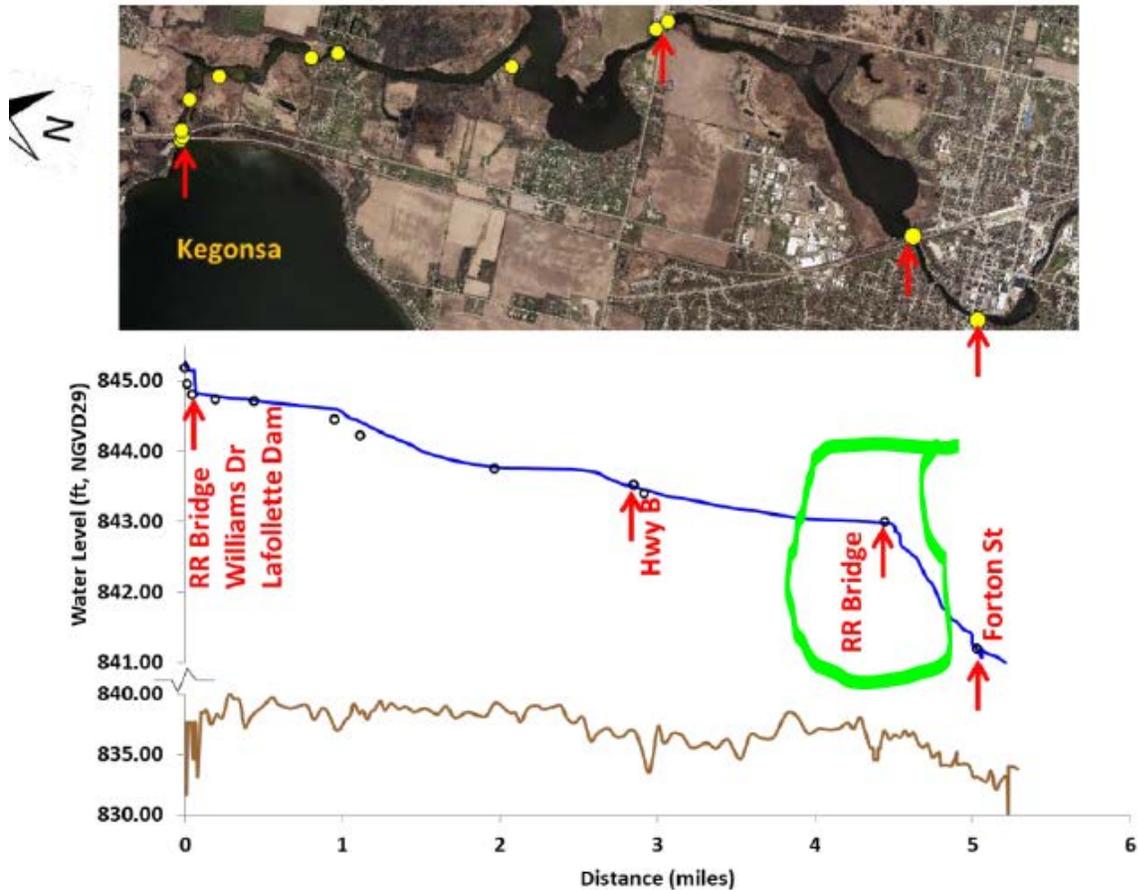


Figure 11: The Yahara River water surface profile between Lake Waubesa and Lake Kegonsa

It is my understanding that during the 2018 flood events, the water level in Stoughton was able to be kept at the minimum DNR prescribed level. I hear various proposals about dredging above Lake Kegonsa. It seems to me that the focus should be on making sure that water can efficiently drain out of Kegonsa, before any efforts are made to improve water flow into Kegonsa. Plenty of water is coming into Kegonsa already, and it is not leaving quickly enough. Even with the weed cutting and various efforts to improve flow downstream of Lake Kegonsa, it was apparent that the flow rate out of Lake Kegonsa is not sufficient in order to maintain a reasonable water level. Lake Kegonsa has been dealing with high water levels now for many years, not just in 2018. If improvements to flow are made above Lake Kegonsa without first sufficiently improving flow out of the lake, the upstream flow improvements will only exacerbate the already very high levels of Lake Kegonsa.

I am perplexed by the relatively steep gradient of the water level in the preceding graph between the railroad bridge and Forton St. It seems to me that this is where our initial efforts should be focused. Let us solve flow issues downstream first, as such efforts will help all of the lakes.

## 2/ Is Avoiding Flooding Really a Priority?

In the Lake Level Management Guide, the following is stated (highlights are my editions)

*The first priority is to keep lake levels from approaching flood stage and thus protecting property, **but***

pending the circumstances at **any** given time, water levels may be adjusted to comply with individual water level orders, provide for recreation and navigational use, flood storage, shoreline protection, and fish spawning.

While I trust that there are good intentions behind the above statement, it is fundamentally useless for management purposes. An honest reading of this statement can only lead to the conclusion that **there is no genuine first priority to avoid flooding**. There is no such thing as a first priority followed by “but”. Imagine if a manufacturer of a safety critical device were to establish their product requirements with language such as, “It is a first priority to protect the patient’s life, but...”. That device isn’t likely to succeed.

It is in the community’s interest to see clear priorities resulting from this effort. If avoiding high lake levels is indeed a first priority, it needs to be set forth clearly and pursued by all reasonable means so that we can maximize our chances of succeeding. If navigation and fishing are going to be the highest priorities, then let us make it clear, so that those who are affected by high water levels will at least know without a doubt where they stand.

### **3/ Winter to Spring Transition**

In the Lake Level Management Guide, the following is stated.

*During a normal season the lakes are gradually brought up to summer minimum levels beginning February 1st. Depending on climatic conditions, the transition of the lakes to summer minimum levels may begin as early as the second week of January. Considerations for an early transition include frost depth, deviation from average snowfall, current snow depth, and the flow in the Yahara River. The lake level orders require that the lakes be at summer minimum levels following the first runoff event after March 1st. Once these levels have been achieved, the goal is to maintain the levels until mid to late April.*

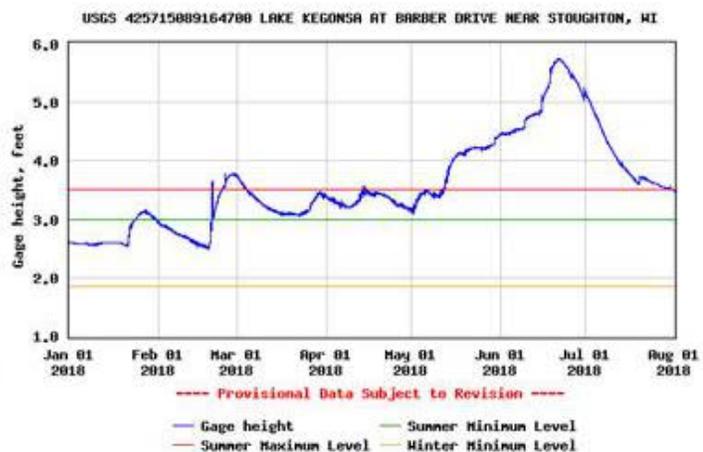
Based on decades of closely observing lake levels, this approach is too aggressive. We should be much more cautious about raising lake levels going into the spring and early summer when the potential for heavy rains is the greatest, and can in most years be expected. Just this past spring in 2018, I was alarmed to see how high the water was, and I was stunned to learn that the dams were adjusted for a week in April to restrict flow.

**Dam Management:** To lower water levels to summer maximums, Babcock Dam and Lafollette Dam **have been open in full flow condition since August 2016**, with the exception of one week in the spring of 2018 when flow was reduced in an attempt to bring water levels up to summer minimum levels.

While the flow was only restricted for a week (because we were hit with heavy rains making it more obvious that the dams should not restrict flow), it nevertheless demonstrates the pressure that the LWRD faces to comply with all of the competing requirements. The lakes were quite high already, and yet the LWRD felt the need to restrict flow. Below is a picture taken of our boat house on March 25, 2018 after much ice had been cleared the day before when the boathouse doors were

much less visible. I now wish I would have taken the picture beforehand, as it was quite dramatic. A few years back, one of our neighbors did in fact have the front of their boathouse crushed. As can be seen from the accompanying graph, the lake was just above the summer minimum at this time as prescribed by the guide. I have many memories of earlier years on the lake when the water was not this high in the spring, and I don't remember any complaints/concerns about low water levels. We used to have a significant shoreline for much of the year. This is no longer the case.

March 25, 2018



I can say from many years of observations that we should be using every opportunity possible to get water out of the lakes before the heavy spring and early summer rains occur. It could be that one year there will be a drought, and the lakes will be lower than desired, but I submit that it is better to err on that side than on the side of high water.

#### 4/ Lake Level Minimums and Maximums

Regarding the six inch band between minimum and maximum water levels imposed by DNR regulations and the requirement to raise the water levels aggressively (I realize the guide says "gradually", but the lake level graphs don't support that) coming out of winter, I hope that it is plain to all that these requirements are not realistic if we are serious about prioritizing minimization of high water levels. The lake level graphs (included at the end of this message) speak for themselves. As at least one person on the task force proposed, serious consideration needs to be given to lowering the minimum level of this band to give more flexibility to the LWRD to manage the levels. It is unreasonable to expect the LWRD to thread the needle under the current requirements given the flow rates. It's an impossible mission. I was saddened by the DNR's apparent lack of desire to make changes here. Many discouraging statements were made by the DNR to make clear to all how long and arduous the process would be to make a change to lake level orders, how many hurdles there are to overcome. It comes across as "Don't even try. It'll wear you out". I don't know who is to blame

here as I don't understand the political system well enough, but as a concerned citizen, I would like to see a lot more concern about the numerous violations of the DNR maximum lake level orders, and much more positive energy and openness to exploring timely and effective ways to come up with lake level orders that match reality. Until we can figure out a way to increase the flow out of the lakes, the current lake level orders are in some respects promoting high waters and flooding.

## **5/ Lowering Lake Levels as a Long Term Strategy**

Some at the task force meetings have mentioned a long term approach to lowering lake levels. I agree with that strategy, not as a complete answer to the problem, but as something that can certainly help. I found the adaptation scenario of lowering Mendota a foot in late winter instructive, but just because it can't work over such a brief period, does not mean it can't work if done more gradually over a long period of time. It has become increasingly apparent to me that we have to be thinking in terms of years and not months. The current water flows out of the lakes will not permit us to think in terms of months. We also must remember that we are dealing with high water conditions other than the extremes of 2018. The task force did state that lowering lake levels to provide more buffering capacity would help to avoid high water issues in years when rainfall was not as severe as in 2018.

## **6/ Pumping Water Out of the Lakes**

After listening to the various thoughts about pumping water out of the lakes, I feel this should be a last resort. It seems like such a heavy handed and expensive way to tackle the problem. Other strategies should be pursued first. As mentioned earlier, let us first try to increase the water flow out of Lake Kegonsa into Stoughton. If we are going to put a pumping system anywhere, let us put one somewhere downstream of Lake Kegonsa in a strategic location to help get the water down to the part of the Yahara that was able to maintain its minimum level during 2018. But before even putting a pumping system there, let us consider if there is some way to dredge and reshape the riverbed in strategic places downstream of Kegonsa to dramatically increase the flow to take advantage of this unleveraged extra capacity.

## **7/ Dam Settings**

There is currently no way that I am aware of to get a history of dam levels. I have asked for it and have thus far not been able to obtain it. It would be helpful to make this information available to the public so that we can have a fuller understanding of the various factors involved in the flow of water. The current dam settings are posted to the LWRD site. Since the dams can now all be controlled via a cellphone over the internet, it means that the data for the dam settings could easily and automatically be made available to the public. All it would take is a small effort by a software developer familiar with the existing dam control system to write a script to pipe the data to an appropriate server where the public could access the dam settings over a specified period of time, along with instructions posted somewhere on the LWRD website indicating how to access and interpret the data. The developer would not need to worry about representing the data in graphs, etc. Just make the raw data available to the public in some reasonable format, and the public can process it as they see fit.

## **8/ Some Concluding Thoughts**

After having reflected much about all of this, and trying to put myself in the shoes of the

LWRD, I perceive that they are in a very challenging position. No matter what they do, they will be seen by various groups as failing to properly manage the water levels. They are in a sense politically forced to play defense, which is why I believe that they have chosen to lay out the scenarios that they have thus far. They are trying to explain how difficult their job is. They are doing their best to follow the strongly competing requirements. They can't make everyone happy at the same time, unless the weather complies. As professor Wu stated, there are tradeoffs. We can't have what are perceived to be optimal fish spawning and navigation conditions, while at the same time expecting to be able to drain the lakes quickly enough when heavy rains strike. We are going to have to compromise, and I would like to think that as a community, we could agree that optimal navigation and fish spawning should not have a higher priority than avoiding high water and flooding. Perhaps there are other ways to promote fish spawning. I also have to wonder about what all of the fish and wildlife did before people settled here and installed dams, etc. I imagine that the water levels fluctuated from year to year depending on rainfalls, and the fish and wildlife adjusted to it. The DNR itself admits that the Madison lakes are not great for growing fish populations, and that most fish are here because they have been stocked. I am no expert in these areas, but I do see contradictions in various writings about how nature copes with changes, and I do see experts disagree about the effects of high water on the natural habitat. I am sensitive to the importance of protecting nature, but there has to be a balance, and I believe that we can find a balanced solution that includes more flexible lake level rules. A balanced solution might in fact require more flexible lake level rules.

In conclusion, until we have arrived at a point where the flow of water through the lakes is high enough where we feel confident that we can avoid high water situations, we should approach this problem conservatively from every angle possible, including gradually lowering lake levels, being less aggressive about raising the levels at the end of winter and through spring, and adjusting lake orders according to reality. Every contribution helps, and these latter contributions can be put into effect quickly to start providing us with some additional margin to work with while the longer term strategies to enhance flow are worked out. Every inch counts. Not every year with high water will be like 2018.

I much appreciate the task force devoting energy to this issue, and I hope very much that we will all be able to work together for the common interest of the public to arrive at the most balanced and reasonable solutions to minimize high water levels.

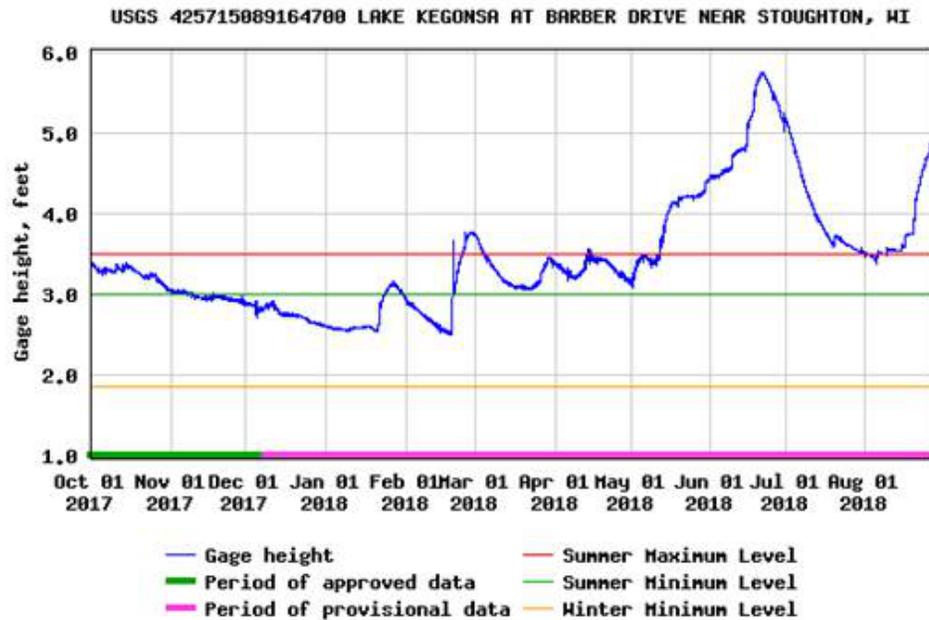
Sincerely,  
Paul Hooper

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

USGS lake level graphs of Lake Kegonsa over the past years dating back to 2007

## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 4.84 08-27-2018 20:00 CDT



## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



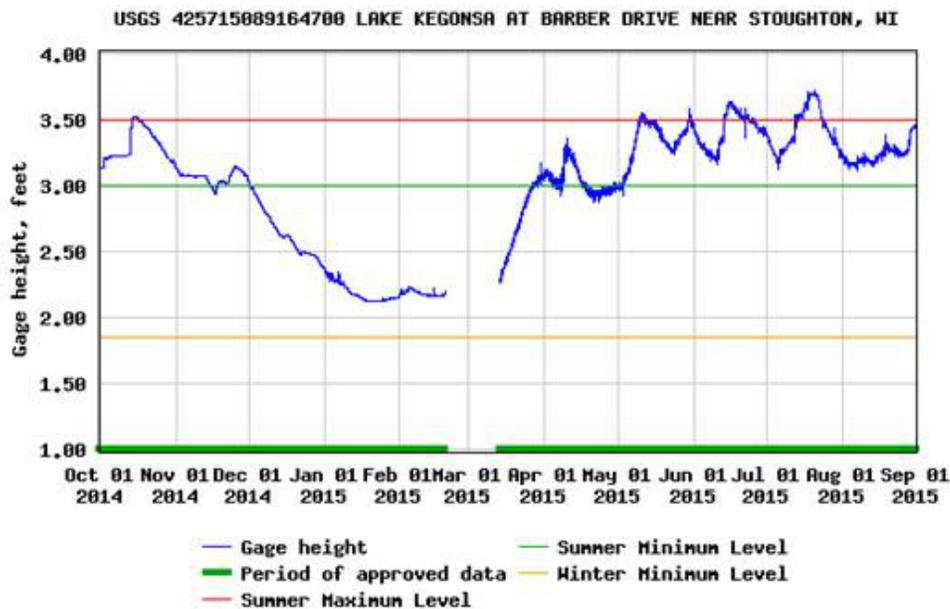
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Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



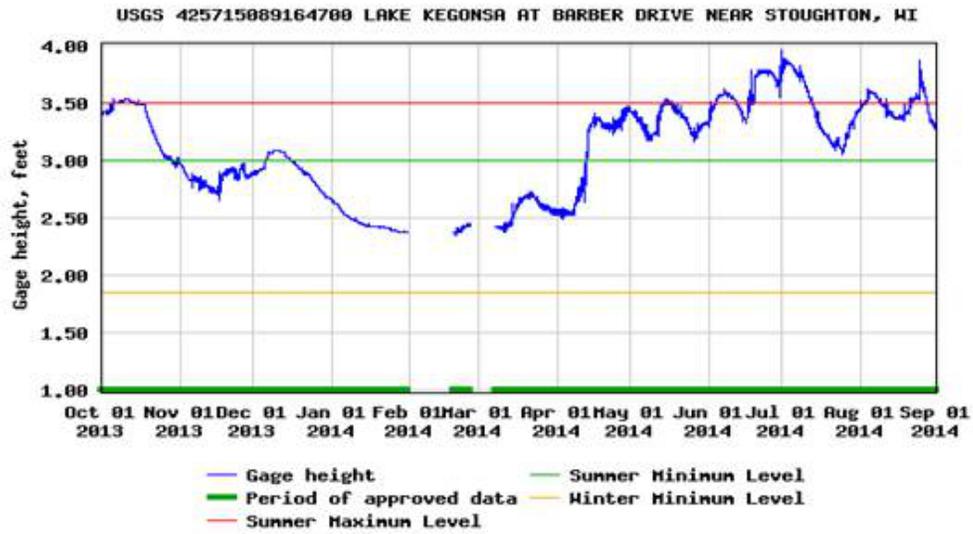
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Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



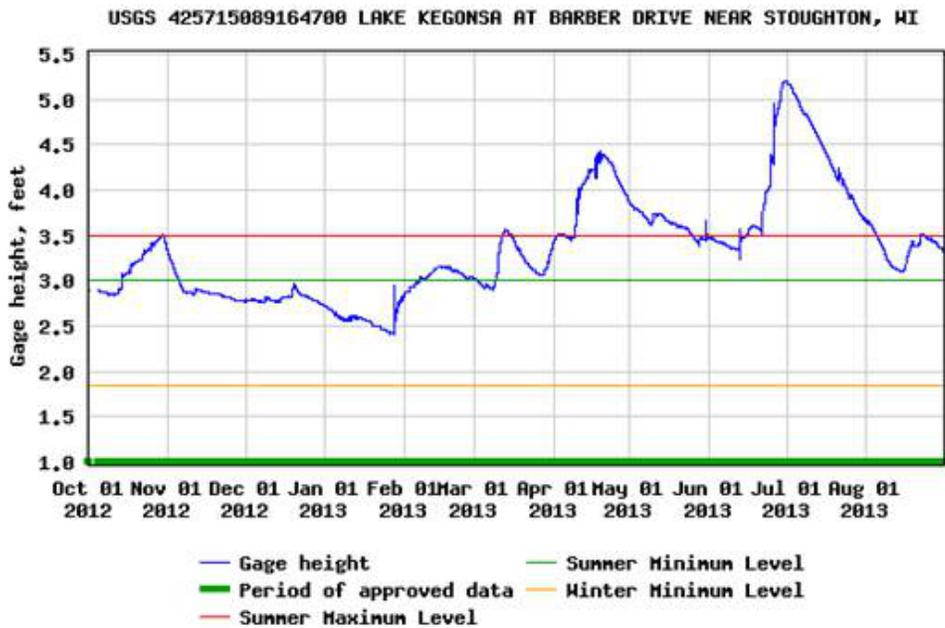
### Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



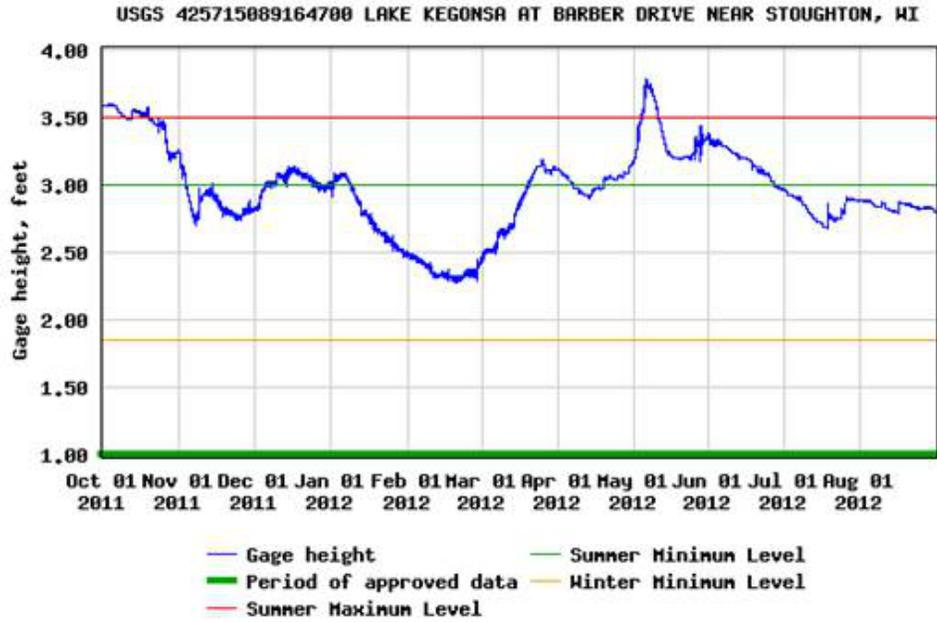
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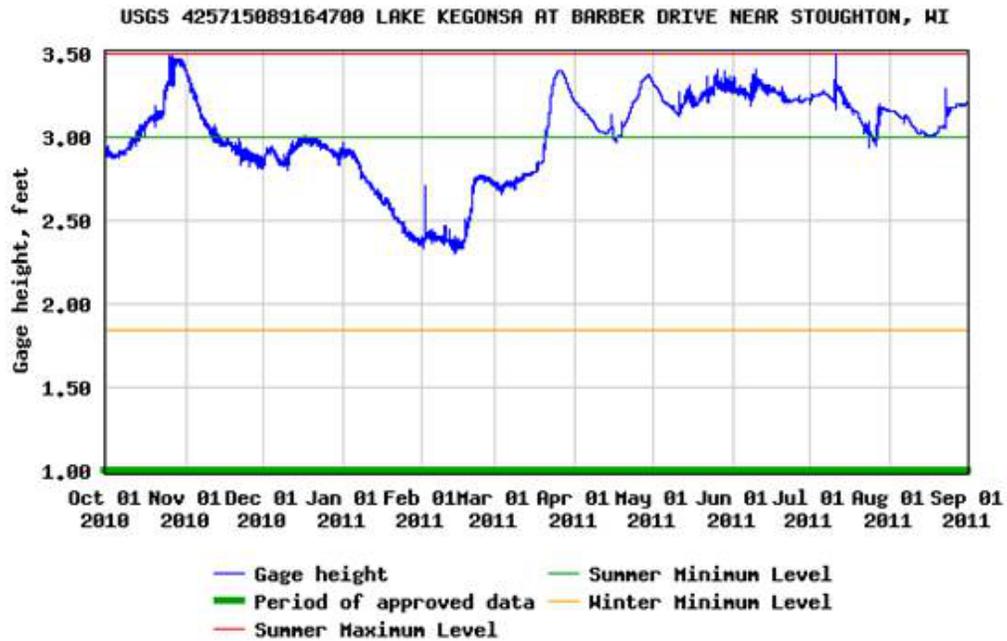
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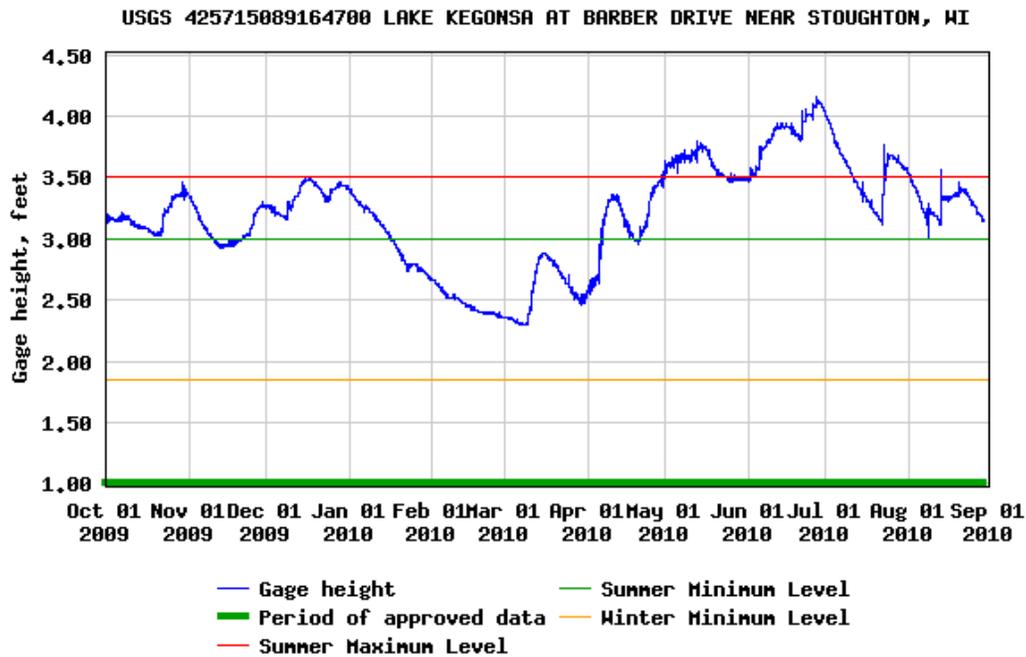
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Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



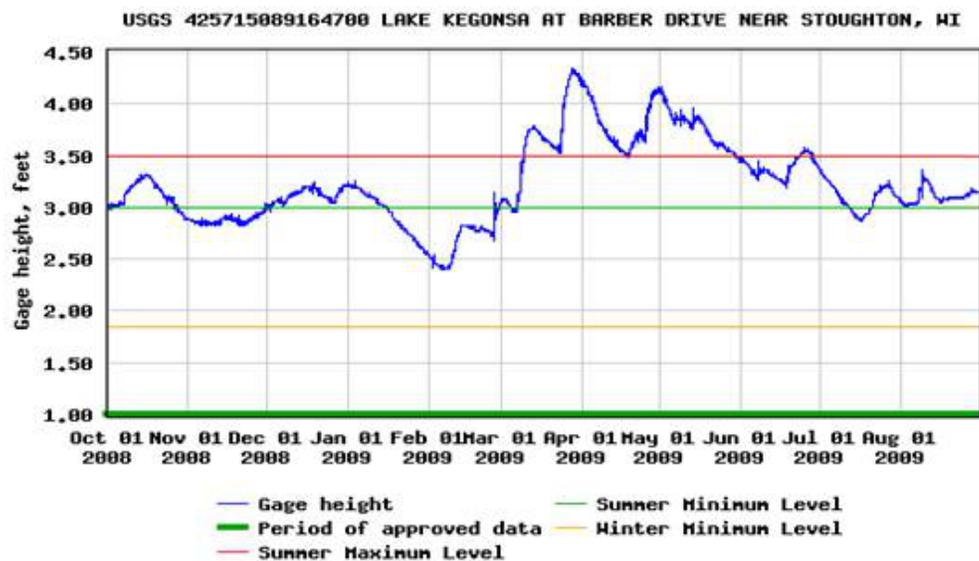
## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



## Gage height, feet

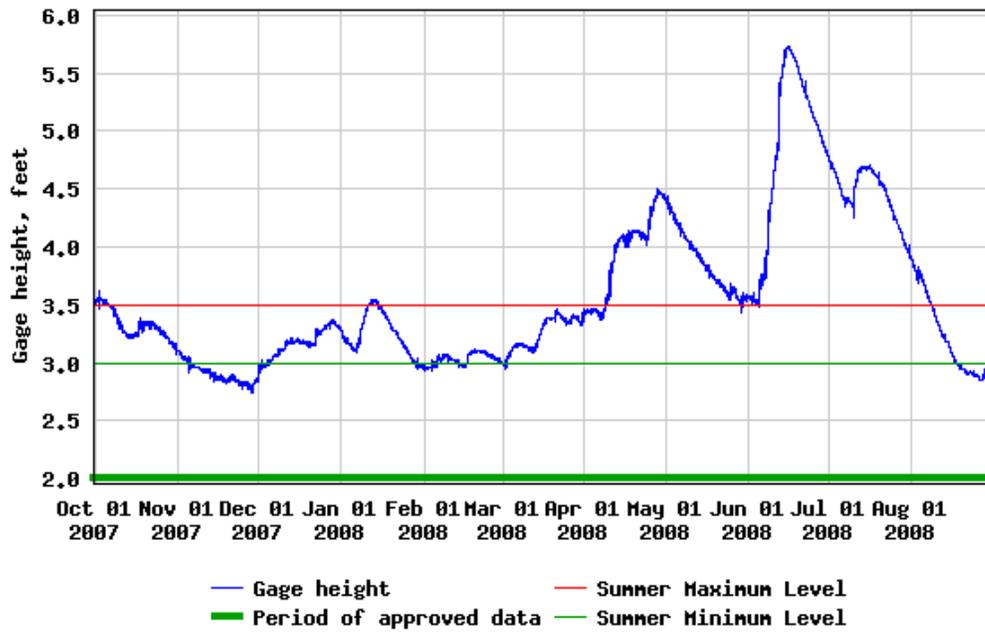
Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT



## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 4.85 08-27-2018 21:00 CDT

USGS 425715089164700 LAKE KEGONSA AT BARBER DRIVE NEAR STOUGHTON, WI



**From:** Shaun Abshere  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Yahara Flooding - Public Comment by Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition  
**Date:** Thursday, March 07, 2019 4:40:04 PM  
**Attachments:** Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition Online Petition Recommendations 3.5.2019 to Lake Levels Task Force.pdf  
Signatories to IFPC March 5 2019 Online Petition to Lake Levels Task Force.pdf  
Public Comment by Ist Fld Prevtn Coaltn - March 5 2019 - Lake Levels Task Force.pdf

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**March 7, 2019**

**Dane County Yahara Chain of Lakes Lake Levels Task Force,**

**On behalf of the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition,  
our constituent neighborhood associations and our neighbors,  
this is to submit to your collection of public comment  
the following documents:**

- a) An online petition which requested signed support  
circulated to residents of the Marquette, Tenney-Lapham and  
Schenck-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara neighborhood associations  
on the Isthmus of the City of Madison.**
- b) The public comments based on the online petition  
delivered orally to the Task Force on March 5 2019.**
- c) The roster of 227 signatories to the online petition  
received as of March 7, 2019.**

**Please consider carefully our recommendations.**

**On behalf of the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition  
and our more than 15,000 neighbors, thank you for your efforts  
to help all Dane County citizens -- and all watershed dwellers --  
now and into our future.**

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shaun abshere | 

## Recommendations to Dane County Yahara Chain of Lakes Lake Levels Task Force

Submitted By: Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition

Supported By: Marquette Neighborhood Association, Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association, SASY Neighborhood Association

March 5, 2019

Dear members of the Dane County Yahara Chain of Lakes Lake Levels Task Force,

Earlier this year, concerned neighbors and home owners from MNA, Tenny-Lapham, and SASY created a working group to better organize neighbor efforts around the issue of flooding. We came together to continue the flood education outreach and advocacy that our isthmus neighborhood associations organized in Fall 2018. We've been attending the Yahara Chain of Lakes - Lake Levels Task Force meetings and have been working with experts on the issue of flood prevention and mitigation.

We appreciate the work of this task force and urge your support for Dane County Board policies and actions that prevent flooding in the future and improve the resiliency and health of our Yahara Lakes Watershed. As citizens of the City of Madison, we also expect the City to collaborate with the County by taking both immediate and long-term actions that address flood risk on the Isthmus.

To these ends, we recommend the following combination of initiatives for your consideration; this is not a priority list or a sequence of steps but rather a list of what should be done simultaneously when feasible:

1. **Policy Timelines.** Dane County should adopt a long-term watershed-wide approach to managing the Yahara Chain of Lakes and make chain-of-lakes-specific policies that are targeted for implementation and assessment within 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and 30 years.
2. **Oversight.** The Dane County Lakes and Watersheds Commission should collaborate with the Dane County Board's Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to oversee and assess the effectiveness of County policies for short- and long-term flood risk reduction and improved resiliency throughout the Yahara Chain of Lakes watershed.
3. **Dredging.** With the cooperation of local governments, Dane County should dredge soon and as needed into the future the Yahara River from Lake Monona to the Stoughton Dam.

With the cooperation of the City of Madison, dredge soon and as needed into the future the Yahara River from Lake Mendota to Lake Monona.

All such dredging should be limited to restoring the natural depth of these channels.

4. **Lake Levels.** Dane County in consultation with the City of Madison and other municipalities in the Yahara Chain of Lakes should promptly petition the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to initiate the official process to review and revise its Lake Levels Orders for the

Yahara Chain of Lakes with the intent of reducing lake levels incrementally over the next 30 years to achieve increased storage capacity, reduce flood risk and increase watershed resiliency to flooding. This reduction also will enhance habitats for fish, wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic plants within the Yahara Chain of Lakes.

Recognizing that such a review of Lake Level Orders will take time, until the DNR modifies its Lake Level orders for the Yahara Chain of Lakes, and in keeping with Dane County Board Resolution 227-2018 now in force, Dane County should suspend the target ranges for lake levels established by the Dane County Lake Level Management Guide for the Yahara Chain of Lakes and instead continue the Res-227-2018 directive that:

“Dane County will continue to implement any tools that may be available to lower lake levels to DNR designated minimum levels as soon as possible and work to maintain lakes at that level...to the extent that managing any given lake will not create flooding on other lakes or other unintended consequences.”

5. **Isthmus Stormwater Diversion.** Dane County in partnership with residents of Madison’s Isthmus neighborhoods should request that the City of Madison take immediate steps in 2019 to reduce stormwater drain backups and to assess alternatives for redirecting stormwater outflows elsewhere to slow the entry of stormwater into the Yahara Chain of Lakes.
6. **Dane County & City of Madison Stormwater Regulation.** Dane County should adopt, implement and enforce the policy recommendations of the 2017 Joint Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee.

Dane County in partnership with residents of Madison’s Isthmus neighborhoods should request that the City of Madison adopt, implement and enforce immediately within its boundaries the same stormwater policy recommendations.

Dane County should act jointly with county municipalities to seek exemption from state stormwater control legislation (Act 243) that prohibits flood-prone areas such as the Yahara Lakes Watershed from adopting stricter stormwater regulations which would increase water infiltration and reduce downstream flooding and property damage.

7. **Wetlands.** Dane County should promote and include significant wetlands restoration and preservation throughout the Yahara Lakes Watershed in annual work-planning by the County and other state, local and non-profit partners.
8. **Aquatic Plant Harvesting.** Dane County should continue early, vigilant and ecologically-sound aquatic plant harvesting to ensure that water flows through the Yahara Chain of Lakes have optimal velocity throughout the ice-free season.

We will continue to follow the work of the task force and to advocate with Dane County and the City of Madison. On behalf of the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition and our neighbors, thank you again for your efforts on behalf of all Dane County citizens and watershed dwellers.

Kind Regards,  
Shaun Abshere  
Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition

Lynn Lee, President  
Marquette Neighborhood Association

Patty Prime, President  
Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association

Brad Hinkfuss, President  
SASY Neighborhood Association

First Name and Last Name	Street Address, City, Zip	Specific message or statement you'd like to provide (optional)
Jennifer Conrad	[REDACTED]	As a Madison resident who lived a block from the Yahara until a few months ago, I have a lot of concern for how the lakes are managed--and the possibility for catastrophic flooding like we experienced last summer/fall.
Jeff Spitzer-Resnick	[REDACTED]	As an isthmus resident and member of the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition, I wholeheartedly support this petition.
Anita Weier	[REDACTED]	As climate change produces more extreme weather events, Dane County and Wisconsin must manage lake levels at minimum levels to prevent flooding.
Brian Lavendel	[REDACTED]	Climate change has arrived to Wisconsin. And the Yahara chain of lakes is extremely vulnerable. We need to move on this sooner than we realize.
Donna Magdalena	[REDACTED]	Climate change is just getting started. We haven't seen anything yet compared to what's coming. Already we're getting swamped, quite literally.
DR NARESH K CHAWLA		good points
Timothy Sanders	[REDACTED]	Help us keep Madison safe and dry!
James Campbell	[REDACTED]	I agree with Yogesh's statement that we should look at lowering Mendota a modest amount together with increasing the flow downstream through weed cutting and dredging. This will allow Mendota to be used as a buffer to hold water during a large rain event and release it slowly afterwards.
Gay Davidson-Zielske	[REDACTED]	I attended the first of these meetings just after the disastrous most recent floods and was so impressed with how blessed we are with diligent and well-informed citizens who went right to work solving these problems. heart-felt thanks to all of you.
Michael Gay	[REDACTED]	I have houses in SASY, Sunset Village and Crestwood that were all flooded and hope other neighborhoods outside the Isthmus adopt many of these recommendations
Matthew Mitnick	[REDACTED]	I have read through the recommendations and fully support them. It is critical to protect our region of the Yahara Watershed. Increased river levels have eroded the soil, damaging habitat and homes near the waterways. It is vital to promote proper leaf removal to prevent phosphorus from leaking into our lakes, stormwater diversion, and minimizing the affects of flooding.
Robert Newlin	[REDACTED]	I lived on the isthmus for 12 years and still work there, this needs to be dealt with the current situation and approach is untenable and unsustainable. This problem will only get worse in the coming years.
Ellen Zweibel	[REDACTED]	I particularly urge wetland restoration and preservation and natural other forms of natural mitigation that take advantage of the large watershed of the Yahara, also steps to minimize toxic runoff.
Robert Baggot	[REDACTED]	I signed
Karen Matteoni	[REDACTED]	I support all of the recommendations. I would further recommend that there is regular communication with the public on current concerns as well as long range plans.
Dayna Long	[REDACTED]	I support all of these measures and would also urge the City of Madison to re-evaluate it's parking ticket policies during floods that force the city to eliminate parking on streets like Williamson to allow for better traffic flow through the Isthmus. While I agree that we should be moving away from free street parking and toward a car-light city, I was appalled to see parking enforcement roaming side streets during last fall's flood to issue tickets for street sweeping-related parking infractions one week after telling residents they would not enforce these rules, without notifying residents that they WOULD be enforced during an additional week of keeping Willy closed. This is blatant profiteering. A commitment to a greener city must also be included in our flood prevention efforts, but NOT solely at the expense of folks who don't own a driveway, particularly while the owners of big boats on nearby lakes (whose interests exacerbated the flooding) didn't pay a dime.
Celeste Anton	[REDACTED]	I support these recommendations.
Karen Solheim	[REDACTED]	I support this petition!
Brian P Roessler	[REDACTED]	I support this petition..
Douglas Alexander	[REDACTED]	I'll help with the dredging!
Stephen Montagna	[REDACTED]	I'm thankful to my neighbors and the civil servants who have taken the lead on this; as a long-time (23+ yrs) renter on the edge of the isthmus, I'm very invested in the long-term management of our waterways which focuses on reducing events such as that which we suffered last year.
Kelly Kearns	[REDACTED]	Increased capacity for on-site rain infiltration and retention should also be addressed. This includes shoreline plantings, rain garden creation on private and public lands (including terraces and road medians), permeable paving, wetland restoration and other features that can be required in new developments and publicly funded projects.
debra flynn	[REDACTED]	Keep Lake Mendota level much lower; 2 feet or more to start
Leigh Mollenhoff	[REDACTED]	Lake levels absolutely need to be lowered and Mendota should be lowered at least a foot. It is almost 10,000 acres and can hold a tremendous amount of water before it dumps into Tenny and Lake Monona. Dredging and pumping need to be considered. Perhaps lake property owners and golf courses should be encouraged to water with lake water instead of municipal water.

First Name and Last Name	Street Address, City, Zip	Specific message or statement you'd like to provide (optional)
Vince Torgerson	[REDACTED]	Lower the lake levels by dredging soon.
Thomas Solheim	[REDACTED]	Managing aggressively to seasonal minimums is an absolute immediate action step.
Christine Verdico	[REDACTED]	Maybe create a plan for people displaced by flooding
Jack Kear	[REDACTED]	Please defend Madisonians at risk of losing everything the next time there is flooding.
Erin Way	[REDACTED]	Please take action! Last summer we knew so many people who suffered losses greater than ours from the flooding. I spent many sleepless nights watching the water fill up the intersections and get closer my home. Knowing that there are things we can do to prevent the damage of last year means we need to act now. Thank you neighbors who worked on these recommendations.
Kate Heiber-Cobb	[REDACTED]	Restoration of wetlands and support of rain gardens that are multi-functional on all size properties is crucial.
Sandra Ward	[REDACTED]	Thank you for the outstanding work that went into creating this petition.
Rebecca Cuningham	[REDACTED]	Thanks to the committee who crafted this petition. Great work to protect our neighborhoods and the Madison park system from flooding.
Pacia Harper	[REDACTED]	The 2018 flooding caused significant economic damage, as we all know. I knew a housebound old man who was actually afraid for his life, because for a while i seemed possible that the Tenney Dam would breach and destroy his home. (A dam breach in his hometown had killed several people in his childhood, so this was not an unreasonable fear.)
Mary R Zillman	[REDACTED]	The immediate and vital part is to manage the lake levels and suspend target ranges previously used. It is also vital for stormwater diversion, saving our wetlands around the lakes and dredging.
Brad Hinkfuss	[REDACTED]	The importance of these flood prevention recommendations should not be underrated, with so few months since the flood waters receded. The time for informed and assertive preventative action is now. I offer my full support for this slate of recommendations. Furthermore, as set forth in other correspondence, I also speak for the Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara (SASY) Neighborhood Association in support of these recommendations. As an Isthmus neighborhood in the eye of the likely flood zone, we see this as a very compelling and emergent issue.
Justin Beck	[REDACTED]	These are super important issues for the long term benefit for ALL users of our lakes.
Eric Grodsky	[REDACTED]	These some like very reasonable, common sense steps we need to take.
Sandra Solheim	[REDACTED]	We can no longer let lake levels get above the summer maximum year after year!
Stephen Vanko	[REDACTED]	We decided to forgo 2 trips that were planned for about a year and stay home so we could keep a vigilant watch on our sump pump. We also decided to buy flood insurance at around \$500 per year. Sounds like something needs to be done sooner than later.
Beth Boeing	[REDACTED]	We don't want to ever be threatened with flooding, like we experienced during 2018! We shouldn't ever have our homes threatened because the water level needs to be high enough to not scrape the hulls on big boats!
Lynne MacAdam	[REDACTED]	We live half a block from the intersection of First and Pennsylvania. Our health and economic stability, and those of all those in the flood prone isthmus, count on a proactive, sensible, future thinking approach to flood mitigation. This issue will likely only be more pressing as time goes on. Please. Do. Something. Now.
Peter Taglia	[REDACTED]	We must incorporate as much infiltration as possible in all our infrastructure work in the Yahara Lake watershed, including rural, suburban and Urban areas.
Michael Vickerman	[REDACTED]	Wetlands restoration includes depaving derelict properties that were functioning wetlands prior to being paved over.
Rae Kaiser	[REDACTED]	Will it be possible to do something for Spring? We had water in our basement for 2 months last year. I really don't want to start out Spring with problems.
Aaron Schultz	[REDACTED]	
Alena Holmes	[REDACTED]	
Ali Muldrow	[REDACTED]	
Alyssa Braun	[REDACTED]	
Amanda White	[REDACTED]	
Amie Hoag	[REDACTED]	
Amy Lambright Murphy	[REDACTED]	
Amy Mager	[REDACTED]	
Andrew Jones	[REDACTED]	
Andy Keller	[REDACTED]	
Anita Krasno	[REDACTED]	
Anjali Bhasin	[REDACTED]	
Anna Wendland	[REDACTED]	
Bacsi	[REDACTED]	
Bill Parenteau	[REDACTED]	
Bradley Grochocinski	[REDACTED]	
Burke O'Neal	[REDACTED]	
Carl Ham	[REDACTED]	

First Name and Last Name	Street Address, City, Zip	Specific message or statement you'd like to provide (optional)
Caroline Hoffman and Bob Kann	[REDACTED]	
Carrie Sachse	[REDACTED]	
Cathy Cornell	[REDACTED]	
Cathy Loeb	[REDACTED]	
Cheryl Balazs	[REDACTED]	
Chris Norris	[REDACTED]	
Christina Heaton	[REDACTED]	
Christine Knorr	[REDACTED]	
Christopher Lukas	[REDACTED]	
Clark Thompson	[REDACTED]	
Dana Grahler	[REDACTED]	
Darcy Haber	[REDACTED]	
David Ballmannngte	[REDACTED]	
David Griffeath	[REDACTED]	
David Mollenhoff	[REDACTED]	
Deanne Syverud	[REDACTED]	
Debbie Olin	[REDACTED]	
Dee Grimsrid	[REDACTED]	
Deven McGlenn	[REDACTED]	
Diane Farsetta	[REDACTED]	
Diane Krause-Stetson	[REDACTED]	
Diane Scherschel	[REDACTED]	
Donovan	[REDACTED]	
Duane Hansen	[REDACTED]	
Dylan Drobny	[REDACTED]	
Eileen McGlynn	[REDACTED]	
Elizabeth Nord	[REDACTED]	
Elizabeth Thompson	[REDACTED]	
Ellen Ermer	[REDACTED]	
Emily Baer	[REDACTED]	
Emily Hutchison	[REDACTED]	
Erin Hughes	[REDACTED]	
Erin Jonaitis	[REDACTED]	
George Hofheimer	[REDACTED]	
Grace Van Berkel	[REDACTED]	
Gretta Wing Miller	[REDACTED]	
Hannah Bauman	[REDACTED]	
Heather Driscoll	[REDACTED]	
Heidi Vargas	[REDACTED]	
Heidi Wegleitner	[REDACTED]	
Helene Androski	[REDACTED]	
Helga Meyer	[REDACTED]	
Iliana Wood	[REDACTED]	
Ingrid Dilley	[REDACTED]	
Jackie Kaplan	[REDACTED]	
Jaclyn Suska	[REDACTED]	
Jamie Campbell	[REDACTED]	
Jane Elmer	[REDACTED]	
Janet Anderson	[REDACTED]	
Janet Stockhausen	[REDACTED]	
Jatinder Cheema	[REDACTED]	
Jean Whitcomb	[REDACTED]	
Jeff Reinke and Karen Banaszak	[REDACTED]	
Jennie Maunnamalai	[REDACTED]	
Jennifer Gaber	[REDACTED]	
Jennifer Parker	[REDACTED]	
Jeremy Cesarec	[REDACTED]	
Jessica Becker	[REDACTED]	
Jessica Pritchard	[REDACTED]	
Jill Way	[REDACTED]	
Jim White	[REDACTED]	
Jini Kai	[REDACTED]	
Jo Garrett	[REDACTED]	
Joanne Pedder	[REDACTED]	
Jodi Vander Molen	[REDACTED]	

First Name and Last Name	Street Address, City, Zip	Specific message or statement you'd like to provide (optional)
Jody Derr	[REDACTED]	
Jonathan Flory	[REDACTED]	
Jonathan Senchyne	[REDACTED]	
Joseph Hoey	[REDACTED]	
Joy Zotalis	[REDACTED]	
Julie Bates	[REDACTED]	
Karen Craig	[REDACTED]	
Karen Lambricht	[REDACTED]	
Karla Handel	[REDACTED]	
Kate knudson	[REDACTED]	
Katelyn Hoffman	[REDACTED]	
Katherine Davey	[REDACTED]	
Katie McGlenn	[REDACTED]	
Kelly Sorensen	[REDACTED]	
Kevin Ryan	[REDACTED]	
Kim Hagerich	[REDACTED]	
Kristin Chambers	[REDACTED]	
Kristin Kanitz	[REDACTED]	
Kyle hanson	[REDACTED]	
Lance Lattimer	[REDACTED]	
Lara Kenny	[REDACTED]	
Larry Gray	[REDACTED]	
Larry Jensen	[REDACTED]	
Laura Lob	[REDACTED]	
Lauren Weeth-Feinstein	[REDACTED]	
Ledell Zellers	[REDACTED]	
Leonid Nenashev	[REDACTED]	
Liz Lauer	[REDACTED]	
Lois Keel	[REDACTED]	
Lori Wessel	[REDACTED]	
Lucas Zoet	[REDACTED]	
Lynn Lee	[REDACTED]	
Lynn Whitford	[REDACTED]	
Marcus Hawkins	[REDACTED]	
Marlisa Condon	[REDACTED]	
Marsha Cannon	[REDACTED]	
Mary (Gigi) Holland	[REDACTED]	
Mary Fiore	[REDACTED]	
Mary Jane Swanson	[REDACTED]	
Max Burke-Scoll	[REDACTED]	
Megan Syverson	[REDACTED]	
Melissa Minnig	[REDACTED]	
Michael Gerst	[REDACTED]	
Michael Jacob	[REDACTED]	
Michelle Schwarze	[REDACTED]	
Miriam Hall	[REDACTED]	
Mitchal McGrath	[REDACTED]	
Molly Ruder	[REDACTED]	
Monica Harkey	[REDACTED]	
Nancy Beck	[REDACTED]	
Nancy Westphal-Johnson	[REDACTED]	
Nathan Barnes	[REDACTED]	
Nicholas Crowley	[REDACTED]	
Nick Schroeder	[REDACTED]	
Pamela Moran	[REDACTED]	
Pat Kelly	[REDACTED]	
Patricia Vanderhoef	[REDACTED]	
Patrick Heck	[REDACTED]	
Patrick McDonnell	[REDACTED]	
Patty Prime	[REDACTED]	
Peggy Garberg	[REDACTED]	
Peggy Garties	[REDACTED]	
Peter Cannon	[REDACTED]	
Raechel Pundsack	[REDACTED]	
Ralph E. Johnson	[REDACTED]	

First Name and Last Name	Street Address, City, Zip	Specific message or statement you'd like to provide (optional)
Rebecca Gibson	[REDACTED]	
Rebecca Summer	[REDACTED]	
Renee Lauber	[REDACTED]	
Richard Kieler	[REDACTED]	
Richard Kilmer	[REDACTED]	
Riley Willman	[REDACTED]	
Robert Arnold	[REDACTED]	
Robert Schubert	[REDACTED]	
Rosa Garner	[REDACTED]	
Ruth Robarts	[REDACTED]	
Sandra Anible	[REDACTED]	
Sara Krauskopf	[REDACTED]	
Sarah Danforth	[REDACTED]	
Sarah Hinkley	[REDACTED]	
Schmitgen	[REDACTED]	
Shannon Sparks	[REDACTED]	
Shaun Abshere	[REDACTED]	
Sheila Thomson	[REDACTED]	
Stefanie Haima	[REDACTED]	
stephen leeds	[REDACTED]	
Steven and Jean Huxmann	[REDACTED]	
Steven Maerz	[REDACTED]	
Sue Breckenridge	[REDACTED]	
Susan Marcquenski	[REDACTED]	
Suzanne Keyes Rybeck	[REDACTED]	
Terri Wilson-Carman	[REDACTED]	
Thomas Armbrecht	[REDACTED]	
Thomas Wilson	[REDACTED]	
Tim Schimick	[REDACTED]	
Timothy Condon	[REDACTED]	
Tom Solheim	[REDACTED]	
Tony Van Berkel	[REDACTED]	
Torrin Bechtel	[REDACTED]	
Valerie Mellerop	[REDACTED]	
Yogesh Chawla	[REDACTED]	

**Recommendations to Dane County Yahara Chain of Lakes Lake Levels Task Force**  
(Delivered March 5, 2019)

I am Shaun Abshere and speak for the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition and our neighbors in the Marquette, Tenney-Lapham, and Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Associations. Some are present tonight and I ask them now to stand and be recognized.

We live on Madison's isthmus. Our neighborhood associations advocate for more than 15,000 people in more than 8,000 households. Our Coalition continues the flood education and advocacy that our associations began in Fall 2018.

We urge your support for County policies that will prevent flooding and improve the resiliency and health of our Yahara Chain of Lakes watershed. As citizens of Madison, we also expect the City to collaborate with the County to take immediate and long-term actions that address flood risks on the Isthmus.

We recommend a combination of initiatives; What follows is **not** a priority list or a sequence but **rather** what should be done **simultaneously** whenever feasible:

1. **Policy Timelines.** Dane County should adopt a **long-term** watershed-wide approach that implements and assesses policies **within and across** the next 1-, 3-, 5-, 10-, 20- and 30 years.

2. **Oversight.** To oversee and assess these Dane County policies, the Lakes and Watershed Commission should collaborate closely with the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

3. **Dredging.** To provide the best-possible water flow-rate through the Yahara Chain of Lakes and in cooperation with local governments, Dane County should dredge soon and **as needed into the future** the Yahara River from Lake Monona to the Stoughton Dam.

Cooperating with the City of Madison, dredge soon and **as needed into the future** the Yahara River from Lake Mendota to Lake Monona.

Limit all such dredging to restore the natural depth of these channels.

4.. **Lake Levels.** Cooperating with municipalities in the Yahara Chain of Lakes, Dane County should **promptly petition** the Wisconsin DNR to start the official process to revise its Lake Level Orders to **reduce lake levels incrementally** over the next 30 years to increase storage capacity, reduce flood risk and increase watershed resiliency to flooding. This reduction also will enhance habitats for fish, wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic plants.

Because such an official review will take time, **until** the DNR modifies its Lake Level

orders and per Dane County Board Resolution 227-2018 now in force, Dane County should **continue** the Resolution's directive to:

QUOTE "...lower lake levels to DNR-designated **minimum levels** as soon as possible and work to maintain lakes at that level...to the extent that managing any given lake will not create flooding on other lakes or other unintended consequences."UNQUOTE

**5. Isthmus Stormwater Diversion.** With the support of our Isthmus neighborhoods, Dane County should request that the City of Madison take immediate steps to reduce stormwater drain backups and to assess alternatives to redirect and reduce stormwater runoff into the Yahara Chain of Lakes.

**6. Stormwater Regulation.** Dane County should adopt and enforce the policy recommendations of the 2017 Joint Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee.

With the support of our Isthmus neighborhoods, Dane County should request that the City of Madison adopt and enforce immediately within City boundaries the Joint Stormwater policy recommendations.

Acting jointly with county municipalities and perhaps with other flood-prone regions in Wisconsin, Dane County should seek exemption from state stormwater control legislation (Wisconsin Act 243) that prohibits flood-prone areas such as our watershed

from enforcing strict stormwater regulations.

7. **Wetlands.** In annual work-planning by the County and its state, local and non-profit partners, Dane County should promote and include significant wetlands restoration and preservation throughout the Yahara Chain of Lakes watershed.

8. **Aquatic Plant Harvesting.** To provide the best-possible water flow-rate through the Yahara Chain of Lakes, Dane County should continue early, vigilant and ecologically-sound aquatic plant harvesting throughout the ice-free season.

In closing, we will continue to follow the work of the task force and to advocate with Dane County and the City of Madison.

On behalf of the Isthmus Flood Prevention Coalition and our more than 15,000 neighbors, thank you for your efforts to help all Dane County citizens -- and all watershed dwellers -- now and into our future.

**From:** Patty Hill  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Pumping Floodwaters Out of Lake Waubesa into Badfish Creek  
**Date:** Thursday, March 07, 2019 6:41:42 PM

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My name is Patricia Hill. I live at [REDACTED]. I have concerns and am not in favor of pumping floodwaters out of Lake Waubesa into Badfish Creek. I currently have one sump pump in my house, which at present, due to the high groundwater level, is currently pumping every two to three minutes, 24/7, 365 days, and I plan on putting in a second one in the Spring. Many of my neighbors are doing the same, adding additional pumps, which is costly. No additional floodwater needs to be pumped into this watershed, as everyone in the neighborhood is concerned about being flooded out as is.

Thanks For Your Consideration,  
Patricia Hill

**From:** [Ritt, Michele](#)  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Improved flow & better infiltration  
**Date:** Thursday, March 07, 2019 7:10:11 PM

---

Thank you, Grant.

Michele Ritt  
Dane County Supervisor  
District 18  
[ritt.michele@countyofdane.com](mailto:ritt.michele@countyofdane.com)  
(608) 335-6827

*Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee, Chair*  
*City County Homeless Issues Committee*  
*Dane County Food Council*  
*Dane County Food Council Food Waste Task Force*  
*Dane County Food Council Budget Sub Committee*  
*Dane County Tree Board*  
*Land Conservation Committee*

On Mar 6, 2019, at 16:22, "Flooding, Yahara" <[YaharaFlooding@countyofdane.com](mailto:YaharaFlooding@countyofdane.com)> wrote:

**From:** Grant Foster [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 05, 2019 3:39 PM  
**To:** Flooding, Yahara  
**Subject:** Improved flow & better infiltration

Good afternoon/evening Lake Level Task Force members:

I really appreciate the work of this group and for the work of the technical advisory group. I thought the report was very well organized, informative, and I generally support the recommendations. I do still have some questions about the impact to vegetation and would encourage you to look at that in more detail before final decisions are made.

I'd also ask that you recommend further study/remediation around the topic of stormwater management in the watershed, particularly in the developed urban areas of the county. While the focus of the technical report was primarily on managing expected inputs (big rain events) by increasing flow to avoid catastrophe, I think there's important work for us to do as a community around improving stormwater infiltration and retention to slow and reduce some of the input into the system as well. In addition to softening the impact of big rain events into the chain of lakes, it would also help to improve the actual quality of the water as well.

The City of Madison Stormwater Utility is investing significant dollars into studying and mitigating some of the most flash-flood prone areas of the city's west side this year, but I think we need to be looking at stormwater management as a county-wide issue. The closer the county works with and supports municipalities on these efforts, the better it will be for everyone in the county.

Thanks again for your work on this task force and please know you have my support on this important issue.

Grant Foster



**From:** Jack von Rutenberg  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Flooding comments and recommendations  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 8:25:50 AM  
**Attachments:** Dane County Flooding Comments.docx

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See attached for my comments regarding Dane County Flooding.

Jack von Rutenberg

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



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## Public Comments/Recommendations for the Task Force on Flooding

As a lifelong user of the Yahara Lakes, a member of Yahara Lakes Advisory Group (YLAG) 1 and YLAG 2, and an owner of water-related businesses, I offer these comments/recommendations:

1. Focus efforts on increasing flow out of the system as this seems to repeatedly arise as the best solution to control flooding. Increasing infiltration/reducing runoff is key as well.
2. If our multi-lake system has issues that prevent getting down to the existing lake level orders, simply setting a new lower standard for summer min./max. certainly won't make it happen. Only solutions that solve the system problems will get the levels consistently to our existing lake level orders, and if these solutions are enacted, there will be no need to lower the orders further anyway. From 5/3/18 onward this past Summer, Mendota was over the summer maximum. Let's not set a lake level we can't obtain, especially if trying to maintain it means sending more water downstream to make it happen.
3. During the public comment section of the 2/11/18 Task Force meeting, the first speaker was a gentleman from Lake Waubesa and he talked about losing much of his summer of using the lake in 2018. As an avid lake user, I certainly empathized with him. Upon further thought, I wondered what it would be like if people were to **forever** lose using their lake in the way they enjoyed it in the past. That would be the case if Mendota were lowered. The boat launches would be inadequate, the access to the only gas docks would be eliminated, access to the locks would be severely hindered, the protected harbor of the upper Yahara and its four marinas would be inaccessible, the Reynold's Avenue Neighborhood would see property value losses likely between 25-40%, and parts of the lakes would be inaccessible or be navigational hazards. People unfamiliar with the lakes envision lowering Mendota a slight inconvenience, requiring a waterfront property owner to only put out a few more pier sections, but upon closer examination, there is much more to it than that. In addition to a wonderful natural resource, the Madison lakes are a huge economic driver for the entire Dane County region, and lowering Mendota would have a tremendous negative economic impact on the entire region.
4. Also during the meeting on 2/11/18, John Reimer commented that he was "trying to be fair" to all the lakes and I applaud him for managing the lakes as a system. He fairness comment was in context of trying to balance Mendota and Monona as to their lake levels in relation to the 100 year flood level. I think it is a good idea to be fair to all the lakes. However, the focus of discussions so far has revolved around lowering Mendota. I understand it is the biggest lake and has the locks, but if we are trying to be fair to all the lakes, why punish Mendota because it is first in the chain, is large, or has a lock? Why not lower all the lakes? (One might say we can't get the other lakes down to lower levels. I agree, see above for my reasoning on not lowering

the lake level orders for Mendota for this same reason.) If a lake is 1/3 the size of Mendota, maybe that means that lake should be lowered 3' to every 1' for Mendota so it is an equal contributor in solving the problem and so there is more holding space for the water from Mendota to go. Maybe Mendota should be kept higher than the current orders and Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa should be lowered significantly to increase flow rate from upstream? Truthfully, I am not advocating lowering any of the lakes, including Mendota. My point is, there are a lot of people wanting to lower Mendota without considering the impact of it, especially if it doesn't cripple the recreational use of their own lake or if they don't use the lake at all. No one wants flooding in Dane County. People may differ in their opinion on how best to solve the issue but we are all the same in that we want to avoid flooding or minimize the impacts of flooding if it does occur. The solution, however, should be win-win, not win-lose.

5. Look past the recency bias of high water levels. With the lake levels running consistently high over the past several years, it is easy to forget just how **low** the lake level orders for Mendota actually are. In fact, if Mendota had been at the summer minimum of 849.6' the last few years, the public may be asking for meetings to **raise** the water level. It is important for the public to realize when one speaks of lowering lake levels it is from a standard that is way below the water levels Mendota has experienced recently.
  
6. Act on the things that scientific data suggests will help the most and don't let the lake level debate get in the way taking action. Former Mayor Dave said it best in his 11/29/18 story in Isthmus:

“What does not seem useful is to reduce this debate to yet another us-versus-them, have-versus-have-nots, zero-sum argument between political tribes. There seems to be a half-dozen viable strategies to address the problem and among those only lake levels sparks a nasty local debate.”

Thank you for considering my comments and for all your efforts towards addressing the issue of flooding in Dane County.

Jack von Rutenberg

██████████  
████████████████████

**From:** Ron Shutvet  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#); [Reimer, John](#); [Erickson, Chuck](#); [Ripp, David](#); [Ritt, Michele](#); [Stubbs, Shelia](#); [Buckingham, Tanya](#); [Chawla, Yogesh](#); [rphillips@cityofmadison.com](mailto:rphillips@cityofmadison.com)  
**Subject:** Recommendations for better flood control on the Yahara River  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 9:34:39 AM  
**Attachments:** Recommendations for better flood control on the Yahara River.pdf

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I have attached a PDF document to this email with my recommendations for better flood control on the Yahara River. Please post this document on your website in its full PDF format with working links to images and video files on YouTube showing water conditions on the Yahara River at the Lake Kegonsa outlet on various days in 2018. This document can also be viewed as a Google Cloud document at the following link:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/15Aom\\_0jMuG5WRb-FU\\_f-PYZZvloFwJyH2Kt3Y6D9Rg/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15Aom_0jMuG5WRb-FU_f-PYZZvloFwJyH2Kt3Y6D9Rg/edit?usp=sharing)

The PDF document does not contain my full address so you do not have to redact anything in it.

My full address is:

Ron Shutvet



I hope that all members of the Yahara Chain of Lakes-Lake Levels Task Force read the document as I put a lot of time and effort into providing this information and recommendations for all of you.

I am a retired engineer who has lived in the Madison area my entire life. I spent a good part of my life working in the field of geotechnical engineering. My knowledge of the geology and hydrology of the Madison area is extensive. I was the foreman of a soil boring crew for nearly 20 years and personally drilled tens of thousands of soil borings in Dane County alone. I know the topography and geology of Dane County 3D and understand the hydrology of the Yahara River watershed more than most people do.

Ron Shutvet

## Recommendations for better flood control on the Yahara River

I start my recommendations at the Stoughton Millpond Dam and work my way upstream pointing out the major water flow pinch points. Downstream from this point the Yahara River has a steeper gradient that does not impede water flow to any degree during periods of high water flow down the river. Upstream from this location the river gradient is quite low all the way to Lake Monona. All the areas listed below are pinch points along this section of the Yahara River and cause water to backup upstream because water flow is being restricted at that location.

- Dane County should study the feasibility of reconstructing the Stoughton Millpond dam so that the water level and flow rate at the dam can be more precisely controlled. This dam should have the capability of maintaining the water level at or even below any authorized maximum level at all times. During periods of high flow rate the dam should be capable of reducing the water level at the dam lower than the authorized summer maximum level to help increase the river gradient and flow rate upstream from the dam.

There are [preliminary plans to create a whitewater kayaking area at the Stoughton Millpond](#). If this project moves forward steps should be taken to insure that the redesigned dam area can quickly react to river conditions and be capable of handling large water flow rates to reduce the potential of flooding upstream. The dam should have three automatic gates instead of just two to allow for better control of the millpond water level during flooding events. The gates should be capable of lowering the millpond water level to below the authorized summer maximum water level of 843.5 quickly if necessary to increase the river gradient upstream. I recommend that the millpond be lowered to 842.0 during severe flood events to increase the river gradient and flow rate as much as possible. The higher gradient during these flood events could serve to flush sediment downstream that has built up in the river channel between the millpond and Lake Kegonsa. This would be a more natural way to control sediment buildup in the river channel between the Stoughton Millpond and Lake Kegonsa and less expensive than dredging.

- The Yahara River between the Stoughton Millpond dam and the Lake Kegonsa lock and dam needs to be monitored more often to identify areas in need of dredging or mechanical weed harvesting. The County should work with the Wisconsin DNR to get rapid approval of dredging operations needed to improve water flow down the river.
- Dane County should work with the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad and State of Wisconsin to reconstruct the railroad bridge just west of the Lake Kegonsa lock and dam. This bridge was constructed with an opening that is too narrow and shallow and restricts the outflow of Lake Kegonsa during periods of high rainfall and rapid snowmelt. During the 2018 flooding this railroad bridge controlled the outflow of Lake Kegonsa. The dam and locks just downstream were fully open all this time. The water level drop at the railroad bridge was significantly greater than the water level drop at the dam during this entire period. The only controlling feature of the Yahara River outflow at this bridge is the Lake Kegonsa water level. The dam and locks would have been able to handle a larger flow of water but the relatively small openings between the bridge abutments are continually limiting the water flow at this pinch point.

[Railroad bridge at the Lake Kegonsa outlet on September 7, 2018, 11.19 AM](#)

September 7, 2018 is the approximate peak of flood water levels on Lakes Kegonsa, Waubesa, and Monona in 2018. The Lake Kegonsa water level reached 845.45 ft above sea level.

[Railroad bridge at the Lake Kegonsa outlet on October 21, 2018, 11:36 AM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Sunday, October 21, 2018, 11:37:02 AM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Sunday, October 21, 2018, 11:39:46 AM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Saturday, November 24, 2018, 12:18:30 PM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Saturday, November 24, 2018, 12:19:42 PM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Thursday, December 13, 2018, 3:59:52 PM](#)

[Video of Lake Kegonsa outlet area taken Thursday, December 13, 2018, 4:02:50 PM](#)

The Lake Kegonsa water level did not go below the authorized summer maximum water level of 843.5 ft above sea level until December 14, 2018 even though the Lake Kegonsa lock and dam was fully open during the entire duration of the flood event. If Dane County is required by law to keep the summer water level of Lake Kegonsa between 843.50 and 843.00, why is it that the railroad bridge is allowed to keep the water level higher during all flood events? This fact seems to defeat the purpose of having an authorized maximum summer water level. Why have an authorized maximum water level at all if there is no way to control it or even enforce it?

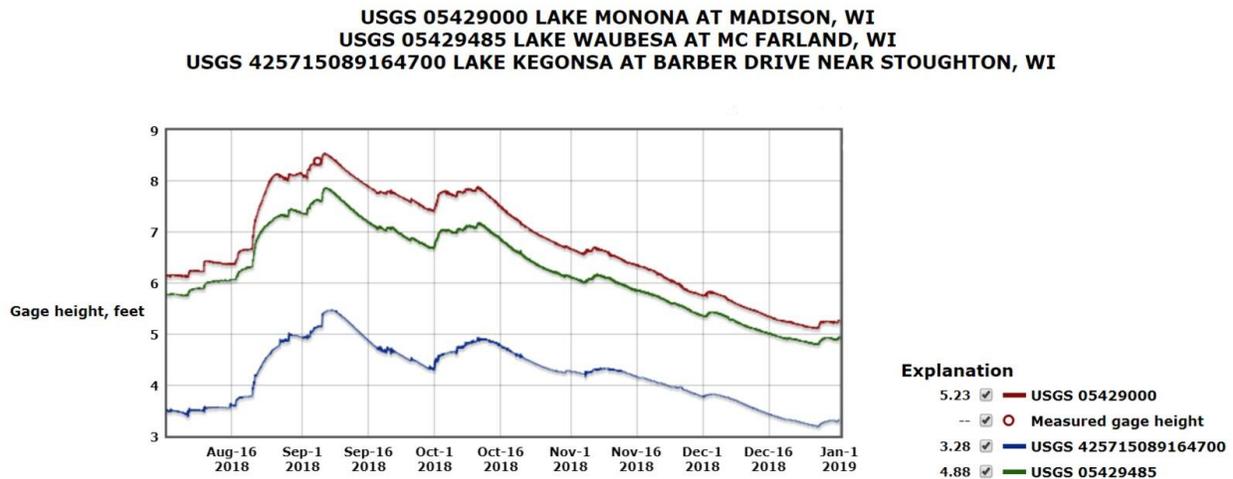
- In addition to lengthening the railroad bridge, the highway bridge at this location may also be a minor pinch point and should be studied to determine if it too should be lengthened or the river bottom beneath it deepened by dredging periodically as needed.
- [Lake Kegonsa](#) in the vicinity of the railroad bridge is quite shallow with a depth of about 3 feet. Consider dredging a deeper channel in the lake bottom where it approaches the railroad bridge. With a new, wider and deeper opening under a new railroad bridge the deeper channel will help increase the outflow of Lake Kegonsa. Strong prevailing westerly winds carry sand along the lake shoreline and continually move this sand towards the railroad bridge. Annual or biannual dredging of the lake bottom in this area may be necessary to continue to optimize lake outflow at the railroad bridge.
- Dredge the Yahara River channel between Lake Kegonsa and Lake Waubesa as needed to improve water flow rates on this section of the river. Aquatic weeds in this area of the river also restrict water flow during the summer unless the weeds are mechanically harvested when necessary. Consider creating a new river overflow channel near the location of the Native American fish weir that during periods of high water would divert a portion of the flood stage waters around the fish weir location.
- The railroad bridge that crosses the Yahara River between Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa also needs to be reconstructed. Larger openings are needed between the abutments. The river channel in this area connecting the two lakes is also very shallow and needs to be dredged out and deepened to allow higher water flow rates out of Upper

Mud Lake. During the peak of the 2018 flooding the water flow in this area looked more like a river with standing waves in the water flow through this area.

- Dredge the Yahara River channel where needed between Upper Mud Lake and the outlet of Lake Monona. Aquatic weeds in this area also restrict water flow during the summer unless the weeds are mechanically harvested when necessary.

There you have it. These are the most necessary steps to increase water flow rate through the Yahara chain of lakes during and after heavy rain events in the Yahara River watershed. I believe that the pinch points at the two railroad bridges described above are the most serious pinch points as they both cause standing waves to form on the water surface downstream from each bridge. This indicates that the bridge openings are limiting the water flow rate and water is backing up upstream from the bridges.

The graph below shows why reconstruction of the railroad bridge at the Lake Kegonsa outlet is so important.



At all times the water level of Lake Kegonsa is the main controlling factor influencing the water levels in the river upstream and in Lakes Waubesa and Monona. The water levels of Lakes Waubesa and Monona mirror the water level of Lake Kegonsa. Since the water level of Lake Kegonsa is being controlled by the volume of water that can flow under the railroad bridge, replacing the bridge with a longer bridge and making sure the channel in this area is as deep enough is obviously the most effective way to better control the water levels in Lakes Kegonsa, Waubesa, and Monona. With the Lake Kegonsa lock and dam fully open, the level of Lake Kegonsa can be controlled by wise operation of the Stoughton millpond dam spillway gates during periods of high water flow rates on the Yahara River.

This railroad corridor is owned by the State of Wisconsin and maintained by the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad. Because these railroad bridges severely restrict the natural flow of water and cause water levels to rise upstream from each location they need to be replaced with longer bridges capable of handling high water flow rates without causing the water level to rise significantly. Both of these sections of the rail corridor cross wide historical flood plains. The bridges were inadequately designed for the water flow rates the Yahara River experiences during periods of heavy rains. The money needed to fix these major pinch points would be far less than the millions of dollars in damages caused by the 2018 flooding events.

I have talked with city and county staff regarding these two bridges in the past and always get the same answer. "We have asked the railroad to reconstruct these bridges but the state and federal governments let the railroad do what it wants. We can't make them reconstruct these bridges if the railroad doesn't want to do it." My comeback for this stance is that the State of Wisconsin owns the rail corridor and sets rules for the use and maintenance of it. If the general public is being repetitively harmed by the repeated flooding of the Yahara River caused partially by the inadequate design of these railroad bridges, then the state should require that the bridges be reconstructed to handle 100 year plus flood water flow rates without causing significant raising of the water level upstream from each bridge location.

Ron Shutvet  
Madison WI

**From:** Susan Marcquenski  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** additional comments for the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 11:13:23 AM  
**Attachments:** Part 2 Marcquenski comments to the Lake Levels Task Force 8 March 2019.pdf

---

Hello again, Dane County,

I provided comments on flood prevention to the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force on March 3 and have attached additional thoughts in a pdf file after attending the 5 March public hearing.

Thank you again for opening this process to the public. Best wishes to All,

Sue Marcquenski

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

8 March 2019

Recommendations to the Yahara Chain of Lakes-Lake Levels Task Force Regarding Flood Prevention

Susan Marcquenski

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I previously submitted comments to the Yahara Chain of Lakes-Lake Levels Task Force on 3 March. In those comments, I did not address re-routing/pumping water because I do not support the idea. Until listening to testimony at the 5 March public hearing, I had not realized the importance of commenting on what **not** to do to reduce the risk of future flooding in Dane County.

I share the rationale of those who spoke against the pipeline option at the 5 March hearing, especially routing it through or adjacent to the Waubesa wetlands. They spoke eloquently and thoroughly on the importance of the quality of, and ecological services the wetlands provide and the significance the wetlands have to the Town of Dunn residents and many others who do not live in the township.

In trying to understand what would really happen if a pipeline was built at all (even if a route could be established), the following came to mind:

### 1. **Let's do some math and the importance of controlling stormwater runoff**

To reduce flooding per the assumptions of 2018 data in the INFOS modelling, 95,000 ac-feet of water would need to be discharged through a pipeline at a flow rate of 400 cfs. I did not find the timeframe needed to accomplish this in the Technical Report, so just used some simple math to calculate the time needed. I also noted that 400 cfs is about the typical flow rate discharged through the Babcock dam, based on the USGS gauging station data. A pipeline would remove about the same amount of water per day as the typical natural flow through the entire Yahara system, via a 60-inch pipe.

My math converted ac-feet to cubic feet ( $95,000 \text{ ac-feet} \times 43,560 \text{ cu ft/ac-foot} = 4,138,200,000 \text{ cu ft}$ ). Dividing the cu ft by the flow rate of 400 cfs through the pipeline is the number of seconds needed to move that amount of water: 10,345,500 seconds. Dividing by 60 seconds/minute, 60 minutes/hour and 24 hours/day, I calculated it would take **120 days of pumping 24 hours a day** to discharge 95,000 ac-feet of water.

The report by the Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee (page 5) stated that about **half** of the increased streamflow in the Yahara River observed since 1970 is from runoff from urban areas. This statement referred to Figure 3 in Appendix II, but appendices were not included in the handout provided at the Lake Levels Task Force meetings. This math exercise and the data from the Stormwater Report underscore the significance of controlling stormwater entry into the Yahara system and including it in flood prevention strategies and plans.

2. The Technical Work Group on Yahara Chain of Lakes Flooding (page 37) included a bulleted comment that further analysis and assessment are necessary regarding the impact pumped water would have on downstream flooding. This is essential, and as another speaker at the hearing mentioned, we need to take responsibility for our problems and not pass them on to downstream communities. They have their own problems to solve.

One bullet that should have been included on page 37 is that further study, analysis and assessment are necessary regarding the impact of releasing this much pumped water on the downstream ecology of Badfish Creek, the Yahara and Rock Rivers. The consequences of a sustained discharge of an additional 400 cfs for four months are unknown.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute comments. I wish you all the best.

**From:** Susan Marcquenski  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [Pamela Porter](#); [Chawla, Yogesh](#)  
**Subject:** Marcquenski additional comments for the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 12:57:35 PM  
**Attachments:** Part 2 Marcquenski comments to the Lake Levels Task Force 8 March 2019.pdf

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Hello Dane County,

Just double checking that you received my comments from earlier today- After sending a first set of comments on 3 March, I received an immediate receipt of email reply, and so far (since 10:35 am below) I have not received a receipt for additional comments sent today. Am hoping that you have received them! Have copied Pam Porter and Yogesh Chawla just in case there has been a mix up.

Thanks again for your all efforts to include the public on this issue, especially making the audio and video recordings.

Sue Marcquenski

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Susan Marcquenski [REDACTED]  
**To:** Yahara Flooding <yaharaflooding@countyofdane.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 8, 2019, 11:10:35 AM CST  
**Subject:** additional comments for the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force

Hello again, Dane County,

I provided comments on flood prevention to the Yahara Lake Levels Task Force on March 3 and have attached additional thoughts in a pdf file after attending the 5 March public hearing.

Thank you again for opening this process to the public. Best wishes to All,

Sue Marcquenski  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

8 March 2019

Recommendations to the Yahara Chain of Lakes-Lake Levels Task Force Regarding Flood Prevention

Susan Marcquenski

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I previously submitted comments to the Yahara Chain of Lakes-Lake Levels Task Force on 3 March. In those comments, I did not address re-routing/pumping water because I do not support the idea. Until listening to testimony at the 5 March public hearing, I had not realized the importance of commenting on what **not** to do to reduce the risk of future flooding in Dane County.

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One bullet that should have been included on page 37 is that further study, analysis and assessment are necessary regarding the impact of releasing this much pumped water on the downstream ecology of Badfish Creek, the Yahara and Rock Rivers. The consequences of a sustained discharge of an additional 400 cfs for four months are unknown.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute comments. I wish you all the best.

**From:** Jon Becker  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [NATTRAILS@aol.com](mailto:NATTRAILS@aol.com); [Terrell, C - forward](#); [Jonbecker@aol.com](mailto:Jonbecker@aol.com)  
**Subject:** CRANES comments for YCOLTF  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 2:55:46 PM  
**Attachments:** CRANES-YCOLTF-Letter-2019-03-08.pdf

---

Hello, Please find attached, as PDF. Best, Jon

**Jon Becker** [REDACTED]  
**Vice-President, Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability** [REDACTED] **Madison,**  
**WI** [REDACTED]

# CRANES

## Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability

*On behalf of its member organizations and individuals, advocating collaboratively for the environment of the South Central Wisconsin region (eight counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk) toward a high quality of life; an ecologically sustainable and just culture; and, the celebration of the beauty of this place, both natural and built.*

### VISION

*The Capital area's environment, including water, land, and air resources, will be conserved or restored to ensure the region's quality of life and the beauty of this special place, for all who live or visit here, now and in the future.*

### PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

*Earth/Art® Resources  
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy  
League of Women Voters ~ Dane County  
Madison Area Bus Advocates  
Madison Audubon Society  
Sierra Club ~ Four Lakes Group  
Western Dane Coalition for Smart Growth & Environment  
West Waubesa Preservation Coalition*

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**CRANES**  
**POB 3413**  
**MADISON, WI 53704**

608.807.0887 tel  
CRANESINC.ORG  
INFO@CRANESINC.ORG

A Wisconsin Non-Profit [EIN 26-4056421]

Fiscal Agent:  
Madison Area Bus Advocates  
(a tax-exempt 501(c)3 non-profit)  
BusAdvocates.org

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

TO: Yahara Chain of Lakes Task Force (YOLCTF)  
FROM: Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability (CRANES)  
DATE: 8 March 2019  
SUBJECT: Yahara Watershed Flooding/Natural Lake Levels

Since 2008, CRANES has been the leading proponent in Dane County for ending urban sprawl, for protecting or restoring wetlands, and for preventing development of closed basins.

CRANES has also been the leading proponent for requiring stormwater stay-on "Ultimate Management Practices" (100% stay-on, benchmarked to natural conditions) for both rural and urban (refill/infill) areas. The recommendations of the Stormwater Technical Advisory Group, a joint effort of the county's Lakes & Watershed Commission (LWC) and the Capital Region Planning Commission (CARPC), were grounded in advocacy in 2012 by CRANES to the Fitchburg/EPA catalytic project: <http://cranesinc.org/presentations/NaturalStormwaterManagement.pdf>.

CRANES has been the leading advocate for reducing nutrient and sediment runoff to natural/historical levels, benchmarked to pre-Original Survey (1830s) conditions. This goal is estimated to require four times the reduction in nutrients/sediments necessary to meet the requirements of the WDNR's lake impairment orders. Given that the 1970 Clean Water Act envisioned the end of surface water pollution by 1985– a full generation ago– and the increased threats to our surface waters, CRANES holds that there should be an end to non-natural runoff by 2030 or sooner, by whatever means necessary.

CRANES is also the leading proponent for re-establishing the natural hydrology of the Yahara lakes, including their natural levels/ranges and seasonal/historical fluctuations, using an adaptive management approach. Especially in the environs of the artificially high (3-8 feet) Lake Mendota, re-establishing natural hydrology is necessary for restoration of shoreline and wetland habitat, as well as the sustainability of well-intentioned efforts like Suck the Muck.

CRANES will continue advocacy for the above goals, which we regard as fundamentally interconnected, and essential to the ecological integrity and environmental sustainability of the Yahara watershed.

Regarding short-term recommendations by the YCOLTF to the county board and others, CRANES comments follow below.

Sincerely,



Gary Werner  
President

## CRANES COMMENTS FOR YCOLTF

### SHORT-TERM (Spring/Summer 2019)

- 1) Confirm that county staff will aim to manage the Yahara lakes at the Summer Minimums of the 1979 WDNR Lake Orders, as directed in late 2018 by the county board and executive.
- 2) Restrict in-river plant harvesting to removal of un-natural volumes of vegetation, while taking into account both ahistorical nutrient levels and the impacts of climate disruption (e.g., water temperature changes), and while protecting the resiliency of native plant communities. Acquire harvesting platforms with minimal draft requirements, making it unnecessary to hold lake levels high just to harvest plants in the downstream reaches of the Yahara River.
- 3) Restrict dredging to removal of un-natural accumulations of sediments, and only within the natural bounds of the riverbed (which likely can be established using LIDAR). Do not dredge the historically and culturally significant fish weir, the existence of which likely confirms that this portion of the Yahara River is at or near natural levels.
- 4) Since soil boring will be required for analysis of dredging, include boring necessary to establish natural lake levels and their historic seasonal ranges and long-term fluctuations. Lake Wingra's natural level/range/fluctuation should also be established. If soil boring (or use of historical boring logs or warehoused cores) for this purpose proves infeasible, undertake historical research (e.g., there is a pre-Tenney Dam (i.e., pre-1849) report that Lake Mendota rose two feet during the spring melt; Aldo Leopold wrote that Lake Wingra used to be higher; etc.)
- 5) Eschew artificial pumping solutions for the present. Direct all public resources toward upstream mitigation efforts that produce multiple benefits, on a watershed basis.
- 6) Publish on the YCOLTF website all science-based information used to establish the 1979 WDNR Lake Orders.
- 7) Publish on the YCOLTF website the PhD dissertation authored by Lakes and Watershed Department staff regarding the Yahara river system management, including an analysis of flood damage forecasts. This dissertation, which used public data, has been sequestered while awaiting publication in academic journals.
- 8) Advise the county to use emergency powers as necessary to lower Lake Mendota by 24" as soon as possible, and when safe for downstream communities. The aim should be to provide flood storage capacity toward mitigating insofar as possible the lake-related flooding from at least one rainbomb or chained storm, two if possible, for delayed release when conditions allow. Adjust the timing and extent of the Winter level accordingly, to reduce insofar as possible the harm currently being done to wetland floras and fauna by the ill-timed and large lake level Winter reductions mandated under the WDNR 1979 Lake Orders.

### LONG-TERM

- 1) Working with other municipalities, apply to the WDNR to revise the lake orders to reflect science- or science/evidence-based natural levels/ranges/fluctuations. CRANES is convinced that doing so will result in the best possible outcome: ecological (including habitat, fauna and flora diversity, fishery productivity, spawning, etc.), social/equity (including accessibility and public safety), cultural/recreational (including boating), and economic; natural levels/ranges/fluctuations will also enhance the sustainability and resiliency of infrastructure, both public and private, over the long haul. After 2018, it should be clear to all that continuing with the practices and conditions of the past 170 years is not an option. Just as we changed sewerage practices in the late 1800s through the 1950 on the basis of new scientific and engineering knowledge, we should now change lake management practices on the basis of current ecological knowledge.
- 2) CRANES is open to community discussion of dredging current navigation passages on tributaries to Lake Mendota, to provide time for current businesses to adjust. CRANES supports retention of the current dam and locks at Tenney Park for public safety and risk management, while being open to community discussion of decommissioning some or all of the Yahara dams/locks in the future, for ecological reasons, as facilities age out, or as technology provides better options.
- 3) If the application for this lake order change is opposed in the courts or undermined in the state legislature, municipalities should proceed with their emergency powers.

**From:** Jon Becker  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** J Becker : citizen input for YCOLTF  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 3:30:59 PM  
**Attachments:** Protect Yahara Communities From Un-Natural Flooding Petition & Supporters.pdf

---

Hello,

Please find attached a PDF with results of an AUG-SEP 2018 petition relevant to the YCOLTF's charge from Dane county.

Best, Jon

[Jon Becker](#)

[REDACTED]

8 March 2019

Hello YCOLTF,

Please find below the results of an AUG-SEP 2018 petition drive.

Note that this petition garnered "likes" by almost 695 discrete individuals (the host petition service uses IP addresses to assure that responses are discrete).

The petition garnered 205 signatures. Some of the signatories wanted to remain "anonymous" (i.e., they chose an option that kept their name, street address, email address, and IP from public view on the petition webpage). The signatory list that follows is redacted accordingly. I have informed LWD staff that I'm willing to provide access to viewing of the full petition database, to establish the validity of the redacted version, provided that doing so doesn't make the data subject to open records requests.

The YCOLTF should be aware that there seems to be considerable public support for re-establishing the natural levels/ranges/fluctuations of the Yahara lakes. There is however also a widespread perception that this stance is opposed by county leadership and others, and fear of retaliation.

This fear may explain why 695 individuals liked this petition, while only 205 were willing to sign it, and while some of those signatories wanted their personal information kept private.

Best,  
Jon Becker  
POB 3292  
Madison, WI 53704

# Protect Yahara Communities From Un-Natural Flooding

Aug 27 2018 Jon Becker (/contact/author/95265)

Like 695 Share

205 Signatures



Sign the petition

Mr, Ms, Dr, etc

Jon

Becker

JonBecker@AOL.com

City or town

Street address

Zip code or post code

Hide my name from public

Keep me informed

GoPetition respects your privacy

(/page/privacy).

Sign this petition

## Target:

Dane County Board of Supervisors

## Region:

United States of America (/petition-campaigns/united-states-of-america)

## Website:

www.facebook.com (https://www.facebook.com/groups/1321685634538010/)

Climate disruption fueled weather recently caused a ~15" rainbomb to fall in Dane County west of Madison, more than ever before in Wisconsin's recorded history. Some of that unnaturally high rain event fell in the Yahara watershed and flowed into Lake Mendota, which has- in compliance with the WDNR's 1979 Lake Orders- been managed at a level, 5-8 feet above its natural elevation (benchmarked to the early 1830s, before the dam at Tenney Park was built). Furthermore, the rainbomb fell near a Lake Mendota being managed by Dane County such that its elevation was higher than the Maximum of the Summer Range of the 1979 Orders. Such exceedances have become more frequent on all four Yahara lakes, especially during the past 10 years, as climate disruption has accelerated, causing more frequent and intense storms.

A Lake Mendota managed at its natural level would provide much more capacity for stormwater run-off, better protecting surrounding communities, especially downstream areas like Madison's isthmus neighborhoods and Monona's shores, but also all surrounding communities. Better land and surface water management is also necessary, but will be insufficient so long as Lake Mendota is held at an un-natural high level.

## YAHARA WATERSHED FLOOD PROTECTION PETITION v.2018AUG27b

The signers of this petition request that Dane County supervisors, at their next board meeting, resolve that the county executive direct county staff to:

1) REIMBURSE COUNTY PROPERTY OWNERS: By 15 October 2018, design and implement a program to reimburse private property owners who are without flood insurance to compensate them for any losses suffered due to county management of the Yahara Lakes

such that levels- regularly across the past several decades, and during summer 2018- exceeded the Summer Range Maximum of the WDNR 1979 Lake Orders;

2) MAXIMIZE NEAR-TERM PUBLIC SAFETY: Manage the Yahara lakes at six inches below the Summer Range Minimum of the 1979 WDNR Lake Orders, as soon as conditions allow;

3) RESEARCH NATURAL LAKE LEVELS: Determine, by soil borings in undisturbed areas or other evidence-based means, the natural (benchmarked to pre-Original Survey or 1830) elevation, including average seasonal range, for each of the Yahara lakes and Lake Wingra, as soon as possible, and no later than 15 October 2018;

4) LOWER LAKE MENDOTA'S LEVEL: Lower Lake Mendota from its current unnatural high level (estimated to be 5-8' higher than before the Tenney dam was built in 1848) by three additional inches per year, beginning in autumn 2019, and take all other necessary action toward restoring Lake Mendota to its natural elevation and average natural seasonal range (adjusted for forecasted climate disruption), as soon as feasible, and no later than 2040 (i.e., in one generation);

5) ADJUST THE OTHER YAHARA AREA LAKE LEVELS AS NEEDED: Lower any other Yahara area lake that is determined to be unnaturally high, by at least one inch per year, beginning in autumn 2019, and take all other necessary action, toward restoring all these lake to their natural elevation and average natural seasonal range (adjusted for forecasted climate disruption), as soon as feasible, and no later than 2020;

6) SECURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE YAHARA WATERSHED: Lead intergovernmental action to, as soon as possible, and no later than 2050:

A) Re-wild the shoreline of each of the Yahara lakes and Lake Wingra, as well as the tributaries, so as to support environmental sustainability (estimated by lake researchers to be at least 75% of shoreline, preferably contiguous);

B) Restore lost natural wetlands (est. 50% of total 1830s wetland acreage) insofar as possible, and offset all remaining acres with new wetlands, as soon as feasible and no later than 2050;

C) Take all other actions necessary to restore the Yahara Watershed's water quality and hydrology to natural conditions; and

7) REAFFIRM COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION LEADERSHIP: Direct the county climate council to, by December 2018, conclude creation of a Trail Map (strategic action plan) for forthcoming all-sector, countywide, climate action, by backcasting from the evidence-based climate action Framework & Goals formally endorsed in 2013 by representatives of municipalities with over 70% of Dane County's population, including the county, and by over 30 other diverse community entities.

[Sign Petition](#) [Map \(/signature-map/protect-yahara-communities-from-un-natural-flooding.html\)](#) [Comments](#)

[Link \(/banners/protect-yahara-communities-from-un-natural-flooding.html\)](#) 12207 Views

The Protect Yahara Communities From Un-Natural Flooding petition to Dane County Board of Supervisors was written by Jon Becker and is in the category Environment (/petition-campaigns/environment) at GoPetition.

First name	Last name	City	Postcode	Date
Jon	Becker	Madison	53704	27-Aug-18
Jeff	Spitzer-Resnick	Madison	53703	27-Aug-18
Maria	Powell	Madison	53704	27-Aug-18
Kären	Miskimen	Madison	53704	27-Aug-18
Holly	Meyers	Madison	53704	27-Aug-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	27-Aug-18
K	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	27-Aug-18
Jesse	Pycha-Holst	Madison	53703	27-Aug-18
D	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53713	28-Aug-18
Rebecca	de Waart	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Jesse	Lyne	Madison	53704-4992	28-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Camille	Knudson	Madison	53714	28-Aug-18
Norm	Littlejohn	Madison	53713	28-Aug-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53713	28-Aug-18
L	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53711	28-Aug-18
Ginger	LaBelle-Brown	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Kathlean	Wolf	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Lynn	Whitford	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
T	Loon	Madison	53708	28-Aug-18
Amelia	Royko Maurer	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Deborah	Neulander	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Sari	Williams	Madison	53715	28-Aug-18
E	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Karen	Craig	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Emily	Steinwehe	Madison	53716	28-Aug-18
Judy	Skog	Madison	53711	28-Aug-18
D	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Suzanne	Askey	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
S	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Town [of Madison?]	53711	28-Aug-18
Geri	Egner	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Christine	Elaine	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Cooper	Thomas	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Rosemary	Spolar	Madison	53705	28-Aug-18
Kerstin	Nelson	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Melady	Elifritz	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Jodi	Janczewski	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Sarah	Kaiksow	Madison	53705	28-Aug-18
Rachel	Kent	Madison	53703	28-Aug-18
Willy	Holden	Madison	53704	28-Aug-18
Marika Fischer	Hoyt	Madison	53726	28-Aug-18
Diane	Farsetta	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Edward	Kuharski	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Kelty	Carew	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Lynn	Shafel	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
S	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53719	29-Aug-18
H	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Patricia K	Hammel	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Brice	Clifton	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Kate	Nolan	Monona	53716	29-Aug-18
Cathy	Loeb	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Nicole	Desautels	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Deena	Brazy	Madison	53711	29-Aug-18
Sunna	Kraushaar	Sedro-Woolley [WA?]	98284	29-Aug-18
Kevin	McGettigan	Madison	53713	29-Aug-18
Jennifer	Bastian	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Danielle	Bailey	Madison	53713	29-Aug-18
S	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Nancy	Rost	Madison	53704-4454	29-Aug-18
Susanne	Breckenridge	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Allison	Tiefenthaler	Madison	53705-1366	29-Aug-18
Brenna	Holzhauser	Madison	53716	29-Aug-18
Gavin	Eagan	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Tim	Riley	Stoughton	53589	29-Aug-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53714	29-Aug-18
D	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Bill	Dunn	Middleton	56532	29-Aug-18

Michael	Matheson	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Martin	Ventura	Madison	53705	29-Aug-18
Laura	Chastain	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Carrie	Scherpelz	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Shaina	Scott	Madison	53718	29-Aug-18
Becky	Scott	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
Carlyn	Pruess	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Heather	Rem	Madison	53714	29-Aug-18
Victor	Toniolo	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53705	29-Aug-18
Patricia Barnes	Putnam	Black Earth	53515	29-Aug-18
D	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53714	29-Aug-18
James	Wilson	Monona	53716	29-Aug-18
K	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Columbus	53925	29-Aug-18
Genia	Daniels	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
B	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Cottage Grove	53527	29-Aug-18
Jacqueline	Kaplan	Madison	53703	29-Aug-18
Ralph	Shively	Madison	53704	29-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53714	30-Aug-18
Debra	Shapiro	Madison	53726-3916	30-Aug-18
Craig	Mooney	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
Keith	Everson	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
Peter	Lewis	Madison	53705	30-Aug-18
Steve	Kosciuk	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
Katharine	Stalker	Madison		30-Aug-18
Patricia	Rourke	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
Christine	Costanzo	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
R	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Monona	53716	30-Aug-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Spring Green	53588	30-Aug-18
Jane	Reynolds	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
Cory	Neeley	Evansville	53536	30-Aug-18
S	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
Brenda	Konkel	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
Mable	Kinzie-Berdel	Charlottesville	22901-4123	30-Aug-18
N	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
David	Holtan	Madison	53703	30-Aug-18
P	Champion	Madison	53704	30-Aug-18
D	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53705-3348	30-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	31-Aug-18
David	Williams	Madison	53714	31-Aug-18
Elizabeth	Nord	Madison	53703	31-Aug-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Sun Prairie	53590	31-Aug-18
Don	Vincent	Madison	53711	31-Aug-18
Patricia	McCormick	Madison	53711	31-Aug-18
Eric	Sundquist	Madison	53711	31-Aug-18
Kate	Heiber-Cobb	Monona	53716	31-Aug-18
John	Peck	Madison	53704	31-Aug-18
Timothy	Cordon	Madison	53704	31-Aug-18
W	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	1-Sep-18
Jody	Clowes	Madison	53715	1-Sep-18
James	Lorman	Madison	53715	1-Sep-18
Susan	De Vos	Madison	53705	1-Sep-18
Anne	Egan-Robertson	Madison	53711	1-Sep-18
David	Gegenhuber	Madison	53704	1-Sep-18
Michael	Jones	Madison	53714	1-Sep-18
Jessica	Jones	Madison	53714	1-Sep-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Waunakee	53597	1-Sep-18
Serena	Sato	Madison	53704	1-Sep-18
L	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	1-Sep-18
Georgia	Skoirchet	Madison	53703	2-Sep-18
Marcia	Hazen	Westport	53597	2-Sep-18
Haven	McClure	Madison	53703	2-Sep-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	2-Sep-18
R	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Sun Prairie	53590	2-Sep-18
Douglas	Renk	Madison	53704	3-Sep-18
Keith	Sayles	Madison	53715	3-Sep-18
Jim	Logan	Madison	53719	3-Sep-18
Gary	Powell	Madison	53726	3-Sep-18
Wally	Graeber	Madison	53715-1549	3-Sep-18

Larry	Orr	Madison	53703	4-Sep-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Monona	53716	4-Sep-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53715	4-Sep-18
Kira	Milanich	Madison	53704	4-Sep-18
Terri	Wilson-Carman	Madison	53703	4-Sep-18
E	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53719	5-Sep-18
Pacia	Harper	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
Lynette	Jandl	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
Casey	Kohner	Madison	53714	6-Sep-18
Jennifer	Hall	Madison	53714	6-Sep-18
L	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53716-2417	6-Sep-18
Michelle	Kern	Monona	53716	6-Sep-18
Kirsti	Walker	Madison	53703	6-Sep-18
T	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
April	Wood	Madison	53703	6-Sep-18
Erica	Revak	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
Kathryn	Ripp	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
Kelli	Ballwahn	Madison	53704	6-Sep-18
Cathleen	Dornon	Madison	53714	7-Sep-18
Esty	Dinur	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Brett	Schuppener	Madison	53703	7-Sep-18
Rae	Kaiser	Madison	53703	7-Sep-18
Kimberly	Askey	International Falls, MN	56649	7-Sep-18
Chris	Reott	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Nataraj	Hauser	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Nancy	Ruggeri	Evanston, IL	60201	7-Sep-18
L	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53711	7-Sep-18
Elizabeth	Jackson	Macomb	61455	7-Sep-18
Gary	Storck	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Julie	Gullickson	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
A	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53714	7-Sep-18
John	Cook	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Shari	Wittman	Madison	53703	7-Sep-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53714	7-Sep-18
Phyllis	Hasbrouck	Madison	537115948	7-Sep-18
Brenda	Morris	Madison	53704	7-Sep-18
Wendy	Pacetti	Verona	53593	8-Sep-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	8-Sep-18
C	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53713	8-Sep-18
Willy	Holden	Madison	53704	8-Sep-18
Sharon	Schoolmeesters	Madison	53711	8-Sep-18
Patrick JB	Flynn	Madison	53704	8-Sep-18
Mary Beth	George	Madison	53704	8-Sep-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53703	8-Sep-18
Jim	Powell	Madison		8-Sep-18
Kia	Conrad	Madison	53704	8-Sep-18
M	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	54703	8-Sep-18
Wayne	Sigelko	Madison	53703	9-Sep-18
Barry	Treichel	Madison	53704	9-Sep-18
H	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Monona	53716	9-Sep-18
J	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	10-Sep-18
Katherine	Davey	Madison	53704	10-Sep-18
P	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison	53704	10-Sep-18
Michael	McKiernan	Madison	53703	11-Sep-18
Kristin	Chambers	Madison	53704	12-Sep-18
Ann	Chambers	Madison	53717	12-Sep-18
Gretchen	Vissers	Madison	53704	13-Sep-18
Lisa	Simonds	Stoughton	53589	14-Sep-18
Garrett	Jach	Madison	53713	16-Sep-18
P	ANONYMITY REQUESTED	Madison		22-Sep-18

**From:** Jon Becker  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** CRANES position paper on Yahara lake levels  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 3:46:53 PM

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Hello YCOLTF, Please find attached, as PDF. Best, Jon

**Jon Becker**  
**Vice-President**  
**Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability [CRANES]**  
[REDACTED]

## **CRANES LAKE LEVEL POSITION STATEMENT v.2018SEP14**

As we have advocated for the past several years, CRANES supports lowering Lake Mendota initially, and as soon as feasible, to a level that protects Yahara communities from climate disruption fueled flooding. That almost certainly will require lowering the lake as soon as possible, and before April 2019, enough so as to allow Lake Mendota to safely store at minimum the precipitation from a ~15 inch rainbomb, falling in 24 hours over ground that is 100% impermeable (due either to soaked or frozen soil).

For the long haul, CRANES supports restoring the Yahara lakes to their natural\* levels and seasonal ranges, as determined using a science- or evidence-based approach, toward achieving maximum environmental sustainability for the entire river system and watershed. This likely will require lowering Lake Mendota around five feet, and may require lowering lakes Monona, Kegonsa, and Waubesa as well; reports dating back to the early 1800s indicate that all four Yahara lakes once had extraordinarily beautiful white sand beaches (see Mollenhoff history, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp 40-41), indicating that levels may have once been lower. It should however be noted that a lot of sand was dredged from the lakes for fill and the current passage of the Yahara River across Madison's isthmus was channelized and deepened by dredging to the west of the river's former meander main passage.)

We support expanding shoreline and wetlands buffers beyond the now outdated 75-foot minimum for stormwater runoff management; doing so will enhance habitat and provide opportunities for climate mitigation co-benefits. CRANES has long supported mitigating the ~50% of natural wetlands that has been lost to development; whenever possible, this should be accomplished by restoring natural wetlands, rather than trying to construct new artificial wetlands (which produce less biodiversity and may not be sustainable).

We support returning Yahara lake and river shores to their natural conditions, based in ecological research. This may require re-wilding of 75% of the total shoreline. In some instances, this will involve retreat from locations that should never have been developed in the first place.

Adjustments to the natural regime may be needed due to climate disruption. Additional adjustment may be needed while the community concurrently implements land and stormwater management best practices, for both rural and urban areas, that are benchmarked to natural hydrologic conditions. We have long supported a requirement of 100% stormwater stay-on for urban development and re-development (refill/infill). We've also supported a ban on development in closed basins.

Since 2012, we have stated that there may be a need for transitional dredging at several locations, as Lake Mendota is lowered. This operation is conceptually similar to the "Suck the Muck" effort already underway on Dorn Creek, but should be more sustainable and resilient: As Lake Mendota is lowered, there will be less chance of reflux re-depositing sediments and nutrients from the lake atop renewed streambeds or dredged areas.

As we work together to restore our lakes to their natural condition, CRANES supports community discussion of dredging and other issues, such as compensation for inholders, whether residential or commercial.

\* By "natural" levels/ranges, we mean the conditions that obtained around 1830, before the Government Public Land Survey (a.k.a. Original Survey), and before the first 3-foot dam was built at present-day Tenney Park, in 1847-48.

**From:** Faith Fitzpatrick  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Yahara Flooding - Public Comment  
**Date:** Friday, March 08, 2019 11:20:26 PM

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Your comments below must include a name and address in order to be reviewed by the task force. Comments may be posted online and available as open records.

Name: Faith Fitzpatrick

[REDACTED]

Comments:

Thank you for providing the technical workgroup report in a timely fashion and providing the opportunity for public comment. Figure 2 in the report showing the trend in annual discharge out of the lakes is particularly striking even for the last 35 years that I've lived in Madison. Of note is also the increase in the year-to-year variability. This follows the same trend we see in streams across Wisconsin. The climatic patterns have changed since much of Madison was developed and BMPs established for farmland. Dabbling with lake levels is the equivalent of trying to heal a broken leg with a band aid. We need a serious commitment to the only solution that will help for flood years and maybe even more importantly the dry years that are sure to follow – increased infiltration and decreased drainage network extension. Instead of looking at stormwater and ag runoff as a problem, we need to think of it as a gift. Our shallow groundwater aquifer in the Madison area is like a large savings and loan, ready to take in during bountiful times and give in times of need. The following considerations are brought forth with the mindset that saving runoff in wet years increases the resiliency of the shallow aquifer during dry years.

- 1) Protect remaining mature woods, wetlands, and prairies and their underlying uncompacted soils, especially near ephemeral channels. Consider interaction for winter rains on frozen ground and give special consideration to evergreen tree species.
- 2) Keep soils from being compacted during construction. Require soil aeration techniques on all new construction and add to existing urban lawns and green spaces.
- 3) Ditches/tiles/storm drains – Remove unneeded drainage pathways where not needed such as in areas where land uses have changed. Fix drainage from barnyards and night pastures.
- 4) Rebuild gullies, cut off drainage extension, add grade control, plan for monitoring and maintenance of any structures. Expect to raise water table in gullied areas and increase base flow.
- 5) Remove levees and dredge spoil along ditches and channels.
- 6) Remove legacy sediment from floodplains, even partial removal to add some floodplain connection and to minimize disturbing riparian woods.
- 7) Remove all concrete in channels and maximize roughness.
- 8) Re-establish disconnected drainages in areas that were disconnected before urban or ag development.
- 9) Require infiltration basins for all new construction and infill, consider underground infiltration techniques.
- 10) Replace small culverts on channels with open-bottom culverts that allow passage of aquatic and riparian species.
- 11) Use watershed planning tools and modeling to quantify expected changes in the water budget for runoff vs. infiltration for a range of rainfalls, including over frozen ground where interception by vegetation is even more important than when ground is unfrozen.

**From:** Jeff Steuer  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Automatic reply: A short follow-up to my verbal comment at the March 5th meeting.  
**Date:** Monday, March 11, 2019 1:15:29 PM

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I included my name (Jeffrey Steuer) and phone number in my original email. My address is

[REDACTED]

Best,  
Jeffrey Steuer

On Wed, Mar 6, 2019 at 10:38 PM Flooding, Yahara <[YaharaFlooding@countyofdane.com](mailto:YaharaFlooding@countyofdane.com)> wrote:

Thank you for your comments regarding flooding along the Yahara Chain of Lakes. Your comments will be provided to the [Yahara Chain of Lakes – Lake Levels Task Force](#). Please note that your comments must include a name and address in order to be reviewed by the task force. Your name and comments may be posted online and available as open records.

The purpose of this email address is to collect public comments and will not be used to respond to inquiries. If you have questions, please contact the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department at [lwrd@countyofdane.com](mailto:lwrd@countyofdane.com) or (608) 224-3730.

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**HyEn** LLC

*Providing a range of Hydrologic and Hydraulic Engineering solutions*

**From:** Topf Wells  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [Hicklin, Laura](#); [Reimer, John](#)  
**Subject:** response to Chairs Porter and Ritt's requests  
**Date:** Monday, March 11, 2019 3:18:11 PM

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1. Dredging. I suggest that the Taskforce recommend that the County begin to dredge the Yahara River from its outlet at the Tenney Lock and Dam to Stoughton based on the following principles and considerations:

a) Consistent recognition that the Yahara River is an important and valued resource and not simply a means for draining the Yahara Lakes. It provides important spawning, migratory, and nursery habitat for a variety of fish and is home to a number of fish and other species on a more permanent basis. The river's wild celery is a valuable native plant and not a harmful invasive.

b) Planning and implementation should focus on cooperation with the DNR regulators, fish biologists, and other staff to first identifying and dredging those segments of the river in which dredging would be most helpful in managing flow and would be the most beneficial or least harmful to the river itself.

c) Adoption of the goal to use dredging and other restoration options to improve the health of the river whenever feasible. In some cases, removal of sand and sediment can revitalize segments of the river. The County's Suck the Muck can offer a model in that the goals of that program have always included stream restoration as well as the removal of legacy phosphorous.

d)) Recognition that dredging will be a multi-year process and probably require maintenance.

2. Dam Management.

a) Strengthen the Tenney Dam so that it can withstand more catastrophic rainfalls such as those which occurred in the Cross Plains/Middleton Area last year.

b) Reach the necessary agreements and create necessary procedures with the operators of the Stoughton Dam to insure that the operation of all the dams is always properly coordinated.

c) Stoughton is in the process of studying modifications to its dam or the area around it so that part of the river's flow would bypass the dam and be used to create kayaking courses and other recreational opportunities. Work with those officials to insure that that project does not impair management of the river's flow.

3. Pumping. This option may be worth additional study and I would not object if the Taskforce identified this as an option worthy of additional study. Should we do so, we should acknowledge that the study itself will be expensive, complex, and time-consuming. Actual pumping will be all that and more. Meanwhile ...

Please reject the option of pumping through the Waubesa Wetlands.

4. Aquatic Plant Harvesting. The County should continue the expanded harvesting that occurred next year with that harvesting limited to mechanical means of doing so. We should recommend two limits: no use of herbicides and the aim of controlling the growth of wild celery but not eliminating it.

5. Lake Levels. The Taskforce cannot recommend that County staff operate illegally. Consequently, we should not recommend that the County deliberately manage the lake levels outside of the legally prescribed ranges. Moreover, I do not think the Taskforce should recommend changes to those ranges for the following reasons:

- a) Such an action is probably not supported by the resolution which created the Taskforce.
  - b) Lake levels are the DNR's responsibility which that agency must address with an opportunity for all the stakeholders to participate. Several citizens also opined that the DNR will have to undertake that review with more complex considerations because of a Wisconsin Supreme Court decision with regard to Lake Koshkonong lake levels.
  - c) The Taskforce heard fragmentary testimony on the issue and did not hear representatives of all the stakeholders (no one, for example, testified from the perspective of shore anglers on the Yahara Lakes, a large and diverse group of anglers, who would be affected by a change in lake levels). What testimony we heard make it abundantly clear that stakeholders are very divided in their judgments about lake levels. The Taskforce does not have the time, resources, or legal authority to convene the stakeholders in a fair process.
- However, many citizens made an excellent point: that the 1979 order could not include consideration of how climate change has affected the fluctuations and management of the lakes. Noting how often that point was made and the strong interest of many stakeholders to have lake levels re-visited I think the Taskforce could request the DNR to undertake the review of those levels. We should accompany that request with the observation that such a review will almost certainly be contentious and time-consuming.

6. Lake Level Management Guide. If this guide should be modified to include the County Board's direction to manage the lakes at the minimum of the legally prescribed ranges and other technical considerations, staff should do so as soon as it is feasible to do so. My concern is that too many citizens see managing at those minimum levels as far more possible than it will be. With our climate having changed so that drastic events will occur more frequently, with the Yahara watershed having lost much of its ability to buffer severe downpours or long periods of heavy rains, and with the river's limited flow capacity, the County or any other manager of the lakes will often be unable to manage lake levels quickly.

7. Other. I respectfully request that the Taskforce recommend the following additional actions:

- a) That the County Board and other policymaker begin implementing the CARPC and Lakes and Watershed Commission's recommendations on stormwater management.
- b) That the County and other interested and able organizations pursue the restoration of wetlands throughout the Yahara River sub-watersheds but especially in the Upper Mendota watershed.
- c) That the County, local governments, and conservation organizations promote much greater infiltration of stormwater throughout urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and suggestions.

Topf Wells

**From:** [Hicklin, Laura](#)  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public comment  
**Date:** Monday, March 11, 2019 4:28:46 PM

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**From:** Ritt, Michele  
**Sent:** Friday, March 08, 2019 5:18 PM  
**To:** Hicklin, Laura; Reimer, John  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public comment

Can you please make sure this reached the email comment part of the Task Force? I would also like the ideas submitted as part of the bucket document. Would you like me to make them into dot points?

Michele Ritt  
Dane County Supervisor  
District 18  
[ritt.michele@countyofdane.com](mailto:ritt.michele@countyofdane.com)  
(608) 335-6827

*Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee, Chair  
City County Homeless Issues Committee  
Dane County Food Council  
Dane County Food Council Food Waste Task Force  
Dane County Food Council Budget Sub Committee  
Dane County Tree Board  
Land Conservation Committee*

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jan Axelson [REDACTED]  
**Date:** March 5, 2019 at 13:17:04 CST  
**To:** "Ritt, Michele" <[Ritt.Michele@countyofdane.com](mailto:Ritt.Michele@countyofdane.com)>, "Chawla, Yogesh" <[Chawla.Yogesh@countyofdane.com](mailto:Chawla.Yogesh@countyofdane.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public comment  
**Reply-To:** [REDACTED]

Michele and Yogesh,

Here is public comment from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Jan Axelson

----- Forwarded Message -----  
**Subject:**Public comment

**Date:**Tue, 5 Mar 2019 13:16:05 -0600  
**From:**Jan Axelson <[REDACTED]>  
**Reply-To:**[REDACTED]  
**To:**[yaharaflooding@countyfdane.com](mailto:yaharaflooding@countyfdane.com)

These comments are on behalf of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

We thank the technical work group and task force for their ongoing efforts to explore ways to reduce flooding in the Yahara watershed, and we appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Use the model to inform lake level management decisions

DNR lake level targets were last set for the Yahara Lakes in 1979. Since that time, our ability to model lake-level responses to rainfall has greatly improved, development in the watershed has increased, and we are seeing more major storm events. Even if we assume that the targets set in 1979 were appropriate for that time, do they remain the best choice when rainfall and runoff have increased?

In recent years, the lakes have often exceeded their maximum targets by a foot or more and have fallen below their minimums only during extreme drought and even then, by a few inches at most.

We should be using modeling to run scenarios for different lake-management strategies under a variety of rainfall patterns from the last 20 years, including the flood years of 2000, 2007, 2008, and 2018 and the drought year of 2012. In addition to modeling different summer management strategies, the analysis should include the effect of delaying raising the lakes to their summer levels to leave capacity for spring rainfall.

The modeling results can inform a decision on what target levels and management strategies are likely to minimize flooding.

If the results show a benefit to changing the target levels, the modeling, along with the recent history of high lake levels, will provide a persuasive argument to the DNR in favor of a change.

Even if we keep the current target ranges, modeling can show if management changes, such as maintaining the lakes at their minimums or lower when possible, would do a better job of keeping the lakes closer to their target ranges throughout the season.

Manage at the minimums until we have data to support a different strategy

The County Board has directed staff to operate the lakes at their summer minimum levels until after the task force has made its recommendations. Doing so also complies with an objective of the County's Natural Hazard

Mitigation Plan to maintain the levels of the Yahara lakes at the lower limit of the DNR's set operating range. In addition, the 2012 Peer Review of the Yahara Lake Level Management Guide recommends evaluating "the benefits of a modified policy, such as maintaining the normal level of Lake Mendota below the middle of the mandated summer range to reduce flood risk." Yet the technical work group hasn't provided scenarios to show the effects of these management strategies.

Until the task force and County Board have had an opportunity to review additional lake-level scenarios and approve a new policy, we strongly urge continuing to manage the lakes at their summer minimum levels. With County Board approval, managing at the minimums does not violate the County's Lake Level Management Guide, but rather amends it.

Need to consider wetland losses at Cherokee Marsh

Cherokee Marsh, at over 3500 acres, is Dane County's largest wetland. Located just upstream from Lake Mendota, the marsh borders the upper Yahara River. Most of the shoreline upstream from Lake Mendota at Cherokee Marsh is public land purchased with public funds in recognition of the wetlands' value.

The water level on the Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh closely follows the level of Lake Mendota. During times of high water, wave action causes pieces of the shoreline wetlands to break off and float downstream, eventually falling apart to be lost forever. We have observed these losses occurring throughout high-water periods, not just immediately following sharp rises.

These wetland losses are a flooding concern like any other and should be factored into the decision about how to manage lake levels.

High water is damaging fish habitat

We agree with the Feb 7 comments by David W. Marshall, retired aquatic ecologist with the DNR Water Resources Fisheries and Habitat Protection Program. In particular, we agree that the loss of fish habitat due to high water has been more significant than the limited benefits that high water may provide for a few targeted species.

Flow reroute and pumping will harm wetlands and Badfish Creek

Due to the damage that will result to wetlands and other natural areas, we don't support flow reroute and pumping options through the Waubesa Wetlands State Natural Area, Dunn Heritage Park, and other nearby parcels with conservation easements. We are also concerned about the consequences of pumping and discharging into Badfish Creek.

Support for stormwater runoff recommendations

We fully support the recommendations of the Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee to decrease stormwater runoff entering the Yahara lakes.

Jan Axelson  
President, Friends of Cherokee Marsh



**From:** [Hicklin, Laura](#)  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Composite graph of Jan. 1 Yahara lake levels  
**Date:** Monday, March 11, 2019 4:29:06 PM  
**Attachments:** [Yahara lake levels relative to summer min. Jan 1 \(2006-2019\).pdf](#)

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**From:** RICHARD C LATHROP [mailto:rlathrop@wisc.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2019 2:35 PM  
**To:** PAMELA A PORTER; Ritt, Michele  
**Cc:** Hicklin, Laura; Reimer, John  
**Subject:** Composite graph of Jan. 1 Yahara lake levels

Hi,

After the last public hearing on Yahara lake flooding and lake level issues I felt that many people were not understanding the full problem because they were so focused on summer high water levels with not a clear understanding of the preceding winter level problem. Thus, after the meeting I talked briefly to a few committee members about winter levels, but I later felt I needed to create some graphs that illustrated the problem better.

Thus, I made a graph for each of the 4 Yahara lakes of their water levels recorded on Jan. 1, 2006-2019 (15 years) with the levels plotted relative to their official summer minimum level. From the composite graph, you can see that Mendota had been lowered in many years during the fall drawdown period to about a foot lower than summer minimum except for the last 4 years (including this winter) when Mendota's drawdown by Jan. 1 was much less.

Now contrast Mendota's winter minimum record with the record on Jan. 1 for the lower 3 Yahara lakes. Only in a few years was the drawdown even 0.5 feet below summer minimum, with many years either near summer minimum or even substantially above summer minimum. (Note, while this is a minor issue for the flooding problem, Monona and Waubesa's winter minimum being 2.5 feet lower than summer minimum is not only currently unattainable, it is probably too low a winter minimum regulatory level from an ecosystem health point of view.) And remember that the dams on Waubesa and Kegonsa outlets have been wide open since the winter of 2016.

Thus, the major conclusion I believe these graphs illustrate is that the lower lakes can't get rid of their water at a high enough flow rate in fall to provide some storage (and prevent ice damage) in winter. And in years when there is a lot of fall or winter precipitation that causes Mendota to hold back water to prevent too high winter levels in the downstream lakes, the need for improving the channel hydraulics for higher flow rates out of the downstream lakes is substantiated.

This finding is consistent with our lake level working group's findings spelled out in the Feb. 1 report to your Task Force. If channel hydraulics are improved, then the lakes can all be lowered in fall and then refilled in spring as runoff inputs occur. If spring runoff is low, then the dams on the lower lakes can be partially closed; if spring runoff is high, then the better channel hydraulics allows the lakes to drain faster with the gates wide open. This helps attain desired summer levels and allows

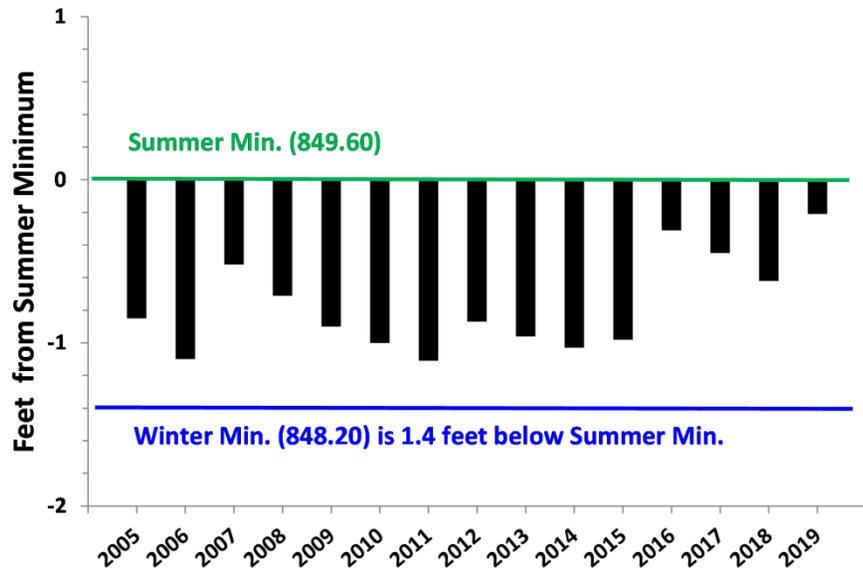
for proactively preventing the chronic flooding problems such as occurred in much of 2018 prior to the big extreme event storm in late August.

I ask that you please forward this email and attached composite graph to all Task Force members as I think it will help guide your discussion as you prepare recommendations for the County Board. If you have an questions, please let me know. People can contact me directly, or I would be willing to comment on the graph at the beginning of your next meeting if your committee so desires.

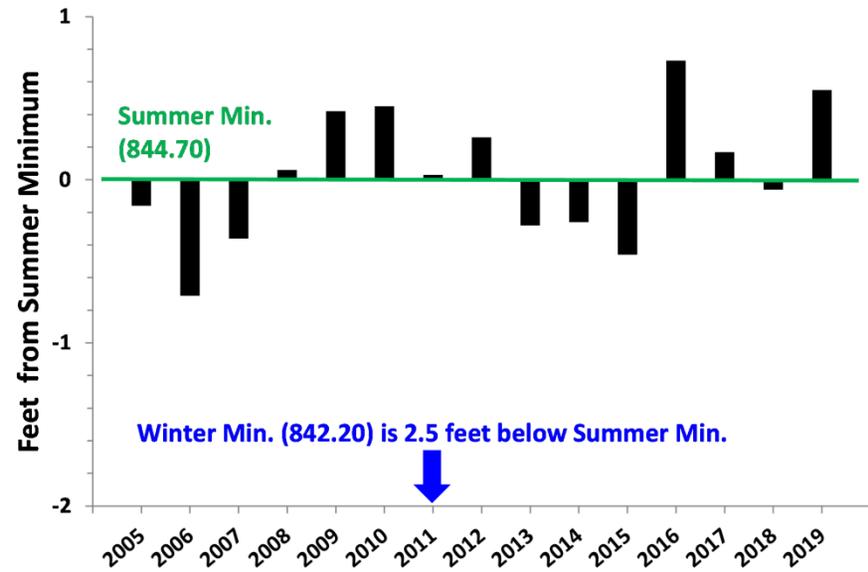
Thanks,  
Dick Lathrop  
UW Center for Limnology

# Yahara lake levels relative to Summer Min. on Jan. 1, 2006-2019

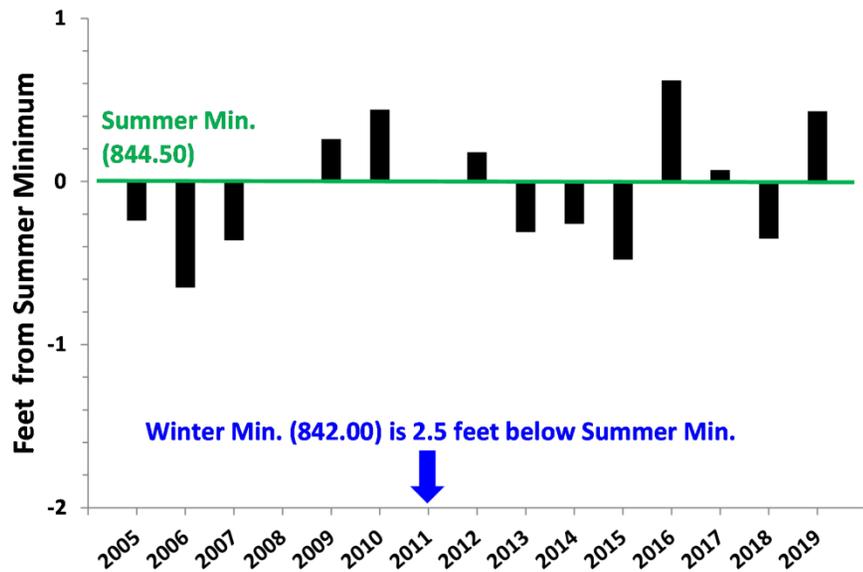
## Mendota Water Levels on Jan. 1



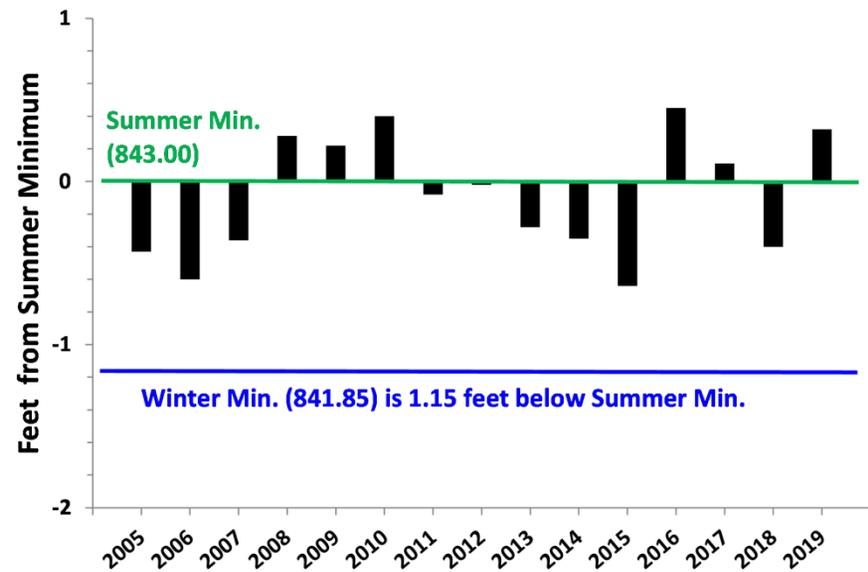
## Monona Water Levels on Jan. 1



## Waubesa Water Levels on Jan. 1



## Kegonsa Water Levels on Jan. 1



**From:** Ben Kollenbroich  
**To:** [Flooding, Yahara](#)  
**Cc:** [Hicklin, Laura](#); "PAMELA A PORTER"  
**Subject:** RE: Additional Comments to Lake Levels Task Force  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 12, 2019 12:48:09 PM  
**Attachments:** [Written Comments to Lake Levels Task Force.doc](#)

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Good afternoon,

Attached are written comments to the Lake Level Task Force.

Sincerely,

Ben Kollenbroich  
Planning & Land Conservation Director  
Town of Dunn  
608.838.1081 ext. 205

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**From:** Hicklin, Laura <[hicklin.laura@countyofdane.com](mailto:hicklin.laura@countyofdane.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2019 4:28 PM  
**To:** 'PAMELA A PORTER' <[pporter@wisc.edu](mailto:pporter@wisc.edu)>; Ben Kollenbroich <[bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us](mailto:bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: Additional Comments to Lake Levels Task Force

Pam and Ben,

There was no attachment in the email that came in. Please send it to:  
[yaharaflooding@countyofdane.com](mailto:yaharaflooding@countyofdane.com).

Thanks  
Laura

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**From:** PAMELA A PORTER [<mailto:pporter@wisc.edu>]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2019 11:57 AM  
**To:** Ben Kollenbroich  
**Cc:** Hicklin, Laura  
**Subject:** Additional Comments to Lake Levels Task Force

Thanks Ben. I'm cc: Director Laura Hicklin who will forward your comments to the task force. Many thanks for your contribution.

Pam  
Pamela Porter  
Research Program Manager  
Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems  
University of Wisconsin  
[pporter@wisc.edu](mailto:pporter@wisc.edu)  
608-575-2055 c

On Mar 11, 2019, at 9:25 AM, Ben Kollenbroich <[bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us](mailto:bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us)> wrote:

Hi Pam,

My apologies. I just realized I sent you an old version of the written comments. Attached is the updated version.

Thank you,

Ben

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**From:** Ben Kollenbroich  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2019 9:03 AM  
**To:** 'PAMELA A PORTER' <[pporter@wisc.edu](mailto:pporter@wisc.edu)>  
**Subject:** Comments to Lake Levels Task Force

Good morning Pam,

Unfortunately I was not able to attend the public comment meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>. I hope it is not too late to submit written comments to the Task Force. You can find my comments attached.

Thank you,

Ben Kollenbroich  
Planning & Land Conservation Director  
Town of Dunn  
608.838.1081 ext. 205  
<Written Comments to Lake Levels Task Force.doc>

## Comments to Lake Levels Task Force

March 5, 2019

Ben Kollenbroich, Planning and Land Conservation Director, Town of Dunn  
4156 County Road B, McFarland, WI 53716  
608.838.1081 ext. 205  
bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us

Re: Mitigation Option: Flow Reroute and Pumping

The Town of Dunn sits on the shores of both Lake Waubesa and Lake Kegonsa and contains more riparian area than any other municipality in Dane County, so figuring out a solution to prevent the flooding we experienced in 2018 is of the utmost importance to our community. Last year, Town of Dunn residents came together to help neighbors sandbag their homes and staff worked countless hours filling sandbags and monitoring Town infrastructure to ensure our residents were safe. For this reason, the Town would like to thank the task force for meeting on the issue of flooding along the Yahara Chain of Lakes and for allowing public comments on this important topic.

We understand that a lot of work may happen in the Town, such as dredging out the Yahara River or bridge modifications. These appear to be sensible changes, as long as proper steps are taken to protect archeological sites such as the fishing weir or corduroy bridge, and the biological impacts are taken into account. However, the Town of Dunn has some serious concerns with the mitigation measures described in Scenario 6. First, the map that is depicted in Figure 27 shows a proposed pumping route going through the Waubesa Wetlands. Thanks to the hard work of Town resident, Dr. Joy Zedler, the Waubesa Wetlands have been designated by the Society of Wetland Scientists as a Wetland of Distinction. Additionally, this area was chosen by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association as a state "Wetland Gem" and designated as a State Natural Area by the Wisconsin DNR. Furthermore, as the City of Fitchburg continues to develop along the shores of Swan Creek, which runs into the Waubesa Wetlands, it is pivotal that these wetlands remain undisturbed in order to continue functioning as a filtration for urban stormwater runoff. Constructing a pipe through the very same wetlands that acts as a filter for Lake Waubesa, and possibly disrupting this ecosystem, is incredibly shortsighted. Additionally, by pumping water from the foot of Lake Waubesa, where this cleaner, filtered water flows in, we have questions about whether pumping clean water out of this location would actually create a dirtier body of water.

Additional maps were shown at the February 18, 2019 Task Force meeting, which depict possible pumping routes traveling through Dunn Heritage Park and down Jordan or Tower Roads, on the way to Badfish Creek. The Town would like to make the Task Force aware of the fact that Dane County, the federal government, and the Town of Dunn have contributed significant amounts of money toward the rehabilitation of this park as a nature conservancy and fish spawning habitat. The rehabilitation project includes a new boat landing, shoreline rip rap, invasive species eradication, seeding of native plants, planting native trees, a new parking lot, new culvert bridges, and the installation of signs and benches. The entire project costs \$99,716 and the federal government grant (administered by the DNR) is worth \$37,983 and the Dane County grant spent \$15,225 on the project. Additionally, as part of the permitting for the rip rap, the DNR required that the Town install downed trees along the shore of the lake to act as "fish sticks" in order to create more fish habitat. The Town also dredged out a retention/northern pike fish spawning pond last year, as this had become silted in over the 20 years since its creation. Due to the Town's efforts, Dunn Heritage Park has become a popular place for shore fishing and the Town has

concerns that if the pipe is installed to go through this park, it will disrupt this revitalized nature preserve and fish habitat.

Finally, depending upon the exact route of these pipe proposals, there is a chance a pipe could go through Town of Dunn conservation easements. The first easement lies directly on the shores of Lake Waubesa, and was protected from development because it contains just over 20 acres of wetlands, approximately 1,500 feet of frontage on the Lake, and provides public access to the State Natural Area from the east, which was previously unavailable. An easement was placed on the property in 2012 with \$227,000 from the DNR, \$91,500 from the Town of Dunn, and \$163,500 from Dane County. In exchange for the Town's contribution to the purchase, a conservation easement was placed on this property prior to the County purchasing the property as public land. The second easement that could be affected lies along Highway B. This easement, worth \$248,400, was placed on this property in 2001. \$194,682.16 was paid by the Town and the USDA provided \$53,717.84 toward the purchase in order to protect this horse boarding, pasture, and farmland property. As you can see, significant public investment has occurred in this area to ensure that lands vital to the environment and to our farming economy are not disturbed. Most significantly perhaps is that both of these conservation easements do not legally allow for a pipe, such as the one described in Scenario 6, to be placed under these properties.

Again, the Town of Dunn recognizes that flooding is a serious concern on the Yahara Chain of Lakes and we would like to thank the task force for their work on this topic. However, we implore members to consider scenarios that do not include the potential to disturb vitally important wetlands, popular fish habitats, and environmentally and economically significant conservation easements.