



Lake Management Planning

Winnebago Waterways Steering Committee Meeting

Date: Friday, September 21st, 2018

Time: 11:30 am to 1:30pm

Location: Fond du Lac City County Government Center, Room H (160 S. Macy St, Fond du lac)

Facilitator: Korin Doering, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance, korin@fwwa.org, (920) 851-0948



Attendees:

Committee members: Todd Wahler, Mark Sesing, Allen Weir, Jessica Schultz, Paul Tollard, Chad Casper, Dani Santry, Erin Gerred, Korin Doering, Kendall Kamke, Bob Schmeichel, Ted Johnson

Members of the public: Travis Driessen

Meeting Notes:

11:30am - Introductions

- Meeting sign-in
- Brief introduction of attendees
- Updates from around the system
 - Winnebago County – Chad Casper reported two big breakwall projects for Lake Winneconne are being proposed. Funding for the projects: \$200,000 NRDA funds and \$110,000 of in-kind match, including a substantial contribution from the adjacent property owners. He also reported that the Poygan Breakwall design is complete and permits are issued.
 - Emergent Plant Mapping – Ted Reported WDNR and Winnebago County are nearing completion of the emergent plant mapping effort of the Winnebago Lakes. Winnebago County was using their drone to map areas that were difficult to access.
 - Ted Johnson – Lake Puckaway, wind/wave modeling showed restorable acreage of potential habitat
 - Fond du Lac County – Paul reported Pipe Watershed project is going well, many harvestable buffers were installed along Pipe Creek’s critical areas. WASCObS and sediment control basins installed. Discussions continue in the county regarding a Farmer Led Group. Soil health initiatives are growing.
 - Travis Driessen (member of the public) – looking to do a market research study on local demand for organic farmers focusing on restaurant/breweries/bakeries.
 - Waushara County – Todd Wahler reported that Waushara County is working with Adam’s County on 9 KE plans for central sands area of their county. Water sampling has been done and county is seeing elevated spikes in Nitrogen and P in wells – working through what the response is. Dani reported that she will be reporting on the Calumet County ground water sampling.
 - Alan Weir – 10/4 Fond du Lac library presentation on trees in urban stormwater. Committee had discussion on urban stormwater management.

- Review of notes and action items from the last meeting (8/10/18)
 - For the sake of time, the Committee skipped discussion of the action items from last meeting. Korin included the action items here for reference:
 - Korin Doering (FWWA)
 - COMPLETE: update project materials to reflect the changes in the names of management topics and technical teams
 - IN PROGRESS: Working on the website
 - IN PROGRESS: Set up a meeting with National Heritage Inventory (NHI) staff to help answer questions about habitat in the LMP region
 - Request a meeting with Joe Henry – statewide ecologist
 - ~~Begin writing habitat sections without assessment tool for wetlands and grasslands~~
 - COMPLETE: Schedule a meeting with Marcel from UW-Oshkosh to discuss working together to develop water quality monitoring plan for the lakes
 - COMPLETE: Move forward with the shoreline inventory using Winnebago County methods
 - COMPLETE: Work with Keith Marquardt to schedule/plan a meeting with people about water levels in preparation for the fall ACOE stakeholders meeting
 - COMPLETE: Draft cover letter for the organizational questionnaire
 - Jessica Schultz (FWWA)
 - COMPLETE: Contact the counties to discuss watershed management project expansion in further detail.
 - COMPLETE: Contact Ted to update him on the recommendation to expand the project area for watershed management.
 - Austin Pethan (FWWA)
 - COMPLETE: Take pictures and write an article to share with the public about aquatic vegetation PI survey when it takes place.
 - IN PROGRESS: Write and share an article that explains what wetland permits are and the permitting process if someone wants to make a change to a wetland. Include information on how people can get information on wetland permit applications. Describe the benefits of wetlands and the permitting process.
 - Send to Steering Committee for review before publication
 - IN PROGRESS: Include information on our website for people interested in getting info about wetland permits (include link in Winnebago Waterways HUB)
 - IN PROGRESS: Once list of recreation questions is complete, draft and distribute a press release asking people for input on how people use the lakes and what they would like to see improved for recreational lake use.
 - COMPLETE: Send draft list of questions to Jordan for his input and approval.
 - ~~Have hard copies available at Mills Fleet Farm Outdoor Show later in August.~~
 - IN PROGRESS: Promote the questions online and at future outreach events.
 - COMPLETE: Draft tour guide talking points for the boat tours on August 23rd.
 - Chad Casper and Ted Johnson
 - IN PROGRESS: Complete emergent plant mapping for in-lake emergent plant beds

- Take photos of emergent mapping efforts and send to Austin
- Entire Steering Committee
 - COMPLETE: We hope to see you at the August 23rd event with boat tours!

11:45am – Summary of Winnebago Waterways Executive Committee meeting

- Overall the meeting went well. There was good discussion regarding the LMP project moving forward and value of extending the timeline for six months to accommodate the workload of completing 9 Key Elements plans for additional HUC12s.

12:00pm – Project Updates

- Management topics/tech team updates:
 - Habitat
 - *Wetland and Grassland assessment*
 - *Using GIS layers for assessment*
 - *Existing wetlands*
 - *Potentially restorable wetlands*
 - *Land use and cover*
 - *Work with Tech Team to refine results and develop recommendations*
 - *In-lake habitat*
 - *Will use results from aquatic plant survey and woody debris inventory*
 - *Shoreline/riparian habitat*
 - *Will use results from shoreline inventory along with GIS layers*
 - Water Quality
 - Ted is working with NOAA on satellite imagery and confirming results of BGA detection with actual monitoring.
 - Sub-group of the WQ Tech Team met in August to work on the comprehensive water quality monitoring plan that will be a recommendation in the lake management plan.
 - *Subgroup is drafting a water quality monitoring plan with good/better/best scenarios.*
 - *Looking at where to monitor/what to monitor for/ who is going to sample/ what lab*
 - *A WQ monitoring plan is important so that we can track progress over time, and hopefully one day be able to de-list the lakes from the EPA's impaired list.*
 - *Our goal is to recommend a monitoring plan that will be consistent with other efforts in the system, including the Upper Fox and Wolf TMDL and UW-Oshkosh projects. This will allow effective coordination between programs, prevent duplicating efforts and maximizing the use of available resources.*
 - *The recommendation will list potential sources of funding.*
 - *And it will include a citizen monitoring component. Citizen monitoring helps get more boots on the ground and promotes a sense of ownership in people who volunteer.*
 - *We are also exploring ways we can incorporate BGA monitoring. Clean Lakes Alliance has a successful program – it's a network of volunteers who report sightings of blue-green algae. The information is then made available online and on a phone app so that*

people who plan to use the lakes know where and when to avoid the water. We are working with them to model a management recommendation off of their program.

- *Blue Green Monitoring – exploring the idea of recommending a rapid reporting program using a volunteer network*
- *Illnesses related to blue-green algae exposure are now required to be reported to the WI Department of Public Health. Given the seriousness of harmful algal blooms as a public health concern and the severity of BGA blooms on the lakes, we feel it is important to address this issue in the lake management plan.*
- *Our next WQ sub-group meeting is scheduled for next week. We plan to finish up a rough draft for the full WQ team to review toward the end of October.*
- Watershed Management
 - We may be expanding the project to include all 30 HUC12s that are outlined in the Upper Fox/Wolf's draft TMDL Winnebago Region. We will be completing EPA 9 Key Element plans for each of those HUC12s as part of the watershed management portion of the LMP.
- Recreation
 - Recreation Survey
 - Goal: >300 respondents
 - We will add a question about safety based on request from the Executive Committee
 - *We plan to distribute online in articles, newsletters, social media, in-person at events, and we will also send out press releases.*
 - *Target audience: boaters and silent sport enthusiasts*
 - *Questions about use, access, and navigation*
 - *Results will inform development of recommendations*
 - *The survey will run through the winter*
- Shoreline Practices
 - *Shoreline property owners survey:*
 - survey going very well, response rate has been great.
 - Bob – have seen the evolution of home owners along lakes wanting manicured lawns, being willing/interested in buffer zone.
 - Draft summary of results should be ready to share at the end of the year.
 - *During the month of August, we sent over 1000 shoreline property owners an invitation to participate in an online survey*
 - *Purpose: to gain a better understanding of what they currently do and what they would be willing to do on their property to reduce runoff and protect the shoreline from erosion.*
 - *348 responses so far!*
 - *Not including several hardcopy versions*
 - *Three mailings to each property owner encouraging participation*
 - *A reminder was mailed to people who have not yet chosen to participate. We have since seen an increase in the number of responses.*
 - *We will be sending a final invitation to participate on Monday. We anticipate the participation rate to increase over the coming weeks.*
 - *We will use the results to help us develop management recommendation for the lake management plan.*
 - *Shoreline erosion inventory:*

- Shoreline inventory is complete with help of Fond du Lac and Winnebago County and donation of boat and fuel from LWQIA. Data will be available on Winnebago County's online photo viewer.
- *In 2014, Calumet, Winnebago and Waushara Counties had a shoreline inventory completed for shoreline that falls within in their respective counties.*
- *To have a more complete picture of the lakeshore for all four lakes, we conduct a shoreline inventory of the Fond du La County shoreline in Lake Winnebago.*
- *This is a collaborative effort among Fond du Lac County, Winnebago County, the Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association, and Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance.*
- *During the inventory took a photographic record of the shoreline, assessed severity of erosion, and recorded locations of woody debris, culverts, and vegetation buffers on developed sites.*
- *The data will be used to develop goals and management recommendations for the lake management plan and will serve as a baseline to assess future progress.*
- *Data and photos will also be added to Winnebago County's online Historic Shoreline Viewer*
- Aquatic Plant Management
 - Aquatic plant survey (point-intercept)
 - Emergent Plant mapping
 - *Emergent Plant Mapping – Ted Reported WDNR and Winnebago County are nearing completion of the emergent plant mapping effort of the Winnebago Lakes. Winnebago County was using their drone to map areas that were difficult to access.*
- Aquatic Invasive Species
 - *A draft will be ready for the tech team to review later this fall.*
 - *Continued monitoring for AIS in Winnebago Waterways. Over 70 hours spent on the waters monitoring.*
- Community Engagement
 - *Technical Team forming – recommendations of contacts?*
 - *Craig Moletar Visitors and Convention Bureau*
 - *Ask Kevin Crawford for recommendations*
 - *Marketing person?*
 - *Dr. Susan May – FVTC*
 - *Sustainability Coordinator?*
 - *Communications and marketing person?*
 - *Korin will send SC email asking for additional ideas*
 - *Journal Magazine – On the Water*
 - *Utilize Town Association*
 - *Organization questionnaire*
 - *Although we haven't yet formed the community engagement tech team, we've drafted and are preparing to being distribution of an organization questionnaire.*
 - *The goal of the questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of the interest and capacity of organizations/clubs from around the Winnebago Lakes to implement management recommendations outlined in the LMP.*

- *We will use their responses to develop a database of organizations around the lakes*
 - *We will also create a matrix that can be quickly referenced by people interested in partnering with other organizations on implementation projects.*
 - *Why is this important?*
 - *Once we have an approved lake management plan for the Winnebago Lakes, qualified organizations and clubs will be able to apply for funding to tackle issues or projects listed in the LMP.*
 - *We want these organizations to know about the opportunities that will be opening up when we get to implementation and how they fit into the big picture of working together as a region to tackle the big lake issues.*
- **Water Levels**
 - *Team has been formed to develop draft good/better/best recommendations for water level management aimed at plants growth and water quality.*
 - *Mark offered to show natural level scenarios compared to current levels managed by recreation/industry needs.*
 - *Water levels are artificially managed by the Army Corps of engineers*
 - *They are mandated under a Federal Martial order to maintain Lake Winnebago at or below flood stage to reduce downstream flooding during spring snowmelt and heavy rains.*
 - *While the Army Corps top priority is complying with the martial order, they do have some flexibility in how they manage water levels*
 - *There is a growing group of diverse stakeholders who think water level management could be slightly altered within the Army Corps mandated operating thresholds to see improvement in lake water quality without substantially compromising navigation during boating season*
 - *When we think about water levels, we need to consider:*
 - *Downstream industry and property owners*
 - *Lakeshore owners*
 - *Recreational boaters*
 - *Habitat*
 - *Water quality*
 - *Aquatic plants*
 - *From what we've gathered from people interested in water quality, water levels are too high in late spring/early summer too low in winter*
 - *So we are LOSING aquatic PLANTS*
 - *Why is that important?*
 - *The more plants we have, the less blue-green algae we will have, and so we will see better water quality and fewer or less intense blue-green algae blooms*
 - *We are working with a group to draft preliminary recommendations that we will present to ACE on Oct 10th*
 - *We are creating a fact sheet that includes three scenarios "good" "better" "best"*
 - *The "best" scenario will outline what would be ideal conditions for optimum plant growth.*

- *The 'good' or 'better' options would be compromises in consideration of other interests and lake users.*
- *In a shallow lake, you either have plants or you have algae – which side of the scale do we want to put our weight behind?*
- Recommendation from the committee: submit recommendation to work with local Army Corp but go right to the top – meet with Marie. Play on current algal bloom situation and elected official support.
 - Ask for 1-year test of the recommended scenario.
- Project Outreach, Engagement, and Communications

We ran out of time during the meeting and weren't able to cover project outreach efforts in details. The following are updates since the last Steering Committee meeting for everyone's records:

- Events/meetings planned:
 - Planning I&E sessions for late November/early December
 - Topic: Lakes 101
 - Presenter: Kendall Kamke
 - Dates: TBD
 - Locations: TBD – one in Oshkosh and one in Appleton
- External events/meetings attended (since 8/10/18):
 - 8/16/18: Attended the WinnebagoLand Conservation Alliance
 - 8/16/18 – 8/17/18: Attended Wisconsin Lakes Partnership meeting
 - 8/18/18: AIS Snapshot Day had over 35 volunteers around the Winnebago Waterways system searching, gathering, and reporting AIS. The Winnebago Waterways Program partnered with Calumet County and UW-Oshkosh for the event. No new AIS were found in the Winnebago system.
 - 8/21/2018: Attended Save the Bay meeting for the Upper Fox/Wolf Watershed
 - 8/23/2018: Everyone on the Lake boat tours -
 - Free boat tours of Lake Butte des Morts on August 23rd, 2018
 - We advertised through social media, online blog articles, press releases, etc.
 - Almost 70 people took a tour!
 - Tours highlighted relationships between aquatic vegetation, water levels, and water quality
 - Several people had never been on a boat
 - Fox River Brewing Company donated space; Scotty's Pontoon & Wolf River Resorts donated pontoon rentals
 - A BIG thank you to those that helped out including Steering Committee members Dani, Chad, and Mark
 - 8/30/18: AIS table at Wisconsin Waterfowl Association Hunter's Eve Bash
 - 9/6/2018: Waushara County Field Day (County & NRCS) - talked with farmer at length about farming and about LMP
 - 9/13/2018: Gave AIS presentation to Outagamie Conservation Club Hunter Safety Class to over 50 new hunters.
 - 9/18-9/19: AIS education at Outagamie County Conservation Field Days to over 200 5th and 6th graders.
 - Grazing Demo at Dan Flood's Organic Valley Coop Farm (FDL)
- E-newsletter

- August edition
 - Sent on 8/31/2018 to 804 people
- September edition
 - Scheduled to be sent out on 9/28/18
- Social Media

	1/2/2018	6/4/2018	7/12/2018	8/9/2018	9/24/2018
Facebook	253	376	394	400	425
Instagram	---	30	51	61	91
Twitter	65	77	80	81	84
Newslette	863	898	896	796	870

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- Other

1:15pm – Public Comment

Members of the public present: Travis Driessen

1:20pm – Meeting wrap-up

- Upcoming Steering Committee meetings:
 - Friday, October 12th from 10am to 12pm (conference Call)
 - Friday, November 9th, from 10am to 12pm (in person – location TBD)
 - Likely to be held in Oshkosh at the Coughlin Center

1:30pm – Meeting close

Action Items:

Korin Doering (FWWA)

- IN PROGRESS: website updates
- IN PROGRESS: Set up a meeting with National Heritage Inventory (NHI) staff to help answer questions about habitat in the LMP region
- Request a meeting with Joe Henry – statewide ecologist
- Send Steering Committee a request for ideas for people to invite to be part of the Community Engagement Team
- Austin Pethan (FWWA)
 - IN PROGRESS: Write and share an article that explains what wetland permits are and the permitting process if someone wants to make a change to a wetland. Include information on how people can get information on wetland permit applications. Describe the benefits of wetlands and the permitting process.
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