



Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 173

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April 2026

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President’s Message ~ John Bottorff

The signs of Spring and Summer are fast approaching. Ice has been off the lake for several weeks. Congratulations to Paul Becker, the winner of the Ice Off contest, who guessed March 13 and won a random drawing among three members who guessed the correct date. Birds are migrating back to the area and we are on Daylight Savings Time. Hopefully, we have seen the last snowstorm of the year and you are making plans to again enjoy another lake season with neighbors, family, and friends. Welcome to Spring!

This edition of the newsletter contains information about the upcoming season and **FOLKS** plans to serve our members – pier pick-up for aquatic plant debris, fun and educational events, and the **FOLKS** annual meeting – please see the “Save the Date” article for other special events.

Membership Renewal - If you have not yet renewed your 2026 FOLKS membership, please do so. There is an article that provides you with a link to renew on-line or you can renew by mail as well. Annual membership is \$20 per household. We are proud that **FOLKS** has the lowest cost membership fee of any lake association in the area. If you choose, you can make an additional donation. We appreciate your support both financially and as being active members attending events and volunteering. If you have friends or neighbors who are not members, please encourage them to join. Thank you for your support!

In particular, I want to highlight two articles.

Land conservancy project - There are a group of **FOLKS** members and Lake Kegonsa neighbors who are working on a significant project to raise money to purchase approximately eight acres of land and put it into a permanent conservancy to prevent development and protect Lake Kegonsa. In order to do that, they have an accepted offer and will need to raise a total of \$920,000 by August 19, 2026.

They are well organized and supported and have made progress. They have commitments for \$200,000 toward the goal. **FOLKS** strongly endorses this project which will protect the lake from run-off of phosphorous and sediment. Please make a generous donation to the project. See the article for details about the project and how to donate.

Boating Safety Classes – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has boating safety classes that are very beneficial for people operating motor boats and personal watercraft. These classes, leading to a certified boater safety card, are required by Wisconsin law for anyone born after January 1, 1989. Equally important, they are a great way for young boaters to learn safe boating practices and boating etiquette. Classes are available both on-line and in-classroom at modest prices paid to the instructional providers. These classes will provide applied knowledge for safe and respectful boating on Lake Kegonsa and other lakes.

Community Effort Underway to Protect Lake Kegonsa

A group of local Lake Kegonsa neighbors and **FOLKS** members have come together with an ambitious goal: permanently protect approximately eight acres of conservancy land adjacent to Lake Kegonsa.



The newly formed **Committee to Preserve Lot 3 Sunnyside, Inc.** has secured an accepted offer to purchase an approximate eight acre parcel located across Sunnyside Street, adjacent to Lake Kegonsa. The property sits in a remarkable natural corridor adjacent to the lake and directly adjoining Lake Kegonsa State Park, the Lower Yahara River Bike Trail, and the Door Creek Wildlife Area. Preserving this land would protect an important connection between existing public lands and help safeguard the surrounding watershed and the lake.

For years, the property has been considered a prime candidate for housing development. Local residents recognized that if the land were developed it would create undesirable impervious surfaces which would increase runoff and pollution entering the lake and further strain the Lake Kegonsa ecosystem. By preserving the land as a permanent conservancy, the community hopes to protect the area for recreation, wildlife habitat, and clean water for generations to come. Local lake and conservation organizations are applauding the effort.

FOLKS endorses and strongly supports the project and its potential to protect the broader Lake Kegonsa watershed. **FOLKS** believes that acquiring this property and placing it in a permanent land conservation trust will provide great benefits to Lake Kegonsa by avoiding development and reducing run-off that carries harmful phosphorous and sediment into the lake.

A Community Goal to Protect the Lake and the Yahara Watershed

The committee must raise \$920,000 in cash and pledges by August 19, 2026, to complete the purchase. Encouragingly, local residents have already committed \$200,000 toward the goal. **FOLKS** encourages all Lake Kegonsa residents to make a tax-deductible financial donation to the project.

Over the coming months, the group plans to host community fundraisers, conduct neighborhood outreach, and pursue local, foundation, and state grant opportunities.

“This is truly a historic opportunity to do something wonderful for the lake and a place that I love,” said Kim Walz, Secretary of the Committee and former board member of both the Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society (**FOLKS**) and Clean Lakes Alliance.

Committee President Jeff Zoeller emphasized that community participation will be essential to success. “We hope the entire community will support this effort,” Zoeller said. “No contribution is too small. It will take all of us working together to invest in this land and make this vision a reality.”

How to Support the Effort

Tax-deductible donations supporting the purchase of the land can be made through Clean Lakes Alliance. To make a donation:

Online	Check
Clean Lakes Alliance Preserve Lot 3 Sunnyside - Clean Lakes Alliance: https://www.cleanlakesalliance.org/donate/preserve-lot-3-sunnyside/	Please designate “Preserve Lot 3 Sunnyside” in the <i>Memo</i> section and mail it to: Clean Lakes Alliance 150 E. Gilman St., Suite 2600 Madison, WI 53703

Clean Lakes Alliance Serving as Fiscal Sponsor

To help make the project possible, **Clean Lakes Alliance** has agreed to serve as the initiative’s fiscal sponsor. Donations made through Clean Lakes Alliance go directly toward the Project and will

be held in support of the land purchase until the acquisition can be completed. If the purchase does not ultimately move forward, all donations will be returned.

"I am excited to support this initiative," said James Tye, Executive Director and Founder of Clean Lakes Alliance. "This committee's work is another great example of local leadership within our "Renew the Blue" movement to protect our Madison-area lakes."

2026 Aquatic Debris Pier Pick-up Program

FOLKS works in cooperation with the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department (LWRD) to provide pick-up of aquatic debris from the end of piers around Lake Kegonsa. This year pick-up days will be Monday through Thursday. LWRD staff will not be on the lake on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. As in prior years, if you have your debris on your pier by Tuesday morning at 7:00 a.m., it will be picked up that week.

The **2026** schedule is as follows:

- June 15 through June 18
- June 29 through July 2 (pre 4th of July pick-up)
- July 13 through July 16
- July 27 through July 30
- August 10 through August 13
- August 24 through August 27 (NEW this year for pre-Labor Day pick up)
- September 8 through September 10 (post Labor Day pick up)

Reminder of rules for aquatic debris pick-up:

- The barge crew will cover all of Lake Kegonsa and Yahara River residences on Orvold Park Drive, Alsmo Lane, and Fish Camp Road.
- The barge will be on the lake and start picking up on Monday of each week. The deadline on Lake Kegonsa for having debris on your pier is Tuesday at 7:00 a.m. for material to be picked up. The barge crew will make ONE complete pass around the lake and river. It usually takes the barge crew three or four days to make a complete pass. Please have all debris out by Tuesday morning or you may get missed. It will take the crew a few days to get to your pier, so be patient. The crew will end its work by Thursday or earlier if it has covered the entire lake.
- Place debris at the end of your pier so that the barge can safely and easily access it. If the water is too shallow at the end of your pier, the crew will not be able to perform the pickup.
- Material ALLOWED – LWRD allows residents to place lake vegetation on the end of their piers for collection. The pick-up service will collect only aquatic vegetation and other debris that either grows in the water or has washed up on shore from the lake.
- Material NOT ALLOWED -- LWRD does not collect yard waste (garbage or pet waste), household waste, brush, limbs, grass clippings, or material growing on land and not the water (including material growing on your shore but not in the water). This type of material interferes with and can damage conveyors used for the offloading. If any of these materials are found, the entire load will not be collected and all material will be left on your pier with a placard explaining why. In other words, the program only removes vegetation that comes out of the lake.

FOLKS sends messages throughout the season to remind members of pickup weeks and the

schedule is posted on our website and the LWRD website. This program helps the lake by keeping vegetation out of the water and keeping your shoreline and the lake clean. We hope to have another successful year and encourage you to utilize the program. Contact Dave Gilles, Program Committee Chairperson, if you have questions.

Ice Off Contest Winner

This wild weather certainly has been teasing us! After 95 days of ice on Lake Kegonsa, Ice Off arrived March 13th, 2026. Three **FOLKS** members guessed the correct date and after a random drawing, Paul Becker is the winner of the \$50 Springers gift certificate. A huge thank you again to Springers for supporting **FOLKS** by donating the gift certificate!

Save the Date!

FOLKS is excited to bring our members several events this spring and summer! Save the date on your calendar! You won't want to miss these events!

Saturday, April 11 9am-10:30: Spring Educational Event at Springers: Learn about Native American History and Culture of Lake Kegonsa. Hear from speaker Janice Rice, Senior Academic Librarian Emeritus, University of Wisconsin and Clan Mother, Ho-Chunk Nation. Meet Bill Quakenbush, Tribal Preservation Officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation and see a model dugout canoe and hear about Bill's journey in constructing and navigating this canoe on the Madison lakes.

Saturday, June 6: **FOLKS** Annual Meeting at Stoughton Country Club

Tuesday, July 14 9-10:30AM (7/21 rain date): "Everything Bumble Bee - a misunderstood pollinator" a small group educational program led by Maggie Honig, Bumble Bee Ambassador for Wisconsin DNR, learning about Wisconsin Bumble Bees, how to identify different species with hands on practice, and Bumble Bee conservation practices.

Boating Safety Education

Boating season is rapidly approaching and **FOLKS** wants to remind you about safe boating practices so that everyone can enjoy recreation on Lake Kegonsa in a safe manner. Please share Lake Kegonsa responsibly and safely with boaters, kayakers, fishermen, swimmers, skiers, and others. Let's have a great boating season by respecting everyone's right to use the lake safely and enjoyably. Thank you for your cooperation and support!

Learn the rules of boating

Wisconsin law that applies to the operation of motorboats and personal watercraft specifies age requirements for the operation of a motorboat or personal watercraft:

WHO MAY OPERATE A BOAT

- A person younger than 10 years may not operate a motorboat.
- A person 10 or 11 years old may operate a motorboat only if accompanied by a parent, a

guardian or a person at least 18 years old who is designated by the parent or guardian AND the parent, guardian or designated adult holds a valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989.

- A person 12-15 years old may operate a motorboat only if:
 - They are accompanied by a parent, a guardian or a person at least 18 years old who is designated by the parent or guardian AND the parent, guardian or designated adult holds a valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989 OR...
 - They have completed a boating safety course that is accepted by the Wisconsin DNR.
- A person who was born on or after January 1, 1989, and who is 16 years of age or older may operate a motorboat only if:
 - They have completed a boating safety course that is accepted by the Wisconsin DNR OR...
 - They are accompanied by another person in the motorboat who is at least 18 years of age AND that person holds a valid boating safety certificate or was born before January 1, 1989.

WHO MAY OPERATE A PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

- No one under the age of 12 may operate, lease or rent a personal watercraft.
- No one under the age of 16 may rent or lease a personal watercraft.
- Children at least 12 years of age may operate a personal watercraft if they have successfully completed the DNR prescribed boating safety course and possess a boating safety certificate issued by the Wisconsin DNR or another state. Adult supervision is not a substitute for a certificate.

BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has an excellent boating safety education course that is required for anyone born after January 1, 1989 to complete and receive a certified boating safety card. The course provides valuable educational information for people beginning to operate motorboats and personal watercraft to learn safe boating practices. The link below will take you to boater education course information on the DNR website. Go to the Boating tab and you will find links to both in-classroom and on-line classes.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/safetyEducation>

An in-classroom class is offered in Waunakee May 5, 2026 6:00 p.m. and May 19, 2026 at 8:00 p.m. Waunakee Village Center, Class 1 of 4, 333 South Madison Street.

<https://gowild.wi.gov/customers/safetyedclass>

Law Enforcement

Dane County Sheriff deputies, who are part of the Marine Enforcement Bureau, periodically conduct routine patrols on Lake Kegonsa to assure safety for lake users. They are dispatched to the lake in the event of an emergency. They can issue citations for violations and also investigate complaints. If anyone encounters an emergency or witnesses a boating violation on Lake Kegonsa, please call 911 to report the issue. The Sheriff and **FOLKS** hope that citations are not needed and encourages everyone to follow safety rules and respect everyone on the lake.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website

2026 **FOLKS** Membership

Have you renewed your membership for 2026? Do you have a new neighbor who would like to join **FOLKS**? Our membership dues remain \$20 per household (+\$10 for newsletter if it is mailed). Your membership dues make the projects highlighted in this newsletter and a number of others possible. If you know of neighbors who are not members, please ask them to join **FOLKS** for the \$20 membership dues. If you choose, you can also make an additional donation to **FOLKS** with the payment of your dues. Renew online today! <https://www.kegonsa.org/membershipsubscriptions>

Water Levels

As of March 10, 2026 – Lake water levels are expected to gradually rise over the next one to two months as they transition toward summer minimum operating levels. March and April are typically the seasonal transition period when lake levels move from winter operating levels to the summer operating range, with the goal of reaching the summer range by Memorial Day. The time required for this transition depends largely on the amount of precipitation received during this period. Navigational buoys in the Yahara River and area lakes were removed in the Fall for the season and may not yet be reinstalled for the Spring. Please use caution while on the water, as buoys that normally mark hazards and navigation routes may not currently be in place. Dane County boat launch piers are planned for installation in April to support the start of the boating season. The Babcock Lock is open for navigation. The LaFollette Lock is closed for navigation.

Check the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department website for the most current lake levels and dam status information:

<https://lwrd.danecounty.gov/Lake-Levels>

FOLKS 2026 Calendar of Events

Date	Activity
April 11	Spring Educational Event at Springers
June 6	Annual FOLKS Meeting at Stoughton Country Club
June 15 - June 18	Aquatic debris pick-up
June 29 - July 2	Aquatic debris pick-up
July 13 - July 16	Aquatic debris pick-up
July 14	DNR Everything Bumble Bee
July 27 - July 30	Aquatic debris pick-up
August 10 - August 13	Aquatic debris pick-up
August 24 - August 27	Aquatic debris pick-up
September 8 - September 10	Aquatic debris pick-up

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Email kegonsafolks@gmail.com to connect with the Board

Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.
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For More About **FOLKS**,
Visit our website at www.Kegonsa.org and

on Facebook  at facebook.com/kegonsa/

Please Support Your Lake Association - Renew Your **FOLKS** Membership.

This year's dues remain \$20.00 for households and \$30.00 for businesses.

If you have any questions regarding membership, please send a message to kegonsafolks@gmail.com

Send news of interest to **FOLKS** :
P.O. Box 173
Stoughton, WI 53589 or
kegonsafolks@gmail.com

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FOLKS Lost and Found

List lost and found items on the Website (www.kegonsa.org) or Facebook page

FOLKS board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month except for a couple of months in the winter. The public is always welcome.
Next Board Meeting is April 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM, Stoughton Country Club

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