



Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 173

Stoughton, WI 53589-0173

**December 2018**

## **President’s Message ~ Peter Foy**

As we close out a very successful 2018 I would like to personally thank the members of our FOLKS Board for their hard work and enthusiasm for making our organization stronger each year. Our membership is at an all-time high and over 37% of our members donated money in addition to their \$20 dues, which wouldn’t be happening if our members weren’t happy with the performance of our Board.

The articles in this year-end newsletter will offer a brief review of some of the various projects and activities over the last 12 months. Most of the projects had more detailed articles in prior newsletters, so this is just meant as a review. As you read through them I encourage you to contact any of the Board members if you have any questions, or suggestions. Their email addresses are included at the end of the newsletter. I am always available at [peter.foy@charter.net](mailto:peter.foy@charter.net).

The Board will now start setting goals and identifying projects for 2019. It should be another exciting year for FOLKS.

Of course, we are hoping for a more normal summer on the lake regarding water levels, aquatic plants and lake conditions. We will continue our close relationships with the County, the Wisconsin DNR, Clean Lakes Alliance and our local government organizations. By leveraging everyone’s strengths we improve our chance for success in whatever we undertake.

We want to also thank each of our members for their ongoing support.

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## **Ice On Contest**

I was sure the lake had frozen over on Friday, December 7. The temperatures were well below normal and there was no wind. Perfect scenario for the lake to freeze and the lake looked like glass. But the geese did it again. The entire lake had frozen over except for two areas. Over a 1,000 geese had settled in the lake in front of Stoughton Country Club as well as in Barber Bay and were keeping the water open with their movement. So, for the 2 who guessed 12/7, sorry!

The good news is the geese decided to move and today, 12/12, Lake Kegonsa is officially frozen over. Only 3 FOLKS members guessed this date. Congratulations to Rich Hall who was the first person to submit his guess for that date. We will be sending you a gift certificate to Springers Restaurant. We want to thank to Springers for the continued support for this contest.

As usual this is a popular contest. We had over 100 entries with 80 of them coming in the first two days! The first was received 14 minutes after the contest email was sent! The earliest date entered was 11/24/18 and the latest is 1/11/19. The most popular date is 12/15/18 with 9 folks entering this date!

Thanks to all who participated. The lake completely froze over on the same day – 12/14 in 2016 and 2017. We are not that far off!

## **FOLKS Membership**

### **Record Membership in 2018**

We now have 404 households as FOLKS members, which is a record for our organization. This represents people living on Lake Kegonsa, the Yahara River and many other households interested in projects assisting Lake Kegonsa.

We have 34 business members. We appreciate their support. Please patronize these businesses whenever you can. They are listed in the back of each newsletter.

### **Outstanding member support**

FOLKS had outstanding member assistance in 2018 - 37% of our members gave us more than the base membership amount. These donations enable FOLKS to continue important projects impacting Lake Kegonsa. We'd also like to acknowledge our Board of Directors and our wonderful volunteers for their tireless hours of work.

### **Grants and Other Support**

FOLKS received project grants from the Bryant Foundation, Clean Lakes Alliance and the Stoughton Conservation Club. Springer's Restaurant and Stoughton Country Club have been exceptional sponsors for our annual meeting, lake levels presentation and social events.

### **Renewal for 2019**

Look for your annual FOLKS membership renewal letters in January. Please review your member information (names, postal and email addresses) so we can keep our records current. We will include the FOLKS brochure so you can share it with your neighbors.

**Thank you for your continuing support of FOLKS and commitment to improving Lake Kegonsa.**

## **Leaf Management Project**

The **FOLKS** leaf management pilot projects have been wildly successful. We've received very positive feedback from our members. In partnership with the **Town of Dunn**, the **Town of Pleasant Springs** and the **City of Stoughton** leaves were vacuumed from all around Lake Kegonsa in 2018 for the very first time.

Leaves are a major source of phosphorus entering our waterways. As water flows over leaves, phosphorous is leached out of the leaves and into the storm water. Excessive phosphorous leads to algal blooms and poor water quality. Proper handling of leaves can potentially reduce the phosphorus making it into our lakes from leaves by 40 to 80%.

FOLKS is working to educate our members and others in the community about the negative impact phosphorus that comes from leaves has on our lake. FOLKS began the leaf collection pilot projects in the Town of Dunn and the Town of Pleasant Springs last year. Our efforts continued through this fall.

### **Education and Support**

FOLKS prepared and mailed educational brochures about the pilot program to residents on the lake and across the street in each of the Towns. We provided educational information on leaf management to all lake residents even if they were not FOLKS members but were part of the pilot projects.

At the annual meeting and through our newsletters, FOLKS offered compostable paper leaf bags to any member who wanted to bag their leaves. FOLKS Board members coordinated this communication and delivery.

We encouraged residents who did not take advantage of the pilot projects to utilize their town's compost site and provided information on the compost site locations and hours. We worked with the towns to provide additional days that the transfer site was open.

### **Yard Signs**

FOLKS prepared and purchased 150 yard signs for Town residents to display that encouraged participation in the leaf campaign.

We also provided street signs that announced the pick-up dates. The Towns used the signs to alert residents of upcoming pick-up days.

### **Town of Pleasant Springs Leaf Pick-up**

The Town of Pleasant Springs used the City of Stoughton's leaf vacuum to pick up leaves on streets around Lake Kegonsa. The City of Stoughton allowed us to rent their vacuum for the Pleasant Springs pilot project. Their leaf vacuum reduces whole leaves to shredded 10:1. The City of Stoughton has been an excellent partner in our leaf management campaign.

The Town of Pleasant Springs vacuumed leaves on three weekends this year – November 3-4, 10-11, and 17-18. Due to early snows that interrupted the schedule, they came back around to do a final day of leaf collection on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

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## Leaf Management Project (Continued From Page 3)

FOLKS helped finance the first year leaf vacuuming pilot and plans to continue assistance for leaf collection next year.



### **Town of Dunn Leaf Pick-up**

In 2017, the Town of Dunn received a \$20,000 grant from the Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (WIN) to purchase a leaf vacuum. The delivery of the Town's leaf vacuum was delayed so it was used for the first time in the 2018 season. The Town of Dunn made numerous pickups around Lake Kegonsa this fall.

### **Scheduling Leaf Pick Up**

The most difficult aspect of the leaf vacuuming pilots from our members' perspective was in knowing when leaves would be picked up from their property. The weather has a lot of say in the timing of when leaves will fall or the snow will fly so this is inherently a difficult question for the Towns when they are scheduling equipment and personnel. Both Towns did their best to pick up leaves throughout November and this seems to have worked for most homeowners.

### **Funding**

Generous grant funding for the 2018 leaf management pilot project comes from the **Clean Lakes Alliance** and the **Edwin E. and Janet L. Bryant Foundation**.



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## Leaf Management Project (Continued From Page 4)

### **Results**

We can't quantify how many of the leaves vacuumed from around the lake this year would have normally been left in the streets so we can't determine exactly how much phosphorous was kept out of the lake. What we do know is that our members gave us very positive feedback about the leaf vacuuming program and they either took advantage of the leaf vacuuming program, mulched their leaves onto their lawns or gardens, or took them to compost sites. We will estimate the amount of phosphorous in the vacuumed leaves when we have final results from the Towns of the number of truckloads collected.

### **Leaf Committee**

We'd like to thank Gary Smithback, Chairman, and his committee – Dave Luellwitz, Cathie Taylor, Eric Olson, Daniele Thompson, Connie Hagen and Peter Foy – for their hard work and enthusiasm on the leaf collection programs in the Town of Dunn and the Town of Pleasant Springs.

**Look for a follow up member email survey about leaf management to help us quantify our project results. And please add any comments or suggestions for improvements.**

## Fish Camp County Park Building Renovation Project

FOLKS was very fortunate to partner this year with Dane County Parks Department to preserve the historic corn and net warehouse buildings located at Fish Camp County Park on Lake Kegonsa. These two 1937 buildings had been used in the carp removal operation for over 30 years. Fish Camp is a little-known gem on the northwest side of Lake Kegonsa that boasts a boat launch, trails, picnic areas, and fully accessible fishing piers.

This fall FOLKS funded the replacement of all rotten siding and trim on the two historic buildings, and Dane County replaced the roofs as well as removed the dilapidated fenced-in area that was filled with miscellaneous debris and park equipment. Next spring Dane County has plans to paint both buildings, so they will look as good as new.

Fish Camp is truly returning to a destination on Lake Kegonsa. If you appreciate all of the wonderful trails throughout Dane County, you will also be excited to learn that Dane County has plans in the works to extend the Yahara River Trail through Fish Camp.

Please stop by to enjoy Fish Camp and all it has to offer. Don't forget to take in the beautiful plantings by the entrance sign and the shoreline gardens. FOLKS is making significant efforts to maintain the natural beauty on Lake Kegonsa and restore its history.



## Presentation On Lake Levels And Other Lake Kegonsa Issues

**FOLKS** sponsored a special presentation on lake levels and other issues which was attended by over 220 people on Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. Our speakers were Dane County Executive, **Joe Parisi** and Assistant Director of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, **John Reimer**. Our representatives to the Dane County Board of Supervisors, **Melissa Ratcliff**, District 36 (Pleasant Springs) and **Patrick Miles**, District 34 (Dunn) were also present.



We've tried to highlight some of the meeting's most important points. Much of the information below is from the Dane County Executive's or Land & Water Resources Department websites.

In the wake of historic summer flooding that resulted in millions of dollars of damage, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced an \$18 million proposal for the County's 2019 budget to aid flood recovery and improve lake health. He discussed certain aspects of the budget items and how this would help our lake and strengthen our communities.

The 2019 Dane County budget contains several areas of funding directly related to flooding including

- \$200,000 to begin analyzing a restoration of the Door Creek wetlands that drain into Lake Kegonsa,
- \$1 million for a park and trail flood repair matching grant fund,
- a \$500,000 streambank restoration fund ,
- \$75,000 to conduct real time modeling of the benefits and considerations for various lake level scenarios and
- \$750,000 for the new Dane County Conservation Reserve Program to pay farmers and property owners to convert lands at greater risk of run-off to prairies and grasses that are more able to hold soil and reduce water run-off.
- \$8 million for potential conservation acquisitions with a similar goal.
- Funding for
  - Two more fast-fill sand bagging machines,
  - 250,000 more sandbags,
  - large pumps to move volumes of water off roads and other critical infrastructure, and
  - portable generators for emergency service if power is out.

The full budget can be accessed through the Dane Co Executive's website at the following link: <https://exec.countyofdane.com/budget.aspx>.

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## Presentation on Lake Levels and other Lake Kegonsa Issues (Continued From Page 6)

John Reimer is responsible for lake level management including aquatic plant harvesting and operation of the three dams in the Yahara Chain of Lakes. He explained why managing our lake levels is more difficult than it was in the past and what is planned to improve control of lake levels in the future. The 2018 rains and the inefficient movement of water were a large part of the discussion.

- Rains - "Rainfall events have become heavier and more frequent (National Climate Assessment, 2017). In 2018, areas in Dane County experienced the second wettest May on record and an intense rain event on August 20-21." "In 2018, heavy rainfall resulted in lake levels that were approximately 12-18 inches above summer maximum goals prior to additional rainfall in August 2018 which further raised lake levels to new historic highs."
- The urban area has almost doubled Dane County since 1970. The increased non-permeable surfaces from urban development dramatically increase the amount of stormwater runoff going directly to our lakes and streams.
- The slope of the Yahara River is very flat in our area and water consequently moves slowly through the system. Babcock Dam and Lafollette Dam (going out of Lake Kegonsa) have been completely open since August 2016, with the exception of one week. Tenney Park Dam was used to regulate flow out of Lake Mendota so that it can be used as a reservoir to hold water or to deliver water.
- Constriction points in the system also cause reduced water flow. He explained that in July 2018, 31 dump truck loads of debris were removed from under the railroad trestle in Stoughton which increased the water flow by about 20%.
- Aquatic plants in the Yahara River below Lake Kegonsa were also a problem in getting water to flow out of lake. In 2018 a special permit was received from the DNR to harvest aquatic plants in the river between Lake Kegonsa and Stoughton. According to the lwrp website, "Between 5/21 to 9/14, 628 dump truck loads of aquatic plants were removed in the Yahara River. Over a 5 day period of 12-14 hour work days in mid August, 95 dump truck loads were removed which doubled the flow."

There were many challenging questions – both from the **FOLKS** Lake Level Committee and from attendees. The growth of aquatic plants, plant cutting and picking up the cut plants was of particular interest to our members during the question session. **FOLKS** plans to work with the LWRD to improve aquatic plant cutting and pick up in the coming year.

We greatly appreciate the interest and attendance from our **FOLKS** members. The number of people attending showed Executive Parisi and Asst. Director Reimer how involved our membership is and how deeply invested we are in the future of Lake Kegonsa.

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## Presentation on Lake Levels and other Lake Kegonsa Issues (Continued From Page 7)

**Additional Information:** For those of you who couldn't make it to the November meeting, the following link takes you to the new flood facts & initiatives page on the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department website <https://lwr.d.countyofdane.com/flood-facts-and-initiatives>. Near the bottom of the page under the Yahara River Watershed tab there is a link to a presentation given to the Dane County Board of Supervisors which is very similar to the one John Reimer presented to FOLKS.

**Technical Work Group:** Dane County Land & Water Resources Department has established a technical work group to address the recent flooding in the Yahara Chain of Lakes. The group will evaluate lake level conditions, model scenarios that include predicted climate changes, identify short- and long-term approaches to improve resiliency for future events and report by February 1, 2019. A task force of the Lakes and Watershed Commission will review the findings of the technical work group and make policy recommendations by March 31, 2019. We will keep you informed of developments as they arise.

### Fish Camp Park News

In 2018 FOLKS repaired damage created by the ice to our shoreline garden. Plants that did not survive the winter were replaced and new ones added. The shoreline garden is thriving and looks great from the path or boating the river. A new sign explains the importance of native shoreline plantings and the new information box at the site offers literature relating to lake conservation.

FOLKS funded a beautiful memorial bench alongside the garden in remembrance of Ray Potempa's many contributions to our lake through his work in FOLKS.

Dane county installed a new park entry sign, where we have planted native plants to enhance the entrance. Like the shoreline garden, this garden is and will continue to be maintained by FOLKS.

This fall we weeded and mulched around the trees in the groomed area of the park to improve their appearance.

This winter we will be meeting with members of the park department to determine the plans for the park in 2019 and how FOLKS can help. With the bike trail scheduled to go through the park in the near future, this may offer new needs to be met at the park.





## From The Wisconsin Salt Wise Partnership

The WI Salt Wise Partnership ([wisaltwise.com](http://wisaltwise.com)) is urging homeowners, municipalities, and private contractors to make a commitment to reduce salt use this winter. Using excess salt doesn't make your sidewalks safer — it harms plants and animals, pollutes our water, damages buildings and corrodes vehicles, roads and bridges. Once you put salt down, it doesn't go away. Instead, it travels into our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, putting our aquatic life at risk and endangering our freshwater resources.

Salt also alters the composition of soil, slows plant growth and weakens the concrete, brick and stone that make up our homes, garages, bridges, and roads. According to a recent report from Public Health Madison Dane County, nearly 30,000 tons of salt were spread on Madison and Dane Co. roads during the winter of 2014-15, and that doesn't include what was spread on parking lots, sidewalks and driveways. That is enough to pollute over 23 billion gallons of water.

There is a way to cut down on salt use and keep our roads, parking lots and driveways safe:

### Use only what you need — and that's less than you might think!

A coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. The scatter pattern should look like the image on the left.

Other things you can do to reduce salt and protect water include:

- **Shovel:** Clear walkways and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be.
- **Switch:** When pavement temps drop below 15, salt won't work. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works in lower temperatures.
- Hire a **salt wise** applicator: If you hire a contractor to remove snow and ice, let them know you are WI Salt Wise! Some local applicators have been trained in winter maintenance practices that reduce environmental impacts. Ask potential contractors if they've been trained and use practices that reduce salt use such as pretreating with brine or pre-wetting salt.
- **Look for proper salt use** at the stores & businesses you visit. If they're using the right amount of salt, thank them! If not, let them know about WI Salt Wise.
- **Love the lines:** The stripes on the roadway before a storm are anti-icing, they show that your professional maintenance crew is concerned about your safety and is saving money, time and protecting our environment!
- **Be Salt Wise all year!** The salt you put in your water softener ends up in local freshwater streams. New, efficient softeners use less than one bag per month. If you're using more – have a professional tune yours up – or, replace it with a high-efficiency model.



## Beautiful Birds of Lake Kegonsa

When we look out our window and see the spectacular migrating birds, it makes us very thankful that we live here. We thought we'd share some pictures.

Sandhill Cranes in our yard :



A Heron on the Pier:



Pelicans just passing through:



Swans, geese and all kinds of ducks:



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## Beautiful Birds of Lake Kegonsa (Continued From Page 10)

Hundreds of little Coots:



The hawk sitting outside our window and the magnificent eagles fishing near the edge of the ice last week. Happily, they don't migrate.



(Photos - Bill Lamm and Connie Hagen)

### Carp Project

We were a little disappointed in the way our carp project ended up this year. The commercial fishermen started out strong, removing about 100,000 pounds of carp in the spring. When they came back to assess the lake conditions, in preparation for fishing in the November, they discovered that the aquatic plant growth from our unusual summer was excessive enough to curtail fishing. With the high plant growth the carp would escape when they pulled the nets in over the existing plants. They came out and checked the conditions three different times.

FOLKS had offered to pay a bonus of \$0.10 a lb., up to \$40,000, for carp removed over 100,000 lbs. Because of this incentive, we know that the fishermen were anxious to come back, but the conditions didn't make it feasible.

We will be working with the WDNR and the commercial fishermen to see if there is any way to improve the chance of increasing the number of lbs. of carp removed in 2019. FOLKS will again be offering a large incentive. We understand that a number of the components of this project are out of our control, but we will continue to support this important initiative.



**Please Shop and Support FOLKS Fabulous Business Members**

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<b>Computer Management &amp; Accounting</b>	<b>PO Box 301, Stoughton WI 53589</b>
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<b>The Edwin E. &amp; Janet L. Bryant Foundation</b>	<b>3039 Shadyside Dr., Stoughton WI 53589</b>
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FOLKS monthly board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month and the public are welcome to attend. Next Meeting is January 9, 2019, 5:30 - 7:00 PM. At Springers, 3097 Sunnyside St., Stoughton, WI 53589

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

Published four times yearly by The Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.

The opinions and information expressed in this publication are for general information only. Its authors and publisher do not represent that information herein is the official position of any agency or governmental unit.

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 contact Connie Hagen at chagen001@gmail.com or Peter Foy at peter.foy@charter.net

**FOLKS Lost and Found**

List lost and found items on the FOLKS Facebook page or contact Eric Olson at eolson@bunburyrealtors.com

For More About FOLKS, Visit Our Website at [WWW.Kegonsa.org](http://WWW.Kegonsa.org) and on

Facebook  at [facebook.com/kegonas/](https://facebook.com/kegonas/) or

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