



Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 173
Stoughton, WI 53589-0173
January 2021

President’s Message ~ Peter Foy

I’m sure you were all happy to bid farewell to 2020 and welcome in a new year. Despite all of the complications and uneasiness we all experienced in 2020, I can cheerfully report that your **FOLKS** organization enjoyed another successful year. The Board has continued to meet via Zoom throughout the year and everyone has stayed engaged and kept our projects moving forward.

Because of Covid-19 we had to postpone our annual meeting this year, but I am happy to report that all of the Board members and officers have agreed to stay on until we can hold our next annual meeting. We will be electing directors and officers at that time. We are currently planning to hold our annual meeting on Saturday June 19, 2021. We are hoping to be able to conduct our usual in person meeting, but if that is still not possible, we will schedule a Zoom meeting. So, either way, our next annual meeting should be on June 19th.

We always enjoy presenting an update about our projects at the annual meeting and getting your comments and questions. Because we can’t do that this year, we have included a little update on each project in this newsletter.

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President's Message continued

As we announced earlier in the year, **FOLKS** won a **2020 Wisconsin Lakes Stewardship Award** and we just received a beautiful plaque from Wisconsin Lakes. Wisconsin Lakes is the only statewide non-profit organization working exclusively to protect and enhance the quality of Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes. "The Stewardship Award goes to groups who exemplify the extraordinary volunteer and professional effort made to protect and improve lakes in Wisconsin".

This is truly a full **FOLKS** award, everyone on the Board and many members have contributed their time and talent to make our organization one of the most successful in Wisconsin. It is always nice to have others recognize our efforts.



As always, we welcome any comments, or question you have about any **FOLKS** activity. The contacts for all of the Board members are included at the end of the newsletter.

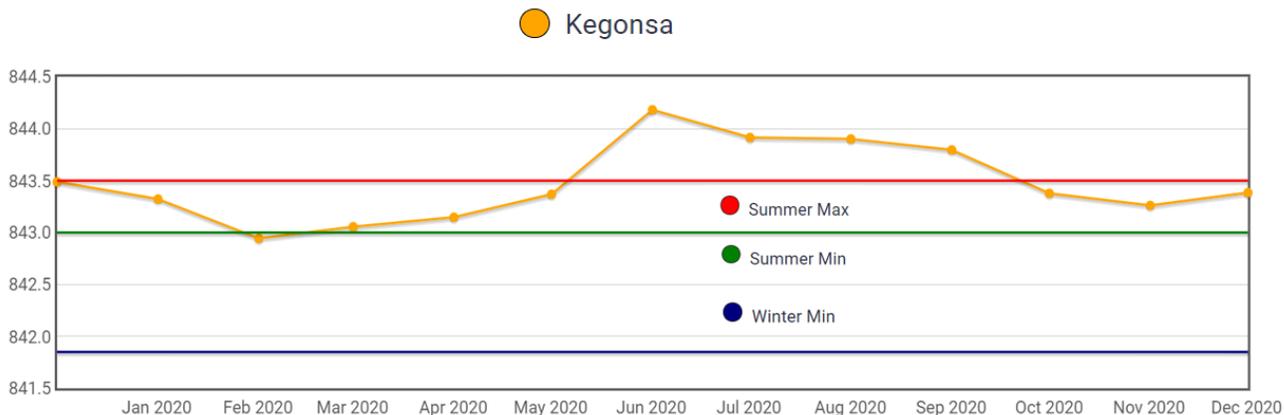
Have a wonderful New Year.

– Peter Foy

2020 Lake Kegonsa Water Levels

The graph below shows the 2020 Lake Kegonsa levels per the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department website at (<https://lwr.dane.gov/chartlakelevels>).

2020 Lake Kegonsa Water Level (feet above sea level) from Jan.2020 to Dec. 2020



As you can see in the graph, Lake Kegonsa rose rapidly this spring (16.4" from May 14th to June 11th) as it did in 2019 but held relatively steady throughout the summer of 2020 even with a few large rain events.

The Dane County goal for 2020 was to obtain summer minimum levels on all lakes to build flood capacity. However, all of the lakes were above summer maximum levels throughout the summer even though Babcock Dam (Lake Waubesa) and LaFollette Dam (Lake Kegonsa) were completely open the entire year.

As of January 5, 2021, the Lake Kegonsa level is 843.02' (ft above sea level) which is very near the summer minimum level of 843.0'. Lake levels are expected to continue to lower during winter (ice) conditions. Winter goals for Dane County (starting November 1st) are to maintain water levels between the winter minimum and summer minimum target levels on the Yahara lakes. For Lake Kegonsa this range is between 843.0' (summer minimum) and 841.85' (winter minimum).

Lake Monona and Lake Waubesa are also at their summer minimum levels as of January 5th. Lake Mendota is more than a foot below summer minimum and close to the winter minimum level. Therefore, Dane County is currently doing very well at building flood capacity for spring.

Lake	1/5/2021 Lake Level (ft)	Winter Minimum (ft)	Summer Minimum (ft)	Summer Maximum (ft)
Mendota	848.43	848.20	849.60	850.10
Monona	844.70	842.20	844.70	845.20
Waubesa	844.50	842.00	844.50	845.00
Kegonsa	843.02	841.85	843.00	843.50

FOLKS Membership and Financials

Membership - As we reported in our last newsletter **FOLKS** household membership was at an all-time high in 2020. We have 457 members (422 Household members and 35 Business members). Please talk to your friends and neighbors about joining **FOLKS** – more voices and ideas make us stronger.

You should receive your annual dues statement in the mail this week. Don't laugh when you find the typo.... Remember we're just volunteers. Please check all the information so that we have your most current names/addresses/emails. We don't give your address or email to anyone without your permission, ever.

Membership forms are available on our website at www.kegonsa.org. We also have all the archived newsletters on the website so potential members can learn more about **FOLKS**.

Financial Position – Due to the substantial support of our members and a very generous grant from the Bryant Foundation, **FOLKS** had an increase in net assets of \$22,739 for the year ending 12/31/2020. We are in an excellent position to continue projects for Lake Kegonsa in the upcoming year.

Update on Carp Removal Project

We had mixed success with our carp removal project in 2020. After removing 162,135 lbs. in 2019 we removed only 62,700 lbs. in 2020. Once again all of the carp were sold live to markets in the Brooklyn, NY area.

There were a number of reasons for the reduction: Covid-19 reduced the demand for live carp sales, a truck hired to collect the carp did not show up on a designated Friday and then when the fishermen tried to keep them in the pen over the weekend a muskrat chewed through the net and much of the catch got away. Finally, the fishermen reported, for the first time, that it was more difficult to find a large number of carp in Lake Kegonsa. We had thought that we might spend up to \$27,500 on our carp project in 2020 and we ended up spending nothing because our incentive doesn't kick in until after they have removed 100,000 lbs. of carp.

Looking ahead to 2021 we are budgeting \$20,000 for the carp project and we are working with the Wisconsin DNR and the fishermen that have the contract to develop a win-win incentive plan. We will do anything we can to make sure that the fishermen come back in the spring to fish again. We have a number of things that are out of our control, which could possibly work against us:

- Covid-19 could still have a major impact on the market
- The 2021 Passover season, which is a major driving factor affecting live fish sales, is 3/27-4/3, so ice would have to be off the lake to allow for early fishing
- The fishermen might believe that the number of carp has been sufficiently reduced to make it harder to make a huge catch
- One of the purchasers of carp has gone out of business.

Again, we will do whatever we can to help continue this highly successful project.

Update on the Leaf Management Project

The **FOLKS** Leaf Management Project had another very successful season in Fall 2020. The Towns of Dunn and Pleasant Springs both utilized leaf vacuums to help keep our streets, lawns and lakes clean and healthy. **FOLKS** again partnered directly with both towns and the City of Stoughton to run this project with the goal of reducing the amount of phosphorous entering our waterways from storm water flowing over uncollected leaves. As stormwater flows over the leaves, phosphorous is leached out of the leaves. This nutrient-rich runoff flows directly into the lake.

The 2020 **FOLKS** Leaf Management Project diverted approximately **200 lbs. of Phosphorus** in total. We encourage you to continue participation in the program next year by removing the leaves from the street near your house and include them with your other leaves.

Town of Dunn

The Town of Dunn alerted residents about their leaf program and schedule for pickup via their website (www.town.dunn.wi.us, search 'Leaf Management'). The Town of Dunn ran two leaf collections in which they collected 22 loads (550 cubic yards) of leaves from the Lake Kegonsa area. Pick up dates were November 13th-15th and 27th -29th. This was made possible by the equipment-sharing program with the City of Stoughton's leaf vacuum truck, subsidized in part by **FOLKS**.

In addition, the Township was very pleased with the use of the six established leaf drop off points – two near Lake Waubesa and four in the Lake Kegonsa area. The four drop off sites around Lake Kegonsa resulted in an additional 13 loads (325 cubic yards) of leaves collected. The Town of Dunn plans to make these sites available again next fall.

Based on feedback from the Township, the public continues to require more education about where to place leaves for pick-up. It would be helpful to the Township to have the leaves closer to the road and **FOLKS** signage already emphasizes keeping leaves out of the street.

Town of Pleasant Springs

The Town of Pleasant Springs continues to share the City of Stoughton's equipment on weekends collecting leaves Friday afternoon through Saturday and finishing on Sunday if necessary.

FOLKS placed announcement signs for the Township every few blocks around the lake with the dates of leaf collection clearly marked. Pickup dates this year were November 6th-7th and 20th-22nd. The weather cooperated this year and made for optimum leaf collection. The Town of Pleasant Springs collected 15 loads of leaves this year for a total of 375 cubic yards of leaves.

FOLKS Involvement

In this 4th year of the leaf management project **FOLKS** again assisted in coordinating between the Towns of Dunn & Pleasant Springs and the City of Stoughton.

- The Town of Dunn has taken the lead in running their leaf pickup with funding assistance from **FOLKS** for the use of the City of Stoughton's leaf vacuum truck.
- In the Town of Pleasant Springs, **FOLKS** continued to assist with funding for leasing equipment from the City of Stoughton and covering some costs for the leaf pick-up around Lake Kegonsa.



Your **FOLKS** Board has budgeted for continued funding for next year's Leaf Collection and both Townships have committed to the funding efforts for the 2021 Leaf Program. This is a commitment we are making with the Townships as stewards of the community's lakes and rivers and to improve the vitality of the lake and beaches for our residents.

FOLKS' support for the annual leaf collection program continues to be one of our most significant programs. We certainly appreciate **YOUR** efforts to keep Lake Kegonsa clean!

Update on Aquatic Debris Collection Program

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Aquatic Debris Collection Program in 2020 (commonly referred to as the "barge pick-up program"). The program was popular among lake residents and we had good participation – overall a great success in its second year! This program is arranged by **FOLKS** with the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department. **FOLKS** pays the cost of the program with funds from membership fees, donations, and grants from members and supporters.

The County barge crew collects debris from the lake that residents place at the end of their piers during the pick-up weeks.

In 2020, we had a total of six pick-up weeks starting in June and ending in September. At least, 35 loads of debris were collected by the barge crew which equates to approximately 35,000 pounds of debris removed from the lake and shoreline. This year we saw a lot of aquatic plants, both growing and cut, in the lake and river and the barge pick-up program provided a great way for residents to dispose of those plants. These efforts by lake residents enhance the cleanliness and beauty of the lake, river, and shoreline of Lake Kegonsa.

FOLKS plans to offer the program again in 2021 and pick-up week dates will be announced in the spring. We are continuing to work with the lake management professionals at Dane County to improve the program and to explore ways to manage and control aquatic plants in the lake and river.

FOLKS thanks Dane County Land & Water Resources Department representatives who work with us to make this program a success. We especially thank the workers on the barge crews and the plant harvesting crews for their dedication and hard work to help manage our lake.

Update on *FOLKS*/Kegonsa Sanitary District #2 Run Off Reduction Project

As we have been reporting throughout the year, **FOLKS** has been working on a runoff reduction project with the Town of Dunn, Kegonsa Sanitary District #2. A nearby drainage ditch runs straight into Lake Kegonsa near the office at 2240 US Hwy 51. We are planting native plants within this active ditch line to absorb rain water and slow the run-off. The overall project is designed to provide additional filtering capacity and improve the aesthetics of the ditch line.

The 40' runoff area planted at the end of May has about a 60% success rate of the original plantings. The native plants will spread with time and their long, dense root structures will help to soak up the runoff coming through the area.

In August, **FOLKS** planted a variety of native plant seeds such as red marsh milkweed, blue vervain, and early sunflower to sow an 80' section among the grasses growing upstream of the original planting. The area was raked hard to disturb the earth, sowed with the native plants seeds to add more filtering and covered with a light layer of cut grass.

FOLKS received a reimbursable Yahara WINS Innovation grant to reduce phosphorus entering our lake at the KSD site. We will use this grant in 2021 to further reduce the impact of the runoff from this drainage ditch. The project may include installing a rain garden to hold and then absorb rainwater during excessive rain events.

Update on Projects at Fish Camp County Park

This year, with the completion of a number of projects at Fish Camp, **FOLKS** was planning an event in August, which included a day filled with fun, family activities which was cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, **FOLKS** volunteers continued to work in the park throughout the summer and saw a huge increase in the number of people enjoying the beautiful park on the shores of our lake.

Dane County completed the restoration of the two historic buildings at Fish Camp Park – The Corn Storage Building and the Net House. They also completed the installation of the memorial bench for long-time **FOLKS** Board member, Bill Lamm, and planted a number of new trees.

FOLKS volunteers repainted benches, raked and mulched around trees, maintained the native plant shoreline and park entrance gardens and created a new native plant garden near the boat launch. Most of the plants for the new garden were grown from seed by **FOLKS** volunteers.



As Dane County continues the construction of Phase 2 of the Yahara River Trail through Fish Camp Park and on to Lake Kegonsa State Park, we expect to see many more opportunities for **FOLKS** volunteers to help with park improvements. **FOLKS** donated approximately 140 hours of volunteer work to Dane County at Fish Camp Park.



Well Testing Initiative

We have had some unusually high levels of precipitation over the last few years, which we understood could impact well water quality. So, your **FOLKS** Board decided it was worth putting together a program that looked at: Why you should test your well water, how you could get it tested and what you should do if problems were detected. Our message was, if you are drinking water from your private well, YOU ARE YOUR OWN WATER UTILITY MANAGER.

FOLKS developed a comprehensive set of instruction, offered to get the test kits from the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and then deliver the test kits to individual member's homes. We appreciated the guidance from Kevin Masarik, an Extension Groundwater Education Specialist from UW-Steven Point, who helped make sure all of our materials were accurate.

FOLKS provided 36 test kits. All 36 households tested for Bacteria and Nitrate and 24 also conducted a metal screen, which included testing for levels of: Aluminum, Arsenic, Cadmium, Calcium, Chromium, Cobalt, Copper, Iron, Lead Manganese, Nickel, Strontium and Zinc.

We had a lot of positive feedback from our members, some saying that they had meant to do this for years, but never got around to it. Having **FOLKS** make it easy for them was enough to cause them to get it done. Although it was not as important as some of our major **FOLKS** projects, it turned out to be a very worthwhile initiative.

Lake Kegonsa "Ice On" Contest

With 52 degree temperatures on the 9th and 10th of December, who would have thought the lake would completely freeze over 8 days later on December 18th. Fred Figge did! He was the first of six folks who guessed this date. But as we all know, the lake opened up within 3 days, so Fred wins the \$25.00 gift certificate to Springers.

A week later the lake froze over again and has stayed frozen. This is the first time since we have run this contest that the lake completely froze over on Christmas Day, December 25th. Heidi De Bruin chose this day and is our winner of the \$50.00 gift certificate to Springers. She was the first of four members to send in her guess for that date.

This was the most popular year for the contest. I wonder why? Almost 120 folks participated! The earliest guess was December 3rd and the latest was January 23. The most popular date was December 22 with 10 guesses. Only 20 folks thought the lake would freeze before December 18 and 32 thought it would freeze after January 1.

Thanks to all who participated. It is always fun to see how quickly the guesses come in as well as your comments on when and why the lake should freeze on your date. This is the latest the lake has frozen in the last five years: 2016 and 2017 = Dec 14th, 2018 = Dec 12th, 2019 = Dec 15th.

Number of Boats in Dane County

In 2001 there was a report in a Yahara Lakes Advisory Group Report showing the number and size of boats in Dane County. **FOLKS** was interested to see how this had changed in the last 19 years, so we got a hold of the Boat registration file from the Wisconsin DNR, as of 9/10/20, and put together a comparison.

Now for a little quiz:

1. Do you think the number of boats registered in Dane County has gone up, or down in the last 19 years?
2. Three classes of boats increased over 100%. Which type of boat increased the most? Was it Personal watercraft, Pontoon Boats, or sailboats?
3. True or False. All sailboats, canoes and kayaks should be registered in Wisconsin.

Answers:

1. This might surprise you, but the number of registered boats has actually gone down by 3.7%. On the other hand, the boats have gotten bigger. In the 16-26 ft. classification the increase was 16%.
2. Pontoon Boats increased 333%, Personal Watercraft 122% and Sailboats 107%
3. False. Only boats with any type of motor, or sailboats over 12 ft. have to be registered.

If you would like the three page detailed report, send me an email at peterfoy49@gmail.com, and I will send it to you.

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For More About **FOLKS**,
Visit our website at www.Kegonsa.org and

on Facebook  at facebook.com/kegonsa/

or on Twitter  @LakeKegonsa

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 peterfoy49@gmail.com

Send news of interest to **FOLKS** to:
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agency or governmental unit.

FOLKS Lost and Found

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

FOLKS board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month and the public are welcome.
Next Meeting is January 12, 2021, 5:30 - 7:00 PM via Zoom -
Contact Peter Foy (peterfoy49@gmail.com) to join.

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