



Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 173  
Stoughton, WI 53589-0173  
**April 2023**

**President’s Message ~ Peter Foy**

One of the articles in this newsletter is about our ice off contest that Cathie Taylor, our secretary, runs each year. Interestingly, the ice was off the lake on 3/26 and now 18 days later we are getting an early taste of summer, with temperatures pushing 80 degrees. As it has been said, “Welcome to Wisconsin”.

Although our **FOLKS** Board doesn’t meet in February and March many of our committees have been meeting and our Board held a long meeting on 4/11. 2023 is shaping up to be another productive year for **FOLKS**. Our popular projects like the barge and leaf pickup programs will be conducted again, but we also have a number of new projects in the works that we believe you will be impressed with. We continue to expand our water quality monitoring program and we will keep you informed on all that is happening with the “suck the muck” project taking place in Door Creek, which is intended to improve the water quality in Lake Kegonsa. Also, there are some major changes taking place at Fish Camp County Park this year. The primary change involves the park becoming a trail head for the Lower Yahara River Trail which will now run through the park. We will be providing more details as plans for the park progress.

I am pleased to be able tell you that we received another wonderful grant from the Bryant Foundation which will allow us to continue to take on new projects. They are a wonderful supporter of our organization.

**-Peter Foy**

<b>In This Issue:</b>	
President’s Message – Peter Foy .....	1
<i>FOLKS</i> 2023 Board of Directors .....	2
Lake Kegonsa “Ice Off” Contest .....	2
<i>FOLKS</i> 2023 Membership Drive .....	3
Lake Kegonsa Water Levels .....	3
Save the Date (June 17 <sup>th</sup> ) for the <i>FOLKS</i> Annual Meeting .....	3
Fish Camp County Park - Removal of Ash Trees and Restoration .....	3
Emerald Ash Borer Killing Our Ash Trees .....	4
<i>FOLKS</i> is Supporting Fish-Vegetation Research Project .....	5
Aquatic Debris Pick Up Schedule for 2023 .....	6
Native Plant Gardens and Plant Sharing .....	7
<i>FOLKS</i> Meets with the Biological Farming Friends BFFs) .....	7
<i>FOLKS</i> Business Members .....	9
<i>FOLKS</i> Officers and Board Members 2023 .....	11

## 2023 *FOLKS* Board of Directors

This is your all volunteer Board of Directors at a recent meeting. It was an impromptu picture and our lighting is bad but hopefully you'll recognize a neighbor or friend. Emails are included at the end of our newsletter so please feel free to contact any of our board with questions, comments or ideas.



Front L-R: Kim VanBrocklin, Cathie Taylor, Kim Walz, Claudia Quam, Janice Kellogg  
Back L-R: John Bottorff, George Corrigan, Pat Guiney, Connie Hagen, Eric Olson, Peter Foy

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## Lake Kegonsa "Ice Off" Contest

The ice stuck around a long time this year. There were many days that we thought the lake was ice free but our daily drive around the lake for 4 days showed that there were still big sheets of ice floating around. The lake completely opened Sunday, March 26. Of our 127 players in our contest, only four members guessed this date.

Congratulations to **Deb Beaver** who was the first person to send in her guess for that day! She will receive a \$50.00 gift certificate to enjoy at Springers. The earliest guess was March 4 and the latest April 14. The most popular days were March 23 and 24 with 12 and 13 guesses. The contest was mailed out February 28 and we had 108 guesses by the end of the day. We should have had a contest for the first jet ski on the lake. Who wants to take credit for circling the lake in a wet suit on Monday, March 27?

We thank **Springers** for their continued donation of gift certificates for our contests.

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## FOLKS 2023 Membership Drive

Please remember to send in your membership renewal forms for **2023**. And help us promote **FOLKS** by talking to your friends, neighbors and the businesses you frequent.

Membership forms are on the **FOLKS** website at [www.kegonsa.org](http://www.kegonsa.org) for new members. Prospective members can go to the website to learn more about **FOLKS** through the information pages and all the archived newsletters.

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### Lake Kegonsa Water Levels

Although we've had quite a lot of rain already, all lakes are still near summer minimums. During the winter Dane County allows lake levels to lower to build capacity for spring and early summer rains. As of April 14, 2022 the Lake Kegonsa level is **843.16'** (ft above sea level). The dams are currently set to maintain or increase lake levels. The Tenney Dam (Mendota) is 40% open while Babcock Dam (Waubesa) and LaFollette Dam (Kegonsa) are 100% open.

Lake	4/14/2022 Lake Level (ft)	Summer Minimum (ft)	Summer Maximum (ft)	Inches > Summer Minimum
<b>Mendota</b>	850.10	849.6	850.1	6.0
<b>Monona</b>	844.86	844.7	845.2	1.9
<b>Waubesa</b>	844.39	844.5	845.0	(1.3)
<b>Kegonsa</b>	843.16	843.0	843.5	1.9

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### Save the Date (June 17<sup>th</sup>) for the **FOLKS 2023 Annual Meeting**

**FOLKS** Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 17, 2023 from 6pm to 9pm at the Stoughton Country Club. Our meeting will include project updates, financial reports and a guest speaker. Please join us for a fun and informative evening and meet your neighbors and other **FOLKS** members. You'll receive more info and sign up instructions in your email as we get closer to the date.

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### Fish Camp County Park - Removal of Ash Trees and Restoration

You may have noticed some big changes at Fish Camp County Park on the northwest shore of Lake Kegonsa. Dane County has removed all the trees in the low basins next to the Net House and boat launch parking lots.

According to Lars Higdon, Dane County Botanist/Naturalist, almost all these trees were dead ash. Darren Marsh, previous Director of Dane County Parks warned us of this in 2017. Because of all the fallen and dead trees, the woods were extremely unsafe for park visitors. Trees have also been removed along the proposed Yahara River Trail toward Door Creek and Kegonsa State Park.

Lars believes the tree removal opens the opportunity to begin restoring this area and expects that process to begin this summer before the invasive species take over.

**FOLKS** Fish Camp committee is working with Dane County to begin discussing plans for the former Fish Camp woods site and how we can work together to restore this area. Lars is envisioning these areas to look like large rain gardens and function in the same sort of way.

### **Proposed Fish Camp County Park Restoration Site Objectives**

The Dane County Land and Water Department strives to return much of their lands to what naturally occurred because it best supports the land and creatures of the area. The planned native plants will be grasses, sedges, rushes, common native flowers, occasional shrubs and swamp white oak trees. Plants native to our region are better at sustaining the ecology of our area. If you have been attending the **FOLKS** Native Plant Workshops, you will recognize a number of the species. It is necessary to get the invasive species under control before plantings can occur so the calendar is up to Mother Nature.

The following goals were provided by Dane County:

- Site will have a species composition similar to the southern sedge meadow natural community, which was likely the historic community type present on site and occurs to the north in the Door Creek Wildlife Area.
- Exotic/invasive species will be controlled through various methods including herbicide application, mowing, burning, and hand pulling.
- Vegetation will assist in stormwater retention and water filtration adjacent to Lake Kegonsa.
- Vegetation will provide habitat for wildlife including amphibians, songbirds, and pollinators.
- Site will provide a variety of educational opportunities for park visitors to learn about wetland plants, native pollinators, ecological services, and natural areas restoration.

### **Preliminary Timeline of Restoration:**

**2023** - Remove dead ash and box elder trees and invasive (nonnative) shrubs, control invasive reemerging plants throughout the summer months, possibly plant seeds or seedlings

**2024** - Possible prescribed burn, evaluate and control invasives, plant full complement of native plants, shrubs and trees

**2025-2027** - Maintain the area by controlling the invasives, prescribed burns and replanting/reseeding areas as needed.

As you can see, this is a long-term project which will benefit the shores of Lake Kegonsa. **FOLKS** will continue to work with Dane County on the restoration project over the years and may ask for ideas and volunteers.

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## **Emerald Ash Borer Killing our Ash Trees**

As many of us know first-hand, the Emerald Ash Borer has been very prolific in Dane County and has killed ash trees on our properties. It's hard to believe one little beetle can do so much damage so quickly. If you're interested in learning more about the Emerald Ash Borer, the Wisconsin DNR and UW have much good information. The websites have links for home owners, firewood use and other topics and information on removing dead ash trees for safety concerns on parklands.

A few of the places to look for information on the Emerald Ash Borer include:

- <http://datcpservices.wisconsin.gov/eab/index.jsp>
  - <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/56386#:~:text=The%20pest%20is%20currently%20the,the%20bark%20of%20ash%20trees.>
  - <https://eab.russell.wisc.edu/>
  - <https://forestrynews.blogs.govdelivery.com/2020/05/28/impacts-and-management-of-the-invasive-emerald-ash-borer/>
- 

## **FOLKS Is Supporting the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership Fish-Vegetation Research Project**

**FOLKS** is excited to partner with the Wisconsin DNR and other state agencies on an important study to quantitatively link aquatic vegetation management to recreational fisheries management (especially walleye populations in Midwest glacial lakes) and provide decision tools and management frameworks to agencies and lake associations interested in actively using habitat management to promote better fisheries. Vegetation and fish management are often considered somewhat separately (or even in opposition to one another), leading to unintended fishery outcomes driven by loss of aquatic plant habitats following vegetation treatments. By combining extensive datasets for aquatic plants and fish communities across thousands of lakes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, this study aims to deliver another tool to the lake management toolbox. In that vein, there are two specific questions that this project will tackle that are high priority for agencies:

1. What is the importance of aquatic vegetation for walleye recruitment, either as spawning or juvenile habitats?
2. How can aquatic vegetation management be used to promote desirable characteristics of popular recreational fisheries, including panfish, bass, and walleye?

In answering these questions, the project would be geared around quantifying relationships between plant community structure and composition and fish abundance, size structure, growth, and recruitment using data analysis and modeling, ultimately making predictions about how plant communities and fish communities can be holistically managed to provide beneficial outcomes for both. This information would then be delivered to biologists, lake associations, and other stakeholders in specific case studies to demonstrate how the management decisions that are developed can be put into practice.

Anticipated Outcomes (tentative list) would include:

- Decision tools for plant-fish management strategies
- Fact sheets for agencies and lake associations
- Extension/outreach/workshops/curricula developed with university extension staff for stakeholder groups, classrooms, webinars (i.e., workshops could be held at Trout Lake Station in northern WI)
- Data will be formatted and made available for inclusion into Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership database as another potential user tool

Collaborators are the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Limnology, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

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## Aquatic Debris Pick Up Schedule for 2023

The Aquatic Debris Collection Program will soon begin its 5<sup>th</sup> year. The program continues to be well utilized by lake residents. In 2022, lake residents removed an estimated 66,000 pounds of debris from the lake such as algae, aquatic plants, sticks and logs, etc. We estimate that equates to 19 pounds of phosphorous which is the primary cause of algae. Lake experts say that one pound of phosphorous creates about 500 pounds of algae. Since the program's implementation in 2019, approximately 267,000 pounds of debris has been removed from the lake. **FOLKS** offers this program in cooperation with Dane County Land and Water Resources Department and **FOLKS** pays for the cost of labor to run the program.

The 2023 schedule is as follows:

- June 13 - 16
- June 27 - 30
- July 11 - 14
- July 25 - 28
- Aug 8 - 11
- Aug 22 - 25

Please notice that this year the pickup week will start on **Tuesday** (rather than Monday). This is in response to feedback that the **FOLKS** Board received from some of our members. This gives you one extra day after the weekend to place debris on your pier so you won't have to spend your entire weekend on this chore. We know gathering the debris can be a big job! The pickup week will still end on Friday.

Here is how the program works:

- The barge crew will cover all of Lake Kegonsa and Yahara River residences on Orvold Park Drive, Alsmo Lane, and Fish Camp Road.
- Please have all debris on your pier by 7 a.m. Tuesday of the scheduled pickup week. The barge crew will start on Tuesday and make **ONE complete pass around the lake and river**. It usually takes the barge crew three or four days to make a complete pass. So, please have all debris out by Tuesday morning or you may get missed. It may take the crew a few days to get to your pier, so be patient. The crew will end its work by Friday or earlier if it has covered the entire lake.
- Material **ALLOWED** - Aquatic vegetation (lake plants, vegetation, algae) and debris washed up on shore (trash, logs, sticks, dead fish, etc.).
- Material **NOT ALLOWED** - Yard waste or brush (grass clippings, leaves, tree limbs) and household waste (garbage, pet waste, etc.). In other words, the program **only** removes debris that comes out of the 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. We suggest asking your neighbor for permission to use their pier. If you don't personally reside at your waterfront property, please inform the residents of this program.

- It is possible that more urgent County work requirements may take priority over vegetation collection and the crew might be diverted during a given week.

Thanks for supporting the program and we hope to have another successful year to keep Lake Kegonsa clean and beautiful.

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## Native Plant Gardens and Plant Sharing

### Native Plant Gardens Clean up at Fish Camp Park:

Please join us on **Tuesday, April 18** to cut down and clean up the native plant gardens for spring. We'll meet at the shoreline garden at **9 am** to begin work on preparing the gardens for the year. Bring work gloves and garden shears or loppers.

### Mulching Native Plant Gardens and at Fish Camp Park:

We'd love to have your help putting down mulch in the native plant gardens and around trees at Fish Camp Park on **Tuesday, April 25**. Again, we'll start at **9 am**.

### Native Plant Sharing:

We have several **FOLKS** members growing plants from the native seeds that were distributed at our workshop last fall. In early June when seeds have germinated and started to grow, we will probably find that there are a lot of extra native plants to share.

We are planning a gathering on **Tuesday, June 6** to exchange extra plants and to talk about the growing process. Plan to attend if you have extra plants or would like free native plants for your own gardens. We will have a representative from Dane County to answer questions and offer advice. Please watch for an announcement in your email and send us ideas about topics you would like discussed.

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## FOLKS Meets with the Biological Farming Friends (BFFs)

On March 20, several members of the **FOLKS** Board met with members of Biological Farming Friends along with the representative from Dane County Land & Water Resources that works closely with the group. The purpose of the meeting was to network and learn about goals that are important to both of our groups. The meeting started on a humorous note! While they are serious-minded farmers, **FOLKS** quickly learned they also have a strong sense of comradery and like to have fun. This was displayed by the motto on their t-shirt, "**DON'T TREAT YOUR SOIL LIKE DIRT**".

The Biological Farming Friends, or BFF's as the members like to refer to themselves, is a group of about twenty-five diverse farmers in the Lower Yahara Watershed that collectively farm over 10,000 acres of cropland and pasture. Their farms have portions of land where rainfall drains into Lake Kegonsa and, eventually, the Yahara River. The farms are dominated by cash-grain farming (corn, soybeans and wheat) with small pockets of dairy and other livestock producers (pasture and hay). The

mission of the BFF farmer-led coalition is to promote the use of innovative, state-of-the-art conservation farming practices within the watershed. The BFF's are one of forty-three farmer-led Watershed Groups in Wisconsin that receive funding from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Department (DATCP). By promoting conservation practices, such as cover crops, no-till, managed grazing, and diversified crop rotations, these farmers are leaders in improving water quality and soil health within our community. The BFF's believe that by utilizing the latest technology, research, and farmer-driven conservation practices they can improve not only the water and soil resources, but also improve the climate and economic resilience of their farms.



**This is a cover crop planted between rows of corn.  
This is called inter-seeding and prevents soil erosion.**

As you drive in rural areas between Madison, Stoughton and Oregon, pay attention to what farm fields look like in early spring – the time of year where soils are most vulnerable to erosion and subsequently phosphorus runoff into surface waters. If you see a field that is green, chances are you are seeing a cover crop or a field with a small grain planted such as wheat or rye. The best protection against erosion is keeping a living root in the soil year-round. These are among the best practices that the BFF's are using themselves and promoting within the farming community. These state-of-the-art farming practices protect our streams, rivers, and lakes. Through their farming network, BFF's have been successfully educating and encouraging other farmers to adopt these progressive practices and are carefully expanding their partnerships and influence.

**FOLKS** appreciated the opportunity to meet BFF and expand our network with an outstanding environmental organization.



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Eric Olson (608) 575-9272  
207 S Forrest St, Stoughton WI 53589  
201 Bus Park Circle, Stoughton WI 53589  
james@cleanlakesalliance.com  
PeterSveum@coldwellhomes.com (608)575-1054  
PO Box 301, Stoughton WI 53589  
crownpointresort.com (608) 873-7833  
Steve Hjort (608) 432-0113  
201 Bus Park Circle, Stoughton WI 53589  
www.finessepr.net (608) 695-6510  
hammeritconstruction@gmail.com(608)205-7669  
(608) 877-9548  
isadex.com (608) 877-0050  
jdhellenbrand@yahoo.com (608) 513-0690  
(608) 222-9504  
ksmhvam@gmail.com (608) 516-3758  
mcginnity.kate@countyofdane.com  
ratcliff.melissa@countyofdane.com  
engelberger.michael@countyofdane.com  
noshortselectric@gmail.com  
miles@countyofdane.com  
(608) 873-3366  
327 South Division St., Stoughton, WI 53589  
springersonthelake.com (608)205-9300  
stoughtoncc.com  
(608) 873-8464  
stoughtontrailers.com (608) 873-2600  
aquaticweedremovers@gmail.com  
(608) 873-9266  
2466 County Hwy AB, McFarland WI 53558  
305 Industrial Circle, Stoughton WI 53589  
drthaneanderson@tds.net  
doghutcare.com (608) 838-2470  
3039 Shadyside Dr., Stoughton WI 53589  
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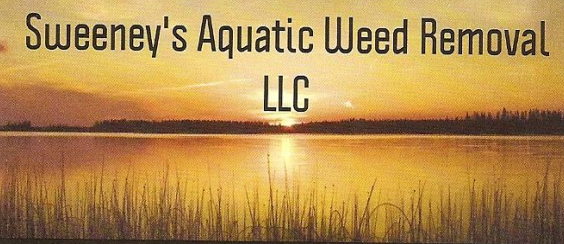



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General Manager



305 Industrial Circle  
Stoughton, WI 53589  
Phone: 608-873-7651  
Fax: 608-873-7692  
Email: [theran@terrykahlplumbing.com](mailto:theran@terrykahlplumbing.com)



**ECO-RESOURCE CONSULTING, INC**

PO Box 730  
2554 CTH N  
Stoughton, WI 53589

Office: (608) 877-9372  
Mobile: (608) 432-0113  
Email: [shjort@eco-resource.net](mailto:shjort@eco-resource.net)  
[www.eco-resource.net](http://www.eco-resource.net)

**Stephen J. Hjort**  
Senior Biologist/Principal

**CLARK**  
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**Keith Comstock**

201 Business Park Circle  
Stoughton, WI 53589  
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Office: (608)873-8500  
[keith@clark-heating.com](mailto:keith@clark-heating.com)



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**FOLKS OFFICERS AND  
BOARD MEMBERS  
2023**

**Peter Foy, President**  
peterfoy49@gmail.com

**Janice Kellogg, Vice President**  
kelloggja7@gmail.com

**Cathie Taylor, Secretary**  
cathieanntaylor@gmail.com

**Connie Hagen, Treasurer**  
chagen001@gmail.com

**Patrick Guiney**  
pdguiney@gmail.com

**Eric Olson**  
eolson.folks@gmail.com

**John Bottorff**  
jbott53511@att.net


**Kim VanBrocklin**  
kegonsakim@gmail.com

**Claudia Quam**  
claudiakquam@gmail.com

**George Corrigan**  
corrigan@corrigan.pro

**Kim Walz**  
kwalz99@gmail.com

For More About **FOLKS**,  
Visit our website at [www.Kegonsa.org](http://www.Kegonsa.org) and

on Facebook  at facebook.com/kegonsa/

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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:  
P.O. Box 173  
Stoughton, WI 53589 or  
chagen001@gmail.com

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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.folks@gmail.com

**FOLKS** board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month except for a  
couple of months in the winter. The public are always welcome.  
Next Meeting is May 9, 2023, 5:00 – 7:00 PM, Stoughton Country Club

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