



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

President’s Message ~ Peter Foy

It is a pleasure for me to report to our members that your **FOLKS** organization had an outstanding 2022. We enjoyed an all-time level of accomplishments:

- The number of both old and new, worthwhile, projects was unprecedented.
- Our membership reached an all-time high of 464 members.
- The donations from our members, over and above dues payments, set a new dollar record. This is important because it not only provides strategic support for lake projects, it is one of the ways that your Board judges our members level of satisfaction with how we are doing.
- The Bryant Foundation continued to help support our efforts to maintain and improve Lake Kegonsa.

I want to first thank our members for the outstanding financial, vocal and volunteer support that they provide to us throughout the year.

You will read a summary of our different projects in this newsletter and hopefully you feel that you benefited from many of them. All of this got accomplished because of the hard work and dedication of your Board. It is a delight to listen to the Board members, at each monthly Board meeting, review the activities that have taken place over the past month to move the various projects forward. I want to offer my sincere thank you to each Board member for their service.

There is no reason not to believe that 2023 won't be another great year for your **FOLKS** organization.

-Peter Foy

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FOLKS 2023 Membership Drive

We strive to grow our membership each year and we're proud to say that we now have **464 FOLKS** members. Please help us continue to grow by talking to your friends, neighbors and the businesses you frequent about **FOLKS**. Membership forms can be found on the **FOLKS** website at www.kegonsa.org. You can also point prospective members to the website to learn more about **FOLKS** where we have all the archived newsletters.

Look for your membership renewal forms in your mailbox this week. The basic membership is still \$20 per year which is what it has been since 2006. We, of course, appreciate any additional contributions. Please check all the information on your renewal form carefully so that we have your most current names/addresses/emails. As always, we never give your address or email to anyone without your permission.

Lake Kegonsa "Ice On" Contest

The early morning of Monday, **December 19** was very cold and still – perfect conditions for the lake to freeze and it did! By Monday afternoon, the lake completely froze over and ice fishermen were on it the next day. Of course, ice fishermen on the lake should never be used as proof that the lake is frozen! The snowmobilers waited until the weekend!

Five people guessed December 19, but Mary Salverson was the first to send in her guess. Mary will enjoy a \$50.00 gift certificate to **Springers**, who have sponsored our "Ice On" contest since we started the contest. The lake must stay frozen for 5 days to win the \$50.00 prize and we have more than passed that but with warm weather and rain, it may open again.

127 homeowners entered a guess – this is the most entries we've ever had. The email announcing the contest was sent at 1:27 PM on November 14 and although it is hard to believe, my computer recorded our first entry at 1:28 PM! The earliest date guessed was 11/28/22 and the latest, 1/18/23. The most popular date guessed was 12/21 with 10 people picking this day. 48 folks thought the lake would freeze before 12/19, 62 before 12/31 and 12 after 1/1/23.

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 the date you chose. A special thanks to **Springers** for continuing to sponsor our contest!



Thanks to Claudia Quam for this great picture of Ice Boats on Lake Kegonsa

Recap of **FOLKS** Activities in 2022

Water Monitoring: One major focus throughout 2022 was an added emphasis on collecting data on water conditions in the lake and water entering our lake from various sources.

- **FOLKS** added 8 additional end of pier observational points for a total of 15 on Lake Kegonsa.
- We added total phosphorus testing at four sites on a monthly basis: Door Creek near Lake Kegonsa, Yahara River at Fish Camp Park (inlet), Yahara River at LaFollette Dam (outlet) and the deepest part of Lake Kegonsa known as the "deep hole". Water quality information is now available on our website.
- We've also collected total phosphorus readings from two piers at opposite parts of the lake on a number of dates throughout the summer.
- In conjunction with the University of Wisconsin, **FOLKS** volunteers have become part of a research study on microcystin levels and the membership has been asked to notify researchers when large quantities of foam are spotted on the lake so it too can be collected and analyzed.
- In an effort to find out how much phosphorus is coming into our lake from various sources we identified twenty spots for observation during major heavy rain events. Volunteers go out to those spots and collect water samples during/after the event and collect samples to determine the phosphorus concentration coming from that source.
- This method was used to determine the total phosphorus concentration and water flow in the area of Co Rd B and Hwy 51 where work is scheduled by the WI Dept of Transportation to construct a roundabout in 2024. **FOLKS** was concerned about increased phosphorus runoff into the lake due to the roundabout construction. The WI Dept of Transportation, WI Dept of Natural Resources, Dane County Land & Water Resources Dept and the Town of Dunn worked with **FOLKS** to address our concerns and to evaluate the impact of runoff from the construction. This included evaluation of the feasibility and cost effectiveness of constructing a wet pond to capture runoff. After extensive study it was decided that the new roundabout would not warrant the addition of a retention wet pond. We will continue to follow this as the construction proceeds

Support of Fish Camp County Park: Your **FOLKS** board continued ongoing maintenance of educational native plant gardens in the park, made picnic table repairs, cleaned the Net House and met with Dane County Parks to learn their plans for the park in 2023. Planned construction of the Lower Yahara River Bike Trail through the park will bring many anticipated changes there. **FOLKS** held workshops and events at the park in 2022.

Annual Meeting: We held our annual membership meeting at the Stoughton Country Club in June. Paul Dearlove, from Clean Lakes Alliance, gave us an update on the "State of the Lakes". Members had an opportunity to ask questions about those observations and socialize with other members.

Aquatic Debris Collection: Our ongoing aquatic plant collection program was busier than ever this summer with a bimonthly collection. Under this program, 44 barge loads of plants and debris were removed from the lake. **FOLKS** maintains close contact with John Reimer at Dane County to make sure collected plant matter is picked up.

Native Plant Workshops: We conducted two native plant workshops to acquaint members with the benefits of using native plants on their properties. Plants were provided to participants in August and members were given seeds at the November meeting to start their own plants.

Recap of **FOLKS** Activities in 2022, continued

Rain Barrels: Individual members were offered a \$30 rebate to take advantage of a Dane County program offering rain barrels to homeowners to reduce runoff and better keep and use rainwater on their property.

Raptor Fest: In September, **FOLKS** held the first Lake Kegonsa Raptor Fest at Fish Camp County Park. Raptor experts gave seminars and informational booths provided interactive fun for everyone. Raptor Fest was planned as a way to get the membership interested and informed about our native raptors.

- **FOLKS** obtained a grant from Alliant Energy to construct both a traveling wingspan sign and a permanent wing span sign. The traveling sign was a big hit with adults and kids alike at Raptor Fest. The permanent sign is finished and will be installed at Fish Camp County Park when construction work is completed for the bike trail.
- The Alliant Energy grant also allowed **FOLKS** to build two osprey nests and have them installed.
- Ten lucky members received kestrel-nesting boxes for their properties

Lake Issues Educational Meeting: In October, Clean Lakes Alliance held an informal get together at Stoughton Country Club to again make themselves and the **FOLKS** Board available to talk about lake issues.

Leaf Management: Our popular leaf collection program continued this fall for both the Towns of Dunn and Pleasant Springs. **FOLKS** works with both towns and the City of Stoughton to coordinate equipment sharing and collection dates and provides grant funding for the program. Each year more leaves are collected, which means less phosphorus going into our waters.

Web Page: **FOLKS** is in the process of assessing our web page (www.kegonsa.org) in an effort to determine the best way of bringing information to our members and the public. We have added more information and will continue to make changes to improve the site.

Quarterly Newsletters and Email communications: We attempt to keep our members up to date on our ever-growing list of projects and events through our quarterly newsletters and important email updates and reminders.

Thanks for your support with all these projects. We're looking forward to a great 2023, improving Lake Kegonsa and making lasting connections. Together we have a bigger impact.

Dane County Supporting Water Quality and Lake Kegonsa

FOLKS forwarded an important message from **Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive** to our members in October. He announced that Dane County would purchase **128.3 acres** of land off of Co Hwy AB, near Fish Camp County Park which would significantly expand the Door Creek Wildlife Area. Other excerpts from the Dane County announcement:

- **"The Door Creek watershed is the second largest contributor of phosphorus within the Yahara Watershed.** Phosphorus concentrations in the sediment range from 350 ppm to 2,000 ppm, and the stream contains some of the largest sediment deposits of the tributaries that were assessed for "Suck the Muck."

Dane County Supporting Water Quality and Lake Kegonsa, continued

- **Planning for Dane County’s “Suck the Muck” sediment removal at Door Creek will occur next year, with construction slated for 2024.** The property’s northern upland will provide a staging area and dewatering site for the project as well as an alternate site, if needed, for the current Yahara Chain of Lakes sediment removal project. I have included **\$2 million** in the 2023 budget for this phase of “Suck the Muck.”
- Door Creek flows through a roughly 1,000 acre wetland complex, one of the largest wetlands areas in the Yahara Watershed. Dane County has worked to acquire lands within the Door Creek Wetlands since 2000 in anticipating of a significant restoration project, which was first identified in the *Door Creek Wetlands Resource Protection Plan*. **In addition to sediment removal, the Door Creek “Suck the Muck” project will enhance high quality wetland plants, prevent the further expansion of invasive species, create additional flood storage, and provide additional spring spawning habitat.**

Door Creek begins in the northeast edge of the City of Madison and flows south 12.7 miles where it empties into Lake Kegonsa. Much of Door Creek has been straightened and ditched to facilitate drainage and provide more agricultural land. Drainage projects date back to 1919 when the Door Creek Drainage District was organized. Straightening of the creek has contributed to the increased flow of nutrients into Lake Kegonsa. This investment in time and money to help Lake Kegonsa is huge.

Your **FOLKS** Board met with Dane County representatives this summer to discuss their plans for Door Creek and the "Suck the Muck" project. It was obvious at that time that the county was actively working on plans for Door Creek.

Water Quality is a Priority for Dane County Spending on water quality in the 2023 Dane County Budget include:

- \$15,000,000 for the Conservation Fund to protect lands for water quality
- \$3,000,000 to evaluate and acquire land for a new manure-processing facility
- \$3,000,000 for Yahara River flow enhancement (Increase flow and reduce flood risk)
- \$2,500,000 for legacy sediment removal (Suck the Muck)
- \$2,500,000 for the Continuous Cover program (to reduce phosphorus coming off of cropland)
- \$750,000 for urban water quality grants
- \$750,000 for conservation practices in the Yahara Watershed
- \$750,000 for conservation practices outside the Yahara Watershed
- \$424,000 for added staffing to support related initiatives

Most of the phosphorus entering Lake Kegonsa comes through the Yahara Watershed, the upper Yahara lakes and Door Creek so all of these initiatives will help Lake Kegonsa. We appreciate the commitment from Dane County Executive Joe Parisi and the Dane County Board to prioritize water quality issues in Dane County.

Thanks to *Gary Smithback*

Gary Smithback is a long-time **FOLKS** Board member and did all the hard work setting up the Lake Kegonsa Leaf Management Project. Gary set up the original program in 2017. He was instrumental in working with the City of Stoughton, the Town of Dunn and the Town of Pleasant Springs to make leaf pick up around the lake a reality. He has continued to head up this super popular project for the last 6 years.

Gary has recently retired from the general duties of the **FOLKS** Board but luckily for us he has agreed to continue working on the leaf management project. We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude. He and his wife Ellen have been traveling a lot but he's heavily involved with the Syttende Mai Norwegian celebration in Stoughton so when you see him this spring say a big "Thanks" for both.



2022 Leaf Management Program

The Towns of Pleasant Springs and Dunn continued to share the City of Stoughton's equipment on weekends this fall to vacuum leaves from around Lake Kegonsa. Here are the highlights:

- **FOLKS** coordinates the sharing of equipment between the towns and the City of Stoughton.
- We provided \$1,500 to each town in 2022 to support the leaf vacuuming program.
- We work with both towns to establish reasonable collection dates. The hardest part of leaf collection is determining when the leaves might fall. This year's dates were November 5th-6th and 19th-20nd in Pleasant Springs and November 12th-13th and 26th-27th in Dunn.
- **FOLKS** sent email reminders and placed announcement signs around the lake with the dates of leaf collection to help our members know when to expect the leaf vacuum truck.
- We also helped to support the use of the collection and compost sites for each town.
- Pleasant Springs picked up 7 truck loads of leaves and Dunn collected 15 truck loads. This equates to about 100 lbs less phosphorus going into our lake. The amount of leaves at the town collection sites was probably much more than this.
- According to our survey, 97% of our members back the leaf management program.

FOLKS appreciates the efforts of area residents to manage leaves and help keep Lake Kegonsa clean. It was another great year even with a little early snow.



Winter Native Plant Seed Sowing – Nov 3rd Workshop

In November, **FOLKS** had a workshop on overwintering seeds as a follow up to the general Native Plant workshop we held in August. Susan Sandford, Dane County Land & Water Resources, Strategic Engagement Coordinator, was our speaker. Susan did a quick update on the background and use of native plants to reduce runoff and then discussed why we do winter sowing of native plant seeds. We then went through the method of using milk jugs to make small individual greenhouses for seed starting. We talked about caring for the jugs outside during the winter and what to do when the seeds start coming up in the spring. We traded a number of transplanting tips and hope to have a gathering in the spring so that participants can share plants.

FOLKS provided native seeds, milk jugs and potting mix so that each participant could go through the process of preparing and planting a milk jug greenhouse. Each participant received **21 species** of native seeds to take home for use on their own properties. Here's a quick pictorial summary of the method – it's fun to try and can produce a plethora of plants in the spring. You can find the full Plant Dane tutorial at <https://www.ripple-effects.com/documents/pdf/Plant-Dane/How-to-grow-native-plants.pdf>.



1. Cut the milk jug



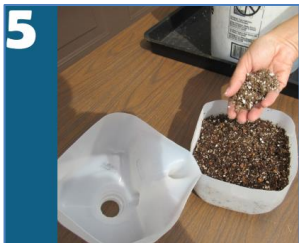
2. Punch holes in the bottom



3. Moisten potting mix



4. Fill jug with mix



5. Spread seeds/Add mix



6. Spray water to moisten



7. Add plant label inside



8. Label & close with tape

Plant the seeds in fall or winter and put them outside in a sunny location for the winter. Native plants need winter (period of cold, moist conditions) before they'll germinate. The openings let in enough snow and rain to keep the soil moist. Then wait for them to sprout in the spring.



Support of Lake Kegonsa Wildlife

As you've seen in previous newsletters, **FOLKS** has been actively supporting our lake raptors in 2022. We'd like to ask you to consider continued support **through the volunteer wildlife projects below**. Consider involving your neighbors, grandchildren, or friends. One gesture can have a huge impact.

- 1. Help an Injured Pelican** - Our partnership with the Dane County Wildlife Center (Humane Society) aims to report orphaned or medically-fragile lake wildlife. An injured pelican who failed to migrate has been receiving treatment, and **the Wildlife Center needs frozen or fresh fish** brought to 5132 Voges Road, McFarland. Pelicans can consume 6 pounds per day...which is half of their weight.



- 2. Watch for Hooks and Tangled Lines** - We ask ice fishermen to remove broken fishing line and hooks and to avoid using older tackle and sinkers containing lead, as lead poisoning is a very detrimental illness to waterfowl.



- 3. Donate Your Christmas Tree** - The Wildlife Center is requesting **discarded Christmas trees**, to serve as shelter for rehabilitating birds. Please remove any stray tinsel, ornaments, and hooks. Wreaths and boughs are not allowed, due to their wires. **Please take trees to the Wildlife Center:** 5132 Voges Road, McFarland and attach a temporary tag that tells them you are from **FOLKS**.



- 4. Owl/Kestrel Boxes** - Dean Tangeman (arborist-extraordinaire) installed homemade Screech Owl/Kestrel boxes around the lake in November. Through a lottery, ten **FOLKS** members received the complimentary boxes and an offer of installation. Owls and Kestrels significantly reduce the presence of rodents, snakes, and bugs. **Be on the look-out for snowy owls this winter!**

- 5. Register for a free birding app called: Citizen-E bird**, sponsored by Cornell University's "Nest Watch" program. Sightings and pictures can be recorded through the app on your phone and Cornell analyzes our lake data to study nesting, roosting, and hatching habits. Go to ebird.org or the Google Play store for the free app, and search: E-bird App.

- 6. Be a nest-watcher/reporter** - During the past 3 months two Osprey nest platforms have been installed as a part of our Alliant Energy Foundation grant. We will register the two Osprey platforms with Cornell University as soon as the Osprey return in March and claim a platform. **We need people to report sightings** since Osprey don't typically migrate to Southern Wisconsin. It is rare to have this many pairs on Kegonsa. The two new platforms were installed at:

- Colladay Pt. Drive and Zor Court greenspace
- Alsmo Drive west of the entry to Fish Camp



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Town of Pleasant Springs
T-Top Shop II, LLC
Tully's II Food & Spirits
UPS Store #3617
Yahara Lakes Association, Ltd.

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Steve Schmitt
(Owner)

We Love Lake Kegonsa and You!!



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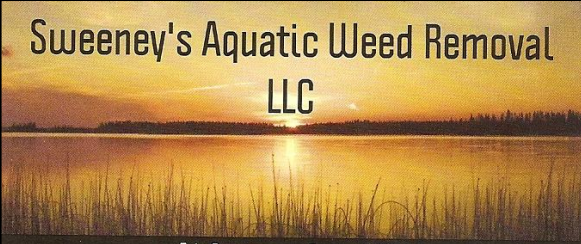
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For More About **FOLKS**,
Visit our website at www.Kegonsa.org and

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:
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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 January 10, 2022, 5:30 – 7:00 PM, Stoughton Country Club

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