



The Winnebago Lakes Council promotes the long-term sustainability of lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan and their connecting rivers.

The Council's mission is to protect and improve the ecological health and scenic beauty of the Winnebago lakes through citizen involvement in research, education, communication and cooperation.

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Winnebago Lakes Council

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Phase 1 of AIS planning process completed

The first phase of a planning process to address aquatic invasive species in the Lake Winnebago System wrapped up on June 30, 2008. The process began in 2007 with a \$75,000 grant from the state. A diverse stakeholder group was formed to gather ideas for preventing VHS, round gobies, quagga mussels and other aquatic invasive species from entering the system. The core of the group's work was to develop local strategies to encourage boaters and anglers to change behaviors.

Draft strategies were brought to the public at five meetings around the lakes. Over 75 people attended. Participants weighed options and gave ideas for implementation. The AIS Advisory Group and Project Coordinator then refined the strategies so they would be acceptable to area citizens. The draft plan is posted on www.winnebagolakes.org (click on Projects).

Phase 2 of the process, if the Lakes Council successfully receives another AIS grant, will seek more public input and begin implementation of preventive strategies. For more information or if you want to be involved in the next steps, contact the Lakes Council. - Catherine Neiswender

THANK YOU members of the Advisory and Steering Groups and the more than 75 other area residents who participated in the AIS planning process

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Candice Mortara-Winnebago Lakes Council

AIS ADVISORY GROUP

Mile Arrowood - *Walleyes for Tomorrow*
Steve Brand- *Oshkosh Public Works*
Mike Buettner-*Appleton Water Treatment Utility*
Bill Bush-*Fox River Navigational System Authority*
Todd Close-*Wolf River Conservation Alliance*
Bob Haase-*Muskie Clubs Alliance*
Mike Lizotte-*UW Oshkosh*
Eugene McLeod- *Calumet County LWCD*
Steve McNeil-*Winneconne Village Administrator*
Gary Olson-*Appleton Yacht Club*
Arlene Schmuhl-*Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau*
Dick Sickinger-*Fox River Bait and Tackle*
Rob Way-*Winnebago County Parks Department*
Bob Wojcik-*Winnebago Lakes Council*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chad Cook-*UW Extension*
Catherine Neiswender-*UW Extension*
Rob McLennan-*Wisconsin DNR*
Anne Forbes-*Partners in Place*

Fall events: check our web site for details

- September, 2008. Speaker Series resumes featuring Dr. Michael Lizotte: "From Winnebago to Antarctica" Date and location TBA
- October 4, 2008, 6:30 p.m. Fin 'n Feather, Winneconne Paddle wheeler boat cruise - dinner and narrated tour
- Talks about our lakes - Schedule a program for your group. Free. Contact us

Contributors

Catherine Neiswender (AIS Plan p.1) is the Winnebago County UW Extension Community Development Educator.

Dick Snyder (Boating Safety p. 2) travels the country testifying about boating safety issues.

Mark Sesing (Critical Habitat p.3) is the DNR Lake Specialist for Northeast Wisconsin.

Mike Lizotte (CBCW, p.3) is Director of the UW Oshkosh Aquatic Research Laboratory.

Wayne Mueller (Shorefront Steward, p.4) lives on Lake Winnebago and works in Oshkosh for a commercial real estate firm.

Greg Keil (Urban Impacts, p.4) is Community Development Director for the City of Menasha.

Around the Lakes

Public hearing set for AIS Grant Program July 30, 2008, Coughlin Center, Oshkosh

Non-profits, universities, and other groups will have greater incentives to seek grants for education and management of aquatic invasive species under changes proposed for the state AIS Grant Program. Changes reflect increased funding, expanded sponsorships and new priorities. Lakes Program Coordinator Carol Schaal has scheduled the hearing. Check www.winnebago-lakes.org for time.

Lake District concept resurfaces

Every few years the possibility of forming a lake district for the Winnebago Pool comes up. Recently participants in the AIS planning process asked if this might a way to gain support and resources for addressing aquatic invasive species. A local channel association also wondered if a district might help solve water flow and weed problems on the many miles of man-made channels in our system. With over 100 lake districts in the state, we have good models to follow. Lake districts elect local commissioners and can assess a small tax on property. Has the time come to seriously consider pursuing this option to protect the Winnebago lakes?

Dispose of old medicines safely

Recent research suggests medicines should be kept out of our waterways to prevent adverse reactions by fish, other wildlife and possibly humans. A pilot mailback program is underway in Winnebago and Waushara counties to allow safe disposal of old medicine. Call 1-800-958-5859 for a pre-paid mailing label and instructions. Only prescription and over the counter medication are accepted.

Speaker Series expands to Menasha

On May 20 Lakes Biologist Art Techlow spoke to over 50 people at the Stone Toad in Menasha. Art talked about lake history and the impacts of changing water levels on wetlands and wildlife. He also showed photos of several impressive projects implementing the Winnebago Comprehensive Management Plan. Jerry Lopas arranged the program as part of the Lakes Council's Speaker Series which resumes in fall. (Photo by Pat Durkin)



Water Guard enforces state aquatic invasive species rules

Danielle Sippel is the new Water Guard in our area. She is one of nine deputy wardens who will work at boat landings in Wisconsin through Labor Day to help control the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and the deadly fish virus VHS.

Danielle will be educating boaters, performing watercraft inspections and informing local wardens of violations. She will be enforcing state rules that prohibit launching any boat, motor or trailer that contains weeds, and prohibit movement of water from lake to lake.

Growing up in Marytown, Fond du Lac County, Danielle is familiar with our lakes. She has a degree in Conservation and Environmental Sciences from UW-Milwaukee. With 48 public boat landings on the Winnebago lakes alone, Danielle is working in one of the busiest boating areas in the state. Smile and cooperate if you see her. You will be doing our lakes a big favor.



Danielle inspects for weeds

Think boating safety when cruising our lakes

With the 2008 recreational boating season well underway, boating safety is an important issue. Topping the list: WEAR A LIFE JACKET!

Nationwide, 70 percent of all recreational boating fatalities each year are drownings. Most of these are due to no worn life jacket. Although federal law requires a life jacket on board that fits properly, is in good condition, and is readily accessible for every boat occupant, it does not require the life jacket be worn.



Belt pack or life jacket—choose one!

Most states now require children 12 and under to wear a life jacket whenever their open boat is underway (not tied up). However, Wisconsin is one of two or three states that hasn't yet passed that law. Many boating accidents that result in pitching occupants into the water occur so quickly there's no time to put the life jacket on at that moment. It's a little like believing you will fasten your car seat belt just before being involved in a crash.

You say life jackets are too hot and uncomfortable, especially in warm weather. OK, you can now think BELT PACK. You can locally purchase either manually or automatically inflatable belt pack life jackets. I now have four and wouldn't think of leaving my dock without one snapped on my waist and on each of my passengers.

A recent tragic canoeing accident in this area resulted in a father drowning. He was not wearing a life jacket; in fact, there were no life jackets in the canoe, and even if there had been, the canoe sank when full of water. Will your boat float when full of water? Think boating safety so that you'll have many happy boating seasons ahead of you. - Dick Snyder. (Check our web site for the full article from *On the Water Magazine*, June 2008)

Help Identify critical habitat on the Winnebago lakes

Habitat means “place of living”. Our place of living is a house constructed of wood, concrete, and glass. A Forster’s tern’s “place of living” is constructed of cane in shallow water. A “place of living” for the northern pike fingerling is constructed of bulrush in shallow water, while an old tree in the water is a “place of living” for the wood duck duckling. We all can see people places expanding dramatically in areas around the lakes. Terns, wood ducks and songbirds are not so lucky, as their places have diminished on all parts of lakes Winnebago, Poygan, Butte des Mort, and Winneconne.

The Department of Natural Resources is now working to identify and recognize areas of important habitat and public value on the Winnebago lakes. Areas important for fish spawning, brood rearing, natural scenic beauty, and water pollution filtration will be identified. High public value areas include:

- Critical “places of living” for fish and wildlife
- Physical features helping water quality
- Shoreline and lake bed areas with a natural or wild appearance
- Traditional navigation routes for boating, fishing, hunting and viewing

Good examples of critical areas are shorelines with natural woody structures. Fallen or overhanging trees shelter mallard ducks, night herons, songbirds, and fish. These are animals we all appreciate in our everyday lives.

When an area is recognized to have public value, it is recorded for future reference. This awareness allows improved review of proposals like marina development, aquatic plant eradication, or shoreline straightening. These all have the potential to affect

“places of living” for fish, wildlife and human recreational activity. If you are adjacent to, or have property within an area recognized to have public value, the recognition will record the special quality of the area of your stewardship. If you, a neighbor, or municipality is proposing a project requiring a permit, the recognition will allow lake resource managers to complete a balanced review of the proposal while considering its natural values. For all of us, recognizing places of living is an opportunity for the community to take responsibility for our natural heritage.

Today an estimated 75 percent of the original natural “places” on the Winnebago shoreline are gone. Most natural shores have been rocked, walled, straightened and mowed.

The Winnebago lakes have been a great friend to the community. They strengthen our families by offering exploration, fishing, boating, and shared experience. Many of us benefit directly from the lakes’ economies. Now is the best time to stop “place of living” loss. Success starts in our yards, on our shores, and wetlands. If you are a lake front property owner, you are especially important in preserving our opportunities for the future.

We encourage you to help us and the wild places through sharing your knowledge of the lakes. Send your input to “Winnebago Places” WI DNR, 625 E CTH Y, Oshkosh, WI 54901-9731, or e-mail mark.sesing@wisconsin.gov. Include details on location and special characteristics of the nominated area with your contact information. Results will appear in a draft report and presented at informational meetings within the lake community. —Mark Sesing

Busiest boat launches are focus of Clean Boats, Clean Waters program

Eight UW Oshkosh student interns are working local boat launches for the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program, funded by a grant to the Winnebago Lakes Council from Wisconsin DNR. This is the third summer for this program on the Winnebago Pool. Clean Boats, Clean Waters aims to educate boaters about Wisconsin law and best practices to reduce the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species. Plants, zebra mussels, and waterborne critters and diseases are the main targets. The paid interns are scheduled to cover the days leading up to major boating events, such as fishing tournaments and sailing regattas. Scheduling focuses on the busiest launches, based on past summers:

Menasha Jefferson Park	Fond du Lac Lakeside Park West
Neenah Rec Park	Pipe Columbia Park
Oshkosh Rainbow Park	Stockbridge Calumet Co. Park
Oshkosh Menominee Park	High Cliff State Park
Black Wolf launch	Winneconne Town Park

Other launches are visited less regularly, but all 48 public launches will be covered. Please encourage the blue-shirted interns and volunteers this summer. —Mike Lizotte

If you see Mark Sesing, congratulate him

Contrary to the words on Mark Sesing’s T-shirt, the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership recognizes just how much Mark brings to the table. It recently presented him with the 2008 Wisconsin Lakes Stewardship award for Public Service.



Don't believe Mark's T-shirt

Mark has been one of the advisors to the Winnebago Lakes Council from its beginnings. Thanks, Mark, for setting the bar high for protecting the Winnebago lakes.

Mark is the DNR Lakes Coordinator for the Northwest Region. His sense of humor, patience, hard work, creativity and persistence enables him to work effectively with many diverse groups and translate their common interests and issues into broadly accepted lake management goals.

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Federal law mandates reduction of urban impacts on waterways Winnebago lakes will benefit

Larger urban areas around Lake Winnebago have begun implementing ambitious plans to reduce the impact of urban development on water quality.

The plans call for a 20 percent reduction in the amount of sediment reaching waterways to be achieved this year, with the reduction scaling up to 40 percent by 2013. These reductions are mandated by federal legislation and are being enforced through administrative rules adopted by the Wisconsin DNR.

Reductions are being achieved via several methods:

Better urban housekeeping

Sweeping streets more frequently using more efficient equipment, catch basin cleaning, and management of yard and pet wastes reduces the amount of sediment and other pollutants reaching waterways.

Stormwater treatment

Facilities are being constructed to capture and hold stormwater runoff from storm sewers and ditches. Often taking the form of deep ponds, these facilities are designed to hold runoff waters long enough for sediments to settle out.

Construction site control

Using silt fence and other practices keep sediment on construction sites and out of storm sewers.

Educational campaigns

Municipalities have taken steps to inform homeowners about ways to reduce impacts on water quality. Examples are using non-phosphorus fertilizer, keeping leaves and grass clippings out of streets, and routing roof drainage onto lawns or rain gardens rather than into storm sewers.

Municipalities will be spending millions to achieve the targeted reduction in sediments entering our waterways. As residents, we can all contribute to these initiatives by being mindful of

what we're putting in the street or on our lawns, and then taking the appropriate steps to keep these materials out of our storm sewers and waterways.

- Greg Keil

Be a good shorefront steward

If you are a shorefront property owner, you can have a significant role in reducing sediment and pollution in our lakes. Here are some of the most important yard practices:

- Don't use phosphorus fertilizer. Better yet don't use fertilizer unless absolutely necessary. Have your soil tested and know what your lawn needs.
- Create a buffer area between your lawn and the shore. It should have a diversity of plant life for wildlife and aquatic habitat. Contact the Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department (920-232-1950) to have your shoreline examined and a buffer plan designed.
- Mow your lawn higher – at least 3 inches high; make sure runoff goes into the soil and not into the lakes; don't burn near the water; and plant more trees near the shore.

- Wayne Mueller

Check out these websites for more information:

UW Extension: <http://clean-water.uwex.edu> and <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/>. Additional tips can be found in the full article from *On the Water* magazine, March 2008 posted on our web site.