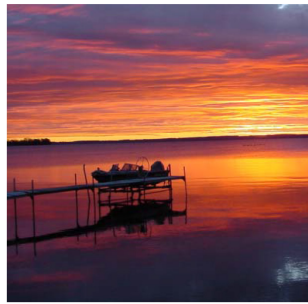




Winnebago Waterways: Working Together to Advance Lake Management

Winnebago Waterways is a collaborative project in a five county area— Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waushara and Winnebago – along with members of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), East Central Regional Planning Commission, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance and the Winnebago Lakes Council. Initial phases in 2013 and 2014 were funded by planning grants from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to the Winnebago Lakes Council. The group is dedicated to protecting our local lakes, rivers and economy and is looking to engage community groups, county staff, nonprofit organizations and other local interest groups.



The first phase of this project, which began in 2013, was a stakeholder engagement process during which the team identified priority issues with help from public stakeholder groups such as anglers, boaters, conservationists, policy experts, tourism boards, homeowners, business owners and farmers. Many issues were raised, but the three issues that rose to the surface included algal blooms, polluted runoff, and aquatic invasive species.

System Wide Collaboration

Collectively from those sources, the team learned about the many ways people are using the waterways and their top concerns for the future of these lakes and rivers. By understanding the needs and priorities of the system’s users, the team is now working together to address those priorities and continue to engage local stakeholders and municipalities.



Working together to build region-wide solutions to address the issues threatening the long-term health of the lakes and rivers is key to address these big issues, and your neighbors agreed.

Overwhelmingly, 95% of public survey respondents support agencies and local municipalities working together to manage the system. That’s why the Steering Team continues to work together on possible shared solutions. Winnebago Waterways is seeking funding resources to hire a half-time coordinator to maintain momentum and enhance engagement throughout the system. The next steps in the process will be developing goals and objectives, and formally recognizing them in a system-wide lake management plan. This is a huge undertaking, but is extremely critical to addressing priority issues such as algal blooms and polluted runoff.

A new system-wide lake management plan is important in leveraging funding opportunities that the system is currently ineligible to receive because the system-wide plan is outdated. It has been twenty-six years since adoption of the 1989 plan. The updated plan will incorporate changes in land use, current water quality trends, aquatic invasive species, and aquatic plant management. The plan will guide local governments and stakeholder groups on targeting areas, prioritizing projects, and ultimately improve water quality so that all stakeholders can enjoy this unique resource right in our backyards.

Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association

Find us at www.lwqia.org

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Next LWQIA Meeting:
Wed., November 4, 2015
7 p.m.
FDL City/County Building

“The public is welcome”

LWQIA and Snapshot Day 2015

On August 29 the Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association sponsored volunteer teams that participated in a statewide event to search for aquatic invasive species. The goals: to detect invasive species early when eradication might be possible and to build a statewide data basis of invasives over an extended time frame.

After receiving a brief training, the volunteers searched several predetermined locations in the Lakeside Park area. For the first time an invasive banded mystery snail was found in Lakeside Park.

Visit the River Alliance of Wisconsin website, the sponsor for this statewide effort, for information on where the volunteers monitored for AIS.

LWQIA efforts for the event were coordinated by Patrick Miller who also coordinated last year's event for LWQIA. For information about LWQIA visit <http://www.lwqia.org>.



Snapshot Day 2015 Photo Contest

Winnebago Lakes Council sponsored a photo contest for the day for Fond du Lac, Calumet and Winnebago regional teams. Two LWQIA volunteers took prizes. Kaci Baillies took first place and Paul Tollard took third place. The winners' photos are posted at www.winnlakescouncil.org.

Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association

Snapshot Day 2015 by Kaci Baillies

Snapshot day 2015 started out looking like a rainy day, but luckily the drizzle stopped and we had a great time! The Tollard family and I surveyed 5 sites inside Lakeside Park where we were able to find all sorts of interesting things, both native and non-native. At our first site we found a large gelatin ball that was very strange! We couldn't identify it, and can't wait to hear back about what it is. We also spent some time learning both native and invasive plant ID. The group did a great job out in the field! I think the most enjoyable part, especially for the kids, was snail hunting. It turned out to be a great day! We all learned a lot and got tons of samples collected.

By Kaci Baillies, Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach and Education Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Snapshot Day 2015 by Patrick Miller

As Patrick puts it, "My family's love of the outdoors and volunteerism to local service groups helped me seek opportunities where I could make a difference in my current community. I was fortunate to have been the previous aquatic invasive species coordinator for Fond Du Lac County and, although due to grant funding I am no longer in the position, I still feel a strong urge to give back to the environment and community where I was fortunate to have been able to work. My passion is being outdoors, using science to improve the environment, and most of all working with volunteers who want what is best for their local waters!"

By Patrick Miller, a recent graduate of the University Wisconsin Oshkosh, achieved a double major in biology and chemistry.

Goby Timeline

Before Labor Day 2015 fisherman found one goby in the Fox River below Neenah Dam in what is known as Little Lake Butte des Morts; fisherman sent pictures to the DNR but didn't keep the fish.

DNR staff performed shocking off a barge in the area but didn't find any goby. Later in the same area a youngster caught a goby and the DNR verified the species. The DNR then asked the Fox River Navigational System Authority (FRNSA) to close the lock. On **September 3** the Menasha Lock was closed.

The DNR set baited traps but didn't find any goby. Thirteen fishermen were then recruited using worm and line casts from the shoreline. Two goby were caught in about 20 minutes but nothing was caught above the dam. There was one credible report from a retired naturalist about catching a goby off the Trestle Trail Bridge.

It is suspected that gobies might have been used as bait in the Little Lake Butte des Morts area. The DNR base this on the fact that, although it is illegal to do so, Great Lakes fishermen sometimes use gobies as bait because small mouth bass like them.

October 1: (Expected timeline) Boats needing to get through the Menasha lock to get to winter storage were locked through. Boaters had to leave their boats in the lock for about 4 hours during which time Rotenone, a pesticide that interferes with fish getting oxygen, was used to poison any goby that might be in the lock. The poison residue in the closed lock was expected to degrade in 4-5 days.

What happens now? If gobies are in Lake Winnebago, there would be no reason to keep the Menasha lock closed. The DNR and FRNSA expect to get stakeholders together this winter, but at this point it is not clear who will be making the decision about future actions. No one knows what the impact of gobies will have if they are in or get into the Winnebago system. The gobies like to migrate upstream so there is a concern about the sturgeon population. What is known is that gobies have a voracious appetite for nest eggs and that they spawn multiple times during a season. Also, in the Great Lakes, native fish populations have declined in certain areas where gobies are found. However, Rob McLennon of the DNR said he remains very concerned--maybe even more concerned--about sea lamprey getting into the Winnebago system.

Based on an update by Rob McLennan, DNR East District Water Resources Field Supervisor, gave to the Board of the Winnebago Lakes Council on September 30, 2015, as reported by Ellen Balthazor.