



Friends of Lake Wingra



Promoting a healthy Lake Wingra
through an active watershed community

Wingra Watershed News

Fall/Winter 2007 volume 4, number 2

Toward a Community Vision of a Healthy Lake Wingra

- Jim Lorman

The Friends of Lake Wingra has been “promoting a healthy Lake Wingra through an active watershed community” for nearly a decade now. Can we say we’ve been successful?

One way to measure the activity of the watershed community is in the numbers of project volunteers, workshop attendees, donors, and subscribers to the FOLW listserve. Measured in these terms, we can say for sure that we have a much more active watershed community now than 10 years ago. We estimate that we directly reach over 500 volunteers and supporters each year.

We can also say that activity is continually increasing as more people who live, work, and play in the Lake Wingra watershed become concerned about its health, and learn about the initiatives the Friends are taking to protect and improve that health.

And what about the state of the lake and watershed—can we say they are any healthier as a result of the Friends? Of course we’d like to believe so. Countless hours by hundreds of volunteers and thousands of dollars of grant funds and private donations have helped increase understanding and raise awareness of the issues; bring together partners to coordinate management efforts; and work with them to prepare and implement new management plans.



Rainbow over Lake Wingra. Photo: David S. Liebl

The lake is no doubt better off today than it would be without all this work. But we can’t say exactly how much better. Nor can we say exactly how much better it *can* and *should* be—at least not quite yet.

Over the past year, we’ve begun to define the parameters for how much better the lake can and should be. We focused our efforts on the question, “Given what our best information tells us is possible, what do we, as a watershed community, consider a healthy Lake Wingra to be?”

We have been inviting the community to help establish a vision for the lake

30 years from now. Together, we’re creating what David Mollenhoff has called a “practical vision” for Lake Wingra (see the Fall/Winter 2006 issue of the *Wingra Watershed News*).

The result is a list of broad goals, easily communicated to the general public (see sidebar, page 2). For each of these general goals, we are now developing specific “health metrics” to guide future management actions. For example, we are exploring:

- A specific measure for water clarity to be reached through reducing both storm water/nutrient inputs and the number of carp.

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Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

Mission

We promote a healthy Lake Wingra through an active watershed community.

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Special Thanks To:

Genesis Bichanich, Kristen Branch, Lisa Coleman, Carol Doeppers, Greg Diebel, Edgewood College, First Unitarian Society of Madison, Graham-Martin Prairie Foundation, Andrea Kaminski, Suzanne Kercher, Betty Les, Jody Les, Bob Liska, Marty Nelson, El Ranthum, Rachel Veltman, Woody Wallace, Wingra Canoe & Sailing Center, Nancy Zolidis, and ZuZu Café.

Become a Friend

To become a Friend of Lake Wingra, send your tax-deductible contribution to Friends of Lake Wingra Inc. c/o Office of Advancement, Edgewood College, 1000 Edgewood College Drive, Madison, WI 53711-1977. Please make checks to: Edgewood College - FOLW.

Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

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Community vision (cont.)

- A target for the number of residential rain gardens and acres of permeable pavement that might increase or re-establish the flow of springs.
- The specific ecological changes that would be required to successfully re-establish wild rice beds in the lake.
- The specific plants and animals in the lake and wetlands most in need of protection, and the habitats needing enhancement to ensure that they thrive.

We are still working with technical specialists and interested citizens to develop these metrics. If you'd like to be involved, please let us know.

In the meantime, we are pleased with

the response to the general goals from the wider community, and are offering the opportunity for people to show their support by signing the statement: "I am a friend of Lake Wingra, and I endorse the Goals for a Healthy Lake Wingra in 2030." Nearly 200 people have already endorsed the goals at events such as "Jazz in the Park," neighborhood July 4th celebrations, and the Fall Windows on Wingra open house.

An electronic endorsement form will be available on our web site (lakewingra.org) by the end of the year. In the meantime, you can contact us to find more details on the health goals or to endorse them now (663-2838, info@lakewingra.org).

Goals for a Healthy Lake Wingra in 2030

Lake Wingra is a unique community resource that contributes to the quality of life of a much larger geographic region. The lake and its surroundings support diverse open spaces and natural habitats that are protected, restored, and regenerated for future generations, and provide refuge from the noise, lights, and pavement of the surrounding urban area. People, plants, and animals benefit from this oasis within the city.

A Healthy Lake

Clear, Clean Water: The lake water is free from excessive pollutants, and clear enough for people to see their feet when standing waist-deep.

Restored Spring Flow: Cool, clear spring water replenishes the lake, and maintains year-round flows into Wingra Creek.

Native Plants and Animals: The ecology of the lake and its surroundings are enhanced by the protection and restoration of habitats for a wide variety of plants and animals.

Stewardship and Enjoyment

Public Access: Lake Wingra's unique amenities are accessible to responsible public use and support a wide range of complementary recreational activities in all seasons.

Swimming: The lake is healthy and attractive for swimming.

Fishing: The fishery meets the needs of many types of anglers; fish are safe and delicious to eat.

Boating: An emphasis on quiet use provides a refuge for paddling and sailing.

Nature Viewing: The lake and its surroundings abound with opportunities to view a large variety of species (such as coyotes, otters, dragonflies, orchids, turtles) and natural features (such as springs, fens, and sedge meadows). The shoreline is recognized as a "dark sky preserve," without obtrusive lights.

Learning: The lake and its surroundings act as a magnet for learning, drawing individuals, youth programs, schools, and families.

Restoring and Enhancing: People of all ages are engaged in activities that restore and enhance the ecological importance, natural beauty, and recreational value of the lake and its surroundings.

From the Chair

Greetings.

In January 2008, the Friends of Lake Wingra will begin a second decade of "promoting a healthy Lake Wingra through an active watershed community."

I am looking forward to the satisfaction of bringing the Goals for a Healthy Lake Wingra in 2030 and the metrics we will use to measure our success into sharper focus.

As the fall season arrives, it's time for us to recognize change by welcoming new board members Paul Dearlove, Anna Healey, and Eric Jacobsen, and offering our gratitude to outgoing board member Steve Glass.

A healthy watershed community will need new volunteers and new leaders for the next decade, so please consider becoming active. And, watch for our Friends of Lake Wingra 10th anniversary celebration coming up in 2008!



We are looking for more good Friends!

Who doesn't appreciate new friends? We sure do! Here are some current volunteer needs.

Don't be shy. Give us a call, and we'll buy you a cup of coffee just to talk about your interests and skills!

Contact: Anna Healy

- ◆ Anyone who loves Lake Wingra and has time and energy!
- ◆ Fundraising & development expertise
- ◆ Web site maintenance
- ◆ Kiosk designer and coordinator
- ◆ Writing and editing
- ◆ Graphic design
- ◆ Events logistics & publicity
- ◆ Archivist/Historian
- ◆ Shoreline caretakers
- ◆ Watershed watchers

Be a Friend to Lake Wingra

Apply by Nov. 16 to Participate in Plant Dane!

- Steve Arnold

The Graham-Martin Prairie Foundation, with administrative help from Dane County, provides matching grants for new rain gardens through the Plant Dane grant program.

Wingra watershed property owners can apply now to become directly involved in improving Lake Wingra's water quality during the next growing season. The grants provide rain garden plants from Agrecol at half price and a free (required) workshop on rain garden construction.

At the time of European settlement, Lake Wingra relied on springs and groundwater as the source of most of its water. Today, over 250 million gallons of storm water runoff is conveyed directly to the lake via storm drains each year.

One of the key strategies for improving the water quality of Lake Wingra is to get as much water as possible to soak back into the soil where it falls, in order to replenish the groundwater and increase spring flow.

The construction of rain gardens on commercial and residential properties in the watershed will have a positive impact on the water quality of the lake, since these two land uses account for most of the runoff to the lake.

A rain garden is typically 4-8 inches deep, contains native plants and can be constructed by either the homeowner or a landscape architect.

For more information on rain garden construction, see <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/nps/rg/rgmanual.pdf>.

Applications for the Plant Dane Program must be completed by November 16th. For more information contact Marcia Hartwig, Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds at 224-3746 or hartwig@co.dane.wi.us.

Wingra Carp Management Update

- David S. Liebl

The common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is a wily creature. Their natural caution and ability to learn helps these invasive fish reach forty years of age. So perhaps the project partnership of Friends, DNR, and Dane County should not have been surprised when we were outwitted during our spring attempt to trap and remove carp from Vilas Lagoon.

The trap we laid was all too obvious, and we could see the effect of thousands of years of evolution as huge fish circled slowly in front of it, refusing to be lured into the lagoon to spawn. It was wonderful (and discouraging) to see the look in the eye of a carp sizing up the leap it would take over the top of the net to get into and out of the lagoon.

Nonetheless, we persevere with a new strategy: netting the fish from chilly November waters in the deepest parts of the lake. Cold weather drives the carp out of the shallows, increasing our chances for catching large numbers of them while minimizing risk to aquatic plants which have died back for the season.

Experienced commercial fishermen will ensure that other species of fish are not harmed by the nets. And, the harvested carp have good market value. With some luck, we should be able to say "adios!" to many of the 11,000 carp in Lake Wingra.



The fyke net laid across the entrance to Vilas Lagoon was meant to allow fish to enter the lagoon (to the left) but not return to the lake (to the right). While it worked for bass and bluegills, the carp weren't fooled. Photo: David S. Liebl

Summer WOW Clean-Up Also Gains Support For Lake Goals

- Matt Diebel

In June, during the annual Take a Stake in the Lakes Week, the Friends teamed up with Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association to sponsor the annual Lake Wingra clean-up.

More than 50 people spent part of a balmy summer day removing trash from the shoreline and shallow water, helping make the lake a more beautiful place. Some participants also enjoyed rides in the two DNR Voyageur Canoes. The Friends used this occasion to begin gathering endorsements of the goals for a healthy Lake Wingra. Overall, this event was a big success and one that we plan to continue in years to come.

City Storm Water Budget Favors Lake Wingra

-David S. Liebl

The City of Madison 2008 Storm Water Utility budget sets the stage for major improvements in the Wingra Watershed. Proposed projects include:

- Stabilization of the natural channel within the Glenway Golf Course along the embankment of the Southwest Bikepath;
- Rain garden streets along Eaton Ridge and Rugby Row;
- Removal of an outfall from Lake Wingra at Ho-Nee-Um Pond;
- Dredging of the outfall area of Wingra Park;
- Funding for the creation and rehabilitation of failed storm water treatment devices located in the UW-Arboretum;
- Eliminating bank erosion, providing habitat enhancement, and storm water treatment along Wingra Creek;
- Rebuilding Wingra Dam to provide a barrier to discourage the passage of carp and other invasive fish species from Wingra Creek to the lake.

Kudos to our friends at City Engineering for investing in the Lake Wingra watershed. Be sure to tell your alder how important these projects are.



Photo credit: <http://emeraldashborer.info>

Know Where Your Firewood Comes From

- Anna Healy

Transporting firewood can aid the spread of gypsy moth, oak wilt, the emerald ash borer and other pests and diseases that threaten both urban and natural forests in the Lake Wingra watershed.

Firewood often comes from diseased trees, and transporting it gives pests a free ride and the opportunity to infest previously unaffected areas. To protect the trees in the watershed from firewood hitchhikers, know your firewood.

Purchase firewood locally from a supplier that seasons the wood for at least two years, kiln dries it, or removes the bark.

Ask about the source of the wood. Currently it is illegal to move firewood to Wisconsin from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, or Ohio, as well as select counties in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

When cutting dead trees into firewood, let it dry for at least two years before moving it. Any pests in the wood will die before it is transported to a new location.

By knowing your firewood is pest and disease free, you can help ensure that the trees in the Lake Wingra watershed stay healthy for many years to come.

The Wingra Naturalist Under the Ice

- Anna Healy

You may be surprised to know that the ice that covers Lake Wingra creates a safe and comfortable environment where turtles spend the winter.

When water cools to 39 degrees Fahrenheit, it reaches its greatest density and sinks to the bottom of the lake. Water that is cooled to less than 39 degrees is less dense and rises.

So when ice forms on the surface it creates a layer of insulation, providing the turtles burrowed deep in the mud at the bottom of Lake Wingra with stable and "warm" water all winter long.

During the summer, turtles, like all reptiles, breathe air with their lungs. So how do they survive underwater all winter?

Turtles extract oxygen directly from the water through tissues in their throat cavity and anus that are lined with small blood vessels. This process is

very similar to the way fish gills work, although the rate of oxygen uptake is a lot slower.

Surviving on this trickle of oxygen requires that turtles slow their metabolism to the point of becoming comatose. Turtle hearts beat about 40 times a minute on a warm day in July, but drop to one beat every 10 minutes in the winter.

Since the turtle has burrowed into the mud at the bottom of the lake, it is safe from predators and can stay in this state until the ice melts and the water warms.

As you enjoy recreational activities on frozen Lake Wingra this winter, pause for a second to think about the turtles resting under the ice, waiting for warmer weather to emerge again.



After a long winter nap, one of Lake Wingra's many snapping turtles prepares to lay her eggs on the Edgewood campus. Photo: J. Lorman

Kid's Corner

How well do you know Lake Wingra? Test yourself with this quiz.

1. Wingra is a Ho-Chunk word for:
 - a. green pond
 - b. muskellunge
 - c. duck
 - d. wild rice
2. Which one of these fish is native to Lake Wingra?
 - a. bluegill
 - b. carp
 - c. muskellunge
 - d. yellow bass
3. The Lake Wingra watershed is mostly:
 - a. forest
 - b. prairie
 - c. golf courses
 - d. neighborhoods
4. On average, how long is Lake Wingra frozen each year?
 - a. 3 months
 - b. 4 months
 - c. 5 months
 - d. 6 months
5. How can you help Lake Wingra?
 - a. plant a rain garden
 - b. pick up trash from the shoreline
 - c. don't feed ducks and geese
 - d. learn more about the lake

Answers on back page

Featured Watershed Partners:

Bob Glebs, Tyler Leeper and the Wingra Canoe and Sailing Center

- Eric Jacobsen

Tyler Leeper and Bob Glebs of the Wingra Canoe and Sailing Center have been chosen as featured watershed partners for coordinating a new and popular activity — pontoon boat tours of Lake Wingra!

The tours are focused on sharing information about the natural history, limnology, and environmental impacts upon the lake.

On several Thursday evenings through late summer, Tyler captained the pontoon boat while FOLW volunteers provided the travelogue.

According to David Liebl, who led one tour, "A family drove up from Bass Lake just to see the carp enclosure ... fun was had by all."

Tyler started the tour program to provide free access to what he considers an "underutilized and great resource." He wanted to help people better understand invasive species, storm water management and other issues in the Lake Wingra watershed. The tours departed from the Center's pier, located at Wingra Park.

Bob Glebs provided the boat for these tours and has also worked with the Friends on other issues, including this winter's outfall dredging project. (See project update, page 7.)

These free tours are planned again for next summer. Keep an eye out for information in upcoming newsletters or contact the Wingra Canoe and Sailing Center for more information.



*There's nothing like a quiet cruise around Lake Wingra for learning about watershed issues.
Photo: Wingra Canoe and Sailing Center*

Watershed Updates

With so many watershed improvement projects underway, it's easy to lose track of everything the Friends are doing. Here are brief summaries of some recent activities. Project contacts can be reached at 663-2838 or info@lakewingra.org.



The new boardwalk can be seen in the marsh between the carp enclosure and the Mazzuchelli Center. Photo: Mike Devries, The Capital Times

Edgewood Community Boardwalk Dedicated

Thanks to a collaborative effort among the three Edgewood schools (College, High School and Campus School) and a generous gift from the Madison Community Foundation, the public can now enjoy more of Lake Wingra's wetland shoreline. The "Edgewood Community Boardwalk," dedicated on October 4, provides access (including by wheelchair) to much of Edgewood's 15 acres of wetlands along the Edgewood Park and Pleasure Drive.

Platforms with benches allow classes and other groups to learn about wetland and lake issues, while the boardwalk itself provides access for research and management as well as outreach and education. Control of invasive species like purple loosestrife will be more effective and less disruptive.

Students, faculty, staff, and neighbors contributed hundreds of hours of labor to construct the boardwalk. Its design and construction, intended to have minimal impact on the wetlands, was approved by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Odana Pond Infiltration

After a rocky start getting the equipment running smoothly, about 200 gallons of storm water runoff is now being infiltrated every minute into the groundwater table below the Odana Golf Course. This cooperative project between City of Madison, UW-Madison and MG&E has resulted in ecological enhancements of the wildlife habitat in Odana Ponds, treatment of storm water runoff to reduce pollutants entering the lake, and increased groundwater flows to springs feeding Lake Wingra.

Project Contact: David S. Liebl

City and County Collaborate to Reduce Road Salt Use

Dane County, the City of Madison, and the Madison Area Municipal Storm Water Partnership are cooperating to provide training on the proper use of road salt by public and private applicators. This is the beginning of what may be a long-term city-county collaboration to reduce the negative impacts of road salt. This is good news since Lake Wingra is affected more than other area lakes by excessive road salt use. Project contact: Jim Lorman

SW Bikepath Restoration

It's been a busy summer of planting along the Southwest Bikepath with our friends from the Dudgeon-Monrore Neighborhood Association. Eight volunteers recently pitched in to plant nearly 400 prairie plants. All have survived, but some have been nibbled by those pesky rodents. Next season the group will prepare and plant an additional small area just to the east of the existing plantings. Project Contact: Steve Glass



Shown here at Zuzu Café are friends distributing our Love Your Lakes, Don't Leaf Them yard signs. Photo: Jim Lorman

Water Quality & Leaf Campaign Open House

WOW! The fall Windows on Wingra event launched the fall leaf campaign and brought watershed enthusiasts together to endorse the goals for a healthy Lake Wingra. Project contact: Anne Forbes or Bob Liska

Wingra Boathouse Dredging

During winter 2007-2008, the City of Madison plans to dredge sediment from around the storm water outfall at the Wingra Canoe and Sailing Center. This is one of three outfalls along the north shore of Lake Wingra where significant upland sediment accumulation has occurred. Improved storm water management higher in the watershed will reduce the transport of sediment, and hopefully prevent the need for future dredging. Project contact: David S. Liebl



Fall/Winter Calendar

See our online calendar at www.lakewingra.org for more details on these and other upcoming events.

**November 29, January 24, February 28, and March 27,
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Monthly Friends of Lake Wingra Board Meetings.

Mazzuchelli Center, Edgewood Campus. All are welcome. Contact info@lakewingra.org or 663-2838 to confirm the location and agenda.

Monthly Southwest Bikepath Work Parties.

The work parties are over for the fall season. Check on the start of the 2008 season by visiting our website.

Friday, November 30, 2007 7:30 p.m.

Our 6th Annual Winter Holiday Party

516 Wingra Street. Join the Friends of Lake Wingra to celebrate another year of good friends and a great cause. New friends and old - everyone is welcome. Please bring an hors d'oeuvre or a beverage.

Kid's Corner Answers

- 1) c - Lake Wingra once was surrounded by beds of wild rice and other plants that attracted flocks of ducks.
- 2) a - The other fish have been put in the Madison lakes by humans for food and sport.
- 3) d - There are many types of land use in the 3,500 acre Lake Wingra watershed, but 51% is residential neighborhoods.
- 4) b - Lake Wingra is the first of Madison's Lakes to freeze, usually during the first week of December.
- 5) All are correct, and it takes all of us working together to make Lake Wingra healthy.

Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

c/o Office of Advancement

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