



# Friends of Lake Wingra



Promoting a healthy Lake Wingra  
through an active watershed community

## Wingra Watershed News

Fall/Winter 2015 volume 12, number 2



David Thompson

*Besadny Check presentation (L to R) Susan Frett, Friends of Lake Wingra Volunteer Coordinator; Ben Yahr, Friends of Lake Wingra Board Chair; Barb Roeber, daughter of Buzz Besadny and NRFW member; Caitlin Williamson, Program and Development Coordinator at NRFW.*

### **Grant Received!** **Watershed Management Plan Kickoff Campaign**

*Susan Frett*

Friends of Lake Wingra are pleased to announce that we have received a \$1,000 grant from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program! This funding will go toward the Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan Kickoff campaign that we are planning for 2016. The purpose of this campaign is to help raise the awareness level of residents near Lake Wingra that they live in the watershed and that individual actions on their properties can indeed affect Lake Wingra either positively or negatively. A lot of people care about Lake Wingra, and we feel that they would make positive changes to their property if they only realized the collective effect on the lake.

We plan to utilize the Neighborhood Association block captain system and also recruit volunteers to canvas key areas of the watershed to educate people about ways that they can help Lake Wingra (find out more about these methods here: [www.lakewingra.org/lake-friendly-bmps-for-property-owners](http://www.lakewingra.org/lake-friendly-bmps-for-property-owners)). Through this process we will be asking people to pledge their participation in a new Lake Friendly Best Management Practices for Property Owners program. Each of the practices is

a step towards reaching the goals of the Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan, which are reducing phosphorus and chlorides in stormwater runoff and increasing infiltration throughout the watershed.

To pledge your participation today please fill out our online survey found here: <http://goo.gl/forms/SgkX0vXOnV>. This system will provide education about actions that will help Lake Wingra and encourage people to get started! The online system will also allow the Friends to follow up with people who may want to install a practice such as a rain garden on their property but need advice or assistance in implementation or maintenance.

Each Lake Friendly Best Management Practice that is implemented will be a step forward in improving the health of Lake Wingra. Each step forward will benefit the residents of the watershed, the wildlife that use Lake Wingra as a resource, and every person who recreates on or near Lake Wingra.

The grant that we received does require a 1:1 financial match; we are currently seeking donations to help us meet this match. If you would like to donate to Friends of Lake Wingra please make out your check to Edgewood College-FOLW and mail it to:

Friends of Lake Wingra  
c/o Edgewood College Development Office,  
1000 Edgewood College Drive,  
Madison, WI 53711.

Thank you to Edgewood College for continuing to serve as our fiscal agent — this reduces our administrative costs and allows your donation to go to work in the watershed.

We also need volunteer help with this campaign, if you can help please email [info@lakewingra.org](mailto:info@lakewingra.org).

The Friends of Lake Wingra would like to thank the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program for making this effort possible. To find out more about their program and see a list of other 2015 recipients please visit their website at [www.wisconservation.org/how-we-work/c-d-besadny-conservation-grants/](http://www.wisconservation.org/how-we-work/c-d-besadny-conservation-grants/).



## Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

### Mission

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

### FOLW Board

Ben Yahr, Chair  
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Jim Baumann, Treasurer  
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### 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.

1000 Edgewood College Dr.  
Madison, WI 53711  
info@lakewingra.org  
www.lakewingra.org

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## Leaf-Free Streets Pilot Project — Year 2

Susan Frett

This fall, Friends of Lake Wingra has been working together with City of Madison Engineering on the second year of a leaf management pilot project in the Lake Wingra watershed. Proper leaf management is a priority because wet, decaying leaves in the street release a nutrient "tea" that contributes to algae blooms and nuisance vegetation growth in our lakes.

Last year, residents in a small three block area off of Tokay Boulevard were encouraged to pile their leaves neatly on their terraces for collection, making sure to keep the street area clear of leaves. Initial results with last year's project were positive with many people participating in raking their leaves out of the street. This year, residents of the same neighborhood were asked to go a step farther and collect their leaves in yard waste bags and then place the bags on their terrace for collection. Project partners theorized that collecting the leaves in bags would help to contain the leaves on the terrace and prevent them from ending up in the street.

The effort has been led by Friends of Lake Wingra board member Roger Bannerman, along with Phil Gaebler and Greg Fries of the City of Madison Engineering department. The public portion of the project began with an informational meeting and a mailing to everyone in the project area explaining the process that would be used. Volunteers then went door to door throughout the project area further clarifying the process, handing out bags, and asking residents to participate. Monitoring has been taking place periodically throughout the fall to gauge participation levels and to measure the amount of leaves remaining in the street.

Overall the residents have been positive about the project and willing to par-



Roger Bannerman

Badger Volunteers removing leaves from the street

ticipate. Everyone in the pilot area was given 20 free yard waste bags while people in the control area were asked to purchase their own bags. Those in the pilot area could request additional bags as needed. As of November 11, one resident had used over 75 bags! People have reported that they feel good about being able to help and do their part to improve the health of Lake Wingra. The streets in the pilot area have been relatively clear of leaves and the collection process has not had any challenges caused by using the bags.

There is a second project going on in the Lake Wingra watershed with the objective of keeping the streets in the pilot area completely free of leaves. The City has been collecting the leaves weekly in this small area and making sure the streets are clear before a storm. Water samples are being collected from stormwater outfalls that are connected to these streets and are currently being compared to stormwater outfalls connected to a control area with typical leaf accumulation. The data isn't back yet but we are hopeful that streets that are clear of leaves will result in water that is clear of phosphorus. Check back next issue for an update on the results of both of these studies!



# Greening of the Monroe Street Festival

Ben Yahr

Visitors to the annual Monroe Street Festival on October 10th got to experience more than good deals from merchants thanks to a new theme developed in part by Friends of Lake Wingra, Wisconsin Environmental Initiative and the Edgewood College Sustainability Leadership program. The "Greening of the Monroe Street Festival" highlighted ten stations along the street to help visitors envision examples of elements that could be incorporated into the upcoming reconstruction of Monroe Street.

Rather than a simple utilities and repaving project, we believe that the reconstruction of Monroe Street offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to turn our neighborhood into a vibrant eco-district that preserves and protects Lake Wingra while improving pedestrian and bike safety and providing unique opportunities for area businesses. A range of ideas were illustrated through display stations that included:

- Design Visions for the Crazy Legs Triangle and nearby intersections that show a vibrant Monroe Street Corridor using pedestrian friendly scale and green infrastructure features.
- Zero Waste Stations with receptacles and signage to clarify materials that can be recycled or composted and where to put them.
- Displays and educational materials by the Friends of Lake Wingra, Edgewood Sustainability Leadership Program, WEI, Formecology Landscape Design and the Monroe Street Library.

Photo: Friends of Lake Wingra Pop-Up Park



David Thompson

- Wisconsin Bike Fed Pedestrian Safety Demonstrations.

- Tours along the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Nature and History Trail.

Perhaps the most unique demonstration projects at the Monroe Street Festival were the two "Pop-up Parks" managed by Friends of Lake Wingra and Edgewood College. While these outdoor rooms were temporary, they were built in the parking lanes and decorated with sod and potted plants. These pop-up-parks provided a vision of what the street could look like in the future if more emphasis were placed on pedestrians and water quality features such as bioswales, permeable pavement, or stormwater trees.

As the City moves forward with the reconstruction, it is likely that the first phase of the project will include a small pilot project for pedestrian safety. Friends of Lake Wingra is working closely with the District 13 Alder Sara Eskrich, the DMNA Transportation Committee, and other partners to ensure that this initial project is a success that leads to additional awareness and investment in safety, placemaking, and water quality. Stay posted to our website or Facebook page for upcoming meetings.

For more information about the Festival, pictures, and video of the event, check out <http://www.lakewingra.org/greening-of-the-monroe-street-festival>

Also stay posted to <https://www.facebook.com/GreeningMonroeStreet> for updates on the reconstruction process.

## Take Action About Road Salts

Susan Frett

Road salts are toxic to aquatic life in Lake Wingra and are virtually impossible to remove from the lake once they are put there. It is important to reduce the amount of road salts that are used throughout the Lake Wingra watershed. Many applicators use 5 times more than the recommended level of salt.

This winter Friends of Lake Wingra is asking you to take the following three steps that will help to reduce the overuse of road salt.

- Call the City of Madison streets department and let them know that you care about the health of our lakes and you would like them to use LESS road salts. Also call to thank them for using less salt, and to thank them for their work keeping the streets clear.
- Adjust your winter driving expectations; drive slower and allow more time to get to your destination safely.
- If you notice commercial properties that are using excessive salt, speak to the manager of the business and let them know that reducing the usage is important to you.

Find out more about reducing road salt usage in Wisconsin at [www.wisaltwise.com](http://www.wisaltwise.com).

## Volunteer!

Let us know if you want to help improve the health and quality of Lake Wingra. We'll keep a list of names and interest areas and will contact you when your help is needed. Volunteer opportunities include watershed management issues, education programs, working with schools, rain garden installation/planting/cleanup, graphic design, newsletter editing, planning events, marketing, and grant application review. Send an email to [info@lakewingra.org](mailto:info@lakewingra.org) if you want to get involved.

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c/o Office of Advancement  
Edgewood College  
1000 Edgewood College Dr.  
Madison, WI 53711-1977



## Life Under the Ice

Rex Merrill

Anyone can walk on water, as long as it's frozen. The real miracle is how the molecular structure of water makes life possible. The polar structure of water molecules allows them to stick together as a liquid over the wide range of temperatures common on our planet. As the universal solvent for the other molecules within cells, liquid water makes the chemical reactions involved in living cells possible. When water freezes, these chemical reactions stop and ice crystals can damage cellular structures.

The structure of water also gives it a property unlike that of most other substances: water is less dense as a solid than as a liquid. This is the property that allows ice to float. When water in a lake cools, water molecules approaching the freezing point (0°C or 32°F) rise to the surface and form a sheet of ice. The denser, liquid water below the ice remains at 4°C (39°F). At that temperature, life is still possible; it just gets harder.

Algae, the simplest green organisms, can continue to photosynthesize at lower light levels under the ice. Like deciduous trees which prepare for winter by losing their leaves, most

aquatic plants also die back and shed their photosynthetic surfaces. Their roots and growing points go dormant, essentially hibernating in the mud or liquid water under the ice. When ice melts with the warmer temperatures of spring, aquatic plants start growing again.

As the oxygen produced by photosynthesis decreases through the winter, metabolic processes of all organisms slow. Like the aquatic plants, many aquatic animals avoid the tough conditions by going dormant. Some aquatic invertebrates like mussels, clams, snails, and various insect larvae or pupae may settle into the mud and become inactive or dormant. Vertebrates like bullheads, carp, many turtles, and frogs do basically the same. Walleye, northern pike, and most panfish may be active after early ice when food and oxygen are still available, but they too slow down as winter proceeds.

Life for humans can seem tough in winter, but we don't have to slow down and burrow in the mud. We can enjoy it by walking, skiing, skating, or fishing above the ice and then going home to a cup of warm cocoa.

Richard Hurd



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