



Friends of Lake Wingra



Promoting a healthy Lake Wingra
through an active watershed community

Wingra Watershed News

Spring/Summer 2009 volume 6, number 1

Friends of Lake Wingra Give Native Plants a Fighting Chance

- Eric Jacobsen and Brad Herrick



Burning the Vilas Park shoreline planting in the spring leads to...



A lush and weed-free prairie later in the summer.

Over the last few years, the Friends of Lake Wingra has established and maintained native plant restoration areas at Vilas Park, Odana Hills Golf Course, and along Wingra Creek. This effort illustrates very well the FOLW Mission: Promoting a healthy Lake Wingra through an active watershed community.

For example, turf grass and invasive weeds along the Vilas Park lagoon shoreline have been replaced with plants native to the Lake Wingra watershed. (See map on page 6.) These native plants add beauty to the park, create a buffer area between the land and water, filter stormwater runoff before it enters the lake, and discourage use of the park's playing fields by urbanized geese.

Selection of proper plant species is key to the success of any planting. Native plants are better able to adapt to local growing conditions, require little input of chemicals, time, and energy, and have a much better chance at survival. Once the native plants are established, volunteers monitor and control exotic weeds.

To help mimic natural conditions and reduce competition from weeds, the Vilas lagoon planting was burned in April. Volunteer work parties will focus

on controlling weedy species through the rest of the growing season. Thus far, the FOLW plantings have been thriving due to the efforts of a multitude of volunteers (Thanks to all!).

We encourage you to be a part of this active watershed community by volunteering at the FOLW work parties at both Vilas lagoon and the Odana Hills Golf Course. See the calendar of volunteer opportunities on page 8.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum is also active in restoring native plant communities in the Lake Wingra watershed. With the support of FOLW, the Arboretum is currently working to restore the 2.4 acre South Shore Fen, which is located directly south of Edgewood College. (See map on page 6.)

Historically, the fen was open, with few shrubs and a variety of native plant species found only in fen habitats. Because of the influx of exotic and invasive species, the fen has become dominated by woody species including common and glossy buckthorns (*Rhamnus cathartica* and *R. frangula*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.) and red osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*).

Continued on page 2

Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

Mission

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

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Special Thanks To:

Corey Losenegger, Pete Jopke, Tyler Leeper

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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Native Plants (cont.)

UW-Madison students have developed an adaptive restoration plan for the fen. The goals of this long-term experiment are to decrease the exotic and invasive woody species and to increase both native plant cover and the number of native species present.

In subsequent years the experiment will be supplemented with both native seeding and the continued removal of woody species. Monitoring of the site

will continue indefinitely.

Plant community restoration is an important activity for the Friends of Lake Wingra. We will continue to support the control of invasive species and the restoration of native species across the watershed by organizing volunteer planting opportunities and by supporting the efforts of other organizations, such as the Arboretum.

Calling all Neighborhoods!

Steve Arnold

The Friends of Lake Wingra encourages your neighborhood association to establish a lakes committee or to create a FOLW liaison position within your organizational structure.

It is within the mission of the Friends of Lake Wingra to empower individuals, groups and neighborhood associations to effectively advocate for activities that protect Lake Wingra and its watershed. Most neighborhood associations have greenspace, open space or parks committees.

A lakes committee, operating either independently or as a subcommittee, can provide interested residents with a structured opportunity to actively work toward assisting in the effort to assure a healthy Lake Wingra.

Potential benefits that a lakes committee can bring to your neighborhood include:

1. **Education** - Neighborhood newsletters provide an excellent forum for sharing information about our lakes and for communicating lake-related volunteer activities.
2. **Workshops** - Installing a rain barrel, constructing a rain garden or building a green roof are more likely when hands-on experiences are made available. Lakes committees could sponsor work-

shops and seminars for neighborhood residents interested in these types of projects that directly benefit the lakes.

3. Connecting to governing bodies and watershed groups - Committees afford citizens greater opportunities to convey interests and needs to elected officials, governing bodies and watershed groups (e.g., the Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership, see page 3).

As an alternative to a lakes committee, an individual acting as FOLW liaison can facilitate communication between our organizations. This arrangement would offer a great way for lake enthusiasts to stay informed and connected, and to lobby for actions that will help clean up our lakes.

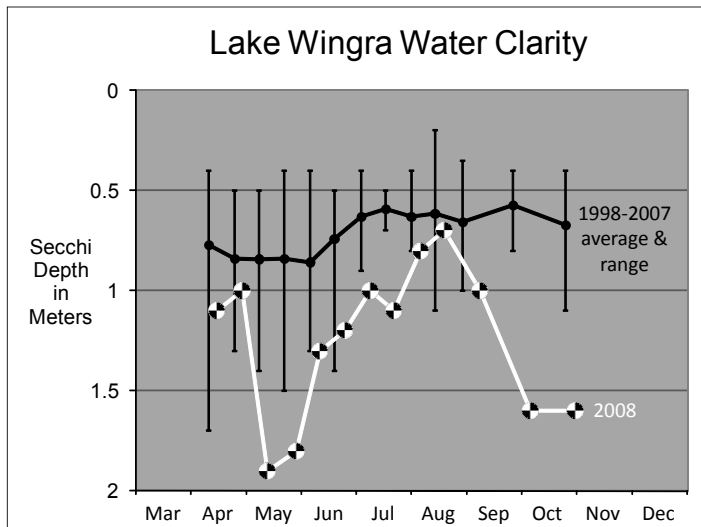
The establishment of closer ties between FOLW and neighborhood associations would be a positive step toward assuring that Lake Wingra remains a treasured resource.

Please communicate your interest in partnering with the Friends of Lake Wingra by contacting info@lakewingra.org.

Removing Carp is the Clear Solution

David S. Liebl

Remove 6,000 carp from Lake Wingra and what do you get? The clearest water in over ten years.



The figure above shows how clear the water was in Lake Wingra during the summer of 2008, as compared to the average clarity over the previous ten years, showing the best and worst clarity during that time. It's easy to see what an improvement 2008 was.

Using a Secchi disk, water clarity is measured throughout the year by the University of Wisconsin's Long Term Ecological Research Program (LTER). With LTER as a partner, we will be able to track water quality improvements into the future, and

judge whether our carp removal efforts are responsible for a long term improvement in the lake.

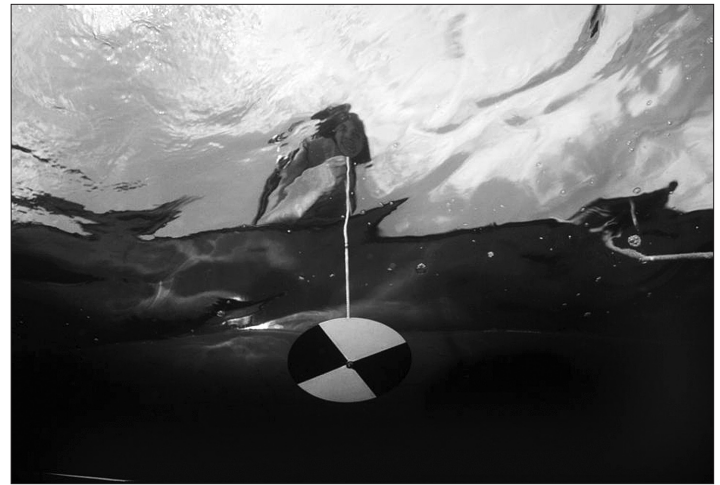


Photo: Using a Secchi disk (from a carp's perspective)

While last March's carp seining through the ice removed an estimated 48% of the carp (6,000 fish), this March the fishing over open water was not as successful. A commercial seine of the lake only netted 414 carp. We assume the others escaped through a tear in the net, or avoided the net entirely. Evidently, new strategies will be needed to further reduce carp numbers. To see pictures from FOLW's carp removal efforts, you can download this (18mb pdf) slide show: <http://epd.engr.wisc.edu/pd/liebl/CarpFishinginWingra3-09.pdf>

Message from the Chair:

A Partnership to Protect and Enhance All of Madison Lakes

Jim Lorman

The Yahara Lakes Legacy Project (YLLP) (www.danewaters.com/YaharaLakesLegacyPartnership.aspx) emerged in late 2008 from separate initiatives:

- 1) Yahara CLEAN (involving Dane County, DNR, DATCP, and Madison), aimed at decreasing nutrients, sediments, and beach bacteria;
- 2) a City of Madison funding initiative (sponsored by Alders Brian Solomon and Satya Conway-Rhodes) "to initiate a planning process to pull together stakeholders and community members to establish...an implementation plan for cleaning the lakes"; and
- 3) a project of Clean Wisconsin and Gathering Waters Conservancy (funded by the Madison Community Foundation) to "develop a common vision for restoring and maintaining a healthy, sustainable [Yahara lakes] watershed."

In the last year, YLLP has engaged hundreds of people in

creating a common vision for Madison Lakes (see "We Want Your Input on a Draft Vision for Our Yahara Lakes" on the YLLP web page), identifying priority actions that can produce improvements in water quality in the near term, and moving toward an inclusive, sustainable partnership that can lead to more significant improvements over the long term (www.danewaters.com/Steering_Team.aspx).

I am glad to have been engaged in this exciting initiative, which I believe can lead to new partnerships that will enhance the effectiveness of Friends of Lake Wingra and other watershed groups to meet shared goals for healthy lakes.

I encourage all friends of Madison lakes to support this initiative. Meanwhile, the "Goals for a Healthy Lake Wingra" document, developed by our own active Wingra Watershed community, is now at UW-Extension for final editing and layout. Stay tuned for the final document!

Goodbye to the Bike Path Ditch

The City of Madison has repaired the Southwest Bike Path ditch, and installed two stormwater treatment devices to remove sediment. (See map on page 6.)

For many years, stormwater runoff from Westmorland Neighborhood, Speedway Rd. and Glenway St., and the Glenway Golf Course eroded a ditch along the railway embankment, transporting sediment via a storm drain under Pickford St. to create a small island in Lake Wingra.

Beginning in 2004, FOLW has advocated for Madison's stormwater utility to repair this area. A hydrological analysis by UW-Madison civil engineering students provided the basis for the improved drainage that we see today.

A big thanks is due City of Madison Engineering for eliminating this source of pollution to lake Wingra.



Erosion and debris along the bike path in 2004.



The same area in February 2009 showing the repairs.

Catching Rain is Catching On

Rain garden initiative in Arbor Hills promotes water quality in UW Arboretum

James T. Spartz

Excessive stormwater runoff is a perpetual problem for the ponds and wetlands surrounding Lake Wingra. Snowmelt and rainfall from adjacent neighborhoods streams down roadside gutters and through storm sewers causing sediment and nutrient overloads that are ongoing threats to the unique ecology of the Arboretum.

To address these stormwater issues, Assistant Professor Bret Shaw's Public Information Campaigns course, part of the Department of Life Sciences Communication at UW-Madison, spent last fall semester focusing on Arboretum stormwater issues and, in particular, the effectiveness of rain gardens.

Shaw's students distributed surveys in the nearby Arbor Hills neighborhood to assess homeowners' opinions, preferences and concerns.

As a result of that survey effort, an ongoing project assisted by UW Life Sciences Communication graduate student James T. Spartz, with guidance from FOLW board member and stormwater expert David Liebl and Arboretum Outreach and Education Manager Molly Fifield-Murray, is continuing in Arbor Hills. This project was also partially supported with a service-learning grant from the Morgridge Center for Public Service.

Arbor Hills, located just south of the Beltline near the Arboretum between Fish Hatchery Road and Seminole Highway, sends a lot of stormwater into Curtis Pond, Johannsen Pond, and the

Southeast Marsh via Pond 3. This neighborhood is well suited to demonstrate how a community rain garden initiative might contribute to the health of nearby surface and groundwater systems.

Shaw's students worked through phone interviews and paper surveys to discover varying levels of support for building and using rain gardens.

Many residents indicated they didn't have the time or energy to build a rain garden. Some residents weren't sure what a rain garden looked like or what its purpose was. Others believed that any effort to promote rain gardens was an outstanding idea.

Ongoing analysis of the survey results will help identify factors that lead to rain garden adoption.

A network of community stakeholders, centered around the Arbor Hills Garden Club, has been working to educate themselves and others about the benefits of rain gardens and other stormwater management tools.

By promoting residential rain gardens, it is hoped that the volume of storm water run-off can be reduced while simultaneously beautifying the neighborhood with native plantings.

For more information on this survey or about volunteering to help, contact James Spartz at (608) 890-2264 or jspartz@wisc.edu or members of the Arbor Hills Garden Club: Ann Stanger at astanger@sbcglobal.net or Nancy Liljequist at enlilj@gmail.com.



1937



2000

Ho Nee Um Pond to be Free of Stormwater

In 1937, the site of the UW-Arboretum Ho Nee Um Pond was a wet meadow with a spring creek running through it. (See map on page 6.)

Dug as wildfowl habitat, the pond soon began to receive stormwater runoff from the Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood through a drain at the foot of

Chapman Street.

Over the years, enough street sand was deposited to create a small island that geese use for nesting.

As part of this summer's rebuild of Arbor Dr., the City of Madison will be removing the storm drain from Ho Nee Um Pond, and redirecting runoff

to new treatment devices under the pavement at the Pickford Street intersection.

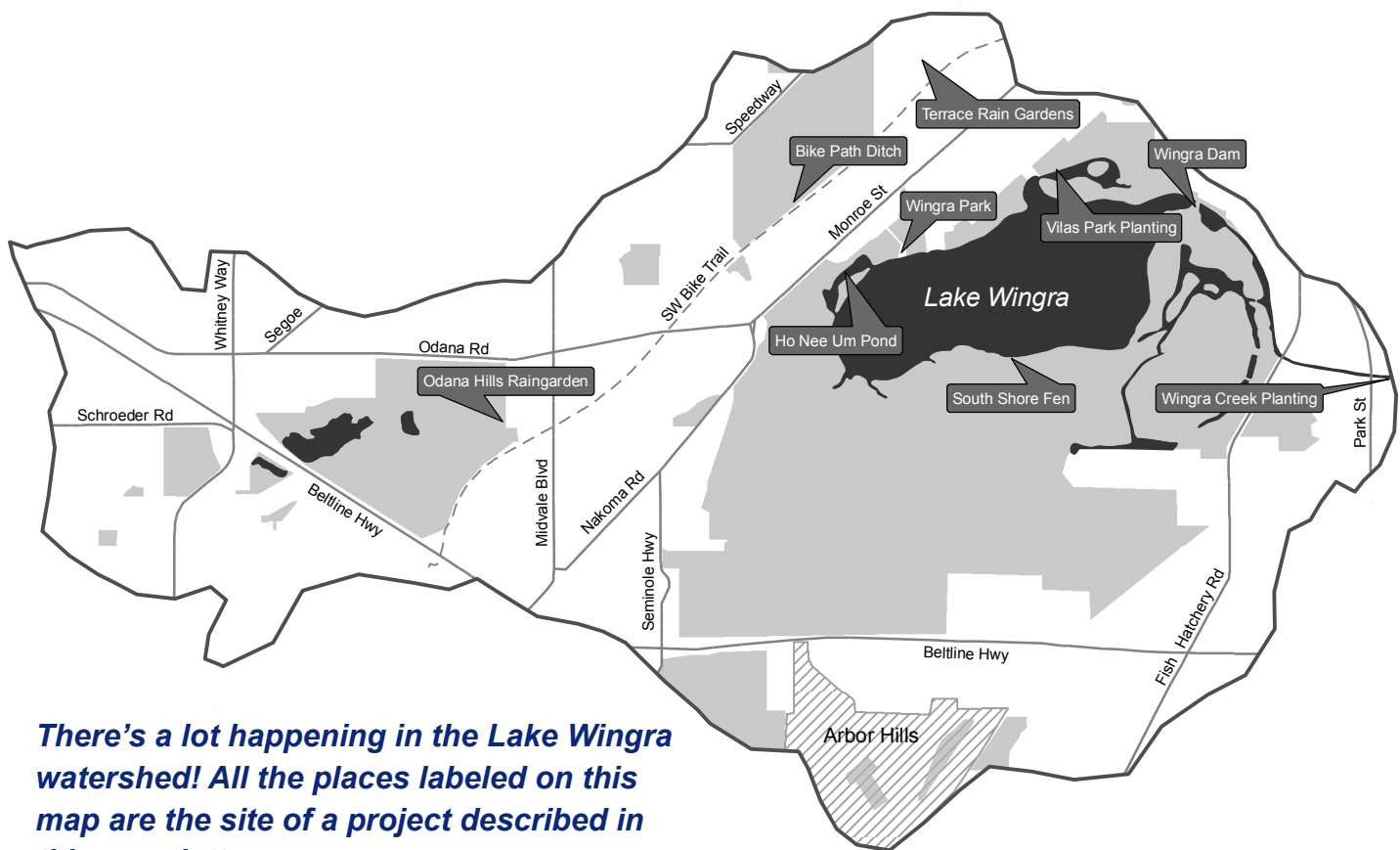
Returning the pond to a spring-fed condition supports restoration plans by the UW-Arboretum and, who knows, maybe wild rice will once again grow along the shores of lake Wingra.

Check out our new website!

FOLW recently worked with the Techshop program at UW-Madison to redesign our website.

This innovative program matches students with a background in web design with community organizations such as ours.

We really appreciated the opportunity and love the new website. The address hasn't changed (www.lakewingra.org), but there's a new look and some new features.



There's a lot happening in the Lake Wingra watershed! All the places labeled on this map are the site of a project described in this newsletter.

Wingra Dam Rebuild Coming

With final construction plans for a new structure going out for bid, it's likely that the ninety-year-old Wingra Dam has seen its final days. (See map above.)

Scheduled to be demolished in June, the historic lock and dam structure will be replaced by a semicircular spillway that will carry runoff from large rainfalls safely into Wingra Creek.

A temporary spillway will be built south of the site, to carry flows until the new dam is brought on line this fall.

Carp removal efforts by Friends of Lake Wingra, Dane County, DNR and others depend on being able to block the passage of carp into the lake from Wingra Creek.

While the design of the new dam should reduce the ability of carp to move into the lake most of the year, a temporary barrier will need to be installed at the dam from early May through the carp spawning season to keep Lake Monona carp out of Lake Wingra.

May 23: "Windows on Wingra" Event Rain Garden Workshop and Plant Sale

The Friends of Lake Wingra invite you to join us for a FREE rain garden workshop, followed by a native plant sale. Space is limited to the first 25 workshop registrants, so please RSVP early to ensure a spot in the class.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about rain gardens, including practical homeowner tips on how to locate, design and build your own garden. You will obtain plant-selection and installation guidance from trained professionals, and a chance to browse a variety of native plants that will be sold after the workshop at discounted prices. Recommended plant lists and instruction guides will also be made available.

The workshop will be held in Room 104 of the Mazzuchelli Center (Edgewood Campus) from 8:30-11:00 a.m., and will be followed by a plant sale from 12:00-2:00 p.m.

There is no fee for the workshop but space is limited, so reserve your spot by calling 608-663-2838 or by sending an e-mail to info@lakewingra.org. The plant sale will be open to the public while quantities last. Look for the LJ Reas Environmental Consulting van, which will be parked at the bottom of Edgewood Avenue hill at Vilas Park.

Weed Feed Festival is May 17

The Dudgeon-Monroe and Westmorland Neighborhood Associations are joining together for their second annual Weed Feed Festival on May 17th from 10:00a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The event will be held at the Glenwood Children's Park located at the intersection of Glenway and the SW bike path. The festival will provide attendees with the opportunity to sample a variety of dishes containing garlic mustard or other edible weeds.

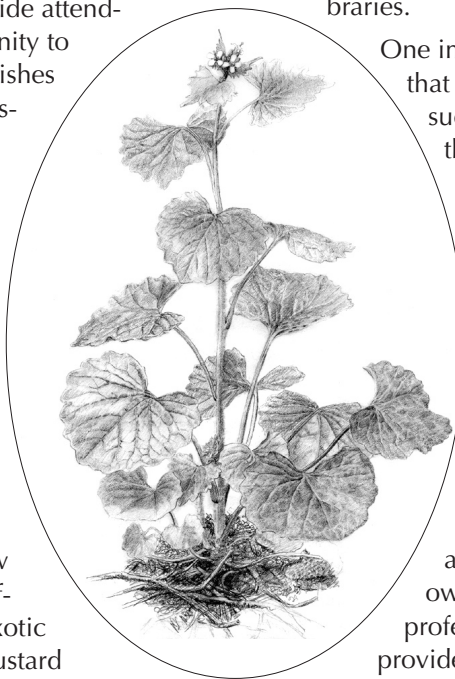
Admission to the food tasting is by helping pull some weeds on the day of the event, bringing a weed-inspired food dish, or helping organize the event.

The intent of the Weed Feed is to draw attention to the proliferation of invasive exotic weeds like Garlic Mustard and Japanese Knotweed in our parks and greenways.

Last year Weed Feed volunteers eliminated all the 2008 'crop' of flowering garlic mustard from the 4-acre Glenwood Children's Park. Replacement of the invasive weeds with native grasses and flowers enhances the aesthetics of the bike path and its surroundings and is also a strategy that effectively re-

duces sediment being washed into Lake Wingra.

Adventuresome cooks are encouraged to contribute any dish made with edible weeds (Note: recipes abound on the web!). A collection of printed recipes will be available at the Reference Desks at both Sequoya and Monroe Street Libraries.



One important ingredient that made last year's event such a success was the incredible diversity of weed recipes. Knotweed Apple Pie garnished with Wild Violets, and Garlic Mustard and Artichoke Lasagna were examples of some of the unusual and tasty dishes at last year's tasting.

While many individuals contributed their own dishes last year, a professional touch was provided by Dardenelles Restaurant and RP's Pasta.

Check the DMNA website (DMNA.org) for more details, weed recipe links, and a blog being launched in April to provide updated event info like the sheltered location of the food tasting if outdoor weed pulling is rained out. Questions can be directed to Peter Nause at pan@secondnature.biz or 206-1463.

garlic mustard illustration by Elisabeth de Boor

Street Terraces Targeted for Rain Gardens

Over the last year, fifteen rain gardens have been constructed in the terraces of Eton Ridge, Rugby Row and Vista Road. The rain gardens will be planted this spring and should be in bloom by late summer. (See map on page 6.)

The Adams Street demonstration rain garden project of several years ago served as an impetus for the Eton Ridge project.

While the Adams Street rain gardens receive run-off from driveways, lawns and sidewalks, ten of the 15 rain gardens in the Eton Ridge project will also receive run-off from the street through curb cutouts.

Prior to the reconstruction of the streets, City of Madison officials surveyed the neighborhood to locate sites suitable for rain gardens. Owners of those homeowners who had terraces suitable for rain garden construction were then contacted and asked if they were interested in having a rain garden constructed.

Those homeowners who agreed to have a rain garden constructed paid one fourth the cost of construction.

It is now standard practice for the city to assess the suitability of building a rain garden in the terrace area during street reconstruction.

We are looking for a few good Friends

As the Friends grow, opportunities for volunteers increase.

Please contact us at 608-663-2838 or info@lakewingra.org to find out how to share your talents and interests to make a difference in your watershed community

Your contribution can take many forms - short-term, team-based, on-the-ground or hi-tech. Please give volunteering for Friends of Lake Wingra a try.

Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

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



Upcoming Events

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

May 17

Weed Feed Festival (story on page 7)

May 23

Windows on Wingra (story on page 6)

May - September

FOLW Volunteer Work Parties

Work parties will be held the 3rd Sunday of every month from 4 - 6 pm April - September with the exception of the June work party which will be held on June 28th. Please bring gloves, gardening tools such as trowels and shovels, and drinking water. The work parties will take place in Vilas Park in the shoreline restoration project area along the lagoon near the foot bridge and in the Odana Hills Golf Course rain garden which is located near the parking lot. The work party leader will be on site in a white "Friends of Lake Wingra" t-shirt. Here is the volunteer work party schedule:

- May 17 - Odana Hills Golf Course rain garden
- June 28 - Vilas Park Lagoon native shoreline planting
- July 19 - Vilas Park Lagoon native shoreline planting
- August 16 - Odana Hills Golf Course rain garden
- September 20 - Vilas Park Lagoon native shoreline planting

June 4, July 2, August 6

Pontoon Boat Tours of Lake Wingra

Lake Wingra is the smallest of Madison's lakes, but it is arguably the most scenic, with a diverse ecosystem, and an interesting history. Wingra Boats and FOLW will offer free educational pontoon boat tours on June 4, July 2 and August 6. Two

20-minute tours will leave from the boat landing at Wingra Park starting at 7:00 and 7:30 pm. Children must be accompanied by an adult. To reserve your spot, sign up at Wingra Boats (open weekends in May, and then seven days a week starting Memorial Day).

June 6

Clean Lakes Festival

FOLW will staff an informational table at Olin Park at this kick-off event for the Take a Stake in the Lakes Days. For times and other details, see <http://www.takeastakeinthelakes.com/>

June 13

Wingra Creek Cleanup

9:00-noon Bring your canoe or kayak and join us for a paddle along the newly restored Wingra Creek. We'll be picking up floatables as we go. Meet on Plaenert Dr. at the pedestrian bridge, gloves and trash bags provided.

June 20

Lake Clean-Up and Jazz in the Park

9:30 am to noon at Wingra Park boat landing. Trash bags will be provided. Wingra Boats will provide free use of canoes for the clean-up. Stay on into the afternoon for Jazz in the Park, sponsored by Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association.

FOLW Board Meetings

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month and are open to the public. Check the calendar at www.lakewingra.org to confirm the time, location, and meeting agenda.