

## WINGRA WATERSHED NEWS

Promoting a healthy Lake Wingra through an active watershed community.

WINTER 2021 • VOLUME 18 • ISSUE 1

Closing out 2020, we reaffirmed the importance of having a village for Lake Wingra. We miss having a village when we can't gather to steward or talk with neighbors about projects. Instead of our traditional donor appeal at the end of 2020, we contemplated how we can support each other to strengthen that village or take on a new meaning. We want to understand how visiting Lake Wingra or improving your environmental footprint has helped you emotionally, mentally, and physically. How can we strengthen that connection for you? Where do you still feel stuck?

If you're just reading those questions for the first time now, consider your answers, and please share them with us. If you're a donor, and you've read those questions already and didn't share your answers, we want them. Those are not empty questions on our end! Reach out at info@lakewingra.org.

Because we feel strongly about this bond and sense of community, you'll find this winter's newsletter celebrates Lake Wingra's Village, of all ages and activities. Enjoy! We'll be waiting to hear from you.

# Combining Art and Water Softeners to Celebrate Wingra and Address Chlorides

by Allison Madison, WI Salt Wise Coordinator

Jingle Bells, over-salting smells. Chloride kills fish eggs. Salt flows into lakes and streams. It doesn't go away - hey!

It may be a little past the caroling season, but unfortunately the salting of our freshwater ecosystems is a year-round problem. Lake Wingra's chloride concentrations have been on the rise since the first use of road salt in the 1950s. Chlorides is currently listed as one of the top three areas of concern in the Lake Wingra Management Plan. To increase public awareness around salt, Friends of Lake Wingra recently collaborated with WI Salt Wise to install a used water softener turned freshwater mural at Henry Vilas Zoo. The mural will travel around the watershed in the coming months. Does water softener salt end up in Lake Wingra? No, but it does enter local freshwater streams with wastewater discharge.

All the salt that we put into our water softeners ends up in freshwater streams because the wastewater treatment plant is not able to remove sodium and chloride



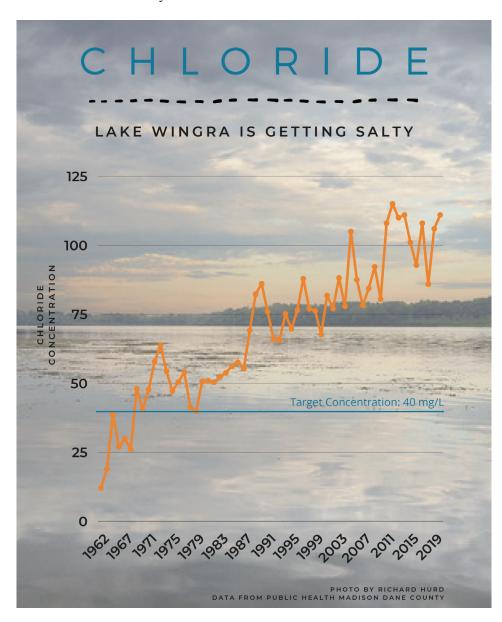
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ions (salt). The installation and energy required to discharge salt-free water would increase sewer rates by 500%. Since removing salt from wastewater isn't feasible, the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is working to reduce inputs of salt through education, training, and Chloride Innovation grants, like the one that funded the softener

mural. The District is currently piloting a water softener optimization program in the Town of Dunn and the Village of McFarland.

If your water softener is a timerbased system - recharging after a set number of days - please consider replacing it with a demand-based system. Even newer softeners may be set to use more salt than necessary. Increasing the efficiency of your water softener can reduce salt use by 25-50% and protect the aquatic plants and animals that make our waters special.

Learn more about water softeners and other ways that you can be Salt Wise to protect freshwater ecosystems and our drinking water at www.wisaltwise.com



#### How to be a salt-wise steward this winter

• Check out clips from Salt Awareness Week - https://www.wisaltwise.com/Take-Action/Salt-Awareness-Week

• Property manager training - https://www.wisaltwise.com/Event/Home/Detail/776

# Q&A with FoLW's Executive Director

While 2020 was a grueling year in many ways, it resulted in positive changes for Friends of Lake Wingra. We transitioned our program manager role to an executive director (ED) role to accommodate for greater flexibility and impact in our work. Because you support us (whether you donate, advocate, or appreciate our work), we want you to understand how that impacts the organization moving forward. So, we asked Casey Hanson, our former program manager, now ED a few questions.

#### What is your vision for Friends of Lake Wingra?

The community views us as a well-functioning neighborhood association (except we represent the watershed). With an urban watershed, we all play a part in stewarding Lake Wingra so I feel most tender about nurturing effective forms of gathering or connecting with our supporters. It can foster a sense of camaraderie. I want everyone to feel like we are all in this together. So that means when you're raking your leaves out of the street, you're saying to yourself, "Wow, I saw Becky, Dylan, AND Georgia raking their leaves. I'm raking my leaves too, and we're on fire. Lake Wingra's going to have a beautiful summer season!"

Lake Wingra is unique in Madison. While Lake Wingra is considered part of the Yahara chain of lakes, it has a slightly different seat at the table than the other lakes, and sometimes not at all. Part of this is because Wingra has a unique watershed compared to its sister lakes, and this uniqueness can make it hard to figure out how we fit into larger-scale initiatives or projects. While this has disadvantages, it has provided us with some impactful outcomes. It's a great watershed to pilot things. Wingra has a watershed management plan specific to Lake Wingra. This happens with the support and different relationships we have with the City of Madison. To wrap up this point, I would like to see Wingra be included a bit more in larger-scale discussions.

#### How does your position interact with the Board? How do you view your working relationship with the Board?

Like a marriage! It takes practice to learn how to listen effectively, know when and how to respond, and how to uplift each other so we can stay functional. Sometimes, you also need to state how you feel or what you need. We generally seem to do well with this. It can get tricky to effectively do this with a quarter-time ED and small volunteer board. In some ways, it makes us protective of each other's success, so I think we are more motivated to find ways to support each other. We also help advise each other. They share thoughts on

the annual work plan to ensure it aligns with our strategic goals and mission. I can suggest blind spots or areas that might need shoring up for governance. This transition to ED/Board structure also allowed us to move forward together for how we govern ourselves. I can make independent decisions, yet we also have conditions that will trigger a group conversation. This is to make sure we think through any decision that we know the community has a hard time uniting around. The Edgewood Stadium saga is a perfect example!

# We're in a world of extreme divisiveness. Ways Lake Wingra is used or cared for don't always result in unanimous feelings. How do you wish to represent the organization on these issues?

Addressing this issue resonates a lot with me. I have a background in both engineering and community planning. This cross-sector experience allowed me to not only reflect on the historical blaming and siloed work between two sectors, but to also experience it in present day. Being in the crossfire is a lonely place but luckily shines light on blind spots you didn't know you had. While in grad school, I decided to study how organizations successfully break down barriers to achieve innovation across different sectors. Now, I actively try to incorporate ways to break down silos and siloed (continued on page 4)

communication in everything I do.

The lake will only be a vibrant place if we champion a multidiscipline, multi-experience thought process to care and protect it. Driving that type of change requires finesse and foresight. Consensus should avoid personal attacks and also avoid neutrality. Practicing this is a great way to honor values behind FoLW's inception. Securing a grant from the Natural Resource Foundation to host a children's design workshop for the Vilas Park Master Plan in 2019 is one way how I've applied this thinking.

# You're partially responsible for deciding how FoLW donors' dollars are used. How do you think FoLW does that efficiently and effectively?

Most people donate because they enjoy the lake and its uniqueness. I believe our donors realize we can't single-handedly take care of the lake. They believe we can be Wingra's friendly watchdog, act as a liaison to bring different groups together, or find leverage points

to take care of the watershed and Lake Wingra. The City of Madison Engineering's 5-year Green Infrastructure Study is one project where we plan to fill a gap and use it as a leverage point by supplementing it with an outreach effort. We can help create a more robust study if we help more people make changes to their yard. This opportunity helps us work towards some of the objectives in the Wingra Watershed Management Plan (e.g., 1000 rain gardens). Finally, it allows us to connect with a part of the watershed community in a new way.

In a non-COVID world, we work with Wingra shoreline landowners, like the UW-Madison Arboretum to care for parts of the shoreline that can't always receive as much attention. We also scan the horizon to look for areas we might need to communicate Lake Wingra's needs (e.g., Vilas Park Master Plan, Edgewood Stadium). It's difficult for a volunteer board to take on all of these things alone. Our board members do attend meetings, explore collaborations,

and events, but they also have other commitments (e.g., jobs or school) that limit when or how they can participate. When FoLW can hire someone to help oversee the organization, it also allows the organization to reliably and consistently participate, make decisions, or dive deeper in some of these projects or issues.

### What are you most excited about when working with Friends of Lake Wingra?

I get a lot of energy collaborating with different people. Luckily, Lake Wingra has a lot of genuine stewards. Therefore, when it comes time to explore collaborations, it feels exciting and authentic. No organizational posturing dominates the scene. I love that it feels like a team effort. I also get excited when I have extra time to understand how we can better connect and foster a better relationship with our supporters. They make everything we do possible. As I said earlier, it is a team effort and I want how we interact with our community to feel authentic.

### Volunteer with Friends of Lake Wingra

We could really use volunteers to:

- Grow our board of directors
- Plan fundraising events
- Maintain/install rain gardens or native prairies
- Help with web design and redesign old and new posters
- •Assist in marketing and social media strategies

Let's chat! We can also discuss other opportunities. info@lakewingra.org

#### Friends of Lake Wingra Board Meetings

When we see a new face at a board meeting, it makes our day! Anyone is welcome to attend at any time. Have something you want to talk about? Email us at least a week in advance so it can get on the agenda.

When: First Thursday of the month from 6:30 – 8:00 (double check website for any changes)

Where: Virtual indefinitely, email info@lakewingra.org if you want to attend

#### Become a Friends of Lake Wingra Board Member

We're on the lookout for experience in:

- Nonprofit law
- Accounting & budgeting
- Fundraising
- Youth education
- Marketing/Communications
- Business-nonprofit partnerships
- Information technology
- Grant writing

# Protecting Lake Wingra calls for collaboration!

By Gail Epping Overholt

A s the saying goes, "it takes a village" to be truly ready for the next big rainstorm. At least, that's how the Arboretum sees it. Most of the Arboretum's 1,200 acres flow into Lake Wingra. While detention ponds and restored land help to filter and absorb some of the stormwater from surrounding neighborhoods, collective help is needed to ensure the health of the receiving waterways, and ultimately Lake Wingra.

Arboretum staff received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to enlist the Lake Wingra "village" to minimize effects of stormwater on their favorite lake. Along with neighbors, city, and county partners, the Arboretum will embark on the two-year WATER (Water Action to Encourage Responsibility) project. Project partners will work together to minimize harmful effects of stormwater that flows from urban land into lakes and rivers. Providing a model for community engagement in pressing environmental issues, the WATER project will document how neighborhood-focused efforts can make a difference.

Funding will support local partners to pursue on-the-ground projects that reduce the impact of stormwater and to model and promote stormwater stewardship actions in the watershed. The goal is that the project will be a model for neighboring communities in the greater Yahara watershed. Funding recipients can use their award for one or more stormwater activities. Possible activities include model green infrastructure projects, neighborhood education and



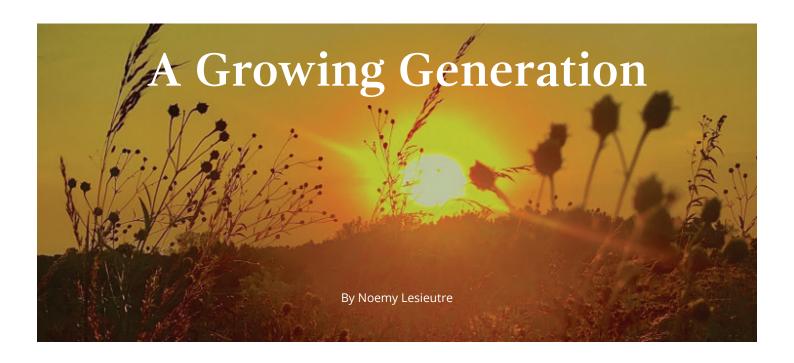
Big Spring, located on the southern shore of Lake Wingra. Photo by Richard Hurd

outreach, support for property owners' own stormwater projects, or other activities that address the recipient's own stormwater mitigation priorities. Examples of projects include installation of terrace rain gardens or porous pavers, "how-to" workshops, neighborhood tours of projects, creation of educational media, or guest speaker presentations. Funding will be distributed to partners to support these efforts.

The Arboretum and its partners will enlist Lake Wingra watershed residents, "social trailblazers", to further engage their neighbors and civic leaders. These "trailblazers" will be invited to attend a tested training model that has been successful for other environmental issues, such as invasive species. The training will focus on encouraging and supporting positive action that can make a difference in water quality. Training participants will receive toolkits to help them recruit others to take responsible actions

that reduce impacts of stormwater to their watershed. While better water quality is a noble goal, actions can also help with basement backups (health impacts), flooding on private property and roads (safety). Additional stormwater education events will take place in the watershed throughout the two-year grant period hosted by project partners.

Friends of Lake Wingra is supporting the effort by acting as an outreach and educational resource for the Arboretum and other project partners. The Friends will be applying to receive funding as a project partner. If approved the Friends will assist in recruiting residents to attend the training or to implement on-the-ground stormwater mitigation projects. If you are interested in learning more, contact: Gail Epping Overholt - gail.overholt@wisc.edu Katy Thostenson - kthostenson@ wisc.edu Casey Hanson volunteer@lakewingra.org



Looking back at my childhood
I remember planting in a
community garden and watching
as the plants grew up with me and
the trees tangled above my head.
But as the years passed it seemed
harder and harder to keep up with
community gardens. Soon, in time,
others lost interest too and became
uninterested in teaching younger
generations the art of producing
food in the city.

As the years passed it was so easy to get swept up in the news. Promises get broken, accusations being thrown, and yet still having to walk the streets yelling to be heard.

It was a time to want to go home and it still is. Until the summer of 2020 when I was awoken by an elementary student, who slipped into my inbox in late July. Simply asking if I could help her grow a garden in a park.

Two years prior was the time of the flood, the rain so heavy it devastated whole communities including the area she wished to plant in. As time passed I worked hard to find a way to plant a few seeds. It seems everyone has time to yell but no time to heal the changing world.

Fortunately, this is what community is for. When all else fails you have something to lean on. It seemed anything was possible when we were all together, even virtually.

But even with the kindness of the community and advisors, there

was still one problem. Water. Water is our core, it is 60% of us and we can not live without it being clean and readily available. But like many things there's a catch, water can also destroy.

In 2018, just two years earlier, it was not uncommon to hear of floods destroying houses, lives, and harvests. Unfortunately for these new gardens, it was self-evident that floods would rush

in and destroy the harvest before the seedlings even reached a foot tall, and yet there was also no way to water the garden should drought strike. But again the community believed in the young student and started volunteering to carry water to the garden each day.

You see it's when we listen to those most vulnerable that change happens. A wise girl once said,



"the best people to fix a problem are the ones most in danger of it." She was right. It's not about fixing every problem for others it's about giving them the equality to help themselves.

Can't that apply to climate change? As marginalized communities get hit hard with climate change it becomes even more essential to find new ways to not only adjust the timeline of climate change but also to allow communities to experience it equally. But this can only happen if we have equal access to resources and understand the consequences of our actions every day. We have to become comfortable with change to make it happen.

The problems coming out of climate change are not only obvious but quite literally surface level. The City of Madison is sitting on a segregated bed of twisted interconnected waterways. From the F-35's, to the Town of Madison, to the algae blooms on our lakes, we are all connected. Now it is the only evidence that is crystal clear.

And it's not just the water it's the air and soil. We see that depleted soils make it harder to produce quality food in certain areas. It's not a question of good or bad it's a question of equity and justice.

Life is all we have but it is what we all have and now the inequities are preying on our rights to life. But it's communities that come together that make it possible for young people to find something to fight for. And believe me, there is no place I love more than the City of Four Lakes. I urge you now to learn more about the systems of Madison: the communities, the

water, the soil, the government so you continue to challenge your understanding of issues in our community.

Noemy is a junior at Madison West High School and a director of the organization/network In Pursuit Of Sunshine which works to positively connect communities to enable all communities to have an equal distribution of resources. They always welcome new members and/or collaborators to join their community.

instagram: in pursuit of sunshine

#### Mission

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

#### Friends of Lake Wingra Board

Hannah Buscemi, Co-chair David Thomposon, Vice Chair Gail Epping Overholt, Secretary Timothy Kuhman

In memory of Roger Bannerman

#### Advisors to the Board

Anne Forbes Tyler Leeper Jim Lorman John Magnuson John Nicol Rebecca Power Ben Yahr, (acting Treasurer)

#### Become a Friend

Ian Krauss, Co-chair

To become a Friend of Lake Wingra, send your tax-deductible contribution using our address below.

Please make checks to: "Friends of Lake Wingra"
Or visit our website at:

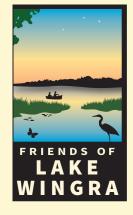
Or visit our website at: www.lakewingra.org/donate

#### Friends of Lake Wingra, Inc.

PO Box 45071 Madison, WI 53744 info@lakewingra.org www.lakewingra.org

#### Wingra Watershed News

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# Is a Master Plan in Glenwood Children's Park Future?

By Sandy Stark, interim chair, DMNA P&G Committee

The Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Parks & Gardens Committee started developing a survey of park users. This survey, we hope, will enhance the ongoing responses to neighborhood erosion and the challenges they present. Our current focus is on Glenwood Children's Park. Flooding issues historically plague the park. The City of Madison has already started flood repairs at the park.

The Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Parks & Garden Committee reached out to the City of Madison Parks about an updated master plan. This plan would honor this landmark and its historical vision and status, attributable to Jens Jensen. We will need to balance this with the limitations of climate change and budget challenges. This survey will help us learn what our neighbors and park users identify as priorities. This also provides an opportunity for us to assess volunteer interest and share the park's current condition.

As always, we would like to continue to work with Friends of Lake Wingra in this valuable watershed area to find the right balance of expertise and commitment available.

Stay tuned! If you are interested in helping with survey distribution or volunteering in Glenwood Children's Park projects, contact us at DMNA. org or email Sandy at sestark@wisc.edu.

Note: To learn more about the history of Glenwood Children's Park and some of the stormwater issues it has faced, read the "Historic Wingra Tributary - Glenwood Children's Park" in our Spring 2018 newsletter edition. Find it at www.lakewingra.org/newsletters

#### Vilas Park Master Plan Final Meeting

Thursday February 4 at 6pm

To register: https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/projects/vilas-henry-park-master-plan

To see Friends of Lake Wingra's comments: https://www.lakewingra.org/projects/vilaspark-master-plan







Photos by Mark Golbach



### Honoring Roger Bannerman

We honor and hurt from the passing of our long-time board member Roger Bannerman. Explore his incredible heart, the passion he brought to Lake Wingra, and most importantly the wonderful human being he was at www.lakewingra. org/rogerbannerman

#### Thank You to Our 2020 Donors!

As we keep beginning new chapters in our organization, we want to acknowledge that this would not happen without the support of our community. Thank you for your commitment to Lake Wingra and belief that we can steward the lake in a way that builds trust and cooperation!

Dan Anderson & Joan Nugent • Bob & Michele Armstrong • Stephen Arnold • Priscilla Arsove • Juli Aulik & Troye Shanks • Sarah Bahauddin & Mark Micek • Dean Gore & Brenda Baker • Jane Bannerman • Georgette Bathum • Jim Baumann • Bonnie & Robert Block • Michael & Lynn Borkenhagen • Phil & Carrie Bower • Paul & Suzanne Buckner • Michael & Adriane Bullock (In memory of Andrew Strehlow) • Kay & Nick Cahill • Susan & Steve Carpenter • Carol Chen and Tim Hacker • Anonymous • Gary Choncholas • Ann Clark & Alen • David Cooper (in honor of The Lucases) • Daniel Cottam • Suzanne & Bob Coutre • Kathy Cramer • Pete Daly • Susan & Richard Davidson • Paul & Andrea Dearlove • Stephen Dembski • Elizabeth Diez • Judi Dilks • John Dillon • Mary & John Dillon • Wallace & Peggy Douma • Sally Drew • Racheal Durfee & Peter Tan • Lloyd & Pat Eagan • Susan Ellingson & John Schafer • Gail Epping Overholt • John Evenson • Marianne Ewig • Exact Sciences • Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund • Ellen Fisher • Anne Forbes & Jim Lorman • Kay Gabriel • Marc Gartler • Peter Gascoyne & Claudia English • Paul Voytas & Elizabeth George • Claire Gervais • Give Back Foundation • Valy Goepfrich • Ken Golden • Steve & Susan Gordon • Catherine & Frank Greer • Anonymous • Patricia Hanson & Terri Bleck • Anonymous • Bill Hausler • Paula Hirschboeck • Michael & Laura Holt • Carol & Geoff Hudson • Hickory Hurie & Renu Syal Hurie • Catherine Jagoe • Steven & Roberta Jellinek • Jewish Federation of Madison • Paul Karch • Don Katz & Rebecca Krantz • Claude Kazanski & Madelyn Leopold • Eric & Sasha Kerlow • James & Renee Knight • Margie & Thomas Krauskopf (In memory of Roger Bannerman) • Janet & Douglas Laube • Joan Laurion • Jeff & Dawn Leeder • Anonymous • Deanna Letts • David Liebl & Linda Schuler • Susan Lloyd • Julie & Daniel Long • Jim Lorman • Betty MacDonald • John Magnuson (In memory of Roger Bannerman) • Nate & Katie Mahr • David & Linda Maraniss • Deron Martin • Thomas & Ann Martinelli • Edward Mason, Jr. • Percy Mather • Diane Mayerfeld & Michael Bell • Liz McBride • Bonnie McMullin-Lawton • Rose Meinholz •Rex Merrill & Judi Dilks • John & Linda Merrill • Mark Micek • Kathleen & Don Miner • Carol Mitchell • John Mix • Paul & Brenda Mueller • Judy Munger • Network for Good • Gillian & Dan Nevers • Phillip & Sonia Newmark • James Omohundro • Nancy Parsons • Mike Pilarz • Andrea Poehling • Kenneth Potter • Carl & Catherine Rasmussen • RBC Capital Markets • Thomas Record & Voula Kodoyianni • Peggy Rosin • Mike Roszkowski • Don & Barb Sanford • Kathleen & Miguel Satut • Miguel Satut • Bob & Nancy Schaefer • Mary Schmitz • Carol Schroeder • Dean & Carol Schroeder • Schwab Charitable • John Shillinglaw • Judy Siegfried • Cohen-Slaymaker Family • Brook Chase Soltvedt & David Nelson • Barbara Sommerfeld • Karl Taeuber • TIAA Charitable • Steven Vedro & Beverly Gordon • W.K. Kellogg Foundation • Diane Walker • Robert & Ela Waterman • Liz Whitesel • Donna & Scott Wilson • Wingra Boats • Peter Witucki • Thomas Wolfe & Pat Powers • Anonymous (In memory of Roger Bannerman) • James Youngerman & Nancy

### The Winter Side of Summer Lake Season



By Shana Verstegen

an you count the lake slogans we use to celebrate the glorious hot (but not too hot) days of summer? It's something we definitely all celebrate and look forward to, but when fall arrives it doesn't mean cold weather ceases efforts to enjoy our lake in the summer. Check out the winter side of a summer lake season for Madison Log Rolling.

In a "typical" off-season (one without Covid) Madison Log Rolling moves our training indoors to some local pools. The main log rolling programs are at Supreme Health & Fitness and the Madison West YMCA. There are also several indoor competitions for the log rolling youth sprinkled around Wisconsin and Minnesota. Of course, we prefer our time outside on beautiful Lake Wingra, but have to keep our rollin' legs in shape yearround!

More details about indoor and outdoor programming can be found at: www.madisonlogrolling.com

photo by Juilian Kege

### **Enhance the Village**

Sometimes doing a small task or participating in an ongoing effort makes all the difference in how connected you feel to a community. Lake Wingra's community needs you and you need it for the experience you enjoy at the lake. Check out some ways you can enhance the village:

**Amphibian Monitoring** - We need volunteers from ice out to mid-summer to help track when frog and toads are most active. Commitment is one night a week for 5 minutes at Vilas Park.

**Lake Ambassador** - If you visit the lake daily, weekly, or occasionally, consider sharing the exciting wildlife or social activities that you see with us. Pictures are appreciated, but words convey emotion too! We could use on-the-ground observations of ambassadors to celebrate the wonderful things taking place at Lake Wingra. Of course, there might be the occasional issue that needs attention too.

Professional Advisor - Sometimes we need a little help from our friends. If you have experience in communications, non-profit law, fundraising, public marketing, or other areas you think we could benefit from, please reach out and we can chat more. This partnership can stay limited to a set time or a specific project.

**Lake Monitoring** - If you have an interest in monitoring the water quality at Lake Wingra, we're working on or will have soft launches for monitoring programs that will maintain the monitoring our recently deceased board member Roger Bannerman devoted much time to.

Wingra's Opine Water Line - You can sign up to receive a direct email no more than once a month where we ask for your opinion on Wingra issues or Friends of Lake Wingra programming. Sometimes it includes a time-sensitive action you can take to address an issue. This is different than our monthly e-news or biannual newsletters. https://www.lakewingra.org/opine-water-line

If anything interests you, please reach out to Casey at volunteer@lakewingra.org.

#### Can Being Part of the Village Improve Your Health?

Longing for a tighter sense of community feels like it is at an all time high. Science suggests that having relationships, connections with your community and a sense of meaning (no matter how small) can yield great benefits to your health and well-being. However you feel, we could all use a little more of that and we invite you to wade in a little deeper into our active watershed community. All are welcome and needed to make a change! If you want to dive a little deeper into this thought, you can learn more at some of these resources:

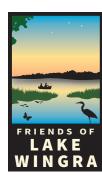
- https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-do-our-social-networks-affect-wellbeing
- https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation



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