

Yahara CLEAN

(Capital Lakes Environmental Assessment and Needs)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between Dane County, the City of Madison, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Regarding Efforts to Improve Water Quality in the Yahara River Chain of Lakes

I. BACKGROUND

The Yahara River Watershed and the Chain of Lakes includes Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa and Wingra in central Dane County. They are valuable resources contributing to our quality of life and our area's economy. Residents and visitors to the area enjoy the swimming, boating, fishing, and a variety of other activities, and the scenic beauty that these water resources provide.

Dane County and the communities adjacent to and in the watershed of the lakes continue to work toward goals to increase the users' lake enjoyment by reducing the nutrient-caused algal blooms that spoil our beautiful shores and the bacterial outbreaks that harm our beaches. Many steps have already been taken to improve the water quality in the lakes. These steps include: banning unnecessary phosphorous from lawn fertilizers; regulating winter spreading of liquid manure; working with farmers to implement nutrient management plans; purchasing, restoring and conserving wetlands, riparian buffers and other valuable areas; participating in Priority Watershed projects; improving the stormwater and erosion control ordinances; constructing storm water treatment practices and creating a grant program to improve storm water discharge; collecting vegetation and debris from shorelines; manipulating the lakes' macroinvertebrate populations; and many other activities.

The City of Madison has also taken measures to improve storm water quality reaching the lakes, including: expanding weekly street sweeping with parking restrictions; increasing the frequency and awareness of erosion control inspections; constructing rain gardens to promote infiltration; constructing storm water detention ponds to collect sediment; installing inline storm water treatment devices; addressing erosion along the banks of Wingra and Starkweather Creeks; collaborating with Dane County in trash removal along the Monona Bay shoreline; and other activities.

Dane County is unique in that it has a state-chartered Lakes and Watershed Commission that establishes a countywide basis for regulation. This body has broad representation from towns, cities, villages, and other stakeholders within the county.

Government officials, residents and scientists agree that these conservation activities have shown

benefits to the Lakes' water quality but believe that even more can be done to reduce the problems of nutrients and bacteria in the Yahara Chain of Lakes.

II. PARTIES

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding ("the MOU") are the entities who execute the MOU below and their successors and assigns.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a process for assessing water quality conditions in the Yahara River Watershed in Dane County. The MOU will identify possible future actions that can be taken to improve the water quality and thus the users' enjoyment of the Yahara Lakes. Dane County, the City of Madison and the Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) enter into the MOU to participate in Yahara CLEAN (Capital Lakes Environmental Assessment and Needs).

IV. Yahara CLEAN

Dane County, the City of Madison, DNR and DATCP agree to a variety of activities that will assess the existing nutrient and sediment loading to the Yahara Chain of Lakes and determine needs or activities to decrease the loading to improve water quality. Yahara CLEAN will include the following steps or actions:

- A. Develop a Vision** – During 2008, a community vision statement for the Yahara Chain of Lakes will be developed, reflecting extensive input from scientists, residents, agencies, elected officials, businesses, and other stakeholders. This vision statement will guide the goal-setting for nutrient limits.
- B. Model Existing Nutrient and Sediment Loadings** – The University of WI-Madison, under the guidance of a technical advisory board, will engage in the assessment of existing lake- loading conditions. The UW-Madison will complete this assessment by 9/2009 but release relevant parts of the data as available.
- C. Assess Causes of Bacterial Outbreaks at Beaches**
- D. Develop Achievable Goals** – During the first year, the parties, consulting with our partners, will determine the necessary nutrient, sediment and bacteria levels to reach the Vision and determine if the needed reductions can be achieved if reduction activities are taken.
- E. Identify Needs** – The parties will identify the activities necessary to meet the loading and bacterial reductions and estimate the costs of these activities. The needs assessment and cost estimates will be completed by fall, 2009.

- F. Advise and Communicate Progress** - The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission will act as the public advisory body and provide regular updates to Dane County residents.

Dane County, DNR, the City of Madison and DATCP agree to be supportive of each other in the pursuit of funds and staff to sustain these activities. Potential funding sources that may be explored include annual budgets, grants and community partners.

Technical and advisory boards of our partners will be established to help guide this process.

V. General Conditions

- A.** Dane County, DNR, the City of Madison and DATCP will each designate a representative to lead and coordinate implementation of this MOU, including agency communication, representation and participation.
- B.** If the designated representatives are unable to resolve an issue, the issue will be raised in briefing papers to the Dane County Executive, DNR’s South Central Regional Director, City of Madison’s Mayor, and the DATCP Administrator for Agricultural Resource Management for resolution.
- C.** All Parties acknowledge that this executed MOU presents a reasonable approach to assessing and identifying needs to improving water quality in the Yahara Chain of Lakes.
- D.** This MOU will remain in effect until December 31, 2009.
- E.** The Parties agree to amend this MOU as updates to Yahara CLEAN are available and warrant change to the process or activities.
- F.** The effective date of this MOU is the date of the latest signature below.
- G.** It is anticipated that this effort will result in other partnerships and the need for additional MOUs.

For Dane County

By: _____ **Date** _____
Kathleen Falk
County Executive

For the Department of Natural Resources

By: _____ **Date** _____
Matthew Frank
Secretary

For the City of Madison

By: _____ **Date** _____
Dave Cieslewicz
Mayor

For the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

By: _____ **Date** _____
Rod Nilsestuen
Secretary