

Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership Coordinating Committee

Meeting Notes

DATE/TIME: Thursday, December 3, 2009, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

LOCATION: City Water Utility Building Conf. Rm. A & B
119 E Olin Ave. - Madison, WI

PRESENT:

Dennis Presser, Ezra Meyer, Genesis Bichanich, Jim Lorman, Jon Becker, Kirsti Sorsa, Pat Sheahan, Sue Jones, Sue Josheff

1. **Call to Order** – 8:30 am
2. **Announcements** - Jon announced that the Western Dane Coalition for Smart Growth and the Environment has released an analysis that examines the significant impact of decisions about urban service extension requests on the environment. He noted that these decisions could have a large negative impact on lake quality, nutrient and sediment loading, and beaches. These decisions could potentially cause much more harm than any positive benefits from proposed Yahara CLEAN recommended actions. Jon suggested that we examine all future service extension requests that come before the CARPC, and that we highlight and publicize the negative environmental effects of future extension requests. In discussion, it was noted that sewer service extension requests were of general interest to the group, but not immediately within the charge of this group. The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission will receive and review this analysis. Also, any successor organization to YLLP/Yahara CLEAN could very well include this.
3. **Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda** – None
4. **Approval of Previous Meeting Notes** – Meeting notes were approved.
5. **Lake Levels Discussion** – Jon lead a conversation on the following questions: Would a lowered lake Mendota increase the efficiency and cost effectiveness of CLEAN MOU strategies? Will the spring seminars offered by the Nelson Institute provide the same level of opportunity for public involvement on lake level issues as would a Lakes Conference as originally planned? Will the spring seminars seriously look at the environmental and other benefits of significantly lowering Lake Mendota? Will the spring seminars examine examples where other lakes have been lowered and what we can learn from them? We examined a list of statements (below) about lake levels for Lake Mendota. While we were not sure of the accuracy of all of the statements, we asked the question, will the spring seminars allow the public to discuss these statements? Lake Mendota is ca 4.5 feet above its natural level. The dam at Tenney Park was built illegally. Most current northern pike spawning areas are not natural. Cherokee Marsh is currently losing approximately 40 acres per year on top of 400 acres prior, due to de-lamination and other factors. The Yahara River has less Phosphorus input to the Lakes (vs. Pheasant Branch, Six Mile Creek, etc.) because of the marsh, wetlands, peat. A November 2009 study argues that peat is a major drive of climate change. Riparian values are higher on lakes with boat motor controls. Climate change means changed precipitation patterns that have added risk, risk that current lake level orders do not address.

6. **Beaches** – The beaches advisory group met with Dr. Julie Kinzelman and did a field trip to beaches. They reviewed and updated current assessments and recommendations. Dr. Kinzelman felt that existing research identifies “low hanging fruit” actions to improve beaches. The committee discussed expanding the use of US coastal grants to evaluate the applicability of coastal water beach research to inland lakes. The beaches group will explore this further at their next meeting.
7. **Sediment Nutrient** – Draft SWAT analysis for Lake Mendota watershed is completed. Input from SWAT to in-lake response modelers is available now. Full draft SWAT analysis for other lakes will be available soon.
8. **MOU Final Report** – Extension memo. Each signatory organization will take the necessary steps to communicate the information in the memo to their organization and will get an OK from the signatories. At the next meeting, Sue Jones will go over a proposed format for MOU recommended actions. We did an initial brainstorming session on “What other recommended actions (other than nutrient/sediment and beaches) might be in the MOU report?”
9. **MCF Proposal** – Ezra will Doodle a meeting of the MCF sub-committee soon.
10. **Nelson Institute Spring Forums** – To be reviewed at next meeting.
11. **Agree on Future Meeting Dates and Meeting Leadership** – Postponed to next meeting.
12. **Web Development Status** – There is more content on the website, but it is not open to the public yet. Genesis will meet with Pat and a website consulting firm to explore developing the site further, adding more content and features. Of specific interest is a pass code protected area for working documents. Jon noted that Mario Mequintana at MATC has photographs from MATC students that could be available for use on the website.
13. **Mississippi River Basin Initiative** – Dane County LCD will apply for 1 maybe 2 sub-watersheds. Unfortunately no funding for additional field staff will be available under this initiative.
14. **Project Management Status** – Federal stimulus grant award should have left the DNR Secretary’s office last week. Sue Josheff will report at next meeting.
15. **Set Next Agenda** – Last weeks assignments were all completed except that: Ezra will provide CC with the info collected from interviews he and Mike had with grass root environmental organizations at the beginning of the YLLP process. Jim, Sue, Sue, and Ezra will form a subcommittee to prepare a funding proposal to MCF. Ezra will provide that subcommittee with a list of the specific duties and responsibilities of Clean Wisconsin in the Southeastern Wisconsin Watershed Trust effort. Our next meeting is next Thursday, December 10 in Conference Room B at the Madison Water Utility Building, 119 East Olin Avenue in Madison. Topics will include: nutrient sediment update, beaches update, final report review, MCF proposal progress, Nelson Institute spring forum, website status, future meeting dates, locations, and leaders, project management status.
16. **Adjourn** – 10:35 am