

Notes from 8/14/08 meeting on Lake Levels hosted by Friends of Lake Mendota (FLAM) with Kevin Connors from Dane County

Kevin stated that the lake levels have to be managed as a *system* and that system includes:

Mendota to Monona to Waubesa to Kegonsa and all rivers (& wetlands) above, below & between. He reviewed the summer and winter maximums and minimums that he works to achieve--this can be seen on the DNR website.

He says our worst problems that contribute to slow flow and flooding are:

- Railroad trestle between Lakes Monona & Waubesa
- The dam below Lake Kegonsa

Some solutions:

- Because the RR trestle area creates a restriction, there is a proposal by DOT, McFarland, Madison, & DNR to redo the trestle to improve flow and navigation—it would include a new bike trail. They hope this will help them to control the lake levels.
- Create a Flood Warning System
- Study what lowering Mendota will do to Cherokee Marsh wetlands, Lake Mendota & Lake Monona
- Help people that get flooded—move them—“Municipal Flood Control Program” – make grants available from DNR

The Tenny locks control flow but when the water threatens to go over, they let the water out to avoid damage to the locks—water would go over anyway. Babcock lock is manually operated—to increase the flow, 2 men raise the logs!

Lake quality is a result of sediment and phosphorus emptied into the lake:

- Farm runoff (about 50% for both sediment & phosphorus)
- Storm sewer ((11% sediment & 5% phosphorus—150 storm sewers dump into Mendota)
- Construction sites (about 20% for both)
- Stream banks (6% phosphorus & 8% sediment)

He explained there are government groups working on lake levels, water quality, zoning—partnerships to clean the lakes and make recommendations about what can be done. He says it's not easy but the most important goal to control water quality is (for farms, homes, businesses):

- Keep the soil in its place and keep water where it lands

Some solutions to improve water quality (for all these solutions there is a huge cumulative benefit):

- Divert storm sewers into wetlands or holding ponds
- Clean trash out of storm sewers
- Pollution reduction rules—rural & urban
- Plantings around the lakes—“Plant Dane Program”
- Rain gardens & rain barrels

Conclusions:

- They try to evaluate the situation--this meeting helps them understand what is going on around the lake
- They try to take everyone into consideration
- They try to act scientifically sound, socially informed , & financially responsibly)
- Educate people about rules & discuss problems and findings

The topic of the ***Waterbody Classification Project***—(Shoreland rezoning) came up. This is a very controversial topic and will be discussed at another meeting of our group.