



Fall • 2005

Magic Potion or Snake Oil?

YLA Working to Clear Away the Weeds

By Douglas Bach, PE / YLA Board Member

Many of you likely read the Susan Lampert Smith column “*Why Not Try Magic Potion On Our Lakes*” in the July 17 Wisconsin State Journal. If not, you almost certainly heard about it from your neighbors, as it caused quite a stir among lake users. For all of us feeling depressed by the floating green mats off the end of our piers, the piece revitalized our hopes for shimmering clear waters in the Yahara Lakes. In her column, Smith related the reported success of Houghton Lake, Michigan, a lake more than twice the area of Mendota, where Eurasian milfoil was eradicated through the whole-lake application of the herbicide fluridone. The lake was reported to have gone from an often unnavigable carpeted mess to clear water in six weeks, and to have stayed weed free three years later with only spot follow-up treatment.

For many of us reading the article, our first response was “Give me some of that!”

Not so fast, was the message relayed from the scientific community in a July 22 WSJ article (Ron Seely, ‘*DNR Wary of Fluridone to Clear Lakes of Weeds*’). Dr. Jennifer Hauxwell, a DNR researcher who has studied the use of fluridone in Midwestern lakes, doesn’t see a panacea just yet. Her initial assessment, based on a review of fluridone’s use on four Wisconsin lakes and information from 28 other states across the country indicates that the

positive effects of fluridone may only last two to four years, and that weeds often come back thicker than before. The effects on fish and other species are not yet known. Furthermore, experience to date indicates that fluridone is less effective in nutrient-rich lakes such as the Yahara chain, than in nutrient-poor environments. Overall, scientific review reveals a much more mixed bag than the rosy claims coming from fluridone’s manufacturer.

(See “*Magic Potion*” on page 2)

In this issue:

Summary of '05 Weed Harvest

Manure Management Recommendations

Classification Study Completed

NALMS Meeting In Madison

Annual Meeting Another Good One

Madison's History as Lake Research Center

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Magic Potion

Continued from previous page

So where does this leave lake property owners and the YLA?

Obviously, we're all frustrated with weeds and algae sullyng our lakes. YLA has long supported and provided constructive input for the initiatives of the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission, designed to protect the lakes from further long term degradation. We continue to believe that such efforts are essential for the long term health of our lakes. But the idea of aggressive remedial measures to provide more immediate results is certainly attractive and should not be dismissed out of hand. Many of our members apparently agree, and have signed a petition calling on the state and county to take the fluridone idea seriously.

Still, many questions remain unanswered regarding the whole-lake application of fluridone:

- Does it work long term? Or will it ultimately make matters worse?
- What are the effects on fish and the overall lake ecosystem?
- Even if fluridone's effectiveness is verified elsewhere, how will we know that it will work here?
- Finally, who will pay? And through what mechanism? Houghton Lake residents were assessed \$1.4 million. How would we divvy the cost here?

To address these and other questions, the YLA Board has formed a working group to expeditiously focus on the issues of fluridone treatment and other whole-lake remedies. It is our intent to ensure that such remedies are given thorough consideration by our elected officials, government agencies, and the research community.

YLA will be actively involved in not only the discussion, but also in the planning and implementation of promising techniques that pass technical scrutiny. The YLA has always worked closely with the county, DNR, Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL), the UW, and citizens' groups. It is those working relationships that will ensure that the voice of lake residents doesn't 'mire in the weeds' while Eurasian milfoil turns our lakes to astro-turf.

Summing Up The Summer of 05 Weed Harvesting

By Kevin Connors, Director
Dane County Land & Water Resource Department

The County Park Lake Management Program began aquatic plant harvesting operation in mid-May at Indian Lake and Vilas Park Lagoons. The operation was in full swing by June 1st on Lakes Monona and Waubesa. During the peak growing period from the middle of June through the middle of July the Operation went to a split shift providing service from 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM. By the week of July 18th the County had provided services to all lakes under the County Aquatic Plant Harvesting permit. Lake Monona received the most service in 2005 due to the high concentration of vegetation. From June through July harvesters stationed full time on the lake.

Many of the calls received this summer were related to the build up of stringy algae called filamentous algae. The algae can build up on anchored vegetation or be blown into shorelines creating large floating mats. The lime green colored mats creates the image that there's a large concentration of aquatic vegetation. This isn't always the case, in many instances there's minimal vegetation. Unless the algae is concentrated into large mats or attached to other vegetation, it's very difficult for the harvesting equipment to pick-up.

The Aquatic Plant Harvesting Operation consists of seven harvesters or cutters working in crews of 2-4 assigned to various locations. The priorities of the harvesting operations include:

- Emergency Flood Abatement Cutting in the Yahara River Channel
- Navigational Cutting
 - Pier Access – navigational channel parallel to shore from the end of the pier out 30-40 feet
 - Lake Access – periodic channels cut perpendicular to shore connecting the Pier Access Channel to open water
 - When accessible removal of wind blown, loose vegetation collecting along shorelines
- Public Access Sites and Fish habitat

The aquatic vegetation removed from the lakes is recycled and provides a good fertilizer source to Local farmers, gardeners and nurseries.

In the 2005 Capital Budget a barge platform was purchased to build a new Harvester. This is a three-year capital project to replace the three oldest harvesters that are over 40 years old.

If you have any questions about the harvesting program or any other lake management issues please contact Dane County Parks at (608) 246-3896 or visit the website at www.countyofdane.com/lwrld/ for links to the Harvester locations and the Lake Water Levels.

Highland Way Protection Project: A Natural Opportunity

The Highland Way Protection Project is an effort by the Friends of Pheasant Branch to preserve as a natural area 19.27 acres of land adjacent Middleton's Pheasant Branch Conservancy and just off the north shore of Lake Mendota. Conservation of this land will help protect the water quality of Lake Mendota and the Pheasant Branch Creek and marsh, Lake Mendota's second largest source of surface water.

The parcel, presently undeveloped, is owned by the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, which must sell the land to raise money to build a school elsewhere in the district. The Friends of Pheasant Branch have acquired an option to buy the land for its fair market value (\$3 million!). The Friends have until November 1, 2005 to exercise this option. To date, more than half of the needed funds have been contributed or pledged by the John C. Bock Foundation, Dane County, the City of Middleton, and many local businesses and citizens. The Friends are applying for additional grants, but need generous local contributions to round out the effort. If they succeed in raising the needed funds, the Friends will acquire the land and transfer ownership to the City of Middleton, under a land preservation agreement, as an extension of the current Conservancy lands, guaranteeing that the property remains undeveloped. If the Friends do not succeed in raising the \$3 million, the land will be sold for development and Lake Mendota and Pheasant Branch Creek will be impacted by additional runoff.

The highly accessible parcel is used by thousands of citizens who enjoy viewing wildlife, wild flowers and trees, hiking, biking and skiing in the area. Many continue on to access the more rigorous adjacent conservancy trails or the nearby city and county parks.

The time is short to make this fundraising drive a success. Your help is needed now! Please make your contribution to: Highland Way Project, Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Box 628242, Middleton, WI 53562.

Visit <http://www.pheasantbranch.org/html/highlandway.html> for a map. For more information, contact project leader Sally Kefer at skefer@charter.net or Friends president Brian Butler at bbutler@staffordlaw.com.

Manure Management Recommendations

A three-month study process commissioned by County Executive Falk culminated on June 20, 2005 in recommendations for winter manure spreading restrictions aimed at preventing manure run-off into waterways.

The task force made seven recommendations. They include a requirement that farmers must develop a winter spreading plan if they intend to apply liquid manure on frozen ground. Application rates will depend on the slope of the land, but will be a maximum of 7,000 gallons per acre, per winter. There also will need to be conservation practices aimed at protecting navigable waterways from run-off, such as the creation of grass buffer strips. Farmers will need to develop emergency procedures and be able to make contact with DNR and other providers in the event of a spill.

The recommendations also would forbid producers from spreading manure under certain conditions which are deemed to be hazardous, such as when snow is melting on frozen ground. The proposal calls for active monitoring of farmer compliance by land conservation department staff. Recommendations also include creation of two new county staff positions in the land conservation division to take on the responsibility for monitoring manure spreading. The other recommendations relate to the implementation of the proposal. On a long-term basis, the task force recommends that the county build a regional manure facility which will digest manure.

The task force report included a minority report. Attorney Andrew Hanson from Midwest Environmental Advocates, together with Supervisor Chuck Erickson, recommended more stringent restrictions upon manure spreading. He also recommended much more elaborate recordkeeping requirements. Further, Attorney Hanson recommended that the maximum fine for violations of the ordinance should be \$1,000 per day.

The manure spreading regulations have dramatic implications for Dane County farmers. Dairy farming remains a viable, but endangered, industry in Dane County. As the task force report noted, the number of dairy herds in Dane County has dropped from 1,111 in 1985 to 411 in 2004. The issue of manure spreading and finding the proper balance between regulation and promotion of the economy is very critical.

Dane County Water Body Classification Study Completed

As the Lakes and Watershed Commission conducted public meetings on various amendments to the shoreland zoning ordinance, a number of groups and individuals expressed concerns that the one-size-fits-all approach to regulations and plans may not be the best approach to protecting and enhancing water bodies in Dane County. In 2003, Dane County received a DNR Lake Classification Grant to conduct a Water Body Classification Study including all navigable lakes, ponds, rivers and streams within its boundaries. The County requested that the Dane County Regional Planning Commission take the lead in preparing the analysis and drafting the technical report. Phase I of this study was completed in December 2004 and copies distributed to local units of government, resource management agencies and private conservation and environmental groups.

The water body classification study classifies lakes, ponds, rivers and streams according to their current level of development and sensitivity. It also provides a menu of management strategies and options depending on the particular circumstances. A classification system allows water resource plans, policies, and programs to be tailored to the needs of the resource and the priorities of the community. It provides the framework for guiding program resources, promoting cost-sharing opportunities and partnerships among various agencies and groups, and directing their efforts for where they will have the greatest benefit.

The Phase I study is expected to provide the technical basis for a subsequent Phase II resource management program. On March 10, 2005, the Lakes and Watershed Commission recommended that Dane County seek additional funding to develop a set of management and policy recommendations appropriate to each class of water body identified in the Phase I report. Dane County has since applied for, and is hoping to receive award of a DNR Classification grant to conduct the work this fall. The Phase II project would include broad community and stakeholder input to develop programs, policies, and guidelines appropriate to each water body classification. Discussion will likely involve an evaluation of priorities and available resources, identifying limitations or gaps in existing policies and programs, and how current efforts might best be restructured or focused. An update on this effort will be provided once more is known about the status of the DNR grant.

Lake Effects: Exploring the Relationship between People and Water: 25 Years of the North American Lake Management Society

Madison, Wisconsin, the birthplace of limnology in North America, is the venue for the 25th Annual International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS). This special anniversary symposium offers you a unique opportunity to look back over 25 years of effective leadership in fostering lake management, and to look forward to the challenges of protecting, managing and restoring lakes for the benefit of all.

The 25th symposium explores the relationship between people and lakes and their watersheds, recognizing that each affects, and has an effect on, the other. An array of relevant topics will be explored in depth with this duality in mind. The conference will have something for everyone – from specialized lake scientists and natural resource managers to lake dwellers and concerned citizens to budding environmentalists of all ages. Experts in their respective fields including many from outside of North America will gather to share their knowledge as well as learn. Energizing plenary presentations on key topics will jump-start each day. NALMS popular pre- and post-conference workshops will afford opportunities for hands-on learning.

Join this unique opportunity at Madison's world-class Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center November 9-11, 2005 to celebrate NALMS' Lake Effects!

Learn more at:

www.nalms.org/symposia/madison/index.htm

Some Early History of Lake Research in Wisconsin

By Steve Morton

Did you know the center of North American lake research in the early 1900's was the University of Wisconsin? Here's a timeline of what the UW did for the lakes and who pioneered the process...

The zoology faculty duo of Edward Birge and Chancey Juday dominated the field of limnology from 1900-1930. Birge, (who later became the president of the U.W) studied

the vertical distribution of minute animals (zooplankton) in Lake Mendota, leading to research on seasonal mixing, physics and chemistry, thermal stability, temperature changes and stratification, changes in the dissolved gases including oxygen exhaustion, and alkalinity and acidity of over 150 southern Wisconsin lakes, with emphasis on Mendota. Juday joined Birge in 1904 and together they published in 1911 their paper on the dissolved gases in southern Wisconsin lakes.

In 1925 they established the Trout Lake laboratory in Vilas County and studied over 500 lakes in northern Wisconsin. Their research became largely descriptive and consisted of collecting massive amounts of data with little effort to establish principles and theories. The Wisconsin School began to lose prestige in the scientific community.

By 1940 Birge and Juday had retired and Arthur Hasler was hired in 1937. Hasler conducted more rigorous laboratory and field studies which included controls and emphasized the entire watershed rather than just the lake. He also helped and encouraged faculty in many other departments to do lake research as the study of lakes involves virtually all fields of science and engineering.

A classic experiment, done in 1952, was on the Peter and Paul lakes near the Wisconsin-Michigan border. The two lakes have an hourglass configuration. A barrier was installed between them and lime was added to one to study the effects on the clarity of these brownish acid bog lakes. One of the students on this project did a similar project in the 1970's in Canada to study the effects of phosphorus. This was one of the first definitive experiments to show the crucial role of phosphorus which many scientists and engineers and previously been skeptical of.

In 1978 Hasler retired leaving a strong tradition and foundation of limnology faculty to continue lake studies. Facilities are also strong with the Lake Mendota laboratory built in 1962 and the Trout Lake laboratory replaced in 1967.

Wisconsin continues to be a center of lake research, including a wide range of faculty research in many different departments at UW-Madison, the recently renovated water chemistry laboratory, the Sea Grant program which emphasizes the Great Lakes, numerous other campuses such as the Great Lakes Institute at UW-Milwaukee, and the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point, the DNR which both monitors lakes and engages in research projects and the U.S.Geological Survey.

Mariners Inn Hosts Association's Annual Meeting

The Yahara Lakes Association annual meeting was held on July 12 at the Mariners Inn and attended by more than 90 members. After enjoying heaps of great appetizers, a delicious dinner included steak and lobster.

Following dinner, Attendees heard from various members of the Board on the activities and plans of YLA.



Maureen Van Dinter (right), Division 9 Captain of the Auxiliary Coast Guard accepted the group's award as Citizen of the Year. John Van Dinter (left) received a Certificate of Appreciation for his many years of service on the Lakes and Watershed Commission. John was honored previously by YLA as Public Official of the Year for his service with the Town of Westport.



Chuck Dykman (left) is presented with the YLA Member of the Year Award by Association President, Joe Tisserand. Chuck's devotion to YLA is genuine and his expertise in keeping the board and our members informed on legislation and the ever changing DNR rules and regulations is invaluable.



The YLA Board of Directors unanimously voted to award Eileen Bruskwitz (above), District 25 Supervisor, the Public Official of the Year Award. Eileen was instrumental in bringing the Yahara Lakes Advisory Group into being. While the original purpose of YLAG was to look at the management of lake levels for the Yahara Chain, it has evolved into a broader forum to address the causes of increasing lake volumes due to urbanization as well as flooding. YLAG brought all lake users, including riparians to the table and it continues to serve as a forum for private and public interests regarding the Yahara Lakes. YLAG's work was leveraged into the lake level monitoring that is being done in conjunction with the MG&E Cogeneration plant.

As a County Board supervisor, Eileen has supported resolutions and budget initiatives to support the Sheriff's Lake Patrol boats, weed cutters, and lake level monitoring.

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Annual Meeting Committee: Joe Tisserand, Dan Schultz and Bill von Rutenberg.

Thanks also to von Rutenberg Ventures for providing a perfect location, terrific food and (eventually) wonderful weather!

Who to Call About Lake Issues

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dane County Sheriff's Office | Emergency | 911 |
| | Non-emergency | 255-2345 |
| | Tenney Park office | 246-3888 |
| | TDD | 266-1111 |
| DNR Violation Hotline | Available 24 hrs/ day | 800-847-9367 Or Cell phone # 367 |
| Lake Information & Coordination | Dane Co. Watershed Mgmt. | 267-0118 |
| Weed Spraying and Plant Mgmt. | Madison DNR | 273-5955 |
| Fish Management | Madison DNR | 273-5955 |
| Lake Levels | Land & Water Resources Dept | 224-3730 |
| Weed Harvesting | Dane County Parks | 246-3896 |
| Tenney Locks | | 266-4364 |
| Beach Monitoring Information | City of Madison Health Dept. | 266-4842 |
| Shoreline Permit Information | Madison DNR | 273-5955 |
| Shoreline Zoning | Dane Co. Dept. of Land Reg. | 267-0118 |

After you have read your newsletter please recycle it.
Pass it along to a water-front property neighbor that is not a member of the Yahara Lakes Association and suggest they seriously consider becoming a member by filling out the membership form below.

YLA ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

To join the Yahara Lakes Association, please fill out this form with your membership check of \$25 made payable to: Yahara Lakes Association Ltd. Please send it to: Yahara Lakes Association, Ltd., P.O. Box 44578, Madison, WI 53744.
If you have any questions, call (608) 848-1450.

NAME _____
(Please Print)

FIRM NAME (if applies) _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ Lake on which I live or own property _____

Please enroll me, as listed above, as follows: _____ Individual Membership (\$25 annually)
_____ Corporate Membership (\$100 annually)

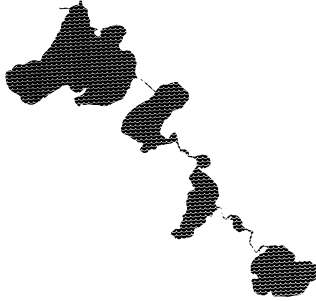
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Yahara Lakes Association, Ltd. is a non-profit organization of over 700 members dedicated to representing Lake property owners and advocating for the vitality of the Yahara chain of lakes so that all citizens may enjoy them.

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COMMITTEES

Communications Committee
Lake Quality Committee
Legislation and Legal Committee
Membership Committee
Water Safety Committee

Call 848-1450 if you would like to become involved in any of the above-listed committees, or if you have concerns you would like a committee to address.