

Lake Views

The newsletter of the Yahara Lakes Association

August • 2008

Fall Conference to Focus on Solutions for Cleaner Area Lakes

By

Bob Miller, YLA President-Elect

The sources of excess nutrients and sediments that enter the Yahara Lakes are widely known and well understood. But practical and effective ways to halt this pollution -- which degrades water quality, feeds excess growth of vegetation and algae, and leads to frequent beach closings -- continue to elude us.

A fall conference will focus on identifying and implementing answers to these persistent problems. *A Clean Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today* will be held on Friday, October 10, at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center.

The day-long conference will begin with a quick overview of the state of the lakes and a presentation on their economic and ecological value to the region. Concurrent sessions will then focus on different aspects of the nutrient-sediment issue and explore the partnerships, strategies, policies, technologies and funding sources that are needed to attack them, from

farm fields to construction sites to city streets. The day will conclude with a leadership panel that will be asked to respond to a set of recommendations or ideas emanating from these sessions.

This event follows up on last year's Yahara Lakes Association conference, *The Future of the Yahara Lakes: Realizing the Vision*, which was organized in partnership with UW-Madison's Nelson Institute and which is widely credited with giving new momentum to the search for solutions to the lakes' persistent problems.

A Clean Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today will be open to the public. For more information or to register, please visit www.nelson.wisc.edu/outreach/yahara or contact Steve Pomplun at the Nelson Institute, spomplun@wisc.edu or 263-3063.

We hope to see you at Monona Terrace on October 10!

**A Clean Future for the
Yahara Lakes:
Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today**

October 10, 2008
Monona Terrace
Community and Convention Center
Madison WI

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**Another Great Annual YLA Membership
Meeting, Program and Dinner**



YLA Members and Guests Enjoy Surf & Turf Treat at Nau-Ti-Gal's

Special thanks to our Major Underwriting Sponsor, Agrecol (see article on next page) and the following area firms and businesses for their generous contribution of door prizes for our 2008 Annual Meeting at Nau-Ti-Gal on June 25. What a great night with almost 100 of your neighbors and friends:

American Family Mutual Insurance Company,

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Focus on Agrecol Envirolok; YLA's Presenting Sponsor for 2008-2009

The Agrecol® Envirolok™ System is a patent pending erosion control and slope stabilization system that creates vegetated walls in combination with deep-rooted native plants. Envirolok vegetated retaining walls by Agrecol are strong, environmentally-friendly alternatives to conventional erosion control systems. This versatile system is effective for erosion control, shoreline stabilization, stormwater management, stream restoration, residential lakeshore preservation and remediation, landscape enhancements, naturalized buffers, raised gardens and more.

The Envirolok system, planted with deep-rooted perennial vegetation, locks, renews and improves the structure year after year. It does not interfere with hydrological processes, provides habitat, is safe for amphibious species, retains oxygen and moisture, absorbs sound, moves with freeze/thaw cycles and provides a beautiful and permanent alternative to rip rap and hard armor structures.

Native plants are increasingly used for stormwater management. They control erosion, increase purification and infiltration of rainwater and runoff so the aquifer remains full and pure.

Founded by William T. “Bill” Graham in 1991, Agrecol Corporation combines the best principles of production agriculture with the science of ecology to produce high quality native seed and plants.

Historically, Agrecol was an agricultural research and development firm. In 1995, the company focused its attention and resources on the production of native plant species. Agrecol’s native plant species are grown from remnant foundation collections gathered primarily in southeastern Wisconsin.

Agrecol has added new and important product lines and services to its native offerings, taking its specialty erosion control and water management products and services to national and international markets. The company’s focus broadened to include, nursery production, growing seed and live plants for prairie, woodlands, wetlands and savanna plant communities, installation of native seed and plants along with

erosion control systems, environmental consulting and resource management services, restoration design, installation and site monitoring and management.

A native seed industry leader, Agrecol, sets industry standards for clean, germination-tested, source-certified seed sold as Pure Live Seed (PLS).

Agrecol cleans and conditions its seed by removing awns and appendages, increasing the bulk density, which means more seeds per PLS pound and increased flowability through standard seeding equipment. Awns and other appendages are slender, bristle-like structures found on the seed of many grasses. In the natural world, this material assists in dispersal of the seed. It is carried by the wind and sticks to animals it comes in contact with. When planting seed mechanically, awns and other appendages interfere with seeding uniformity. Agrecol’s cleaned and conditioned seed provides planting flexibility, uniformity and successful stand establishment.

The company works with the Wisconsin Crop Improvement Association (WCIA) to certify our seed in the WCIA ‘Source Identified’ program. The program tracks source origin, the original prairie remnant from which the foundation seed was gathered. The seed is stored in temperature and humidity controlled buildings that protect and preserve seed vigor and viability.

Agrecol founder and Chairman, Bill Graham, states that “As part of our commitment to a green future, Agrecol is involved in research and development of renewable fuels, such as pelletizing switchgrass and other native plants to produce fuel to support manufacturing and to heat homes and businesses. Our farm buildings are completely heated with pellets made on site from our own native straw and stem plant material left after cleaning the seed.

Our company, our employees, our customers, our friends and associates are all part of Agrecol’s team; a team dedicated to leaving the earth better than when we found it. I invite you to join our team; be a part of Agrecol’s green future.”

Visit our website at www.agrecol.com to learn more about our company; see project photos and buy on line.

Anchors Away

By Don Sanford

The weather bureau forecast called for below freezing temperatures on December 15, 1940. At 6:40 p.m. that day, as 80 officers and men of the 33rd Division of the U.S. Navy Reserve boarded a train for a year's active duty, another chapter of the old building at 409 N. Blair St. came to a close.

The 33rd Division was organized in 1925 as an auxiliary unit of the Navy Reserve. For a few years, they met in a building at West Main and South Carroll Streets. In May 1931, the *Capital Times* announced that the unit would move into a new armory, the former Mendota Yacht Club building, at 409 N. Blair St. While not the type of structure that comes to mind when you think of an armory, the old building, built in 1854, would serve as the headquarters for the 33rd Division for nearly 10 years.

Work began on the transformation of the structure from its previous uses as a soda pop factory, Mendota Yacht Clubhouse, boatbuilder T. H. Tofte's workshop and a boat dealership, The Madison Boat Company. During the next few months, the building was remodeled so it could be transformed into a "ship" to provide training for the officers and men of the unit every Friday night. By the end of 1931, a 4-inch cannon from the *U.S.S. Niagara* with an 18 1/2 ft barrel had arrived in Madison and was mounted on a specially prepared concrete base at the Armory.

But what is a Navy without a vessel? That question was answered in July of 1932 when the unit received a 40 ft. launch. She was launched from the Tracy Boat Company on N. Franklin St. with great fanfare on a July day with Madison suffering under record high temperatures,

While not what could be described as speedy or graceful, the 40 ft. converted motor sailor and her 50 hp engine was, nevertheless a Navy vessel. She had room for perhaps 30 sailors and provided plenty of hands-on training for members of the unit who served as engineers, ship's carpenters and coxswains. That October, the unit held its first Navy Day open house and took visitors out for cruises from dawn till after dusk.



The Navy Launch raises a sunken boat on Lake Mendota

During the next few years, the 33rd Division, under the command of J. B. Arnold was a prominent fixture on Mendota's shoreline. Naval inspectors arrived each year to look over the unit's 6 officers and 69 enlisted men. Each October, the launch would take Madisonians out for rides on Navy Day. The launch served as a spectator boat during regattas sponsored by the Mendota Yacht Club. At least once, she was used to help raise a boat from the depths of Lake Mendota.

All of this came to an end when the train left the depot on West Washington Ave. that cold December day. The final disposition of the Navy launch, the 4-inch gun or the bell from the *USS Eagle* that hung outside the building are lost to history. After the Navy Reserve moved out, the building was rented to the Truax Field Instructors Club. In 1945, the Payton family purchased the property. The City of Madison acquired the property for the expansion of James Madison Park in 1969. This old structure truly became a ghost of Lake Mendota when it was torn down in 1970.

Thanks to Ann McCann for the use of these photos.

Don Sanford is a Captain on the Betty Lou Cruise Line. He is currently researching *On Fourth Lake, A Social History Tour of Lake Mendota*. He welcomes your comments, recollections and anecdotes at: dpsanford@charter.net or at 255-1508.



The men of the 33rd Division at 409 North Blair Street

More Photos from YLA's Annual Summer Meeting at Nau-Ti-Gal

This year's Annual Meeting featured a presentation from Ken Johnson, Water Leader at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (right). Mr. Johnson spoke about the Yahara CLEAN program and took questions from YLA members.

State Senator Mark Miller (below right) also spoke briefly and then joined our other 2007 award winners for the photo below.



YLA Board Member & Dane County Supervisor's update on the issues facing Riparians on Shoreland Zoning

By
Eileen Bruskwitz

Three years ago, the Dane County Board of Adjustment (BOA) handed down a decision in the 'Arborum' case that made small lots unbuildable. It also required any improvement to these lots in the shoreland district of towns from small repairs, like replacing rotting wood on a deck to major projects such as a tear down and rebuild, to get approval from non-elected officials.

Thousands of properties in the shoreland district, which is defined as 1000 feet from a lake, or 300 feet from a river or stream, or any navigable waterway including detention ponds or gullies, are affected. Since the County is not required to notify homeowners about this change, many will not know their property is subject to BOA approvals until they go for a building permit.

Before the BOA decision, small lots were given grandfathered status. After the BOA decision grandfathering was no longer recognized by Dane County. This decision should have been litigated, but it wasn't.

Ordinance Amendment 2 was written to reverse the Board of Adjustment decision. Subsequently, other proposals were suggested to defeat that intent. Now, a new kind of variance process will be proposed. Of concern is adding significant regulations from the new Waterbody Classification and Riparian Management Plan which would apply in all of Dane County's cities, villages and towns.

This would require shoreland property owners to install, for example, a 35 foot deep vegetative buffer in the setback from the lake if they want to add a bedroom or expand a kitchen. You might have to change the color of your house if you want to make an improvement.

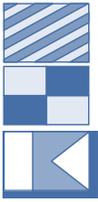
All of this leaves property owners questioning the continued use and value of their property as well as the motivations behind these regulations. The proponents claim that small substandard nonconforming lots pose a serious risk and pollute the lakes. Their view is that we are to be phased out so that there is less 'density.' Eventually, only large landowners will be able to live on or near lakes. I'm not kidding.

I would submit that shoreland district owners have a much higher regard for our waterways than the general population and many have taken steps to improve lake quality at the shoreline. It is in their self interest to do so. But, we need to do a better job of educating everyone in our watershed. The homeowner near a storm sewer has the same impact as one near the shoreline.

We have a responsibility to protect our waterways. We should do more. For YLA members, all of whom live on the Yahara Chain of Lakes, the only way to protect our riparian rights is to monitor government actions—they will have a profound affect on the ability to stay in our homes, improve them, and sell them to others to enjoy.

In September 2008 there will be a meeting that will clarify many of the questions. Staff from DNR and Dane County will discuss how we can correct the BOA decision and have fair and reasonable laws for the shoreland district homeowners. As soon as the meeting information is available, it will be posted at: www.yaharalakes.com.

Sincerely,
Eileen Bruskwitz, YLA Board Member (Mendota)
Dane County Supervisor District 25,
Westport and Waunakee
Eileen53597@charter.net



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