



# **Inventory of Lake Projects to Protect and Improve Water Quality and Wildlife Habitats in the Winnebago Pool**

## **Department of Natural Resources**

### **Critical Areas Inventory**

Staff has been identifying important natural areas on the Winnebago Lake system in an ongoing effort to protect habitat critical for sustaining water quality, wildlife, and outstanding natural shore areas

### **Long-Term Trend Monitoring**

Monitoring is conducted four times a year at three stations on Lake Winnebago to support the identification of long-term and seasonal trends in lake water quality. These stations are located in the south, mid and north zones of the lake. Parameters measured or analyzed include nutrients (phosphorous, nitrogen), chlorophyll (measure of algae), Secchi clarity, dissolved oxygen and temperature profiles. Recent aquatic invasive species monitoring was begun for plankton tows for the spiny water flea.

### **Breakwater Committee**

Representatives from agencies and conservation groups are serving on a short term committee to identify areas suitable for establishing breakwaters.

### **Sturgeon Management Plan**

Staff has developed and continues to update a management plan aimed at sustaining the sturgeon fishery in the Winnebago System.

### **Winnebago Lake Sturgeon History Project**

Throughout 2006, a team representing DNR, UW-Milwaukee Great Lakes Water Institute, Sturgeon for Tomorrow, the Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, and the Oshkosh Public Museum, will be gathering information, photos and other documentation on sturgeon experiences to produce a book on the history of the Winnebago lake sturgeon fishery.

### **Army Corps water level management**

DNR staff provides data and support to the Army Corps which sets water levels for the Winnebago Pool based on the needs of multiple users: industry, municipal, recreational, wildlife

### **Winnebago Comprehensive Management Plan**

Specific water quality objectives developed in 1989 by experts and area citizens are guiding actions on the lake system. Much of the plan has been implemented.

## **UW Extension**

### **Volunteer Stream Monitoring**

UW Extension coordinates the WAV program, a statewide program to train citizens to monitor streams. A recent DNR grant supported training through UWO to monitor streams entering the Winnebago Pool.

### **Rain Garden Demonstration & Promotion**

A demonstration rain garden adjacent to the Expo Building, a display board, and appearances at local events are components of a Winnebago County UWEX storm water education program.

### **Economic Study of Winnebago System fishery**

Economists from UW Oshkosh, UW Green Bay, UW Extension and UW Madison teamed up to poll anglers to determine the economic impact of the Winnebago system fishery on local communities. Funding came from a diverse group of area clubs and businesses. Preliminary findings show a \$221.4 million impact. A media presentation is promoting the program.

## **Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium**

### **Cost-Effective Stormwater Management and Regulatory Compliance**

NEWSC is a group of 35 municipalities and businesses working together to address state stormwater regulations. UW-Extension was a founding partner and continues to provide support for stormwater

marketing and educational program development. The consortium is sponsored by the Fox Wolf Watershed Alliance.

## **County Land & Water Conservation Departments**

### **Erosion Control and Phosphorus Reduction Programs**

Numerous actions to protect and improve the Winnebago Pool lakes are included in Land and Water Conservation Plans for the 5-counties surrounding the system. These actions are being implemented through a variety of cost-sharing programs such as Barnyard Runoff Management, Nutrient Management, Shoreline Buffers and Streambank and Shoreline Protection.

## **UW Oshkosh**

### **Citizen Lake Monitoring Network**

UW Oshkosh, in cooperation with UWEX and the Winnebago Lakes Council, sustains a volunteer lake monitoring network for the Winnebago lakes stemming from a 2005 DNR grant. Citizens are trained to measure water clarity with a Secchi disk to obtain information for a statewide database.

### **Aquatic Invasive Species Education Project**

UW Oshkosh, the Winnebago Lakes Council and UWEX Winnebago County are sharing a \$75,000 Wisconsin AIS grant for education, prevention and planning on the Winnebago Pool lakes. Specific projects include a strategic management plan, initiation of proven public education programs, scientific studies of current and potential risks and outreach activities for teachers and the general public.

### **Earth Charter Oshkosh**

Based at UW Oshkosh, Earth Charter Oshkosh supports local environmental groups and offers area residents a one week annual Summit in October addressing sustainability issues.

### **Aquatic Research Laboratory**

UW Oshkosh science classes, citizen training sessions and research pertaining to the waterways occur in this building located on campus along the Fox River. The long-range plan is to support regional efforts to sustain the Winnebago lakes and river system.

### **Beach and Groundwater Microbial Contamination Research**

Although projects are located across Wisconsin, contracts include municipalities in the Winnebago system.

## **East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

### **L-Thia Project for North and West Watershed of Lake Winnebago**

Through an EPA grant, East Central has available a computer-based model to estimate sediment and pollutant loadings to a waterway based on proposed changes in land use to use as a planning tool to address impacts of development on water quality. East Central has applied this model to several Lake Winnebago watersheds.

### **Regional Smart Growth Plan**

The Natural Resources component of this plan includes goals for sustaining the Winnebago system.

## **Local Governmental Entities**

### **City of Oshkosh**

The city has numerous on-going projects, including a storm water credit proposal, a goose removal project, brown field cleanups, a proposed waterfront walkway, a memorial tree program and water intake improvements.

### **Town of Algoma**

The town has been debating what kind of public access it wants to provide for a newly acquired wetland acquisition on Lake Butte des Morts.

## **Municipalities and counties in the five-county region**

All governmental units are undergoing a state mandated Smart Growth Planning process through 2010. A Natural Resources component is one of the required elements.

### **Oshkosh Area School District**

At Traeger Middle School, in cooperation with UW Extension WAV program, students are monitoring Sawyer Creek where it flows through the school grounds. Oakwood Elementary School is designated an environmental charter school in conjunction with the adjacent Sheldon Nature Area. Its curriculum includes various studies related to Honey Creek which flows into Lake Butte des Morts.

## **Clubs and Organizations**

### **Butte des Morts Conservation Club**

Numerous wildlife restoration projects are ongoing at Terrell's Island, a 110 acre wetland the club acquired in 1998 and placed in the public trust.

### **Friends of the Fox**

Members are conducting an AIS education campaign related to the opening of the Fox River lock system and installation of a boat lift at the Rapid Croche dam which will remain closed.

### **Heckrodt Wetland Reserve**

The Reserve operates the Watershed Education Resource Center, which makes available water quality testing equipment, educational resources, expertise and training of residents, teachers, community leaders and groups interested in local watershed issues and resources.

### **League of Women Voters**

Oshkosh, Neenah-Menasha and Appleton leagues have strong positions based on national, state and local studies to sustain the Winnebago lakes.

### **Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust**

The Land Trust develops partnerships in land conservancy and resource management and currently has conservation easements on restored wetlands and prairies in Winnebago County.

### **Otter Street Fishing Club**

The Otter Street Fisheriee generates funds to support various projects, most recently a proposed fishing dock in Millers Bay in Oshkosh

### **Poygan Sportsmen's Club**

The club's most recent project is removal of a large section of curly leaf pondweed in the lake.

### **Sturgeon for Tomorrow**

This group has four annual fund-raising events to support a wide variety of sturgeon protection and improvement projects.

### **Walleyes for Tomorrow**

The club currently has several on-going spawning habitat improvement projects

### **Fox Wolf Watershed Alliance**

A recent project has been preparation and posting of a State of the Watershed Report 2006 on its website. It also sponsors river paddling events, houses NEWSC, has an annual spring meeting and Stormwater Conference and conducts technical studies.

### **Winnebagoland Musky Club**

The club supports projects to improve the muskellunge fishery habitat.

### **Picnic Point support resolutions and letters**

Winnebago County, the City of Oshkosh, several towns and various civic, environmental and archeological organizations have gone on record against the proposed sale of Picnic Point, a 126 acre parcel of state-owned land with 3000 feet of undeveloped shoreland on Lake Winnebago in the City of Oshkosh. In December, 2006, the state transferred the site to the DNR for preservation.