

ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL WORK GROUP TO ADDRESS RECENT FLOODING
IN THE YAHARA CHAIN OF LAKES

Climate change is increasing the frequency of wetter conditions, more severe storms and threats to public health, safety and public and private property. This summer storms have caused dramatic and unprecedented flooding damage across the County including historic high water levels on the Yahara Chain of Lakes and severe flooding in Madison's Isthmus, resulting in financial damages exceeding \$78,287,645 to residents and \$37,114,219 to businesses with approximately only 2% of those damages insured.

Lake levels for the Yahara Chain of Lakes (Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa) are managed by Dane County in accordance with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources lake level orders developed in 1979.

Similar to flood events of 1993, 2000, and 2008, the events of 2018 call the questions of:

1. How to manage our lakes and reduce flooding with ever increasing volumes of water, mostly attributed to climate change and urban development;
2. How to improve the volume of water leaving the Yahara River system, a chain of impounded lakes connected by low gradient (relatively flat) river with obstructions by 31 bridges and railroad crossings, aquatic plants and sediment deposits; and
3. How to reduce stormwater runoff volumes through increased stormwater infiltration and better management of stormwater on impervious surfaces.

These questions must be asked within the larger context of the powers of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) "to promote safety, and to protect life, health, property, property values, and economic values" and to "regulate and control the level and flow of water in all navigable waters..." (Chapter 31.02 Wis Stats).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Land & Water Resources Department shall immediately convene a technical work group that includes representation from the University of Wisconsin and other experts to evaluate lake level conditions, model various scenarios that include predicted climate changes, identify short- and long-term recommendations to improve resiliency for future events, and make other recommendations that may include a recommendation to petition the WI DNR to change the permitted target range for lake levels.

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, that the Lakes and Watershed Commission in cooperation with the Environment Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee shall convene a task force to review the findings of the technical work group and make policy recommendations prior to March 31, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dane County will continue to prioritize the aggressive harvesting of aquatic plants, including native species, in the Yahara River to improve water flow through the system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, consistent with the Lake Level Management Guide that calls for attaining minimums in the fall and winter, Dane County will continue to

47 implement any tools that may be available to lower lake levels to DNR designated
48 minimum levels as soon as possible and work to maintain lakes at that level until the
49 County Board acts on recommendations from the task force.