

Yahara Chain of Lakes Lake Management Quarterly Update

September 1, 2021

Current Water Levels

Lake	Date	Lake Level	Summer Min	Summer Max	Winter Min
Mendota	9/1/2021	850.03	849.60	850.10	848.20
Monona	9/1/2021	845.50	844.70	845.20	842.20
Waubesa	9/1/2021	845.38	844.50	845.00	842.00
Kegonsa	9/1/2021	843.34	843.00	843.50	841.85

<https://lwrp.countyofdane.com/Lake-Levels>



Future Website Updates



Lake Levels & Information

The Land & Water Resources Department is responsible for maintaining lake levels for the four major lakes in Dane County: Lake Mendota, Lake Monona, Lake Waubesa and Lake Kegonsa. Minimum and maximum lake levels were set by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 1979 and are listed below in the information tabs for each lake. For information on the 2018 flooding, please visit our [Flood Facts & Initiatives](#) webpage.

Notices

August 30, 2021 - Lafollette Dam (Lake Kegonsa) is 5% open. Babcock Dam (Lake Waubesa) is 100% open. Tenney Dam (Lake Mendota) outflow is set to maintain levels on Lake Mendota. Lakes Mendota and Kegonsa are within summer range. Lakes Monona and Waubesa are slightly above summer maximum. The National Weather Service is predicting dry weather for the 5 day forecast.

Babcock lock is open for navigation.

Lafollette lock is closed for navigation.

Lake Levels*

Lake	Date	Lake Level	Summer Min	Summer Max	1% Flood
Mendota	9/1/2021	850.03	849.60	850.10	852.8
Monona	9/1/2021	845.50	844.70	845.20	847.7
Waubesa	9/1/2021	845.38	844.50	845.00	847.0
Kegonsa	9/1/2021	843.34	843.00	843.50	845.2



[Chart Lake Levels](#)

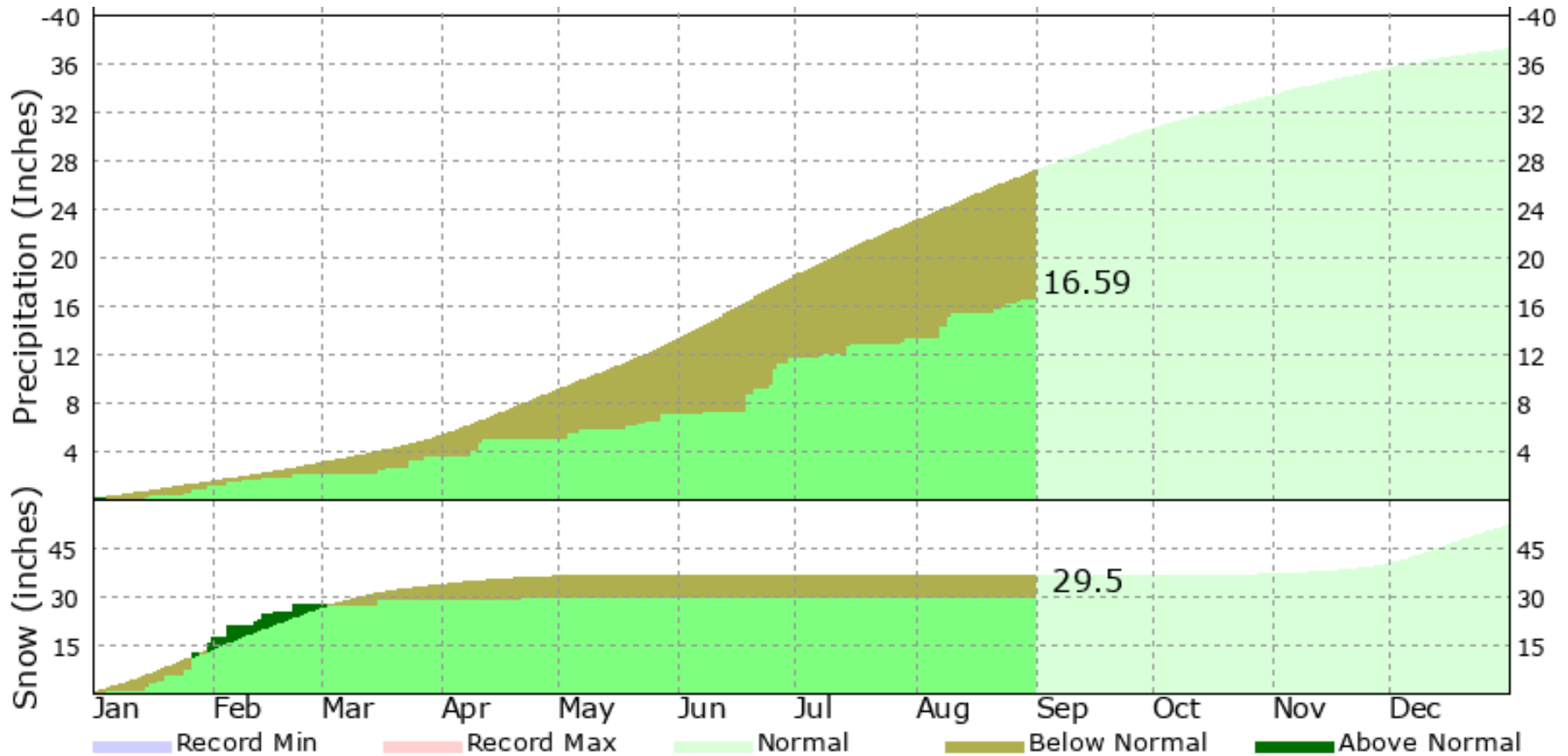
[Tabular Data](#)

Dam	Amount Open (%)
Tenney (Lake Mendota)	5%
Babcock (Lake Waubesa)	100%
Lafollette (Lake Kegonsa)	10%

[Chart Dam Operations](#)

Annual Precipitation

2021



Number of Days within Summer Minimum and Maximum Levels Year to Date

March 1 – September 1 (185 days)

Lake	Average (2011-2020)	2020	2021
Mendota	107	79	181
Monona	94	78	158
Waubesa	102	78	158
Kegonsa	112	79	170
Stoughton Dam	-	185	183

Slow No Wake Status



Slow-no-wake Restriction Map

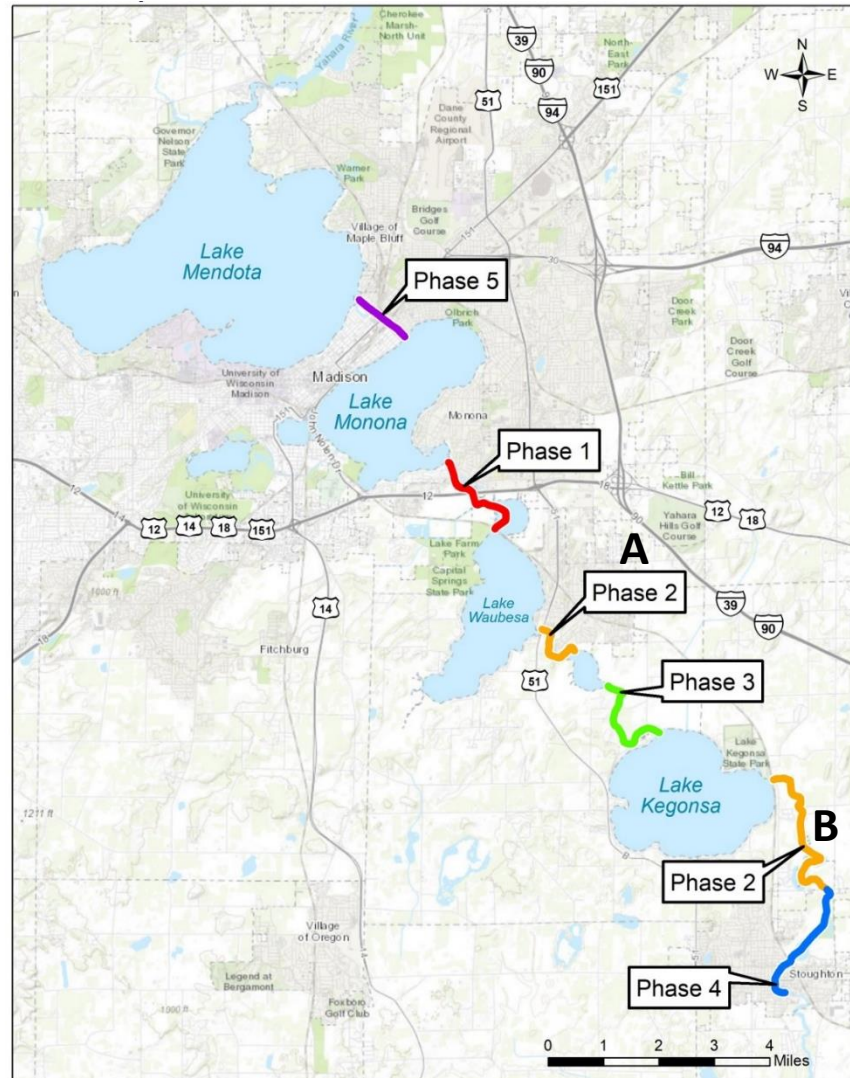
Green Lake = Normal Slow-no-wake Restrictions

Yellow Lake = Emergency Order: slow-no-wake within 500 feet of shore

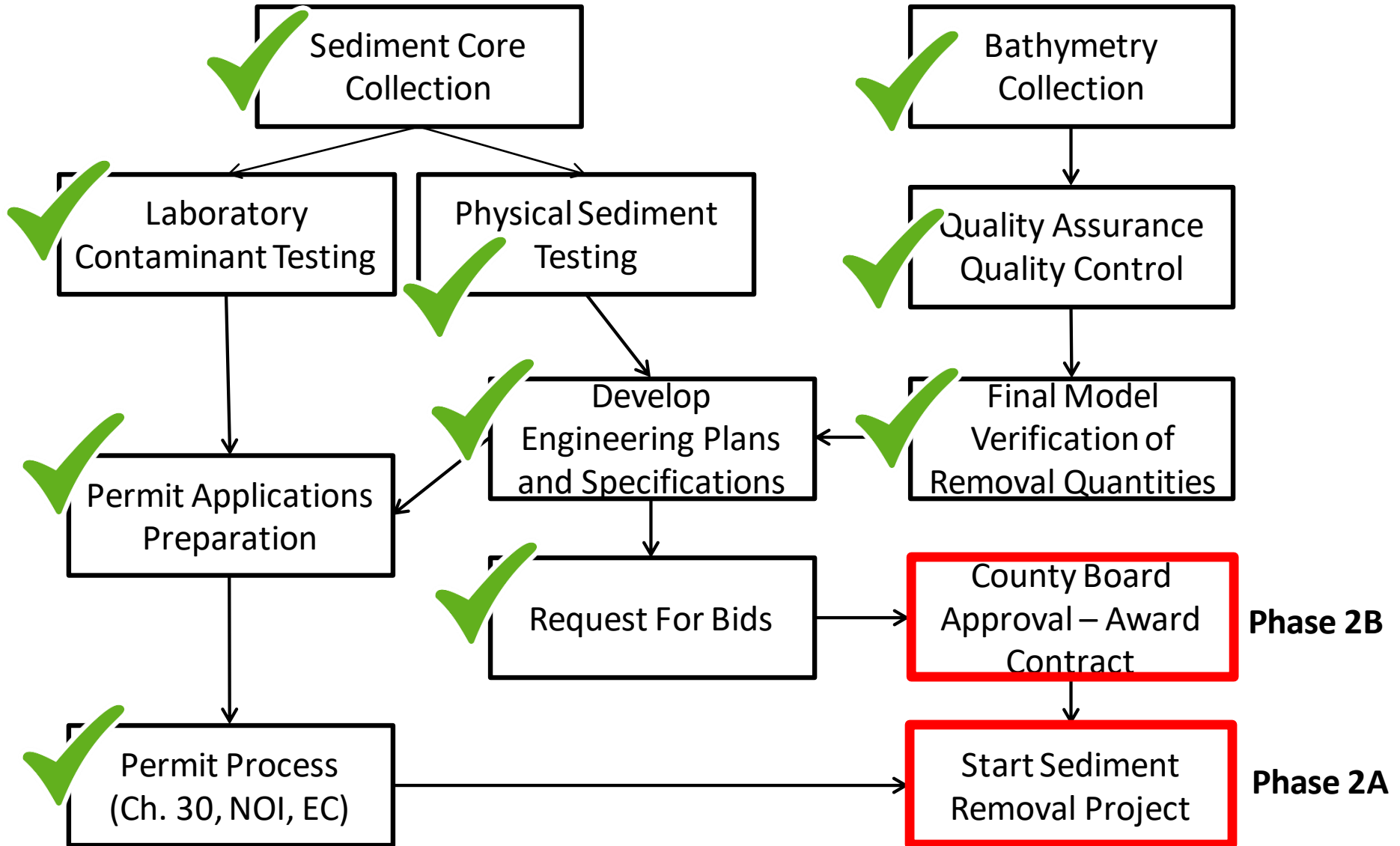
Red Lake = Emergency Order: slow-no-wake entire surface area

<https://lwr.d.countyofdane.com/slownowake#>

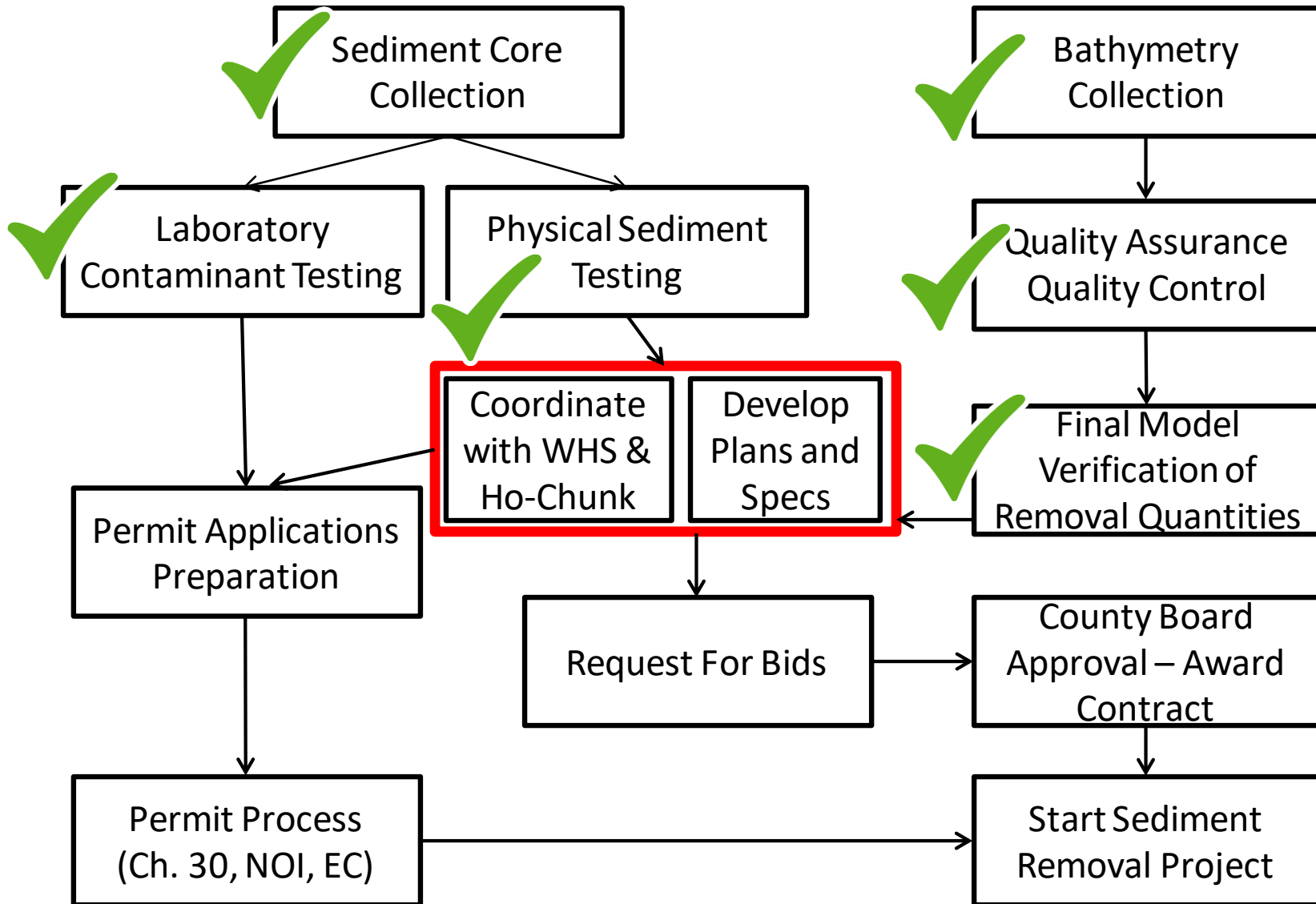
Sediment Removal Update



Phase 2 Status



Phase 3 Status



Sediment Removal Webpage



Yahara River Sediment Removal

Currently, water comes into the Yahara Lakes faster than it goes out. Therefore, after repetitive and heavy rainfall events, the lake levels increase and can lead to flooding. The efficient movement of water through each lake is undermined by sediment build-up in the Yahara River. While sediment movement is a naturally occurring process, the accumulation of sediment in the Yahara River and Lakes is greatly increased by human activity, including urban development and winter sand operations. Today, two inches of rain takes over two weeks to leave the Yahara Lakes system due to its sluggish nature.



Our goal is to improve water flow so that the delivery of two inches of rain that normally takes two weeks to travel through the Yahara Lakes system will take half as long, or one week.

- Project Phases
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Project Phases

Dane County's sediment removal project in the Yahara Lakes system will take place in five phases, with each phase carried out as Dane County secures permitting - see [Phase Map \(PDF\)](#). The benefit to reduce flooding for all lakes is realized when sediment accumulation has been removed along the Yahara chain, thus it is critical that the phases are planned as timely as possible.

Several factors were considered for a five phase plan including:

- Readily available sediment and bathymetry data for developing engineering plans
- Presence of contaminated sediment that would impact permitting timelines
- Proximity of dewatering locations to the river
- Existence of culturally sensitive features

Phase 1

The first phase is located between Lakes Monona and Waubesa. Hydraulic dredging of approximately 35,000 cubic yards of sediment has been completed. The project encountered rock and debris between Broadway and Bridge Road. Mechanical dredging by the use of excavators and barges will remove approximately 5,000 cubic yards of sediment and debris. The project is expected to resume in the fall after the boating season.

Phase 2

The second phase is located between Lake Waubesa to Lower Mud Lake and Lake Keonosa to

<https://lwr.dane.gov/LwrProjects/Detail/1/1>

Questions?