

# CRANES

## Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability

On behalf of its member organizations and individuals, advocating collaboratively for the environment of the South Central Wisconsin region (eight counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk) toward a high quality of life; an ecologically sustainable and just culture; and, the celebration of the beauty of this place, both natural and built.

### VISION

The Capital area's environment, including water, land, and air resources, will be conserved or restored to ensure the region's quality of life and the beauty of this special place, for all who live or visit here, now and in the future.

### PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Earth/Art® Resources  
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy  
League of Women Voters - Dane County  
Madison Audubon Society  
Sierra Club - Four Lakes Group  
W. Dane Coalition for Smart Growth & Environment  
West Waubesa Preservation Coalition

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Fiscal Agent

□ River Alliance of Wisconsin  
A Tax-exempt 501(c)3 Non-profit  
WisconsinRivers.org

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August 16, 2017

To: Commissioners, Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission  
Cc: Laura Hicklin, Interim Director, Land & Water Resources Dept.

From: Gary Werner, President, Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability (CRANES)

Subject: Comments on Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission FY2018 Budget Recommendations

Thank you for your thoughtful review of agency requests and public suggestions for the annual LWC Budget Recommendations to the County Executive. CRANES comments are organized under the underlined titles used in the LWC document.

### I. Initiatives to Reduce Phosphorus Pollution

#### E. Provide cost-share funding for urban runoff control.

CRANES supports and especially appreciates the high priority LWC places on the Urban Water Quality Grant program (UWQGP) including the Urban Outfalls Mitigation Program. As stated on the LWRD website, *Since 2005, Urban Water Quality Grants have helped fund projects totaling almost \$10 million that are estimated to have removed more than a half million pounds of debris since that time and more than 2000 pounds of phosphorus annually. One pound of phosphorus removed from the county's watersheds prevents 500 pounds of algae growth in area lakes.*

This year Water Resources Engineering is to be commended for initiating the call for proposals in February which is earlier than in past years, thus allowing municipalities adequate time to prepare applications. But it is difficult to monitor this grant program. CRANES repeats its previous requests that County staff update the website map and chart of approved (completed and underway) UWQGP projects and provide a written annual program report, so that the public is aware of the progress achieved. The latest map is from 2013 (see [https://wred-lwrд.сountуofdane.com/documents/UWQG/UWQG\\_October2013\\_poster.pdf](https://wred-lwrд.сountуofdane.com/documents/UWQG/UWQG_October2013_poster.pdf)).

CRANES supports LWC emphasis on increased funding to an annual level of \$2 million in new funding for five years. We support LWC reiteration that the program should:

- (1) promote green infrastructure and improve storm drain outlets (from a developed drainage area with inadequate stormwater controls)
- (2) maintaining emphasis on the county's "top ten" problem stormwater outfalls
- (3) carry forward and award of any unspent funds from previous years
- (4) provide an annual program report to LWC (specify written)

**CRANES requests that LWC insert the following additional point #5 under I. E.:**

**NEW 5. Tighten UWQGP with written annual program reports to the public and exclusion of natural surface waters (like Starkweather Creek) from eligibility as an "urban stormwater outfall."**

We bring this to LWC because CRANES is disappointed that LWRD

administration of UWQGP has failed to respond to questions raised by CRANES in letters of 2014-2016 concerning a funded project for the Starkweather Creek Flocculant Dispersal Facility.

CRANES supports LWC budget recommendations I. A-D and F.

- A. CRANES supports the LWC recommendation to add one Dane County staff person to develop and maintain data management systems for tracking progress on agricultural phosphorus management through LWRD, Yahara WINs and other conservation programs.
- B. LWC is to be commended for including a request for \$100,000 over 2 years to join other stakeholders in supporting UW research analysis of specific phosphorus reduction questions listed in your document.
- C. Maintaining land and water conservation funding, including farm conservation cost-share, are important to the agricultural community and economy of Dane County. CRANES continues to support investments for farm best management practices and streambank restoration to improve water quality and conserve soil. LWC also recommends funding innovative farm management practices and establishing a carp management fund for use in cost sharing community carp management efforts. These can be worthwhile efforts as well.
- D. CRANES will be following the progress of legacy sediment removal projects supported by LWC. We are especially concerned about the potential resuspension and return of these sediments to streams, identified as "reflux" in the recent research Yahara Lake publications of UW-Madison Prof, Emerita Joy Zedler.
- E. (above)
- F. LWC is to be commended for prioritizing best practices for municipalities and citizens to reduce phosphorus runoff from urban leaves. We support LWC creating a task force to create a multi-year strategy to address leaf management in conjunction with the USGS/City of Madison/Dane County Leaf Project, Clean Lakes Alliance, Friends of Lake Wingra, Madison Area Metropolitan Stormwater Partnership (MAMSWaP) and others.

## II. Initiatives to Reduce Chloride Pollution

As we did last year, CRANES supports the efforts of LWC to reduce chloride pollution for public health and ecological health. We greatly appreciate that LWC is a champion of the efforts to recognize the impacts of the rising chloride levels in Dane County surface and ground waters.

## III. Public Health

CRANES endorses the LWC budget request that the County maintain existing investments in monitoring and reporting and the addition of LTE resources to develop a unified monitoring plan for Dane County surface waters with a focus on *E.coli*, cyanobacteria and chlorides.

## IV. Protecting Dane County Water Resources through Community Engagement

CRANES salutes LWC for its leadership in adopting the Equity and Inclusion statement and endorse LWC plans and modest expenditures for expanding Equity and Inclusion into the culture and programming of LWRD and County committees.

LWC provides a valuable service by increasing the visibility and supporting other government investments in water resource management. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.