

The background of the cover is a photograph of a person in a canoe on a river at sunset. The sun is a large, bright yellow-orange orb in the center of the frame, casting a warm glow over the water and sky. The sky is filled with dark, silhouetted clouds. A semi-transparent map of the Yuhara region is overlaid on the sky, showing the outlines of the land and waterways. The map is light blue and white, contrasting with the warm colors of the sunset. The person in the canoe is seen from behind, wearing a hat and a jacket, and is holding a paddle. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the light from the sun.

# Yuhara Waterways

Water Trail Guide

This guide is based on *Taychopera: A Canoe Guide to Dane County's 4 Lakes* developed in 1984 by the Dane County Environmental Council with text written by Jane Licht. Taychopera means "four lakes" in the Ho Chunk tongue. Taychopera is the glacial-formed chain of lakes, marshes and river now known as Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa, Upper and Lower Mud, and the Yahara River.

The Yahara Waterways project has been a labor of love for many people. This is especially true considering that people volunteering their time have produced this guide. A special thank you and acknowledgement to the following contributors in the development of this 2007 guide:

- Dane County Environmental Council for project initiation and oversight
- UW-Extension Environmental Resources Center (Bruce Webendorfer and Jeff Strobel) for editorial assistance, graphic design, and map development
- Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission
- Key Members of the Yahara Waterways Steering Committee:
  - Mindy Habecker, project coordinator and author, Dane County UW-Extension
  - Robert Beilman, Madison Audubon Society
  - Steve Falter, Capitol Water Trails
  - Terry Hiltz, Wisconsin River Alliance
  - Sue Jones, coordinator, Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission and Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds
  - Wes Licht, McFarland teacher and environmental educator
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Graphic design and photos by Jeffrey J. Strobel, UW-Extension Environmental Resources Center (ERC). Base maps courtesy of Dane County Planning and Development. Map trail features by Allison Kirby, UW-Extension ERC.

## Key to Map Symbols

-  Accessible boat launch
-  Accessible fishing pier
-  Beach
-  Boat launch – no parking lot
-  Improved boat launch with parking
-  Campsites
-  Carry-in canoe/small boat site
-  Fishing walk-in access or pier
-  Marina
-  Public phone
-  Seasonal restrooms
-  State park sticker required
-  Warning - Dam! – portage required
-  GPS reading
-  Place of interest mentioned in text

 Water trail

The maps contained herein are intended to be general references for area boaters and are in no way to be considered adequate for navigational purposes. Additionally, we are not endorsing any business establishment mentioned in the guide.

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# Yahara Waterways

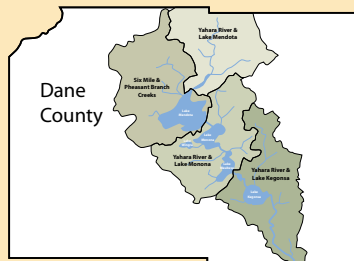
## Water Trail Guide – 2007

A guide to the environmental, cultural and historical treasures of the Yahara waterways.

### Land Shaped by the Glaciers

For centuries waterways have been usable long-distance “trails and highways” prior to other forms of transportation. They played a key role in the exploration and settlement of North America. Early European settlers and Native Americans used the area for fishing, hunting and transportation. Mail at one time was delivered by boat on the Yahara Lakes. Now only some of our major rivers are being used for commercial transportation as railroads, highways and air transportation carry the majority of commercial traffic. The waterway trails described within are for recreation, giving you a chance to enjoy the local blueways (paddling trails) and explore the vast array of wildlife, commune with nature, and learn about our area’s rich cultural heritage.

The Yahara Watershed in Dane County  
(showing sub-watersheds)

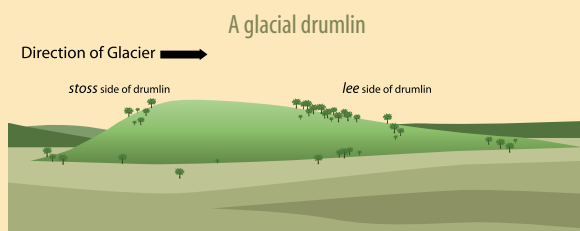


The Yahara Watershed, or land area that drains into the Yahara River and lakes, covers 359 square miles, more than a quarter of Dane County. Much of the watershed is farmed; however, the watershed also contains most of the urban land of the Madison metropolitan area. In addition, the Yahara Watershed includes



some of the largest wetlands that are left in Dane County. The lakes' watershed includes all or parts of five cities, seven villages and sixteen towns, and is home to about 350,000 people.

Glaciers primarily shaped this area. About 15,000 years ago the glacier ice reached its maximum with the Madison area covered by about 1,000 feet of ice. About 12,000 years ago Glacial Lake Yahara connected all the present lakes, stood about 12 feet higher than present Lake Mendota, and encompassed about twice the current water area. Moving glacial ice also widened the valleys, created hills in the shape of elongated teardrops (called drumlins) and created poorly drained areas where wetlands formed. Sometimes called "the Yahara River Valley," the area represents the far western edge of the last glacier advancement.



The ice also left glacial deposits of silt, sand, gravel and rock up to 350 feet deep. These deposits dammed up the existing, larger pre-glacial valleys, and formed the Yahara chain of lakes. The region is typically flat with gently undulating hills, a result of the glaciers flattening hills and filling former valleys. The gentle relief resulted in slower-moving streams and rivers than those found in the southwestern Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin that was not covered by glacial ice. The watershed area has rich, young (less than 15,000 year old) soils.

## The First Humans

Humans first inhabited this area about 11,500 years ago, living first by hunting and gathering and more recently by agriculture. The Native Americans left behind many artifacts, including hundreds of earthen mounds, many shaped like animals (Effigy Mounds). By periodically setting fire to the land, they shaped the prairie-oak savanna landscape that greeted the European settlers. When European-style farming began in the 1830s, dramatic transformations to the land and water began. Soil eroded from the new farms and washed into the lakes. People began to notice nuisance algae blooms as early as the 1880s. Draining and filling the surrounding wetlands exacerbated the problem, because wetlands had kept the sediment and nutrients from entering the lakes. Since pre-European settlement we have lost about 50 percent of the wetlands around the Yahara Lakes.

## Problems and Promise – The Lakes in Modern Times

Local water quality is a direct reflection of land use. As the 20th century progressed, water quality in this area declined in direct proportion to the population growth. Sewage from growing villages and cities, along with manure and fertilizers running off from farms, added bacteria and more nutrients. As the urban and suburban areas grew, so did the area covered by streets, parking lots, roofs and sidewalks. This has increased the amount of runoff, which erodes waterways, increases flooding frequency and intensity, and carries contaminants directly into the lakes.

Recent years have brought progress as well as challenges. Municipal sewerage is treated and the effluent diverted away from the lakes. Wetlands are better protected. However, population is increasing rapidly, generating much new construction while farms support ever-greater numbers of livestock. Recognizing these trends, county and state officials have been partnering with other local units of government, farmers, developers, and citizens to reduce non-point or runoff pollution. This kind of pollution includes excess nutrients, sediment, pesticides and toxic chemicals that are washed into the water from farms, fields, developing land, and streets. It is the greatest threat to the Yahara River and its lakes.

Adoption of conservation farming practices such as grass waterways, contour farming, safe manure storage and handling, minimal tillage, crop rotations, and buffer strips greatly help pollution reduction in rural areas. In developing and suburban/urban areas, reducing erosion from construction sites and reducing runoff are essential to water quality improvement. The use of proper seeding and mulching, rain gardens, bioinfiltration, filter fabric fencing, storm water detention ponds, and other conservation practices all assist in the effort. You will probably see some of these practices as you paddle on the Yahara waterways.

Traveling the Yahara waterways offers a fresh perspective of the physical character of this famous water resource and the histories behind present day landmarks. This guide is designed to aid your planning and enrich your travels from Cherokee Marsh to Lake Kegonsa.

### Water-related Groups

Several dozen water-related and conservation groups are active in this area of the county. If you would like to get involved in local projects that can make a great difference in the community, contact them.

You can find links to their websites and more information about their missions and projects by going to:

**[www.danewaters.com](http://www.danewaters.com)**

(Click on Lakes and Watershed Commission and then Partners.)



## Yahara Lake Names

Between 1833 and 1835 federal surveyors mapped out southern Wisconsin. The Madison area was mapped from south to north in December of 1834. The lakes were then named First Lake (Kegonsa), Second Lake (Waubesa), Third Lake (Monona) and Fourth Lake (Mendota). It was known by the Native Americans as the Four Lake area or Taychopera in the Ho-Chunk language.

In 1855, then Governor Leonard J. Farwell was in the midst of leading Madison to unprecedented economic prosperity through establishing businesses and systematic land development promotion. As part of this promotion he decided that more romantic names were needed for the lakes. Frank Hudson, a surveyor and student of tribal lore, suggested a series of three syllable, euphonious names in Chippewa or Ottawa – Mendota, which he said meant “great” and Monona or “beautiful”. Lyman Draper, the secretary of the State Historical Society, additionally suggested to Farwell, Waubesa or “swan” (supposedly a settler killed an unusually large swan in that area) and Kegonsa or “fish” lake as it was known for its good fishing, and Yahara for the Catfish River’s name.

That same year the state legislature approved the names.

## Safety Tips

To ensure you have a safe and pleasurable trip, please note the following boat trip and safety information. Remember that your personal safety is your responsibility!

- **Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD)** that is approved by the U.S. Coast Guard – a PFD is legally required for each person on-board and can save your life!
- **Bring an extra paddle.**
- **Dress appropriately for the weather** and anticipate weather changes. Bring a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and extra clothes stored in a waterproof bag.
- **Wear brightly colored clothing** to improve your visibility to other boaters.
- **Review your exit points and portages** before launching and be aware of hazards (i.e. dams). Fish icons on the trail maps indicate not only shore fishing locations but also non-motorized boat launch sites. Some improved sites have a launch fee.
- **Boats are not allowed to come into swimming areas to land.**
- **Official lake location numbers** are posted on many piers (blue reflective signs with white numbers and letters). These can be used to help provide your location to emergency response crews if needed. See Lake Property Numbering and Slow-No-Wake section below for more detailed information.
- **Bring drinking water and safety equipment** (1 gallon of water per person per day, first aid kit, rain gear, lashing line for both bow and stern – about 15 feet long – and dry bags).

- **Carry a map and trail guide, and signaling device (whistle, mirror, etc.)**
- **Check the weather forecast** before you head out. Review the weather and wind conditions. One can usually find a quiet place to paddle no matter what direction the wind is blowing.
- **Stay nearer to shore** – it is not advisable to paddle across the lakes. Prudent boaters always keep a watch on changing weather and water conditions. The wind conditions can suddenly change, and waves on the large lakes can present a serious hazard. Heavy boat traffic can also make the crossing unsafe. Additionally, the vast majority of the interesting features are found along the shorelines.
- **Be aware of blue-green algae blooms.** These native algae can produce toxins harmful to humans and pets, therefore it's best to be cautious where algae are visible (e.g. pea soup, floating mats, scum layers, etc.) or the water is discolored. Don't swim in or drink this water or inhale it into the sinuses, and keep your pets from drinking or swimming in water wherever algae is visible.
- **Be aware of the water temperature and wind conditions.** Consider how the current winds will affect your trip – Will it add more time or take more energy? Will you be fighting whitecaps?
- **Does your group have the experience and strength** for the planned trip or should your plans be altered?
- **Stay out of the way of other boat traffic** and turn the bow into the wake.
- **Keep trip length reasonable** for the weather conditions and the type of craft you are in. Allow a maximum of two miles for each hour paddling time under normal conditions. In difficult conditions such as a headwind, the distance per hour may be greatly reduced.
- **Let someone know your plans**, where you are going, who's with you, and when you plan to be back.
- **Bring food and gear in watertight containers** tied to your boat.
- **In case of emergency, contact 911.**
- **To report violations of boating rules**, contact (608)255-2345 (Dane County Sheriff's dispatch) or 800-TIP-WDNR (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)

## Lake Property Numbering System

As you use this water trail guide, you may notice blue reflective signs, with white letters and numbers affixed to many piers. These signs, part of Dane County's voluntary Lake Property Numbering System, can help you in an emergency.

Each lakeshore property on Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa has been assigned a unique “lake address.” The Mendota addresses begin with the letter “A”; Monona with “B”; Waubesa “C”; and Kegonsa “D.” These numbers have been cross-referenced in the 911-computer system with the property street address.

A boater in distress can report his or her location by cell phone using the nearest lake property “address” as a reference point. Similarly, a landowner who observes an emergency on the water can dial 911 and the dispatcher will be able to translate the street address to a water location.

View of Lake Wingra from McCaffery Drive





## Slow-No-Wake

In addition to state boating safety rules, Dane County has a slow-no-wake zone within 200 feet from the shoreline of Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa. Slow-no-wake means the minimum speed at which a motorized watercraft is able to move and maintain adequate steering control. There is an exception to this requirement on Lake Monona from Law Park to a point 1,000 feet due north of the intersection of John Nolen Drive and Lakeside Street. Beware of water skiers practicing and performing in this area.

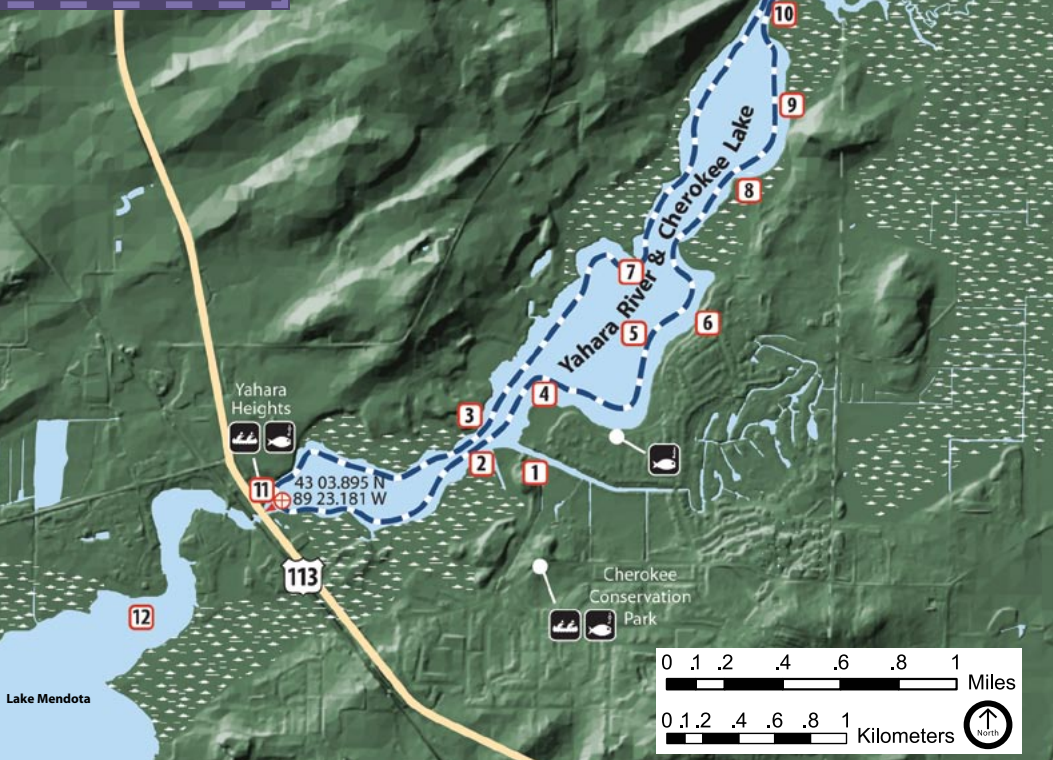


## Cherokee Lake and Marsh

elevation: approximately 850 feet above mean sea level

lake area: 57 acres

10-foot max. lake depth



Cherokee Marsh, at 3,200 acres, is the largest and most significant wetland in Dane County. Located at the head of the Yahara chain of lakes, this high quality wetland acts as a nutrient sponge and provides storm water storage. It supports a wide variety of wetland habitats including rare calcareous fens (wetlands fed by an upwelling of calcium-rich groundwater). These uncommon habitats support many rare and endangered plants and wildlife. Because of these qualities, a portion of the marsh is a designated a DNR state natural area. Hiking trails in Dane County and City of Madison parks offer excellent birding and wildlife viewing year round.

Cherokee Marsh and other flat areas surrounding Lake Mendota sit atop the bed of an ancient lake (Glacial Lake Yahara) that formed approximately 10,000



years ago toward the end of the last glacial period. The water surface was as much as 14 feet above present day Lake Mendota so it covered a much larger area. This glacial lake left sediments of fine-grained silt and clay that inhibited sub-surface drainage. The result was saturated soils, favoring wetland plants that over time accumulated to form peat (partially decayed plant material). This peat formation is up to 10 feet thick in some parts of the marsh. Much of eastern Dane County once held large areas of peat wetlands interspersed between glacial drumlins. However, the early 1900s led to large-scale drainage and conversion of the wetlands to agriculture.

Ironically, human intervention inadvertently allowed much of Cherokee Marsh to escape this fate. Around 1850 the first dam was placed on the outlet to Lake Mendota to supply power for industrial machinery. The dam backed water up into Cherokee Marsh, making it more difficult to successfully drain the wetlands and convert them to agriculture. Additional dams placed at Tenney Park over the past 150 years kept water levels high, as do today's locks that facilitate recreational boat traffic. Today's lake level is a minimum of 5.5 feet above what nature intended, and might be as much as seven to eight feet higher according to a 1900 hydrographic map produced by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey.

While the increase in Lake Mendota water levels helped preserve the interior peat wetlands in Cherokee Marsh, it created unintended detrimental effects on wetlands adjacent to the Yahara River. The wetland vegetation (chiefly sedge meadows) along the river "floated up" when water levels increased because of the buoyancy of the peat and the plants. This created the so-called "floating bogs" that people refer to when pieces (sometimes acres in size) break away during flood events. Using air photos and original public land survey records from the 1830s, City of Madison park staff have documented a loss of more than 640 acres (one square mile) of wetlands along the upper Yahara River in the past 150 years.

Cherokee Lake is an artificial water body formed by dredging wetlands adjacent to the Yahara River in the early 1960s as part of a residential development. When the wetlands were originally dredged, a strip of wetland was left to maintain separation from the Yahara River. However, soon after the dredging was completed, the floating wetlands broke away. As a result, Cherokee Lake today represents a significant widening of the Yahara River. The lake was originally dredged to a depth of 23 feet, but due to sedimentation it is only about 10 feet deep today.

Public concern over development in Cherokee Marsh was the catalyst for the first public acquisitions to protect the wetlands. Dane County, the City of Madison, and Wisconsin DNR manage their public lands cooperatively.

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### Cherokee Lake Water Trail Highlights:

1. **The School Road boat landing** is an excellent site to launch paddle craft and small motorboats. Follow the gravel drive past the waste oil collection site at the intersection of Wheeler and School roads. A small parking lot and pier are located at the end of the gravel drive.
2. **This open-water inlet** was created in 1970 when a large sanitary sewer pipe was installed across the Yahara River. The construction created the inlet, which grew wider as time passed. The City of Madison Parks Division first attempted wetland restoration at this site in 2002 to prevent further loss of diverse, floating sedge meadows.
3. **Yahara Heights County Park** offers a canoe landing on this shore and access hiking trails that showcase ongoing oak savanna restoration and several effigy mounds.
4. **The Yahara River/Cherokee Marsh shoreline stabilization project** includes a sign with a map and text explaining the issue of wetland losses along the river's edge and steps that the City of Madison has taken to address the situation.
5. **Cherokee Lake Island** was formerly surrounded by wetlands (fen and sedge meadow) prior to the dredging that created the lake. A small remnant fen with rare plants remains. This sensitive area is off limits to people to protect this rare resource. The City of Madison is attempting to stabilize this eroding island with aquatic plants to buffer it from wave action. Fish and wildlife habitat will also benefit.
6. **A signed launch site for paddle craft** in Cherokee Park, near the intersection of Burning Wood Way and Mosinee Lane. It is a short, level carry across the park to a sandy beach launch on Cherokee Lake.
7. **The West Shore Peninsula** was destroyed in the flood of 2000. The public land survey in 1834 noted the width of the Yahara River at this point as 46 feet. Today, because of the loss of the peninsula, the river here is nearly 2,500 feet wide. Efforts are underway to restore wetlands here to help shield upstream wetlands from wave action by reducing the nearly 10,000 feet of open water without the peninsula. With that kind of distance, whitecap waves can build up and damage the fragile floating shoreline.
8. **An unimproved landing point for canoes and kayaks** is found on Hickory Island. This site is a part of City of Madison's Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. The island contains a conical effigy mound.



9. **The Boat House Bay landing pier** is another point to access Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park hiking trails. Boat House Bay is a 20-acre, deep-water marsh wetland restoration project. A variety of wire fence enclosures are used to establish aquatic plants.
10. **The “back up” effect of Lake Mendota** disappears and a normal river habitat appears upstream from the open water area of Cherokee Lake. The area just below the confluence of the Yahara River and Token Creek contains several flowing springs and a DNR fishery area.
11. **The Dane County (Yahara Heights) Dog Park** provides a launch for canoes and kayaks. This is the best public access site for traveling the short distance downstream to reach the mouth of the Yahara River in Lake Mendota.
12. **At the mouth of the Yahara River a small island** is all that remains of a 5-acre peninsula that floated away in the flood of 1993. The loss of the island also meant that the upstream marinas lost their protection from southwesterly winds. The east bank marsh south of the marinas is owned by the City of Madison and is part of the Mendota Unit of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. There is no water access to this park.

*Note: Dogs are not allowed in City of Madison conservation parks, but are welcome at the Dane County's Yahara Heights dog walking facility near Hwy 113.*

Great blue heron





## Lake Mendota

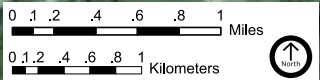
elevation: approximately  
850 feet above mean sea  
level

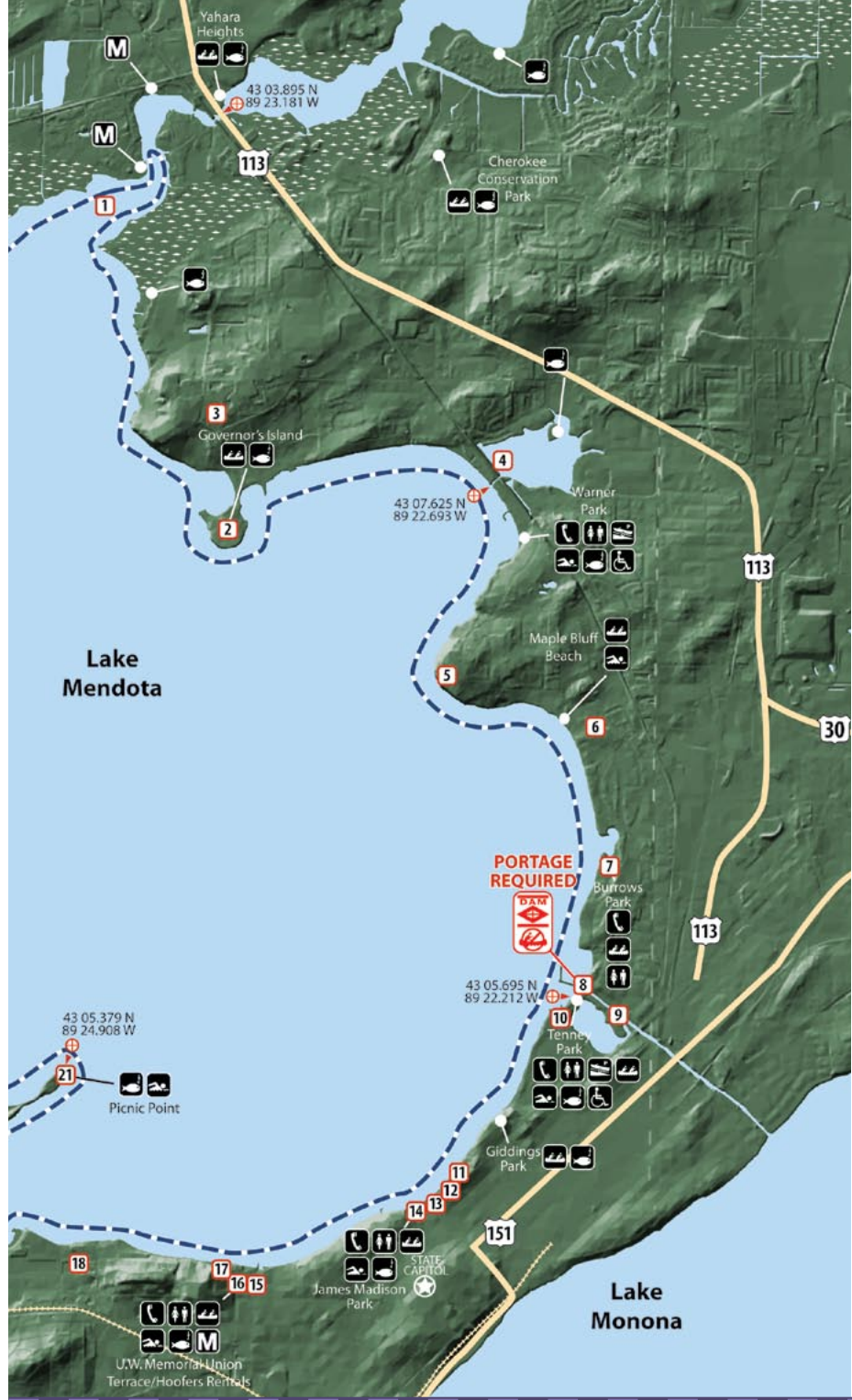
(for daily levels, see:  
[www.countyofdane.com/  
landconservation/  
lakelevelpg.aspx](http://www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx))

9,842 acres

82-foot max. depth

42-foot mean depth





Lake Mendota is the largest of the Yahara Lakes – three times larger than Lake Monona. Its watershed covers 217 square miles.

Mendota is a glacial lake that formed 15,000 years ago. Although much larger during the last glacial period, the lake shrank as ice reformed its basin. The ancient lakebed is evident in sediments bordering the present day lakeshore. At its largest the lake covered University Bay, most of the Isthmus, Tenney Park, Warner Park, Truax Field, Cherokee Marsh and much of Middleton.

Lake Mendota was originally mesotrophic (moderately fertile). As the area became more intensively farmed and experienced more urban development, nutrients and sediments washing into the lake turned it eutrophic, or overly nutrient-rich. Aquatic plants became more abundant and periodic algae blooms occurred more frequently. However, water quality was worse in the past than it is today. While recent efforts have improved the lake's quality overall, especially in the area of weed growth, phosphorus and sediment remain problems.

Wetlands once covered extensive areas around the lake. They have been filled in, drained, or lost when the lake level was raised with the construction of the Tenney Park dam. Wetlands act as detention ponds, storing polluted runoff and filtering out nutrients before releasing the water back into lakes and streams. The loss of wetlands has also meant the loss of fish spawning areas. Despite the loss, Lake Mendota still has 34 common fish species such as large and small mouth bass, walleyes, northern pike, white bass, perch and bluegills.

The largest and northernmost of the four Yahara chain of lakes, Mendota strongly influences water quality in downstream Lakes Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa.

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### Lake Mendota Water Trail Highlights:

1. **The Upper Yahara River** originates in marshy areas of Columbia County and meanders through farmed land to its outlet in the 3,200-acre Cherokee Marsh. The Yahara River is Lake Mendota's largest tributary, draining 32% of the watershed, contributing 22% of the surface water and carrying the largest total mass of sediments to the lake of all five of its tributaries. Wetlands along this stretch have been extensively drained and many small feeder streams have been straightened. Heavy fertilizer use and inefficient animal waste management practices have adversely affected water quality.
2. **Governor's Island**, formerly part of Governor Leonard J. Farwell's property, was an island until the 1860s when it was connected to the north shore of Lake Mendota by a narrow causeway. This 60-acre "island" is heavily used by dog walkers and birders. Nearby are fishing and scuba diving

“hot spots.” Shallow water near the site is a great spot to observe migrating waterfowl and for spring bird watching.

3. **The Mendota Mental Health Institute** is operated by the State to serve patients with complex psychiatric conditions. In 1858 Leonard J. Farwell donated the land, an oak savanna, to be used as a hospital. In 1860 the “State Hospital for the Insane” was opened to accommodate 600 patients.

On the grounds are several groups of Native American Indian mounds, some dating back 2,000 years. These are some of the finest and largest effigy mounds in the world and include two panther, two bear and a rare deer effigy along with conical and linear mounds. One bird effigy mound with a wingspan of 624 feet is the largest of its kind in the world. Archeologists have found Native American village sites and traces of ancient corn hills. This location also has one of the best panoramic views of the lake.

4. **Warner Park Beach** and the small creek that drains the Warner Park lagoons are located on a flat stretch of lacustrine (lake) plain. The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, when Ernest Warner was its president, formed this 215-acre park in the 1930s. The park is the current site of the annual July 4th fireworks display, “Rhythm and Booms.”
5. **Maple Bluff**, originally named MacBride’s Point for an early settler, was renamed because of its many maple trees, unusual in the area. The pre-settlement vegetation on the uplands near the capitol was typically oak savanna surrounded by marshes. Prairie fires blowing in from the southwest maintained the savanna ecosystem. However the lakes and the Yahara River protected the area to the north and east of the Yahara from fires, and these protected highlands were able to establish a sugar maple, basswood, and elm forest.

A sandstone quarry in Maple Bluff supplied the stone used to build the original Governor’s Mansion on Gilman Street and the second capitol building. Just south of here at the Maple Bluff Beach, the Kurtz and Huegel Ice Company cut ice from the lake. A spur line of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad allowed easy shipment of the ice as far south as New Orleans. (See also #12)

6. **The Governor’s Mansion** was built by a prominent industrialist who called it home from 1920 to 1928. The State purchased the large, white, waterfront house in 1949 for \$47,500.
7. **Burrows Park**, a part of the estate of State Senator and real estate developer George B. Burrow, was donated in 1909 to the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association. The park offers an easy carry of a canoe or kayak to the water. At the top of the hill, near the shelter house, is a bird effigy mound with a wingspan of 128 feet that was restored in 1934. A running fox mound used to exist to the north of the bird mound.

Burrows Park is the home of the Mendota Yacht Club, founded in 1903 and widely known for sailboat racing. In the early 1900s the club had a facility on North Blair Street in the present James Madison Park. The club’s launching rails have been at Burrows since the mid 1970s. Sailing and sailboat racing have been taking place on Mendota since 1839, when the “Lady of the Lake,” the first sailboat in the area was launched. The first sailing regatta occurred in 1856. The club offers races every Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday during the boating season.



8. **Madison Mill and Tenney Locks** resulted from Governor Leonard Farwell's 1849 decision to straighten the meandering Catfish River (later renamed the Yahara River) and build a dam. The dam provided power for a sawmill and a flour mill built in 1851. The main mill building straddled the Yahara River near Lake Mendota and was five stories high. These changes greatly stimulated Madison's economy, but the dam raised the lake level 4.5 feet and flooded many wetlands.

In 1904, urged by the growing numbers of motorboat users, the Tenney Locks were built at the outlet of Lake Mendota. The locks soon saw heavy use – 612 boats went through in one day in 1913. In 1959 the locks were rebuilt on an old landfill site that closed before World War II. The locks have been rebuilt and upgraded over time, most recently by Dane County in 2006. There is a fee to pass through the locks. The lighthouse located here is the only one on the Yahara River chain of lakes, but its strobe light operates only during storm conditions to guide boaters to the locks.

9. **The Yahara River through the isthmus** between Lakes Mendota and Monona was straightened and dredged in 1849 and dredged again later to allow for bigger boat traffic. Schools of fish congregate in the deep water near bridge crossings. Snorkeling reveals freshwater mussels, amphibians, and reptiles best seen at “eye” level.
10. **The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association** was formed in 1894, operated until 1937, and became a national leader in urban open space development. Under the initial direction of UW law school professor John Olin, the Association acted on the assumption that parks were necessities, not frills, and in fact acted as the “lungs of the city.”

The Association developed scenic carriage drives both inside and outside the City of Madison. Their first major project, the Yahara River Parkway, was designed in the ‘Prairie Spirit’ style by landscape architect O. C. Simonds, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Yahara River Parkway was made possible by private donations. It helped usher in the golden era of park philanthropy in Madison, which provided funding for five major parks in the city. Between 1902 and 1909 one-tenth of all Madisonians voluntarily contributed money for park acquisition. This money, along with major donations from William Vilas, George Burrows, Thomas Brittingham and Daniel Tenney, provided Madison with more parks and open space than most American cities of the time.

11. **Bernard-Hoover Boathouse**, at the eastern end of what now is James Madison Park, is the last remaining building of the commercial pleasure boat and boat livery industry in Madison. German-born Charles Bernard started the first major commercial boating business in Madison in 1855. He provided livery service and built a variety of boats including the steamboats Columbia (1893) and Wisconsin (1905). At their peak the Bernard family operated six large pleasure boats. Charles also revolutionized the design for iceboats. The “Madison Design” provided superior speed and stability. The Bernards built the current boathouse in 1915. They ran their business until 1943 when Harry Hoover purchased it. In 1968 the City of Madison bought it to expand James Madison Park. The Mendota Rowing Club is now located in the boathouse.
12. **James Madison Park** was formerly the site of the Conklin Ice House, which operated from 1854 until 1936. The icehouse was one-half block long and the building had sawdust-filled walls



two-feet thick in order to store ice all summer. Crews of several hundred men cut and harvested ice from the lake's surface as a steam-powered conveyor moved 500-pound blocks of ice inside. The ice industry boomed from the 1850s to the 1890s. Ice cut from Lake Mendota was considered a superior product because it was thicker and free of pollution. Ice was shipped as far away as New Orleans in insulated rail cars. The Conklin icehouse was torn down in 1939.

The steam yacht "Mendota," built in 1872, used the park as its home. It was the largest and fastest on the lake, carrying 150 passengers on two decks and featured a steam calliope. The Mendota sailed on request to Pheasant Branch, Picnic Point, the University, the Insane Asylum (now Mendota Mental Health Institute), McBride's Point (Maple Bluff) and elsewhere. Today, a concession operating at the Park Shelter rents canoes, kayaks and sailboats.

13. **The UW Life-Saving Station** helps minimize problems caused by the huge summer use of Lake Mendota in the UW area combined with the often-tricky weather. Originally housed in the old Crew House next to the Red Gym, a 60-foot high modern concrete structure was built in 1971 about 150 yards west of James Madison Park. It gives a much better view of the entire lake especially the large university waterfront area used by swimmers, paddlers, sailors, and sailboarders. It also provides winter storage for the high-powered rescue boats. In bad weather the station might make up to 25 rescues a day. One of the early station directors was Harvey Black. Even today, sailors being rescued say "here comes Harvey," as both of the rescue boats have this nickname.
14. **The Old Governor's Mansion**, built in 1856 at 130 East Gilman Street, was the first building in Madison to have central heat. Now known as the Knapp House and owned by the University of Wisconsin, the Cambrian sandstone walls can just be glimpsed through the trees behind the concrete University life-saving station. This sandstone is the same 500 million-year-old stone used for the University's construction of North and South Halls on Bascom Hill.
15. **The Red Gym** opened in 1894 as an armory, and was built in the style of a medieval castle fortress in response to labor violence of the late 1880s. For decades it housed a large gymnasium, swimming pool, and university registration center for students. It also served as a Reserve Officer Training Center (ROTC) facility. The Gym was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1993 and was adapted as a multipurpose student services center at that time.
16. **The Memorial Union** is the social, cultural, and recreational center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Opened in 1928, it hosts more than 1,000 events a year. The Union has multiple food facilities, an art gallery, theatre, and summer activities on the outdoor Union Terrace.
17. **The Arthur D. Hasler Laboratory** for Limnology is one of the world's premier research facilities for the study of lakes and shorelines. UW-Madison is known as the birthplace of limnology in North America. E.A. Birge and Chancey Juday taught the first limnology classes in 1909. Hasler was later director of the lab, introducing new ways to study complex ecological problems through experimental manipulations of entire lake ecosystems.
18. **The Porter Boat House**, completed in 2005, replaced a 30 year-old University rowing facility that was prone to flooding. This privately funded \$8,500,000 structure provides large indoor rowing

tanks (necessary because of our three to four months of lake ice) and complete training facilities for more than 200 rowers. At 52,000 square feet, this is one of the premier crew facilities in the country.

19. **The 1918 Marsh (or University Bay Marsh)** provides outstanding birding for neo-tropical migrants and waterfowl. This wetland is a remnant of an 84-acre sedge meadow that was once separated from the lake by a sandbar. The area became a marsh connected to Lake Mendota when the dam at the Yahara River outlet raised the lake level (see #8 above). In 1914 it was drained so that the area could become experimental agricultural fields and produce crops for University cattle. By the mid-1960s the area was no longer farmed, the peat had oxidized, shrunk, and compacted, and some of the drainage tiles were broken. Alumni abandoned the original idea of constructing a deep Japanese-style lagoon and island with the \$50,000 anniversary gift from the UW class of 1918. Instead, in 1972 the alumni decided to restore the marsh with the money, and it became known as the Class of 1918 Marsh.


The marsh demonstrates the effects of nutrient-rich water associated with littoral (near-shore) habitats in areas where the sun's energy reaches the bottom and encourages plant production. The wind-protected bay allows for early spring warming of waters that stimulate plant growth and attract fish. University Bay is an important sunfish spawning area.

20. **The ancient lakebed of glacial Lake Yahara** is evident in this low, flat area, which formed when glacial debris and ice blocked the Yahara River. This raised water levels by about 12 feet above the present level, flooding an area much larger than Lake Mendota is today. The fine, clay-rich sediments deposited in the former lake environment drain poorly, and these wet soil conditions favor wetland plants and peat formation. The ridge bearing the UW and Veteran's Administration hospitals is an isolated bit of moraine formed when rock and debris piled up at the edge of the receding glacial ice sheet.
21. **Picnic Point** peninsula stretches for one-half mile into the lake. It housed a small Ho-Chunk encampment up to 1889. Two linear Native American mounds and four conical mounds along with restored prairies are still visible on the peninsula. The area later became part of a farm, and was subsequently bought by the University in 1939. The University planted an apple orchard on a lake-facing slope, improved the roads, and built a bathhouse now used for tool storage. The area is open for hiking and picnicking, and provides a swimming beach and fire pits.
22. **A tent colony** was established in 1912 by the University to provide summer graduate students and their families temporary housing. It operated until 1962 in the wooded setting north of Lake Mendota Drive and west of Frautschi Point.
23. **Frautschi or Second Point's shoreline** to the west provides a refreshing look at the geology that defines the largest of the Yahara lakes. A natural and undeveloped shoreline dominated by exposed bedrock, rocky substrates, and woody debris is a significant staging and spawning area for walleyes, perch and bass. The presence of large rocks provides hiding places for the mudpuppy, Wisconsin's only true aquatic salamander.

24. **Merrill Springs** flows through the densely vegetated undeveloped area several hundred yards east of Spring Harbor. Native Americans, thinking the water had medicinal qualities, developed a healing spa. There is currently a small park on the site. The former springs, now supplied with a pump, are about 100 yards inland, surrounded by a stone structure built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).
25. **Spring Harbor** receives water from a network of storm sewers and drainage ways coming all the way from West Towne Mall several miles away. The harbor was originally more than 20 feet deep. However, urbanization increased storm water runoff, which scoured waterways and eroded soil from construction sites and deposited the sediment here. The harbor was last dredged in 1996. Efforts to stabilize drainage ways and install storm water detention basins such as those on Mineral Point Road and Gammon Road have helped to reduce the amount of silt washing into the lake. Spring Harbor provides a launch site with restrooms and good panfishing into the spring.
26. **Pheasant Branch Creek** is seven miles long and drains 23 square miles of west-central Dane County including some of Madison and most of Middleton. It has experienced channelization, ditching and erosion leading to increased peak flows that accelerate channel and bank erosion. Most of its adjacent wetlands have been drained. However, the creek still has a complex of springs and wetlands that offer opportunities to observe wildlife and plant communities including wild rice beds, more reminiscent of pre-settlement.
27. **West Point**, located just east of the inlet to Mendota County Park, was used by the Ho Chunk for corn fields and contains a number of effigy mounds. According to the Ho Chunk, the Thunderbirds lived here – mighty gods in the form of a giant, supernatural bird that symbolized power, strength, and nobility.
28. **City of the Four Lakes** was a platted “paper city” that competed to be the capital for the Wisconsin Territory in 1836. It attracted considerable attention because of its location adjacent to the military road connecting Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) and Fort Winnebago (Portage). It lost out to James Doty’s Madison plat, and later lost the bid to become home to the territorial university. Although it had a trading post and post office, it never developed into a city and reverted to farmland in 1843.
29. **Fox Bluff** was the site of the major village of Ho Chunk Chief White Crow. He signed a treaty in 1832 ceding the Madison area to the United States government.
30. **Bishop’s Bay Country Club** and its pier are privately owned. The clubhouse was once the home of the bishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Madison. The clubhouse can be identified by the small white statue on the southwestern side of the building. This private, 7,160 yard, par 72 course is ranked one of the most difficult in the state and offers beautiful views.
31. **Camp Wakanda** was a YMCA camp for boys from all over the Midwest from 1919 through the 1970s. Michael Olbrich gave the land to the YMCA in honor of his brother Emil, who drowned while swimming in Lake Mendota off Picnic Point. Now a part of Governor Nelson State Park, boaters

can land here and take the well-marked path to see Native American conical mounds and water sprite effigy mounds.

32. **Camp Indianola** was a large, well-equipped private boy's camp that ran from 1910 until 1967. The camp was located along most of the lake frontage now part of Governor Nelson State Park. Frederick Mueller, an instructor in psychology at the university, initially ran the camp. The camp offered classes in photography, dramatics, music, academic subjects and physical activities such as archery, tennis, swimming and canoeing. The program culminated in a two-week long "Gypsy Trip" around Wisconsin and a five-mile swim across Lake Mendota. Orson Wells attended the camp in 1925 when he was 10 and participated in dramatic productions. Later, Scott Simon (of National Public Radio fame) attended. In 1967 a strong tornado struck the night after the last day of camp. Touching down near the camp's shoreline, the tornado caused only minor damage to the camp but killed two women who lived nearby. The Woldenberg Family, who then owned the camp, never reopened it after this event.
33. **Governor Nelson State Park** provides shoreline access to Lake Mendota and encompasses wooded drumlins, wetlands, Native American effigy mounds, and restored prairie. Prairie-oak savanna was the predominant landscape in pre-settlement Dane County. Fires maintained the open prairies, but fire-resistant bur oaks were able to survive in the otherwise open grasslands. Twenty-five prehistoric Native American sites, including prehistoric cornfields and a stockade built about 1,000 years ago have been found within this 422-acre park. The park also has a dog beach.
34. **Sixmile Creek**, actually 12 miles long, has good water quality and supports a limited forage fishery west of Highway 113 and a diverse forage and sport fishery from Highway 113 to Lake Mendota. Forage fisheries are waters that support populations of small fish that provide food for larger predatory fish, including game fish. It contains abundant fish spawning areas and is classified by the state as an "Exceptional Resource Water." Its watershed includes the rapidly urbanizing Village of Waunakee. Pollutants from agricultural land and construction site erosion, as well as habitat loss are current problems. Sixmile Creek drains about 16% of the lake's watershed and delivers about 15% of the lake's surface water input. It joins with Dorn Creek one-half mile before it enters Lake Mendota.



Dutchman's breeches and Lake Mendota at Wally Bauman Woods, part of the UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve that includes the 1918 marsh, Picnic Point, Frautschi Point and Eagle Heights Woods.



## Lake Monona

elevation: approximately  
845 feet above mean sea  
level

(for daily levels, see:  
[www.countyofdane.com/  
landconservation/  
lakelevelpg.aspx](http://www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx))

3,274 acres

64-foot max. depth

27-foot mean depth



Lake Monona's watershed covers just over 40 square miles. The lake has a diverse fishery of perch, panfish, largemouth bass, northern pike, walleye, and muskie. It is a eutrophic (nutrient rich) drainage lake subject to urban runoff, nutrient loading, and intense boating pressure.

Eurasian water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed, both non-native species, have invaded the lake over the past 50 years. Chloride levels have been slowly increasing since the 1960s. PCBs, mercury, arsenic and copper have all been detected in Lake Monona sediments, concentrated near a large storm sewer outfall at the north shore area of Monona Bay.

### Lake Monona Water Trail Highlights:

1. **Tenney Locks and Madison Mills** are located on the Yahara River at the Lake Mendota end (see also Lake Mendota guide, #8). Near this location several Ho-Chunk villages existed in the early 1800s. In 1832 Chief White Crow signed the treaty ceding the Madison area to the United States government. In 1849 Leonard Farwell built a dam where the Tenney Locks now stand, cut a new straight channel for the Yahara River across the Isthmus, and cleared the river's outlet into Lake Monona. Prior to straightening the river, its mouth into Lake Monona was several hundred feet to the east of its current location. All this work was undertaken to provide water power for the Madison Mills. The mill was located on the Mendota end of the river, and was the only mill in the area for many years. The demand for its services was so high that it operated 24 hours a day. The mill processed flour and other grains, and had an attached sawmill and woolen mill. Tenney Park was constructed between 1899 and 1911. O.C. Simonds designed a lagoon system that was dredged in 1901. The lagoons were later simplified by Emil Mische and John Nolen.
2. **Car, railroad, and pedestrian bridges** cross the Yahara River at nine locations across the Isthmus. The Sherman Avenue Bridge was originally built in 1934 and recently reconstructed. The Johnson Street Bridge was built in 1925. The Halle Steensland Bridge was originally built at East Washington Avenue in 1905 and was recently reconstructed. The East Main Street Bridge was originally constructed in 1926 and was reconstructed in the style of the Rutledge Street Bridge that was built in 1916. This stretch of the Yahara River allows more than 16 million gallons of water to flow from Lake Mendota to Monona every day, enough water to fill a football field 48 feet deep in water!
3. **Yahara Place Park**, located just east of the mouth of the river, is only a small part of what was once a 26-acre park established by the area's German immigrant community. The Madison Schuetzen ("shooting") Club opened the park in 1871. Families gathered here to hear outdoor band concerts, stroll through the woods, play billiards, go bowling, drink beer, enjoy outdoor plays, and compete in shooting contests. In 1902 the club sold a portion of the park for a housing development. Madison's park system acquired the undeveloped western edge of the old Schuetzen Park in 1928.
4. **Hudson Park** provides a launch site for canoes and kayaks. The park has several Native American mounds on a high slope overlooking the lake. Most effigy mounds date from 300 A.D. to 1300 A.D.

In 1958 a fighter plane on a training flight crashed into Lake Monona just east of here. Witnesses called the pilot, George Stull, a hero for the way he maneuvered to keep the disabled plane from hitting homes along Lakeland Avenue. Stull died in the crash.

5. **Starkweather Creek** drains urban land on the east side of Madison and flows into Lake Monona near Olbrich Park and Olbrich Gardens. The beautiful, gold-leaf covered Thai Pavilion is connected to the central gardens by a 155-foot arched ornamental bridge, which can be seen from just a short distance upstream from the Atwood Avenue Bridge. Starkweather Creek is a largely urban stream with two main branches. Its watershed includes much of the eastern and northern areas of the City of Madison, as well as some Town of Burke and Town of Madison lands. Years of neglect and misuse have resulted in a highly degraded stream habitat. Only a few of the numerous historic springs within the watershed still provide a steady base flow to the creek, while increased urban runoff provides a steady load of pollutants. In recent years, bike paths, parks, and hiking trails have been added along the creek, and additional, planned improvements should help improve this water resource.
6. **Olbrich Botanical Gardens** contains 16 acres of outdoor display gardens including an award-winning rose garden, and the Thai pavilion and garden, one of only four located outside of Thailand. This structure was crafted in Thailand by local artisans, taken apart, and then reconstructed here by Thai craftspeople. Thai alumni from the University of Wisconsin were influential in this project. The outdoor gardens are open daily and are free to the public. Olbrich also includes the Bolz Conservatory, a glass pyramid filled with exotic tropical plants, bright flowers, a waterfall, and free-flying birds. Olbrich City Park, located adjacent to the gardens, has a boat landing with parking. There is a launch fee. The park and the gardens are named after Michael Olbrich (1881- 1929), a Madison lawyer strongly influenced by both John Olin and Robert La Follette. He was especially interested in the preservation of direct public access to Madison's lakeshores, and to Lake Monona in particular. Residential development began in earnest around the lakeshore in 1916, so Olbrich focused on preserving the degraded marshland at the east end of Lake Monona. He purchased 3,500 feet of shore land and, in 1921, the city took title to the park.
7. **San Damiano Friary** is the Madison area home of the Capuchin Franciscans, a religious order that originated in Naples, Italy in the early 1500s. The Franciscans' mission is to serve the poor, sick, and underprivileged. At one time Keyes' Springs, an artesian well considered to have medicinal qualities, was located on the property.
8. **Stone Bridge Park** is the home of the Spring Haven Pagoda built in the late 1800s to protect the natural spring water at this site. This land was formerly the farm of Elisha W. Keyes, a former Madison Mayor and later chairman of the Republican state central committee. The spring is now filled in, but paddlers can launch canoes and kayaks at this park. The pier provides sailboat storage for the Monona Sailing Club.
9. **Schluter Park** has restrooms and a carry-in site for canoes and kayaks. A nearby concession offers bait, sandwiches and ice cream. Schluter Park was once the location of the Tonyawatha Springs Hotel, built in 1879 to accommodate 100 guests. Tonyawatha means "healing waters" and was

named for the spring on the grounds from which prized mineral water flowed. The hotel offered a billiard hall, bowling alley, rowboats, croquet, fishing, and paths through the oak woods. Steamboats serviced it on the hour in summer with visitors from Madison and places as far away as New Orleans. Business was initially so successful that the hotel was eventually expanded to accommodate 300 guests. By 1887, however, business had declined and the hotel was nearly deserted by 1890. In 1895 a fire left Tonyawatha Springs Hotel in ruins.

10. **Wylldhaven Park** is near the site of a famous and sad event in Madison's history. In December, 1967, soul singer Otis Redding died on his way to a performance in Madison when his plane crashed into the icy waters of Lake Monona northeast of the park. Redding had recorded his most famous song, "Dock of the Bay," just three days before his death. Considered by many "The King of Soul Music," he had replaced Elvis Presley as the world's most popular male vocalist.
11. **Winnequah Point** is a coinage of the words "Winnebago" and "Squaw" given by steamboat Captain Frank Barnes in 1870 when he opened a dance hall and picnic grounds here. The spot had formerly been the site of a Ho-Chunk Native American village. This area was at various times called Squaw Point, Strawberry Point, Old Indian Garden and Straw Point before it was finally called Winnequah.
12. **Graham Park** is at the lake's outlet into the Yahara River, and provides a landing spot for canoes. The park is located near the intersection of Graham and Midwood streets in the City of Monona. Just north of here is Frost Woods beach, the last area on Lake Monona to be used by the Ho-Chunks as a summer camp. They used the area until about 1932.
13. **The outlet at the Yahara River** leads to Upper Mud Lake. An eating establishment and marina are one-quarter mile down river on the west shore.
14. **Inter-Lake** is a widening of the Yahara River a half mile south of Squaw Bay. Lottes Park in Monona provides a boat launch site. Just to the east of Lottes Park is a small pond where a paddling shop is located. Boats and gear can be purchased or rented and lessons, classes, and outing opportunities are available. Inter-Lake's southern end is surrounded by the Nine Springs E-way. This seven-mile-long environmental corridor was designed by UW Landscape Architect Philip Lewis, Jr. in the 1970s to protect water, wetlands, and steep topography, and to provide recreational access and a green buffer between communities.
15. **Paunack Marsh** is the last remaining wetland on Lake Monona and is located along the Yahara River in the eastern part of Paunack Park. The park is a good spot for viewing water birds.
16. **Squaw Bay** represents an important fishery habitat for juvenile spawning and cover, and resting and feeding cover for adult pike and sunfishes. The productive shallows also attract interesting non-game fishes such as the bowfin (dogfish). The bright lime-green and orange-colored males construct and aggressively guard their nests in Squaw and Turville Bays. Paleo Indians lived in the Yahara Lakes area since at least 10,000 B.C. with most of the Indian villages within one-quarter mile of water. During the late 1800s most of these bays were lined with summer encampments. Land development forced them all out by the 1930s.
17. **Esther Beach** was named for Charles Askew's daughter, who was born in 1883 and died in childhood.



The Askew brothers ran a passenger boat business in the 1870s, owned and operated the Angleworm Station (at Law Park, see #25) beginning in 1893, and built a dance hall and picnic grounds at Esther Beach in 1901. They retired from their business ventures around 1920. The summer dance hall continued under different owners and was known as Hollywood-at-the-Beach until 1952.

18. **Turville Bay** is another important fishery area providing spawning, resting and feeding habitat. Sunfish and muskies make heavy use of this shallow, productive habitat. Esther Beach is on the bay's southeastern shore. This area was once owned by circus legend P.T. Barnum.
19. **Olin Park** in 1854 was a water cure resort and sanitarium with a four-story hospital. The hospital failed after four years, and in 1866 was refurbished into a 60-room, first-class hotel named the Lakeside House. As the first resort in the area the hotel operated until 1877, when it was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt. It had many southern visitors from St. Louis, Memphis and New Orleans who came north during the summer to escape yellow fever and cholera. Visitors included beer barons Adolphus Busch and Everhard Anheuser from St. Louis, as well as President William McKinley, William Jennings Bryan, and General W.T. Sherman. The structure was replaced by a large summer tent colony with a circular, 450-seat assembly hall built in 1884. It became the site of the Monona Lake Assembly's Chautauqua style events including music, lectures and classes for up to 15,000 people a year. By the 1860s four steamboats served the lake resorts. The Olin Pavilion, now a park shelter rebuilt in 1995, was a historic hall used for dancing and other social events. In 1912 Madison purchased this area for its first city park, which included the first municipal campground east of the Mississippi River. In 1923 the park was named for John M. Olin, first President of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association. Turville Point is a Conservation Park designated to preserve unique plant communities. A boat launch site is located at the park.
20. **The mouth of Wingra Creek** is the outflow channel of Lake Wingra. It is a migratory conduit for muskellunge moving upstream from Lake Monona from late March to early May. These fish get "bottlenecked" by the Vilas (Wingra) Dam and can be seen trying to jump over the dam structure. In 2004 the City of Madison stabilized banks and naturalized the Wingra Creek creek corridor for recreation.
21. **The Chicago Northwestern and the Milwaukee railroads** crossed tracks in the middle of Monona Bay in 1854. The tracks on the west end of the lake are still in use, and are the only place in the world where two railroad tracks cross in a lake! The tracks, built on fill material, had their problems. One day the track sank five feet due to compression of the peat and marl fill from the train's weight.
22. **Brittingham Boat House**, built in 1910 and designed by John Nolen, is the oldest surviving Madison park structure and is a National Historic Landmark. The Camp Randall Rowing Club and City of Madison recently renovated the boat house in exchange for a 25-year lease of space for the club.
23. **The Chicago Northwestern railroad tracks** ran along the north shore of Monona. Passenger trains dropped travelers and tourists off at the Northwestern Station, six blocks from the Capitol Square.
24. **The Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center** is the result of bold visions by two world-renowned architects. In 1909, Boston landscape architect John Nolen envisioned the development of

a capitol mall and grand esplanade to connect Lake Monona with the capitol building and serve as a focal point for the entrance to Wisconsin's capital city. Nolen's vision was never realized. However, beginning in 1938, Frank Lloyd Wright designed three different plans for the Monona Terrace, all of which were rejected several times by city officials and Madison voters. A number of contemporary architects also developed grand plans for the Law Park land, but none were accepted. Finally, in 1990, Wright's plans were revised by architects at Taliesen, Wright's landmark home and studio in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Although once again controversial, the plan was approved by Madison voters and in 1997 the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center opened.

25. **Law Park**, named for architect James R. Law, is located on the strip of land that includes the Monona Terrace Convention Center. Surveyed in 1832 as the Township of Madison, the land on the Isthmus was considered second rate, with 25 percent of it categorized as marsh. Early pioneers had to deal with malarial epidemics, typhoid fever and plentiful prairie wolves. One of the first actions taken by the Board of Dane County Commissioners (the predecessor of the county board) was to establish a three-dollar bounty on wolf scalps. However, the wolves were so numerous, and the hunters so eager and accurate, the board was forced to lower the bounty to one dollar just three days later for fear the treasury would be exhausted!

In 1864 the site was known as Anglemorm Station, the launch site for steamboats on the lake. A huge ice harvest business also grew at this location. It began in 1875 and continued for more than thirty years, serving the Milwaukee and Chicago brewing and packing industries. Wisconsin's ice was considered superior because of its superb hardness and thickness (12 to 15 inches). In 1876, an ice harvester had six runways leading directly to railroad boxcars running along the edge of Lake Monona at Pinckney St. By 1880 the Madison area shipped 2,621 railroad boxcars loaded with ice during the winter season. By the early 1900s mechanical refrigeration, water pollution and prohibition killed the ice trade.

The original shoreline of Lake Monona rested against the bluff on the other side of the railroad tracks. In 1934, Madison Mayor James Law ordered the lakeshore filled to help achieve architect John Nolen's vision of a grand esplanade connecting the lake to the capitol building (see note #24). Today, the Monona Terrace Convention Center juts out over Law Park and provides great views of Lake Monona and downtown Madison. Free water skiing shows are presented by the frequent state champion Mad-City Ski Team on Sunday evenings during summer.

26. **Madison Gas and Electric's** warm water discharge is a thermal attractant for fish. Large schools of bluegills, crappies and other fish can be seen adjacent to the shoreline. This popular fishing area also attracts top predator fish that come to dine on the abundant forage fish. It is not uncommon to see dozens of muskies in the three-to-four foot range milling about the outfall. Be careful of the strong current here.
27. **B.B. Clarke Beach** opened in 1901 and was the first public beach with a city-built bathhouse in Madison. The Madison Common Council had deemed public bathing immoral until the decision was reversed in 1879, but only if swimmers were covered from "neck to knee."

# Lake Wingra

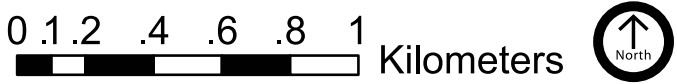
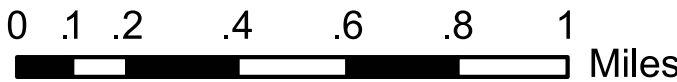
345 acres

12-foot max. depth

9-foot mean depth

  
Wingra Canoe & Sailing Center

43 03.458 N  
89 24.359 W



Lake Wingra is a small, shallow lake, located in the near west side of Madison, with the University Arboretum along its southern edge. Its watershed covers 5.4 square miles. This is a shallow, highly eutrophic lake mainly affected by urban runoff. The lake has a warm water panfish and muskie fishery. The word Wingra means duck (it was a great location for ducks) and is the only one of the Yahara Lakes to keep its Ho-Chunk name.

### Lake Wingra Water Trail Highlights:

1. **Wingra Dam** was built in 1919 to maintain the lake levels after the dredging of Wingra Creek by the Lake Forest Development Company. Paddlers can portage the dam and follow Wingra Creek to Lake Monona. This offers great muskie viewing opportunities in late April through May as these large fish attempt to jump over the dam.
2. **The Lake Forest Development Corporation** was a land development scheme to create a model community by draining and filling wetlands along the southeastern edge of Lake Wingra between 1914 and 1920. By 1922 the project had failed, and today a few paved roads are all that remain in the Arboretum's "Lost City." The year the Lake Forest Company failed, Michael Olbrich launched a campaign to have the entire area turned into a great public wilderness. That idea eventually came to fruition with the establishment of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum.
3. **The University of Wisconsin Arboretum** is a 1,260-acre natural area along the south shore of the lake, dedicated in 1934 to restoration, research and teaching. It is widely recognized as the site of pioneering research in ecological restoration. The Arboretum includes the oldest and most varied collection of restored ecological communities in the world, including tallgrass prairies, savannas, several forest types and wetlands. It also features flowering trees, shrubs and a world-famous lilac collection, and offers educational tours, classes and volunteer opportunities.
4. **Wingra Springs** is among the last of the many springs that once fed the lake. Access is easy, but paddlers should stay in their boats to help protect the springs.
5. **Ho-Nee-Um Pond** is a spring-fed lagoon created in 1940. It has a boardwalk and interpretive trail with abundant early spring waterfowl and bird viewing.
6. **Wingra Park** has a boat launch and a concession that provides canoe, kayak and paddleboat rentals. The Knickerbocker Ice House was once located here, and provided lake ice for refrigeration until the early 1900s.
7. **Edgewood College** is the site of the former home of Wisconsin Governor Cadwallader C. Washburn. It became a Catholic college in 1927 and is the site of the Mazzuchelli Center, which houses nursing and music programs, and a biological field station.
8. **Vilas Zoo** is a free, child-friendly zoo operated by Dane County. A swimming beach, boat landing, and restrooms are located in adjacent Vilas Park.





# Lake Monona

**Upper Mud Lake**  
 elevation: approximately 845 feet above mean sea level  
 223 acres  
 8-foot max. depth  
 4-foot mean depth

**Lake Waubesa**  
 elevation: approximately 845 feet above mean sea level  
 (for daily levels, see: [www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx](http://www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx))  
 2,080 acres  
 34-foot max. depth  
 16-foot mean depth



Upper Mud Lake is bordered on the south by fill materials where a railroad was constructed to cross the wetlands at the inlet of the Yahara River to Lake Waubesa. Migratory waterfowl gravitate to this area in spring after the ice is out, and again in fall. The lake also provides good spawning grounds for northern pike and an excellent stopover for migrating waterfowl. Its flooded edges attract an abundance of species seeking spawning and nesting cover. The old dredge channels on the lake's north side are good furbearer habitat. The dredge-hole marked in the lake's northeast side is from dredging for fill needed in the construction of the south Beltline Highway (Hwy 12/18/151).

The Lake Waubesa watershed covers 44 square miles and the lake has nearly 1,000 acres of wetlands surrounding it. Severely affected by large amounts of municipal wastewater in the 1950s and 1960s, Waubesa continues to have problems with prolific aquatic plant growth. Despite the problems, Waubesa supports a warm water fishery of muskie, northern pike, walleye, bass and panfish.

An archeological survey by W.G. McLachlan in 1914 found 188 Native American mounds in 42 separate groups surrounding Lake Waubesa. Perhaps no other lake region in Wisconsin can furnish greater evidence of the activity of the mound-building Native Americans. The mounds here include effigy, linear and conical types, and some were used as burial sites. Many of the mounds that existed in 1914 have since been destroyed.

Public lands dominate the views from the lake, offering wooded shores and restored upland environments of native grasses. Very few piers encroach on the shoreline, while native submergent vegetation graces the lake bottom.

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### Upper Mud Lake & Lake Waubesa Water Trail Highlights:

1. **The Yahara River** widens at this inlet and becomes Upper Mud Lake. This fertile, shallow lake is surrounded by timber marsh, shallow marsh, and wet meadow that provide excellent habitat for gamefish, furbearers, and waterfowl. Just past the shallow area on the west edge is a deeper, straight channel with steep banks that bends sharply to the east. This area was dredged around the time of World War I to facilitate boat travel, a function it still provides. Passenger and excursion boats, even boats carrying the mail, once traveled through the Upper Mud Lake on the way from Madison to McFarland.
2. **The Chicago, Milwaukee, Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad**, once a symbol of progress, separates Upper Mud Lake from Lake Waubesa and was an important connection between Stoughton and Madison. In 1856, it spawned the Village of McFarland in the Wisconsin wilderness. The rail line



enabled farmers to get their grain and produce to markets, and provided a means for streams of Norwegian, German, and Irish settlers to populate the area.

3. **The McFarland tank farm** is one of the largest oil tank facilities in Wisconsin. The ownership of the bulk oil tank farm was the subject of a bitter legal battle between Madison, Monona Grove and McFarland in the late 1950s. Representing McFarland, attorney Lloyd Schneider's victory enabled his community to build its first high school using the tax base provided by the tank farm.
4. **McDaniel Park in McFarland**, north of a water accessible restaurant, provides shore fishing, a picnic area and restrooms. In 2006 the village improved the park by restoring shorelines, creating two pebble beaches for swimming and canoe/kayak access, and constructing a public pier that has seasonal public slips for small sail craft. The park is the home for the Waubesa Sailing Club.
5. **A very long pier stretched from Edwards Park into Lake Waubesa** in the early 1900s. A 35-passenger excursion boat, run by Ole Olson of McFarland, brought people from around the lake to dances at the Edwards Park Pavilion or to the train stop. A train cart was rolled onto the pier, picking up suitcases and trunks from boat passengers, who could travel to Madison, Stoughton or 40 other destinations by rail. Wirka Boat Line of Madison also had passenger and mail routes around Lakes Monona and Waubesa. Captain Wirka's boats circled the lakes three times each day. The long pier now belongs to a water accessible restaurant, which offers a launch, pier tie-ups, and restrooms for patrons. The old dance pavilion, located a block from the water, is now a restaurant and ballroom.
6. **Knickerbocker Ice**, a Chicago-based company, harvested ice along McFarland's shore before 1900. The company owned the lake shore property from Edwards Park to Larson's Beach, and had a boarding house and livery for its workers where a restaurant is now located. Crews from Knickerbocker Ice cut the ice from December until March, and then stored it, insulated in sawdust, in icehouses until June or July. The bulk of the ice was transported by rail to a large icehouse in Bensonville, Illinois. The ice was primarily used for keeping fruits, vegetables, and meat fresh in refrigerator cars. Electric refrigeration eventually put an end to the industry. In 1900, McFarland businessman John Larson bought the icehouse site and 80 acres of adjoining uplands for \$5,000.
7. **McFarland water tower** sits within Indian Mound Park, home of a bear-shaped effigy burial mound. The high land is a glacial drumlin. The park can be accessed via a mowed walking path by water from the State-owned Jaeger's canoe landing (see #9) on the Yahara River.
8. **The channel beginning here** is an off-lake passage to Babcock Park. A restaurant and lounge and a resort here offer food, drink, fishing boat rentals, gas and bait.
9. **Jaeger canoe launch** is a Wisconsin DNR property named after Conrad and Ruth Jaeger who were long active in environmental and cultural preservation. Visitors can take the path on the northwest side of the property to Indian Mound Park where the Lewis Group of mounds is located. These consist of multiple conical and linear mounds, plus a 74-foot bear mound, and an unusual hook-shaped mound. Some of these are burial mounds.
10. **Babcock County Park** is located at the outlet of Lake Waubesa into the Yahara River. The park is named after Stephen Babcock, a UW scientist who invented an inexpensive way of determining

the butterfat content in milk. The park provides accessible piers, restrooms, a fish-cleaning area, vending, and camping. The Babcock Park lock and dam was built in 1938. Dane County operates the 10-foot-high dam that controls the water levels for lakes Monona and Waubesa. By adjusting water levels, the County helps create favorable spawning conditions for game fish in lakes Monona and Waubesa and the Yahara River.

11. **Bible Camp Marsh**, connected to Lake Waubesa by a culvert, helps filter runoff from surrounding lands and provides ideal northern pike spawning habitat. When adequate water levels are available, adult pike enter the marsh in spring to deposit eggs. The rich marsh environment is ideal for the pike “fry” to grow and repopulate the lake. The point where the waterslide is located is the 10-acre Lake Waubesa Bible Camp. It is a year-round Christian camp and conference and retreat center, located here since 1945.
12. **Dunn Heritage Park**, a former lowland cornfield, has recently been restored to a wetland to help improve water quality in Lake Waubesa. In the 1960s the area was ditched for crop production, which created a direct path for sediment and accompanying pollutants to enter the lake. The wetland restoration has renewed its filtering ability by diverting overland flow through grass channels and retention ponds. The project has also included the excavation of two wildlife ponds and created a northern pike spawning pond. This 28-acre park provides canoe pull-ups, trails, and shore fishing.
13. **The South Waubesa wetland area** consists primarily of cattails and tussock sedge, and provides an important nesting and spawning area. The “Big Spring” pumps cold, fresh water into Lake Waubesa year-round and offers open water to wildlife in winter. Several smaller springs, lined with yellow and purple sulfur bacteria, surround the Big Spring.
14. **Goodland County Park**, one of Dane County’s oldest parks, was named after Governor Walter Goodland, who took office in 1943 at the age of 80. He had been a teacher, lawyer, and newspaper publisher before serving as a Wisconsin senator and lieutenant governor. The park contains an effigy mound, three linear mounds, and an oval mound. It offers a beach, boat landing, restrooms, and vending.
15. **Waubesa Beach** is the site of seven acres of wetland restoration work, including four acres of cropland converted into an upland prairie grass buffer area and a restored wetland planned to become a northern pike spawning area. A nearby restaurant offers pier tie-ups, food, and restrooms for patrons.
16. **McConnell Street launch** in the town of Dunn provides lake access, but has no pier.
17. **Hog Island**, a natural peninsula on the west side of Waubesa, is a drumlin. Hogs were left to pasture there for many years. It has become part of the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area, a 3,000-acre public area that includes most of the Nine Springs E-way.
18. **Lake Farm Centennial State Park** contains 32 archaeological sites and rich data on the long span of Native American culture in the area. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated the Lake Farm Archaeological District. More than 11,000 pottery shards (including some whole pots) plus numerous tools and weapons have been archived on this site. The park has a 1.5 mile heritage trail relating some of the Native American history of the area. The park provides accessible piers, restrooms, a fish cleaning station, vending, and camping.



Lake Waubesa

## Lower Mud Lake

195 acres

15-foot max. depth

43 00.446 N  
89 18.447 W

1

2



3

Babcock Park



4

Lower  
Mud  
Lake

4

51

5

6

Fish Camp Launch



8

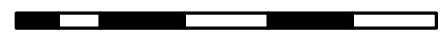
9

M

42 58.898 N  
89 15.787 W

Lake  
Kegonsa

0 .1 .2 .4 .6 .8 1



Miles

0 .1 .2 .4 .6 .8 1



Kilometers



Lower Mud Lake is fed by the Yahara River flowing from Lake Waubesa as well as by groundwater discharged at small springs, and seepages from the surrounding marshes. Migrating waterfowl use the lake extensively during the spring.

The Yahara River supports a diverse, warm water sport fishery resource. About 48 species of fish are represented. Common fish include walleye, largemouth bass, bluegills, carp, white bass and northern pike. The river is an important migratory corridor for spawning fish that find the wide range of habitats and substrates necessary to their life cycles.

Storm water runoff carries heavy nutrient loads into the river and its wetlands. Both agricultural and urban lands, including the growth in the Village of McFarland, contribute to the water quality problems. Streams and wetlands are also affected by lowered groundwater levels. Pumping groundwater for domestic use has lowered groundwater levels and reduced baseflow in the river. For example, pre-development flow of Door Creek was 7.25 cubic feet per second and is now about 5.4 cubic feet per second. The reduced water levels also cause the loss of wetlands, which in turn degrades fish and wildlife habitat. Efforts are underway at the state and local levels to identify and reduce the sources of pollution and increase the amount of water filtering down to groundwater.

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### Lower Mud Lake and Yahara River between Lakes Waubesa and Kegonsa Water Trail Highlights:

1. **Carp pens** above the Exchange St. Bridge just south of Babcock County Park once held the catch for rail shipments to New York City, Chicago, and other destinations.
2. **Jaeger Canoe Landing** provides access to Indian Mound Park and McFarland. The Lewis Mound Group consists of nine Native American mounds on the crest of a high, wooded hill. It contains linear and conical mounds, an effigy Bear mound, and a mound in the shape of a hook. Some were burial mounds. Conrad and Ruth Jaeger, long active in environmental and cultural preservation, were the moving force behind the establishment of McFarland's Indian Mound Conservation Park.
3. **Lewis Park**, named after Tollef Lewis, a prominent McFarland businessman in the early 1900s, lies along the Yahara River. This five-acre park has no launch area through the marsh vegetation. In February and March it provides one of the best early waterfowl birding sites in the county. Just east of Lewis Park is Marsh Woods Park. This 18-acre park was purchased mainly as a wildlife refuge. The vegetation suggests that the area might never have been touched by the plow or other disturbances.



4. **Lower Mud Marsh** is a unique open-water marsh with prime fish, plant and animal habitat. It is also an important migratory route for waterfowl, including invasive mute swans. Drumlins surround the marsh. Hunting is allowed on some parts of this large acreage. Native American mounds (including a rare cross formed by two linear mounds) and gardens are located on the higher private wooded land on both sides of the northern end of Lower Mud Lake.
5. **The Dyreson fish weir** was built by Native Americans. Weirs are stone structures using glacial boulders and cobbles to aid in fishing. The Dyreson fish weir in the Yahara River is very likely of prehistoric origin, but the Ho Chunk used it into the late 1800s. It is one of only 10 Native American fish weirs documented in Wisconsin. Paddlers might not be able to see the weir because it can be totally submerged during high water. In the 1800s a corduroy bridge of now sunken logs provided a ford at this major river crossing. The Ho Chunk now consider these sacred timbers.
6. **The Dyreson Bridge** is an iron bridge built in 1897 by the Milwaukee Bridge and Iron Works, replacing an 1868 bridge and earlier fords. This site is significant since it is one of very few places on the Yahara River system that is narrow enough and with firm footing suitable for convenient crossing by horses and humans. (Local stories also suggest that the site is haunted!) The Dyreson Bridge is scheduled for restoration in its current design with help from grants from historical agencies. This area, once the Olie and Brita Dyreson farm established in 1851, is now owned by Dane County. Canoes and kayaks can be launched on the northeast side of the bridge. The adjacent west bank was an important campsite for Native Americans.
7. **Orvold Park Conservancy** is owned by Dane County and maintained by the Town of Dunn. This 7.3-acre finger of land has 1,200 feet of shoreline on the Yahara and is the only spot west of the river where a small boat can be pulled up on public property between Lower Mud Lake and Lake Kegonsa.
8. **Freshwater mussels and wild celery** can be seen in this stretch of the river. Wild celery, or eel-grass, has ribbon-like leaves that emerge in clusters along a creeping rhizome. This submergent plant is a premiere source of food for waterfowl and also provides good fish habitat. Freshwater mussels are mollusks (bivalves – with two shells). Look for them and for their discarded shells on the river bottom. The shells provide important spawning and hiding habitat for various fish and aquatic insects, and are important in the food web of large rivers like the Yahara. Mussels are quite sensitive to changes in habitat and water quality, which makes them good indicators of changing environmental conditions.
9. **A private boat rental business** is located on the south bank, one-quarter mile upriver from the inlet of the Yahara River into Lake Kegonsa.





Yahara River near Lake Kegonsa



## Lake Kegonsa

elevation: approximately  
843 feet above mean sea  
level

(for daily levels, see:  
[www.countyofdane.com/  
landconservation/  
lakelevelpg.aspx](http://www.countyofdane.com/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx))

3,209 acres

31-foot max. depth

17-foot mean depth





Lake Kegonsa is the southernmost and often the windiest of the Yahara River lakes, and is surrounded primarily by agricultural land. Its watershed covers 54 square miles. Lake Kegonsa is a highly eutrophic (nutrient rich), moderately-shallow drainage lake, formed when glacial deposits dammed the Yahara River. Much of the shore is covered by homes, with only 1.5 miles of shoreline in public ownership.

Excess sediment, nutrients and chloride affect the lake's water quality. Phosphorus levels have declined since the 1970s, but severe blue-green algae blooms still occur in summer, restricting beneficial aquatic plant growth. Lake Kegonsa has an excellent and diverse warm water sport fishery including bass, bluegills and yellow perch. Modest improvements in water clarity would allow some larger plants to grow, which would improve the fishery.

Fish sampling has detected toxic contaminants, but at levels below health standards. High fecal coliform levels in 1987 were likely caused by poor septic systems. Subsequently, a wastewater treatment plant was constructed to eliminate this pollution source.

Cottage development first occurred on the southern side of the lake in the 1880s, due to its closer proximity to Stoughton and the train station. Many of the early summer residents were from the Rockford, Illinois area.

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### Lake Kegonsa Water Trail Highlights:

1. **Boat rentals and supplies** are available one-quarter mile upriver from the inlet of the Yahara River into Lake Kegonsa.
2. **Fish Camp County Park** was a place for carp seining for many years. The State stocked the lake with carp from 1881-1897, and by the 1930s about three quarters to one million pounds of carp per year were removed and sold for food from each of the lower three Yahara Lakes. Lake Waubesa, in particular, had an abundance. The carp were placed in large water tanks on boxcars and sent to Chicago, New York, and southern states where they were sold as a delicacy. Small fish were canned at Nine Springs for animal feed, plowed under for fertilizer, and sold live to mink ranchers. The State ran these operations until 1976, when it transferred the business to the private sector. More recently, commercial fishermen used the area in early spring and late fall for unloading carp caught in gill nets. Now the park offers a canoe launch, public restrooms, accessible piers, walk-in fishing, and a fish cleaning area. The original 1937 storehouses for nets and boats have been restored.
3. **Door Creek** is 13 miles long and drains almost 30 miles of rolling agricultural land in the drumlin-marsh area of eastern Dane County. Door Creek is easy to overlook when coming in from the west due to a small outlying point of land on its western edge. Channelized, ditched and sluggish, with

high temperatures and low flow, Door Creek's stream bottom has a large amount of silt deposited from cropland erosion. The adjacent wetlands have been drained. A Cottage Grove sewage lagoon once discharged wastewater into Door Creek, but in 1982 the discharge was redirected into the Madison Metropolitan Sewage District. Groundwater discharge into Door Creek has declined 28 percent from pre-development times due to groundwater pumping and wastewater diversions. With improved management the current warm water forage fishery could become a warm water sport fishery. Sandhill cranes and many waterfowl are frequently seen here.

4. **The Door Creek wetlands** area north of Lake Kegonsa along Door Creek provides good canoeing opportunities though its 1,100-acres.
5. **A waterfront restaurant** is located at the end of Fairview Road and offers refreshments and a pier for its patrons.
6. **The Town of Pleasant Springs boat launch** has bathrooms and plenty of parking.
7. **Lake Kegonsa State Park** opened to the public in 1967. The 342-acre property is a mix of woodland, restored prairie, wetlands and lakeshore frontage. Because of the variety of ecosystems, it is common to see deer, fox, otter, raccoons, herons, ducks, geese, turtles, snakes, reptiles, and songbirds. The park has a number of Native American mounds along a self-guided trail located in a mature oak forest. Numerous historical, archaeological, and natural resource features are found here, as well as a boat launch, beach, hiking trails and restrooms.
8. **The LaFollette Dam** is a 10-foot high, 520-foot-long dam constructed in 1938 at the lake's outlet to control water levels and improve navigation. It provides walk-in fishing. Farther down the Yahara River is the Stoughton Dam, built in 1843 and owned and operated by City of Stoughton. This dam generated power until 1999.
9. **The "Grand Marsh"** is a wide spot in the Yahara River below the LaFollette Dam and north of Dane County Viking Park. It was a favorite swimming hole for young people in the 1920s. Historically, the marsh area has offered some excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities.
10. **Stoughton** was founded when Luke Stoughton from Vermont purchased 800 acres of land along the Catfish River (now the Yahara River). He platted the town, built a dam, lumber mill, and general store, then publicized the town. In 1853 he offered free land to the railroad if it would pass through Stoughton, thus assuring the city's growth. In the 1870s, Norwegians began arriving and by the turn of the century, 75 percent of the local population was of Norwegian descent. Stoughton's main street offers food and shops and is easily accessible from the river. Every May 17th, Stoughton's Syttenede Mai celebration features a canoe race. Canoe rental and a walking trail are located adjacent to the river at the Forton Street Bridge.
11. **LaFollette County Park** provides a site for shore fishing, a carry-in for canoes, a small boat launch, and restrooms.
12. **The Camp Collins Club** was formed in 1885 when eight railroad managers decided to establish a club for family summer vacations and purchased acreage with 1,400 feet of shoreline. As membership

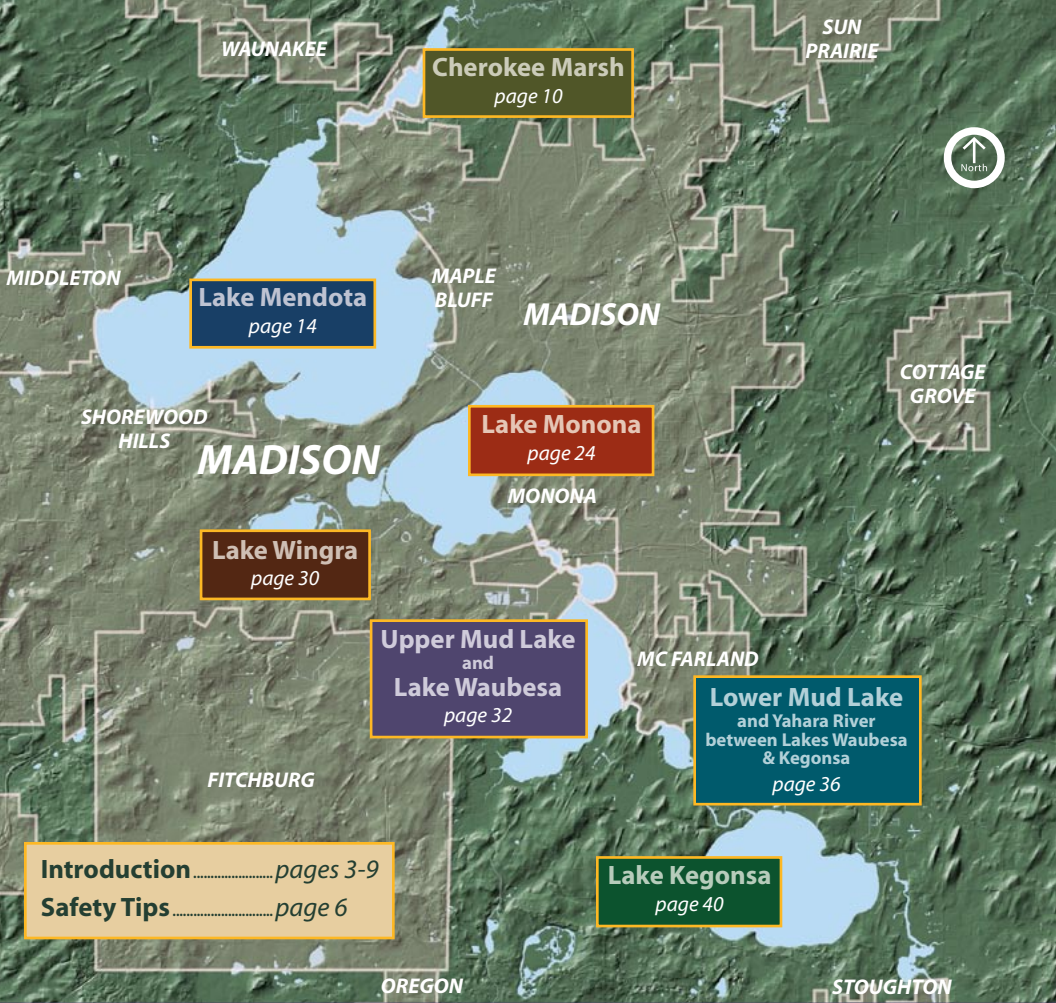
increased, the railroad built a small station named “Lake Kegonsa” for members to de-train and walk to the camp. The camp even had a golf course. In 1906 the Camp Collins Club dissolved and subdivided the property.

13. **Stoughton Country Club** was the only golf course on the Yahara Lakes for years. To the west of the clubhouse along the bluff, early commercial fishermen built a small dam. The cool, spring-fed pond behind the dam provided an excellent live holding “tank” for their catch.
14. **Amundson boat landing** in the Town of Dunn has limited parking, but at one time was the location of a very popular dance hall with live bands in the 1930s and 40s.
15. **Quam’s Seaplane Airport** just offshore from this spot is officially listed on air maps and used by pilots. On-shore the same business sells gas and rents boats.
16. **The Castle** was built in 1903 for Peter Sorenson and Gunder Anderson to replicate a typical Danish castle with two turrets. It is constructed on a large, flat-topped rock and was intended to be a summer bachelor home. The Castle is privately owned.
17. **Two well known restaurants** are located here. Both have piers for patrons and offer restaurant services.
18. **“Saloon in the Lake”** was established by George Barber and Anton Anderson in 1895 off Colladay Point on a shallow bar in the lake, now marked by three buoys. The saloon dispensed both malt beverages and hard spirits to anglers and other thirsty individuals who visited by boat. The proprietors claimed that the 12-feet by 15-foot sand bar was out of the local jurisdiction’s control so the owners obtained a federal liquor license.
19. **Colladay Point** on the west side of Kegonsa includes a pond near the southeastern tip of the point. William Colladay established his family farm here in the 1840s. His was the second Yankee family in the area. William was active in the community and served in the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate.

Shoveler ducks







Introduction .....	pages 3-9
Safety Tips .....	page 6

# Yahara Waterways

## Water Trail Guide

A guide to the environmental, cultural and historical treasures of the Yahara waterways.



For additional copies of this guide and more detailed information, visit the following Dane County website:

**[www.danewaters.com/YaharaWaterTrail.aspx](http://www.danewaters.com/YaharaWaterTrail.aspx)**

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