



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PO BOX 2004
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS 61204-2004

July 11, 2011

Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division

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A Planning Team consisting of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District (District); the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and the Rock Koshkonong Lake District (RKLD) is preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). This PEA will document potential environmental impacts associated with a range of Lake Koshkonong Management options and the features associated with those options. Multiple approaches and ideas are being considered to address an underlying need for managing and conserving natural resources on Lake Koshkonong while continuing to provide quality public recreation experiences for present and future generations.

The proposed project area encompasses all of Lake Koshkonong and its shoreline. Lake Koshkonong is large shallow lake located in Jefferson, Rock and Dane Counties, (Enclosure 1), on the Rock River 45 miles southeast of Madison, Wisconsin.

This package is intended to initiate agency scoping and coordination. The Planning Team is seeking comments regarding the proposed management options and their potential to impact any significant natural or manmade resources, information that may add to our study, and any recommendations for management opportunities your agency may feel have been overlooked or that could be added for further evaluation. Your comments will contribute to the PEA through comprehensive environmental evaluation.

The purpose of the PEA is to provide a planning and project implementation platform that coordinates permitting and public sentiments, and cumulatively evaluates actions that meet Rock Koshkonong Lake District goals:

1. improve navigation and to provide navigational aids;
2. restore or protect wetland habitat or water quality;
3. create, restore or protect fish and wildlife habitat; and
4. enhance the natural aesthetic value or improve the recreational use of the lake

In partnering with the Wisconsin DNR and the Rock Island District, the RKLD is using the expertise and resources of these agencies to arrive at economically feasible projects that meet state and Federal regulatory requirements.

The various management options (Enclosure 2) being analyzed include:

- constructing islands and breakwater structures to intercept damaging wind and waves to minimize erosion along the shoreline;
- dredging navigational channels for the material needed to construct islands and breakwater structures;
- recreating a littoral zone previously lost to erosion;
- creating a suite of shoreline control options for landowners in need of improved shoreline protection;
- implementing carp population control measures; and
- cooperating in watershed planning activities to improve awareness of the impacts of land use practices on both the watershed and, ultimately, the lake itself.

The proposed management options will be discussed and analyzed in general terms, as the PEA describes generic types of projects suitable for wide application throughout the project area and, therefore, do not include any site-specific data or analysis. (Enclosure 3)

Because the specific choice of locations and the number of willing participants is not yet known, nor can the choice of specific measures be determined at this time, an Environmental Assessment will be prepared at the programmatic level. When specific locations for projects have been determined, the RKL D would fulfill compliance requirements for each individual site-specific project. In preparing for these additional, site-specific requirements, the RKL D would:

- inspect project sites for the presence of listed or proposed threatened or endangered species;
- complete Environmental Species Act consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) before initiating any action that would result in irretrievable and irreversible commitment of resources. This includes consultation at both a programmatic level and for site specific projects;
- conduct cultural resource surveys to determine the presence of resources eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in locations that may be affected by construction or operation of the proposed modifications. This includes consulting with tribes to determine if Indian sacred sites are present and if so, seek to avoid damage to those sites;
- secure any necessary permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act through the Wisconsin DNR and the District;
- conduct shoreline and in-lake activities within the Wisconsin DNR guidelines; and
- initiate additional National Environmental Policy Act analysis as required for any projects that exceed the scope of this PEA.

The Planning Team anticipates the management options and associated features would not likely adversely affect any federally- or state-threatened or endangered species. The USFWS's endangered species website indicates species listed as either threatened or endangered species for Jefferson, Rock, and Dane Counties, Wisconsin. These species can be found at Enclosure 4.

Please provide written recommendations, comments, and concerns relative to resources in your area of expertise and agency authority no later than 30 days from the date of this letter. All written responses will be included in the PEA.

The point of contact for this action is Mrs. Wendy Frohlich of our Environmental and Economics Branch. Mrs. Frohlich can be reached at telephone (309) 794-5573; by writing to our address, ATTN: Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division (Frohlich), or by e-mail: wendy.m.frohlich@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Kenneth A. Barr
Chief, Environmental and Economics Branch

Enclosures

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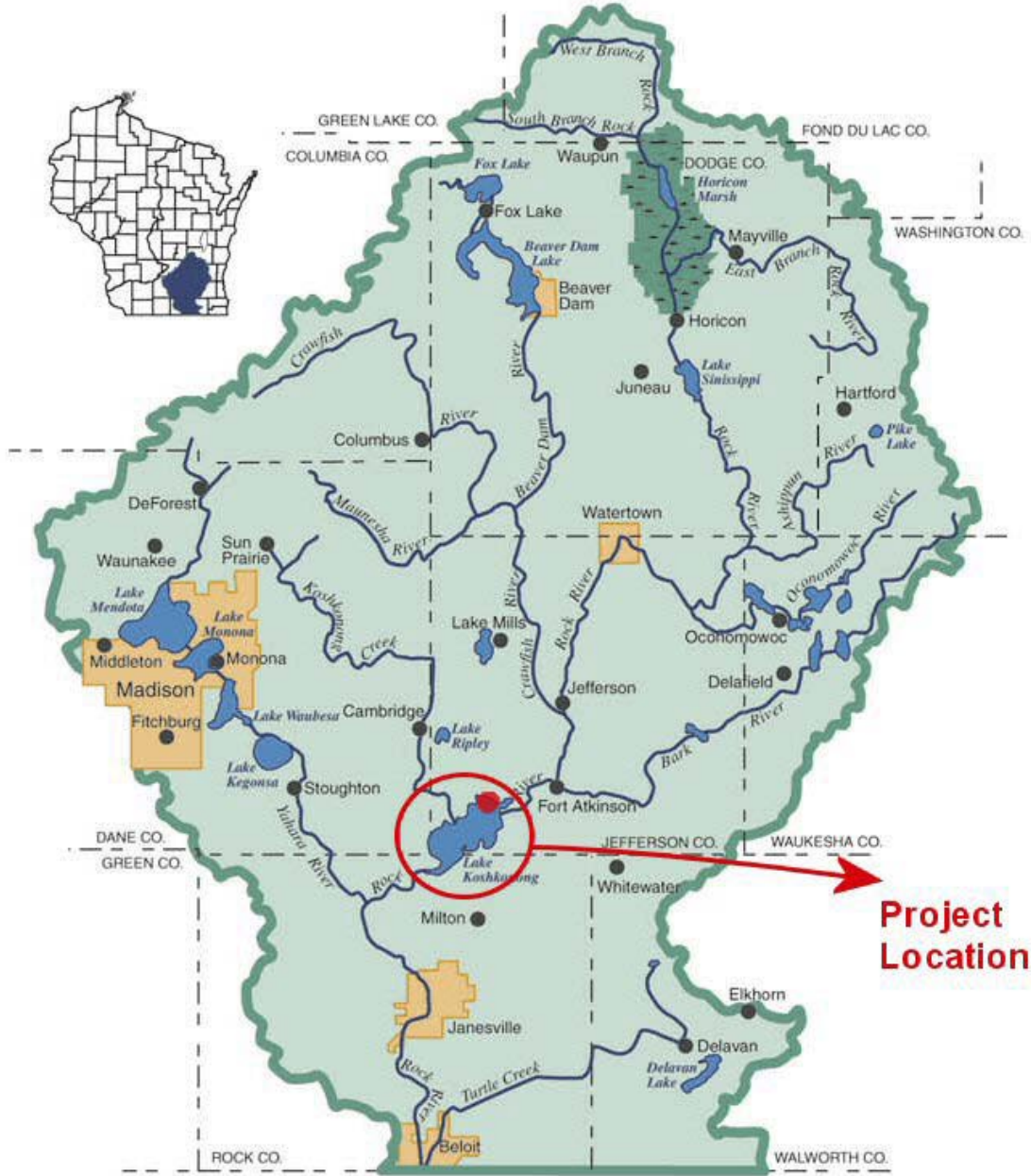
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Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation
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Wisconsin Historical Society
Division of Historic Preservation
Chip Brown
Office of Preservation Planning
816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

Project Location



Possible Management Option Plates

**Management Options/Projects
From Rough Draft Programmatic EA**

**Federally Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, and Candidate Species
for Jefferson, Dane and Rock Counties, Wisconsin**

Species	Scientific Name	Status	Habitat
Eastern prairie fringed orchid	<i>Platanthera leucophaea</i>	Threatened	Wet grasslands
Whooping crane	<i>Grus americanus</i>	Non-essential experimental population	Open wetlands and lakeshores
Higgins eye pearly mussel	<i>Lampsilis higginsii</i>	Endangered	Lower WI River
Sheepnose	<i>Plethobasus cyphus</i>	Proposed as Endangered	Shallow areas in larger rivers and streams
Mead's milkweed	<i>Asclepias meadii</i>	Threatened	Upland tall grass prairie or glade/barren habitat
Prairie bush-clover	<i>Lespedeza leptostachya</i>	Threatened	Dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soil
Eastern massasauga	<i>Sistrurus catenatus catenatus</i>	Candidate	Open to forested wetlands and adjacent uplands

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service Website, March, 2011