

Task force to coordinate public, private efforts to clean up Madison lakes

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi signed a county resolution, authorizing creation of a new task force to help coordinate work underway to reduce phosphorus pollution in the Yahara Chain of Lakes.

The task force was approved by the County Board of Supervisors late last week. "We have a once in a lifetime opportunity with the right resources coming together - public, private, agriculture, business - to do the work needed to get our lakes back to the way they were decades ago," Parisi said. "This new task force will ensure our work is collaborative and the action steps we take are coordinated."

Thanks to development of new "Cow Power" manure digesters near Waunakee and at the town of Springfield, as well as other significant projects aimed at reducing phosphorus and other pollutants from enter-

ing the watershed, it's logical for the county to take the lead at facilitating many positive lake clean-up efforts, Parisi said.

The new Clear Lakes Task Force will include representatives from county government and organizations like Clean Wisconsin, the Clean Lakes Alliance, and the agricultural group known as "Yahara Pride" which consists of farmers in the Lake Mendota Watershed.

The Task Force is charged with developing a phosphorus reduction work plan, identifying the top priority urban and rural areas where runoff reduction work is needed, and coordinating the efforts of Dane County, MMSD, and groups like the Clean Lakes Alliance.

Melissa Malott, chair of the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission was instrumental in creation of the new task force.

"Healthy lakes mean healthy lives. The county executive and county board are demonstrating exceptional leadership to protect this important resource. This is especially crucial as our lakes are increasingly pressured by climate change," Malott.

Dane County Board Supervisor Sharon Corrigan sponsored the legislation creating the Clear Lakes Task Force.

"By bringing together those working to address phosphorus in the lakes, the Clear Lakes Task Force will strengthen Dane County's efforts to cost-effectively remove phosphorus from the watershed and meet federal clean water standards," Corrigan said.

Dane County's Clear Lakes Task Force will also develop a process to track progress of the phosphorus

work that's underway and review potential cost-sharing models to ensure dollars - - both public and private - - allocated for lake clean-up are utilized in the most effective way possible.