

Koshkonong dredging coming

Lake district annual meeting Saturday, July 30

By Mark Scarborough
Reporter Staff

Let plans for Lake Koshkonong dredging move forward.

That's what Brian Christianson, commission chairman of the Rock-Koshkonong Lake District, expects to happen – at least in some sort of experimental fashion, as a cooperative effort of state, federal and local units of government – at some yet-to-be-disclosed date.

The experimental dredging project – for which Christianson did not have an immediate cost when reached last week on the telephone as he shuttled between meetings for his political consultant work – is expected to be discussed at an annual meeting of lake district property owners this coming weekend.

The Rock-Koshkonong Lake District will hold its annual meeting 9 a.m. Saturday, July 30, in the auditorium at the Fort Atkinson High School, 925 Lexington Boulevard, Fort Atkinson.

Anyone who owns land or rents in the district can vote at the annual

meeting, according to Frank Micale, a Jefferson County town of Sumner man who serves as a commissioner on the lake district board. Although roughly 4,000 people are eligible to vote in the district, the annual meeting usually attracts about 150 people. Those people generally make decisions for the whole district.

As of late April (as reported at its May 12 meeting), the district held a checking account balance of \$11,872.57; a savings account balance of \$108,199.81; a total segregated Indianford Dam fund of \$555,157.16; and a total segregated lake improvement fund of \$178,161.30.

The district property owners at the July 30 annual meeting will be asked to approve 2012 expenditures of \$185,000.

Included in this sum will be \$35,000 in spending for "water level proceedings" (tied to raising the water level of Lake Koshkonong by seven inches); \$10,000 set aside for legal fees (compared to an additional \$10,000 budgeted for legal costs in 2011 and \$36,657 in actual legal

costs accumulated in 2010); \$87,000 in spending connected to engineering work (with another \$87,000 in engineering costs already included in the 2011 budget and \$122,266 in actual engineering costs piled up in 2010); and \$30,000 for maintenance of the Indianford dam (for which \$30,000 was budgeted in 2011 and \$15,691 was actually spent in 2010).

Christianson, of 374 E. Samuelsen Drive, Edgerton, told the Edgerton Reporter last week that a scaled-down, experimental lake dredging project would be funded from existing lake district funds, without any additional contributions expected from property owners in the lake district.

According to the published 2012 budget which appears in the latest issue of the district's newsletter, the Rock-Koshkonong Lake District will also add \$136,004 in revenue to a non-lapsable lake improvement fund, as well as add \$64,059 in revenue to a non-lapsable Indianford Dam fund.

The total lake improvement fund,

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Dredging proposal

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uding the fund balance as of Jan-
2010, will be \$161,886. The
Indianford Dam fund, including
fund balance as of January 2010,
be \$503,625.

A \$50-per-parcel lake district fee,
ected from all property owners in
district, will remain the same
n 2011 to 2012, Christianson said.
ere will be no additional expense
the experimental dredging," he
ed. "It's all within the existing
get. It will come from the exist-
revenue that we take from the
perty tax."

The annual special charge assessed
lake district property owners began
1999, at \$25 per year. The fee re-
ined \$25 per year until 2002, when
was increased to \$35 per year. In
03, it was reduced again to \$25,
n increased to \$45 in 2004, to \$50
2005 and to \$100 in 2006.

The special charge was reduced to
\$5 in 2007, to \$41 in 2008, and to
\$5 in 2009. In 2010, it was in-
ased again to \$50.

"One thing you can count on from
ur RKLD board is when the spe-
l charge is raised it is for a good
ison - to accomplish the goals our
ctors have directed us to pursue,"
board notes in the July 2011
newsletter sent to property owners
d renters in the lake district.

According to the newsletter, the
0 charge is necessary to provide
fficient funding for the appeal of a
urt decision on lake levels to the
isconsin Supreme Court. "We also
ed to cover unanticipated expenses
rued from our Planning Assis-
nce to the States (PAS) collabora-
on with the U.S. Army Corps of
ngineers," the newsletter notes.
When these two items conclude or
hydro power can be generated at
idianford, we will once again pro-
se cutting the special charge."

The PAS dredging project - to
ke place on the north lake area,
om approximately the mouth of
ake Koshkonong to the North Shore
n property - will benefit from
edging provided by the Corps of
ngineers, Christianson said. The
edging of this area "will greatly im-
ove the shoreline," repairing dam-
ge caused by erosion, he added.
roperty owners in the area are sup-
rtive of the effort, he said.

■ show if

trict don't pay for the dredging, it
should not happen, Venske suggested.

The lake district has not proposed
local government funding for the ex-
perimental dredging project, al-
though the commissioners attending
the July 20 meeting mentioned the
possibility of seeking dollars from
private wetland preservation groups
and from government and other grant
programs. Frank Micale, a lake dis-
trict board member from the Jeff-
erson County town of Sumner, said that
Christianson has been "a whiz" at
getting "outside money."

A document presented at the July
20 meeting, and also found on the
lake district's web site, includes a
\$200,000 to \$400,000 cost estimate
for an experiment involving a "navi-
gation access dredging and dredge
spoil placement for wetland en-
hancement" project at a north shore
launch ramp. Under this plan, "spoil"
(material from the lake dredging)
would be placed on the shore of Mud
Lake.

According to the document, the ob-
jectives of this experiment would be to
"quantify the rate of sedimentation in
dredge areas" and "demonstrate break-
water construction and cost."

Accomplishing this work would
address "a real immediate problem -
the breach of the shoreline adjacent
to Mud Lake," the document notes.
"one project includes both dredging
and wetland habitat creation."

"Potential difficulties" listed on
the document for this project include
"landowner agreement," "competing
desire for first dredging area," and
"relatively expensive - fundraising."

According to a joint agreement be-
tween the DNR, the Army Corps of
Engineers, and Rock-Koshkonong
Lake District signed in February-
March 2011, "best estimate" study-
only costs associated with the project
were expected to be \$160,340 for the
lake district and \$49,050 for the DNR.

In-kind work provided by the
Corps of Engineers was expected to
be valued at \$209,390.

According to a May 11, 2011, let-
ter to Christianson from the Rock Is-

land District office of the U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers, the experimental
project would include cutting a "shal-
low broad dredge cut" in Stinkers
Bay near the North Shore boat
launch, measuring about 200 feet
long by 200 feet wide by two feet
deep. The project would also involve
the construction of a stone breakwa-
ter about 330 feet long, with dredged
material placed behind the breakwa-
ter, protecting the wetlands of Mud
Lake from the encroaching erosion of
Lake Koshkonong.

"The exact location of the break-
water has yet to be determined be-
cause a record search revealed
previously recorded archaeological
sites in the vicinity of Lake
Koshkonong," Kenneth Barr of the
Army Corps wrote Christianson on
May 11. "These sites could be im-
pacted by the access roads and place-
ment of dredge material on the shore
line." Thus, the Corps has proposed
an "intensive archeological survey"
in the area where the experiment is to
take place.

Notice of tentative lake district
dredging plans have been sent to re-
presentatives of most Native American
tribes that once lived in this part of
southern Wisconsin, with the current
members of these sovereign nations
now spread throughout Wisconsin as
well as Michigan, Minnesota and
South Dakota. These tribes have in-
cluded various divisions of the
Chippewa, Potawatomi, Sioux (in-
cluding the Sisseton-Whapeton
Oyate), Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe, Menom-
inee and Oneida.

Members of these tribes have
been invited to comment about the
proposed project and the Corps of
Engineer's proposed survey, per re-
quirements of the National Historic
Preservation Act.

Also on the lake district web site,
a March 2011 application for water
regulatory permit approvals, signed
by Christianson, indicates that the ex-
perimental dredging would be con-
fined to a 200-foot-by-200-foot area
at the North Shore Road boat launch,
in Stinkers Bay in the Jefferson

County portion of Lake Koshkonong.

Dredged material would then be
used to create a break water between
Lake Koshkonong and the Mud Lake
wetlands area. As much as 67,000
square feet of material might be in-
volved in the Mud Lake shoreline
protection element of the project,
based on the application.

Last year, the lake district held a
series of meetings to discuss options
for dredging Lake Koshkonong. One
of these included a cost estimate for
dredging the entire lake of \$200 mil-
lion to \$300 million. This suggestion,
which would have involved moving
34 million cubic yards of sediment
and making the lake two feet deeper,
was "unfeasible and untenable,"
Christianson noted in a telephone in-
terview last week. None of the sug-
gestions outlined during those
meetings are expected to be imple-
mented, Christianson said.

Christianson has suggested that
the positive cooperation of the state
Department of Natural Resources
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and
local Rock-Lake Lake District on this
experiment should be the focus of
any public scrutiny of the effort.

Officials of board of commission-
ers of the lake district include Chair-
man Christianson, who can be
reached at (608) 884-9444, as well as
Treasurer Ray Lunder, Milton, who
can be reached at (608) 868-2805
and Secretary Ed Sandner, who can
be reached at (920) 563-5304.

Board members include Mar-
Mawhinney, (608) 883-2419; Jeff Folk
(608) 884-3466; Micale, (920) 563
8518; and Brown, (608) 931-1179.

Micale, who is seeking re-electio-
n to the board at the July 30 meeting
will compete with Jim Bowers, Edge-
ton, and Steve Proud, Fort Atkinson
for two open seats on the board.

Micale is the president of the
Rock River Koshkonong Associa-
tion, while Bowers is a foundin-
member of the Rock Koshkonong
Business Association. Proud has as-
sisted the current Rock-Koshkonong
Lake District board stage its annu-
al meeting for the last three years.

The experiment should . . . areas dredged in Lake Koshkonong will “remain at a deeper water level,” Christianson said.

As discussed at a meeting of concerned citizens last week by Dave Brown, a member of the lake district commission who lives in the Rock County town of Fulton, there has been talk that fine silt on the lake’s bottom might complicate the dredging process.

At the citizens meeting, held Sept. 20 and involving founders of the Consolidated Koshkonong Sanitary District, former University of Wisconsin-Madison water resources management program professor Herman Felstehausen noted the difficulties in such a dredging project.

“It would be a nice improvement for the people who live on the lake, but the technology for dredging soil (beneath the lake) and keeping anything in place would be huge,” Felstehausen said. The waterway feeding the lake is “bringing in silt at such a steady pace” that any dredged area would likely swiftly fill up again, the educator added.

Bob Venske, a supervisor from the Dane County town of Albion, suggested that townships surrounding the lake would be unlikely to contribute financially to such a dredging project. “Only the people who live on the lake will benefit from it,” Venske said. “I don’t think you can justify spending town or county money on it. It should be strictly a user’s fee.”

If property owners in the lake dis-

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