



I am proud to announce that the Village received a prestigious award at the Annual Lake Country Clean Waters meeting on September 21st, where many southeastern Wisconsin lake communities were represented.

The Lake Recognition Award was given to the Village of Oconomowoc Lake and Donald Wiemer in recognition of the nearly 65 plus years of effort to maintain the best lake quality possible.

Representing the Village was myself, Trustee Paul Fischer, Village Attorney and resident John Macy as well as co-recipient of the award, Don Wiemer.

Oconomowoc Lake is a unique entity. It does not have a lake management district or even a lake homeowner association. Rather, the Village surrounds the lake and the Village Board and Village staff are charged with protecting the lake, a great advantage that most other lakes do not have. The Village Board is aware of this uniqueness and accepts the grave responsibility that comes with it.

There are approximately 200 hundred homes on the lake. In 1959 these homes incorporated as a village from the Town of Summit in part to protect the lake. The Village Board, since incorporation, has made conscientious decisions in an attempt to do what is best to maintain the high quality of the lake.

The lake level is controlled by a dam at the inlet from the Oconomowoc River and by a dam at the outlet to the river. The lake level is monitored regularly.

For many years, lake residents monitored the clarity of the lake themselves using a Secchi disk. I remember when I was 10-12 years old a helicopter was used to take water samples from the lake. More recently the Village Board has:

- ❖ Funded a lake water study by United States Geological Survey each year for the last 30 years.
- ❖ In January 2005, adopted one of the first ordinances to regulate the use of lawn fertilizer.

- ❖ Co-sponsored a grant to study the lake bottom through a core study conducted by the DNR.
- ❖ Worked with Wisconsin Department of Transportation on the installation of sediment ponds to protect the lake from highway runoff with the construction of the Hwy 16 interstate.
- ❖ Promoted the installation of riprap along the shoreline for the protection of the shoreline.
- ❖ Constantly regulated the lake level to minimize shore damage especially on “ice out”.
- ❖ Drafted the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and land division regulations in a manner which protects the lake.
- ❖ Instituted a burning ban.
- ❖ Restricted density and development on the lake including purchasing almost one hundred undeveloped lots in the Lalumiere subdivision.

As recently as last Monday night the Village Board authorized the UW-Stevens Point Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory to continue lake water studies.

The Village has an incredible data base of information on the lake that has been acquired over the years.

The Village has used many tools including litigation as well as the purchase of property to protect the lake. The zoning code, the subdivision control ordinance and the nuisance ordinance are all written in a manner as to protect the lake.

The man who for nearly 50 years monitored and administered all of this was Don Weimer. Until recently he wore many hats in the Village and surrounding area; all of them in a manner as to protect the lake. He guided the Village Board and Village residents to best protect the lake. He was responsible to implement the policies that the Village Board adopted. Village residents and the lake itself owe a great deal of gratitude to the Village Board and Don Weimer. The lake has maintained its quality, value and unique character because of the Village Board and Don Weimer.

Usually, this award is given to a Lake Management district that has done a significant project to protect the lake. That is not the case here. Rather this award is being given to the Village of Oconomowoc Lake for almost 65 years of quietly maintaining the lake.

I would like to thank John Macy, who serves on the Lake Country Clean Waters Board of Directors, for suggesting the Village be considered for this award and for his service on the Board of Directors. John’s service is one more way the Village stays on top of the most up to date information to ensure we have the best lake possible!

Mike Bickler
Village President