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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: **Yahara WINS partnership offers project grants to reduce phosphorus pollution**

MADISON, WI – The Yahara Watershed Improvement Network partnership is now offering grants for 2018 to fund projects that will reduce algae-feeding phosphorus pollution in local waterways.

Yahara WINS has included a total of \$60,000 in its 2018 budget for grants to municipalities and organizations to implement projects that reduce the amount of phosphorus entering nearby water bodies. Projects funded by Yahara WINS may reduce any source of phosphorus, including agricultural runoff and urban stormwater.

“Practices to reduce urban and rural runoff are cost-effective solutions to phosphorus pollution in our waters,” said Martin Griffin, president of the Yahara WINS executive committee. “Yahara WINS is looking forward to funding projects that will reduce phosphorus at the lowest cost to our community.”

With partners including 23 area municipal entities, farm groups and water stakeholder organizations, Yahara WINS pools resources and provides funding for practices that reduce phosphorus runoff as part of a 20-year project to achieve quality goals for the Yahara Watershed. The grants aim to reduce urban and agricultural runoff, the two main sources of phosphorus in local waters.

To support different types of projects, there are two categories of grants: conventional grants and innovation grants. A total of \$40,000 is available for conventional grants, with a maximum award of \$20,000 for a single project; a total of \$20,000 is available for innovation grants, with a maximum award of \$10,000.

Conventional grants will fund practices with quantifiable phosphorus reduction benefits. Examples include cover crops and harvestable buffers in agricultural settings and improved leaf management and stormwater practices in urban settings. These projects must take place in the Yahara watershed.

Innovation grants will fund relatively new, untested approaches to reduce phosphorus. Successful applicants will show how their project can benefit the overall Yahara WINS project, such as by gathering

data or testing the viability of an innovative practice. These projects are not required to take place in the Yahara watershed as long as the lessons learned can be applied in the watershed.

The Yahara WINS partnership has offered these grants annually since 2013, funding a diverse array of projects including prairie restoration at Holy Wisdom Monastery, streambank restoration for the Village of DeForest, a new bioretention facility for stormwater in Fitchburg and vertical manure injection on local farm fields. Since inception, the grant program has awarded \$270,325 and kept an estimated 52,859 pounds of phosphorus out of local waters.

Gregory Armstrong, director of land management and environmental education at Holy Wisdom Monastery, said the Yahara WINS grant was used to restore 30 acres of prairie with more than 100 types of native plants in a priority watershed area.

“The prairie restoration work has dramatically reduced the amount of stormwater runoff carrying pollutants into the watershed,” Armstrong said. “Back in the 1990s, before our earliest prairie restoration work started, at times the runoff would overtop Highway M. With this latest prairie addition, even after a storm there’s very little water in the old drainage channels.”

Joleen Stinson, parks and natural resources supervisor for the Village of DeForest, said a Yahara WINS grant in 2016 helped the community improve stream conditions.

“We received a Yahara WINS grant and did a big streambank restoration project in three separate areas along our hiking trail on the Yahara River,” Stinson said. “Last summer, we had 300 people-plus a day using the trail on busy weekends. When they’re enjoying the trail, they can see the work that was done and we can teach them about the improvement and why it’s important for the watershed.”

In addition to the grants for conventional and innovative practices, Yahara WINS funding is supporting implementation of phosphorus-reducing agricultural management practices and water quality monitoring. Through partners’ efforts, in 2016 approximately 29,000 pounds of phosphorus were kept out of local waters, nearly one third of the phosphorus reduction total of 96,000 pounds per year by 2036 to meet water quality goals.

Information about the grants is now available at www.madsewer.org/yaharawins. Applications are due by May 18, 2018, although if funding is still available after this date additional applications may be considered. Interested parties can contact Kathy Lake, pollution prevention manager at Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, at KathyL@madsewer.org with questions or to submit applications.

ABOUT YAHARA WINS

The Yahara Watershed Improvement Network, known as Yahara WINS, is a groundbreaking initiative to achieve clean water goals for the Yahara Watershed. In this effort, community partners led by Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District are collaborating on a strategy called watershed adaptive management in which all sources of phosphorus in the watershed work together to reduce nutrient runoff. The work began in 2012 and following a four-year pilot effort has now transitioned to the full-scale project.

Photo Cutlines:

A Yahara WINS grant funded streambank restoration by the Village of DeForest.



A blooming prairie at Holy Wisdom Monastery has reduced the stormwater runoff reaching Lake Mendota.

