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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: **Yahara WINS partnership awarded 2018 U.S. Water Prize by U.S. Water Alliance**

MADISON, Wis. – The Yahara Watershed Improvement Network has been awarded the prestigious U.S. Water Prize by the U.S. Water Alliance in recognition of the southcentral Wisconsin group's groundbreaking approach to improving water quality.

Awarded on an annual basis, the U.S. Water Prize celebrates outstanding achievement in the advancement of sustainable, integrated and inclusive solutions to our nation's water challenges. [Yahara WINS](#) earned the U.S. Water Prize in the U.S. Water Alliance's cross-sector partnership or coalition category for its collaborative approach to improving water quality.

"We are thrilled to be recognized for the combined efforts of so many in our watershed," said Martin Griffin, Yahara WINS executive committee president. "Yahara WINS is a testament to the amazing progress that can be made when all of us work together to improve the whole. By moving beyond individual interests and working with others, we can solve complex challenges, navigate uncertainty and identify new paths to success."

Yahara WINS is a groundbreaking initiative to achieve clean water goals for the Yahara Watershed. Through 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, 20-year project.

Yahara WINS works with partners including 24 area municipal entities, three counties, local farmers and water organizations to pool resources and provide funding for practices that reduce phosphorus runoff to achieve quality goals for the Yahara Watershed. 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 needed by 2036 to meet water quality goals.

Griffin said fundamental to the project's success has been regulatory flexibility developed and codified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Flexibility provided through Wisconsin's watershed adaptive management option allows all sources of phosphorus to work together to identify low cost opportunities for phosphorus reduction rather than focus on extremely expensive infrastructure upgrades by individual point sources. Examples of

landscape-scale practices advanced by Yahara WINS partners include aerial seeding of cover crops that hold soil in place, expansion of buffer strips along streambanks and improved urban leaf collection.

Radhika Fox, chief executive officer of the U.S. Water Alliance, said the U.S. Water Prize celebrates innovation in building a sustainable water future.

“We annually award the U.S. Water Prize to celebrate the amazing progress happening in the water sector, and to inspire everyone to see what is possible to achieve through a commitment to partnership and innovation,” Fox said.

The U.S. Water Prize was awarded Tuesday night in Minneapolis as part of the One Water Summit 2018, which brought together more than 900 water leaders from across the country. Community groups, water utilities, private sector companies, environmental and agricultural groups attended to participate in discussion and problem solving around our nation’s most pressing water problems.

For more on the groundbreaking Yahara WINS partnership, visit: <http://www.madsewer.org/Programs-Initiatives/Yahara-WINS>. For more information about the U.S. Water Alliance and the U.S. Water Prize, visit <http://uswateralliance.org/>.

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