

## **The Door County Environmental Council Position Statement on the Proposed Forestville Millpond Drawdown**

The Door County Environmental Council strongly supports a comprehensive cleanup and permanent restoration of water quality in the Ahnapee River and Forestville Millpond. The question is, how is this best accomplished?

Minutes from meetings of the Door County Land Conservation Committee for the past three years reveal a tripling of the average phosphorus levels in the millpond over the last two decades (1994-5 to 2012-13). In 2017 the Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department requested and received, a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Planning Grant. The purpose of the grant was to research and collect water samples for the express purpose of providing current and accurate data on water quality. The department's June 2018 final study report revealed high concentrations of total phosphorus in both the pond water and accumulated pond sediment, including elevated levels of oil, grease, and heavy metals in the sediment. But, perhaps the most disconcerting finding was that 25% of the upstream waters exceeded established stream thresholds for total phosphorus concentrations.

It is interesting to note that 88% of the farms upstream are part of the DNR's best management practices for water quality. Either the water quality numbers are inaccurate or the best management practices for water are ineffective. And, while environmental experts have complimented Door County on the study, they have also criticized the county for not making the objectives of the study clearer. Door County must ensure that the proposed millpond drawdown will indeed accomplish those objectives of increased water quality, clarity, and quantity. In addition, these same experts have added that if you want fish, you must ensure that the water quality upstream is such that the millpond will accommodate fish.

Given the above, the Door County Environmental Council does not support a Forestville Millpond drawdown at this time. Because, if the contamination in the upstream waters feeding the millpond is not corrected, the millpond will soon revert to its current status. Rather, we believe more time and more money should be provided to investigate, enforce, and if need be, create clean water standards in the Ahnapee watershed. In order to have a clean Forestville Millpond and Ahnapee River, a comprehensive watershed cleanup program must be employed.

The Door County Environmental Council Board of Directors