Submitted Public Comments for 19 November 2026 LOPRD Meeting

1. Robin Schmidt

My comments relate to the agenda item for strategic planning for the Lake District. I want to suggest that part of that discussion be a thorough review of the benefits of dissolving the Lake District in favor of a qualified Lake Association. Lake associations are eligible for Wisconsin's surface water grant program and other government grants and informal discussions with various government entities has suggested that their assistance with funding or technical assistance would not vary if it were a Lake District or a qualified Lake Association. They work now with various friends groups, as witness by the ACOE work on the Pierce County island restoration.

Lake associations have some limits – such as membership fees must be no less than $5 or more than $50, Any individual who owns real estate or resides (seasonally or year-round) within one mile of the lake must be allowed to become a member, and members cannot be denied the right to vote in lake association affairs. Lake Associations are not government entities, and as such, the administrative work to ensure open meetings laws and public records laws are minimized. A qualified lake association should be relatively open and non-discriminatory when determining who is eligible to become members. Many lake associations choose to be even more open, allowing anyone who wishes to support lake preservation or conservation efforts to become a member. Attracting members is only one step in an ongoing process of membership management and development, but just think about Lake sponsorship by some of the professional fishing tournaments that use our lake without any financial support to maintain it.

I ask that you assess the Yahara Lakes Association for their effectiveness at generating revenue from business sponsors – at the $2000, $1,000, $500 and $250 levels. Members and sponsors have great pride in their support of the lake association, and they proudly display yard signs and other decals at their businesses identifying themselves as Friends of the Lakes.

The county has indicated they will contribute financially to projects where there is a cost-share, but I don't see Lake District members voting to implement a tax in the future. $10,000 could be raised by having 5 corporate sponsors paying $2000 and getting great advertising and public relations through their actions of support.

Please have a plan B for the future of the Lake, and an honest discussion of what the future of broader community support for the lake might look like.