

Cooksville General Store: a journey back in time

By Janice Redford
Special to the Lakes Edition

A visit to the Cooksville General Store is like a journey back into the 1850s, except it is a living store that is perhaps the oldest general store still in operation in Wisconsin. The store was opened in 1846 and is located on State Highway 138 one block north of the intersection of Highway 59 in the unincorporated Village of Cooksville.

The Cooksville Store was restored by the new owners, Sue Ebbert and family, who purchased the building in 2013. It has running water for the first time, new shelving, show cases, an ice cream parlor in the corner with nine stools from the 1940s, and modern

lighting. The store carries an amazing supply of ingredients for cooking and baking that are difficult to find in other places and supplies for picnics, snacks, cheese and food of all kinds plus containers of many varieties of candy.

Owner Sue Ebbert says, "Visitors like to see history and places that remind them of a more simple way of life and times in the past. The store is like a destination spot that brings back memories."

The store is closed from January to March and open from April through December on Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The general store building was operated

not only as a general store, but also as a village gathering place downstairs for decades. The second floor was sold to the Masonic Lodge named Waucoma #90 in 1864 and housed meetings and events. It later became a dining

room for Masons who eventually bought the entire store. Many private owners have saved the store over the last century.

The village was founded in the early 1840s by New Englanders and most of the

buildings are now listed in the records of historical places. The architecture of the village is not what is typically found in Southern Wisconsin. The houses resemble those of a village from ancient New England and most of them have

been restored to keep their history intact. There is a village green in the center that hosts community events and festivals. The former school has been restored as a community center and is part of what is now the village park.

Lakes of Dane County Lake Monona

Lake Monona is the second lake in the Yahara chain as water flows south from Lake Mendota. Most of the land surrounding the lake is urban and is fed by the Yahara River, Wingra Creek, and Starkweather Creek, along with many urban storm sewers.

The Yahara CLEAN plan for the Lake Monona watershed calls for action to improve the management of leaves and reduce erosion from construction sites. In 2017, the cities of Madison and Monona invested in water quality projects to reduce phosphorus runoff into Lake Monona with grant support from Dane County.

The following projects reported by partners in 2017 will help us meet our Yahara CLEAN water quality goals for Lake Monona:

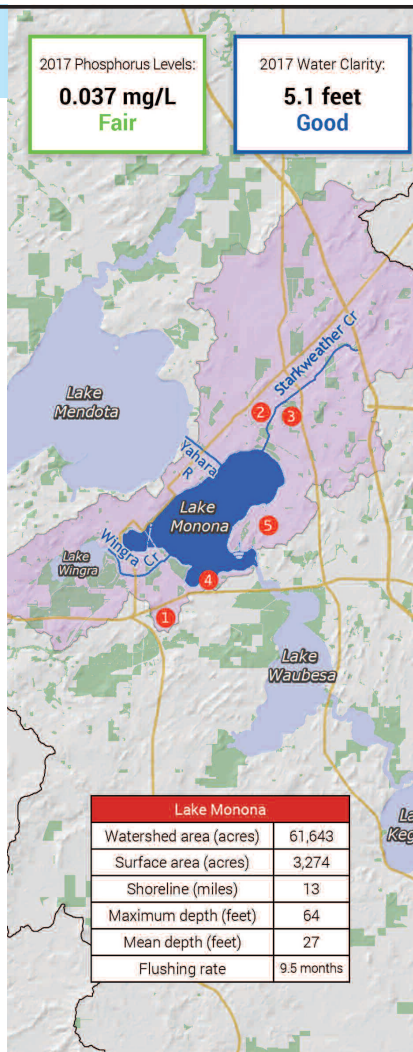
Dane County awarded grants to the City of Madison to fund stormwater ponds in the Rimrock Greenway (1) and stormwater improvements at Jacobson-Furey, including two retention ponds along Starkweather Creek (2)

City of Madison

- Continuing to work to remove phosphorus and sediments from urban runoff using Voit Pond (a former quarry). During storm events, stormwater will be diverted from Starkweather Creek and treated before being routed back to the creek and Lake Monona (3)
- Completed Phase I of improvements to Esther Beach Park, including a swale, rain garden, and other improvements to help filter runoff (4)
- Continues to participate in the Yahara WINS adaptive management project to fund projects that reduce phosphorus throughout the watershed

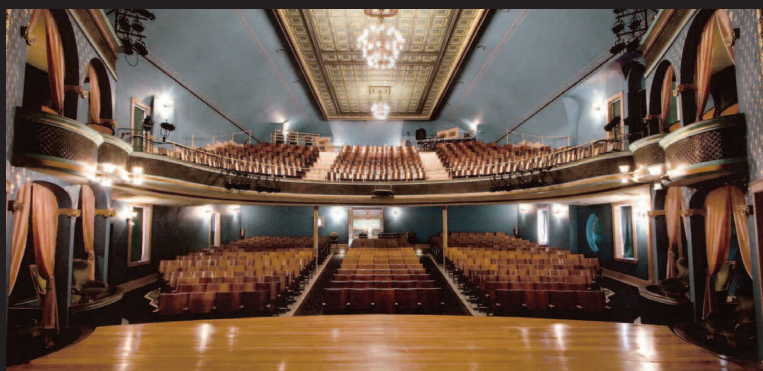
City of Monona (5)

- Piloted a "Lend Lake Monona Your Helping Hand" program that resulted in 42 stormdrains being adopted
- Surveyed all 119 stormwater outfalls and will be following up with repairs on 34 of them
- Continues to participate in the Yahara WINS adaptive management project



The Cooksville Store was founded in 1846. (Photocourtesy of Sue Ebbert)

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- CHARLIE HUNTER — OCT 5
- SAMMY MILLER & THE CONGREGATION — OCT 6
- CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! — OCT 11
- BETTYE LAVETTE — OCT 19
- SHAWN COLVIN — OCT 20
- HAWKTAIL — OCT 26
- LOUDEN WAINWRIGHT — NOV 1
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- HAL KETCHUM — NOV 16
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- THE LONE BELLOW — DEC 7
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