



REIMAGINING WARNER BEACH: CONCEPTUAL DESIGN CONTEST
Clean Lakes Alliance, Madison Community Foundation, Madison Parks
Supplemental Information

WHY WARNER PARK BEACH?

Warner Park Beach is part of Madison’s largest urban park. Warner Beach, located on Lake Mendota at 1025 Woodward Drive, serves a large, diverse population base. However, it is also the only publicly accessible beach on Madison’s Northside. The beach was once a favorite of Madisonians, but its use has diminished over time. Grassroots efforts to celebrate the beach (i.e. art projects, tree plantings, and flower beds) as well as proposed plans to redevelop the beach house (2018) and introduce an in-lake “clean beach corridor” (see “Resources” section for more details) are igniting energy in the area.

WARNER BEACH BACKGROUND

Community investment in Warner Park and Warner Beach is deep rooted. The community resources referenced in this document capture some of this investment. The 1992 Northport-Warner Park Neighborhood Plan and the 2015 Warner Park Facility Study and Visioning Meeting are resources that contain information pertinent to the beach, park, and community. Ongoing stakeholder community meetings have helped reveal local sentiment, including: a desire to reduce potential for area flooding, improved accessibility to the park and the water, and concern for wildlife and their habitats.

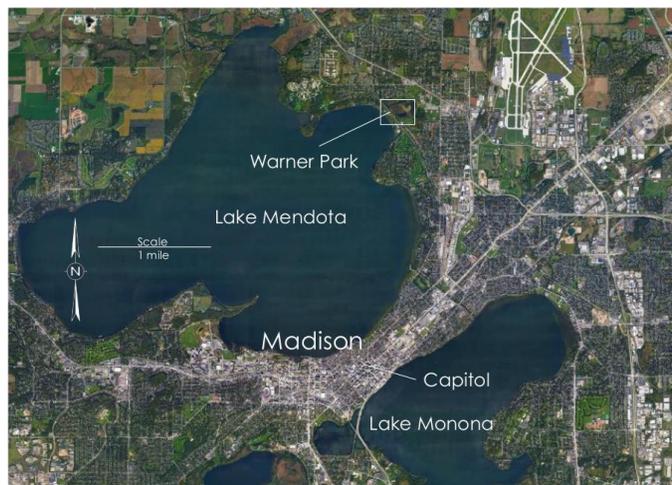


Figure 1 – Warner Park Location

Parkland since 1898, Warner Park (figure 1) became publicly established in the 1930s. The park is named for the president of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, Fred Warner, who started the process for the property’s public acquisition. Warner Beach possesses great potential for visitors from the neighborhood, the city, and beyond to gather and connect to Lake Mendota and enjoy the natural resources it has to offer. From the Madison Parks webpage:

“Though distinctive for its natural beauty and expansive tracts of land, Warner Park is primarily defined by its links to the community. Occasionally, the park plays host to a variety of social happenings such as charity walk/run events and community festivals. The colorful shelter is popular for reunions and parties, while other notable attractions include the off-leash dog park, beach, and frequented boat launch. However, despite the wide-range of interests that the park tends to attract, patrons share a common ground by using Warner as a place for gathering, promoting healthy activity, and facilitating sincere,

cultural exchange. This unique aspect of Warner Park clearly reflects in the Warner Park Community Recreation Center. Its mission to provide innovative growth and enrichment opportunities for the Madison community connects people of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, Warner is home to such summer favorites as Madison Mallards ballgames.”

“Madison parks are for the people.” John Nolen’s quote from over a hundred years ago deserves continued recognition today. The city of Madison has seen success as a green city in recent years, with advances and improvements in bicycle infrastructure, continued recognition as a tree city and recent water quality milestones (including meeting 29% of the Yahara CLEAN goal by keeping 13,600 pounds of phosphorus out of the lakes in 2016). It is now time to turn attention to Madison’s parks and beaches to further enhance the city’s reputation and quality of life.

The design contest area (shown in figure 2) is bordered by the train tracks running parallel to Woodward Drive to the Northeast, the park edge to the Northwest, Lake Mendota to the Southwest, and the Warner Park boat launch to the Southeast. The beach and beach house are shown in figure 3.



Figure 2 – Warner Beach design area



Figure 3 – Warner Beach and beach house facility

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Warner Beach sits in the northeast corner of Lake Mendota. The beach and waterfront park are low lying and relatively flat. The near-shore lakebed is gently sloping, reaching 5 feet of depth approximately 200 feet from the shoreline.

Prevailing summer winds in Madison come primarily from the south and west. These winds have the potential to generate relatively large waves at Warner Beach.

The nearshore water currents at Warner Beach are inconsistent. Water generally flows from the north to the south along the waterfront due to the Yahara River flow. However, due to the complex dynamics of the lake, the current at Warner Beach can flow from any direction, including directly towards the beach. Currents and waves bring algae, bacteria and other contaminants to the beach.

Concern for public health arises when bacteria (particularly *E. coli*) or blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) reach levels that are too high. Public Health Madison and Dane County tests beaches regularly and has had to close Warner Beach several times in recent years due to *E. coli* and blue-green algae.

Surface soils at the site are mostly loamy sand. Bedrock is dolomitic sandstone.

RESOURCES

Design Contest

“Back to the Beach” Page: cleanlakesalliance.org/beaches

Design Contest Main Page: cleanlakesalliance.org/warner-beach-design-contest

Site Photos

Supplemental Information:

[Warner Park Master Plan Map \(2013\)](#)

[Warner Park Beach Area Map \(2017\)](#)

[Synopsis - Warner Park Facility Study and Visioning Meeting \(2015\)](#)

[Wisconsin DNR Large Scale Lake Planning Grant - Warner Lagoon \(ongoing\)](#)

[EPA Green Infrastructure in Parks Playbook \(2017\)](#)

Community Resources

[Demographics and Neighborhood Indicators](#) (City of Madison)

[Northport – Warner Park Neighborhood Plan](#) (City of Madison)

Community Group Web Resources:

[Northside Planning Council](#)

[Warner Park Community Recreation Center](#)

[Wild Warner](#)

[Yahara Fishing Club](#)

Natural Resources

[INFOS Yahara](#); [INFOS Warner](#); [INFOS Water Current](#)

Wind data: [Iowa State University](#); [Western Regional Climate Center](#); [Madison \(1990-2012\)](#)

[Information on Deflectors](#)

[Information on the Yahara Watershed](#)

[Lake Mendota map - DNR](#)

Park Resources

[Warner Park History \(Wild Warner\)](#)

[About Warner Beach \(Madison Parks\)](#)

In the News

[Madison Community Foundation Press Release](#)

[Channel 3000 TV news interview](#)

[Capital Times story](#)

[Mendota County Park Beach Exclosure](#)

[Dane County “Clean Beach Corridor” Announcement](#)

[Isthmus article including “Clean Beach Corridor”](#)

[Travel Wisconsin beaches feature](#)