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12/2/2023

To: City of Whitewater Lakes Advisory Committee
From: Eric Olson Director, Extension Lakes

Our office was asked by City of Whitewater staff to summarize some points about Lake Districts as elected and appointed officials consider forming a new district to help benefit Trippe and Cravath Lake. Extension Lakes at UW Stevens Point has been assisting communities form lake districts since Wisconsin lawmakers first created statutes that allow for them to be created and operated 50 years ago. Lake districts have proven to be a popular option for raising funds needed for lake care, there are now over 260 lake districts across the state with four to five new districts formed annually.

Lake districts are primarily formed because a local community desires a dedicated funding stream for relatively expensive projects like integrated aquatic plant management, maintenance of dams and other infrastructure, and acquisition of lands that are important for public access or protecting water quality. Governance of the lake district budget is unique in that all residents of a district and property owners in a district have a direct voice in shaping the budget by participating in the annual meeting. This, coupled with a levy rate cap, historically has helped calm concerns that a new lake district will result in "runaway taxes" for impacted landowners.

I am optimistic that a lake district can help create an increased focus on the rehabilitation of Trippe and Cravath Lakes to the benefit of the residents of Whitewater. Feel free to reach my office with any questions or concerns you have about lake districts in Wisconsin.

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cc: Jennifer Jefferson, WI DNR Lake and Rivers Team; Heidi Bunk, WI DNR Regional Biologist