Press Release

Poynette: Today, the Winnebago System Fisheries Protection Alliance, representing 244 hunting and fishing organizations in Wisconsin, requested the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on a proposal by the Fox River Navigational System Authority to reopen the Menasha Lock to allow boat traffic upstream into Lake Winnebago and the Fox-Wolf Rivers Watershed System.

The Menasha Lock was ordered closed by the WDNR in 2015 to prevent the passage of the round goby and other aquatic invasive species up into the Lake Winnebago System. The Fox-Wolf Rivers Watershed, extends from Columbia County in the south to Forest County in the north and contains 22% of the inland water resources of Wisconsin.

The Fox-Wolf River System extends from Columbia County in the south to Forest County in the north and makes up more than 22% of the inland water resources of the state. The watershed maintains a highly diverse and outstanding fishery including the finest Lake Sturgeon population and fishery in the world.

Beyond its vast recreational and environmental benefits, the economic benefits from angling in just the Winnebago Pool lakes according to a 2006 UW-Extension survey found that the total annual economic impact of that fishery was $234 million and supported 4,300 jobs. The Wisconsin DNR and local and state sports clubs have invested scores of millions of dollars over the years to restore and maintain this highly valuable fishery. As stated previously, almost one-quarter of the state’s inland water resources would be put at risk by the reopening of the Menasha Lock.