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May 2, 2025

The average lake level this morning was 2.58 ft above the Oshkosh datum. Inflows to the lake pool were estimated at approximately 9,550 cubic feet per second (cfs), while outflows are estimated to be approximately 6,800 cfs this morning, based on flow measurements by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for the Fox River at Appleton. Evaporation is contributing approximately 550 cfs of water leaving the lake, based on a 6-day calculated average.

Last Friday USACE rain gages in the watershed recorded between 0.02 and 0.18 inches of rain, with an average of 0.11 inches and an average at the four Lake Winnebago rain gages of 0.09 inches. The rain gage at Fond Du Lac only received the 0.02 inches of rain as rain was more heavily concentrated to the north. About a half inch of rain fell across the far northern portion of the watershed. Other than the direct contributions, the rainfall did not have an immediate impact on inflow to Lake Winnebago as the overall inflows continued a slow decline through the rest of the dry weekend. With inflows declining, lake levels were at 2.30 ft. on Monday morning, which was 0.02 feet above the bottom of the target strategy band. On Monday there was 0.7 inches of rain forecasted the remainder of the week split between Monday and Thursday-Friday. In order to stay in the target strategy band, 1 gate was closed at Menasha Dam on Monday leaving the gate settings at one (1 of 6) tainter gates open at Menasha Dam, seven (7 of 9) needle gates and zero (0 of 5) tainter gates open at Neenah Dam. The closure kept lake levels within the target band through the steep part of the spring refill which ended on May 1st. During that portion of the refill, lake levels were increasing by approximately 0.03 to 0.04 feet per day. After May first, the refill slows to between 0.01 and 0.02 feet per day.

This week, USACE rain gages recorded an average of 0.34 inches of rain on Monday night and 0.88 inches on Thursday. The rain added direct precipitation to Lake Winnebago in addition to increasing flow to the lake. Yesterday on May 1st, the average daily lake level was 2.52 feet meeting the May 1st target level of 2.50 ft ± 0.10 feet. Having met the May 1st target and with the rain this week, one tainter gate was opened at Menasha Dam on Thursday morning. The opening on Thursday returned the gate settings to two (2 of 6) tainter gates open at Menasha Dam, seven (7 of 9) needle gates and zero (0 of 5) tainter gates open at Neenah Dam. The next target goal is 2.70 ft ± 0.10 feet on May 15th.

Today there was a 20 percent chance of showers after 4pm. Cloudy, with a high near 51. North wind around 5 mph becoming east northeast in the afternoon. Conditions will clear overnight and this weekend will be mostly sunny with highs in the mid to upper 50s. There are chances for showers overnight Sunday through Tuesday, although, generally, mostly sunny conditions are expected through the extended forecast. Conditions will clear Saturday and mostly sunny conditions will continue through the extended forecast. The National Weather Service (NWS) Quantitative Precipitation Forecast (QPF) estimates 0.01 to 0.10 inches of precipitation on the Lake Winnebago watershed over the next 24 hours and anticipated cumulative precipitation of 0.01 to 0.10 inches over the next 7 days. The Wolf River remains above Action Stage at Shiocton and New London, and that is forecasted to continue throughout next week by the NWS.

Forecasts and basin conditions will be reassessed on Monday morning, or as necessary over the weekend, through coordination with the Lake Michigan Project Office (Appleton, WI). Please check this page for weekly updates regarding basin conditions and gate operations.

2024 - 2025 Lake Winnebago Stage with # of Open Gates

