



Annual Picnic Planned

The Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake will be holding our Annual Picnic on Friday August 13th. The picnic will take place at the Clear Lake State Park at 6:00 PM. Please come join us and learn about important actions being taken to improve Clear Lake. Cost of membership and dinner is included in the \$10.00 charge. Ticket request forms will be mailed shortly. Tickets are also available at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce.

Majority of Federal Funds Going Directly to Corps

Over 1.2 million dollars in federal funds have been allocated from the federal government to help improve Clear Lake and Ventura Marsh in the past three years. A very legitimate question is how are these funds being utilized to improve Clear Lake?

As has been previously mentioned in this newsletter, the Iowa DNR has entered into a partnership with the Corps of Engineers to restore Clear Lake and Ventura Marsh. The funds that have been received for Clear Lake are allotted directly to the Corps so there is very little local control over how they are utilized.

There are both positives and negatives that will result from partnering with the Corps. The primary positive is that the Corps will pay for 65% of the project and currently appears to be the only legitimate funding source for the large amount of dollars needed to restore Clear Lake and Ventura Marsh. The primary negative is that for the next 3 to 4 years the project will be in the planning and design stage with no real visible accomplishments.

So why does the planning and design

take so long? Part of the reason is because the Corps has to perform its own feasibility investigation to prove that the project will be successful. The other reason is the many different levels of approval that projects must go through. The district office is in Rock Island, Ill. Our lake and marsh restoration projects begin with teams from Rock Island performing the planning and design. Their plans are then reviewed locally by the DNR, and then sent to Vicksburg MS where the Corps divisional headquarters are. After the plans are approved by the division, they are forwarded to Washington D.C. to the Corps national headquarters for approval. This large amount of hierarchy lengthens the project completion time, but is necessary for any funding to be approved.

Although it can be discouraging to go through this lengthy process, it is important to remember that work in the watershed must be performed in the mean time. Storm water filtration systems in developed areas and wetland restorations in agricultural areas are vital to the long term health of Clear Lake. After all, if the land draining into the lake is not improved, it makes little sense to spend large amount of funds restoring the lake.

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Ventura Marsh Water Quality Should Improve This Year

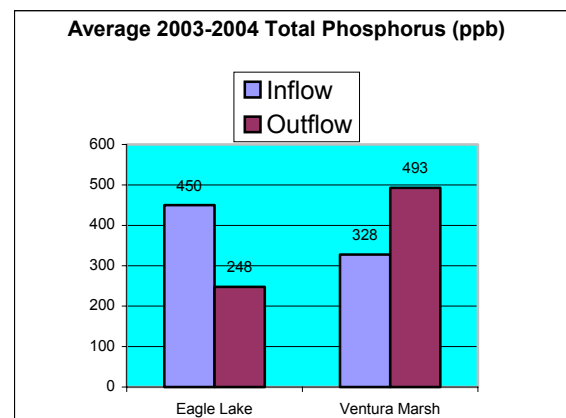
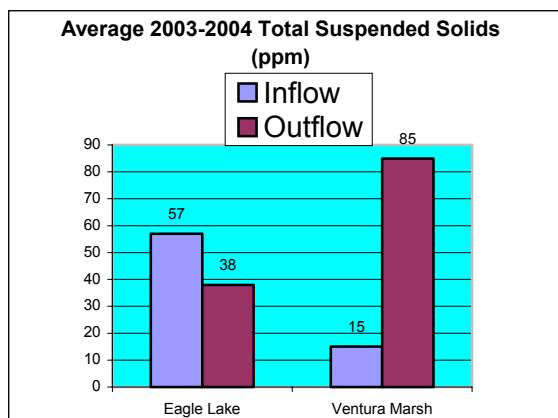
Researchers expect improved water quality to be flowing out of Ventura Marsh this year. The reason: shallow water conditions in the fall and heavy snow cover in the winter produced a nearly complete fish kill in Ventura Marsh. “The exact scenario we would like to create artificially occurred naturally this past fall and winter in Ventura Marsh,” explained fisheries biologist Jim Wahl. “This will give us the opportunity to see how the marsh reacts without the large population of carp and bullheads that normally resides there.”

A similar fish-free situation occurred in the summer of 2000 when fish were artificially removed by the application of rotenone to Ventura Marsh. Once the fish were removed, aquatic vegetation began growing back and water quality in the marsh improved greatly. Unfortunately, by 2002 carp had repopulated the marsh. The experiment proved that keeping the marsh nearly carp free is essential for improving the water quality of Clear Lake, and that an annual method of removing fish will be needed to accomplish that goal.

With that information in hand, Iowa State University proposed a pumping station, new fish barrier and a berm be constructed in order to gain better water level control of Ventura Marsh. These activities would allow water levels in the marsh to be reduced enough after the waterfowl season that a natural winter fish

kill would occur. The result would be an annual extermination of carp and therefore increased vegetation and improved water quality. The Iowa DNR has entered into a partnership with the Corps of Engineers to implement the marsh restoration proposals. The total project cost is 2.3 million dollars, about \$780,000 in state and local funding will be needed. The Corps estimated the completion date being 2009, however efforts are being made to speed up the process.

So why is aquatic vegetation so important? A recent water monitoring project conducted by students from Ventura High School clearly shows the discrepancy between a well vegetated marsh (Eagle Lake) and a marsh lacking vegetation (Ventura Marsh). The two marshes are similar in area, depth and drainage basin size, making them excellent candidates for comparison. Students collected 10 samples over a one-year period. The results showed Eagle Lake was removing 33% of the sediments from the water entering the system, while Ventura Marsh was exporting 452% more sediments than what was entering it. Likewise, Eagle Lake removed 45% of the phosphorus entering it while Ventura Marsh exported 50% more phosphorus than what entered it (see graphs below). Ventura Marsh must have aquatic vegetation return in order for it to remove sediments and nutrients so the water quality of Clear Lake can be improved. Thanks to Mother Earth, that scenario is likely to occur this year.



Storm Drain Cleanup Project Begins with opportunity Village Clients:

The Association has partnered with Opportunity Village to clean up storm drains that empty into Clear Lake. The clients remove debris that accumulates around the drains and takes the material to the city yard waste collection site. Three clients were able to clean about 300 storm drain inlets in about 10 hours. The project will continue throughout the summer and fall.