



Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

FALL/WINTER 2007

COMMERCIAL FISHING REPORT

Commercial fishermen had a very successful year of capturing carp at Clear Lake. The DNR contracts with a commercial fisherman to remove rough fish from Clear Lake each year. If weather conditions permit, the fishermen typically will harvest carp in the spring and fall. This year a total of 180,000 lbs. of carp were harvested from the lake. At an average weight of 8lbs each, this equates to about 22,500 fish. The DNR estimated the standing stock (total poundage) of carp prior to the fishing was 130 lbs/ac and afterwards was 80 lbs/ac. This represents a significant reduction which could help reduce carp populations if similar fishing success occurs in the future. The DNR will continue to remove carp following improvements to Ventura Marsh. Ventura Marsh is currently the primary spawning area for carp; however following the restoration, carp recruitment will be reduced substantially. It is hoped that implementation of the Ventura Marsh project with the Corps of Engineers will begin next fall.



\$2.558 million for Ventura Marsh Restoration Received

Although often overshadowed by the Clear Lake dredging project, the Ventura Marsh restoration project is also progressing. The IDNR has been partnering with the US Army Corps of Engineers since 2002 in an attempt to procure federal funding for a pump station and other restoration features at the marsh. These features are necessary to keep carp populations low in the marsh and re-vegetate the marsh to improve water quality.

For several years the COE has received funding for investigations and design work on the marsh improvements. The DNR has been working with the COE every step of the way to ensure the project will have the intended results. Finally in 2007, a design for the pump station and other pro-

ject features was developed. Several discussions and modifications to the design have taken place in 2007, and a final plan is now nearly completed. The Lake Association asked Congress for significant funding in the 2008 budget to move the project out of the design phase and into the construction phase. Thanks to help from Congressman Tom Latham, \$2.558 million was included in the House version of the 2008 omnibus appropriations bill. Senators Tom Harkin and Chuck Grassley also helped ensure the funding for the marsh remained when the Senate passed the bill.

Although significant federal funding for the project is now secured, there are still some hurdles to clear before the project becomes a reality. The COE has not

yet been able to provide the DNR with a cost estimate for their portion of the project costs. If the requested amount from the DNR is more than what they can perform the project for on their own, the partnership could be dissolved. To their credit, the COE has made efforts to reduce project costs and is very interested in seeing the project to completion. So, if all goes well, it is possible that construction could begin on marsh improvements in the late fall of 2008.



Example of proposed pump station structure

Osprey Reintroduction Project Completed

When thinking about lake restoration activities, most people focus on the benefits improved water quality has on recreation and our local economy. However, improved water quality can also have a big impact on wildlife habitat. One such species that stands to benefit is the osprey. Ospreys are raptors who feed almost exclusively on fish. The birds will dive feet first into the water from great heights and often fully submerge themselves in pursuit of their prey. Good water clarity allows the osprey to capture fish more effectively.

Native American folklore indicate ospreys were nesting in Iowa before it became a state, but until recently, no nesting pairs had been recorded since European settlement. The Iowa DNR therefore began a program that relied heavily on local volunteers to reintroduce this unique bird of prey. One such site chosen for reintroduction was Clear Lake. Beginning in 2002, five to six young ospreys were fledged (learned to fly) at Clear Lake annually through 2007. An interesting twist in the life cycle of the osprey is that they typically return to nest at the same location where they fledged. It takes ospreys 3 to 4 years to mature to breeding age, and they usually do not return to their fledging site until that time. It is therefore anticipated that some of the early pairs of birds that were released at Clear Lake could start returning to the area.

The program has already seen some success in other areas of the state. Ospreys have been nesting in Iowa since 2003 with 16 young produced so far from eight successful nestings. In 2006, there were six nesting attempts and four nests produced eight young. In 2007, there are eight nesting pairs. All Iowa ospreys have a purple band with number and letter on right leg and silver USFWS band on left leg.



Source: IDNR

2007 Water Monitoring Results

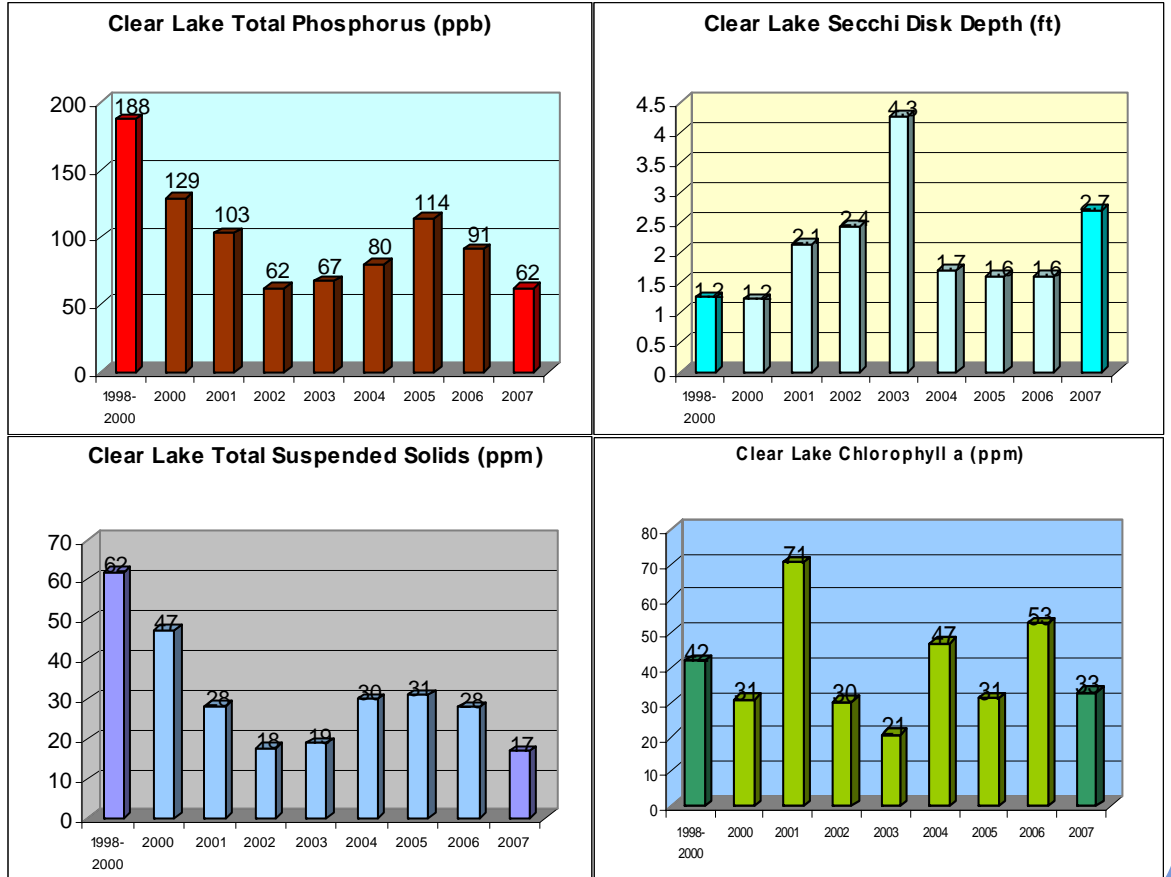
DREDGING BID RESULTS

The bid letting for the dredging project took place on Jan. 3rd. Three bids were received: \$6.5, \$8.0, and \$14.0 million. The low bid was submitted by L.W. Matteson Inc. from Burlington, IA. This is the same firm that dredged Crystal Lake. The bids will be reviewed and a decision will be made on Jan. 15th by the Natural Resources Commission on accepting a bid. The estimated cost of the project was about \$8.0 million. In related news, the construction of a containment site for the Clear Lake dredging project is nearly complete. The dry fall conditions allowed for significant progress to be made in the past few months. The site consists of a 15 ft. high perimeter berm around the 160 acre site and two interior berms that separate the site into three sections. Dredging will most likely begin by the summer of 2008 and extend into 2009 taking two open water seasons to complete.



Containment site during construction

Surface water samples were collected at 3 sites on Clear Lake twice each month during the open water portions of the year. The results showed some of the lowest concentrations of lake pollutants seen over the past 10 years. The results also indicate about a foot of increased clarity over the past few years. This correlates well with the many reports from lake users that the lake seemed clearer this year. Despite the improvement, there are still sufficient phosphorus levels to produce algae blooms as was evident this fall. However, it is encouraging to see improved water quality conditions, and it is anticipated that continued improvements should occur as watershed work continues and major restoration projects like Clear Lake dredging and Ventura Marsh improvements are completed.



LAKE NEWS

The Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake
 PO Box 54
 Clear Lake, IA 50428

Name Surname
 Add1
 Add2
 Add3
 City, State Zip Code