



# Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

Winter 2020/2021

## APCL Update

Happy New Year and we hope that 2021 is off to a great start for you! The APCL Board is looking forward to hosting in-person events again with our members and partners beginning with the June 8 Chamber Business After Hours. Other events planned are a Lady of the Lake Cruise highlighting completed Lake restoration projects (date to be announced) and our August 15 Annual Picnic at PM Park.

The APCL Board meets monthly to discuss and approve projects to protect and enhance the water quality in Clear Lake. Projects planned for 2021 include the continuation of APCL's financial support for Water Quality Monitoring in Clear Lake. Last year's results are included in this newsletter. APCL continues to work closely with CLEAR Project Coordinator Jim Sholly for technical expertise and guidance on other ways we can provide the greatest benefit to the lake. Other projects include interpretive signage for the fish barrier installed in Lekwa Marsh and aquatic vegetation information and outreach activities.

Current Officers and Board Members are:  
President: Margo Underwood  
Vice-President: Kirk Kraft  
Secretary/Treasurer: Deb Tesar

Board Members: Tim Ackarman, Tom Birdsall, Carol Casey, Mark Ebeling, Tom Ebeling, Paul Gordon, Jake Kopriva, David Knoll, Jan Lovell, Charlie MacNider, Todd Peterson, Brad Price, Tom Sawyer and Cerise Sissel.

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership in 2021. We appreciate your continued partnership and support to protect and enhance Clear Lake for all to enjoy!

Margo Underwood, President

## Water Monitoring Update: Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project

Frequent monitoring of Clear Lake's water quality has been taking place since 1998 when the Clear Lake Diagnostic & Feasibility (D&F) Study began. IDNR, Iowa State University, University Hygienic Laboratory, and CLEAR Project have all assisted with sample collection. In 2020, samples were collected twice a month from May-October from three sites on Clear Lake and one site in Ventura Marsh.

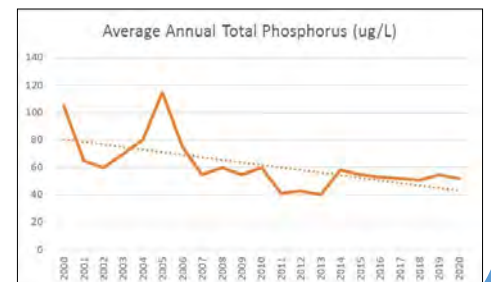
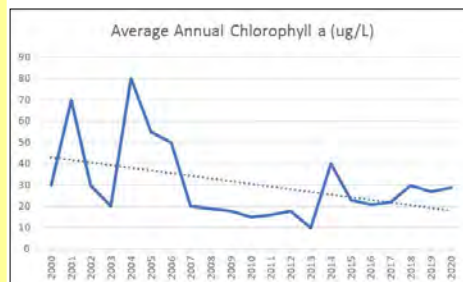


Water testing expenses are shared by the APCL and Iowa DNR.

The water quality of Clear Lake is degraded by several pollutants that enter the lake from non-point source runoff. In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency approved a total maximum daily load (TMDL) plan that set numeric targets for nutrient levels, algae concentrations, and water clarity. Those targets are measured by sampling for total phosphorus (TP), chlorophyll a (CHL), and Secchi depth (SD).

The recent water monitoring has shown that Clear Lake has been meeting the goals that were established, which is a sign of significant water quality improvements. As of 2020, in-lake measurements have shown a 55% decrease in phosphorous and resulting *Chlorophyll a* concentrations since routine monitoring began in 1998. These results indicate that watershed conservation practices have helped significantly reduce nutrient and sediment loading to Clear Lake.

Although many of the original water quality goals are being met, it will be important to continue implementing lake and watershed practices to maintain the current level of water quality and to see greater improvement in water clarity. Continued efforts to reach bacteria loading reduction goals are also needed.



## Lekwa Marsh Complex Project Update: TJ Herrick — Iowa DNR Wildlife Biologist

To the South of Clear Lake State Park lies a tract of public land that is part of the Lekwa Marsh Complex owned and managed by the Iowa DNR. This tract of land came into public ownership and was restored through the wishes of the Pedelty family and with cooperative work between the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and the Iowa DNR. Future developments will involve the APCL and CLEAR Project.

Beginning March of 2020 a large-scale tree and brush removal project was initiated by a local contractor; trees and stumps were removed and disposed of (Photo 1). Next, the drainage tile was located and removed from historic wet areas on the site and a water-control-structure was installed to give management capabilities to the 10 plus acre restored wetland. The restored wetland has a watershed area of about 100 acres. The water that now flows off the landscape into this wetland will be captured and held while beneficial natural wetland processes take place sending cleaner water downstream (Photo 2).

The next step will include the restoration of upland habitat through a native grass and forb (flower) seeding and installing informative signage detailing the benefits of the project at the main parking area.



Photo 1: Tree removal and tile breaks



Photo 2: Restore wetland hydrology

## Project Spotlight — Shoreline Revegetation: Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project



One of the single greatest threats to water quality in Iowa is the loss of soil from the banks of our rivers, lakes, and streams. The expansion of non-native woody vegetation into and the loss of native prairie grass species from these locations makes them far more susceptible to erosion than they should be. The CLEAR Project worked with several lakeshore landowners in 2020 to begin restoring the vegetation on the slope above the lake to a more diverse native mix. One project was located along the Eastern shore just a few hundred yards South of the Outlet Stream. This project included the removal of all existing vegetation through manual cutting and herbicide application followed by hydroseeding a diverse prairie seed blend back onto the exposed slope and then covering the area with a natural fiber blanket to stop erosion until the new vegetation could get established.

## CLEAR Project Photo Drive: Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project

The CLEAR Project is working on updating many of its outreach and educational tools. In that effort, we are looking for new photos to include in brochures, social media outreach, and the website. If you have any photos from around Clear Lake that you are willing to share, please send them to [Jim@ClearProject.net](mailto:Jim@ClearProject.net). Pictures of families enjoying the lake, or landscape portraits from both summer and winter are needed. Please include any photo credit

information to be attached to the use of the photo. Thank you for helping to spread the message of the importance of protecting our lake for future generations.



### Upcoming Events

April 22 — Green Expo — visit [earthdayclearlake.org](http://earthdayclearlake.org)

April 24 — Earth Day Festival and Trash-Bash

June 8 — APCL Hosts Chamber Business After Hours @ The Yacht Club

August 15 — APCL Annual Picnic @ PM Park