



Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

Spring 2022

APCL Update

Margo talks about stuff here.

Lawn Care Considerations — Tips from Minnesota DNR

Phosphorus is one of the most troublesome pollutants in storm water runoff. Phosphorus comes from many sources, and it is the primary cause of water quality problems in our lakes and streams. Everything that is or was living contains phosphorus. It is in leaves. It is in lawn clippings. It is in animal wastes. It is an ingredient in most lawn fertilizers. It is even attached to soil. When leaves, lawn clippings, animal wastes, fertilizers, and soil are picked up by storm water runoff and are carried directly to our local lakes and streams, they provide the lakes with excess phosphorus. This excess phosphorus causes increased algae growth.

Algae are small green plants that live in lakes and streams. Increased algae growth is observed as green algae blooms or “scums” on lakes. Too much algae is harmful to a lake system. It blocks sunlight and prevents other plants from growing. When it dies and decays, it also takes much needed oxygen away from fish. Limiting phosphorus reduces algae blooms.

You can reduce the amount of phosphorus entering a lake or stream by:

1. Keeping your leaves and lawn clippings out of the streets and gutters. Leaves and lawn clippings are a major source of phosphorus. When they are swept or washed into the nearest street or storm sewer, they end up in your local lake or stream.
2. Applying only the amount of fertilizer your lawn needs. A soil test will tell you how much-if any-fertilizer your lawn needs. Excess fertilizer may harm your lawn or pollute our lake.
3. Fertilizers containing phosphorus may be used on lawns if a soil test indicates that it is needed or if you are establishing a new lawn. A soil test will inform you of the amount of phosphorus in your soil and the appropriate application rate.

Project Spotlight — Jim Sholly: CLEAR Project

In the fall of 2021, work finally began along the shoreline of the Outing Club. This nearly 200 feet of shoreline was shedding almost 55 tons of sediment into Clear Lake every year. Thanks to a federal grant through the EPA Section 319 program administered by the CLEAR Project, that area is now protected into perpetuity and no longer a source of harmful sediment and phosphorous to the lake. This project was 5 years in the making and only the start for homeowners there who want the next 400 feet protected as well.



Earth Week Events — For more information visit earthdayclearlake.org

April 18-23 — TrashBash Community Cleanup

April/May — Community Seed Library at Clear Lake Public Library

April 19 — House Plant Cutting/Swap Program at Clear Lake Public Library (6:30 pm)

April 21 — Green Expo at the Surf — Be sure to check out the CLEAR Project and APCL booth!

April 27 — Outdoorfest: 5k/10k, Family Fun Activities in City Park, Recycling Opportunities at One Vision, Wildlife Care Clinic

May 5 — APCL Executive Board Meeting — 5pm @ Clear Lake City Hall

June 2 — APCL Executive Board Meeting— 5pm @ Clear Lake City Hall

August 14 — APCL Annual Picnic at PM Park

For over 70 years, the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake has been dedicated solely to the protection and enhancement of Clear Lake.

Kids and Conservation: Brianna Sholly, Youth Services Librarian — Clear Lake Library

Conservation often seems like a very grown-up topic, but it doesn't have to be. Even the youngest of children can learn to appreciate nature and develop a sense of concern for improving it. For a baby, it might be as simple as allowing them to lay in the grass, stare up at the trees, bang rocks together, or play in the snow. A preschooler will become much more inquisitive as they are able to roam around, picking up rocks, sticks, bugs, and anything else they can find. Follow their lead! Use those opportunities to ask them questions about what they are seeing, such as: What kind of animals do you think live in this tree? How did the ice get on the lake? What do you think is under the ice? It may seem like they aren't old enough to understand any of that yet, but they'll impress you with just how quickly they can grasp simple concepts. Keeping the questions open-ended will allow them to answer without limitations. Regardless of how on-point or crazy their answer may be, take the chance to SHOW them. Can you see a squirrel in the tree? Put a container with water in it into the freezer and check it every 20 minutes – what happens to the water? Use an auger to drill a hole in the lake ice and look below, or go ice fishing. The possibilities are endless! Of course, you can get to all the nitty-gritty details in a few years.

As children mature, their ability to grasp natural concepts matures as well. For school-aged children, try to parallel a family adventure with something they are learning about at school. When they learn about photosynthesis, take a trip to a county wildlife area and explore the plants that live there. If they're learning about the water cycle, head to the nearest stream and see if you can figure out what path that water takes to get to the ocean. If they are learning about recycling, have them help to separate out recyclables at home. Have them start their own garden in the spring to introduce the concepts of where food comes from. Don't want to buy seeds? See if they can grow a plant from seeds already in your kitchen – apples, oranges, avocado, etc. Even if it doesn't sprout, how great is it to experiment? You might be surprised! Giving them some hands-on experience to coincide with their classroom learning will benefit both of you, and their teacher is likely to appreciate it as well!

Remember: YOU are your child's first and best teacher. No matter what age your child is, know that environmental education is messy business. The best learning days will end with wet feet, dirty clothes, possibly a few splinters, and the biggest smiles. Clothes and bodies can be washed, but we only have one Earth. Regardless of the habitat you explore, instill in your child a sense of respect for the environment and all its inhabitants. Nature is there for everyone to enjoy. Gently pick up the worm, investigate it, and then return it to its habitat. Try to avoid stepping on or picking flowers or breaking branches off of trees



and bushes. If you have a picnic, be sure to pack your trash out or find a trash can. If children respect the natural world, they are more likely to become environmentally literate citizens concerned about conservation. What could be more important than that?

Still not sure how to get started? Join us for our Earth Day Celebration the week of April 18th – 23rd. The children's department at the library will have some self-led programming all week, check out the Green Expo on Thursday night, and join us for story time and other activities in City Park on Saturday. Any one of the committee members would be happy to chat with you during those events to hear your feedback or help steer you in the right direction. After all, we're all in this together!

Is a Rain Garden Right for You? Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project

Most people living in a residential area assume that the vast majority of rainwater that lands on their lots soaks into the ground. Unfortunately, in many cases, this is not true. Urban lots contain many impervious areas such as roofs, driveways, and sidewalks. Even lawns are often compacted, which severely limits their ability to infiltrate rainwater. The result is rainwater runs off the lot and enters the nearest storm drain leading to a river or lake. This runoff contains contaminants that degrades water quality. One solution to this problem is to install a rain garden. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows runoff from impervious areas to be absorbed. Rain gardens also add beauty and wildlife habitat to your landscape while helping manage storm water more sustainably. The popularity of rain gardens is growing rapidly as over 700 have been installed in Iowa over the past couple years. Native plants are recommended for rain gardens because they don't require fertilizer and are more tolerant to Iowa's climate. Homeowners can install a rain garden themselves, or many landscaping companies also have experience installing them. The Iowa Rain Garden Manual provides detailed information on how to install a rain garden and it can be downloaded from the CLEAR Project web site: www.clearproject.net

