



# Lake Association News

*A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake*

Winter 2022-2023

## President's corner

—Margo Underwood,  
APCL President

The APCL Board is looking forward to a busy spring and we invite you to join us for several Earth Week activities: April 20 Green Expo; April 21 Lakeshore Clean-up at Farmer's Beach and the April 22 Earth Day Festival.

Other activities currently planned for 2023 are a June 13 Chamber Business After Hours, July 4 Parade float and our August Picnic.

Two projects highlighted in this newsletter are underway and will be completed this year. APCL will be providing funds to assist the IDNR with the wetland restoration project on the west side of the Ventura Marsh Wildlife Management Area known as Dutch and Tom's Access. As TJ Herrick explained in his article on this page, "The end goal is to have functioning restored wetlands on the property that positively impact the watershed of Clear Lake."

The second project that we are thrilled to announce is the new Clear Lake Watershed Entry Sign Project. Five new signs (pictured in the article) will be installed this spring along key roadways at the watershed entry points by the County Engineer's Office. The APCL will help publicize the signs and encourage people to use best practices and properly dispose of chemicals and nutrients. These signs will be a constant reminder to each of us that all water in the watershed drains to the lake.

In closing, I want to thank each of you who have renewed your APCL Membership for 2023. Your continued membership and donations help support projects designed to protect and enhance Clear Lake. For those who have not renewed your membership for 2023, we have enclosed a reminder with a membership form for you with this newsletter.

## Ventura Marsh Acquisition Moves Closer to the Finish Line

—TJ Herrick, Iowa DNR Wildlife Biologist

Over this past summer, the area now known as "Dutch and Tom's Access", on the west side of Ventura Marsh Wildlife Management Area (WMA), was seeded to a diverse mix of native grasses and flowers (forbs) and had the initial excavating done looking for existing sub-surface drainage tile.

The native planting was seeded this spring and was maintained with periodic mowings this past summer. The mowings keep competing weeds short and allow the native species access to more sunlight to give them a better opportunity to establish successfully. A successfully established deep-rooted native seeding will help to improve precipitation infiltration and hold sediments on the landscape so those sediments do not runoff towards Ventura Marsh and ultimately Clear Lake.

The excavations (or tile search) are an important part of the wetland restoration plan. The tile search allows information to be gathered such as: tile size, tile depth and tile grade. By understanding these things, the plans for wetland restoration can more accurately consider costs, areas to remove tile, and areas where tiles need to be kept in place (or modified) to maintain drainage from neighboring property. In the end the goal is to have functioning, restored wetlands on the property that in no way negatively impact neighbors, but positively impact the watershed of Clear Lake.

Look for the remainder of the heavy equipment work to be completed in the next several months, and stay tuned for my next update which should include details on the finished project.



## Curlyleaf Pondweed Removal Reminders

While it looks like not much may be happening under the ice right now, soon warming water temperatures will kick off the active growing season for Curly-leaf Pondweed, an aquatic invasive plant. This plant generally completes its growing cycle by mid to late June, then breaks loose and floats around, frequently ending up in stinky piles on shorelines around the lake.

Although Iowa DNR rules generally prohibit the transport of aquatic plants of any type, there are provisions—along with a permitting process—for *legally* disposing of these pesky piles. For more information, see [www.iowadnr.gov/ais](http://www.iowadnr.gov/ais), then see the "Managing Curly-leaf Pondweed" section in the right column. There's a link to a fact sheet with more information, as well as the permit forms.

## Upcoming Events

- April 20, 4-7 pm: Earth Day Green Expo at Surf Ballroom
- April 22, 9 am-1 pm: Earth Day Trash Bash & Festival at City Park
- June 13, 4:30 - 6 pm: Chamber Business After Hours hosted by APCL, Clear Lake Yacht Club and Clear Lake Sailing Center at Yacht Club

## Looking for a Sign?

—Deb Tesar, APCL Secretary/Treasurer

Soon you will be seeing several!

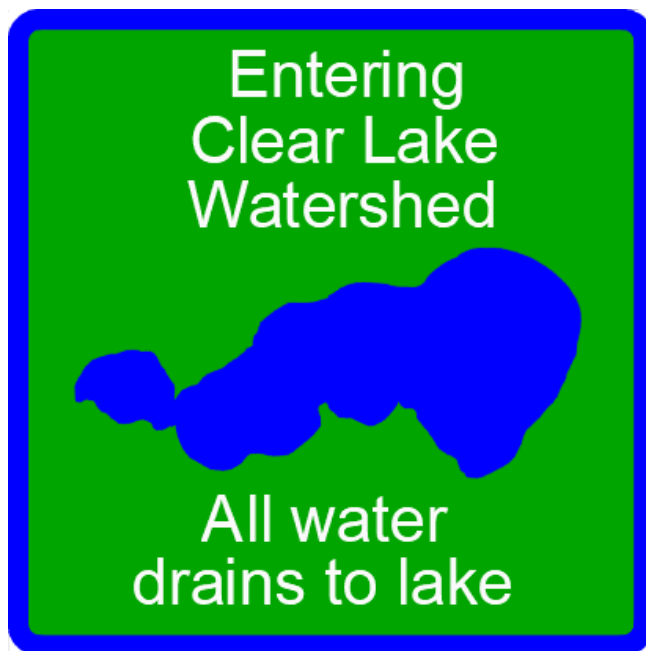
Last May, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources announced its "County Creek Sign Grant Program," to fund signage to help raise awareness of creeks and watersheds, especially where water quality projects are under way. The grant funding would cover fabrication, installation, and maintenance of signs on county roads or city streets.

The APCL Board voted to proceed with applying for this grant with the County Engineer's Office. President Margo Underwood collaborated with the Cerro Gordo County Engineer Brandon Billings and Cerro Gordo County Assistant Engineer Mary Arndt to prepare and submit the grant application. In early September, we learned that Cerro Gordo County was awarded a \$10K grant for county watershed and creek signs. Five signs were allotted for the Clear Lake watershed, with the remaining 64 signs earmarked for county creeks.

Although the creek signs will be the standard white-on-green design as seen at many area river crossings, APCL had the opportunity to provide design input for the lake watershed signs. The finalized design was recently unveiled, and after the spring thaw, the five new signs will be installed on key roadways around the lake.

It is hoped that wherever folks see "all water drains to lake"—or any other waterway—they will take extra care to properly dispose of or manage chemicals and nutrients. Of course, *every* piece of land is part of *some* watershed, all of which should be respected and protected!

This grant was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Section 319 fund and administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Water Quality Bureau.



## Love Clear Lake in the Winter!

—Deb Tesar, APCL Secretary/Treasurer

If you've been in the area during the winter months, you have probably noticed folks enjoying the lake in a variety of fun and exciting ways. Groomed rinks have popped up around the shore, and this year, one was even cleared near the downtown seawall for all to use. These rinks play host to pick-up hockey games as well as figure skating and perhaps a few wipe-outs. There are no known curling courts as yet, but it's probably only a matter of time...

Our ice fishing community is alive and well, with fisher-folk accessing the lake with everything from their buckets & gear sleds to the deluxe ice fishing castles that congregated earlier this season primarily near Farmers' Beach and McIntosh Woods, and have since fanned out from there. To learn more and get involved with this timeless activity, visit with the folks at either of our local bait shops, or the Clear Lake Fishing Club at [www.clearlakefishingclub.com](http://www.clearlakefishingclub.com).

You have perhaps caught a flash of those intrepid adventurers who make the most of the windy days with their kites and snow skis or snowboards. Some are even able to tow a wee one on an additional sled—what a ride that must be! To learn more about this exciting sport in our area, on hard water or soft, follow the "Clear Lake Kiteboarding" group on Facebook.

Our area snowmobiling community welcomed the arrival of "thick enough" ice followed by snow, and celebrated with the Midwest Sled Fest in early February, when several competitive and fun events were held near Clear Lake State Park. For more information about this event, see [www.midwestsledfest.com](http://www.midwestsledfest.com).

It was hard to miss the outsized beauty and excitement of the Color the Wind Kite Festival on Saturday, Feb. 18. Fliers from around the country dazzled us with the color, whimsy, and even choreography of their amazing kites. For more information about this popular event, see [clearlakeiowa.com/events/color-the-wind](http://clearlakeiowa.com/events/color-the-wind).

Even if you don't get out on the lake, you can still have fun prognosticating when the ice will go out—and maybe even win a prize—with the Clear Lake Earth Day Committee's ice-out contest. See the "Clear Lake Earth Day" group on Facebook for more information.

