



Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

Spring 2023

President's Corner

—Margo Underwood,
APCL President

The APCL is preparing for a busy summer of activities and we'd like to invite you to join us for the events listed in this newsletter.

We hope that you have seen the new watershed entry signs installed on county roads around Clear Lake. This project was part of a larger County Creek and Watershed Entry Sign Program to help raise awareness of creeks and watersheds where water quality projects are underway. Special thanks to our project partners: the Cerro Gordo County Engineer's Office and the IDNR Water Quality Improvement Section.

More details about the August 13 Annual Picnic will be mailed in July. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Curlyleaf Pondweed Update

Local DNR staff has observed that Curlyleaf Pondweed growth is prevalent this spring near Dodge's Point, Farmers Beach, and the Clear Lake Baptist Camp, and is doing further surveys to gather additional information.

The growing season should wind down by early July. If your lakefront is invaded by smelly piles of decomposing plant material, learn how to remove it *legally*:

At www.iowadnr.gov/ais, 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.

Clear Lake Watershed Entry Signs Installed

—Margo Underwood, APCL President

Five new Watershed Entry Signs were recently installed on key roadways around Clear Lake. These signs were fabricated and installed as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources County Creek and Watershed Sign Program.

The Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake partnered with the Cerro Gordo County Engineer's Office to submit a grant application to the IDNR to fabricate and install 69 County Creek and Watershed Signs to help raise awareness of creeks and watersheds, especially where water quality projects are underway.

A \$10K grant was awarded to the County to support this project. "The DNR Water Quality Improvement Section's 319 program is thrilled to partner with the Cerro Gordo County and APCL in awarding EPA Section 319 grant funds to the county to install creek and watershed signs as a complement to their effective, long term water quality project and educational efforts," explained Steve Hopkins, IDNR Nonpoint Source Coordinator, Water Quality Improvement Section.

In addition to the Watershed Entry Sign pictured above, the other four Clear Lake Watershed Entry Signs are located at:

- Balsam Avenue ¼ mile north of 220th Street
- Grouse Avenue ¼ mile south of 240th Street
- Eagle Avenue ¼ mile north of Highway 18
- Balsam Avenue just south of 270th Street

"The APCL was pleased to partner with the County Engineer's Office to help design the new Clear Lake watershed entry signs and include the message that 'all water drains to lake' as a reminder to all of us that our actions to properly dispose of chemicals and other materials do directly impact Clear Lake's water quality. Each one of us can help to make a positive impact on water quality in this watershed or the watershed where we live," stated Margo Underwood, APCL President.



APCL Board Members standing next to the new Clear Lake Watershed Entry Sign located at 250th Street and Apple Avenue. Pictured left to right: Jan Lovell, Margo Underwood, Cerise Sissel, Deb Tesar, Paul Gordon, Kirk Kraft, and Dave Heath.

Upcoming Events

- June 13, 4:30-6 pm: Chamber Business After Hours co-hosted by APCL, Clear Lake Yacht Club and Clear Lake Sailing Center, at Clear Lake Yacht Club, 103 Main Ave., Clear Lake
- July 4, 10 am: Clear Lake Street Parade
- July 6, 5 pm: APCL Board Meeting at Clear Lake Public Library
- August 13, 5 pm Social, 5:30 Dinner: APCL Annual Member Picnic at PM Park

Monitoring Summary & Lake Restoration Program Update for Clear Lake

— Michelle Balmer, Iowa DNR Lake Restoration Program

Monitoring changes in water quality is key to understanding the overall health of Clear Lake. Thankfully, Clear Lake has one of the most robust sets of monitoring data in Iowa, thanks to the ongoing partnership between the APCL, DNR, and local community.

2022 was an interesting year for the lake, with periods of warmer weather and high winds in the spring, coupled with a year of good ice and snow cover, stands of curly leaf pondweed were low. However, the lake experienced an early season algae bloom, likely due to the availability of phosphorus from wind/wave mixing and sunny weather. The lake experienced several more blooms over the summer, usually associated with periods of warmer sunny weather. Water clarity remained pretty good throughout the growing season, generally averaging between 2 and 3 feet. Water quality was excellent in the fall, with transparency measurements over 7ft in parts of the lake.

Monitoring data collected over the past decade is showing a minor increase in total suspended solids and chlorophyll a (an algal pigment) over the past three years. We've also observed an uptick in total phosphorus concentrations. These changes could be caused by a variety of factors, including changes in the zebra mussel and curly leaf pondweed populations, changes to Ventura Marsh (while DNR manages the marsh for aquatic vegetation), changes to weather patterns, and changes to management practices within the lake's watershed.

Sampling is already underway for the 2023 season. The spring started strong—it was a banner year for walleye netting and two shoreline restoration projects (see photos below) are currently being constructed to stabilize public dock areas around the lake.



Photos (left) show the bank prior to restoration at the Hill Street public access dock in Oakwood Park, where the steep slope was covered by shallow-rooted non-desirable vegetation. The photo (right) shows the project currently underway, where the toe of the slope was stabilized with rock to minimize shoreline erosion, stone steps provide new access to the lake, and where the upland portions of the shoreline will be restored to prairie.

The Lake Restoration Program (LRP) remains committed to protecting and improving water quality in Clear Lake. In addition to the projects described above, the LRP helped fund pump repairs and upgrades at Ventura Marsh to allow DNR Wildlife to manage water levels and help re-establish vital aquatic plants in the marsh that filter nutrients and sediment from the watershed.

APCL Board and Friends Help with Earth Day Cleanup

— Deb Tesar, Secretary/Treasurer

After deferring a couple planned dates due to weather, several APCL board members plus additional family members met to pick up trash at the Clausen's Cove/Farmers Beach Area on Friday, May 5. The group collected 6 bags of trash from along trails and the shoreline both east and west of the turnaround, plus along both sides of Cedar Avenue up to the County Road B35 (235th St).

Pictured L-R are Dave Heath, Paul Gordon, Jan Lovell, Kirk Kraft, Sue Heath, Cerise Sissel, Dennis Sissel, and Deb Tesar.
Not pictured: Margo Underwood

