



Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

Summer 2018

APCL Annual Picnic Notice

The APCL Picnic will be held on Sunday, August 19, at 5 pm at PM Park. We invite you to join us for this informative and fun annual event.

Following dinner, Rick Cruse, Director of the Iowa Water Center in Ames will present keynote remarks and Scott Grummer, Fisheries Biologist and Jim Sholly, CLEAR Project Coordinator, will provide information about recent and future projects to improve and enhance Clear Lake's water quality and its fishery.

Watch for your picnic invitation and membership renewal in early August. We look forward to seeing you on August 19!



Rick Cruse
ISU Iowa Water Center

Clear Lake Angling — The Glory Years

Angling on Clear Lake has never been better. During 2017 anglers had an exceptional year and 2018 is starting off in similar fashion.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources conducts what is called a recreational creel survey on Clear Lake to come up with fish harvest estimates for the lake. A staff person conducts interviews with anglers fishing on the ice, from boats, and from docks or shoreline areas. Information gathered during these interviews gets catch composition, catch rates, angling preferences, and demographics.

In 2017, 50,000 anglers fished Clear Lake and harvested 170,000 fish. Yellow Bass dominated the fish being harvested with 133,570 of the estimated harvest.

When asked, Clear Lake anglers prefer to target Walleye (over 30% of anglers). These anglers were rewarded in 2017 with great success. The Walleye harvest was just over 12,000 fish. An average year for Clear Lake Walleye harvest is around 5,500 fish. 2018 has started off similarly with April and May providing good Walleye action thanks to a large year-class of fish in the 14-18 inch range.

Crappie, Yellow Perch, and Bluegill are species that have improved populations as a result of lake restoration efforts. These species rely heavily on better water quality and aquatic plant beds that develop as a result of better water clarity.

Anglers harvested 13,000 Crappie, 4,700 Yellow Perch, and 5,300 Bluegill in 2017. The harvest levels of these species has consistently increased after lake restoration work and should continue.

Clear Lake angling success has brought anglers consistently from greater distances. Ice fishing is the season anglers travel the furthest. Sixty four percent of ice anglers interviewed traveled a distance greater than 30 miles to fish. There has also been an increase of anglers traveling from other states (21% during ice angling and 11% open water).

The good fishing benefits the area economy. It is estimated that the 2017 angling season brought 2.2 million dollars into the local economy.

Scott Grummer, Fisheries Biologist Iowa DNR



Aquatic Vegetation: Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project

Aquatic vegetation is a conversation centerpiece for Clear Lake boaters and fishermen these days. As water quality has improved over the last decade, so has the area of our lake where vegetation now calls home. While news broadcasts from around the Midwest focus on the destructive force of invasive species like Eurasian Water Milfoil or Curly-Leaf Pondweed, rest assured that Clear Lake is dominated by native species.

This month we are highlighting a common resident to our lake, Longleaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton nodosus*). This native, perennial aquatic plant is common to much of the Midwest. It is rooted and typically does not grow in water more than about 5 feet deep. It has elliptical leaves that float on the top

of the water and are about 1.5 to 5 inches long. It is a very desirable plant because it provides good habitat for small fish and invertebrates, which are in turn eaten by larger fish and waterfowl. The seeds and the plant itself are eaten by many migrating species as well. Having a healthier and diverse stand of native rooted vegetation throughout Clear Lake will help prevent or slow the establishment of much more harmful invasive vegetation. It is important to know all the new invasive species laws in Iowa. Check to make sure your boat's drain plugs are removed and all loose vegetation is cleaned from your trailer

before leaving the boat ramp. The spread of invasive species hurts everyone and once they are established cannot be undone. To find out more about how you can protect Clear Lake, visit www.clearproject.net.



Project spotlight: Jim Sholly — CLEAR Project

A bio-retention cell was completed this Spring beside the fire station in Ventura. It was designed with the help of the Urban Conservation team from Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and built by volunteers from the Ventura Fire Department. It will capture runoff from the fire station and a portion of its parking lot and driveway. This is an area that would have significant standing water and heavy erosion through the gravel lot after any significant rain event. Since construction, visible erosion has been virtually eliminated with no more standing water around the parking area. This project was funded in part by the CLEAR Project using its EPA Section 319 grant, and a generous donation to the Ventura Firemen Association for a memorial garden.

APCL Membership Matters: Margo Underwood, APCL President and Deb Tesar, Treasurer

Thank you for your membership and continued support of the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake. A healthy Clear Lake is critical to this area's economic and recreational vitality.

Through its work with the CLEAR Project over the last couple of decades, the APCL has helped enable important work for the lake such as the west end dredging project, Ventura marsh restoration, beach cleaning equipment, water sampling, habitat restoration and more. We have begun to see the benefits in improved water quality, the return of desirable vegetation, and an impressive fishery that contributes 2.2 million annually to the local economy.

Although the era of large marquee projects may be behind us for now, there are still many opportunities to continue to enhance and protect the lake that surrounds it, such as shoreline stabilizations, rain gardens/bio-retention cells, and other practices to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff into the lake. For the past several years, much of the funding for these projects has come from an EPA grant that may not be available to Clear Lake much longer. As we begin looking for other grants and funding sources to fill the void, we will need to demonstrate strong local support through membership in our lake association. In early August, you will receive an invitation to the August 19 APCL picnic and a reminder to renew your membership for 2018-19. We're grateful for your past support and thank you in advance for your renewal during our upcoming membership drive.