

# Why I Joined The DLIA and The Citizen Lake Monitoring Network

By Susan Vogus

In November of 1988 our family bought our home on Inlet Shore Drive in Delavan in order to get away from the hubbub in Illinois and to enjoy Delavan Lake. Imagine our surprise when in 1989 the Lake was drawn down, emptying the Inlet of water and beginning a 3-year project to rehabilitate the Lake! That was when I learned of the Delavan Lake Improvement Association and began to attend meetings to learn about the project goals and the process involved in implementing the project. And along the way I learned about the importance of protecting and preserving the Lake.

Over the years since, the DLIA has been at the forefront of advocating an ongoing process of rehabilitation, restoration, maintenance, and special projects to protect and ensure the health of the lake. The DLIA also has played an important role in educating the public about the economic importance of the Lake to our community and in presenting information on opportunities for the public to get involved in activities and practices that benefit the Lake.

It was because of the DLIA that I became aware of things that I could do to protect the shoreline of our property. I also have been able to participate in programs, events, and “best practices” that help ensure the future of Delavan Lake.

In 2007, I met Audrey Greene (Walworth County Lake Specialist), and Lisa Reas (Environmental Consultant and native plant specialist). The shoreline on our property was eroding significantly, and they guided us through the permitting process and installation of our shoreline buffer. It has protected out 2 large trees whose roots were becoming exposed, as well as prevented run-off of soil into the lake. The native plants & bushes planted have flourished, providing an array of beautiful colors and textures, as well as providing habitat for birds, butterflies & bees. And it's also keeping the geese out of our yard!

As I've learned more about native plants, I began to become familiar with some invasive plant species, which could spread aggressively and negatively impact the lake. I began taking a closer look at plants along our shore and in the water, and I asked questions when I noticed an unusual species that I couldn't identify. I sent photos to both Lisa and Audrey and subsequently the DNR was contacted, some Purple Loosestrife plants were removed, and the area was flagged to watch for any recurrence to ensure that the species would not return & spread. They have successfully also eliminated two subsequent appearances of the plant. A year or so later, I noticed another unusual plant – this one growing in the water- and again shared photos with Audrey & Lisa. This plant was identified as Water Pennywort, an invasive that, upon investigation by the DLSD and the DNR, was successfully removed from several locations in the Inlet.

Even better news is that this summer the DLSD and the DNR implemented a Citizen Lake Monitoring Network program to train community members to observe, identify, and report on plant species sighted in their designated areas of the Lake. A training session was held in May for citizens in Walworth County, and four DLIA Board Members were certified to monitor areas of Delavan Lake. This collaborative effort, utilizing excellent materials to assist in accurate identification of a variety of invasive species, has already been helpful. The DLSD has welcomed citizen assistance in locating problem areas in order to provide timely response to quickly control problem areas as they work to eliminate invasive species to preserve & protect Delavan Lake.

We encourage neighborhood associations as well as individual citizens to contact the DLIA at [www.delavan-lake.org](http://www.delavan-lake.org) to learn more about participating in this effort and to join with us to ensure the long-term health of Delavan Lake. We welcome your help!