

Fall 2022

Delavan Lake Improvement Association Newsletter



Spotlight

2022 Year-end
Membership 251

Farm acreage
added to program:
75 acres

Tonnage of plants
removed from the
lake in 2022: 5892
cubic yards

Carp removed from
the lake in 2022
YTD: 427

Delavan Lake
Improvement
Association Board

President: Bill
Thummel
Vice-President: Kim
O'Keefe
Treasurer: Don Althoff
Secretary: Sue
Heffron
Gerri Green
Jim McKeivitt
Ben Nixdorf
Mary Pat O'Connor
Carol Radford

President's comments...

This summer's outbreak of blue-green algae was another reminder that we must stay vigilant in our efforts to improve the water quality in Delavan Lake. The algae bloom was largely related to the high levels of phosphorus in the lake water, a key nutrient used by the algae. Your DLIA has continued its efforts to help reduce the flow of phosphorus into the lake in several ways.

In coordination with Walworth County, this year we will have doubled the amount of acreage under cover crop, from 170 to 245 acres. And we have continued to sponsor the carp removal program with support from the Town of Delavan and the Delavan Lake Sanitary District, removing over 400 carp this year.

We will continue these programs in 2022 and will introduce a new program in 2023 intended to significantly increase the acreage of no-till farmland in the watershed. Essentially, no-till is where the soil is left undisturbed after harvesting until planting, and this practice has a significant impact on reducing the amount of phosphorus reaching the lake. However, specialized equipment is needed to prepare the untilled soil for planting. The Delavan Lake Watershed Improvement Plan authored by Peter Berrini and others in 2016 recommended that almost 10,000 acres of our farmed watershed be under no-till. The County currently estimates that about 5,550 acres are no-till, and we intend to entice other farmers and operators to add an additional 1,000 acres of no-till by offering financial incentives similar to what we now do with cover crops.

This effort will require considerably more investment than we have recently achieved and we will be asking for the assistance of our membership and many others in the coming months. More to come !

Blue-green Algae Outbreak

Delavan Lake experienced a significant blue-green algae bloom recently that closed the Community Park beach from June 30th to July 18th. The closure was issued by Walworth County as a safety precaution for both humans and pets due to serious health concerns.

(continued on the next page)



Blue-green algae bloom



Blue-green algae continued.....

Walworth County placed a news release on its website shortly before the 4th of July weekend outlining what the cause of the closure was and the harm the bloom could cause. It read: "Swimmers, boaters, and recreational users are urged to be aware of the conditions in the water around them and avoid direct contact with the water that looks like pea soup or smells foul, two indicators of the presence of blue-green algae", the release continued. "Children and pets are particularly susceptible to health problems related to blue-green algae and should be kept away from the affected lake areas".

"Blue-green algae are natural parts of lake ecosystems, but algae blooms are when the algae population grows very quickly and overwhelms part of the water system" it was explained. "Typically, with lots of sunlight, warm water, little wind and high levels of nutrients such as phosphorus, the likelihood of having an algae bloom occur are higher".

The blooms can make people and animals sick if they swallow, breathe or even have contact with the water. The DNR recommends swimming in the clearest possible water and avoid water that looks like spilled pea soup, colored latex paint, and has small green dots floating in it. It can also be characterized by floating scum or dead fish or other animals.

"It is recommended when people and pets come in contact or suspected contact with blue-green algae or algal bloom to rinse off thoroughly, so no skin irritation occurs and to assure that no one consumes the water," the notice said.

How can we get rid of harmful algae blooms? We can't eliminate blue-green algae from the lake -- they are an inherent part of the overall algal community. What we really want to do is to try to control their overall intensity and the frequency of the blooms. Since we can't control the water temperature, which is an important factor in their growth, the best thing we can do is to reduce the amount of nutrients getting into the lake. This can best be accomplished by reducing the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen from man-made sources such as lawn fertilizer, cultivated fields, and a myriad of other sources. Though a

reduction of nutrients entering the lake will not be immediate, it is the best long-term solution to minimizing the frequency and intensity of these nuisance algae blooms.



Boat Safety

Boat Safety... We all have our stories of crazy and inattentive drivers, careless maneuvers, and various dangerous unsafe situations. Fortunately, Delavan Lake has been spared severe boating tragedies over the last several years.

The lake is a wonderful place to be especially if everyone knows and obeys the lake 'Rules of the Road'. Unfortunately, there are many boaters who operate without knowing the rules and this is when accidents can happen.

A Boater Safety course and license is required for younger boaters, however, older boaters have NO license requirements. This void in boater education is a concern. The boating rules are not as intuitive as some people assume. Who has right-of-way in this or that situation? Obeying the rules can be critical when fast paced activities are underway. Failure to act correctly by just one person could lead to disastrous outcomes. Some of the problematic situations include: Two boats approaching head to head, overtaking boats, when to make or not make a wake, swimming in the lake off a boat, jet-skiing close to others, showing off, drinking & driving, and the list goes on.

(continued on the next page)



Boat Safety continued...

The DLIA is working on ways to improve boater education. In 2023 the DLIA will publish a boater safety card and make it available at boat launches and where boats can be rented at no charge. The cards will also have a QR code that will access a handbook on Wisconsin Water Safety Laws and Responsibilities on the DNR website. We have also included the link here for your reference: widnr.widen.net/s/Ovw8hwrae3. And the Town of Delavan has provided a more complete set of rules on their website: townofdelavan.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20.-Chapter-19-Mutual-and-Identical-Regulations-for-Boating-on-Delavan-Lake-and-Lake-Comus-for-the-City-and-Town-of-Delavan.pdf. These rules address frequent situations which include: no wake zone 200' from shore, no wake within 100' of another boat, Right-of-Ways; power boat vs sail boat vs drifting boat vs anchored boat vs boat towing someone or something, where NOT to ride in the boat.

We would love to hear from our members about their concerns, suggestions and ideas about how to improve Delavan Lake safety. Please visit our website at www.delavan-lake.org/, the "contact us" tab at the top of the page.

See you on the water in 2023 and Safe Boating!

Mound Road Ponds Dredging Project

Many of our members will recall when Delavan Lake was 'drawn down' in order to deal with a number of significant issues negatively impacting the lake. A part of that project was the creation of three sediment holding ponds north of Mound Road, the Mound Road Ponds. The purpose of these Ponds was to trap sediment (containing phosphorus) from significant rainfall events and keeping that phosphorus from reaching the lake through the main Jackson Creek tributary. Those ponds have worked effectively but because they have not been regularly maintained, they have filled in over time.

The Town of Delavan identified funds to be directed toward the dredging of the ponds in 2021. Given the complexity of the task and the complicated permitting process, dredging did not occur that year. However, thanks to significant effort from Town Supervisors Mary Knipper and Katherine Gaulke, dredging was begun this year. The current permit from the DNR allows for the removal of about 16,000 cubic yards of material from the ponds. Dredging of the east, or largest pond, began on August 27 and was stopped on September 22 in order to align with the permit time designated by the DNR. During this time period, about 5,600 cubic yards were removed.

The dredging will continue in 2023, with the hope that all three of the ponds will be completed. Plans are now in place to routinely monitor the ponds going forward and to resume maintenance when data from these monitoring efforts indicates that work is needed.

The DLIA wishes to commend the Town for its focus on this critical element in improving the quality of our lake water.



The dredger on it's first pass on the east pond

Fall
2022

Delavan Lake Improvement Association Newsletter



Muskie Stocking in Delavan Lake

Recently more than 1,200 foot-long muskellunge (muskie) were released into Delavan Lake. The muskie stocking was sponsored by the Delavan Lake Improvement Association and was largely funded by the Town of Delavan with supporting funds coming from the Delavan Friends of the Park and private citizens.

While muskie are well prized as a popular game fish, the hope is that in addition to further improving the sport fishing in Delavan Lake, that the voracious muskies would prey on young common carp that are in the lake. The feeding style of the carp disturb lake sediments, thus releasing trapped nutrients such as phosphorus back into the water column.

Last year, the same partnership organized the introduction of over 1,000 muskie. The fish in this year's release were tagged in order to enable the DNR Fisheries biologists to monitor the development of muskie in the lake. Another similar size release is planned for 2023.



Annual Membership Drive

We will soon be launching our membership drive for 2023. Through your generosity, the membership fees which we receive enable us to continue the needed work to improve the quality and safety of our lake. Please renew your membership and, just as importantly, please talk with neighbors who are not yet members and ask them to consider becoming a part of the DLIA community. Renewing and joining

online is quick and easy. Simply go to Delavan-lake.org and click JOIN.

DLIA Website: www.delavan-lake.org
Facebook: [Facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake](https://www.facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake)
Instagram: [Instagram.com/dlia_delavanlake](https://www.instagram.com/dlia_delavanlake)

