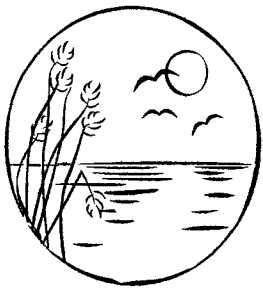


Spring 2009



Lost Island Protective Association Newsletter

L.I.P.A. Mission Statement: *To encourage and to promote high environmental quality of the lake area. We support the steps that are essential to maintain the continuing proper usage of Lost Island Lake and its surroundings.*

President: Gary Small
Vice President: Larry Rustan
Treasurer: Nancy Drum
Secretary: Patty Willrett

Upcoming Dates to Remember!

Association Picnic (at the Shelter House).....June 7th
Meeting at 5:00. Supper at 6:00.

Junk Day.....June 21st

Lost Island Garage Sale.....July 5th ^{4th}

L.I.P.A. Booth Buy's at the Quasquicentennial Celebration.....July 11th
(come and see us from 9 to 5!)

Trail Project Update

As most of you are aware, the Lost Island Trail Project has been collecting money for the past three years in an effort to begin the long and tenuous process of creating a trail around the perimeter of Lost Island Lake. Through the Palo Alto County Gaming Development Corporation we have been awarded a matching fund grant in the amount of \$21,137.44 this year. That money will be used to pay for the engineering portion of the trail as laid out in our preliminary plans for the northeast, east and southeast sides of the lake. Our money raising efforts are just beginning, however. It is our goal for the next phase (real cement on the ground) to raise \$25,000.00 this year to be used for additional grant applications. This must be a joint effort and will take time and patience. Many projects are being planned and a comprehensive canvassing of the residents to boost membership will be just the beginning. Look for all the other opportunities to support your association in the upcoming days and months ahead.



Gary Small, President

Lost Island Restoration Project Update

Let me begin this update by telling everyone how excited I am to be working with such a great community on such a landmark lake restoration project. This beautiful lake deserves our attention and needs our care. Lost Island Lake is one of Iowa's sovereign lakes, meaning that during the original Federal Government surveys of this land, it was designated as a special water body. When Iowa entered the Union this sovereign lake was transferred to the state to be held in trust for its citizens. All citizens of Iowa have a stake in Lost Island and its health, but as lake or local community residents your interest is especially important and valued. Lost Island Lake is your lake – the decisions you make regarding its management will forever be a part of its history and have an impact on its health for future generations.

So, what's been happening? The Lost Island Lake Restoration Project is in full swing. Much has happened over the past year. Although much of the action has been administrative – believe me, we're moving very quickly.

Last winter we finished up the Water Quality Improvement Plan. Many of you attended this public meeting and listened to one of our staff scientists talk about phosphorus, internal and external loading, in-lake versus watershed inputs, and some other scientific stuff. Although this may have been tough to digest, this study was very valuable in confirming some of our assumptions. Lost Island Lake, like many Iowa lakes, has been plagued with too many nutrients. Too many nutrients lead to algae blooms and green water. Interestingly, the study confirmed that a large source of the problem may be coming from the lake itself. This is not normally the case. For many lakes, the watershed (land draining to the lake) is the major contributor to this problem. Fortunately, a significant portion of the watershed for Lost Island Lake is already in perpetual grass and water cover thanks to the state's and federal government's land acquisition programs. Don't get me wrong, we should never underestimate the importance of a healthy watershed and lakeshore, but this is good news for those of us who are impatient. Watershed restoration can be a slow and sometimes expensive process.

Many of you had a suspicion there was an over abundance of common carp in the lake. You couldn't have been more right. This is an important determination because at high densities common carp can be very detrimental to water quality.

Last spring the DNR fisheries team fin clipped nearly 6,000 carp and released them back into the lake to mix with the masses. Later on in the summer we came back and netted 1,600 more. Seventy three of those fish were fin clipped. Some quick algebra and a little math allows us to use these numbers to estimate the population and biomass. We determined there are over 128,000 carp in the lake weighing close to half of a million pounds! And those numbers don't include the 40,000 carp removed by the commercial angler this spring!



So what do we do? Working with your local citizen advisory team, we are formulating a plan to aggressively decrease carp numbers in the lake. We'll accomplish this in three major steps. The first is to reduce carp reproduction by eliminating or reducing their access to key spawning areas in and around the lake. Two major spawning areas are Baringer Slough and the Blue-wing Marsh Complex, but we're identifying others. Restoration of these areas improves the lake not only by helping to control carp numbers, but by also improving water quality.

The second step is to remove massive amounts of carp through commercial fishing. It's important to understand that this removal effort will not work without step one. Simply removing a bunch of carp without controlling their reproduction puts us right back to the beginning in no time.

The third step, already being implemented, is stocking game fish species. This effort will help to control carp reproduction and establish a healthy and more stable fishery.

All of these steps require careful planning, but step one will also require engineering and design of fish barriers and water control structures. To help us with this, we've hired an engineering firm this winter. They have already begun survey work and will have designs and recommendations completed by mid to late summer. If our plans stay on schedule we could be starting initial construction this fall.

In the meantime there is still plenty happening. We will be repeating the carp population estimate this spring. This data will give us important information

regarding their growth and population response to the large commercial harvest last year. The commercial angler also plans to remove more fish this spring. We will also be exploring techniques to establish aquatic vegetation on the shorelines of Lost Island Lake. This vegetation is one of the important keys to a healthy lake. It stabilized shorelines, provides important habitat, and holds sediments on the bottom where they belong.

The Palo Alto and Clay County NRCS offices are also completing survey and analysis of the Lost Island Lake watershed looking for places to reduce sediment and nutrient inputs to the lake.

It's a great time in the history of your beautiful lake. If you are interested in supporting this project and getting involved or simply have questions, comments, or concerns please contact your local lake association, advisory team members, or myself.

Mike Hawkins

In addition to the Lost Island Lake Restoration Project, the Palo Alto County Conservation Board and the Iowa DNR are working on a project to improve fishing in Lost Island lake. The following article is provided by Steve Pitt of the Palo Alto County Conservation Board: The Palo Alto County Conservation Board and the Iowa DNR will be working on a project this summer to improve fishing in Lost Island Lake. The Conservation Board was awarded a Fish Habitat Grant of \$36,000 to be matched with \$ 4,000 of Conservation Board funds and \$ 60,000 of DNR funds to construct a rock fishing reef in the lake. The reef will be located in approximately 10' of water and will be constructed like a "dragon's back". It will rise and fall from the lake bottom in a linear path. At this time, plans are for the reef to be constructed of native fieldstone. It will be located on an area of the lake bottom that has been identified as being very firm, thereby not causing the stone to sink into the soft lake bottom.

This reef will provide a substrate for aquatic invertebrates, attract minnows and in turn attract game fish and fishermen. Construction should take place in late summer or fall.

As you can see, there are several exciting projects going on around the lake. The Lost Island Protective Association appreciates your continued support. It's a great time to get involved and support these worthwhile improvement projects.

Jim Neighbors, L.I.P.A. 712-837-4806