



About This Issue

This newsletter is for members and supporters of The Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake (APCL)

The APCL will begin publishing the newsletter at least twice each year.

The newsletter will focus on the water quality of Clear Lake. If you know of anyone who would like to be added to the newsletter mailing



Public Awareness Campaign for 2002

LAKE LEVEL SPONSORSHIP

The Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake is are planning on sponsoring the Lake Level Report in the Clear Lake Mirror Reporter. This should give us excellent page-one advertising and increase public awareness of lake related issues. Each week will be a different "lake friendly" message to remind readers what they can do to improve lake water quality. The cost is minimal and a weekly reminder should greatly increase awareness to the people who can do the most good. Look for the lake logos in the spring of 2002 when the lake level is again published.

LAKE PHOTOS WANTED!

We would like to publish a Clear Lake calendar for the year 2003.

Each month will feature a Clear Lake photo and a "lake friendly" tip relevant to that month. The calendar will provide another opportunity to get our message to the public. To do this project effectively, we need some good photos of Clear Lake activities. Photos showing people enjoying Clear Lake activities will be likely candidates for publication. Swimming, boating, sailing, fishing, wake boarding, snowmobiling, skating, cross country skiing and ice fishing are all good examples. The photographer for each selected photograph will be given credit. We will accept prints or slides, 35 mm or larger negative size, all horizontal format. Submit your photos to Tom Sawyer by the end of September, 2002. Go have some fun and keep those cameras clicking!



Be Alert To Harmful Activities

One of the ways that local residents can contribute to efforts being made by the CLEAR Project is to be watchful for activities around the lake that could be harmful to water quality. During the past summer and fall, several residents in the community have called the Clear Lake Police Department and/or David Knoll, the CLEAR Project coordinator, with concerns about activities they had witnessed. Examples of these calls include complaints about:

- a contractor rinsing cement from a wheel barrow into street gutters near a storm drain intake.
- a resident raking leaves into a storm drain.
- a lake property owner shoveling dirt from the side of a hill into the lake.
- chlorinated water from a swimming pool being drained into a storm water intake.

- residents mowing grass clippings into the street.

All of these activities go against the efforts of the CLEAR Project to reduce run-off and pollutants from entering Clear Lake. In all of the above noted cases, the responsible property owners or contractors were approached and informed about the harmful effects of their actions. In each case, the people responsible were very cooperative and didn't realize how damaging their actions were to lake water quality.

Educating the public about protecting the lake is a major goal of the CLEAR Project. Being watchful for and reporting activities detrimental to the watershed is an important role that all of us can help with. Please be alert to activities around the lake and call David Knoll at 357-2532 if you see things that could be harmful to water quality.

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Recent Water Clarity Explained

An intriguing phenomenon occurred at Clear Lake during the latter part of September. Suddenly, almost overnight, the lake became dramatically clear. With some help from a local citizen (Mike Connor), the local DNR office determined that the reason for the unprecedented water clarity lay in the voracious appetite of a very small herbivore – zooplankton. Zooplankton are tiny invertebrates, barely visible to the naked eye, that feed on algae. When zooplankton populations are large enough, they can actually eat the algae in the lake faster than it can grow. The result, as was noticed by anyone visiting Clear Lake, was very clear water. In fact, the DNR measured water clarity depths of up to 9 feet. Unfortunately, zooplankton population explosions are only temporary and cannot be relied on to maintain the water clarity we all desire. However, the recent clear water did raise at least one interesting question, was the clear water just a sign of



the past or also of the future?

We all know that Clear Lake was once much clearer than it is today. In the 1950's, there was still more than 5 feet of water clarity. We were fortunate enough this fall to witness what Clear Lake could look like if algae populations are kept in check. The results were amazing. I heard many stories about people being able to walk to the end of their dock and see to the bottom of the lake for the first time in many years. Others told of finding lost tools or items dropped from their dock that were now visible on the bottom of the lake. Many enjoyed being able to see fish, turtles, and other aquatic life that suddenly were exposed. Iowa State University has put together a restoration plan that they predict would increase water clarity to at least 3-4 feet. This plan will take a lot of cooperation to be successful. It is up to us to determine whether the clear water we have recently enjoyed will be only a reflection of the past or an indication of the future. (Picture: Shadow of

Commercial Fishing At Clear Lake



Many people probably do not know that commercial fishing has been going on for a number of years at Clear Lake. According to Scott Grummer of the DNR, contract commercial fishing began on Clear Lake in the early 1980's. Now commercial fishing is being viewed as one potential way to reduce the populations of "rough" fish like carp and buffalo. Jim Wahl of the DNR calls commercial fishing "A win-win situation because the fishermen get the product they desire and Clear Lake rids itself of some unwanted fish." Every three years a competitive bid is held and awarded to one commercial fisherman for exclusive fishing rights to the lake. Some people have questioned why the DNR doesn't allow unlimited commercial fishing. One of the main reasons is because the DNR prefers to work closely with the

commercial fishermen to make sure no harm is being done to sport fish. Other reasons are because unlimited commercial fishing would interfere with recreational fishing and would cause many confrontations among the commercial fishermen.

Currently, commercial fishing is not extensive enough to have a large impact on reducing carp populations. Approximately 10 lbs/acre (36,000 lbs) of carp are removed each year by commercial fishing. This number seems large but is quite small in comparison to the total population of carp in the lake, which is about 150 lbs/acre (540,000 lbs). Because reducing carp populations in the lake is so important, the DNR is currently investigating new ways to increase the amount of rough fish taken by commercial fishermen. Changes to

Ventura Marsh Vegetation



Unless you are a duck hunter or pilot, you probably have not noticed the increasing amount of submerged vegetation in Ventura Marsh. Many years ago, Ventura Marsh was heavily vegetated. However, over the last couple decades, aquatic vegetation in the Marsh has been on the decline. This is bad news because aquatic vegetation plays two important roles in improving water quality and clarity. First, they stabilize the bottom of marsh. This helps prevent bottom sediments from being disturbed and mixed into the water column. Second, they compete for phosphorus, making less of the nutrient available for algae growth.

The main reason for the decline in vegetation in the marsh is lack of water clarity. Just like other plants, aquatic plants require sunlight to grow. The DNR and ISU wanted to determine what impact fish were having on

making Clear Lake turbid, and therefore hindering vegetation growth. It was well known that bottom dwelling fish like carp and bullhead mix lake sediments back into the water column. So, in the summer of 2000 the DNR performed a fish kill on Ventura Marsh, resulting in a 99% removal of fish from the marsh. In the next 6 weeks, water clarity began to increase until it peaked at a depth equal to the depth of the marsh. More quickly than expected, submerged vegetation began returning to the marsh. Even though fish populations are beginning to rise again in Ventura Marsh, vegetation is still on the increase. If you wish to see where areas of submerged vegetation are, you don't even need a boat. Just view the marsh on a windy day. All the calm areas of the marsh are where the vegetation is currently established. Although keeping carp and bullhead populations low in the marsh will not solve all of Clear Lake's problems, it is