



About This Issue

We hope you enjoy the new colorful look of our newsletter. The Hancock SWCD office has received a laserjet color printer that we will be using to print our newsletters. The laserjet printer will provide a more attractive newsletter for you to enjoy. If you know of others interested in receiving this quarterly newsletter, please contact the CLEAR Project at: (641) 357-2532

Limited Data Indicates Improving Water Quality

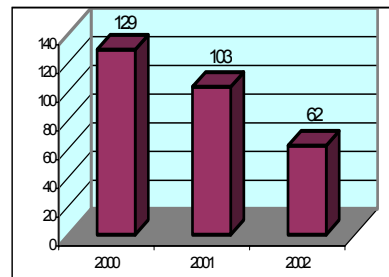
The Iowa Lakes Survey has been collecting water quality information on 132 Iowa Lakes for the past three years. The study is performed by ISU and funded by the DNR. The results of the latest survey released this spring shows a steady improvement for the water quality of Clear Lake over the past 3 years. However, the results are based on a very small number of samples.

The first and most visible clue to the health of a lake is water clarity measured by the Secchi Disk depth. Clear Lake has increased in water clarity from 16" to 28" to 31" over the past three years. The increase in water clarity coincides with the reduction in total phosphorus levels from 129 parts per billion (ppb) to 103 ppb to 62 ppb over the past three years. Phosphorus is the nutrient responsible for algae blooms and needs to be maintained at a level less than 100 ppb.

Although this data seems to be

showing a definite trend in improving water quality at Clear Lake, a number of factors point to taking the data with some sense of caution.

First of all, only 3 samples are taken at each of the lakes studied each year. This low number of samples could skew results because water quality parameters often change daily due to weather conditions. There have also been some unique environmental conditions affecting the lake over the past couple years, including the high zooplankton populations. So, while this data is very encouraging, we all know our work is just beginning at Clear Lake.



Total P data for Clear Lake from the Iowa Lakes Survey.

The publication of this document has been funded in part by the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake, the Division of Soil Conservation, Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship, and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act).

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Lakeshore Stabilization Project Completed at Ventura Heights

A lakeshore stabilization project was completed this spring at a state owned park in Ventura Heights. The lakeshore of the park has seen many years of ice movement and wave action wash away valuable portions of the shoreline. A few trees have been lost over the past several years and more trees, along with more shoreline, were in jeopardy of washing into the lake if action was not taken. The eroding of dirt from the shoreline into the lake was also a water quality concern.

The DNR and CLEAR Project worked together to develop and implement a plan to place riprap along the shoreline. A donation of quarry rock was offered by Lehigh Cement Co. was offered and greatly appreciated; however, local fieldstone was located and used instead. Large native fieldstone rock was used for the first row and smaller native rock was placed behind it. The result was a much more attractive lakeshore and a total of

about 400 feet of shoreline protection. The work began in late April and was completed in about a week. The project was funded by the Iowa DNR.



A picture of the shoreline at Ventura Heights prior to the stabilization project.



A picture of the shoreline at Ventura Heights after the stabilization project.

Clear Lake and Ventura Earth Day Activities a Success

Earth Day activities were once again a success at Clear Lake and Ventura.

The CLEAR Project teamed with the 7th grade class at the Clear Lake Middle School to clean up the lakeshore at Clear Lake City Beach, Clear Lake State Park, and the public approaches on N. Shore Dr. The students removed a couple pickup truck loads worth of dead plant material and garbage from the locations. Students were also given a brief presentation on water quality and enjoyed viewing a living zooplankton under a microscope.



The Ventura Earth Day was equally rewarding as students there also cleaned up multiple lakeshore locations. Another group of students repainted the message "Caution Drains To Lake" on all 60 storm drains in Ventura and Venetian Village. The bright blue message will act as a reminder to all to keep contaminants out of streets and sidewalks.

A PowerPoint presentation on Clear Lake water quality was given to a handful of adults during Earth Day week. Earth Day activities culminated with a community wide cleanup activity by many local residents on a Saturday morning.



Storm Water Utility Fee Passed

(source: Clear Lake Mirror Reporter)

Clear Lake residents will now begin providing financial support for the cleanup of Clear Lake. The City Council has adopted an ordinance to establish a storm water utility fee.

The city has decided on a \$1.50 per month charge per single family residence on utility bills. The charge for residences and property other than single family is \$3.00 per month. The city estimates revenue from the fee will be approximately \$72,000 per year.

"Often times, stormwater needs do not

compete well against the higher profile needs of other departments," said City Administrator Scott Flory. "The stormwater utility would provide the city with a funding source to make some necessary capital improvements, without the reliance upon property taxes."

Flory noted that 32 storm infiltration boxes are needed to remove sediment and particles from lines which empty directly into the lake. The city has installed two boxes to date with two more planned for 2003. The filter boxes cost about \$50,000 each.