



Lake Association News

A newsletter for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake

SPRING 2008



! DREDGING ! **SAFETY RULES**

SLOW DOWN - to 10 MPH or less. The DNR has proposed that all areas of Clear Lake west of the McIntosh Woods sandbar, known locally as the "Little Lake," will have a speed limit of 10 MPH during the dredging. The 2008 dredging season will last from June 1st until ice-in.

The Lynne Lorenzen Park and boat ramp will be closed as it will serve as the mobilization area for the dredging. No access inside the fenced area is permitted.

McIntosh Woods boat ramp will remain open; however, users must abide by the 10 MPH Little Lake speed limit. Traffic and parking congestion will be an issue on busy weekends; please be patient.

Do not trespass at the dredged material containment site. These sites can be very dangerous; do not attempt to access the site.

Be respectful of the dredge workers by maintaining a safe distance from the dredge barge.

Be observant of where the dredge and pipeline are at all times, as they will move daily.

Conservation Donors Leave Legacy at Clear Lake

A total of 500 acres of land in the watershed has been restored to prairie and wetlands since 2002. However, the recent increase in grain prices has resulted in a subsequent decline in interest in land conservation programs. It was therefore assumed that very few acres would be restored to a natural state in the near future. However, Conservation donors like Max Clausen remind us that that some people are more interested in leaving a legacy of conservation than focus on a short term profit. This past winter Max decided to donate 240 acres of land and 2,700 feet of shoreline known locally as the "Farmer's Beach" area to the Nature Conservancy. The monetary value of the property, now known as "Clausen's Cove" was appraised at \$5.4 million. But to Max, the true value of the property was not measured in dollars and cents, but in the fact that it was a rare parcel of land that has re-

mained relatively unchanged for the past 150 years. In a press release from the Nature Conservancy, Max said: "I wanted to preserve what I had. Anyone would have sold by now. I saw what they did to the rest of the lake and wanted this property to stay in its natural state," said Clausen. "There is no other place in Clear Lake where you can see grassland, farmland, forest and lake in one view – an unspoiled world that I wouldn't sell for any price."

The wildlife and conservation value of Max's donation is further enhanced by previous acts of generosity by descendants of the Woodford and Ashland families who donated a conservation easement on over 100 acres woodland and wetlands and 1 mile of shoreline known as the Lone Tree Point area. Another 190 acres of prairie and wetland known as the Sisters' Prairie area was enrolled in a wetland easement a few years

ago. Both areas are adjacent to the Clausen's Cove area.

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A partial view of Clausen's Cove

Dredging Equipment Arrives at Clear Lake

Lake dredging is set to begin in June, about a month ahead of schedule. L.W. Matteson Company began moving the dredge barge from a lake in South Dakota to Clear Lake in mid May. The barge was transported on about 15 semi truck loads and then was assembled at Clear Lake. The pipeline that the dredged material will flow through to the containment site was moved from nearby Crystal Lake, which Matteson recently dredged. Finishing touches were put on the containment site this spring to prepare it to receive the dredged material. The actual dredging will begin in June and will continue through this open water season. It will likely take part of the 2009 open water season to complete the project. Thanks to all who donated time and money to make this project happen! Please note the dredging safety rules in the panel on the left.



Clear Lake Birders Search for Rare Waterfowl Nest

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR AT THE CAPITAL

State lawmakers continued their strong support of lake restoration funding by providing \$8.6 million dollars to the DNR for those efforts in FY'09. It is the same amount that was allocated for the past two years. Of the \$8.6 million in new funding, \$3.0 million was earmarked for Clear Lake. This was the final year of a three commitment by lawmakers to improve Clear Lake by investing a total of \$9.5 million in the project. It is the most money invested in a lake restoration project to date. Be sure to thank our local legislators for their support of the lake restoration efforts!

THANK YOU

ANNUAL PICNIC DATE SET



Mark your calendars for the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake's Annual Picnic. The Picnic will be held the evening of Friday, August 8th, 2008 at the Clear Lake State Park.

LAKE NEWS

There's a new duck in town. Somewhere along Clear Lake's north shore a tiny bufflehead duck is currently tucked deep inside a natural tree cavity quietly incubating her clutch of eggs. At least that's what a number of Iowa birding enthusiasts have been led to believe.

The saga began in late April when DNR State Waterfowl Biologist, Guy Zenner, noticed a pair of buffleheads feeding with a flock of coots along the lake's high bank located just west of the Clear Lake Gold Course. Although bufflehead ducks are common spring migrants in Iowa, most have moved out of the state by mid-April.

"At first, I just thought the birds had just found a good place to feed," said Zenner.

"But when I noticed the ducks in the exact same spot several days later, I began to take notice. To me, it was surprising that the birds were so site specific. They seemed tied to a specific location and were acting just like a pair of ducks on their nesting territory."

Returning to Clear Lake following a week-long, state-wide spring waterfowl survey, Zenner noticed the bufflehead drake sitting alone in the exact spot the pair had occupied for several days.

"That's when I realized that the hen must be nesting," said Zenner. "Like wood ducks, buffleheads are cavity nesters and, if she was on eggs, I knew the hen must be nearby."

Zenner alerted area birders, and the hunt was on. So far,

no one has been successful in locating the duck's nest site.

"If no one can spot the hen going to or from her nest, our last hope is to document the brood when she brings her ducklings to the lake," said Zenner. "It's all been very interesting. For a little duck, the birds have really generated a lot of excitement."

If documented, this will only be the third bufflehead duck nest ever recorded in Iowa. The species is most abundant in the western boreal forests of British Columbia and Alaska where buffleheads nest in abandoned flicker cavities.

Why a pair would choose to nest at Clear Lake is a question only the ducks can answer.



PHOTO: A drake bufflehead sits on his territory along the north shore of Clear Lake. Area birders are currently searching for his mate's nest site. Only three bufflehead nests have ever been recorded in Iowa.

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