

Ripples

LAKE RIPLEY
PRIORITY LAKE PROJECT

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FROM THE HELM

I had a few days off the first week in April. I was hoping that the weather would warm up and I would have a chance to work in the yard or even get in an early round of golf, but no such luck.

I did have a chance to take a few late-morning walks, and found the usual trash left over from winter. As I passed another walker and we stopped for a second to exchange greetings, I suggested that on my next walk I would bring a plastic grocery bag and pick up what I could. When I returned home, I thought how great it would be if every walker picked up just a couple pieces of trash each day. What a difference it would make!

To inspire such action, the Lake District co-hosted its annual Earth Day Litter Sweep on Saturday, April 20th. Our newsletter will not reach you in time to volunteer this year, but that doesn't mean we can't do our part all year long. We can carry that grocery bag when we walk, and, even more important, teach our children that trash belongs in a can and not on the streets and in the lake.

Trash talk aside, I am looking forward to another busy year for the Lake District. We hope to make some more improvements to the Lake District Preserve, continue our shoreline restoration projects, pursue additional conservation easements to protect and restore our limited wetlands, and continue to work on a new buoy system for the lake. I encourage you to attend meetings and share your ideas and concerns.

As always, I believe "bad things happen when good people do nothing."

John Molinaro

Chair, Lake Ripley Management District

Earth Day Litter Sweep

Over 40 volunteers gathered for the 2002 Earth Day Litter Sweep on Saturday, April 20th at Cam-Rock Park. Enough trash was collected during this community-wide cleanup to fill two dumpsters! Most of the trash was retrieved from shorelines, parks and roadsides around Lake Ripley and Koshkonong Creek. In appreciation of everyone's hard work, a number of prizes were raffled off including "Earth Day Team" T-shirts, treats and gift certificates donated by local merchants and civic organizations.

This year's litter sweep was co-hosted by the Lake Ripley Management District, Friends of Cam-Rock Park and Cambridge Aquatic Environmental Club, with support from Cambridge Divers LLC, Village of Rockdale

and Dane County Parks. Donations were graciously provided by the following sponsors: Village Bakery & Coffee Shop, Adams & Haack, Cambridge State Bank, Lon's Country Foods, Steven Bentz Company, Lake Ripley Bed & Breakfast, Cambridge Bed & Breakfast, Village Barber, Heather's Rockdale Bar & Grill, Earth & Road – Erosion Control & Geotextiles, Edward Jones Investments, Katy's Corner, and Melster Candies.

This event would not be possible without the generosity of these fine businesses, as well as the support and participation of our many caring volunteers. For those interested in participating next year, the litter sweep will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2003.

Lake Ripley Priority Lake Project Progress Report

The Lake Ripley Priority Lake Project began in 1993 as a state-funded initiative to address non-point source pollution problems. Management efforts are focused within Lake Ripley's eight-square-mile watershed, representing the adjacent land area that drains surface water runoff to the lake. The Priority Lake Project, which receives state funding through 2006, is intended to reverse declining water quality trends and the loss of fish and wildlife habitat that negatively impacts our natural resources and overall quality of life.

The goals of the project are achieved through education and outreach activities, and by using cost-share incentive programs to encourage eligible landowners to adopt sound land/lake-use practices. Excessive soil erosion, polluted stormwater runoff, and habitat destruction are just a few of the issues the Priority Lake Project attempts to address.

If left unchecked, these problems would undoubtedly worsen over time, leading to nuisance aquatic weed growth, frequent algal blooms, reduced water clarity, loss of biodiversity, increased management costs, and diminished property values and recreational opportunities. Needless to say, the ripple effects would be felt throughout the community.

Fortunately, a great deal is being accomplished to prevent these situations from getting out of hand. The following is an abbreviated list of some of our major achievements to date:

- Leveraged nearly \$1 million in state funding to conduct studies, implement pollution-control and habitat-enhancement projects, acquire weed-harvesting equipment, engage in management planning efforts, improve public access facilities, conduct resident opinion surveys, protect critical ecosystems, and much more.
- Identified and quantified sources of pollution affecting the lake and watershed.
- Protected and restored over 100 acres of degraded wetlands in the watershed by acquiring the Lake District Preserve and a number of conservation easements.



- Partnered with eligible landowners to address 3,500 feet of significantly eroding shoreline and nearly 40,000 feet of eroding ditch banks associated with degrading agricultural drainage systems.
- Eliminated over 2,000 tons of annual sediment loading to Lake Ripley through the installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to control erosion and polluted runoff.
- Worked to pass local ordinances that: 1) limit development along ecologically sensitive shorelines; 2) restrict the burning of yard waste in areas that directly drain to the lake; 3) expand Lake Ripley's slow-no-wake times and zones; and 4) discourage the feeding of geese and other waterfowl.
- Used regular newsletters, press releases, fact sheets, televised public meetings, 'Welcome Wagon' informational mailings, litter cleanups, watershed tours, lake fairs, water quality monitoring programs, project demonstrations, and a new web-site to inform and educate the public.
- Harvested invasive, non-native aquatic "weeds" from Lake Ripley (e.g. Eurasian watermilfoil) to promote a greater diversity of native aquatic plant species.
- Developed and now implementing comprehensive lake, watershed and aquatic plant management plans.

Although we are pleased to report the great strides we have made over the last several years, there is still much more we need to accomplish. You can help by continuing to support our efforts, and by recognizing that positive change starts at the individual level. Make a difference by becoming better informed and more involved in local decision-making matters. When it comes to protecting our valuable but threatened natural resources, we cannot afford to leave anything to chance by assuming someone else is taking care of things.

Porous Paving Alternatives for Soggy Soils

by Derek Hoffman, Lake Ripley Management District, President, EARTH & ROAD - Erosion Control & Geotextiles

Those who own property near a lake, stream or wetland often have difficulty with access due to wet or soft soils. Traditionally, the solution has been to pave the area with asphalt or concrete, thereby creating a water-impervious surface. By preventing water from infiltrating the soil, however, these hard surfaces funnel increased volumes of stormwater runoff directly into our surface waters. The resulting impacts from this polluted runoff to water quality, aquatic vegetation, fish and wildlife can be devastating.

Wisconsin is currently writing stricter regulations to help control and filter stormwater runoff. The natural way to clean stormwater is to allow it to percolate through soils where microbes and bacteria can break down contaminants. This process also minimizes what is known as thermal pollution, which can be caused by storm water runoff from sun-baked parking lots and other hot impervious surfaces. Natural infiltration allows more water to enter our lakes

and streams in the form of much cooler and cleaner groundwater.

There are many surfacing options available today that offer structural capabilities that can rival those of asphalt and concrete, while also allowing natural infiltration and establishment of vegetation. Products from companies such as Invisible Structures or American Excelsior's Tri-Lock System offer a variety of alternatives for boat landings, driveways, walking paths, or similar high-traffic areas. The important thing to remember when planning a resurfacing project is to recognize how the project will impact the landscape and local drainage patterns. Before you start, be sure to discuss your plans with your local zoning officials to find out if any special permit approvals are needed. By taking the time to make conscientious decisions, we all have the opportunity to do our part in preserving the natural resources we enjoy.

Slow No-Wake Zoning Changes Proposed

After more than two years of planning and public advisory meetings, the Lake Ripley Management District is ready to propose an amended slow-no-wake buoy ordinance for Town Board consideration. The purpose of the proposed ordinance amendment is twofold. It is intended to: 1) better protect shallow, ecologically sensitive areas on Lake Ripley, and 2) more equitably distribute conflicting lake uses. Secondary objectives include reducing wake-induced shoreline erosion, improving water clarity, and providing a safe refuge for both near-shore wildlife and passive recreation.

The results of surveys and public hearings show that the Lake District community is overwhelmingly in support of this

action. A diverse public steering committee consequently hammered out a buoy placement strategy. This strategy is consistent with recommendations in the recently approved Lake Ripley Management Plan. It is also based on a scientific literature review of shallow-water motor boat impacts, as well as existing zoning and lake-use patterns on Lake Ripley.

It is hoped that this measure will not only benefit Lake Ripley, but all those who use and recreate on the lake as well. Assuming the Oakland Town Board approves the ordinance amendment, the new buoy system would most likely be in place by the 2003 boating season.

Lake District Preserve Prairie Burn

Under the direction of Mr. Ron Martin of Midwest Prairies LLC, and with the help of several devoted volunteers, the Lake Ripley Management District conducted its first prescribed prairie burn at the Lake District Preserve on April 10th. Its purpose was to help control non-native, invasive plant species, and to encourage the growth and diversity of the native prairie plants. We would like to thank Jim Seidl, Patricia Cicero, Tim Lorden, Steve Bentz and Kent Brown for volunteering their time to assist with the burn.

Plans are now underway to enhance public access and educational opportunities at the preserve. Proposed projects include nature observation platforms, boardwalks, and interpretive panels along the nature trail.



Lake District Meeting Schedule

Saturday, May 18, 2002

Saturday, June 15, 2002

Saturday, July 20, 2002

Saturday, August 10, 2002
(Budget Hearing)

Saturday, August 17, 2002
(Annual Meeting of the Electors)

Saturday, September 21, 2002

Saturday, October 19, 2002

All meetings start at 9:00 a.m. at the Oakland Town Hall. If you cannot attend but wish to submit a public comment, calls to the Town Hall speaker-phone will be taken during the Public Comment period of our regularly scheduled meetings (920-563-9198).



Neglected shorelines, parks and roadsides around Lake Ripley and Koshkonong Creek got some much needed attention on Saturday, April 20 when 40 volunteers picked up enough trash to fill two dumpsters. Shown here are some of the volunteers, standing behind some of the more unusual items of trash.

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