

Spring 2024

Delavan Lake Improvement Association Newsletter



Spotlight

Current Membership
306

Farm acreage
currently in program:
2,700 acres

Cubic yards of plants
removed from the
lake in 2023: 6,000+
cubic yards

Carp removed from
the lake in 2023: 364

Upcoming Events

DLIA Annual Meeting,
*April 13 at the Delavan
Lake Yacht Club - for
more details see our
website*

Delavan Lake Improvement Association Board

President:
Bill Thummel
Vice-President:
Kim O'Keefe
Treasurer:
Don Althoff
Secretary:
Hugh Charvat
Directors:
Charlie Handel
Sue Heffron
Gerri Green
Jeff LaMarre
Ben Nixdorf
Carol Radford

Letter from President

The purpose of the Delavan Lake Improvement Association (DLIA) is to help improve, protect, and preserve the lake quality and all the land around it; to represent all those who own its property, and to help support a healthy and relaxing environment for our friends and visitors. That's a tall order because of the scale of our watershed and the number of the stakeholders that need to be involved to affect change.

Your DLIA board has for years worked to help identify, support, and, in some cases, fund projects that supported our purpose statement. These efforts have always included the various constituencies that work in the watershed because it is only through joint efforts that significant results can be obtained. In the last year or so, our focus has been to increase the level of cooperation and to engage more of our stakeholders. This has included overt efforts to listen to the voices of the residents of our watershed.

In this issue of your newsletter, you will read about examples of where the people and organizations who can drive change are now collaborating more routinely and as a normal course of business. These efforts to seek out the concerns of our residents and then respond collaboratively not only include municipal, county and state groups, but now also homeowner's associations and private citizens. I am very optimistic that this spirit of teamwork will drive impactful improvements to our lake, and I think that you will have the same sense as you read the following stories.



HELP US HELP THE LAKE - Annual Membership Drive

Why Renew Your Membership? In 2023 your support was crucial to our success. By renewing your membership, you help us continue important activities such as:

- Increasing the 2,700 acres under consistent no-till which has a direct beneficial impact on the lake
- Minimizing sediment levels (sediment depths were roughly the same as 2011 levels, indicating that the no-till and cover crop activities are minimizing sediment loading)
- Seaweed removal (in 2023 more than 6,000 yards of seaweed was removed by the DLSD)
- Continuation of the Carp bounty that removed more than 300 carp in 2023 from the lake (which helps lower phosphorus loading)

Please Become a Member; go to our website www.Delavan-lake.org and click on **Renew**
Follow us in Facebook; [Facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake](https://www.facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake)



A Strategic Approach to our Watershed

We all know that we have a very large watershed with all sorts of associated challenges with respect to limiting nutrient and sediment runoff into the lake and impacting water quality. A number of studies have indicated that over 80% of the nutrients and sediment that enters the lake comes from farm runoff. So your Board has focused a lot of its efforts in working with our key constituents on farm conservation strategy and programs.

The majority of the projects have focused on reducing farm runoff and include approaches such as no till farming, cover crops, and buffer zones. We recently have been involved in another project that converts current farmland into wetlands. This farmland borders Jackson Creek and the conversion would have a significant positive impact on reducing nutrients and sediment from entering the lake. The DLIA's role in this project is a bit unique. Typically the DLIA's role will be one of coordination and ensure there is appropriate collaboration with the key stakeholders. But in this case, the DLIA has paid for the engineering work necessary to file the project for state funding. This was done because the other agencies involved were unable to contribute to the required engineering.

And while the farmland conversion project is a significant new opportunity, what is often not emphasized is the increased effort we have taken in building and growing our collaboration with other key stakeholders within the watershed. Recently this effort at working alongside other groups has taken on a new dimension.

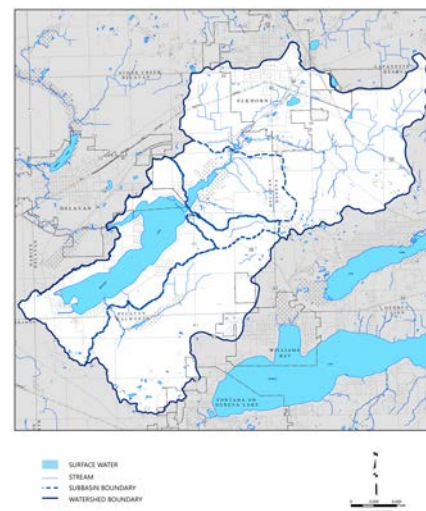
The Town of Delavan Lake Committee, which is chaired by Mary Knipper (Town of Delavan Chairperson) has organized a set of subcommittees in order to enable greater focus upon specific areas, and additional people have been invited to join these subcommittees. These groups will focus on water safety, the Inlet and Outlet, and fishing practices, as examples. One of these subcommittees is the Watershed Planning Subcommittee and Bill Thummel has been asked to lead this team and Sue Heffron has joined as a citizen member. The objective of the group is to identify potential sites within the watershed which could be an opportunities to engage the property owners to utilize best practices to reduce runoff. This Subcommittee includes the Town of Delavan, the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Walworth County Land Use & Resource

Management group (LURM), the Delavan Lake Sanitary District (DLSD), the US Geological Survey, and the DLIA, as well as other non-affiliated participants.

This team has already met twice and has identified several locations where the employment of specific practices could be extremely beneficial. I am very optimistic that this kind of organized, collaborative work to limit the amount of phosphorous and sediment loading in our lake is going to yield some very positive results. In the future issues we will keep you apprised of our efforts.

In related news and an important project in keeping nutrients and sediment out of the lake, we are pleased to report that the Mound pond dredging was successfully completed this fall.

Delavan Lake Watershed Map



Mound Road Pond



Listening and Responding

An overarching goal of the DLIA board over the last several years has been to improve our outreach to our stakeholders to ensure that we understand your issues and concerns. One of the areas where we have had great success has been with the residents who live along the Inlet and Outlet of the lake.

For the last two years the DLIA has hosted a public meeting to discuss water quality issues within the Delavan Lake Inlet and Outlet areas. Residents along those shores had expressed concerns about increasing amounts of sediment and plants which have made it difficult to launch and recover boats. The DLIA meeting was intended to allow these residents to express their issues to representatives of the Town of Delavan and the Delavan Lake Sanitary District. These meetings were well attended, and all agreed very useful.

Following the second meeting, the Town committed to funding a survey to assess the exact levels of sediment in the two locations. This survey was conducted during the fall of last year and subsequently the Town retained Peter Berrini to analyze the data and offer recommendations as warranted. Peter's analysis has been completed and sent to the Town.

Further, one of the subcommittees of the Town of Delavan Lake Committee is specifically focused on the Inlet and Outlet. The team is led by Ben Nixdorf, a Town Supervisor and Carol Radford, who is a citizen member. At a recent meeting the group discussed Berrini's recommendations, and they are already exploring the potential to implement some of the suggestions. These include increasing lake levels during dry periods to improve access and to install circulators in these areas to increase water flow.

On June 22, 2024, the DLIA will again host an Inlet/Outlet meeting to allow the Subcommittee to explain the survey results and associated possible responses. We will offer more details about the meeting as we get closer to that date.

Delavan Lake Outlet



Our Key Collaborators

We work and collaborate with a lot of groups but our primary contacts are with the Town of Delavan, Delavan Lake Sanitary District and Walworth County.

And as you may notice below, there are several past and present DLIA board members that also serve on these important organizations.

Town of Delavan

Elected Officials:

- o Mary Knipper, Chair
- o Ben Nixdorf, Supervisor
- o Hugh Charvat, Supervisor
- o Bill Thummel, Supervisor
- o Chris Wasik, Supervisor

Delavan Lake Sanitary District

Commissioners:

- o Tom Miller, Chair
- o Richard Beers
- o Kim O'Keefe
- o David Reider
- o Ted Kasch



Fish and Wildlife Sub-committee

More collaboration and focus on the quality of fishing in the lake

With spring in full bloom and fishing season right around the corner, we know many of our members are getting excited about spring/summer fishing season. Delavan Lake is generally considered a very good lake for fishing and that's not by accident. The DNR stocks and monitors the lakes fish population and the community works to ensure we following best practices for maintaining the quality of the lake.

But of course, we can't take this for granted and we can do even better. So the DLIA has been working with the Town of Delavan on improving our coordination and collaboration in the area of fishing. The Fishing Sub-committee, which was newly formed in 2023 has made terrific progress and has been working with the DNR and Town of Delavan to advance our agenda.

The sub-committee has already met and is into action. Here's some of the key topics from the last meeting:

- The Wisconsin DNR conducted a "mini" fish count survey last fall. Overall the results were positive and here's some take aways:
 - They caught 145 walleyes and found yearling which indicates that they are naturally reproducing (the DNR hasn't stocked walleye in the lake since 2018).
 - They also caught a couple of muskies from the stocking programs in 2021, 2022 and 2023. This is a good sign that the fish are adapting to the lake and surviving. This will serve as the baseline for future surveys.
 - They caught several large carp that indicates we need to evaluate our carp bounty program to take more out of the lake.
- Evaluating the impact of fishing tournaments on the fish spawning season to make sure we put in place best practices to prevent issues with reproduction.
- Monitoring and evaluating changes to fish habitat to improve the health of the fish population. Currently exploring fish cribs in areas that have been seen large habitat losses.



Board member Ben Nixdorf with a beautiful Delavan Lake pike

Become a Member and follow Us!

Go to our website; www.Delavan-lake.org and click on the **Renew** or **Become a Member** buttons and follow the instructions

Or use this QR Code



And Follow US on Facebook

[Facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake](https://www.facebook.com/HelpUsHelpTheLake)