

ROCK LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Following the 2019 RLIA Annual meeting and with three new energetic board members, John Crump, Bonnie Nolan and John Thode, we enthusiastically made plans to aggressively work the 2018 - 2028 Lake Management Plan. We laid out twenty seven action items that we were committed to carry out. Here are those items and the progress we made on them.

- 1) continue work on reducing agricultural erosion - **in progress**
- 2) work with the City again on a leaf campaign - **completed and ongoing**
- 3) replace storm drain markings - **in progress**
- 4) create a "storm drain stewardship" program, where citizens would monitor - **in discussion**
- 5) continue support for the Clean Boats/Clean Waters program - **ongoing commitment**
- 6) add AIS cleaning stations at each boat launch - **completed**
- 7) spear head the annual environmental clean-up at parks - **limited due to Covid-19**
- 8) distribute Lake Regulations and the "Welcome to the Lake" brochures - **ongoing**
- 9) send out Home Owners packets to all new riparian buyer - **ongoing at least twice a year**
- 10) develop a dash board to report the Board's progress on our website - **completed**
- 11) update a spreadsheet with details of our progress on reaching planning goals - **ongoing**
- 12) work on educational events - **this was held up due to Covid-19**
- 13) post book and video recommendations on our website - **completed and ongoing**
- 14) participate in Knickerbocker Days by hosting ice safety event - **completed**
- 15) host annual meeting - **in progress 8/15/20**
- 16) Bob and Sue Volenec to continue their survey of bats, frogs and toads - **ongoing**
- 17) complete the 2017 fish sticks project - **completed**
- 18) set up an advisory board to the Public Outreach committee - **in discussion**
- 19) host a riparian breakfast to encourage natural shoreline - **unable to host due to Covid-19**
- 20) draft a letter to riparian owners and realtors to remind them of shoreline protection protocols - **nearly completed, should be done in August or September**
- 21) meet with the City and Town to discuss erosion and pollutant run-off - **completed**
- 22) meet with the City and Town to discuss zoning practices - **completed, now working on a brochure to help riparian owners with regulations**
- 23) perform additional water sampling at multiple locations around and on the lake to monitor phosphorous - **Covid-19 stopped this**
- 24) explore adding additional fish sticks to lake - **no activity**
- 25) conduct a boat and trailer survey - **completed**
- 26) explore program to purchase books to lend to members - **no activity**
- 27) purchase four CDs and increase amount to \$5,000 - **completed**

As you can see, even with the challenges that Covid-19 and the stay at home order presented, we were able to carry out a number of the action items. As the year progresses we will continue to work the plan to preserve, protect and improve Rock Lake.

Before closing, I'd like to address concerns that have come up again this year. That is the concern with "weeds" particularly on the west side. "What can we do about them?" "Can we remove them?"

Well the answer is yes and no.

You can manually remove aquatic plants in front of your property without a permit provided that the removal meets **ALL** of the following:

- * Removal of aquatic plants is limited to a single area with a maximum width of no more than 30 feet measured parallel to the shoreline. Any piers, boat lifts, swim rafts, and other recreational and water use devices must be located within that 30 feet

- * Removal of nonnative plants designated by the DNR when performed in a manner that does not harm the native aquatic plant community - this is difficult to do since some native plants are mixed with the non-native plants

- * Removal of plants that drift on-shore and accumulate along the waterfront

- * The location is **NOT** in a sensitive area (Schultz Bay, Korth Bay, Marsh Lake and Mill Pond) or in an area known to contain threatened or endangered resources. Rock Lake's sensitive areas are so large that they affect many riparians. Plant control measures are different depending on whether your frontage is located along a sensitive area or not. To determine if you are in a sensitive area you can go to the DNR website: <https://dnrmaps.wi.gov/H5/?Viewers=SWDA>. Then zoom in to Rock Lake. Click on Show Layers. Click on the box next to Priority Navigable Waterways. Then click the + next to that. If it is ambiguous whether your frontage is adjacent to a sensitive area, feel free to email Susan Graham, susan.graham@wisconsin.gov.

- * The only activity that can be done without a permit from the DNR in a sensitive area is manual removal of plant material that has floated in and accumulated along the shore.

- * Does not interfere with the rights of other lakeshore owners

A permit is required from the DNR for the removal of any aquatic plants by mechanical or chemical means. Our contact is Susan Graham, Water Resources Management Specialist, susan.graham@wisconsin.gov

Aquatic plant surveys in Rock Lake have found the plant community is generally healthy. It does have some Eurasian Water Milfoil and curly pond weed but the surveys show it tends to be of low or moderate density, and does not create a terrible impediment to navigation. Our fishery would not be the same with aquatic plants.

Keep in mind that native plants provide many benefits:

- * create habitat which supplies food, shade and shelter for aquatic and terrestrial animals
- * essential for fish spawning
- * create oxygen for animals in shallow areas
- * filters runoff
- * stabilizes sediments at the water's edge reducing erosion
- * absorbs phosphorus and nitrogen
- * uses nutrients, making them less available for nuisance algae
- * limits the growth of invasive plants
- * keep the lake clean

Before removing any plants remember that their removal could potentially invite invasive species to take hold. Having native plants near your property is much better than having Eurasian water milfoil and/or curly-leafed pondweed.

In closing I would again like to thank you our members, our volunteers and especially our dedicated board members (Jim Colegrove, John Crump, Ralph Depasquale, Mike Nesemann, Bonnie Nolan, Nathan Pyles, Stan Smoniewski, John Thode, and Susan Trier) for all your tireless work and support in 2019 -2020.

Stay healthy and safe,