

## Lake Camelot Environment Update

April 2019

Our lake environment is on the minds of many Lake Camelot Property Owners Association (LCPOA) members. Studies of Lake Camelot for several years have shown that a major source of our problem with the weeds and algae is tied to high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in our lake. LCPOA has water quality initiatives and is working with several groups that have come together to address this at a local level. Above and below the water line are two areas that need our attention.

The following is an update on a number of projects related to our lake environment. Be sure to seek out additional information in areas of interest to you.

**LCPOA Habitat and Fish Management Committee:** It was another busy year and the Habitat and Fish Management Committee and numerous volunteers have been extremely active in working on current projects as well as planning for future below the water line initiatives.

In 2017 the LCPOA Board established the Habitat and Fish Management Committee. The primary goal of the committee focuses on the underwater habitat to create an environment that will enhance wild life with a focus on improving the fish population within our Lake Camelot system. Board members and Camelot residents who serve on this committee are very committed to improving our lake environment.

This committee has been working on fish reproduction and habitat improvement initiatives. Here's an update on some of their current and future work.

**Fish Cribs:** With the financial support of LCOPA members the committee installed 15 fish cribs with plans to install another 30 to help grow the number of fish in our lake. (Thank you to all who have donated!!!) Fish cribs are a winter project. They are constructed and placed on the ice in DNR approved locations and then

sink with the spring thaw. Although we initially hit a few bumps in the road, our fish crib process is improving as we move forward.

**Future plans:** Future plans for additional underwater structure improvements include aquatic plantings and building fish sticks (different from fish cribs) and rock reefs.

### **1. Aquatic Plants**

Aquatic plants form the foundation of healthy and flourishing lake ecosystems - both within lakes and on the shores around them. They not only protect water quality, but they also produce life-giving oxygen. Aquatic plants are a lake's own filtering system, helping to clarify the water by absorbing nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen that could stimulate algae blooms. Plant beds stabilize soft lake bottoms and reduce shoreline erosion by reducing the effect of waves and current. In order to maintain healthy lakes, we must maintain healthy native aquatic plant communities. Note: You will see some private shore lines along the lake that are participating in shore line protection and fish sticks.

### **2. Fish Sticks**

What is a fish stick you ask? Fish sticks are woody habitat structures consisting of 2-3 downed and overlapping trees in shallow water near shorelines and are cable anchored to the shoreline.

Nearly all fish species use woody habitat for at least a portion of their life cycle. "Fish Sticks" projects are intended to restore woody habitat in lakes and provide additional fish habitat, as well as to expand fishing opportunities and provide protection to shorelines. Fish and underwater organisms use the branches and trunk for shelter and food.

The Habitat and Fish Management Committee is going to place the first fish sticks on state land east of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue on Lower Lake Camelot, where our head waters are located. Fish stick instillation permits will be obtained and the DNR, Adams County and a private aquatic plant specialist will be on site helping with this project. These agents have completed dozens of similar projects around the state with great success resulting in cleaner water, improved fishing and fewer invasive weeds as native plants flourish. In the

future other areas will be designated for additional fish sticks. There will also be native aquatic plants planted in these areas to help filter nitrogen from the water and serve as fish habitat.

**Other updates:**

1. 14 Mile Watershed Joint Committee: Tri-Lakes (Sherwood, Camelot, Arrowhead) are part of the 14 Mile Creek Watershed. Recently, Tri-Lakes Management District formed the 14 Mile Watershed Joint Committee. The purpose of this group is to use an inclusive approach to improve water quality in the total watershed and to educate all parties. They are a very active group and more information about them can be found at <http://trilakesmanagement.com/14-mile-watershed-joint-committee.htm>

**What can you do to improve water quality and lake health?**

1. Help limit the amount of nutrients and sediment that enter the lake. Be aware of what you put on your roads, driveways, lawns and in your septic. It is highly likely that whatever we apply to our properties will eventually run into our lake.
2. Replace old leaking septic tanks. As old steel tanks start leaking they must be replaced. Defective tank replacements in our area average around five per year.
3. Participate in the Shoreline Protection Program. Just to name a few of the benefits, the 35' buffer helps a) prevent shoreline erosion, b) filter property run off and c) benefits "the three B's"; bees, birds, and butterflies. (And another perk is that the buffer may reduce the number of geese in your yard because they don't like to cross the high plants in the buffer.)
4. Get involved. Volunteer to help with Habitat and Fish Management Committee projects and other initiatives to improve the health of Lake Camelot.
5. Donate. Provide financial support for lake quality initiatives that you believe are important.

The LCPOA has received a lot of positive feedback from our membership on these initiatives. As you can see there is a great commitment to improving the health of our lake. This commitment requires time, labor and money. Much is accomplished through volunteers and we are grateful to have this support. We also greatly appreciate the financial contributions and support that our membership has given.

Funding for these initiatives comes from proceeds from the February Winter Fisheree, our Summer Habitat Raffle and ongoing donations. In addition, we have applied for and expect to receive grant dollars this year to help support these initiatives to improve the health of our lake. However, these dollars are not enough and additional support is needed. Donations of any amount are appreciated. If you'd like to donate make checks payable to LCPOA and specify the initiative you'd like to support. Checks can be dropped off or mailed to the Lodge at 298 Leisure Lane. Nekoosa, WI 54457.

Thank you for your interest and ongoing support,

Bob Budjac, LCPOA Board Member

Habitat and Fish Management Committee Member