

Lake Redstone Protection District-Year in Review

Although much of the last year was devoted to implementing the dredging project, many other important activities continued. Both the dredging project and other the activities are summarized below.

Dredging

Although the bids received in 2018 were deemed too expensive, the Dredging Committee and the LRPD board continued to investigate the possibility of dredging in Lake Redstone by seeking ways to reduce the costs. Rebidding of the project resulted in a more affordable proposal using mechanical dredging. At a special LRPD meeting on May 18, 2019, the electors of the district approved the plans, with 284 votes in favor and 59 votes opposed. Dredging began in July of 2019 and was completed just before Christmas. A detailed summary of the dredging project was presented in the 2020 Newsletter. A summary of the financial aspects of the dredging project is presented in a separate document. Remaining questions can be posed at the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Because the floods in the fall of 2018 brought extra sediment into the lake, the depth surveys performed in the fall of 2015 were repeated in the fall of 2018. Comparison of the results from the two surveys revealed that a great deal of new sediment was present in the bays of Lake Redstone. Because the two surveys provided good data on the extent of damage done by the 2018 floods, the LRPD board sought financial assistance from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The application is still pending, but unfortunately we are not hopeful that FEMA will provide reimbursement for the dredging. However, both Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin provided financial assistance.

Damage to Meronek Meadows Berm

Following the 2008 floods, a berm was built at the end of Mourning Dove bay between Meronek Meadows and the lake. Its purpose was to prevent heavy rains from bringing sediment into the lake. However, the flooding in 2018 was so severe that the berm failed and large amounts of sediment washed into Lake Redstone. Jewell Engineering produced a different, more robust plan to accomplish the same goal. After months of negotiations with FEMA, it appears likely that they will provide partial reimbursement for these repairs. Bids were solicited in May of 2020, a low bidder was identified, and the work is scheduled for August. We still are waiting on final confirmation regarding the level of reimbursement from FEMA, but expect it will be finalized in the coming months.

Development of a Whole Lake Management Plan

Preparation of a whole lake management plan continued during the past year, supported by three different grants from the Wisconsin DNR. Phases 1 and 2 began in 2018, while phase 3 began early in 2019. The result from the combined three phases will be a whole lake management plan that should be finished by the end of 2020. The

management plan will be used to evaluate the efficacy of past and current lake improvement projects and to guide the implementation of future activities.

Phase 1 of the grant has multiple facets, including ongoing efforts to assess water quality within the lake by collecting and analyzing water samples during ice-free months. A second activity was for our consultant, LEAPS (Lake Education and Planning Service), to perform a shoreline habitat assessment, with assistance from many volunteers. The report of the assessment was recently delivered to the LRPD. The next step is to determine how to use this information to make shoreline improvements that will reduce nutrient and sediment entry into the lake.

Phase 2 of the grant focuses on acquiring information regarding the nutrients and sediment coming into the lake from the watershed. This is being done by measuring water flow and by collecting water samples from inlet streams as well as the outlet stream. The water flow data will be combined with information on the stream's nutrient and sediment content in ways that will allow a nutrient budget to be generated for the lake.

In phase 3 of the grant, the results of earlier studies will be integrated with new data from phases 1 and 2 to evaluate the efficacy of earlier efforts to improve the lake and to develop plans for future actions that will improve water quality. This will be done by development of a 9-Key Element Plan; details of this process are provided in the last two issues of our newsletter, the *Protection Connection*.

Shoreline Activities/Healthy Lakes Program

A few years back, the State of Wisconsin launched a new grant program to help lake property owners improve their property in ways that would improve lake health (<https://www.healthylakeswi.com/>). Reimbursement grants of up to \$1,000 per project provide financial support to assist property owners who install one or more “best practices” on their property. These include: native plantings, water diversion paths, rock infiltration projects, or rain gardens. In 2018, the LRPD, together with two Lake Redstone property owners, secured funds to assist them in performing a best practice on their property. In the coming years, we plan to use the results of the shoreline habitat assessment and the actions described in the lake management plan to secure funds from the healthy lakes grant program or other funding sources to improve the shoreline around Lake Redstone thereby improving water quality in the lake. For more information visit the LRPD web site (<https://www.lakeredstonepd.org/>) or speak with a LRPD board member.

Watershed Activities

We continue efforts to reduce the entry into Lake Redstone of sediment and/or nutrients from the watershed by partnering with representatives from Sauk and Juneau counties as well as farmers in the Lake Redstone watershed. Farmers in the Lake Redstone watershed have formed a cooperative to pursue various conservation practices on their farms (see their Facebook page at *Producers of the Lake Redstone Watershed*). The cooperative has secured grant funds from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade

and Consumer Protection to provide support for their conservation practices. This is a win-win effort that benefits both the producers in the watershed in that they retain their soil and keep the nutrients on their fields and the efforts of the LRPD to keep sediment and nutrients out of Lake Redstone.

Aquatic Plant Management

An Aquatic Plant Management Plan was approved in 2015 (a copy is available on our website at <https://www.lakeredstonepd.org/>) and continues to provide guidance for control and education activities. Lake Redstone has two invasive plants species, Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed; both have been in the lake for many years. We continue to monitor their levels, as well as the levels of other native aquatic plants in Lake Redstone, although the dredging project last summer impacted our efforts. Surveys were performed on 12 bays before dredging last summer to assess the types and quantities of plants before dredging. Similar surveys will be done this summer and comparison of the results from the two surveys will provide information about the impact of the dredging on plant life in Lake Redstone. The results of this summer's surveys will provide valuable information that will guide control activities in the coming years.

The LRPD continues to operate a Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) program with financial support from the DNR. CBCW serves to educate boaters at the landings to clean their boats and trailers to prevent transporting aquatic invasive species into or out of Lake Redstone without knowing they are doing it. The CBCW program is operating at both the Sauk County boat landing near the north end of the lake and the Section 11 boat landing during the summer of 2020.

LRPD By-laws update

The LRPD is a governmental entity that operates under authority and rules spelled out in Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The LRPD also established Bylaws shortly after the district was formed in 1976. Our current bylaws have been updated periodically, including some changes that were approved at the 2019 Annual Meeting. Following the recent changes, the LRPD board began a thorough review of our current bylaws, with significant assistance from Al Baade, who has been involved with the LRPD for many years. During that review, we found that some aspects of our current bylaws conflict with revised Wisconsin statutes. With assistance from an attorney who has long experience with lake districts, the LRPD board is preparing a significant revision of our bylaws. We hope that a proposal will be available for consideration by district electors at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Communications

The LRPD board continues to use several avenues to keep district electors informed of district activities. The 2020 Newsletter (*Protection Connection*) was mailed to all district residents in May and covered a range of topics relevant to district activities and issues. The Newsletter remains a major source of information about district activities and we hope you take the time to read it when it arrives each spring.

Another important source of information about district activities, both past and present, is our website (<https://www.lakeredstonepd.org>). It contains copies of our monthly meeting agendas, minutes, archived newsletters, updates regarding various activities, and reports from various studies performed by the district.

The Facebook page (*Lake Redstone Protection District*) established in 2017 continues to provide information about our activities.

The newest addition to our communications portfolio is an App that smartphone users can download and use to keep up to date on LRPD activities and on other news and activities relevant to lake residents. We are able to send messages to App users, e.g., information on Slow-No Wake designations. The free App can be downloaded from the App stores at Google and Apple. For Android devices, go the App section of the Google Play Store. For Apple devices go the Apple App Store. In both cases, search for Lake Redstone Protection District.

The annual meeting, held the first Saturday in August, provides an important opportunity for dialogue between the LRPD board and district residents.

In addition to our regular monthly meetings, the LRPD board meets annually with our Sauk & Juneau County partners and Wisconsin DNR representatives to plan collaborative efforts regarding Lake Redstone.

We encourage participation in our monthly meetings, held on the second Tuesday of each month, 6 pm, at the La Valle Town Hall.

Volunteers

The activities summarized above could not have been accomplished without volunteers who contributed countless hours on each of the projects. Volunteers have helped on the dredging committee, on the water quality committee, including lake and stream sampling, with production of the newsletter, with organizing and maintaining district records, and with the development of the lake management plan.

Whether your skills and interests lie in lake biology, shoreline protection, electronic or written communications, or organizing paper files, we welcome additional volunteers who can help with district activities. If you find an activity that interests you, please contact one of the members of the LRPD board and learn how to become involved.

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