



DEER LAKE CONSERVANCY

REPORT

SUMMER EDITION

JULY 2022

IMPROVING TRAIL ACCESS:

BRIDGES, BOARDWALKS, AND VIEWING PLATFORMS, OH MY!

Deer Lake Conservancy construction projects planned for fall 2022 will improve access throughout the year and increase enjoyment of trails. They include:

- Replacing the old bridge which crosses the ravine flowing into Elizabeth's Pond on the Johnson Preserve
- Adding a wooden walkway across the northern infow of the Northeast Pond Preserve
- Construction of a small pier for wildlife viewing on the Northeast Pond

One of my favorite memories from childhood is skipping on boardwalks through forested wetlands in Northern Wisconsin. This was usually accompanied by "we're off to see the Wizard. . ." I'm looking forward to celebrating these new additions in a similar fashion! Cheryl Clemens, Deer Lake Conservancy, Executive Director

With this improved access, we ask that everyone remember to respect and avoid disturbing "our" trumpeter swan family who lives on the Northeast Pond and the pond south of 140th Street. They have returned to nest for the seventh year with a family of six goslings. Trumpeter swans are the largest waterfowl in North America. They mate for life, and will return to a nesting site year after year. Trumpeter swans have made a dramatic comeback after being nearly extinct in the 1930s when fewer than 70 individuals were known to exist.

LEARN ABOUT TRUMPETER SWANS! WITH PAT MANTHEY

DNR Trumpeter Swan Project Field Coordinator 1997-2014

SATURDAY, JULY 30TH

9 A.M. TO NOON

9 a.m. Trollhaugen Convention Center Presentation
10:30 a.m. NE Pond Preserve to See Swans



MORE NORTHEAST POND PRESERVE NEWS

We continue to work on access, water quality, and habitat improvements on the Northeast Pond Preserve. The pond is the second largest source of spring water to Deer Lake after the Conservancy-owned Rock Creek Conservation Area.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

We are working with Polk County Engineering Technician, Karsten Petersen, to control runoff from the crop field to the east of the Northeast Pond Preserve. Proposed projects will capture runoff from the field forming what amounts to super-sized rain gardens. The water that enters the pond from the rain gardens will be cleaner and flow more slowly. Designs are approved by state engineers, and we are in the process of seeking bids for work planned for fall 2022.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

Conservancy volunteers continued the battle against invasive buckthorn last winter. They removed hundreds of specimens from the northeast shoreline of the pond where the boardwalk and viewing platform will be constructed. Buckthorn removal not only enhances access and viewing, it also allows native species which provide wildlife habitat to thrive.

LOWER ROCK CREEK IMPROVEMENTS

A sediment basin constructed in 2017 collects water from Watershed 5 – the furthest Deer Lake drainage to the northwest. An intermittent stream carries runoff from agricultural fields and road ditches to the sediment basin where it can settle before discharging to Rock Creek and eventually to Deer Lake. Reduced flow rates also prevent erosion downstream in Rock Creek. The importance of this basin was clearly evident during snow melt with the muddy water it held back from the lake!



Muddy water held back by the Lower Rock Creek sediment basin – snowmelt 2022 – Pat Corcoran Photo

Improvements made late in 2021 included altering the discharge point to stabilize and more effectively manage water flow. We also stabilized a significant cut bank that had developed during high flows in an upstream spot in the intermittent stream above the pond. While some accumulated material was removed from the pond itself, we will likely return in 2022 to complete pond maintenance.



Cut bank above Lower Rock Creek sediment basin – Fall 2021

THE SHORES OF DEER LAKE

How we develop and use our property has a profound impact on the lake's water quality and habitat. A Deer Lake Conservancy-commissioned inventory of Deer Lake shorelines was completed in summer 2021. The inventory looked at characteristics of the shoreline where the land and water meet and the first 35 feet inland. This first 35 feet is referred to as the riparian zone.

The ideal riparian zone (for water quality and habitat) has a nearly full tree canopy which breaks the force of rain drops, a natural understory to slow water flow, and little or no hard surfaces so water readily soaks into the ground. These same characteristics provide critical habitat for creatures who live in and near the lake. A shoreline which consists of natural vegetation including a thick cover of trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses is ideal for preventing erosion from runoff and waves.

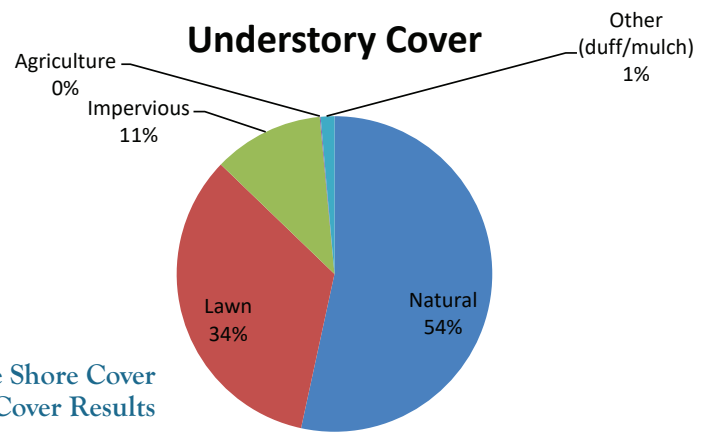
DEER LAKE SHORELAND INVENTORY RESULTS

The July 2021, Deer Lake Shoreland and Shallows Habitat Survey followed Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources field protocol. The methodology involved surveying, assessing, and mapping habitat in lakeshore areas, including the riparian zone, bank, and littoral (in-lake) zone. As a result of the survey, we now have lake-wide estimates of percent tree cover, percent ground cover by type (impervious surfaces, manicured lawns, and natural), erosion concerns, length of modified banks, the density of human structures, presence of floating/emergent plants, and coarse woody habitat. We will use the results to acknowledge Deer Lake owners with the most natural shorelines to recognize the benefits they are providing to the lake. The report is found on the resources page of the Deer Lake Conservancy web site:

<https://www.dlcwi.org/conservation/resources/>

To identify the most natural shorelines, we looked for natural coverage of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers making up at least 80% of the riparian zone with less than 6% impervious surface AND 30 feet or less of rip rap.

Deer Lake Shore Cover Understory Cover Results



DEER LAKE SHORELAND OUTREACH

Many thanks to the committee of Deer Lake owners who helped develop a strategy to reach out to owners on the lake. The committee provided great suggestions to guide the information we provide and ideas to get more people engaged.

DEER LAKE SHORELAND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Diane Barghini
Dorothy Goldie
Geri Howard

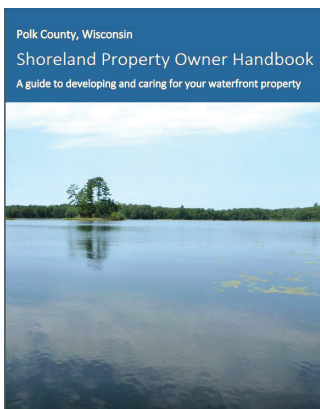
Rod Johnson
Steve McCormack
Katy McGrane

John Patterson
Angie Rider
Jacob Rider

Cheryl Whitmore
John Wright

Look for events and information to learn more about the importance of and how to maintain a healthy shoreland including:

- Walk and Learn Events
- Neighborhood Gatherings
- Property markers that acknowledge (super) natural shorelines
- Property markers that acknowledge completed projects
- Shoreland information for lake owners



Coming Soon: This attractive marker will acknowledge owners who maintain natural shorelines and those who complete water quality projects.



This guide contains valuable information about developing and caring for your waterfront property. The Deer Lake Conservancy and Deer Lake Improvement Association are cooperating to deliver these to all lake property owners.

HOW DOES YOUR SHORELINE RATE?

The DNR developed this informative tool to evaluate your shoreline. The survey will guide you through a series of questions about how you use your property and make suggestions for improvements. It takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

<https://survey.healthylakeswi.com/default.asp>

Interested in sharing what you learned with other lake residents? Send an email to deerlakeassn@gmail.com to post your insights to the Deer Lake Facebook page.

Want to learn more about how to complete a recommendation? Free on-site technical assistance is available because of a DNR grant. Contact Cheryl at dlcdirector@dlcwi.org to schedule a visit.

DEER LAKE CONSERVANCY

2022 ANNUAL MEETING

TROLLHAUGEN CONVENTION CENTER

Saturday, July 9

Refreshments and Welcome: 8:30 a.m.

Lake Association Business Meeting: 9 a.m.

Conservancy Business Meeting: 10 a.m.



Annual Flagstad Farm Celebration

Hosted by the Deer Lake Conservancy and the
Deer Lake Improvement Association

Live music and refreshments at the Flagstad Farm

Saturday, July 23, 2022 • 6-9 PM

Free native plant distribution

All ages and guests are welcome

2022 CONSERVANCY OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Phillip Foussard, President

Jim Miller, Vice President

Tom Pesek, Secretary/Treasurer

Mark Boyken

Tom Bradley

Rod Johnson

Tom McBride

John Patterson

John Wright

Our mission is to preserve Deer Lake and the surrounding land that contributes to its natural, scenic and recreational value.

*Thanks to our generous member donors. To join or make an additional contribution, go to:
<https://www.dlcwi.org/contributing> or mail a check to:*

DEER LAKE CONSERVANCY

P.O. BOX 1139

ST. CROIX FALLS, WI 54024

For more information, visit our website: <https://www.dlcwi.org>