

Palmyra Lower Spring Lake

Protection & Rehabilitation District

Our lake district was established in August, 1980. We banded together to tax ourselves so that we could improve the quality of the lake. We have only 50 property owners in our district, with just 7 residences in the township. Although we are a small number of families, we have accomplished many things to benefit the lake and community in the past 42 years.

During that time, we have purchased 2 weed harvesters with trailers and a shore conveyer with the help of 50/50 grants from the state. The current 28-year old harvester cost \$73,250 in 1994 and was refurbished for \$43,000 in 2009. In 2018, we spent over \$16,000 to make needed repairs to the machine and dump truck. We continue to save for a new harvester and trailer with a price tag of more than \$160,000. In addition, we have paid the salaries of the operators for removing thousands of tons of weeds from our lake. At one time, the DPW disposed of the weeds for us, but for the past 14 years, we have bought a truck and hauled away the weeds to a farmer's field. All the equipment we purchased has been deeded to the Village, but the gas and repair parts are paid for by us.

We have also spent a lot of money on chemically treating at least part of the lake nearly every year. In 2010, we applied for and received a 5-year 50/50 grant from the DNR that allowed us to do whole lake treatments with an annual cost to us of more than \$10,000. In 2019-2020, we initiated a drawdown to reduce shoreline weed growth, to compact the silt, and to improve the fishery. We are again requesting a drawdown for the winter of 2022-2023.

We continue to try to keep the public beach and shorelines unpolluted. Unfortunately, just one goose can excrete 1 pound of feces every day. For many years, our volunteers have been spending a number of hours searching out their nests and collecting the eggs to prevent them from hatching, but not all could be found. When the number of geese rose to 43 in 2015, we paid \$2,411 for a goose round-up which dramatically reduced the population.

Our volunteers also help protect the lake in other ways. About 10 years ago, we donated \$1,100 to refresh the beach. We purchased new buoys and flotation material for the raft pontoons along with truckloads of sand which were spread by a dozen volunteers. Our Clean Boats, Clean Waters volunteers educated fishermen and boaters about procedures that will prevent invasive species, such as zebra mussels and rusty crayfish from entering our lake. One of our volunteers monitors the temperature and clarity of our lake water. Others have done spring clean-ups along the public shorelines. None of our officers or members are paid for their services.

In addition, we have collaborated with the DNR on improving the boat launch to make it easier for the community to fish, boat, canoe, kayak, and paddle board. We've partnered with Jefferson County and the DNR in doing plant surveys and water quality samplings. We've worked with the Wisconsin Bowfishing Association and Marxman Outdoors to reduce the amount of carp in the lake.

Added to the huge number of volunteer hours mentioned above, we levy an annual assessment on ourselves to pay for improvements to Palmyra Lower Spring Lake. Our members continue to contribute an average of \$400-\$500 a year to keep the lake usable and healthy. So over just the last 20-year period, based on our \$20,000 annual budget, we've already donated \$400,000 toward the betterment of the lake.

More recently, our lake district was assessed 25% of the dam repair costs. Obviously, \$200,000 is a large chunk for our 50 members to contribute. In addition, we're paying for the dam in a second way as Village taxpayers.

Lower Spring Lake is a wonderful resource to all of Palmyra. It is beautiful to look at in every season and at any time of day. It provides opportunities for our whole community to swim, fish, boat, ice skate, and snowmobile. Also, local businesses profit from out-of-towners who use the lake, then visit their stores and restaurants. Through the years, our Lake District has gone to great expense and effort to protect and enhance the lake for everyone's benefit.