



RESTORING IOWA'S LAKES

AN INVESTMENT IN IOWA'S QUALITY OF LIFE

Iowa's Most Valuable Real Estate

Iowans value water quality and desire safe healthy lakes that provide a full complement of aesthetic, ecological and recreational benefits.

Lakefront property values increased 62% in 10 years, led by West Okoboji Lake at \$14,000 per foot.

A recently completed water-based recreational use survey by Iowa State University found that 6 of 10 Iowans visit our lakes multiple times each year and spend \$1.6 billion annually in their pursuit of outdoor lake recreation. The most popular activities are fishing,

picnicking, wildlife viewing, boating, hiking and biking, and swimming and beach use.

The goals of Iowa's Lake Restoration Program are improved water quality; a diverse, balanced aquatic community and sustained public use benefits.

To Fix the Lake, Start on Land

Lake restoration starts in the watershed and relies on strong local involvement and landowner participation.

Many Iowa lakes suffer from excessive algae growth and sedimentation due to nutrient loading and soil loss. Iowa's Lake Restoration Program designs projects to ensure a cost effective, positive return on investment; a local community commitment to lake and watershed protection; a significant improvement in water clarity, safety, and quality; provide for a sustainable, healthy, functioning lake system; and to remove the lake from the impaired waters list.

These partnerships, along with sound scientific information, are the foundation of lake restorations and protect the investment. The return on lake restoration investment is within five years.

Quality Lakes Increase Quality of Life

Lakes with better water quality contribute to a higher quality of life, local economic development and increased property values.

Lakes that completed watershed and lake improvements exceed state visitation averages and their own pre-renovation visitation levels. Of the four lakes with the highest increase in visitation, three had undergone major restoration efforts - Clear Lake, Lake Macbride and Storm Lake.



Lake use increased 27% between 2005 and 2009



Successful lake restoration projects like at Prairie Rose Lake, near Harlan, involve many partners, have strong local involvement and landowner participation.

SUCCESS STORIES

Economic Development – Storm Lake

Lake restoration efforts encouraged a \$35 million economic development named “Project AWAYSIS” created an estimated 690 new jobs and more than \$28 million in spending in Storm Lake and Buena Vista County.

“Lake restoration work for Storm Lake and its watershed has been the inspiration for the community to come together and chart its destiny into the future. This community has traditionally had most of its economic base centered on agriculture. Because of lake restoration work, our people determined that we could diversify our economic base by increasing recreational opportunities at Storm Lake,” said Jon Kruse, mayor of Storm Lake.



A \$1 million project got Little Storm Lake to become a properly working marsh again that removes sediment and absorbs nutrients from Powell Creek before the water enters the Lake.

Anita Loves its Lake

Thanks to a watershed that protects water quality and a recent fish renovation, anglers and campers have made Lake Anita State Park the go-to place between Des Moines and Omaha.

Not long ago, yellow bass and grass carp were dominating the game fish and destroying aquatic plants. Without those plants to tie up phosphorus in the water, algae blooms became a problem.

“When I got here in 2002, camping was going down because fishing had become so poor,” said Josh Peach, park manager. In 2003, the DNR drained the lake, killed what fish remained, deepened and strengthened the shoreline, installed underwater fish habitat, and added pea gravel spawning areas to attract bluegills and largemouth bass closer to shore.

Park visitors were sparse while the lake took a couple of years to refill. Businesses in the town of Anita, along the park’s northern boundary, could feel that lack of campers and anglers.

“What affects us at the park affects the town of Anita,” said Peach. But once the lake refilled, word spread quickly about the successful restoration. Park use and camping numbers are higher than ever before. Those park visitors stop in town for supplies, gas, bait, dinner and more.

“We get people coming in with the campers. I’m glad we have it here,” said Lee Poeppel, owner of Redwood Steak House in Anita.

“Everything is in place here for a great weekend,” said E.D. Brocker with the friends group. Conservation practices within the watershed protect that investment in the community.



People come to Lake Anita from as far away as Waterloo and Omaha. “It’s a fantastic thing for the whole town,” said Lee Poeppel, owner of Redwood Steak House in Anita. “It has grown. It helps the community tremendously.”

Iowa has completed 9 lake restoration projects, with 24 underway and 17 in the planning stages.