

Circle Lake Improvement District 2024 Annual Report



The overall goal of the Circle Lake Improvement District is to improve water quality sufficiently to allow the removal of Circle Lake from MPCA's Impaired Waters List for nutrients.

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The Circle Lake Improvement District held its Annual Meeting on August 19th, 2024, at the Forest Township Hall. The meeting started at 7 PM

Notices of the Circle Lake Improvement District Annual Meeting were:

- mailed to members on **June 21st, 2024 and, July 28th, 2024,**
- published in the Faribault Daily News on **July 31st, 2024,**
- mailed to the Rice County Board of Commissioners, Minnesota Commissioner of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Forest Township Board **July 29th, 2024**
- posted on the Forest Township Hall Bulletin Board in, **September 2023,**
- and the Circle Lake Improvement Districts website in **September 2023.**

Overview of the 2024 Season

It was a particularly challenging year for Circle Lake. Algal Bloom started in May and continued throughout the season. Some of the blooms were particularly bad, and a foul odor was also present, depending on the day.

Heavy rain events in May and June flooded the lake in early June, and it remained that way until the third week of July. After that there was no rain of any consequence, so ultimately, the water receded to the top of the weir at the dam in August and has remained there through the end of the season.

The Current Status of Circle Lake in 2024.

- Circle Lake is Hypereutrophic – **HIGHLY IMPAIRED** for recreational use.
- Phosphorus levels are more than 10 times higher than the minimum desired standard for reducing the risk of harmful algal blooms.
- Total Nitrogen is more than 3 times higher than the minimum acceptable standard.
- The lake is severely impaired for dissolved oxygen and is at moderate to high risk of a Summer Fish Kill, and has experienced winter kills.
- There is a significant amount of organic “muck” at the bottom of the lake.

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By all reasonable standards, Circle Lake was not swimmable for most of the 2024 season and posed a respiratory irritation risk for boating from time to time.

Circle Lake Restoration Pilot Project

The CLID Board is committed to a three-pronged approach to returning Circle Lake to a healthy status. This approach includes lake aeration, phosphorus sequestration, and biological treatment.

This year, we contracted with Tigris to keep our water quality data current. They also took lake sediment samples and completed a lake bathymetry study. This is the last bit of data needed to allow vendors to figure out a bid for each component of our Lake Restoration Project. We have yet to receive their report.

As we work toward a funding source for this project, we have met with:

- Regional MPCA
- Regional DNR
- Representative Kristi Pursell
- Senator Bill Lieske
- Tri-Lakes Sportsman Club
- Representatives from BWSR
- Rice County Soil & Water
- Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board
- Rice County Board of Commissioners
- ISG
- and other Vendors

Our presentation has been well received, and we have received constructive feedback. However, at this point, we have not received any outside funding.

We will continue working with State agencies and approach the Federal Government for help in 2025.

Aquatic Invasive Species Management (WEEDS)

Offshore/Shoreline

The DNR approved 41.4 acres of mechanical harvesting and 59.3 acres of herbicide treatment.

The cost of mechanical harvesting was \$600/acre. However, due to high water, we were unable to use mechanical harvesting.

The cost for herbicide was \$417/acre. This was completed in April 2024

The herbicide application was for curly leaf pondweed and received a stellar response from homeowners along Culver Trail and in the North Bay. This also included several homeowners' shorelines in the North Bay area.

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This year, we received a grant through Rice County for \$5,000 and \$12,500 from the Circle Lake Association for AIS management. We applied for but did not receive grant money from the DNR this year.

When we checked for AIS this fall, we found several Eurasian Milfoil patches that will be addressed in 2025.

Buoys were placed in the lake to identify hazards.

The District placed seven buoys in the lake this year to identify hazards to navigation (Rocks close to the surface and very shallow water). We want to thank the Rice County Sheriff's office for handling the permitting, placement in the spring, and removal in the fall of all our buoys. Thank you.

RESULTS OF THE ITEMS VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERSHIP AT THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

- 2025 Budget (Approved)
- Invasive Weed Control (cost > \$5000) (Approved)
- Lake Restoration Pilot Project (>\$5000) (Approved)
- Ad Hoc Watershed Project/Lake Project (cost > \$5000) (Approved)
- Elected three Lake Improvement District Members to the Board of Directors
 - William Houston (three-year term)
 - Jeff Jirik (three-year term)
 - Denise Klokow (three-year term)

POSSIBLE PROJECTS OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Items on our five-year plan will/might include:

- AIS Invasive Weeds control
- Reducing the nutrient load entering the lake
- Reducing the nutrient load in the lake
- Lowering the sediment load entering the lake
- Controlling the level of the lake
- Carp population control
- Core Sampling
- Native Plant Restoration

The CLID Board of Directors:

Dean Sunderlin Chair Term Ends in 2025

William Houston Vice Chair Term Ends in 2027

Denise Klokow Secretary Term Ends in 2027

Cheryl Bahnsen Treasurer Term Ends in 2026

Carl Bahnsen Term Ends in 2025

Jeff Jirik Term ends in 2027

Stefanie Johnson Term Ends in 2025

**Circle Lake Improvement District
2024 Annual Report**

Many thanks to our members for their support and to the Board for all they do for the lake and our community.

Dean Sunderlin
Circle Lake Improvement District- Chair

2025 Budget

	Estimated Income	
Estimated Carryover from 2024		\$20,000
Membership Assessment	\$300/parcel	\$50,700
Grant	DNR	\$10,000
Grant	Rice County	\$5,000
Grant	Other	\$12,500
Income Total		\$98,200
	Estimated Expense	
Administration Expenses	Printing, Postage Website, Office items	\$3,500
Contract Services	Consultants	\$13,000
Rice County	Admin Fees	\$510
MCIT	Liability Insurance	\$2,000
Sub Total		\$19,010
Projects		
	Weed Management	\$45,000
	Lake Restoration Pilot Project	\$20,000
	Ad hoc Watershed/Lake Project	\$10,000
Sub Total Projects		\$75,000
	Working Capital/Cash Reserves	\$4,190