

Circle Lake Improvement District 2025 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.

The Circle Lake Improvement District held its Annual Meeting on August 11th, 2025, 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 13th, 2025 and, July 25th, 2025,**
- published in the Faribault Daily News on **July 24th, 2025,**
- mailed to the Rice County Board of Commissioners, Minnesota Commissioner of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Forest Township Board, **July 21st, 2025**
- posted on the Forest Township Hall Bulletin Board in **September 2024,**
- and the Circle Lake Improvement District's website in **September 2024.**

Overview of the 2025 Season

The lake was much more usable this year than in years past. Algal blooms began in May but were less numerous and less severe. The foul order caused by our algal blooms was much improved in the Benjamin Bay Area after the deployment of our aeration test project.

After our herbicide treatment for Curly Leaf Pond Weed in April, our weed issues were few.

The Current Status of Circle Lake in 2025.

- 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 (DO) 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.

The above statement addresses the lake's overall condition. However, DO throughout the water column in the area where the aeration pair was deployed improved significantly, as did the makeup of the lake bottom “muck”.

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.

We deployed a small test aeration project this season to determine whether a fine-bubble diffuser paired with a surface aerator could maintain DO at or above 2.0 ppm near the bottom of the lake. This would break the cycle in which the lake bottom often becomes anaerobic. That will support the bacteria in the lake sediment as they digest the “muck” and also reduce the release of sediment-bound phosphorus. See the attachment at the end of this report for more information on this effort.

This system was efficient, scalable, and modular, making it highly adaptable to the conditions of this and other lakes.

We also have a lake-bottom core sample taken from the area around the aeration pair being analyzed at a lab, which will give us insight into how we might have affected its composition.

Summer aeration was terminated in mid-October. We will redeploy the surface aerator sometime in late January or early February, as ice conditions permit, to support our fish population.

While we realize this past summer is only one data set. Overall, we are encouraged by the results.

We received a \$15,000 grant from the Circle Lake Association to partially offset the costs for this project.

The summer aeration project will be expanded to a total of three sites in the lake for 2026

Aquatic Invasive Species Management (WEEDS)

Offshore/Shoreline

The DNR approved 92.62 acres of the lake for a herbicide treatment for Curly Leaf Pondweed. Treatment was very effective and was completed in April 2025

The cost for herbicide was \$417/acre.

This year, we received a grant from Rice County for \$5,000 and \$12,000 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 no weeds.

AIS Management will continue in 2026.

Communication and Community Outreach

We have launched a quarterly newsletter and a Facebook Page to add to our website's presence.

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, spring placement, and fall removal of all our buoys. Thank you.

RESULTS OF THE ITEMS VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERSHIP AT THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

- 2026 Budget (Approved)
- Invasive Weed Control (cost > \$5000) (Approved)
- Lake Restoration Pilot Project (>\$5000) (Approved)
- Elected three Lake Improvement District Members to the Board of Directors
 - Dean Sunderlin (three-year term)
 - Carl Bahnsen (three-year term)
 - Stefanie Johnson (three-year term)
 - Ryan Nugent (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 2028

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 2028

Jeff Jirik Term ends in 2027

Stefanie Johnson Term Ends in 2028

Ryan Nugent Term Ends in 2028

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

Circle Lake Improvement District Financial Status

	September 30, 2025
Bank Balance	\$74,220
O/S Checks	\$200
Total Balance	\$74,020

Circle Lake Improvement District Budget for 2026

	Estimated Income	2026 Budget
Estimated Carryover from 2025		\$70,000
Membership Assessment	\$400/parcel	\$66,800
Grant	Rice County for weeds	\$5,000
Grant	Other	\$12,500
Income Total		\$154,300
	Estimated Expense	
Administration Expenses	Printing, Postage Website, Office items	\$3,500
Contract Services	Consultants	\$5,000
Rice County	Admin Fees	\$520
MCIT	Liability Insurance	\$2,000
Sub Total		\$11,020
Projects		
	Lake Restoration Pilot Project	\$105,000
	Weed Management	\$38,000
Sub Total Projects		\$143,000
Working Capital/Cash Reserves		\$280.00



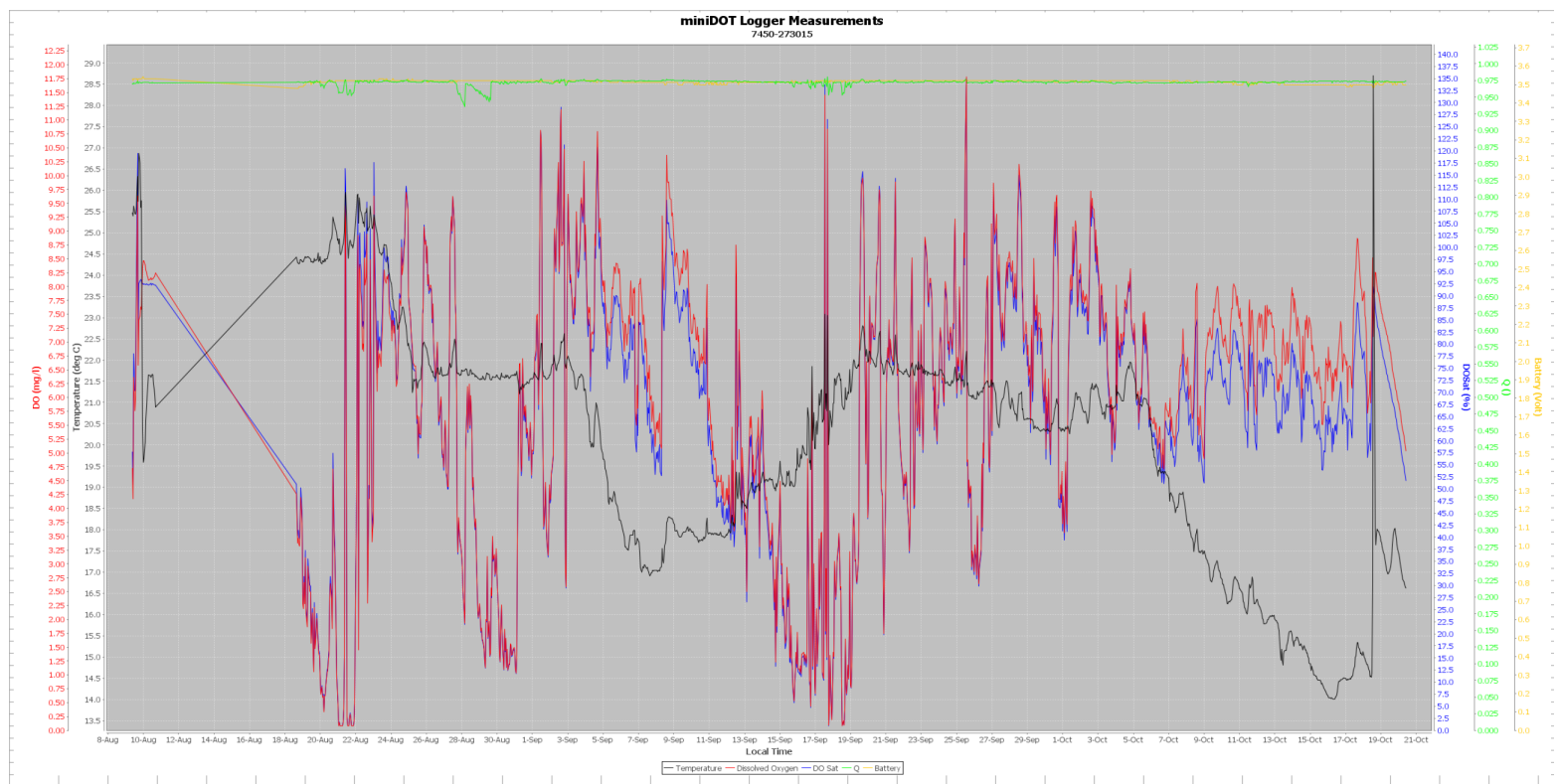
Surface Aerator/Diffuser Pair



DO Deployment



Aerator Location



Bottom DO Logger Measurements