



NEWSLETTER

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OPA MISSION

"The OPA is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the water quality and ecological health of Lake West Okoboji and the Iowa Great Lake Watershed."

OUR GOALS

- To protect and monitor water quality, including the threat of invasive species.
- To preserve and protect the wetlands in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed.
- To participate in the control of lake development where a threat to the aquatic and shoreline environment exists.
- To promote sustainable urban and agricultural developments to protect the ecological balance of the lake and its watershed.
- To inform the community of ecological concerns of the OPA and courses of action to be taken.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear OPA members,

A highlight of my summer was getting to see a young paddlefish in a tank brought to the Okoboji Blue Water Festival by the DNR fisheries, who are stocking paddlefish and tracking them in the lakes. I also had the opportunity to attend the Prairie Lakes Conference, the Blue Water Festival, the annual meetings of local protective organizations, and talks at the Lakeside Laboratory. I learned much about changes in our environment and how they affect water quality.

For example, Keith Shilling, the State Geologist, reported that because Iowa land is 50% row crops, 20% perennial plants, 18% open water, and 12% developed land, it should be no surprise that 80% of the total Nitrogen to the Des Moines and Racoon Rivers come from agricultural land. Twenty percent of the Nitrogen (N) comes from soybeans and legumes which pull it from the atmosphere and turn it into nitrate; 20% comes from manure applied to land; 18% comes from "atmospheric deposition" in rain and snow (I had to refresh my memory that our earth's atmosphere contains 78.1% Nitrogen, 20.95% Oxygen, 0.93% Argon, 0.04% Carbon Dioxide, and small amounts of trace elements.); 2% from developed land; and 40% comes from fertilizers applied directly to the land.

Larry Weber, director of hydro science and engineering in the College of Engineering at the University of Iowa, noted that the 100-year flood of 2008 in Cedar Rapids was the 4th largest natural disaster in the history of our country. He explained that the term 100-year event means that the event occurs 1 time every 100 years. However, due to changes in land use and precipitation changes, these 100-year events are now occurring every 10-15 years. Ground soil can accept 2 inches of rain over 24 hours, and then, after saturation, there is a 33% increase in run-off. So, for example, the run-off from recent floods released greater than 1 billion pounds of Nitrogen. If it happens again, all of our preemptive planning to date would remove only 1 million pounds of Nitrogen. Why, do you think, we are observing such rapid changes in our environment?

Mary Skopec, Director of the University of Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, reported that after last year's flood, the CLAMP data revealed a sudden increase in Nitrogen and Phosphorus (P) levels in our lakes. The N level decreased to normal levels over several days. The P levels have remained elevated and are decreasing slowly. This probably accounts for the increased algae blooms and green algae that has decreased the clarity of our lake water.

The OPA Mission states we are dedicated to improving and enhancing water quality and ecological health of Lake West Okoboji and the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed. Maybe thinking about the new paddlefish, which might grow to over 100 pounds in our deep, blue lake, will give us hope and the courage to act in concert with other national, state and local entities to preserve our precious lakes.

Sincerely,

John Fieselmann, President of OPA

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STATE-LED SHORELINE REPAIRS SET TO BEGIN THIS FALL ON AREA LAKES

By Mike Hawkins, Iowa DNR NW Regional Fisheries Management Supervisor

Following the significant flooding and high-water event in June 2024, the State of Iowa is moving forward with a crucial shoreline repair project in Dickinson County. These efforts will address damage and stabilize shorelines on both public and private properties along West Okoboji, East Okoboji, Spirit Lake and Silver Lake.

The primary goal of this project is to protect the long-term health and integrity of our lakes, even in cases where private landowners may be unable to complete additional work on their own.

Project Scope and Details

The scope of the repairs will vary by location:

- On the 33 private shoreline sites, repairs will focus on the toe (bottom) of the slope, specifically in the area near and below the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM). Any repairs above the OHWM will be the responsibility of the landowner.
- At Triboji and Pillsbury Point on West Okoboji, the state will undertake more comprehensive repairs covering the entire shoreline slope to ensure full stabilization of the public land.

Current Status and Timeline

After completing surveys and conceptual designs last fall, the project has been advancing through final engineering, cultural resources investigations and permitting. We are pleased to report that construction easements have been successfully secured for all private shoreline sites.

In August, the Natural Resources Commission officially approved the project for bid, and a contractor has been selected. Construction is expected to begin this fall (2025) and is scheduled for completion by Memorial Day 2026 for all private sites and the Triboji area.

Construction Logistics

To minimize disruption to landowners and the public, all work will be conducted from the lake side. Equipment and materials will be staged at the following locations:

- Gull Point State Park
- East Okoboji Beach
- Isthmus Park
- Orleans/Spillway State Park
- Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area

Pillsbury Point Update

The project at Pillsbury Point is on a slightly different timeline. Engineering and cultural resource surveys are still in progress for this location. Due to the project's complexity, construction is anticipated to begin as soon as the spring of 2026.

UPDATE FROM THE MILLERS BAY CONSERVANCY

By Deborah Cotton Lanners

Eurasian Watermilfoil - Our multi-year campaign to prevent the spread of Eurasian watermilfoil into "particularly susceptible" Millers Bay continues. Eurasian watermilfoil was found in the Millers Bay canals in 2023, and even though the DNR successfully treated that hot spot, we can't let our foot off the gas. Eurasian watermilfoil is feared for its **disruption to water recreation and navigation**, and we must try to prevent its spread to the main lake.

With funding from the Okoboji Protective Association, we hired local firm Blink Marketing to produce a 30-second **public awareness video** to educate boaters on the importance of removing all aquatic vegetation from their anchor *before* leaving one spot to drop anchor in another spot within the Okoboji chain. This simple action prevents Eurasian watermilfoil fragments from **hitchhiking** on anchors to spread to new locations. *"Spread the Word, Not the Weeds."*

Blink Marketing arranged for the video to pop up *automatically* as an ad in the Facebook and Instagram feeds of anyone within a 15-mile radius of Lake Okoboji over the summer. The results blew us away! The ad had over 200,000 views this summer, with nearly a quarter of those views leading to meaningful engagement with the ad's content! We are particularly encouraged by data showing the PSA succeeded in reaching those in their 20s and 30s, our primary target and an important demographic we've struggled to reach with our past public awareness initiatives. Watch the brief (and beautiful!) video on our [website](#), [Facebook page](#), or [Instagram site](#).

We also ran a recurring **public awareness spot on KUOO** this summer season. The message synced up with our video ad on social media: remove all weeds from your anchor when you pull it up, and make sure it's clean before you drop it elsewhere in Lake Okoboji. *"Spread the Word, Not the Weeds."*

Public Safety - Driven in part by the tragic death of a young tourist from a July 4th incident on Millers Bay in 2023, we met with Governor Kim Reynolds in June about the recreational safety concerns on Millers Bay and the need for stronger law enforcement presence during peak usage times. We are encouraged to have witnessed increased law enforcement presence on Millers Bay since our meeting. A **visible and active law enforcement presence deters** illegal or risky conduct that endangers those trying to enjoy safe recreation on Millers Bay.

Paddlesports - We continue to **promote and enable the "paddlesports"** (kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing) as an equitable public use of Millers Bay and a sustainable recreation alternative to concentrated mass anchoring, which invites Eurasian watermilfoil. We are very encouraged to see a marked increase in the number of paddlers enjoying the calm, wake-free waters and beautiful natural shorelines of western Millers Bay. Kayak anglers are also making an impressive showing this year!

Our kayak dock with its attached **"kayak launch assist"** (a YAKport, an Iowa product available for order through Menards) is available again this year at the City of Wahpeton's public lake access at Miller Street and will remain available throughout the fall kayaking season!

We completed a project to repair past, and prevent future, erosion damage from storm water coming down Miller Street to the lake access, thanks to Community Betterment funding of \$2500 from the City of Wahpeton. Those funds will also be tapped to install the dock and YAKport and to remove them after fall kayaking season concludes.

For those who don't need assistance with launching, the DNR's public "fishing access" just two blocks to the East (where Oak Street ends at Millers Bay in Wahpeton) is probably the better option. The Oak Street launch provides a very wide, gently-sloped lake access with rubber matting for launching kayaks, canoes and paddleboards easily and safely.

For parking, drivers may drop off their vessels, gear and fellow paddlers at either launch site, then park in the small gravel lot across Lakeside Avenue from the former Kazarelli's site, which is just a two-to-three minute walk back to either launch.

In 2026, we'd love to see other entities establish kayak launches as well, such as an accessible DNR launch site into the canals winding through Gull Point State Park, connecting Millers Bay and Turtle Lake!

Noise Pollution - An *airboat* on Lake Okoboji!?! Yes indeed. Many of you were distressed by its frighteningly loud noise as it traveled across Millers Bay and West Lake Okoboji in the late-night hours this summer. Calls to our law enforcement agencies asking for relief from **distressing, excessively loud noise from boats** on Millers Bay – this summer *and* over many past summers - have been met with some version of: *There's*

nothing we can do...there's no noise ordinance on the lake.

We'd like to **collaborate with other entities and individuals on a *remedy*** for when unreasonably loud, sustained noise is being generated by boats on the lake. Please contact us at millersbayconservancy@gmail.com if you're interested in working together on this issue so *everyone* can enjoy Millers Bay and the rest of the lake!

Thank You - The Millers Bay Conservancy could not do its volunteer work to protect and improve Millers Bay without the donations of time, talent and treasure of those who care about Millers Bay and West Lake Okoboji. We are so grateful for the support!



Airboat AI image from MBC Canva Subscription

SAVE TURTLE LAKE PROJECT READY TO BEGIN

By Becky Batcheller

Renewal of Turtle Lake, a part of the 1912 Wahpeton canal system, begins in September! Funds received now total \$874,000. However, the dredger's extensive sonar evaluation of Turtle Lake and the canals determined that the Turtle Lake area has more silt in the center to extract than had been anticipated. The cost is estimated to be over \$1,000,000 for Turtle Lake. The committee is currently seeking another \$150,000 in order to complete dredging Turtle Lake as planned.

Improved water flow through the canals and Turtle Lake has also been an overall goal. Additional funds will need to be raised for these areas. The canal area extending from Bridge Street to Emerson Bay, Phase 2, and Paddler's Path canal which extends from Turtle Lake to Millers Bay.

If the entire project, not just Turtle Lake but also the canal system, could be completed at the same time, it would be more cost efficient.

According to Tim Ireland, one of the Save Turtle Lake volunteers, "Dredging Turtle Lake and the adjoining canals, Paddler's Path and Wilderness Way, is about more than improving navigation—it's about protecting the overall health of West Okoboji and the Wahpeton community. The canals are DNR-owned waterways, and by stepping up to help, our community is restoring water circulation, reducing stagnation, and creating cleaner habitats where fish, turtles and native wildlife can thrive. By investing in these dredging efforts, we are preserving recreational access and safeguarding a vibrant ecosystem for future generations."

You can help us restore this essential ecosystem and recreational area by sending your tax-deductible donation in the form of check, IRA contribution or securities to the Okoboji Foundation, PO Box 593, Okoboji, IA 51355. Mindy Gress can assist you with your Save Turtle Lake contribution at 712-332-7177. Please specify Save Turtle Lake.

For more information or to join the committee, please contact us at save.turtle.lake@gmail.com.



Residents have removed docks and hoists in anticipation of dredging activity this fall.

SOIL QUALITY RESTORATION

By John H. Wills, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator

Soil quality restoration is a crucial practice for maintaining the health and sustainability of ecosystems, particularly in areas like West Lake Okoboji. Soil quality restoration is the practice of deep tine aeration, compost application, and turf grass seeding, and their importance to the region.

Deep tine aeration is a technique used to alleviate soil compaction, which is a common problem in areas with heavy foot traffic or machinery use. This method involves using specialized equipment to create deep holes in the soil, allowing air, water, and nutrients to penetrate deeper into the ground. By improving soil structure and promoting root growth, deep tine aeration helps to enhance the overall health of the soil. In the context of West Lake Okoboji, where recreational activities are prevalent, this practice is essential for maintaining the quality of the soil and ensuring the longevity of the turf.

Compost application is another vital component of soil quality restoration. Compost is rich in organic matter and beneficial microorganisms, which help to improve soil fertility and structure. When applied to the soil, compost enhances its ability to retain moisture and nutrients, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. This is particularly important for West Lake Okoboji, as the use of chemical fertilizers can lead to nutrient runoff and water pollution, negatively impacting the lake's ecosystem. By incorporating compost into the soil, the region can promote sustainable agricultural practices and protect the health of the lake.

Turf grass seeding is the final step in the soil restoration process. Turf grass plays a significant role in preventing soil erosion, improving water infiltration, and providing a habitat for beneficial organisms. By selecting the appropriate grass species and ensuring proper seeding techniques, the soil can be stabilized, and its health can be maintained. In West Lake Okoboji, where the landscape is often used for recreational purposes, having a healthy and resilient turf is essential for both aesthetic and environmental reasons.

The importance of soil quality restoration around West Lake Okoboji cannot be overstated. The lake is a popular destination for tourists and residents alike, and its health is directly linked to the quality of the surrounding soil. By implementing practices such as deep tine aeration, compost application, and turf grass seeding, the region can ensure that the soil remains healthy and productive. This, in turn, will help to protect the lake's ecosystem, promote sustainable land use, and enhance the overall quality of life for those who live and visit the area.

In conclusion, soil quality restoration is a multifaceted practice that involves the use of deep tine aeration, compost application, and turf grass seeding. These methods work together to improve soil structure, fertility, and health, which are essential for maintaining the sustainability of ecosystems like West Lake Okoboji. By prioritizing soil quality restoration, the region can protect its natural resources, promote sustainable land use and ensure a healthy environment for future generations.



OKOBOJI PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION AWARDS THE ACE CORY CONSERVATION AWARD

By Steve Weisman, OPA Publicity Director

One of the highlights of the Okoboji Protective Association's annual meeting, which was held at Gull Point State Park Lodge on Friday, June 20, was the presentation of the Ace Cory Conservation Award to Joe McGovern, on behalf of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Mary Skopec, OPA board member and Executive Director of Lakeside Lab, presented McGovern with the Ace Cory Conservation Award plaque with an inscription that reads,

"Bestowed to Joe McGovern, on behalf of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) for their commitment to protecting Iowa's natural resources and enhancing water quality. Through leadership, collaboration and dedication, they have safeguarded the Iowa Great Lakes, ensuring a legacy of clean water, vibrant ecosystems and sustainable landscapes for future generations. Presented with gratitude for their enduring impact on the Iowa Great Lakes and West Okoboji."

In receiving the award, McGovern said, "I am really humbled, and I accept it on the behalf of the board and for all of us! We certainly appreciate the efforts of the Okoboji Protective Association in its mission and goals."

Speaking of McGovern, specifically, Skopec noted in her presentation that McGovern has long been a champion of Iowa's natural resources, first on the Story County Conservation Board and now with the INHF. "For the past 12 years, Joe has served as the President of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. In the Iowa Great Lakes, INHF has established itself, under Joe's leadership, as a go-to entity for the preservation and protection of the area's natural resources."

Skopec next reflected on the years of INHF's impact to the Iowa Great Lakes. "Over nearly 4 decades, the INHF and its partners have protected 5,800 acres in Dickinson County alone. Two of the most recent projects have included the North Shore Project on Big Spirit, which includes the Wallace and Bowers Nature Area and the East Okoboji property adjacent to Elinor Bedell State Park. Just recently, the INHF has purchased an option to buy a 73-acre property in Arnolds Park sandwiched between Upper Gar, Lake Minnewashta and Lower Gar."

This now becomes the next challenge for McGovern, the INHF and partners as they work to protect this 73-acre property.

In conclusion, Skopec shared a thought that McGovern penned in 2023 about the work that has been accomplished and the work that needs to be done. "After more than four decades, we continue to work with our partners to create more parks, trails and wildlife areas, hoping to attract and retain young people that prioritize outdoor recreation when deciding where to live.

We continue to look for natural solutions to the water quality and quantity issues facing our state. We continue to listen to nature, knowing that protecting and restoring resilient natural lands can help

cont.



(photo by Steve Weisman) John Fieseemann, president of the Okoboji Protective Association, (L) presents Joe McGovern with the plaque honoring McGovern and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation as the 2025 Ace Cory Conservation Award.

OKOBOJI PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION AWARDS THE ACE CORY CONSERVATION AWARD - CONT.

us be prepared for increasing extreme weather events. We continue to advocate for the voiceless – Iowa's land, water, wildlife and future generations."

About the Award

OPA president, John Fieselmann, shared the background of the Ace Cory Conservation Award. McGovern and the INHF is the most recent recipient of the Ace Cory Conservation Award, which has been bestowed annually since 2006 by the Okoboji Protective Association to an individual whose work in the Iowa Great Lakes area, voluntary or professional, reflects the principles of the late Ace Cory, one of the region's pioneer environmentalists.

Ace Cory, who passed away unexpectedly in 2005, was one of the leaders in the late 1990's to seek a steady stream of money to fund clean water projects in Dickinson County. He was instrumental in the formation of the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission, the first and only organization of its kind in Iowa. He was always involved in the grass roots of many conservation projects.

Past recipients include John Synhorst, Barbara Mendenhall, Jane Shuttleworth, Orville Berg, David Thoreson, Phil Petersen, Mike Hawkins, John Wills, Chris LaRue, Steve Anderson, Greg Drees, Jeff and Elizabeth Wallace, John Boettcher, Eric Hoiem, Gary and Jake Johnson and Terry Wilts and Mark Gulick.

OBWF CLEAN WATER PANELISTS SHARE WATER QUALITY THOUGHTS

By Steve Weisman, OPA Publicity Director

The Okoboji Blue Water Festival is the largest clean water event in the state of Iowa. While much of the day is about celebrating clean water and clean water successes, it's also about raising public awareness of water quality issues in the Iowa Great Lakes and beyond.

According to Greg Drees, co-chair for the OBWF, "The mission of the OBWF is to support the stewardship of clean water and other natural resources through both celebration and education."

One of the greatly anticipated events at the OBWF has always been the moderator-led clean water panels. This year's four clean water panelists included Pete Hildreth, division administrator for Conservation & Recreation for Iowa DNR; Susan Kozak, director of Soil Conservation and Water Quality for IDALS; Joe McGovern, president of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation; Larry Stone, photographer, naturalist, explorer and writer, along with moderator, John Lundell, retired mayor of the city of Coralville.

Each panelist began with a brief background of their clean water background and then responded to. Lundell as he asked a series questions. Topics included issues of flooding, phosphorus and sediment runoff, the lack of public land in Iowa, whether IWILL will ever be funded, the positives happening in areas of the state on protecting the land and the water, but that there were so many challenges ahead of Iowa.

A major discussion centered around the issue of flooding, reflecting on how flooding seems to be occurring much more often than in the past. McGovern noted, "Water doesn't follow state boundaries. We are all in this together, and we must work together." He noted that the Vincent property north of Big Spirit in Minnesota is an example of people working across borders to make conservation work.

Hildreth added, "The key is implementing best land practices that work to slow down the water and keep it on the land longer. Collaboration and partnerships are a huge key."

As director for IDALS, Kozak agreed. "Every state has like agencies. We work together to learn what other states are doing and learn from each other. It takes getting the right people to talk to landowners and also in many cases tenants to establish a connection and build long term relationships. What we do must be scientifically backed."

cont.



Clean Water Panel
(L to R)
Larry Stone,
Joe McGovern,
Susan Kozak,
Pete Hildreth

Panelists referenced the work that has been done in the Iowa Great Lakes and the collaboration that has taken place. Key parcels of land have been secured and have helped with the watershed. However, there is much more work that needs to be done. Stone talked about growing up on a farm in the '50s and the changes that have been slowly occurring with the increased use of cover crops and no till. However, all four panelists agreed that much more needs to be done.

At this point, both McGovern and Stone addressed the issue of Iowa's Water and Land Legacy (IWILL). Iowans voted (approved by 63%) in 2010 to establish IWILL, an initiative that would provide permanent funding for clean water, outdoor recreation, soil conservation and wildlife habitat.

However, the fund has remained unfunded because the Iowa Legislature has not enacted the necessary sales tax increase to fund it, despite consistent public support for the fund's creation.

McGovern, who has long been a big advocate for IWILL wonders, "Will it ever happen? This would fund so many things Iowans want." Stone reflected, "I agree. How much have we left on the table without IWILL?"

As the panel drew to a close, panelists answered several questions from the audience. In conclusion, panelists believe WE ALL are the answer. "Success in clean water will only come through collaboration and partnerships. We must work together; we can't do this as one agency or group."

Barbara Mendenhall, past president and current secretary of the Okoboji Protective Association has a strong passion for clean water and protecting our natural resources. These are her thoughts on the Clean Water Panel, "The Okoboji Blue Water Festival gives everyone a chance to pause and think about how important clean water is to all living things. This year the Clean Water Panel brought many current issues to the forefront with the opinions from government, non-profit conservation and a conservation journalist. Discussion included examples of what has been accomplished to date but also included their concerns for the future. It is their hope to continue to partner to enhance conservation in the Iowa Great Lakes and beyond. My husband, Walter and I both felt it was time well spent learning about the partnerships that exist between government and the non-profit sectors to promote conservation in Iowa."

A LITTLE OVER A YEAR SINCE THE FLOOD OF 2024 AND WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

By Steve Anderson, IGLSD Superintendent

From the Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary District, the Trustees wasted little time making modifications to the ordinances, rules and policies that will make the public sewer system more flood resistant. This article will cover the impacts to the public sewer system and step taken after the flood of 2024.

The flood of 2024 had major impacts on the public sewer system. The flood impacts to the sewer system started with the rains on June 15, 2025, with the major impacts happening with the rains of June 21, 2025.

The average flow to the wastewater plant in the month of June is 108 million gallons. In June of 2025 the wastewater plant received 245 million gallons of water. That does not include the water that bypassed to the lakes, or water pumped out of the sewer system to protect private property and the wastewater infrastructure. The main reason for this flow was the flood waters were filling up the sewer system.

At the peak of the flood, over 300 structures with sewer were flooded along with one RV park. The flood water was going in floor drains, shower drains and even blew toilet wax rings in, all allowing the flood water into the sewer system. Areas of the sewer were so overwhelmed with flood waters that fish could be seen swimming in the lift stations, with no sign of stress.

The initial start to this flooding of the sewer system was due to illegal connections such as sump pumps connected to the public sewer system. By pumping ground water into the sewer system, illegally this started the flooding issues around June 15, 2025. The flooding ended up costing the payers of the Sanitary District around \$500,000 in damages, wages, equipment repairs, protective measures, equipment replacements and more. These impacts would have been in the millions if sandbagging operations had not taken place to protect lift stations.

The Sanitary District Trustees recognized action that they could take to make the sewer system more flood resilient. They also recognized that other things outside of their control also needed to be done to make the sewer system more resilient to flooding in the future. The steps taken by the Sanitary District Trustees were in the form of policy and ordinance changes.

New changes include the requirement that new homes cannot have a sewer drain lower than 12 inches above the 100-year flood elevation of the nearby waterbodies. They also cannot have a sewer drain less than 12 inches above the 100-year flood elevation of any nearby stormwater facility. New structures must identify wetland soils on the property and any sewer drain less than 12-inches above the natural grade of the wetland soils.

All three of these changes reduce the chances for the sewer system to get flooded. New subdivision plats must go through and identify all these items and the limitations of the sewer system for those lots must be documented as part of the plat process for a sewer construction permit.

The District Trustees also identified items that were out of their control but in the control of the local cities and county. The preservation of wetland soils from being filled in built over. The preservation and restoration of these wetland soils help absorb and slowly release rain water and reduce flooding on the lakes.

Enforcement of drainage requirements that limits concrete and roof tops from draining directly to the lakes. By enforcing drainage requirements in the different cities and county water off impervious surfaces can be slowed down and even reduced from getting to the lakes. For instance, the change of culverts to a bridge on Lower Gar Lake to reducing the changes of flooding within the lakes area. These and other steps must be taken by other jurisdictions to make the sewer system more resilient to flooding.

The 2024 flood can be a guidepost or just a memory to be forgotten. The Sanitary District has taken these steps to make the public sewer system and private property more resilient to future flooding around the Iowa Great Lakes.

EXCITING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AT LAKESIDE LAB

By Dr. Mary Skopec, Executive Director of Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has exciting news to share with the Iowa Great Lakes community. This fall Lakeside will be breaking ground on a new Innovation & Discovery Laboratory, which represents phase 1 of critical infrastructure and capital improvement projects on the campus.

In 2022, Lakeside conducted a review of campus needs and identified three main priorities: additional year-round classroom and dedicated laboratory space, upgraded residential space for students and improvements to the limnology lab located on the old boat house along the shoreline of West Okoboji.

The new classroom and laboratory space will fill several critical needs:

- a larger classroom space for pre-K-12th grade groups, college classes and public events. The large laboratory space offers a climate-controlled area for scientific instrumentation, Lakeside's historical collection of plant, animal, fungi and bird specimens, and collaborative workspace for researchers, students, and interns.
- The new laboratory provides a modern area for the CLAMP volunteers (Cooperative Lakes Area Monitoring Project) to house and analyze samples.
- Lastly, the new building provides a visual connection to nature and the outdoors that facilitates the study of nature in nature ethic when the weather conditions prevent students from being outside.

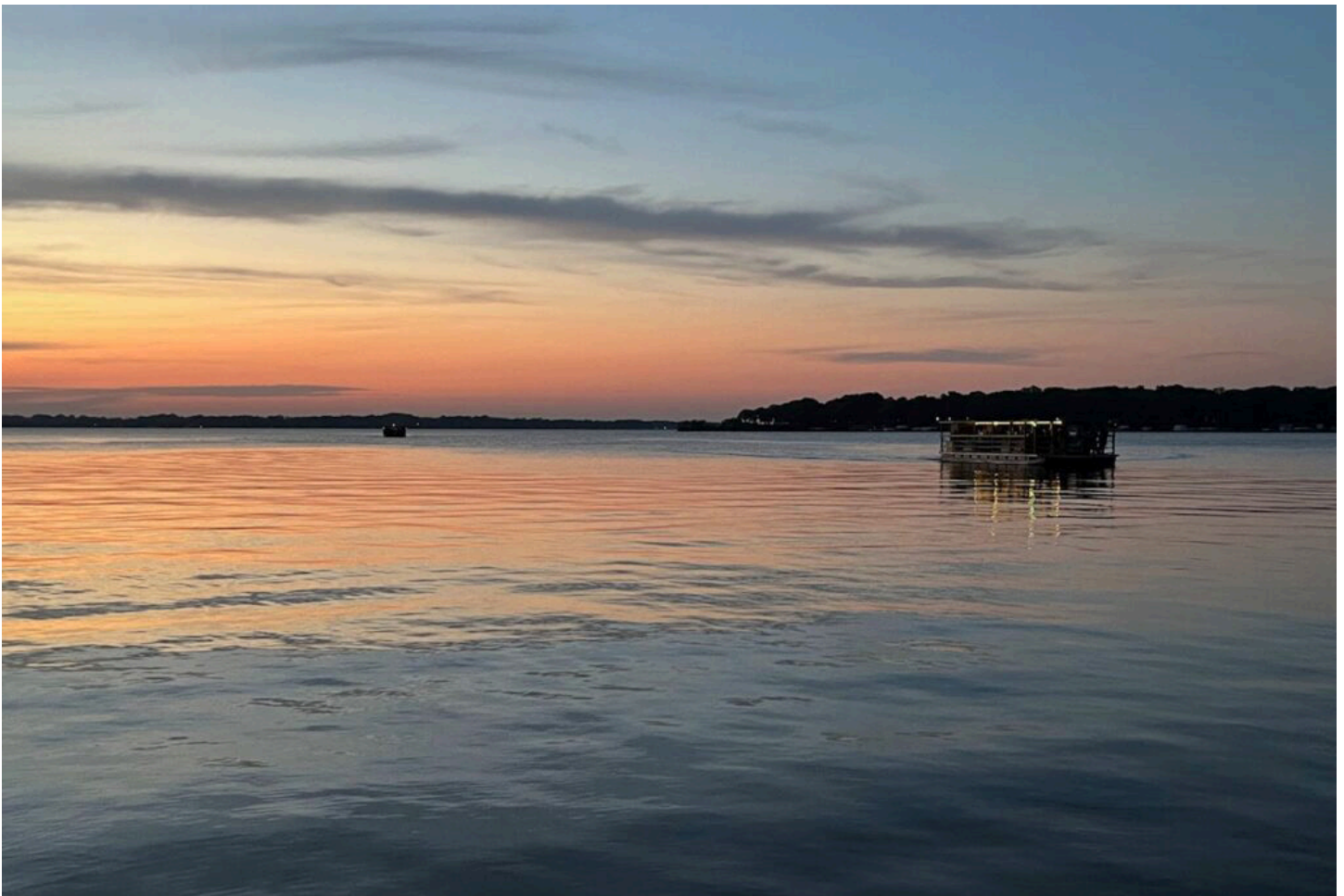
DLR architects (Des Moines) have designed a building that honors the historical and natural aesthetic of Lakeside, while stepping into the modern era of education and research. Removal of the King and Botany Lab will make way for the new building and is scheduled to occur in October. We anticipate a grand opening in September of 2026 and hope that you will plan on attending!



Photos of completed construction to be completed by September of 2026.



OKOBOJI PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION



 **FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!**

OPA NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 242
Okoboji, IA 51355

The OPA Newsletter welcomes submissions from its readers.
Editors: Barbara Mendenhall
Steve Weisman

WORLD WIDE WEB

OPA
<http://www.okobojiprotectiveassociation.org>