



CRYSTAL LAKE PARK DISTRICT
One E. Crystal Lake Avenue
Crystal Lake, IL 60014



CRYSTAL LAKE PARK DISTRICT

September 2016

LAKE LINES

The mission of the Crystal Lake Park District is to enhance the lives of our residents by providing programs, services, facilities and open spaces that safely promote health, recreation and community in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.

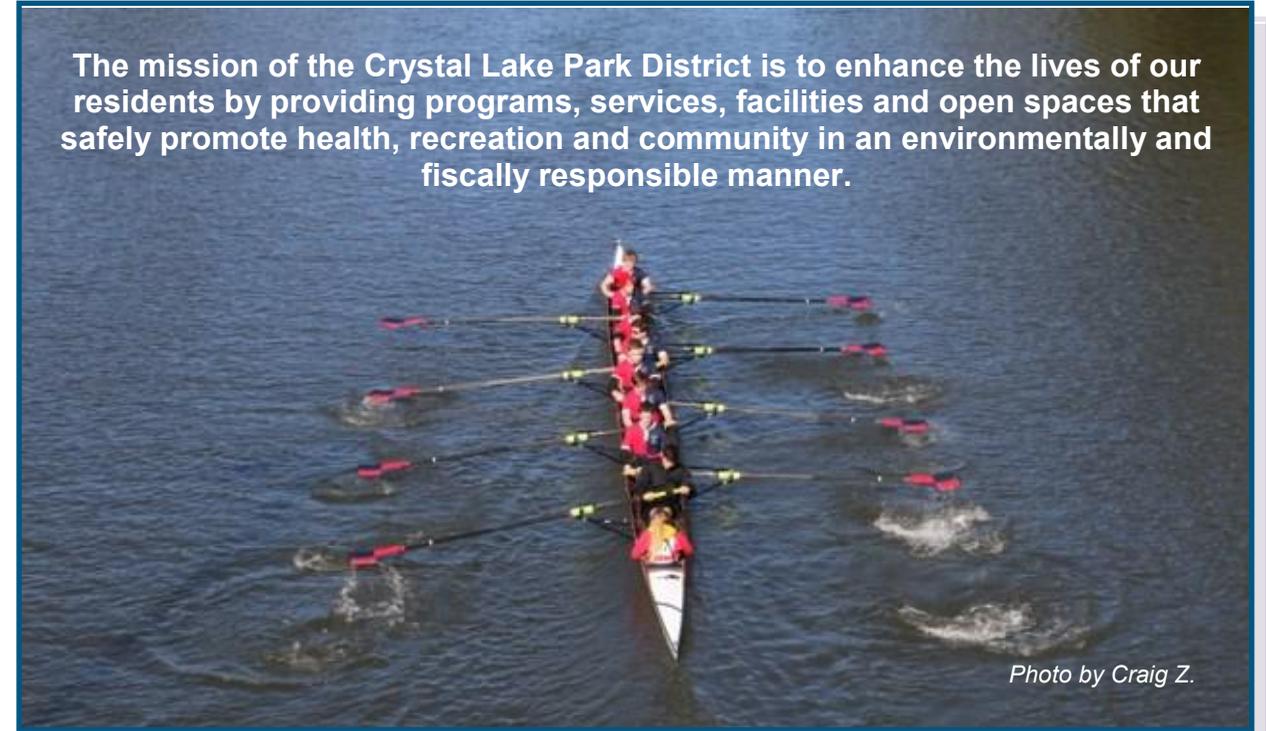


Photo by Craig Z.

Lake Lines - September 2016

To subscribe to future editions of this newsletter, visit our website at www.crystallakeparks.org, choose Contact Us from the menu, select Get Connected, enter your email address and check Lake Lines Newsletter.

Summer of 2016 is nearing its end. As we enjoy the last few warm days and look forward to fall, it's a great time to review what's been happening on and around Crystal Lake. As you can see from our mission statement, the Crystal Lake Park District is dedicated to both the environmental and recreational aspects of our parks and open spaces. The lake is a perfect example of managing many uses while working diligently to preserve the high quality of the water, fish and plant life. There are many opportunities to learn more about Crystal Lake – look for links throughout the newsletter where you can delve deeper into many subjects.

Enjoy this newsletter ~ we'll see you at the lake!



Invasive Plant Spotlight: Common Reed Grass

How can something so beautiful be so destructive? Common Reed Grass or *Phragmites australis* is a wetland grass widely distributed throughout the United States. It is aggressive and will outcompete native plants and displace native animals. Because of its height and distinctive, fluffy seed heads, Phragmites is easy to spot. Phragmites grows readily in disturbed wetland areas, along streams, lakes, ponds and roadside ditches. It is salt tolerant and is spread by seed, rhizomes (underground stems) and stolons (above ground sprouts.) Phragmites can spread up to 30' per year and reach 18' in height. As the plant dies back each fall, large



concentrations of dense mats choke the ground, further diminishing wildlife habitat and making access into the affected area difficult.

Phragmites is very difficult to control or eradicate. Herbicides applied by a licensed applicator appear to be the best method of control. Multiple applications are necessary to effectively eradicate a stand of Phragmites, and even then, success can be limited.

Herbicide application is generally most effective when combined with other control strategies that target landscape issues that caused the Phragmites to initially establish in the area.

The best way to combat Phragmites is to stop it from getting started in the first place by careful planning and implementation of projects that will disturb existing ground conditions within the watershed. Infestations of Phragmites will reduce runoff, reduce water quality and encourage the establishment and spread of more Phragmites.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For more information, visit www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites.



Lake Facts

- Surface Area: 233.32 acres
- Shoreline Length: 3.2 miles
- Maximum Depth: 40 feet
- Average Depth: 14.7 feet
- Lake Volume: 3,347 acre-feet
- Watershed Area: 3,175 acres
- Lake Type: natural glacial seepage

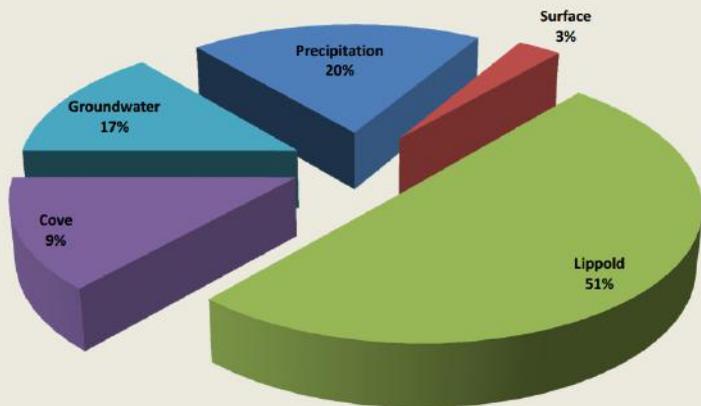
From Crystal Lake Clean Lakes Phase I Protection Plan, July 9, 2007, Hey and Associates, Inc.



What's a Water Budget?

Simply put, a water budget is the accounting of water that enters the lake versus water that leaves the lake. The charts below show the actual water inputs and outputs measured in 2015. The entire Lake Manager's Annual Report, prepared by Hey and Associates, Inc., can be found in the Hot Topics Section at www.crystallakeparks.org.

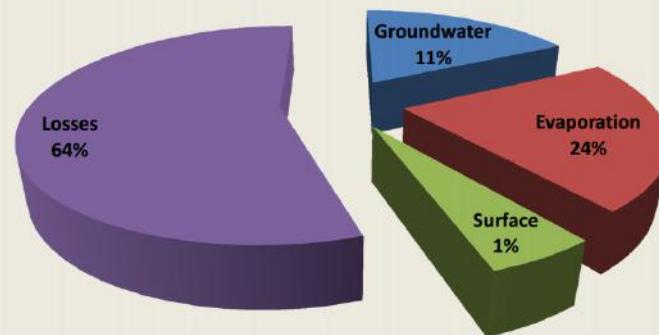
HYDROLOGY (2015 WATER INPUTS)



Hey and Associates, Inc.

More than half the water that enters Crystal Lake comes through the Lippold Park Wetland Complex, which drains over 2,000 acres of land to the north of the lake.

HYDROLOGY (2015 WATER OUTPUTS)



Hey and Associates, Inc.

Most of the water leaving the lake is through infiltration, unmeasured groundwater, and undiscovered outlets. Except for the severe drought years of 2012 and 2005, the lake level has remained very constant.

Crystal Lake History: the Lake Shore House Hotel

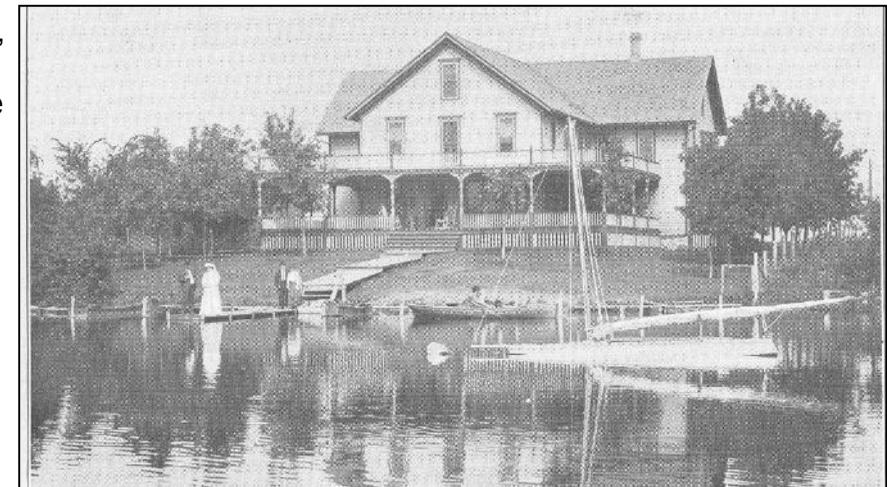
Around the turn of the 20th century, Crystal Lake was known as a resort town. Chicagoans and other large city dwellers flocked to the hotels and summer cottages that surrounded beautiful Crystal Lake. They came for blue skies, clear water, wonderful old trees, excellent bathing beaches, fine fishing, and good hotels.

The Lake Shore House was built in 1900 by W.E. Prickett and Sons at a cost of \$5,000. It was situated on the north shore of the lake, and stood about 30 feet from the water's edge. The June 14, 1900 Nunda Herald describes the hotel as follows: "A 12-foot double-deck veranda adorns three sides of the house, giving 2,016 square feet of porch room. The house is two full stories with a large attic and basement. The house contains twenty-three guest rooms, besides an office, parlor, dining room, kitchen, corridors and store-rooms...W.E. Prickett and Sons assure us that the conduct of the house will be first-class in every respect....the terms are \$2 a day or \$10 a week."

In 1908, the Pricketts sold the Lake Shore House to Mrs. Wiltberger who immediately hired Robert Burr, a well-known local, to manage her hotel. The new management team held a grand opening for the 1908 summer resort season. Guests and locals were treated to a sumptuous turkey dinner and entertained by musicians all day. The hotel was festively decorated throughout with pink and white carnations.

By the 1920's, the resort business was in decline. Business continued to dwindle through the Depression years with World War II, bringing the end of the resort hotel era in Crystal Lake. The Lake Shore House continued operating but more as a rooming house than for the resort trade. In May, 1982, the house was badly damaged by smoke from an electrical fire. Rather than rebuild, the owner decided to demolish the aging structure.

Article reprinted from The Crystal Times, April 2002, with permission from the Crystal Lake Historical Society.



Taming the Invasive Aquatic Plants in Crystal Lake

The Crystal Lake Park District works closely throughout the year with lake management consultants Hey and Associates, Inc. Periodic surveys on the lake detect and record the location and coverage of plants that are invasive and considered undesirable.

Using a targeted approach, a treatment plan is developed for each infested area that is in need of treatment. Invasive plants are treated at appropriate times throughout the year with granular herbicides. Different plants respond to different herbicides and are

easier to kill at specific times during their growing cycle. Water temperature, pH and weather conditions are also measured to determine the appropriate treatment time.

The swimming areas at Main and West Beach are the only areas that receive a “total kill” treatment in the spring. Our goal is to balance the needs of the lake and its users while treading as lightly as possible with

herbicide use. Only licensed aquatic applicators are permitted by law to apply herbicides on park district property. Shoreline homeowners who own a portion of the lakebed (this is very rare - only 4% of the lake bottom is not owned by the park district) can apply herbicide on their property only.

The park district and Hey and Associates comply with all State of Illinois regulations regarding public notice and sign posting prior to each application.



What's In Your Water Garden?

Many plants that are available to water gardeners are invasive. If introduced into our waterways—either accidentally or intentionally—they can reduce the amount of food available for fish and wildlife and change how ecosystems function. They can also cost millions to eradicate or control. Growing only non-weedy or regionally native plants is one way you can help to protect our natural areas from aquatic invaders.



Tips for water gardeners:

- Build your water garden away from waterways and flood-prone areas.
- Rinse plants before planting to remove animals, eggs and other plants or plant parts.
- Weed out uninvited plants.
- Seal unwanted plants in a plastic bag and place them in the trash. If possible, freeze the bag before disposal.
- Never release plants or animals into waterways.

For more information and a list of plants to avoid, visit www.takeaim.org. Protect Crystal Lake and grow only non-invaders in your water garden!

Source: *Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, University of Illinois*

Interesting Tidbits from 2016:

- *On July 20, a harvesting operation removed 13 loads of floating eelgrass from the west bay. The operation took 12 hours. The eelgrass was so thick that a person could lay on top of the mound without sinking.*
- *As of mid-August, the surface water temperature was approximately 80 degrees. Thirty five feet down the water temperature was approximately 60 degrees.*
- *In typical fashion, the water clarity diminished as summer progressed, due to boat activity, water temperature and wave action.*

Faces on the Lake: Crystal Lake Park District Beach Staff

The Crystal Lake Park District employs approximately 75 lifeguards, beach staff, and beach managers throughout the summer. All lifeguards are certified in Waterfront Lifeguarding by the American Red Cross, a 35 hour course covering lifeguard skills, CPR, First Aid, and AED use. Lifeguards also go through 10 hours of preseason lifeguard training in addition to 1 hour per week throughout the season. This training ensures lifeguards are fully ready and able to handle an aquatic emergency should one occur. CLPD currently has 6 lifeguard instructors on staff that train and certify lifeguards.

The Beach Staff you'll see at Main Beach in the blue shirts are some of the hardest workers at the beach! The beach staff not only collect money at the front gate and help users with boats, but come in early to clean up the park and serve as parkers on special event days. The Beach Staff are an extremely important part of the beach and Main Beach would not be able to function without them!



Photo from the 2016 Independence Day Fireworks Display at Main Beach.

Who is responsible for overseeing the daily beach operations at both Main and West Beach? CLPD has 8 beach managers on staff. Throughout the summer, the managers are responsible for not only all the staff on duty, but overseeing the entire park. Managers often are the ones coming in early and staying late to ensure things are being taken care of and ready to go for all of our visitors to the park.

CLPD also holds swim lessons at Main Beach. Swimming is such an important skill, and swimming in the lake is very different than in a pool. The CLPD swim lesson program not only focuses on basic skills but also safety in and around open bodies of water. Swim lessons instructors put in a great deal of effort making sure participants in the program not only learn this life skill, but have a good time too!

West Bay Eelgrass Harvesting Completed in July

Due to its depth and years of nutrient rich sedimentation from the old sod farm that operated until the park district purchased Lippold Park 25 years ago, the west bay of Crystal Lake has been challenged with heavy aquatic plant growth. Some years are worse than others. In the worst years, the thick vegetation prohibits power boat traffic.



The Crystal Lake Park District reached out to west end shoreline property owners to discuss the ongoing issue and develop an approach to battle the nuisance vegetation that is both environmentally friendly and fiscally responsible. With input from the users, two boat lanes were treated with an aquatic herbicide to kill off excessive vegetation and allow for boat traffic. Homeowners who wanted to improve the shoreline directly in front of their property (between piers) contracted privately with Hey and Associates for additional herbicide treatment.

Eelgrass is a native aquatic plant that has been particularly troublesome this year. It uproots and forms dense floating mats. Although harvesting is not a long term solution to eradicate eelgrass (think lawn mowing—the plants grow back), the Crystal Lake Park District had an aquatic plant harvesting operation spend a day in the west bay. A group of shoreline homeowners pitched in by working in the water to collect mats of vegetation and guide them toward the harvester.

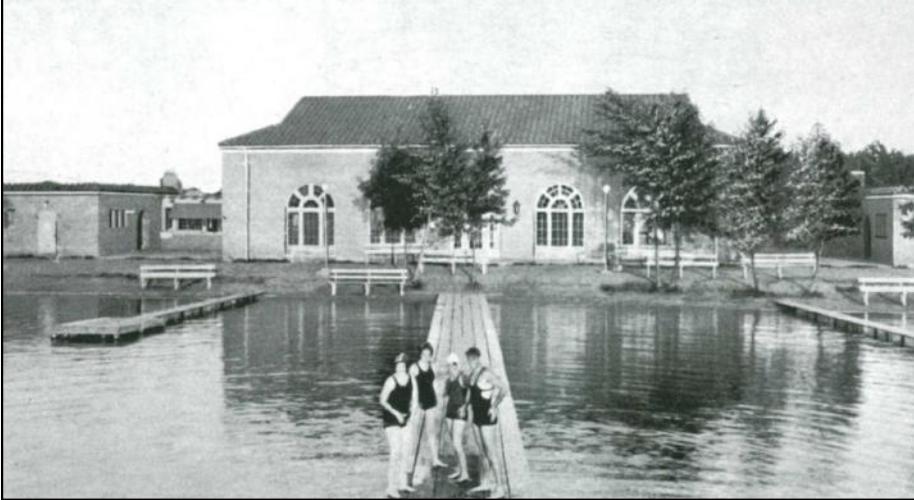


Thanks to the dedication and “elbow grease” of neighbors working together, the west bay was nicely cleared of floating vegetation. Harvesting is only considered an alternative in dire situations, and this summer certainly met that criteria!

Main Beach Pavilion Renovation Begins

The Main Beach Recreation Building was constructed in 1926 and remains today much as it was originally built. A renovation project in 1998 modernized the restrooms and concession stand. This fall another major interior renovation will take place.

Photo courtesy of Crystal Lake Historical Society



The building's striking main feature is the center Pavilion Room, an airy two story structure flanked by stunning arched windows facing east and west. The room has been used for an interesting and vast variety of purposes since its construction. In the early days, dances were held on Friday nights

that were accompanied by an organ or band and later by phonograph music. As athletics grew in popularity, the Pavilion became a gymnastics facility, a basketball court, fitness room, a ping pong tournament locale—you name it and it has happened at Main Beach! In addition to hosting park district recreation programs, the Pavilion is a popular rental space for weddings, reunions and other large parties. With a stunning sunset view, the space is truly unique!

The renovation project will bring much needed modernization to the Pavilion in the form of air conditioning (the space has never been air conditioned), energy efficient windows, lights and insulation, flooring and additional storage.

The building will be closed from September 6 to December 31 for renovation. All fall session classes are being relocated to other park district facilities. Watch the progress in the Project Update section at www.crystallakeparks.org.



Faces on the Lake: Crystal Lake Rowing Club



The Crystal Lake Rowing Club was the inspiration of rowing enthusiasts who brought the idea to the Crystal Lake Park Board of Commissioners in 2004. With park district support, the non-profit club was formed, drawing a small group of rowers from the area. The group obtained donated boats and oars that were stored at Main Beach the first summer. In 2005 the park district provided CLRC with a fenced enclosure at Naoki Kamijima Park which was later enlarged and covered as the fleet and membership grew.

Today, the Crystal Lake Rowing Club is a familiar sight on Crystal Lake. The organization hosts the Greater Chicago Junior Rowing Championship that attracts over 1,000 participants each May. Adult and teen Learn to Row classes are held throughout the season and training is available year round. The club has a great group of social adults that get together to row. Experience is not required, so you are invited to give it a try!



CLRC is excited to announce that the Juniors Team has a new head coach, Michael O'Gorman, whose credentials include coaching world champions and Olympic medalists. The juniors team consists of students grades 8-12 who come from Crystal Lake and surrounding towns. There are many scholarship opportunities available for students wanting to pursue the sport in college.

Watching the Crystal Lake Rowing Club members on the water can be a hypnotic experience. With everyone moving in unison, it's a peaceful sight. The members enjoy seeing homeowner's around the lake observing them at sun up and sun down. The energy adds to a shared appreciation of the water.

For more information, visit www.crystallakerowing.org or call Lindsay Herrera at (815) 546-9415.