

## ***the Watershed***

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### ***the Watershed***

is a periodic publication that contains information relevant to our District's constituents.

### ***Do the Right Thing***

*By Marty Portner, LN/NL RCD President*

In the months ahead, the **RCD** will be passing a resolution to request all shoreline property owners to complete a shoreline stabilization project on their own individual properties. This is an idea whose time has now come since we truly have a good handle on the major issues that have been contributing to the quality of our lake and its natural habitat.

Over the last year and a half, the **RCD** has been studying this issue and to-date has set a number of programs into motion with one goal in mind: to complete the work started by previous boards with the

ultimate goal of reducing the need to do costly periodic dredging of our lake and to enjoy the ensuing benefits in terms of water clarity, wildlife habitability and safe recreation for our constituents.

**The RCD is now asking the shoreline property owners to take action to "shore-up" their individual portions of the shorelines.**

As any student of this issue knows, the primary

contributors to the silt build-up are the tributaries within our watershed that introduce a steady stream of eroded stream bank (in the form of common silt and nutrients from livestock operations) into the lake. Our aggressive grant-seeking program is showing signs of success even at this early date. The number of organizations that are willing to help (at little or no cost to the taxpayers) has grown by leaps and bounds. We have seen our initial plan expand into areas where we never thought headway could be made. We are receiving

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#### **Did You Know...**

- You can access our website [www.rcdinfo.com](http://www.rcdinfo.com) for information like rental forms and meeting minutes?
- For 2008 Survey results, you can go to the Minutes and Info page on the Website or Call the RCD office and we'll mail you a paper copy.

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unprecedented cooperation from landowners in the watershed and awareness of the contribution that they are making to the lake has been heightened. They are for the most part, on board with our program. The new unified Lost Lake POA is also on board, with plans to stabilize the shores of its park properties. Some property owners have already begun to line their shorelines with riprap and other **RCD**-approved materials.

Now it is time for all lakeshore property owners to step up and do the right thing. For years, the shoreline

has been eroding and contributing to the silt and nutrient build up. The **RCD** is now asking the shoreline property owners to take action to "shore-up" their individual portions of the shorelines. The return will be worth the investment in terms of reduced costs in periodic dredging. The **RCD** has already invested a good amount of tax dollars into cleaning up the beaches, the entire 10,000-acre watershed, and the **RCD's** own shoreline properties. The final investment is in the individual shorelines and the success of the long-term strategy depends on the owners to step up and do what is required.

We will send notification of the time schedule and recommended procedures for stabilizing your shore once the resolution is passed in January. If we get enough requests, we will have a hearing for shoreline property owners to voice their concerns prior to the January meeting. Judging by the amount of interest so far, a hearing is not likely. It's up to you. Property owners should call our office at 815.652.2006 to log our support for an open hearing on the **RCD's** request to shore up your property. If you have more questions or concerns, you may call me at 815.652.8637.

## *Your RCD In Action*

*By Steve Larry, LN/NLRCD Vice President*

Like any business, to be successful, you need a clear vision to set your direction, supported by goals and objectives that are supported by all that are affected by the end result. In the case of your **RCD**, it is no different. Our job as elected board members is to set the goals that align with our vision, which is to improve and protect the Lost Lake ecosystem as well as support and manage assets such as the Lake Court Center and our parks.

So what are these goals and what are our objectives for this coming year? Let me try to outline them for you.

First and most importantly, our goal is to **improve and protect our ecosystem**. What this means is that the lake and everything that affects it must be the focus of what we do and spend most of our resources on, including our time and your tax dollars. To do this, we have established objectives that insure we make strides to achieve this goal especially as it pertains to silt and affluent entering the lake. They include:

**Shore Line Stabilization:** This objective is supported by the Lake Management Committee (LMC) headed up by Jerry Sellers and a host

of dedicated volunteers. The greatest portion of these efforts surround the current and ongoing riprap program which began with the North Shore riprap completed last Spring; the soon to be completed East (beach) Landing; adoption of riprap standards for shoreline property owners; and institution of regulations to insure that rip rapping is completed over a set period of time.

**Reducing Silt Entering the lake:** Here again, the LMC has the charge. Our Clear Creek silt basin is one of the most visible examples of what we need to do to lower silt entering and clogging our lake. Last Spring, we completed a major dredging of this basin and will do it again

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## *Your RCD In Action (continued from page 2)*

this winter, a clear sign that it is doing what it was designed to do. In the late Fall of '09, we are planning on starting a project to build a similar silt basin for Babbling Brook. Since it involves Schings Park, it will take on a more “landscaped” appearance, but will have the same effect.

**Reduce silt currently clogging our lake:** The LMC will also be responsible for this program under the volunteer management of Don Finn. With the right planning, we will embark on a major dredging program to “dig out” existing silt that threatens the very existence of our lake. This project will coincide with the Babbling Brook Silt Basin Project so we minimize disruption of the use of the lake (which will have to be drawn down while the work is done); reduce the expense as much as possible while maximizing resources to do the work.

**Reduce nutrients entering the lake:** This can be summed up under “Watershed Improvement”, a project that I have responsibility for. We must understand that we have a large surrounding land mass that affects the clarity of Lost Lake, and unless we make efforts to manage what enters the streams that eventually enters the lake, we will never succeed in improving aquatic vegetation that supports the fish we like to see in our lake and the recreational use of the lake (swimming, boating, etc.). We have already begun meeting with land owners in our “community” to

discuss land use improvement (which includes managing grazing programs, buffer strips, stream management, etc.) and plan to continue these efforts over the next 12-18 months.

**Manage current assets:** Under the watchful eyes of Herb Hill and Glenn Baldwin, we maintain the Lake Court Center and our properties that include the swimming beaches and parks. It involves a whole host of things from just upkeep like you do in your own homes to mowing, dock repair, painting, signage, dam management, cleanliness of our swimming areas and beaches, and so on. Both Herb and Glenn put in a ton of time just making sure all these areas are maintained for public enjoyment and use.

**Improve volunteerism and support to reduce costs:** Betty Lou Finn manages this area and continues to work diligently to reach out to the community for support on any number of projects we are involved in. Volunteerism is a key area for us as it lends itself to reducing what we need to pay contractors when work has to be done for minor repairs, cleanup projects and building projects.

I have mentioned within the discussions above who carries the load when it comes to responsibility and oversight for these objectives. In addition, your **RCD** has engaged the services of two key consultants. Joe Rush (JadEco) is a lake management specialist. Joe supports the activities

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of the LMC, doing lake affluent studies, developing and implementing lake management standards, supporting fish stocking programs, and working as a liaison with other government agencies like the Army Corp. of Engineers and EPA.

Rebecca Olson (Olson Ecological Solutions, LLC) has been working with me for the last 9 months, mainly in the exploration and writing of grants that will financially support our objectives that certainly strain our budget. Along with this, Rebecca is assisting with our Watershed Management program and has been our key contact person when it comes to gaining the cooperation and involvement of watershed property owners, Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS), endorsements and cooperation from local organizations with similar interests such as the Ogle Co. Soil and Water Conservation District and the Nature Conservancy. Currently we are in the process of writing and submitting a grant for stream management and building the Babbling Brook Silt Basin.