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FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER FOR THE PEOPLE OF

Union Grove Lake

Another Piece of Union Grove Lake's Jigsaw Puzzle: Phosphate from Animal Waste

Union Grove Lake Watershed Project's summer newsletter introduced the four likely sources of high phosphate levels in the lake: household sources, animal contamination, fertilizers and natural sources.

While that issue addressed how we, as consumers, can control phosphate in and around our homes, this issue concerns phosphate from animal waste—livestock, wildlife, and pets.

One of the Project's main goals is to reduce the impact of livestock on the streams in Union Grove Lake's watershed. Thus cost-share funds are available to install a number of manure management practices.

Among these practices, runoff from feedlots can be contained in storage basins to store the effluent. Also, vegetative buffers can protect surface water from manure-laden flow from pastures.

These practices not only stop the flow of manure's phosphorus entering Union Grove's water system but also controls accompanying pathogens such as bacteria, another of our lake's impairments.

Effective livestock management includes

manure nutrient testing and responsible manure application. Most producers realize that manure is a resource to utilize in order to reduce the use of costly commercial fertilizers.

Especially in today's tight agricultural economy, responsibly using manure resources has been described as "money in the bank."

Wildlife sources are difficult to control. Without a doubt, the lake watershed contains an ample population of several wildlife species, including deer and geese.

For the past several years, personnel from the



Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) have been capturing and relocating Canada geese from Union Grove Lake.

This year's round-up took place on June 23. Approximately fifty adult and fledgling geese were captured and then

released at Otter Creek Marsh near Chelsea.

According to Tom Smith from IDNR's Otter Creek Wildlife Unit, the birds are expected to return to Union Grove Lake within two months. While the re-location is only temporary, it does somewhat reduce Union Grove's goose population during the lake's high-use, summer months.

The final animal source, pets, is affected by many residents and day-users in and around Union Grove Lake.

Pollutants from improperly-disposed pet waste may be washed into the lake or streams by rain or melting snow. As animal waste decays in water, it uses up oxygen, releases phosphate and sometimes gives off ammonia. These conditions, combined with warm temperatures, can kill fish.

In addition, diseases and parasites found in pet waste in lawns and gardens pose a health threat to people.

Be sure to bag pet waste and add it to your trash can. A compost pile **will not** reach temperatures high enough to kill disease organisms in pet waste.

Project Website:

www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/uniongrove/

Want to receive the Watershed's quarterly newsletter electronically? Contact melody.bro@ia.nacdn.net.

Union Grove Lake Watershed

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Leave options open for 2010 crops

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Now is a great time to plan for flexibility in your 2010 crop options. Keep in mind that what you don't do this fall can be just as important as what you do.

Leaving 2009's crop residue untouched through the coming winter months will provide ground cover during winter rains and snow melt, keep soil from becoming airborne in winter winds, improve soil tilth, provide wildlife cover, reduce soil compaction, save time and fuel during the busy harvest season and protect water quality. The snow caught by standing stalks can also be beneficial by replenishing soil moisture following

droughty cropping seasons.

Remember that what comes out of a combine is just as important as what goes into it. Check choppers and spreaders during your combine's pre-harvest check-up to ensure that residue will be spread evenly over the field.

Delaying fertilizer application until spring leaves crop rotation options open also. Unfortunately, fertilizer prices have dictated application timing more than anything in recent years.

Regardless of the timing of application, be sure to obtain reliable soil tests, set realistic yield goals for 2010 and take credit for contributions

from 2009's legume crops and manure applications. Don't forget to have manure analyzed for nutrient content.

Sound nutrient management reduces input costs and protects water quality by preventing over-application of commercial fertilizers and animal manure.



Did you know? It takes 59 acres of watershed to create one acre of Union Grove Lake's surface area.