

July 21, 2023

Evergreen Lakes Residents:

Several months ago we wrote you about work planned at Evergreen Lakes. While the District completed that work, there is more work to help mitigate increasing shoreline erosion. This letter is an update to clarify the primary function of the Evergreen Lakes, and notify you of risks for misuse on the property or damage to the work being done.

Before we begin, we want to thank those community members who have shared their appreciation for the work already completed, as well as those who have shared their concerns. We also wish to thank those residents who informed us of how our parks are used and, at times, misused by the community.

We have repeatedly sought input over the last five years on how to best manage several competing interests at Evergreen Lake. These include: (1) preserving the lakes primary function as a water detention area for the surrounding subdivisions; (2) maintaining the lakes natural beauty and biodiversity; (3) allowing access for recreation; (4) preventing ongoing erosion. In order to chart a path forward, we met with numerous engineers, Village of Carol Stream officials, and members of our community both adjacent to and near the lake. Those discussions led to work completed over the last year:

1. Rip rap was added to the south side of the lake where the shoreline was deteriorated.
2. Signage was added around the perimeter of the lake to better identify mow and property lines.
3. Boat launches were improved to make these areas more accessible and user friendly for residents.
4. We re-established native species in order to mitigate shore loss/erosion – this is at least a 3 year process.
5. We applied herbicide treatments of invasive species.
6. We removed sand willow from the shoreline and areas near Birchbark Trail.
7. We performed a controlled burn of the area.

Throughout this process we have received primarily positive feedback from residents and recreational lake users. But, we have also received complaints and concerns from some residents. The Park District recently met with a few concerned residents again. We invited Village engineers, and specialists to explain the lake's primary function and explain how the District's Natural Areas Management Plan (<https://www.csparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/3-2023-Carol-Stream-Parks-Native-Areas-Evaluation-and-Management-plan-upda-1.pdf>) is the best course of action at

this time. The plan ensures the lake's critical function in the regional storm water system, and best manages the various competing interests. The plan will take time (3-5 years) and it requires cooperation from residents surrounding the lake.

We will try our best to maintain Evergreen Lakes as a recreational amenity, but preserving the lakes primary function as a water detention area is the most critical. The short-term plan is to:

1. Fence off select areas where erosion is most significant as necessary.
2. Monitor and evaluate trees along the shoreline.
3. Evaluated an area on the south side of the lake where rip rap was installed; it looks good. We will continue to monitor that area.
4. We will increase supervision of the landscaping contractor who mows the area.
5. We will continue the establishment of native plantings to mitigate shore loss/erosion.
6. We will implement a quarterly herbicide treatment of invasive species – including the boat launch area to allow for access.
7. We will perform controlled burns once new plantings are established and it becomes beneficial to the plants.
8. We will increase communication to you about what's happening.

Nothing listed above will restore the erosion; it will only slow the loss of shoreline. The Park District will work with the Village of Carol Stream to seek options on a long-term plan to restore the erosion. We don't know what that will cost – nor how the restoration will be funded, but if we can start with a plan, at least we will know what we are up against.

The main message is – we have a short-term plan; experts have confirmed this is the best course of action. We seek your patience and cooperation in making sure it can be accomplished.

This leads to an important message. We have also continued to receive reports that individuals were and are misusing the property. This included repeated calls that “slats” or other damming materials were being installed on the north end of the pipe that runs beneath Evergreen Drive (in an apparent effort to keep water levels at a certain preferred depth). We have also had various reports of individuals who have continued to cut/mow/pull and otherwise destroy the native species that mitigate shore loss and erosion. Signage has been installed/or will be reinstalled marking where park district property starts, and where residents may not mow. Damage to Park District property and its efforts to stabilize the shoreline must be addressed. Each time these plants are destroyed before they can take root, it requires us to start over. This causes significant losses in both funding and time, and is destruction of public property which is punishable by criminal or civil means. Additionally, these planting efforts are intended to increase the fuel sources for scheduled burns, and when they are mowed/pulled or otherwise removed, the burns are less effective.

The Carol Stream Park District Ordinance 411, Section 19, authorizes the Park District to fine individuals who have damaged Park District property. The fine is \$500.00 **per offense**, as well as

seek restitution for those items damaged, and ban violators from our property. We remain reluctant to enforce these penalties as it is the last thing we want to do. However, willfully causing harm to Park District property has proven costly to the public and set our efforts of shore stabilization back at least 2 years. We will, from this point forward, begin enforcing this ordinance against violators at Evergreen Park and Lakes. **If you witness any of this activity, we encourage you to call the Police, or Park District.**

The Village is responsible for maintaining the pipe between ponds in Carol Stream to maintain proper flow (remove debris or obstructions). Impeding water flow, attempting to control water levels, or entering the storm water pipe is considered trespass, and will result in police action.

Maintaining a functional storm water system is critical to the entire community and surrounding communities; it is not a matter that can be taken lightly. The alternatives to ensure the storm water function remains intact are something we all wish to avoid. They are no less burdensome to our residents and include: (1) constructing fencing around the lake; (2) limiting public access to certain locations; or (3) closing the lake for recreational use. We wish, at this time, to avoid measures that significantly limit public access to Evergreen Lake.

You can expect to see increased supervision by our employees, and by Village of Carol Stream employees, including but not limited to police officers. Our goal is to maintain Evergreen Park and Evergreen Lake for this and future generations of residents, and we need your cooperation.

As always, we remain available for questions and commentary and thank you for your understanding. If you would like to receive regular email updates, please send us your email address.



Sue Rini
Executive Director
suer@csparks.org
630-784-6194



Shane Hamilton
Director of Parks & Facilities
shaneh@csparks.org
630-784-6163