



SPRING 2024

Friends of SLPA,

It's a long way from the heat of summer with kids playing in the lake and the sounds of "Lake Life" all around. As I write this letter, wind chills in the area are reported today at -50 F with recent heavy snow, and many folks are staying in their homes, clustered around fireplaces or wood stoves, trying to keep warm. So, thoughts of Spirit Lake Protective Association are not likely at the "Top of the List." Oh, for those days of summer and pancake breakfasts and fireworks! So, here's but a short report to remind you of some good things going on.

Your good friends with SLPA are still at work; you can see that represented well in this report. We are, of course, anticipating the spring and summer of 2024. Planning includes:

- the July 3rd pancakes and fireworks,
- coordinating new 2024 insurances and permits,
- preparing taxes,
- trying to keep track of emerging changes with the recent sale of a portion of Kuhlman's Lake Service and Welding to Midwest Lake Service and Sales, and
- anticipating how bad the lake vegetation and zebra mussels will be this spring, summer and fall.

We're hoping for solid ice and a great ice-fishing season after a late start. New and exciting things are in store for the Templar Park Recreation area with our continued focus on this wonderful, but under-utilized, location, on Big Spirit Lake.

Read here in this spring newsletter about our new online membership module. We hope you will create an account with us and use this new system to help keep track of your membership and contributions to your 501(c)(3). **For those of you who have jumped in to make your 2024 membership renewals and donations online, we know there have been some technical "glitches" that we have been working to resolve with our web developer. Thank you for your patience.** We are here to monitor, participate in, report on and just generally help everyone enjoy their "Quality of Water ~ Quality of Life" on Big Spirit Lake.

Help us develop the "Legacy Families on Big Spirit Lake" project by sharing your family story from your Big Spirit Lake experience with us. We hope to work in cooperation with the Dickinson County Museum and intend to document these stories to share why this is such a wonderful place to live, love and play.

Spend a few volunteer hours with us this next spring, summer or fall as we work to maintain various view spaces around the lake. Learn about the purple martin colony growing at Templar Park and how you, too, can help these struggling migratory birds. There are plenty of things to do. Just raise your hand, and we will find a way to help convert your passions for Big Spirit Lake into more ways to improve our "Quality of Water ~ Quality of Life" on Big Spirit Lake.

Thank you from all the members of the SLPA Board of Directors.

Respectfully,  
John F. Smeltzer, President

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER AND DONATE ONLINE

Please read this newsletter carefully to learn more about using the new online system to join and/or donate to SLPA. Prefer not to use the online system? We have enclosed the traditional membership card, and you can still write a check. If you have already completed your online membership/donation or plan to renew it online, we encourage you to share the enclosed card with other potential SLPA members.

If you had a valid email address with us from your membership in 2023, you should have received an email in December about the online system. If you did not receive it, the address that we used was not recognized or our message went to your spam folder. Even without this email, you can go to our website to join and to donate online at [www.theslpa.org](http://www.theslpa.org).

### FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO BECOME A MEMBER AND TO DONATE ONLINE:

Set up an account. When you first enter the web page, go to MY ACCOUNT in the upper right corner. Put in your email and you will be given a temporary password. Once you establish the account, you should change the password to one you choose. After your account is set up, the account will maintain your membership and donation history going forward and allow you to review it whenever you wish. Go to the membership tab. The software does not give

us the option to “check out” with the membership and donation total together, so you will need to complete the membership financial transaction before going to the donation page. On the membership page, you can join with the Basic Membership level or the combination of Basic Membership level and the Century Club. You can choose to auto renew either of those membership levels. At the bottom of the membership page there is a clickable box that will take you to the donations page, or you can go to donations via the donation tab at the top of the web page. Go to the donation page. This is the place to make additional donations beyond our Basic Membership level or the combination of Basic Membership and Century Club. Donation options include fireworks, docks/access, or the general fund.

Questions/Concerns? If you still have a question/concern about your status, please email us at [SpiritLakeProtective@gmail.com](mailto:SpiritLakeProtective@gmail.com) and we will collaborate with you to resolve the issue.

If you only go to the donation page, it will not include a membership component. Please look at your account history to review your membership/donation status. Additionally, you can help SLPA if you would be willing to pay the processing fees for online usage.

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## MEMBERSHIP NOTES

The basic membership level is just \$35.00 a year and is effective from **January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024**. This basic membership level largely covers association support costs like mailing, printing, website maintenance, insurance, dock install/removal, buoys, etc. Becoming a member also gives you the opportunity to vote at the SLPA annual meeting and receive two publications each year. To join online, go to [theslpa.org/join/#join](http://theslpa.org/join/#join).

Membership in our organization strengthens and supports our Big Spirit community and demonstrates your belief in and support of our “Quality of Water ~ Quality of Life” mission. Join us today!

If you wish to pay with a check, return it with the enclosed membership card and envelope to PO Box 51, Spirit Lake, IA 51360.

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## GET OUR MAILERS!

You are receiving this spring newsletter because we mail to over 1100 addresses, casting a wide net to renew/recruit members and donors who will support our efforts on Big Spirit Lake. This newsletter also gives us the opportunity to share updated information about the SLPA activities since last summer. By becoming a member, you will receive our colorful and informative 2024 annual report, covering a

variety of topics that relate to our Quality of Water ~ Quality of Life mission. Have an idea or topic you want us to share in the newsletter? Contact us by email.

Sign up online or, if you wish to pay with a check, return your check with the enclosed membership card and envelope to PO Box 51, Spirit Lake, IA 51360.

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## KEEP UP TO DATE BY JOINING OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Our Facebook page continues to be the avenue for all topics related to Big Spirit. From ideas generated by the page administrators to those contributed by our members, we are the information page for everything Big Spirit. We especially enjoy the beautiful photos from our local photographers.

We work hard to ensure that the page does not become a location for “bots” and other material. You can help us by reminding those who want to join us to please complete the questions for membership so we can keep the “bots” off the page.

## MEMBERSHIP ADDRESS INFORMATION

We know that some of our members are full-time residents; others live here on a part-time basis. We want to do our best to make sure you get any mailers or information pertinent to our Big Spirit Lake community. This Spring Newsletter has been sent to the address you have listed on last year's membership card or, in the case of current non-members, from the Dickinson County Assessor address lists. This is our opportunity to bring in new members through a larger mailing effort and to share awareness of the Spirit Lake Protective Association and our mission.

We will keep one mailing address on file, and it should be the one where you receive your mail. We have learned that while you may have an address at the lake, there may not be a way to receive mail at that address.

While we will physically mail information to you, we continue to move towards email for communication as this follows you wherever you may be! We encourage you to provide an email address (print carefully if you use the membership card) along with your mailing address.

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## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CENTURY CLUB AND SUPPORT THE FIREWORKS!

The July 3rd Big Spirit fireworks is the singular fireworks show that occurs on Big Spirit. Your SLPA members as well as Century Club members (those who give at least \$100 dedicated for our Third of July fireworks) play a critical role in the continued production of this show. We do not receive financial support from other resources; you are the people who have contributed and "Filled the Barge" for the last two years in a row! As always, we appreciate your support!

In 2024, we anticipate that the show will cost over \$30,000. We know that the difference between a good show and a great show is the volume of fireworks that are set off. Our annual show is important to our Big Spirit "Quality of Life," so we ask you to please renew or increase your contribution to the Century Club. If you are not in the Century Club, please consider becoming a Century Club member for the

first time. Our Century Club membership grew to 160 in 2023. Help us grow our Century Club to 200 by becoming a member in 2024!

We recognize our Century Club members in three ways. We publish members' names in the Lakes News Shopper ad published before the July Third Celebration; Club members are also featured in the annual newsletter. Upon joining, you will receive your 2024 Century Club sticker. You are encouraged to display it proudly for your friends and neighbors and to show your support for the fireworks. **To become a member of the 2024 Century Club, submit your fireworks specific donation by May 31.** Then sit back, relax and enjoy the show knowing that you were part of creating this, the only fireworks show on Big Spirit.

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## TEMPLAR PARK PROGRESS

In 2021, the SLPA Board supported a vision document, created by a Templar Park subcommittee, recognizing that this area has much potential for enhancing public use. You can see the vision document here [theslpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Templar-State-Recreation-Area-Vision.pdf](https://theslpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Templar-State-Recreation-Area-Vision.pdf).

Just as important, though, is the historical relevance to Big Spirit. How much do you know about the history of Templar Park? If you have not viewed the video presentation on Templar Park history, we encourage you to go to the Dickinson County Museum web page and look up the video or go to the following link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=14z2X09H5Ak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14z2X09H5Ak).

The SLPA, in cooperation with the Iowa DNR, continues to make progress on items identified in the vision document. Kuhlman Lake Service and Welding is building the new dock for Templar Park as this newsletter comes to you. We expect it to be installed at the base of the Templar Park stairs this spring. Thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas and financial resources to support the building of this dock. It will provide a wonderful place for people to fish and to enjoy our scenic Big Spirit!

The Iowa DNR coordinated and funded repair of a portion of the grand staircases in late September. After curing over

the winter, the stairs will be painted classic white when warm weather returns.

SLPA sponsored "Clean the Hillside" in August to cut back the growth once again on the south side of the steps. We also cleared a small view space on the north side. Twenty wonderful volunteers joined us in the effort to clean the hillside. The Iowa DNR then moved the branches and limbs away from the hill. While we know this will take continuous effort to keep it clear, it is a much-appreciated cooperative effort with our local Iowa DNR staff.

The purple martin colonies continue to flourish. The 2023 summer saw over 100 new purple martins fledged! As the adults return in the spring, we encourage you to spend a little time at the picnic shelter; listen to them and watch them come and go creating mating pairs and raising their fledglings.

On the historical side, the Templar Park Arch will observe its 100th Anniversary in 2024! This historical arch is one of the few remaining physical structures from the days of the Knights Templar resort. The SLPA and a subcommittee are planning for the restoration of the arch and rededication. If you would like to be a part of this effort, please contact us. We hope to release further information on this project in the future.

## NEWS ABOUT DOCK INSTALLATION/HOISTS/BOAT GAS

Midwest Lake Service purchased the hoist installation and removal business from Kuhlman Lake Service and Welding in November. We want to say thank you to Kuhlman Lake Service and Welding for the years of service they have provided to Big Spirit. As a local family with long ties to the lake, they will be missed in the hoist business. They will, however, continue to build docks like the one they are currently building for Templar Park. Best wishes to Midwest Lake Service on their expanded presence on Big Spirit.

If you are new to the lake or have wondered who the numerous providers of dock and hoist, as well as gas services are on Big Spirit Lake, here is a list of those providers. If we missed any providers, please let us know at our email address.

### Hoist Services:

Midwest Lake Service	(712) 466-3543
Plowman Lake Service	(641) 740-0095

### Dock Services:

Donaldson Docks	(712) 209-1489
Grim's Lakeside Service	(712) 330-2479
Ingvall Dock Service	(712) 336-1121
JB Dock Service	(712) 339-9141
Midwest Lake Service	(712) 466-3543
Plowman Lake Service	(641) 740-0095
Triple T Dock Service	(712) 330-6563

### Boat Gas: (fuel for your boat delivered at the dock)

SLP Marine	(712) 432-8140
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## LAKE FRIENDLY LAWN PRACTICES

Our Spirit Lake North fundraising effort to help purchase the Howard K. Vincent Waterfowl Production Area will help reduce nutrients in the lake. As we embark on another growing season on Big Spirit, we want to remind residents about their role in reducing nutrients and suggest the following lake-friendly lawn practices.

Use phosphorus free fertilizer. Look for the N-P-K numbers on the bag; a "zero" in the middle number means it is phosphorus free. Use a lawn care company? Request that they use phosphorus-free fertilizer on your property.

Control soil erosion on your property. Most soils in Iowa soil contain enough natural phosphorus. By controlling erosion

to the lake, we can help reduce this natural source of phosphorus. Cover exposed soil with vegetation or mulch.

Control yard waste. Keep leaves and grass clippings out of the lake, ditches and storm drains. Residents of the cities of Orleans and Spirit Lake have access to the Green Waste Site east of Orleans on 140th to recycle yard waste.

Choose to mow higher. Grass lengths of 2 ½ -3 inches are healthier!

We all have a role to play in contributing to our Big Spirit "Quality of Water." Please consider your own property practices as we head into 2024.

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## MAKE A DONATION TO A SPECIFIC AREA

As with membership, you can also donate in two ways. To donate electronically, go to the donate tab, [theslpa.org/donate/#!form/Donations](https://theslpa.org/donate/#!form/Donations) where you can donate to the following:

- Fireworks. We know that members donate to the fireworks funds in amounts other than the basic \$100 for Century Club. This area allows for those varied types of donations.
- Docks and access fund. This provides funds for dock development, access, acquisition, installation, removal, repair, and insurance.
- General fund. The general fund allows us to use the funds where needed most throughout the year. Historically, these have been used as a resource to match a donation, to jump start a campaign, or cover unexpected needs, etc.

Again, if you wish to pay with a check, return your check with the enclosed membership card and envelope to PO Box 51, Spirit Lake, IA 51360.

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## LEGACY FAMILY PROJECT

All around Big Spirit, there are cottages that have been in families for decades; there also are new homes that have replaced these simple cottages. Yet, the thread running through both is the families that have maintained a continuous love for Big Spirit for many, many years.

The SLPA would like to develop a Legacy Family program which captures the stories that make us who we are. We need your help to do that. Do you like to write? Do you love local history and would like to gather stories? Do you enjoy hearing family stories about Big Spirit? We know this is a worthy program and will be important to our Quality of Life. So, we're calling on volunteers to help us develop this program. Contact us by email if you would be interested in this project.

## MANAGING AQUATIC PLANTS AROUND DOCKS

The Iowa DNR has developed Aquatic Plant Management Plans for many lakes in Iowa. These plans are a joint effort between the DNR, local communities, and conservation partners. These plans have a foundation based on healthy native aquatic plants and use integrated approaches to plant management that improve habitat and allow better navigation. Since native aquatic plants are so important to lake health and water quality, they are rarely the focus of control efforts. Most plans focus on invasive aquatic plant control and targeted navigation improvement.

A plan was developed for the East Okoboji Chain of Lakes in 2017 to provide strategies for a small area of curly-leaf pondweed control along shorelines and boat ramps. Curly-leaf pondweed is not native to the United States, but has been present in the Iowa Great Lakes since the 1950s. Recent environmental conditions, including the introduction of zebra mussels, have caused an increase in curly-leaf pondweed densities. This plant cannot be eradicated and control techniques are very limited. This is the only plant targeted by the East Okoboji Plan. The dozen or more native aquatic plants on the lake are not impacted by the curly-leaf pondweed treatments.

The Aquatic Plant Management Plan and treatment of curly-leaf pondweed on the East Okoboji Lakes Chain is only possible because of the relatively shallow water and the lake's small water volume. Lakes like Big Spirit Lake and West Okoboji Lake are the largest in the state making the same treatment options unfeasible. In addition, Big Spirit Lake and West Okoboji Lake are source water lakes for drinking water and are also classified as Outstanding Iowa Waters. This use and designation places additional protections on these lakes that restrict or severely limit the use of herbicides.

Watershed conservation work that reduces nutrient input to the lake has been and remains the main focus on Spirit Lake. These practices work in the long-term to reduce the amount of nutrients available for excessive plant and algae growth. New tools and techniques for plant management also continue to be developed and Iowa remains a leader in this area.

Iowa Administrative Code 571.54 gives anyone with a valid dock permit the ability to remove aquatic plants from the lake under the following rules.

- When aquatic plants cause a hazardous or detrimental condition for boating around the dock or cover at least 75% of the boating area around the dock, a person with a valid Class 1,2, or 3 Dock Permit may remove aquatic plants in a 20-foot radius around the dock and remove aquatic plants in a 15-foot-wide channel to get to open water. Property owners may do this removal without a permit or permission from the state if they follow these rules:
  - The plants must be disposed of on the owner's property adjacent to the lake. If aquatic plants are going to be moved away from the lake or adjacent property, a transportation permit must be obtained from the Department Director. Those transportation permit requests can be made by calling or visiting the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery.
  - Aquatic plant removal can be done by hand-cutting, hand-pulling, hand-raking, or mechanical cutting devices, excluding automated plant control devices that disturb the bottom substrate. Commercial, mechanical cutting or hand pulling is an option. Under no circumstances may a private landowner apply herbicides or other pesticides to public water. Unauthorized application of herbicides or other pesticides to the lake may result in criminal and civil penalties.

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## REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS

The SLPA Board invites you to attend our regular board meetings held on the second Saturday of the month. Our in-person meetings occur from April to October; meetings start at 8:00 a.m. at Orleans City Hall. We encourage you to join us at our in-person meetings! The board meets virtually November through March to stay current on activities during the winter months.

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## SPIRIT LAKE NORTH – UPDATE

As we shared in the 2023 Annual Report, the Spirit Lake North fundraising efforts for what is now the Howard K Vincent Waterfowl Production Area was a major success for the SLPA. Minnesota Pheasants Forever recently awarded the SLPA with the "Partnership of the Year for 2023" for its efforts in working with conservationists, clean water groups in both Minnesota and Iowa, along with national conservation organizations to secure this property.

If you have not been to the area, we encourage you to make the drive to see not only the wetland area in progress but also the monument in the parking lot on the southeast corner of the property. Thank you for making this water quality dream come true!



P.O. BOX 51  
SPIRIT LAKE, IA 51360

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# SUMMER 2024 WITH SLPA!

Pancake Breakfast –Wednesday, July 3, 8:00 a.m., Mini-Wakan Lodge  
Big Spirit Fireworks –Wednesday, July 3, 10:00 p.m.  
SLPA Annual Meeting – Saturday, August 17, 8:00 a.m., Mini-Wakan Lodge (NEW DATE!)

## HOW TO CONTACT SLPA

- At SLPA we are here to serve you, the Big Spirit residents. If you have a comment or question, you can reach us through the following avenues:
- [www.theslpa.org](http://www.theslpa.org) or through scanning this QR code to the right
- [spiritlakeprotective@gmail.com](mailto:spiritlakeprotective@gmail.com)
- Facebook page at Spirit Lake Protective Association

