

Crystal Lake, Sheboygan County

Surface Acres = 113.7 Maximum Depth = 61 feet

At 113.7 acres, Crystal Lake is a moderately fertile, natural lake, heavily used for fishing and boating. The lake's shoreline is intensively developed with residential dwellings. Many property owners have reinforced the shoreline with seawalls that have detracted from the aesthetic quality as well as the fisheries value. In the autumn of 1966, a sanitary district was organized and sewers were installed in the late 1970s.

The lake's fishery has undergone several major changes over the past 35 years due to shifts in management philosophy. Over time it has been managed for walleye and northern pike, then trout and panfish, then largemouth bass and panfish. It is currently being managed for the native fish community: largemouth bass, panfish and with limited walleye due to stocking by private organizations. The existing bass and panfish community is improving due in part to the new bass size limit restrictions.

Historically, the lake was chemically treated to control aquatic plants and algae. In 1989, the DNR conducted a Sensitive Area Survey of the lake and as a result prohibited the use of aquatic herbicides and algicides in an attempt to protect the fish habitat and the water quality.

Since 1986, the water quality, aquatic plant community, and phyto- and zooplankton have been surveyed to obtain baseline water quality data and to assess trends. The results from this survey indicate that the water quality is excellent. The lake boasts some of the clearest water found in southeastern Wisconsin. A significant amount of Eurasian water milfoil is present in Crystal Lake. The DNR, in cooperation with the Crystal Lake Property Owners Association, attempted to displace the Eurasian water milfoil with a native species, Large Leaf Pondweed during the summer of 1994. The control program was effective for only a few years. By 1997 Eurasian water milfoil had again moved into the area displacing the newly planted native species (Wakeman 1998).

A public boat launch with adequate parking is available in the southwest bay. A unique boating ordinance on the lake prohibits the use of motors on Sundays. This is strongly supported by residents on the lake.