

Help Relink the Chain,

Calhoun, Isles, Cedar, Harriet...Bass Lake

Stretching before you is the 40 acre remnant basin of the once beautiful 80 acre Bass Lake. The shores stretched to City Hall and the waters were deep, clean, and spring fed. Old timers remember fishing here and kids rafted on the water just 12 years ago.

Today the waters of Bass Lake are hypereutrophic; meaning high in phosphorous and low in oxygen. The cattail vegetation no longer decomposes but falls and rots, forming a massive floating bog and producing methane gas. The native cattails have been replaced by narrow leaf hybrid cattails and a monoculture has formed just as a monoculture of buckthorn is forming in the upland forest.

Bass Lake historically connected to Lake Calhoun through a winding creek, replaced in the early 1900s by a ditch, and later with a pipe. In the 1960s, the St. Louis Park storm sewer system was built with concrete pipes funneling 1,350 acres of upstream unfiltered water into the Lake. Combined with dumping, filling, and draining the degradation was complete. The lake was finally bulldozed and divided into house lots. However, underground springs reclaimed the basin. When the Park Glen Apartments were built in the early 1980s the ownership paved a walking path around the lake and opened it to the public.

Bass Lake was officially declared dead by the DNR in 2015 and reclassified a Type 4 wetland. Having done so little to protect Bass Lake, St. Louis Park now finds itself with a 40 acre weed choked stormwater pond with partially submerged storm pipes that threaten to flood the upstream watershed with every big rain.

Over the years environmental groups have organized to restore the lake but none has been successful. In 2008 the Friends of Bass Lake was organized because the water level had dropped dramatically with the deterioration of the outlet dam. Six years later hybrid cattails have taken over the exposed marsh bottom and only a few acres of open water remain.

The Friends of Bass Lake has written a resolution to the City Council broadening the stewardship of the wetland to include the SLP Department of Community Development and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. The 'public waters' of Bass Lake that flow to Lake Calhoun belong to all of us and require our dedication. Visit www.friendsofbasslake.com to learn more, become a member, and help relink the broken chain of lakes.