

These articles about the formation of Rice Lake were posted on the Facebook Group page called 'Osseo/Maple Grove Memories' (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OSSEO.MEMORIES/>).

September 12 1967 from Minneapolis Tribune

Hennepin County Boosts Plan to Restore Rice Lake

By MOLLIE IVINS
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

The Hennepin County Board gave a boost Monday to plans for the restoration of Rice Lake in Maple Grove.

The village of Maple Grove plans to construct a dam on Elm Creek, north of County Road 30, and fill Rice Lake to its original portions, 425 acres (about the size of Lake Calhoun), of a recreation area.

Maple Grove officials hope the lake restoration project will attract new citizens to the community (pop-

ulation 4,594) and thus increase the property tax base.

THE COUNTY board helped the project along yesterday by giving preliminary approval to the abandonment of County Ditch 24, a legal requirement before the lake can be refilled.

The ditch was built in 1913 to drain the lake so that more land would be available for farming.

A public hearing was held before the board yesterday to convince the commissioners that the character of the area has changed from rural to urban eliminating any need for the ditch.

Art J. Lee, county highway administrator, said the ditch is no longer functioning. The bed of Rice Lake is now a marsh that cannot be farmed, said Raymond Haik, an attorney for Maple Grove.

Haik said there are about 225 acres in the center of the lake bed which are covered by three feet of water and inhabited mostly by ducks.

SEVERAL landowners around the lake bed said the land was too swampy to farm. One farmer said he had lost a horse in the bogs and another said he had lost a tractor.

But Homer Gruton, who runs a vegetable farm on the east side of the lake bed, claimed that he would lose 40 or 50 acres he is now farming if the lake area is flooded again.

Richard H. Reimer, Maple Grove mayor, said most farmers in the area are having their land rezoned for future housing developments.

Hennepin County has pledged \$11,000 to get the Rice Lake project started. Haik said that Maple Grove hopes to get more money

from the county, the state and the federal government.

THE MINNESOTA Highway Department, which will construct Interstate Hwy. 94 near the restored lake, has agreed to elevate its route and build two bridges to allow for the restored lake. The State Highway Department also is planning a 30-acre roadside park by the restored lake, Haik said.

Maple Grove plans one park of about 40 acres and several smaller parks for greater public access to the lake, Haik said.



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April 10 1969 from Minneapolis Star

Creation of Maple Grove lake Apr. 69 to begin, but park hopes dim

By CHARLES WHITING
Minneapolis Star Staff Writer

Maple Grove will start acquire parkland around the flooding its long-awaited "Calhoun-like" lake this fall after completion of the Rice Lake Dam in the heart of the village.

But hopes that the lake will be surrounded by a "Calhoun-like" park appeared to be doomed. The village doesn't have the money, according to Mayor Richard Reimer.

Instead, Reimer plans to confer with the village park board to decide on buying a "piece" of park on the new lake shore with whatever money the village can obtain.

Rice Lake, now a 60-acre duck pond in the midst of a swamp, will grow to 425 acres after water backs up behind the dam to be built across Elm Creek this summer.

\$100,000 cost

The entire cost of the dam is to be assessed against landowners fronting on the new lake. The village is considering widely varying bids for dam construction. Attorney Raymond Haik estimates a total cost of about \$100,000.

Maple Grove has about \$3,000 left of an \$11,000 Hennepin County grant for lake improvements. The rest of the grant was spent for flowage easements.

The \$3,000 can be used to match additional grants from federal and state agencies for park acquisition. And Art Lee, Hennepin County highway administrator, believes the village could be eligible for more county money to

But the failure of the village to set aside a surrounding belt of park has revived charges from some village residents that the whole lake project is a scheme to benefit private land speculators.

James L. Jones, a real estate man and long-time opponent of the project, said the intent of the lake expansion is to provide developers with 36,300 feet of valuable lakeside lots to sell.

He said the village initially had advertised the lake expansion as a public project and had attracted the county money on that basis. He also said the Highway Department had raised the grade and built bridges for Interstate Hwy. 94 so it could pass over two arms of the expanded lake.

He said the 100-percent assessment against benefited property owners and the lack of a park indicate the lake actually is a private project.

Reimer and Haik respond that the lake is at least a local improvement project, like street or utility improvements. They say the village stands to benefit along with affected landowners, even without an encircling park.

Rice Lake development over time

1937



County Ditch 24 (later to be Elm Creek)

Fish Lake

1945



Fish Lake

Rice Lake development over time (cont.)

1967



Fish Lake

1984



Rice Lake Dam

Fish Lake