

HISTORY OF FISHING PIER AT KIWANIS POND

Background

Kiwanis Pond in Janesville Wisconsin was so named in 1987 when the Janesville Kiwanis Club adopted what was formerly known as Blackhawk Pond. The pond includes 10.25 acres of water surrounded by 11.88 acres of land for a total park site size of 22.13 acres. Originally this area was known as Atlas Pit when it was operated at Atlas Sand and Gravel Company from 1932 until it was closed in 1960 as spring water filled the quarry and mining was no longer feasible. In 1962 this area was sold to the City for a park and the adjacent Blackhawk Golf Course.

The area had experienced many anti-social problems including partying and off road vehicle use. The police and parks departments were looking for answers. In 1987 the Janesville Kiwanis stepped forward and agreed to donate \$16,000 to match city funding for the pond entrance road, roadside barrier posts, parking area, and grading of the existing grassed areas. With this adopting and improvements the area was named Kiwanis Pond. Now 25 years - later these improvements have transformed this area into a well respected and popular fishing and water recreation area.

Following a vehicle driving into the pond in 1988 and the tragic drowning of a young person the Kiwanis came forward with the donation of \$10,000 toward the construction of the modern concrete boat ramp, security lighting, and the picnic pavilion. These improvements added in making this area a popular fishing and picnic destination.

Original Fishing Pier

In 1993 the Kiwanis lead by former City Planner and Engineer Dave Knoerr designed and constructed a new handicap accessible fishing pier that extended 60' out in the pond to a water depth of 16' deep. This was a \$10,000 project donated by Kiwanis. To save money the pier was efficiently built during the winter with piling posts driven through holes in the ice and the volunteers built the pier from the ice surface. Many fish cribs were built on the ice and sunk within casting distance of the pier to provide fish habitat and improve fisherman success from the pier.

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Flood Closure and Reconstruction

In 2008 considerable rains brought all time record flooding throughout Southern Wisconsin and the Janesville area. The Rock River was way out of its banks. High ground water raised the water level of Kiwanis Pond by several feet as there is no outlet to drain this spring fed pond. The high water rose above the fishing pier and remained for several years causing considerable damage to the pier deck and structure. In 2011 the City of Janesville buried a 1300 foot long drainage pipe to lower the pond water level and insure that future flooding would not occur.

In the face of city need, The Kiwanis Clubs of Janesville stepped forward once again in 2012 to rebuild the damaged 60' long x 8' wide pier plus "T" shaped fishing end-structure measuring 10' wide by 20' in length. Damage to the pier was estimated by the city to \$29,000 for outside contractors to repair or replace. City engineering staff and club volunteers meet on several occasions which provided city engineer Matt McGrath the information he needed to create plans to salvage and rebuild the existing pier. The Kiwanis Clubs donated over \$11,000 to fund the materials for pier reconstruction. Golden Kiwanis Club member Gordon Drake put in over 280 volunteer hours in leading the pier rebuilt. Golden Kiwanis members added 45 hours of work and the Noon Kiwanis Club members lead by member Ben Coopman provided over 100 additional hours of volunteer effort. Further community volunteers contributed over 100 hours of work including volunteer hours by the Janesville Fire Department Divers who reinforced the several long piling posts which support the pier's 60' length.

The end result is a wonderful renovated fishing pier which is being highly praised and heavily used by fishermen. The pier includes benches for sitting, accommodates wheel chair fishermen by height of railing and fish retrieval areas and drilled railing holes for convenient placement of fishing poles.

The City of Janesville thanks the Kiwanis Clubs of Janesville for their ongoing dedication and commitment to Kiwanis Pond over the past 25 years. During this period of time and whenever the city was in need of help, the Kiwanis stepped forward and to date have contributed over \$47,000 to make Kiwanis Pond the jewel it is for fisherman, families, and water recreationists. Kiwanis Pond and the Janesville Kiwanis Clubs are truly a wonderful example of community service at its finest.