

## Ribbon cutting marks completion of \$3M Sylvan Lake dam project



Residents and officials Friday marked the completion of the \$3 million project to rebuild the dam on Sylvan Lake and North Highland Drive atop it, as well as relocating sanitary sewer and water lines and associated work. (Courtesy of Lake County Stormwater Management Commission)



Residents and representatives from various entities Friday marked the official completion of the newly rebuilt dam on Sylvan Lake near Mundelein. (Courtesy of Lake County Stormwater Management Commission)





The rebuilt dam on Sylvan Lake near Mundelein and associated work will improve safety for residents and the environment, according to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission. (Courtesy of Lake County Stormwater Management Commission)

Residents and representatives from several entities involved in the long-sought reconstruction of the century-old earthen dam on Sylvan Lake gathered Friday to celebrate the official completion of the \$3 million project.

The project to modify the dam, relocate water and sanitary sewer lines and other work began in June 2024. A majority of the dam construction was completed last year leaving related work on North Highland Drive, which runs atop the dam as the main entrance to the tight knit community, to be wrapped up this year.

Entrepreneur August Schwerman built the dam in 1924 to create the 32-acre Sylvan Lake east of Gilmer Road and north of Midlothian Road near Mundelein. Officials for years had feared potential flooding or impact of a ruptured sanitary sewer line that ran through the walls of the spillway if the dam breached.

The dam has been updated with modern design standards and modern materials to withstand more intense storms and the continued effects of climate change, according to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, a key partner in the project.

A water line was relocated and the exposed above ground sanitary sewer line also was relocated underground significantly reducing the risk of contamination and ensuring the safety of the dam and cleanliness of the water for residents and wildlife, according to SMC.

The work last summer required Sylvan Lake to be drawn down several feet revealing a cornucopia of lost items, mostly trash-like old tires and submerged tree stumps, fishing lures and the like. But there were also some treasures, including coins and jewelry and old pucks lost in the snow generations ago by kids playing hockey that sank to the bottom in spring.

Many seawalls were completed during that time, residents report and the lake is nearly back to its original level.

Local officials worked for years to raise funds and bring the project to construction in what was described as a collaboration of various entities. Funding included \$1.2 million in federal pre-disaster mitigation funding. The Fremont Township Highway Department and Sylvan Lake Improvement Association also contributed.

Those involved said the project was a collaboration of several entities.