



Office of Water Management  
Indiana Department of  
Environmental Management

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Winter 2001  
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## It's Not Too Late to Attend the 13th Annual Indiana Lakes Management Conference

The 13th Annual Indiana Lakes Management Conference will be held Friday and Saturday April 6-7, 2001 at the historical French Lick Springs Resort and Spa located among the beautiful hills of southern Indiana. The conference is sponsored by the Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

By attending this year's conference, you will learn about managing urban stormwater, shorelines, fisheries, and watersheds. In addition, there will be a number of interesting case studies from Indiana lakes and reservoirs and several talks about zoning practices. Two special sessions are planned this year. One is entitled, *Leading and Motivating Volunteers for Effective Organizations*, lead by Beth Applegate of the Institute for Conservation Leadership. The other is entitled, *Biological Indicators of Lakes*, moderated by Tom Simon of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The French Lick Springs Resort and Spa has 471 well-appointed guest rooms, two full restaurants, snack bars, and a variety of guest activities including: golf, tennis, horseback riding, and a complete, full-service health spa. Overnight accommodations are available at a special conference rate of \$75 per night. For reservations, call the hotel at (800) 457-4042.

Conference registration fee is \$60 and covers admittance to all conference programs and the exhibit area, written materials, and meals (Friday lunch and banquet; Saturday breakfast and lunch). For more information, contact: Tina Hissong at (219) 842-3686; e-mail: <Imec@culcom.net>.



## NALMS Celebrates 20 Years

From November 8-10, 2000, over 500 people helped celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) at their annual meeting in Miami, Florida. Thirty technical sessions with 150 presentations as well as over 100 posters, and 10 pre- and post-conference workshops provided plenty of lake management information for those in attendance.

Attending the conference from Indiana were: Mandy Burk, Lyn Hartman, Bill Jones, Holly LaSalle, Carole Lembi, Bob Mayer, and Cornelia Swatzky.

During the annual awards banquet, our own Bill Jones received the prestigious Secchi Disk Award. This award is presented annually to the one person who has done the most to further the mission of the NALMS.

The 2001 NALMS meeting will be held November 7-9, 2001 in Madison, Wisconsin.

## Volunteer Lake Monitors Retire

We are sad to say good-bye to several volunteer lake monitors who had to “hang up their Secchi disk” this past year. The retired volunteers include:

Robert Busch—Dewart Lake (12 years)  
Jim Luttmann—Bixler Lake (8 years)  
Todd Nichols—Round Lake (5 years)  
Donald Trease—Winona Lake (9 years)  
George Edwards—Little Cedar Lake (1 year)  
Jack Horoho—Long Lake (5 years)  
Richard Bonsett—Sweetwater Lake (4 years)  
Ralph Worline—Big Barbee/Kuhn Lake (1 year)  
Ben Muzillo—Little Barbee/Sechrist/Sawmill Lake (5 years)

We certainly appreciate all the time that each of these volunteers committed on behalf of Indiana lakes, no matter how long they’ve been with the program. However, we must make special note of the many years of service provided by Bob and Betty Busch. They have been the only monitors on Dewart Lake. They’ve been with the Indiana Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program since its beginning in 1989.

To all of you we say thanks and we hope that you have gained something from this association as well.

Have you checked out the Indiana Clean Lakes Program Web page lately?

Take a look at:  
<<http://www.spea.indiana.edu/clp/>>  
and see what's new and happening with the Program and with Indiana lakes!

## Boating Safety

The following is a short list of statistics on boating safety recently released by the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Safety Council:

- More than 50% of all boating fatalities occur in boats 12-16 feet long.
- Half of all boating fatalities occur in lakes, ponds, and reservoirs and not on navigable waterways (rivers).

- The majority of most fatal boating accidents involve people who suddenly and unexpectedly find themselves in the water without life jackets.
- Over half of fatalities occur on weekend afternoons. About 50% occur in calm weather and in full daylight.
- Injuries occur across all demographics and both young and old. Almost 50% are 26 to 50 years old.
- Nearly 90% of those involved in reported accidents were NOT wearing life jackets and a large percentage were drinking. (According to the National Safety Council, half of all boating fatalities involve alcohol use.)
- Nearly 90% of people who lose their lives in boating accidents drown even though most of them are “swimmers.”
- Of those involved in fatal boating accidents, about two-thirds have had no training in boat handling and safety. (The NSC says 90% of boat operators involved in boating incidents have not received any formal safety instructions.)
- In 1997 there were 800 boating fatalities, 588 drowned and of the 588, 523 victims were not wearing a life jacket.
- Also, vessels 16 feet or less accounted for 385 deaths and 293 drownings.
- Sadly, 25 children, 12 years old or less, died in boating accidents and 14 of these were by drowning. The 1998 Boating Safety Statistics show similar findings. It pays to wear life jackets.

Here are the two web sites, approved by the National Association of Safe Boating Administrator’s (NASBLA), that provide an on-line tutorial training course for boat operations:

<<http://www.boatus.com/onlinecourse/>>

<<http://boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/boating/index.htm>>

Got a question about your lake? Or lakes in general? Or about something you’ve read? Write to us at the *Water Column* and we will do our best to answer it.

## Fish Die-offs Possible Due to Ice and Snow Cover on Lakes

All the signs of a winter fish die-off existed at J.C. Murphey Lake in Newton County last January. Thick ice and deep snow reduced the amount of light getting to oxygen-producing plants. DNR fisheries biologists expected a substantial die-off at J.C. Murphey this winter—and expected that similar conditions may cause die-offs at other lakes and ponds around the state.

Anglers have reported a dramatic drop in catch rates at J.C. Murphey Lake in Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area. On January 8, fisheries biologist Nathan Brindza found oxygen levels between 0 and 1.5 parts per million in different parts of the lake. Most sport fish need at least five parts per million to thrive.

“If these weather patterns continue, it’s very likely that many other shallow lakes and ponds will meet a similar fate,” said Dr. Gwen White, a biologist with the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. “Fish die-offs involving sensitive species like gizzard shad will be apparent once ice begins to thaw.”

During winter months, fish rely on algae and rooted plants to produce oxygen. Snow cover reduces the amount of light under the ice and can cause plants to die out completely. Three inches of ice covered by five inches of snow will shut out 99 percent of incoming sunlight. Sudden declines in algae can result in low oxygen.

Fish die-offs are common in the spring, but may be more prevalent this year due to thick ice and heavy snow cover. Lake residents and pond owners who find small numbers of dead fish along their shorelines in the spring need not worry in most cases. Minor fish die-offs commonly occur each year during early spring after ice out. Fish are more susceptible to stress during spring. Poor conditions in summer and fall can magnify the effects of food scarcity in winter. As the weather warms in spring, bacteria and other pathogens may infect fish. On top of this, fish are physically gearing up for the coming spawning season. All these factors produce stress that some individual fish simply cannot overcome.

Most minor die-offs occur naturally and pond owners can do little to correct them. To prevent or reduce the severity of winter die-offs on small ponds, remove snow from at least 50 percent of the pond surface or artificially aerate with a bubbler system. Drilling holes in the ice will not help.

Stressful environmental conditions usually take their toll on weak or unhealthy fish. Natural die-offs seldom seriously impact fish populations and rarely affect fishing success. Anglers who observe fish kills commonly express concern about the safety of

eating other fish they catch from affected waters. Fish that appear robust and healthy are generally safe to eat as long as anglers clean and cook them properly.

Due to the much greater amounts of ice and snow and record low temperatures in December, natural winter die-offs may be unusually severe this year and affect a large proportion of the population of fish in some shallow waters. Frequently, dead fish will accumulate on wind-blown areas and appear all at once as the ice thaws, creating the appearance of a major sudden die-off. Suspected fish kills can be reported to a DNR conservation officer or a district fisheries biologist in your area. Fisheries biologists can also provide additional pond management information.

### Fisheries biologist directory:

<<http://www.ai.org/dnr/fishwild/fishing/fishbiol.htm>>

### Conservation officer directory:

<<http://www.ai.org/dnr/lawenfor/tel.htm>>

The DNR has several publications available to assist landowners in pond and lake management. For more information on managing ponds for fishing, see:

<<http://www.ai.org/dnr/fishwild/fsmgt/fishpd.htm>>.

The publications “Managing Aquatic Plants in Indiana Lakes” and “Resource Guide to Water Quality” can be requested or downloaded at:

<<http://www.ai.org/dnr/soilcons/publications.htm>>

Contact: Gwen White or Jon Marshall at (317) 232-4080.

### **WATER COLUMN**

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## Meetings

**April 17-20, 2001.** *Enhancing the States' Lake Management Programs—Integrating Nonpoint Source Watershed Management with Lake Management and Protection.* Congress Plaza Hotel, Chicago, Illinois. Contact: Bob Kirschner, Phone: (847) 835-6837, e-mail: <bkirschn@chicagobotanic.org>.

**May 15-17, 2001.** *2nd National Conference Nonpoint Source Pollution Information & Education Programs.* Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois. Contact: Bob Kirschner, Phone: (847) 835-6837, e-mail: <bkirschn@chicagobotanic.org>.

**August 27-30, 2001.** *Monitoring and Modeling Nonpoint Source Pollution in the Agricultural Landscape.* Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis, Indiana. Contact: Tammy Taylor of the Conservation Technology Information Center at <taylor@ctic.purdue.edu>.

**October 1-4, 2001.** *11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species.* Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, Phone: (800) 868-8776; Fax: (613) 732-3386; E-mail: <profedge@renc.igs.net>; Web page: <www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org>.

**November 19-21, 2001.** *NALMS 2001: 21st International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society,* Monona Terrace, Madison, Wisconsin. Contact: Terry Thiessen, Phone: (608) 233-2836; Fax: (608) 233-3186; E-mail: <thiessen@nalms.org>; Web page: <www.nalms.org/symposia/madison/>.

## In Case You Thought Zebra Mussels Aren't a Problem:



*This shopping cart was left in zebra mussel-infested waters for a few months. The mussels have colonized every available surface on the cart. (J. Lubner, Wisconsin Sea Grant, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.)*

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