

## Snow Misses Wolf Lake Winterfest, But Not Cold



Weather shaped activities at the second annual bi-state Winter Wonderland at Wolf Lake, as cold but little snow welcomed some 200 to the January 18 event in Hammond and Chicago.

Ice-carving, ice safety, ice skating, ice hockey, and the ice-boat demonstration events were best suited for the weather. Lack of sufficient snow

forced cancellation of the bi-state cross-country skiing, but a short hike was substituted in its place.

The cold may have discouraged some from the brush-cutting exercise, but it increased interest in the bonfire event—which began earlier than scheduled.

The festival began at 9 a.m. at the Environmental Education Center in Hammond. Closing ceremonies were held at the Southeast Sportsmen's Club in Chicago.

The purpose of the festival, sponsored by the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative, is to showcase the lake and demonstrate to communities served by Wolf Lake that it can be enjoyed throughout the year. It is intended to be a fun event, but one that educates the public in various ways, promotes the improvement and enhancement of Wolf Lake and surrounds and fosters bi-state cooperation at the grassroots level. The Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative is a bi-state working consortium that seeks to improve Wolf Lake and its surrounds by treating the lake, which lies in Illinois and Indiana, as one lake.

The planning group received administrative assistance from students at Chicago's Bowen and George Washington High Schools. Some students helped promote the event by distributing flyers door-to-door and painting signs weeks in advance.



Students from George Washington High School gave presentations on bird feeder construction and quilt-making. Other activities included tree identification, Wolf Lake history, and bird watching.

## Cold Weather Blamed for Mass of Frog, Turtle Deaths

The long, cold winter has been blamed for the deaths of many frogs, turtles, and fish in Indiana lakes and ponds.

A massive frog and toad die-off, numbering approximately 1,500, was discovered recently in Pine Canyon Lake near Orland. A turtle die-off, totaling up to 500, was found at Silver Lake, west of Angola.

Conservation Officer James Price said cold winter weather had left up to two feet of ice on area lakes. Scientists said the animals probably froze to death or may have suffered from low oxygen levels in the water.

Vicky Meretsky, an assistant professor at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, said amphibians and reptiles hibernate over the winter. "These guys are down there essentially hibernating in the mud," Meretsky said. "Their metabolism is very, very slow." Some frogs can recover from being frozen, but others can't, she said. A creature that failed to burrow deep enough to avoid being frozen could die as a result. Fish can swim away from water that is icing up, but amphibians and reptiles slow down so much that they can't move, she said. "They're sort of prisoners of their own lowered metabolic rate," Meretsky said.

Thousands of fish have died in other lakes in Indiana as a result of the cold weather, said Doug Keller, fisheries biologist for the state Department of Natural Resources. Winter fish die-offs are common during winter, but "This winter's persistent harsh, snowy weather increased the number of affected lakes and ponds," he said.

"A number of environmental conditions conspire this time of year to kill weak and unhealthy fish. Low oxygen levels due to

heavy snow and ice cover are a primary cause. And due to stress from low oxygen, bacteria and other pathogens may infect fish," said Keller

Shallow ponds and lakes that began winter with abundant weed growth are the most susceptible to low oxygen levels. Decomposing vegetation reduces the amount of oxygen in the water.

"In the big lakes that have gizzard shad in them, it's pretty common for shad to die every year," Keller said. The shad, prey for larger game fish, are particularly susceptible to cold weather or low oxygen levels. Large lakes might lose 100,000 shad that way, Keller added.

"Actually, it's kind of a good thing when shad die," he said, since they compete with young game fish such as largemouth bass. "It's not very pleasant for the people who live around the shores of these lakes and dead shad are washing up everywhere," he admitted.

Some game fish might also die in smaller ponds where thick ice and snow cover resulted in low

oxygen levels, he said. Adapted from: [www.IndyStar.com](http://www.IndyStar.com) and IDNR *Wildbulletin*.

## Attention, Watershed Organizations

Make sure that your organization is listed in U.S. EPA's on-line "Adopt Your Watershed" database. You can search the database at: [www.epa.gov/adopt](http://www.epa.gov/adopt). Click on "Catalog of Watershed Groups." If you are not listed and would like to be added, click on "Join Now" on the sidebar. Groups that are already listed can now update their information on-line.

A wealth of Indiana watershed information is available on this EPA site by clicking on the Indiana state map. Information includes a list of Indiana impaired waterbodies, Indiana's 305(b) water quality report, and more specific information on the many Indiana watersheds included in the database.

### *Scenes from the lakes . . .*



*The long and colder-than-usual winter allowed hearty ice fishermen in southern Indiana to enjoy their sport. These anglers, on Bloomington's Griffy Reservoir, didn't seem to mind the cold.*

## Sound Stream Management?

Is this the action of a selective tornado? Ravenous beavers? No, this resulted from implementation of the Indiana Drainage Code.

The Indiana Drainage Code was enacted by the state legislature in 1965 and became effective in 1966. Through the Drainage Code, the County Drainage Boards and the County Surveyors are responsible for the maintenance and operating functions of all “regulated drains,” open and tiled, in the county.

The Drainage Code specifies that “trees, shrubs and woody vegetation may not be planted within the (*regulated drain*) easement area without the written consent of the Drainage Board and may be removed by the Surveyor if necessary for the proper operation of the drain.”

Undisturbed and, especially, woody vegetation is particularly important for stabilizing stream banks and preventing water quality problems downstream. In addition, substantial fish and wildlife benefits are gained by stable, vegetated stream banks. Given this, it is difficult to understand how such drain cleaning, as pictured here, can occur.



*Mud Run River, Noble County—upstream view*



*Mud Run River, Noble County—downstream view*

## New Aquatic Plant Control Rules Proposed to Catch Up with Last Year's Statute Changes

In its 1999 report, the Indiana Lakes Management Work Group recommended that aquatic plant control regulations be updated to reflect newer technologies for nuisance plant control in the state's waterways and provide additional protection to beneficial aquatic plant communities. Subsequently, Senate Enrolled Act 230 was passed and became effective on July 1, 2002. The new law expanded state jurisdiction for

Aquatic Plant Control Permits from only chemical control to include use of: (1) mechanical control, such as weed harvesters or other equipment; (2) physical control, such as dyes or large plastic barriers; and (3) biological controls, such as weevils. The act made several other changes to the law, including reducing the area of plant control allowed without a permit to 625 square feet and updated references to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management as the state agency with authority over treatment in surface drinking water sources.

With passage of the statutory changes to IC 14-22-9-10, state regulations must be updated to match the new coverage. Therefore, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) will entertain a proposal from the IDNR for preliminary adoption of amendments to 312 IAC 9-10-3 that governs aquatic vegetation control on waters of the state.

### Summary of Proposed Changes to the Rule

The existing rule language applies only to chemical controls, but the amendments would implement P.L. 19-2002 by extending coverage to controls based on mechanical, physical, and biological methods. Around 200 aquatic plant control permit applications are submitted by lake management consultants for review by the IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife between March and June each year. Many of these companies are hired by lake associations or drinking water utilities to professionally treat waterways. Companies are allowed to control nuisance plants in public freshwater lakes and other state waters, as specified on the resulting permits. To ease implementation, the proposed effective date for the rule would be January 1, 2004, to accommodate the 2004 permit season. Applicants proposing mechanical, physical, and biological control will have to

provide information, as needed, on the existing form during the 2003 treatment season.

The proposed changes would modify the application form by including an illustration of the control area on a legible map, providing the maximum perpendicular distance from the shoreline and linear distance along the shoreline, and providing duration and timing of control efforts, if repeated applications will be used.

The proposed changes would also add a reporting requirement consistent with other permits issued by the department for management actions taken in public waters that provides the department with notification of actual date, location, acreage, and method of control within seven (7) days of each control effort.

### Rule-making Process

The draft rule will be provided on the DNR Web site and directly by mail or e-mail to permittees and lake associations for public review. The proposal will be submitted to the IDNR Advisory Council in April and to the Natural Resources Commission for preliminary adoption in May. If the commission approves the preliminary adoption, one or more public hearings will be held and comments from the public will be received by mail or email for a designated period not less than 30 days. Changes will be made as recommended by the hearing

officer and the rule will be submitted to the NRC for a determination on final adoption later in the year.

For questions concerning the proposed rule amendments or a copy of the proposed rule, contact Gwen White, IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 W. Washington St., Rm W273, Indianapolis, IN 46204; telephone: (317) 232-4093 or e-mail: [gwhite@dnr.state.in.us](mailto:gwhite@dnr.state.in.us).

### Web-based References

Existing rules and statutes can be obtained by entering the statute (code) or administrative rule numbers in the Web page at [http://www.IN.gov/legislative/ic\\_iac/](http://www.IN.gov/legislative/ic_iac/)

Administrative code for the Department of Natural Resources is in Title 312 on the following Web site: <http://www.IN.gov/legislative/ic/title312.html>

To download a copy of the 1999 Indiana Lakes Management Work Group report or view other interesting information about Indiana lakes, go to: <http://www.IN.gov/indianalakes/>.

## Water Project Wins Teaching Award

A project to test water quality in Lake Monroe helped win McCormick's Creek Elementary teacher Tim Soliday an award for teaching conservation. The Owen County Soil and Water Conservation District honored Soliday with its Conservation Educator of the Year Award. Soliday, who teaches fifth grade, takes his students to Lake Monroe each year to test the water for pH, nitrates, turbidity, and other indicators. The students compare their results to those gathered in previous years. They also study the water in nearby McCormick's Creek.

While at Lake Monroe, the students cleaned up the beaches at Hardin Ridge and Paynetown recreation areas as a service learning project.

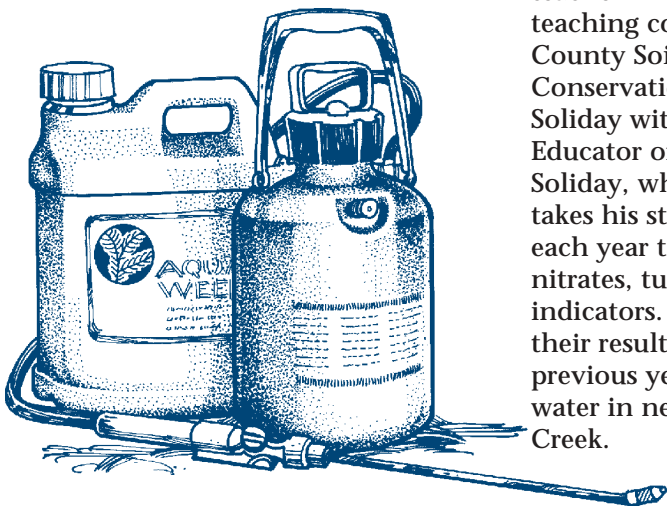
## Celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clean Water Act

October 18, 2002 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clean Water Act. The anniversary presents an excellent opportunity to celebrate water quality improvements, enhance public appreciation for the importance of our water resources, educate our nation's young people, build better understanding of remaining challenges and solutions, and rekindle the public stewardship ethic and support for watershed protection programs.

As part of the celebration, July has been designated as *Clean Lakes Month* by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This coincides with the annual NALMS-sponsored *Lakes Appreciation Week*, which, for this year, has been extended to *Lakes Appreciation Month*. For more information and ideas, see the NALMS Web site: [www.nalms.org](http://www.nalms.org) or the USEPA Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/index.html>.

## Hoosier Boaters Provide \$1.1 Million to Protect Water Quality, Reduce Soil Erosion

Boat registration fees are helping improve Hoosier waterways by funding local projects. The projects will result in better fishing and boating, and even more varieties of fish. In 2002, \$1.1 million was available for



34 grants that will improve lakes and rivers in 37 counties. The grant monies come from annual fees for boat registration. Five dollars from each registration is reserved for the projects.

The Department of Natural Resources grants are approved by the State Soil Conservation Board. "The projects help to restore Indiana's natural beauty and native ecosystems," said John Goss, director of the DNR. "They'll result in more varieties of fish, better fishing, boating, and other recreation. In the end, all Hoosiers benefit," he said. The projects address soil erosion- and nutrient-related problems affecting public-access lakes and streams. Details about the project awards can be found on the Web at: [www.IN.gov/dnr/](http://www.IN.gov/dnr/).

The projects improve water quality by reducing sedimentation and nutrient runoff through the installation of constructed wetlands, grass cover, and filter strips. The grants will also fund studies to document water-related problems and solutions.

The 2002 grants bring the number to 264 projects that have received state boating-funded monies since 1988. Those projects have enhanced 150 rivers, lakes, and streams and 83 watersheds in 87 counties.

"Even with recent budget cuts, it is important to remember that the projects funded by these grants add to Indiana's attractiveness to thousands of visitors from out of state," Goss said. "These grants will expand work already completed and further protect Indiana's lakes and rivers for years to come."

For more information, contact: Jim Ray, Division of Soil Conservation, (317) 233-3870.

## Study Finds Urban Sprawl Wastes Water, Worsens Drought

The *Winston-Salem Journal* reported on a study released by a coalition of American Rivers, the National Resources Defense Council, and Smart Growth America that says that the drought-plagued southeast and other regions waste billions of gallons of water each year because of urban sprawl. The report, titled *Paving Our Way to Water Shortages*, says that growing development has aggravated the effects of drought by greatly increasing the amount of rain that runs off from roads, roofs, and parking lots rather than falling on open land, where it would be absorbed into the underground water supply. The study ranks the top 20 metro areas that have seen the greatest amount of acres developed between 1982 and 1997, and provides estimates of the yearly water wastage of those areas. Several bone-dry southern cities ranked in the top 20, including No. 1 Atlanta, No. 8 Charlotte, No. 13 Raleigh-Durham, and No. 18 the NC Piedmont Triad. Nationwide, government figures suggest that 365 acres of forest, farmland, and other open space are developed each hour. The report also presents a series of "smart growth" policy recommendations, such as strengthening regional cooperation on planning and concentrating development in urbanized areas. *Source:* Wildline Report #35, State Environmental Resource Center.

## Upcoming Meetings

**May 12-14, 2003.** *Agricultural Hydrology and Water Quality.* American Water Resources Spring Specialty Conference, Kansas City Marriott, Kansas City, MO. Information: [www.awra.org/meetings/Kansas2003](http://www.awra.org/meetings/Kansas2003)

**June 1-5, 2003.** *2003 NALMS Southeast Lakes Conference.* Hosted by the Florida Lake Management Society, Hyatt Orlando, Orlando, FL. Contact: Sharlesh K. Patel; Phone: (386) 304-6505; e-mail: [spatel@dmces.com](mailto:spatel@dmces.com)

**September 22-26, 2003.** *Watershed Restoration Institute.* Sponsored by: Center for Watershed Protection and River Network. Pearlstone Retreat and Conference Center, Reisterstown, MD. Contact: Jack Tawil, phone: (410) 461-8323; Web: [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org)

## WATER COLUMN

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**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!**

# Perspectives

“The sun was warm but the wind was chill.  
You know how it is with an April day  
When the sun is out and the wind is still,  
You’re one month on in the middle of May.  
But if you so much as dare to speak,  
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,  
A wind comes off a frozen peak,  
And you’re two months back in the middle of March.”

—Robert Frost (1874-1963)

**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.**

## **WATER COLUMN**

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