Water Column

Summer 2007
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West Otter Lake Fair

The West Otter Lake Association held a "lake fair" on Saturday, August 11. Under the leadership of chairman Jim Szudarek, and with many helpful volunteers, the lake fair had a theme of "Getting Connected". Over 140 people attended this worthwhile event and had the opportunity to get connected with each other and with lake professionals.

The lake fair featured 21 different exhibitors and presenters from 13 state and local agencies and groups. Attendees could talk with representatives and pick up literature from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Clean Lakes Program, Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District, Indiana Lakes Management Society, and others. The Steuben County and Freemont Dive Rescue Teams were present and gave a demonstration. Attendees could get their blood pressure and blood sugar levels tested by the Orland EMS. The Power

The West Otter Lake Fair was a festive event. At left, Gwen White, Indiana DNR, displays a variety of aquatic plants, several of which are invasive, that she purchased from an aquarium shop.

Squadron gave safety checks on ten boats. Local fishing expert, Paul Oakes, gave two fishing clinics.

The West Otter Lake Fair ran from 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch was provided by the West Otter Lake Association to all participants. Door prizes totaling $650 were won by 33 lucky attendees. A grant from the Indiana Lakes Management Society Small Grants Program provided 75 percent of the fair costs.

If you would like information on how to plan and conduct a lake fair, you may contact Jim Szudarek at: **OUJJS@aol.com**. A great 15-page lake fair planning guide is available from the Wisconsin DNR at: **www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/lakes/WILakeFair.pdf.**

Five Simple Things You Can Do to Protect Your Lake

Lake management doesn't have to be complicated. Sure, designing an alum treatment or implementing a dredging program definitely requires the assistance of lake management professionals. However, there are many things that citizens can do to make a positive difference.

1. Use P-free Lawn Fertilizer

- Most turf grass does NOT need more phosphorus. Grass needs mostly nitrogen for green growth.
- The second number on a fertilizer bag shows the percentage (%) of P. In a P-free fertilizer, this second number would be "0".
- P-free fertilizer is widely available…or you can ask for it at your local garden center.
- Do *not* apply fertilizer down to the water's edge.
- Leave at least a ten-foot wide unfertilized buffer strip – any closer and you may as well fertilize the lake!
- Fertilizer will migrate to make this unfertilized buffer strip green.

of all sizes – insects to fish, filters out pollutants, and stabilizes sediments.
- Where would you catch more fish??

Here . . .

2. Create More Natural Shoreline Habitat

- Shallow water habitat (littoral zone) is critical for proper ecological functioning in lakes.
- The littoral zone provides habitat (for breeding and living) for aquatic organisms

. . . . or here ?

Grass and seawalls create habitat for geese.

Natural vegetations along the lakeshore creates a healthy habitat.

- Woody debris and rocks attract fish because they provide good *habitat!*
- Seawalls prevent turtles and frogs from moving onto land.
- Grass and seawalls create habitat for geese.
- Natural vegetation along the lakeshore creates habitat for beneficial aquatic organisms.

3. Properly Maintain Your Septic Tank and Drainfield

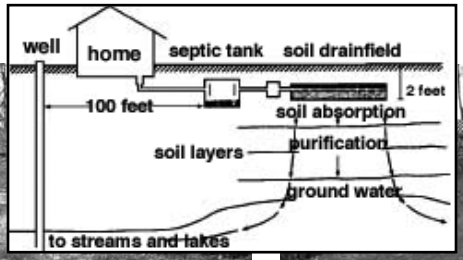
- Don't overload your system with water. A waterlogged drainfield will not purify the wastes.
  - Limit the length and frequency of showers.
  - Limit laundry to only one load per day.
- Don't drive over your drainfield.
- Don't plant woody shrubs or trees over your drainfield.
- Have your tank pumped regularly – for example, a 500-gallon tank serving a four-person family should be pumped once each year; a 1,000-gallon tank once every two years.
- Test septic systems around the lake by flushing a dye down toilets and then check the lake for any color. This costs only about $1 per home and is a great activity for your lake association.

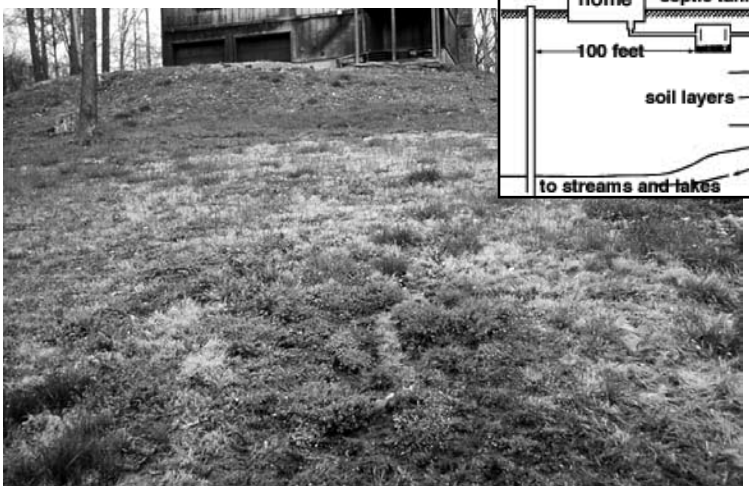
4. Don't blow grass clippings or rake leaves into the lake

- Grass and leaves contain nitrogen and phosphorus – nutrients that stimulate algae growth.
- Clippings and leaves consume oxygen from the water as they decompose.

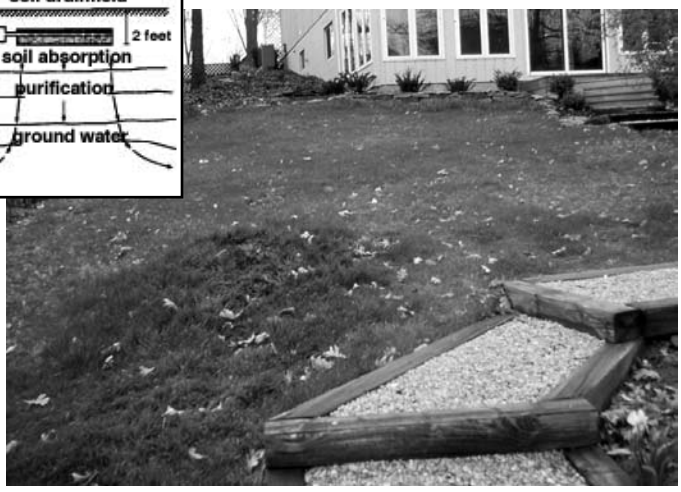
5. Plant Only Native *Plants in Your Lakeshore Property*

- Many non-natives, while attractive, can be invasive.
- Invasive, non-native plants can crowd out beneficial native plants.
- Non-native plants don't provide necessary habitat for native animals and birds.
- Control of non-native species is one of the most serious problems in lakes and streams.
- Many invasive plants, such as myrtle, bush honeysuckle and purple loosestrife, are available from garden centers and nurseries, or from the Internet. Make certain that you know what you are purchasing!





A surface failure.



Grass over the septic tank should not *be green (or greener).*

Indiana Lakes get More Protection

As summer draws to a close and recreational activity on Indiana's public freshwater lakes begins to dwindle, many lakefront property owners may consider landscaping projects along the lake's shore.

Indiana requires a biologist to check many types of shoreline work on public freshwater lakes because some types of lakeside work degrade water quality or destroy fish and wildlife habitat.

If you are considering a project on or near the shoreline of a public freshwater lake, and are not sure if you need a shoreline construction permit, contact the DNR Division of Water at (877) 928-3755, or e-mail **water_inquiry@dnr.IN.gov**.

Indiana Code, public freshwater lake defined, Lakes Preservation Act:
http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title14/ar26/ch2.html

Apply for a permit online at:
http://www.in.gov/dnr/water/permits/index.html

Lake Acts Against Weeds, Algae

CLEAR LAKE – Clear Lake has taken the lead in Indiana to become the first municipality to ban the use and sale of fertilizers containing phosphorous

"Within the last three to five years we're getting these algae blooms and weed growth increasing in both size and intensity," Clear Lake resident Mary-Jo Fitzenrider said. "I've noticed around here that as the clientele changes, as more people are living here year-round and building bigger houses with bigger yards, people were using more and more fertilizer. I went online and checked on this and found some of the information and printed it off. It has been a real grassroots effort with several people involved."

Town Council President Jack McArdle said Town Council member and attorney Anthony Kraus couldn't find another ordinance to ban such fertilizers in the state, but found others, including a Muskegon County, Michigan, ban, as well as two countywide bans in Wisconsin and a statewide ban on the use of such fertilizers in Minnesota. Using the Muskegon County ordinance as a model, the council crafted an ordinance, which was first read at its May meeting and adopted later. So far the reaction to the ordinance has been overwhelmingly positive, McArdle says.

"The people of Clear Lake understand the lake is probably the greatest asset we have here. There is a lot of love for it and people really care about it. They want to keep it clear, like its name," McArdle says. The ordinance took effect July 11.

County commissioners in Steuben County in the state's northeast corner have backed a similar county-wide ordinance.

However, The Indiana Office of the State Chemist and Seed Commissioner notified county and Clear Lake officials that a 2001 state law gives that agency the authority over how fertilizers are used and stored, said Mike Hancock, the office's fertilizer administrator.

"You can pass ordinances until you're blue in the face, but you don't have the authority to enforce it," Hancock said.

The state law allows a local government seeking such a ban to petition the state chemist's office for a public hearing to make its case.

Clear Lake's attorney, W. Erik Weber, said Thursday he did not know about the law when the ordinance was passed and that a Town Council member had already called to request a hearing.

We'll keep *Water Column* readers updated as decisions are made in the future.

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EPA Small Engine Rule to Impact Watercraft by 2009

On April 17th, EPA released a new clean air proposal that sets strict standards for most lawn and garden equipment and small recreational watercraft. In the near future, those boating out on the water and those spending hours mowing their lakeside lawns will be using more efficient, combustible engines.

The proposal is groundbreaking in several areas. To meet the new exhaust emission standards, manufacturers are expected to use catalytic converters for the first time ever in many types of small watercraft, lawn, and garden equipment. After rigorous analysis and extensive work with diverse stakeholders, EPA determined that such a strategy was feasible and safe. This proposed rule by EPA also includes the first-ever

- fuel evaporative standards for all the types of equipment and watercraft ,
- national standards for vessels powered by stern-drive or inboard engines, and
- carbon monoxide standards for gasoline-powered engines used in recreational watercraft.

Americans spend more than three billion hours per year using lawn and garden equipment. Currently, a push mower emits as much hourly pollution as 11 cars, a riding mower emits as much as 34 cars, and a recreational watercraft can emit as much as 348 cars an hour.

By 2030, recreational watercraft powered by gasoline engines would see a 70 percent reduction in smog-forming hydrocarbon (HC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx), a 20 percent reduction in carbon monoxide (CO), and a 70 percent reduction in fuel evaporative emissions. When fully implemented, the rule would result in annual emission reductions of 630,000 tons of HC, 98,000 tons of NOx, 6,300 tons of direct particulate matter, and 2.7 million tons of CO.

If the EPA adopts the rule as proposed, it could start taking effect for outboard engines and personal watercraft by 2009 and mowers, leaf blowers, weeders, and other garden equipment by 2011.

Nonpoint Source Outreach Toolbox

EPA's new Nonpoint Source (NPS) Outreach Toolbox is intended for use by state and local agencies and other organizations interested in educating the public on nonpoint source pollution or stormwater runoff. The Toolbox contains a variety of resources to help develop an effective outreach campaign. The Toolbox contains a product catalog of more than 700 TV and radio public service announcements, print ads, and other products focusing on nonpoint source pollution. Most of the products, many of which are free, can be customized to be used in your watershed. The Outreach Toolbox can be found at **www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox**.

Handy Help for Fish I.D.

The Wisconsin DNR recently unveiled a handy fish identification guide on their website at: **http://www.wiscfish.org/fishid/**.

A series of queries with drop-down menus show photos of various fish feature categories that you can select from. The feature categories include: snout shape, spines, tail shape, body shape, body patterns, distinctive features, and family. Once you select the characteristics of your fish from these seven categories, the program identifies your fish.

Even if you don't have a fish to identify, observing the features within the categories can help you better understand how and why fish are different. The program makes learning fun.

Perspectives

A recent article in the F.X. Browne newsletter presented water proverbs from other countries. We thought we'd share these bits of wisdom with you over the next several issues of *WaterColumn*.

We never know the worth of water until the well runs dry. ~ France

A mule can swim seven different strokes, but the minute he sees the water he forgets them all. ~ Armenia

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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!