



Fall, 2009

**MemberLakes:**

- Adams**
- Atwood**
- Big Long**
- Cedar**
- Dallas**
- Fish/Royer**
- Lake of the Woods/**
- McClish**
- Little Turkey**
- North Twin**
- Oliver/Martin**
- Pretty**
- Shipshewana**
- South Twin**
- Stone**
- Westler**
- Witmer**

This newsletter is published by the LaGrange County Lakes Council and distributed by mail to more than 4,000 members and friends.

LCLC is proud to support the Indiana Lakes Management Society and the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce.

**LaGrange County  
Lakes Council**  
111 W. Spring Street  
PO Box 86  
LaGrange IN 46761  
260-499-5253

Member



Member



# LaGrange County Lakes Council

To promote, protect and preserve the quality of the lakes and watersheds of LaGrange County.

Phone/Fax: 260-499-5253 • [www.LaGrangeCountyLakesCouncil.org](http://www.LaGrangeCountyLakesCouncil.org)

## Fall Forum set for Saturday, August 29

The annual Fall Forum is again being presented jointly by Indiana Lakes Management Society, LaGrange County Lakes Council and Steuben County Lakes Council. The event is to be held at Lakes Missionary Church on US Highway 20, just east of highway 327.

Starting at 9 am and running to 4 pm, lunch will be provided. Please call the Lakes Council office to register, 260-499-LAKE (5253), or e-mail [admin@lagrangepubliclakescouncil.org](mailto:admin@lagrangepubliclakescouncil.org).

The agenda for the meeting includes:

- Zach Michels—"Putting Wind To Work"
- Angie Tilton and Lisa Ritter, DNR—"Healthy Water, Healthy People"
- Linda Schmidt and Angie Brown, IDEM: "Is Your Lake Group Stuck In Neutral?"
- Doug Keller, IDNR—Invasive Species Coordinator
- Scott Banfield ILMS—"Invasive Species: Control"
- Nate Simons—Wetlands Management

Don't miss this outstanding lineup of professionals. It's your best opportunity to learn.

## Nice catch for Cedar Lake angler Derek Bragg



Derek is pictured with his 4-1/2 pound largemouth, caught in Cedar Lake on March 27 near the inlet. The fish sets a lake record at 20-1/4 inches and 14 inch girth. The lunker was released.

**Lakes Council phone: 260-499-5253**  
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## Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership formed to coordinate lake efforts

Glacial lakes—natural lakes that were formed by glacial activity—are an abundant and recognizable feature of the landscape over much of the upper Midwest. For example, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin each boast of more than 10,000 natural lakes over 10-acres in size within their respective boundaries.

The Prairie Pothole Region is an important waterfowl production area for North America and includes portions of eastern Dakotas, western Minnesota, and northwestern Iowa. Clearly, these

glacial lakes are a regionally and nationally significant economic and cultural natural resource and yet they are increasingly threatened by a number of human-driven factors affecting sustainable fish and wildlife habitats. These drivers are not universally distributed across the region, but rather most intensely affect glacial lakes on a gradient generally oriented from south to north.

Presently, there is no regional strategy for addressing aquatic habitat protection and restoration in glacial lakes. Many good efforts are occurring in the respective states, however, the coordination of programs and exchange of information and experiences only occurs haphazardly and often as a result of crisis management. This project will develop an aquatic habitat action plan for glacial lakes in the upper Midwest.

Visit the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership website for more information: [www.midwestglaciallakes.org](http://www.midwestglaciallakes.org).

### MISSION

*The mission of the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership is to protect, restore and enhance Midwestern glacial lakes fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.*

# West Lakes group seeks “legal drain” designation for Elkhart River

After numerous meetings with organizations and stakeholders in the Elkhart River Basin there seem to be a lot of misunderstanding concerning the request from the home owners of the West Lakes Chain to declare the North and Middle branches of the Elkhart river a legal drain. It is important to hear both sides of the issue so as Paul Harvey would say—and now the rest of the story.

Severe flooding of the West Lakes area has caused extensive damage not only to many of the homes but also to county property and infrastructure. During flooding, roads were under water to the extent that many homes were not accessible to emergency fire and life saving EMS vehicles. These floods have become more frequent and the water levels have taken much longer to recede. The water levels were 4.25 feet above normal during the highest levels and have continued to be 2.43 feet above normal to date. These problems have lead homeowners to believe that something has changed in the rivers ability to move water out of the area. Also more water is entering at a faster rate than in the past. Previously the Department of Natural Resources has funded projects in the Elkhart River to eliminate log jams and clean out debris so the water has the natural ability to flow properly. The need to do this type maintenance is ongoing and must be funded on a regular basis. The West Lakes Association has tried many avenues to fund this program but is limited in resources. One way to fund this project on an ongoing basis is to declare the river a legal drain. The cost would be \$5.00 per year per parcel and administered by the county and overseen by the DNR. It seems to make sense that all individual property owners in the watershed pay this assessment since they contribute the water. After numerous communications and meetings with DNR officials they have stated they are not opposed to the petition. The DNR has responsibility to oversee the work in

## Sewer rate increases in sight

The Regional Utility District has been informed by its rate consultant of a need to adjust rates in three of its regions. The exact amount of the increase is yet to be determined but is expected to be nominal.

The District will probably hold all rate hearings at a single meeting this fall when the final rate is calculated for the Shipshewana Lake project.

Regions expected to be affected are: Region A, (Atwood, Hackenburg, Dallas, Martin Messick, Oliver); Region B (Big Long, Big Turkey, Blackman, Elmira, Lake of the Woods, Little Turkey, McClish, Pretty, South Milford, Stroh); Region D (Fish/Stone).

Each region of the District has separate rates, as determined by each project’s financing package.

## Goose roundup DVD available to clubs

A DVD demonstrating a successful goose roundup is available from the Lakes Council office. The nineteen-minute program was filmed by Dick Dirig in 2000 at Pretty Lake.

Pretty Lake Conservation Club has been conducting their own geese relocation activity for many years. As a result, the 2009 “roundup” moved only 5 Canada geese. Contact the office if you are interested in a copy of this DVD.

## Board meetings:

The Lakes Council board meets on the fourth Thursday of each month except November and December. Meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. in the County Office Building, 114 W. Michigan St. in LaGrange. The public is always invited to attend.



*Pretty Lake Conservation Club organized a “Kid’s Conservation Project that brought nearly 20 youngsters together, each with a parent or other adult, to build bluebird nesting boxes. The project was funded by a grant from the LaGrange County Chapter, Pheasants Forever. Each child was given an educational packet teaching them all about bluebirds and their habits.*

the river and make sure the river stays a river. The Drainage Board would also restrict the work so that Clear-Cutting of the river edge would not be done. The West lakes association recognizes that this project alone will not solve all the problems, but is just one step in alleviating a safety concern of residences that are unable to receive basic emergency life saving services during flooding. Other watershed management projects that are longer term and beneficial are wetland formation and preservation, sediment control, agricultural land management, retention ponds, etc. All these items take

education and financial resources that everyone in the watershed needs to be a part of.

The residents of the West Lakes chain have already shown their commitment to cleaning up the lake and watershed by funding a \$7,380,000 sewer project. The West Lakes Association is interested in preserving nature and being environmentally friendly so that all can enjoy the lakes for generations to come. I hope this information helps clear up any misunderstandings.

*Provided by the West Lakes Association*



## Selected News Releases

### Unwanted pike and white bass found in area lakes

COLUMBIA CITY - Two species of fish, although popular among Hoosier anglers, are not what biologists wanted to find in three lakes north of Columbia City in Whitley County.

In mid-June, two northern pike were netted at Loon Lake and a white bass was captured in Big Lake during fish surveys conducted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Last fall, two northern pike were also netted in Crooked Lake, although none were caught during a follow-up survey in June.

The northern pike found in both lakes were 24 to 26 inches long. The white bass in Big Lake was 14 inches long.

“Northern pike and white bass do not occur naturally in any of these lakes,” said Jed Pearson, DNR fisheries biologist. “They were apparently illegally stocked there by someone.”

According to Indiana law, anyone who stocks a fish in public waters under state control must first get a permit from the DNR.

Catching fish in one lake and releasing them into another lake without an approved permit is a Class C misdemeanor. The cost of a stocking permit is \$3.

Since northern pike and white bass are popular among anglers, some people may not realize such stocking is harmful.

“Both species are predatory fish and can compete with other sportfish,” Pearson said. “They both are capable of reproducing, so they could also increase and spread to other lakes in the area. But more importantly, they could harm ongoing fish management programs at each lake.”

Northern pike could compete with muskies stocked in Loon Lake, thereby reducing survival and growth of muskies. In Crooked Lake, pike could feed on ciscoes, a unique coldwater fish species found in only 13 Indiana lakes.

### Don't dump aquariums in the lake!

Aquarium owners who are moving and can't take their aquarium's contents with them should avoid dumping the contents in local waters.

Most of the fish won't survive the winter, and the plants can thrive and cause serious environmental damage.

Dumping aquarium fish into public waters without a stocking permit is a Class C misdemeanor that can carry a fine of up to \$500 and 30 days in jail, plus court costs.

If an aquarium owner cannot find someone who will take the fish, the DNR recommends sealing the fish in a plastic bag, putting them in a freezer, and then disposing of them in the trash. They should never be flushed down a toilet or dumped into local lakes, ponds, streams or rivers.

Alternatives for those who don't want their fish to die as a result of their move include:

- ❖ Giving the fish to another aquarium owner
- ❖ Donating the fish to a local aquarium society
- ❖ Contacting aquarium stores for possible return

The plastic-bag technique also is the best option for getting rid of unwanted aquarium plants. Unlike the fish, many aquarium plants thrive in local waters, crowding out native plants and adversely affecting fishing, boating and the water's appearance; and can cost thousands to eradicate.

**W**hat happy memories I have as a boy  
 and Stone Lake brought me so much of the joy.  
 Family and friends and dogs and fish  
 kept kids active and filled our dish.  
 Boats and rabbits and dogs galore  
 kept a boy busy and not wanting for more  
 So many years have passed by since then  
 and the boys have grown into wonderful men.  
 Some children and grandchildren their vacations they take  
 to recapture and experience our fun at the lake!  
 It was great for my grandparents, parents and me,  
 and my son brought his first child to see  
 why we kept coming back to the cottage each year  
 to visit the place that we hold so dear.

*By Bill Readdy,  
 with poetic assistance from Bette Readdy*

“Local residents and the DNR have done a lot to protect ciscoes in Crooked Lake. If pike numbers increase, they could decimate the population,” Pearson said.

White bass are predators that usually feed offshore on gizzard shad, a silver-colored forage fish. However, shad are not present in Big Lake, so white bass there would likely be forced to eat bluegills, perch or other sportfish.

“Anglers who think it is OK for them to take fish from one lake to stock in another lake run the risk of hurting fishing for everyone else,” said Pearson.

### Association newsletters wanted

If your lake association publishes a newsletter, the Lakes Council office would like to receive a copy. Please add our address and/or e-mail address to your mailing list.

*admin@LaGrangeCountyLakesCouncil.org*  
 LaGrange County Lakes Council  
 111 W. Spring Street  
 PO Box 86  
 LaGrange IN 46761

*Yes, I want to support the  
LaGrange County Lakes Council!*

I am enclosing my tax-deductible donation/membership in the amount of:

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name .....

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Telephone .....

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Please make your check payable to LCLC and mail to:

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## **RV use in Lake Residential areas limited to 15 days per year**

The use of a Recreational Vehicle for visitation purposes has a limit of 15 days in a calendar year. Simply, this means RV's shall not be occupied or have residents for more than 15 days. This would not be a good situation for value of property or health concerns when RV units are used in this capacity on a residential site longer than this timeframe. There are provisions in the zoning ordinance to allow RV's to be **stored** in a front or rear yard(s) and these inquiries can be directed to the LaGrange County Plan Commission at 260-499-6347

## **LCLC Board needs lake reps**

Of the nineteen lakes represented by the Lakes Council, four are not represented on our board. Board members are nominated by their respective lake associations and elected to the board per Lakes Council by-laws. If you are interested in serving as your lakes representative on the LCLC board, please call the office, 260-499-5253, for more information. Lakes not represented include: Atwood, Cedar, Fish-Royer, and South Twin.

The Lakes Council will be happy to begin receiving your stories and photos for the Spring, 2010 issue.

Stories should be limited to 300 to 400 words. Pictures should be full-color .jpg or .tif files with good clarity and full resolution. One exceptional picture will be selected as the cover shot.

Get on board and get recognition for your lake by sending your material to: [admin@lagrangecountylakescouncil.org](mailto:admin@lagrangecountylakescouncil.org).

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