



ILLINOIS

Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

NEWSLETTER

Special points of interest:

- Upcoming ILMA Conference
- Aquatic Exotic: Hydrilla
- ILMA Scholarship Opportunities
- Frank Loftus Award
- Clean Boats Campaign
- LEAP Grant Opportunities
- Million Trees Project

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End of Season Wrap-Up

We've come to the end of yet another monitoring season. Your Secchi disk has been dunked and dragged through the depths of your lake dozens of times over the last six months and countless times over the years. Your chlorophyll filtering equipment has been dutifully waterlogged in sample filtrations as well as clean-up rinses. Your shipping coolers have endured dropping, kicking, scraping, bouncing, twisting and the rest of the gauntlet of torture otherwise known as the back of the UPS truck.

As we bring the season to a close, please take a few minutes to make sure your monitoring equipment is clean, dry and stored in a proper location until it's time to bring it out of hibernation for next season's monitoring.

Here are a few tips on how to properly store your monitoring equipment:

Secchi Disk: Rinse your Secchi disk to remove as much lake gunk as possible. Dry carefully. If you are using a measuring tape, make sure the line is

dry and wound back in its reel without folds and moisture. If you are using a rope or surveyor line, make sure the line is dry and untangled before winding back on its reel.

Chlorophyll Equipment:

Make sure your weighted bottle sampler is clear of mud and is fully dry before putting into storage. Recycle old ½ gallon jugs used for sample collection. You will receive new ½ gallon jugs for next year's sampling. Give your filtering equipment (magnetic funnel, filter base, graduated cylinder and collection flask) one final rinse and let sit out to dry completely before storing.

Storage Tote: Make sure the tote is clean and dry throughout before storing equipment. If you do not have a storage tote, please contact your VLMP coordinator.

Unused Bottles: If you have any unused bottles that contain acid preservative, you may rinse them in your sink, being sure to flush with plenty of water and being careful not to splash or spill acid on your

skin or clothing. The bottle can then be thrown away. If you prefer to save your bottles until next year to give to your coordinator, please be sure that there are no signs of leakage, e.g., sticky residue on bottle or tote, moisture around cap or bottle, and store upright and secure so the bottles will not be knocked over on their sides, making them prone to leaking. Bottles without preservative can be kept until next year.

Now that all of the equipment and the storage totes are clean and dry, place all equipment neatly and upright in the tote and store in your basement, garage or other location that is safe from the weather. Please be sure to recycle or throw away as appropriate any unused laboratory analysis paperwork and shipping labels from this year and all previous years. You will receive all new lab sheets and mailing labels next season.

See you in Spring!



Notes from the Statewide Coordinator

At last, the long-awaited next issue of the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program Newsletter. This issue discusses many exciting topics. Please be sure to make special note of the upcoming Illinois Lake Management Association Conference being held February 28 & 29 and March 1, 2008 in Springfield, IL. As volunteers, you are invited and encouraged to attend the annual citizen volunteer session since it is designed specifically for the VLMP.

As you read through this newsletter, I would greatly appreciate feedback, constructive criticism and ideas for future articles. I'd also like to include articles written by you, the volunteer, since you have first-hand experience with the ins and outs of volunteer life.

Now that we've come to the end of our 27th season, I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of

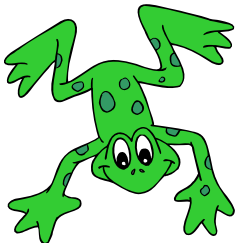
you for your tireless and painstaking efforts to make this one of the most successful and long-lasting volunteer lake programs in the country. I would also like to express my gratitude for your patience as we continue to struggle with finalizing the online volunteer database which will store our data and make it possible to provide detailed summaries and trends for your lakes. As always, please contact me for any water quality information we may have on file.



Best Regards,

Sandy

Leap into ILMA: February 28 & 29 and March 1, 2008



SAVE THE DATE!

The ILMA 23rd Annual Conference will be held February 28th & 29th and March 1, 2008.

This year's conference will be centrally located at the Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center in historic Springfield, IL. It is conveniently located just off of Interstates 55 and 72.

Plan on visiting Honest Abe's hometown to meet with old friends and new in the lake community.

This year, we have a **Special Event** planned for the Exhibitors' Reception that you will not want to miss! Please join us for this tremendous opportunity to meet & greet and thank our Exhibitors at the magnificent **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum**. This event will be held on the evening of Thursday, Feb 28th.



Lincoln

Also, there are a number of fascinating talks and presentations on lakes and watersheds for all to enjoy. Those in the Illinois VLMP will especially want to join in the special citizen volunteer session.

In addition to the many informative sessions available, a workshop is being offered on Saturday, March 1.

Dan Stephenson from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will be speaking about fish stocking and proper fish habitat. Weather permitting, he will also give a fish shocking demonstration. Additionally, Andrew Clapper of the U.S. Department of Agriculture will give a presentation on Goose Management.

So LEAP into Leap Day by joining us at the Illinois Lake Management Association's Annual Conference February 28 & 29 and March 1, 2008!



Questions about the conference?

General Conference Information:

Dick Hilton - wildick@comcast.net

Phone: 800-338-6976 access code 01

www.ilma-lakes.org

Contact ILMA at:

Illinois Lake Management Association
P.O. Box 20655
Springfield IL, 62708



Focus on Exotics: *Hydrilla*

Let's begin our "Focus on Exotics" by examining the phrase exotic species. The term, "exotic" simply implies that a species, whether plant, animal or other, is not native to a particular region. In one way or another, typically through human influences, this species is introduced to an area where it is not naturally occurring. Another term we should explore is "invasive." Non-native species can out-compete native, or indigenous, species for essential nutrients for survival and can displace or crowd out the native species. This can limit species diversity by creating monocultures of exotics. When an "exotic" takes over an area once controlled by native species and adversely affects ecological or economical interests, it is termed an "invasive exotic species." Invasive exotic species, also known as Aquatic Nuisance Species, can disrupt entire ecosystems and impair recreational activities, such as, fishing, swimming, boating and hiking. Invasive exotic species can also wreak havoc on your wallet because they are often costly, if not impossible, to control once introduced.

The exotic we are highlighting in this issue of the VLMP Newsletter is Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*). And yes, it is both exotic to Illinois and the Midwest and extremely invasive. It can be found in all types of waterbodies as a submersed plant that can grow to the water's surface where it forms thick mats, making navigation and recreation difficult or impossible. These thick mats shade out native species and can grow to such abundance that water flow is reduced and flooding can occur. Hydrilla can alter the delicate balance of water chemistry and provides poor habitat for fish and wildlife, causing fish population imbalances. Waterfront property values plummet once this invasive aquatic plant takes hold of a waterbody. If you think your lake is too deep or murky for Hydrilla to grow, you should know that Hydrilla can successfully proliferate in much lower light conditions than other submersed plants, needing only 1% of full sunlight.



Hydrilla can reproduce by seeds, fragmentation, turions and tubers. Fragmentation can be quite devastating as it only requires a one half-inch sprig to start a new population (either within a waterbody or spread from one waterbody to another).



Hydrilla infestation
Withlacoochee River, Florida
Photo by Brian Nelson
Copyright 1997 Southwest Florida Water Management District

Typically, Hydrilla has been found in Southern states, but it has been identified close to home in both Indiana and Wisconsin as recently as Summer 2007 (Wisconsin) and Summer 2006 (Indiana). Indiana alone expects to spend \$500,000/year for 3-4 years on eliminating it from a single lake.

Some identifying characteristics of Hydrilla are: long slender stems that branch and can be up to 25 feet long; small, pointed leaves in whorls of 4 to 8 around the stem; leaf margins are saw-toothed and rough to the touch. Hydrilla produces tiny white flowers on long stalks.

Control of aquatic weeds is difficult and eradication sometimes can be an unrealistic goal. Before any type of management technique is implemented, positive identification of the plant is recommended. Some native plants look similar to Hydrilla so it is important to have proper identification. Once properly identified, consult an expert or professional for aquatic weed eradication or control.

What can you do?

- One of the most common ways that aquatic invasives are spread from one waterbody to the next is on boats, trailers and live wells. Be sure to carefully clean your boat before you leave the ramp.
- Be sure that plants you purchase for water gardens, aquariums or ponds are not exotic.
- Learn to recognize the plant characteristics and report potential sightings of exotic invasive species to your local expert or agency for verification.

Interesting Fact: Even though this plant is listed on the U.S. Federal Noxious Weed List, it is still available for purchase over the internet or at aquarium supply dealers.

ILMA Scholarship Opportunities



The Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) is pleased to announce the availability of Scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in natural resource disciplines related to lake and/or lake watershed management. Two scholarship opportunities are available: The Undergraduate/Graduate scholarship (\$1,000) and the Robert Esser Student Achievement Scholarship (\$500).

Eligibility:

Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarship:

Students must attend an Illinois college or university or must be an Illinois resident attending a college or university in Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, or Wisconsin.

Robert Esser Student Achievement Scholarship: Students must be an Illinois resident attending an Illinois university or college.

Application Deadline: December 31, 2007

Funding: Funds for these scholarships are made available through the ILMA membership, a matching grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and Mr. Robert Esser, a long-standing member of ILMA.

For questions or additional information and requirements regarding the ILMA Scholarship Program, please call (800) 338-6976 (01) or go to the ILMA website: <http://www.ilmalakes.org/pages/studentgrant.htm>

To download an application, go to:

<http://www.ilmalakes.org/Artwork/ScholarApplication.pdf>

To complete an online application, go to:

<http://www.ilmalakes.org/pages/app.lasso>

**Please Join us for ILMA's 23rd Annual Conference
February 28 & 29 and March 1, 2008
Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center
Springfield, IL
www.ilmalakes.org**

Frank Loftus Award

**The Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA)
Board of Directors seeks nominations for the Frank
Loftus Conservation Award**

In 2002, the ILMA Board of Directors established the Frank Loftus Conservation Award in recognition of Mr. Frank Loftus' tireless volunteer effort and commitment. This award provides an opportunity for Illinois lake organizations or individuals to nominate a local resident for state-wide recognition of their personal commitment, dedication, and stewardship efforts to address local lake issues. The award is presented each year at the Annual ILMA Conference.

Past recipients include:

2002– FRANK LOFTUS, Posthumously awarded, Apple Canyon Lake, Jo Daviess Co.

2003– LOU LISKA, Bruce Lake, DuPage Co.

2004– BRUCE WALLACE, Silver Lake, McHenry Co.

2005– RICHARD A. HILTON, Wonder Lake, McHenry Co.

2006– MADELYNN WILHARM, Lake Galena, Jo Daviess Co.

2007– JIM ROBERTS, Twin Oaks Lake, Champaign Co.



Nominations must be received by January 1st. For more information or to submit a nomination, go to: <http://www.ilmalakes.org/pages/frankloftusaward.html>

Congratulations to all past recipients. You are excellent stewards of Illinois Lakes and model VLMP participants!

Symposium to Address Aquatic Invasive Species

Concerned about aquatic invasive species in your neighborhood? Learn about what has been done—and what still needs to be done to control these unwanted visitors. Attend the forthcoming Aquatic Invasives Workshop, to learn more about what you can do.

What: Knocking at the Gates: Stop the Wave.

When: Saturday, February 16, 2008—8:00am to 5:00pm (Join us Friday evening, February 15th, to celebrate Valentine's Day and enjoy a good ole Wisconsin fish fry!)

Where: Milwaukee Hyatt Regency Hotel
333 West Kilbourn Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Telephone: 414 276-1234

How: Register on-line at www.windlake.org.
For more information, email info@wimd.org
OR telephone Dr Thomas M. Slawski or Dr Jeffrey A. Thornton at the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 262 547-6721

Who should attend? Anglers, boaters, lake residents, decision-makers, lake association and lake district board members, and friends of our lakes and rivers: anyone interested in protecting our waters from "The Next Wave."

Sponsored by: Wisconsin Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, Wind Lake Management District, University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Lakes Partnership, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Association of Lakes, Illinois Lake Management Association and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission with a grant from the Aquatic Invasive Species grant program.



Clean Boats Campaign Leah Miller, Izaak Walton League of America

ANNOUNCEMENT: Izaak Walton League of America Launches Clean Boats Campaign to Combat Invasive Species

Every day, boaters and anglers unknowingly introduce harmful invasive species into their favorite lakes and streams. These plants and animals hitch a ride in boat hulls, propellers, muddy boots, and other equipment. The Izaak Walton League of America is launching the Clean Boats Campaign to raise awareness of this problem and educate boaters and anglers how to properly clean their gear. The campaign kicks off with a sweepstakes for a \$2,500 boater's shopping spree and other prizes. Participants enter to win by visiting www.cleanboats.org and taking our Clean Boats Challenge to see if they know how to keep their boats and waterways clean and safe from invasive species.

Because invasive species such as zebra mussels and round gobies aren't native to American waters, they are safe from the predators and diseases of their native habitat. As a result, they reproduce exponentially and out-compete native fish and wildlife populations, threatening biodiversity. They can also ruin boat engines, jam steering equipment, increase the operating costs of drinking water and power plants, affect human health, and reduce property values. In the Great Lakes region alone, at least 184 aquatic invasive species are already established, with a new one discovered every eight months.

"Each year, the United States spends \$9 billion trying to control the spread of aquatic invasive species that are damaging our waterways and wildlife," says Leah Miller, director of watershed programs for the Izaak Walton League. "If you can detect them early enough, it may be possible to eradicate them. But in most instances, it is too late. That's why it is important for boaters, anglers, and other water users to inspect and clean their boats and gear every time they leave the water. This keeps invasive species from spreading to new waters."

For more information on the Clean Boats Campaign, please contact Leah Miller, (301) 548-0150, ext. 219, lmiller@iwla.org.

Founded in 1922, the Izaak Walton League of America protects America's outdoors through community-based conservation, education, and the promotion of outdoor recreation. The League has more than 40,000 members and supporters nationwide.

Leah Miller
Director of Watershed Programs
Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.
707 Conservation Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
(301) 548-0150 ext. 219
(301) 548-0146 - fax
www.iwla.org

"Lake Notes" Fact Sheets

"Lake Notes" is a series of publications produced by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency about issues affecting Illinois' inland lakes. These fact sheets are intended to provide information on various topics concerning lakes, their watersheds and actions that can be taken to protect these valuable resources. Twenty-six fact sheets have been completed to date. They are available on the Agency's website at www.epa.state.il.us/water/conservation-2000/lake-notes/index.html or in hard copy, free of charge, by contacting Steve Kolsto at 217-782-3362. Available Lake Notes include:

- Aquatic Exotics
- Aquatic Plant Management Options
- Artificial Structures For Fish Cover
- Beavers and Muskrats
- Canada Geese and Your Lake
- Common Lake Water Quality Parameters
- Determining Your Lake's Watershed
- Fertilizers and Pesticides
- Home and Yard
- Illinois Clean Lakes Program (ICLP)
- Illinois Lakeshore Birds
- Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP)
- Lake Aeration and Circulation
- Lake Dredging
- Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP)
- Lake Stratification and Mixing
- The Milfoil Weevil
- Monitoring Lake Quality
- Pressure Treated Wood
- Septic Systems
- Shoreline Buffer Strips
- Shoreline Stabilization
- Stormwater Detention Ponds
- Waterborne Pathogens
- Where to Go For Lake Information
- Zebra Mussels

Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP) Steve Kolsto, LEAP Coordinator



The Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP) is the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's grant program available to teachers, schools and not-for-profit organizations for the study of lakes, ponds and their watersheds. This grant of up to \$500 is available twice a year and can be used to purchase equipment, transportation, educational materials and registration to lake-related conferences and workshops.

LEAP has awarded nearly \$500,000 to over 1,000 applicants across Illinois since it began in 1995. In addition to teachers and students, many groups have benefited from LEAP grants to teach and learn about lakes, including scout troops, cities and environmental organizations. Projects have ranged from studying small farm ponds to Lake Michigan.

Some examples of projects that have been funded by LEAP include:

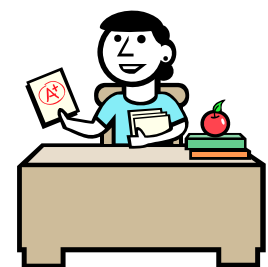
- Pond installation at a school
- A class in Williamsville, Illinois conducted studies on their city pond and presented their findings and recommendations for how to restore and protect the pond to the city council
- A high school in Bunker Hill, Illinois had the rare opportunity to study a lake since its "birth." When the city dug the new lake in their local park in 2003, Clarine Dobos and her high school science classes

began to monitor and keep recorded observations of the lake and have done so every year since.

- In 2001, Christine Geiselhart and her fourth grade students from Butterfield Elementary began a study of Lake Michigan. Around the same time, students from Siberia were conducting studies on Lake Baikal. In 2002 (the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act), Christine and others from her school took a trip to share the results of their lake studies with their counterparts in Russia. The entire Lake Michigan/Lake Baikal story is in the 2002 Summer/Fall issue of Environmental Progress which can be found on our website at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/environmental-progress/index.html>

If you have any questions or want to find out more about LEAP, please contact Steve Kolsto of the Illinois EPA Lakes Unit at 217-782-3362.

The deadline for LEAP applications is September 30 and January 31 of each year.





Dive-In!

The 1st annual *Dive In!* was held on October 11, 2007 at the Rock Springs Nature Center in Decatur. *Dive In!* is a day of water education for students and is celebrated with interactive water-related presentations. Over 500 Piatt and Macon county 4th grade students were able to explore a variety of water-related topics including watersheds, geology and water quality. This event was sponsored by the Illinois EPA and co-sponsored by Macon County Conservation District and the Decatur Audubon Society.



Calling All Acorns: Volunteers Needed for Million Trees Project

Do you want to help provide a sustainable and viable food source and habitat for river wildlife, such as, nesting birds, ducks, songbirds, squirrels and wild turkeys? Do you want to help reduce pollution run-off and soil erosion on the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio Rivers? Do you want to help reduce the impact of climate change by absorbing carbon and producing more oxygen for us to breathe? Do you want to help increase species diversity? Do you want to help reduce the intensity of algae blooms and eutrophication of our waters? All of this can be done by helping Living Lands and Waters (a not-for-profit organization based in East Moline, Illinois) achieve their goal of planting one million trees within the next 5 – 10 years along the shorelines and islands of our major waterways, as well as within your own town.

For the last ten years, Living Lands & Waters (LL&W) has been chugging up and down our big rivers on their barge and floating classroom, appropriately dubbed "River Cleanup," picking up garbage and litter that has found its way to our rivers. In 2003, LL&W expanded their environmental stewardship by restoring our rivers to a more natural state through planting native trees and removing invasive plants. They are also working diligently to educate the public on preserving and protecting these natural resources. In the fall of 2007, LL&W is taking the next step in their restoration and education efforts by launching the Million Trees Project.

As mentioned, LL&W has a goal of planting one million trees along our major waterway shorelines within the next 5 – 10 years. They will do this by collecting, planting and nurturing native hardwood seeds at a nursery near Beardstown, Illinois, until they are ready to be re-planted. These trees, once grown to an appropriate maturity, will

then be re-planted along river and island shorelines to help produce the many benefits previously mentioned. Some trees will also be given back to the communities that have helped with this project to plant in their own community or back yard.

The crew at LL&W needs your help to make this project a success. Take your family, friends, co-workers, scout troop, environmental club or anyone on an outing to collect acorns. Some examples of trees LL&W would like to grow are native hardwoods such as oaks, hickories, hackberries, mulberries, pecan and paw paw. This is a worthwhile and simple project that will benefit generations to come and will help to preserve our nation's natural heritage and preserve the character of our forests.

Please visit Living Lands & Waters website at www.livinglandsandwaters.org and click on the Million Trees Project link for more information. If you have any questions, please call Denise Mitten at 309.496.9848 or email her at: milliontrees@livinglandsandwaters.org

Contact Information:
Living Lands & Waters
17624 Route 84 North
East Moline, IL 61244
Phone 309.496.9848





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Springfield, IL 62794-9276

ILMA Conference

Remember to mark your calendars for the annual Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) conference being held February 28 & 29 and March 1, 2008 at the Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield, Illinois. Be sure to check ILMA's website for conference updates at www.ilma-lakes.org.



Local Contact Information

VLMP Coordinators:

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Ike Kirkikis – Southern Coordinator

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