



ILLINOIS

Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

NEWSLETTER

Goodbye Sandy!

Welcome to the Fall/Winter edition of the VLMP newsletter.

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This fall concludes the 29th season of the VLMP in Illinois. Whether you are new to the VLMP or a seasoned veteran, your contributions as lake stewards are very much appreciated. Your efforts help protect the water quality of Illinois' lakes and ponds and help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species throughout the state. Keep up the good work.

Those of you who have been involved with the VLMP for awhile know that each year the Program undergoes a few inevitable changes. This year is no exception. After ten years as statewide VLMP Coordinator, Sandy Nickel has left the Agency to pursue a career with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).



Sandy Nickel at Lake Killarney

The VLMP has flourished these past ten years under Sandy's direction. Her commitment to the VLMP and her dedication to you, the volunteer, was obvious. I know that you will all join me in wishing her well in her new position.

Since Sandy's departure, I have received many inquiries regarding the future of the VLMP. Be assured that the Illinois EPA is committed to continuing the Program. However, due to overall state of Illinois budget cuts there are no plans to fill Sandy's position at this time. We ask for your patience while we look for innovative ways to administer the VLMP within existing IEPA resources.

We will continue to keep you informed during this process and will notify you when plans are finalized. Until then, assume nothing has changed. During this transitional period, feel free to call me with any questions you may have. You can reach me by telephone at 217/782-3362 or by email at teri.holland@illinois.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

~Teri Holland



Sandy Nickel at Sunset Lake

End of the Season To Do List:



Another VLMP season has come to an end!

All Volunteers:

- Mail all Secchi Monitoring forms and dissolved oxygen/temperature profile forms to your Regional Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Recycle all unused monitoring forms, lab sheets, and shipping labels. Do not keep them for next year.
- Recycle all ½ gallon jugs. You will receive new ones next year.
- Store any unused sample bottles (with or without acid) upright in the storage box provided, indoors in a temperature-controlled safe area, and out of the reach of children and pets.
- Secchi Disk:** Rinse off any mud or debris on the Secchi disk and rope/survey tape. Wind the rope/survey tape around the dowel rod/dowel float. Make sure the survey tape is not creased or sharply folded, which can cause the tape to weaken and eventually break. Dry thoroughly.
- Multi-plate Zebra Mussel Sampler:** If you have one of these samplers, remove the multi-plate sampler from your lake. Wash the sampler thoroughly to remove all algae and debris, let it air dry, and store the sampler with your other VLMP equipment.
- Once clean and dry, place all equipment neatly and upright in the storage tote provided. Store the tote in your basement or other location that is protected from the weather and out of the reach of children and pets.

- If you do not plan to participate in the Program next year, please contact your Regional Coordinator or Teri Holland at Illinois EPA to make arrangements for the return of your equipment. Teri can be reached by email at teri.holland@illinois.gov or by telephone at 217/782-3362.



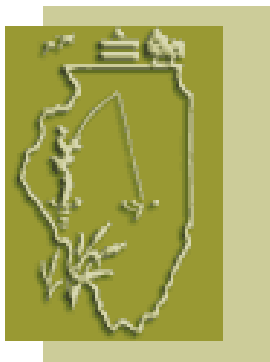
Tier 2 and Tier 3 Volunteers:

- Shipping Cooler(s):** Rinse out the inside of your cooler(s) with tap water. Keep the lid open and allow the cooler(s) to air dry before storing.
- Chlorophyll Equipment:** Make sure your weighted bottle sampler is clear of mud and is fully dry before putting into storage. Rinse the filtering equipment (magnetic funnel, filter base, graduated cylinder and collection flask) with tap water (never use soap). Empty the wash bottle. Let everything air dry completely before storing.
- Depth Sounder:** If dirty, gently wipe clean with a damp, soft cloth. Remove the battery before storing.
- Dissolved oxygen/temperature meter:** Disconnect the cable from the meter and remove the batteries. If dirty, rinse the probe in tap water. The meter can be gently wiped off with a damp, soft cloth. Allow the probe and cable to completely air dry before closing the carrying case. Make sure that the cable is not sharply bent or caught between the lid and the case bottom. Store the case inside and out of the reach of children and pets.

Thank you for taking the time to properly care for your equipment!



ILMA Conference 2010



Please join us at the 25th annual Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) conference **March 3-5, 2010, at the Holiday Inn Select in Naperville, Illinois.** Everyone is welcome! This is a great opportunity for homeowners, water operators, state agency staff, lake professionals, students and teachers to network with other lake enthusiasts and learn about all things lakes. If you have a question about your lake, this is an

excellent venue for tracking down the right lake professional to help with your lake needs. If you have an interesting story to tell about your lake or you've implemented lake restoration or protection measures, this is your chance to share your experiences with others. You may even consider giving a presentation.

For more information, please go to the ILMA website at: www.ilmalakes.org.

Thompson Lake Festival near Dickson Mounds Museum

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency teamed up with other agencies for the Thompson Lake Festival August 29th at the Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve in Lewistown, IL. At this event visitors had the opportunity to learn about water quality, macroinvertebrates, bird identification, invasive species and Emiquon through displays and hands-on activities.



In the morning, the Nature Conservancy allowed free bank fishing for one day only and provided fishing poles and tackle for those 15 years old and younger. Another opportunity offered to visitors was a short tour on a Voyageur Canoe, which included stops on the lake to view two different science demonstrations.

Other satellite activities were also held. These included a hayrack ride to the University of Illinois (UIS) Field Station for facility tours and science demonstrations at the UIS Emiquon Field Station, bird identification at the US Fish and Wildlife Service Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge South Globe Levee, and an exhibit at Dickson Mounds Museum on bird migration.



These events were free to the public. Many visitors brought their own kayaks, canoes or small boats to put on the lake. Plans are in the works to make this lake festival an annual event.

In addition to IEPA, other partners included: Dickson Mounds Museum, Emiquon Audubon Society, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Natural History Survey, The Nature Conservancy, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the University of Illinois – Emiquon Field Station, and the University of Illinois – Springfield.



**Please join us for Illinois Lake Management Association's
25th Annual Conference & to celebrate the 30th anniversary
of the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program**

**March 3-5, 2010
Naperville, Illinois**

(Ideas are welcome & pictures are needed— see back cover for more details)



Take Time to Monitor Your Lake for Zebra Mussels This Fall

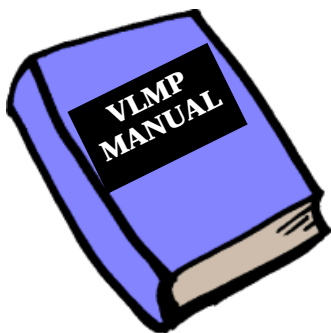
Each year the list of zebra mussel infested waters in Illinois grows. To date, zebra mussels have been reported in Lake Michigan, several river systems (including the Calumet, Chicago, Des Plaines, Fox, Kankakee, Illinois, Mazon, Mississippi, Ohio, Rock, Wabash, and possibly DuPage), and numerous inland lakes (see table below). This list represents only those rivers and lakes where zebra mussel populations have actually been reported. Since zebra mussels are easily transported from one waterbody to another, especially when precautions are not taken, it is possible that zebra mussel populations exist in additional inland lakes or rivers, but these populations remain undetected or unreported. In order to determine the extent of the zebra mussel expansion in Illinois, we are requesting your help this fall to look for zebra mussels in your lake.



Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*). Note the variation in shell color and patterns. (Photo from U.S. Geological Survey - Nonindigenous Aquatic Species website.)

Illinois Inland Lakes with reported zebra mussel infestations (information provided by IL-IN Sea Grant)

County	Illinois Inland Lake
Calhoun Co.	Swan Lake
Cook Co.	Axehead Lake, Skokie Lagoons, Wolf Lake
DuPage Co.	Deep Quarry Lake
Grundy Co.	Beaver Lake, Goose Lake, Heidecke Lake, Lincoln Lake
Kankakee Co.	Manteno Lake
Lake Co.	Bangs Lake, Cedar Lake, Fox Chain-O-Lakes, Diamond Lake, Druce Lake, East Loon Lake, West Loon Lake, Gages Lake, Independence Grove Lake, Lake Minear, Slocum Lake, Sterling Lake, Third Lake, Tower Lake, Lake Zurich
McHenry Co.	Lake Elizabeth, Crystal Lake, Griswold Lake
Tazewell Co.	Peoria Lake (Illinois River)



As lake stewards, your actions are crucial for helping to prevent the spread and potentially reducing the impact of this aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Illinois. Education and early detection are key. Learn how to identify this AIS and participate in the zebra mussel monitoring effort that is part of the VLMP. Page 11

Fall is an ideal time for zebra mussel monitoring because lake water levels often are low. A little extra poking around exposed shorelines, seawalls, or rocks when water levels are low is really all that is required. Know that zebra mussels do not like direct sunlight and are often found on the underside of rocks and structures. They can also be found attached to aquatic plants, native mussels, or even to each other. If possible, inspect several areas around your lake, especially boat ramps and marinas. Zebra mussels are often introduced to a lake through boating activities and it may take several years before they spread from the original site of introduction to other areas in the lake.

of your VLMP Training Manual (March 2003 edition) has additional information on monitoring procedures.



Fall, when removing equipment from the lake, is also a good time to examine recreational equipment (e.g. boats, dock supports, buoys, and floats) for attached zebra mussels. The Zebra Mussel WATCH card (provided with your VLMP Training Manual) and a magnifying glass may be helpful for this purpose.

Note: If you don't see adult zebra mussels, carefully run your hand over the smooth surfaces of the submersed objects. If surfaces feel grainy, tiny zebra mussels may be attached.

If you suspect zebra mussels are present in your lake, it is important to confirm your identification with an expert. Zebra mussels can easily be confused with the related quagga mussel (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*). Both exhibit similar physical characteristics and both may be found firmly attached to solid substrates. For more pictures and identification tips, see the "Zebra and Quagga Mussel Information Resource Page" on the U.S. Geological Survey Nonindigenous Aquatic Species website (<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/taxgroup/mollusks/zebramussel>).

General Characteristics of Zebra Mussels:

- **Yellow or brownish D-shaped shell**, often with dark and light-colored stripes
- **Up to two inches long**, but most are under one inch
- **Usually grow in clusters**, and are generally found in shallow water
- **Attaches firmly to solid objects**



* **What should you do if you find zebra mussels?**

- ☑ **Take a photo(s)** of the mussels in place if you can.
- ☑ **Collect** several mussels in a leak-proof plastic bottle and fill with rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol. On the bottle record the date and location where the specimens were found.
- ☑ **Call** your Regional VLMP Coordinator or Illinois EPA at 217/782-3362 for further instructions.



Last fall following a lake level drawdown, volunteer monitor Marietta Kappel discovered zebra mussels had colonized the shoreline of Lake Marie in Lake Co.

(Photo courtesy of Marietta Kappel)

Lake Festival Held in Conjunction with Conservation Fair 2009 at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds



On September 29th and 30th, the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission (GERPDC) held its annual workshop at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds as part of the 19th Annual Soil and Water Conservation District's Conservation Fair. IEPA staff participated in the event on September 29th. IEPA and GERPDC set up two filter stations in which students participated in filtering water samples. The day was broken up into seven slots, each twenty-five minutes in length, to conduct presentations to local fifth and sixth grade elementary students. In total, GERPDC had an audience of 223 children and adults, which included teachers, teachers' aides, and parents.



Each presenter was assigned a location upon arriving. GERPDC was assigned a space near the south shoreline of the fairground's lake. To start each presentation, students were given a brief history of VLMP. A demonstration of Secchi disk followed. Students were shown how to use the Secchi disk by dipping the disk in a tub of lake water. The Secchi depth was noted and then the students used the color chart to determine the water color.



All students were given the opportunity to use the Secchi disk and color chart. After the Secchi demonstration, a brief description of the methodology to collect a chlorophyll sample was provided. Several different water collection instruments were presented as well. Students were shown how to filter the sample using the vacuum pump. Each student was given a chance to use the vacuum pump. Students were fascinated by how much sediment turned up on the filters when the water appeared so clear. The students were given a brief synopsis of why water quality is important and how the VLMP is working to improve water quality. After the demonstration there was a question and answer session. The students enjoyed the hands on interaction and were also given an aerial photo of some of the more well known lakes that are being monitored this year.



“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

Dip into Lake Resources...



Important VLMP Contacts to Know

Regional Coordinators:

Illinois EPA Regional Office Biologists and Technical Support:

VLMP Statewide Contacts

Teri Holland
IEPA Headquarters, Springfield, IL
Phone: 217-782-3362
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Old Photographs (or anecdotes)

We're looking for historical photographs or anecdotes to help commemorate the 30th anniversary of the VLMP. We plan to use these photographs in a special display or presentation at the annual ILMA conference in March.

Send only those photographs you wish to share with others.

We prefer scanned images sent as a .jpg file (highest resolution possible).
Send images or anecdotes via email to Steve Kolsto at Steve.Kolsto@illinois.gov.

We will also accept original (or copies) photographs.
Please include your name and address on the back if you would like the picture returned.

DEADLINE for submittal: December 18, 2009
Questions? Call Steve at 217/782-3362.

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