



ILLINOIS

Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

NEWSLETTER

Help Keep Drugs Out of Our Lakes



For years, we have all been practicing what we thought was an appropriate method of disposal for our unwanted medication: flushing old pills down the toilet. What seemed like a harmless practice has turned into a hot button environmental issue. As we know, what gets thrown down our drains ends up in our water systems; this includes pharmaceuticals and personal care products, or PPCP's for short.

This emerging environmental concern has prompted regulatory agencies to start monitoring the situation. All across the country, water tests have revealed traces of pain killers, estrogen, antidepressants and other pharmaceutical chemical derivatives in water supplies. These studies have linked hormone exposure from these PPCP's to reproductive abnormalities in fish and may also be linked to the development of drug-resistant germs. Although long-term effects of PPCP's are not

fully understood, the Illinois Department of Public Health and U.S. EPA do not believe the trace amounts found in finished drinking water will endanger public health. This information is not meant to be a source of panic or worry, but to alert and empower you with the right information to help you properly dispose of your (and your pets') unwanted medication and to help keep drugs out of our lakes.

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VLMP Online Data Entry

The VLMP online data entry and retrieval system is nearing completion and will be ready in time for you to use this monitoring season. From this site, volunteers and the general public will be able to access valuable lake data in the form of graphs, charts, spreadsheets or reports. In order for you to access the most up-to-date information, data must first be entered. This is where you, the volunteer, come in.

The VLMP is requiring that ALL volunteers with access to the internet enter their own monitoring data (from the Secchi monitoring form) using the online data entry system. In order to maintain quality control, we are requesting (at least for now until the process becomes more

efficient) that in addition to entering your data online, you should also continue to submit your Secchi monitoring form to your local coordinator as you have done in the past. This will allow a system of checks on the entered data.

At first it may take a little practice, but the more you use the online database, the easier it will be for you to not only navigate the website, but to also make better use of your data. Remember, you are the collectors and users of your own data. This website will also help streamline the lag time between data collection and data use.

More information about the website will be explained to you during training and in the upcoming weeks.

Notes from the Statewide Coordinator

Welcome to the Spring 2009 edition of the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program Newsletter. It is hard to believe, but we are beginning our 29th monitoring season this May!

Before we head out to the lake, I want to let you know about some new VLMP news. But before I do that, let's tie up some loose ends from last year, as well as mention a few helpful tips for this year.

First, check around your house and office for any remaining Secchi monitoring forms from last year and send them in immediately to your local coordinator.

A few tips for this year:

- Secchi monitoring forms will be sent out soon, so if you have already been trained to take Secchi transparency readings last year or any previous year, please feel free to start your Secchi monitoring beginning May 1. Remember, you want your first trip to be on or before May 15 and your second trip to be between May 16–31. Continue monitoring Secchi transparency twice per month using these time frames through the end of October.
- For water quality participants (Tier 2 and Tier 3), your coordinator will contact you regarding training location, date and time. You will receive all

necessary forms, bottles and equipment at training.



- Before going out on the lake, please carefully inspect all equipment to make sure it is clean and in good working order. If a piece of equipment needs to be replaced, notify your coordinator immediately so that a replacement can be provided in time without delaying your monitoring efforts.

Now for the new stuff. As you have no doubt read on the front page of this newsletter, the VLMP will have a new online data entry and retrieval system in place for this season. As a volunteer, we request that you use this system to enter your Secchi monitoring data. We also highly encourage you to use the graphs and charts to help you better understand your data. We will send details when it's ready.

Another exciting addition to the VLMP is an updated website! It is now easier to navigate and provides many helpful links. Take a look: <http://epa.state.il.us/water/vlmp>.

And finally, to assist you with monitoring methods and techniques after the trainer has gone, we have a new training DVD. This replaces the old training VHS tape and is meant to coincide with your training manual.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 217-782-3362 or E-mail at sandy.nickel@illinois.gov. Have a great season!



Drugs (Continued from page 1)

Here is a list of do's and don'ts to help you make the right disposal choices:

Do: Go to the Illinois EPA website to find a location near you to drop off your unwanted medication - <http://www.epa.state.il.us/medication-disposal/locations/index.html>

Do Not: Throw medicine down the toilet or other drains.

Do: Find a local or Illinois EPA-sponsored household hazardous waste collection event in your area.

Do Not: Toss your pills or pill containers into the trash where they may be accessible to children and pets.

Do: Dissolve your unwanted medication in water or alcohol and mix with an undesirable substance, such as, used coffee grounds or kitty litter, place in a sealed container (double bagging is preferred) and then bury in your trash.

Do Not: Burn PPCP's. This can create dioxins and other air pollutants.

Do: Consult Illinois EPA's website for more information on PPCP's.

Do: Check out the Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal (P2D2) program started at Pontiac (Illinois) High School. <http://www.p2d2program.org/>

Do: Start up a take-back program in your area.

VLMP Webpage Updated

If you haven't logged on to the Illinois VLMP website lately, please consider doing so now. We have an updated look that not only discusses the history and current status of the program basics, it also provides many interesting and informative links.

From our website, you can learn all about eligibility requirements and monitoring parameters for each level of participation under the Tiered Approach. You can also find out what all this data you are collecting means.

In addition, there are several handy links to educational materials, such as, the VLMP Newsletter, Lake Notes, the VLMP training manual and training DVD.

As you read on the front page, we will have an online data entry and retrieval system that you can access from this site.

As a member of the VLMP, in past years, you have been asked to take part in global events, such as, the Great North American Secchi Dip-In and World Water Monitoring Day. Each of these events now have a convenient link from our website to make it easier for you to learn about lake ecology and to participate in these events.

Log on today!

<http://epa.state.il.us/water/vlmp>



Focus on Exotics: New Zealand Mud Snail

As the name implies, the New Zealand Mud Snail, or *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, is native to New Zealand.

Its arrival to the United States can be traced back to the 1980's where a population was discovered in the Snake River in Idaho. In 1991, this very small, invasive exotic mollusk made its debut in the Great Lakes region when an established colony was found in Lake Ontario. Last summer (2008), researchers at the Lake Michigan Biological Station discovered, while processing samples collected in 2007, that the snail found its way into Lake Michigan. Later the same summer, another population of the snail was uncovered in a Lake Michigan sample from 2006, but this time from deeper water.

You may be asking yourself why anyone would fear such a tiny little snail. How could such a cute *s...n...a...i...l* possibly wreak havoc?



photo credit: Larry Mayer/The Billings Gazette

Believe it or not, this little critter could greatly impact and potentially decimate populations of native trout or other fish species.



How is this possible? The New Zealand Mud Snail has a very special trick up its sleeve. They reproduce asexually. This means that they do not need a partner to reproduce mass copies of themselves, which allows them to reproduce at a rapid rate. As densities of the mud snail increase, they start to outcompete native mollusks and other invertebrates for food and habitat. Eventually, this could disrupt the upper levels of the food chain.

In particular, Lake Michigan native invertebrates are already having a tough time thriving due to the increased number of exotic invasives making their way into the Great Lakes. According to the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (<http://www.iisgcp.org>), there are over 180 non-native species that have found a home, albeit uninvited, in Lake Michigan. This is a tremendous environmental and economic concern. Because of the multitude of other exotics stressing the Lake Michigan ecosystem, the addition of the mud snail is of greater concern to this waterbody than

perhaps other waterbodies.

To make matters worse, the mud snail has no known natural predators. Sure, fish will eat them, but they provide little nutritional value and it would be impossible for fish to keep up with an ever-growing population of mud snails to have any real remedial effects. The focus right now for controlling the spread of this invasive exotic is to prevent the organism from ever entering your waterway. We, as a volunteer lake monitoring organization, must take it upon ourselves to mobilize and prevent this and other exotics from entering our inland lakes.

What can you do? Anglers may be the group impacted the most if this organism begins to disrupt fish populations. Therefore, it is anglers, boaters and volunteers like you that play a crucial role in helping to stop the spread of this and other invasive species. The most important steps you can take to help control any exotic species is to monitor consistently and make sure your monitoring equipment, boats and trailers are properly cleaned before launching into lakes and streams.

The first step is proper identification. These small snails are just 1/8 of an inch long (3 to 6 mm) and have a brown or black cone-shaped shell with 5 whorls.



Where should you look? Because of their small size, it will be easier to check for them on dock posts, rocks and other hard surfaces along the shoreline and the bottom of the lake.

Like most exotic species, the mud snail arrived in the Great Lakes via ballast water from ocean transportation vessels. They can easily transport themselves from waterbody to waterbody by attaching to fishing gear, boats, trailers and other equipment. To help prevent the spread of mud snails and all exotic and invasive species, it is extremely important to make sure you and others are not transporting these organisms from one waterbody to another. You can do so by adding draining water from your boat, removing all vegetation from your boat and trailer and rinsing your equipment as part of your everyday monitoring, boating or angling routine.

Volunteer Milestones

In the volunteer business, you may not always get the praise you deserve. In recognition of this, on behalf of Illinois EPA and the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, I would like to give a big THANK YOU to all volunteers who have shown their dedication and commitment to our program by generously giving of their time and hard work in 2008.

In particular, these volunteers have reached a milestone year with the VLMP in 2008.

Number of Years Lake/County

25+

Bruce Wallace (28)	Silver/McHenry
Sandy Wallace (28)	Silver/McHenry
Jarrell Jarrard (27)	Country/Menard
David Byus (27)	Jacksonville & Mauvaise Terre/Morgan
Dick Schick (26)	Zurich/Lake

25

Carol Bettis	Duck/Lake
Lee Bettis	Duck/Lake

20+

Alan Alford (24)	Charleston Side Channel/ Coles
Allen Jacobsgaard (24)	Eureka/Woodford
Kevin Whitten (23)	Altamont New/Effingham
Raymond McKoski (23)	Waterford/Lake
Chris Mitchell (22)	Dolan/Hamilton
William Johnson, Sr. (22)	Kollar/Cook
James Lang (21)	Paradise/Coles & Mattoon/ Shelby

15

Jerry Corcoran	Bass, Black Oak, Pine, Sunset & Woodhaven/Lee
Michael Madigan	Chautauqua/Jackson
Phyllis Trostrud	Harrow Gate/Cook
Virginia Piekarski	Joliet Junior College/Will
Scott Gradle	Paradise/Coles & Mattoon/ Shelby
Harold Wolfe	Paris East & West/Edgar

10

Val Dyokas	Barrington/Lake
Adam Smith	Carbondale/Jackson
Scott Framsted	Gamlin/St. Clair
Polly Lavery	Joliet Junior College/Will
Chris Pekarek	Lambert/DuPage
Janet Herzog	Virginia/Cook
Don Niemi	White Oak/Woodford
Mary Niemi	White Oak/Woodford

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Vaughn Voelker	Altamont New/Effingham
Scott Winter	Altamont New/Effingham
Patrick Kocher	Borah, Olney & Vernor/ Richland
Phillip "Jack" Schroeder	Fish Trap & Pierce/JoDavies
Bob Wittenborn	Highland Silver/Madison
Janet Wittenborn	Highland Silver/Madison
Jack Solomon	Killarney/McHenry
Joe Marencik	Leopold/Lake
Jerry Skyles	Lost Nation/Ogle
Ron Berger	Lost Nation/Ogle
Bob Dill	Otter/Macoupin
Dan Brill	Springfield/Sangamon
Sara May	Sylvan/Lake
Bruce May	Sylvan/Lake
Bob Eiss	Westlake/Winnebago
Ed Kubicki	Wooster/Lake

1

Richard Marshall	Bertinetti/Christian
Ron Riesbeck	Deep/Lake
Edward Goeden	Fox/Lake
Craig Stettner	Harper/Cook
P. Randell Gray	Harrisburg/Saline
Joe Sofia	Highwood/McHenry
John Kanzia	Indian/Cook
Joe Deskines	Little Grassy/Williamson
Richard Kalina	Murphysboro/Jackson
Thomas Ryan	Sara/Effingham
Charles Kellogg	Sara/Effingham
John Bayler	Tanglewood & Wildwood/ Marshall
Bert Nicholson	Vermilion/Vermilion
Mark Brown	Walton Park/Montgomery

Pere into ILMA's 24th Annual Conference

In case you missed it, the 24th annual Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) conference was held at the Hotel Pèr Marquette in Peoria on February 18 – 20. The event kicked off with a pre-conference workshop, "Grant Opportunities and Funding Options for Lake and Watershed Projects." This was an extremely informational and useful workshop that taught us types of grants available through different organizations, who should apply and who to ask about finding money for your lake project.

But the program didn't stop there! Conference attendees had a variety of excellent presentations from which to choose. Topics included the beneficial use of Illinois River basin sediment, a LEAP project presented by 6th graders, pond and lake management techniques, VHS, project permit requirements, social and water quality indicators, the Pontiac High School Prescription Pill Drug Disposal Program (P2D2) and my favorite, the volunteer lake monitoring session.

This year, the volunteer lake monitoring session had a great line-up. Our first presenter was George Czapar from the University of Illinois Extension office. He gave a very well-rounded presentation on aquatic weed management. He shared his expertise on herbicide application certification, explained the different types of aquatic plants and how to manage nuisance growth. Our second was Andrew Clapper from the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services. Mr. Clapper shared his knowledge of Canada Goose management. Finally, we heard from Trevor Sample from the Illinois EPA who explained the world of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and how it relates to volunteer monitoring activities and restoring water quality.

If you missed this year's ILMA conference, hopefully you can join us next year at the Holiday Inn Select in Naperville, Illinois from March 3 – 5, 2010. For more information about ILMA, go to their website at www.ilmalakes.org or contact your local VLMP coordinator.

ILMA's 2009 Lake Guardian Award

Every year, the esteemed Lake Guardian Award is presented to a lake professional at the Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) conference. This award recognizes its recipient for exhibiting exceptional effort in preserving Illinois lakes. This year's Lake Guardian is David Fligor.

David is an active outdoorsman, an avid hunter, fisherman, and participant in horseback field trials. He also serves on the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission. David earned his Master's Degree in Forest Recreation from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and has since expanded his knowledge

base and environmental activism to watershed and lake ecosystems.



Gary Raines of HDR presents the Lake Guardian award to David Fligor (Right).

For the past 13 years, David has been a dedicated participant in the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) at Kinkaid Lake in Jackson County.

Congratulations David!

Grant Opportunities

Looking for funds to help you with lake projects or lake education activities? Let me remind you about a couple of grant opportunities available through the Illinois EPA: Priority Lake and Watershed Implementation Program (PLWIP) and Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP). Please reference the Spring 2008 edition of the VLMP Newsletter for more details about each program.

For simple projects that could improve your lake, such as, installing buffer strips along the shoreline to provide shoreline stabilization and filter runoff from the watershed or installing aerators to help circulate water which could increase habitat for fish and other aquatic life, you will be interested in the Agency's PLWIP program. This is a reimbursement grant program designed to protect, enhance, and restore lakes. An application with a list of project and eligibility requirements is available online at <http://www.state.il.us/water/surface-water/forms/>

[plwip-app.pdf](#). If you have questions, you can contact your local IEPA regional office lake biologist (see contact information on page 7) or the grant coordinator, Steve Kolsto, at 217-782-3362. Applications are due March 1st of each year.

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. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Kolsto at 217-782-3362. The deadline for LEAP applications is September 30 and January 31 of each year.



ILMA Recognizes Frank Loftus Award Winner

In 2002, the ILMA Board of Directors established the Frank Loftus Conservation Award in recognition of Mr. Frank Loftus' tireless volunteer effort and commitment to Apple Canyon Lake, Jo Daviess County. This award provides an opportunity for Illinois lake organizations or individuals who are ILMA members 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.

This year's Frank Loftus Award was presented to Todd Curtis of Ossami Lake (Tazewell County).



Outgoing ILMA President, Dennis Ross presents the Frank Loftus Award to Todd Curtis (Right).

Congratulations Todd!

Past recipients include:

2002– FRANK LOFTUS

Posthumously awarded, Apple Canyon Lake, Jo Daviess County

2003– LOU LISKA

Bruce Lake, DuPage County

2004– BRUCE WALLACE

Silver Lake, McHenry County

2005– RICHARD A. HILTON
Wonder Lake, McHenry County

2006– MADELYNN WILHARM
Lake Galena, Jo Daviess County

2007– JIM ROBERTS
Twin Oaks Lake, Champaign County

2008– Round Lake Management Commission
Round Lake, Lake County. The six individuals on the Commission that received this award were: Tim Pasternak, Doug Vehlow, John Gutknecht, Niel Flamm, Marty Nelson and Ken Schnur.

If you are interested in nominating one of your peers for the Frank Loftus Award, please go to the ILMA website and submit your nomination. Nominations must be received by January 1st of each year. For more information or to submit a nomination, go to:

<http://www.ilma-lakes.org/pages/frankloftusaward.html>

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

ILMA/IEPA and Bob Esser Scholarship Awards



The 2009 Illinois Lake Management Association/ Illinois Environmental Protection Agency scholarship award was announced at the annual ILMA Conference held in Peoria. One \$1000 ILMA scholarship funded through a grant from the Illinois EPA and one \$500 scholarship funded by the late Robert Esser was awarded to two very deserving candidates.

The ILMA/IEPA scholarship is awarded to Illinois residents who are full-time undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in natural resource curricula related to lake or watershed management at accredited colleges or universities in USEPA Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio). Selection criteria include academic achievement, major field of study, career goals and volunteer activities related to the natural environment. The major fields of study this year's applicants have been involved with include wetlands, plant ecology and lake nutrient budgets.

This year, awards were presented to Thomas J. (T.J.) Evans and Mitchell Isaacson. T.J. Evans is a Master's Candidate at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois. His interests are focused in aquatic resource

preservation. In 2007, he participated in field sampling of Illinois Lakes for the National Lakes Assessment. Mr. Evans also held an internship with the Illinois EPA in the Surface Water Section at the Springfield Regional Office. For his research project, Mr. Evans studied the Lake Decatur watershed and developed a nutrient budget for the reservoir.

The Robert Esser scholarship is awarded to an Illinois student attending an accredited Illinois College or University and majoring in a lake-related curriculum. The Esser Scholarship recognizes academic excellence and commitment to volunteerism. The 2009 Esser Scholarship was awarded to Mitchell Isaacson. Mr. Isaacson is pursuing his undergraduate studies at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. He plans to attend the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point next year to study watershed management. Mr. Isaacson is currently working on a tallgrass prairie buffer to help prevent adverse impacts to campus wetlands caused by salt runoff. His volunteer efforts involve environmental protection and education activities.

Congratulations to both of these award recipients!

“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

SAVE THE DATE: The 25th annual ILMA conference has been scheduled, so mark your calendars. We will be meeting at the Holiday Inn Select in Naperville, Illinois March 3 – 5, 2010. Please check the ILMA website for updates and information at: www.ilma-lakes.org. You can also use this website or contact your local VLMP coordinator to become a member of ILMA.

Important VLMP Contacts to Know

VLMP Regional Coordinators:

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Central

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Phone: 217-557-8761

Southern

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As the boating season approaches, keep the Online Illinois Boating Safety Course and Exam in mind (refer to Fall/Winter 2008 edition of the VMLP Newsletter). Be a responsible boater. Know the rules of the waterway and please boat safely!

Available on the IDNR website: "Online Illinois Boating Safety Course and Exam." This free, self-paced course allows you to learn many different topics on boating at your leisure. There are no time constraints or set schedules. When you're ready, you can take the official Illinois Boating Safety Certification Exam to comply with Illinois boater education law. Not only will you be a safer, more knowledgeable boater, you may also qualify for lower insurance rates with this certificate. Check with your insurer for details.



<http://www.boat-ed.com/il/index.htm>



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