

Bass Lake Healthy Shorelines Initiative

April 7, 2018 - Update

The Problem:

Recently, the issues of lake water clarity and the lack of fish has been discussed at BLPOA meetings. This has inspired discussions with the DNR, Purdue and other lake communities about the issue.

Water clarity and fewer fish than in previous years seems the issue. Why? The answer is complicated; however, a contributing factor is the existence of concrete seawalls. These seawalls intensify shoreline wave activity and disturb the natural lake bottom. Glacial stone seawalls are more natural and interestingly, the placement of stone in front of existing concrete can achieve the same reduction in wave action. This leads to a better bottom, better fishing and clearer water. Healthy shorelines include native plants which work to filter pollutants out of runoff from lawns, deter nuisance wildlife and slow wave action.

Our Next Steps:

1. *Educate our Property Owners* - Continue to educate the BLPOA about the problems and the solutions through Catch & Release, the BLPOA website, handouts at BLPOA Membership Events and as an agenda item at BLPOA meetings.
2. *Lake Audit* - Partner with Rod Edgell of the DNR to conduct an audit of the entire Bass Lake shoreline in May 2018. The purpose of the shoreline survey will be to inventory how many properties have existing cement seawalls and/or glacial stone facing, and identify any natural areas and beaches. This will identify our target audience for a Healthy Shorelines Initiative.
3. *Glacial Stone Grants* - We'll also work with Rod Edgell for our January 2019 LARE grant request, which will pay up to 80% of qualifying glacial stone projects.
4. *Lake Stocking* - Continue discussion with Tom Bacula of the DNR to identify strategies to improve the fishing at Bass Lake. Tom informed us that the DNR released 32,000 1 1/3 inch bluegill into Bass Lake the week of March 18.
5. *Conferences* - Attend the Marshall County Shoreline Health event on April 19. Nathan Thomas, the DNR Lakes Permitting Biologist is the speaker. (See attached flyer.) Note: We attended the March 22 & 23 conference of the Indiana Lakes Management Society and learned about the best practices of lake water clarity, fishing habitats and healthy shorelines. Lyn Crighton, from the Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation was a speaker; she is a terrific resource for us.
6. *Lake Water Testing* - Work with Phil Woolery from the Purdue Starke County Extension Office on expanded monitoring under the Clean Lakes Program. This measures water clarity, phosphorus and chlorophyll (a measurement for algae).

Possible BLPOA Goal:

Restore our natural shoreline to preserve and enhance our water quality, prevent erosion, and provide healthier and safer habitat for the native creatures and lake life. Our vision to preserve our shoreline includes a better lake for recreational activities such as boating and fishing.

Excellent Resources:

<https://www.tippecanowatershed.org/HSI> The Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation has been tackling this problem for 20 years. They have superior information on their website. This is the best example in Indiana of a healthy shorelines initiative. Their website includes three solutions: bioengineered seawalls; new glacial stone seawalls; and stone refacing of existing seawalls. Each of the options, the cost and permitting issues are outlined on this website.

<https://www.wacf.com> The Wawasee Conservancy Foundation also has a healthy shorelines initiative. Their lake audit was in 2012 and their website now includes informative content for property owners.

Questions:

Contact Rick Anderson, barefootrun@mchsi.com or Kathy Carrier kcarrier@briljent.com.