

CATCH & RELEASE

VOL. 7 NO. 1

JANUARY 2020—BASS LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

President Rick Anderson's Thoughts

New Year 2020 arrived with Bass Lake ice free. The December ice melted away around Christmas leaving behind water about as clear as I've ever seen it. For the second year in a row, I was able to stand by the gas pumps at the Bass Lake Marina and see the channel's bottom. Do you think I was able to see the pop can I saw on the bottom last year? No, I could not! Did it get covered up by prop wash? Did someone remove it? Is it still there hidden by aquatic vegetation (AV). That's right, maybe hidden by AV. The channel has much (a lot of) Coontail & Eurasian Milfoil growth right to the surface from the boat hoist to the gas pumps. If you are over that way, it is worth a look. The native Coontail and the invasive Milfoil certainly look healthy. Elsewhere in the lake they are probably healthy too. Lake level: On January 11th about two to three inches of rain filled the lake to just under the "Top of Dam" mark.

So what does this mean for the 2020 season? A hard winter with snow covered ice kills aquatics. So far, so much for a hard winter kill. As of January 12th, the lake has open water with maybe a little shore skim ice. Can warm water and sunlight accelerate green stuff growth? They can. Now is a good time to make your 2020 prediction. I won't predict; however, here is some advice. Before you put your boat in the water, sharpen your propeller. I'm not sure what to advise about jet boats. The best place to discuss the AV is probably the Bass Lake Conservancy District meetings on the second Monday of the month. My guess is that many property owners will be using hydrothol granular pellets to treat their allowed 625 square feet of AVs. A 20 pound/\$100 bag of hydrothol should be able to treat about 2,000 square feet. A less expensive (and less effective) option is liquid 2, 4-D aquatic.

January is a planning month for your BLPOA. The 2020 Directory, Annual Letter and Membership form are all in progress. They will be agenda items for the February 1 Property Owners meeting. Finances: The annual Dues will remain at \$40; however, our contracted garbage collections fees have increased to \$104 up from \$95 per year. This will be the first increase in six years. Optional Curbside Recycling has been well received; this year the fee will be \$112 up from \$108 for those who chose to be in our recycling program. The Starke County Recycling Facility on 250 north and US 35, north west of the County Garage is also a good recycling choice. It is open from 7:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. on Friday and 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Did you know they now take tires at a charge of \$3 each? The Knox VFW Great American Game had a Christmas winner. The new jackpot is \$39,326 with 48 numbers left. Around the lake: You will see changes at the SOS (by Sportyz) and Double D's this spring. *Stay Safe & Healthy, Rick*

Property Owners Association—Saturday, February 1 at 9:00 a.m., BLPOA building

Bass Lake Neighborhood Watch: Monday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m. BLPOA building

Exercise Class: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:00 a.m.—9:00 a.m. \$3 per class. BLPOA building

Prairie Trails Club—Thursday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m. CST, BLPOA building

Starke County Park Board (our Beach): Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m. at the Starke County Annex

Bass Lake Conservancy District: (our sewers, pump and lake weeds) Monday, February 10 at 6:00 p.m., BLPOA building

Bass Lake Conservancy District—Weeds in the Lake

BLCD Board members recently met with DNR officials to request a maintenance fee LARE (Lake and River Enhancement) grant for 2020. The grant would be used to treat lake vegetation. The DNR will pay 50% of our cost to treat the lake up to a maximum of the grant amount we receive. Any cost above will be 100% paid by the BLCD.

The DNR has taken the position that the lake requires more native vegetation to promote fish habitat and clearer water. Native vegetation tends to thrive when growing in the invasive vegetation, mainly the Eurasian Milfoil that seems to be abundant in Bass Lake. Therefore, the BLCD is anticipating a small acreage will be approved for treatment in 2020. Boaters, PWC operators, skiers and swimmers should make themselves aware of affected lake areas. The majority of the growth is in the South Basin of the lake (also the shallowest area). There is also a map on the BLCD website showing the results of the most recent Lake survey. The DNR will reassess the acreage for possible treatment in late Spring.

To be clear, the BLCD is only allowed to treat the invasive, not native, vegetation and only after a permit is approved by the DNR. Receiving a grant does not guarantee a permit will be issued. Individual homeowners are allowed to treat up to 625 sq. ft. in front of their property without having to obtain a permit from the DNR. Contact the BLCD office (574) 772-2974 for a list of approved chemicals that will not harm the lake. Note that Roundup is not an approved chemical to be used in the water! In addition, the BLCD request includes funding to treat shoreline invasive vegetation such as Phragmites and Purple Looseleaf.

Your BLCD will continue to update you on the lake vegetation concerns throughout the year.

32nd Annual Indiana Lakes Management (ILMS) Conference—Join the ILMS for their annual conference on April 9 and 10 at the Monroe County Convention Center in Bloomington, Indiana. Registration information is on their website: www.indianalakes.org. A handful of Bass Lake property owners and Bass Lake Conservancy District supporters attend each year to learn about best practices from other Indiana Lakes.

Bass Lake Property Owners Association

President ~ Rick Anderson
Vice President ~ Mary Topelian
Treasurer ~A. J. Gappa
Secretary ~ Kathy Laiter

Board Members

- Zac Binkley
- John Bucher
- Terry Chmiel
- Rich Linkus
- Rik Ritzler
- Gayle Smith
- Ron Vendl

Board member contact information is on our website:

www.inbasslake.com

Prairie Trails Club—On October 29, the PTC and the Troyer Group, Inc. entered an "Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services" related to the extension of our local bike trail. The survey and data collection phase has begun! Last year the Prairie Trails Club was awarded a \$390,750 grant from Indiana's Next Level Trails program to extend our Erie Trail 2.1 miles south-east of US 35 (the other side of the road) to 700 East.

www.basslakefest.com—The Bass Lake Festival planning is underway. Volunteers and sponsors are needed to ensure our festival thrives. With over 30 activities planned for July 24—26, many volunteers are needed. Contact Mary Topelian, mjtopelian@att.net or Tabitha Dillner, tdillner@gmail.com with questions.



Constellation of Starke— The COS Executive Committee is meeting this month to talk about next steps and our application for this year. They are also meeting with Indiana's Office of Community and Rural Affairs on February 10 to get feedback on the Regional Development Plan. During this process, they will discuss the \$333,000 that will be awarded to Starke County and decide how best to use it. If you have questions, contact Jessica Martinovic at (574) 772-3665 or email: starke@nicf.org.

How Does Ice Effect Bass Lake?

By Dr. Nate Bosch, Director of the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams



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This winter, we will likely endure below-zero temperatures and inches of snow and ice. Although some brave the cold to go ice boating or fishing, for most of us, ice on the lakes brings water activities to a halt. This might lead you to assume that the lake itself becomes inactive in the winter months. But under that layer of frozen water, much happens! As air temperatures decrease over the winter, ice forms on the surface of the water. In northern Indiana, ice thickness is typically seven-to-eight inches but can get up to 24-to-30 inches in colder winters. But what does the presence of ice mean for the Bass Lake?

The ice alters the underwater environment by insulating and shading the lake and forming a seal that stops oxygen movement between the air and water. The water temperature stays around 39 degrees Fahrenheit for the entire winter except for the water very near the ice surface, which is close to the freezing point of 32 degrees. The ice insulates the lake and prevents it from getting much colder than it is when the ice initially forms. The ice (and especially snow-covered ice) stops some sunlight from getting into the lake where the phytoplankton (also known as algae) can use it. The colder temperatures and lower light levels decrease the activity of the phytoplankton under the ice, so they produce less oxygen.

The oxygen concentration of the lake water then declines as decomposition in the lake bottom uses up oxygen. The decline in oxygen is worse if there were too many nutrients in the lake in previous seasons. That is because more nutrients lead to more plant material accumulating at the bottom of the lake. As a result, the plant material will use up oxygen as it decomposes. Since the ice seals off the oxygen, the lake only has a limited amount before it runs out. This has important implications for fish. Most fish reduce their activity during the winter months, but the fish still rely on oxygen in the water to breathe. If oxygen runs out under the ice, fish kills will result.

As winter comes to a close and air temperatures start to rise, the ice will melt and oxygen will enter the lake again. The question is, will the oxygen last until spring? For the sake of the fish in Bass Lake, and for all of us enduring another winter, we hope the thaw comes soon! For more information, visit lakes.grace.edu or call 574-372-5100, ext. 6445.

Golf Carts Galore—Did you know there are about 1500 golf carts with permits in Starke County? If you are in the market for a new or used golf cart or are looking for a local service option, you might consider JC Motorsports, located in Cambe Buick, 704 South Heaton Street in Knox. They have financing available and deliver to Bass Lake. Contact Doug Miller at (574) 772-2191; they are open Monday—Friday from 8—6 or Saturday from 8-3.



Historical Dredging in Starke County

Few things have changed the face of Starke County more than floating dredges like the one shown in this photo. Before their arrival in the 1890's, it was not unusual for much of Starke County to sometimes be under water. The higher sand hills took on such names as White Woman's Island, Grape Island and Jackson Island. Early settlers talked of rowing boats from places like Brems and Hamlet to Knox. Winter actually made getting around easier, because the settlers could walk on the ice.

Back in 1904, there were seven of these huge machines working on re-routing the Kankakee River in Starke County. They varied in size. Some required as many as ten men. Most employed a cook, as the men lived and stayed on the dredge boat. A local newspaper article tells of the men loosing even their Sunday clothes when one caught fire. One of the dredge owners built a hotel boat for the men that followed the dredge. These machines were powered by steam engines, which required a constant supply of coal delivered by teams of horses. A row boat was towed behind. It was used to take supplies and workers to and from the dredge. Blacksmiths making repairs would have been frequent visitors.

The dredges had no means of moving themselves other than using their bucket to pull the entire rig forward as necessary. Outriggers called "spuds" were extended to the banks to stabilize the machines. Depending on the width and depth to be excavated, dredges could move as fast as 500 feet in a day or as little as a mile a month. Once a job was completed, the dredge was taken apart, loaded on a railroad car and transported to the next job. This might have been several states away, as these rigs were owned by large companies.

This photo belongs to Paul Sellers, grandson of Joseph Sellers standing to the left in the picture. If you look carefully to the lower left, you will see that this dredge is working its way through new soil.

Ron Vendl, Starke County Historian

