



Bass Lake Healthy Shoreline Initiative

July 2019 - Update

Background:

Several years ago, the issues of lake water clarity and the lack of fish were discussed at BLPOA meetings. This inspired discussions with the DNR, Purdue, Indiana University, the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams and other lake communities. So, your BLPOA began taking action for a healthy lake!

Actions Taken by Your BLPOA:

1. *Lake and River Enhancement Grant (LARE)* - In January your BLPOA submitted a grant request to the Indiana DNR for our glacial stone seawall projects. We had 44 applicants; our grant request totaled \$114,240 and will reface 3264 feet of our shoreline. The decision regarding our grant application will be made by the DNR in July/August, to be followed by internal DNR paperwork and sign-off. If we are approved, the funding will not be made available until this fall. If you are one of the 44 applicants, your glacial stone seawall project should not be started until after the funding is approved or it will not qualify. Timewise, this means that your project should not be done until fall, 2019 or spring/summer, 2020.
2. *Partnering with the DNR* - We partnered with Rod Edgell of the DNR to conduct a review the entire Bass Lake shoreline in May 2018. The purpose of the shoreline survey was to inventory how many properties have existing cement seawalls and/or glacial stone facing, and identify any natural areas and beaches. This led to further discussions with the DNR about glacial stone solutions and our LARE grant application.
3. *Lake Fish Stocking* - We continue our dialogue with Tom Bacula of the DNR to identify strategies to improve the fishing at Bass Lake. Tom provides us with DNR lake testing results and Bass Lake fish stocking strategies and plans.
4. *Indiana Lakes Management Conferences* - Representatives from the BLPOA attend area conferences on the topic of healthy lakes. For the past three years we've attended the annual conference of the Indiana Lakes Management Society. We've learned about the best practices of lake water clarity, fishing habitats and healthy shorelines. Note that Bass Lake was the focus of one of the 2019 presentations, citing our work as lake best practices.
5. *Indiana Clean Lakes Program* - Last year the BLPOA established a volunteer group that leads our efforts with the Indiana Clean Lakes Program. We partner with Phil Woolery from the Purdue Starke County Extension Office to test and monitor our lake water each month. We measure water clarity, phosphorus and chlorophyll (a measurement for algae).
6. *Property Owner Education* - We continue to educate the BLPOA about the problems and the solutions through Catch & Release, the BLPOA website, handouts at BLPOA Membership Events, an information table at the Bass Lake Festival and as an agenda item at BLPOA meetings. Note the new posting regarding lawn fertilizing on www.inbasslake.com.
7. *Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams* - In 2018 we forged a new relationship with a wonderful resource, the Lilly Center, located in Kosciusko County. They have significant funding and staffing. Though they focus on the county they are located in, they are happy to help us with education and research; they often do.

8. *Invasive Species* - In May we installed a zebra mussel trap provided by the Lilly Center, as part of a research program regarding this troublesome issue. At this time we have concluded that we do not have a problem with zebra mussels in our lake. Another property owner concern this summer is Eurasian Milfoil. Both the Bass Lake Conservancy District and the BLPOA have been working with the DNR on this issue. Updates will be included in our newsletter, Catch & Release.
9. *CISMA* - Recently a statewide effort to manage invasive species plants expanded to our area with a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). Representatives of the BLPOA are actively involved in this group and will bring information to our property owners on the efforts to manage invasive species plants in our lake.
10. *Glacial Stone Project* - Last summer we partnered with Starke County to plan and execute an “early adopter” project at the Bass Lake Beach. The County (thank you Rik Ritzler) installed glacial stone in front of the large concrete seawall at the Bass Lake Beach bath house. Starke County continues to install glacial stone around the lake at the dozens of easements that are owned by the County.

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:

The Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams - This organization is dedicated to making the lakes in Kosciusko County clean, healthy, safe and beautiful. Their website is a rich source of healthy shoreline information, <http://www.lakes.grace.edu>.

The Watershed Foundation - They have been focused on healthy shoreline initiatives for many years. <http://www.watershedfoundation.org>.

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

Questions:

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