

# CONSERVANCY VIEWS



Preserving Water Quality & Scenic Beauty of Our Lakes

Spring 2015



## Chairman's Letter

By Sam Leman, WACF Chairman

*"I think Henry Ford once said, 'If I'd asked customers what they wanted, they would have told me, 'A faster horse!'" — Steve Jobs\**

So what does that have to do with clean water? Not much, I guess, but it has a lot to do with forward thinking. Both Jobs and Ford were able to figure out what their customers were going to want before they (the customer) did. In a similar way, we at WACF strive to recognize and address matters that could have a negative impact on our lakes before they happen. (Think hog farms or massive piers.) Luckily, we're not confronting such serious and immediate issues at the moment, but we remain vigilant... and for now, we continue our work to protect and enhance the lakes, streams and wetlands in our watershed.

Today we're promoting ways to improve our shorelines, not only to reduce destructive wave action, but also to control nutrient rich run-off with native plantings. In addition to our existing educational programming, we're working to educate boaters regarding the impact of their activities on water clarity, and developing ideas to engage younger age groups. We support efforts to monitor and control invasive plants, both aquatic and terrestrial. We continue to pursue opportunities to either acquire or control critical upstream wetlands, while managing the over 800 acres and 10+ miles of shoreline WACF already holds. We are also partnering with other organizations in the community on projects like the Syracuse-Wawasee Trail, and the Syracuse Parks' "Mudtastic" event. All part of our developing the Levinson-LaBrosse Education Center as a place for public events as well as self-guided walks along our trails. Of course, this is all made possible by your continuing, generous support, and we thank you for that. Look for more details on all the above in the following pages.

This is my last "letter" as WACF's Board chair. Joan Szynal will take the reigns at our Annual Meeting in August—please join us. So, I want to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow directors, past and present, and the WACF Staff for all your work on our projects and committees. I've found the best way to do my job has been to stay out of the way and let you do yours. I couldn't ask for a better group. Thanks!

*\*Excerpt From: Isaacson, Walter. "Steve Jobs." Simon & Schuster, 2011*

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# Executive Director Update

By Heather Harwood, WACF Executive Director

**Thank you for your support and partnership with WACF.** It's been a productive and rewarding year. One of our projects, and a personal favorite, is restoring the wetland areas on our Levinson-LaBrosse Lakes and Wetlands Education Center. This invasive plant removal project in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kosciusko County Community Foundation and the Indiana DNR is opening up the woods and allowing native plants to finally grow. Being able to actually see through the wooded wetland on this property by removing the invasive plants has been particularly rewarding.

WACF will also be hosting our Annual Breakfast this year on August 22d, our Lake Talk and Eats the first Saturday of June—August, and we are looking forward to hosting the Syracuse Park Department this summer with a 'Mudtastic Classic' on June 27th, an event for kids and adults. WACF will also be hosting canoe trips down the 10 lake chain starting June 26th. Call Al Campbell, Canoe Trip Logistic Coordinator, at 513-543-6997 for reservations. And please join us for our Annual Farm Tour with Russell Anderson on Wednesday, July 22nd at 9am at Dillon Creek.

Aquatic invasive plants in the lake are as troublesome as invasive plants on the land. To help with the in-lake invasive plants, the IDNR recently awarded WACF a grant for an invasive weed survey update and treatment in Wawasee and Syracuse Lakes in the amount \$20,875. This is an important project to fight the invasives that can out-compete native plants, inhibit boating and recreation.

One perk of being the WACF Executive Director to observe the positive transformation of troubled areas in our watershed, and providing some protection of those areas for us and future generations. Owning land that will continue to be critical to the health of the watershed provides long-term insurance of our watershed for now and in the future. And this all started with just a small group of concerned residents with a vision of, and motivation for protecting our lakes. This volunteer group started with a worthy direction and we salute the founders and their

vision. It was the dream of our founders that got the foundation headed in the right direction with a noble cause.

Thank you for your gift to WACF this year. As a supporter and partner, you help with the preservation of valuable wetlands and construction projects that transform environmentally challenged areas. WACF is doing what we can to protect this beautiful chain of lakes that sits up against the continental divide. Life could be worse! And thank you to all our wonderful volunteers that all provide a significant effort to protecting our lakes. This time of year our buoy volunteers are busy installing Eco Zone buoys.

In addition to land acquisition and pollution control projects, WACF partners with community and governmental agencies that hold similar missions. These relationships open doors to more knowledge of our natural systems. Working together, our efforts make a transformative difference in our environment and setting. Good for us, good for our health, and good for future generations.



Jeffery Moore and Bailey Hersberger help with SLA Buoys



Jeff and Joel Guyas help with Conklin Bay Buoys



# Adding Value

By Tom Yoder, WACF Land Acquisition Chairman

**Is WACF adding value?** Each year WACF publishes a list of accomplishments. These primarily are projects in one of three categories: remediation of sensitive wetlands; control of pollution caused by soil erosion, agricultural chemicals, or livestock; control of invasive plants both on land and in the water. Also published is an updated land acquisition list. This program is directed toward long term protection of the many sensitive areas that serve as filters thereby maintain water quality. These lists show value added. They represent major actions that the conservancy has taken to directly affect water quality in the watershed, at least over time.

The question is - do these lists tell the whole story? They alone are big bites but the complete answer is much deeper and maybe even more significant.

First, consider us, the people who regularly use the water or, through our actions, affect the water as it flows in and out of our watershed. Imagine for a moment that nobody could do anything in the watershed. No human impact. Zero. The whole 23,300 acre watershed IS quarantined. For a long time. What would happen to the water? Years and years of no people activity. No farming, no boating, no fishing, no swimming, nothing. What would happen to water quality?

My guess is that it would gradually improve. It would gradually become a very balanced ecosystem and prosper with much higher water clarity and it would become very balanced in terms of dissolved oxygen and all the other important parameters. Mother nature would thrive.

So human impact is big. It is extremely relevant to WACF's mission of maintaining and improving water quality. Is WACF adding value in the human impact arena? Yes, via educational programs. One of WACF's highest priorities is to provide opportunities for people to learn that they themselves can make a positive impact on water quality as a user. Some of the programs are: the popular canoe expeditions in the headwaters ; Lake Talk and Eats; Bug Catch for youngsters; trails at the Education Center to show demonstration areas; newsletter; the agriculture tour led by Russell Anderson; discussions with farm operators about filter strips and other prevention tips. Value added. You bet.

Let's explore another aspect. Even though we proudly define our lake system as the largest

natural lake in the state, our watershed does not exist in an isolated vacuum. Looking at the big picture, there are huge global demands for water related to food, energy and over-indulged material goods. The need for clean, quality water worldwide is unparalleled. In some places it is a crisis. The building of dams and reservoirs will not be sufficient and are extremely costly. With climate changes it seems droughts are becoming more severe. Ala California and the southwest.

So where do we fit in?. Don't forget what happened to lake levels and volume just 2 years ago. We need to be vigilant. We need to be frugal and farsighted planners. It is a positive thing that WACF exists and is an organization that has solidified itself and has strength and purpose. Via all the projects and efforts over the past 20 plus years of WACF's existence, important relationships have been built with the DNR, other government agencies, other associations and conservancies. WACF has the respect of



these planning and regulatory groups.

We have representation in many of these organizations. Complements to Heather Harwood, Ex. Dir, and to Diana Castell, Chm of Education and Ecology who have worked hard to develop strong bonds and relationships with key DNR personnel and outside expertise organizations. Compliments also to past champions who were leaders and, in fact, helped found important Indiana lakes organizations. We especially acknowledge Bob Myers in this category.

Is this a valuable thing to have strong relationships with other experts and policy setters? The Wawasee "community", and particularly WACF, is a respected and valued partner.

Turn now to the issue of preserving sensitive lands. For this, WACF is a land trust. All across the country, in spite of recessions and

government cuts, voters continue to favor public funds for land conservation. They favor planned development and support projects that maintain natural areas, public parks, forests, etc.

Thousands of nonprofit groups, like the Nature Conservancy and Acres Land Trust for example, are acquiring open spaces with the goal of preserving natural areas and spaces.

WACF's main thrust for acquiring land is to protect the wetlands so that, in turn, the wetlands provide water quality. But these acquisitions add other benefits. For example, more than 20% of the property acquired by WACF has been donated. That means our wetland property owners, many from the agricultural base, have become involved. They value the concept of water quality and preservation of natural areas. Studies show that it is economical to sustain nature and particularly as it relates to the growth of food sustenance.

Additionally, because many of the acquired properties need maintenance and clean up, volunteers have come forward to assist. In so doing they become better informed and educated as to the mission and the methods for achieving water quality. The opportunities for people to work with nature and give back are enriching. These side benefits to land acquisition truly provide another added value.

The final point is economic value. Dozens of studies document the positive relationship between real estate values and proximity to conservation areas. Buyers are willing to pay extra to know that the adjacent property or nearby property is protected and will be left natural. It seems logical that lake property owners who enjoy the benefits of increased water quality and an active conservancy that focuses on that mission will also experience positive effects on property values.

To summarize, we live on the only habitable planet in our solar system, possibly the entire galaxy. Nature gives us tons of life saving services. Our end of the bargain is to help take care of the planets health. When we value something we take care of it. If it becomes tarnished we need to polish it up. We need to retain its benefits and add to its value.

If you are already a donor, or are considering donating funds or time or talent, rest assured that you are contributing to an organization that is ADDING VALUE.



# Land Management Update

By Jeff Herdrich, WACF Land Management Officer



Spring is finally here, allowing the lakes and wetlands to come alive again with new vegetative growth. With the new season upon us and summer soon to follow, I am developing a list of objectives I want to accomplish with the properties of the WACF.

One objective I am working on is creating property markings which would attempt to prevent inappropriate use of WACF lands, such as dumping and hunting, and also to allow easy identification of property lines. Additionally, these property markings will advertise our efforts at protecting the WACF watershed. Most of the markings I have

made are simple PVC pipes with black lettering which I can fit over surveyors stake marking which are already present at the property lines. I will estimate that I have completed about 60% of the 690 acres of WACF fee- simple owned properties.

Another objective near completion is installing a pier along the channel next to the educational center, thus allowing for boat access to the Levinson-LaBrosse Lakes and Wetlands Education Center. The pier should be completed by the time this new letter is out. In closing, I would like to thank you for your support.



# Retro Rain Recycling

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

Humans have collected rainwater for millennia; natural wetlands have collected rain for even longer. Ancient civilizations collected rainwater in cisterns, clay pots, and irrigation ditches for later use, and now many people are similarly saving water for use around the modern home on not-so-rainy days. Wetlands absorb and clean natural water, but recently natural wetland functions are being utilized as assets to domestic yards and gardens. This new incorporation of rain barrels and rain gardens borrows from what wetlands have been doing in natural ecosystems for many years.

Rain barrels collect rainwater from gutter and downspout systems around residential homes and business buildings. They typically have a screen on top to keep debris from entering the barrel as well as to keep mosquitoes from using the barrels as breeding areas. A hose spigot at the bottom of the barrel allows water to flow out of the barrel under pressure due to gravity. Rain barrels come in a variety of styles and can be homemade or purchased from most local home and garden retailers.

Rain gardens are installed in low areas of yards or landscape beds where water enters from driveways, roofs, or lawns. Naturally occurring local plants that tolerate wet conditions are planted in these gardens to allow quick uptake of water during rain events. These plants typically require no maintenance or watering and can add aesthetic value to landscaping. Rain gardens can be created in any shape or size, depending on the desired look and function. These gardens can also be designed to either allow for the accumulation of water or to encourage the water to quickly drain into the soil.

This recycling of water not only has the potential to add to a



photo by Larry Baumgardt

property's beauty while saving time and money on gardening, but it also helps protect local lakes and streams. Springtime rain events can quickly wash soils, nutrients, and pollutants from rooftops, yards, driveways, and streets into local waterways. Rain barrels hold back some of this water for later and more controlled use. Rain gardens absorb much of this water and clean and purify the water as it drains into the soil and is absorbed by plants.

So, let's help our lakes and streams by recycling our rainwater.



# Lake Talk & Eats Summer of 2015

**First Saturday Morning: June 6, July 4 & August 1**

*By Diana Castell*

The WACF Ecology and Education Committee's role is to spread the environmental education message to protect and preserve our watershed. Everyone has a part to play. I mean everyone. If you on a lake or a mile from the water. It may be hard to believe that your behavior effects the lakes down stream from you. Maybe you change your oil and dump the old oil just in the grass or woods. Or maybe you walk your dog at the Wawasee Middle School and don't pick their droppings. These behaviors will affect our watershed. Where I live what happens at Wawasee Middle School will come find its way in our channels, including sediment, nutrients, fertilizer and E.coli. We have worked on two sediment ponds to catch the sediment. Sediment will fill our channels and in time will fill the lake. Sediment carries phosphorus, which promotes weed growth. So please remember what you do affects our watershed.

June 6th, we are promoting native plants for shorelines and yard plantings. Native plants are just that...plants that were grow-

ing here wild. They have adjusted to the local conditions such as climate and rain. They will not need special treatment or fertilizer. While taking a drive last Sunday, I was treated to a carpet of wild flowers. I wished my yard were covered with Dutchman breeches and Trilliums.

Planting native plants helps not only our lakes but also insects and butterflies. Monarch butterfly larvae eat only leaves from milkweed.

## June 6th Shoreline Native Plants

On June 6th, an expert on native plants will give a short presentation about the value and importance of native plants. We have invited a number of vendors to bring their native plants for the public to purchase plus share with you of their plants. Also we will have a company that sells coir logs for your lakeside. We will be demonstrating how to plan and plant a rain garden and make seed bombs.

## July 4th Bug Catch

Grandparents, parents and kids of all ages are invited to put on their water shoes and get wet. Nancy Brown, a certified Hoosier Riverwatch trainer, will again help us identify water critters. Certain types of water critter only live in clean water. Come join us and see what you can find.

## August 1st Invasive/Exotic plants

We are planning to have a speaker discuss how invasive species affect our lakes. We have discussed the invasive of Starry Stonewort and how it has caused motors to stop. We all have water shores to protect our feet from zebra mussels. The pictures of flying carp jumping into boats are funny but I would not want those Silver Asian carp in our lakes. We will be also providing a brunch using some edible invasive plants.

During 2014, our periodic WACF e-mail updates allowed us to send many of you reminders and timely information regarding interesting and important conservancy events and activities. Our e-mail address database is growing but incomplete and we would like to be sure that any interested person receives our e-mails. If you are not receiving our e-mails (or are not sure) but would like to receive them, please visit our website at [www.wacf.com](http://www.wacf.com) where you will find a simple sign-up form on the home page. Our e-mail address database is strictly for WACF use and will *not* be shared with any other group. *Please help us keep you informed.*



*photo by Larry Baumgardt*



# Why Leave a Legacy?

By Judy Shoemaker

With your generous support, the Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation, has worked for 23 years to preserve and protect our watershed, including nine lakes, over 820 acres of wetlands and natural areas and ten miles of shoreline. The work that donors like you, wacf friends, volunteers and staff have completed will benefit many generations to come. As the legal stewards of the land, wetlands and waters we protect, however, the WACF must ensure the organization's ability to manage and protect these lands and waters forever.

Members of the WACF Legacy Society provide the foundation for our long-term success. The WACF recognizes donors who share the mission of the WACF by making a gift through a will, bequest, trust, annuity, insurance policy or other instrument. Through thoughtful, long-term planning, members of the WACF Legacy Society are achieving personal, family and philanthropic

*"If for no other reason, do it for your kids & grandkids future. Preserve it for them."  
"We feel personally responsible to do everything we can to protect our watershed so our kids and grandkids can enjoy our lakes for generations to come and so they learn to endow the future for their children, passing it on to future generations."*

— David & Susie Brandes, WACF Legacy Society

goals, and ensure their support will not end after their lifetimes.

While supporting the WACF, planned gifts can also serve the donor in important ways. For instance a deferred gift can help minimize the tax liability of heirs. Some estate planning instruments can even create a secure, annual income for donors right now, during their lifetimes.

There are a variety of ways to include the WACF in planned-giving.

As always, we advise you to seek independent financial and legal advice as you consider significant gifts. If you would

like more information about including the WACF in your financial plans and becoming a member of the Legacy Society, please contact WACF Executive Director Heather Harwood or Development Officer, Judy Shoemaker, [info@wacf.com](mailto:info@wacf.com); [judy@wacf.com](mailto:judy@wacf.com) or call 574-457-4549 to schedule a meeting.

Thank you for your support over the past two decades. You have made a difference and strengthened our commitment to fulfill the mission of preserving and enhancing the Wawasee area watershed for present and future generations.

## Honor and Memorialize Friends and Family with a Special Donation to WACF

### 2014 WACF Memorials

Richard Boerger  
Beth Bolsen  
Brook and Marolyn Sefton  
Raymond Butler  
Dottie Campbell  
Tom Cougill  
John Cummins  
Linda Dahm  
Jeanne Berkey Brokaw Eissman  
Andrew Hardie  
Harry Schwartz  
Gladyn Hayner  
Walter 'Wally' Herdrich  
Tom and Judy Hughes  
Richard Inskeep

Jack Kennedy  
Mike and Carol Kiley  
Cheryl Kroemer  
Tim Kroh  
Lloyd Kruckeberg  
Dan List  
Thomas Miller  
Jack Olmstead  
Donald Osborne  
Tom Osborne  
Norma Jean Schumm  
Steve Skaggs  
Jamie Tully  
John Wallace

*In Memory*

### 2014 WACF Honorariums

Ron and Tami Baumgartner  
Barbara Johnson  
Donn Baird  
David and Susie Brandes  
Mary Lou Hurst  
Bob and Nancy Myers  
Eleanor Long Organ  
William and Louise Warshauer

*Honorariums*



# Aren't You Proud?

By David Brandes

When you are on our watershed or driving around it or entertaining company, aren't you proud of our watershed? When you see WACF signs all around protecting the lands adjacent to the lakes, aren't you proud? When you see projects restoring our wetlands, aren't you proud?

When you see projects which retain and hold water to prevent excessive runoff into our lakes, aren't you proud?

WACF is always there protecting our watershed so that for years and years into the foreseeable future we can look forward to a healthy ecosystem to enjoy. These projects cost a lot of money and there are so many more that need to be done. We have many volunteers and a watchful board of directors who guard the

interests of the Wawasee Area watershed.

We are in the midst of a five year fund raising campaign to help insure that WACF will be able to continue these efforts.

We can't do it without each one of you helping out financially.

So when you are cruising around the lakes on a beautiful evening or watching the joy on the faces of your kids and grandkids playing in the lakes, take a moment to thank WACF and yourselves for protecting our lakes.

Sit on your front deck and look out at the beautiful surroundings and then ask yourself, aren't you proud to have the WACF always there and aren't you proud that you helped?

*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."*

— Native American Proverb



photo by Larry Baumgardt



## WACF recognizes new Eli Lilly Lifetime Founders Society members.



Longtime Syracuse Lake residents, the Laudeman Family & Wawasee Lake resident Jim Brumbaugh are new members of the Eli Lilly Lifetime Founders Society. New members are recognized with a bronze plaque on the Eli Lilly Lifetime Founders Society donor wall. WACF will host new and existing members at a dinner event to be held at the end of the summer. The Society recognizes lifetime cumulative gifts totaling at least \$100,000, ensuring the WACF's success and sustainability. For more information on the Eli Lilly Lifetime Founders Society and other gifting opportunities contact Judy Shoemaker, Development Officer, email: [judy@wacf.com](mailto:judy@wacf.com) or 574-457-4549.



WAWASEE AREA CONSERVANCY FOUNDATION

*Preserving Water Quality*

**We're on the web!**  
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## 2015 WACF Calendar

### JULY 2015

July 3, *Friday*  
 SLA/Syracuse Lake Fireworks 10:30 PM

July 4, *Saturday*  
 WACF Lake Talks & Eats & "Bug Catch!"  
 Ruddell Pavilion 9:00 AM

July 4, *Saturday*  
 WPOA / Wawasee Lake Fireworks 10:30 PM

July 10, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

July 17, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

July 22, *Wednesday*  
 WACF Agriculture Tour/Anderson Farm  
 9:00 AM

July 24, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

July 31, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

### AUGUST 2015

August 1, *Saturday*  
 WACF Lake Talks & Eats Program #3  
 9:00 AM

August 1, *Saturday*  
 SLA Annual Breakfast Meeting Syracuse  
 Community Center 8:00 AM

August 7, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

August 8, *Saturday*  
 WPOA Annual Meeting Ruddell Pavilion/  
 WACF Education Center (TRD)

August 14, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

August 21, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip (last canoe trip) 7:30 AM

August 22, *Saturday*  
 WACF Annual Public Meeting (TRD)

### JUNE 2015

June 6, *Saturday*  
 WACF Lake Talks & Eats Program #1  
 Ruddell Pavilion 9:00 AM

June 19, *Friday*  
 Clean-Up Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

June 20, *Saturday*  
 SLA/WPOA Annual Breakfast 8:00 AM

June 26, *Friday*  
 WACF Canoe Trip 7:30 AM

June 27, *Saturday*  
 "Mudtastic Classic" (Syr. Parks Dept.)  
 Ruddell Pavilion / WACF 9:00 AM