



WAWASEE AREA CONSERVANCY FOUNDATION

# CONSERVANCY VIEWS

Fall 2019



Wawasee Freshmen participated in the WACF Watershed Rafting Adventure in September.

## Message from the Chairman:



**Chris Roberts**  
WACF Chairman

When I write about something I strongly believe in, I tend to attempt to cover every aspect, every nuance and even every subtlety. In this case, my editor will step in and spare you. There are lots of great things in this issue and only so much space for me – as it should be.

Truth is, I get excited about the lakes and preserving them and I want you to get excited too. I have great respect for nature, yet that respect is tempered with an understanding that we humans are also part of the equation. We occupy land, use resources, generate waste and in general, live our lives – all within feet of a delicately balanced eco-system we call the Wawasee Watershed.

Some of us care to know more about that balance while others really aren't concerned as long as nothing changes. Well, as you know, there's nothing quite as certain as change – you can count on it. It is an unstoppable force. To a degree that's one reason why WACF exists; certainly not to block or stifle change, but to be aware and to aid in responsible decisions regarding it.

Our extensive WINS (Wawasee Inlets Nutrient Study) effort will for the first time ever, point out exactly what stresses the two largest lakes in the watershed (Wawasee and Syracuse) are subjected to and from where those stresses are coming, giving us a solid information base with which to advise, assist and mitigate going forward.

Mitigation, the modification(s) necessary to effect change from a negative to a neutral or positive is something we've been doing since we set up shop in 1991. Acquiring strategic wetlands, cleaning up inlet streams, constructing retention ponds and building buffer zones all have great value when it comes to protecting clean water, which is really what we're all about.

My family's love affair with the Syracuse, Indiana area is always and forever. Sometime ago I came to the realization that the clear, clean waters of the lakes are neither guaranteed nor accidental. It takes people and money. This is my way of giving back. There's a way for you too. Keep what doesn't belong in the lake (leaves, clippings, non lake-friendly fertilizers, etc) out of the lake, donate, encourage others to donate or just wish us well.

Rest assured that between WACF consultant, Dr. Jerry Sweeten, Ecosystems Connections Institute and the Lilly Center for Lakes and Streams' Dr. Nate Bosch, we are on track to fulfilling the WACF mission of "Preserving and enhancing the Wawasee area watershed for present and future generations."

## Memorials & Honorariums

Memorial and honorarium gifts have a lasting impact, like the lives and achievements they recognize. All memorial and honorarium gifts are directed to the WACF Endowment Fund establishing a layer of stability under the Conservancy and ensuring it's strong and lasting future. Interest income from the WACF Endowment fund is used for ongoing Conservancy expenses, operating costs and programs.

### 2019 WACF Memorials – 1/1/19-10/12/19

Ted Ben Bales

John C. Barron and Barbara  
Barron Hiers

Richard 'Whitey' Boerger

Tim Borne

A. Hunter and Neoma Colpitts

Kim Conrad

Nancy Cougill

Richard L. and Janet Davis

Barb Grant

Andrew Hardie

Colleen Herdrich

Peggy Hipskind

Jill Hubbard

Tom and Judy Hughes

Pat Johnson

Robert and Rosalyn Jones

Susann Kellogg

Dick Kelly

Casey Kroh

Sara Kroh

Maurice and Lucille Lung

Peggy Clapacs Miller

Deceased Morrison Island members

Bob and Nancy Myers

Rafael 'Papi' Ollervides

Eleanor Organ

Sherry Ott

PADOROMA

Dr. William K. and Mary H.  
Patterson

Dick Reasner

William and Sophie C. Salin

Douglas A. Schmahl

Hilda Smith

Herb and Donna Snyder

Linda Tillman

Charlie Walker

Isabelle Westfall

Marilyn Wilson

Matthew Wuebker

### 2019 WACF Honorariums

1/1/19-10/12/19

Doug and Carolyn Anderson

Donn Baird

Dave and Cindy Newcomer

Sophia Salin and William Salin Sr.

Doug and Eileen Williams

Heather Harwood

Brian and Jamie Hull



Heather Harwood  
WACF Executive Director

# Highlights from the Executive Director



**Conklin Bay Boardwalk / WACF Education Center Trail – Congratulations to the Trail Committee!** The new section of trail across Conklin Bay wetlands and along the WACF Levinson-LeBrosse Education Center property at SR 13 includes about 1/3 mile of wetland boardwalk and 2/3 mile of concrete sidewalk. The Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Committee has done a fabulous job getting this project going and work is now underway. WACF is looking forward to the completion of this important trail linking residents living on the south half of Wawasee Lake and the Conklin Bay area to town. The new trail section will connect with the existing 11 miles of trail system in Syracuse, and there will be a link from this new trail to the WACF Education Center property trail system. The contractor, the project manager from EarthSource, and the Kosciusko County Soil and Water Conservation District are working to protect the wetlands from contaminants during the construction process. There will be weekly inspections for a minimum of 21 weeks with time allotted for 10 additional inspections and site visits. A native seed mix will be planted in disturbed areas. This will be a great addition to our community!

**The Turkey Creek Tributary Phase I completed and Phase II is underway –** Turkey Creek is the major water supply to Wawasee, making it a focus on erosion control work in the creek and tributary. Phase II will be starting soon thanks to funding from the IDNR Lake and River Enhancement (LARE). Stream bank erosion has been a contributor of sediments downstream into Wawasee. The erosion along the stream bank is evident by the large sediment deposits that have accumulated along the way. This natural sediment trap is slowly reaching holding capacity, thus allowing greater volumes of sediment to continue moving further downstream during significant storm events. The source of the sediment was

identified upstream and the compromised stream shoreline areas will be protected. The design focuses on reducing the stream flow velocity to protect the eroding embankments. A combination of Best Management Practices (BMPs) were designed to reduce stream velocity by 20-50%.

**Fish tank collaboration with the Lilly Center for Lakes and Streams –** WACF sponsors two aquariums in Syracuse Elementary and one in Syracuse Public Library in partnership with the Lilly Center. During our annual presentation to the Kosciusko County Leadership (KLA), Dr. Nate Bosch led a tour of the aquarium lab which has 140 native fish spread between more than

30 aquariums at the Lilly Center. The aquarium lab has space for 85 40-gallon tanks set up for different schools and public buildings. WACF is proud to support this important program for our community's schools.

**The US Fish and Wildlife Service is sponsoring overseeding with native wildflowers at WACF's Between-the-Lakes property on Main Channel at Mud Lake –** The USFWS has helped WACF with the original site preparation and now native wildflower overseeding. This property features grass trails, a kayak and canoe launching site, and native plants including prairie grasses, wildflowers, perennials, wetland plantings complete with boardwalks and viewing areas. WACF's Between-the-Lakes property is across the street from the Channel Marker.

These plants will take years to become fully established. In the meantime, our Between-the-Lakes property will continue to be a destination for WACF Educational programming with high school freshmen rafting trips, and kayaking in the Mud Lake channels. We look forward to watching this property grow as a community asset with trails for self-guided tours.

*"WACF has partnered with the Lilly Center now for 8 years as one of our sponsors for the Classroom Lake Experience program, and we are appreciative for their investment with us to bring the lakes to local students," said Dr. Nate Bosch, director of the Lilly Center. "This program teaches K-12 students about the lakes by giving them a visual for what a lake looks like beneath the surface. They get to feed and observe the fish, and learn about the different species and their habitats. We've found that Classroom Lake Experience is one of the best, most memorable ways to inspire the next generation to care for our waterways."*



# 2019 Education by the Numbers

By Pam Schumm, *Education Committee Chair*

**2** Wawasee High School classes (the Natural Resources class and Outdoor Education PE class) came to WACF for a special field trip.

**2** Special Events – Earth Day Festival and FallTastic Trail Walk.

**3** Youth activities including Forensics Workshop, Fishing with the DNR and a presentation to the Syracuse Boy Scouts.

**3** Lake Talk and Eats programs: Native Plant Sale, Bug Catch and Lilly Pad Cruise.

**4** Wetland Adventures Wednesdays in July for elementary children and a parent. Children participate in group instruction about nature and wetlands followed by crafts and/or experiments and the ever popular canoe scavenger hunt.

**5** Adult programs including Pollinator workshop, Native and Invasive Fish in Wawasee, Farm Tour and Interpretive Walk with The Lilly Center.

**7** Grade levels of Wawasee students (Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th) visit WACF for a field trip. Each grade level trip is tailored to specific standards and themes.

**30** Fabulous volunteers that help with various activities. More than half of these volunteers are retired teachers, still giving back to their community and practicing their passion to teach students in our outdoor classroom.

**423** Hours of planning to run all the educational activities.

**846** Hours of volunteerism to run these field trips.

**1480** Approximate number of students in Wawasee School Corporation served by our field trips.

**2426** Total number of individuals served by WACF education activities.





# Aquatic Invasive Plants

By Beth Morris  
Ecology Committee Chair

The fight against Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) and Starry Stonewort (SSW), two aggressive invasive aquatic plants, continues. Eurasian Watermilfoil has been surveyed by the state IDNR in our watershed

starting in 2006. Starry Stonewort was first discovered in Wawasee in a channel off Johnson Bay in 2008. It was discovered in Syracuse Lake in 2011. Since then, WACF has been working with



Starry Stonewort (SSW) underwater

DNR and key vendors to hold these invasives at bay. EWM historically is part of the community of plants and tends to grow in deeper areas so it does not take over an entire lake. SSW on the other hand grows at all depths and can pose a big problem over time if it overtakes native vegetation and eliminates habitat for fish and other natural species in the ecosystem.

## **What are we seeing and where?**

In 2019, a Tier 2 Survey was completed by Clarke Aquatic and showed that acreage of both EWM and SSW continue to increase while native species in some areas of Syracuse Lake and Lake Wawasee are on the decline. This year the amount of EWM in Syracuse Lake increased approximately

30%. Unfortunately, SSW also showed a marked increase. In Lake Wawasee, this year EWM increased 25% over last year, and SSW also showed an increase in Wawasee, though not as marked as on Syracuse Lake at approximately a 30% increase.

## **How did we treat it in 2019?**

Funding for SSW treatment comes from a federal program called the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and is distributed by DNR across affected lakes. Treatment was

applied by Aquatic Weed Control. The DNR spent \$80K treating Lake Wawasee and \$10K on Syracuse Lake. Both lakes have significantly more SSW acreage than was treated. The chemicals used to treat SSW slow it down but do not kill it completely. Mechanical harvesting can make the problem worse due to fragmentation of SSW and so is not considered a viable approach. Research continues, but for now the best we can do is to hold it at bay using Cutrine Ultra and Hydrothol.

Funding for EWM treatment comes from boat registration dollars collected at the state level and allocated by DNR. Historically, DNR has provided WACF with \$10K/year to be used as matching funds for treating both Syracuse and Wawasee. This year, Clarke Aquatic was asked by WACF to test the EWM and we learned that of the several areas tested, all were found to be hybrid in Syracuse and Wawasee. What does this mean? Simply that they are a bit harder to kill and require a higher rate of chemical application than non-hybridized. This year, three acres were treated with a promising new chemical, ProcettaCOR. Although higher in cost than other chemicals, it has the potential to prevent reinfestation of treated areas for up to three years. A plot of roughly 16 acres was treated with 2,4-D, the standard chemical that has been used for the last several years. There are numerous other large and heavily traveled areas of the lake that are infested but have not been treated. If funding can be secured from private donors, we would like to sequentially treat one or two large beds a year with



Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM)

ProcettaCOR as a means of reducing EWM presence in both lakes.

## **What's the plan going forward?**

The state and federal funding for their treatment is shrinking and must be spread across more areas as more lakes become infested. DNR has informed us that their 2020 budget for treating SSW will be 1/3 less than 2019 and will be spread over 25 lakes (up from 22) with priority given to newly infested lakes. That means less state and federal money to treat invasive aquatic plants in our watershed. DNR is encouraging us to set aside our own funds to extend treatment. Tippecanoe Lake is already doing so.

*We need your help!* Treating our lakes for EWM and SSW comes at a cost. We have reached the tipping point where state and federal funding is no longer adequate to treat our lakes as we seek to preserve our watershed. Won't you please consider making a special donation to WACF to be allocated for treatment of SSW and EWM in 2020?



# An opportunity to help

By Bill McCully  
Development Committee Chair

There have been too many real-life stories of healthy and thriving lakes nearly dying out in less than a generation. Recently, the Wall Street Journal highlighted the challenges faced by Ohio's Grand Lake and chronicled how an unchecked flow of farm and residential runoff brought the lake to the brink of ecological and financial ruin. The lake was unsuitable for human contact leading to drastic action and millions of dollars spent to restore wetlands and preserve lands that buffer the lake, thereby vastly improving water

quality. This was great news validating the importance of healthy wetlands, although it will be years and many more millions of dollars before it is fully back to good health.

Fortunately, the foresight and commitment of a group of people led to the creation of The Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation in 1991. As a Land Trust, the WACF has been able to acquire and nurture nearly 1,000 acres of endangered properties and wetlands throughout our watershed. This strategic portfolio of property enables the WACF to be proactive in preserving the quality of our

waters and avoid the fate of lakes such as Grand Lake.

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**Your gift is vital and we ask you to consider an investment to ensure the health of our lakes . . .**

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As an organization that can truly take action, we continually face the question, "what are the best actions to ensure a lasting impact on water quality?"

To answer this question, the Wawasee Inlets Nutrient Study was established under the direction of Dr. Jerry Sweeten and the Ecosystems Connections Institute. The WINS Study is a

comprehensive scientific study of the water entering and leaving Lake Wawasee. Continual collection and sampling of the water entering the lake at four inlets as well as water flowing to Turkey Creek in Syracuse Lake provides voluminous and reliable data to the WACF.

From this data, WACF can target activities, projects and land acquisition that will reduce the flow of nutrients, sediments and other harmful materials. This study is essential to our mission and its importance has been recognized by the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation which has awarded WACF a

matching funds grant of \$150,000 to support the study.

That's where you come in. By supporting the WACF financially, you can ensure that our matching funds will be fully realized and the study completed to provide an action plan. Your gift is vital and we ask you to consider an investment to ensure the health of our lake so it can continue to provide the quality of life we have all come to know and love. We would love the opportunity to tell you more about this landmark study and the importance of your support. Please reach out to us at (574) 457-4549 or [info@wacf.com](mailto:info@wacf.com).



WACF Eli Lilly Lifetime Founders Society – Left to right: Doug Grant, Karen Lewallen, Jay Jorgensen, Jeff Herdrich, Jan Hackleman Rea, Jerry Rea, Debbie Herdrich, Bill Herdrich,

Susie Brandes, Russell Anderson, David Brandes, Mary Anderson, Harriett Inskip, Sally Hubbard, Jim Hubbard, Cindy Deister, Mark Deister and Al Campbell



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The WACF is a non-profit 501(c) 3 charity and donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. There are other tax benefits that you might want to consider as you prepare for tax season.

- Donations are permitted from Individual Retirement Account (IRA) distributions of up to \$100,000 to qualified 501(c) 3 charities. By donating the distribution directly to the WACF, the funds are not considered taxable income. In order to take advantage of this tax provision, instruct your IRA trustee, broker, or financial advisor to make the contribution directly to the WACF.
- You can make gifts of stocks or appreciated stocks directly to the WACF and bypass the capital gains tax. If you have appreciated stock, some or all of it can be donated to the WACF with no tax liability.



**Sally and Jim Hubbard**  
 2019 Cattail Award recipients