

Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative

A not-for-profit organization and land trust

Working across state boundaries to enhance the Wolf Lake watershed

Oct. 25, 2017

Watershed Advisory Meeting
Set Nov. 3 at CCSJ

Contact: Michael Boos 219-933-7149 or 773-220-0120

Immediate Release

Projects in the bi-state Wolf Lake watershed will be the center of attention at an all-day meeting of land managers; local, state and federal agencies; and non-profit organizations on Nov. 3 at Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ).

Held in Room 200, the meeting of the Wolf Lake Watershed Advisory Committee will focus on the theme “Envisioning Tomorrow” by discussing projects underway and those proposed but not yet funded. The meeting also will build on what was presented at last year’s Research Summit on the Wolf Lake Watershed to turn research results into action.

The Wolf Lake watershed includes the bi-state Wolf Lake. Other areas include George Lake, Forsythe Park and Pulaski Park in Indiana and Indian Creek, Hyde Lake Wetlands, Powderhorn Lake and Prairie and Eggers Grove in Illinois.

Sponsors of this conference are the Legacy Foundation of Lake County, the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, ArcelorMittal, the city of Hammond, Calumet College of St. Joseph and the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative (AWLI).

The conference will begin with a welcome from Amy McCormack, president of the college, at 9 a.m. However, everyone can arrive at 8 a.m. for a guided walk to the Wolf Lake observation pier by Joan Crist, associate professor of theology at CCSJ and planning committee member.

The first morning panel will discuss current research and projects. It will include an update from Phil Willink of the Shedd Aquarium, who heads the multi-year research project into the population decline of the mudpuppy and ways to better understand the aquatic salamander.

His talk will describe work currently being pursued by Jared Bilek, a doctoral candidate at Southern Illinois University, and previously done by Alicia Beattie, then a graduate student at the same institution. There also will be a contest for best signage for a proposed Save the Mudpuppy campaign.

Another panelist will be Suellen Burns, senior adviser for urban communities and partnerships for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. She will discuss a recommendation plan for the enhancement of William W. Powers State Fish & Wildlife Area.

The second morning panel, starting around 10:15 a.m., will discuss projects proposed for funding. First up is Young Choi, professor of ecology at Purdue University Northwest, who will discuss problems of invasive plants at Wolf Lake Memorial Park in Hammond.

A team of panelists, including retired science teacher and administrator Michael Kobe of Hammond, Tom Bloom of

2400 New York Ave., Whiting, IN 46394

219 933-7149 ◆ 312 220-0120 ◆ FAX: 219 473-4259

michael@wolflakeinitiative.org

<http://www.wolflakeinitiative.org>

the U.S. EPA and Sarah Coulter of the Calumet Collaborative, will talk about the proposed Calumet Container Nature Classroom.

Dave Graham, assistant commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, will discuss efforts to remove contamination on private properties along Indian Creek.

The first afternoon panel, starting around 1 p.m. and led by Chelsea Cottingham of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), will feature a discussion of services available for watershed managers. She will be joined by Joe Exl of NIRPC and Trevor Sample of Illinois EPA.

The second afternoon panel, starting around 1:20 p.m., will discuss planning for the watershed's future. Eric Schenck, executive director of the Illinois Conservation Foundation, will discuss projects he and the Illinois DNR have prioritized and for which they are seeking funding.

Charles O'Leary, deputy director of resource management for Cook County Forest Preserve District, will discuss the district's watershed plans for the future.

Tom Bacula, fish biologist for Indiana DNR, will discuss mapping the Indiana portion of Wolf Lake as well as future plans. John Heroff, director of Policy and Legislative Affairs of Chicago's 10th Ward, will discuss the outlook on the future for the 10th Ward.

During the lunch hour, four individuals will be honored as Watershed Volunteers of the Year. They are Joseph Kruczek and Joe Wright of Hammond and Jayme Boberek and Mary Loretta of Chicago's Hegewisch community.

Calumet College of St. Joseph is located at 2400 New York Ave. in Whiting. Further information on the meeting is available at AWLI's website, www.wolflakeinitiative.org, or by calling 219-933-7149.

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