

AWLI's wetlands festival

Features mudpuppy researcher

The researcher of the threatened mudpuppy at Wolf Lake will talk about her work at the 15th annual Wolf Lake Bi-State Wetlands, Wind & Water festival, May 23-24, at Wolf Lake.

Alicia Beattie, a Shedd Aquarium research associate and master's degree student at Southern Illinois University, will give a brief presentation of her work at 9 a.m. Sunday, May 24, at the visitor's center at William Powers State Fish & Wildlife Area, Chicago. She will then invite participants to observe or volunteer at her work site along the lake's shoreline.

Those who volunteer are asked to bring hip waders or tall boots.



Beattie holds mudpuppy

Beattie's talk and demonstration will conclude the two-day festival. It is conducted by the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative and is free to the public.

The festival begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 23, at the Environmental Education Center, 2405 Calumet Avenue, Hammond. Winners of the poster contest will be honored.

A talk on the natural areas along the Grand Calumet river follows.

At 10 a.m. Dr. Young Choi, Purdue University Calumet, will begin a hike along restored wetlands to view spring flowers and wildlife. Participants are asked to bring binoculars.

Others in attendance will depart to the old beach area at Wolf Lake for canoeing and kayaking, fishing and kite flying.

At 10:30 a.m. Dr. Joan Crist of Calumet College of St. Joseph, will conduct a demonstration with the help of the college's rowing crew. Crist coaches the crew.

Afternoon activities will be held at William Powers with fishing at 1 p.m. Canoeing starts at 1:30 p.m., followed by kite flying and face painting.

Sunday activities begins at 7 a.m. with a sunrise service by Rev. Dr. Zaki L. Zaki with an ecumenical choir and color guard. Breakfast follows at 8 a.m. in advance of

Beattie's talk.

The multi-year research project on mudpuppies was launched last year by Dr. Phil Willink, senior research biologist at the Shedd Aquarium. They are studying the biology and ecology of the mudpuppy population in Wolf Lake and along Chicago's Lake Michigan shoreline.

Specifically, they are gathering such baseline information as the amphibians' population dynamics, feeding habits and contributions to ecosystem functions.

Willink is familiar with Wolf Lake. He is author of *A Century of Shifting Fish Assemblages in Wolf Lake, Illinois-Indiana*, published in the *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science, 2009*. He has conducted research at Wolf Lake for decades.

The Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative is a bi-state, not-for-profit organization and land trust. It is headquartered at Calumet College of St. Joseph.

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