

Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative

A not-for-profit organization and land trust

Working across state boundaries to enhance Wolf Lake



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July 10, 2013

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Meetings to address issues
Facing Wolf Lake watershed

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For Immediate Release

Stormwater runoff and discharges to the Wolf Lake watershed will be among issues to be discussed at a series of public meetings beginning next month.

Sponsored by the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative (AWLI), the meetings initially will focus on ecological, ethical and legal concerns over the stormwater discharge of petroleum waste water by Wolf Lake Terminals, located at 3200 Sheffield Avenue, Hammond. Its plant site stretches to the Illinois border.

Last month Indiana renewed the company's permit to discharge wastes into bi-state Wolf Lake "so there may be no legal issue, unless you are Illinois users of the lake," explains Michael Boos, executive director of AWLI. "But what recourse do Illinois residents have?"

There also is an issue of fairness.

"Some may ask why a roofer is fined for dumping construction wastes, but a larger company receives a permit to discharge its wastes," Boos says. "We are asked other questions, as well."

Boos says concerns over discharges to the lake emphasize the need to again address the entire Wolf Lake watershed from a bi-state perspective as envisioned by the Bi-State Gatherings on Wolf Lake in 2000-2001 and pursued in subsequent years by Wolf Lake VIC (2002-2005) and AWLI's Vision Implementation Task Force (VITF, 2005-present).

AWLI has selected discussion topics for the first three meetings, the first of which begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, August 10, at the Environmental Education Center, 2405 Calumet Avenue, Hammond. To help organize subsequent meetings and work toward bi-state resolutions, AWLI is seeking co-sponsors from organized lake users, area organizations and local, state or federal government agencies.

The following is the schedule for the first three meetings:

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, August 10

Topic: Problems from stormwater runoff, discharges

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Michael Boos
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Management from Wolf Lake Industrial Center and Terminals will be invited to explain why the company continues to discharge wastewater into a public waterway 40 years after passage of the federal Clean Water Act. This would include relevant elements of their Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management will be invited to explain why it issues permits that allow companies to discharge wastes into a public waterway.

Discussion will follow on options companies have to comply with the spirit of the Clean Water Act with an emphasis on public comments from fishermen and hunters, windsurfers, canoeists/kayakers/rowers, birders, naturalists, joggers, cyclists, sailing enthusiasts and those who picnic on the lake. Discussion also will deal with construction debris discarded in the watershed..

A walk along Wolf Lake Terminals site at the state line will conclude the meeting.

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, September 14

Topic: *Hydrology of Wolf Lake along State Line and the Defense Logistics Center*

Management from the Defense Logistics Center will be invited to discuss their efforts to minimize runoff from entering Wolf Lake.

Discussion will focus on the hydrology along the state line and ways to protect habitat in this area of the watershed.

A bike ride along the state line will conclude the meeting.

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, October 12

Topic: *Recent and Future Enhancements to the Watershed*

The cities of Chicago and Hammond, counties of Lake and Cook, and the Departments of Natural Resources of Illinois and Indiana will be invited to bring participants up to date on improvements to the watershed and what improvements are planned in the next decade.

A hike along Wolf Lake's north channel and George Lake's north shoreline will follow.

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, November 9

Topic: TBD

A tour of improvements to Indian Creek and William Powers State Fish and Wildlife area will conclude the meeting.

AWLI is a not-for-profit organization and land trust that seeks to protect and enhance the Wolf Lake watershed. It sponsors annual events that promote the recreational and educational aspects of the watershed.

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Note to Editor: A copy of court documents relating to the Wolf Lake Terminals discharge and a map of the watershed is available on request.