

Update from SLAHA Lake Environment Committee November 2008

Environmental issues are often riddled with controversy and strong convictions and beliefs for all concerned. The Lake Environment Committee has experienced these issues first hand. We have agreed as a committee to accomplish anything to help our lake and its aquatic and wildlife. We have to work together.

First and foremost, we need to protect and preserve our lake and the entire Simonton Lake Area Home Owners' defined boundaries. The Lake Environment Committee has tackled its first task together. We would like to focus on our lake and its watershed, beginning with the aquatic plant life. The watershed issues affect all homes and the safety and condition of our drinking water. Secondly, recycling proposals are being obtained for leaves and recyclables. Our committee agreed that in order to accomplish the aforementioned, we are considering proposals from the J.F. New Company, for a watershed diagnostic study and an aquatic plant management plan. Keep in mind the study may take several months to complete following the natural cycle of our lake. Proposals for recycling in our neighborhoods and leaf pick up are being established with our State Representative, Tim Neese, through the Elkhart Recycling Initiative.

A lake diagnostic study does require a substantial amount of money. Good news for our association and our lake, there are state grants and funds available through the Lake and River Enhancement Project. J.F. New and Associates are at the helm applying for these grants and are familiar with what monies are available, the deadline for application and where to file the paperwork. This is part of their service. Part of the charges can be worked off by anyone who has a love of wildlife and our lake by learning to take water samples of the lake. The diagnostic company has agreed to train individuals to perform water readings of Simonton Lake. If you are interested please call the Lake Environment Committee at 903-6791.

Our lake and water, aquatic and wildlife are the keystone of our neighborhoods, home values and our enjoyment. We have to protect it in order to keep it and help it evolve. Can it be better? ...only if we do something now. The Department of Natural Resources 2007 Fisheries report by Rodney Edgall, states Simonton Lake's status on all fronts has not changed from 2005. Prior to 2005 there was an alarming drop in fish populations and the overall health of our lake.

We can bring more wildlife such as migratory birds, increase fish populations and aquatic plant management. We already know milfoil is present in our lake and has to be eradicated or controlled in very early stages. For more information regarding milfoil please access our website at www.simontonlake.org and follow the prompts for Indiana Department of Natural Resources through the feature "Wildlife in Our Backyard". Also as a community we are hurting our environment to toxic watershed by using non-organic lawn fertilizers.

The current state of our nation's energy and natural resource crisis should influence your consideration about the validity and urgency of this study and our recycling initiative. The amount of money and effort we have to invest as an association is small compared to what we will receive from the state and from our improved properties. It is an investment which deserves proper consideration by all whether you live on the shoreline or surrounding area. Many other lakes have had to go through this process to protect their natural resource and so should we. We have the opportunities to teach our children responsibility for the environment and make a positive mark on our earth. The Lake Environment Committee hopes this is only the beginning for SLAHA to create green and cutting edge ideas to make our neighborhood better.

Please give us ideas or feedback at www.simontonlake.org. We would love to hear from you, SLAHA member or not.

Yours in Conservation,

Lisa Kime, Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator

Lake Environment Committee