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LAKES COUNCIL: WORKING FOR YOU!

2019 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Name: _____
Lake: _____
Mailing address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Household membership \$25

Lake association \$50

Total enclosed _____

All gifts to the LaGrange County Lakes Council are tax-deductible. LCLC is a 501c3 tax-exempt group.

Mail to: LaGrange County Lakes Council
PO Box 86, LaGrange, IN 46761



With 425 individual and business members, 18 member Lake Associations and a mailing list of 3,000 waterside residents, LaGrange County Lakes Council is a busy group! Staffed on a part-time basis, LCLC is working to educate and improve conservation efforts on our lakes and throughout the watershed.

Not yet a member? You should be! LCLC invests in water quality testing on all member lakes, and works to protect your lake property values. **Join us!**

Is Your Neighbor Rotationally Grazing his Livestock? Why Should You Care?

The colonial and frontier period in the United States made survival in the New World a contest for survival; man vs nature. This was reflected in all aspects of life, and affected people's attitudes toward wildlife, natural resources, and agriculture. As a result of the census of 1890, the United States government declared the frontier "Closed" in the lower 48 states, and a new era slowly, but surely, started to emerge.

The Dust Bowl of the 1930's forced American farmers to face the necessity of changing some agricultural practices to conserve soil resources that had previously been taken for granted. No wonder, then, that USDA's first department dedicated to conservation focused on soil and was aptly named the "Soil Conservation Service." As time has progressed, we have become increasingly aware that, as important as soil is, no less important are other related natural resources like water and air. Thus, in 1993, the name of the agency was changed to reflect that realization, from SCS to NRCS-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In the 1990's and early 2000's, rotational grazing became a major focus of NRCS, and by extension, of many county Soil & Water Conservation Districts across the country. So, what makes rotational grazing of interest to governmental agencies dedicated to natural resources conservation?

Rotational Grazing as a farming technique incorporates a few practices that dovetail well into the overall idea of what "conservation farming" is all about. It covers large tracts of land with dense grass and legume forage. This holds topsoil in place with a dense mat of fibrous roots, prevents erosion and sedimentation, and keeps soil where it belongs. That accomplishes a primary goal of conservation farming. One of the first things we "SWC-Ders" teach young people is the difference between "soil" and "dirt".

Do you know what that difference is? Soil is what forms the floor outside-it's what you stand on, what you live on, the platform of life. All food ultimately is derived from the soil. Soil is located where the Good Lord put it, and where it is intended to be. Soil only becomes "dirt" when some force-wind, water, or activity of some kind-takes soil from where it should be and puts it where it shouldn't-across mom's freshly mopped kitchen floor, or clogging the bottom of the tile or ditch, for example. Since rotational grazing involves covering the land in forage, this physically accomplishes a great deal toward keeping the soil where it belongs. This method of farming not only conserves topsoil resources, but at the same time, by limiting erosion and sedimentation, positively impacts surface water quality and enhances drainage for the benefit of northeastern Indiana's lakes, rivers, streams and ponds.

Rotational grazing makes the cow herself take the place of the harvest equipment. While she is out harvesting, she naturally spreads the manure so that most of it does not have to be scraped up, transported and spread mechanically. The cow ends up happier, cleaner and more content, while the much of the equipment is rendered unnecessary, and much time is saved for the farm family. This, in turn, makes more time for non-farm activities. A family that has more time for church activities, social functions, swimming, fishing, or other interests-also ends up being a happier family as well. Production is streamlined, resources are conserved...rotational grazing doesn't solve all problems on the family farm, but it certainly does make some positive inroads on quite a few!

Authors: Franke, Martin – NRCS-CD, LaGrange Indiana

CLEAN, UNCONTAMINATED WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO ALL FORMS OF LIFE.

However, most of Indiana's waterways struggle with sediment runoff, excess nutrients such as phosphorus, and even infectious bacteria such as E. coli. HEC is working to protect Indiana's water resources by focusing on the greatest threats to Indiana's drinking water, rivers and lakes.

The Issue

Indiana faces many challenges to water quality: nutrient pollution, manure runoff, excess sediment, inadequate sewage treatment, and industrial contamination.

Challenges to the state's water quality are also challenges to drinking water safety. Approximately 75% of Hoosiers get their drinking water from a public drinking water system. The other 25% use their own wells. Well owners are responsible for the safety of their water and should test it regularly. Our public drinking water systems source their water from Indiana's rivers, reservoirs, and groundwater so they sensitive to pollution problems. In a 2015 survey, 80% of Indiana drinking water utilities said they had had trouble with poor quality source water.

Testing of water quality in lakes and rivers by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) show that our most prevalent challenge is high levels of E coli, which are bacteria from animal and human feces. IDEM estimates that the biggest sources are livestock operations and inadequate treatment of human sewage, including failing septic systems and sewage pipes that go straight to tile drains, ditches or streams. Manure and sewage also contribute to nutrient pollution, which is an excess of nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus, in water. Other sources include fertilizers, soil erosion, and urban storm-water. While nitrogen and phosphorus are important components of a healthy ecosystem, there can be "too much of a good thing". An overabundance of nutrients in rivers and lakes can lead to an overgrowth of algae and loss of other aquatic species. An overabundance in groundwater can lead to high nitrate levels in wells which can cause water-related diseases, like 'blue baby syndrome'.

Another water quality challenge is Indiana's long history of industries leaving behind contaminated sites and contaminated groundwater. Smaller businesses like dry cleaners and gas stations have also been a significant source of groundwater contamination. Each site of groundwater contamination reduces what can safely be used for drinking water.

Author: Hoosier Environmental Council

www.hecweb.org



A Special Place

The beauty of lake living is a powerful magnet that draws me in day after day. We are living in an extremely stressful time where we seem to be pulled in every direction. Our lakes provide a sanctuary where we can escape. Whether its ice fishing and skating in the winter, cruising on the pontoon, kayaking, or fishing in the summer sun, our lakes provide us with the opportunity to unwind and relax. The lake is good for the mind, body and soul!

Those who live on the lake are a special breed who appreciate the opportunity the lake gives us to really bond with and enjoy our families. It's so nice to see kids playing in the yard, swimming and fishing and not stuck in their room playing video games. The smiles on the faces of those kids after tubing around the lake is priceless.

Being an early riser affords me the opportunity to see those beautiful sunrises reflected in the water and it not only reminds me of nature's power and grace, but also that I am living in the place where I belong.

Helping to preserve and protect all of the beautiful lakes within our county's boundaries is the goal of the Lagrange County Lakes Council. I encourage every lake resident to get involved because you can make a difference. Support your Lake Association or if you don't have one, get together with your neighbors and form one. Plan to attend a Lagrange County Lakes Council meeting and see what we are all about. It's a place where you can share ideas and learn from other lake property owners.

There are many organizations both State and local that offer help and advice to lake association and residents. Investigate and take advantage of grants and other programs offered by the DNR. The Lagrange County Soil and Water Conservation District can help you learn how to make a rain garden, plant a Filter Strip that removes contaminants from ground water runoff, or you can buy a tree to plant at the annual tree sale.

An area of concern to every lake resident is our water quality. The LaGrange County Lakes Council conducts water testing that include Nitrates, PH and e-coli along with 7 other categories that help determine the water conditions of the lake. The results of those tests can be found on the Council website at www.lagrangelakes.org.

In closing I encourage everyone to become a member of The Lagrange County Lakes Council and help in the fight to protect and preserve our lakes and all the beauty and enjoyment they bring.

Steve McElhoe, McClish Lake and Lake of the Woods

LaGrange County Lakes Council Meeting Date:

Final meeting date for 2019

October 26th, 9:00 a.m. at Par Gil; 2335 N St Rd 9

**Hosted by the LaGrange County Soil & Water Conservation District
Martin Franke; District Manager**

**The LaGrange County Lakes Council
has been working for you all summer.**

**Water quality test results for May and July are posted on our website;
www.lagrangelakes.org Check back as there will soon
be results for August water tests.**

**Please consider becoming a member to help defray
the costs of the water quality testing.**

