



Fish/Royer Lake Association

Newsletter: November 2019

Visit our website at fishandroyerlakes.com

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Did You Know...???

-The lake association raised \$2500 at the fall fundraiser and had 100 in attendance. We all enjoyed a delicious meal and musical entertainment. Thanks to all who came and especially to our raffle and silent auction donors!

- Our lake association's October fish stocking added 3600 walleye and 360 northern pike to our lakes. Please observe the voluntary catch and release policy on these fish for the next few years until we get the gizzard shad problem in check. (It is illegal to keep any walleye under 16 inches anyway.) We have invested over \$15,000 from our lake association in the past two years to improve our lakes' fishery.

- Larry Koza, the DNR district fish biologist spoke at our August Pig Roast and will have last summer's fish survey published early 2020 for all to see.

-Dredging the dead end channel on Fish Lake will be the subject of a meeting at Nancy Block's house soon. All channel residents are encouraged to attend. Contact Nancy for more info.

-Volunteers raised over \$5000 for the lake association treasury by clearing East Fly Creek this past winter and again this summer. THANKS!

-There are over 130 paid members now in our Fish/Royer Lake Association. There are approximately 220 properties on the lake and channels. Please encourage neighbors to join.



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-If you have questions about upcoming changes regarding your sewers, call the LaGrange County Regional District Utilities Office at 260-499-6349. They are very helpful. Changes are coming in rates and where our sewage will be treated.

-The winner of this year's \$400 Chicago Joe Scholarship is Nicole Pettifor. She is the granddaughter of Lydia and Royer Allman, and will be attending Cornerstone University.

She plans to pursue a degree in Digital Media along with a minor in Creative Writing. Her winning essay was posted on our facebook page. Congratulations to Nicole, and thank you to those who contributed to the scholarship fund!



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-Fish/Royer Lake Association is now a 501c3 not for profit organization. If you are interested in making an end-of-the-year donation to the organization, it is a tax write-off. Contact our treasure Dave McIntosh (765-749-6761) or Erik Pearson (260-463-6789) for needed tax form info. If your company does matching donations, that would be great!



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Want to share our world??

There have been inquiries about places to rent on our lakes for a weekend, week, etc. If you would be interested in renting out your place, contact us. We will put that information in our next newsletter and on our facebook page.



President's Corner: Fish Migration

As many of you may already know, we were able to release 3600 Walleye and 360 Northern Pike into our lakes in October. These fish were all released at the Fish Lake public access. We had to release the fish at this access due to the 5 inches of rain that we received the previous 2 days. Unfortunately, the only access that can be used to release fish on Royer Lake was too wet and muddy to allow the transport truck to back down to the edge of the lake for the release of any fish. I have had several individuals state that they are concerned that the fish that were released will not migrate over to Royer Lake.

Walleye, by nature, are inclined to migrate. During 2011 and 2012, Michigan State University used acoustic telemetry to document the Walleye migration on Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay. Acoustic telemetry is a tag tracking system that allows researchers to use 3D fish tracks in real time. Literally hundreds of fish can be tracked simultaneously, and data is accessed via satellite. Results of this study showed that Walleye migrated to Saginaw Bay, 350 km away in 2011 and returned to Lake Huron in 2012, and that the Walleye migrated throughout virtually all of the U.S. shoreline.

Walleye are not ambush predators by nature, like bass and northern pike. Walleye feed by roaming and hunting their food down using keen senses like eyesight and their lateral line to locate and pursue their prey. Pike are a territorial fish; this means they are not a schooling fish such as walleye and pan fish. Therefore, they will disperse themselves through out the entirety of both lakes.

Only two days after we stocked these fish, I received a text from a resident on the west side of Royer Lake who had already caught and released one of the pike. My son has also caught and released three Pike in the channel in front of his house. A resident on the South side of Royer Lake also told me that he caught and released ten of the

small walleye that were released at the mouth of the channel on the Royer Lake side. Unfortunately, there will always be people who think they know more than the scientists and the researchers, and they will tell you that fish stocked on one lake will not migrate to other lakes. I think that not only does the study done by Michigan State prove that our stocked fish will migrate through out both lakes, but the people who caught some of the fish we stocked just a few short days after the day we stocked them, verify the evidence of the migratory habits.

Erik Pearson



What's with the bubbles on Royer Lake?

The air bubbles you see coming up from the bottom of Royer Lake at the south end are from four aerators. They are pumping air to reduce water pollutants that have settled near the bottom. According to Bob Drach, the resident who has started this project, this is a "proactive approach to aid the lake in getting rid of some of the pollutants in the water." Before Bob retired, he worked at BP Refinery in Whiting, Indiana, at the wastewater treatment plant for twelve years. Bob and his family have had a place on Royer Lake since 1972. He has seen the water clarity vary in the lakes over the years and is hoping this project helps clear the water in that area. He is using his own resources to purchase the aerators and equipment. He and a neighbor are paying the electricity costs for the pumps. This runs about \$30 per month per pump, and they run the pumps about six months a year. The aerators cost between \$1350 and \$1600 each, depending on the size. Bob's equipment was purchased online from The Pond Guy and Absolute Aquatics.



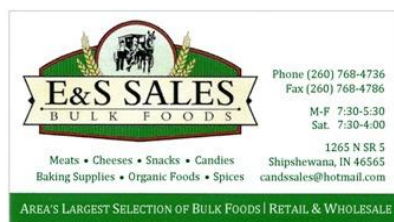
Bob explains:

“By pumping air into the water from the bottom up, the benefits are:

1. It reduces the muck and excess nutrients found on the bottom of the lake. You are essentially stirring up the muck and releasing it into the water column.
2. With the muck/pollutants released into the water column, you’re aiding the aerobic bacteria to feed on the nutrients. Also, some gasses will be released into the atmosphere where it would be dispersed rather than being trapped at the bottom of the lake.
3. The added nutrients will encourage the colonization of beneficial bacteria, which give us more bacteria to digest the nutrients.
4. With the increase of bacteria growth, more dissolved oxygen will be needed to sustain fish life. Thus the excess dissolved oxygen will reduce the risk of a fish kill and maintain a healthy water environment.
5. Eliminates the thermocline.
6. With reduced pollutants/nutrients in the water, it will reduce algae growth.

We don’t need to have an algae bloom that can consume the dissolved oxygen and cause a fish kill. An algae bloom can result in our fish going ‘belly up’ and we certainly don’t want that!”

Bob is awaiting hip surgery and hopes to be back on his feet next spring. He is hoping to add bacteria to the area of the aerators in order to increase the dissolved oxygen in the area. Bob is more than willing to discuss his project with other lake residents. He is available at 219 798-9989.



Summary of Larry Koza’s report on Fish/Royer Lakes’ fish study

DNR Fish Biologist Larry Koza volunteered to come to the August Pig Roast, and he did a presentation on the findings of the fish studies the DNR has been doing on our lakes. Larry said the actual numbers of fish surveyed during the studies will be available after they put all the info together this

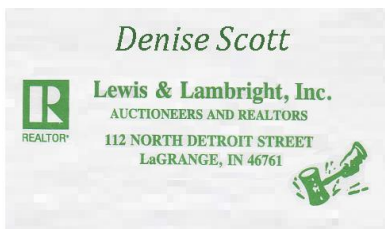
winter. The DNR does field studies during the good weather months and then puts together their official reports over the winter. When the report is available next spring, we will relay all the information to our lake residents.

Koza said the bluegill population appears to be stunted with only about one percent of the bluegill pulled up being over seven inches. This could be due to the large gizzard shad population devouring their food sources. The bass population was strong and good sized as they feed heavily on the gizzard shad. Large channel catfish were plentiful. Walleye were still small but he did find a few large ones. Our stocked walleye will take three to four years to get to the legal size limit of 16 inches.



Larry said we are on the right path as far as controlling the gizzard shad population. Stocking predator fish like walleye and northern pike will help. Channel catfish will also feed on the shad and their eggs. But he pointed out that we will always have gizzard shad because we are an open lake system with incoming and outgoing streams that allow the shad to come into our lakes. Chemical treatment for gizzard shad is very expensive and ineffective for the long term on open lake systems like ours. Larry said that while we do have a lot of gizzard shad, he has seen worse situations on other lakes in his career.

In discussing the clarity of our water, Larry said the rains can contribute to the cloudiness. He also said that the gizzard shad will stir up the bottom while searching for food. That can lead to cloudier water. Larry pointed out the importance of weed cover in our lakes. Because Fish Lake is like a bowl with few shallow areas, the weedy areas are important and should be preserved if possible. In addition, weeds struggle to grow in cloudy water because they cannot get needed light. Our weedy areas are diminishing and this becomes a problem for the fishery. Fish need the weedy areas for feeding and breeding. Larry encouraged us to be very cautious about treating the lake water for weeds. We need our lake weeds!



Larry pointed out that he is very aware that our association is raising our own money to stock the lakes with predator fish. He said the DNR's walleye are currently not available for our lakes. The DNR had preset policies that determine where the fish are distributed. Evidently we don't qualify. Koza did say he occasionally has some surplus fish and will keep us in mind when that happens. Last fall Larry did manage to get us 3000 small channel catfish, our first DNR stocking in many, many years. This fall our lake association will again pay to stock 3500 walleye, 6-8 inches, and 400 10-inch northern pike.

If you want to talk with Larry Koza, he works at the Fawn River State Fish Hatchery in Orland, Indiana. You can email him at lkoza@dnr.in.gov.
Article contributed by Dave Schnieders

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Treasurer's Report:

General Fund: \$3848.34
 Fish Stocking: \$6474.00
 Scholarship: \$ 10.00
 Total= \$10,332.34 as of 11/1/19

Expenses:

\$437.89 for new buoys
 \$10,260.00 for fish stocking



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And a special thanks to Christine Benak, who has so diligently been keeping up to date our facebook page. Also thanks to those contributing pictures to the page. We have some amazing photographers on our lakes!

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