



Fish/Royer Lake Association

September 2021

FISH / ROYER LAKE FUNDRAISER DINNER:

Tickets are now available for our annual Fish/Royer Lake Fundraiser Dinner set for Saturday, September 25, 2021. Everyone Is Welcome! \$20 will get you a great Broasted Chicken Dinner, along with great company and great fun. There will also be plenty of generously donated items available for door prizes, raffles and silent auction; as well as a 50/50 drawing. Come join us and your lake neighbors and friends in a night out, to help raise monies for our Fish/Royer Lake Association!

* Mark Your Calendars and Grab Your Tickets Today! *

A limited amount of tickets will be available at the door, so purchase your tickets in advance by contacting any of the Association Board members listed on the back page.

FISH / ROYER LAKE FUNDRAISER DINNER

Saturday, September 25, 2021
6:00 P.M.

Broasted Chicken Dinner

* Raffles * Door Prizes *
* 50/50 Drawing * Silent Auction *

\$20 - Tickets Available at Door

American Legion Post 215
100 Industrial Pkwy - LaGrange, IN 46761



Congratulations to Both of our 2021 Chicago Joe Memorial Scholarship Winners:

Joshua Pettifor, grandson of Royer & Lydia Allman
and

Gavan McIntosh, son of David & Connie McIntosh

The Board voted to award both essay applicants with
a \$500 Chicago Joe Memorial Scholarship!

The essays have been posted on our website for viewing.
Also on our website, you can find the article on how
the Chicago Joe Memorial Scholarship came to be.

* After receiving feedback at the General Meeting in August, the Board has decided to table the vote on what to do with any donated monies for years in which no essay applications are received and will continue to roll any monies remaining in the fund to the following year. *

In addition, the 2020-2021 Board motioned and approved: Any individual being awarded a Chicago Joe Memorial Scholarship will be in the amount of \$500. If the Scholarship Fund lacks the monies, the difference will be met using monies from the General Fund.



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Gizzard Shad and Fish Management Update

After talking with the County and state fisheries biologists, we learned that the current Gizzard Shad problem is most likely due to a fish hatchery that accidentally emptied a batch of Shad into the Pigeon River (around 2011 or 2012). Being a Tributary of the Pigeon River, Fly Creek was how the Shad gained access to Fish Lake and Royer Lake. Starting around 2016, the prevalence of Gizzard Shad became very apparent and we started seeing their impact on our fishery. As we all know, the Gizzard Shad has created several issues for our lakes; for example, the overabundance of Gizzard Shad has resulted in stunting the size of Bluegills. Because Bluegill's and Gizzard Shad's primary food source is Zooplankton, they compete for the same food source resulting in smaller size Bluegills. The Zooplankton is vital to Bluegill during the first stages of their life cycle. Because Gizzard Shad are so dominant in our lakes, they are decreasing the number of Zooplankton available for Bluegills resulting in small Bluegills.

In recent years, we have had success in significantly decreasing the number of Gizzard Shad in our lakes. Through our stocking program, growth in association members, a high percentage of members donating to the fish stocking fund, and the extra work (e.g. clearing Fly Creek) to bring additional funds to support fish stocking, we greatly reduced the number of Gizzard Shad. Unfortunately, we will always have to have a fish stocking program to contain the numbers of Gizzard Shad.

To regain a healthy ecosystem, we need to continue to reduce the Gizzard Shad population and reduce the stunted Bluegill and large White Sucker population. We do this by stocking Walleye, Catfish, Northern Pike and keeping some of the small Bluegills. By lowering the Gizzard Shad and White Suckers, not only will it result in a healthier fishery, but it will also help with the clarity of the lakes. The Walleye are vital because they gorge themselves on small Shad; the small Catfish will eat the eggs laid by the Shad in the Spring and feast on the newly hatched Shad fry. Once the Catfish reach 4 lbs., they will then start eating small bluegills. Pike are possibly the most important of all because they will eat every size of Shad, including the sexually mature females, which can reach sizes over 14 inches in length! Pike are also territorial, so even when they are not hungry, they will kill the Shad just for being in their presence. Pike also love to eat White Suckers, which have also become a problem in our lakes.

by Erik Pearson - August 1, 2021

We have learned that we will no longer be approved to stock Northern Pike due to possible genetic contamination between the native Pike in our lakes and the stocked Pike escaping into the Pigeon River. Therefore, if we want to reduce the Gizzard Shad and White Suckers, we all need to practice catch-and-release when we catch Northern Pike. The larger females, we think, are reproducing in our lakes, which will help sustain the Northern Pike. Unfortunately, we will not know if they are truly reproducing for a couple more years.

Fish Management Recommendations

1. Keep the majority of small panfish. Catch-and-release small Rock Bass.
2. Consider catch-and-release for Catfish over 4 lbs.
3. Start keeping some of the legal-sized Walleye for consumption.
4. Consider catch and release for Walleye over 24 inches.
5. Catch-and-release all Northern Pike.
6. Do have fun catching Walleye and Northern Pike as we have worked hard over the last three years to enhance the fishery of our lakes!

In contrast, it has been recommended for Walleye we start keeping some of the legal-sized Walleye for a couple of reasons. First, Walleye stocking will be continued each year at a rate of 1690 each Fall. Second, Walleye are being stocked for our consumption and help control the Gizzard Shad problem. The goal is to create and maintain a healthy fishery for both sport fishermen and those of us who enjoy a bountiful meal of fresh fish caught right out of our lakes. So, let's all do our part and keep panfish, Catfish, Walleye and catch-and-release the Northern Pike. By reducing the Gizzard Shad and White Suckers, not only will it result in a healthier fishery, but it will also help with the lake clarity.

Finally, we would like to thank all our association members for renewing each year and the members who continue to donate extra funds to support the fish stocking program. The success of our fishing stocking program and the development an outstanding fishery depends on your continued support!

Article Update as of August 30th:

After hours of work between Erik Pearson, our fish stocking provider, and the DNR, our fish stocking permit for 2021 has been amended to include 360 Northern Pikes! However, this will be the last year the DNR will approve pike stocking for our lakes, for reasons mentioned in the above article. Therefore, we are still requesting that everyone practice catch-and-release of Northern Pike in order to continue to the reduction of Gizzard Shad and White Suckers. Thank you Erik for getting our lakes one more stock of Pikes!

Denise Scott
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Lake Water and Aquatic Plant Update

Members of the Association Board have been meeting with LaGrange County and DNR officials with the goal of better understanding the water clarity of our lakes. At this time, the Board will be meeting with several consultants to determine the best approach to addressing the water clarity of our lakes. It is important to note that in every meeting it has been shared by officials that they do not think we have a watershed issue or water quality issue (e.g., algae). In almost every meeting the type of lakes we have (e.g., muddy bottom), Gizzard Shad, loss of aquatic plants, and now White Suckers are mentioned as the most likely causes of the decreased clarity of the water.

The plan is to meet with several consultants provided by the Division of Fish and Wildlife aquatic biologist for the Northeast Region to gain their insights on conducting a Lake Diagnostic Study and/or a Lake Watershed Study. These meetings will occur over the next few months. After meeting with the consultants and if recommended, the Board will consider applying for a grant through the Indiana Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Program.

LARE proposals are due January 15th and are only accepted one time a year. Therefore, the goal will be to submit a LARE proposal, if recommended, for the January 15, 2022 deadline. We are aware that the process has been slow but do want to make sure we take an informed and strategic approach to finding answers related to the questions we all have related to the water clarity of our lakes. Also, the LARE Program requires proposals include a study outline and estimate from a consultant and we need time to meet with 2 to 3 consultants, allow them time to develop their proposals, and allow time for the Board to review their proposals. The Board will notify members on whether it will be recommending to the Association whether to pursue a LARE grant prior to the end of this year. We will definitely keep members notified of our progress and plans moving forward as we begin answering our questions related to the water quality of our lakes.

Lake Water Article Update as of September 13th:

David McIntosh has contacted the first consultant, who is in the process of reviewing our lakes and reports. The Board is currently waiting on receipt of their proposed study outline and estimate. Thank you for David for your work on this.

by David McIntosh - August 1, 2021

An application was submitted to the Division of Fish and Wildlife to transplant aquatic plants on Royer Lake as a pilot study. The application is requesting transplanting aquatic plants from the north cove area on Royer Lake to the shallow eastern shelf on Royer Lake. The removal of aquatic plants will not harm the area where they are being removed. The removal areas only will likely be around 10 X 10 feet plots. In visiting with DNR, they only wanted to pilot transplanting on Royer lake this year to see if the transplanting process is viable. A recent study found that over the last 3 to 5 years, the aquatic plants on our lakes have decreased by over 80%! This is an attempt to begin to reverse this process and re-establish aquatic plants in other areas of our lakes. Aquatic plants offer cover for fish, provide some fish cover as they spawn, help filter the lake water, reduce wave action that stirs up sediment, and enhances fishing. Once we receive approval, we will reach out to lake members for volunteers to assist in the transplanting of the aquatic plants.

Aquatic Plant Article Update as of September 13th:

The transplanting of some lily pads on Royer Lake took place on the morning of September 3rd. We are now waiting to see if they will take in their new spots. New lily pad growth was also spotted around both lakes as well. We are feeling positive that with future transplanting, time and patience, our aquatic plants will return to a normal level. Thank you to David McIntosh for working on a transplanting plan with the DNR, and to our transplant volunteers Jolyn Strahm, Christine Benak, Jay Benak and Dave Schnieders.

As acting president of the Fish / Royer Lake Association, I have decided to table the voting of creating a new fund or renaming of the current Fish Stocking fund until a study outline and an estimate are received. We will then discuss amongst the board members whether we want to move forward. If we decide that we could benefit from creating another fund separate from the general fund then we will reach out to our association members for an official vote. In the mean time, we are diligently working towards improving our knowledge and understanding of our lakes water ecology to better serve our residents. - Jolyn Strahm



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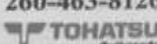
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ASSOCIATION BOARD MESSAGES:

What a nice turnout to our August General Meeting and Election, considering how crazy hot the heat was! We hope our members enjoyed the food, music, door prizes and theme; that everyone found the discussions as interesting and productive as we did; and that it showed how much the Association appreciates our members!

LaGrange County REMC Broadband:

A thank you to Mark Leu, CEO, who spoke at our General Meeting regarding the implementation of fiber optic internet service for our area. If you haven't already pre-registered, help our community out and do so by going to: https://broadband.lagrangeremc.com/front_end/zones



David McIntosh has chosen to resign as Treasurer

As most of you may know, David McIntosh, who has been our treasurer for the past 3.5 years, has chosen to resign from the position. He has devoted countless hours with our finances, as well as working on every fly creek clearing project, editing by-laws, organizing movie nights, placing fish structures, building wood duck boxes, taking the lead on researching our lake clarity and much more. We as a board are sure we speak for all our members when we say Thank You David. Your time and service to our lake community is greatly appreciated!

Board Election: Per our by-laws, we are able to have from 3 to 9 elected board members. They should be split between both the two lakes, when possible, and must be split between opposing two year terms. Therefore, existing board members have one year left to their terms, while newly voted board members will have two year terms. In addition to board members, we have committee positions, so more individuals can participate. If you are interested in being a committee lead or member, please let any of our board members know. The 2021 paid member attendees casted their votes and their votes have been tallied, and our 2021-2022 Association Board is as follows...



OUR 2021-2022 ASSOCIATION BOARD:

Jolyn Strahm, President - Fish Lake - one year term
- contact: (260) 463-6135 or jolynstrahm@gmail.com

Jeff Slabaugh, Vice President - Fish Lake - two year term
- contact: (574) 971-6814 or jeff@pbnj.org

Mark Albert, Treasurer - Channel - two year term
- contact: (260) 499-1450 or mendyandmark@live.com

Christine Benak, Secretary - Royer Lake - one year term
- contact: (708) 431-5194 or krisy23@aol.com

Tom McCue, board - Royer Lake - two year term
- contact: (260) 442-7821 or cagermcq@aol.com

Jay Benak, board - Royer Lake - two year term
- contact: (847) 226-8565 or pipefitterjay@comcast.net

Ron Lucas, board - Fish Lake - two year term
- contact: (260) 760-9091 or ronlucas48@gmail.com

Erik Pearson, board - Royer Lake - one year term
- contact: (260) 463-6789 or erikpearson4@gmail.com

David Schnieders, board - Fish Lake - one year term
- contact: (317) 345-2918 or djschnied@gamil.com

Bob Considine, committee - Fish Lake
- contact: (513) 518-1473 or bobconsidine345@gmail.com



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Treasurer's Report September 11, 2021: \$ 23,976.39

General Fund:	\$ 6,301.39	Buoys:	\$ 795.00
Fish Stocking:	\$ 16,870.00	Scholarship:	\$ 10.00



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Don't miss out! Be sure we have your updated address to receive our newsletters. Message Christine Benak thru our Facebook page, or email to krisy23@aol.com