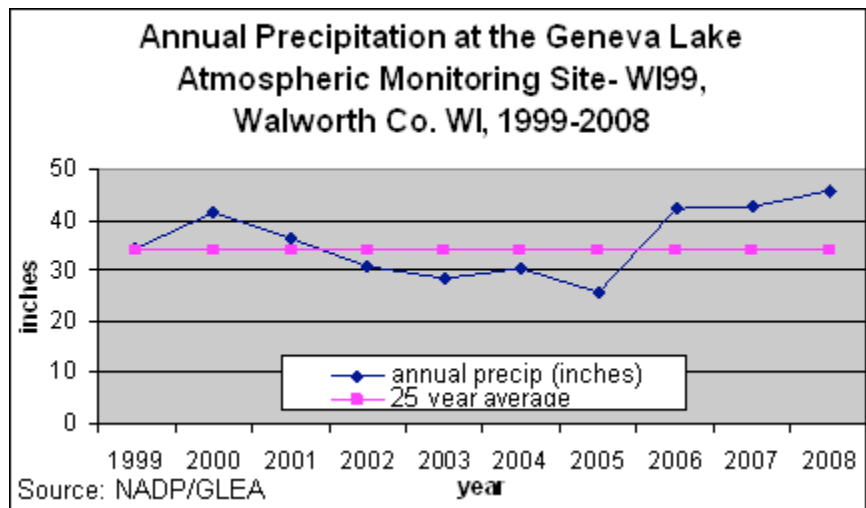


### 2008-09 Winter

After a cold and snowy 2007-08 winter one might have thought that was enough. Yet the winter of 2008-09 has followed in similar fashion with early snow and long lasting cold. Ice-on for Geneva Lake was officially January 11, 2009. That is the earliest ice-on date in 10 years since a 1999 ice-on date of January 7. However in 1999 the ice didn't even last a month as the lake was ice free by February 5, 1999. We have already outlasted that date as we are in the last week of February and there is a good 12 inches of ice on much of the lake.

As we have all learned if we have lived in Wisconsin for any time, the weather can change fast. An inch and a half of rain and some warm south winds the last week of December 2008 resulted in the significant amount of snow disappearing in a couple of days. As the sun gets higher in the sky, shadows shorten and daylight lengthens, snow will soon be a forgotten commodity. For now, let's not get too far ahead of ourselves as March can bring some nasty weather.

Year 2008 was another above normal precipitation year, exceeding the 24 yr. average by 11.64 inches. This brings the 10 year total to 17.19 inches above the 25 year average. Only four consecutive years had below precipitation, 2002-2005.



After a wet 2007 fall, the spring and early summer of 2008

brought more heavy rains with April being 2.55 inches above normal, June and July being 2.40 and 3.13 inches above normal. One very wet week, June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, brought almost 4.33 inches of rain and raised lake level to 9 inches above the spillway crest.

### A New “Footprint” to be Concerned About.

With a heightened concern about our impacts on planet Earth, we have all been warned to reduce our “carbon footprint”. A recent article in the Wall Street Journal rises awareness about a new and perhaps more important “footprint” that we need to be more informed about, our Water Footprint.

Companies and water conservationist are taking a closer look at the cost of “doing business’ in terms of water usage. This includes not just the water consumed directly but also the amount of water that is used to produce everything to get the product to the market. For example a hamburger takes about 630 gallon of water to make. That includes everything from the water needed to grow the corn, to feed the cattle, to process the meat, to package and market the burger. (See the water foot print of various products listed at the end of this newsletter.)

The article goes on to say that a large water footprint may not be bad if you are in an area where water is plentiful. Regardless, recognizing one’s water footprint will play a large role in water conservation. The first step in conserving water is to know how much and where is it being used.

Many companies in the food and beverage business are giving serious recognition to their water footprint and its impact on their future growth and production. Some are already tracking their footprints and have initiated better water conservation practices in some of their plants located oversea in areas vulnerable to future water shortages. With world population growing exponentially while the amount of water on the planet remains the same, the need to reduce our water footprints is going to become more important for our survival on this third rock from the sun.

### **Teaching the Teachers**

The George Williams College of Aurora University is offering a Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership, Earth and Space Science. This new program offered only on the George Williams Campus, is designed to produce better science teachers. In addition to 18 credits of Master Level education courses, it includes 18 credits in science. Working with Yerkes and the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency coursed in earth and space science, to include geology, water resources, meteorology, astronomy, sun, planets and moons, oceanography and limnology are being offered.

### **Slow No Wake Bill (SB 12)**

Geneva Lake has long had a slow no wake zone within 200 ft of the shore. Although initially established for safety, it also plays a vital role in protecting the extremely sensitive yet valuable shoreline area of Geneva Lake. Proposed new Wisconsin legislation, SB 12, would establish a no wake zone within 100 feet of a lake’s shoreline for motorboats. This proposal, not as protective as Geneva Lake’s, includes an opt-out provision, allowing local government to exclude lakes if the law significantly impacts recreation. Pick-up and drop zones for water skiers would also be excluded.

### **Voluntary Guidelines for Preventing Invasive Species Spread.**

Invasive species threaten our woods and waters. Buckthorn, garlic muster, gypsy moths and ash bore are a few invasives threatening our woodlands. To reduce the threat to our woodlands, a recreational

advisory committee of the Wisconsin Council of Forestry has developed some voluntary best management practices (BMP) for many forestry recreational activities. The committee has spent two years gathering input from more than 70 recreation organizations, environmental groups, and agencies to develop comprehensive BMPs to help prevent the introduction and/or further spread of invasive plants, insects, and diseases on private and public lands while recreating outdoors. Additional information about the voluntary BMPs for invasive species can be found on the Wisconsin Council on Forestry Web site at [council.wisconsinforestry.org](http://council.wisconsinforestry.org). or contact Ms. Bernie Williams, Invasive Species BMP Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources-FR/4, P.O. Box 7921, Madison WI 53707-7921. The deadline for both online and written comments is Friday March 20.

### **Update on Ballast Water Legislation**

More than 180 nonnative fish, plants, insects and organisms have entered the Great Lakes since the early 1800s, disrupting the food chain, fouling beaches, clogging infrastructure and costing citizens, industry and businesses more than \$200 million a year. Research has shown the primary way aquatic invasive species enter the Great Lakes is when ocean-going vessels discharge ballast water. Inaction at the federal level has many Great Lake States initiating their own efforts to control this spread of invasive species in the great lakes.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has recently developed a proposed state ballast water permitting process that is now open for public comment. The proposed permit requires commercial ocean-going ships and those transporting cargo between Great Lakes ports to take steps to reduce aquatic invasive species in the ballast water they release into Wisconsin waters. The permit would be valid for five years. Ocean-going ships would have to meet strict standards for the number of living organisms allowed in the ballast water they discharge in Wisconsin ports.

“The best solution to this problem is a federal one but we cannot wait for Congress to act,” said Secretary Frank. “This permit will help stop the spread of these invasive species that take a steep toll on our Great Lakes, inland waterways and \$13 billion dollar tourism industry. Under Governor Doyle’s leadership, we will continue to work with Wisconsin’s congressional delegation to achieve strong federal regulations and more federal funding to fight aquatic invasive species on the Great Lakes.”

The Environmental Assessment is available for public review and can be found online at [Ballast Water Discharge General Permit](#) or obtained at [Paul.Luebke@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Paul.Luebke@wisconsin.gov) Public comments on the proposed permit will be accepted from Feb. 20, 2009, through March 23, 2009 and should be sent to Mr. Luebke. He can be reach by phone at (608) 266-0234, by e-mail, or by mail at P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI. The hearing on the general permit is set for 10 a.m., March 23 at the DNR Southeast Regional Headquarters Room 140, 2300 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Dr., Milwaukee.

## **Mussels Cross the Rockies**

In a recent front page article in a Sunday edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, a familiar story about a major threat to lakes takes on a new look. Quagga and zebra mussels have invaded several western lakes including Lake Mead. In a matter of two years these mussels have infested some of the largest fresh water reservoirs and lakes in Western United States. These mussels and their impact on these water systems may be more detrimental than in the Midwest. Warmer weather, year round growing seasons, and the large distribution system many of these reservoirs have to deliver water to major residential centers, have allowed these mussels to spread fast and far.

It is believed that these mussels got into the western lakes by transport from Midwestern lakes by transient boaters. Some western states have taken aggressive action to reduce the spread by closing whole lakes to recreational boating, mandatory high pressure hot washes for boats, and granting enforcing agents the right to stop and detain boats coming from contaminated waters.

## **Stewardship Funds and Access.**

Gov. Jim Doyle launched a successful drive to increase the amount of the Stewardship Fund from \$60 million to \$86 million each year for ten years beginning in 2011. As part of this Stewardship reauthorization, the 2007-2009 State budget includes a provision requiring that lands purchased with Stewardship funds be open to five nature-based outdoor activities: hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, cross-country skiing, and a wide range of other nature-based outdoor activities.

## **A Fisheries, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Plan for Wisconsin, 2007 – 2013.**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently drafted a Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management plan. This plan specifically describes how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will implement DNR's mission and its strategic plan in the programs that work with fish, wildlife, and their habitats. This is the document that will help guide Department staff and partners in the work they do to protect, improve and manage habitat, game animals, sport fish, and non-game wildlife. The plan is a six year look at the future and tells us what we need to accomplish during those six years. Although it looks to the future, it is built on past public involvement efforts and follows through on the promises they have made to the residents of the State. our customers. For more information, contact: [Dennis Schenborn](#), Chief, Planning, Budgeting and Outreach Section, (608) 267-7591.

## **Feeding the Wildlife.**

With last few winters being very hard on wildlife, many Geneva Lake residents may be tempted to feed the wildlife. Be aware that due to the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease in the deer herd in Walworth County, feeding of wild animal for hunting or non-hunting purposes is **prohibited** in Walworth County. No person may place, deposit or allow the placement of any material to feed or

attract wild animals for non-hunting purposes including recreational and supplemental feeding, except as allowed below for birds and small mammals.

- Material may be placed solely for the purpose of attracting and feeding wild birds and small animals if:

- Placed in bird feeding devices and structures at a sufficient height or design to prevent access by deer,
- The structures and devices are within 50 yards of a dwelling devoted to human occupancy.
- When deer, bear or elk are found to be utilizing bird feeding devices or structures, the devices or structures shall be enclosed or elevated higher to prevent access by deer.

The placement of plain water for drinking or for birdbaths is allowed. Feed that is deposited by natural vegetation or found solely as a result of normal agricultural or gardening practices, as well as standing crops planted and left standing as wildlife food plots that may be used by wild animals, is not considered feeding for the purposes of these regulations and is allowed statewide.

### **Year of Science 2009**

Recently, in Boston, at the annual meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS), kicked off a national, year long, grassroots celebration for the Year of Science 2009 (YoS2009). COPUS, which represents more than 500 organizations, is celebrating how science works, who scientists are, and why science matters. Ira Flatow, host of Science Friday, broadcast every week on National Public Radio, launched the week's events with a plenary presentation encouraging scientists to get involved in communicating and sharing the excitement of science at every opportunity.

Flatow said: "If you don't stand up for science, then no one else is going to do it. We as journalists and scientists have to figure out ways to share science in plain English whenever possible." This call to action is what drives YoS2009: it is a call for scientists to step out of their laboratories and into the public eye.

A special Web site (<http://www.yearofscience2009.org>) will help the general public learn more about this yearlong, national event. The site will feature a different scientific theme each month, complemented by blogs from scientists and science communicators about those topics and their fields of expertise.

### **Lake Notes:**

-The Wisconsin Association of Lake, the UW-Extension and WDNR will hold their annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention on March 18 – 20, 2009 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay WI. The theme for the Convention is "Back to Balance" and will focus on Invasive species management. This is an

excellent opportunity to discuss lake issues with other concerned lake people from around the state, including professionals, scientist, users and residents. For more info visit <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/>

-Yerkes has applied for a new National Science Foundation Grant to develop a five year **Yerkes Observatory Science and Engineering Academy** for Innovated Science and Technology for Students and Teachers.

-The Environmental Education Foundation has recently names its Scholarship to Nature Adventure Camp for 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade student the Charlotte Peterson Memorial Scholarship. Six scholarships are awarded each year to area students based upon an environmental essay they are asked to write.

-The City of Lake Geneva is taking a long hard look at doing some city-wide master planning under the Smart Growth planning effort. They are holding information meetings for input and discussion on the future direction for the City. Their next public meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2009 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers.

-Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has released a draft and summary of a Regional Water Supply Study Plan. Generally speaking for Walworth County most of the area will continue to be served by private wells except in urban development area such as cities and villages.

-The village of Fontana recently adopted a phosphorus fertilizer ordinance that regulates the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. It is similar to the ordinance adopted by the other Geneva Lake Communities. Similar legislation is working its way through the state legislative process.

-Once again there is a much needed effort to return the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to a position appointed by the Natural Resources Board rather than a political appointment of the Governor. It is felt that this approach to naming the head of the WDNR will result in a Secretary that is more independent to the politics of Madison.

-An interesting evening of environmental awareness is promised for Friday March 13,2009 at the Wild and Scenic Film Festival. The festival will be held at the Geneva 4 movie theater in downtown Lake Geneva and is being hosted by Clear Water Outdoor. Kids matinee will be at 9:00am and 1:00pm with a final showing for adults at 6:00pm. The event which includes some booths and several interesting films is a fund raiser for the Friends of Big Foot Beach State Park.

-A final draft copy of the Geneva Lake area groundwater study is being prepared along with a informational summary. The findings of the study will be presented at two informational meeting on March 24, 2009. One at 10:00 am in the Carrie Ann Room on the George Williams Campus of Aurora in Williams Bay and one at 7:00pm in the Senior Citizen's Room in the Lake Geneva City Hall.

-After several years, the Harris Creek Bacteriological Study is ready to be presented to Williams Bay Village Board. The study attempted to better understand the high bacteria counts in Harris Creek and their impact on the E-coli counts at Williams Bay public beach. In addition to the genotype finger printing initially proposed several additional studies were undertaken. From this work it appears that the bacteria may be from wildlife in the wetland through which Harris Creek flows. The study also found bacteria in the soils even under snow leading to the conclusion that the bacteria may be able to live and sustain in the soil for longer periods initially thought.

Some common Water Footprints;

- 1 average Sunday newspaper = 150 gallon of water
- 1 liter of beer = 41 gallons of water.
- 2 liter bottle of soda = 132 gallons of water.
- 1 pair of Levi's stonewashed jeans = 500 gallons of water.
- 1 car = 40,000 gallons of water.
- 1 apple = 18.5 gallon of water
- 1 loaf of bread = 10.5 gallons of water
- 1 lb of cheese = 600.5 gallon of water
- 1 lb of new growth in a plant = 100 lbs of water
- Americans drink more that 1 billion glasses of tap water per day
- USA average per person daily footprint = 1,797 gal/ day
- Global average per person daily footprint = 900 gal/day

For more information on water footprints visit: <http://www.waterfootprint.org>

