

Geneva Waters

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Fred Noer, Photo

Geneva Lake Environmental Agency

Quarterly Publication

Featured in this issue:

GLEA Annual Ice-On, Another Wet Year, 2010 Geneva Lake Classic Car Rally, Geneva Lake Aquatic Plants, March Workshop on Groundwater/Watershed Management, Fishing Report, VHS Update, Uniform Fueling Standards, and Lake Notes

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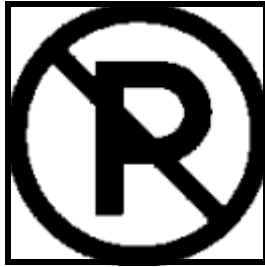
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Say NO to Phosphorus

Fertilizer



Save Geneva Lake

Phosphorus is the most problematic pollutant in the lake. Most lawns in our area don't need phosphorus. When lawn fertilizers run off into the Geneva Basin, they feed the unsightly, smelly and potentially toxic algal bloom and promote the growth of weeds in the lake.

**USE OF PHOSPHORUS FERTILIZERS IN THE GENEVA
LAKE SHORELINE AREAS IS REGULATED.**

ICE ON

Geneva Lake froze over on January 29. There was open water on the west end of the lake Thursday evening. The wind stopped, the temperature dropped, and the remaining open water froze Friday. It is not known whether it froze early Friday before dawn or during the day. Complete lake freeze-over was not confirmed till Friday afternoon.

Recorded weather conditions from the Geneva Lake Atmospheric Monitoring Station on the north shore indicated temperatures bottomed out around 3:15 a.m., Friday at -1.8 degrees and stayed below zero until around 7:30 a.m. A bright sun and low winds made it somewhat comfortable outside on Friday even though the air temperature never got above 15 degrees. Wind speed from Thursday afternoon through Friday evening were less than five m.p.h. – perfect conditions for making ice cover on a lake.

The week prior to freeze-up the lake actually was losing ice. On Tuesday, Jan. 19



there were only about 300 acres of open water. Strong east wind the next couple of days blew out most of the ice on the western end of the lake, leaving open water from Cedar Point to Fontana. But this being January in Wisconsin, Geneva Lake froze, and it is being used for all kinds of enjoyable winter activities.

Table 1

<i>Historical Ice-On and Ice-Off Dates for Geneva Lake</i>		
Ice On	Ice Off	Days off Ice
1-20-2000	2-28-2000	39
12-27-2000	4-5-2001	99
2001-2002	Never Froze	0
1-22-2003	3-31-2003	68
1-30-2004	3-25-2004	55
1-18-2005	3-31-2005	72
2-26-2006	3-20-2006	23
2-4-2007	3-25-2007	50
1-21-2008	4-11-2008	81
1-11-2009	3-23-2009	71

Source: GLEA

ICE-ON WINNERS



More than 180 students submitted their guesses of when Geneva Lake would freeze over. Some students wondered if the lake would ever freeze, especially when the lake started losing ice in late January. However, a cold, high pressure brought cold temperatures with no wind, and Mother Nature – or Old Man Winter – took over. Thus, we have an Ice-On Contest winner!

Three area students guessed Jan. 29 as this year's ice-on date. The winners were decided based upon postmark date or date of receipt.

Owen Chapman of Woods School was the first-place winner, having sent in his Jan. 29 ice-on date as far back as Nov. 25. The second-place winner was Maggie Gallagher of Star Center School. The third-place award went to Blake Wisdom of Woods School.

Winners received certificates of recognition and gift certificates for ClearWater Outdoors in Lake Geneva. The GLEA

thanks all who took the time to submit dates and to ClearWater Outdoors for helping with the event.

ANOTHER WET YEAR

With the end of 2009, the Geneva Lake area again has received annual precipitation above the 25-year mean. Based upon precipitation data collected and recorded at the Geneva Lake Atmospheric Monitoring Station, total recorded precipitation for 2009 was 42.28 inches, which compares to a 25-year mean of 33.05 inches. This is the fourth year in a row we have received at least nine inches above the 25-year mean. Over the last 10 years the Geneva Lake area has had six years above the 25-year mean for a net amount of more than 40 inches above the 25-year mean.

The wettest month in 2009 was June with 5.60 inches, and the driest month was January with 1.46 inches. Spring and summer were the wettest seasons, accounting for 29 percent and 29.3 percent respectively of the annual precipitation. Winter was the driest season, with only 18.7 percent of the annual precipitation.





2010 GENEVA LAKE CLASSIC CAR RALLY AND POKER RUN

Planning is under way for the 2010 Geneva Lake Classic Car Rally. It is anticipated to be bigger and better than the 2009 event. Mark your calendars for the weekend of Sept. 24-26 as the weekend for “A Classic Rally for A Classic Lake.”

The rally will be held at the chalet on the grounds of The Lodge at Geneva Ridge. We look forward to a successful event with a family friendly poker run, raffles, a dance, and refreshments.

The GLEA will be working with students in the marketing department of the UW-Whitewater College of Business to promote the rally. If a good marketing plan comes out of the effort the GLEA may hire an intern to implement the plan.

GENEVA LAKE AQUATIC PLANTS

Last summer the GLEA conducted a lakewide aquatic plant survey. The survey was done using predetermined transects with a double-sided rake thrown into the lake at different sites to collect plant specimens.

The survey was done to not only inventory the plant community but to assess the extent of invasive species. Comparing the findings of this survey to previous surveys helps us understand what is happening to the valuable but often underappreciated aquatic plants in Geneva Lake.

The 2009 survey found 19 species, which compare to 31 species found in 2001. The most common genus was the pondweed (*Potamogeton spp.*) with eight different species identified. The most common plants found were water celery (*Vallisneria spp.*) and wideon grass (*Ruppia spp.*).



One beneficial genus, arrowhead (*Sagittaria spp.*), was found in 2009 that was not found in past surveys.

Although present throughout the lake, invasives were not found at problematic densities. Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and curly leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) were the major non-native invasives found in Geneva Lake.

Zebra mussels have the potential to change plant communities by affecting the amount of available light reaching the bottom. As the mussels filter the water, it becomes clearer, allowing more light to penetrate to the bottom. Often this results in an expansion of the plant community into deeper waters. It may also change plant community composition. In Geneva Lake it does not appear as if the plant community has expanded more deeply into the lake.

One thing that was noticed on the plant survey was the large number of zebra mussels attached to plants. This was especially true in areas where the lake bottom was silty or soft. It appears that as the young mussels settle out of the water column they attach to plants rather than trying to survive in the silty bottom.



March Workshop on Groundwater/watershed management

The Geneva Lake Environmental Agency and the UW-Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education

will host a workshop about groundwater and watershed management at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 20 at Linn Town Hall. The workshop is open to all interested people but will focus on groundwater/watershed issues specific to the southeastern portions of the Geneva Lake watershed.

Seasonal flooding and concerns over groundwater quality have heightened the area's residents' awareness of groundwater/watershed issues. Kevin Masarik, groundwater education specialist from the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center in the Center for Watershed Science and Education, will be the featured speaker who will discuss general groundwater and basic watershed concepts. Following his presentation a discussion about specifics of the area will take place with a question and answer session.

If residents express interest, a second workshop focusing on watersheds and their management will be scheduled later in the spring. Specific issues and concerns about the local watersheds would be discussed.

FISHING REPORT

As many know, Geneva Lake has a wide variety of fish in number and size. In a recent survey 85 percent of the bass collected were 14 inches or larger and 10 percent were 18 inches or larger. Crappies were found up to 16 inches. However, this winter fishing on Geneva Lake has been very slow. Fishermen have reported seeing many dead pan fish, mostly bluegills on the lake bottom in Geneva Bay. A die-off of a single species may indicate a species-specific disease.



VIRAL HEMORRHAGIC SEPTICEMIA VIRUS UPDATE

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) is believed to be in all the Great Lakes. Low levels of the virus recently have been found in several locations around Lake Superior. Follow-up

testing still is being conducted. The virus has been identified in 28 freshwater fish species in the Great Lakes watershed. Fortunately, it has not been reported as being present in any new Wisconsin inland lakes.

Due to the very serious concern over the spread of this virus and its potential impact on Wisconsin fisheries, new regulations have been passed that apply to all boaters and anglers. Most of these apply to the transport of fish, bait, and water from one lake to another. They use common sense to prevent the transfer of VHS from one body of water to another. For more information on VHS, including the new regulations, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/>



vhs/.

UNIFORM FUELING STANDARDS

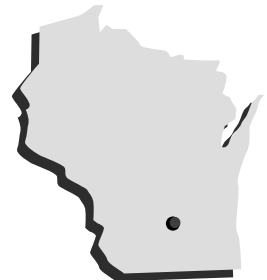
As the Abbey Marina looks for a new boat-fueling station location, it has been discussed that there are several boat-fueling stations on Geneva Lake. It is unknown what safety standards and training exist at those stations. If and when The Abbey does replace its station, it is likely that there will be conditions of approval relative to the safe operation of the site.

The GLEA has reviewed the Abbey Marina's gas-dispensing and fuel-dock protocol and has made recommendations to better protect the lake, life, and personal property. The GLEA encourages all the communities around the lake to adopt uniform on-lake fueling standards and training.

There are products on the market that can minimize spills and their impact on the local environment. We hope that within the next year uniform standards, training, and protocol for fueling stations can be adopted by all lakeshore communities.

LAKE NOTES

- ◆ The State of Wisconsin Supreme Court will revisit the issue of riparian rights being transferred by easements. Over the years the court has held that this could not be done except in narrow exceptions. The transfer of these right without ownership could lead to a significant increase in the development and pressure on a near-shore area, a zone whose critical habitat is vital for a lake's well-being.



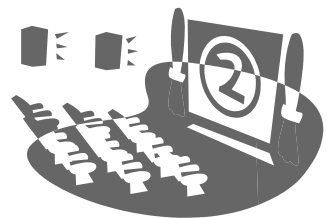
- ◆ The State of Wisconsin DNR is proposing

to revise runoff rules passed in 2001. More than 700 lakes and stream segments are proposed to be included in Wisconsin's 2010 Impaired Waters List. The rules are looking to better address phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment from developments, municipal storm water, and farmland runoff. These are the major causes of algae blooms and water-quality degradation.

- ◆ This spring at the Wisconsin County Conservation Congress hearings citizens will vote on a ban of certain types of lead fishing tackle, a serious threat to waterfowl and fish.
- ◆ The GLEA will attend a Southeastern Wisconsin Lake Workshop at Waukesha County Technical College on Feb. 13. The theme of the workshop is "Changing Lakes and Changing Policy."
- ◆ Beginning in 2010 and running through 2012 Walworth County government will have an Invasive Species Control and Prevention Program. With funding from the Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Program, Walworth County is funding a position and programs to educate the public about

invasive species and what can be done to minimize their spread. Audrey Green, who was the Walworth County lakes specialist, will be focused on invasive species. Her major emphasis will be on education and monitoring for invasive species. She will still be able to be a resource for lake questions or for sources of information on other lake issues.

- ◆ ClearWater Outdoors will again host a Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival. This years event is scheduled for Friday March 19, 2010 and will be held at Badger High School. The youth programs are scheduled between 9 am to 1pm. and the adult program is scheduled to start at 7pm. This event will be used to create momentum for the summer activities at the State Park. Cost of the event is \$4 for youth and \$10 for adults. Proceeds from the event will go to Friends of Big Foot Beach State Park to help with Big Foot Beach State Park with their programs and upkeep. Come and enjoy a Friday night at the movies as you learn more about our environment on the third rock from the sun.



Geneva Lake Environmental Agency

Contribution Form

YES, I want to help Geneva Lake Environmental Agency in their efforts to protect and preserve Geneva Lake for generations to come. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution for 2009.

All contributors will receive a one year subscription to Geneva Waters.

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If you are interested in receiving a copy of any of the following publications, check in the title in the list and include this form along with your donation.

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