

# the Watershed

## Lake Management Makes Huge Strides

Volunteers continue to drive the RCD's watershed vision under the direction of the Lake Management Committee (LMC). LMC volunteers collected and sent 6 months of data to the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP). Results are currently being compiled by the State. When received and analyzed, the data will become part of our lake's database. A cost avoidance of \$4,038 was generated because of volunteers and the VLMP involvement vs. a private lab and contractor. Our consulting firm has completed the data collection on our lake (500 pts.) and will be constructing a sediment survey, due to the LMC in early January. This will tell us where and how much sediment we have. This data will be used to cost effectively plan future dredging programs. A Hach multi-probe was purchased and utilized to gather information on dissolved oxygen, temperature, PH and conductivity in the lake's water column. This data will further enhance our database. Under the direction of the LMC for the RCD, 1000 Walleye, 88 Muskie and 880 Bass were stocked in September at a cost of \$3,210. The Fishing Club generously paid for an additional stocking of 400 hybrid Striped Bass (\$300) in October, adding to the 26,883 fish stocked by the RCD

since 1985. This year's IDNR shocking report will be available in February 2007. However, unsolicited IDNR comments indicate that our lake is "one of the best" fisheries they have seen!

Joe Rush of JadEco, our consultant and Certified Lake Manager together with the LMC, continue to pursue getting the necessary approvals from State and Federal authorities to install a fish barrier upstream of the spillway. We are hoping for approval by late January-early February, at which time costs for installation will be developed.

The Lake ecology involves many interrelated disciplines, two of which are wildlife (e.g. goose) management and shoreline stabilization. The management, by property owners, of their shorelines is critical

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## District Is Cautious About Grants

The RCD, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the IDNR and others has embarked on a program of discovery in order determine the type and kind of grant programs and associated funding that are available to the District.

The grant process requires highly skilled individuals to prepare and shepherd the

applications to their conclusion. We are courting three such individuals, two of whom live in the District. The services of these individuals will cost the District some "up front" money. In most cases, a percentage of the total grant money is paid to the grant preparer as a fee. However, the money is paid out of existing District funds, not out of the grant funds obtained.

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*the Watershed* is a periodic publication containing information relevant to our District's constituents. Contact *the Watershed* at [thewatershed@rcdinfo.com](mailto:thewatershed@rcdinfo.com)

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### Did You Know...

- The RCD board of trustees are volunteers who are appointed by the Ogle County Board?
- The RCD Board meets at 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Lake Court Center in Lost Lake ?
- The taxes you pay to the RCD are fully income-tax deductible, while POA dues and assessments are not?
- Lost Lake is a man-made impoundment that requires periodic, costly silt evacuation ?
- Due to its exempt status, the RCD saves members thousands of dollars in additional property and sales taxes each year ?

### RCD Board

**Marty Portner**, Pres.  
**Dan Dummett**, V.P.  
**Bill Piper**, Treasurer  
**Herb Hill**, Secretary  
**Betty Lou Finn**, Member

**Becky Breckenfelder**  
Administrative Manager

[www.rcdinfo.com](http://www.rcdinfo.com)

## Bits and Pieces

**NEW MEMBER APPOINTED TO RCD** | Please welcome Ms. Betty Lou Finn to the RCD board as of our December meeting. Ms. Finn and her husband Donald live in New Landing and have been involved in community affairs ever since they moved here in 2002. Ms. Finn's appointment to the Board follows a long period during which the RCD operated with only four members. However, we think that it was well worth the wait!

**THOSE WORRISOME FEES** | The RCD has fielded many questions and some complaints from District members regarding the fees that are charged for various programs and facility usages. In June of 2006, RCD president Marty Portner ordered a comprehensive review of the fees and policies surrounding them, to be completed prior to FY 2006 end. The hope is to take a serious look at whether the fees can or should be rolled into the budgetary process and thus avoid

charges on top of the taxes that constituents already pay.

Writing or calling to complain is not enough to fix this issue. You must get involved if you want permanent change. The RCD has a policy that it will not rescind a fee unless it is either illegal, burdensome or serves no current purpose. If you can carve out 2 hours per month for the next 3 months to help us to determine whether the fees fall into any of these categories, please call Becky at the office at 815.652.2006. If we cannot convene a committee of at least three interested individuals, we will consider tabling this issue indefinitely.

**PETITION RECEIVED** | A petition to, in effect, reduce the RCD budget from approximately \$150,000 to \$15,000 per annum has been received by the RCD. It must be certified to the County Clerk for inclusion on a future election ballot. More information will be released as it becomes available.

## LMC

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to our lake's health and beauty. These 103 property owners will be provided with some IEPA educational publications like "Shoreline Buffer Strips," "Canada Geese and Your Lake," and "Shoreline Stabilization." It is anticipated that an ad hoc committee will be formed of lake shore property owners to decide how best to proceed in these areas. The RCD has spent \$1,011 to plant 64 native, non-invasive plants in a test plot at the LCC to promote these endeavors.

Lost Lake is a part of the **Clear Creek** watershed primarily in Ogle County with a portion in Lee County. A major goal of the RCD/LMC is to establish a **Clear Creek Watershed Committee** consisting of 8-12 members including farmers, rural

landowners, Nature Conservancy and the Farm Bureau. We have engaged to date the following organizations to help formulate this commitment: **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ogle County Soil & Water Conservation District, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Black Hills Resource Conservation and Development and the Illinois EPA.**

The RCD and the LMC are committed to developing good working relationships with upstream landowners, government officials, and the education of all stakeholders. We welcome your participation as Winter sets in to plan our work for Spring. With your help, we can work our plan. Call **815.652.2006** to volunteer today.

## Grants

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While we are hopeful of obtaining grants for specific projects, it would be irresponsible for the RCD to propose an operating budget that depends on grant money on a year-over-year basis. The RCD must strive to have a positive cash flow—like any other responsible business or personal budget. To make phantom grant money a part of that budget is no more responsible than it would be for a family to count on lottery winnings to carry it through each year.

We consider grant money as the "icing on the cake" to the RCD budget and when the money is in hand—and only when it is in hand—we can consider it a part of the *future* budgetary process.

In reality, grant money is available for specific purposes, not for general spending. Many strings are attached and the administrative costs must still be borne by the District. Visit [www.rcdinfo.com/grants.html](http://www.rcdinfo.com/grants.html) for more information.