

# Lake Links

May 18, 2009 Edition

The Newsletter of the Valparaiso Chain of Lakes Watershed Group, Inc.

**Our mission is to protect and maintain our lakes and surrounding environs through education, conservation, pollution monitoring, research, and invasive species control. We are committed to waste reduction, recycling and the use of best land-use practices to ensure that our lakes remain quality habitats for fish, wildlife, and human recreational use.**

## Meeting Minutes March, 16, 2009

The meeting began at 6:45 PM. Nancy moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, and Jim seconded the motion. The Treasurer's report was read, and the group received a \$650 deposit from the Phil Doolittle education grant. There is a total of \$6728.65 in the account and approximately half of that has been earmarked for the Treasured Chain of Lakes book.

The next topic discussed was the upcoming regatta for the dedication of the island in Long Lake recently acquired by the Woodland Savannah Land Conservancy. The regatta is planned tentatively for Sunday, July 19th and will start around noon. It will most likely substitute for the regular summer event.

Earth Day was discussed next and Bonnie Swarner announced that she paid the fee to reserve a booth at the Sunset Earth Farm Earth Day celebration on April 19th. Volunteers signed up to help run the booth.

At 7 PM, Spencer Hadley, Luke Morgan, and Tyler Fabree of the Chesterton High School Debate team participated in a debate on alternative energy. The debate was approximately an hour long and focused on fossil fuels and ethanol, as well as less traditional fuels such as algae and solar nano-technology. After the debate there was a question and answer session with the rest of the group.

After the debate, the group discussed the environmental minute. Bonnie Swarner's environmental minute about wildlife encounters was played and a sheet was passed around for people to write down ideas for more topics. VU's environmental group Earthtones is also going to help with the project.

The Flint Lake sedimentation was discussed. An enormous amount of flooding has washed even more sediment in to the lagoons around Flint Lake. Tom showed the aerial photos he took of the changes in Flint Lake's color due to sediment.

The meeting was adjourned and the group reconvened at Greek's Pizzeria with the members of the CHS debate team

### **Agenda for May 18, 2009 Meeting:**

Environmental Minute

Flint Lake Sedimentation

Living with Lakes Seminar & Geiselman Island Dedication Regatta – July 19, Noon

Book Update

Report of septic system leaching into Flint Lake

Report by Jan Westergren of old houseboat dropping “lead based paint” into Flint Lake.

## **Chesterton Tribune Article – contributed by Ron Trigg**

A six-acre island on Long Lake in Liberty Township and six additional surrounding acres of wetlands will be protected as a nature preserve through the Woodland Savanna Land Conservancy.

The land was donated to the non-profit conservancy by Dr. Tom and Marilyn Geiselman of Asheville, North Carolina. The property was originally settled by Dr. Geiselman's grandparents in the 1890s.

The island, which is accessible only by boat, features a hardwood forest with numerous old red oaks and other mature trees, the conservancy said. The woods and surrounding marshes provide excellent habitat for a great variety of wildlife, including aquatic mammals, waterfowl, and other birdlife.

"We are delighted to accept this property," said conservancy president Don Evans. "The island and its environs have great natural and geological significance. They lie in the center of the Valparaiso moraine, a geological feature that separates the Lake Michigan watershed from the Kankakee River basin, and the area is a wetland ecosystem that harbors many native species of plants and animals. We are proud to have the opportunity to protect this property and the important natural values it represents."

The conservancy said the island holds great sentimental value for Tom Geiselman, who spent his boyhood years living in a two-story log structure built there by his grandparents, Danish immigrant Chris Miller and his Swedish immigrant wife, Ida Marie Sonneson. Some ruins of the original structure still exist on the island.

The Valparaiso Lakes and their watershed were formed during the most recent glacial retreat of the Pleistocene era. They provide a watery environment that has been attracting hunting and fishing enthusiasts for well over a century. Geiselman's grandparents, who also owned nearby Long Lake Island, established Long Lake Island Hotel there in the 1930s to capitalize on the tourist trade. The resort, which had a pavilion extending out over the water, received crowds of patrons who arrived by rail and road from Chicago and elsewhere.

During Prohibition days, the popular hotel housed a speakeasy that served bootleg liquor. Geiselman's family sold the old hotel years ago, and the building has subsequently been converted into a private home.

Tom Geiselman is pleased that the island will remain as he remembers it. "I am deeply gratified that this special place will be preserved in perpetuity, and my wife and I are very thankful that the vision of the Woodland Savanna Land Conservancy has made this possible."

The Woodland Savanna Land Conservancy, a non-profit organization founded in 2003, is dedicated to the long-term preservation of open land in and around Porter County.

For more information, contact the Woodland Savanna Land Conservancy at P.O. Box 1042, Valparaiso, IN 46384, or see its website at [www.woodlandsavanna.org](http://www.woodlandsavanna.org)

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