

VLMP... WHAT? WHY?



Prepared by Joe Rush

JadEco Lake & Natural Resources Consultation & Management

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Crystal Lake, Illinois

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO COLLECT
INFORMATION ON YOUR LAKE?



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or how about this one...

“We never had winters (or summers... or rain... or wind)...
as bad as we see now!”



WHY IS THERE A NEED TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON YOUR LAKE?

or better yet...



WHY IS THERE A NEED TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON YOUR LAKE?

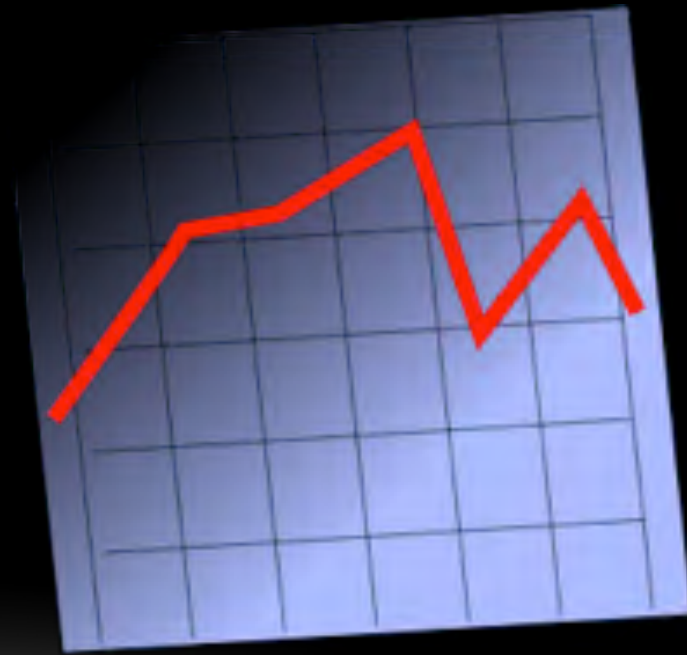
or better yet...

THIS IS THE WORST MY LAKE HAS EVER BEEN WITH WEEDS...or algae... or water level... or sediment... or clarity!"



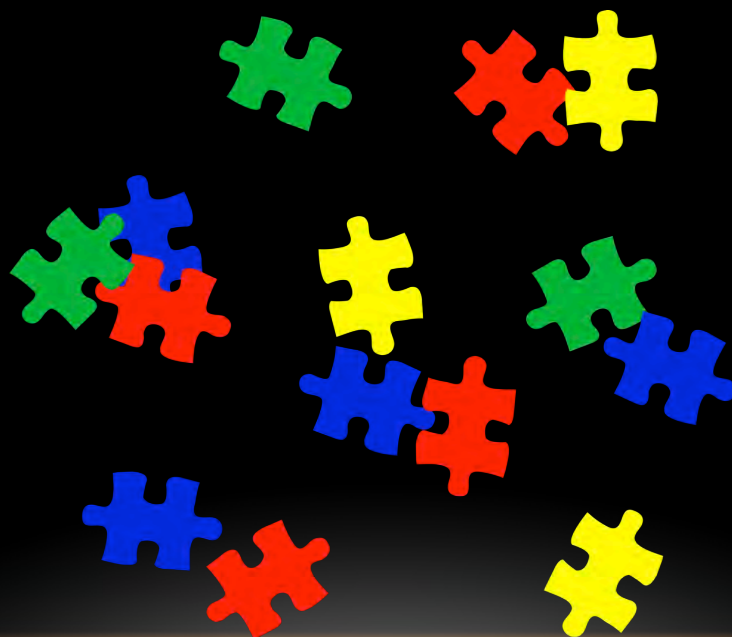
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Without data and records, how do you REALLY know the ACTUAL trends for your lake, or what is 'perceived' memories?

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There is help...

VLMP... WHAT IS IT?

The Volunteer Lake Management Program is a great resource for people to begin gathering info on their bodies of water.

- It provides training,
- Materials,
- Equipment,
- Data analysis,
- Reporting,
- Creates CONFIDENCE in citizen scientists and stakeholders.



VLMP... BRIEF HISTORY

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VOLUNTEER LAKE MONITORING PROGRAM

- Established by the IEPA in 1981 as an important and necessary step to help protect Illinois' lake resources.
- Utilizes citizen volunteers to help gather fundamental information on Illinois inland lakes
- Provides an educational gateway for citizens to learn more about factors that affect lake water quality, which in turn, fosters a sense of responsibility to the citizens to help protect lakes and watersheds.



VLMP PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

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- Develop local grass roots support for environmental programs and foster cooperation among citizens, organizations, and various units of government.
- Provide historic data to help document water quality impacts and support lake management decision-making.
- Provide guidance for the implementation of lake protection / restoration and a framework for technical assistance for cooperative lake and watershed management projects.

WHO CAN ENROLL?

- Are you upright?
- Are you breathing?

WHO CAN ENROLL.... EVERYONE!

- All are welcome to join this program to learn more about their lake!

And it's absolutely FREE!

- Only Requirements:

Have access to a boat with an anchor

Be dedicated to making regular monitoring trips.



WHO CAN ENROLL.... EVERYONE!

- The VLMP is a network of lake enthusiasts from many different backgrounds.
 - public water supply personnel,
 - college professors and their classes,
 - private citizens that may or may not live on the lake they monitor,
 - forest preserve district employees,
 - state workers,
 - retirees,
 - lake associations and ,
 - any number of other categories you can imagine.

WHO CAN ENROLL.... EVERYONE!

The VLMP currently averages over 300 volunteer monitors on approximately 150 lakes annually. Over time, that has added up to over 2,000 volunteers monitoring over 400 Illinois lakes!

TIER LEVELS

- There are 3 tier levels in the VLMP:
 - Tier 1: Starter level
 - Tier 2: Mid level
 - Tier 3: Advanced level



TIER 1

- Data collected 2x / month usually three in-lake sites May – October.
 - Measure water clarity (transparency) using a Secchi disk.
 - Also records a series of field observations relating to other important environmental characteristics of the lake, such as:
 - water color,
 - weather conditions during monitoring and in the previous 48 hours,
 - presence and amount of aquatic plants at each site and the lake as a whole,
 - presence or absence of aquatic exotics, site depth and watershed activities.



TIER 1

- Also documents recent lake management activities, such as:
 - Dredging
 - Applying chemicals
 - Notes any recreational lake usage which could impact the lake.



TIER 2

- After completing Tier 1 for at least one year, volunteers may enter a rotation which allows them to collect more detailed information on their lake. Participants in Tier 2 collect water and chlorophyll samples once per month May through August at Site 1.



- It is analyzed for:
 - ammonia,
 - nitrate-nitrite nitrogen,
 - total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN),
 - total phosphorus,
 - alkalinity,
 - chloride,
 - total suspended solids
 - volatile suspended solids.

TIER 3

- After a volunteer has completed at least one year of Tier 2 monitoring and has met monitoring consistency and accuracy requirements, they become eligible for Tier 3. Volunteers in Tier 3 are chosen by Illinois EPA based on:
 - Volunteer's interest in becoming a Tier 3 volunteer,
 - Volunteer's monitoring history and demonstrated proficiency,
 - There is an opening in the rotation.
 - The lake being monitored must be 20 acres or more.



TIER 3

- Finally, Tier 3 volunteers collect and record dissolved oxygen and temperature profiles at each of their sites, twice per month in conjunction with Secchi disk transparency monitoring



WHAT EQUIPMENT / MATERIALS ARE PROVIDED?

- Training
- Training Manuals
- Secchi disk and color card
- Data sheets
- Sampling Bottles
- Coolers & ice packs
- PRE PAID shipping labels
- Temp / DO Meter

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Support!

SUPPORT...

- Annual Reports
- EPA Websites
- Lake Notes
- Training Manual

IEPA – VLMP PROGRAM

- How do I get into the program?



VLMP CONTACTS

**Holly Hudson: Northeastern Illinois
Chicago Metropolitan Agency For Planning
312-454-0400 Chicago, IL**

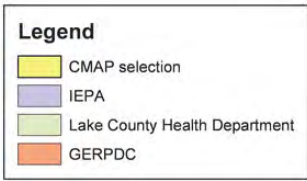
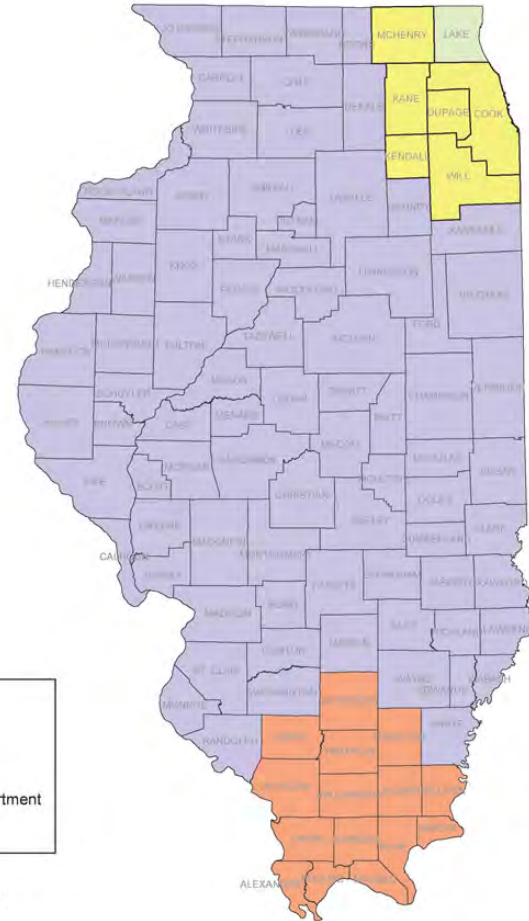
**Greg Ratliff: Statewide Coordinator
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
217-782-3362 Springfield, IL**

**Alana Bartolai: Lake County
Lake County Health Department
847-377-8009 Libertyville, IL**

**Tyler Carpenter: Southern Coordinator
Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission
618-997-9351 Marion, IL**

Google “EPA VLMP Coordinators”
Click on “VLMP Contacts”

VLMP Regions



QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

EVERY flood is made up of individual raindrops, & each raindrop is an individual...

You may not see the difference in each raindrop, but together they make a flood.

If EACH of you make a change, collectively, you WILL make a difference...



Credits:

www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/monitoring/vlmp/index

www.Clipartfest.com

INTRODUCING....



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