

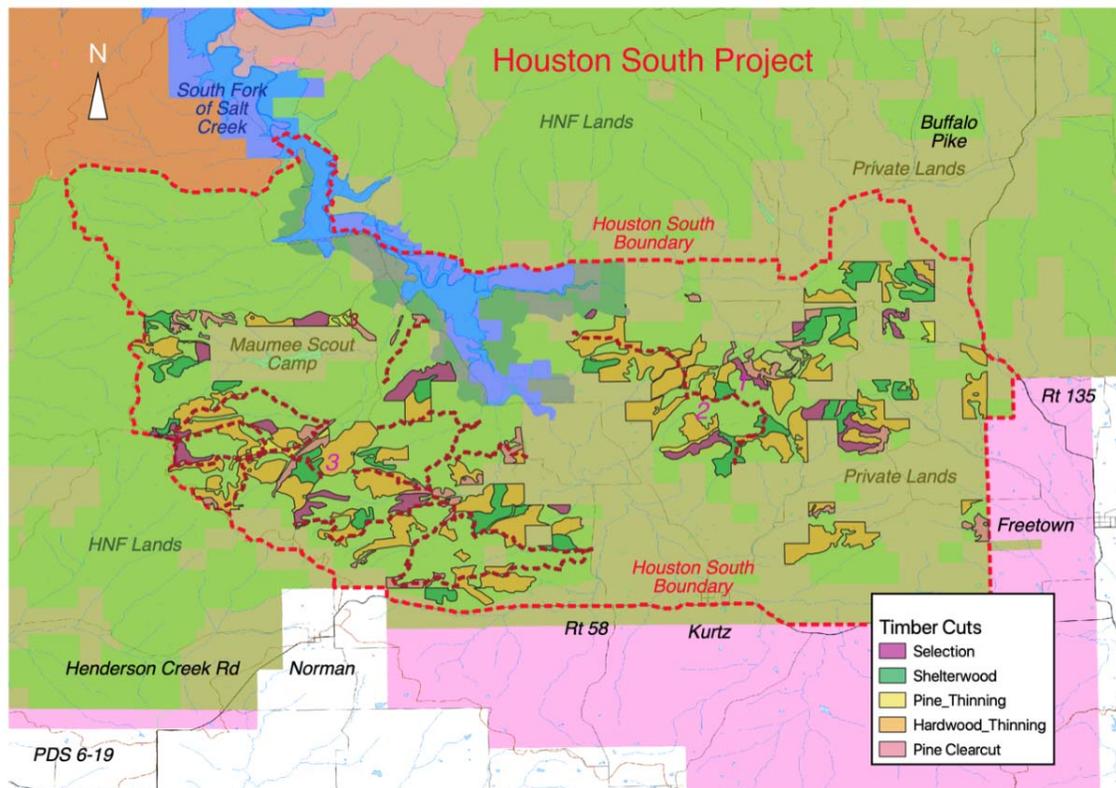


County Water Conservation District to Headline July FLM Meeting

The Friends of Lake Monroe's July 2019 public meeting will be addressed by Martha Miller, District Manager of the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The meeting is this coming Wednesday, July 17, at 6:00pm in Meeting Room 1C of the Monroe County Public Library, 303 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington.

FLM Had a Look at the Houston South Project Area



An FLM outing with members of the Sassafras Audubon Society was held on June 1st in the Hoosier National Forest's Houston South Project area. This timber management project in its draft stages delineates a 10,000 acre area straddling the South Fork of Salt Creek part of the Lake Monroe Watershed.

The purpose of the outing was to familiarize the birding enthusiasts with the areas and types of timbering activities in the Project. The first of three stops (see No. 1 on the Houston South Timber Project Map) was a proposed pine clear cut along a stream in the Fork Ridge Area (east side of South Fork) just south of Buffalo Pike. These mature pines are slated to be clear cut due to the fact they are non-natives planted when the area was being reforested by the Civilian Conservation Corps to mitigate erosion from previous clearcutting. This area is one of several proposed pine clear cuts as part of 4,000 acres of timbering. By not leaving these pines to die a natural death many species will be deprived of habitat, snags and decaying matter important to a century of rebuilding soil that had been eroded by previous failed attempts at agriculture.

Stop No 2 was to highlight the proposed timbering on the ridge top and north slopes of Fork Ridge, through which the south branch of the Fork Ridge trail runs. This ridge is resplendent in chestnut oaks. A Selection harvest would target less commercially desirable beech and maple that predominate on more moist (more mesic) north slopes. Another section would undergo a Shelterwood harvest, a series of harvests over 10-15 years equivalent to a longer-term clear

cut. The proposed goal is to promote oak and hickory stands. In the interim decades, neo-tropical and other migratory birds will be deprived of springtime caterpillars that feed on these and other oak species. Increased edge habitat will encourage nest parasitism by cowbirds.

The final stop, No. 3, was on sloped terrain on Trail No. 13 in the western Hickory Ridge section. Shelterwood and Selective harvests are also proposed on this ridge. At the foot of the ridge is a beautiful stream bounded by non-native pines, again slated for removal. This trail like many in the area are enjoyed by horseback riders. Unfortunately, the steep slopes on Tr 13 has been turned into a muddy mess, sending sediment down the hill.

We plan on continuing to offer outings with groups like the Audubon Society who value deep woods and the habitat they provide. Contact us at friendsoflakemonroe@gmail.com, if you or your group would like to schedule an outing.

- Dave Simcox -

Wrap-Up on DNR Project to Build Fish Habitat in Lake Monroe



The Herald-Tribune reported on the conclusion on June 25th of DNR's two-year project to build and install fish habitat structures in Lake Monroe: see [here](#).

Open Houses on the Forest Management Project

The Hoosier National Forest will host two public open houses in August to discuss a management proposal for forest system lands in Jackson County. This project, known as the Houston South Vegetation Management and Restoration Project, involves treating vegetation and conducting related management activities to improve forest health and sustainability of the oak-hickory ecosystems, while also improving wildlife habitat.

- Monday, August 5th from 6-8pm at Brownstown Central High School, 608 W. Commerce St., Brownstown, IN.
- Wednesday, August 7th from 6-8pm at the Monroe County Public Library, 303 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington, IN.

These open-house events will allow the public to engage with the Hoosier National Forest subject-matter experts who have been conducting the NEPA assessments. While the events will last for two hours, people are invited to stop by anytime during those hours to visit the individual stations devoted to different aspects of the project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Andrea Crain, Public Affairs Officer, Hoosier National Forest. She can be reached by calling (812) 275-5987 or via email at Andrea.C.Crain@usda.gov.

Report-Out on June 27 FunRaiser



The Friends of Lake Monroe held its first fundraiser with a silent auction on June 27, 2019 in the Beer Garden at the Upland Brewery on 11th Street. The music, food, and people were great and we had a wonderful time meeting up with friends, new and old.

We are happy to report that the event pulled in over \$3,700 and that 30 people signed up for memberships, many of them offering to volunteer in the future. It's good to know that our message about protecting and enhancing the lake is spreading.

Let's keep this message going!

- Kriste Lindberg contributed the snapshot for this report -

Lake Conditions and Shoreline Cleanups

As of this writing (July 11), the water level at Lake Monroe remains very high — about 12 feet above the normal summer pool of 538 feet above sea level — and the beaches at the lake remain closed. However, the Army Corps of Engineers is releasing water rapidly, and water levels are creeping down. The good news is that water at the lake is clearer than normal right now and it's a great time to be on the lake! The attached photo was captured below the dam on July 8, and shows water being released at 2,147 cubic feet per second. At that rate, the lake goes down about 2 inches per day, so it may still be a few weeks before the beaches are opened.

On June 25, Mary Reardon and Jessica Fitzpatrick joined Richard Harris on the monthly shoreline cleanup at the Paynetown State Recreation Area. The cleanup was hampered by high water levels making parts of the property inaccessible. Nonetheless, approximately 40 pounds of trash was collected — trash that may otherwise have ended up in the lake, or at least made the experience of visiting the lake less enjoyable.

The Friends of Lake Monroe has adopted Paynetown as part of the DNR's Adopt-A-Shoreline program. Each month, volunteers meet at Paynetown to pick up trash at the beach area, the boat ramp, and around the campground. The next cleanup is scheduled for July 23, at 6 pm.

If you're interested in volunteering, please sign up on the Friends of Lake Monroe's webpage at friendsoflakemonroe.org. Go to the Events calendar and click on the event for the applicable date to sign up. That way, we know how to contact you in the event of any schedule changes.

- Richard Harris -



WATERFest is COMING!
Friday, August 23
5:30-7:30 pm
Banneker Center



WATER:

(Water Activities To Educate Residents)

A Celebration!

*Celebrating Water
Through the
Summer of 2019*

June 7

5 - 8 p.m.

WATER: Gallery Walk

Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center

Flashlight Gallery

Water-themed photography exhibit

Miller Gallery

Dawn Adams', "Water is Life" exhibit

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(Both exhibits will run May 31—June 22)

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Come join us to listen, ask questions, walk the exhibits, and meet others who are exploring ways of helping to keep our community's water clean.

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The Banneker Center, 930 W. 7th St.

Bring your entire family to this fun and educational event to learn how to protect our waterways for healthy plants, animals, and people. Live animals and plants will be on display. Topics will cover fish, crayfish, algae, birds, water quality monitoring, building a watershed, fishing with magnets, hands-on discovery, and more.

For more information, contact stormwater@bloomington.in.gov
www.friendsoflakemonroe.com

Bring your entire family to this fun and educational event to learn how to protect our waterways for healthy plants, animals, and people.

Live animals and plants will be on display.

A sneak preview:

- Build a watershed
- Aquarium with live fish and crawfish
- Algae: Green and bluegreen
- Water chemistry
- Autonomous boat
- Robotic secchi disk
- Sign a fish “action” pledge
- Magnet fishing for the little ones
- Free pizza for the kiddos
- And more....

This is the 4th of a series of events called “WATER: A Celebration!” (Water Activities To Educate Residents).

Those interested in tabling or volunteering at this event may contact either Mary Madore at mary_madore@yahoo.com or Kriste Lindberg at lindberk@bloomington.in.gov.

Blue-Green Algae: A Primer



Most discussions of water quality and lake health include some mention of blue-green algae. Many people have a vague notion that it may be a bad thing, but don't know much more than that. This short article provides some basic information about blue-green algae, its potentially harmful effects, and how you can make informed decisions about engaging in water activities when blue-green algae may be present.

What are Blue-Green Algae?

Blue-green algae are not true algae, but are a group of photosynthetic bacteria called cyanobacteria. They are often blue-green, but can also be other colors, including blue, green, reddish-purple, or brown. They often appear on the water surface as "pond scum" or algal mats, but can also live below the surface and be less apparent.

Blue-green algae occur naturally in fresh water systems and can grow very quickly if environmental conditions are favorable. When this happens, they are referred to as "algal blooms." You may see the term "Harmful Algal Bloom," or HAB, associated with blue-green algae.

Favorable conditions include lots of sunlight and warm, slow-moving water that

is rich in nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. Nutrients that cause algal blooms in lakes like Lake Monroe are often associated with sediment that enters the lake from the watershed, which can come from excess lawn and agricultural fertilizer, and from runoff from pastures, feedlots and golf courses.

According to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), most algal blooms occur between May and October. But they can occur at any time of the year.

Are Blue-Green Algae harmful?

There are many species of algae, blue-green and otherwise, and most of them are not harmful to humans or pets. However, even if they don't pose a physical threat, excess algae can be a recreational nuisance. In worst-case conditions, blue-green algae have the potential to be harmful to humans, animals, and aquatic organisms due to the toxins, called cyanotoxins, they produce.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine if algae are harmful just by looking at them. Laboratory analysis is often required.

For this reason, when it comes to water contact and blue-green algae, it's probably best to follow the maxim "when in doubt, best keep out!" and also not to drink untreated water.

Humans and pets are exposed to harmful toxins primarily through skin contact and by ingesting water while swimming. Pets are not necessarily more sensitive to cyanotoxins than humans, but they are more likely to drink water when swimming and to lick algae from their coats after being in the water.

Symptoms of exposure to cyanotoxins include rashes, skin or eye irritation, nausea, stomach aches, and tingling fingers and toes. Toxic exposure in pets can result in lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, and seizures. There are documented examples of pet deaths following exposure to blue-green algae in water.

In general, it is safe to eat fish caught in water that contains blue-green algae. The World Health Organization recommends eating them in moderation, and

avoid eating the guts, where cyanotoxins may be in the greatest concentration.

There are also no negative health effects from blue-green algae in municipal drinking water supplies, since the treatment process removes any potential cyanotoxins.

Plants and animals living in the lake can be harmed by blue-green algae blooms. In high numbers, the algae can reduce light penetration and harm production of phytoplankton and aquatic plants that are important to the food chain. In addition, when algal blooms die off, they decompose in the water, a process that can deplete the oxygen supply. This oxygen demand can be harmful to fish and other aquatic life, and can even result in fish kills.

Does Anyone Monitor Blue-Green Algae in Indiana Lakes?

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) monitors thirteen public lakes in Indiana for blue-green algae, including Lake Monroe. Locally, the beaches at the Fairfax and Paynetown State Recreation Areas are tested periodically from May through about Labor Day, to coincide with the summer recreation period. This testing includes both a cell count of blue-green algae (number of cells per milliliter), and a laboratory analysis of certain cyanotoxins if the cell count indicates that the correct species are present.

IDEM and the Indiana State Department of Health follow the World Health Organization and U.S. EPA threshold of 100,000 cells/ml of cyanobacteria when determining if a recreational advisory is necessary.

Below are the results of IDEM's testing at the Fairfax and Paynetown beaches so far in 2019.

Date	Location	Cells/ml	Toxin Concentration
5/13	Fairfax	3,900	None detected
5/13	Paynetown	Flooded-not sampled	NA
6/10	Fairfax	27,000	None detected
6/10	Paynetown	42,000	None detected

A note on IDEM's website states that sampling has not been conducted at

either Fairfax or Paynetown beaches since June 10 due to high water and beach closings, and that sampling will resume on July 22.

The limited results obtained from Lake Monroe for 2019 indicate that blue-green algae cell counts at Fairfax and Paynetown have been well below the High Cell Count Recreational Advisory level of 100,000 cells/ml. In addition, cyanotoxins have not been detected.

In the previous three years (2016, 2017, and 2018), early season blue-green algae cell counts at both Paynetown and Fairfax beaches were similar to the low cell counts observed in early summer 2019. However, in the previous three years, blue-green algae cell counts increased as the summer progressed and exceeded the High Cell Count Recreational Advisory level of 100,000 cells/ml on several occasions late in the summer, resulting in advisories at both Fairfax and Paynetown. The maximum cell count observed was 400,000 cells/ml in August, 2016 at Paynetown. In no case however, did the levels of cyanotoxins exceed threshold values that resulted in closing the beaches.

A High Cell Count Recreational Advisory states the following: “Swimming and boating permitted. Avoid contact with algae. Avoid swallowing water while swimming. Take a bath or shower with warm soapy water after coming in contact with lake water. Do not use lake water for cooking or bathing. Do not allow your pets to swim or drink water where algae are present”.

In extreme cases, human and dog recreation can be prohibited (beaches closed) if cyanotoxin concentrations found in laboratory analysis exceed thresholds that are believed to be harmful to humans and dogs. The beaches at Lake Monroe have not exceeded those levels.

The Friends of Lake Monroe recommends checking for High Cell Count Recreation Advisories on IDEM’s website (<https://www.in.gov/idem/algae/>) before swimming at Fairfax or Paynetown beaches. Unfortunately, information is not available for the Hardin Ridge beach since it is not a state-managed property.

Even without the benefit of specific data, common sense approaches to water recreation can help protect you, your family, and pets.

- Do not swim in water with any obvious algae on the surface.
- Do not boat or water ski over such water (people can be exposed through inhalation).
- Do not let children play in scum layers, even from the shore.
- Do not let pets or livestock swim in or drink water with blue-green algae blooms.
- Do not treat blue-green algae blooms with herbicides — toxins may be released by dying algae cells.
- Always take a shower after contact with surface water to remove any potentially harmful algae, bacteria, or viruses.

When visiting the beaches at Fairfax and Paynetown this summer, look for the signs that warn of potential HAB contact, and prominently display any applicable advisories, cautions, or beach closings. Look for one of the colored triangles on the sign to determine the level of risk from blue-green algae.

What Can You Do to Help Combat Blue-Green Algae?

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for combating blue-green algae in Lake Monroe or any other lake, and solutions will have to be long-term. However, there are things we can all do to help reduce future algal blooms.

- Reduce the amount of fertilizers used on lawns and agricultural fields.
- Use only phosphorus-free fertilizers (look for a “0” as the middle of the three numbers on the lawn fertilize bag).
- Minimize activities that result in erosion.
- Properly maintain your septic tank and fix any leaks.
- Use only phosphorus-free laundry- and dish-washing detergents.
- Maintain buffer strips along streams and lakes to minimize the sediment entering waterways.

Remember, we all live in a watershed — even if it isn’t Lake Monroe’s.

The links below provide additional information about blue-green algae.

- <https://www.in.gov/idem/algae/index.htm> (IDEM fact sheets, list of lake advisories, and test results)
- <https://www.in.gov/isdh/25974.htm> (Indiana State Department of Health)

fact sheets)

- <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/blue-green-algae-and-harmful-algal-blooms> (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)
- <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/> (Wisconsin DNR)

Information in this article was obtained from the websites of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana State Department of Health, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

- Richard Harris -

Upcoming Events



Mark your calendars! Here's what we have coming up.

[See All Events >](#)

Wednesday, July 17, 6:00pm

Friends of Lake Monroe public meeting

Meeting Room 1C, Monroe County Public Library
303 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington

Tuesday, July 23, 6:00 pm

Adopt-A-Shoreline trash pickup

Paynetown State Recreation Area

Friday, August 23, 5:30-7:30 pm

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**WATER SUMMIT
INAUGURAL EVENTS!**

**AUGUST 14 | 6-8:30 pm
CONNER PRAIRIE**

A kick off event featuring a hands-on workshop designed for learning 'all things water'. Diverse professionals will provide an educational tour through water infrastructure systems, key water regulations, water quality threats, and water use trends among major user groups. Small group activities will help 'connect the drops' and provide a great learning forum for everyone!

JOIN US EARLY 5-6 PM FOR LIGHT HORS D'OEUVRES, EXCLUSIVE HOT AIR BALLOON RIDES WITH VIEWS OF THE WHITE RIVER, AND TIME TO MINGLE WITH WATER EXPERTS READY TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.

THIS IS AN ADULTS ONLY EVENT.

**AUGUST 15 | 8:30-5 pm
THE ATHENAEUM**

An action-driven forum aimed at building widespread understanding about competing water needs, best-practice water quality strategies, and regional water planning approaches needed to guide Indiana's water future. Interactive sessions, speakers, and panels will feature national, state, and regional experts across the full spectrum of water users, researchers, and policy makers.

STAY AFTER 5-6 PM FOR HAPPY HOUR NETWORKING IN THE RATHSKELLER BIERGARTEN.

MORE INFORMATION | IndianaWaterSummit.org

Volunteer Opportunities



Check FLM's [website](#) for future opportunities, including monthly shoreline cleanup get-togethers.

Paynetown State Recreation Area Shoreline Cleanups

Tuesday, July 23, 6:09pm

Got a friend or neighbor who should know about Friends of Lake Monroe?



Share



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Forward