



## President's Message, *Brian Metzke*

At the annual conference this past March, the Executive Committee made the decision to advance officer progression from fall to the annual business meeting. So, Scott Stuewe ceremoniously handed me the gavel at the meeting and I began my term as President. I've been thinking about my agenda for the next year and where I'd like to see the Chapter go. I do so with a humble heart, however, as I am truly standing on the shoulders of those before me. Over the past several years the Chapter has advanced through robust membership and active leadership; I'm inheriting a strong and stable organization.

As I take appraisal of the Chapter's position I'm pleased with both individuals' efforts that have driven our success and our efforts to participate outside of our organization. We have a strong financial footing that has resulted from sound governance and members' participation and generosity. We have gained administrative efficiency by separating the Secretary and Treasurer positions. We have

had individuals step up to fill committee chair and committee member positions. We have grown in student participation and welcomed the addition of the Western Illinois subunit. We have been active in commenting on environmental policy and proposals through participation in the Illinois Environmental Council and through numerous letters and resolutions. These efforts, and others, have served to enhance our Chapter and have made it an organization that enhances the development of fisheries professionals and students.

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### Chapter Objectives:

- Promotes training of fisheries professionals.
- Provides education outreach to the citizens of Illinois.
- Fosters research in fisheries and aquatic sciences.
- Provides sound fisheries policy information.
- Enhances communication and synergistic relationships amongst fisheries professionals.



**Chapter Officers and Chairpersons**

President: Brian Metzke  
 President-Elect: Steve Pescitelli  
 Secretary: Jim Lamer  
 Treasurer: Rich Lewis  
 Past President: Scott Stuewe  
 Excom Members at Large: Karen Rivera/Kevin Irons  
 Committee Chairpersons:

- Archival: Rich Lewis
- Arrangements: Scott Stuewe
- Awards: Steve Pescitelli
- Continuing Education: Ben Lubinski
- Environmental Concerns: Rob Colombo/  
Randy Sauer
- IL Environmental Council: Vic Santucci
- IL Wildlife Action Team: Trent Thomas
- Membership: Matt Diana
- Newsletter: Brian Metzke/Mark Fritts/ Jason  
DeBoer
- Raffle: Jim Lamer
- Resolutions: Rob Hilsabeck
- Student Concerns: Nerissa McClelland
- Student Subunits:
  - Eastern Illinois:
  - Southern Illinois: Anthony Porreca
  - University of Illinois: James Garavagila
  - Western Illinois: Rebekah Haun
- Website: Matt Diana/Ann Holtrop

NCD Committee Reports Representatives:

- Centrarchid: Josh Sherwood
- Esocid: Rob Colombo
- Ictalurid: Jeremy Tiemann
- Rivers and Streams: Trent Thomas/Steve Pescitelli
- Walleye: Jason Deboer/Mike Garthaus

**Thanks to Our 2015 Corporate Members**

The Chapter thanks the Professional Association of Conservation Resource Managers (PACRM) for their continued support of our annual conference.

The Chapter also thanks our 2015 corporate members. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting our organization, please contact the membership committee chairman, Matt Diana (mattd@illinois.edu), for more information.



**Illini  
Muskie  
Alliance**



**Illinois Council  
Trout Unlimited**



## President's Message

*(continued from page 1)*

Accordingly, my agenda is driven by a desire to build upon our successes and refine the way we operate and administer. I propose three objectives that I would like to realize during the next officer year:

1. Increase participation in corporate membership. The Chapter shares common goals with many organizations and corporations; however, corporate membership is currently has historically been low. This is unfortunate for us as a society because corporate members provide us financial flexibility in what we can offer Chapter members. In general, there is a reluctance to financially support organizations such as ours, sometimes because of conflict of interest or a violation of policy, but often it is because the potential member does not see the benefit in providing support. Matt Diana, membership committee chairman, and I have begun to craft a strategy that might increase participation in corporate membership by both providing additional tangible benefits and increasing our marketing to potential corporate members. If you have any suggestions that could aid our mission or are aware of any promising leads for corporate members, please contact me or Matt.
2. Enact a sound investment strategy. If you have participated in the annual business meetings during the past few years I'm sure you are aware that our coffers have grown over the most recent decade. This has resulted from the desire of the Executive Committee to pursue a conservative budget and also from the generosity of our members. In the past we have invested our surplus in certificate of deposits, but the current yield on these investments is paltry. The (ahem, Parent) Society offers its Chapters an opportunity to place their funds in a group portfolio. The investment management firm used by the Society charges low fees and the performance of the fund used by the Society is quite good. The Executive Committee has discussed this and other options for more than a year and we are confident this investment strategy is appropriate. This option was addressed in greater detail during the last business meeting, but if you have questions or concerns I can address them. We will keep the membership up to date as we move on this opportunity.
3. Develop student interest and support utilization. Students represent a large proportion of our membership and of the participants at annual conferences. Nerissa McClelland, student committee chairwoman, does an excellent job serving as a liaison to the subunits and encouraging them to participate in student opportunities provided by the Chapter. For their part, the subunits are active in providing student workshops, attracting speakers and community outreach and events. However, I believe there is an opportunity for the Chapter to improve its relationship with the student subunits. It seems the subunits are functioning well without much support from the Chapter, so perhaps it's time we, as the Executive Committee, ask ourselves how we might become more relevant to the students. I would like to see a stronger connection between the subunits and the Chapter. For example, monetary support for subunits and individual students is underutilized. Improving our funding ratio might benefit from the Executive Committee reaching out to mentors and faculty advisors and encouraging them to increase student participation. Perhaps a casual mentoring effort from the Executive Committee to student officers might help the subunits recognize ways in which funds could progress or expand their goals.

As you likely can detect, these objectives are enhancements to the way we operate rather than an overhaul of our procedures, which reflects positively on the Officers and Chairpersons that carry out the activities of the Chapter. I hope my time at the helm will see a continuance of the Chapter's current trajectory. In the meantime, I welcome comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Brian



## 2015 Conference Recap, Mark Fritts

The Illinois Chapter hosted another annual conference this past March 3, 4, and 5<sup>th</sup> at the Pere Marquette Lodge and Conference Center near Grafton. Around 130 people attended this year's meeting, 31 of whom were students. Many of those students delivered well-prepared and insightful platform and poster presentations at the meeting.

There were 42 oral presentations and 18 poster presentations delivered at the meeting, with topics including stream restoration, fish foraging behavior, diet analysis techniques, large river fish community changes, and even Brazilian mussels. The officers of the Illinois Chapter thank all presenters for your efforts to disseminate the results of your research programs. Three special awards were given for best professional paper, student paper, and student poster:



Scott leads the business meeting

Best Professional Paper: Dr. Philip Willink, Shedd Aquarium, *Using pop-off satellite archival tags to monitor Lake Sturgeon *Acipenser fulvescens* in Lakes Erie and Ontario*

Best Student Paper: Clinton Morgeson, Eastern Illinois University, *Changes in Asian carp demographics in the Illinois River and its tributaries*

Best Poster: Elizabeth Tristano, Southern Illinois University, *Do invasive Asian carp compete with native Gizzard Shad*

We are sincerely grateful to all of those who worked to make this meeting a great success. We are especially thankful to Jim Lamer and the student subunits (among many other volunteers) who worked so hard to ensure that we had yet another successful raffle. The Illinois Chapter collected over \$2,600 in proceeds from this year's raffle. Those funds will be used to support student travel awards to future meetings.



Scott Isringhausen receives a check from Monsanto



Sarah receives best student paper award



## Meet the New Officers and Committee Chairs

### *Secretary, Jim Lamer, Western Illinois University*

Jim Lamer received his B.S. and M.S. from Western Illinois University. His thesis examined gene flow and population genetic structure of red-eared sliders in the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Jim is scheduled to earn his PhD from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana in May for his dissertation work describing the prevalence, distribution, and post-zygotic success of Asian carp hybridization in the Mississippi River Basin.

Jim's love of aquatic ecology was first realized when he started working for Eric Ratcliff, John Chick, and John Tucker at the Illinois Natural History Survey, Great Rivers Field Station (now NGRREC). He was at INHS for seven years off and on and worked on a variety of projects and crews including: intensive turtle trapping, fisheries, water quality, vegetation, macroinvertebrate sampling, and for the last two years worked exclusively on the Swan Lake HREP project. During this time, Jim took four months off in 2004 to become a fisheries observer in Kodiak, Alaska where he worked on longliners, pot boats, and trawlers in the Gulf of Alaska.

After his time at INHS, Jim was hired by Western Illinois University in 2007 as manager of the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station located in Warsaw, IL on the Mississippi River. At the station he is responsible for the security and upkeep of the grounds, conducting and organizing research and management, and teaching courses at the field station and university including: fisheries techniques, fisheries management, freshwater biology, streams ecology, and Mississippi River ecology.

Jim has been a member of ILAFS since 2005 and has been coordinator or co-coordinator of the raffle for the chapter since 2006. When he's not on the water for work or serving ILAFS, Jim enjoys catfish fishing (by pole and hand), serving as a captain and firefighter on the Warsaw volunteer fire department, and spending time with his wife and son.

### *NCD Walleye Committee Reports Representative, Jason DeBoer, IL Natural History Survey*

Jason DeBoer grew up in West Michigan fishing for walleye and other sportfish. He received a BS in Natural Resource Management and a minor in Engineering Science from Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in 2001. He also received an MS in Biology with an emphasis on Fisheries Science from GVSU in 2009, where he studied sediment, macroinvertebrate, and fish assemblage response to habitat restoration on tributary streams in the Manistee River watershed. He received an MS in Natural Resource Sciences from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2014, where he studied walleye and white bass recruitment in SW Nebraska irrigation reservoirs. During his four-year tenure in Nebraska, Jason was actively involved in both the student subunit and state chapters of AFS, serving as president of the student subunit (1 year), as well as the Nebraska representative of both the Walleye (4 years) and Centrarchid (3 years) Technical Committees. He attended the summer and winter meetings of the Technical Committees, and submitted annual reports for both subunit and WTC/CTC activities during our state chapter's annual business meeting. Jason's past familiarity with the WTC and his current ability and willingness to travel to WTC meetings make him a good candidate to fulfill this important role for IL AFS.

### *NCD Walleye Committee Reports Representative, Mike Garthaus, IL DNR*

Mike Garthaus is a fisheries biologist with the IL DNR. Mike graduated from Southern Illinois University with a M.S. in Zoology. During his time at SIU, Mike worked on a walleye stocking success project that initiated his interest in walleye. After graduating from SIU, Mike worked for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife as an assistant District Fisheries Biologist. After 2 years in Kentucky, Mike started working for the IL DNR as a District Fisheries Biologist and has been with the Department for 15 years. Mike currently manages 5 lakes that contain either walleye or saugeye. Even though Mike has been sampling and managing these fisheries for 15 years, he believes the Walleye Technical Committee would be a great way to learn new management strategies that would benefit Illinois. The WTC would also be a way to meet other people interested in walleye management and share information from Illinois.



## Eagle Scout Honors District Ecologist With Funds for Fish Project, *Deb Humiston*



IMAGE © QUINN DRAZ

Eagle Scout Quinn Draz with the 30 submersible fish habitats he built for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

When it was time to design his Eagle Scout project, Quinn Draz of Naperville, an avid angler and outdoor enthusiast, wanted something he could be passionate about that would also serve the community, so he turned to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

District ecologist Don LaBrose worked with the Neuqua Valley junior from Naperville Troop 889, helping him plan and initiate the construction of 30 submersible fish habitats and 18 fishing-line collection stations for the preserves.

“In the short time I worked with Don LaBrose on my Eagle project, his passion for the outdoors, conservation-minded spirit and dedication to our natural resources impacted my life greatly,” Draz said.

LaBrose passed away in 2012, and after Draz completed his Eagle Scout project he decided to honor his mentor with a

new endeavor. He developed [Funds for Fish](#), a campaign to raise \$5,000 to introduce a new species of hybrid bluegill to forest preserve waters to attract younger anglers. The hybrid grows quickly, but it also tends to spawn infrequently, which means it dedicates less energy to reproduction and more to growth and is less likely to become overpopulated.

“Through Funds for Fish, I’m paying it forward so kids for generations to come can have the same incredible outdoor experiences I’ve had growing up,” Draz said. So far he has raised \$600, including \$300 of his own money that he earned through Troop 889’s Christmas tree sales. People who wish to donate can do so at [dupageforestgiving.org](http://dupageforestgiving.org).

“Thanks to Quinn’s efforts, more kids will be able to experience the thrill of catching a fish and hopefully embrace this pastime,” said Joe Cantore, president of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. “We’re very grateful for his work to enhance fishing in our forest preserves.” Chris Linnell, volunteer services coordinator for the District, added, “Quinn’s enthusiasm is contagious. We hope others will support the Funds for Fish and bring youngsters to the lake to drop a line.” Now that he’s earned the rank of Eagle Scout, Draz hopes to work again with the District to earn a prestigious Hornaday Award, which recognizes Scouts for outstanding contributions to environmental and conservation programs and has only been awarded to an estimated 1,100 Scouts in the last 80 years.

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has been connecting people to nature for 100 years. More than 4 million people visit its 60 forest preserves, 145 miles of trails, five education centers and scores of programs each year. For information, call 630-933-7200 or visit [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org), where you can also link to the District’s [e-newslet-](#)



Longtime District ecologist Don LaBrose



## Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Revision Update, *Brian Metzke and James Renn*

The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), implemented in 2005, is a blueprint for Illinois conservation. By Federal law, all States must review and revise their Action Plans by October 1, 2015. The IWAP revision will focus on producing an operational document to guide conservation actions on the ground.

Since 2005, new tools to develop and aggregate information have improved procedures for assessing conservation status and evaluating vulnerability of species and habitats. In addition, new standards exist for describing threats and conservation actions. The revision will enable a conservation effort to use a systematic approach in targeting Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and prioritizing species, habitats, and conservation actions in an overall effort to strategically direct limited resources to the highest priority targets.

The revised IWAP will be composed of six campaign units, each of which will be a “stand alone” document, detailing what is needed across the state to keep SGNC from declining and provide a working document for our conservation partners and IDNR’s offices to progress over the next decade. The revision of each Campaign is being authored by the associated Campaign lead with the input of stakeholders. The Streams Campaign will include objectives and actions for conservation of fish, invertebrate and aquatic herptile SGNC and their habitats in streams, lakes, ponds, backwaters and caves.

Important dates for the revision include:

May 2015 – draft revision document available for public review

May-June 2015 – public review period

July-August 2015 – public comments incorporated into revised document

September 1, 2015 – revised document submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft revision documents will be available at the IWAP webpage (<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IWAP/Pages/default.aspx>) for public viewing during the comment period.





## Are Asian Carp Influencing the Fish Community as a Whole?

*Rich Pendleton, Levi Solomon, and Andrew Casper, Illinois Natural History Survey*

The establishment of Asian carp within the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) has prompted numerous studies on the possible effects they may have within the aquatic food webs they invade. Most of this work has focused on the effects of Asian carp on plankton communities, while other research has shown that catch rates and relative body condition of native planktivores have declined due to possible competitive interactions with Asian carp. Based on these impacts on different food web components, this study sought to determine if Asian carp are influencing the fish community structure in an ecosystem (the La Grange Reach of the Illinois River), which harbors some of the highest densities of Asian carp.

The Long Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM) element of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) program is implemented by a partnership of the U.S. Geological Survey's Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center and the 5 Upper Mississippi River System states (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin). This element has been monitoring fish, water quality, and vegetation throughout the UMRS since the early 1990s. LTRM staff at the Illinois Natural History Survey's Illinois River Biological Station (INHS-IRBS) have been using these long-term data to understand ecological processes and responses over time and how they relate to natural and anthropogenic changes the river has undergone. Here, we used fish community data from the La Grange Reach of the Illinois River from 1993 to 2013 to investigate possible changes in fish community structure in relation to the establishment of Asian carp. Annual catch per unit effort (CPUE) was calculated for each species for each LTRM gear (electrofishing, fyke netting, hoop netting) and river strata (main channel, side channel, and backwaters) in addition to weighted poolwide means calculated among strata for electrofishing and minifyke netting. Annual community data were analyzed as pre-establishment (1993–1999) and post-establishment (2000–2013) of Asian carp, using 2000 as the year of establishment based on the previously published work from past IRBS staff.

For most gears and river strata, significant differences in the fish communities were observed, indicating a change in community structure coinciding with the establishment of Asian carp (see illustration). In general, centrarchid sportfish (largemouth bass, white bass, and crappie) were found to be less abundant after the establishment of Asian carp whereas gar, bowfin, and grass carp were more abundant. Temporal trends emerged among years as pre-establishment communities tended to be more similar to one another while post-establishment communities exhibited higher between-year variability. Years immediately following the establishment (2000–2004) also tended to be more similar to pre-establishment communities, indicating a transitional period as Asian carp densities were increasing over time.

Collectively, we observed strong differences in the fish community in relation to the establishment of Asian carp. Numerous fish species seem to be affected negatively by Asian carp establishment while some fishes are now more abundant. Other biotic and abiotic factors may be contributing to these differences, but changes in community structure were evident corresponding to Asian carp establishment. Long-term monitoring will continue to inform ecologists about the potential ecosystem responses resulting from the establishment of Asian carp. A peer-reviewed manuscript of these results is currently being drafted.



Silver carp jumping in response to electrofishing near Frederick, IL.



## Apple Canyon Lake Watershed Plan, Michael Malon, NRCS

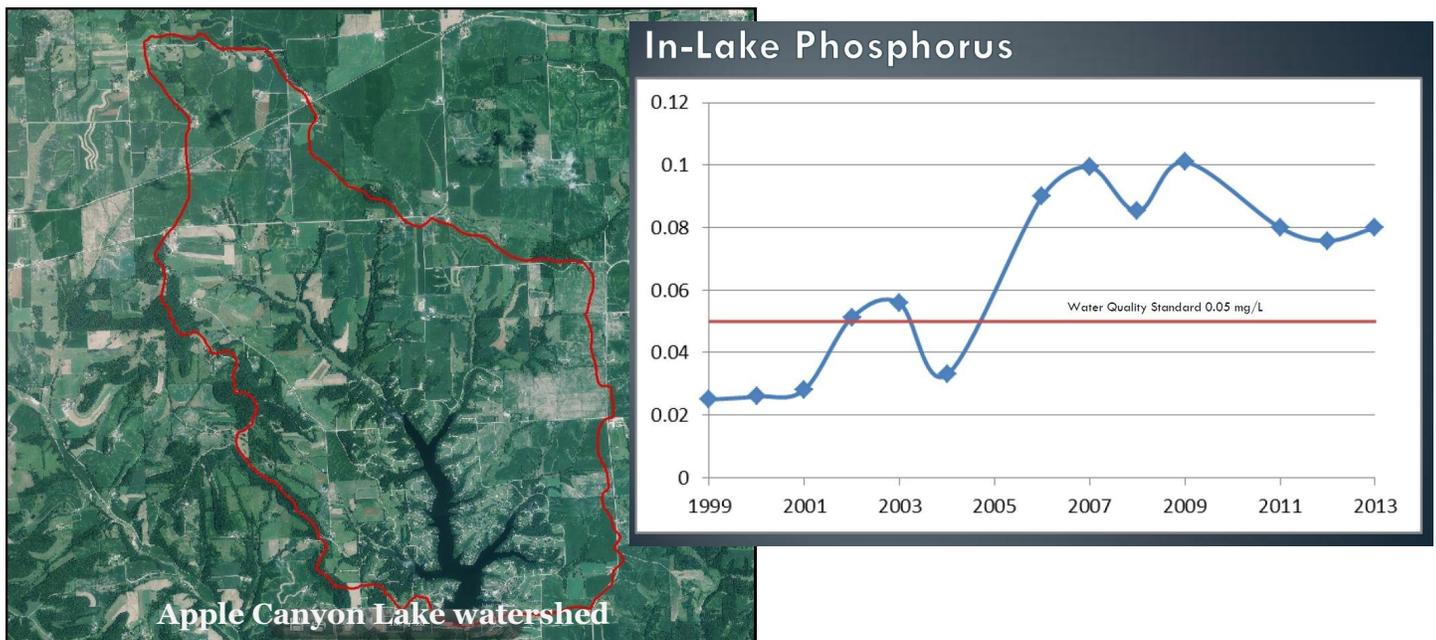
The Jo Daviess County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is developing a watershed plan for Apple Canyon Lake and its 10,000 acre watershed. The 400 acre lake is located in northwest Illinois and is part of the driftless region. The lake has shown a downward trend in water quality through Illinois EPA sampling which has been ongoing since the mid-1980s. The lake is an impoundment created on the Hell's Branch stream, a well-known smallmouth fishery. Phosphorus and nitrogen are the primary water quality concerns in the lake.

The SWCD is developing the plan based on qualitative data. The lake was surveyed to model bathymetry and estimate a volume. Load reduction needs are generated based on extrapolating IEPA lake samples to the lake volume. Samples are taken at the six major tributaries to the lake on a monthly basis or any storm events greater than one inch. This data is used to model the watershed and prioritize best management practices in the subwatershed.

The watershed is being modeled using both STEP-L, and the A, B, C, D, E-model, coded to R by Dr. Austin Polebitsky at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. The watershed is 75% agriculture, 14% forest, and 7% light development. The preliminary load reduction estimates show a need for approximately 0.14 lb. per acre of phosphorus and 1.04 pounds per acre of nitrogen to meet water quality standards set by the EPA. These reductions are very achievable.

An extensive education campaign is being organized as part of the watershed planning process. A watershed science intern was hired in 2014 and the position is being sponsored in 2015 through the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC). A three day conservation camp for kids is held each summer to educate them on aquatic biota in our waters and give them a hands-on exposure to both the species and the monitoring techniques. NGRREC is holding a RiverWatch training at the lake this year (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/jsw/>). Eight sites were monitored last year at the lake for invertebrates and five of the eight rated poorly with only three rating fair.

Public meetings are held quarterly to incorporate public participation and comments. So far, participation has been outstanding. All of the information gathered is available on the Apple Canyon Lake website at: <http://applecanyonlake.org/announcements/blog.php?bid=481>



**Announcements:**



*Save the date!*

Hotel Pere Marquette, Peoria, IL  
October 27-29, 2015

## A Watershed Partnership



ILLINOIS RIVER  
**CONFERENCE**

Discover what's been happ'n  
on the river and the land!

**Partnerships working towards  
improving the Illinois River system**

Find out more by going to <http://www.conferences.uiuc.edu/conferences/conference.asp?ID=413>