Volume 1 Issue2 Fall 2006

Ripple Effects

Eagle Creek Watershed: We're All in It Together

Mission Statement

To utilize a holistic approach to watershed management with the ultimate goals of improving water quality, increasing public awareness of watershed water quality, and encouraging stewardship of the watershed's resources.

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CALENDAR

Details in newsletter

November 27
ECWA public meeting
Zionsville Library
6:30 p.m.

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JOIN US!

We welcome your participation. Should you have an interest in joining the ECWA, please contact John Ulmer at remlu@tds.net.

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This newsletter is funded in part by a 319 Grant from the U.S. EPA under an assistance agreement with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

ECWA Meeting Features Zion Nature Center and Eagle Creek Park

Join us on Monday, November 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the Zionsville Library for exciting news and updates regarding the Zion Nature Center in Zionsville and the Earth Discovery Center at Eagle Creek Park (ECP). Both facilities are located within the Eagle Creek Watershed and will play an important role in promoting responsible stewardship of our natural resources. The library is at 250 N. 5th St.

Jill Troha, from Zion Nature Center, and Karen LaMere, ECP Manager, will discuss activities planned for 2007.

The Town of Zionsville recently announced plans to hire a chief naturalist for the Zion Nature Center and Zionsville Parks. The Earth Discovery Center at ECP is near completion and ready for installation of exhibits, labs and environmental programming.

The public is encouraged to attend. Increasing knowledge to improve water quality and providing educational resources continue to be high priorities of the Alliance. In addition to quarterly meetings, the Alliance works with local landowners, government agencies and others on an on-going basis to reduce contaminants to Eagle Creek reservoir, a source of local drinking water.

The ECWA represents a broad coalition of individuals, volunteers, foundations, utilities, county, state and federal agencies and universities working together to improve water quality and environment of the Eagle Creek Watershed. Through a 3-year grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with assistance from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, ECWA is implementing a watershed management plan to improve water quality, increase public awareness and encourage stewardship of the watershed's resources. For more information, contact John Ulmer at remlu@tds.net or 769-3500.

ECWA Concerns

- Lawn chemicals, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, and resultant algal blooms.
- Degradation of aquatic habitats as a result of increased sedimentation.
- Nutrient loading; harmful levels of herbicides and other chemicals.
- High levels of *E.coli* and other pathogens.
- The public's level of understanding of the watershed and its value as a natural resource.

"FALL INTO NATURE DAYS" WATERSHED TOUR

ECWA hosted one of 20 statewide activities offered through INCA's (Indiana Conservation Alliance) "Fall into Nature Days." Twenty-five participants enjoyed a boat trip on Eagle Creek Reservoir while learning about reservoir water quality, algal blooms, taste and odor compounds and ongoing research projects of the Central Indiana Water Resource Partnership. IUPUI Center for Earth and Environmental Science staff assisted ECWA with the tour on September 16.

After docking at the marina, participants visited a residential development and a farm where innovative approaches to improving stormwater quality have been installed. Participants gained an appreciation for the challenges associated with managing water resources for drinking water, recreation and the support of aquatic life.

Farm Promoter Hired

In a joint venture with the Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District, the ECWA announces a new Farm Promoter. John Bush, who brings more than three decades of experience in agriculture conservation practices, will help connect local farmers and agricultural landowners to programs that ultimately improve water quality and surrounding wildlife habitat.

John, recently retired from the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, will promote cost share opportunities that are available to the agricultural community through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program and the Eagle Creek Watershed Alliance Section 319 Grant.

New Coordinator Named

Eileen Hack has recently joined CEES as Watershed Coordinator for ECWA. Her family relocated to Indianapolis from Overland Park, Kansas, where Eileen worked on wastewater quality, stormwater quality, environmental regulatory and environmental health issues as a water quality specialist. Her responsibilities included water quality assessment and monitoring programs, regional public education and outreach programs and ordinance development. With an M.S. in Aquatic Entomology, and M.P.H. in Environmental Health, Eileen brings 25 years experience with environmental science and public policy to ECWA.

Water Quality Awareness Days Both Fun and Informative

Participants in Water Quality Awareness Days had fun while gaining an appreciation for water resources and awareness of threats posed by non-point source pollution. The ECWA Education Committee hosted the event on September 29 and 30.

On Friday, nearly 200 fifth grade students, teachers and chaperones from Zionsville West Middle School rotated through five interactive learning stations at Zionsville Lions Park as part of “Make a Splash with Project WET” festivals occurring across the country. Students “developed” waterfront property, discovering how everyone contributes to non-point source pollution, as well as the importance of planning for water resource protection. They also learned about animals commonly found in the watershed and clues to identifying watershed wildlife. Other tasks helped them understand the complexities of managing water resources and the importance of wetlands for managing stormwater. The error of judging water quality by simply looking at its clarity was another surprising activity. The public had the opportunity to experience similar activities on Saturday at Eagle Creek Park.

The events would not have been possible without our sponsors and many volunteers. Our thanks to Indiana Project WET, IUPUI-CEES, Experience Science, Indy Parks, Veolia Water, JF New, Waste Management and Williams Creek, and to our many volunteers. The committee has already started brainstorming for next year. If you would like more information or would like to participate in the ECWA Education Committee, call Eileen Hack at 278-8585.

Things to Do Around Your House:

- **Pick up pet wastes regularly**
- **Use phosphate-free dishwasher detergent**
- **Cover bare ground with plantings**
- **Have your septic tank pumped out**
- **Monitor and maintain your septic drainfield**
- **Collect stormwater from gutters**

Volunteers needed for new Sign Committee

We’re looking for a few good “signers” who will help design highway signs to mark tributaries within the Eagle Creek Watershed. The members will also work with the specific jurisdictions where the signs will be placed. Please join us; the first meeting will be Tuesday, December 12, 9 a.m. at Eagle Creek Park. For more information, contact Eileen Hack at 278-8585 or hacke@iupui.edu.

CALENDAR

February 26, 2007 Zionsville Library 6:30
ECWA Quarterly public meeting. Check website for details.