



LEWS NEWS



Photo: Kristin Stanford

Volume XV

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Protecting Lake Erie's Natural Heritage

Announcing Nerodio 2007.... As Seen on Dirty Jobs

Yes folks, once again the annual Lake Erie Watersnake census (a.k.a.~ The Nerodio) is rapidly approaching. I, the "some kind of wacky chick" island snake lady, and my entourage will be spending two weeks scouring the islands for Lake Erie Watersnakes from approximately May 29 – June 10, although we may be doing occasional site visits both before and after the census period. As in the past, we will begin the census at the Bass Islands and then move over to Kelleys Island (From June 2 – 7). Following Kelleys Island, we will return to the Bass Island area. Who knows....maybe Mike Rowe and his crew will come out and tag along again!

We will be visiting our traditional sites that we go to every year, however, we are always open to suggestions for new areas we have not visited! As part of the criterion outlined in the federal recovery plan, one of our objectives is to continue to monitor the snake population size and learn where the snakes are and are not living along the shoreline. Additionally, we hope to continue to show that the population size is currently at the recovery size criterion (above 5500 adult snakes on all 9 islands). My undergraduate assistants and I will also be visiting select sites throughout the summer. If you would like us to come and monitor the number of snakes on your property, please contact my Stone Lab office at 419-285-1847 and leave your name, address, phone number, and let us know when we can come out for a visit. You can also e-mail

theislandsnakelady@yahoo.com and tell me all about them. The sooner you get your request in for us to come and visit the better! Last year I had so many requests that we were unable to visit all the sites, so get those requests in early. I want to thank those residents who have been supportive of our work and encourage others to do so as well! If any residents are interested in participating in the census, please e-mail me! I'd love to get you all involved in my Dirty Job!

Kristin Stanford ~ The Island Snake Lady

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Nature Camp 2007 Registration Time is Here!

The Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy (LEIC-BSC) has been hard at work planning this summer's adventures for Nature Camp at the Bay 2007. We will be working again with the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society with partial funding from the Put-in-Bay Recreation Committee. Some funding is still needed to keep the camps affordable for everyone. There is a line for tax-deductible donations to the program on the registration form. Native Americans, rocks and a fishing trip to the Aquatic Resources Visitor Center will keep Nature Campers busy. Environmental Adventure Camp will include an overnight campout, kayaking and possible trips to Kelleys Island and Stone Lab. My First Nature Camp will include nature stories, crafts, and games with programs on frogs, Indians and more. Camp dates and fees are as follows:

June 11-14 Nature Camp at the Bay-Suggested for ages 6-8 or those who have just completed kindergarten through second grade. Two sessions of 20 campers each. 10:00AM-12:00PM and 1:00-3:00PM. Registration Fee: \$50

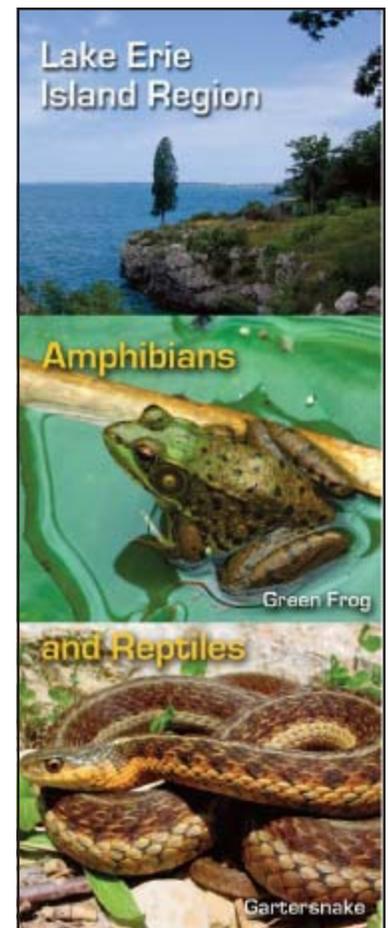
July 16-18 My First Nature Camp-Suggested for ages 4-5. Must be four by July 31, 2007 to participate. One session of 20 campers. 10:00-11:00AM. Registration Fee: \$25

July 16-19 Environmental Adventure Camp 1-Suggested for ages 9-10 or those who have just completed grades 3-5. One session of 20 campers. 1:00-5:00PM with a possible overnight camp out. Registration Fee: \$75

July 23-26 Environmental Adventure Camp 2-Suggested for ages 11 and up, or those who have just completed grade 6 and above. One session of 20 campers. 10:00AM-2:00PM with a possible overnight camp out. Registration Fee: \$75

If you are interested in having your child participate in this year's Nature Camp programs, please contact us at leic_bsc@cros.net or 419-285-5811. REMEMBER THAT REGISTRATION IS ON A FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVE BASIS AND SPACES FILL QUICKLY. We have had lots of inquiries already so we suggest you register right away. A full schedule and more information on the Camp will be mailed to you upon receipt of registration.

-Lisa Brohl
LEIC-BSC



New Lake Erie Island
Amphibian and Reptile
brochures now available.

Nerodio Kids Day and Herpetology Lab Open House

On Saturday June 9th, Kristin Stanford (The Island Snake Lady) and her LEWS research team invite kids and their parents to come out and learn about the research program. Two free field trips will be available for 15 children (age 10 - 13) to Middle Bass Island, in which participants will assist our research team in 3 different LEWS field projects at Middle Bass State Park. Registration is strictly limited to only 15 per boat trip for either the morning session (9:30-12:00) or the afternoon session (1:00-3:30) on a first-come first-serve basis. A free sack lunch will be provided at 12:00 for all 30 kids who are registered for the field trip.

That's not all! If you miss the cut off for the field trip or are too young to participate there are still activities for you! The herpetology lab (located within Stone Laboratory's Peach Point Research facility) will be open to the public from 10 am until 3 pm for all to come and learn about what kinds of laboratory snake research is currently going on. Additionally, the upstairs of the building will host a reptile and amphibian show-and-tell where kids of all ages can get a hands-on experience with a variety of different species.

Come and join us for a day filled with lots of fun and lots of snakes!

For registration information please call 419-285-1847. Remember the field activity is limited to just 30 kids (age 10-13), no exceptions!

New Brochures and Web Materials

Two new brochures will be available this summer. *Lake Erie Island Region Amphibians & Reptiles* provides information on and a checklist of all 52 species of amphibian and reptile species known from the islands and adjacent mainland. *Lake Erie Watersnakes: Unique Residents of the Lake Erie Islands* provides information on watersnake biology, protection, recovery, and research. These brochures will be available at various island locations (State Parks, Aquatic Visitor Center) and on the web at:

<http://www.bios.niu.edu/rking/lab/projects.html> Additional information on Lake Erie region amphibians & reptiles, including photos of many species, can also be found at this website. More detailed information on Lake Erie Watersnakes, including photos and figures suitable for use in the classroom, is available at this website and at <http://www.respectthesnake.com/> Both websites are 'works in progress' so expect updates! Other web-based sources of information include: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/reynoldsburg/endangered/lews.html> and <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/resources/wildnotes/wildnotes.htm>

Middle Bass Wetland Donation--Could This be Right for You?

In December 2006, the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy (LEIC-BSC) accepted the donation of ¼ acre of wetland and woods in the Burgundy Bay subdivision on Middle Bass Island. This is a win-win situation for everyone! LEIC-BSC gets to preserve wooded habitat for migratory birds and the LEWS while the property owners received an income tax deduction for the appraised value of the land that, according to the new tax rules, can be spread over a number of years. They will no longer have to pay utility and association fees on the property that would have been difficult to develop as a home lot due to wet conditions. With the lower Lake Erie levels the last few years, these wet areas on Middle Bass Island have appeared dry. Wetlands here are often only identifiable by the presence of plants growing in the area that are adapted to a high water table or the presence of hydric soils. However, a trip to this area in the spring or in high water years would reveal flooded conditions-not ideal for a vacation home unless you like wading-but ideal for migratory songbirds and waterfowl. If you have a similar piece of island real estate that you would like to see preserved (and get a great income tax deduction), give us a call!

State Park Marina Construction to Begin This Fall

Rehabilitation of the Middle Bass Island State Park marina is scheduled to begin this fall, now that all the necessary permits have been obtained. Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), who purchased various portions of the property over the past few years, recently received permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency authorizing the proposed in-water work. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provided part of the funds for the project through a Boating Infrastructure Grant, issued the Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact on February 15, 2007.

The rehabilitation includes the following key components: removing the center peninsula; reconfiguring the basin to a more rounded shape; moving the entrance channel to the northeast corner of the basin; recreating the marina walls using armor stone; dredging the basin; improving fish and wetland habitat in particular areas within the basin; installation of up to 350 boat slips; installation of boat ramp, service dock, and pump station; and construction of a harbormaster building and restrooms.

Construction is slated to begin in October, and to last two full years. Work will occur within the marina area, and also on some other upland areas that ODNR owns on the southern portion of the island. On some parcels, existing vegetation will be cleared, and the materials excavated from the marina basin will be spread, then the area will be seeded and mulched. These areas will eventually become picnic areas, camping areas, or other day-use areas. No work is currently proposed at the former Lonz Winery Building.

Because the Lake Erie Watersnake (LEWS) is known to occur throughout the marina area, ODNR and the US Fish and Wildlife Service consulted on how the project would affect the snake. ODNR incorporated a number of measures to protect the snake and its habitat during and after construction. Some of these measures included: creation of two artificial hibernacula; use of riprap in the marina design to provide summer basking habitat; placement of toe stone within the marina basin to create fish habitat and foraging habitat for the snake; installation of a snake barrier to keep LEWS out of the construction area; employment of a LEWS specialist to monitor impacts on the snake during construction; education of construction workers on measures necessary to protect the snake; timing excavation activities to avoid excavation in potential hibernation locations during the winter; avoidance of impacts to all known hibernacula and most high quality potential hibernation sites; and outreach to park visitors about the snake. Despite all of the proposed avoidance measures, it is still possible that some individual LEWS may be injured or killed during construction, so formal consultation under the Endangered Species Act was undertaken, and completed in September 2006.

Once construction is complete and the marina opens for business boaters and visitors can expect a top-notch recreational experience with many quality amenities.

-Megan Seymour
US Fish & Wildlife Service



The Island Snake Lady and her entourage will be grabbing handfuls of LEWS during the annual Nerodio census, scheduled for May 29-June 10, 2007.

Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Grant Success! Jane's Trail

On December 18, 2006, the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy (LEIC-BSC) was awarded an early Christmas present- a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant to purchase an additional three acres on South Bass Island! The three acres are adjacent to Ladd Carr Wildlife Woods. The property is wooded with a mix of Sugar Maple, Blue Ash, Basswood, Black Cherry, and Common Hackberry. Wildflowers like Dutchman's Breeches and Jack in the Pulpit are present in the spring. The property will provide a great place to watch birds, enjoy wildlife, and walk in the woods. The LEIC-BSC is currently working through the grant process to purchase the land.

With a total of five acres protected in the area soon, a trail can be constructed that will link both Ladd Carr Wildlife Woods and these newly protected properties that can be enjoyed by everyone! A donor made the purchase possible by providing the 25% matching funds required for grant submission. The trail will be named in honor of former island resident and artist Jane Coates per the donor's request. Jane was well known for her love of the island and especially its wild areas-often joining in the fight to protect what she loved.

Thanks again goes to all those who helped with this project-whether it was attending a public meeting, writing a letter of support, or providing financial support for our Land Protection Fund to help in these acquisitions. We hope to complete more such projects in the future. These projects take a tremendous amount of time and energy for writing grants and finding funds. If you would like to help with such land protections projects or would like to make a contribution to our Land Protection Fund to help us preserve more, please contact us by phone or e-mail: leic_bsc@cros.net or 419-285-5811.

-Lisa Brohl
LEIC-BSC

Next time you see the Snake Lady, be sure to congratulate her on her recent wedding! Kristin Stanford and Matt Thomas got married on March 2, 2007 in the Virgin Islands! Matt is currently the Assistant Manager of Stone Lab.
Congrats
Kristin and Matt!!!



Get Your Snake Gear Now!



Are you or your kids fascinated by the LEWS or snakes in general? Why not sport a cool snake shirt, while spreading the message to “Respect the Snake?” Or how about enjoying your morning coffee with a LEWS-inspired coffee mug? Or surf the internet with slithering ease on your new snake-loving mousepad? Kristin Stanford, the Island Snake Lady, has created a great new website with all kinds of information on the LEWS project, as well as all kinds of great merchandise with the “Respect the Snake” logo on it. Even better, a portion of the money raised by the purchase of merchandise goes to protect the LEWS. The website also has everything you’d ever want to know about the LEWS, including research projects, outreach activities, newspaper articles, photos, and more. Check out this great new website and support your local reptiles!



Respect the snake gear is perfect for the whole family!

<http://respectthesnake.com>



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