



SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Our Mission:

The preservation of an ecologically sound Lake Maxinkuckee and its watershed.



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Allen Chesser Memorial Summer Intern

KATHERINE BEESON



*Senior at
University of Pennsylvania
Environmental Studies*

Hello, my name is Katherine Beeson and I am a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania. I am majoring in Environmental Studies with minors in Chemistry and French. My academic journey has allowed me to explore my interests in science and research, but what truly drives me is my passion for the environment—rooted in a lifelong love of nature and its beauty.

I have lived in Culver for 11 years, and during this time I have grown to truly appreciate our beautiful lake. I especially enjoy taking my dogs for walks along the shoreline and canoeing whenever I get the chance. In my free time, I love reading, traveling, and painting.

I was incredibly excited to join the LMEF team this summer and contribute to its important mission. My main projects were shoreline and watershed mapping projects. These efforts involved developing maps that classified different shoreline types and identified the surrounding land use around the streams in the watershed. I had a great time leading the garden club at Culver Youth Club this summer. It has been so inspiring to see the community come together and share a passion for gardening and the outdoors, and it was a pleasure working with so many dedicated LMEF partners and volunteers!

Shoreline Survey



LMEF is building on our 2022 desktop survey of the shoreline with a more detailed, on-the-water analysis, led by intern Katherine.

The type of shoreline, as well as landward and lakeward vegetation, has a big impact on the ecological health of the lake. We are benchmarking the current status of the shoreline so that we can plan future efforts and evaluate them over time.

Thank you to volunteers Emerson Wells, JD Castleman, and Lauri Manikowski for assisting. Stay tuned for updates!

Data Buoy

LMEF's data buoy is halfway through its first field season! It gathers data about the lake around the clock, including temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, algae, conductivity and weather.

Many thanks to Jeff Justice at PWC & Marine, who helped us launch the buoy in Aubbeenaubbee Bay, by the Culver Academies' Rowing Center.



Scan the
QR code to
see the
live data

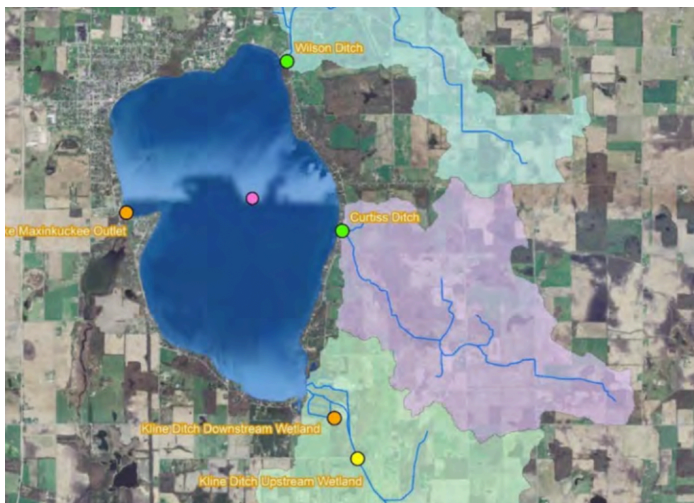
Inaugural Golf Outing



The summer heat and the rain held off long enough to host our inaugural golf fundraiser at Horseshoe Farms. New friends and old came together to support LMEF's mission of an ecologically healthy Lake Maxinkuckee and its watershed. Signs at every hole, like the one pictured, helped connect golfers with the work that

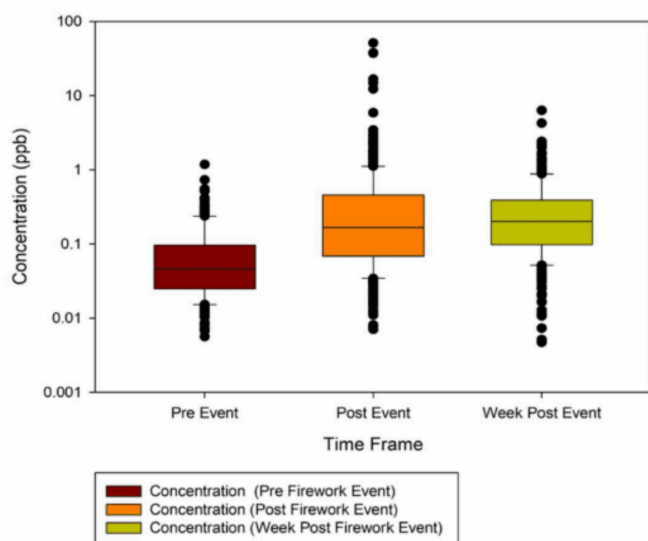
we are doing together. We are grateful for what this generous support is going to allow us to do long into the future! Special thanks to our volunteers, event and grounds staff, and our hosts, the Irsay Family.

Emerging Contaminants Research



“FIND OUT BEFORE YOU FREAK OUT”

That has been our motto when it comes to discussing potential contaminants in the lake. This has been especially relevant since LMEF partnered with a team of scientists last summer to test the perchlorate levels of Lake Maxinkuckee and get a better understanding of the potential impacts of fireworks on the lake. Perchlorates are a compound used in the manufacture of explosives like fireworks and in high doses are associated with thyroid issues. Out of 226 lakes sampled across the country, 8% of samples had concentrations exceeding 1.0 parts per billion (ppb), and there was a clear increase in concentrations after fireworks.



RESULTS FOR LAKE MAX

At one of the two sites sampled at Lake Max, perchlorate levels hit 1.16 ppb on the day after fireworks, qualifying us to participate in a follow-up study this summer; however, like many university research grants, this program was terminated by the federal government this spring, leaving many people wondering about perchlorates and other contaminants in the lake.

To help the public better understand the data and the unknowns, Adam gave a talk at the library about “Emerging Contaminants of Concern” to present recent findings on potential contaminants such as perchlorates, PFAS, and microplastics and how they are related to Lake Maxinkuckee.

**SCAN TO
WATCH THE
EMERGING
CONTAMINANTS
TALK**



HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Perchlorate levels in Lake Max are below Indiana’s guidance level; federal regulations for drinking water forthcoming
- No PFAS detected in Town of Culver’s drinking water; Lake Maxinkuckee not tested
- The ubiquity of microplastic pollution likely caused by atmospheric deposition
- The need for further research on all of these potential contaminants

Turtle Action Response Team (TART)



“Why are there cages on the ground?” This may be a question you have asked when walking through the Culver Park this summer, but there is a fun explanation - baby turtles!

This May, LMEF started a project to try and protect some of the turtle nests on the Culver Park hill, where dozens of Map Turtles lay their eggs.

It all started last summer when we noticed ransacked turtle nests at the Kline wetlands. In places like the park, we humans have created a racoon-opossum paradise, which is bad news for turtle reproduction since these animals dig up and eat the turtle eggs buried underground.



LMEF partnered with the good folks at Marshall-Starke Development Center to build six boxes to try out. These boxes are anchored to the ground and have a small one-way flap on the lake-ward side allowing hatchlings to escape.

Timely deployment is very important for placing the cages in the right spot. Thanks to the many people who called us after spotting a turtle laying her eggs, we were able to see many in action and our amazing volunteers installed the cages immediately after.

We are still waiting to see the baby turtles hatch and scurry to the water. Hopefully this project was able to give some of them a fighting chance to survive!

Thank you for your time and experience!

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Dave Haist and **Chris Kline** concluded their nine years of service to the LMEF board. All who cherish the health of Lake Maxinkuckee can be thankful for the legacy they've established.

We managed to keep Kline around awhile longer. As Chairman of the Lake Maxinkuckee Environmental Council, he will continue serving on LMEF as an ex-officio board member. You're not getting off that easy, Chris!

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