

WATERLINE

September 2005

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Time to renew

WALPA members who did not attend the 2005 conference may renew their memberships today. Send dues to WALPA, P.O. Box 4245, Seattle, WA 98104.

Membership fees are: \$15 students, \$20 individual, \$30 professionals, \$40 organizations.



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Please save *Waterline* issues for future reference.

Nutria invade Skagit County posing risks to lake resources

By Stephanie Woolett, water resources technician, Skagit County Public Works, Surface Water Management Division

Recent sightings of the non-native rodent nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) in Skagit County have stirred up concern throughout the local community. The Argentinean native was observed in a localized area in the lower Nookachamps Watershed near Clear Lake. Left untreated, nutria could significantly impact the region's lakes, as well as other natural, agricultural,

native vegetation and important habitat for wildlife. Nutria consume approximately 25 percent of their body weight in plant matter per day. As semi-aquatic creatures, they prefer aquatic and emergent plants; however, nutria are opportunistic feeders and will consume tree bark, crops, and lawn grasses, leaving a path of destruction in their wake.

Although introduced nutria could provide some relief from invasive aquatic plants in Washington's lakes, the consequences of their inhabitation would far outweigh the benefit, as seen in other states around the nation. Nutria consume desirable native plants, burrow in banks, cause bank erosion, reduce water quality, degrade habitat important to the survival of native wildlife, and impair the aesthetic value of lakes enjoyed by all lake users. A good example can be seen in Louisiana where officials attempted to use nutria to manage plants such as the water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) in the early 1930s. By the 1950s, the introduced population increased to approximately 20 million, producing unforeseen consequences including the loss of valuable coastal wetlands at a rate of 25-35 square miles each year. Despite control efforts, nutria currently impact a variety of parameters in 100,000 acres of the state's coastal wetlands.

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Nutria are voracious eaters.
Photo by C.C. Lockwood. Courtesy of Louisiana Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife.

and structural resources that are valued by locals, and important to the area's economy. Locating and removing nutria while the population is relatively small is vital to maintain the health of lakes and natural resources in Skagit County and Washington state.

Nutria are extremely prolific critters due to their short gestation period of 130 days and large litter size that ranges from one to 13. High reproduction rates coupled with their feeding habits can result in losses to

Nutria pose risks

continued from page 1

In Skagit County, evidence of nutria can already be seen on the landscape in the trapping area. In an attempt to stifle population growth and prevent the spread of this species, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has launched an aggressive trapping program, which ended in August. The age class of captured nutria includes adults, sub-adults, and young, which suggests nutria have been established long enough to breed. In light of this recent discovery, local officials are preparing to implement a winter trapping program to contain the population. The severity of this situation is taken seriously because the problems posed by nutria extend beyond lakes; they will impact everyone in the region.

To report nutria sightings in Washington state, call Pamela Meacham, WDFW, at 360-902-2741.

Sources for this article:

USGS FS-020-00, Nutria Eating Louisiana's Coast; 6/2000 (Updated 4/20/01).

Dwight J. LeBlanc, Nutria; 1994, www.wildlifedamage.unl.edu/handbook.shtml.

Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries, Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), 2003, www.nutria.com.

Mike Davison, WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife, wildlife biologist; 7/27/05.

WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife, Project Under Way in Skagit Valley to Curb Nutria Damage; news release, 6/6/05 wdfw.wa.gov.

Pamela Meacham, Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife asst. aquatic nuisance species coordinator, 8/1/05.



Aerial photo of Lake Tapps. Photo courtesy of Jay Ditty, SkyShot Air Photo, LLC, 253-350-6559, www.skyshot.net. Used with permission.

Lake Focus on Lake Tapps

By Heidi Wachter, aquatic scientist, Taylor Associates, Inc.

Along the northern border of Pierce County, the approximately 2,300 acre Lake Tapps reservoir lies about three miles northeast of Sumner and due west of Tacoma. The reservoir was created in the early 1900s when flow was diverted from the White River flooding four smaller lakes in the area. The conversion of the four lakes to Lake Tapps reservoir created a complex body of water with numerous peninsulas and islands, and a shoreline length of approximately 42 miles. In the 1990s, the reservoir's mean depth was recorded by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) at 24.9 feet, with a maximum depth just under 90 feet.

Lake Tapps supports a variety of recreational uses including fishing, swimming and boating. In addition, many residential properties exist along the lake's shorelines. Thus, public use of the lake is high by both local residents and lake visitors. Fish use has been reported to include largemouth bass, yellow perch and rainbow trout. A WDFW warm fish survey in fall 1997 identified 12 different fish species in the lake, with

the largescale sucker being the dominant species identified (based on biomass and number). Salmonids identified in the 1997 survey included kokanee, cutthroat trout and mountain white fish. A city boat launch exists on the lake's northwest shore and on the northeast shore is a county park, which also provides boat ramp and bank access.

The water level in Lake Tapps experiences an annual fluctuation as a result of controlling the reservoir's inflow at the White River Diversion Dam near the town of Buckley. A "traditional wintertime drawdown," which is initiated in fall, occurs to minimize growth of milfoil in the shallow areas and to "help freshen" water quality in the lake. This drawdown, which also assists property owners with boat dock maintenance or repairs, results in a lower lake level during winter and early spring. During the spring the lake is gradually refilled, also accommodating public recreation activities in the summer.

For most of the 1900s, the lake level has been managed by Puget *continued on page 3*

WALPA Committees for 2005-2006

By-Laws

Isabel Ragland

Public Policy and Legislative

Stephanie Woolett

Barry Moore

Harry Gibbons

Peter de Arteaga

Elections

Peter de Arteaga

Marianne Barrentine

Shawn Ultican

Tricia Shoblom

Publications

Peter Burgoon

Stephanie Woolett

Glen Rothrock

Paula Lowe (Waterline editor)

Membership

Beth Cullen

Ray Latham

Bob Roper

Glen Rothrock

Michael Murphy

Annual Conference

BiJay Adams

Scholarships

BiJay Adams

Beth Cullen

Peter de Arteaga



State lakes grant opens

The Aquatic Weed Management Grants opens October 1 and closes on November 1. For information, contact Kathy Hamel 360-407-6562 or kham461@ecy.wa.gov.

Correction

In the June newsletter article on Moses Lake, by Eugene Welch, PhD., there was an error due to a conflict between software packages. The units for total phosphorus and chlorophyll in the article were published as mg/L instead of µg/L. Please note this correction for the water quality results.

Lake Focus for December

We will focus on Soap Lake in Grant County. Those of you "in-the-know" who have conducted research on Soap Lake or have a historical (or future) perspective to share please contact Heidi Wachter (heidi@taylorassoc.net) by Oct. 15, 2005.

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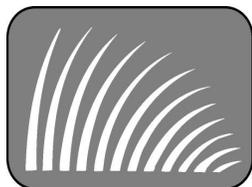


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WALPA Board plans projects

By Sally Abella, WALPA president

The last WALPA Board meeting was July 11 at the Washington Department of Ecology Northwest Regional office in Bellevue. The treasurer's report indicates that the organization is in solid financial shape. The annual conference in Spokane was profitable and highly successful.

A variety of issues and challenges are facing the WALPA Board this year. These are some items the board is discussing:

Peter Burgoon of Wenatchee has filled the last open board position (see accompanying article) and has attended the last two meetings. We are delighted that he has accepted the position, since he can bring a perspective on the interests of Central Washington residents and lake issues, as well as the technical consulting community. We are looking forward to his input during the next two years.

We discussed the impacts of going to an email version of the newsletter as well as mailing hard copies to those who prefer that format. Some production changes were made to make the dual mailing cost-effective and efficient. Members who prefer to receive the newsletter by email, but have not signed up for this service, please send a request to isabelr@piercecountycd.org. Hard copies will be mailed to members who do not request email delivery.

A subcommittee is working on a plan to offer reduced rates for the annual conference to individuals who are members of a lake association that belongs to WALPA. This will likely apply to citizens rather than government or agency managers and staff. Another subcommittee is updating our list of contacts for active lake associations within the state. Please contact Bob Roper at rstanley3@comcast.net, if you can supply us with current contact information for your lake association.

WALPA is joining forces with the Oregon Lakes Association (OLA) to sponsor a regional lakes conference in

Portland to be held in September 2006, with the help of our parent organization, the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS). WALPA President-elect BiJay Adams will attend OLA's annual meeting in September to meet OLA officers, and discuss the format and content of the proposed joint meeting. (See article.)

WALPA is considering setting up an independent scholarship fund to support students who aim at careers in freshwater research and management. The scholarships distributed during the last two annual meetings have been very successful, and it would be useful to put the project on a solid basis for the future.

Joining forces for regional conference

By BiJay Adams, conference coordinator, WALPA president-elect

Next year WALPA joins with two other organizations to hold a regional lakes conference. During the past few years, our conferences have been held in the spring, but this year, it will be held in the fall.

Conference co-sponsors are the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) and another NALMS Chapter, the Oregon Lakes Association (OLA). The regional conference will be held at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon on Sept. 13 and 14, 2006, with Sept. 15 tentatively reserved for a field trip.

The benefit of holding a regional conference allows participants to learn the concerns and challenges experienced by other chapters, while providing an avenue to work closely with the neighboring states. In addition, co-sponsoring a regional conference will provide each of the associations the opportunity to expand and to work closely with NALMS.

For information, contact BiJay Adams, 509-922-5443, or bijay@libertylake.org.

Update on NPDES Permits

By Tricia Shoblom, Water Quality Program, Department of Ecology

In July of 2002, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued two NPDES Permits within the State of Washington to control aquatic plants. The Noxious Aquatic Weed Control NPDES Permit was issued to the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture), who in turn gave umbrella coverage to individuals and government agencies seeking to control or eradicate noxious weeds.

Due to a recent settlement agreement between the Agriculture and The Washington Toxics Coalition and People for Puget Sound, Agriculture will only issue coverage to government entities for in-lake herbicide treatments in 2005. The settlement agreement also states that Agriculture will no longer issue any coverage for in-lake control efforts for aquatic plants after 2005. The responsibility of issuing NPDES permit coverage for noxious weed control efforts in lakes, such as Lake Washington, has been given back to Ecology.

Several lake associations have tried to obtain coverage for noxious weed control under Ecology's Aquatic Nuisance and Algae NPDES Permit this year, but have been unsuccessful due to the type of plants they wish to control. These plants generally include Eurasian watermilfoil, Brazilian elodea, and Curly leaf pondweed. Ecology's Nuisance and Algae Permit was developed to control aquatic plants that are native to Washington state and does not allow for the treatment of noxious weeds.

Ecology is currently in the process of re-issuing a new aquatic NPDES Permit. Currently the *draft* permit addresses both aquatic noxious and nuisance plants. Ecology also recognizes the urgency for lakes that have serious aquatic plant issues and are hoping to release the final permit by March 2006.

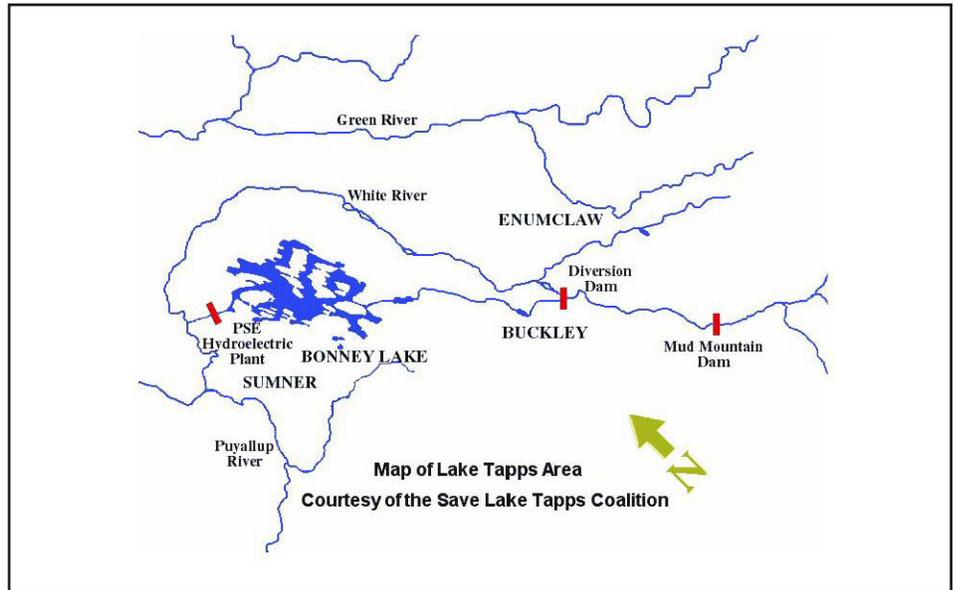
Lake Tapps

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Sound Energy (PSE), which has operated a hydroelectric plant at the outlet on the west side of the lake. An issue that has long been discussed by residents and agencies, is what will happen to Lake Tapps when PSE no longer diverts water from the White River into the reservoir for hydroelectric power generation. After considering a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing process approximately one-and-a-half years ago, PSE decided not to license the hydroelectric project with FERC and thus, during fall 2004 power generation was stopped. According to a Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) spokesperson, Curt Hart, to date PSE does not intend to license the project with FERC.

Without the need for power generation, withdrawals from the White River could be reduced. According to Hart, Ecology's interest is to determine the level of flows that are needed to maintain water quality in Lake Tapps reservoir to state standards and maintain flows in the White River bypass channel for fish use. In addition to meeting these requirements, withdrawals need to maintain adequate flows in the White River for fish use.

So where are things now? In June 2003, Ecology granted water rights to PSE to allow the continued withdrawals from the White River with storage allowed in Lake Tapps. Currently, there is a proposed agreement between PSE and the Cascade Water Alliance (CWA), a non-profit corporation made of eight regional municipalities and districts, for the CWA to obtain the water rights with the intent of using the resource for municipal water supply. In response to this proposed use, Ecology aims to release a draft Record of Examination for public comment in early September 2005.



The Save Lake Tapps Coalition, a community organization, is also actively involved with issues surrounding the future of Lake Tapps. The coalition, which works with the Lake Tapps Task Force, is a membership-based organization of local area homeowners who live along and near the lake's shorelines. The organization's charter "is to preserve Lake Tapps to meet homeowner requirements," which it achieves through using membership donations to "communicate and educate the area homeowners, as well as provide legal support for Lake Tapps issues."

Lake Tapps has an interesting history including issues with hydroelectric generation, water supply and quality, resident concerns and recreational use. All of which are not possible to fully explore in this newsletter article. However, if you seek further information contact Ecology or the Lake Tapps Coalition.

Note: WALPA makes no guarantee to the accuracy of this information.

Have some information to share for the next Lake Focus on Soap Lake? Please contact Heidi Wachter by October 15 at heidi@taylorassoc.net.

Sources for this article:

Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology); Ecology Approves Lake Tapps Water Rights, www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/swro/lktappshome.html.

Curt Hart, Water Resources, Headquarters, Ecology.

Greg Zentner, Water Quality, Southwest Regional Office, Ecology.

David Hallock, Environmental Assessment Program, Ecology.

Cascade Water Alliance, www.cascadewater.org.

Puget Sound Energy, press release, Sept. 2004. Winter drawdown of Lake Tapps to commence in mid-October.

Save Lake Tapps Coalition, www.savelaketapps.com.

www.WashingtonLakes.com

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1997. 1997 Lake Tapps Survey: The warmwater fish community of a reservoir managed for hydropower.

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Peter Burgoon joins WALPA board

Welcome to our newest WALPA board member Peter S. Burgoon, Ph.D., P.E., who is the president of Water Quality Engineering, Inc., in Wenatchee.

He has 25 years of experience in environmental sciences, engineering, and project management. His expertise and project experience include design, project and construction management, evaluation of natural systems for water quality control, nitrogen and phosphorus removal, stormwater treatment, wetland and lagoon design, best management practices, nutrient load analysis for freshwater lakes, TMDL evaluations for phosphorus and DDT, municipal and agricultural wastewater treatment, drainage of saturated soils, and wastewater reuse. Clients range from municipalities to private industry throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Peter may be contacted at 509-663-1303 or peterb@waterqe.com.

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The next deadline is Nov. 1 for the Dec. issue. Send articles to Editor Paula R. Lowe, pmrlowe@comcast.net.

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