

Lake of the Ozarks Watershed Alliance (LOWA)
April 20, 2009
The Lodge of 4 Seasons
Public Meeting

Donna Swall, LOWA Executive Director, opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with introductions of the LOWA Executive Board and then round robin introductions through the audience. Then, new features of the LOWA website at www.soslowa.org were presented and described, followed by a general overall description. Many thanks go out to Jerry Walker, LOWA Webmaster. Features include the Elements of LOWA, describing LOWA's different working committees, a scrolling announcement bar across the top, a link to LOWA's next public meeting, Lake Boating Weather, and pertinent watershed information. Coming soon to the LOWA website will be a Tip of the Month – green suggestions for a healthy watershed. Everyone is invited to visit the site frequently.

Doug Beck, LOWA First Vice President, spoke next about the Watershed Management Plan (WMP), also known as the Lake District Plan of the 4 County Alliance. First Doug presented a history of LOWA from its first beginnings in the spring of 2006 and tied in dates of how long LOWA has been working on the WMP and what work has been done. LOWA has collected a lot of information and data that will be useful in developing the specific objectives, plans, and goals of how the stakeholders want to develop the Lake area. The WMP is almost finished and will be submitted to the MDNR sometime this summer. The next step will be to build awareness among the diverse stakeholders to help people understand the importance of maintaining a healthy watershed and a healthy lake. Good water quality drives good socioeconomic conditions. This awareness will be built through a series of Knowledge Gap meetings held around the 4 county (Benton, Camden, Miller, and Morgan) Lake region. From these meetings, any gaps in understanding the importance of a clean lake to the area's health can be recognized and addressed.

LOWA's Mission Statement was read next:

LOWA Mission Statement

**Citizens will preserve, protect and improve the Lake of the Ozarks,
its watershed and natural resources while maintaining our economic,
social and environmental health.**

Tony Thorpe, Lakes of Missouri Volunteer Program, was up next to discuss his program's data from the Lake of the Ozarks (LOZ) from 2008. Lakes of Missouri Volunteer Program (LMVP) trains and coordinates citizen volunteers to take measurements and water samples at lakes throughout Missouri. Several spots along LOZ's main channel have been monitored for chlorophyll, inorganic suspended sediments, nitrogen, phosphorus, water temperature, and water clarity (Secchi disk) for several years. The program has been running for 15 years and is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Tony discussed several aspects of the data for the Lake of the Ozarks and the data's significance. The chlorophyll measurement measures algae and the amount of algae is important because algae are the base of the lake's food chain so all the fish in LOZ ultimately depend on having algae in the Lake's

water. Having enough algae is necessary, but too much algae can cause big problems. Water clarity is often associated with clean water in the public's eye, but water that is too clear doesn't have enough algae and other organisms to feed the rest of the critters, including the game fish so prized by anglers. Nitrogen and phosphorus are 2 of the primary nutrients needed by algae to grow. The Lake needs some nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P), but too much of these plant nutrients can cause the Lake big problems. Inorganic suspended sediments (ISS) carry phosphorus and other minerals with them and are an indication of the amount of soil erosion happening in the watershed around LOZ. Soil erosion is Missouri's #1 water pollutant and the waters carrying the soil are from runoff which is a type of nonpoint source pollution (NPS). Up by the Truman Dam end of the Lake, many of the suspended solids come from an agriculturally based watershed. Closer to the Bagnell Dam end of LOZ, the soil and suspended sediments are coming from development, streets, and parking lots. The 2008 data shows that water coming out of Truman Lake dominates the water quality of LOZ. The higher the flow coming from Truman Lake, the less water clarity and the higher the suspended sediments (and P) count is. Sediments start out high in the spring but then drop off through the season. This also affects the amount of algae growing in the water. Too much soil/sediments in the water cuts out light and so the algae don't grow as fast. Later in the season, sediments go down and algae growth goes up. Since P is attached to sediments, P drops out of the water, but the amount of nitrogen in the water stays steady. In general, the data shows a drop in ISS and P from the Truman end to the Bagnell end. Over the last several years there have been no significant trends or changes in the data to cause alarm coming from the Lake of the Ozarks. The last 2 years have been very wet and the data shows the results of what would be expected with a lot of soil in the water.

Greg Stoner, Fisheries Biologist, MDC, spoke next about the 5-year *E. coli* cove sampling program, but first commented that crappie and phosphorus (P) are related and that the more P one year, the more crappie the next year. The 5-year program to sample coves around the Lake of the Ozarks is a joint partnership between AmerenUE, LOWA, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and began in 2007 with 118 sites spread from Bagnell Dam to the Community Toll Bridge. Sampling each site 3 times over the season, 2007 saw 12 sites come back with *E. coli* counts higher than the standard. Then, 2008 sampled from the toll bridge to Linn Creek with 108 sites and 15 came back high over the sampling season. Every high reading is investigated by MDNR as to probable cause and retested until results come out below the standard again. Heavy rains can wash a lot of fecal material into the water from the surrounding watershed and that can result in high readings. Flocks of geese swimming through a cove right before a sampling can also lead to high readings. So, an initial high reading is not necessarily cause for alarm but repeated high readings indicate potential problems. This year, 2009, samples will be taken from Linn Creek to the Hurricane Bridge and up the Niangua arm. One of the coves from the 2008 samplings and 2 of the coves from the 2007 samplings (which did not show any high readings in 2008) will be included in the 2009 samplings. Results of sampling tests can be examined on LOWA's website at www.soslowa.org.

Our Lake is healthy now which makes monitoring the Lake all that much more important in order to keep LOZ healthy. Our Lake One Voice

LOWA spent Earth Day with the 5th graders at Osage Upper Elementary in Osage Beach. Over 160 students enjoyed hands on activities to celebrate Clean Water and received a LOWA/Stream Team Earth Day tshirt and a bag of goodies. A couple of weeks earlier, LOWA and MO Steam Team sponsored the Osage High School Environmental Science classes (again, over 160 students) for a hands-on water quality monitoring experience on the shores of the Osage River near the new Bagnell Dam Access off of River Road. Students received a MO Stream Team tshirt.

Carroll Vogel, LOWA Lake Safety and Water Safety Council liaison, spoke next about the Water Safety Council's Designated Captain's Program. Participating drivers of the boats can show a floating keychain to participating restaurants for free nonalcoholic beverages. The Designated Captain's Program is designed to reduce drinking on the lake, keep the Captains sober, and increase lake safety. This program is available to everyone, and if an organization would like, the Water Safety Council would be glad to come present the program and sign interested parties up. Participants receive a floating key chain to present to restaurants and a brochure with a map showing participating restaurants and describing the program.

LOWA also has brochures with maps showing the locations of area marinas and RV campgrounds that have the facilities to pump-out boat holding tanks.

PUMP DON'T DUMP!

Gaye Belloir, new LOWA Recycling Chair, has been working with recycling through the Osage Beach WalMart for the last 5-10 years. Gaye announces Tire Day is coming soon. People can drop off many recyclables in the Osage Beach WalMart lobby, open 24 hours/day. A Household Hazardous Waste Pickup will be October 10th in the Camdenton school parking lot.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next public meeting for LOWA will be July 13, 2009 at 6:30 at Tan-TarA.

These minutes respectfully submitted by C. King Toole, LOWA Recording Secretary.
And read and approved by Donna Swall, LOWA Executive Director