

Webster Waves

Catch THE LATEST LAKE NEWS

*photo courtesy of JoLene Hum/
Portraits by JoLene*

HOW THE "WILSON FAMILY" GOT TO WEBSTER LAKE

The Webster Waves Newsletter is a publication of the Webster Lake Conservation Association.

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Bob and Carolyn Wilson lived and farmed in Lapel, Indiana, east of Indianapolis where they raised their four children. Both Bob and Carolyn were very active in their local community and church. In 1975 Carolyn accompanied their church youth group to the Epworth Forest Methodist Church Camp at Webster Lake. The tradition at that time was that each group attending camp had to bring its own food and cook with it. Carolyn was the cook. During her break one day, Carolyn decided to find and look at a property at Webster Lake which she had seen advertised in an Anderson, Indiana, newspaper as a "four-unit resort." That turned out to be a main house and three small cottages at the east end of First Street near the North Webster School (now the North Webster Community Center). Bob and Carolyn purchased this property for use by their family. After all, they had four children and there were four units on the property. At this time, the property still has a main house and one cottage located on it.

The Wilson family grew over the years. At this time Carolyn and her four children and their spouses continue to use the lake property along with Carolyn's nine grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren and soon to be twin great-great-granddaughters. When Bob passed away in 2017, his grandchildren spoke at his funeral with the common theme in each of their talks being about the wonderful times they had enjoyed with Grandpa Bob, Grandma Carolyn and other family members at Webster Lake.

Carolyn and Bob's son, Mike, and his wife, Judy, purchased a house in North Webster many years ago and have been very involved in

the North Webster Community. Mike was the General Manager at Bart's Water Sports until it closed in 2023 and has been a board member of the Wawasee Community School Corporation for many years. Also, his four children (RJ, Monica, Lex and Drew) worked at Bart's during summers.

The family lake property is used many weeks and weekends each summer by various family members especially during the summer holiday weekends of Memorial Day, Mermaid Festival, 4th of July and Labor Day. You can always find a Wilson in the water, on the pier holding a fishing pole or sitting on the deck visiting with other family members. The 4th of July, of course, is the most important weekend at the lake for the family when nearly ALL family members are at the lake at the same time. As the family has grown, and continues to grow, tents and campers have become a part of the weekend sleeping quarters as well as the rental of a local Airbnb. For many years the Wilson family has had a tradition of the entire family caravanning by car to the Essenhaus Restaurant in Middlebury, Indiana, for supper before the Fireworks Show. In 2024, thirty-eight members of the family, including Grandma Carolyn, made this trip after which they returned to the lake to enjoy the fireworks together.

The Wilson family exemplifies the reason many Webster Lake residents say that they own and use their Webster Lake houses each summer. The beauty and lifestyle of Webster Lake and the community of North Webster truly help keep a family connected.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Welcome to Lake Season 2025! Here's an update on recent activities since fall 2024.

Over the fall and winter, the Board of Directors cleared brush and scrub trees at the Epworth Forest Island fireworks site in coordination with the fireworks provider and Epworth Forest Center management. Work also progressed on water quality improvements and controlling aquatic weeds and algae.

In 2024, two sediment studies were completed: one for dredging sites and another for phosphorus levels related to a "whole lake" restoration project. 80% of the first study's cost was covered by a Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grant.

LARE Grant Applications for 2025:

1. Pending approval to fund monitoring equipment and studies for phosphorus containment, crucial for reducing algae and weed growth. WLCA's share, if funded, is \$15,622.

2. A \$34,400 grant was approved to treat invasive species (Eurasian Water Milfoil and Starry Stonewort) in Webster Lake. Total weed treatment cost for 2025 is \$83,702, with WLCA members paying \$49,302 after the grant.

3. A grant request for dredging 2 acres near the Town Park was declined, but WLCA will reapply in 2025 for 2026 funding. The North Webster Town Council has committed to covering any uncovered dredging costs related to the Town's stormwater drains and enhancing efforts to clean and filter stormwater drains.

4. A grant was submitted for a fourth island shoreline restoration project, with the island owner covering costs not funded by the grant.

Upcoming Events:

- Fireworks Display: July 5, with a rain date of July 12.
- Annual Membership Meeting: August 9, 9:30 AM at the NW Community Center.

FIRST WLCA MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE IN OVER 25 YEARS

For the first time in over 25 years, the WLCA Board of Directors has voted to increase membership dues from \$100 to \$125 per year. This decision is due to rising costs, particularly for weed control on Webster Lake. Despite generous contributions to the Weed Fund, we are now operating at a loss. In 2022, the net cost (after the application of any grant award) to treat the lake was \$22,400, and by 2025, it is projected to reach \$49,799—a 122% increase in three years.

The rising costs are due to both more resistant weeds and a larger area to treat. The Indiana DNR allows treatment for Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP), but reimbursements are not guaranteed. In 2025, treatment will cover 77.5 acres (up from 50 acres last year) of CLP and 60.5 acres of shoreline with no grant coverage available. Partial grant reimbursement limited to \$30,000 will be available for the treatment of 84.5 acres of Eurasian Water Milfoil and 5 acres of Starry Stonewort. With over a third of the lake being treated, the costs are significant.

Although membership remains strong, we have seen a slight decline over the past two years. To address this, we are asking for your support to keep the lake clean and enjoyable. Your membership in WLCA is your investment in the maintenance of Webster Lake.

We have set the new dues at a level that does not fully cover weed treatment costs. So, we encourage additional contributions to the Weed Fund. We are also introducing a recognition program for those who donate \$100 or more to the Weed Fund over and above their dues payment. Our goal is to raise membership to at least 57% and address rising weed treatment costs. Funds will also support water quality improvements, such as reducing phosphorus levels and enhancing member programs like the Annual Dixie Ride and Fireworks Show.

Become a Weed Fund Elite Contributor!

Contribute \$100 or more to the Weed Fund in 2025 and earn recognition:

- \$500+ = Gold Elite Contributor
- \$250-\$499 = Silver Elite Contributor
- \$100-\$249 = Bronze Elite Contributor

We appreciate every donation, large or small, and hope to foster a spirit of giving in our lake community. Donations can be made anonymously if preferred. Your support is vital for the future of our lake! **Donations may be made online through the WLCA website at www.lakewebster.com or by check sent with the 2025 WLCA Membership Form located on page 3 of this newsletter.**

WLCA 2024 YEAR-END FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Expenses:

Invasive weed treatment costs after LARE reimbursement	\$23,818
Shoreline weed treatments	\$20,995
Annual Vegetation Management Plan required by IDNR after LARE reimbursement (invoiced in 2025 at \$896	\$ 0
Dam Maintenance and related Legal Expense	\$11,669
Other Expenses: insurance, safety buoys, education expense, sediment studies, accounting fee & software, Website Maintenance, Public Relations & Member Events, Newsletter, Printing, & Postage	\$ 17,056

Total Expenses Excluding Fireworks**

\$73,538

Income: *Total Income from Dues, Weed Fund, and Dam Contributions excluding Fireworks**

\$61,333

Shortage:

\$12,205

* LARE Grant Income is excluded from the total Dues and Weed Contributions. The Grant income was subtracted from the total weed treatment costs and the Net Weed costs are presented in this chart. LARE Grant income and the expenses paid with it each were \$25,000.

**Expenses for fireworks are paid by special contributions from both members and local businesses with most of the funds coming from the members. Moneys designated for fireworks are only used for fireworks and, therefore, are not included in the above General Fund Report.

WEBSTER SKI BEE SHOWS FOR 2025 North Webster Town Park

6:00 PM - Pre-Show Acts Prior to 6:00 PM
Bring Your Own Lawn Chair



June 14 - June 21 - July 5 - July 26 - August 9
(All Shows Weather Permitting)

Thank you to Sock's Marina/Main Channel and Lakeland Pier & Lift for their contributions of support to WLCA each year. Sock's Marina/Main Channel stores WLCA's pontoon boat during the winter and puts the boat in the water so that it can be used during Fireworks Weekend to stage the show on the island and for placement of the navigational buoys in the lake each spring. Lakeland Pier & Lift provides and installs the pier used to access the island during Fireworks Weekend and removes the navigational buoys in the fall.

2025 WLCA MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please return this voucher with your mailed payment)

Name(s):

E-mail Addresses:

Lake Address:

Mailing Address: «

E-mail Statements ☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact Phones:

Check Payable to WLCA

Membership Dues \$ 125.00

Fireworks Fund Donation \$ _____

Weed Fund Donation \$ _____

(native/non-invasive)

Mail to: WLCA
P.O. Box 79
North Webster, IN 46555

TOTAL: \$ _____

PAYMENT MAY BE MADE THRU PayPal
Information at www.lakewebster.net,
Pay Dues Tab

Code: Spring Newsletter, 25

WLCA is a Not-for-Profit Charitable Corporation Under IRS Section 501(c)(3).

FAMILY DIXIE RIDE

Saturday, June 14, 2025, at 9:30 AM

The annual WLCA Family Dixie Ride is a fun event for WLCA members and their families of all ages. Snacks and beverages will be provided by WLCA. Activities and prizes are planned—especially for our young Cruisers. Please mark your calendar to bring members of your family of all ages with you on this Family Dixie Ride for an enjoyable hour of cruising on the Dixie around Webster Lake, one of the most historic lakes in Indiana. The Ride is provided to WLCA and its members by the Dixie Sternwheeler, Inc., in memory of Tom Plew who was a longtime volunteer of both organizations.



photo courtesy of JoLene Hum/Portraits by JoLene

BALANCING WEBSTER LAKE: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

courtesy of Jim Kerwin

Webster Lake is a beloved destination, cherished by two distinct groups—fishermen and pleasure boaters—each with their own vision of the perfect lake experience. Fishermen value the lake’s vegetation, recognizing it as essential for a healthy ecosystem and thriving fish population. On the other hand, pleasure boaters prefer clear, vegetation-free waters for swimming, skiing, and tubing without the hassle of tangled props or “seaweed” in their swimming areas. These differing perspectives make weed control one of the most debated topics around the lake.

The real challenge lies in managing invasive plant species, namely Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed. These two non-native weeds are the primary culprits of overgrowth. Curly Leaf Pondweed is an early-season invader, clogging channels and waterfronts so densely that boats can grind to a halt. Fortunately, it tends to die back by mid-June as water temperatures rise. Eurasian Water Milfoil, however, is a persistent problem, growing aggressively throughout the season and threatening to turn Webster into a “kayak-only” lake if left unchecked.

The Webster Lake Conservation Association (WLCA) works tirelessly to address this issue. Partnering with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), WLCA secures LARE (Lake and River Enhancement) grants to treat some of the milfoil. The DNR covers 80% of these costs, with WLCA contributing 20%. However, this grant only accounts for less than

40% of the overall weed control budget. The remaining 60%, including shoreline and channel treatments, relies heavily on donations from community members.

Chemical treatments are the primary method of control. While newer, safer options exist that can suppress milfoil for up to three years, they are prohibitively expensive for WLCA’s current budget. Instead, the association predominantly uses 2-4-D and Diquat. These chemicals are effective but require careful application to avoid harming fish and other aquatic life. Unfortunately, decaying weeds release large amounts of phosphorus into the water, which can fuel next year’s weed growth—a challenge WLCA continues to tackle.

Long-term solutions, such as whole-lake treatments, could provide relief for up to five years. However, past issues with over-application have made this approach a sensitive topic, particularly among fishermen who depend on Webster Lake’s ecosystem.

Despite these challenges, WLCA remains committed to finding a balance that benefits both fishermen and pleasure boaters. The association relies on community support to fund these efforts. A simple way to contribute is by encouraging your neighbors to join WLCA and donate \$125 annually. Please mention to them about contributing to the “Weed” and Fireworks funds. This is OUR lake, all of us. Let’s get all the homeowners to join this year! Every contribution helps ensure Webster Lake remains a healthy and enjoyable destination for all.

While we may never fully satisfy both sides of the debate, together we can work toward a sustainable future for Webster Lake—one where fishermen can enjoy abundant catches and boaters can revel in clear waters. With collaboration and generosity, we can preserve this treasure for generations to come.



photo courtesy of JoLene Hum/Portraits by JoLene