

Walleye planting on Six Mile Lake

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BY Cherie Hogan



Jewel Noirot and Naomi Burt releasing walleye fingerlings into Six Mile Lake.

A good crowd was on hand Friday, September 20, at Echo Park to watch the release of some 2100 walleye fingerlings into Six Mile Lake. The walleye were purchased from Rose City Trout Farm at the cost of 95 cents each.

The idea of planting the walleye originated with Gil and Jewel Noirot of Six Mile Lake nine years ago. This spring, using \$1500.00 of their own money, they prepared a pond for the release of 5000-8000 walleye fry into Six Mile Lake. The fry were donated by the DNR and raised in the pond.

This time around, the money for the project was raised through donations from private individuals, local organizations and garage sales. Substantial contributions of \$500.00 and \$150.00 were made by the Upper Chain of Lakes Association and the Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce, respectively. Bill and Naomi Burt (also of Six Mile Lake) spent much of the summer helping the Noirots with this project, as did many other neighbors and friends. A total of \$2358.00 was raised.

The walleye fingerlings, which should reach a length of 8-10 inches next spring and be keeper size by 1988, are a nocturnal fish which feed primarily on minnows. They need a sandy or gravel bottom for reproduction. Fred Bird (owner of the trout farm) says the walleye fingerlings "should stay in Six Mile Lake indefinitely as long as the food source is good."

To Gil and Jewel Noirot, it doesn't really matter where the fingerlings go. As Jewel puts it, "No matter what, they'll be in the Chain and that's what really counts."

Will there be another walleye planting on Six Mile Lake sponsored by the Noirots and Burts and company? No one knows for sure.

However, one fact is certain. As long as the Chain is occupied by people who care about the future of the lakes and its inhabitants (human or not), there's always that chance.

Through the assistance of the Three Lakes Association and as a result of efforts made by Warren Studley of the USDA Antrim County Soil Conservation Service, a program has been started that will significantly contribute to controlling the flow of nutrient rich water from farms to the lakes. The program envisions federal grants to assist in the redesign of farm operations. This will decrease drainage from barnyard areas and diminish overland flow of nutrients from croplands into lakes. All of us are indebted to Warren for initiating this program in Antrim County, the first of its kind in the State.

Central Lake operates a street sweeper to remove nutrients from the streets. Analysis of water from streams that drain the village show high levels of nutrients and coliform bacteria, but it will be difficult to further reduce these levels.

Feral animals, domesticated animals, and birds all contribute nutrients, but under natural conditions the contribution is not significant. Feeding birds has become a significant source of contamination and no one who wants a clean and long lived lake should feed the birds. If you have domesticated animals, clean up after them as you would in the city and help keep the lake clean.

Finally, as has been said so many times before, limit application of fertilizer, never rake your leaves down toward the lake, and plant as much of a greenbelt next to the lake as possible. Cedar trees are the native vegetation along the lake, grow well there, and utilize large quantities of nutrients that move through the soil toward the lake. Other trees, shrubs, and bushes that grow near the lake use nutrients that would otherwise go directly into the lake and enrich the water of the lake. A wide greenbelt is probably the most effective means of limiting nutrient migration to the lake.

I am enclosing prints of articles from the Torch on the fish plant in Six Mile Lake made through the efforts of our two ambitious Board Members on Six Mile Lake, Gill Noroit and Bill Burt. They spent many hours conducting garage sales, garnering support from friends and neighbors and making all of the arrangements to get the fish. Our thanks to both for a super job that will benefit all of us in coming summers.

As this is being written, only preliminary information is available about the contamination of Ellsworth Lake by arsenic, chromium and copper. The source is believed to be from abandoned barrels in the lake along the west side adjacent to the former IDC plant.

Saturday, Nov. 16, 1985

Lake tests find high arsenic level

ELLSWORTH — Preliminary tests along the shoreline of Ellsworth Lake show arsenic levels six million times greater than federal standards for drinking water, Department of Natural Resources officials said Friday.

More tests on water, sediment and fish were taken last week at International Disc Inc., formerly Morweld Steel, under a search warrant issued by the Antrim County prosecutor.

The DNR began investigating in July after citizens complained to the governor's office about contamination in the lake.

The preliminary tests also showed levels of chromium and copper said by DNR officials to be hazardous to humans, livestock, fish and other aquatic life. "This is 10,000 times what we normally see," said Mike Tillotson, assistant professor of industrial and environmental health at Ferris State College.