

Parke County Non-Partisan  
Committee on Political Education  
November 26, 2008

Subject: Meeting Minutes – November 22, 2008

The November 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting was held in the Conference Room at the Parke County Extension Service Office in Rockville. The topic of this meeting was the Cecil M. Harden Lake, and Raccoon State Recreation Area and the relationship of these organizations to the citizens of the County.

The featured speakers for the meeting were Joe Staigl, Park Manager Cecil M Harden Lake Corp. of Engineers and Mike Clingerman, Park Manager Raccoon Lake State Recreation Area.

Following are the highlights of the meeting:

Cecil M. Harden Lake was originally called Mansfield Lake. The Lake was renamed in 1974. The Lake was started with land purchase in 1940. Actual construction began in 1957, and the lake was filled for the first time in 1960. The Lake covers 2100 acres. The Lake is a part of a series of lakes providing flood control while feeding the Wabash and the Ohio River. Of the lakes in Indiana including Cagles Mill, and Monroe Harden lake has the highest rate of visitation.

Raccoon State Recreation Area, also known as Raccoon Lake State Park is part of the Indiana Division of State Parks and Reservoirs. The Park supports a State objective to have a park within 50 miles of every resident in Indiana.

Some interesting statistics are:

- 1800 homes around the lake
- 28 recognized sub-divisions
- 864 bank ties
- 600 sea wall permits have been issued
- 300 step and pathway licenses are in affect

The State controls the bank ties, while the Corp. of Engineers controls the seawall, and step/pathway permits. Basically, if you have an issue to discuss that involves the water you go to the State. If your issue involves land around the lake you go to the Corp. of Engineers at the dam.

The maximum release of water from the dam is 1600 ft<sup>3</sup>/sec. It used to be 1800 ft<sup>3</sup>/sec. but was reduced due to houses build in the flood plain downstream of the dam.

When the water was at its highest this summer it reached an elevation of 687.5 ft above sea level. At this level the surface area of the lake was 4000 acres. At the 687.5 ft. level the water will go over the State Park road next to the beach.

Important lake levels, to remember are:

Winter Pool	640 ft. above sea level
Summer Pool	662 ft. above sea level
Gov't. Owned to	678 ft. above sea level
Flood Stage	690 ft. above sea level (water of spillway)
Homes build min.	694 ft. above sea level.

Downstream flow rates and creek levels are measured at Coxville. It takes approximately 16 hours for water released from the dam to reach the Wabash River. The rule of thumb to control of downstream flow is to not exceed 9 ft. of depth in the creek at Coxville. The lake level is controlled to drop no faster than 1ft./day to prevent erosion.

The Lake life expectancy was originally projected to be 50 years. This refers to the hydraulic and mechanical controls at the dam, not the lake itself. The lake does have silt areas, but these tend to move around during annual level changes. The deepest part of the lake is just in front of the dam at 65 ft. The average lake depth is approximately 20 ft. The Lake will be here for a long time.

The Corp. of Engineers conducts water quality sampling 2 times per week. The biggest pollution contributors to the Lake are septic systems that do not operate properly. It is not known how many septic systems are discharging into the lake, but this could be a major problem in the future as homes around the lake age.

Water sports are the big attraction of the Lake. The State DNR stocked the lake this year with 10,000 striped bass. Fishing appears to be quite good in the lake with some walleye being caught in the fall. As with any recreation area enforcement of the rules can be a problem. There are a lot of boaters on the lake at anytime in the summer. Many of these are doing dangerous things and do not get caught by the Sheriff, or Conservations Officers. It was suggested that if you see someone doing something dangerous in a boat out on the lake that you obtain a description of the boat, (color, type, size, or even a picture ), and get the IN numbers. Send this information along with a description of the actions being displayed to Joe Staigl at the dam. He will check the IN identification and send a letter to the owner indicating what the dangerous action was. This is not the same as being presented with a citation from the Sheriff , or Conservation Officer patrols on the lake, but might just wake up some boaters.

Golf carts are permitted to be parked by the lake only with a handicap permit. You must identify the handicapped person who regularly uses the lake to obtain an permit from the Corp. of Engineers at the dam. If you do not have a permit you can drive your golf

cart to the lake, unload your gear, or people, and then park above the red line with no permit. If you park beside the lake, at you seawall and do not have a permit, (stickers are provided to indicate that you have a permit and must be displayed) you will receive a warning the first time you are caught. The second time you will receive a citation from the Corp. which will result in \$75.00 fine to be paid in Federal Court. You will not be able to pay this at the Court House in Rockville!

The lake drawdown for winter always begins on the last Sunday of the covered Bridge Festival.

No firearms, regardless of permits are allowed on the Lake!! Even if you have a State Carry Permit, the Federal Law supersedes these permits and does not allow firearms to be carried on the lake.

This was as great presentation with a lot of good information provided. I would like to express a special thanks to Joe Staigl, and Mike Clingerman for great presentation

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

There will be no December Meeting of the Parke County COPE due to Christmas. The COPE Executive Team will be meeting in December to put together an agenda for meetings in 2009. You will receive this information as soon as it is available.

John Anderson

Chairman – Parke County COPE