LAKE GEORGE CONSERVANCY

Dr. Dennis Zent
Indiana House of Representatives, District 51

Dr. Zent,

By way of introduction, my name is Matt Minnick and I am the president of the Lake George Conservancy (LGC) which is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the environment in and around Lake George. My wife Julie and I are year-round residents on Lake George, and coincidently next-door neighbors to Dave and Tammy Heine.

I am writing you today to bring to your attention a situation that presents a potentially serious environmental threat to Lake George and all downstream bodies of water including Snow Lake and Lake James. Roughly three weeks ago a contractor on the Sheldon Fireworks property at the corner of Baker Road and Old Angola Road began excavating a drainage ditch from the wetlands on this property. This action released a considerable amount of water through the stream and eventually into Lake George. The water level of the wetland was reduced considerably.

We immediately contacted Larry Gilbert, Stueben County Surveyor (tragically Larry passed away shortly after) and Wes Hauser with IDEM. Both Larry and Wes acted upon this notification quickly and visited the site. Mr. Hauer's report is attached, IDEM Incident No: RM 93437. As you will read, the marshland in question is in the Army Corp. of Engineers inventory of wetlands and they are copied on the report.

The LGC's immediate concern is the wetland appears to be a retention area for the expansive parking lots of both the Sheldon and Pilot Truck Stop facilities. As such this body of water is likely susceptible to considerable petroleum runoff and other potentially harmful pollutants. With the unauthorized alteration of this wetland drainage potential pollutants are likely to flush into and out of Lake George and eventually through all connected lakes.

Dr. Zent, my goal for this letter is to simply bring this issue to your attention. As our District 51 representative and a fellow lake resident I am sure you will want to follow this potential pollution super spreader problem to ensure no undue damage is done to lake water quality in Stueben County.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue and let me know if I or the LGC can answer any questions moving forward.

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