NEWSLETTER

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14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

State of Our Lakes Recap – 2025

Another successful State of Our Lakes was held June 7th at the Rome Town and attracted approximately 275 attendees! If you joined us that Saturday, **thank you** for taking time out of your weekend and for your **attentiveness** throughout the presentations! We hope you also took the opportunity to visit the exhibitors' booths, enjoy lunch and try for a chance at a door prize, raffle basket or bid at the silent auction. Our goal each year is to share knowledge of the lakes we all love so much in a fun setting.

A couple of our presenters shared information on **biochar** as a possible technology to explore further in helping us to address algae issues in our waters. So, what exactly is it and how can it be used?

Biochar, a form of charcoal produced from organic materials, like wood chips or agricultural waste, offers a promising solution to a lake's excess nutrient problem. When placed in a bag and submerged under a dock, biochar acts as a sponge, effectively capturing and immobilizing phosphorus and nitrogen, reducing the amount of those nutrients available for algae growth.

Heather Gayton, our Adams County Watershed Coordinator, discussed how biochar can be used in agricultural applications as a soil amendment. Biochar attracts water and nutrients, making them more available to plants and thus reducing the amounts of fertilizers needed to grow a crop. It does not need to be applied each and every year as do conventional fertilizer products. Less use of fertilizers can lead to less run-off and be good for streams and lakes. Heather has recently secured a $100,000 grant to implement biochar practices in the 14 Mile and the Roche-a-Cri watersheds. This is very exciting news!

Pat Rogers, a Lower Camelot resident, gave us a recap of her efforts using biochar bags in her bay at the end of last season along with an update on plans for further testing over a full season this summer. Testing of nitrogen and phosphorus levels taken up in just a month last year are promising. This summer will give us a better idea of the efficacy of these bags. We will be looking for funding sources to possibly expand this practice in the future. Another lake on the East Coast is also piloting a similar program that they have aptly named "Socks for Docks" – Google it

for a short video on their project.

We are excited about the possibilities of both types of biochar applications and will continue to update you as we move forward and learn more. Although we thought this was a new technology, we learned that indigenous peoples have been using this practice for more than 2,500 years. So, what's old is new again!

Save the Date

On August 23 at 5:00 pm the **14 Mile Watershed Alliance** is sponsoring the Visit Rome Summer Concert Series featuring The Blue Notes.

Mark your calendars now!

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin. See us at 14milewatershed.org or https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

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