

Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative

A not-for-profit organization and land trust

Working across state boundaries to enhance the Wolf Lake watershed

October 26, 2015

AWLI contemplates action
To clear cutting at George Lake

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A response to the clear cutting of native trees and other George Lake habitat will be discussed Friday by directors of the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative (AWLI).

One action would be to support the three-step request by the United Citizens Association (UCA). Contained in an October 21 letter to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), UCA president David Dabertin called for:

- a public meeting “where we can obtain answers to our questions and provide meaningful public input into any restoration project planned for this area.”
- preparation and implementation of “a full restoration of the site with the largest trees available in the most expeditious manner possible.
- investigation of why IDNR’s contractor “continued to destroy the area after it had been informed that it was to stop work.”

In his letter, Dabertin said that a contractor working at IDNR’s direction removed all of the vegetation along the west side of lake on September 24 without the permission of the landowner, the Hammond Port Authority.

“This work,” he said, “resulted in the removal of dozens of mature trees. Inconsiderate scraping of the ground further destroyed everything growing in this area.

“The devastation is complete and a recently verdant habitat in now a wasteland.”

The area is adjacent to the Environmental Education Center at 2405 Calumet Avenue, Hammond.

“The land,” Dabertin explained, “is made up in part of industrial fill where it is difficult to get anything to grow. It will take a Herculean effort to replant the property.”

IDNR’s project “was performed without public notice, discussion or participation. Scarce tax dollars were squandered,” Dabertin added.

AWLI’s executive committee discussed the clear cutting on October 2, but it had been told that the removal was to improve the habitat with the planting of a variety of trees. AWLI is a bi-state, not-for-profit organization and land trust dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the Wolf Lake watershed.

UCA has spent the past 40 years protecting and preserving George Lake and its habitat. This has included legal challenges to keep the land as a natural area.

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