

2010-07

OPEN LAKE DUMPING

The Izaak Walton League of America is a champion of water quality issues and had its origin with sportsmen's concerns over the impact of water pollution on fishing in 1922. The Great Lakes ecosystems are under extreme stress as aquatic invasive species and water quality issues continue to take their toll. The Great Lakes represent the single greatest freshwater resources on earth containing 20% of the earth's fresh water and 95% of North America's fresh water. The Great Lakes have many stakeholders who need its resources to sustain their lives and livelihoods. The effects of the aquatic invasive species have been traumatic, placing critical ecosystems at the tipping point of irreversible decline. Contributing to this situation are the ongoing impairments from water quality issues resulting from billions of gallons of untreated sewage being dumped into lakes along with millions of tons of sediment with a multitude of issues from non-point pollution. Compounding these issues is the fact that the Army Corps of Engineers persists in utilizing open lake dumping as a means of disposal of dredge materials to keep shipping channels open. This practice creates additional problems in that much of the sediment can contain a variety of hazards including toxic chemicals, nutrients, heavy metals and much more. Open lake dumping, depending on the soil types of dredge material, can further create problems. Clay and silt type soils contribute to excessive turbidity by remaining in suspension by boat traffic and wave action during heavy or even moderate weather conditions.

Water quality issues are of special concern to public health. Millions of people rely on the Great Lakes for their drinking water. The fishery, wildlife and tourism industries of the Great Lakes provide for millions of jobs and contribute billions of dollars to local and state economies in the region. These activities require that water resources be of the highest quality.

Open lake dumping of dredging spoil materials is not an acceptable means of disposal of sediment containing large quantities of clay or silt or any amount of toxic chemicals, heavy metals or other hazardous materials where waters are utilized for drinking or recreational activities. Suspension of fine material such as clay and silt seriously impacts safety of drinking water and impairs the integrity of the critical ecosystems.

The practice of open lake dumping should only be considered for use as a last resort and then only when special criteria are met. The criteria that must be met should include:

- Area where material is dumped must be deep enough to handle material without becoming an impediment to recreational or commercial shipping traffic.

- The safety of public drinking water and recreational areas must be the highest priority.
- Aquatic habitat must not be impaired.
- Location of materials dumped should not allow material to be re-suspended by wave, traffic or currents.

Open lake dumping is unacceptable due to the critical nature of the water resources and the shallowness of the waters of that area.

Therefore be it resolved the Minnesota Division in convention April 11, 2010 opposes the utilization of open lake dumping in the Western Basin of Lake Erie.

Submitted by the Resolutions Committee: Bill Henke & Dave Zentner