



LILLY CENTER FOR
**LAKES
& STREAMS**

GRACE
COLLEGE

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Local First-Responders Prepare for Potential Rail Car Incidents

WINONA LAKE, IND. – Our community knows how to prepare for a tornado or flood, but how would we respond if a rail car of hazardous material accidentally dumped its cargo near a local waterway? Those substances would seep into the closest wetland or stream, potentially causing serious damage to nearby lakes.

To prepare for a rail car incident, several local first-responders recently attended a local presentation of an All Hazards Training workshop, developed by the University of Findlay, Findlay, OH.

“The training was beneficial in many ways,” said Dr. Nate Bosch, director of the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams. “If a rail car full of crude oil, ethanol or other harmful liquids derails and dumps near one of our county’s waterways, the results could be catastrophic for people, property and the environment.”

Workshop participants included Turkey Creek, North Webster, New Paris, Silver Lake and Warsaw fire departments as well as other professionals from the City of Warsaw Stormwater Utility, Wawasee Property Owners Associations and Wawasee Boat Company. Bosch also participated.

“The trainers gave us several best-practices for how local organizations should prepare to respond if necessary,” Bosch explained. “In the event of a rail car incident, we will be better prepared.”

There are four major railroad lines in Kosciusko County operated by three separate companies. “The close proximity of railroads to waterways provides many opportunities

for rail car incidents to negatively impact our lakes,” said Bosch. “Within 1,000 feet of these lines are 10 lakes, including Wawasee, Winona, Pike, Syracuse, Waubee and Center.” According to Bill Holder, Kosciusko County GIS Director, 731 wetlands are within a 1,000 feet of railroad lines and these railroad lines also cross county streams 39 times in the county.

In order to preempt a potential rail car incident, the Lilly Center plans to connect with environmental representatives from the three railroad companies that operate in Kosciusko County. Together, they will determine the number of railroad cars that enter the county on a daily basis, as well as what substances are commonly transported. Armed with this knowledge, the Lilly Center will work with local fire departments to assist in identifying the best response strategies for these most common substances.

The Lilly Center conducts research, provides resources, engages and educates residents, and collaborates with local organizations throughout the region. Our mission is to make Kosciusko County’s lakes and streams clean, healthy, safe and beautiful. If you have questions or concerns about your local lake, visit lakes.grace.edu or call 574-372-5100, ext. 6445.

Left to right: Doug Anderson from Wawasee Boat Company, Carolyn Anderson from Wawasee Property Owner's Association, Inc., Dr. Bosch from the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams, and Ryan Workman from the City of Warsaw, Stormwater Utility.

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The Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams at Grace College conducts research, provides resources, engages and educates residents, and collaborates with local organizations to make the lakes and streams of Kosciusko County clean, healthy, safe and beautiful. To date, the Lilly Center has conducted scientific research on over 30 streams and 40 lakes. The Lilly Center is driven to create a legacy of stewardship by equipping community members, visitors and future generations to understand and enjoy the county’s natural beauty. For more information, visit lakes.grace.edu.