

HEADWATERS

A core publication of the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams | Summer 2026



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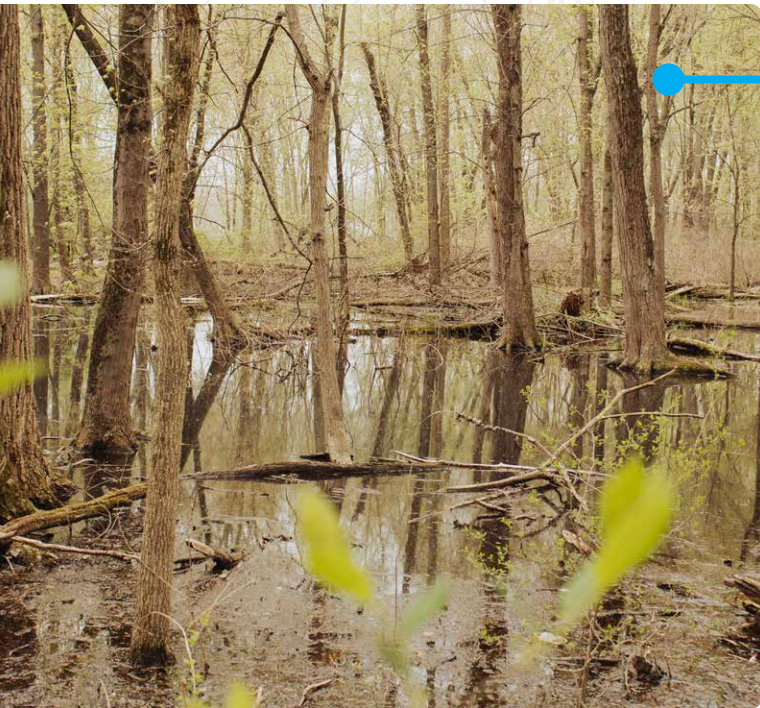
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LILLY CENTER FOR
**LAKES
& STREAMS**



HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

They say beauty is fleeting, and in the case of **ephemeral wetlands**, this is certainly true!

These fascinating habitats are temporary pools of water that typically occur in the springtime or after heavy rain, often in low woodland areas. Because the water eventually dries up in the summer, these wetlands cannot support fish populations, which means they offer a safe spot for amphibians to breed and lay their eggs. As a result, you will often hear a chorus of tree frogs singing around these areas during dawn and dusk.

Unlike other wetlands, ephemeral wetlands are here then gone within a couple of months. But the impact they have during their **brief lifespan** is incredibly large and should not be under-appreciated.

Guests on the Lake Doctor Podcast are diving deep into these amazing habitats and much more related to the incredible world of wetlands. **Experts include** our friends at The Nature Conservancy, ACRES Land Trust, Wright State University, the Indiana DNR, and V3 Consulting. •

Turn to the next page to test your lake knowledge and claim your free Lilly Center pin.

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Cover: Lilly Center staff and students celebrate the future impact of Lake R_x in Kosciusko County.

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TEST YOUR LAKE NERDINESS

How well do you know your lake? Marketing assistant, Claire, put together this short quiz to see if you are as **nerdy about lakes** as our Official Lake Nerd, Dr. Nate Bosch. Read the instructions at the bottom of the page if you answered all of the questions correctly to get your **Lilly Center pin!**

1 Wetlands are often compared to which organ?

- a) lungs
- b) kidneys
- c) stomach

2 Which type of wetland contains *Sphagnum* moss and is filled via rainfall?

- a) ephemeral
- b) fen
- c) bog

3 Freshwater mussels are important because they act as what?

- a) ecosystem engineers
- b) indicators of water quality
- c) primary food for fish

4 For all but which one of these is using native plants on a shoreline beneficial?

- a) filtering excess nutrients
- b) providing habitats for local wildlife
- c) Preventing flooding

5 What do scientists at the Lilly Center's research lab test for in water samples?

- a) *E. coli*
- b) heavy metals
- c) sediments

6 Which is an example of a restoration strategy?

- a) increased pavement near lakes
- b) prescribed fires
- c) removing all shoreline vegetation

7 Why are wetlands tied to the health of lakes?

- a) they filter excess nutrients from the water
- b) they release stored water into the lake during droughts
- c) they aren't connected in any way

8 What is one of the legal requirements for catching wild turtles?

- a) cannot be set free after 30 days in captivity
- b) they don't require a permit to catch
- c) they must be over a year old to keep

9 Which is NOT a reason ephemeral wetlands help amphibians breed?

- a) the tree cover discourages wading bird predators
- b) the wetland's life span is too short for fish
- c) the water is acidic, speeding up the hatching process

Congratulations! If you answered all the questions correctly, you are an **Official Lake Nerd!** Nate and Suzie cover all of these topics on the Lake Doctor Podcast — which is now greenlit for a third season.

To claim your **free** Lilly Center pin, send an email to lakes@grace.edu with the subject line "I'm a Lake Nerd." Supplies are limited, so send that email today!

Tune in to the Lake Doctor Podcast wherever you get your podcasts or at lakes.grace.edu/podcast.





KICKSTARTING A NEW CHAPTER

THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM \$10 MILLION LILLY ENDOWMENT GRANT

Grace College has received a \$10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams kickstart a new program to **revitalize** Kosciusko County lakes.

Since 2007, the Lilly Center has created innovative education programs and conducted applied research on local lakes. Now, with new funding, the Lilly Center will launch **Lake R_x**[™], a program to create custom, holistic prescriptions to address the health challenges facing lakes. This initiative will focus the center's efforts on the most strategic solutions to each lake's health challenges to ensure

its wellbeing and the wellbeing of its surrounding communities.

Kosciusko County is home to more than 100 lakes, most of which are open to the public for recreation. Seven public beaches provide free access to the entire community and to visitors. Research shows that the lakes contribute more than \$400 million annually to Kosciusko County's economy. Healthy lakes increase business, tourism, employee retention, home values, and **quality of life**.

But elevated levels of *E. coli* and blue-green algae toxins in lakes pose a threat to human health and therefore limit the community's

access to lakes.

Lake R_x projects to improve community wellbeing fall into three categories:

- Solutions on **land**: agricultural best practices, wetland revitalization.
- Solutions in the **water**: blue-green algae research, ecosystem rebalancing, weed management.
- Solutions in the **community**: water literacy, responsible boating, native shorelines.

By following Lake R_x prescriptions, Lilly Center scientists will work to improve the health of local lakes and anticipate outcomes that include

increased lake access, reduced health threats and increased economic value. The Lilly Center will work carefully to help residents and local businesses, including farmers, and other stakeholders understand the benefits of healthy lakes and ensure that the

be allocated to an endowment to support on an ongoing basis Lake R_x as a permanent addition to the Lilly Center. The remaining \$2 million will seed the initial on-the-ground and in-the-water projects.

“Lilly Endowment’s founders cared deeply about the wellbeing

neighbors.”

Projects will include partnerships with lake stakeholders who **share a vision** for healthy lakes. Partners include lake associations, environmental nonprofits, local government, and state and federal agencies.

We look forward to partnering on projects that are a win-win for our lakes and our neighbors.

RUSTY MARTINEZ

prescriptions are **beneficial to all**.

“Lilly Endowment has a long history of supporting efforts that improve the quality of life in communities across Indiana,” said Dr. Nate Bosch, Creighton Brothers endowed director at the Lilly Center. “It’s exciting that Lilly Endowment sees Lake R_x as an important effort that enhances our communities through the care of lakes and streams.”

While this generous gift will have an immediate impact, the Lilly Center’s mission includes making lakes healthy for future generations. Under the grant agreement, of the \$10 million gift, \$8 million will

of communities in Indiana and had a special connection to Lake Wawasee in Kosciusko County,” said Ronni Kloth, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for community development. “We are pleased to support the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams’ comprehensive, research-based efforts to ensure that future generations of Hoosiers and visitors to the area can enjoy the lakes of north central Indiana.”

“**Collaboration** is at the heart of Lake R_x,” said Rusty Martinez, assistant director of marketing at the Lilly Center. “We look forward to partnering on projects that are a win-win for the lakes and for our

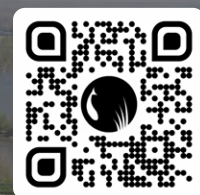
“The Lake R_x grant is another great example of Lilly Endowment coming alongside Grace College and enabling us to serve our community better,” said Dr. Drew Flamm, president of Grace College. “The

Lilly Center and Lake R_x create a path for greater impact locally and across our region.”

The Lilly Center envisions implementing a variety of projects during the next five years. Not only will these projects improve local lakes and streams, but they will **serve as a model** to guide the improvement of waterbodies throughout the state and country. The Lilly Center anticipates sharing project updates and findings from its research with stakeholders, the public, and fellow scientists to help improve lakes throughout Indiana and the country. •

For more information about Lake R_x, visit lakes.grace.edu/LakeRx or scan the QR code.

To learn more about Lilly Endowment, visit lillyendowment.org/.



LEARN MORE




SCAN TO RSVP

SSSUMMER EVENTS

June 10, 17, 24
Stories & STEM
Join us for storytime and an activity at the Warsaw Community Public Library.

June 12, 26, and July 10
Critter Encounters*
Explore the amazing world of native critters with projects and storytime. Attendees will get up close and personal with fish, crayfish, and snakes!

June 13
Workshop: Native Mussels*
Dive into the world of mussels with Carter Schuh, a former Lilly Center intern.

July 1
Swamp Stomp
Middle schoolers trek through wetlands and do a scientific activity.

July 25
Expedition: Summer Foraging*
Discover food in nature at Tri-County Fish & Wildlife Area with Carrie Vlabel.

August 29
Expedition: Birding on the Water*
Enjoy birding from a raft with Kosciusko County Soil & Water Conservation District.

**RSVP required*

WELCOME, JOEL PETRIE

FROM STUDENT TO STAFF RESEARCH TECHNICIAN

Joel's love of the environment took root in elementary school, where he participated in a **young naturalist** education program, and quickly grew from there. He grew up in Seville, Ohio, but attended Grace College and completed a Bachelor's of Science with a focus on **environmental studies**. While at Grace, he interned at the Lilly Center, working on the field research team and eventually becoming the team lead. In his new role as the research technician, Joel

will be responsible for collecting data, guiding college interns, and maintaining stream sensors around Kosciusko County. He enjoys being a part of conservation efforts for our local lakes and streams, especially when it comes to collecting water samples, because it gives him the chance to see the beauty in God's creation every day. When not at work, Joel can be found spending time outdoors and serving at his church. •

Welcome to the team, Joel!

