

Press Release

The Kosciusko Leadership Academy (KLA) met Tuesday, September 13 for their first educational session at the Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation (WACF) office in Syracuse to learn about the importance of protecting our water resources.

Director of Kosciusko Lakes and Streams, a water quality project based at Grace College, Nathan S. Bosch, spoke about the project to the class. He presented a slide presentation on aquatic ecology in Kosciusko County, explaining what a watershed was and how a stream and lake works. Dr. Bosch then covered the seasonal mixing of the lakes and explained how lakes start out clear and deep and eventually end up as a wetland with more plant growth and sediment accumulation.

WACF Volunteer Diana Castell stepped in and went over the invasive problems the different lakes have. One problem in particular is the increasing number of swans due to no natural predators in this area. She shared that the average swan deposits 7-12 pounds of feces waste a day and showed a box with a similar weight. Castell explained that swans can not be legally killed and the only way to address the problem is to oil the eggs which prevents them from maturing.

The meeting was then handed over to Heather Harwood, Executive Director of WACF. Harwood explained that the mission of the foundation is to protect the water quality in the Wawasee Watershed for future and present generations. She shared the background on the WACF Education Center and the vision WACF has of future trails and an educational area inside the wetlands.

The class members gathered outside to participate in the creation of a visual aid of the continental divide using a tarp, plastic sheet, and newspapers. Several students used different items and fluids to simulate toxins, rain, and nutrients falling down or going into the continental divide to demonstrate the harmful results from those agents. The session ended with Harwood taking the class on a walk through the property pointing out WACF's new Ruddell Pavillion for educational events, public meetings and public use. The group also viewed a wetland as well with a bald eagle making an unexpected appearance.

The next KLA session is scheduled for Tuesday, September 27 at the Warsaw Police Department where class members will learn about city, county, and state government.