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SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT LAKE SEDGEWICK

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Frank Jakubicek (far right), with the Department of Natural Resources, speaks to a group of District 230 students the morning of Friday, Oct. 3, at Lake Sedgewick in Orland Park, at the start of a project conducted by the district's bass fishing club. TRISTAN ZEIER/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

Area students conduct shocking fish survey

District 230 Bass Fishing Club returns to Lake Sedgewick

FELICITAS CORTEZ, Staff Writer

The District 230 Bass Fishing Club had a hands-on lesson in lake conservation and fisheries management during a community service project Friday, Oct. 3, at Lake Sedgewick in Orland Park.

Less than two weeks after placing fish cribs in the lake to boost the fish population, the group — which consists of students from Andrew, Stagg and Sandburg high schools — joined Illinois Department of Natural Resources biologist Frank Jakubicek in electrofishing as a method of determining the condition of Lake Sedgewick's fish population.

"We've had pretty harsh winters the past few years," said Joe Regiro, an Andrew junior and avid fisherman. "This [sampling] survey is important to see if and how the fish were affected by the cold temperatures."

Electrofishing is a method often used to sample fish populations to determine the species composition in a particular body of water, including its abundance and health. Low-voltage electricity is used to stun the fish, allowing them to be caught easily, according to Jakubicek.

"[The amount of voltage] changes according to how much mineral content is in the water, but generally we put about 25-30 amps of power into the water that translates into a 200-250 volt — just a little shock," Jakubicek said. "There is no permanent harm, as fish often return to their natural state after a few minutes of receiving



ABOVE: Frank Jakubicek prepares a boat before heading out on the lake.

LEFT: Frank Kutnar (left), a senior at Andrew High School, and Ethan Goldstein, a senior at Sandburg High School, look out at Lake Sedgewick during the project.

the shock."

Generator-powered electricity was released into different parts and depths of the lake through a pair of round electrodes. And as the fish floated near the surface, students worked in pairs to quickly catch them with a dip net. Collected fish were then kept in a livewell, and later measured and weighed.

The first sampling, done on the shallower edges of the lake, netted quite a bounty, including bluegills, pumpkinseed sunfish, shad, white sucker, black and yellow bullheads, bullfish, golden shiner and black crappie. One of the larger fish caught during the sampling was 16-inch, 3-pound bass.

Jakubicek explained that knowing the lake's composition of fish is important in maintaining the health and field for the sport. By establishing a baseline data, any future changes to the type and density of species of fish, for example, could be easily corrected through restocking.

Andrew senior Frank Kutnar, who helped net the fish as well as record its species, length and weight, said he was pleasantly surprised at



Frank Jakubicek, with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, talks with District 230 Bass Fishing Club students Friday, Oct. 3, at Lake Sedgewick, during a project conducted by the schools to survey fish populations. PHOTOS BY TRISTAN ZEIER/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

the variety of fish found in Lake Sedgewick.

"There was a lot more types of fish than I originally thought were in this lake," he said. "The bigger fish were difficult to find because they didn't come as close to

the surface of water like the smaller fish."

Sandburg senior Ethan Goldstein said the large number of small, young fish found in Lake Sedgewick is encouraging.

"It's actually a good sign,"

Goldstein said. "That means the fish are reproducing. This lake is healthy and will continue to have a good supply of fish."

And the experience helped Goldstein decide on a future career.

"I'm going to attend the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point next year where they have a really good natural resource program," Goldstein said. "I'd love to do something like this as a fisheries biologist."