



NEWSLETTER

April 26, 2015

In 2013 when International Paper Company donated Lake Erling to the AGRED Foundation, one of our first orders of business was to request that the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) continue to manage the game and fish as it relates to Lake Erling. We felt like they could help us achieve our primary goal which is to preserve and conserve the habitat in and around Lake Erling for the wildlife, birdlife and fish better than anyone else. They graciously agreed, and have worked closely with us ever since in continuing to maintain and improve the game and fish within the Lake Erling watershed.

AGRED began receiving reports from around the lake that some species of fish were getting harder and harder to locate and catch. For that reason we asked AGFC to make a study of the fish population in the lake and help us formulate a plan if there were any issues.

During the fall of 2014 AGFC conducted a sampling of the lake and advised us that we have an enormous Channel Catfish population that needs to be reduced for the balance and benefit of the other game fish in Lake Erling.

This research has been included in the Annual Fish Sampling Report which is presently being reviewed by the AGFC. In addition to this action they are considering make changes to the daily limits on Lake Erling including lowering the Flathead Catfish limit to one per day, since they had a very low rate of catch, and they are the main predator to the Channel Catfish.

Secondly changing the daily limit of Channel Catfish to possibly an unlimited harvest, and lastly allowing a limited commercial fishery of the Channel Catfish from November 2015 through February 2016.

We at AGRED Foundation of course are in total agreement with these proposals and are asking for your help in bringing these changes about. Presently AGFC is asking for the public's comments and opinions to the changes through the use of their website. We are asking you to go to the site, agfc.com and give your opinion on these changes. Once the website is open you will see in the upper quarter of the page four different rotating news items. The first is "Your Opinion Matters". Click on it, and it will take you to the survey. Items number 11 and 12 concern Lake Erling, however you can fill out the entire 21 questionnaire if you wish.

We encourage you to save the website in your favorites list and visit it often to follow the daily activities and goals they have for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

We will keep you up to date as this process continues and advise when the final plan comes together. Every chance you get, take the opportunity to tell our area Legislative Delegation and Arkansas Game & Fish Commission members how much we appreciate their efforts to maintain and improve Lake Erling.