

SHAFFER & FREEMAN LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION CORPORATION  
(SFLECC)  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MONTICELLO, INDIANA  
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Responding to the lowering of Lake Freeman under a U.S. Fish and Wildlife's mandate, the Shafer Freeman Lakes Conservation Corporation (SFLECC) invited their federal congressional representatives to hear from local Lake Freeman business owners and residents about the devastating economic effects of the current low water condition. "Our vibrant, healthy and beautiful Lake Freeman, one of the drivers of our summer economy has been shut down. Here we are, in the midst of a pandemic and our worst fears are coming true," commented Shafer Freeman Lakes Conservation Corp Executive Director Gabrielle Haygood. The SFLECC met with staff of U.S. Rep. Jim Baird and U.S. Senator Todd Young, as well as state legislators and local elected officials to view the stumps, rocks and other dangerous objects now exposed in Lake Freeman. "The situation just doesn't seem to be getting any better," said Gary Creigh, owner of Tall Timbers Marina. "So we've got to get some help on the state and federal level to get our waters figured out." Creigh said most of his customers live in the Indianapolis, Chicago area. If something isn't done soon he could lose a great deal of business. "We have people coming up wanting to enjoy the lakes, use the lakes with the holiday coming up and they are going to get here and find out it's impossible, it can't be done right now," said Creigh.

Lake Freeman has been lowered each day as the lack of rain has caused a "low flow condition" that compels NIPSCO to open Oakdale Dam in order to water the nesting grounds of endangered mussels several miles downstream on the Tippecanoe River. As of Thursday, August 27th the lake was down 25 inches, leaving most lake property owners unable to use their boats and concerned about their property values and damage to seawalls and buildings.

The water levels have dropped significantly, creating many hazards. SFLECC Lake Levels Chairperson John Koppelman states, "Areas that were navigable before, may not be now. Please use extreme caution when operating any type of watercraft. Watersports are not recommended at this time. Boat ramps are closing due to these unsafe conditions so please take caution. If you do decide to go out on the water, be aware of submerged objects that may be dangerously close to the surface. If you have watercraft docked on Lake Freeman be aware of the lower water levels and take appropriate action to protect your watercraft."

The SFLECC is urging its property owners to contact their federal legislators and ask for their support in the SFLECC's appeal in federal court that is scheduled to be heard on October 5th. "We know we have the correct science on our side, and while we respect the efforts to protect endangered species, the Fish and Wildlife Service made this determination based on their limited and inaccurate science," said Koppelman. In addition, the SFLECC is accepting donations for its legal fees in fighting the Fish and Wildlife's mandate, having already spent over a half million dollars on the legal fight with USFWS.

For more information visit [www.sflecc.com](http://www.sflecc.com) or call the SFLECC office 574-583-9784.

- <https://www.young.senate.gov/help/help-with-a-federal-agency>
- <https://www.braun.senate.gov/contact-mike>
- <https://baird.house.gov/services/casework/help-with-a-federal-agency.htm>