

## Discovery Lake gets a spring-cleaning

By Allison Ashley

Eight NIEHS volunteers arrived at Discovery Lake March 27 to clean the shoreline for the many plant and animal species that call it home. Participants, organized by the Environmental Awareness Advisory Committee and volunteers from the lake management group, focused on picking up fishing debris and other items that don't belong in or around the lake. Discovery Lake sits between NIEHS and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Research Triangle Park, N.C.

The Health and Safety Branch (HSB) provided gloves and trash bags, and participants supplied their own outdoor gear for the job. Ken Coffey, Steve McCaw, Paul Johnson, Claire Long, Vee Vee Shropshire, Caranza Smith, and Bill Willis joined Bill Steinmetz, HSB environmental protection specialist, in the effort.

### Improved conditions over past years

"The area was a little cleaner this year," said Steinmetz. "The lake is in pretty good shape. Everybody does a decent job of putting their waste where it needs to go, and the landscapers do a good job keeping the cleared fishing areas clean." The small amount of trash collected during the cleanup was discovered away from the trails and appeared to have been there for some time.

A few years ago, an aquatic weed, *Ludwigia peploides* ssp. *Glabrescens*, also known as floating primrose, grew along the shoreline, extending 8-12 feet into the water and threatening to spread further. Lake monitors discovered that carp, which eat the vegetation, could no longer be found. In March and May of 2012, the lake was restocked with 150 carp, and they now, in combination with other aquatic and biological factors, help maintain the health of the lake and its habitants.

Discovery Lake is a popular location for employees who want to enjoy the walking trail along the shore, or bring family and guests for some fishing. Use of the clearly marked trash receptacles by lake visitors could make future spring cleanings unnecessary. With help from employees and visitors, the lake will continue to be a healthful habitat for fish and other living species.

(Allison Ashley is a program specialist in the NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison.)



*Geese often walk freely among the lake's visitors. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*



*Many of the trails were free of litter this year, but there was still plenty for volunteers to pick up. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*



*Steinmetz, left, uses a stick to pick up debris, while Johnson, hazardous waste program manager, assists him. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*



*Posing with her gloves, Long, of the Office of Management, was ready to clean up the shore. (Photo courtesy of Claire Long)*



*Willis and Coffey removed even small pieces of debris from around the lake. (Photo courtesy of Claire Long)*



*The weather cooperated, providing volunteers with a clear day for the cleanup. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*

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