

# ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

## NEWS

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### **Understanding of Water Quality Improving**

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People are recognizing the need for cleaner water, according to a new assessment from the Nippersink Watershed Association.

The association is working with Wonder Lake Master Property Owners Association and Illinois State University with funding from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency on an ongoing project to help bring awareness of water quality issues to the residents and property owners in the Nippersink Creek Watershed.

Researchers from Illinois State University have been working with property owners to promote the use of phosphorous-free fertilizers, and to improve the maintenance of septic systems. Both issues would contribute to maintaining and enhancing water quality in the area.

“The project evaluated changes over time in property owners’ understanding and knowledge about water quality issues and threats to water quality within the Nippersink Creek Watershed,” said Professor of Sociology Joan Brehm, who is leading the research and helped to develop the “Lawns for the Nippersink” campaign. The campaign educates homeowners about the value of using phosphorous-free fertilizers in their lawn care practices, as well as encouraging local retailers to carry phosphorous-free products.

Findings of Brehm’s latest research unveiled an increased awareness of the campaign and its messages. “Adoption of best management practices, or BMPs, is improving over time. This is one of the most important goals of the project efforts undertaken, so the results are very encouraging,” she said.

“It is especially promising to see that the use of phosphorus-free fertilizers increased, given that this was the primary message of the ‘Lawns for the Nippersink’ logo and campaign. The research team is excited to share these results with the public.”

Those interested in learning more about the assessment or the overall campaign can contact Joan Brehm, Illinois State University, [jmbrehm@ilstu.edu](mailto:jmbrehm@ilstu.edu) or Randy Stowe, Nippersink Creek Watershed Manager, [nippersinkcreek@gmail.com](mailto:nippersinkcreek@gmail.com). The full report is available on the Nippersink Creek Watershed website at [www.nippersink.org](http://www.nippersink.org).