



Indiana Seaplane Pilots Association

2020 Splash In Report

What an AMAZING weekend, there are few words to describe how special this weekend's Splash In was in the shadows of a pandemic. We pivoted the events activities to be considerate of this and worked with the State Park Staff to develop an accepted plan to safely have the event. The 2020 18th Annual, Indiana Seaplane Pilots Association Splash-In at the Pokagon State Park was held September 19th and 20th, 2020. Once again the event would like to report a 100% safety record and a lot of happy pilots and guests even if the smiles were behind our very fun seaplane masks. We had 23 Aircraft attend between both days from all over the Midwest including the surprise arrival of Mark Wrasse all the way from Green Bay Wisconsin in his M7 Maule, Mark is no stranger to Seaplane events as he is the Chairman of the EAA Oshkosh Vette Seaplane Base. There were 19 different aircraft types represented this weekend which is pretty amazing, everything from an Aventura, Cub and Searay to a SeaBee, Beaver and Cessna 208 Caravan and just about one of everything in-between, truly an aircraft enthusiast line up. This was no particular challenge however for our professional Aviation announcer Jakob Mckenney, Jakob joined us for his first visit to Indiana from the great State of Maine, I met him a couple years ago at the Greenville Maine International Seaplane Splash-in doing his amazing announcing work at that event, I can promise you Jakob has committed to memory more about these 19 aircraft types than any of will ever know, I would suspect he could probably tell aircraft owners more about their particular aircraft than they even know. He is truly impressive. We invited Jakob to come and announce as a part of our pivot plan since we wouldn't be doing rides this year, part of our 2020 plan was to get Bio's on pilots and have demo flights flown by all that wanted to participate, the Coldwater Mi. chapter of the EAA's member Joe Best set up their PA system and Jakob did his thing announcing to the crowd, we received such good feedback over this that we have booked him for next year event. Nearly every aircraft in attendance submitted a bio and flew a demo, this kept the water ops and sky filled with the beautiful sights and sounds of airplanes. A big thanks and standing ovation for all of our pilots who brought in their aircraft for the event, they all did a top notch professional job. I would like to extend my appreciation to the community for coming out to Pokagon State Park and Potawatomi Inn this weekend to enjoy our annual event, and some of the most perfect weather we have ever experienced all throughout the Midwest to enable our success this weekend and for cooperating with the Covid safety requirements.

Additionally I would like to thank the Indiana DNR, and State Parks Administration, the staff of Pokagon State Park, with leadership by Managers Ted Bohman and Tami Sawvel who were on duty for the event, Potawatomi Inn Manager Emily Burris and staff who attended to our needs at the Inn along with meal vouchers for our pilots. Terry Hallet who manages the Angola Airport his Staff for attending to our wheel plane and amphibian aircraft needs at KANQ and I can't say enough about the all of the volunteers who assisted with set up tear down and safety, of course we can't forget the 23 Pilots who chose to make the trip, they all made it home safely Sunday afternoon after the event.

Our Saturday evening Barbecue and Bonfire at my Runway on the other side of the lake was no less spectacular with the beautiful night with the Local Land Of Lakes Lions Club preparing our evening meal. We dropped two loads of skydivers into our grass strip (myself-included) from our seaplane flown by Allison Wheaton. And the Gravity Powered sports 182 jump plane.

I must not forget to mention and thank the Lake James Association who has been a supporter and sponsor of this event all 18 years running along with the Steuben County Visitors and Tourism Bureau for their annual support who stepped up their effort by underwriting the design and making of 500 "seaplane are fun face" masks that were well received and worn by our guests. We are grateful for the exposure and stories provided by the Herald Republican newspaper, Swick Broadcasting's WLKI and Channel 15 TV.

Thanks to the following volunteers who assisted with set up tear down and aircraft safety;

A special call out to Joe Willig as for many years I would be at a loss without his uncompromised support and assistance he has been a steadfast, iron clad, non-stop tireless support structure for almost each and every year we have had this splash in along with his son Zack and vry patient wife Adrian.

A special call out to Allison Wheaton for being such an important part of this event and supporting me for so many years of the event along with all of the pilots, volunteers, and visitors, the only seaplane ride that was given this weekend was by Allison as a well deserving Jakob McKenney got to enjoy a seaplane ride after his full day of service.

Ramp set up crew on Friday: Joe Willig, Zack Willig, Bob Magley, Jeff Bell, John Merz, Mitchell Merz and from Elite Air Service Ben Reilley and Drew Randall.

Saturday the park was attended for early arrivals by Larry Lyman, Jim Harris and David Wilkinson while Nicholas Groen ran the shuttle boat and provided additional support and communications along with Zack Willig and Eric Adams

Sundays on the water crew sharing tips with our visitors by boat on how best to enjoy the day were Todd Gorman, Keith Danford Sporting orange and white checker flags, additional support provide by the DNR crew of Jim Price and Kyle Buchanan

The Aircraft Parking Safety crew: Ramp Boss Joe Sweeney, Water front Boss Joe Willig, Jeff Bell, Larry Lyman, Zack Willig, Steve Campbell, Barb Rutledge, Dennis Deforest, Cindy Sigrist, Nelson Grate, Jake Balyeat, Tony Salvaggio, Bob Magley, Jim Harris, Rick Rumble, Nicholas Groen. Most of the folks represented the following organizations, The Lake James association, the Tri State flying Club, and the Steuben county Board Of Aviation Commissioners

The tear down crew consisted of Joe Willig, Joe Sweeney, Larry Lyman, Zack Willig, Bob Magley, Richard and Eric Adams, Cindy Sigrist, Nelson Grate, Jake Balyeat Lucas Balyeat, John Merz

brought in some horsepower with himself Hayden, Mitchell Luke and Ryan. What a team we had a record breaking cleanup effort.

Registration table was supported by as always my folks Dale and Nadine Strebig my sister Michelle Wood, Adrian Willig, Jenn and Barb Rutledge.

You always run the risk of forgetting a name and if I have please accept my apologies your assistance is no less appreciated.

WELL DONE and THANKS TO ALL! Without all of you there is just no way this would be possible.

Thanks to our unsung hero Steve Whitney who hasn't been able to attend for a few years but thanklessly updates the website and is rumored to be improving the web site for next year.

We will be looking forward to next year's event. September 18 and 19 2021

Randy Strebig, President Indiana Seaplane Pilots Association/Indiana Field Director SP