



Three Lakes Park 2006

Three Lakes Park is owned and operated by Henrico County. It's located in the northeastern portion of the county on Wilkinson Road, one mile east of Rt. 301. The three lakes, all approximately 3 acres in size, are actually old borrow pits dug during the construction of I-64. They now serve as the main attraction for the park. Fishing is allowed in two of the three lakes (#1 and #3). The middle lake (#2) has a nature center with a large aquarium embedded in the shoreline, and it is closed to fishing. The nature center was badly damaged during Hurricane Isabel, and at the time of this report, was still being rebuilt. No boats are allowed, but most areas of Lake # 1 can be accessed along the shoreline, at the picnic pavilion, and/or from the fishing pier. There is a playground, picnic shelter, and walking trails available for family or group-use year-round.

Lake #1 is immediately on the left after entering the parking lot; just walk past the gate and follow the hard path to the lake on the left. It has a maximum depth of about 8 feet. There are two small islands, both of which can be reached by casting from the pier or shoreline. Fish attractors have been placed at two locations to enhance angling opportunities. At times, vegetation has become a problem in this lake. However, grass carp have been successful at keeping it under control in recent years. Historically, this has been one of the better public lakes for bass angling in the Richmond Metropolitan area.

In the spring of 2000, this lake was incorporated into the Department's Community Lakes Improvement program (CLIP) in an effort to sustain and improve the fishery. Under this program, additional bass, grass carp, hybrid bluegill, and harvestable-size channel catfish have been stocked. When sampled in 2001, the lake had a stunted population of bluegill, and bass were abundant up to 17 inches.

The lake was sampled again in early November, 2005. Sampling is typically conducted during spring, but conflicts pushed sampling into the fall, which was not considered a problem given the shallowness of this lake. The bass population did not appear to be as abundant as it was in 2001, but several fish in the 17-20-inch range were collected. The droughts and infestations of vegetation during early the 2000's may have depressed bass abundance. Bluegill, however, were much more common than in 2001, and even though the population was still dominated by small fish, there were some 7-inch fish collected. As was observed in the other CLIP lakes, hybrid sunfish did not appear to do well; none were collected. Stocking of hybrids has been discontinued. As in previous years, a handful of black crappie were collected. However, none exceeded 8 inches. In a small lake such as this, we would generally not expect to create much of a black crappie fishery. No channel catfish were collected during this sample, but it had not been stocked in several months. We suspect that many had been caught by anglers and plan to continue stocking this lake at the maximum allowable rate annually.

Lake #3 is not accessible to our sampling gear, and therefore, we have no information regarding the status of the fish populations there at this time.