

HISTORY OF THE WHITE RIVER YACHT CLUB

The White River Yacht Club traces its roots to March 16, 1938 when a small group of area boaters filed articles of incorporation with the Indiana Secretary of State to create the North White River Club.

After an intermediate name change to White River Boaters Associates, the Club in 1947 adopted the permanent name of White River Yacht Club.

The Club held its first meetings in members' homes and docked boats at the Old Green City Boathouse near Broad Ripple Park, or at docks of members living along the river. From these small beginnings, the Club has progressed to its present condition through years of struggle and hard work by members.

On Easter Sunday of 1947, Smith Island, the present ten acre home of WRYC, became its permanent site. Members began immediately to restore the summer home located on the grounds, doing the work themselves, and financing the first mortgages, all fully retired in 1952. That year also saw the addition of the large boat-launching hoist just north of the clubhouse, erected by club members, and in 1957 the metal launching ramp south of the clubhouse was added. Cost for these projects were borne by members and additional income from boat-launching fees.

With new financing by members themselves, the clubhouse was professionally remodeled in 1959, this time including a new dining room, kitchen, and patio. The patio was improved for summer outdoor festivities.

The purchase of a bulldozer in 1978 afforded many improvements, especially to the Club grounds and their appearance. The filling of the slough and the leveling of many low-lying areas of the grounds were now possible.

In late 1979, the main entrance drive from 74th Street to the Club parking area was blacktopped.

Several important improvements were made in 1980 and 1981, including the new bar, new heating and air-conditioning systems, new thermo pane windows in the bar, complete chain link fencing of the grounds, vinyl awnings on the clubhouse, and much beautification of the grounds and outdoor recreation areas. In 1982 the new solid oak deck was added to the river side of the concrete patio.

During 1983 and early 1984, our clubhouse was vastly improved by the demolition of the kitchen portion of the clubhouse.

This allowed us to build a large two-story addition to the clubhouse, greatly expanding our kitchen and storage for liquor and beverages. It also gave us room for another entrance on the east side of our building leading into a hallway with entrances to the new men's and women's restroom facilities and a new cloakroom.

This entrance also has a ramp for the handicapped.

While we had a contractor erect the outer shell, much of the interior was done by members who gave their time and expertise generously. We dedicated the new addition to Art Augustine, a past Commodore and founding member, who gave so much of himself to our Club and its betterment.

Generally 1984 was a "catch-your-breath and enjoy-your-club" type of year at the White River Yacht Club, after consecutive years of high-pressure projects.

During the years of 1984 and 1985, the Club put final touches on the clubhouse construction. Possibly the most important was the continued work and installation of new equipment in the kitchen. In other acts of progress, the Club created a safety committee and established new banking practices to benefit the Club.

In 1986 the Club erected a sixty-foot radio tower and took initial steps towards becoming a Marine base radio station.

Major accomplishments in 1986 include extensive remodeling of the bar and dining rooms and creation of a committee to plan long-range improvement programs for the Club.

The year 1987 brought about two major changes which proved long-range to be very beneficial: 1) a 144-foot totally roofed patio (to be enclosed later) was installed; and 2) the Board of Directors hired a full-time Club Manager.

During 1988 and the beginning of 1989 many significant happenings took place starting with a full-time kitchen with cook. Next came the removal of the Landmark Gantry, which had been inoperative for many years.

The Grounds Committee started a bank erosion salvation program by applying #1 and #2 gravel. The boat launching ramp was changed from soft gravel to concrete. Our full-time kitchen with chef and bar was approved for seven days a week operation. Finally, thanks to EPA, we removed our underground gas tank and installed an above ground tank.

In 1989 and early 1990 two significant events took place. The 144-foot patio was decked with railing installed and temporary canvas siding.

Secondly constitutional changes were approved to provide for the election of Officers in August and installation in September.

During 1992-1993 many changes were implemented at the Club. A new, expanded riverside deck was constructed, a new concrete sidewalk was added around the perimeter of the south deck and the handicap parking area was paved. Major improvements were made to improve the air quality inside the club and a new air conditioning unit was installed. The outside of the clubhouse was newly painted and the interior received a new face lift.

Commodore Dave Fox traveled to Washington, D.C. at the invitation of the White

House to accept an award for our efforts in River Clean-up.

A gasoline spill at the club cast a shadow over an otherwise near perfect year, but steps have been taken and are in place to correct the situation.

In 1995 a brand new boat ramp was installed at the south end.

In 1996 the new restroom construction was completed. The rest of the addition to the bar room and kitchen will be completed in phases. An almost new 16" x 16" walk-in cooler and freezer was donated to the Club by Meredith Smith.

An old landmark, the sycamore tree on the river side of the deck, was found to be in bad shape and had to be removed for the safety of members, guests and club structures.

1998 saw the addition of a new 20' x 40' shelter house built on the north end of the grounds. Also the entire parking lot and road south to the Club ramp was paved.

In 1999, the long awaited expansion of the bar room finally got underway; the Grand Opening was held in October, 1999.

In 2003 the kitchen was remodeled.

In 2004 a new Point Of Sale system was introduced to assist in customer service and inventory control.

In 2006-2007 we broke ground for the new sewer system. Also, our manager, Christ Ladas, retired after 13 years of service. The club raucously celebrated the Indianapolis Colts Super Bowl Championship.

In 2008 The Club purchased a new John Deere tractor for grounds maintenance. Sadly, during a summer storm, two trees fell and destroyed the Shelter house on the north end of the property. There are plans to rebuild in the spring of 2009.

A new "Walk-In" Cooler and Freezer was installed. The members gave their support in massive quantity and the old cooler and freezer was demolished and cleaned up within just two hours.

The White River Yacht Club had a grand event to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of our founding with a fantastic party.