

Washburn County AIS Education & Prevention Project: Final Report



**Washburn County
Land & Water Conservation Department
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1) Report/Assessment of Education/Outreach Activities Including Examples of Newsletters, Articles and Education Materials

Presentations

Many AIS educational presentations were requested from various lake groups throughout the year. Typically they would make a request for their annual association meeting when the most people would be present. The number of people in attendance usually ranged between 20 and 40.

Invasive species were discussed in depth; including why they are harmful, what they look like and what prevention steps should be taken to prevent them from spreading. Many educational brochures and handouts were available at each presentation, along with hands-on specimens for people to identify. Everyone always seemed to really enjoy all the free material that was available to them. The biggest concern among the citizens about invasive species was discovering a new stand of EWM in their lake. Generally lake residents are aware of the potential negative consequences of acquiring EWM.

The following are the lake groups that attended:

2007

Shell Lake - Lake District
Twin Lakes
Minong Flowage

2008

Trego Lake District
Little Long Lake
Long Lake Preservation Association
Stone Lake
Gull Lake

Workshops

With the growing concern of AIS in the State, more local lake associations are getting more involved in learning what they can do to help prevent the spread of invasive species. AIS and CBCW monitoring workshops were done at the Spooner Ag Research Station throughout the year. In March of 2008, Dave Blumer helped the AIS Coordinator host an AIS/CLMN workshop. There was a CLMN and CBCW workshop held at the North West Lakes Conference in 2008 that the AIS Coordinator helped with. Two more CBCW workshops occurred in 2008, one of them Erin Henegar helped present.

Being able to provide 1 free kit per lake, really made associations excited to begin working on their lake to prevent the spread of AIS and to educate others. The excitement folks reveal is

really great to see. It shows just how important water resources mean to them and to Washburn County. The following are the lake groups that attended and the locations:

(AIS/CLMN Workshop with Dave Blumer) Spooner Agriculture Station

Echo Lake
Lower Eau Claire Lake
Little Ripley Lake
Trego Lake
Gordon/St. Croix Flowage
Upper and Lower Vermillion Lake
North Sand Lake
Upper Turtle Lake
Kirby Lake

(CBCW with Erin Henegar) Spooner Agriculture Station

Rice Lake Lake-District
Moon Lake
Spooner Lake
Island Lake
Upper St. Croix Lake
Bear Lake
Lake Nebagamon
Minong Flowage
Trego Lake
Stone Lake
Kimball Lake
Red Cedar Lake
Walleyes for Tomorrow

(CBCW/CLMN) North West Lakes Conference, Cable WI

Namekagon Lake
Bear Lake
Trego Lake
Moose Lake
Tahkodah Lake
Marengo Lake
Delta Lake
Blue Lake
Little Sand Lake
Whitefish Lake
Lake Owen
Connors Lake
Diamond Lake

In 2008, a small informational workshop to learn more about AIS and to identify species occurred at the Totogatic Campground in Minong. A small group of people showed up, all from the Minong Flowage. They were all given free brochures and identification cards to hand out at their lake association meeting.

Each September, the Land Conservation Department hosts “Conservation Field Day” for 5th graders at the Trego town park. It is a full day of various educational topics, including learning about water and AIS. Area schools including, Birchwood, Northwoods, St Francis de Sales participated. The Land Conservation had a station set up to learn about sedimentation in lakes and AIS. The AIS Coordinator taught the students about the negative effects of invasive species and provided specimens for them to look at. They also learned how to clean off a boat and equipment when they enter and leave the boat landing.

Newspaper Articles and WCLRA Newsletter Articles

(See attached articles)

2) Report on Purple Loosestrife Bio-Control Projects

2007

2007 was our first attempt at producing *Galerucella* beetles in mass rearing cages. Since the AIS Grant didn't officially begin until July 1, 2007, all the preparation was completed by existing LWCD staff. Two wooden cages were assembled at the Spooner Ag Research Station. The purple loosestrife root stock was collected from a location in Douglas County and potted in early May. The plants quickly sprouted, but the plants in one of the cages did not grow well. An organic fertilizer was used in that cage and it seemed to have a negative effect on the plants. Approximately 2,000 adult *Galerucella* beetles were added to the cages at the end of May.

When the new beetles began to emerge in mid-July, it was clear that the cage with the poor purple loosestrife plants was not going to produce the expected number of insects. It was difficult to determine, but the number of beetles in the poor cage was estimated between 10,000 and 20,000. The other cage fared better and produced 60,000 – 70,000 beetles. The majority of the beetles were released on July 11 – 12 on the Yellow River Flowage, east of Spooner and south of Highway 70.

2008

In 2008 the mass rearing cages were set up initially on May 6th. However, a spring thunderstorm hit the Spooner area and strong winds blew the cages apart. While the galvanized metal cage was simply reassembled, the wooden cage was severely damaged and couldn't be repaired. Fortunately another metal cage was available from DNR and was quickly set up. The root stock was collected and planted on May 21st. The propagation beetles were gathered from the Shell Lake area on June 10th and distributed in the rearing cages.

The potted purple loosestrife plants grew well in June, but by July 9th the larvae began to decimate the plants. There was concern that there wouldn't be enough food for the larvae or the new adults once they hatched. Approximately 30 pots were taken by canoe to several locations on the Yellow River. The focus in 2008 was the stretch of river between Tozer Lake Road and Green Valley Road. Several days later the new beetles began emerging. Pots with fresh plant clippings were used to attract the adults and then nets were placed over top to secure the beetles for transport. Since the most severe purple loosestrife infestations on this stretch of the river occur just upstream from Green Valley Road, several additional batches of new adults were released there.

The period of hatching was somewhat elongated and continued over the next few days. The same procedure was used to capture the beetles for release. Secondary release sites in 2008 included the DNR Beaver Brook Reserve and several patches of loosestrife on Shingle Camp Road. The total number of released beetles in 2008 was estimated to be 157,000.

In 2007 and 2008, two small purple loosestrife rearing pools were set up at Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary. About 24 pots were planted and covered with white mesh nets to keep the predators out. Beetles were collected and were released into each netted pot. Approximately 10 were put into each pot. Overall, the beetles didn't seem to produce as many new ones as expected. Only about 2,000 beetles hatched out of the 5,000 expected. Larvae decimated the plants, and hot weather dried the pools quickly, leaving the plants thriving for water.

The overall purpose of the pools at Hunt Hill was more of an educational tool for people visiting the camp. Purple Loosestrife educational material was in view for everyone to read and learn more about. The small number of new beetles that were produced were released at the DNR Beaver Brook Reserve.

3) Report on AIS Monitoring Activities

In 2008, the AIS Coordinator spent a few hours in June doing CBCW monitoring at the Minong Flowage campground. Although only three boats were present, everyone was very cooperative and followed the proper prevention steps. With the next grant, the Coordinator is hoping to get out and do more inspections when time is feasible.

During the time of the grant, no new EWM or CLP infestations were found. That is great news, considering Washburn County is a lake rich community. It goes to show that education in prevention is playing a key role to citizens using the lakes. Mostly all of the Purple Loosestrife is inventoried and mapped and we are continuing to work with the GIS Mapper to inventory it, along with other invasive species within the county. Efforts to raise beetles and control purple loosestrife will continue.

4) County Wide

With the many lake groups that have been talked to about AIS, some of them have stepped up their efforts for their lake by doing CBCW monitoring. The following groups are doing CBCW:

Nancy Lake Association
Minong Flowage Lake Association
Gilmore Lake Association
Spoooner Lake Association
Kimball Lake Association

More groups are looking into doing it next year like Stone, Island, Pokegema and Red Cedar Lake Associations and Trego Lake District.

With the overwhelming number of requests for grant funding, and limited amount of money, it is hoped lake groups don't get too discouraged when they don't receive funding the first time around. The AIS Coordinator is always encouraging them to keep applying and hopefully they will get the money in the next cycle. Fortunately, there is still some drive out there from citizens to voluntarily sit at the landings and monitor. That is truly great to see!

5) Report on TLC's

In the spring of 2008 with input from concerned citizens, the Town of Minong formed a Town Lakes Committee. This committee will act as an advisory to the Town Board on lake issues. The committee is composed of residents who own property on lakes in the Minong Township, along with the County AIS Coordinator. Many residents are concerned about AIS, especially EWM, and recognize the lakes are an extremely valuable resource to the township. Members are representatives from Kimball, Horseshoe, Pokegema, Minong Flowage, Gilmore and Nancy Lake Associations. The objective of the committee is to bring residents together to identify and discuss issues, problems, and concerns relating to the lakes. It is likely that addressing these problems jointly could generate common solutions and give the lakes better access to financial resources to help with problems.

The committee wanted to bring the Minong community together to learn about various water-related issues their town. It was unanimously voted on to host a town lake fair. The fair will be on July 25th, 2009.

It is anticipated that the Minong Town Lake Committee will be utilized as an example for other towns that might be interested in forming such a committee. There are some inherent difficulties in forming groups like this, however. One problem is the lack of lake organizations among some of the smaller lakes in Washburn County. Another issue is the concern about the additional time commitment associated with a Town Lake Committee. A major issue is the potential for Lake Organizations and Towns to have very divergent priorities and a lack of

continuity. It should prove interesting to see the outcome of the Town of Minong Lake Fair and see how many people outside of Minong become more interested in forming a Town Lake Committee.

6) Report Summarizing AIS Planning Committee Activities

In the spring of 2008, an AIS Advisory Committee was formed to help create an AIS Strategic Plan for Washburn County. The strategic plan is a vital step towards a comprehensive approach to managing the county's problem with AIS. The committee is credited for providing valuable input toward the development of the AIS strategic plan. The AIS Coordinator's primary focus and the purpose of the strategic plan, is to help educate Washburn County residents, and help manage and control AIS. To strengthen the county's AIS efforts and make future decisions, we need this type of fundamental formation. John Haack, from UW-Extension, helped facilitate the group of 15 members. Represented were lake association members, DNR, NPS and Hunt Hill staff, along with the City of Shell Lake Coordinator. Input from the Washburn County Land Conservation Committee was also welcomed.

7) Complete Strategic Plan

The AIS Strategic Plan was complete in January 2009, and is in the process of implementation. Copies of the plan were distributed to many parties, including the County Board.

8) Documentation of Donated Time and Services

Documentation of donated time is available in the attached reimbursement request.

9) AIS Materials Generated or Paid for by Grant

No expenses were paid for by the Land Conservation Department during this grant. All materials used for education and workshops were free and available from the Wisconsin DNR. Purple loosestrife project supplies were also available from the DNR and buckets were donated by local restaurant businesses.