

**Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grant
Sawyer County AIS Coordinator
AEPP-452-15**

**Final Report
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Project Scope:

The Sawyer County Zoning and Conservation Department sponsored a project to continue the Sawyer County AIS Coordinator position and project. The position has increased awareness of aquatic invasive species throughout Sawyer County and provided needed resources for lake associations and shoreline owners. The guidance and expertise of the AIS Coordinator was a critical tool for lake associations, tribal partners, and local units of government as they worked on AIS issues. The four main goals of the project were:

1. Continue advancing the CBCW and CLMN programs in Sawyer County while also looking for new program opportunities.
2. Map and monitor aquatic invasive species in Sawyer County; Purple Loosestrife bio-control project
3. Educate lake residents (public) about AIS activities and control options;
4. Ensure lake associations have assistance to properly manage AIS issues on their lakes.

Accomplishments

1. **Objective 1:** Continue advancing the CBCW and CLMN programs in Sawyer County while also looking for new program opportunities.
 - a. Sawyer County has had a CBCW campaign at various landings for almost 10 years. However annual training on inspection techniques and dissemination of information is required.
 - b. Participate in Statewide CBCW AIS Campaigns.

The Clean Boats Clean Waters campaign has become a critical tool on prevention of new infestations of aquatic invasive species. Sawyer County has continued with traditional boat landing monitor programs. Additionally, we have been using it as an outreach tool for education. This program has been able to reach new age groups of people for upper middle-aged retired traditional lake homeowners to third grades in the Hayward School District. Finally, participation in the statewide drain campaign and land blitz campaigns has increased presence at boat landings around the county during some of the busiest hours.

5. **Objective 2:** Map and monitor aquatic invasive species in Sawyer County; Purple Loosestrife bio-control project

- a. Monitor known infested sites once/year;
- b. Survey and map 5-10 lakes per year where no known invasive program is established;
- c. Provide GPS units to lake associations for mapping of possible infestations sites;
- d. Work with local community groups on purple loosestrife biocontrol projects;
- e. Assist lake associations in monitoring waterbodies for AIS, upon request.

In Sawyer County from 2015-2017, lakes that were surveyed included some where AIS work had been done previously and some lakes where none or limited AIS had been done. Lakes monitored by the Sawyer County AIS Coordinator include:

2015: Smith Lake*, Lake Hayward**, Osprey**, and Lost Land Lake**.

*No AIS was identified

**No other new aquatic invasive species locations were found.

2016: Lakes surveyed for the first time- Little Sissabagama

Other lakes surveyed- Tiger Cat Flowage, Grindstone Lake, Osprey Lake, Callahan Lake, Mud Lake, Spider Chain of Lakes, and Lake Hayward.

*No new infestations of AIS were found

2017: Tiger Cat Flowage, Spider Chain of Lakes, Lake Hayward, and Mud/Callahan

*No new infestations of AIS were found

Lake association representatives were often involved in the surveys conducted by the Sawyer County AIS Coordinator. Lake associations were very positive about having surveys done on their lakes as most are very concerned about AIS. Many lake associations will request yearly surveys of “hot spots”, boat landings, or areas with a lot of traffic to ensure that if AIS are introduced they are quickly found.

The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator worked closely with lake associations that did chemical treatments for submerged aquatics. Lake associations performing chemical treatments included: Osprey Lake, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Lost Land Lake. The AIS Coordinator offered advice on chemical herbicides used, timing of application, and plant identification. Mapping was also done by the AIS Coordinator in some circumstances. Maps were provided to herbicide applicators if pre-treatment surveys were not done by the consultant.

The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator experimented with in situ purple loosestrife beetle rearing. The Coordinator placed netted cages in various established PL location around Tiger Cat Flowage and Spider Chain in 2016 and 2017. In 2017 *Galerucella* sp. beetles were provided with assistance from the WI DNR. The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator provided guidance in timing of beetle release and placement of beetles within problem areas on lakes.

Many lake associations began monitoring programs of their own during this time. The AIS Coordinator trained citizen volunteers to monitor for AIS, developed monitoring zones on lakes, and identified plants that volunteers had concerns about. Trainings often occurred on the lake of the respective lake association, giving the volunteers knowledge about their lakes, what native plants are located there, what concerns are, and an increased ownership in the need to monitor their own lake.

Other tasks included providing many lake associations with educational materials, maps, and plant identification for AIS monitoring and providing identification knowledge to Sawyer County residents regarding possible AIS.

Objective 3: Educate the public about AIS issues.

- a. Work with residents on lakes where invasives may or may not be located to educate, map, and control;
- b. Assist lakes with new infestations in developing a lake association or an invasive committee in their lake association;
- c. Assist in the development of and work with existing Clean Boats, Clean Waters programs;

The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator worked throughout the year to educate visitors, residents, fishing/ice fishing tournament participants, students, and interested organizations about AIS issues. Educational materials were provided for many meetings, lake associations, tournaments, resorts, and special events such as Musky Fest and the Hayward Fall Musky Tournament. Displays were created for lake association meetings and other events and were tailored to the specific needs of the organization.

Clean Boats, Clean Waters and Citizen Lake Monitoring Network trainings were held in 2015 thru 2017. Lake associations involved included Chippewa Flowage, Round Lake, Lake Hayward, Lake Sissabagama, Lac Courte Oreilles, Grindstone Lake, Whitefish Lake, and Spider Chain of Lakes. Most trainings were geared to the specific lake association/organization and the needs of the program. Trainings were held at the lake where the project was being implemented, in most instances. Assistance was provided to lake associations after trainings in material supplies, advice, and plant identification. The AIS Coordinator also ensured that CBCW projects were using revised materials for data collection. The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator also assisted with a monitoring project on Grindstone Lake.

The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator participated in the Chequamegon Lions Water Resource Day for third graders at the “The Landing” on the Chippewa Flowage in 2015 thru 2017. An adaptation to the WI DNR Clean Boats, Clean Waters story hour was given. The presentation AIS education, focused on lakes, a lake-related art project, and finding and cleaning “AIS” off of a boat. Over 120 children participated in the day each year.

Other accomplishments included: presentations and provided signage to lake associations for special events, such as fishing tournaments and annual picnics.

Objective 4: Ensure lake associations have assistance to properly manage AIS issues on lakes.

- a. Develop inspection, rapid response, and control plans;
- b. Identify questionable plants found in lakes;

As part of this project, the Sawyer County AIS Coordinator was available to assist all lake associations in Sawyer County that had AIS issues. This included mapping, identification, control questions, education of lake users, finding funding sources, assistance in following reasonable treatment plans, and more. Meetings were held with lake associations throughout the year to discuss treatments, results, and plans for the future. Assistance was given for chemical treatments on Osprey Lake and Lost Land Lake. Species of concern for lake users were identified in the office and out on lakes to determine if a new invasive species location was found.

Overall

The Sawyer County AIS Program has been a highly successful program helping many lake associations, individuals, and organizations in Sawyer County. The AIS Program has provided a link between the public and the WI Department of Natural Resources. The Sawyer County AIS Coordinator is able to educate volunteers, attend meetings, provide presentations and educational materials, and identify situations where rapid response is required. The AIS program is important to many lake associations and residents in Sawyer County for slowing the spread of aquatic invasive species.