

Oneida County Lake Planning Grant

2004 – 2006 Final Report

Project Number: LPL – 1000 – 05

Prepared for:

**The Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Committee
and
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

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**State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Lake Planning Grant
Oneida County Lakes Management
LPL-1000-05, 2004-06**

In 2004 the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department began to develop an aquatic invasive species (AIS) program. To begin this process Oneida County applied for a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR or DNR) lake-planning grant. As part of State of Wisconsin DNR Lakes Planning Grant, LPL-1000-05, covering October 1, 2004 through December 31, 2006 the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department was obligated to conduct and has achieved the following:

Partnership with Lake Associations, Lake Districts, and Local Units of Government

The Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department provided assistance and guidance to lake associations, lake districts, and units of government while they applied for DNR grants. The Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department and Committee also provided letters of support and limited staff support to the above mentioned groups during the DNR grant application process. The Land and Water Conservation Department worked with the following groups: Crescent Lake; Minocqua (Lakeland Chain of Lakes); Hazelhurst Township; Lake Tomahawk; Katherine Lake; Bear Lake District; Post Lake District; Horsehead Lake District; Town of Three Lakes (Three Lakes Chain), Lake George, and Pelican Lake.

AIS Meeting

The Town Boards of Minocqua, Lake Tomahawk, Hazelhurst, Woodruff, and Lac du Flambeau established an AIS Prevention Committee in the fall of 2004. Ted Cushing, Hazelhurst Town Board Chair, was the chair of this committee. This group held a meeting on December 9, 2004 at the Hazelhurst Town Hall. Bill Klase, UW-Extension Basin Educator, was the facilitator for this meeting. Lori Regni and Radley Watkins, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department staff, also provided information on DNR grants to the group. Lori Regni provided additional guidance and assistance to these townships on their grant application(s).

AIS Grant Workshop

An AIS Grant Workshop was held at the Rhinelander DNR Service Center on December 16, 2004. Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department staff attended this workshop to gain additional information on the DNR grants that are available. Staff was then able to provide guidance to Lake Associations, Lake Districts, and units of government on their grant applications. Land and Water Conservation Department staff encouraged the various lake groups to also attend the meeting to gain information on the DNR grants first hand.

Monitoring Beyond the Boat Landing Workshop

On May 25, 2006 the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department hosted a whole lake-monitoring workshop. Laura Herman, UW-Extension, and Sandy Wickman, DNR, were the instructors. The workshop was held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Oneida County Airport, Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

The program introduction covered history, the need for monitoring, the benefits of monitoring, and the importance of assisting the WDNR in monitoring. Other topics covered how to organize a program on a lake, equipment/materials required, how to identify invasive species, record keeping, and sharing results/data.

Part two of the program involved interactive training for the participants. This training covered hands-on identification of several common invasive species, guidelines for collection of specimens of species, and the equipment needed to conduct lake monitoring. Information regarding the statewide citizen lake monitoring coordinators was then provided to the participants.

The workshop included 24 participants from through the Northwoods area. The workshop was approximately 2 hours. Participants generally appeared eager and excited about the workshop contents and the information provided.

Citizen Lake Monitoring Training

On July 14, 2006 the Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department submitted a news release to area newspapers in order to recruit citizen lake monitors for area lakes. A list of 40 lakes located across the county was included.

The process we used to determine that we needed volunteers to do monitoring on 40 lakes was that we took the 40 largest lakes in the county that did not currently have volunteers. These lakes range in size from 179 acres to 6,306 acres. Since the larger lakes are the most popular and the most likely to be impacted by AIS, development, erosion, runoff, etc., those are the ones we felt needed volunteers to obtain data. We knew from the beginning that we would not get volunteers on all lakes that were advertised. By asking for volunteers on that many lakes, it increased the chances for a lake to be monitored.

On August 8, 2006 a Citizen Lake Monitoring Training workshop was held to train the volunteers that committed to monitoring of a specific lakes. Sandy Wickman, WDNR Water Resources Management Specialist, held the workshop at the Rhinelander DNR Service Center.

Manuals and handouts were distributed to the attendees. Numbers were assigned to the volunteers for reporting purposes. Sandy explained the volunteers would learn how to take secchi disk readings first. She went on to explain when monitoring would occur, where on the lake, how often, and how to record events such as weather, boat traffic,

wind, wildlife observations, etc. when taking secchi disk readings. Sandy also gave the attendees some tips, for instance, putting a clothespin on the rope at the first sign that the disk disappears in order to mark the spot on the rope that indicated the depth of visibility. She explained that the data could be entered on the Internet at anytime but a copy of the report must be sent in by the end of the year.

Out of the 40 lakes advertised for Citizens Lake Monitoring, approximately 14 trainees represented about 20 of the lakes. There were a few trainees that were able to monitor several lakes. Some of these lakes were not on the priority list. Since the news release asked for any lake volunteer, these lakes were included. However, most of the attendees were from the priority lakes. In addition, all the volunteers from the training are active in the Citizen Lake Monitor Network.

The Press Release (dated July 14, 2006) requesting volunteer lake monitors is listed as follows:

LAKE MONITORING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ON 40 LAKES IN ONEIDA COUNTY

Forty new lake water quality-monitoring volunteers are needed in Oneida County. If you are concerned about the future of Oneida County's lakes, then lake monitoring is for you. Lake monitors are important because they contribute to the understanding and protection of lakes. The data gathered is used by lake biologists, fisheries staff, lake associations, and others to make decisions about maintaining the quality of the lakes and surrounding areas.

Volunteers will collect information on water clarity by lowering an 8-inch black and white metal plate, called a Secchi Disk (named after the Italian inventor who tested the waters of the Mediterranean in the late 1800s) into the lake. By recording the depth at which the Secchi Disk disappears, a measure of the water clarity is obtained. Water clarity is a measure of the overall water quality, and especially indicates the amount of algae and silt present. Over time, clarity monitoring can give a good indication of the general "health" of a lake. After being involved in water clarity monitoring for one year, volunteers may be eligible to do more advanced water chemistry monitoring if they choose to. Secchi volunteers are also trained to recognize and search for Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly-Leaf Pondweed on their lake. Volunteers will receive all the equipment they will need, plus one-on-one training. In addition to water clarity monitoring and aquatic invasive species watch, volunteers can also become involved in aquatic plant or dissolved oxygen monitoring.

Only 61 lakes in Oneida County are currently being monitored. The following list targets lakes across the County that especially need lake monitoring. The effort to recruit new volunteers will focus on these lakes, but other lakes need monitoring also. If you are interested in monitoring a lake that is not on the list and there is no current volunteer, please call.

If you have questions or are interested in monitoring a lake, please contact Sandy Wickman, DNR Water Resources Management Specialist, 715-365-8951.

The lakes are listed as follows:

Crescent – Hat Rapids Flowage

Hazelhurst – Katherine Lake

Little Rice – Willow Flowage, Killarney Lake

Lake Tomahawk – Two Lake South, Big Carr Lake,

Lynne – Willow Lake

Minocqua – Pine Lake, Squirrel Lake, Kawaguesaga Lake, Buckskin Lake, Pier Lake, Clear Lake, Stone Lake, Booth Lake

Newbold – Rainbow Flowage, Nokomis Lake North (Swamp), Mildred Lake

Nokomis – Swamp Lake

Pine Lake – Shepard Lake, Pine Lake

Sugar Camp – Dam Lake, Columbus Lake, Sand Lake, Indian Lake, Jennie Weber Lake, Chain Lake, Stone Lake

Stella – Stella Lake

Three Lakes – Spirit Lake, Clearwater Lake, Crooked Lake, Thunder Lake, Planting Ground Lake, Big Fork Lake, Ninemile Lake (Lower), Big Stone Lake, Julia Lake, Little Fork Lake, Fourmile Lake, Medicine Lake, Laurel Lake, Deer Lake, Dog Lake

Woodboro – Oneida Lake

Woodruff – Gilmore Lake, Carroll Lake, Sweeney Lake, Clear Lake

Citizen Lake Monitoring Training Summary

The Boat Landing AIS Spot Checks for September 1, 2006 (Labor Day Weekend Friday) conducted by Jean Hansen, Oneida County Conservation Specialist, are listed as follows:

Bearskin Lake Landing

Time of day: 3:30 P.M.

Number of trailers: 4

Signage: AIS sign present. Rusty crayfish.

Notes: There were four (4) boat trailers present and no weeds visible. Took 3 photos, which are saved under my documents, Photos, Boat Landings. Sign in good shape.

McGrath Lake

Time of day – 3:45 P.M.

Number of trailers: 0

Signage: Green AIS sign; the one that has no place for species present.

Note: Small dirt landing located right on Hwy D. Looked like it had been used recently with tire tracks going into the water. Took several photos.

Little Carr Lake

Time of day: 4:55 P.M.

Number of trailers: 1

Signage: Signs were up in good repair.

Notes: Boat trailer clean of weeds. Rusty crayfish and purple loosestrife present. Took several photos.

Wisconsin River

Time of day: 4:10 P.M.

Number of trailers: 2

Signage: Signs up and in good repair. Yellow sign and green with STOP AIS. Rusty crayfish and purple loosestrife present.

Notes: The two trailers came in while I was looking at the signs. I spoke to both parties and identified myself and whom I worked for. Briefed them of the AIS problem in our lakes. Trailers were clean. The people were very receptive.

Rainbow Flowage - Swamp Creek

Time of day: 4:25 P.M.

Number of trailers: 0 but one truck with canoe

Signage: Signs were up but need repair/replacement. Rusty crayfish and Eurasian Water-Milfoil. Rusty crayfish sign was off and on the ground. EWM was torn and hanging from sign.

Notes: I took the Rusty crayfish emblem since it was lying on the ground. Left the EWM emblem hanging there. Landing is poor with lots of sand. Would be hard for someone without four-wheel drive to launch boat. The person with the canoe was too far out on the water for me to talk to.

Lakes Inventory Database

One of the deliverables was to collect and synthesize information on citizen lake monitoring activities and physical features of Oneida County Lakes. This information was then assembled into one lakes inventory database. The lakes inventory database contains the following fields: Lake Name, Maximum Depth, Area (acres), Self Help Volunteer status, Level of Citizen Lake Monitoring activity (Secchi disk, AIS, etc.), Access Information, Exotic Species presence/absence. This database was completed in October 2006, using Microsoft Excel and the latest available WDNR data.

The database compiled by the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department is a more concise grouping of data than is generally available to the public and possibly even more all encompassing than any other one grouping of Oneida County data managed by the WDNR. This database has already been provided and is being used by DNR staff. To date Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department staff has begun analysis of this data.

Staff has sorted the data and assigned a binary code so that aquatic invasive species (AIS) presence/absence data could be sorted along with lake area. The preliminary results of this investigation indicate that the comforting figure of approximately 6% of Oneida County lakes having AIS present jumps to an astonishing 48% when looking at the more widely used lakes, 300 acres or greater in size. Such a figure may more accurately reflect the threat AIS pose to Oneida County's lakes and recreational based economy. Further analysis using this data will help managers in Oneida County understand what water bodies are a priority for aquatic invasive species prevention, management and even control. The Oneida Co. Land and Water Conservation Department staff plans to continue to keep this database up to date with new information as it becomes available (The Lakes Inventory database is provided on the attached CD).

Float in Rhinelander Fourth of July Float Parade

This event was accomplished in addition to the DNR grant deliverables. The Land and Water Conservation Department/Committee and cooperating agencies including UW-Extension, WDNR, and the Charter School had a float in Rhinelander's Fourth of July 2005 parade. This partnership promoted the Year of Land and Water Conservation. It also provided education on aquatic invasive species. The float consisted of a truck pulling a pontoon boat on a trailer decorated with plants and Clean Boats, Clean Waters slogan. Students from the Charter School handed out bobbers at the parade that were printed with the Clean Boats, Clean Waters logo. The purchase of bobbers was made possible through donations provided by local businesses and other local organizations. Aquatic invasive species information cards were also distributed. This event was used as a way to promote land and water conservation and education regarding aquatic invasive species.

Parade Attendance 4th of July 2005

Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Committee Members

Tom Rudolph
Wilbur Petroskey
Matt Matteson
Guy Hansen
Jack Martinson
Carl Lassig

Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department Staff

Nancy Hollands
Jean Hansen

Wisconsin DNR

Lori Regni
Laura Herman

UW-Extension

Dan Kuzlik

Charter School

Kirby Kohler
Marie Martini
Darlene Machtan

Others

Jason Coffey (Matt Matteson's son)
Ted (Lori Regni's husband)

Kids

Xavier Bauke, Ariel Betts, Ethan Fourt, Jill Holschuh, Nick Hunter, Haley Jacobson, Hannah Jacobson, Hattie Jacobson, Levi Marten, Curtis Rollo, Nicholas Rollo, Thomas Rollo, Morgan Wochinski

Conclusion

The State of Wisconsin DNR Lakes Planning Grant, LPL-1000-05, was the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department's first DNR lake-planning grant. The grant provided a good start to forming partnerships with various groups interested in lake planning and aquatic invasive species issues. It provided the momentum needed to begin to develop an Oneida County aquatic invasive species program that now has a full-time staff member. The Oneida County lakes database is a valuable tool that will help the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department utilize and analyze lake data. The Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department will continue to promote education focusing on aquatic invasive species management and prevention in the future. Oneida County would like to thank the Wisconsin DNR for the funds provided through this grant and their support in the countywide aquatic invasive species management endeavor now taking place.