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2009 Regional AIS Coordinator LTE Report

Goals and Objectives:

1. A minimum of 200 hours of Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) reported
2. Assist Education Specialist in surveying, and mapping pioneer infestations
3. Assist Education Specialist in hand pulling pioneer infestations

1) A minimum of 200 hours of Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) reported

- a) A total of 425.25 hours were reported to SWIMS for Clean Boats, Clean Waters. A total of 444 boats were inspected, and 711 people were contacted during this time. CBCW inspections were performed at 85% of the boat landings in Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties.
- b) There was no trouble in talking to boaters. Many questions, especially involving bait laws and water transportation were answered. Boaters had feedback on ways to improve the ease of aquatic plant removal from their boats, as well as on how much they had learned from CBCW inspectors. Boaters showed an obvious increase in aquatic invasive species (AIS) and CBCW knowledge throughout the summer, with increasing comments on how they had heard about AIS from other inspectors or their friends. The highest sources of AIS knowledge by almost equal percentages were: 1. News sources, as well as 2. Signs at landings such as the billboards put up by Portage and Wood County in 2008 and 2009.
- c) A sign was made and taken to the boat landings during CBCW, announcing "Courtesy Boat Inspections," in order to help sway the negative connotation that sometimes occurs with people carrying clipboards asking questions. Boaters were able to see right away that this was intended to benefit them.
- d) Hands-on education about AIS was presented at landings to people of all ages. Live samples (if available) were collected and shown to boaters and fisherman, with great response. Participants showed great enthusiasm in handling and inspecting live specimens rather than simply looking at pictures.
- e) An inventory was created for the boat landings in Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties. In Portage County, 93% of boat landings were inventoried, along with 86% in Waushara County, and 100% in Wood County. The inventory included: boat landing location, aquatic invasive species reported at that site, the AIS signs present at the landing, along with the AIS stickers located on the signs. (AIS stickers corresponded with the aquatic invasive species that were previously present.) The signs and stickers that were needed were also inventoried at each boat landing.

2) Assist Education Specialist in surveying, and mapping pioneer infestations

- a) Assisted in surveying and mapping 13 lakes in Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties. Water bodies surveyed include: Amherst Mill Pond, Collins Lake, McDill Pond, Onland Lake, Pickerel Lake, Sunset Lake, Wolf Lake, Fish Lake, Lake Lucerne, Lake Dexter, Lake Nepco, Lake Wazeecha, and Yellow River system in North Wood County Park.
- b) Collected and reported new occurrences of aquatic invasive species. Fourteen new occurrences of AIS were reported in the three counties by the LTE's alone. Three were found in Portage County, and eleven were found in Waushara County.

3) Assist Education Specialist in hand pulling pioneer infestations

- a)** Hand pulling events were held at Lake Helen, Pickerel Lake, Sunset Lake, Wolf Lake, and McDill Pond. Lake residents are now competent in the hand removal of EWM without the assistance from AIS Education Specialists. Total eradication is expected for Lake Helen. Problems in hand pulling were evident with Lime Lake, where the EWM was spread throughout the cattails and, although there was not a large population of EWM, it was too difficult to reach. Wolf Lake had been hand pulled in 2008, and the results were dramatic, with no EWM occurring in 2009 where it had been pulled in 2008. There was a small population left in another area of the lake, and plans to hand pull the remaining plants remain for the fall of 2009.
- b)** Three floating EWM devices were constructed for the temporary on-water storage of EWM during the hand pulling process. They increased mobility of hand-pullers, and reduced the amount of fragments created by other means of transport, while letting water pass through and keeping plants intact. The construction was designed to be easily duplicated by lake residents, and photo instructions were documented and shared with other AIS Coordinators around the state.
- c)** Assisted Education Specialist in the trapping and hand removal of the rusty crayfish from the Yellow River in Wood County. The decreased population of rusty crayfish by about 15,000 in one month resulted in the observation of an immediate increase in fish species like darters and stonecats.

A focus for next year would be to further monitor the lakes that were pulled this year for EWM. Education of volunteers and lake residents is essential and greatly appreciated, made evident in donations to the project and letters of support. More hand pulling would be in order next year. With the steady increase of lake groups that requested meetings toward the end of this summer, a further increase in interest in monitoring and controlling AIS is not just hoped for, but expected, for next year.