

The Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter



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Talk About a Busy and Successful Summer Season!

Well, now that the Labor Day weekend has passed, and as the temperature continues to drop (which feels quite early this year!), the activity on our lakes and rivers will begin to slow down. This summer season has brought an abundance of visitors, some much needed precipitation for our waters and forests, along with a wide variety of partners in the fight against aquatic invasive species (AIS) here in the Northwoods. This year, we've had researchers evaluating management techniques on Eurasian water milfoil (EWM), state and county agencies conducting AIS-related surveys and training workshops, private entities helping to manage AIS, and hundreds of volunteers educating boaters at landings as well as monitoring the quality of our waters.....just to name a few! Talk about an effort, and a well-established partnership, working to protect the integrity and uniqueness of the water resources found in the Northwoods!



Here in Oneida County, we're fortunate to have a strong group of lake organizations and volunteers committed to protecting the things they value. Undoubtedly, without the efforts of these people, the health and quality of our 1,100+ lakes and rivers would not be what they are today. Therefore, as individuals that either enjoy recreating on water, using or benefiting from the water for business opportunities, or simply just knowing that the aquatic environment is healthy, give serious consideration to getting involved in a lake organization or becoming a volunteer.

That being said, let's talk about some of the accomplishments of the Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) program in Oneida County this year. This program, in my opinion, is the number one way to prevent the spread of AIS. According to the state's CBCW database (and keep in mind that not all of the lake associations have entered their data yet), in Oneida County to date, we have inspected over 5,390 boats and contacted over 12,240 people. Now hopefully, those contacts we made will teach others about

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Highlights From the Oneida County Award Ceremony



On Saturday, August 21st, the Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department, in cooperation with the Oneida County UW-Extension Office, hosted an award ceremony for lake groups and volunteers within the Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) and Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) programs in Oneida County. The event featured guest speakers from the Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department/Committee, Oneida County Lakes and

Rivers Association, University of Wisconsin Extension – Lakes, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The speakers focused on on-going efforts in Oneida County designed to protect our lakes and rivers. There was also a presentation on current WDNR research into the ecology and management of Eurasian water milfoil. In addition, I presented on a few interesting projects area lake associations were doing (see story below), and I also distributed a number of

“Distinguished Service Awards,” for individuals demonstrating the leadership and commitment towards the protection of Oneida County’s water resources. Approximately 40 lake association board members and CBCW or CLMN volunteers attended the event. For more information regarding the Award Ceremony see: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/oneida/cnred/AISInformationpage.html>.



Interesting Lake Association Projects

The following paragraphs contain descriptions about four innovative projects implemented by lake associations in Oneida County.

The Three Lakes Waterfront Association has an “Adopt-A-Shoreline” program, with the objective of early detection of AIS through organized shoreline monitoring. Lake captains, for each lake the association covers, (approx. 17 lakes) recruit and train volunteers and assign shoreline monitoring stations to the participants. Suspected AIS specimens are collected and

verified. The program coordinator collects the completed survey data sheets and enters the information into the CLMN database.

The Two Sisters Lake Property Owners Association recently installed a boat washing station at the boat landing for a total cost of around \$450. The wash station consists of a portable pressure washer with water hookup and a spray bottle with a diluted bleach/water mixture. Boaters with incoming, unclean equipment are asked to use the wash station. The CBCW inspector then sprays the

boat/trailer with the bleach solution (allows contact time of ten minutes) and power washes the equipment clean. The station is only operated when CBCW inspectors are working, and the wash water flows away from the lake. The most difficult part of the project was finding a water supply. A nearby landowner graciously supplied the use of his well water.

The Tomahawk Lake Association owns and operates a “Hydraulic Conveyor System” (HCS) that, when coupled with divers, selectively harvests Eurasian water milfoil (EWM).

The diver guides the EWM into the suction hose of the HCS, and then loosens the root-wad of the selected plant. The HCS then transports the EWM (plant, roots, fragments, and all) into a filtering apparatus of the HCS sitting on a pontoon.

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Reports on Recent Findings & Management of AIS

During the weekend of August 21st, John Raymond (age 13) found a floating piece of EWM wrapped around the pier at the Lake Katherine (Town of Hazelhurst) boat landing. In response to John's find, cooperators from Oneida County, Wisconsin DNR, University of Wisconsin Center for Limnology, and the Lake Katherine Association conducted several surveys and were unable to locate any rooted plants of EWM.

Therefore, it is suspected that the EWM fragment likely came off a visiting boat. However, the association is going to step up their monitoring efforts to ensure that no EWM is present. Monitoring efforts like John's are a great example of how a small amount of time and persistence can prevent an AIS from establishing itself in a new waterbody.

Earlier in the summer, I personally received two

fragments of EWM that CBCW watercraft inspectors had removed from boats accessing lakes currently free from EWM. The incidents occurred on Pelican Lake (south of Monico) and Crescent Lake (east of Rhinelander). In both cases, the fragments were found attached to a boat or trailer. If not for CBCW watercraft inspection programs on these lakes, EWM may have been able to infest one or both of these waterbodies.

In a related story, DNR water guard, John Preuss, found a boat trailer containing EWM and zebra mussels (ZM) at the Allequash Lake landing in Vilas County. After the fisherman (from the Shawano area) returned from fishing, he admitted that he was aware of the laws, and that he apparently had not done a good enough job of cleaning his equipment. The man was issued a citation for

transporting aquatic plants and animals. Monitoring of Allequash Lake will continue, to determine if either species becomes established in the lake. If one of the AIS does establish a population, management and control efforts will go into effect immediately.

Speaking of ZM, it was just confirmed that a recreational diver found them in Keyes Lake in Forest County. Additional efforts will now be made in that area to increase user awareness to protect other nearby waters. To limit the transfer of ZM, steam clean or wash your boat/equipment (preferably with a diluted bleach-water mix) and pressure wash clean.

In regards to management of EWM, I've heard a number of positive remarks from lake associations in the area. Those lake groups using chemical treatment as a management technique

this year, seem to be quite pleased with it's effectiveness. In addition, a number of lake groups were also using contracted scuba divers to hand-remove the EWM. This technique is more labor intensive, but it's also much more selective (divers pull only EWM). Divers are also able to harvest EWM where other techniques aren't warranted (e.g. small numbers of EWM plants). In addition to chemicals, divers were able to harvest a few extra thousand pounds of EWM across county waters. The battle with AIS continues, but with efforts such as those noted in this article, we will continue to protect our waters for everyone's enjoyment!



Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

Talk About a Busy and Successful Summer Season! (cont.)

maintaining clean equipment, and the resulting number of people educated about AIS will grow exponentially!

One of the objectives of the CBCW program is to obtain boater feedback by asking a series of questions during the inspection process. The resulting information is then used to guide future management/education efforts. Of the boaters contacted during watercraft inspections in Oneida County, 93% indicated that they were aware of the laws designed to prevent movement of AIS. 95% of boaters said that they always make an effort to inspect and remove all

aquatic plants and animals, but only 80% of them said that they drain the water in their live wells along with the rest of the water in their boat/equipment. This indicates that a fair number of boaters still don't understand that they cannot transport harvested fish in their live wells (with water, if the well is drained, fish can be transported that way). Just remember, all water must be drained. Therefore, as a fisherman myself, I always ensure that I carry a stringer, and cooler of ice, if I hope to keep some fish for the frying pan. By not draining your water, you could potentially be transporting things like

ZM (their larval stage is a free-swimming microscopic organism), the fish-killing virus, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), or others.

Boaters also indicated that they preferred getting information about AIS and the new laws from people at the landings (i.e. watercraft inspectors). During the inspections, inspectors observed, that about 10% of the time, plants were present on the equipment. However, only 1% of the time did a violation occur. That tells me that the majority of people are inspecting and removing after coming off the water. However, while running

between commitments last Saturday, I inspected a single boat (it was preparing to enter a lake) and it had plants on the trailer. The individuals were from the central portion of the state. We have to keep at it, and we all need to make it a habit of practicing the prevention steps (inspect, remove, drain, wash, and dry)!



Interesting Lake Association Projects (cont.)

Water is then drained through a series of wire-mesh screens, and the drained EWM is then bagged for disposal. The HCS is ideal for pioneer populations of EWM (also typically targeted by scuba divers) where other management techniques (e.g. chemical treatments) are not warranted. The device is also more efficient for divers, because rather than coming

to the surface to bag the EWM, they can stay down in the water and harvest many more plants in a given amount of time. In 2009, the HCS helped divers harvest over 18,000 pounds of EWM!

The Crescent, Julia, and Squash Lake Associations have together formed a partnership (so-to-say) to combat AIS. The partnership was created to

be more competitive at acquiring DNR grant funds, which they have now successfully obtained! With the grant funds, they have cooperatively hired one CBCW coordinator to manage all three lakes' programs. They'll also be creating educational materials to provide to local businesses and lake property owners, and tools to assist with monitoring and

removal of EWM (only on Squash Lake), and more. Creating partnerships with other lake groups, as was just covered, or undertaking projects similar to those mentioned here, are great ideas for other groups to adopt, so talk about it at your next association meeting!

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Oneida County Website: <http://www.co.oneida.wi.gov/>

Land & Water Conservation Department

Phone: 715-369-7835

Forestry & Outdoor Recreation Department

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Land & Water Conservation Dept.

