

Aquatic Invasive Species grant # AEPP-107-08
Regional AIS Specialist – Portage, Wood, Waushara Counties

Final Report

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Grant period 1 April 2008 – 31 December 2009



Submitted by:
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Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development

Goals and Objectives Reporting

Workshops: CLMN-AIS and CBCW workshops were provided by the Regional AIS Specialist (Amy Thorstenson) and the Regional AIS Technician (Paul Skawinski). These workshops were held at Pleasant Lake (July 11th-Amy), Little Hills Lake (July 25th-Amy and Paul), and Round Lake (August 19th-Paul) (all Waushara County) in 2008. Patrick Nehring from UW-Extension assisted with the Pleasant Lake and Little Hills Lake workshops. An additional aquatic plant monitoring workshop was requested for July 26th by the Lake Helen Protection & Rehabilitation District, Portage County. Attendance at the workshops was as follows: 11 at Pleasant Lake, 5 at Round Lake, 6 at Little Hills Lake, and 9 at Lake Helen. During the workshop at Lake Helen (Paul), Eurasian watermilfoil was discovered for the first time. During the next few weeks, quick action by RC&D and several Lake Helen residents prevented the spread of the EWM, and allowed for control of the small patch of EWM. Currently, the EWM still has not spread beyond this area, and is being actively monitored and pulled by volunteer lake monitors.

A CBCW workshop (Paul) was taught at Lake Helen on April 26, 2009. Rob Hvidsak kindly volunteered his basement to host the workshop, and fourteen residents from the Lake District attended.

Pleasant Lake CLMN workshop 11 July 2008



Little Hills Lake CLMN workshop 25 July 2008



Lake Helen aquatic plant monitoring training 26 July 2008



Lake Helen CBCW workshop 26 April 2009



Lake Helen CBCW workshop 26 April 2009



Lake Helen CBCW workshop 26 April 2009



Biological control of purple loosestrife:

Two schools from Portage County (Boston School Forest, Plover, and Stevens Point Area Senior High School (SPASH)) were involved in the 2008 Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Project (Fig. 7). Approximately 8,000 *Galerucella* beetles were released in a riparian wetland along Bear Creek, Town of Carson, Wood County. The release site was at the intersection of Bear Creek and 3rd Avenue South, 44.51774N, 89.78766W. The teachers valued their ability to participate in this program, and both expressed interest to continue with the project in 2009. Paul created educational signs to place next to the pools to help explain the project to the public.

Purple loosestrife rearing pool



Map counties:

Maps have been created. See attached maps.

Milfoil weevil surveying training:

Amy conducted two weevil training sessions: one at Echo Lake, Barron County, and one at McDill Pond, Portage County. Laura Herman, UW-Extension, assisted with both trainings, and Paul assisted with the McDill Pond training. Participants were trained on weevil surveying methods, identification, and a brief *Euhrychiopsis lecontei* ecology lesson.

McDill Pond weevil surveying training



McDill Pond weevil surveying training



Education and outreach blitz:

A poster was created by Benjamin Liesch of Web Design, to post at taverns in Portage, Wood, and Waushara Counties. The poster was printed at the Printing & Design shop at UW-Stevens Point. It focuses on a message to “preserve our fishing tradition”, and outlines the Clean Boats, Clean Waters prevention steps. It was designed to appeal to the main angling audience, mostly males of the “baby-boomer” generation, and to have a slick, professional design.

A display booth was set up at the 2009 Garden Visions conference in Wausau, which highlighted aquatic invasive species that could be spread by water gardening practices. The emphasis was on education of the public to never release water garden plants to nearby waterways. Photos and facts conveyed the serious impacts that these plants can have outside of their native range. Although the location was outside of our county focus, participants from our counties were expected, such as the Portage County Master Gardeners.

Paul met with a local 4-H group to remove Eurasian watermilfoil from the boat landing area of Lake Thomas, Portage County. The most likely place where EWM would be transported out of Lake Thomas would be the boat landing, where it could be snagged by a trailer. Paul and the 4-H group worked with rakes to pull EWM out of the shallow water area. Several children were willing to swim through the area to look for EWM as well. Four 5-gallon buckets of EWM were removed from Lake Thomas and used for fertilizer.

Members of a 4-H group assisting with EWM removal



Develop canned AIS training presentation for Parks Department:

Paul created a self-contained AIS PowerPoint presentation that county parks departments could show to their staff. It is designed to run on its own without a presenter, but can be used as part of a personal presentation as well. Portage County and Waushara County Parks Departments agreed to show the presentation to their staff in 2009. Waushara County’s Highway Department has already viewed the presentation, assisted by Patrick Nehring, UW-Extension. The Wood County Land Conservation Department also agreed to view it and take a pre-test/post-test to evaluate efficacy of the presentation. It covers invasive species that Parks Departments are likely to encounter in riparian areas in Central Wisconsin. Parks departments can now show the presentation each year to train seasonal staff. This way they can recognize AIS and know how to avoid spreading them.

Oversee LTEs working on AIS programs:

Portage County LTEs (2) and Lake Emily LTEs (2) in 2008 were employed by Golden Sands RC&D. Paul and Amy provided training and supervision to the LTEs. LTEs assisted Paul with occasional EWM hand-pulling assistance, and submitted bi-weekly reports to Paul and Amy to keep them up-to-date with the CBCW inspection program progress in Portage County.

Investigate curly leaf pondweed occurrences: (Portage County)

The Portage County Lake Study in 2003 documented aquatic plants in all public access lakes in the county. Paul obtained a list of the lakes that had curly-leaf pondweed documented. Lakes where no management was occurring were mapped via kayak in June 2008, to assess the extent of the CLP population. Relative abundance was noted at each location. See attached maps. Upon discussion with the lake group and DNR, it was determined that these populations would be monitored, but no control efforts would be attempted at this time. Golden Sands RC&D and the lake residents will continue to monitor these CLP populations.

Mapping EWM: (Waushara Co, Portage Co)

In Waushara County, no new EWM populations were found in public access lakes where AIS status was unknown. EWM mapping demonstrations were offered to the first two lake groups who signed up for CLMN-AIS monitoring workshops. Pleasant Lake and Little Hills Lake were offered these demonstrations.

In Portage County, new reports of EWM were investigated and mapped upon request. Three new EWM lakes were identified in 2008, including Wolf Lake, Collins Lake, and Lake Helen. Extensive hand-pulling was initiated at Wolf Lake and Lake Helen. Collins Lake only had a couple plants right at the boat landing, so the plants were immediately pulled out upon discovery. These plants were discovered during a stop at Collins Lake to confirm a report of Chinese mystery snails in the lake. Maps of the EWM locations were produced by the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department, so future monitoring can refer back to these sites.

At Wolf Lake, the EWM was located in shallow water, with very thick, soft marl. Kayaks were used to float over the EWM plants and pull them. Paul and LTEs were able to reach directly into the marl and underneath the EWM root masses to lift them out. In the deeper spots, short garden rakes were used. By the end of the year, it was becoming difficult to find any remaining EWM.

At Lake Helen, the EWM was found during a plant identification training for the Lake Helen Protection & Rehabilitation District. A short time later, Paul and the Portage County AIS LTEs assisted the District with a hand-pulling effort to remove this pioneer colony of EWM. Rakes were used from a pontoon boat to pull up the EWM, and RC&D staff paddled around in kayaks armed with mesh minnow nets to collect any fragments that broke off. The pulling event continued until all EWM appeared to be removed. Several weeks later, a few additional plants were discovered by the District. Lake resident volunteers and RC&D staff attacked the colony again, using similar methods again, but one of the residents was willing to dive for EWM this time. Diving made quick work of the EWM population, and all visible EWM was again removed. In spring of 2009, EWM was again spotted in the same location, but another lake resident dove down to remove it, and it hasn't been seen again since.

Hand-pulling EWM at Lake Helen



Hand-pulling EWM at Lake Helen



Hand-pulling EWM at Lake Helen



When any new EWM or other aquatic invasive plant was found, a voucher specimen was collected and submitted to the Freckmann Herbarium at UW-Stevens Point. Maps were created of the pioneer infestations with a handheld Garmin GPS76 GPS unit, with the assistance of the Portage County and Waushara County Planning and Zoning Departments. For each new AIS population, "AIS Incident Reports" were filled out and entered into the SWIMS online database.

Survey public access lakes where AIS status is unknown: (Waushara Co.)

Paul surveyed six Waushara County lakes where AIS status was unknown. This included Alpine Lake, Big Silver Lake, Mecan Springs, Mount Morris Lake, Spring Lake, and the Upper White River Flowage. CLP was confirmed at all of these except Mount Morris Lake. Voucher specimens were collected at each lake and were delivered to the Freckmann Herbarium at UWSP for confirmation. Mapping was done with a Garmin GPS76 handheld GPS unit.

Spread the word about AIS: (Waushara Co.)

Paul attended lake association meetings and the Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council meetings. He gave presentations and was available to help with questions regarding AIS. Press releases about the LTEs, Regional AIS project, and other local AIS topics were written and submitted to local media. An additional article about AIS was contributed to the Round/Wilson/Kusel Lake District annual newsletter.

Collect AIS records for Wood Co.: (Wood Co.)

Paul worked with DNR personnel to assemble current distribution records for Wood County AIS populations and volunteer activities. Few records were available, except for Lake Wazeecha, where a DNR aquatic plant survey had been conducted in early 2008. Volunteer participation has been encouraged by Wood County Land Conservation Department in the past, but nobody has volunteered on any of the Wood County lakes. Few residents actually live on the lakes though, since most of the property on Wood County's five lakes is owned by the County or by the paper companies.

AIS surveys and the Wood County AIS Management Plan were completed as part of the Regional AIS Coordinator project (AEPP-190-09).

Rusty crayfish investigation: (Wood Co.)

Paul visited the Yellow River, and examined possible causes for rusty crayfish abundance there. Likely causes were slow current, abundant cobble and boulder substrate, and warm water temperature. Discussion with DNR and Wood County LCD led to an aggressive trapping effort being considered for the 2009 grant project. UW-Stevens Point agreed to loan crayfish traps to RC&D to conduct this trapping effort. This trapping effort was then executed through the 2009-2010 Regional AIS Coordinator project.