Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Updates

Andrew Teal

10/15-10/26/18

* Worked at the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC) to cover registration costs, then attended the sessions at this multi-day, bi-annual conference. As the largest invasive species conference on the North American continent, it brings in professionals from dozens of states and several countries to network and to talk about different species, outreach and education methods, and novel management techniques. I took lots of notes regarding Asian carp deterrent research and management, knotweed management and gene typing, education involving middle schoolers, climate change impacts on non-native species, several aquatic invasive plant species (presented by other states; WI doesn’t have those species…yet), the use of biocontrols as the potential future of management, Eurasian watermilfoil herbicide treatments, and more. Favorite presentations include: a new knotweed management technique using a system to spear large clumps of roots and inject hot water into them. The temperature range is VERY specific-too cool, nothing happens, and boiling water may only kill that clump. The goal is to heat the water to the point that it causes a systemic chain reaction throughout the plants and kills most of the population. From what I could see, it is shockingly effective. Another presentation came from a group called the Prairie Ecology Bus Center. They literally bought a coach bus, arranged to pick up students at school, and took them out into the field for hands on activities. My favorite had to be Dr. James Leary from the University of Hawai’I, though. He presented “Protecting Hawaii’s Watersheds, One Incipient Miconia Plant at a Time with Extreme Prejudice”. I hope they recorded it. He craftily worked military lingo into his presentation, while talking about his Miconia calvescens management strategy, which includes a combination of drones, a helicopter with a three-person crew, and herbicide ballistic technology (HBT). HBT=paintball gun loaded with herbicide-filled rounds. He was even able to break down the budget for using these things. It costs them a whopping $0.25/second to run a helicopter for surveillance and plant elimination runs!

One undercurrent theme was that so many presenters mentioned that all these people from all over the country (and to a certain extent, the continent) are doing all these cool things but no one shares them until mid-October on even numbered years (when UMISC happens). Basically, they said so many projects happen in a bubble and don’t get shared quickly with other partners to maximize potential.

* Attended the Lake Superior Collaborative Symposium at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. The Lake Superior Collaborative was born of three other partnerships, which all merged to bring common interests together to reduce competition and pool resources. The Symposium focused on all kinds of projects, but common themes included bluff erosion, invasive species, climate change, culvert replacement and survival through increasingly frequent heavy precipitation events, and sediment loading into Chequamegon Bay and along other stretches of Wisconsin’s Lake Superior shoreline.
* Worked on funding for the AIS Coordinator position for the next three years
* Traded emails and phone calls to set up a meeting for the Lake Owen Association and its efforts to create/partner on decontamination stations at key areas of Bayfield County