

2006 Aquatic Invasive Species Project Narrative for Final Report

In the months of May through August 2006, the Barron County Soil & Water Conservation Department conducted a project partially funded by an Aquatic Invasive Species Grant from the Department of Natural Resources. The project involved an inventory of lakes in Barron County to check for the existence of Eurasian milfoil and included a project to control purple loosestrife in Barron County.

Prior to 2006, it was known that six lakes in Barron County were infested with Eurasian milfoil; part of this project was to assess an additional 35 lakes for new infestations of Eurasian milfoil. None of the 35 lakes were found to have new infestations of Eurasian milfoil. Therefore when we ask the questions how and where Eurasian milfoil is spreading in Barron County, we are happy to say that, to the best of our knowledge, it is not spreading or it is spreading very slowly.

One of the 35 lakes checked, Horseshoe Lake in Almena Township, was found to contain a suspicious looking plant. Horseshoe Lake is connected to Echo Lake by a small stream and Echo Lake is infested with Eurasian milfoil. This could be the source of an infestation in Horseshoe Lake. After DNA analysis of the suspicious plants found in Horseshoe, they were determined to be hybrid milfoil.

Of the six lakes in Barron County that are known to be infested with Eurasian milfoil, five have established lake associations or lake districts and have established Eurasian milfoil control programs. Duck Lake is the only lake that does not have an active association. The AIS intern in 2006 spent time on Duck to evaluate how aggressively the Eurasian milfoil is spreading and looking at the possible management alternatives that the people around Duck Lake could use once they have established an active lake association.

During the course of the project, a new map showing the extent of purple loosestrife infestation in Barron County was created to be part of a statewide data base for purple loosestrife. In May, a rearing station was set up to raise the Galerucella beetle, which eats the purple loosestrife. In late July, thousands of beetles and beetle larva were released in larger patches of purple loosestrife throughout Barron County. Considerable time was spent cutting and spraying small patches of purple loosestrife throughout the county. This was done by the AIS intern and staff from the SWCD. It was found that purple loosestrife infestation has decreased over time but now is again on the increase. The extent to which purple loosestrife was cut and sprayed and also controlled with the Galerucella beetles helped to again reduce the extent of purple loosestrife in Barron County.

Education / Outreach Activities

Information boxes were placed at 30 boat landings and filled with a one page informational sheet (enclosed). The sheet, printed on water proof paper, is intended for boaters as a reminder and guide of how to check their boat and trailer for aquatic plants. The sheet also has information on other aquatic invasive species the boaters should be aware of. The supply of sheets is enough that they will again be distributed in the spring of 2007.

The Soil & Water Conservation Dept. owns a building at the Barron County Fair that serves as a Conservation Education Display during the fair. The AIS Intern set up an excellent display on invasive species for the fair. The display included a great deal of printed material about AIS, samples of the different AIS, and a boat / motor on a trailer to show people how to check for aquatic weeds.

Clean Boats / Clean Waters Program

Activity relating to Clean Boats / Clean Waters was expanded in Barron County due to the AIS project. The AIS Intern did not have week ends available as hoped for watercraft inspection, however participated in watercraft inspection on several occasions during the work week and on holidays. As a part of this project, 5 watercraft inspectors were trained to work at Silver Lake and Beaver Dam Lake throughout the summer of 2006. Included in this report is a summary of inspection activities at Silver Lake. The SWCD has not received inspection reports from the City of Cumberland or the Beaver Dam Lake District.

Priority List of Boat Landings For Future Watercraft Inspection

Below is a list of boat landings that will be given priority for future inspection activities. Priority is assigned according to proximity to infested lakes and how busy the boat landing is. To date two Clean Boats, Clean Waters training workshops have been held in Barron County. A third will be held on July 14, 2007.

Upper Turtle	Lower Turtle	Bear Lake
Silver Lake	Red Cedar	Hemlock Lake
Crystal Lake	Upper Vermillion	Lower Vermillion
Granite Lake	Big Dummy	Sylvan Lake
Little Sand Lake	Rice Lake	Big Moon Lake

Strategy for Future Control of Eurasian Milfoil

The current plan is to hire another intern in 2008 or 2009 to replicate the work done in 2006. This will serve to continue the monitoring of the spreading of Eurasian Milfoil. In the mean time staff from Barron County SWCD will continue several efforts in E.M. control. These include: 1) inventory several lakes with busy boat landings that the 2006 intern didn't get to, 2) continue the Clean Boats / Clean Waters program in Barron County, and 3) continue the educational programs already in place, including the display at the fair, and the boat landing educational sheet.

Strategy for Future Control of Purple Loosestrife

For large patches of purple loosestrife, existing staff at the Barron County SWCD will erect the shelter, collect purple loosestrife plants and beetles, and grow and release another batch. For small patches of purple loosestrife, the existing staff will spend several days each cutting the flowers and spraying the plants with Rodeo herbicide.