1414 West Hamilton Avenue
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008

October 30, 2012

Ms. Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Subject: **2012 Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Report**
Holcombe Hydro (P-1982), Cornell Hydro (P-2639), Jim Falls Hydro (P-2491), Wissota Hydro (P-2567), Chippewa Falls Hydro (P-2440) and Dells Hydro (P-2670)

Dear Secretary:

Attached is a copy of the 2012 Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Report for the above-referenced hydro projects. Pursuant to the Exotics Control Plan of the operating license for each project, Xcel Energy (Licensee) is required to annually monitor for the presence of loosestrife on each impoundment and eradicate pioneering plants on company-owned shorelines. There was no purple loosestrife documented on Chippewa Falls Flowage or Dells Pond, while eight plants were observed on Lake Wissota. These results are similar with past findings. Cornell and Old Abe flowages both showed a slight overall decrease in loosestrife infestation while Lake Holcombe experienced an increase.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) issued a letter on February 23, 2011 commenting on Licensee's 2010 Purple Loosestrife Report. In response to the significant increase in loosestrife on Lake Holcombe in 2010, the Commission directed Licensee to annually consult with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in an effort to enhance or modify its loosestrife control methods. Licensee consulted with said agencies via letter dated March 21, 2012 (Appendix B); however, neither agency responded with comments.

Beginning in 2010, Xcel Energy partnered with Beaver Creek Reserve to introduce purple loosestrife beetles into the main spillway of the Jim Falls Hydro Project. The beetles were introduced in early July at several locations in the spillway channel where loosestrife concentrations were greatest. Licensee and Beaver Creek Reserve partnered again in 2011 and introduced a second population of beetles into the spillway channel. Early results based on the past two years of monitoring show promise from these control efforts.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact Matthew Miller of this office by telephone at (715) 737-1353 or by electronic mail at matthew.j.miller@xcelenergy.com.

Sincerely,

William Zawacki
Director, Hydro Plants

Attacments

c: Nick Utrup - USFWS
Cheryl Laatsch – WDNR (via e-mail)
Brian Guthman - LHIA (via e-mail)
Jeanette Kelly – Beaver Creek Reserve (via e-mail)

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE ASSESSMENT – 2012

Dells Pond, Chippewa Falls Flowage, Lake Wissota, Old Abe Lake, Cornell Flowage, Lake Holcombe and Jim Falls Spillway Channel

Prepared for:

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October 12, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria* L.) is an erect, herbaceous perennial of Eurasian origin that became established in the estuaries of northeastern North America by the early 1800's. Since then, this highly invasive species has spread throughout much of the United States, including most of Wisconsin's counties. As purple loosestrife expands its local distribution and becomes more widespread, it poses a serious threat to native emergent vegetation in shallow-water marshes and shorelines by displacing native food and cover plants in the waterways.

As part of the 2001 Lower Chippewa River Settlement Agreement, Xcel Energy has agreed to monitor for the presence and spread of purple loosestrife at its six Lower Chippewa River hydroelectric projects. The surveys are to take place each year in the late summer when loosestrife blooms are easily detectable. Additionally, Xcel Energy has committed to treating any small clusters of pioneering plants which occur on company-owned lands with an approved aquatic herbicide.

In 2010, Xcel Energy partnered with Beaver Creek Reserve to introduce European beetles (*Galerucella calmariensis* and/or *Galerucella pusilla*) into the main spillway channel adjacent to the Jim Falls Hydro. Beetles were again introduced into the same area during the summer of 2011. The beetles are commonly referred to as "Cella" foliage beetles or purple loosestrife bio-control beetles and they feed specifically on purple loosestrife plants. Their use has shown to be successful at decreasing the overall population of purple loosestrife in certain areas. The locations and density of loosestrife within the Jim Falls spillway channel are therefore being mapped to determine the success of the beetle introduction.

METHODS

Following the same approach as previous surveys, an inspection of the entire shoreline of Dells Pond, Chippewa Falls Flowage, Lake Wissota, Old Abe Lake, Cornell Flowage and Lake Holcombe was performed by boat. The surveys were conducted between August 15 and September 15, 2012. The surveyor motored slowly around the shoreline looking for purple loosestrife plants. When loosestrife was discovered, the location was marked on a map and

coordinates were saved into a handheld GPS unit. Loosestrife infestations were classified as either "present" or "abundant" and marked on the map with a specific color. "Present" was defined as a few plants that sparsely inhabited the area but did not comprise a large percentage of the vegetation in that area. "Abundant" indicated that denser loosestrife growth existed and that the loosestrife made up a significant portion of the shoreline's overall vegetation.

By referencing the location of purple loosestrife plants with land ownership maps provided by Xcel Energy, the surveyor determined if the plants were on company-owned land. If the plants were on Xcel Energy land, and if it was only a minor infestation, the plants were sprayed with Rodeo® (an aquatic herbicide) from a backpack sprayer. Through past work, it has been determined that herbicide application can be used as an effective treatment for small loosestrife populations, however, it is much less effective at controlling larger infestations. If major infestations were noted on Xcel Energy land, they were not to be treated, but documented for the possibility of a different eradication method in the future.

Using the field maps, GPS coordinates, and notations made by the surveyor, the locations of purple loosestrife infestation were noted on field maps and catalogued in a spreadsheet. The locations were then digitized onto GIS basemaps (Wisconsin DNR 24K Hydrography version 6 and ESRI StreetMap USA). Locations of purple loosestrife are noted on the maps using green for present and red for abundant. Due to the scale of the maps, locations covering less than 20 feet of shoreline are denoted by a dot, while areas covering 20 feet of shoreline or more are denoted by a line drawn to scale. By using a combination of GPS, laser rangefinder, visual estimates, and GIS, the total distance of shoreline infested by purple loosestrife was calculated for each flowage (Table 1). Appendix A provides detailed information regarding each loosestrife location.

A purple loosestrife survey was also conducted in the Jim Falls spillway channel adjacent to the downstream powerhouse. This area has been known to contain purple loosestrife in locally large numbers which prompted the introduction of purple loosestrife bio-control beetles. A comprehensive mapping effort of the area was started in 2010 to monitor the spread of the loosestrife and the success of the beetle introduction. This portion of the task was completed on foot using GPS and maps to identify the locations and densities of loosestrife within the channel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of purple loosestrife locations and the total feet of shoreline infested are presented for each flowage in Table 1. 2009 was the first year where an effort was made to tabulate abundance and shoreline coverage so a direct comparison may be made from year-to-year. The three most recent years of survey are summarized below in Table 1. This year's survey revealed a general increase in purple loosestrife infestation on Holcombe Flowage, Cornell Flowage and Lake Wissota; while a slight decrease was observed on the Old Abe Flowage. Collectively, the amount of loosestrife infestation has increased since 2011, but not to the level of coverage seen in 2010 (Table 2). .

Table 1. Summary of Purple Loosestrife Infestations on Six Lower Chippewa River Hydroelectric Projects, 2010-2012

	Number of purple loosestrife locations						Shoreline Affected (ft)					
	Present			Abundant			Present			Abundant		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
Holcombe	115	106	135	2	2	1	1806	886	1134	160	145	137
Cornell	6	17	14	0	1	1	8	40	38	0	55	117
Old Abe	8	14	14	0	1	0	31	61	76	0	20	0
Wissota	1	4	8	0	0	0	1	14	20	0	0	0
Chippewa Falls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dells	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Total Purple Loosestrife Infestations on Six Lower Chippewa River Hydroelectric Projects, 2010-2012

	2010	2011	2012
Total number of loosetrife points at Impoundments	132	145	173
Total shoreline affected in Impoundments	2006	1221	1522

There was no purple loosestrife found on the Chippewa Falls Flowage or Dells Pond in 2012 which is consistent with the last three years of monitoring.

The number of purple loosestrife plants found on Lake Wissota has increased from four in 2011 to eight in 2012. These locations are all relatively minor infestations with one or two plant clumps at each site and all located on the upper portion of the flowage (see map of

Lake Wissota). Total shoreline affected on Lake Wissota has increased from 14 feet in 2011 to 20 feet in 2012.

Holcombe Flowage contained the most purple loosestrife among the six impoundments surveyed. 135 locations were noted as present and one location was noted as abundant (see Holcombe Flowage Map 1). While a few new plants were found during the survey, the majority of the infested areas have been noted in previous years. New infestation is generally associated with areas where the native vegetation has been disturbed. This disturbance can come from urbanization (clearing for home sites, swimming areas or fishing areas), road improvements, or erosion. It is also common to have plants grow only during select years. This may be the case on Holcombe Flowage, with new plants growing this year while other previously noted plants did not.

The majority of plants on Lake Holcombe were again found in the area on and around Pine Island and along Highway 27. Although a comparison to the 2011 surveys show a clear increase in the overall loosestrife populations in this area (see Holcombe Map 2); the level of loosestrife infestation is very similar to that noted in 2010. Several small infestations and one abundant location were again found just to the east of the State Highway 27 Bridge. This area also shows a slight increase from last year's survey. No purple loosestrife was found in Main Creek, Jump River, Pine Lake, or Cranberry Lake.

Several plant clumps were found scattered along the north and south shores of the main flowage (see Holcombe Maps 3 and 4) with many of these plants having been documented in the past. The large islands near the south shore of the main flowage contain several plants. Overall, there was a general increase in plant density in the main flowage area.

The upstream reach of the flowage (see Holcombe Maps 5 and 6) also contains a number of purple loosestrife plants that have been noted in past surveys. The overall plant density in these areas was similar to what was noted in 2011.

A total of approximately 1,271 feet of shoreline was found to contain purple loosestrife compared to 1,031 feet in 2011. A total of 137 feet was classified as abundant while the remaining 1,134 feet was classified as present. In 2011, 145 feet and 886 feet were reported as abundant and present, respectively.

Cornell Flowage was found to contain 14 small infestations of purple loosestrife classified as present and one location classified as abundant (see map of Cornell Flowage). A

number of these were new isolated locations that had not been noted in previous surveys. The one abundant location was found in a low lying area on an island just upstream from the State Highway 64 Bridge. While this location was classified as present in 2010, it has been classified as abundant in several previous surveys, including 2011. A total of 155 feet of shoreline was found to contain purple loosestrife in 2012, compared to 95 feet in 2011.

Fourteen areas of loosestrife infestation were found on Old Abe Lake (see map of Old Abe Flowage) all of which were classified as present. This represents a slight decrease in plant abundance from last year. Thirteen locations were noted in the upper reaches of the flowage and consisted of single plants or a few plant clumps, many of which had been noted in past surveys. One location near the downstream end of the flowage was noted again this year. The total amount of shoreline infested by purple loosestrife this year on Old Abe Lake is approximately 76 feet. This compares to 81 feet in 2011.

The minimum flow channel at Jim Falls Hydro remains an area of relatively high infestation despite a noticeable decrease in the number of plants documented this year (Table 3). Loosestrife was found scattered throughout the channel, with the lower third of the channel being moderately infested (see maps of Jim Falls Spillway Channel). The area of greatest concentration occurs in the area just upstream from the County Highway Y Bridge (see Jim Falls Spillway map 2). This area covers approximately 19,835 square feet (Table 4); however, the loosestrife is scattered throughout the area and therefore is not classified as abundant.

The number of loosestrife locations also decreased from 28 in 2011 to 19 this year. Collectively, these amounted to 52 feet of infested shoreline versus 381 feet in 2011. Each of these locations was comprised of small plant clumps covering between one and five feet of shoreline each. Two years have passed since the introduction of the bio-control beetles at Jim Falls and while it is too early to make a determination as to their success, the initial results are promising.

Table 3. Comparison of Purple Loosestrife Infestations in Jim Falls Spillway Channel – 2010 – 2012

	2010	2011	2012
Total number of loosestrife points at Jim Falls Spillway	12	28	19
Sq feet of Jim Falls Spillway infestation near Hwy Y	24,589	27,288	19,835
Total other shoreline affected at Jim Falls Spillway	687	381	52

Table 4. Summary of Purple Loosestrife Infestations in Jim Falls Spillway Channel – 2012

Map point	Abundant/ Present	Coverage type	Area covered	
JF 1	Present	Aerial	19,835	sq ft
JF 2	Present	Point	3	ft
JF 3	Present	Point	3	ft
JF 4	Present	Point	4	ft
JF 5	Present	Point	3	ft
JF 6	Present	Point	4	ft
JF 7	Present	Point	5	ft
JF 8	Present	Point	3	ft
JF 9	Present	Point	2	ft
JF 10	Present	Point	1	ft
JF 11	Present	Point	4	ft
JF 12	Present	Point	4	ft
JF 13	Present	Point	5	ft
JF 14	Present	Point	3	ft
JF 15	Present	Point	1	ft
JF 16	Present	Point	2	ft
JF 17	Present	Point	2	ft
JF 18	Present	Point	1	ft
JF 19	Present	Point	2	ft

Wissota Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

150Th
175Th
165Th
Y
Old Barry
152Nd
150Th
185Th
181St
184Th
145Th
183Rd
145Th
147Th
Cr
Old Abe
182Nd
178
195Th
Oak
W1
W2
Riverside
190Th
W3
Short
W4
W5
198Th St
185Th
195Th
135Th
188Th
Sunneyview
132Nd
W6
130Th
130Th
Ramp
188Th
160Th
128Th
189Th
W7
195Th
125Th
180Th
125Th
170Th
121St
121Th
122Nd
120Th
120Th
188Th
122Nd
W8
115Th
161St
110Th
159Th
170Th
175Th
197Th
105Th
S
105Th
165Th
Fox
170Th
98Th
R View
O
96Th
95Th
167Th
168Th
95Th
95Th
190Th

Legend

Loosestrife Present

2,000 1,000 0 2,000 Feet

N

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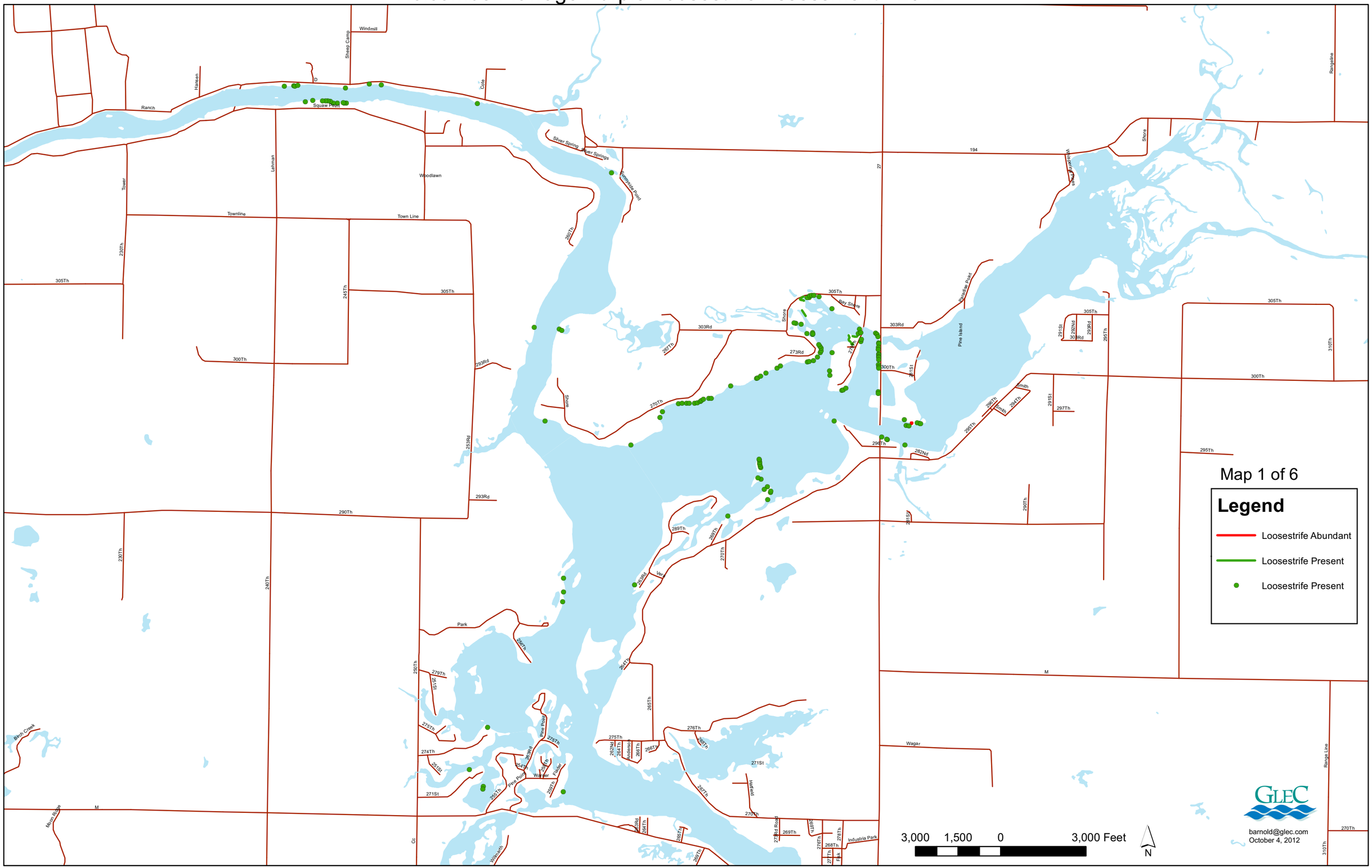
September 27, 2012

Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012



Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

Map 2 of 6

Legend

- Loosestrife Abundant
- Loosestrife Present
- Loosestrife Present

305Th
Bay Shore
Florence
27
Shore
303Rd
301St
279Th
281St
300Th
296Th
295Th
282Nd
273Rd

H74 H73 H75 H76 H72 H70 H71 H77 H67 H65 H64 H66 H68 H63 H69 H62 H78 H79 H91 H92 H93 H94 H81 H80 H90 H89 H95 H96 H97 H98 H82 H61 H60 H59 H58 H57 H83 H99 H100 H101 H102 H103 H56 H55 H53 H54 H104 H105 H106 H84 H85 H88 H86 H87 H107 H108 H109 H112 H113 H115 H110 H111 H114 H120 H119 H118 H117 H116

500 250 0 500 Feet

N

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September 27, 2012

Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

Map 3 of 6

Legend

Loosestrife Present

267Th
270Th
273Rd
263Rd
289Th
269Th
295Th
290Th
270Th

H52
H51
H50
H49
H47
H48
H46
H43
H45
H44
H41
H42
H35
H36
H37
H39
H38
H40
H34
H33
H133
H132
H131
H130
H129
H128
H127
H126
H124
H125
H123
H122
H121
H134

500 250 0 500 Feet

N

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September 27, 2012

Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

650 325 0 650 Feet

N

Map 4 of 6

Legend

Loosestrife Present

H7
H135
H6
H5
H4
H3
H1
H2
H136

Park
256Th
265Th
264Th
Pine Point
275Th
274Th
262Nd
264Th
Anderson
266Th
254Th
263Rd
257Th
258Th
Wright
Warner
Skidmore
Flader
259Th
271St
255Th
M

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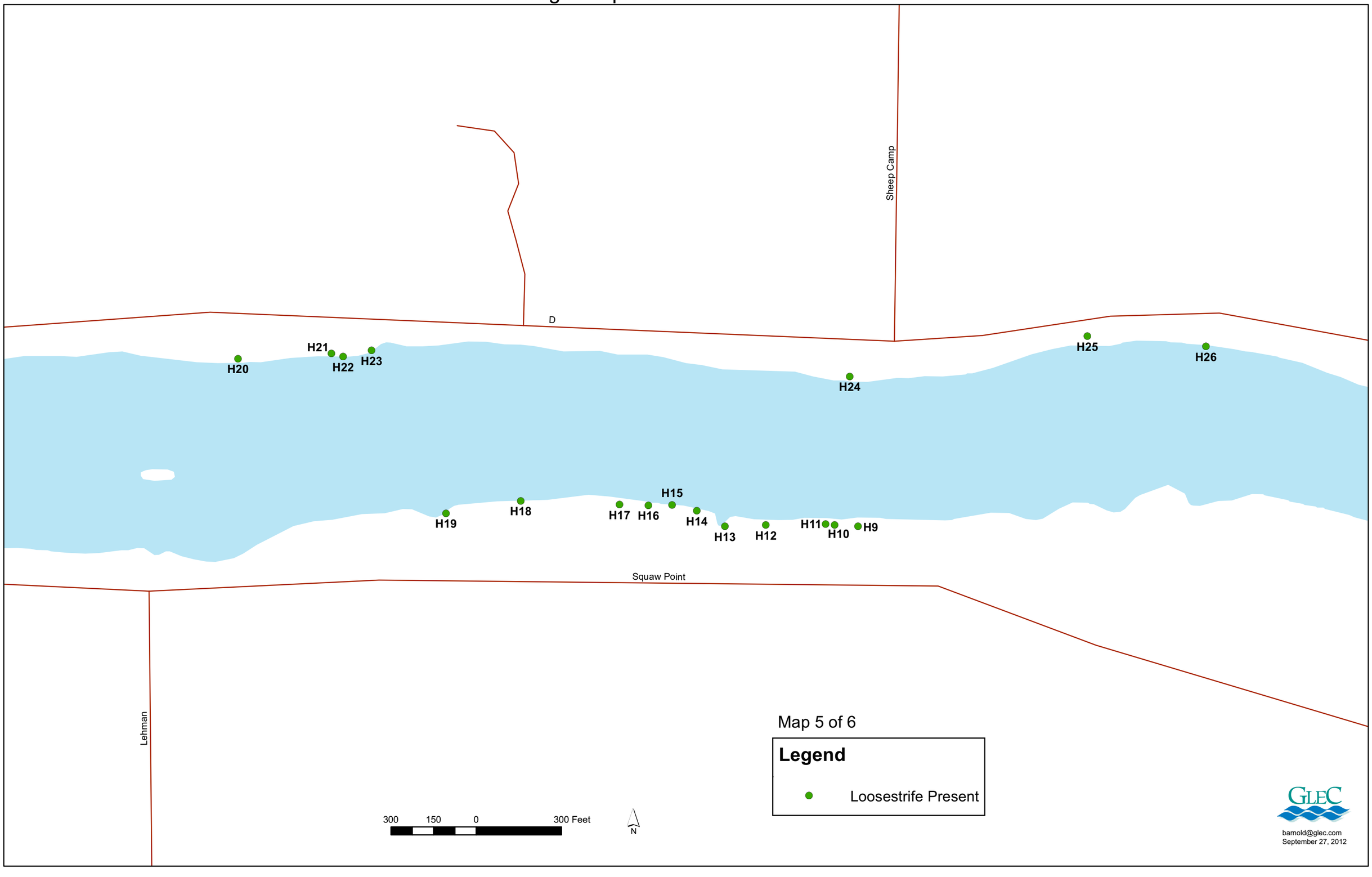
October 4, 2012

Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012



Map 5 of 6

Legend

Loosestrife Present

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September 27, 2012

Holcombe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

Cote
D
Woodlawn
Silver Spring
Silver Springs
Sunnyside Point
Squaw Point
Town Line
260Th
253Rd
305Th
293Rd
Shore
270Th

H27
H28
H8
H29
H30
H31
H32

Map 6 of 6

Legend

Loosestrife Present

800 400 0 800 Feet

N

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September 27, 2012

Cornell Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

240Th
239Th
Cc
C9
C10
C11
Brunet Island State
255Th
C12
C13
C14
C15
Brunet Island State
Brunet Island State
Ridgewood
Anchor
Adrian
Mcintyre
Park
Industrial Park
Moen
Bay
Z
C8
C1
Riverside
C7
C6
Osborne
2Nd
Thomas
Main
Ripley
1St
Bridge
C5
C4
C3
C2
Bridge 64
Bates
Spring
3Rd
Pine Point
27
3Rd

Legend

- Loosestrife Abundant
- Loosestrife Present

800 400 0 800 Feet

N

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October 4, 2012

Old Abe Flowage Purple Loosestrife Assessment - 2012

OA1
OA2
OA3
OA4
OA5
OA6
OA7
OA8
OA9
OA10
OA11
OA12
OA13
OA14

Legend

Loosestrife Present

2,500 1,250 0 2,500 Feet

N

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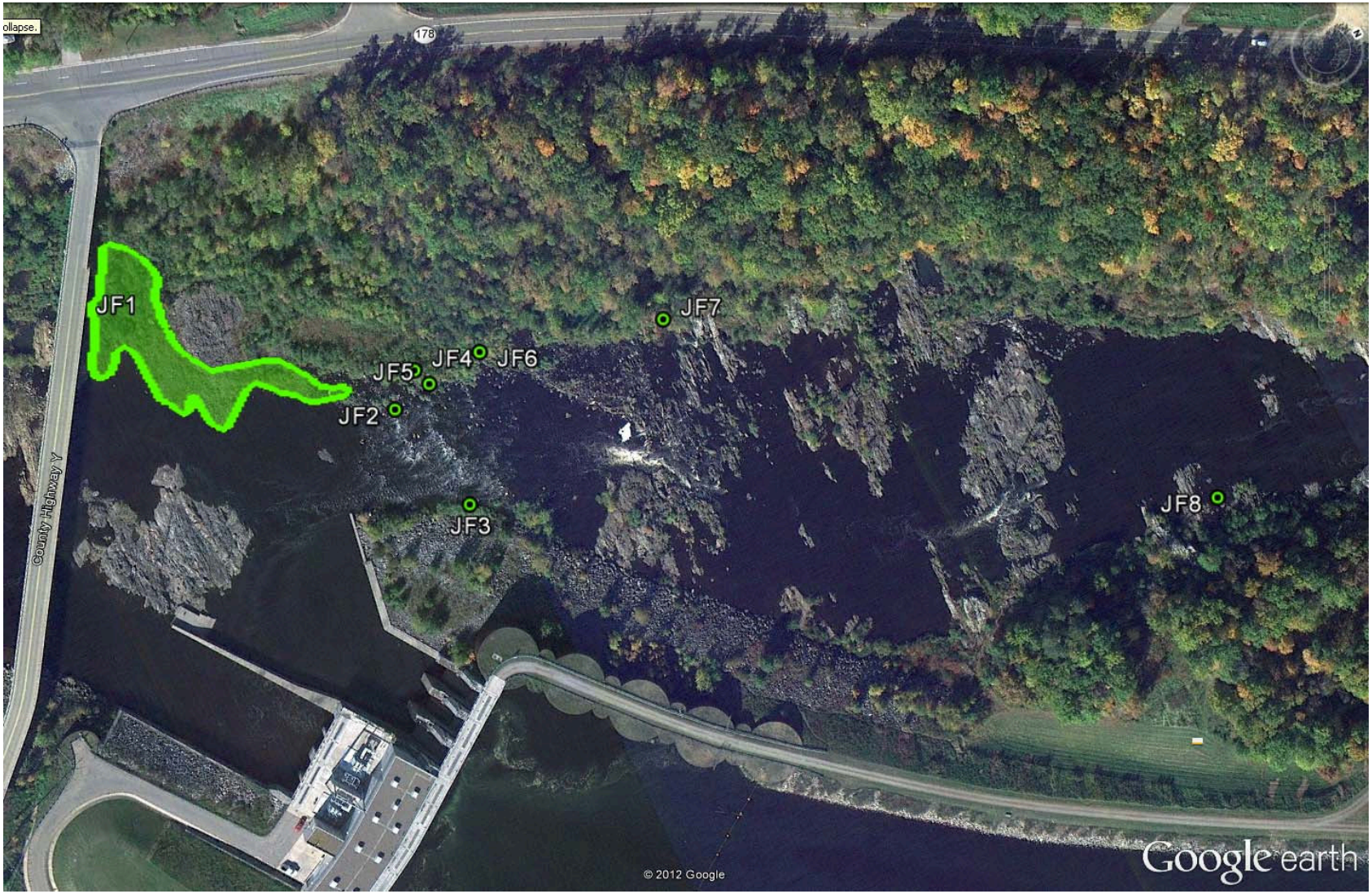
September 27, 2012

Jim Falls Spillway Channel Purple Loosestrife Assessment – 2012 (Map 1 of 4)

Jim Falls Spillway Channel Purple Loosestrife Assessment – 2012 (Map 2 of 4)



Jim Falls Spillway Channel Purple Loosestrife Assessment – 2012 (Map 3 of 4)

Jim Falls Spillway Channel Purple Loosestrife Assessment – 2012 (Map 4 of 4)

Appendix A

Catalog of Purple Loosestrife Locations at Six Lower Chippewa River Hydro Projects

2012

NSP PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE LOCATIONS
2012
HOLCOMBE FLOWAGE

Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)	Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)
H1	Present	Multiple	3	H69	Present	Single	2
H2	Present	Multiple	6	H70	Present	Multiple	25
H3	Present	Single	4	H71	Present	Multiple	304
H4	Present	Single	2	H72	Present	Multiple	4
H5	Present	Multiple	6	H73	Present	Single	1
H6	Present	Multiple	10	H74	Present	Multiple	20
H7	Present	Multiple	3	H75	Present	Multiple	5
H8	Present	Single	3	H76	Present	Multiple	6
H9	Present	Multiple	5	H77	Present	Single	3
H10	Present	Single	2	H78	Present	Single	3
H11	Present	Multiple	7	H79	Present	Single	1
H12	Present	Multiple	3	H80	Present	Multiple	45
H13	Present	Multiple	6	H81	Present	Multiple	50
H14	Present	Single	3	H82	Present	Multiple	10
H15	Present	Single	3	H83	Present	Single	3
H16	Present	Multiple	4	H84	Present	Single	3
H17	Present	Single	2	H85	Present	Single	2
H18	Present	Single	3	H86	Present	Single	1
H19	Present	Single	2	H87	Present	Single	4
H20	Present	Multiple	8	H88	Present	Single	2
H21	Present	Single	3	H89	Present	Multiple	18
H22	Present	Single	2	H90	Present	Multiple	5
H23	Present	Single	1	H91	Present	Single	3
H24	Present	Single	2	H92	Present	Multiple	7
H25	Present	Single	1	H93	Present	Multiple	5
H26	Present	Single	1	H94	Present	Multiple	15
H27	Present	Single	1	H95	Present	Single	4
H28	Present	Single	3	H96	Present	Single	3
H29	Present	Single	1	H97	Present	Single	3
H30	Present	Single	1	H98	Present	Single	3
H31	Present	Single	3	H99	Present	Multiple	6
H32	Present	Multiple	2	H100	Present	Single	4
H33	Present	Single	1	H101	Present	Multiple	4
H34	Present	Single	1	H102	Present	Multiple	2
H35	Present	Single	1	H103	Present	Multiple	6
H36	Present	Single	2	H104	Present	Single	3
H37	Present	Single	1	H105	Present	Multiple	8
H38	Present	Single	2	H106	Present	Single	3
H39	Present	Single	1	H107	Present	Single	3
H40	Present	Multiple	4	H108	Present	Single	1
H41	Present	Multiple	6	H109	Present	Multiple	6
H42	Present	Single	1	H110	Present	Multiple	4
H43	Present	Single	2	H111	Present	Multiple	11
H44	Present	Single	1	H112	Abundant	Multiple	137
H45	Present	Single	3	H113	Present	Multiple	6
H46	Present	Multiple	3	H114	Present	Single	4
H47	Present	Single	1	H115	Present	Single	2
H48	Present	Single	2	H116	Present	Single	2
H49	Present	Multiple	3	H117	Present	Single	1

NSP PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE LOCATIONS
2012
HOLCOMBE FLOWAGE

Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)	Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)
H50	Present	Single	2	H118	Present	Single	2
H51	Present	Single	3	H119	Present	Single	4
H52	Present	Multiple	4	H120	Present	Single	1
H53	Present	Multiple	3	H121	Present	Single	1
H54	Present	Multiple	9	H122	Present	Single	3
H55	Present	Single	1	H123	Present	Single	1
H56	Present	Multiple	7	H124	Present	Single	2
H57	Present	Multiple	10	H125	Present	Single	2
H58	Present	Multiple	4	H126	Present	Single	1
H59	Present	Multiple	5	H127	Present	Single	1
H60	Present	Single	3	H128	Present	Multiple	5
H61	Present	Single	1	H129	Present	Multiple	6
H62	Present	Multiple	4	H130	Present	Single	1
H63	Present	Single	2	H131	Present	Multiple	4
H64	Present	Multiple	6	H132	Present	Single	1
H65	Present	Multiple	5	H133	Present	Multiple	4
H66	Present	Single	2	H134	Present	Single	2
H67	Present	Multiple	235	H135	Present	Single	3
H68	Present	Single	3	H136	Present	Multiple	4

NSP PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE LOCATIONS
2012
LAKE WISSOTA

Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)
W1	**Present**	Multiple	5
W2	**Present**	Single	2
W3	**Present**	Single	3
W4	**Present**	Single	2
W5	**Present**	Single	1
W6	**Present**	Single	2
W7	**Present**	Single	3
W8	**Present**	Single	2

NSP PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE LOCATIONS
2012
OLD ABE FLOWAGE

Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)
OA1	**Present**	Multiple	8
OA2	**Present**	Multiple	8
OA3	**Present**	Multiple	3
OA4	**Present**	Single	2
OA5	**Present**	Single	3
OA6	**Present**	Single	2
OA7	**Present**	Multiple	7
OA8	**Present**	Multiple	15
OA9	**Present**	Multiple	9
OA10	**Present**	Multiple	8
OA11	**Present**	Single	1
OA12	**Present**	Multiple	3
OA13	**Present**	Multiple	5
OA14	**Present**	Single	2

NSP PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE LOCATIONS
2012
CORNELL FLOWAGE

Location #	Degree of Infestation	Single / Multiple	Coverage (ft)
C1	Present	Single	3
C2	Present	Single	2
C3	Present	Single	3
C4	Present	Single	2
C5	Present	Single	3
C6	Abundant	Multiple	117
C7	Present	Single	2
C8	Present	Single	3
C9	Present	Single	1
C10	Present	Single	2
C11	Present	Single	3
C12	Present	Single	3
C13	Present	Single	2
C14	Present	Multiple	4
C15	Present	Single	5

Appendix B

Agency Consultation

1414 West Hamilton Avenue
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008

March 21, 2012

Mr. Brock Woods
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
2801 Progress Road
Madison, WI 53716

Mr. Nick Utrup
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
2661 Scott Tower Drive
New Franken, WI 54229-9565

Dear Mr. Woods and Mr. Utrup:

Xcel Energy annually monitors for purple loosestrife at its six lower Chippewa River hydro projects. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) reviewed our 2011 purple loosestrife report and recommended that we consult annually with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to discuss possible additional control methods.

Xcel Energy has cooperated in the past with the Lake Holcombe Improvement Association (LHIA) to stock loosestrife beetles on Lake Holcombe. According to Mr. Brian Guthman, LHIA member & loosestrife coordinator, loosestrife beetles were stocked from 1991-2004. The population remains viable and Mr. Guthman indicated in 2011 that no further stocking was warranted. Mr. Guthman continues to remain active in purple loosestrife control on Lake Holcombe and he or another member of the LHIA verifies the beetle population each year. We agree with Mr. Guthman that the wet summer of 2010, following years of extreme drought, provided optimal germination conditions for new loosestrife plants and may help explain the 2010 resurgence in loosestrife.

In 2010, Xcel Energy partnered with Beaver Creek Reserve to introduce loosestrife beetles into the minimum flow channel at our Jim Falls Hydro Project. The goal was to reduce the concentration of loosestrife plants in an effort to prevent the infestation of Lake Wissota immediately downstream. Extremely high river flows throughout 2010 may have thwarted our attempts at a successful introduction in 2010 and so beetles were again introduced in 2011. Future monitoring will attempt to evaluate the long-term success of this effort.

Our 2011 loosestrife monitoring report showed a marked decrease in loosestrife at Holcombe Flowage and only a slight increase at Cornell Flowage, Old Abe Flowage and Lake Wissota. Dells Pond and Chippewa Falls Flowage continue to remain free from infestation. Based on these results and our current loosestrife beetle efforts, we feel our current monitoring and control measures are sufficient at this time.

Please review the enclosed FERC letter at your convenience and provide me with any recommendations you may have concerning additional loosestrife control methods. I've also enclosed a copy of our 2011 monitoring report for your convenience.

If you have any questions, you may contact me by telephone at 715-737-1353 or by electronic mail at matthew.j.miller@xcelenergy.com.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Miller

Matthew J. Miller
Hydro Licensing Specialist

Enclosures

c: Mr. Brian Guthman – Lake Holcombe Improvement Association (via email)
General Project Files

Document Content(s)