**Southwest Badger RC&D**

**Aquatic Invasive Species Project (Southern Region)**

**AIS Control Grant #AEPP-486-16**



**3rd Qtr and FINAL Grant Report 2016-2017**

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Following is a list of deliverables taken directly from the AEPP-486-16 grant proposal/contract and the progress that has been made to date on each.

Deliverables that are in progress but require adjusted deadlines are highlighted in yellow.

**1a. Convene Stakeholders and develop criteria for prioritization and choose a watershed to focus on.**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* July 26, 2016 - A Stakeholder meeting was held at Lafayette County conference room, Darlington, WI.
  + July 26, 2016 - Representatives from SW Badger RC&D, Green County and Lafayette County were in attendance.
  + July 26, 2016 - Criteria were developed with input from the group to decide on what watershed was highest priority. See Table 1 below.
  + July 26, 2016 - The West Branch of the Pecatonica was chosen as the watershed for prioritization. Discussions among the attendees resulted in the prioritization of invasives to be targeted which included Japanese Hops, smaller populations of Japanese Knotweed, and prevention of Phragmites.
* Compile AIS information from each stakeholder and shared with each partner.
  + July 26, 2016 - Table represents a compilation of known information about priority watersheds in each county.

Table 1 – Criteria and Ranking to Prioritize Watersheds

1 = lowest, 5 = highest concern

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | E. Br. Pec  Iowa/Laf./Green | Lower W.  Pec.  Iowa/Laf./Green | Mineral Pt. Branch  Iowa Co | Hefty/  Little Sugar  Green Co | Fever/  Galena  Grant Co | Platte River  Grant Co |
| 1. Current condition of water body | Impaired  2 | Impaired  2 | Impaired  2 | OWR  5 | OWR  5 | 1 |
| 2. Presence/absence of AIS | Knotweed, Hops, CLP, Rusty Crayfish  2 | Japanese Hop and Japanese Knotweed, CLP,  Rusty Crayfish Multiple Locations  5 | Rusty Crayfish CLP (low Priority)  1 | CLP, StarHead (Low/High Priority)  3 | CLP  (Low Priority)  1 | EW, CLP  (Low  Priority)  1 |
| 3. Size & number of populations | 1 | 3 | Low Priority  1 | Low Priority  1 | Low Priority  1 | High Priority but Issues  1 |
| 4. Ability to make noticeable impact | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. Amount of harm being done | 1 | 2 – 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 6. Adjacency to a unique natural area | 3 | Pecatonica Woods, Yellowstone Lake, Other  4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Significant public access | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8. Presence of listed, NHI, endangered, threatened | Blanchard’s Cricket, Threatened plants, Threatened, Mussels 3 | Russian Turtle, Mad Tom Catfish  3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 9. Availability of volunteers/co staff | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 10. Cost Effectiveness | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 11. Other missions aligned | Pecatonica Pride, Friends of Yellowstone  3 | SWGSCA, Pecatonica, Pride, Lafayette Cty, Farmers  5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Friends of the Platte  2 |
| 12. Notes | Hops Prohibited Iowa County | Hops prohibited Laf, Iowa, Green co.s | Low Priority Species | Low Priority Species | Low Priority Species | Success of project |
| TOTAL POINTS | 22 | 38 | 16 | 21 | 19 | 15 |

**1b. Facilitate stakeholder development of AIS Control Plan and Submit to DNR for approval**

* November 22, 2016 - A second stakeholder meeting was held to seek input from stakeholders in order to further develop a strategy for managing the targeted AIS in the West Branch of the Pecatonica.
* Create comprehensive maps of presence/absence of AIS
  + 2016 - Conducted surveillance where AIS presence data was not available.
  + 2016 - Recorded Latitude Longitude of site locations of Japanese Hop and Japanese Knotweed and will be updating a map.
* June 15, 2017 - Ninety two landowners on the West Branch of the Pecatonica were contacted via mail with Watershed Plan information and AIS species of concern in the watershed and on some landowner properties.
* June 27, 2017 - A third stakeholder meeting was conducted on June 27th. In attendance were representatives from Lafayette County Land and Water and private citizens from Lafayette and Green Counties.
  + Watershed plan and specifics were presented in the form of a power point presentation. Stakeholders in attendance provided input and responded with enthusiasm.
  + Stakeholder memorandum of agreements: TBD
* Develop a Friends Group and a diversified funding plan to accompany the AIS Mgmt Plan -
  + We are collaborating with several groups in order to develop a support group. The Pecatonica Pride, the Argyle Rod & Gun Club and the Gratiot Conservation Club (which contacted SW Badger after the mass mailings to landowners) that are willing to support the efforts necessary for this watershed project. Discussions taking place with similar Friends Groups (Friends of the Yellowstone Lake) and (Friends of the Pecatonica River-Illinois) in an effort to solicit their support and a unified effort.
* Gather signed landowner pledges to provide resources to work toward implementation of approved plan - TBD
* A Rapid Response Grant for the City of Monroe, Green County, will be submitted in January of 2018.
* The AIS Management Plan for the West Branch of the Pecatonica was submitted to the Wisconsin DNR for review in December of 2017.
* The Stakeholder memorandum of agreements to provide resources and commitment to the management plan are in process and will be completed in 2018, after the 2017-2018 AIS South Grant is approved.

**1c. Promote targeted watershed and associated AIS Control Plan**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* Plan and host two guided paddle events:
  + August 2, 2016 - The first Paddle Event was titled “Like the Lake” held at Yellowstone Lake. Unfortunately, it was a rainy day and only 4 individuals attended.
  + May 27, 2017 - A second Paddle event was held on May 27th on the Pecatonica River. This event was attended by 15 individuals from Iowa, Lafayette and Green Counties. The second paddle event was very successful in terms of making connections, training individuals to identify invasive species and creating concern for the Pecatonica watershed.
* Conduct 3 drain campaigns:
  + Three Drain Campaigns were carried out on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day Weekends in 2016.
  + AIS brochures and information that contained the “Drain” message were carried out during watercraft inspections at Lake Beckman (Cadiz Springs), Yellowstone Lake, Blackhawk Lake, Cox Hollow Lake, Twin Valley Lake and the Wisconsin River (Boscobel).
  + Two additional Drain Campaigns were carried out on Memorial Day Weekend (May 29, 2017 on Governor Dodge State Park and Blackhawk Lake through CBCW grant funding and SW Badger directed volunteers.
  + People Contacted and Watercraft inspected are listed in SWIMS data base. This task tracked and paid for outside this grant.
* Plan and conduct two 4th of July Landing Blitz’s.
  + The Landing Blitz’s were completed on July 4th weekend 2016 and July 4 weekend 2017. Southwest Badger carried out six (6) Landing Blitz’s including the landings at Lake Beckman, Yellowstone Lake, Blackhawk Lake, Cox Hollow Lake, Twin Valley Lake and Lake Wisconsin (Moon Valley).
* Plan and conduct two group checks with DNR wardens (staff):
  + Sept 5, 2016 - A group check was conducted by on Labor Day Weekend and the opening of waterfowl hunting. The group check included members of the WDNR warden staff, WDNR water-guards, and volunteers from Kiwanis Organizations. Inspections and enforcement was carried out by Southwest Badger staff (AIS violations were reported as part of the group check), WDNR Law Enforcement Staff Samantha Olson, DNR Conservation Supervisor Joe Frost and others.
  + June 30, 2017 - A second group check was conducted by representatives from the WDNR assisted SW Badger at area boat landings (Blackhawk Lake, Gov Dodge Lake, Yellowstone Lake) and near the Pecatonica River. Group check participants included Nick Webster, Nate Degross, John Arthur and Yellowstone Ranger staff and Don Barrette.

**1d. Begin Implementation of DNR approved AIS Control Plan by identifying and gathering agreements from property owners adjacent to the watershed and conducting removal demonstrations.**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* Create list/map of watershed property owners:
  + The list of property owners who own property on the West Branch of the Pecatonica River has been recorded and each landowner was mailed information regarding the watershed plan and AIS best management practices. Also included was a press release for the third stakeholder meeting with an agenda that included approval of a management plan by landowners.
  + June 29, 2017 - Mapping of the watershed with landowner parcels and presence or absence of Japanese Hop/Japanese Knotweed was completed with assistance from Laurie Aulik and Terry Loeffelholz Lafayette County Land and Water Department.
* Develop messaging to be mailed to property owners regarding the AIS Control Plan-
  + June 15th, 2017 – Letters were send to landowners, and a press release
  + June & July 2017 - Follow up phone calls and/or visits were conducted with landowners to discuss upcoming AIS Control Work
* Plan and host 1 to 3 Weed Out events as removal demonstrations

These Weed Out events used Best Management Practices to control AIS populations in the targeted watershed per the DNR approved AIS Control Plan.

* + March 27, 2017 Weed in Green County Phragmites control work attended by SW Badger, Green County Land and Water Staff, Private Landowner.
  + April 28th, 2017 Weed Out with Green County staff in Monticello on Phragmites and Japanese Knotweed populations. (4 adults)
  + May 30th, 2017 Weed Out at Yellowstone Lake with Green County staff: Dig Purple 60+Loosestrife for raising of Biocontrol beetles to rerelease in the region. (4 adults)

**2a. Teach Project Red to students and environmental groups 300 students and 200 citizens (500 Total) and begin monitoring and entering data into DNR SWIMS database.**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* SW Badger has been working with multiple groups on AIS collaboration for training on Project Red through the use of Power Point presentations, AIS brochures, handouts and communications. Project Red methods such as identification, reporting and vouchering are presented at all events.
* SW Badger trained **over 600 students and citizens** to date about AIS Prevention including the following events/dates:
  + July 8, 2016 - Training SW Badger Council and staff outing in Boscobel (12 individuals)
  + July 13th-July 17th 2016- Training at Lafayette County Fair (Approx. 30 Adults & 30 youth)
  + August 23rd , 2016 - Training Carl’s Paddlin’ Shop (3 Individuals)
  + Training Private Landowners: September 1st Lafayette County (2 Individuals)-October 6th Green County (5 Individuals)-October 25th Green County (3 Individuals)-December 9th Green County (3 Individuals)
  + August 6th 2016 - Training Professional Staff: Dane County K & A Greenhouse/Nursery (10 Individuals)
  + October 7th 2016 - Green County Youth Conservation Days Monroe Wisconsin (90 Students, 10 adults)
  + December 15th 2016 - Darlington Elementary School (75 Students, 5 Adults)
  + November 17th 2016 - Cassville Elementary School (85 students, 4 Adults)
  + February 3rd,  2017 - Association events: Lower Sugar River Project Exhibit Green County (Approx. 30 citizens)
  + February 4th 2017 - Outdoor Skills Fair Workshop Grant County (30+ citizens at the workshop and 50+ citizens which includes adults and teenagers throughout the day)
  + February 8, 2017 - Grant County Sheriff's workshop and AIS training (32 Deputies)
  + February 10th, 2017 - Take A Break outreach and AIS trainings with K & A Greenhouse and staff. (10 adults)
  + February 16th, 2017 - AIS training and identification for Green County Land and Water staff (4 adults)
  + March 14, 2017 - AIS Workshop and training Lafayette County Highway Department in Belmont (82 adults).
  + March 27th, 2017 - Take a Break Training and AIS discussions with Rock Construction Monroe Wisconsin (5 Construction Staff)
  + April 4th, 2017 - AIS Ethics Presentation UW-Baraboo (10 Students)
  + April 14th, 2017 - Take a Break on site in Dane County Six Mile Creek Gollons Bait & Fish Farm (4 Adults)
  + April 24th, 2017 Green County Highway Department Training in Monroe Wisconsin. (40 Dept staff)
  + May 5th, 2017 Youth Conservation Green County presentations and student training. (165 students and 15 adults)

**2b. Act as Rapid Response Liaison for WI DNR to install AIS signs, monitoring, vouchering, communicating, etc. Work has been underway throughout the fall and winter of 2016 to replace AIS signs at Boat Landings when needed.**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* At least 8 new or replacement AIS signs were installed –
* A minimum of 10 bridge crossings will be monitored throughout the region –
  + Sept 2016 - AIS Monitoring was completed at 20+ bridge crossings (on or near the Pecatonica). The sites were part of The Pecatonica River watershed work in Iowa, Lafayette, and Green Counties.
* January-June 2017: Additional meetings and discussions with the Lower Sugar River Watershed Association and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association collaborated on wash station placemen and press releases, New Zealand Mudsnail Article information and future grant work for New Zealand Mudsnail work in Dane County.

**2c. Recruit and Train 4+ Rapid Response Crews and ready to be deployed**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* To date SW Badger has worked with multiple organizations to train them on aquatic invasive species identification and control.
* Organizations that have agreed to participate in being a Rapid Response Crew and have had AIS project training include Green County Land and Water Conservation, Lower Sugar River Watershed Association, Friends of The Platte River, Applied Ecological Services, Lafayette County Land and Water Conservation, Pecatonica Pride. We will be looking to add Iowa County Land and Water Conservation and we have garnered support from additional Highway Departments as mentioned in 3b.

**3b. Assist county and town road crews in developing Smart Mowing Plans: Educate 6+ road crews about smart mowing, 3 road crews to integrate principals into their schedules.**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* + August 31, 2016 - Presented to Iowa County Township Meeting on, reaching 6 different township officials
  + March 14, 2017 - AIS Workshop and training Lafayette County Highway Department in Belmont (82 Dept staff, 10 Road Crews).
  + April 24th, 2017 - Green County Highway Department Training in Monroe Wisconsin. (40 Dept staff, 15 Road Crews)

**3c. Deliver Take-a-Break trainings to 3 or more companies**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* Take a Break Trainings were offered as a method to increase awareness about invasive species prevention and transfer to the Nursery Trade Industry, General Contractors, Bait Dealers, Ag Businesses and other organizations actively involved in work that could impact native species.
  + February 10th, 2017 - Take A Break outreach and AIS trainings with K & A Greenhouse and staff. (10 adults)
  + March 27th, 2017 - Take a Break Training and AIS discussions with Rock Construction Monroe Wisconsin (5 Construction Staff)
  + April 14th, 2017 Take a Break on site in Dane County Six Mile Creek Gollon Bait & Fish Farm (4 Adults)

Listing of other bait dealers that were trained during the grant timeframe:

Iowa County:

Spring Green Mobil

Jumpin Jupiter

Kate’s Bait

Mt T’s (gas station/bait dealer)

R&A Bait

Sauk County:

Moon Valley Resort Bait Shop

Wilderness Fish and Game

Mobil Gas Station

Sauk Prairie Bait and Tackle

Lafayette County:

Chalet Bait Shop (Yellowstone Lake)

Erder Hardware (Blanchardville)

**3d. Educate boaters/provide 400 hours of CBCW events**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* CBCW inspections were initiated at 5 locations in the south region in 2016.
* Boscobel Boat Landing (Grant County) 123 Boats inspected, 263 people contacted, 216 hours spent at landing.
* Yellowstone Lake (Lafayette County) 340 boats inspected, 943 people contacted, 213 hours spent at landing.
* Blackhawk Lake and Cox Hollow Lake (Iowa County) 1,101 Boats inspected, 2,112 People contacted, 419 hours spent between the two landings.
* Cadiz Springs Lake (Green County) 177 Boats inspected, 348 People contacted, 222 Hours spent at landing.
* May 2017-June 2017: Continuous watercraft inspections are being conducted at Blackhawk Lake, Cox Hollow Lake and Lake Wisconsin with CBCW grant funding.

**3e. Present AIS findings to 3+ AIS Groups**

**This activity, and its associated deliverables, was completed in the grant timeframe.**

* AIS Findings have been shared with multiple agencies throughout the grant period and include the following:
  + July 1, 2016 - Green County Land & Water Conservation dept. staff
  + July 8, 2016 - SW Badger Council members representing all counties
  + July 14, 2016 - Grant County Land & Water Conservation Council members and staff
  + August 6, 2016 - Lafayette County Land and Water Conservation Dept. staff
  + August 30, 2016 Partner meeting Lower Sugar River Watershed Association & Green County staff
  + October 10, 2016 - Iowa County Township Meeting
  + December 2, 2016 - Friends of the Lower Wisconsin (FLOW)
  + December 19, 2016 - Dane County Staff
  + June 27th, 2017 - Lafayette County Land and Water Department

**4a. Educate public on New Zealand Mud Snail (400+ people)**

* Education of the general public for this category comes in three forms: Events, NZMS signage and Articles/Press Releases through media outlets.
* Southwest Badger has presented information about the introduction of New Zealand Mudsnail at Black Earth Creek and Badger Mill Creek in over 10 events.
* SW Badger has installed 3 NZMS signs on Badger Mill Creek (Dec 2,3, 2016). SW Badger is part of the WI DNR-led NZMS rapid response group in 2018. Additional signs and boot wash stations will be installed as part of this initiative.
* Additionally 10 AIS Boat signs were checked in the south region for replacement needs in 2016-2017 while survey work was performed.(September14,15,16, 2016)
* SW Badger completed and distributed 4 NZMS articles to its media outlets as well as Lafayette and Grant County Land and Water Dept. news outlets, and SW Badger RC&D’s newsletter. AIS press releases have covered a variety of AIS issues such as New Zealand Mudsnail discoveries, Holiday weekend reminders, Fishing season openers, Invader Crusader regional award recipient, stakeholder meeting announcements, Weed Out events and other AIS updates.
  + 8/16/16 – AIS Paddle Event “Like the Lake” released
  + 9/20/16 – New Zealand Mud Snail Article released
  + 11/15/16 - New Zealand Mud Snail Article released
  + 5/15/17 - New Zealand Mud Snail article released
  + 5/18/17 - AIS Paddle Event “Pecatonica Paddle & Learn” article released
  + 6/29/17- New Zealand Mud snail article released

**Lessons Learned**

Ensuring that we have solid support from each of the County Land Conservation Departments in the counties that we serve is an important component in support of our work and our activities. We want to ensure that county staff is supportive of what we are doing in their counties so that we know they will provide assistance when needed, and so that we know we are filling the niches or gaps that they cannot. Following are comments from counties contacted in December, 2017, by Jeff Jackson. Iowa County is not included, as his initial meeting with Iowa County is scheduled for January 9, 2018.

Western Dane County-

In 2018, Dane County would like SW Badger’s help with control efforts for Japanese hops, Japanese knotweed, and phragmites. They have an active roster of volunteers, but they welcome help organizing and publicizing events. SW Badger is preparing plans for work days and workshops in western Dane County in 2018. One of these will be a “Snapshot Day” focused on Japanese hops in a western watershed.

They would also appreciate monthly AIS articles that they will include in their newsletters. The first one has been delivered to them and will be included in their January 2018 newsletter.

Grant County-

They are discouraged by the infestation of Japanese hops in the county, and would prefer that SW Badger not focus on what they believe is a lost battle. Instead, they would like SW Badger to choose a different species to focus control efforts on. We are currently deciding which AIS will be a good focus species for our efforts in Grant County—species with a minimal presence that could be controlled.

They support our plan to host a paddle event on the Grant or Platte River in 2018. The paddle event will focus on the target species identified as focus species for the county.

It is important to them that we have a booth at their county fair in 2018. They also requested that we continue our support and involvement with SWISC (Southwest Invasive Species Coalition).

They would also appreciate monthly AIS articles that they will publish in the local newspaper. The January 2018 article has been provided to them for review.

Green County-

They are satisfied with the results of our mutual project raising beetles to control purple loosestrife. They requested our help again in 2018 with this project.

They requested AIS presentations in 2018 with the Green County Conservation League, and two TU chapters. Along with these presentations, we will also be involved in their Youth Conservation Days (May and October) and have a booth at the Swiss Colony annual program.

They also requested help with controlling phragmites in the city of Monroe. A Rapid Response Grant for this project will be re-submitted by SW Badger in January 2018.

Lafayette County-

They appreciate SW Badger having a booth at their county fair, and we will do this again in 2018. It is also important to them that we present Project RED protocols to the Argyle Rod and Gun Club, Gratiot Sportsmen’s Club, and Lafayette Sportsmen’s Club.

They fully support the West Branch Pecatonica Management Plan and our active involvement in that watershed. They will help us to make landowner contacts, and have already been helpful in this regard.

End of Report.