

## ECO Education / Pontoon Classroom

May 2012

### "6th Pontoon Classroom / ECO Field Trip".

This program completed our 3<sup>rd</sup> class year and included 32 students.

During the winter the education committee finalized the curriculum guide/handbook. The goal with this effort is to have the successful program we have created to be available to other. The complete program is available on the Town of Barnes Web site. <http://www.barnes-wi.com> (The files can be found under community organizations, select Property Owners Association (POA), then select ECO Education Program.)

A few changes were made over the winter and spring to finalize the program. We added a Tree Lab segment, a Pre and Post Test for the teacher to administer to the students before we start in September and then take again after we are completed with the May program... The results were quite interesting!. We also added a fun activity to the spring field trip, an 'Aquatic/Shoreline Scavenger Hunt'. The scavenger hunt incorporated all 6 segments that the students experienced over the year and an extra canoeing segment plus a canoe race. In all the surveys we conducted canoeing along with the Macros were the most enjoyable, so adding another canoeing segment was a big hit!

This sixth session included a major change in venue. We moved from the bony lake property of Carol Lebreck, which was an excellent location, to the original Silver Beach resort property owned by Quentin and Helen Ruprecht. They own approximately 500 feet of level sandy frontage on the south end of Middle Eau Claire Lake. The property borders a DNR wetland section and is very close to the boat landing, so this property is really well suited to host our event. We conducted segments on the Outdoor Aquatic Food Cycle/Pyramid/Web led by POA staff and volunteer along with Carrie Sanda, the Douglas County AIS Coordinator. A segment on Reforestation and Shoreline restoration led by Travis Tulowitzky from Bayfield Co. Land and Water Conservation and POA volunteers and the final segment was on Macro Invertebrates led by John Kudlas and POA volunteers. Following the three segments at the Ruprecht's, the students were bussed to the boat landing and had a short lunch period followed by the scavenger hunt and canoe race. A really great day was had by all the students and volunteers. With the changes made and the beautiful weather of the day, this was our most fun and exciting field trip of the six we have conducted.

A week later we held our final in class segment to conduct the evaluation and review the post test that the teacher had. We were quite surprised to be greeted with 4 large photo collage posters that the students made as part of their recap of the field trip!

Some additional highlights from the event included; The discovery of Curly Leaf Pondweed during the scavenger hunt. Surprisingly one of the students raked up the sample but before he identified it, he accidentally dropped it on the dock. John Kudlas spotted the plant and had Carrie Sanda identify it. It is fair to say that had we not held the event that day, the AIS species may not have found for some time! The other highlight to mention is that Ruprecht's property has long been one of the properties along the lake front that you would suggest needed some restoration, due to acres of mowed lawn right to the water. So now that we are involved with them we have started planting native plants along the shoreline and over the next 3 years we have plans for the students to create and construct a runoff retention garden that will be designed by Travis Tulowitzky, this was a pretty cool result of moving to this new venue!!