

OCLAWA NEWS

TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE THE LAKES AND RIVERS OF OCONTO COUNTY

Fall 2012

Improved AIS Detection and Awareness Keys to a Successful Summer

by Amanda Strick

The summer has quickly faded into the colors of fall and the winds are starting to bring promises of winter, but I wanted to take some time to review progress and projects of a productive summer for Oconto County's AIS Program.

As seen in the last newsletter there was monitoring conducted as a part of a statewide monitoring effort through the WDNR on Boundary, Boulder, Berry, Townsend Flowage, White and Round Lakes. From the surveys it was discovered that there are **NO** zebra mussels or spiny water fleas on these water bodies! This is fantastic news! Unfortunately, the crew did identify pioneering populations of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) on Boulder and Round Lakes which led to a discovery of EWM on Kelly Lake. Boulder and Kelly Lakes have pursued Early Detection/ Rapid Response Grants and Boulder Lake was able to do a fall treatment. In addition, EWM was detected on Winslow Lake this summer and hand pulling efforts were initiated on both Winslow and Round Lake in an attempt to eradicate the small populations near the boat landings**. Early detection efforts will continue next summer.



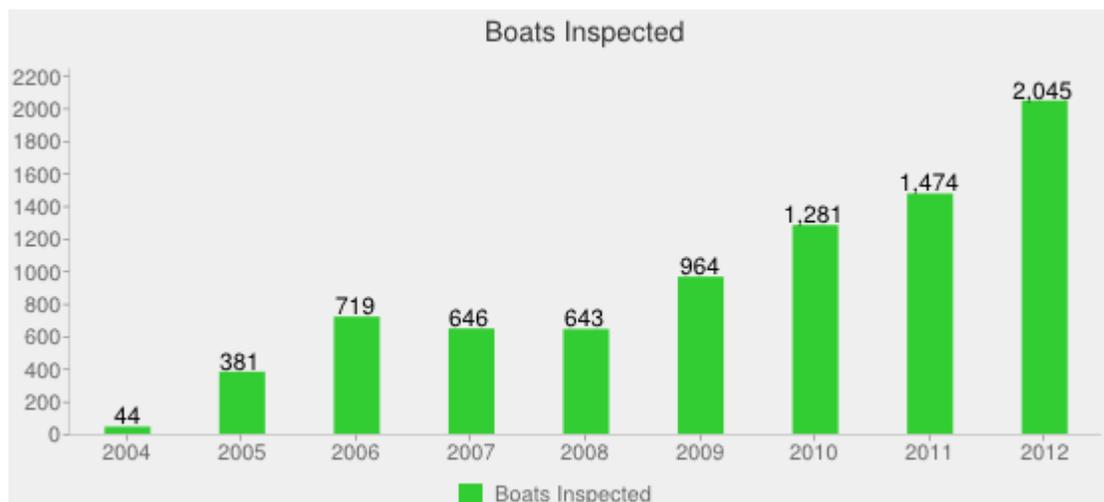
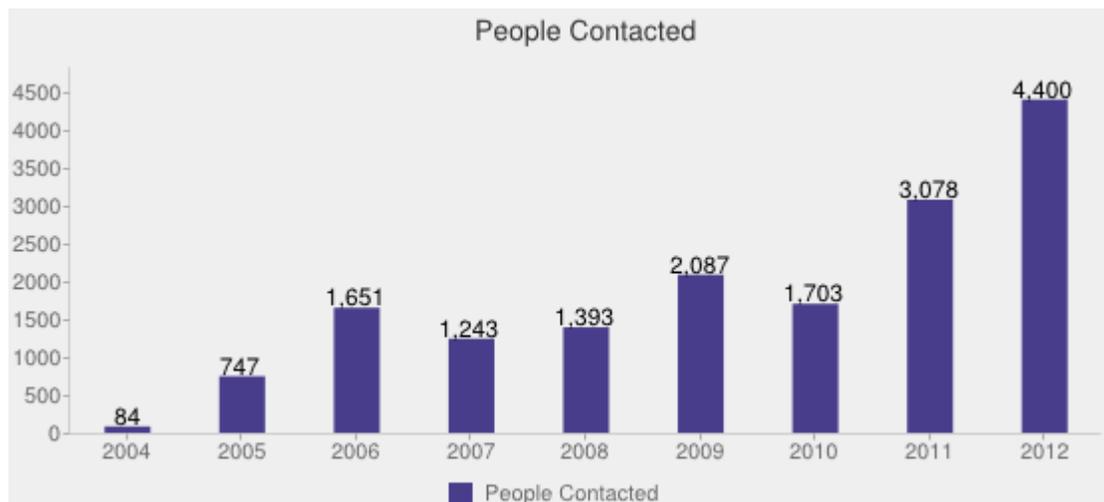
Early detection monitoring was also done by a number of lakes in the county with the help of some fantastic volunteers who agreed to place zebra mussel monitoring platforms (ZMMP) in the water off the end of their docks. Almost all of these platforms have been collected at this time and the majority of the platforms have been scraped off. The tasty sludge that was the result of this scrapping has been preserved and submitted to the WDNR. The results are pending, though there were no visuals of adult zebra mussels on any of the platforms. Rusty Crayfish traps were also distributed to a number of lakes over the summer and rotated every two weeks, no new populations of this invasive were found at this time. I'm hoping to expand this trapping next year. If you are interested please contact me.

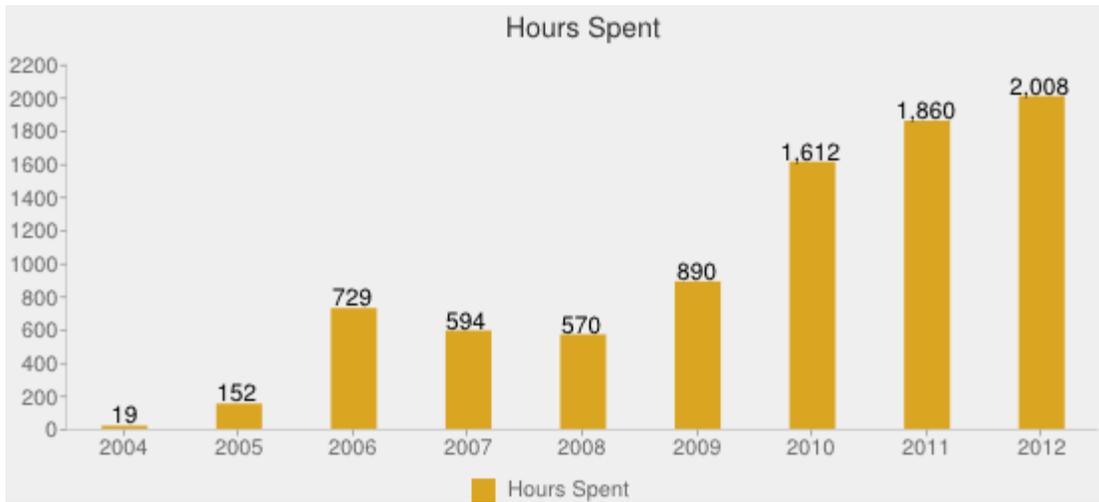
The rusty crayfish trapping and zebra mussel monitoring efforts were greatly enhanced this summer by the assistance of the Bear Paw Boy Scout Camp. Throughout the summer I was able to visit once a week to teach the boy scouts about aquatic invasive species, their impact on lakes such as Bear Paw, how important it is to be an environmental steward, and assisted in designing and constructing more ZMMP as well as crayfish traps. The boy scouts built over 100 ZMMP and 45 Rusty Crayfish traps which were distributed to various counties of NE Wisconsin. After construction, the boy scouts placed five ZMMP in Bear Paw Lake and continued Rusty Crayfish trapping

throughout the summer (no rusty crayfish were ever found!). Many thanks for all the enthusiasm, EWM hand pulling efforts and contributions of materials from the Bear Paw Boy Scout Camp to enhance our research throughout the county and the region!

Clean Boats Clean Waters

Great job everyone who worked on CBCW this summer! We did a phenomenal job! Below are three graphs from the WDNR that were created using the data from all the lakes in Oconto County.





The interns from this summer were able to log about 300 hours' worth of monitoring time. There were few issues and a lot of receptive boaters. Serving as a reminder to Inspect, Remove, Drain and Never Move over 20 new AIS signs were placed at boat landings this summer.

Additional education and outreach from the summer included the Oconto County Fair, many thanks for those who participated: Judie Gowaski, Matt Marty, Kathy Wiggins, Sam Rothermel, Kay Rankel, Don Prueter, and Jim Jawort. I was also able to have a booth at the Oconto Fly in and Copper Fest. Thanks to all who stopped by and for all of those who have continued to work hard to educate, inspect, remove, and monitor for AIS within Oconto County.



One of the county's projects that continued in the fall of 2012 was the Phragmites control project. *Phragmites australis*, also known by the surname Common Reed Grass or simply Phragmites is an aggressive non-native plant species that can grow over 15 feet tall in dense stands easily recognizable by the feather like plums atop these warm-season perennials. Oconto County in conjunction with a number of partners has been working with the WDNR's Coordinator for the Phragmites and Lyme Grass Control Project, Heidi Springborn, to address the problem of these invasive species. Springborn began working last year under a three year control grant. One key component of the grant is to reduce Phragmites by chemically treating the plants on 3,600 acres along 118 miles of Lake Michigan's shoreline. Of

the 3,600 acres receiving treatment under this project, 1,300 acres are in Oconto County alone. With the permission of 294 landowners in Oconto County an initial spraying was completed in the fall of 2011. This year, working over a nine day period in early September the Phragmites on the shoreline was sprayed through a number of methods. Aerial spraying via helicopter and ground crews operating with both boom sprayers and backpack sprayers completed this monumental task. This was the last year of treatment under this grant.

Some lake members may have already seen this request but I would like extend this request once again; in an effort to decrease the spread of Phragmites I am asking that anyone who spends time on various water bodies within Oconto County assist me in looking for small pioneering populations of this invasive species. If you have seen a suspicious patch of tall reeds on or near the lake or riverine system you have visited in Oconto County please contact me.

Photo: Amanda Strick (L) and Morris (R) identifying invasive Phragmites



Tom

This summer there was a couple of interesting questions



that arose, the first, what is all this long, thin, grass like “weed” coming out of the lakes? The answer was *Vallisneria americana*, commonly known as water celery or American eel grass and some places such as Chute Pond found more of this plant than others. This summer found many lakes with increased aquatic vegetation due to a number of conditions including the unseasonably warm weather we experienced early in the spring. Water celery is a lightly rooted plant that floats to the

surface when disturbed by wave action and boat traffic.



Mystery Snails washed up to shorelines in unprecedented numbers. *Photo Credit Reservoir Pond

Another not so friendly but fairly common occurrence that was noted this summer was massive die offs of banded mystery and Chinese mystery snails. This was caused by warm water temperatures. Snails were collected this summer during the monitoring surveys.



“It doesn’t seem to be covered in our invasive species management plan.”

Please report any suspicious organisms, invertebrates or macrophytes that you find on water bodies. Thank you so much for your efforts and continued involvement in stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species in Oconto County!

Amanda Strick <{}{}><{

amanda.strick@co.oconto.wi.us

Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

Oconto County Land Conservation Department

111 Arbutus Ave.

Oconto, WI 54153

Office:920-834-7155

****Special Note:** There is no public access on Winslow Lake

The Way I See It by Matt Marty

One only needs to look at the number of lakes that are finding aquatic invasive species to realize that the money which the DNR is spending on the control and eradication of these plants and animals is beginning to run low. How many lakes can the DNR support with emergency grants and extended treatment grants before they run out? How will we take care of our lakes when that happens? There is another way and some lakes have already taken the step. That step is to form a lake district. A lake district is a form of local government that has taxing capabilities and is governed by a board which is elected by the members of that district. Anyone who owns property or is registered to vote in that district has voting rights. To my knowledge it is the only exception to the "one man one vote" doctrine. The district has taxing authority over all parts of that district which may include land and property up to a mile away from the lake. The level of taxes which may be collected (mill rate) is very limited but it does one important thing. It provides a guaranteed source of revenue which the lake district can depend on to maintain the lake. Having that stream of money available to purchase equipment (weed cutters), hire engineering firms to assess or treat AIS, hire necessary manpower to man the landings etc. is so important during these times of dwindling resources from the state. In the next edition I will outline the steps necessary to form a lake district.

Alternative Lawn Care Practices for WI by Doug Soldat, UW-

Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Dept. of Soil Science, UW- Madison

Edited from the Lake Tides Spring/Summer 2012

UW-Madison is one of the leading institutions in the country doing research on turfgrass. There are two new publications on this topic from UW-Extension Learning Store: Do-it-Yourself Alternative Lawn care (A3964 and Organic and reduced Risk Lawn Care (3958). The former intended for home owners and the latter for lawn care professionals. The best situation for lake property owners is not to have lawns on slopes which lead down to the lake and to restore the buffer zone to filter any water flowing into the lake. However, this is often not the case and many lake property owners love their lawns. The best thing to do then is to use best practices when planting or maintaining a lawn on a lake.

Poor soil creates the most problems for homeowners because it often dries out during droughts, is easily invaded by weeds and doesn't do a good job filtering or preventing runoff. Six inches of top soil is usually considered ideal for a lawn. Lacking that one should core areate each fall and add compost in the spring and fall each year to slowly build up the root zone.

Another important consideration is grass type. Some grasses don't tolerate shade, traffic, wet or compacted soils. A turfgrass specialist will be able to tell you what the best grass is for your situation.

Mowing is the next important part of proper lawn care. Mowing is a stressful event for grass so it is important to have a sharp mower blade. Try not to mow more than 1/3 of the grass blade off at any one time. Always mulch the grass clipping back into the soil because doing that is equal to one or two applications of fertilizer.

Fertilizing a lawn can be important to maintain good density. A dense lawn will slow runoff and encourage infiltration. What type of fertilizer and how much to use can be determined through the use of a soil testing kit. These are easily available from your County Extension office. The best time to apply fertilizer is around Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The best way to eliminate weeds is to hand pull them because there is no herbicide to run into the lake. Two other products may also be used. They are corn gluten meal for pre-emergent weed control or products containing chelated iron that control (but may not eliminate) many broadleaf weeds.

New From Around the County: What are other lakes doing?

Townsend Flowage:

Water Drawdown: The DNR has approved our request to lower the flowage. On or about September 3 Oconto County will start lowering our water level until they reach a level of 6 feet. Ending date will be approximately September 22. The DNR does not want to let water out much beyond this date as the trout spawn in the fall in McCaslin Brook. Ideally, a drawdown of a flowage should be done every 5-10 years to control the weeds and preserve the flowage. Our last drawdown was in 1993. Property owners should refer to the rules on the DNR website concerning shoreline clean up. We have contacted the Red Arrow Snowmobile Club about marking hazards in the ice this winter

Boater safety classes were conducted June 8 & 9 and 21 students completed the class.

It has been an unusual year for weeds. The weeds are growing so fast they are pulling themselves free from the lake bottom roots and all. Volunteers will cut until the end of August. Rich reported 165 loads were harvested with 226 hours of volunteer hours. Another 70 loads of floating weeds were picked up. In 2011 we harvested 68 loads with 115 volunteer hours. The new harvester and the water draw down should help this situation in 2013.

With the drawdown be cautious an infection called blastomycosis in both dogs and humans. This is an infection of the lungs that may develop when humans or dogs breathe in a fungus found in wood and soil.

There was concern from the floor with the disregard for the slow no wake zones, the slow wake hours and lack of courteous shown to other boaters or the loons. Everyone felt this was the worst summer ever. The Town of Townsend has jurisdiction for the slow no wake hours and the DNR has jurisdiction for everything else. Phone numbers for the DNR and Townsend officers are listed on the bottom of each TFA newsletter. Don't hesitate calling them and taking pictures of the boater registration numbers.

Inland P&R District No. 1:

Oconto County is rebuilding the dam on Reservoir Pond and has an expected completion date of mid-

November. This project affects the water levels on Reservoir Pond, Horn, Little Horn and Explosion Lakes. Water levels will remain down 4-6 feet until after ice-out next spring. We're hoping for a normal or above normal snowfall and a wet spring to get our lake levels up quickly next year. A loss of fish due to the drawdown is expected and to obtain funds for restocking the lakes next year a fund raiser was held on September 8th at the Sunset Bar & Grill. Tom Derrickson, Sunset's owner, was having his annual corn roast and he let us use this event for raffles, auctions, spin-the-wheel, etc. A considerable amount of money was raised so we should be in good shape with our fish restocking efforts.

Sunset Bar & Grill and our District have held a kids orientated ice fishing event the past couple of years. All kids receive a special gift just for participating and compete for additional prizes for the biggest fish, etc. It is free to the kids and its purpose is to get them outside and enjoying the winter sports. We don't know yet whether this will be held this winter but it will go on if water conditions permit.

We're hoping that the drawdown of our lakes will help us with our on-going efforts to control Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). According to experts, one of the most effective means killing this plant is by freezing and drying. Large areas of our lake system will be exposed due to the lowering of the water and if the freezing helps kill off EWM we'll be able to focus our chemical treatment efforts in areas that have EWM but have not been treated recently. Chemically treating EWM is very expensive and maybe this drawdown will help us with our efforts of control. We're in our third year of a four year grant from the DNR, and with limited funds we need to maximize our attack on EWM. Hopefully Mother Nature will help rid some areas of this nuisance plant. For the latest information please find us on inlandlakesdistrict.org.

Pictures are of the channels going into Horn Lake, Little Horn Lake and Explosion Lake, with the water down about 3 feet.

Here are a few pictures of the drawdown of the flowage and reservoir. You might find it interesting to stop over and see this event for yourself because it's not something happens every day. These pictures were provided by Dan Jones, David Liss and Kathy Ott.





Paya Lake:

Not a lot new for Paya Lake. Our loons seemed a little late at first but a pair ended up blessing us with their presence. Our weed growth, while not excessive seemed to show up in a few areas that had slight growth in years past. The water quality continues to be good even though it appears the boat traffic continues to increase. We hope to take a more professional approach to our webpage coming in the next year, so stay tuned. As in the past Paya Lake continues to be great place to live.

Boulder Lake:

Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), an invasive aquatic plant, has been discovered in Boulder Lake this summer. We urgently need your help to get rid of this menace to the ecological well-being of our lake. EWM can spread rapidly in Wisconsin Lakes where it has no natural curbs on its growth. There are northern lakes and streams that have become so clogged with EWM that fish die and boating is nearly impossible. Surely no one who enjoys the beauties of Boulder Lake wants that to happen here. In July of this year, Amanda Strick, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator for Oconto County, and a group of Lake Association volunteers spent a day trying to eliminate the problem by pulling out as much of the plant as possible by hand. They worked hard for several hours and concluded that there was too much to remove by this method. A subsequent survey by the Wisconsin Department of Natural

Resources (DNR) determined that EWM has spread over approximately 2 acres of our lake. Since it has just appeared this year, there is still a good chance to get rid of it, if we act immediately. Chemical treatment can be effective and is recommended by the DNR. For the best chance of success, one treatment needs to be applied in September of this year, while the water temperature is near 65 degrees, and at least one follow-up treatment early next spring. The chemicals are not harmful to humans or other aquatic life, and disperse within a few days.

The Boulder Lake Private Homes Association has formed a committee to organize the effort to eradicate EWM. Chemical treatment must be done by a professional contractor with a permit. The DNR will not pay for this at present. Local groups must pay upfront costs, probably in the range of \$12,000 to \$15,000, so we are establishing a Boulder Lake AIS fund to cover the costs of combatting this environmental threat. We are in the process of applying for a grant from the DNR, which may reimburse up to 75% of the cost of EWM eradication. Any reimbursement would be applied to the AIS fund. All monies in the fund, whether donations or DNR reimbursement, will be used exclusively to combat AIS. As this will be an ongoing effort, we hope to be more prepared to combat future AIS as they may appear. (At present we have just over \$1,000 in the Association's general treasury, much of which is intended for regular expenses.)

We are hoping for a contribution of \$200 from each Boulder Lake household, which would assure that we can begin treating the EWM this year, but would appreciate any amount you are able to give at this time. Of course, contributions over \$200 would help us to more quickly meet our goal! When considering an amount to give, please reflect on the possibility that your gift will make the difference between continuing to enjoy the lake as you know it, and a lake so clogged with weedy EWM that fishing, boating and swimming are no longer possible. This is a real choice, and we hope that you will join us by making a substantial contribution.

Archibald Lake:

We have spent a busy summer working hard to minimize the impact of our two aquatic invasive species: flowering rush and Eurasian water milfoil. We keep finding more and more of the EWM and are trying to hand pull the small accessible patches. One of our association members has developed a hand digging tool which makes pulling easier. We plan to have large areas chemically treated in the spring. Our lake association is fine tuning our Adopt-a-Shoreline program to involve more lake owners patrolling their own shorelines. The Clean Boats/Clean Waters program had a successful summer with over 200 volunteer hours monitoring our boat landing. We have a DNR research grant to experiment with several chemicals to control flowering rush, our other aquatic invasive. One chemical was quite effective and had a 59% reduction in the number of plants per square foot; the other chemical we applied had no effect. The results are posted on our website: www.archibaldlake.com. We are waiting to hear results of treatments from other affected lakes before we decide how to proceed with further actions. Archibald Lake Association is not all work and no play. We enjoyed a summer Association picnic and fall golf outing. Both activities were enjoyable and included successful raffles, meeting old friends and wonderful food. All the proceeds will be used to pay for treatments of our invasive species when our DNR grants expire.

Sunnies

Taken from the LL Bean Game and Fish Cookbook 1983

The average angler, boy or man, seldom has identified the various kinds of sunfish that have come to his worm or fly, but, for most of us, whose first “trophy” was a 7-inch “sunny” it matters little. Rolled in flour or cornmeal and sautéed slowly but finally to a crisp brown, the tidbit is excellent fare as a breakfast fish course before the eggs and bacon.

Panfish Sunnies with Marjoram and Lemon Butter

This recipe can be employed with any of the panfish from sunnies to crappies. It is super with white perch and is simple to make with any panfish.

Serves 4

6Tb. Butter

4 shallots or cloves garlic,
chopped

½ tsp. dried marjoram

4 sunnies, cleaned and scaled
salt and white pepper

1½ Tb. lemon juice

Melt the butter in a skillet (that has a lid for later use) and add the shallots or garlic, marjoram, and sunnies that have been salted, peppered and floured.

Brown both sides of the fish, about 5 minutes.

Add the lemon juice, cover, and over medium to low heat cook the fish another 10 minutes or so.

When you serve the fish pour some of the lemon butter from the pan over each fish.

It Time to Plan to Attend the 2013 and 35th Lakes Partnership Convention

Every year for the past 34 years the DNR, UW College of Natural Resources at Stevens Point, UW-Extension and Wisconsin Lakes have put on a convention solely oriented around lakes. This has become the finest convention of its kind in the nation and is the place to go to find out the latest scientific, legal and legislative information about lakes. When you attend you can expect to attend workshops on: cultural, historical and archeological aspects of lakes, endangered resources, AIS, scientific lake research, people public policy and politics, lake habitat and biology, lake recreation, native plants and animals, water quality and ground water, watersheds, economics and water, and governance of water. The challenge often is deciding what to attend since there are so many interesting choices. I have seen some lake associations bring as many as six people so they can attend every workshop. An additional benefit is meeting folks from other lakes who are facing the same problems on their lake as you are. Talking with them, comparing notes and hearing new ideas is so interesting. So make your reservations for April 9-11 at the KI Center in Green Bay. You'll be glad you did.

The water lily opens to the sun.

The pine spreads its arms into the sky.

The trickle flows into the stream, flows into the river, flows into the ocean.

Flows into the cloud.

All living, growing things flow , move toward openness.

And nothing is ever lost...

*There is no fairer subject for a picture than a pine.
But the pine is the better artist; it paints pictures of the wind*

*Overhead on a limb, a red squirrel has a pine cone.
Within the seeds of a single cone, a sleeping forest.
Now what? Is the squirrel in the forest?
Or is the forest in the squirrel?*

Thoughts from Paddle Whispers by Douglas Wood

- Publication of the Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Assoc.
- Editor-Mathew G. Marty
- Contact; 608-2495898 marwigs@chorus.net