

VILAS COUNTY AIS PARTNERSHIP
2006 ACTIVITY SUMMARY
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- Development of a long range Vilas County AIS Partnership Plan began in February and was approved on July 26 by the Land and Water Conservation Committee. The plan includes action steps to achieve the following five objectives:
 1. Prevent the infestation and dispersal of AIS through public education
 2. Identify and manage AIS infestations and facilitate AIS studies
 3. Encourage State Legislators to provide funding needed to manage existing infestations
 4. Establish a county organizational structure to accomplish goals 1, 2 & 3.
 5. Conduct comprehensive review and update of long term plan every two years
- Chambers of commerce in Vilas County began distributing visitor guides containing AIS prevention messages in an effort to inform potential visitors of the importance of properly cleaning boats and trailers before coming to Vilas County.
- Presentations explaining the Vilas County AIS Partnership approach to AIS prevention, awareness and control were delivered by the Vilas County AIS Coordinator to attendees of the WI Association of Lakes annual convention in Green Bay and to various groups in Florence, Forest, Polk and Oneida Counties, at the Northwest WI Lakes Conference in Cable and at a WDNR sponsored AIS grant workshop in Green Bay.
- Carolyn Scholl's Aquatic Invasive Species – A Guide for Proactive / Reactive Management was published for state wide distribution.
- A public information meeting regarding how to proceed with management of Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) on the Eagle River chain of lakes was held on April 25th at the NPHS auditorium. This was the first public discussion of what eventually lead to creation of the Eagle River Area Unified Lakes organization. While this new group is still grappling with its organizational structure, its objective is to bring together all concerned parties representing the towns of Washington, Lincoln, Cloverland and the City of Eagle River plus the lake organizations and waterfront property owners of the Eagle River chain. The objective of the group is to oversee the planning process, plan implementation, cost allocation and funding for managing EWM on the chain.

In the meantime, a WDNR grant was awarded to the town of Washington to conduct plant surveys and develop plant management plans for the Eagle River chain. 75% State funding was provided for the project with the 25% local cost share to be picked up by the four municipalities in which the lower 10 lakes of the chain lie. The plant survey work was completed this past summer. WDNR approval of the plant management plans is pending. When finalized, the plans will enable 50% implementation funds to be sought from the WDNR AIS Control Grant program.

- The Vilas County AIS Partnership and the Vilas County Lakes Association (VCLA) were named by the WI Governor's Council on Invasive Species as co-recipients of a 2006 "INVADER CRUSADER" award in the "volunteer" category. County AIS Coordinator Ted Ritter, traveled to Madison to receive the award for the Partnership on June 2nd.

The Partnership and VCLA sponsored a celebration picnic at the Star Lake pavilion on June 29 with all food and supplies donated by area businesses and VCLA.

- Workshops for why, how, when and where to monitor lakes for early detection of AIS were conducted by Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department staff at the Boulder Junction and Lincoln town halls on June 15th and July 11th. Approximately 80 people attended the workshops. (More of these workshops will be conducted in 2007 with times and locations to be announced later).
- An Evening With AIS Researchers on July 20th was arranged by the Vilas AIS Partnership in advance of the Northwoods Lakes Workshop held the following day at Lakeland Union High School.
- The Discover Wisconsin television show aired a special half hour program on June 10th highlighting the problem of aquatic invasive species in Wisconsin. The program featured Vilas County lakes and the prevention efforts of the Vilas AIS Partnership.
- The Lac du Flambeau tribe of Chippewa Indians released a 15 minute educational CD entitled Understanding Invasive Intruders: Aquatic Invasive Species in Northern Wisconsin. Collaborators with the tribe on the project included UWEX, US EPA, WDNR and production assistance from the Vilas AIS Partnership.
- AIS researcher John Rothlisberger of the University of Notre Dame used volunteers at the Big Saint Germain public boat landing in Saint Germain to conduct part of his studies of the effectiveness of high pressure washing to remove invasive species from boat hulls and trailers prior to or after launching. Results of the study are expected later this winter.
- Ten year old Brendan Stoehr, a fifth grade student at the Sugar Camp Elementary School, was awarded first place in his age group in the statewide annual environmental speech contest. His topic was, "Pick on Someone Your Own Size" in which he personified a Spiny water flea. Several contestants from both Vilas and Oneida Counties from various age brackets chose AIS topics for their speeches.
- WDNR staff completed aquatic plant surveys on Arrowhead (Arbor Vitae), Big Sand (Phelps), Boot (Cloverland), Little Papoose (Winchester), Long (Phelps), Middle Gresham (Boulder Junction), Nebish (Plum Lake), Stella (Saint Germain) and Upper Nine Mile (Washington) Lakes.
- WDNR and GLIFWC staff completed Zebra Mussel and Spiny Water Flea surveys on Anvil (Washington), Big (Presque Isle / Boulder Junction), Big Muskellunge (Plum Lake / Boulder Junction), Island (Boulder Junction), Presque Isle (Presque Isle), Star (Plum Lake) and Trout (Arbor Vitae / Boulder Junction) Lakes.
- Activities of Vilas County Town Lakes Committees during 2006:
 - **Arbor Vitae:** Achieved official recognition as a standing committee by the town board in the fall of 2006. The committee is now considering its objectives and plans for the future.
 - **Boulder Junction:** While no town lakes committee has yet been established, the town board has been supporting efforts of the Gresham Lakes Association to

develop a planned approach to managing aquatic plants in the Gresham lakes chain including EWM on Upper Gresham Lake. The permitting process for chemical control in 2007 is underway and a contractor has been selected to conduct a full plant survey on all three lakes and develop a long term plant management plan, pending WDNR approval of a planning grant to be applied for in 2007.

- **Cloverland:** Was awarded a \$5,000 WDNR AIS education grant in the spring of 2006 and recruited 90 volunteers to conduct more than 800 hours of lake monitoring and watercraft inspection activities this past summer. Also committed financial support to the 25% local cost share for the WDNR 75% funded project to survey the Eagle River chain of lakes and develop long term plant management plans.
- **Conover:** No activity to report
- **Eagle River (city of):** Committed financial support to the 25% local cost share for the WDNR 75% funded project to survey the Eagle River chain of lakes and develop long term plant management plans.
- **Lac du Flambeau:** Was awarded a \$14,000 WDNR AIS education grant in the spring of 2006 and recruited 160 volunteers to conduct more than 1,400 hours of lake monitoring and watercraft inspection activities this past summer.
- **Land O' Lakes:** No activity to report
- **Lincoln:** Committed financial support to the 25% local cost share for the WDNR 75% funded project to survey the Eagle River chain of lakes and develop long term plant management plans.
- **Manitowish Waters:** Was awarded a \$26,000 WDNR AIS education grant in the spring of 2006 and recruited volunteers to perform lake monitoring and watercraft inspection activities this past summer. The concept of conducting a "Shoreline Sweep" was introduced by the Manitowish Waters project and will serve as a protocol for other towns and/or lake organizations to emulate in the future.
- **Plum Lake:** Successfully activated volunteers to conduct extensive lake monitoring activities on 11 lakes considered to be the highest priority of the town's 37 lakes. Volunteer teams performed watercraft inspections at public landings and new signage was placed throughout the town in an effort to increase public awareness of AIS. A new boat landing sign was designed and an effort was launched to make the sign the new state wide standard. Several meetings were held with the WDNR Vilas County Fisheries Manager and researchers from the Universities of Wisconsin and Notre Dame to consider the feasibility of effectively reducing the population of Rusty crayfish in Plum and Star Lakes through aggressive trapping of the crayfish and manipulation of predator fish species. Discussions are ongoing.
- **Phelps:** The Phelps Area Lakes Partnership (PALP) was formed and achieved incorporation status in lieu of the town board establishing a lakes committee. The group will coordinate activities of mutual interest to lake organizations. The Long Lake Association petitioned the Vilas County Board of Supervisors to establish a lake district. A public hearing was conducted in late December on the matter. The county board will decide whether the district is to be created or not during the first half of 2007. Long and Big Sand Lake Associations were awarded a \$4,000 WDNR grant to develop plant management plans to begin controlling EWM in both lakes.
- **Presque Isle:** Was awarded over \$33,000 as the State's 75% share of projects to conduct plant surveys and develop plant management plans on seven lakes. The committee also conducted a public AIS awareness campaign which included

distributing hand outs, applying label messages to disposable bait containers, delivering presentations to local lake organizations, distributing bookmarks with an AIS message through the local library and conducting watercraft inspections at public landings.

- **Saint Germain:** Was awarded a \$15,000 WDNR AIS education grant in the spring of 2006 and recruited volunteers to conduct lake monitoring and watercraft inspection activities this past summer. The committee's public awareness campaign included printing an AIS message on grocery bags, bait container labels, and paper placemats, all of which we widely distributed throughout the town. AIS signage was also placed at private boat landings used by the public. A 2 ½ year WDNR grant funded project to conduct plant surveys and develop plant management plans on eight town lakes was completed.
- **Three Lakes:** (Not in Vilas County, but regarded as a participant in the Vilas County AIS Partnership due to its close proximity and concern for the upper lakes of the Eagle River chain.) Was awarded a \$30,000 WDNR AIS education grant in the spring of 2006 and recruited volunteers to conduct lake monitoring and watercraft inspection activities this past summer for the second consecutive year.
- **Washington:** Is sponsoring and committed financial support to the 25% local cost share for the WDNR 75% funded project to survey the Eagle River chain of lakes and develop long term plant management plans. Was awarded \$35,000 as the State's 75% share of projects to conduct plant surveys and develop plant management plans on ten lakes that are not part of the Eagle River chain. Was also awarded a \$1,150 WDNR AIS education grant to conduct Clean Boats, Clean Waters watercraft inspection training.
- **Winchester:** This group began meeting officially in April and concentrated its efforts on getting organized and determining what its objectives should be. A WDNR grant application will be submitted in the early 2007 grant cycle seeking funds to construct new boat landing signs that will consolidate the varied signs now present and establish a high visibility AIS prevention message. A public awareness campaign beyond boat landing signage will also be incorporated in the project.
- A "Year 2 in Review" AIS Partnership meeting and workshop was conducted on October 24th at the Wild Eagle Lodge in Eagle River. Most of the above information was shared in detail. The following topics were also discussed at the meeting:
 - How the efforts of the Vilas County AIS Partnership fit into the bigger state wide picture – presented by Jeff Bode, WDNR Section Chief, Lakes and Wetlands.
 - The concept of Cooperative Weed Management Areas – presented by Patrick Goggin, Vilas County Conservationist
 - The status of "Mystery Snails" in WI – presented by Laura Herman, UWEX Lakes Partnership
 - Certificates of recognition were presented to the Vilas County News Review, the Lakeland Times, WERL / WRJO Radio and NBC 12 News for "Outstanding Contributions to the Vilas County AIS Partnership".
 - Breakout sessions were conducted with discussion leaders for the following topics:
 - Volunteer based watercraft inspection and lake monitoring programs – what works & what doesn't - Laura Herman and Laura Felda-Marquardt, UWEX Lakes Partnership

- What role can town lakes committees play in assisting lakes without associations in responding to AIS threats? - Carolyn Scholl, Vilas County Lakes Specialist
 - AIS Grant Tips - Kevin Gauthier, WDNR – Rhinelander
 - Coalition building for achieving increased State funding for managing existing AIS infestations - Gail Gilson-Pierce - River Alliance of Wisconsin
 - AIS Public Awareness and Education techniques brainstorming - Bill Klase, UWEX Headwaters Basin Natural Resources Educator
 - Aquatic Plant Management Plans- Why, when and how? - Kevin Gauthier, WDNR – Rhinelander
- Sufficient volunteer hours were accounted for by the Vilas AIS Partnership to fully satisfy the three year project goals, thereby assuring full reimbursement in 2008 of all Vilas County expenses following conclusion of the three year project. State funding for the Vilas County AIS Coordinator position will expire at the end of calendar year 2007.