

**VILAS COUNTY LAND & WATER
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT**



**AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)
PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

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Eagle River, WI 54521
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**SUMMARY
"YEAR 2 IN REVIEW" MEETING & WORKSHOP**

The Partnership conducted its second annual review meeting and workshops on October 24, 2006 at Wild Eagle Lodge in Eagle River. Approximately 75 people attended representing area lake organizations, town lakes committees, local media, county AIS Coordinators from other areas of the State, WDNR and UWEX staff, State legislators and others. The meeting facility was provided at no cost by Wild Eagle Lodge. Lunch was prepared and served by Vilas County Conservationist Patrick Goggin.

The following summarizes the day in the order of the agenda:

Morning presentations:

A. Year 2 summary by Ted Ritter, Vilas County AIS Coordinator (Power Point presentation slides attached).

1. Month by month review of broad based Partnership activities:

- a. January
 - 1) 5 towns applied for AIS prevention grants
 - 2) 2 towns & 2 lake associations applied for APM planning grants
 - 3) "Planning" action team began developing long range Partnership objectives and action steps
 - 4) Chambers of Commerce began distributing visitors guides with AIS messages
- b. February
 - 1) "Ordinance" action team completed drafting proposed revisions to State AIS laws.
- c. March
 - 1) Not much happened – no one was around!
- d. April
 - 1) Partnership AIS displays and presentations at 3 day lakes conference in Green Bay.
 - 2) Partnership assisted in production of a Discover Wisconsin AIS segment.
- e. May
 - 1) 3 year mid-point Partnership status report distributed
 - 2) Partnership information presented at Florence County LWCD meeting
- f. June
 - 1) Partnership and Vilas County Lakes Association received 2006 "Invader Crusader" award and sponsored a celebration picnic.
 - 2) Carolyn Scholl's AIS Proactive & Reactive Management Guide was published

- 3) Partnership AIS lake monitoring workshop held in Boulder Junction with 50 people attending
- 4) Design work began on Partnership AIS website
- 5) Partnership information presented at Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Cable, Polk County Lakes & Rivers Association in Balsam Lake, Forest County Lakes Association in Crandon and Oneida County Lakes & Rivers Association in Lake Tomahawk.
- 6) Town lakes committees were busy with wide ranging activities
- g. July
 - 1) DNR wardens stepped up monitoring and public awareness at public boat landings
 - 2) Partnership AIS lake monitoring workshop help in Lincoln with 30 people attending
 - 3) Partnership participated in Northwoods Lakes Conference in Minocqua with AIS presentations and sponsoring “An Evening With AIS Researchers”
 - 4) Vilas Land & Water Conservation Committee approved Partnership long range plan
 - 5) WDNR aquatic plant surveys began on 10 Vilas County lakes
 - 6) WDNR/GLIFWC zebra mussel and spiny water flea surveys began on 7 Vilas County lakes
 - 7) AIS and/or Lake Planning grant applications submitted by two town lakes committees
- h. August
 - 1. Continuation of WDNR/GLIFWC zebra mussel and spiny water flea surveys on 7 Vilas County lakes
 - 2. Presentation of Partnership information to Natural Resources Board
 - 3. Very busy month for volunteer watercraft inspectors
- i. September
 - 1) Partnership accounted for nearly enough volunteer hours to qualify county for full reimbursement of three year project expenses
- j. October
 - 1) Partnership “Year 2 in Review” annual meeting and workshops in Eagle River

2. 2006 town lakes committees activities were reviewed

- a. Attendees were provided with copies of summaries prepared by individual town committees
- b. The Manitowish Waters “Shoreline Sweep” was highlighted as a project that all town committees and/or lake organizations should consider sponsoring. Not only does such an event produce substantial volunteer hours, more importantly it engages lakefront property owners and lake users in monitoring activities that will likely continue indefinitely by those involved, thus greatly increasing the likelihood of detecting lake changes at an early stage.

3. Partnership WDNR grant awards were reviewed

- a. Attendees received a detailed listing of all area grants awarded totaling \$494,376 over the past two years.
- b. 2006 grant funded activities:
 - 1) 5 town lakes committees obtained AIS education grants, 4 of the towns hired summer coordinators

- 2) Grant funded plant surveys were conducted on lower Eagle River chain, APM plans are now being developed
- 3) APM Lake Planning grants awarded to Presque Isle Washington for 17 lakes, plant surveys to begin in 2007
- 4) APM AIS grants awarded to Big Sand and Long Lakes in Phelps, plant survey work completed by WDNR during 2006, APM plans are now being developed

4. Area EWM infestations were updated:

- a. Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes
 - 1) Professional plant surveys have been completed
 - 2) Plant management plans are now being developed
 - 3) Plan implementation could begin as early as spring, 2007
 - 4) Funding may be an obstacle
- b. Forest Lake, Land O' Lakes
 - 1) August, 2001: First and only chemical application deemed successful in initial control
 - 2) Subsequent control maintained through vigilant monitoring and hand pulling by volunteer SCUBA divers
- c. N. & S. Twin Lakes, Conover/Phelps
 - 1) EWM discovered in 2001
 - 2) First chemical control attempted in 2002
 - 3) Second chemical control attempted in 2003
 - 4) APM plan now pending for long term management
- d. Big Sand & Long Lakes, Phelps
 - 1) DNR lake surveys completed this summer
 - 2) DNR grant awarded this fall for development of APM plans
 - 3) Plan completion in time for February grant for implementation in spring is targeted but questionable
 - 4) Implementation could commence in 2007
 - 5) Funding may be an obstacle
- e. Little Saint Germain Lake, Saint Germain
 - 1) Year 3 of 5 year management plan complete
 - 2) Spread of infestation is contained to small colonies through
 - a) Vigilant volunteer monitoring
 - b) Professional confirmation of volunteer findings
 - c) Aggressive annual chemical treatments
- f. Boot Lake, Cloverland
 - 1) WDNR plant survey conducted in 2005
 - 2) Repeat WDNR survey conducted in 2006
 - 3) No efforts yet undertaken to develop management plan
 - 4) Boot Lake is popular with muskie anglers
- g. Silver Lake, Eagle River
 - 1) Plant survey to be conducted and APM plan developed in 2007
- h. Arrowhead Lake, Arbor Vitae
 - 1) Status unknown

5. Long range Partnership Plan was discussed

- a. Plan Objectives:
 - 1) To prevent the infestation or dispersal of AIS through public education
 - 2) To identify & manage AIS infestations and facilitate AIS studies
 - 3) To encourage State legislators to provide funding needed to manage existing infestations

- 4) To establish a county organizational structure to accomplish above
 - 5) To conduct comprehensive reviews and update the long term plan every two years
- b. Action Steps
- 1) All partners should review all action steps to become familiar with the elements of the long range plan

6. GFLIWC / WDNR VILAS COUNTY LAKE SURVEY RESULTS

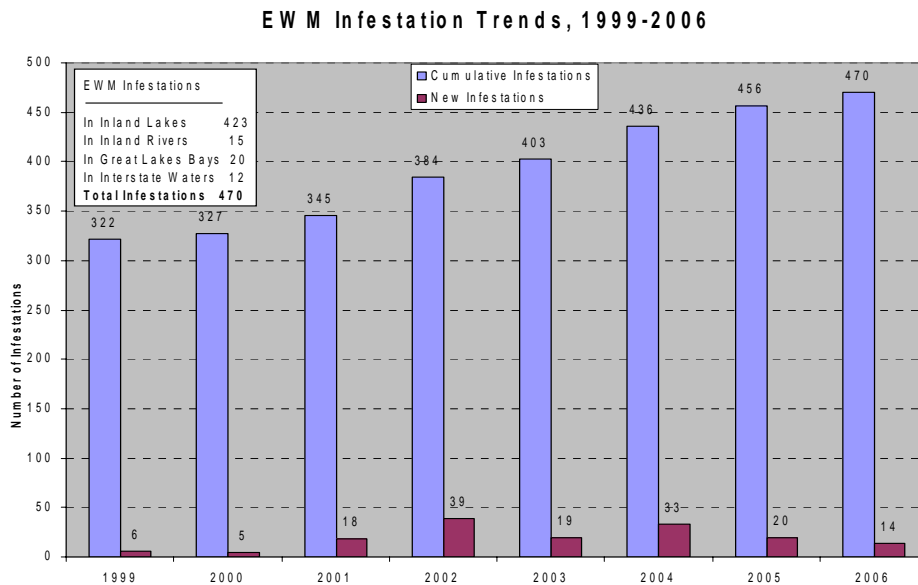
- a. Zebra Mussel and Spiny Water Flea surveys were conducted during 2006 by the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission and/or WDNR on the following lakes with all results being negative:
- 1) Big
 - 2) Big Muskellunge
 - 3) Island
 - 4) Presque Isle
 - 5) Star
 - 6) Trout

B. How Vilas County AIS Partnership activities fit into the big picture by Jeff Bode, WDNR Lakes & Wetlands Section Chief, Madison

1. 1989 – present Legislative support review

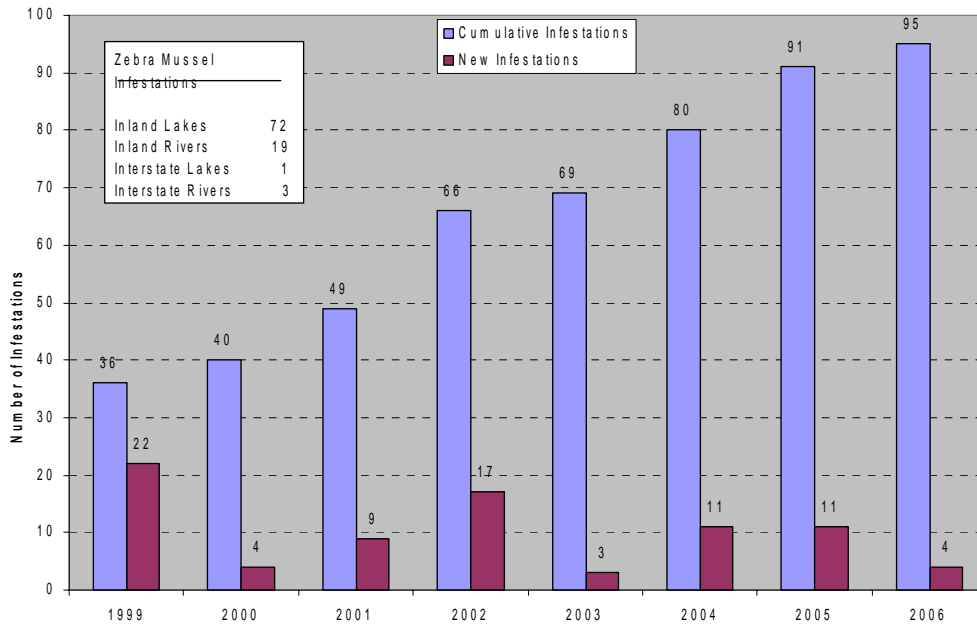
- o 1989 Request for Legislation & Funding
- o 1992 Report to the Legislature
- o 1993-1999 DNR Request for Legislation & Funding
- o 2001 Aquatic Invasive Species Law Passed
- o Watercraft Inspection \$50,000
- o Information & Education \$132,000
- o Monitoring & Research \$50,000
- o Purple Loosestrife Bio-control \$68,000
- o Total: \$300,000
- o 2003 Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grants
- o \$500,000 – Local Units of Government
- o 2005 AIS Control Grants \$1 Million

2. Wisconsin Eurasian Water-milfoil Trends



3. Wisconsin Zebra Mussel Trends

ZM Infestation Trends, 1999-2006

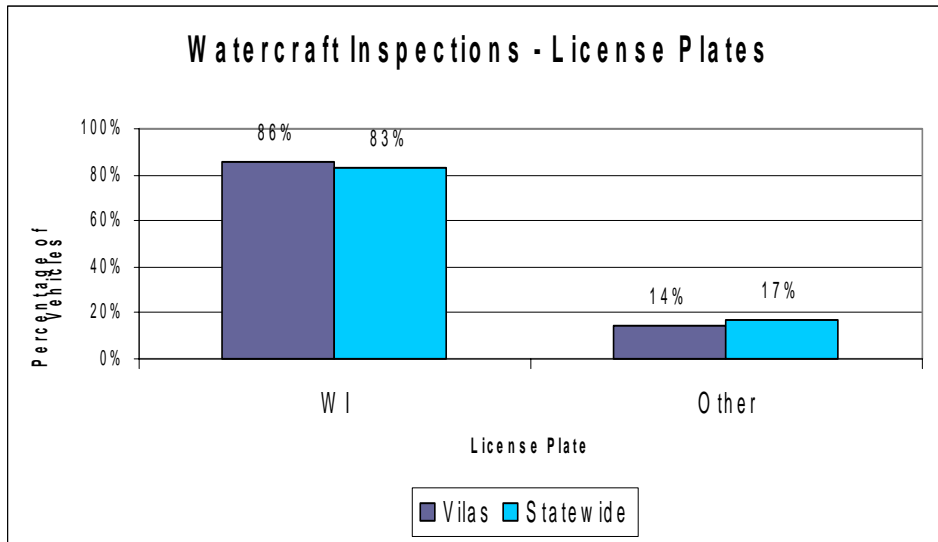


4. State vs. Vilas County Watercraft Inspection Statistics

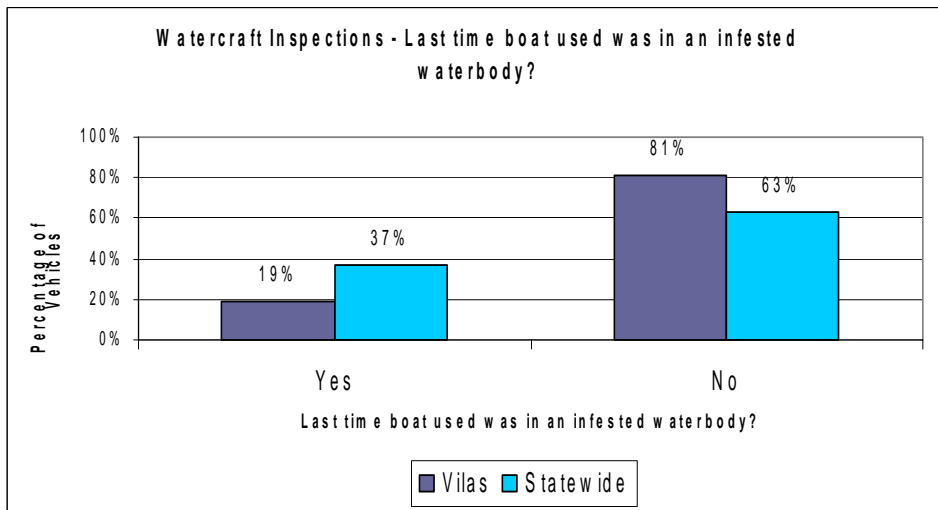
o Numbers of inspections

Year	Statewide	Vilas
2000	458	65
2002	246	
2003	2358	
2004	11521	124
2005	60290	659
2006*	46569	5541
	121442	6389

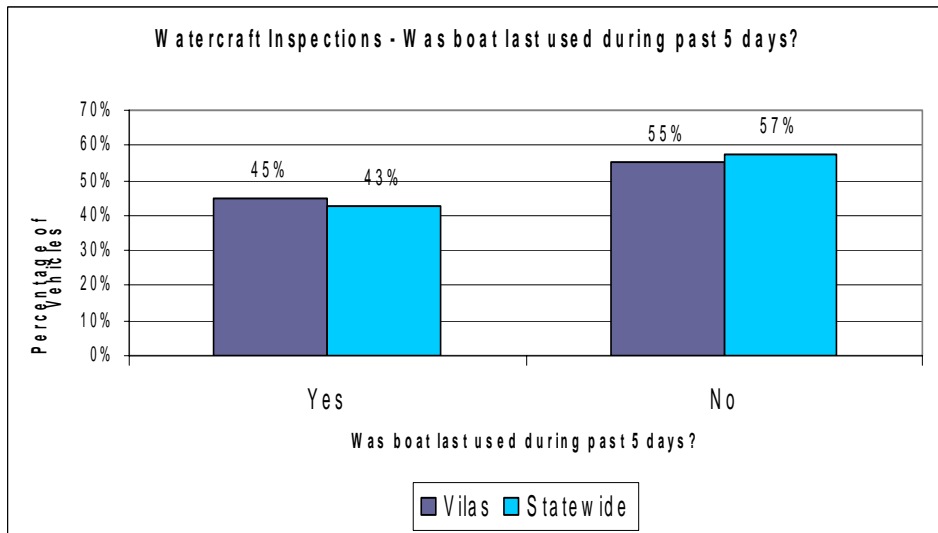
- Where did boats come from?



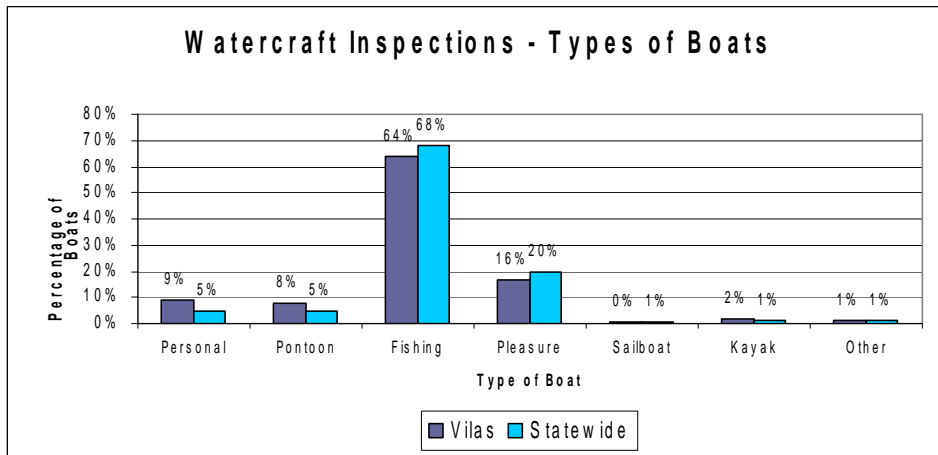
- Where were boats last?



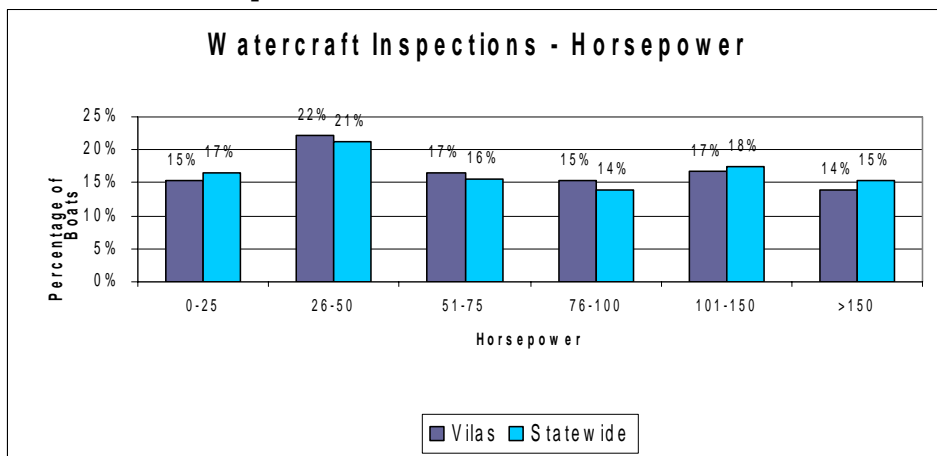
- When were boats used last?



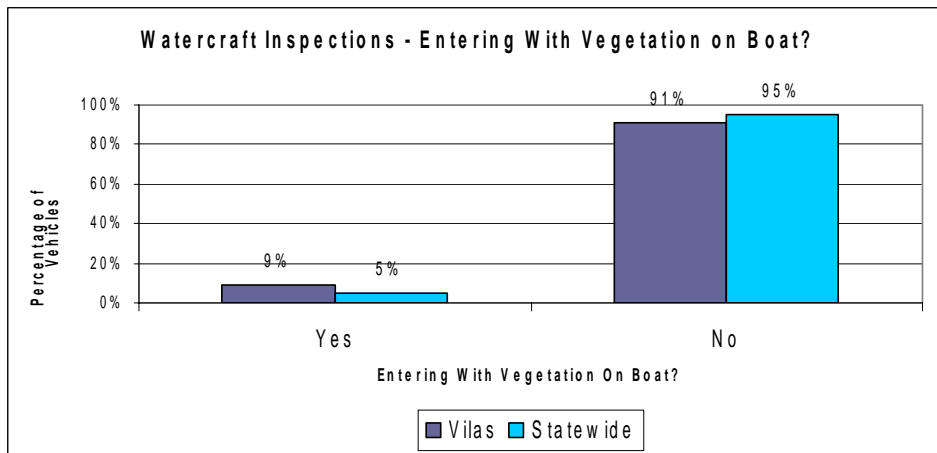
- What types of boats?



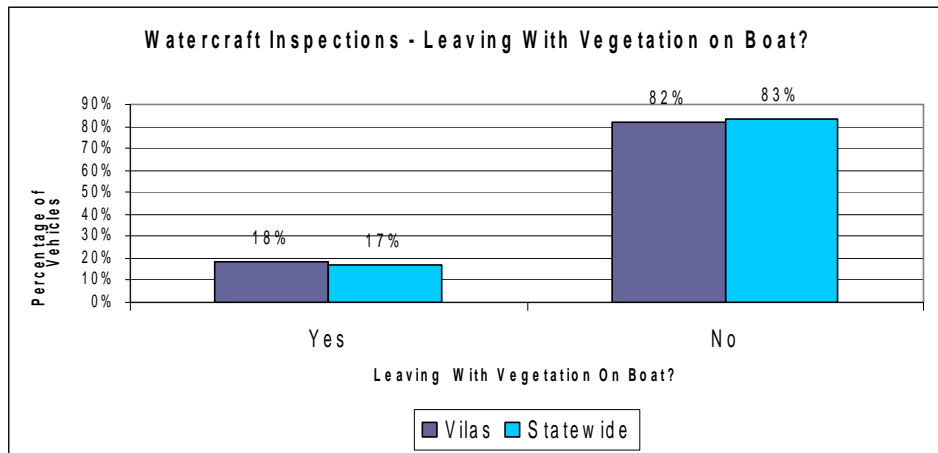
- Boat horsepower?



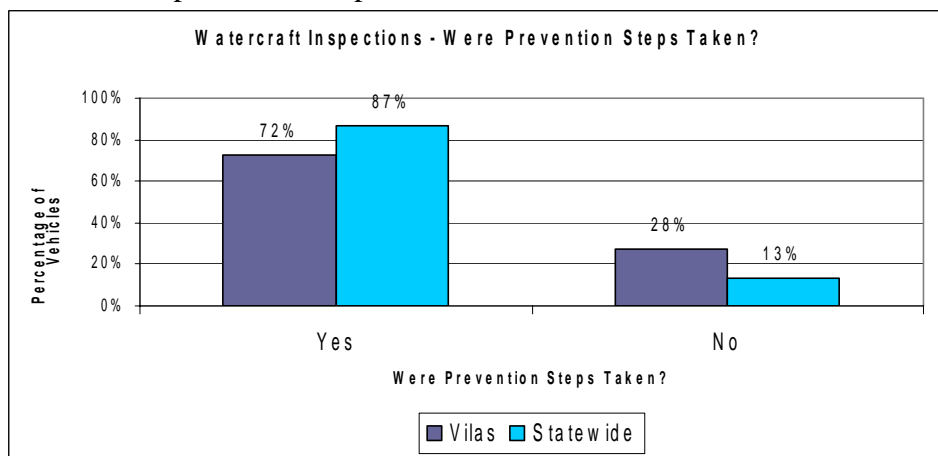
- How many boats arrive with weeds?



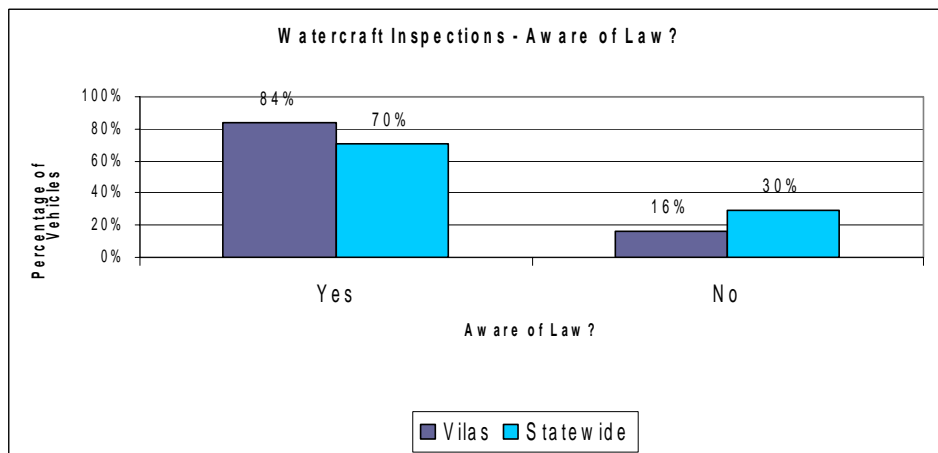
- How many boats leave with weeds?



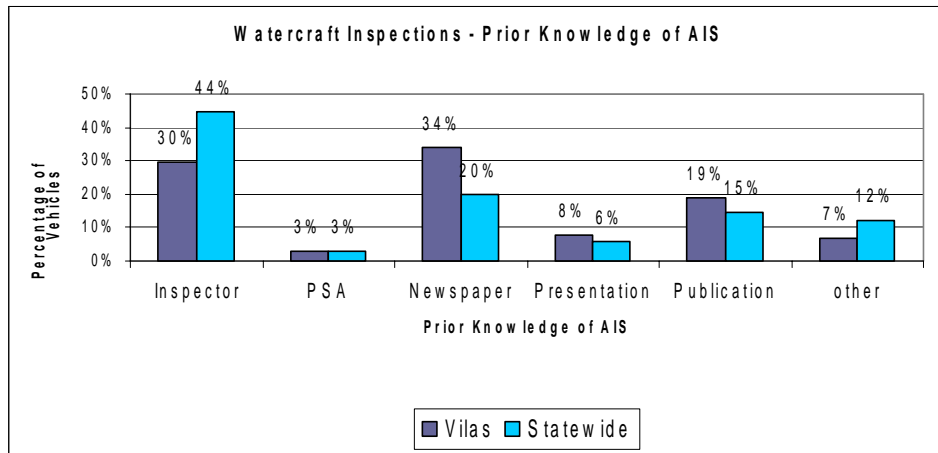
- Were prevention steps taken?



- Were boaters aware of AIS laws?



- Where did boaters learn of AIS laws?



5. 2004 AIS Grants:

2004 AIS Control Grants

- Education, Prevention & Planning Grants
 - 30 Projects Statewide / 14 in Northern WI
 - Vilas County Projects: 5
 - \$141,700 Statewide / \$22,865 in Vilas Co
- Control Grants
 - 8 Projects Statewide / 1 in Vilas Co Northern WI
 - \$383,647 / \$120,000

Totals: 38 Projects \$525,347 

6. 2005 AIS Grants:

2005 AIS Control Grants

- Planning, Prevention & Education Grants
 - 19 Projects Statewide / 13 in Northern WI (3)
 - \$305,022 / \$167,192 in Vilas Co
- Control Grants
 - 7 Projects Statewide / 3 in Northern WI
 - \$128,985 / None in Vilas Co
- Early Detection & Rapid Response
 - 8 Projects Statewide / All in Northern WI
 - \$55,002

Totals: 34 Projects \$489,009 

7. 2006 AIS Grants:

2006 AIS Control Grants

- Planning, Prevention & Education Grants
 - 40 Projects Statewide / 30 in Northern WI (5)
 - \$483,393 / \$61,421 in Vilas Co
- Control Grants
 - 10 Projects Statewide / 2 in Northern WI
 - \$283,223 / None in Vilas Co
- Early Detection & Rapid Response
 - 9 Projects Statewide / None in Northern WI
 - \$53,640

Totals: 59 Projects \$820,256

Vilas Co Total Grants: \$371,478



8. Where should we go from here?

So, where should we go from here?

- Enhance watercraft inspection, enforcement and citizen monitoring
- Increase the state's cost-share rate up to 75% and expand eligibility for associations
- Improve environmental outcomes of AIS control projects by rewarding community sponsors for their achievements
- Create county-wide AIS prevention and control - Fund County Water Conservation staff



Where should we go from here?

- Improve Rapid Detection & Response via contract/hire of survey crews to inventory and confirm presence, location and extent of invasive species
- Remove AIS grant bottle neck for Northern WI projects
 - Technical & Grant Assistance
- Research, Adaptive Management & Patience



9. Thank you!

Thank you!

**Vilas Co Land &
Water**

**Vilas Co Lakes Assoc
Towns**

Lake Organizations

Northern Region DNR

Citizens



C. Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) by Patrick Goggin, Vilas County Conservationist

- A brief history of CWMAs in the western U.S. was provided
- The concept of a CWMA in the Vilas County area to possibly address both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species issues was presented
- Copies of a “CWMA Cookbook”, a step by step guide on how to develop a CWMA were made available to attendees

D. Mystery snails update by Laura Herman, UWEX Lakes Partnership

- Characteristics of various snail species were compared
- An explanation was given of how lake monitoring protocol will be modified to include detecting and reporting the presence of non-native snail species

E. Plum Lake Town Lakes Committee signage initiative by Frank Splitt, Plum Lake Town Lakes Committee

- A boat landing sign recently designed by the Plum Lake Town Lakes Committee was shared
- Support for adoption of the sign as the new standard for reminding boaters of laws prohibiting the spread of invasive species was sought

F. Local media recognition by Ted Ritter, Vilas County AIS Coordinator

- Certificates of appreciation recognizing “Outstanding contributions to the Vilas County Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership” were awarded to:
 - The Vilas County News Review
 - The Lakeland Times
 - WERL / WRJO Radio
 - Newswatch 12 Television

G. State Senate Citation by Senator Roger Breske

- A lengthy commendation was presented on behalf of the Wisconsin Senate by Senator Breske to the Vilas County AIS Partnership for “the volunteers and staff who work so diligently in the interest of preserving Wisconsin’s natural resources, educating Wisconsin residents and visitors, and disseminating information and resources to those who are fighting the Crusade Against Exotic Invasive Species.”

H. Round table discussions:

- **Volunteer based inspection & monitoring programs – what works and what doesn't** by Laura Herman & Laura Felda-Marquardt, UWEX Lakes Program
 - Why is soliciting volunteers difficult?
 - Large percentage of lakefront property owners are non-residents
 - Part time property owners would rather donate \$ than time
 - Fear of confrontations at boat landings – lack of confidence
 - Lake monitoring volunteers are easier to find than watercraft inspectors
 - Are there sources for volunteers that are not being tapped?
 - Boy Scouts?
 - WI Conservation Corps?
 - AmeriCorps?
 - College interns?
 - Is a paid summer coordinator a good idea?
 - The towns of Cloverland, Lac du Flambeau, Manitowish Waters and Saint Germain have hired summer coordinators with varying degrees of satisfaction.
 - The labor pool is very limited – very few applicants for these positions. Good skills are critical.
 - Volunteer hours are credited at \$8.00 per hour, summer coordinators need to be paid considerably more if good candidates are to be attracted. At \$12.00 per hour coordinator pay the ratio of offsetting volunteer hours is 1.5:1.
 - Summer housing is an issue for nonresident coordinators
 - The cost of employment taxes must be built into the coordinator expenses.
 - Coordinator needs to be flexible and self motivated
 - Training sessions conducted by coordinator should be at a location not subject to weather conditions
- **What role can town lakes committees play in assisting lakes without associations in responding to AIS threats** by Carolyn Scholl, Vilas County Lakes Specialist
 - Think two scenarios and consider what roles town lakes committees can play for each:
 - Shoreline privately owned/developed with no lake org.
 - Shoreline publicly owned with no development and no lake org.
 - Education – distribute AIS information through mailings, publications and youth organizations
 - Encourage area lakes with organizations to include these lakes in their volunteer monitoring and watercraft inspection programs
 - Town committee hires individuals to monitor those lakes/landings – costs could be grant funded
 - Town committee conducts proactive town wide base line lake studies to include these lakes
 - Encourage lakes with private development to become organized by providing information of how to establish lake associations
 - Encourage lakes with private development to become organized by providing information of how to establish lake associations

- **AIS Grant tips** by Kevin Gauthier, WDNR Water Resources Management Specialist
 - Types of grants focused on: Education, Prevention & Planning
 - Questions and answers:
 - **Q.** What enhances the chances of getting an Early Detection/Rapid Response Grant? **A.** Nothing, these are awarded on a ‘first come first serve’ basis until funding runs out
 - **Q.** If a coordinator is hired, is there a tax issue? **A.** Kevin explained that usually the township will either hire the individual as an employee (town takes care of payroll taxes) or as an independent contractor (contractor pays own taxes). It is the grantee’s responsibility to comply with employment laws when considering hiring either an employee or a contractor.
 - **Q.** What is the annual grant cycle? **A.** Grant deadlines are February 1 and August 1. Applicants were encouraged to have Kevin review their applications as early as two months in advance of the deadline. Due to the number of applications Kevin receives, there is not always time to review applications just before the deadline and to amend the application prior to the statewide ranking meeting. Ranking meetings for the February grant deadline are held in mid-March and applicants are notified of grant awards or denials within the first two weeks of April.
 - **Q.** What is the State’s fiscal year? **A.** July 1 to June 30. The August grant submittal deadline historically has fewer applications than February. Groups should consider submitting applications in the August cycle when the annual funding is at 100% and competition for it is less. As of July 1, 2006, \$1,500,000 is available for AIS grants.
 - **Q.** Are grant \$ allocated between regions? **A.** No, it is a statewide allotment with open competition from the entire state.
 - **Q.** What are the “decision drivers”? **A.** There is a list of specific questions that DNR staff consider when ranking projects. Each question is answered with a range of points. Applicants can review the “Grants & Publications” website for a list of the ranking questions. Ted Ritter added that the ranking questions will also be placed on the new Vilas County AIS Partnership website by next spring.
 - **Q.** Under Section V of the application, what is meant by #2 Consulting Services? **A.** If a professional donates professional services such as grant writing or scuba diving to a grant funded project, the value of the donated time is at the professional hourly rate rather than \$8 per hour. This would not apply though to a lawyer donating time to conduct watercraft inspections at a boat landing. Only the value of donated professional services can be claimed at a rate higher than \$8 per hour.
 - **Q.** Under Section VI(A)(2), what is meant by “letters of support”? **A.** These are letters that support the scope of the project or provide financial support to the project. Kevin further explained that Section VI is really where the application process should be started. Applicants should consider each item and describe in detail what is requested and what the deliverables of the project will be.

- **Q.** What is the \$8 per hour about? **A.** This is the hourly rate that volunteer time will be credited at for volunteer match on AIS grants.
- **Q.** The grant process and form are intimidating. Is the Department trying to simplify the process? **A.** Hopefully workshops such as today will lessen intimidation and encourage lake groups to contact Kevin when questions arise.
- **Coalition building for achieving increased State funding for managing existing AIS infestations** by Gail Gilson-Pierce, River Alliance of Wisconsin, notes by Sue Drum:
 - Representative Dan Meyer lead the early discussion:
 - To build a statewide coalition Dan felt we need to make AIS a top DNR priority. WAL and other WI conservation groups should pressure the DNR. The Legislature funds the DNR. Under the Public Trust Doctrine, the DNR has responsibility for managing AIS. The Joint Finance Committee provides the funds.
 - A statewide AIS coalition should focus on aquatic problems only. The issue shouldn't be diluted with forestry (terrestrial) issues.
 - Potential coalition partners include:
 - Ducks Unlimited
 - Trout Unlimited
 - Musky Association
 - WAL
 - River Alliance
 - WI Land & Water Conservation Association
 - WI Conservation Congress
 - WI Wildlife Federation
 - UWEX
 - Tribes
 - Media
 - DNR – water people
 - U. S. Forestry
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Realtors/builders
 - How to get started:
 - Aggressively communicate with State legislators, the Governor and the DNR
 - Decide on a unified message
 - Identify potential obstacles
 - Find an ongoing funding stream
 - After the election, make the Governor's office aware of the importance of AIS funding as part of the new budget
 - Present ideas to Vilas Co Land & Water Conservation Committee
- **AIS public awareness and education techniques brainstorming** by Bill Klase, UWEX Headwaters Basin Natural Resources Educator
 - Highway billboards, especially on county land
 - Public service announcements in movie theaters – local schools, theater groups or college media classes could produce
 - Teachers resource network – expand existing events in include AIS
 - Real estate signs with CBCW message

- AIS float for area parades – donated pontoon boat, students could decorate
 - Captive audience public service announcements – i.e. dentist or medical clinic reception and waiting rooms
 - Non-traditional newsletters, public service announcements and tax bill inserts
 - Tap into non-commercial community services – i.e. high schools, scouting groups, churches
 - Solicit local service organization volunteers and provide such groups with AIS information
 - AIS message on gas pumps
 - Take the AIS prevention message to boat shows
 - Display AIS information at the Saint Germain summer flea markets
 - Boat washes during busy weekends – high school students
 - Include AIS message on boat registration forms
 - Incorporate AIS prevention activities into community service programs
 - Promote “Adopt-a-lake or shoreline” programs with lake organizations
- **Aquatic plant management plans – why, when and how** by Kevin Gauthier, WDNR Water Resources Management Specialist (notes by Susan Knight)
 - Kevin Gauthier (KG) discussed a research project in progress by DNR research showing there is no relationship between the amount of Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) in a lake and the intensity of past management history, suggesting that EWM management strategies are often not successful. An audience member commented that we don't know what lakes would look like had there been no treatment. KG replied that you would expect some relationship if treatments were at least sometimes successful and that there were lakes sampled with EWM and they had low amounts of EWM.
 - KG discussed the Aquatic Plant Management (APM) plan guide as guidance to creating a plan. He pointed out that there will be a better understanding of the lake and will make it possible to create a map delineating plant communities, invasive species, sensitive areas and special fishery habitats.
 - The plan will help direct management by creating clear goals and minimizing guess work. KG discussed the benefits of being proactive and creating plans before there are any problems. KG noted that Vilas County, unlike many other counties, is leading the way in being proactive, with several Vilas County towns already in the process of creating APM plans. KG noted that volunteers can do much of the work, but plant surveys should be done by professionals. Audience members commented that when volunteers do some of the work, they become much more engaged with the health of the lake beyond their property up to the water's edge. KG explained that an APM plan is useful for the future. He noted that people should first aim to ensure that native plants are healthy and second, that we try to control invasive plants. To do this, we need to have a baseline so that we can evaluate the success of treatments. The audience questioned what to do about lakes that share state, or town borders. KG and several audience members commented that there have been many examples of cooperation. Further, plans will allow assessments and comparisons of lakes statewide including those being watched by the DNR, the private sector or other entities creating plans.

- KG quickly reviewed the components of the APM plan. He described the Point Intercept method, noting that the DNR research will create the points for any lake. Volunteers can do much of the water quality work for the plan. The APM plan requires a map of the watershed including any sources of pollutants. A major part of the plan is to educate riparian owners and the greater community with all the information gathered for the plan. Finally, KG stressed how important it is to include a fisheries component to the plan. Fish rely on healthy plants, good water quality and a healthy watershed. The plan must address the potential impacts of any management decision on the fishery. Lake groups must understand that all components of the lake are interdependent and that when you treat or alter one aspect of the lake, other parts of the lake will also be affected.

I. Meeting wrap up and adjournment by Ted Ritter

- Thanks to Wild Eagle Lodge for free use of facility
- Thanks to Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department for lunch and other refreshments