

## Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring

“Asian Carp close to Wisconsin”; “Red Swamp Crayfish in Washington and Kenosha Counties”. These headlines may cause momentary concern but luckily, they are not “here” – right? Wait....”Sacred Lotus and Water Pennywort found in Delavan Lake”.

Yes, that’s right, both Sacred Lotus and Water Pennywort, two extremely aggressive aquatic invasive species (AIS), were introduced to Delavan Lake sometime in the last few years. Luckily, both species were discovered by people that were out on the lake and well-informed about AIS. Once discovered, samples were collected and sent to Dr. Robert Freckmann at the Freckmann Herbarium in Stevens Point, for positive identification. As soon as these species were positively identified as invasive species, the Department of Natural Resources immediately began to work with the local municipality to implement rapid response plans, which is the best chance for eradication. So, while Delavan Lake is unlucky to have these new invasive species, it is very lucky that there are trained invasive species monitors out on the lake looking for unwanted species.

You might be thinking that all invasives are introduced to lakes by boaters and anglers. This is not true, there are actually several different ways that AIS can get into a lake. However, boats are one known pathway, so to help prevent AIS introductions via boaters and anglers, a great prevention program was put in place in 2004. The program is Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CB,CW) and works to train individuals to work at their local boat launches to educate boaters about aquatic invasive species and the prevention methods required to stop the spread. The CB,CW program is working very well in Walworth County and around the State, and while it can not provide a 100% guarantee against new AIS, it has been shown to make a huge difference.

So how did Sacred Lotus and Water Pennywort get into in Delavan Lake? Unfortunately, these two invasives closely resemble native aquatic plants. It is believed that they were introduced to Delavan Lake by well-meaning but misinformed gardeners.

You may be reading this thinking, “At least they aren’t in my lake”. Wait... are you sure? Have you looked? Has anyone looked? Does anyone know when to look and what to look for? These are important questions because it is difficult to believe that Delavan Lake is the only lake in the area that could have new invasive species. Unfortunately, there are simply not enough agency staff to look for AIS on all the lakes in Wisconsin. Fortunately, there are more and more lake loving citizens that are willing and able to give a little time every summer to help monitor their lakes for invasive species. However, more help is always needed. We are hoping that some of you reading this will consider becoming a volunteer AIS monitor on your lake. Monitoring for AIS on your lake does not need to take a lot of time. Often monitoring teams can be organized so that the work is divided up. Volunteers can choose which AIS they would like to monitor for or they can be trained to monitor for many different AIS.

For anyone that is interested in learning how to look for AIS on their lakes, or would simply like a little more information about the program, there is an excellent program called Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN). This program provides all the training, support and often the equipment needed to organize and carry out a monitoring program. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements in 2013 about a CLMN workshop/training right here in Walworth County. Or if you would like more information now, please contact the Walworth County Lake Specialist and Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator at (262) 741-7902 or [agreen@co.walworth.wi.us](mailto:agreen@co.walworth.wi.us)