



Plants out of Place

The newsletter of the
INVASIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN

Issue 8 July 2004

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Mark your Calendars

The IPAW Annual Members Meeting will be held in Madison, Wisconsin, in conjunction with the Wild Ones Native Landscaping Conference. The meeting will be in the UW Memorial Union, Beefeater Room (3rd Floor) from 12:30 - 1:30 on Saturday, August 7, 2004.

Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin Annual Meeting Agenda

1. Introduction of board of directors and officers
2. Minutes of previous annual meeting
3. Financial report
4. Report and Discussion of activities
 - A) Science committee
 - List of invasive weeds
 - Mapping of invasive weeds
 - B) Chapter activity
 - C) Activities of Education Committee

"The Battle of Durst Rockshelter"

Baraboo Hills, Sauk County

By Gary Rubin, Volunteer for The Nature Conservancy

"I'm very worried about garlic mustard at Durst." When this call came in from our friend and Nature Conservancy staff advisor Jim Welsh, the members of our volunteer stewardship group were happily unaware what the discovery of this infestation would mean for our efforts in the Baraboo Hills.

Durst Rockshelter Preserve also was not well known to us. Although it lies near TNC's large and critically important Hemlock Draw, the 40-acre Durst is surrounded by private lands, and was closed to visitation. By the time Jim and staff checked on the property, the garlic mustard had clearly been there for some years.

Those of you who have worked at this invasive weed know what this means. We were confronted with a very large contiguous patch of four-foot-tall garlic mustard in full flower, widespread outlying patches, and a well-established seed bank in rich soil.

Adding extra urgency was the beauty and natural values of the forested preserve. Named for an archaeological site on the property, Durst has one of the best communities of ephemeral wildflowers to be found in the Hills, including several orchid species.

As we began to dig into what became known (not affectionately) as the "Big Patch", some factors were in our favor. We had the huge asset of a pre-existing volunteer group, built around the leadership of Steve Jandl, all dedicated to help protect the Baraboo Hills. The willingness of our members to persist in a long-term effort meant we had a chance at success.

Durst Rockshelter continued on page 2

***Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin
Education Committee Meeting***

June 8, 2004
Stevens Point, WI

Present:

Rolf Utegaard, IPAW Board; Amy Staffen, WI-DNR; David Bayer, UW Extension; Lauren Ebbecke, Interim Education Chair; and Jerry Doll, UW-Agronomy-Madison.

Define Outcomes:

Review Agenda
Identify chairperson(s)
Identify priority items
Develop action plan with timeframe for priority items

1. The Minutes from the February meeting were reviewed and approved.
2. Amy Staffen offered to help co-chair the Education committee.
3. A representative is needed for the Governor's Council in Madison. Rolf lives too far away, but has considered it. He would be willing to be an interim rep and communicate via e-mails since it is only 4 times a year. However, to date no one has volunteered for this position. (Update: A representative has been found to replace Rolf as an interim volunteer).
4. Rolf stated that he would pass on the display to Kelly to take to the Invasive Plant Symposium in Chicago on October 16 as part of the Natural Areas Conference.
5. The Minnesota "Invasive Species Awareness" Month was discussed. Jerry Doll suggested we start out with an "Invasive Weed Awareness Week" in Wisconsin in 2005. The committee agreed to address this item again at the next meeting. Lauren will get information from Minnesota on their Awareness month including press releases, workshops, field days, etc...
6. David Bayer is interested in working on a short one page summary for legislators on Invasive weeds and Amy Staffen volunteered to help with the Legislative Field Day.
7. David Bayer reported updating his CD presentation. He also stated he is still working on the Speaker's Bureau and has contacted Lisa Johnson in Dane County. He requested that Lauren to post an e-mail regarding the speaker's bureau on the IPAW listserv.
8. Amy reported that the education committee has indeed identified targeted audiences and she would forward that information to Kelly.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Durst Rockshelter continued from page 1

Our first-year efforts were aimed at the emergency of thousands of flowering plants in the Big Patch ready to contribute even more seeds to the soil. We were mostly successful in preventing this from happening, at a cost of long days and a hard effort. I wish today that we had a count of the huge heavy bags of garlic mustard we carried down this hill. It was a lot! I'm sure that each of us had thoughts of not being able to complete the task.

Following that first spring, we began to plan what would clearly have to be a continuing campaign. We decided to hold garlic mustard workdays each Saturday in April and May. In following years, this intensive, sustained schedule began to show results.

We noticed early on that, due to topography and vegetation, we tended to search and re-search some areas, while missing others. It was difficult to keep track of the parts of the preserve that had been worked on each year. To make a more organized search possible, we put in a grid marked by corner trees and lines of ribbons. Along with this, a mapping project led by Sherren Clark gave us a guide for our work, and helped track our progress and identify areas that needed more attention.

Now that we've been involved at Durst for almost 10 years, I can report a lot of success and some continuing concerns. The Big Patch is no more. Wildflowers continue to flourish, and garlic mustard is under control. Small patches and individual garlic mustard plants remain, and we have had to realize that we will probably never be able to eradicate it from the preserve. In addition, the weed is established on the neighbor's land. With permission, we had extended our control efforts to these areas, and are covering twice as much land as in the early years. As our efforts show results, we've found that we can cover more than twice as much land in less time than when the garlic mustard was more prevalent. We are using the environmentally friendly herbicide "Round-Up" on less sensitive lands to save time, but have used hand-pulling almost exclusively on TNC-owned lands.

Looking back, we've learned a few lessons from the experience. In the first years, we should have made an effort to establish and defend a perimeter to keep outlying plants from running away from us into areas where we cannot easily follow. Other lessons--all learned the hard way-- include:

- Catch it early! This is the single best thing you can do toward control.
- If possible, set up a grid or other tracking system to ensure you are covering all the needed areas.
- Find a simple but effective disposal method. We found after experimenting that garlic mustard seed doesn't stay viable after two years in black plastic trash bags. The plastic can be removed, and the compost dumped in a location that can be monitored.
- To make the best progress, areas need to be worked on twice a year. No method, herbicide or pulling, will catch all the sprouts or missed plants in one pass.

Certainly the Battle of Durst has been a lot of hard work. But I can say that it has also been a great pleasure to spend spring days in this beautiful place, to develop friendships around a shared task, to see the orchids bloom, and to experience the satisfaction of a sustained effort in a good cause.

There are many individuals and groups today working on garlic mustard control, and efforts continue to find a biological control. Keep encouraged; your efforts can really make a difference. Working together we can keep our woodlands diverse and beautiful.

Curly-leaf Pondweed in Half Moon Lake Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

The aquatic plant community in Half Moon Lake is characterized by abundant plant and average-to-good diversity, with much of the diversity in the emergent plant community.

Potamogeton crispus, curly-leaf pondweed, is the dominant species early in the growing season. This is a non-native plant species that has been introduced into many lakes in Wisconsin. Because of its early growth, curly-leaf pondweed can suppress the growth of native aquatic plant species.

P. crispus has an advantage over other species due to its early growth. It starts its growth during the fall when the lake water starts to cool. Once ice is off in the spring, it can quickly reach the surface before other aquatic plant species have attained much growth. *P. crispus* can then suppress the growth of other species by shading them as they are just starting their growth.

Because *Potamogeton crispus* is a cold water species, it will start to die-back in June. Its decrease and decay releases nutrients that can feed algal blooms and thus reduce water clarity which will further shade other aquatic plant species.

James et. Al. (2000) found that 40% of the phosphorus in the *P. crispus* plant tissue was released in the first two days. Water monitoring confirmed that phosphorus and algae increased dramatically in Half Moon Lake from Mid-June to mid-July (James et. al. 2000).

Early season harvesting of *Potamogeton crispus* can lessen the impacts of *P. crispus* and result in improved water clarity.

- 1) Harvesting will open areas and allow light to penetrate to other species. This can increase the growth and diversity of other plant species.
- 2) Early harvesting removes the curly-leaf pondweed plant tissue and the nutrients in the tissue from the lake. Mechanical harvesting removed 33% of the phosphorus that was tied up in *P. crispus* plant tissue in Half Moon Lake July (James et. al. 2000). These nutrients are removed from the lake not available to feed algae blooms.
- 3) Early season harvesting of *Potamogeton crispus* before the formation and release of buds (turions) will result in better long-term control of *P. crispus* than harvesting in the late spring and summer. Turions are the buds from which new growth starts in the fall.
- 4) Mechanical harvesting results in the immediate opening of dense plant beds and does not result in the water-use restrictions that are prudent after chemical treatments.

Mechanical harvesting appears to have improved the quality of the aquatic plant and fish community in Half Moon Lake.

Since 1995, there have been some improvements in the aquatic plant community:

- 1) a modest decrease in the frequency of occurrence of *Potamogeton crispus* from 82% frequency in June 1995 to 77% frequency in June 2000
- 2) a decrease in filamentous algae from 83% frequency in 1995 to 78% frequency in 2000
- 3) a decrease in the total occurrence and density of the plant growth.
- 4) improvements in the fish community since the harvesting program began (Holzer 1995).

Let's all be friends of Half Moon Lake

Don Huebscher

Leader-Telegram Staff

If you've ever driven an out-of-town relative or friend around Eau Claire to "see the sites," a spin through Carson Park is on just about everybody's list.

It's unquestionably one of our community treasures, and it's smack dab in the middle of our city. When you take a walk or slow drive on the road along the park's western bluff, and look out through the trees over Half Moon Lake, you'd swear you were in the wilderness, not surrounded by 60,000 people.

But a hint of urbanization is apparent in the 132-acre lake, which turns shades of green when the summer heats up and

Friends continued from page 3

the algae is in full bloom. Trying to keep the lake looking nice is not an easy job, but a necessary one if we are to preserve this urban gem for our continued enjoyment and for future generations.

Fortunately, a group is forming to spearhead efforts to keep the lake clean and to educate the rest of us about how we can help. The Friends of Half Moon Lake has about a dozen members and is looking for more. Forming such a group was among the recommendations from a task force appointed by the City Council in 2001 to study the lake.

“We want to promote it as being a highlight for the city of Eau Claire rather than an eyesore,” group co-chair Sue Kaul told Leader-Telegram reporter Joe Knight.

One of the group’s goals is to improve the water quality to the point that people would consider swimming there again. Supervised swimming ended in 1988 when the beach closed.

Experts say the lake was once a bend in the Chippewa River that became so sharp that the river forged a new channel and left the U-shaped lake behind. It is estimated that this probably happened several hundred years before white settlers arrived in the area.

As a result, there is no natural flow of fresh water through the lake. To try to compensate, the city pumps water out of the river at Owen Park across to the lake. However, the lack of natural springs, a maximum depth of just 9 feet, a mean depth of 6 feet, and some 15 entry points for storm sewers are too much for the lake to overcome, especially during the heat of the summer. The Leader-Telegram files are full of stories about Half Moon algae blooms, swimmer’s itch, etc. The best solution would be a comprehensive dredging project to remove the centuries of sediment that have accumulated in the lake. But to get down to the original sand bed would cost millions of dollars, something anyone who has studied local or state government lately knows isn’t available.

So the friends group will stress less expensive measures along with raising public awareness about the responsibility we all have to keep the lake as clean as possible.

A 1999 study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said a contributing factor to algae blooms is the stirring up the phosphorus-laden sediment that’s already in the lake through wave action. That’s why it was recommended that the Ski Sprites move their exhibitions elsewhere. Powerboats are prohibited from the lake.

Other measures being talked about include chemical treatment of the lake to reduce algae growth, and possibly urging the City Council to OK a second weed cutter to eliminate weeds during a crucial point in their “growing season.” But more immediate, if not drastic steps that might help according to observers is for people living near the lake to use less lawn fertilizer, which in turn would reduce the amount of those chemicals finding their way into the storm sewers and the lake, which fertilize the algae.

And then there’s something all park users can and should do: Pick up after yourself and others. That means no cans, cups, bait containers, fishing line or other assorted garbage left lying in the park that ends up in the lake.

Any gem has to be polished every now and then. Half Moon Lake and Carson Park are no different. We all should support the efforts of the “Friends” group.

Don Huebscher, editor

The Fight is On Against the Evil Purple Invader

by Samantha Smith

Wisconsin Master Gardener

You don't have to be a tree-hugging Greenie to realize the damage that invasive plants are causing in our environment. Buckthorn, garlic mustard, and leafy spurge are but a few of the many plants that are taking over and pushing native plants out. These plants cause millions of dollars of damage, increased production costs (pesticides), and lost profits every year. Environmentalists, hunters, fishermen and farmers alike are fighting one invasive: Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*. Purple Loosestrife is an exotic perennial plant of European origin that is invading and degrading wetland habitats across North America. It forms dense monotypic stands in a variety of wetland and lakeshore habitats replacing native plant species, thus degrading food, shelter and nesting sites for wildlife and fish.

Purple Loosestrife is a splendid performer in the garden but escapes so in North Dakota, where the loosestrife invasion is picking up speed, groups like the Girl Scouts and FFA are offering to exchange loosestrife plants for Liatris, a hardy purple flowered non-invasive plant. The North Dakota Agriculture Department, the Game and Fish Department and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided funding for several exchanges around the state according to *The Bismarck Tribune*. Ken Eraas, North Dakota State Agriculture weed specialist is quoted in *The Tribune*, "Gardeners often think they have destroyed purple loosestrife by cutting it down when actually they created a perfect situation for it to spread

Purple Invader continued on page 5.

Purple Invader *continued from page 4.*

It can have a huge economic impact on our fishing and hunting future and it has caused more dissension between weed officers and citizens than any other issue." Eraas said that the Ag Department borrowed this plant exchange idea from Nebraska, where loosestrife is a huge economic problem.

Here in Wisconsin, the City of Superior is also fighting purple loosestrife to help the environment and spur economic growth. Approximately 70 percent of undeveloped land within the City is wetlands of varying degrees of quality. In order for a developer to build in wetland areas, they must get permits from the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources. To streamline the process the City negotiated a Special Area Management Plan, or SAMP. The SAMP is essentially a series of general permits issued by the Corps, which makes the City the administering authority for the development of specified wetland areas. The City has established a wetland mitigation "bank." Paul King, the City of Superior's Engineer said, "We decided to fight Purple Loosestrife as part of our SAMP. We get wetland mitigation credits for what is called wetland enhancement. For every three acres of infested wetland that the City enhances, we can put one wetland acre in our "account" to use for development within the City of Superior. The City has several options to get mitigation credits. The City can preserve upland buffers, preserve endangered wetlands, create new wetlands, or enhance existing high quality wetlands."

Engineer King continued, "I think enhancing the existing wetlands makes a lot more sense ecologically than creating more wetlands. It is hard to replicate the diversity in natural wetlands. Also, we are hard pressed to find sites large enough that don't already contain a significant amount of wetlands to create these new wetlands. So we would have to create wetlands outside the city limits. It makes more sense to preserve and enhance the high quality wetlands we already have in the City than to out and try to create more."

Mitigating wetlands is not cheap, but as King said, "When you compare the cost of buying land, constructing, monitoring and maintaining a created wetland, it's a much deal for the taxpayer and the environment to preserve and enhance existing wetlands."

Several years ago the Corps and City decided to enhance about 75 acres of important wetlands in Pokegama Bay on the St. Louis River for mitigation credits. King contacted an environmental consulting firm called Fortin Consulting which works on invasive plant control, shoreline restoration, and native plant restoration as well as advocating for road salt use reform in Minnesota working to find better ways to keep the roads and waters safe.

Connie Fortin of Fortin Consulting said, "We have worked with a variety of cities to control purple loosestrife within the city limits. Many of the projects include an education/outreach component and include volunteers in the entire process of rearing insects for biological control of purple loosestrife. The City of Superior is the most aggressive city we have worked with as far as its commitment to purple loosestrife control. They have worked with volunteers and many branches of the city staff to help dig the plants, rear and release the *Galerucella* beetle that feeds exclusively on purple loosestrife. The size of Superior's annual operation is many times the size of other cities and with good reason, the City of Superior is built on a wetland thus lots of perfect loosestrife habitat. Only with an aggressive control program will the City of Superior protect its wetlands and shorelines."

Currently there are no chemical or mechanical methods that provide long-term control of established stands of purple loosestrife. Biological control (the use of natural enemies) shows real promise. *Galerucella* (pronounced gal' uh roo sell' uh) beetles introduced to areas infested with loosestrife feed on the plants and can effectively reduce levels of purple loosestrife. The introduction of the insects is not intended to eradicate purple loosestrife but to reduce its abundance and allow native plants to make a recovery. The beetle introduction should take place over several years to insure a healthy population of insects. Once the loosestrife is eaten up, the beetles move on to other loosestrife stands or die as their entire life cycle is spent on purple loosestrife.

The City of Superior started their loosestrife control activity on Pokegama Bay in the spring of 2002. 100 loosestrife plants were dug from the wetland, potted up and allowed to grow about 18 to 24 inches tall in kiddie wading pools filled with several inches of water. There are ten pots of loosestrife per pool, referred to as a "station." *Galerucella* beetles are then collected from previous DNR beetle release sites and put on the potted plants. Ten beetles are put in each pot before they lay their eggs each spring, netting about 1000 babies per pot. Each plant is covered in mesh to ensure the little darlings won't escape or be eaten by bugs, birds, or spiders as the beetles are a favorite food of many. After the babies are born they begin eating the loosestrife voraciously. This stage requires careful monitoring as the beetles quickly destroy their host plant. The beetles and the plant are then taken back to the wetland and the beetles munch their way through the loosestrife infested area. By mid July of this year, well over 400 pots of beetles, or an estimated 200,000 beetles will have been released into the Pokegama Bay infested area.

Already the loosestrife health at the Pokegama Bay site is diminishing. Loosestrife in both the release and non-release

Purple Invader *continued from page 5.*

. areas are showing signs of beetle chewings and diminished bloom. Each loosestrife plant can release tens of thousands of seeds annually. The tiny black seeds quickly spread to start new colonies. The Loosestrife density on the Pokegama Bay control area has already decreased at four of the ten survey sites, and this is the result of the 2002 release as the 2003 beetles haven't had time to make an impact yet and the 2004 release won't happen until July.

The City will continue to monitor Pokegama Bay and do another plant inventory. King said, "This growing season we hope to identify other wetland areas that are inundated with purple loosestrife and continue our control efforts elsewhere. We are also going to go after Reed canary grass in one of our created wetland mitigation sites so it does not become a dominant species and degrade the quality of that wetland.' For more information on fighting purple loosestrife contact Paul King with the City of Superior kingp@ci.superior.wi.us, Fortin Consulting at www.fortinconsulting.com, The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission at www.glifwc.org, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at www.dnr.state.wi.us, or The Wisconsin Wetlands Association at www.wiscwetlands.org. It is against the law to knowingly grow or cultivate *Lythrum salicaria*.

(Smith is a loosestrife warrior whose loosestrife fighting work includes volunteering with the City of Superior's loosestrife control efforts, loosestrife inventory with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association and speaking in schools about invasive plants. She gardens at her home in the woods near Foxboro, WI and on Minnesota's Lake of the Woods. She hates purple loosestrife really badly.)

Get Involved in Regional and County Groups!

The following groups are actively working at invasive species control around Wisconsin. They can use your help! Contacts are listed.

Central - Mike Engel
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Western - Rolf Uttegaard
bigute-hort@prodigy.net
(715) 834-0065

Northwoods Weed Initiative - Quita Sheehan
(715) 479-2827

Northeastern – Coordinator needed
http://www.uwgb.edu/biodiversity/herbarium/invasive_species/invasive_plants01.htm

Southern - Coordinator needed

Southeast - Coordinator needed

Milwaukee County Weed Out - Ken Solis
ksolis@drjump.com
(414) 423-1709
<http://www.theparkpeople-milwaukee.org/>

Southwest - Coordinator needed

Door County - Carolyn Rock
rockc@dnr.state.wi.us
920-823-2400
<http://clean-water.uwex.edu/lakeshore/dcist/>

Greater Sauk County - Jen Stewart, jstewart@co.sauk.wi.us

Monroe County - Kim Mello
kim.mello@emh2.mccoys.army.mil
(608) 388-5766

Brown County - Paul Hartman
paul.hartman@ces.uwex.edu
(920) 391-4610

Beaver Creek Citizen Science Center

The Beaver Creek Citizen Science Center, located near Fall Creek, Wisconsin, works to involve citizens in activities that contribute to environmental research. In the process, participants grow closer to their environment and become better stewards.

Volunteer stream monitoring is a popular project. Citizens are trained to monitor for temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, flow, habitat assessment and macroinvertebrate (stream critter) populations. Together, these parameters paint a picture of a stream's health and can highlight changes over the years.

If you find the springtime calls of frogs and toads intriguing, join our frog and toad survey. Commit to three evenings in the spring and early summer, choose one or more wetlands and record the species of frogs and toads you hear. Because amphibians are particularly sensitive to environmental conditions, they are good indicators of problems with wetlands.

Wetlands are also threatened by purple loosestrife, a Eurasian invasive plant that, left unchecked, can destroy wetlands in a few short years. We train citizen volunteers to identify purple loosestrife, then ask them to drive a particular route in search of this beautiful menace. Biocontrol with *Galerucella* beetles will be initiated where needed. Over 50% of our wildlife depend on wetlands at some point in their life cycle, and wetlands are important in filtering water and contributing to flood control.

If watching wildlife is a favorite past time, become a Wisconsin NatureMapper. Observe wildlife in the field, then report it to our interactive website, www.wisnatmap.org. The information you collect will help resource agencies in their wildlife management decisions. Special NatureMapping projects will target invasive plants, as well.

More and more, citizen help is needed to keep an eye on the environment. You can be an important part of this effort. Contact the Beaver Creek Citizen Science Center at 715-877-2212 or csc@beavercreekreserve.org for more information, and make a difference in your community.

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Plants out of Place is a periodic newsletter distributed to the members of **IPAW**.

Send comments, suggestions, and articles that you think may be of interest to IPAW members to:

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For information on joining and a membership form, email:
Membership@IPAW.org

Check out what IPAW is working on! Or go to www.ipaw.org

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