

Aquatic Invasive species gathering at Fisherman's Park in Sparta

Attendees: **Al and Kate Hoff**, Residents, City of Sparta; **Brad Gilbertson**, Parks Director, City of Sparta; **Chris Barlow**, Greenfield TSP; **Christina Mulder**, Monroe Co. Land Conservation; **Andre, Andre and Alice Paque** Portland Tsp; **Michelle Komiskey**, NRCS USDA, Guest speaker **Alex Selle** AIS Regional Coordinator – West Region, Division of Environmental Management, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Alex covers 22 counties, working with Lake Associations and Clean Lakes Clean Waters

Prior to the premeeting Alex Selle (don't pronounce the second e) and MK went on a Phragmites ID tour along Hwy 16 to Oakdale and gathered samples of the native, then went to a site in Tomah that Alex had already identified as the nonnative and extremely invasive version of "Common Reed Grass".

Alex used the plants they harvested to demonstrate the identifying characteristics. It is extremely difficult to tell them apart by a photograph, but in the field the flowers are distinguishable (invasive is purple, native brown), and the stem of the native is smooth when you roll it between your finger and fingernail, the invasive feels grooved'. The invasive ones are usually taller too.

The most widely distributed flowering plant in the world, Phragmites is a huge and expensive problem on the east side of the state, it will survive in most wetlands choking out everything else and likes salt, so it is happy growing along our roadsides in lateral ditches.

In Monroe County we only have the one known area and it will be a good thing to "nip it in the bud".

The next plant we discussed was Japanese Knotweed. There is a patch growing in some riprap across from Fisherman's Park.

He also brought pressed leaves of Bohemian (a Prohibited species) and Common Japanese Knotweed (a Restricted Species). The Bohemian leaf was considerably larger, there is also Giant KW, also prohibited that has leaves about 12" across. Alex recapped the NR 40 rule explaining the difference between Restricted and Prohibited species. One reason this could be important is Prohibited species may be eligible for more grant options.

Gilbertson said that they sprayed it with Milestone two years ago which seemed very effective, leaving only a few spouts, but they missed it last year and it has exploded again. It is on the schedule to spray soon.

We had a brief conversation about invasive species signage at boat and canoe landings Alex told us they are not mandatory but if we need some, he can get them to us. (Agenda item, next meeting?)

A sidebar to the discussion is that there is currently a dilemma about the future of Perch Lake. The cost estimates to bring the dam up to code and possible dredging of the accumulated sediment in the impoundment are causing planners to look at a controversial alternative to remove the dam and use rip rap to create a whitewater park with the La Crosse River as the centerpiece.

We noticed Spotted Knapweed on the edges of the canoe landing prompting a discussion about invasives being spread down river.

Next, we were given the opportunity to study some invasive invertebrates including New Zealand Mud snails, Faucet Snails (kills ducks), Chinese Mystery Snails, Asian Clams, Zebra Mussels and Quagga Mussels. There is a study that suggests the costs of invasive species efforts now surpass the economic benefits of the associated with the St Lawrence Seaway.

One Great lakes success story has been the Sea Lamprey-held at bay using high tech methods. The Aquatic Invasive Species community (scribes' word, not Alex's) is hoping to follow up with successful prevention of Asian & Silver Carp invading the Great lakes.

Alex threw his weed rake into the lake pulling a pile of weeds and to the delight of Andre and Alice, some scuds which wriggled around on the fishing deck. No invasives were found, just pondweed and native coontail. Alex gave attendees nice laminated handouts of Eurasian Milfoil, Curley leaf pondweed (only found in cold water, i.e. winter) and purple loosestrife.

Next was some advice on best management practices at boat landings etc. Mix 2.5 TBs of Clorox bleach per gallon of water (Fleetfarm bleach apparently is a lower strength so you would need more). Spray down the boat, waders etc. and leave ten minutes before rinsing with clean water. Plan activities in rivers to work from upstream to downstream, also switch out waders and keep in separate plastic tote boxes.

Alex uses Hand held Jiffy steam cleaners to clean boat hulls, also (200 degree) power washers using the inverter plug in a vehicle, and deep cell batteries.

We concluded the meeting with a brief presentation by **Armstrong** explaining Lunkers (Little Underwater Neighborhood Keepers Encompass-ing Rheotactic Salmonids) - structures for trout, several of which are in the Farmers Valley Creek in Fisherman's Park

<https://obtu.org/lunker-structures/>

