

A small group met at the courthouse building for the Urban “invasive or not” walk an hour before the main meeting. Mic started with a quiz in the landscape surrounding the building where we identified and discussed several species.

1. Emerald Ash Bore. 3 trees were visible from the starting point of the walk. **Megan Mickelson** showed the group exit holes and led a discussion about EAB. The trees by the courthouse and the Post Office are now too far gone to treat.
2. *Lonicera*- Honeysuckle. There is a hedge of an ornamental one planted by the courthouse. **Mic Armstrong** explained that some cultivars are still legal to plant as they are not considered invasive, hard to tell them apart, did not see much for berries or nearby seedlings. We found a larger honeysuckle across the covered bridge just loaded with berries- this one is probably a bad actor, definitely in the wrong place, in the riparian corridor, and really should be removed and replaced with a non-invasive shrub.
3. *Berberis*. We looked at several of these thorny plants in the landscape of the courthouse and in yards along the walk. The cultivars we saw included green yellow and red ones, some of these are being phased out of production in the nursery industry due to the cultivar restriction in the NR-40 Rule. Some cultivars will remain available as they produce much lower numbers of viable seed. Others are still available and have never been tested. Buyer beware. We did not find any barberry outside of cultivated yards as we walked along so we did not map any.
4. *Acer platanoides* **Norway Maple**. The first one we found was a seedling under the honeysuckle hedge, obviously not planted, the second was a volunteer purple leaved variety growing a couple of feet off the creek bank, again probably not planted there. This one we mapped on the smart phone. Norway Maple is given a ‘caution’ category in NR-40, if I remember correctly it was reviewed and at the time it was decided there was not enough reason to restrict a species of such high economic value to the nursery trade.
5. *Euonymus alatus*. Burning bush. The large shrub on the corner of the post office has a lot of small seedlings that have germinated in the bed underneath the plant. The NR 40 rule has put the Species and one cultivar known to produce a lot of offspring (Nordine) on the restricted list. All other cultivars are, at this point, exempt. We found another burning bush cultivar on the walk that also had seedlings sprouting several feet away from the mother plant. We did not find any in the riparian or undisturbed areas we walked past and so did not map it as an invasive species occurrence.
6. *Ulmus* species. Elm, probably *Ulmus pumila* Siberian Elm, a restricted species except for the hybrids bred for disease resistance. We found numerous seedlings growing out of cracks in concrete etc. We did not map any.
7. European (Common) buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica*. Although it does have relatively glossy leaves it is distinguished from glossy buckthorn by the presence of tiny thorns and the bark is more of a shiny brown than the grey bark with distinct light colored lenticels of Glossy. There are some native buckthorn in WI but none have been reported in the area for a long time.
8. Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*. This population has been mapped before, but I remapped it to note that it had not been treated yet. I will contact the city later this summer to make sure it is added to the list of sites they treat. Last year they treated a large population in rip rap down from the Perch lake dam with excellent results, but they will need to retreat a few sprouts that were missed. Some of our group were not familiar with this terrible plant and it is always good to be familiar with the plant in all of its stages of growth. Scribe’s Note: Just opened the July

page of the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council's 2018 Calendar which says among other things that "Knotweed infestation cleanup at London's 2012 Olympic Site cost 70 million Pounds (\$120 million US Dollars)"

9. Crown Vetch *Coronilla varia*. This regulated species used to be popular for revegetating steep slopes because it covered ground so well, unfortunately it has a tendency to cover more ground than the intent and has become an invasive species in many natural settings. Not previously mapped along the Beaver Creek so now it is, and we will remember to keep an eye on it.
10. Field Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis*, this plant has the distinction of being one of 5 plants listed on Wisconsin's Noxious Weed Law yet is not regulated by NR-40. Go figure! Gledn was happy to let us map the population growing on the banks of the Beaver Creek.
11. Dames Rocket *Hesperis matronalis*. We saw one plant of this Restricted Species in the area where 2 weeks ago I mapped a whole bunch of them. It had been mowed, presumably by the city. This pretty perennial often invades natural areas.
12. Orange Day Lilly *Hemerocallis fulva* receives the "Caution" category in NR-40. We spotted some of these in the riparian corridor and many (non caution) hybrid day lilies in ornamental beds around town.
13. Privet *Ligustrum* species. Found a hedge of an unknown cultivar. Some privets are potentially invasive, another Eurasian plant that birds eat the berries. None mapped in Monroe County but worth learning to recognize. (One species has a Caution designation in NR40)
14. Autumn Olive *Elaeagnus umbellate*. There is a large specimen on Court Street being maintained as an ornamental. Most of our group recognized the plant, a Restricted Species'

The idea of this walk was to give attendees an opportunity to learn how to be on the lookout for (common) invasive species, hopefully to become familiar with their identification, and see firsthand how the Gledn app works in the "field". It was also intended that more sets of "trained" eyes would find new species not yet mapped in this stretch of the Beaver Creek corridor and, indeed, we did find some.

As we made a couple of stops along the creek, **Michelle Komiskey** pointed out various elements of the restoration project NRCS worked on with the County Conservation Department and the City of Sparta. The stream corridor had eroding vertical banks in a thicket of mostly box elder. During restoration these trees are removed, leaving good species as much possible, the banks shaped so that flood events would slowly rise up the slopes, vegetated with a thick cover of grasses, without causing erosion. The streambanks are armored with, large sized, rock rip rap and the current centered using log and rock weirs. Lunkers- wooden cribs designed to provide permanent underwater cover for trout and other wildlife, built from hardwood boards, are strategically placed in banks below some of the weirs.

We stopped at a good native plant and discussed Amelanchier species, more commonly known as Serviceberry, Juneberry or Saskatoon. The berries are tasty, Native Americans avoided the scurvy by adding them to the dried meat in Pemmican. Around here you will need bird netting to harvest Juneberries or the birds will beat you to them. The tree we found did not have any berries left.

It was a hot muggy day and we ran out of time to complete the planned loop which would have included one more species- Acer ginnala (Amur Maple) and one more European buckthorn, a huge specimen being maintained as an ornamental tree on Myrtle Street.



The urban walkers get familiar with Japanese Knotweed slated for fall treatment on the edge of Beaver Creek