



Florence County

Invasive Species Ad Hoc Committee

June 24, 2015 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2 PM by Florence County Conservationist Margie Yadro. Introductions included: Florence County Invasive Species Program Manager, Scott Goodwin; Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes Association (SECOLA) representatives, Glen Johnson and Jay Weber; Florence County Lakes and Rivers Association (FCLARA) representative, Cary Anderson; Lake Ellwood Association (LEA) representative, Nate Goudreau; Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) Coordinator, Emily Anderson; and Florence County Supervisor, Susan Theer.

Conservationist Yadro presented the County's *Invasive Species Prevention and Management (ISPaM) Guide* draft for further review and evaluation of actions taken to address previously suggested goals and priorities. Activities focused on: two Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) grant projects currently underway; multi-media outreach developed for high priority invasive species identification and treatment; mapping and rapid response plans; along with brainstorming resources to sustain county-wide programming for current and future invasive species prevention and management. Suggestions were made to develop a business media alert to emphasize Clean, Drain and Dry to those frequenting multiple water bodies; also a request was brought forward for more information on County launch fees collected (both seasonal and local contributions), added instructional signage, and use of funds. All were asked to review the ISPaM Guide and contact Yadro (myadro@co.florence.wi.us) to provide feedback.

Florence County's Invasive Species Program Manager Goodwin followed with handouts highlighting the AIS grant projects, including data collected over the first month. Watercraft inspections are being carried out this season on 11 public boat landings throughout the County along with coordinating the use of two boat wash units provided by FCLARA and SECOLA, including a donation in excess of \$11,000 to increase staff time at North Lake. Florence County seasonal staff will be participating in the 4th of July Boat Landing Blitz with an expectation for significantly increased public contacts to add to the nearly 1,000 already documented. The AIS/Lake Monitoring project has begun with water chemistry studies conducted on 2 lakes to-date. A DNR handout was provided that identified all AIS source waters within the County. The list includes 41 local water bodies impacted though many are shown with rusty crayfish or mystery snail populations, low priority concerns at this point. More equipment purchasing appears necessary to assist in reaching mapping and monitoring goals. Volunteer contacts were offered to provide lake monitoring assistance. Goudreau and Weber each gave an update on AIS treatment strategies and expenses carried out on Lake Ellwood and the Chain of Lakes.

WRISC Coordinator Anderson presented several grant projects within the area which call for invasive species mapping and rapid response efforts related to the organization's *Invasive Species Strategic Management Plan*. She was pleased to report that leafy spurge, a plant listed as a "Restricted" invasive in Wisconsin that is also a Noxious Weed appears to be in extremely low populations within Florence County and is being treated. She has also been sharing management strategies and tools to address more effective wild parsnip reduction on road systems in the area. The most common database for the collection of invasive species distribution appears to be through the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) where participants were encouraged to use their smartphone apps to help map priority species within the region. Anderson supplied a monitoring form and Yadro suggested further training available to those interested in mapping. European Marsh Thistle was identified as another invasive plant concern where more information needs to be known on population densities and effective

treatment techniques. Anderson will work with Florence County staff and interested volunteers to set up test plots where control studies can be conducted.

Yadro shared comments from the Wisconsin Department Of Transportation that claimed exemption from management of local additions to the state's three plants listed as Noxious Weeds (Leafy Spurge, Field Bindweed, and Canada Thistle). This communication stemmed from a locally supported resolution to request more state funding for highway right-of-way plant management and a citizen petition to promote required wild parsnip treatment. Even though terrestrial invasives are included in the Michigan grant program, Wisconsin does not recognize their management as grant eligible at this point. The County Legislative Advisory Committee has also requested Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) to be considered by the state as grant eligible entities in Wisconsin.

A discussion followed to assess the need to maintain a consistent county-wide Invasive Species Prevention and Management program. Yadro suggested continuing to seek funding through grant projects, but budgeting the funds needed to sustain a fulltime staffed position which has become necessary to continue this type of effort. All felt that invasive species impacts and pressures are going to increase over time and the populations that are not addressed this season come back to be more expensive and harmful to the economy and environment for the next season. All Associations agreed to provide a letter of support to County Board to consider budgeting this item for the future along with development of stronger rapid response and long-term management resources. Yadro agreed to bring this item forward for consideration at the next Land Conservation Committee meeting.

The next meeting of the Florence County Invasive Species Ad Hoc Committee will be announced by Conservationist Yadro.

With all discussion complete, the meeting adjourned at 4 PM.

Respectfully drafted by:

Margie Yadro
Florence County Conservationist