The newsletter of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners' Association, Inc.

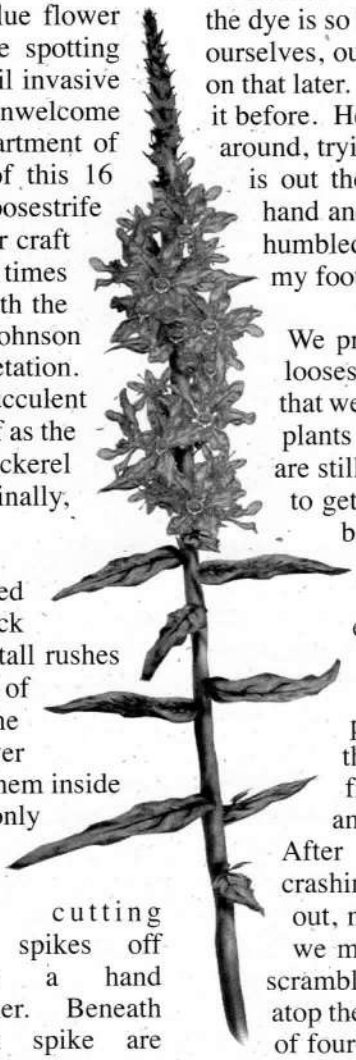
Driftwood

Spring/Summer 2014

River Strife*

By Chad McGrath

As we motor out from the Manitowish River landing below the highway 47/182 bridge in far northern Wisconsin, pickerel weed's (*Pontederia cordata*) soft blue flower spikes grab my gaze. I'm supposed to be spotting purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), the evil invasive with pretty purple flowers (*corymbs*): an unwelcome wetland interloper. Thad, a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources technician and captain of this 16 foot, square-backed Grumman canoe, sees loosestrife almost immediately and reflexively steers our craft toward the bank. As will be repeated over 40 times the next six hours, Thad lines up the bow with the purple flower spikes, guns the five-horse Johnson and crashes the boat through the floating vegetation. I wince as we crush several beautiful, succulent pickerel weed flower heads, then brace myself as the boat (*"Nelly"*) abruptly stops, grasped by pickerel weed, lily pads (*Nymphaea odorata*), and finally, cattails (*Typha latifolia*).



Thad dismounts Nelly before I have recovered from the landing. He straps on his backpack sprayer and is off into the aquatic jungle of tall rushes (*Juncus*), various sedges (*Carex*), cattails and, of course, the aberrant purple loosestrife. I am the flower picker. I am to pick off the purple flower spikes (technically called a thyrse) and stuff them inside a large plastic garbage bag. Initially I see only a couple of flower spikes, but as I proceed toward them more come into view. I am cutting the spikes off with a hand pruner. Beneath each spike are little spikes, not developed, but with blooming potential. I try and clip the stem below these. Thad follows up with herbicide ("Habitat") spray. It is tinted with a blue dye, ostensibly so we can see what we have sprayed. An alternative reason for the dye is so that we can see how much we have sprayed on ourselves, our boat, our equipment and our clothes. More on that later. Thad is good at this. It's easy to tell he's done it before. He is quick, efficient. While I am pussy footing around, trying not to sink up to my crotch in muck, Thad is out there ripping flower heads off plants with one hand and spraying liquid poison with the other. I feel humbled, but resolved to get better, faster, more sure of my footing: a leaner, meaner, flower-cutting machine.

We progress through the jungle, finding ever more loosestrife as we move. Eventually my captain says that we should head back to the boat. There are a lot of plants to kill here and it is taking too much time. We are still close to the road, and he can return tomorrow to get the rest of this loosestrife stand. On the way back to the boat I confront an obstacle. There are large patches of blue tinted, herbicide laden loosestrife between me and the canoe. I have elected to make this foray in swim trunks and running shoes, no long pants, no waders, no socks. The idea of coating myself with liquid poison is unattractive. So I thread my way through the blue plants, sinking into one muck filled spot that will hold the imprint of my foot and leg until the next ice age.

After about three hours of gunning the motor, crashing into cattails, lurching to a stop, jumping out, mucking around cutting, ripping and spraying, we motored to a high bank, secured the canoe and scrambled uphill to eat lunch. A peaceful interlude atop the river bank ensued. I carefully withdrew slices of four-year old cheddar cheese from a plastic baggie so as not to contaminate them with blue-tinged fingers. It reminded me of the time years before when I had donned hip boots, a rain coat and rubber gloves to spray Round-up for the first time. I almost passed out from the heat, all the while suspecting that I had somehow poisoned myself.

Our repast over, we return to our canoe and resume attacking

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Editorial Page

President's Letter

By Terry Daulton

I just came home from visiting Lake of the Falls. Every spring I ride my bike to the falls and watch the cold meltwater tumble over the boulders as it rushes into the flowage. The fresh spray on my face, the smell of the warming earth and the hypnotic sound of flowing water remind me why I love this place. For me, periodic immersion in a beautiful place helps keep me motivated to work on protecting the flowage and our region.

When I was in school I came across a scientific paper that analyzed conservation leaders to see if they had common life experiences that accounted for their dedication to conservation causes. The authors found that indeed there were commonalities in the lives of these leaders. These experiences included: time spent in relatively pristine environments; parents and teachers who were enthusiastic about the natural world; frequent contact with natural habitats; solitude in nature; a young adult "awakening experience" in the natural world, such as a camping trip; and loss of a beloved place to development. In my youth I experienced five of these six things, and I credit my need for spring visits to Lake of the Falls as a continuation of my youthful habits.

I expect that I am not alone in sharing these life experiences and that many of you may also recall similar patterns in your background. If my guess is correct, it is likely that many TFFTL POA members have the capacity to be conservation leaders. This brings me to the theme of this President's letter: building leadership capacity in our group. Our association has been in existence since 1996, when 25 flowage residents gathered to approve the first set of bylaws. Two years from now, the organization will turn 20, and like most groups we have grown and evolved. Our board believes that we are at a new point in the association's development, one where we need to expand our leadership capacity and infuse our committees and board with creative individuals and ideas. Since I have been on the board, we have been primarily a board-driven organization with a few committees that met periodically. We have had individuals who have been great leaders on specific projects from water quality and water levels to invasive species to education. But we have not been able to really make our committees vibrant and productive. While sometimes it is easier to work with a small number of people, we have perhaps neglected our most important resource, the creative energy and expertise of our broader membership.

For this reason, we are going to be asking for more involvement from members. We hope to energize our committees by drafting position descriptions and concrete work plans and by expanding the structure of our committees and increasing their membership. These steps should help us continue to grow as an organization as well as preparing new leaders to come onto the board or become officers. We have some organizational challenges. These include the distances between areas of the flowage and Trude Lake which make it difficult to find convenient locations for meetings; the percentage of our members who are not here year round; and the fact that most of us would rather fish than go to a meeting. However, we also have assets. We have lots of highly qualified retirees who have time and experience to share. We can use technology to have meetings even if we are not on the same part of the flowage (or the same state). Email is a widely used tool which can help us carry on work between face-to-face meetings. And mostly, I would guess that we have a significant number of our members whose life experiences mirror those of our great conservation leaders as detailed in the paper I cited.

While we may not all become a Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, John Muir, or Teddy Roosevelt, we can tap into our own conservation leadership skills and make a lasting contribution to the future of this waterbody. In coming months, you may receive a call, letter or other communication asking about your interests. But even better, I encourage you to contact me or other members of the board to express your ideas and interests and join one of our committees. We will be highlighting some of this work at our annual meeting on June 21.

It was hard coming inside to my computer after that lovely ride to Lake of the Falls, but in my mind's eye I see that scene and carry it with me as I work. Maybe as we move ahead we can share our sources of inspiration as we plan the future of the association and develop its conservation priorities and projects.

Calling All Loon Lovers! North American Loon Symposium in Ashland

By Julie Buckles

The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute's LoonWatch, a thirty-six year old program dedicated to loon research and education, announced today that they will be hosting the North American Loon Symposium October 25-26. "It has been over a decade since a loon symposium of this size and scope has taken place in North America — the importance of this event cannot be overstated," said Erica LeMoine, coordinator of the SOEI loon program at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin.

"This is the first time a loon symposium of this magnitude has been held in this region," she said, noting the symmetry of a symposium at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College. "Wildlife biologist Sigurd T. Olson, son of the Institute's namesake, Sigurd F. Olson, is recognized for his early contributions to our understanding of loons. His 1952 paper, 'The Common Loon in Minnesota,' co-authored with William H. Marshall, continues to be cited as one of the premier baseline reports on the natural history of the species."

Common Loon

LeMoine expects to draw loon researchers, experts, agencies, non-profits, and loon enthusiasts from all over North America. As the key organizer, LeMoine said the symposium will focus on threats to loons, current research, and the exchange of information and networking. Renowned loon researchers Dr. Michael Meyer, Dr. Mark Pokras, Dr. Kevin Kenow and Dr. Walter Piper will be presenting on topics ranging from mercury and lead toxicology to migration and behavior. Both Dr. Meyers and Doctor Kenow made use of data on loons on the flowage and Trude Lake. Other experts will discuss loon banding, impacts of global warming, habitat management, wintering habitat, and citizen science. Flowage loon expert Jeff Wilson will present a paper on the use of trail cameras to document predation at loon nests. This study, conducted on the flowage, also documented important water-level impacts on loon nests.

For more information contact Erica LeMoine at loonwatch@northland.edu or call 715-682-1220. Details on the program and registration will be available in early summer at www.northland.edu/loonwatch.

River Strife *Cont'd. from page 1*

loosestrife. We encounter fewer and fewer purple flowers as we get farther down river and our canoe bow bank bashing becomes less frequent. After a couple more hours it's time to turn around and head back upstream.

We travel slowly, against the current. There is much to see now that we aren't scouting for aliens. Submerged below us lie Monet-like pictures: fuzzy, soft images of reality, light gone soft, gone weak, filtered by water and tannin. Ubiquitous sand, full of current carved ripples snakes under the boat. Giant logs from long ago, cleanly cut ends still smooth from cross-cut saw, lie silently on the bottom, testament to hard work and devastating human energy. Some such logs lie midstream, tilted upward to the water's surface, forming deadheads, single or mingled. They part the water into gentle V-shaped standing waves, waiting for a misdirected bow. Near the weed edges ghostly apparitions permit split-second glimpses before disappearing into the weeds or up or down stream. Was it a walleye, a smallmouth, something else? Current-powered grass skirts, undulate just below the surface: long, legless strands of aqua grass waving aloha as our boat slips by.

Finally, near the end of our return trip, as motor and boat labor against the current, two grouse shoot past, one a few seconds after the first, both fast enough to have been shot out of a canon. Shortly after, with a wing-beat rhythm seemingly timed to the grass below, a white tailed eagle flaps past, close by, individual feathers visible on its wings, smoothly and powerfully stroking the air as it flies downstream.

As Thad expertly maneuvers the boat into the small crevice in the bank where we launched seven hours ago, I reflect on our effort. It takes a lot of time and money and energy to fix or actually, just control, what we as humans do to the place we live in. We made a small difference today. That feels good. A lot better than the myriad of scratches and scrapes I have on my legs from various river vegetation ripping across them. Next time, waders will be in order.

*With apologies to John Bates, whose book about the Manitowish, *River Life*, (Manitowish River Press, 2001), inspired this title.

Bruce Bacon: A Wildlife Biologist Looks Back at His Work in the Area

By Mike Hittle

Over the past half dozen years or so, the Mercer Ranger Station has witnessed a major turnover in its professional staff. One of the positions affected was that of Wildlife Biologist for Iron and Ashland Counties, when, in June of 2011, Bruce Bacon retired after 34 years with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Bruce came to Mercer from his post in Brule in 1993, the year after the state completed its acquisition of the flowage from the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company. As it turns out, he traded places with Gregg Kessler, who went to Brule. Kessler had been in Mercer during time of the purchase and had taken part in the preparation of the Master Plan.

Bruce soon found himself at work on a number of on-going projects involving the "big three" bird species so prominent on the landscape of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage: osprey, eagles, and loons. This work had begun in the late 1970s under the leadership of John Olson, Mercer's first wildlife biologist, with the assistance of Jeff Wilson, a WDNR technician, and Mark Fort, the property manager for the CFIC. At that time, avian predators had begun to rebound in numbers nationwide, thanks to the declining use of harmful pesticides. In this area, osprey led the way, and by 1988 their numbers on the flowage peaked with 22 nests as compared with only three or four for eagles. From then on, however, osprey numbers began to decline, while those of eagles rose, until in the last two years not a single osprey nestling fledged on the flowage. Over the course of his 18 years at the Mercer station Bruce studied intensively this steady decline of osprey numbers. With assistance from four interns whom he supervised, Bruce nimbly scaled trees and platform posts to capture and band over 500 osprey nestlings on the flowage and throughout Iron County. The research also involved placing cameras at nesting sites to capture behaviors that might adversely affect osprey. In time this work led Bruce to suspect that the ospreys' problems might be attributed in large measure to harassment by the burgeoning eagle population. The issue is not the occasional fish that eagles steal from osprey. Rather, the issue centers on the defensive activities of male osprey to defend their nests from threatening eagles. The males spend so much time driving eagles away, and pursuing them, that they neglect their primary responsibility, which is to catch fish for their young. As a consequence, osprey fledglings set off on their first migrations underweight, which renders them vulnerable to the many perils of long-distance flight and survival in a new environment. It is not surprising that so few survive to return and nest in the area. In the future, Bruce thinks that osprey numbers might be improved by more strategic placement of nesting platforms in relation to known eagle nests.

Bruce Bacon in retirement: a big fish from the Big Water. A Superior effort.

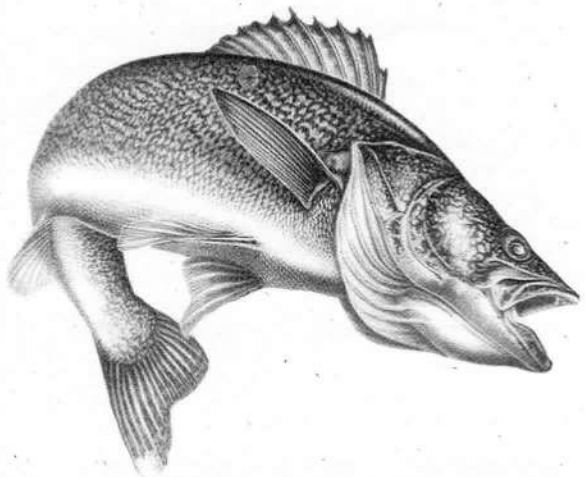
Eagles and osprey were hardly the sole focus of Bruce's attention. He took part in loon surveys and assisted in some of the loon research projects on the flowage; and he also participated in Northland College's Loon Watch program as a member of its Advisory Council. Keeping track of the remaining wood duck houses on the flowage (90 of the original 200 remain in more remote areas) became one of Bruce's regular responsibilities as well. For the most part, these nest boxes produced mergansers, rather than wood ducks, but recently one of them produced a clutch of common goldeneye, a duck that rarely breeds in this area. That led to the placement of ten new boxes, with somewhat wider entry holes, aimed at attracting more goldeneye to the flowage. He also coordinated the flowage waterfowl and bird inventory and survey which were conducted every five years to track species diversity. Bruce published the results in the Passenger Pigeon, the journal of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

According to Bruce, the four-legged wildlife that is present in the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area receives no special attention from the Mercer wildlife biologist; they are simply folded into the biologist's two-county field of responsibility. The

one exception would be recommending timber sales within the scenic area but away from the flowage viewshed that would be beneficial to wildlife. At the county level, there is no question that one of Bruce's most important charges was making recommendations about local bag limits for deer season to the WDNR. While Bruce recognizes that such rules can have an impact on herd sizes, he feels that the bottom line for deer numbers, as for all creatures, is that "Mother Nature rules." When she deals out mild winters, animals prosper. But when she deals out winters like the last two, there is little that anyone can do to immediately mitigate the consequences. Moreover, predator numbers also fall under mother nature's rule. For example, a severe outbreak of mange between 1990 and 1995 severely reduced the coyote population in the state. Their recovery, in turn, was slowed by the growing number of wolves. As of now, in Bruce's view, the coyotes are back in business, and seem to have learned how to live with wolves. The recovered coyotes (who are the single largest predator on deer statewide) joined bears, wolves, and bobcats to become part of a more robust array of predators than the north has seen in a long time. Winters, and to a lesser extent predators, have taken a heavy toll on the area's deer population.

To those who think that a wildlife biologist spends his or her days watching happy animals gamboling in a sunny glade, Bruce offers a sobering retort. "I was not dealing with a fairy tale world. Most of the animals I saw were dead, injured, or sick." It should come as no surprise, therefore, that some of his best memories involve a program he and Terry Daulton set up with the North Lakeland Discovery Center that enabled Mercer and Hurley high school students to study live-trapped animals. The program initially targeted fishers, but later Bruce and the Discovery Center employee Zach Wilson reo riented the program toward American martens. These animals, which repopulated areas of Iron County on their own, are a Wisconsin endangered species. Bruce and the students "learned a bunch" from the program. And, of course, Bruce also enjoyed the tracking down reports of moose (at any given time, there may be between one and six moose hanging around in Iron County) or to check on claims that cougars have been sighted or photographed in the area (usually not, though there has been at least one confirmed case).

Looking ahead, Bruce hopes that the good working relationship the WDNR has had with the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Company, and now with Xcel Energy, will continue. In particular, he hopes that water levels can be kept as stable as possible, especially during breeding seasons for water birds, like loons. If the water levels rise after shoreline nests have been built and eggs laid, wave action, either natural or from boats, can prove disastrous. Steady water levels also benefit the wild rice beds that have been established where the Manitowish River comes into the flowage. Bruce also hopes that the future will see continued efforts to combat invasive species on the flowage. "The identification and control of purple loosestrife has been and is very important to the health of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. It is a lot of work [Bruce knows this all too well from personal experience] and only possible with the assistance of association members/ volunteers." As for the WDNR staff itself, Bruce says that they realize what a great resource the flowage is and what a desirable place Mercer is to work because of the presence of the flowage. So much so, that he has become an "official" volunteer, who will be helping WDNR staff in the coming years. Bruce's many friends in the area will be delighted to know that he will keep his hand in natural resources matters; and they will no doubt be on the alert for the sight of him, clad in climbing paraphernalia, zipping up to an osprey nest. Bruce, you have our thanks for your years of service and best wishes for many more happy days afield.



The American Sportsmen's Creed

"The American Sportsmen's Creed," written by the famous author and outdoorsman, Zane Grey, was first published in the *Bulletin of the American Game Protective Association* in July of 1918. World War I, still raging at that moment, explains Grey's efforts to link America's heritage of outdoor pursuits with its "splendid" soldiers.

In introducing this creed to the public, the association, whose motto was "More Game," seemed a bit torn between thinking the sentiments expressed in it were almost too obvious to print, while at the same time justifying the need for such a document. To wit: "At the outset it should be made very plain that neither the author nor the distributor of the creed feels that such a thing is necessary for the true sportsman. His creed is written ineffacedly on his heart, and printed words will not serve to make his adherence to its principles any stricter. It is thought, however, that a creed may serve a useful purpose in inculcating principles of true sportsmanship in the youth of today who will be the sportsmen of tomorrow."

Driftwood will leave it to readers to determine whether such a creed might have relevance to outdoor sports as practiced and publicized today.

The reproduced image come from the B*iennial Report of the State Conservation Commission of Wisconsin* for the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1917, and June 30, 1918.

36 WISCONSIN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

THE AMERICAN SPORTSMEN'S CREED

LET ME pause in these momentous days and think with wonder and reverence how the spirit and activity of the American pioneer hunters and fishermen have given us the American soldier—that splendid type of the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I want my boy and his comrades and the boys of the future to receive this heritage of gun and rod. It is a heritage of the open, which now must be idealized to a love of nature and a thoughtfulness for the meaning and preservation of life.

FEELING this, I record my unalterable belief that a Sportsman should:

1. Never in sport endanger human life.
2. Never kill wantonly, or needlessly or brutally.
3. Obey the laws of State and Nation, work for better laws, and uphold the law-enforcing authorities.
4. Respect the rights of farmers and property-owners and also their feelings.
5. Always leave seed birds and game in covers.
6. Never be a fish-hog.
7. Discourage the killing of game for commercial purposes by refusing to purchase trophies.
8. Study and record the natural history of game species in the interest of science.
9. Love Nature and its denizens and BE A GENTLEMAN.

To this ideal I consecrate myself—that sport shall not be my only aim—that my reward and my lesson shall be in the thrill of the chase and the glory of the heights, and the whistle of the stag—in the music of the murmuring stream and the leap of the playing trout—in the gold of the autumn's woods and the whirr of the ruffed grouse—in the sweet soft scent that breathes from off the sea and in the beauty and silence of the lonely hills and dells.

Attest: John B. Burnham, President American Game Protective Association.

Attest: John B. Burnham,
President.

"What's Past is Prologue"
The Future of the Trude Lake Bridge

So Shakespeare wrote in The Tempest just before a heinous act went down. Today, we use the term in a much more benign way, simply to suggest that past events have set up the present moment. But when applied to the proposed Trude Lake bridge project, this famous phrase carries a little bit of both meanings; it conveys some dark hues, and some neutral ones as well. But positive?

Let's look at the past, as reported in that unimpeachable source, Driftwood. "A Bumpy Road Ahead," said the headline in the Spring/Summer, 2011, issue. "The target date for construction is 2012; however, there remains the issue of who is going to pay for what...it's anybody's guess as to when construction actually is going to happen." A year later, after noting that the Town of Mercer had failed "to complete a 'rating' for the road to document its poor condition," [as if documentation were necessary] and that the project would thus not happen in 2012, Driftwood pontificated that "the good news is that there is a 95 % chance that the much anticipated bridge will be constructed in 2013." Fast forward yet another year, and you will find these optimistic words from officialdom. "Town Chairman Jim Kichak says that he 'hopes to get it [the project, the bridge] in this year,' but that the relentless winter has set the timetable back by weeks." Lots and lots of weeks, it turns out. For as the Fall/Winter 2013-2014 issue notes, optimistically if not breathlessly so, "there is a New Target Date: the fall of 2014." The capital letters were intended to convey a certain gravitas, though only for a date, not a bridge . So if these grim excerpts constitute the past, of what are they likely to be the prologue? At the worst, another delay, brought on by a 100 year autumn rain event, or by a late nesting of the endangered tufted-bridgehater, or by the loss of the cosmic authorization document, without which nothing, not even the announcement of another delay, can be made. At best, this history might be prologue to the construction of a bridge that fails to connect at the other end.

Amidst persistent rumors of a shortage of funds for the Trude Lake Bridge, the Town of Mercer and Wisconsin DNR join ranks to create a toll-bridge accessible only campground, thereby shifting costs to future generations of Popko Road residents and visiting campers.

But maybe, just maybe, this past could be prologue to a shiny new bridge, under which flotillas of boats will steam onto the flowage's autumn-gilded waters and over which vehicles will smoothly pass, their passengers' fillings still in place. After all, if the ice can go out this year, maybe we can have a bridge, too. Moreover, we have our annual positive prognostication from officialdom. This year it comes from Christine Paulik, Property Manager of the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area, who has worked diligently to see this bridge—one of the few uncompleted objectives of the flowage's Master Plan—become a reality. "It will be worked on this fall, starting after Labor Day. According to the town meeting minutes, money has been put into the bridge fund and bids will be let out the week of June 1. All permits have been approved. There is progress!" Folks, you read it here first! Now all we can do is wait patiently to see how to interpret the bard's words.

A New Lake Specialist is on Board with Iron County Land Conservation Department

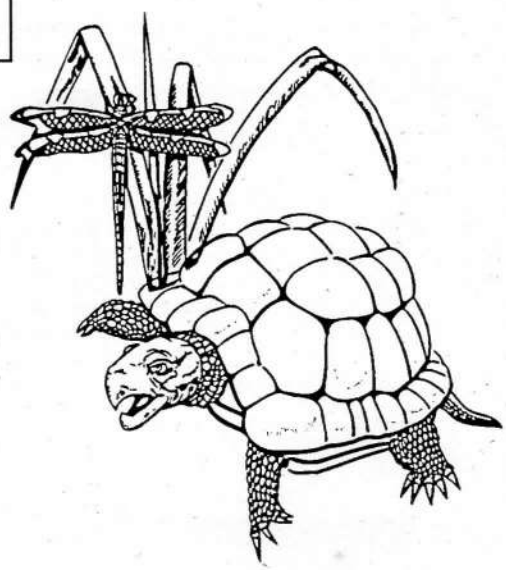
The Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department is pleased to welcome Mari Dallapiazza as our new Lake Specialist. Previously, Mari was the coordinator for the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC), working with mapping and monitoring terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Mari graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology in the spring of 2013. She enjoys bird watching, snowshoeing in the winter, and hiking and kayaking in the summer.

Mari and the summer staff members, Max and Laura, will continue monitoring the Turtle Flambeau Flowage for invasive species this summer. Max Samuelson and Lauren Manchester will also be educating boaters on aquatic invasive species and good boating hygiene practices on the weekends at Turtle Flambeau Flowage boat landings. The staff will also be raising Galerucella beetles that will be released in mid-summer at purple loosestrife populations as bio-control for the nasty wetland invader. Mari will be available to help identify any suspicious looking plants and critters that you may find in and around the flowage. She can also provide technical assistance to anyone interested in planning a shoreline restoration or anyone who has problems with shoreline erosion in Iron County.

A native northern Wisconsinite, Mari grew up on a lake and was fascinated by aquatic life from a very young age. Mari is excited to be bringing her passion and knowledge of lakes to Iron County. She can be contacted by calling (715)561-2234 or emailing mari@ironcountywi.org.

Local WDNR Contacts

Conservation Warden: Matthew Meade	(715) 476-7845
TFSWA Property Manager: Christine Paulik	(715) 476-7846
Private-Land Foresters: Erik Peterson	(715) 476-3890
and Kelly Martinko	(715) 476-7844
TFSWA Forester: Joe Schmidt	(715) 476-7803
Wildlife Biologist: Samuel Jonas	(715) 476-7843



Iron County Lakes and Rivers Alliance Update

The following information was provided to us by Dick Thiede of the Iron County Lakes and Rivers Alliance.

Scheduled Meetings – 2014

Saturday, July 26th, 9:00 AM – Haines Building, Mercer

- Program on boating and water safety by Mathew Meade, Mercer DNR
- Annual meeting and election of officers

Saturday, September 20th, 9:00 AM – Mercer Community Center

- Watersheds and shoreline restoration discussion with Heather Palmquist and John Bates
- Presentation on Northwoods Land Trusts by Meta Reigel of Springstead

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Activities – 2014

Saturday, June 7th, 10:00AM to 2:00PM – Children's Free Fishing Lessons at Lake of the Falls Park

- Start the little people off right with free fishing instruction for kids with qualified guides and instructors.
- Fishing is free in Wisconsin on June 7th and 8th – no license required!
- Free refreshments for all starting at noon.
- Volunteer instructors and guides needed, kid appropriate fishing gear
- Prizes!
- Sponsored by ICLRA, Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department (ICLWCD), and the WDNR

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Government and Legislative Issues

- We are still waiting for the Iron County Board to enact enforcement of 1980 state rules for septic tanks.
- Iron County is fortunate to have over 400 beautiful lakes and more than a thousand miles of streams and rivers. Unlike other counties in the state, Iron County riparian development has left most of our shorelines in "natural" condition which supports clean water and our plant and animal associates. There have been legislative attempts (and successes) to weaken the statutes which protect our lakes. We need to be informed, vigilant and vocal.
- We also have very low incidence of invasive species. We must do our personal best to stop the spread of these plants and animals to our lakes and to encourage the DNR to do its best to keep us safe from the destruction brought on lakes in other counties. (See News below)
- This year Iron County will begin to rewrite its shoreland zoning ordinances. Zoning Administrator, Tom Bergman, has solicited our help in that process. Volunteer to be on the rewrite committee or submit your suggestions. Your voice counts!

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News

Mari Dallapiazza, the Lakes Specialist for the ICLWCD will be organizing the kids' fishing day.

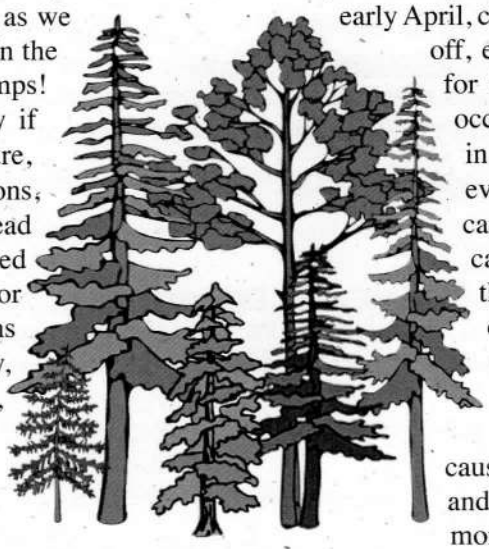
Sadly, the experiment on Long Lake in Oma to try to control Eurasian Water Milfoil with beetles has been cancelled. The results from last year's test showed no difference in beds stocked with the beetles and those not. The company which supplied the beetles has gone out of business. George Van Beynen, Long Lake Improvement Association president, tells us that Dr. Susan Knight of the DNR will discuss "what happens now" at the LLIA meeting on Memorial Day weekend. This is an important issue for all Iron County riparian owners and lake and river users. Long Lake sits at the head of the Turtle Flambeau watershed, and the invasive weed has made progress down Long Lake Creek toward Oxbow lake in recent years.

Please direct any comments or questions to Dick Thiede ([715] 476-2881) or Heather Palmquist (ironcountylakesandrivers@gmail.com).

Severe Winter and the Trees

By Heather Berklund, WI DNR Forestry

Trees are one of our mighty natural resources that can handle a severe winter, such as the one we all experienced in the Northwoods this past season. Active forestry management was probably the most difficult. In fact, the trees probably laughed at us field foresters as we bundled up, barely able to snowshoe in the deep snow structure and below zero temps! Extended extreme temps, particularly if there is minimal snow cover or moisture, can cause drought-like conditions, especially for conifers, resulting in dead needles, which can be readily observed now. In addition, conifers along major roadsides will show similar conditions due to exposure to road salt. If healthy, conifers will usually rebound, shedding these brown needles once new growth occurs. Cold winters are positive in that insect populations can decline; however, this could be offset by a wet, cold spring, thus increasing the potential for disease or fungus.



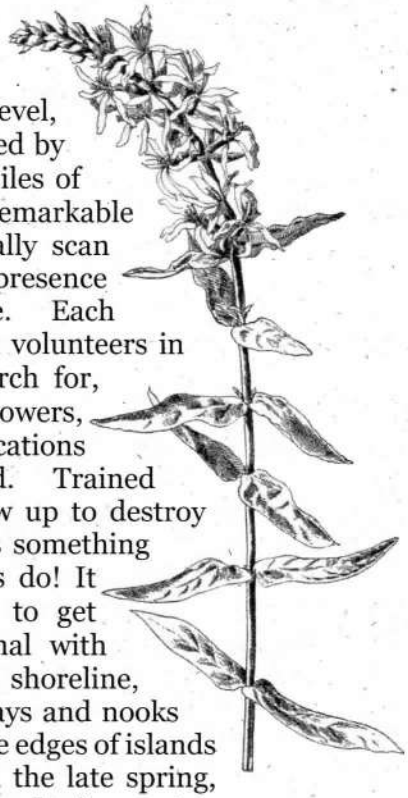
Some of the greatest natural hardships on trees actually come in spring and early summer seasons--the primary active growing time. Extreme shifting of temperatures, particularly in late winter/early spring, can result in what we call "frost cracks." Seams appear and forked trees can split. Heavy, wet snows, which often appear in March and early April, can result in branches and tree tops breaking off, exposing cells and leaving points of entry for insects and diseases. Deep freezes that occur when trees are "budding out" can result in severe frost damage, impeded growth, or even death. Hail storms during early leaf-out can cause damage to the tender new shoots, causing the trees to look "sickly." Often, if the tree is healthy to begin with, it will put on a new flush of growth later and heal itself. Extensive rain during spring can over-saturate the soil, thus causing entire trees to root tip. All these factors may not cause the death of a tree; however, its health and growth rate may decline, thus making it more susceptible to pests and decreasing its value. In summary, if a relatively "normal" season of precipitation and temperatures follows a severe winter, trees will recover—they are amazingly resilient!

Likely record Walleye caught on flowage during icy season opener. Even after the snow was brushed from its exterior, the fish measured 38". On-ice observers believe it to have been in the vicinity of 45 pounds but, unfortunately, by the time it was transported to a certified scale in an overheated truck, it had lost considerable weight and thus failed to establish an official world record.

Photo Courtesy John Wahleitner

The Hunt for Purple Loosestrife

By Kit Bogenschneider

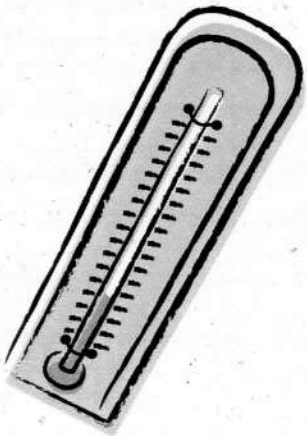


Purple Loosestrife is an invasive species brought to the eastern United States in the 1800's, and it has since spread throughout the country. It is now documented in at least 40 states. The management plan for the Turtle Flambeau Flowage,written in 1994, mentions a population of purple loosestrife near Murray's Landing and calls for its eradication. The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission did a survey of the ceded territories in 1998, looking for invasive species, and found one plant of purple loosestrife in Iron County, which was pulled by hand. A similar survey done in 2006 found an infestation on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage near one of the boat landings, and the DNR manager was notified. That marked the beginning of the current battle against this pervasive plant on the flowage.

Since then, the TFF-TL Property Owners Association has joined forces with the WDNR and the Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department to monitor the presence of this plant and to destroy it wherever it is found. Purple loosestrife grows along the edges of land adjoining the water and thrives in the wetlands abutting the flowage. It comes in by traveling in the rivers and streams that feed the flowage and sometimes riding on the boat trailers of our frequent visitors, or of our own property owners who trailer their boats to other lakes. That's why it is so important that we clean our equipment thoroughly if we move between lakes, and encourage others to do likewise.

Depending on water level, the flowage is bounded by approximately 212 miles of shoreline. It takes a remarkable task force to physically scan all of that for the presence of purple loosestrife. Each summer we send out volunteers in teams of two to search for, mark, clip off any flowers, and report the locations of any plants found. Trained personnel then follow up to destroy those plants. This is something that you can help us do! It is a wonderful way to get up close and personal with a few miles of the shoreline, exploring the little bays and nooks and crannies along the edges of islands and mainland. With the late spring, similar to last year, we don't expect to see plants in bloom until at least the tail end of July or early August. If you will be here for that part of summer, won't you please consider giving a few hours of your time to "the hunt for purple loosestrife." To volunteer, contact Kit Bogenschneider at 715-476-3446.

For a good story on how trained personnel seek and destroy loosestrife, see Chad McGrath's article, *"River Strife*,"* in this issue.



Excel Energy reports that it has installed a tailwater probe just below the dam to measure water elevation. The probe also includes a temperature sensor. This temperature, now posted on the internet, represents a cooperative effort between Xcel and WDNR to aid in spring sturgeon sampling. Fisherman should take note that these posted water temperatures, based on water discharged from well below the surface, may vary from surface water readings.

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Driftwood

The newsletter of the Turtle Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake Property Owners' Association, Inc.

— Mission Statement —

The purpose of the Association is to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of the lake and its surroundings for the collective interest of members and the general public.

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If you would like to contact the Association electronically, please visit our website www.tfftl.org and search under "Board Members-DNR Contacts"