

Aquatic Invasive Species Update Washington & Waukesha Counties



July 2022

Amanda Schmitz:

Email: amanda.schmitz@washcowisconsin.gov or aschmitz@waukesha.wisconsin.gov

[Washington County Website](#)

[Waukesha County Website](#)

Summer is ramping up! If you spot any suspicious plants or animals in your waterbody, please reach out to [Amanda Schmitz](#) for identification.

Upcoming Events:

Snapshot Day 2022:

August 20th from 8:30am-12:30pm

Washington County: Sandy Knoll Park, Shelter #3 ([2064 Wallace Lake Rd, West Bend](#))

Waukesha County: Nixon Park ([175 E Park Ave, Hartland](#))

This statewide, one-day event connects volunteers, water lovers, and local groups in a search for aquatic invasive species (AIS). You can help protect Wisconsin's rivers and lakes from these invasive plants and animals that negatively impact habitat, wildlife, recreation and health. **[Register here](#)** for the event at the location of your choosing.

Volunteer training: August 12th from 12:00pm-1:00pm online over Zoom. This training will cover Snapshot Day background, protocols, and some species ID. [Register here](#) for the training.



Photo: Brad Steckart



Oconomowoc River Asian Clam Survey:

August 4th from 1:00pm-3:00pm at the Oconomowoc River (1050 Concord Rd, Oconomowoc)

Come help County staff survey a section of the Oconomowoc River for the invasive Asian Clam. Training on identification will be provided, so come lend a hand and have some fun while you help out! Bring water shoes or other shoes that can get wet and sunscreen. Dress to be in the water. Recommended age 13+. [Register here](#) for the event.

Landing Blitz 2022

Every Fourth of July, AIS Partnership members and Clean Boats, Clean Waters volunteers reach out to boaters across Wisconsin with a simple but powerful message: **You have the power to protect lakes and rivers from aquatic invasive species.**

The Landing Blitz is a statewide effort to remind boaters and other water lovers to take action to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species, which pose great risks to the health of our lakes and fisheries. Volunteers will be stationed at boat landings around the state to demonstrate the prevention steps that boaters must take before they leave the water:

- **Inspect** your boat, trailer, and equipment
- **Remove** all attached plants or animals
- **Drain** all water from boats, motors, livewells, and other equipment
- **Never** move live fish away from a waterbody
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash
- **Buy** minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer, and use leftover minnows only if you will be using them on that same waterbody or if no lake or river water or other fish were added to the container



Elizabeth J. Czarapata

Eurasian Water-milfoil
Photo by: [Elizabeth Czarapata](#)

Annual Meetings

We are looking to get Lake Group Annual Meeting dates onto our calendars ASAP! If you have an event scheduled for your group, please contact Amanda with the date:

Meet your Washington and Waukesha County Interns!

Washington County:

Alyssa is the full-time AIS intern for Washington County. She is currently studying Marine Biology at Wisconsin Lutheran College. After graduating this December, Alyssa is planning to pursue a career in fisheries biology. On campus, Alyssa is involved in two research projects where she investigates fish populations in the Menomonee River and conducts fish, plant, and water quality surveys in Beaver Lake. When she's not out in the field, Alyssa enjoys kayaking, backpacking and hiking, biking, and dog training. One thing she's excited about for the summer is being out on the water and learning more about AIS!



Waukesha County:

Faith is the full-time AIS intern for Waukesha County. She completed her degree in Biology and Environmental Studies this May and wants to work in the wildlife/natural resources field. Faith interned for the Wisconsin Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation program for two years and conducted research investigating microplastics in small mammals during school. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking and camping, reading, and spending time with family. One thing she's excited about for this summer is meeting interesting people and learning more about aquatic ecology!



Aquatic Invasive Species Management: What's Being Done?

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) pose a threat to native biodiversity and ecosystem functioning which can lead to economic and public health concerns. Invasive species are able to reproduce and grow rapidly, lack natural predators, and can withstand diverse environmental conditions. These characteristics allow them to be successful at invading new environments and out-competing their native counterparts. However, this makes eliminating and controlling AIS extremely difficult.

How has Wisconsin historically managed AIS?

Wisconsin's invasive species management plan has changed dramatically over time with emergent scientific understanding and strategies. Many problematic AIS like Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) and zebra mussels were discovered in the state during the mid-to-late 1900s, contributing to recreational and aesthetic aquatic concerns. Early management strategies relied heavily on chemical treatments that were detrimental to native species

and the environment. As the impacts of herbicides became better understood, management shifted towards an integrated approach that considered holistic conservation strategies. Prevention and educational programs like Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) became an important part of AIS control in tandem with ecological conservation efforts.

How are invasive species being controlled in Washington and Waukesha County?

Early detection and monitoring of AIS is an important part of preventing their spread. There are several programs aiming at large-scale prevention such as the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, Snapshot Day, Landing Blitz, and Drain Campaigns. Educating citizens that frequent waterbodies helps to prevent the spread of AIS and identify new populations.

There are three methods used for managing AIS: **physical, biological, and chemical**.



Physical control methods use mechanical or manual manipulation of the environment to control AIS. This includes hand pulling, harvesting, and dredging to reduce AIS biomass and destroy its reproductive capabilities. This technique is commonly used for species like EWM. (Photo: Vermont Dpt of Cons)



Biological control methods use certain plants or animals to control invasive plants or animals. This can include introducing a predator to an invasive population that has no biological control. One example includes distributing purple loose strife beetles to eat purple loose strife plants. (Photo: Matthaei Botanical Gardens)



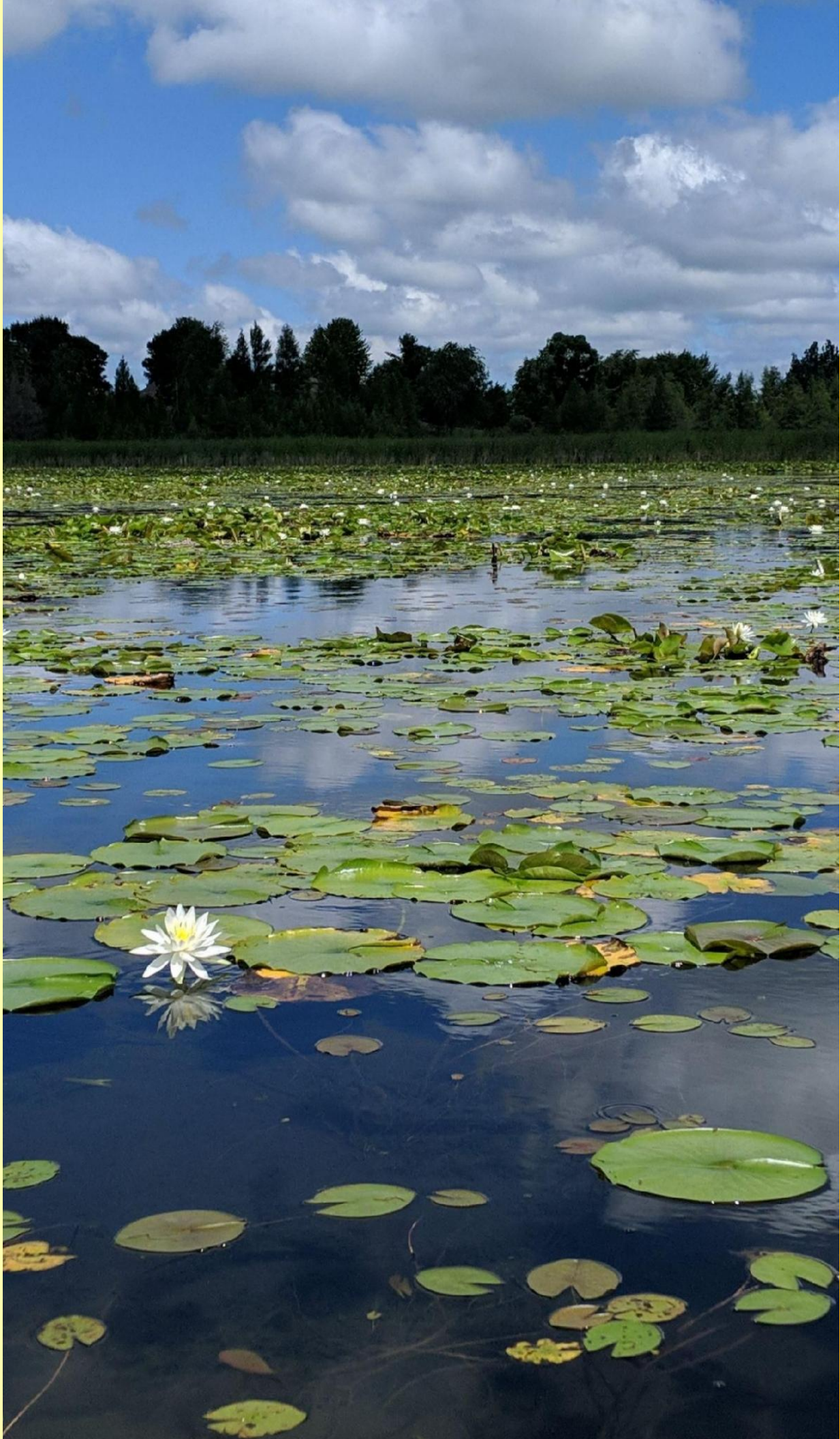
Chemical control methods use herbicides or pesticides to treat AIS populations. This only includes chemicals that have been approved by the EPA for use and is closely monitored for any adverse impacts. However, this method can lead to chemically resistant AIS populations. (Photo: Pond Management)

Has Wisconsin's AIS management been successful?

Researchers conducted a five-year study in 2016 to answer the question of whether Wisconsin's AIS management techniques have slowed the spread of invasive species in the state's waterways. 150 researchers and volunteers sampled 200 lakes each year, clocking over 3,000 hours to collect data. They found that the rate of spread for invasive species stayed the same over time and the most commonly found AIS were less problematic species such as purple loose strife and mystery snails. More troublesome species did not increase their range: 75% of lakes were free of EWM, 90% were free of zebra mussels, and 99% were free of spiny water fleas. The authors attribute this success to early detection, public education, and conservation management.

In Washington and Waukesha counties, all of the techniques listed above are employed to combat the presence and spread of invasive species. Early detection monitoring allows county ecologists to determine where invasive populations exist and what kinds of management action should be taken. During the 2020-2021 season, the Washington and Waukesha county CBCW program inspected more than 15,000 boats and spoke to over 30,000 people. By including the public in the management of AIS, our communities can help protect native and vulnerable ecosystems for the enjoyment of all.





Please Click Here to
SUBSCRIBE
to our Newsletter

*The Aquatic Invasive Species Program is a cooperative effort between Washington & Waukesha Counties, supported by grant funds from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and a number of generous local lake groups working to control the spread of AIS.
Thank you for your support!*

For more information:

Email: amanda.schmitz@washcowisco.gov
aschmitz@waukeshacounty.gov

Washington County
262-335-4806
www.washcowisco.gov

Waukesha County
262-548-7818
www.waukeshacounty.gov/ais