

Battling the Invaders Roundtable II

February 9, 2010

VLMP Woodbury Brackett Environmental Center, Auburn

In Attendance: Roberta Hill, Christine Guerette, Keith Williams, Peter Kallin, Ross Wescott, Bob French, Don Hayes, Cheryl Welch, Meg Nelson, Julia Davis, Gerry Nelson, Roberta Scruggs, Dennis Roberge, Maggie Shannon, Dick McKeen, Elin Haugen, Paul Gregory, Lidie Robbins, Norman Stiles, Alexa Dayton, Bunny Wescott, Al Railsback, Sibyl French, Debbie Hite, Bart Hague, Laurie Callahan, Joseph Howes, Jim Entwood, Michael Sawyer, Pixie Williams, Peggy Hallee.

Keith Williams – Highland Lake

18-20 years of full lake plant surveys, with a complete level 3 survey taking 14-18 days to complete. Originally done every year, now surveys are done every other year. Nearly 100 plants have been identified, including wetland plants. A dam breach led to a sprouting of the seed bank, giving a historical look at the plant populations. Keith has kept statistical tabulations of the prevalence of plant species and other indicators.

Peter Kallin - BRCA

Formed from 5 lake associations. Of the seven lakes in the Belgrades, two are infested. Messalonski Lake has Variable-leaf Milfoil and Salmon Lake has Eurasian Milfoil. The BRCA maintains a large CBI program with approximately 20 paid inspectors. There are seven public boat launches and in 2009 there were 10,330 boat inspections done. Four invasives were stopped from entering the lakes, including Curly-leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Milfoil, and Fanwort. Each year a level 1 survey is conducted on the boat launches. A full level 3 survey was done on Salmon Lake, with multiple intensive surveys done of Hatch Cove in Great Pond. There are 45 trained IPP volunteers, 17 of which are certified. 20 are on Great Pond. For surveys an IPP trained observer is paired with a "paddler". BRCA is working on building a team of IPPs and divers. Two IPP workshops were conducted in the Belgrades last year.

Don Hayes – Branch Lake

11 miles long and 3 miles across at the widest point. For the last 8 years the Branch Lake Team has done a complete level 3 survey of the shoreline. The shoreline is divided into 23 sectors and surveyed by 33 trained "milfoil rangers" plus paddlers. All but one have been trained by the VLMP. Supported by the Branch Pond Association, the lake association for Branch Lake. Outfitted members with homemade 6 inch viewsopes; 20-25 in the past few years for \$20-25 a piece. Also constructed glass-bottomed kayaks and canoes and made them available to the IPP milfoil rangers. Funding provided by an optional donation in the annual lake association dues appeal. Have only lost two rangers over 8 years, and have added approximately half a dozen. Don calls team members every spring for affirmation of engagement, disseminates the latest version of the screening survey forms, checks on the condition of the gear, and sends reminder e-mails during the summer to remind people to complete their assigned section and send the forms to Don. This allows Don to proof the forms, see who has done their survey, and put a copy of them on local record with the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District. The group provides a social component every other summer, such as a pot luck or BBQ hosted at a rangers house. Sea planes are now allowed to land on Branch Lake if they have taken VLMP training in invasive plants and animals. The original ordinance was reversed by the city.

Julia Davis – DLWA

The DLWA has a CBI program and an IPP program. Hydrilla was found in August last year by a IPP member and many volunteers were recruited from other areas to help survey the whole shoreline. IPP surveyed 60% of the shoreline last fall. DLWA is very interested in expanding their team and making survey gear. 45 miles of shoreline to cover. Are using GPS and buoys to try to keep track of exact areas covered and to mark the beginning and end of surveys. Use portable buoys to mark out transects.

Cheryl Welch – Crystal Lake

85 acres and 65 feet deep at the deepest point. Free public access with a \$3 parking fee for vehicles with trailers. Crystal Lake Association formed in the 1970, but later went inactive. In 2001 John Welch discovered Eurasian Water-Milfoil on a boat at a local convenience store. The boat was bound for Crystal Lake. The first

informal survey was done by John that year. After publicity of that incident and an E. coli outbreak the CLA was reformed. In 2002 a rapid assessment was done. In 2006 Cheryl became president of the CLA and convinced the town to have the beach attendants conduct CBIs. The town hired 1 CBI and several people were trained. In 2007 Roberta Scruggs attended the CLA annual meeting to recruit CBI and teach about CBI and self inspection. Co-hosted an introductory and field IPP workshop in 2008. A level 3 survey was conducted with two teams of two people. A level 3 survey has been done for the past 3 years. Three more people joined in 2009. An eruption of native plant growth was seen in 2009 and lots of concerned citizens were contacting the CLA with questions. High rains and algae decreased clarity and made surveying difficult this year. Challenged to draw in new people and combat burn-out.

Roberta Scruggs – LEA

LEA is on the forefront of new technology. Last year on Upper Songo was the best year ever. The suction harvester was on the river 3 days a week, and the other 2 days the crew did IPP screening surveys. A new milfoil patch was discovered on Brandy Pond. Shorefront property owners have been covering the plants with tarps, local people are worried about loss in property values. 10,000 boats go through the Songo every year. Beginning of the lower Songo was loaded with milfoil. 2009 was the first time working on the Lower Songo, and it was cleared out. Federal grant money will be put to use on Sebago Lake. The Maine Milfoil Summit is on Friday, February 26.

Joe Howes – West Pond

West Pond is infested with Curly-leaf Pondweed. 23 people are trained on the suction harvester, working top-side and watching bags and divers. 2 on deck with one diver for safety reasons. Every year the lake association has a meeting in July where it requests volunteers. The one diver is retired. The boat is moored with a heavy anchor on one end of the weed bed and the diver works in a fanning pattern. Harvesting occurs twice a year, once in the spring before turions form, and again in the fall after dormant turions have sprouted. Use of GIS helps create maps to show where the boat has been and where the infested patches that remain are. There are 69 properties on the pond, and about 50% are involved in the lake association. There is headway being made in the harvested areas, but benthic barriers do not appear to work. Luckily, the suction harvester used twice a year does seem to be making progress. Unsure of turion viability, but visible progress is keeping enthusiasm high. Lots of volunteers helped to build the suction harvester, which cost \$7500.

Michael Sawyer – IF&W

Education programs incorporating IAP info has reached 10,000 students. There has been some resistance, but training sportsmen and women is important because of their high level of activity and ability to play a stewardship role. The IF&W is trying to find new avenues to get the information out. Boating safety programs are growing, there is an on-line magazine, and there is a push to pass mandatory boater education legislation. Only 12 states do not have mandatory boater education, and that would increase the reach of the education efforts.

Gerry Nelson – Cushman Pond

In 2009 there were 9 bass fishing tournaments on Kezar Lake. These tournaments were not self monitored by trained CBIs. Kezar Lake Watershed Association hires CBIs to monitor the launches during the tournaments. Gerry is currently the Chair of the Lovell Invasive Plant Patrol Commission but will be stepping down soon. Cushman has been infested and control has been actively pursued for 14 years. Began as an intense infestation on a small pond. Last year only a very few plants were found, removed, and benthic barriers put down. There are two hired SCUBA divers and six snorklers and safety boats to search for the Variable-leaf Milfoil. Received two \$10,000 grants at the beginning of the project and still have \$20,000 in the bank. The effort has never taken town money. The CBI program is down 20%, with 723 inspections last year. Volunteer numbers are also down, and there are two boat landings to cover. Lovell voters strongly support the IAS efforts. Cushman is piloting self inspection boxes for unmanned boat launches. The boxes provide forms to fill out, information, and a place to put completed forms. The form asks for limited information about the boater to help determine usage and launching history.

Pixie Williams – Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond

Slight infestation of Variable-leaf Milfoil, discovered in 2000 in a marshy passage between the two lakes, is very nearly eradicated. The group has been working on it for the past 8-9 years, and last year only a few sprigs

of VM were found during an inspection. The plants were then covered with clamshell benthic barriers. Very good records have been kept, there are very devoted people involved, and an excellent diver. Will continue careful monitoring for the next several years. Hoping for complete eradication. Pixie monitors all the waterbodies in Casco, other than waters surveyed by the Raymond Waterways Protection Association, and Otisfield with the exception of Thompson Lake. The PLPPA are concerned about not attracting new IPP members.

Dennis Roberge – Mousam Lake

Dennis is a new board member on the lake association. Mousam Lake is 900 acres and has one very active boat ramp. Acton/Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps does about 2,500 courtesy boat inspections a year. Two invasives were caught last year by CBIs. Dennis is the only active IPP volunteer. In 2009 Dennis surveyed approximately 50% of the shoreline and does the majority of his monitoring while snorkeling. The lake association has 400 members, but there is not a high level of interest in IAP.

Peggy Hallee – Cathance Lake

Cathance Lake is remote and largely undeveloped, as most of the shoreline was owned by a paper company until recently. The lake is 3000 acres, but very rocky with variable depths and not easily navigated. There are 150 properties on the lake, 24 of which are year round homes. There is one public boat launch, and many private launches. The Cathance Lake Association was revitalized in the early 00's. Had a workshop with Dr. Mark Whiting, as well as a social outing. The CLA sent 16 members to the VLMP IPP training in Princeton. In 2005 the CLA applied for a grant, and pushed for volunteers to start a CBI program. Sent 34 volunteers to be trained. So far, 6 plants have been found, all native except for some seaweed. Every year Mark Whiting has a "look in your lake" event on a pontoon boat. Many people around the lake send in plant samples, mostly bladderworts. CLA is the only program in Washington County to have this level of involvement. The CLA has engaged the local people as much as possible, and their membership has gone from 60 to 114. The focus of the message is what local people can do to protect and preserve the lake. The CLA has hosted lake days for children, with lots of food. Many social events are planned. The CBIs try to teach boaters how to check their own boats for IAP. Last summers rain is dampening spirits and the effort needs to be recharged. There are private boat launches on the opposite side of the lake that are being reached out to.

Maggie Shannon – COLA & BLA

Costs are up but funding is down, and COLA is trying to save money by concentrating CBI trainings into 3 geographically dispersed locations. One will be held at the Maine Milfoil Summit, with the two other locations to be decided on later. COLA is trying to get Voluntary Inspection Boxes (re: Gerry Nelson) made in bulk more economically. Last year a CBI catch on East Lake in the Belgrades came from a boat that had gone through a power wash, and the plants were discovered until the boat separated from the trailer. Fishing camp employees were educated about IAP concerns though not formally trained in CBI.

COLAs mission is to try to impact law to make lakes sustainable. The VLMP does not engage in advocacy; COLA acts to influence legislation to protect Maine lakes. Maggie and COLA are concerned about boats launching onto Salmon Lake less than 50 feet from the infestation barrier. Last summer a bass tournament was held on Salmon Lake. Legislator Jean Eberly has proposed a bill to prohibit bass tournaments on infested waters, however quarantine is a controversial topic. LD 1548 will come to hearing on February 18th (postponed) before the IF&W Committee, usually at 1pm. The content is up for grabs. COLA & Dan Buckley met with Jean in October to discuss. The working group is made up of SAM, BFM, COLA, DEP, and DIF&W. Handouts available, contact Maggie at info@mainecola.org for more information.

Elin Haugen – West Harbor Pond

Elin is the water quality monitor and IPP volunteer on West Harbor Pond. The pond is 1 mile long, about 300 yards wide, with no public landing, and is connected to a water supply. Elin initially joined the IPP in 2007 because of her concern over the seaplanes landing on West Harbor Pond. The pond is used as a pick up lake for planes commuting to northern lakes as well as being used by the nearby airport for take-off and landing practice. The group sponsored a bill to keep seaplanes off the lake, modeled after a law in Vermont that restricts seaplane activity on small waterbodies. Elin does IPP surveys on the pond, as well as hosting a "plant paddle" to introduce people to the plants on the lake. The plant paddles are very informal, but Elin scouts out the areas in advance and

has interesting things to tell people about the plants. Now there are several people interested in doing more. Elin also holds noodle parades for kids to get them interested in their lake.

Paul Gregory – Maine DEP

There are currently 25 lakes with VM, 2 lakes with EM, 2 with Hydrilla, one with CLP, and one with European Naiad. Prevention is important because there is even more territory to be infested. 40,000 boat inspections were done last year. There are several ongoing control projects. The Salmon Lake EM infestation was treated with herbicide. On Damariscotta Lake a riprap barrier was put in place to block the shallow opening to the Hydrilla infested cove, while the deeper opening with a steep grade was blocked off with a fence of galvanized steel mesh attached to rebar driven into the bottom. The control work is also an effort to prevent spread. Another concern is Didymo, which appears to have travelled from Scotland to New Zealand to America. Trout Fishing of Maine have received funds from LL Bean to install two kiosks, plus saltwater brine soaking units, but there has been a great deal of vandalism and nasty comments left on the comment cards. Ross mentioned the possibility of LL Bean putting labels about didymo on its products, and they are currently marketing sticky rubber boots to replace the old felt-bottomed waders. They are also supporting having two pairs of waders, one to use while the other is soaking. They need public input. Paul is also doing seaplane pilot outreach through the National Seaplane Association, which invited him to post on their blog. Trying to find ways to pump out pontoons; concerned about Zebra Mussels. Sea/terrestrial planes could pump out on land, but would need a way for seaplanes to filter the water from their floats. All pilots use Jeppson flight charts, and it might be useful to see if they would mark infested lakes on their charts.

Lidie Robbins – 30 Mile River Watershed Association

In operation for 2 years and coordinates CBI and IPP work on member lakes. Uses funds from member lakes to hire CBI staff. Varied support amongst the lakes according to their needs. 30 Mile RWA provides reminders, data forms, equipment and coordination for member lakes. In 2009 there was a VWM save on Parker Pond. 8 lakes in the system have been surveyed by IPP volunteers. About 40 volunteers did 160 hours of survey work. There are 4 paid CBI staff and they cover 8 lakes. They did 900 inspections, which is up from last year. That may be due to having paid staff. Launches are only covered on the weekends, and all launches can't be covered at all times. There are lots of trained people, but it is hard to get them to make a commitment to survey. The volunteers don't often feel confident in their ability. Lidie likes the idea of the plant paddle. A lot of people feel intimidated and don't want to be responsible for any missed plant. It's good to get people out onto the water immediately after training so they can get used to utilizing their knowledge. The field workshop on Minnehonk Lake was a good opportunity, but many of the participants had not taken the introductory course and were not comfortable with some of the basics.

VLMP will urge participants to go out on to the water immediately and to have an informal look at their lake. Have interested people apprentice with trained teams.

Alexa Dayton – Gulf of Maine Research Institute

GMRI is a non-profit geared toward solving problems by bringing together diverse groups. The challenge we are faced with is science literacy. GMRI has instituted its Vital Signs program to engage students in widespread environmental challenges. Working with teachers to bring IAP knowledge to children, allowing them to become involved and interested. GMRI hosts an online forum for discussions between classrooms. GMRI allows access to the scientific community and conversely allows the scientific community to access student findings. A great way to collect data, and it engages the next generation in an effort that is led by an aging workforce. It works with Maine's laptop initiative. All teachers are welcome to join the system. There are 5 training institutes and educators are taught how to facilitate student learning and are given technological support. GMRI will train 100 teachers this year and are actively recruiting. If you have a teacher in your area that would like to learn more about Vital Signs have them contact GMRI. We are two years into teacher training and many teachers ask what to look for. Would like to team up teachers with lake associations, regional lake conservation groups, and IPP volunteers to increase teacher knowledge and experience. Broadening awareness starts at the base. Equipment blitzes to make lots of equipment at low cost. Send teacher contact info to alexa@gmri.org or go to www.vitalsignsme.org. There is no cost to the school district.

Bunny Wescott & Sibyl French – Panther Pond

Waterweed is experiencing high levels of growth. Panther Pond is in the midst of lakes with aquatic invaders, and is connected to the Jordan Stream which is infested with VWM. When surveying on calm days, Bunny and Sibyl stand in their boat for increased views. They also use the trunk scopes while Ross and Bob row. Buoys are used to mark suspicious plants and also to mark out transects to help maintain a straight course. The anchor line can also be used to measure depth. There is no public launch on Panther Pond. The town of Raymond has 5 lakes, and the RWPA covers all the lakes in Raymond but concentrates primarily on runoff issues and getting grants for runoff abatement. Panther Pond Association and RWPA are working on better communication between the lake association and the regional group. New IPP volunteers were trained last year and the upstream lake is just starting up. Panther hasn't formed a lake-wide team yet, but will try to have a group meeting to figure out shoreline coverage and organization. The private boat launch is covered by a CBI sometimes, but boats also come down from Crescent Lake which is larger and has a public launch. When conducting screening surveys on weekends, lots of people are out on their docks and that is a good time to meet people and educate them.

Maggie mentioned that it would be a good idea to create a color code system to indicate the survey method used in a given sector.

Ross pointed out that the milfoil removal efforts on the Jordan River have been helped substantially by someone who walks the length of the river with his canoe every week removing new growth. High levels of follow-up monitoring are necessary, and there needs to be a point person to oversee the IPP effort.

Bob mentioned that the area on Little Sebago Lake where the suction harvester work was done has regrown, and that there needs to be ongoing effort to monitor and control infestations.

Debbie Hite – Androscoggin Lake Improvement Commission

Debbie is the sole IPP volunteer active on Androscoggin Lake. She is trying to reinvigorate people who have taken the IPP training but have not kept up with the program. Also trying to form a lake wide team. 6 people who are trained and four who aren't are interested. Androscoggin Lake is close to 4000 acres with 27 miles of shoreline. Dividing the lake into sectors based on the MA loon count quadrants. Three quadrants have been covered in addition to those regularly patrolled by Debbie. Debbie takes photographs while surveying and posts them on the lake association website, and it is helpful to have a highly visible person on the lake to spark interest. Androscoggin is popular for bass tournaments and there are 7-8 a year with up to 100 boats participating. People are concerned but it is hard to get enough involved with the CBI effort. This season's goal is to involve the youth camps on the lake with the IPP effort. Will do a teaching unit, hands on exploration of plants in the lake, etc. Many of the people buying property on the lake attended those youth camps. A few campgrounds on the lake are a good place to target interested people, as well as Twitchell's Airport. Sea planes use the lake as a practice landing zone. Has seen a heightened awareness of plants, with many lake association members getting in contact about plants they have found.

Laurie Callahan – York County Soil & Water Conservation District

Helping head up the YCIAS outreach and survey project in York, similar to projects done in 2004 and 2005. The focus is on Little Ossipee watershed. There are 7 infestations in York County, and 5 of them are in the Little Ossipee watershed. The area in the watershed is especially vulnerable, as down stream lakes and ponds are at risk from water flow from infested lakes and ponds, and also because of boating vectors and York County's close proximity to New Hampshire with its many infestations. They have applied for grant funding and are doing events and infestation tours. There was an August symposium and Aquatic Plants survey week, as well as control project presentations. Smaller ponds with public access were surveyed and the YCSWCD helped to share info and plan partnership activities. Teamed up with lake associations to help activate plant patrols and hosted plant paddle-like events. Attendees said they felt more comfortable after going out on the water with Laurie. There were 60-70 participants

Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed – Youth Plant Patrol

Paid two college students to jump-start IPP activity by surveying lakes & ponds. See attachment.

CIAP Year in Overview

11 introductory workshops

More IPP trained than in any previous year

Over 2000 IPP trained through the program

More than a third became certified (roughly double the average)

361 active certified IPP annually covering 152 lakes

385 surveys done this year

406 waterbodies have reported survey activity since 2001

82% of surveys done by IPP volunteers

Maine's Rapid Response Team

10 new members, primarily SCUBA divers

Damariscotta Lake discovered to have Hydrilla

IPP first responders travel from far & wide to help complete a level 3 survey.

27 trained IPP participated

New infestation of EN in Legion Pond in Kittery.

Organization has to increase to meet future challenges

The IPP program needs to evolve a multi-level organizational structure (based on the WQ model)

Benefits include increased technical assistance and quality assurance checks at every level, enhanced volunteer involvement, and enhanced efficiency.

Regional IPP Coordinators include

Hancock – HCSWCD

York – YCSWCD

Oxford – LEA

Franklin – RLHT

Cumberland – RWPA

Kennebec – BRCA, FCW, 30MRWA,

Piscataquis – BSP

Small multi-lake IPP Coordinators

Lincoln – PWA

Kennebec – TLA, FTLA

Oxford – KLWA, LAON, CLAGW, FKA

Penobscot – DLA

Lake-wide Teams

Aroostook – Long Pond

York – Great East Lake

Cumberland – Crystal Lake

Hancock – Branch Lake

Oxford – Thompson Lake

Somerset – Lake Wesserunsett

Kennebec – Echo Lake

On well established lakes like Branch Lake with many segments each survey only takes 3-4 hours for each team to complete. Lake-wide teams that are in the process of forming can take a number of courses.

Don – Branch has an active system that allows for quality assurance by putting all the surveys through the lake team leader.

Roberta – Training for volunteer regional coordinator could be done by the VLMP. Get organized structure in effect among already active lake teams. Further training will occur this summer.

When there are problems with teams not doing their assigned sectors or not doing a thorough job, you can build overlap into the sectors to increase the probability that the whole shoreline will be covered. This is especially useful in shallow areas.

Raising awareness at the local level and providing tech support. Organizational meetings for forming team can occur when members are gathered at an IPP training workshop and can be built into the workshop.

IPP Jump Start: Moosehead

Pinpoint areas of the state that are of particular significance, where awareness and activity are low, and bring a team to kick start a program in that area. Started in Moosehead with a workshop, none of the trained people came out to help survey. 70% of the littoral zone was covered in 2 years. No invasive species were observed.

Maggie – Need to have a long term connection with the community and focus on individual interests to lure people to the program. Need to liaison with area groups and get them interested.

Peggy – Need to build pride in the lake and get people invested. If you can, show examples of what is possible to let people know what they stand to lose.

Don – When you go into an area with this program, make sure you have an area coordinator set up in advance to be there to carry on when you leave.

First Responders

Build a team that would be able to mobilize quickly to conduct an emergency survey. Partnering with DEP rapid response plan to catch and stop infestations early.

Bart Hague – COLA

Where are we going and where will we end up 20 years from now. Rapid spread of milfoil and multiple ways to contain it. Would like to think about ways to stop infestations from happening in the future. Inspections at weigh stations and at the borders to keep new infestations out.

Ross – Jump Start program might want to work on lakes that are not well monitored by are in high risk areas. Offer the services to lake associations who have agreed to drum up interest and work together to perform a level 3 survey on vulnerable lake. An infrastructure already exists on lakes with associations and lakes in the danger zone are in great need of self-sustaining teams.

Alexa – Need to raise awareness. Having people understand the risk will get them to act. Train people to go out and have outreach events to reach more people.

Roberta – CBI are needed for awareness, especially for Moosehead; have inspections on the two roads leading into Moosehead.