

2011 INVASIVE PLANT PATROL UPDATES

Please join us in celebrating our 40th anniversary! The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program is America's FIRST citizen lake monitoring program!

Mark your calendar for VLMP's Annual Conference! ~ The Conference will be held on **Saturday, July 30, 2011** at the Great Outdoors on Pleasant Pond in Turner. Come enjoy the company of lake minded people from across the state. Please contact VLMP at vlmp@mainevlmp.org or 207-783-7733 to register.



2010 Maine Lakes Report is now available ~ The annual *Maine Lakes Report* provides a wealth of information about Maine lakes and ponds. The report includes water quality and invasive species screening summaries for the hundreds of lakes now in the program. If you would like to receive a hard copy of the full publication (which includes the 2010 IAP screening survey and IPP volunteer data) please contact us. You may also view the full color version on line at www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org/publications.

Invasive Plant Patrol Leadership Opportunities

Are you looking for opportunities to expand your horizons as a Plant Patroller? Hone your survey techniques and plant identification skills while exploring new regions of the State with other lake-minded volunteers? Be part of Maine's growing IPP Rapid Response Survey Team? Expand volunteer participation in your own local early detection effort? If so, please read on and consider becoming involved in one or more of these exciting new leadership opportunities:

IPP First Responders are trained IPP volunteers who are willing to be on call should a new infestation be identified anywhere in the State of Maine (limits on distances one is willing to travel may be specified of course). This mobile, ready-to-go team is able to move confidently and swiftly when the need arises. With the VLMP coordinating with the local lake community, trained Plant Patrollers may be paired up with members of the local community who may have great familiarity with the lake of concern, but limited knowledge of invasive plants, thus enhancing not only the quality of the *survey*, but the quality of the *survey experience* for everyone involved.

The First Responder concept was successfully tested on Damariscotta Lake in 2009 when twenty-seven trained invasive plant patrollers (many traveling from distant corners of the state) participated in the intense search that followed the discovery of hydrilla in a small cove along the western shore of Damariscotta Lake. To date, no additional hydrilla has been detected in the lake.

The purpose of **IPP Jump-Start** is to conserve native ecosystems now threatened by a wide array of invasive aquatic organisms, by "jump-starting" locally-sustainable citizen-based invasive aquatic

species monitoring in areas of the state where such activities are currently lacking. At the core of this program is the IPP Jump Start team: comprised of trained IPP volunteers, state agency personnel, VLMP staff and other professionals working alongside of --and mentoring-- novice plant patrollers and other members of the target community.

Engaging and leading by example, the IPP Jump-Start team conducts an invasive aquatic plant screening survey and baseline native aquatic plant inventory on the waters of the target region while providing one-on-one outreach to the community. IPP Jump-Start got its start in the Moosehead Lake Region in 2008.

Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders - When the VLMP achieves its *ultimate* goal as an organization, virtually every lake in the State of Maine will have one or more water quality monitors and an active team of trained Invasive Plant Patrollers routinely monitoring the health of the waterbody. This statewide cadre of dedicated volunteers, trained and certified by the VLMP, will be supported and sustained by a well-organized, integrated, collaborative system involving the VLMP, local, county and State agencies, trained volunteer coordinators, local lake associations, and regional lake conservation groups.

The VLMP has had such a structure in place on for its water quality monitoring program for decades. It is now working to put the necessary elements in place for its Invasive Plant Patrol as well. The emerging structure provides opportunities for volunteer leadership at every level: trained Invasive Plant Patrollers, IPP Lake Team Leaders, IPP Regional Coordinators, etc. As is the case with the water quality system, the benefits include: technical assistance and quality assurance checks at each level; enhanced volunteer involvement and contribution; improved program efficiency and sustainability.

Much progress was made in 2010, including, to our great delight, the activation (or active formation) of many new IPP Teams across the State of Maine. (An IPP Team is defined as “four or more trained Invasive Plant Patrollers working in concert to conduct an invasive aquatic plant screening survey.”) The number of waterbodies being surveyed by an active (or actively forming) team jumped from a small handful in 2009 to more nearly 60 waterbodies in 2010. In addition, a roundtable meeting of current IPP Leaders was held in the fall for the purpose of refining and enhancing IPP program goals and objectives; more clearly defining volunteer leadership roles; identifying needs; and brainstorming next steps. Two train-the-trainer workshops (*How to Lead and IPP Plant Paddle* and the *View Scope Clinic*) have now been added to the list of VLMP training opportunities. A host of new resources for IPP Leaders, including the *Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders Handbook*, will soon be available on the *Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders Resource Page* on the VLMP website.

To learn more about any of the VLMP’s volunteer leadership opportunities, please contact us at vlmp@mainevlmp.org or 207-783-7733