MIPN.org Midwest Invasive Plant Network

MIPN Quarterly Newsletter

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Letter from the President

Hello,

You may or may not have realized that MIPN held elections for new officers as per our by-laws during the winter. The board unanimously elected Jody Shimp (Illinois Department of Natural Resources) as Treasurer, Lisa Brush (The Stewardship Network) as Vice President, and me (Mark Renz, University of Wisconsin) as President. I am honored and excited about the opportunity to represent MIPN in this upcoming year as we have many challenges and opportunities to tackle in 2009.

While I was born, raised, and educated in California, I have lived in Wisconsin for three years and have enjoyed my winters and summers in the Midwestern United States. In my brief time here I have enjoyed being introduced to the landscape and plant communities associated with this region. Unfortunately I have also witnesses the effects of invasive plants. While my position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison researches invasive plant issues and extends information to the public, it became clear to me that a coordinated approach across our region would be needed. I was happy to discover that such an organization was being developed, and I welcomed the opportunity to become involved in MIPN.

In my brief time with MIPN we have been successful and active in many fronts, and I hope to continue to promote this as President. Education has been a strong component of MIPN, and I will strive to continue to develop useful and needed information and educational opportunities to members like the newly released Field Guide, Early Detection and Rapid Response Flyers, and annual meeting and symposia (in Indianapolis in 2008). Unfortunately MIPN is suffering from the same financial issues that many of us are currently facing. We are currently developing a detailed plan to help stabilize MIPN's financial status, but expect this will take two to three years. Remember this is a membership-based network, and many of the resources we develop, while available for everyone, are targeted to our members. We hope these resources are helpful, and ask that you renew your membership to MIPN to allow us to continue to develop material like this for many years to come. Membership forms are available online at http://www.mipn.org/index.html. As a member of MIPN you will receive a copy of the new Field Guide and have discounted rates for additional copies of this publication and others like the Pocket Naturalist guide. Descriptions and prices for each can be found at http://www.mipn.org/publications.html . Currently we are almost out of the initial printing of the Field Guide and are planning on making another printing. To help us with the cost of this printing we are offering discounted rates ($3/book) if groups pre-order copies. If interested in pre-orders please contact Kate Howe at (howek@purdue.edu).

I hope your winter was productive and energized you for the 2009 field season.

-Mark Renz, President of the Midwest Invasive Plant Network and Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Meet Our Board of Directors

Janet Clark is Assistant Director of the Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM), an organization based at Montana State University-Bozeman. She has worked on invasive plant projects for 20 years, often coordinating multi-stakeholder projects in the West and nationally. She has managed grant programs that support research and CWMAs, organized and facilitated symposia, and developed working partnerships with government agencies, universities, and nongovernmental organizations. Since 2006, she has served on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee of the National Invasive Species Council. She has also co-edited several books and helped launch the journal *Invasive Plant Science and Management*. Her work passion of the moment is building the National Network of Invasive Plant Centers (www.invasiveplantcenters.org).

A Pennsylvania native, Janet holds an English/Writing degree from Penn State and a master's in Public Administration from Montana State. Her proudest accomplishment is the graduation from college of both her son and daughter in May 2009. Her greatest anxiety is wondering whether they will get jobs or join her once again in the family home and leave wet towels on the floor. As for hobbies, Janet enjoys the idea of gardening during the short Montana growing season, although is more accomplished in gardening theory than actual implementation. She loves the wide open spaces of Montana and the West and is glad to live in a place that's always better than wherever else she's been.

Janet Clark

Chris Pierce

Christopher Pierce received his B.S. in Plant and Soil Science from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1994. He received both his M.S. in Horticulture (1999) and Ph.D. in Entomology (2003) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. From 2004 through 2007 he served as Indiana's Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) State Survey Coordinator. He was responsible for coordinating invasive species (insects, mollusks, nematodes, pathogens and plants) surveys in the state of Indiana, as well as education and outreach programs. At that time he created and developed Indiana's "Most Unwanted" Invasive Plant Pest List Website. While he was in Indiana, he was a member of the Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group (IPSAWG). Currently, he serves as the Pest Survey Specialist for Missouri and Iowa for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). His responsibilities include coordinating and collaborating with multi-discipline, multi-agency programs to facilitate invasive species surveys and outreach in Missouri and Iowa. He is currently serving on both Missouri and Iowa's CAPS State Survey Committees.

Invasive Aquarium Plant is Big Problem for Lakes and Ponds

contributed by Leonard Dane, Lake County Health Dept. Lakes Management Unit & Debbie Maurer, Lake County Forest Preserve District

Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*, also known as Brazilian waterweed) is spreading into Midwest lakes and streams. It is native to South America, but is considered exotic and invasive in the United States. Until 2008, this invasive aquatic plant was only known in 17 counties in the Midwest and Ontario, with only one known population surviving the cold winters of central Minnesota.

Previously not known to Lake County, IL two populations of Brazilian elodea were found in Libertyville during the summer of 2008 by the environmental consultant Integrated Lakes Management (ILM) while conducting routine maintenance of two ponds owned by the Village of Libertyville. ILM reported the populations to the New Invaders Watch Program (NewInvaders.org), a regional early detection program for invasive species in the Chicago region. Identification was confirmed by the Illinois Natural History Survey. On January 22, 2009 the Lake County Health Department, Lakes Management Unit (LMU) sampled the ponds and found that Brazilian elodea was overwintering beneath 8 inches of ice covered by 6 inches of snow. The Village planned to begin removal of the populations this spring.

Once established, Brazilian elodea is difficult to completely eradicate. Brazilian elodea can grow aggressively in our lakes and streams; infestations can cause a decline in water quality, restrict water movement, interfere with navigation and traditional recreational uses, and reduce the abundance and diversity of native plants, such as our native American elodea (*Elodea canadensis*) also known as common waterweed.

Aquatic invasive plants can spread as water garden plants, as contaminants on non-invasive water garden plants, as hitchhikers on recreational vehicles, trailers, and equipment, and through the dumping of unwanted plants or plant parts from aquaria. Unfortunately, this plant is widely sold as an aquarium and water garden plant and an "oxygenator" for water nurseries under the name "Anacharis". The problem occurs when the plants from aquaria or water gardens are released into a neighboring water body instead of being disposed of properly. This harmful practice is common with other invasive aquatic plants as well. The LMU has found the exotics parrot feather, water hyacinth, and water lettuce during annual monitoring. All three species are popular water garden plants sold at many local stores. However, unlike Brazilian elodea, these species have not yet been found overwintering in Lake County. If you have water garden or aquarium plants that become over abundant, please dispose of the excess plants in the trash.

Brazilian elodea has the potential to be our next Eurasian water milfoil– a widely abundant and problematic aquatic invasive plant throughout much of the Midwest. Detection and rapid control of small, isolated populations increases the likelihood of successful, cost effective, eradication. In states where it has become established, management efforts focus on keeping beaches free of plant growth, opening boat lanes from the shore to open water, maintaining favorable plant cover for fish populations, and restoring the diversity of submersed plant communities all of which are very costly. Established populations of Brazilian elodea are also maintained to prevent further spread by fragmentation. Control measures are conducted early in the year before fragmentation occurs. Management objectives for Brazilian elodea control should involve prevention and eradication.

Invasive Aquarium Plant is Big Problem for Lakes and Ponds (continued)

To stop the spread of aquatic invasive plants like Brazilian elodea, follow these rules: 1) Do not release aquatic invasive plants into any waters; 2) Rinse your aquatic garden plants before planting; 3) Keep aquatic plants contained in your water garden; and 4) Clean all recreational vehicles, trailers, and equipment before leaving any lake or river.

Identification:
Brazilian elodea is a rooted, submersed perennial with bright green, finely toothed leaves densely arranged in whorls of 4 to 6. The leaves are 1 - 3 cm long and up to 5 mm wide with a pointed tip. Having more than 3 leaves per whorl, and leaves more than 1 cm in length help to distinguish this plant from American elodea (*Elodea canadensis)*. Branches form irregularly along the stems. The plant appears dense with leaves because whorls grow close together on the stem. The slender roots are pale and unbranched. In our region, the plant reproduces vegetatively through fragmentation.

Brazilian elodea prefers moderate water temperatures; therefore, optimum growth occurs in the spring and fall. During the summer and winter, growth may slow or cease completely. When water temperatures become extreme, plants will die back to the roots. Areas on the stems with double nodes play an important role in food storage and reproduction. Roots and branches are both produced from double nodes on the stem. If a Brazilian elodea fragment does not have a double node, it can not grow into a new plant. It is unable to produce seeds, because only male flowers are present on plants found in the United States.

The monitoring, control, and education of this plant has been a collaborative effort by groups from the private sector (ILM), local government (Village of Libertyville), county government (LMU and Lake County Forest Preserve District), state government (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Department of Natural Resources), and non-governmental organizations (Midwest Invasive Plant Network, Illinois Natural History Survey, and Illinois – Indiana Sea Grant). If you are concerned about invasive, exotic plants in a waterbody in Illinois, please contact any of the following:

Lakes Management Unit – (847) 377–8030 or ldane@lakecountyil.gov
Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Steve Shults – (618) 435–8138 or steve.shults@illinois.gov
New Invaders Watch Program – http://newinvaders.org
Illinois – Indiana Sea Grant – (847) 872–0141 or ktepas@illinois.edu
Integrated Lakes Management – (847) 244–6662 or sdenny@lakesmanagement.com

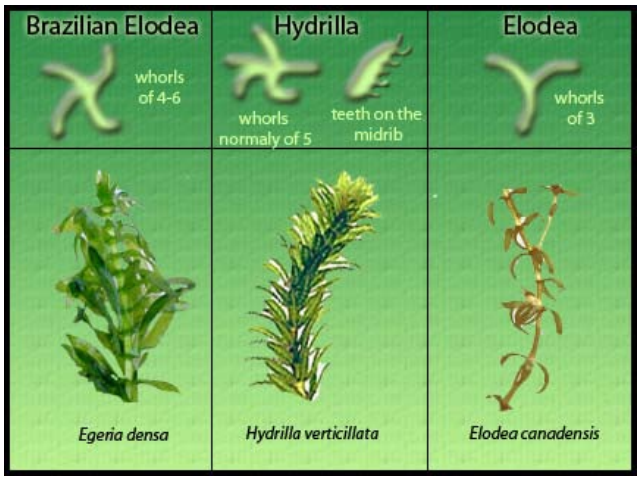

Image courtesy of www.thewildclassroom.com

New CWMA Forms in Ramsey County, Minnesota

contributed by Paul Erdmann, Ramsey Conservation District

In 2008, the Ramsey Conservation District received a $16,000 grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources to assist in establishing a Cooperative Weed Management Area for Ramsey County. The Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area (RCCWMA) was formed in June of 2008, and now consists of 11 partner organizations.

Although the smallest county in Minnesota and highly urbanized, Ramsey County's central location and large population make it the perfect place to combat invasive plants collaboratively. St. Paul, the state capital, is located in the southern portion of the county. Many natural resource agencies, non-profits, and other organizations are represented in the county, providing a wide range of expertise and experience in dealing with invasive plants. Thus far, organizations participating in the RCCWMA include the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, National Park Service, Ramsey Conservation District, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation, HB Fuller/Willow Lake Nature Preserve, City of Maplewood, Great River Greening, Ramsey County Public Works, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, Rice Creek Watershed District, Minnesota Army National Guard, St. Paul Parks and Recreation, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The RCCWMA is focusing on five target species in the county: yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), and Miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis* and *M. sacchariflorus*). These species are not yet widespread in the county, but have the potential to be. The RCCWMA is also on the lookout for cut-leaved teasel (*Dipsacus lacinatus*), hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), Grecian foxglove (*Digitalis lanata*), and flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*). These species occur in isolated populations or have not yet been found in the county, but have been found in surrounding counties and/or have high potential of appearing in the county.

Attendees at RCCWMA's first terrestrial workshop learn about native and non-native plant communities.

The RCCWMA is currently focusing on early detection and education. Partners have presented general invasive plant and target species information at workshops, high schools, and green expos. An April workshop will focus on management of the target species and be geared towards natural resource managers and others working in the field. The RCCWMA meets monthly at alternating partner locations. For more information, go to the RCCWMA website: http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/cd/cwma or contact Paul Erdmann, Ramsey Conservation District, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112, 651-266-7277, paul.erdmann@co.ramsey.mn.us.

Southern Illinois Strike Team contributed by Chris Evans, River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area

With funding from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry's Forest Health Protection Program and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy and the Illinois DNR have established a two-person team to work full time on monitoring and controlling invasive plants within the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area. In the fall of 2008, Brooks Davey and Jen Mueller came on board to form the Southern Illinois Invasive Plant Strike Team. Brooks hails from the southern Illinois area and recently worked with Southern Illinois University, helping conduct research in wetland ecosystems. Jen moved to the area from a position with The Nature Conservancy in South Dakota. This strike team was modeled after the National Park Service's very successful Exotic Plant Management Team program. They will focus primarily on controlling invasive plants in natural areas, responding to Early Detection events, and reducing the spread of invasive species into natural areas by managing pathways and corridors of spread. As part of the project, the strike team will be keeping detailed records about the infestations and control treatments using The Nature Conservancy's Weed Information Management System (WIMS).

A new website provides information on environmentally-friendly gardening practices

A new website has been created to educate gardeners about environmentally sound gardening practices. The site includes an events calendar and allows users to post information or questions, as well as participating in discussions with other users about topics of interest. Visit www.wildlifegardeners.org to learn more.

Upcoming Meetings

36th Natural Areas Conference - Living on the Edge: Why Natural Areas Matter
September 15-18, 2009
Vancouver, Washington

In association with the Natural Areas Association, the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils (NAEPPC) will host an Invasive Exotic Species track at the 2009 Natural Areas Conference in Vancouver, Washington. The theme for the September 15-18, 2009, conference is "Living on the Edge: Why Natural Areas Matter", and all NAEPPC chapters are invited and encouraged to submit some aspect of their work in a contributed paper or poster. Submission of abstracts and other information about the conference is available online at the Natural Areas Conference web site (http://www.naturalarea.org/09Conference).

Joint Meeting of The Stewardship Network and the Midwest Invasive Plant Network, Jan. 22-23, 2010

For the first time ever, MIPN will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the Stewardship Network's Conference in Lansing, Michigan. MIPN and the Stewardship Network have worked closely together on a variety of projects, and we decided to join forces for our next annual meeting.

The conference will focus on the Science, Practice, and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems and will be MIPN's first ever meeting in Michigan. We hope you will plan to attend. Stay tuned for more details on the meeting as it approaches.

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The Stewardship Network