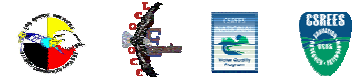


Chippewa Flowage Invasive Species Education and Management Project



Erik Olson- Water Quality/Environmental Educator
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College

Project Description

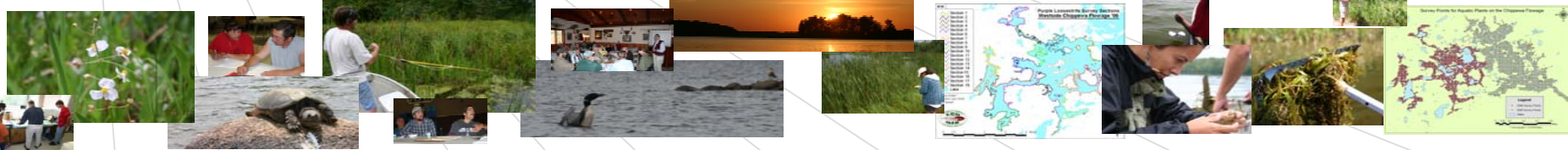
The spread of Eurasian watermilfoil and purple loosestrife within the Chippewa Flowage and other area lakes is a problem for tribes in Northern Wisconsin. These invasive species displace valuable native plants that provide food and cover for native fauna. In addition, the negative impacts of invasive species can be detrimental to tribal subsistence hunting and gathering.

The Project is guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from multiple agencies, organizations, and associations. The Project's objectives are to: map areas of invasive species on the Chippewa Flowage using GIS and GPS technologies, explore management options, provide targeted education, and promote local leadership.

Purple Loosestrife Research: Volunteers from the LCO Community, Chippewa Flowage Lake Association, and interns helped inspect a large area of shoreline, and gathered information on the purple loosestrife infestations. The information was then entered into computer databases by the project educator and interns at LCOCC. These data will then be provided to Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to update GIS coverages. A map of the purple loosestrife infestations on the Chippewa Flowage was generated and shared with natural resource management agencies and organizations. Project staff then worked with those agencies to facilitate purple loosestrife management activities.

Local Leadership: A large number of local people assumed key leadership roles in the Project. For instance, one volunteer took charge of two purple loosestrife survey sections in 2005 and another two in 2006. That same volunteer started an aquatic invasive species (AIS) subcommittee within his Lake Association, raised purple loosestrife beetles for release, AND worked with the Project staff and the WDNR to release them on targeted infestations on the Flowage. Many of the other volunteers have taken similar leadership roles in their lake associations.

The hardworking interns also assumed key leadership roles and gained valuable work and educational experience. One intern in particular, is now the AISES Club President, a member of the LCOCC Environmental Stewardship Committee, and has presented his intern experience at the AISES 2006 National Conference.



Eurasian Watermilfoil Research: The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College (LCOCC) provided interns, boats, and equipment for the survey. Interns worked under the supervision of the project educator to collect large quantities of data covering a 15 square-mile area. Between the summers of 2005 and 2006 staff surveyed 2,854 sample points to show the spatial distribution (and other attributes) of invasive and native plant species within the Chippewa Flowage. Once entered into a database the data was analyzed and maps were generated to assist in management activities.

Education & Outreach: In addition to the invasive species surveys many education and outreach activities were undertaken. Including: the updating of invasive species signs at 36 boat landings in the Chippewa Flowage area, public presentations, guest teachings, trainings, workshops, media outlets, and more.

Recently, the Project started providing public service announcements on WOJB 88.9FM Woodland Community Radio. Project and WOJB staff created two announcements every six weeks to be aired during the morning news hour. There has been great positive feedback from both local citizens and citizens residing in surrounding counties.

Conclusion

The Project data was collected to provide natural resource managers, lake associations, and volunteers with the distribution and abundance of invasive species and native aquatic plants within the Chippewa Flowage so that they may manage it in a way that will reduce overall costs and environmental impacts. Also, the information can be used to better our understanding of aquatic ecosystems.

Community support for this project is strong, mainly thanks to county/reservation-wide education and outreach activities. These efforts are essential in prevention of invasive species and the protection and enhancement of native plant species.

