



# Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area

*Working together to protect Northern Wisconsin from invasive species*

NCWMA | Issue 16

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## Get Ready For NCWMA Summer Projects!

While there still may be snow on the ground in the northwoods, we are excitedly planning for our summer season. We will continue many of our projects from previous years, such as working with municipalities on invasive species control along right-of-ways, educating boaters about aquatic invasive species with the portable boat wash station, and invasive plant control along Ashland's lakefront. As always, we will be present at numerous events throughout the summer to disseminate information, as well as hold a number of work days targeting the management of various invasive species.

From pulling pigweed on Long Island, to taking down aquatic invasives (and Milfoil Man) at boat landings across our four county area, look for us to be out working to protect the northwoods from invasive species!





## Alien Invaders: Curly-leaf Pondweed

By Scott Caven, Ashland County LWCD AIS Coordinator

Curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) is a perennial aquatic invasive species native to Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. It was introduced to the United States in the mid-1880s as an ornamental aquarium plant and reached Wisconsin's waters around 1905. But Wisconsin isn't the only one experiencing the wrath of curly-leaf pondweed; this aquatic invader has been reported in all of the continental United States.

The leaves are reddish-green in color, oblong shaped, and approximately one-half inch wide and three inches long. To properly identify curly-leaf pondweed, look for distinct "lasagna-noodle" shaped leaves equipped with finely toothed edges; this distinguishes it from clasp-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton richardsonii*), a native look-a-like found in many waters in Wisconsin.



Curly-leaf pondweed has a huge competitive advantage over the majority of aquatic plants. Although it prefers alkaline and high nutrient waters with soft substrate and shallow depths, it can survive in a variety of habitats, depths, temperatures, levels of sunlight, and nutrient levels. It is especially invasive in highly disturbed environments like boat landings, docks, beaches, and fishing piers.

To say that this aquatic invader has found its ecological niche is a severe understatement; curly-leaf pondweed starts forming new plants underneath the ice during the winter months and is one of the first to emerge in early spring. The plants have a huge competitive edge by obtaining space, nutrients, and sunlight long before most native aquatic plants.

When most native aquatic plants are growing in July, curly-leaf pondweed starts dropping to the bottom. This massive plant die-off causes a significant drop in dissolved oxygen that fish and other aquatic organisms depend on for survival. The decaying plants increase the amount nutrients, causing algal blooms that wash up on shore, degrade aesthetics, and give off an unpleasant odor. The dense mats of curly-leaf pondweed can also hinder recreational activities like boating, fishing, swimming, and waterskiing.

Curly-leaf pondweed spreads primarily through turions, burr-like winter buds produced in vegetative reproduction. They can also reproduce by seed, but this is far less common than reproducing by turions. Humans exacerbate their spread by transferring turions and plant fragments via boats, trailers, motors, and equipment; reinforcing how critical it is to follow the aquatic invasive species prevention steps.

Once established, it is nearly impossible to fully eradicate curly-leaf pondweed from a waterbody. Therefore, the most effective way to combat curly-leaf pondweed is by maintaining a healthy aquatic ecosystem with a high biodiversity of native plants and animals, minimizing nutrient input, and preventing the introduction of this detrimental aquatic hitchhiker in the first place.

Take these steps to ensure that your actions are not part of the problem, but the solution!

- INSPECT your boat, trailer, and equipment
- REMOVE any attached aquatic plants or animals
- DRAIN all water from boats, motors, and equipment
- NEVER MOVE live fish away from a waterbody
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash
- BUY minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer





## Invasive Species Rule Updates

The Wisconsin Invasive Species Identification, Classification, and Control Rule (Chapter NR 40) is in the process of being updated. The rule came into effect in 2009, which helps citizens learn to identify and minimize the spread of plants, animals, and diseases that can invade our lands and waters and cause significant damage.

Proposed changes to the language of the invasive species rule are for the purpose of adding additional invasive species into existing categories established under Chapter NR 40, facilitating compliance, clarifying the language, and improving the organization of the rule.

The Chapter NR 40 rule creates a comprehensive, science-based system with criteria to classify invasive species into two categories: "Prohibited" and "Restricted." With certain exceptions, the transport, possession, transfer, and introduction of Prohibited species is banned. Restricted species are also subject to a ban on transport, transfer and introduction, but possession is allowed, with the exception of fish and crayfish. The DNR may issue permits for research or public display of any listed invasive species. For species other than invasive fish and crayfish, permits may also be issued for any other purpose.

Without this rule, different invasive species groups are not treated consistently, making concerted action less likely. Federal and state laws provide regulations and resources for early detection and quarantine for invertebrates and disease-causing organisms. State law limits the release of non-native fish and other vertebrates into the wild. However, there are very few federal or state laws that relate to non-native plants. Local noxious weed ordinances are erratic and often uneven in their implementation. This rule allows the DNR to have more consistent authority and actions between the species groups and to provide one clear, state-wide law that is reasonable and feasible.

Look for official public hearings on the proposed changes in September or October. For more information, please see the NR 40 page on the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/classification.html>

### Reminder

If you ordered from the Native Plant Sale, be sure to pick up your plants on your specified date! (April 26, 27, May 31, and June 1)



The NCWMA and the Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department (AIS program) teamed up to have a display at the Vaughn Library during National Invasive Species Awareness Week. It was quite successful, and we were asked to keep the display up longer! Also watch for our display at the library in June for National Invasive Species month, along with other events.

## Invasive Species Display





## Upcoming Events

Look for the NCWMA to be present at the following events:

- April 6 Bay Area Farm and Garden Show, Bay Area Civic Center, 8:00 - 1:00
- April 10 Pesticide Applicator Training, Ashland DNR office
- April 16 NCWMA April meeting, EOC room Bayfield County Annex Building, 9:00
- April 20 Barnes AIS Conference, Barnes Town Hall, 8:15 - 1:00
- May 3 Garlic mustard pull, Hurley
- Early May Garlic mustard pull, Mellen
- May 14 Barnes ECO Ed Day
- May 16 - 18 Chequamegon Bay Birding and Nature Fest
- May 29 - 30 Tentative date, Collection of *Galerucella* beetles
- May 29, June 5 and 6 Purple Loosestrife Beetle Bonanza Field Trips, Douglas County
- June 1 Kid's Fishing Day, NGLVC, 9:00 - 1:00
- June 21 Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference, Spooner

**Be sure to look at the Upcoming Events tab on our website, [www.northwoodscwma.org](http://www.northwoodscwma.org), in the coming months for the latest listing of upcoming events!**

**For more information on any of these events or to get involved, please contact us!**



Have your own project this season? Don't forget to utilize the NCWMA tool shed!



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## Care to Join Us?

The Northwoods CWMA meets at 9:00 AM on the second Tuesday of every month (*check the NCWMA website for any date changes*) at the Northern Great lakes Visitor Center on Highway G near Ashland, WI. The public is always welcome to attend, or just drop by to discuss an invasive species concern or question.

For more information, contact us at [info@northwoodscwma.org](mailto:info@northwoodscwma.org), visit us online at [www.northwoodscwma.org](http://www.northwoodscwma.org) or find us on Facebook.



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