

## June is Invasive Species Awareness Month

By Darienne McNamara

It's a great month for gardening, camping, fishing and chipping away at house projects—so much to do! This June, also consider celebrating Invasive Species Awareness Month for an afternoon. I wager you'll be glad you did.

Like most worthwhile endeavors, fighting invasives is not easy. They will hold their ground with long stout roots, poke your arms, try to tire you out, even lure you with seductive flowers, but don't be fooled. These plants are the equivalent of a disease on our landscape, cleverly disguised as wildflowers and harmless shrubs. They spread through forests, fields, wetlands and waters, crowding out other plants, and taking a toll on the wildlife, people, and industries that depend on a healthy ecosystem. This translates to billions of dollars lost each year in timber production, crop yields, tourism revenue, and much more.

It sounds bleak, but don't despair.

In the Bad River watershed, our land is only beginning to show the signs of infestation. Only recently

have we seen plants such as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, leafy spurge, and others. Of course, we also have our fair share of buckthorn and honeysuckle, two widespread invasive plants.

Want to know if you have invasive species on your property? Check out the DNR website with photos and information at [www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.asp](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.asp). You can also contact the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area, online at [www.northwoodscwma.org](http://www.northwoodscwma.org). The NCWMA is a local group working to address invasive species in Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron counties, with lots of knowledgeable members who would be thrilled to help others in tackling invasives.

With more eyes on the ground, and a little effort from a lot of people, we can care for the things we love about this watershed. Happy Invasive Species Awareness Month! ♦

—Darienne is Coordinator for the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area, BRWA water quality volunteer and BRWA Board member. She can be reached at [info@northwoodscwma.org](mailto:info@northwoodscwma.org)



*Invasive garlic mustard carpets the forest floor.*



## First Karen Danielsen Outstanding Stewardship Award Given



Nearly 100 BRWA supporters gathered on Saturday March 27 for the 6th annual Spring for the Water fundraising event. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first Karen Danielsen Outstanding Stewardship Award to Colleen Matula. Colleen is a founding board member of BRWA, Fundraising and Membership committee member, events planner and long time water quality volunteer. She is also a forest ecologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in Mellen.

Colleen and Karen were professional comrades, often partnering up at conferences and workshops. Upon receipt of the award, Colleen reminisced about their conversations. "We would always find ourselves talking about what was important—connecting people with their watersheds." In accepting the award, Colleen also put forth a challenge to BRWA supporters to "continue supporting and participating in this great organization." ♦

**Colleen Matula accepts the Karen Danielsen Outstanding Stewardship Award from Karen's husband, Dale Thomas**