

No Eurasian milfoil found at Tripp Lake

By Roberta Hill

Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants

Recent events at Kezar Lake and Tripp Lake serve as both a cautionary reminder of the importance of inspecting our boats and boating gear every time we enter or leave a body of water, and also as an example

of Maine's highly effective, largely volunteer-powered system for intercepting and responding to the threat of invasive aquatic plants.

On June 14, a courtesy boat inspector (CBI) on Kezar Lake in Lovell removed a plant fragment from a boat

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Milfoil Update 2011

July

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When Aaron Tripp arrived at an artists' reception at Harvest Gold Gallery in Lovell, everyone immediately flocked around to hear "his story."

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Aliens among us

With so much riding on the eradication of invasive aquatic plants, protectors of Maine's fresh waters remain ever vigilant.

By Beth Quimby

Maine Sunday Telegram Staff Writer*

NAPLES – The S.S. Libra may not have the elegant lines of a cabin cruiser, and its plodding pace is not much faster than an aquatic turtle's. But the vessel is the first line of defense in the war against the variable leaf milfoil on the Songo River.

This summer, the boat and its four-man crew are stationed just south of Songo Lock, engaged in a fight to keep the aquatic plant pest from invading recently won territory to the north. Although the crew is highly experienced in milfoil eradication, the stakes are high and the outcome far from certain. Keeping Maine's fresh waters free of invasive weeds is crucial, not only to the health of native plants and animals, but also to the state's economy, say those on the front lines. Maine's lakes generate about \$3.5 billion annually in tourism spending, increased property values and recreational boating activity.

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"This impacts every lake in Maine."

**– Peter Lowell,
LEA executive director**

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Survey reveals Windham pond may be infested



Laurie Callahan prior to conducting an IPP Level 3 survey on Mill Pond in Windham on July 7.

It may take a week or two to get DNA results, but a survey appears to have found hybrid variable leaf milfoil plants in Mill Pond in Windham.

Mill Pond is located between Little Sebago Lake and Collins Pond, both of which are infested with a variable milfoil hybrid. On July 7, Laurie Callahan and Paula Monaghan conducted an Invasive Plant Patrol Level 3 survey of the 17-acre pond.

Callahan is an aquatic biologist from Vermont and Monaghan works with the Collins Pond Improvement Association. Callahan had been thinking about doing an aquatic plant survey on Mill Pond for a few years. She learned that Monaghan was also interested in taking a look at the aquatic plants in Mill Pond.

The two women are familiar with the appearance of the variable milfoil hybrid; Monaghan through her survey and harvesting work on Collins Pond and Callahan through work at Little Sebago Lake in 2003.

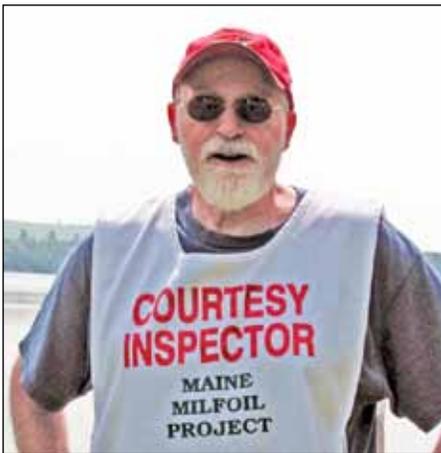
Samples of the plants were taken from Mill Pond to get a positive DNA identification. But because the lab is backed up, identification may take time, according to Roberta Hill of the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP).

Callahan has lived in Maine three separate times for a total of 11 years. She worked with Hill at VLMP in 2005-2006. This year, as in several past years, Callahan is coordinating the York County Invasive Aquatic Species Project.

– Paula Monaghan and Laurie Callahan

Check it out!

Joseph Howes, president of the West Pond Association, invites everyone to “check out our new Facebook Page. Search – WEST POND ASSOCIATION. Then click on Like and view our site.”



Willy Mercier has been our main CBI for four years. He works hard for Craig Pond!

– Janie Crowell



"Never too young to introduce our next generation of lake stewards to 'What Lies Beneath' ... We found metaphyton!!"

– Cheryl Welch of Crystal Lake in Gray and her grandson Theron Ringrose

A new video from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources introduces Minnesota's new laws to prevent the spread of zebra mussels. The specifics of the new laws themselves, of course, do not pertain to Maine, but the video does a good job explaining the additional precautions to be taken by CBIs and boaters in order to prevent spread of zebra mussels. <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/index.html>

The Milfoil Update is produced by the Lakes Environmental Association with funds generated by the Maine Lakes and Rivers Protection Sticker and the support of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. **Contact:** Roberta Scruggs at LEA, roberta@leamaine.org, 207-647-8580, www.mainelakes.org or **Maine DEP Invasive Species Program:** 800-452-1942, milfoil@Maine.gov, www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/invasives/index.htm

Collins Pond launches with special volunteer

By Paula Monaghan

On July 9, the Collins Pond DASH (diver assisted suction harvester) boat was launched for the season. This is our second year and already we have learned valuable new lessons.

We had a frustrating morning attempting to get all the hoses back together, which included a lot of hard work and several trips back and forth to the store. We learned that it is advisable to take the boat apart very carefully at the end of the season and mark everything well.

We have also learned to be very flexible with our volunteer schedule, adjusting quickly to cover or substitute for whoever shows up for the day.

Larry Farley had volunteered to work as a bagger on the boat but ended up being both bagger and boat captain. Larry is a retired Electrical Engineer who now works part-time as a math tutor for Dean College in Franklin, MA.

Larry loves spending his entire



Paul Rawson (in water), Cheryl Rawson, William Fergis and Larry Farley prepare the Collins Pond DASH boat for launch.

summer on Collins Pond and volunteers to work on the DASH boat because he wants to preserve the peacefulness and beauty of the pond for generations to come.

While we were preparing the

DASH boat, we were visited by William Fergis, who is from the west coast of Ireland. Willy is dating Michele, the niece of Larry and Denise Farley. He is in the United States working for an engineering company after he recently completed his engineering studies in Scotland.

Larry had volunteered to work on the DASH boat on Saturday and Willy was visiting for the weekend so he came over to observe what we were doing.

Since he is a hands-on guy, he decided to join us and was shoulder to shoulder with Larry bagging milfoil as diver Paul Rawson, worked below the lake surface to dig up the invasive milfoil plants. Cheryl Rawson, Steve Cantor and Paula Monaghan also volunteered that day.

We send a very special thank you to William Fergis for volunteering to help us for the day.



Larry Farley and Willy Fergis monitor the flow of invasive plants and remove filled bags. Cheryl Rawson maintains a vigilant watch for her husband, diver Paul Rawson, as he removes plants.



Invasive Plant Patrol First Responders Sibyl French and Jackey Bailey scouring the shallows of Tripp Lake in search of Eurasian water-milfoil. *Photo by Lew Wetzel, courtesy of the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program.*

Tripp Lake survey

Continued from Page 1

preparing to launch. The suspicious plant specimen was subsequently submitted to the Maine Volunteer Lake Program (VLMP) in Auburn for identification.

Though the condition of the fragment was such that species ID could not immediately be confirmed, photos of the fragment were quickly disseminated to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's on-call expert "peer group." Within a day, consensus was reached, qualifying this intervention as one more official CBI "save." Since the CBI program began, hundreds of invasive plant fragments have been removed from boats and boating gear here in Maine, greatly reducing the potential for spread of these destructive organisms.

But the story does not end there. According to the records of the CBI in Lovell, the boat that carried the Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) had last been in Tripp Lake in Poland. Tripp Lake is not currently known to be infested with any aquatic invader.

The situation begs a host of questions. What was Eurasian milfoil doing in Tripp Lake? Is it quietly gaining ground there in some back cove, as yet unnoticed? Could the Eurasian milfoil fragment have been deposited in the area of the public boat landing by yet another boat, one that had just recently come from an infested lake?

Lacking the full registration identification number needed to find the Kezar Lake boater, and information that might help trace the plant's origin, there was only one course of action to be taken. All of the shallow areas in Tripp Lake capable of supporting rooted plants had to be immediately screened, in order to rule out the presence of Eurasian water milfoil.

The VLMP put out the call to its Invasive Plant Patrol First Responders, a team of highly trained and experienced volunteer lake monitors who have

signed up for special duty. They respond to newly identified (or suspected) infestations by conducting a comprehensive invasive aquatic plant survey on the waterbody of concern, as rapidly as possible. When it comes to effectively controlling invasive aquatic plants, early detection and rapid response are critical.

Within two days of the Eurasian water milfoil confirmation, a strategy meeting was held at VLMP headquarters. Members of the Tripp Lake Improvement Association were present to lend their intimate knowledge of the lake and possible points of private access for efficient deployment of the team.

"I am so impressed," Barbara Shapiro, former Tripp Lake Improvement Association president, said at the meeting. "You all have dropped what you are doing and come from all over Maine to help us here on Tripp Lake. Thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts for moving so quickly. You are all just amazing."

By July 7, the IPP First Responders had completed their Level 3 survey on Tripp Lake. No Eurasian water milfoil was detected. One small floating fragment of milfoil was spotted and collected. It does NOT look like EWM, but it is rather young and small. It was sent to a lab in Michigan for DNA species confirmation.

None of the invasive aquatic plants on Maine's prohibited list were detected (all 11 were included in the screening). The team also collected native plant data during the survey. A full inventory of native plants observed will be available as soon as all the paperwork is in. It will be posted later in the season on the VLMP website, www.MaineVolunteerLakeMonitors.org, on the Tripp Lake page.

A small population of Chinese mystery snail was observed in area of the public boat landing. It is possible that this is a relatively new introduction to Tripp Lake. The \$64,000 question remains: Where did

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CBI is 'a bit of a local hero'

By Anne Williams

When Aaron Tripp arrived at an artists' reception at Harvest Gold Gallery in Lovell, folks immediately flocked around to hear "his story."

"I think you could say that Aaron has become a bit of a local hero – and well deserved!" said Lucy LaCasse, who organized Eyes on the Water, a program developed to increase the number of people looking for invasive aquatic plants within the Kezar Lake watershed.

Tripp studies art and architecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn NY, and exhibited his art at Lovell Old Home Days July 16. But the story that has generated so much interest concerned his other job – as a courtesy boat inspector for the Kezar Lake Watershed Association.

At 8 a.m. on Monday, June 13, Tripp found a suspicious plant on a boat launching at the Narrows public ramp on Kezar Lake. The plant was bagged and Gene Spender of the Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee took it to the Volunteer Lakes Monitor-

ing Program (VLMP) in Auburn for identification.

The VLMP and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) identified the plant as Eurasian water milfoil. It was a potential "double save" because the boat had previously been in Tripp Lake in Poland, which had not been identified as having milfoil. Tripp's save triggered a Level III Invasive Plant Survey of Tripp Lake (see story on Pages 1, 4 and 5.)

It also has helped galvanize the Eyes on the Water program, as we had 35 participants (OK, some were workers) show up at our first outing on the afternoon of July 9. Also, it seems to have been helpful in recruiting CBI inspectors (or \$\$ to defray the cost of same).

This invasive would not have been found last year, because inspections were not done on Mondays!

The Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee was able to greatly expand inspection time this year, thanks to a vote at the March town meeting, which resulted in more funding from the town. There has



Aaron Tripp of Kezar Lake.

also been a huge effort recruiting volunteer inspectors. This success is at risk if we do not continue to get volunteers to help us cover the many key launch sites in our watershed.

As for Tripp, he was interviewed by the LIPPC's Education Committee and a video clip of the interview was part of the group's presentation at Lovell Old Home Days.

"I think you could say that the news of his find has helped galvanize our efforts, increasing interest in and awareness of both the CBI program and Eyes on the Water," LaCasse said.

Tripp Lake survey

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the EWM on the boat entering Kezar originate? Unless we can track down the boater, we may never know the answer.

It is quite possible that EWM fragments were recently introduced into Tripp Lake by a boater from away (a portion of which were later snagged by a boat and carried off to Kezar), and that the remaining fragments are so small that they managed to escape the well-trained eyes of our surveyors. For this reason, it is highly recommended that Tripp Lake be monitored as thoroughly as possible for the next several years. (And once this activity is started, why stop? There are many good reasons of course, for continuing this effort indefinitely.)

The VLMP has already been asked by the Tripp Lake Improvement Association to conduct an IPP workshop for Tripp Lake volunteers next season. In

the meantime several from that group may attend nearby workshops this summer. The VLMP is thoroughly committed to providing all the training and technical support needed to help launch an effective, local IPP team on Tripp.

We greatly admire and appreciate the way in which everyone involved in this incident, those working behind the scenes and those on the front lines, acted so swiftly, capably, and cohesively in the defense of two of Maine's most well-loved lakes. Very impressive indeed! We here at the VLMP are very proud to be part of such a well-oiled system.

As John McPhedran of Maine DEP, told the first responders in an email, "Your effort is astonishing and I know the product – the survey – is top notch. Many, many thanks."

TV News Links: www.wcsh6.com/news/article/164645/2/Volunteers-search-Tripp-Lake-for-milfoil
www.wgme.com/newsroom/top_stories/videos/wgme_vid_8400.shtml

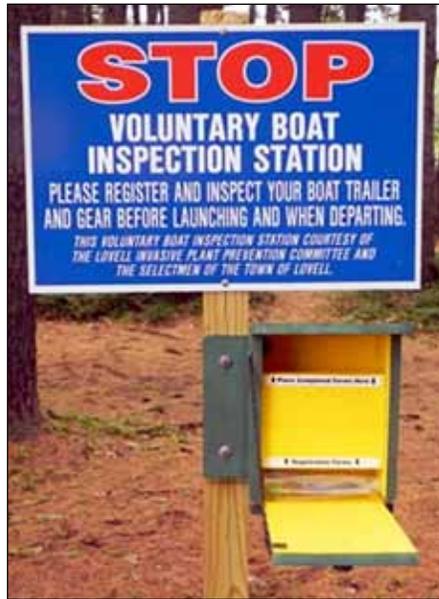
Maine DEP encourages self-inspections

AUGUSTA – In a press release about the recent save by a CBI on Kezar Lake, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection also seized the opportunity to encourage boaters to inspect their own boats.

The press release pointed out that while awareness about invasives and their threat to Maine’s lakes is higher than ever, fewer than 20 percent of boaters inspect their boats and equipment before and after launching, according to a DEP study.

Lake lovers and scientists from Maine DEP’s Invasive Aquatic Species Program say the interception of a Eurasian milfoil fragment at Kezar Lake shows how a careful inspection lasting no longer than a few minutes can save countless hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars in plant management alone.

“Plant invasion is preventable but an established infestation is forever,” explained DEP’s Paul Gregory, an environmental specialist. “The best bang for the buck in the fight



Lovell's Voluntary Boat Check Station.

against invasive aquatic plants is prevention and once again, local lakes groups and their boat inspectors have played a vital role in these proven prevention efforts.”

Lake associations also are finding ways to encourage boaters to self inspect. Sokokis Lake sets out self-reporting forms and the Lovell

Invasive Plant Prevention Committee has a Voluntary Boat Check Station, for use when there is not a CBI on duty. These are found at boat launches in the watershed which are not generally patrolled. LEA created an “Inspect Yourself” sticker that has been given out to hundreds of boaters.

Trained courtesy boat inspectors, both paid and volunteer, monitor boat launches during high traffic periods and inspect boats, trailers and related equipment for invasive aquatic plants while taking time to educate owners on steps to self-inspect and remove vegetation from boating and fishing equipment.

But inspectors can’t be on duty during all the hours that boaters want to be on the water. That’s why the department urges boaters to always inspect their boating gear, including motor prop, anchors and anchor chains, livewell and trailers before entering and after leaving any lake or pond. Any vegetation collected should be disposed of in regular trash.



At Sokokis Lake we have added the option for boaters when a CBI is not available. We have created a self-reporting form and as of July 10, we had received three reports.

–Roy Bagley



Aliens among us

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"This impacts every lake in Maine," said Peter Lowell, executive director of the nonprofit Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton.

The southern Songo River is the latest battleground in a 10-year campaign to beat back milfoil from its northern reaches and the waters of Brandy Pond, part of a roughly 40-mile stretch of recreational water extending from Harrison on the north of Long Lake to Standish on Sebago Lake's southern tip.

Led by the lake association, efforts to clean out the weed north of the lock have been successful. But milfoil continues to proliferate along the mile-long section of the river south of the lock.

Last summer's warm, dry weather triggered both an explosion of milfoil below the lock and a surge in boat traffic. Inspectors at the lock were removing armfuls of milfoil that was entangled in the propellers of passing boats.

Alarmed that milfoil would regain a foothold north of the lock, the association launched a campaign to encourage boaters to stay south of it. Although state officials denied a request to close the lock, they installed more channel markers in the river to keep boaters away from the worst of the milfoil and agreed to pick up the cost of more boat inspections.

Similar battles to control or eradicate invasive weeds are taking place on lakes, ponds and rivers across southern Maine where infestations have been found.

Compared with other states, Maine remains relatively free of invasive aquatic plants, which have been discovered in only 33 lakes. But the race is on to keep the half-dozen species of invasives seen so far from spreading to the rest of Maine's 5,700 lakes and ponds.



Divers Christian Oren, left, and Dan Bishop of the Lakes Environmental Association, jump into the water to remove milfoil from the Songo River, the latest battleground in the 10-year fight against invasive plants.

Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram photo by John Patriquin.

Public funding doesn't begin to cover the costs of controlling the problem, said Lowell. The major federal source is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which grants eligible states, including Maine, up to \$30,000 a year for invasive plant measures.

Maine raises about \$1.1 million annually through milfoil stickers – \$10 for residents and \$20 for non-residents – required on all power boats on fresh water. The money covers the cost of three Department of Environmental Protection workers who coordinate training and education. It also funds small grants for boat inspectors and other efforts.

But the work is largely performed by thousands of volunteers and lake associations.

"We depend on the many eyes out there," said Paul Gregory, environmental specialist at the Maine DEP's invasive aquatic plants program.

The most damaging invasive species, the Eurasian milfoil, is a plant that grows in water up to 20

feet deep. Its tendrils rise to the surface and form thick mats that choke out native plants.

Milfoil ruins swimming and drives out cold-water fish such as trout and landlocked salmon. It can also cause problems for public drinking-water systems that rely on lakes.

The plant is spread chiefly by boats and trailers that are hauled out of waters with milfoil infestations and then put into other lakes. Only a small fragment of the plant is needed to establish a new colony.

The Little Sebago Lake Association has been working for five years to remove milfoil. The association operates two suction dredges, employs a seasonal staff of 15 supported by an equal number of volunteers, and spends \$60,000 annually, most of it from association members.

The result has been a dramatic reduction in milfoil in the upper part of the 2,009-acre lake in Gray and

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Aliens among us

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Windham, said Pam Wilkinson, association president.

"We haven't had a bloom in the upper basin for three years," she said.

Volunteers and lake associations have set up rapid-response networks to deal with reports of new infestations. Late last month, a boat inspector on Kezar Lake in Fryeburg discovered Eurasian milfoil on a boat about to enter the water.

Within hours, a plant patrol team of 12 people from the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, the oldest citizen lake monitoring association in the country, was combing for signs of Eurasian milfoil on Tripp Lake in Poland – where the boat had last been. They put in more than 130 hours surveying the lake by boat and diving.

"So far, all reports are coming clean," said Roberta Hill, aquatic ecologist at the program.

The number of boat inspections



Courtesy Boat Inspector Molly Keane a boat at Songo Lock.

Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram staff photos by John Patriquin.

conducted, by both paid inspectors and volunteers, has climbed steadily each year, from 2,848 in 2001 to 72,428 in 2010. Last year, the inspectors managed to intercept 281 invasive plants on boats, up from 254 the year before.

Education efforts are now focused on encouraging boat owners to make their own inspections. But it is slow going, said Gregory.

"We have observed people on boat ramps," he said. "Fewer than 20 percent are inspecting equipment on their own."

Back on the Songo River, Lowell said the milfoil war is one of advances and setbacks.

The proposal to close the lock this summer – a move opposed by marinas – fell on deaf ears in the Legislature this year.

But marinas, other businesses, municipalities and Lowell's organization banded together to ask the Department of Conservation to raise the fee at the lock from \$6 to \$10 a boat to pay for dredging and other milfoil eradication. So far there has been no response to their request.

Divers are laying barriers on the riverbed, fashioned from shrink wrap donated by local marinas, to

block the light and prevent the re-growth of milfoil. The 4-H Club at Lake Region High School in Naples is helping to make the barriers.

Lowell hopes that more boaters will honor a voluntary ban on traveling through the lock this summer. Boaters generally are respectful of eradication efforts.

"I absolutely support inspections. We did our own check," said Erik Ousback of Gorham, as he motored north through the lock last week.

As the summer unfolds, the S.S. Libra and its crew will continue the muddy work.

Graduate students Adam Perron of Naples and Dan Bishop of Bridgton, and college-student brothers Tyler and Christian Oren of Casco are all multi-year veterans of the Songo milfoil campaign. They spend 10 hours, four days a week vacuuming the weed into onion sacks and hoisting them ashore, where the pesky plants are composted.

"It takes some practice at first, but we have it down good," said Bishop.

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LEA is making good progress in Naples

By Peter Lowell
LEA Executive Director

LEA has been working since late May on the milfoil infestation in Brandy Pond and the Songo River. This is the seventh year of plant control work there. All commercial and private marinas on Brandy Pond have infestations, which we have been controlling. In addition to these six sites, there are about six other locations where plants have been harvested. The upper Songo had about three acres of plants when we started, mostly concentrated in the half mile upstream from the lock.

This summer, our crew of four has found only scattered plants in repeated surveys of Brandy Pond and the upper river. This has allowed us to concentrate our resources on the boat waiting zone just below the Songo Lock and on the stretch of river downstream.

Last winter, we had estimated that the total plant control effort might cost as much as \$60,000 if we were to add to our usual work load on Brandy and the upper Songo by clearing the area below the lock and downstream for about 700-900 feet. We were hoping to clear a safety zone below the lock and in the waiting area to reduce the amount of plants being carried through the lock.

The good news is that we are making much better progress than expected. The 2011 crew is made up of all-stars from the past seven seasons: Adam Perron, Dan Bishop, Christian Oren, Tyler Oren and Jack Tragert. Their dedication and expertise has been a huge factor.

The Portland Water District, Naples Marina and the Lake Region 4-H Club have contributed to this success by helping us with the development and deployment of a new bottom barrier made of shrink wrap and iron rebar. These



An LEA aquarium with Eurasian and variable milfoil.

new tarps measure twenty feet wide and can be cut to any length. They are very easy to place and were designed to follow river contours.

If LEA's crew is to complete the season, the estimated cost of the project is about \$30,000. Unfortunately, we will be around \$10,000 short on funding to complete the season. Work in August will be able to continue if additional funding is found. The shortfall is approximately the same as the Maine Milfoil Initiative support we received in 2010 but lost this year due to federal cutbacks.

A new idea for plant surveys

LEA is experimenting with a new way to conduct plant surveys, inspired by a trip in June to watch biologists at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife electrofish.

State fisheries biologists often use electrofishing, which is illegal for the ordinary angler, to collect samples or survey a population. It's a lot quicker than catching fish one by one and less stressful, at least in theory, for the fish than being hooked and released.

On a calm night with powerful lighting, lake bottoms, fish and plants were highly visible. We

are assembling a light bar and have done two test surveys with very good results. This technique seems to allow surveyors to cover a wide area at trolling speed, greatly increasing survey zones and efficiency. We will be doing more work in August and will report our results and a standard method for night surveying so others can try it.

The Ram Island Foundation has funded LEA's new aquarium garden, which is now home to several invasive and native plants. We are using the three custom aquariums in some plant identification sessions aimed at the general public. The new resource allows people to see the invasives and look-alikes in an aquatic setting. We are at the start of this project and we are learning a great deal about growing invasive plants. Oddly enough, some are quite difficult to maintain "in captivity."

We already have used the aquariums to help us respond to the statements that we hear all summer long: "There's something odd on my lake. There's a weird plant growing around my dock. I think I saw milfoil on my lake."

On July 19, LEA offered a free, one-hour guide to recognizing invasive aquatic plants. The presentation allows landowners to identify the most common invasives found in Maine to allow the average person to understand aquatic plants and help them know what to do if they spot an unusual one.

The idea is to have many eyes watching for invasives because quick response is the key to controlling them. It's also helpful if people can distinguish between native aquatic plants and invasive ones. We had nine enthusiastic participants for the first class, so we're planning a second one on August 11.



CBI Herb Meyer checks a boat at a Nite-Bite Bassers tournament July 15 on Little Sebago Lake.

Bass anglers boosting CBI stats

If you looked closely at the statistics for Maine's courtesy boat inspections in 2010, you probably noticed the sharp increases in overall inspections, waterbodies with inspections and participating organizations. Those increases were partly due to inspections conducted at Maine's bass tournaments.

"Last year (the first full year) the response was good, though we had a few problem clubs and had to chase many reports. We're hoping that this year is much better," said John Boland, director of the Bureau of Resource Management at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW).

As a condition of receiving a permit to hold a tournament, bass fishing clubs must promise "to have a minimum of two aquatic plants/livewell inspectors available at the tournament. All boats, motors, trailers and livewells must be inspected for plants or live fishes by an aquatic plants/livewell inspector prior to entering waterbody and again upon exiting the waterbody for weigh-in. The club is required to inform anglers if they must leave before scheduled weigh-in or exit a location other than the weigh-in location, they must conduct the inspection and removal on their own. Any plants or fish found must be removed."

Total boat inspections rose 26 percent, from 57,552 in 2009 to 72,428 in 2010. The number of waterbodies with inspections increased 42 percent in the same period, from 84 in '09 to 119 last year. The number of organizations participating in courtesy boat inspections jumped 124 percent, from 50 to 112.

In fact, at this year's Maine Milfoil Summit in April, former Maine DEP Commissioner Darryl Brown sin-

gled out bass anglers when he described Maine's Invasive Aquatic Species Program as "an example of a state and public partnership at its best."

"Last year, all 63 bass clubs participating in bass tournaments were required to conduct inspections as a condition of their permit," Brown said. "As a result, bass tournament participants logged 6,327 inspections, utilized 129 inspectors and inspected their tournament boats at 36 rivers and lakes that don't have a Courtesy Boat Inspection Program. It should be said that even before this requirement was put into place, many bass clubs had proactively and voluntarily taken a lead to become trained inspectors."

Changes this year include the requirement of the bass club to write the names of at least two aquatic plant/livewell inspectors on the permit before displaying it at a conspicuous location for all tournament contestants and law enforcement. The club is required to inform all participants of the inspection requirements, including the angler's responsibility to conduct his or her own inspection and removal if leaving early or from an alternate location.

Clubs must submit aquatic plant/livewell inspections forms no later than 7 days following the tournament. Failure to comply can result in revocation of future permits.

Steve Wilson, president of the Maine B.A.S.S. Federation Nation, said in an email that the member clubs of his organization "have been strongly encouraged to approach lake associations prior to events to coordinate any activities, inform, etc. This has been well

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Bass tournament inspections

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received by both my membership and the Associations they have contacted.”

He also explained that not every bass fishing event is conducted by a Maine B.A.S.S. Federation Nation club. There are several other large organizations in Maine and many more smaller ones.

“These other groups still desire to do it correctly, however may not have contacted anyone,” Wilson wrote in an email. Please encourage your readers not to be shy, to introduce themselves, offer to help if that is possible and generally to work with any fishing groups they encounter. Many of the smaller groups only encounter associations once or twice a season and tend to be very suspicious, defensive, etc. A smile goes a long way!”

Reaching out to bass anglers has made a difference on Androscoggin Lake, Debbie Hite wrote in a story this spring about the efforts of the Board of Directors of the Androscoggin Lake Improvement Corporation (ALIC).

After years of disgruntled feelings and resentment among lake residents about the frequent bass tournaments on “their” lake, she wrote, the board decided to learn more about the clubs behind the events. In addition, the board wanted to increase awareness among the clubs of the concerns of its association members. The initiative has been very productive in promoting greater understanding all around.

The process was actually rather simple to implement, Hite wrote. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife posts the tournament schedule on its website in the spring, along with the contact info for each bass club.

About two weeks prior to a tournament, ALIC’s administrative assistant called the club contact, identified her affiliation with the lake association, and confirmed that the tournament was taking place as listed. She then followed a prepared script, which makes communication easier for the caller, ensures that the conversation is concise and uniform each time, and keeps the message cordial.

The conversation goes something like this, with opportunity, of course, for expanded comment: “I see you’re having a tournament on _____. Can you tell



Jim Fitzgerald, a veteran CBI on Little Sebago.

me about how many boats you’re expecting? Which site will you be launching from? Do you have the names of your boat inspectors? We’d like to ask for your cooperation in addressing a few concerns (i.e. observation of wake speed limits, especially in the river channel; alertness to wildlife, especially loons; respect of personal property; and courtesy towards others around the lake). We hope you have a fun and safe event. Good luck!”

After just a few weeks of these phone calls, the word must have gotten around that we are a pro-active but reasonable lake association, Hite wrote, because some bass clubs starting contacting US in advance of their tournaments with the desired information.

Moreover, Steve Wilson (Maine B.A.S.S. Federation Nation), called to inquire about ALIC’s initiative and accepted an invitation to speak at one of our board meetings. ALIC encourages other lake associations to try this approach to improving relationships and encouraging good lake stewardship among all who enjoy the waterbody.

“Steve did come to our board meeting, which was informative from both sides,” Hite wrote in an email last week. “There continue to be tournaments on Androscoggin with, I believe, few complaints.”

– Peter Bourque, IFW: Debbie Hite, and Steve Wilson contributed to this report.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife posts the fishing tournament schedule on its website:

www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing/pdfs/BassByWate063011r.pdf

BRCA creates 'SWAMP team'

By Peter T. Patenaude
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Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance

The Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) is incorporating a variety of techniques to fight against the spread of milfoil within the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

In addition to stationing 22 Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBIs) at our public boat launches the BRCA has created a new "SWAMP" team this year that will be identifying, marking, and removing milfoil.

Surveys so far this season have been done in the North Bay area of Great Pond as well as in Great Meadow Stream. The SWAMP team has been working hard to manually pull the milfoil as well as create and place benthic barriers over larger sized patches. For severely infested areas that are accessible by boat a diver-assisted suction harvester (DASH) boat will be used.

What are we going to do with all this milfoil? We are excited to announce a new program in conjunction



Tom Littlefield waits for more boats to inspect at Salmon Lake.

with Black Gold Vermiculture and Research which will compost the harvested milfoil. The new soil will be offered to residents as a way to help fund upcoming milfoil removal projects.

Other strategies we are using in the fight against milfoil include holding Invasive Plant Patrols (IPPs) as well as hosting educational events, such as Milfoil Awareness Day, that was presented by the Friends of Messalonskee on June 25. The public was educated



about milfoil as well as other invasive aquatic plants and offered boat trips to their own shore fronts to check for these species. For more information, visit www.snowpond.org.

On July 16, North and East Pond of Smithfield hosted their own Education for the Lakes event. To learn more visit www.northpond.net.

Above, the BRCA uses its Weed Weasel to survey for invasives. At left, Courtesy Boat Inspector Kerry Schlosser checks over a boat and its trailer at Great Pond.



Where can boaters buy a milfoil sticker in your town?

Check out the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's list at:

www.minelakes.org/documents/Milfoil%20Sticker%20Agent%20List.pdf