

June 9, 2016

Horicon Marsh

Horicon, WI

Wisconsin's 12th Annual Invader Crusader Awards

**Presented by
Wisconsin Invasive
Species Council**

and



The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council
and the
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
present

Wisconsin's 12th Annual Invader Crusader Awards

Master of Ceremonies

Quinn Williams, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Welcome

Paul Schumacher, Chairman, Wisconsin Invasive Species Council

Drew Feldkirchner, Bureau Director, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Presentation of the 2016 Invader Crusader Awards

Debra Feirer, volunteer individual

Fred and Mary Kueffer, volunteer individuals

Valerie Stabenow, volunteer individual

Fritz Funk, volunteer individual

Lower Chippewa Invasive Species Partnership, volunteer group

Mequon Nature Preserve's Restoration Rangers, volunteer group

Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance, volunteer group

Tim Campbell, professional individual

Michelle Nault, professional individual

Brock Woods, professional individual

Mike Fort, sustaining crusader

Presentation of the 2016 Protect the Places Where You Play Video Contest

Dougal Walker, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Recognition of Council Member Service

Paul Schumacher, Chairman, Wisconsin Invasive Species Council

Concluding Remarks

Quinn Williams, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Refreshments

Debra Feirer
Volunteer Individual

Debbie Feirer is a biology teacher at Wrightstown High School. The focus of Debbie's invasive species control efforts is Chambers Island, an island in the middle of the bay of Green Bay and a 7-mile boat ride from Fish Creek. Chambers Island has one of the last and largest stands of relatively untouched forest in Door County.

Debbie's impact on invasive species on Chambers Island is summarized effectively by Director of Land Program for the Door County Land Trust, Terrie Cooper: "Throughout the past five years I have known her, she has educated the island community on the threat that garlic mustard and phragmites could have on the island's forests and waters. Chambers Island is one of the healthiest northern mesic forests left in Door County and has an outstanding understory of spring ephemerals and native shrubs in large part due to Debbie and her volunteers' efforts to make sure invasive species do not spread into the island's forests."

Fred and Mary Kueffer
Volunteer Individuals

Fred and Mary Kueffer have been active in the area of aquatic invasive species (AIS) control since 2005. At that time they began a lake monitoring program to enlist volunteers to cover the Spider Chain of Lakes (SCLA) searching for signs of invasives such as purple loosestrife, curly leaf pondweed, and Eurasian water milfoil. As coordinators for this program over the past 11 years, Fred and Mary have logged hundreds of individual hours in lake monitoring as well as coordinated thousands of hours of volunteer time.

In 2011, Fred and Mary became founding members of a newly formed AIS Committee for SCLA and have been active in that committee for the past 5 years. This committee has been instrumental in many AIS related activities including initiating a June "My Shoreline Week" to raise awareness of AIS, development of a rapid response plan, oversight of landing monitors and lake monitors programs, and coordinating with community and legislative groups to effect change in the area of AIS.

Valerie Stabenow
Volunteer Individual

Valerie Stabenow was instrumental in the discovery and removal of water hyacinth from Lake Winneconne in Winnebago County last year. Valerie is a Master Gardener and past volunteer in the Aquatic Invasive Species Snapshot Day organized by the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

Valerie was out paddling her kayak in the backwaters of Lake Winneconne and was able to recognize several water hyacinths floating by. After collecting samples and photographs, she immediately contacted local aquatic invasive species professionals that could help verify her findings. She continued to search areas of Lake Winneconne for water hyacinth, collecting many garbage bags full of plants, and spoke to various lake residents, resort owners and her fellow Master Gardeners about this issue. Valerie is always willing to share her knowledge with others and to be a part of any effort necessary to protect the resources she loves.

Fritz Funk
Volunteer Individual

Water lettuce and water hyacinth were discovered in Lake Onalaska on Wednesday, October 6, 2015. Both of these species are prohibited under Wisconsin's NR40 law. **Fritz Funk** was instrumental in responding to the infestation of both species in Lake Onalaska throughout the fall of 2015. After receiving the report of the infestation, Funk played an essential role in mobilizing concerned citizens to collect and contain the invasive plants. Funk used the Brice Prairie Conservation Club email list and his own contacts to rally 15-20 Brice prairie residents to scour the shoreline on Saturday, October 10. The next day, over 40 citizen volunteers converged on Lake Onalaska to collect, bag and dispose of the invasive plants that had escaped from a residential garden pond and multiplied at an alarming rate. This effort was organized by Funk, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and River Alliance of Wisconsin.

The efforts to monitor for water lettuce did not stop there. Fritz continued to recruit volunteers to check for water lettuce over a wide area of Lake Onalaska throughout the next month using the website of the Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District. He was just as tireless in his own pursuit of plants escaping the infested area- going out a daily basis throughout the fall to remove water lettuce. To date, it is estimated that over 1,000 volunteer hours have been logged, with hundreds by Funk himself, in control of the invasive plants. The dedication that Funk and the other volunteers showed to protect Lake Onalaska has been a source of inspiration to me and has set a very high bar for citizen-led invasive species control efforts.

Lower Chippewa Invasive Species Partnership
Volunteer Group

The **Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership** is a broad alliance established to control invasive plants by fostering partner cooperation and community action. The partnership has been consistently active in conducting outreach, prioritizing and then implementing important projects, and hosting regular workshops and field work days. The partnership has struck on an effective leadership structure with co-chairs and a board representing the wide range of partners.

Each year, the partnership hosts several training workshops and work days. They work with people who have the ability to impact large areas, important high quality sites, or large numbers of people, such as township road managers, teachers, Master Gardeners and others. At an Urban Forestry Workshop last fall, the partnership brought in over 60 attendees from many walks of life. They had 20 separate events last year.

Mequon Nature Preserve's Restoration Rangers
Volunteer Group

The **Restoration Rangers** program's goal is create awareness in people of all ages to advocate for invasive plant removal and replacement of those non-natives with native species. Ranging in age from 7 years old to senior citizens, the Rangers carry out a comprehensive program that supports Mequon Nature Preserve's mission: to restore the land to its natural state that existed prior to European settlement that started in the early 1800s.

Through their work sessions, Rangers learn why invasive species are detrimental to the environment and develop skills to remove invasive species through hands-on work assignments. Rangers, from time to time, include employee groups from local businesses. In 2015, Rangers planted 1,200 bare root tree seedlings and 500 native herbaceous plant plugs. The Rangers work all over the 166 acres now in active land restoration programs. The results are visually stunning and the efforts are confirmed by the returning native animal species and their growing populations.

Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance
Volunteer Group

The volunteers who are active in the **Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance's** restoration program devote their time to stewardship of the lands of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant. Most of this work has occurred within the boundaries of what is now the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

The Alliance's restoration volunteers have planned and conducted prescribed burns, applied herbicides, hand-pulled invasive species and launched an annual intensive invasive species monitoring program in 2012 for a 15-acre prairie remnant. In 2015 alone, restoration volunteers contributed more than 340 hours to stewardship of the natural areas of the Badger lands. These volunteers contribute additional hours sharing their passion for ecological restoration with visitors, inviting others to join their efforts and explaining the value of stewardship – in which invasive species management is an important part – as a service to their community.

Tim Campbell
Professional Individual

Tim Campbell is an invasive species outreach specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Tim engages communities, organizations, local government officials and other stakeholders and helps them incorporate aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention actions into their existing activities. Tim also works closely with the numerous professionals working on AIS issues in Wisconsin to coordinate education and outreach efforts. Connecting people is a vital tool in the fight against AIS. By performing outreach and education to this group, Tim has a much larger impact than just the people he personally talks to.

Tim is an effective communicator who uses cutting edge technologies to better engage and reach new audiences. Always a strong and innovative communicator, Tim has been an advocate of using humor and crowd-sourced video contests to further engage the public and better grab the attention of the audience.

Michelle Nault
Professional Individual

Michelle Nault is a water resources management specialist working for the DNR in Green Bay. Michelle's work over the past decade has had a deep impact on Wisconsin's battle against aquatic invasive species. She is currently in charge of developing and initiating rapid response plans for faucet snails in part of the Wolf River and round gobies in parts of the Lake Winnebago System.

In the field, Michelle has monitored native and exotic aquatic plant species in the same manner that many consultants do, via point-intercept surveys, a methodology that Michelle helped develop and refine. While Michelle's gathering of aquatic plant data are not out of the ordinary, her methodologies in analyzing and interpreting the data certainly are. Analyses refined by Michelle and her colleagues are now the standard in the analysis of point-intercept data. Her efforts have impacted thousands of people across the Wisconsin lakes community, including riparian landowners, consultants, agency staff, applicators and high-level decision-makers in state government.

Brock Woods
Professional Individual

Brock Woods is the Purple Loosestrife & Wetland Invasive Plant program coordinator for the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the DNR. He has the ability to motivate citizens around the state to get involved in a program that needed an army of volunteers to be successful – and it has been! Starting as a DNR employee, Brock grew the program with dedication to volunteers, providing

them with unparalleled service by traveling across the state to provide volunteers with training, equipment and encouragement. The program has grown to become a shining example of how successful a citizen-based program can be. It's difficult to estimate the number of volunteers Brock has involved since the beginning of the program, but it's estimated to be in the thousands. Brock has enlisted a wide variety of volunteers from all walks of life including professionals, citizens, landowners, students from garden clubs, lake organizations, 4-H clubs and scout groups. Brock's leadership has been demonstrated over the course of many years and his impact on Wisconsin's wetland quality will be remembered for years to come.

Mike Fort
Sustaining Crusader

Since 1996, **Mike Fort** has volunteered at Lapham Peak State Park in Delafield, including the Ice Age Trail. Mike has focused his efforts on restoring native prairie grassland habitat on approximately 200 acres of the property by planting native grasses and flowers. He began by removing all invasive species and then planted and maintained the restored native communities. More recently, Mike has focused efforts on restoring approximately 150 acres of native oak savannah habitat by removing woody

invasive species. He has accomplished much of this work by himself while at Lapham Peak as often as seven days per week year round, but has a loyal crew of volunteers that assist him at least two or three days per week. Mike has been a leader, educator and mentor for decades. He has a very large group of loyal and dedicated volunteers that assist him frequently. Mike is often sought out by individuals from around the state for advice on invasive removal and native species restoration including DNR staff, other experts and trade professionals.