



MICHIGAN NATURAL SHORELINE PARTNERSHIP

Promoting Natural Shoreline Landscaping to Protect Michigan's Inland Lakes

Volume V Issue 2

The Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership Newsletter

April 2015

News and Notes...

Compiled by Julia Kirkwood, MNSP Chair
*Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Water Resources Division-Nonpoint Source Program*

While we still have a long way to go the word about natural shorelines is getting out! Recently we looked at the website stats and compared 2011 to 2014. During a 6 month period in 2011 there were 544 users with 763 visits. In 2014 (for the entire year) there were 4,060 users for a total of 5,424 visits. We have also had people from 72 different countries check out the MNSP website. And our Facebook page was started in 2011. In January 2014 there were only 120 "likes". Just a little over a year later there are now 475 "likes". In one week there was a 6.1% increase. The Facebook page is used to help us better communicate changes, and post photos of any demonstration sites and other happenings. This isn't a huge number for either the website or Facebook page but it is a growing number.

Website Changes

We do have a few changes and additions coming up. We are in the process of updating our website which will hopefully be ready to go live soon. One of the changes that you will see on this site will be with the MNSP Plant List. Once the new site is active you will now be able to click on the plant name to take you to a photo of the plant. A big thank you goes to a couple of DEQ interns (Kayla Anderson and James Willard) for helping us out in both of these areas. This work could not have been done without them.

MNSP Shoreline "Signage Program"

There have been many questions as to whether or not MI is ever going to have some kind of shoreline signage program for lake property owners to show that they are helping to protect their lake. I am happy to say that the MNSP is in the process of developing such a program. Due to limitations on resources and staffing it will be an on-line process for lakefront property owners to take advantage of. Thanks to a few key MNSP partners, lake associations and other financial supporters an AmeriCorps member (Mackenzie Dix) is available to help us with this project. Mackenzie is hosted by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council through the Huron Pines AmeriCorps Program. Our goal is to have it ready at the end of 2015. Stayed tuned for more information.

4th Shoreline & Shallows Conference Furthers Natural Shoreline Efforts

by Nick Meekhof
Student Intern

MDEQ Office of Environmental Assistance

Every year, the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership promotes natural shorelines by hosting its biennial Shoreline & Shallows Conference or by partnering with the Michigan Inland Lakes Convention. This year marked the 4th Shoreline & Shallows Conference, bringing in guests coming from all over the state and beyond. Conservation partners, landscapers, contractors, government officials, homeowners, and many others came out to show their advocacy for natural shorelines in Michigan.



The Shoreline & Shallows Conference drew a large crowd at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. (Photo: Lois Wolfson, MSU)

Amy Picotte, a Lakeshore Manager for the [Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation](#), discussed “Lakeshore Protection in Vermont: Ecology, Policy, and Social Progress.” While the Green Mountain State has a thriving culture of conservation, lakeshore protection was not a legislative priority until recently. Vermont is currently on a parallel track with Michigan getting government legislature and property owners to promote natural shorelines through setbacks, ordinances, and conservation awareness to enhance stewardship on lakefront communities. Relaying the Vermont side of the story, one of Picotte’s highlights was introducing the “[Lake Wise Program](#),” an incentive for lakefront property owners to install and maintain natural shoreline landscaping. Picotte also praised the benefits of having representatives from all concentrations—government, contractors, landscapers, educators, and homeowners - working together in a partnership with the common goal of keeping Michigan’s lakes healthy.

Next was [DNR Fisheries](#) Biologist Chris Freiburger’s “Shoreline Restoration: Lake and River Differences and Challenges.” Rivers are usually much more dynamic than lakes, and therefore require different approaches to building natural barriers. Freiburger explained how the pattern and profile - referring to a river’s course and depth - are intimately linked. For example, digging ditches to cut corners can move water efficiently, but fails to move sediment, creating an eventual pool that erodes banks downstream. Most importantly, Freiburger emphasized thorough site analysis before implementing any changes.

“Plant Design Processes for Lake Shorelines and Stream Banks” focused on the aesthetics of shoreline management. Shannan Gibb-Randall of [InSite Design Studio](#) discussed ways to make natural vegetation look well-tended and appealing. Different audiences are receptive to different landscape designs; getting a customer on board with natural vegetation after years of beaches and barriers sometimes takes persuasion.

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Getting to Know Your Plants! One Stem at a Time

by Nick Meekhof
Student Intern

MDEQ Office of Environmental Assistance

In this third and final installment of “Getting to Know Your Plants,” we will look at grasses. Remember the catchphrase?

*Sedges have edges,
Rushes are round,
Grasses are hollow,
What have you found?*

In the last articles, we used simple touch techniques to classify sedges and rushes. To review, sedges have a slightly angled shape. When you look closely, you can identify three distinct edges on its stem. Rushes, on the other hand, can be rolled between your fingers with ease because they have rounded stems.



Photo: Perennial Plant Association

Now we look at grasses. While both grasses and rushes have rounded stems, you can tell the grasses apart because they are hollow. Grasses also have **nodes**, or joints that connect stem segments. Unlike sedges and rushes, whose flowers are normally inconspicuous, grasses often have showier displays. The golden heads of wheat stalks and corn tassels are examples of grass flowers, as the domestication of this plant family (*Poaceae*) has provided civilization with food, drink, fuel, and building material for thousands of years.

On a more local level, *Panicum virgatum* is one of MNSP’s Recommended Plants for shoreline protection. More commonly known as switchgrass, this plant is famously well-suited for various soil types, resistant to insect damage and disease, and requires little maintenance. Reaching heights of nearly six feet with a far-reaching root system to match, switchgrass is an excellent soil stabilizer, well-adapted for planting above the ordinary high-water mark. Because of its remarkable disease tolerance, low maintenance, diverse climate suitability, and erosion resistance, switchgrass was named the 2014 Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association. It also provides cover for various game birds, including pheasant, grouse, wild turkey, and songbirds. Switchgrass is perfect for any sort of garden or meadow landscape.

Sources

MICHIGAN FLORA ONLINE. A. A. Reznicek, E. G. Voss, & B. S. Walters. February 2011. University of Michigan.
Web. February 18, 2015. <http://www.michiganflora.net/species.aspx?id=2176>.

Perennial Plant of the Year: Panicum Vergatum 'Northwind'. Perennial Plant Association, 2014. Web. 18 Feb. 2015

4th Shoreline and Shallows Conference...

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“People are willing to think outside the box, but they make really small steps,” says Gibb-Randall. Landscaping catalogs and pictures are helpful tools to providing property owners with sustainable designs they like. From there, it becomes a matter of discerning what the property owner appreciates.

Of course, choosing natural shorelines isn’t always preferable to customers. Attendee Ramze Idriss, of Sturgis-based Idriss Company, mentioned that while many property owners are on board with the principle of conservation, many are still unaware of its importance. As an advocate for ecological protection, Idriss finds himself—like many landscape contractors—balancing between the homeowner’s wants and the environment’s needs. “It’s a balance between the person who owns the property and what you think is right,” he explained.

Brian Majka, a Senior Professional at [GEI Consultants of Michigan](#), spoke on “Estimating Costs for Shoreline Installations.” Majka walked through numerous situations, helpful tips, and questions, highlighting clear communication and thorough calculation. Materials, timelines, liabilities, site access, and landowner expectations represent only a handful of the factors to record, all while maintaining a transparent approach with cost estimates.

Conference attendees found it both useful and uplifting to see so many others promoting natural shorelines. “As more people are getting educated, it’s getting easier,” said the Village of Paw Paw’s John Small. Small was a contributing player at an MNSP test site on Maple Lake, and has other projects around Paw Paw coming soon.

Jane Herbert and Gaye Blind, an MSU-Extension educator and a Natural Resource Specialist respectively, concluded the conference with their case-study, “Project Results from the MNSP: What Went Right, What Went Wrong.” Herbert and Blind showcased MNSP sites on Lake Cadillac’s north shore and at Paw Paw’s Maple Isle Park, to demonstrate how natural shoreline projects have been implemented across the state.

Attendees had the opportunity to voice questions and suggestions on these sites, as well as on each of the presentations, demonstrating what Picotte noted was one of the Partnership’s greatest strengths: a collaborative conversation among members of all backgrounds about keeping Michigan’s inland shorelines healthy and beautiful. Copies of the presentations can be found at www.mishorelinepartnership.org .



MDNR's Least Wanted Aquatic Invasive Plants



Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Natural Features Inventory are collaborating on the implementation of an Early Detection Rapid Response Program, which seeks to locate and eradicate occurrences of the following species:

Be on the lookout for these invasive species!

Flowering Rush
Butomus umbellatus



www.kingcounty.gov

Water Chestnut
Trapa natans



invasives

**Parrot Feather Water-
milfoil**
Myriophyllum aquaticum



www.invasives.org

Water Soldier
Stratiotes aloides



Leaf Wilts, U.S.

Water Lettuce
Pistia stratiotes



www.invasives.org

Water Hyacinth
Eichhornia crassipes



www.invasives.org

European Frog-bit
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae



www.dnr.wi.gov

Brazilian water-weed
Egeria densa



www.graynarbon-wsu

If you have seen any of these aquatic invaders, note their location and contact:

Michigan DNR Wildlife Division Invasive Species Program
Phone: (517) 641- 4903 ext. 260
www.mi.gov/invasivespecies

Questions about other aquatic invasive plants? Contact the DEQ Aquatic Nuisance Control Program at 517-284-5593, www.mi.gov/anc



Michigan Shoreline Educator Training: A Train-the-Trainer Program

The Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership (MNSP) is offering a professional training for individuals interested in becoming a part of the MNSP Shoreline Educator Network (SEN).

Topic: Participants will learn how to conduct homeowner workshops on the benefits of natural shoreline landscaping, bioengineering and erosion control on inland lakes.

Course Healthy Lake Ecosystems
Content: Ideas for Natural Landscapes on Lake Shorelines
 Problems with High Impact Landscape Methods
 Use of Native Plants in Shoreline Landscape
 State of Michigan Rules and Regulations

Participants will receive the ***Shoreline Educator Network Homeowner Tool Kit*** which includes:

- MNSP Homeowner Manual
- Workshop Presentation
- Shoreline Brochures for Homeowners
- Workshop Promotion Materials

Date and Location:

April 24, 2015

8:30 am—4:00 pm

Mid Michigan Community College
 1375 South Clare Avenue
 Harrison, Michigan 48625

Registration:

Register online at <http://events.anr.msu.edu/MNSPEducator2015/>

Fees include lunch, refreshments & workshop materials

Early Registration: \$65

Ends: March 1st

Normal Registration: \$75

Ends: April 16th

On-site Registration: \$85

Questions:

Contact Marybeth Denton at 989-539-7805 or Denton.Marybeth@anr.msu.edu

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Michigan Lake & Stream Associations 54th Annual Conference

“Managing Aquatic Invasive Species in Inland Lakes”

**Friday & Saturday
May 1st & 2nd, 2015**

**Boyne Mountain Resort
Boyne Falls, MI**

Registration is open to the public

For more information or to register for the conference, [click here](#)

Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership

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www.mishorelinepartnership.org

www.facebook.com/MNSP1

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