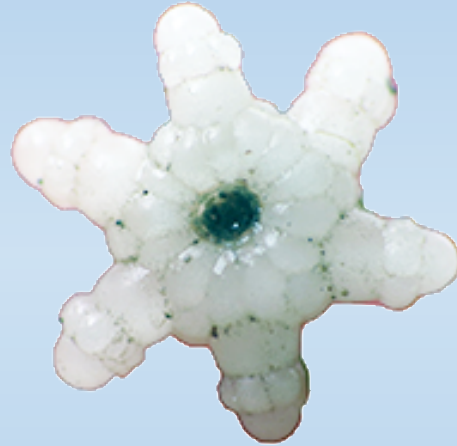


# A re-designed volunteer AIS monitoring program in Wisconsin, USA



**Paul Skawinski**

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point



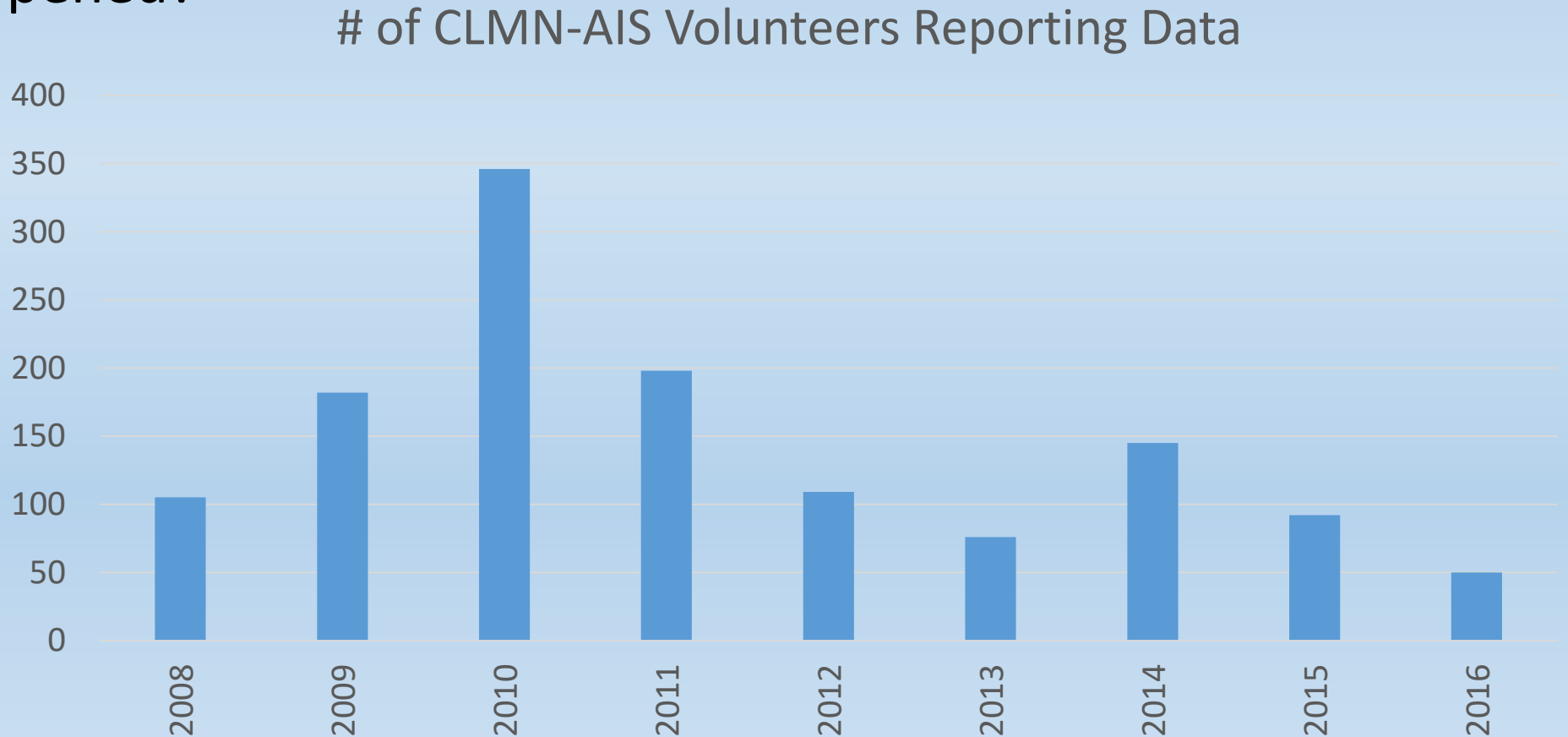


# Citizen Lake Monitoring Network

## *Volunteer AIS Monitoring*

Launched in 2008. Strong initiative in 2010 – peak of 346 volunteers.

Then what happened?



# Volunteer Feedback – *What limits volunteer involvement in AIS monitoring?*

- **44.7%** - People don't think AIS monitoring data result in changes to management actions
- **40.9%** - AIS monitoring is too difficult, or training is inadequate to give volunteers the confidence to detect/identify AIS
- **36.4%** - AIS monitoring takes too much time
- **19.7%** - People feel there is no reason to monitor their lake because it already contains one or more invasive species
- **14.4%** - People may not have a boat, so they are unable to monitor.

# Tackling the Issues

**ALS monitoring → management action** – Focus of the ALS stream of our Wisconsin Lakes Convention.

- Share success stories
- Encourage citizen volunteer presenters
- Highlight volunteer ALS projects in our newsletters (*The Monitor* and *Lake Tides*)



Volume 2, Issue 2  
Mar-Apr 2016

## The Monitor

### Lakes Convention to Celebrate Volunteers


The theme of the 2016 Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention is “Celebrating Volunteers” - a tribute to the incredible work of dedicated volunteers like all of you. This year's conference will be held at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn and Convention Center, March 30th - April 1st.

This Lakes Convention will be partnering with the Water Action Volunteers (WAV) annual symposium and Citizen-based Monitoring Network of Wisconsin (CBM), both of which will be running concurrently on April 1st and 2nd, also at the Holiday Inn. Those attending the Lakes Convention on April 1st will also be able to attend the WAV/CBM events on April 1st/2nd at no extra charge.

Keynote speakers at this year's Convention include Kris Stepenuck, formerly the Coordinator of the Water Action Volunteers volunteer stream monitoring program. Kris is currently an Extension Assistant Professor at the University of Vermont, and is Secretary of the national Citizen Science Association. Kris will be addressing the question “Does volunteer monitoring really make a difference?” The second keynote speaker, Alyssum Pohl, spent four months kayaking the length of the Mississippi River to document water quality changes and concentrations of micro-plastics in the river. She will share her sampling results and interesting stories from her adventures on the river.

Between the three events, nearly 100 poster presentations will be on display. Participants can attend 13 hands-on workshops and over 90 concurrent sessions. A CLMN chemistry refresher training will also be available for anyone to attend.

Registration is now open. Early-bird pricing expires on March 9th, so register soon! You can view the conference agenda and complete online registration at <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/convention/default.aspx>





# The Monitor

- 2 pages max
- Attractive design
- Electronic only



**Citizen Lake Monitoring Network**  
Since 1986

## The Monitor

Volume 1, Issue 4      The newsletter of Wisconsin's Citizen Lake Monitoring Network  
Nov-Dec 2015

### Prohibited Invasive Plants Released to Local Waterways

Across the state, two NR40-prohibited aquatic invasive plants were repeatedly found growing in our lakes and streams this year. These plants, water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*), are commonly purchased for water gardens, and both have aggressive growth rates that allow them to form huge floating mats of vegetation. Although the proper, legal way to reduce these mats is to throw extra plants in the trash, some water gardeners illegally release extra plants into a nearby waterway.

In Lake Winneconne, CLMN volunteer Valerie Stabenow was out paddling to pick up trash from the lake when she noticed an unusual floating plant. Although this plant is native to South America, not Wisconsin, Valerie recognized it as water hyacinth from previous experience seeing it growing in fountains and water gardens. She had also heard about it by participating in a recent “Aquatic Invasive Species Snapshot Day” organized by the River Alliance of Wisconsin. She collected a sample, reported it to Oshkosh DNR staff, and led a group of staff and volunteers out to search for and remove the rest of the plants. Hundreds of water hyacinth plants have been removed from Lake Winneconne to date, and Valerie continues to be on the lookout for more. Recognizing the limited staff resources available to monitor our abundance of lakes and streams, Valerie offered, “We as citizens can volunteer and do our part to watch out for these aquatic threats.” She added, “I have seen photos of lakes where the citizens did not take the threats of invasives seriously. The resulting damage to the water, fish, birds and other creatures can have far-reaching consequences.”

*“We as citizens can volunteer and do our part to watch out for these aquatic threats.”*  
- Valerie Stabenow, CLMN volunteer

In Lake Onalaska, a resident enjoying the lake noticed a strange plant covering the surface of a small channel. He immediately reported the plant to Eau Claire DNR staff, which was confirmed as water lettuce. A partnership between WDNR, River Alliance of Wisconsin, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and dozens of great volunteers from the



CLMN volunteer Valerie Stabenow holds a clump of water hyacinth she discovered in Lake Winneconne in early October

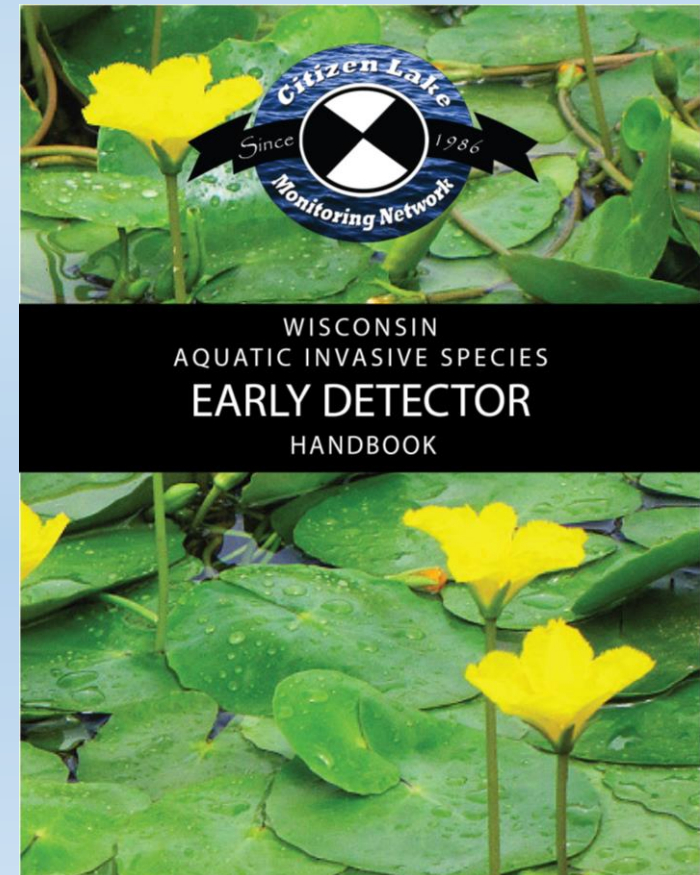
*Continued on page 2*

# Tackling the Issues

**Training is inadequate or overwhelming** – 309-page manual now split into a 36-page, color, 6x9” *Early Detector Handbook* and a larger “optional” document.





Provided as part of free AIS Monitoring kit or available for purchase (\$10)

Wisconsin DNR aquatic plant training workshops now promoted to CLMN volunteers as well as staff.



# Tackling the Issues

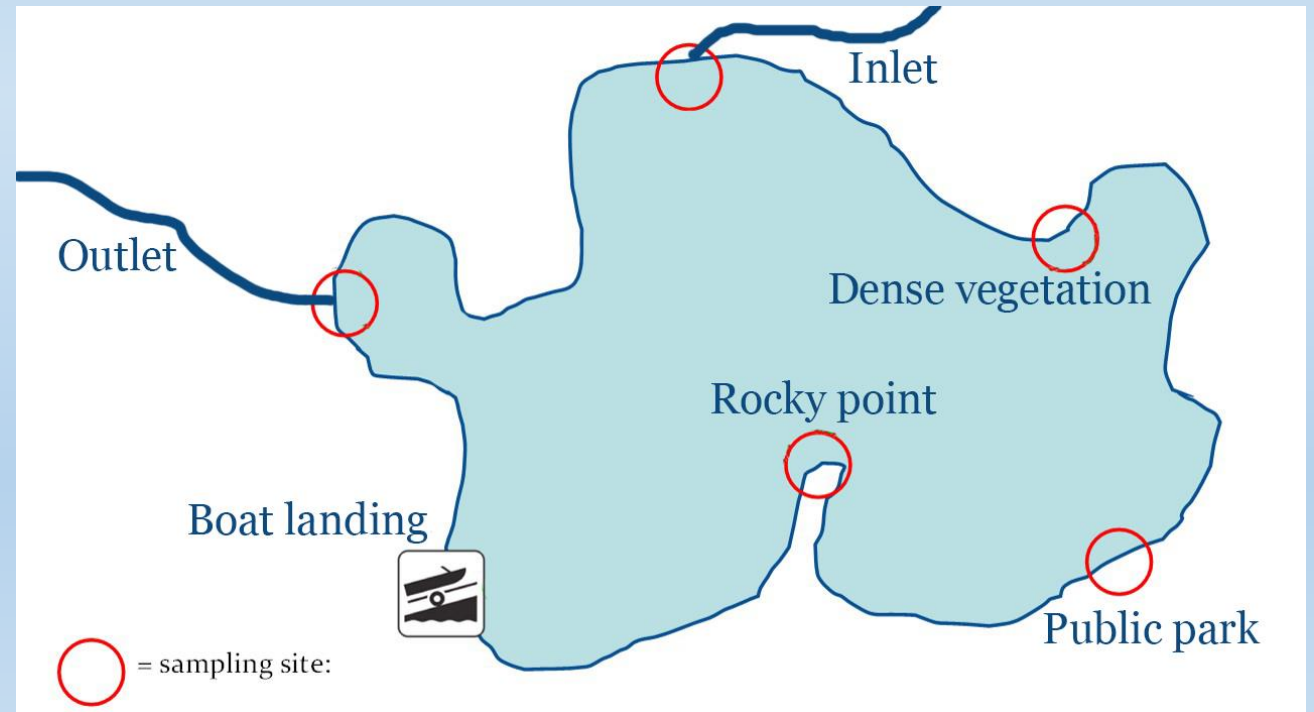
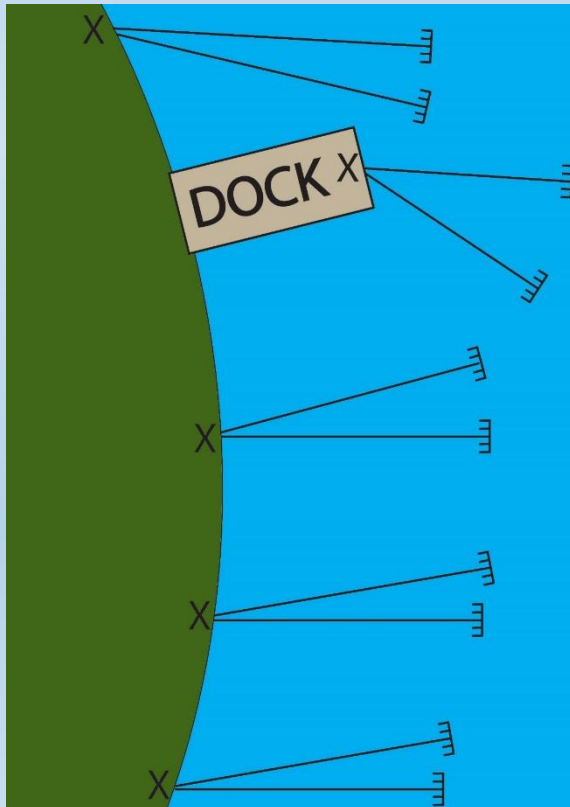
Training is inadequate or overwhelming – 309-page manual now split into a 36-page, color, 6x9” *Early Detector Handbook* and a larger “optional” document.

QUAGGA MUSSELS & ZEBRA MUSSELS		CHINESE & BANDED MYSTERY SNAILS	
			
Status: Prohibited Native Look-alike: None	Status: Restricted Native Look-alike: None	Status: Restricted Native Look-alike: Brown mystery snail	Status: Restricted Native Look-alike: Brown mystery snail
INVASIVE	INVASIVE	INVASIVE	INVASIVE
<b>Quagga Mussel</b> ( <i>Dreissena bugensis</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teardrop-shaped</li><li>• Does not sit flat on its side</li><li>• Color varies but is typically lighter than the zebra mussel</li><li>• Can grow to larger size than zebra mussels (1.5 inches in length)</li></ul>	<b>Zebra Mussel</b> ( <i>Dreissena polymorpha</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• D-shaped</li><li>• Sits flat on its side</li><li>• Color varies but is usually light brown to white with brown/black stripes.</li><li>• Size: 0-1.25 inches in length</li></ul>	<b>Chinese Mystery Snail</b> ( <i>Cipangopaludina chinensis</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Larger size, up to 3 inches tall</li><li>• Dark brown shell, often with short ridges near the shell opening.</li></ul>	<b>Banded Mystery Snail</b> ( <i>Viviparus georgianus</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1-1.5 inches tall</li><li>• Horizontal brown bands on shell</li></ul>
			



# Tackling the Issues

**Need for a boat?** – Two new protocols: boat-meander survey, shoreline/public access protocol for those without a boat.

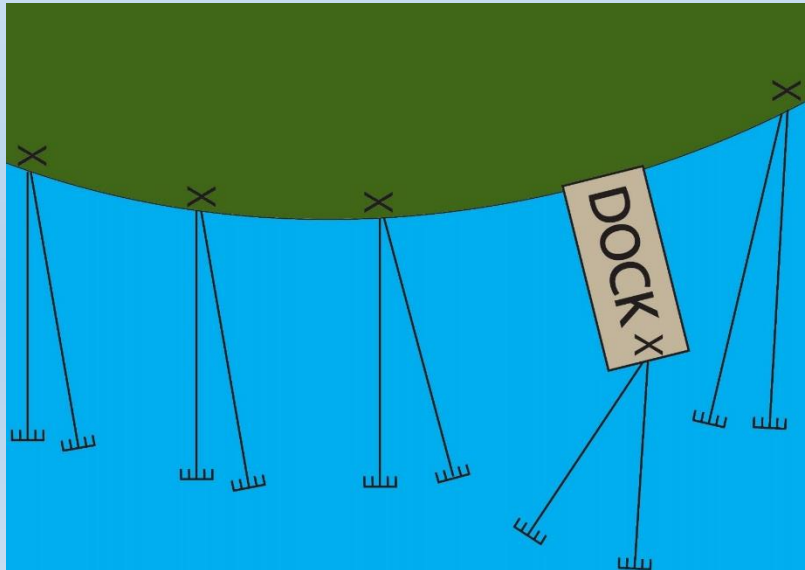




# Tackling the Issues

**ALS monitoring takes too much time** – One-day, “no obligation” WI/MN ALS Snapshot Day launched on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This used the new shoreline protocol.

99 participants sampled over 150 sites across Wisconsin!



# Survey Results – AIS Snapshot Day (N=30)

- 67% of participants rated the quality of their Snapshot Day training as very good, 33% as good
- 58% of participants are “very comfortable” recognizing AIS after participating in Snapshot Day. 40% are “somewhat comfortable”.
- 90% are “likely” or “very likely” to participate again next year.
- Comments:
  - Have training at a site with a stream/lake to demonstrate protocol
  - Limit number of sites that teams need to sample
  - Have everyone meet back at the same time to compare findings and suspicious species

# Tackling the Issues

**Cost?** - AIS monitoring has been our only fee-based monitoring activity. Goal is to now provide essential equipment and training for free.\*

\* One free kit per lake, provided after a volunteer completes the training workshop. Additional kits available for purchase.

# 2017 AIS Training & Equipment

Hands-on workshop provided by local AIS Coordinator or CLMN staff (2-3hrs)

Early Detector Handbook

Rake

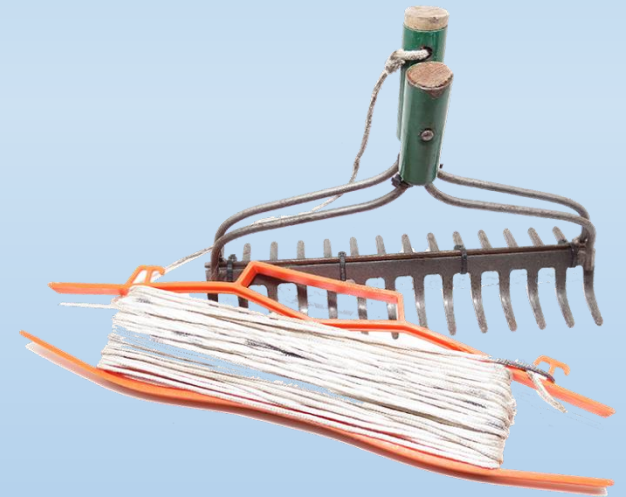
Ziploc bags

Waterproof specimen labels

Ruler

Pencil

Hand lens





# Vouchering with photos

- Much faster, easier
- Volunteers can submit photos instantly via smartphone and get a quick response
- Dedicated email inbox for AIS voucher photos during Snapshot Day


**Wisconsin Citizen Lake Monitoring Network**  
Use these labels when submitting a sample of an aquatic plant or animal for identification

Which species do you think it is?  
Asian clam

Lake & county where it was collected:  
Lulu Lake, Walworth Co.

Date:  
8/10/16

Your name and contact information:  
Paul Skawinski  
715-346-4853 Pskawins@uwsp.edu



# 2017 Volunteer AIS Monitoring Events (reported)

Have these changes increased participation in AIS monitoring? We will know soon.

Volunteer data requested by November 1.

**Current numbers:** (fieldwork events entered by volunteers)

2013 79

2014 147

2015 97

2016 114

2017 78 so far

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