



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

March 2008 Station Activities

The Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) is located in Alpena, Michigan and works to meet the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fishery and Ecosystem goals within Lake Huron, Western Lake Erie, and connecting waters of the St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River. Activities include Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management, Aquatic Invasive Species Management, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Partnerships and Accountability, Public Use, and Workforce Management – all of which are conducted in alignment with the Service Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future. The station is one of many field offices located within Region 3, the Midwest Region.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

***MV Togue* Readied for Disposal**

*Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist*

From February to April 2008, Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena NFWCO worked with staff from GSA, Regional Office Fisheries, the *MV Spencer F. Baird* vessel crew, the Alpena NFWCO, and USGS to ready the *MV Togue* for disposal. The *MV Spencer F. Baird*, christened in September 2006, replaced the *Togue* and ended the *Togue's* 18 year history of stocking lake trout in the upper Great Lakes.

In early 2008, staff removed over 75 items from the *Togue* for historical preservation or for re-use on other vessels. Woldt has been working with staff from NCTC and the Service Heritage Committee to ensure that artifacts from the *Togue* will be preserved



The MV Togue, which stocked lake trout for the Service for 18 years in the upper Great Lakes prior to replacement in 2006 by the MV Spencer F. Baird, is in preparation for disposal. Photo credit: Aaron Woldt,

and used to create a display at NCTC documenting the *MV Togue*'s historic importance to lake trout restoration efforts in the Great Lakes. Some smaller artifacts will also be displayed at regional lake trout production facilities (Iron River NFH, Jordan River NFH, Pendills Creek NFH).

On February 8, 2008 the *Togue* was placed on the surplus property list and made available to other governmental agencies. The vessel went through the 60 day long agency screening process and was not claimed. As a result, it will go up for public auction by the end of April 2008.

Preserving historic, one-of-a-kind artifacts from the *MV Togue* allows the Service to educate and inform a wide range of agency employees and public regarding the critical role the Service plays in lake trout rehabilitation efforts. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of implementing educational and outreach activities to educate public regarding Service activities under the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Public Use" priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Thunder Bay Project Implementation Working Committee Meeting

*Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist*

Fishery Biologists Aaron Woldt and Andrea Ania participated in a Working Committee meeting for the Thunder Bay Power Company's Thunder Bay River Project Implementation. The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power (TBP) and its parent company North American Hydro (NAH) in meeting the requirements of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license.

The primary focus of the March 25, 2008 meeting was to review results of NAH's 2007 purple loosestrife, Eurasian watermilfoil, and erosion sites monitoring activities. In addition, the Working Committee also discussed recent charges to the project escrow account, NAH's water quality monitoring plan, NAH's website and posting of project discharge information, a recently completed fishing pier at the Hillman site, and the status of the proposed fishing pier and public easement issue at the Hubbard Lake site. Woldt also announced that due to increased station duties he will be replaced on this committee by Biologist Ania.

The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, NAH, and the Service. In addition representatives from the Montmorency Conservation District, Thunder Bay Audubon Society, and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments also participated.

Service involvement in the TBP Working Committee provides opportunities to minimize or mitigate the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species caused by hydropower

facilities in the Thunder Bay River system. This outcome is consistent with the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Cooperation with Native Americans

Service Biologists Co-Chair Modeling Subcommittee Meeting for 1836 Treaty Waters

*Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist*

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena NFWCO along with John Netto of the Green Bay NFWCO co-chaired the March 11-13 meeting of the Modeling Subcommittee (MSC) of the Technical Fisheries Committee (TFC). The primary focus of this meeting was to generate preliminary 2008 harvest limits for lake trout in 1836 Treaty waters of lakes Huron, Superior, and Michigan, although other technical matters were discussed. As stipulated in the 2000 Consent Decree, preliminary lake trout harvest numbers must be calculated by the MSC, reviewed by the TFC, and presented to the parties to the decree by March 31 each year. The MSC will complete final lake trout harvest numbers and present them to the TFC for review at the May TFC meeting.

Biologist Woldt and Ji He of the Michigan DNR presented an update of the status of northern Lake Huron (MH-1 and MH-2) lake trout stock assessment models, model diagnostic output, and preliminary 2008 lake trout harvest limits. In MH-1, the 2008 preliminary lake trout harvest limit increased from 2007 due to changes in the lake trout population structure and better survival of young fish. In MH-2, the 2008 preliminary harvest limit declined from 2007, but the rate of decline has stabilized compared to previous years. The MSC will continue to evaluate and monitor these changes. Preliminary harvest limits were presented to the TFC for review on April 1.

In addition to performing model analyses, Biologist Woldt helped run the MSC meeting ensuring all agenda items were discussed and kept meeting minutes. A preliminary draft of the March 11-13 MSC meeting minutes was emailed to MSC members for review.

Harvest limits produced at this meeting, when reviewed by the parties and finalized, will become binding 2008 lake trout harvest limits for 1836 Treaty waters. These harvest limits will allow lake trout fisheries to be executed while still protecting the biological integrity of the lake trout stocks. This outcome is consistent with the Service’s goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while meeting the needs of tribal communities under the “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management” and “Cooperation with Native Americans” priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Aquatic Invasive Species Management

Asian Carp Information Provided at Michigan Environmental Health Association's Annual Education Conference

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen
Fishery Biologist*

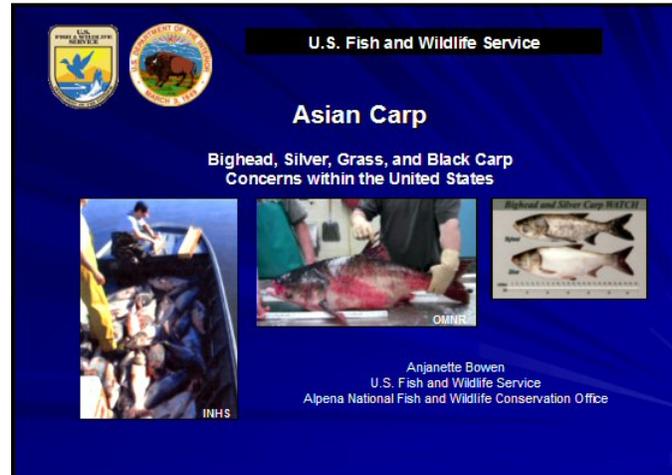
Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (Alpena NFWCO) Biologist Anjanette Bowen was invited to provide information on Asian carp at the Michigan Environmental Health Association's Annual Education Conference held March 11-14 in Bay City, Michigan. The focus of her presentation was to educate the environmental health community about Asian carp and the concerns associated with their spread within the United States, and potential spread into the Great Lakes.

The term "Asian carp" refers to four species of non-native carp (bighead carp, silver carp, black carp, and grass carp) that have become established and are spreading within the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Asian carp may reduce the diversity of native species and be hazardous to water users. There is also growing concern that Asian carp may spread into the Great Lakes.

Approximately 20 people attended the PowerPoint presentation which included topics on the identifying characteristics of Asian carp, their current distribution, and concerns associated with their increase in numbers and spread to new areas. Efforts to slow the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes via the Chicago Dispersal Barrier Project were discussed. Bowen also provided information on what the public can do to prevent the spread of Asian carp and other invasive species.

At the end of the presentation, a short DVD was played that detailed the jumping behaviors and problems associated with Asian carp. The DVD, titled "Nuisance Fish," is an outreach tool that was recorded in partnership with Bill Dance, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is available for viewing from the Asian Carp Management website at the following web address: <http://www.asiancarp.org/>.

"The Michigan Environmental Health Association (MEHA) is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of health through management of the environment. It consists of over 750 professionals throughout the State of Michigan." For more information about the Michigan Environmental Health Association visit their website at <http://www.meha.net/>.



Alpena NFWCO provided information about Asian Carp at the Michigan Environmental Health Association's Education Conference held in Bay City, Michigan during March. Image credit: Anjanette Bowen, USFWS.

Public education regarding invasive species is an important means of preventing their spread and helps promote healthy native species populations. This effort is consistent with the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future priorities for "Aquatic Invasive Species Management", "Public Use", "Partnerships and Accountability", and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management".

Partnerships and Accountability

Service Participated in Michigan's Call to Action on AIS Stakeholder Workshop

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen
Fishery Biologist*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff from the Regional Office (Mike Hoff), East Lansing Field Office (Bob Kavetsky), Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (Anjanette Bowen), and the US EPA GLNPO Liaison (Amy DeWeerd) participated in a workshop hosted by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) titled "Michigan's Call to Action on Aquatic Invasive Species." The workshop was held on March 5, 2008 in East Lansing, Michigan to generate stakeholder discussion about aquatic invasive species issues. Information shared at this meeting will be used to update Michigan's Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan.

For more information about Michigan's Aquatic Invasive Species program please visit the Michigan DEQ - Office of the Great Lakes website located at http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3677_8314---.00.html.

Partnerships with state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental organizations are an integral part of the Service Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future, and this effort is consistent with the "Partnerships and Accountability", "Aquatic Invasive Species Management", and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" components of the Vision.

Public Use

Science Olympiad 2008

*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) Biologists Anjanette Bowen and Heather Rawlings participated in the Michigan Regional Science Olympiad tournament on Saturday, March 1, 2008 at Alpena Community College in Alpena, Michigan. Biologists Bowen and Rawlings developed and administered an ecology test for six junior high and nine high school teams and served as judges for the tournament's Ecology category. A considerable amount of time

and effort was invested in designing the two tests. Medals were awarded to 1st through 3rd place in each category, and the schools that ranked the highest overall advanced in the competition and became eligible to compete at the state level.

Outreach events such as these contribute toward the “Public Use” component of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. Approximately 30 high school and junior high students improved their understanding of ecological issues through this outreach event.

Workforce Management

Employee Completes Fisheries Academy and Employee Foundations Training

*Submitted by Andrea Ania
Fishery Biologist*

Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) Biologist Andrea Ania attended *Fisheries Academy* and *Employee Foundations* courses at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The *Fisheries Academy* course provided an overview of Fisheries Program operations, pertinent legislation and policies, and DOI organization to new and entry-level fisheries professional staff. The course included Fisheries Information System (FIS) training, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Planning for Natural Resource Pathways training, and an overview of career paths in the Service's Fisheries Program.



The National Conservation Training Center's Employee Foundations training course involves outdoor and indoor (inset) team building challenges. Photo credit: Jeanette Harrison, USFWS.

The *Employee Foundations* course covered the history, organization, and mission of the Service. Additionally, employees learned about and evaluated their communication skills, personality type, and conflict styles. Indoor and outdoor teambuilding activities were used to illustrate the importance of interpersonal skills in building trust and developing mutually beneficial professional relationships/networks within the Service and with our partners.

Both courses covered topics such as use of the Individual Development Plan, other career development tools, and a variety of training opportunities. Both courses were worthwhile and had excellent speakers.

Continued educational opportunities are consistent with the Service's goal of providing employees with opportunities to maintain competencies and improve opportunities for professional

achievement under the “Workforce Management” priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Spring Safety Training

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen
Fishery Biologist*

The Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) held a safety meeting followed by a day dedicated to safety training on March 27, 2008 to prepare for spring field activities and to meet annual requirements. Staff received CPR refresher training from the American Heart Association, fire extinguisher training hosted by Great Lakes Fire and Safety Equipment, and reviewed the station Hazard Communication Program and accident reporting protocol. This effort is consistent with the Service’s Fisheries Vision priority for “Workforce Management”.

For more information about Alpena NFWCO programs and activities contact us at:

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