

La Crosse Area Garden Club and YCC Team Up to Help Pollinators

BY DOUG ALOISI, GENOA NFH

The Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) recently invited the LaCrosse Area Garden Club to visit the station and help us revitalize our butterfly garden and increase its effectiveness in attracting and benefiting pollinators. Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, bats, etc. pollinate an estimated 75% of all of our flowering plants and crops, so maintaining healthy pollinator populations could be considered self-preservation for us humanoids. Pollinator populations are at risk due to a number of different stressors, some which include improper use of pesticides, and habitat fragmentation and loss due to land development.

To help local pollinators, Genoa NFH built a butterfly garden in 2009 to help provide some new habitat. Over the last two years some of the native plants had begun to be replaced by weeds and sedges, not the most ideal or aesthetic species for attracting and benefiting pollinators. At a recent Friends group meeting volunteer opportunities were shared with our local supporters. Ken Visger, executive board member of our Friends group suggested that the La

Crosse area Garden club may be interested in helping rejuvenate our butterfly garden as one of their service projects. The club was contacted and they were very interested in helping us out. We planned this volunteer opportunity to begin when our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) students came on board in June. Remarkably it was right on the Fish and Wildlife Service's National Pollinator Week observance. Candace Brown of the Garden club and her team donated many different flowering species that attract and hold pollinators. Many of the species have yellow and purple blooms, particularly attractive to butterflies and bees. Working with our YCC enrollees Quentin James and Austin Lockington, the club made short work of the weeds and quickly added beneficial species and mulched the entire area. The results are truly amazing, and bees by the score have been flocking in all summer. We are very grateful to our YCC enrollees and Candace, Phyllis and Peg of the La Crosse Area Garden Club for making this finished project a reality.

For further info about the Genoa NFH: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/>

Sampling the Tittabawassee River Fish Community

BY JOSEPH GERBYSHAK, ALPENA FWCO

On July 26th and 27th biologist Joseph Gerbyshak aided Central Michigan University (CMU) and Michigan State University (MSU) graduate students in sampling the fish communities in the Tittabawassee River. The graduate students are studying fish communities and movement on the river systems with varying levels of connectivity in the Saginaw Bay watershed. The Tittabawassee River, a fully dammed system, has the lowest level of connectivity of the rivers in the study. Sampling occurred above and below the Dow Dam in Midland, Michigan, to assess differences in the fish communities that may be attributed to the damming of the river.

Gerbyshak operated a new electrofishing vessel purchased by the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) earlier this year. The new vessel, a 14 foot aluminum pontoon, was designed to sample in shallow riverine environments. It performed well in

the shallow riffles of the river due to the low draft of the vessel. A primary advantage of the vessel is that it is short in length and has a tiller motor, making it quite maneuverable. Due to the high degree of maneuverability of the vessel, it was nimble enough to effectively sample habitat types that would be problematic for a larger vessel to sample, such as between large woody debris on the river banks. The ability of the vessel to effectively sample all habitat types, including habitat types that have been logistically difficult in the past, was essential in obtaining a representative sample of the fish community. It appeared an accurate sample of the fish community was obtained, catching 28 different species. The dominant species were redhorse suckers, channel catfish and smallmouth bass. Gerbyshak will lend assistance to CMU and MSU graduate students next month to complete sampling for this field season.

For further info about the Alpena FWCO: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/index.htm>