

# TGIF

## Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

Lake Namakagon, WI, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 – Volume 3: Number 18 [Back Issues](#)

***“If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking.”***

**-George Patton-**

### MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
<a href="#">WIB Business Development Conference</a>	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
Stream Monitor Training**	May 5 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	NGLVC
<a href="#">Living Green Expo</a>	May 5-6	All Day	St.Paul, MN
<a href="#">Lecture: Renewable Energy Economy by Barry Hanson</a>	May 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 AM	Washburn High School
<a href="#">Lake Superior Binational Forum</a>	May 11-12	All Day	Thunder Bay ON
BCEDC Board Meeting	May 14 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM - noon	TBA
<a href="#">Future of Farming Statewide Conference</a>	May 14 & 15	All Day	Madison, Monona Terrace
<a href="#">Chequamegon Bay Birding &amp; Nature Festival</a>	May 18-20	All Day	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center-Ashland
Stream Monitor Training**	May 19 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Duluth – Lester Park
BCEDC Board Meeting	June 11 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	TBA
<a href="#">2007 Entrepreneur's Conference</a>	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
<a href="#">Inland Sea Kayak Symposium</a>	June 14-17	All Day	Washburn WI
<a href="#">Midwest Renewable Energy Fair</a>	<b>June 15-17</b>	All Day	Amherst, WI
<a href="#">Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference &amp; Workshops</a>	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable
<a href="#">Pie &amp; Politics</a>	June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Evening	Big Top Chautauqua

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>

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## INVASIVE SPECIES

Bayfield County inland lakes were recognized in the summer of 2005 as harboring Eurasian Water Milfoil. The response has been worthy of note. **Bayfield County Lakes Forum**, led by many individuals, too many to name here, has successfully gained the attention of Bayfield County Board and launched initiatives to reduce the threat to other lakes. Appointment of an Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, **Stefania Strzalkowska** is no insignificant accomplishment. Although Stefania works for the combined Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Iron County **Land Conservation Department**, my sources in Douglas County wonder with wringing hands how Bayfield County does it. I tell them that the Bayfield County Board has a strong history of recognizing the importance of lakes to our economy and are willing to do what is necessary to protect the asset.

Exotic species, non-native species, nuisance species, and alien species are hardly distinctive categories and, as frequently happens, combinations are used, as in Alien Invasive Species. Our rhetorical tools are challenged in more ways than merely giving a name to a problem that ecologists have struggled with for decades. Exotic species are not always invasive.

Invasion biology denotes a newly emerging discipline for research. The foundations are well recognized by practitioners as in need of new architecture. Early work is challenging assumptions about invasive species that have long been dogma.

The recent issue of **CONSERVATION** (the new title for a magazine I really liked when it was called **Conservation In Practice**), published by the **Society for Conservation Biology**, provides a mind expanding round table exploring the positive and negative sides of the invasive species issue. **CONSERVATION'S** editors may have found a productive way to provide context for a penetrating discussion about this important topic. Three articles take differing points of view regarding the losses of biodiversity and alterations of habitat that accompany changes following introduction of a new species into a biogeographic region.

Framing the arguments as all or nothing, we VS them, is mostly too simplistic for adding value to the problems and challenges. One article, by philosopher **Mark Sagoff**, has a big tinge of Alfred E. Neuman "What, me worry?" or, the late **Richard Carlson's** "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff and It's All Small Stuff." While the "benefits" of Zebra mussel actions in reducing the eutrophication of Lake Erie can be counted on the plus side, and retrofitting water pipes can be dismissed as a "one time cost," the need for vigilance regarding human intervention in transport of species from one habitat/niche to another is not a need to be dismissed easily and quickly.

Biology VS history is way too simple-minded for the mind of a philosopher. But Sagoff dismisses the science of invasive species with a hand-waving attribution that science tells us nothing that history doesn't tell us about species introductions to new habitat. Biological sciences are four dimensional. Time, both backward and forward, is inextricable from every

living system at every level of organization of life. Analysis of historical records is fundamental to the science of biology.

Nevertheless Sagoff provides a useful framework for what should be an enlightened discussion of invasive species. Of course, I fear the arguments of Sagoff will be lifted from the pages of CONSERVATION and used to fortify a What, me worry? attitude and a Don't Sweat It approach by those who benefit economically from doing nothing about their responsibilities. Striped Bass in the Sacramento estuary and Coho Salmon in Lake Superior notwithstanding, our natural tendencies to negatively impact natural ecosystems needs attention.

The take-home message for me in these articles is that Invasive Species represent a highly complex problem in the highly complex systems that support life on our planet. Those with ready and pat answers should be targets for tough questions. Would that we all have the wisdom to generate the questions.

The first lesson of this new discipline, invasion biology, may well be that those who think they understand, probably don't.

Take care and have a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

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[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) Director

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) US Delegation Co-Chair

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) Co-owner

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) *Member*

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*