



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ONE Voice

Outreach, News, and Events *July 2019*

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge/Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office



Erie Canal Water Chestnut Monitoring/Removal Program Complete for another Year

Water chestnut is an invasive aquatic plant that can alter water chemistry and affect recreational uses of waterways. Since 2008, the Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office's Aquatic Invasive Species team has been removing a population of water chestnut in the Tonawanda Creek section of the Erie Canal. At one point, this plant covered significant portions of the waterway. This year, we found small numbers of plants in only two locations, indicating that we may be in the final phases of eradicating this invasive plant. (Contact: Heidi Himes)

Mountain Alliance Tackles Honeysuckle on Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge

On July 3rd, twelve students and three chaperones from Mountain Alliance visited Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge from Boone, NC. Mountain Alliance is a non-profit organization that runs Rolling Academy, a two-week long leadership and adventure program for youth. They arrived early to explore the INWR Visitor Center and meet Refuge staff. From there, they traveled to Swallow Hollow Nature Trail to take an educational hike led by HAF Intern Sasha Azeez. Afterwards, they spent the day cutting down invasive honeysuckle bushes on a trail-connected island, helping bring the refuge one-step closer to completing the spur of the new HQ trail. (Contact: Kathryn Brenner)



Lower Great Lakes FWCO Work with Young Environmental Leaders Program (YELP)

Lower Great Lakes FWCO staff held an interactive meeting on July 8th in Wheatfield, NY with a group of students in the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's Young Environmental Leaders Program (YELP). Service biologists and YELP students discussed the ecology of fish migration, and the importance of connected aquatic habitats to the survival and maintenance of healthy populations. Lower Great Lakes also held hands-on lessons in conducting culvert assessments at three culvert sites with varying degrees of passage for fish; YELP students helped collect data and witnessed the challenges to fish migration presented by culverts. This event provided a great opportunity for students to learn how to solve problems affecting fish and aquatic connectivity, and to learn more about the mission of and work conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (Contact: Megan Kocher)

Young Environmental Leaders Program (YELP) - Take 2

Staff from the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program also worked with students in the YELP program early in July. Students learned about invasive species in the Great Lakes, such as sea lamprey, round goby, and Hydrilla, and viewed a demonstration of electrofishing - one of the primary techniques used to look for AIS. Students also helped identify fish and aquatic plant species, and improve their skills at using a secchi disk. The program wrapped up with an impromptu presentation about the Hydrilla project in the Erie Canal from Army Corps of Engineers biologists who had just arrived at the boat launch to conduct Hydrilla surveys. (Contact: Heidi Himes)

Refuge Invasive Species Awareness Walk Lead by Fisheries Staff

As part of the New York State Invasive Species Awareness Week (July 7-13), Iroquois NWR offered a free, public walk on a new trail outside the Refuge Visitor Center. Led by Lower Great Lakes FWS AIS staff, participants learned about local invasive species in and around the Refuge, as well as what is currently being done to combat these "unwanted" visitors. (Contact: Chris Osborne)

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/iroquois/>
<https://www.facebook.com/IroquoisNationalWildlifeRefuge>

Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/lowergreatlakes/>
<https://www.facebook.com/LGLFWCO>



Buffalo Urban Partnership Offers Student Photography Program at Times Beach Nature Preserve

The GroundWork Buffalo “Green Team” is for Buffalo high school students to develop job and leadership skills through a variety of community-based conservation projects and hands-on learning experiences. On July 16th, Iroquois NWR and Lower Great Lakes FWCO staff met with the Green Team members and its leader to show off some of the beauty available right in downtown Buffalo at the Times Beach Nature Preserve. Students were given digital cameras to take lots of photos while being led on a guided walk through the Preserve. The weather was hot, but the Green Team thought the outing was pretty cool. (Contact: Denise Clay)

Supporting our Workforce: Cooperative Work by YCC and...YELP!

The crews of Iroquois NWR’s Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper’s Young Environmental Leaders Program (YELP) joined forces to conduct conservation work and learn from one another. On July 17th, YELP students came to the Refuge and helped YCC and volunteers with purple martin banding. Then, both crews went out with NYS DEC biologists to suck up some purple loosestrife biocontrol beetles. On July 22nd, YCC also met up with the YELP crew at Hyde Park, Niagara Falls, NY to release the beetles on some invasive loosestrife. Both crews worked together restoring habitat restoration, conducting routine maintenance, testing water quality, and installing interpretive signs. (Contact: Sasha Azeez)



Enjoying the Outdoors at Dunkirk Outdoor Adventure Camp

On July 18th, Lower Great Lakes FWCO Habitat Restoration staff provided a day-long program on stream ecology and morphology to approximately 60 Dunkirk Conference Center summer camp participants ranging in age from 8 to 14. Campers received instruction on how to collect fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates using seine nets and kick nets in the local stream. Next, campers identified the fish and macroinvertebrates they collected using keys and dissecting microscopes while discussing stream morphology with our biologists. We are proud to say we have helped with this annual field program for over five years now, and look forward to next year’s program. (Contact: Betsy Trometer)