



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ONE Voice

Outreach, News, and Events *September 2019*

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

Staff Comings & Goings at Lower Great Lakes FWCO

In September, the Lower Great Lakes FWCO welcomed Fish Biologist, Greg Kronisch to the native species program. Greg will be working on a variety of native species projects under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), including Lake Sturgeon population and habitat studies, Lake Trout habitat use, and Coregonine research work. (Contact: Michael Goehle)



Erie Canal Surveys Wrapped Up for another Year

In September, a team of aquatic invasive species biologists from the Lower Great Lakes FWCO completed the fall fish survey on the Erie Canal. They found no new invasive species but did see some interesting native species such as chain pickerel and an American eel. Every year, the team conducts surveys for invasive fish and plant species, including removing water chestnut and Hydrilla, on the Erie Canal. They are counting down the days until next spring when they can do another 15 miles down the Erie Canal. (Contact: Heidi Himes)

Fall Festival Features "Water Theme"

THANK YOU to the over 400 kids and adults who stopped by the Lower Great Lakes FWCO's "make your own invasive species" display at the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve Fall Festival on September 21st. Families learned about invasive species in the Great Lakes, such as sea lamprey, round goby, and rusty crayfish. It was a beautiful day to experience nature with walks, hands-on activities and lots of fun! (Contact: Denise Clay)



New York Power Authority's Annual Wildlife Festival

Staff and volunteers from both the Lower Great Lakes FWCO and Iroquois NWR worked at the Wildlife Festival, hosted by the New York Power Authority (NYPA). This has been a very popular event for 34 years! Over 1,400 people stopped by our office display that focused on the Lake Sturgeon and invasive species work conducted right across the road from the Power Vista in the Lower Niagara River. Kids also used crayons to color fish, create their own fun invasive species, and see a (replica) 4-foot sturgeon up close. (Contact: Michael Goehle)

Reaching Students at Monroe County Conservation Field Day

On September 17th, Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF) intern Sasha Azeez and Visitor Services Specialist Eric Schaertl represented the Iroquois NWR at the annual Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District's Conservation Field Days for middle and high school students. Students were treated to lessons on a variety of environmental issues from endangered species to pollution by professionals in a casual "fair-like" atmosphere. The theme for the booth was "Pollinators", taught through an educational game, written by Sasha, called "Pollination Trivia". At the end of the day, 105 students had played Pollination Trivia. (Contact: Sasha Azeez)



Safer Divers = Safer Dives

Lower Great Lakes FWCO and Iroquois NWR Dive Team trained in Alexandria Bay, NY in September to complete Diver Stress and Rescue training. Students participated in classroom lessons, pool dives, and three open water dives. This course taught employees how to quickly prevent, recognize, and correct stressful and emergency situations in a variety of dive conditions and environments. Some tasks practiced were emergency swimming ascents, shared air, underwater equipment removal, unconscious diver recovery, and tired diver towing. The ability to perform these tasks helps prevent diving accidents, making the dive safer for both the individual diver and the dive team. (Contact: Kathryn Brenner)



Brickhouse Corners Fair: Bringing Communities Together

Friends of the Iroquois NWR volunteers Dorothy Gerhart, Chris Kieber and Karin Johnson attended the Brickhouse Corners Fair on September 7th. Skulls and pelts of animals found on the Refuge were a big attraction. Kids (and adults) had fun matching cards with animal names to the pelts, and learning some fun facts about each. All participants were invited to visit the Refuge to hike the trails and learn more about the amazing ecology of our wetland treasure. FINWR membership forms were passed out, and 116 visitors stopped by the display. Good food, crafts, and fresh fruit and vegetables were available for purchase. Band music playing throughout made the day a festive occasion. (Contact: Karin Johnson, Friends of INWR)

Improving Habitat for Ground Nesting Birds

Iroquois NWR manages 1,186 acres of grasslands for ground nesting birds including bobolink, meadowlark, Henslow sparrow, several ducks, and more. The purpose of managing grasslands is to provide the habitat desirable for these birds. One of the management tools used is mowing. This needs to be done on our fields every 3-4 years to keep the shrubby vegetation down. These birds need grass to hide in to avoid predators like fox, raccoons, and hawks. Large areas of grass helps reduce ground predators. The lack of tall trees and shrubs eliminates perches for avian predators. This year, 448 acres of grasslands were mowed primarily by volunteers. (Contact: Kate Brenner)



Another Year on the Books for YCC

Since 1971, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer work program has been introducing youth to conservation projects supporting the efforts of agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From June 24th to August 18th Iroquois NWR hosted a YCC crew of kids ages 15 to 18. During the 8 weeks of their employment, the YCC crew completed numerous projects in all kinds of weather, from invasive species removal to bird banding and trail construction. YCC work and the projects they completed are highly valued by the Refuge! (Contact: Sasha Azeez, HAF Intern)