

# Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders

## INVASIVE PLANT PATROL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

*Are you looking for opportunities to expand your horizons as a Plant Patroller?* Hone your survey techniques and plant identification skills while exploring new regions of the State with other lake-minded volunteers? Be part of Maine's growing IPP Rapid Response Survey Team? Expand volunteer participation in your own local early detection effort? If so, please read on and consider becoming involved in one or more of these exciting new leadership opportunities:

**IPP First Responders** are trained IPP volunteers who are willing to be on call should a new infestation be identified anywhere in the State of Maine (limits on distances one is willing to travel may be specified of course). This mobile, ready-to-go team is able to move confidently and swiftly when the need arises. With LSM coordinating with the local lake community, trained Plant Patrollers may be paired up with members of the local community who may have great familiarity with the lake of concern, but limited knowledge of invasive plants, thus enhancing not only the quality of the survey, but the quality of the survey experience for everyone involved.

The First Responder concept was successfully tested on Damariscotta Lake in 2009 when twenty-seven trained invasive plant patrollers (many traveling from distant corners of the state) participated in the intense search that followed the discovery of hydrilla in a small cove along the western shore of Damariscotta Lake. To date, no additional hydrilla has been detected in the lake.

The purpose of **IPP Jump-Start** is to conserve native ecosystems now threatened by a wide array of invasive aquatic organisms, by "jump-starting" locally-sustainable citizen-based invasive aquatic species monitoring in areas of the state where such activities are currently lacking. At the core of this program is the IPP Jump Start team: comprised of trained IPP volunteers, state agency personnel, LSM staff and other professionals working alongside of—and mentoring—novice plant patrollers and other members of the target community.

Engaging and leading by example, the IPP Jump-Start team conducts an invasive aquatic plant screening survey and baseline native aquatic plant inventory on the waters of the target region while providing one-on-one outreach to the community. IPP Jump-Start got its start in the Moosehead Lake Region in 2008.

**Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders** - When the LSM achieves its *ultimate* goal as an organization, virtually every lake in the State of Maine will have one or more water quality monitors and an active team of trained Invasive Plant Patrollers routinely monitoring the health of the waterbody. This statewide cadre of dedicated volunteers, trained and certified by LSM, will be supported and sustained by a well-organized, integrated, collaborative system involving LSM, local, county and State agencies, trained volunteer coordinators, local lake associations, and regional lake conservation groups.

LSM has had such a structure in place on for its water quality monitoring program for decades. It is now working to put the necessary elements in place for its Invasive Plant Patrol as well. The emerging structure provides opportunities for volunteer leadership at every level: trained Invasive Plant Patrollers, IPP Lake Team Leaders, IPP Regional Coordinators, etc. As is the case with the water quality system, the benefits include: technical assistance and quality assurance checks at each level; enhanced volunteer involvement and contribution; improved program efficiency and sustainability.

Much progress is being made, including, to our great delight, the activation (or active formation) of many



IPP First Responder Dennis Roberge surveys the shallows of Damariscotta Lake from dockside, while taking a well deserved break from the numbing fall water temperatures

new IPP Teams across the State of Maine. (An IPP Team is defined as “four or more trained Invasive Plant Patrollers working in concert to conduct an invasive aquatic plant screening survey.”) The number of waterbodies being surveyed by an active (or actively forming) team jumped from a small handful in 2009 to over 60 waterbodies in 2011 and is somewhere in the vicinity of 80 teams today. In addition, roundtable meetings of current IPP Leaders are held in the spring for the purpose of refining and enhancing IPP program goals and objectives; more clearly defining volunteer leadership roles; identifying needs; and

brainstorming next steps. Two train-the-trainer workshops (*How to Lead an IPP Plant Paddle* and the *View Scope Clinic*) have now been added to the list of LSM training opportunities. A host of new resources for IPP Leaders are available on the *Invasive Plant Patrol Leaders Resource Page* on the LSM website.

To learn more about any of LSM’s volunteer leadership opportunities, please contact us at [vlmp@mainevlmp.org](mailto:vlmp@mainevlmp.org) or 207-783-7733.

## Does Your Lake Have an IPP Team?

When it comes to monitoring aquatic invaders, the more eyes on the water, the better. The creation of strong, active *Invasive Plant Patrol Lake Teams* is seen as essential, not only to ensuring the quality of invasive aquatic plant surveys, but also to the long term sustainability of Maine’s early detection effort. As part of a larger team, each patroller can focus more comprehensively on a smaller survey area; no one’s survey area is too onerous. Teams are formed by dividing the shoreline of a waterbody into appropriately scaled sectors (e.g. 500-1,000 foot sections), and recruiting and training volunteers to conduct a survey in each sector.

The *Lake Team Leader* plays a key role in energizing, organizing and providing local technical support to members of the Lake Team. *Lake Associations* also play an important role in sustaining the team: helping to recruit team members, raising funds for supplies and equipment, providing recognition of the team’s work, etc.

An active, well trained, fully equipped survey team benefits your lake community in many ways. The team can rule out presence of invasive aquat-

ic plants annually, help educate and engage the lake community (friendly face-to-face encounters, dockside, are commonplace during plant surveys) and provide a better understanding of your lake’s unique native plant communities.

Maine now has several successful *Regional* IPP Teams. In this situation, one or more trained Plant Patrollers from each waterbody in the local system (e.g., Five Kezars, Tacoma Lakes, Belgrade Lakes) form a composite team and work together to collectively monitor each lake in the system. Possible strategies for accomplishing goals include: monitoring all high risk areas on every waterbody in the region, annually, over the course of several days; conducting a complete (Level 3) survey on each lake in the system in rotation, with the goal of monitoring each lake once every two or three years; or some combination of the above. This is a great way to stretch the effectiveness of an IPP effort in water rich areas where there are currently only one or two trained patrollers on each waterbody.

Whatever the size and scope of your team...working as part of a team is,

safer, more effective, more efficient, more engaging, and *more fun!* For more information on IPP Lake Teams, please contact us at 207-783-7733 or [vlmp@mainevlmp.org](mailto:vlmp@mainevlmp.org).

