



# *The Monitor*

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*The newsletter of Wisconsin's Citizen Lake Monitoring Network*

## **Flash Flooding and Water Quality**

The summer of 2016 was the 4th wettest summer on record in Wisconsin, since the National Weather Service began keeping records over 120 years ago. On July 11th/12th, 2016, heavy rains pounded much of Northwest Wisconsin, unleashing 8-12 inches of rain in many areas. Last month, severe storms hit the area again. Heavy soils prevented much of that water from infiltrating into the ground, so it flowed over the ground into low areas and streams. The great deal of runoff eroded streambanks and washed out roads, and contributed a great deal of sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants to Chequamegon Bay and Lake Superior. June 2018 measurements of total phosphorus in Chequamegon Bay collected by Northland College show an increase from 13 parts per billion (ppb) before the storms to 157ppb two days after the storms.

The Bibon Swamp in Bayfield County is a giant wetland that received a great deal of water from the recent storms. Instead of allowing the water to continue plowing its way across the landscape, it captured the water, filtered out sediments and pollutants, and allowed the water to slowly flow out over the coming weeks. The Wisconsin Wetlands Association estimated that the Bibon Swamp alone soaked up more than 10 billion gallons of water from the July 2016 storms, which would have otherwise contributed to even more severe flooding.

Heavy rains can cause great deals of runoff across any soil type, especially where water flows are concentrated by downspouts, compacted soils, and impervious surfaces. Wetlands, swales, and rain gardens all serve to capture rainwater and allow it to slowly soak into the ground, replenishing groundwater supplies, and reducing pollution of local lakes and streams. These landscape features will not eliminate the negative impacts of severe storms, but they can help reduce the impacts of all rain events by removing some of the potential floodwaters and reducing the overall volume and power of runoff. Riparian landowners can tap into the Healthy Lakes program that provides free information and grants to implement runoff-capturing practices like swales and rain gardens. Consider a rain garden or swale on your property to help manage runoff and decrease the amount of nutrients and other pollution entering our lakes and rivers.



A sediment plume in Chequamegon Bay near Ashland in July 2016, caused by surface runoff and erosion from heavy rainstorms

# Announcements

## Free Lake Learning Day Offered for CLMN Volunteers

Would you like to learn more about dragonflies, damselflies, aquatic plants, and mussels? Join us for a free day in the new Connor Forestry Classroom at Kemp Natural Resources Station in Woodruff, WI to learn about these interesting groups of plants and animals that call our Wisconsin lakes home.

Sessions will be taught by Bob DuBois, author of *Damselflies of the North Woods* and leader of the Wisconsin Odonata Survey; Paul Skawinski, author of *Aquatic Plants of the Upper Midwest* and Statewide Citizen Lake Monitoring Network Educator; and Jesse Weininger, WDNR Conservation Biologist and Wisconsin Mussel Monitoring Program Coordinator. The program will run from 9:00 - 4:00.

Please bring your own lunch and register using the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JMTD6TR>

## 2018 AIS Snapshot Day Sites Announced

AIS Snapshot Day is a free, family-friendly event where local aquatic invasive species (AIS) staff work with volunteers from their communities to find early populations of AIS. Early populations can be managed or eradicated with far less effort and expense than a well-established population. Participants receive free training at the beginning of the event, and small teams spread out to nearby sites to search for AIS at boat landings and other public access areas. Participants are not required to enter the water.

Any plants or animals suspected of possibly being an invasive species are brought back to the local training site for identification by AIS staff. Any necessary data entry or reporting is taken care of by your local site coordinator.

19 training sites have been organized across the state. Visit this site to learn more about AIS Snapshot Day and to register to help at a site near you! <https://www.wisconsinrivers.org/snapshot-day/>

AIS Snapshot Day is organized by the River Alliance of Wisconsin and UW-Extension Lakes.

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