

# News from WAV

June 2025

## Invasive Species Action Month!



*Photo of New Zealand Mud Snails. Courtesy of Paul Skawinski.*

June is Invasive Species Action Month (ISAM) in Wisconsin! Started in 2005 by the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council, ISAM was started to raise awareness and encourage folks to take action to prevent the spread of invasive species.

Why is this important? Wisconsin's rivers are vulnerable to various aquatic invasive species (AIS), from small animals like Faucet snails to plants like Japanese knotweed that form large colonies along riparian areas. The key to successfully protecting our waters is detecting these invasives early when it may still be possible to isolate or eradicate them. If left unchecked, AIS have the potential to reduce the diversity of native organisms, disrupt the food web, and impact recreational activities.

# Register for AIS Snapshot Day



*Snapshot Day 2025 locations.*

Registration is now open for our annual Aquatic Invasive Species Snapshot Day event! Join us on Saturday, August 9 for this free, statewide effort connecting volunteers, water lovers, and local conservation groups in a search for aquatic invasive species (AIS).

**What to Expect:** Volunteers meet in the morning at a local training site hosted by one of our local partners (see map above). After a short training on how to identify target aquatic invasive species and how to follow search protocols, volunteers will look for and document invasive species at critical lake, river, and wetland monitoring sites. Any potential invasive species will be verified and cataloged with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to guide species control and conservation management plans.

Visit our website to learn more and register: [wateractionvolunteers.org/events/aquatic-invasive-species-snapshot-day-2025](https://wateractionvolunteers.org/events/aquatic-invasive-species-snapshot-day-2025)

We hope you'll join the search and help protect Wisconsin's waters!

**Register for Snapshot Day**



*Volunteers during past Snapshot Days.*

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**Invasive Species Action Award Winner:**



# Cathy Higley



*Recipients of the 2025 Invasive Species Action Award. Photo courtesy of Wisconsin DNR.*

Join us in celebrating WAV coordinator Cathy Higley, a 2025 Invasive Species Action Award winner! Presented by the Wisconsin Invasive Species council during Invasive Species Action Month, the Invasive Species Action Awards recognize "individuals and groups in professional and volunteer settings that positively impact the fight against the spread of invasive species. The winners represent all regions of Wisconsin."

As a WAV coordinator, Cathy supports volunteers in her area to conduct [baseline stream monitoring, nutrient monitoring, and continuous temperature monitoring](#). Through this work, Cathy helps expand aquatic invasive species (AIS) education and foster a community-driven approach to invasive species management by training people to [monitor and report AIS](#) in their local streams.

As a Lake Conservation Specialist with Vilas County, Cathy has assisted more than 100 lake associations in her county. With over 15.6% surface water cover and 18.5% mapped wetland cover, Vilas County is 34% "wet" and garners great interest in tourism. Through Cathy's leadership, the Northwoods Businesses for Clean Waters group was established and has united water-using businesses to provide tools and guidance to protect their waters."



*Cathy Higley being awarded a 2025 Invasive Species Action Award.*

Additionally, a key part of Cathy's impact has been biological control. Since 2016, she has released tens of thousands of *Galerucella* beetles to control purple loosestrife, including early efforts on 1.62 miles of Deerskin River. For over a decade, she has worked on purple loosestrife control at one of the state's most remote sites—Tenderfoot Lake. Partnering with Wisconsin Headwaters Invasive Species Partnership (WHIP), Cathy's program annually removes purple loosestrife from seven sites along the four-mile shoreline and has released beetles to limit its spread along the Ontonagon and Presque Isle Rivers.

*Congratulations, Cathy, and all the Invasive Species Action Award winners!*

[Read full press release](#)

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**Sign up for summer Project RED trainings**



6/25	Glendale, WI	7/16	Waterford, WI
6/28	Baraboo, WI	7/23	Kenosha, WI
7/11	Saint Croix Falls, WI	8/14	Eau Claire, WI

**Upcoming Trainings**  
Riverine Early Detector  
AIS Monitoring

**Project RED**  
Riverine Early Detectors

WAV's Riverine Early Detector AIS Monitoring, or Project RED, trains volunteers to search for, identify, and report aquatic invasive species (AIS) in their local waterways. Once trained, volunteers can monitor for AIS while paddling, fishing, wading, or walking along a reach of river. There is no specific time commitment for monitoring as a Project RED volunteer - any and all time dedicated to search for aquatic invasive species is appreciated!

[Find a training near you](#)

## WAV Volunteer Spotlight: Friends of Cam-Rock Park

New this monitoring season, we're excited to highlight short stories and discoveries from WAV stream volunteers across the state!

[Friends of Cam-Rock Park](#) members **Don Nettum, Becky Schettler-Peterson, and Janice Redford** have been monitoring Koshkonong Creek in Dane County for over 25 years.

The creek meanders through the beautiful CamRock County Park, though it is listed on the [2024 Wisconsin DNR Impaired Waters List](#) due to high phosphorus levels and, relatedly, a degraded biological community. The Friends of CamRock Park are also interested in monitoring for any changes to the stream as new large solar panel projects are built in the watershed.



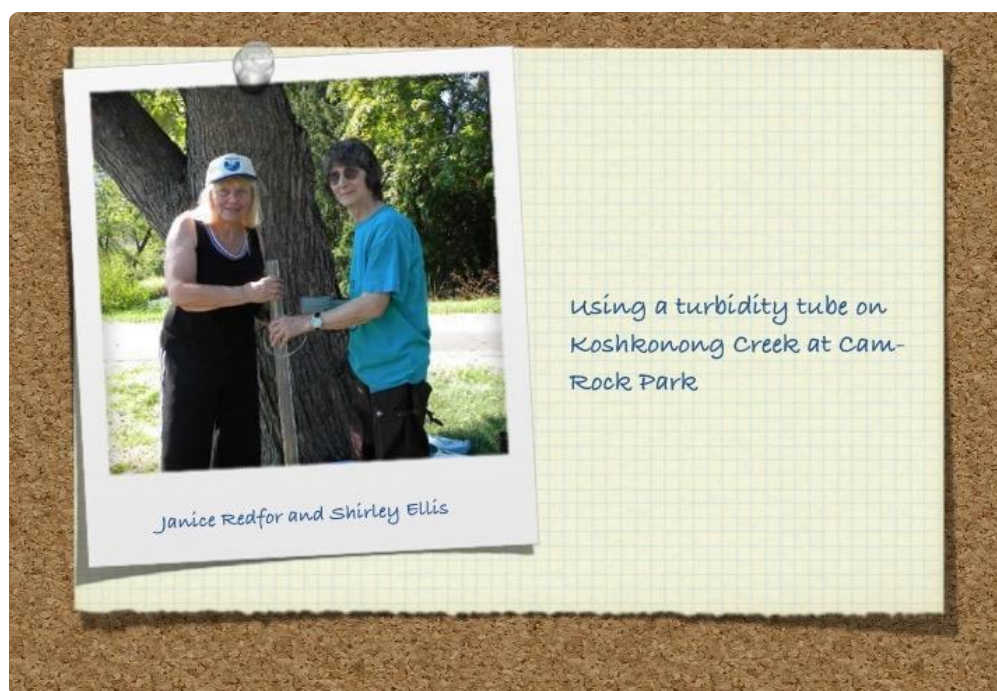
By monitoring the creek, Don, Becky, and Janice are collecting and submitting important information about the health of the creek until a long-term restoration plan is hopefully put in place.

When asked what is a message they would share with other potential volunteers, Don, Becky, and Janice said, "Love the waters here!"

*Thank you, Don, Becky, and Janice for your continued work!*



*(Left to Right) Becky, Don, and Janice monitoring at CamRock County Park.*



*(Above) Early years monitoring at the park.*



*(Above) Bridge at CamRock Park. Koshkonong Creek flows beneath the bridge.*

### Submit your own WAV Spotlight!

Whether it is a special experience during your monthly stream monitoring, your favorite place on a local stream, or a cool aquatic find, we'd love to share it with the WAV volunteer network! Groups are welcome to submit together.

[Submit a Spotlight](#)

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**Reminder:**  
**Submit Your Stream Data to SWIMS**





Have you collected May or June data at your stream site? We encourage you to enter your data into the SWIMS surface water database *right away*. We don't want you to lose your data if your datasheets are misplaced, and it's valuable for the data to be immediately available for biologists and other users who may be working on stream and river assessments or planning efforts this summer!

- Watch our [9 minute tutorial video](#) to learn how to Submit and Edit Stream Data in SWIMS correctly.
- The new MyWisconsin ID method of logging in to the SWIMS database has launched! We highly recommend that you [view this 4 minute instructional video on how to create a MyWisconsin ID](#) and get access to SWIMS, *before* attempting the process. While some volunteers occasionally encounter strange errors, the process typically works well for volunteers if you follow the steps in the video.
- Feel free to contact WAV staff for any assistance with SWIMS at [wav@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wav@extension.wisc.edu).



**Help preserve and protect Wisconsin's streams**

**DONATE**

**Water Action Volunteers Program (WAV)**

Phone: (608) 331-0173

Email: [wav@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wav@extension.wisc.edu)

[wateractionvolunteers.org](http://wateractionvolunteers.org)



The Water Action Volunteers (WAV) stream monitoring program is an ongoing partnership between the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and nearly 50 local partner groups and organizations.

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