

Be A Hero...Transport Zero! STOP HITCHHIKERS!

By Joe Rush, Lake Manager

Update June, 2020:

With the current situation of Covid-19, many of our members are traveling outside of Lake Carroll to other states for outdoor recreation, including boat other bodies of water and ATVing Wisconsin trail systems. If you are doing this, we want you to be aware of concerns of transporting invasive species **BACK TO LAKE CARROLL!** While I've preached to you for years about making sure your boats are clean before they go in the lake, you also need to know that those trails you travel out of Lake Carroll with your ATV's can likely have seeds from plants we **DO NOT WANT** here, like wild parsnip and many others. Those seeds can be stuck in the mud on your ATV's or attached to plants collecting on your undercarriage. By working together to be sure our equipment is **CLEANED BEFORE** returning to the lake, we can reduce our financial burden to manage these invasive species as a community, as well as protect our natural ecosystem that makes up what we are here at Lake Carroll.

As you can see, there are **TWO** campaigns to educate the public: 1) Aquatic Campaign, and 2) Terrestrial Campaign. The terrestrial campaign also describes the concerns for **CAMP FIREWOOD** for campgrounds. **MANY** bad insects (like the Emerald Ash Borer) are transported through firewood movement. By creating **AWARENESS**, we are hopeful you'll do the right thing, and make the effort to protect our community and it's ecosystem.

Now that I've got your attention, we're not talking about people walking down the road with a thumb in the air, but rather aquatic hitchhikers: Nasty little invasive species that can cause great harm to the ecology of our lake (and in turn the finances needed to manage the lake). Some of you may ask, "What is an invasive species, and why should we be concerned about them?" An unofficial definition could be that an invasive species is a species that does not naturally occur in a specific area and whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. The main way these "invasive species" get into bodies of water (lakes, rivers, wetlands), is by "hitching" rides with anglers, boaters, and other outdoor recreationists.

If you sit and think about your boating and recreational habits around Lake Carroll, you will probably realize you have done one of these in the past. For example, Bill and Jane decide to meet some friends down at the Rock River for a day of sunbathing, boating and tubing, so they pull their boat out of Lake Carroll and head to the river for the day. They launch at the river where they put their boat in is **LOADED** with an **INVASIVE** plant called Eurasian Milfoil, and when the trailer comes out of the water it's covered in these plants. After a great day on the water with friends, they take their boat back to Lake Carroll and launch it, park their boat in the marina and take their trailer home. What they didn't realize is that as the trailer was backed into the water, a big mat of invasive Eurasian Milfoil fell off the bunks and floated out into the lake to take root on the shoreline. Had Bill and Jane inspected their boat and trailer, and pressure washed it at a local carwash on the way home, they could have prevented this **INVASIVE** spread of milfoil.

Here's another example. Johnny stops at the local bait shop and heads out to the lake for a bit of crappie fishing. Once he's done fishing, he decides to dump his bait bucket into the lake instead of disposing of it in the trash. I know, I know, how sad is it to dump that poor minnows out in the trash so they just die. But what Johnny doesn't know is that there could be an **INVASIVE** Spiny Water Flea in the water with the bait. Instead of killing a few minnows in the trash, he's introduced a species of zooplankton that can be detrimental to the fishery by making it difficult for larval fish to eat. And if a baby fish doesn't eat, he doesn't become a **BIG** fish. Or maybe some of the 'minnows' in the bait bucket are actually minnows that aren't good for the lake.

There are many examples of ways you can have "hitchhikers", but if you sit and think you will probably be able to think of ways they could spread. Now that you're aware and paying attention to these concerns, the question is, "What can **YOU** do to make sure we stop aquatic hitchhikers from entering Lake Carroll?" Outlined below are a few simple actions that you can take to help prevent them from spreading.

- INSPECT** and **REMOVE** aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boat, motor, trailer, and equipment.
- DRAIN** water from your boat, motor, bilge, livewell, and bait containers **AWAY** from the boat landing.
- DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait, fish parts, and worms in the trash.
- SPRAY/RINSE** boat and equipment with high-pressure or hot water, **OR**
- DRY** everything for at least **FIVE** days before going to another body of water.
- NEVER** release organisms from one water body into another.

The sad truth is that in the recent past, invasive species have been on the rise, and substantial funds are being spent to combat them all over the United States. For more information on aquatic invasive species and how to protect our waters, go to www.ProtectYourWaters.net or www.transportzero.org.

Together, we can make a difference....

