

Environmental Board's Purple Loosestrife Program

2013 Annual Report

Activities & Progress in 2013

- Beetles were released in late May at the same sites as last year: Consolidated Drain (behind D&W on Romence), Lakeview Park, Mandigo Marsh and Millenium Park. Like last year, beetles were released directly in the field.
- Beetles were purchased from Integrated Weed Control of Bozeman, MT – the same source used by Kalamazoo Nature Center.
- Beetles were seen in two locations on the day of release: Mandigo Marsh and Millenium Park. Field surverys were conducted as well at all sites and there was evidence of beetles feeding on purple loosestrife plants with many plants struggling.
- There has been a resurgence of PLS in various spots around Portage including Mandigo Marsh and West Lake. There have also been noticeable declines in some spots as well including the Consolidated Drain and Lakeview Park. Attached is a picture of Purple Loosestrife in 2011 and one from 2013 that does show a noticeable decline in the health of Purple Loosestrife in an area being treated with beetles.

Planned Activities

- Continue to purchase beetles and release these beetles at the same five sites where we have already been releasing beetles.
- Encourage local lake associations to also purchase beetles and release them in an effort to curb PLS growth at these locations.
- Conduct annual pulls to eradicate isolated PLS.
- Increase volunteer participation by increasing public awareness of PLS.
- Maintain contact with Michigan State University for updates concerning the rearing of the Galerucella beetle.
- Maintain contact with Kalamazoo Nature Center for information on other area PLS control programs.
- Annually report to Council on the program's activities and progress.

Program's History

- Purple Loosestrife is an invasive species native to Europe and Asia. It will grow in any moist environment. In the City of Portage, Purple Loosestrife is observed along the shorelines of Austin, Gourdneck and Long lakes, in the channels between the lakes, wetland areas (Mandigo Marsh) and along some of the banks of Portage Creek. There are no domestic enemies for the plant and it will overtake native vegetation. A concern is that removal of native vegetation will impact the wildlife species that depend on them.
- In April 2001, members of the Environmental Board initiated a small project using a USDA-approved biocontrol method to reduce Purple Loosestrife within the City. The biocontrol method uses a European species of Galerucella beetle that feeds specifically on Purple Loosestrife.
- On October 18, 2005, the Council approved the Environmental Board's plan for the measurable reduction (environmental control) of Purple Loosestrife within the City of Portage by 2012.

- In 2006, a Working Group was formed, as required by PLS plan, to manage the program and report to the Environmental Board. Members represent associations from Austin, Gourneck, Long lakes along with Kalamazoo Nature Center, Park Department and Environmental Board.
- Annually, starting in 2006 through 2011 beetles were regenerated at a greenhouse, usually at Vicksburg high school, which is part of a consortium led by Kalamazoo Nature Center. A PLS density map was developed to determine possible beetle release locations, including Austin/Long Lake channel, Lakeview Park and Consolidated Drain project.
- Release sites are photographed every August to reflect visual changes in PLS density. Photographs are compared and evaluated to determine relative density and represented on a PLS density map of the City. The map is updated depending on whether there have been significant changes. The program's progress is reported via an annual report to the City Council, the EB web page and an EB sign displayed at Lakeview Park.
- Five treatment sites were marked with signs in 2010.
- In 2012, the Environmental Board started releasing live beetles.

Consolidated Drain Area, August 2011



Consolidated Drain Area, August 2013

