

ASRA Newsletter

ASRA to write Watershed Management Plan

ASRA has recently been awarded a grant from the Department of State (DOS), Division of Coastal resources, to formulate and write a Watershed Management Plan for the Au Sable River. This is an exciting opportunity for ASRA and comes at the perfect time. First, it will allow the association to summarize on a watershed level, the results of many studies ASRA has conducted since its formation in 1998. Copious data collected during these studies now resides hidden in files in our office and



needs to be presented as a collective picture in order to assess the health of the watershed as a whole. Second, it will allow the ASRA to connect all of the municipalities within the watershed in writing a plan to improve water quality for all residents of the watershed. Municipalities within the watershed are connected by flowing water and share the water resource; therefore, they should share a common plan for protecting it. Third, this is a fabulous opportunity to lay the framework for future water quality projects. The

DOS is committed to supporting its partners' once a Watershed Plan is written. The DOS provides opportunities to obtain more grant funds in order to implement the plan.

The first step in crafting a watershed plan is to solicit input from the public. This will be accomplished through several "town meetings."

The Au Sable River Watershed collects water from 516 square miles and the river is 60 miles long, passes through 7 townships, 2 villages, and 7 hamlets along its 60 mile journey to Lake Champlain. Involving the people from such a large area is a large task; a single planning meeting would be defeatist. Instead, meetings will be held gathering citizens' from the East Branch, West Branch, and Main Stem communities. It is hoped that some of these will take place this summer in order to involve summer residents. Watch for notices for the meeting near you!



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If you would like to donate a please contact the director at (518) 873-3752 or info@ausablriver.org.

Please Welcome Our New Director

If you have called the ASRA office lately you have heard the new voice on the other side of the phone. Anne Lennox Barlow left in January and Carol Treadwell-Steitz, Ph.D. took over the reins on May 15, 2007.

Carol comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience. She received a masters in geology from SUNY Binghamton

where she conducted research on the Au Sable River to for her thesis. She received a Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico for studying the "Role of Arid Soils on the Global Carbon Cycle." Her expertise is in fluvial geomorphology and soils. Unlike most geologist she enjoys dirt and rivers more than rocks!



Indian Cup Plant Pretty but Invasive!

Results of the 2005-2006 Field Survey



Purple Loosestrife, Japanese Knotweed, Phragmites, Garlic Mustard... commonly heard invasive plant names that give gardeners sore backs and resource managers sore eyes! But have you heard of “Indian Cup Plant?” Two years ago the director of the Au Sable River Association (ASRA) wrote an article in this newsletter about this newly discovered invasive. Although native to the U.S.’s Midwestern Prairies, it was found to be spreading rapidly down the Au Sable’s East Branch. Its rapid spread and aggressive take over of riparian and grassland habitat make it an invasive. While unique to the East Branch this is nothing to be proud of since invasive plants negatively affect native soils and push out native flora and fauna.

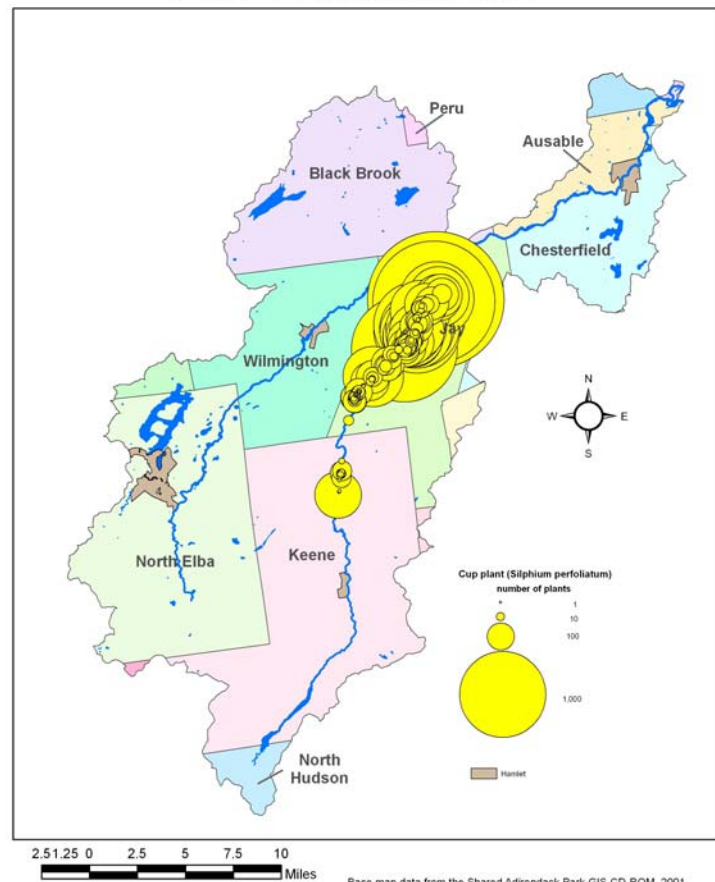
Since the discovery of its invasive nature, ASRA has worked with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) to document its spread and to test methods for controlling the spread of Indian Cup Plant. As seen to the right, it has been found from Keene to Au Sable Forks. Unrecorded field observations also report a plant along the banks of the river in Keeseville. Preliminary observations by Steven Flint from the Nature Conservancy also note its presence in the uplands above the river near the Glenn Road in the Town of Jay.

In the summer of 2006, ASRA and APIPP partnered to determine the best method for controlling the spread of this plant. In a study funded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program different applications of pesticide were undertaken on test plots in the watershed. The effectiveness of these treatments will not be fully known until one full growing season has elapsed (Fall 2007). However, if you have found this plant on your property and want to prevent its spread, you may want to try an applica-

tion of 20% Rodeo herbicide (diluted 1:5 with water) to stems cut 6 inches above the ground. It is illegal, however, to apply make chemical applications to plants on property other than your without a permit.

Further information on Indian Cup Plant can be obtained from the Au Sable River Association – 873-3752 or info@ausableriver.org.

Au Sable River Watershed
Invasive Plants 2005-2006



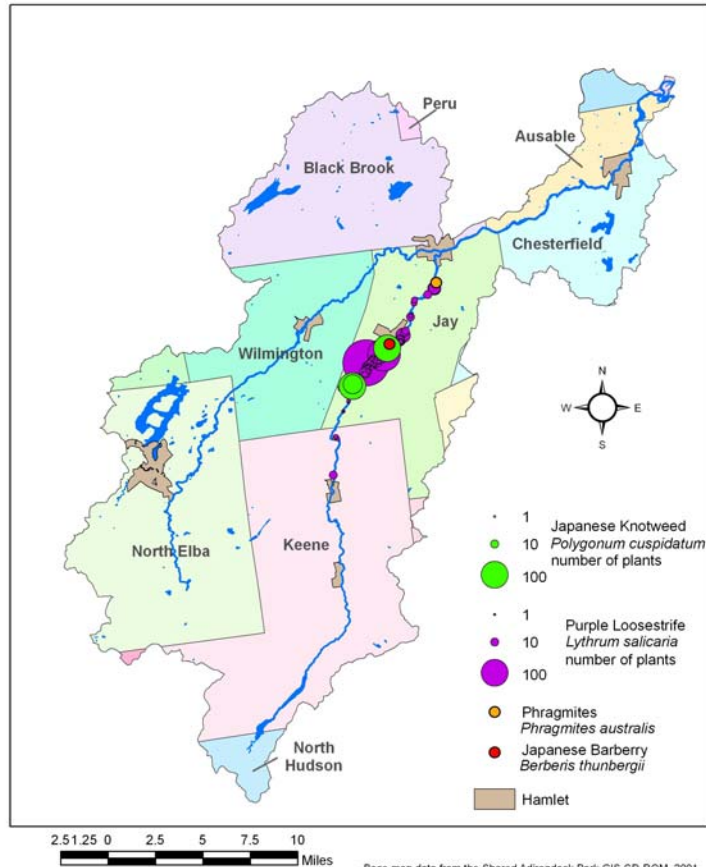
—Base map data from the Shared Adirondack Park GIS CD-ROM 2001.
—Au Sable River Watershed boundary from NYS APA 2007.
—Invasive plant identification and counts by the Au Sable River Association.
—Map by CTS and EBA, 2007. Plattsburgh State Univ. of NY

More Invasive Plants to Watch for...

The summer of 2006 found the director of ASRA wading along the riparian corridor of the East Branch Au Sable with a GPS unit in one hand and a clip board in the other. The goal of this otherwise pleasant sounding activity was the unpleasant task of mapping the spread of invasive plants down the Au Sable. Results of the survey are shown on the map to the right. The most common invasive on the East Branch is Indian Cup Plant (see article below) with Purple Loosestrife coming in a close second and single sightings of Phragmites and Japanese Barberry (yes, that thorny landscaping bush has crept to the river's edge).

The work done on the East Branch was important and ASRA has applied for funds to start documenting invasive plants on the West Branch in the summer of 2007. While documenting the presence of invasive plants is important, eradication is even more important. Each year funding is available from state sources to do this critical and time consuming work. This summer ASRA has plans to photo document and map key sites in the watershed so that proper documentation is in hand next spring when grant monies become available for eradication work.

Au Sable River Watershed
Invasive Plants 2005-2006



2.5 1 2.5 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

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—Au Sable River Watershed boundary from NYS APA 2007.
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The Great Adirondack Trail Run—A Great Success Again

For the third year in a row the Mountaineer in Keene Valley hosted the Great Adirondack Trail Run as a fund raiser for the Au Sable and Boquet River Associations. This year the two organizations were able to raise over \$ 3,500 from food sales, donations, and race entries. A fun time was had by all;

even if they were not running. Participants enjoyed listening to a local band play lively music and lounging in the warm sun behind the Rivermede Farm Stand. Thank you to all who came out to support us.



Don't "P" on Your Lawn

“P”

stands for phosphorous

- It is responsible for algae blooms in many of the bays in Lake Champlain fed by rivers coming from New York and Vermont. In fact, levels of phosphorous measured at the mouth of the As Sable River have been determined to be above what is acceptable for the health of the Lake.

“P” makes its way into lakes and rivers from lawns and farm fields that are heavily fertilized. Rain-water flowing across the surface dissolves excess nutrients in fertilizer and carries it into streams, ponds, and lakes. The result is unsightly, smelly, and potentially toxic algal blooms. In fact, one pound of phosphorous can produce 500 pounds of algae. Ugh!

The Lake Champlain Basin Program has started several programs to encourage land owners to switch to phosphorous-free fertilizers.

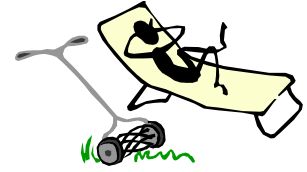
While those of you at the upstream reaches of the Au Sable may think this has little to do with you or your lawn, be aware that phosphorous is very soluble and can travel a long distance to contribute to the problem downstream in Lake Champlain. Lawn fertilization may even be affecting local ponds or upstream lakes in the watershed such as Mirror Lake, Mill Pond, or Lake Everest.

Over-fertilized lawns become sources of phosphorous but lawns can also be an important mechanism for slowing run-off and filtering flow. Bare exposed soils add to the problem by contributing soil nutrients and sediment to streams. There is a happy medium between a bare lawn and an over-green lawn. As a land owner you can start by buying phosphorous free lawn fertilizer.

This does not mean that you will not be depriving your grass of food by skipping the “P.” Studies on lawns in Vermont shows that the soil there already supplies sufficient P to feed grass and do not need extra phosphorous to stay healthy.

Finding phosphorus free lawn food is as easy as reading the label. All fertilizer bags display three numbers prominently on the front. The first number is the proportion of nitrogen “N”, the second is “P,” and the third is potassium (K). For example: a bag that displays 25-3-10 has 3% phosphorous; you want to look for a bag that displays a “0” in

the middle slot. The zero content should be followed whether you choose a conventional, organic, or manure based fertilizer. There are several brands that are starting to sell P-free fertilizer, these include: North Country Organics, Bio Builder, Bradfield Organics, Renaissance Fertilizers, and American Green. For a list of locations to buy P-free go to www.lcbp.org/lawn.htm.



Healthy Lawn Tips from The Lake Champlain Basin Program

Fertilize...

- Only with phosphorous free fertilizers. Most northeastern lawns have enough Phosphorous (P) and need only nitrogen (N).
- Apply fertilizer only once a year. The best time in this region is early fall (around Labor Day).
- Sweep fertilizer off sidewalks and driveways after application.
- Don't fertilize before a heavy rain.

Take a Soil Test...

- If you are seeding a new lawn, or wonder about the availability of natural phosphorous for your grass, take a sample of soil to your local garden supply store for a soil test.

Water...

- If desired, in the early morning, when there is less than 1 inch of rain in a week.

Plant Grass Seed...

- On existing lawns in the fall and spring to out-compete weeds.
- Use a grass mix that does well in the setting (light, soil, activity)
- Leave legumes, such as common white clover, to add nitrogen which will naturally fertilize your lawn.

Mow...

- Maintain a height of 3 to 4 inches and cut off no more than 1/3 of a grass blade.
- Leave clippings on lawn to add nutrients and organic matter.
- Sweep clippings from the pavement.

Weeds...

- Will be discouraged by these healthy lawn tips!

There's Something Fishy in the Nation's Water Supply

Alarming changes have been appearing in fish populations in rivers across the country. In Boulder Creek, a trout stream in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, fish are being found that are neither clearly male nor female. Even worse, in fresh, mountain waters the natural population has equal numbers of males and females, downstream below the wastewater-treatment plant in Boulder, however, females outnumber males 5 to 1. Boulder Creek is not the only river with "fishy" fish. In the Mississippi, Ohio, Allegheny, Monongahela, Shenandoah and Potomac rivers similarly affected male fish have been found.

Since the passage of the Clean Water Act the quality of our nations water has as a whole greatly improved. But some contaminant is causing the appalling changes to fish populations. Scientists suspect pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and antibacterial soaps. Pharmaceuticals are introduced either from manufacturing plants or because dosages are not completely absorbed by the body. These substances are not completely cleaned

from the water by wastewater treatment or septic treatment and end up in our surface waters in measurable amounts.

Scientists do not yet know if they could affect human health. New technology is allowing scientists to detect very small levels of chemicals in water. Ibuprofen found in Michigan drinking water is at levels so low that an individual would need to consume 17,000 gallons of water to get the dosage of one pill. Of more concern to human health are groups of chemicals that mimic hormones when absorbed into the human system.

Chemicals sourced from shampoos, shaving lotions, skin creams, dish liquid, pesticides, flame retardants, plastics, and antibacterial soap when mixed together in low concentrations become a hormone altering cocktail.

People, fortunately are less affected by these trace amounts of foreign chemicals in the water because they do not live in and breathe in the water. Tests done on fish by a team of Canadian and American scientist showed that fish populations declined when in a test lake after low levels of synthetic estrogen were introduced.



Although we as individuals cannot give up every synthetic compound that we use here are some items to substitute in our household medicine cabinets: Use phthalate-free deodorants and body lotions. Stop using antibacterial soaps—regular soap has been shown to clean just as well. Dispose of drugs properly, don't flush them. Some Municipalities will dispose of them as hazardous waste.

If you are worried about your drinking water a charcoal filter or tabletop distiller and purification unit that uses reverse osmosis will take out a wide variety of chemicals.

Membership Form

Annual Memberships run from June 1st to May 31st. Renew yours today!

Benefactor (\$2,500 plus)
Patron (\$1,000-2,499)

Challenge (\$250-499)
Supporter (\$100-249)

Donor (\$50-99)
Member (\$30)


Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please return this form to:
Au Sable River Association
P.O. Box 217
 Elizabethtown, NY 12932

 ASRA is a 501-c-3, not-for-profit and your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.



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*Working to protect and
enhance the natural and
cultural resources of the Au
Sable watershed.*

We're on the Web!
www.ausableriver.org



This newsletter was funded through a grant provided by the Lake Champlain Basin Program. For more information visit www.lcbp.org

Au Sable River Association Summer 2007 Newsletter

"A river is the most human and companionable of all inanimate things. It has a life, a character, a voice of its own, and is as full of good fellowship as a sugar-maple is of sap. It can talk in various tones, loud or low, and of many subjects grave and gay... For real company and friendship, there is nothing outside of the animal kingdom that is comparable to a river."

- Henry VanDyke