



Wisconsin River Power Company
(owners of the Petenwell & Castle Rock Hydroelectric Plants)

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Wisconsin River Power Releases Beetles to Combat Purple Loosestrife

Central Wisconsin Nature Foundation donates “excess” beetles after releasing them in the Tri-Lakes area.

Necedah, WI - Wisconsin River Power Company (WRPCO), owned jointly by Wisconsin Public Service and Wisconsin Power & Light, coordinated with the Central Wisconsin Nature Foundation to raise the purple loosestrife eating Galerucella beetles by providing materials, technical assistance, and a location to release them.

Purple loosestrife is an invasive plant that out-competes native vegetation and is detrimental to fish and wildlife habitat. The Galerucella beetles only feed on purple loosestrife and need loosestrife to complete their life cycle. The beetles stress the invasive plant, allowing native vegetation to return.

Once the loosestrife is controlled, beetles either move on to a new site with loosestrife or die out. The Galerucella beetles are unlike the Asian lady beetle in that they have many enemies and are eaten by a variety of birds and insects. Galerucella beetles over winter in the soil, so there are no worries about them getting into homes.

The Central Wisconsin Nature Foundation raised the beetles for release at the Petenwell Flowage. This is their second year releasing beetles on the flowage. The Tri Lakes Management District student intern (Jesse) and the Adams County Lakes Coordinator (Reesa Evans) assisted with the beetle release – see photo attachment. About 8,000 beetles were released onto a small island near the Chester Creek Boat landing with an existing purple loosestrife infestation.

The DNR coordinates a statewide biocontrol program that was developed after many years of field testing to ensure that there would not be detrimental affects. Biocontrol is the most effective control measure for purple loosestrife. WRPCO and WPS use the method to control the invasive plant at many hydroelectric dam projects in Wisconsin.



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