



# THE RIVER GUARDIAN

## Purple Loosestrife Removal Days 2021

### From the President

David Smith

When we were looking to buy a place on a river, I read a proverb that said, “You never step in the same river twice.” The water in front is always going somewhere and new water is showing up. It’s also true to say rivers are dynamic and always changing.

In the same way, our bylaws are changing to keep up with new laws and technology. And the Association’s methods of treating Purple Loosestrife is changing. When the project started in 2009, the accepted treatment was to dig plants up by the roots, put the root mass in bags, and properly dispose of the collection. One result of this method was lots of smaller plants the next year because the bits of roots left in the soil generated new growth. Also, we ended up dealing with a lot of really heavy bags.

After some experimenting, we are using a new way. For our two August volunteer events this year, we aren’t going to dig. Instead, after cutting and bagging the flowers and seeds carefully, the plan is to cut the stems at the ground, bag the cuttings and properly dispose of the bags. The thought is that by removing the energy-producing leaves before that energy is stored in the roots for use next year, the plant will starve to death in a few years and be stunted in the meantime. The advantage is obvious: easier and faster work with pretty much the same results.

I hope to see you on the river in August helping control Purple Loosestrife.

David

### Help Stop the Spread of Purple Loosestrife

This summer, give just a few hours of your time and help stop the spread of this invasive species. Join us **Tuesday, August 3rd** for the downtown Grayling to Burton's Landing float and/or **Saturday, August 7th** for the Wakeley Bridge to McMasters float. Each event runs from **9am to 2pm**. Lunch and all the tools and instruction you'll need are provided. **Please bring your own work gloves and waders. If wet wading, wear closed-toe footwear.** The work is fun, satisfying and accessible to all able-bodied volunteers through a simple system of cutting and bagging the stems, flowers and seeds. And you don't have to be a member of ARPOA. Everyone is welcome! Email [arpoa.mi@gmail.com](mailto:arpoa.mi@gmail.com) to join us!

ARPOA'S 2021  
**PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE  
REMOVAL DAYS**

TUES. AUG. 3      SAT. AUG. 7

**VOLUNTEER:** EMAIL US AT [ARPOA.MI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ARPOA.MI@GMAIL.COM)  
**LEARN MORE:** ONLINE VIA [WWW.ARPOA-MI.ORG](http://WWW.ARPOA-MI.ORG)

**ARPOA BOARD:** David Smith, President; Micki Levin, Vice President; Margot Surridge, Treasurer; David Long, Secretary; Julie Gibbs, Web Director; Howard Johnson, Cedars for the Au Sable; Steve Poulos, River Guardians; Boyd Dillon, John Blakemore, Adolph “Dolph” Greenberg.

### Why is Purple Loosestrife considered an invasive plant?

Purple Loosestrife (PL) is an invasive plant for these reasons: it is non-native, it out-competes native plants, it is costly to control, and is environmentally destructive. It comes from Eurasia and first showed up in North America in the 1800's. It was brought here accidentally in soils used as ship's ballast (and used to fill wetlands) and on livestock. It was also brought here on purpose as ornamental plants and for folk medicine (used to treat diarrhea, eczema, bleeding of the gums, and more.) It is estimated that PL overtakes 200,000 hectares (about 500,000 acres) of wetlands in North America every year.



Blue Vervain

### Purple Loosestrife has beautiful flowers. Why is it so bad?

It's true, PL is very pretty but so is Blue Vervain, a native plant that is found in similar habitats and that feeds several species of birds with its seeds and hosts the verbena moth and common buckeye butterfly. In ditches and other waterways, PL can grow so thick it cuts off the flow of water. No North American native animals will eat PL and waterfowl will actually avoid wetlands where PL has a strong presence. PL will out-compete and crowd out native plants like cattails that provide food and home for native animals. Also, PL is illegal to sell, trade, plant, or share in Michigan per Michigan's Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act.

### Why isn't Purple Loosestrife a problem where it is a native plant?

In Eurasia, where PL is native, it has natural predators. Over 100 insects eat purple loosestrife in its home habitat including leaf-eating beetles, root-boring weevils, and flower-eating weevils. After years of testing, first in Europe and then in North America, several insects have been approved to control PL here. The most common are the leaf-eating beetles *Galerucella pusilla* and *G. californiensis*.



Purple Loosestrife

### How does Purple Loosestrife reproduce?

PL is "hardwired" to survive in Michigan. A mature plant can be seven feet tall and have 30-50 stems. It can produce over two and a half million seeds which can remain viable in the soil for over two years. PL seeds also germinate several degrees cooler than native seeds thus giving it an earlier start in the spring. PL also sprouts from root tips left in the soil after digging the plant for disposal and from pieces of stems that fall in the stream after cutting or mowing.

The July 17th Annual Wine & Cheese Meet & Greet is almost here.  
Email your RSVP today!

*Join us for the 9th Annual*



*Summer on the river event!*



# WINE & CHEESE MEET & GREET



SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2021 | 3-5 PM  
GATES AU SABLE LODGE | 471 STEPHAN BRIDGE ROAD, GRAYLING

Join fellow property owners on the banks of the beautiful Au Sable River to enjoy fun food and door prizes, renew your dues, and hear current news about issues affecting the river.  
Seating will be socially distanced; masks are welcome.

**RSVP BY 7/12/21 AT [ARPOA.MI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ARPOA.MI@GMAIL.COM) OR [MLEVIN@MICKILEVIN.NET](mailto:MLEVIN@MICKILEVIN.NET)**

## Voting on Proposed Bylaw Changes

When our bylaws were originally written, they conformed to the laws that existed at the time. Since that time there have been changes in the law as well as technological advances. The proposed bylaw changes are designed to bring us into accord with current law and provide for the use of technology, such as Zoom meetings, while reflecting accurately the way our organization operates.

You can review the bylaw changes in preparation for the membership vote at the July 17th Annual Meeting at our website, [arpoa-mi.org/arpoa-bylaws/](http://arpoa-mi.org/arpoa-bylaws/)