

The BogHunter

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog

Volume 14, Number 1 SPRING 2019

SKUNK CABBAGE

What native Wisconsin plant is the first to bloom in the spring, generates its own heat capable of thawing frozen soil and melting snow, and produces flowers before leaves; flowers that emit a smell of rotting flesh? Skunk cabbage!

Not a true cabbage, skunk cabbage is a member of a mostly tropical family of plants, the Arum family or Araceae. Other well-known members of the Arum family include calla lilies, philodendrons, taros (elephant ears), as well as other native plants like Green Dragon and Jack-in-the-pulpit. Skunk cabbage gets its name from the pungent skunk-like odor released when any part of the plant is broken or damaged and from its large leaves, which grow in a rosette somewhat like a cabbage.



Skunk cabbage leaves unfurling

Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) flowers emerge from the ground in early spring before the leaves. The whole plant generates heat through cyanide-free cellular respiration (the explanation of which is above my pay-grade), making it one of the few plants capable of "thermogenesis". The plants can produce temperatures of 55-95°F, allowing them to grow through frozen ground. The heat may also help them spread the odor of their flowers and attract early spring pollinators which come to eat and take refuge in the flower structure.

The "flowers" actually consist of a spathe and a spadix. A spathe is a modified leaf which looks like a hood. The spathe

surrounds a spadix, a cylindrical structure which contains a bunch of tiny flowers packed together.



Pale flowers on the spadix

The plants are ephemeral. That is, their leaves die by late summer and the plants go dormant until the following spring. After being pollinated, the flowers produce a large purple or black compound fruit which ripens as or soon after the rest of the plant has gone dormant. Like the flowers, the fruit becomes smelly as it matures.

Eastern skunk cabbage is a boreal species found in both North America and Asia. Some botanists consider the *Symplocarpus* found in northeast China, Siberia, and Japan to be a separate species. Either way they are closely related, and our lineage is thought to have crossed the Bering Strait when sea level was lower and there was a land connection between North America and Asia.

It is curiously absent between the west coast and Minnesota (considering that it migrated from Asia). It ranges from Minnesota and Northern Ontario to the east coast of the USA and Canada and as far south as Tennessee and North Carolina. Another genus of skunk cabbage, *Lysichiton*, has several species and is found in the Western United States and Asia.

Skunk cabbage is among the first of the plants to emerge in spring. The leaves of eastern skunk cabbage are food for snails and slugs as well as ruby tiger moth

(*Phragmatobia fuliginosa*) and cattail borer moth (*Bellura obliqua*) caterpillars. Although the leaves contain crystals of calcium oxalate, making them toxic to most animals, hungry snapping turtles and bears have been observed eating the leaves in spring.

Gnats, carrion flies (Calliphoridae), and flesh flies (Sarcophagidae) pollinate the flowers which they are attracted to due to their flesh-like smell and appearance as well as the warm temperatures generated by and sustained within the spathe. Not surprisingly, spiders like to live in skunk cabbage flowers where they await unsuspecting pollinators.



Skunk cabbage melts through the snow

Eastern skunk cabbage roots were cooked and eaten by some Native American tribes. Various parts of the plant were prepared in lots of different ways (depending on the symptom, wound, or infection) to treat conditions ranging from headache, earache, bleeding, to skin and mouth sores etc. Because the leaves, stems, and flowers are toxic, use of this plant without oversight of a trained physician with extensive herbal experience is not advised.

Caitlin Reinartz

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog:
Supporting stewardship and
appreciation of the Cedarburg
Bog through land management,
preservation, research and
education.

BOARD NEWS

Some changes have been made to the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog board of directors. At the organization's last annual meeting, members bid farewell to Bruce and Pam Ross, who served in several capacities during their tenure. Pam was secretary and membership chair, Bruce was grant chair and President and Past President of FOCB. "During his time on the board, Bruce contributed in many vital ways which took our organization to a new level," said Bill Taylor, President.

Tim Vargo has stepped down as President and now serves as Past President. Jim Ellis, a board member who has chaired the Stewardship committee and spearheaded the Bog Guardian program, has become Vice President. Peg Edquist will continue as secretary, and William Taylor will serve as President and Treasurer.

The Friends welcome three new Board members, all of whom bring to the table long-time interests in natural history. Andy Holman is an accountant and an avid nature photographer who travels the world capturing beautiful images; Chuck Stebelton is a birder and a graduate of the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program, and Jim Reinartz, who will continue to share his passion for the Bog as a Board member.

Continuing board members are Terri Haas, Carrie Hiestand, Andy Holschbach, Zoe Finney, Dennis Milbrath, John O'Donnell, Julia Robson, and Andrew Struck. Gretchen Meyer and Sharon Fandel, representing the UW-Milwaukee Field station and the DNR, serve as advisors.

Peg Edquist, FOCB Secretary

MANY THANKS,

Jim Reinartz, long-time Director of the UWM Field Station, has retired. Jim was one of the original group of people who sat around the table in 2005 to found an organization that, partnered with the University and the DNR, would help to protect the Cedarburg Bog. He's been a tireless friend of the Friends, and plans to continue to be active.

As initial grant funding for our Bog Guardian Program has come to a close, **Tyler Betry's** employment by the Friends has come to an end. However, he will continue to be involved in stewardship of the Bog as a volunteer. He has been invaluable in getting the Bog Guardian Program off the ground.

Caitlin Reinartz is stepping down from her job as Administrative Assistant. The AA is the glue that holds us together, maintaining the database, depositing donations, handling correspondence, and formatting the newsletter.

BOG GUARDIANS TURN ATTENTION TO BIG-4

The Bog Guardians concluded their second season of mapping and treating invasive plants in the Cedarburg Bog neighborhood and are turning their attention to the Big 4 - Wild Parsnip, Teasel, Phragmites and Japanese Knotweed. With the help of our volunteers, neighbors and local highway crews, we were successful in locating and eradicating approximately 90% of these invading plants before they set seed. The remaining 10% will get first attention for treatment as the weather turns warmer. A goal of preventing all seed production is feasible in 2019.

Other successes include:

- All 61 miles of public roads in our 27 mile neighborhood have been surveyed.
- Infestations of Dame's Rocket and others were also located, mapped and targeted for eradication this season.
- We have worked with OWLT in killing four of eight known patches of Phragmites in the area.
- We have had fantastic support from local highway departments and electric transmission utilities.

Unlike the surrounding areas, the Bog and neighborhood are relatively clean of invasive plants, especially the BIG -4. Bog Guardians want to keep it that way!

Becoming a Bog Guardian is easy - anyone can help and there are many ways to become involved. Keeping our neighborhood free of the Big-4 can be as easy as reporting any Big-4 plants in the area.

Please contact the Friends with any questions, comments, or to volunteer.

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog

Website: <https://bogfriends.org>

Email: bogfriends@gmail.com

Phone: UWM Field Station (262) 675-

6844 or Jim Ellis, Chairperson FOCB

Stewardship Committee 920 207-3801,

Papajim66@gmail.com.

STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

Slip and slide no more! In fall, our stalwart volunteers spent two Saturday mornings putting down gravel on the



Marsh Marigold

muddy path to the boardwalk at Mud Lake. This improvement makes it easier for visitors to access the lake. Stop by and check it out. A short walk will reveal the beauty of Ozaukee County's largest lake. Once there, take a few minutes to enjoy the quiet.

Other volunteer activity included completing a semi-annual cleanup along Cedar Sauk Road from County Highway Y east to Covered Bridge Road and routine cleanup of the parking lot and trails at the Watt's Lake access on the north end of the Bog.

Plans to rebuild and reinstall sections of the Mud Lake board walk burned by vandals last spring have been postponed as floats needed for the job have not yet arrived at the Field Station. Stay tuned, we will put out a call for volunteers to complete this job in the spring.

Thank you volunteers! Your time and talents are appreciated!



Bog Rosemary

MUD LAKE WATERBIRD MIGRATION - SOON TO BE IN FULL SWING

It's happening again -- Mother Nature is reinventing herself at Mud Lake and adjacent surroundings! As I write this, Red-winged Blackbirds by the thousands are streaming through Mud Lake and the Cedarburg Bog. Most will keep going, but some will stay put. At least a hundred males have already staked out territories in and around Mud Lake's cattail marsh perimeter. Even though the lake is still very, very frozen, close to 40 pairs of Canada Geese and at least 12 pairs of

Sandhill Cranes are already standing on the ice waiting for the big thaw and for the sacred rites of spring to begin anew.

Wisconsin's waterfowl migration has officially started, and if Mud Lake thaws out before our more northerly bodies of water, it will likely repeat its role as a major staging area for thousands of waterfowl, herons, shorebirds, grebes, bitterns, and rails that are taking a hiatus while fattening up and waiting for open water and ice-free marshes further north. Some of these layover migratory birds have frequent flyer mile flights booked as far north as Hudson Bay and the Arctic!

With a surface area of 245 acres, Mud Lake has the bragging rights of being the largest surface inland lake in Ozaukee County. With the obvious exception of Lake Michigan, Mud Lake processes more migratory waterfowl and water birds than any other inland lake in the county.



Common Goldeneye

To date, 34 species of waterfowl have been tabulated here, seven species of the heron family, two grebe species, 13 shorebird representatives, six members of the gull and tern families, Double-crested Cormorants, ospreys, Bald Eagles, and even a few American White Pelicans. Unpredictable rarities like Trumpeter Swan, Cackling Goose, Cattle Egret, and King Rail can and do show up at Mud Lake; already this year, five Trumpeter Swans were observed heading due north after exiting Mud Lake as early as March 17.

Who knows what the 2019 spring migration will bring? Curious??? Check out the upcoming canoe-kayak paddle in and around Mud Lake sponsored by the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog.

Guaranteed -- you will not be up the creek without a paddle should you sign up for this expedition!

John O'Donnell, Friends Board

RED FOX

Red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are listed as a common mammal in the Bog, but their tracks – long lines of almost single-file, dog-like footprints – are seen more often

than the animals themselves. Because of their adaptability, they are the most widely-distributed carnivore on the planet, at home on farms, woodland edges, grasslands, and, increasingly, in urban areas, wherever there is suitable prey. In Wisconsin, they are less common in the northern part of the state, and expanding coyote populations may be impacting them.



Red Fox

Red foxes aren't always red; they come in a variety of shades from silver to all black. The medium tones are similar to the coloring of a gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), but no matter its color, a red fox has a white tip on its tail. They measure three to three-and-a-half feet long (including tail), but they weigh in at only about 12 pounds (males are larger than females). Their long, slim legs can carry them at speeds of 30 miles per hour, and they can jump over barriers two yards high.

They communicate via sight, hearing and smell. Adults' vocal vocabulary includes a dozen kinds of yapping, growling, whining, rattling, shrieking, and the "waaaah" sound of a vixen seeking a mate. Young foxes (pups) make about eight sounds. They have a good sense of smell, and they use urine and feces to mark a territory. Their hearing is keen – they can hear and pinpoint a mouse at more than 100 yards. The placement of their eyes allows binocular vision.



About the fox's diet there are mixed reviews. True, it feeds mainly on cottontails, voles, and mice, which it stalks and then pounces on with its front feet, and it's

considered a good controller of rodent pests. It also eats fruit and insects, and when it lives elbow-to-elbow with humans, it may eat garbage and outdoor pet food. But, foxes are hard on ground-nesting birds like cranes, grouse, ducks, and some grassland birds, and they sometimes raid gardens and chicken coops.

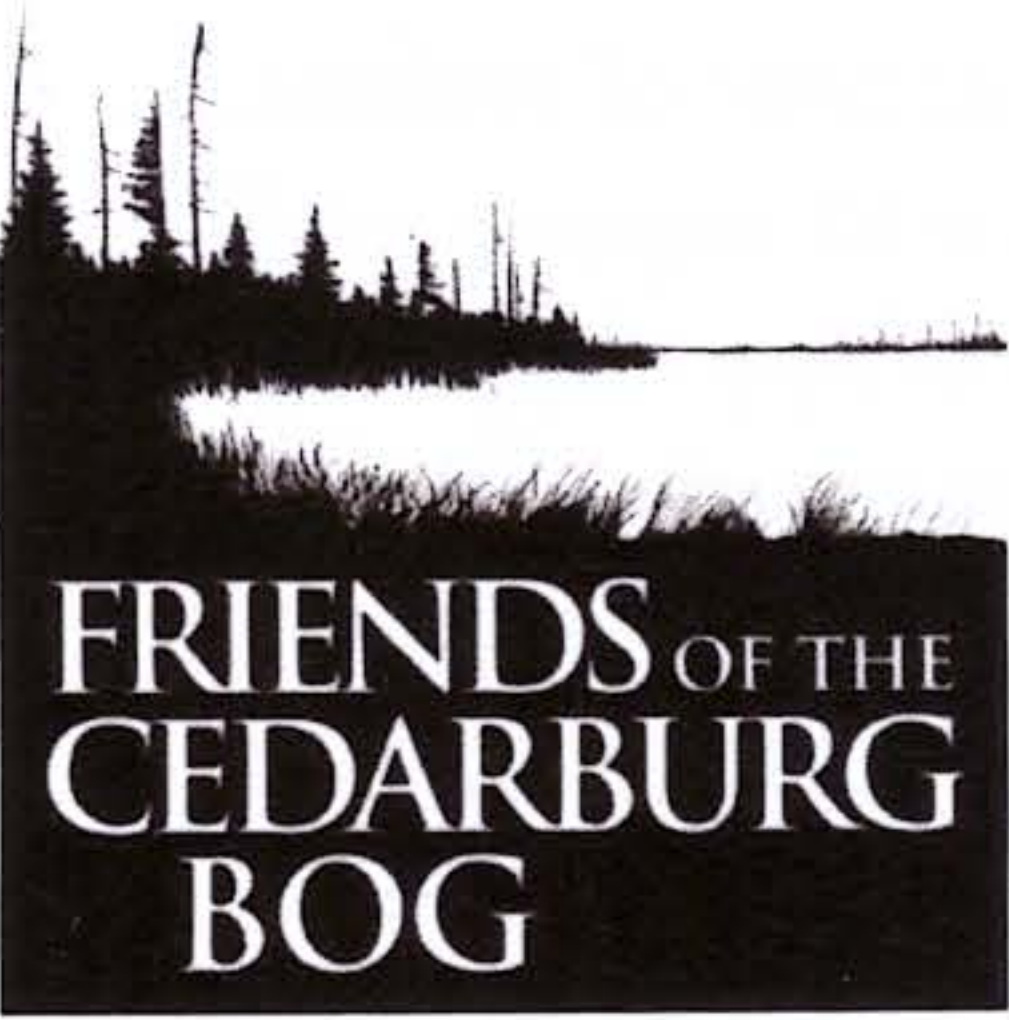
They are most active in the hours before and after dawn and dusk, resting in a sheltered spot during the day. Some are solitary except during the breeding season, but many live in small, family groups. They typically cover five miles per night – more if food is scarce.

The pups, an average of five, are born in late winter in a den that is often a modified woodchuck burrow. Males bring prey to nursing females, and both parents rear the pups after weaning at about 10 weeks. Pups start to hunt with their parents at three months. The family stays together until late fall, when the young leave, although some young females stay with the family and help with the next spring's litter. Mortality is high – pups fall prey to hawks, owls, bobcats, and coyotes – but some adults live for five or more years in the wild.

The origin of today's red foxes is complicated. It's thought that they were historically found in northern and western parts of North America, and that they expanded their range to the east as European settlers cut the forests and created edge. But, the settlers, who imported many of their familiar Old World species, introduced Eurasian red foxes in the mid-1700's for fox hunting. Those foxes became dominant in the East and spread west, and it's thought that the foxes we typically see in man-modified habitats are likely to be descendants of the Eurasian stock. American and Eurasian red foxes were considered separate species. They have since been lumped into one species that has a bunch of subspecies, but they may be split again.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT NEEDED

The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog is seeking an Administrative Assistant. This position is part time with flexible hours and requires some of that time be spent at the UWM Field Station. Be a part of our ongoing mission to support the preservation of the beautiful Cedarburg Bog. For more information, please contact Jim Ellis at admin@bogfriends.org.



UWM Field Station
3095 Blue Goose Road
Saukville, WI 53080

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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FRIENDS EVENTS

Walks meet at the UWM Field Station on Blue Goose Rd. unless otherwise noted. Space is limited, so please register. To register, visit bogfriends.org (click on Events). Walks are free and open to the public; a \$5 donation is appreciated. Questions? Contact (262) 675-6844 or fieldstn@uwm.edu. Please, No Pets.

Glacial Geology

April 13, 10 AM to noon

Join geologist Bill Kean on a trail walk through the Field Station property to appreciate life on the edge of a glacier 12,000 years ago. See how the glacier shaped the topography of our wetlands and uplands.

Spring Migration at Mud Lake

April 20, 7 to 9 AM

Float Mud Lake, at the south edge of the Bog, in search of migrating swans, ducks, geese, and other birds moving through the area. Participants must be able to swim, have prior experience with canoeing or kayaking, and wear a flotation vest when on the water. We'll provide equipment if you need it; you must let us know in advance if you are bringing your own boat, paddle, and flotation vest. Maximum of 12 people. Adults only.

Suggested donation: \$25 per person.

Meet at Cedar-Sauk Rd Bog entry boardwalk at the Horns Corners Rd. intersection. No restrooms.

Woodcocks and Frogs

April 25, 7:30 to 9:30 PM

Immerse yourself in the magic of the spring chorus of frogs and the sky dance of woodcocks. Bring a flashlight; boots not needed.

Frogs and Maybe Woodcocks

May 2, 7:30 to 9:30 PM

Most Woodcocks are settled on nests, but we'll listen for the last of the sky-dancers and the late spring species of frogs. Bring a flashlight; boots not needed.

Spring Wildflowers

May 5, 9 AM to noon

Early spring? Late spring? We'll see what's in bloom in the Bog and enjoy the natural history of this wonderful wetland.



Quarterly Board Meeting

May 9, 6 to 8 PM

Members welcome.
At UWM Field Station

Tracking the Arrival of Spring

May 11, 12:30 to 3 PM

Gretchen Meyer and Mark Schwartz
Phenology is the study of the timing of events in the life cycles of plants and animals. We'll take a walk in the woods, talk about phenological monitoring studies at the Field Station, and show you how you can get involved. Register by phone or email fieldstn@uwm.edu or call 262-675-6844.

Bird Banding with Tim Vargo

May 18, 8 to 11 AM

Bird banding gives us important information about bird migration. Watch Tim and the crew band migrants and resident birds and see how the data are collected.

Memorial Day Bird Walk

May 25, 6:30 to 8:30 AM

Spring migration of warblers and vireos should still be in progress, and nesting birds will be advertising territories. Join John O'Donnell and Chuck Stebelton as they search for the regulars and for uncommon birds.

Ethnobotany

May 27, 9 AM to noon

The Saukville area was an important trading crossroads for Great Lakes tribes. Find out which tribes lived in the area and what plants were used for food, medicine, fiber and construction. Wear good hiking shoes and dress for the weather.

Bird Walk

June 8, 6:30 to 8:30 AM

Some species are still passing through, and others are settling in for the summer. Join Norma Zehner & Marilyn Bontly to look for some Bog specialties. Bring binoculars if you have them; special footgear not needed.

What's Up in the Bog?

June 23, 9 AM to noon.

As spring turns to summer, we'll enjoy the calls of Sandhill Cranes as we see what's in bloom along the boardwalk with Kate Redmond leading the way.

The Cedarburg Bog:
designated an
Important Bird Area
and a Wetland Gem

OTHER EVENTS

CALENDAR

See the Treasures of Oz website and the websites of our partner organizations for more details about these and many other events <https://treasuresofoz.org/>.

Noel J. Cutright Bird Club

First Tuesday of the month, except December

7:00 PM meeting at RNC

Free and open to the public

Science for Everyone

The 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7 to 8:15 PM

Programs on natural history, science, public policy, and the environment. RNC hosts the odd months and LLC hosts the even months. Check the RNC and LLC websites for topics and driving directions.

Free, \$5 donation appreciated.

Annual Midwest Crane Count

April 13, 5:30 to 7:30 AM

You must contact your county coordinator before the Count. Find a list at <https://www.savingcranes.org/counter-information/>.



Canada Geese

OWLT Milwaukee River Spring Clean-up at Kratzsch Conservancy and Bratt Woods

April 27, 9:00 AM to Noon

Register on the Milwaukee Riverkeeper's webpage (<https://www.milwaukeekeeper.org/>) and receive a FREE t-shirt.

Waterproof boots recommended.

Contact Josh Schlicht (jschlicht@owlt.org) for more details.

World Migratory Bird Day and Native Plant Sale

May 19, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 PM at FBMP

Join Observatory guides on bird hikes, enjoy a live raptor show, and presentations on Gardening for Monarchs and Wildlife Photography. Shop for native plants that benefit birds, Monarchs, and other pollinators and find some treasures at our eco-rummage sale.

Lac Lawrann Wildflower & Perennial Sale

May 11, 9 AM - 1 PM

Huge selection of Wisconsin native plants for wetland, woodland and prairie gardens as well as garden perennials and herbs.



Wild Geranium

Treasures of Oz Eco-Tour

June 15: Tour 9 AM to 3 PM; Forest Beach Migratory Preserve headquarters open from 9 AM until 4:30. Grab the family and hit the road for this annual Eco-Tour of Ozaukee County natural areas. Visit <https://treasuresofoz.org/> for information about this year's six Treasures, to find out about the "ArtServancy" project, to download a passport, and to find out about all the activities.

Treasures of Oz Monarch Workshop

June 15, 2019, 9 AM to 2 PM at FBMP

Learn how to raise a Monarch from egg to adult butterfly at the Observatory's Monarch Workshop. Attendees who have a good supply of milkweed, the only plant Monarch caterpillars can eat, will be able to adopt Monarch caterpillars. For more information, see <https://wglbbo.org/>.

Bio Blitz at Riveredge Nature Center

June 15, 10 AM to 3 PM at RNC

A Bio Blitz is a race against time, to see

how many species can be found on the Riveredge property in a single day. The public can join the scientists in the field, and other activities will be available. Sponsored by the Milwaukee Public Museum and Riveredge.

River Valley Bike Ride

June 23, 7 AM to 4 PM at RNC

Pick a route – from 8 to 100 miles – gather a team (or not), and enjoy a ride through beautiful, rural Wisconsin. Come back to the Center for a picnic. Check the Riveredge website for more information and to register.

Get to Know Lake 12 Paddle

June 29

Explore this Ozaukee Washington Land Trust property. Please email Josh (jschlicht@owlt.org) for more details and registration info.

Garlic Mustard Pull-A-Thon

Any date before June 30

Support the Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium (SEWISC) – and the landscape of your choice – by joining in this annual competition. Form a team, get your friends to pledge, pull more garlic mustard and dame's rocket than anyone else, and win the 2019 trophy. This year's goal is 20,000 pounds (that's about 667 garbage bags full)! For more information, see <https://sewisc.org/garlic-mustard-pull-a-thon>.

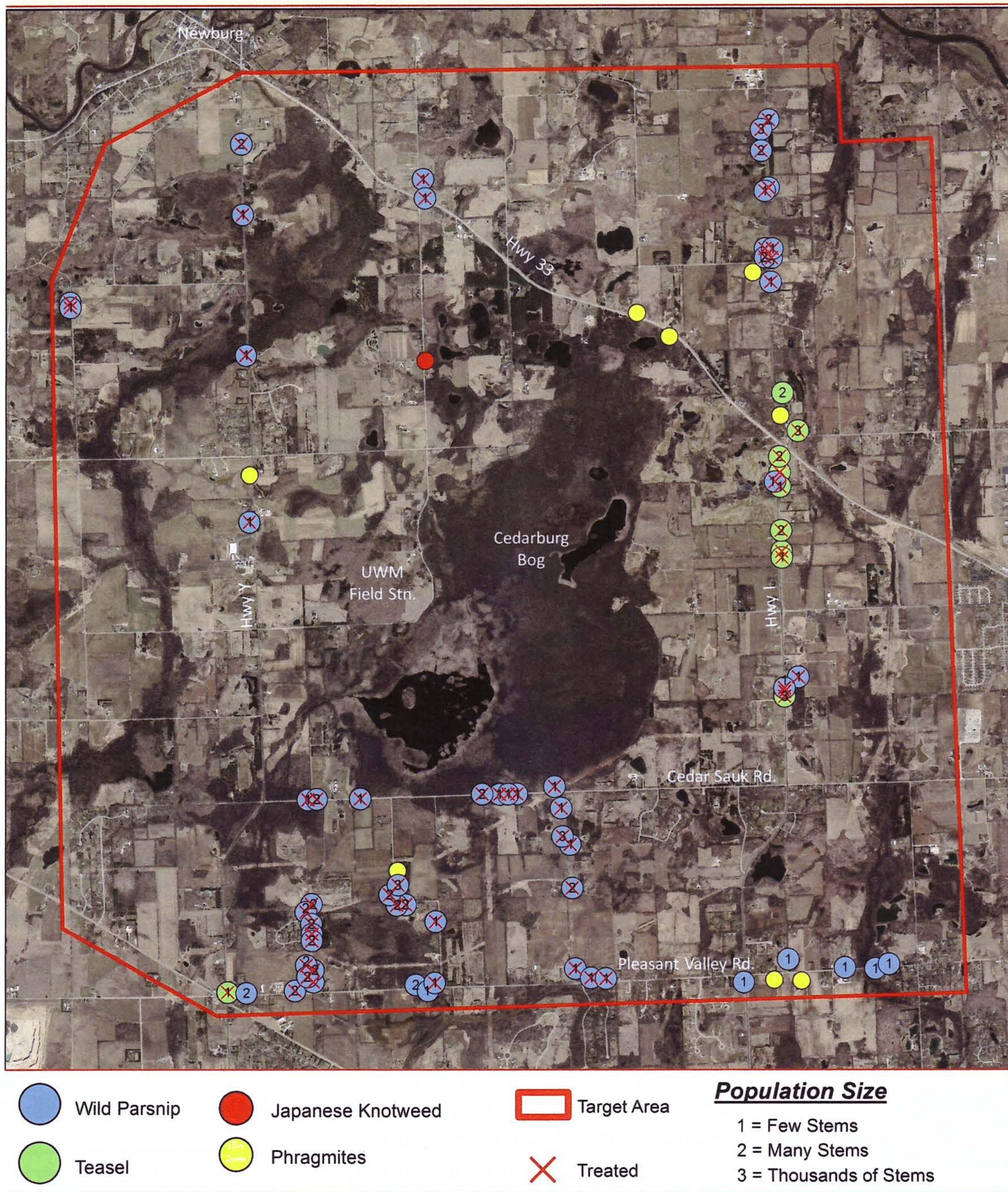
FBMP – Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

4970 Country Club Road, Belgium
owlt.org (262) 338-1794
wglbbo.org

LLC - Lac Lawran Conservancy
300 Schmidt Rd, West Bend
laclawrann.org (262) 335-5080

RNC – Riveredge Nature Center
4458 County Hwy Y, Saukville
riveredgenaturecenter.org
(262) 375-2715 (800) 287-8098

MNP – Mequon Nature Preserve
8200 W County Line Rd, Mequon
mequonnaturepreserve.org (262) 242-8055



Bog Guardian Program

This is the area monitored and then treated by the FOCB Bog Guardian program.