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Secretary Gassman Highlights Green Summer Youth Program, Recovery-funded Project to Combat Aquatic Invasive Species

55 youth working at boat landings, educating boaters, protecting inland waters

PEWAUKEE – At a boat landing on Pewaukee Lake, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today praised the work of four young adults, new recruits in the fight against aquatic invasive species, a Wisconsin American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project.

“They are helping us protect our lakes and rivers from Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels and other invasive species,” Secretary Gassman said. “This is a great investment of Recovery funds by Governor Doyle to protect our beautiful lakes.”

Secretary Gassman said 55 young adults have been hired as part of the Invasive Species Demonstration Project, a collaborative effort with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The ARRA-funded project is one of many that will employ approximately 4,000 Wisconsin young people statewide through June 2011.

DWD provided ARRA funding to state’s 11 workforce development areas, allowing each to hire five individuals, 18 to 24 years of age. Trained as watercraft inspectors by the DNR, they are working 20 hours a week for \$8 per hour at boat landings around the state.

Under supervision of the DNR and its community partners, the watercraft inspectors work to educate the public about aquatic invasive species. Their duties also include inspecting boats, observing boater behavior and entering the information into an online database. The pilot is scheduled to run eight weeks. Total project cost has been estimated at approximately \$98,500.

Secretary Gassman said that she and DNR Secretary Matt Frank plan to continue the project. In developing a permanent working relationship, she said they can provide young people jobs fighting invasive species for summers to come.

For more information about Wisconsin ARRA efforts, visit: <http://recovery.wisconsin.gov/>

For more information about invasive species, visit: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/>

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