



WNY PRISM

Partnering to Protect Western New York from Invasive Species

Fall 2017 Newsletter

Vol. 3 Issue 1

In This Issue

- 2017 Field Season Highlights
- Seneca Bluffs Restoration
- Partner Spotlight: Land Conservancy
- Species Profile: Pale & Black Swallow-wort
- Upcoming Events

The WNY PRISM mission is to proactively identify, evaluate and address invasive species priorities in western New York using a coordinated partnership of local professionals, organizations and private citizens to improve, restore and protect local aquatic and terrestrial resources.

WNY PRISM 2017 Field Season Highlights

By Nicholas Ransbury

The 2017 field season has too quickly come and gone for WNY PRISM. This summer brought new (and returning) projects, exciting events, and an enthusiastic new Crew. Consisting of two Invasive Species Management Assistants, an Education and Outreach Assistant, and WNY PRISM's new Project Manager, the Crew traveled across the region to work with our Partners on invasive species removal, mapping and outreach events.

WNY PRISM took on a number of significant invasive species removal projects this summer. We assisted with removal of common buckthorn from North Tonawanda

Audubon Preserve, College Lodge and Tifft Nature Preserve. The Tifft project involves an ambitious six acre vernal pool restoration. Mugwort, phragmites, knotweed and swallow-wort were the target of additional removal efforts, and WNY PRISM continued our work to remove invasive species and restore Seneca Bluffs; a multi-year project you can learn more about on page 3 of this newsletter.

Invasive species mapping efforts included 9 projects in 5 counties, and over 400 observations. The Crew surveyed a number of our Partners' properties, from new acquisitions to established preserves, and provided them with summary reports. Reports include information on the species found, suggestions for prioritization and best management practices, which will facilitate their ability to develop management plans. We're looking forward to continuing to work with these Partners as those plans come together.

The Annual Invasive Species Awareness Week (ISAW) once again encouraged our Partners, and the public, to get involved with stopping the spread of invasive species. The week of events kicked-off with an aquatic invasive species workshop, which provided an in-depth look at many different species and discussed management strategies from prevention to removal. Celebrations continued with outreach tabling events, an iMap training and volunteer workdays. The week finished up with a screening of "Making Waves: Battle for the Great Lakes", held at Buffalo State. The engaged audience passionately questioned the expert panelists, on hand after the documentary. Efforts outside of ISAW kept us busy as well, and by the end of our field season we had tallied 30 events!

Continued on page 4



WNY PRISM Crew, (l to r) Kevin Sanders, Nick Ransbury, Lucy Nuessle and Heather Zimba at the Ellicott Creek Dog Park, during Invasive Species Awareness Week. Photo Credit: Andrea Locke, WNY PRISM.

Regional News & Updates

USDA released New York Feral Swine Management Report: http://www.wnyprism.org/invasive_species/feral-swine/.

NYS DEC releases third draft mute swan management plan and announces public hearings: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/111322.html>.

Funding Opportunity - U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities Grants: <http://www.usendowment.org/healthywatersheds.html>.

Funding Opportunity - Fish Passage and Aquatic Habitat Restoration Grant: [Call for Project Proposals](#).

NYS DEC has awarded funds to Jamestown Audubon, SUNY Brockport and City of Tonawanda through the Invasive Species Rapid Response and Control Grant Program. Projects involve removal of water chestnut, phragmites and slender false brome, and treatment of EAB impacted trees.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded funds to WNY PRISM and FL-PRISM/Finger Lakes Institute to establish invasive species collaborations for slender false brome and starry stonewort, respectively. Additional invasive species collaborations active in New York include those focused on hydrilla, hardy kiwi, and hemlock woolly adelgid.

13th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference, hosted by the Healing our Waters - Great Lakes Coalition, will be held in Buffalo from October 17 - 19, 2017: <http://conference.healthylakes.org/>.

Steering Committee Members

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Ecology & Environment, Inc.
SUNY Buffalo State
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
New York Sea Grant
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Department of Transportation
NYS Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
The Nature Conservancy
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
USFWS, Lower Great Lakes Conservation Office

Partner Spotlight: Western New York Land Conservancy

By Rachel Chrostowski and Kathleen McCormick, Land Conservancy

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a non-profit land trust dedicated to preserving our region's irreplaceable natural environments, working farmland, forestlands and meadows in order to maintain wildlife habitat, economic resources, public recreation areas and the unique scenic character of western New York.

In 2011, the Western New York Land Conservancy purchased the 36-acre Niagara Escarpment Preserve on Leete Road in Lockport. As its name suggests, this singular property is crossed by the Niagara Escarpment, and contains a restored grassland as well as a mature hardwood forest with seldom seen trees like hackberry and the rare pawpaw.



Thanks to hands-on support from WNY PRISM, and financial support from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Yahoo Community Benefit Fund and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the Land Conservancy has been working to enhance habitat at the Niagara Escarpment Preserve. WNY PRISM laid the foundation for our most recent efforts by conducting the Preserve's first invasive species survey in 2014. Since then, the PRISM summer crew has been back annually to monitor and control invasives. Targeted species include honeysuckle, buckthorn, reed canary grass, pale swallow-wort, barberry and phragmites. This year we began revegetating the forest. More than 250 native forbs and ferns were planted in deer exclosures. Species include marginal wood fern, plantain-leaved sedge, white baneberry, jack-in-the-pulpit, wild blue phlox, bloodroot, meadow-rue and blue cohosh. It should be quite a show when things start blooming.

The Land Conservancy's most exciting enhancement activity at the preserve was a prescribed grassland burn, a first for western New York. Applied Ecological Services conducted the burn with backup safety support from two local volunteer fire companies in fall 2016. Approximately 70% of the grassland was burned, making it easier to treat early spring invasives and creating an excellent substrate for subsequent over-seeding with a mix of forbs and sedges. The seed mixes were designed to increase native plant diversity in the grassland so that pollinators can find food there throughout the growing season.

Go to wnylc.org for more information and to support land conservation in western New York.



Press event at Seneca Bluffs during the September 8 Volunteer Workday. Photo Credit: Nick Ransbury, WNY PRISM.

Upcoming Events

Western New York Environmental Summit at Daemon College
September 30; 8:30am-12:15pm

WNY PRISM Fall Partner Meeting
Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
October 5; 9:00am-11:00am

Great Lakes Restoration Conference
The Hyatt Regency Hotel, Buffalo, NY
October 17; 10:00am-12:30pm

NYS Monthly Invasive Species Webinar Series - last Wednesday of the month; 11:00am - noon

CCE In-Service (Invasive Species)
Cornell University
November 13 - 15, 2017

For more information or to include your events, visit our website:
www.wnyprism.org

To subscribe to the WNY PRISM listserv email:

cce-westernprism-l-request@cornell.edu

Type "join" in the subject line.
Leave the body of message blank.
Don't include signature or text.

Seneca Bluffs Restoration

By Nicholas Ransbury

Seneca Bluffs, an Erie County Natural Habitat Park, is located alongside the Buffalo River nestled within an urban, industrial and residential landscape. Like many of our natural areas, Seneca Bluffs has been severely impacted by human development over the past century, and has experienced degradation, erosion and the emergence of invasive species. Beginning in 2002, the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning (DEP) has been taking steps to restore the preserve, working with partner organizations to bring about positive change. Initial habitat restoration activities were completed in 2004, and included debris removal and site re-grading, installation of a native warm season grass meadow and a seasonal aquatic depression within the upland area.

WNY PRISM joined the effort at Seneca Bluffs in 2014. By this time, the park was once again dominated by large stands of knotweed, which covered nearly all of the upland area of the preserve. Seeing the accomplishments of previous restoration efforts disappearing, DEP reached out to WNY PRISM to seek a solution to the invasive species issues on the property. After assessing the condition of the site and working with DEP to develop a plan of action, WNY PRISM began working to remove knotweed in 2015. Work has continued each summer since and impressive results have followed. With WNY PRISM's help, the knotweed has been successfully managed across the majority of the property, making way for new restoration efforts.

In 2017, restoration efforts included a stream bank stabilization project led by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Buffalo District. This effort involved reshaping the bank to address erosion concerns, removal of invasive species, and installation of native plants along the lower terrace. In September 2017, Erie County DEP brought together WNY PRISM, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Labatt USA, the Buffalo Sabres and Pegula Sports and Entertainment to restore native plants to the upland areas. This volunteer effort saw over 90 participants! Native plants included cardinal flowers, virginia wild rye, boneset, blue-eyed grass, ironweed and multiple species of milkweed.

Efforts are far from over for the Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park. WNY PRISM will continue to manage knotweed and additional invasive species next year, and continued monitoring will be necessary to ensure long-term success. As a reminder to the public about helping to prevent the spread of invasive species, a boot brush station was placed at the entrance to Seneca Bluffs. Brushing off your boots before and after going on a hike may seem insignificant, but it only takes a single seed on your boots or clothing to cause harmful impacts to our natural areas.



Volunteers work hard planting native species in areas that were cleared of invasives by WNY PRISM. Photo Credit: Nick Ransbury, WNY PRISM.

From WNY PRISM

Dear Partners,

The deep breath we each take as the summer field season comes to a close only lasts a moment before its time to get back to work. Of course, part of that work involves reflecting (and reporting) on the many accomplishments from the past few months. This field season has been WNY PRISM's most ambitious and successful to date, and I can't be more proud of our Crew. One of the highlights for me was welcoming our new Project Manager, Lucy Nuessle. Lucy joined us in June, taking on the huge task of coordinating and supervising the Crew. In addition, Lucy has taken the lead on our Early Detection Program, iMap efforts and removal projects. You may remember Lucy from her time as Crew member, back in 2015.



Andrea Locke, WNY PRISM Coordinator

Looking forward, WNY PRISM has been awarded a U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant to establish a Slender False Brome Working Group. Due to its far reaching negative impacts and potential for spread, slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) is a priority species for WNY PRISM. This concern is shared by PRISMs across the state and I'm excited to have the opportunity to address this species on an even grander scale. The project will focus on raising regional awareness and understanding for this species, and improving management practices. I'm looking forward to sharing all of the great project accomplishments with you.

As always, I would like to thank you for your continued support of WNY PRISM. We are only as successful as the partnerships we form! Have a wonderful fall!

- *Andrea*

Species Profile: Swallow-worts

Black and pale swallow-wort (*Cynanchum* spp.), perennial vines native to Europe, first arrived to New York in 1897, where they are believed to have been introduced as garden plants. As invasive species, they quickly spread out of garden and into natural areas. The two species are similar, but can be distinguished by their flowers. Black swallow-wort has small dark purple flowers, while pale swallow-wort has pale pink flowers with elongated petals.



Pale Swallow-wort. Photo Credit: Andrea Locke WNY PRISM.

Swallow-wort are known to have significant negative impacts on our natural areas. They suffocate landscapes, preventing forest regeneration, outcompeting native plants, and limiting the biodiversity of bird and insect populations. They also have helped contribute to the decline of monarch populations. Monarchs mistake swallow-wort for milkweed, a necessary food source for their offspring. When monarchs lay their eggs on swallow-wort, the young are unable to survive.

Keep a lookout for black and pale swallow-wort, and if you see some, consider removal and report it to www.nyimainvasives.org.



Pale swallow-wort removal at Woodlawn Beach SP, before and after. Photo Credit: Nick Ransbury, WNY PRISM.

Contact Us

SUNY Buffalo State
Great Lakes Center
SAMC 319
1300 Elmwood Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
(716) 878-4708

wnyprism@buffalostate.edu

www.wnyprism.org



WNY PRISM



@wnyPRISM

Field Season, *Cont'd*

WNY PRISM would like to thank all those who helped in making this an extraordinary field season; our work wouldn't be possible without our Partners. It is through our partnerships that we are able to continue moving forward, protecting our terrestrial and aquatic resources from the harm caused by invasive species.

To learn more about the projects WNY PRISM works on, consider becoming a Partner. You can do so by attending our upcoming Fall Partner Meeting on October 5, 2017, or joining our [listserve](#).