

# 2024

## WNY PRISM Annual Report



Prepared By  
Andrea Locke, WNY PRISM Coordinator

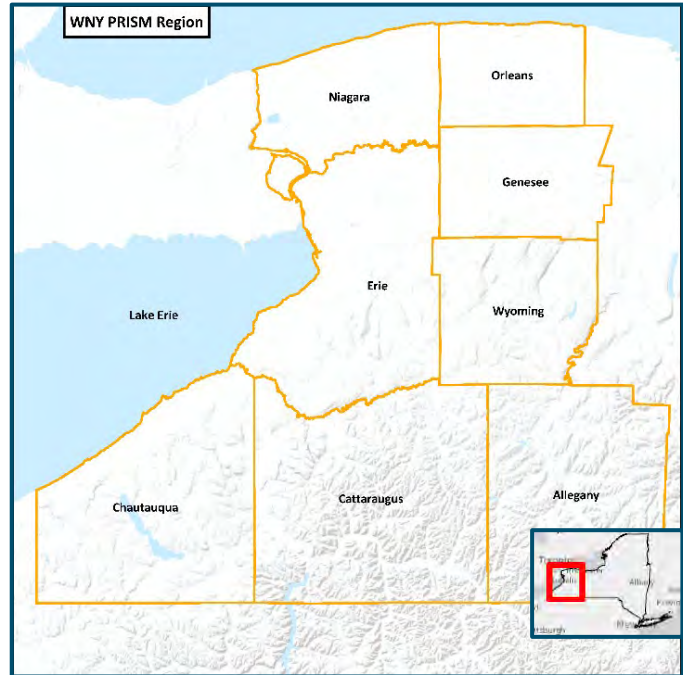
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*Cover Photos: WNY PRISM early detection priority species: porcelain berry, water lettuce and slender falsebrome. All photos used in this annual report are property of WNY PRISM, unless otherwise cited.*

## Introduction

Invasive species are those which are non-native to the ecosystem under consideration, and whose introduction causes, or is likely to cause, economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Western New York is particularly at risk to the threat of invasive species due to the unique geographic and human characteristics of the region. Western New York is situated within both the Great Lakes Basin and Mississippi River Watersheds with extensive river systems connecting much of the landscape, and the diversity of natural ecosystems offer habitats that are inviting to a wide variety of invasive species. Western New York also has a long history of human development and has seen significant alterations to the landscape that have created a level of disturbance in which invasive species thrive. In addition, western New York is positioned along prominent pathways of invasion, such as well-traveled transportation corridors. Each of these factors have led to the increased likelihood for the establishment and spread of invasive species within the region.



*WNY PRISM encompasses the eight western-most counties of NYS, including 5 major watersheds and 6,440 square miles.*

WNY PRISM works to implement programs that address all aspects of the invasive species management needs of the region by forming strategic partnerships, developing resources, and increasing regional capacity. Established in 2014, WNY PRISM has quickly become a leader in invasive species management for the region and continues to expand our impact.

WNY PRISM would like to thank our host organization, the Great Lakes Center at SUNY Buffalo State University, as well as the entire NYS Invasive Species Program for their continued support. We would also like to thank WNY PRISM's partners including the dedicated members of our Steering Committee and Working Groups. WNY PRISM looks forward to continuing to work together on our shared mission.

WNY PRISM is a sponsored program of the Research Foundation for SUNY Buffalo State University. Funding for WNY PRISM is provided by the Environmental Protection Fund through a contract with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Additional funding is provided through various federal, state and foundation grant programs.



## Mission

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 community members to improve, restore and protect local aquatic and terrestrial resources.

## Operational Structure

WNY PRISM’s operational structure consists of staff, a Steering Committee, and Working Groups. WNY PRISM also solicits information and feedback from partners and additional stakeholders, which factors strongly into the strategic decision-making process.

WNY PRISM staff include a Director, Coordinator, Program Managers and approximately twenty summer staff and interns. The Steering Committee is comprised of a core group of individuals representing a variety of organizations, agencies, businesses and community members, and is representative of the invasive species management needs of the WNY PRISM region. Steering Committee meetings take place quarterly with additional communication and meetings held as needed.

Working Groups (Terrestrial, Aquatic, and Education and Outreach) have been established and meet on an as-needed basis, focusing on the completion of specific tasks and projects.

Partner Meetings are held twice a year. The Spring Partner Meeting is held in April, ahead of the field season, and the Fall Partner Meeting is held in October. Working Groups and Partner Meetings are open to everyone and all interested parties are encouraged to attend. For more information on WNY PRISM’s operational structure, please see [WNY PRISM’s Operational Guidelines](#).



*WNY PRISM held an invasive plant identification and iMapInvasives training at Reinstein Woods as part of New York Invasive Species Awareness Week in June.*

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County	Sharon Bachman
New York Sea Grant	Megan Kocher
NYS Department of Transportation	Leslie Moma
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 9	Jennifer Landry
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation	Aaron Heminway
Royal Fern Nursery	Jonathan Townsend
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Buffalo District	Kathleen Buckler
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service	Mike Shaw
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office	Colleen Keefer

**WNY PRISM Staff**

<b>Dr. Christopher Pennuto</b> Director	<b>Andrea Locke</b> Coordinator
<b>Brittany Hernon</b> Terrestrial Program Manager	<b>Rachel Taylor</b> Community Science and Engagement
<b>Nick Farese</b> Aquatic Program Manager	

**Summer Staff**

**Field Crew Leader**  
Hannah Rola

**Education and Outreach Assistant**  
Nikolai White Bear

**Invasive Species Management Assistants**  
Jessica Castellan • Rebecca Kolsch • Hannah Philips

**Lead Watercraft Inspection Steward/Environmental Educators**

Owen Hebler · Jimi Wiggins

**Watercraft Inspection Steward/Environmental Educators**

Audra Blue · Michael Bayba · Mailey Geiger · Dainaira Goldthwait · Robert Kelly · Grace McKissock  
Rehn Pielechowski · Macy Pritchard · Leia Quichocho · Kara Sparling · Chloe Van Nelson  
Charles Weaver III

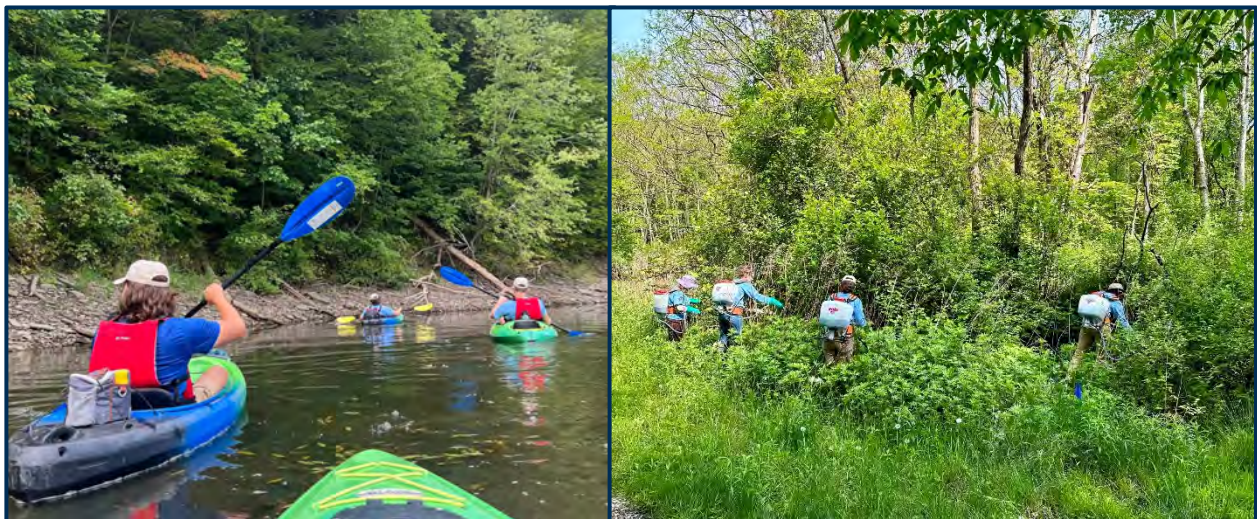


## WNY PRISM 2024 Annual Report

WNY PRISM efforts are guided by the [WNY PRISM Strategic Plan \(2019-2024\)](#), which was developed through a year-long collaborative process involving regional partners in 2019, and updated in 2022. The original plan put forth an ambitious program designed to provide the framework by which the invasive species management needs of western New York may be met. The 2022 updates served to strengthen and expand upon the established framework by addressing shifted priorities, expanded programs and new opportunities. The strategic plan is further supported by the [2024 WNY PRISM Annual Work Plan](#) that identified specific programs and tasks for which WNY PRISM would focus on in 2024.

The WNY PRISM Annual Report provides an overview of the projects and programs WNY PRISM implemented in 2024 and is organized based on the six goals associated with WNY PRISM's established core functions: Partner and Network Coordination, Information Management, Education and Outreach, Prevention, Early Detection and Rapid Response, and Management and Habitat Restoration. Most of the work described in this report is funded through the WNY PRISM contract with New York State and administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation. However, some projects receive funding through additional sources such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Greenway Ecological Standing Committee.

WNY PRISM is first and foremost a partnership organization and we rely upon strong partnerships to achieve success. Most of the projects highlighted in this report include support and assistance from partner organizations and in this way, the WNY PRISM Annual Report serves not only as a record of WNY PRISM activities but provides an overview of invasive species management efforts and priorities from across the region. For more information on the projects and programs mentioned in this report, or to view additional documents and resources, please visit [www.wnyprism.org](http://www.wnyprism.org).

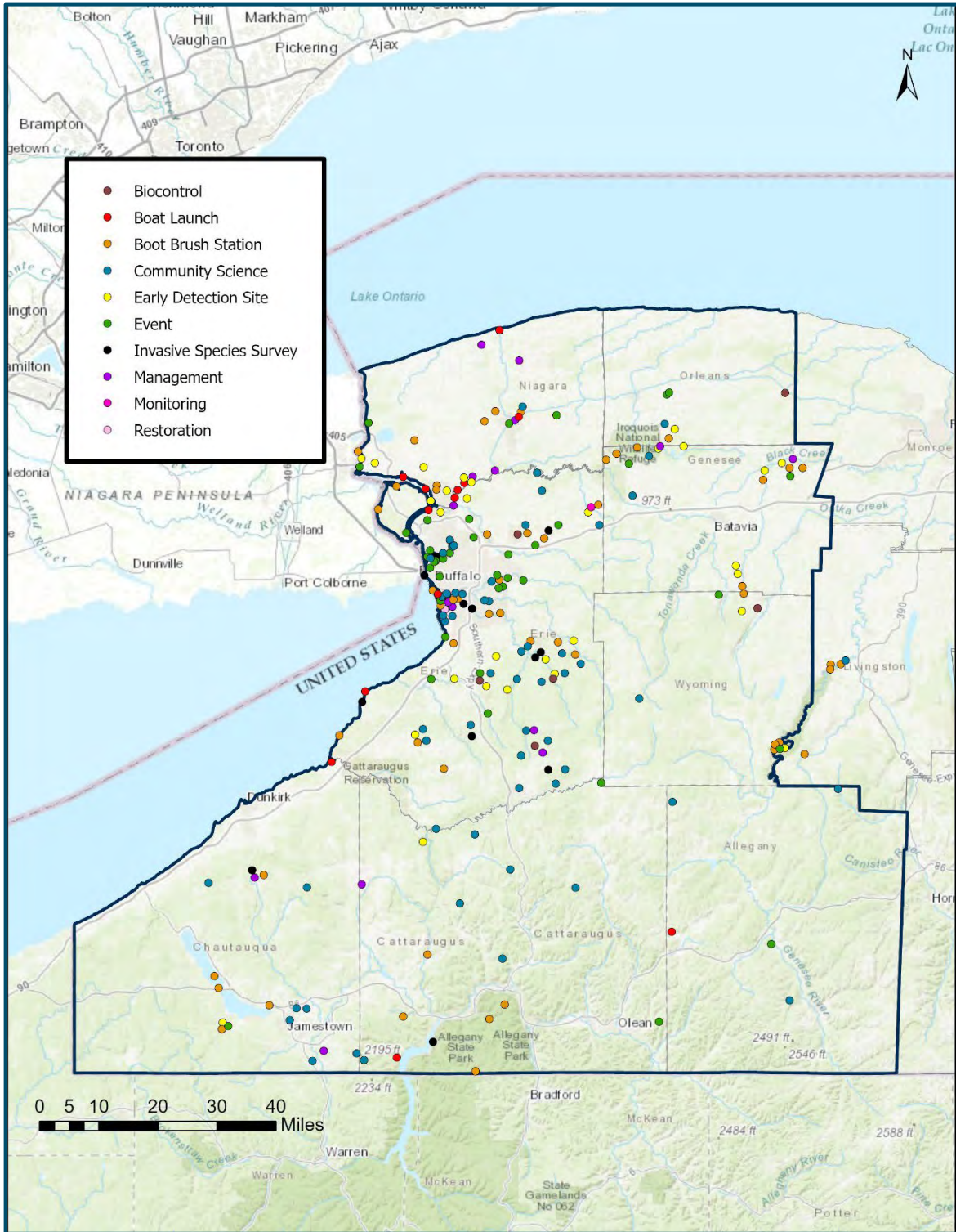


*WNY PRISM Boat Stewards surveyed Allegheny Reservoir looking for water chestnut (left) and the WNY PRISM Crew foliar treated mugwort at Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park (right).*

## WNY PRISM 2024 Program Highlights

- WNY PRISM has worked with **224 partner organizations**, including **7 new partners** in 2024.
- Hired **17 summer staff** – Invasive Species Management Assistants (3), Education and Outreach Assistant (1), and Watercraft Inspection Steward/Environmental Educators (13).
- Hired seasonal **Field Crew Leader** to assist with project coordination and Crew supervision.
- Held **2 Partner Meetings** with **58 attendees** (Spring Meeting – 27, Fall Meeting – 31).
- Conducted a review and update of **Tier Rankings** and **updated WNY PRISM priority species lists**.
- **4,160 records** submitted by **148 unique users** were uploaded to iMapInvasives, including **77 unique species**.
- The **top five recorded** invasive species for WNY PRISM were **Eurasian watermilfoil (613)**, **Japanese stiltgrass (180)**, **curly pondweed (173)**, **HWA (143)**, and **flowering rush (141)**.
- **HWA** was the **top, not-detected species** with 304 records.
- Released and monitored *Hypena opulenta* swallow-wort biocontrol agents **at 3 sites** across western New York.
- Coordinated **3 Community Science Programs**: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Hunters, Spotted Lanternfly Trap Monitoring and Trail Survey. **37 volunteers** contributed **128.25 hours**.
- Obtained **444 signatures** for WNY PRISM’s **Pledge to Protect** program.
- **Updated 102 invasive species profiles** on the WNY PRISM website to include interactive presence and distribution maps.
- WNY PRISM staff responded to **114 public inquiries**.
- **Facebook** and **Instagram** posts generated **60,707 impressions**.
- Tabled at **16 events**, delivered **13 presentations**, and held **7 Walk and Talks** and **5 workshops**.
- Events resulted in **2,426 direct contacts** and had **29,778 attendees**.
- **The Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program** achieved an **87.2% acceptance rate** with **808 interceptions** – the most encountered species were **Eurasian watermilfoil (395)** and **curly pondweed (314)**.
- Boat Stewards conducted **10,077 boat inspections** working at **13 launches**.
- Stewards conducted **530 Walk-Up Surveys** and **411 Angler Surveys** – no invasive species were observed.
- **Terrestrial early detection survey and management** was carried out at **22 sites** encompassing **61.2 acres**.
- **Aquatic early detection surveys** were carried out at **5 sites**, encompassing **634.6 acres**.
- **Early detection** priority species removal efforts resulted in **34 sites managed** with a combination of herbicide and manual removal and efforts totaled **412.4 acres treated**.
- Developed **6 Boot Brush Stations** for partners – stations were installed ahead of NY Invasive Species Awareness Week.
- The **Crew Assistance Program** received **16 proposals** from **13 partners** and resulted in **8 completed projects**, including **201.83 acres surveyed** and **14.17 acres treated**.
- Completed **77-acre survey of Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park** and **treated 3.18 acres** of mugwort, Japanese barberry and privet.
- Facilitated **WNY Water Chestnut Working Group** and assisted with survey and removal efforts.

## WNY PRISM – Where We Work



## Partner and Network Coordination

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*Goal: Effectively coordinate the WNY PRISM partner network and strengthen relationships to the benefit of all those impacted by invasive species and those involved with invasive species management.*

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WNY PRISM works closely with partners and stakeholders across the region to address priority invasive issues. It is through partnership that we work to improve the effectiveness of invasive species management efforts to increase awareness of invasive species issues and to engage both partners and community members in taking meaningful action.

Partner and network coordination begins with the WNY PRISM Steering Committee, which is comprised of member organizations, agencies, businesses and community members who represent the varied interests within the WNY PRISM region. The Steering Committee provides essential support for WNY PRISM efforts including the review and approval of strategic and species priorities, review of operational documents, and review of project proposals and requests. Several members also participate in WNY PRISM Working Groups. Terrestrial, Aquatic, and Education and Outreach Working Groups are used to address various programs and tasks that benefit from the regional, expert knowledge our partners can provide. Working groups are open to all those interested in supporting WNY PRISM efforts and meet on an as-needed basis.

WNY PRISM collaborated with seven new partners in 2024, bringing the total number of partners we've collaborated with through the years to 224. In addition to working with partners on shared projects, we help promote their programs and events through social media, newsletters, attended events, the WNY PRISM website, and the WNY PRISM Listserv, which offers additional opportunities for collaboration and partner feedback.

WNY PRISM staff responded to 114 public inquiries received through our website, email and by phone. This continues to demonstrate improved public awareness of WNY PRISM and the value provided by our resources and knowledge. Topics were varied and ranged from observation reports, requests for presentations and management assistance, to questions about identification, best management practices, volunteer events, and job opportunities. Management questions pertaining to specific species remains the most common inquiry we receive, with question about knotweed (*Reynoutria* spp.), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) being the most frequent.

### Partner Meetings

WNY PRISM holds two Partner Meetings each year that serve as an opportunity for partners to interact with one another and learn about important regional news and updates. The Spring Partner Meeting was held at Woodlawn Beach State Park on April 18. Twenty-seven partners attended the meeting and guest presenters included Dan Kresse, Director, The Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc. and Thom Allgaier, Invasive Species Coordinator, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM). Dan Kresse

gave a brief presentation on a new AmeriCorps program for WNY and led a discussion session that was part brainstorming for project and partnership ideas, and part question and answer. Thom Allgaier presented an update on the status of spotted lanternfly in NYS, focusing most of his presentation on integrated pest management and the multiple tools and strategies being used to manage spotted lanternfly within WNY and across the state.

The Fall Partner Meeting was hosted by the Buffalo Zoo Grounds and Horticultural Department and held at the Buffalo Zoo on October 17. Thirty-one partners attended the meeting which began with a brief welcome and overview of the recently completed field season, provided by Andrea Locke, WNY PRISM Coordinator. Nathan Huff, Curator of Horticulture & Ground at the Buffalo Zoo then discussed the Zoo's shifting focus from use of exotic species to native species and removal of invasive species from the landscaping and outdoor exhibits.



*The WNY PRISM Fall Partner Meeting was held on October 17 at the Buffalo Zoo.*

Guest Presenters Nate Morey and Theresa Draves, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Foresters, presented on emerald ash borer efforts focusing on long-term management efforts at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and the Monitoring and Managing Ash program, and Nick Farese, WNY PRISM Aquatic Program Manager, provided an overview of WNY PRISM's aquatic invasive species programs. Partner updates were extensive at the Fall Partner Meeting with half of attendees providing information on their organizations, ongoing projects and new initiatives.

## Collaboration

WNY PRISM staff participate in and/or facilitate several local, statewide, and regional collaboratives to better provide support for the region we serve. WNY PRISM facilitates and/or participates in the following local, regional, and statewide collaboratives:

- Buffalo State Arbor Day Committee
- Great Lakes Action Agenda
- Great Lakes Environmental Sciences Professional Science Masters Advisory Board
- Great Lakes Hydrilla Collaborative
- Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative
- Great Lakes Slender False Brome Working Group
- iMapInvasives Terrestrial Spatial Prioritization Advisory Group
- iMapInvasives Tier Ranking Working Group
- iMapInvasives Tools Planning

- Invasives Crayfish Collaborative
- NYS Aquatic Coordinators Working Group
- NYS Hydrilla Task Force
- NYS PRISM Education and Outreach Committee
- NYS Terrestrial Coordinators Working Group
- Phragmites Adaptive Management Framework
- Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring Group - AGM
- Swallow-wort Research Group
- Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program App (WISPA)
- Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program Manual Update
- WNY Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Collaborative
- WNY Mile-A-Minute Working Group
- WNY PRISM Aquatic Working Group
- WNY PRISM Education and Outreach Working Group
- WNY PRISM Terrestrial Working Group
- WNY Water Chestnut Working Group

## Grants/Funding

WNY PRISM provides support for partners seeking funds for invasive species management efforts. On our website, partners can find the [Invasive Species Funding Guide for Western New York](#) with information on available grant programs, and links for additional guides and tools to improve grant submissions. WNY PRISM also supports partners by providing review of management plans and proposals, and by providing letters of support.

## Communications

The WNY PRISM Listserv is the primary means by which WNY PRISM shares invasive species information and resources with partners. In 2024, eighty-two emails were sent through the Listserv by WNY PRISM, iMapInvasives (iMap), the NYS DEC Invasive Species Coordination Section (ISCS) and the New York Invasives Species Research Institute (NYISRI). WNY PRISM added forty-one subscribers in 2024 and maintains 381 listserv members.

WNY PRISM Listserv Email Breakdown:

- 39 event announcements
- 28 WNY PRISM eNews
- 6 job opportunities
- 4 news items
- 3 grant/funding opportunities
- 2 information/data requests

The WNY PRISM eNews is a biweekly digest of invasive species news, grant information, job openings, professional development opportunities and public events. Several items included in the eNews, such as funding, events and job opportunities, are not sent individually and therefore not included in the individual category metrics.

## Information Management

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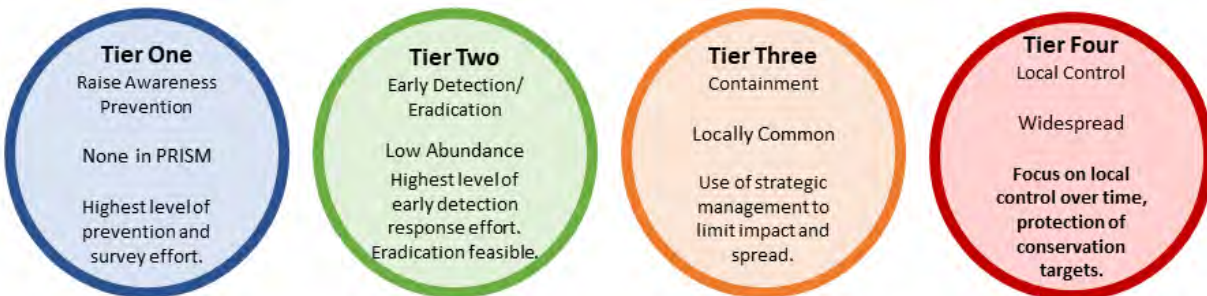
*Goal: Establish WNY PRISM as the leading resource for invasive species management information and strategic planning. Ensure information is current, accurate, regionally appropriate and easy to access, and provide opportunities for improved data collection and partner collaboration.*

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### Prioritization

#### Invasive Species Tier Ranking

The NYS Invasive Species Program developed the [NYS Tier Ranking System](#) to prioritize invasive species based on species presence and management strategies. The aim is to provide a level of consistency across the state, while continuing to allow each PRISM to rank species based on their local need, impact, and threat level. The system identifies five tiers based on species abundance (presence and distribution), impact (including potential future impact), cost of control, and difficulty of control. WNY PRISM first adopted the tier system in 2019, using it to identify species priorities, inform management decisions, and assist in project selection. WNY PRISM has revisited the rankings and conducted comprehensive reviews of species through active engagement with all partners in both 2021 and 2023. In 2024, an internal staff review of species tiers was conducted and focused on forty-two Tier 1 and Tier 2 species.



*NYS Invasive Species Tier Rankings – the fifth tier (5/M) is for species with data/information gaps preventing accurate ranking.*

Four species were added to WNY PRISM’s list of ranked species. Reed mannagrass (*Glyceria maxima*), water soldiers (*Stratiotes aloides*) and oak wilt (*Bretziella fagacearum*) were added in the Tier 1 category while Chinese beauty-berry (*Callicarpa dichotoma*) was added as a Tier 2 species. No species shifted tiers this year. The updated [WNY PRISM Invasive Species Tier Rankings](#), including 159 ranked species, is available for reference.

#### Species Priorities

WNY PRISM maintains an [Approaching Region Priority List](#) and [Early Detection Priority Species List](#), which provide guidance beyond the Tier Rankings for species prioritization. WNY PRISM prioritizes the

survey, monitoring and management of these species, as well as education and outreach related to increasing regional awareness and encouraging management.

WNY PRISM also maintains a [Data Gap Species Priority List](#) and five species were once again selected for 2024. Data gap species represent those species for which additional information is needed and are used as target species for partners and volunteers to focus their survey efforts. These species may be considered common on the landscape, but available survey data is lacking, or they may be newer species of interest for which an understanding of presence and distribution is completely unknown.

#### **Approaching Region Priority Species – species not yet present in WNY PRISM**

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) <i>Actinidia arguta</i>          | Hardy Kiwi            |
| 2) <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>    | Himalayan Balsam      |
| 3) <i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>    | Parrot Feather        |
| 4) <i>Ludwigia peploides</i>        | Primrose-willow       |
| 5) <i>Oplismenus undulatifolius</i> | Wavyleaf Basket Grass |

#### **Early Detection Priority Species – species present in WNY PRISM**

- |                                   |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) <i>Ampelopsis glandulosa</i>   | Porcelain Berry     |
| 2) <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> | Slender False Brome |
| 3) <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>       | Scotch Broom        |
| 4) <i>Oshuna crassipes</i>        | Water Hyacinth      |
| 5) <i>Lycorma delicatula</i>      | Spotted Lanternfly  |
| 6) <i>Microstegium vimineum</i>   | Japanese Stiltgrass |
| 7) <i>Persicaria perfoliata</i>   | Mile-a-Minute Vine  |
| 8) <i>Phellodendron amurense</i>  | Amur Corktree       |
| 9) <i>Pistia stratiotes</i>       | Water Lettuce       |
| 10) <i>Procambarus clarkii</i>    | Red Swamp Crayfish  |

#### **Data Gap Species Priorities – more information is needed on presence and distribution**

- |                                 |                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> | Wild Chervil          |
| 2) <i>Aproceros leucopoda</i>   | Elm Zigzag Sawfly     |
| 3) <i>Nymphoides peltata</i>    | Yellow Floating Heart |
| 4) <i>Rhodotypos scandens</i>   | Black Jetbead         |

The priority species lists were again reviewed towards the end of the year and updated for 2025. Japanese stiltgrass was removed from the early detection list due to its continued spread within the region and replaced with sticky sage (*Salvia glutinosa*). The approaching region received a change with water soldiers replacing hardy kiwi. The data gap species list also saw some changes with wild chervil and yellow floating heart being replaced with sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*).

## Surveys and Monitoring

### Approaching Region Species

The Approaching Region Priority Species list was reviewed to identify survey sites for the species. For each species on the list, the closest known occurrence was found using iMap and iNaturalist data, and possible vectors of spread into the WNY PRISM region were identified based off location and species biology. A list was compiled of publicly accessible parks and natural areas where each species might emerge in the region. This list will be used as a starting point for future survey efforts.

### Data Gap Surveys

WNY PRISM conducts invasive species surveys to address data gaps, and further inform management efforts, priorities and regional planning. Surveys consist of general inventories, often based on geographic data gaps, and species-specific efforts, which may focus on “high probability areas” where species of concern are more likely to be found.

The WNY PRISM Crew carried out two general inventory surveys as part of a geographic data gap related effort. Surveys took place at Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary and Hamlin Park, both located in the Village of East Aurora, and covered 21.6 total acres. Species present included bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), multi-flora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and dames rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), with dense stands of privet (*Ligustrum* spp.) found at Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary.

A species-specific data gap survey was conducted at Clarence Town Park for black jetbead. The Crew was able to see the species when the characteristic black berries were present and collected updated presence and distribution data which was uploaded to iMap.

All four data gap species were included during species identification and mapping training for summer staff. The Crew observed and mapped wild chervil at Genesee County Park and Forest and reviewed elm leaf identification to look for elm zigzag sawfly damage early in the season. The hands-on identification training better prepared the Crew to keep a lookout for these data gap species during the season. No additional observations were made during field work.

### Regional Data Report – iMapInvasives\*

- 4,160 Total Records
  - 3,042 presence detected, confirmed
  - 214 presence detected, unconfirmed
  - 904 not-detected
- 77 unique species reported
- 148 unique users submitted presence data
- 35 unique users submitted not-detected data



*The Crew compared data to ensure the entire project site was covered during survey efforts.*

### Presence Detected – Top 10

• Eurasian Watermilfoil	613
• Japanese Stiltgrass	180
• Curly Pondweed	173
• Hemlock Woolly Adelgid	143
• Flowering Rush	141
• Common Buckthorn	138
• Bush Honeysuckle	129
• Multiflora Rose	112
• Starry Stonewort	109
• European Frogbit	105

### Not Detected – Top 10

• Hemlock Woolly Adelgid	304
• European Frogbit	53
• Water Chestnut	39
• Oak Wilt	35
• Water Hyacinth	30
• Water Lettuce	30
• Tree of Heaven	28
• Asian Longhorned Beetle	25
• Spotted Lanternfly	24
• <i>Hydrilla</i>	23

WNY PRISM was awarded three of the four iMap Mapping Challenge trophies in 2024 for jumping worm (*Amyntas* spp.), tree-of-heaven, and European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*).

\* The data provided is based on the iMapInvasives 2024 Annual Report for WNY PRISM.

## **Biocontrol**

### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

WNY PRISM worked with a Buffalo State University graduate student to develop a protocol for the Survey123 iMap Forest Pest Data Collection Tool. The student drafted a protocol and used this tool to conduct hemlock site assessments which provides information necessary to determine a sites viability for hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*, HWA) biocontrol releases. In March, WNY PRISM staff invited community scientists to test out the protocol and provide feedback at Sprague Brook County Park, to better adjust the protocol for future Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Hunters community science efforts.

In April, WNY PRISM staff partnered with Erie County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, Bureau of Forestry (Erie County) to collect 38 hemlock twig samples from four parks in the region: Chestnut Ridge, Emery, Franklin Gulf and Sprague Brook County Parks. These samples were analyzed using a dissecting microscope to collect HWA mortality data, which was sent to the NYS Hemlock Initiative to further assist with biocontrol release site selection.

WNY PRISM staff assisted Erie County with the release of silver flies (*Leucotaraxis* spp.) at Chestnut Ridge County Park in April and release of *Laricobius* beetles (*Laricobius nigrinus*) at Emery and Sprague Brook County Parks in the fall. Biocontrol agents



*Hemlock woolly adelgid biocontrol agents were released in Emery and Sprague Brook County Parks this fall.*

were shipped to Erie County staff by the NYS Hemlock Initiative and released in areas with robust HWA populations so they could feed and establish.

### Swallow-wort

WNY PRISM took over the leadership role on Swallow-wort Biocontrol Project efforts in western New York in 2024. WNY PRISM had previously assisted with identifying potential sites, connecting partners, gaining necessary permissions, and assisting with site set-up and data collection, however with funding and capacity changes among project participants it was necessary increase our involvement. The WNY PRISM region includes three *Hypena opulenta* research plots: Clarence Oak Openings, Genesee County Park and Forest (GCPF) and Holley Canal Falls. Clarence Oak Openings is our longest running research plot, first established in 2020 as a joint effort between NYISRI and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) – Erie County. Holley Canal Falls was added to the project in 2021 and GCPF in 2023. WNY PRISM ensured project partners had the necessary supplies, materials, including the biocontrol agents, and data collection protocols to continue monitoring these sites. On June 27 and 28, seventy-five adult, seventy-five larvae and sixty pupae were released, evenly distributed between the three sites.

Holley Canal Falls is monitored by Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District every other week while a WNY PRISM volunteer monitored the research plots at GCPF and Clarence Oak Openings (Clarence) weekly. Monitoring included taking data on the visible life stages (number of each), the percent defoliation of swallow-wort leaves, notes on weather, and other observations. Clarence and Holley Canal Falls showed similar declines in the progression of defoliation later in the summer, with agents no longer being observed past mid-August and neither site reached the 50% desired before removing the cage. However, GCPF showed steady defoliation and agents (larvae and adults) were still present when 50% defoliation was achieved on August 18. The cage at GCPF was removed on August 22 while the remaining cages were removed in early September.



*Hypena opulenta* was released at Clarence Oak Openings, Holley Canal Falls and Genesee County Park and Forest in June – 25 adults, 25 larvae and 20 pupae were released at each of the sites.

## Education and Outreach

*Goal: Increase public and partner awareness, understanding and participation in meaningful and effective invasive species management activities.*

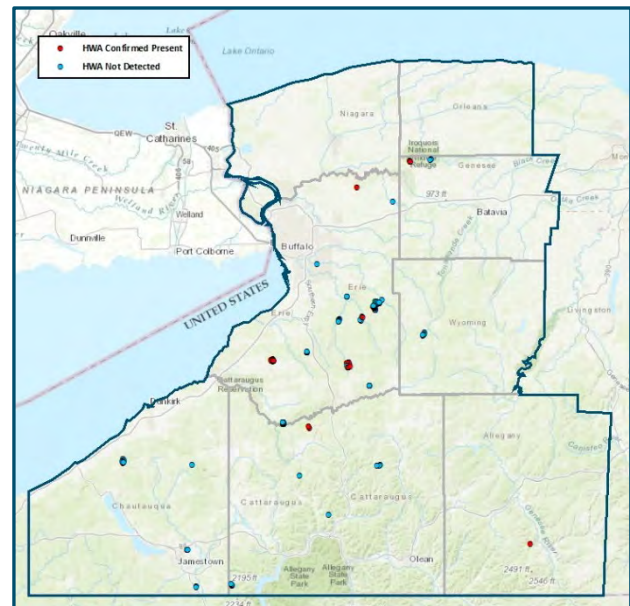
### Community Science Programs

WNY PRISM’s Community Science Programs were developed to engage people with data collection in support of established priorities and associated programs. By working with the public on collecting scientific data, WNY PRISM builds relationships with individuals, increases public awareness of invasive species and expands regional capacity to address invasive species issues. WNY PRISM administers three community scientist programs including the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Hunters Program, Trail Survey Program, and Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) Monitoring Program. Thirty-seven community scientists participated across all programs, contributing approximately 128.25 volunteer hours and the data collected has contributed to improved invasive species management efforts within the region.

#### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Hunters

With the increasing presence and distribution of HWA in the western New York region, we have expanded our efforts to address this species by establishing an official community science-based Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Hunters Program. In the program’s third year, WNY PRISM continued to work with partners CCE – Erie County, Erie County, Craneridge Homeowners Association (Craneridge), and the NYS Hemlock Initiative, along with new program partners NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Parks), to expand the regional effort.

Based on previous results, WNY PRISM focused efforts on a single training which was open to the public. The training, held at Knox Farm State Park, was attended by thirteen volunteers – program participants from previous years were not required to attend. A list of thirty prioritized survey locations was compiled and volunteers were asked to select locations from this list. Prioritized sites included conservation lands that had trails, confirmed hemlock presence and were safe to survey during the winter. However, sites with well-established infestations were not included. Twenty-three locations were adopted by community scientist including twenty-one of the thirty prioritized locations and two other locations independently selected by community scientists.



*HWA Hunters Program iMapInvasives Reports.*

Seventeen people participated, surveying twenty-eight locations. Of these seventeen community scientists, six (35%) of them were newly trained and the rest (65%) were trained previously. A total of 274 observations were submitted to iMapInvasives, an increase from the 189 submitted in 2023. Of the 274 observations, 246 were not detected observations and twenty-eight were confirmed presence observations. New infestations were detected at six sites: Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Sprague Brook County Park, East Otto State Forest, Beeman Creek Park, on private property near Sprague Brook, and on private property in Allegany County. Additional infestations detected were in Franklin Gulf County Park and Emery Park where HWA was already known to be present. A total of 50.25 volunteer hours (self-reported) were contributed by community scientists in 2024, an increase from the 18.5 hours contributed in 2023.

Data collected through this program has led to increased biocontrol releases in the region. In June 2022, silver flies (*Leucotaraxis argenticollis*, *L. piniperda*) were released at Franklin Gulf County Park and in November 2023, *Laricobius* beetles (*Laricobius nigrinus*) were released at Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area. In April of this year, silver flies were released at Chestnut Ridge Park and *Laricobius* beetles were released at Sprague Brook County Park and Emery Park in October.

### Trail Survey Program

In 2024, WNY PRISM's Trail Survey Program was expanded from the focused effort on the Town of Tonawanda Rails to Trails to being a region-wide program. Lessons learned and resulting recommendations from previous years were successfully incorporated into the broader program. Community scientists were trained to collect data using the iMapInvasives Mobile App rather than the Survey123 App, which was found to be too complicated for volunteers and deterred participation, a shorter (three-week) survey period was implemented, and more time was provided for participants to practice identifying target species during both the classroom and outdoor portions of the training. Training efforts also resulted in marked improvements to the quality of photos being submitted, which is a huge help when working to confirm reports in iMap.



*The Trail Survey Program training held at Burchfield Nature & Art Center on June 22, 2024.*

Sixteen community scientists attended the training held at the Charles E. Burchfield Nature & Art Center on June 22 and five completed surveys along trails in eleven locations, including locations in Cattaraugus County (2), Erie County (8) and Niagara County (1). A total of 125 confirmed observations were submitted and fourteen species were detected with the most common being common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), bush honeysuckle and Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Overall, community scientists who completed surveys contributed 28.5 volunteer hours in 2024, a slight increase from the 25 hours contributed in 2023.

## Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring Program

WNY PRISM’s third community science program centered on spotted lanternfly monitoring. Spotted lanternfly is a high priority species across NYS and our efforts to support statewide spotted lanternfly programs through use of community science began in 2022. Most participants in the program have expressed interest in continuing to volunteer each year: 78% from 2022 to 2023 and 94% from 2023 to



*Community Science and Engagement Program Manager, Rachel Taylor, checked a spotted lanternfly monitoring trap at Shoshone Park on August 18.*

2024 (only 88% were able to follow through with monitoring in 2024). In 2024, nineteen traps were set up and monitored in Allegany (2), Chautauqua (1), Erie (13), Genesee (1), Orleans (1) and Livingston (1) counties. Traps were installed in late spring, due to some shipping delays for replacement trap components, and were taken down by the end of the year.

Monitoring data is collected by AGM, however, community scientists aren’t given access to the Survey123 form or ArcGIS Online account associated with the program, so they provide their monitoring data to WNY PRISM every other week through a separate Google Form. WNY PRISM staff then re-enter the data into the AGM Survey123 form. Approximately 49.5 hours (self-reported)

were contributed by community scientists in 2024, an increase from the 32.5 hours contributed in 2023. No SLF were found as part of WNY PRISM monitoring efforts this year.

## **Pledge to Protect**

Traditional educational messaging for invasive species is focused on raising awareness but we recognize this is only the first step in fully engaging the public. To address this, WNY PRISM has developed, and continues to expand, our Pledge to Protect Program to help move people from awareness to action. The program centers on four campaigns: “Play. Clean. Go.”, “Clean. Drain. Dry.”, “Don’t Move Firewood”, and “Know Before You Grow”. Each campaign includes messaging that consists of small steps that people can take to help manage invasive species and slow their spread. Actions such as cleaning footwear before entering and upon leaving a trail or natural area, planting native plants, and removing organic material from boats and trailers can make a huge difference.



*196 people took the Play. Clean. Go. pledge, signing the banner and committing to take spread prevention steps.*

Community members may Pledge to Protect in one of two ways. They may visit our website, where they can sign onto one or all the pledges, or they may sign one of our banners while at an outreach event or training. In addition, the *Clean. Drain. Dry.* banners are rotated around our staffed boat launches. By signing onto one of the pledges, people are making a commitment to taking those simple steps to help manage invasive species. Those who sign a pledge receive a pocket card, with a reminder of their pledge and the steps they can take, as well as an “I Pledged to Protect” sticker. WNY PRISM received 444 signatures this year with 46 taking the “*Clean. Drain. Dry.*” pledge, 151 taking the “*Don’t Move Firewood*” pledge, 196 taking the “*Play. Clean. Go.*” Pledge, and 51 taking the “*Know Before You Grow*” pledge.

### WNY PRISM Events

Education and outreach events, whether held by WNY PRISM or our partners, offer an opportunity to reach a wide variety of audiences who have expressed interest in invasive species management and who are actively seeking more information. Events represent different models of engagement from more passive tabling to targeted presentations and workshops.

WNY PRISM tracks both direct contacts and event attendees as part of education and outreach efforts. Direct contacts include those with whom WNY PRISM staff or volunteers communicate with directly, as well as all participants in partner meetings, presentations, workdays, workshops and trainings. Event attendees include those who may stop by our informational table and take outreach materials but with whom we did not engage in direct dialog.



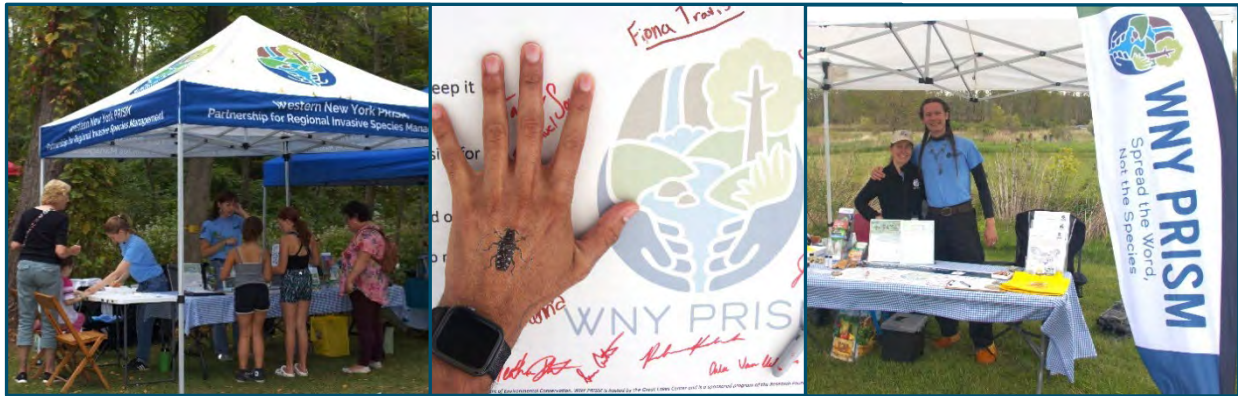
*Community Science and Engagement Program Manager, Rachel Taylor, at the Reinstein Woods Fall Festival, giving out invasive species tattoos.*

WNY PRISM held and/or attended forty-four events with at least one event in each county and recorded 2,426 direct contacts and 29,778 attendees. Attendance numbers for larger events were either provided by the host organization or are estimates based on staff observations.

Partner Meetings	County	Direct Contacts	Date
Spring Partner Meeting	Erie	27	18-Apr
Fall Partner Meeting	Erie	31	17-Oct

Outreach Table/Display	County	Contacts/Attendees	Date
Rural Landowner Workshop	Cattaraugus	25/76	2-Mar
Buffalo State Job & Internship Fair	Erie	53/392	7-Mar

Party for the Planet	Erie	123/1202	20-Apr
Massachusetts Avenue Project Seedling Sale	Erie	116/700	4-May
Spring Spectacular	Genesee	168/500	11-May
Tonawanda Kids Fishing Derby	Erie	28/175	15-Jun
Belmont Farmers Market	Allegany	8/25	11-Jul
Conservation Day on Bidwell Parkway	Erie	97/2000	13-Jul
Lockport Community Farmers Market	Niagara	39/1500	20-Jul
Lewiston Art Festival	Niagara	129/12500	10-Aug
Conservation Day and Monarch Release	Erie	61/550	24-Aug
Niagara Frontier Antique Boat Show	Erie	80/2000	7-Sep
Local Environmental Awareness Fair (LEAF)	Erie	100/350	14-Sep
Reinstein Woods Fall Festival	Erie	338/1750	21-Sep
Erie County Fall Fest	Erie	192/4500	28-Sep
Research and Creativity Fall Forum	Erie	9/100	7-Nov



WNY PRISM attended events at Reinstein Woods and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.

Presentations	County	Direct Contacts	Date
Plant WNY Trade Show & Conference	Erie	72	1-Feb
Hamburg Garden Club	Erie	50	14-Feb
Communities in Bloom Gardening Classes	Erie	24	24-Feb
Rural Landowner Workshop - Management	Cattaraugus	45	2-Mar
Rural Landowner Workshop - iMap	Cattaraugus	7	2-Mar
Research Foundation Presentation	Erie	7	23-Apr
Orleans County Master Gardener Training	Orleans	20	25-Apr
Park School Red Swamp Crayfish Project	Erie	65	25-Apr
Storytelling & the Language of IS Outreach	Online	49	3-Jun
Niagara County Environmental Field Days	Niagara	196	5-Jun
Master Your Garden Educational Series	Orleans	14	3-Aug
Spotted Lanternfly Panel Presentation @ UB	Erie/Online	63	18-Oct
Genesee County Parks ACORNS	Genesee	12	23-Oct



WNY PRISM held an Invasive Plant ID & iMap Training at Reinstein Woods on June 3, 2024.

Workshops/Trainings	County	Direct Contacts	Date
HWA Volunteer Survey Training	Erie	13	20-Jan
Lawncare and Landscape Professionals	Erie	4	13-Mar
Invasive Plant ID & iMap Training	Erie	18	3-Jun
Trail Survey Training	Erie	16	22-Jun
Post-Treatment Data Collection Workshop	Erie	23	5-Sep

Volunteer Workdays	County	Direct Contacts	Date
Letchworth Stewardship Day	Wyoming	19	8-Jun
Volunteer Workday at Chestnut Ridge	Erie	7	24-Aug

Walk and Talks	County	Direct Contacts	Date
Bergen Swamp	Genesee	13	1-Jun
Get Outdoors & Get Together Day	Erie	5	8-Jun
David & Margaret Naetzker Preserve	Chautauqua	11	27-Jul
Tillman Road Wildlife Management Area	Erie	11	17-Aug
Niagara Gorge	Niagara	6	7-Sep
Reinstein Woods Fall Festival	Erie	15	21-Sep
Pfeiffer Nature Center	Cattaraugus	17	12-Oct



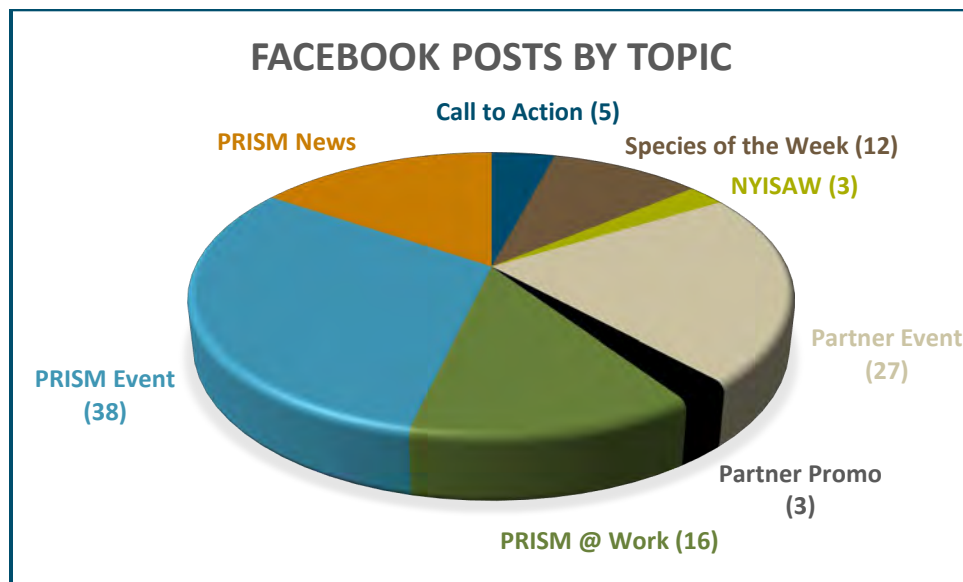
Walk and Talks were held at Tillman Road WMA and Pfeiffer Nature Center, and a volunteer workday was held at Letchworth.

## Social Media Report

WNY PRISM’s social media outreach continues to be a useful tool for sharing information, promoting WNY PRISM’s resources, programs and projects, and providing community engagement and learning opportunities. Focus on social media platforms ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) remained consistent throughout the year and resulted in steady increases in followers for both.

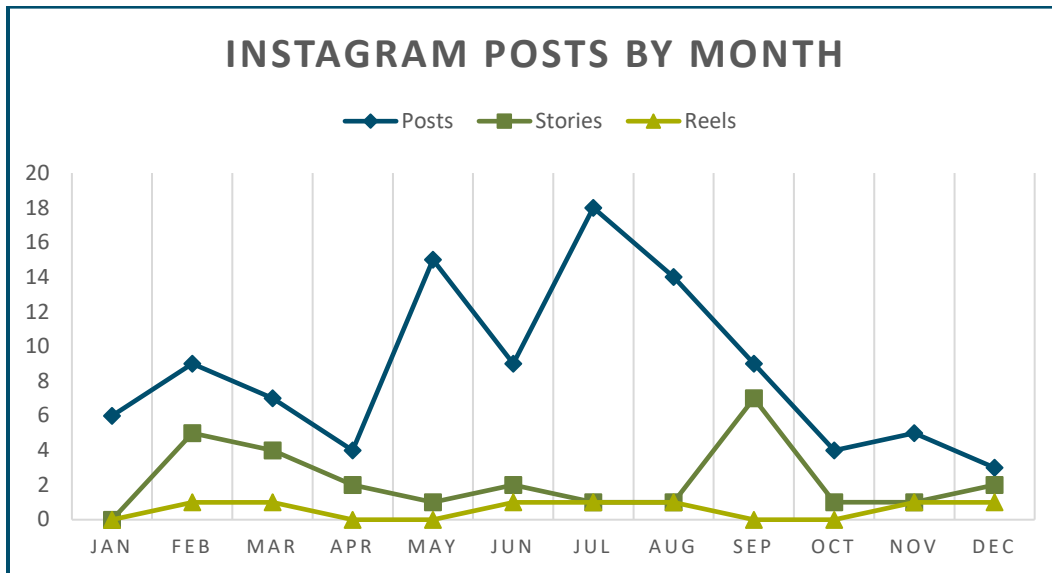
WNY PRISM gained 125 Facebook page likes and 168 followers, representing increases of 11% and 12%, respectively. We created 123 Facebook posts, an 8% decrease from the number of posts made in 2023, 20 Facebook stories and 8 Facebook reels, generating a total of 32,510 impressions. Posting frequency was highest during the traditional field season (May – September) and lower during the winter months.

Facebook posts ranged in topic from news, ecology, and project updates to events and calls to action. The most frequent topics for Facebook posts were events, including both WNY PRISM and partner events, as Facebook provides a strong platform for advertising and generating interest. WNY PRISM news posts included items such as notices for the Crew Assistance Program and Boot Brush Station Program being open for applications and posts related to hiring. The most popular post, based on impressions, was our seasonal hiring announcement post. Rounding out the top five posts are the HWA Survey Training Thank You post, HWA Survey Training event announcement, the Walk & Talk: Bergen Swamp event announcement, and the Keep a Lookout: Lesser Celandine invasive species of the week post.



WNY PRISM created 103 Instagram posts, 27 stories and 7 reels, with a combined reach of 28,197. We gained 109 followers, representing an increase of 10% from 2023. Post categories were similar to Facebook posts and many posts were shared to both platforms. The post with the highest number of impressions was about the Letchworth Stewardship Day, one of our volunteer workdays and rounding out the top five were the Field Crew Leader hiring post, an end-of-year farewell to our Education and

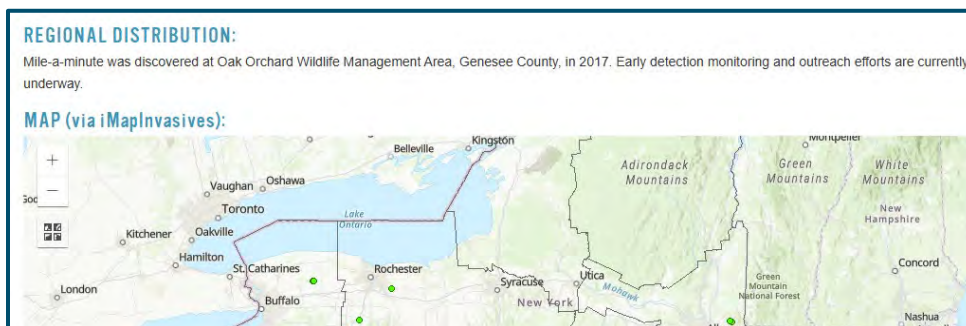
Outreach Assistant, the Walk & Talk: Bergen Swamp event announcement and a welcome to our Boat Stewards.



### Website Updates

Several program pages on the WNY PRISM website received significant updates in 2024. An interactive location map for boot brush stations installed in the WNY PRISM region was developed and integrated into the Boot Brush Station Program page, along with several new photos and improved text to assist with navigating the page. Each of the Community Science Program pages received updates with more information and new banner photos. The HWA Hunters and Trail Survey Program pages were updated with essential information and resources for this year’s programs and further improvements were identified for future updates. New pages were created for the Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring Program and for partner programs including iMapInvasives and the Monitoring and Managing Ash program.

Interactive species presence and distribution maps were added to all but three of the invasive species profiles (102 completed). The maps are linked to the iMapInvasives database and so the data is automatically updated.



*Interactive invasive species presence and distribution maps were added to WNY PRISM’s species profiles – this map shows the locations of mile-a-minute.*

## Prevention

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*Goal: Prevent the introduction of invasive species to the WNY PRISM region, limit the spread of invasive species within the region and limit the movement of invasive species established in WNY PRISM to other regions.*

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### Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program

Boats, trailers and other watercraft have long been recognized as a vector for the spread of aquatic invasive species. Plants and animals can be transported between bodies of water when species become attached to watercraft and are subsequently moved to another location where they become dislodged. WNY PRISM coordinates a regional Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program to help reduce the spread of invasive species, to raise awareness, and to engage the public in taking spread prevention action. Watercraft Inspection Steward/Environmental Educators (Stewards) are placed at boat launches throughout the western New York region from Memorial Day through Labor Day to educate the public on the importance of spread prevention, to perform voluntary inspections and to remove visible aquatic plants and animals from watercraft.



*Sturgeon Point Steward, Chloe Van Nelson, staffing her display table.*

The WNY PRISM region has over eighty public launches and fishing access points, and therefore it is necessary to work through a prioritization process to determine which launches should be staffed. Launches are selected through regular evaluation of launch usership, aquatic invasive species presence and distribution, risk of spread, opportunities for education and outreach, and how closely the launch aligns with established WNY PRISM priorities.

Thirteen launches were selected and staffed by two Lead Stewards and eleven Stewards. Launches included one site on the Allegheny Reservoir (Onoville Marina), one site on the Buffalo River (Ohio Street Kayak Launch), one site on Cuba Lake (Cuba Lake Boat Launch), four sites on the Erie Canal (Amherst Veterans Canal Park, North Tonawanda Botanical Gardens, Widewaters Marina and West Canal Park and Marina), two sites on Lake Erie (Sturgeon Point and Hanover Town Boat Launch), one site on Lake Ontario (Olcott Harbor) and three sites on the Niagara River (Gratwick Riverside Park, Griffon Park and Niawanda Park). Lead

Stewards were placed at Ohio Street Kayak Launch and Widewaters Marina.

Launch	Launch Owner	Waterbody
Amherst Veterans Canal Park	Town of Amherst	Erie Canal
Gratwick Riverside Park	City of North Tonawanda	Niagara River
Griffon Park	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara River
Niawanda Park	City of Tonawanda	Niagara River
N. Tonawanda Botanical Gardens	City of North Tonawanda	Erie Canal
Olcott Harbor	Town of Newfane	Lake Ontario
West Canal Park and Marina	Niagara County Parks	Erie Canal
Widewaters Marina	City of Lockport	Erie Canal
Cuba Lake	NYS DEC – Region 9	Cuba Lake
Hanover Town Boat Launch	Town of Hanover	Lake Erie
Ohio Street Kayak Launch	NYS DEC – Region 9	Niagara River
Onoville Marina	Cattaraugus County Planning	Allegheny Reservoir
Sturgeon Point	Town of Evans	Lake Erie

Stewards conducted 10,077 watercraft inspections and had 23,567 interactions with members of the public. The inspection acceptance rate among boaters was 87.2%, which is a little lower than previous years and efforts were put into determining a cause. We believe this was due to a lack of clarity and consistency in how this metric is both calculated and how survey data was being collected, which will be addressed next year.

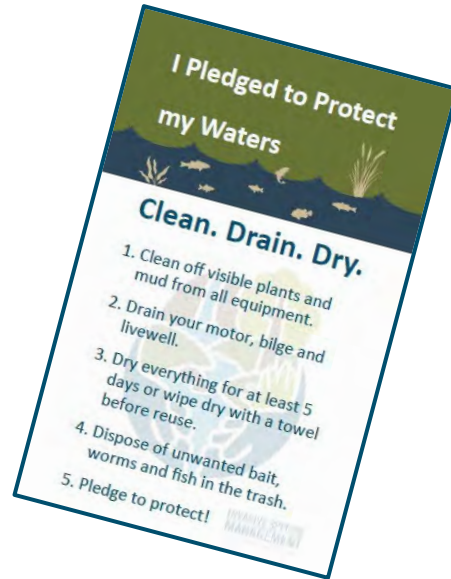
During an inspection, Stewards remove all organic matter from watercraft, including native and invasive species. Stewards identified and removed 808 individual, invasive organisms (interceptions) from inspected boats. The most intercepted invasive species was Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*, 395) followed closely by curly pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*, 314). Additional species intercepted include brittle naiad (*Najas minor*, 33), zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*, 33), *Hydrilla* (*Hydrilla verticillata*, 22), spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*, 7), and quagga mussel (*Dreissena bugensis*, 4). Stewards stationed at Olcott Harbor and Hanover Town Boat Launch had the highest percentage of inspections (50%) that resulted in an organism being found, while the Steward stationed at Widewaters Marina had the lowest, with no interceptions.

Organic matter was found on 27.4% of watercraft inspected with just 7.18% carrying invasive species. Most interceptions occurred on retrieving boats (74.5%), or those boats leaving the water, while 25.5% occurred on launching boats. No new aquatic invasive species were found during inspections this year.



Cuba Lake Steward, Rehn Pielechowski, conducted an inspection on July 6, during the busy 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.

Stewards are present at their assigned launches Thursday – Sunday, from Memorial Day through Labor Day. While this mirrors the busiest times at the busiest regional launches, Stewards can't be present every time someone launches or retrieves a boat. Therefore, it is important to instill within the community an understanding of the importance of conducting their own inspections. As part of the Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Application (WISPA) survey, Stewards ask boaters to take the *Clean. Drain. Dry.* Pledge, a pledge to take spread prevention measures on their own. The survey results showed that when boaters were asked to take the pledge, 92.4% of boaters asked for the first time said “yes, and 2.5% said “maybe”.



### Angler and Walk-up Surveys

The WISPA survey is a powerful tool that allows watercraft inspection programs statewide to share data on inspections and interactions. However, there are opportunities beyond just interacting with boaters at the launches. Two surveys, Angler and Walk-up Surveys, were developed to accompany the WISPA survey and capture information from a broader group of recreationists that use a launch.

The number of Angler and Walk-Up Survey submissions is heavily dependent upon the location and layout of individual launches. Launches with heavier boat traffic, such as Sturgeon Point and Onoville Marina, are not set up for other members of the public to walk through or fish from the docks. In addition, Stewards are often busy talking with boaters and unable to interact with other visitors. However, launches that are adjacent to a popular park or walking trails may have many more interactions with non-watercraft launch visitors, regardless of the level of boat traffic.



*Kara Sparling (Steward) and Niko White Bear (Education and Outreach Assistant) staffed an informational table at the Niawanda Kids Fishing Derby in June.*

Stewards submitted 205 Angler surveys and 280 Walk-Up surveys, recording direct interactions with 938 additional people. The most Angler surveys were submitted from West Canal Park and Marina and the most Walk-Up surveys were submitted from Ohio Street Kayak Launch. This is most likely due to the long shoreline dock present at West Canal Park and Marina, which gives anglers space to spread out, and the walkability of Ohio Street Kayak Launch.

In only 45.5% of Angler surveys did the angler have previous contact with a boat steward, clearly demonstrating a continued opportunity for future expansion of outreach and education efforts. Despite low familiarity with the Program, 81.0% of anglers still allowed the Steward to inspect their equipment, including fishing reels, bait boxes and tackle boxes. No invasive species were found during Angler surveys, and organisms were only detected on 1.2% of the equipment inspected.

### Boot Brush Station Program

WNY PRISM’s Boot Brush Station Program has been highly successful, with fifty-four boot brush stations being placed since the program began in 2016. The program aims to improve regional spread prevention efforts by providing partners with the signs and building materials necessary to install boot brush stations at popular trailheads and public access areas on their properties. The signs provide information on invasive species and advice on how visitors can help stop the spread of invasive species by cleaning off their footwear before and after hiking.

The Boot Brush Station Program opened for applications towards the end of January and remained open through February. Six applications were submitted by five partners, and all were selected to receive a boot brush station. In exchange for receiving a boot brush station, partners agree to install and maintain the stations, which generally includes cleaning the sign and replacing the brushes. Brush replacement frequency depends on level of use, which can be highly variable between sites.



*A boot brush station was installed at the Clarence Nature Center on May 31, 2024, ahead of NY Invasive Species Awareness Week.*

WNY PRISM staff worked with partners to tailor the signs to each site by including partner logos and selecting appropriate species to feature. Selected species may be those that partners are actively managing or those that hikers are most likely to encounter on the trail. We strongly encourage the inclusion of an early detection species as the primary species, to help increase awareness of these high priority species, but don’t require it. The most often selected early detection species was Japanese stiltgrass while the most popular non-early detection species selected was multi-flora rose.

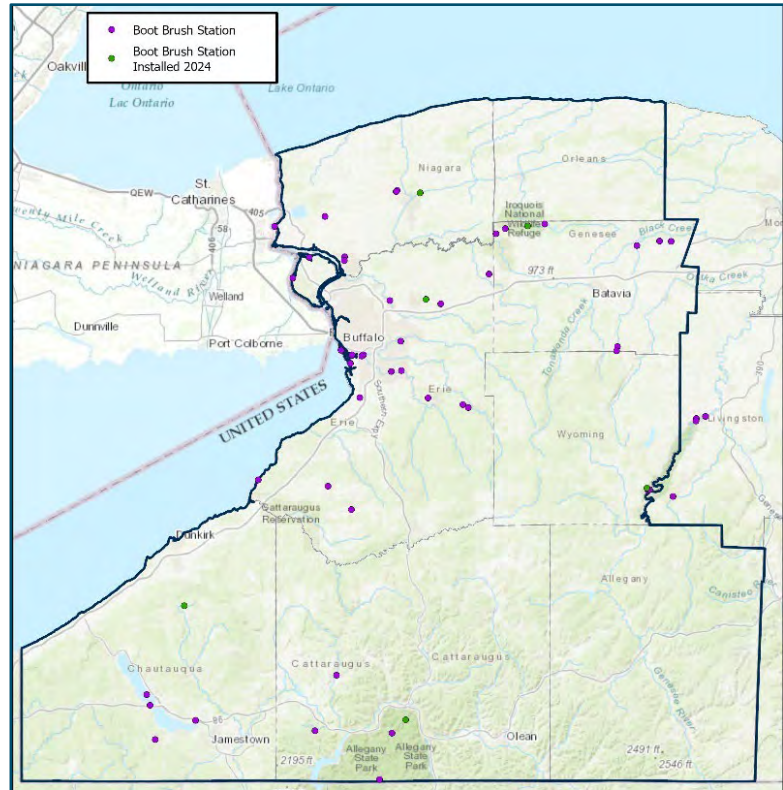
Site	Partner	County
Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park	Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy	Chautauqua
Letchworth State Park	NYS Parks	Wyoming
Clarence Nature Center	Clarence Conservation Advisory Council	Erie
Allegany State Park	NYS Parks	Cattaraugus
Iroquois NWR	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Genesee
Lytle Nature Preserve	CCE of Niagara County	Niagara

Partners received their supplies in May, which include the sign, boot brush, lumber and necessary hardware, and were tasked with installing the boot brush stations prior to New York Invasive Species Awareness Week, which began Monday, June 3. Partners provided WNY PRISM with photos and GPS points for each station, which were used to promote the new boot brush stations and encourage people to seek them out.

### Boot Brush Station Partner Survey

In 2023, WNY PRISM conducted a survey of established boot brush stations to assess their condition and identify nearby invasive species. The surveys provided helpful insights on the longevity of the boot brush station's components, however we were unable to get a full picture without a little more information from program partners. As a follow-up, in August of this year, partners were asked to complete a brief survey in which they indicated the frequency of checking and maintaining their boot brush station(s), whether any components had needed to be replaced since installation, and to share any additional input or recommendations regarding the boot brush stations.

Survey responses were received for 45% of the established boot brush stations (24 out of 54). All but three responses indicated that the boot brush stations were checked and maintained at least annually. Seven of the stations were indicated as having had items needing to be replaced since installation and four of these seemed to have had items replaced. Most input consisted of some form of positive feedback, such as the boot brush station getting a lot of use and people appreciating the opportunity to learn about its purpose.



WNY PRISM Boot Brush Station Locations.

## Early Detection and Rapid Response

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*Goal: Develop an effective early detection program and associated protocols that provide for reporting, assessment, and response efforts.*

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The WNY PRISM early detection program addresses the survey, removal and spread prevention of Tier 2 and Tier 1 species, with a focus on established early detection species and approaching region species priorities. WNY PRISM’s Early Detection Priority Species represent those that pose the greatest threat to the region while also being species for which a goal of eradication is feasible based on current species presence and distribution, and management capabilities. Two changes were made to the early detection list for 2024 including the removal of goatsrue and addition of amur corktree.

### Early Detection Priority Species

1) <i>Ampelopsis glandulosa</i>	Porcelain Berry
2) <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	Slender False Brome
3) <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Scotch Broom
4) <i>Oshuna crassipes</i>	Water Hyacinth
5) <i>Lycorma delicatula</i>	Spotted Lanternfly
6) <i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Japanese Stiltgrass
7) <i>Persicaria perfoliata</i>	Mile-a-Minute Vine
8) <i>Phellodendron amurense</i>	Amur Corktree
9) <i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	Water Lettuce
10) <i>Procambarus clarkii</i>	Red Swamp Crayfish

WNY PRISM early detection sites, those with known infestations of early detection priority species, are placed into four categories: **Active**, **Inactive**, **Partner** and **Eradicated**. **Active** sites are those WNY PRISM staff members and/or volunteers visit each year to survey for and remove plants. **Inactive** sites are those for which WNY PRISM is unable to carry out management. This is most often due to capacity limitations, but also may be due to an inability to safely access a site or a lack of permission. **Partner** sites are those actively managed by WNY PRISM partners and **eradicated** sites are those identified as presumed eradicated based on WNY PRISM’s early detection site monitoring protocol.

Early detection monitoring sites (i.e., sites where previous removal efforts resulted in no remaining plants) are monitored annually by WNY PRISM. If removal efforts have resulted in individuals not being found for three consecutive years, the site will then be monitored every other year for up to five or seven years, depending on the species. If no individuals are found after the final survey year, the site is presumed eradicated and removed from WNY PRISM’s site monitoring list. If at any point additional plants are found, the site resets to active management, and annual monitoring will begin again the following year.

Terrestrial early detection efforts focused on porcelain berry, slender false brome, Japanese stiltgrass, mile-a-minute and amur corktree, and management was carried out on 61.20 acres across 22 sites.

Slender false brome manual removal was carried out at five sites, resulting in the removal of 10.25 bags of plants, while herbicide treatment was carried out at two sites, resulting in 24.26 total acres treated. Japanese stiltgrass hand-pulling was implemented at eight sites, resulting in the removal of 6.5 bags of plants, and herbicide treatment was carried out at two sites. Japanese stiltgrass chemical and manual removal was carried out over 30.5 acres and as part of survey and monitoring efforts, 1,114 acres were surveyed to map new plants ahead of treatment or to conduct site monitoring. Two volunteer removal workdays were held, one focused on slender false brome and one on Japanese stiltgrass. No Japanese stiltgrass was detected at two monitoring sites this year, Birdsong Park and West Falls Park, and no porcelain berry was found at Delaware Park.



*WNY PRISM Stewards CJ Weaver III and Grace McKissock helped to remove slender false brome at Trestle Park.*

Aquatic early detection efforts focused on water hyacinth and water lettuce. Three water lettuce and two water hyacinth early detection sites, covering 634.6 acres, were surveyed during the field season. Water hyacinth was observed in a portable water garden placed on a dock near Tonawanda Island and a 114.2-acre survey was conducted in the waters around the island in response. No water lettuce or water hyacinth were found during survey efforts.

## **Terrestrial Early Detection Species**

### Porcelain Berry – 1 active, 1 inactive

Porcelain berry was first reported in the WNY PRISM region in September 2020 by a community scientist. At the time porcelain berry was a Tier 1 and approaching region priority species, so it was moved to the early detection list. There is one active porcelain berry site in the WNY PRISM region, in Delaware Park, an Olmsted Park in Erie County, and one inactive site at Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary, in Chautauqua County, which was first reported, and then mapped by WNY PRISM, in 2023.

Site monitoring at Delaware Park resulted in no plants being found in 2024. While the second known site at Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary remained inactive this year, WNY PRISM developed and submitted a grant proposal through the USDA Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Cooperative Weed Management Area program that if funded, will support removal and survey efforts in and around both Delaware Park and Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary.

### Slender False Brome – 5 active, 2 partner, 6 inactive

Slender false brome continued to be a focus of WNY PRISM's early detection efforts. Manual removal efforts took place at five sites totaling over 1.6 acres and 10.25 bags of plants were removed. At GCPF, slender false brome was treated across nineteen acres, and as part of the Crew Assistance Program,

WNY PRISM staff foliar treated 3.66 acres of slender false brome along the Pocock Trail and entrance at Bergen Swamp. Slender false brome herbicide treatment was carried out in mid-June with follow up in late July to early August.



*The WNY PRISM Crew treated slender false brome at Genesee County Park and Forest in June.*

WNY PRISM staff continued to visit slender false brome pre- and post-treatment management plots, first established in 2018 at Genesee County Park and Forest. Twenty-five plots were established and evenly distributed among the control, manual removal, mechanical removal, herbicide treatment and mechanical/herbicide treatment areas. Average slender false brome percent cover in these plots before any treatment was implemented was  $67.2 \pm 21.2\%$ . Those treatment methods were implemented, along with an untreated control from 2018-2019. From 2020-2024, the

entire infestation including the control was treated with herbicide, which was determined to be the Best Management Practice for the site. In 2024, the average slender false brome percent cover ahead of treatment was  $1.0 \pm 2.5\%$ . Following data collection, plants were treated with herbicide.

Ten plots were established in the Inspiration Point slender false brome infestation at Letchworth State Park, ahead of initial herbicide treatment in 2020, and the percent cover in these plots was  $49.0 \pm 21.9\%$ . This site was treated with herbicide for two years with a third year of minimal manual removal. A lack of consistent treatment at Letchworth State Park over the past couple years has resulted in increased numbers of plants and density compared to the previous years during active management, demonstrating the need for continued management. In 2024, the average slender false brome percent cover was  $12.5 \pm 23.2\%$ .

#### Scotch Broom – 1 partner

Scotch broom is present at a single known site within the region, at Letchworth State Park, and is under the management of Parks. WNY PRISM continues to prioritize surveys and raise awareness for this species to ensure new populations are detected before a potential 30-year seed bank can be established. No new sites were reported in 2024.

Spotted Lanternfly – 1 partner

Spotted lanternfly was first reported in the region in 2022, within the City of Buffalo. This remains the only confirmed site and is managed by AGM and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). WNY PRISM efforts regarding spotted lanternfly include outreach efforts and the Spotted Lanternfly Trap Monitoring Program, which you can find more information about in the Community Science section of this report. WNY PRISM staff were able to visit the site this fall and had the opportunity to observe live adults for the first time.



*Spotted lanternfly displaying its bright coloration during a site visit in Buffalo.*

Japanese Stiltgrass – 11 active, 5 partner, 22 inactive

Japanese stiltgrass was hand-pulled at 8 sites covering a total of 21.40 acres and resulted in the removal of 6.5 bags of plants. Herbicide treatment of Japanese stiltgrass was carried out in two parks, Franklin Gulf and Hunters Creek/Mossy Point. The Crew carried out herbicide treatment across 9.1 acres, first in July and then with follow up treatments from late August to early September. Ahead of treatment, an extensive 600-acre survey was carried out at Hunters Creek/Mossy Point to map new infestations within the park. A few smaller populations were mapped in the Hunters Creek portion, while a larger infestation was mapped off-trail in Mossy Point. New plants were manually removed or chemically treated as time permitted.



*Japanese stiltgrass has continued to spread along creeks and streams in Erie County, making eradication no longer a viable management goal in these areas.*

Site monitoring was conducted and included 216.1 acres at Birdsong Park and West Falls Park. This was the first year no plants were found at either site. A new Japanese stiltgrass site was found at Deer Lick Conservation Area in Cattaraugus County as an incidental finding while a staff member was hiking.

Japanese stiltgrass was first reported in the region in 2016, and WNY PRISM began management efforts in 2018. Unfortunately, this species has continued to spread within the region, primarily in Erie County within both known infestations and along associated

waterways. Due to this continued spread, decreased staffing capacity within the WNY PRISM contract, and completion of a grant that had provided additional funding for survey and removal efforts, it was determined that eradication of Japanese stiltgrass was no longer a realistic goal, and the decision was made to remove Japanese stiltgrass from the early detection list for 2025.

Mile-A-Minute – 1 partner, 1 eradicated

The Mile-a-Minute Working Group includes SUNY Brockport, DEC and partners from Finger Lakes PRISM, and is facilitated by WNY PRISM. WNY PRISM is home to a single site that is located at Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and includes satellite populations that are present on two adjacent private properties. A second site in Cattaraugus County is considered eradicated.

WNY PRISM staff was able to assist the SUNY Brockport team on three days during the season to hand-pull mile-a-minute on 3.86 acres at Oak Orchard WMA and surrounding private properties. In 2024, 440 mile-a-minute plants were removed from the area, compared to the almost 5,000 plants removed in 2023. The area was in good shape, and the efforts led to the removal of smaller plants, as the group works towards eradication in the area.



*Mile-a-minute was found and removed amidst dense vegetation at Oak Orchard.*

Amur corktree – 1 active, 1 inactive

Amur corktree is a new addition to WNY PRISM’s priority species list for 2024. This species forms dense stands that can prevent the establishment of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants and releases allelopathic chemicals into the soil that harm native plant species and soil microorganisms. The fruit of amur cork tree is less nutritious than that of native species and may be detrimental to bird populations.

In 2023, WNY PRISM completed site assessments for amur corktree at the two known locations in the region, Akron Falls County Park and Delaware Park. In 2024, Amur corktree was treated at Akron Falls County Park using cut stump methods in partnership with Erie County, and 2.58 acres of the park were treated over two days, however we were unable to gain permission to treat the infestation at Delaware Park.

**Aquatic Early Detection Species**

Water Hyacinth – 2 active, 1 partner, 1 inactive, 4 eradicated

WNY PRISM spent a total of 95.85 hours surveying 265.3 acres at two sites for water hyacinth in 2024 and no plants were found. The two active sites include Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal and Oppenheim Park. First reported in 2021, no plants have been detected at the Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal sites since initial removal efforts. Water hyacinth was first reported at Oppenheim Park in 2015 and while this site has had plants detected and removed in subsequent years, plants were last detected and removed in 2020.

An additional survey was carried out around Tonawanda Island after a water garden with water hyacinth present was observed on a dock. This survey encompassed 114.2 acres and 18 hours of survey efforts. No plants were found during the Tonawanda Island survey. Similarly, the water hyacinth partner site within Dunkirk Harbor was surveyed by the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy and no plants were detected.

Water Lettuce – 3 active, 1 inactive

WNY PRISM staff spent 148.35 hours surveying a total of 369.3 acres at three sites for water lettuce. In 2021, water lettuce populations were found in Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal and the Hyde Park population was found in 2020. No plants were found at any of these sites during 2024 survey efforts. Hyde Park Lake has now been free of water lettuce plants for 4 years, and Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal for 3 years.



*WNY PRISM Boat Stewards surveyed Tonawanda Creek for water hyacinth and water lettuce. While they didn't find any of the target species, they did find and remove some water chestnut.*

Red Swamp Crayfish – 2 active



*Red swamp crayfish found at the Park School in Amherst, NY.*

Red swamp crayfish was first reported in the WNY PRISM region in 2020, in a small pond on the property of the Park School of Buffalo. WNY PRISM's Director, Christopher Pennuto, initiated a trapping program with students from the Park School in 2020, which has continued with select Buffalo State University students adding to the effort. As of November 2024, 2,530 red swamp crayfish have been removed from the pond and, in 2024 alone, the team collected around 1,100 crayfish. Of those collected in 2024, seventeen were calico crayfish (*Faxonius immunis*), which is a native species, while the rest were red swamp

crayfish. Due to the presence of a native species, including the white river crayfish (*Procambarus acutus*), which has been collected previously, management and further survey efforts are being re-evaluated.

In September 2024, a new population of red swamp crayfish was reported and confirmed in Two Mile Creek, in Tonawanda. Seven crayfish have been captured and removed from this system, including a large female carrying a batch of newly hatched young. NYS DEC has been recruited to assist with trapping efforts on this population and will continue into 2025 as the population is investigated.

## Additional Species

### Hydrilla

*Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata)* is a Tier 2 species in the WNY PRISM region and a high priority target for regional, state and federal partners, who are leading removal and monitoring efforts. Since herbicide treatment is necessary for *Hydrilla* management, and WNY PRISM is unable to carry out such treatments, our efforts have primarily involved supporting partners through survey assistance and outreach.

WNY PRISM continued to work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Buffalo District (USACE), DEC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (USFWS) on the Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal *Hydrilla*

Demonstration Project, a multi-year project aimed at eradicating *Hydrilla* and providing information for the development of Best Management Practices. In support of the project, WNY PRISM Stewards provided outreach to members of the public at staffed launches along the Erie Canal throughout sampling and treatment efforts, and they assisted with post treatment surveys over two days.



*Lead Stewards, Jimi Wiggins and Owen Hebler, assisted USACE with Hydrilla post-treatment surveys in September.*

## Approaching Region Species Efforts

An effective early detection program dedicates time and resources to survey and monitoring efforts for approaching region species, so new priority invasive species can be detected as early as possible. All species on the approaching region list were included in the Crew invasive species ID training, so staff were familiar with these species should they be encountered during fieldwork. In addition, resources were made available to partners to provide training for their staff and invasive species profiles were created for those species not already on the WNY PRISM website. No approaching region priority species were found in the WNY PRISM region in 2024.

### Approaching Region Priority Species

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) <i>Actinidia arguta</i>          | Hardy Kiwi            |
| 2) <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>    | Himalayan Balsam      |
| 3) <i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>    | Parrot Feather        |
| 4) <i>Ludwigia peploides</i>        | Primrose-willow       |
| 5) <i>Oplismenus undulatifolius</i> | Wavyleaf Basket Grass |

## Management and Habitat Restoration

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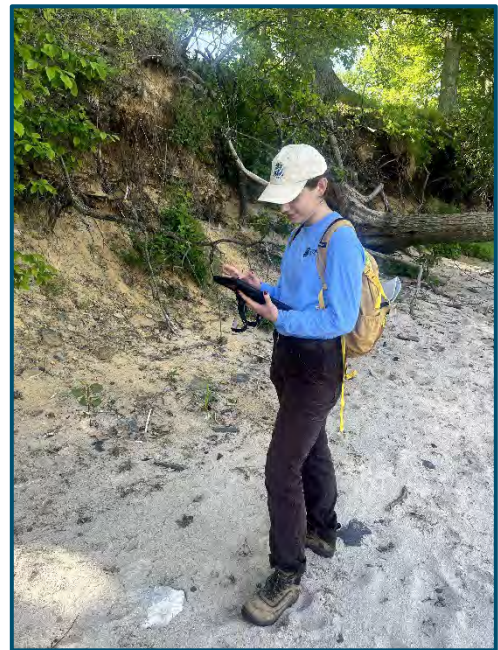
*Goal: Assist with management planning and project implementation focused on long-term, sustainable projects that provide resilience against future invasions, and provide improved ecosystem function and services. Supported efforts will be based on WNY PRISM identified priorities through primarily technical assistance and training, with project implementation assistance when capacity allows.*

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### Crew Assistance Program

The Crew Assistance Program (CAP) continues to be one of WNY PRISM's most successful programs, improving invasive species management across the region by assisting partners with invasive species surveys and mapping, invasive species removal, habitat management, and restoration projects. It offers valuable opportunities for partners to work alongside WNY PRISM's experienced staff and trained seasonal crew to learn about invasive species management and gain experience using removal methods and equipment.

The Crew Assistance Program Request for Proposals was released on Friday, December 1, 2023, and the closing date was set for Friday, January 26, 2024, giving partners eight weeks to submit project proposals. Sixteen proposals, submitted by thirteen unique partners, were received and projects were located in six of eight WNY PRISM region counties. Each proposal was reviewed and prioritized based on our established review criteria and assessed based on the project's ability to fit within our capacity. Eight projects consisting of three survey and mapping projects, one survey and management project and four removal and restoration projects were selected for 2024.



*Hannah Rola, Field Crew Leader, surveyed Wendt Beach as part of the Crew Assistance Program.*

Completed projects resulted in 201.83 acres surveyed and 14.17 acres managed. Reports including summaries of the completed work, the collected data and recommendations for future management actions, were provided to partners for each of the eight completed projects. Partners contributed to the success of projects and recognized the work through organizational newsletters and social media posts.

### Survey and Mapping Projects

Crew Assistance Program survey and mapping projects serve the purpose of providing partners with a basis for which to identify strategies and build a management plan. Surveys primarily consist of general invasive species site inventories, though species focused surveys are also conducted, such as at Boston Forest where the survey focused on burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), an underreported species in the region. WNY PRISM primarily uses the iMap Mobile Advanced tool to collect and manage data and

provides each partner with a written summary of the survey and a map. The project summary includes an overview of how the survey was conducted and what was observed, provides management recommendations, and provides information on how to access the data within iMap.

<b>Project Site</b>	<b>Partner Organization</b>	<b>Acres Surveyed</b>
Boston Forest	Erie County Bureau of Forestry	178.5
Eaton Preserve	The Archaeological Conservancy	9.53
Furman Preserve*	Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc.	6.2
Wendt Beach	Erie County Bureau of Forestry	7.6

Boston Forest: Priority Invasive Species Assessment at Boston Forest – Erie County Bureau of Forestry

Boston Forest Conservation Park is located in Boston, NY, and has 701 acres of wooded property. The property is mainly used for recreational activities and consists of woodlands and meadows. Erie County requested assistance to survey for and map burning bush in a section of Boston Forest and remove plants as time permitted. The Crew surveyed a 178.5-acre section and did not find burning bush. This species is under reported in the WNY PRISM region, so survey data, including this Not Detected record, is helpful to determine the presence and distribution of this species in the region. While surveying for burning bush, the Crew also mapped bush honeysuckle, Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and multi-flora rose.

Eaton Preserve: Eaton Preserve Habitat Restoration Project – The Archaeological Conservancy

The Eaton Preserve is owned by the Archaeological Conservancy and includes an archaeological site bordering Cazenovia Creek. It is a valuable archaeological site for future research and contains artifacts dating back to a mid-sixteenth century Iroquoian village. The Crew conducted a full inventory of invasive species on the site to help the Archaeological Conservancy better understand what invasive species have established and how they can be managed. The goal is to plant native trees on the floodplain and to establish plants that were once common in the area and restore the site to what it may have resembled in the mid-sixteenth century.

The Crew surveyed 9.53 acres of trail, natural areas and along Cazenovia Creek to complete this inventory survey. During the survey 19 species were observed, including monocultures of reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Japanese stiltgrass.

Wendt Beach: Rare Ecological Community Assessment at the Great Lakes Dunes at Wendt Beach – Erie County Bureau of Forestry

Wendt Beach is a 164-acre park used for recreational activities and is home to a forested wetland area with protected plant species such as *Trillium* spp. Other native plants found at Wendt Beach include the common pawpaw and wafer ash. Erie County asked for assistance surveying the shoreline in preparation for restoration efforts. The Crew surveyed 7.6 acres between the edge of the bluff and the Lakeside Shoreline Trail and found 18 species. Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) were found in dense stands along the entire survey area. Invasive shrubs including multi-flora rose, bush honeysuckle, Japanese barberry and privet were also common on site.

*\*Furman Preserve is described within Removal and Restoration Projects section below.*

## Removal and Restoration Projects

The prioritization criteria for removal and restoration projects under the CAP focus on species selection, conservation targets, sustainability, and partnership. Invasive species priorities include Tier 2 species, however projects focused on Tier 3 and Tier 4 species are often selected, if the project successfully addresses the other criteria. WNY PRISM looks for projects where we can work with our partners to achieve long-term, sustainable management success on high priority conservation lands, and where the projects can support improved capacity for partner efforts moving forward.

Five removal projects were selected, each representing either a site or project we have worked on previously, although in different capacities. Species targets included slender false brome, *Phragmites* (*Phragmites australis*), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), invasive shrubs, and knotweed.

Project Site	Partner Organization	Acres Managed
Bergen Swamp	Bergen Swamp Preservation Society	3.75
Furman Preserve	Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc.	3.8
Niagara County	Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District	2.41
Oak Orchard WMA	NYS DEC Region 8	3.93
Rosche Preserve	Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc.	0.28

### Bergen Swamp: Invasive Species Control at Bergen Swamp – Bergen Swamp Preservation Society



*The Crew spent two days in September using the clip and drip method to treat Phragmites at Bergen Swamp.*

The Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS) requested assistance for the management of slender false brome and to push back *Phragmites* infestations out of pristine habitat in the Preserve. Bergen Swamp is designated as a National Natural Landmark and is home to rare habitats, plant communities and species that represent important conservation targets. WNY PRISM has worked with BSPS for several years to move

forward invasive species management within the preserve and this project represents a continuation of these efforts.

The Crew foliar treated slender false brome along both sides of the Pocock Trail, within approximately ten feet on either side of the trail, starting from the back and moving towards the front entrance area. Once this was complete, additional sections further off trail were treated. The Crew returned later in the

season to treat *Phragmites* infestations using clip and drip. The focus was once again on areas along the Pocock Trail and spots where *Phragmites* was encroaching into the high value marl area. A total of 3.75 acres was treated across both species.

Furman Preserve: Preserving a Rare New York Fen – Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc.

Furman Preserve holds a rich sloping fen with an S1 rarity status. There are five or fewer sites with this rarity status known in New York State and this site is home to native plant species that require this rare habitat to grow and thrive. The Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc. (NSSWNY) asked for assistance with manual removal of yellow flag iris and an updated invasive species inventory survey of the site, with additional invasive shrub treatment as time permitted. WNY PRISM has previously assisted with yellow flag iris removal as part of a volunteer workday.



*The Crew manually removed 46 yellow flag iris plants from Furman Fen.*

The Crew completed manual removal of yellow flag iris on site, which involved digging up forty-six plants, and completed an inventory survey over 6.2 acres of the site. Four species were mapped: bush honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and yellow flag iris. After the yellow flag iris removal was complete, the Crew was able to treat the invasive shrubs found during the survey using the cut-stump method. A total of 3.8 acres were treated over two days.

Niagara County: Japanese Knotweed Eradication Project – Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

WNY PRISM has worked with the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation Service (NCSWCD) since 2017 to assist with their ambitious project focused on eradicating knotweed from Niagara County. This project has funding secured to allow for long term sustainability, and measurable progress has been seen at the treated sites. Those factors contribute to the repeated selection and participation in this work from year to year. In 2024, the Crew worked alongside NCSWCD staff for three days at four sites within Niagara County, using stem injection and foliar spraying to treat Japanese knotweed. WNY PRISM treated 2.41 acres of knotweed across 3 days.



*WNY PRISM used stem injection to treat knotweed in Niagara County.*

Oak Orchard WMA: Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area Forest Restoration – NYS DEC Region 8

In 2022 the Crew worked alongside NYS DEC to treat invasive shrubs in 2.89 acres of forest and 2.43 acres of field at Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area. Efforts to restore this area continued in 2023 with DEC conducting follow-up foliar treatments in the areas WNY PRISM had worked, and by working with the National Wild Turkey Federation to treat an additional 2.5 acres. As part of this expanded

effort, DEC and volunteers planted native tree and shrub species in the area in spring of 2024, and placed protective cages over native trees that naturally grew back in areas where invasive species were treated.

In 2024 the Crew worked alongside DEC once again to further expand the area of invasive shrub treatment with removal efforts focused on autumn olive, common buckthorn, bush honeysuckle and multi-flora rose. The majority of invasives found on the site were too large to foliar spray, so the trees and shrubs were cut low to the ground using various tools including loppers, hand saws, brushcutters and chainsaws, the last two operated by NYS DEC staff. Nearly four acres were treated across four days.

### Rosche Preserve: Special Concerns Species Thrive with Partner Care - Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc.

The Rosche Preserve is a 43-acre private wetland located on the floodplain of Conewango Creek in Cattaraugus County. Owned and managed by NSSWNY, the Rosche Preserve includes a NYS Class II Wetland which is home to a population of rare western chorus frogs and supports eastern meadowlark, nesting American woodcock, blue-winged warbler and northern harrier. The NSSWNY requested assistance for treating persistent stands of *Phragmites*. Previous attempts to remove the *Phragmites* involved use of tarps, which needed to be removed after many years. The tarps were removed by NSSWNY volunteers in the spring allowing the remaining *Phragmites* to regenerate to a point where they could be treated with herbicide.



*The WNY PRISM Crew worked with Nature Sanctuary Society of WNY, Inc. volunteers to remove Phragmites from the Rosche Preserve.*

The WNY PRISM Crew worked alongside NSSWNY volunteers in August and October to treat the *Phragmites*. Management consisted of the clip and drip method where volunteers cut the *Phragmites* and the Crew applied glyphosate into the cut, hollow stems. This effort took four days and 0.28 acres were treated.

### **Habitat Management and Restoration Projects**

WNY PRISM implements several habitat management and restoration projects outside of the Crew Assistance Program. These projects often serve as demonstration projects designed to showcase management strategies and methods or may provide training opportunities for staff. However, they may also involve additional priorities and externally funded projects.

#### Great Lakes Center Field Station

The WNY PRISM Crew conducted an invasive species inventory survey of the Great Lakes Center Field Station property at Buffalo State University, located in Buffalo near the Peace Bridge. The Great Lakes

Center is working to restore native communities to the Field Station so that it may better serve as a place of learning and contribute to the regional efforts to restore connectivity along the Niagara River. The Crew surveyed 4.8 acres over two days and identified fifteen invasive species. A summary report was created and provided to the Great Lakes Center along with recommendations for management. In addition to the survey, several common buckthorn were treated.

### Craneridge Homeowners Association

The Craneridge Homeowners Association is a community of 165 homes that first requested assistance from WNY PRISM in 2021 for an invasive species inventory survey as part of their initiative to remove invasive species, plant native species and support a healthy ecosystem within their community. The Crew carried out Crew Assistance Program projects focused on removal in 2022 and 2023. This year the Crew returned to complete removal of invasive shrubs and treat *Phragmites* on site. Ahead of treatment they mapped invasive species in 5.7 acres across three shared demonstration areas. The Crew found sparse plants and little regrowth and used foliar and cut stump herbicide treatment methods to complete follow-up management of 0.52 acres of invasive shrubs. Later in the season they treated 0.11 acres of *Phragmites* using the clip and drip method.

The Craneridge Woodlands & Habitat Committee has built upon WNY PRISM's work by planting native trees and shrubs in areas after invasive species management. They also survey for HWA on site annually and hired contractors to treat infested hemlocks. They are committed to protecting their woodland environment on site and plan to continue these efforts in the future.

### Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park

WNY PRISM first worked at Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park, a property owned and managed by the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy located in Pomfret, NY, in 2021. At that time the Crew conducted an invasive species survey as part of the Crew Assistance Program. The Crew returned this year to map invasive species and obtain updated presence and distribution data to inform management efforts and covered the entire 77-acre site. Based off the survey, a few species were prioritized for management this year. A dense 0.23-acre patch of mugwort was managed using foliar treatment. This species was found in the parking lot and then in a small section of the park and was a management priority to prevent further spread. Japanese barberry was found in a forested section of the property and 1.72 acres of this species was treated with the cut stump method and another 1.23 acres was foliar treated. A small patch of privet located near the parking area was also treated with the cut stump method since this was the only location of this species found on site. WNY PRISM and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy will work together to create a management plan for the site and ensure long-term management and restoration efforts continue in the park.



*WNY PRISM treated mugwort at Cassadaga Lakes Nature Park.*

## Tifft Nature Preserve

WNY PRISM has assisted at Tifft Nature Preserve with invasive species control and native planting in the past through the Crew Assistance Program and several grants, and the Crew returned this year to work on the *East Canal Ecological Renovation at Tifft Nature Preserve* project. Invasive species removal efforts focused on bush honeysuckle, common buckthorn, glossy buckthorn, multi-flora rose, tree of heaven and knotweed. The Crew treated 0.078 acres of shrubs using cut stump, 4.17 acres of shrubs with foliar treatment and 0.74 acres of knotweed with foliar treatment. Restoration efforts included organizing and constructing tree cages and planting American basswood trees, which took place in areas where foliar treatment occurred earlier in the season.

## Akron Falls County Park – Swallow-wort Treatment Plot

In 2023, a test plot of swallow-wort at Akron Falls County Park was foliar treated with Pathfinder II at a rate of 100%, to see if this would be a viable treatment option for this notoriously difficult species to manage. WNY PRISM returned to monitor the plot this year, and the 1 m<sup>2</sup> area that was sprayed had significantly less swallow-wort present than adjacent areas. The swallow-wort present within the plot were also mostly seedlings, which is encouraging.

## **Water Chestnut**

Water Chestnut is a Tier 3 species in the WNY PRISM region and a species of concern for many of our municipal, state and federal partners, particularly within our Southern Tier. To assist with the management of this species, WNY PRISM leads the WNY Water Chestnut Working Group which facilitates communication among members and coordinates survey and management efforts. The working group includes members from fifteen different organizations.

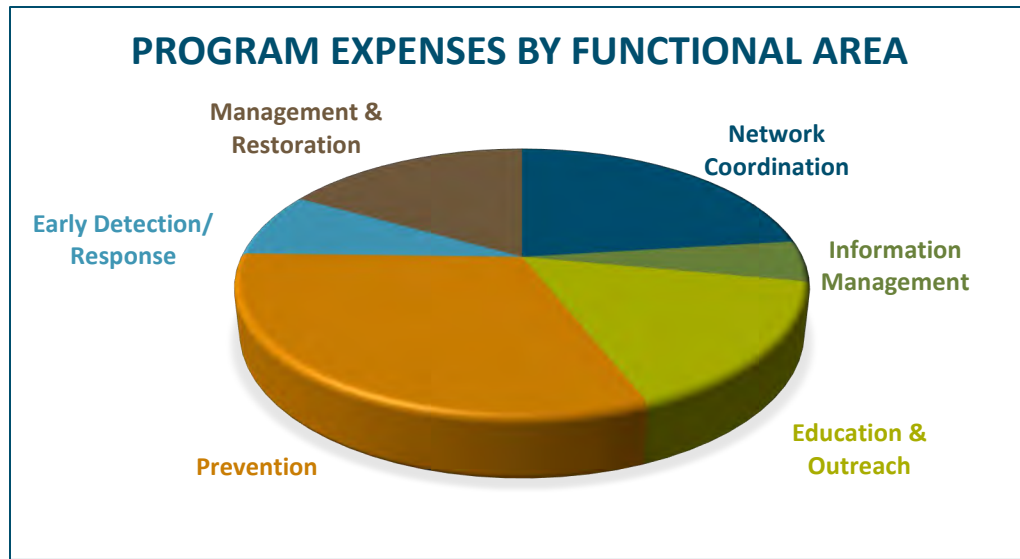
The working group met once in the spring, and again in the fall, to discuss ongoing efforts and to coordinate resources. As part of WNY PRISM's contribution to the working group's efforts, a 540.5-acre survey of the Allegheny Reservoir, adjacent to Friends Boat Launch in Allegheny State Park, was conducted. Allegheny State Park contains three populations of water chestnut, currently under the management of NYS Parks, and this survey was performed to address concerns that there may be spread due to the routine flooding of the reservoir. No water chestnut were found during this 20-person hour survey.



*WNY PRISM Stewards assisted Audubon Community Nature Center with water chestnut removal in July.*

WNY PRISM's Stewards also assisted the Audubon Community Nature Center with continued removal efforts within two ponds located within their property. Stewards contributed 90.5-person hours of removal over two days, removing 10 sleds of water chestnut and European frogbit. As part of early detection site monitoring within Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal, Stewards found and removed 68 plants.

## Summary of Program Expenses



This summary of program expenses is intended to provide a general overview of how WNY PRISM divided time and resources in 2024. Expenses were grouped together by Goal/Core Function. Many of WNY PRISM’s activities fall within multiple functional areas and effort was taken to place expenses appropriately. This is not intended to serve as a financial report.

**Partner/Network Coordination (24%)** – Program administration, grant management, partner communication, working groups and committees, hiring, messaging and marketing.

**Information Management (5%)** – Data collection and data management, prioritization, resource development and outreach, non-early detection survey and monitoring, and research support.

**Education and Outreach (16%)** – Community science programs, pledge to protect campaign, outreach, workshops and trainings, volunteer management, website and social media management, and materials development.

**Prevention (31%)** – Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program, boot brush stations, horizon scanning, resource/materials development and outreach.

**Early Detection/Rapid Response (8%)** – Early detection site monitoring and management, surveys, partner communication, data management, data collection protocols, working group facilitation, research support and outreach.

**Management & Habitat Restoration (17%)** – Crew Assistance Program, pre and post treatment monitoring, removal, restoration, development of best management practices, partner communication, data collection and management, resource development and outreach.

## WNY PRISM Partners

*Bolded partners are new in 2024*

Adirondack Park Invasive  
Plant Program

Alfred Farmers Market  
Alfred State College

**Allegheny Highlands Council  
- Boy Scouts of America**

American Association of  
Pesticide Safety Educators

American Legion Post 362  
Amherst Conservation

Advisory Council  
Amherst Public Library

Amherst State Park  
Arcade Chamber of

Commerce

**Association for Conservation  
of Recreational and Natural  
Spaces (ACORNS)**

Audubon Community Nature  
Center

Belmont Farmers Market

Bergen Swamp Preservation  
Society

Buffalo and Erie County

Botanical Gardens

Buffalo Audubon Society

Buffalo Museum of Science

Buffalo Niagara Heritage  
Village

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Buffalo Olmsted Parks

Conservancy

Buffalo Science in the Pub

Buffalo Sewer Authority

Buffalo Women of

Environmental Learning &

Leadership (BWELL)

Buffalo Zoo

Byron-Bergen Central

Schools

Canal Village Farmers Market  
Capital Region PRISM

Catskill Regional Invasive  
Species Partnership

Cattaraugus County

Department of Public Works

Cattaraugus County Highway  
Department

CCE of Allegany County

CCE of Erie County

CCE of Genesee County

CCE of Niagara County

CCE of Orleans County

CCE of Wyoming County  
Certified Nursery Landscape

Professionals

Chautauqua County Forest

Pest Taskforce

Chautauqua Institution

Chautauqua Lake &  
Watershed Management

Alliance

Chautauqua Lake Association

Chautauqua Watershed

Conservancy

Chautauqua-Conewango

Consortium

Christ the King Seminary -

Diocese of Buffalo

Citizens Coalition for Wildlife  
and Environment

City of Buffalo

City of Dunkirk

City of Lockport

City of Niagara Falls

City of North Tonawanda

City of Tonawanda

Clarence Hollow Farmers

Market

Conewango Creek

Watershed Association

Cornell University

Craneridge Association

Daemen College

Don't Move Firewood

Eastern Monarch Butterfly  
Farm

Eckert Herbarium

**Ecological Research Institute**

Elmwood Village Farmers  
Market

Environmental Protection  
Agency

Erie Canal Harbor

Development Corporation

Erie County 4-H Club

Erie County Agricultural  
Society

Erie County Department of  
Environment and Planning

Erie County Department of  
Parks, Recreation and

Forestry

Erie County Soil and Water

Conservation District

Faun Lake Association

Federated Garden Clubs of  
New York

Finger Lakes PRISM

Finger Lakes Regional

Watershed Alliance

Fox Valley Farmers Market

Friends of Bond Lake

Friends of Iroquois National  
Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Letchworth State  
Park

Friends of Reinstein Woods

Friends of Times Beach

Friends of Unity Island  
 Gardens Buffalo Niagara  
 Genesee Country Farmers  
 Market  
 Genesee County Agricultural  
 Society  
 Genesee County Park and  
 Forest  
 Genesee County Soil and  
 Water Conservation District  
 Genesee River Wilds  
 Girl Scouts of Western New  
 York - Camp Timbercrest  
 Grand Island Conservation  
 Advisory Committee  
 Grand Island Memorial  
 Library  
**Grassroots Gardens WNY -  
 Tyler Street Community  
 Garden**  
 Great Lakes Action Agenda  
 Great Lakes Center at SUNY  
 Buffalo State  
 Great Lakes Hydrilla  
 Collaborative  
 Great Lakes Media  
 Great Lakes Phragmites  
 Collaborative  
 Great Lakes Restoration  
 Initiative  
 Greystone Nature Preserve  
 Groundworks Buffalo  
 Habitattitude  
 Hamburg Farmers Market  
 Hikerbabes Community:  
 Western New York Chapter  
 Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant  
 Invasive Species Advisory  
 Committee  
 Invasive Species  
 Coordination Section  
 Invasive Species Council

Jamestown Community  
 College  
 Jamestown Farmers Market  
 Jamestown Garden Club  
 Ken-Ton School District  
 Lake Erie Seaway Trail Center  
 Lake Erie Watershed  
 Protection Alliance  
 Lily Dale Assembly  
 Lockport Community Market  
 Lockport Public Library  
 Long Island Invasive  
 Management Area  
 Lower Hudson PRISM  
 M&T's Think Green Resource  
 Group  
 Master Forest Owners  
 Master Gardeners  
 Master Naturalists  
 National Plant Diagnostic  
 Network  
 Natural Resources  
 Conservation Service – USDA  
 Nature Sanctuary Society of  
 Western New York  
 New York Farm Bureau  
 New York iMapInvasives  
 Program  
 New York Invasive Species  
 Research Institute  
 New York Natural Heritage  
 Program  
 New York New Jersey Trail  
 Conference  
 New York Sea Grant  
 New York State Turfgrass  
 Association  
 Niagara County Parks  
 Niagara County SWCD  
 Niagara Frontier Antique &  
 Classic Boat Club  
 Niagara Frontier Botanical  
 Society

Niagara River Greenway  
 Niagara University  
 NIASMA  
 North American Invasive  
 Species Management  
 Association  
 North Buffalo Farmers  
 Market  
 North Tonawanda City  
 Market  
 NYS Canal Corporation  
 NYS Classic Fishing  
 Tournaments  
 NYS Department of  
 Agriculture and Markets  
 NYS Department of  
 Environmental Conservation  
 NYS Department of  
 Transportation  
 NYS Federation of Lake  
 Associations  
 NYS Hemlock Initiative  
 NYS Office of Parks,  
 Recreation, and Historic  
 Preservation  
 NYS Thruway Authority  
 Olean Farmers Market  
 Onondaga Environmental  
 Institute  
 Ontario Invasive Plant  
 Council  
 Orchard Park Library  
 Orleans County Soil and  
 Water Conservation District  
**Outside Chronicles**  
 Panama Rocks  
 Penn Dixie Fossil Park &  
 Nature Reserve  
 Perry Farmers Market  
 Pfeiffer Nature Center  
 Plant WNY  
 Play. Clean. Go.  
 PUSH Buffalo

Reinstein Woods  
Research Foundation for  
SUNY Buffalo State  
Richmond Memorial Library  
Riverside Community High  
School  
Roger Tory Peterson Institute  
Rushford Lake Association  
Saint Bonaventure University  
Salamanca Farmers Market  
Science Demands Action  
Seneca Nation of Indians  
Silver Lake Association  
Silver Lake Water Quality  
Group  
South Towns Garden Club  
St. Lawrence Eastern Lake  
Ontario PRISM  
Starry Stonewort  
Collaborative  
Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers  
Strykersville Senior Citizens  
SUNY Brockport  
SUNY Buffalo State  
University  
SUNY College of  
Environmental Science and  
Forestry

SUNY Fredonia  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Park School of Buffalo  
**The Stewardship Network  
Gloves for Good**  
Tifft Nature Preserve  
Town of Amherst  
Town of Aurora  
Town of Bergen  
Town of Boston Conservation  
Advisory Council  
Town of Byron  
Town of Cheektowaga  
Town of Clarence  
**Town of Clarence  
Conservation Advisory  
Council**  
Town of Eden – Conservation  
Advisory Board  
Town of Hanover  
Town of Holland  
Town of Newfane  
Town of Tonawanda  
Town of Tonawanda – Youth,  
Parks & Recreation  
Town of Tonawanda Public  
Library - Kenmore Branch  
Town of West Seneca

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
– Buffalo District  
U.S. Department of  
Agriculture – Animal and  
Plant Health Inspection  
Service  
U.S. Department of  
Agriculture – National  
Resources Conservation  
Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
– Lower Great Lakes Fish and  
Wildlife Conservation Office  
University at Buffalo  
University of Georgia  
Village of Allegany  
Village of East Aurora  
Village of Holley  
WBFO 88.7 NPR  
West Seneca Chamber of  
Commerce  
**West Seneca Lions Club**  
Western New York Land  
Conservancy  
WGRZ Channel 2  
WNY Forest Pest Taskforce  
Wyoming County Soil and  
Water Conservation District