



WNY PRISM

Partnering to Protect Western New York from Invasive Species

Fall/Winter 2015 Newsletter

Vol. I Issue 2

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

Invasive Species Priorities

By Patricia Shulenburg, WNY PRISM

Throughout the past several months, WNY PRISM and Partners have collaborated to evaluate terrestrial, aquatic and early detection species priorities in our region. Prioritization is essential due to the number and distribution of invasive species across the region. This allows stakeholders to focus efforts to prevent, manage and monitor target species and helps guide education and outreach initiatives. The process to establish species priorities includes:

- Engaging terrestrial and aquatic working groups
- Universal scoring of each species using statewide metrics/risk assessments
- Incorporating understanding of Pathways of Invasion and effective management options for species
- Targeting education and outreach efforts

Species found in and around western New York were screened and ranked using NYS risk assessments. Metrics were used to evaluate the distribution and abundance in the geographic region, likelihood the species will become present or expand its distribution, and estimated number of infested sites. Examples of priority species in our region include phragmites, Asian clam, hemlock wooly adelgid, and water chestnut.

Many of our terrestrial priorities are well-established within WNY and therefore management efforts are based on conservation targets or asset-protection. In most cases, a control option or combination of techniques including biological, mechanical, or chemical methods are effective. However, some species still need effective management methods to be identified.

Early detection priority species in WNY include Asian longhorned beetle, northern snakehead, water hyacinth and mile-a-minute vine. To be effective in early detection, it is important to identify potential new threats in time to allow for mitigation, and the effective use of resources to decrease the likelihood of species establishment. Therefore, education and outreach is a key strategy for addressing early detection species.



To see our full list of priorities and to download our new Keep A Lookout! publications, please visit our website.

Hydrilla Update

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are in their second year of the Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal Hydrilla Control Demonstration Project. The goal of this project is to stop hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) from further expansion into other areas of NYS and the Great Lakes. The project team, including USACE, NYS DEC, USFWS and WNY PRISM, used acoustic monitoring, rake toss sampling, and tuber sampling to determine the areas of dense macrophyte beds. The aquatic herbicide endothall (Aquathol K) was applied the week of July 27, 2015 from the Delaware bridge in Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, to West Canal Marina in the Town of Pendleton. Hydrilla decreased significantly after treatment in 2014 and initial monitoring after the 2015 treatment has also shown positive results. The project is expected to continue for the next several years.



Left: Rake toss sampling hydrilla. Right: Richard Ruby (USACE) demonstrates acoustic monitoring techniques.

Steering Committee Members

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper
Conewango Creek Watershed Association
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Ecology & Environment, Inc.
SUNY Buffalo State
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
New York Sea Grant
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Department of Transportation
New York State Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals
New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
SUNY Fredonia
The Nature Conservancy
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
USFWS, Lower Great Lakes Office

Partner Spotlight: Tift Nature Preserve

By Maris Grundy



The mission of Tift Nature Preserve... ..is to protect and manage the natural resources and historical value of a remnant wetland and reclaimed brownfield.is to connect environmental education with authentic scientific research.is to provide a nature preserve for public enjoyment in an urban setting.

Located on Buffalo's waterfront, Tift Nature Preserve is a site where human history has been recorded through the represented habitats and wildlife now found there. Prior to Tift's designation as a nature preserve in 1972, the site was historically a coastal marsh then transformed into a farm, transshipment center, followed by a city dump. Needless to say, the current 264 acres of forest, marsh, meadows and ponds have been affected by the site's history of disturbance.

The 75 acre freshwater cattail marsh at Tift is one place impacted by a history of human use and disturbance. The marsh is a key stopover for migratory waterfowl and quality nesting habitat for marsh birds. The establishment of the invasive species *Phragmites australis*, also called common reed, has affected the cover of native vegetation in the wetland. *Phragmites* offers little value for birds and wildlife. Over the past five years, Ecologists and Technicians have monitored and treated this invasive plant through a combination of mechanical and chemical controls. Following a successful removal of phragmites, this summer 15,000 plugs comprised of 19 native species were planted in the wetland. So far, the native plants have been establishing well and are reclaiming space once inhabited by phragmites.

Restoring the land from a past of human misuse, the hope is that Tift's marsh habitat can be restored to support native wildlife and create a positive future as an urban nature sanctuary. As a unique site where nature and city meet, Tift is a great place to learn and enjoy nature as well as address history and plant a greener future.

Go to www.tift.org for more information or to plan your visit!



Inset Photo: Before planting. Large Photo: Establishment of native species after native planting. Photo credit: Tift Nature Preserve.

Upcoming Events

10/8 - WNY EAB Taskforce Mtg.

10/10 - WNY Earth Science Day @ Penn Dixie Site

10/17 - NYSFOLA Western Region Mtg.

10/28 - Webinar: NYS Invasive Species Speaker Series

10/28 - Webinar: Native Warm Season Grasses for Restoration

Save the date!

Nov. 19, 2015

You are invited to the next Full Partnership Meeting held at SUNY Fredonia from 1-3pm.

11/18 - Webinar: NYS Invasive Species Speaker Series

12/8 - Webinar: Economic and Ecological Effects of Roadside Mowing

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



Lexy Wagner identifies spotted wing drosophila with our Partners at CCE.

To subscribe to the WNY PRISM listserv email:

cce-westernprism-l-request@cornell.edu

Type "join" in the subject line.

Leave the body of message blank.

Don't include signature or text.



Above: WNY PRISM staff surveys for oriental weatherfish in Chautauqua Lake. Right: Purple loosestrife beetle collection.



2015 WNY PRISM Seasonal Crew: Mat Bilz, Lexy Wagner, Patricia Shulenburg, and Lucy Nuessle.

2015 Seasonal Crew Highlights

By Lexi Wagner, WNY PRISM

Our Crew had a very productive summer this year surveying western New York's beautiful parks and nature preserves, educating people about invasive species, and getting our hands dirty doing a variety of invasive species removal projects. Our season started with a survey of Amherst State Park (ASP), using iMapInvasives to identify and plot species. Our Partners at ASP are committed to ongoing environmental education and have used this information to update their website (www.amherststatepark.org) and design interpretive signs to place within the park, to educate their visitors.

Next, we surveyed the Stella Niagara Preserve where we were joined by WNY Land Conservancy staff and volunteers. Then we moved on to Bergen Swamp, home to a variety of rare and protected plants and animals, and unfortunately, one of the only infestations of slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) known in the Northeast. Our crew spent two days surveying the hemlock forests, bogs and fens in Bergen for *Brachypodium* and other invasives in this wildlife area.

Invasive species threaten not just our scenic natural areas, but our farms as well. We partnered with the Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension to set up traps in Thorps Farm in East Aurora. Staff examined the insects caught, and identified spotted wing drosophila (SWD) an invasive fruit fly that destroys healthy fruit.

Hydrilla and water chestnut are two aquatic threats to western New York. Our Crew joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in sampling the aquatic vegetation of the Tonawanda Creek, as part of their Hydrilla Control Demonstration Project. We traveled to Chautauqua County to remove water chestnut at the Jamestown Audubon Center and Nature Preserve, with the help of some very committed volunteers. We also surveyed creeks within the Chautauqua Lake watershed and are pleased to report that we found few additional water chestnut plants! However, while electrofishing in Ball Creek, WNY PRISM Director, Dr. Pennuto confirmed the presence of oriental weatherfish, an invasive species that was last surveyed for in 2010.

We also worked at Tift Nature Preserve throughout the summer, removing and treating phragmites, Japanese knotweed, buckthorn and honeysuckle in order to help the native trees and wetland plants recently planted there thrive.

On behalf of our crew I would like to thank our Partners for an incredible field season. We gained invaluable knowledge and experience in invasive species ID, prevention, and management while having the opportunity to see the beauty of western New York!

From WNY PRISM

Partners,

I am very excited to share with all of you our Fall Newsletter and the many accomplishments we have to boast of. It has been a busy past few months, both in the office and in the field. But first, I would like to thank our seasonal crew, who did an incredible job as they were sent to the far corners of our region to work with Partners on so many important invasive species efforts.



Andrea Locke, WNY
PRISM Coordinator

This summer, WNY PRISM completed 6 invasive species mapping projects within 4 counties, participated in 22 events, and assisted Partners on 8 removal projects ranging from manual removal of honeysuckle from Kennelegunn Nature Preserve to herbicide treatment of Japanese knotweed from Tiff Nature Preserve and right here at the WNY PRISM Office. Also, with help from our Partners, we were able to get invasive species and PRISM information out to nearly all of our County Fairs.

We have seen incredible growth for WNY PRISM in 2015, including the launch of our website and creation of Working Groups, responsible for the development of our new priority species lists. All of this wouldn't be possible if not for the strong Partnership Network we are continuing to grow.

Please consider joining us for our next Full Partnership Meeting, to be held on Thursday, November 19, 2015 from 1:00 - 3:00 pm, at SUNY Fredonia. We will have guest speakers, review regional invasive species management progress for 2015 and look to the future with our 2016 Work Plan. I hope to see all of you there and I encourage you to bring your thoughts and ideas!

Sincerely,

Andrea

Statewide Updates

- The NYS DEC welcomes Catherine McGlynn as the new AIS Coordinator. Her roles include implementing the state aquatic invasive species management plan by assisting the Adirondack Park AIS Spread Prevention Pilot Program, boat stewardship programs, hydrilla control, and additional management projects throughout New York.
- The Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA) is a guide to promote successful ecosystem-based management through existing programs and partnerships involving many state, federal, academic and nonprofit, stakeholders. Working Group meetings have been held for both lake Erie and Lake Ontario to identify watershed challenges and specific opportunities to collaboratively accomplish GLAA projects. Sub group meetings address concerns including water quality, sustainable resilient communities, and natural resources. Invasive species projects continue to be a priority in the Great Lakes basin. For more information about the GLAA or to attend a meeting visit www.dec.ny.gov
- Keep an eye out for new state regulations on Aquatic Invasive Species prevention, expected later this fall.



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WNY PRISM

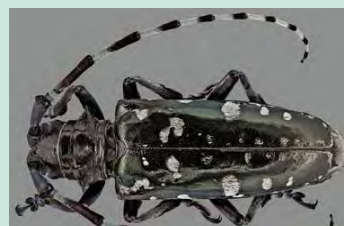


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Species Profile: Asian Longhorned Beetle

Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) may not yet be present in WNY, however it is important to monitor for this insect to prevent establishment of a new invasive.

ALB has led to the loss of more than 130,000 trees in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio and Illinois and is costly to manage and eradicate.



ALB Photo Credit: Steven Valley,
Oregon Dept. of Agriculture,
bugwood.org

The beetle is 1 – 1.5" long, has long antennae, banded in black and white and longer than the body. Their body is shiny black with distinctive white spots. They have 6 legs and may have a bluish tint to the feet. It leaves dime sized round exit holes, woody frass, and wounds on trees, which may be easy to spot this time of year.

For more information about ALB and eradication programs, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov or www.AsianLonghornedBeetle.com.