



Partnership For
Regional Invasive
Species Management

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Extension
(315)788-8450

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Oneida County:
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Oswego County:
Oswego County Soil &
Water District
(315)592-9663

St. Lawrence County:
Cornell Cooperative
Extension
(315)379-9192

S_{t.} L_{awrence} E_{astern} L_{ake} O_{ntario}

About the SLELO PRISM

"Teaming Up to Stop the Spread of Invasive Species"

Invasive species pose a serious ecological and economic threat in the St. Lawrence – Eastern Lake Ontario region of New York and indeed the entire state.

The St. Lawrence – Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership For Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) was formed in 2005 to combat the spread of invasives and mitigate associated threats. Our overall mission is to protect the natural and cultural integrity of aquatic and terrestrial areas in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties from invasive species. Formally recognized by the state in 2011, our PRISM has made tremendous progress towards the prevention of new species and the management of existing species within the PRISM.

SLELO provides region-wide coordination for invasive species monitoring and management across the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems within our 7,600-square mile PRISM region.

SLELO partners promote prevention, early detection and rapid response of invasive species through development and dissemination of educational materials and programs, documentation of species distributions, promotion of integrated habitat management strategies, and builds consensus for resource protection through partnerships with residents, institutions and agencies. Hosted by the Central & Western NY Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the SLELO PRISM has and continues to make significant progress towards invasive species management by utilizing the support and expertise of our partners.

From early detection to rapid response and education, SLELO shares several goals with our PRISM partners. To focus immediate priorities, we have targeted several invasive species. Invasive Species Program Coordinator Rob Williams, has engaged and rallied the SLELO partnership in a strong and focused way, one which will certainly help our PRISM to achieve our goals and objectives.



WHAT IS AN INVASIVE SPECIES?

In recent years many terms have been thrown around in relation to the subject of invasive species: non-native, exotic, nuisance, introduced, alien and noxious species. Sometimes these terms are used incorrectly, or interchangeably. According to the New York State Task Force on Exotic Species, “*an invasive species is one that is 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.*”

Any living thing can be invasive if it meets the criteria quoted above: animals, fish, insects, plants, or diseases. In general, invasive species have several characteristics in common:

- They are habitat generalists and are able to invade a wide range of sites. (Ex. pale swallow-wort)
- As plants, their seeds tend to germinate earlier in the spring or they leaf out before native species. Therefore they out compete native species for resources. (Ex. Norway Maple)
- They are non-native and have few natural predators. (Ex. emerald ash borer)
- They have a high reproductive output. (Ex. feral swine)
- As plants, they have long flowering and fruiting periods, their seeds are wind dispersed and they tend to form large, monotypic stands. (Ex. purple loosestrife)

Invasive species are not a new problem: the gypsy moth, which is native to Asia, was accidentally released in the U.S. in 1868; chestnut blight, a fatal disease that has wiped out most of our American

chestnut trees, was introduced from Japan in 1900. What is new is a global economy that carries with it hundreds of pathways that allow for the introduction of non-native species. Ballast water, canals, roadways, shipping materials and containers, ATV's and heavy equipment are just some of the ways that potentially invasive organisms are introduced, or moved around.

Not all non-native species are problems and become invasive. Many of our food crops and livestock are not native and they are beneficial! Honey bees, for example, are native to Europe. Some non-native species have no impact and are well-behaved. Examples include lilacs and Queen Anne's lace. Less than 0.1% of non-native introductions can be considered “invasive”. This is a very small number, but it has a huge impact.

Each **year** invasive species cost us an estimated 137 to 146 **billion** dollars! Invasives reduce water quality and reduce the productivity of fisheries, forests and agricultural lands. They reduce property values and impair recreation. Let's not forget about the ecological impacts- erosion, habitat and species loss, and altered nutrient cycles are just some of the problems created by invasive species.

The SLELO PRISM is interested in all invasive species that are a threat to our region. The list below includes the species that are currently our main focus. This list is fluid and will change as new species are introduced and as other species are controlled.



Japanese Knotweed, Salmon River, Photo by Greg Chapman

Below is a partial list of invasive species that can be found within the SELO PRISM.

Plants

Aquatic: Eurasian milfoil, Water chestnut, European frogbit.

Terrestrial: Swallow-wort, Giant hogweed, Purple loosestrife, Glossy buckthorn, Japanese knotweed.

Animals/Organisms

Aquatic: Hemimysis, Round goby, Zebra/Quagga Mussels.

Terrestrial: European Bore/Feral swine

Insects:

“On our watch list”: Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Long-horned Beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. *Not currently found in SLELO region.*

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PREVENTION

- Established an Invasive Species Protection Zone (ISPZ) on the Tug Hill core forest protecting 150,000 acres of forests lands.
- Conducted 3 forest pest prevention activities.
- Conducted surveillance on 9-priority conservation areas.
- Called out 2-priority pathways: Ports of Entry & Fisheries Bait.

EARLY DETECTION RAPID RESPONSE

- Completed early detection assessments on 9-priority conservation areas and developed “High Priority Area” (HPA) protocol.
- Completed early detection assessments on the Tug Hill ISPZ.
- Completed 4 Rapid Responses.

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

- Treated 141 Giant Hogweed sites using 3-different methods.
- Treated 53 Swallow-wort sites in 9-priority conservation areas.
- Assisted with a Water Chestnut hand-harvest in the Salmon River Estuary.
- Removed 1.5 cubic yards of Japanese Stilt grass from 2-sites (Selkirk State Park & Deer Creek Weed Management Area (WMA)).
- Assisted with the control of 209 acres of Water Chestnuts on the Oswego River.
- Assisted with the control of Glossy Buckthorn on two priority sites, the Silver Lake Fen and forested land near the Happy Valley WMA.



Whetstone Reservoir, Photo by Mike McHale

EDUCATION OUTREACH

- Sponsored five Public Information Sessions, 1 per SLELO county reaching appx. 180 people and 4 organizations.
- Sponsored 3-Citizen Science events targeted at Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Long horned Beetle and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.
- Distributed over 700 brochures & info flyers.
- Supported Sea Grant’s Boat Launch Steward Program.
- Exhibited at conferences and events (Local Government Conference, Salmon.River.Fish Hatchery, Conservation Field Days, partner events).

SITE RESTORATION

- We have helped to restore 50.02 acres of globally rare Alvar Communities in the eastern Lake Ontario coastline (both inland and coastal).
- We have restored 19.52 acres of rare “Fen” habitat.
- Worked towards restoring 3.6 acres of freshwater dune barrier system within the Eastern Lake Ontario Coastline.
- Strategic Measurable (s) Silver Lake Fen Dunes at Black Pond Coastline
 - Restored 0.39 acres of wetland habitats.
 - Restored 5.8 acres of important habitats found in WMA’s.
 - We have significantly reduced the potential human health threats posed by Giant Hogweed by treating 136 sites.
 - Worked towards restoring over 230 acres of freshwater resources.

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN



I must say, 2012 was a great year for the SLELO PRISM thanks to the collaboration and commitment from our partners and from the support we receive from The Nature Conservancy as our host organization. Being our first state-funded year, we accomplished much and I would invite all who are interested to view our 2012 Annual Report available from our website at www.sleloinvasives.org.

Our work to restore and protect the ecological integrity of the eastern Lake Ontario Basin and Northern New York's unique natural & cultural resources from the threat of invasive species is based upon the goals and objectives identified by our partners as outlined in our five year strategic plan. This plan is what guides our work and what shall shape our efforts in the upcoming field season.

Our partners will soon be developing an "Annual Work Plan" for implementation in 2013. As in 2012, our work will be based around the seven goals which we strive to reach: Prevention, Early Detection/Rapid Response, Cooperation, Information Management, Control, Restoration and Education. We will implement follow-up work from last year as well as new work for this season including five special projects to include: The Salmon River Initiative, Water Chestnut Control, new signage for the Tug Hill Invasive Species Prevention Zone, Swallow-wort and Purple Loosestrife control. In addition to invasive species control work we will implement strategies to prevent the introduction of new species along with extensive public education and outreach.

I can't speak highly enough about our partners. They are interested in the subject matter, there is a tremendous amount of expertise within the partnership, they are engaged, motivated and work extremely well together. I am impressed by what our partners have accomplished and am equally confident that 2013 will be another great season.

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