

From Madison County Courier:

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SLELO PRISM Coordinating Invasive Species



(Oswego County, NY – Aug. 2012) Partners of the SLELO-PRISM (St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario – Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) have been busy conducting field work to identify and control invasive species in the eastern Lake Ontario region. Invasive species are plants, animals, insects and other organisms that are nonnative to the area and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Invasive species of plants, animals, insects and microorganisms are among the most serious threats to native species, habitats and ecosystems within the five county area that define the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario (SLELO) Region. Invasive species interfere with many types of outdoor recreation. They reduce crop yields and interfere with operations on local farms. Along public roads and highways, invasive plants restrict visibility and create roadside hazards. Invasive insects and diseases kill trees in forested areas as well as along community streets. The economic impact of invasive species in the United States alone has been estimated at 120 billion annually. Local communities have been challenged with controlling invasive species or remediating their impacts at costs ranging from several thousand to millions of dollars.

Utilizing a small field crew consisting of only four people, the SLELO partnership has made tremendous progress in their first season. Attacking species such as Giant Hogweed, Pale Swallow-wort and Water Chestnut Plants, the SLELO field crew continues to effectively address invasive species threats to our region. Turning early detection initiatives into rapid response events has resulted in the control of several species on numerous sites. Over 141 Giant Hogweed sites have been identified and treated along with 18 sites contaminated with Swallow-wort. The SLELO field crew has also assisted with the removal of hundreds of pounds of Water Chestnut Plants from local waterways.

According to PRISM Coordinator, Rob Williams, “Our four person team has already exceeded our expectations for planned work in 2012 – The SLELO field team consists of Mike Parks, Greg Chapman, Mike McHale and Sarah Conley. Together this team conducts early detection, control work and provides education and outreach to the public”.

For more information on invasive species prevention and control or the SLELO Partnership, the public is invited to visit www.sleloinvasives.org