

Fish Creek Wildlife Management Area SLELO-PRISM Early Detection Surveillance

June 10 and 18, 2013



Figure 1: Panoramic view of Fish Creek WMA near West Lake Road Parking Area, photo taken by Mike McHale.
Report prepared by Logan West and Mike McHale on 6/20/13

Introduction and Background¹

The Fish Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 4,438-acre tract of land located in southwestern St. Lawrence County (Figure 2), New York, eight miles west of the city of Ogdensburg and one mile south of Black Lake (Figure 3).

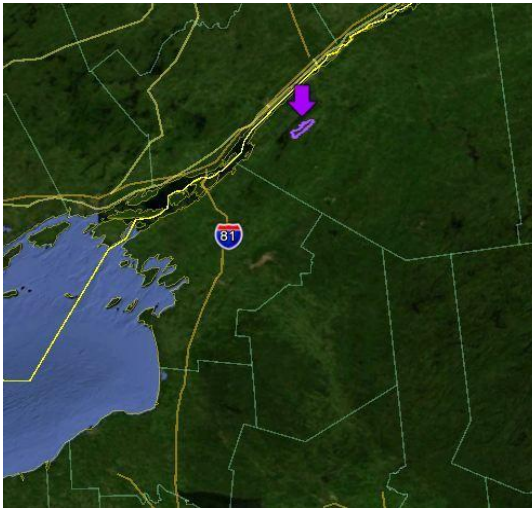


Figure 2: Position of Fish Creek WMA in St. Lawrence County



Figure 3: Fish Creek WMA highlighted in purple near Black Lake.

Fish Creek WMA consists of a 2,046 acre natural wetland which is primarily an emergent marsh whose water level is dependent on the many beaver dams on the Fish Creek drainage and

¹ Introduction and background taken from Department of Environmental Conservation Web site (except for Figures 1 & 2): <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9322.html>

2,392 acres of upland most of which is forested. The emergent marsh is mainly cattail with flooded shrubs interspersed throughout the area. There is a hardwood swamp along the fringe of the emergent marsh. The upland portion contains approximately 1000 acres of softwood scattered throughout the area which deer use as wintering areas and 861 acres of young northern hardwoods that are being managed using commercial forest sales. There are 93 acres of open grassland maintained for ground nesting birds.

Fish Creek WMA with its diverse habitat provides many recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, trapping, bird watching, and canoeing. White-tail deer, turkey, cottontail rabbit, and grouse can be found on the area as well as waterfowl, marsh birds, and songbirds which are attracted to the large wetland. Furbearers include beaver, muskrat, mink, and otter. There are two canoe launches, one near the village of Pope Mills and the other near the Macomb/Depeyster town line on State Route #184. Keep in mind that there are numerous obstacles along the Fish Creek drainage such as beaver dams and cattail mats which make for difficult paddling. There are no developed hiking trails on the area. No special permits are required to use the area.

Survey Methods and Objectives

In preparation for establishing and conducting Early Detection and Rapid Response surveillance targeting invasive species, a map of Fish Creek WMA with six High Probability Areas (HPA's) was created (Figure 4). HPA's are areas where human activities or site conditions increase the probability that invasive species will be detected and/or become established.

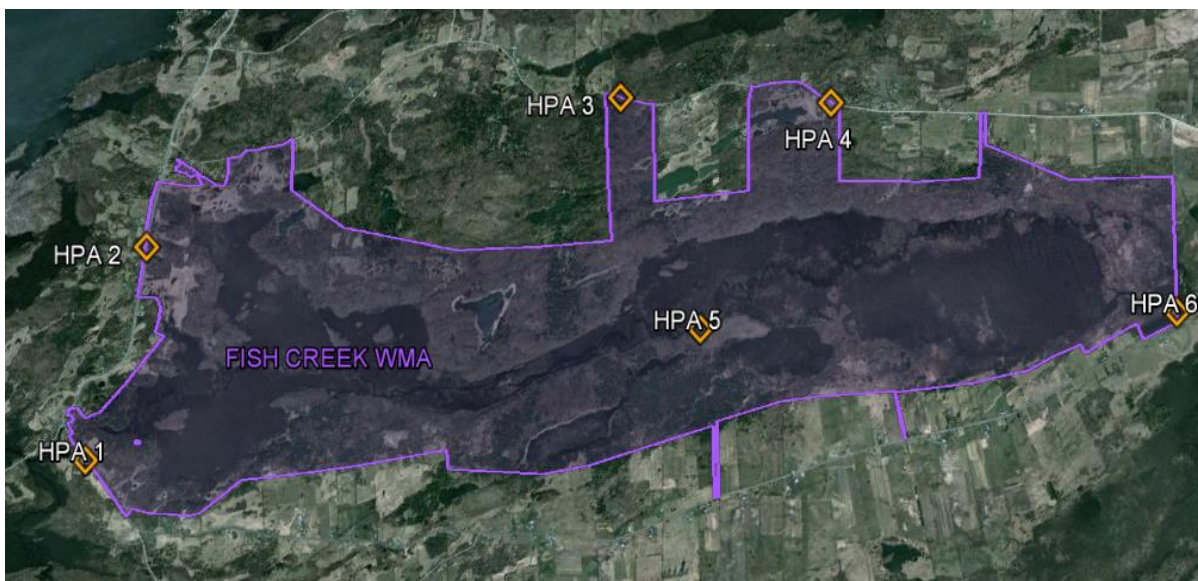


Figure 4: Distribution of HPA's within the Fish Creek WMA

SLELO-PRISM
c/o The Nature Conservancy
269 Ouderkirk Road. Pulaski, NY 13142
Rob Williams, Coordinator

Table 1: HPA locations and latitude/longitude coordinates

HPA	Location	Latitude	Longitude
HPA-1	Pope Mills Parking Area & Trail	44.48342	-75.5769
HPA-2	Rt. 58 Parking Area & Trail	44.49898	-75.5829
HPA-3	Bishop Road Parking Area & Trail	44.52877	-75.5467
HPA-4	Lake Road West Parking Area	44.53765	-75.5267
HPA-5	Rt. 184 Parking Area & Trail	44.51833	-75.5264
HPA-6	Factory Rd. Intersection Parking Area	44.54022	-75.4826

On June 10, 2013, a terrestrial examination of the six HPA's was conducted, and visual observations along the roadsides that border the WMA were recorded (Figure 5: yellow track). The crew utilized a handheld Garmin GPSMAP* 62 to track the travel route and record waypoints.

The surveillance crew revisited the Fish Creek WMA on June 18 to conduct an aquatic examination of HPA's with water access points for car-top boat launching (Figure 5: red track).

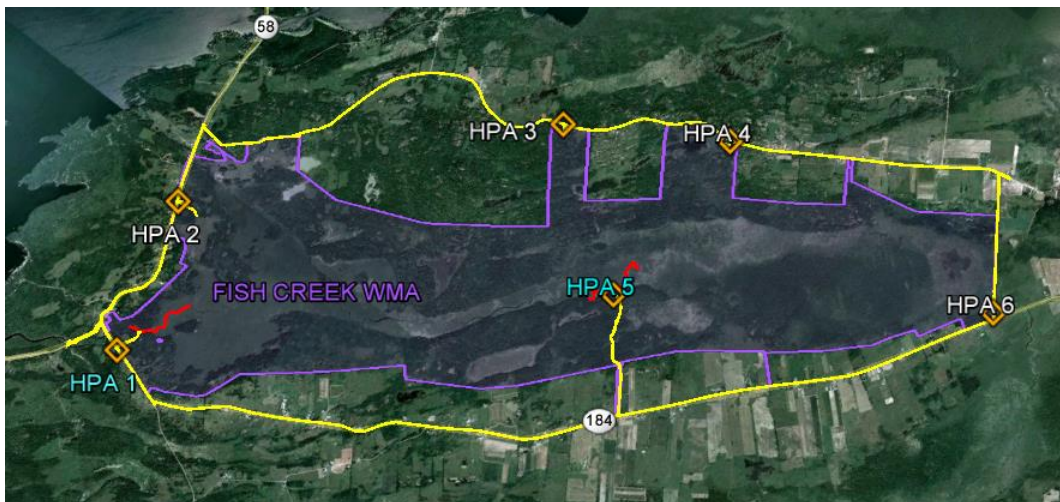


Figure 5: Survey route; yellow driving route, red canoeing route

Data was collected by throwing a weighted rake attached to a rope into the water from both sides of the canoe to gather submerged aquatic vegetation samples and to measure water depth (Figures 6 & 7). This technique allows the crew to determine what species are present in that

SLELO-PRISM
c/o The Nature Conservancy
269 Ouderkirk Road. Pulaski, NY 13142
Rob Williams, Coordinator

location. Once the samples are collected, the species are identified, recorded, and determined to be either invasive or noninvasive. Visual observations were also used to determine if other invasive species are present in the area.

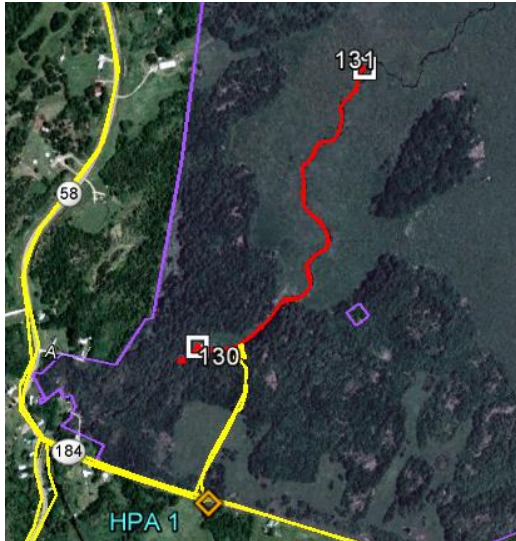


Figure 6: HPA 1 rake toss points

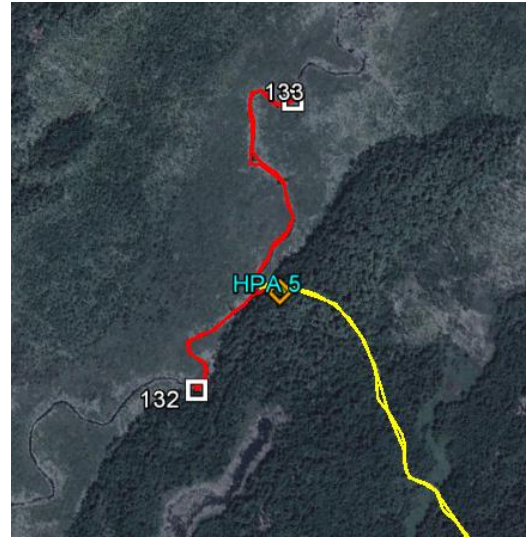


Figure 7: HPA 5 rake toss points

Observations

The June 10 terrestrial assessment of the six HPA's and roadsides of the Fish Creek WMA concluded that there were **no 'Prevention "Watch List" Species' found** in the area. Buckthorn spp. (*Rhamnus* spp.) and Japanese Knotweed (*Lythrum salicaria*), listed as a 'Target Management Species,' were observed in the WMA. Buckthorn was present in each of the HPA parking areas, and Japanese Knotweed was found 0.15 miles west of HPA 4 on the Fish Creek WMA side of the road (Figure: 8). This population spanned 183 feet along the roadside by approximately 30 feet deep totaling 5,490 sq ft or (0.126 acres), and individual plants reached over seven feet tall (Figure: 9, 10).

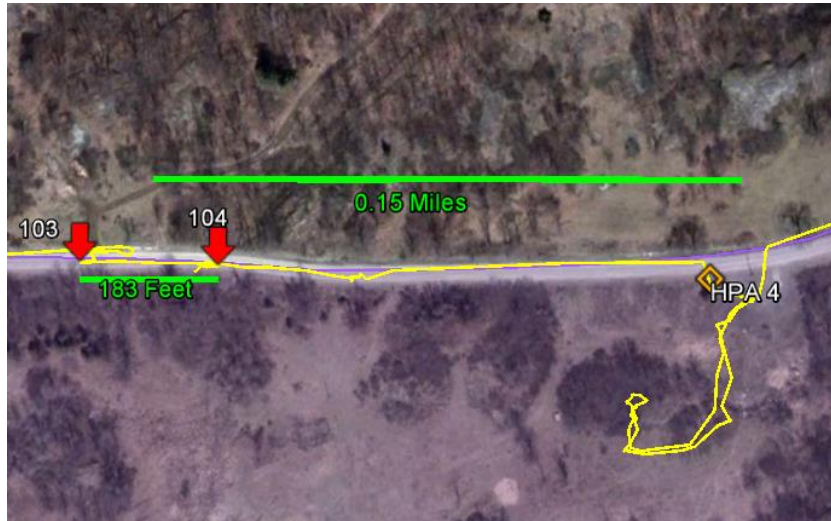


Figure 8: Position of Japanese Knotweed near HPA 4



Figure 9: Photo, Japanese knotweed at center of patch



Figure 10: Panoramic photo of Japanese Knotweed patch

SLELO-PRISM
c/o The Nature Conservancy
269 Ouderkirk Road. Pulaski, NY 13142
Rob Williams, Coordinator

The June 18th aquatic assessment of water access points near HPA's 1 & 5 also showed that there were **no 'Prevention "Watch-List" Species' found** in the area; and the 'Target Management Species' that were observed include: frogbit spp. A summary of species observed at various rake toss points is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Rake toss points data

Location: Fish Creak Wild Life Management Area							Date: 6/4/2013
Point	Latitude Longitude	Throw	Depth (ft)	# Spp.	# Inv.	Invasive Spp. Present	Notes
130	44.48629	1	4	4			Visual: FB
	-75.5771	2		3			
131	44.49134	1	3	5			Visual: FB
	-75.5727	2		4			
132	44.51647	1	2.5	1	1	FB	Visual: FB
	-75.5287	2		0			
133	44.52198	1	3	1	1	FB	Visual: FB
	-75.526	2		1	1	FB	

Key to abbreviations used in all tables: **PL:** purple loosestrife, **FB:** frog bit, **CLPW:** curly-leaf pondweed, **WC:** water chestnut