

French Creek Wildlife Management Area

SLELO-PRISM Early Detection Surveillance

August 13 and 14, 2013



Figure 1: Panoramic view of French Creek WMA

Report prepared by Mike McHale and Logan West, 8/20/2013

Introduction and Background

The French Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is comprised of 2,300 acres and is located in Jefferson County (Figure 2) southwest of Clayton, New York (Figure 3). Meadowlands along with oak and hickory hardwood forests are found in the upland areas along with cattail marsh bordering open water areas supplying habitat for waterfowl and fur bearing species¹.

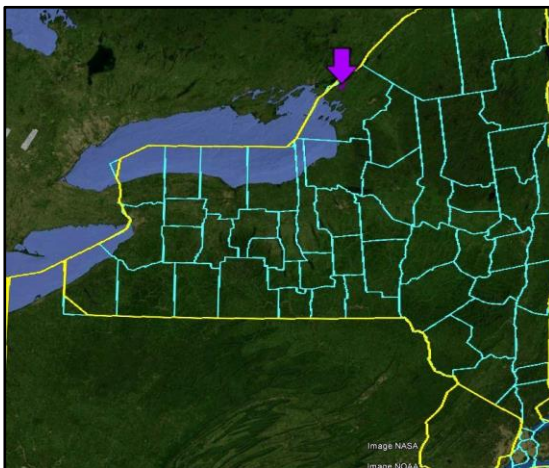


Figure 2: Location of French creek WMA in New York State

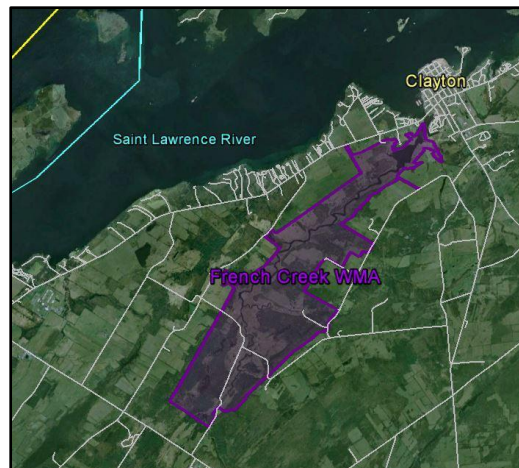


Figure 3: Location of French Creek WMA to Clayton and the Saint Lawrence River

¹ Introduction and background taken from Department of Environmental Conservation Web site (except for Figures 1 & 2): <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40678.html>

Within the French Creek WMA there are several unpaved roads that provide access to the interior of the WMA and to open water areas. Hunting is allowed for coyote, beaver, raccoon, muskrat, and ring necked pheasants are stocked in the fall. Roof top boat launch areas enable fishing for bullhead and pan fish. The upland and lowland habitat allows for bird watching of songbirds and waterfowl. A snowmobile trail also transects the WMA.

Survey Methods and Objectives

In preparation for establishing and conducting Early Detection and Rapid Response surveillance for prevention and target management invasive species, a map of French Creek WMA with seven Highly Probable 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.

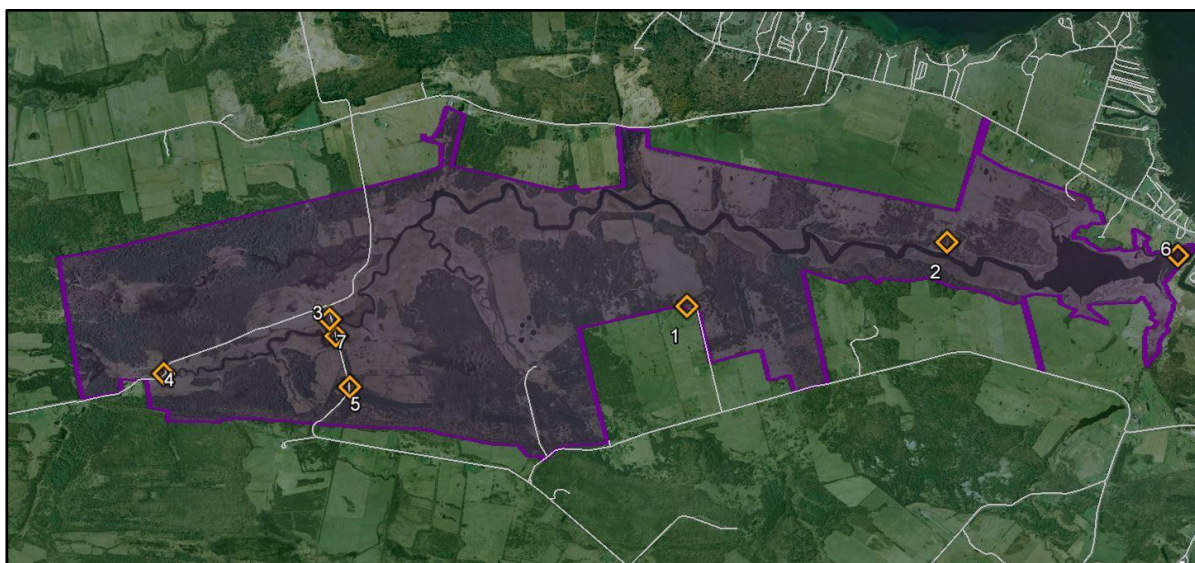


Figure 4: HPA map for French Creek

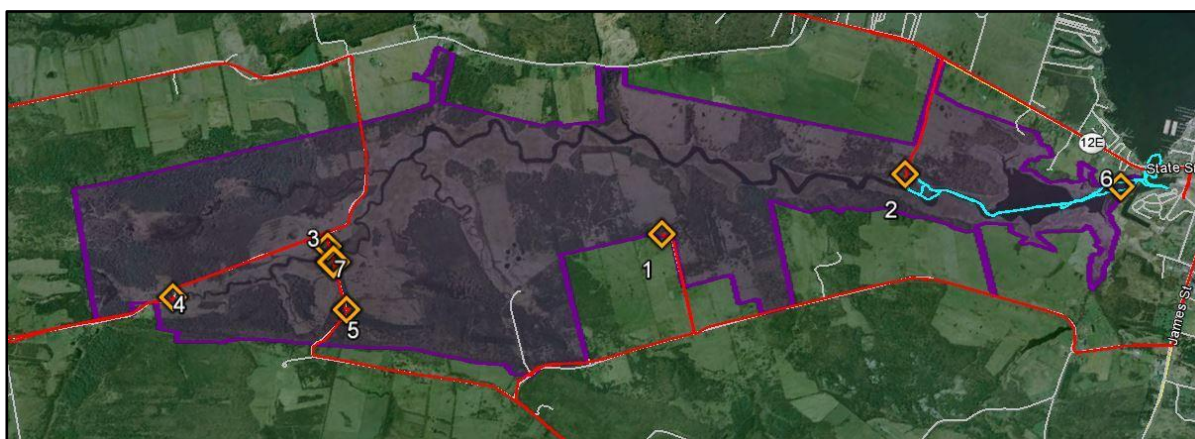
Latitude and longitude coordinates along with locations and descriptions of HPA's are presented in Table 1. Coordinates of HPA's are always recorded in the event that personnel are required to return to the site for rapid response efforts or follow-up monitoring.

Table 1: HPA locations and latitude/longitude coordinates

HPA	Location	Latitude	Longitude
1	Grant Rd. Parking area	44.20584	-76.1156
2	Rout 12E access road and roof top boat access	44.22044	-76.1042
3	Bevins Rd. parking area	44.18898	-76.136
4	French Creek Rd bridge (closed) and water access	44.17911	-76.1424
5	Bevins Rd. Parking area	44.18702	-76.1305
6	Area of high boat access	44.23039	-76.0896
7	Bevins Rd. bridge and water access	44.18855	-76.1346

On August 13, 2013, a terrestrial examination of seven HPA's was conducted. Visual observations conducted along roadsides that border the WMA were also completed and are shown in red (Figure 5). The crew utilized a handheld Garmin GPSMAP* 62 to track the travel route and record waypoints.

The surveillance crew revisited French Creek WMA on August 14, 2013, to conduct a partial aquatic examination of the eastern section utilizing a canoe, rake tosses, and visual surveys from the surface (Figure 6: Blue track).

**Figure 5:** Survey route; red driving route, blue canoeing route

Data was collected by throwing a weighted rake attached to a rope into the water from both sides of the canoe (rake toss) to gather submerged aquatic vegetation samples and to

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

measure water depth along the blue line depicted in Figure 6. At road crossings and bridge access, a rake toss was performed (Figure 7 and 8). This technique allows the crew to determine what species are present in that location along with water depths. 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 were present in the area.

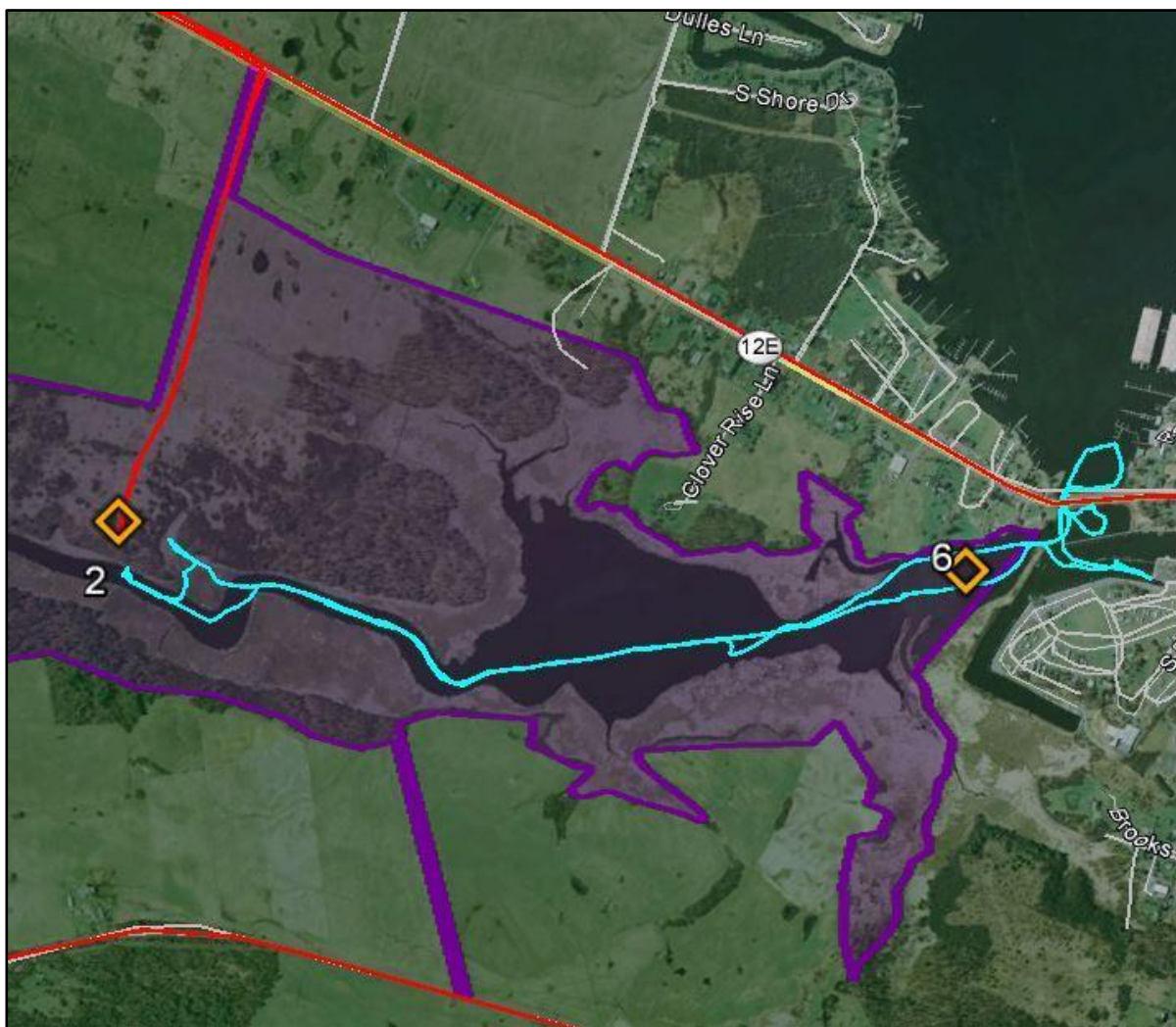


Figure 6: HPA 6 and canoe rout visual survey

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



Figure 7: HPA 4, closed bridge on French Creek Rd.

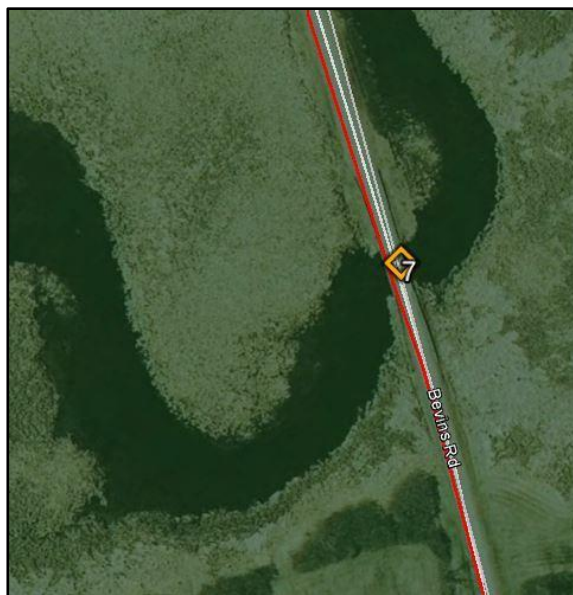


Figure 8: HPA 7 Bridge and water control structure on Bevins Rd.

Observations

The August 13 terrestrial assessment of six HPS's and roadsides of French Creek WMA concluded that there are **no 'Prevention "Watch List" species' found** in the area. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) listed as a 'Target management Species', was observed in the WMA. Purple loosestrife was present in patches on and around the access of HPA 2 in single plants and clumps (Figure 9). It was also found spread out linearly along French Creek Rd among native vegetation (Figure 10). Honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*) a 'General Species of Concern' was observed along roads and trails in single plant and linear monocultures in hedgerows at HPA 1, 2, 4, and 5 (Figure 11). Honeysuckle was mixed in with Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) along with other species not on SLELO-PRISM's 'species of concern' list.



Figure 9: Small clump of purple loosestrife found at HPA 2.



Figure 10: Linear patch of purple loosestrife along south side of French Creek Road.



Figure 11: Logan West SLELO-PRISM Field Technician walking along vehicle impacted trail bordered by Honeysuckle, Common Buckthorn, and Red Osier Dogwood.

On August 14, 2013 an aquatic survey of French Creek WMA was performed. Three HPAs 4, 6, 7 (Table 2) and one visual canoe survey was performed on the paddle to HPA 6. There were **no ‘Prevention “Watch-List” species’** found in the area. The ‘Target Management Species’ that were observed included purple loosestrife. The purple loosestrife was observed in small clumps along the border of water to cattail. Three species on the ‘General Species of Concern’ list are European Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) and Eurasian Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). Frogbit was observed at all aquatic sites predominantly around emergent plants. Phragmites was observed adjacent to the

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

WMA on what appears to be an over grown jetty separating the WMA from a marina but is not directly on the WMA (Figure 12).

Table 2: Rake toss data at French Creek WMA on August 14, 2013

Point	Latitude	Throw	Depth (ft)	#Spp.	#Inv.	Invasive Spp. Present on Rake Toss	Notes
	Longitude						
4	44.179148	1	3	2	0		Visual: FB
	76.142476	2	3	1	0		
6	44.229333	1	4	5	1	EWM	Visual: FB, PL, PH
	76.090181	2	3	4	1	EWM	
7	4.194146	1	3	1	0		
	76.138651	2	3	1	1	FB	

Key to abbreviation used in all tables: **PL:** Purple Loosestrife, **FB:** Frogbit, **PH:** Phragmites. **EWM:** Eurasian Water Milfoil



Figure 12: Phragmites monoculture along jetty