

Teaming Up to Stop the Spread of Invasive Species' Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Invasive

of New York State is Forested Land In This Issue: **About The Cover** Volunteer Experience Showcase HWA- A Potential Needle in Our Haystack SLELO PRISM Adopts Robust 2020 Work Plan **Invasive Species Projects in SLELO PRISM** EAB is Here Now What? Invasive Zebra Mussels Found in Delta Lake SLELO Adopts a New Logo **Events and Partner Highlights** A Word From Our Coordinator

About the Cover

Megan Pistolese, SLELO

In New York, 63% or 18.9 million acres of the land is forested⁽¹⁾. Located between Lake Ontario and the Adirondacks, the Tug Hill Plateau boasts the most densely forested land in the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario region. Hemlock trees are one of the most abundant trees that comprise New York's forests. Being the third most common tree species in our forests, hemlocks are considered to be a foundation species, meaning they "create the ecosystem in which they reside" by providing a wide variety of ecoservices.

To protect our forests, SLELO PRISM is expanding our hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) surveillance. Our Early Detection Team, Robert Smith and Brittney Rogers have surveyed 12 Priority Conservation Areas and 60 Highly Probable Areas. Our staff is also working with our partners who conduct surveys in SLELO to standardize our survey methods using data collection apps developed and tested by programs across the state.

SLELO's Outreach Coordinator, Megan Pistolese, has co-hosted multiple guided walk and talks with our partners to recruit and train volunteers to recognize and report HWA to iMapInvasives through our invasive species Volunteer Surveillance Network.

- (1) Tug Hill State Forest-https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/8001.html
- (2) NYS Hemlock Initiative- https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/hemlock-woolly-adelgid/why-hemlock-trees/



Brittney Rogers, Sandy Bonanno, Richard & Naneen Drosse, Robert Smith and Rocky the dog visited the Great Bear Recreational Area to survey for HWA – no signs found.

Photo: Brittney Rogers.

Volunteer Experience Showcase

I started volunteering with SLELO PRISM after the Town of Colton, where I am director of the town's Bti Black fly and Mosquito Control Programs, and was asked to also work on Invasive species control. I initially took some training workshops to learn about invasives; identification, how invasives spread, and prevention, etc, then helped to coordinate with SLELO to have training workshops in Colton which not only educated the local people about invasives and helped to rally volunteers to pull milfoil during the annual fall draw down of the reservoir, but is always educational for me as well as I continue to learn about invasives, and a great opportunity to network with other professionals. During Invasive Species Awareness Week, I lead a group on an educational and fun paddle on Higley Reservoir to teach them about invasive variable-leaf milfoil. SLELO provided great brochures and some cool swag. Everyone had fun and learned a lot and the event resulted in me recruiting a volunteer to help with the hand harvesting of the milfoil later in the fall. I really appreciate all the support SLELO PRISM has provided and look forward to collaborating on more projects in the future.

~SLELO volunteer, Andrea Malik.

Learn about <u>volunteer opportunities</u> and <u>workshops</u> Need inspiration? Watch our <u>volunteer video</u>



Andrea Malik collecting invasive plants on the Raquette River.





HWA- A Potential Needle in our Haystack

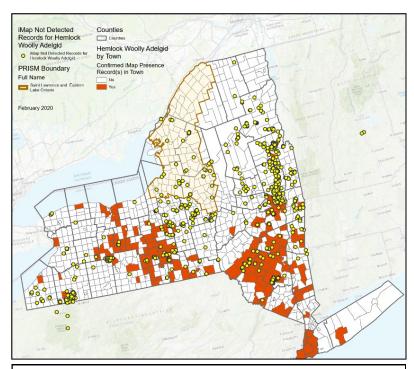
Charlotte Malmborg, Hemlock Initiative; Michell ONeill, iMapInvasives; Megan Pistolese, SLELO

The SLELO PRISM is the only PRISM region that has not reported an infestation of hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), an invasive forest pest that has decimated eastern hemlock tree populations along the East Coast. HWA has been present in New York since the 1980s and was found in the Adirondacks in 2017. The northern spread of this insidious insect puts hemlocks in the SLELO PRISM at risk, an especially devastating diagnosis in an area with some of the densest hemlock stands in the state. Although HWA has not been sighted in the SLELO PRISM region, there are multiple ways you can get involved with hemlock conservation.

If you are a landowner, it is important to know if hemlocks are present on your property and to monitor those trees regularly for HWA infestations. 76% of New York's forested lands are privately owned, so landowners play an important role in forest stewardship throughout the state. This year, the New York State Hemlock Initiative (NYSHI) launched MyHemlock, an HWA surveying program created with landowners in mind. Participants choose one site often their own property—and monitor the hemlock stands there twice per year. In addition to encouraging regular surveys, the data collected in this program helps NYSHI understand the spread of HWA in New York and plan for releases of HWA predators. Landowners should also consider making a management plan for when HWA arrives. Currently, the only option for effective HWA management available to landowners is pesticide treatment. Treatments are done individually on a tree-by-tree basis, and often landowners are unable to treat every tree on their property. Therefore, it is critical to consider prioritizing treatments by knowing where hemlocks are located on your property, and which trees you would prefer to save if the trees were infested. High priority trees might include the trees near water, or those near a house or driveway that could cause damage if they fell, or just a favorite stand to visit, but knowing which of these would be important to save is a great way to be prepared for HWA.

If you are a hiker, hunter, angler, trail rider, snowmobiler, skier, or participate in any other outdoor activity we need you to keep a look out for HWA. If you see the characteristic tiny, white cotton balls lining hemlock twigs, it is absolutely crucial to report your findings. When you survey a hemlock tree for HWA, please make sure to report it on iMapInvasives whether you find it or not. Presence records of HWA in SLELO will trigger email alerts to various PRISM and state agency staff so that appropriate actions can be swiftly set in motion. Not-detected records show conservation partners where people have surveyed hemlock trees for HWA and didn't find and help to locate hemlock stands to check in the future. Additionally, since iMapInvasives records include the date of the observation, reporting not-detected observations helps conservation partners track the spread of HWA through time when presences are recorded in locations where not-detects were previously recorded. As of February 2020, there are 80 not-detected HWA records in SLELO region. These records help conservation partners to determine the current extent of HWA and to track its spread from nearby areas in the Finger lakes, Catskills, and Capital Region.

When you submit an HWA observation using iMap, be sure to take a clear, focused picture of the hemlock branches with a plain back-



Red towns indicate confirmed iMapInvasives reports for HWA, and yellow dots indicate HWA not detected as reported to iMapInvasives (accessed Feb 14, 2020). SLELO is highlighted in tan. Map provided by the iMapInvasives team.

ground if possible (a sheet of paper will do, or place your hand under the branch for scale). That way, experts can confirm your observation and use your data to enhance hemlock conservation in SLELO and across the state. Even if there is no HWA present, please take a picture of the hemlock branch so that experts can confirm that the surveyed tree was a hemlock.

You also have the option to tag your observations to special projects, doing so helps project leaders analyze and confirm observations easier. SLELO has monitoring projects for HWA, EAB, Fanwort, Tench and Spotted Lanternfly that you can be added to . To join these projects click here and follow step 2.

If you want to get involved but you're not sure where to start, SLELO PRISM hosts guided walk and talks and workshops aimed to recruit and train volunteers to recognize and report HWA, as well as other invasives. You can learn of upcoming trainings on their website's Events Page, or sign up to join their invasive species Volunteer Surveillance Network (<u>VSN</u>).

If you're already conducting HWA surveys you can help by joining the NYS Hemlock Initiative Train the Trainer Program aimed to enhance HWA outreach efforts across the state; this program is best suited for those who have a strong hemlock and HWA identification skills. If you have advanced experience using iMapInvasives, you would be well suited to join the iMap Certified Trainers Network (CTN) and help support training needs across the state. Getting involved in these programs is not only fun but very rewarding as you inspire and enable others to protect our lands and waters.

Being the last PRISM to have confirmed the presence of HWA gives us all a chance to take a proactive stance to protect our hemlocks. So get involved!



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SLELO PRISM Adopts Robust 2020 Work Plan

Rob Williams, SLELO

work plan incorporates eight strategic goals identified by our understanding of invasive species issues. partners which align with the NYS Comprehensive Invasive Species 8. INNOVATION - Develop and implement innovative Management Plan. All 75 tasks planned for this season align with technologies that help us to better understand, visualize, alleviate or one or more of the following goals:

- 1. **PREVENTION** Prevent the introduction of invasive species into the SLELO PRISM's Priority Conservation Areas.
- in all Priority Conservation Areas.
- **COOPERATION** Facilitate partner meetings and opportunities for sharing resources.
- 4. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT Collect, utilize, and share information regarding surveys, infestations, control methods, • monitoring, and research.
- 5. **CONTROL:** Control invasive species using three basic levels of control within Priority Conservation Areas.
- 6. **RESTORATION** Develop and implement effective ecological restoration methods as deemed necessary.

- This years Work Plan is once again as robust as it is interesting. This 7. **EDUCATION/OUTREACH** Increase public awareness and
 - manage invasive species and their impacts or that serve to strengthen ecosystem function and/or processes.

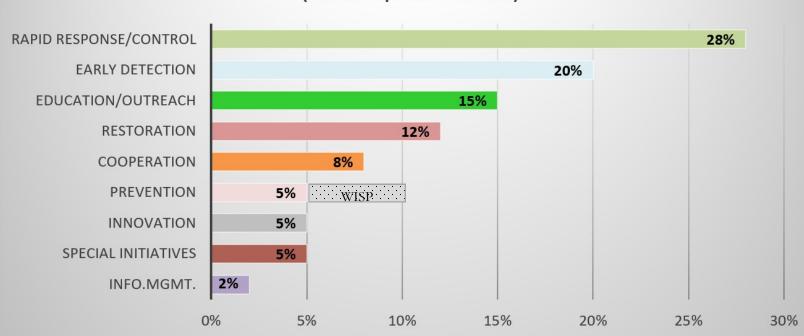
In addition to core program elements, the SLELO PRISM will also 2. EARLY DETECTION - Conduct invasive species surveillance be advancing special initiatives designed to further protect our lands and waters from invasive species threats.

These special initiatives include:

- **Urban Forest Sustainability**
- Tug Hill Forest Restoration
- Aquatic Invasive Plant Nutrient Analysis
- **Expanded Watercraft Inspection and Stewardship**
- Black River Trail Assessment & Feasibility Study
- Eastern Lake Ontario Tributary Assessment
- **Environmental DNA**

The chart below depicts the percentage of work efforts as related to our strategic goals based on the number of activities attached to each strategy. Prevention has been corrected for an increase in the WISP program. In 2020, SLELO PRISM has identified 75 specific tasks to meet our annual objectives.

2020 Work Plan Percentage of work efforts as related to SLELO strategic goals (includes special initiatives)



SLELO PRISM

Putting the Brakes on Fanwort to Protect Oneida Lake

Rob Williams, SLELO

Fanwort (Cabomba caroliniana) is a submerged aquatic plant native to South America. Its name is derived from the fan-like appearance of its foliage. This macrophyte has the ability to overwinter and grow rapidly in the spring and summer, outcompeting and dominating the native vegetation. Fanwort's dense foliage reduces light availability for benthic organisms and native plants. This may result in a decline in populations of fish and other animals dependent on these native organisms. Dissolved oxygen is also depleted as fanwort decays in autumn and beneath the winter ice. In the SLELO PRISM fanwort is considered a Tier 2 species where it is present in PRISM, but at low abundance making eradication feasible within Priority Conservation Areas (PCA's).

Kasoag Lake is located in Oswego County in the Town of Williamstown. This man-made public water body was created in 1810 by construction of a dam across the West Branch of Fish Creek. With an approximate surface area of 57.6 acres and an average depth of 9 feet, Kasoag Lake lends itself to advanced macrophyte growth including introduced fanwort. The outlet known as Fish Creek, drains directly into Oneida Lake.

The presence of Fanwort has been identified in Kasoag Lake and the SLELO PRISM has partnered with the Kasoag Lake Conservation Association (KLCA) to conduct a downstream assessment of fanwort with none being found in these outflow areas connected to Kasoag Lake.

This year the SLELO PRISM will be collaborating with the KLCA to utilize a chemical treatment to target and eradicate existing fanwort populations in the lake. The overall objective of this effort is to deter the spread of fanwort downstream into Oneida Lake. The project will be funded through the SLELO PRISM Special Projects Fund.



Aquatic Restoration Initiative; Phase I

Brittney Rogers, SLELO

With AIS and climate change impacting the future of the Great Lakes, there is an opportunity to enhance a more diverse and The assessment will focus on select areas that may be impacted by anthropogenic impacts will continue to destabilize this system.

Inventory and Habitat Assessment."

resilient native ecosystem in the Eastern Lake Ontario region. aquatic and riparian invasive species and determine the presence of Today, there are strict laws in place for ballast water dumping, species such as; non-native crayfish, gobies, and mussels; transporting invasive species knowingly and extensive efforts macrophytes such as fanwort, water hyacynth, and hydrilla; and near underway to educate recreational boaters on preventing the spread shore plant species, like Japanese knotweed, common reed, and of AIS to un-infested waters through the NYS Watercraft Inspection oriental bittersweet. The results of the assessment will identify the Steward Program, which teaches boaters to "Clean, Drain, Dry" most deserving areas in need of eradication, suppression, restoration, their equipment. These efforts are important but without innovative or management, and serve as the foundation for this project. The and restorative plans being implemented, unintended negative upcoming years may include additional management and restoration work as/if recommended in the results of this assessment, followed by intensive monitoring to preserve the habitat. To scale-up this As a result, we are developing SLELO PRISMs new Aquatic initiative, this work will focus on building partnerships with Restoration Initiative for 2020-2023. The first phase of this initiative organizations within NYS and the Great Lakes Region and will begin with our "Aquatic and Riparian Invasive Species information will be disseminated to any interested parties through outreach and educational resources.

Collaborating for an Expanded Watercraft Inspection Steward Program

Brittney Rogers, SLELO; Alaina Young, Thousand Islands Land Trust

Watercraft Inspection consists of visually inspecting all boating and recreational equipment that come in contact with water; removing all visible plants, animals or mud materials; and draining any compartments that may hold water. Stewards are stationed at launches where they empower boaters to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by sharing educational information and teaching boaters how to properly conduct inspections. During the inspections, which usually last less than three minutes, stewards collect important data on where boaters are coming from, headed to next and if they're aware of invasive species issues. This information helps to better inform our programming efforts and allows us to be more efficient and effective at conserving New York's waters.

Here at the SLELO PRISM, we are pleased to announce that we will be partnering with the Thousand Islands Land Trust in 2020 to co-administer our expanded Watercraft Inspection Steward Program.

The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) works to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality, and outdoor recreation opportunities of the 1000 Islands region, for present and future generations. Since 1985, TILT has helped to safeguard over 10,000 acres of land in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties through conservation easements, land acquisition, and by establishing accessible areas available for public enjoyment (including open spaces for hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, birding, and kayaking).

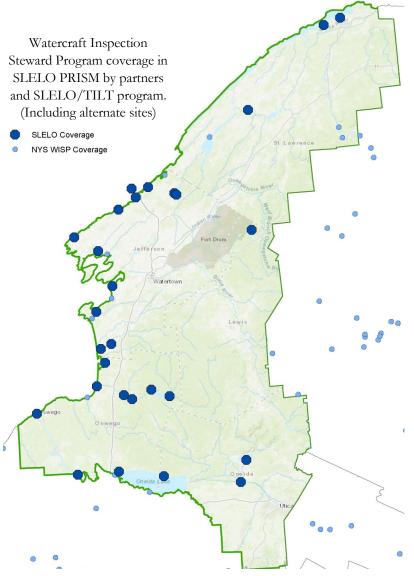
With this newly expanded program, we will to have 10 stewards who will conduct inspections at more than 20 launches in the SLELO PRISM. This program is contributing to a statewide effort focusing on preventing or slowing the spread of AIS. There were nearly 325 launches in NYS with steward coverage in 2019, and over 248,000 inspections conducted with resulted in 12,000 potential invasive species spread interceptions.

Engaging with boaters and the public helps to reduce the threats that AIS pose to NY waterbodies and in turn may reduce the cost associated with the management of invasive species. NYS DEC AIS Spread Prevention

If you or somebody you know may be interested in becoming a steward, apply on TILTs website.

Fore more information, click the links below:

- Thousand Islands Land Trust
- SLELO Watercraft Inspection Information
- Watercraft Inspection Steward Programs in NYS



Areas to have SLELO/TILT Coverage: Butterfield Lake Cape Vincent Delta Lake State Park Bellamy Park - Erie Canal Henderson Harbor Heuvelton Boat Launch, Oswegatchie River Lake Bonaparte Public Boat Launch Mary Street Boat Launch Millsite Lake Montario Pt. Rd. North Sandy Pond, Stanley Road Oneida Lake Phoenix, Oswego River Sackets Harbor Salmon River and Reservoir South Sandy Creek St. Lawrence River, Massena Intake Stony Creek

Three Mile Bay, Lake Ontario Wrights Landing Marina & a floating site



The Emerald Ash Borer is Here! Now What?

Megan Pistolese, SLELO; Mike Demarco, Watertown City Planner

In October 2019, the emerald ash borer (EAB) was confirmed to be In 2018, the City of Watertown was awarded a \$20,250 tree planting State Street in Clayton were identified positive for EAB. EAB kills ash money for a pilot ash tree treatment program. trees and infested trees become brittle and break apart making them a liability to municipalities and property owners. Due to this liability, urban ash trees that are not treated will need to be removed even if they appear to look healthy.

With over 430 ash trees located on public land and within right of ways, the City of Watertown developed a Tree Management Plan in 2012. To inform community members and city officials about necessary management actions to take place in response to EAB, workshops have been held and more are to take place along with a series of public press releases and city council public work sessions. SLELO partners Mike DeMarco, City Watertown Planner and Sue Gwise, Cornell Cooperative Extension Educator, recently addressed the Watertown City Council at a Public Work Session. They provided an overview of how the City plans to manage ash tree populations moving forward; a live recording of this session is available online through Vimeo-Livestream, Demarco and Gwise begin their presentation at timestamp 1:07.

The presentation outlined strategies of the City of Watertown Tree Management Plan. Strategizes include the removal of about 200 ash trees between 2020 and 2021. Not all ash will be removed; 230 ash trees have been identified in the plan as treatable or populations that are healthy, and treatment is more cost effective than removal. However, the ability to treat these trees depends on funding availability.

present in Jefferson county by the NYS DEC. A sample collected from a grant through the DEC's Urban and Community Forestry Grant tree on South Massey Street in Watertown and another from a tree off Program. \$6,000 of remaining funds will be reallocated and used as seed

> Additional alternative funding sources still need to be identified in order to secure longer term preservation of the City's ash tree population. Utilizing the City's asset management software, Cartegraph, specific areas of the City will be identified for the first round of EAB treatments during the late spring of 2020.

> Tree Watertown members and other interested citizens are scheduled to meet in the first steps of formalizing an area EAB Task Force to identify ways to effectively communicate ash tree and EAB information to citizens as well as to identify alternative funding sources for the continued treatment of City owned ash trees. Of particular interest to the City is protecting the ash trees located in Downtown Watertown on Washington Street as the tree population in this area provides a unique aesthetic value that has been identified as an "urban arboretum" which is a rarity in urban settings.

Photo, Mike DeMarco: Ash trees in Watertown; notice rather than immediately cutting down the ash, new trees have been planted and will be given time to mature before managing the ash that aren't impacted by EAB yet.

If you have any questions regarding Watertown's Tree Management Plan please reach out directly to City Planner,

Mike DeMarco, (315)785-7884 mdemarco@watertown-ny.gov



Zebra Mussels Found in Delta Lake

Megan Pistolese, SLELO

Delta Lake in Rome, NY in January of this year. An investigation and boaters and other water recreationalists to take action and clean, drain & water testing confirmed that zebra mussel larvae are present at the dry their watercrafts before entering and leaving a waterbody. For more Rome Fish Hatchery whose water is supplied by the Lake.

The Rome Fish Hatchery produces brook, rainbow, and brown trout totaling to nearly 160,000 pounds annually making it one of DEC's largest hatcheries. The produced fish are used to stock water bodies throughout the region. To limit the spread of the invasive mussels from the hatchery, DEC is only releasing produced fish in waters that currently have zebra mussels and taking other precautions to prevent future incidents from occurring. Short and long term strategies are being developed to prevent the spread while also maximizing stocking production. Learn more about these efforts by the NYS DEC.

Zebra mussels have been present in New York waters since the 1980s; they are a fingernail-sized invasive mollusk native to Eurasian freshwaters. They have a dark zig-zagged stripe on their shell which gives zebra mussels their name. Zebra mussels disrupt the food web as they filter out algae that native species need for food, in addition, they attach to and smother native mussels and clog water intakes costing the state millions to manage. Like many aquatic invasive species, zebra mussels were introduced to the Great Lakes though ballast water discharged by large ships from Europe and are easily spread by

The NYS DEC has announced that zebra mussels were discovered in recreational water vehicles. State regulations are in place that require information about state regulations and suggested spread prevention methods visit the DEC website.



New Logos for the PRISM Network

Megan Pistolese, SLELO

A logo is a symbol that delivers a visual message connecting an audience to a brand or organization. Logos make a powerful statement about what the purpose of the brand is and provide an easy way for an audience to recognize a brand. Logos should be simple, yet impactful, and rememberable.

The SLELO, Adirondack, Capital Region and Long Island Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) have adopted new logos that are complimentary extensions of a state-wide parent logo under the NYS DEC. The new logos enhance continuity among the state-wide network while accentuating resources unique to each PRISM region. Each logo can be viewed on PRISM websites.

A similar theme was shared among each logo, a circle framed by a pair of hands signifying partnerships that make the PRISM network successful, as well as, action to protect our lands and waters from invasive species, accented by resources unique to each region.

The **NEW YORK STATE** parent logo highlights New York State's rich natural resources and inspires us to protect the places we love from invasive species.

The **SLELO PRISM** logo prominently features a salmon which highlights the region's world-renowned fishing and abundant fresh water resources, in addition to trees to signify the Tug Hill region and other forested areas within the region.









Upcoming Invasive Species Events

We encourage our partners to highlight their upcoming invasive species related events in each newsletter & on our website.

PROMOTE YOUR EVENT — REPORT AN EVENT YOU HOSTED

- Preparing for the Emerald Ash Borer Workshop
 March 4th 6pm-8pm at the Malone Fire Station
- Guided Forest Pest Walk & Talk
 March 7th 10:30am-12pm meet at the Trenton
 Greenbelt Trail head in Holland Patent.
- <u>Tug Hill Commission Local Government Conference</u> March 26th 7:30am-4pm at JCC in Watertown.
- Invasive & Native Mussels in the Great Lakes Webinar March 24th 2pm-3:30pm.
- <u>Invasive Terrestrial Plant ID & iMapInvasives</u>
 <u>Workshop</u> April 9th 11:15am-1:30pm in Canton.



Invasive Species Awareness Week (ISAW)

A state-wide educational campaign aimed to raise awareness about invasive species and engage the public.

Partners and community members are encouraged to participate and are invited to host an ISAW event.

If you are interested please reach out to Megan Pistolese, megan.pistolese@tnc.org; 315 37 3600 x7724

To learn more visit: www.nyisaw.org

Collaboration is the backbone of the SLELO PRISM; we currently have 19 partner organizations and many engaged community members whose expertise and support have lent tremendous progress towards the prevention of new species and the management of existing species within our region. Collaboration begins with communication. Partner meetings are held on a seasonal/quarterly basis alternating between the third Wednesday and Thursday of January, April, July, and October. Meeting dates/locations are announced via email, so please contact our PRISM Manager, Rob Williams rwilliams@tnc.org 315 387 3600 x7725 if you would like to be notified of these meetings.

Calling all Partners!

If you have an invasive species project you'd like to present at the meeting contact Rob!

SAVE THE DATE

SLELO Full Partner Meeting Thursday, April 16th 2020 10am-12pm @ Thompson Park Zoo in Watertown, NY.





COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

'Commitments'



First and foremost, it is my commitment to protect the Current initiatives of the board include: 1) the Invasive impactful. Since we, as the gatekeepers of the St. Lawrence species and urban forestry. River and Eastern Lake Ontario, are committed to protecting large natural systems, its important that we In New York, I continue to serve on the NYS Invasive collaborate at all scales, it is our duty.

Recently, I have been appointed to serve on The Nature Conservancy's North American Invasive Species Advisory These types of collaborations help strengthen information programs designed to minimize the distribution and impacts the SLELO region. of invasive species and the introduction of new invaders.

lands and waters within the SLELO region from the threat Learning Network — a North American networking of invasive species and to our partners. For without your platform, 2) better understanding of forest pests and commitment to the same, our collaborations might be less carbon, 3) invasive species gene editing and 4) invasive

> Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) and attend IS Council meetings when appropriate.

Board (ISAB). This board consists of numerous individuals sharing, team building and moving effective programs and with diverse expertise from across North America. The policies forward to broaden our capacity to prevent and ISAB seeks to prevent new aquatic and terrestrial invasions manage invasive species and their impacts. I assure you that both by advancing public policies in the US and other my role on the North American ISAB will provide crossnations and by working collaboratively with partnerships, collaboration opportunities along with ecosystem-scale businesses, professionals and consumer groups in voluntary benefits to people and nature including those right here in

~ Rob Williams

SLELO PRISM Partners

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- The Nature Conservancy, CWNY
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Offices
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
- NYS Department of Transportation
- NY Sea Grant
- **Ducks Unlimited**
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Fort Drum Military Installation

- Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
- Tug Hill Commission
- Save The River
- Onondaga Audubon
- Thousand Islands Land Trust
- NY Power Authority
- CNY Regional Planning & Development Board
- US Coast Guard Auxiliary
- Indian River Lakes Conservancy
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe-Environmental Unit

Acknowledgements: **NYS Invasive Species Council** NYS Dept. Environmental Conservation The NYS Environmental Protection Fund









Department of -Environmental Conservation



