

# Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention In Eastern Lake Ontario

*2017 Annual Report*

2017 marks the second season of an intense effort to reduce the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Through a \$100k grant from the NYS DEC Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants Program (NYS Environmental Protection Fund) four AIS stewardship specialists were strategically placed at high use/high priority boat launches along Eastern Lake Ontario and the data collected tells a real story.



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

DEC01-C0018566-3350000

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## Our 2017 Team

In 2017, four aquatic invasive species Stewardship Specialists served as Boat Launch Stewards for a 12 week period, June through August and worked Wednesdays through Sundays to maximize boater engagement.

Harbor, Henderson Harbor, Sackets Harbor and at Cape Vincent.

Photo—clockwise from top left: Julia Stephens, Jacqueline Novak and Miranda Nelson.

Not pictured: Katlyn Linerode.

Stewards were placed at four strategic locations along Eastern Lake Ontario to include: Oswego

*“Four strategic boat launch sites along Eastern Lake Ontario were selected”*

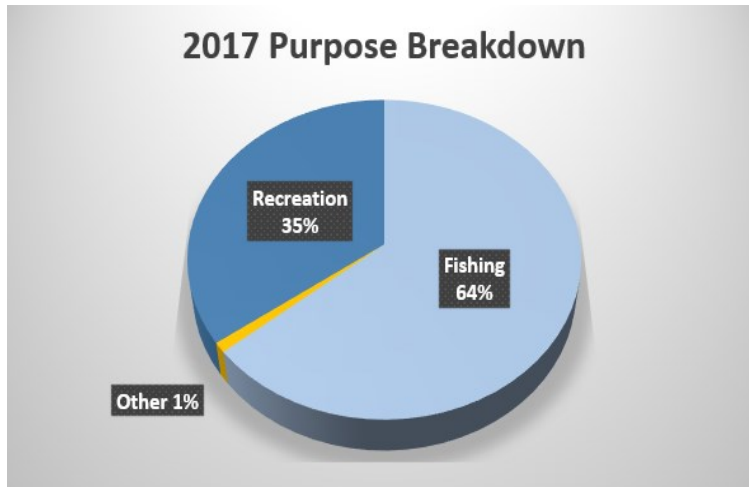
## 2017 Statistics

- ◇ 626 boaters engaged (2 year total = 1,657).
- ◇ 14% from out of state/country.
- ◇ Aquatic organisms found on 9% of boats in 2017 compared to 67% in 2016. Likely due to lake water levels.
- ◇ 89.6% of all participants received AIS “Clean-Drain-Dry” literature.
- ◇ Top 3 travel routes identified: Route 3, Route 81, Route 12-E.
- ◇ Areas recently boated: Canada, Florida Keys, Alabama, Louisiana, Finger Lakes, Adirondack Lakes, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Hudson River, Ohio River, Alaska.

## Season Summary for Eastern Lake Ontario



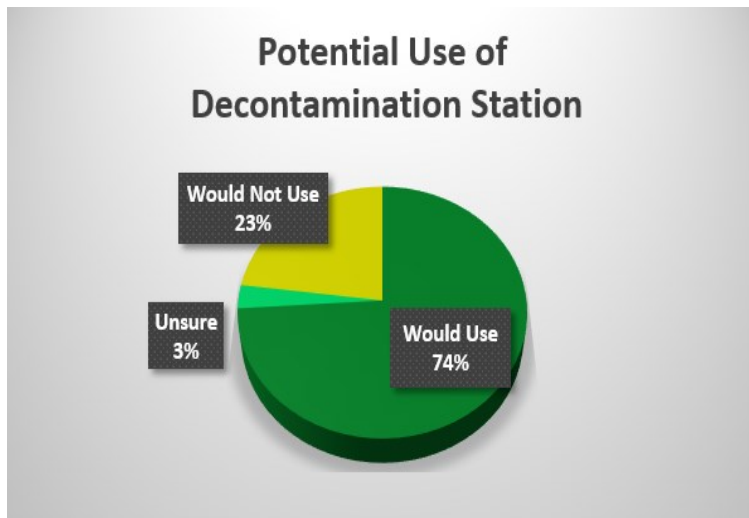
## Purpose for Boating



One question on the field data forms asks for the purpose of the watercraft's outing. In 2017, 64% of boaters engaged were for the purpose of fishing, 35% were for the purpose of recreation and 1% were grouped into "other" category.

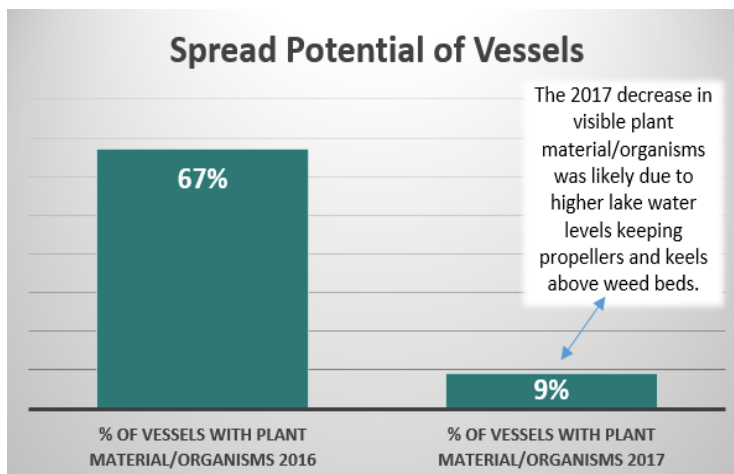
Other refers to such purposes commercial and/or governmental watercraft.

## Decontamination Stations



When asked if they would use a decontamination station if available: 23% stated they would not, 3% stated they were unsure and 74% stated that they would use a decontamination station.

## Spread Potential



In 2017 only 9% of all watercraft (launching or retrieving) had visible plant materials/organisms on them compared to 67% in 2016. This was likely due to higher lake water levels keeping propellers and keels above weed beds combined with an overall reduction in boat activity.

### Collecting Information

The field data forms that our stewards populate during their conversations with boaters have 14 questions designed not only to learn about boater habits, but to collect data that can be used to evaluate invasive species prevention efforts.

#### Questions include:

- ◇ Boat type, motor, personal watercraft, sailboat, canoe, kayak, rowboat.
- ◇ Group size
- ◇ State of Registration
- ◇ Launching/retrieving
- ◇ Time of inspection
- ◇ Prior contact with steward
- ◇ Does the visitor take spread prevention steps?
- ◇ Aquatic organisms found
- ◇ Species identification
- ◇ Educational materials offered
- ◇ Waterbodies visited in last two weeks
- ◇ Waterbody the visitor will go to next
- ◇ Travel route to be taken.
- ◇ Would visitor use a decontamination station.

Pertinent information is then extracted and used to make determinations as to the spread of aquatic invasive species in the decision making process.

## Common Species Observed

Round Goby, Zebra Mussel  
Quagga Mussel, Milfoil(s)  
Elodea Spp., Chara  
Eelgrass, Curly Pondweed.  
Coontail, Water Chestnut,  
Spiny Waterflea

## For More Information on the Eastern Lake Ontario Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Program.

The SLELO PRISM Program is part of a much larger program throughout New York State. Other partners are also promoting AIS spread prevention via boat launch stewards. As a whole these combined efforts should significantly slow the spread of aquatic invasive species throughout New York State waters.

In the SLELO PRISM Region this effort is implemented as a partnership between the partners of the PRISM and The Nature Conservancy CWNV. Funded in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants Program through appropriations from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

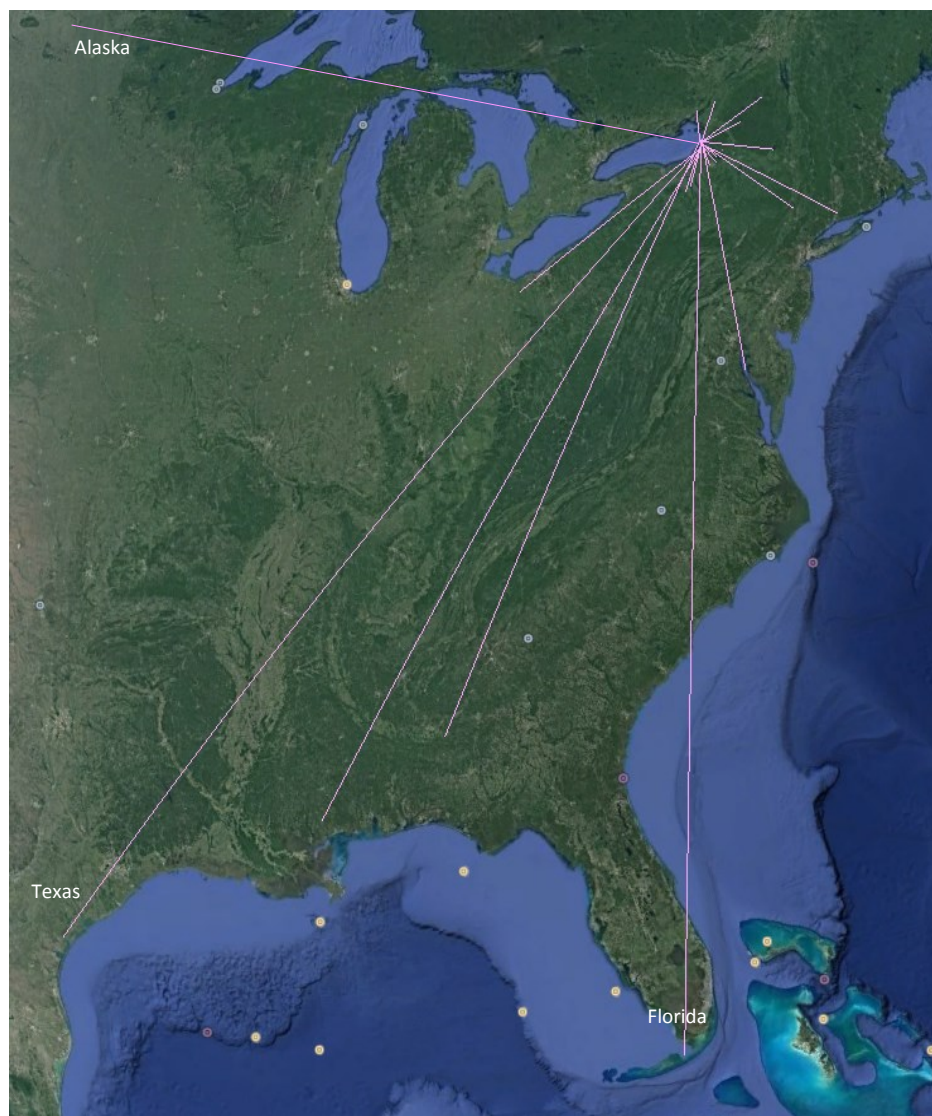
Report prepared by:

**Rob Williams**, Invasive Species Program Coordinator,

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## Spread Potential on a Larger Scale



## Spread Potential on a Larger Scale

Lake Ontario has always been a destination for fishing enthusiasts as well as recreational boating. Professional anglers participate in competitions from all over the east coast. The Salmon River in Pulaski attracts anglers on a global scale. Recreational travel-boating is also a significant activity with boaters traveling the Great Lakes, Erie Canal, Hudson River and even the so called “loop” which takes vessels from the Great Lakes down through the Mississippi River around the Florida peninsula up the Atlantic and back into the Great Lakes.

During the 2016-17 season when asked what waterbody the boater visited last or where they intend to go to next revealed the following locations/areas:

|               |              |            |             |              |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Canada        | Florida Keys | Alabama    | Louisiana   | Finger Lakes |
| Adirondacks   | Pennsylvania | New Jersey | Connecticut | Texas        |
| New Hampshire | Hudson River | Ohio River | Alaska      |              |

**Acknowledgements:** NYS Dept. Environmental Conservation, SLELO PRISM Partners  
The Nature Conservancy CWNV