

Watercraft Inspection Steward Program

SLELO PRISM and TILT Mid-Season Report — July 06, 2020

The goal of the Watercraft Inspection Steward Program (WISP) is for the stewards to teach the public, specifically boaters, how to look for and remove aquatic invasive species from their boating and fishing equipment. Our program is co-administered by the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) and the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT). As part of a larger statewide effort, WISP's are one of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Aquatic Nuisance Species priorities and funding is provided from the Environmental Protection Fund. This program is designed to equip the public with information so they can inspect their boating and fishing in the absence of stewards. Invasive species such as hydrilla and rusty crayfish are species that have been introduced into inland waterbodies and Lake Ontario and are having detrimental impacts on our waterways. Boater participation in this initiative is 100% voluntary.

With boaters, the stewards:

- Walk through inspection checkpoints using a standardized protocol;
- Engage boaters in dialogue about AIS, their impacts on the environment, and the importance of taking measures to prevent their spread;
- Provide AIS educational materials;
- Collect boater usage and aquatic invasive species data.



*Images above from 2020 WISP training.
Map below indicates launch coverage.
Photos by Brittney Rogers, TNC ©*

Survey Information Collected

The field data forms that our stewards populate during their conversations with boaters have questions designed to learn about boater habits, but to collect data that can be used to evaluate invasive species prevention efforts.

Questions include:

Watercraft type

Group size

State of Registration

Launching/Retrieving

Time of inspection

Prior contact with steward

Are spread prevention steps taken?

Aquatic organisms found

Species identification

Educational materials offered

Waterbodies visited in last two weeks

Waterbody the visitor will go to next

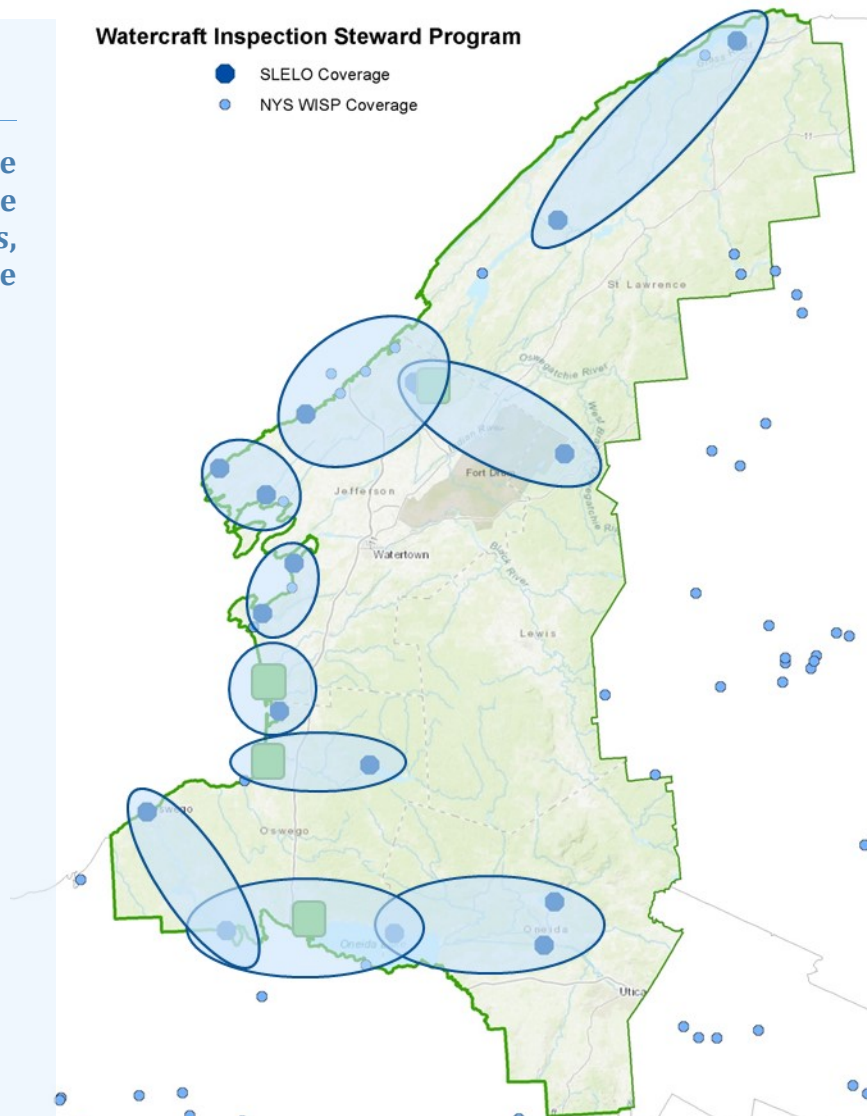
Travel route to be taken

Possible use of decontamination station

Boater commitment to Clean-Drain-Dry

Watercraft Inspection Steward Program

- SLELO Coverage
- NYS WISP Coverage



5,122 Inspections

94% Participation Rate

35% no previous steward interactions

Average group size 2-4 people

Largest group size 11 people

Largest watercraft group 11 Kayaks

13,136 People Reached

Launch users are from all over the US and CA;
Alaska, Washington, Texas, Florida, Maine

Of the completed inspections,
85% of boaters committed to Clean, Drain,
and Dry their equipment when there
is no boat steward present.



Busiest Launches:

Lake Bonaparte

North Sandy Pond

Butterfield Lake

Cape Vincent

Mary Street

64% of inspections are conducted before
incoming boats are launching

10% of vessels have aquatic hitchhikers

43% of boats in water within 2 weeks
22% were in different waterbodies

Most recent waterbody includes:
NY, MA, MD, NJ, OH, PA, SC, VA

Images above from 2020 WISP. Photos by Alaina Young, TILT