

St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management

Invasive species pose a serious ecological and economic threat in the St. Lawrence – Eastern Lake Ontario region of New York.

The St. Lawrence – Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) was formed in 2005 to combat the spread of invasive species and mitigate associated threats. Our overall mission is to protect the natural and cultural integrity of aquatic and terrestrial systems in Jefferson, Oswego, Oneida, St. Lawrence, and Lewis counties from invasive species. Formally recognized by the state in 2011, our PRISM has made tremendous progress towards the prevention of new species and the management of existing species within the region.

SLELO partners provide coordination of invasive species monitoring and management across terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems within our 7,600-square mile PRISM region. SLELO partners promote prevention, early detection and rapid response of invasive species through development and dissemination of educational materials and programs, documentation of species distributions, promotion of integrated habitat management strategies, and builds consensus for resource protection through partnerships with residents, institutions and agencies. Hosted by the Central Western NY Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the SLELO PRISM continues to make significant progress towards invasive species management by utilizing the support and expertise of our partners.



The SLELO PRISM is home to a variety of unique land features, habitats, plants and, animals. All of which are threatened by invasive species. Pictured left to right: The St. Lawrence River, alvar habitat along Lake Ontario, NYS endangered Black Tern. Photos property of The Nature Conservancy.

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Site Development and Topsoil Relocation

Often overlooked in our discussions of invasive species pathways and mitigation is the idea of land clearing and the relocation of topsoil contaminated with invasive plant fragments and/or seeds.

As land clearing occurs for site development, this is often the case for the import or offsite transport of topsoil. However, topsoil is rarely examined for the presence of invasive species seeds or plant fragments, each of which can produce new populations of invasive species in other locations. Topsoil that is relocated from one site to another can be a significant pathway for the spread of invasive species if not properly managed; thus increasing the post development costs for landscape site development.

To reduce the spread of invasive species from site-to-site, partners of the SLELO PRISM suggest the following protocol;

- 1. In the early stages of site planning, hire a trained professional to scout the site for invasive species, or consider training someone on the construction staff to identify common invasive species.**
- 2. Prior to breaking ground, survey the site for invasive species, record location and species.**
- 3. At least 10 days prior to earth moving, and depending on the invasive species found, apply the appropriate control method to each species identified. This may include herbicide treatment, manual removal or a controlled burn.**
- 4. Topsoil contaminated with invasive species remnants should be kept separate from topsoil and scheduled to be re-used. Only clean topsoil should be moved offsite.**

Additional Notes:

When excavating in areas containing knotweed, be aware that knotweed rhizomes (underground stems) may extend 30 feet beyond visible stems and roots can reach depths of 10 feet.

Excavated materials that contain knotweed can be disposed of as follows: Reuse material at the site of infestation after being treated; bury material at least 5 feet below grade; stockpile material on an impervious surface (plastic or pavement) until plant material is non-viable .¹

¹ <http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/environment/units/program-management/documents/FactSheet2-Knotweed.pdf>