PROTECTOR TOOLKIT



'PLEDGE-TO-PROTECT'

ST. LAWRENCE EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO REGION

WATERS

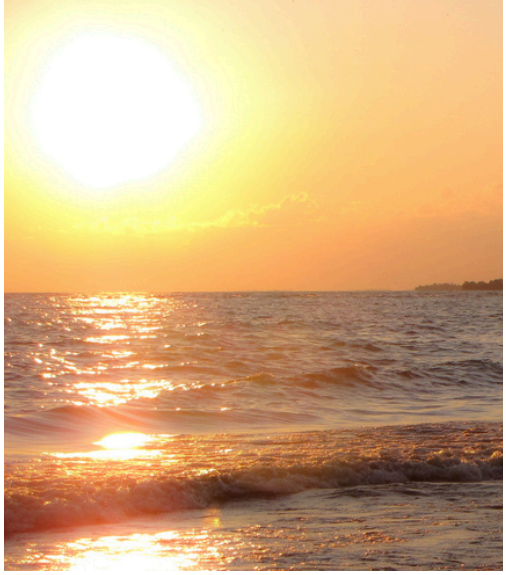
CONTENTS

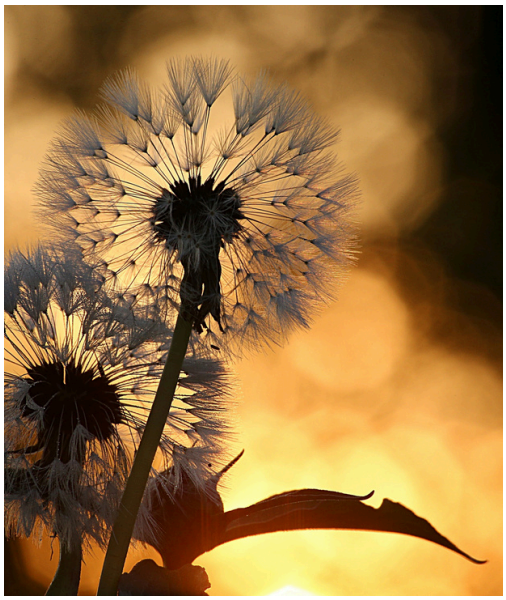
03 Introduction: What is the 'Pledge-To-Protect', Toolkit Overview, Definitions

05 Regional Fact Sheet: Overview of Invasive Species, SLELO Region

07 Action Plan: 'Pledge-To-Protect' our Waters:
- Simple Steps You Can Take Today
- Invasives You May Encounter
- Support Our Efforts

10 Get Social! Share the Pledge, Get Involved

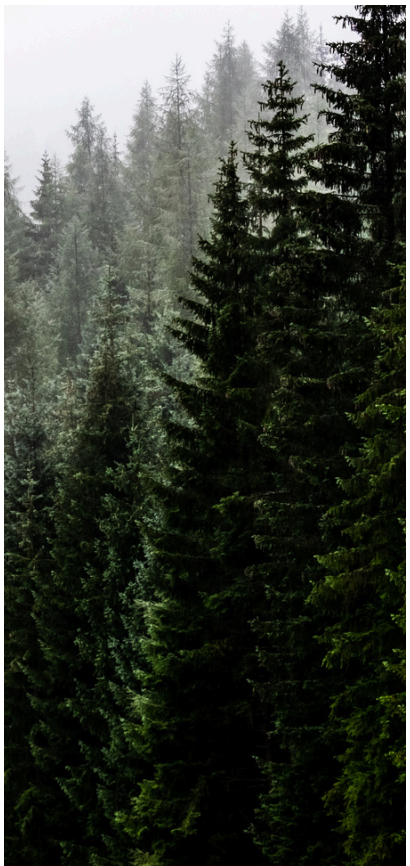












The mission of the St. Lawrence-Eastern Lake Ontario (SLELO) Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) is to protect native habitats, biodiversity, natural areas, and freshwater resources using a collaborative and integrated approach to invasive species management with emphasis on: prevention, early detection, rapid response, education and outreach.

The 'Pledge-To-Protect' helps us to support that mission.

INTRODUCTION

The ‘Pledge-To-Protect’ is a resource intended to educate and inspire our Protectors to support the SLELO Region with environmental conservation actions that are simple, positive and impactful. Conservation is a year-round effort, with activities that can be done each season and at specific times of year. In each of our natural settings - lands, trails, waters, forests, gardens, and within our community - there are steps that you can follow to provide proven impact on your natural surroundings, now and for generations to come.

How to Use the Toolkit

There are five toolkit categories, including: gardens, communities, waters, forests, and lands & trails. Each toolkit can be explored virtually in the 'Pledge-To-Protect' section of our website, as well as downloadable as a PDF. The toolkits provide you with easy to follow impactful actions you can take everyday to prevent the spread of invasive species, along with resources to help you manage invasives you may already have on your property or in your community. When you take the Pledge to Protect, you'll be given chances to earn **Pledge Badges** and other prizes by completing Protector Challenges. These challenges are offered seasonally and include activities like attending local events, sharing social media posts, planting native species, and removing backyard invasives.

In addition to the toolkits, you’ll receive monthly emails with simple, actionable steps and helpful resources to support your pledge and deepen your understanding of invasive species.

Nature is a place for all to enjoy and therefore a responsibility for us all to protect.







About Invasive Species

What are they?
Invasive species are non-native plants, animals and even microorganisms that threaten the health of the lands and waters that we all enjoy. They outcompete our native flora and fauna, interrupt natural systems and food-webs, and negatively impact our economy.

How do they get here?
Invasive species can be intentionally or unintentionally introduced to new areas by human activities such as global trade, outdoor recreation, gardening, and by dumping unwanted plants, fishing bait, and pets in natural areas and waterways.

How do they spread?
Invasive species are easily spread by people, and the way we enjoy the outdoors can sometimes have unintentionally huge consequences. A boater putting their craft in the water without cleaning it first, could introduce an invasive plant that causes your favorite waterway to become clogged with thick weeds. A gardener may unknowingly grow an invasive plant that escapes to surrounding natural areas. A hiker heading out on a favorite trail without cleaning their shoes first, could unintentionally introduce the seeds of an invasive plant onto the path - only to grow a population that outcompetes the native understory of the surrounding forest. A camper bringing firewood from home can transport tree-killing insects to your favorite forests.

What can be done?
Although people are often the cause of the introduction of invasive species, taking the 'Pledge-To-Protect' your lands and waters is the first step in preventing the spread of invasive plants and animals. Upon taking the 'Pledge' you will be given specific but simple actions you can practice, and educational resources that will help you protect your favorite outdoor spaces, backyard and community.

Basic Definitions

- **Invasive Species:** Any non-native plant animal or microorganism that causes harm to the environment, economy or human health.
- **Impact:** Negative effects on native species and natural environments caused by invasive species.
- **Pledge:** A solemn promise or undertaking.
- **Action:** The fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim.

iMapInvasives

iMapInvasives is an online, collaborative GIS-based invasive species database and mapping tool used in several jurisdictions across North America. In New York State, iMapInvasives is the official state invasive species database used for reporting observations, treatments and to aid the early detection of invasive species.

Scan to Learn More About iMapInvasives

REGIONAL FACT SHEET

The SLELO region encompasses a 7,387 square mile region and includes the counties of St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego outside of the Adirondack Park. The region includes portions of the Lake Ontario watershed and shoreline and the Oneida Lake northern watershed.

Who is SLELO PRISM?

The St. Lawrence–Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership For Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) is one of eight PRISMs that span the state of New York. The PRISM network stemmed from recommendations from the NYS Invasive Species Task Force in 2005, and became fully established in 2014. PRISMs are funded by the NYS Environmental Protection fund in coordination with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and various partners. PRISMs have made tremendous progress towards preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species and mitigating the impacts of existing invasive species within the state.

SLELO PRISM is hosted by The Nature Conservancy and was formally recognized by NYS in 2011. Our mission is to protect native habitats, biodiversity, natural areas, and freshwater resources. We utilize a collaborative and integrated approach to invasive species management with an emphasis on prevention, early detection, rapid response, education and outreach. Our work provides region-wide coordination for invasive species monitoring and management across the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems within our 7,600-square mile PRISM region.



SLELO Tiered Invasive Species List

Due to the high number of existing invasive species and the constant threat of new introductions of invasive species in New York State, it is impossible to attempt to manage every invasive species in our region. To address this issue, SLELO has developed a Tiered Species List that is aimed to help better strategize management of invasives within our capacity. The list categorizes species by known presence, and the following feasible management approaches: prevention, eradication, suppression, localized control, and monitoring.

The Invasive Species Tiered List approach is data-driven and utilized by the Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) Network across New York State.

Scan to view our
Invasive Species Tiered List

Tier One: Prevention

Not known to be present within the region but are within a 100 mile radius and a pathway exists for their introduction. For these species, prevention is the best management strategy to implement.

Tier Two: Eradication

Known to be present in the SLELO region, but at low abundance. Eradication is the management strategy in place for these species within Priority Conservation Areas when feasible.

Tier Three: Suppression

Considered to be too widespread for eradication although, some areas remain unaffected. Infestations found within PCAs are targeted and populations are suppressed through targeted control efforts.

Tier Four: Localized Control

Also considered to be too widespread for eradication. High priority resources, like rare plant or recreation assets are protected through localized (landowner) management strategies.

Tier Five: Monitoring

Species that require more knowledge to learn of their impacts and distribution. Utilizing this tiered approach allows us to better strategize our management efforts and target outreach initiatives.



ACTION PLAN

'Pledge-To-Protect' our Waters

SIMPLE STEPS

You'll receive monthly blog emails featuring simple actions you can take—and chances to win prizes by joining challenges in select Protector blogs.

ACTION: CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

Before your watercraft enters a new body of water, take these simple steps:

- **CLEAN** off visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud from all equipment before leaving water access.
- **DRAIN** watercraft bilge, livewell, motor and other water containing devices before leaving water access.
- **DRY** everything for at least five days OR wipe with a towel before reuse.
- **DISPOSE** of unwanted bait, worms and fish parts in the trash.
- **DO NOT** dump unwanted aquarium plants and animals into waterways.

KNOW YOUR INVASIVES

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

ACTION: LEARN TO RECOGNIZE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES YOU MAY ENCOUNTER IN LOCAL WATERS.

Learn to recognize these aquatic invasive species threatening the SLELO region:

- **HYDRILLA.** Congests waterways, interferes with navigation, recreation, ecology and aesthetics. Highly aggressive.
- **TENCH.** An invasive fish that has the ability to diminish aquatic food-webs, increase water turbidity, and introduce non-native parasites into the Great Lakes.
- **WATER CHESTNUT.** Creates dense floating mats that dominate surface waters rending them unusable.
- **FANWORT.** Outcompetes native vegetation and can alter native biological diversity.

SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS

ACTION: SEARCH FOR AND REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES.

Manage invasive species found on land and commonly along trails, and learn to report your observations.

SIGN UP for a free iMapInvasives user account and download the mobile app.

VOLUNTEER with SLELO - help with removals, surveys, plantings, and more. See our events page for details.

Check out our Events Page

GET STARTED

RESOURCES

- iNaturalist App - Learn and connect with nature.
- Seek by iNaturalist App - Identify plants and animals all around you.
- Invasive Species Fact Sheets
- Great Lakes Shoreline Plant Guide
- NYSDEC Water Chestnut Control Best Practices
- SLELO Invasive Species Handbook
- The Great Lakes Hydrilla Collaborative
- Lake, Pond, and Fisheries Management Knowledge Bank.
- Aquatic Plants Guide
- Tench Identification Poster
- Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Handbook

For All Resources, Visit Our Waters Virtual Toolbox



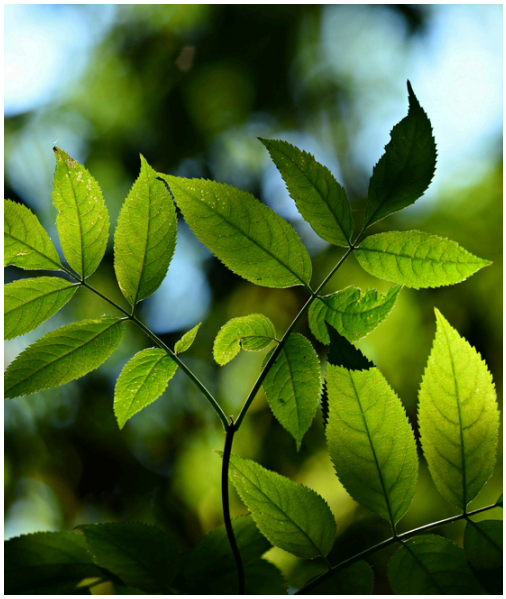




GET SOCIAL!



You've signed up as a Protector - now help us spread the word! Building a network of volunteers and helping others to take the 'Pledge-To-Protect' builds on the impact you can make in your area.



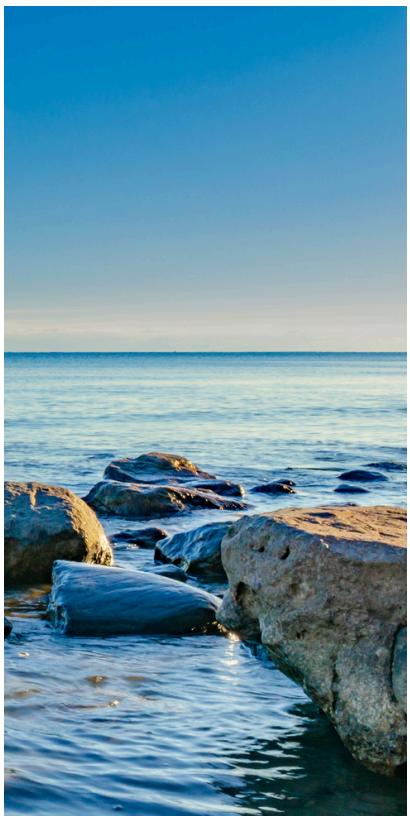
01 Share the Pledge with your friends and family. Encourage them to sign up and do their part.

02 Share on your social media channels that you are a Protector! Get social post ideas from our website.

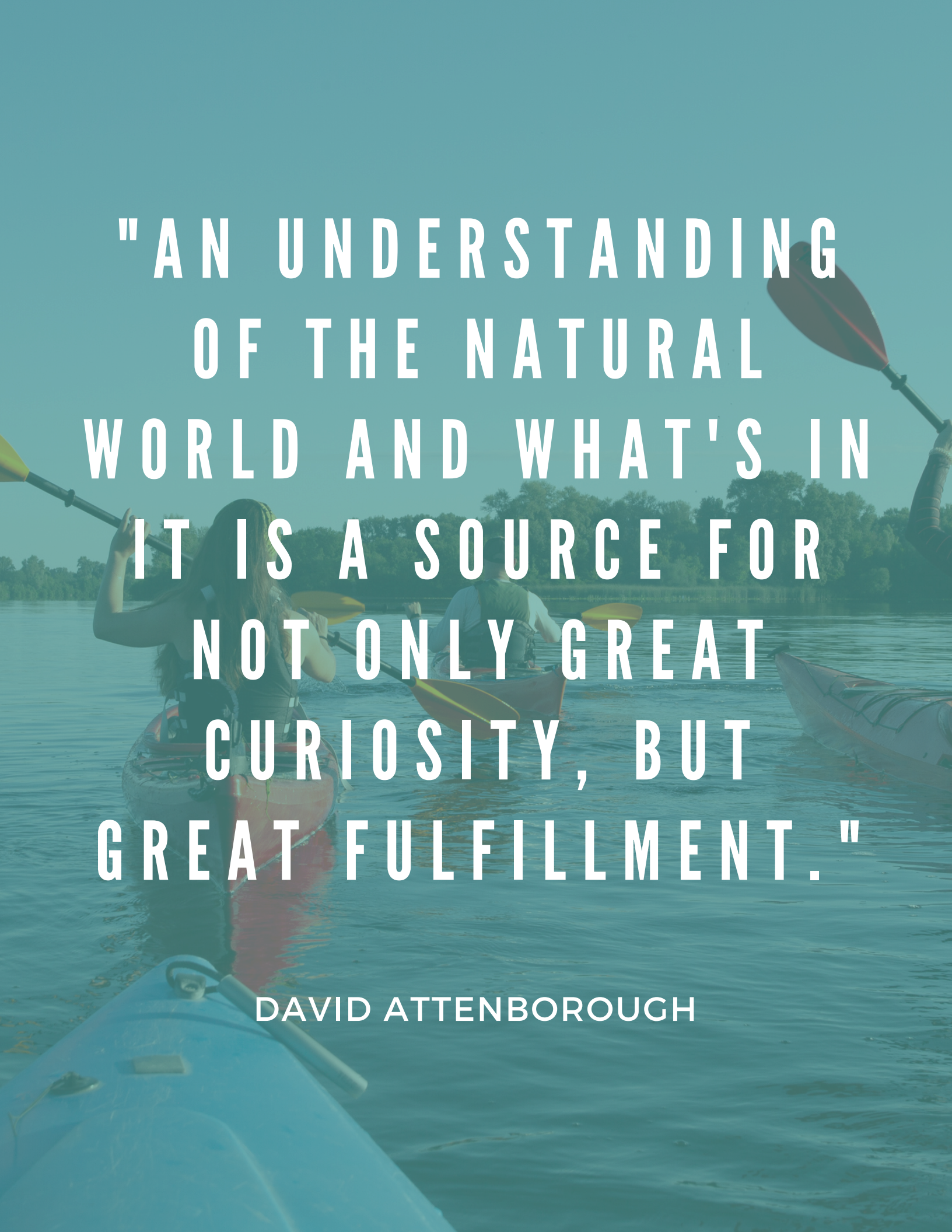
03 Create a free user account on NYiMapInvasives.org and start reporting invasive species you encounter.

04 Join SLELO's invasive species Volunteer Surveillance Network (VSN) to be part of a community of Volunteers.

05 Download apps that help you explore nature! **Seek** and **iNaturalist** help you identify native and invasive species. SLELO PRISM has an iNaturalist group you can join too!



Scan to View our Resource Gallery!


"AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURAL WORLD AND WHAT'S IN IT IS A SOURCE FOR NOT ONLY GREAT CURIOSITY, BUT GREAT FULFILLMENT."
DAVID ATTENBOROUGH