

Getting Started:

How to Start a Watercraft Inspection Program



Brittney Rogers

New York Sea Grant

Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Leaders Trainer

Blr93@cornell.edu



PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Watercraft Inspection
- Watercraft Inspection Programs
 - Standardization
- New York Sea Grant's Role
 - NYS Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Handbook
 - Steps for Starting a Program
 - Steward Supply Suggestions



Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic organisms (plants, animals, and pathogens) that are not native to the aquatic ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Some reasons to be concerned:

- Ecology
- Economics
- Recreation
- Health

Recreational boating... a key pathway in the spread of AIS.



What is Watercraft Inspection?



Watercraft inspection consists of visually inspecting all areas of boating and recreational equipment (i.e., boat, trailer, motor, livewell, anchor, swim fins, scuba gear, etc.) that come in contact with or hold water; removing all visible plants, animals, and mud; and draining water from all compartments and containers.

These practices reduce the risk of movement of all organisms from one body of water to another.



The Goals of Watercraft Inspection Are:

- Reduce the impact of aquatic invasive species (AIS) on native aquatic organisms and ecosystems
- Limit or prevent the spread of AIS by containing infestations to current locations
- Increase boater awareness about ways they can help prevent the spread of AIS



The Goals of Watercraft Inspection are Accomplished by Programs:

- ✓ Teaching boaters how to look for aquatic hitchhikers through the demonstration of watercraft inspection
- ✓ Informing boaters about boating related and other pertinent laws, AIS identification, common AIS spread vectors, and AIS prevention methods
- ✓ Providing boaters with watercraft inspection and AIS educational materials



The Goals of Watercraft Inspection are Accomplished by Programs:

- ✓ Encouraging boaters to continue or adopt behaviors that support **Clean-Drain-Dry** practice with all boats, trailers, and other water recreation equipment.
- ✓ Collecting data on boater usage patterns and the presence of aquatic organisms
- ✓ Responding to boaters' questions





The Value of Watercraft Inspections

Critical component in protecting the aquatic ecosystems and water quality by preventing and limiting the spread of AIS among waterbodies in NYS and neighboring states and provinces.



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**



Standardizing Watercraft Inspection



Achieving a greater level of consistency in protocols and standards employed by watercraft inspection steward programs across NYS benefits the areas under consideration both environmentally and economically.



Standardizing Watercraft Inspection:

- Limits variation among watercraft inspection programs.
- Provides guidance and start-up support for newly developed/young programs.
- Increases effectiveness by ensuring that programs use the best science and technology currently available.



Standardizing Watercraft Inspection:



- Establishes consistency among programs that promotes credibility with boaters.
- Makes it easier for the boating public to recognize, understand, anticipate and comply with watercraft inspection and prevention programs.



New York Sea Grant's Role in WCI

- NYS Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Handbook
- Training assistance programs
- WISPL Workshops
- WISPL Webinar Series
- Tool/Resource development





SECTION #5 Getting Started: A Guide for Organizations Starting Watercraft Inspection Programs



Published in 2014

- PDF downloadable online
(provided with one for attending today's workshop)

Goals:

- Guide for new programs
- Recommendations across the state
- Resource for program coordinators and stewards

- Collaborative effort
- Funding: NYS Environmental Protection Fund

Today's Presentation focus: *Handbook Section 5*

*Successful Programs =
Effective Leadership + Adaptability + PARTNERSHIPS*

**The steps in this presentation may occur
simultaneously or in different order.*

Step #1:

Identify a Program Leader/Coordinator/Trainer

- Roles of Program Leader:
 - Lead on developing program components
 - Typically recruits, trains and supervises the stewards



Step #2: Develop & Nurture Partnerships



- Crucial in existing programs
- Help identify priorities
- Fill expertise gaps
- Ex: NYSG, NYSDEC ISCU, PRISM_s, lake/landowner associations, state agencies, municipalities, universities and cooperative extension

Step #3: Determine Program Structure

- Staffing:
 - Paid
 - Volunteer
 - Both?
- Things to consider:
 - Be realistic
 - Funding availability, sustainability & resources
 - Recruitment pool
 - Coverage area (one launch, one lake, one county, etc.)
 - Time/level of commitment of the program coordinator and of potential recruits



Step #4: Build Your Budget



Budget Item*
Steward salary
Program leader salary
Fringe (on salary only)
Volunteer hour estimate (can be used as cost share)
Steward supplies
Travel
Program operating costs
SUBTOTAL
In-direct costs
TOTAL

** This budget chart is provided as a starting place and will likely need to be customized to fit the needs of your organization and program.*



Step #5:

Determine What Your Stewards Will Do

Steward Duties:

- Demonstrate watercraft inspection, collect data, inform boating public about AIS
- Recommendations for standardized duties listed in NYS WISP Handbook
- Customization to allow for additional duties



Step #5: How They Will Be Recognized

- Clearly identifiable by boaters
 - Recommendations for standardization include incorporating the *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!* logo



Beyond the Inspections...



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Step #6a:

Determine Coverage Area & Secure Property Owner Permission

- Mission of organization
- Needs of partners
- Funding & resources
- Coverage area gaps of nearby programs
- Requirements & liability issues
- Permits
- *These steps take time!*
- See Handbook Appendix D





Appendix D: Sample Launch Site Property Owner Permission Letter

DATE

Name of Property Owner
Address of Property Owner
Address of Property Owner

Dear TITLE (Mayor/Supervisor) LAST NAME) of the City/Village/Town of _____:

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct educational activities, including voluntary watercraft inspections for boaters at the _____ (Name) boat launch at _____ (Location) and to provide you with the details of the (YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME) watercraft inspection steward program.

In an effort to slow and/or prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), boat launch stewards would work with you as site manager to select an inspection location for conducting educational and voluntary watercraft inspections from _____ (PROGRAM ACTIVITY DATE) to _____ (DATE). Days and times of duty at each site will change throughout the season but be limited to daylight hours. This effort is part of a statewide boat/launch steward program and one of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Aquatic Nuisance Species priorities.

The inspection process would not impede launch access/exit. Boater participation in this initiative is 100% voluntary; these are not regulatory inspections. The goal of the program is for the stewards to teach boaters how to look for and remove aquatic invasive species from their boats and to empower boaters with information so they can inspect their watercraft in the absence of stewards. With boaters, the launch stewards will:

- 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; and
- collect boater usage and aquatic invasive species data.

Launch stewards will have field supplies with them at the launch. These supplies may include: sandwich board, folding table, chair, umbrella, preserved specimens for educational purposes, and distribution materials. Stewards will bring supplies to the launch each day and will remove them from the launch at the end of each shift.

Please contact me by DATE with your decision about allowing these inspections at your location, or if you would like additional information. I look forward to working with the City/Village/Town of NAME to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species in New York's waters.

Respectfully Submitted,

Your Name and Title
Contact information: address, telephone, email



Step #6b:

Determine Coverage Schedule

- Things to consider:

- Funding & resources
- Mandates of contacting
- High traffic vs. low traffic
- Target audience?
- Volunteer vs. paid staff

- Tips:

- Visit launch sites
- Network with other launch site users
- Flexibility in scheduling



Step #7:

Develop Your Steward Training Program

Goal: Provide stewards (paid and volunteer) with the tools and resources to confidently and accurately complete their duties

- Training structure:
 - Startup orientation:
 - Organizational orientation
 - Introduction to the problem and region
 - AIS introduction
 - Data collection
 - Boater engagement
 - Launch site visits
 - On-going training
- Training considerations: data collection & aquatic species ID and collection



Step #7:

Training Considerations: Data Collection

- Data Collection is IMPORTANT
- Standardization of data collection recommendations are in the handbook
 - Example datasheets on pages 6:19 & 6:20
- Establish protocols for data collection and review



Step #7:

Training Considerations:

Identification & Specimen Collection Protocol

- Species ID:
 - Timing: once or on-going?
 - Finding experts
 - Common AIS and natives, especially lookalikes
 - Watch species
 - Assess identification skills of your crew
- Collection protocol:
 - Confirms ID skills
 - Section 6:14 of handbook



Step #8:

Develop Quality Assurance Quality Control Plan

- Purpose:
 - Defines roles
 - Ensures consistency each year and between years
 - Helps your program maintain credibility and consistency in established protocol
- QAQC topics for consideration:
 - Responsibilities & Expectations
 - Data Collection & Entry
 - Equipment/Supply policies



Step #9: Recruit & Hire Stewards

- Recruiting stewards:
 - Develop position description & advertisement materials
 - Identify the best places to advertise
 - Define your application process
- Hiring stewards:
 - Establish set interview criteria
 - Multiple Interviewers
 - Stewards will be representing your organization and program partners



Follow recommendations of Human Resources Department

Step #10: Implement Your Training Protocol

- Identify locations for steward stations at each launch site
- Coordinate startup orientation
- Package educational materials for the stewards to distribute
 - Resources in Section 7



Standard Steward Supply Suggestions

For your consideration:

Inspection Station Items
Emergency Contact List
Distribution Materials
Data Collection Items
Resource Tote
Manual
Swag

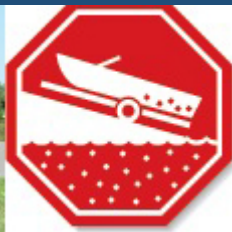




CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS

Watch for unwanted aquatic hitchhikers when you move from one waterway to another!

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants and animals that threaten native plants, wildlife, and their habitats. They can clog waterways and fishing areas, and can reduce lakeshore property values. Once AIS are established, containment is difficult. Through watercraft inspection, you can help SLOW the spread of AIS.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS

Prevent the transport of nuisance species. Clean all recreational equipment. www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Aquatic Invaders to Watch For



- Water Chestnut**
- Triangular leaves & toothed edges
 - Forms dense floating mats
 - Seeds & plants attach to trailers



- Zebra & Quagga Mussels**
- Tiny, "D" or oval shaped striped shells
 - Cover hard surfaces; sharp shells cut feet
 - Shells attach to plants & boat bottoms



Eurasian Watermilfoil

Water Chestnut WATCH



Photo: B. Smorgans

Curlyleaf Pondweed WATCH

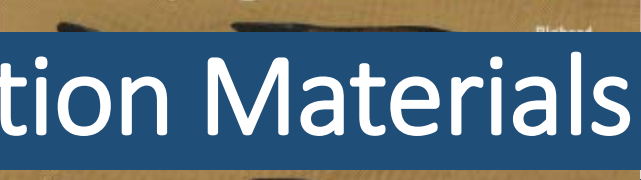


Zebra Mussel



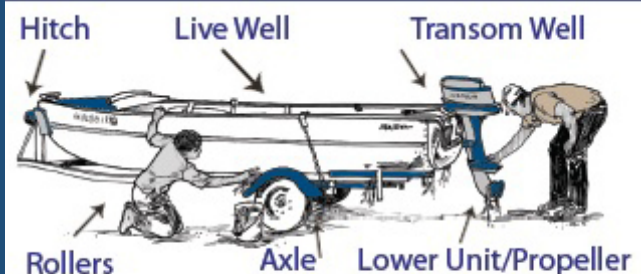
WATCH

Asian Carp: Bighead & Silver



Standard Distribution Materials

WATERCRAFT CHECK POINTS

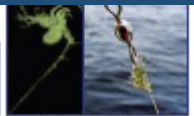


Before you leave a waterway:

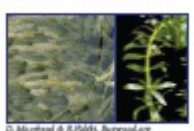
CLEAN & INSPECT: Inspect, remove, and properly dispose of any visible mud, plants, fish or organisms from boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.

DRAIN: Before leaving the launch, empty all water from spaces (i.e., bilges, buckets, livewells, etc.) that can hold water. Dump live bait at bait disposal sites or in the trash. Never move live bait fish between bodies of water.

DRY: Dry anything that comes into contact with water.



- Spring Water flea**
- Tiny, 1/2" crustacean with long, barbed tail
 - Competes with fish for food
 - Masses collect on fishing line



- Hydrilla**
- Blade-like leaves in whorls of 4-8
 - Forms dense beds
 - Plant fragments attach to boats & trailers



- Live Bait**
- Non-native crayfish and minnows
 - Alters aquatic habitats & may carry pathogens
 - Often released or illegally stocked

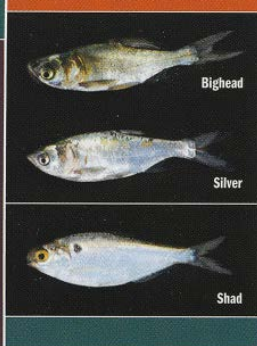
The Launch Steward Program is a collaborative education program offered at water access sites in New York's Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake regions to help slow the spread of aquatic invasive species and help preserve the integrity of water resources, recreational opportunities, and local economies.



You can help!

- **Report new sightings** - use identification tips inside this card; note exact location, take a photo if possible, freeze specimen in a sealed plastic bag and call **1-877-STOP ANS (1-877-786-7267)**.
- **Harvest bait** only from uninfested waters.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash.
- **Know the rules** - many states prohibit release of live Asian carp.
- **Catch and eat** these tasty fish to help reduce their numbers.

For information on catching, cleaning and cooking Asian carp, visit iseagrant.org/asiancarp. For general information visit asiancarp.org.



watch Asian Carp: Bighead & Silver

Round Goby WATCH



Photo Credit: David



Summary:

- Use handbook as a guide
- Standardize when possible
- Call on partners for guidance and topical expertise as needed
- Take advantage of training offered



Contact Information:

Brittney Rogers

Email: Blr93@cornell.edu

Office: (315)331-8415

Questions?