

Starting a Watercraft Inspection Program: *Step-By-Step Recommendations for Standardization*

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Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Leaders Workshop
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Presentation Outline

- Handbook history
- Standardization
- Steps for starting a watercraft inspection program
- Summary & questions



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

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STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™

Standardization

- Consistency within & across programs
- Builds from the experiences & expertise of others
- Outlined protocols are well-received by boaters
- Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign
 - www.protectyourwaters.net

Step #1: Identify a Program Leader

- 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: PRISM, 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



EXPECTATIONS
REALITY

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 & How They Will Be Recognized

- Steward Duties:
 - Recommendations for standardized duties listed in NYS Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Handbook
 - Customization to allow for additional duties
- How will your stewards be recognized?
 - Recommendations for standardization include incorporating the *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!* logo



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Step

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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

Sea & ion

liability

time!



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
 - Talk with others that work/play at launch sites
 - Flexibility

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



Training Considerations: Data Collection

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



Training Considerations: Aquatic Organism 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
 - Page 5:7 of handbook



Step #8: Develop Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) 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
 - Equipment/supplies 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 interview criteria
 - Interviewers
 - Stewards will be representing your organization and program partners

Follow recommendations of Your Human Resources

Step #10

- Identify steward launch
- Coordinate orientation
- Package materials steward

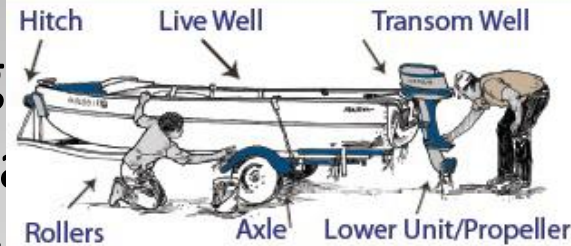


CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS

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 habitat. AIS degrade boating and fishing areas, and can reduce lakeshore property values and tourism. Once AIS are established, containment is difficult. By practicing watercraft inspection, you can help *SLOW* the *SPREAD* of AIS.

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.

Never release plants, fish, or other animals into a waterway unless they came from that waterway.



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Aquatic Invaders to Watch For:



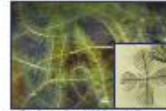
Water Chestnut

- 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

- Feathery leaves in whorls of 4
- Forms dense beds
- Plant fragments attach to boats & trailers



Spiny Waterflea

- 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

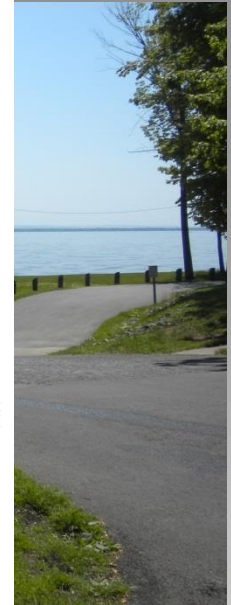
- Non-native crayfish and minnows
- Alters aquatic habitats & may carry pathogens
- Often released or illegally stocked

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.



Design courtesy of AiRondeck PRISM. For more information go to: www.aleloinvasives.org or www.nyis.info

protocol



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Summary

- Use handbook as a guide
- Standardize when possible
- Call on partners for guidance and topical expertise as needed

QUESTIONS?

