

**Aquatic Invasive Species
Education Series 2012**

A water chestnut pull volunteer with some of the equipment used to remove the AIS from Oneida Lake; photo: Nick Spera, NY Sea Grant



**How-to Tips for Organizing
a Water Chestnut Pull**

*by New York Sea Grant Launch Steward
Nick Spera*

Hand-pulling water chestnuts is one method for reducing the potential of this aquatic invasive species (AIS) to interfere with the natural and recreational environment. Localized removal efforts are important in the battle to slow the spread of AIS. When organizing an AIS removal event, consider the following:

Two months (generally April) prior to your event:

- Scout and pre-select site: survey potential sites for need, safety and accessibility by volunteers and vessels; are parking and staging areas adequate?
- Estimate AIS population to be removed, time and number of volunteers needed to remove that population; a typical water chestnut pull lasts 3-5 hours.
- Acquire property owner permission.
- Begin identifying project partners/sponsors.
- Identify central meeting location to meet with volunteers before and after pull.
- Plan for proper AIS disposal in a location where it will not return to the aquatic system (lake, stream, sewer drain, etc.) via animals, people, rainfall, or other vectors, options include:
 - Local landfill: check ahead for accessibility and dumping/hauling fees
 - Trash collector: contact local providers for accessibility, fees and how to contain AIS for disposal
 - Local composting site or facility: check ahead for acceptability of AIS.
- If transporting AIS to off-site landfill or other facility, identify how to safely transport AIS to disposal site.
- Plan to have necessary materials available for the pull and volunteers, including first aid kit, canoes/kayaks, personal flotation devices/life jackets of varying sizes, work gloves, containers to hold and transport plants, wheelbarrows, metal rakes, and trash bags.
- Plan how to teach volunteers proper AIS removal methods.
- Plan to provide beverages and light snacks to help keep volunteers hydrated and reward them for their time and effort.
- Plan budget.



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One Month Prior to AIS Removal Event

- Recheck site when AIS plants are growing and visible to determine size of AIS population to be removed.
- Designate lead person to organize and smoothly implement the event/pull.
- Determine number of volunteers/partners (local community associations, scouts, school groups, environmental groups, etc.) needed, and how to reach them.
- Include local organizer contact information in recruitment and publicity materials.
- Schedule removal date/time and rain date when most volunteers are available.
- Plan and begin publicizing event with press releases, posters, emails, organizational newsletters, and Web sites, etc.
- Prepare and print informational materials for volunteers, public, and media who will be at the event; include time/place, map, lists of required and recommended safety and use gear, and AIS educational and disposal information.
- Begin organizing gear and supplies.

Several Days Prior to AIS Removal Event

- Provide volunteers with informational fliers.
- Invite local media outlets to cover, and to participate, if they choose.
- Organize supplies.
- Collect informational materials to distribute at event.
- Plan to have someone to photograph the event activities.
- Notify local emergency response organizations of event.

The Day of AIS Removal Event

- Deliver supplies and tools to work sites.
- Place first aid kits at each hand-pull location.
- Welcome volunteers, provide safety information, when to return to meeting location, demonstration of what to do with removed AIS plants, etc.
- Have volunteers register: name, address, email, affiliation, etc., and sign any necessary liability waiver or photo release.
- Assign someone to meeting location to assist volunteers, media, and public, and to organize post-pull activities, including AIS weigh-in, distribution of refreshments, etc.
- Take group photo prior to or after event.



*Some AIS removal gear;
photo: Nick Spera, NY Sea Grant*

After AIS Removal Event

- Provide appropriate agencies with report of event, the amount of AIS removed, observations of note, etc.
- Issue post-event press release and photos to acknowledge positive impact of AIS removal effort and assistance of local volunteers and sponsors.

MORE INFO: www.nyseagrant.org/ais • <http://nyis.info>
www.protectyourwaters.net



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